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**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report To:** Executive – 15 September 2010

**Subject:** Alexandra Park Restoration Project

**Report of:** Director of Neighbourhood Services  
Head of Leisure Services

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**Summary**

In line with the City's strategy for investment in parks and open spaces, a bid was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in September 2008 for grant funding to restore Alexandra Park's infrastructure, landscape and buildings and to reactivate the park through increased community involvement in activities and management. This bid was unsuccessful, but following confirmation of the City Council's continued commitment to the Park's regeneration and the enthusiasm of the community to see the park restored, a revised Round One bid to the HLF was submitted on 1 March 2010.

The success of the Round One bid was announced on 29 June 2010 and this report is seeking the approval of the Executive Committee to develop a detailed Round Two bid for submission to the HLF. The Round One bid beat substantial opposition to win the funding and the Round Two bid will also be in competition with other schemes, although we are informed by the HLF that generally at Round Two 80% of bids are successful.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is asked to:

1. Note the success of the City Council's Round One submission for HLF grant to support the restoration of Alexandra Park
2. Authorise the Head of Leisure Services to prepare a detailed Round Two bid for submission to the HLF at a capital cost estimated at £263,800, of which £138,500 (53%) has been secured from the HLF, leaving a cost of £125,300 (47%) to the City Council.

**Wards Affected:**

Whalley Range  
Moss Side  
Fallowfield  
Hulme

Community Strategy Spine	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
Performance of the economy of the region and sub region	The restoration of the park will create employment during the capital works programme and the ongoing reactivation of the park will create an attraction that will generate visitors from across the City Region.
Reaching full potential in education and employment	The project will create new employment, training and volunteering opportunities in horticulture which will be targeted at local communities. There will also be enhanced education and interpretation facilities for schools and visitors to the park.
Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect	Regeneration of the park will provide a local, high quality environment open and accessible to all, and a programme of local events and activities where people from diverse communities can become involved in shared experiences and enjoyment.
Neighbourhoods of Choice	The restoration of the heritage landscape will create a destination that will bring visitors from a wider area and will enhance the area's profile and attractiveness.

**Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:**

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

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### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

There will be no revenue consequences.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

The development of the Round Two bid will involve a Project Team consisting of officers and consultants who work with the local community to produce detailed designs and programmes for the restoration and reactivation of the park.

The cost of this work has been estimated at £263,800 and £138,500 has been secured as grant funding towards these costs from the HLF, as part of the Round One submission. The City Council will therefore be required to contribute £125,300 to the cost of the Round Two bid; a request for capital budget approval is included in the Capital Programme – Proposed Increases report.

If the Round Two bid is successful then there will be a need for the City Council to commit to capital expenditure of £2.0m (50%) towards the costs of the capital works, with the balance being provide by HLF grant. The detail of this will be clarified in a further report to the Executive should the Round Two bid be approved by the HLF and capital resources have been earmarked.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee report for information – 15 July 2008

Minutes of Council meeting – 8 July 2009

Heritage Lottery Fund Application – 1 March 2010

Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee report for information – 2 March 2010

Minutes of Communities and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee verbal update – 20 July 2010

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In the mid 1990s the City Council developed a strategy for investment in parks and open spaces to upgrade and improve their infrastructure and facilities to provide attractive places for community activities. This strategy has resulted in successful partnership working to deliver major parks improvement projects across the City such as the HLF/MCC funded restoration of Heaton Park and the work with New East Manchester at Phillips Park.
- 1.2 As one of the earliest and most complete of Manchester's Victorian Parks, Alexandra Park is regarded as being important to the national heritage and is listed grade 2 on the English Heritage Register Historic of Parks and Garden. As such it has been the subject of review over a number of years to identify the means for its renewal and regeneration, as it is widely recognized that the Park is in need of investment by way of a major restoration programme to provide a vibrant space to bring local communities and sustainable sporting activity back into the Park.
- 1.3 The Park has served the local community for over 130 years and has recently seen many improvements to the grounds maintenance regime, play and sports provision especially over the last 2 years. Although many of the original Victorian design features still exist, others have been eroded by change over the years and much of the basic fabric and infrastructure of the Park is in need of repair. The necessary remedial work and any further investment in improvements are substantially beyond the resources of routine maintenance budget provision, or small grants packages.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 To address these issues, in September 2008 the City Council, through Leisure Services submitted a bid to the HLF and BIG Lottery 'Parks for People' programme for support for a £6.7m project to restore Alexandra Park. This bid was not approved despite it being recommended as a high priority by the HLF Regional Committee. It was in fierce competition with other projects in a national bidding round that had £118M of bids for a funding pot of £20M.
- 2.2 Following this disappointment, the City Council confirmed its commitment to restore the Park and officers held meetings with HLF officers at national and regional level. It became clear that HLF considered that the project was still important and encouraged the City Council to submit a fresh bid to their 'Parks for People' (PfP) fund, albeit for a reduced amount, to restore the Park.

## **3.0 Heritage Lottery Fund 2010 Bid**

- 3.1 On this basis of this commitment by the City Council, and with the continued enthusiasm of the Friends Group and local community for the restoration, a revised bid to the new HLF PfP scheme was submitted on 1 March 2010 for support for a £4m scheme to restore the park. On 29 June 2010 the HLF announced Manchester's success at Round One for the restoration of

Alexandra Park and we now have up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

- 3.2 Our vision is to enable local people to rediscover Alexandra Park and for the park to become the 21<sup>st</sup> century living heart of a reinvigorated community and provide a tangible regenerative effect in the area. The project will reinstate the Park's historic infrastructure and recapture the original design, and it will refurbish and bring back into use the Park's buildings providing spaces for the Community to meet and gather on a formal and informal basis. The Community will be involved in the development of the Round Two bid in the detail of the design of the spaces, in researching the history of the park and in the creation of a People's Panel to root the Community within the Park's management structure.
- 3.3 This will have a real and positive impact on individuals, families and community groups with opportunities for them to become volunteers and potential trainees in horticulture, sporting and cultural activities and interpretation of the heritage, and support the broader investment into Moss Side, Hulme and Whalley Range to create flourishing neighbourhoods.
- 3.4 Now that we have HLF approval at Round One for these proposals the Project Design Team, comprised of MCC officers from relevant stakeholder departments and consultants, has a period of two years to work closely with the HLF Project Officer and the local community to refine the detail of the scheme. Using this close consultation approach the community will be given the tools to articulate and 'shape their own plans for their own park' and will ultimately be rooted within the park's management structure ensuring that real community involvement will strongly influence the management of the park, its activities and future development once the changes are made.

#### **4. Key Policies and Considerations**

##### **(a) Equal Opportunities**

- 4.1 The restored park will provide a wide range of accessible opportunities for all sectors of the local community, including volunteering, employment, free play and sports facilities, small scale local events and activities, large scale annual events such as the Caribbean Carnival, high quality amenity horticultural displays, interpretative exhibitions and educational services.

##### **(b) Risk Management**

- 4.2 Comprehensive risk assessments have been undertaken as part of the Manchester Method and were included in the HLF Application documents.

##### **(c) Legal Considerations**

- 4.3 None at this stage