

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	4 th October 2006
Subject:	Byron Recreation Ground Improvement proposals and Disposal of Development sites
Key Decision: (<i>Executive-side only</i>)	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Graham Jones, Director of Planning Services
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Marilyn Ashton Property, Housing Planning (Development) and Planning (Strategic) Portfolio Holder
Status:	Part I
Encs:	Appendix 1 Summary Of UDP Proposal Sites Appendix 2: Detailed Plans of UDP Proposal Sites PS 29 And PS 30 Appendix 3: Summary Of Overall Strategy & Improvements

SECTION 1 – SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report sets out a coordinated and corporate approach to the improvement and development of Byron Recreation Ground and the neighbouring UDP development sites, taking account of council service requirements and value for money.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Cabinet is requested to:

- Agree the overall strategy for Byron Recreation Ground and adjacent development sites
- Note that discussions with Leisure Connection regarding the future of the Leisure Centre will be reported back to Cabinet in due course with a report on options.
- Agree in principle the improvement of Byron Recreation Ground to Green

Flag standard

- Agree in principle to the funding of Byron Recreation Ground improvements from receipts, the capital sum to be agreed following a further report on costs necessary to bring the Recreation Ground up to Green Flag standard.
- agree the location of proposed Neighbourhood Resource Centre and Learning Disability Residential scheme to replace 79 Bessborough Road
- agree the sale of the Parks Depot & Former Mortuary site for residential development and authorise the Executive Director Urban Living to market the property and conclude a disposal at best consideration
- agree the appropriation of land at Christchurch Avenue (PS 29) (as identified on the plans in Appendix 2) under s122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to facilitate development

REASON: to agree a coordinated and corporate approach to the various development and improvement proposals in the area.

SECTION 2 - REPORT

Background

Byron Recreation Ground, Harrow Leisure Centre and the surrounding area has suffered from ad hoc development over the years, with the consequence that the Recreation Ground is now locked in by buildings, all of low architectural merit. The external environment around the Leisure Centre badly requires enhanced maintenance, investment and improved community safety measures.

The Council through the Unitary Development Plan has designated 4 Council owned pieces of land adjacent to Harrow Leisure Centre and Byron Recreation Ground as Proposal Sites (see appendix 1). In summary these are

PS 29 - Land adjacent to the Leisure Centre/former outdoor pool

PS 30 - Parks Depot site & Former Mortuary, Peel Road

PS 31 - Land north of the Bridge Day Care Centre adjacent to the Leisure Centre car park

PS 32 - Driving Centre, Christchurch Avenue

These sites have been promoted for a range of development over a number of years including community and residential uses but without success.

More recently, two People First schemes have been agreed by the Council's Cabinet Committee. These are

- a Neighbourhood Resource Centre on part of the land adjacent to the Leisure Centre/former outdoor pool (Cabinet 15th December 2005)

- A Learning Disability residential scheme to replace 79 Bessborough Road on land anywhere within the Byron Park site (Cabinet 29th June 2006).

These two proposals are key actions in the 2006-2009 Corporate Plan.

In addition, following discussions with members and officers, Leisure Connection has prepared a discussion paper on possible future leisure development including options for the Leisure Centre.

These proposed developments have meant that the future of the area needs to be considered in a strategic context.

Summary of Proposal Sites

(i) **Land adjacent to Leisure Centre/former Outdoor Pool (UDP Proposal Site PS29)**

This site covers 0.6 hectares and is allocated in the UDP for leisure or housing use.

As mentioned above, Cabinet approved the development of PFI Neighbourhood Resource Centre on the southern part of the site fronting Christchurch Avenue in October 2005. The appropriation of this land was agreed at Cabinet in December 2005 but the formal appropriation has not yet been done.

However, following further consideration of these proposals, this report recommends a new location for the Neighbourhood Resource Centre at the northern end of this site with the Learning Disability residential scheme located to the southern end of the site fronting Christchurch Avenue.

(ii) **Parks Depot site & Former Mortuary, Peel Road (UDP Proposal Site PS 30)**

This site lies immediately to the north of the land described above. It is 0.3 hectares in size and identified in the UDP as being suitable for community use where building height should not exceed two storeys.

The site could also be suitable for residential development and could be sold in the short term without having a detrimental effect on the other proposals for the area.

(iii) **Driving Centre Site (UDP Proposal Site PS32)**

The Driving Centre site is 1.4 hectares in size. The Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2004 identifies the site as suitable for a range of uses including leisure, residential, community or business both individually or as part of a mixed use scheme. It is a self contained site, located towards the south east corner of the Byron Recreation Ground complex.

