

# Collett Park Phase 2

## Project Scope

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### Executive summary:

A proposal to redesign the café and toilet area of Collett Park, the marshalling yard and enhancing the entrances located either side of the café. The new facilities should serve and attract greater footfall to the park; reflecting the anticipated higher usage of the park generated by the new play area, improved cycle connections and growing local population.

### Background:

Collett Park is the town's largest public recreational park and is home to the largest play area in Shepton Mallet. The park is used by a number of organisations such as parkrun, the Drifters model boat club and outdoor sports and wellbeing groups. The main entrance to the park is located at the end of Park Road, adjacent to the Shape carpark.

The café is housed in a temporary structure which is owned by the business owner who has a lease for the site with the Town Council. This lease is up for review shortly and it is likely to be renewed for 9 months with the possibility of a further extension. The café operates out of a wooden structure and does not have any indoor or covered seating. In March 2023 a new play area was opened in Collett Park which significantly improves the play offering of the park (more equipment, catering to a wider group of users, etc.). The café currently only opens at weekends during term time and weekdays and weekends during school holidays – although the café manager may close on any given day if the weather isn't suitable.

The toilets are located within a stone building which backs on to the marshalling yard. There are gendered toilets and an accessible toilet, however the latter does not reflect best practice in terms of accessibility. The toilets are functional but could be modernised.

The marshalling yard is used to house equipment used by the contractors who maintain the park and town. These contractors work on behalf of the Town Council and Somerset Council. The marshalling yard is also used as storage space for the Town Council (chairs, banners, electrical boards, etc.). This is the only storage space currently available to the Town Council, the office itself being already fully utilised.

A new cycle path connection has been made, linking the Millenium Path, through the Shape carpark and out towards Townsend shopping area. This is one part of a wider effort to increase the cycle network across Shepton Mallet and improve connections with nearby towns.

### Aim:

To improve park users' experience and to support economic regeneration by encouraging greater footfall to the town.

## Desired outcomes:

- A café which continues to cater to current park users but also attracts customers on its own merits. The business will not necessarily be expected to generate additional income for the town council. It will only need to cover its operational costs. The café will have an indoor seating area which could possibly be let out at quiet times. The café would remain open for takeaway.
- An attractive all-weather outdoor hard-standing covered seating area open to all (not just café customers).
- An outdoor uncovered seating area (picnic benches) open to all.
- Modern and accessible toilets which meet the needs of the volume and diversity of park users.
- A safer, more welcoming and well-connected park entrance which reflects the significance of the park in our town and is attractive to pedestrians and drivers passing by.
- A space for food trucks (hard standing, electrical supply, etc.) connected to the outdoor seating area.

## Constraints and assumptions:

- Sufficient car parking spaces need to be provided for the increase in park and Strawberry Line use (including disabled spaces).
- We are assuming that external funding will be required.
- We have considered the current market dynamics.
- We are assuming that no significant changes will be made to the layout of the Shape building and carpark. It will be important to remain abreast of plans for this space in light of the reorganisation of local government.
- The land is owned by the Collett Park charity and the charity will need to give its permission for any changes to be made to the current site. The town council will need to be mindful of this charitable status when considering arrangements for the café.
- We will need to consider the implications on the location for the marshalling yard and for the Town Council's storage space for large items.

## Interfaces:

This project fits in to a wider programme of activity envisaged to regenerate Collett Park. The first phase of this programme was the new play area.

Any works carried out as part of this project will need to be tied in with the regular maintenance works which need to take place to the park (trees, plants, grass, lake, etc.).

Insofar as the marshalling yard is currently used by our grounds care contractors, we may need to ensure that a suitable alternative solution is provided if the current marshalling yard is removed or significantly changed. This may require discussions with Somerset Council.

## Project objectives

### Scope

In scope: the café; the marshalling yard; the toilets; utilities; the entrance; the pathways and connections leading from the entrance into the park and towards the cycle route; tree-planting, hard and soft landscaping directly impacted by the construction of any new facilities; storage space.

Out of scope: planting schemes in the park (beyond those immediately impacted by the build); new cycle routes; Shape building use or ownership.

### Time

Project completion current target date is April 2025.

### Cost

No budget currently agreed. No funds currently ringfenced.

### Risks

There is a risk that the new facilities, particularly the café, do not generate enough income to generate income or even cover their costs, which would result in a financial loss for the council and upset local residents.

There is a risk that any one of the steps of the project slip and therefore the project is delayed.

### Benefits

By making the park more attractive we hope to increase footfall to the town and therefore support our town's economic regeneration.

By improving the facilities at the park we hope to provide a better experience for park users and local residents.