

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
22ND FEBRUARY 2007

Park Lane Open Space, Kidderminster

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	A Better Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Managing the Local Environment
KEY PRIORITY:	Forward Planning
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Anne Hingley
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Ken Harrison (Ext. 2557) Ken.harrison@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	APPENDIX 1: Park Lane, Kidderminster: Public Realm Framework, Final Report – June 2006 <i>The appendix to this report has been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for contact details.)</i>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To apprise Members of a public realm framework for Park Lane, Kidderminster prepared by Taylor Young and to seek approval for preliminary works to improve the open space.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.1 **The ‘Park Lane, Kidderminster: Public Realm Framework’, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report, be endorsed as the basis for further discussions and consideration in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.**
- 2.2 **Subject to funding, the Head of Cultural Leisure and Commercial Services in consultation with the Head of Planning, Health and Environment be authorised to undertake an initial phase of improvements and consultation with the local community as set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During 2005/06 the Head of Planning, Health and Environment in consultation with the Head of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services invited landscape consultants to look at the potential use of an area of open space adjacent to Park Lane in Kidderminster. The final report of the study was considered by the Prosperity Policy Panel on the 10th January 2007.
- 3.2 The Park Lane site provides a natural setting to the town centre and Weavers Wharf development and is designated as 'urban open space' in the Local Plan. On the face of it the site offers a unique opportunity to create some useable green space in the heart of the Kidderminster town centre and lies immediately adjacent to proposed new housing areas earmarked for the existing timber yard and derelict 'Rock Works' factory. The ultimate goal may involve linking this new neighbourhood to Weavers Wharf via a footbridge over the canal and creating a new 'town park' and street improvements.

4. THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACE IN PARK LANE

- 4.1 During 2005 there was known interest emerging into the possible residential redevelopment of sites in the canal corridor, including the former Zanzibar nightclub and the timber yard (both earmarked for housing). In separate negotiations in connection with the 'Piano Building' at Weavers Wharf, the District Council secured developer agreement to land a new pedestrian bridge linking Weavers Wharf and Park Lane. The 'urban open space' beyond Park Lane is an area of self seeded woodland and scrub that was protected for its open space value as part of the 2004 Local Plan.
- 4.2 The framework has helped Development Control secure significant developer contributions to fund improvements to the open space. Whilst interest in other sites has 'cooled' for the moment, the 'public realm framework' provides a basis for future negotiations. It also provides essential technical background to the emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Central Area Action Plan. It is envisaged the Park Lane open space may form part of a 'nature to heart' approach that makes more of the town's relationship with the River Stour. The redevelopment of the timber yard will also help complete the regeneration impact of Weavers Wharf.
- 4.3 The framework provides guidance on:
- Greenspace - a new town park evolving as a new residential neighbourhood develops;
 - Creating the east/ west link to connect regeneration of Park Lane to Weavers Wharf and;

- Potential environmental enhancement works to Park Lane.
 - Next steps... creating an attractive neighbourhood of strong visual character & amenity with clear links to the town centre.
- 4.4 For the main open space, the framework suggests the possible evolution of the space to a 'neighbourhood park' with options ranging from security and safety starting at £35,000 to the creation of a new park costing in the region of £400,000. As a minimum, improvements are needed to the boundary treatment and accumulated rubbish associated with fly-tipping. It is envisaged that any significant scheme would need to be funded through developer contributions and/ or separate grant funding. Further studies will be needed including topography, structures, contamination, trees and biodiversity.
- 4.5 For the streets and development sites specific proposals are suggested for the northern entrance to Park Lane around the Rock Works to create a softer gateway into the area. The framework includes an indicative materials palette. It is proposed that these shall form the basis of pre-application discussions with prospective developers.

Next Steps – Initial Improvements

- 4.6 The recent erection of palisade fencing was an expedient response to the recognised liability while discussions continue about the future of the area. It is envisaged that a first phase project could involve creating a more aesthetically pleasing boundary treatment. Other initial improvements might include the removal of extensive fly-tipping. This would necessarily involve consultation and dialogue with nearby residents to deter further fly tipping and establish local opinion on the future of the open space. It is considered that improvements to the Park Lane aspect will create a more conducive residential setting.
- 4.7 The prospect of creating a new town park near to Kidderminster town centre raises a number of practical and financial implications that will need to be fully considered during any options appraisal and planning process. In particular, any proposals will need to have regard to ownership, on-going maintenance and management of the space and associated infrastructure. It is likely that commuted sum payments may need to be sought to secure appropriate revenue streams. Other issues such as the adoption of spaces, paths and bridges together with community safety, cleansing and maintenance will need to be fully considered.
- 4.8 In addition to seeking developer contributions and subject to other priorities and commitments within the town centre, the Council may also seek to explore opportunities for grant assistance from relevant bodies such as Advantage West Midlands, West Midlands Arts Council, Sport England and/ or Natural England etc.. The Public realm study usefully provides a broad indication of possible costs. However, at this stage the options have not been subject to consultation or full technical

appraisal and, as such, the indicative plans are not sufficiently advanced to develop bids, budgets and more detailed costings.

- 4.9 Finally, it is proposed that the framework for the design of public space in Park Lane be further developed through the preparation of the Local Development Framework – Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. The design guidance contained in the 'Park Lane Public Realm Framework' provides a sound basis for further negotiations and site investigations. It raises a number of issues to be addressed over the short, medium and long term.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is envisaged that the costs of taking the framework forward will be met from a combination of the existing budgets associated with the Local Development Framework together with developer contributions and any other available external funding sources. There is no specific budget allocated for the suggested public realm works but money towards such improvements has been secured through section 106 developer contributions. It is envisaged that, with further development planned in the area, additional opportunities for developer contributions will arise. It is also anticipated that other potential sources of funding such as grant assistance will be investigated. Further reports will be presented to Cabinet if there are any additional financial implications in the future.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The District Council will need to seek the agreement of other land owners but otherwise the proposals accord with s.106 agreements.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 The proposals may raise issues of concern amongst local residents and business. Furthermore, other landowners may not agree to the suggested works being carried out on land in their ownership.

9. CONSULTEES

- Head of Cultural Leisure & Commercial Services
- Head of Legal & Democratic Services

- Head of Financial Services

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Adopted Wyre Forest District Local Plan, January 2004

30th January 2006