

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Meeting / Date	Cabinet: 20th July 2010	Agenda Item	8
Report Title	Provisional Mitigation Settlement for Temporary Usage of Community Facilities		
Cabinet Portfolio	Olympics and Paralympics		
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Wards affected	Leyton, Leytonstone, Cathall, Forest, Grove Green		
Public Access	OPEN		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) has requested the use of Drapers Field E15 for an 'Olympic Village holding area' from September 2011 to December 2012. It is expected that during this time, the green space would be closed-off from public usage.
- 1.2 The Council has been presented with an offer by ODA to compensate the Borough in the form of a 'mitigation package'. A provisional settlement would include measures to provide alternative facilities for local residents, with legacy improvements to Drapers Field complemented by investment in the Ive Farm area, Abbots Park and Church Lane.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the reasons given in this report, Cabinet is recommended to:
 - 2.1.1 In principle and subject to both due consideration of any objections received and the satisfactory agreement of detailed terms of the mitigation package to compensate local residents for this temporary loss of the facilities, to temporarily release Drapers Field to the ODA for the period from September 2011 to December 2012
 - 2.1.2 To delegate to the Chief Executive and Leader the power to consider any objections received and to negotiate and finalise the mitigation settlement with the ODA.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The ODA has requested the use of Drapers Field for 'back-of-house' operations serving the Athletes Village from September 2011 to December 2012. During this time, it is anticipated that the site will be treated as part of the Olympic Park and will be subject to high security arrangements reflecting this status. The site will be fenced-off and will house temporary structures and hard landscaping.
- 3.2 The temporary usage of Drapers Field will mean a significant amenity loss in an area where there is no immediate alternative for accessing green space. As a result, discussions to date have focused on mitigating the negative impacts of the temporary closure. Capital investment to improve Drapers Field after the Games is the central element to these measures; legacy improvements include enhancements to the playing field with landscaped groundwork, new leisure facilities and increased access. Sites in the Olympic fringe area have also been considered for possible enhancement. No plans have been agreed, and all proposals will be subject to extensive community engagement and consultation.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is clear that large-scale capital investment for community and leisure facilities in Leyton is badly needed, but is unlikely to be forthcoming from public bodies in the near future, particularly in light of the current financial climate. As the Games were won on the promise of regeneration in east London, the Host Boroughs will be under pressure to produce a tangible sporting legacy but will be prevented from delivering one.
- 4.2 Investment secured through this settlement would complement a suite of existing pre-Games improvement projects to the Leyton area.
- 4.3 The Council is delivering an ambitious public realm enhancement scheme covering Crownfield Road, Ruckholt Road and Leyton High Road, utilising investment of over £7million from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the London Development Agency (LDA). These improvements will create enhanced access, pride, prestige, and economic benefits to Leyton through careful and precise measures to improve the public realm, building on the existing qualities of the High Road and maximising benefits from and connections to the nearby Olympic development and legacy.
- 4.4 The Council is also delivering a new pedestrian footbridge at Ruckholt Road, to sit alongside the existing road bridge across the railway lines. This will enhance east-west movement, creating a new 'gateway' to the borough and allowing pedestrians and cyclists to safely avoid the traffic on the vehicular bridge.
- 4.5 Further improvement projects include the delivery of a pilot scheme to improve shop frontages on Leyton High Road, and to implement a

cross-borough wayfinding strategy to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling.

- 4.6 Taken together, these projects demonstrate the Council's commitment to positively respond to, and take full advantage of Olympic developments in a dynamic, sensitive and resident-focused manner.
- 4.7 A settlement with the ODA, whilst resulting in the temporary loss of Drapers Field, will bring substantial investment to this and other sites in the immediate vicinity.
- 4.8 It has been confirmed that Drapers Field is Council-owned land and is not subject to the planning conditions relating to the Olympic Park.
- 4.9 A final decision to agree the mitigation package will be required by early August 2010, so it is proposed that this should be delegated to the Chief Executive.

5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)

- 5.1 The proposals will assist with the Sustainable Community Strategy priority to cultivate civic participation, cohesion and independent living so everyone feels they belong.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken due to the nature of the discussions to date. If Cabinet passes the recommendations in paragraphs 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, a full communication and consultation strategy will be implemented to allow local interests and stakeholders to be fully involved in developing the schemes that result from a settlement. Improvement schemes to emerge from the settlement will be taken to Cabinet for consideration and further approval. As the proposal is to dispose of open space, this also needs to be advertised and any objections considered (see paragraph 7.2.3 below).

7. IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance and Risk

- 7.1.1 The financial settlement would principally represent a financial arrangement in the form of grant agreements. The details of these agreements have yet to be confirmed and will be subject to the process as recommended in paragraph 2.1.1.
- 7.1.2 It is envisaged that Legacy improvements to Drapers Field would be delivered as part of the remedial 'transformation' works by ODA to the wider Olympic Park, but would accord with plans as devised by the Council in consultation with local stakeholders. The value of these improvements would be subject to the final settlement, and would form a key element in the temporary lease agreement with ODA.

