

	<h2>Environment Committee</h2> <h3>28 November 2018</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Victoria Park, Finchley – Master Plan</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>Chairman of Environment Committee</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A – Final Consultation Report Appendix B – Master Plan including priority order for the work Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment for Victoria Park Master Plan</p>
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Summary

Following the sale of The Lodge the ring fenced capital receipt can only be spent on Victoria Park. Groundwork London were appointed to develop a master plan for the park, this was subject to public consultation in 2018. Following the public consultation this report seeks agreement to the Master Plan, and a priority order for the works.

- Officers Recommendations**
1. That the Environment Committee considers the report including the outcomes of the public consultation and agrees the Master Plan set out at Appendix B.
 2. That the Environment Committee considers the report including the outcomes of the public consultation and agrees the priority order for the work as set out at Appendix B.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

1.1 Following the sale of The Lodge at Victoria Park, the ring fenced capital receipt can only be spent on running costs of and improvements to the park, it was agreed at the 13 July 2017 meeting of the Environment Committee that qualified external support would be procured to develop the master plan and that a master plan be developed subject to a full consultation.

1.2 Following a procurement exercise the council appointed Groundwork London (GWL) in early 2018 to develop a master plan for Victoria Park. GWL carried out engagement speaking to users of the park as well as stakeholders to get a better understanding of the priorities and improvements they would like to see. This led to GWL developing a draft master plan for the park with two options proposed for play, tennis and a multi-use games area. The council then undertook a public consultation on the options proposed and the long list of potential improvements to the park.

1.3 Public Consultation

1.4 The public consultation on the draft masterplan, undertaken by the council, took place between 18 June 2018 and 13 August 2018. A summary of the consultation results can be seen below, and the full report can be found at Appendix A.

1.5 The following table shows the activities undertaken and the responses received:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Online questionnaire	1077 responses
Easy Read questionnaire	11 responses
Pop Up events	400 attendees 57 comments
Youth Engagement	61 individuals
Emails and phone calls	19 individuals

1.6 The summary of the public consultation is:

- 96% of those who responded to the questionnaires use Victoria Park
- The most common reason for visiting the park is walking
- For Play the majority of respondents preferred Option 2, which is two new playgrounds in the current two locations
- For a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) the majority of respondents preferred Option 2, which is a MUGA on an existing tennis court
- 74% of the young people engaged would like to see one of the tennis courts converted into a ball court, and more challenging play and informal sports provision at the Long Lane play area
- 50% of 626 questionnaire respondents said they would use a MUGA
- For tennis there was no clear preference for Option 1 (retaining 6 tennis courts) or Option 2 (retaining 5 tennis courts). Of 586 respondents taking

into account those comments made in “Other”, 274 respondents selected Option 1 and 265 respondents selected Option 2

- 24% of 586 respondents said that they use the tennis courts
 - The top five improvements that respondents selected to spend the money on were: new playground facilities (2-14 years), new café with indoor toilet, resurfacing paths where tree roots have led to an uneven surface, additional tree planting and a new multi-use games area. The full list can be seen at Appendix A, page 17
 - The five improvements that respondents rated the least for spending the money on were: new path from tennis courts to oak tree, new entrances to northern playground, improved signage and interpretation, widening path between tennis courts and northern playground, and new path from northern playground to cafe
 - The top five changes that respondents selected to see happen were: new café, playground facilities, multi-use games area, café terrace and calisthenics. The full list can be seen at Appendix A, page 18
 - In the “other” category 23 respondents said that they wanted “better public toilets including facilities for the disabled”, which generated more responses than the bottom 12 items that were selected to see happen
 - Residents top five further comments were: better public toilets including facilities for disabled, install calisthenics equipment/outdoor gym, improve/new café, better play equipment including removing bark, and improve safety, maintenance and litter clearing
 - The topic of improving the toilets came up several times in the responses received including in the Easy Read questionnaire responses and the Youth Engagement
 - The conversion of the depot was rated 13th of where the money should be spent, and 16th of the top changes in the park. Comments were also received that the conversion of the depot should be funded from other sources
 - Other comments include; the installation of a public access defibrillator, removing the bark from the play area and detailed comments about the sensory garden.
- 1.7 Following advice from our Legal Team the response to the question in the questionnaire “Overall which Option for play, multi-use games area and tennis do you prefer?” was excluded from the evaluation. It was excluded as respondents were only able to select “Option 1” or “Option 2” and were not able to select “Alternative” or skip responding the question. The Final Consultation Report at Appendix A sets out the response rate to each question, and there is no evidence of a significant drop off in response rate as a direct result of respondents not being able to select “Alternative” or skip responding the question. Overall the consultation is considered to be fair and otherwise compliant with the overarching principles governing the conduct of public consultation.
- 1.8 The outcomes of the public consultation were provided to GWL who developed the Master Plan, which is attached at Appendix B.

- 1.9 The estimated costs of the individual improvement items are set out at Appendix B, page 5. These are estimates only as cost certainty will only be provided once the improvements have been procured.
- 1.10 The conversion of the former depot has not been included in the Master Plan as this was not rated very highly in the responses, and the estimated cost of this work is £200,000, which is over one third of the money that is available for the park. Instead we are seeking to source a suitable partner to take over the former depot, that should be to the benefit of the park. This will be aligned with delivery of the Finchley Central Town Centre Project.
- 1.11 The council is aware of the planning application that has been submitted for the construction of a war memorial on park land next to Ballards Lane. The outcome of this planning application will have no effect on the Master Plan, as no improvements have been suggested to this area, as can be seen at Appendix B, page 2.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Recommendation 1 - It is recommended that Environment Committee agrees the Master Plan set out at Appendix B page 2, as this sets out the improvement works to the park that the public consultation identified as being the best options.
- 2.2 Recommendation 2 – It is recommended that Environment Committee agrees the priority order for the work as set out at Appendix B page 5, as this sets out the priority order for the works that the public consultation identified as being the most important. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient funds to undertake all the works listed in the Master Plan, therefore the priority order will be used to guide the order of the work and therefore the spend of the available money.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 It is not recommended that a further public consultation is undertaken on the master plan, as the public consultation undertaken earlier this year had good engagement levels and a clear consensus of opinion on many matters, and a second public consultation is very unlikely to deliver different results and will add a delay to putting the Master Plan into implementation.
- 3.2 It is not recommended that the money from the sale of The Lodge is not spent. The decision to sell The Lodge was made in 2014 and The Lodge was sold in 2016. The money is ring fenced to Victoria Park and it should be used to benefit the park users.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 If the Committee is minded to agree the above recommendations the Master Plan will be adopted and the work progressed in the priority order as set out in the Master Plan at Appendix B.
- 4.2 For Play, a play design consultation will take place in the park in the later part of 2018/19, depending on the weather. It is the plan that all play equipment will be installed by the end of 2019.
- 4.3 For the new Café and toilets, planning permission will be sought. It is the plan that a new café and toilets will be installed by the end of 2019/20.
- 4.4 For all other works in the park these will start in 2019 and be completed by March 2020, depending on the weather. This includes the resurfacing of the tennis courts and the installation of the multi-use games area.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The Corporate Plan 2015-2020 is based on the core principles of fairness, responsibility and opportunity to make sure Barnet is a place:
- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life
 - where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure
 - where responsibility is shared, fairly
 - where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the tax payer.
- 5.1.2 The Corporate Plan 2015-2020 and the 2018/19 Addendum includes the following:
- Barnet's parks and green spaces will be amongst the best in London;
 - Resident feedback consistently shows that Barnet's Park and Greenspaces are amongst its biggest assets and a strong influence for people deciding to live here;
 - The Council recognises this and will continue to ensure that the Borough's Parks and Greenspaces are looked after;
 - The Council will develop more innovative ways of maintaining its Parks and Greenspaces; including through greater partnerships with community groups and focus on using parks to achieve wider public health priorities for the Borough.
 - Investing in parks and open spaces for a greener borough.
- 5.1.3 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020 states: -
- Barnet is now the largest Borough in London by population (367,265 at the end of 2015) and is continuing to grow

- Barnet Sport and Physical Activity Needs Assessment (2012) highlighted that whilst health behaviours and outcomes are more favourable in Barnet than in England as a whole, sport and physical activity rates and the use of outdoor spaces are below the national average
- A breadth of evidence demonstrates that a more active lifestyle is essential for physical and mental wellbeing. Regular physical activity helps reduce the risk of stroke, type II diabetes, development of dementia, incidences of heart disease, cancers and high blood pressure. Physical activity supports the prevention and management of long term conditions as well as being a component of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight
- Physical inactivity currently costs the UK economy £7.2 billion. Additional costs are incurred via the wider economy through increased sickness absence, premature death of productive individuals and increased costs for individuals and their carers
- Within Barnet the health costs of physical inactivity currently cost £6.7 million. This is approximately £1.9 million per 100,000 of the Borough's population. However, as measured by the Sport England Active People Survey Data (APS9 Quarter 2) 43.8% of the Borough are currently inactive and would like to do more
- The number of people with mental health conditions is predicted to increase as the population grows. In November 2014, the Health and Wellbeing Board identified prevention of and early intervention in mental health problems as a priority
- We plan to:
 - Develop and improve the accessibility and quality of open spaces across the borough to support healthy outcomes, underpinned by the Barnet Open Spaces Strategy
 - Utilise open space to co-ordinate and support recreational and competitive activity, inclusive of Outdoor Gyms.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 Finance and Value for Money – The ring fenced capital receipt from the sale of The Lodge is £623,000. This money can only be spent on running costs of and improvements to the park. Groundwork London were appointed to develop the master plan and to carry out specific youth engagement work, at a total cost of £35,858. The remaining £587,142 is to be spent on the park improvements including the procurement of each package and associated fees. The council will seek the best value for this project, however it is very unlikely that there will be sufficient funds to do all the works identified in the Master Plan and set out at Appendix B, page 5. For any further works to be undertaken the council would need to source additional funds where possible.

5.2.2 Procurement – If the Master Plan is approved existing contracts and new procurements will be used to deliver the changes in the park.

5.2.3 Staffing – At this time there are no implications. The implementation of the Master Plan will be led and managed by the council's Greenspaces Team.

5.2.4 IT – At this time there are no implications.

5.2.5 Property – If the Master Plan is approved a planning application will be made for a new café and toilets in the park.

5.2.6 Sustainability – The initiatives detailed in this report seek to maintain a high quality park for everyone, whilst considering the maintenance costs in the short and long term in the position of declining resources.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. This will be done.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 Victoria Park is owned by the council under the terms of a “Charitable Trust” because the land was transferred to the Urban District Council of Finchley in 1899 and 1900 to hold as to part as a public park and recreation ground for the parish of Finchley and as to part for the purpose of the Recreation Grounds Act 1859. The London Borough of Barnet now owns the park as a result of it being the successor in title to the Urban District Council of Finchley. The council is the trustee of “designated land” (i.e. land held for specific purposes under the trusts mentioned above). The council is a corporate body and is therefore deemed to be a “Corporate Trustee” of the land in the trusts. On 4 November 2014 Full Council as trustee decided to sell Victoria Park Lodge, and noted that the proceeds of sale of the Lodge must be held in a ring-fenced fund to defray future running costs relating to Victoria Park and carry out improvements.

5.4.2 Council has delegated responsibility for parks to the Environment Committee, therefore it is appropriate for the Environment Committee to consider how the sale proceeds of Victoria Park Lodge are applied to the park. The Council’s Constitution sets out the terms of reference of the Environment Committee. This includes:

- Responsibility for all borough-wide or cross-constituency matters relating to the street scene including, parking, road safety, lighting, street cleansing, transport, waste, waterways, refuse, recycling, allotments, parks, trees, crematoria and mortuary, trading standards and environmental health.
- To receive reports on relevant performance information and risk on the services under the remit of the Committee.

5.4 Risk Management

5.5.1 All risks are managed using the risk management procedure, as set out in the Corporate Risk Management Framework. High level risks are reported as part of the Council’s quarterly performance regime.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

5.6.3 The Corporate Plan 2015 – 2020 sets the Strategic Equalities Objective, which is: that citizens will be treated equally, with understanding and respect, and will have equal access to quality services which provide value to the tax payer. Changes to policies and services are analysed in order to assess the potential equalities impacts and risks and identify any mitigating action possible, through an equalities impact assessment, before final decisions are made. Consideration will also be made to the equalities and data cohesion summary.

5.6.4 An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the proposed Victoria Park Master Plan, and is attached as Appendix C. This shows that the proposed Master Plan is expected to make a positive change.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

5.7.1 Not applicable.

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

5.8.1 The public consultation took place between 18 June 2018 and 13 August 2018. The Final Consultation Report is attached at Appendix A, and a summary of the consultation results is set out a paragraph 1.6 of this report.

5.9 Insight

5.9.1 No insight information has been used to produce this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 [Environment Committee 13 July 2017 Papers](#) – including Item 12 Implementation of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, and the agreement that a master plan be developed for Victoria Park subject to a full consultation.

- 6.2 [Policy and Resources Committee 27 June 2017 Papers](#) – including Item 15 Business Planning 2017-20, Appendix B which shows the capital allocation for Victoria Park.