

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

A.3

Meeting Date: 14th December 2020
Portfolio: Communities, Health and Wellbeing
Key Decision: KD 26/20
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: BITTS PARK INTERACTIVE WATER FEATURE
Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number: CS 33/20

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of the report is to seek Executive approval for the release of the capital allocation for full mechanical and electrical reinstatement of the children's interactive water feature in Bitts Park, following flood damage in February 2020.

Recommendations:

1. That the Executive approves the addition of £73,591.50 for the reinstatement and repair of the water feature at Bitts Park, pending the finalisation and acceptance of the insurance settlement.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Bitts Park was flooded when, as a result of Storm Ciara on 9th February 2020, the Rivers Eden and Caldew overtopped their banks. Bitts Park play area was submerged to a depth of around two metres for five days. The interactive water feature in Bitts Park play area sustained considerable damage to its electrical and mechanical systems.
- 1.2** The feature was assessed by Council staff and an outline quotation request drawn together for reinstatement of the facility. The original equipment manufacturer, Ustigate Waterplay, submitted a quote of £68,651.50 for all necessary works to reinstate the feature whilst the Council sourced quotes from local suppliers for site security fencing and adequate temporary welfare facilities for staff working on the project. These total £4,940.
- 1.3** Following the submission of an insurance claim and subsequent assessment of the facility, the Council's insurers accepted the claim and have agreed in principle to the settlement of the claim at a cost of £73,591.50.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1** To use the settlement sum as agreed in principle by the Council's insurers in order to allow the repairs to be progressed in good time for the facility to be in full operational order for the beginning of the spring/summer 2021 season.
- 2.2** The main contractor, Ustigate Waterplay, have been advised that no site works may commence until March 2021 in order to avoid the period when the area is at highest risk of repeat flooding.
- 2.3** The water feature will be re-commissioned in late-March 2021 and operation will be in full accordance with UK Government Coronavirus restrictions in place at that time.

3. RISKS

- 3.1** The risk of further flood events remains present at Bitts Park due to proximity to two main rivers and the location of the play area on the unprotected side of the city's flood defences. The Council's insurance on the facility remains unaltered as a result of this claim and therefore the financial risk to the authority should another flood occur is considered low.

- 3.2** The reputational risk to the Council for not reinstating the facility, or providing a suitable alternative in a different location, is considerable given the popularity of the water feature and the footfall it generates.
- 3.3** The water feature comprises approximately 1/3 of the total footprint of Bitts Park play area and, should it not be reinstated, the authority would have to consider the risk of locating sufficient external funding to remove the feature and replace with alternative play equipment.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1** The need for consultation as to whether to release these funds is not considered necessary. The insurance settlement has already been paid in full and, as the proposed works are to the mechanical and electrical componentry, there will be no material change to the external appearance and operation of the facility to users or those tasked with its' inspection and maintenance.

5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1** The interactive water feature is an integral and universally popular component of Bitts Park play area, the authority therefore has a responsibility to ensure its continued presence on the site so long as this remains practicable and the facility is fully insured.
- 5.2** The flood damage incurred in February 2020 is repairable and the Council's insurer has already settled the resulting claim in full.
- 5.3** With the release of the capital funds, as per the recommendation of this report, the authority may progress the repair and recommissioning of the water feature in preparation for re-opening in spring 2021.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 6.1** This action directly contributes to the Council's priority to 'improve the quality of our local environment and green spaces so that everyone can enjoy living, working in and visiting Carlisle'.

- 6.2** This free to use facility additionally contributes to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of both users and their parents or carers by promoting physical activity, social interaction and imaginative play in a welcoming and attractive space.

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Appendices

attached to report:

- **None**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL – There are no particular legal implications arising from the report but an appropriate contract for works should be in place for the delivery of the works.

FINANCE – The Council's insurers have agreed in principle to a settlement for the reinstatement and repair of the Bitts Park Water Feature up to a value of £73,591.50. The Council will engage the supplier to reinstate the water feature in Spring 2021 to minimise the risk of any additional flooding damage in preparation for re-opening in Spring 2021. This report requests that the sum agreed is added to the capital programme to allow the reinstatement to occur once the insurance claim is finalised and agreed.

EQUALITY –

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –