

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COBTREE MANOR ESTATE COMMITTEE**

**14<sup>TH</sup> March 2012**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND REGULATORY SERVICES AND THE  
COBTREE OFFICER**

Report prepared by:  
Joanna Joyce, Cobtree Officer  
Paul Holland, Senior Accountant  
Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager  
Ian Trueman, Senior Solicitor

1. **REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASTER PLAN FOR COBTREE MANOR PARK**
- 1.1 Issue for Decision
- 1.1.1 To consider the project plan set out within this report ("the project plan") for the implementation of the proposed enhancements to Cobtree Manor Park as outlined within the report dated June 2010 prepared by Adam S. Bailey Garden Design and updated in March 2012 ("the Master Plan").
- 1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director of Environment and Regulatory Services and of the Cobtree Officer
- 1.2.1 It is recommended that the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee agrees to and endorses the formal withdrawal of the previous resolution to the Charity Commission and replaces that resolution with the resolution set out in paragraph 1.2.2 below.
- 1.2.2 The Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee agrees, approves and resolves to pass the following:
  - (i) For Officers to approach the Charity Commission using either the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity's statutory powers under Section 75A of the Charities Act 1993 as amended by the Charities Act 2006, or other appropriate powers seeking the release of £1,065,000.00 of the permanent endowment in the following terms:

That the Committee acting as the trustee to the registered charity known as Cobtree Manor Estate (no. 283617) resolves to release from its permanent endowment funds to implement, in three phases, the enhancements to Cobtree Manor Park outlined in the report dated June 2010, as updated in March 2012, prepared by Adam S. Bailey Garden Design ("the Master Plan"); such implementation being in full compliance with the objects of the charity and seen in its best interests in order to encourage greater use of Cobtree Manor Estate by the general public.

- (ii) Should the Charity Commission give its approval for the releasing of part of the permanent endowment as outlined in (i) above to expend those moneys (i.e. £1,065,000.00) on completing phases 1, 2 and 3 of the Master Plan.

It is further recommended:

- 1.2.3 The Committee endorses and approves the Master Plan attached as **Appendix D**; this plan being an update of the original plan prepared by Adam S. Bailey as approved by the Committee at its meeting on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2010.
- 1.2.4 The Committee approves the repayment programme recommended by the Senior Accountant within this report (**Appendix A**) and authorises officers to approach the Charity Commission seeking its approval for the implementation of that repayment programme.
- 1.2.5 The Committee approves the project plan (**Appendix B**) and the implementation of the design details set out within the Master Plan by three separate phases;

Phase 1 – Installation of the first phase of the play area.

Phase 2 – Other Works such as: The picnic area, the hard path network and nature trail paths, way finding posts and maps, viewing platform and pond clearance, car park resurfacing and edging, woodland management and park tree works, boundary planting, new arboretum trees, car park replanting, improved boundary fencing around the estate bridal path, trim trail, outdoor seating and bins, sculptures, bridal path rerouting and resurfacing, Llama house renovation, and the final phase of the play area.

Phase 3 – The building of the visitor centre and café.

1.2.6 The Committee approves the location (as indicated on the **Appendix E** map) and the design of the play area and authorises the Head of Legal Services to enter into a contract for the construction of the first phase of the play area (phase 1) once release of the permanent endowment funding has been agreed by the Charity Commission.

1.2.7 The Committee endorses the Officers decision to bring to a later meeting of the Committee reports seeking approval for:

1.2.7.1 The detailed design of the phase 2 works including the second phase of the play area and entering into a contract or contracts for these phase 2 works.

1.2.7.2 The final design of the visitor centre and café.

### 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 As stated Committee Members have previously endorsed the Master Plan dated June 2010 of which **Appendix D** is an updated version, for the future enhancement of the Cobtree Manor Park. It was resolved (in July 2010) that:

(i) The Master Plan be endorsed as the “guiding principles” document for the future development of the Cobtree Manor Park;

(ii) The play equipment should remain the highest priority element of the scheme; and

(iii) The officers report with a future project plan, including design specifications, phasing and funding proposals.

1.3.2 Following the failure of the project to achieve funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund all funding will now need to be sourced as recommended by the Senior Accountant.

### 1.4 Charity Commission Approval

1.4.1 The Committee has previously resolved to approach the Charity Commission for its approval to use up to £500,000.00 of the permanent endowment.

1.4.2 It is recommended that the Committee agrees to the formal withdrawal of this existing resolution (the Charity Commission has already informally been advised of this) and its replacement with a new resolution seeking approval to use £1,065,000.00 of

the permanent endowment in order to fund all 3 phases of the project plan. This approach to be coupled with details of the repayment programme identified by the Senior Accountant within this report (**Appendix A**).

## 1.5 Funding recommendations

The implementation of the Master Plan as detailed elsewhere in this report will cost an estimated £1,065,000.00. There are three options available to fund the works:

- Use of the permanent endowment;
- An external loan from a financial institution;
- A loan from Maidstone Borough Council.

