

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

16th March 2021



Subject: Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) Programme – Notification of Extension

Report of: Director of Neighbourhoods (Acting)

Relevant Cabinet Member: Cllr John O'Shea – Street Scene and Parks
Councillor Tristan Chatfield – Finance and Resources

Relevant O & S Chair(s): Cllr Penny Holbrook – Housing and Neighbourhoods

Report author: Hamira Sultan, Consultant in Public Health and FPA Director
Tel. 07595090451
Email: hamira.sultan@birmingham.gov.uk

Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Through testing phase, specific wards of Druids Heath & Monyhull, Brandwood & Kings Heath, Ward End, Perry Common are impacted		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 008329/2021		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :		

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) programme has been running in earnest since December 2019, testing key proposals to help the wider Council better see the value of our green spaces. Due to Covid 19, it has been a challenge to implement as much

of our learning as anticipated. We have an opportunity to extend our funded programme, originally due to finish in May 2021, to March 2022.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves extension of the programme by accepting additional funding of £204,000.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that Cabinet Members with specific portfolios will take on a leadership role within the five frameworks (see 3.4).
- 2.3 Given the complexity of the FPA, that Cabinet approves the production of a video describing the programme to the wider public.

3 Background

- 3.1 In July 2019, Cabinet agreed to receive £900,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and up to £100,000 in-kind support from National Trust (NT); to run the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) Programme, with the huge ambition to embed the value of green spaces across the Council – within Health and Wellbeing (pilot site Witton Lakes), Employability/ Skills (pilot site Ward End Park), Children's Trust ((pilot site Dawberry Fields Neighbourhood Park) and Housing/ Development (Edgbaston Reservoir, Druids Heath BMHT development and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital).
- 3.2 Key objectives of the programme are:
 - 3.2.1 To ensure green spaces were considered:
 - as vital community living spaces
 - as to their role in defining local character and identity
 - as to their importance for nature and climate change mitigation
 - for sport and recreation
 - for health and wellbeing
 - as places for business and enterprise
 - 3.2.2 Parks and green spaces will have more support for their management
 - 3.2.3 A wider range of people will be involved in parks and green spaces
 - 3.2.4 The organisations funding parks and green spaces will be more resilient
 - 3.2.5 The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit
 - 3.2.6 People will have developed skills
 - 3.2.7 People will have greater wellbeing
- 3.3 As part of our engagement process in June 2020, we identified 14 proposals we wanted to test which could support embedding the value of green space. Our plans were well received (see results in Appendix 1) by those responding to our questions and taking part in our community conversations.

- 3.4 The programme was planned to end in May 2021, but due to the impact of Covid 19 and the great work the programme has already achieved, we were successful in securing a funded extension. This means the programme will now finish in March 2022, and that the Council will receive an extra £204,000 to support the work to continue. In summary we are developing five strategic frameworks for embedding the value of green spaces across our Council and communities, championed by members of the cabinet –
- 3.4.1 Healthy City (Cllr Hamilton)
 - 3.4.2 Environmental Justice (Cllr Zaffar)
 - 3.4.3 Sustainable Finance (Cllr Chatfield)
 - 3.4.4 Citizen Involvement (Cllr Cotton)
 - 3.4.5 Governance Model for Natural Environment (Cllr O'Shea)
- 3.5 Our key achievements are listed in Appendix 2, with more details of our extension work in Appendix 3. Key outcomes and achievements to date include:
- 3.5.1 We have seen improvements in how residents engage with green spaces across three of our pilot sites, including working with the police to help positive engagement of younger residents
 - 3.5.2 Strong linkages made with housing management to support and make existing green spaces in housing more usable and accessible by residents
 - 3.5.3 Development of an online skills showcase to highlight what is possible in green spaces and how to access it
 - 3.5.4 Connecting residents to nature through virtual means, and improving their wellbeing through doing so
 - 3.5.5 Embedding green space thinking within the early years team at the Council, and in settings
 - 3.5.6 Agreement to set up a parks' foundation through Birmingham Open Spaces Forum, which will allow more funding to come into parks through charitable grants.
- 3.6 We are now in the process of producing implementation guides of key proposals on how to do this across the City.
- 3.7 We have made strong links with R20, Commonwealth Games Team as well as the planning team within Inclusive Growth, showing the value FPA is already having across the Council.
- 3.8 We are requesting that Cabinet assure our funders, HLF, that the Council will support the continued work of our FPA programme throughout the extension period.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 4.1 Not to extend the programme – if FPA were to finish in May 2021 as originally planned we would be unable to complete our plans to embed 5 strategic frameworks relating to green space and would limit the impact the programme could have.
- 4.2 Support extension of the programme by working with the FPA team to identify and overcome key barriers to support embedding the value of green spaces across the Council, this is the recommended option.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 We have undertaken engagement with residents as part of community conversations in June 2020 (see Appendix 1) which involved 10 virtual conversations with 117 participants, and 153 responses to an online survey. There was a positive response to our proposals, but we are aware of the need to engage with a more diverse range of residents. We are therefore launching 'Earth Stories' and more detail can be found [here](#).
- 5.2 Cabinet Members taking responsibility for championing key frameworks have been consulted and are supportive of the approach.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 Unless directorates fully commit to the programme of work, there is a risk of us not achieving these outcomes. To date, engagement has been good, and we anticipate good results.
- 6.2 Covid 19 restrictions are limiting our approach to engagement and getting people into our pilot park destinations. We are making full use of virtual methods to allow us to continue the work and learning required to meet the programme aims.

7 Compliance Issues:

7.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

7.1.1 The FPA programme has been designed to work hand in hand with the Council Plan 2018 to 2022. The focus on Health and Wellbeing, Employability, Housing and Children are key tenets of our programme.

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 None.

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 The programme in 2019/20 was awarded a £900,000 grant plus the equivalent of £100,000 support package of professional and in-kind support from a partnership fund for a two-year period 2019/20-2020/21. The City Council has also contributed £185,000 in kind

7.3.2 The funding received up to the 31st March 2020 was £314,816, of which £103,276 was expended. The remaining balance of £211,540 is identified on the Neighbourhood Directorate Balance Sheet

7.3.3 The funders offered the project the opportunity to bid for additional funding which was successfully progressed resulting in additional resources of £204,000 (not yet received and to be drawn once Cabinet approval is gained and mid-point review has been passed in March 2021)

7.3.4 The additional funding will enable extension of core team members until March 2022 in order to complete the work that has not been able to be progressed due to Covid-19.

7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

7.4.1 None.

7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)

7.5.1 None – we have recruited all the staff through BCC required for delivery of the programme.

7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

7.6.1 The EQIA has been approved and is attached to this report.

8 Background Documents

8.1 None.

List of appendices accompanying this report:

1. Results of engagement
2. Extension Application
3. Extension Appendices
4. Equality Assessment