



Glasgow City Council

Parks and Facilities Committee

28 September 2005

Report by Director of Land Services

Contact Jim McQuillan on ext 75143

DELIVERING ENHANCED VISITOR FACILITIES IN PARKS

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on progress with the provision of improved customer facilities in parks, and to seek Committee approval in principle to the further development of the specific proposals outlined.

Recommendations

I recommend, therefore, that Committee:

- i) notes the content of the report and,
- ii) agrees, in principle, to the further development of the specific proposals as outlined in the report.

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised:

yes

no

Consulted:

yes

no

INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Best Value Review and Implementation Plan sets out a number of Key Actions to ensure that a fully inclusive and co-ordinated approach is adopted in delivery of improved services.

PARKS MANAGEMENT PLANS

A cornerstone of this approach will be the development of a 'Parks Management Plan' for each park. To ensure the most appropriate format is adopted for these plans, officers are presently examining a range of existing documentation, including Glasgow's existing Parks Management Plan for Tollcross and examples from across the UK, Australia and the United States. It is intended to produce a final template for the approval of the Director of Land Services by October 2005.

At the same time, officers are preparing information for incorporation into these documents. The first plans to be produced will cover the 5 City Parks as designated in the 1994 Parks Strategy – Bellahouston Park, Botanic Gardens, Glasgow Green, Kelvingrove Park and Pollok Country Park. The target for completion of Parks Management Plans for these 5 locations is Summer 2006. It should be noted that a separate exercise is underway to review the categorisation and hierarchy adopted in the 1994 strategy, which may result in changes to specific designations for individual Parks. For example, this review will take account of the significant improvements to Tollcross Park since 1994, which may result in a re-designation as a City Park. Creation of Park Management Plans will then be rolled out from Summer 2006 onwards for District Parks, Local Parks and Cemeteries.

VISITOR FACILITIES

Each Parks Management Plan will examine a variety of issues for each specific Park, including maintenance, ecology and biodiversity, access, recreational facilities, features, and horticultural management.

One of the issues to be considered will be the current provision of customer facilities and opportunities for improvements will be identified for each park. Additionally, a separate city wide assessment of early action opportunities for improvements to customer facilities will be undertaken, with a proposal to produce an 'expressions of interest' document, covering the city, early in 2006.

Rather than wait until all such documentation is complete, however, Land Services has initiated a number of demonstration projects to assess the viability of creating enhanced facilities. Additionally, a number of opportunities have been presented to Land Services which could potentially also improve customer facilities. Outline details of these are presented below, for Committees information, and approval in principle is now sought to develop these ideas further.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Glasgow Botanic Gardens

Overview

The proposal for a visitor centre within the Botanic Gardens has come about in response to the popularity and increasing diverse use of the Gardens. The Botanic Gardens are accommodating a wider range of uses and activities, without the bespoke facilities to support them.

There is an identified need to provide facilities to support the environmental and horticulture education programmes, particularly lectures and school visits as well as the increased use of the Botanic Gardens as a venue for performances from classical recitals to theatrical performances.

Glasgow Botanic Gardens is a potentially important visitor venue but has not yet realised its full potential as a major tourist attraction within Glasgow.

The Feasibility Study commenced in June 2003 and was funded by a partnership comprising Scottish Enterprise Glasgow, Glasgow City Council Land Services and Glasgow City Council Development and Regeneration Services. The Architect's Commission was awarded after tender to Chris Stewart Architects and the Landscape Consultant's Commission to City Design Co-operative. Both of these commissions were issued, on behalf of the partners, by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow

The Feasibility Study brief outlined some of the main criteria that had to be considered:-

- Provision of internal and external lecture or performance space including facilities for schools and specialist tours,
- Catering facilities to replace and improve on those that were lost as part of the Kibble Palace Restoration,
- Tourism and merchandising space including information relating to Glasgow Parks, Culture and Venues as well as opportunities to promote the City and the best of Scottish craft in a select range of goods,
- Administration space to complement the variety of uses within the building,
- An interpretative zone with reference facilities / internet access etc.

Outline Design

The design proposal resulting from the study comprises of a unique, high quality building, providing educational, lecture and reference facilities. The building also incorporates a catering facility which can provide facilities both during normal Garden opening hours and in the evenings in addition to improved public toilet provision for the Gardens.

Great care has been taken in developing the design to ensure that the building does not clash with the nearby 'A' listed Kibble Palace and indeed complements the development of this corner of the Gardens which is nearest to the busy links of Byres Road and Great Western Road.

