

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

27 SEPTEMBER 2007

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Arts, Leisure & Culture – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Mrs Womphrey

THE REGENERATION OF STOCKTON'S PARKS

1. Summary

The Council's 'Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy 2001-2005' emphasised the need to develop and maintain parks of high quality and character across the Borough, encouraging greater use and in turn delivering wider benefits to local communities. It indicated the need to improve the management of existing parks and to provide new recreational facilities.

This report summarises progress made to date on the current development programme for Stockton's parks. It provides details of planned developments at four sites in the Borough, setting out proposals for the allocation of £500,000 capital investment in parks, as approved by Cabinet in February 2007. In conjunction with the match funding identified in this report, this will facilitate delivery of the first phase of the current park regeneration programme.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1) Cabinet approves the commitment of £500,000 for park regeneration projects as detailed in this report, and in accordance with the Medium Term Capital Plan agreed by Cabinet on 22 February 2007.
- 2) Cabinet agrees that any secured external funding should be used to support delivery of the schemes, and additional external funding sought where possible.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To facilitate the phased delivery of Stockton's park regeneration programme, utilising the Council's capital funding and external funding where this has been secured.

4. Members Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

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SUMMARY

1. The Council's 'Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy 2001-2005' emphasised the need to develop and maintain parks of high quality and character across the Borough, encouraging greater use and in turn delivering wider benefits to local communities. It indicated the need to improve the management of existing parks and to provide new recreational facilities.
2. This report summarise progress made to date on the current development programme for Stockton's parks. It provides details of planned developments at four sites in the Borough, setting out proposals for the allocation of £500,000 capital investment in parks, as approved by the Cabinet in February 2007. In conjunction with the match funding identified in this report, this will facilitate delivery of the first phase of the current park regeneration programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1) Cabinet approves the commitment of £500,000 for park regeneration projects as detailed in this report, and in accordance with the Medium Term Capital Plan agreed by Cabinet on 22 February 2007.
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DETAIL

1. Well-managed, accessible and diverse parks make a significant contribution towards quality of life, helping to make the Borough an attractive place to live, work and visit. The development of parks and greenspaces contributes to a wide agenda, relating to all five core themes within Stockton's Community Strategy.
2. In 2007 Stockton Borough Council were awarded four Green Flags for Ropner Park, Billingham Beck Country Park, Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park and Wynyard Woodland Park. Continuous improvement and development of Stockton's parks will help to achieve the Council's target of five Green Flags by 2009.
3. The successful implementation of the Council's 'Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy 2001-2005' has seen the regeneration of the three Thornaby Parks, the £3.5 million restoration

of Ropner Park and significant improvements to Tilery Park, Primrose Hill Park and the Great North Park. Newham Grange Park has recently had a new £200,000 play area installed.

4. In February 2007 Cabinet approved the commitment of £500,000 expenditure to finance the on-going development and regeneration of Stockton's parks as part of the Council's Medium Term Capital Plan. Details of the proposed projects are set out below, followed by information on the financial and legal implications. Proposals focus on four key parks within the Borough:
 - creation of a new park in Ingleby Barwick (Romano Park);
 - continued redevelopment of Newham Grange Park;
 - redevelopment of John Whitehead Park in Billingham;
 - a new approach to play provision at Wynyard Woodland Park.
5. The current funding (including external match funding) will be used to deliver discrete projects, providing significant benefits their own right. However, each project also forms a component of a broader master plan or development plan for each site, delivery of which will be phased over a period of years.

Romano Park (Ingleby Barwick)

6. As a major new township of 6,500 households, with many residences home to family groups, Ingleby Barwick is lacking in recreational provision for a wide range of ages and different users.
7. The Council have produced an ambitious masterplan for the development of Romano Park, a new park for Ingleby Barwick. This will make significant strides towards addressing this deficit, with the development of a new play area, sporting facilities (a multi-use games area and football pitch) amenities for the old and young (including seating, wheeled sports facilities) and improved security and CCTV. All facilities will be designed to cater for the needs of users with disabilities.
8. Public consultation was undertaken in autumn/winter of 2006. This took the form of a series of drop in sessions and displays in the community centre, the library and Tesco superstore. In addition there was a leaflet drop to all households in Ingleby Barwick, an article on the SBC website and councillor newsletters.
9. The consultation underlined the public's support for the creation of the park. The development of a play area with appropriate security measures was highlighted as a priority. A friends group is being formed to encourage local community participation in the project.

