

# Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No.09/18

**Date:** 23 November 2018

**Briefing paper to:** All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Purpose:** **To provide an update on the Victoria Gardens, Fort Pitt Gardens and Jackson Recreation Ground greenspace landscape masterplan.**

---

The Committee is reminded that at its meeting on 18 October 2018 it noted that Victoria Gardens forms part of the Jackson's Recreation Ground landscape masterplan and the Committee requested that a briefing note be supplied on the emerging masterplan.

The following information is therefore provided:

- The Greenspace Development Team is establishing a single greenspace landscape masterplan for Victoria Gardens, Fort Pitt Gardens and Jacksons Recreation Ground.
- Although still in development, the masterplan for the three sites makes clear the need to improve the sites' boundaries, the two play areas, the sports/leisure facilities and finally, the sites' furniture/facilities.
- A summary of the current interventions are listed below and where possible costings are given.
- Available funding:
  - Two Section 106 contributions totalling £1,123,000 have been secured to fund the site improvements. These are costed below. Works valued at £123,000 will commence in 2019.
  - A Section 106 contribution from Rochester Riverside, valued at £1m, has been agreed but will not be available to spend for another four years. When it is available this funding will enable the delivery of the full landscape masterplan and will deal with items such as the additional play at Jacksons, the accessibility issues across all three sites and a suite of boundary treatments.

## **Site specific proposals:**

### **Victoria Gardens:**

- A key strength of this site is the dramatic view northwards along the River Medway and over the Historic Dockyard. The emerging landscape masterplan looks to replace the three rather poor benches with a more fitting artist designed Feature Seating area. This will raise awareness and enjoyment of this view, and a sum of c. £15,000 has been allocated to create the Feature Seat.
- The play area requires the addition of more challenging play equipment. Users have commented that boundary trees shade the play area making it cool and damp. A scheme to thin the trees will be considered in the final landscape masterplan and a sum of c. £35,000 has been allocated to improving the play provision.
- Consideration is being given to reinstating the original footpaths to improve links to the bandstand. Also, the flowerbeds in this area will be redesigned. A sum of c. £20,000 has been allocated to this task.
- Other works could include the restoration of the gate pillars on the New Road entrance.

### **Fort Pitt Gardens:**

- Fort Pitt Gardens separates Victoria Gardens from Jacksons Recreation Ground. Some of the paths in Fort Pitt Gardens require resurfacing but immediate funding has been allocated for this task.
- A key strength of these gardens is their road frontage, with the mature Cherry trees and formal annual flower beds creating a strip of colour along New Road. There is an issue with the Cherry trees all being of a similar age and consideration will need to be given to the phased replanting of these trees to prolong their landscape impact.

### **Jacksons Recreation Ground:**

- The skatepark in the south-eastern corner of the recreation ground requires repairs. A community/user group is working with the Greenspace Development team to determine the nature of the repairs. A sum of c. £53,000 has been allocated to complete this task. If savings can be realised during the skatepark repair works then funds could be allocated to a new 'street course' or Parkour area.
- Boundary repairs:
  - Plans will be developed to improve the site's main entrance at the junction of New Road and City Way. These improvements could be deliverable as part of the highways/roundabout enlargement linked to mitigation of Rochester Riverside derived traffic.
  - The unattractive and broken boundary wall on City Way will be repaired as part of Integrated Transport team's works on the adjacent cycle path. These works will be completed in 2018/19.
- To accommodate local population growth the play area in the western corner of Jacksons Recreation Ground will need to be enlarged. The

- sloping grass areas that separate the top and bottom sections of the recreation ground could be sown with meadow mix to create an attractive flower-rich sward visible from both New Road and City Way.
- Finally, it is noted that the tennis courts require resurfacing and the fencing around the Bowls Club requires improving or replacing.

#### Summary of Section 106 works (2019 onwards)

Site	Works	Cost
<b>Victoria Gardens</b>	Feature Seating area	£15,000
	Play area investments	£35,000
	Path improvements	£20,000
<b>Jacksons Recreation Ground</b>	Skatepark improvements	£53,000
		<b>Total £123,000</b>

#### Summary of potential Section 106 enhancements (2022/23 onwards)

The following works are being considered as part of the works to develop the sites landscape masterplan and are shown as indicative.

Site	Works under consideration	Estimated cost
<b>Victoria Gardens</b>	Boundary works	£150,000
	Signage and interpretation	£15,000
	Play are investments	£40,000
<b>Jacksons Recreation Ground</b>	Landscaping / tree planting	£120,000
	Extension of skatepark and provision of Parkour course	£200,000
	Path improvements	£60,000
	Play area investments	£150,000
<b>Fort Pitt Gardens</b>	Path improvements	£30,000
	Tennis court improvements	£20,000
	Tree and flower bed improvements and long term maintenance	£50,000
	Boundary treatments	£65,000
<b>All sites</b>	Community informed projects	£100,000
		<b>Total £1,000,000</b>

#### Lead officer:

Martin Hall, Greenspaces Access and Bidding Team  
 Tel. No: 01634 331447 Email: martin.hall@medway.gov.uk