

# Decision Pathway – Report



**PURPOSE:** For reference

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 03 September 2019

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Grant Funding for Parks and Green Spaces</b>		
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All		
<b>Author:</b> Gemma Dando	<b>Job title:</b> Head of Communities Services		
<b>Cabinet lead:</b> Councillor Asher Craig	<b>Executive Director lead:</b> Colin Molton		
<b>Proposal origin:</b> BCC Staff			
<b>Decision maker:</b> Cabinet Member <b>Decision forum:</b> Cabinet			
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> For information <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To note Bristol City Council's successful bid for £900k from the Future Parks Accelerator Fund (National Lottery Heritage Fund and National Trust) and the proposals for the two-year project that the funding will deliver.</li><li>2. To note establishment of the Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation and the timescales for the next phases of this project.</li><li>3. To update cabinet on current grant funding ambitions.</li></ol>			
<b>Evidence Base:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018 Cabinet approved the recommendations in a report entitled "Parks and Green Spaces – future funding model 2018-2020". The recommendations included a variety of measures to deliver a more sustainable and independent funding model for parks - required due a reduction in the revenue budget available.</li><li>2. In order to deliver the parks service within the budget allocated (£1.8m), significant work has been undertaken since 2018 to increase income, improve service efficiency and to bring in funding from external sources whenever possible. Over the last two years the Council has raised £1.7M in grant funding and the sustainable management of green spaces will benefit from a further £435K grant income by working with partners such as the Avon Wildlife Trust.</li><li>3. Parks and green spaces are a significant part of people's lives and are often a significant and special place for friends, families and individuals. The current municipal approach to parks, with the local authority having sole responsibility for funding and maintenance, means that investment is deteriorating and the connection between the community and their local green spaces is being lost in some areas. This means that the many health, financial and social benefits that green spaces can deliver are not being maximised. The grant funding for parks that we have brought in to Bristol, outlined in this report, seeks to change the relationship between the city and its green spaces. The Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation offers a gateway for people to become connected to their green spaces in a supported way through a charitable organisation, the Future Parks Accelerator seeks a new strategy that is based on a partnership approach to securing a sustainable model for parks, and My Wild City is focussed on harnessing people power to enhance spaces for wildlife in an urban environment. We want to do things differently and together with people that benefit from our green spaces, and this report outlines some of the innovation work that will deliver this approach.</li></ol>			
<u>Grant funding for parks received in the last year:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation – grant fund of £193,000 from NESTA jointly with Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council.</b></li></ol>			

- a) This NESTA funding has enabled the Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation to be established as an independent charitable body, which has the ability to fundraise for investment money for parks in a way that the council is not able to do.
- b) Bristol City Council retains ownership and management of all land, and is developing an agreement with the foundation which will enable additional investment to be realised for areas that are mutually agreed as priorities. This may include investment in infrastructure, supporting volunteers, and other priorities identified through the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy.
- c) The Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation and associated 'Your Park' fundraising platform were launched in June. Since then, a board of independent trustees have been appointed together with a Foundation and Partnership Manager, See [www.bbpf.org.uk](http://www.bbpf.org.uk) and [www.yourpark.org.uk](http://www.yourpark.org.uk). The fund from NESTA is a 100% grant.

**2. 'My Wild City' nature and people project – grant fund of £435,100 from National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Avon Wildlife Trust**

- a) Avon Wildlife Trust led on a bid which will enable them to engage with local communities, to build relationships between these communities and 11 of our local wildlife sites. The project will also fund the restoration of habitats on these sites, and the provision of site interpretation, as well as tools and materials. One of the key aims of the project is to develop effective and sustainable groups of local volunteers who can contribute to the long term management of these sites. The council supported this bid and committed to ensuring the spaces were retained as local wildlife sites and were maintained in accordance with an agreed management plan, as the council's.
- b) The sites receiving benefit from this fund are: Dundry Slopes, Northern Slopes, Hengrove Mounds and Hawkfield Meadow, Lawrence Weston Moor, Saltmarsh Drive Open Space, Stockwood Open Space, Coombe Brook Valley, and Dundry Woodland.
- c) Over the next three years, Avon Wildlife Trust will help people living nearby to connect with their local wildlife site through a programme of family days, school visits and practical conservation days to improve the condition of each site.

