

SUBJECT:	Land at Boundary Road, Taplow Boundary Wall Stabilisation work
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services
	Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to discuss the cost of carrying out work to the boundary wall enclosing land at Boundary Road, Taplow.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The future management of this site will contribute to the Council's aim to make our environment measurably cleaner, healthier and managed in a way to preserve it for future generations.
- 2.2 This matter also progresses the aims of the Council's Asset Management Plan through working with the Parish Council.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council owns the land to the south of Taplow village and this is shown edged in shaded grey on the plan at Appendix A.
- 3.2. The site is located to the south of a residential development Wellbank and originally was part of the landscaped garden of a large house. The area is now very overgrown. The house was demolished to make way for the Wellbank housing development. Part of the original garden was retained as garden for the new development and the remaining part transferred to the Council.
- 3.3. This matter was reported to the Resources PAG 23rd March 2010. The report set out the background and suggested that the site should be made available for use by the local residents for recreation and the enjoyment of the natural environment. After considering all the information available the PAG agreed to advise the Portfolio Holder to recommend to Cabinet and Council that: -

- 1 - A 125 year lease of the land at Boundary Road, Taplow at a peppercorn rent be offered to Taplow Parish Council,
- 2 - A clause is inserted in the lease requiring Taplow Parish Council to undertake to use, maintain and secure its boundaries against redevelopment or alternative uses,
- 3 - Each side to bear their own legal costs,
- 4 - Delegated authority is given to the Resources Portfolio Holder to agree any minor amendments, in consultation with the Head of Environment.

This matter was subsequently agreed by Cabinet and Council

- 3.4. Members of the Environment PAG via email on 25th July 2010 agreed to release monies from the Gladys Jones bequest that had been left to the Council for environmental improvements in Taplow as follows:

1 - £5000 is released to Taplow Parish Council for the purposes set out in this report to fund improvements at this land.

2 - A further £2,500 might be required, to be release from the bequest subject to the results of structural survey, to carry out wall repairs to the boundary wall.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 The outstanding point to resolve with the Parish Council before the lease is completed is the large Boundary wall on the eastern boundary. This has been inspected by a structural engineer. It was found that there is build up of soil behind the wall and as a result of a mature Horse Chestnut and Yew tree immediately behind the wall that the wall has deformed significantly to require the wall to be urgently stabilised for a length of approximately 15 metres as indicated on the plan and photograph at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The Parish Council will not complete the lease until this matter is resolved. It is in this Council's interest to resolve this issue as then the Parish will complete the lease and be responsible for all future management costs.
- 4.3 The Parish Council have agreed to contribute £5,000 to the cost of repairing the wall and for SBDC to pay the remainder.
- 4.3 Various options of repair have been explored and the best solution is to remove the build up of soil, remove the trees and rebuild the 15 metre section of wall the cost to carry out this work is £12,400.
An alternative view has been explored to remove the build up of soil; demolish the wall and remove from site and replace with a closed board timber fence the cost be £10,000. It should be noted that the removal of the wall may raise local opposition for the removal of a local land mark and would require full local consultation.

The Council's Planning Conservation Officers comment is. The situation is that the wall in question is not in the Taplow Village Conservation Area. It is however within the setting of the conservation area, and it is considered as enhancing the setting of the Conservation Area . Its replacement by a boarded fence would detract from the setting of the Conservation Area. The wall is also marked in Appendix map H *Important Historic Walls* of the Conservation Area Appraisal. The text which accompanies that map (Appendix I) notes that "Taplow still has significant lengths of historic boundary walling. They are the surviving legacy of the large houses built during the 18th and 19th centuries." In the case of this wall it is virtually the sole surviving structure related to a demolished large house or gentleman's residence called Taplow Priory. The text concludes that the "Loss of these historic boundary walls would seriously damage the special interest of the conservation area". By the same token, removal of the wall would seriously damage the setting of the Conservation Area. Incidentally, I think it would also be unpopular with the Parish Council.

Therefore the wall should not be removed but rebuilt.

- 4.4 £5,000 of the cost will be met by the Parish Council plus £2,500 to be release from the bequest.

Members are therefore asked to consider releasing £4,900 from capital to fund these work.

