



## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report: Ruth Bell, Head of Parks and Countryside**

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**Report of:** *Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services*

**Report to:** *Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *4<sup>th</sup> March 2024*

**Subject:** *Proposal for one year extension of parks funding to Green Estate*

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken N/a	Initial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full <input type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA 2631		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>“The (<b>report/appendix</b>) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (<b>insert relevant paragraph number</b>) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

**Purpose of Report:**

This report proposes that the existing funding and management arrangements with Green Estate for the Manor Fields site are continued for a 12-month period, with a further £141,481 being granted to Green Estate, subject to the prior completion of a subsidy control assessment and the approval of the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services. During this 12-month period a proposal for renewing arrangements for the Manor Fields and associated sites will be developed, along with any necessary processes required for an appropriate longer-term management arrangement.

**Recommendations:**

The Communities, Parks and Leisure Policy Committee is recommended to approve:

- in principle, the extension of existing funding arrangements by 12 months with Green Estate, with a further £141,481 being granted to Green Estate for their management and maintenance of Manor Fields and associated sites for 2024/25 and delegates approval of the extension of existing funding agreements (and award of £141,481 to Green Estate) to the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services. Such approval to be subject to the prior completion of a subsidy control principles assessment to demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services that the extension of the funding agreements (and award of £141,481 to Green Estate) is compliant with the subsidy control principles.

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: Adrian Hart
		Legal: Richard Marik
		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton
		Climate: <i>Victoria Penman</i>
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	<i>Ajman Ali</i>
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	<i>Richard Williams</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Ruth Bell</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> <i>Head of Parks and Countryside</i>
	<b>Date:</b> <i>27<sup>th</sup> February 2024</i>	

**1. PROPOSAL**

1.1 Strategy and Resources Committee approved the grant to Green Estate on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 until 2024. We are now seeking approval extend this arrangement for 12 months for an additional £141,481.

1.2 Manor Fields is 50 acres of parkland in an area of the city of high deprivation and poor health outcomes. Green Estate have managed the site for over 15 years developing the parkland into a green space for the benefit of local people, which feels safe, accessible and welcoming. The site is managed to Green Flag standard (Green Flag has been maintained since 2015/16).

1.3 There are a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes on the Manor Fields site that are maintained by Green Estate as part of the site.

1.4 The proposed funding amount to be paid to Green Estate (subject to a subsidy control assessment and subsequent approval from the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services) is broken down as follows and is to be paid monthly:

Main funding agreement	£124,300
Woodthorpe Ravine SUDs Scheme	£14,990
Commuted sum for maintenance of playground	£2,191

1.5 In receiving the grant, Green Estate actively promotes and carries out Sheffield City Council’s Green and Open Space Strategy aims as follows:

- To manage holistically a number of local parks and open spaces in the ownership of Sheffield City Council in compliance with the City Council’s policies and strategies to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of a quality service for the people of Sheffield, making the best use of available resources.
- To assist in the regeneration of the Sheffield City Council’s parks, open spaces, woodlands and countryside within the Manor and Castle wards, embracing the city’s heritage, reflecting local needs, upholding local distinctiveness and character and contributing to social, environmental, economic and tourism initiatives.
- To provide and develop recreational and leisure opportunities to the public across the Manor and Castle wards by determining their needs and requirements through consultation.
- To develop effective partnerships and delivery mechanisms which encourage and enable local communities, RSLs, businesses and

third sector groups and individuals to become involved in the management and development of the area's green space.

- To undertake any work that will help to raise quality standards for green space in the area and contribute to the Climate Change agenda.

1.6 Green Estate prepares a management plan for the site and reports to Parks and Countryside regularly on progress against the work plan.

1.7 It is the Council's intention that the existing funding agreement with Green Estate will be renewed for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 and a further £141,481 will be granted to Green Estate subject to a subsidy control assessment and subsequent approval from the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services. During this period a review will be undertaken. This will enable Parks and Countryside to develop a plan to enable a longer-term arrangement for the site.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

2.1 Continuing the Green Estate grant supports the Council's commitment to work with the Voluntary and Community Sector and supports Green Estate's work in the Manor Fields area.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

3.1 Parks and Countryside have met with Green Estate and set out the proposal for 2024/25. Further consultation will be required when the process for 2025/26 and beyond is developed.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

4.1.1 Funding to the voluntary and community sector through Grant Investment Programme contributes to the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires us to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation,
- advance equality of opportunity,
- foster good relations.

4.1.2 Grant Investment also contributes to and is aligned with the Council's broader equality considerations, including unpaid carers, health, poverty and cohesion. It is proposed to be a standstill budget and therefore whilst no cut in monies is proposed we know this could be a cut in real terms for Green Estate due to rising costs.

### **4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications**

4.2.1 The financial implications in this report are covered by an ongoing budget which will be available in 2024/25.

#### 4.3 **Legal Implications**

4.3.1 s19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits a local authority to provide (including by the provision of “assistance of any kind”), a wide range of recreational facilities.

4.3.2 Where no specific power (or limitation) exists the legal power for the Council to establish, administer and make awards from the various grant funds as described in this report is provided by the general power of competence, contained in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

4.3.3 The Council must at all times be mindful of the requirements imposed by the public sector equality duty enacted in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

4.3.4 The decision to extend the current funding agreements and award further funding to the recipient is subject to a subsidy control assessment and subsequent approval of the extension (following the subsidy control assessment) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services in accordance with delegation proposed in this report.

4.3.5 The Council must ensure that any extension of the funding agreement is made in accordance with its terms and conditions.

#### 4.4 **Climate Implications**

4.4.1 Given the nature of the proposal (i.e. continuing existing arrangements for a further 12 months) a full Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) is not considered necessary. It is however acknowledged that the activities delivered by Green Estate have a positive climate impact.

The climate impact of the process and proposals for 2025/26 and beyond will be considered.

#### 4.5 **Other Implications**

4.5.1 There are no other implications

### 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 The ‘Do Nothing’ option has been discounted as to cut or change the grant funding support to Green Estate with very little notice would be detrimental at this time to the Green Estate organisation, the people they work with and ultimately Council services. An alternative to the Green Estate’s management of the Manor Fields site would also be required,

so costs would likely increase in the short term.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Continuing the existing arrangements for one-year provides Green Estate with the necessary security to continue their operations for the next 12 months. It also provides time to review the required processes to offer longer term security for the Manor Fields site, rather than relying on year-by-year arrangements.