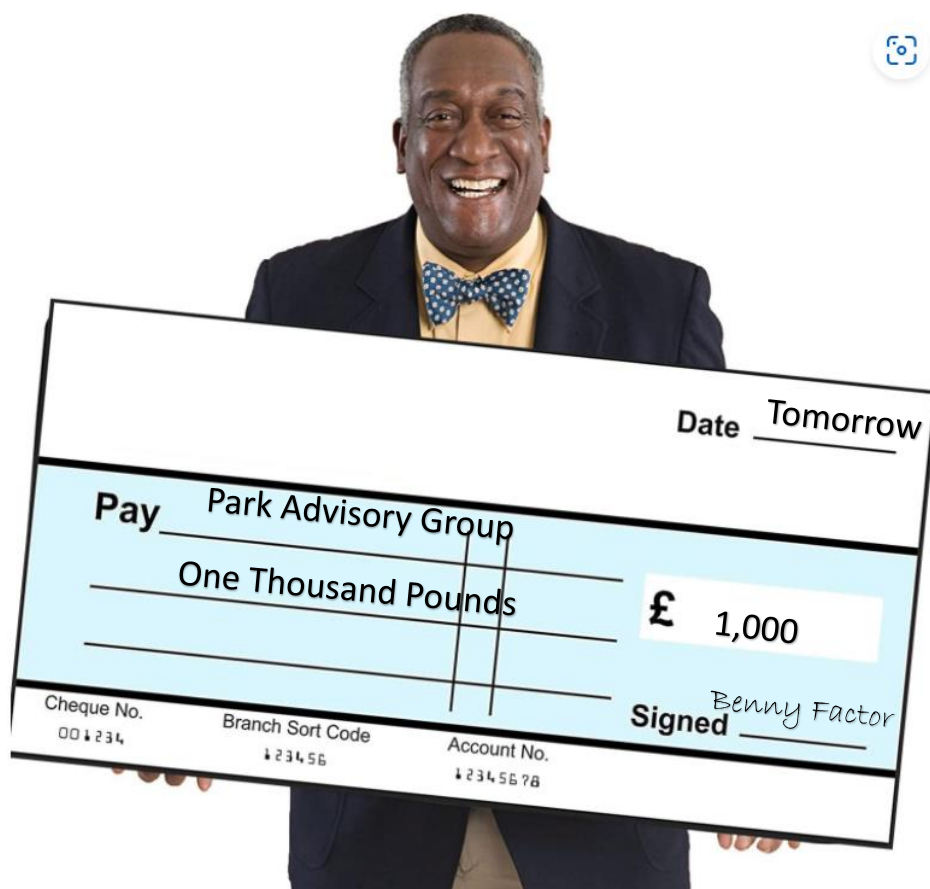


CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

Appendix 2

Parks and Open Spaces

Income Strategy



Introduction

In 2024 the City Council carefully considered, and ultimately adopted, a policy for income generation in parks and open spaces that was specifically developed to provide for investment in these sites.

It is recognised that the range of options is so huge that the policy could not cover every opportunity in detail, so it is an intentionally flexible policy that has been designed to be adaptable to a wide range of circumstances, whilst still ensuring probity and transparency.

This strategy document therefore seeks to take the framework provided by the policy and develop this into a clear approach on which areas are to be prioritised for income generating work, so the possible eventual outcomes of the policy can be made clear.

Core principles of the policy are that charges will be considered wherever an event/activity denies access/use of an area by the wider public, where a publicly funded space is used to generate income for an individual or group, where the public purse incurs a cost as a result of a use of a site where no benefit to the wider public is achieved, and that the income generated will be returned for investment in the parks/open spaces.

