

REPORTS BY COUNCIL OFFICERS

ITEM-84 **CCL 24/08/21 - PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF DRAFT GREGSON PARK MASTERPLAN AND AMENDMENTS TO THE HERITAGE PLACES PLAN OF MANAGEMENT FOR GREGSON PARK**

REPORT BY: **CITY WIDE SERVICES**
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PURPOSE

To place the draft Gregson Park Masterplan and draft amendments to Heritage Places Plan of Management for Gregson Park on public exhibition.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1 Place the draft Gregson Park Masterplan (**Attachment A**) on public exhibition for 42 days.
- 2 Place the draft amended Heritage Places Plan of Management (Heritage PoM) (**Attachment B**) for Gregson Park on public exhibition in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (Act) for 28 days and to receive submissions for 42 days.
- 3 Hold a public hearing for the proposed re-categorisation of Gregson Park in the Heritage PoM, as required under the Act, during the public exhibition period.
- 4 Receive a report on the outcome of the exhibition period for the draft Gregson Park Masterplan and the amended Heritage PoM for Gregson Park.

KEY ISSUES

- 5 A Masterplan has been prepared for Gregson Park to guide its future development and management. Gregson Park is a significant local heritage listed park in Hamilton. Development of the masterplan has involved extensive community engagement, providing the community a chance to have a say on their vision for the future of the Park.
- 6 Philips Marler Heritage Landscape Architects were appointed to undertake the Masterplan. Local sub consultants Creative Ingredient assisted with the Phase 1 engagement.
- 7 The draft Masterplan (**Attachment A**) has been prepared reflecting the community vision and identified themes.

- 8 Gregson Park is community land and managed under the Heritage Places Plan of Management (Heritage PoM). The Heritage PoM provides clear guidelines for the future management and direction of land in the care and control of City of Newcastle. There are fifteen sites specifically addressed in Heritage PoM, including Gregson Park.
- 9 As the draft Masterplan proposes change to the use of different spaces within the Park following community feedback, a re-categorisation of the Heritage PoM for Gregson Park is required under the Act. The main changes to the Heritage PoM are updates to the wording and actions to reflect the vision of the draft Gregson Park Masterplan and the associated community input.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 10 The draft Masterplan is designed to be delivered over a 10-year period with actions and projects requiring funding to be identified in CN's Our Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan.
- 11 The 2021/22 Our Budget has identified initial funding of \$300,000 for a new inclusive play space in Gregson Park.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- 12 The draft Gregson Park Masterplan and associated Heritage PoM aligns with the following Newcastle 2030 Community Strategic Plan directions:

Vibrant, Safe and Active Public Places

- 3.1a Provide quality parkland and recreation facilities that are diverse, accessible and responsive to changing needs.
- 3.2 Culture, heritage and place are valued, shared and celebrated.

Inclusive Community

- 4.1a Acknowledge and respect First Nations peoples.
- 4.2a Ensure people of all abilities can enjoy our public places and spaces.

Liveable Built Environment

- 5.1 A built environment that maintains and enhances our sense of identity.
- 5.4b Plan, provide and manage infrastructure that continues to meet community needs.

Open and Collaborative Leadership

- 7.3a Provide opportunities for genuine engagement with the community to inform Council's decision-making.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/IMPLICATIONS

- 13 City of Newcastle's Parklands and Recreation Strategy (2014) identified a need to prepare Masterplans for our city's district level parks including Gregson Park. Gregson Park is a heritage listed park under Newcastle LEP 2012 and being community land the Heritage Places PoM applies to this park.

- 14 A public hearing is required to be held under the Act for the proposed re-categorisation of Gregson Park in the Heritage PoM.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION

- 15 In 2020 City of Newcastle demolished the former bowling club building due to significant building disrepair, vandalism and safety matters.
- 16 Feedback will be sought from the community on the draft Gregson Park Masterplan during the public exhibition period and incorporated in the adoption of the final Plans mitigating risk regarding community engagement.

RELATED PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 17 At the Ordinary Meeting on 24 June 2014 Council resolved:

"that the draft amended Heritage PoM be adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

- 18 At the Ordinary Meeting held on 23 July 2019 Council resolved:

That City of Newcastle:

- i) Notes the historical and cultural significance of Gregson Park, Hamilton, for local Hamilton residents and the broader community;*
- ii) Recognises growing community interest in upgrades to Gregson Park, including the playground and open space areas, as well as the former Hamilton Bowling Club site;*
- iii) Holds a Workshop for Councillors, to outline the Plan of Management process for Gregson Park, including opportunities for the community to provide feedback regarding upgrades and future uses of the park, as well as to advise Councillors of the implications of the Crown Land Management Act 2018 on Council managed parks and recreation spaces.*

CONSULTATION

- 19 A Councillor Workshop was held on 8 October 2019 to outline opportunities for the community to provide feedback regarding upgrades and future uses of Gregson Park.
- 20 The community engagement on the Gregson Park Masterplan was undertaken from August to December 2020. The community were asked how they use the Park, to share memories of the historical site and have their say on future uses of the Park.

- 21 Engagement activities included community conversations, key stakeholder interviews, student workshops, online surveys, an interactive online map and ideas wall, two face to face drop-in sessions at the Park and internal stakeholder workshops. A summary of this community engagement is found at **Attachment C**.
- 22 Councillors were briefed on the outcomes of this community engagement and the draft Masterplan on 17 August 2021.

BACKGROUND

- 23 Gregson Park is a historic park with a 137-year history in the centre of Hamilton. It was designed by Alfred Sharp in 1884 as a major suburban park with many old plantings and a complex overlay of memorials and features, including gates, fountains, community service buildings and fixtures.
- 24 The aim of the Gregson Park Masterplan is to:
- i) Identify the role of Gregson Park in meeting local recreation needs and respecting the heritage significance of the park.
 - ii) Identify the way in which Gregson Park can be most effectively utilised to help meet the broader recreation, sporting and community facility needs of the surrounding communities and the wider Newcastle region.
- 25 The draft Masterplan has been developed with extensive community engagement. The engagement provided the community a chance to have a say on their vision for the future of the park including the:
- i) Former bowling club site
 - ii) Location, scope and style of the playground
 - iii) Tennis courts
 - iv) Greenhouse
 - v) Amenities block
 - vi) Recognition of heritage
- 26 The key findings from this community engagement identified several common themes which are reflected in the draft Masterplan including:
- i) Plantings and Aboriginal Culture – retain fig trees and flower beds and add native plant species
 - ii) Basic amenities – upgrades needed
 - iii) Playspace – larger and more inclusive
 - iv) Community gathering – upgrade park infrastructure to support events
 - v) Heritage – keep canons and monuments
 - vi) Recreation – upgrade parts of park for active recreation
- 27 Specific elements included in the draft Masterplan to reflect these themes include:
- i) Larger inclusive playspace in existing location with nature play, water feature and small yarning circle

- ii) New swale footbridge and wetland for water detention
- iii) New large community shelter on the former bowling club site for picnics, markets, events etc
- iv) Key axis pathway realignment
- v) Retention of figs, new native plantings and rearrangement of annual flower beds
- vi) Removal of the glasshouse (subject to heritage assessment)
- vii) Space for community gardens
- viii) Resurfaced tennis courts and expanded active recreation precinct including half basketball court, bat ball wall and fitness equipment
- ix) Future opportunity for an underground stormwater retention tank
- x) New or upgraded amenities
- xi) Possible kiosk in repurposed building (subject to further investigation)

28 The *Local Government Act 1993* requires all community land to be categorized as either park, sportsground, general community use, natural area or area of cultural significance. Uses and leases on community land are to be in alignment with the categorisation of the land and are to be expressly authorized within a plan of management.

29 The whole of Gregson Park will continue to be categorized as *area of cultural significance* to reflect the significant landscape heritage value of the park. In addition it is proposed to amend the categories of various parcels within the Park to reflect the proposed use as *park, general community use and sportsground*. The revised Heritage PoM and map is at **Attachment B**.

OPTIONS

Option 1

30 The recommendation as at Paragraph 1. This is the recommended option.

Option 2

31 Not place draft Masterplan and amendments to the Heritage PoM on exhibition. This is not the recommended option as feedback is required from the community on both plans.

REFERENCES

ATTACHMENTS

Item 84 Attachment A: Draft Gregson Park Masterplan

Item 84 Attachment B: Draft Heritage Places PoM for Gregson Park Hamilton

Item 84 Attachments A - B distributed under separate cover

Item 84 Attachment C

[Phase 1 Community Engagement report](#)