



ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee
13 July 2021
Agenda Item 20

Key Decision No

Ward(s) Affected: Selden Ward

Brooklands Park progress update

Report by the Director for the Economy

Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report updates the Committee on the work undertaken to restore Brooklands Lake, improve landscaping, develop a new play area and new café within the park.
- 1.2. To advise members of the Committee of progress made to secure a partner to deliver a new family leisure facility on the south western corner of the park.
- 1.3. It sets out how officers are working with emphasis on activities and events within the park to improve community engagement and deepen relationships with local stakeholders who will provide long term stewardship for Brooklands in conjunction with Worthing Borough Council.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report including the progress being made against the three workstreams of the project.
- 2.2 Note the revised procurement and commercial strategy set out in paragraph 4.8

3.0 Recovering Brooklands Park - Progress to Date

3.1 Brooklands Park is a 29 ha open space, lake and leisure facility on the eastern edge of Worthing. Over recent years parks and open spaces have begun to be used differently by communities with a renewed emphasis on being attractive and welcoming for all; offering an important resource for people's physical and mental health and wellbeing; and more recently in connecting people to their wider community as relationships to place and neighbourhood evolve as a result of lockdowns and Covid-19. To meet these new emphases Worthing Borough Council have been leading local stakeholders to deliver a project to recover and renew the park by redesigning the landscaping and infrastructure; improving Brooklands Lake; and delivering new leisure, hospitality, and play facilities to ensure that it continues to serve the needs of the local community, and the town more widely.

3.2 The report below provides an update on each of the three workstreams of the project:

Workstream 1 Develop the detailed design of the Landscape, Playground and Cafe design to enable this to be tendered for delivery by the Council by entering into a construction contract.

Workstream 2 Deliver a development strategy for the Southwest Corner Leisure Opportunity by securing a partner investor who would build, own, and operate the facility. The leisure facility would need to be in line with the masterplan approved by the Committee, and contribute to the overall vitality and vibrancy of the park.

Workstream 3 Ongoing work of the Environment Service to improve maintenance and planting, and working with the Friends of Brooklands and other community groups to increase activity through events, and community projects in parallel with the major works planned.

4.1 Workstream 1 - Update on Landscape, Playground, and Cafe Project

- 4.2 The first workstream of the project focuses on increasing activity, repairing existing infrastructure, improving existing facilities and delivering a new café offer for visitors to the park. An annotated park masterplan is included below as Appendix 1 for reference.
- 4.3 The initial step focused on addressing the environmental issues arising from the lake which was putting off people from visiting. Significant progress has been made with work being undertaken throughout 2019, 2020 and early 2021 on restoring and improving the lake which was causing odours and pollution to surrounding neighbours and visitors. Work has been undertaken to address the reed beds, repair an outflow pipe that connects the park to the sea, and the installation of windmills which will lead to improved aeration of the park preventing the significant algae bloom that had been a feature of the lake previously. This key first step was undertaken to ensure that the most significant challenges to the park's amenity are addressed and were no longer putting off people from visiting.
- 4.4 The second step in this workstream is around addressing the core infrastructure of the park. This includes:
- Construction of a new play area
 - Development of a new café
 - Delivering new landscaping, planting and pathways in conjunction with the Friends of Brooklands Group
- 4.5 The detailed planning, design, and commercial procurement strategy to deliver these elements of the park has been the core focus during the first half of 2021. Officers have concentrated on ensuring that these works are achieved within the budget envelope that was agreed when the project was considered at Joint Strategic Committee in March 2020. Detailed designs for the café were worked up and considered with a planning application being submitted and approved in 2020. Detailed designs were developed for the play area, and plans developed for the key planting and landscaping elements of the project which are required to make the park more cohesive following the closure of the par 3 golf course.
- 4.6 Following an overall review of Workstream 1, it was identified that while the aspirational design for the café was laudable, it drew attention from the overall park and open space project. Commercial analysis identified that the anticipated income from leasing the café would be approximately £25,000 while the cost of construction was estimated at £1,250,000. With an estimated

forty year life span the development would not demonstrate best value for our communities as an investment. Furthermore, the capital cost at £1,250,000 would have exceeded the overall financial envelope agreed for the project in the March 2020 JSC report. Through this review it was identified that an overall more meaningful renewal of the park could be achieved by refocusing this workstream on delivering the play area and landscaping elements, by working more closely with community groups to develop aspects of the masterplan and by finding a design solution for the café that was more cost effective.

