

Communities Scrutiny Commission

23rd November 2021



Report of: Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration

Title: Bristol Future Parks

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Jon James, Head of Service for Natural and Marine Environment

Contact Telephone Number:

Recommendations:

That the Commission consider the contents of the report.

The significant issues in the report are:

- The Council's departure from the Future Parks Accelerator Project and the development of standalone project
- The refreshed project aims
- Progress with the relaunched Future Parks Programme



1. Summary

As a result of austerity measures the parks service has seen the budget decline over the past ten years to achieve the MTFP saving targets. The Future Parks Programme has been developed to identify tangible and sustainable ways in which the parks service can secure new income streams to support parks service.

A project team led by Bristol City Council secured funding in 2019 from the Future Parks Accelerator Fund (National Trust, Heritage Lottery and the Ministry of Housing, communities and Local Government) to pilot new approaches to sustaining the Cities Parks and transform the way we manage parks and green spaces.

The original project aims through the Future Parks Accelerator Fund were:

- Identify new, tangible investment opportunities at scale which hopes to enable financial sustainability for Bristol's Parks & Green Spaces
- Inspire ALL communities to want to take more responsibility to provide and support park services
- Generate a significant, demonstrable interest response from partners and collaborators across sectors
- Addressing health inequality
- Feed into the Parks & Green Spaces Strategy

As part of the the Future Parks Accelerator review process the Council were asked to curtail aspects of the project and focus on income generation. Even though this is one of the main work streams of the project; the project team wished to continue with the work which we were developing with local communities and addressing health inequalities.

In May 2021 the council made the decision to take the lessons learnt from the Future Parks Accelerator and progress the project independently.

In June 2021 the project continued to progress with the above aims.

Since June 2021 the Bristol Future Parks Programme has made significant progress and all work streams are well developed and the project timelines are being met.

2. Context

The refreshed project aims to deliver the following:

- **ENGAGING COMMUNITIES** - Inspire ALL communities to become more involved in their parks and green spaces.
- **DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS** - Generate a significant, demonstrable interest response from partners and collaborators across sectors to engage and invest in our Parks.
- **GENERATING INVESTMENT** - Identify new, tangible investment opportunities through Expression of Interest, an approach to seek new ideas to implement in Parks and in the process achieve financial sustainability and encourage community participation/engagement.

The project is piloting an “Expressions of Interest” for 5 sites (Blaise Castle Park, Chaplin Community Garden, Dame Emily Park, Eastville Park, and Sea Mills Recreation Ground) to secure ideas for Income Generation, and for Communities to get involved in the management of parks and green spaces and work with the council in developing their ideas. It is hoped that ideas submitted through this exercise will generate revenue streams, which can be used to support the financial sustainability of Bristol Parks. If this pilot succeeds, we will roll out this approach to other parks which will help us work towards a financial sustainability model for the service.

- **VALUING PARKS** - Address the shortfall in data and provide an evidence base for advocacy.
- **ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITY** – To develop a health pilot site (the site selected is “Hartcliffe Millennium Green”) which will allow us to work with the local community, public health and GP surgeries to test and trial a number of interventions. The findings will provide evidence which can influence health policies. The project will work with commercial team to work up licensing system that makes delivering activities for health via social prescribing attractive, accessible and affordable.

To achieve this we have:

Developed and launched the expressions of interest (EOI’s):

- Delivered site Information & Planning for each site in scope:
- Provision of relevant content for promoting investments from external organisations/partners detailing the assets on each of the 5 sites (Eastville Park, Blaise Castle Estate , Dame Emily Park, Seamills Recereation Ground and Chaplin Road). The current status, potential opportunities and constraints on each of the sites with the intention to give them a clear picture of the sites to allow them to propose ideas for implementation on the pilot sites which will see the development of new income streams for parks, promote community participation, engagement and responsibility.
- The site information developed includes community views for the parks in the form of Place based assessments such as “Spirit of Place” and/or “Our Place” assessments.
- Site plans put in place to support of EOI’s process.
- An agreed external and internal process to evaluate the EOI’s received.
- The Future Parks Website presents the content developed to promote the sites for both commercial and community audience.
- Evaluate the expressions of interest received
- Review and develop a repeatable approach/process to secure additional revenue by incorporating the lessons learnt from the pilot sites.

Communities:

- Capture community perspective on how well park provision meets their needs. Use Spirit of Place and Our Place evaluation tools to understand the community views on the parks and to enable community involvement in a future vision for these parks.

- Generate community understanding and support for appropriate income generating activities in the parks in scope.
- To develop community interest and capacity to submit EOIs.
- Work with the Bristol and Bath Park Foundation’s (BBPF) to develop their role in supporting community expressions of interest, reflecting principle asks / needs: i) investment ii) capacity-building iii) knowledge hub.
- Support BBPF to engage business and other partners and develop investment routes, via a co-design approach.
- Support BBPF to attract funds and provide resource to support agreed Community supported projects/initiatives.

