



**Leeds**  
CITY COUNCIL

Originator:  
Andrew Middlemiss /  
Martin Farrington  
Tel:0113 3957472

**APPENDIX 1 NOT FOR PUBLICATION Exempt / Confidential under Rule 10.4 (3)**

---

**Report of the Director of City Development**

**Report to: Executive Board**

**Date: 12 March 2008**

**Subject: Stage 1 application for a Parks for People Heritage Lottery Funding for Middleton Park**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**  
Middleton

Ward Members consulted  
(Referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

---

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report informs Executive Board about proposals to submit a Stage 1 Parks for People Programme Heritage Lottery Fund application for Middleton Parks and seeks Executive Board's approval for the submission of the bid. The restoration scheme has the support of Wade's Charity and the match funding is to come from the surrender and subsequent sale of 218 and 220 Middleton Town Street and adjoining land by Wade's Charity who own the freehold title to these properties.

If successful, the restoration scheme will deliver up to £1.4m of capital investment into Middleton Park and help it to achieve Green Flag status. The scheme will also improve the conservation and interpretation of a number of heritage features in the Park.

Subject to Executive Board approval, the Council will make a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund at the end of March 2008.

## **1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- 1.1 This report concerns proposals for the restoration of Middleton Park and in particular:
- 1.1.1 Informs Executive Board about the proposal to submit a Stage 1 application for a scheme at Middleton Park seeking Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding under the Parks for People Programme with the support of Wade's Charity
- 1.1.2 Seeks Executive Board's approval for the submission of the Stage 1 application.
- 1.1.3 Seeks approval from Executive Board to the City Council providing match funding to support the Stage 1 application through the surrender and subsequent sale of 218 and 220 Middleton Town Street and adjoining land.

## **2.0 Background Information**

- 2.1 Middleton Park is operated and managed by Leeds City Council. The majority of the Park is leased to the Council by way of a 999 year lease from Wade's Charity whose charitable aim is to provide green space in Leeds.
- 2.2 In recent years two of the City's primary parks, Roundhay and Kirkstall, have undergone significant investment with the assistance of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and these parks have subsequently achieved Green Flag status, which is a nationally recognised quality benchmark for parks and open spaces.
- 2.3 However Middleton Park has not benefited from any sizable capital investment and consequently is alone amongst the larger Parks in Leeds in not having reached a Green Flag status.
- 2.4 In common with many parks up and down the country, Middleton Park is at a crucial point where, without significant investment its important features and structures may decay and be lost. Key Issues to be addressed include the infrastructure and security of the site; development of the play provision for all ages; visitor and café facilities; interpretation detailing the mining heritage history of the area and development of historical trails.
- 2.5 Despite the condition of the park's infrastructure the visitor analysis figures show that it has over 2 million visits each year 90% of which are drawn the local catchment area which includes the wards of Middleton, Beeston, City and Holbeck and Hunslet. All of these fall into the bottom 16% of Wards in terms of the national multiple deprivation indices.
- 2.6 As a consequence of the issues identified above officers from Leeds City Council have liaised with representatives from Wade's Charity to consider the potential for an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable the restoration project to be delivered which in turn will enhance the quality of the Park as a visitor experience and recreation amenity. Key to a successful application will be the need to improve and enhance the heritage core of the Park and to also secure the supporting match funding required.

## **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 The proposal is for a Stage 1 application to the HLF Parks for People programme and to be eligible for funding three criteria have to be met namely that:
- The community values the park as part of their heritage
  - That the park meets local social, economic and environmental needs

- The park involves local people

3.2 Middleton Park is eligible for the Parks for People as it has:

- a very strong Friends organisation and has over 2 million visits a year; 90% of which come from Middleton, Hunslet, Holbeck and Beeston (household surveys 2004/5)
- it provides and supports golf; aero modelling; fishing; bowls; play facilities and open air theatre
- as well as the largest remaining ancient woodland site in West Yorkshire, Middleton Woods Nature Reserve is of special importance for nature conservation in Leeds
- the woods contain a scheduled ancient monument because of the extensive early mining remains.

This view has been reinforced by discussions between the City Council's consultants and the HLF grant officers in the HLF regional office.

3.3 For the Stage 1 application to be successful in the HLF Parks for People programme it has to meet five expected outcomes in that it must:

- Increase the range of audiences
- Conserve and improve the heritage value
- Increase the range of volunteers involved
- Improve skills and knowledge through training
- Improve the management and maintenance

3.4 By undertaking this scheme of works the HLF Parks for People expected outcomes would be provided in that the provisional make up of the works within the Stage 1 application will increase the range of audiences by improving the infrastructure and security of the site so allowing greater access by disabled people and by a wider age range of people. They will conserve and improve the heritage value likewise and also by increasing the interpretation detailing the mining and natural history heritage. They will improve the skills and knowledge of visitors by this interpretation and by seeking to extend the involvement of volunteers in the visitor centre, the café and historical interpretative work. The development of the play provision for all ages will involve a greater range of audiences whilst the capital investment will improve the ability to manage and maintain the park. On this basis officers feel that the scheme of works proposed will meet the outcomes of the Parks for People programme.