The proposal incorporates a 'green roof' which will be of growing material, and this, combined with similar green walls at the Garden edge will help to blend the building into its background. Due to the existing levels, the single story structure will sit generally below the level of the Kibble Palace and will have panoramic views to the main range and Kibble Palace across the new landscaped surrounds.

Images of the proposed external areas of the Visitor Centre will be on display at the meeting. These include a new pond and water feature to the north, plaza to the west merging with the access boundary to the main Gardens and a quieter external dining area accessed through the building on the eastern edge, screened from Queen Margaret Drive by a green wall and having canopies to enable al fresco dining even in the Scottish climate.

Consultation

Initial consultation has taken place with the Friends of Glasgow Botanic Gardens, Glasgow West Conservation Trust and the local Councillor all of whom have expressed approval of the concepts presented. An initial approach has been made to Kelvinside Community Council but unfortunately they will not be in a position to consider details at present, due to timescales. The secretary however has indicated that they would be inclined to follow the advice of the Friends of Glasgow Botanic Gardens and the Glasgow West Conservation Trust in relation to this type of proposal within the Botanic Gardens.

The Friends of the Botanic Gardens have sent a letter expressing that they found the designs very exciting, highly original and with many attractive features particularly in the versatility of usage of the premises. They further indicate that they consider the proposed development could do much to further the education mission of the Gardens and increase their public appeal even further.

The Glasgow West Conservation Trust have indicated that they feel the proposals are the correct way forward in the development of this corner of the Gardens and the improvement of facilities for both local users and visitors and have submitted a letter giving strong backing to the scheme.

Development Proposals

In order to progress the Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre the following actions would require to be implemented:

- Tender for and appoint suitable architect and landscape consultants to develop the scheme and take it to completion. It is proposed that these appointments would have a 'stop' clause prior to putting the Visitor Centre out to tender for construction,
- Identification of funding sources for the scheme. At present, there are three partners, Land Services, Development and Regeneration Services and Scottish Enterprise Glasgow. A formal agreement requires to be entered into with Scottish Enterprise Glasgow covering their future funding and any other contributions to the scheme,
- Novation of original Study results by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow in favour of Glasgow City Council is required.

It is currently envisaged that the Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre would be the main scheme for inclusion in the 2006/07 Parks Development Capital Programme at an overall cost of £2.750m. Funding sources including prudential framework, will be investigated in the interim and development proposals will be brought forward for considering at a future date.

Request that Committee note the emerging development proposals for this project.

Hogganfield

In February 2005, an 'expressions of interest' document was issued by Development and Regeneration Services inviting interested parties to submit development proposals for a range of facilities. Although there were a number of initial enquiries, there were no submissions. This document will be re-issued, and actively marketed with a view to providing facilities such as:

- A family type licensed restaurant
- Changing accommodation and reception area for visitors to the golf course
- Golf professional shop
- Interpretation/educational space relating to the Local Nature Reserve

Request that Committee note the detail of this project.

Littlehill and Linn Park Golf Courses

It is proposed that the Council source an operator to invest in the refurbishment of the existing catering facilities. Options for rental/lease/income share will be flexible and negotiated depending on the proposal submitted by a potential operator.

In general, the customer base will be:

- golf club members
- ad-hoc golfers
- golf outings
- members of the public visiting the park/golf course area/equestrian centre/park events
- Littlehill has passing trade from Stobhill hospital
- Linn Park sits adjacent to the Simshill Primary School and King's Park Secondary School is within walking distance.

The general type of catering envisaged is:

- Breakfast rolls, tea, coffee etc
- Light lunches – e.g. soup, sandwiches etc.
- Snacks
- Occasional buffet type catering for club events
- Occasional licensing

In line with Glasgow City Council's policies, we would expect operators to promote healthy eating. We would expect operators to balance the use of Fairtrade products with the use of locally sourced produce, reducing where possible the use of fizzy drinks and sugar based snacks and promoting the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

It is proposed that a detailed brief and tender be prepared, inviting submissions from interested parties to develop high quality catering and toilet facilities in both locations. The tender evaluation model will be focussed on quality, and ensuring the correct provision of facilities for the golf course and park users, while guaranteeing an income stream to Glasgow City Council.

It is anticipated that the current operators on site will be given the opportunity to submit proposals.

If committee approval is given to progress this project, a project plan will be prepared, which will include an allocation of time for community consultation.

Request that Committee approve the implementation of this project subject to the satisfaction of the Director of Land Services.

