

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Planning & Development (Introduced by Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets))	Cabinet	Wednesday, 14 September 2022

## Worden Park Improvement Plan

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Yes
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<b>Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000</b>	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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### Purpose of the Report

- To enable Cabinet to consider the Draft Improvement Masterplan for Worden Park.

### Recommendations to Cabinet

- That Cabinet reviews the attached plan and agrees the proposed scope of the project and outline proposals.
- That Cabinet agrees for a public consultation event to be held within the park to canvass views of the public on the proposed Masterplan.

### Reasons for recommendations

- Agreement of the outline proposals is sought to allow the project scope to be defined prior to the start of the detailed design phase, public consultation and application for planning consent.

### Other options considered and rejected

- The option of progressing the detailed design stage prior to consultation with Cabinet was considered and rejected to allow Members visibility of the early proposals.

### Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
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## Background to the report

7. Worden Park is the borough's largest park and attracts a large number of visitors annually. The site is the only park north of London to have consistently retained the Green Flag Award since the scheme began in 1996/7.
8. Improvements have been carried out to various areas of the park over the years with recent improvements taking place to the park's car parks, playground and formal gardens rockery. However, there are still areas within the park that would benefit from improvement, especially the park's paths and drives where the surface is beginning to wear.
9. A large project to refurbish and reopen Worden Hall is now in the final stages with finishing touches and wi-fi installation being completed and therefore is proposed to bring forward improvements to the wider park to raise the quality of the infrastructure and landscaping to further enhance the Hall refurbishment project and coincide with the proposed start of wedding functions and similar events from April 2023.

## Proposals

10. The proposed improvements outlined on the attached plan aim to deliver a range of improvements across the park including improving the surface of the existing paths and drives, reducing conflict between vehicles and pedestrians on the route between the Main and Hall car parks, with the option of lighting along this route, and providing new path links between key locations on the park such as the main car park, Fish Pond and Playground whilst also providing a pedestrian route to Worden Hall away from the vehicle route. The path running between the Shaw Brook Road and Farmyard Wood entrances forms part of the Leyland Loop and so is proposed to have the surface improved to tie in with the Green Links scheme.
11. The proposals also seek to reinstate paths that once ran through the area south of the formal gardens as part of Nesfield's original landscape design for the site and remove modern additions that are not an enhancement of the original design where the landscape would be better returned to the original grass and specimen trees so maintenance operations can be focused on the historic formal gardens and the new landscaped areas planted around the refurbished Hall and courtyards.
12. The approved capital programme contains a budget of £500,000 for Worden Park Infrastructure and Landscaping (spread over 2022/23 and 2023/24), £188,000 for Green Infrastructure and £63,000 for Leyland Loop. Further details on costs will be provided when the final scheme has been worked up and tenders have been received.

## Consultation Carried Out

13. Following agreement from Cabinet for the outline proposals, detailed plans will be drafted for consultation and an application for planning consent drawn up, which will also include a public consultation period with the opportunity for an event to be held within Worden Hall.

## **Climate change and air quality**

14. The work noted in this report impact on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Council's Green Agenda:
  - Reducing waste production.
15. The following remediations have been undertaken to limit the environmental effect:
  - Waste materials arising from the works including timber, metal and stone, will be reused on site where possible and recycled off site where needed minimising the amount of material disposed of at landfill.

## **Equality and diversity**

16. The works seek to make the park more inclusive and accessible by design. A shorter pedestrian path between the main car park and playground would assist in gaining PiPA accreditation for the playground – a benchmark for inclusive play areas.

## **Risk**

17. A number of risks linked to the current site layout and condition will be addressed through the proposed improvement proposals. The project risk register identifies other key risks, the majority of which will be mitigated by the procurement processes followed.
18. There is a desire for works contained within the draft improvement Masterplan to be completed by the end of March 2023 to coincide with a start of weddings and other prestigious events in Worden Hall from April 2023. There is a risk that the completion of the works will be delayed if the scope of the project is not agreed at this stage delaying detailed designs, public consultation and planning applications.

## **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

19. There are no financial implications at this point. The approved capital budget contains a number of schemes for Worden Park and Green Infrastructure which will be utilised when a full plan is developed.

## **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

20. There are no legal implications at this stage. All that is being agreed now are the outline proposals. What proposals are firmed up there may be procurement and contract implications to consider.

## **Background documents**

Council Budget Report, Appendix F1 to F3: Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2024/25 - 23 February 2021

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Worden Park Improvement Masterplan 2022

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