

Playing Fields, Outdoor Sports Facilities and Parks Pavilions

05/09/2019

Members wished to make the following comments and conclusions:	Response/Comments	RAG Status
<i>General Comments</i>		
Members noted in section 7.5.2.1 of the consultation, the high percentage of general recreation users of the council's playing fields and/or pavilions. Members raised concerns that a club taking over a facility could chose to fence off this facility, excluding the general public. How will this work in the future if public open space is fenced off?	This depends on the specific agreement that is being signed, it may be the case that there is no fencing permitted each are should be considered upon its own merits. The Council includes a clause in the lease issued to sports clubs protecting access to public open space.	
The consultation indicated a high percentage in support of play areas being maintained by town and community councils, but unfortunately the question did not state that this could end up with the local council tax precept being increased to cover the cost of maintenance. Hence it is not clear how valid this support would be if the question had been more fully explained.	This would be a consideration of the Town or Community Council as taking ownership of local facilities would enable them to tailor the needs to the local communities and can be raised at future meeting of the Town & Community Council Forum and Clerks Meeting. How each Town and Community Council decides to fund and play area would be a decision for themselves, it would not necessarily result in a tax precept increase.	
There was general support for the proposed reduction in frequency of grass cutting in certain areas where appropriate, but it was pointed out that just leaving some areas uncut is not a substitute for managing reduced cutting to enhance biodiversity.	The proposal was to identify some area's that would remain uncut, given enough time these area's would transition from grassland, to ruderal shrubbery and eventually woodland.	
A member queried whether play areas would be refurbished or upgraded before being handed over to a Town or Community Council.	Play areas are up to a minimum safety standard at present and should not require further refurbishment. The Council's annual Town & Community Capital Scheme has previously provided funding to upgrade play areas subject to community asset transfer whereby match funding is provided.	
Concern was expressed as to how standards of maintenance are going to be monitored in the future if there are a range of organisations maintaining sites to varying standards. There is a danger of the asset gradually deteriorating due to limited or poor / uncoordinated maintenance and hence the facility may be lost to the community and future generations. What safeguards are in place to prevent this and how is this going to work with reduced staff and resources at BCBC?	For transferred assets this would be the responsibility of the organisation to who the asset is transferred. It would be for that organisation to carry out repairs and maintenance that is appropriate for its agreed usage. However the alternative to the transfer to organisations that will be responsible for ongoing maintenance is that the Council retains ownership and given the ongoing financial pressures the deterioration and potential closure described potentially occurs in any event.	
Members suggested the option of a collective services being purchased back from BCBC for the maintenance of play areas could be raised on a future TCC agenda. It was noted that TCC's wold not have the qualified staff to undertake the regular inspections and maintenance.	This is dependant upon the asset being transferred and if enough organisations were interested in buying in any services from the Council such as play area maintenance. The development of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is an item that can be considered at a future meeting of the Town & Community Council Forum and Clerks Meeting.	
Members noted that the annual audit and independent inspection that needs to be undertaken on all play areas every 12 months, would be more cost effective if co-ordinated by BCBC with the appropriate re-charge being made to the town or community council.	Please see response above.	

Concern was expressed that the direction of travel within the report was geared towards meeting the MTFS, whereas this is not truly compatible with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.	As explained in the report the aspiration is to enable communities to take ownership of assets and thereby give greater assurance to their long term viability in meeting community needs and to protect assets for future generations which the Council are unable to maintain due to the current climate of financial austerity.	
Concern was expressed that the report is geared towards removing the subsidy that currently exists for the use of sports pitches, but it was pointed out that there are other non-statutory services operating that have a subsidy level (e.g. Leisure Centres, Arts & Culture) and are these also being looked at in the same way?	Year on year all area's of the authority are being closely looked at for further savings, any opportunities in other area such as those described will also be carefully considered.	
<i>Further Information Required:-</i>		
Members asked for legal clarification on whether dogs could be banned, if a Town or Community Council took over the running of a Children's Playground? What is the position with PSPO's being implemented on both play areas and sports pitches.	The borough council has a county wide PSPO controlling dogs and dog fouling. Whilst the Borough council could implement further PSPOs. There is no current intention to ban dogs from individual area's due to the resources involved in putting in place and enforcing the resulting PSPOs.	
Members asked for clarification that if a club either does not want to or is unable to take over a facility, or unable to afford the revised charges, will that facility will ultimately close?	It is the case that the council is seeking beneficial use within the community and it may be the case that other users of facilities may arise. Facilities that are not subject to community asset transfer or full cost recovery are likely to be subject to closure or possible re-development due to the financial pressures currently faced by the Council.	
Members noted the scale of charges in Appendix E, but asked for a more detailed breakdown of costs. There needs to be the annual maintenance cost shown for sports pitches. There was also some confusion as to what happens when more than one club share use of a pitch – do they both pay the full fee as in the example given by Cllr.D. Lewis it could end up with a bill of around £40,000 for two pitches with several teams which is more than the actual maintenance cost.	A meeting has been arranged with the Chair of scrutiny 3 on the 9th Oct 19 to discuss the rates breakdown in further detail.	
It was also noted that the comparison between Sports Pitches (Cricket) in 2019 and 2020 showed a unit cost and then an annual amount, and sought further information on costs in order to have a comparative cost from one year to the next.	This has been amended for the Cabinet report prepared for the 22nd Oct. See attached.	

SCALE OF CHARGES – PER OCCAISION FROM 1st APRIL 2019

PLAYING FIELDS AND PAVILIONS

<u>SPORTS PITCHES (RUGBY/FOOTBALL)</u>	Pitch Only	Use of Pavilion	Total Charge
Full (Inc. Pitch Marking)	£36.70	£19.43	£56.13
Concessionary (Inc. Pitch Marking)	£23.44	£12.44	£35.88
Mini Football	£17.48	£12.44	£29.92
 <u>SPORTS PITCHES (CRICKET)</u>			
Full - Prepared Wicket	£42.46	£19.43	£61.89
Concessionary - Prepared Wicket	£27.55	£12.44	£39.99
Full - Artificial Wicket	£25.49	£19.43	£44.92
Concessionary - Artificial Wicket	£14.39	£12.44	£26.83
<u>SPORTS PITCHES (Bowls)</u>	Self-Managed		

PROPOSED SCALE OF CHARGES FROM 1st APRIL 2020

PLAYING FIELDS AND PAVILIONS

<u>SPORTS PITCHES (RUGBY/FOOTBALL)</u>	Pitch Only	Use of Pavilion	Total Charge
Full (Inc. Pitch Marking)	£199	£106	£305
Concessionary (Inc. Pitch Marking)	£147	£78	£225
Mini Football	£96	£58	£154
 <u>SPORTS PITCHES (CRICKET)</u>			
Per Square and Outfield per season.	£27,500		
 <u>SPORTS PITCHES (CRICKET)</u>			
Full - Prepared Wicket	£358	£106	£464
Concessionary - Prepared Wicket	£265	£78	£343
Full - Artificial Wicket		not now used	
Concessionary - Artificial Wicket		not now used	
<u>SPORTS PITCHES (Bowls) per year</u>	Green	Use of Pavilion	Total Charge
Per facility	£16,000	£ 7,000	£23,000