

7th January 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks - Councillor A Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Place

Ward(s) affected:

Woodlands

Title:

Juniper Drive Play Area Petition – Request that children’s play equipment in the park is replaced with updated equipment following consultation with local residents.

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

This report relates to an e-petition organised by Councillor Julia Lepoidevin, a Woodlands Ward Councillor, signed by 115 residents who lives in the vicinity of Juniper Drive.

The petition reads:

“We are calling on the Council to update and replace play equipment in the park area Juniper Drive/Woodridge Avenue, after consultation with local residents. There has been no update of this equipment for a number of years.”

This play site includes a number of items of play equipment designed to cater for the younger age group as well as some informal sports provision such as a goal post and basketball hoop. There are also a number of infrastructural elements associated with the play area including fencing, tarmac paths and safer surfacing. The park is under the control of the Parks Service within the Place Directorate

Play facilities in the City are inspected on a weekly basis and repairs/replacements are undertaken as and when necessary to maintain the equipment in a safe and usable condition.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks is recommended to:

1. Note that adequate play provision is located in Allesley Park just 600 metres from Juniper Drive

2. Agree that updating and replacing the play equipment at Juniper Drive is unsustainable in the present financial climate
3. Agree that the play equipment, apart from the basketball hoop and goal, be removed from Juniper Drive and that any serviceable items be reused where practicable and that the area be reinstated to grass

List of Appendices included:

N/A

Other useful background papers:

Report to Cabinet Member on the 8 April 2014 entitled: Allesley Park Play Area

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel, or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Juniper Drive Play Area is located in the west of the City and contains a number of items of equipment designed to be appropriate for the younger age group aged 4 to 7 years. These play items include rockers, swings and slide. In addition the play site also includes items for informal sports play this includes a goal post and basketball hoop. Infrastructural elements associated with the play site include metal fencing, tarmac footpaths and safer surfacing.
- 1.2 The park is under the control of the Parks Service within the Place Directorate. Play facilities in the City are inspected on a weekly basis and repairs/replacements are undertaken as and when necessary to maintain the equipment and associated infrastructural features in a safe and usable condition. Recent inspections have found that most of the equipment was nearing the end of its practicable life, some items are showing signs of wear and tear, an element of vandalism with dog damage is evident on the swing seats and the stainless steel slide chute which was stolen earlier in the year, has not been replaced. Repairs would also be necessary to the fencing and safer surfacing within the next 12 months.
- 1.3 Juniper Drive Play Area is located just 600 metres from Allesley Park which is the Area Park for the west of the city and as such has benefitted from significant investment in recent years has also been awarded a Green Flag (a national standard for parks) annually for the past four years with support from residents and the Friends Group. Juniper Drive and Woodridge Avenue fall well within the catchment area of the Allesley Parks' play area.
- 1.4 In 2008 major improvements to the play area in Allesley Park were completed with the provision of new equipment and associated "safer" surfacing material. This new facility caters for children aged between 7-13 years. The play area also has provision for the 4 to 7 age group although this area is older it is perfectly serviceable and has been maintained in a good and usable condition with no safety issues. This play area has a fenced area containing fixed steel equipment which provides a range of play experiences including swinging, rotating, climbing and sliding, as well as opportunities for creative play. The equipment has recently been sanded down and re-painted presenting a high visual impact. In addition this play area will benefit from the installation of new safer surfacing in the coming months.
- 1.5 When external or internal inspections are undertaken, consideration is also given to the serviceable life expectancy of the facility, usually on an item by item basis as not all equipment needs to be replaced at the same time. In these cases, recommendations are made as to what items should be considered for replacement or improvement and the works are then included in the play area maintenance programme.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Subject to a decision by Council the Parks Service operational budget will be reduced by £1m from 2015/16. As part of its financial strategy the service will be reviewing the replacement of play equipment as and when its practicable life ends. This review will be on an item by item and site by site basis and will take into consideration cost, remaining equipment and location to other play areas.
- 2.2 Juniper Drive falls within the catchment area of Allesley Park. A full refurbishment of this play area would cost approximately £29,400 to complete and is not considered to be appropriate or sustainable under the Council's present economic circumstances.

- 2.3 It is recommended that Juniper Drive play area be removed and the area reinstated. Recent safety inspections of the equipment at this site have indicated that the majority of the items are reaching the end of their serviceable lifespan. If removed, some items could be re-used for spares to extend the serviceable life of other play items elsewhere in the city. The goal posts and basketball hoop could however remain in situ. The cost of removing the equipment and infrastructural elements and ground reinstatement would be approximately £13,500 to be met from the parks revenue budget.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

No consultation has taken place on this issue

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 To be agreed subject to approval of a recommendation within this report

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

The cost of removing the existing items of equipment, safer surfacing, fencing and subsequent reinstatement of the area would be approximately £13,500.

These one off works, if approved, could be funded from the Parks and Open Spaces revenue budget and given the likely reduction in the Parks service operational budget would remove any on-going liability relating to the existing equipment.

5.2 Legal implications

No legal implications associated with this matter.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

N/A

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The continued programme of play area and equipment safety inspection will ensure that facilities are maintained in a safe and usable condition.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure facilities are maintained in a safe condition

6.4 Equalities / EIA Implications for (or impact on) the environment

The Service will continue to provide a level of provision which will ensure that all children within the City have access to park play facilities.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

Continued provision of safe, attractive and stimulating play environments.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author(s):

Name and job title: Graham Hood, Head of Streetpride and Greenspace

Directorate: Place

Tel and email contact: 0247683 2194 graham.hood@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or organisation	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Andrew Walster	AD – Streetscene and Greenspace	Place	15.12.14	17.12.14
Ces Edwards	Head of Parks and Greenspaces	Place	15.12.14	15.12.14
Jas Bilen	HR Manager	Resources	15.12.14	16.12.14
Gurdip Paddan,	Governance Services Officer	Resources	15.12.14	17.12.14
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Finance: Phil Helm	Finance Manager, City Services & Development	Resources	15.12.14	15.12.14
Legal: Andrew Burton	Corporate Governance and Litigation Team	Resources	15.12.14	15.12.14
Director: Martin Yardley	Director – Place Directorate	Place		
Councillor Abdul Khan	Cabinet Member (Culture, Leisure, Sports and Parks)		17.12.14	17.12.14

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Appendices

None