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| **Report to** | | **On** | | |  | | |
| **Council** | | **21 July 2021** | | |
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| **Title** | | | | **Portfolio Holder** | | | **Report of** | |
| Remediation of Contaminated land at Strawberry Valley Park, Bent Lane | | | | **Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets)** | | | **Director of Customer and Digital** | |

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| Is this report confidential? | No |

## Purpose of the Report

1. To put in place a budget and agree a way forward for the remediation of land at Strawberry Valley Park, Bent Lane, Leyland to allow works to refurbish the playground and improve the park’s landscape to be progressed.

## Recommendations

1. That Council grants approval for the following:
   1. That Council recognises the decision taken by Cabinet in June 2021 to develop a new Play area on Strawberry Valley Park (Bent Lane) and to carry out the necessary re-mediation of Contaminated land on the site so that the Play area can be built
   2. That Council approves a budget uplift of £139,000 on an original budget of £61k providing a total budget of £200,000 in line with the estimated cost of carrying out the decontamination work
   3. That Council notes that the Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member (Health and Wellbeing) in liaison with the Director of Customer and Digital will approve the award the contract for the remediation of Strawberry Valley Park following the completion of the procurement process in line with the standing orders of the Council up to a value of £200k.

## Reasons for recommendations

1. The current capital programme includes a number of play areas identified for improvement. Strawberry Valley Park Playground has funds allocated in this financial year and a design and contractor has now been identified following a tender process.
2. The current capital programme also includes a budget for remediation of contaminated land on site, required before the new playground can be constructed. Estimates to remediate the site by the introduction of a cap of clean soil are greater than the available budget and therefore a request from Council is proposed for a budget uplift for this element of the project.

## Other options considered and rejected

1. The option of doing nothing and leaving the playground in its current condition was rejected as the site is now in need of refurbishment to provide quality facilities and the Friends of Strawberry Valley Park have worked hard to obtain a grant of £30,000 towards the cost of improved facilities.
2. The option of not remediating the contaminated ground found on site was rejected as the council has a duty to take action where ground contamination on public open spaces exceeds recommended maximum levels.

## Corporate outcomes

1. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (tick all those applicable):

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| An exemplary council |  | Thriving communities | **X** |
| A fair local economy that works for everyone |  | Good homes, green spaces, healthy places | **X** |

## Background to the report

1. The report Creating Playful Communities by Play England (2011) suggests improving opportunities for play provides additional benefits to the simple fun and enjoyment that it gives to children and young people:

* Play is important for children's health - both physical and mental. Active physical play can contribute to reducing levels of childhood obesity.
* Access to play and informal recreation opportunities can help to reduce anti-social behaviour
* Providing play opportunities brings communities together and is a strong force for community cohesion.

1. Strawberry Valley Park Playground was last comprehensively refurbished in 2002 with only a group swing remaining on site. The demand from the local community for a quality playground remains high as illustrated by the funds raised by the Friends Group.
2. It is proposed to refurbish Strawberry Valley Park Playground to provide a modern accessible and inclusive playground for Toddlers (ages 2-6) and juniors (ages 7-12) with an associated ball court.
3. As a result of historic use of the site, ground investigations to check for potential contamination were undertaken which has confirmed the presence of some elevated chemicals in certain areas of the park. These present a small risk to users of the site however the Council has a duty to ensure that remediation of the site is undertaken to remove the source-pathway-receptor linkage between the identified chemicals and site users.
4. Following further detailed surveys into the contamination, a strategy has been developed for the remediation of the land. In line with standard industry practices the linkage is being broken by installing a layer of clean material over the affected areas to a suitable depth to ensure no risk remains. A high visibility geotextile barrier will be placed below this layer to warn anyone in the future that the site is potentially contaminated.
5. There is an existing budget of £61,000 remaining in the current capital programme for the improvement of the park and it is proposed that this budget be allocated to remediation works needed to the site. The forecast agreements to be used are outlined below:

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| **Schemes / Location** | **Cap Prog 21/22** |
| 1-3 Hawthorne Close, Leyland | 10,596 |
| Land at North Side of Cleveland Road, Leyland | 36,464 |
| Land at Group One, Royal Ordnance site, Euxton | 14,000 |

1. The estimate for importing the new clean soil across the park over a high visibility geotextile membrane and reinstating existing hard surfaces at the new raised levels is £200,000 and therefore a budget uplift of £139,000 is requested to allow for the remediation works and therefore allow the playground refurbishment to progress to the agreed programme.
2. The invitation of the playground design and build bids has been timed to allow the reinstatement of existing hard surfaces as part of the remediation contract to be carried out to reflect and suit the new layout of the playground and ball court.

## Risk

1. The playground project risk register identifies key procurement risks, the majority of which will be mitigated by the procurement process followed. The project to remediate the site will address risks raised by the ground investigations carried out.

## Equality and diversity

1. The new play area would be more inclusive and accessible by design.

## Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

1. This report requests a total budget of £200k to fund the remediation works that are necessary to progress the playground refurbishment. Of this £61k is to be funded through S.106 agreements, as outlined within the report, with the remaining £139k to be funded through potential borrowing at a cost to the revenue budget of approximately £6k per annum.

## Comments of the Monitoring Officer

1. The Council are asked to increase the budget for the delivery of this project to ensure the discharge our obligations in relation to contaminated land. Recommendation 2.(3) is for noting as this is an Executive Function and details on the award of the contract is for information.

Background documents

Cabinet Report 16th June 2021 - Strawberry Valley Playground (Permission to Award Contract & Spend Capital Budget).

Asim Khan

Director (Customer & Digital)

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