1.5.1 It is recommended that the permanent endowment is used for funding. The Charity Commission have indicated in principle that the endowment funds could probably be used, but with the condition that there is a plan in place to replenish the endowment fund to its current level over a period of time.

The advantage of using the endowment monies is that the required funds can be drawn down as they are required, and the replenishment of the funds can be scheduled to accommodate the ongoing annual cashflow requirements of Cobtree Estate. The disadvantage of using these funds is that there will be a loss of investment income when the funds are initially drawn down, although as the fund is replenished investment income should rise accordingly.

1.5.2 An estimated cashflow projection, along with details of the proposed use and replenishment of the endowment funds is attached at **Appendix A**. At this stage these figures are indicative, as the final costs of the plan are subject to confirmation once the relevant contracts have been finalised. It should also be noted that the return on investments, both from the permanent endowment and the annual investment income from Cobtree Charity Trust Ltd are subject to the prevailing economic climate and the impact this may have on investment returns. The projection also assumes that the golf course contract will continue to produce a similar return, but this cannot be guaranteed in the longer term.

1.5.3 For these reasons and because of the possibility of unforeseen items of major expenditure arising the annual sum for replenishment will be subject to adjustment. This is also an

advantage of using the endowment monies for funding, as the flexibility to vary the annual sum does exist provided the Charity Commission agree to such flexibility being incorporated into the repayment programme. The cashflow projection shows a period of 15 years, with the initial level of repayment lower to reflect the impact of the loss of investment income in the early years. It is intended that details of the replenishment of the fund will be reported as part of the regular financial monitoring reports that the Committee receive. Although the cashflow projection does not show the fund being replenished to its current level it does demonstrate to the Charity Commission that the endowment funds can be replenished over time, subject to a number of assumptions and risks as identified above.

## 1.6 Project Plan

1.6.1 Attached at **Appendix B** is an outline project implementation plan which indicates the timescales within which it is anticipated the various enhancement proposals could be completed once adequate funding has been approved. Phases are as follows (subject to Charity Commission approval):

- Phase 1, Play area, March 2011 – July 2012
- Phase 2, Parks works, June 2012 – February 2013
- Phase 3, Visitor Centre/Café works, March 2012 – May 2013

1.6.2 Attached at **Appendix C** is a breakdown of each phase and the tasks and allocated funding, each element has an additional 10% contingency funding allocated.

- Phase 1, Play area, £170,000 (£153,000 and £17,000 contingency).
- Phase 2, Parks works and second phase of the play area £482,500 (£434,250 and £48,250 contingency).
- Phase 3, Visitor Centre/Café works, £384,500 (£346,050 and £38,450 contingency).
- Additional costs £28,000 (£25,200 and £2,800 contingency).

## 1.7 Project Phasing

1.7.1 It is recommended that the project is implemented in three phases.

1.7.2 Phase 1, Play area

The play area design at the revised value of £170,000 (£153,000 and £17,000 contingency) was tendered for and the preferred design identified, and now needs to be finally approved by the Committee because it:

- Provides an unusual bespoke destination play area.
- Caters for children across a wide variety of ages.
- Will provide an attraction to draw visitors to the park.

Revised drawings of the play area design will be made available at the meeting for the Committee to inspect. The location of the play area as indicated on the map marked **Appendix E** will also need to be approved.

1.7.3 There is the potential to further improve this design by working with the winning company. Any alterations will be brought to the attention of the Committee for approval prior to the commencement of the second phase of the play area installation. This will be undertaken as part of Phase 2 of the Master Plan works. A total of £180,000 (£162,000 and £18,000 contingency) has been budgeted for these additional improvements.

1.7.4 The play area works are scheduled for March 2011 - July 2012 (subject to Charity Commission approval).

1.7.5 Phase 2, Other works

Remaining Parks works from the master plan and second phase of the play area totalling £482,500 (£434,250 and £48,250 contingency).

Works to include;

The picnic area, the hard path network and nature trail paths, way finding posts and maps, viewing platform and pond clearance, car park resurfacing and edging, woodland management and park tree works, boundary planting, new arboretum trees, car park replanting, improved boundary fencing around the estate bridal path, trim trail, outdoor seating and bins, sculptures, bridal path rerouting and resurfacing, Llama house renovation and the second phase of the play area installation.

