

Ward: Wells Central

Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Corporate Services

Report Author(s): Cllr John Parham

Meeting Date: 05/12/16

SUBJECT: Wells Recreation Ground Play Area – Update on Fire

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Report Sign off	Seen by:	Name	Date
	Legal	Alex Kershaw-Moore	28/11/16
	Finance	Paul Deal / Duncan Moss	29/11/16
	Procurement	N/A	
	Group Manager	Sara Skirton	29/11/16
	Portfolio Holder	Cllr John Parham	29/11/16
	Ward Member(s)	Cllr John North	29/11/16
Summary:	<p>On the evening of Saturday 5 November 2016, a fire severely damaged part of new play area on the Wells Recreation Ground. Fire and police services attended and the incident is being treated as suspected arson. Investigations are on-going.</p> <p>The Council has made an insurance claim.</p> <p>The proposal is to remove the damaged structure and surfacing, retain the security fencing and place an order for the manufacture and installation of like-for-like replacement equipment and surfacing.</p>		
Recommendation:	<p>Cabinet is recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to the like-for-like replacement of the damaged equipment and surfacing. 2. Delegate to the Wells Recreation Ground Trust Committee decisions on the detail of the replacement equipment and in relation to further play area enhancements. 		
Direct and/or indirect impact on service delivery to our customers and communities:	<p>The play area remains partially open and will do so until the replacement structure and surfacing is in place.</p> <p>The Trust wishes to take the opportunity to carry out further enhancements to make the play area even better and provide the best possible play experience to users.</p>		
Legal Implications:	<p>Legal advice is that the Council keeps a register of who has donated monies, their contact details and how the donor wishes the money to be spent, if specified.</p>		

Financial Implications:	<p>The play area is insured under the Council’s insurance policy and a claim has been submitted and is in progress.</p> <p>The Council will have to pay the £1,000 excess for the claim.</p> <p>Id Verde are providing a quote for the removal of the burnt structure and surfacing; this will be sent to the insurer asap.</p> <p>Eibe has provided a quote of £47,012.11 plus VAT for a like-for-like replacement, including installation and surfacing.</p> <p>There will be a new on-going cost of circa £2,200 for the annual insurance premium covering the new play area.</p> <p>Enhancements would be additional and require separate funding.</p>
Value for Money:	<p>A like-for-like replacement quote has been obtained from the supplier. The selection of the supplier was done through a procurement framework which demonstrated that value for money would be achieved in the procurement and delivery of the project.</p>
Equalities Implications:	<p>The proposal will re-instate improved play facilities for residents in the area.</p>
Risk Assessment and Adverse Impact on Corporate Actions:	<p>The key risks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late settling of the insurance claim would delay placing the order and installing the replacement structure and surfacing. • Potential health & safety issues if the damaged area within the site is not properly secured or if there are delays in removing the burnt structure and surfacing. • Damage to Council and Trust’s reputations if replacement process is delayed.
Scrutiny Recommendation (if any)	<p>N/A</p>

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a brief overview of the recent fire and progress made for replacing the equipment and surfacing. It also highlights the phenomenal community response which has been very supportive of the new play area and making it even better.

BACKGROUND

Cabinet approved Section 106 funding for the new play area and gym circuit at their May 2016 meeting. Subsequently, the equipment was ordered and installation took place between mid-August and mid-October 2016.

The new facilities were officially opened by Cllr Jeannette Marsh, Chairman, and Cllr Alison Gibson, Mayor of Wells, on Sunday 30 October 2016. The event drew a large crowd of several hundred children and their families who were the first to try out the new equipment.

THE FIRE

On the evening of Saturday 5 November 2016, a fire severely damaged part of new play area on the Wells Recreation Ground, just one week after the opening.

Fire and police services attended and the incident is being treated as suspected arson. There are notices on-site asking for people with information to come forward.

The fire service has sent through an Incident Handover Form and this confirmed the burnt structure was made safe and unstable supports made safe.

The police have confirmed the incident still subject to a criminal investigation that is ongoing. CID has been brought in to oversee. The police have carried out house to house enquiries, a review of social media and visits to local schools and colleges. A forensic examination of materials from the site is being done.

The CCTV camera located nearby was unable to reveal any detail as it was after dark.

Damage was restricted to the 'palace' structure and its associated surfacing. This was the largest piece of equipment and the centrepiece of the design.

REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT

The insurer sent the loss adjusters to site on 10 November and the following week the Council was instructed to proceed with a claim. This has been done and is in progress.

The proposal is to remove the damaged structure and surfacing, retain the security fencing and place an order for the manufacture and installation of like-for like replacement equipment and surfacing. These actions are pending the claim outcome.

It is anticipated the replacement process will be completed by Spring 2017, this allows for 6-8 weeks for manufacture and 2 weeks for installation.

FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS

Trustees have requested that security and surfacing options are explored by officers and that reports are submitted to them for consideration.

In addition, extra seating and a youth shelter have been suggested.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Immediately after the fire, the community independently started fundraising, mainly through crowd funding and individual fundraising events at schools and clubs.

The Council has said it can hold these monies, but prefers that groups/individuals hold onto donations. Legal advice is that the Council keeps a register of who has donated monies, their contact details and how the donor wishes the money to be spent, if specified.

The insurer has confirmed that the crowd funding monies raised are not required for the replacement items. On this basis, donations from the community could either be used to enhance facilities subject to agreement of the donor, or returned to the donor as the full cost of replacement is covered by insurance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree to the like-for-like replacement of the damaged equipment and surfacing.
2. Delegate to the Wells Recreation Ground Trust Committee decisions on the detail of the replacement equipment and in relation to further play area enhancements.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The insurance claim will cover the cost of like-for-like replacement.
2. The Wells Recreation Ground Trust Committee wishes to take the opportunity to carry out further enhancements to make the play area even better and provide the best possible play experience to users.

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