

Agenda Item: Major Projects Update

Meeting Date: 13th January 2025

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major projects that are currently in flight.

Background

As you are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which are: 'Courtside Hub at the Leys (inc. Parking Restrictions)', 'Raleigh Crescent Sports & Social Area', 'Splashpad Renovation' and 'Portaloos at West Witney Sports Field'

Courtside Hub at the Leys



Current Situation

- Planning Application [24/02888/S73](#) is currently under consideration by WODC – See Confidential Appendix A
- Heavy machinery has arrived a significant grounds work has commenced
- Noticeable improvement in communication and project governance

- Provisional project completion date has changed to early Summer 2025
- Chasing response from OCC to accept enforcement responsibilities, which will enable Witney Town Council to commence TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) process. Proposed restrictions are:
 - Free Parking
 - Monday to Sunday 8am to 6pm
 - 4 hours – No return for 2 hours

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 – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to achieve over 100% improvement in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – contractor is now on site, which ensure site security and reduces risk of trespassing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally materials which will also improve thermal efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

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.

- Due to delays the council have experienced during pre-construction phase, a reputational risk with the community still exists and remains on our risk log. This is being managed through regular reporting and collaboration with Courtside and contractor
- Officers intend to phase the council's £250,000 contribution to Courtside at set milestones that are weighted towards the end of the project, to minimise the risk of any financial loss.

Social Value

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

- Courtside philosophy is to serve the community, providing a social and welcoming space for Witney's residents and visitors
- Increased variety of sports will encourage Witney's residents to exercise and feel the physical and social benefits
- The completion of the Courtside Hub, coupled with new skatepark, mini-golf, splashpad and excellent play area, establishes the Leys as a destination park for the area.

Financial implications

- Witney Town Council's contribution of £250,000 will be segmented and phased in accordance with project milestones and acceptable level of risk.
- Work is underway to renegotiate the lease between the council and Courtside

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Raleigh Crescent Sports and Social Park



Current Situation

- After successful consultation, officers have clarity on what the community want from the park
- Witney Town Council are working in partnership with District Council to procure this project due to constraints surrounding S106 monies. Procurement process has been clarified.
- Procurement tender has been written and issued to WODC for review and distribution through their procurement channels. See Confidential Summary (Appendix B)

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 – inclusivity and accessibility to everyone are important design features of this park, which are highlighted in tender and subsequent evaluation process.
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to deliver above the minimal uplift in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – location is an area subjected to occasional anti-social behaviour, which was raised at consultation events. We have asked for this issue to be addressed within the design through lighting and seating innovations.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient.

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.

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges when transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. We are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.

Social Value

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

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to socialise and participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

Financial implications

- The project budget is reliant on S106 monies from District Council, which means the town council must work in partnership to deliver project. Robust processes need to be in place to ensure smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Splashpad at the Leys Play Area



Current Situation

- As detailed in previous Committee Meeting minutes (Mar 2024), the Splash Park renovation project was agreed with a budget of £172,500 from earmarked reserve and a planned completion for 2025 summer season.
- After a successful period of operation between Spring and Summer of 2024, officers have identified several improvements to enhance the Splashpad and make more reliable.
- Community consultations held in Summer 2024 have provided officers with a clear view of what improvements the users would like to see.
- The Splash Park currently connects to the Courtside drainage system, which means the effective drainage of the Splash Park is dependent on Courtside correct managing and maintaining their drainage and pump systems. With the anticipated increase of foul and grey wastewater exiting the facility, this could create a strain on the system and risk back flowing to the Splash Park. Officers have formally raised this risk with Courtside and exploring alternative drainage options to make the Splash Park drainage systems independent.
- Splash Park contractor have been engaged to gauge interest and Tender document for the Splash Park renovation has been started.

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.

- The Splash Park has been at the receiving end of some poor feedback from the community, which has prompted this project. This highlights a reputational risk that officers will carefully manage with effective communication and delivering the valued project improvements in time for the warmer weather.
- The cost of eliminating the risk of drainage issues by making the Splash Park drainage system independent is unknown and could consume a significant proportion of the earmarked budget and reduce the planned improvements the council would like to make. Making the Splash Pad separate would benefit the Courtside Hub and mitigate their risks associated with drainage capacity. Therefore, the council will engage with Courtside when costs are known to negotiate funding/contribution.

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.

Financial implications

- We have an earmarked reserve budget of £172,500

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Portaloo at West Witney Sports & Social Club



Current Situation

- Council agreed that Portaloo should be removed at previous committee meeting, due to management and hygiene issues.
- Portaloo hasn't been removed due to issues finding a company to dispose of. Therefore, they remain unlocked and open for members of public to use.
- Officers have consulted the clubs who use the sports field and all have confirmed the loo is useful and it to stay, but haven't volunteered taking on cleaning and management.
- An alternative solution to using the Portaloo is landlord will open the Social Club when the club requires it to, at an agreed price.
- Portaloo is planned for removal when the Club renovation project is complete, early 2026. Officers are exploring digital/intelligent access systems for the new facility to enable clubs to access the toilets when the social club is closed.
- Officers explored the rental of social clubs disabled outside toilet but the risks were too high of affecting their DDA compliance, therefore this idea was abandoned.

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 – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – n/a
- c) Crime & Disorder – n/a
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – n/a

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.

- There is a risk of reputational damage as the Portaloo has been the subject to one complaint. The complainant has escalated to local MP.
- In its current state the Portaloo does raise a hygiene risk as it is not managed or cleaned by any organisation and continues to be open to the public.
- If the Portaloo is closed, it will encourage users of the sports field to respond to the “call of nature” publicly, which isn’t acceptable.

Social Value

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

- n/a

Financial implications

- No financial implications

Recommendations

1. That the report be noted.
2. The Portaloo to remain in place until the building has been renovated, but is locked and every club has a key/code that their members can use
3. The clubs are given a key/code and instructions of use and expectations that the clubs will collaborate to keep the toilet in an acceptable level of cleanliness.