

4th December 2017

Community and Housing Committee

Warley Playing Fields Play Area Refurbishment

Report of: *Stuart Anderson – Deputy operations Manager*

Wards Affected: *Warley*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the emerging Leisure Strategy a phased approach has been agreed for any work streams identified as part of it.
- 1.2 One of these streams is to investigate opportunities at King George's Playing Fields and Warley Playing Fields.
- 1.3 The Council currently operates 29 play areas around the Borough as part of its outdoor leisure provision, one of which is at Warley Playing Fields.
- 1.4 As part of the work around Warley Playing Fields it has been identified that the play area is in need of refurbishment following the removal of a number of items of equipment.
- 1.5 In addition to this it has been identified that there is an opportunity to establish the authorities first outdoor gym in the Borough as part of the ongoing improvements to Warley Playing Fields.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Members to approve the capital investment [as outlined in the report] and authorise Officers to initiation a refurbishment of the existing play area at Warley Playing Fields.
- 2.2 That Members delegate authority to the Chair of Community, Health and Housing together with the Officers and Members of the Leisure Strategy Working Group and the Health and Wellbeing Board to determine the final design of an outdoor gym at Warley Playing Fields.

2.3 That once a final design is established that Officers proceed with procuring the design and installation of the outdoor gym facility at Warley Playing Fields.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 As Members will be aware the Council is currently undertaking a review of its leisure provision in the Borough as part of the work being carried out around the emerging Leisure Strategy.
- 3.2 It has previously been agreed by Members that a phased approach be adopted to the work streams coming from the emerging Leisure Strategy. It had been agreed that the first phase of work centre around King George's Playing Fields and Warley Playing Fields and of the improvements or potential of each site.
- 3.3 The play area at Warley Playing Fields had already been identified by Officers and Ward Members as being in need of investment and refurbishment as the previous refurbishment had taken place in 2005.
- 3.4 Naturally time and usage has taken its toll on a number of these items and earlier this year two items were removed due to being beyond economical repair and a further three items taken out of service and made safe so that they were unable to be used, again due to safety concerns.
- 3.5 This has resulted in a restricted and limited offering of play items on the site and with a concentration of housing around and additional housing developments at Mascalls Park and also Evoke [old Warley Training Centre] being constructed it has meant that there is greater demand on the facility than in previous years.
- 3.6 Taking the above into consideration, Officers have recommended that a full refurbishment of the play area at Warley Playing Fields be undertaken as part of the works being done to look at the enhancements and leisure opportunities at Warley Playing Fields.
- 3.7 The refurbishment will consist of removing all existing equipment and safety surfacing, the only exception to this is the double cable way which will be retained. New equipment and safety surfacing will then be procured and installed. In addition, and to complement the new equipment, new metal railings will be installed around the play site and new tarmac footpaths, bins and seating will also be provided.

3.8 Initial steps have already been taken to cost out a potential scheme, design ideas have also been discussed with representatives from SNAP to ensure that any scheme initiated is open and accessible to all families including those with children that may have restricted mobility.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4.1 As already stated and as outlined above the play area at Warley Playing Fields has been identified as in need of refurbishing.

4.2 Funding from the scheme has already been identified through S106 contributions from the Evoke development [old Warley Training Centre] and a collective of other smaller S106 contributions, therefore funding for the scheme has already been secured.

4.3 The overall scheme is expected to cost circa £232,000 which can be broken down as follows:

- Supply, delivery and installation of equipment £122,000
- Supply and installation of safety surfacing £70,000
- Supply and installation of railings and gates £24,000
- Installation of footpaths £16,000

4.4 Whilst this is a significant sum of monies it is important to highlight that the play area is one of the larger sites in the Borough and serves a high portion of residential properties and in particular flatted properties that may not have access to private play space.

4.5 The refurbishment will consist of removing all existing equipment and safety surfacing, the only exception to this is the double cable way which will be retained. New equipment and safety surfacing will then be procured and installed. In addition, and to complement the new equipment, new metal railings will be installed around the play site and new tarmac footpaths, bins and seating will also be provided.

4.6 To ensure that the play area is a safe and secure place for families to attend and parents to be at ease whilst their children play additional steps will also be taken on the entrance to the play area nearest The Drive. Measures will be introduced to create a holding area gated at each end so that children are unable to quickly exit the play area and

gain access to the busy road adjacent. This method has been adopted with success at Hutton Recreation Ground play area. The entrance leading directly onto The Drive will also be removed in its entirety to ensure the safety of users of the site.