- 4.7 Taking into consideration the Council's sustainability and climate change commitments, along with a wider public sector drive to realise the benefits of modern methods of construction a new café design has been identified. A number of images of the proposed new café design is included below as Appendix 2. Officers have reviewed these designs and the quality of development and it is considered that it would be a suitable and attractive addition to the park, sitting well within the wider landscape. Adopting this modular approach will also be significantly more cost effective, ensuring that the project can be delivered within the approved budget, and will be significantly more environmentally friendly and cost effective to maintain.
- 4.8 In terms of timescales, to accelerate progress, the previous approach of sequentially tendering a number of work packages for the works has been reviewed. A new single lot tender encompassing all elements of this workstream has been designed that can ensure a coordinated and cohesive delivery from one construction firm. Should members agree the recommendation above, the following target milestones for delivery have been identified:
- July / August 2021 - tender period
 - September 2021 - contractor appointed and contractor site preparation works
 - October 2021 - commence on site (estimated 12 months programme)
 - October 2022 - practical completion

5. Workstream 2 Project - Update on Marketing of land at the South West Corner of the Site for a family leisure development

- 5.1 The masterplan's aspiration is to deliver a family and youth focused leisure opportunity on a parcel of car park and other land at the south-west corner of Brooklands. Various options were considered including, outright sale, direct delivery by the Council, and joint venture, and a development strategy was

agreed where the Council would offer the land to the market via a long leasehold interest.

- 5.2 A national marketing campaign for the opportunity commenced in February 2021 and invited interested parties to make a proposal to the Council for how they would develop a suitable facility that delivers on the Council's aspirations.
- 5.3 This marketing campaign has generated significant interest and 33 bids registered initial interest. Four formal bids were received by the bidding deadline of 14th May. The key criteria for assessing the bids focused on experience of development, experience in running similar facilities, alignment with Worthing Borough Councils wider regeneration aspirations, and, critically, how the proposed development links with the wider programme of improvement within the park.
- 5.4 Following interviews with these bidders two preferred bids were identified. To ensure that the best possible bidder is chosen further information is being sought from both parties on:
 - Construction costs and design
 - Detailed business case information to understand their proposals long term commercial viability
 - Information on their planning and design process, including how they will interact with local stakeholders and support the overall masterplan for the park.
 - Evidence of a track record on the delivery and operation of similar facilities
- 5.5 It is anticipated that a report the the 9th of September JSC committee will recommend a preferred bidder and set out their detailed proposal. Once confirmed it is anticipated that the development would meet the following milestones:
 - Autumn 2021 Planning Stage Design Work
 - Winter 2021 - Planning Application Submission
 - Spring 2022 - Planning Application Determined
 - Spring 2022 - Detailed Design and construction tender work
 - Summer / Autumn 2022 - Commence Construction
 - Autumn 2023 - Completion and Opening

6.0 Workstream 3: Working with local stakeholders to generate activity and events

- 6.1 The Environment Service's Park Rangers have seen that the recent and forthcoming investment in the park has led to new visitors, more repeat trips and an increase in overall activity in Brooklands. The Park Rangers are aware of their role in the park renewal and have stepped up their maintenance and gardening programme. The regular park planting that takes place in all our Park and Gardens has been designed to ensure that it effectively ties in with the wider landscape scheme in terms of species and location.
- 6.2 A key change in the emphasis of the project is the recognition that park and landscape projects are meant to be shaped, interpreted, used, consumed and revised over long periods of time. The objective of the masterplan is to ensure that it continues to appeal to a diverse range of publics long after its conception. This understanding has led to the consensus that citizen participation in design decision making ought to be integral to the Brooklands Project to ensure that it builds constituencies and future stewards of the space.
- 6.3 Central to this effort has been developing a new approach to engaging with park users and driving increased visits to the park. Keeping Brooklands open for use during the summer, throughout the construction period and following the redevelopment as active and immersive as possible will become an ongoing workstream.
- 6.3 A diary of events and activities is being developed to enhance the user experience of the park. This includes:
- temporary art installations, bicycle events, activity days and Ranger led events
 - Tree planting was undertaken in March to deliver the first phase of the landscape layer to ensure we get tree diversity in the park
 - The food pioneers have started with the 'Bees and Seas' project with a new compound and education space taking shape.
 - Dedicated focus from the Park Rangers to have weekly volunteer days within the park for anyone to be able access and be a part of.
- 6.4 The Friends of Brooklands Park are a very proactive and enthusiastic group. They are keen to help raise funds, alongside the Councils fundraising officer, to deliver projects within the park. We are developing a suite of short and long term projects we can work on together and are concentrating on planting

projects as well as Practical work days within the park fence removal in the first instance to help support the other workstreams.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The budget approved for the project in March 2020 was £3,177,000 funded by a mixture of CIL / S106 receipts (£150,000), £100,000 external funding and prudential borrowing.

