

Hermitage Park Update

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.0.1 This report provides an update on the current development phase of Hermitage Park.
- 1.0.2 A draft masterplan was presented to the public on 29th April 2015, following which minor amendments are being made to develop the final draft masterplan.
- 1.0.3 A report on options for delivery of associated car parking and the associated budget implications (outwith scope of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding), and also management and maintenance resourcing and budgetary implications were presented at the 12th May 2015 business day.
- 1.0.4 The project is on track for a 31st August 2015 deadline for the application to HLF.

1.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1.1 The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee note the content of this report.
- 1.1.2 That members consider and provide approval in principal to sign off the final draft masterplan.
- 1.1.3 Members consider and if agreeable approve the additional car parking provision as described in option one, and approve the associated budget which would require to come from the remaining Section 75 monies as it is out with the scope of the HLF funding bid. However members should note that in approving the Section 75 monies for car parking that this means that it would then not be available for use in other projects such as the Helensburgh Pier head.
- 1.1.4 Members approve using part of the surplus Indian Granite setts, purchased as part of the CHORD project, for use in Hermitage Park.

Hermitage Park Update

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides the members attending the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee with an update on the current development phase of Hermitage Park. The main purpose of the report is to presents the final draft masterplan to the area committee for approval in principal, which includes additional car parking provision with associated budget implications (out with the scope of the HLF funding application). In addition the report seeks approval for the use of surplus Indian Granite setts purchased in association with the CHORD project.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee note the content of this report.
- 3.2 That members approve in principal the final draft masterplan.
- 3.2 Members consider and if agreeable approve the additional car parking provision as described in option one, and approve the associated budget which would require to come from the remaining Section 75 monies as it is out with the scope of the HLF funding bid. However members should note that in approving the Section 75 monies for car parking that this means that it would then not be available for use in other projects such as the Helensburgh Pier head.
- 3.3 Members approve using part of the surplus Indian Granite setts, purchased as part of the CHORD project, for use in Hermitage Park.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following a number of area committee and business day reports, the Heritage Lottery Board met on the 17th December 2013 and the Hermitage Park bid was awarded a first round pass and development grant. Subsequently the full council approved HLF terms of grant on 23rd January 2014.
- 4.2 Through the process all groups were supportive of the desire to improve Hermitage Park and the overall general vision and values the Friends of Hermitage Park had presented. This vision which included proposed works was detailed at the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee Business Day on 14th August 2012.

- 4.3 These works include;
- 4.3.1 Restoration of historic fabric including walled memorial garden, pond and gates, old mill remains, Hermitage Well and the Millig Burn paths, bridges and walls,
 - 4.3.2 Restoration/reinterpretation of historic planting, including open up lines of site to improve safety of visitors,
 - 4.3.3 Celebration of heritage through interpretation and community involvement – and upgrading of the paths and drainage to increase access to the park,
 - 4.3.4 Reconsideration of the recreational elements which include the children’s play park, bowling green, tennis courts, putting green and recreational pavilion, shelter and toilets.
 - 4.3.5 Consideration of relevant car parking (outwith scope of HLF funding).
- 4.4 These works would meet the wider social needs of the community, allowing for traditional leisure needs, whilst encouraging use of the park as a location for education and learning. The vision includes a greater heritage and environmental aspect to the park, with the possibilities of interpreting the heritage and exploring the potential of community gardens, sensory gardens, increasing the habitat for wildlife, birds, etc. and minimising future maintenance requirements.
- 4.5 The timeline agreed between HLF and council officers is as follows:
- 4.5.1 Appoint consultants - 24th October 2014 - COMPLETED
 - 4.5.2 Draft masterplan for consultation - February 2015 - COMPLETED
 - 4.5.3 Final masterplan and all documents - July 2015 – ON SCHEDULE
 - 4.5.4 Second stage application prepared - August 2015
 - 4.5.5 Notification of second stage - December 2015
 - 4.5.6 Works commence on the ground - March/April 2016
 - 4.5.7 Project completes (revenue/interpretation/training) - 2019/2020.
- 4.6 The Hermitage Park Steering Group continues to meet monthly and includes representatives from The Friends of Hermitage Park Association, Schools and Youth, Ministry of Defence, Leisure Services and Helensburgh Community Council. The group is chaired by Tom Murphy, Amenity Services Manager and is governed by a partnership agreement.

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 The HLF Parks for People is a two stage application process. The first stage pass which was awarded includes a development phase to take the project to RIBA Work Stage 3 for the second stage application. The proposed final costs in stage two are currently being finalised and there will be an increase on the original stage one costs as a consequence of the need to demolish the existing pavilion due to structural issues and replace it with a new pavilion building. HLF are agreeable to consider a request for additional funding from them if a clear case can be demonstrated. It has been made clear that there will be no additional funding from the council. Officers are currently investigating other funding options and these will be made available to members should they wish.

5.2 The report to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee Business Day on 12th May highlighted to members two key areas where there will be a financial and resource commitment required from the council. These specifically relate to car parking provision, which is out with the scope of the HLF grant funding, and to the on-going management and maintenance requirements of the Park for 10 years post the HLF capital funding investment.

