

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Alice Park Trust Sub Committee	
MEETING DATE:	6 December 2016	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	Alice Park SWOT ( Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis	
WARD:	Lambridge	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM/		
List of attachments to this report: SWOT Analysis of individual areas within the park.		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The newly appointed Alice Park Trust sub-committee has requested that the Park's Section undertakes a critical review of Alice Park in order to make recommendations for improvement works and to offer a context for prioritising any expenditure in the future with a view to compiling a comprehensive management plan.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

The Alice Park Trust sub-committee is asked to;

- 2.1 Instruct officers to submit a draft Management Plan to the February 2017 Sub Committee meeting based on the SWOT analysis contained in this report.
- 2.2 Consider the detail of this SWOT analysis and provide any feedback for inclusion in the prioritised Management Plan.
- 2.3 Use the analysis of Alice Park to set the context for future funding priority decisions with a view to seeking future Capital funding for 2018/19 from the Council which will be the next available opportunity to submit an application.
- 2.4 Note the following priorities for expenditure if a capital bid is to be made to the Council:
  - 2.4.1 To widen the age range catered for by the play area. The existing equipment provides more play for younger children; the layout is poor as most of the space is taken up with cradle swings. Furthermore there is limited play value due to a very narrow range of equipment i.e. predominantly swings.
  - 2.4.2 The completion/continuation of the circular footpath for a variety of users including

toddlers, children, wheelchair users, joggers etc. The longer pathway behind the tennis courts has been costed at an additional £8k, which would take it outside any available funding.

2.4.3 The redesign and replanting of the area between the World War 1 memorial area and the yew hedge, to include renovating of the Plaque area, removing the old shrub borders and cherry trees and replanting with fastigate trees to create a more formal look and under plant with a curving swathe of flowering bulbs and incorporate lavender and roses to accentuate the formality of the area. This could be a phased project to be completed in 2018 i.e. the 100 year anniversary of World War 1.

2.5 To agree the following works that will be undertaken as part of the winter works schedule and which are identified in the SWOT (Appendix 1)

- To paint the railings and Alice Park Sign at the main entrance (maximising the use of volunteers and the probation service where possible).
- To remove the circular bed in front of the nursery and return to lawn.
- To plant successional spring flowering bulbs (January – May) in the lawn in front of the nursery.
- Lift the canopy of the Lime Trees in the Car Park and those overhanging the Tennis Courts.
- Remove weed tree seedlings.
- Mow out the blind daffodils.
- Clean and repaint the benches in the War Memorial area.
- Moss kill the tennis courts.
- Cut back shrub growth from northern boundary returning it to the line of Holly.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

3.1 If the sub-committee wish to proceed with the broader works to the park infrastructure as detailed then this would require capital funding in the order of £97K. A request for Capital funding would need to be made to the Council through the Council's budget management process for approval.

3.2 The winter works proposed will be carried out within the parameters of the service level agreement previously agreed and will be funded from within the Council's parks budget.

3.3 Proposals in the management plan will be costed to seek agreement to be funded from within the Council's parks budget or for external funding to be sought.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

4.1 The Council is sole corporate trustee of the Alice Park Trust and the sub-committee's terms of reference are to undertake the operational management

functions in respect of the Alice Park site and its resources, in accordance with Trust's objects and the duties it owes pursuant to the Charities legislation.

- 4.2 Members in their capacity as Trustee must administer the Trust in good faith, abiding strictly to the objects of the Trust and administering the Trust for the benefit of the public which may at times conflict with the interests of the Council.
- 4.3 One highly important consideration for the APT sub-committee to consider, when deciding upon the issue of expenditure generally but specifically in respect of the skateboard park is, that the income from the Endowment and arising from the Trust Property is currently insufficient to maintain the park without a subsidy from B&NES's corporate funds, and therefore a very clear legal basis would be required in order to enable B&NES as trustee to permit any project to go ahead, if that would involve future expense. The Trust must secure the funding for the works and future maintenance, insurance etc before it commits to expenditure. There is also a potential conflict between B&NES's duty of prudence as trustee of the Trust and its interest in improving recreational facilities for its inhabitants as local authority.
- 4.3 The objects of the trust require the land bequeathed to be used as a public park and children's recreation ground. The committee must consider whether any proposed use falls within the trust's objectives, and if so whether to permit the use requested. If it permits the use then it must decide on what terms, in order to ensure effective use of the park whilst minimising any conflict between the different uses to which the park is subject to under the terms of the trust deed.

## **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The success of Alice Park, like all parks, relies on its ability to attract every demographic through what it is able to offer. It is therefore sensible to ensure that a balanced approach is taken to improve the amenities contained within the park.
- 5.2 In order to identify what might be achieved in Alice Park the B&NES Parks team visited the site to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and used the results to inform this report.
- 5.3 In addition to the more general SWOT analysis in 5.4 below the park was subdivided for ease of reference into key areas and appraised individually. This detailed SWOT analysis appears in Appendix 1 and provides more detail of the works that could be carried out in order to improve the park.

