



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

CITY PLANS PANEL

Date: 19th September 2013

Subject: APPLICATION 12/05150/LA – APPLICATION FOR THE FORMATION OF A PUBLIC PARK, PLAYING PITCHES, PARK AND CHANGING ROOMS ON LAND TO WEST OF THORPE PARK AT LAND AT AUSTHORPE LANE, AUSTHORPE, LEEDS.

APPLICANT	DATE VALID	TARGET DATE
Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside – Mr T Stringwell	12/3/13	19/11/13

Electoral Wards Affected:

Crossgates and Whinmoor

Yes

Ward Members consulted

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

RECOMMENDATION: DEFER and DELEGATE to the Chief Planning Officer for approval (subject to appropriate conditions and addressing the issues raised by Sport England and any issues raised by other outstanding consultation responses)

INTRODUCTION:

- 1.1 A new public park is proposed on land to the west of Thorpe Park and east of Austhorpe Lane. This 47 hectare site is allocated as proposed open space in the UDPR and is owned by the Scarborough Development Group, the owner of Thorpe Park. It is intended that the Scarborough Development Group will deliver some of the park and fund the cost of the remainder of the public park as part of the section 106 agreement attached to the application for a new major mixed use development at Thorpe Park as presented to this Panel. This application is presented to Panel as it is an important piece of local green infrastructure and because it is directly linked to the developments proposed at Thorpe Park that are also under consideration at Panel.

2.0 PROPOSAL:

- 2.1 The new public park will maintain many of the existing features currently within the site such as hedgerows, trees, meadows and ponds but also include a number of features listed below:
- 6 sports pitches and changing pavilion.
 - Formal and informal play areas for children 0-14 years.
 - New walking routes/footpaths that include links to the open space within Thorpe Park.
 - Wildflower meadows.
 - Artworks and interactive structures.
 - Open parkland.
 - New woodlands.
 - Nature enclosure.
 - Picnic area.
 - Orchards.
 - The 'Roman Garden' exhibited at Chelsea in 2007.
- 2.2 50 designated car parking spaces are provided within Thorpe Park for use by visitors to the park.
- 2.3 The proposals also include a new school drop-off area adjacent to Austhorpe Primary School.
- 2.4 The application is supported by the following documents:
- Design and access Statement.
 - Flood Risk Assessment.
 - Sustainability Statement.
 - Ecology Statement.
 - Archaeology Statement.

3.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

- 3.1 Green Park is located to the west of Thorpe Park with Austhorpe Lane on its western boundary. The land is mostly undeveloped and includes a variety of landscape features including the presence of old field boundaries with associated vegetation. Part of the site is still used for agriculture and livestock also graze areas on occasion. A cricket pitch exists towards the northern part of the site (accessed from Austhorpe Lane) and further east substantial earthworks were undertaken to construct three newt ponds. These works remain unfinished following intervention by the Council but the ponds do hold water and are understood to be now colonised by Great Crested Newts (which are protected species). In addition, Grims Ditch, a prehistoric ditch and Scheduled Ancient Monument, is located on the eastern edge of the Green Park land but there is little or no visible evidence of its existence.

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:

- 4.1 32/199/94/OT – Outline application to layout business park, Green Park and access roads - Granted 04/10/95. This relates to the original outline permission at Thorpe Park. The section 106 agreement attached to this permission requires the applicant to provide Green Park. Designs for Green Park were developed in respect of the S106 agreement but concerns were raised regarding the proximity of playing pitches to the residential properties on Austhorpe Lane and the potential for adverse impacts on amenity due to increased noise levels and Austhorpe Lane being used for car parking. The current designs seek to overcome this issue.

4.2 12/03886/OT, 12/03887/FU, 12/03888/FU and 12/05382/FU are the four applications relating to the new proposals for Thorpe Park and the Manston Lane Link Road (MLLR) also being presented to the 19/9/13 Panel.

5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS:

5.1 Planning Officers have met with officers from Parks and Countryside and made recommendations to ensure the proposed scheme to ensure the scheme can be linked with the proposals at Thorpe Park and into the wider green corridors proposed in East Leeds.

5.2 The proposals have been subjected to public consultation at many of the same events relating to the Thorpe Park proposals.

