



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Cabinet Report

Report of: Simon Green: Executive Director PLACE

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 12th November 2014

Subject: **Proposed World War 1 Centenary Field
Dedication: Weston Park, Sheffield S10 2TP**

Author of Report: David Cooper - 2734350

Key Decision: YES

Reason Key Decision: **Charitably held City Park**

Summary: Sheffield City Council proposes to nominate Weston Park as a 'Centenary Field', as part of a national initiative being led by the Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion. The Centenary Fields programme 2014-18 aims to protect at least one green space in every local authority area across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to commemorate the centenary of World War I (WW1).

Weston Park has been selected because of its local heritage and significance. The Yorks & Lancaster Memorial within the Park commemorates the loss of more than 8,800 soldiers during WW1, including the Sheffield Pals. Dedicating a Centenary Field is a fitting way for local authorities to mark the centenary of WW1 by commemorating the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the conflict and ensuring that their communities benefit now and in the future from protected green spaces.

Weston Park is held by the Council in its capacity of the Weston Park Trust, a registered charity.

Reasons for Recommendations:

Weston Park is felt to be the most significant and accessible high profile city park that Sheffield has to offer which best matches the national Centenary Field designation criteria. The historic local links and memory of the Sheffield City Battalion / the Sheffield Pals and Yorks and Lancaster Regiment are significant. Nominating this site does not further increase the Council's current revenue commitment for maintenance or require any new capital investment. The designation further compliments the charitable status and is consistent with the objects of the Charity. Fittingly, Weston Park is recommended as the City's flagship nominated site for WW1 Centenary Field designation.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet acting in its capacity as trustee of the Weston Park Trust give approval and authority to:

- a) formally submit an application to designate Weston Park, Sheffield, S10 2TP as a Centenary Field in conjunction with the Fields In Trust charity, to provide further protection to ensure that it will continue to be managed as a public park and recreation ground in perpetuity.
 - b) authorise the Director of Capital and Major Project Management in consultation with the Director of Culture and Environment, to negotiate the terms of the documentation needed to dedicate the land; and
 - c) authorise the Director of Capital and Major Projects Management to instruct the Director of Legal Services to take all necessary action and complete the documentation needed to dedicate the land.
 - d) subject to recommendations a- c being concluded, the site will be formally dedicated as a Centenary Field in a ceremony to be arranged during the next year.
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Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

If CLOSED add 'Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).'

* Delete as appropriate

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
YES Cleared by: Paul Schofield
Legal Implications
YES Cleared by: David Hollis
Equality of Opportunity Implications
NO
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
NO
Human Rights Implications
NO
Environmental and Sustainability implications
YES
Economic Impact
NO
Community Safety Implications
NO
Human Resources Implications
NO
Property Implications
YES Dave Wood
Area(s) Affected
City
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Lead
Cllr Isobel Bowler
Relevant Scrutiny Committee
Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
NO
Press Release
YES

REPORT TO CABINET

PROPOSED WORLD WAR 1 'CENTENARY FIELD' DEDICATION: WESTON PARK, SHEFFIELD, S10 2TP

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Sheffield City Council proposes to nominate Weston Park, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TP as a 'Centenary Field.' Forming part of a national initiative being led by the Fields in Trust and the Royal British Legion, the Centenary Fields programme (2014-18) aims to designate and protect at least one green space in every local authority area across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to commemorate the centenary of World War I (WW1).
- 1.2 Weston Park was one of the first municipal parks in Sheffield and first opened its gates to the public in 1875. It remains one of the UK's finest public parks, further enhanced by its recent 21st century restoration and it enjoys national Green Flag Award status. As an historic and important city flagship site and well established visitor destination, Weston Park has been chosen because of its local heritage and significance. The Yorks & Lancaster Memorial within the Park commemorates the loss of more than 8,800 soldiers during WW1, including the Sheffield Pals, and reminds of us all of the ultimate sacrifice made by others in our past.
- 1.3 The Park is held by the Council as trustee of the Weston Park Trust, a registered charity.
- 1.4 Dedicating a 'Centenary Field' is a fitting way for local authorities to mark the centenary of WW1 by commemorating the sacrifice of those who lost their lives in the conflict and ensuring that their communities benefit now and in the future from protected green spaces.
- 1.5 One of the principal objects of the Charity is the provision of facilities for the recreation and leisure time occupation of the inhabitants of Sheffield, particularly those who have a particular need due to youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances. The proposal to dedicate as Centenary Field is consistent with these charitable objects.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SHEFFIELD PEOPLE

- 2.1 By further safeguarding Weston Park, this new Centenary Field designation will contribute towards creating a living UK-wide legacy in commemoration of the sacrifice made by those who lost their lives in WW1.
- 2.2 Each Centenary Field will be provided with signage to indicate its designated status. The Centenary Fields programme is also complimentary to the local authority's Armed Forces Community Covenant policy commitment.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 The Centenary Fields designation will further ensure that the Weston Park will remain available for current and future generations to use and enjoy.

4.0 THE CENTENARY FIELDS PROGRAMME & WESTON PARK

Background to the Centenary Fields Initiative

- 4.1 The Royal British Legion and Fields in Trust are leading a nationwide initiative aimed at securing recreational spaces in perpetuity in honour of the memory of the millions of people who lost their lives in World War 1 (WW1). The objective of this new programme is to encourage every local authority in the UK to nominate at least one recreational space to be dedicated as a Centenary Field to commemorate this significant milestone in our shared history and to create a tangible living local legacy that will be valued by local communities for generations to come.
- 4.2 As the UK's largest Armed Forces charity and the Custodian of Remembrance, The Royal British Legion are leading the nation in respecting the sacrifices made during World War 1. The Fields in Trust – the operating name of the National Playing Fields Association – has been the leading independent charity campaigning to secure and improve playing fields for more than 85 years with the long standing support of the Royal Family. Working together they plan to deliver the Centenary Fields programme, which aims to protect the war memorial parks and playing fields in memory of those who lost their lives, or other green spaces that local authorities may want to dedicate. As well as providing an opportunity to commemorate the sacrifice made, this initiative is also in keeping with the spirit of the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

City Site Selection – Weston Park

- 4.3 Weston Park is important both locally and nationally and has been selected as the City's potential flagship site for Centenary Field designation following desktop research and consultation with the Fields In Trust. The grounds, covering 5 hectares, were first acquired, by the City in the 19th century, who commissioned Robert Marnock, one of the leading park and garden designers of the 19th century to create the new public park (Marnock also designed the Sheffield Botanical Gardens, High Hazels Park and Regent's Park in London). See Appendix One for a Site Plan and the proposed area of inclusion.
- 4.4 Weston Park first opened its gates to the public in 1875. As a living landscape the Park has evolved and developed since. The publicly cherished Park contains many Grade II listed features and monuments today, reflecting the City's growth, its history, and its social context. Significantly, there are 2 war memorials located in Weston Park, including those who fought in the Sheffield City Battalion.

York and Lancaster Regiment Memorial

- The main York and Lancaster Regiment Memorial was unveiled in 1923 in

memory of 8,814 officers who died in World War 1. A later inscription records the death of 1,222 members of the Regiment during World War 2.

Transvaal War Memorial

- Commemorates the Boer War (1899 to 1902). The memorial was moved to Weston Park in 1957 from its original site on the forecourt of the Sheffield Cathedral.

4.5 In common with other industrial towns in the north of England, Sheffield was quick to form its own “Pals” battalion in the early weeks of the First World War. In September 1914 a full complement of around 1,000 local men were recruited within just two days. On July 1st 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the Sheffield City Battalion (the 12th Service Battalion York & Lancaster Regiment) fought alongside the Accrington Pals in the heroic but failed attempt to capture the heavily fortified village of Serre in France. Tragically, the Sheffield City Battalion was largely wiped out, with well in excess of 500 men being killed or wounded in battle on this single day alone.

4.6 For further information about the Regiment and Battalion online see:

- The York and Lancaster Regiment, 12th (Service) Battalion, The Sheffield Pals see: <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/somme/memorial-sheffield-park.htm>
- BBC World War One at Home: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0230n3y>
- The Fields In Trust: <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/centenaryfields.aspx>

4.7 Working in conjunction with the Fields In Trust and the Royal British Legion, the Sheffield Community Covenant Partnership Board will be consulted and involved further as this initiative is progressed.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A proposed draft Deed of Dedication has recently been received from the Fields In Trust for consideration and nomination. To enable a Centenary Fields application to be formally completed, Cabinet acting in their capacity as Charity Trustees, are advised of the following legal implications:

a) Entering into a Deed of Dedication as a ‘Centenary Field’ is not classed as a disposal of an interest in land as the land remains in the ownership of the Council as trustee of the Charity. The dedication only places restrictions on the use of the land and further restrictions on the ability to dispose of it in the future. Consequently, the restrictions on disposal contained within sections 117 – 121 of the Charities Act 2011 do not apply to the proposed dedication, nor do the conditions relating to the disposal of land in section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

b) By completing the dedication the Council will agree to restrict the use of the land on the terms required by the dedication. The Council will maintain Weston

Park, so far as is consistent with its duties as a local authority, and it will have due regard to any advice given from time to time by the Fields In Trust on the management and running of the property.

c) The Council as trustee must act within the objects of the Charity, but as outlined in the report, the proposed dedication is consistent with those objects.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nominating Weston Park as the city's flagship 'Centenary Field' site in 2014 does not commit the City Council to any further additional investment for access and maintenance over and above what is currently being committed and achieved today as a city Green Flag Park. Weston Park will continue to be maintained by Sheffield City Council within its normal core revenue budget allocation for management and upkeep.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Sheffield City Council has been directly approached by the Fields In Trust / The Royal British Legion to nominate a suitable site within the City's boundary to be part of this national initiative. The City Council does not have to nominate a site but this report provides the City the opportunity and option to now do so.

7.2 The Fields In Trust / Royal British Legion Centenary Fields initiative is specifically about the centenary of World War 1 (1914-18). Any site nominated needs to have an appropriate historic link and value. Following desktop research, the Sheffield General Cemetery, Chapeltown Park and the rural Redmires Practice Trenches have also been considered as having significant local historic merit because of their WW1 associations and connections. At this stage however, it is envisaged that each would require further site investment to increase their profile to become more suitable as a promoted visitor attraction / feature as part of this national initiative and as the City's flagship.

7.3 Some locally significant WW2 associated park sites were also identified in the desktop research undertaken, including Endcliffe Park. In further consultation with the Fields In Trust, we have subsequently been advised and confirmed that the primary focus of the 'Centenary Field' programme and associated designation is for WW1 associated sites and memorials.

8.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Weston Park is felt to be the most significant and accessible high profile city park that Sheffield has to offer which best matches the national Centenary Field designation criteria. The historic local links and memory of the Sheffield City Battalion / the Sheffield Pals and Yorks and Lancaster Regiment are significant. Nominating this site does not further increase the Council's current revenue commitment for maintenance or require any new capital investment. The designation further compliments the charitable status and is consistent with the objects of the Charity. Fittingly, Weston Park is recommended as the City's flagship nominated site for WW1 Centenary Field designation.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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Author: David Cooper

Job Title: Head of Policy & Projects (Culture & Environment)