

# Report

**Report subject:** Victoria Park Heritage Lottery Bid

**Report to:** City Area Committee (Community)

**Date:** Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008

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## 1. Introduction:

- 1.1. The Committee will be aware that the management plan for the future of Victoria Park was adopted in 2007 (minute 256 refers).
- 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. It was also agreed that the plan form the basis for a Heritage Lottery Fund Bid (HLF) to restore the park and set it up for the years to come. This report highlights that detail and requests the committee's approval to proceed with the project to the next step.

## 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 Park (around 70 people).
- 2.2. All were invited to an open meeting at the nearby St Francis Church with a view to getting volunteers to form a "Friends of Victoria Park" committee. A number of residents / users came forward and by May 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. Cllr Curr has been the ward councillor attending the meetings.
- 2.4. By the end of October, a considerable number of the issues had been debated and preferred ideas put forward. About the same time, the Parks section were working on the preparation of a bid to the HLF for a project planning grant to fund the appointment of a HLF approved Landscape Architect with expertise in restoring heritage parks nationally.
- 2.5. In January 2008 we received confirmation that our application had been agreed in full to the value of £49,000. Immediately after this notification was received, a tender exercise was undertaken and Nicholas Pearson Associates (NPA) appointed. NPA have a wealth of experience of preparing full HLF bids related to parks projects.
- 2.6. During early May, NPA met with the Friends group and other stakeholders to debate the issues and outline their initial thoughts and ideas.

## 3. The Current Position:

- 3.1. NPA submitted their draft Conservation Management Plan in mid July, this was then circulated to the Friends group for comments and, along with Officer's comments, has been returned to form the basis of the next step in the application process
- 3.2. Assuming the Committee is willing to proceed to the next step, then a full Stage 1 bid will be submitted to the HLF by the end of September.
- 3.3. This is, in effect, the main bid and will be extremely comprehensive. If approved then this virtually guarantees the monies will be forthcoming

3.4. We are told that the Stage 1 bid application will be determined by around Xmas. If approved, a degree of further detailed work must be done and approved before work can start on site. If all goes to plan, it might be possible to be on site around late 2009 to commence works, though more likely early 2010.

#### 4. General Proposals:

- 4.1. The following primary works are planned as part of the Stage 1 bid. All of these issues were highlighted in the original management plan by the residents, users and stakeholders using the park
- 4.1.1 Complete overhaul of planting areas
  - 4.1.2 Re-design of the triangle area to re-introduce the formal bedding areas
  - 4.1.3 Replacement bandstand in its former position
  - 4.1.4 Re-surfacing, widening, narrowing, re-routing of paths as necessary
  - 4.1.5 Refurbishment, replacement of hedges where required
  - 4.1.6 Re-introduction of railing perimeter boundary as original
  - 4.1.7 Closure of the Stratford Rd car park area on safety grounds and re-use as part of park
  - 4.1.8 Re-organisation and possible small extension to the Castle Rd car park area, including re-design of entrance / exit splay
  - 4.1.9 Introduction of more suitably styled lighting, bins, finger posts etc
  - 4.1.10 New signage
  - 4.1.11 Upgraded playarea
  - 4.1.12 A re-design and re-build in part of the existing central public toilets / kiosk / bowls club buildings to provide up to date community facilities in keeping with the park
  - 4.1.13 Rationalise other buildings - remove where necessary, refurbish where necessary
  - 4.1.14 Re-location of the crazy golf facility and possible change back to a putting green
  - 4.1.15 Removal of football pitch perimeter barriers
  - 4.1.16 Succession tree planting
  - 4.1.17 Possible creation of a central focal point for the park
  - 4.1.18 Introduction of more diverse habitats
  - 4.1.19 Enhance external views of tennis pavilion via planting etc
  - 4.1.20 Upgrade tennis fencing

#### 5. Finance – Capital

- 5.1. To undertake this scheme as proposed is expected to cost approximately £1.1m.
- 5.2. HLF application guidelines require that around 20% of the total is met by the applicant, therefore around £220,000
- 5.3. However, none of this will be required until early 2010 and will then probably be split between 2 years. In addition, when calculating the Committee's contribution, items such as staff time, voluntary contributions, work "in kind" can be taken into account. The amount of "cash" the Committee will have to find may well be about 25% less than this figure therefore.
- 5.4. This figure can currently be met from the Committee's reserves and will need to be budgeted for when the new City Council is set up in April 2009.
- 5.5. At this time no monies are required to progress the project as this is being covered by the project planning grant approved earlier in the year (see 2.5 above)

#### 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 2010 on.

#### 7. LGR Impact

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. 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. It is suggested therefore that in the context of taking the HLF bid forwards at this time, LGR is unlikely to have an impact and

the ability to implement the project will remain with the new City Council as against transferring to Wiltshire Council

8. Conclusions:

- 8.1. The HLF process is now really entering a crucial phase and the support of the Committee for the main Stage 1 bid in late September is imperative.
- 8.2. The thoughts and ideas which will form the basis of the bid have all come about from the original management plan consultations. These have then been discussed, debated and agreed with the Friends group and stakeholders and presented to our Landscape Architects.
- 8.3. Without doubt, the scheme if implemented will restore Victoria Park to its former glories and set it up for the next 50 years plus.

9. Recommendations:

The Committee is requested to:

- 9.1. Support the Stage 1 bid to the HLF as outlined in the report.
- 9.2. Note the future financial implications at this time

10. Implications

- 10.1. Financial: As outlined in the report
- 10.2. Legal: None at this stage
- 10.3. Personnel: As outlined in the report
- 10.4. Community Safety: The scheme will provide a much safer environment for users
- 10.5. Environmental: The scheme will create a more diverse environment
- 10.6. Human Rights: None at this stage
- 10.7. Ward(s) Affected: Stratford and St Marks