

SERVICES DELEGATED COMMITTEE

MINUTES

(Open to the public)

Monday 11 April 2022

Council Chamber, 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell.

Commencement 6.34pm

Attendance

Councillor Lisa Hollingsworth (Chairperson)
 Councillor Jane Addis (Mayor)
 Councillor Jim Parke
 Councillor Felicity Sinfield
 Councillor Victor Franco
 Councillor Wes Gault
 Councillor Di Gillies
 Councillor Cynthia Watson
 Councillor Susan Biggar
 Councillor Garry Thompson
 Councillor Nick Stavrou

Apologies Councillor Garry Thompson (Leave of Absence)

<u>Officers</u>	Phillip Storer	Chief Executive Officer
	Christine White	Acting Director Places and Spaces
	Gail Power	Acting Director Community Support
	Scott Walker	Director Urban Living
	Mans Bassi	Director Customer and Transformation
	Amy Montalti	Chief Financial Officer
	Andrew McHugh	Manager Health and Wellbeing Services
	Paul Mitchelmore	Manager Civic Services
	Ashlee Camm	Acting Executive Manager People Culture and Development
	Adele Thyer	Acting Manager Governance and Legal
	Wendy Smith	Social Policy Consultant
	Penelope Shaw	Senior Coordinator Community Wellbeing
	Dianne Yans	Projects and Strategy Officer
	Elizabeth Manou	Senior Governance Officer

Table of contents

1.	Adoption and confirmation of the minutes	3
2.	Declaration of conflict of interest of any councillor or council officer	3
3.	Presentation of officer reports	3
3.1	Child Safe Policy	3
3.2	Victoria Park proposal whether to remove gates on the fence at the North Oval	4
4.	General business	7
5.	Urgent business	7
6.	Confidential business	7

1. Adoption and confirmation of the minutes

MOTION

Moved Councillor Addis

Seconded Councillor Gillies

That the minutes of the Services Delegated Committee meeting held on 14 February 2022 be adopted and confirmed.

CARRIED

2. Declaration of conflict of interest of any councillor or council officer

Nil

3. Presentation of officer reports

3.1 Child Safe Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to present the Boroondara Child Safe Policy (the Policy) for adoption.

Background

In March 2021 Council adopted a Boroondara Child Safe Policy. Since that time, a new set of Child Safe Standards (the Standards) have been released by the Victorian Government and these have been incorporated into the Policy. The updated Policy is contained in **Attachment 1**.

Key Issues

Key changes arising from the new Standards include new requirements:

- to involve families and communities in organisations' efforts to keep children and young people safe,
- to provide a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people,
- to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments; and
- to provide greater clarity on the governance, systems, and processes to keep children and young people safe.

The current seven Standards will be replaced by eleven new Standards which come into effect from 1 July 2022. The changes have been made to support greater national consistency, reflecting the National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation developed following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Council is in the process of being certified as a child safe organisation by the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF). As part of the certification process, the expectations for all parties bound by this policy are referenced in section 4.6.

The Boroondara Child Safe Policy has also been updated in line with the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31.

Next Steps

Once adopted, the Policy will be placed on Council's website.

There were no speakers wishing to make submissions to Council for this item.

MOTION

Moved Councillor Gillies

Seconded Councillor Sinfield

That the Services Delegated Committee resolve to:

- 1. Adopt the Boroondara Child Safe Policy.**
- 2. Place a copy of the Boroondara Child Safe Policy on Council's website.**

CARRIED**3.2 Victoria Park proposal whether to remove gates on the fence at the North Oval**Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of the feedback and an assessment of the key findings identified from the community consultation on whether to remove the gates from the fence on the North Oval at Victoria Park, Kew. The Report also assesses several other considerations relevant to Victoria Park and its shared usage amongst the various community stakeholders. Following the community consultation and further assessment it is considered that the small, single gates should be removed from the fence on the North Oval.

Background

Victoria Park, Kew is a sporting reserve consisting of two ovals (North and South) with an accompanying pavilion on both ovals for competitive sport as well as being a shared space for passive exercise and dog-off lead use. The ovals are predominantly used for football (winter) and cricket (summer). Crucially the north oval has a turf wicket and turf wicket training facilities which is more susceptible to damage from dogs and attracts a more extensive turf maintenance regime. Victoria Park is also a community hub with three playgrounds including a facility at the northwest corner of the park being redeveloped into a new regional playground, multiple barbeque facilities and picnic shelters.

The park is utilised by multiple stakeholders such as sporting clubs including; Kew Football Club, Kew Cricket Club, Kew Junior Football Club, Kew Tennis Club, Victoria Park Tennis Club, Kew Croquet Club, Hawthorn Aquatic Running Group, local residents and visitors.

