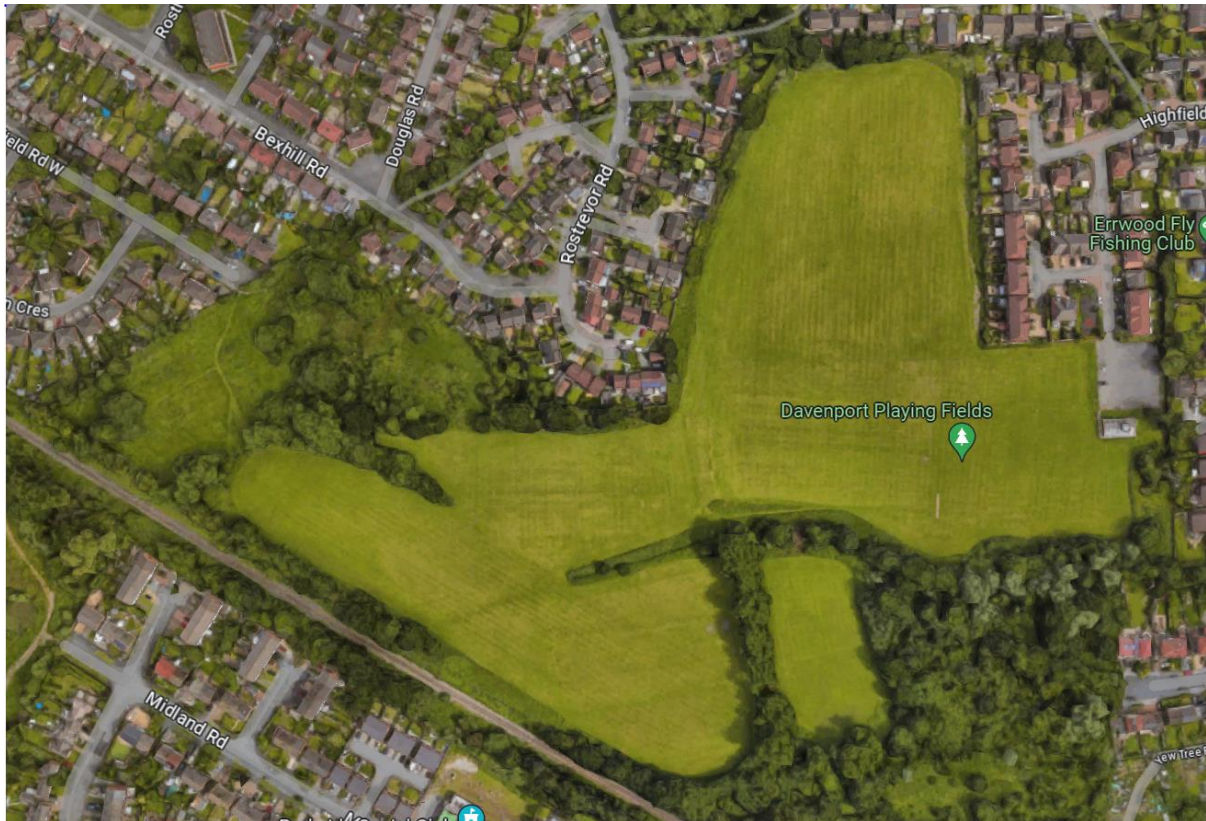


Davenport Playing Fields

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. Introduction

1.1 Davenport Playing Fields is a Council maintained area comprising of three football pitches, woodland and open space utilised by adult and youth football team and a popular area for dog walkers and recreational users.



1.1.2 Vehicle access is via Highfield Close, a height restriction barrier prevents vehicles over 1.8m entering the car park. This has been effective at preventing traveller incursions. A knee rail surrounds this car park to prevent unwanted vehicle access onto the playing fields. There are no parking restrictions in the car park – it is free to use.

1.1.3 In addition to the vehicle access pedestrian accesses are also located off Bracadale Drive, Bexhill Road and Barnfield Road West.

2.0 Background

2.1 For several years local residents have reported incidents of antisocial behaviour occurring in and around the playing area.

2.1.2 Off road bikes were a significant issue – driving at high speed, often without helmets – the unauthorised use of these bikes in this area is dangerous to dog walkers and amenity users of the fields and a noise nuisance for properties neighbouring the fields.

2.1.3 The car park off Highfield Road has also been subject to reports of anti-social behaviour – youths have been observed on several occasions climbing onto the roof of the changing rooms, normally during the school holidays.

2.1.4 The car park is relatively secluded and has attracted vehicles in the evening and during the night – with reports of drug dealing, nitrous oxide gas use and loud music being played.

