

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

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

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The visual Masterplan was finalised in November 2022 after extensive public engagement.
- Projects were prioritised based on views and concerns of park users and information held by Officers.
- Funding for projects is to be obtained from a variety of sources as set out in the report.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Victoria Park is one of the Council's four large Park sites within Rossendale. Following the success of the Masterplan at Stubblelee Park, this approach has been utilised to identify key areas and projects for improvements over the next decade to ensure the Park is an asset to the community.
- 3.2 The Council has been working with the local community, Councillors and Proffitts on the Masterplan since 2022. 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 This initial consultation was used to create a draft visual Masterplan illustrating ideas received. This draft was then put out for further consultation with the Community before being finalised in November 2022. The current Masterplan is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The consultation responses were used to create priority projects to pursue, and from this funding plans, where necessary, were created.
- 3.5 The Council's Communities Team have assisted throughout and worked hard to help local residents create a constituted group for the park that will help with projects and potentially front future funding bids. The group is called Friends of Victoria Park.

## 4. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The consultation produced a variety of responses which covered all aspects of the park. The priorities for creation or improvement were as follows:
1. Path improvements- completed
  2. Increased seating and bin provision- completed

3. Wheeled sports improvements- in progress
4. Play area improvements- awaiting funding opportunities
5. Woodland walk/ walking trail- to be explored 2024/25
6. Fountain improvements- to be explored 2024/25
7. Entrance improvements- to be explored 2024/25
8. Bandstand/ shelter improvements- to be explored 2024/25
9. Forest school area/ mud kitchen- awaiting funding opportunities
10. MUGA improvements- awaiting funding opportunities
11. Flagpole- unable to implement at present due to resource implications
12. Boundary wall improvements- some completed 2023/24

4.2 The priorities were discussed and the old wheeled sports area has been brought to the Council's attention as being in need of investment. It is constructed from steel and consists of several individual pieces of equipment on tarmac. This has become worn and lacks the flow to keep wheeled sports enthusiasts engaged. It was therefore earmarked as the first major project to take forward.

4.3 In addition to this, the group felt that a few quick wins were needed in the park to show the intentions of raising standards. These improvements consisted of resurfacing of paths and roads, improved seating and picnic facilities, a measured walk and increase capacity for litter.

## **5. PROGRESS SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE MASTERPLAN**

5.1 A survey was carried out of paths and roads in the park and this has led to an area of 300m<sup>2</sup> being resurfaced. This has eradicated any potholes or deterioration in the surface making the park safer for users.

5.2 The street furniture within the park was also improved with 9 new benches being installed and the creation of a new inclusive picnic area near the clock tower, aimed to allow families to extend their stay in the park. Ten old litter bins have been replaced by new, larger capacity units to reduce issues with litter.

5.3 To help people stay active, a way-marked measured route has been introduced around the paths. This tells users how far they have moved and is designed to increase the number of people using the park for physical activity. The park is now Rossendale's first venue for Junior Parkrun, which began in late 2023. This occurs each Saturday and is a well-attended event for families interested in keeping fit. This has helped to increase the profile of the park.

5.4 Several consultation sessions have been carried out with youths regarding the wheeled sports area over the past 6 months. This has included going in Haslingden High School and holding events at the 'Youth Zone' to share proposals. This has helped to develop a bid for funding from FCC Community Action Fund for £100,000 towards the project.

5.5 A further bid for £40,000 has been submitted to Lancashire Environment Fund (LEF). In March the council was informed that this bid was successful. This will be combined with RBC capital and UKSPF for a project budget of £195,000. If all funding is obtained the project will go ahead later in 2024.

5.6 One issue raised by the public was that some of the boundary walls of the park were deteriorating and needing rebuilding. Due to the size of the wall in total, it was unrealistic to address in one go, therefore an assessment was carried out to determine the areas in worst condition. This led to a 50 metre section at the Park's south being reinforced and straightened

by putting in a concrete fitting and securing the railing in places. The other areas will be addressed in the future through council budgets as necessary.

## **6. FUTURE PROJECTS**

- 6.1 The drainage system is defective at some location above the MUGA and Skate Park and is the main priority to be looked into this year and next. Investigative work is planned for the end of May and this will hopefully determine the cause of the leak which is currently causing surface water issues on the skate park. It is imperative that the drainage is functioning properly before any investment into the Wheeled Sports Area is made. This will ensure any new facility is fit for purpose and users maximise their experience.
- 6.2 Improvements to the play facilities available will be made in June with the installation of a new slide which will provide a type of equipment that was identified as needed in consultation. The slide uses the height of the banking to provide its fall and will provide a play option currently missing in the park.
- 6.3 The shelter or 'band stand' has been identified as a priority so the Team will look into improving access to it and its appearance by painting the structure where necessary and installing a path and possibly seating to bring it more into use; both as a place to sit and as a performance space.
- 6.4 Another small-scale project that will have a big impact are improvement works to the fountain and two entrances to the park from Helmsore Road. This will involve stone cleaning and replacement, planting and restoration and painting of the entrance gates.

## **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 projects 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% 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 The recent availability of UK Shared Prosperity Funding for Whitaker and Victoria Park have helped kick start the Masterplans at both locations. This is due to end at the start of 2025/26, but will have contributed to Play improvements at Whitaker and Wheeled Sports at Victoria, as well as other improvements.
- 7.5 A capital budget for Victoria Park was set up to help deliver projects and this was for a total of £80,000. This budget will be used to address the drainage work as well as other park projects.

## **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.

**13. REASON FOR DECISION**

13.1 To provide an update to Cabinet members.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Victoria Park Masterplan	Appendix 1

**APPENDIX 1**

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