# Flagship park nears completion

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Members of Sunderland City Council's West Area Committee gathered to inspect the latest progress on phase two of the redevelopment, which is set for completion next month. Work on phase one of the 18-month project started in October 2009, and was completed in May 2010.

The fully completed park will be officially unveiled to the public at a grand re-opening ceremony on May 21.

Leader of the City Council, Councillor Paul Watson, said: "The park looks absolutely tremendous. It is packed full of family friendly features which will keep visitors entertained all year around. I can't wait until we can invite people in to start fully enjoying it."

"The council has worked in close partnership with several organisations throughout the redevelopment of the park. Without their support all of the fantastic improvements made wouldn't be possible."

"I'd like to thank all of these partners for their help, with particular thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which provided a £2.4million grant to support the redevelopment."

Ivor Crowther, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, said: "It is great to see this restoration almost completed and to know that this valuable park will soon be back to its best for the local community to enjoy."

"Parks are a hugely important part of our natural heritage and HLF is committed to sustaining them long into the future. Congratulations to everyone who has worked passionately on this project which has been a great success."

A key element of the redevelopment has been to make the whole park - and particularly the play areas - accessible to all, including those who are severely disabled. As well as specialist play equipment there is a changing/toilet pavilion fully equipped to support those caring for disabled children and adults and parking - including a number of disabled parking bays.

It is the only park in the region equipped with disabled changing facilities. Some of the other key features of the Barnes Park regeneration include:

- The restoration of historic features such as the cannon, bandstand, railings and gates.
- Disabled and able-bodied play space for all ages including an adventure play area.
- A sensory and formal garden.
- Rejuvenation of the lake and surrounding area, including a new bridge for the lake.
- Removal of excess shrubbery and tree coverage to improve the security of the park and deter anti-social behaviour.
- A multi-use games area.
- Car parking facilities.
- CCTV coverage.

The park covers over 14 hectares and welcomes approximately 120,000 visitors a year.

Along with the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project includes contributions of £800,000 from Sunderland City Council, £150,000 from CDENT, £200,000 from Play Pathfinder and £100,000 from Local Transport Plan.

The official re-opening ceremony takes place on Saturday, May 21, from 12.00 noon until 4pm. The free celebration event includes live music in the bandstand, craft activities, face painting, story telling and more.

**Notes to editors**

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, it invests in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 30,000 projects allocating £4.5billion across the UK with £214million in the North East alone.

**Further information**

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