

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Provision of a new Toilet Block in King George V Park, Arnold

**Date:** 18 March 2021

**Author:** Head of Environment

### **Wards Affected**

Daybrook & Ernhale

### **Purpose**

To seek Cabinet approval to build a new toilet block with a changing places facility in the garden area of King George V Park, in Arnold as part of on-going green space improvements to parks facilities within the Borough.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

### **Recommendation(s)**

#### **THAT Cabinet:**

- 1) Approves the proposals for the new public toilet block and changing places facility in King George V Park in Arnold, as detailed in the report, subject to planning permission, further design amendments and costs remaining within the approved budget.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve the final design scheme for the toilet block and changing places facility for submission for planning permission.**
- 3) Allocates the current approved capital scheme for the provision of Public Toilets approved as part of the 2021/22 budget to the King George V Park Toilet Block.**

- 1.1 King George V Playing Field in Arnold was originally acquired by Arnold Urban District Council in two tranches. In 1950, Arnold Urban District Council were gifted part of the land (shown green in Appendix 1) ("the Land") and in 1951 the second tranche was purchased by the Council. The 1950 conveyance provided that the then Arnold Urban District council, and now Gedling Borough Council must hold, manage and maintain the Land for the following purpose:
- Public recreation ground, playing field and rest garden for aged people which shall form part of the National Memorial to his late Majesty King George V under the provisions of King George's Field Foundation.*
- 1.2 In 1988 the Land was registered as a charity with the sole Trustee of the charity being Gedling Borough Council. The object of the Charity was, as set out in the 1950 conveyance and detailed above. The Council, despite being landowner cannot unilaterally make decisions about the Land and must consider the views of the Charity who exist to protect the Land and the covenants placed on it. The Land must also be managed in a way that complies with the restrictions placed on it by the conveyance.
- 1.3 The King George V Playing Field charity met on 17th February 2021, and Councillors, in their capacity as Acting Trustees of the Charity, considered whether a proposal to develop a toilet and changing places facility on the park aligned with the object of the Charity and therefore was in accordance with the restrictions on the land from the 1950 conveyance.
- 1.4 The Charity determined that the development of a toilet and changing places facility on the land was considered to align with the object of the charity and the restrictions on the conveyance and agreed with the proposal for development on that basis.
- 1.5 King George V Park is central to Arnold and the town centre and adjacent to the new market development. Nearby toilets in Wood Street are internally in a poor state of repair and it is no longer possible to keep them properly clean and free from offensive odours. In this context and as part of on-going green space improvements to parks facilities within the Borough, a new toilet facility for both residents and visitors, to the park, offers a way forward. This project serves to keep the Land as a recreation ground, for the benefit of park users and the community/public at large, therefore, is a development which encourages use of the Land and provides benefits to park users and improves accessibility for all.
- 1.6 It is recognised that as with the King George V car park, the toilet facility is also likely to be used by people visiting the town centre,

indeed there is a demand for better public toilet provision in Arnold. It is hoped that by having this facility on the park, this will encourage those visitors to the town centre to utilise the park facilities as well.

- 1.7 Officers have undertaken a survey with park users in relation to the proposal to develop a toilet facility on the Land, the results of that consultation are shown at Appendix 2. The overwhelming response was positive with 38 out of the 39 surveyed indicating they were in favour of the facility. An indicative location of the facility was provided to those surveyed, this indicative location is shown at Appendix 3 with indicative designs at Appendix 4. 36 of those questioned agreed with the proposed location of the facility to the rear of the rest garden towards the front of the park. As detailed below this location was chosen following initial feasibility work by officers.

## 1.8 **Location**

Officers have completed a desk top feasibility study to consider the most appropriate location for the facility in the park, the main considerations were access to drainage for such a facility, impact on the street-scene, impact on the openness and current layout of the park and accessibility to the facility for the public. A number of locations were considered:

### Car Park

As the car park is already developed, and given its location at the entrance to the park this was initially considered to be a possible location, however, development within the car park would reduce car parking space for park users, in addition the gradient of the car park and layout means it is quite difficult to navigate through safely by the public wanting to use the facility and in particular wheelchair access is not achievable. Drainage connection to a facility in the car park is also restricted. From a planning perspective, locating the facility in the car park was not considered advisable given its impact on the street-scene and openness of the park behind.

### Within the playing field to the rear of the car park

Locating the facility here would set it back from the street scene whilst keeping it near to the entrance to the park. Any development within the open parkland however would significantly impact on the use and openness of the playing field area. Additional development in the form of footpaths to provide access to the facility in the park would be necessary at this location. Access to drainage is difficult within park land, in addition part of the park in this location is used as a football pitch which requires a surface water run off buffer around it for drainage purposes. This location was not therefore considered appropriate.

### Within existing clubhouse

There is already some development on the park in the form of a clubhouse. It was suggested by the public during the survey that this might be a better site for the development as it is already developed land. This was not considered a suitable location for reasons of accessibility and links to drainage.

### Proposed location

At this stage the most suitable location for the facility, taking into account accessibility by the public from the park land, car park and play park, impact on the street scene and park openness, and accessibility to drainage, is within the rest garden at the entrance to the park. The site is masked somewhat already from the street by foliage, and although some portion of the rest garden would have to be developed and therefore access to it reduced, this is only a part of the rest garden and the facility is considered to be of great benefit to park users.

