

TO: EXECUTIVE
15 OCTOBER 2013

**Phase 2 Parks and Open Spaces Quality Improvements; Bracknell Town Council
(Director of Environment Culture and Communities)**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the allocation of funding to support quality improvements at Mill Park (Wildridings and Central) and Calfridus Way Recreation Ground (Harmans Water).
- 1.2 This will be funded using financial contributions from developers which have been secured under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 1.3 If approved, the S106 monies will part-fund improvements being implemented by Bracknell Town Council.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Executive recommend to Full Council that £80,000 of s106 contributions (as summarised in Annexe 1) are allocated to Bracknell Town Council as a grant to fund site works to improve recreational facilities and associated quality standards at Mill Park and Calfridus Way Recreation Grounds.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Provision of and access to public open space is recognised as being a key contributor to well-being and quality of life. This is central to:
- The character of the built environment
 - Social functions; especially health, recreation and play, social inclusion, and community development
 - Environmental quality
 - Economic vitality
 - Sustainability
- 3.2 The Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2014 identifies the importance of the green landscape and accessible facilities. Preserving our green heritage is highlighted within the Community Strategy as being central to the future development of the area, as is the significance of providing a range of ways to spend leisure time. One of the key priorities is *A Desirable Place: Protecting the Environment*.
- 3.3 Priority 2 for Bracknell Forest Council is: *Protecting and enhancing our environment* and Medium Term Objective 3 is to: *Keep Bracknell Forest clean and green*. Key strategic actions are:
- *maintain our open spaces to a high standard*
 - *implement the Parks Quality Improvement Programme*
 - *increase the amount of green space that is accessible to residents*

Priority 3 is: *Promoting health and achievement* and Medium Term Objective 6 is: *Support opportunities for health and wellbeing*. A key action is:

- *support sports activities and facilities within the Borough*

3.4 Key objectives set out within the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012) are:

A. Provision:

Protect and establish public open space for recreation, play, sport, health, biodiversity, heritage and climate change adaption that is appropriate to need; strategically located; and adaptable to future requirements

B. Maintenance:

Provide safe and welcoming public open space; attain and improve quality standards

C. Use and Enjoyment:

Make sure public open space supports well-being; encourages participation; and facilitates social inclusion

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 To not support delivery of quality improvements. This will limit the extent of improvements feasible and so restrict quality standards and recreational use of these important public open spaces.
- 4.2 Bracknell Town Council is a key provider of outdoor recreational facilities and has prioritised these two projects. There are currently no competing schemes identified by other providers (including Bracknell Forest Council).

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 These 2 projects have been identified as a result of consultation on the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy which was approved on 25 October. The process for this included a related Decision made on 21 May 2012 by the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services & Public Protection to consult on the allocation of S106 developer contributions to carry out site quality improvements.
- 5.2 Mill Park and Calfridus Way Recreation Ground are the first schemes brought forward for Phase 2 of the Quality Improvements Programme. Phase 1 is currently being implemented following the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Greenspace Quality Improvement Executive Member Decision dated 25 October 2012 (work programme reference 1036768).
- 5.3 In carrying out these works, the key objective is to safeguard and raise quality standards. S106 funding is secured in accordance with adopted planning policy. Of particular significance is Limiting the Impact of Development Supplementary Planning Document (ref. Chapter 4 Open Space and Outdoor Recreational Facilities) and the 'Plus One' principle whereby works are prioritised towards improving quality as initially audited in 2006. Core quality criteria have recently been reviewed and are defined within the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy (2012).
- 5.4 In addition to being secured to fund quality improvements, there is a requirement that developer contributions are allocated to open spaces capable of serving the development from which the contribution was paid. This means that available

funding needs to be allocated to a site within close proximity of the contributing development. The contributions to be allocated are summarised in Annex 1; with the planned improvements being of direct benefit to residents from these developments.

Mill Park

- 5.5 Situated in the south of the parish, Mill Park provides extensive recreational opportunities including children's play areas, a skate park, fishing platforms and walks around the lake. The old boat house is now managed as a café. This site is owned by Bracknell Forest Council and is leased to Bracknell Town Council. Thames Water own the balancing pond and banks.
- 5.6 A range of improvements are underway led by Bracknell Town Council. This includes a new outdoor play area providing facilities for local people of all ages to use either socially or as part of structured training programmes. The project is being led by Bracknell Town Council (BTC), with play equipment part-funded by Aiming High for Disabled Children (Bracknell Forest Council). The scheme includes equipment specifically suitable for children and young people, up to the age of 18, with disabilities, including complex needs. The scheme is also funded by Bracknell Forest Homes (BFH) who have contributed towards adult outdoor gym equipment. The Town Council also aims to improve the Mill Pond pavilion building. Planning approval has been granted for the play equipment and building regulations approval is in place for works to the pavilion (planning approval ref 13/00132/FUL approved 26th March 2013).
- 5.7 A breakdown of funding for these improvements is shown below:-

BFC grant/S106	= £50,000
Expected BTC funding	= £60,000 (plus staff, labour etc)
Bracknell Forest Homes	= £20,000
BFC - Aiming High for	= £37,900
Disabled Children (AHDC)	

Total: £167,900

Calfridus Way

- 5.8 Calfridus Way Recreation Ground comprises grass football pitches. This site is owned by Bracknell Forest Council and leased to Bracknell Town Council. The proposal is to provide car parking for ground users. This will include a new car park on existing hardstanding to provide 36 additional spaces, including dropped kerb, new entrance gate and landscaping. Planning approval has been obtained (reference 12/00809 dated 14 February 2013).
- 5.9 The cost of this project is estimated at £30,000 which would be exclusively funded via a Bracknell Forest Council grant of £30,000.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Nothing to add.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 Part of the Section 106 monies previously identified as available to fund Phase 2 Parks and Open Spaces Quality Improvements. This expenditure is not included in the current years capital programme and therefore requires approval by Full Council.

Borough Planning Officer

- 6.3 Combines S106 funds from a number of contributing sites (listed in Annexe 1). These 2 partnership schemes are in line with the terms under which these S106 payments were secured by Planning to offset impacts of new development upon local open space and recreational facilities.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 A full EIA for the Parks and Countryside service was published in 2009. This has recently been reviewed, the results of which are due to be published this year. Added to this an equalities screening for the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy was published in September 2012. Implementation of these projects will have a positive impact by making the Parks more attractive and accessible to all.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 There are no significant risks arising from this project. Future management and maintenance costs for both schemes will be met by Bracknell Town Council.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Parish and Town Councils, Ward Members

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Via email correspondence, publication of information on the Bracknell Forest Council website and at the Parish Parks and Public Realm Forum.

Representations Received

- 7.3 The proposed works have been prioritised following consideration of a number of schemes proposed by Bracknell Town Council.

Background Papers

Parks and Countryside Strategy 2012
Limiting the Impact of Development Supplementary Planning Document 2007
Bracknell Forest Borough Study of open space, sports, recreational and leisure facilities (PPG17) 2006

Contact for further information

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