

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	HEIGHTS FREE SCHOOL SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 OCTOBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	5
TITLE:	MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS AND PAVILION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR GITTINGS	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, SPORT AND CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	WARDS:	MAPLEDURHAM
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the current position and possible next steps for the pavilion at Mapledurham.
- 1.2 An outline of the current position and implications of different scenarios that may be proposed by the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That a decision on refurbishing or replacing Mapledurham pavilion is made only after the Sub-Committee is confident in the implications of a proposal from the EFA or other potential interested parties.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading Borough Council holds The Trust Land in its capacity as charity trustee and the object of the Charity is: "the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Mapledurham and the Borough of Reading without distinction of political, religious or other opinions."
- 3.2 The sub-committee has delegated authority, with the support of the Officers, to discharge Reading Borough Council's functions as charity trustee of the Charity. The sub-committee has a duty to make all decisions in what

it considers to be the best interests of the Charity and in order to advance the object referred to above and any such decision must be in line with all relevant charity law and other legal restrictions. This duty applies in respect of the sub-committee's consideration of the proposal submitted by the EFA.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Current Position

- 4.1 Mapledurham pavilion remains closed following a structural survey which identified significant deterioration requiring additional supports to stabilise the building.
- 4.2 The Education Funding Agency (EFA) proposal does not include enough detail to allow a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the scheme.
- 4.3 The proposal does identify the area in which the EFA are considering locating the school as fig 1 below.

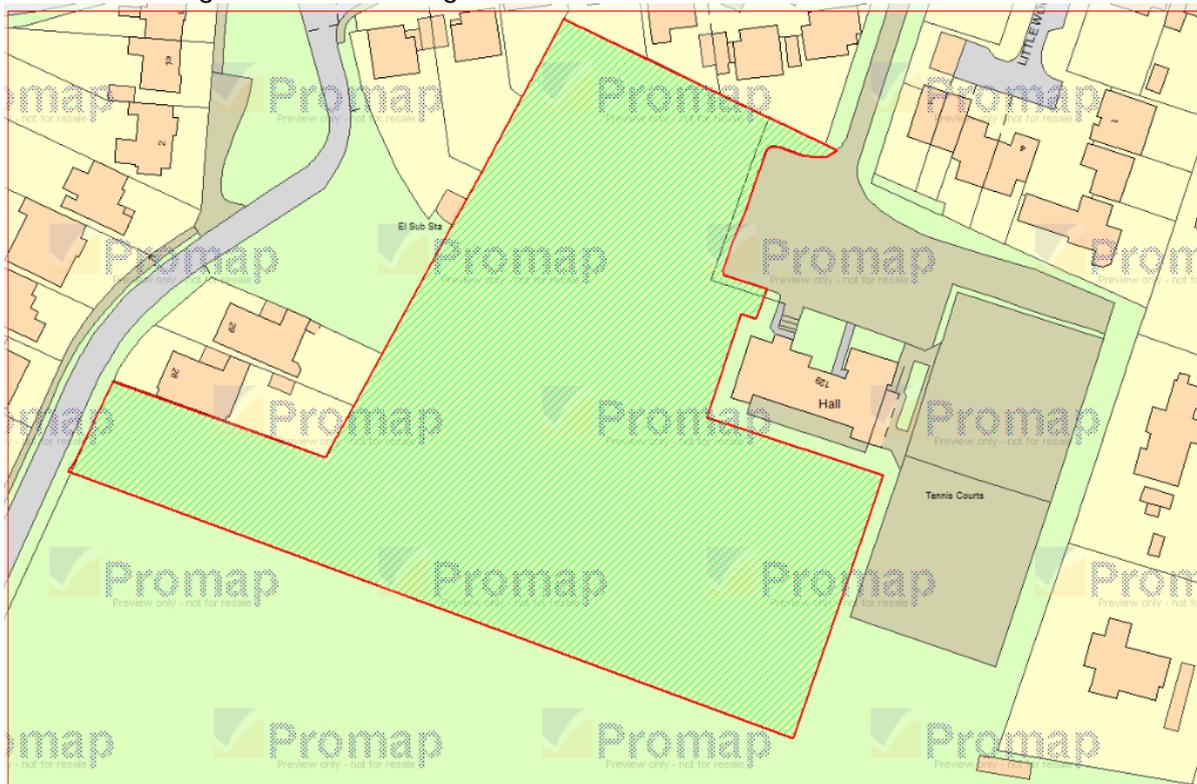


Fig. 1

- 4.4 Mapledurham is a principle site for football north of the Thames within Reading. The other sites close to Mapledurham are at capacity, namely Emmer Green Recreation Ground, Highdown School and Clayfield Copse. There is capacity at Christchurch Meadows although work is required to bring pitches back into use and the site does not have the space to become the principle home venue for the principle user of Mapledurham. There are

a number of other limitations at Christchurch, such as car parking, lack of social facilities and variable ground conditions.