## **1.9 Planning and Design**

Indicative designs for the toilet are shown at Appendix 4 and include toilets and a changing places facility. Given the play park located close to the rest garden, a changing facility is considered to be beneficial within this location. Careful consideration has been given to the layout of the toilet facilities, in particular whether the toilets should be unisex, divided into male and female, separate disabled toilet provision or combined provision. The indicative designs offer the maximum accessibility for all users. The new facility requires planning permission and an application based on the position, design and layout is shortly to be submitted. Consideration is still being given as to whether a modular building may be suitable, but further investigation into this option will be undertaken as part of the planning process.

## **1.10 Security and Maintenance**

Consideration has been given to the opening hours of the facility. The facility will be open during park opening times which will be slightly later in the summer months. The facility will be locked when the park is closed. Access to the cubicles will be free of charge and cleaning will be carried out twice per day. The location of the toilet is such that it is within the range of the CCTV camera located in the park. This gives the site protection from antisocial behaviour and incidents of vandalism as the camera will act as a deterrent.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the proposal to develop a toilet and changing places facility within King George V park in line with the detail set out above. The facility will serve as a community asset, to allow visitors to enjoy both the open space, skate park, children's play area and garden whilst also providing a facility encouraging town centre visitors to the park. A facility that combines a changing places facility will 'inclusively' encourage more people into King George V for recreational and health purposes. Further approvals will be required to progress the toilet including planning permission following final design/drawings being prepared.
- 2.2 It is proposed that a delegation is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve the final design scheme for submission for planning permission. This will ensure that if any changes are needed to the indicative designs these will have Executive oversight.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the agreed budget of £120,000 approved for public toilet provision be allocated to this scheme.

## **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 (a) Not to build the toilet block

*Advantage:* Cost savings made.

*Disadvantage:* The local community asset would not be enhanced. The amount of visitors to the park may not increase and there would be no changes places facility to encourage inclusivity for the whole community.

In addition the availability of sufficient public toilet facilities within the borough continues to reduce and there is no suitable alternative in the vicinity of the same proposed standard.

## **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 A £90,000 capital project budget was established in 2020/21 as a general provision for public toilets and this was approved for deferral to 2021/22 by Cabinet as part of quarter 3 budget monitoring report. An additional budget of £30,000 was approved by Budget Council on 4 March 2021 bringing the total approved budget for public toilet provision to £120,000.'
- 5.2 It is now proposed that the approved budget of £120,000 for the general provision of public toilets be allocated to the scheme identified at the site on King George V park. It is anticipated that the revenue running costs will be accommodated within the current

approved budget subject to a wider review of public toilet servicing requirements.

## **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 As landowner, the Council is bound by the covenants in the 1950 conveyance and the park must be maintained as detailed in para 1.1. The addition of a toilet facility is considered to enhance the provision at the park and therefore align with the restrictions in the conveyance. Any proposed scheme will be subject to planning approval, any contractor appointed to develop the site will need to be procured in accordance with Contract Standing Orders.

## **7 Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 The toilet block is being proposed in a location that will be easily accessible by all, be it by private vehicle, public transport, cycle and on foot. Its design will take into account people with disabilities to ensure inclusivity within a group setting and equality of access for all users.

All works undertaken in the delivery of this toilet block project should not have any adverse equalities implications. The Rest Garden for the elderly will be increased in size on the opposite side of the entrance to compensate for that lost by the imprint of the new toilet facility. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 5 to this report.

## **8 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 The design and construction should ensure that any greenspace and parkland either side the construction work is not affected and is protected as an ecological community. Tree roots will be identified and protected as appropriate. Carbon offsetting will be achieved by planting additional tree stocks in the greenspace concerned by way of mitigation.

On the build project, abatement of CO2 emissions will be achieved by using Green Power where available, and specific materials chosen, such as recycled materials. For example, recycled asphalt for path consolidation where appropriate.

Air quality assessments will be undertaken where necessary by calculating the changes in concentrations in nitrogen dioxide as a result of changes to traffic at sensitive human receptor locations such as nearby homes, and business premises. The impacts of dust from any construction phase will also be assessed, and water sprays used to damp down any arising dust where necessary. Trees will be identified as TPO'd or as growing in a Conservation Area, before

any works are undertaken.

## **9 Appendices**

- 9.1 Appendix 1: Plan of the park
- Appendix 2: Consultation responses from park users
- Appendix 3: Indicative location plan
- Appendix 4: Layout.
- Appendix 5: Equalities impact needs assessment

## **10 Background Papers**

- 10.1 King George V Park, Arnold, Toilet Block Business Case

## **11 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 11.1 This project meets the Gedling Plan objectives under Sustainable Environment of; Developing availability of and quality of Council public toilets, and 'Developing and implement a plan to enhance existing parks and open spaces. As part of on-going green space improvements to parks facilities within the Borough.
- 11.2 To ensure Executive oversight of the final design proposal.
- 11.3 To ensure budget allocation for the project.

### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:** 09/03/2021

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:** 09/03/2021

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**