

THE EXECUTIVE

17 JUNE 2003

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

CASTLE GREEN PROTECTED OPEN SPACE & LAND SWAP TO SCRATTONS FARM ESTATE TO ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE JO RICHARDSON COMMUNITY SCHOOL		FOR DECISION
<i>This report concerns a strategic planning issue.</i>		
<u>Summary</u> It is necessary to provide replacement Protected Open Space to enable the development of the Jo Richardson Community School on Castle Green to proceed. This report sets out a proposal to designate 3.72 ha of land to the south of the Scrattons Farm Estate as replacement Protected Open Space and the financial implications for its creation and maintenance.		
<u>Recommendation</u> The Executive is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree that the land shown single-hatched on the map attached as Appendix A be "appropriated pursuant to Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 from Housing purposes to Open Space purposes and be designated as Protected Open Space in the draft revised Unitary Development Plan"; and,2. Note the financial implications.		
<u>Reason</u> To enable the development of the Jo Richardson Community School on Castle Green to proceed, which will assist the Council in achieving the Community Priorities of " <i>Better Education and Learning for All</i> ".		
Contact Martin Brady	Project Manager	Tel: 020 8227 3892 Fax: 020 8227 3896 Minicom: 020 8227 3024 E-mail: martin.brady@lbbd.gov.uk

1. Background

- 1.1 On the 23 January 2003 the Director of Education, Arts and Library Services submitted an outline planning application for an 8-10FE school on Castle Green - the Jo Richardson Community School. Castle Green is designated as 'Protected Open Space' in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted in October 1995.

- 1.2 The Development Control Board, at its meeting on the 8 April 2003, considered the planning application, where the Board indicated that it was minded to grant consent (DC/03/00059/OUT).
- 1.3 As a 'significant application' it had to be referred to the Mayor for London under the Stage 1 referral procedure
- 1.4 The Mayor indicated in his response to the Stage 1 referral (PUD/0711HAC08) that he was minded to direct the Council to refuse the application, if submitted at Stage 2, unless a suitable area of replacement Protected Open Space could be identified and designated. There are other issues of concern expressed by the Mayor for London, but these have been addressed through the planning process.
- 1.5 As a departure from the adopted UDP, the planning application has also been referred to the Secretary of State who has indicated he is prepared to leave the determination of the application to the Council.
- 1.6 In order to overcome the particular objection of the Mayor for London, it is proposed that the area of vacant land to the south of the Scrattons Farm Estate, owned by the Council be re-designated as Protected Open Space. The area consists of two sites, Levine Gardens and Morrison Road, (shown single-hatched on Appendix A) and these were originally acquired for housing purposes and are currently designated for development in the UDP. Protected Open Space designation could also include the area of land (shown cross-hatched on Appendix A) as being owned by Network Rail, which is currently designated as being of nature conservation interest. Discussions are taking place with Network Rail in this regard.
- 1.7 Levine Gardens and Morrison Road, are earmarked as part of the Council's land disposal programme and have been viewed as potential sites for housing and on this basis would have values of approximately £150,000 and £2,000,000 respectively. Whilst these sums would be lost if the site is used as the replacement land for Castle Green Open Space it would be preferable to use these sites as Open Space as they would be comparatively difficult to develop and their land value would be discounted to allow for difficulty of access, unknown contamination, ground conditions, proximity of railway and extreme awkwardness of shape rendering parts of the land unusable. Therefore, it is recommended that the Levine Gardens and Morrison Road sites are used as the replacement for Castle Green Open Space that will be lost as a result of the development of the Jo Richardson School. This will also leave any other potential sites available for disposal.
- 1.8 A substantial area of the site has already attracted SRB funding for the creation of an Eco-park. Further tree planting works are will be undertaken to provide a tree screen between the railway and the properties backing on to the site, subject to the agreement of Network Rail to the scheme and funding from Rail Link Countryside and Ground Level being confirmed. Designating the land as protected open space will afford the site long-term protection.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 Capital

It is a condition of the outline planning consent for the Jo Richardson Community School that the replacement Protected Public Open Space shall be 'of the same quality and equivalent in area to that occupied by buildings & impervious surfaces on the application site'. The site area as defined above is limited by a further planning condition to 15% of the application area (1.68ha) with the proposed replacement public open space providing 3.72ha. However, the Council needs to make financial provision to upgrade the site. An initial estimate suggests that £150,000 should be allocated within the 2004-05 Capital Programme to implement a first phase of this upgrade. These proposed works include the tree screen sought by Ward Members and local residents to the southern (railway) boundary. Members should also note that alternative additional external funding sources are being explored, however, if this is not forthcoming, the proposed Education Capital Programme for 2004-05 will need to be adjusted to incorporate this cost. This could mean that other capital schemes within the 2004-2005 Education Programme would be deleted or delayed.

2.2 As mentioned in paragraph 1.7 the Council will also lose the potential Capital receipt for the Levine Gardens and Morrison Road sites which could have realised values of approximately £150,000 and £2,000,000 respectively.

2.2 Revenue

No specific budget exists or has been allocated for the on-going maintenance of the current Eco-park, or the additional area. It is, therefore, suggested that the budget available for the maintenance of the part of Castle Green that is to be transferred to Jo Richardson School should be allocated to the Eco-park and its extension. Once the school development is complete, the cost of maintenance of the school grounds will need to be found from within the school budget, as is the case with other schools.

2.4 The cost of maintaining the new park extension site cannot be fully estimated until the final design has been confirmed. Based upon the £5,474 annual cost of maintaining the existing Eco-Park, which is about 40% of the whole area, it is anticipated that the cost of maintaining the Eco-Park and the new area in a County Park style per will be £13,685 per year.

2.5 The £13,685 could be partly met through transferring the existing budget from Property Services Management costs (minimum fire-break cutting and fly-tip removal) of £500 per year, plus the budget saved by not maintaining the lost Open Space at Castle Green of £3,269.69 per year. This leaves a shortfall £9,915 per year. This shortfall could be met from the contingency sum, however, the Executive is asked to note that this will reduce the budget for maintenance or minor improvements in all the other parks, which could be seen by the public as detrimental to the rest of the parks.

3. Consultation

The following people have seen this report and are happy with it as it stands.

LESD

Parkin Peter, Group Manager, Parks & Countryside, Leisure and Community

Jason Payne, Senior Accountant, Strategic Finance (LESD)

Tina Woodhouse, Accountant, Strategic Finance

Wright Peter, Head of Planning

Lewis Tim, Group Manager Planning

Dick Trott, Development Manager, Asset Management & Development

Corporate Strategy

Robin Hanton, Corporate Lawyer, Legal Division.

Grint Jeremy, Head of Regeneration

DEAL

Carr Andy, Assets Manager Assets & Administration.

Alan Gillard, Assets Manager PFI, Children's Support.

Background Papers

- Report and Minute of Development Control Board, 8 April 2003 re: Consideration of Application (DC/03/00059/OUT).
- Executive Minute 95, 6 August 2002 re: Support to Seek Outline Planning Application.

