
TITLE: North Ely Park Stage Two Report

Committee: Commercial Services Committee

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[P201]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To consider the North Ely Park Landscape Vision Stage Two Report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Approve the final Stage Two report, provided at Appendix 1, as the Council's vision for North Ely Park.
- (ii) Instruct the Infrastructure and Projects Officer to explore the next steps detailed in 3.11 and 3.12 of this report.

3.0 BACKGROUND/FURTHER INFORMATION

3.1 In July 2014, the Committee approved "in principle" the Stage One report. This enabled the consultants, Sheils Flynn, to progress into the next stage; involving wider consultation and further development of the proposals.

Consultation

3.2 Stage two has involved extensive consultation including a public exhibition at Ely Library from 6-8 November 2014. A summary of responses to the questionnaire are provided at Appendix 3 of the Stage Two report.

3.3 Sheils Flynn also led on a consultation project with Ely College, where year 8 pupils developed their own designs for the Park. A selection of these designs was then presented to key stakeholders including ECDC Members and the Mayor of Ely. Some of the designs are shown on page 47 of the Stage 2 report.

3.4 As a result of the consultation responses, a number of specific revisions were incorporated into the Landscape Vision for the park. These have included:

- Definition of a hierarchy of access routes, including specific cycleways and links to the city centre and railways station;
- Inclusion of natural/wild play as a fundamental ingredient of the park;
- Identification of a potential area for performances and events;

- Inclusion of a viewing mound, possibly using soil generated by excavation of the attenuation ponds;
- Identification of a potential location for an “activity building”; and
- Provision of more information on the potential habitats to be created.

Management

- 3.5 The second phase of the study has also included a review of possible management and governance options leading towards a strategy for the implementation and long term sustainable management and maintenance of the Park.
- 3.6 This identifies the challenges of managing the new Park as it grows in phases. It highlights the need to work in partnership with local community, wildlife groups and statutory agencies and it also emphasises the value of volunteers in this process. Whilst the Council may wish to take on the future ownership and management of the facility, other management options are suggested in the report, including the Land Trust.
- 3.7 The report also explores how revenue funds might be secured to guarantee the long term future of the Park. This includes the option of a local service charge to home and property owners, to help with the on-going maintenance costs.

Delivery of the Park

- 3.8 This is a long term vision for North Ely Park which is eventually expected to include up to 65 hectares. The current planning applications, however, provide only a small first phase of this facility, approximately 3.8 hectares of open space, plus ponds and ditches as part of the surface water drainage scheme for the site. The majority of the park will be provided as part of a future planning application, or applications, from the Church Commissioners as part of the wider Highflyer Farm development. There is no timescale for this at present.
- 3.9 It is anticipated that the land for the first phase of the new Park will be transferred to the Council along with a sum of money to deliver the play facility. This transfer is not likely to take place for some time and will be based on housing occupation rates. This might potentially be as late as 2024. The Council will then be responsible for the further design and construction of the new park. Subject to Full Council approval, it is anticipated that this work will be funded from part of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) collected from the North Ely development.

Costs

- 3.10 The report incorporates a capital cost plan and an estimate of future maintenance costs. Further detailed design stage work will be needed to refine the cost plan, but it should be noted that the initial estimate within the

masterplan to deliver the park is considerably greater than the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy funding earmarked for the facility.

The funding gap between estimated cost of phase 1 (£1.18 million) and earmarked funding, subject to Full Council approval, (£625,000) is approximately £555,000. Additional sources of funding will need to be identified to deliver the full Landscape Masterplan vision. Should Full Council approve CIL funding being applied to the North Ely Park this report details potential stages of delivery for Phase 1.

Next steps

3.11 The following steps are recommended by Sheils Flynn:

- The Land Trust to be invited to make a presentation to ECDC officers and Members.
- The Land Trust to set up a costed, phased management model and action plan.
- ECDC to confirm current levels of funding to be secured through CIL.
- ECDC to liaise with the Church Commissioners and Endurance Estates to consider the overall governance of the site, including any possible services charges to be made to residents.
- The Land Trust to review anticipated income against the management model in order to assess project viability and evaluate other funding options.
- Define and agree park extents and areas of responsibility, especially relating to the SUD's, footpaths etc.
- Initiate negotiations and provisional heads of terms for land transfer, governance structures and management responsibilities.
- Consultation with stakeholder groups to establish the potential for involvement and resourcing.

3.12 In addition to the above, further discussions are now required with both developers regarding the layout of the SUD's to ensure that they fit with the Council's vision for North Ely Park.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Study is being entirely funded from the Department of Communities and Local Government Local Infrastructure Fund Grant secured by officers from the Corporate Unit.

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: North Ely Park Stage 2 Report

Background Documents

North Ely Park Stage 1
Report

Location

Room 012,
The Grange

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