

BRIEFING REPORT - PART I

Derriford Community Park – Phase 4



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

I. INTRODUCTION

This proposal aims to deliver a further phase of work in the programme to deliver Derriford Community Park, Plymouth. It forms part of the growth of the city and aims to deliver significant health and well-being for communities. The proposal objective is part of the Joint Local Plan (PLY 41) to deliver 'Derriford Community Park (which) will become a highly valued environmental, social and educational asset, a resource for the people of Plymouth and a regional destination for environmental learning. The project will take a phased approach and this report focuses on delivery of Phase 4 of the project from April 2018-May 2019.

2. BACKGROUND

Derriford is poised for significant growth over the next 25 years. At the heart of the new Derriford will be a regionally important park – Derriford Community Park. The Park will act as a regional destination for environmental learning, growing, recreation, play and interaction with the land. The Park will cover 137hectares in total and will include woodlands, farmlands, and a series of streams. It will link the existing Forder Valley and Bircham Valley Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) with Seaton Valley which has been in private ownership until recently. The overall ambition is identified in the Masterplan for Derriford Community Park that was published by the Council in 2012.

Detailed work to secure the legal agreements for the Community Park land, including Poole Farm, and section 106 contributions for the Park, were concluded in 2014 and in 2015 phase one of the work to deliver the Park began. This has involved using £200,000 of section 106 money to establish the necessary biodiversity improvements to the park and using this as a catalyst for engaging the local community in managing the parkland. To date over 3345 volunteer hours have contributed to improving the wildlife value of the site worth over £18,000 of volunteer time to the project. It has also allowed the team to engage with 45 families at family events and host over 440 schoolchildren on visits to the farm and 30 work experience days for 14 -24 year olds working with a range of partners.

Phase 2 focussed around developing the building infrastructure at Poole Farm to begin the process of providing the necessary facilities to act as a community enterprise hub. Phase Three, still in delivery, has built on these foundations to improve the infrastructure of the farm to deliver educational courses and establish the first phase of access networks. Duchy College began delivering the first animal care course as a result of this investment to young people from local secondary schools. Work to begin the construction of the first footpaths and access points to local communities is due to start in the summer.

The newest phase (Phase 4) commits further section 106 money to further building renovations to increase capacity for offices and tenancy by project partners – contributing to activity delivering social and environmental outcomes as part of the project whilst also generating an income contributing to the project. It will also allow us to develop the detail of the plans to progress the development of the rest of the site to be able to deliver more involvement and understanding of the natural environment and farming and involve more partners.

The Park will help to ensure that the growth of Derriford is sustainable by providing a significant green infrastructure asset, the Park, which will deliver the natural services needed by new and existing communities. It will provide spaces for learning, recreation, play, wildlife and growing. It will also directly support the new Seaton Neighbourhood by providing sustainable solutions to water management, mitigating ecological impacts, enhancing the areas wildlife and by providing a Park on the doorstep of the new community. The Forder Valley link road will run through the Park but the Natural Infrastructure Team is working closely with the road design team to ensure any impacts are minimised both during construction and when the road is open.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

A Masterplan for the Park was developed in 2012. The development of the Masterplan built on previous work to establish the concept of a significant greenspace destination in the north of the City. Previous studies include a feasibility study in 2007 and a delivery study in 2009. The Masterplan took forward the ideas within the previous studies that had been developed with extensive input from stakeholders, community members and landowners. The Masterplan for the Park was produced in draft and was subject to a 6 week public consultation in February 2012 when a proactive approach was taken to gaining views and ideas. Overall 96.5% of respondents supported the creation of the Park and the remaining 3.5% stated they might support a new Park.

There were no respondents that didn't support the Park. The Masterplan was completed and published in May 2012.

A recent consultation phase in January 2018 focused around the new access networks, generated a response of 95% supporting the specific proposals for the new routes.

4. PROJECT PHASING SUMMARY

The project will be in line with the agreed Masterplan. It will be phased with a programme of consultation and community engagement running throughout all phases. This proposal aims to deliver Phase 4 of the project.

Phase 1 – April 2015 – March 2019: Biodiversity Improvement Programme including:

- Fencing, boundary improvements and livestock grazing
- 2km of hedgerow and 0.5 hectares of woodland tree planting
- Enhancement of existing habitat features – hedges, woodlands, wetlands and grasslands
- Delivery of 'ecosystem services' through this work to benefit the wider city infrastructure and communities e.g. flood risk and water quality management through biodiversity improvements such as increasing wetland size and species reintroduction
- Partnership working to engage key partners specialised in this work
- Community engagement to maximise involvement and ownership of space and foster key values in the natural environment

Phase 2 – April 2016 – April 2020: Poole Farm improvements

- Buildings improvements to provide community workspace and toolstore facility as well as tenancy of the farmhouse.

Phase 3 – May 2017 – April 2019: Dairy renovations, access networks and play facilities

- Delivery of approximately 2.4 km of footpath and 5 entrance ways at the east and west of the park
- Design and build of new play facility associated with the park and new Seaton Neighbourhood housing
- Renovations to Poole Farm dairy to provide practical teaching space for delivery of land based courses

Phase 4 – April 2018 – May 2019: Renovation of farmhouse and development of plans for hayloft renovation

- Increasing capacity of office and meeting space for tenancy by partners and community groups

Phase 5 – April 2019 – September 2020: Hayloft renovation and development of plans for education and visitor centre

- As set out in phase 4 project development, to provide a facility that provides formal and informal environmental learning courses and acts as a destination and revenue generating facility for the Park.

Phase 6 – September 2019 – September 2020: Completion of park infrastructure work

- Once Forder Valley Link Road construction is complete the central section of the footpaths and park infrastructure can be completed.

5. FINANCIAL ELEMENT

The split of funding required across the three phases is forecast to be as follows:

Phase 1 = £420,000 (already on cap prog. Includes recent addition of £130,000)

Phase 2 = £34,000 (completed)

Phase 3 = £551,000 (ongoing)

Phase 4 = £214,413 (this business case)

Future phases = £6.3million

The total £7.6 million of funding for the Park will be a mix of £6million of corporate borrowing, S106 contributions (£1.5 million secured) and external grant funding. The detail of the funding mix will be detailed in a separate business case for phases 5.

Procurement

The delivery of works to the buildings will be procured through the council's procurement team in line with financial regulations.

In line with project ethos sustainability and local suppliers will be preferred where they deliver the correct level of specialist skills to the correct standard.

It is recognised that we will need to discuss with strategic procurement our process for procuring professional services in architecture and education provision.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposal as set out as Phase 4 is one of many individual projects which will help to deliver the overall Masterplan for Derriford Community Park that was published by the Council in May 2012. Derriford Community Park Strategic Green Space Site is Policy PLY 41 in the draft Joint Local Plan and a key part of supporting the sustainable growth agenda of Derriford and Northern Plymouth Corridor over the Plan period.

It is recommended that Phase 4 delivery is approved as outlined in this report.