**3. Future Parks Accelerator Programme – grant fund of £900,000 from National Lottery Heritage Fund and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government**

- a) Bristol City Council were successful in securing grant funding of £900k to deliver a two-year project which will result in an updated Parks and Green Spaces strategy covering the next 25 years and also identify opportunities to progress the sustainable funding and management model which will protect the city's parks for the future.
- b) The project is split into two phases. The first phase, which lasts for the first 12 months, focusses on assessing known and potential benefits from Bristol's green spaces and the potential for partners to deliver those benefits and commit to investing in green spaces (from community delivery of services to health benefits to possible commercial opportunities) and articulating these in a way that can be shared locally, nationally and globally. A request will be made towards the end of year 1 for potential partners (local community groups through to large public and private sector organisations) to express their interest in working with BCC to find ways to unlock the benefits of green spaces in a way that sustainably maintains those green spaces for future generations. This might include other organisations providing funding which realises their outcomes or shared outcomes, or might include different ways of local communities taking a role in the green spaces. It should be noted that there is no intention to dispose of green space.
- c) The second phase of the project will analyse the expressions of interest received and will articulate all of the possibilities presented for partnerships, ideas, and different ways of working together to keep parks and green spaces sustainably managed and funded.
- d) The assessment of the city's green spaces, coupled with the opportunities for the future, will form the basis of the future Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, which is due to be completed in summer 2021.
- e) The £900k grant funding is a significant sum as this is an expensive project which will require a team of people to work on it with some specialist work required in different disciplines throughout the project. The anticipation is that this investment from this grant fund will result in significant investment and partnership

potential in parks and green spaces for the future which will far outweigh the cost of the project. The funding is from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with a professional support package from the National Trust, and is not Bristol City Council funding that could be used for other purposes. The council's contribution is to offer officer time which supports this project.

- f) The ambition for all projects across eight cities funded through Future Parks Accelerator is that learning, success or otherwise, is shared across all local authorities and the parks sector.

**4. 'Biodiversity -No Net loss' – grant fund of £27,790 from Network Rail in partnership with South Gloucestershire Council.**

- a) The project consists of 3 years' of biodiversity offsetting projects funded by the grant, including woodland thinning and shrub layer planting to improve diversity and structure at Eastwood Farm (BCC), to include woodland flora and wildflower meadow creation working with schools, volunteers etc. This is the first time we have been offered a biodiversity offset grant of this type (the grant mitigates for the loss of habitat to electrify the route to London) and may open the door to more such grants in the future.

**5) Stoke Park improvement works – grant fund of £127,000 from Highways England Environmental Designated Fund**

- a) This project funds drainage solutions for M32 tunnel, fence and hedgerow and trees along M32 for screening and noise amelioration, stabilise foundation of a listed structure, and new stone track to improve pedestrian and farmer access.

**6. Bristol and Bath Railway Path – Sustrans' Department of Transport grant. £1.157M**

- a) The Bristol and Bath Railway Path is the busiest dedicated traffic-free route in the country, carrying over 2.5million journeys each year. However, the path was not built to accommodate the current number of users and there are frequent reports of user conflict, mostly relating to cycling speed. The existing path requires upgrading to cope with increased demand and to make it fit for purpose for the 21st century.
- b) The One Path Initiative is an approach developed and piloted by Sustrans to tackle conflict on paths, promote positive actions and behaviour by all users, and improve communications and understanding between the people who use the path. Sustrans, in partnership with the three landowning local authorities, has undertaken a One Path Initiative project on the Railway Path. A variety of tested communication methods and events were used to engage with path users and promote the key principles of the One Path Initiative – Share, Respect, Enjoy.
- c) In response to the publication of Sustrans' 'Paths for Everyone' document in November 2018, a grant of £22m has been awarded to Sustrans by the Department for Transport to improve the National Cycle Network (NCN). Through evidence gathered by the One Path Initiative, the Railway Path section in Bristol was identified as a priority section of the NCN requiring investment. The project has been awarded £1.157m which includes £100-£120,000 for community engagement, co-design and detailed design services and £1m for the associated capital costs.

Other parks-related funding that the council is actively pursuing:

1. Tree Planting: We are submitting a partnership application to the Urban Tree Challenge Fund – a £10 million fund for planting at least 20,000 large trees and 110,000 small trees in urban areas in England. As a joint application with North Somerset Council, we will seek £500K to plant new street trees and trees in the city's green spaces; with a cash contribution of £50k from each local authority.
2. National Heritage Lottery Fund monies to continue the restoration of Stoke Park Estate following successful investment through a Countryside Stewardship capital grant. We are working with the Stoke Park Partnership Group to develop proposals.

**Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:**

1. That Cabinet note this report and support additional grant funding being applied for to invest in parks and green spaces.

**Corporate Strategy alignment:**

1. Working towards an independent, sustainable funding model for parks which relies less on public funding helps to meet the objective of keeping Bristol on course to be run entirely on clean energy by 2050 whilst improving our environment to ensure people enjoy cleaner air, cleaner streets and access to parks and green spaces as it helps to financially future-proof the existence and maintenance of parks and green spaces.
2. Much of the grant funded work within parks and green spaces prioritises community development and enables people to support their community.

**City Benefits:**

1. Sustainably funded Parks and Green Spaces have clear benefits for the city as they provide free spaces for every citizen to play, relax, exercise and take part in community activities. The grant funding detailed in this report contributes to the sustainable funding ambitions for Bristol's Parks and Green Spaces.
2. Protecting wildlife areas, improving species management, increasing tree cover and a number of other outcomes of the grant funding will ensure that parks and green spaces continue to contribute to sustainability outcomes including carbon reduction and clean air outcomes.
3. When delivering grant funding and developing new grant bids, care will be taken to ensure that activities do not have a negative impact on equalities groups such as older people or young people (who could be excluded or marginalised from some activities). Equalities impact of each of the proposals will be regularly assessed. The outcomes of the grants offer an opportunity to potentially increase the breadth of the cultural and recreational offer in parks to better cater for all equalities groups.

**Consultation Details:**

1. The grant funding has been one of the ways to deliver the agenda which was consulted on in 2017/18 in a 12 week citywide consultation, drop-ins, engagement, social media, partnerships as described above and in consultation report and which was detailed in the cabinet report of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018.
2. Engagement with Communities Scrutiny – 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019 on the Parks Accelerator Fund. Comments raised:
  - i. There is a need to communicate the core values of the project regularly including reiterating the key message that this is not about selling land;
  - ii. There is a need to clarify any opportunity for sites and assets that are already leased;
  - iii. The project should have a clear view of what any commercialisation might mean and how it will be managed;
  - iv. There is a need to identify clear parameters and criteria to assess competing expressions of interest;
  - v. There is a need to avoid jargon and be conscious that the widest possible audience needs to understand the Prospectus and its content;
  - vi. It is confirmed that Councillors will be part of the co-design process;
  - vii. It is confirmed that Scrutiny will continue to be involved in the project;
  - viii. The project should be clear what sites are included / excluded and identify spaces not owned by the Council.
3. Ongoing engagement and communication with Bristol Parks Forum, Avon Wildlife Trust, VCS and community partners, including developing both the Nesta and the Future Parks Accelerator bid with members of the Parks forum, and Avon Wildlife Trust leading on the wildlife bid.

**Background Documents:**

Cabinet report 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018 - <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3089>

<b>Revenue Cost</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>	N/A
<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>Source of Capital Funding</b>	N/A
<b>One off cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Ongoing cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Saving Proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:****1. Finance Advice:**

The report has been produced for information purposes and for Cabinet to note the progress achieved on the Future Parks Accelerator Fund and other wider parks grant funding. Each of the grant funded projects will have been

subject to an individual decision pathway process. The Parks Service needs to ensure that current and future grant funding applications adhere to the Councils Grant Bid and Claim Protocol and follow the Decision Pathway process.

**Finance Business Partner:**

Kayode Olagundoye. Finance Business Partner. 02/08/2019

**2. Legal Advice:**

The recommendations in the report raise no particular legal issues at this time. As and when the grants are spent, then consideration will need to be had to the relevant procurement rules and regulations.

**Legal Team Leader:** Eric Andrews, Legal Services, 17 July 2019

**3. Implications on IT:**

There are no identifiable IT implications arising from this funding proposal.

**IT Team Leader:**

Ian Gale. Service Manager, Service Delivery and Integration. 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019.

**4. HR Advice:**

There are no direct HR implications evident in the report, but the position should be reviewed as the projects are implemented.

**HR Partner:** HR Partner: Celia Williams, HRBP 01.08.2019

<b>EDM Sign-off</b>	Colin Molton	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
<b>Cabinet Member sign-off</b>	Cllr Asher Craig	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2019
<b>For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off</b>	Mayor's Office	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

<b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b> <i>Bristol and Bath Parks Foundation – outline business plan ‘roadmap’</i>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix D – Risk assessment</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix G – Financial Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix H – Legal Advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix I – Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix J – HR advice</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Appendix K – ICT</b>	<b>NO</b>