



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
Fosse and Abbey

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet

21st June 2010

Rally Park & Abbey Meadows Strategic Green Infrastructure Projects

Report of the Strategic Director Development, Culture and Regeneration

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To note external Strategic Green Infrastructure funding secured for improvements to open spaces at Rally Park and Abbey Meadows and to seek approval for the projects to be added to the 2010/11 Capital Programme.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Council has been awarded £595,000 Capital Grant from the Strategic Green Infrastructure CLG Housing Growth Fund to improve two open spaces at Rally Park and Abbey Meadows adjacent to the River Soar. (*see plan in appendix 1*). Additional funding is available from developer contributions and potentially the Playbuilder Fund to carry out further linked open space improvements and provide play equipment at Rally Park.

2.2 These projects will bring major benefits to existing and new residents in the Fosse and Abbey Ward areas through improvements to the environment and wildlife, better public access to green open space and reductions in anti-social behavior. The schemes are also intended to encourage new housing development in the adjoining regeneration areas.

2.3 This report requests inclusion of these projects in the Capital Programme. Funding contracts would be signed by July 2010 and projects are required to be completed by December 2011.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Cabinet is requested to note and approve the Rally Park and Abbey Meadows SGI projects and for the £595,000 be added to the 2010/11 Capital Programme financed by Growth Fund SGI Capital Grant.

4. REPORT

- 4.1 Leicester City Council has been successful in its application to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Fund and will receive £595,000 to improve Rally Park and Abbey Meadows areas. These projects will be the first City contributions towards implementing the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Strategy, 2009.
- 4.2 The projects would make substantial improvements to existing open spaces and riverside environments including natural habitats as well as improving public access. Such improvements will be essential to encourage and help bring forward housing development in the nearby Waterside and Abbey Meadows housing regeneration and growth areas.
- 4.3 The Rally Park project is the first phase of a potential comprehensive redevelopment of the park which is currently of poor quality and requires significant investment to improve its standard and the benefit it could bring to local communities. The funding will improve the existing open space resource by improving links between existing and new communities in the Abbey and Fosse ward areas to the park and waterside, open up the waterside frontage and the appearance and wildlife value of the towpath. The proposal also includes tree planting, increasing the area of open space that can be actively used by local people and taking away overgrown vegetation that restricts views and contributes to anti-social behaviour.
- 4.4 The first phase of the Abbey Meadows work focuses on the area from the National Space Centre to Abbey Park Road. This will involve improvements to accessibility and biodiversity along the river corridor through vegetation and tree management, landscaping, reed bed creation and tree planting.
- 4.5 Developer contributions totaling £98,000 have been secured to further improve open space in the Waterside/Rally Park areas. This will supplement the SGI funded works outlined above. Rally Park is also being considered for investment as part of the Playbuilder Fund initiative which could contribute towards new play equipment. A funding decision is expected shortly.
- 4.6 The proposed SGI funded improvements to Rally Park and Abbey Meadows have been assessed and there are no anticipated additional revenue maintenance costs. The revenue costs of the potential additional improvements funded through other sources as set out in 4.5 above will be considered once specific projects have been identified. Costs associated with project management and detailed design fees are to be met by the SGI fund. Any other officer time will be contained in existing revenue resources.
- 4.7 Funding contracts are due to be signed by June 2010 and projects need to be completed by December 2011. The Council's Development Team and Parks Management will be responsible for project delivery.
- 4.8 Cabinet is requested to approve the SGI funded projects for inclusion in the Council's capital programme.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

The costs of the Rally Park and Abbey Meadows schemes to be added to the capital programme are estimated to be £595,000 and are to be financed by the CLGs Strategic Green Infrastructure Growth Fund Capital Grant. The additional works discussed in para 4.5 totalling £145,000 would be funded by £98,000 of developer contributions and £47,000 from the Playbuilder Fund grant, the latter of which is not confirmed. The revenue costs of maintaining these works will need to be assessed in due course.

Martin Judson Financial Services

5.2 Legal Implications

The report refers to the provision of funding from a number of funding bodies in connection with this project, which may require that funding contracts and agreements to be entered into. It is recommended that the project manager obtains legal advice concerning the terms of the contracts to be entered as and when required.

John McIvor Legal Services

5.3 Climate Change Implications

Depending on final plans and how the project is implemented there is the potential to reduce carbon emissions by encouraging people to walk or cycle (as an alternative to car use) utilising these green spaces. The addition of further green infrastructure is also important in adapting to the effects of climate change by providing areas of cooling and shade.

Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Climate Change

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within the Report	References
Equal Opportunities	N/A		
Policy	Yes	Part of Waterside regeneration area plans	
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	Whole document	
Crime and Disorder	N/A		
Human Rights Act	N/A		
Elderly/People on Low Income	N/A		
Corporate Parenting	N/A		

7. RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
------	---------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------------------------

1. Physical completion of the schemes outside of the funding period and hence losing grant.	L	M	Appoint project manager/corporate project management approach followed
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---	---	------------------------------------------------------------------------

L – Low
M – Medium
H - High

L – Low
M – Medium
H - High

- 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**
6Cs Strategic Green Infrastructure Growth Fund - Detailed Application 2009
Waterside SPD
Abbey Meadows SPD

- 9. CONSULTATIONS**
- SGI Partnership Board
LCC Property, Parks Management & play team

- 10. REPORT AUTHOR**
Rob Hincks
Senior Officer, Development Team
Ext 29 7344

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising more than one ward
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)