

Subject:	Proposed project to upgrade Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove
Director/Head of Service:	Head of Community Development and Outdoor Leisure
Decision Issues:	Non- Key
Decision type:	These matters are within the authority of the Executive
Classification:	This report is open to the public
Wards:	Westgate
To consider	To consider the proposed project detailed in the report for comment as part of the consultation process.
Next stage in the process:	To feed the results of consultation into a stage one Heritage Lottery Fund bid for August 2001

1. Introduction

Westgate Gardens is a nationally registered historic garden and along, with the cathedral, is an iconic vista for Canterbury. Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove are the largest significant publicly accessible open space in Canterbury, therefore important in creating a sense of place. The site includes an area with Scheduled Ancient Monument status due to the remains of the roman wall, London gate and roman road to London. The area lies within the Canterbury conservation area.

The Open Space Strategy for Canterbury district 2009 – 14 action plan 6.1 seeks to enhance open space via the priority lists and emphasises the Westgate Gardens project.

An officer-working group has had the site surveyed, drafted some initial design principles and developed initial ideas for discussion with key partners and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It was felt that a contingency plan was important as bidding for external funding is a competitive process and we did not want to raise both Council and community aspirations without a fall-back position in place.

Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove area have been identified as a Green Flag site in Canterbury and this project will help realise this. Green Flag can be seen as a measure of success.

2 Details

An officer group met with HLF representatives on the 3rd March 2010 and it highlighted the importance of this project.

2.1 HLF application process

HLF have amended their application process to pre application, simplified stage one and full stage two application.

The Council submitted a pre-application in December 2009 and the visit on the 3rd March was to discuss this pre- application and the merits of the proposed project. HLF were impressed with the master plan approach, the partnership approach (Environment Agency and Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership) and community engagement (Telephone House residents association have already raised £10,000 in support of the proposed project).

The HLF Parks for People Fund is a national scheme with £20 million available and only 10 applications to date, with some dropping out. An award can be capital and revenue up to £5 million and 75% of the cost of a scheme however, the higher the percentage of partnership funding the better the chances of success. They are keen to fund smaller projects rather than just four or five large projects. The recent success at Whitstable Castle will not be held against the Council; indeed it illustrates the ability to deliver.

Stage one application

Stage one is a simplified application, which has a 50/50 chance of success. Stage one can award “Developmental Funding” to assist the council to make a fully designed and costed application at stage two.

Stage two application

Stage two is a full application has an 80% chance of success and should include:

Master plan

Activity plan – volunteers, new activities increase in usage, celebration of the historic nature of the park etc

Conservation plan – historical conservation

Management plan – long term maintenance, management and habitat management

2.2 Feedback from HLF on draft project.

The HLF representatives raised several points about the pre-application that need to be developed for a successful stage one / two application.

A lack of a feature or building to restore. The HLF suggested that we focus on “telling the story” of the historic park. This is vital as we do not have a historic building / feature to restore. HLF will not support new building, upgrades or improvements.

Community engagement. A Friends Group and action groups will be formed to develop specific elements of the project. This is similar to the approach at Memorial Park where we are working with Friends Group, community groups and young people on specific elements of the overall master plan. – see section 4 of this report.

A Community Development post. The HLF are keen that a temporary post is created for five years, to run activities that ‘tell the story’ and work with community

groups. Discussions are underway with Kent Stour Countryside Partnership to take on a lead role for this element of the project - as they are undertaking a similar role in Ashford. This approach emphasises partnership working and is a potential extra source of funding. The Community Development post would not be a park ranger or grounds maintenance post and will not impact on the revenue of the Council

Baseline survey data: This is planned for the summer 2010.

Partnership Funding HLF will not consider funding for projects that start before the award of stage two. Therefore the work to Toddlers Cove car park and riverbank planned for the summer 2010 cannot be included as partnership funding to help lever in the HLF funding. However, these works support the bid by illustrating the council's commitment to the master plan.