Victoria Park

The current level and quality of customer service is not now considered to be appropriate for a park of the quality and popularity of Victoria Park. In line with the objectives of the Best Value Review, it is felt that these should now be improved.

There are a number of developments which have increased, and have the potential to increase users within the park.

The 'Freeplay' initiative for the outdoor leisure facilities has increased seasonal recreational usage, and there is current dialogue with local sports clubs about increasing recreational use.

The play facilities have recently been improved and there is continuing discussion with user groups about inclusive play within the park.

These ongoing developments in Victoria Park demonstrate improvement in line with the targets set in the Best Value Review, and the catering and toilet facilities are required to reflect the improved customer service expectation.

There are potentially three sites which have been identified to offer high quality catering. These are:

- The current site adjacent to the pond,
- The current sports pavilion,
- A completely new site between the pond and the pavilion, overlooking the play area.

It is proposed that a detailed brief and tender be prepared, inviting submissions from interested parties to develop high quality catering and toilet facilities in Victoria Park. The tender evaluation model will be focussed on quality, and ensuring the correct provision of facilities for the park users, while guaranteeing an income stream to Glasgow City Council.

It is anticipated that the current operators on site will be given the opportunity to submit proposals.

If committee approval is given to progress this project, a project plan will be prepared, which will include an allocation of time for community consultation.

Request that Committee approve the implementation of this project subject to the satisfaction of the Director of Land Services.

Queens Park

Retail

It is proposed that a retail outlet be created in the central corridor of Queen's Park glasshouse, offering a range of high quality goods alongside a seasonal range of plant material.

Detailed discussion has taken place between Land Services and Cultural and Leisure Services to ensure that there is a sound business plan in place to support the operation of this outlet, and to plan the implementation.

The expected customer base will be existing Queen's Park glasshouse users, and will be a mix of parent and toddler groups, school groups and those visiting the general glasshouse and park area. There is also scope for attracting purchasers from the wider area around Queen's Park, as the park sits within a high amenity and residential area.

It is anticipated that the shop will be operational by the first week in November 2005 (this implementation date is subject to approval by this Committee).

The initial shop fitting costs will be £15,000.00. This will be funded from existing budgets within Land Services. Operational costs will be split between Land Services and Cultural and Leisure Services. Land Services will continue to finance the building maintenance and utility costs, and Cultural and Leisure Services will finance the ongoing maintenance of the shop fixtures, stock costs and staffing costs.

Operational profit will be split between both services on a 50/50 basis, providing both services with an equal incentive to ensure the success of the project.

Request that Committee approve the implementation of this project subject to the satisfaction of the Director of Land Services.

Catering

Encore provides existing catering in Queen's Park glasshouses in the form of a coffee shop and function space. Discussions are currently underway with Encore with regard to improving the quality of existing provision on this site, and for the future, expanded provision at Queen's Park to be the subject of a feasibility and business plan.

Request that Committee note the detail of this project.

Kelvingrove Park

An opportunity has been identified to develop a project in Kelvingrove Park which would enhance the visitor facilities and attract a range of new users to the park. The aims of the project would be to provide:

- Fair Trade retail outlet, enhancing the Council's stated aim to become a Fair Trade city by 2006,
- Educational space, promoting the principles of sustainability, Fair Trade and global citizenship,
- Catering, with an emphasis on fairly traded, organic and local produce,
- Toilets.

It is envisaged that this project would not encroach on the park in terms of land use other than existing buildings. The catering element of the project would not be licensed.

The delivery mechanism for this project would be by the advertisement of a land lease opportunity which would detail the specific elements desired by Land Services in the operation of the project, and the selection of an appropriate operator. It is anticipated that Land Services will receive an income from the lease of the ground.

Request that Committee agree to the implementation of this project subject to the satisfaction of the Director of Land Services.

Mosesfield House, Springburn Park

Land Services and the North Area Management Committee intend to employ external consultants to prepare a feasibility study for this listed building which was built in 1838. Some £15,000 will be spent this financial year on this consultant's report. This proposal was approved by the North Area Management Committee on 14 June 2005.

The range of this report will include the following;

- The historical background of Mosesfield.
- Potential future uses.
- Recommended treatment of the fabric of the building.
- Analyse financial mechanisms.

Request that Committee note the detail of this project.

SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

Glasgow Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre

It is currently envisaged that Land Services will fund the scheme from the prudential framework and the Parks Development Budget and that it shall be the main scheme for 2006/7. At the same time every effort shall be made to secure funding from other sources to reduce the extent of funds being drawn from the Parks Development Budget.

