



**Executive**  
18 March 2008

**Report from the Director of  
Environment and Culture**

Wards Affected:  
Kenton

**Petition - Woodcock Park**

Forward Plan Ref: E&C-07/08-045

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report is in response to a petition presented to Brent Council with regard to the current condition and future of Woodcock Park.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members note the content of the report.

**3.0 Detail**

***Background***

- 3.1 Woodcock Park is situated off Woodcock Hill, Kenton HA3 and is situated south of the Wealdstone Brook. This open park is the second section of land which formed part of the grounds of Kenton Grange built as Kenton Lodge in 1803-7 and opened to the public in 1952. It is approximately 11ha in size.
- 3.2 The park facilities include a popular Bowling Green and Club, Children's Playground and has disused Tennis Courts and a hard standing areas adjacent to St Gregory's School. The park is categorised as a Local Park within the Brent Parks Strategy, and as Public Open Space within the Authorities Unitary Development Plan.

3.3 The petition was compiled by local residents who are keen to see improvements made to the park; the main points of the petition are

- Rubbish generated in the park and surrounding area
- Lack of facilities
- Acts of vandalism and lack of maintenance of the facilities

In addition to these matters raised in the petition an accompanying letter also requests that

- Permission be sought from Brent Council for local residents to seek lottery funding to renovate the park
- Request that the tennis courts be fully restored as a local amenity
- Lack of toilet facilities
- Introduce flowers into the park
- Lack of disabled children's play equipment
- Establishment of a full time Warden Service in the park

### ***Current Position***

3.4 Upon receipt of the petition regarding Woodcock Park, Brent Parks Service, Head of Service met with the petitions author and undertook a site visit to Woodcock Park in the company of one of the local Ward Councillors.

3.5 This park, like many of Brent Parks, has suffered over the years with a lack of investment in its infrastructure. Boundary fencing, paths, hard surfaces and the tennis courts are in a poor state of repair.

3.6 However grounds maintenance in the park is to a good standard and there was little evidence of litter and graffiti at the time of the visit. Grass areas were well maintained as were tree and shrub areas. The children's playground is well maintained, clean and safe. There was some evidence of debris in the Wealdstone Brook.

3.7 In response to reported problems in the park with regard to litter and nuisance caused by local school children, Brent Parks Service Mobile Warden Service has been in attendance during most lunch hours during school term time, over the past 12 months. The Warden Service has also undertaken joint working with Brent Animal Welfare Unit promoting responsible dog ownership in this park.

### ***Conclusions***

3.8 Where possible the Parks Service will undertake work to address the issues raised by the petition. However, some of the issues require capital funding which is not available to the service. In summary, the Parks Service will address the actions as follows:

- *Rubbish generated in the park and surrounding area*

The park is regularly maintained and litter cleared and additional resources have been allocated to this park in response to previous reported problems, with additional and regular visits by the Parks Mobile Warden Service. The Head of Service has also met with the Head Teacher and Governors of St Gregory's School to try and encourage teaching staff to help monitor student's behaviour and encourage litter picking.

- *Lack of facilities* - The Parks Capital programme has provisionally allocated some funding in the 2010-11 financial year to upgrade tennis facilities in the park.
- *Acts of vandalism and lack of maintenance of the limited facilities* - Vandalism does occur in the park and in particular graffiti attacks happen on a regular basis. Brent Parks Service staff remove graffiti as and when it occurs. The tennis courts on this site needs new fencing and resurfacing and this work has been provisionally scheduled for 2010-11. The children's playground is regularly inspected and maintained to a good standard. Grounds maintenance on this site is to a good standard.

3.9 In direct response to issues raised in the petitioner's letter,

- *Permission be sought from Brent Council for local residents to seek lottery funding to renovate the park* - Brent Parks Service is more than happy to work with local residents to seek improvements to the park.
- *Request that the tennis courts be fully restored as a local amenity* - The tennis courts have been provisionally scheduled for upgrading as part of the Parks Service Capital Programme, 2010-11.
- *Lack of toilet facilities* – As this is a local park the majority of park visitors are local residents and live nearby and this is not a priority park for new toilet facilities.
- *Introduce flowers into the park* - The Parks Service is happy to work with residents to introduce more flowering plants.
- *Lack of disabled children's play equipment* - The children's playground does not specifically cater for disabled users, however facilities for disabled users are considered as a matter of course and as part of BPS future playground specification and requirements.
- *Establishment of a full time Warden Service in the park* - The park receives regular visits from the BPS Mobile Warden Service particularly during school term time but other parks are seen as a priority for the full time Warden Service.

3.10 The current Parks Strategy is due to expire in 2009 and Officers will be drafting a replacement strategy (2009-2014) during the forthcoming financial year. This strategy will consider the state of the assets across all the boroughs parks and the level of

funding required to refurbish existing facilities and develop new ones. Woodcock Park will obviously be considered as part of this process.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 Estimated costs to upgrade the facilities are as follows:

### ***Capital Costs***

Tennis Courts	£85k
Hard standing	£45k
Footpaths	£10k
Furniture	£25k
Fencing	£20k
Playground	£40k

### ***Revenue Costs***

Warden Service                      £56k [to operate all daylight hours]

4.2 With the exception of a provisional allocation in 2010/11 for the tennis courts, there is no funding within the Environment and Culture Capital Programme to meet the other costs outlined at 4.1 above. If there was a decision to undertake any upgrade of the facilities the required funding would have to be made available from existing provision through re-prioritisation of other allocated schemes or through the identification of additional resources. Funding for a full time, static Warden Service at the site would have to be subject to a growth bid on the revenue budget.

4.3 Where possible Officers will seek external funding to improve facilities in Parks, although due to its location it is unlikely that many grant schemes will fund developments in this area.

## **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 The Council has power pursuant to section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide such recreational facilities as it thinks fit. This power includes the power to provide buildings, equipment and assistance of any kind.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening and Officers believe that there are no diversity implications

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

7.1 None.

## **8.0 Background Papers**

Petition.

**Richard Saunders**  
**Director of Environment and Culture**

**Shaun Faulkner**  
**Head of Service**