

Agenda Item 6

For decision – Plans for Nurture Open Spaces Programme

Author: Rob Holden, Environment Manager

Summary

This is the first of the updates for the individual programmes that feature in the Council Plan. There follows a summary of the situation for each of the projects listed within the programme. A status update is included for each project. This is on a traffic light basis where green indicates that the project is going ahead without issues, amber indicates that there are impacts on delivery or timeline, and red indicates a significant obstacle threatening project delivery. All projects in this programme are in green status. There are two recommendations – one concerning a new CCTV to be donated to the Police for us in Victoria park and the second is to consider the purchase of a new vehicle.

Progress review for Nurture Open Spaces Programme:

Project	Update	Status
Convene people who use our open spaces to ensure existing groups are represented but also to reach out to other users whom we have not yet engaged	Engaging with local residents to undertake management plan reviews for each site. Showfield is first site. Play Area review underway. Management plan review started	
Work with the forum to consider resident involvement in the maintenance and development of open spaces	As above	
Identify open spaces that we want to take on during the creation of the new Unitary	BCG - acquired Review being undertaken. FTC exploring possibility of being a pilot study for review with new Somerset County as part of Unitary Town Deal	
Consider how FTC would service and maintain a growing number of open spaces	Review of capacity and funding in relation to all new asset acquisition Ranger team back up to full capacity Need for new vehicle – old electric retired. Need offroad/ tipping/carry 4 people/towing for heavy objects on grass – see below	
Work with housing and planning to agree which open spaces should be maintained and which could be made available for housing	Ongoing	
Ensure our parks and open spaces are places that people value highly to enjoy, are accessible and inclusive, and support a wide range of outdoor activities and biodiversity	Review of management plans to ensure inclusivity Taking on direct governance of Millennium Green (already undertake management) Examples - Play Park Showfield, Children road markings The Green Café and toilet refurbishment in Victoria Park, Tennis club Floodlights Mary Baily Biodiversity assessed through iNaturalist record keeping	
Other - Collaboration with partner agencies on land, works and maintenance across Open Spaces and the town	Ongoing as discussions arise Worked with MDC/SCC to review play in Stonebridge area off FTC land Working with Frome Medical Practice Possible exploration of community woodland site	

Update on other projects not included with the Programme

- Review of litter management across Parks and FTC estate
- Process for reviewing including new SIDs and application for second SID

CCTV Camera proposal

The proposal is that FTC work with Police to have a CCTV presence in Victoria Park – one of the known summer crime hot spots in the town. The camera would be sited within the Victoria Park Bowls Club, at the corner closest to the bandstand. The camera would be purchased by FTC from a Police approved supplier and attached to a lamp post that would be installed by the Rangers. This lamp post would be funded by the Bowls Club. The Bowls Club would provide the power to the camera and FTC would engage an electrician to connect the power supply. The Police would install the camera onto this post and would own and manage the CCTV.

Vehicle proposal

Background

The Ranger team now consist of 5 rangers (two newly recruited) in addition to the Tree Officer who also has use of a vehicle to assist with tree watering in the summer and tree planting in the winter. So the outdoor team now consist of 6 people. The previous G3 Bradshaw electrical vehicle is now 3 years passed its 8 year service life and has recently broken down. While we are exploring if it could be viable to bring this vehicle back into active use this is uncertain. In addition there is the newer G4 Bradshaw electrical vehicle that carries two people and the transit van that can carry three people. There is a need to access our off road sites in all weathers, to tow heavy equipment such as chippers or trailers carrying mini diggers and a need to be able to carry materials such as stone or woodchip to site and to off load without manual work.

Whether with the old G3 working or not working, there is a need for an extra vehicle that meets the following criteria:

- Can transport 4 people
- Good off-road access
- Can tow a chipper / heavy trailer
- Can transport to site and then tip materials
- Has low annual running cost and low lifetime cost

There are two options. A new tipping version of the Bradshaw electrical G4 or a Toyota Hilux. The cost is all but identical at just over £37k.

While the G4 is more environmentally friendly in that there are no carbon emissions it cannot access all sites in all conditions, cannot tow weight off road, and cannot transport heavy materials on-site in all weathers and cannot transport 4 people. It is also very expensive to maintain, with servicing costing £90/hour and parts often sourced from France at very high cost. The 8 year predicted lifespan also makes the annual cost of ownership very high.

The Toyota Hilux has very good off-road access even in wet conditions, can transport 4 people, will tow chipper or heavy trailer in all conditions, can tip materials up to the weight that we would need (EG 1m³ of stone). They have a record of very high reliability and very long lifespan (20 years+) making for a low annual lifetime cost of ownership. Although the Toyota is a diesel it has very high emission controls to the point that it meets the strict ULEZ emission requirement and is one of the few vehicles that meets this requirement and can carry weight. It is a vehicle that has proved popular for this reason with other councils as well as businesses within ULEZ zones.

The proposal is to purchase a Tipping Toyota Hilux.

Recommendations

1. Purchase a police sourced CCTV camera and donate to the Police
2. Approve the purchase of a Toyota Hilux Extra Cab Tipper