



Report of the Chief Planning Officer

Outer East Area Committee

Date: 23 March 2010

Subject: THORPE PARK PROGRESS REPORT

Electoral Wards Affected:
Garforth & Swillington
Kippax & Methley
Cross Gates & Whinmoor
Temple Newsam

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report sets out progress relating to the delivery of the green park, construction of the new ponds on the green park area and proposals for the future development of Thorpe Park including the revised Master Plan and construction of the Manston Lane Link Road.

1.0 Purpose of This Report

1.1 This is a brief report setting out progress relating to issues of local concern regarding the future development of Thorpe Park and associated S.106 Agreement, together with the procurement of the Manston Lane Link Road. The key issues are as follows:-

- a) Delivery of the green park
- b) Construction of the 'new ponds' on the green park area
- c) Future development of Thorpe Park and revised Master Plan and construction of the Manston Lane Link Road

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Local Members and residents have raised concerns on a variety of issues relating to Thorpe Park. In 2008 a planning application was submitted for the construction of playing pitches and changing facilities on the green park area.

This resulted in significant opposition from local residents and the application was withdrawn. Since then, members of the community have requested information about the delivery of the playing fields and the changing facilities. Furthermore, concerns have been raised about the construction of ponds on the green park area and the associated earth mounds. Enquiries have been made as to when enforcement action may be taken against the unauthorised construction of the newt ponds. Finally, the residents are concerned to secure the construction of the Manston Lane Link Road which will help relieve traffic congestion in the Crossgates area and help facilitate the development of the former Barnbow site.

3.0 Main Issues

a) Delivery of the green park.

- 3.1 The delivery of the green park and associated changing facilities arises from the S.106 and Land Agreements for the development of Thorpe Park. This requires that 600,000 sq.ft. (gross external) are occupied. The extent of occupied development has been questioned by the new owners of Thorpe Park (Valad) and this is now being checked by using City Council records relating to each individual development that has been constructed and occupied on the Thorpe Park site. This is an extensive exercise and should be completed in the near future and will then need to be agreed with Thorpe Park Developments. In the meantime, Council officers and Ward Councillors have looked at alternative sites for the location of the playing fields, access road and changing facilities in order to overcome objections raised by local residents to the previous scheme. The revised proposals will be discussed further with local residents and Councillors before any new planning application is submitted.

b) Construction of the newt ponds

- 3.2 The excavation of soil on the northern part of the green park was undertaken without the benefit of planning permission. The developer considered that the ponds were required to relocate newts from Thorpe Park to ensure the completion of the Thorpe Park estate. Recent surveys and the proposals submitted by Threadneedle for the redevelopment of the Barnbow site have established that the ponds are not required for the relocation of newts to the north of the railway line. The City Council has therefore written to Valad to either ensure the submission of a planning application (to regularise the newt ponds) or to fill in the holes. However, for the holes to be filled in a new newt survey needs to be undertaken in Spring 2010 to determine whether a new colony of newts has become established in the holes in the last few months.
- 3.3 At the moment, it is Valad's stated intent to submit a planning application for the relocation of the colonies of newts within their site to the new ponds and that they propose to submit this later this year. We are pressing Valad for a clear timetable for action in order to overcome residents concerns.

c) Revised Thorpe Park Master Plan and delivery of Manston Lane Link Road

3.4 Members and residents will be aware of the new planning applications submitted for the redevelopment of the Barnbow site. In order to overcome problems of local highway capacity and traffic congestion in Crossgates, the redevelopment of the site requires the completion of the Manston Lane Link Road through Thorpe Park. Discussions are underway with the various land owning interests as to how this may be achieved. The East Plans Panel have recently considered a position report in relation to the redevelopment of the Barnbow site and strongly support the early delivery of the Link road as well as other S.106 obligations, including affordable housing and the retention of the Barnbow Social Club.

3.5 At the same time, Valad are in the early stages of revising their Master Plan for the northern development of Thorpe Park. This includes a route for the delivery of the link road. Once officer discussions have been completed the proposals will then be submitted to the City Council for approval. A process of public consultation with residents and Members will take place before the revised Master Plan is accepted.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

4.1 The details described in this report and the recommendation fits with existing Council policy and governance arrangements.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 The legal implications arising from this report relate to potential enforcement action in respect of the unauthorised construction of the newt ponds on the green park development.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This report provides details of progress relating to a number of issues in the Thorpe Park area. A further update report will be subjected to future Outer East Area Committee meetings.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That the information contained in this report be noted and Members of the Area Committee invited to comment.

Background Papers:

PA 09/04999/07

S1.06 Agreement for Thorpe Park

JHS\PC\Reports\2010\Thorpe Park Area Committee March 2010