



To: Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation, Councillor
Julie Smith
Report by: Head of Active Communities
Relevant scrutiny committee: COMMUNITY SERVICES 08/01/10

Jesus Green - Update on improvements to Jesus Green (2)

Non-Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

Following the unsuccessful Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Parks for People' submission, the Executive Councillor instructed officers to continue consultation with a broad range of to progress proposals and priorities for future improvements to Jesus Green. This report provides an update on the various proposed improvements for Jesus Green and reviews work to date.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- a) Agree the proposals and timescales as laid out within this report.
- b) Instruct officers to proceed with work to undertake improvement work to the Victoria Avenue vehicular entrance.
- c) Instruct officers to proceed with improvements to the skateboard facilities in line with planning procedures and recent consultation outcomes.
- d) Instruct officers to proceed with consultation on the type of future tennis provision on Jesus Green
- e) Instruct officers to prepare a report for March 2010 that outlines recommendations for future play provision

3. Background

3.1 The bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Parks for People' scheme enabled a comprehensive review of Jesus Green and the development of a master plan which incorporated various improvements and new features such as a community cafe, performance space, improved paths, new planting and natural play. However, in April 2009 the bid was rejected by the HLF. In a report to the Executive Councillor in June

2009 highlighted that it would not be possible to take forward the number and range of improvements originally suggested and that work would need to take place with stakeholders to consider priorities and affordability to create a revised short to medium term plan. This would be funded through existing s106 and repair and renewal funding. It was highlighted that some more substantive improvements would need to be the focus of a revised approach to seek external funding.

3.2 A Jesus Green working group was established in April 2009 and has since met regularly and worked with the Council to develop a clear list of priorities for improvements. The following immediate priorities have been agreed:

1. Improvements to the skateboard facilities
2. Improvements to the vehicular entrance from Victoria Avenue
3. Review of Rouse Ball Pavilion structure and potential function
4. Demolition of the wooden bowls pavilion¹
5. Review of current tennis facilities
6. Play area location and improvements

3.3 Progress on the above items is detailed below:

1. Improvements to the skateboard facilities

Consultation led by the Council's Children and Young People's Participation Service (ChYpPs) began in September 2009 at a skateboard competition held on Jesus Green. This attracted over 150 participants, all of whom were asked to fill in a questionnaire which included the following questions:

- Length of visit
- Type of use i.e. bmx / skateboard
- Equipment required, currently and in the future

A user forum is taking place on 9th December with those consultees who expressed an interest making decision on proposed changes. Letters were also delivered to local residents overlooking Jesus Green and a random sample of residents in the local neighbourhood. At this stage, and subject to clarification from the user forum, it is proposed to retain and improve the existing structure, with the possibility of a small surround extension. Full planning permission will be a required and subject to permission being granted, it is proposed that improvements are scheduled for spring 2010 and funded through S106

2. Improvements to the vehicular entrance from Victoria Avenue

A costed design has been commissioned to improve the entrance from Victoria Avenue to aid vehicle movement, particularly for events that require more significant infrastructure such as the 'Cambridge Beer Festival' and 'Jesus Green Live'. Proposals will enable vehicles to turn on a reinforced grass-crete turning area, minimising the potential damage to grass. A design will be finalised and discussed with stakeholders before implementation. Improvements will be scheduled for spring 2010 and funded through existing resources

3. Review of Rouse Ball Pavilion

A structural survey of the pavilion has been commissioned and will be completed in January 2010. This will inform consideration in relation to the future use of this building, which could include making improvements to the toilet facilities.

There is currently no identified funding for this project.

¹ Subject to planning permission
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4. Proposed demolition of wooden bowls pavilion

The bowling green was decommissioned in 2005 and integrated into the general grass landscape in 2007. Other than providing a power supply for events held at the bandstand, it provides no operational function for the Council. It has been used for temporary storage for punting traders, although there is no formal arrangement. Structurally the building is in a poor condition and is subject to misuse. With the support of stakeholders, Conservation Area Consent for demolition has been requested from Planning (November 2009). The planning process will enable any objections to this proposal to be raised. If consent is provided, the building will be demolished as soon as possible and the area grass seeded, with a pop-up electricity point installed to allow events in this area of Jesus Green to continue. This work will be funded through existing resources.

5. Review of current tennis facilities

Consultation will be undertaken during January and February 2010 to review the current tennis facilities and requirements on Jesus Green. Options will include the removal of the grass tennis courts, and provision of additional tar macadam courts. Results of this consultation will be reported in March 2010. Any improvements to tennis provision will be funded through S106

6. Play area refurbishments

Consultation was led by ChYpPs and started in September 2009. This included;

- Events held on Jesus Green during October half term
- Workshops in local schools
- Questionnaires sent home from school
- Letter drop to local residents (260 addresses)
- Information and questionnaire on City Council website

The questionnaire asked respondents to consider the following;

- Location of play area
- Types of equipment
- Age range of users
- Length of stay

Consultation will be completed by mid December and results will be analysed and fed back to Community Services Scrutiny Committee in March.

Design will be further finalised with stakeholders before implementation. It is intended that improvements will be scheduled for late 2010 and funded through s106

3.4 It is recognised that some external funding will be required for more aspirational improvements and as such no timetable for decision-making or implementation can yet be determined. Potential medium-longer term aspirations include elements such as drainage and any changes to the Rouse Ball Pavilion. It is possible these and maybe other aspects could form part of a revised bid to HLF 'Parks for People' in the next two years. Preliminary discussions with the Jesus Green Association & working group suggest this would be supported. New tree planting will be considered as a separate item in 2010 and may be partially resourced via funds committed by West Central Area Committee. .

3.5 A report detailing further progress will be submitted to the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee in March 2010.

a) Equal Opportunities

Stage one EIA to be completed at project appraisal stage for capital items

b) Financial

Detailed in the report

c) Staffing

None

d) Environmental

Detail will be included at project appraisal stage

5. Background papers

None

6. Appendices

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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