Newham Grange Park (Stockton)

10. Newham Grange Park is a large park situated one mile from Stockton Town Centre. Located between the A1027 Ring Road and Darlington Back Lane the 14 hectare park lies at the heart of the residential areas of Elm Tree, Newtown and Hardwick.
11. Recently many shrubs and bushes were removed to improve security in the park and a new play area has just been installed through £150,000 Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and £88,000 Section 106 contribution from Darlington Back Lane Phase III development. A CCTV camera has been erected to protect the asset. As a result there are many more users of the park. Immediate priorities include the development of sports pitches with changing rooms and a car park.
12. The development of the park benefits from the active presence of a well-represented Friends Group.

John Whitehead Park (Billingham)

13. Regeneration plans coincide with the 50th anniversary of the original opening of the park. The potential for the renovation of the park has been high on the agenda over the past few years due to the potential redevelopment scheme of the town centre. The improvements to John Whitehead Park will contribute to and compliment the town centre regeneration.
14. Consultation was undertaken at the end of April with security issues being the main concern for users and the development of a play area identified as a priority for development.
15. A supporters group have been working with the Council on the development of the scheme, and have secured external funding for the delivery of a sensory garden. Two CCTV cameras are being installed in the park and other measures introduced to improve site security and safety.

Wynyard Woodland Park (Thorpe Thewles)

16. The standard of play equipment currently provided at Wynyard Woodland Park does not reflect the site's status as the Borough's premier country park. With a host of other attractions on offer the provision of some stimulating, high profile play facilities would add significantly to the site's appeal as a key 'destination site'.
17. The opportunity exists to redevelop the play facilities on the site in a new and innovative way, with play and the environment becoming integrated in an inventive and original manner; for example, by making use of the site's trees and woodlands to provide a dramatic setting for play.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial

The following tables set out 'indicative' project costings for each of the four sites identified above. It should be emphasised that in some cases detailed designs have yet to be developed and the features to be incorporated into each park may be subject to further public consultation.

It is proposed that the £500,000 capital allocation for parks regeneration identified in the current Medium Term Capital Plan is split between these four sites. Again details are set out below, with the specific sums allocated to each site highlighted in bold type. These funds, together with any available match funding, will be used to deliver specific, elements of each scheme during this initial phase of the programme. Delivery of the remaining elements will be phased over a period of years, subject to the availability of funding.

It is recognised that the development of these sites will have implications in terms of on-going management and maintenance costs. Any additional revenue costs as a result of this first phase of works can be met within existing resources.

Romano Park (Ingleby Barwick)

a) Indicative Project Costs

CCTV	£35,000
Security Perimeter Fencing (Eastern Section)	£70,000
Security Perimeter Fencing (Western Section)	£40,000

New Play Equipment	£165,000
BMX Track	£40,000
Wheeled Sports Facility	£175,000
Landscaping, Path Construction etc.	£150,000
Multi Use Games Area	£60,000
Sports Pitch Drainage	£40,000
Total	£775,000

b) Sources of funding

Proposed SBC allocation (from £500,000)	£150,000
Impetus Waste (unsecured)	£100,000
Play England (unsecured)	£100,000
Balance	£425,000

Newham Grange Park (Stockton)

a) Indicative Project Costs

New Car Park	£125,000
Drainage of Sports Pitches	£175,000
New Changing Facility	£150,000
Street Furniture	£10,000
Entrance Features	£15,000
Picnic Area	£15,000
Footpath at Fir Tree Close	£10,000
Total	£500,000

b) Sources of funding

Proposed SBC allocation (from £500,000)	£75,000
SITA Trust (secured)	£21,000
Hardwick Regeneration (secured)	£50,000
S106 Darlington Back Lane (secured)	£63,000

