



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 6 / 2 / 2019

To the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Street Scene and Trading Services

ELMFIELD PARK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Joe Blackham	Town	Yes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Elmfield Park is Doncaster's oldest Public Park. As an asset to the Town Centre it is extremely valuable in terms of accessible green space in a dense built environment. The park serves both the communities around the park and also any visitors to the Town Centre. The current condition of the park is passable and of a safe standard, but the quality of the provision is not comparable to that of some of Doncaster Green Flag award winning parks. It is evident that usage of the park can be improved and the park promoted and utilised for a host of beneficial reasons, including the health of the public and community cohesion. For this reason, the park has been included within one of the nine dedicated development zones of the Doncaster Urban Centre Masterplan – Development Zone 6: Parklands and Green Space.
2. To change the current image, perceptions and usage of the park a number of schemes will be required to improve the quality of provision across the park. By following the park's Management Plan, the improvement scheme will aim the park in the direction of becoming a Green Flag Award winning park, and ultimately achieve this accreditation. The scheme will address what is required to ensure sustainable provision for the future, whilst reshaping aspects of the park and improving safety - which is a key component in providing a modern accessible open space.
3. As consultation and community engagement has begun and will continue, the public's concerns, needs and requirements can be addressed; by engaging with the community throughout any development processes a renewed sense of ownership can be achieved.

4. Given there are a number of changes needed to be made to Elmfield Park, this report is seeking approval to use £342,817 of Section 106 monies from the Belle Vue housing development (Planning Ref: 13/01639/FULM) to deliver this scheme of improvements.

EXEMPT REPORT

5. No. There are no financial or commercial matters contained within this report which are of a sensitive nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. The Portfolio Holder approves the allocation of £342,817 of Section 106 monies from the Belle Vue housing development, Bennetthorpe (Planning Ref: 13/01639/FULM) to deliver a scheme of improvements at Elmfield Park, Doncaster.
7. The Portfolio Holder approves the inclusion of the Elmfield Park Improvement Scheme into the Regeneration & Environment Capital Programme and approves the draw down on the budget.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

8. For the citizens of Doncaster, investment will be accumulatively beneficial in a number of areas. Investment will target delivering enhancements based on the result from public consultation and the quality of the park set against the Green Flag standards. By taking this approach we will strive to deliver a park which both meets the aspirations of the public and which can hold itself against award winning parks.
9. By creating a space which is more welcoming it will be beneficial in the following ways:
 - **Public Health & Wellbeing:**
 - Physical - a space which encourages physical activity both gentle and energetic.
 - Mental - a space which offers areas for contemplation & access to nature. The benefits of green space have shown that they reduce stress. This can play an important part to both the residents and workforce in the surrounding area.
 - The importance of the green infrastructure on public health is often overlooked – for example; trees remove pollutants from the air & support urban cooling.
 - Elmfield Park may be the first interaction with nature for many of the Town Ward's youngest residents and the park plays a role in the development of their understanding of the natural world.
 - Public consultation has shown that the park is underutilised for exercise. By making improvements and creating an appealing park it is hoped that it will encourage users to be physically active.
 - **Community Cohesion:**
 - Parks are melting pots for communities; the park will become a

- space where all segments of the community can interact and engage. Either through organised events or general usage.
 - Through promotion, participation and interaction the accessibility of the park will aim to reduce social isolation by becoming an inviting and welcoming area.
- Improved Maintenance and Appearance:
 - By addressing the existing planting across the site and delivering a scheme which matches the existing maintenance, reflecting appropriate landscaping for a modern park, will allow the park to be kept to a better standard and improve the overall appearance.

