

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES

BARNES PARK REGENERATION UPDATE – APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR AND COMMENCEMENT OF WORKS ON SITE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update West Area Committee on the appointment of the Contractor to undertake the regeneration works within Barnes Park and the subsequent commencement of works on site, following approval by Cabinet 3 June 2009.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 It was agreed by Cabinet on 8 November 2006 that Sunderland would submit one funding application to the Big Lottery Parks for People Fund and the park chosen for re-development, should the application be successful, was Barnes Park.

2.2 It was subsequently agreed by Cabinet on 3 June 2009, following the award of the Heritage Lottery Fund Grant in April 2009, to proceed to procure appropriate works with appointed contractors and to accept the Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £2,420,000.

2.3 The overall project value is £3,661,000.

2.4 Funding contributions are made from:

Heritage Lottery Fund	£2,420,000
Country Durham Environmental Trust	£150,000
Local Transport Plan	£100,000
Play Pathfinder	£200,000
Volunteer contribution	£6,888
SCC enhanced management and maintenance of Barnes Park – revenue	£89,515
SCC general revenue	£9,700
Sunderland City Council Capital programme	£684,900

2.5 A key element of the redevelopment is to make the whole park - and particularly the play areas - accessible to all, including those who are severely disabled. As well as specialist play equipment there will be a changing pavilion fully equipped to support those caring for disabled children and adults and parking – including a number of disabled parking bays.

2.6 Other developments at Barnes Park will include the restoration of historic features such as the canon, bandstand, railings, gates and bridges. A cycleway will be installed. There will be a sensory garden designed with visually impaired people in mind and a formal garden. The lake and surrounding area will be rejuvenated to create an ideal space for picnics and an extensive events programme. Excess shrubbery and tree coverage will be

removed to open up sight lines and make people feel safer, as well as CCTV installed. There will also be car parking facilities, a new bridge for the lake, new seating, railings and signage and a grand staircase leading from the former Park's depot, down to the bandstand.

- 2.7 The 18 month redevelopment project began on the 19 October 2009 and for the safety of park users it will remain closed throughout the redevelopment. However, the Coach House Café will stay open throughout and the new children's play area, sensory and formal garden, Durham Road gates and entrance and Ettrick Grove Car Park, will be open by March 2010.
- 2.8 The bowling greens at both ends of the Park will be open in time for the new bowling season in April 2010. The bowling greens will be maintained throughout the regeneration works.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Full planning permission has been received and Listed Building Consent received to undertake regeneration works within the Park, following a Special Planning Committee on 24 February 2009.
- 3.2 The contractor has been appointed to undertake the regeneration works. The successful contractor is a local company called Brambledown. They undertook the regeneration works at Herrington Country Park and their tender application for Barnes Park scored 93.6 out of 100. The tender was scored 60% price and 40% quality and Brambledown were the most economically advantageous tender in terms of quality, design and cost.

4. COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 During the application process significant consultation was undertaken with the community, local schools and specialist groups, as well as various services across the council specifically relating to Art, Children's Play, Health, Housing and Adult Services, Sport and Wellness, Heritage and Wildlife.
- 4.2 Communication will be critical to ensure the project gains maximum positive publicity for the West Area and to minimise any complaints that may arise during the regeneration works.
- 4.3 A dedicated website has been established and can be found at www.sunderland.gov.uk/barnespark. The website will be used in all communication and will be updated weekly with updates on what's happening within the Park.
- 4.4 Information panels will be located around the Coach House Café within the Park, which will remain open throughout the works. The Café will be an information hub for the Park and members of the public will have the opportunity to visit the site, during organised visits as well as the opportunity to share their views on works ongoing.
- 4.5 A dedicated reporter has been appointed with the Sunderland Echo to ensure information is provided in a timely manner and to ensure that health and safety messages in particular are shared, to ensure that people understand it will be incredibly unsafe to go into the Park during the construction works, should someone choose to break-in out of working hours. Security will be at an optimum during the regeneration works with 24 hour on-site security

provided by the Contractor, as well as CCTV. Information updates will also appear in the West Area newsletter.

5. CENTENARY EVENT

- 5.1 Children from Little Learners Day Care Nursery joined the Mayor of Sunderland, Cllr Dennis Richardson; Cllr James Blackburn, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Attractive and Inclusive City and Ivor Crowther Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the North East, for the promotional photograph on the Bandstand in Barnes Park, which promoted the successful Barnes Park Centenary Event which was held on Sunday 9 August 2009.
- 5.2 The free family event took place in Barnes Park on Sunday 9 August between 12noon and 4pm to celebrate the park's centenary and everyone was invited to attend.
- 5.3 Those who came along took part in free craft activities including wire art and willow weaving, face painting and storytelling. With refreshments at the Coach House Café and live music on the bandstand from the Benny Graham Ceilidh Band, it was a really fun afternoon for all ages. Mayor of Sunderland, Cllr Dennis Richardson also unveiled the final regeneration plans at the event.
- 5.4 The event was also a chance for people to find out more about the park's future, as the final plans for its regeneration were unveiled for all to see.
- 5.5 Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East Ivor Crowther said:
 "Open spaces such as Barnes Park play such an important role as havens from the bustle of daily life. We are thrilled to help restore and open up this wonderful park for as many people as possible to enjoy. The North East has some of the best parks in the country and HLF is dedicated to bringing them back to their former glory. People will benefit from this funding all year round from spring through to winter; this funding will ensure that this park can be enjoyed for generations to come".

6. KEY MILESTONES

- 6.1 The following key milestones broadly highlight planned regeneration activity:

TIMESCALE	ACTIVITY
19 October 2009	Close Barnes Park – commence works on site
31 March 2010	Open new play area, sensory garden, specialist toilet and changing pavilion, Ettrick Grove Car Park and new entrance, Durham Road Gates
Easter weekend in April 2011	Open remainder of Park – Opening celebration event

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to support the Barnes Park regeneration works moving forward.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 The following background papers were relied upon to compile this report.

- a. Parks for People Stage 1 Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund
- b. Parks for People Stage 2 Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund
- c. Barnes Park Cabinet Report 8 November 2006
- d. Barnes Park Cabinet Report 3 June 2009