5.3 A position statement was presented to the 26/3/13 City Plans Panel, Members were supportive of the proposals.

6.0 PUBLIC/LOCAL RESPONSE:

6.1 An advertisement was placed in the Yorkshire Evening Post on 17/4/13 and site notices (major development affecting a public right of way) were posted on 22/3/13 and 30/8/13.

6.2 Letters of representation have been received from four local residents, a summary of the comments are listed below.

- One residents states it is great to see a new park proposed but improvements to the proposals could be made including rugby league pitch, all weather pitch and a footpath over the railway line.
- Two residents object to any removal of the hedgerow on Austhorpe Road to create a new footpath link adjacent to the cricket pitch.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS RESPONSES:

7.1 Statutory

7.1 Sport England: The pitches are slightly smaller than recommended. It is requested a specialist sports turf agronomist is involved in finalising the drainage strategy. These issues should be addressed.

7.2 Health and Safety Executive: No objection.

7.3 Natural England: No objection. Further details of the ponds and habitat connectivity should be provided.

7.4 Non-Statutory

7.5 Neighbourhoods and Housing: No objection.

7.6 Contaminated Land: A phase 1 desk study is required.

7.7 Public Rights of Way: The proposed route diversion will need to be formally amended. Alternative surfacing such as crushed limestone may be more appropriate.

- 7.8 Coal Authority: A coal mining risk assessment report is required.
- 7.9 English Heritage: The proposals are welcomed as they will allow for greater recognition of Grim's Ditch. Further work could and revisions could take place to ensure even greater protection of Grim's Ditch.
- 7.10 West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service (WYAAS): Further studies of Grim's Ditch should be carried out as those submitted to date to not meet normal WYAAS requirements. Further reorientation of the sports pitches is requested.
- 7.11 Nature Conservation Officer: Further details of the works and the protection and mitigation should be provided and a management plan required by condition.
- 7.12 Highways: The parking proposed within Thorpe Park needs to be secured and consideration should be given to securing a contribution to off-site TROs if the surrounding streets are used for parking. Where will coaches park? The dimensions of the footpaths and cycleways appear acceptable and to be appropriately surfaced.
- 7.13 Environment Agency: No objection.
- 7.14 Flood Risk Management: No objection subject to standard drainage conditions.

8.0 PLANNING POLICIES:

8.1 Development Plan

8.2 The development plan includes the adopted Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review 2006 (UDPR) along with relevant supplementary planning guidance and documents. The site is allocated as Proposed Open Space under policy N5.

8.3 Leeds Unitary Development Plan Review (UDPR):

GP5: General planning considerations.

GP11: Sustainable development.

N10: Protection of existing public rights of way.

N8: Urban Green Corridor.

N5: Improvement in the quantity and quality of greenspace provision.

N23/N25: Landscape design and boundary treatment.

N29: Archaeology.

N38b: Flood Risk Assessments.

N39a: Sustainable drainage.

BD5: Design considerations for new build.

T2: Accessibility issues.

T5: Consideration of pedestrian and cyclists needs.

T7/T7A: Cycle routes and parking.

E4, E18: Employment sites.

LD1: Landscape schemes.

8.4 Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance

8.5 Building for Tomorrow Today – Sustainable Design and Construction (2011): Sustainability criteria is set out including a requirement to meet BREEAM standards.

8.6 National Planning Guidance

8.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on 27th March 2012. The introduction of the NPPF has not changed the legal requirement that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The policy guidance in Annex 1 to the NPPF is that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF. The closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given.

8.8 Emerging Policy

8.9 The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district. On 26th April 2013 the Council submitted the Publication Draft Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for examination and an Inspector has been appointed. It is expected that the examination will commence in late 2013.

8.10 As the Council has submitted the Publication Draft Core Strategy for independent examination some weight can now be attached to the document and its contents recognising that the weight to be attached may be limited by outstanding representations which have been made which will be considered at the future examination.

9.0 **MAIN ISSUES**

- Background.
- Public access.
- Landscaping and Ecology.
- Sports pitches.
- Parking.
- Archaeology.
- Letters of representation.
- Local Employment.

10.0 **APPRAISAL**

10.1 Background

10.2 The extant outline consent, 32/199/94/OT relating to Thorpe Park requires Green Park to be delivered when 600,000 ft² (55,742m²) of development has been built out. Thorpe Park has now reached this threshold. The proposals for Green Park agreed via the extant consent are out of date therefore new proposals are put forward that reflect the current aspirations for the area and local population. The Section 106 attached to the Thorpe Park planning application requires the developer to deliver the sports pitches and changing room prior to occupation of any new development and to provide financial contributions to allow LCC Parks and Countryside to deliver the remainder of the park.

