

Subject: The Wellesley Recreation Ground  
Report to: Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee

Report by: Group Manager- Neighbourhoods and Communities  
Date: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

## **SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS**

**To consider recent reports of ASB and Criminal Damage at the Wellesley Recreation Ground and immediate prevention work and longer term development options.**

### **1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The report follows on from a discussion at the previous Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee about Wellesley Recreation Ground and its future use and reports on recent issues relating to ASB and criminal damage on the same site.

### **2. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

- 2.1 Great Yarmouth Town Football Club has occupied the Wellesley Recreation Ground since its creation in 1892. The Wellesley Recreation Ground is also home to Great Yarmouth Athletics Club and the oldest purpose-built football stand in the world. It is also home to an existing multi use games area and a tennis court. Part of the recreation ground also features a Tennis Pavilion and Attendants Office which are both in a serious state of disrepair.
- 2.2 Levels of Anti-Social behaviour have increased over recent months and ease of access to the Recreation Ground has led to drug dealing, drug taking, vandalism/graffiti in the grandstand and theft of athletics equipment from storage facilities.
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Manager for the area has worked with the Police and Crime Prevention Officer from Norfolk Constabulary to look at short-term and medium term measures to address these issues. As a short-term measure access to the recreation ground has been restricted from 7pm every evening, although this does not remove the risk of further anti-social behaviour due to the nature of the ground's easy access. As a medium term measure a recommendation for CCTV around the facility has been made and a capital bid has been submitted for council's consideration.
- 2.4 In 2015 Great Yarmouth Borough Council undertook a Sport, Play and Leisure Strategy to provide an evidence-led approach to the future provision of leisure and sport facilities for the borough's population. The strategy highlighted Wellesley Recreation Ground as a key outdoor leisure asset which could benefit from a different operating model. The recommendation of exploring the development of a trust to run the site could open up further opportunities of external funding.
- 2.6 From a leisure management perspective the Wellesley Recreation Ground is a significant cost to the council. The costs for maintenance far outweigh income

received on the site at present, particularly as the pitch needs to be maintained to FA standards. The cost of site maintenance and servicing the Wellesley Recreation Ground by GYBS has been calculated as £50,090 per annum. There are also maintenance liabilities relating to the stand which need to be absorbed by council maintenance budgets. Construction Services are currently undertaking conditions survey of the buildings of the site and it is clear that some urgent remedial works will be required on the grandstand in the near future.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Wellesley Recreation Ground will continue to present a financial burden to the council, however its potential role in future outdoor leisure development has been highlighted. The site is currently protected as recreation space through a Fields in Trust covenant. There is a clear ambition that outdoor leisure facilities should cost the council less in the longer term and any future investment options must reflect this objective.

### **4. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The future viability of the grandstand and facilities at the recreation ground will continue to pose a risk to the council until a more sustainable model of operation is developed. Further ASB and criminal damage could create greater costs to the council moving forward and the risks to the public increase.

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Council officers have started work with all current stakeholders using the site to start scoping options in terms of future site management. A working group will be established involving ward members to progress options. The Neighbourhood Manager will also continue to work with the Police and users to tackle current ASB on the site. It is proposed to bring a report to a future committee.

### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and recommended next steps.

<b>Area for consideration</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Through EMT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Through EMT
Existing Council Policies:	Corporate Plan/ Sport, Play and Leisure Strategy
Financial Implications:	Outlined in report
Legal Implications (including human rights):	Outlined in report
Risk Implications:	Outlined in report

Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	Will need to be considered as proposals develop.
Crime & Disorder:	None identified at this stage.
Every Child Matters:	None identified at this stage- but will impact on play and recreational provision.