

Public Questions for City Executive Board - Thursday 16 June 2016

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Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground Car Park Extension Responses to Ms J Harley's Questions

My first question is – who made this request?

The Head of Direct Services as part of the budget carry forward and new bid process.

My second question is – where, exactly, is it envisaged that the Car Park will be extended? Into Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground? Or on its present footprint in an upwards or downwards direction?

It is envisaged that the car park will be extended by using grass grids from the end of the current car park towards the pavilion. A planning application will be submitted in due course if this bid is approved.

The Marsh Recreation Car Park is supposed to be a public car park, for the general public, not a private car park for Depot staff, which is what it actually seems to be. Last summer, planning application 15/01661/CT3 was submitted by the City Council for “Part change of use of recreation ground for external storage of stacked wheeled bins, creation of porous hardstanding, with ancillary fencing and landscaping to increase storage capacity for the Council Depot, for a temporary period of up to 5 years (Amended site plan) | Oxford City Council Depot Marsh Road Oxford Oxfordshire OX4 2HH”. Thanks to a concerted campaign by local residents objecting to this application because of its proposed encroachment into the Park, this application was eventually withdrawn. In the light of this, my third question is – why is this proposal, which presumably will also try to take part of the recreation ground, being made at all? This is effectively trying to achieve the same effect as withdrawn application 15/01661/CT3 by stealth. Any attempts to encroach onto any part of the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground will be met with strong opposition from local residents.

This is not an application to extend the depot. It is an application to enlarge the public car park for recreation users and Direct Services employees and reduce parking problems in the neighbourhood.

My fourth question is – if £132,000 is available to spend on Cowley Marsh Car Park, why can't this be spent on repairing or strengthening the stone pillars and fencing at the entrance to the Park and surrounding the Car Park, restoring them to their rightful glory, so that the unsightly supporting temporary fencing can be removed?

Part of the expenditure will be used to make the current surround safe and therefore enable the temporary fencing to be removed.

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