Council welcomes Brooke Park funding boost

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The Council has successfully secured round two funding from HLF through the Parks for People Programme to support the estimated £5m Regeneration of Brooke Park Project, which will see a total regeneration of the park including its parkland, sports and leisure facilities.

The wider regeneration of Brooke Park work will begin next year, and will mean the creation of some exciting new features in the park, including a state of the art play garden as well as the restoration of historic features such as the Robert Ferguson statue. It is also planned to bring forward the development of the Outdoor Events Area this year.

Welcoming the news, the city's Mayor, Councillor Kevin Campbell, said the award will make a positive difference in the area: "Council is delighted to receive this very significant funding award as the Regeneration of Brooke Park has been on the agenda for a number of years.

"As Mayor, and in support of Council's Parks Development Programme 2012-2013, I look forward to the commencement of this regeneration project. It will leave a lasting legacy for the people of the city, who will be able to enjoy the new improved and much needed parkland, sports and leisure facilities for future generations to come."

Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, commented on the award: "This is a fantastic and exciting project for Brooke Park. The planned works not only carry huge social community benefits but will also preserve it's rich history and fantastic listed structures that date back as far as 1840. With Derry's adoption of the mantle of UK City of culture in 2013, this announcement is timely, with the park set to host various planned community events."

John Kelpie, Strategic Director with Derry City Council, said the scale of the regeneration project would be significant: "The regeneration proposals are extensive, and will transform this important green space in keeping with the historical character of the park, including the restoration of some old features, and creation of some state of the art facilities."

As part of the plans, the gate lodge will be opened to the public and used as a venue to tell the 'Brooke Park Story'. It is also proposed that the much loved Oval Pond is restored to the park, and families will be able to enjoy some great new facilities in the specially designed family friendly area at Gwyn's Pavilion.

The park's sports facilities will also benefit, with the provision of a modern two story Contact Sports Centre, and seven-aside MUGA.

An exciting five year programme of activities and events is also planned to build new audiences for the park.

Note to editors

The park's soft landscaping will be returned to its former glory through extensive planting in keeping with the historic nature and character of a Victorian Park. Surrounding walls, paths and street furniture will also be improved with the main avenues lit for enhanced use and safety. The plans also include the development of a contemporary Gwyn's Pavilion on the site of the former Gwyn's Institute. This will be a family friendly area providing bathroom facilities,

refreshments and enjoying the wonderful panoramic views of the City Walls. Adjoining the Pavilion, a state-of the art Play Garden will be developed to the highest standard.

Sports facilities within the park will be dramatically enhanced. The existing shale pitches will be remodeled into an Outdoor Events Area. The ‘Sparta Hut’ will be demolished and replaced with a modern two story Contact Sports Centre (CSC) catering for sports such as Boxing, Weightlifting, Jujitsu, Karate. This facility will have an associated shared meeting room, toilets, changing facilities and leisure attendant’s office. The disused tennis courts and the underused basket-ball courts will be redeveloped into a new state-of the art floodlit 3G area.

A new Horticulture Training Centre (HTC) will be developed on site within the walled garden. This centre will accommodate both Council Grounds Maintenance Staff and Conservation Volunteers (NI). An adjoining Outdoor Growing Area will provide volunteer training opportunities to adults and young people using Brooke Park. It is also planned that local schools will be actively engaged in building new audiences for our heritage and environment using the park as an outdoor classroom.

Ongoing maintenance and management of the park will be supported through an increased revenue contribution from the Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund, to ensure that Brooke Park is managed and maintained to the highest standards.