BACKGROUND

10. Elmfield Park is Doncaster's oldest Public Park, as an asset to the Town Centre it is extremely valuable in terms of accessible green space in a dense built environment. The park serves both the communities around the park and also any visitors to the Town Centre. The current condition of the park is passable and of a safe standard, but the quality of the provision is not comparable to that of some of Doncaster Green Flag award winning parks. It is evident that usage of the park can be improved and the park promoted and utilised for a host of beneficial reasons, including the health of the public and community cohesion.
11. The Town Ward, which surrounds Elmfield Park, identifies numerous inequalities in the demographic makeup of its residents. When compared to the rest of Doncaster, and subsequently nationally, it displays much higher percentages of childhood obesity, income deprivation, child poverty and lower life expectancy. It also has a much higher than average diversity in the ethnic makeup of its population.
12. Due to these stark inequalities, Elmfield Park needs to play its part in alleviating these discrepancies and promoting a positive healthy lifestyle. Traditionally the park was popularly used for recreation and respite from the everyday trappings of life for Doncaster residents. Today, open spaces struggle to compete as an attraction in a modern, digital and commercial world. However, there are still many examples of quality open space provision up and down the country which prove invaluable in continuing to provide freely accessible recreational space. By making this investment now, revitalising Elmfield Park will take huge steps in addressing negative connotations in the wider community and raising the overall appeal of the green space.
13. Specific reference to the value of good quality open space has been made in the Doncaster Urban Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan identifies 9 Development Zones – Development Zone 6: Parklands and Green Space recognises Elmfield Park as significant parkland close to the centre which needs reconnecting to the urban centre. The Masterplan aspires to create better access to the park and improve links with the wider urban environment so it can be enjoyed by more people. It sees the Park as an important green space that should feature prominently in the annual events calendar for the town.
14. To change the current image, perceptions and usage of the park the scheme (under 5 headings) will be required to improve the quality of provision across the

whole park. By following the Elmfield Park's Management Plan, the overall scheme of improvements will aim the park in the direction of becoming a Green Flag Award winning park, and ultimately achieve this accreditation. The scheme will address what is required to ensure sustainable provision for the future, whilst reshaping aspects of the park to improve safety, which is a key component in providing a modern accessible open space.

15. This scheme has been split into 5 separate headings to maximise the overall impact:

16. Pavilion Refurbishment

Invest in the existing infrastructure of the park to enhance the pavilion so there are improved facilities, enabling the park to function in new ways, engaging with the community offering relief from social isolation and giving visitors reason to spend more time in the park. Once the refurbishments have taken place it is intended to offer the Pavilion to the 'Friends of Elmfield Park' under a community lease arrangement.

17. The Friends of Elmfield Park, although a new and developing group have already made a positive impact on the park, they have held a number of successful community engagement events. They have expressed interest in developing a horticultural group to engage with enhancing the park aesthetically as well as engaging with other local community and charitable groups to participate in activities and improve the appearance of the park.

18. New Play Area

Relocate the play area to the 'active area' as set out in the Management Plan, creating a modern play facility which meets the community's requirements for all suitable age ranges. As part of this development the old play area which is dated and coming to the end of its useful life will be removed and returned to open space.

19. Tennis Courts

The current facility is in poor state and requires rejuvenating. As part of this revamp the multifunctional possibilities of this space will be addressed to determine how other sports provision can be accommodated as part of this space.

20. Interpretation / Maps / Noticeboards

Developing a welcoming and inviting space is important for the presentation and image of the park. Through planned interpretation this can be achieved, acting as a guide and source of reference.

21. Landscaping

Whereas specific facilities cater for particular user groups, the overall visual landscape will have the largest impact for visitors; this will be the key aspect to change perceptions and creating a space where visitors feel safe and welcome. As a result of a public survey for the park, it is evidenced that visitors do not feel safe. Delivering these elements will be imperative if the scheme wishes to have the desired impact of enhancing the site's appeal and improving its usage.

22. The landscaping aspect will include:

- **Trees** - Address the need for succession tree planting across the site, taking into account the age and condition of existing arboricultural provision.
- **Arboretum** – As set out in the management plan, enhance the area designated as the arboretum and opening up for improved access.
- **Horticulture** – Address the existing planting schemes across the site to provide new schemes which are sustainable and suited to existing working practices. Mitigating any loss of potential wildlife habitat by offsetting on site. As recent boundaries have changed, address the existing planting to look at screening.
- **Site Furniture** –Address the current provision of bins/benches and other site furniture to assess condition/style and suitability.
- **Rose garden** – As a unique feature within the park the current condition of the rose garden will be addressed for potential renewal.

23. This report is seeking approval to use £342,817 of Section 106 monies from the Belle Vue housing development (Planning Ref: 13/01639/FULM) to deliver this scheme of improvements at Elmfield Park.

24. The Section 106 Agreement dated 14th January 2015, between Doncaster Council, BDW Trading Limited and Doncaster Rovers Football Club Limited required the land owner to pay to the Council the sum of £333,520 (index linked) for the shortfall of public open space on the development site.

25. The Section 106 Agreement stated the funding must be used to ‘create or enhance existing public open space in the vicinity of the development’ and would be paid in 3 tranches as follows:

£111,174 – on commencement of construction of the 45th dwelling

£111,173 – on commencement of construction of the 83rd dwelling

£111,173 – on commencement of construction of the 120th dwelling

All 3 trigger points have been hit and the full payment, index linked, has been made.

26. The S106 Agreement required the funding to be spent or committed within 5 years of receipt, which will be by the end of 2022/23.

27. A radius of up to 1.5km is generally considered to be within the vicinity of a development. Elmfield Park is an important piece of public open space located well within 1.5km of the development at Belle Vue. It is a priority park within the Borough for investment to reach Green Flag status and has the benefit of an existing Management Plan. It is therefore felt that Elmfield Park is the most appropriate site for this capital investment.

Delivery

28. This scheme has been developed and will be driven by a cross departmental working group from Regeneration & Environment, Communities & Public Health. It is being supported by the Strategy & Performance Unit.

29. The Landscape Design Team’s professional services will be employed to deliver the majority of the overall scheme. As the development of the tennis courts can be delivered between Communities and Street Scene, this section of the development will not be delivered by Landscape Design.
30. The £342,817 sum of Section 106 funding is to be allocated to the following areas as part of the whole scheme. At present the costing are estimates and are there to guide the overall cost of the scheme.

Description	Estimate Cost (£)
Pavilion Refurbishment	25,000
New Play Area Development:	
Provision	65,000
15 years maintenance	15,000
Tennis Court Improvements	70,000
Interpretation / Maps / Noticeboards	15,000
Landscaping:	118,535
• Trees/Arboretum	
• Horticultural	
• Site Furniture	
• Rose Garden	
Professional Fees (10%)	34,282
Total Cost	342,817

31. As part of the development of the play area there is a request for £15,000 to be allocated to revenue budgets for on-going maintenance. £327,817 will be allocated to a capital budget.
32. As part of the scheme investment will be prioritised against Green Flag Judging Criteria, evaluation of need and requirement via consultation and community engagement.
33. It is also thought that match funding could potentially be secured through ‘Our Heritage’ Funding for the Rose Garden. If this is the case, additional improvements could be made to the Rose Garden or some of the budget allocated to the Rose Garden could be re-directed into other areas. A final decision will be made if additional funding is secured and following consultation with stakeholders.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

34. There are 2 options for consideration in respect of the utilisation of these S106 funds.

Option 1: Utilise the entire Section 106 funds available from the Belle Vue housing development for Elmfield Park, maximising the impact and benefitting the wider community and service provision through open space improvements.