2.1.5 The Police have received the following reports of asb and criminality during the 12 month period 19/10/22- 19/10/23 in the vicinity of Davenport Park Playing Fields.

D01 - Antisocial Behaviour	7
T01 - Transport related Offences/Incidents	3
G15 - Public Safety / Welfare	2
C07 - Vehicle crime	2
C13 - Other crime (inc. Shoplifting & Theft of pedal cycle))	1
P01 - Police Generated or Resourced Activity - (Opening Code)	1
G12 - Suspicious circumstances - (Opening Code)	1
C01 - Violent / Public Order	1
D04 - ASB-Communications	1
Grand Total	19

3.0 Actions taken to date

3.1 The pedestrian entrances at Bracadale Drive and Barnfield Road West have been fitted with A frames and steel gates to make it harder for off road bikes to access the fields. The knee rail around the car park also requires a bike to be lifted over the rail to access the fields. The recent trend towards electrically powered off road bikes may have made the knee rail less effective as these bikes, whilst quieter, are lighter and easier to lift over a barrier.

3.1.2 This target hardening by way of robust barriers has significantly reduced the reported incidents of off-road bike use on these fields, regrettably it has not eliminated this activity as a report was received in July this year that off road bike(s) had accessed the field.

3.1.3 These access controls do also prevent easy access to the fields for disabled users and children's buggies etc. Access is available via a vehicle gate which can be opened by teams using the fields for football games. During the winter months the fields can become very boggy and would be unsuitable for wheelchair users. When the access controls were constructed the prevention of ASB was paramount and access control was considered a proportional approach – consideration needs to be given as to whether this remains the case.

3.1.4 A litterbin was used as a step to access the roof of the changing room – this has been moved further from the building to prevent access via this route.

3.1.5 Anti climb paint was applied to the roof of the changing rooms – this paint doesn't dry, and stains the hands and clothes of those clambering across it. This was initially effective however I have observed this has been circumnavigated on several occasions. A duvet and subsequently a plastic sheet was placed over it and a ladder brought to once again access the roof space.

3.1.6 In 2022 a CCTV unit was fitted to the changing room. This unit recorded activity in the car park onto a hard drive located in the changing rooms. It was intended that the footage would be reviewed to investigate reports of ASB and criminality. Clear signage was also erected to notify all car park users that they were being recorded – this can act as a deterrent.

3.1.7 The CCTV was in place for around 6 weeks, during this time no reports of ASB or Crime were received. Regrettably the CCTV was vandalised and destroyed however the hard drive remained in tact. The most recent footage was reviewed which showed two cars in the car park at the time of the CCTV's destruction. A Public Space Protection Order in force across the borough prohibits vehicles meeting in car parks hence Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to these two vehicles as a result of this footage.

4.0 - Additional Measures for consideration

4.1 – To further inhibit access to the fields the knee rail can be raised a further 30cm to waist height. This would make lifting bikes over this barrier more challenging. The cost of this enhancement would be in the region of £10,000

4.1.2 – Following conversations with our CCTV provider Stockport Homes – options for CCTV coverage of this area have been considered.

4.1.3 Fitting a system to a neighbouring property allowing good coverage, power and enhanced vandalism prevention (out of reach) has been discounted as no suitable property has been volunteered.

4.1.4 CCTV fitted within a pole located near the changing rooms – this would provide excellent coverage and record footage locally as per the previous unit. This would cost c£1,500. There have been several examples across the borough where this solution has been vandalised – sawn off, spray painted or pulled over by a vehicle. It is reasonable to assume that a camera of this nature in a secluded location such as Davenport Park Playing Fields Car Park would be vulnerable.

4.1.5 A fully secure vandal proof CCTV pole such as the one in Adswood district centre – This would have to be at height and would provide a 'drone' view (which is not ideal for identifying faces nor registration numbers) Given the scale of reported ASB in this car park this option can't be recommended. The cost (+£30,000) would not be proportional to the issues reported.

5.0 – Funding

5.1 There is no funding available centrally for CCTV at this location. Ward flexibility funding can be used for this system should Councillors consider CCTV to be the preferred option.

5.1.2 A partnership approach to dealing with ASB is being developed across the Council. This includes the option of CCTV where appropriate. This approach will recognise that CCTV can have a role in preventing and detecting crime in some cases but also takes into account the costs involved in installation and ongoing monitoring of CCTV systems.

6.0 Recommendations

1. The existing access control methods are maintained.
2. A pole mounted CCTV system is considered as detailed in 4.1.4.