

Report of Director of Communities and Environment

Report to Executive Board

Date: 21st November 2018

Subject: Design and Cost Report for the Development and Enhancement of Green Space at Royal Park Road

Scheme Number: 33028/000/000

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Headingley and Hyde Park and Little London and Woodhouse	
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:	
Appendix number:	

Summary of main issues

1. This report provides an update on plans to develop a new green space on the site of the former Royal Park School that will integrate with the adjoining pre-existing community green space and will provide an enhanced holistic space.
2. In July 2013, Executive Board supported a decision to demolish the former Royal Park School site and approved a proposal to temporarily grass over the site while future community use options were considered. In May 2014 a report was submitted to South and West Plans Panel that established the principle of developing the space as a high quality permanent green space.
3. A masterplan for the site has been produced that presents an overall vision for the site as an integrated holistic space that combines community use and recreational value with environmental benefits. The design makes provision for the site to be developed in phases or indeed for individual micro elements of the design to be added, amended and influenced by ongoing conversations with residents, stakeholders and community organisations.
4. It is proposed that a total of £516.6k will be injected equally from section 106 funding committed from available funds within the Headingley and Hyde Park ward, and Little London and Woodhouse ward.

Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to;

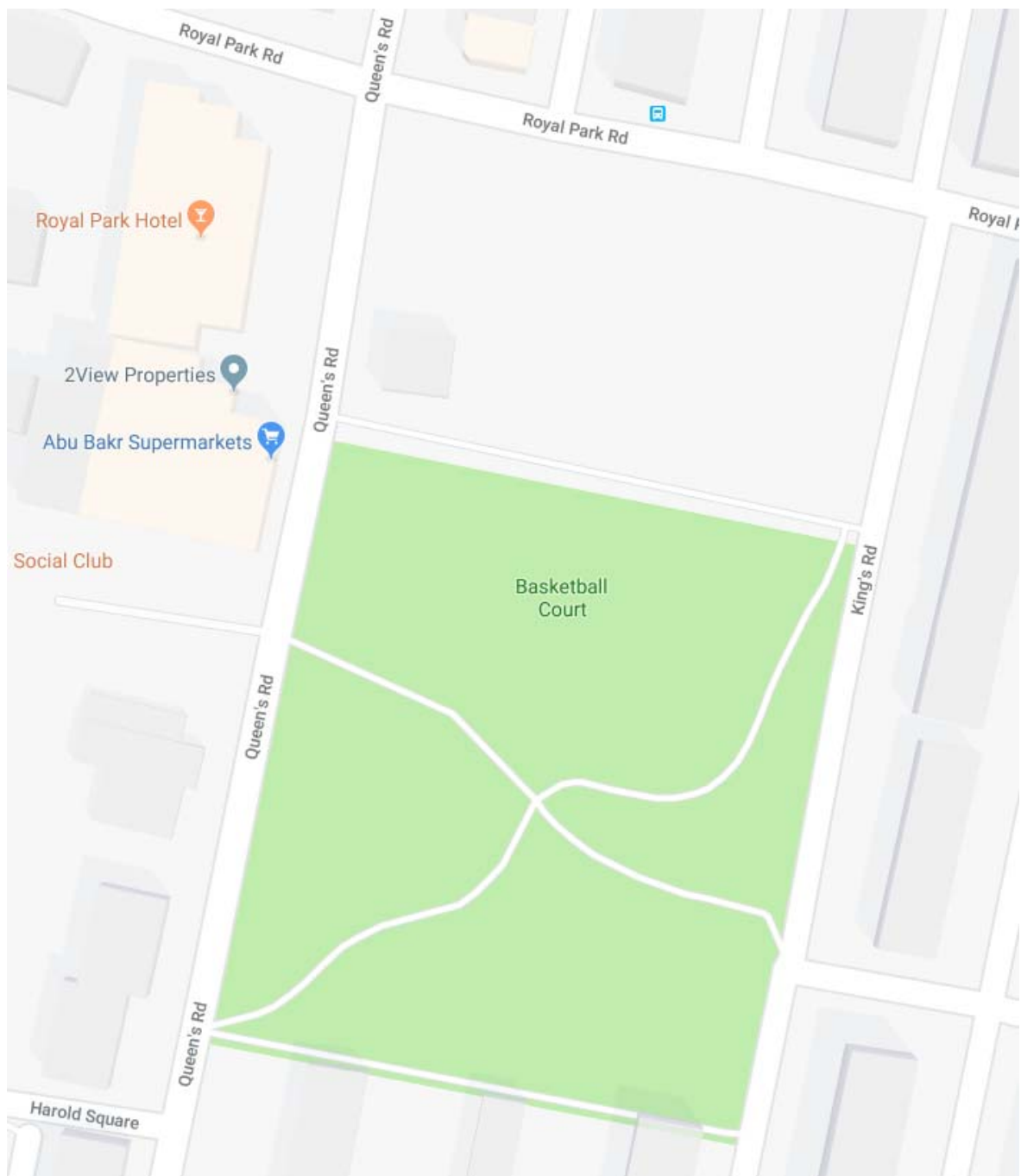
- i. Support the principle of developing the site as a community green space that is to be integrated and developed into the existing parkland.
- ii. Endorse the design principle and features set out in the report as the foundation for developing the site and planning determination.
- iii. Authorise the injection of £516.6k from S106 into capital scheme 33028/000/000, towards the development of the former Royal Park school site as a community park and the creation of an integrated, holistic community green space. To note that the allocation of S106 in line with available funds within relevant schemes is already delegated to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside.
- iv. Provide authority to spend £516.6k from capital scheme 33028/000/000 to implement elements included in the masterplan, subject to the outcome of the planning submission for the scheme.
- v. Support the principle of developing the site in phased approach based on the masterplan design proposal outlined in this report and also that proposals to pursue funding applications to add value to the capital investment set out in this report be endorsed.
- vi. Subject to ongoing consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles and Deputy Executive Member that responsibility for implementing the scheme be deferred and delegated to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on plans to develop a new green space on the site of the former Royal Park School that will integrate with the adjoining pre-existing community green space and will provide an enhanced holistic space.