Option 2: Separate the Section 106 funds across other green spaces on smaller projects within the vicinity of the housing development.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

35. The recommended option is **Option 1**. This will maximise the impact and see wholesale improvements to Elmfield Park to support the site in its journey to achieve Green Flag Award status. There would be little impact seen if the Section 106 funds were distributed to a number of smaller green space projects in the vicinity of the Belle Vue housing development. The majority of green spaces in the vicinity are of an amenable standard and do not have the current capability of achieving Green Flag status. It is expected that with the investment and improvements, delivering a project which vastly improves Elmfield Park, it can supersede the quality of surrounding open spaces.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

36.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Supporting a healthy workforce through the provision of quality open space.</p> <p>By aiming for and achieving green flag status the park will demonstrate a benchmark of quality.</p> <p>Open the park to corporate volunteering opportunities.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	<p>Elmfield is Doncaster's oldest and most centralised public park. The park should reflect the aspirations of the town centre to be a vibrant space encouraging residents and visitors to spend time engaging in the outdoors. Elmfield has the potential to be the 'green lungs' to match the 'beating heart' of Doncaster town centre. The aim is for the park to achieve Green Flag status (an internationally recognised benchmark for quality park provision), by achieving this that park will reflect the town centre's vision to be a vibrant space of opportunity.</p> <p>The engagement for both physical and mental public health will be considered every juncture of the development to encourage and enable positive usage across the park.</p>

		<p>Natural surveillance and high visitor numbers is a major contributor to the feeling of safety on any site. This has been evidenced in borough wide consultation on parks and open spaces. Through improved quality of provision the desired outcome is one where visitor numbers increase and in turn project a feeling of safety.</p> <p>The new friends of Elmfield Park have held a number of events which have proved popular offering residents new opportunities to engage with the park.</p> <p>The Land Trust reports have shown that through quality green space provision it can have a direct impact on the value of housing in the surrounding area. Although this is not currently measurable on a local scale, the development can be taken as a positive for the ward.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	<p>Developing early motor skills are an important part of childhood; through investing in the park we will create a space which encourages outdoor engagement.</p> <p>Interpretation will be introduced, offering details of the parks history and also informing of the importance the contribution the park makes to the natural environment.</p>
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>The physical and mental health benefits of engaging with a park are across a life course of a resident. Through the management plan the park is split into 4 separate areas (Memorial gardens/arboretum/active area/open grasslands). Specific areas of the park will cater for the needs of different generations.</p>

		Parks are often children's first engagement with the natural environment, but improving the quality enables better access to this.
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	As part of enhancements to park, the services provided by Street Scene for both horticultural and cleansing standards will be addressed to deliver a scheme which is sustainable for the current workforce.

RISKS & ASSUMPTIONS

37. As a result of a failure to allocate and spend the Section 106 funds before the end of 2022/23, which is the time limit associated with the funds, the Council is exposed to claw back by the developer. This could result in a project being half finished, incomplete and the loss of a sizeable investment.

The initial risk rating is 6 = Likelihood 2 (unlikely) x impact 3 (significant)

To manage the level of risk the current working group will be working closely with the Landscape Design Team to ensure the scheme is completed in a timely manner.

38. As a result of failure to neither consult or promote the improvement works in the park, the Council is exposed to criticism and lack of site usage, this could lead the park not delivering the positive impacts set out to achieve.

The initial risk rating is 2 = Likelihood 2 (unlikely) x impact 1 (significant)

To manage the level of risk the consultation has already begun and will continue throughout the lifetime of the scheme. Work will be undertaken with the Communications Team to ensure a suitable marketing and promotion strategy is in place and carried out leading up to and during the project initiation.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [HL 03.01.2019]

39. The Section 106 Agreement in respect of the Belle Vue housing development, Bennetthorpe (Planning Ref: 13/01639/FULM) allows the Council to use the financial contribution (which was provided in lieu of the provision of an area of public open space within the development) to “*create or enhance existing public open space in the vicinity of the development*”.
40. The proposed works are considered to be in the vicinity of the housing development and would enhance the existing public open space at Elmfield Park, thus meeting the essential criteria for spending the contribution, as required by the terms of the Section 106 Agreement.
41. It is appropriate given the nature of the obligations in the Section 106 Agreement and the policy reasons that the money was sought, that the money should be used for the funding of the works as described in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

