

Meeting	Full Council
Date	20 th January 2026
Report Title	Cloverlands Open Space
Agenda Reference	15
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Officers Recommendation

1. To note the report and give some steer on next actions in relation to this report balancing the needs of all residents and in compliance with operational considerations.

Purpose of Report

To inform Members of complaints and representations received in relation to football activity and the presence of football goals on Cloverlands Open Space, to summarise the investigation undertaken by officers, and to outline the actions taken to date.

Background

The Council received a complaint from a resident of Cloverlands regarding children playing football directly outside his property on the adjacent communal open space. The complaint raised concerns relating to disturbance, proximity to the dwelling, and the placement and condition of football goals. Cloverlands Open Space is a shared amenity intended for recreational use by residents, including informal play by children.

Investigation

Following receipt of the initial complaint, officers undertook an investigation which included:

- A site visit to Cloverlands Open Space
- Consideration of the location, condition, and ownership of the football goals
- Assessment of operational, health, and safety implications
- Consultation with the Parks & Open Spaces Team regarding maintenance requirements

The investigation identified that while the use of the open space for children's play is appropriate and encouraged, the current football goals present operational challenges, particularly during the spring and summer maintenance season.

The Parks & Open Spaces Team advised that the goals obstruct the safe use of ride-on mowing equipment and cannot reasonably be removed and replaced during each visit. The fragile condition of the goals also increases the risk of damage during routine maintenance, which may lead to disputes or potential liability concerns.

Consultation Letter Issued

As a result of the investigation, a consultation letter was issued to residents of Cloverlands outlining:

- Concerns regarding the condition and appearance of the football goals
- Operational challenges faced by the Parks & Open Spaces Team
- The importance of maintaining safe and well-managed communal areas
- The Council's support for children's outdoor play, balanced against consideration for neighbouring residents
- That failure to remove the goals may result in them being treated as fly-tipped items and removed ahead of the spring maintenance season



PCSO's

The PCSO's have been contacted and asked to patrol the area or give any additional comments on how this neighbourly issue can be addressed.

Further Representation Received

Following the issue of the consultation letter, a further representation was received from another neighbour, submitted with the permission of the family who own the football goals.

The representation set out an opposing view, highlighting that:

- The football goals are privately owned by a local family and used by their child
- The child's use of the green space provides positive benefits to wellbeing and development – *the area is on a slope, and the goals were being vandalised at the bottom of the open space*
- The child is respectful, causes no issues, and often includes other local children in play
- Any damage to the goals is attributed to vandalism rather than misuse
- The positioning of the goals allows for parental supervision
- Greater emphasis should be placed on supporting positive outdoor activity for children
- Open communication between residents may help resolve concerns amicably
- Consideration could be given to repairs or replacement of the goals through community or charitable support

The neighbour also offered to facilitate further discussion if helpful.



Officer Consideration

Officers acknowledge the points raised in the further representation and recognise the importance of outdoor play for children and the positive use of communal open spaces.

However, the Council must also consider:

- Its responsibility to maintain land safely and efficiently
- The operational limitations of the Parks & Open Spaces Team
- The condition, appearance, and non-authorised placement of privately owned equipment on communal land
- The need to manage shared spaces in a way that is fair and consistent for all residents

The concerns raised are not related to discouraging children's play, but to the practical and operational implications of the football goals remaining in their current condition and location.

**Current Position**

No immediate enforcement action has been taken. The Council has sought to engage residents through consultation and to encourage a cooperative resolution.

Officers will continue to monitor the situation and assess whether the goals are removed voluntarily. Should they remain in place and continue to pose an operational issue, removal may be required ahead of the spring maintenance season.

The Chairman was willing to meet with the residents to be in an informed position at the time of the meeting in which neighbours are welcome to attend.