The Kew Cricket and Football clubs have, via a licence agreement, exclusive use of both ovals for scheduled training and matches. This arrangement aligns with Council's other sporting grounds

Victoria Park, has been designated under Council's Order No.1 Control of Dogs (Order) for over 14 years, allowing dog owners to exercise their dogs off-lead.

Victoria Park is not a designated fenced dog play area like the one recently opened at Gordon Barnard Reserve between the east oval and Boroondara Sports Complex.

Approximately five years ago, gates were installed on the North Oval (only) causing Victoria Park to become the only off-lead, fully enclosed sporting facility in the municipality.

Since the installation of the gates, tension grew between the sporting club members and some dog owners, with clubs reporting to Council ongoing concerns and issues such as damage to the playing surface, sports equipment and team member's personal items, dog owners not leaving the ground when organised sport or training commenced and continual presence of dog faeces.

During the COVID lockdowns, tensions escalated when organised sport recommenced after extended absences. Council conducted regular and sometimes daily patrols including a targeted program to educate dog owners of their responsibilities when exercising their dog off-lead and complying with the need to leave the oval when sport commenced. Improvement was noted however, issues have persisted.

The community was invited to provide feedback to a consultation in February 2022 on whether the gates should be removed from the fence on the North Oval. In addition, several multiple-choice questions were included that sought to gain a better understanding from the community on how they use the North Oval. The response was high with a total of 697 submissions. A separate letter was also submitted from the tenant sporting clubs (Kew Cricket, Kew Football, Kew Comets Junior FC).

In response to the direct question of whether the respondent supports the proposal to remove the gates from the North Oval, 52.22% supported their removal and 47.78% did not support their removal.

The multiple-choice questions provided insight into the type and extent of the shared use of the North Oval. These shared uses included to play team sport, exercise, socialise and walk and exercise a dog. Of the 404 respondents who answered the question as to how they travel to the North Oval, walking was indicated as the most likely way. The remaining 293 respondents, however, did not select an option.

The North Oval was shown to be an important location for dog owners to socialise as well as being able to exercise and mainly walk, with their dog. The result demonstrate also that dog owners access multiple other off-lead facilities with Hays Paddock, Gordon Barnard (fenced dog play park) and the Outer Linear Park being most popular.

Key Issues

- Victoria Park is not designated as a fenced (fully enclosed) dog play area like that at Gordon Barnard Reserve. Victoria Park, along with all other off-lead parks in the municipality, with guidance from an expert consultant and use of objective criteria, were assessed for their suitability for use as a fenced dog play area.

The Boroondara Dog Park Site Assessment Report from 2018, indicates Victoria Park was never considered a suitable site for a fenced dog play area.

- The installation of gates on the fence at the North Oval was done without considering the impacts on the way the reserve would potentially be used. An opportunity was not afforded to all stakeholders using the North Oval to consider the suitability of such an installation and, to provide feedback. An assessment of the suitability of the North Oval as a fenced dog play area does not appear to have been undertaken.
- As a fully enclosed oval, the use of the North Oval by dog owners has evolved and in particular, during COVID lockdowns. The change in behaviour over time by dog owners is supported by Officer observations, community complaints and findings from the community consultation process where 697 submissions were received.
- The proposal from Officers is to remove the gates from the North Oval. The North Oval and all of Victoria Park will continue to provide dog owners the ability to exercise their dogs off-lead. The Order requires when dogs are off-lead, owners must maintain effective control of their dog at all times at Victoria Park and across the municipality. It is important to note these same obligations to maintain control of an off-lead dog, apply in the fenced dog play area at Gordon Barnard Reserve.
- Key Themes from community consultation:
 - a) Safety of dogs and children
 - b) Unsafe for my health and that of my children/ Lack of personal safety
 - c) Community connection
 - d) Dog training
 - e) Convenience
 - f) Limited other options
 - g) North Oval is a dog play area
 - h) Enjoyment and recreation for dogs and children
 - i) Loss of amenity
 - j) Lack of responsible dog ownership: control and supervision
 - k) Damage
- Further considerations by Officers:
 - The primary intended purpose of the area
 - Availability of safe facilities both for on and off-lead use
 - Animal management concerns and compliance
 - Impact on Amenity
 - Neighbouring facilities.

Next Steps

After Councillor consideration and adoption of the officer recommendation at the Services Delegated Committee Meeting on 11 April 2022, the small, single gates will be removed from the fence at the North Oval.

Two speakers in support of the officers' recommendation addressed the meeting.

MOTION

Moved Councillor Stavrou

Seconded Councillor Franco

That the Services Delegated Committee resolve to adopt the recommendation to remove the small, single gates from the fence at the North Oval at Victoria Park to provide a balanced offering as a shared space between multiple user groups.

CARRIED

4. General business

Nil

5. Urgent business

Nil

6. Confidential business

Nil

The meeting concluded at 7.20pm

Confirmed

Chairperson

Date