Development Opportunities & Constraints

As a self contained site, it could be released for development in the relative short term. Access to any development on the site would have to be through the leisure centre complex. Improvements would need to be made to the existing road along the southern side of the car park as part of any development proposals to ensure a safe and secure access to the development. At the same time, the layout of the existing car and coach park would have to be revised to ensure a separation from the access road.

However, in view of the recent discussion paper prepared by Leisure Connection, no immediate action is recommended for the Driving Centre site as this could potentially pre-empt more comprehensive solutions.

(iv) **Byron Recreation Ground and Harrow Leisure Centre**

Byron Recreation Ground, Harrow Leisure Centre and related sports and recreation facilities are a key resource in Harrow. Byron Recreation Ground is designated as a Destination Park within the Borough. The Recreation Ground includes a number of football pitches, a skate board park and children's play area.

There is however a number of problems with the site including poor pedestrian and vehicle access, badly laid out car parking and community safety issues related to poor overlooking of the Recreation Ground.

Improvements to the existing entrances to the Recreation Ground, the footpath network including new lighting as well as improvements to the play area, skate board park and bowling green would assist in bringing the Recreation Ground up to Green Flag Standard.

The Leisure Centre itself suffers from an outdated design with a consequent poor use of space within the building. Leisure Connections recently set out proposals for investment in leisure facilities across the Borough.

Consultation

In September 2005, Byron Recreation Ground and these 4 Proposal Sites were subject to a consultation exercise following the production of a masterplan for the whole area.

Issues to be Determined

This report seeks the agreement to an overall strategy for the area (see Appendix 3 for a summary) which includes proposed locations for the two People First sponsored schemes, disposal of the Parks Depot site and improvements to Byron Recreation Ground to be funded from the sale of these sites. The future of the Leisure Centre itself, the Driving Centre site and the car and coach park will be the subject of a future report.

The use of the former open air swimming pool and disposal of the former depot and mortuary site will not pre-empt options for the Leisure Centre and Driving Centre site.

Options Considered

A number of options and approaches to the improvement of the area have been considered over several years. A large scale masterplanning exercise took place in the autumn of 2005. This set out a range of improvements to the Recreation Ground, and the relocation of a number of buildings and uses within the area. However, these proposals were too expensive to implement and did not meet a number of service requirements. Since this work, a number of further options relating to the location of the Bessborough Road replacement scheme and the Neighbourhood Resource Centre were considered. These included locating the Bessborough Road Replacement

scheme on the southern end of the Driving Centre site. However, it was considered that co-locating the two schemes on Proposal site PS29 had a number of benefits. This included the opportunity to share access and services between the two buildings.

Option recommended and reasons for recommendation

The following section sets out the recommended options for each of the identified UDP Proposal sites, and a strategic approach to the improvement of Byron Recreation Ground and Harrow Leisure Centre. They are summarised in the plan attached as appendix 3.

(i) Land Adjacent to the Leisure Centre/Former Outdoor Pool (UDP Proposal site PS29)

Due to the limitations mentioned above, it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Resource Centre & Bessborough Road Replacement schemes are located together on this site. It is recommended that the Learning Disability residential scheme fronts Christchurch Avenue (instead of the Byron Park Site) with the Neighbourhood Resource Centre relocated towards the rear of the site. Designs for the two buildings are currently being progressed. They have yet to obtain planning permission.

(ii) Parks Depot site & Former Mortuary, Peel Road (UDP Proposal Site PS 30)

With the use of the UDP Proposal site PS29 agreed as above, it is recommended to release this site for residential development without having a detrimental effect on the other proposals for the area. Residential development on the site will also provide additional overlooking of the Recreation Ground and improve the safety of the area.

(iii) Harrow Leisure Centre and Driving Centre Site (UDP Proposal Site PS32)

It is recommended that Leisure Connection and the Council continue to work on proposals and that options for both the Leisure Centre and Former Driving Centre site are reported to a future Cabinet meeting.

A key requirement of any future development will be to improve the access to the Recreation Ground from Christchurch Avenue and the surrounding residential area.

(iv) Byron Recreation Ground Improvements

It is recommended that a proportion of the revenue generated from the land sales is used to upgrade the Recreation Ground. This would meet the Council's Corporate Plan objectives to give parks a family friendly environment and raise key parks to the National Green Flag standard.

Implementation and Timescales

Subject to agreement of the proposed locations for the Neighbourhood Resource Centre and Residential Scheme, it is anticipated that the development will take place during 2006/7 and 2007/8.

A report back on the Leisure Centre and Driving Centre site is anticipated in the new year.

Resources, costs and risks associated with recommendation

Resource & costs

Sale of the Park's Depot and former Mortuary site would produce a Capital receipt.

