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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 10</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> October 2014	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	Director of Community and Planning	<b>OPEN</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	Stuart Batchelor 01283 595820	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Parklife Project</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	Swadlincote, Newhall, Woodville, Church Gresley	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS07</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 To note the progress on the development of the Urban Parks
- 1.2 To approve the delivery of the 'Parklife' project.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To provide Members with an update on progress since the Review of Anti-Social Behaviour in Public Open Space and seek approval for the delivery of the 'Parklife' project.

## **4.0 Detail**

### **Background**

- 4.1 The Council fully recognises the value that parks and open space plays in the urban areas of the District. The environmental benefits of large areas of open space are important from a planning aspect but as importantly the informal and formal activity that a park space can offer is crucial from a public health perspective.
- 4.2 In 2009 the Housing and Community Services Committee considered a Service Review of Anti Social Behaviour in the urban parks. The Review had examined the issues around actual and perceived levels of crime in the parks and proposed a series of works in the subsequent years which would reduce crime, increase community use and improve facilities

4.3 In the subsequent 5 years significant changes have been delivered as follows:

Launch of Parklife brand and leaflet

Eureka Park HLF funded refurbishment to heritage features

New play equipment at Eureka Park funded by PlayBuilder programme

Externally funded Community Engagement Officer employed for Eureka Park project.

Expansion of National Play Day to a major event

Outdoor Gym installation at Maurice Lea Memorial Park

Refurbishment of Woodhouse Skateboard Park

Financial support of Neighbourhood Wardens to priorities ASB hotspot areas in Parks

Reinstatement of Friends of Newhall Park

Establishment of a regular Conservation Volunteer team at Swadlincote Woodlands

Work towards Local Nature Reserve designation at Swadlincote Woodlands

Funding secured for Newhall Park outdoor gym

Tree planting initiative in Parks since Jubilee year

Permanent orienteering courses at Swadlincote Woodlands & Eureka Park.

4.4 During this period there continues to be a relatively low level of ASB and criminal damage in the Parks with incidents being occasional rather than a predictable pattern.

4.5 However it would not be sensible to seek to further protect the Parks, particularly Eureka Park which has benefitted from over £600k of capital works. The most effective method of protecting the Parks is through the increased use by the local community both in terms of participation in activity but also through engagement as volunteers and Friends of Groups. This proactive approach would be backed up with continued enforcement and patrolling from Neighbourhood Wardens and Police Community Support Officers.

### **Parklife**

4.6 The Parklife brand was launched in 2011 to encompass activity within the urban parks under one promotional heading. The South Derbyshire Partnership provided financial support towards this launch and a leaflet pulling together a calendar of activity has been provided each year since. A copy of the latest leaflet is attached as Appendix 1.

- 4.7 It is now appropriate to consider the expansion of Parklife to be a development project which instigates activity to increase usage and delivers physical improvements to the parks for users. The proposal is to deliver a two year project during which time an 'activator' will develop a programme of activity and engagement across the principle park areas resulting in sustained increased use by individuals, families, uniformed groups and volunteers. The highly successful 'Village Games' will be used as a model for the project as the Village Games has seen significant increased use of open space in villages through the provision of new activities and recruitment of local volunteers.
- 4.8 The concept of Parklife has been recognised by Derbyshire Public Health as an important initiative due to the key role that public open space can play in two crucial areas of health concern. These are childhood obesity and adult mental health, particularly around dementia and Alzheimers. Physical activity has a positive impact on reducing the incidence of these conditions and open space, particularly formal parks can be fundamental in encouraging physical exercise, whether that be on an individual basis or through instructor/group led activity.
- 4.9 The key objectives and action areas of the project will be:
- To reduce anti social behaviour - improvements to the infrastructure in terms of lighting, community presence, targeted patrols and enforcement activity
  - To increase sport and physical activity use - delivery of a sport development programme covering tennis, netball, bowls and rounders, running, walking and cycling activity
  - To increase community engagement - further development of Friends of Groups, Park Watch and Team South Derbyshire Volunteer Group
  - To provide and enhance facilities - provision of skateboard facilities in Newhall, enhancement of dated play areas
  - To increase the range and number of cultural and public events - to promote the Parks as venues for small and medium scale cultural and sporting events along with the delivery of large events where suitable.
  - To increase conservation and environmental education activity - expand the environmental volunteering across all sites and increase the educational use of the Parks
- 4.10 Other partners will have responsibility for certain aspects, for example tennis development will be co-ordinated by Active Nation, the charity who operate the Council's leisure facilities, as part of a 'Racket Development project' which will cover the whole District.

- 4.11 A schematic of how the Parklife project is provided as Annexe 2 and fully illustrates the scope, objectives and partners/communities that will be engaged by the project.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The anticipated cost of the project will be £25,000 per year and this will be funded from within current budgets and external contributions. This funding is as follows:

Derbyshire Public Health £7,000 Grounds and Open Space budget £5,000, Safer South Derbyshire Partnership £4,000, South Derbyshire Sport £4,000. Further applications for funding have been submitted to the National Forest Company, £2,000, Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the South Derbyshire Partnership.

- 5.2 The project will only progress when sufficient funds have been secured.

## **6.0 Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Parklife will deliver across two corporate priorities, 'Lifestyle Choice' and 'Safe and Secure' being able to provide for increased physical and cultural activity, which in turn will ensure that the Urban Parks and open spaces are seen as safe environments for families and individuals to visit and use.

## **7.0 Community Implications**

- 7.1 The Parklife project will have significant benefits to the local community, as it will make the most of the significant capital resource that has been invested by the Council in the parks and open spaces, by encouraging their use and reducing the incidence and perception of anti social behaviour.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

- 8.1 The delivery of Parklife over a two year period will encourage community ownership and use of valuable areas of open space that will be sustainable for the future.

## **9.0 Background Papers**

- 9.1 N/A