

25th October 2018

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities Councillor A S Khan

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

Ward(s) affected:

Lower Stoke

Title: Petition – Refurbishment of the Tick Tock Play Area, Stoke Green.

Is this a key decision? : No

Executive Summary:

This report responds to a petition containing 22 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council. The petition is supported by Councillor McNicholas a Lower Stoke ward Councillor requests that the Council refurbish the Tick Tock children's play area located within Stoke Green Park.

The petition reads:

"We the undersigned call on the City Council to refurbish the play facilities that are much used by residents who live adjacent to the Tic Toc play area Stoke Green, Stoke Park and gentleman's Green".

This play site includes a number of items of play equipment designed to cater for the younger age group. 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 Councils Greenspace 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. Details of the inspections are recorded on the PSS live system. Currently there are no Findings [identified issues] regarding the current equipment above "Low Risk" for the site.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is recommended to:

1. Note that inspections of the play area have identified that the equipment is still within its practicable life.

2. Note that the Tick Tock play facility falls outside the catchment area of the nearest equipped local play facility
3. Agree that the Tick Tock play area be retained and that items of the existing play equipment be replaced as and when it reaches the end of their practicable life and be funded through a combination of external funding and existing budget provision.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: General location plan and aerial photo.

Appendix 2: Original play area design plan and post installation report.

Appendix 3: Photographs of all current assets [items of equipment, street furniture and fencing].

Other useful background papers:

None

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

Report title: **Petition – Refurbishment of the Tick Tock Play Area, Stoke Green**

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The Tick Tock Play Area is located within Stoke Green [Principal Open Space] in the South of the City just off the Binley Road. The play facility contains a number of items of equipment designed to be appropriate for the younger age group aged 4 to 7 years. Infrastructural elements associated with the play site include metal fencing and seating, waste bins, tarmac and paved footpaths and safer surfacing. Items of existing equipment are shown in appendix 3.
- 1.2 Stoke Green is under the control of the Councils Greenspace 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.
- 1.3 The site of the current play area is the segregated area where the former concrete paddling pool and Joseph Levi clock were situated. The latter had been removed and was the inspiration for the naming of the play area. The clock was subsequently refurbished and re-sited onto the Adopted Highway adjacent. When the paddling pool was infilled and returned to grass the area became of interest to the Gosford Residents Association as a potential site for a Bandstand or Play Area.
- 1.4 In 2012 the Gosford Residents Association (GRA) submitted a successful application to the Jubilee People's Millions Big Lottery and were awarded £56,000.00 to construct a play area. The original idea to provide timber equipment on site was not supported by Parks Service and the plans were revised to incorporate more durable metal equipment. The Greenspace Service also stated that their preference was for Dura Sports' Impact Play

Grass safety surfacing as this was proven to be long lasting and durable, however the group confirmed that they had decided to use “Matta” grass reinforcing rubber matting as it was cheaper and they could provide an additional item of equipment if that was used.

Nine items of equipment were included within the original scheme as detailed below and in Appendix 2:

- Junior Swing – double with cradle seats [with Matta surfacing]
- Glow worm see-saw [with Matta surfacing] – Now removed and replaced with a play train
- Junior Multi-Unit [with Matta surfacing]
- Slide – high pedestal [with Matta surfacing]
- Rotator [with Matta surfacing]
- Cockerel springer/bouncer [with Matta surfacing]
- Sputnik round-a-bout [with Matta surfacing] – Now Removed awaiting replacement with a spinning dish
- Multi-play Unit – Tropica Trinidad [with Matta surfacing]
- Swing – basket seat [with Matta surfacing]

As part of the funding agreement the City Council had to agree to inspect and maintain the play area for a minimum of 5 years following opening, which was agreed. New seats, waste bins and a new notice board were provided by Parks Service, along with an illustrated name sign. The play area opened in 2012 and was independently inspected [post installation inspection] by The Play Inspection Company included in Appendix 2.

