

14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2019

REPORT TITLE	<i>Local Authorities Parks Improvement Funding</i>
REPORT OF	<i>Councillor Julie McManus</i>

## REPORT SUMMARY

Improvements to Mersey and Ilchester Parks, including essential improvements to infrastructure and introducing new features.

The pledge 'Leisure and Cultural opportunities for all' is supported by this proposal, as it targets improvements to the more deprived areas of the borough.

The pledge 'An attractive local environment' is supported by this proposal, as it improves two local parks.

This matter affects especially Bidston and St. James Ward and Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward, but also adjacent wards within the Birkenhead Area.

This is not a key decision by virtue of being below the threshold of £500,000

## RECOMMENDATION

**The Cabinet Members approves the allocation of £56,295 received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Local Authorities Parks Improvement Funding to be spent in Mersey Park and Ilchester Park in accordance with the attached report. The funds will be spent in Mersey Park and Ilchester Park to make improvements to the play areas and multi-use games areas, installing an activity trail, creating nature areas and improving signage.**

### **Mersey Park:**

Improvements to Play Area: Improve railings and entrances, including painting railings, existing slide and stockades. If possible/feasible install art panels or features around entrances to make the area more welcoming and inviting: (Estimated at £7,000)

Improve signage around play area in partnership with local school. This has been done on similar schemes where the design of the signage has been completed by local school pupils: (Estimated at £3,000)  
(Clean it up as well as no dogs etc.)

Install Activity Trail in grassed part of Play Area: (Estimated at £15,000)

Create nature areas within the grassed fenced play area – including nature piles/bug hotels etc., possible land art - snake, mounding or similar. Planting – bulbs, plug planting and tree planting (both small & larger trees), signage to inform users about the biodiversity

of the area (Interpretation) in partnership with the local school/s. Also a fruit growing area if funding permits. (Estimated at £10 -15,000)

Improvements to Multi-Use Games Area including Colour Coating surface and line marking: (Estimated at £7,000)

**Total Estimated Cost: £47,000**

**In Ilchester Park:**

Improvements to Multi-Use Games Area including Colour Coating surface and line marking: (Estimated at £7,000)

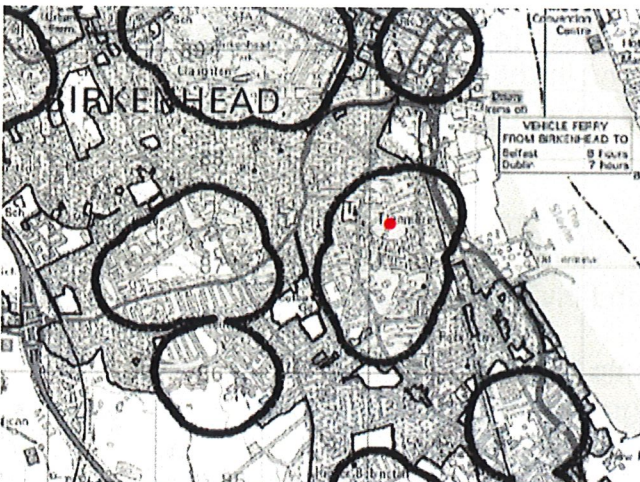
Improvements to play area boundary and entrances: (Estimated at £3,000).

**Total Estimated Cost: £10,000**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### 1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

The two parks selected for these improvements were chosen because they are adjacent to two of the largest areas of housing in Wirral lacking in Parks (using the criteria - over 400m from the nearest park)



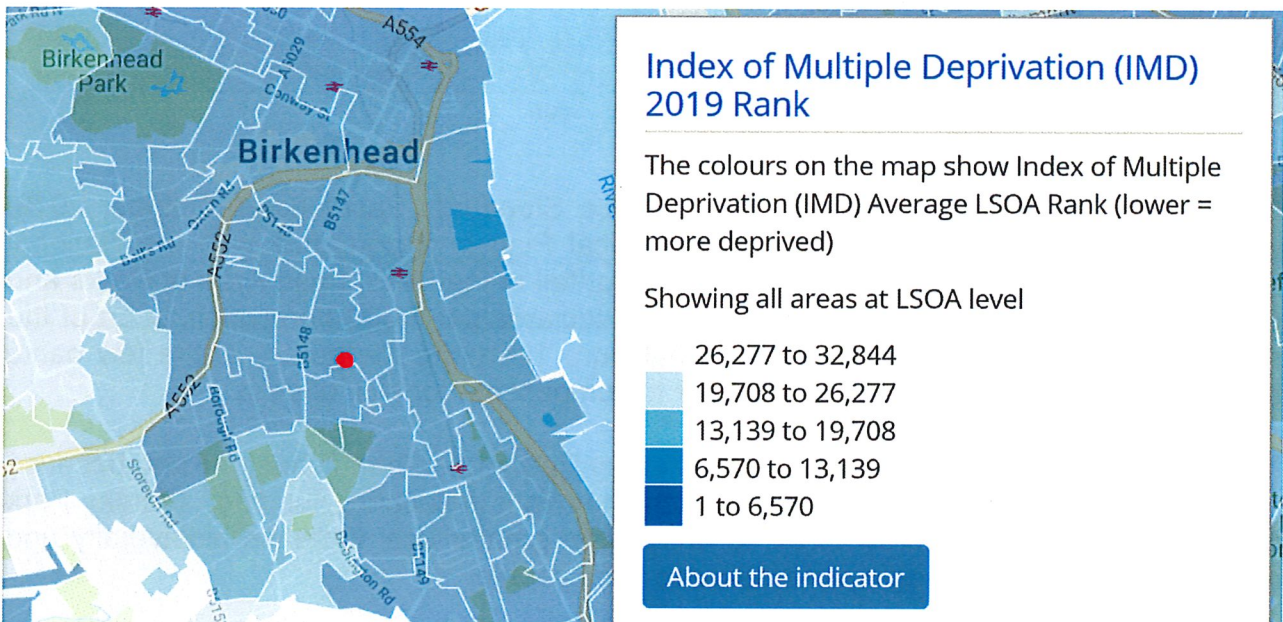
Location of Mersey Park in the centre of an area of dense housing with no park within 400m



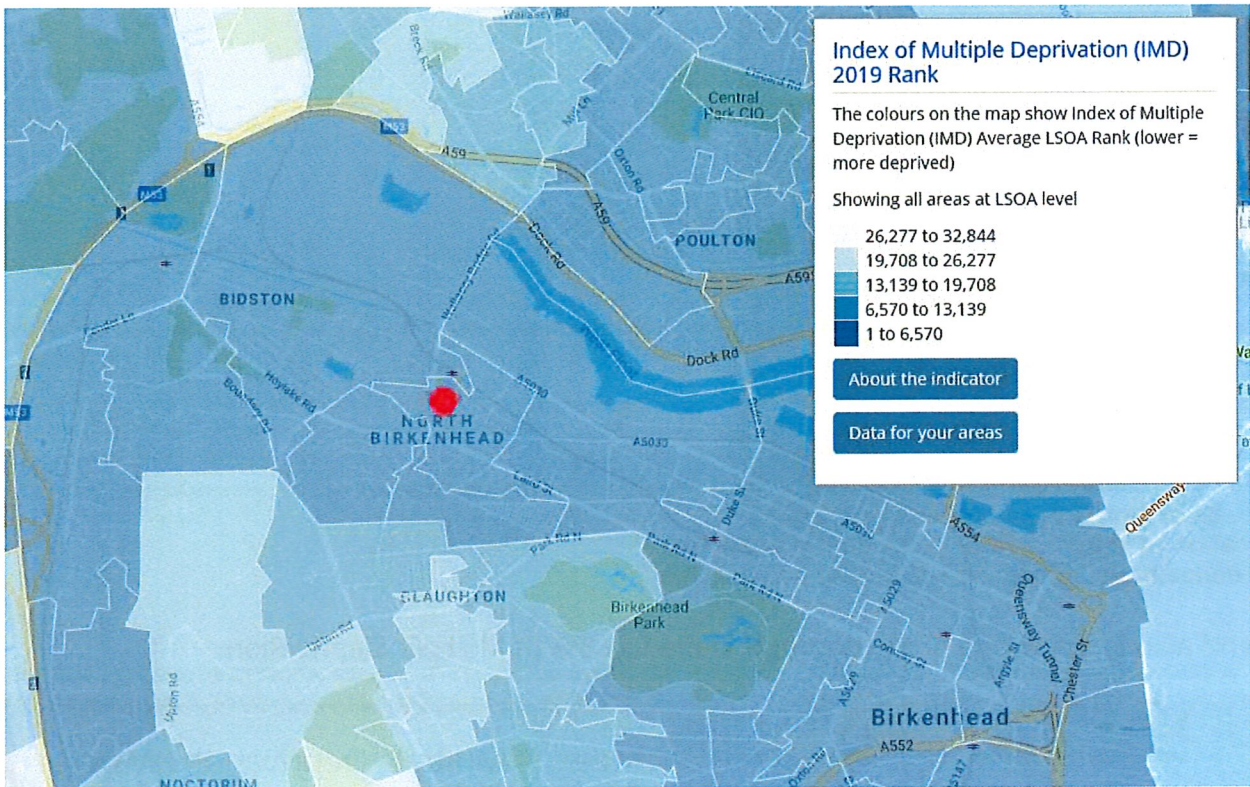


Location of Ilchester Park in the centre of an area of dense housing with no other park within 400m

– and also in the areas of the borough in the top 3% of Multiple Deprivation.



Location of Mersey Park in an area of High Multiple Deprivation



Location of Ilchester Park in an area of High Multiple Deprivation

In addition, the current draft of the Open Space Standards Paper dated October 2019, which will be supporting document for the Local Plan in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, has identified a shortfall in the Birkenhead Area of Parks and Gardens (Table 4.3.2 shows provision as 1.12 hectares per 1,000 population, short of the recommended 1.8 Hectares per 1,000 population) Therefore the quality of the few parks that exist are even more important, in order to compensate for lack of area.

Most of the funding has been targeted at Mersey Park rather than Ilchester Park, because recently Mersey Park has lagged behind Ilchester Park in securing funding. Mersey Park is in greatest need of improvement, to encourage greater use, increase biodiversity and make the area more inviting and attractive to local people.

Mersey Park was one of the ten parks identified in the 10 year Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2014 - 2024 as having the most potential to be improved.

## 2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Another option considered was to spread this funding to all 22 wards on Wirral; this would result in £2,558 being allocated in each ward.

This small sum would be insufficient to make any impact and would not be targeted at the most deprived wards of Wirral.

It would also not meet the stated purpose by the MHCLG, i.e. to target the areas of greatest need.



### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This funding was part of the £9.7 million announced by the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2019 for local authorities, to be used to renovate existing parks and to enhance green space available to local communities. It was to be targeted to those parks in the local area in greatest need of improvement.

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The grant of £56,295 has been received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, and so the implementation of this report has no financial implications for the authority.

### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None arising directly out of this report.

### **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

None arising directly out of this report.

### **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

The risk of not approving these projects is that the money will not be available next Financial Year for alternative projects, and therefore this opportunity for improving any parks will have been lost.

There is also a risk of being challenged why this money is not being spent in other parks, this has been addressed in sections 1.0 and 2.0 above.

### **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

Most of the Mersey Park elements of this project have been raised by the local Friends of Tranmere Parks.

### **9.0 CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

None arising directly out of this report.

### **10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – (*insert appropriate hyperlink*).

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2017/delivery>

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**APPENDICES**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

Council Meeting	Date