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| Cabinet Decision 6 November 2013 |  |
| Report of: Stephen Halsey, Corporate Director, Communities, Localities & Culture | Classification: Unrestricted |
| Bartlett Park Improvement Plan | |

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| Lead Member | Cllr Rania Khan, Cabinet Member for Culture |
| Originating Officer | Edmund Wildish, Senior Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer |
| Wards affected | Limehouse and East India & Lansbury |
| Community Plan Theme | A Great Place To Live |
| Key Decision? | Yes |

Executive Summary

Bartlett Park is a key piece of large open space in Poplar, spanning both Limehouse and East India & Lansbury wards. Whilst the park is well used for football league games it does not cater for other types of users due to a combination of lack of facilities, fractured layout and poor accessibility.

The Bartlett Park Landscape Improvement Plan proposes a number of interventions and improvement works (to be delivered in a phased approach) in and around the park to improve the facilities and the quality, accessibility and connectivity of the park. The comprehensive enhancements proposed for the park – including a new children’s play area, improved sports facilities, and other recreation areas – will provide a high quality open space which will cater to additional sections of the community. This will support and complement the regeneration taking place in the surrounding area.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Bartlett Park Landscape Improvement Plan derived from the public consultation process
2. Adopt a capital estimate of £3.71m for Phase 1 works

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Bartlett Park is the single largest piece of green open space within the local area, serving many residents in the Limehouse and East India & Lansbury wards. Recently there have been numerous large scale new housing developments around the locality (including the New Festival Quarter), increasing the population density and therefore the pressure on open space. It is therefore considered crucial that facilities be upgraded to support a more intensive use.
- 1.2 The drive for improving Bartlett Park also derives from the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF seeks to improve the quality, usability, and accessibility of existing publicly accessible open spaces across the borough. The evidence base for the LDF was informed by a qualitative and quantitative assessment of all open spaces in the borough; this assessment rated Bartlett Park as a 'poor' quality open space and identified it as a priority for improvement.
- 1.3 The Landscape Improvement Plan takes a phased approach to Park improvement to enable staged improvements to the Park to be made as funding comes on line, rather than be delayed whilst funds for the entire project are accumulated.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Undertake no improvements to Bartlett Park. Rejecting the Improving Plan and capital estimate will undermine Council policy (through the Local Development Framework) in improving local open spaces. There are a number of housing developments taking place in and around Bartlett Park; this will bring a growing local community for whom the current provision will not be suitable or adequate. In the consultation that has taken place residents have already raised their concerns about the lack of family provision and the desire to see a park which caters for all communities and compliments the regeneration taking place in and around the area. On these bases this course of action is not recommended.
- 2.2 Approve the Improvement Plan in moderated form, with fewer elements. The Plan has been developed via consultation with residents and park users, and is designed to encourage as many different parts of the community as possible to use the park. If any element is removed it will risk alienating a section of potential park users and therefore may not meet the diverse needs of a growing local population. This course of action is not recommended.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

Developing the Landscape Improvement Plan

- 3.1 Officers commissioned Ringway Jacobs to develop a Landscape Improvement Plan for Bartlett Park. The process has been managed by a Steering Group, with membership across services in Communities, Localities & Culture (Parks, Transportation & Highways, and Sports & Physical Activity), Development & Renewal (Housing & Regeneration and Major Projects) and also by the Friends of Bartlett Park.
- 3.2 The Steering Group oversaw the development of a Highways Feasibility Study examining potential highways improvements, and, following engagement with the Mayor proceeded to produce a draft plan for public consultation.
- 3.3 The consultation activity was carried out by officers in the summer of 2012, during which residents, park users, community groups and local organisations were given the opportunity to view the draft plans and provide feedback. Officers sought the views and suggestions of Ward Members and the Mayor's Office in terms of individuals and groups to consult with.
- 3.4 A number of activities and events were held throughout the consultation period:
- Administering a questionnaire survey online and in hard copy
 - Three drop in sessions at Idea Store Chrisp Street.
 - Exhibitions in Bartlett Park over two weekends
 - Workshops for community groups and local organisations to meet and discuss proposals
 - Presentations to residents associations
 - Separate drop-in sessions for Members

Following the consultation period, which included input from ward Members and executive Lead Members, the draft plan was finalised.

- 3.5 The key themes to emerge from the consultation were that:
- Residents wanted to
 - see improvements made to reduce ASB
 - restrict or manage access for dogs
 - improve access to the park
 - There was a strong demand to provide areas to relax and engage in quiet activities like reading
 - There was a strong demand to retain both football pitches

Full details can be found in the Consultation Summary Report in Appendix 1.

- 3.6 Some suggestions were raised during consultation that were not incorporated into the final Improvement Plan, notably:

- *Floodlights*. Due to the high revenue costs of maintaining floodlights, and advice from the contractor that however positioned, they would interfere with some residents' properties, floodlights therefore were not included.
- *Public toilets*. Due to concerns about vandalism and ASB, and maintenance and upkeep, public toilets have not been included. However, as part of phase 2 improvements to the changing rooms every effort will be made to explore the possibility of opening up such facilities for public use.
- *Tennis courts*. Given the space already provided in the park for sporting activity, the strong demand for open space to relax and engage in quiet activities, and advice that a minimum of four courts would be required to facility community and school use, tennis courts were not included.

Detailed proposals

3.7 The proposals within the final plan consist of:

- a) Realigning and re-landscaping a section of Upper North Street, including installing traffic calming measures to improve general safety, accessibility and connectivity between the main park and the adventure playground.
- b) Relocating the existing football pitches in order to free up areas within the park for other facilities
- c) Providing purpose built changing rooms.
- d) Closing Cottall St to vehicular traffic and extending the park northwards and improve connectivity with Limehouse Cut canal and create a waterside area.
- e) Replacing existing fencing around the perimeter of the park with a mixed boundary consisting of unobtrusive walls and fencing.
- f) Creating a new 'celebratory' entrance at the south east corner of the park with additional secondary entrances.
- g) Creating new footways and cycle paths within the park.
- h) Creating a new play area for young children at the northern section of the park.
- i) Re-landscaping the park with new seating, tree and shrubbery planting.
- j) Creating a fenced-in 'dog-walking' area within the park
- k) Providing an outdoor exercise area with gym equipment.

For details of the plan, please see Appendix 2.

Funding and capital estimate for Phase 1 works

3.8 The funding for Phase 1 has been identified and secured through the Council's Planning Contributions Overview Panel (PCOP) with additional funding for the highways work secured from the Local Implementation Plan. This equates to £3.71m for the works that will be delivered in Phase 1. Delivery of the rest of the works will take place in Phases 2 and 3, once future S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions have been

identified and secured.

- 3.9 Ringway Jacobs have provided initial outline estimates of costs for all elements within the plan. On the basis of these estimates and taking into consideration what will have the biggest impact for all residents and park users, the following elements are to be delivered in Phase 1: (a) highways improvements, (b) relocation of the football pitches, (g) new footways and cycle paths, (h) new play area, (j) dog-walking area, and (k) the outdoor gym.
- 3.10 The capital estimate for the works is £3,710,888 of which £3,360,888 has been secured from s106 funding and a further £350,000 from LIP funding (Cabinet has already approved a capital estimate for all LIP funding). All Phase 1 works are anticipated to commence in January 2014 and to be completed by early 2015.
- 3.11 Whilst (d) improving connectivity with the canal, (e) boundary replacements, (f) celebratory entrance and (i) re-landscaping the park are scheduled for Phase 2 it may be possible to bring one or more of these elements in to Phase 1 depending on the results of market testing at the start of the procurement process. The remainder of elements (d), (e), (f) and (i), together with (b) the changing room will be delivered as part of Phases 2 and 3, when further funding has been identified and secured.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 The report sets out the Landscape Improvement Plan for Bartlett Park. The detailed proposals within the final plan are outlined in Paragraph 3.7. The report further sets out that the plan will need to be implemented in a phased approach, as funding becomes available. Once future S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions are identified and secured, the other Phases will then be delivered.
- 4.2 The estimate for the Phase One element of works detailed in Paragraph 3.10 is £3,710,888. Funding has been secured to match the cost, of £3,360,888 from s106 resources and £350,000 from the TfL LIP which has already been approved within the capital programme. A capital estimate will need to be approved for £3,360,888 to deliver Phase One which is due to commence in January 2014.
- 4.3 The outline procurement route for implementing the Improvement Plan proposes a two stage, 'design and build' procurement process as the most cost effective. Although the project cost is over £1m, this will be wholly funded by S106 contributions, secured via appropriate planning agreements and other external funding (TfL grant funding).
- 4.4 The S106 funding has been agreed based on contributions fully received of £530,883; fully triggered of £487,547 and part triggered of £1,693,950. The remaining contribution of £648,507 from the Cottal Street development is in

negotiations. Approval of the project by Cabinet will be subject to all funds being in place at the start of the scheme.

- 4.5 Revenue implications arising from the new elements, to be delivered in Phase One will need to be contained within existing budgets,

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The report details the consultation work which has been done in formulating the proposals for the improvement works. This is consistent with section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 1999 which requires Councils to consult where there are to be changes to services. Once the improvement works are agreed a procurement plan will be presented to ensure suitable contracts are in place to undertake the work. These contracts cannot be entered into until sufficient resources have been identified to meet the contract sums.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1. An Equality Analysis found that the Improvement Plan will have positive impacts in relation to seven target groups (race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, and pregnancy and maternity), with the remaining groups neither positively or adversely affected.
- 6.2. Developing Bartlett Park's facilities so they cater to a wider range of users than at present will help bring different parts of the community together into the park, thus contributing towards One Tower Hamlets.

7. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 The Improvement Plan proposes a range of greening activities within Bartlett Park, whilst retaining existing green space and trees within the park. This includes the planting of new trees, creation of a habitat enhancement corridor, and development of a flower garden.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Intensification of uses within the park are likely to result in some conflict between different types of park users and the activities they wish to undertake and between park users and those living adjacent and within the park (Bartlett Close).
- 8.2. A concern amongst a few residents living within Bartlett Close is the on-going issue of footballs being kicked into gardens. For this reason the relocation of football pitches has been carefully considered to minimise this risk. In addition removable fencing and/or netting is also being proposed to further mitigate the issue.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The plan has been developed with careful attention paid to designing out crime. For example, the changing room is at the side of the park rather than in the middle, and the entrance will be visible from different locations, discouraging ASB.
- 9.2 The functional relationship between the different elements of the park and between the park and surrounding environment has also been carefully considered and informed by the consultation, for example ensuring that lighting, boundary treatments and seating areas reduce the possibility of ASB or other problem behaviours highlighted by local residents.

10. EFFICIENCY STATEMENT

Delivery of the works

- 10.1 The cost of Phase 1 works is below the EU Threshold (£4.3m for construction), so procurement will be undertaken via the Council's Level Four Quotations process – suppliers will be selected from a standing list of approved companies.
- 10.2 Although the Council has existing Highways and Maintenance Term Contracts, Procurement has advised that the Council will not get value for money if it contracts out delivery of different elements of the Improvement Plan to different suppliers.
- 10.3 Procurement has advised that the most efficient, risk-free and cost effective route for implementing the Improvement Plan will be a two stage, 'design and build' procurement process. In this process the Council will tender to a single supplier to coordinate all works. The procurement policy will be followed to ensure that local providers are considered as part of the tendering process.
- 10.4 Officers will begin the procurement process as soon as Cabinet approves the Improvement Plan and capital estimate for Phase 1. It is anticipated that through the design and build process a supplier will be appointed by January 2014.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Consultation Summary Report
- Appendix 2: Improvement Plan

- Appendix 3: Equalities Analysis
- Appendix 4: Equalities Assurance Checklist

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

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