
Report of the Director of City Development and the Director of Communities & Environment

Report to Executive Board

Date: 13th December 2017

Subject: Parklife Programme

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Beeston & Holbeck; Calverley & Farsley; Gipton & Harehills; Middleton Park; Temple Newsam; Weetwood	
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. Parklife is a national programme funded by the Football Association (FA), the Premier League, Department for Culture Media and Sport, Sport England and the Football Foundation. The programme seeks to implement a new sustainable model for grassroots football based on quality facilities that are more cost effective to operate.
2. Parklife provides funding through the FA of 60% towards the costs of developing football hubs each comprising a minimum of two artificial grass pitches (AGPs) with associated changing facilities and parking.
3. The draft Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) identifies a shortfall of 13 additional full size 3G (3rd generation artificial rubber crumb) football pitches in the city, based on training demand.
4. Working with partners across the city, a shortlist of potential sites has been developed. The current shortlist is:

Site	Ward	Ownership	Likely no AGP
Elland Road	Beeston & Holbeck	Leeds City Council	1
Former Matthew Murray High School	Beeston & Holbeck	Leeds City Council	3
Woodhall Playing Fields	Calverley & Farsley	Leeds City Council	2
Fearnville Leisure Centre	Gipton & Harehills	Leeds City Council	3
John Charles Centre for Sport	Middleton Park	Leeds City Council	2
Thorpe Park	Temple Newsam	Scarborough Group	4
University of Leeds Lawnswood	Weetwood	University of Leeds	3
University of Leeds Bodington Hall	Weetwood	University of Leeds	3

The shortlist is not finalised and suggestions for additional or alternative sites are welcomed.

5. Technical feasibility studies are required to progress further and to narrow the list down to a final shortlist, develop a delivery programme and provide costings for development of each site.

Recommendations

6. Executive Board is recommended to:
 - i) Note the proposal for the Parklife programme in Leeds;
 - ii) Note the proposed shortlist of sites and approve that officers seek further suggestions for sites from local partners, subject to criteria as set out in paragraph 3.7;
 - iii) Approve further work with the FA and local and national partners to further develop the Parklife programme in Leeds, which will specifically include carrying out technical feasibility studies, production of a final shortlist, develop a delivery programme and provide costings for the development of each site;
 - iv) Approve an injection into the capital programme of £100k to carry out feasibility works at some of the shortlisted sites;
 - v) Approve release of £100k from the capital programme with decisions on the release of funding for specific sites to be delegated to the Director of City Development;
 - vi) Note that a further report will be submitted to Executive Board to make a final decision on the shortlist and appropriate release of funds for development; and
 - vii) Note that the Director of City Development and the Director of Communities & Environment will be responsible for implementation of the recommendations.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with an update on progress with the Leeds Parklife programme, to seek approval for work to continue on the programme, to note the shortlist of sites and to seek approval for funding of £100k toward feasibility studies on some of the shortlisted sites.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The Parklife programme is funded by the Football Association (FA), the Premier League, Department for Digital, Culture and Sport, Sport England and the Football Foundation. The programme seeks to implement a new sustainable model for grassroots football based on quality facilities that are more cost effective to operate. In late 2016 Sport England invited expressions of interest from Local Authorities with populations exceeding 200,000 to participate in the programme. Leeds City Council was requested to submit an expression of interest by the FA who were keen for Leeds to be part of the programme. In January 2017 the expression of interest was submitted and Leeds was subsequently invited to participate in the programme.
- 2.2 Parklife provides funding of 60% towards the costs of developing football hubs each usually comprising a minimum of two artificial grass pitches (AGPs) with associated changing facilities and parking.
- 2.3 The Parklife model requires that land is leased to a purposely established not for profit football trust for the city and then each site operated by a private operator. The aim is that each site generates sufficient income to pay the operator's fees and profits are used to put funding into the football trust. The trust's surpluses are to be reinvested into football facilities in the city, with a particular focus on improving the remaining stock of grass pitches.
- 2.4 Each hub would have at least one community partner club attached. These partner clubs would benefit from being able to use the facilities for matchplay at the same cost as for grass pitch hire. Hire for training and for other clubs would be at a price determined by the operator.
- 2.5 This is the first round of the Parklife programme, although a pilot project has been successfully implemented in Sheffield. At present two hubs are operational in Sheffield with a third currently in development. Other authorities in the programme include Kirklees, Liverpool, Sunderland, Trafford, Wigan and Coventry. The funding partners aim to have hubs in 30 cities by 2020. Parklife hubs use branding aligned to the FA's national centre of excellence in Burton, so for example if a hub was delivered at the Woodhall site it would be called "St George's Park Leeds Woodhall".
- 2.6 The draft Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS), which is due for approval in the new year, identifies a shortfall of 13 additional full size 3G football pitches in the city, based on training demand. The draft PPS recommends that feasible sites are identified to increase provision of full size 3G pitches to meet training and competitive demand and to consider the FA's Parklife model as a means of doing this.
- 2.7 There are sufficient grass pitches in Leeds to cope with matchplay demand. However, these pitches are generally of poor quality and the few that are better are overused and then quickly deteriorate each season. This leads to cancellations and ultimately affects participation numbers.

