

# Report

**Subject** : Queen Elizabeth Gardens Management Plan  
**Report to** : City Area Committee (Community)  
**Date** : Tuesday 01 July 2008  
**Author** : Reg Williams, Parks Manager

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## 1. Introduction:

- 1.1. The Committee will be aware that the management plan for the future of Queen Elizabeth Gardens was adopted on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007.
- 1.2. The plan highlighted, after considerable consultation, what was good and most importantly what were people's main concerns about the facility.
- 1.3. Since then, a great deal of work has been undertaken to bring the outcomes in the action plan to fruition. This report highlights that detail and requests the committee's approval to proceed with the project.
- 1.4. Underpinning the plan is the opportunity to undertake a range of improvements and enhancements aimed at setting the Gardens up for the next 40 years plus, all based around the public's (and key stakeholder's) aspirations and needs.

## 2. Background:

- 2.1. Immediately after the management plan was adopted, Officers wrote to all those members of the public who indicated a desire to be part of a potential Friends group for the Gardens (around 70 people).
- 2.2. All were invited to an open meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October with a view to getting volunteers to form a "Friends of Queen Elizabeth Gardens" committee. 11 residents / users came forward and by early November the group were formally constituted, had a Chair and Secretary and with Officer support, were meeting every 3-4 weeks to debate the various issues from the action plan.
- 2.3. It was made absolutely implicit to all Friends committee members that they looked at the plan, the issues, the aspirations etc based upon a holistic view of what was best for the long term viability and attraction of the facility for the residents of Salisbury and visitors as a whole, and not their own personal view as to how it will affect them in isolation from the rest of the community.
- 2.4. It must be said that, in the main, the Friends group have taken this on board admirably and rarely has the suggestion of "it can't happen because it will affect me" arisen.
- 2.5. At least one of the ward councillors (Cllrs Tomes and Howarth) attends each meeting.
- 2.6. By the end of January, a considerable number of the issues had been debated and preferred ideas put forward. About the same time, the Parks section sought quotations from local Landscape Architects to take the views and ideas and transfer them to coloured CAD drawings showing scaled layout and isometric views and artist impressions.
- 2.7. By mid February, Indigo Landscape Architects Ltd (based at Odstock) had been appointed and were briefed on the timescales and requirements. Between then and mid April they undertook the initial phase of the works requested.
- 2.8. Officers and Indigo presented the initial detailed plans to the Friends group on 28<sup>th</sup> April. The general thoughts and ideas in plan form were universally well accepted by the group, though concerns were raised by one couple in particular regarding two issues which they believe will impact upon their property.
- 2.9.



Awarded in:  
Housing Services  
Waste and Recycling Services



It is planned that Officers will meet this couple prior to the Committee to discuss further their concerns in light of some minor alterations to the original plan they saw. Since the Friends meeting the plans have been tweaked further, more detail to the plans drawn, draft costings sought and further views taken.

### **3. The Current Position:**

- 3.1. The scheme as discussed by the Friends group is attached – please note that a number of large scale AO fully coloured plans will be on display at the meeting showing much greater detail.
- 3.2. In a nutshell the scheme is made up of a number of component parts, the primary ones being:
  - 3.2.1 The redesign of the triangle area close by Long Bridge
  - 3.2.2 The creation of a grass amphitheatre area (building on the principle of the tiered wall area currently in situ)
  - 3.2.3 Replanting a series of areas along Mill Rd, linking around to and beyond Harcourt Bridge
  - 3.2.4 The creation of a high quality formal “open plan entrance” to the Gardens around the current carpet bed area
  - 3.2.5 Using deck areas projecting over the rivers to improve access and capitalise on two of the Gardens major assets – the views and the rivers
  - 3.2.6 Reposition the playarea slightly to give a far greater link between the 2 areas of the Gardens
  - 3.2.7 The realignment of certain paths to create better links, resolve safety concerns etc
  - 3.2.8 Create areas for alternative maintenance such as the lawn maze, the woodland trail area etc
  - 3.2.9 The provision of an area for an extremely innovative and exciting new facility for the 12 – 16 age group, based around what is known as iplay.
  - 3.2.10 The general replanting of most shrub planted areas to lose hidden areas. Planting to be a mix of perennial, herbaceous, roses, annual etc with an emphasis on diversity and quality.

### **4. General Comments:**

- 4.1. Q E Gardens is now around 50 years old and whilst the layout and infrastructure has undoubtedly served it well, most observers would suggest that it is now a little tired and ripe for a thorough overhaul if it is to continue as the flagship park for central Salisbury. Its location, coupled to its natural assets and very high degrees of use gives the Committee the opportunity to set the Gardens up as a site of horticultural excellence and diversity.
- 4.2. As an investment this project will transform the Gardens, give it an air of exceptionally high quality and set it up for the next generation of residents and visitors.
- 4.3. The scheme shown will involve a high degree of disruption to the Gardens. However, as with any overhaul this is to be expected and unavoidable. It is suggested though that any inconvenience and disruption over a relatively short period will reap huge benefits longer term.
- 4.4. It should be noted that during its lifetime, capital investment in the Gardens has been limited pretty much to the playarea and elements of planting. If this scheme is undertaken it is highly unlikely that further capital investment would be required for a significant number of years.
- 4.5. Some aspects of the scheme may require planning consent

### **5. Finance – Capital**

- 5.1. To undertake this scheme as proposed would cost approximately £470,000. However it should be noted that the provisional finishes, especially to the hard landscape elements has been costed to a very high level. It would be relatively simple to re-assess these elements in particular, still keep specified standards to an exceptional level (far, far higher than existing for instance) and reduce the cost to around £430,000.
- 5.2. Of course the works would be phased, probably into three elements:
  - 5.2.1 The first phase must include the various hard landscape elements (including service provision) as until these are completed virtually nothing else can proceed. This would include the footpaths, paving, groundworks relating to the amphitheatre area etc – provisionally £290,000. This element will also cause by far the most disruption
  - 5.2.2 The second phase would include most of the soft works such as planting but also seating, lighting etc – provisionally £90,000
  - 5.2.3 The final phase would include issues such as the play facilities, the deck areas, the woodland trail, some tree planting, etc – provisionally £50,000
- 5.3. If all went smoothly it is likely that up to around £200,000 would be required in 2008/09, £180,000 in 2009/10 and the balance £50,000 in 2010/11.
- 5.4. Of course it is quite possible that with the downturn in the economy, and the house building market in particular that tender prices for the civils/hard aspects of the project will be far more competitive than has been the case in recent years

**6. Finance – Revenue:**

- 6.1. There are unlikely to be any increased revenue implications as a result purely of the refurbishment project as all aspects of maintenance are already covered within detailed specifications currently contracted to Environmental Services.
- 6.2. However, the committee is reminded that the management plan consultations gave a clear message that the public would like to see a return to an on-site groundsman. Whilst not essential purely from a managerial perspective, there is no doubt such a move would be hugely popular with users and would certainly assist in maintaining the very high standards this project would create. Such a move would add around £15,000 p/a to the revenue requirements for the site from around late 2009 on.

**7. Finance – Overview:**

- 7.1. As the Committee is aware, it will have a projected sum of around £800,000 available in its reserves at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. Of that figure, around £700,000 is available now. The Committee is clearly able therefore, if it so chooses, to proceed with this project on a phased basis.
- 7.2. However the Committee needs to be mindful of other calls on these reserves as a result of the other management plan projects and their timeframes:
  - 7.2.1 Hudson’s Field – subject to a separate report on the agenda, a figure of around £290,000 is required, probably split £200,000 in 2008/09, £90,000 in 2009/10
  - 7.2.2 Victoria Park – subject to a HLF bid with a stage 1 application in September. Whatever the outcome, it is highly unlikely that any monies will be required until around late 2009/10 and possibly even early 2010/11 and then will be phased. It is known that the bid will be for around £1m of which around 20% must come from the Committee (though not necessarily as straight cash).
  - 7.2.3 Churchill Gardens – Whilst the plan has been adopted by the Committee, the formulation of the Friends group, and therefore any potential project is in its very early stages. Any funding highly unlikely before the winter of 2009 and then any project will be phased over 2 / 3 years.
  - 7.2.4 Allotments – a more detailed report will be submitted to the Committee at the September meeting. Most of the recommendations will relate to processes rather than investment but it is likely a figure of around £25,000 will be requested for expenditure during 2009/10 based upon outcomes from the adopted management plan
  - 7.2.5 Playareas – This management plan is likely to be completed around early August. Whilst financial requirements are currently not known, it is known that the playareas are generally in good condition. In addition there has been considerable R2 investment into playareas and this may continue in one form or another after LGR thereby mitigating the Committee’s need to use reserves
  - 7.2.6 Bourne Hill / Greencroft / Wyndham Rd Grounds – This management plan has commenced but is in its very early stages. A provisional completion date is as indicated in previous reports – around the November Committee meeting. At this time there is no known indication of what the public’s views or aspirations for these areas are, it is impossible therefore to put an idea to likely financial requirements. A better idea will be known as the process proceeds. Whatever the outcomes, any expenditure is highly unlikely before late 2009/10.
  - 7.2.7 Harnham Recreation Ground – Management plan not yet commenced. Any expenditure highly unlikely to be of any great size as scope at the site is limited and certainly not before 2010/11.

