



## Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment	Councillor Simon Bridge, Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder	25 March 2021

### Capital Project – Improvements to King George’s Playing Field and open space including Royles Brook in Thornton, Phase Three

#### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval to develop and deliver improvements to King George’s Playing Field and the open space to the north including Royles Brook in Thornton in collaboration with Wyre Rivers Trust.

#### 2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Facilitate and support the improvement of parks and open spaces.
- 2.2 Improve opportunities available to promote healthy choices and healthier lifestyles to keep people well.
- 2.3 Collaboration with our partners to respond to climate change issues, including reducing flood risk across Wyre and increased biodiversity.

#### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the council accepts the offer of support to work in collaboration with external partners, Wyre Rivers Trust (WRT) and Lancashire Wildlife Fund (LWF) to include improvements to King George’s Playing Field and the restoration of Royles Brook; through Section 106 funding and via external funding for the project to be secured by WRT.
- 3.2 That the council’s 2021/22 Capital Programme be amended to include improvements to King George’s Playing Fields using the remaining S106 funds (£10,678) received by the council linked to the planning permission 14/00772/FULMAJ. This will be used as match funding to attract third party funding by WRT. These S106 funds were previously to be fully utilised as part of Phase 2 of this project but an underspend means that they can be carried forward and allocated to Phase 3.

**3.3** That agreements are entered into with WRT and Natural England and LWT to enable biodiversity monitoring access to the ponds for 25 years.

**3.4** That approval is given to authorise the Corporate Director Environment to appoint consultant(s), contractor(s), supplier(s) and legal agreements in accordance with Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules.

#### **4. Background**

**4.1** A masterplan for the site is in place which was informed by community engagement undertaken in 2017.

**4.2** The proposed project will follow the first and second phases of improvements, involving drainage improvements to the playing fields and construction of some pathways which were completed in 2018 and 2020 respectively.

#### **5. Key issues and proposals**

**5.1** The site has undergone some improvements but it is still limited in its ability to enable year round use owing to water retention. The wildlife and biodiversity on the site and climate change adaptability could also be improved along with easier access routes which would attract a broader range of user groups without causing detriment to the habitat.

**5.2** The playing fields are actively used by local sports groups and the YMCA users and any development of the Brook and footpaths would need to be undertaken in a manner that ensures the existing value of the playing fields is not diminished.

**5.3** The aim of the project is to create a series of wetlands, ponds, backwaters, swales and to re-meander a section of Royles Brook which flows through the middle of the site. Both physical and intellectual access to the site will be improved via the installation of 300m of surfaced path and 25m of boardwalk. Both the path and boardwalk will be accessible for wheelchair users ensuring that a wide range of people will be able to access the site. We will also plant around 400 trees, creating areas of wet woodland and reintroducing black poplar to the site, a tree species which has become increasingly rare in the last 100 years.

**5.4** The project will have a wide range of benefits for the Royles Brook sub-catchment, the wider environment and local communities. It is expected that the works will allow for the storage of around 2,000m<sup>3</sup> of water during flood events. The project will also have benefits for water quality, water quantity, habitat quality, carbon sequestration and physical recreation.

**5.5** The project is supported by the Wyre Making Space for Water group which includes each of the flood risk management authorities. It is also supported by local councillors and community action groups such as Thornton Flood Action Group. This project will complement a programme

of wetland creation and river restoration that is taking place in Thornton as part of the Thornton Flood Risk Resilience project. It will act as part of a network of wetlands which store water during flood events and create diverse natural habitats. In this instance the main point of difference at this site is the public access, especially that which is accessible to wheelchair users. This will provide a wide range of opportunities for engagement on freshwater habitats, catchment management and a greater appreciation of natural flood risk management.

**5.6** The project will be co-ordinated by the WRT using a best practice approach, the works will be subject to permitting and approval by various statutory bodies and they will be delivered according to rigorous management systems, with the support and oversight of the council's Coast and Countryside Service.

**5.7** The 2021/22 Capital Programme will be updated to reflect the use of unused S106 funding of £10,678 on Phase 3, as the expenditure on Phase 2 is now lower than predicted (originally £15,385, now £4,707).

The site will be maintained by Wyre Council, its coast and countryside volunteer group and by the WRT and its volunteer group.

**5.8** Interpretation panels will also be situated at the site to provide educational information to support the improvements which are to be delivered and encourage site safety, with more water being visible than previously. The project will also be publicised via project partners and

**5.9** relevant stakeholders.

**5.10** It is a condition of the S106 obligation that the funding be spent on the improvement of open space in the vicinity of Ashdell Nurseries and the former council depot in Thornton. The S106 funding must be spent before August 2026. The proposal will adhere to these criteria and provide an improved facility and contribute to wider community benefits.

## 6. Delegated functions

**6.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution): "To consider matters relating to parks, open spaces, playing fields, playgrounds and allotments."

<b>Financial and legal implications</b>	
Finance	That the council's 2020/21 Capital Programme will be updated to reflect the unused S106 funding of £10,678, as the expenditure on Phase 2 is now lower than predicted previously and that the council's 2021/22 Capital Programme be amended to include improvements to King George's Playing Field Phase 3 using the unused S106 funds (£10,678) received by the council linked to the

	planning permission 14/00772/FULMAJ. This will be used to attract match funding from partners to undertake and manage the project as detailed in the report above.
Legal	A formal agreement with WRT will be entered into for the completion of the works, including engagement and subsequent ongoing maintenance.

### Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	✓
health and safety	✓

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	✓
climate change	✓
ICT	x
data protection	x

### Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

### List of appendices

None

dem/ph/st/21/0003rh2