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**Agenda Item:** Play Areas Review

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 4 November 2024

**Contact Officer:** Projects Officer

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The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on Play Areas under, or due to come under the remit of Witney Town Council.

### **Play Areas Review**

#### **Current Situation**

- The annual analysis is underway to review Witney Town Councils play areas to confirm equipment that requires updating and replacing.
- Officers are physically inspecting all parks and equipment to identify areas for improvement and updating the Councils database highlighting priorities and forecasted expenditure.
- Officers are selecting new equipment by focusing on safety, durability, and play value.
- Careful consideration is being given to inclusive equipment being present in each play area.

### **Play Area Transfers from West Oxfordshire District Council**

#### **Current Situation**

##### **Raleigh Crescent**

The transfer of Raleigh Crescent play area at Deer Park to Witney Town Council completed in August 2024.

The park had a major £63,000 refurbishment in 2019 being completely redesigned with an exciting range of new equipment for youngsters up to the age of 12.

The facilities were based on feedback from local children who had the opportunity to pick the kind of equipment they wanted during a consultation at West Witney Primary School last year. The supplier HAGS then devised a play area designed to cater for the entire age range features included slides, swings, climbing equipment and a toddler trail.



## **Waterford Lane**

The play area at Waterford Lane on the Madley Park Estate is currently owned by West Oxfordshire District Council and is in the latter stages of the legal process to be transferred to Witney Town Council.

This contains a DDA compliant see-saw, seating and picnic table, benches, 3 seat carousel, multi play with slide, rockers, and swings.

Witney Town Council officers have been working closely with the District Council to ensure all equipment and surfaces are compliant and in a good safe condition prior to transfer. Officers have also asked the District Council to confirm ownership of the street lighting surrounding this play area.



## **Cedar Drive**

The play area at Cedar Drive also on the Madley Park Estate and currently also owned by West Oxfordshire District Council is going through the legal stages of transfer. Officers will carry out the same due diligence as to all play area transfers to check compliance and condition.



## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – WTC aim to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to safe, inclusive, and engaging play environments with good accessibility, diverse equipment, safe spaces that are welcoming and enjoyable for everyone, helping to break down barriers and promote social equality from a young age.
- b) Biodiversity – Integrating biodiversity into playground design not only enriches the play experience but also fosters a deeper connection between children and the natural world. WTC aim to incorporate natural elements like trees, shrubs, and wildflower meadows, which help support local wildlife and create more engaging environments for children.
- c) Crime & Disorder – consideration is given to equipment that can withstand vandalism and reduce risk of anti-social behaviour. Efforts will be made revitalise spaces leading to improved community relations and a reduction in crime and disorder, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – consideration is given to ensuring equipment is manufactured from sustainable and recycled materials for equipment and surfaces. This reduces the carbon footprint and promotes eco-friendly practices.



## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Officers and the Town Council legal representatives mitigate risks relating to transferring ownership and responsibilities for play areas by working closely with the District Council prior to any transfer.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- A key objective of the play areas review is to identify parks that can be improved to encourage exercise through fun activities to attract users from every segment of the community which encourages social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Transfer of play areas into the Town Council's portfolio increases the facilities provided to the town under its control, enabling the Council to promote exercise through fun activities and to attract users from every segment of the community which encourages social, generational, cultural and physical integration.

## **Financial implications**

- The review will be completed within the next two weeks identifying what equipment is needed to update our parks enabling forecasting of future budget requirements. The budget for next year has been confirmed as correct and sufficient.
- Thorough due diligence prior to transfer minimises any associated costs to the Town Council.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and provide any feedback considered necessary..