- 1.7.6 The final designs and specifications for materials, and outlines for these works will be brought to the Committee for approval prior to the commencement of works.
- 1.7.7 It is recommended that these remaining works are tendered for separately and carried out following the completion of the play area in accordance with the project plan after prior approval of the Committee, **Appendix B**.
- 1.7.8 Depending on the decision of the Charity Commission and the procurement process these works are scheduled for June 2012 – February 2013.
- 1.7.9 Phase 3, Visitor Centre and Café  
The budget for the Visitor Centre and Café is £384,500 (£346,050 and £38,450 contingency). Final designs and specifications for the building will be brought to the Committee for its approval prior to any contract being tendered for.
- 1.7.10 It is recommended that the Visitor Centre and Café is tendered separately and works are commenced following the completion of the other works in phase 2, as identified in section 1.7.5, and according to the project plan **Appendix B**.
- 1.7.11 The Visitor Centre/Café is an important hub for the park and will also provide interactive information boards, cycle stands, interpretational signage and renovation of the elephant house.
- 1.7.12 Depending on the Charity Commission and the procurement process the Visitor Centre/Café works are scheduled for March 2012 – May 2013.
- 1.8 Alternative Action and why not Recommended
- 1.8.1 The alternative course of action is to not implement the agreed Master Plan. This is not recommended as the Committee has already endorsed the original version of the Master Plan as outlining the best programme for the future development of Cobtree Manor Estate.
- 1.8.2 A second alternative is that the project is delayed and Heritage Lottery Fund grant funding re-applied for. This is not recommended as there is still only a limited chance of success due to the high competition for funding, and this would delay the project for another year. As a funding source has been identified it is recommended that the advice of the Senior Accountant is followed.

1.8.3 The plan could be funded via an external loan or a loan from the Borough Council. However, this would mean a commitment to regular fixed repayments, which could potentially have cashflow implications depending on how the economic climate develops in future years, and if a major item of unforeseen expenditure were to occur. The use of the endowment funds is a more flexible approach to funding that can take into account the impact of the economic climate, on the basis the Charity Commission agrees to the basic approach recommended in this report.

1.9 Impact on Charity Objects

1.9.1 The whole essence of the Master Plan is to seek to better meet the objects of the Charity by increasing the attractiveness of Cobtree Manor Park and thus increase the number of visitors to it, thereby enhancing public benefit of the park to the inhabitants of Maidstone and indeed of the County and elsewhere generally. The improvements set out in the Master Plan will build upon the increasing popularity of Cobtree Manor Park already evidenced through activities such as guided walks already operating in the park.

1.10 Risk Management

1.10.1 Risk assessments will need to be reviewed at each stage of the implementation process. The greatest risk is that the project will go over budget and that the proposals might fail to attract an increased number of visitors to the park.

1.10.2 The cashflow projection does contain a number of assumptions regarding future financial performance and economic conditions. However even after allowing for increased running costs the Cobtree Manor Estate will still be generating a healthy annual surplus to replenish the endowment fund, although the time period over when this happens could potentially be impacted by future events that are outside the control of officers. The endowment fund will also still contain an adequate minimum balance of approximately £0.4m after the monies for this project have been withdrawn.

1.11 Other Implications

1.11.1

Financial

Staffing



Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social Inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Considerations for Disabled Persons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Environmental/Sustainable Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Community Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Human Rights Act	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- 1.11.2 The implementation of the Master Plan will cost an estimated £1,065,000.00. The financial implications are outlined in the report.
- 1.11.3 A new approach will have to be made to the Charity Commission seeking an order or scheme for the use of the permanent endowment fund for this project.
- 1.11.4 The funding required has been increased from the original estimated sum of £873,300. This further £191,700 is a result of revised costs following additional further information and equates to;
- £72,000 in additional funds for the Visitor Centre/Café following advice from building experts,
  - £4,500 for a project engineer not originally included but which has proved worthwhile in the Mote Park project;
  - £4,500 for bridle path rerouting and resurfacing which was not included in the original project cost; and
  - £1,530 increase for benches and way finding posts as these have proven more expensive than anticipated in the Mote Park project.
  - £90,000 for the improvements to the play area winning design.
  - £19,170 for an additional 10% contingency.
- 1.11.5 The building of the Visitor Centre will result in a need for further staff to run it. It is initially intended that this will be part of the café franchise. There will also be a requirement for an additional

member of parks staff as the workload from additional school groups and visitors increases.

- 1.11.6 The net surplus generated by the golf course/park is currently in the region of £70,000 per annum. This will be used to fund the additional staff costs for the Park and Visitor Centre, and then any remaining surplus will be reinvested into the endowment funds to replace those withdrawn to finance the Master Plan.
- 1.11.7 The addition of a visitor centre will allow better resources for visitors and enable better social inclusion by increasing the number of courses and events that can be run in the park, allowing time for more specialist and inclusive courses to be included in the programme.
- 1.11.8 The implementation of the proposals will result in better access to the park and its facilities for disabled persons.
- 1.11.9 Every effort will be made to ensure that all materials are obtained from sustainable sources and that environmental considerations remain a high priority.
- 1.11.10 It is anticipated that an increase in the number of park users will assist in deterring unwanted persons from visiting the site.
- 1.11.11 The Council's procurement processes will be used at every stage of the implementation process of the project plan.

Background Documents

*Cobtree Manor Park Master Plan – update March 2012* **Appendix D**

**How to Comment**

Should you have any comments on the issue that is being considered please contact either the relevant Officer or the Member of the Executive who will be taking the decision.