Shortly after the play area opened the GRA confirmed that they wanted to provide an additional item of equipment, the large Multi-play Tube slide, however they did not have enough funds. Parks Service provided funds of around £17k towards its provision and installation including Dura Sports’ Impact Play Grass safety surfacing. Parks Service also funded the refurbishment of the paved crescent within the play area at a cost of around £13k including improvements to a macadam footpath.

Since the play area opened two of the original items have had to be removed due to on-going maintenance issues and vandalism. The items were the “Rotor play round-a-bout” and the “Glow worm see-saw”. The latter was removed and replaced by a Play Train which was purchased by the GRA. The Greenspace Service funded its installation and provision of the Impact Play Grass safety surfacing at a cost of around £3k. The “Rotor play round-a-bout” is currently awaiting replacement. Streetpride have confirmed that this will be replaced with a Sutcliffe Leisure “Spinning Disc”. It is anticipated that this will be installed in approximately 10 weeks. The Greenspace Service Service also provided an additional double swing [with flat seats] in 2013 at a cost with barriers of £5.5k

The large multi-play unit suffered from arson several years ago and all the damaged items were replaced at that time. Some sections of the unit are still awaiting a fresh coat of paint, although this has not been identified as a priority.

The GRA recently contacted the Councils Parks Service regarding the deteriorating condition of the “Matta” grass reinforcing rubber matting. The Parks Service facilitated a meeting with Dura Sport who provided the group a quote of £15.5k to remove the rubber matting and replace with their Impact Play Grass safety surfacing. The group later confirmed that they did not have enough funds and enquired as to whether Parks Service would contribute towards it. It was agreed that the cost would be split 50:50. This work is currently being programmed.

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. Currently there are no items of equipment on site identified as beyond practicable use.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 During 2015/16 the Parks Service operational budget was reduced by £1m from 2016. As part of its financial strategy the service now reviews 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 The option to remove and not replace items of equipment deemed to have reached the end of its practicable life has been considered however this would result in the gradual further and overall reduction in the play value and benefit of the facility over time and lead to its eventual removal.
- 2.3 A full refurbishment of this play area would cost approximately £110k to complete. Parks Service does not have the existing resources to undertake this proposal, however they do not consider this would be necessary anyway as all the equipment is within six years old.
- 2.4 The nearest other play facility is located at Gosford Green and the Tick Tock play facility falls outside its catchment area. The eventual removal of this play facility will leave the local community without any play provision within a reasonable distance. It is therefore recommended that the Councils Park Service retain the facility and it continues to explore and exploit all funding opportunity both external and internal to replace items which reach the end of their practicable life with dynamic and high play value items of equipment and when possible install additional items to provide an exciting and stimulating play environment.
- 2.5 The ability of the service to implement this recommendation will be subject to available resources and its ability to secure external funding.

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 the Director of Finance and Customer Services

- 5.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations at the present time.

The service reviews 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.

As and when the replacement of items of play equipment becomes necessary, this will be managed through a combination of external funding (for example section 106 funds) and the existing budget provision.

5.2 Legal implications

The responsibility for managing and maintaining the children’s play area in this park falls to the Council which has a duty of care towards employees, contractors and the public who use the play facilities. Play provision is governed by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Acts of 1957 and 1984. The Council has a legal responsibility to ensure the children’s play area is in as safe a condition as reasonably practicable. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require providers to carry out risk assessments. Play provision also has to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's Plan?

N/A

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The continued programme of play area and equipment safety inspections 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):

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Directorate or	Date doc sent out	Date response received or
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Gill Carter	Solicitor Team Leader (Regulatory)	Resources	20 th Sept 18	23 rd Sept 18
Rose Michelle	Governance Services co-ordinator	Place	20 th Sept 18	27 th Sept 18
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and Members)				
Andrew Walster	Assistant Director (Streetscene and Regulatory Services)	Place	25 th Sept 18	12 th Oct 18
Councillor A S Khan	Cabinet Member for (Policy and Equalities)		27 th Sept 18	27 th Sept 18

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

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Appendix 2: Original play area design plan and post installation report.

Appendix 3: Photographs of all current assets [items of equipment, street furniture and fencing].