

Body:	Cabinet
Date:	29th May 2013
Subject:	Princes Park Development Plan
Report Of:	Jefferson Collard, Senior Head of Development
Ward(s)	Devonshire
Purpose	To enable the publishing of the Princes Park Development Plan and the release of capital budget to enable further funding to be investigated to allow the key areas identified for improvement within the plan to be delivered.
Decision Type:	Key decision
Recommendation:	That Cabinet: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support and endorse the Princes Park Development Plan.• Authorise publication of the Princes Park Development Plan.• Authorise the use of the existing capital allocated to Princes Park for attracting further funding if possible.• Appoint a professional fund raiser to secure additional funding
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has been working closely with the Friends of Princes Park since 2005 to improve Princes Park and during this time, the Park has benefitted from two newly equipped play areas and a Splash Pad, in addition to many other enhancements throughout the Park.
- 1.2 A Management Plan for the Park has been produced, and Princes Park was the first park in Eastbourne to be entered into the prestigious Green Flag Award in 2011. The Park was awarded a Green Flag in 2011 and this was retained in 2012. To retain this prestigious award, there is an expectation that continual improvement must be demonstrated.
- 1.3 The sale of the coach and lorry park in Wartling Road resulted in a significant capital sum that was assigned for further improvements to Princes Park. The Council engaged the services of a Landscape Architect to produce a development plan for Princes Park and this was completed in

2012.

- 1.4 Within the brief, the consultant was instructed to identify the priorities for the future development of Princes Park and a plan with the associated cost of delivering improvements.

2.0 Preparation of the Princes Park Development Plan

- 2.1 Before the Landscape Architects (Allen Scott Landscape Architecture) began the work they undertook consultation with various stakeholders including the Friends of Princes Park, various clubs who use Princes Park, and the general park community to determine their priorities for improving the Park.
- 2.2 The initial draft Princes Park Development Plan was shared with the Friends of Princes Park who generally supported the recommendations put forward by the consultant for consideration.
- 2.3 The outcome of the stakeholder consultation identified some key issues within Princes Park, and the consultants identified improvement proposals within the draft plan to deal with them. These were:
- That the priority was to improve the café
 - That a hub is created around the café as a meeting place, and the landscaping and viewing areas will be improved
 - That the disused land where the bowling greens are located is used to create an entrance directly from the seafront
 - That the Dotto Train is able to enter Princes Park via this new entrance but that non authorised vehicles are prevented from doing so.
 - That there are improvements to the lake edge and opportunities for introducing more wildlife interest are investigated.

These areas were considered, through the Development Plan, as key to improving the Park for future generations.

- 2.4 There were some proposals to change the character of the lake by introducing an island and naturalising some of the lake edges, but this is not seen as a high priority in the plan and will require further consideration with the clubs who use the lake, should funding become available in the future for this element of the plan.
- 2.5 The final draft of the plan was agreed by The Friends of Princes Park, the Project Board and Corporate Management Team for consultation.

3.0 Consultation

- 3.1 The Council prepared a questionnaire named the "Princes Park Development Plan Questionnaire" that was distributed through the café (Pistachios in the Park) and posted directly to properties surrounding Princes Park. This was open for comment from the 15th February 2013 until the 15th March 2013. A hard copy of the Princes Park Development Plan was provided for the café and the questionnaire was available on the

Council's website.

3.2 There were 21 returns to the questionnaire from which the following results were received:

- The priority of the Development Plan recommends significant investment in Pistachios café (formerly Strollers), potentially returning the building to its original design.
- Would you agree with this as a priority? **Yes – 90% No – 10%**
- The area immediately surrounding Pistachios café (formerly Strollers) is recommended for improvements to create a hub in the park. This will create a meeting place and the general landscape and viewing areas will be improved.
- Would you agree with this as a priority? **Yes – 85% No – 15%**
- The area where the two disused bowling greens are located is used to create a new entrance into Princes Park, linking the seafront more directly with the park.
- Would you agree with this as a priority? **Yes – 71% No – 29%**
- The new entrance is used as direct access into Princes Park for the Dotto train.
- Would you agree with this as a priority? **Yes – 55% No – 45%**
- Princes Park lake edge is improved and opportunities for introducing more wildlife interest are investigated
- Would you agree with this as a priority? **Yes – 95% No – 5%**

There were additional comments made on the returned questionnaires in relation to visitor parking, Dotto train access, reducing the costs for the proposals, and reintroducing decorative or better lighting.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 **Financial** - there is a capital budget available of £183,000 to commence work on the key areas, such as the café and hub, but the estimated costs for this work exceed the available budget. The proposals to improve the café are £331,000 and the creation of the hub as an active focal point to draw people into Princes Park, is a further £494,000. The entire costs for completing all the proposals within the development plan total £1,805,050. The questionnaire was focussed on seeking opinion for the improvement to the café and the creation of a hub. Additional funding will need to be secured to achieve the recommendations from the development plan. There are a number of funding opportunities that do become available and within these there is an expectation of match funding to varying percentages. The dedication of Princes Park as a Queen Elizabeth II Field will also make a new funding stream available and detailed research will be

carried out to determine the most favourable source of external funding.

4.2 **Staffing** -the project will be carried out with existing staff resources initially but there will be the need to engage an architect for the proposed improvements to the café.

5.0 Other Implications, Environmental, Community Safety, Youth, Anti-poverty, Equality and Fairness analysis

5.1 Environmental: The recommendations will deliver considerable improvements and enhancements to the landscaping and café building within Princes Park.
Community Safety: The principals of designing out Crime will be followed throughout to ensure community safety.
Equality and Fairness analysis: consideration has already been given to equality and fairness issues, and the improvements made will be fully accessible. A full analysis will be undertaken.

6.0 Summary of Options

6.1 The key recommendations, identified within the Princes Park Development Plan, have been endorsed and supported by the community. It is also clear that the priorities identified in the Plan are also supported and these are improvements to the café and the surrounding area forming the hub.

6.2 There is a shortfall in the available budget so there will be the need to secure external funding to commence works for improvements to the café as the first priority.

6.3 The services a professional fund raiser will be required, who will be tasked with securing external funding on the proviso that their fees will only be paid for a successful bid. They will be initially appointed on this project for a year and the situation will be reviewed at this time.

Gareth Williams Senior Specialist Advisor
The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows: Princes Park Development Plan Princes Park Development Plan Questionnaire To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.