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Q E Gardens	200k	150k	80k	0
Hudson’s Field	200k	90k	0	0
Victoria Park	0	25k	175k	0
Churchill Gardens	0	TBC	TBC	TBC
Allotments	0	25k	0	0
Playareas	0	0	0	TBC
Bourne Hill etc	0	TBC	TBC	TBC
Harnham Rec	0	0	TBC	TBC
TOTALS	400k	290k	255k	TBC

Note – TBC (to be confirmed) is where a budget may be required but at this time is not known. A zero indicates nil expenditure.

- 7.2.8 In addition, the Committee has agreed in principle to assist with financing the Sth Wilts Sports Club to update their facilities along Wilton Rd (minute 71, 6/5/08 refers). However this funding is conditional on a report back to the Committee outlining further detail and options for funding. Whilst possible, it isn't certain at this time therefore that the Committee's desire to fund the project will come from its reserves though that is obviously one of the options. A report is likely to be submitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> September Committee to further debate these issues.
- 7.2.9 In principle the Committee can finance the known costs for the completed management plan projects until half way through 2010/11, however this does not take into account the Committee's ability to add to the reserves during 2009/10 and 2010/11. The Committee can therefore, if it chooses, proceed at this stage at least with the 3 primary sites at Q E Gardens, Hudson's Field and Victoria Park.

## **8. LGR Impact:**

- 8.1. Whilst the setting up of the new City Council for Salisbury is moving forwards, it is still unclear as to exactly what services will transfer to the new City Council.
- 8.2. Whilst some services which the Committee would like to see transfer are in the balance, it is highly likely that the service relating to Parks, Open Spaces and Playareas will (the allotment service is a certainty). It is suggested therefore that in the context of taking the management plans forward at this time, LGR is unlikely to have an impact and the ability to implement the projects will remain with the new City Council as against transferring to Wiltshire Council
- 8.3. However, in accordance with the LGR process, tenders sought prior to vesting day for works exceeding £100k must be approved by the Implementation Executive. It is likely therefore that the first phase works at Q E Gardens will be subject to this approval.
- 8.4. It is hoped that as this finance is coming from the City reserves, raised via a levy on City residents alone, that this will not cause undue problems.

## **9. Conclusions:**

- 9.1. The process of undertaking long term management plans for the major parks etc in Salisbury has highlighted how valuable and well regarded these facilities are in the City to residents and users.
- 9.2. Q E Gardens in particular is probably regarded generally as the jewel in the crown. Over 600 consultee forms were received for Q E Gardens alone, informing the management plan upon which this project is based.
- 9.3. The management plan process has also raised awareness, involved countless resident and user volunteers and genuinely created an excited expectation that real improvements and upgrades, as well as considered solutions to problems are going to come to fruition.

