

Subject:	Edgeside 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 Edgeside Park Masterplan to date.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Masterplan Group was formed in 2021 and aims to improve the standards of the park following the approach taken at Stubblelee.
- Funding for projects is to be obtained from a variety of sources as set out in the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Edgeside Park is one of the Council's four large Park sites within Rossendale, and a Masterplan has been created to raise standards following a lack of investment in recent years.
- 3.2 The Council has been working with the local community, Councillors, with input from Proffitts CIC, since 2021 on this. 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 A small number of projects have been delivered in this time, with the addition of an increase in RBC staff presence to attempt to address historic maintenance issues.
- 3.4 Decisions on areas for improvement are made in consultation with the Masterplan Group, which includes prominent community groups and Councillors.

4. PRIORITIES

- 4.1 As with other Masterplans, the starting point was a community engagement exercise in 2022. This dictated the priorities on the plan. The current priorities are listed below:
1. Improvements to the derelict tennis courts. These were removed and returned to green space in 2023. Further developments will occur subject to funding.
 2. Installation of a pump track. This was delivered in 2021.
 3. Wheeled sports improvements- New facility to be installed in 2024.
 4. Additional seating throughout the park. 5 new benches have been installed since 2021.
 5. Improvement of the top play area. This will be removed and made into parking for visitors when funding allows.
 6. Improvements to the MUGA- low priority
 7. Explore usage of the old bowling green- picnic facilities have been installed here in 2023.
 8. Installation of an outdoor gym facility- to be progressed when funding opportunities arise.

- 9. Improvement of the play facilities in the park- to be explored in 2025
- 10. Woodland path through trees at the north of the Park- low priority

5. PROGRESS SINCE 2021

- 5.1 A quick win for the Masterplan Group was to procure 5 refurbished benches that were installed at various locations within the park, in 2022.
- 5.2 The second project that was delivered was a brand new cycling pump track. This was installed in December 2021 after obtained funding from Lancashire Environmental Fund, combined with RBC input. This is now the best pump track within Rossendale and attracts numerous cyclists on a daily basis.
- 5.3 The park tennis courts were out of use since the 1970s and had since become overgrown with vegetation. The old fencing posts and broken tarmac surface were a blight on the appearance of the park for years. In 2023, RBC capital funding was used to remove the old courts and replace this with additional green space aimed at attracting visitors to spend more time in the park. This has improved the overall impression greatly for those who visit.
- 5.4 The Green Spaces Team spent 2 weeks over the winter months in the park to carry out much needed maintenance that hasn't been managed in recent years. This included removal of ash trees with dieback disease and clearance of areas of overgrown vegetation, allowing these areas to be utilised again. This is part of an ongoing focus on the 4 main parks in Rossendale.
- 5.5 Local skaters and BMXers have been vocal regarding the current wheeled sports facility and its poor condition. It is past its best and is at the end of life. Therefore, a bid was made to FCC Community Action Fund to improve the area. This was successful in March 2024 and has brought in £100,000 to develop a new area. The procurement process is currently being carried out in order to appoint a contractor to deliver a new concrete wheeled sports facility, which will be ready in the autumn.

6. FUTURE PROJECTS

- 6.1 The main focus this summer will be to work with a contractor to deliver the new wheeled sports area. However, beyond its completion, consideration will be given to removal of the old top play area to create a parking area for visitors. This will ensure families can stay there for longer periods.
- 6.2 The former bowling green is not currently used often by visitors. A stone picnic table was placed there in 2023, therefore it is intended to expand this area. Its location adjacent to the play area means this will become a useful and practical additional for families.
- 6.3 Beyond these, the Masterplan group are keen to look for funding to purchase and install an outdoor gym area to increase opportunities for exercise and keeping fit and healthy.

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 Section 106 contributions from the Dark Lane Housing development has contributed towards the budget for the upcoming wheeled sports improvements.

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.