

HEADING: WAMMY NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK: PHASE 3

DATE: 16th September 2015

SUBMITTED BY: Roger Tait - Head of Operations

PORTFOLIO: Environment and Recycling

WARD(S) AFFECTED: Cross Heath, Knutton/Silverdale

Purpose of the Report

- To seek approval to proceed with Phase Three of the agreed master plan to deliver teenage recreational provision in line with a consultation exercise undertaken with local teenagers, to make habitat improvements to attract wildlife, and to plant trees so as to further develop the project and comply with obligations.

Recommendations

- **That the third phase of the Wammy project to deliver teenage recreation provision, wildlife habitat improvements and tree planting 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.**
- **That authorisation is given to further develop the pavilion phase of the project and to investigate / secure match funding opportunities.**

Reasons

- To meet identified community need in relation to green space and outdoor play and sports provision.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** In recent years, the Council has negotiated a number of developer financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements relating to various developments in the Knutton and Cross Heath area, which have resulted in the loss of outdoor sports pitches and/or created an additional demand for play and recreational facilities.
- 1.2** The Council has prepared a Green Space Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation) to assess community need for green space of various typologies and to plan for its provision. These documents form the basis for negotiating Section 106 Agreements and prioritising the need for provision of facilities of appropriate scale, typology and location across the urban area of the Borough, to ensure that the needs of the community are met.

- 1.3** The Wammy has been identified in these policy documents (and in Local Development Framework documents) as strategically important green space in the Knutton and Cross Heath area which is under-utilised and of poor quality.

The recommendations for the Wammy are to develop a neighbourhood park on the site to serve the communities of Knutton and Cross Heath, including high quality outdoor playing pitches and play provision.

- 1.4** Phase One of the scheme to provide one mini soccer and two full sized football pitches as approved by Cabinet 13 May 2009 has been completed.

- 1.5** A consultation exercise was undertaken in 2009 to obtain the views of the local community and other stakeholders to put together a master plan. From this proposals were drawn up to develop the neighbourhood park in two further phases.

Phase Two: to improve the cycleway and footpaths, provide lighting to the main route through site, provide site furniture, improve entrances, and provide car parking for users of the football pitches and natural play provision for younger children.

Phase Three: to provide recreation and play facilities for teenagers, an all-weather games area, make improvements to attract wildlife and plant avenue trees.

- 1.6** A separate consultation workshop was carried out with 22 children from the Eco Board and School Board of St Marys Knutton in January 2011 to develop proposals for natural play as part of Phase Two. Ideas were explored by the children and from this sketch designs were drawn up based around a maze, den structure, boulders/rocks and flower meadow.

- 1.7** Phase Two of the scheme was approved by Cabinet in June 2011 and has also been carried out, however the contractor has failed to complete all of the specified lighting works and some snagging items. The funding for these uncompleted items is being held by the council. It is intended to include these items in the Phase Three contract and use retention money from the Phase Two contract to pay for the works. The electrical connection of the lighting to the mains will also need to be deferred to Phase Three.

- 1.8** A consultation was carried out at the end of 2013 involving local youngsters between 11 and 18 years old to find out what forms of provision they would like to see for teenagers. An on-line questionnaire was put on the council website and paper copies were distributed. Officers visited Project House and Knutton Youth Centre to obtain views and children from Newcastle Community High School completed the on-line questionnaire. A total of 117 surveys were returned. The most popular activities amongst users are to relax/chill, play sports, meet friends and keep fit, and the most popular options to be provided are shelter/meeting area, skateboard/BMX ramps, all-weather games practice area and gym equipment.

The Western Communities Locality Action Partnership were updated with these results on 1st October 2014. There was general approval of the chosen activities with the exception of the shelter which was thought likely to cause problems relating to anti-social behaviour.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1** Cabinet has previously resolved to allocate funding from four Section 106 Agreements totalling £1,046,190 to the Wammy Neighbourhood Park project to enable full delivery of the scheme.

- 2.2** The total amount spent on Phases One and Two stands at £663,099 leaving £383,091 remaining, including £12,278 retained from Phase Two.

- 2.3 The cost for the proposed Phase Three scheme is estimated at £215,000 including fees and can be financed by the money currently available.
- 2.4 The Wammy is identified in the Green Space Strategy for the creation of a grouped Playing Field Facility and the Playing Pitch Strategy identifies the Wammy, linked with the Cotswold Avenue pitches, as requiring changing facilities. Remaining Section 106 Agreement funding allocated to the Wammy could part finance the provision of a pavilion as a future Phase Four if it is approved for this purpose.

The budget estimate for a pavilion to serve the Wammy is approximately £380,000. This would require the remaining Section 106 money plus an additional figure of approximately £212,000 from other sources. Your officers will continue to pursue appropriate avenues to seek to identify and bid for the balance required.

In terms of the strategic provision of grouped playing field facilities with ancillary facilities, the Wammy is identified as a strategic location which serves the central area of the borough (the north and south being served by facilities at Birchenwood and Roe Lane respectively). Clearly, the provision of grouped facilities with ancillary parking and changing to serve larger catchment populations is the recommended direction of the Playing Pitch Strategy, and will negate the need for a larger number of smaller, isolated, poor quality, single pitch sites without ancillary facilities across the borough. The council has invested heavily in creating this high quality facility at the Wammy to ensure that community needs in respect of outdoor playing pitches is properly met, and adjacent facilities at the Newcastle-under-Lyme College site which comprise outdoor grass pitches and a full size synthetic pitch available for community use, complement this offer.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The options considered are to either carry out the proposed improvements as detailed in the report or not to carry out the improvements.
- 3.2 Options for the detailed content of Phase Four of the scheme for a pavilion will be explored with consultation/guidance from the Football Foundation and Sport England.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed to further progress and develop this project to create a high quality Neighbourhood Park on the Wammy as outlined above, which is to be funded from the Section 106 Agreements which have already been secured.
- 4.2 It is proposed to draw up detailed proposals and prepare contract documents for Phase 3 of the scheme and to invite tenders.
- 4.3 It is proposed that the Pavilion phase of the project is further explored and match funding sources investigated.

5. REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

- 5.1 To support parallel regeneration initiatives in the locality, to meet identified community need in relation to green space and outdoor sports provision, and to improve infrastructure.

6. OUTCOMES LINKED TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Creating a clean, safe and sustainable borough.

- 6.2 Creating a healthy and active community.
- 6.3 Becoming a co-operative Council, delivering high-value, 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 impact on equality issues resulting from this project.

9. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The estimated budget capital cost of the third phase of the project is £215,000 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 in recognition of its strategic priority in green space terms. 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 currently 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 providing greater opportunities for local recreation, play and by creating wildlife habitat as part of the comprehensive master plan for the location.

12. KEY DECISION INFORMATION

- 12.1 The project does not involve significant expenditure or savings of Council resources.
- 12.2 It impacts directly on two Wards, Knutton and Silverdale, and Cross Heath, and is included in the Forward Plan.

13. EARLIER CABINET/COMMITTEE RESOLUTIONS

- 13.1 Cabinet 13 May 2009 item 58
- 13.2 Cabinet – 15 June 2011 item 100