

Elton Reservoir Area, Bury, Greater Manchester

Parkland Strategy

April 2020

1. Introduction and Parkland Vision

The Elton Reservoir Area is a proposed urban extension in a sustainable location which will contribute to the delivery of a substantial new area of “parkland” between Bury and Radcliffe town centres. The Elton Parkland would create new a publicly accessible strategic greenspace of substantial quality. It would be of lasting benefit to existing and new communities, and mitigate the use of greenfield sites by significantly enhancing Greater Manchester’s green infrastructure provision.

The new Parkland will be an integrated environment, balancing the needs of nature and landscape conservation, habitat biodiversity and community recreation, as well as the enhancement of working agricultural holdings. Its integration with neighbouring communities and associated residential development will make the concept accessible and relevant to all.

A parkland approach to development, centred on new greenspace around Elton Reservoir, will deliver planned and sustainable urban expansion to meet housing needs. It would provide family and affordable homes in mixed and vibrant communities, with public open space and social/community infrastructure to serve new residents and create communities.

This will draw on the heritage, landscape and natural assets of the place to create open and accessible greenspaces for all to enjoy and be of lasting benefit to existing and new communities. The new parkland will:

- Be publicly accessible for walking, cycling, jogging, picnics and recreation
- Retain, enhance and manage existing landscape and ecological assets
- Promote and interpret the distinctive heritage of the place
- Increase local biodiversity and create new landscape features and wildlife habitats
- Be managed to promote long-term stewardship, encourage sustainable public use, promote education and enhance visitor and tourist experiences.

This concept is intended to be a best practice and exemplar response to both the Government and Greater Manchester agendas.

The proposals are also in conformity with Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to Green Belt, which states that “local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity...”

The area at Elton Reservoir will provide an unrivalled development in Bury, in a unique parkland setting. Future residents will have access to a new country park including a variety

of recreation and leisure facilities centred around the Elton and Withins reservoirs. This will improve the health and wellbeing of Bury residents, creating an exceptional lifestyle concept.

Further detail on the delivery model and future management of the parkland concept is provided within this note.

Delivery Model

Elton Parkland will be delivered in key steps which focus on the management of landscape components and infrastructure interventions.

The suggested works follow the theme of increased usage, enhanced biodiversity and maximising connectivity.

The delivery of this new parkland and its long term management will require a partnership approach which combines the efforts and aligns the agendas of a range of stakeholders. This will allow stakeholders' aspirations to be discussed, quantified, programmed and costed for delivery over set timescales.

Proposals should be supported by an Integrated Management Plan which will set all the elements down in a working action programme.

The outline delivery process is set out below as a starting point for these discussions. It is split into three parts:

- **Part 1 – Strategy and mechanism for delivery**
- **Part 2 – Themes: detailed proposals in broad categories**
- **Part 3 – Integrated Delivery and Management Plan**

Part 1 - Strategy and mechanism for delivery

The Strategy and Mechanism for Delivery can be secured through the planning process and associated legal agreements.

The residential development will generate capital which will facilitate the delivery of the parkland in a phased manner. A detailed Cost Plan has been prepared by quantity surveyors RLB, which illustrates the total delivery costs of the Parkland.

The viability assessment work undertaken to date, including the RLB cost plan, assumes that the Parkland's capital investment proposals are delivered as part of the early phasing of works, in the first 5 years of delivery of new homes. This has been assumed at the request of the Council that the parkland is delivered in full in the early phasing, rather than over the lifetime of the development. This will help in creating the place and improving the environment, which will in turn support the delivery of new homes.

It is intended that Peel L&P would work with the various landowners and local environmental and community organisations to develop a detailed delivery plan. It may be possible to secure match or joint funding for specific aspects of the Parkland to further support its delivery.

A partnership approach will be taken to the long term maintenance of the parkland. As with the cost of capital investment in the parkland, the cost of maintaining the parkland will be

secured from the development, to ensure long term funding in perpetuity and that the parkland does not impact on the Council's operational parks budgets.

This will be achieved through an annual service charge on each home. It is anticipated that a charge of circa £200 pa would cover public realm and greenspace across the development, including the parkland area but also the more immediate environs of housing.

The management of budgets, spending and coordination of long term maintenance could be managed by a management company established by Peel (and other developers) and eventually to be run by the local community – typically with an independent company overseeing accounting and works. It may be advantageous given the nature of the parkland and the potential role of different partners including tenants, the CRT and environmental groups to establish a community interest company or other structure to manage the parkland over the longer term. There are different potential models which could be applied.

The model for delivering and maintaining the parkland is summarised in the diagram below.



Part 2 – Themes: Detailed Proposals

Access infrastructure – increased activation

Improvements to, and extensions of, the existing public access arrangements to the park landscape resource, will be a primary objective. This will involve investment in public infrastructure, with substantially increased activation for public use and enjoyment. The ultimate intention would be to create a linked and permeable walking and cycling network, which is safe and legible, and that allows for recreation and leisure use along the existing reservoirs and canals and open amenity and wildlife areas. All routes would be linked to the improvement of existing, and new, access points to communities surrounding the Parkland. They could also connect to the existing paths and trails, including the Irwell sculpture trail, Route 6 of the National Cycle Network and a proposed 'Bee Network' route into Bury town centre. It is expected that visitor facilities will be developed which could include a visitor centre and associated amenities.

Amenity grassland and managed agriculture

Alongside increased habitat and biodiversity within Greater Manchester, the parkland will also provide a considerable amount of open amenity space and retained agricultural uses. These areas of grassland will be developed with consideration to which areas of the parkland hold the lowest potential for habitat enhancement and the proximity to the proposed development parcels. Management of these areas will be specific to their function within the parkland. Areas could be identified as either formal private use as shared courtyard spaces enclosed by the new development or as open recreational space within the park catering for a wider variety of users. A considerable amount of agriculture could be retained on site in those areas of least value to creating a biodiverse habitat.

Woodland and tree groupings

The woodland element of the parkland will create a rich green setting for the proposition.

Opportunities envisaged for the woodland structure include:

- Meeting the aspirations and objectives of the Manchester City of Trees initiative – including managing woodland and adding value; educating young people by growing or adopting trees in the park.
- New hot spot planting areas of trees, could encourage new habitat and natural community development.
- Management of existing grassland zones in areas agreed with tenant farmers to develop species diversity and richness, and where appropriate encourage regeneration of scrub woodland.
- Encourage species diversity through creating site specific habitats by selecting tree species appropriate to the park's underlying hydrology. ie alder/birch in areas closer to water bodies or with a higher water table.
- Existing woodland could be retained and enhanced as identified in an agreed management plan with species specific management prescriptions developed and programmed for action.
- New fences could be placed where appropriate to protect new woodland groups from damage by pests and other natural threats or by selective use of tree guards in smaller groupings. Hedges could be retained and enhanced with new planting in areas bounding retained agricultural fields

Part 3 – Integrated Delivery and Management Plan

At the outset of any detailed design of the development and as part of any planning application a comprehensive Integrated Delivery and Management Plan will be prepared.

This will set out in detail the sequencing of the delivery of the parkland and on-going management and maintenance.

Specific details about the funding of the delivery and maintenance will also be included within this document.