

**Report of the Director of Public Health**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 12 December 2012**

**Subject: Health and Wellbeing of people living in Hyde Park and the need for local schools and community to access decent sports facilities.**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):</b> Hyde Park & Woodhouse and Headingley		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

**Summary of main issues**

1. This report responds to the recent deputation to Full Council concerning the Hyde Park Olympic Legacy Group. The deputation raises important issues about the health and well being of the residents of Hyde Park, the provision of public green space and the potential negative impacts that could occur as a consequence of its development.
2. The report concludes that the planning and access to sports facilities are important for the health and wellbeing of Hyde Park residents and the Council's Executive Board is asked to support the ambition for the Victoria Road playing fields to be retained for community use.

**Recommendations**

Whilst recognising the separate role of the local planning authority the Executive Board is recommended to support the principle of retaining the Victoria Road playing fields for community use due to the important role that green-space provision can make to health and wellbeing.

## **1.0 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report seeks to describe the key issues impacting on the health and wellbeing of the residents of the Hyde Park area in respect of the role of the Council as the lead organisation to improve health and reduce health inequalities locally.
- 1.2 This report highlights how the availability of the green space provided by Victoria Road playing fields is central when considering the needs of this community.

## **2.0 Background information**

- 2.1 This report is written in response to the recent deputation to Full Council concerning the Hyde Park Olympic Legacy Group. The deputation outlines the importance of health and wellbeing in Hyde Park. Indeed, the Leeds City Priority Partnership Plan includes indicators to improve health and wellbeing. These include increased healthy life expectancy for all, and reduction in the differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities. Achieving these outcomes will be a measure of the success of actions taken across the whole business of Leeds City Council and partners.
- 2.2 The new Health and Social Care Act 2012 (HSCA) Section 12 states that each local authority must take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area. Planning policies and planning decisions are not exempted from this new mandatory requirement.
- 2.3 The health of people living in Hyde Park has been outlined in the Leeds Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The Victoria Rd playing fields (the potential residential development) are situated in the centre of a residential area that houses a high density of people living with greater socio-economic disadvantage than the average for Leeds in a built environment of predominantly terraced properties with little or no amenity garden space. The consequent impact of this disadvantage is to increase the physical and mental health problems that affect the population, and ultimately lead to higher levels of premature mortality (before age 75 years). The rate of premature mortality is higher than the average for Leeds with the principle causes identified as cancers in both men and women and Cardio-Vascular Disease in women.
- 2.4 People from Asian background make up 17.5% of the residents of living in the area (three times higher than the population across Leeds). This population group experiences higher levels of diabetes and cardio-vascular disease. These conditions can be prevented or controlled by people increasing their levels of physical activity.
- 2.5 Local child obesity rates are among the highest in Leeds. The Head teachers of six local schools submitted objections to the recent planning application to build on the protected playing fields on the grounds that it would lead to the permanent loss of sporting facilities to this community. They noted in particular that three primary schools in this area have no playing field space at all. Retaining the Victoria Road site in an area which is acknowledged as having inadequate playing fields would

provide a golden opportunity to support local children and families in being more active.

- 2.6 There is an acknowledged deficiency in recreational open space. The Council recently conducted a PPG17 survey of recreational land, which accurately identifies the locations of recreational open space. This analysis did not include the accessibility of such open space, much of which is in private hands and is not presently available to the public. The accounting boundaries for the PPG17 survey subdivide the most deprived areas of Leeds. When these factors are taken into account the deficiency of recreational open space in the vicinity of the former LGHS site is even more severe than previously recognised.
- 2.7 Members will be aware that a planning application for the Victoria Road site as a potential residential development was recently submitted, but subsequently withdrawn by the applicant. It may well be the case that a further application is made in due course, which will need to be considered by Plans Panel on its merits, in the context of existing planning policy. Accordingly, any support that Executive Board may give to the future use of Victoria Road for recreational purposes is separate to and does not restrict the role of the Local Planning Authority.

### **3.0 Main Issues**

The substance of the deputation covers a number of areas relating to health and wellbeing, however, two particular points to note are Sport and Active Lifestyles and improving health and wellbeing to address health inequalities. Both of these aspects are considered below.

