

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELDS CHALLENGE**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

1.1. To update the Area Board on the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge, and, request assistance in obtaining suitable venues

### **2. Background**

2.1 The Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire on behalf of HRH Prince William has asked Wiltshire Council to assist in supporting the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. The aim of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is to protect 2,012 playing fields in communities all across Britain by 2012, thereby securing recreational spaces for community events, sport, exercise, and play; all vital elements impacting on issues such as health, crime and social wellbeing.

In brief, the benefits of protection are:

- Making an express and recognizable commitment to local people to safeguard land, facilities and opportunities for sport, play and outdoor recreation both now and forever
- Protecting public access to outdoor space
- Providing reassurance to potential investors regarding viability and sustainability
- Ensuring that in the case of sale, proceeds are reapplied to replacement facilities, with a priority on new outdoor facilities
- Raising awareness of the importance of such facilities in the context of quality of life, health, the environment and amenity.

The programme will culminate in 'Have a Field Day', a nationwide mass participation event to take place on all protected fields throughout the country.

HRH Prince William has agreed to be Patron and is leading this project as a tribute to Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and to mark the Olympics.

### **3. Main Considerations**

3.1 Fields in Trust (FIT) with the assistance of Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council and other local authorities is required to identify 20 playing fields (indicative only) throughout Wiltshire which the councils would be willing to

protect. Once these have been identified and agreed, Fields in Trust will then target the public at large by putting these fields forward to a vote allowing the general public to express their support by way of a vote for their favourite local playing field. The vote is being planned for late September.

Wiltshire Council would like residents to be able to vote for land that it owns and has therefore agreed the following methodology as being fair and equitable as is possible.

Operationally for Wiltshire the county is split into three areas, each area is made up of a number of Community Areas (shown below); if we add in Swindon we would have 4 operational areas each with a maximum of 5 chosen playing fields.

| <b>Wiltshire Council Operational Area make up combined with community area boards</b> |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>North</b>  | <b>Central</b>   |
| Malmesbury  | Melksham         |
| Wootton Bassett & Cricklade   | Bradford on Avon |
| Chippenham  | Trowbridge       |
| Corsham   | Westbury         |
| Calne   | Devizes          |
| Marlborough   | Pewsey           |
|   |                  |
| <b>South</b>  |                  |
| Warminster  |                  |
| Amesbury  |                  |
| Salisbury   |                  |
| Tidworth  |                  |
| South   |                  |
| South West  |                  |

We request that each community area board submits two nominations, outlining its priority preference, in line with the project criteria (shown below) by the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

The Community Area Board Managers will be provided with maps showing the land that Wiltshire Council owns in the community area.

Existing sites protected by Fields in Trust and new sites to be offered protection by Fields in Trust need to satisfy the following criteria if they are to be accepted into The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge:

- The site must be owned by the organisation putting the field forward to become a Queen Elizabeth II Field.
- Evidence of the title permitting site use for outdoor, sport, and/or recreation must be produced.
- Sites may be provided with facilities and equipment or used as general open space, and established for that purpose by way of planning requirements.

- Each sites' principal use should be outdoor sport, play and/or recreation, though FIT wants to be flexible and in this context dedications also including indoor leisure facilities, village halls or other buildings enabling community recreation will be considered.
- The minimum acceptable size is 0.2 hectare (0.5 acre)
- Sites need to be accessible in terms of location.
- Sites need to be affordable for the community concerned.
- Sites should be open to the public, established charitably, as facilities held by a sports club under the CASC regime or held as Public Open Space. In essence this excludes all school playing fields.
- All sites need local managers, who will be responsible for the quality of facilities, their maintenance and development, improving participation and use, and financial and operational sustainability.
- Compliance with existing legislation relating to sport, play or open space.
- The fields identified need not be Wiltshire Council owned however the landowner must give have given permission and have nominated the site.

Once the nominations have been submitted, a Committee made up of Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Portfolio Holder for Leisure), Mark Smith (Director – Neighbourhood Services), Brad Fleet (Director – Development Service), Robin Townsend (Head of Leisure) and Mr John Bush (Lord Lieutenant) will make the final decision on the nominations taking into account geographical location and planning effects.

Town and Parish Councils will be encouraged to take part in the programme by putting forward land that they own for protection direct to Fields in Trust.

To assist with the funding of the programme, Wiltshire Council has been asked to provide names of interested sponsors to Fields in Trust; this is being dealt with by Wiltshire Council's Economic Regeneration Section.

## **4. Implications**

### **4.1. Environmental Impact of the Proposals**

Once the playing fields have been chosen and agreed by Wiltshire Council they will be protected thereby securing land for sport, play and outdoor recreation now and forever.

### **4.2. Financial Implications**

It is possible that Community Buildings such as changing accommodation could be included in the protection.

### **4.3. Legal Implications**

Once the playing fields have been identified a Deed of Dedication will be drawn up between FIT and the landowner thereby protecting the field for at least 100 years or ensuring if it is used for another purpose a duplicate piece of land is made available in its stead.

This could mean that the ownership of the nominated playing fields may be altered.

#### 4.4. HR Implications

There are no HR implications

#### 4.5. Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no Equality and Diversity Implications

### 5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the each Community Area Board assist the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire by nominating two suitable playing fields that meet the criteria of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge by the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2011 latest.

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Report Author: Colin Brown – Leisure & Play Strategy Officer  
Tel No: 01380 734684  
E-Mail: [colin.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:colin.brown@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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Appendices:

Background papers: