
FEETHAMS PROGRAMME – RIVERSIDE PARK

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy and Regeneration Portfolio**
Responsible Director – Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update and release the capital funding required to deliver the Riverside Park.

Summary

2. The Feethams Planning and Development Brief was adopted in 2008 and established the objectives and vision for the Feethams Area.
3. Significant progress has been achieved in delivering the vision, including the completion of the DfE Offices, Feethams Leisure development and the Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP).
4. One key element is the creation of a Riverside Park which will provide accessible, high quality open space within the town centre, as well as an attractive frontage for the new development. Part of this scheme has been delivered by developers as part of the Feethams leisure development. The remainder of the Riverside Park project has been developed by the Council and was granted planning approval in November 2016.
5. The funding for the project has been assembled from various sources and totals £555,000 of which £100,000 has yet to be released. This report seeks approval to release the remaining funding allow commencement of the project in early 2017.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that Cabinet note progress on delivery of the project and release the capital funds identified in Paragraph 18 of the report.

Reasons

7. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) Members are aware of the progress in developing the Riverside Park in line with the objectives of the Feethams Brief.
 - (b) To provide accessible, high quality open space within the town centre, as well as an attractive frontage for the new development and linking the new development into the town centre.
 - (c) To enable delivery of the Riverside Park project to commence in January 2017.

Ian Williams
Director of Economic Growth

Background Papers

Cabinet Report – 14 October 2014: Feethams Programme – Progress and Riverside

Kirsty McGready x6314

S17 Crime and Disorder	S17 Crime and Disorder was considered throughout the design of the riverside park to ensure that any potential issues are addressed and mitigated appropriately. Specific issues raised were considered as part of the Planning Approval process.
Health and Well Being	The riverside park will provide informal open space close to the town centre.
Carbon Impact	The design of riverside park has considered carbon impact.
Diversity	The riverside park has been designed to be inclusive for all.
Wards Affected	Central Ward
Groups Affected	None.
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no budget implications to the Council
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Delivery of the riverside park will help facilitate development in the Feethams area, and by providing good open space close to and serving the Town Centre, as well as meeting green infrastructure objectives.
Efficiency	Design of the riverside park has considered life-cycle costing and maintenance requirements.

MAIN REPORT

Background

8. The Feethams Planning and Development Brief was adopted in 2008 (referred to as the Feethams Brief) and established the objectives and vision for the Feethams Area.
9. Significant progress has been made in respect of realising the objectives including the completion of the DfE Offices, Feethams Leisure development, the Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and bus and coach passenger waiting facility improvements.
10. The Feethams Brief identified a number of public goods that should be delivered as part of the regeneration of the area to ensure that the quality of place and amenity of the area is improved, as well as adding to the offer of the Town Centre. The building of a riverside promenade and improvements to the landscape and ecology value of the Skerne was one of these elements.
11. Work on the Feethams Leisure Development started on site on 22 September 2014, and completed earlier this year. This included an element of works along the riverside designed to deliver the first element of the park. This was developed with the Council to ensure there was a consistent design and specification to ensure that footways, materials and design features match to deliver a continuous riverside park.

Consultation

12. Consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the Feethams Brief and specifically on the development of the Riverside Park design in early summer 2016 which informed the planning application process.
13. All feedback received was incorporated where possible into the final plans which were then formally consulted upon as part of the planning application process and considered at planning committee in November 2016. The approved design for the Riverside Park is set out in **Appendix 1**.

Delivery of the Riverside Park

14. The delivery of the project is scheduled to commence in January 2017 following the festive sales season for the Town Centre. It is anticipated that the park will be open by Summer 2017.
15. The commencement of works will trigger the planned permanent closure of the Feethams Public Car Park and there will be temporary footway arrangements during the construction period. In the development of the Parking Strategy the re-provision of this space was factored into the MSCP design with this new facility re-providing the required short term car parking for this part of the town centre.
16. There will be some areas of parking and servicing provision retained in the area, including:-

- (a) The Courtyard at the rear of the Town Hall will be accessed from Feethams and limited to operational parking, loading and servicing of the Town Hall and Bishopsgate House.
- (b) The Lifeline and CCTV parking area will remain at its current location for operational efficiency requirements.
- (c) The Shop-mobility area under the canopy of the Council Chamber will be retained for disabled parking, but limited to 3 hours. This is reflecting concerns regarding the need to keep dedicated disabled parking near to facilities such as the Church, Town Hall, Market Square, Feethams Leisure and the Dolphin Centre.

17. A Communications Plan is in place to advise visitors, businesses and stakeholders of the works and arrangements.

Financial Implications

18. The total budget for the project is £555,000 and Cabinet has previously released the majority of the funding for the project subject to planning approval being granted. There remains an amount totalling £100,000 to release and this report seeks approval to release this funding which is made up from the following elements:

- (a) Further funding will be received by the Council and the HCA from the Feethams Leisure Development agreements over the next couple of years. Members are requested to approve the release of **£90,000** against these expected funds. There is a very limited risk of non-receipt but Members are requested to agree the principle of underwriting the £90k.
- (b) Darlington Lions Club is to contribute £10k towards a Lion's Den (**£10,000**) in and around the development as part of the organisations centenary celebrations in 2017. This will contain a seated area / pergola which will be somewhere for people to sit and have quiet reflection.

19. The Riverside Park project has a landscape management plan with the first three years of maintenance costs to establish the park incorporated into the project costings. Maintenance includes all trees and shrub beds and cutting the grass circa every two weeks.

