

WARDS:

Halesowen South, Halesowen North & Belle Vale

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.**

DUDLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

AREA COMMITTEE – HALESOWEN

15th September 2004

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

THE LEASOWES RESTORATION

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the progress of the historic restoration of Leasowes Park

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This Committee has considered reports on the status of the Leasowes Restoration on the 9th October 2001, 3rd July 2002, 10th March 2004 and 16th July 2004. On the latter date the Committee were advised that in December 2003 the Heritage Lottery Fund had approved details of a revised restoration which could be achieved for the original grant of £1,306,500 and the Council's match funding of £435,520.

- 2.5 The revised restoration proposals covered the following phases;

- All works & costs to date
- Beechwater Dam
- Virgil's Grove
- Leasowes Lane Dam & Lower Pool
- One further phase (which might include improvements to the car park, minor footpath improvements and woodland management elsewhere on the site, as well as further survey, archaeological investigations and design works which could permit elements of restoration using alternative

grant sources, the Wardens' service, or volunteers), the content of which would be determined when the final cost of the preceding 3 phases is established

2.6 The location of these phases is shown on the plan in Appendix A to this report.

2.7 Since the last report, the detailed design for the restoration of Leasowes Lane Dam, including the reinstatement of the buried cobbled roadway which existed in Shenstone's time, the associated sandstone walls and the cascade to the valley below, has been completed and has been approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund's project monitor. Appendices B, C and D to this report show an impression of the recreated dam viewed from below the cascade, a plan and cross-section illustrating the proposals. The proposals are based on the principle of using mini-piles to provide the structural element of the dam, but which will cause minimal damage to the historic structure underneath. A planning application for this structure was submitted on the 5th August 2004

2.8 The Committee were advised at their meeting on the 16th July 2004 that the estimated completion of these works would be in May 2005. However, a number of issues have arisen that have required further investigation, and the estimated completion is now July 2005. These issues include;

- The need to carry out contamination testing of fill material used to strengthen the dam during the 1950's
- During the re-assessment of the restoration project in 2001, following its suspension by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the proposal to spread the silt dredged from the pools to be restored in the park on the adjacent Crown Tip site was reviewed and found to still be a viable option. However in the intervening time the Environment Agency, from whom an exemption from the Waste Management Regulations would be required to spread silt on Crown Tip, have taken an increasingly restrictive interpretation of the legislation relating to the Waste Management Regulations. As a result, an exemption would no longer be granted for this activity, and alternative sites for the re-use of the dredgings have had to

be identified. In consultation with the Environment Agency, land at the Earls High School playing fields has been identified as a suitable site for the reuse of these dredgings, and a planning application has been submitted accordingly. This proposal is covered under a separate report for to this Committee

- In order to record the condition, prior to restoration works commencing, of sewers crossing the site which are believed to serve the Golf Club, GreenCare Depot and homes on the site, a full sewer survey has been commissioned. This has revealed that a sewer which passes under the Lower Pool in Virgil's Grove runs at a far shallower depth than was anticipated, and the results of this survey have led a number of changes to the proposed restoration of this pool.

2.9 To date the project remains within budget, and estimated costs continue to be closely monitored as the design proposals become more detailed

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 It is proposed that the contents of this report be noted and that further reports to update the Committee on the progress of the restoration be submitted in due course

4.0 FINANCE

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LAW

- 5.1 Under Section 9 & 10 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 the Council is empowered to acquire and maintain land for the purposes of Public Open Space
- 5.2 Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 enables the Council to provide recreation facilities within, or outside of its area, with or without a charge
- 5.3 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to do anything that is calculated to facilitate or is conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its functions

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1 The proposals in this report accord with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- 6.2 The proposals include restoration of path routes which have been designed to permit a high level of disabled access

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That the proposals set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report be approved

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Director of the Urban Environment - John B. Millar

Contact Officer: Rupert Dugdale ext 5538

Background documents used in the preparation of this report:-

- 1. Report to Halesowen Area Committee – The Leasowes Restoration, 9th October 2001
- 2. Report to Halesowen Area Committee - The Leasowes Restoration 3rd July 2002
- 3. Report to Halesowen Area Committee - The Leasowes Restoration 10th March 2004

4. Report to Halesowen Area Committee - The Leasowes Restoration
16th July 2004