2. Background information

- 2.1 In July 2013, Executive Board supported a decision to demolish the former Royal Park School site and approved a proposal to temporarily grass over the site while future community use options were considered.
- 2.2 The Royal Park site is located to the North West of the city centre and is to the south of Royal Park Road, with Queen's Road to the West and King's Road to the east as illustrated below.



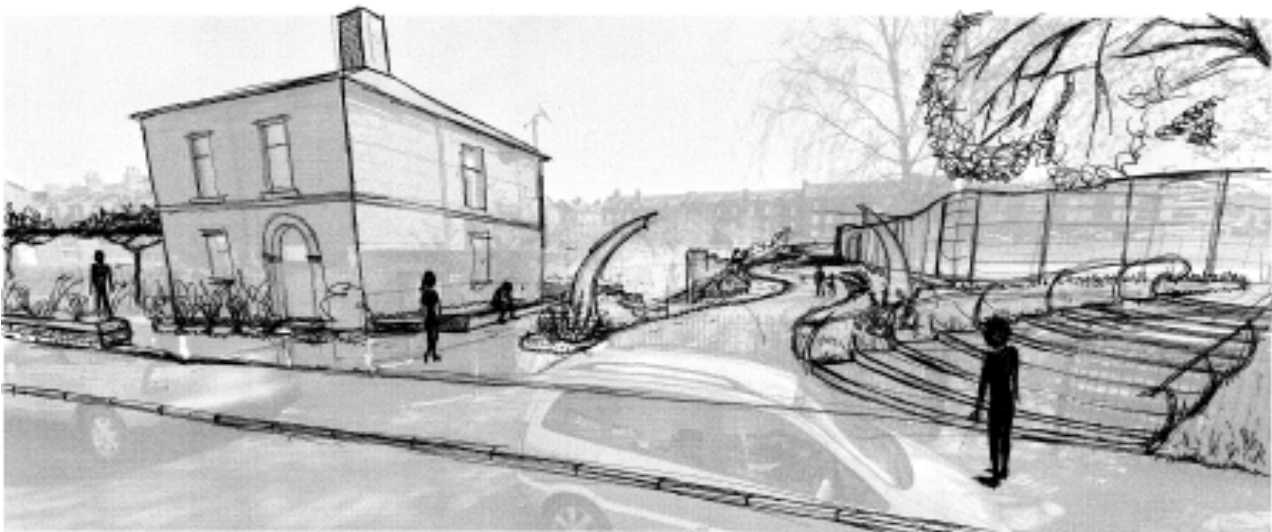
- 2.3 The site consists of two halves divided by a wall. On the northern side is the grassed over site of the former school and the southern side consists of amenity space, an informal play area and a multi-use games area. Following a ward boundary change the site is now located in the Hyde Park and Headingley Ward having previously fallen within the curtilage of the Hyde Park and Woodhouse ward.
- 2.4 In May 2014 a report was submitted to South and West Plans Panel that established the principle of developing the space as a high quality permanent green space. Subsequent to that there has been a series of ongoing conversations with community organisations, local interest groups and residents regarding the principle of developing the space as a community park.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 In order to inform discussion, a masterplan for the site has been produced that presents an overall vision for the site as an integrated holistic space and illustrated below.



