



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Petition Hearing - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services

Date: WEDNESDAY, 2 JULY 2014

Time: 7.00 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 4A -
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8
1UW

**Meeting
Details:** Members of the Public and
Press are welcome to attend
this meeting

**This agenda and associated
reports can be made available
in other languages, in braille,
large print or on audio tape.
Please contact us for further
information.**

Cabinet Member hearing the petitions:

Jonathan Bianco, Cabinet Member for
Finance, Property and Business Services
(Chairman)

How the hearing works:

The petition organiser (or his/her
nominee) can address the Cabinet
Member for a short time and in turn the
Cabinet Member may also ask questions.

Local ward councillors are invited to these
hearings and may also be in attendance
to support or listen to your views.

After hearing all the views expressed, the
Cabinet Member will make a formal
decision. This decision will be published
and sent to the petition organisers shortly
after the meeting confirming the action to
be taken by the Council.

Published: Tuesday, 24 June 2014

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Useful information for residents and visitors

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Agenda

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

PART 1 - MEMBERS, PUBLIC AND PRESS MAY ATTEND

- 1 Declarations of Interest in matters coming before this meeting
- 2 To confirm that the business of the meeting will take place in public.
- 3 To consider the report of the officer on the following petition received:

	Start Time	Title of Report	Ward	Page
4	7pm	Cerne Close Pocket Park, Yeading - Petition requesting the Council to reject the proposal to create a park that will back onto the gardens of homes in Cerne Close, Camden Avenue and Longford Gardens	Yeading	1 - 13

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Agenda Item 4

CERNE CLOSE POCKET PARK - YEADING

Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Jonathon Bianco
Cabinet Portfolio(s)	Finance, Property and Business Services
Officer Contact(s)	Adrian Batten, Residents Services
Papers with report	Copy of supporting letter from petitioners Before and After photographs

1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

Summary	This report informs the Cabinet Member of a petition that has been received regarding the newly installed Pocket Park at Cerne Close in Yeading.
Contribution to our plans and strategies	The request can be considered in relation to the Council's strategy for Estates Management.
Financial Cost	The costs for these works have been funded though the Leaders HIP (Hillingdon Improvement Programme) Programme.
Relevant Policy Overview Committee	Residents' & Environmental Services
Ward(s) affected	Yeading

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet Member:

- 1) Meets the petitioners and discuss their concerns.**
- 2) Explain that the improvements have transformed a neglected area to a site that is now clean, tidy and free from fly tipping with further planned enhancements.**
- 3) Agree on the controlled access to the site.**

Reasons for recommendation

To enable the Cabinet Member to discuss the petitioners' request; and to consider the officer's recommendations.

The Cerne Close site is a narrow parcel of unused land that sits above a canal feeder. The area had not been cultivated and therefore pioneer species such as grass, brambles and willow had colonised this site. The site had been used a dumping ground for a wide range of items that

included old furniture, bits of vehicles and building debris; as a result, the site looked neglected. This parcel of land is bordered and overlooked by numerous properties and adjacent to the main road. Improving this neglected site would enhance this as part of the local amenity.

It would seem that there has been a history of dumping and fly tipping that had occurred over a number of years. In the region of forty eight tons, twelve lorry loads of fly tip were removed from this area. A tree survey was carried by the Council's Tree Officers that highlighted some dangerous trees and these were removed in the interest of public safety to neighbouring properties.

The site was originally unsecure and susceptible to fly tipping and it has now been enclosed with a two meter tall chain link fence and gate.

A proposal was to clear and cultivate the site as a 'pocket park' for local residents to enjoy the enhanced open space. The site has been cleared and a woodland path established with wildflowers sown for summer interest. In the autumn it is proposed to plant bulbs that will provide spring colour such as daffodils. It is also anticipated that the area would be enhanced for wildlife with the installation of nesting boxes and 'bug hotels' to encourage the nesting of birds and create an environment for invertebrates. This proposal includes the addition of a seat at the end of the path and a litter bin. The site will then be maintained and further enhanced by the Green Spaces Team.

Access will be controlled with the site only open during the day and locked and secured at dusk.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Not to undertake any further works to this site and let it slip back into the dilapidated unkempt fly tipped neglected area.

Policy Overview Committee comments

None at this stage.

3. INFORMATION

Supporting Information

A petition with 27 signatures has been submitted to the Council from residents living in Cerne Close and Camden Avenue.

The petition states: *"We reject the proposal concerning land between Cerne Close and Camden Avenue. The proposed park will back directly onto the gardens of homes in Cerne Close, Camden Avenue and Longford Gardens.*

We are very concerned that opening up the area will attract anti-social behaviour. Even though the area will be locked at dusk, we still believe there will be a serious risk to security in the area, particularly during the day when most homes are unoccupied.

While the Council is aiming to provide a 'better quality spaces, increasing opportunities for getting together, healthy living, relaxation, play and contact with nature', we feel that the location

and size of space of the land is neither adequate nor suitable and these changes will not create the environment they are hoping to achieve, but the opposite".