2.3 Discussion on draft design principles for the Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove project.

The draft principles for the Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove project are:

- Heritage
- The River Stour
- Connectivity
- Play and recreation
- Improve habitat management

Heritage of Westgate Gardens

Without a historic feature or a building to restore, we need to develop a balance between enhancing what we have and celebrating the importance of the heritage – the roman wall, London gate, and roman road to London. The story of the park runs from the decision to award the park to the people of Canterbury and not the monks in the Middle Ages, to the Williamson's family legacy and Sidney Cooper landscape paintings – this will be the task of the community development worker.

It is also proposed to enhance the existing vista and improve the event space, so it is more flexible and offers more income-generating opportunities. This already has the consent of the Williamson family. Note the Canterbury City Premises licence includes the whole of the Westgate Gardens, number 35.

River Stour

The River Stour is the fundamental reason for the green corridor into Canterbury and the main element of connectivity between the countryside and the city. Without the river the gardens would probably not exist. It also impacts dramatically on the various habitats in the project area.

The Environment Agency is a key partner in developing the project and has been consulted at regular intervals. In 2009 the council replaced 200 metres of pile and plank river wall at a cost of £120,000 and re profiled the riverbank plus planted an area to improve the habitat for river wildlife at a cost of £10,000. Within the council's 2010/11 budget it is proposed to replace a further 100 metres pile and plank river wall at an estimated cost of £70,000.

The Environment Agency has a management plan for the flow of the river through the Westgate Gardens.

Connectivity links - City to Countryside

The approved planning permission proposed for Tower House car park access includes a public footpath, as it is generally felt that this is the public desire line from the city centre into Westgate Gardens.

Within the park, the aim is to enhance the footpaths and bridges through the park and into Toddlers Cove. A key issue is to improve community safety and access at the underpass and the Police are a key partner.

The upgrading of the cycle link from Chartham to Canterbury should be completed in summer 2010. It will come into the area at Toddlers Cove and then split into two - one branches into Whitehall Road, the other crosses the Stour and links into Tannery Field cycleway.

In addition, there is a need to improve directional and interpretational signage at this and other key access points - such as Toddlers Cove car park, cycleway links and Ivy Cottage public access.

The footpath and cycleway network needs to be built upon to enhance the connectivity between the city and the countryside.

Play and Recreational area

Traditionally, Toddlers Cove area has been both an informal play and fixed play area. The developer contributions from recent housing developments focus on enhancing the play area / equipment.

There appear to be two options for consultation.

- 1 Enhance the existing play area and recreational open space at Toddlers Cove (number 6a in appendix B)
- 2 Relocate the playground to Tannery Field (number 6b in appendix B)

Note, the Residents Association has raised £10,000 to support the playground with an outdoor gym.

The Canterbury City Premises licence includes the whole of Toddlers Cove and Tannery Field areas, number 38.

It is also proposed to relocate the Serco compound to this area to free up the existing Serco compound for future development.

Habitat management

This focuses on the Stour riverbank throughout the site, the Bingley Island area and links to the countryside. There is potential to increase access from Toddlers Cove to the countryside via Bingley Island that would further increase connectivity. This links into the Riverside Strategy.

This would form part of developing a habitat management plan for the area and recent allocation of £15,000 from housing developers could be used to attract external funding.

2.4 Master plan approach

HLF welcomed the master plan approach and see Westgate Gardens Toddlers Cove, Tannery Field and Bingley Island as key historic green space linking Canterbury to the Countryside.

The indicative master plan of the area has been developed in consultation with partners and is now being fully consulted upon. The indicative Master plan is attached for discussion in **Appendix A** (Westgate Gardens) and **Appendix B** (Toddlers Cove). The current proposed HLF Parks for People bid includes the following (Where appropriate the Ref No on maps equates to the numbers in the table)

Ref No on maps	Capital element of project	Link to draft design principle
1	Extend event space	Play and recreation
2	Enhance War memorial area	Heritage
3	Enhance picnic area	Play and recreation
4	Possible development of Ivy Cottage for a concession - tbc	Play and recreation / Heritage
5	Improve community safety at under pass with fencing, lighting etc	Connectivity
6	Enhance playground and outdoor gym	Play and recreation
7	Enhance river habitat plus Bingley island an Tannery Field especially	River Stour and Habitat management
8	New foot path links	Connectivity
9	Enhance footpaths	Connectivity
10	Replace 2 bridges	Connectivity
11	New bridges	Connectivity
12	Transfer Serco compound to toddlers Cove	Habitat management
13	Directional signs throughout area	Connectivity
14	Interpretation signage	Connectivity
15	Fishing platforms	Play and recreation

