

EX38. Strategic Parks Masterplanning

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Place Services which provided a progress update, with definite plans for Kinneil Estate including options for a potential Heritage Lottery Bid. In addition, the report proposed how the Council responded to the transition of management of Kinneil Estate along with three other Strategic Parks (Muiravonside Country Park, Callendar Park and the Helix) back from Falkirk Community Trust to Falkirk Council as of 1 April 2022.

Kinneil Estate had a limited annual revenue budget (£14k/annum) and no dedicated capital budget other than that ringfenced for repair and development of the Walled Garden. There was no income target for the Estate but it had generated an average annual income of £3.5k per year (between 2017/18 and 2021/22). Implementation of the existing Estate Masterplan was not complete. The Kinneil Advisory Group had historically overseen masterplan implementation at the site.

Muiravonside Country Park (including Newparks Farm) had a modest annual revenue budget (c£84k/annum excluding staff costs) alongside a commensurate annual income target (c£72k/annum). Typically, annual income at Muiravonside had not met this target (average income 2017/18 – 2021/22 was £52k/annum) and expenditure at the park had also exceeded the available budget. The management plan for the park was beyond its original outlook and there were significant financial challenges which needed to be addressed if the park was to run more sustainably.

In light of this it was recommended that a report was brought forward on the feasibility of transferring Newparks Farm to a third-sector or commercial organisation in an effort to reduce the cost to the Council of running Muiravonside Country Park.

The Helix Park had an annual budget of c£785k (excluding staffing costs) which reflected the costs of running an internationally recognised VisitScotland 5-star visitor attraction. The budget was used to fund site maintenance and management, building maintenance and management, events, catering and retail costs. The income target for the 2022/23 for the site was c£1.4 million. The Park Management Plan would be reviewed in 2025.

Preparation of park masterplans was resource intensive over a long time period and included community consultation and specialist consultant input, prior to the reporting and adoption of any masterplan.

Decision

The Executive agreed that:-

- (1) reviews of the masterplans for Callendar Park, then Muiravonside Country Park and then Kinneil Estate were undertaken along the indicative timescales as set out in paragraph 5.23 of the report, and**

- (2) a report was submitted to Executive to provide an update on the feasibility of transferring Newparks Farm to a third-party organisation to reduce ongoing costs.**