

Leisure & Recreation Committee

Report: Pembroke Gardens Landscape Project

Date: 2nd July 2026

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1. Purpose of Report

To update Members on the emerging Pembroke Gardens landscape enhancement project, present the initial community survey feedback, and seek approval to undertake further targeted consultation before any detailed proposals are brought back to Committee.

2. Background

Pembroke Gardens is a significant open space within Moredon, currently used for walking, dog walking, children's play, informal recreation and general open space.

An initial concept has been developed to explore how the site could be improved while retaining its open character. The emerging ideas include:

- A circular walking route around the site;
- Additional seating;
- Tree planting and biodiversity improvements;
- Wildflower areas and wildlife habitats;
- Retention of large areas of open grass;
- Potential youth and recreation provision, including a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA);
- Longer-term opportunities linked to the refurbished pavilion and future community use.

The site was previously used for youth football. While there is no statutory requirement for the site to remain as a formal football facility, its historic sports use should be recognised when considering future recreation provision.

3. Initial Community Survey

An initial community survey was undertaken to understand local views on the draft ideas for Pembroke Gardens.

The survey received 15 responses. The majority of respondents were from Moredon and most respondents indicated that they visit the site regularly.

The feedback showed broad support for improvements to the space, particularly:

- A circular walking path;
- Additional seating;
- Tree planting;

- Wildflower and biodiversity areas;
- Bird and bat boxes;
- Retaining large areas of open grass.

The survey also highlighted that residents value the openness of the site and that any future design should avoid overdeveloping the space.

4. MUGA and Youth Recreation

The proposal for a MUGA received mixed feedback. Some respondents supported improved youth and sports provision, while others raised concerns about:

- Noise;
- Anti-social behaviour;
- Lighting;
- Maintenance;
- Location and impact on nearby residents.

Given this feedback, it is recommended that no firm decision is made on a MUGA at this stage. Instead, further consultation should be undertaken to understand whether a MUGA is the preferred option for youth recreation, or whether alternative provision may better meet local need.

Any future MUGA proposal would also need to consider design, surfacing, fencing, hours of use, management, noise impact and long-term maintenance.

5. Wider Stakeholder Engagement

Further engagement is recommended with:

Local Residents

To test the emerging priorities and understand concerns, particularly around noise, anti-social behaviour, lighting, open space retention and maintenance.

Moredon Baptist Church

The Baptist Church is already active on site and will occupy the refurbished pavilion. Their views should be sought on how the wider park improvements could support community use, youth provision and future activity from the pavilion.

Sport England

Sport England were consulted by Swindon Borough Council during the change of use process for the pavilion due to the site's previous youth football use. Although the site is not required to remain as formal football provision, early engagement with Sport England would be sensible to understand any views on the emerging proposals, potential sports provision and possible funding opportunities.

Young People and Local Groups

Further engagement should be undertaken with young people, local schools, youth organisations and community groups to understand what type of recreation provision would be most valued.

6. Funding Opportunities

The project may be suitable for a phased funding approach, including:

- Biodiversity and tree planting grants;
- National Lottery Community Fund;
- Sport England funding;
- Football Foundation / multi-sport funding;
- Other community and environmental grant opportunities.

National Trust

Cllr Hebden is currently undertaking engagement with the National Trust in relation to Pembroke Gardens and the wider project opportunities. Any feedback received through this engagement should be incorporated into the next stage of project development, particularly where it may assist with landscape design, biodiversity enhancement, community involvement, heritage/nature interpretation or potential partnership opportunities.

External funding is likely to require evidence of local support, community need and a clear delivery plan.

7. Delivery Considerations

Members should note the following considerations:

- Long-term maintenance costs for paths, seating, planting and any sports infrastructure;
- Ongoing management of biodiversity areas and new trees;
- Potential noise or anti-social behaviour concerns linked to youth recreation provision;
- Planning and technical requirements for any formal MUGA or significant built intervention;
- The need to retain the open character of the site;
- The opportunity to link the wider landscape scheme with the refurbished pavilion and future community use.

8. Proposed Next Steps

Subject to Committee approval, officers will:

1. Undertake further targeted consultation with residents and key stakeholders;
2. Engage with Moredon Baptist Church regarding future site use;
3. Contact Sport England for early feedback on the emerging proposals;
4. Explore funding opportunities;
5. Develop a phased project plan for further consideration by Committee.

9. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note** the initial community survey feedback;
2. **Agree** that further consultation is required before detailed proposals are developed;
3. **Authorise** officers to undertake targeted engagement with residents, Moredon Baptist Church, Sport England, young people and local groups;
4. **Agree** that officers explore external funding opportunities for landscape, biodiversity, recreation and community use improvements;
5. **Request** that a further report is brought back to Committee setting out consultation findings, funding options, project phasing and any recommended next steps.