

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Bath Recreation Ground Trust Board	
MEETING DATE:	14 March 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2534
TITLE:	A Management Plan for the Recreation Ground	
WARD:	Abbey	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: None		

1. THE ISSUE

- 1.1. There is currently no management plan to guide the use and development of the Recreation Ground.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Board agrees to the start of preparatory work for a management plan for the Trust's land.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The preparatory work will be accommodated within the existing staff resources available to the Trust.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 At present, there is no management plan to guide the use and development of the Recreation Ground. If the draft Scheme for the Recreation Ground is authorised, it is anticipated that the new trustees would wish to review and plan for the future use of the Trust's land, including Lambridge. If the Scheme is delayed or rejected, a sound and up to date management plan for the Recreation Ground will still be needed.

- 4.2 The overall objectives for the Recreation Ground are given by the trusts of the charity. These are;
- to use the Recreation Ground for games and sports of all kinds, tournaments, fetes, shows, exhibitions, displays, amusements, entertainments and other similar activities,
 - to maintain and let the land as open space, and
 - to carry this out without preference to any particular sport or organisation.
- 4.3 However, the trusts give no indication of the range of sports to be accommodated and the balance between them. Although the land is to be managed principally for games and sports, the balance between these and the other activities listed is not specified.
- 4.4 This lack of direction can give rise to conflicts over the use of the Recreation Ground, such as:
- Between groups wanting to use the outfield at the same time. There are concerns that some sports are over-provided for.
 - Between existing and potential users. A number of popular sports are currently not catered for.
 - Between sporting activities and events. Events can take over the outfield for periods of time during which clubs wish to hire. Events sometimes cause damage to the ground.
 - Between authorised and unauthorised use.
- 4.5 A management plan will provide direction for the use and development of the Trust's land and, in turn, for the way it is managed. The land leased to the Rugby Club and the Leisure Centre would not be covered by a plan since the Trust does not manage these areas.
- 4.6 Specifically, a management plan would;
- provide a strategic view of the Trust's land in the context of the other recreational facilities of the area,
 - provide clarity on the aims of the Trust's assets and set policies and priorities for their use,
 - assess public expectations for the Recreation Ground and the demands for its use,
 - make the best use of Trust land by reviewing the layout of the space available and the potential for multiple use,
 - review the condition of facilities and set priorities for their improvement and development,
 - set grounds maintenance standards and policies,
 - set leasing and rental policies,
 - review booking policies and fees,
 - provide a basis for promoting the Trust's facilities and increasing their use, and
 - enable management arrangements and responsibilities to be defined.

- 4.7 Any plan should be produced in line with current best practice. Guidance is available from organisations such as CABI, Fields in Trust and GreenSpace.
- 4.8 The approach should be to involve the public (both users and non-users) and stakeholder organisations throughout the process. There would be a need for significant survey and consultation work.
- 4.9 The production of a management plan would be a major piece of work, taking perhaps nine to twelve months to complete.
- 4.10 With the future of the Recreation Ground not yet settled, it is suggested that only preparatory work should be undertaken at this stage. This would include;
- obtaining and researching relevant guidance and current best practice,
 - scoping the work involved and considering the options for delivering it,
 - assembling information on other recreational facilities in Bath and the surrounding areas,
 - compiling and updating information on the facilities of the Recreation Ground and their condition,
 - identifying the users, potential users and stakeholders of the Recreation Ground, and
 - compiling any existing information on demand for using the Recreation Ground, including from the Strategic Review and the 2011 consultation exercise.
- 4.11 When this basic information had been gathered and analysed, a further report would be brought back to the trustees with more detailed proposals and cost estimates for completing a management plan.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 By limiting action at this stage to preparatory work only, risk related to the uncertain future of the Recreation Ground is minimised.

6. EQUALITIES

- 6.1 A management plan will address the accessibility of the Trust's facilities to all users.

7. RATIONALE

- 7.1 A management plan will be needed whether or not the draft Scheme for the Recreation Ground is confirmed.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The option of continuing to operate without a management plan is not considered to be in the interests of the Trust.

9. CONSULTATION

9.1 The Sports and Active Lifestyles, Tourism Leisure and Culture, Environmental, and Property Services sections of the Council have been consulted.

10. ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

10.1 The effective use of the Recreation Ground in the best interests of the beneficiaries of the Trust.

11. ADVICE SOUGHT

11.1 Advice has been sought from the Trust's legal and financial advisors. Both have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	<i>Graham Evans, Parks & Estate Manager Tel. 396873</i>
Sponsoring Trustee	<i>Councillor David Dixon</i>
Background papers	<i>None</i>
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