

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, DELIVERY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
October 2020

Parks and Open Spaces Quality Improvement – Access and education improvements at Lily Hill Park

Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the allocation of S106 funding (£ 35,000) to support improvements to access and education facilities at Lily Hill Park.
- 1.2 To confirm which financial contributions secured from developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be applied to the project. (ANNEX 1).
- 1.3 If approved, the S106 monies will provide a new boardwalk and wildlife interpretation board at Lily Hill Park in Bracknell, which is managed by Bracknell Forest Council Heritage Parks Team.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That £ 35,000 of S106 contributions (as summarised in ANNEX 1) are allocated to fund improvements to access and education facilities at Lily Hill Park.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Developer contributions are collected through S106 agreements to support “providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement of land and/or buildings and/or carrying out or assisting in the carrying out of nature/landscaping conservation projects) within 3 kilometres of the Site.”
- 3.2 The justification for requiring developers to supporting the improvement of open space and outdoor recreational facilities is given under point 8. Promoting Healthy Communities, The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.”
- 3.3 The borough council has adopted a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012) and the improvements at Lily Hill Park are in accordance with delivering the following two priorities:

2. Maintain Green Flag status for existing award-winning parks and attain additional Green Flag Awards for suitable sites.

5. Manage the restored historic parks of South Hill Park and Lily Hill Park to a high standard in line with approved management and maintenance plans
- 3.4 The borough council has adopted the Play, Open Spaces and Sports (POSS) Study which identifies detailed site recommendations for parks such as Lily Hill Park i.e. **4.41** ...*There are a number of sites which would be suitable for the promotion of educational features such as nature trails, outdoor classrooms and community*

kitchen gardens as specified in Table 10d. Lily Hill Park and South Hill Park being the most suitable due to their size and popularity...

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The boardwalk and pond viewing platform at Lily Hill Park is old and not fit for purpose. Not replacing it isn't an option, as it provides important access to the pond, and a link between the Edwardian Water Garden and Starch Copse that cuts out having to walk a longer route around. It needs to be replaced with a more accessible and durable version.
- 4.2 Not providing new interpretation boards would be a missed opportunity to educate visitors about the pond wildlife and celebrate and respect the site's wider important biodiversity value.
- 4.3 S106 funding is currently the only viable option to deliver these improvements.

Lily Hill Park is managed as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which means that funding is usually available to deliver improvements to help mitigate any adverse effect from development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. On this occasion, upgrading the boardwalk or providing new pond interpretation wouldn't qualify for SANGs funding as they're not listed in the site's Open Space Management Plan and there is insufficient funding available, having just invested a large sum in upgrading Lily Hill Park's path network.

There is also insufficient council capital funding to deliver these improvements this financial year.

- 4.4 Not using the s106 development monies could result in a failure to mitigate the impact of development and a missed opportunity for *'providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities.'* It could also lead to funds being returned to the developers, if no other qualifying scheme was located through which to deliver enhancements in the time available.
- 4.5 The wide range of S106 contributions available in the borough have been assessed in order to eliminate those lying outside the distance constraints of the developments as set out in the respective s106 agreements.
- 4.6 Development monies amounting to £90,709 are already secured through the Foundation House development (14/00933/FUL), which is 500 metres away from the nearest boundary with LHP and within distance constraints set out in the legal agreement.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 This project will focus on improving access and education facilities at Lily Hill Park, which will compliment and add to existing facilities. This includes a new boardwalk and pond viewing platform and a new pond wildlife education panel.
- 5.2 Lily Hill Park is a Green Flag awarded 23-hectare public open space, located near Bracknell town centre and Ascot. It lies to the east of Bullbrook Ward, which accordingly to mid-2015 population estimates from the Office for National Statistics has a population of 6359. It has a high population density (just over 38 persons per hectare) compared to the Borough as a whole (10.79 pph).

- 5.3 There are 56 acres of restored heritage parkland and gardens for visitors to explore and enjoy, with an extensive network of restored surfaced pathways allowing easy access to all areas of the park. The boardwalk and pond viewing platform link to this wider network of paths and provide an important route to access to the pond, which wouldn't be possible with a standard hoggin path. The viewing platform is popularly used by park users to enjoy the pond area and is available for use by local schools.
- 5.4 The wooden boardwalk / pond viewing platform, which also has a seating area were installed many years ago, during the heritage restoration project. They are now old and showing signs of wear and tear, which means they're no longer fit for purpose. The structure underneath the surface treads are rotting, and if not replaced with something more durable (e.g. recycled plastic) to withstand the wet conditions, will eventually fail. See Annex 4 for map and photos of boardwalk and Annex 5 for photos of wear and tear.
- 5.5 It is proposed to replace the structure with recycled plastic made to look like wood. This is an excellent product that is sustainably sourced, being from recycled plastic. It is more durable in wet conditions and is easy to maintain, as it doesn't require regular sanding down/oiling/painting etc. which will save staff time and reduce revenue costs. The textured surface means that it also provides good grip to pedestrians in wet weather, whereas the wooden surface can be slippery and needs grip strips adding, which takes away from the aesthetics.
- 5.6 There is currently a lack of interpretation near to the pond, explaining the important habitat it provides for many species including amphibians, mammals and invertebrates e.g.
- Common pipistrelle, long eared and noctule bats
 - Birds such as redwings, firecrests and mistle thrushes
 - Invertebrates such as dragonflies
 - Amphibians such as newts, frogs and toads
- A simple wide horizontal panel that could be attached to the handrail, following a similar principle to the wildlife interpretation provided at nearby Englemere Pond. See Annex 6.
- 5.7 The Bracknell Forest Residents Survey (2017) identifies that 83% of respondents use parks, open spaces and countryside at least monthly. The most frequently mentioned best aspects that respondents said they liked about the borough continue to relate to access to green spaces (parks, open spaces, and the countryside (54%). Of those who gave a satisfaction rating, the service that the highest proportion of respondents were satisfied with was parks, open spaces and countryside (92%). Further investment will help maintain and improve these high standards and will give residents access to the services they desire and help improve their health and wellbeing.
- 5.8 S106 funding is secured in accordance with adopted planning policy. Of significance is Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (ref. section 5.11 Open Space of Public Value and the 'Plus One' principle whereby works are prioritised towards improving quality of existing open spaces over time.
- 5.9 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 set out in Annex 1.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The allocation of funding proposed in this report complies with the requirements of the s106 agreements.

The approval of the recommendation in the report falls within the decision making remit of officers in consultation with the Executive member pursuant to the Bracknell Forest Council Constitution June 2020 Part 2, section 6 paragraph 6.2 (a)(vi).

Director: Resources

- 6.2 The financial implications are set out in the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An EIA scoping assessment has been carried out for this project and included in ANNEX 3. There are no negative impacts resulting from the proposed project.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 S106 contributions will need to be refunded should they not be allocated in accordance with the respective legal agreement. Providing these new facilities would reduce the future maintenance requirements at Lily Hill Park and be a cost saving to the borough council.

Head of Planning

- 6.5 The proposed new boardwalk and interpretation board will provide an improvement to an outdoor recreation facility. This is an appropriate use of S106 funds and complies with the terms of the S106. This will help to improve the quality and capacity of outdoor leisure in the area, thereby mitigating the impact of the relevant development in this regard.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Lily Hill Park users

Representations Received

- 7.2 Three consultees of the Park User Survey provided feedback that they'd like to see more information about wildlife in the park.

Background Papers:

Unrestricted

- ANNEX 1: S106 Allocation details
- ANNEX 2: P&C Application form
- ANNEX 3: EIA Scoping assessment for project
- ANNEX 4: Pictures and location map of boardwalk and viewing platform over the pond.
- ANNEX 5: Pictures of the rotting boardwalk
- ANNEX 6: Example boardwalks and interpretation panels
- ANNEX 7: New boardwalk specifications and quotes

Contact for further information

Kath Moss, Heritage Parks Manager.

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Tel: 01344 351874

Revision V1 08/10/20

Unrestricted

ANNEX 1 S106 Allocation details

YN CODE	PLANNING REF.	PLANNING SITE NAME	WARD	AMOUNT AVAILABLE	AMOUNT TO ALLOCATE	TERMS	SPEND DEADLINE	SPEND DEADLINE DATE, OR 7 YEARS FROM DATE OF PAYMENT
YN545	14/00933/FUL	Foundation House, Eastern Rd	Bullbrook	£90,709	£35,000	Open space/outdoor recreational facilities within 3km	Yes	15/12/2022

Total: £35,000

ANNEX 2 – Parks and Countryside Service Application Form

Section	Criteria	Project 7
1: Contact Details	Name	Kath Moss
	Contact	Kath Moss Kath.Moss@bracknell-forest.gov.uk T:01344 351874
2: Organisation Information	Name of organisation	Bracknell Forest Council
	Other	
	Department/service area/section	Parks and Countryside Service
	Lead officer	Stephen Chown
	Lead member	Cllr John Harrison
	Lead director	Andrew Hunter
	Decision maker	Cllr John Harrison
	Date of decision	TBC
	Reason Key	
	Making representations	
	Financial impact	Positive - The recycled plastic material is more durable in wet conditions and is easy to maintain, which will save staff time and reduce revenue costs.
	Consultation carried out?	Yes
	Consultation details	Park users consulted via a survey, which is available to access on BFCs consultation portal and is signposted from BFC web pages and various comms issued. At least three visitors have requested to see more information about wildlife e.g. birds.
	Equalities scoping report completed and provided with the application?	Yes – see annex 3
	Document(s) to be considered	
	Background papers	
	Open/exempt?	
	Explanation for exemption	
	Key decision	

Section	Criteria	Project 7
	Exempt report	
2: Project Description	Type of project	Blue and Green Infrastructure - Active Open Space of Public Value (Active OSPV)
	Other	
	Project Address	Lily Hill Park, Bullbrook, Bracknell RG12 2RX
	Accompanying map	Yes – see annex 4
	Parish	Bracknell
	Ward	Bullbrook
	POSS reference number	83
	Brief description of scheme	Provision of new boardwalk and wildlife interpretation panel
	Policy / Strategy Objectives Being Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy • The POSS Study • Council Plan – protecting and enhancing our environment
	Total estimated cost of scheme	£35,000
	Estimated amount of s106 funding required	£35,000
	Existing funding	Yes
	Timeline	Contractor lined up to do the work now (as of October 2020). Any delays to the project could risk a rise in product costs.
	Details of previous improvement projects	No
Additional information	<p>The boardwalk / pond viewing platform at Lily Hill Park is old and not fit for purpose. It's an important feature of the site and needs replacing with a more durable and accessible structure.</p> <p>There's also scope to provide new wildlife interpretation near the pond, to educate people about the importance of this area, and which would meet Green Flag Award criteria.</p> <p>Funding is not possible via SANGs or council capital funding, so s106 is the best option to take these works forward, particularly as there are development monies for open space/rec improvements</p>	

Unrestricted

Section	Criteria	Project 7
		<p>nearby (within 500 metres).</p> <p>Three quotations already received from contractors. Opted to go for the cheaper quote of £27,000 (incl VAT), with the additional £8,000 to be used towards interpretation provision and project facilitation costs.</p> <p>Work to begin immediately, as soon as confirmation has been received that the funding has been approved.</p>
	Project finished?	No.

Lead Contact: Kath Moss
Position (Officer / Member): Heritage Parks Manager
Date: 8 October 2020

ANNEX 3 - Equality Impact Assessment Scoping**Initial Equalities Screening Record Form**

Date of Screening: 08.10.2020	Directorate: Place, Planning and Regeneration	Section: Bracknell Forest Council Parks and Countryside Service	
1. Activity to be assessed	Quality improvements to outdoor recreation facilities at Lily Hill Park		
2. What is the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Rose Wicks		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Rose Wicks and Kath Moss		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	<p>The aim is to upgrade outdoor recreation facilities at Lily Hill Park using s106 developer contributions, in accordance with Planning Obligations SPD (section 5.11) and the BFC Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2012.</p> <p>A key part of this is to replace/upgrade the boardwalk/pond viewing platform, which will maintain access to the pond area and with improvements to accessibility will increase its capacity for people to use it.</p> <p>New interpretation, which will be made accessible for all to view, will also educate people on the wildlife value of the pond.</p> <p>Encouraging use is beneficial to the local community in many ways including community cohesion and well-being.</p>		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	<p>The new boardwalk/pond viewing platform should benefit all users of the park who wish to access the pond area, and who want a shorter route between the Edwardian Water Garden, Well and Cascade and Starch Copse. This should especially benefit those with mobility issues who can't walk for long distances, particularly as there's a seating area where they can rest halfway across.</p> <p>This investment will serve several nearby communities/ recent housing developments within the area.</p>		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral, please	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g. equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to

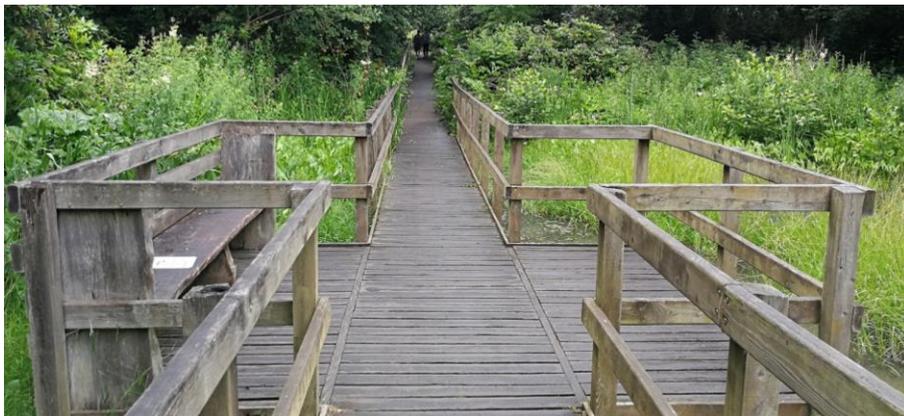
			give a reason.	justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities including conditions such as dementia.	Y ✓	N		
9. Racial equality	Y	N ✓		
10. Gender equality	Y	N ✓		
11. Sexual orientation equality	Y	N ✓		
12. Gender re-assignment	Y	N ✓		
13. Age equality	Y ✓	N		
14. Religion and belief equality	Y	N ✓		
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y	N ✓		
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y	N ✓		
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on promoting good community relations.				

18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A		
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	Yes. Those with accessibility issues, who can't walk for longer distances are likely to benefit more from keeping this shortcut open between the Edwardian Water Garden and Starch Copse.		
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?	Y	N ✓	
21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?	N/A		
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	Y	N ✓	
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Time scale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria
When providing new on-site interpretation, the design needs to be made accessible for all.	April 2021	Kath Moss (SHP Heritage Parks Manager)	Appropriate font size and visual contrast, with furniture accessible to those who should wish to read it.
The boardwalk will be designed with accessibility in mind i.e. non-slip surface, handrails and with gentle inclines.	April 2021	Kath Moss (SHP Heritage Parks Manager)	The boardwalk is well used, particularly by those who have accessibility issues.
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy - S106 quality improvement		

<p>included in?</p>	<p>programme, based on the Plus 1 Principle.</p>
<p>25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?</p>	<p>When carrying out site quality improvements, the following actions are undertaken to ensure that any new / improved site features are made accessible to all park users:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Follow best practice examples from guidelines from the BT Access For All Project and from organisations such as Fields in Trust (registered charity that protects vital open spaces all across the UK). 2. Provide appropriate specifications to contractors, which include the need to adhere to equalities best practice guidelines.
<p>26. Director's signature.</p>	<p>Signature: Date:</p>

When complete please send to abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for publication on the Council's website.

ANNEX 4 – Pictures and location map of boardwalk and viewing platform over the pond.



ANNEX 5 – Pictures of the rotting boardwalk



ANNEX 6 – Example boardwalks and interpretation panels

Wetland wonder interpretation board at Englemere Pond



Recycled plastic boardwalk at Wykery Copse, by Creative Timber.



ANNEX 6 – New boardwalk specifications and quotes

Specification:

Length: 57.5m

Width: 1.2m

Platform: 1.2m wide x 3m long and includes a seating area

Handrail: to extend whole length on one side, and include a 1.2m extension beyond the boardwalk at the far end

On the other side the handrail is currently 20m long but needs to extend 2m at one end, 4m at the other end to increase safety for the public and help prevent dogs accessing the water

Materials:

Recycled plastic sourced and made in the UK

A dark brown plank with deep grooves which has a good grip level and if spaced correctly won't fill with debris and won't need maintenance.

Life span is beyond 25yrs, according to the manufacturers.

Soft finished plank to be used for the seating for more comfort, this will also be easier to wipe water away after rain.

Old boardwalk to be removed and disposed of.

Contract awarded to: Creative Timber, <http://www.creativetimberwork.co.uk/>

Images of their previous boardwalk projects can be found here:

<http://www.creativetimberwork.co.uk/boardwalks/4595043929>

Other quotes provided by:

Greenspace

Heathland Management

Smallwoods