

Project Documentation - Initial Project Proposal Document

Project: Priory Park - Phase One Option appraisal.

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1. Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to set out the requirements for the first phase of the Priory Park Project. In this phase an option appraisal will be undertaken to review the community and commercial buildings within the park including the café, Bowls Club, Cricket and Hockey Club, White Pavilion, public conveniences and the depot buildings. The bylaws may need to be reviewed to ensure they meet the expectations of park users and fit in with the Chichester Vision once approved.

2. Project Description

This project will look at the opportunities available to the Council to be able to deliver both a commercial and community orientated scheme within Priory Park.

3. Background

The lease granted to Chichester Priory Cricket and Hockey Club expired on 31st December 2016 and the club has chosen not to renew the lease and are in the process of vacating the building as its main venue. The park's depot is also in urgent need of replacement and presents an opportunity to rationalise the facilities. This has prompted the need for the Council to review the use of all buildings in the Park with a view to considering the following identified needs:

- Alternative uses of the former Cricket and Hockey clubhouse – these include the Bowls Club for short mat bowls and could also be used, subject to consents, for a variety of other leisure, community or commercial purposes.
- The existing bowls clubhouse could be considered for other commercial or community purposes should it be vacated.
- The current café in the park has planning permission to operate until 31st December 2020 and there is a desire to see a more permanent café facility in the park.
- A possible community space within the park, which could be linked to the need for function space to support the commercial activity of weddings at the Guildhall in the park.
- The parks depot buildings are beyond the end of their useful life. There is potential to demolish the parks depot buildings, refurbish the compound area and provide a much smaller storage/welfare facility.
- The public conveniences in the Park require refurbishment.
- Alternative users for the “white pavilion”.
- The bylaws were last reviewed in 1974.

This proposal supports the Corporate Plan 2015-18 priorities to promote commercial activity and economic growth, to be healthy and maintain clean, safe, pleasant public spaces.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- increased income (from commercial activity);
- enhanced community space;
- Improved satisfaction levels from park users;
- reduced revenue costs
- better quality buildings within the park setting
- resolution of concerns about parks depot buildings

5. Timescales

There is no specific timescale for this project and whilst the Bowls Club are keen to progress their plans to expand their facilities in the Park and the Cricket and Hockey Club have vacated the Clubhouse building, it is important to undertake a full option appraisal of all the buildings rather than develop piecemeal. The café operator has agreed terms for a new lease to expire, alongside the expiry of their planning consent, in 2020.

Any proposal for alternative facilities in the Park would include discussion of terms and lease arrangements. However, no long term agreements will be entered into with anyone until the Cabinet has determined this review.

6. Project Costs and Resources

Costs (£)		Source
One-Off Phase one	Up to £30,000 to employ a Consultant to undertake an options appraisal/design work required. The capital costs of implementation are unknown until the option appraisal is completed.	CDC reserves
Revenue	The Council currently receives rent from the café and bowls club which will be reviewed as part of any options considered.	
Savings	Smaller depot facilities and alternative public convenience provision will reduce revenue costs.	
Services to be involved in the project delivery	The project will be led by the Estates Service supported by CCS, Legal Services, Community Services, Sport and Leisure, Planning Services, PR, Building Services and external consultants.	

7. Benefits vs. Cost

The Council will need to consider and balance the community and commercial benefits of the options and will be informed by the option appraisal.

8. Identify Risks

Pressure to proceed piecemeal; the capital costs may be prohibitive or the returns unattractive; costs associated with a void period and accommodating a variety of differing and varied interests which might be mutually exclusive.