

WOLLATON AND LENTON ABBEY AREA COMMITTEE
28 NOVEMBER 2011

Title of paper:	Highfields Park Restoration	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	John Kelly, Corporate Director, Communities Hugh White, Director, Sport, Culture & Parks	Wards affected: Wollaton East
Report author(s) and contact details:	Eddie Curry, Head of Parks & Open Spaces 0115 876 9482 James Dymond, Parks Development Manager 0115 876 9483	
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Steve Ross, Finance Analyst Vincent Bryce, Equality & Diversity	
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
World Class Nottingham		X
Work in Nottingham		X
Safer Nottingham		X
Neighbourhood Nottingham		X
Family Nottingham		X
Healthy Nottingham		X
Leading Nottingham		
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):		
<p>In order to restore Highfields Park a significant capital project is required (approx. £3.7m) and, given the call on the Council's capital resources, the external Heritage Lottery Fund's <i>Parks for People</i> grant fund is considered to be the most appropriate funding scheme to enable this work to take place in the next few years.</p> <p>This proposal has been agreed by the NCC Trusts and Charities Committee and a minute of the meeting is attached at Appendix 1.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	That the Area Committee note the contents of this report and supports the submission of a Stage One HLF bid for the restoration of Highfields Park.	
2	That the Area Committee support the creation of a Friends of Highfields Park group to support the restoration project and recommend any Area Committee members to the group if appropriate.	

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 History

Highfields Park was laid out in the early 1920s as a public park on the initiative of Sir Jesse Boot and to designs by Richard Percy Morley Horder. Its foundation stone was laid in 1922, it opened partly in 1923 and the public was given its full use in 1926. The ownership was transferred to the City Council in 1932. It is one of the first man-made, large-scale public parks of the 20th century. By virtue of its values Highfields Park was included in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest Grade II Ref GD 2771.

1.2 Current Status

Highfields Park is currently managed by the Highfields Leisure Trust. The Trust has charitable status and is governed by Nottingham City Council. Nottingham City Council Parks and Open Spaces team currently works in partnership with the Highfields User Group to manage and develop the Highfields park site. The group reports to the Trust and meets quarterly with representation from key stakeholders including the Civic Society, Highfields Sports Club, University of Nottingham, Lakeside Arts Centre, Croquet Club, Model Boat Club, Tennis Centre, local residents and the Police.

1.3 As a destination site, Highfields Park serves a wide audience and has a broad cross section of community involvement. The Lakeside Arts Centre is based at the Park and the University works closely with the City Council around the development of activities and education sessions and events which they organise.

1.4 Partners

As the Park's significant neighbour, the University will be a key partner in the development and delivery of this project. Its campus acts as a natural extension to the Park and both students and visitors are regular users. The City also works closely with the University on day to day management and has supported projects with staff time and recently the Friends of University Park donated funds towards the cascade planting scheme.

1.5 Highfields Park currently has a User Group who meet quarterly to oversee the park's day-to-day maintenance and improvement projects. In the future it is proposed that this group will become the foundation of a new Steering Group for the restoration project and that a separate Friends of Highfields Park group is established – this would be more hands-on and involved in activities on the park as well as commenting on proposals for the site. Citizens interested in becoming part of such a group should make themselves known to the Parks Development Officer for the site.

1.6 The Restoration Project

The project consists of a comprehensive programme of restoration works designed to fully restore the Park, build upon its heritage and create a community facility for the 21st century.

1.7 In 2009 and 2010 a series of surveys of the site (including trees, heritage features and the lake) were undertaken by specialist consultants and a Masterplan produced by FPCR. These documents, including outline cost estimates, have been used to produce the proposals below which will be worked up to greater detail at a Stage One bid.