### **5.4 Strengths**

- Strong local support for the Park
  - Appeals to a fairly broad demographic (though less so to older children and teenagers).
  - Clear sight lines across the park support a perception of safety.
  - The designed landscape is largely in place.
  - The park contains enough amenities to have a broad appeal.

- Reasonably well maintained.
- Concise purpose i.e. provision of a set proportion of the site for children.
- Wide use of the park from outside the immediate B&NES area.

### 5.5 Weaknesses

- No cohesive plan for the Park.
- Proximity to a busy road impacts on the air quality.
- Limited (age range) and dated play equipment.
- Poorly designed horticultural areas.
- Some horticultural areas have become 'tired.'
- Limited Parking.
- Main roads dissect the community and deter foot and bike traffic and unaccompanied children.

### 5.6 Opportunities

- The newly established Alice Park Trust sub-committee is able to concentrate on one site.
- Improvements can be made incrementally.
- May be possible for the Trust and its supporters to access additional funding for the Park.
- Potential to maximise income from facilities within the Park though there are time limitations before these can be implemented.
- May be possible to establish a Friends Group that might undertake some aspect of the work in the Park e.g. bulb planting or the adoption of a horticultural area.
- If Park and Ride goes ahead the site would then be more attractive for some small to medium events.

### 5.7 Threats

- Funding to maintain and improve the site is under pressure from external budget reductions.
- Expectation of the Alice Park Trust sub-committee could exceed the available funding/resources.

5.8 A number of options from the SWOT analysis in Appendix 1 suggest themselves as having some degree of priority whilst others can be seen as opportunities for future investment.

5.8.1 The completion of a circular path to unite the site would be advantageous to most users be they young and learning to ride a bike or older and being pushed in a wheelchair or at many of the life stages in between.

5.8.2 Much of the play equipment is quite old and dated (though still usable) and as yet the spider has not been replaced with another piece of equipment. If some investment were to be made in the play area it would be possible to make it attractive to older children.

5.8.3 As it has been suggested that some investment be made in the park infrastructure; the site specific play area; Members of the Alice Park Trust sub-committee may wish to consider some money should be allocated to the horticultural aspect of the park.

## **6 RATIONALE**

6.1 A management plan for the park will provide a framework against which future funding can be sought preventing a piecemeal approach to the landscape of the Alice Park and allowing the Trust sub-committee to prioritise and to seeking estimates for the works.

6.2 A winter works programme will identify works that are to be carried out and identify any phasing of works where appropriate. NB Winter works are not carried out on an annual basis but will be required to fit in with the wider parks programme and the available resources.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 Doing nothing would result in a piecemeal approach to the long term development of the park and potential inefficiency in expenditure.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

8.1 None

## **9 RISK MANAGEMENT**

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Michael Rowan 01225 39 6811</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<i>Skatepark report – Alice Park Trust Sub-committee 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016 Agenda item.</i>  <i>Minutes of Alice Park Trust Sub-Committee August 2016 meeting.</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

**Entrance – Gloucester Road**

<b>Internal</b>		<b>External</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and obvious entrance to the park</li> <li>• Entrance is close to the Children's Play Area and Café/Lavatories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Railings are in need of painting</li> <li>• Signage is tatty and back to front</li> <li>• There is only a bare earth path between the car park and the café</li> <li>• The Nursery wildflower bed appears messy and unappealing.</li> <li>• Weed tree saplings (Ash and Sycamore) are present in the shrub border immediately adjacent to the right hand side of the café and should be removed winter 16/17</li> <li>• Beds in front of Healthmatic toilets are full of weed and shrubs that are over mature.</li> <li>• Tree canopies are low and inhibit relaxation and exclude DDA accessibility</li> <li>• Presence of bike rack clutters the main entrance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A main Alice Park sign mentioning the Sub Trust and a second board for information and notices</li> <li>• Install a formalised path between the car park and the café</li> <li>• Improve the stand for the Alice MacVicar sign Remove the nursery bed and return to grass but plant the wider lawn area with successional spring bulbs</li> <li>• Install low walls, fill with soil and plant with low-growing herbaceous shrubs in front of Healthmatic toilet</li> <li>• Clear beds in front of Healthmatic toilet and replant using shade tolerant architectural plants</li> <li>• Raise canopies of lime trees obstructing paths and other trees around café seating area to increase DDA accessibility</li> <li>• Relocate bike rack inwards of park entrance to entice people into the park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained</li> </ul>

## WWI Memorial Area

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing path to the war memorial facilitates wheelchair access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of distinct formality to memorial area.</li> <li>Plaque needs to be refreshed and repositioned.</li> <li>Community garden obscured by yew hedge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add curved stone wall with embedded seating to either side at the end of the path leading to the memorial.</li> <li>Remove old plaque plinth and replace with improved plinth and position plaque to face upwards.</li> <li>Replace Cherry trees with fastigate trees to create more formal look and under-plant with curving swathe of flower bulbs.</li> <li>Reduce width of community garden Yew hedge by a third.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>

