

CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE - OPEN SPACES AND CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

- 1.1 The proper Officer reports that, Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 (C) (2), the Chairman of the Review Committee has requested that the following aspect of the decisions made by the Portfolio Holder for Environment on the 11 November 2010 be called in for scrutiny:-

‘That the Open Spaces Capital Programme is utilised for the provision of fencing at the Grove Woods play area, together with minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods.’

- 1.2 To assist Members, copies of the original report of the Head of Environmental Services and the decision by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment are appended.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Paul Gowers on:-

Tel:- 01702 318178

Email:- paul.gowers@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

REPORT TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT

REPORT FROM HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE – OPEN SPACES AND CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 That the Open Spaces Capital Programme is utilised for the provision of fencing at the Grove Woods play area, together with minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods.
- 1.2 That the proposed permissive route through New England Woods to Flemings Farm, agreed as part of the programme of works for Cherry Orchard Country Park in 2010/11, is deferred until 2011/12.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Open Spaces Programme for 2010/11 includes security fencing at Hockley Woods and drainage works at Sweyne Park Open Space. Whilst these works are above the original estimates identified in the previous report dated 28 May 2010, they can be contained within the Open Spaces Capital Budget. Furthermore, some minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods have been identified which can also be contained within budget.
- 2.2 Works are currently in progress to improve the Grove Woods play area which is being funded externally. In order to protect the play area from stray dogs and related health risks, it is recommended that low level fencing is installed around the perimeter. The cost of these works will be in the order of £35,000. This can be funded from the unallocated open spaces budget.
- 2.3 The current year's capital works for Cherry Orchard Country Park includes additional car parking at Grove Woods and Cherry Orchard Way, together with tree planting and a permissive route through New England Woods to Flemings Farm. External funding has also been secured for a play area off Cherry Orchard Way.
- 2.4 Since this programme was agreed, it has come to our attention that a local resident is pursuing a claim against Essex County Council (ECC) for the established use of a bridleway over this land. If this claim were successful, ECC would have responsibility for the upgrading and on-going maintenance. The route in question extends from Connaught Road through New England and Grove Woods to Flemings Farm. This claim is actively being considered by ECC.
- 2.5 In addition, Officers have identified that potential funding is available from the Forestry Authority for certain works. We are currently in the process of registering the land and have the opportunity to submit Woodland

Management Plans which could provide some funding for the permissive route, coppicing and ancillary measures. It is, therefore, recommended that the proposed works to the permissive route are deferred until the next financial year.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The alternative option at Grove Woods is not to undertake the works and leave the area vulnerable to dog fouling.
- 3.2 The alternative option in New England Woods is to commit Council resources to the permissive route in Cherry Orchard as originally planned. This would not enable potential funding opportunities to be explored.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Open Spaces Capital Programme is currently carrying a budget of £108,800, spend and commitments to date total £48,234. The works identified in this report can be contained within the existing budget.
- 4.2 The permissive route through New England Wood, that was part of the Capital Programme for Cherry Orchard in the current financial year, was originally estimated at £45,000. Estimates for the entire route through Cherry Orchard, New England Wood and Grove Wood could exceed £150,000 dependent upon the length and type of surface required.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: Mr R Evans

Date: 1 November 2010

Background Papers:

None.

EXECUTIVE DECISION BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT

SUBJECT: CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE – OPEN SPACES AND CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

1 DECISION MADE

- 1.1 That the Open Spaces Capital Programme is utilised for the provision of fencing at the Grove Woods play area, together with minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods.
- 1.2 That the proposed permissive route through New England Woods to Flemings Farm, agreed as part of the programme of works for Cherry Orchard Country Park in 2010/11, is deferred until 2011/12.

2 REASON FOR DECISION

- 2.1 The Open Spaces Programme for 2010/11 includes security fencing at Hockley Woods and drainage works at Sweyne Park Open Space. Whilst these works are above the original estimates identified in the previous report dated 28 May 2010, they can be contained within the Open Spaces Capital Budget. Furthermore, some minor electrical improvements at Hockley Woods have been identified which can also be contained within budget.
- 2.2 Works are currently in progress to improve the Grove Woods play area, which is being funded externally. In order to protect the play area from stray dogs and related health risks, it is recommended that low level fencing is installed around the perimeter. The cost of these works will be in the order of £35,000. This can be funded from the unallocated open spaces budget.
- 2.3 The current year's capital works for Cherry Orchard Country Park includes additional car parking at Grove Woods and Cherry Orchard Way, together with tree planting and a permissive route through New England Woods to Flemings Farm. External funding has also been secured for a play area off Cherry Orchard Way.
- 2.4 Since this programme was agreed, it has come to our attention that a local resident is pursuing a claim against Essex County Council (ECC) for the established use of a bridleway over this land. If this claim were successful, ECC would have responsibility for the upgrading and on-going maintenance. The route in question extends from Connaught Road through New England and Grove Woods to Flemings Farm. This claim is actively being considered by ECC.
- 2.5 In addition, officers have identified that potential funding is available from the Forestry Authority for certain works. We are currently in the process of

registering the land and have the opportunity to submit Woodland Management Plans that could provide some funding for the permissive route, coppicing and ancillary measures. It is therefore felt that the proposed works to the permissive route should be deferred until the next financial year.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The alternative option at Grove Woods is not to undertake the works and leave the area vulnerable to dog fouling.
- 3.2 The alternative option in New England Woods is to commit Council resources to the permissive route in Cherry Orchard as originally planned. This would not enable potential funding opportunities to be explored.

4 NAME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER

- 4.1 Councillor M J Steptoe.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 5.1 None.

6 LEAD OFFICER

- 6.1 Head of Environmental Services.

I confirm that the above decision does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

.

Portfolio Holder Signature: Cllr M J Steptoe

Date of Decision: 11 November 2010

Note: Please ensure that Member Services are provided with the original of the decision on the day it is taken (or by 10.00 am the following morning at the latest) to enable publication.