- 2.8 Parklife offers an opportunity for Leeds to have top class facilities for football and other sports right through from junior mini soccer at the grassroots level through to elite player development. It links into plans for development work by West Riding County FA and the Leeds United Foundation to further develop football in Leeds and offers an opportunity to work with partners such as the universities and National Governing Bodies from other sports such as the Rugby Football League. Parklife will also address issues with the state of the city's pitches by not only directly providing new facilities through the hubs, but by reinvesting surpluses from the football trust into the remaining stock of grass pitches.
- 2.9 In other authority areas that are engaged in the programme the expected model is that the local authority will bring forward and develop hubs on its own land, and this was the expectation in Leeds. Although the majority of the current shortlist in Leeds includes council land and would follow this model, there are opportunities presented by third party partners who have indicated a willingness to contribute their land and develop hubs themselves. The council's role in Parklife in Leeds is therefore to direct the programme for the city providing the local strategic context for the funding partners as well as contributing land and funding towards developments on land it owns.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Following acceptance onto the programme an FA projects manager was allocated to Leeds. A steering group has been established which includes external representation from The FA, West Riding County FA, Sport England, Leeds United Foundation and the Football Foundation as well as internal representatives from Asset Management, Sport & Active Lifestyles and Parks & Countryside.
- 3.2 The group's activities have focussed on developing a shortlist of sites in the city, a task which has been led by Asset Management service in partnership with colleagues in Parks & Countryside, Sport & Active Lifestyles and Sport England. The approach taken has been to try and identify any council owned space that might be suitable and then assess those sites based on factors including size, proximity to housing, location, accessibility and impact on the surrounding area. That work started with an initial longlist of around 100 sites and was reduced to 20 sites, each of which was visited. Following those visits a shortlist of sites which appear to be suitable has been developed.
- 3.3 Two third parties have approached the council about the possibility of working with them on their land. Scarborough Development has suggested some of the land which would form part of the Green Park at their Thorpe Park development and the University of Leeds have suggested either Lawnswood playing fields or the pitches at Bodington Hall. The Scarborough Development land is due to transfer to council ownership as part of the Green Park project so should fit within the usual Parklife delivery model. The University of Leeds proposes to develop land on their property and that the University would match fund the Parklife grant, meaning no financial contribution from the council. However, officers will seek to ensure the council leads on the community aspects of this site, including working with community partner clubs.

3.4 Any consideration of the Parklife potential at Elland Road and Matthew Murray would be progressed in the context of the Council's discussions with LUFC and its Community Foundation and their ambitions for training and development facilities on these sites. Any Parklife proposals will be complementary to those proposals.