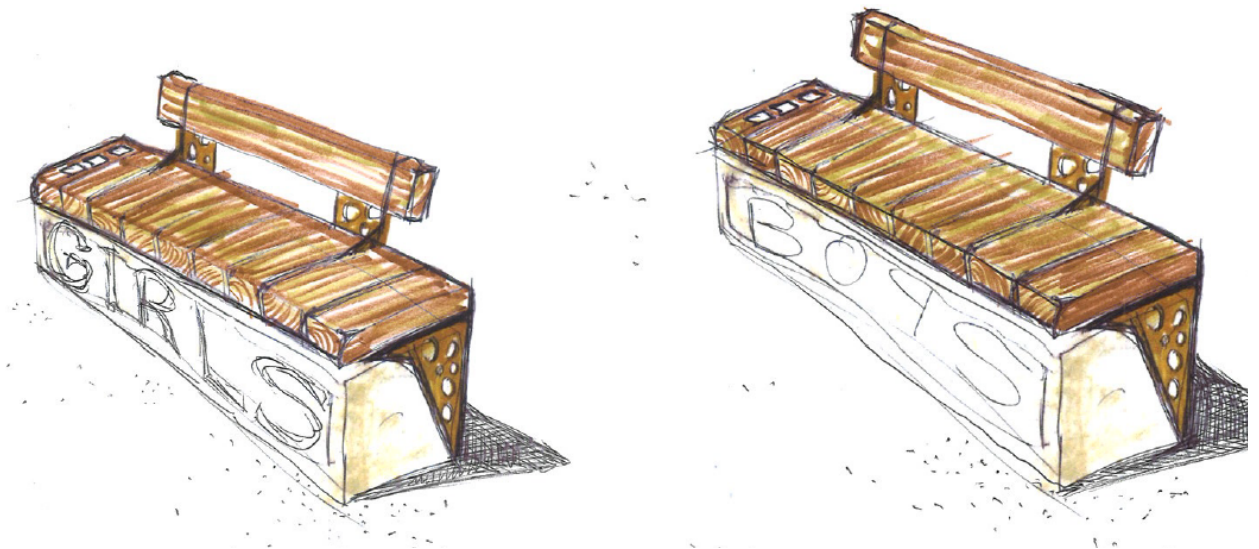
- 3.2 The design aim was to provide a holistic green space that combined the former school site with the existing adjoining recreation space. The design makes provision for the site to be developed in phases or indeed for individual micro elements of the design to be added, amended and influenced by ongoing conversations with residents, stakeholders and community organisations.
- 3.3 The design intends that the park would be utilised by individuals, families and other broader social use. Longer term the aspiration would be to establish an active and engaged friends group for the site to act as a catalyst for further community cohesion and social inclusion. One example is the proposal to develop a community orchard in the north-west corner of the old schoolyard planted with a mix of fruit trees, available for all to harvest, and offering opportunities for training programmes and encouraging healthy eating. The area is integrated into the design of the whole site and also doubles as an area to sit and relax, and is bordered by a shallow swale, taking rainwater from the adjacent hard surfaced space.
- 3.4 There are also proposals to develop a community planting bed in the north-east corner to create a sheltered and warm space for community growing adjacent to a curved brick wall. Complementing the orchard area, it would be ideal for a variety of edible plants and could include espaliered pears etc.
- 3.5 There is the inclusion of a large open area which could become a multi-functional performance and events space that could incorporate an area for a stage. Trees would be planted to provide shade through the summer yet allow clear views beneath with shallow terraces in the ground providing informal seating opportunities that also helping create an amphitheatre effect. The whole area could be made more inviting by removing some of the fencing, leaving only a visual boundary created by the planting and surfacing details along Queens Road at the front.
- 3.6 Essential to early stage works will be proposals to enhance arrival to the site from Queens Road creating a more welcoming entrance with new, wider steps up to the multi-use games area (MUGA) to improve access and add continuity, helping the different features integrate better. Incorporating artwork and features into both the surfacing and large 'gateposts' help create a strong identity and allow for elements of community involvement as shown below.



- 3.7 This area will also need to address the wall that presently splits the two sites by reducing the impact of this physical barrier by removing some sections. Low sections could be converted to seating with the addition of durable reclaimed

hardwood tops, and thus a new lease of life is breathed into what was historically an important part of the site. Raised planting beds incorporated along this wall further soften its appearance and provide further opportunities for community growing projects. Removing the fence between MUGA and wall to open this area up makes it more welcoming and allows for a new, wider path areas supported by meadow planting to either side to increase the welcoming feel and add visual interest.

- 3.8 In addition to physical enhancements, the design also seeks to respond to climate change and includes elements that directly relate to the new Green Flag criteria as highlighted to Executive Board in April 2017. For example the development will seek to ensure sensitive and sustainable management of rainwater, to help combat issues with both drought and flooding. A long curved swale running through the site helps capture rainwater from hard-surfaced areas, slowing its release into drains and allowing far more of it to naturally infiltrate into the ground. The micro-habitats created are an important ecological resource, increasing biodiversity and adding sensory interest and colour, as well as providing important resources for wildlife.
- 3.9 This will be supported by a mixture of native and non-native wildflowers to provide a very long lasting display of colour, and a rich source of nectar for a variety of pollinating insects, from spring through to late autumn. The perennial mixes require minimal maintenance and mown margins around accessible edges maintain a tidy and managed appearance even once the flowers have faded.
- 3.10 A further central feature of the masterplan design are proposals for significantly enhanced opportunities for physical and mental wellbeing from enhanced children's play features and outdoor recreation features. The design proposal includes smaller equipment aimed more at younger children, along with larger feature equipment that will provide a greater degree of challenge to generate enthusiasm amongst older children and make a strong visual statement. Feature slides have been proposed including a tubular tunnel slide, double wide slides and 'rabbit hole' slides along with giant slides.
- 3.11 From a physical activity perspective proposals will be considered to enhance the (MUGA) and complement that with the development of an outdoor gym space. Outdoor gym equipment has proven very popular over recent years, and by installing several pieces in close proximity, overlooking the MUGA, users can chat socially to each other or watch the activity on the courts, increasing the likelihood of them being well used. Re-aligning the bank and pathway down through the site in this area allows for a wider space to be opened up, and creating a retaining wall around the gym equipment allows for informal seating to be sensitively incorporated into the area.
- 3.12 Where possible the design will also seek to reflect back to its former use as a school recognising its significance to the local community. For example the Royal Park School sign will remain and be enhanced by planting the inside with a specimen tree to provide greenery and shade and centring the surrounding structures on it, it becomes the focal point of the east side of the old School yard. Furthermore the former caretaker's house was retained on site. Whilst a longer term sustainable use will be needed for the building it has the potential to form a focal point with options to create a garden with possible opportunities to pursue food growing. Should a sustainable use not be found the space still functions and other options considered including being left as open space. Further elements such as including the former entrance stones will also seek to be incorporated as highlighted below.



3.13 The proposals included within the masterplan need to be developed in further detail and also need to be submitted for planning approval. The construction proposed in this development is landscape related works and therefore falls within the provisions of Contract Procedure Rule 3.1.4 in that an internal service provider can undertake the work. Therefore the work is to be undertaken by the Parks and Countryside service who will act as principle contractor.

3.14 Programme

Subject to Executive Board approval to the proposals and recommendations within this report, the following indicative development programme is proposed;

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| • Complete the design process | November 2018 |
| • Submit planning application | December 2018 |
| • Commence works on site | April 2019 |

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Following the decision to close the former school, options regarding future use have been subject to consultation with a view to determining a sustainable future for the site. The masterplan presented for consideration has been subject to extensive discussion led by ward members incorporating resident feedback along with Hyde Park Neighbourhood Forum, school governing bodies, stakeholder and interest group discussion.

4.1.2 Given that detailed plans will be subject to planning, there will be an opportunity for ongoing conversation and feedback. Furthermore, the Parks and Countryside service is committed to supporting and extending opportunities for community engagement in green space delivery and will commit officer resources to establishing a friends group that will provide ongoing feedback and a platform for ongoing dialogue.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An equality impact screening has been completed in relation to the report content and the proposed decision being taken within this report. The proposed development has the potential to establish a community green space thus encouraging different communities to interact with one another improving health and recreation provision for all ages particularly children and young people.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The proposals in this report support the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 and in particular the key aim that 'Leeds will be fair, open and welcoming', and 'all Leeds' communities will be successful'. It will support the 'best city for children', 'best city for business', and 'best city for communities' with specific reference to the aspiration that 'there are high quality buildings, places and green spaces, which are clean, looked after, and respect the city's heritage, including buildings, parks and the history of our communities'.
- 4.3.2 The proposals contribute to the Best Council Plan outcomes to 'enjoy happy, healthy, active lives', to 'do well at all levels of learning and have the skills they need for life' and 'enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts'. Also, the project will contribute towards best city priorities relating to health and wellbeing by providing increased opportunities for children and families to be physically active. Furthermore the project has the potential to address issues associated with life expectancy for the least deprived by providing improved access to green spaces and its associated social outcomes and benefits and best council priorities relating to Child Friendly City by providing opportunities to be physically active and address childhood obesity.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 Contributions towards the delivery of the park will be secured from funds held with both the Headingley and Hyde Park ward and Little London and Woodhouse.
- 4.4.2 It is proposed that a total of £516.6k will be injected equally from section 106 funding committed from available funds within the Headingley and Hyde Park ward, and Little London and Woodhouse ward.

4.5 Capital Funding and Cash Flow

Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2019 £000's	FORECAST				
			2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023 ON £000's
LAND (1)	0.0		0.0	0.0			
CONSTRUCTION (3)	454.0		454.0	0.0			
FURN & EQPT (5)	0.0		0.0	0.0			
DESIGN FEES (6)	62.6		62.6	0.0			
OTHER COSTS (6)& (7)	0.0		0.0	0.0			
TOTALS	516.6	0.0	516.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2019 £000's	FORECAST				
			2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023 ON £000's
15 'S106 Funding	516.6	0.0	516.6	0.0			
			0.0	0.0			
Total Funding	516.6	0.0	516.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance / Shortfall =	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

4.6 Revenue Effects

4.6.1 The cost of absorbing the additional land will be incorporated into existing maintenance budgets for the green space.

4.7 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.7.1 There are no issues with access to information in respect of this report. The decision is subject to call in. Any successful funding application will be subject to a legal agreement with appropriate due diligence applied. The funding to support development will be provided from developer contributions which in this instance are secured by a legal agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) between the local planning authority and developer. Any allocation of funds will be in accordance with the terms of the relevant S106 agreement and in line with delegated authority to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside.

4.8 Risk management

4.8.1 Elements of this project which relate to specialist aspects of landscape development will be managed and implemented by the Parks and Countryside service with due regard given to risk management through project governance. The service has extensive and varied expertise in acting as principal contractor in the construction of landscape projects.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Considerable progress has been made in bringing forward a masterplan design with funding available to commence development in the near future. The design makes provision for the site to be developed in phases or indeed for individual micro elements of the design to be added, amended and influenced by ongoing conversations with residents, stakeholders and community organisations.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is requested to;

- i. Support the principle of developing the site as a community green space that is to be integrated and developed into the existing parkland.
- ii. Endorse the design principle and features set out in the report as the foundation for developing the site and planning determination.
- iii. Authorise the injection of £516.6k from S106 into capital scheme 33028/000/000, towards the development of the former Royal Park school site as a community park and the creation of an integrated, holistic community green space. To note that the allocation of S106 in line with available funds within relevant schemes is already delegated to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside.
- iv. Provide authority to spend £516.6k from capital scheme 33028/000/000 to implement elements included in the masterplan, subject to the outcome of the planning submission for the scheme.
- v. Support the principle of developing the site in phased approach based on the masterplan design proposal outlined in this report and also that proposals to pursue funding applications to add value to the capital investment set out in this report be endorsed.
- vi. Subject to ongoing consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles and Deputy Executive Member that responsibility for implementing the scheme be deferred and delegated to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside in line the programme in 3.14.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.