Capital funding for the Residential Scheme to replace Bessborough Road has been identified for 2006/7 of £100,000. Provision of £700,000 for 2007/8 and £1,200,000 for 2008/9 has been identified in the Medium Term Budget Strategy.

The capital costs of the Neighbourhood Resource Centre are to be covered by £10m of PFI credits from the Department of Health, as part of a scheme to construct three centres. Provision for revenue costs is being addressed through the Medium Term Budget Strategy. The current draft MTBS provides for £300k in 2008-2009, and £130k in 2009-2010, with £60k required in the following year.

The costs associated with the Byron Recreation Ground improvements would be met from receipts received from the sale of the Former Mortuary and any further surplus land.

Risks

- Delays in obtaining planning permission for various development proposals
- Department of Health funding through PFI credits is not forthcoming

Legal implications

The proposed location for the Neighbourhood Resource Centre and Residential Scheme to replace Bessborough Road (UDP Proposal site PS29) comprises part of a disused outdoor leisure facility and a car parking area and is technically held for allotments.

The Council needs to agree the appropriation under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 of the whole site from the purposes under which they are held to planning purposes under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to facilitate the development of the site.

With regard to Parks Depot & Former Mortuary site, (UDP Proposal Site PS 30), Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council may dispose of any land it owns if it obtains a consideration which is the best that can be reasonably obtained. This is usually demonstrated by extensive marketing of the property and acceptance of the best price or by disposal at auction.

Where this is not being received, the Council must either rely on the general consent issued by the Secretary of State if applicable or obtain the ad hoc consent of the Secretary of State for the disposal.

Staffing/workforce consideration

None

Equalities Impact consideration

This scheme meets levels 1 & 2 of Harrow's Race Equality Scheme by supporting the delivery of Valuing People Strategy.

Current KPI's and Likely impact of decision on KPI's

PAF C31 - Numbers of people with a learning disability helped to live at home

SECTION 3 - STATUTORY OFFICER CLEARANCE

Chief Financial Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Anil Nagpal
		Date:
Monitoring Officer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name: Adekunle Amisu
		Date:

SECTION 4 - CONTACT DETAILS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

Contact: David Sklair, Regeneration Project Manager, 020 8736 6806

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report: Private Finance Initiative - Social Services – 11 March 2000
Cabinet Report: PFI for Supported Housing 2003
Cabinet Report: Social Care PFI Project (Community Resource Centres for People with Learning Disabilities) and Housing PFI Project - 29 July 2004
Cabinet Report: Proposal for an Indoor Tennis Centre - 29th July 2004
Cabinet Report: Byron Park Area Regeneration - 9th September 2004
Cabinet Report: LIFT/PFI Project – 27 July 2005
Cabinet Report: LIFT/PFI Project - 15 December 2005
Cabinet Report: Reference from WRAP: Byron Park - 12th January 2006
Cabinet Report: Replacement Residential Unit for 79 Bessborough Rd – 29 June 2006

1.	Consultation	YES
2.	Corporate Priorities	YES
4.	Manifesto Pledge Reference Number	C4,D4,F3

APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF UDP PROPOSAL SITES

(i) Land adjacent to the Leisure Centre/former outdoor pool (UDP Proposal Site PS29)

This site covers 0.6 hectares and lies immediately to the west of the leisure centre. It includes the former outdoor pool and the building on Christchurch Road. The UDP allocates the site for leisure or housing use.

The derelict outdoor pool currently represents a safety liability to the council to prevent access to the pool and regular pumping out of the pool.

(ii) Parks Depot site & Former Mortuary, Peel Road (UDP Proposal Site PS30)

The UDP identifies this site (0.3 hectares) as being suitable for community use. Building height should not exceed two storeys. The boundary with residential property in Byron Road should be suitably fenced and landscaped.

(iii) Land north of the Bridge Day Care Centre adjacent to the Leisure Centre car park (UDP Proposal Site PS31)

The UDP identifies this site, which is 0.23 hectares in size, as being suitable for leisure or community use. However it is recognised that the operation of the Leisure Centre car park, and the need to share vehicular access, will limit the site's development potential. Use in conjunction with the Leisure Centre or for the development of a community facility to complement the adjoining Bridge Centre would be appropriate.

(iv) Driving Centre Site (UDP Proposal Site PS32)

The Driving Centre site is 1.4 hectares in size. The Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2004 identifies the site as suitable for a range of uses including leisure, residential, community or business both individually or as part of a mixed use scheme. It is located towards the south east corner of the Byron Recreation Ground complex. Belmont Walk, which is a site of nature conservation importance and a green chain, lies to the south east and Byron Recreation Ground immediately to the north of the site.