## Central Area

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open area facilitates a number of informal activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of designated social picnicking/ barbeque seating space / facilities.</li> <li>Main planting of Daffodils are now quite old and are coming up blind.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install a small number of barbeque benches.</li> <li>Mow off Daffodil bulbs on flat, but retain on the slope. Plant white bulbs on slope for a more striking effect.</li> <li>Plant bulbs around the old stump.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>

## Pond Area

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pond adds a point of interest and is something not seen in every park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak and somewhat piecemeal design that does nothing to define the area.</li> <li>Pond water has become stagnant and needs to be remedied.</li> <li>Memorial plaque beside pond is in need of cleaning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add white/ silver planting to border hedge.</li> <li>Remove Berberis.</li> <li>Plant trees for autumn colours e.g. Acer. This may fit in with the war memorial aspect.</li> <li>Revitalise/refresh tree and planting landscapes: seasonal colours/ distinctions.</li> <li>Plant white bulbs.</li> <li>Remove weed trees in border hedge.</li> <li>Restore water flow to revitalise pond water quality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>



## Tennis Court Area

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly defined purpose for this area.</li> <li>Revenue stream with potential for growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cut back encroaching northern boundary vegetation from "Horseshoe Walk".</li> <li>Metal object protruding from ground on path between courts and boundary hedge requires removal. Creates a tripping hazard and health and safety risk.</li> <li>Lack of a water source makes it difficult to maintain the courts and the pond.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace corroded iron fencing around tennis courts and resurface courts.</li> <li>Speak to property services regarding repairs to the Tennis hut weatherboards, and roof tiles are broken in places.</li> <li>Create footpath between tennis courts and children's cycle track to extend the 'Horseshoe Walk'.</li> <li>Add a measured distance track between the tennis courts and the fence line.</li> <li>Need to ensure a new water source close to the tennis courts for pressure washing /maintenance of courts / topping up of pond if needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>

## Children's Cycle Track Area

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity of gate to busy road.</li> <li>Lack of welcome sign at this entrance.</li> <li>Lack of horticultural interest.</li> <li>Benches face away from the track.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Install pedestrian safety barrier at gate onto road near children's cycle track.</li> <li>Install Welcome to Alice Park sign at this entrance.</li> <li>Plant bulbs in this area.</li> <li>Add hedging to fence line adjacent to cycle track.</li> <li>Consider repositioning benches to face children on cycle track.</li> </ul> <p>Install miniature road signage to improve the play interest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>

## Shelter

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedding costs low as grown by Council.</li> <li>In-house ground staff maintenance.</li> <li>Recently revitalised and appointed Trustees.</li> <li>Actively publicised on Council web-page and social media.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure in need of repair and refurbishment.</li> <li>Uneven ground.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paint and repair shelter, repair roof and replace missing slats beneath seat.</li> <li>Install guttering on roof to prevent rainfall run off forming muddy areas on ground (where would guttering drain to?) Fill and grass over unsightly puddle depression on ground.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trustees and or local communities resisting improvement changes and Council-intervention at the Park.</li> <li>Funding and revenue security.</li> </ul>

## Play Area

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generous footprint.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly defined boundary that is too close to the road.</li> <li>Lack of seating for parents and carers.</li> <li>Gates are not self-closing so reliant on users always closing the gates behind them.</li> <li>Equipment appeals to a narrow age range.</li> <li>The play equipment is dated and over supplies swings at the expense of more interesting units.</li> <li>Underutilised Table Tennis table.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant more trees at southern corner against the road and possibly redefine the boundary by pulling the hedge line in toward the park and away from the road.</li> <li>Install self-closing gate at play entrance closest to London Road.</li> <li>Install more benches.</li> <li>Relocate the Table Tennis table to a space outside the play area to encourage adult/young adult play. Perhaps the café could rent out paddles and ping pong balls?</li> <li>Shift entrance to play area away from the café to divert foot traffic from café al fresco dining area.</li> <li>Swap the stressed arch swings and the Springies to make room to install a new multi activity climbing frame with slide for older children.</li> <li>Install 3 new Springies in a group facing inwards together.</li> <li>Install a small</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>

		<p>water play feature e.g. water pump and rill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swap some tarmac for grass along the edges of the play area and then alter the grass edge to a wavy design.</li> <li>• Swap some tarmac in the centre of the play area for a more playful (porous) surface using Eco mulch or Nott sport etc.</li> <li>• Swap two flat swings for tango seats (dual seat swings for sharing “carer and baby”) Swap the logs in the bark pit for a see saw or low rotator / wok.</li> </ul>	
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## General and Throughout

Internal		External	
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
•	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bins throughout park are of variable condition and type.</li> <li>Benches in poor condition.</li> <li>What should be a circular path ceases three quarters of the way around the park.</li> <li>Lack of signage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardise the type of bin throughout.</li> <li>A number of benches need either replacing or refurbishment.</li> <li>Add new bin beside each new bench.</li> <li>Create a pathway between the pond area and the London Road to link the two sides of the park and create all weather access for users of buggies, wheelchairs etc.</li> <li>Add interpretation and direction signage throughout the park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget pressures will impact on what can be achieved and more importantly what can be maintained.</li> </ul>