1. Landscape Restoration
2. Regenerate the community facilities
3. Community Engagement
4. Training and Volunteering opportunities

1.8 Preliminary investigations show the following elements as major costs:

Project	£
Lake Rehabilitation and management	800,000
Refurbishment and repair of existing historic building features on the site.	300,000
Boundaries and gateways - including restoration of fencing, gating and wall work within the site.	200,000
Hard surfacing and resurfacing - estimated costs for the repair of existing footpaths to be kept and the construction of new footpaths and car parks.	550,000
Furniture/signage	100,000
Vegetation and arboriculture work.	300,000
New Features.	150,000
Water park alongside new playground.	250,000
Other elements including prelims & fees	600,000
Staff costs: Park Ranger x 10 years.	250,000
Contingency	162,500
TOTAL	3,662,500

1.9 We expect the restoration project to last approximately 18 months - 2 years from funding becoming available to completion. Anticipated timetable:

- Stage 1 - Feb 2012
- Stage 2 - Feb 2013

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

2.1 Highfields Park has been prioritised as one of the parks for improvement within the Council's manifesto pledges. Recent small-scale improvements at the park include works to the cascade and a new children's playground in August 2011 – however, further works are now needed to raise the quality of the rest of the site.

2.2 As one of the City's 'destination' parks and one on a high profile route into and out of the City, the restoration of the site and citizen buy-in to it will be vital to ensure any future HLF grant success.

2.3 The restoration will contribute to the World Class, Family, Healthy, Working and Safer themes of the SCS.

2.4 The proposed project will restore Highfields Park for the benefit of Nottingham's citizens as well as visitors from further afield.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To not apply for a Lottery bid would mean that insufficient funding would be available to restore the park's historic fabric with the risk that the condition of these features would continue to decline further.
- 3.2 Other funding sources may be sought for the park's restoration but no other funds are of the necessary scale and type for the works required.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)

£

- 4.1 The total estimated cost of the scheme is estimated to be 3,662,500

Proposed Funding/Bid:

Maximum HLF parks for People Fund (90% of total cost)	3,296,250
Minimum Match Funding (10% of total cost)	366,250

- 4.2 The terms of the bid states that a least 50% of the matching funding will have to be a cash contribution of £183,125
- 4.3 The match funding required for this project is £366,000. The Capital Programme has a current shortfall of £10m and the City Council has not identified any specific funding for this project, however, alternative funding streams are currently being explored.
- 4.4 Prior to the project being entered into the Capital Programme, the project will be subject to the Corporate Project Assessment & Prioritisation Process, which is currently being finalised. It is proposed that only projects that can demonstrate a contribution to the delivery of the City Councils statutory requirements and/ or strategic objectives/ organisational priorities will be proposed for inclusion in the capital programme.
- 4.5 This report does not seek approval to commit to or to incur capital expenditure. It should be noted that at this stage the funding is not confirmed and approval to commit capital funds will be sought through the presentation of further reports in the event that the bidding application is successful.
- 4.6 Any cost incurred in submitting the bid will have to be met from existing resources and any additional revenue costs will need to be found within existing resources.

Comments from Steve Ross, Finance Analyst, 21-10-11.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)

- 5.1 The predominant project risks will be surrounding the availability of match funding (10%) and the fact that both Stage 1 and Stage 2 bids are now competitive i.e. funds are no longer ring-fenced for the project if the Stage 1 bid is successful. This presents risks relating to costs 'sunk' into the bid process up to that decision point.

- 5.2 It should also be noted that, where a grant award is given, specific conditions apply which usually bind the Council for a set number of years. Typically this entails maintaining the standards of the Park and supporting any revenue programme agreed.
- 5.3 It is proposed that this project should be taken to the Project Health Board that Major Programmes are currently establishing for appraisal so that an appraisal can be made and reported accordingly to the Corporate Delivery Board.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

- No. An Equality Impact Assessment would be carried out as part of the development of the proposal in the event of a successful HLF bid to consider relevant issues such as disability access.

This proposal would advance equality of opportunity by helping ensure the highest quality park provision to meet the needs of young people. An equality impact assessment is not required at this stage as the approval for a bid for funds for refurbishment does not amount to a new or changing policy service or function, but should be carried out if the funding bid is successful to ensure relevant equality considerations (such as disability access) are incorporated into refurbishment work.

Comments from Vincent Bryce, Equality & Diversity, 07-10-2011.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

- 7.1 None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- 8.1 Highfields Masterplan, FPCR, 2010.
- 8.2 Highfields Park Restoration: Lottery Bid Expression of Interest – NCC Corporate Leadership Team report, September 2011.
- 8.3 Highfields Park Restoration: NCC Trusts and Charities Committee – 6th September 2011.