5.3 Work is progressing to schedule with the following milestones being met;

5.3.1 A preview meeting with Heritage Lottery Fund took place on 7th April to review progress and assess the draft masterplan and key documents. This was followed by a meeting on 11th May to provide further support for the completion of a formal review stage and confirmation that the project is on track.

5.3.2 The draft masterplan was presented to the Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee 14th April 2015, followed by a public presentation event on 29th April. Following this minor amendments have been made and the final draft masterplan will be presented to the area committee today, 9th June 2015, for approval in principal.

5.4 Hermitage Park draft masterplan

5.4.1 The main changes to the current park layout and function as presented in the final draft masterplan are as follows:

- Belvedere at outer wall of memorial gardens
- Bedding area next to Hermit's Well to be redesigned as footprint of former Hermitage House and removal of Japanese style shelter
- Play park to become demonstration garden (with play equipment resited)
- Redesign of sports area to adventure play, a putting green and fountain plaza/event space/informal play
- New pavilion with covered deck area to incorporate café, toilets and community space for volunteers/other
- Introduction of seating both formal and informal
- Additional car and cycle parking
- All ability paths from four access points through the park that will be lit
- Consolidation and re-interpretation of Milligs Mill site

5.4.2 Members are asked to approve in principal the final draft masterplan for Hermitage Park.

5.5 Car parking and associated costings

5.5.1 Following recommendations from the area committee business day on 12th May 2015, where three options were presented for the provision of car parking, members recommended option two; to redesign and extend the existing car park at Victoria Halls, to provide an addition 27 car parking spaces in the extended area, cycle racks and possibly an electric charging point. Following discussion members requested that a further reconfiguring of the area be considered adding more spaces if possible.

- 5.5.2 Through reconfiguring Victoria Halls' car park we have increased the capacity of car parking spaces from 20 to 33 spaces. The two options set out below show this increase, and proposed additional car parking within the Hermitage Park boundary. Members should be made aware that at this stage figures are estimates and the final number of spaces may vary slightly, however the budget figures will remain set:-
- Option One: Fifty-six spaces in total – made up of 33 spaces within the Victoria Halls area and a further 23 new spaces at a cost of £75k. This amounts to an overall increase of 36 from current provision.
 - Option Two: Sixty-eight spaces in total – made up of 33 spaces within the Victoria Halls area and a further 35 new spaces at a cost of £150k. This amount to an overall increase of 48 from current provision.
- 5.5.3 The increase in costs for undertaking option two are a result of works required to rectify the change in gradient and for excavation and additional bank reinforcement works. This is because the increased area takes the new car park on to the edge of the bowling green.
- 5.5.4 Both options include the following considerations:-
- Central access path between the car parking areas – In discussion with the council's Health and Safety Officer a preliminary assessment of risk has been undertaken considering the access path and the crossing of vehicular traffic. It was felt sufficient provisions could be put in place to ensure any risk remained low.
 - Planning permission – Initial discussion with the planning department indicate option one would not be an issue, however, the encroachment onto the Bowling Green needed as part of option two would need input from Sportscotland's advisory team. This has not been undertaken.
 - Car parking assessment and traffic management requirements – In discussion with the council's Technical Officer, Roads and Amenity Services, additional parking provision within the Victoria Halls site and proposed new area of Hermitage Park may require an additional traffic controlled signalised crossing to facilitate the increase in traffic, taking into account both pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, consideration of the appropriate guidance will be undertaken when the project is in detailed design and planning. Should traffic management be required, this has been estimated at £30,000, for which funding will be sought from SPT.
 - Victoria Hall's car parking requirement – Discussions with the council's Community Service representative has been undertaken to ensure the Halls' requirements are met.
- 5.5.5 The surface material will be primarily tarmac, close to the Victoria Halls, and recycled plastic Geogrid with gravel infill within the new area, which will limit surface water runoff.
- 5.5.6 The only source of funding for the car parking provision identified to date is the Section 75 monies. It is understood that there is £75,000 remaining in this budget and if it is used for the Hermitage Park car parking it will not be available for other projects such as the Pier head. There is no budget to take forward option two. Option one provides, as requested, a number of additional spaces and funding has been identified using Section 75 monies, whereas option two is not considered value for money.

- 5.5.7 Members consider and if agreeable approve the additional car parking provision and approve the associated budget which would require to come from the remaining Section 75 monies as it is out with the scope of the HLF funding bid. However members should note that in approving the Section 75 monies for car parking that this means that it would then not be available for use in other projects such as the Helensburgh Pier head.
- 5.5.8 Any increase in car parking may require an additional traffic management system (traffic lights for pedestrian, cycling and vehicular crossing), which has been estimated at £30,000. This applies to both option one and option two. Funding for this will be sought through SPT.