S106 reference - (13/01639/FULM) Land at Belle Vue Doncaster

42. There is currently an uncommitted balance of £360,860 on the above public open space reference, a commuted sum in relation to S106 monies for land at Belle Vue, Bawtry Road, Doncaster.
43. This project is seeking to use £327,817 Capital monies for the enhancement of the existing public open space in the vicinity of the development and £15,000 Revenue monies for 15 years maintenance costs. In addition, the agreement allows the Council to apply 5% of the full balance, an amount of £18,043 towards the cost of administering, monitoring and collecting payments attributable to this project, leaving a nil balance.
44. These monies are time limited to 2022/23 financial year, if the money committed to this enhancement project is not utilised within the time limit or not reallocated, there is a risk of claw back by the developer.

DF 02/01/19

Capital

45. The cost of the scheme, broken down in the main body of the report, is expected to be £342,817, with a capital allocation of £327,817 and revenue allocation of £15,000. S106 funding has been identified to meet these costs. Should the final cost exceed the funding allocated then additional resources would have to be identified. The scheme will be monitored as part of the Capital monitoring process.
46. The Elmfield Park Improvement Scheme is a capital project and on approval of the report, the Capital Programme will be updated to include this project.

Revenue

47. Scheduled maintenance of the park will be ongoing and met from within Street scene budgets provision. The maintenance of the addition of the new play equipment will be met from a proportion of the S106 allocation. The sum required is £15,000 over a period of 15 years.
48. It is intended, that the refurbished pavilion, will be offered up for lease, initially to the Friends of Elmfield Park Group.

49. There is no intention to change the current funding arrangements for use of any other facilities within Elmfield Park at this time.

TE 03-01-19

PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS [ZJ 03.01.2019]

50. There are no direct procurement implications for the approval of capital expenditure attached to the Elmfield Park proposal. However if funds are required to be drawn down, all activity must be carried out in line with the Council's current CPR's and Public Contract Regulations in that tenders are advertised using the ProContract portal utilising the Council's standard tender documents and are let on suitable forms of contract via prior engagement of the Authority's Legal Service Team.
51. Upon award of any tendering process the author and contract manager is responsible for completing appropriate contract award notices and the signing of contracts with winning bidders.
52. Support, guidance and assistance throughout the tender process is recommended from the outset with early involvement from the SPT

ASSET IMPLICATIONS [DS 04.01.2019]

53. Investment in the park as described within this report will support a sustainable asset for the local community. The proposed lease of the Pavilion post refurbishment to the 'Friends of' group will require separate reporting to Asset Board once provisional terms have been negotiated between the Council and the group. Any negotiated lease terms that do not confer repair and maintenance liabilities onto the group will necessitate a budgetary provision to be made to maintain the asset.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [PW 08.01.2019]

54. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [KH 03.01.2019]

55. Parks and green spaces play an important role in the health and wellbeing of the population. Not only do they lend beauty to our communities; time spent in natural environments has demonstrated mental and physical health benefits. Safe and accessible green spaces such as gardens and parks entice families and children to spend more time outdoors and natural spaces are key to people spending more time being active and socialising. Trees also help to clean and cool the air and reduce harmful air pollutants and air temperatures and provide areas for people to shade as they travel about the borough.
56. It is essential that the information gathered during the consultation previously undertaken is utilised during the development of this project and that the local community is involved on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that it meets the needs of the diverse local population.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

57. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector

Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share that protected characteristic.

58. The equality implications will be considered during the design and delivery of this scheme to ensure the requirements of those with protected characteristics are taken into account.

CONSULTATION

59. As part of the preparatory works there is a cross departmental working group developing an implementation plan. Consultation with the Town Ward Members is continuous throughout the development and delivery of the scheme. An online survey and a survey held by Friends of Elmfield Park received 95 individual responses. Consultation will continue throughout the project. Further consultation will take place as and when specific designs are developed for aspects of the park, areas such as the development of a new play area it will be vital to engage with the wider community for detailed and specific requirements.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Elmfield Park Management Plan
Elmfield Park Survey Results 2018
SWOT Analysis
Town Ward Population Demographics

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