
REPORT TO:	COMMUNITY SERVICES	AGENDA ITEM: 20
DATE OF MEETING:	11TH APRIL 2002	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	CHRIS MASON 5794	DOC:
SUBJECT:	NEW RECREATION FACILITIES – COTON PARK, LINTON.	REF: e:\leisure\committee reports\cotonpark1.doc
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	LINTON, CASTLE GRESLEY	TERMS OF REFERENCE:CS08

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To recommend to Finance and Management Committee the use of a maximum of £5000 from the possible 'carryover' of the capital allocation for new play equipment to fund the cost of detailed design work.
- 1.2 To continue to work with the 'Friends of Coton Park' in the development of the site, based initially on the group's acceptance of the Countryside Agency's offer of funding

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To outline progress in attracting external funding to the development of the site.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The development of this site offers an opportunity to provide important recreation facilities for an isolated community. The project also provides an important facility in the development of the National Forest. The success in obtaining development funding from the Countryside Agency provides an ideal opportunity to progress this worthwhile project. To take advantage of this offer it is necessary to re-allocate capital funding in the region of £5000 to allow detailed design work to be undertaken. This Committee does not have the authority to do this but can, if it is minded, make recommendations to Finance and Management Committee.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 At the meeting of Leisure Services Committee on 12th April 2001, Members approved the progression of a scheme to redevelop the former British Coal Stocking Site (West) at Coton Park. Members will recall that this land was purchased by Derbyshire County Council on behalf of this Council in 1997.
- 4.2 The project has been developed via a partnership involving the local community, Linton Parish Council, The National Forest and this Council. The group commissioned initial feasibility work which was funded by TXU at Drakelow. The outcome of this initial feasibility was a scheme to develop part of the site as a

conservation area and part as a recreation ground.

4.3 The proposed layout of the site is detailed in Annexe A.. A breakdown of the individual elements of the project together with indicative costs are contained in Annexe B . An important part of the project is that it lends itself to a staged development with individual elements being completed as funding is obtained.

4.4 Applications to fund the project have been submitted to the following organisations:

Funding Body	Amount Sought	Expected Response Date
Derbyshire Environmental Trust	£20,000	Criteria changed. Date for decision not known
Countryside Agency – 'Doorstep Greens' Initiative	£29,000	Successful response for development funding
Coalfields Regeneration Trust	£35,000	Application to be submitted
National Forest Development Fund	£5,000	In principle commitment
Barnado's Better Play	£20,000	New round of funding starts 8 th April 2002
Linton Parish Council	£1,000	
South Derbyshire DC	£10k	Unsuccessful bid for inclusion in 2002/2003 capital programme

4.5 The excellent news has recently been received that the 'Friends of Coton Park', who set themselves up as a legal entity in order to access funding, have been successful in a bid to the Countryside Agency under their 'Doorstep Greens' initiative. The bid offers project preparation plan funding of £3,500 towards 70% of the total cost of this work. While no promises are made about funding a 'Doorstep Green' the initiative allows for 70% of the costs of £42,000 for a final project.

4.6 The Countryside Agency have placed the following conditions on their offer of development funding:

- The Project Preparation Plan (PPP) needs to be submitted by August 2002
- The PPP would form the basis of an application for funding to meet creation costs.
- A legal agreement needs to be entered into with the 'Friends of Coton Park' confirming use of the site as a 'Doorstep Green'.

4.7 The production of the PPP involves the following elements:

- production of a local community profile
- community consultation
- community involvement and identification of training needs
- detailed design and costings for creation works
- production of site management costings

4.8 Undertaking elements of the Countryside Agency's requirements, particularly the production of detailed costings, will require the use of specialist consultants. Faulks Perry Culley and Rech undertook the initial feasibility work at the site and it is intended to obtain a quotation from them for this work.

4.9 However, the Countryside Agency will only fund the following specific elements of the total project:

- informal play space (identified as football pitch on initial feasibility)
- picnic site
- boardwalk and footpaths
- the Countryside Agency will pay a grant towards the first 3 years of the costs involved with managing the ‘doorstep green’.

4.10 From a practical viewpoint it would make sense for the appointed landscape architects to undertake the detailed design work for the rest of the project. This will need to be undertaken at some stage, particularly if the applications to the other funding bodies are successful.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 At this stage the exact cost for consultants to undertake all of the detailed design work for the project is not known. However, realistically, this could cost between £6000 and £8500. Given that the Countryside Agency is offering £3,500 towards 70% of the cost of detailed design work there will be a likely shortfall of between £2500 and £5000.

5.2 To fund this work Members’ approval is sought to approach Finance and Management Committee to use part of a possible ‘carryover’ from an underspend in the 2001/2002 on the capital budget for new play equipment and safety surfacing. The total amount of this carryover is likely to be in the region of £22,000 and Members will recall that £15,000 of this is committed to the project to provide new play equipment in Newhall Park. While discussions have taken place with a number of parish councils on upgrading their play sites there are no definite project commitments for 2002/2003. Members will be aware that as part of the recent budget process, no money was allocated in the 2002/2003 programme for new play equipment.

5.3 In terms of longer term responsibilities for the site the approach, in line with an objective of the Council’s Asset Management Plan, is to divest the management of sites to as local a community level as practically possible. In discussions with the project’s other partners this principle has always been accepted. The possibility of grant aid from the Countryside Agency to assist with management costs is a very positive and helpful offer.

5.4 Initial estimates for ongoing revenue costs for the whole site were £9000 per annum. At this stage it is difficult to say how these costs will be met. However, it is likely that this Council will have to make a contribution to these costs. Under present circumstances this Council meets parish council expenditure on the grass cutting of recreation grounds and play equipment maintenance through concurrent functions

5.5 The development of this site would free land currently used as a play area in Coton Park for other purposes.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 Any decision to re-allocate capital funding needs to take into account other demands on the programme.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 The project has been developed to this stage by a great deal of community effort and commitment. The excellent news of success in obtaining Countryside Agency funding has given the group a timely boost.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Like a great many projects that have to be funded from a variety of external sources it is impossible to get the full package in place at one time. Experience at other locations indicates that other support tends to follow once some success has been achieved. It is important to the partnership and the delivery of the project that all offers of funding are pursued as vigorously as possible.

9.0 Background Papers

9.1 Offer letter from Countryside Agency dated 13th February 2002