16	Canoe pontoon	Play and recreation
17	Replace existing toilets	Infrastructure supporting play and recreation
18	Enhance street furniture	Infrastructure supporting play and recreation
	Revenue element of project	
A	Community activities	Celebrating the historic nature of the park
B	Community Development post for the area	Celebrating the historic nature of the park

2.5 Finance

At this stage all figures are estimates, however they are based on recent works or contract rates. As the project evolves and the consultation takes place no doubt amendments will come forward. A stage two bid will require fully design and quotes.

Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership and the Environment Agency are key partners in developing the project and along with the Police are part of the officer-working group. In summary the financial position is to date is

Estimated capital cost	£ 886,600
Estimated revenue cost	£ 250,000
Project cost	£1,136,600
Secured Funding	£ 377,500

Shortfall (HLF Bid)	£ 759,100	(66%)
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The reality is that the project will evolve through consultation and a full HLF application.

2.6 Contingency plan that can be delivered within secured funding if HLF bid is unsuccessful

If a stage one or indeed a stage two application fails the contingency plan is to deliver the following within existing budgets.

No	Item	Estimated cost	Secured Funding	Revenue cost
1	New playground and outdoor gym	£160,000	Section 106 plus community fund raising	Revenue, neutral, replaces existing playground
2	Extend event space	£5,000	Off site developer contribution	Revenue neutral, income opportunity
3	Limited signage improvements	£10,000	Off site developer contribution	Revenue neutral

4	Community safety at underpass	£20,000	Section 106	Revenue neutral
5	Replacement of toilets at Toddlers Cove	£60, 000	Section 106 / Open space fund	Revenue neutral, replace existing toilets.
6	Limited habitat enhancement	£15,000	Latest Section 106 agreement	Revenue neutral
	Total	£270,000		

The Committees views on the contingency plan are welcomed.

In addition the Councils commitment to the overall master plan includes:

- Improved access into the park from the city
- Relocate the current Serco compound to Toddlers Cove
- Enhance the car park at Toddlers Cove and include CCTV
- Cycleway link to Chartham to Canterbury
- River bank enhancement works

We will continue to work with the Environment Agency, Police and Kentish Stour Country Partnership as key partners.

2.7 Risk management

The officer group considered the risks of submitting a HLF application

Funding constraints

A constraint of section 106 agreements is usually time constraints. There are a number of section 106 agreements for this project and one of them means we need to have placed orders or started spending the funding by December 2011 at the latest. Therefore we need to submit a HLF bid by August 2010.

Raising expectation via consultation

Any consultation on a project that aims to attract external funding from a competitive bid process has a risk of raising expectations, both in the community and within the council.

To mitigate the risk we are consulting on the proposed contingency plan at the same time and emphasis that this is a competitive process with no guarantees of success.

Potential increased revenue cost

Any capital investment needs to consider the knock on effect on revenue streams in the future. Throughout the whole process the focus has been on a revenue neutral approach i.e. new playground replaces an old playground. Initially lower maintenance costs and then feed into the existing maintenance contract.

The aim is to work in partnership with local organisations and for them to take the lead in the community park post to off set revenue costs for the Council.

In addition the habitat management work is capitalising some of the revenue costs in Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove area.

2.8 Timing

The proposed timing for this project is set out below

Consultation early summer 2010 (see consultation section 4 of this report)

Submit stage one HLF Parks for People application – 31st August 2010.
(Decision January 2011)

If successful develop project for full stage two HLF Parks for People application
February 2012. – Decision June 2012)

Deliver project 2012 / 2013
(option of 5 year revenue funding)

If we are unsuccessful at stage one (January 2011) deliver contingency project within
secured funding in 2011/12 financial year.