- 4.5 There are 8 football playing areas/pitches that are used for formal football at Mapledurham. Their locations are shown below:

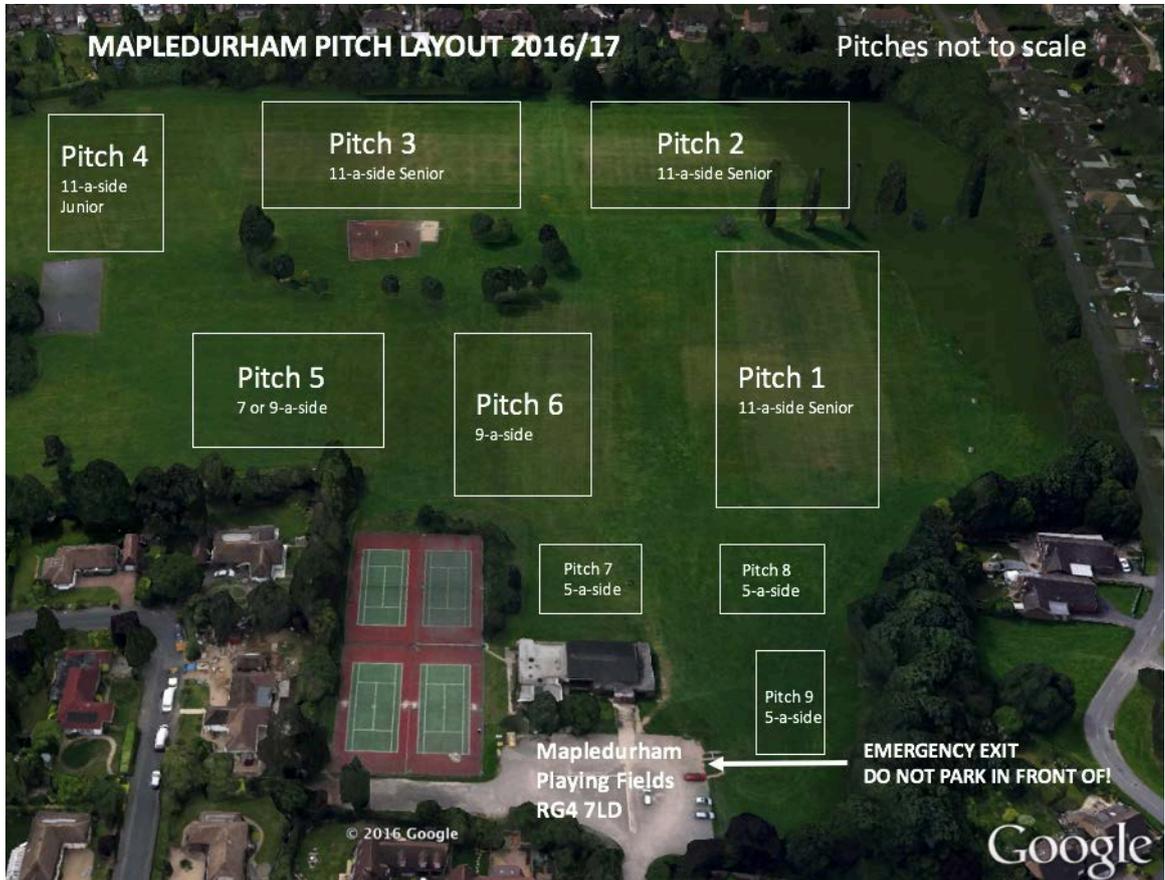


Fig. 2 Note orientation north is towards the bottom of the photo.

- 4.6 The senior pitches (1,2 & 3) are currently used more frequently than the maximum number identified as their capacity. The carrying capacity is 6 games a week and they are currently used for 6.5 games a week.
- 4.7 Pitch 4 is often water logged and is unusable for large parts of the season.
- 4.8 Pitches 5 and 6 are lightly used for matches but are heavily used for training by junior and senior teams during the season. Pitches 7, 8 and 9 are used heavily for pre-season training and non-league games. They are often water logged during the winter.
- 4.9 Caversham Trents are a well-established football club that are rapidly growing
- 4.10 and are expected to be using Mapledurham Playing Fields to its full capacity in the next 3-5 years potentially displacing some of the current users.

