

Report of the Strategic Director Place to the meeting of Bradford East Area Committee to be held on Thursday 22nd November 2018

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Subject:

Report regarding a petition received by the Council requesting immediate cessation of any further removal of play equipment and or fencing and a halt to the closure of the lower play area in Peel Park.

Summary statement:

Replacement of the lower play area at Peel Park in the existing location, or to provide a new centrally located single site facility to replace both play areas that currently serve the park and local community, designed in consultation with the local community and park users.

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Portfolio:
Health, People and Places

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Regeneration and Environment

1. SUMMARY

- Replace the lower play area at Peel Park in the existing location or provide a new centrally located single site facility to replace both play areas that currently serve the park and local community.

2. BACKGROUND

Peel Park is currently served by two childrens play areas, a lower play area near the lake and the upper play area adjacent to Park Road. Both play areas are now of an age where they are past their anticipated life span. (Appendix one shows the location of the plays areas within the Park)

The upper play area is primarily aimed at the younger age group where the lower was aimed at the older age groups (as the Councils Park Bye Laws currently state that play areas are to be used by children under the age of 14).

The lower play area was installed approximately 20 years ago and was built on a former pond which has led to structural issues with the foundations of the play equipment installed.

Since 2016 the lower play area has suffered from repeated and sustained attacks of vandalism to such an extent where equipment has had to be removed as they became a health and safety issue. The Multi Unit on site was removed on the instructions of the independent play inspector as it had become structurally unsafe owing to the sites inherent ground conditions.

A petition has been received by the Council requesting immediate cessation of any further removal of play equipment and or fencing and a halt to the closure of the lower play area in Peel Park.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The guidelines for the location of a childrens play area suggest that is overlooked by residential properties to allow for 'natural surveillance' to discourage misuse of the equipment itself and reduce anti-social behaviour incidents. Unfortunately the location of the lower play area does not allow for this which has led to an increase of vandalism to the play area and other features within the locality.

In the last three years the lower play area has suffered from increasing attacks of vandalism with an average cost to the Council of over £2000 per annum. In comparison, the upper play area that is overlooked by residential properties has suffered on average £500 per annum.

The lower play area was built on the site of an ornamental pond. This has led to ground stabilisation and drainage issues which have had a twofold effect on the longevity of the site. These ground conditions have led to an accelerated decline in the structural properties wooden play equipment (rotting of the wood) as well as the destabilisation of the concrete foundations of the Multi Unit.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The annual repair budget for the playground equipment is £36,000 which equated to an allocation of £236.00 pa per facility.

There is a financial cost to either replacing the facility in the same location or consolidating the play provision in Peel Park and building one new central play area in a location to be finalised.

The estimated cost of replacing the play area at the lower site is estimated to be approximately £150,000 to £175,000

Peel Park is held by the Council on Charitable Trust. In 2014 the trust agreed to lift a covenant on the sale of Laurence House to allow the Council to dispose of the building. The sale of the site provided a capital receipt to the trust of £140,500 to be spent on the outcomes of the charity. The money is held by the Council and has no time limits on the spend. It has been notionally agreed to allocate £70,000 to the play areas within the park.

The remaining funding will need to be found from other sources none of which have currently been identified.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

At present there are no significant risks arising out of the implementation of the proposed recommendations.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

There are no Equality or Diversity issues arising from this report.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability issues arising from this report.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

There is no greenhouse gas emission impact arising from this report.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Community Safety Implications arising from this report.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no Human Rights act issues arising from this report.

7.6 TRADE UNION

There are no Trade Union issues arising from this report.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

The information in this report is relevant to the Bolton and Undercliffe Ward in the area. Increased devolution of the services will allow the Area Committee to further address local priorities for those services within the Bradford East Constituency.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

There are no direct Area Committee Action Plan implications arising from this report.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

There are no implications for corporate parenting arising from this report.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Not applicable in regard to matters arising from this proposal/decision.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

No documents

9. OPTIONS

1. To replace the existing lower play area in its current location, running the risk that the site will continue to suffer the same structural and anti-social problems.
2. Work with the friends of group to identify a more suitable and sustainable site to provide a play facility for all age groups and ensure local user buy in to the scheme to foster a sense of local ownership and the benefits this can bring. This will allow the development of a new play area which actively seeks to design out any anti-social and misuse issues that are experienced currently, reduce the future maintenance cost burden and ensure that more inclusive elements of play provision are provided together with engendering a sense of community ownership.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That officers work with the local community and the parks friends of group to find a suitable and sustainable site for all age groups and ensure local user buy in to the scheme to foster a sense of local ownership and the inherent benefits this can bring.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Site Plan

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

No Background Documents