If we are unsuccessful at stage two (June 2012) deliver contingency project within
secured funding in 2012 / 2013.

3 Relevant Council Policy/Strategies/Budgetary Documents

Corporate Plan
Community Development Strategy 2008-12
Open Space Strategy for the Canterbury District 2009-2014

The Westgate Gardens project is closely linked to the aim and the policy objectives of the draft Open Space Strategy for the Canterbury District 2009-2014, which is to:

“Aspire to protect and enhance the existing quality of our open space and promote its usage”.

4 Consultation planned or undertaken

The consultation plan for the project includes the following in May, June and July 2010:

- Online ten-week consultation (17th May – 23rd July 2010)
- Consultation with Community Panel (June / July 2010)
- Hard copies on display at Visitor Information, Sidney Cooper Gallery and Council offices (17th May – 23rd July 2010)
- Report to CAMP – 24th May 2010
- Report to City Centre Partnership – 6th July 2010
- Statutory agencies – English Heritage, Environment Agency etc (17th May – 23rd July 2010)
- Report to Community Safety Group
- Community consultation event at Guildhall - 8th June 2010
- Specific consultation in local Primary Schools (May/ June / July 2010)
- Attendance at Canterbury High Community event – 12th July 2010

- SNAAP (June / July 2010)
- Street Team focused work in Toddlers Cove (May, June and July 2010)
- Say what event (June 2010)
- Consult with Disability Advisory Group and Ethnic Minority Independent Council (May, June and July 2010)

5. Options available with reasons for suitability

- a) Approve the proposed for consultation
- b) Amend the proposed for consultation
- c) Deliver the contingency plan without make a bid.

6. Reasons for supporting option recommended, with risk assessment

This is an exciting opportunity to enhance a key area in Canterbury by using secured funding to lever in external funding and deliver the master plan for Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove. The consultation will help shape the final project and designs. It is a key element of any external funding bid.

If an HLF application fails then we can deliver the contingency project outlined within secured budgets.

If we do not develop Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove project then the housing developers could reclaim the secured section 106 funding.

7. Implications

(a) The proposed consultation will be feed into the drafting of the HLF bid plus a summary of the results of consultation will be placed on the website.

(b) Legal Implications

The section 106 funding for the Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove must be spent on the area and within a certain timescale or the housing developers could reclaim it.

Other implications

(c) Staffing/resource – the work will be delivered within existing staffing arrangements and the aim is to work with the community to finalise the project and if possible attract external funding is secured to deliver elements. Note, if the external funding is unsuccessful then a contingency project can be delivered within existing resources

(d) Environmental/Sustainability – ensure Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove are managed appropriately with sustainability issues to the fore and develop green links with existing open space.

(e) Planning/Building Regulations – The area contains a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is mostly a conservation area. Planning and Conservation Officers are on the project team.

(f) Human Rights issues – Need to consider equal access issues

- (g) Crime and Disorder – Westgate Gardens and Toddlers Cove can be an area of anti social behaviour. The proposed project includes improved community safety. The police are on the officer-working group.
- (h) Biodiversity – the proposed management plan has an increased focus on biodiversity as an integral part of managing the park and linking to semi natural open space. The site may attract Green Flag status in the future in line with objectives within the Open Spaces Strategy.
- (i) Safeguarding Children – the proposed management plan should impact positively on children and young people’s lives.

8 Proposed Way Forward

Following the meeting with HLF representatives’ officers believe that a stage one bid to HLF will have a realistic chance of success. Therefore it is proposed to go out to consultation in the summer 2010 and submit a HLF Parks for people bid by 31st August 2010. However, it is a competitive process so we need to ensure we have a contingency plan that is included in the consultation process.

This is an excellent example of a project being developed with the community and how the Open Space Strategy for Canterbury district 2009 –2014 should work in action. It is being developed with the community and partners and has a good chance of leveraging external funding to maximise the impact of the Council’s capital resources.

In addition, a contingency project if the external funding bid fails, will still deliver high quality improvements for the community within secured budgets.

Therefore CAMP is asked to consider the project as laid out in the report.

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