

Minutes

**Petition Hearing - Cabinet Member for Finance,
Property and Business Services
Wednesday, 26 September 2018
Meeting held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge**



	<p>Cabinet Member Present: Councillor Jonathan Bianco (Chairman)</p> <p>Ward Councillors Present: Councillors Mohinder Birah (Agenda Item 4) and Jagjit Singh (Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>Officers Present: Adrian Batten (Green Spaces Manager), Paul Richards (Head of Green Spaces, Sport and Culture) and Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager)</p>
1.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUBLIC.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That all items of business be considered in public.</p>
2.	<p>PETITION REGARDING BROOKSIDE PLAYING FIELDS</p> <p>Councillor Mohinder Birah and Jagjit Singh attended the meeting and spoke as Ward Councillors in support of the petition.</p> <p><i>Concerns and suggestions raised at the meeting included the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Petitioners were grateful for the £169k that had already been spent on improvements to the park but noted that this work had not addressed all of the requests that had been made in their petition, submitted in 2017;</i><i>Concern was expressed that the locks on the pedestrian gates kept getting smashed off so that motorbikes could access the park;</i><i>The existing sharp gravel footpath around part of the open space was thought to be unsafe for residents and dogs as the surface needed to be either concrete or tarmac. The surface was also being churned up by motorbikes and by animals digging it up;</i><i>Benches had been abused by some individuals who had used them as a base for their disposable barbecues so more benches were needed to allow elderly residents to sit down;</i><i>CCTV and improved lighting had been requested to reduce instances of anti social behaviour and to help residents to feel safer (it was noted that there had recently been three attacks on women in the corner of the park closest to Ealing). Although there were security cameras at the entrance as well as inside the car park and three covering the children's playground, this had not acted as a deterrent as there were individuals who dealt drugs from their cars there. These people also had pizzas delivered to their vehicles in the car park and then left their rubbish strewn on the ground. It was suggested that locking the car park up at night would prevent this from happening;</i>

- *There was an ongoing issue with bulbs in streetlights not being replaced when they had blown;*
- *As the 4,000 households in Yeading paid approximately £5.9m per year in Council Tax, it was thought that there should be plenty of money to pay for the improvements requested in the petition which would benefit local residents as well as those from the wider area;*
- *It was noted that the playing fields currently had no disabled access;*
- *Concern was expressed that the disused gas bunker had not been filled in and was causing a hazard;*
- *It was noted that Sport England had funded the installation of sport facilities at the nearby Spikes Bridge Park but this was in Ealing and Yeading residents wanted their own facilities;*
- *In May 2018, residents had been involved in a clean up day at Brookside playing fields where they had found used needles amongst the litter;*
- *Litter was proving to be a problem in the park. 20-30 children played football at the weekend and residents were having to pick up around 30 discarded bottles and cans that they had left behind on the grass. If residents did not take this action, the mowers were subsequently driving straight over the litter, spraying fragments of cans, plastic and glass across the grass making it hazardous for residents and dogs to walk on;*
- *It was thought important to improve the safety of the park before any further facility upgrades were introduced; and*
- *Some residents had been involved in raising funds from bodies such as Sport England and London Marathon Fund for other projects and would be happy to be involved in putting grant bids together for this project. It was recognised that this process could take some time.*

Councillor Bianco listened to the concerns of the petitioners and responded to the points raised. He noted that the Council shared petitioners' desire to encourage residents of all ages to get outdoors and get active and he would like to see provisions improved to support this. However, the installation of a 3G pitch would be expensive, would require fencing and floodlights and would not be acceptable in a green belt area.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council did not have significant sums of money that it was able to spend on extensive projects and that consideration would need to be given to making improvements on an incremental basis and finding alternative sources of funding. Chrysalis funding had already been secured for some improvements works at Brookside playing fields and Chrysalis applications were currently being considered for the reconstruction of the northern footpath and the reinstatement of the football pitch and cricket strip. It was noted that there would be nothing to prevent residents from submitting further Chrysalis applications for future work.

The Ward Budget Initiative provided local Ward Councillors with a limited amount of funding that they could use for local initiatives. It was suggested that residents contact their Ward Councillors to establish whether there was any money left in this fund that could be used towards improvements at the park.

