

# CERNE CLOSE POCKET PARK - YEADING

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

## 1. HEADLINE INFORMATION

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