

Report to Cabinet

Report reference: C/043/2006-07.

Date of meeting: 4 September 2006.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leisure and Young People.

Subject: Fisherman's Car Park, Chigwell - Resurfacing and Maintenance.

Officer contact for further information: Laura MacNeill (01992 – 56 4223).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendation:

That, in order to undertake remedial works to the Fisherman's Car Park in the Roding Valley Recreation Ground, a Supplementary DDF Estimate for 2006/07 in the sum of £7,000 be recommended to the Council for approval.

Background Information:

1. The highlighted areas on the attached plan identify a short section of single-track roadway opening onto an area of hard standing known as The Fisherman's Car Park. This is used by members of the public wishing to visit the Roding Valley Nature Reserve located on the eastern side of the River Roding and the Recreation Area to the west. Responsibility for the upkeep of both the roadway and car park currently falls under the jurisdiction of E.F.D.C. Leisure Services. However, there was no specific budget ever allocated for the maintenance of these areas and consequently, only minor repair works have been undertaken. Despite these running repairs, there has been a steady decline in the overall condition of the site and it is now deemed essential that proper remedial works are undertaken to ensure the car park is safe and fit for purpose.

Current Condition:

2. The current access roadway appears to be solidly constructed with a smooth tarmac surface, all of which is currently in good order and no remedial works are recommended. The car park itself is approximately 700sqm and comprises of road scalplings compressed into the soil surface. This area is in an extremely poor condition, very uneven and containing numerous potholes.
3. A narrow strip of vegetation containing mature trees, saplings and a large amount of bramble bound the road and car park. These areas are very overgrown and unsightly, containing a considerable amount of wind blown litter and dumped rubbish. There is also evidence of fly tipping in the car park, despite installation of a height restriction barrier at the entrance.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

4. The level of usage of the car park and the area in which it is situated does not warrant or lend itself to a properly constructed car park. However, the area must be dealt with to ensure there is no Health and Safety issues with trip hazards etc. There have been a number of complaints regarding the condition of the area from the users therefore action is required.
5. If the work were undertaken it would bring the Car Park up to a more reasonable and acceptable standard. Currently, the Council is negotiating as per the previous Cabinet

decision, the terms of long term leases (125 years) with both Buckhurst Hill Parish Council and Loughton Town Council for the Roding Valley Recreation Ground areas within their boundaries. It is therefore anticipated that in future maintenance of the car-park would be transferred. However, there would be resistance by the local Councils, to accepting the car park in its current condition.

Other Options for Action:

6. In order to obtain professional advice on how best to deal with the hard surface issues and obtain costings for any recommended works, a site visit was made with a representative from 'approved' highways contractor May Gurney. The outcome of discussions are as follows:
7. *Roadway - no work recommended at present other than regular sweeping to maintain the surface in a clean condition.*
8. *Car Park – Due to the fact there is no proper foundation to the current surfacing, it is not considered advisable to apply tarmac directly onto the area as this would be very costly and the new surface would quickly deteriorate. A properly constructed car park would cost many thousands of pounds and given the relatively light usage of the Fisherman's C/P, it would seem difficult to justify such a large financial outlay. The cheapest option would be to simply level off the potholes but again, without proper foundations the tarmac or scalping in-fill could not be secured in place and would offer only a very short-term solution to the problem.*
9. The compromise and recommended option is to level a sufficient depth of road scalplings across the entire site and compact this into the existing base. This would provide a firm and even surface but above all, one that is both hardwearing and cost effective. Given 'normal' usage this surfacing is estimated to have a life expectancy of between 5 and 7 years although the provision of regular maintenance visits could significantly increase this life expectancy.
10. In addition, the general appearance of the site would be much improved if all hard surfaces were regularly swept and grass areas litter-picked. Following discussions with the Council's Waste Management Section, a monthly cleaning programme has been recommended.
11. Cutting back the encroaching vegetation and pruning of mature trees sited along the perimeter of both the road and car park is also recommended; this would open up the site and thereby make it less attractive to fly tippers and allow thorough cleaning/litter picking to take place.
12. The main route from the car park to the footbridge spanning the River Roding is along a grass pathway. However, over time this has become extremely worn and is now badly rutted and particularly slippery when wet. It has been suggested that a layer of wood chippings along its length would make this pathway sufficiently level and usable all year round.

Consultation undertaken:

13. Highways Contractor: May Gurney.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: *Car Park* – To prepare the site and apply/compact approximately 70 tons of road scalplings over the entire area would cost in the region of £4,500. *Vegetation* - The initial clearance of overgrown vegetation from the roadway and car park perimeters including the recommended tree pruning/felling work would cost £2,000. *Cleaning* - Initial clearance of

litter and fly tipping would cost £150.00. The additional works to the grass pathway would cost in the region of £300.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: As per attached map.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Policy Theme 1 – To provide a safe, healthy attractive place.

Relevant statutory powers: Local Government Act 1974.

Background papers: None.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: To maintain the area to ensure it is safe and to an acceptable environmental standard. May deter fly-tipping and litter.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.