10.3 Public Access

10.4 There are significant enhancements proposed to create a new large public park including enhanced footpaths, cycleways and bridleways plus meadows, orchards, picnic areas and interactive structures and play features. New woodland walks will be provided and large meadows are also introduced to complement more formal

features to ensure the park is suitable for a wide range of user. The park will also link into the proposed Central Park within Thorpe Park and therefore be part of the wider public right of way network and green strategy extending through East Leeds.

10.5 Landscaping

10.6 The proposals for Green Park include significant new areas of planting ranging from wildflower meadows, new woodland, orchards to formal gardens including one of the previous gardens displayed at the Chelsea Flower Show. This planting will supplement the existing woodlands and open parkland to create an attractive landscape setting and help soften the more formal appearance of the football pitches and changing rooms.

10.7 The newt ponds formerly located within Thorpe Park were relocated without consent into Green Park. These ponds are now well populated therefore to ensure the long term success and protection of the ponds and newts and to provide an educational resource the newt ponds will be enhanced and the wider surroundings adapted and enclosed to create a nature enclosure that will allow for the creation of other natural habitats.

10.8 Sports Pitches

10.9 Three senior and two junior sports pitches plus changing rooms are proposed. Following public consultation these pitches have been located away from Austhorpe Road and adjacent to Thorpe Park. Sport England has consulted the Football Association (FA) who has stated that the pitches do not meet the recommended size. However, the pitches are within the dimension tolerances set by the relevant Sport England guidance document. The pitches are at the maximum size possible that maintains an appropriate distance to Grim's Ditch, existing trees and hedgerows and to provide suitable run-off areas between pitches. As such it is considered that the pitches are appropriate and further discussion with Sport England, a statutory consultee, will continue to address the concerns put to them by the FA.

10.10 Parking

10.11 50 designated parking spaces are located within close proximity to the pitches and changing rooms within Thorpe Park. The Thorpe Park developer will deliver and manage these spaces separate to any spaces required for their own development. The location of the spaces away from Austhorpe Road and other residential areas will ensure visitors to Green Park and those using the sports pitches will not need to park in the residential areas. It is also considered that any coaches bringing sports teams to the pitches will also park within Thorpe Park. Whereas there are no designated coach parking spaces it is considered there is and will be ample space for coaches to park without causing obstruction on the highway network. With Thorpe Park being a major attractor, significant amount of parking within Thorpe Park and the addition of the 50 designated parking spaces it is not considered that there will be significant on-street parking problems within the residential streets to the west of the park.

10.12 To alleviate existing problems associated with pick up and drop off at Austhorpe Primary School adjacent to Austhorpe Road the proposals include a new turning and drop off area adjacent to the school. This area will provide space for approximately 30 cars to park/drop off children at the school and therefore avoid blocking traffic and driveways on Austhorpe Road.

10.13 Archaeology

10.14 The Scheduled Ancient Monument, Grims Ditch, is located to the east of Green Park. The ditch is located within land that is currently ploughed and therefore has very little protection. The proposed sports pitches have been oriented to avoid Grims Ditch and therefore should allow for better preservation. Part of the ditch will be utilised for water storage from run-off from the sports pitches. Conditions will be added to ensure the visible presence of Grim's Ditch is maximised and appropriate archaeological recording takes place as necessary.

10.15 Letters of representation

10.16 The comments regarding the footpath adjacent to the cricket pitch have been taken on board and the footpath removed from the proposals.

10.17 Parks and Countryside have assessed the need for pitches in the area and concluded the appropriate and necessary pitches are football pitches. The use of the pitches will not be formally managed by on site staff therefore all-weather pitches are not appropriate.

10.18 It is not considered appropriate to introduce a pedestrian link over the railway line at Green Park. This would be a difficult and costly facility to deliver and would not provide a significant enhancement in terms of connectivity with nearby communities as the larger residential areas are to the west. Those communities to the north would have the option to use the existing Austhorpe Road access or the new access created by the MLLR and associated public rights of way.