4.11 As the EFA have not provided either detail or definitive information, it is therefore necessary to consider a number of scenarios.

SCENARIO A

4.12 Should the school be located to the immediate south of the pavilion, this would separate the pavilion from the playing fields, significantly impacting upon its effectiveness both in terms of providing changing facilities and a hall/community facility that can be used in conjunction with the playing fields. This would necessitate the relocation of the pavilion to the south of the tennis courts. This would require demolition of the existing building and re-providing facilities that meet current standards. Car parking will also need to be reconfigured if it is possible to provide parking next to the pavilion. This is essential to support use by those less mobile.

4.13 Clearly, pitches 5, 6 and 1 will be bisected by the new development (see Fig. 2) and it is likely without removing trees and/or moving the play area, only one pitch could be re-provided on site. It is also likely that pitches 7, 8 and 9 would also be lost. It may be possible to relocate these within the playing fields.

4.14 This arrangement would not accommodate current demand for pitches

4.15 The school have identified a MUGA but not its dimensions nor type of surface. This would not be able to provide replacement facilities for the pitches lost. There is not capacity or space available to re-provide pitches in the Mapledurham locality.

4.16 This leaves three options;

- Provision of a new artificial turf pitch on site (size to be determined),
- Caversham Trents FC being co-located between Mapledurham and Christchurch Meadows if this can be brought back into use. Caversham Trents' development plans however, are based around a single home venue, their development may not be possible with a split site.
- The third option is for no re-provision to be made and accepting a reduction in service. This would not meet the objects of the trust.

4.17 It is also worth noting that the EFA proposal includes use of pitch 1 which is currently at capacity. Additional use here will necessitate further provision elsewhere being made available.

4.18 While the school may only occupy a portion of the 1.091ha the recreational value of the land around the school would be so degraded the effective reduction of the open space would be equivalent to the full 1.091ha. An equivalent re-provision or significant facilities to allow more intensive use would be required.

4.19 In order to continue to provide similar community hall/pavilion facilities that serve the playing fields and accommodate the current (and expected future) use of the playing fields, the following should be provided:

- Full size artificial turf pitch capable of use for football matches
- New pavilion with hall (and ancillary accommodation).
- New sports changing
- Car parking to support playing field and pavilion use.
- The existing pavilion does not meet current Sport England minimum standards. A replacement would therefore occupy a greater footprint if it were to provide the same services as the existing.

COSTS:

4.20 Sport England publishes model designs and costs for a number of affordable sports facilities. The facilities within the pavilion are broadly equivalent to Sport England's one court sports hall and outdoor two team changing rooms pavilion. A provision for the tennis club's room would also need to be made.

- The cost for these facilities is circa **£1m** Ref: <https://www.sportengland.org/media/10289/facility-costs-2q16.pdf> (excluding professional fees).
- Alternatively, using industry standard square metre rates to calculate the build costs, the figure increases to **£1.5m - £2m** (Rates from recent Leisure works)
- Demolition of existing Pavilion up to **£0.1m**
- Re-provision of car parking is likely to be an additional cost, depending upon ability to share school car parking.
- Floodlit artificial turf pitch to replace lost pitches 1, 5 & 6 **£885k**.
- In total, the cost of works to ensure existing use can continue to be accommodated will be between **£2m and £3m**.

4.21 It is clear that the offer from the EFA will not be able to fund the changes required to maintain the same quantity of facilities as currently provided and any work supporting intensified use to offset loss of open space would need to be funded by the Council.

SCENARIO B

4.22 The school is built in the north east of the area identified and not impacting on either the interaction between the pavilion and the playing fields or pitches 1 to 6.

4.23 In terms of sport, in order to maintain the existing capacity, the training areas around the pavilion would need re-providing. This includes both the formal spaces (pitches 7, 8 & 9) and adjacent areas. Pitches 7, 8 & 9 are used for both games and matches and use is concurrent.

- 4.24 Replacement facilities will need to cater for the 3 groups training/playing at any one time requiring a 60m x 40m pitch. Given the level of use an Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP) suitable for football will be required. Asphalt is unsuitable for the regular training required by the football clubs.
- 4.25 The senior pitches are currently being over used and cannot cater for the current demand. The school could however use either the junior pitches or the ATP.
- 4.26 Warren and District Residents Association (WADRA) have stated they will not be able to contribute funds or believe volunteers would be willing to contribute significant time to assist in the management and or rebuilding of the pavilion. In this instance, the full cost of building refurbishment would fall upon the Council.
- 4.27 In order to accommodate current and expected use, the following would be required:
- Floodlit Artificial Turf Pitch: Rubber filled £385k
 - Pavilion Refurbishment/Rebuilding £450k - £600k
 - Improvements to other infrastructure such as car parking and access are not included.
 - This would leave £450k - £600k for investment into the rest of the playing fields to support intensified use.

