

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 24 MAY 2011
title: QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELDS CHALLENGE
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: CHRIS HUGHES, HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform members of the scheme, and to consider whether any of the Council's Parks/Open Spaces should be nominated as a Queen Elizabeth II (QE2) Playing Field.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions:

This report contributes to:

- Making People's lives Safer and Healthier
- Protecting and Enhancing the environmental quality of the area.

2 BACKGROUND

All local authorities/parishes etc have been approached to ask if they are interested in nominating facilities. The QE2 Challenge is a campaign to protect 2012 outdoor spaces (not just playing fields) for local communities across the country, and to create a fitting and lasting grassroots legacy across the UK to mark both the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics. Prince William is the patron of the Challenge.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 We have had a meeting with a representative from Fields in Trust (formerly The National Playing Fields Association) to go through the criteria for applicants, in order to identify if any of our facilities would be eligible under the scheme.

Sites that are eligible to be included can be:

- Sports pitches and playing fields
- Open space
- Small informal open spaces
- Parks
- Children's Play Areas
- Cycle trails and routes
- Ornamental Gardens
- Country Parks
- Wildlife Areas
- Woodland
- Open spaces in new residential developments

Sites with indoor facilities can also be included.

If local authorities sign up to the Challenge, they can nominate as many spaces as they wish, and local communities can then be asked to vote for their preference, if that is required.

There is no expectation to change the name of the site, but simply to mark the dedication by a plaque provided by Fields in Trust.

- 3.2 Our conclusion is that, although we have many areas that will fulfil the minimum criteria, we should aim to identify those more iconic facilities. With this in mind, the obvious choice would be The Castle Grounds, but members may wish to consider an additional facility in Longridge (Kestor Lane Fields or John Smith's). The decision on the number of applications is up to the landowner but, if we nominated all our facilities, it is likely that not all will be chosen, and the outcome would be out of our hands. We should also be aware that parishes / Playing Field Trusts within the Ribble Valley may also be looking to nominate their own facilities.

4 ISSUES

- 4.1 One of the primary reasons behind the scheme is to develop a high profile project to contribute to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012.
- 4.2 There is a secondary reason for the project which is about the protection of playing fields, hence the involvement of Fields in Trust. The Council will be expected to guarantee the future use of any nominated facilities through a deed of dedication, protecting the facility as public open space.
- 4.3 By way of an incentive, Sport England have recently announced a Lottery Funding round – Protecting Playing Fields – that has ties to the 2012 Olympic Legacy and also to the QE2 Playing Fields challenge. The SITA Trust has also announced a small grants programme, primarily aimed at volunteers to help with improvements to parks and open spaces. Officers will hopefully attend the launch of these funds to determine what benefits there may be to the Council and other facilities in the Ribble Valley.
- 4.4 The deadline for applications is September this year.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources** – There are no direct implications, although there may be the possibility of future external investment;
- **Technical, Environmental and Legal** – Any application will require a Deed of Dedication;
- **Political** – members should be aware that the Deed of Dedication is in perpetuity;
- **Reputational** – If the project is to achieve the national status it is hoping, then there may be a local expectation that there are Ribble Valley facilities within the scheme.

6 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Notes the contents of the report, and considers which sites, if any, should be nominated.
- 6.2 Considers whether we wish to involve the community in nominating sites.

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For further information please ask for Chris Hughes 01200 414479