

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Date of Meeting: 10th November 2010

Report of: Guy Kilminster, Head of Health & Wellbeing

Subject/Title: Sandbach Park Redevelopment Plan

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Andrew Knowles

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report outlines 'in principle' proposals for the redevelopment of Sandbach Park. The details of the proposals are contained within a report drawn up by Ryder Landscape Consultants following extensive consultation with community and park users.
- 1.2 The project is being led by the Sandbach Partnership in conjunction with Sandbach Town Council and Cheshire East Council and its adoption will form the completion of the first phase of the process.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing approve
 - (1) the 'in principle' adoption of the finalised Concept Plan for Sandbach Park as set out in the Appendix: 'Sandbach Park Final Presentation';
 - (2) that the Concept Plan form the basis for future development within the Park but that such proposals be amended or prioritised in line with available funding and maintenance costs; and
 - (3) that approval be given to Officers to continue to work with the Sandbach Partnership and Sandbach Town Council to implement the proposals, including support for the securing of any additional external funding required to ensure the Plan's completion.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Sandbach Park is much loved by the local community. It is a key local facility as it is located in the town centre adjacent to the market square and the library. Whilst being attractive and heavily used by the community, many of the key facilities are at the end of their useful life and are no longer fit for their purpose.

- 3.2 Funded by Sandbach Town Council, the Sandbach Partnership commissioned Ryder Landscape Consultants to undertake a full review and consultation exercise to provide a future improvement plan for the Park.
- 3.3 Funding for the finalised project would need to include any Section 106 allocations, both current and future.
- 3.4 Following partnership meetings, Cheshire East Council Officers have made clear their priorities, stating that the first aspects of park infrastructure to be addressed need to be access to the park, improvement to the public toilet facilities and improvements to the play provision. The play provision requirement is given even greater priority since the level of facility at the time of writing of the Ryder Report has been reduced following an arson attack which destroyed the main climbing frame.
- 3.5 If the scheme is approved, Officers will work with the main partners (Sandbach Town Council and Sandbach Partnership) to identify the best way to drive the project forward. Whilst Officer time continues to be a limited resource, the aim will be to find an appropriate mechanism to deliver on-the-ground improvements in line with the stated priorities and making best use of the available funding.
- 3.6 In principle, approval of the Ryder Report subject to modifications will allow Officers to work with the Council's partner organisations to progress from the consultation to the delivery phase of the project and physically improve the park to support the health and wellbeing of the Sandbach community.
- 3.7 A full hard copy of the consultants' report will be made available at the meeting.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Sandbach

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Councillors Barry Moran, Stella Furlong and Gill Merry.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

- 6.1 Climate Change: Parks act to mitigate actions that are understood to be causes of climate change. As large green spaces within urban areas, parks slow down surface run-off at times of heavy rain, the vegetation serves to absorb CO₂ and particulates in the air, and the trees have a cooling effect on local air temperatures and will locally reduce the impact of high winds.
- 6.2 Health Benefits: Excellent parks are proven to deliver positive health benefits to the communities who use them or live in their vicinity. They provide places where people can improve their physical health through

recreation and exercise. They are socially cohesive locations where children can play and adults can meet and relax together. They are tranquil places where people of all generations can enjoy the benefits associated with proximity to nature.

- 6.3 Economic Benefits: Well managed and attractive parks will have positive economic benefits. They demonstrate the pride of the local community, the confidence of the local authority, they add value to local property prices and they attract business to the area by supporting the family friendly infrastructure necessary to bring in key employees.

7.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

- 7.1 The funding for this project is already identified from developer contributions under Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act. Any other funding will be found by applications to external funding bodies.

- 7.2 There will be no increased revenue funding required.

- 7.3 Officer time will be necessary to drive the project forward but this will be reduced by appointing a project delivery agency. Their fees would have to be raised from the existing budget or from future grant applications.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

- 8.1 All improvements to the fabric of the park and all facilities will become assets belonging to Cheshire East Council who will have an ongoing responsibility for maintenance.

- 8.2 Monies paid to the Council under s106 agreements must be used strictly in accordance with the terms of those agreements.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Risk of harm to park users: the level of risk to park visitors / users should be reduced by the replacement of old and obsolete play equipment and by careful design consideration as to the location of new facilities. Modern play equipment must comply with higher safety standards.

- 9.2 Given that the original concept plan based on consultation with local people would be considerably more expensive than the funding available, there will be a need to manage public expectation in terms of what can be achieved and in what timescale. This will be undertaken through careful use of the media by all parties involved.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 A comprehensive process has been undertaken to develop an implementation plan to improve Sandbach Park as set out in Section 3 of this report.

10.2 Options:

(a) To approve 'in principle' the Ryder Landscape Consultants Concept Plan subject to available funding and to the amendment of the Plan as required for operational and financial reasons. Approval of the concept design will allow for the progression of the project and the search for additional funding. As such this option is recommended for approval.

(b) To reject the Ryder Landscape Consultants report. A considerable amount of officer time and partner funding has been spent on progressing the Plan to its current position. There is no further funding available to develop an alternative proposal. This option is not recommended.

11.0 Access to Information

11.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name:	Mark Wheelton
Designation:	Leisure & Green Space Manager
Tel No:	01270 686679
Email:	mark.wheelton@cheshireeast.gov.uk