Officers have consulted with the Council's tree officer who has agreed the required work. The work will be managed by officers

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

5.1 The financial implication is the cost of repairs to be met from capital funds.

5.2 There is a risk that should this matter not be progressed that the wall will collapse causing injury to the public.

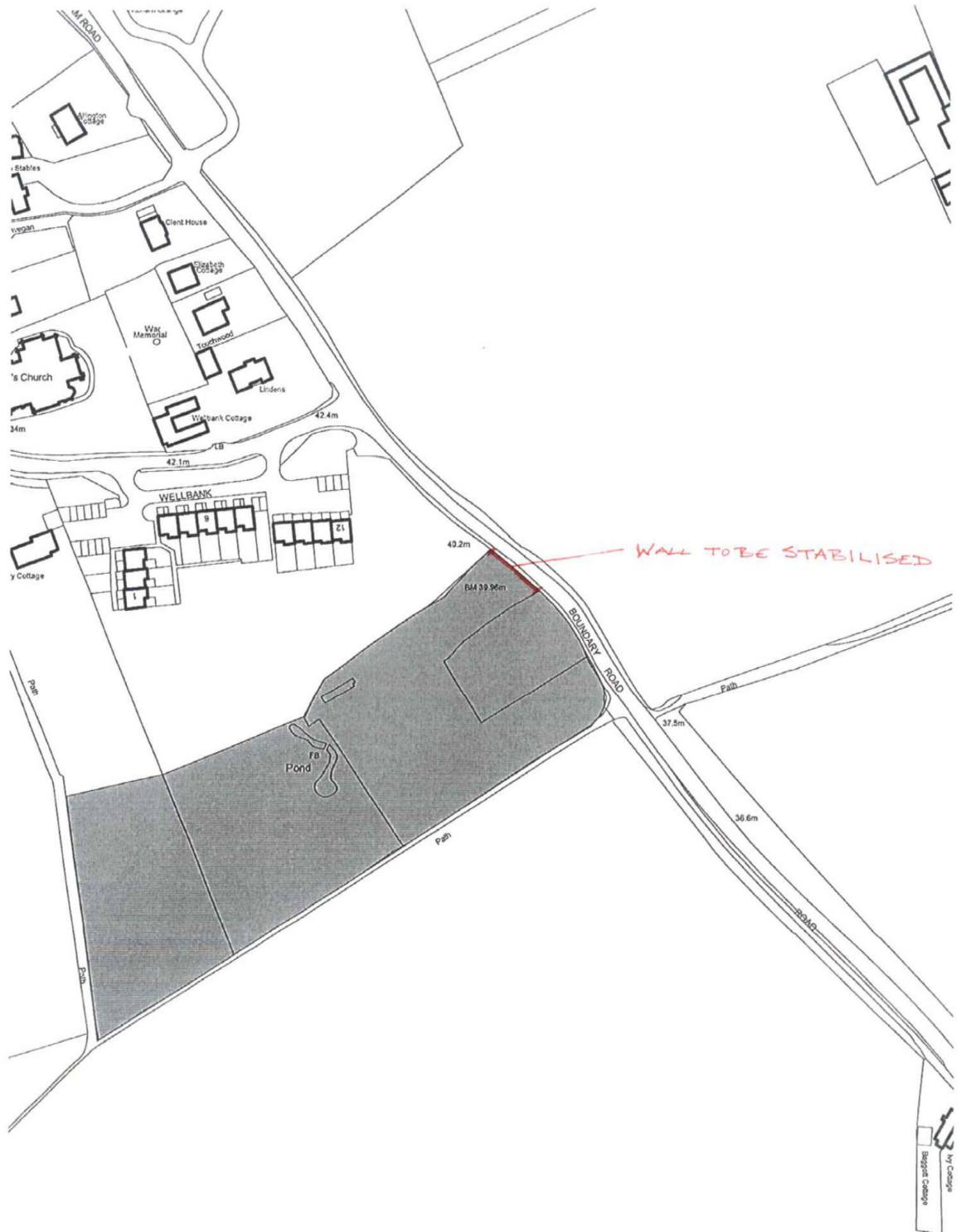
6. Summary

6.1 The Policy Advisory Group is asked to note the contents of this report and advise the Portfolio Holder as to whether £7,400 is released from capital towards the cost of the wall repairs.

This matter will require Cabinet / Council agreement

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Background papers	Services working file

Appendix A. Plan of the site showing the land to be transferred.



BOUNDARY ROAD WALL



Boundary Road Wall requiring to be stabilised or rebuild 15M Length



Boundary Road Wall requiring to be stabilised or or rebuild 15M Length



Boundary Road Wall requiring to be stabilised or rebuild 15M Length