Councillor Bianco noted that, from March 2019, the Football Association (FA) would

have significant funding available to develop and install grass football pitches across the country. Applications for this FA funding would be welcomed from community groups (rather than from local authorities). As such, Council officers would be happy to work with residents to help them to submit applications to the FA.

London Marathon Charitable Trust provided small and major capital project grants. The Council would be happy to support residents if they decided to apply for this funding. It was noted that, wherever possible, the Council actively pursued Lottery funding for local projects but recognised that this was a slow process.

The Cabinet Member advised that revenue funds were also available from the Council's annual £250k Youth Fund. Requests were received in relation to funding for things like new footballs, additional coaching resources and kit.

With regard to needles being found amongst the litter in the park, Councillor Bianco noted that this was a problem across the whole Borough. However, this issue was not unique to Hillingdon and was being experienced across the whole country. It was not an easy issue to resolve as the Police and the Council did not have the resources to extensively patrol the parks. Whilst CCTV cameras would provide some form of deterrent, this would only be effective if the Police had sufficient resources to respond to any incidents. Officers would speak to the Police Liaison Officer to ask that patrols be increased and residents were advised to call the Police on 101 or keep a record of any incidents that occurred.

The Cabinet Member was disappointed to hear about the behaviour of those officers operating the mowers and asked officers to ensure that this practice did not continue. Emptying the bins in parks was now undertaken by a team that worked within Grounds Maintenance and, as such, should be coordinating its work with the mowers to ensure that the mowers followed them round. The cost of litter picking was high and mowers shredding the litter made the job far more time consuming and, therefore, expensive than it would otherwise be. Officers would ensure that the team was working together.

It was noted that the Council did not lock the car park up at night as it was associated with the community centre. Councillor Bianco asked officers to make some enquires to establish what action was being taken by the community centre with regard to the security of the car park and whether this aligned with what was expected of them.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services:

- 1. met with petitioners and listened to their concerns;**
- 2. asked officers to further explore the Chrysalis Scheme for funding in addition to what had already been carried out and what had been agreed through the Chrysalis Scheme;**
- 3. noted there were currently two Chrysalis applications that had been submitted for consideration relating to construction of the northern footpaths and reinstatement of the old football pitch and cricket strip;**
- 4. asked officers to work with the residents to help them to submit community led funding bid applications;**
- 5. asked officers speak to the Police Liaison Officer to request an increase in patrols of the park;**

6. asked officers ensure that the litter picking and mowing at Brookside playing fields were coordinated; and
7. asked officers to investigate the responsibilities of the community centre in relation to the security of the car park.

Reasons for recommendations

To give the Cabinet Member the opportunity to discuss with the petitioners their concerns and aspirations.

To investigate in further detail the potential to address the petitioners' concerns.

Alternative options considered / risk management

These were discussed with petitioners.

3. PETITION REQUESTING INSTALLATION OF A WATER FOUNTAIN AND TOILETS AT THE RUNNING TRACK AT KINGS COLLEGE PLAYING FIELDS

It was noted that Councillor Edwards had advised that he was unable to attend owing to another Committee meeting sitting at the same time. Although there were no petitioners or Ward Councillors present, to ensure that there was no delay in determining the petition, Councillor Bianco considered the petition and associated recommendations.

Councillor Bianco noted that there were two issues of concern raised within the petition: the request for a water fountain (this had now been installed at the site) and access to toilet facilities. He noted that the current lease agreement was due to expire in March 2019 which would provide an opportunity to include an extension to the toilet opening hours. Investigations could also be undertaken regarding the feasibility and cost of modifying the building to provide access to the toilets when the cafe was closed, and the requirement to manage the new layout could be included within the updated lease.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services:

1. noted the actions/investigations already undertaken by officers; and
2. asked officers to ensure that public access to the toilets was considered as part of the lease renewal in 2019.

Reasons for recommendations

To address the issues raised in the petition.

Alternative options considered / risk management

Alternative options considered were:

- to update the lease agreement when it expired in March 2019 to include an extension to the toilet opening hours.
- the modification of the building to provide access to the toilets when the cafe was closed.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to purchase and install a separate toilet facility.• for residents to apply through Hillingdon Council's Chrysalis programme for funding for a toilet facility. |
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These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki O'Halloran on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.