E X T R A C T from

the minutes of the **TRUSTS AND CHARITIES COMMITTEE**

held on 6 **SEPTEMBER 2011**

RESTORATION AND REGENERATION OF HIGHFIELDS PARK

6 HIGHFIELDS PARK: LOTTERY BID EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND DELEGATED AUTHORITIES FOR HIGHFIELDS PARK AND HARVEY HADDEN STADIUM

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Sport, Culture and Parks, copies of which had been circulated, seeking the Committee's support for the submission of an Expression of Interest for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) to restore Highfields Park,. The report also sought approval of a number of delegations to the Director for Sport, Culture and Parks, both to follow up the expression of interest and to make arrangements to proceed to Stage One of the bid, and to allow day to day management and maintenance of both Highfields Park and to Harvey Hadden Stadium.

The report was introduced by Mr E Curry, Head of Parks and Open Spaces, explained that the periphery, lake and infrastructure of Highfields Park had been in slow decline over the last 20-30 years, and significant capital input in the region of £3.4 million was required to restore and regenerate the Park and its facilities. The HLF Parks for People grant fund had been identified as the appropriate funding scheme and an Expression of Interest was being prepared to kickstart the bid process.

Mr Curry confirmed that there were no risk liabilities for the City Council at this stage of the process, and, should the process proceed to Stage One, resource and other implications would be considered in detail. Mr Curry also explained that, with the establishment of the Committee, delegation to the Director of Sport, Culture and Parks was required to ensure that day to day operational and management decisions were taken effectively without constant recourse and referral to the Committee.

The Committee expressed its support in principle for pursuing capital funding as proposed, and in the discussion that followed, a number of issues were raised and points made:

- it was explained that, prior to the establishment of this Committee, decisions such as those currently being considered were taken by the relevant Portfolio Holder;

- the Highfields Users Group, which was made up of stakeholders including the Civic society, University of Nottingham, Highfields Sports Club, Lakeside Arts Centre, the Tennis Centre, miscellaneous specialist interest groups and local residents, was used as a sounding board for operational and strategic decisions taken to maintain and develop the Park. Mr Curry agreed that it would be useful to have a representative of this Committee attend meetings of the User Group;
- the Park had an active Friends Group, comprised of residents both from within and outside the City boundary;
- it was acknowledged that the development of the Nottingham Express Transit Line 2 could have a significant impact on the Park, as it was proposed to have tram stops near to the paddling pool and to the Tennis Centre;
- it was explained that, while significant improvement works had been undertaken in the Park in recent years, including valuable input from the Probation Service, the historic fabric of the Park needed a major overhaul;
- in response to a councillor's question on sources of match funding to take the process forward, Mr Curry explained that there were a number of disparate funding streams that could be explored, including seeking contributions from key stakeholders such as the university and the Probation Service;
- the Committee supported delegating day to day management and maintenance for both Highfields and Harvey Hadden Stadium;
- arising from a substantive discussion on the status and potential use of the Highfields Trust Dowry, it was confirmed that the Dowry fell under the auspices of this Committee, but that its use was subject to very specific caveats. There was consensus that it would not be prudent to make decisions on its use until Legal and Parks and Open Spaces colleagues had considered in detail both the current legal status of the Dowry and restrictions on its uses. Based on the outcome of that work, Parks and Open Spaces colleagues could then take forward detailed proposals for expenditure from the Dowry, or its yield, for the Committee's consideration.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the Committee supported the submission of a Heritage Lottery Fund Expression of Interest for the restoration of Highfields Park, it being noted that, should a Stage One application be made, further consideration by this Committee would be required;**
- (2) that delegated authority be granted to the Director for Sport, Culture and Parks:**
 - (a) to continue the preparation of both the Expression of Interest and the Stage One lottery bid, and**
 - (b) for the day to day management and maintenance, including accountability for all revenue and capital income and expenditure in line with thresholds determined in the City Council's Constitution, in respect of both Highfields Park and Harvey Hadden Stadium;**

- (3) that the Head of Parks and Spaces and the Legal Services Manager consider in detail both the current legal status of the Highfields Trust Dowry and restrictions on its uses, and, based on the outcome of that work, the Head of Parks and Open Spaces submit detailed proposals for expenditure from the Dowry, or its yield, for the Committee's consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Jones', with a horizontal line underneath.

Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director of Resources