

Vigo Road Recreation Ground Management Plan

Report of the Community, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

That the Management Plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground annexed to the report be approved.

SUMMARY:

- This report summarises the work to develop a Management Plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground following community consultation undertaken through the Andover Vision.
- The management plan will help guide the improvement and development of this green space.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report summarises the work to develop a management plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground in Andover (attached as an Annex) following consultation with the community in 2021.

2 Background

- 2.1 Vigo Road Recreation Ground is a popular green space in the ward of St Mary's, Andover. As part of the Andover Vision work programme, a community consultation was held between May and September 2021 with the purpose of understanding whether the green space meets the community's needs, and if not, what improvement and development work might be needed.
- 2.2 A series of workshops were held with local schools and groups along with a number of events and markets attended to help develop a picture of the community's thoughts and aspiration for this green space. Over the period, 570 responses were received from the online survey.
- 2.3 The outcome of the consultation was presented to the Andover Vision members' group in April 2022 with the recommendation being that the group supported the drafting of a site management plan. The first draft of the management plan's vision, aims and strategic objectives along with a detailed action plan were presented back to the Andover Vision members in August 2022 with a request for written comments and suggestions. Written comments received have been taken on board in the revision of the plan and further context on how the document contributes to wider community and environmental objectives added.

- 2.4 Adhering to a structured management plan provides an agreed framework for the care and improvement of green spaces and is an accepted best practice method to achieve the best outcome.
- 2.5 The management plan will be delivered by the Community and Leisure and Environmental Services teams, and intends to build on the existing planned maintenance schedules for the space. The plan has a focus on engaging the local community through specific projects and with the formation of a Friends of Vigo Road Recreation Ground group. The intention is to apply for the Green Flag award for the site when the site reaches the required standard.
- 2.6 The future ambition to extend the size and scope of the space as part of the delivery of the wider Andover Masterplan ambition is included as part of the management plan.
- 2.7 The plan represents a starting point and will be kept under review to ensure it is delivering the required outcomes for the site and local community.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The proactive management of green spaces delivers key objectives within the Councils Corporate Plan *Growing Our Potential 2010 – 2023*. This includes:
- 3.2 **Growing the potential of People** by creating communities that have the infrastructure and accessibility to meet the needs of a changing and growing population. Establishing attractive, sustainable and vibrant communities for people to live, work and enjoy.
- 3.3 **Growing the potential of The Local Environment** by providing high-quality green infrastructure such as green spaces and nature reserves for our communities to access and enjoy for generations to come.
- 3.4 The management plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground will focus on how the site can contribute to the Council's Climate Emergency targets to achieve net zero carbon emission. This will be helped through changes to management practices and new planting.

4 Consultations/Communication

- 4.1 Consultation was carried out with the community over a five month period to understand their thoughts and aspirations for the space. Over 1000 people engaged with this process. The outcome of this consultation was reported to the Andover Vision members group in April 2022. The draft vision, aims, objective along with the detailed action plan was presented to the Andover Vision members group for comment in August 2022.
- 4.2 Consultation on the draft plan has been undertaken across key services and work streams who will be involved with its implementation, including Environmental Services and Community Safety.

5 Options

- 5.1 Option 1 – Approve the management plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground (recommended).
- 5.2 Option 2 – Do not approve the management plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground and continue with the current approach to site management.
- 5.3 Option 3 – Adopt some other approach.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 The option appraisal is as follows:
- 6.2 **Option 1 – Approve the management plan.** A planned approach to the management and future development of a green space ensures that available resources are maximised and the approach to improvement is planned and its impact monitored. The management of a number of green spaces around the borough are guided by management plans which have helped to coordinate improvements over the plan period. The management plan for Vigo Road Recreation Ground follows this approach and is written in response to the community's comments about the space, what works currently, and their ambitions for improvement. Approval by Cabinet would demonstrate that the Council have listened to and have responded to this feedback and are committed to working with the community to deliver improvements within the available resource.
- 6.3 **Option 2 – Don't approve the management plan and continue with the current approach to site development.** Continuing the current approach to the management of Vigo Road Recreation ground will see the site remain as is. Comments about its upkeep were positive from the consultation however this reactive approach to site development will not provide the coordinated benefits required to begin to deliver the communities aspiration for this space.
- 6.4 **Option 3 – Adopt some other approach.** The above are of course not the only two options, some other approach to management of the green space could be taken. However as the proposal set out at option 1 above is the recommendation of a professional officer, formulated with the benefit of their expertise and knowledge having taken into account consultation responses Option 1 is the preferred option.
- 6.5 Option 1 will help to deliver the communities aspiration for this green space in a planned way and responds to the outcome of the public consultation. Option 1 is considered low risk and therefore recommended.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 An evaluation of the risks indicate that the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks have been identified at this time.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 The management plan details a number of projects to improve and develop this green space for the community. It is anticipated that as the delivery of the management plan and individual projects develop, funding will be sourced from collected S106 contributions, funding bids made to the Community Infrastructures Levy (CIL) and external funding bids from sources such as Sport England. Where appropriate bids will be made to the Council's capital programme for consideration.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The Council has a duty of care under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act to do what is reasonably practical to ensure green spaces are safe for use. The Council has an obligation under the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act to consider biodiversity in all decisions.

10 Equality Issues

- 10.1 Green spaces are managed in accordance with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.

11 Other Issues

- 11.1 Community Safety - Low level anti-social behaviour has occurred over the last 12 months at the open space. Increasing the quality of the facilities and public use will help to deter this activity. Safe spaces are places where the community feel comfortable using them at all times of the day. We work across Council and with partners to target issues when they arise.
- 11.2 Environmental Health Issues – The safety of the community who use our green spaces is a top priority. We work across council services to ensure we do what is reasonably practicable to ensure sites are inspected and appropriately managed.
- 11.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate – The delivery of this management plan takes into account the need for appropriate management of the green spaces in order to promote resilience in a changing climate.
- 11.4 Wards/Communities Affected – Vigo Recreation Ground is situated in St Mary's Ward. Local members have been engaged with the public consultation and draft management plan

12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 12.1 Following a management plan for a green space provides a planned approach to improvements and enables the community to inform and take active involvement.
- 12.2 This planned approach to management and the future improvement of Vigo Road Recreation ground demonstrates that the Council is proactive and is responding to the recent community consultation.

12.3 It is therefore recommended that the management plan attached at Annex 1 is approved.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Community, Leisure and Tourism) Councillor D Drew			
Officer:	Kevin Harrington	Ext:	8815
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	26 October 2022