Summary of Strategy actions:

1. *To seek a social responsibility contributor to provide a free will writing service for the PAGS.*
2. *To develop promotional material to encourage bequests.*
3. *To invite PAGs to comment formally on the principle of generating income from car parking at each of the PAG sites **by way of adopting a voluntary donation scheme.***
4. *The Council will establish a document setting out clearly the benefits of businesses providing support to parks and open spaces, including clear guidance on the basis on which this would work, how offers can be made and received, and what any potential benefits a sponsor may expect.*
5. *The council will make clear when it lets contracts, that financial support direct to PAGs is an option it would welcome as a part of social responsibility requirements.*
6. *'Tap and go' card donation stations should be explored with PAGs and installed where supported, subject to opportunity and set-up funds being available.*
7. *PAGs be asked to engage with the Lincoln Community Lottery, either individually or if they wish, as a joint venture.*

- 8. PAGs to be invited to suggest, on a site by site basis, options where they think a concession could and should be let for mutual benefit.*
- 9. Officers to develop the concessions promoted and supported by PAGs as/when resources permit.*
- 10. Corporate income for events to be pegged at existing levels in definitely, to motivate staff to generate additional income, which **MUST** be spent on parks/open spaces.*
- 11. Opportunities to advertise in parks/at park events will be included within all other forms of promotion.*
- 12. To adopt a positive attitude to externally offered grant funding, based on the premise that we will accept if we can meet their requirements, but always subject to review through the Council's formal review process, being mindful of the resource commitments.*
- 13. To pursue external grant funding for strategically developed parks/open space projects, so as to maximise the benefits of every penny spent.*

The Review of Priorities.

The policy suggests there are ten general areas of income potential. Some are potentially large in scale, such as external grant funders, whilst others far more modest, such as the hire of a small space for a short-term use.

All of these income opportunities have a part to play in supporting open space improvements, but if the policy is to have a significant impact, and resources are to be deployed to maximise benefit, then it is necessary to prioritise areas for attention.

In assessing each area of potential income, the scale of possible return is obviously important, but it is also vital to explore barriers to success before agreeing final implementation plans. This is to ensure that time is not wasted pursuing avenues with low likelihood of a good level of return.

Assessment of options.

Actions will be undertaken in order of priority, unless an “unmissable” opportunity presents itself.

Bequests.

Many good causes now recognise that whilst someone may not have opportunity to give to good causes they would wish to support while they are alive, they may still want to recognise the importance of this facility/work after their death.

This offers the opportunity for people to give a contribution of their choosing as a part of the division of their estate after their death, thus not affecting them during their lives, but recognising the value of the good cause, and its importance to them that it continues in the future for the benefit of others.

In practice this means embracing a modern attitude to death and loss, and not being shy about inviting people to remember their local parks and open spaces as contributors to their quality of life, and inviting them to remember these spaces as places that need investment, when making their wills.

Many good causes offer a free will writing service to encourage people to contribute, and at a time when many companies are seeking ways to openly show social value, it is possible that the aim of offering a free will writing service might be possible through a local company who wishes to show its support for parks and open spaces in the city.

A key barrier to attracting funding by way of contributions from the public has been the perception that the money would go to the Council, and that it might not be spent as they would have wished. As the Income Policy now makes very clear that income generated would be channelled via Park Advisory Groups, then this barrier should no longer exist, and people should be able to give without concern.

Strategy actions:

- 1. To seek a social responsibility contributor to provide a free will writing service for the PAGS.*
- 2. To develop promotional material to encourage bequests.*

What this might look like in practice?

The Council and Park Advisory Groups would include within their parks promotional material, an offer to provide a free will writing service. One or more official solicitors' offices may offer this service, and anyone taking up the service would not be obliged to make any contribution in their will to any park or open space, although it may be considered implicit in the offer, if only to donate the value of the will writing service. However, this would not be obligatory.

Sales- Car parking

There are few opportunities to generate income from car parking in support of parks generally, and only at specific sites. However they do exist, and could make a significant contribution to income provided they are done sensitively. **It is NOT proposed that a set of fixed or mandated charges be applied, but instead that a voluntary option be used. Site users can therefore pay as much or as little as they can afford.**

At Hartsholme Country Park (HCP) there is a car park of compacted earth/stone, of poor quality, and inadequate size. **Appendix A**

At Boultham Park (BP) there are two car parks, both of which have tarmac hard surfaces but are unmarked. One is small and served from Rookery Lane (it also serves the adjacent residential area). The other car park is much larger, and accessed from Hall Drive. **Appendix B**

At the Arboretum no car park is available or dedicated for park use. A joint share agreement is operated by Parking Services for the car park on Sewell Road at weekends for general use. **Appendix C**. The only potential to develop a small car park would be off Milman Hill, which would require significant earth works and investment, so is not considered feasible at this time, but offers for social value contacts, or S106 contributions in the future.

The two potential sites for consideration short-term are therefore HCP and Boultham Park.

Strategy actions:

3. *To invite PAGs to comment formally on the principle of generating income from a voluntary car parking payment scheme, at each of the PAG sites.*

What this might look like in practice?

This could take the form of simple honesty boxes on site, or a formal car park ticket machine, giving out tickets in return for a donation.

Corporate Sponsors

This refers to financial donations from businesses, in return to certain rights/privileges. This might be the right to publicise their funding, or associate their business with a particular open space. It might include agreement to use of the park's name/logo in association with their own, for example. The terms of each agreement might be different subject to the scale of the sponsorship.

Linked to both the changes in industry wishing to 'go-green' for their customers and requirements for businesses to demonstrate social responsibility in public service contracts, it is suggested there is a potential income stream available to PAGs from businesses. A previously untapped source of investment, but an important emerging area of work, it is thought that early investment of time and effort could yield not just financial investment, but indirect benefits for open spaces by improved networking and associations.

Strategy actions:

4. The Council will establish a document setting out clearly the benefits of businesses providing support to parks and open spaces, including clear guidance on the basis on which this would work, how offers can be made and received, and what any potential benefits a sponsor may expect.

5. The council will make clear when it lets contracts, that financial support direct to PAGs is an option it would welcome as a part of social responsibility requirements.

What this might look like in practice?

A formal publicity pack that encourages businesses to consider innovative sponsorship offers, not just cash donations (see below). It might be free kit/equipment or even clothing for operational staff on a site, or work undertaken FOC.

In return the sponsor may be given permission to use their sponsorship in their own publicity materials (approved by the Council) or they might seek on-site badging of their business in some way for a specified piece of work and /or period.

The scale of any 'badging' by a corporate sponsor would be subject to careful consideration by the Portfolio Holder, with referral to Executive if required.

Donations.

These refer to offers of anything that might be gifted to a park/open space, via the Council or to a PAG directly.

The outline for terms of acceptance is set out in the policy.

'Tap and go' card donation stations are now popular at many sites, and are considered to be something that should be considered here.

Strategy actions:

6. 'Tap and go' card donation stations should be explored with PAGs and installed where supported, subject to opportunity and set-up funds being available.

What this might look like in practice?

Many parks now sport a donation point, both encouraging and allowing visitors to donate instantly by simply tapping their payment card. These are small and simple installations of a 1m high pillar for example, with associated supporting informational materials.

Community Lottery

For each £1 ticket sold, 50% goes directly to the participating park/open space and 10% to a central fund which is awarded annually via an application and selection process (and can receive bids from PAGs).

The funds raised by each cause are paid directly into the good cause's bank account each month. There are no set up costs or administration fees.

This is a venture that individual parks could promote, or they could work together.

Strategy actions:

7. PAGs be asked to engage with the Lincoln Community Lottery, either individually or if they wish, as a joint venture.

What this might look like in practice?

The City Council and PAGs would promote the Community Lottery in their publicity associated with the parks. This would be on-line, via posters, and through any/all channels available.

Concessions

There are many areas where concessions could be let. This could be from boating on lakes to mobile hot drinks providers, or ice cream vans in the summer. There is no intention to undermine existing food/drink providers at sites, only to enhance provision for visitors and to exploit a mutually beneficial option to generate income.

As these would be legally bound agreements, then the income would have to come to the city Council, but would be ring-fenced for investment in parks/open spaces, as per the policy.

Strategy actions:

8. PAGs to be invited to suggest, on a site by site basis, options where they think a concession could and should be let for mutual benefit.

9. Officers to develop the concessions promoted and supported by PAGs as/when resources permit.

What this might look like in practice?

Permission for ice cream vendors, coffee kiosk, etc. given permission for specific pitches in parks for given seasons/periods/events. Care would be taken to ensure

they do not undermine unfairly any existing on-site provision (cafes) and that any food/drinks are reasonable in the context of wider health objectives.

Activities

The City Council operates an activities programme, utilising both staff from HCP and other staff supporting specific externally funded project initiatives, such as the Boultham Park project and the Local Landscapes Hidden Histories project. For HCP supported events, the income comes in against a corporate income target. Events operated in connection with projects are usually funded, and unless external funding specifies events must be free, these are charged, with any funds raised put back into achieving the objectives of the project.

Strategy actions:

10. Corporate income for events to be pegged at existing levels indefinitely, to motivate staff to generate additional income, which MUST be spent on parks/open spaces.

What this might look like in practice?

Income targets that Council staff have for existing events and activities programmes will not be inflated on the budget sheets each year.

Advertising

The income policy sets the framework for income potential. However, the work required to generate income from this is known to be significant, and therefore a low priority.

Strategy actions:

11. Opportunities to advertise in parks/at park events will be included within all other forms of promotion.

What this might look like in practice?

Any/all aspects of the policy will be sensitively advertised to make people aware that they can support their parks/open spaces in many ways, if they wish to do so.

Events

Whilst having high social value, events are recognised as creating high level of work for little or even no return. They therefore represent poor value for money (in financial terms alone) in terms of investing resources, and indeed a possible financial risk. No actions are therefore planned against this priority. Any events already planned will be completed, and any support historically provided will continue each year, provided the resources remain available.

It should be noted that the Council does encourage third parties to arrange and manage events in our open spaces, and advice is given to those who would want to do so by the Council's corporate events staff. The lower priority given via the strategy in no way affects or diminishes that support.

What this might look like in practice?

Events will only be put on by the Council alone in very exceptional circumstances.

Sale of items

This is a low volume, low return activity and so not priorities for work. It is hoped that it may feature more prominently at a later date, with the sale of parks merchandise, should the opportunity exist to develop this avenue of income, perhaps associated with a major parks/open space project.

What this might look like in practice?

At this time, no new work is prioritised. It will be considered in the HCP Master Planning work when this takes place.

External grants

Although some long term funds, such as the National Lottery, can provide opportunities that can and should be planned for, by the nature of how some external funders can work at times, these can also be unexpected opportunities.

The approach to be taken here is therefore difficult to define, but the scale of the opportunities that can be presented is too large to ignore.

The work that comes with external funding cannot be underestimated, and so whilst these funds can offer great opportunities that would otherwise not exist, they can also offer significant risks which must be taken into account from the outset.

The council therefore has policies for the acceptance of external grant funds, requiring escalation of authority subject to scale, and review of the resource commitments necessary to meet the funders requirements (in match funding or staff resources).

The position adopted will always be to start from the premise that we will accept externally offered funds, unless we are not able to meet the demands of the funders.

Strategy actions:

11. To adopt a positive attitude to externally offered grant funding, based on the premise that we will accept if we can meet their requirements, but always subject to review through the Council's formal review process, being mindful of the resource commitments.

12. To pursue external grant funding for strategically developed parks/open space projects, so as to maximise the benefits of every penny spent.

What this might look like in practice?

Continual scanning for opportunities, BUT with a careful assessment of resource demands that would arise if applying/accepting grants, to ensure that the Council can meet the requirements of funders, and that other priority work of the Council will not be adversely affected.

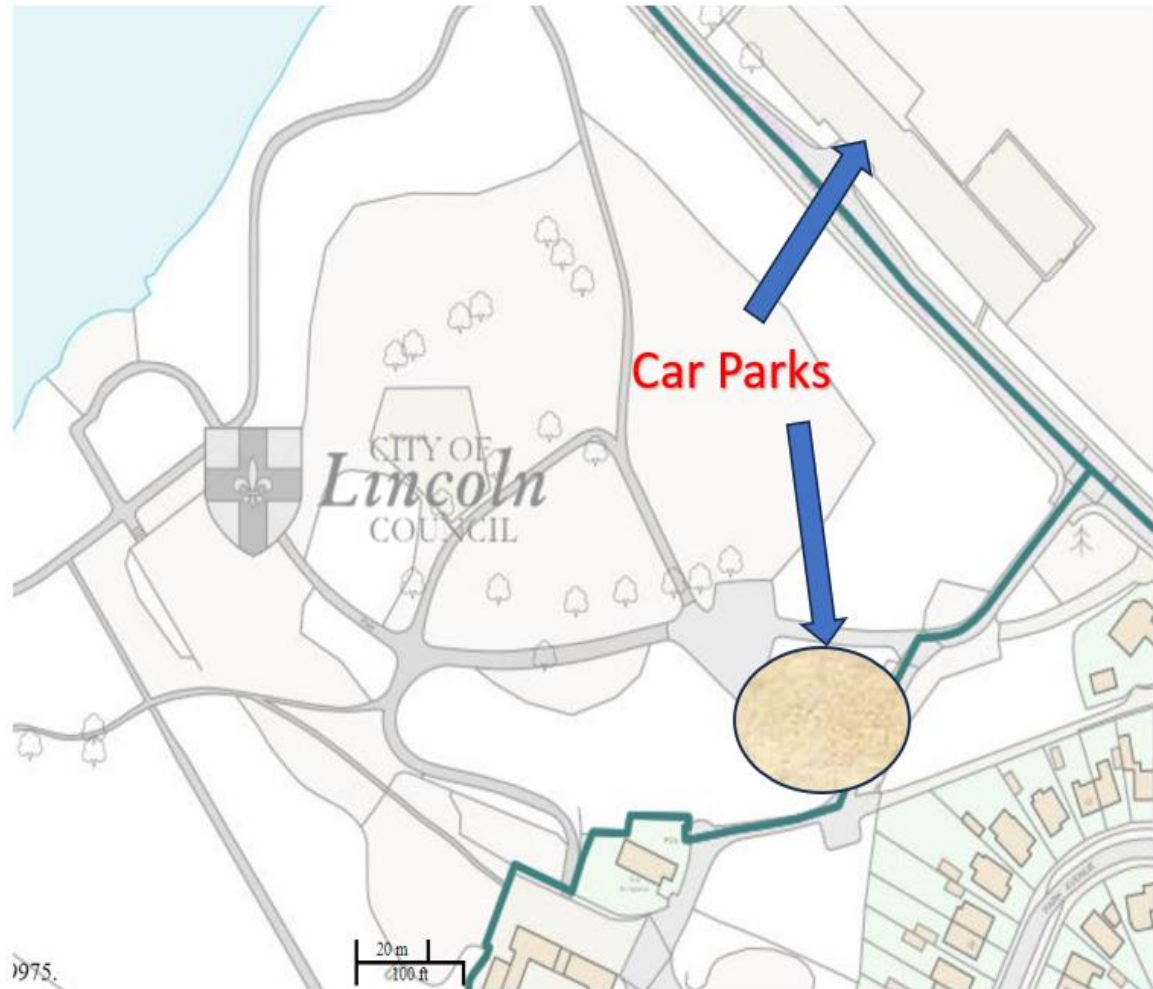
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Below :

Appendix A`- Hartsholme Country Park

Appendix B Boultham Park

Appendix C- Arboretum



Car Park