Health:

- Working with Public Health we have identified areas of highest health inequalities.
- Increased individual and group use of parks for health and wellbeing-based activity (e.g. initiated through social prescribing).
- Developed strong health partnerships, working together to increase usage of parks for health and wellbeing improvement in one geographical area of the City - linking health provision within that park to people benefiting from green social prescriptions.
- Develop a tried and tested approach to working with health providers to work with the social prescribers using our Parks and Green Spaces.
- Development of a system which provides statistics around the health benefits that parks and green spaces offer.

Progress to date:

- Carried out site-specific consultation and developed “Our Spirit of Place” assessments at Blaise Castle Park, Chaplin community garden, Dame Emily Park, Eastville Park, and Sea Mills Recreation Ground.
- Developed site plans for at Blaise Castle Park, Dame Emily Park, Eastville Park, and Sea Mills Recreation Ground.
- Communities Team have created a series of community stories for each park
- Commissioned a series of work packages with external consultants and partners, including: Bristol Parks Forum, Natural History Consortium, BBPF/YourPark
- Bristol Natural History Consortium is engaged in project evaluation and the overall lessons learnt process
- Launch of Health pilot at Hartcliffe Millennium Green
- Development of a process which will test the social prescribing “Value Chain” and increase opportunities for people to benefit from targeted health intervention programmes
- Creation of a data room is being compiled which will allow us to transfer knowledge gained through the project.
- We have launched a communications package which was released on the 13th October 2021, asking for people, community organisations and businesses to come forward with ideas for the five parks and green which form part of the Bristol Future Parks pilot.
- Development and launch of the Bristol Future Parks website, which went live on 13th October 2021.
- Development and launch of a Bristol Future Parks short film, which was released on 21st October 2021.

- Communication to all Local Members, Ward Members covering pilot sites & MPs.
- Communication to internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and existing stakeholder groups.
- Internal Communications to all Bristol City Council Staff.
- Communication to all existing BCC business registered on Prc Contract and registered Parks businesses
- We have gone live with a social media package; including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Next Door.
- Launch of the expression of Interest on 25th October 2021, which is open 31st December 2022.
- Cllr King’s blog – bright sparks to reshape our parks was published on 3rd November 2011
- Development of a series of workshops to support communities and business who are interested in submitting an expression of interest.
- Delivery of broader conversations with community groups is underway.
- Engagement with BCC Events team to further extend to EOI take up with local business and communities

Next Steps :

- Development of short films for Blaise Castle Estate and Eastville Park which will test the use of this promotional material.
- Engagement with new businesses and response to external enquiries has commenced and will continue through the EOI process.
- EOI panel will begin to review submitted EOI's from the end of November 2021.
- The selection of EOI'S will conclude at the end of January 2022.
- Health pilot work is in progress and will conclude at the end in February 2022
- Project lessons learned process will be carried out by NHC (External partner) throughout the process and conclude in February 2022.
- The work from the project will support and inform the Parks & Green Spaces strategy

3. Policy

1. **Empowering and Caring:** Work with partners to empower communities and individuals, increase independence and support those who need it. Give Children the best possible start in life.
2. **Fair and Inclusive:** Improve economic and social equality, pursuing economic growth which includes everyone and make sure people have access to good quality learning, decent jobs and homes they can afford.
3. **Well Connected:** Take bold and innovative steps to make Bristol a joined up City, linking up people with jobs and each other.
4. **Wellbeing:** Create healthier and more resilient communities where life expectancy is not determined by wealth or background.

4. Consultation

a) Internal

- i. Councillor Asher Craig has regular briefings
- ii. Councillor briefings took place in February 2020, we are planning a second briefing as soon as the changes have been agreed by the funder

- iii. Briefing with Councillor King is scheduled for 4th November 2021

b) External

- i. The Bristol Future Parks Team have carried out 19 community events, 4 face to face (pre-Covid 19) and 15 virtual discussions. At these events we informed citizens about Bristol Future Parks, we asked people what was special about their park, what opportunities they see in their parks, what risks and challenges they saw, and started discussions as to how they might want to take up the opportunity to do more in their parks.
- ii. Natural History Consortium carried out an online Survey asking people about their parks usage, both before and during Covid 19.
- iii. Public engagement for the development of spirit of Place

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

- 5b) Public sector equality duties are relevant and have been carefully considered when developing this programme. The potential adverse impacts on parks users with protected characteristics have been identified and a range of mitigations will be applied to ensure an equitable approach, in terms of engagement with the local community and service provision is achieved.

It is a key priority of the programme to achieve a good cultural mix of projects within parks that cater to all. We will achieve this by ensuring that any new commercial activity or change of use project will be subject to a specific equalities impact assessment. For alternative service delivery models, such as management of parks by local groups / communities, consultation and clear agreements about the duties related to managing green spaces will be key to ensuring that there are no negative impacts on equalities communities. With particular attention being given to economically disadvantaged communities in relation to management of assets if finance or skills are a barrier.

Appendices:

Appendix A- EqlA Full Form - Bristol Future Parks Pilot

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

- Bristol Future Parks Mandate
- Appendix A- EqlA Full Form - Bristol Future Parks Pilot
- Bristol Future Parks (BFP) Project Proposal Decision Pathway Report