

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Planning and Development (Introduced by Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets))	Council	Wednesday, 24 May 2023

The Council's Capital Programme and Withy Grove Play Area

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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Purpose of the Report

1. This report is asking Council to approve an addition to the agreed Capital Programme by including a project costed at £110,000 to replace the central tower at Withy Grove Park Playground in Bamber Bridge following an agreement reached with the Council's insurers. The report will also provide a context as to how this project is part of a wider improvement programme for Withy Grove Park and Bamber Bridge Leisure Centre

Reasons for recommendations

2. Council approval is required for capital schemes that require additional capital expenditure of over £100,000.

Recommendations to Council

3. That Council agree to amending the Capital Programme by the sum of £110,000 to replace the tower slides at Withy Grove Park Playground

Other options considered and rejected

4. The option of not replacing the tower slide with a similar item of equipment was considered and rejected as the item formed the centrepiece of the play area and Withy Grove Park is one of the few parks in the borough where such an item can be installed due to the amount of space available.

Corporate priorities

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

Background to the report

5. Withy Grove Park is one of the premier parks in South Ribble located within Bamber Bridge. The Park is on the same site as Bamber Bridge Leisure Centre and the newly created Playing Pitch Hub.
6. This relatively small project is one part of a wider regeneration of the Park and Leisure Centre, Projects have and will include the following
 - a. The creation of a new Playing pitch Hub on the site which includes two new 3G pitches and a new Sports Pavilion
 - b. The installation of a new Footbridge over the railway and associated landscaping and footpaths by Network Rail
 - c. General improvements to the Park and a submission of an application for a Green Flag award (Decision pending)
 - d. The Decarbonisation and refurbishment of Bamber Bridge Leisure Centre (Currently underway)
 - e. The re-development of the skate park area of the park
 - f. The re-planning of parking at the site to complement the above
7. This particular project relates to an incident that took place in the Summer of 2022 (1st August and 10th August) two separate fires were started at Withy Grove Park Play Area which resulted in the loss of the Tower Slide unit in centre of the play area.
8. Following the incident, the area around the tower was closed for a short period whilst investigations took place into the integrity of the remaining structure and the Council had the chance to involve the insurance section and identify a way forward. Following consultation with the manufacturer of the equipment (Proludic) who installed the original play area in 2007 it was advised that the remaining parts of the tower were not recommended for retention due to distortion by the heat of the fire. It was also advised that a like for like replacement would not be possible as the company no longer manufactures many of the main component parts of the item.
9. However, Proludic were able to calculate a price for the supply and installation of the item in today's prices and working closely with the Council's insurance section and following extensive negotiations with the loss adjuster, an agreement was reached on a sum of £110K to replace the item.
10. Permission from the loss adjuster was given to remove the remains of the tower slide which was carried out on the 18th January 2023.
11. Discussions have been held with both the fire service and police around the incidents and how the resilience of the site can be developed with upgraded CCTV and other measures to deter damage and anti-social behaviour.

The Proposal

10. It is proposed to replace the original 2007 tower slide with a new piece of equipment in the existing woodchip pit at Withy Grove Park playground.
11. A replacement item is intended to be procured by a design and build process openly advertised on the Chest and Contracts Finder whereby bidders are given a maximum budget and invited to submit designs for a replacement item. The design that provides the most equipment, play value and longevity for the price would score the highest marks.

12. The guidance/specification to bidders would ensure the new piece of equipment is more resilient to damage with greater visibility through the structure as well as providing a replacement landmark item in the centre of the play area.
13. Of the £110,000 budget, £109,179 (minus £100 policy excess) would be reclaimed from the council's insurers.

Climate change and air quality

14. The work noted in this report impact on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Council's Green Agenda:

- Reducing waste production.

15. The following remediations have been undertaken to limit the environmental effect:

- Waste materials arising from the works including timber, metal and stone, will be reused on site where possible and recycled off site where needed minimising the amount of material disposed of at landfill.

Equality and diversity

16. As part of preparing the 2023-24 Business Plan for Parks and Open Spaces an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the whole service including play areas. As we instigate this project, we will sense check the overall EIA and apply it to this project.

Risk

17. A Risk Register is in place for capital improvement works to play areas.
18. There is always a risk of misuse and vandalism of play areas and therefore design specifications seek to ensure equipment and other facilities are as robust as possible whilst remaining attractive and providing high levels of play value.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

19. The scheme is not currently established within the capital programme and, as it is over £100k, it requires Council approval to establish the budget. The cost of these works will almost exclusively be funded by a corresponding insurance receipt with a very small excess amount to be covered from existing Council resources.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

20. There are no concerns with this report from a Monitoring Officer perspective. A compliant procurement exercise will be carried in order to ensure we get the best scheme for the money available. Formal contract documentation will be entered into.

Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

Appendices

There are no appendices to this report

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This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.