#### Sport and Active Lifestyles in the City

- 3.1 The Council has a long tradition in providing and encouraging the development of sport in the city from grass roots right through to the elite performers, including our Olympic and Paralympic medallists from these years London Olympic Games. This commitment has helped Leeds reach 13<sup>th</sup> of all local authority areas in terms of Sport England's latest "Active People" survey and by far the most active of all the core cities. This achievement is not solely down to what the Council directly provides, rather its is a reflection of the wider sports community including voluntary sector, colleges, professional clubs, coaches, public and private sectors.
- 3.2 In the context of large scale budget reductions the Council remains committed to providing sustainable sports opportunities. In September 2012 the Council's Executive Board approved a report titled 'Inspire a Generation' which made a number of recommendations to maximise the legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games by increasing participation in sport and physical activity to contribute to improving health in the City. The report references a number of city wide initiatives that could seek to extend opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity and includes extending rate relief for voluntary clubs and providing a legacy fund. The report also included reference to exploring ways of offering more opportunities to local people where levels of participation are lowest and where there may not be traditional sports facilities.

3.3 By way of illustrating current development work in the area the Council is seeking to maximise the use of community recreational facilities located near to the former LGHS site including Woodhouse Moor, which has a skate park and is used essentially as common land and an open green space that is ideal for informal use such as kite flying, dog walking and 'kick-about' football. A number of community sports clubs are also located in the area including Hyde Park Harriers, Hyde Park Rovers Junior Football Club and Hyde Park United. The council's Sport and Active Lifestyles Service has officers who can support these clubs to increase participants.

Improving health and wellbeing, and reducing health inequalities

3.4 The relationship between the availability of sports facilities, exercise and public health is important. Moreover participation in physical activity such as sports and walking is strongly related to household income. There is an association between reducing levels of physical activity and decreasing household income with the potential to increase health inequalities.

3.5 The presence of the urban green space provided by the playing fields can impact positively on the health of the local population in many ways. Proximity and accessibility of green spaces to residential areas leads to:

- increased overall levels of physical activity across age groups which contribute to the prevention of many health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, some cancers and osteoporosis
- improved mental health and well-being providing effective relief from everyday stress, improved self esteem, and alleviation from anxiety and depression
- increased opportunities for education, social inclusion and cohesion by supplying space for social mixing, creating networks and relationships. Playing in local green spaces helps children to develop intellectually and learn about social interaction
- a contribution to reducing flood risk, reducing atmospheric pollution and traffic/residential noise.

3.6 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance makes recommendations for Local Authorities to support people of all ages to be more physically active in order to meet their new public health responsibilities. Specifically, the recommendations can make a positive impact on a range of indicators identified in the public health and the adult social care outcomes frameworks.

3.7 Whilst the Victoria Road site has had fairly limited public use in the past, this does not mean that this amenity should not be made available to the public in the future. The presence of a visible and useable urban green space could significantly contribute to the health and wellbeing of local people in this community.

3.8 The views of the Planning Inspectorate in relation to the application that has already been permitted within the former Leeds Girls' High School site are noted. However, the Planning Inspectorate's comments were made before the Health and Social Care Act 2012 came into force. Any future planning applications for this site will

have to be considered in light of the implications of that Act and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **4.0 Corporate Considerations**

Development on the former Leeds Girls High School land would have significant direct impacts on health and wellbeing and on the Council's ability to fulfil its duties under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

#### **5.0 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

Equality is central to in terms of sports, recreation and green space provision in the inner areas and it is acknowledged that less advantaged communities in the city have poorer access to facilities.

#### **6.0 Council policies and City Priorities**

Relevant Council policies and City priorities are referred to above

#### **7.0 Conclusion**

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, Leeds City Council will have a new duty to take such steps as it considers appropriate to improve health.

The provision of public recreational playing green-space is an important factor in the health and wellbeing of local communities, particularly in the urban core of the city. This is a material planning consideration and will form part of making a balanced planning judgement.

#### **8.0 Recommendations**

Whilst recognising the separate role of the local planning authority the Executive Board is recommended to support the principle of retaining the Victoria Road playing fields for community use due to the important role that green-space provision can make to health and wellbeing in a community which is acknowledged as having a deficiency in sports facilities and pitches.

#### **9.0 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

---

<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.