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Cobtree Manor Estate Committee Chairman

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**NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED**

Is this a Key Decision?      Yes            No     

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan?      October 2011

Is this an Urgent Key Decision?      Yes            No     

Reason for Urgency

## Appendix A

### COBTREE CASHFLOW PROJECTION

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Current Debt Balance	17,910								
Golf Club Surplus	146,390	152,900	157,487	162,212	167,078	172,090	177,253	182,571	188,048
Debt Repayment	17,910								
Manor Park Deficit	127,380	113,580	116,987	120,497	124,112	127,835	131,670	135,620	139,689
Investment Income	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000
<b>Additional Costs</b>									
Play Area Maintenance		8,000	12,500	12,875	13,261	13,659	14,069	14,491	14,926
Additional Staffing Costs			24,000	24,720	25,462	26,225	27,012	27,823	28,657
Café Franchise			-1,700	-1,751	-1,804	-1,858	-1,913	-1,971	-2,030
Visitor Centre Costs			7,500	10,000	10,300	10,609	10,927	11,255	11,593
Loss of Charifund Interest		24,955	37,548	36,263	34,978	33,693	32,408	31,123	29,581
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>-66,100</b>	<b>-71,365</b>	<b>-25,652</b>	<b>-24,608</b>	<b>-25,769</b>	<b>-26,926</b>	<b>-28,080</b>	<b>-29,229</b>	<b>-30,632</b>
Endowment Replenishment	66,100	70,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	30,000
<b>Adjusted Surplus</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,365</b>	<b>-652</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>-769</b>	<b>-1,926</b>	<b>-3,080</b>	<b>-4,229</b>	<b>-632</b>
<b>Assumptions &amp; Notes</b>									
Inflation (As per Budget Strategy)	-	-	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%

2011/12 & 2012/13 figures as per current estimates

## Appendix A

### COBTREE CASHFLOW PROJECTION

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Current Debt Balance							
Golf Club Surplus	193,689	199,500	205,485	211,649	217,999	224,539	-231,275
Debt Repayment							
Manor Park Deficit	143,880	148,196	152,642	157,221	161,938	166,796	171,800
Investment Income	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000	-65,000
<b>Additional Costs</b>							
Play Area Maintenance	15,373	15,835	16,310	16,799	17,303	17,822	18,357
Additional Staffing Costs	29,517	30,402	31,315	32,254	33,222	34,218	35,245
Café Franchise	-2,091	-2,154	-2,218	-2,285	-2,353	-2,424	-2,497
Visitor Centre Costs	11,941	12,299	12,668	13,048	13,439	13,842	14,258
Loss of Charifund Interest	28,039	26,497	24,698	22,899	20,843	18,787	16,475
<b>Net Surplus</b>	<b>-32,030</b>	<b>-33,424</b>	<b>-35,071</b>	<b>-36,713</b>	<b>-38,607</b>	<b>-40,496</b>	<b>-42,638</b>
Endowment Replenishment	30,000	30,000	35,000	35,000	40,000	40,000	45,000
<b>Adjusted Surplus</b>	<b>-2,030</b>	<b>-3,424</b>	<b>-71</b>	<b>-1,713</b>	<b>1,393</b>	<b>-496</b>	<b>2,362</b>

### Assumptions & Notes

Inflation	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
(As per Budget Strategy)							

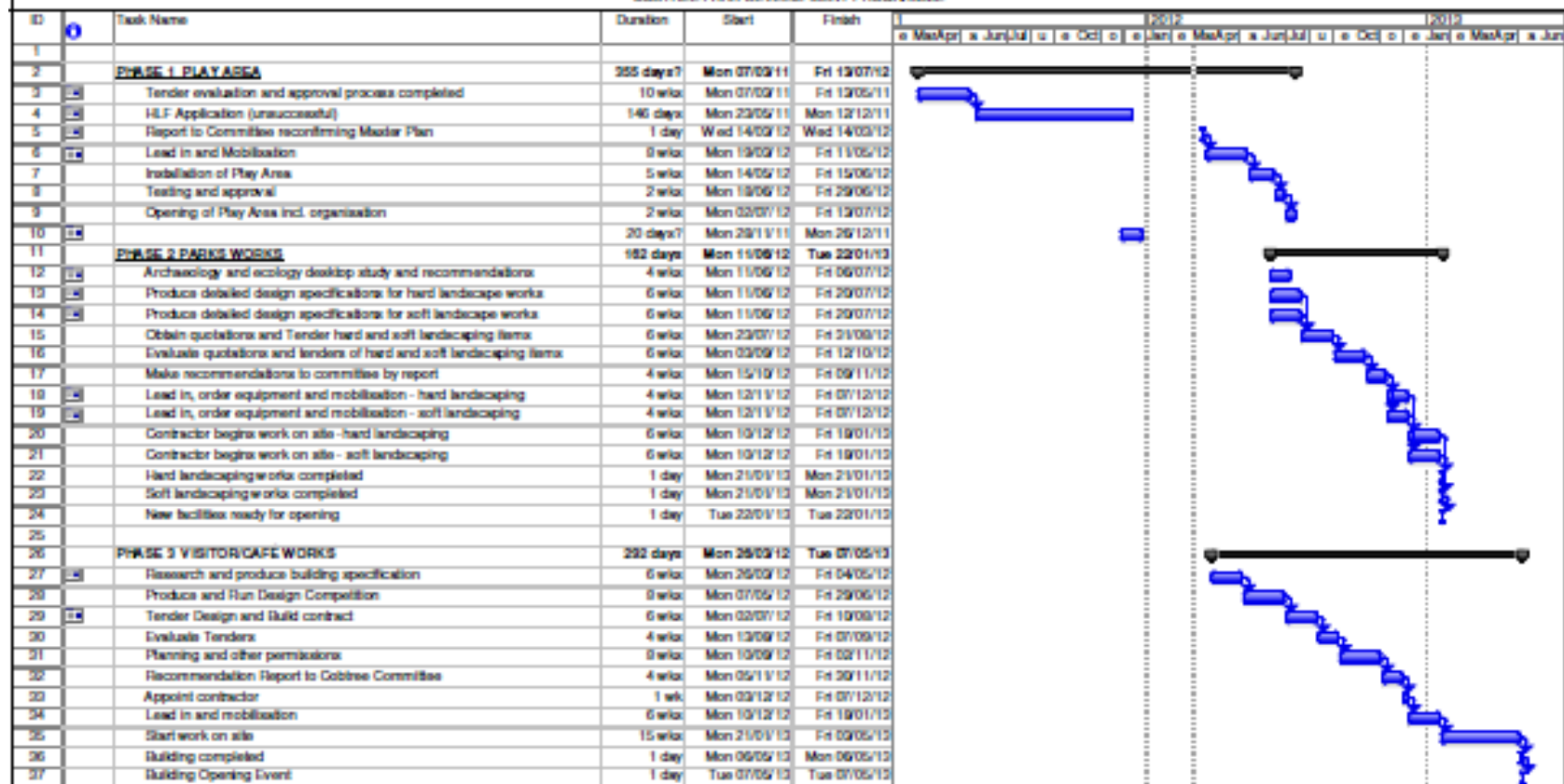
2011/12 & 2012/13 figures as per current estimates