Biffaward (unsecured)	£50,000
Balance	£241,000

John Whitehead Park (Billingham)

a) Indicative Project Costs

2no. CCTV Cameras	£35,000
New Play Area	£175,000
Development of Café/Youth Cafe	£70,000
Resurfacing of Tennis Courts	£25,000
Sensory Garden	£80,000
Landscaping (inc. water feature)	£50,000
Multi Use Games Area	£60,000
Wheeled Sports Facility	£175,000
Entrance Features	£50,000
Security Fencing	£170,000
Total	£890,000

b) Sources of Funding

Proposed SBC allocation (from £500,000)	£100,000
Impetus Waste (secured)	£80,000
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (secured)	£175,000
S106 Stockton VI form College (secured)	£112,000
Small Environmental Improvements Budget allocation for Billingham Central (secured)	£13,892
Balance	£409,108

Wynyard Woodland Park (Thorpe Thewles)

a) Indicative Project Costs

Removal of existing failing play equipment	£5,000
Installation of New Play Facilities	£245,000

Total	£250,000
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b) Sources of Funding

Proposed SBC allocation (from £500,000)	£175,000
Balance	£75,000

Legal

Romano Park – Planning Permission will be required to develop as a new park, with possible implementation of new byelaws.

Newham Grange Park – Planning Permission required for New Car Park and Changing Pavilion.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The development of these parks is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk. The development of the parks will be managed through a combination of internal Council working groups and external ‘partnership’ or ‘consultation’ groups.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

The park regeneration programme will impact on the following policy platform areas of the Community Strategy:

- 1) **Environment:** Attractive, diverse and well-managed parks make a major contribution towards overall environmental quality – including landscape and biodiversity.
- 2) **Community Safety and Well-Being:** Well-maintained, high-quality parks provide safe environments for play and relaxation, promoting social interaction. Increased levels of use helps to deter anti-social behaviour and promotes positive attitudes and well-being.
- 3) **Health:** Accessible, stimulating parks encourage people to play and be active, contributing towards improved mental and physical health.
- 4) **Economic Regeneration:** Attractive parks contribute towards ‘quality of place’. Parks form part of Stockton’s tourism ‘offer’, and enhance the image of the Borough as a place to invest and work.
- 5) **Education and Lifelong Learning:** Parks offer learning opportunities for people of all ages.
- 6) **Arts and Culture:** Parks are an essential part of our cultural heritage. They also provide high quality outdoor spaces for performing arts, and often incorporate artistic elements into their design.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

Romano Park (Ingleby Barwick) – Phase I consultation was undertaken at the end of 2006. Exhibitions were held at various schools, library and community centres with drop in sessions by

officers. Articles were placed in local Ingleby Barwick publications, the Stockton News, Sub-Regional Newspapers, and SBC website. All local Ward Councillors regularly advised of progress. Presentation to Eastern Area Partnership Board on 25 September 2007.

Newham Grange Park – Masterplan consultation has been undertaken and Friends Group established. Officers regularly attend committee meetings and Steering Group has been established. SBC website regularly updated. Ward Councillors (Elm Tree and Bishopsgarth/Newtown) regularly advised of progress. Presentation to Central Area Partnership Board on 27 September 2007.

John Whitehead Park – Consultation led by Supporters Group at end of April 2007, with exhibitions at venues such as libraries, community centres and the Forum. . Open day held at the park on Sat 21 April. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Steering Group established. SBC website regularly updated. Ward Councillors (Billingham Central) attended NRF Steering Group meetings. Presentation to Northern Area Partnership Board scheduled for 1 October 2007.

Wynyard Woodland Park – Outline proposals discussed with Wynyard Woodland Park Environmental Trust on 3 July 2007 and more detailed consultation to be carried on the basis of a more detailed project proposal (to include Ward Councillors, Parish Council and partner organisations. Presentation to Northern Area Partnership Board on 1 October 2007.

Name of Contact Officer: **Jamie McCann**
Post Title: **Head of Direct Services**
Telephone No. **01642 - 527071**
Email Address: **jamie.mccann@stockton.gov.uk**

Background Papers

Report to CMT - 16 July 2007

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Property