
Central Dudley Area Committee Meeting – 12th June 2012

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Designation of Playing Fields in Commemoration of Queen Elizabeth Second for the Diamond Jubilee

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Committee of the options to designate Playing Fields/Open Space as Queen Elizabeth II playing fields in commemoration of the Queens Diamond Jubilee and consider proposals for the Central Dudley Area to be submitted for approval by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture.
2. To consider the options to acquire FA/Landfill tax funding of sites in the Central Dudley area and to determine which options to submit for approval by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture for submission to the relevant funding bodies.

Background

3. The Fields in Trust (FIT) charity have lobbied for many years to protect public open space especially playing fields. They have developed a campaign to celebrate the Queens Diamond Jubilee and the year of the Olympic Games in Britain by asking owners of public open space to identify and establish Queen Elizabeth II Fields (QE2 Fields).
4. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge mirrors the memorial project created following King George V's death in 1936 when many parks, playing fields and children's playgrounds across the country were dedicated in perpetuity as King George V Playing fields. King George V Playing fields in Lawnswood Road, Wordsley provide a local example of such a protected field.
5. The Trusts intention is to try to establish two thousand and twelve QE2 fields by 2012 and there are no specific limitations on the number of sites that an area can put forward. The only restriction for Members to note at this stage is that parks or open spaces already designated in some way eg 'Stevens Park', 'King George V Park' are ineligible because of the prior designation.
6. Once established a QE2 field will be protected for the future by a legal document a "Deed of Protection". These Deeds will be similar to the

deeds of dedication which the Council entered into with the Millennium Commission for the Millennium Woodlands Project in 1995-2000, and in essence means that the 'field' is protected for 99 years from the date of dedication.

7. FIT has been working with a number of fund holders and external funding bodies to improve areas of public open space. There is an agreement with Sport England to designate £10m worth of spending to QE2 fields, these must be playing fields which have been recognised in a Playing Pitches Strategy as requiring improvement.
8. Consequently County Football Associations are working with local Authorities to identify a maximum number of 3 sites per local authority area that are to be put forward for funding as part of this programme. This funding is specific to pitch drainage improvements so it is important to identify sites where such improvements could have maximum impact in terms of a pitches carrying capacity and the link to a playing pitch strategy is essential.
9. In addition to the Sport England funding there is also an agreement between FIT and SITA, the waste management company, who provide support through the land fill tax. They have allocated £1m nationally to support the QE2 fields initiative.

Proposals for Dudley Borough

10. It is proposed that Dudley identifies suitable sites across the Local Authority area which could be identified as QE2 fields. It is suggested that, as a minimum, a QE2 field is identified in each area and this will assist each town to celebrate the importance of green space for recreation in their locality as an Olympic legacy for 2012.
11. There are a significant number of sites throughout the borough which would be eligible for designation and producing an agreed borough wide list is a complex task. A number of greenspaces have benefited from external funding through Government funding in recent years and many have seen a huge increase in community involvement in site development and management.
12. Across the Borough we are seeking to nominate 3 playing pitches which would be eligible for funding from Sport England with approval from the FA. These have to be pitches that have been highlighted as high priority for improvement as part of the Borough's Playing Pitches Strategy.
13. In addition we propose that an additional 2 sites be nominated which could be eligible for funding via the Landfill tax fund through the volunteering and community involvement work that has been a high priority for Parks Development Services. The Landfill Tax Awards are made to Community Sector organisations not the Local Authority.

14. In terms of the Central Dudley Area the sites listed at appendix 'A' are the highest priorities for investment in order to improve the playing pitches quality and increase usage. Members are asked to consider the list and determine which site(s) they wish to put forward to the Cabinet Member for consideration.
15. Similarly the Area Committee Is asked to consider the sites at appendix 'B' which would be eligible for the Landfill Tax funding that has been made available and to agree those that it wants to be considered by the Cabinet Member for submission to both the QE2 initiative and funding agency.
16. The sites listed in Appendix 'A' and 'B' are identified on the accompanying map at Appendix 'C' for Members information
17. Members will note that certain sites are excluded from these lists as noted in paragraph 5 as they are ineligible for QE2 status given existing designations for such sites eg 'Stevens Park' 'King George V Park'

Summary

- The QE2 Playing Fields scheme is a means by which local areas can dedicate a playing field/open space to commemorate the Queens diamond Jubilee.
- There are no limits as to the number of sites that an area can propose as QE2 Playing Fields. The fields are dedicated for 100 years and must not be covered by some other form of dedication.
- Funding opportunities are open to both local authorities and community sector organisations in connection with a QE2 dedicated site.
- Sport England (Football Association) could fund playing pitch improvement works to 3 sites in a local authority area. Such proposals need to be identified as priorities within the Council's existing playing pitch strategy.
- SITA is providing funding for community led improvements to greenspaces. The essential element with such applications is the existence of a strong friends group with an agreed plan for the site.
- Each Area Committee is being asked to consider the options for their area and put its proposals to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Culture.