## **Appendix B**

### **Project plan (please see next page)**

Time scales for phases 1, 2 and 3 could be subject to some change depending on the approval of the Charity Commission and the tendering process used and final decisions on design. Each phase shall be brought to the Committee for prior approval. A larger version of this plan will be brought to the Committee Meeting.

**COBTREE PARK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**



Project: Project Plan Feb 2012  
Date: Fri 02/02/12

Task		Milestone		External Task	
Split		Summary		External Milestone	
Progress		Project Summary		Deadline	

## Appendix C

### Breakdown of costs per phase

		Item	Cost	Total Phase Cost	
PHASE 1	1	Play area inc equipment (initial)	£153,000	<b>£153,000</b>	
PHASE 2	2	Play area inc equipment (additional)	£162,000		
	3	Picnic Area including benches, surfacing and possibly BBQ's	£15,750		
	4	Hard Path network, as shown on map.	£117,000		
	5	Nature Trail Paths, as shown on map	£10,800		
	6	Way finding posts and maps	£5,400		
	7	Viewing platform and pond clearance	£9,000		
	8	Car Park Resurfacing and Edging	£9,000		
	9	Woodland management and park tree works	£20,700		
	10	Boundary Planting	£4,500		
	11	New Arboretum trees	£3,600		
	12	Car park replanting	£4,500		
	13	Improved boundary fencing around estate/bridle path	£9,000		
	14	Trim trail	£19,800		
	15	Outdoor seating and bins	£12,600		
	16	Sculptures	£22,500		
	17	Bridle path rerouting and resurfacing	£4,500		
		18	Llama house renovation	£3,600	<b>£434,250</b>
	PHASE 3	19	Café Building/Visitor Centre	£315,000	
20		Interactive information boards	£9,000		
21		Cycle Stands	£2,250		
22		Interpretational Signage	£10,800		
23		Elephant house	£9,000	<b>£346,050</b>	
ADDITIONAL	24	Project Manager (est.)	£13,500		
	25	Engineer	£4,500		
COSTS	26	Landscape Architect designs and drawings (est.)	£4,500		
	27	Planning Fees (est.)	£2,700	<b>£25,200</b>	
TOTAL	28	<b>Cost of all works</b>	<b>£958,500</b>		
	29	<b>Contingency (10%)</b>	£106,500		
	30	<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£1,065,000</b>		



## **Appendix D**

### **Cobtree Manor Park Master Plan (Update) 2012**

# Cobtree Manor Park Maidstone

## Master Plan (Update)

March 2012

# Introduction

This master plan document is an update of the one original produced on behalf of the Cobtree Estate Committee by Adam S Bailey Garden Design in January 2010. As such some information has been taken directly from Adams original document but this document provides an update to this original document.

The key emphasis for the design from the start has been to attract visitors to explore and enjoy the full extent of the park at all times of the year. This requires the design to draw visitors up through the park on a series of routes designed with different users in mind, whilst offering a range of attractions which are both sympathetic to the feel of the park and to its past history as a private zoo.

Any heavy bias towards seeing the park as having a zoo 'theme' has been avoided as it is felt that this would not sit well with the natural feel of the park and instead the design draws in more subtle elements which are intended to educate and stimulate children and adults of all ages.

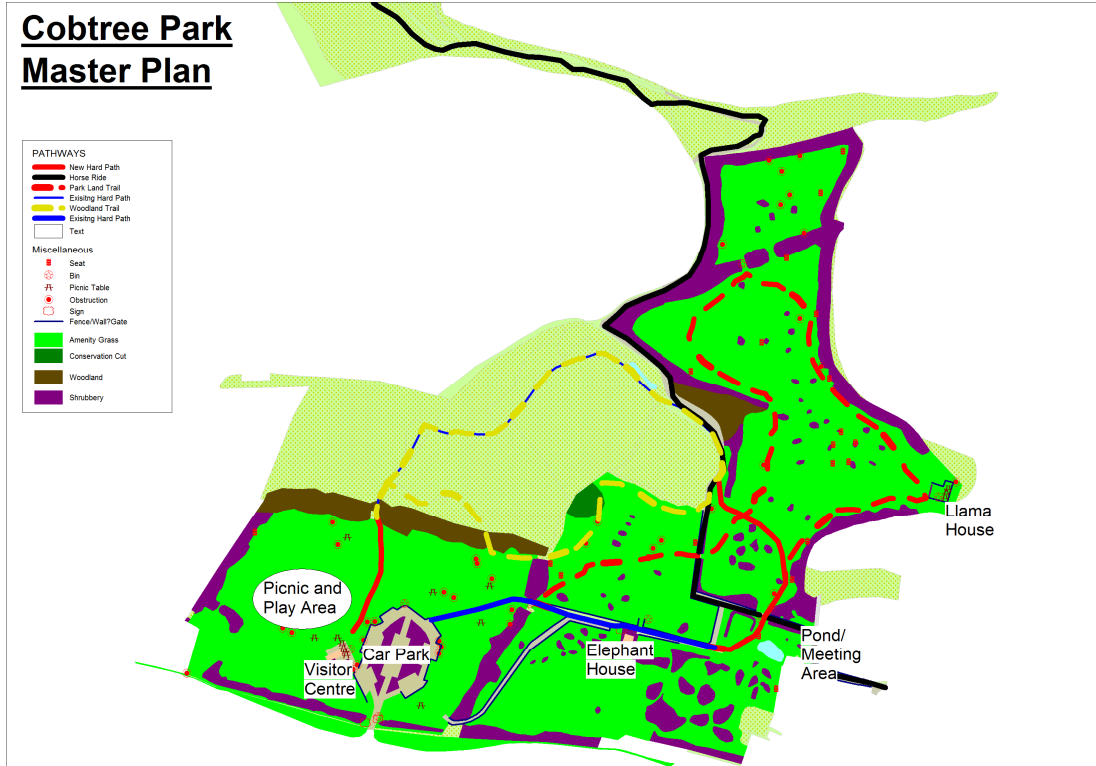
Another major consideration has been the necessity to retain and manage the existing impressive tree collection, effectively reducing the impact of the new design on the existing trees by weaving the design around them rather than requiring their extensive removal in order to install the new scheme.

## **Main benefits of the new design**

The new design will aim to increase the number of visitors to the park by a number of key proposals. These proposals will also seek to remedy a number of on-site problems which currently detract from the quality of the park. The major key benefit of the whole scheme is that the new design has a minimal impact on the existing tree stock and wildlife habitats, enhancing and improving rather than removing long-established features in order to install the new scheme.

# Master Plan

This updated map of the site, gives a rough guide as to where the new elements of the park will be located. The exact locations of these elements will be finalised following further consideration and site visits.



# Elements of the Improvement Plan

## 1. Play Area

It was identified very early on that families particularly those with children rarely visited the park, apart from walking around the park there was not a great deal on offer. If visitor numbers from this group were going to be encouraged to use the park it will be important that facilities appropriate to this were provided, one of the most important reasons that families visit parks is to use the play area. Very early on in the project the Committee expressed a wish for Cobtree to not just have an off the shelf play area as often provided in parks but to have a bespoke play area which must have a "wow factor".

The council uses the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Framework agreement for the purchase and installation of play equipment and the appropriate organisations we contacted with a brief to provide designs to provide a bespoke play area, with the "wow factor" which must be relevant to the park, its surroundings and history. Following this a number of designs have been submitted to the council, these have now been through the tender process, and been presented to the Committee.

The preferred supplier has now been chosen and the design will be shown to the committee at their March 2012 meeting.

The chosen design is based around the theme of Cobtree Zoo and will be totally unique to Cobtree Manor Park.

## 2. Picnic Area

This is another feature that families look for when they visit parks. It is proposed that this is located at the bottom of the park to allow school groups using the visitors centre to eat packed lunches. Visitors may also wish to eat food purchased in the café in the picnic area.

Barbeques are now a feature of many parks, although not currently in Maidstone, advice would be taken from police and Community Safety Team as to whether this should be considered as an option.

As the park grows in popularity it is likely in the future that an additional picnic area may be required and this could be located further into the park.

The following would be required of this area:

- In keeping with the rest of the park.
- Accessible to all park users
- Be maintained within existing park resources.

- Fit for purpose.

### **3. Hard Path network**

This hard path will allow families with push chairs and small children to get out into the park and to the new play area, whatever the conditions. The current hard path limits the areas that families can access for some months of the year. This can be seen on the Master Plan Map. Final locations of this path will be decided following further consideration and site visits.

The brief for the path design would include the following:

- Provide adequate stability to enable pushchairs, wheelchairs, etc to use at all times of the year.
- Fit in aesthetically in the park.
- Be able to be mechanically swept and cleaned.

### **4. Nature Trails**

The Woodland and Parkland trails will provide circular walks for visitors taking in interesting features around the park such as the Llama House and Arboretum. Information will be provided on these features by signage. The surface of these paths will be less structured and boots will be needed at certain times of the year. These paths will be clearly marked to make them identifiable to users. There would also be a map available in the park and on the Park website.

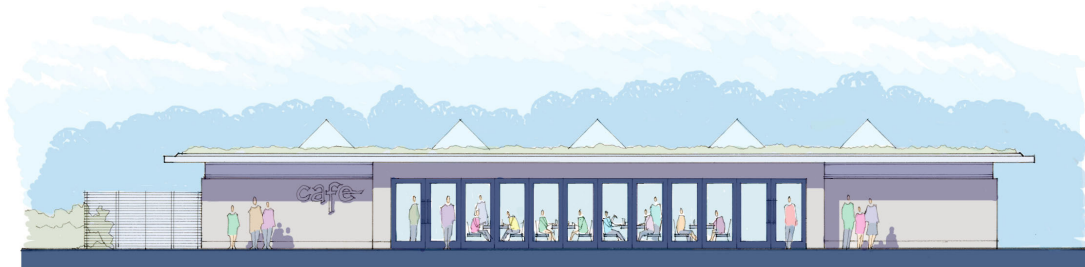
The brief for the park would include:

- Enable access by pedestrians wearing appropriate footwear, without getting muddy.
- Fit aesthetically in the park.
- To be able to be resurfaced within existing park resources.

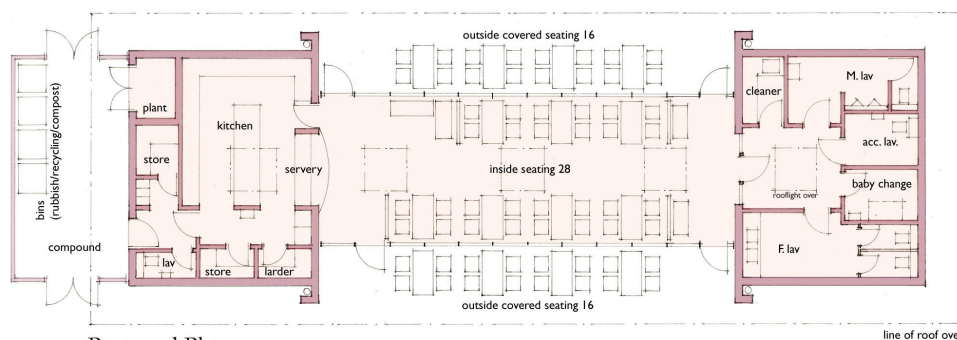
### **5. Café/ Visitor Centre**

The original proposal was to have a café/visitor centre and a separate education building located in the Elephant House. Because school groups tend to visit during the daytime on week days and the busiest time for a café would be weekends, evening and in school holidays it is now proposed to combine the two facilities. As well as making the building more economical to run this will also make staffing considerably easier.

This building would need to be designed by an architect but below is an example of a similar type of dual use building to be constructed in Derby at a cost of £270,000. Following advice we shall budget £350,000 for the building to give something that will fit our requirements more closely.



Proposed Elevation



Proposed Plan

The specification below shows what we would be looking to be included in the design of the Visitor Centre in Cobtree Park:

- Café with Kitchen
- Indoor seating area that can be used for café at weekends, evenings and holidays and indoor education area at school time.
- Indoor and Outdoor Toilets
- Outdoor covered seating area as above
- Rangers Office
- Rangers/Staff Mess Room
- Storage for Buggy and Tools
- Education area with interpretation/interactive features
- Touch screen panels – containing more in-depth information about the park – history, Sir Garrard, etc.
- Sustainable features
- The building will have the potential to be extended in future

- It will contain facilities that meet current legislation for provision for disabled access including toilets etc.
- The building will be sympathetic to its environment and could look something like this similar building at Trosley Country Park (see below).



## 6. Viewing Platform Feature

It is proposed to have viewing platform at the edge of the pond. As this area is some distance it is proposed to incorporate some sort of meeting area and focal point, where people could sit and where information could be provided. This type of feature is also ideal for school groups that visit the park.

The brief for this feature is:

- Provide a meeting place/focal point and feature within the park.
- Enable access to pond area for education purposes.
- Fit in aesthetically with park



## **7. Car Park**

The existing car park will remain the same size but does need to be resurfaced and the boundary clearly defined to stop cars entering the park. It has been proposed that the car park be surface in a Kentish Ragstone material with larger boulders defining the edges. The car park will incorporate cycle stands to provide secure parking for visitors that cycle to the park.

The brief for the car park is as follows:

- Surface to be easily maintained using existing resources
- Perimeters to be marked possibly using local stone
- Cycle stands
- Fit in aesthetically with the park

## **8. Woodland Management**

As well as improving the Arboretum by introducing new trees it is also proposed to carry out works to any trees in that park that require it to ensure that trees are in the best possible condition. Some areas of the park including the car park and some boundaries require additional planting and fencing to improve definition.

## **9. Trim Trail**

This equipment would be incorporated in the Nature trails and path network. It would provide a course around the park for users to carry out various activities such as pull ups, sit ups and climbing. The equipment is very rustic and will fit in with the surrounding. Trim trails have been very popular in other "country" type parks and attract a different type of user to the park.

The brief for the trim trail is as follows:

- Provide items/equipment for exercise activities.
- Be maintained within existing park resources.
- Fit for purpose.
- Uniform design used.
- Information on how to use.

## **10. Outdoor Seating and Bins**

There are currently a large number of different types of park furniture and bins in the park. As some of these are in a poor state of repair a review will take place. It is highly likely that with the new features in the park that bins and benches will need to be replaced, relocated and new items purchased. Existing items will be restored and recycled where possible, especially commemorative benches.

## **11. Interpretational Signage**

It is important that visitors, particularly schools have the opportunity to learn about what they are seeing in the park. A series of interpretational signage will teach visitors the significance not only of what they see today but also some of the history of the park as well as the natural environment.

## **12. Elephant House**

An approach has recently been made by a local art group looking at the possibility of using the Elephant house as a work shop and gallery. As there are currently no services in the building a sum has been added to the budget to investigate this option further.

## **13. Sculptures in the Park**

One of the things which could really make the park different from other similar parks is to have sculptures hidden around the park. These could be linked to the parks history and the play area has included sculptures based on the Zoo theme. These could be hidden in the park for visitors to find, this should be particularly popular with school groups. Local artists could be approached and this would be an opportunity to showcase their work.



*Example of sculpture in Shorne Country Park*

An initial brief for the sculptures in the park is:

- Provide interest to visitors
- To be linked with an activity for visitors
- Have relevance to the surroundings
- Feature the work of local artists

## **14. Llama House Repairs**

This original feature in the park needs some work to make sure that it is in top condition. As one of the surviving enclosures from the original zoo it is likely that there will be a considerable amount of interest from visitors.

# Project Costs

The table below has been put together using information from other projects, existing specifications, estimates provided by suppliers and respected sources. The overall project would need to be tendered which mean that prices would could fluctuate.

		Item	Cost	Total Phase Cost	
PHASE 1	1	Play area inc equipment (initial)	£153,000	<b>£153,000</b>	
PHASE 2	2	Play area inc equipment (additional)	£162,000		
	3	Picnic Area including benches, surfacing and possibly BBQ's	£15,750		
	4	Hard Path network, as shown on map.	£117,000		
	5	Nature Trail Paths, as shown on map	£10,800		
	6	Way finding posts and maps	£5,400		
	7	Viewing platform and pond clearance	£9,000		
	8	Car Park Resurfacing and Edging	£9,000		
	9	Woodland management and park tree works	£20,700		
	10	Boundary Planting	£4,500		
	11	New Arboretum trees	£3,600		
	12	Car park replanting	£4,500		
	13	Improved boundary fencing around estate/bridle path	£9,000		
	14	Trim trail	£19,800		
	15	Outdoor seating and bins	£12,600		
	16	Sculptures	£22,500		
	17	Bridle path rerouting and resurfacing	£4,500		
		18	Llama house renovation	£3,600	<b>£434,250</b>
	PHASE 3	19	Café Building/Visitor Centre	£315,000	
20		Interactive information boards	£9,000		
21		Cycle Stands	£2,250		
22		Interpretational Signage	£10,800		
23		Elephant house	£9,000	<b>£346,050</b>	
ADDITIONAL	24	Project Manager (est.)	£13,500		
	25	Engineer	£4,500		
COSTS	26	Landscape Architect designs and drawings (est.)	£4,500		
	27	Planning Fees (est.)	£2,700	<b>£25,200</b>	
TOTAL	28	<b>Cost of all works</b>	<b>£958,500</b>		
	29	<b>Contingency (10%)</b>	£106,500		
	30	<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£1,065,000</b>		

## **Project Plan/Timescales**

A project plan is enclosed with this document as **Appendix B**. This document gives timescales to carry out the various stages of the work, but the start dates shown are dependant on finances being approved.

Depending on how the work is phased timescales may alter. The installation of the play area which is currently shown as Phase 1 has now been tendered so is ready to progress when approval is given.

## Appendix E

### Play area location map (area marked in red)