3.5 The current shortlist of sites is:

Site	Ward	Ownership	Likely no AGP
Elland Road	Beeston & Holbeck	Leeds City Council	1
Former Matthew Murray High School	Beeston & Holbeck	Leeds City Council	3
Woodhall Playing Fields	Calverley & Farsley	Leeds City Council	2
Fearnville Leisure Centre	Gipton & Harehills	Leeds City Council	3
John Charles Centre for Sport	Middleton Park	Leeds City Council	2
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University of Leeds Lawnswood	Weetwood	University of Leeds	3
University of Leeds Bodington Hall	Weetwood	University of Leeds	3

The plan attached at Appendix 1 shows each of these sites alongside existing AGP provision and location of existing junior football teams. The shortlist offers a good geographical spread across the city. Members are asked to note that in wards where more than one site is identified, only one of those sites would be delivered. Therefore although there are eight sites on the current shortlist, only a maximum of six of them could be delivered. The shortlist is not yet finalised and is open for discussion, with suggestions for potential additional or alternative sites welcomed.

3.6 The pilot project and work in other cities which is more advanced than Leeds has shown that the ideal Parklife hub business model is for three AGPs, or even more if there is sufficient market demand. It is considered likely that in Leeds 12-15 pitches could be accommodated across up to five hub sites which is in line with the requirement identified in the draft PPS.

3.7 The shortlisting process originally focussed on council owned land. However, the approach from the University of Leeds has highlighted that there may be other privately or even council owned land in the city that could be suitable for Parklife hubs. Members are asked to approve that the council invites informal expressions of interest from partners across the city to identify suitable sites. A minimum criteria is recommended for privately owned sites to be considered and officers recommend the following:

- Site of sufficient size to accommodate 2 full size artificial grass pitches plus requisite changing facilities and parking
- Sufficient security of tenure to grant a 25 year lease to the football trust
- Availability of at least 40% match funding
- In line with planning policy

3.8 Each site on the current shortlist has been provisionally scored against the Parklife site assessment matrix and each of the shortlisted sites scored well. A copy of the matrix template is attached at Appendix 2.

3.9 Technical feasibility studies are required to progress further and to narrow the list down to a final shortlist, develop a delivery programme and provide costings for development of each site. It is likely sites will be brought forward one or two at a time. The council would only be expected to fund 40% of the costs of feasibility studies on its own land. In the first instance feasibility studies are proposed for Woodhall Playing Fields and John Charles Centre for Sport. A further study may be required in the future at Fearnville, subject to the outcome of the school and wellbeing centre consultation. A total budget of £100,000 is required to fund the council's contribution to the feasibility studies.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 The Executive Member for Environment & Sustainability and the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning have been briefed and both are supportive of the proposal.

4.1.2 Ward members of the affected wards have been consulted. Although there are some issues and concerns around specific sites, members are supportive of the programme and the presence of a hub in their wards. Further more detailed assessment and consultation will be undertaken to work through these issues.

4.1.3 There has been no public consultation yet, although this will be important post-feasibility to inform the final list of sites.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 An equality and diversity/cohesion and integration screening has been completed and is attached at Appendix 3. The screening has found that there are likely to be benefits to young people and no foreseen negative impacts. The design of the Parklife buildings include self-contained changing rooms for each team using the facility, thereby easily accommodating concurrent male and female usage. The increase in capacity resulting from the programme will also meet the increase in demand from the growth of girls' and women's football.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 Our vision is for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: one that is compassionate with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that still exist. We want Leeds to be a city that is fair and sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative

for all with a council that its residents can be proud of: the best council in the country.

4.3.2 The provision of state of the art artificial grass pitches at hubs located across the city adds significant benefit to our Vision. This includes the potential to support the following 2017/18 priorities:

- Good Growth
- Health and Wellbeing
- Resilient Communities
- Child Friendly City
- Better Lives.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The Parklife business case requires that hubs are leased to a newly formed football trust and managed by private operators with surpluses retained by the trust for reinvestment into the stock of grass pitches in the city. This could lead to a loss of income for the council on sites already used to provide football facilities such as John Charles Centre for Sport.

4.4.2 The cost of a typical 3 x AGP Parklife hub with associated changing facilities and car parking will be in the region of £3-4m. On the council owned sites this will require a significant contribution from the council's resources, but will result in 60% of the overall project costs being met by external grant funding.