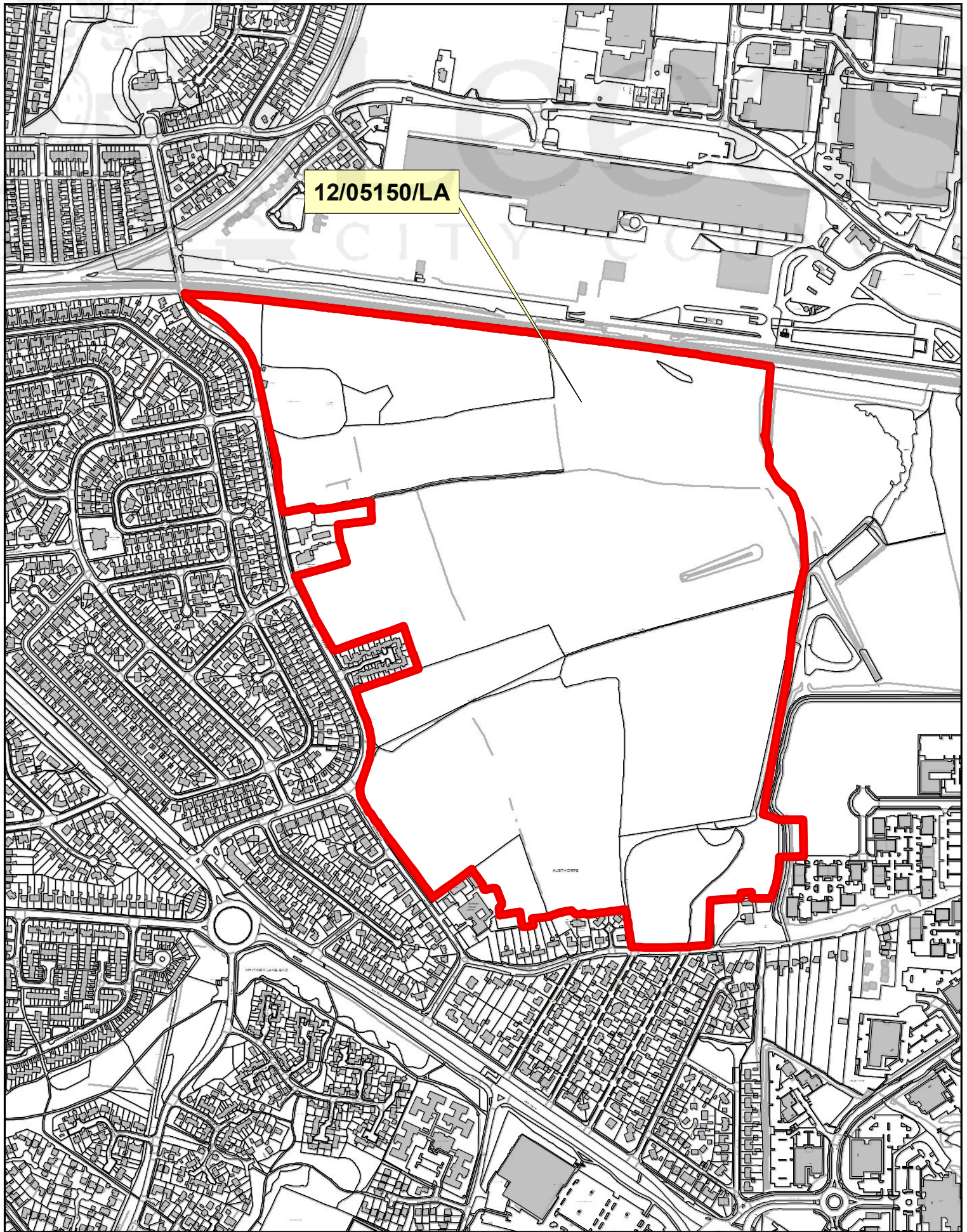
11.0 **CONCLUSION**

11.1 The Green Park development is strongly supported as it will create an attractive new destination for the local community and provide much needed facilities. The proposals will also alleviate traffic problems on Austhorpe Road. The new park will form a key part of the linked green spaces within Leeds that will extend from Temple Newsham through Thorpe Park and the East Leeds housing allocation and onto Red Hall and Roundhay Park. The Panel are recommended to support this application and defer and delegate approval to the Chief Planning Officer to allow the further discussion to take place in response to some of the consultation responses outstanding and identified above.

12.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 Application file 12/05150/LA.

12.2 Notice has been served on Scarborough Development Group (the owner of and applicant for the applications relating to Thorpe Park).



CITY PLANS PANEL