## **10. Recommendations:**

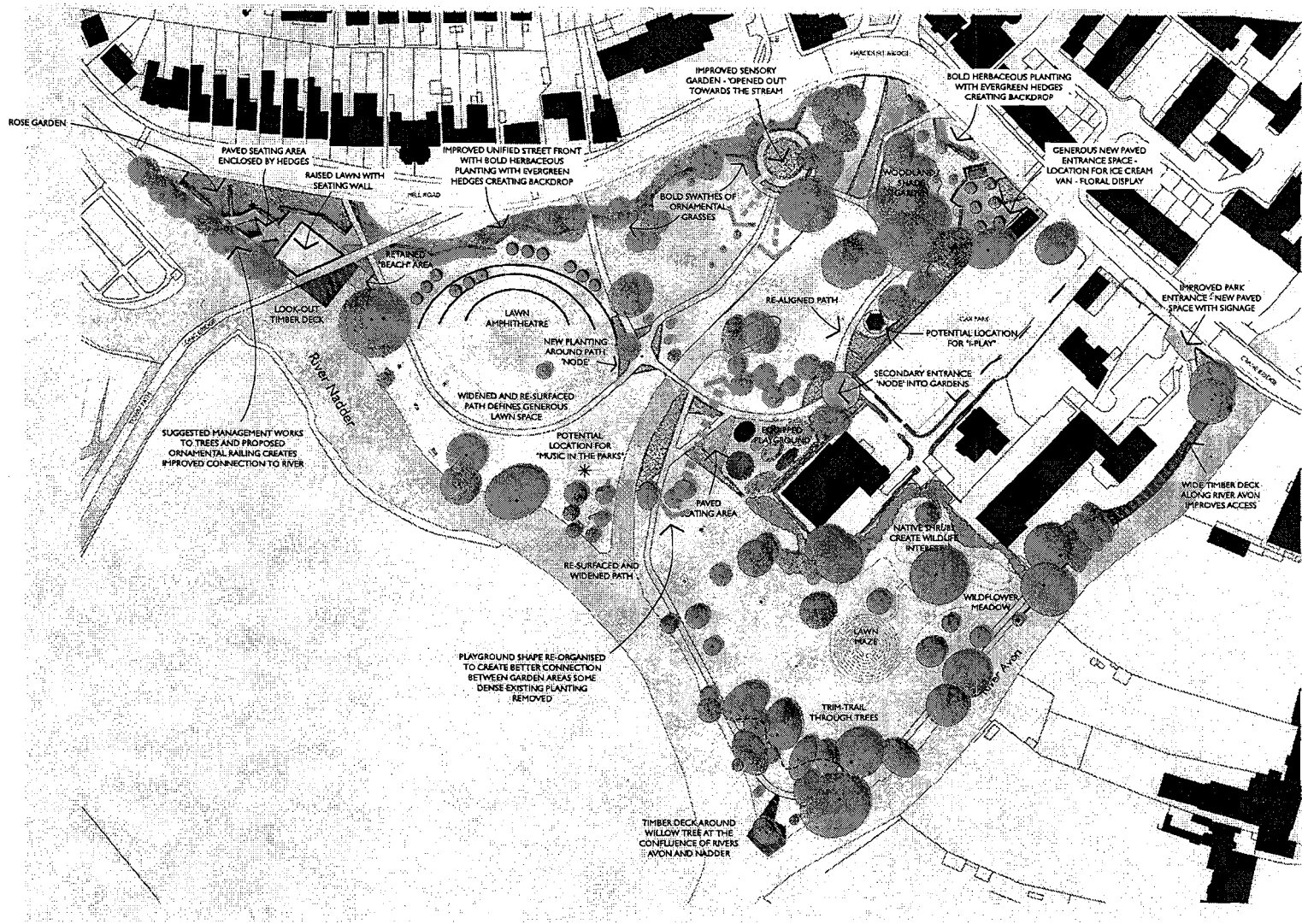
The Committee is requested to:

- 10.1. Approve the project to refurbish Q E Gardens in line with the attached plan
- 10.2. Approve the phased funding for the scheme outlined in the report
- 10.3. Delegate final details to the Ward Councillors in conjunction with Officers

## **11. Implications:**

- 11.1. Financial: As outlined in the report
- 11.2. Legal: None at this stage
- 11.3. Personnel: As outlined in the report
- 11.4. Community Safety: The scheme will provide a much safer environment for users
- 11.5. Environmental: The scheme will create a more diverse environment
- 11.6. Human Rights: None at this stage
- 11.7. Ward(s) Affected: St Martin and Milford Ward

NOTES  
 The drawings shall be subject to the approval of the Council and the relevant authorities. Any changes to the drawings shall be made in consultation with the relevant authorities. The drawings are not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of the architect.



# QUEEN ELIZABETH GARDENS ■ CONCEPT LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS



Scale: 1:500  
 0m 5m 10m  
 15th APRIL 2014  
 CONCEPT LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS

QUEEN ELIZABETH GARDENS  
 SALISBURY  
 SALISBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL

INDICATOR

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