

# Report to Executive

Agenda  
Item:  
  
**A.8**

Meeting Date: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020  
Portfolio: Environment and Transport  
Key Decision: No  
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes  
Public / Private: Public

Title: TRIBUNE DRIVE PLAY AREA, HOUGHTON  
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive  
Report Number: CS 34/20

## Purpose / Summary

The purpose of the report is to seek Executive approval for the release of the capital funds allocated for the replacement of play equipment and safer surfacing at Tribune Drive, Houghton.

## Recommendations

That the Executive approves the release of £35,000 contained within the capital programme to allow progression with the installation of new equipment and safer surfacing, for which the preparatory works have already been undertaken.

## Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** Tribune Drive play area was installed by the developer of the estate, Hassal Homes, in the early 1990's and was subsequently adopted by the City Council, who continue to maintain the play area and the wider green space in which it is sited.
- 1.2** Recent years have seen a gradual deterioration in the quality of the equipment on the site, primarily due to age-related wear, with several items having been completely removed following their failure.
- 1.3** The City Council's budget resolution from 2019/20 contained a capital allocation of £35,000, subsequently carried forward into 2020/21, for improvements to Council owned play areas. These funds have been earmarked for the Tribune Drive site to carry out a complete replacement of play equipment and surfacing on the site with the original intention of commencing works in late summer/autumn 2019. The extremely wet conditions experienced at that time resulted in a decision to delay the project to spring 2020, at which point it was further delayed to autumn 2020 by the Coronavirus crisis.

## **2. PROPOSALS**

- 2.1** To release the allocated sum of £35,000 contained within the capital programme to allow progression of the scheme, specifically the installation of new equipment and associated safer surfacing.
- 2.2** The authority will coordinate the play equipment upgrades with the installation of a new land drainage scheme within the play area and adjacent access points, with expected completion in November 2020.

## **3. RISKS**

- 3.1** The reputational risk to the authority for not upgrading the facility was noted, particularly when considering the physical risk to which young people and their parents or carers would be exposed during use of equipment which is known to be near the end of its lifespan.
- 3.2** The risk of public opposition to replacement of the scheme or rejection of its contents was considered and counteracted with a thorough public consultation exercise, heavily involving the local school and parish council. All comments were considered when finalising the detail of the project.

- 3.3** The risk to the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the local community should the play area not be upgraded (and therefore require removal) is significant, particularly at a time when access to good quality green spaces has been identified as a priority by members of the public.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1** Full public consultation, using methods adhering to the UK Government's Coronavirus restrictions at the time, was undertaken in June 2020, receiving an exceptionally high response rate.
- 4.2** City Councillors for Stanwix and Houghton Ward, Stanwix Rural Parish Councillors and staff at Houghton Primary School were engaged with and actively contributed towards the consultation. The opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed project was advertised heavily in the local area.

#### **5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1** The play area at Tribune Drive is a valuable community resource, the popularity of the site and residents' desire to contribute towards planning its refurbishment was demonstrated through the consultation.
- 5.2** The required funding of £35,000 is already earmarked within the current capital programme and the project has been planned in order to maximise the use of this budget for users of the site.
- 5.3** With the release of the capital funds, as per the recommendation of this report, the authority may progress the installation of new equipment and safer surfacing, with completion expected during winter 2020.

#### **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' by providing access to high quality play facilities.
- 6.2** Access to free to use play facilities for children of a wide range of abilities, ages and backgrounds assists with the improvement of physical health and social skills within the local community.

**Contact Officer:        Darren Crossley**

**Ext:    7120**

**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 –** The proposal in the Report applies the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

**PROPERTY SERVICES –**

**FINANCE –** There is £35,000 within the current Capital Programme in 2020/21 to support improvements to Council owned play areas. This report provides an update on the project and requests release of funding to progress the works.

**EQUALITY –**

**INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –**