

Decision Maker: Executive

Date: 22nd July 2014

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Key

Title: CRYSTAL PALACE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

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Chief Officer: Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward: Crystal Palace; Penge and Cator;

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 Bromley Council previously committed £50k, as well as £400k in principle, alongside the Greater London Authority's (GLA) £2m, as match funding for a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application for the regeneration of Crystal Palace Park.
- 1.2 Following an application to the HLF being unsuccessful the Crystal Palace Park Executive Board are pursuing interim improvement projects at the park. Members are asked to agree to commit £400k to these Crystal Palace Park improvement works. The GLA have already verbally recommitted their £2million to this project.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That Members:

- 2.1 **Agree to contribute £160k capital receipts towards the Crystal Palace Park improvement project.**
- 2.2 **Agree that £240k be set aside in an earmarked reserve for the Community Projects Fund from revenue as detailed in 5.5.**
- 2.3 **Agree to delegate decisions to spend the £240k Community Projects Fund to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Crystal Palace Executive Board.**
- 2.4 **Full Council is asked to agree to add the Crystal Palace Improvement project to the capital programme with a total estimate of £2.16m.**

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council Quality Environment
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: £2.16m capital and £240k revenue
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Crystal Palace Park
 4. Total current budget for this head: £299,330
 5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget, capital receipts, GLA funding
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None
 2. Call-in: Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): In 2006 annual visitor numbers to Crystal Palace Park were assessed as part of work towards the park's Masterplan. The visitor figures at this time were estimated at 1.68 million.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments?
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: The content of this report was discussed at the Crystal Palace Executive Board meeting on 9 July 2014. A local ward councillor is a member of this Board and was present at the meeting.

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Since 2002 extensive community consultation has been undertaken on the future of Crystal Palace Park. In particular, wide public consultation was carried out to inform the 2007 Masterplan.
- 3.2 Recognising the need to invest in the park, a commitment was made by Bromley Council and the Greater London Authority (GLA) to improve the park landscape, visitor facilities and heritage features. To that end Bromley committed £50k to a Heritage Lottery Fund bid, as well as a further £400k in principle should the bid be successful, and the GLA committed £2m. The Heritage Lottery Fund bid was submitted in 2013. Extensive consultation was carried out again to inform this bid.
- 3.3 The HLF project allowed the potential of the park to be realised and sought to increase the number of visitors the park received. The project restored the legibility of the park through making Sir Joseph Paxton's Central Axis the new focus, and reuniting the upper and lower areas. It improved the landscape by moving parking areas, conserved and restored the park's heritage assets and provided new and refurbished visitor facilities. The funding bid requested £5m from the HLF to carry out the works, match funded by the Council's £450k and the GLA's £2m.
- 3.4 Due to the ZhongRong Holding's interest in the park however, the HLF application was unsuccessful. The HLF said that the potential £100million for park restoration from the ZhongRong group undermined the application for funding, and the need for the HLF funding was no longer being demonstrated.
- 3.5 At this time, an opportunity to survey the Crystal Palace Subway, which is on English Heritage's At Risk register, and produce an options appraisal for its future emerged. In June 2013 English Heritage provided a grant of £29.25k towards this work, and Bromley Council committed £29k. A team has now been appointed and this work is due to start imminently.
- 3.6 On 9th April 2014 the Crystal Palace Park Executive Project Board met. At this meeting a programme for improvement projects, that had been identified through all the previous consultation, was assessed by the Board. The Board includes representatives from Bromley Council, the GLA and others, including community representatives.
- 3.7 At the meeting the GLA confirmed that their £2m contribution had been recommitted to Crystal Palace Park. This is recorded in the meeting minutes. Consequently it was decided that members of Bromley Council would be asked to agree a sum of £400k for park improvement works, and that one last round of community consultation would be undertaken to capture the views of casual park users. The results of this consultation would inform how the £2.4 m would be spent.
- 3.8 It was also decided that if Bromley agree the funds, a request would be made for part of this fund to be used for a Community Projects Fund, which would be set up as soon as possible. This fund would require revenue funding, and allow the community to realise some short term improvement works. The public are keen to see investment in the park get underway.
- 3.9 Public consultation was carried out in June 2014, with 590 people taking part. The results of this consultation indicated how the public would like to see £2.4m spent on improving the park. The results showed that landscape, heritage and visitor facilities works were all important.
- 3.10 The public consultation identified which of the improvement projects, out of a list of 15 options (drawn from the widely consulted 2007 Masterplan, the HLF application and community feedback), should be prioritised for the park. The nine most popular projects are shown in the following table:

	Project	Estimated cost £
Built heritage	Conserving the dinosaur models	400,000
	Conserving the sphinxes and south terrace steps	153,000
	Conserving the Paxton basin and improving surroundings	213,000
Landscape	Return parking site in central area to parkland	371,000
	Remove parking from central axis	48,000
	Remove turn stiles from central axis	75,000
Visitor facilities	Renovate concert platform to be a functioning venue	237,000
	Restore existing café	200,000
	Create new wheeled sports facility (skate park)	300,000
	Capital project feasibility and survey work	160,000
	Total estimated costs	2,157,000

3.11 The estimated costs of these nine projects suggest all nine could be achieved within a £2.16 m budget.

3.12 In order to produce detailed costings for all nine capital projects, and assess their feasibility, the GLA are making a request to their Board in July 2014 for £160k to be released from their £2m to enable the Council to carry out the following work:

- A condition survey of the dinosaur models and detailed costs for fully conserving the models
- Assessment of drainage issues at the concert platform, as well as the future management of the stage, and detailed costs.
- Detailed costs for reintegrating the Paxton basin and south terrace steps in to the park
- Detailed costs for removing parking from central axis
- Detailed costs for removing the turn stiles
- Options for the restoration of the café and detailed costs for each option
- Options for the creation of a skate park and detailed costs for each option

3.13 The viability of the landscape projects will be determined this summer as a parking survey of the park is currently being undertaken by the GLA.

3.14 A report will be brought back to Members in March 2015 with the detailed costs following the completion of the feasibility works, to confirm which projects will be going ahead and to verify that written confirmation of the £1.84m balance of funding, has been received from the GLA.

- 3.15 The results of the consultation also confirmed that there was public support for the Community Projects Fund. The public's ideas for how this fund should be spent, ranged from a youth club, to pony rides, to an open air cinema. Based on the ideas provided, and the public appetite to see the other larger improvement projects realised, it is recommended that a sum of £240k is set aside for this purpose.
- 3.16 As the GLA's £2m is restricted to capital and feasibility works only, the £240k is required to come from Bromley. As grant requests are expected for both revenue and capital projects, it is recommended that the £240k is funded from the Council's revenue budget and is set aside in an earmarked reserve to be drawn down, as and when required to fund each project when the grant has been awarded. Approval is sought to agree funding of £160k from capital receipts to be added to the £2m that the GLA have committed to the Crystal Palace capital project to fund the nine improvement projects.
- 3.17 If approved, the £240k Community Projects Fund will be retained by the Council, but responsibility for awarding the grants will lie with the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Crystal Palace Park Executive Board. The Crystal Palace Community Stakeholder Group will review the grant applications on the Boards behalf and make recommendations as to which projects should receive funding. A number of Bromley Councillors and senior officers sit on the Crystal Palace Park Executive Board, including the Leader of the Council. All grants will be subject to thorough scrutiny. Draft guidance notes and an application form for the Community Projects Fund grants programme have been produced and will be reviewed by the Crystal Palace Park Executive Board at their meeting on the 9th July 2014. It is recommended that the £240k fund is spent over a three year period.
- 3.18 The Scheme of Executive and Non-Executive Delegation to Offices, appendix 10, point xiv states that the Council may 'enter into contracts with any voluntary sector organisation for the provision of services by way of a service level agreement'.
- 3.19 Involving the Community Stakeholder Group in the assessment of grant applications, and asking them to produce recommendations, will foster community ownership and support the future possibility of transferring park governance to the community.
- 3.20 Grant applications to the Community Project Fund will have to meet a set of criteria to be eligible for consideration by the Board. All applications will be subject to checks that will be undertaken by officers who will administer and monitor the grants. The proposed criteria for projects is summarised as follows:
- The organisation requesting the grant must be a voluntary or community charity or not-for-profit organisation in good financial health and with a bank account.
 - The project must be consistent with, or complement, the vision for the park as set out in the 2007 Masterplan.
 - Projects must be self-sufficient and not require ongoing revenue support from the Council.
 - Projects must be completed within 12 months of receipt of the grant.
 - Projects must meet at least one of the Fund's outcomes identified for heritage, environment, people or communities, e.g. better visitor information, wayfinding and services within the park.
 - The maximum size grant available will be £20k. The Council will be willing to consider schemes above £20k in special circumstances, but in this case the works for the project will be required to be procured through the Council and there will be an expectation that these projects will be match funded. All projects must demonstrate value for money.

- Projects requesting grants under £1k will be required to claim for reimbursement of costs on successful completion, and will not be given funding upfront.
 - Projects requesting grants above £5k will be required to follow the Council's procurement process and provide three quotes to ensure value for money.
 - All grant recipients will be required to report on their progress each month and complete an end of project grant report to detail project spend, confirm the project timetable is on course and that the project outcomes being met.
- 3.21 Regular updates of the details of the projects for which grants are awarded from the fund will be included in the budget monitoring reports submitted to the Environment PDS committee. Additionally, an annual report will be brought back to Members each financial year, detailing how the Community Projects Fund has been spent.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's Building a Better Bromley 2012/13 commitment states that the Council will further develop the parks, leisure and sports offer at Crystal Palace Park in line with the Crystal Palace Park Masterplan.
- 4.2 The investment also supports the Council's wider objectives for a quality environment and regeneration.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 On 3rd April 2013 the Executive agreed that a sum of £50k from capital receipts be used to support work needed to prepare a first round application to the HLF. The Executive also gave an in principle decision to match fund the capital project up to £400,815, should the bid be successful.
- 5.2 As the GLA subsequently directly funded the cost of the HLF application, Members agreed in April 2014, that £29k of the original £50k funding be used, along with a £29k grant from English Heritage to undertake survey works to provide options for the future of the Crystal Palace subway.
- 5.3 As mentioned above, the HLF application was unsuccessful due to the potential £100m investment proposal from Zhong Rong Holdings.
- 5.4 The GLA have confirmed that they are still committed to providing £2m to improve the park landscape, although official confirmation has not yet been received in writing. This funding can only be used for capital works and the initial £160k feasibility works that need to be undertaken to assess the cost of the projects listed in 3.10 above. Members are asked to agree funding of £160k from capital receipts towards the Crystal Palace Park improvement scheme. The total capital estimate for the scheme will be £2.16m and approval is sought to add the scheme to the capital programme.
- 5.5 Members are also requested to agree that a sum of £240k is set aside from revenue, to be held in an earmarked reserve as a Community Project Fund. The money will be met from unallocated provisions in the 2014/15 Central Contingency Sum. The fund will be used to award grants for the completion of small capital and revenue projects submitted by community groups over a period of 3 years.
- 5.6 Approval is sought to delegate the responsibility for awarding the grants to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Crystal Palace Executive Board.

- 5.7 Council Officers of the Board will assess the applications to ensure that the criteria set out in 3.20 has been adhered to, will assess whether the group or organisation applying for the grant is financially stable and whether value for money has been achieved.
- 5.8 The Board will be expecting monthly progress reports from the grant recipients detailing progress to date and project completion report with details of spend and confirmation that the project outcomes have been achieved. Details of the grants awarded will be included in the Environment Portfolio budget monitoring report submitted to the Environment PDS committee and an annual report will be brought back to Members at the end of each financial year, with details of how the Community Projects Fund has been spent.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal implications and Personnel implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Crystal Palace Park Interim Projects Consultation Findings and Recommendations, June 2014