

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 8 February 2016

Portfolio:	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Leigh Road Tennis Courts – Conversion to Car Parking
Report of:	Director of Operations
Strategy/Policy:	Leisure Strategy
Corporate Objective:	Leisure for health and for fun

Purpose:

To feedback on the consultation on the proposal to convert the existing two tennis courts opposite the Leigh Road entrance to the Park Lane Recreation Ground to provide additional car parking.

Executive summary:

The existing car park at Leigh Road has 20 parking spaces and, whilst this is sufficient to accommodate most of the demand, it does not have the capacity to meet the peak demand during the summer, particularly when the Fareham Bowls Club have matches or events taking place at their premises within the recreation ground.

The adjacent two tennis courts are redundant and no longer fit for purpose and there is an opportunity to change the use of these to provide an additional 25 parking spaces, which will include disabled parking bays and be in line with the existing four hour limit.

Public consultation has revealed no objection to the principle of converting the tennis courts to provide additional car parking, but there has been a request for an alternative use to be considered, i.e. to make the area of the courts a formal area for off the lead exercise / training of dogs.

The Executive is asked to consider the results of the consultation and to consider the proposal to provide additional car parking.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

That the Executive agrees that the redundant tennis courts adjacent to the Leigh Road entrance to the Park Lane Recreation Ground be converted to provide increased car parking provision.

Reason:

To address the shortfall in parking in the summer period and to further implement the Park Lane Vision.

Cost of proposals:

A capital budget of £70,000 will be required for the conversion to be funded from available developer's contributions and added to the open spaces improvement programme for outdoor sport.

Appendices:

A: [Location Plan](#)

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	8 February 2016
Subject:	Leigh Road Tennis Courts – Conversion to Car Parking
Briefing by:	Director of Operations
Portfolio:	Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. There are two tennis courts adjacent to the Leigh Road entrance to the Park Lane Recreation Ground. These have effectively been redundant since 2010 as the surface is not suitable for the playing of tennis due to the debris that falls from the row of Hornbeam trees on the eastern side of the court.
2. No action on the tennis courts has previously been taken as it was considered appropriate to address the future of these as part of the ongoing development of the Park Lane Vision. As part of this vision it is intended to install an all-weather multi use sports area which would include tennis provision and improve the provision of facilities for this sport in the area.
3. Since being removed from use as tennis courts, the enclosed area has become popular with dog walkers who use the area as an off the lead area.

LEIGH ROAD CAR PARK

4. The existing car park at Leigh Road has 20 parking spaces and, whilst this is sufficient to accommodate most of the demand, it does not have the capacity to meet the demand when events are taking place such as the Fareham Triathlon or when the Fareham Bowls Club have a match or host a tournament. At such times, problems are experienced with people parking inappropriately on the public open space and on Leigh Road meaning that residents are displaced.
5. To address the problem of inappropriate parking at Leigh Road and to help meet the needs of the Fareham Bowls Club, and to find a more suitable use of the land occupied by the tennis courts, a proposal has been developed to convert 60% of the tennis courts into an extension to the Leigh Road car park to provide an additional 25 parking bays, 4 of which would be disabled spaces. The remaining area of the tennis courts would be returned to grass.

CONSULTATION

6. In November 2015 a consultation exercise was undertaken to gauge the views of the local residents and visitors to the Park Lane Recreation Ground. The consultation included sending an explanatory letter and plan to all of the residents in Leigh Road, to SLM who manage the Fareham Leisure Centre and to the Fareham Bowls Club whose club is immediately to the north of the Leigh Road car park. In addition A3 posters of the proposals were displayed on the perimeter fencing of the tennis courts.
7. Twenty responses to the consultation were received and the key outcomes were:
 - Both the Fareham Bowls Club and SLM were supportive of the proposal.
 - Four residents expressed support for the proposal.
 - No objections were received to the principle of increasing parking provision, although a number of comments were received about parking issues in general.
 - Fourteen members of the public were concerned about the loss of the current informal use as an off the lead area for dogs.
 - The local ward Councillors have expressed their support for the proposals.
8. The issues raised in relation to parking in the area included concerns about commuters parking in Leigh Road all day, commercial vehicles parking in the car park overnight, a suggestion that residents parking be introduced in Leigh Road, making Leigh Road one way and a suggestion that residents be allowed to park in the existing and extended car park without restriction.
9. Whilst these are all genuine concerns and will be discussed with relevant officers, they are not considered to be directly relevant to whether the car park should be extended.
10. Currently the tennis courts are used as an informal off the lead dog walking area and those who have suggested that this use should be retained and formalised have argued that it is an ideal facility for the elderly who cannot exercise their dogs in the remainder of the park, that there is nowhere else in the area that dogs can be safely let off their leads, that it is ideal for training puppies and rescue dogs, it is a safe area for dogs with behavioural problems and that it is an ideal area for training and bonding with new dogs.
11. Whilst the dog walking community are keen for this area to be formalised as an “off the lead” dog area, a number of complaints have been received from local residents about the associated noise from barking and alleged incidents of dog fighting. Because of these problems and due to the close proximity of the area to residential properties, the use of the tennis courts as an “off the lead” dog walking is not considered to be suitable.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The capital cost of converting the tennis courts to provide additional car parking and the associated landscaping and signage is £70,000. It is recommended that this be funded from available developers contributions and be formally included within the open spaces improvement programme for outdoor sport when this is considered by the Executive in April 2016.

CONCLUSION

13. The consultation exercise that has been undertaken has not identified any significant objections to extend the Leigh Road car park. However, an alternative use as a formal off the area for dogs has been suggested by the fourteen local dog walkers.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Gareth Satherley. (Ext 4476)