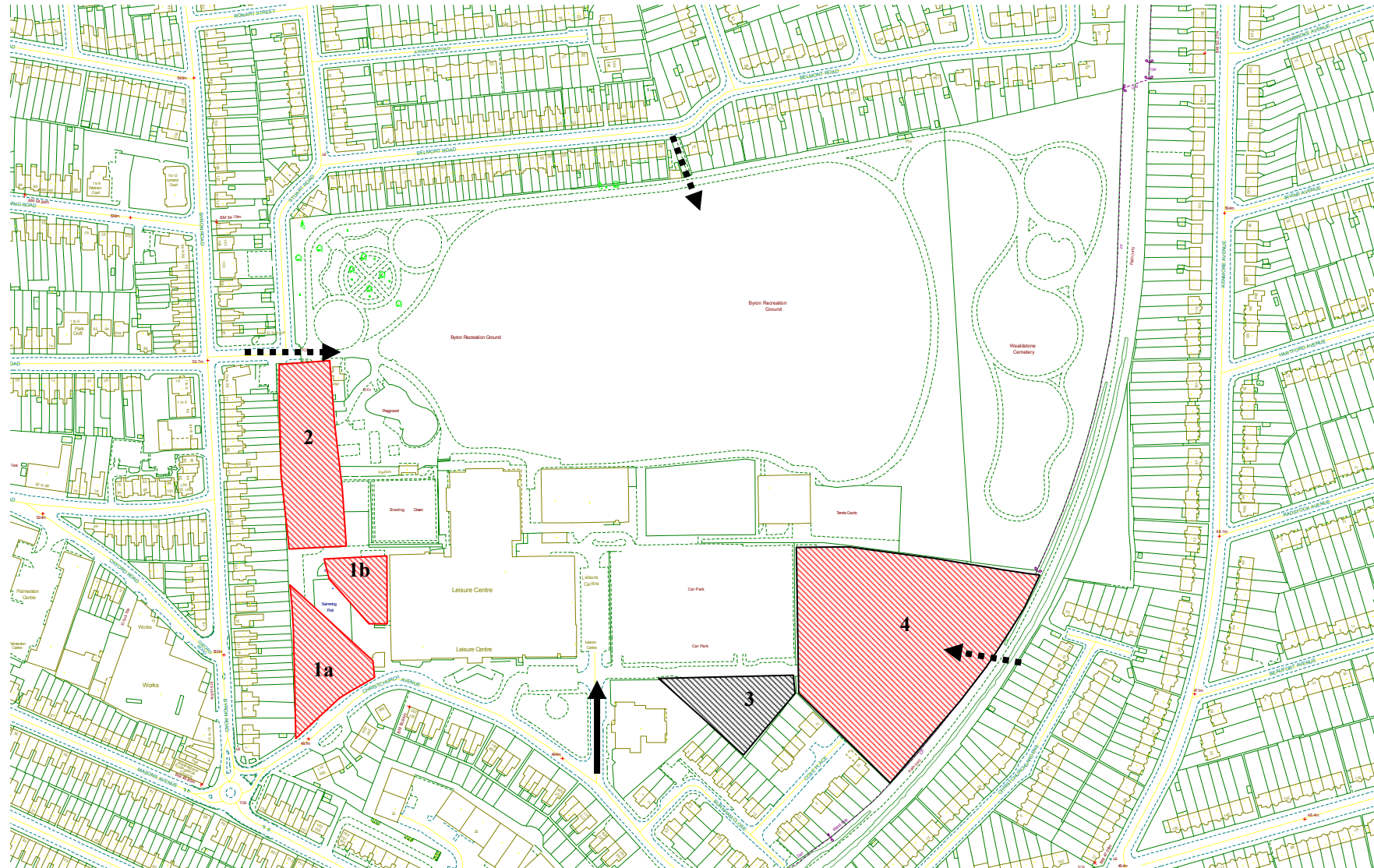
(v) Bridge Day Care Centre

Although this site is not allocated as a proposal site within the UDP, it provides a key site within Byron Recreation Ground/Leisure Centre complex.

APPENDIX 2: DETAILED PLANS OF UDP PROPOSAL SITES PS29 AND PS 30



APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRATEGY & IMPROVEMENTS



<p>1a Proposed Site of Learning Disability Residential Scheme</p> <p>1b Proposed Site of Neighbourhood Resource Centre</p> <p>2 Parks Depot site & Former Mortuary (UDP Proposal Site PS30): Proposed site for Residential development</p> <p>3 Land north of the Bridge Day Care Centre adjacent to the Leisure Centre car park (UDP Proposal Site PS 31): To be considered as part of longer term review of assets</p> <p>4 Driving Centre Site (UDP Proposal Site PS 32): To be considered with Leisure Centre proposals</p>	<p>.....➔ Improved pedestrian access</p> <p>————➔ Improved pedestrian & traffic access</p>
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