5.6 Management and maintenance

- 5.6.1 An update on the management and maintenance implications were presented to the area committee business day on 12th May 2015. The report highlighted the council's requirement to sign up to a formal contract with HLF, which include the following conditions:
- The council cannot sell, let or otherwise part with the property without the approval of HLF.
 - The property must be maintained in good repair and condition to the satisfactions of HLF for a period of 10 years following the completion of the works.
 - The park must obtain the Green Flag award following completion of the capital works and that all steps necessary to retain the Green Flag award are taken for at least six years.
- 5.6.2 Initially the delivery stage of the HLF project (post stage two approval) will provide the funding for the appointment of a Parks Manager who will assist the Project Manager with delivering this stage. The delivery stage will be complete within five years and thereafter, as per the condition of any grant, a subsequent ten year management and maintenance programme will require to be resourced and delivered and it will be closely monitored by HLF. This will require a ring-fenced budget to be provided for the maintenance of the park for a period of up to 10 years following completion of the works.
- 5.6.3 A fully detailed management and maintenance plan is being completed based on the current masterplan. This will not be available until after the area committee day but will be made available to committee members in August 2015.
- 5.6.4 The main issues and risks for the council are highlighted below.

Service choices	There will be a requirement to ring-fence management and maintenance resource for the park for up to 10 years following completion. It is currently estimated that the future maintenance costs will exceed the current maintenance costs. This is due to the existing maintenance provision having been significantly reduced and the former Victorian standards having been reduced to a basic care and maintenance provision.
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	It is anticipated that the service choices process will further reduce resource available for amenity and parkland. This will result in any ring-fencing reducing flexibility and reducing delivery specifications to none ring-fenced areas.
HLF funding	If we do not proceed with the park's development there may be a requirement to reimburse HLF development costs. This amounts to £169,700.
Capital investment	If we do not proceed then the opportunity to harness over £2million of external investment in the park in order to make it sustainable, will be lost.
Health and Safety	If the park continues to deteriorate the limited resource available will have to be prioritised to ensure there are no health and safety implications for park users. If HLF funding is not secured there will still be a requirement to seriously look at the future management and maintenance of the park.
Reputation	If we do not proceed local goodwill and the positive media profile will be lost. There needs to be a sustainable maintenance plan in place that ensures resources are available for up to 10 years following the completion of the works. This maintenance plan also needs to take into consideration resource requirements and maintenance standards for the remaining council area.

5.7 Indian granite

- 5.7.1 As part of the CHORD project an amount of surplus Indian granite material was purchased using CHORD project funding, approximately 1400m² of paving and 740m² of setts.
- 5.7.2 The material will be used for public utility reinstatement works and as part of further improvements works within the CHORD area, which could include the Pierhead project. In discussions with the CHORD Project Manager and Head of Roads and Amenity Services, once an amount has been deducted for reinstatement works (20m²), 720m² of setts is surplus to requirement.
- 5.7.3 This report seeks approval for the surplus 720m² of setts to be used as part of the Hermitage Park development project. Its use will assist with offsetting additional costs associated with the need to replace rather than refurbish the pavilion. This would amount to a saving of £29k, and would help to achieve a reduced maintenance requirement. It would also link the park with the CHORD development works and improve the aesthetics of the park and proposed features. Two linked areas within the park have been highlighted for its possible use (see Appendix Three) the fountain plaza and upper paved area with a small amount set aside for reinstatement works, in total 720m², leaving 20m² for the CHORD reinstatement works.

5.8 Next Steps

- 5.8.1 Following approval in principal of the final draft masterplan, the associated documents required for the park which include the conservation plan, activity plan, interpretation plan, management and maintenance plan, pavilion business plan and marketing plan are being fully developed for the final bid to HLF.
- 5.8.2 A report on options for delivery of the management and maintenance resourcing will be prepared for the August 2015 business day.
- 5.8.3 The associated documents required for the stage two bid to HLF will be finalised and submitted before 31st August 2015 with notification of the outcome in late December 2015.
- 5.8.4 The Hermitage Park Project Development Officer post will end on 7th August 2015.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Following a final presentation of the draft masterplan to the public on 29th April 2015, and car parking recommendations following the area committee business day meeting 12th May 2015, minor changes have been made. A final draft masterplan and car parking plan is presented for sign off by the area committee on 9th June 2015. The project is on track for a 31st August submission to the HLF.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy None.
- 7.2 Financial £20,000 has been allocated within the budget process for development in 2014/2015. A further £280,000 has been allocated from ear marked reserves for potentially 2015/16 onwards depending on HLF approval. The provision of additional car parking and the associated budget is out with the scope of the HLF bid and budget for this will therefore require to be identified from elsewhere. The only option identified for this is the Section 75 monies of which there is £75,000 remaining but if allocated to this project would then not be available to any other projects such as the Pier Head. There is no budget that would allow option two to progress. Traffic management of circa £30,000 would be sought from SPT if required.
- 7.3 Legal Bound by HLF terms of grant approved by Council 23rd Jan 2014.
- 7.4 HR New staff post funded by HLF ends 7th August 2015.
- 7.5 Equalities None but the proposed improvements increase accessibility of the Park to those with mobility problems and visitors with pushchairs.

- 7.6 Risk Further match funding must be secured.
- 7.7 Customer Services None.

8. APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix One Hermitage Park final draft masterplan
- 8.2 Appendix Two Car park options
- 8.3 Appendix Three Proposed area for use of surplus Indian granite

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