

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES

BARNES PARK REGENERATION UPDATE - PARKS FOR PEOPLE FUNDING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the Parks for People Big Lottery Funding application for Barnes Park.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Sunderland Parks Management Strategy recognises the need for a strategic focus for parks, by aiming to improve the City's Parks, through re-development, maintenance, engaging communities, and identifying natural as well as historical features in individual parks.
- 2.2 The City's aim is to achieve Green Flag Status in one District Park in each area framework by 2008. Mowbray Park (2002), Roker Park (2004) and Herrington Country Park (2005) have all been successful in achieving Green Flag Status.
- 2.3 Committee will be aware following a presentation made in November 2007, that the Parks for People fund is a three-year joint initiative between Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) which is aimed to help with the restoration and regeneration of public parks and gardens, including squares, walks and promenades in England.
- 2.4 The Parks for People grant programme applications are assessed using a two-stage process. Sunderland City Council submitted a Stage 1 application in September 2007 for Parks for People funding for Barnes Park and received a stage 1 pass to the value of £2,420,000 in May 2008.

3. BARNES PARK

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 Following the submission of the Pre-Application to the Big Lottery via the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) - who are distributing the funds on behalf of the Big Lottery - Sunderland City Council were strongly advised via intelligence at the Heritage Lottery North East office, to submit their full application to the National Board rather than the Regional Board.
- 3.3 To submit a project to the National Board, the overall contribution from the Big Lottery / HLF must be over £2million. To enable the 75% contribution to be over £2million, the overall project cost must be a minimum of £2.75million.
- 3.4 During the stage 1 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, Sport and Wellness and Heritage. Due to this consultation it was considered to be appropriate to consider additional elements to the application for which external match funding could be secured. Utilising the opportunity to draw-in substantial match funding due to the size and extent of the application.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Following submission of the Stage 1 Application on Friday 28 September 2007, the overall project cost was £3,479,188.
- 4.2 The grant requested from the Parks for People fund was £2,420,000 (70%).
- 4.3 This leaves an overall funding shortfall of £1,059,188.
- 4.4 £375,000 match funding was secured via Cabinet (8 November 2006). An additional £300,000 has since been agreed by Council during 2008/2009 budget setting process.
- 4.5 Therefore, outstanding shortfall equates to £384,188.
- 4.6 Sunderland City Council has already commenced the active pursuit of securing additional match funding from the following organisations:

Play Pathfinder	£200,000 (successfully secured)
CDent	£150,000 (successfully secured)
Local Transport Plan	£100,000

5. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BUDGET

- 5.1 To support the Parks for People application, the Barnes Burn which runs through Barnes Park and the extension requires rejuvenation and Habitat creation.

- 5.2 The Barnes Burn is a stream running west to east through Barnes Park, to culvert and then through Burn Park, back end of culvert and to the River Wear at Galley's Gill. The lake in Barnes Park has suffered in recent times due to the irregular and minimal water supply from the stream to the west.
- 5.3 It is accepted that much of the watershed has been lost due to the development of the housing estates to north and south taking water into the pipe system. Despite this the stream should carry a significant volume from the valley itself.
- 5.4 It is intended to re-profile the streambed removing silt and a range of other materials allowing a running profile to be developed.
- 5.5 This in turn will allow further, physical inspection of the stream bed itself to ascertain whether or not sinks have been developed in the bed which would see water prematurely drain away into the aquifer. Should this be the case the area can be dug out and clay installed to reseal the streambed.
- 5.6 Additionally it is intended to re-profile the banks of the stream in order to create habitats suitable for Water Vole and other endangered species in the hope that this will allow a reintroduction of a nationally rare species which is relatively common in Sunderland. As part of this it may be possible to re-profile the stream banks to create a number of linear wetlands/ponds should the local geology be suitable.
- 5.7 It is anticipated that the above will create the best opportunity to harvest water into the system however much will depend upon localised rainfall and will create the best opportunity to improve water quality in the Barnes Park lake and generally along the stream given sufficient rainfall in the first instance.
- 5.8 The central lake will be improved including water quality, natural habitat and setting, to become a main feature within the Park and the park's extension.
- 5.9 It is the intention of the Project Team to submit an application for SIB funding to the value of £60,000 to support this activity across Barnes Park and the extension.

6. KEY MILESTONES

- 6.1 The stage 2 application for Barnes Park is currently being produced and the timescales for submission are as follows:

TIMESCALE	ACTIVITY
8 August 2008	Public Consultation Day held in Barnes Park to review stage 2 designs and specifically consult with children and young people with regard to the Specialist Play Area
19 September 2008	Public Consultation Day held in Barnes Park to sign off stage 2 designs
3 November 2008	Submission of stage 2 application
24 March 2009	Decision by HLF on stage 2 award
August 2009	If funding successfully received, commence work on-site within Barnes Park (coinciding with centenary of park opening 1909)
August 2009 – August 2011	Barnes Park development complete August 2011

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and to support the Stage 2 application for Parks for People funding for Barnes Park.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Stage 1 Parks for People Funding Application for Barnes Park
8.2 Public Consultation Feedback from August 2007 and 8 August and 19 September 2008
8.3 Sunderland Parks Management Strategy