
REPORT TO:	Housing and Community Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 17
DATE OF MEETING:	3 rd February 2005	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	James Miller Ext 5753	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Development of Recreation Facilities – Badger Hollows Leisure Park, Coton Park, Linton	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Church Gresley, Linton & Swadlincote.	TERMS OF REFERENCE:HCS07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members approve, in principle, that revenue support for the ongoing management & maintenance of the site be offered to the Parish Council on a sliding scale over a 3 year period.
- 1.2 That Members approve, in principle, that as soon as the new recreation area is fully available for use that the existing site be disposed of, subject to appropriate consideration by the Finance and Management Committee.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update Members on the current status of the project and highlight proposals relating to the future management of the site

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 Members were made aware, in a report to Leisure Services Committee on the 20th November 2003, of the excellent news that funding had been secured from the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) towards the project to provide new leisure facilities at the former coal stacking site at Coton Park. Funding has also been secured from the National Forest Company towards the project.
- 3.2 The land, approximately 15 ha in area, was originally purchased by the Council from British Coal in 1997, with the primary intention of providing a location for recreation facilities for the isolated community of Coton Park, Linton.
- 3.3 Work has continued with the 'Friends of Coton Park' to develop the site. This group comprises representatives from Linton Parish Council and the local community.

- 3.4 Members approved, in the report of the 20th November 2003, that officers work with Groundwork Erewash Valley (GEV) to deliver the project. Tenders for main contractor were issued in February 2004. Returned tenders came in higher than expected and the scale of the project was subsequently revised. A further £10,000 was also successfully secured from EMDA in light of the high tender returns.
- 3.5 A decision was taken that the project be split into two phases. Phase one work being hard and soft landscaping, including new car park, paths, boardwalks and a new football pitch. Phase two work is the installation of play equipment and park furniture. Phase one works have been completed on schedule and to the revised budget.
- 3.6 A competition has been held for local schools and residents, organised by 'Friends of Coton Park', to name the facility. Badger Hollows Leisure Park was chosen as the preferred name.

Way Forward

- 3.7 Officers are now working to deliver phase 2. Part funding has been secured and efforts are underway from all partners to secure the remainder of funding needed so that work can be delivered in Spring 2005. Details of funding can be found in Annex A
- 3.8 Pedestrian access to the site was originally intended thorough the proposed near by community centre. Unfortunately, plans for the community centre have been abandoned, with the property being sold off as private dwellings.
- 3.9 Safe pedestrian access is vital to the viability of the site. It is now proposed that the footpath, which currently stops at the corner of the adjacent property is extended down the main highway to the dedicated pedestrian access for the park.
- 3.10 Being a new footpath adjacent to the main highway, we are required by the Highways Authority to enter into a Section 278 agreement, which ensures that the footpath is designed in accordance with their design and safety standards.
- 3.11 A specialist consultant has been employed, in accordance with Council's Standing Orders, to undertake this work. Once the Section 278 Agreement has been approved, a main contractor will be appointed in accordance with Standing Orders to carry out works on site.
- 3.12 Members may recall that it is intended to develop the site for formal recreation and as a conservation area. At present officers are investigating where this area of the site could be designated as a 'Local Nature Reserve' (LNR). It is not known at this stage what financial commitments would be placed upon the Council if LNR status were declared. Members will be updated once more is known on this issue.
- 3.13 In the interim the ecology area of the site is to be recommended by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to be registered as Derbyshire Wildlife Site. The designation is non-statutory and impose any legal constraints or immediate financial responsibility on the Council. The primary purpose of the designation are to protect sites from development pressures and to assist in protecting it from damage caused by work such as the laying of cables, new telephone masts etc.

'Day to Day' Management

- 3.14 Since the inception of this project an important element in discussions with the Parish Council and the Friends of Coton Park's has been their commitment to fully manage the site once work is complete. It is anticipated that this will be via a long term lease. The site is very much larger than normal parish council managed sites. It is therefore proposed that financial support be offered to the parish council, over a three-year period, to help them maintain the site (discussed in greater detail under financial implications).
- 3.15 There is currently an existing recreation area in Coton Park and again, it was always anticipated, that as soon as the new recreation ground is fully operational Estates Dept. would be requested to dispose of the existing site.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 In undertaking the feasibility work for the scheme likely revenue costs of £21,720 per annum were identified (based on existing SDDC prices). This can be broken down into the following categories:
- Overall Management - £7,720 per annum
 - Soft Landscape Maintenance - £8,500 per annum
 - Hard Landscape Maintenance - £5,500 per annum
- 4.2 However, it was anticipated that some work would be undertaken on a voluntary basis and that the real, total site management costs, would be less. The report of 20th November 2003 identified that revenue funding in the region of £14,000 p.a. would be needed. Closure of the existing site would produce a saving in maintenance costs in the region of £6,000 per annum. Therefore, £8,000 in revenue funding has been allocated to cover the on-going maintenance of the site. To support the Parish Council it is proposed to offer in, in principle, financial support on a sliding scale basis over a 3-year period (say up to a maximum of £8k in year 1, £4k year 2 and £2k year 3). At the end of the 3-year period the Parish Council would assume and pay for, the full management of the site.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.2 Delivery of this project substantially contributes to primary and secondary key aims of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2004/05.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 Through the 'Friends of Coton Park' group the community have played an active role in the development of this project. This role is actively being encouraged in the implementation of phase 2 and the future management of the park.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The successful delivery of phase 1 of this project has turned a bleak, un-inviting piece of land into a leisure facility that the residents of Coton Park and the wider community can be proud of. It is essential that phase 2 is delivered, and that the management of the site is undertaken appropriately to ensure that the site is enjoyed for many years to come.

