

## Appendix A

### Community Services Committee – 15 June 2023

#### Agenda Item 5 – Question submitted under Standing Order 30

##### Question from Councillor Bilton

Councillors in Caterham are receiving regular complaints from both residents and hirers of Queens Park about the new grass cutting schedule.

Put simply, 4 weekly cuts are not frequent enough. I understand we are trialling longer intervals, but so far feedback from all users is that this is insufficient. Hirers are of the opinion that the facility they are paying to hire is not fit for purpose most of the time and being asked to pay over and above their hire fee for the facility to become fit for purpose is wholly unreasonable. I have to say I agree with them.

Over and above this, we are no longer providing safe space for our residents, particularly those with small children. It's bad enough that the play park equipment is closed until the summer holidays, but families are now not even able to kick a ball about for fear of their children treading in something unpleasant, or standing on broken glass or cans, that can't be seen because the grass is too long.

At what point do we accept that the trial is failing and reinstate fortnightly grass cutting?

##### Response from the Deputy Chief Executive

We are aware of several groups who use Queens Park, however none actually hire and pay to use the park.

The street cleaning team have been out to Queens Park on a daily basis, and there have had no concerns raised by them or to them of broken glass and cans on the grass. The Park was mown earlier this week. I would encourage residents and Councillors to notify us of any issues as soon as possible, so that we can get teams out to assess and clear directly. This can be done through [Tandridge.gov.uk](http://Tandridge.gov.uk) under 'Report' or through calling Customer Services.

We very much appreciate families' frustration with the play area being closed and thank residents for their patience.

Due to age, the playground bark is deemed unfit for purpose as a safety surface under the playground units within Queens Park, Mint Walk, Whyteleaf Rec, and Jenners Field and a programme of work has been set up, so the old playground bark is being replaced. We have now completed the procurement and appointed a company to progress.

As agreed by this committee, we have made provision to do additional grass cuts or provide some flexibility in the schedule when requested by hirers. We have responded to a couple of requests to date, for example Bushy Croft Playing Field (in old Oxted) was mown a week earlier than normal for a football tournament. And the Colin Anderson Playing Field (in Dormansland) in which the contractor mowed the field and the grounds staff cleared the excess grass laying on the field.

In terms of the length of the trial, we need to continue this for the grass cutting season, so that we can measure the full impact over that timescale.

## Appendix A

### Supplementary question from Councillor Bilton

In terms of the bark, should this not have been replaced in advance as we would have known the age of it?

Have the additional cuts that have been requested been paid for by those who have requested them or are they just an additional cut?

### Response from the Deputy Chief Executive

The additional cuts are where hirers have requested it because it has stopped them playing sport. It is not an additional fee on top of their hire fee.

Lessons have been learnt in terms of playgrounds and in the autumn we will be looking more strategically at all our play areas to understand the works that need to be undertaken on them.