3.5 Although the final scheme proposals will be developed through the two stage process and subject to consultation the generic improvement areas are expected to include

- Path surfacing, landscape furniture and boundary improvements
- Development of the play facilities for all ages
- Visitor and café facilities
- Development of interpretation of the (mining) history and historical trails

Once completed it is intended that the Council will seek Green Flag Status to bring Middleton in line with other major Parks.

3.6 Integral to the Stage 1 application will be the requirement for the Council to provide an appropriate amount of match funding. In this instance and following discussions with Wade's Charity it is proposed that the Council's match funding will come from the surrender and subsequent sale of 218 and 220 Middleton Town Street.

3.7 Discussions with HLF senior grants officers and consultants acting on behalf of the authority and also with representatives of the Charity have indicated that the HLF

are disposed to look favorably on such a funding proposal provided that it was led by the council with the support of the Charity.

- 3.8 In seeking such a structure to the Stage 1 application the HLF is indicating that there is a need to manage the financial risks to the execution of this project which can only be managed if the City Council has control of the project, its development and its finances. It is proposed that the City Council will act as the lead administrative body for this application with the support of Wade's Charity.
- 3.9 Disposal of these vacant Grade II listed cottages will remove any financial liability from the Council for ongoing maintenance, health and safety and security risks associated with these properties.
- 3.10 Middleton Park will receive much needed financial investment as a result of the sale of the cottages, enabling the partnership between the Leeds City Council and Wades Charities to progress the Middleton Park Parks for People HLF Stage 1 application.
- 3.11 The deadline for applications to this programme is March 31<sup>st</sup> 2008 and the process following application is a two stage one with the Stage One decision being made by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

#### **4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance**

- 4.1 The implementation of this proposal will have impact on the Council's priorities in Better Outcomes for Local People in that by improving Middleton Park it will contribute to the improvement and protection of green and open space and make them more accessible. In this context the improvement of Middleton Park will also help address the priority of improving the physical mental and social health and wellbeing of all Citizens of Leeds.
- 4.2 By this focussed allocation of investment it will help address the council's prioritisation of services to those who most need them, while working with Wade's Charity will also further the modernisation aim of developing partnerships with others.
- 4.3 The information contained in the Appendix attached to this report relates to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, and of the Council. This information is not publicly available from the statutory registers of information kept in respect of certain companies and charities. It is considered that since this information will be obtained through inviting of best and final offers for the property/land then it is not in the public interest to disclose this information at this point in time and will affect the integrity of disposing of property/land by this process. Also it is considered that the release of such information would or would be likely to prejudice the Council's commercial interests in relation to other similar transactions in that prospective purchasers of other similar properties would be informed about the nature and level of offers which may prove acceptable to the Council. It is considered that whilst there may be a public interest in disclosure, much of this information will be publicly available from the Land Registry following completion of this transaction and consequently the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information at this point in time. It is therefore considered that this element of the report should be treated as exempt under Rule 10.4 (3) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

## **5.0 Legal And Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Based on the expected sale value of the cottages outlined in Appendix 1 and Wade's commitment to funding, it is proposed that the total project value will be up to £1.4 million.
- 5.2 In preparing for the surrender of the leases the legal position has been consulted upon and the recommended action undertaken as described in paragraph 2.2 (above).
- 5.3 The match funding is to be provided by the receipt from Wade's charity following the property surrender and disposal; the expectation is that there will be no other capital provision required from the authority.
- 5.4 The project will not involve any significant requirement for enhanced revenue maintenance and as such costs can be contained within existing revenue budgets.

## **6.0 Consultations**

- 6.1 In the course of the preparatory works, consultations have taken place with the charity and with members of the public in Middleton particularly with the Friends of Middleton Park and also local elected members as well as the Executive Member. All of these consultations have resulted in positive feedback for the project's development.
- 6.2 As part of the ongoing development of proposals, further consultations are to take place with the Friends and local members as well as in the community in Middleton. Additionally consultations are planned in the wider community including young people. These consultations will be used to inform and develop the proposals which will go forward into the Parks for People HLF Stage 1 application in March 2008.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

- 7.1 That Executive Board approves the proposal to submit a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, with support from Wade's charity, to restore Middleton Park and authorises the Acting Chief Recreation Officer to sign off the application on the Council's behalf.
- 7.2 That Executive Board approves the surrender of the leases of 218 and 220 Middleton Town Street to Wade's Charity to facilitate the sale and subsequent use as match funding for the restoration project at Middleton Park.