

Report to: Executive
Date: 18 March 2008
Report of: Executive Member for Regeneration
Subject: Environmental Improvements to Play Area, South Hetton
Wards: South Hetton

1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Executive to provide a financial contribution to an environmental improvement scheme, designed by Groundwork East Durham, which will be implemented on Council owned land in South Hetton.

2 Consultation

2.1 In preparing this report all the necessary service departments within the District Council, Local members for the South Hetton Ward and the Parish Council have been consulted.

2.2 Public consultation for the play improvements were conducted with local groups who are based in the nearby Robin Todd community Centre in South Hetton. Proposed plans, including suggested pieces of new play equipment were shown to each group before questionnaires were distributed to allow group members to provide feedback and comments. The plans were also displayed in the community centre for 3 weeks along with additional questionnaires and a comments box.

2.3 Local residents were also consulted, each receiving letters explaining the project and its proposals along with a copy of the plan, a questionnaire and a comments slip.

2.4 Residents and the local community are generally supportive of the scheme, however some concerns were raised regarding anti-social behaviour and vandalism within the area. The Neighbourhood Enforcement department has been consulted, and they did not highlight any issues regarding anti-social behaviour or vandalism.

2.5 Concerns were also raised regarding noise and disturbance by teenagers playing football at the gable end of number 17 Ravensworth Court. To alleviate this problem a ball stop screen area is being planted and a new football area has been addressed in the installation of a Goal Module shown on the attached plan.

3 Background

3.1 Groundwork East Durham is working in partnership with South Hetton Parish Council on a project to provide a robust and sustainable public amenity open space for the use of local people.

3.2 The site is an unattractive and neglected area of green space adjacent to a residential housing estate. It includes a large badly drained playing field; a semi-derelict area of tarmac and structures; dilapidated seats and obsolete play equipment.

3.3 The final choice of play equipment was a direct result from the consultation with local residents, school children and members of the local partnership group.

3.4 The proposed environmental improvements scheme is in alignment with housing investment to the adjacent development at Argyle Place.

4 Position Statements: Environmental Enhancements

- 4.1** The purpose of the scheme is to undertake environmental improvements on the South Hetton Play area as shown on the attached plan. The aim is to develop the site as a robust and sustainable public amenity open space for use of local space.
- 4.2** This will be achieved by removing the derelict elements that give the site a run-down and neglected character, refurbishing the existing play equipment to improve facilities for local children and young people.
- 4.3** This will create a sense of place and provide a pleasant and safe environment for the local community.
- 4.3** The overall cost of the works is £68,000. The Neighbourhood renewal Fund is contributing £18,000, with a further allocation of Section 106 monies to the sum of £40,000. It is suggested that the Council make a contribution of £10,000.
- 4.4** The council will take on the responsibility for grassed areas, paths and trees. The play equipment will be maintained by South Hetton Parish Council.

5 Implications

Financial

- 5.1** The Council's contribution of £10,000 can be accommodated within the 2007/2008 Regeneration budget.

Legal

- 5.2** It is not considered that there are any legal implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

Policy

- 5.3** It is not considered that there are any policy implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

Risk

- 5.4** A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to manage the identified risks will be implemented.

Communications

- 5.5** The District Council's contribution to the improvements will be fully recognised in any media articles or press releases.

6. Corporate Implications

Corporate Plan and Priorities

- 6.1** This scheme fits into a number of Council priorities as identified in the Corporate Plan. Firstly it will help to meet the target of creating 'creating clean and tidy communities'. It will do this by improving surroundings by tackling pollutants such as litter, graffiti, vandalism and environmental improvements.
- 6.2** It will also meet the target of 'building a healthy community'. It will do this by improving, promoting and encouraging the use of locally accessible, high quality open space.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.3 The scheme will provide linking footpaths between the play area and the adjacent residential housing estate.

E-Government

- 6.4 It is not considered that there are any E-Government implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

Procurement

- 6.5 It is not considered that there are any procurement implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

Crime and Disorder

- 6.6 It is not considered that there are any crime and disorder issues not otherwise referenced in the report

Local Government Review

- 6.7 It is not considered that there are any local government review implications not otherwise referenced in the report.

7 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Executive:

- a) Endorse the environmental improvements scheme in South Hetton
- b) Approve a contribution of £10,000 to the South Hetton Improvements scheme from the Regeneration Budget, 2007/2008
- c) Grant Landlords consent for the works being undertaken by Groundwork East Durham on land in South Hetton as shown on the attached plan.

Background Papers/Documents referred to:

District of Easington Corporate and Performance Plan 2005/06 (Regeneration and Partnerships Unit)
Proposal from Groundwork East Durham and associated Drawings (001)