A copy of the supporting letter submitted with the petition is attached. The petition was signed by 27 people and claims to have the support of the 27 signatories.

Financial Implications

The cost to install a pocket park at this location was £25k and was funded from the Leaders HIP (Hillingdon Improvement Programme).

4. EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

To develop a public open space with controlled access from what was once an overgrown neglected dumping ground.

5. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Legal

There are no special legal implications for the proposal, which amounts to an informal consultation. A meeting with the petitioners is perfectly legitimate as part of a listening exercise. Notwithstanding that the works have been undertaken, the decision maker must be satisfied that responses from the public are conscientiously taken into account.

Legal Services understand that the land upon which the Pocket Park has been installed is owned by the Council, is not subject to public rights of way and is not a public highway or common land. However, Legal Services have not been instructed to carry out any searches to verify this information. Assuming that position is correct, the Council as a private land owner has the power to restrict or permit public access to its land in such way as it thinks fit, subject to its general duty to act lawfully, fairly, reasonably and with proportionality.

However, for the purposes of the planning legislation, the erection of a new means of access (the gates for instance) to the Council's land could constitute development requiring planning consent. Before creating the means of access, Legal Services would recommend that the Council's Planning Department is consulted prior to erecting any new structures or altering any existing structures.

Should there be a decision that further measures are to be considered, then the relevant statutory provisions will have to be identified and considered.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

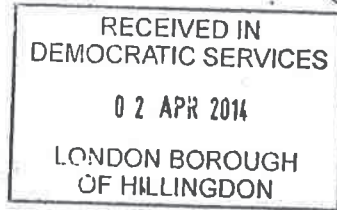
None.

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YEADING
PAUL RICHARDS

27

02/04/13: NOH (L)



Dear Michelle Gleeson,

We would like to bring to your attention concerns that local residents have regarding the development of land between Cerne Close and Camden Avenue. The site was recently cleared of rubbish and a boundary fence erected. Hillingdon council are currently turning the land into an open space, with the aim of regenerating a previously neglected site for the benefit of the neighbourhood.

Our main areas of concern are firstly with the lack of consultation. We only became aware of the park when it was announced in the Hillingdon People magazine. At no point before this have the council informed residents of their intentions and have therefore missed the opportunity for valuable input from the stakeholders most affected by this development. The idea of a park is not only an inappropriate solution for the site; it has been simply imposed on residents. We have a couple of alternative ideas for the land but would prefer that the site is left as it is – cleaned up and protected from fly tipping. Our other main concern is with security, especially for homeowners whose gardens back directly onto the site.

The chain link boundary fence has been put up within a few inches of the back gardens of Cerne close. As a means of keeping the site clear and deterring dumping of rubbish it is fine. As a fence separating private properties from a public open space it is unacceptable. It is inadequate to prevent anyone from climbing over into these properties and into the access way behind Camden Avenue. The size shape of the land will merely provide a secluded and private area for drinking and drug use during the day when most people out. We feel that we are now more vulnerable to burglary and, given that the gardens in Cerne Close are quite small, to noise and anti-social behaviour during spring and summer months.

The initial response from the council was an email sent by Jamie Bell, a technical officer for the Green Spaces Team. It was unsatisfactory and felt dismissive of our concerns. It made clear that this project was already a done deal whether we liked it or not. A fact borne out when ground works started on Tuesday 25th March. Coincidentally this was the day that our MP, John McDonnell, visited Cerne Close to see the problem for himself. He was shocked by the actions of the council and agreed that the space was not suitable for this type of development. He also pointed out that he had been campaigning for some time for Brookside Park to be redeveloped to help tackle antisocial behaviour in the area – a reason cited for the creation of this pocket park. Together with Minet County Park there is ample provision in the area for "better quality spaces" that increase "opportunities for getting together, healthy living, relaxation, play and contact with nature" to quote from the brush-off email.

☐ HON:EI/40/50

"Putting People First" is a standout headline in the recent Hillingdon People magazine but all the people that we have spoken to are not happy with the behaviour of the local council; it's lack of communication, transparency and consultation. This is reflected in the number of signatories to the petition we have started, a copy of which I enclose with this letter.

We are calling for a halt to any further development of the spaces behind our back gardens.

We request the minutes of all the meetings that have taken place relating to development of the space behind the Cerne close and Camden Avenue and a meeting with councillors and local residents to discuss all the concerns that we have.

We look forward to your response to this letter,

Yours sincerely,

Mr Julian Gaskarth

Mr Nilesh Solanki

BEFORE



Area as it was before improvements





Area as it was before improvements





Area as it was before improvements



Area as it was before improvements

AFTER



Area after site clearance



Footpath installation



New fencing installed



New fencing installed



Finished footpath with wild flower mix (Poppy and Golden Coreopsis)



Finished footpath with wild flower mix (Poppy and Golden Coreopsis)

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