7.2 To date £420,680 has been spent on the initial phases of the project, leaving £2,755,230 for the next stages which will include the construction of the new cafe and playground, landscaping and car park improvements. It is expected that the programme of works can be accommodated within this budget.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation.

8.2 Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows a local authority to provide either indoor or outdoor recreational facilities as it thinks fit and that includes the power to provide buildings, facilities, equipment, supplies and assistance of any kind, either without charge or on such payment as the authority thinks fit.

8.3 Section 1 of the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 provides that every statutory provision conferring or imposing a function on a local authority confers powers on the local authority to enter into a contract with another person for the provision or making available of assets or services, or both (whether or not together with goods) for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of the function by the local authority.

8.4 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council shall have the power to do anything (whether or not involving expenditure, borrowing, or lending of money, or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive, or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions.

8.5 In seeking a long leaseholder for the cafe, the Council will need to consider which route to market is most appropriate, and seek procurement advice. Regard must also be had to s123 Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's duty to obtain best consideration for the disposal, which is not limited to highest rent but may include other elements in the transaction, provided those have a quantifiable commercial or monetary value.

Background Papers

- Brooklands Masterplan; Report to 6th November 2018 meeting of Joint Strategic Committee
- Brooklands Park - Masterplan Development; Report to March 10th 2020 meeting of Joint Strategic Committee

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Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

- The proposal will have a positive impact on the economic development of our places. The redevelopment of the park into a destination park will help to attract additional visitors into the area.
- Developing a cafe to be operated by a leaseholder will deliver a revenue stream against which borrowing will be offset.
- Outside of the masterplan proposals, the development of the indoor activity centre will help ensure that the park's future financial sustainability.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- The proposed redevelopment of Brooklands will provide meaningful opportunities for community involvement in the future management and maintenance of the park, either as an individual or through the Friends of group that is already in place.
- The developed design puts accessibility and inclusiveness as one of the key principles of development. The design ensures that every member of the community has access to different experiences.
- Physical activity and exercise will be encouraged with new adventure play and walking/running trails.

2.2 Equality Issues

- The developed design puts accessibility and inclusiveness as one of the key principles of development. The design ensures that every member of the community has access to different experiences.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- It is anticipated that the provision of a vibrant park that is used regularly and valued by the local community will help to reduce anti-social behaviour activities taking place in the park.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

3. Environmental

- The protection and enhancement of the park's bio diversity was a key factor in determining the final design of the concept master plan building on the environmental enhancements already taken to the lake and its surroundings.

- The proposals for the park develop different character areas, exploiting what's good and addressing what's weaker.
- Boundary planting provides enclosure and shelter, and extends habitat corridors from the coast towards the south downs.
- New tree and shrub planting creates different habitats.
- Pollination corridors will be created through the variety of herbaceous planting through the park.

4. Governance

- The Councils' strategic plan 'Platforms for our Places Going Further (2020-2022)' highlights the importance of Brooklands Park in delivering benefits across all platforms, but particularly Platform 2 – Thriving People and Communities and Platform 3 - Supporting our Natural Environment.
- Increased working with the local community group should enhance the Council's reputation and relationships.

[Appendix 1: Masterplan](#)

Brooklands Park | Masterplan



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|---|------------------------------------|
| ① New cafe, toilets and waterside terrace | ⑪ Community garden |
| ② Access & parking | ⑫ Willow and Den glade |
| ③ Overflow car park retained | ⑬ Nature glade |
| ④ Enhanced pedestrian entrance | ⑭ Winter glade |
| ⑤ Adventurous & inclusive play | ⑮ Wind glade |
| ⑥ Amphitheatre & cycle track | ⑯ Viewing mount |
| ⑦ New lakeside seating | ⑰ Picnic areas |
| ⑧ Contemplative garden | ⑱ 2.5km Fitness Route |
| ⑨ Species rich grassland | ⑲ Fitness Equipment |
| ⑩ Enhanced boundary planting | ⑳ Site for future leisure facility |

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