7.2 Legal

- 7.2.1 As Drapers Field is Council-owned land, Council would need to grant a lease of the necessary parts of Drapers Field to the ODA for the required period.
- 7.2.2 Under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council may dispose of land in any way it wishes and because the lease will be for less than 7 years there is no obligation to obtain best consideration.
- 7.2.3 Drapers Field is open space as defined by section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in that it is “land used for the purposes of public recreation”. Under section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 any proposed disposal of open space must first be advertised for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper and any objections to the proposal must be considered.
- 7.2.4 New temporary buildings on Drapers Field, along with other usage requirements, are likely to require planning permission from the Council, but the obligations, if any, to obtain planning permission would rest with the ODA.

7.3 Equalities and Diversity

- 7.3.1 Equality Impact Assessment attached as Appendix 1.

7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

- 7.4.1 Participation in sport and physical activity at Drapers Field has a beneficial health impact. 24 organised groups, including Norlington School, currently use the astroturf pitch throughout the year. The School use the astroturf pitch for PE lessons which equates to 330 young people per week. The vast majority of other users of the astroturf are groups of adult males who use the facility for an hour a week. The grass area is free to use and whilst individuals and groups do use this area it is generally on an ad hoc basis. As there is no booking procedure there are no confirmed records of usage and participation rates can only be estimated based on anecdotal evidence.
- 7.4.2 The closure of Drapers Field for the time period suggested could have a detrimental effect on health if the users were not able to continue to participate in sport and physical activity. Therefore, the provision of alternative local facilities is paramount.
- 7.4.3 The proposed ODA settlement would provide funding to upgrade some local facilities, to be used as alternatives to Drapers Field, but there are also existing facilities in the surrounding area that may be able to meet the need of the current users such as SCORE and the Leyton County Ground. If the ODA settlement package is accepted users will be consulted and alternative provision agreed.

- 7.4.4 The development of Drapers Field following the Games offers opportunities to enhance the health and well-being of future users. Local residents and users will be involved in the development of the 'new' facility to ensure that needs are met. A strategic approach will be required as the future Drapers Field would need to complement the new sports facilities built close by in the Olympic Park such as those at Chobham Academy and Eton Manor.
- 7.4.5 Drapers Field is in Cathall ward and the current priorities for the Cathall Safer Neighbourhood Team are to tackle anti-social behaviour by youths, theft from motor vehicles and burglary. There are few, if any, reported crimes reported at Drapers Field.
- 7.4.6 Anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of young people access the grass area at Drapers Field to 'hang out' or to take part in physical activity. Re-providing a safe and secure space for young people would be challenging, particularly given the gang issues in the South of the Borough. It is likely that alternative provision would need to be located close to Drapers Field but it may not need to be a playing field. It will be imperative to consult with the young people to understand their needs and the role that Drapers Field plays for them to ensure appropriate alternative facilities can be provided.
- 7.4.7 The ODA require Drapers Field for 'back of house' operations during Games time, however the final detail and use has not been confirmed at this point. The ODA will be required to submit a 'Games Time' planning application to the Council which will detail the development and as part of the process they will need to produce a series of supporting documents such as an Environmental Impact Statement, an Energy Efficient statement, a Biodiversity and Ecology survey and report, a Flood Risk Assessment and a Sustainability Statement.
- 7.4.8 A second 'Legacy' planning application will be submitted, prior to the end of the Games, which will detail the Legacy vision for Drapers Field. The vision will be developed in partnership with the Council and following extensive public consultation. As with the 'Games Time' application, the 'Legacy' application will require a number of sustainability focused supporting documents.
- 7.4.9 The Council would expect the development on Drapers Field in Games Time and in Legacy to adhere to the principles of Environmental Sustainability and expect CO2 emissions to be minimised at every stage. Equally, the environmental impact of providing alternative facilities, when Drapers Field would be inaccessible, must be considered.
- 7.4.10 The ODA have a strong record of recycling and waste minimisation on the construction of the Olympic Park. The Council would expect the ODA to continue this commitment on to the development of Drapers Field.

7.4.11 Whilst full details of the proposed development of Drapers Field for Games Time are not yet available from the ODA they have provided the Council with an indication of the perimeter they require. They have also stated that they will need to clear and level the site. The changing rooms would be inside the perimeter fence but secured, the drama pavilion would be outside of the fence and should be largely unaffected. It is anticipated that the ground work will include tarmacing within the perimeter fence. The Council would require the use of a permeable material to limit the possibility of flooding and water pollution.

7.4.12 There is evidence to suggest that a large proportion of users of the astroturf at Drapers Field are not residents of Waltham Forest but travel to this venue from surrounding boroughs. It is assumed that these users do not walk or cycle to the venue so their journey would have an environmental impact, particularly on air quality. If a similar facility, such as that at SCORE, was designated as the alternative then the environmental impact is not likely to change significantly.

7.4.13 The environmental impact in Legacy could be reduced if users were encouraged to utilise public transport or walk or cycle to the venue. If local residents were prioritised for any bookable element of the future facility then this may also have a beneficial impact as journeys would be shorter.

7.5 Council Infrastructure (e.g. Human Resources, Accommodation or IT issues)

7.5.1 There are no Council infrastructure implications arising from this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Equality Impact Assessment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

- Planning permission (reference: 07/090010/ OUMODA) September 2007 "Olympic Paralympic and Legacy Transformation Planning Applications: Facilities and their Legacy Transformation Planning Application".

Approval by the Portfolio Holder

I have cleared this report for inclusion on the Cabinet agenda.

Signed



Date.....8th July 2010

Cllr Chris Robbins

Leader of the Council