

REPORT TITLE: Thistleberry Parkway Cycle Path and Lighting

Submitted by: Roger Tait – Head of Operations

Portfolio: Environment and Recycling

Wards Affected: Thistleberry

Purpose of the Report

- To seek approval of the masterplan for the Thistleberry Parkway Neighbourhood Park drawn up as a result of a consultation exercise undertaken with the local community and other stakeholders.
- To seek approval to proceed with the first phase of the proposals to improve the parkway.

Recommendations

- **That the masterplan proposals for the parkway are approved.**
- **That the first phase of the project, to improve the cycleway running through the park and provide lighting is approved.**
- **That the Executive Director – Operational Services be authorised to seek tenders for the works and, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling accept the lowest suitable tender within the available funding.**

Reasons

- To meet identified community need in relation to green space and to improve infrastructure which facilitates and encourages walking and cycling in the locality.

1. Background

- 1.1 The site is managed as a neighbourhood park in the Urban North Staffordshire Green Space Strategy for the Borough. This sets out an aim to improve the quality of this public open space based on robust assessment of local need. There are over 2000 properties within a ten minute walking distance (800m) of the park; the residents of which would benefit as a result of investment. The first stage in working to achieve this was to build the new play area to Fields in Trust NEAP (neighbourhood equipped area for play) standard in 2009.
- 1.2 A consultation exercise was undertaken in 2009 to obtain the views of the local community and other stakeholders. A random 50% selection of properties within an 800m radius of the Parkway was surveyed. In

total 1058 paper surveys were sent out. An online survey was also available.

The results show that the top 5 proposals, cited as very high in importance by the respondents, are:

- provide lighting
- seating and litter bins
- improve woodland track way
- make improvements to attract wildlife
- improve footpaths and cycle ways

- 1.3 From this consultation a masterplan has been drawn up to develop the neighbourhood park. Thistleberry Parkway Friends Group was consulted in compiling this and the resultant plan has been agreed by them.

The masterplan takes account of the highest scoring items resulting from the consultation and includes: lighting to the main central path; seating, litter bins and signage throughout; improvements to formal and informal paths; developing more natural habitats in woodland, grass and water edge; creating a widened dual purpose foot/cycle route along the main central path. (See appendix A)

- 1.4 Thistleberry Parkway Friends Group in conjunction with the councils Community Development Section have carried out some of the seating and new habitat proposals, and it is now proposed to implement improvements to the widen and provide lighting to the main central path as the first major phase of the scheme.

- 1.5 Views of residents living adjacent to the parkway have been sought so as to best integrate the central path and lighting proposals to their satisfaction and a letter was delivered to dwellings near to the path in February 2014 asking for comments. 7 replies were received raising concerns such as light pollution and glare into windows, increase in antisocial behaviour, fear of cyclists using the path and detracting from the visual appeal of the pathway. All of these factors will be taken into consideration and every attempt will be made to mitigate them when drawing up the detail proposals.

- 1.6 Thistleberry Parkway Friends Group have agreed the path widening and lighting proposals in principal.

2. Issues

- 2.1 Officers have been seeking opportunities to progress these identified priorities through various external grant funding programmes and via Section 106 Agreements. Housing developments taking place in Thistleberry in recent times, which are ongoing, have provided opportunities to secure Section 106 agreements.

- 2.2 The following Section 106 agreements have been secured:

Beazer Homes, Land at Keele Road 2012

£23,283

Wimpy UK Ltd, Land at Keele Road. 2013	£66,267
Total	£89,550

2.3 The estimated cost for the proposed first phase of the scheme is estimated at £85,716 including fees and can be financed by the money currently available.

3. Options Considered

The options considered are to either carry out the proposed improvements as detailed in the report or not to carry out the improvements.

4. Proposal

4.1 It is proposed to further progress and develop this project to create a high quality Neighbourhood Park as outlined above, which is to be funded from the Section 106 Agreements which have already been secured and which will be secured in relation to further development in the area in the near future.

4.2 It is proposed to draw up detail proposals and prepare contract documents for phase 1 of the scheme with a view to going out to tender in August 2014.

5. Reasons for Preferred Solution

5.1 To meet identified community need in relation to green space and to improve infrastructure which facilitates and encourages walking and cycling in the locality.

6. Outcomes linked to Corporate Priorities

6.1 A Clean, Safe and Sustainable Borough

6.2 A Healthy and Active Community

6.3 Becoming a co-operative Council which delivers high quality, community-driven services.

7. Legal and Statutory Implications

7.1 The Council is obliged to comply with the terms of the Section 106 Agreements referred to in the report.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 It is considered that there would be a positive differential impact resulting from the project.

9. Financial and Resource Implications

9.1 The estimated budget capital cost of the first phase of the project is £89,550 inclusive of fees to meet the cost of Officer time. This full amount has been secured via Section 106 Agreements, therefore

there are no capital financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

- 9.2 There will be ongoing management and maintenance costs associated with this project but it is proposed to realign existing resources to accommodate this work. Therefore there will be no additional call on the Council's revenue budget as a result of the scheme.

10. Major Risks

- 10.1 There are no major risks associated with the project currently identified.

11. Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 It is considered that the project will have a positive impact on sustainability and climate change by helping to reduce traffic congestion and pollution and by providing greater opportunities for recreation, walking and cycling.

12. Key Decision Information

- 12.1 The proposal does not involve significant expenditure or saving of Council resources.
- 12.2 It impacts directly on Thistleberry ward and has been included in the forward plan.

13. List of Appendixes

- 13.1 Appendix A: Masterplan; Lighting and cycle path route plan.