

Improvements to Dunorlan Park Play Area – release of Section 106 Funding

For Cabinet Member for Leisure, Wellbeing and Culture

Summary

Lead Member: Cllr Wendy Fitzsimmons

Lead Director: Paul Taylor

Head of Service: Gary Stevenson

Report Author: Peter Every

Classification: Public document (non-exempt)

Wards Affected: Park.

Approval Timetable	Date
Cabinet Member	9 March 2023
Report Published	13 March 2023
Decision Due not before	21 March 2023

Recommendation

Officer recommendation:

1. It is recommended that £18,670.38 of developer contributions are released to fund a project related to children's play utilising a contribution received through a planning condition for Fairmile, Dunorlan Park planning reference 05/0184, and Rookley Close and Forest Road planning reference 12/03274

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The natural play area in Dunorlan Park was initially installed in 2011 with a subsequent upgrade. The play area is a popular attraction to the park for families with young children and offers opportunities for children to engage with the natural environment through play.
- 1.2 The planning agreement for Fairmile specifically indicates the contribution for children's play should be utilised in Dunorlan Park. The funding from the development at Rookley Close is less specific on the location for its use. Dunorlan Park is the nearest park to the development so it is proposed that the funding should be utilised for play provision in Dunorlan Park.
- 1.3 Following a review of the existing play equipment and consulting with the Friends of Dunorlan Park a proposal was put forward to extend the existing area to accommodate more equipment to facilitate the increased volume of children using the play area.
- 1.4 The proposal consists of the following equipment:
 - Improvements to the existing timber adventure trail
 - Installation of new sensory play units
 - Two timber carvings
 - Refurbishment of the existing climbing tree
 - Installation of new grass mats to damaged areas
 - Supply and installation of wood carvings
 - Wood carvings utilising timber on site.
- 1.5 The total estimated cost for the project is £20,038.00 with the shortfall of £1,367.62 being funded from Parks revenue budgets. The majority of the cost of £18,670.38 will be funded from developer contributions held by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- 1.6 Since the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown Dunorlan Park has experienced an increase in visitor numbers resulting in added pressure on the play provision in the park. The introduction of additional play will add further opportunities for more children to experience play in the natural environment.

2. Options Considered

- 2.1 Do nothing - the majority of the project is funded from S106 developer contributions one of which is specific to funding children's play in Dunorlan Park.
- 2.2 Proceed with the project as detailed in the main body of the report.

3. Preferred Option and Reason

- 3.1 The recommended and most durable option is to proceed with the plan to add new equipment in the existing play area. This will increase the play value of the park and provide increased opportunities for interactive and social play.

4. Consultation on Options

- 4.1 The Parks team worked closely with the Friends of Dunorlan and where possible incorporated feedback from visitors to the play area. The location of play area means there is no impact on surrounding properties.

5. Implementation

- 5.1 Quotations will be sought in line with the Council's procurement policy and contract procedure rules.
- 5.2 Information will be communicated via social media, the Friends of Dunorlan and notice boards in the café and notice boards in the park.

6. Cross Cutting Issues

A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)

Section 106 planning obligation agreements provide a mechanism for collecting contributions from developers through the planning process. Section 106 contributions may only be used for the purpose specified in the agreement. The proposed use for the contributions in this instance are in accordance with the terms of the relevant condition and agreement and the funding can be utilised as proposed.

Any necessary agreements or contracts entered into must be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and should be in a form approved by the Head of Legal Partnership.

B. Finance and Other Resources

The Section 106 funds have been received and can be used for this purpose.

Clare Hazard Accountancy Manager 21.04.21

C. Staffing

There are no staffing implications in the staffing sections.

Nicky Carter Head of Human Resources, Customer Services and Culture. 21.04.21

D. Risk Management

There are no significant risk management issues related to this project.

Peter Every Parks and Sports Team Leader – 21 December 2022

E. Environment (inc. Biodiversity) and Sustainability

The proposal will not have a significant impact on the carbon emission's from the operation of the service. No adverse issues.

Gary Stevenson Head of Housing, Health and Environment 9 March 2023

F. Community Safety

No adverse issues.

Terry Hughes Community Safety Manager 16.04.21

G. Equalities

Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper could directly impact on end users. When carrying out the refurbishments consideration will be given to access for people with disabilities.

Sarah Lavallie Corporate Governance Officer 21.04.21

H. Data Protection

The recommendations given in this paper will not involve the processing of personal data.

Sarah Lavallie Corporate Governance Officer 21.04.21

I. Health and Safety

Upgrading the play equipment in this park reduces risk to children, as it will be ensured to be to the current required standards, through Council procurement procedures. Any equipment will be added to the Council inspection regime going forward. This will ensure that children are not put at any risk, with any improvements required actioned to ensure safety.

Mike Catling Corporate Health and Safety Advisor 16.04.21

J. Health and Wellbeing

Releasing these funds for improvement to Dunorlan playground will support the increase of physical activity and outdoor play for children in the local area. This will be achieved through the expansion meaning more people can access this area. It will also benefit parents and families providing them a safe outdoor space for the children and opportunity to be active themselves.

Rebecca Bowers Health Improvement Team Leader 20.04.21