Other Considerations

- 4.28 The positioning of the school in intermediary position will have varying impact on how the pavilion can be used. The pavilion overlooks the playing field and the relationship between the two is an essential characteristic of the pavilion. If this is compromised then the pavilion will need to be moved. The cost of this is likely to be in excess of a payment from the EFA. An assessment will need to be made of any detailed proposal to assess the impact on the pavilion and whether the pavilion needs replacing.
- 4.29 To prevent the interaction between the pavilion and playing fields being compromised, it is important that the school does not occupy land immediately to the south of the pavilion. Building should be avoided on the blue area on the plan below:



Fig. 3

- 4.30 Similarly the impact on variants to any proposals will need assessing to determine the impact on football pitches and what alternative provision is required on site.
- 4.31 In order to determine whether it is appropriate to start work to repair the pavilion, greater clarity is required in terms of what the school are proposing.

Options to support intensified use

- 4.32 The building of the school will reduce the total recreational space available which will have the largest impact upon football. While playing of adult football is declining generally in Mapledurham, demand for senior pitches is greater than supply. Junior football is growing generally and Caversham Trents is showing consistent and ongoing increases in numbers of young people playing and participating. Facilities are therefore required to both cater for the displaced activity and allow the existing clubs using Mapledurham to continue to implement their existing development plans. Assuming the adult pitches are retained the minimum size for replacement junior facilities is a 60m x 40m (ATP) as previously identified.
- 4.33 Other infrastructure improvements that should be considered are:
- A perimeter footpath and linking paths eg: to play area (£125k - £150k)
 - Entrance improvements (£25k - £50k)

- Play area - upgrade and relocate next to pavilion (£150k - £200k)
- Fitness stations around perimeter path (£25k - £50k)
- Relocate ball area to next to school (£60k - £100k)
- New furniture (seats/bins etc) - £10k - £20k
- Extend ATP to full football pitch size (£500k)

4.34 The list above identifies estimates for some options, but the extent of any provision requires determining through consultation with both public and interested parties. This will also determine costs.

4.35 An assessment as to whether this additional provision would offset the loss of open space/charity land would also require determination.

SCENARIO C

4.36 A proposal is being prepared by the local community to refurbish the pavilion using a contribution from the Council. This however, is predicated on the Council not accepting an offer from the EFA which would result in the building of the Heights School on the playing fields.

4.37 A formal proposal is awaited.

PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

4.38 Should work be undertaken to the pavilion and a proposal from the EFA as described in Scenario A be implemented, funds expended on refurbishment would be lost as the pavilion will need relocating.

4.39 Therefore, before any work is undertaken to the pavilion, confirmation is required that any developments will not compromise use of the pavilion to the extent that it will need relocating.

4.40 Should the position be reached where it is clear that work can commence to the pavilion, agreement should be sought with WADRA to ensure that the proposals do not compromise any future proposals they may wish to make.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Leisure and recreation services are a key contributor to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough and to meeting the 2015-18 Corporate Plan objective for "Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active."

5.2 Equal Opportunities:

5.2.1 Being mostly free to use and open every day, parks are particularly important to people with limited income and limited open space at home.

There is little barrier to use, whether by ethnic origin, social background, physical or financial means. Consequently, parks and open spaces in general are the most frequently used Council service by choice.

5.2.2 Enhancements to the town's leisure facilities will encourage greater and safer use by the local community. Access to improved local facilities is essential in order to provide everyone with an opportunity to improve their quality of life.

5.3 Sustainability Implications:

5.3.1 Parks and open spaces are a key contributor to a sustainable and healthy environment whilst encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle of those participating.

5.3.2 Well-designed and well-maintained public open spaces and leisure facilities contribute to social well-being and help reduce the fear of crime.

6. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

6.1 Consultation with user groups will be required before any refurbishment works are undertaken.

7. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must consider whether the decision will or could have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief. Approval of the decisions to carry out any of the improvement work will not have a differential impact on any of the above.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be considered before any works are undertaken.

8. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 These are dealt with in detail in Agenda Item 4.

9. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The financial implications are different for each of the scenarios. Very broad estimates have been made. Before any work is undertaken, an assessment of costs and implications will be made.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Outline proposal from EFA