4.7 As an addition and an emerging longer term project and to ensure the site offers something for all age ranges and groups of the community it has also been suggested that an outdoor gym be installed on site.

4.8 An area of land adjacent to the play area has been identified as a potential location for the gym, this will ensure that all the facilities are close to each other and visible from each area along with being served by surfaced footpaths

4.9 Although there are a number of outdoor gyms in the Borough these have been provided by Parish Councils and so this would be the first central site provided by the Borough. A number of locations have been considered for this facility including the High Street at the rear of the Bay Tree Centre but this has been discarded for the following reasons:

- Unlikely that office workers will attend site during the day when there are no facilities to change or shower in.
- Relatively small site that is already well utilised during the summer months.
- Due to the number of people using the green during the summer gym users may well be deterred from using the equipment i.e. being watched.
- Night time use, the area is lit which would benefit evening users but then there is the issue of unwanted attention during the evenings, especially on a Friday and Saturday night.
- Those that work or live around the town centre are likely to be young professionals due to the number of flats accommodation and who are, in all likelihood already members of a private gym and would prefer this option as oppose to exercising outside in public.

4.10 Officers have suggested that Warley Playing Fields be considered as a first possible location for the following reason:

- High level of housing around the site.
- High levels of flats accommodation around the site with limited access to private outdoor space.

- High levels of social Housing and therefore potential financial deprivation or reduced disposable income to allow for membership of a private facility.
- 4.11 It is intended that a budget of £20,000 - £25,000 be reserved for the provision of the gym equipment, installation and provision of safety surfacing. The budget for this has already been identified and will be provided with 50% coming from S106 contributions and 50% from the Health and Wellbeing budget.
- 4.12 If successful it is hoped that, with agreement of Members and the relevant boards/working parties the scheme of outdoor gyms can be expanded to other parts of the Borough utilising similar monetary sources or external grants.
- 4.13 In addition to providing an additional facility for the local community an outdoor gym would also support the Councils Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017 - 2022 [to be adopted] in that one key priority is:
- **Tackling Obesity and Improve Physical Health** – Obesity continues to pose a serious threat to health and wellbeing and is seen as an increasing burden on public services. Regular, physical activity is associated with increased life expectancy and reduced risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and osteoporosis. As part of its commitment to improve health and wellbeing and to assist local residents in becoming more healthy and active, local partners will focus their efforts on a work programme that will promote more physical and recreational activities amongst local residents. We will make best use of local community assets and help to develop other low-cost/no-cost opportunities working collectively.

Providing this outdoor gym equipment will address this health priority together with addressing the identified action of:

- To work with partners to establish opportunities for residents to become more physically active”

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To allow for the refurbishment of a degraded and aged play facility at Warley Playing Fields

- 5.2 To ensure a safe and engaging facility is provided for the expanding local community
- 5.3 To ensure that facilities are provided for all elements of the community and not just those in a targeted age group with the provision of an outdoor gym.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 To ensure the provision of efficient and effective services to our residents and businesses.
- 6.2 Providing increased customer satisfaction in the quality of Council services.
- 6.3 To Increase access to the Borough's leisure opportunities.
- 6.4 Making Brentwood a Borough where people feel safe, healthy and supported.

7. Implications

Financial implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Principal Accountant

Tel & Email: 01277 312 82/

jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 The funding for the Proposed projects has been identified through various Capital Section 106 Income (£245k) which is currently accounted for on the Council's Balance Sheet and through the Revenue Health and Wellbeing Grant (£12.5k) which is 50% of a Revenue Grant to be received by Essex County for 2017/18 and will have to be contributed to the Capital Programme, to fund the Capital Expenditure.
- 7.2 Although the funding has already been secured, so the project is of no additional cost, it should be noted, that should the Project overspend, as in most capital projects, the burden will fall on the Council's Capital receipts. However the project will be monitored as part of the Council's Capital Programme and should any underspends/overspends occur, these will be reported.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Legal Services Manager

Tel & Email: 01277 312860/daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.3 The Council will need to ensure that refurbishment contractors (if required) are procured in compliance with the Council's Constitution and relevant procurement regulations. Legal Services are available to advise and assist going forward.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

Health & Safety implications

Name & Title: David Wellings, Health & Safety Officer

Tel & email: 01277 312518/david.wellings@brentwood.gov.uk .

- 7.4 The Health and Safety implications include the Council's arrangements to enable legal compliance with statutory responsibilities for using the Council's public open spaces. Reduce the Council's risk exposure from aging play equipment.

8. Appendixes

None

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Stuart Anderson

Telephone: 01277 312500

E-mail: stuart.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk