

## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 9 NOVEMBER 2022**

### **Response to Report on Fields in Trust (Scrutiny Committee 19 September)**

Following the report to the Committee in September some questions were posed by on the content of the report.

#### **Question from the Committee:**

Please provide more information on the potential costs of placing land with the Fields in Trust process

#### **Response (circulated previously on 10 October)**

The principal cost involved with the procedure is the officer time necessary to carry out the requisite work and manage the process. There is a minor charge for site registration. From registration work carried out thus evident that there can be significant variation in the time involved – and that a lot of the issues connected with each site only really come to the fore once the process has commenced. Consequently, it is difficult to provide a truly accurate estimate of the cost of site registration.

From current experience it is considered that it will take at least 80 hours of officer time to carry out the procedure – and depending on the grade of staff involved, a likely cost of around £2,800 in terms of the time taken. This cost takes no account of the ‘price’ of existing work having to be delayed or set aside.

If all Trafford sites were to be co-opted into this process, some economies of time would be expected – but broadly it might take at least 6 years of officer time to carry out the task.

#### **Questions from Cllr Coggins**

**“So we could cover a site every two weeks, which is 26 sites a year. But it would take 6 years to complete? Do we have 156 sites? There are 29 listed on the council website here [Parks in Trafford](#) That looks like little over a year’s work? Still a lot but just checking how these numbers are arrived at?”**

Trafford has different types of open space – including playing fields, play areas, parks and semi natural areas. The figure of 156 sites is derived from the Trafford [Greenspace Strategy](#) and is an amalgamation of the various tables within the strategy. It will include other types of greenspace, in addition to the principal parks.

The cost estimates are derived from the officer time employed on recent efforts to secure Fields In Trust registration. It is assumed that a variety of staff are involved – and so a blend of grades 8 -12 was used to estimate costings – based on an hourly rate. That hourly rate takes account of full cost of employing the member of staff. It was also assumed that with a larger number of sites, there would be economies of scale – and so a corresponding reduction in the overall total was made to take account of that.

It should be noted that these costs assumes existing staff are re-deployed to carry out the work. By implication this means that other, existing programmes across strategic planning, parks, leisure and estates would be correspondingly delayed or shelved. The headline cost does not reflect any knock-on resource implications that might arise as a consequence. If it was necessary to employ an external company to carry out the work, the costs would also be expected to be rise significantly.

***Please provide some background on why William Wroe, Turn Moss and Crossfield were picked for FiT status***

These sites are not conventional parks but are open spaces which historically have been used for a variety of purposes – William Wroe for example was previously a Municipal Golf Course. Each site has also been the subject of development proposals within the past few years. This combination of relatively unusual circumstances led to the decision to designate these areas under the Fields in Trust process.