

Senior Operations Support Officer's Outline Report for the Meeting held for the Members of the Amenities & Leisure Committee 26.05.2021

Meadow Park

Junior Swing Area Upgrade

Background

Upgrades to the Meadow Park play area have been on the Town Council's agenda for the last few years. A full upgrade project will take several months of planning including community consultation, funding applications, tender processes, reviewing plans etc.

The Town Council are not currently in a position to embark on the full upgrade project however, the current plan is to renovate the junior swing area situated on the right hand side of the playground and return this to a usable space.

Junior Swing Area

The existing timber frame shows evidence of rot and a build-up of algae and moss. The swing seats and chains have been removed in the interest of health and safety. The surfacing currently consists of two square pads of wetpour tiles on concrete surrounded by bark. The surfacing tiles are starting to lift along the edges and the bark in need of topping up.



The proposal is to replace the existing swing frame with a 2.4m high 2 bay 4 seater steel framed swing, ideally incorporating an inclusive seat to allow children with disabilities to have full enjoyment of the swings.

The safety surfacing would also be upgraded, ideally moving away from bark. Bark requires regular topping up and also makes clearing up small pieces of litter, such as broken glass, extremely difficult.

Budget

The Town Council has received £11,664 in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which must be spent on a suitable project by 18th October 2021. It is therefore the intention that these funds be used to redevelop the swing area at Meadow Park.

There is a further £3,936 in CIL to be spent by 6th June 2022. These funds could be used should the project exceed £11,664.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	
Amount Received	Spend By
£11,664	18/10/2021
£1,693	26/04/2022
£1,693	26/04/2022
£550	06/06/2022
£15,600	

Renovating the remainder of the play area would be somewhere in the region of £50k-£100k. The Town Council currently have £10k in an earmarked reserve (EMR) for the project and although match funding opportunities can be explored, the Town Council would need to allocate additional funds to the project in order to qualify for match funding.

Proposals

I have had initial discussions, followed by site visits, with four companies regarding their proposals for replacing the swing set and upgrading the surfacing. There are a number of factors to consider and more conversations required to refine the proposals. The companies are: HAGS, Kompan, Mant Leisure and Sutcliffe Play.

The swings are enclosed by metal fencing in an area measuring 8.2m x 8.2m. We have received conflicting information from the four companies as to whether the space complies with current safety legislation (further detail below). I have referred a query regarding this to the Play Inspection Company who conduct our annual playground inspections and am awaiting a response.

HAGS

HAGS have advised that the total area required for the replacement swings exceeds the dimensions of the enclosure. Their proposal therefore includes:

- Removal of the gate and 3 sides of fencing
- Removal of existing frame, surfacing and subbase
- Installation of a 2 bay 4 seater swing (3 x flat seats and 1 x inclusive seat)
- 48.5m² stone subbase
- 48.5m² of black wetpour surfacing (edges ran into ground)
- Stone subbase and black wetpour to be extended from swing pad to the path to facilitate easy access for wheelchair users

Inclusive Seat



Total cost: £13,193

Comments

Existing bark to be removed by ETC – bark is a specialist waste and costly to dispose of, most of the remaining bark has been compacted to mulch. It is therefore advisable that the Town Council repurpose it either at Meadow Park or elsewhere.

Safety surfacing to be surrounded by turf (to be supplied and laid by ETC or others)

Kompan

Awaiting proposal and quotation however the initial discussions suggest that Kompan believe their swing frame would fit within the existing fence line.

Mant Leisure

Mant Leisure have advised that a 3 seater swing would fit within the existing fence line however a 4 seater swing would require the fencing to be removed. They have submitted two initial proposals:

Proposal A

- Removal of existing frame and bark pit
- Installation of a 2 bay 3 seater swing (2 x flat seats and 1 x inclusive seat)
- 76m² of black wetpour surfacing

Total cost: £15,654

Proposal B

- Removal of existing frame and bark pit
- Removal of fencing and gat
- Installation of a 2 bay 4 seater swing (3 x flat seats and 1 x inclusive seat)
80m² of black wetpour surfacing

Total cost: £17,793

Comments

Unlike the other three suppliers, Mant Leisure do not manufacture their own range of play equipment and instead use various suppliers as such the frame itself is approximately £1,500 more expensive than the other suppliers.

Sutcliffe Play

Sutcliffe Play have advised that the total area required for the replacement swings exceeds the dimensions of the enclosure. They have submitted two initial proposals:

Proposal A

- Removal of gate and front fence
- Clearing of existing bark (only 14m², remainder to stay in place)
- Removal of existing frame and square surfacing pads, subbase to remain in place
- Installation of a 2 bay 4 seater swing (3 x flat seats and 1 x inclusive seat)

Inclusive Seat



- 14m² stone subbase
- 24m² of black wetpour surfacing (edged) to be surrounded by existing bark

Total cost: £8,979

Proposal B

- Removal of gate and front fence
- Clearing of existing bark (to be transferred to existing play areas and/or piled to one side)
- Installation of a 2 bay 4 seater swing (3 x flat seats and 1 x inclusive seat)
- 35.4m² stone subbase
- 43.4m² of black wetpour surfacing (edged)
- Supply and lay turf around wetpour

Total cost: £14,705

Concluding Comments

The initial discussions with these four companies have been positive and suggest that the project could be completed without exceeding the budget as set out above. The general consensus appears to be that we would need to remove the surrounding fencing in order to ensure we comply with the latest playground safety legislation.

More discussions will be had with the companies and with the Town Council's grounds team in order to refine the proposals before a final decision is made. I am confident that the CIL deadline will be met and the new swings will be a huge asset to Meadow Park.