4.4.3 Site feasibility work is the next stage and a budget of £100,000 is required to contribute towards the feasibility studies at the council owned sites. This will be a 40% contribution towards the costs, with the remainder funded by the Parklife programme.

4.4.4 By being part of the Parklife programme the council will have access to the FA's national framework for procurement of specialist contractors which includes already vetted contractors for both the delivery of the physical development work and the operators. Accessing this existing proven framework will offer the opportunity for cost savings and reduced risk.

4.4.5 Capital contributions from the Council will be considered further as part of the capital programme budget setting process.

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

4.5.1 Hubs built on council owned land will each require a 25 year lease at peppercorn consideration to be granted to the newly established football trust. The details of the leases will be considered once feasibility has completed and individual sites identified for development. This detail will be explicit at the time any site specific decisions are taken in the future.

4.5.2 The Council will need to ensure it is compliant with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires local authorities to dispose of land at the best consideration (highest price) reasonably obtainable. This means disposals must be at market value unless there is a general or specific consent by the Secretary of State to justify a disposal at less than best consideration. The Local Government

Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003, gives a general consent which allows the Council to dispose of certain local authority land at less than best consideration, without obtaining specific consent from the Secretary of State, where the Council considers that the purpose for which the land is to be disposed is likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of economic social or environmental wellbeing of their area or people living or present there, provided that the difference between the unrestricted value of the land and the actual consideration received for the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000. The Council will also need to ensure it is compliant with the State aid rules.

4.5.3 The football trust will likely be a form of charity and therefore in the event that the business is not viable and the charity is wound up, the Council will not be able to forfeit the lease and recover possession in the usual way. In these circumstances, the leasehold interest would likely be transferred by the Charity Commission to another charity with similar objects.

4.5.4 There are no access to information implications.

4.5.5 The decision is eligible for Call In.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 The main risk to the programme is that the new hubs are not financially viable. However, the draft PPS shows there is currently unmet training demand for 13 artificial grass pitches in Leeds and each of the currently shortlisted sites scores well on the FA's scoring matrix for operational viability of the location. Therefore, although the potential impact of financial failure would be high, the likelihood is low.

4.6.2 Parklife is the main funding programme to develop AGPs and improve facilities nationwide. If Leeds does not take part in the programme then we risk being left behind other areas (such as Sheffield which already has hubs and neighbouring Kirklees which is also part of the programme) and then having to catch up, possibly in the absence of such a generous funding programme. In that context, being invited onto the programme at this stage offers the opportunity for Leeds to be at the forefront of developments.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Parklife programme offers the opportunity to attract significant grant funding towards the development of football hubs across the city which will provide state of the art football hubs. Not only will this provide additional artificial pitches, a need which is identified in the draft Playing Pitch Strategy, but will also result in investment in the existing stock of grass pitches. All of this will provide fit for purpose high quality facilities for all levels and age groups.

5.2 A shortlist of sites has been developed which includes sites owned by the council, on land which will eventually transfer to council ownership and land owned by the University of Leeds. The current shortlist offer the potential for six hub locations to be developed which would provide 12-15 pitches, in line with the need for 13 identified in the draft PPS. Suggestions for additional or alternative sites are welcomed.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to:

- i) Note the proposal for the Parklife programme in Leeds;
- ii) Note the proposed shortlist of sites and approve that officers seek further suggestions for sites from local partners, subject to criteria as set out in paragraph 3.7;
- iii) Approve further work with the FA and local and national partners to further develop the Parklife programme in Leeds, which will specifically include carrying out technical feasibility studies, production of a final shortlist, develop a delivery programme and provide costings for the development of each site;
- iv) Approve an injection into the capital programme of £100k to carry out feasibility works at some of the shortlisted sites;
- v) Approve release of £100k from the capital programme with decisions on the release of funding for specific sites to be delegated to the Director of City Development;
- vi) Note that a further report will be submitted to Executive Board to make a final decision on the shortlist and appropriate release of funds for development; and
- vii) Note that the Director of City Development and the Director of Communities & Environment will be responsible for implementation of the recommendations.

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.