

Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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Briefing of: Councillor Steve Summers

Portfolio: Sports, Leisure and Open Spaces

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1. Sports and Leisure

The Porchester Centre

- 1.1 Works to improve the existing ground floor area of Bridgefield House (the building adjacent to the Porchester Centre) are progressing well and will complete in April 2015. The new facility will provide a flexible community space for meetings, training events and activities.

Queen Mother Sports Centre

- 1.2 Works to redevelop the reception, café and health and fitness facilities at Queen Mother Sports Centre are progressing and works will conclude in April 2015.
- 1.3 The works have relocated the reception facilities to the ground floor of the building to provide more prominence of the centre from street level and an enhanced experience for customers. The cafe facilities have been moved to a more central location within the main facility which will provide a more convenient environment for customers. Improvements to the popular health and fitness facilities include new lighting, new flooring and decoration.
- 1.4 The vast majority of works are now complete and the improvements have been welcomed by customers. The only remaining works relate to signage and branding and ventilation systems which will be completed in 2 weeks.

Improvement works to the Games Area at Queen's Park Gardens

- 1.5 The improvement works to the 'free to access' Games Area (new fencing, floodlighting and improvements to the surface) and the provision of new outdoor gym equipment at Queen's Park Gardens are progressing well and the majority of works are now complete.
- 1.6 The new courts will be spray painted in the Spring (these works are weather dependant) and the floodlighting for the MUGA will be commissioned in April (the required works by UK Power Networks have now completed and the floodlighting is expected to be commissioned in the coming weeks).

Paddington Recreation Ground- entrance improvement works

- 1.7 The improvement works to the Carlton Vale entrance at Paddington Recreation Ground (part funded through Ward budgets) are virtually complete and the new signage will be installed at the end of March.

Sayers Croft- residential block extension

- 1.8 The programme of works to create new shower facilities for one of the residential accommodation blocks at the Sayers Croft Centre is progressing well. The main building works have completed and the 'fit out' works will be completed by the end of March.

Initiatives and Events

MCC Lords Schools Offer and Launch event

- 1.9 Over 30 schools have now signed up to the programme, with a mix of school based coaching, visits to Lords and even match day ticket offers, which is excellent. Discussion with the MCC's Community Development Manager and officers has led to a plan for a more formal launch on **Monday 27th April** between 4-6pm. All Westminster schools have been invited to attend the launch.

Westminster Mile 2015

- 1.10 An ambitious target of over 8,000 participants has been set for the Flagship Westminster Mile event this year with a strong focus on promoting participation from children and families. Nearly 2,000 registrations have already been made so far which is extremely encouraging.

Place Making Awards

- 1.11 The Westminster Mile event and the new Bluebell Glade at Paddington Recreation Ground have been shortlisted for the finals of the national 'Place Making' awards. The awards event will take place on 31st March 2015.

2. Libraries and Culture

Queen's Park Library

- 2.1 Internal redecoration works have been completed at Queen's Park Library and it re-opened to the public on 3 November 2014. All works have now been completed.

Marylebone Library

- 2.3 A re-procurement exercise has been concluded by Property and the report is with the Member for Finance for approval. The scheme, including a new library is now expected to complete in Q1 2017. A temporary library will remain open at Macintosh House until the new library is ready for use.

St John's Wood Library

- 2.4 St John's Wood Library is closed from 11 to 25 March for redecoration.

Registration service

- 2.5 Twenty-three venues, including Mayfair Library and Asia House showcased their facilities in a Westminster venue open day on 15 March.

3. Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector

Volunteer Brokerage

- 3.1. The Volunteer Brokerage service in Quarter 3 continued to over perform its targets for volunteer registrations and placements. Including do-it.org registration, there were 1,032 new volunteer registrations for the third Quarter of the final year of the current contract against a target of 712 (145%). There have been a total of 255 placements for this Quarter, which has exceeded the target of 250 (102%).
- 3.2. The service contract for volunteer brokerage is due to expire in August 2015 and work is ongoing with stakeholders to re-design and re-procure a contract to commence from August 2015. The new service will reflect changes at a national level to the do-it.org platform commissioned by the Cabinet Office allowing for more local outreach to particular groups e.g. unemployed with general opportunities becoming more self-service in nature.

Team Westminster Volunteering Strategy Implementation

- 3.3. Work is on-going to implement the commitments contained within the volunteering strategy. It is expected that the Westminster Time Credits service will commence in July 2015.
- 3.4. The specification for a new Volunteering Brokerage service, which combines general brokerage with a more targeted service where the Provider will broker a volunteering opportunity based on someone's personal skills and interests is currently being developed by officers.
- 3.5. The Team Westminster Flagship Volunteering Programme has entered the final stages of procurement. The flagship Team Westminster Ambassadors and Team Westminster Active programmes will replace the existing 'City Guides' events volunteering and 'A City Transformed Through Sport' programmes. The programme will also include Team Westminster Community Action, a scheme focused on creating a pool of locally registered volunteers that can be called on to get involved in major social action days across the city. It is expected that the new Team Westminster Flagship Volunteering Programme will commence in August 2015.

4. Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries

Broadly Street Gardens

- 4.1 The drainage and flood improvement works at Broadley Street Gardens have been completed with full re-instatement taking place. Additional planting and landscaping has also been incorporated into the design.
- 4.2 The Council's grounds maintenance contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd, was responsible for the design and sourcing of the new planting arrangements. A&N Contracts worked with park officers to find a solution to the continued flooding of a low lying pathway. A soak-away has been created and full re-landscaping of the area followed, to date this approach appears to have fully resolved the problem.

Tamplin Mews Gardens

- 4.3 Construction of the new play area is well under way and completion is expected in early April. The design of the play area was subject to extensive public consultation led by the Friends of Tamplin Mews Gardens with all works being fully funded by Thames Water. Some additional park benches will also be installed and other minor improvements made. The parks contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd, will also be arranging bulb planting sessions with local residents and schools during Spring/Summer.

Causton Street Play Area

- 4.4 The old paddling pool has been decommissioned and the area filled in. A new interactive ground level play splash area is being created with completion expected by the end of April. The new design specifically reduces the risk of trips and falls by very young children whilst enhancing the play experience.

St Georges Square

- 4.5 Following the winter storms in 2014 the park staff accommodation was demolished by a large falling tree; a successful insurance claim for a replacement building and improved building has been installed and is fully functional. The area around the park fountain has been re-paved with planting areas incorporated to include sustainable planting. The re-turfing at St Georges Square dog walk area has also recently been completed.

Westbourne Green Open Space

- 4.6 The old shrub area running along Harrow Road which had become very old and tired has been split into several zoned areas for replacement. The first zone has been completed with the old shrub material being removed, the area levelled and grass seed applied. A new native species hedge will be planted along the road side to encourage greater bio-diversity. Further replanting will be taking place over the coming months along the length of the perimeter.