Finance

18. There are some financial implications in developing the deed of dedication with the Fields in Trust. However, there will be some financial benefits in that the Authority can then bid for capital funds from the partner sponsorship organisations which could amount to £25k - £50k.

Law

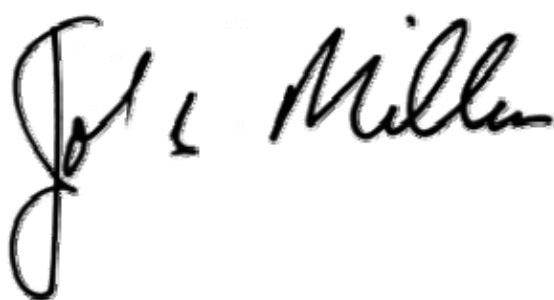
19. Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to do anything which is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.
20. The Deeds of Dedication on each QE2 playing field would effectively bind the local authority to maintaining the open space for the length of the deed approximately 99 years.

Equality Impact

21. The proposals within this report comply with the Council's policy on Equality and Diversity.

Recommendations

22. That the Area Committee nominates to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture proposals for Playing field/public open spaces from the Central Dudley Area to be put forward as QE2 sites
23. That the Area Committee considers the list of eligible sites for FA/Sport England funding and landfill tax funding as detailed at Appendices A and B and identifies the Area Committees priority sites to be put forward to the Cabinet Member for Environment and culture for consideration.
24. That Officers be tasked to explore further the variety of external funding which is available via the QE2 nominations process, and to submit bids for the Councils prioritised schemes as approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Culture.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.B. Millar', with a stylized, cursive script.

J.B. MILLAR
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List of Background Papers

Appendix 'A'

Playing Fields requiring drainage improvements

The following pitches have been identified through the non-technical visual inspections as being of below average or average quality (DMBC Public sites), and the limitations due to drainage are summarised

Area	Site	Pitches – Adult(A) Junior (J) Mini(M)	Drainage - Comment
Central Dudley	Russells Hall Playing Fields	3 A	Poor drainage means none of the pitches currently in use; Standing water during wet weather
Central Dudley	Sledmere Playing Field	4 A	Pitches poorly drained, not fully utilized during winter but play continues on poor surface. Pitches on part of old water reservoir
Central Dudley	Burton Road Playing Field	3 A	Drainage installed 10 years ago, but only partially successful as only playable by Junior teams and water logged surface from Nov. onwards
Central Dudley	Dudley Wood Playing Field	3 A	2 x Top Pitches – previously drained, playable throughout the year to the detriment of the playing surface at the end of the season. Lower Pitch – poorly drained unusable from Nov. – Feb. requires drainage system
Central Dudley	Donkey Pool Playing Fields	3 A ; 2 M	2 x Top pitches (A &M) previously drained, However, playing surface very stony. Lower Pitch poorly drained water logged from Nov. – March and during wet winters pitch becomes unusable

Appendix 'B'

Eligible Parks and Green Spaces with Community involvement through Friends groups

Local Committee Area	Site	Friends group	Master plans/ Management plans (approved through consultation)	Fund raising success of group
Central Dudley	Priory Park	Friends of Priory Park	Yes, Lottery funded management plan	Heritage Lottery funding, Liveability funding
	Milking Bank open space	Friends of Milking Bank	Yes Master plan	Liveability funding
	Green Park	Friends of Green Park	Yes Master plan	Liveability funding, Lottery funding
	Buffery Park	Friends of Buffery Park	Yes Master plan	Liveability funding, landfill tax funding, Area Committee, Awards for all
	Netherton Park	Friends of Netherton park	Yes Master plan	Healthy Towns funding, Liveability funding, Tree planting, Netherton Fun Day fund raiser
	Woodside Park	Friends of Woodside Park	Yes Master plan	Liveability funding, Disability Access funding
