

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Nominations for Centenary Fields Programme</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>7 October 2014</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Environment, Development &amp; Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Jan Jonker</b>	<b>Tel: 29-4722</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Royal British Legion and Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) are leading a nationwide initiative aimed at securing recreational spaces in perpetuity in honour of the memory of the millions of people who lost their lives in World War I. The programme is encouraging every local authority to nominate at least one site to be dedicated as a Centenary Field.
- 1.2 At Full Council on 17 July 2014 a Notice of Motion was carried seeking a report to be brought to this meeting with a view to nominating specific sites in Brighton and Hove. This report summarises the objectives of the Centenary Fields Programme and recommends proceeding with the nomination of three sites as Centenary Fields.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Committee delegates officers to proceed with the application for four sites (The Chattri, Old Steine Gardens, East Hill Park and Patcham Peace Garden) to be dedicated as Centenary Fields.
- 2.2 That Committee delegates officers the authority to complete the relevant deeds of dedication to protect the sites in perpetuity, subject to the sites meeting the criteria.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Centenary Fields is a programme dedicated to protecting war memorial parks in perpetuity in honour of the memory of the people who lost their lives in World War I. It is a national campaign run by the Royal British Legion and Fields In Trust which is seeking at least one nomination from each local authority in the UK.
- 3.2 At the Council meeting in July a Notice of Motion was carried requesting a report be presented to this Committee to consider nominating specific suitable sites in

Brighton & Hove. Three sites were suggested for consideration (which have also been put forward by Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion) : The Chattri, Old Seine Gardens and Easthill Park. Plans of the sites are attached as Appendices 2a – 2c. The notice of motion further asked that any other sites were put forward which may warrant consideration. Officers have researched the programme and have looked in to the suitability of the proposed sites and potential other sites. Further details of the programme are set out in the 'Frequently Asked Questions' in Appendix 1 to this report.

3.3 In order to be dedicated, sites must meet the following criteria:

- The Landowner of the site must complete the application form
- Evidence of ownership, and where relevant freehold interest must be produced
- The principal use should be outdoor recreation, sport or play. However, sites can also include facilities such as pavilions, village halls, indoor leisure or heritage facilities that are established for community recreational purposes
- Sites must have public access
- Sites should be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community
- Sites should have local managers who are responsible for the quality of the facilities, maintenance and development, improving participation and financial and operational sustainability
- The Landowner must be able to sign the agreed Deed of Dedication within six months of submitting an application

3.4 In response to an article in The Leader following Full Council, residents in Patcham have contacted officers to request that the Patcham Peace Garden is also included as a Centenary Field.

3.5 Officers from the Royal Pavilion and Museums were asked whether any other sites were suitable and their additional suggestions included Preston Park which was a focal space during WWI for semi-military parades and the limbless soldiers played bowls there and hosted 'international' baseball matches between the Americans and Canadians towards the end of the war; and Hove Museum & Gardens which was initially used to host fetes/fundraising events at the beginning of WWI but was later used as a Prisoner of War Camp and had an anti-aircraft (zeppelin) gun stationed there. Whilst these sites could also be put forward the four sites mentioned previously provide a good distribution across the city and it is recommended that they are taken forward.

3.6 An initial review by Legal Services has confirmed that the four sites are owned by the council and appear to meet the relevant criteria and can therefore be put forward under the program.

3.7 Each site put forward by the Council will be visited by a representative of the programme to assess its suitability. If sites are suitable a deed of dedication is drawn up by Fields in Trust, to be approved by the council. Once agreed and signed it will be registered with the Land Registry. Fields in Trust provide a commemorative plaque to be installed by the council. The management of the sites, and their names remain the same, and the dedication does not provide any

additional resources although Fields In Trust are exploring fundraising opportunities.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Given the time-scale within which this work was completed and the resources available it has not been possible to carry out a wide public consultation on the proposals. The proposals did feature in the media which encouraged residents to come forward to propose Patcham Peace Garden. The four sites recommended are spread across the city.
- 4.2 The Southdowns National Park Authority were consulted on the proposals for the Chattri as the site lies within the national park. Officers from SDNPA have stated that: 'The South Downs National Park Authority recognises the great value of the Chattri both in terms of Cultural Heritage and as a site for quiet reflection. The site is an oasis in the wider downs and a key reminder of the contribution of the Commonwealth soldiers during the Great War and subsequent conflicts. The SDNPA supports the application to give lasting protection to this important site.'

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The three sites identified in this report are considered to be suitable for nomination under the Centenary Fields Programme. While the sites are already offered high levels of protection as open spaces, successful dedication will award further recognition of these sites as memorials to WW I. Dedication of the sites would support the Armed Forces Community Covenant which the council signed up to in January 2013.

#### **6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 6.1 The costs associated with the process of dedicating sites consist of staff time associated with agreeing the deeds, the cost of installing a commemorative plaque (provided free of charge) and the cost associated with registering the resulting restrictions with the land registry, which is £80 per site. These costs will be funded from the existing City Infrastructure revenue budget.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Steven Bedford*

*Date: 04/08/14*

##### Legal Implications:

- 6.2 The Council is the freehold owner of the nominated sites and subject to consultation with any existing tenants can enter into deeds of dedication. Under the proposed Deed of Dedication; the Council would retain ownership of the land; so there would be no disposal for the purposes of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972. The deed of dedication is a legally binding contract which will restrict the user of the sites to recreational use; a restriction would be registered against the Council's freehold title. If the Council wished to dispose of any of the sites in

the future, it would need to seek the consent of Fields in Trust & the Royal British Legion; such consent would be forthcoming; provided the Council reapplied the entire proceeds of any disposal to new sport, recreation and/or play facilities, which would serve the same community in terms of catchment area.

*Lawyer Consulted:*

*Joanne Dougnaglo*

*Date: 5/8/14*

Equalities Implications:

- 6.3 Dedication of the sites complements the Council's Armed Forces Community Covenant. There are no other equalities implications.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.4 Dedication of the sites offers further protection from development. However the sites are already protected by virtue of their current use.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

- 1a Background Information Relating to Centenary Fields
- 1b FAQ's
- 2a Boundary Easthill Park
- 2b Boundary Plan Old Steine Gardens & War Memorial
- 2c Boundary Plan The Chattri
- 2d Boundary Plan Patcham Peace Garden