

COMMISSIONING FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

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Annexes/Appendices (attached):

Other available papers (not attached):

Report summary

To consider options to commission a draft strategic plan for Nonsuch Park.

Recommendation (s)

To agree a procurement scoping paper to commission a draft strategic plan for the Nonsuch Park to be prepared and submitted for the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

1 Background

- 1.1 At the Joint Committee's meeting on the 4 February 2019, the Committee received a report detailing the current and proposed arrangements for the park. As part of this report, the Committee agreed for work to be commissioned on a draft strategic plan for Nonsuch Park. Such plan to encompass a new 10 year management and business plan.
- 1.2 There is a requirement to have a management plan in place and the current plan is out of date.
- 1.3 As part of developing a long term vision for the Park there is a clear case to ensure all parts of the community are engaged in the process of developing that strategic plan. It is particularly important to engage some of the hard to reach communities and those who do not use the Park currently, and those whose health and wellbeing could be benefited from their use of the Park.

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- 1.4 The upkeep of the Park continues to put pressure on resources of both Councils. The nature of the Park as a heritage asset makes it both challenging and expensive to maintain. Local Government has highlighted that the lack of investment and austerity measures were likely to impact the delivery of leisure and cultural facilities in the future.
- 1.5 The work of the voluntary sector to support the Park as proved very successful. It has allowed improvements and enhancements to the Park, and also allowed the substantial volunteer hours to be counted towards the match funding elements for some bids. However, efforts by the Joint Committee to access large grant funding sources have failed because such bids, such as the previous heritage lottery bid, require, in addition to the value in kind from volunteer hours, financial match funding.
- 1.6 The feedback from the South East in Bloom competition is that to achieve gold, the Park needs to address key requirements to meet the gold standard. The Park has won several silver gilt awards and although this is a significant achievement in light of the nature of the resources used, the efforts of all those who support the competition, including many from the voluntary sector, fails to reach its full potential, because of a lack of funding.
- 1.7 The role parks and open spaces can play in health and wellbeing agenda is now forming a key role in activities around social prescribing. It is now accepted that social prescribing can contribute to a wide range of health and wellbeing priorities, such as supporting people with long-term conditions and combatting loneliness, mental health and physical inactivity. It can also help to reduce health and social care spending and improve community wellbeing and public health. The aim of developing a strategic plan is to understand better how Nonsuch Park can contribute and support local healthcare initiatives.
- 1.8 Therefore there is a clear business case for the Joint Management Committee to explore new ways to increase income not just to be able to access sources of funding to support the development of facilities at the Park, but also to ensure the Park remains available to all to enjoy. Developing a strategic plan will allow the Committee to meet these challenges.

2 Proposals

- 2.1 The wider use and access of the Park can sit comfortably with it becoming self-sustaining, however, this needs careful management. The development of a strategic plan encompassing a new 10 year management and business plan is both complex and time consuming, and cannot be carried out within Epsom and Ewell's existing resources nor within the agreed joint Committee budget framework.

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- 2.2 Part of the work which now needs to happen is around designing a service specification for the work to develop a Plan for the Park. The Joint Committee needs to consider what outputs it wishes to see from the Plan, what measurable performance indicators in relation to those outputs, as well as agreeing the nature of monitoring and performance review requirements it would like to have in place.
- 2.3 As with all elements of developing a specification, care needs to be taken in determining what requirements are appropriate and deliverable.
- 2.4 There is also the need to carry out a wide ranging consultation exercise designed to reach all parts of the community, particularly those who do not currently use the Park. Also business, charitable and health care providers all need to be engaged.
- 2.5 The Joint Committee has not undertaken work of this nature before and therefore it is important to ensure the work delivers the outcomes the Committee would like it to. Both Councils have their own procurement and contract procedure rules and arrangements and the question which needs to be considered is which Council is able to deliver this work in a timely fashion and within a challenged budget envelope.
- 2.6 The proposal is that the procurement teams of both Council be asked to produce an agreed approach to the commissioning of the Strategic Plan, with a particular focus on minimising procurement costs. The aim should be to access existing frameworks. The development of the options paper should be at no cost to the Committee and that a paper should be brought to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

3 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 3.1 None arising from the contents of this report.
- 3.2 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** *none arising from the contents of this report.*

4 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 4.1 It is important to consider the route to procurement with both Councils before an options paper is brought.
- 4.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** *none arising from the contents of the report.*

5 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 n/a

6 Partnerships

- 6.1 n/a

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7 Risk Assessment

- 7.1 The Park needs to develop a model which allows it, as far as possible to be self-financing. The level of investment needed to maintain the Park is increasing each year, however, the pressure on budgets remains intense. A long term plan needs to be developed to ensure the Park can be maintained at a level where the on-going maintenance and upkeep costs prevent or delay wider improvements or access to match funding for bids.

8 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 8.1 Developing a strategic plan for the Park is a key requirement to ensure the Park can fully contribute to the local area and beyond. This is not just in terms of the role it can play in the health and wellbeing agenda, but also in terms of it becoming self-sustaining, so as to make the most of the funding from both the supporting Councils.

Ward(s) affected: Nonsuch Ward;