
Agenda Item: Major Projects Update

Meeting Date: 12th May 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 five 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', 'Ralegh Crescent MUGA', 'Splash Park Renovation' and 'Portaloo's at West Witney'

Courtside Hub at the Leys



Current Situation

- Grounds work has been completed, and steel structure has been erected.
- Recent issues with logistics and construction methods for the Padel Court building have been resolved and construction of this building will commence on 12th May 2025.
- Due to Health and Safety regulations the Wheeled Sports Park will be temporarily closed until 15th July 2025 when the building is planned to be completed. This closure

is disappointing and unavoidable, despite Officers efforts to explore alternative options for park to remain open. More information on this closure, including community recompense activities is contained within email update on 8th May 2025.

- Provisional project completion date has been delayed to Autumn 2025

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 friendly 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 previous complaints received from Fernleigh residents, Courtside are proactively engaging the residents prior to the construction of the padel court building to mitigate risk of complaints.
- Officers have ensured that all communications regarding wheeled sports park closure are from Courtside, readers are signposted to Courtside contact details for queries and initial communications are approved by the Council. Any comments or complaints received by the Council will be sent directly to Courtside.
- Courtside are employing an overnight security guard to protect the wheeled sports park and construction site during the Padel building construction phase.
- 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.

- 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, renovated 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.

Ralegh Crescent MUGA

Current Situation

- Officers have received clarification from District Council on the conditions of use for the S106 money allocated to provide a MUGA at Ralegh Crescent. The image in 'Appendix A' is a concept that provides an illustration of what could be possible. **Please note that this image is confidential and should not be shared as it could compromise the procurement tender process.**
- Officers are amending the tender document to reflect the S106 requirements for WODC to distribute.

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 innovations.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient. Muga specification includes soundproof materials to reduce sound of ball strikes.

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 agreeing tender specifications and 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.
- Officers recognise that concepts which were presented at public consultation last year will be different to what is being delivered due to S106 spending criteria. Officers are taking relevant feedback from consultation event to incorporate into new design scope. In addition, officers are working with WODC officers to re-engage community to reset expectations.

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 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 robust contracts are in place and smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

Recommendations

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

Splash Park at the Leys Play Area



Current Situation

- Council agreed to procure Splash Park renovation work through KCS local authority framework at Policy, Governance and Finance Committee Meeting on 3rd Feb 2025.
- Contract awarded to Ustigate Ltd formally on 14th February and the contractor is on track to open new Splash Park on 23rd May 2025 agreed.
- Officers have encountered no issues with the renovation project to date. We are in the final stages of installation and will be testing and commissioning the Splash Park shortly.
- Officers will test the Splash Park prior to opening to ensure we optimise sequencing to balance water usage with user enjoyment.

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.

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. Environment & Climate Emergency – consideration is given to ensuring equipment is manufactured from sustainable and recycled materials for equipment and surfaces. Officers estimate that the equipment and sequencing will reduce water usage by 60%.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider 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 throughout the planning and construction phases, whilst delivering the project in time for the warmer weather.

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



Current Situation

- Council agreed that Portaloo should be offered to clubs for them to manage.
- Despite all clubs confirming the Portaloo was useful, no clubs accepted our offer to take responsibility for them by the deadline date.
- Ongoing discussions with clubs are taking place to agree interim solution while the Clubhouse awaits its renovation planned for Winter 2025.
- The Town Clerk/CEO will provide a verbal update at the committee meeting

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 consider 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 of one complaint.
- If it is decided that the Portaloo will remain unlocked and in its current condition, there is a continued risk of vandalism and mechanical failure.

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

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