

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 17 May 2021
Title: Park Road Play Area - Update
Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Council has asked for this play area to be refurbished and opened ideally in time for the summer holidays. Due to previous ASB, the park will be aimed at young children.

Current Situation

Further to the update submitted to Full Council, Officer have met four contractors on site and have asked them to quote to provide new play equipment.

The rocking horse will be refurbished by the Works Team and made static (to ensure it complies with current safety guidelines) and the slide will also be renovated by the Works Team.

The bear bin will be relocated to the park from The Leys, and will be complimented by a Penguin bin that is currently in storage. The Works Team will also install a recycling bin and a bench from existing stock.

The Council has a trampoline in storage which can be fitted by the Works Team and also a 4m mini space net, which contractors have been asked to install and include in their quotes. Some additional parts will be required for this but it has been confirmed by the manufacturer that these are available to purchase.

Play providers have been asked to quote for a small spinning dish (DDA compliant), two rockers, play panels and new play surfacing under equipment. They have also been given the opportunity to include extra equipment which the Council could decide to purchase at a later date. By selecting a few small new items to install to open the park for the summer, this also provides local residents with the opportunity to fundraise and choose additional items going forward.

Swings

The Project Officer, Operations and Estates Advisor and the Maintenance and Environmental Officer have held several discussions on the swings currently in the park, to consider if these could be brought back into use.

All the play providers who visited the park have commented that they are currently not compliant as the seats are too near to the poles (see fig. 1) and the base underneath is not large enough. If seats were removed to ensure compliance, only one swing per bay would be able to be used. This would be disappointing as swings are always popular and it is hoped to include an inclusive swing for children with disabilities. The play providers also advised that it would not be cost efficient to restore them, if indeed this was possible.

One of the legs is rusted and shows signs of pitting (see fig. 2) and this would give cause for concern in terms of safety. The loose arm castings (see fig, 3) are also badly corroded. The swings are 52 years old and the manufacturer (Wicksteed) only provides replacement parts for equipment up to 20 years old. If Council staff did try to restore them, the Operations and Estates Officer has concerns that they may not be insurable due to modification.

Officers have therefore requested that the play company quotes include a new set of swings.

Currently Officers are waiting for designs and quotes to come back. If these are available at the time of the meeting, they will be shared.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates. By reusing and refurbishing four pieces of equipment, the Council is reducing its carbon footprint as opposed to purchasing entirely new equipment.

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 some risk that the project may not be completed in a timeframe that is in line with the Council's aspiration, although all companies providing proposals have been advised of the the timeframe.

Financial implications

The budget already set aside for this project is £20,000, which includes the donation of £2,500 from the Witney Town Hall Charity.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. that new swings be installed, replacing the old, non-compliant set;
2. that the bear bin from the Leys be moved to Park Road Play area;
3. that in view of the short time frame for project completion, the decision of which company to proceed with is delegated to Officers, in consultation with the local ward Councillors – these being Cllrs Ashbourne, Duncan and Smith with the main deciding factor being price.