

## Meadow Lane Green Space Works

Date: 8 June 2021

Report of: Asset Management and Regeneration

Report to: Director of City Development

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### What is this report about?

The report seeks Authority to Spend £3.25m for the delivery of the Meadow Lane Green Space as part of the Council's ongoing commitment to the development of green infrastructure in the city centre to support the implementation of the Our Spaces Strategy and the South Bank Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document.

### Best Council Plan implications (see the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- Contributing to inclusive growth
- Reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles
- Delivering sustainable infrastructure
- Making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in
- Making Leeds the best city to grow old in
- Supporting housing delivery
- Providing inclusive spaces for communities
- Improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities

### Recommendation

- a) The Director of City Development is requested to authorise £3.25m of expenditure from Capital Scheme No. 33401/MEA/000 for the delivery of the proposed Meadow Lane green space works which is funded through governments 'Getting Building Fund' (GBF).

### Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The Our Spaces Strategy is the first time that the city has brought together and articulated the importance of our spaces and the role it plays in positioning Leeds as the Best City now and in the future. The strategy has identified a number of proposed interventions to meet our vision for the creation of world class, inclusive and vibrant spaces. The Our Spaces Strategy identified a number of interconnected and complementary strategies and work programmes including: Connecting Leeds (LPTIP); South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD which incorporates Aire Park; Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan and HS2; the Health and Wellbeing Strategy; the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Climate Emergency, that brought forward considerations for a transformational work programme of public realm schemes.

- 2 The March 2020 Executive Board Report 'City Centre Park Delivery' advised that Executive Board had previously approved the masterplan for the transformation of Meadow Lane as green space as part of the wider South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD at Executive Board February 2018. It also gave approval to the proposed funding package to transform the highways infrastructure at Meadow Lane into a new development plot and green space, utilising the receipt realised from the development plot as the Council's match funding towards the capital costs of the delivery of the new green space.
- 3 Meadow Lane is currently a four lane adopted highway that is adjacent to the North West boundary of the former Carlsberg Tetley site with the Asda Head Office located immediately to the west. For over a decade, through the South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD, the Council in partnership with the adjoining landowners (Asda and Carlsberg Tetley and latterly Vastint) have promoted a collective vision for the repurposing of the Meadow Lane highway infrastructure into what will be part of Leeds's City Park (Aire Park). The creation of Aire Park by Vastint is now progressing into its delivery phase.
- 4 Meadow Lane has continued to be developed as part of this wider green infrastructure ambition as part of the Connecting Leeds programme, in alignment with the Leeds Transport Strategy. The scheme proposals will re-prioritise Meadow Lane from a four-lane highway, into a north-south two-lane traffic route through the western edge of the park with cycle ways and walking routes (and Sovereign Street Bridge) connecting the city centre to Aire Park and vice-versa.
- 5 The project will utilise the release of the Council land holding at and between Meadow Lane and Hunslet Lane surface car park to contribute to the delivery of the Meadow Lane green space. In addition, the release of land also creates the opportunity to bring forward the proposals for the creation of a development plot to be marketed, thereby generating a capital receipt to form part of the Council's match funding contribution to the Grey to Green programme.
- 6 The disposal of the development plot is part of the approved capital receipts programme and will contribute to the delivery of the wider Grey to Green projects.
- 7 The Meadow Lane green space design ambition may be summarised as follows:-
  - Continuum - Meadow Lane and Aire Park should have a continued landscape narrative to ensure the space is read as one.
  - Coherence - A coherent series of spaces is established from Leeds Train Station to Aire Park. Meadow Lane is a key linking site between the new City Park and the train station, including any future HS2 connections.
  - Formal / Informal - A formal route along the northern boundary adjacent to the development plot, with an informal biodiverse route flowing to the south.
  - The Meadow Lane green space has been divided into distinct zones to meet different design ambitions across the space and also to make allowance for the proposed development plot and access/servicing requirements for adjacent buildings. The zones are as follows;
  - Meadow Lane Pedestrian and Cyclist Crossing Point - This allows the creation of the pedestrian connection between Aire Park and the future Sovereign Bridge minimising the interaction with traffic between the city centre and Aire Park.
  - Future Development Plot - The space to the north of the Meadow Lane public realm is earmarked by the Council as a space for a future landmark building which would provide the match funding required to deliver the green space.
  - The Central Lawns - The centre of the public realm offers an open recreational area, with lawn spaces positioned to make full use of the southern aspect. Trees and shrub planting is arranged to the edges of the lawns, allowing for flexible uses in the middle. The south facing

aspect exploits full sun for picnics, socialising, or relaxing and reading, whilst larger trees positioned towards the edges will provide spaces to relax in the shade.

- Biodiverse Area - The Biodiverse Area is a space for visitors to wander slowly through, or to sit and enjoy the trees and planting surrounding them. This space allows for a tangible connection to nature, with the narrower discovery paths allowing both children and adults to explore the textures, sounds and smells of the planting. A number of rain gardens in this area connect to the wider SuDS strategy, celebrating the management of water at the surface.
- The tree proposals include the planting of 19 no. new trees of a variety of native tree species including river birch for the rain gardens, two species of cherry tree for early and late flowering, honey locust for their climate resilience and a holm oak to add evergreen species. The planting proposals include shrubs adjacent to the road that are pollution tolerant, a wide variety of flowering shrubs to attract pollinators, a drought and water resistant mix of shrubs for the rain gardens and grass mixes to provide benefits to both biodiversity and people using the space.
- The hard landscaping proposals have been developed to ensure that the paving materials being utilised for Aire Park are complementary, using the same or similar materials where they blend across the scheme to meet other spaces. The seating approach has followed BS 8300 to ensure that all of the seating elements and all elements of the scheme are designed for equality and inclusion.

