

Report of:	Director of Regeneration and Culture: Richard Horniman Executive Member for Communities and Education: Councillor Mieka Smiles Executive Member for Environment: Councillor Dennis McCabe
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Submitted to:	Executive - 16 March 2021
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Subject:	Teessaurus Park Improvements
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
That Executive approves funding of £250,000 for the proposed improvements to Teessaurus Park.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent? ¹
Decision	Yes - over financial threshold	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2018-22 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
The developments to the park will provide a much improved outdoor leisure facility for people who live and work in and visit Middlesbrough.	The developments to the park will assist in enhancing the look of the town and provide an improved recreational outdoor space.	The developments to the park will help to strengthen national perceptions of the town by improving a unique park.

Ward(s) affected
Central Ward

What is the purpose of this report?

1. To seek Executive approval for funding of £250,000 for the proposed improvements to Teessaurus Park.

¹ Remove for non-Executive reports

Why does this report require a Member decision?

2. The proposed investment is £250,000 which exceeds the financial threshold and therefore requires a Member decision.

Report Background

3. Teessaurus Park is a unique visitor attraction that has long been part of Middlesbrough's cultural USP. The park attracts visitors from across the north, and has been synonymous with Middlesbrough since its opening in 1979. The park has provided opportunities for children, families and adults to enjoy the area, and the access to the river.
4. As with any park or leisure space, there is a constant need to update the offer, and ensure that the attraction continues to support Middlesbrough's desired cultural image.
5. To facilitate this, a working group comprising of the two Executive Members and the Director cited at the beginning of this report, along with Director of Environment and Community Services and relevant officers was set up in 2020 and explored options for improving Teessaurus Park. A range of improvements were identified and costings gathered and aligned to the improvement plan.
6. The proposed improvements to the park to be funded from the £250,000 capital investment are as follows:
 - 40ft café unit to include internal toilets and customer seating, full kitchen and appliances, a serving hatch for take away refreshments. It is proposed that the operation of the café is outsourced and managed by an independent business.
 - Enhanced lighting throughout the park to be installed on columns and located to illuminate paths and the dinosaur sculptures.
 - Improved footpaths throughout the park to improve accessibility.
 - Mains utilities provision to the park of electricity, water and drainage.
 - Children's zip wire and embankment slide to help increase visitor dwell time.
 - Accessible children's play equipment for children with disabilities.
 - Installation of three CCTV cameras mounted to columns
 - Motion sensors and sound system installed on columns close to dinosaur sculptures to make dinosaur sounds when visitors pass them.
 - Points of interest around the park including installation of large outdoor fixed dinosaur-themed jigsaw puzzles and large dinosaur footprints.
 - Improved signage to direct visitors to the park from the A66.
 - Improved new signage around the park including educational signage providing information on each dinosaur.
 - Development of a marketing campaign to increase visitor numbers and creation of a brand for the park.
7. Subject to Executive approval, the improvement works would commence in late May 2021 with Planning Permission application, followed by a procurement exercise to tender for the purchase of the café unit and site works would be expected to commence in May and be completed in late September 2021.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

8. That Executive approves funding of £250,000 for the proposed improvements to Teessaurus Park.

Why is this being recommended?

9. The proposal to improve Teessaurus Park is recommended to enhance, develop and further market the presence of the popular and unique visitor attraction within the town. This unique offer will benefit the people who live and work in Middlesbrough and also to enhance the town's leisure offering to visitors, aiming to increase and develop visitor attendance from the wider Tees Valley. The outlined developments would increase visitor dwell time at the park which offers large open green spaces, free admission, free car parking and leads on to popular walking routes along the River Tees.
10. The proposed improvements would make the park more of an inclusive environment for everyone due to the improved paths and walkways and the installation of accessible play equipment for children with disabilities. The park could become a great venue to host outdoor events and educational paleontology sessions for school children could be held there.
11. Increased marketing and interpretation opportunities are proposed to increase awareness of this unique outdoor space, access to the river and increase the knowledge of the presence of a series of playful public art pieces within the town. It is felt that it is important to connect the park up with the wider public art plans for the town and the importance of connecting local people with cultural and heritage assets. Working with the marketing and communications team will develop a comprehensive plan to promote the park to audiences in Middlesbrough, the Tees Valley and the Wider North East Region.
12. Sponsorship for some improvements could be explored with local businesses and a marketing campaign could be developed to identify a brand for the park and to increase awareness of the site.
13. Overall, the proposed developments would improve this much-loved leisure facility which is truly unique in the Tees Valley and North East of England and growing on our reputation of offering high quality green spaces. It would be the aspiration to work towards green flag award ensuring Middlesbrough continues to develop vibrant opportunities.
14. Initial stakeholder consultation has been undertaken with the Executive Member for Culture and Communities and the Executive Member for Environment and Community Services and is not statutorily required.
15. The proposal to improve Teessaurus Park has not been examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Board or by a Scrutiny Panel.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

16. An alternative option which was considered was to leave the park in its current condition and not improve it any further. This option is not recommended as it will

not assist with improving visitor numbers to the town and will not provide an improved leisure offering to residents and those who work in Middlesbrough.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

17. None.

Financial

18. The investment of £250,000 will be in addition to the Council's current capital investment strategy.

Policy Framework

19. Approval of the recommendation will not affect any part of the Council's Policy Framework.

Equality and Diversity

20. Protected groups would not be adversely affected by the proposal to improve Teessaurus Park.

Risk

21. No risks being addressed by the recommended decision and no risks are being reduced as a result of approval.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

22. Should Executive approve the proposal to improve Teessaurus Park, the next steps would be as follows (with approximate timescales outlined) and the progress of the development works would be monitored as part of the Strategic Plan delivery tracker:

- Apply for Planning Permission – April 2021
- General site works commence (subject to Planning Permission) – June 2021
- Installation of utilities to site – June 2021
- All works completed – August/September 2021
- Procurement exercise for café unit – tender will be prepared during the improvement works

Appendices

23. None.

Background papers

24. No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.