The estimated overall scheme budget is proposed as £2,750,000 comprising construction and fit out of £2,225,000 + fees of £225,000 plus client contingency of £250,000 to cover unforeseen development costs, investigations etc. This figure is considered robust and capable of delivering the project based on the current proposals.

Hogganfield

The costs associated with advertising and assessment of submissions will be met from existing budgets.

Littlehill and Linn Park Golf Courses

There is no current income to the Council for catering on either of these sites, and therefore it is anticipated that income to the Council will be generated through leasing of these facilities. Any potential operator within the park would negotiate with Glasgow City Council in terms of rental/lease and potential profit share agreements.

Victoria Park

There will be an income from the forthcoming mobile catering provision of £9,417.00 per year.

Any potential operator within the park would negotiate with Glasgow City Council in terms of rental/lease and potential profit share agreements. It is not anticipated that there would be a loss of income to Glasgow City Council.

Queen's Park retail

The initial shop fitting costs will be £15,000.00. This will be funded from existing budgets within Land Services.

Operational costs will be split between Land Services and Cultural and Leisure Services. Land Services will continue to finance the building maintenance and utility costs, and Cultural and Leisure Services will finance the ongoing maintenance of the shop fixtures, stock costs and staffing costs.

Operational profit will be split between both services on a 50/50 basis, providing both services with an equal incentive to ensure the success of the project.

Queen's Park catering

Improvements to the current catering will be financed from existing budgets within both Land Services and Encore. The initial preparation of a feasibility study and business plan for the expansion of will also be funded from existing budgets within both Land Services and Encore. Once the initial study is completed, the extent to which additional funding is required will be ascertained.

Kelvingrove Park

The costs associated with advertising and assessment of submissions will be met from existing budgets.

Mosesfield House

Funding of £15,000 has been agreed by the North Area Management Committee for the feasibility study. Once the study is completed, the extent to which additional funding is required will be ascertained.

Legal:

Glasgow Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre

A tender for and appoint suitable architect and landscape consultants to develop the scheme and take it to completion will require to be prepared. It is proposed that these appointments would have a 'stop' clause prior to putting the Visitor Centre out to tender for construction.

Funding sources for the scheme require to be identified, and a formal agreement requires to be entered into with Scottish Enterprise Glasgow covering their future funding and any other contributions to the scheme. Novation of original Study results by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow in favour of Glasgow City Council is required.

Hogganfield

The tendering and evaluation process will be managed in conjunction with Development and Regeneration Services, using appropriate conditions of contract and evaluation models.

Littlehill and Linn Park Golf Courses

The tendering and evaluation process will be managed in conjunction with Land Services purchasing section, using appropriate conditions of contract and evaluation models.

It is anticipated that operators will be offered a long term lease, the terms of which will reflect the level of operator investment in the property. The leases will also detail service and maintenance responsibilities. Advice will be sought from Legal Services prior to and during negotiations with operators.

Victoria Park

The tendering and evaluation process will be managed in conjunction with Development and Regeneration Services, using appropriate conditions of contract and evaluation models.

It is anticipated that the contracts for mobile catering will be issued before any other catering proposals can be delivered. It has been ensured that the contracts for mobile catering contain a 'break' clause which will allow them to be terminated when it is suitable to do so.

Queen's Park retail

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Queen's Park catering

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Kelvingrove Park

The tendering and evaluation process will be managed in conjunction with Development and Regeneration Services, using appropriate conditions of contract and evaluation models.

Mosesfield House

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Personnel: There are no personnel issues arising from this report.

Service Plan: These projects meet Recommendation 5.3 in the Strategic Best Value Review, which is, 'to develop and enhance the range of facilities and amenities within parks through partnership working and other approaches'. It also fulfils the following Key Actions within the Strategic Best Value Review:

Key Action

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 20 | Identify opportunities for introducing new quality catering and public toilets into parks. |
| 30 | Extend the range of catering facilities within parks. |
| 56 | Identify external funding and partnership opportunities to develop clubhouse facilities at the city's golf courses. |
| 60 | Examine the viability and prepare plans for the franchising or leasing of suitable facilities and amenities such as bowling greens, putting, boating, bandstands, cafes etc. within parks. |
| 61 | Take steps to improve toilet facilities in parks using existing buildings where appropriate and introduce new facilities where possible. |
| 138 | Investigate the potential for creating new catering outlets within park locations. |

ROBERT BOOTH
DIRECTOR OF LAND SERVICES
19 September 2005