8 In addition to the distinctive zones identified above, the ambition for the scheme is that it is sustainable and climate change resilient. As such the scheme has been designed with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in mind with the ambition that the Meadow Lane green space on an annual basis will achieve a measurable level of carbon sequestration as follows:-

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| • Carbon absorbed by amenity lawns per annum     | 180.5 Kg of CO <sub>2</sub> |
| • Carbon absorbed by young trees per annum       | 41.3 Kg of CO <sub>2</sub>  |
| • Carbon absorbed by 10 year old trees per annum | 264 Kg of CO <sub>2</sub>   |
| • Carbon absorbed by retained trees per annum    | 110 Kg of CO <sub>2</sub>   |
| • Carbon absorbed by planting                    | 32.37 Kg of CO <sub>2</sub> |

### What impact will this proposal have?

**Wards affected: Hunslet & Riverside**

Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

9 The Meadow Lane green space will increase the available public realm creating a space which welcomes people, speaks of our diverse communities and resonates with the citizens of Leeds and supports healthy lifestyles.

### What consultation and engagement has taken place?

10 Extensive consultation has been undertaken and is detailed in the April Executive Board report 'Proposed Grey to Green Projects, Progress Update', in summary this included has included;

- Consultation on the City Park through the South Bank Regeneration Framework in 2016, and South Bank Regeneration Framework SPD in 2017.
- Public engagement on the Our Spaces strategy in 2018/19.
- The Connecting Leeds Corn Exchange Gateway consultation (of which Meadow Lane was an integral part) on Transforming Your City Centre 2019.

11 The Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate has been consulted.

12 LCC's Planning Services City Centre Team Leader has confirmed they are of the view that the scheme would benefit from permitted development rights pursuant to Schedule 2, Part 12, Class A of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and subject to compliance of the landscape features and other works or structures to be provided with the interpretation of Class A as stated at paragraph A.2. Confirmation was also received that the works do not fall within the categories of works within either Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) which would require either an Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted or an Environmental Impact Screening Opinion to be adopted by the Local Planning Authority.

### What are the resource implications?

13 It is proposed that the Meadow Lane green space works will be funded by £3.25m secured from the 'Grey to Green' Getting Building Fund, which was injected into Capital Scheme No. 33401/MEA/000 as part of the capital programme in February 2021.

14 The 'Grey to Green' Getting Building Fund has a time constraint of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The scheme must be complete by this date to be eligible for the Fund.

15 Meadow Lane green space will be constructed by the delivery partner for the Connecting Leeds (LPTIP) Gateways.

16 The approach of using an existing framework and construction partners provides a number of benefits including the ability to minimise costs across the delivery programmes through efficient delivery of existing contractual arrangements and minimising disruption and impact in the city centre.

## 17 Capital Funding and Cashflow

### Meadow Lane Green Space Works

Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2021 £000's	FORECAST		
			2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's
CONSTRUCTION (3)	2764.2	68.5	2637.5	58.2	
DESIGN FEES (6)	183.4	103.0	80.4		
OTHER COSTS (7)	302.4		302.4		
TOTALS	3250.0	171.5	3020.3	58.2	0.0
Total overall Funding LCC Capital Programme	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2021 £000's	FORECAST		
			2021/22 £000's	2022/23 £000's	2023/24 £000's
LCC SUPPORTED BORROWING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
GOVERNMENT GRANT (Getting Building Fund)	3250.0	171.5	3020.3	58.2	0.0
	0.0				
Total Confirmed Funding	3250.0	171.5	3020.3	58.2	0.0
<b>Total Funding Balance</b>	<b>(3,249.9)</b>	<b>(172)</b>	<b>(3,020)</b>	<b>(58)</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Any revenue implications resulting from the scheme will be picked up through existing directorate budgets.

### **What are the legal implications?**

18 None of the contents of this report are exempt or Confidential under Access to Information Rules detailed in the constitution.

19 The decision is a Key Decision and is subject to Call In.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

20 Risk is to be managed through application of 'best practice' project management tools and techniques via the City Council's 'PM Lite' risk methodology. Experienced Project Management resource has been allocated from within City Development

21 A risk management strategy has been produced for the grey to green programme and a risk register. Key risks are reported to the Grey to Green Project Board on a monthly basis.

22 A priced risk log has been prepared by the contractor with Employer and Contractor risk budgets allocated accordingly.

23 Funding from the 'Getting Building Fund' is dependent on the Meadow Lane works being completed by the end of March 2022. The current anticipated construction programme runs from the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Any delay to entering into a contractual position with the construction partner risks the funding window being exceeded and potentially the loss of the £3.25m from the Getting Building Fund.

24 There are two areas of land that are currently 'under the highway' that do not have a registered land title. The intention is for the Council to appropriate these and the required legal process to do so has commenced. Until the land is appropriated there is a risk that a claim of landownership could arise. This risk is considered low, as no interest was forthcoming during the successful Stopping Up application and, it is considered highly unlikely that interest will be stimulated now that consultation on the Stopping Up process has ceased. If a credible ownership claim was subsequently forthcoming, it is unlikely that the works would be completed within the funding window.

### **Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?**

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **What other options were considered?**

25 No other option has been considered. Authority to Spend is required before the contract can be awarded and works start on site. .

#### **How will success be measured?**

26 The scheme will be measured against time, cost and quality.

#### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

27 The programme envisages a start on site on 5 July 2021, with works to be complete by 31 March 2022.

### **Appendices**

28 None

### **Background papers**

29 None