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| Subject: | Stubbylee Park Masterplan Update | Status: | For Publication |
| Report to: | Cabinet | Date: | 18 th September 2024 |
| Report of: | Head of Environmental Services | Lead Member: | Environment and Corporate Services |
| Key Decision: | <input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | General Exception | Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Equality Impact Assessment: | Required: No | Attached: | N/A |
| Biodiversity Impact Assessment: | Required: No | Attached: | N/A |
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1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update on progress made against the Stubbylee Park Masterplan to date.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Masterplan Group was formed in 2012 and over this time has instigated numerous improvements in Stubbylee and Moorlands Park that have led to a Green Flag for the park being obtained.
- The Masterplan has been revised in 2016 and 2020 to ensure community engagement is continued and projects are relevant in terms of what residents would like to be improved.
- Funding for projects is to be obtained from a variety of sources as set out in the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Stubbylee Park is one of the Council's four large Park sites within Rossendale, and due to the many improvements made over the last decade, has become a destination site for users from around the borough and beyond.
- 3.2 The Council has been working with the local community, Councillors, with input from Newground Together, since 2014. The process for this began with a public consultation exercise to gain people's opinions on the Park, its facilities and areas for improvement.
- 3.3 The majority of the major projects to improve facilities from the Masterplan have been delivered. These include improvements to the Duck Pond and Dell, a pump track, new skate park, resurfacing of the tennis courts and paths, and a new children's play area. This represents approximately £600,000 of investment in facilities over the past decade.
- 3.4 The focus now is to improve the basic facilities within the park which are listed in the following section.

4. PRIORITIES

- 4.1 Due to the length of time the group has worked on improving the park and the successes, the priorities for the park have reduced in recent years. Nevertheless, enhancing the facilities remain an ongoing process. The current outstanding or completed priorities are listed below:

1. Path improvements- large sections have been resurfaced in stages. This is an ongoing process as further paths deteriorate. The priority is to surface the rough track on the western boundary of Moorlands Park.

2. Increased seating and bin provision- New picnic area and recycling bins introduced 2022. Further seating to be installed opposite the pump track in 2024
3. Wheeled sports improvements- New skate park installed in 2023
4. Play area improvements- New play area installed in 2018
5. Entrance improvements- Both main entrances were cleaned and repainted in 2015. This is something that will need to be revisited in 2024/25
6. Improvements to the Sunken Garden- new seating installed in 2024 and a heritage interpretation board is planned as funds become available
7. Pump track improvements- the stone to dust surface is worn therefore a conversion to full asphalt is planned when section 106 contributions are paid in 2024.
8. Additional tree planting- carried out in 2023/24
9. Extension of the cycleway through the park to connect 2 other sections- this will be completed by LCC in 2024/25

5. PROGRESS SINCE THE 2021 MASTERPLAN REVISION

- 5.1 Following a public consultation exercise, the council started engagement with a group of local skaters and BMXers to discuss updating the skate park, or wheeled sports area. Viridor gave a grant to produce a new concrete formed facility on the footprint of half of the old site and this was delivered in 2022 at a cost of £120,000. This is now the premier wheeled sports facility in the Borough and is used by people from inside and outside Rossendale.
- 5.2 The consultation exercise was used to create a Management Plan for the Park and an entry for the Green Flag Award was submitted. The Management Plan provides information the history of the site, how it is maintained, and what the plans are for the future. The plan pays special attention to explaining how it hits the Green Flag criteria. The entry was successful meaning Stubblelee and Moorlands Park became Rossendale's first Green Flag accredited site. Since the initial award, the park has achieved a further 3 Green Flags, retaining the status in 2024. This has given the Green Spaces Team a blueprint for rolling this to another site at Library Gardens in Rawtenstall. This has become Rossendale's second Green Flag site in 2024.
- 5.3 As part of the LTA Local Authority Programme, the 3 tennis courts at the park were refurbished in 2023. The surfaces were replaced and repainted, nets and gates replaced, and fencing repaired as part of the scheme. The park now has first class tennis facilities. The scheme was funded by the LTA at a cost of £60,000.
- 5.4 Two separate drainage schemes have been delivered in problematic areas below the Play Area and above the Duck Pond. There were problems with standing water at both places in heavy rainfall and this has seen a marked improvement in conditions, although the Park's location under the moors means excess water is unavoidable at times.
- 5.5 The consultation highlighted that families felt there weren't enough options to sit in the park. In response to this the Team have installed an additional 7 benches at key locations, and utilised the old concrete bases of the animal sheds to create a sheltered accessible picnic area which is located across from the Rose Garden. This has helped families and other park users to prolong their stay in the park and enjoy being there for a day.
- 5.6 Additional tree planting has taken place near to the Skate Park as part of the Rossendale Forest project.
- 5.7 2 recycling litter bins have been installed at the car park and picnic area.

6. FUTURE PROJECTS

- 6.1 The pump track was installed in 2018 with the main track being made from a compacted stone and the berms being asphalt. The stone surface has worn significantly due to heavy use so it is planned to resurface these sections with asphalt similar to more recent tracks at Edgeside Park and Edenfield Recreation Ground. It is intended to fund this using imminent section 106 contributions that are allocated to the Park.
- 6.2 Resurfacing the western boundary path is a high priority for 2024/25. This is currently made up from rough stone and old tarmac and runs from the Sunken Garden down to the entrance and is approximately 100 metres long. Prices are being sought for resurfacing with tarmac. When this is completed it is intended that the Junior Parkrun will then hold a weekly event in the Park which will raise the profile further.
- 6.3 The Cycleway which runs through the valley is due to travel through the park linking up 2 other sections. This is led by LCC but plans have been designed with RBC input. This project is at the stage of delivery and it is anticipated this will be completed in 2024.
- 6.4 The Sunken Garden lies where the cellar of the old Hall stood in Moorlands park and is an area that is enjoyed especially in the better weather. The intention is to obtain funding for a heritage project that will provide information boards to visitors about the history of this particular area of the Park.

7. FUNDING

- 7.1 As with the majority of projects within a park setting, the council strongly relies on being able to draw the majority of the project budget in from external sources. The main sources for Rossendale are from Landfill providers such as Valencia, Lancashire Environmental Fund, and FCC. Each funder has 3 or 4 funding rounds per year, and with many project being pursued in Parks around the borough, these must be submitted in a manner where Rossendale's Parks are not competing against each other.
- 7.2 Any successful grant application requires a 10% 3rd Party contribution to be paid by the council, which then releases the funding. For larger projects this can eventually amount to a contribution of anything up to £30,000. This is usually sourced from either capital sources or any Section 106 contributions that may be available. Both are finite resources and for this reason the projects within Masterplans can happen only when these come available.
- 7.3 The Green Spaces Team have an excellent track record of obtaining this funding over recent years and have been able to deliver 1 or 2 of the larger projects from each Masterplan each financial year.
- 7.4 There is a Section 106 contribution from a development for the park due in 2024 of £30,000. This will be used to address further priorities.

8. RISK

- 8.1 All risks are managed in accordance with the project risk register.

9. FINANCE

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising as this is a report for noting by Cabinet.

10. LEGAL

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising as this is a report for noting by Cabinet.

11. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no policy implications arising as this is a report for noting by Cabinet.

12. REASON FOR DECISION

12.1 To provide an update to Cabinet members.