
Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities

29 September, 2022

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities - Councillor A S Khan

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services

Ward(s) affected:

Sherbourne

Title:

Petition – Request for the installation of a children’s play area in Moseley Avenue Park

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

This report responds to a petition containing 510 signatures which was submitted to Coventry City Council in 16/08/2021. The petition is supported by Councillor Gavin Lloyd and the late Councillor Seamus Walsh and requests that the Council create a new Children’s Play area in Moseley Avenue Park.

The petition reads:

“We the undersigned petition the Council to consider that there are many children and adults who use this park in and around the area, more so over the past year with people taking their daily exercise allowance whether it be walking or walking the dog or children generally playing (on the grass or loose gravel) in the park with their parents. I have noticed an increase in young children using this park with nothing to play with or stimulate them. The nearest recreational children's play areas are Radford Road & Nauls Mill, both really serving opposite sides of the area to Moseley Avenue central. The particular area which would suit such a safe recreational installation used to be tennis courts and has been left derelict with loose gravel sitting on the surface for around 40 years now (speaking with local members of community). This area being as it has been left for so long seems the ideal space for development, giving families with young children a place for them to play safely, promote physical activity, health and wellbeing”

The petition also provides the following justification:

“The end goal is to create what is currently an unsafe and unsightly area in the local park, to a safe, enjoyable space where children can play, enjoy themselves and the community can come together”

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested to:

1. Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners.
2. Note that there is insufficient funding for a new playground to be provided from the existing Park Service budgets however the Service will consider all available funding opportunities available from any resource which may be used to create a new Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP) or Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) at the earliest opportunity.
3. Agree that when opportunity and resources allow, a LEAP and/or NEAP playground should be provided in a suitable green space in or near to Moseley Avenue Park which will provide for children resident in the general area concerned.
4. Agree that plans for an alternative play feature for Moseley Avenue Park should be considered in the interim, separate to providing a LEAP or NEAP playground in or near to the park. This will be subject to the necessary funding being identified.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Location maps showing the location of Moseley Avenue Park and the catchment areas of neighbouring play facilities including separate maps for LEAPs and NEAPs.

Appendix 2: A detailed map of the park showing the relative size and location of the Tarmac area concerned.

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it 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:

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Moseley Avenue Park is located in the NW of the City and is approximately 13,800 square metres in size (1.38ha) and contains a mixture of grassed areas, ornamental trees and an area of old Tarmac of approximately 1148 square metres which was once used for tennis.
- 1.2 The site is a small park in a quiet residential area with houses bordering the park on all sides, separated by a narrow road.
- 1.3 According to the Fields In Trust (FIT) criteria in their 'Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play', children's playgrounds are separated into three categories:
 - LAP or Local Area for Play. A playground aimed at very young children. No fixed play equipment but natural features to encourage imaginative games and basic infrastructure including footpaths, waste-bins, seating etc.
 - LEAP or Locally Equipped Area for Play (and informal recreation). A playground aimed at children who can go out to play independently. As per the definition of a LAP above but with 5 or more fixed pieces of play equipment and with appropriate infrastructure.
 - NEAP or Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (and informal recreation). A playground aimed at older children. As per the definition of a LAP and LEAP as described above but with additional play equipment aimed at children of older age ranges and with additional features to encourage informal sport and recreation, e.g. hard-surfaced ball games area, skateboarding etc. typically used by older children / teenagers and young adults.
- 1.4 The city council has adopted the FIT accessibility standard for playgrounds in terms of their distance from dwellings. This equates to 100m for LAPs (<5 minutes' walk), 400m (5 - 10 minutes' walk) for LEAPs, and 1,000m (15 - 20 minutes' walk) for NEAPs. The relative distances are currently measured from the nearest boundary of the parks to the nearest dwellings rather than from the playgrounds or the park's nearest entrances.
- 1.5 The map in Appendix 1 shows the provision of LEAP and NEAP playgrounds within Coventry which are owned and maintained by the City Council and the approximate catchment areas of the playgrounds concerned, namely 400m from the boundary of the park containing a LEAP and similarly the 1000m catchment for a NEAP..
- 1.6 It can be seen that Moseley Avenue Park falls outside the catchment areas of the nearest playgrounds with a particular lack of any NEAP provision.
- 1.7 The City Council Parks Service have estimated the cost of creating a new playground to be approximately £91,915 for a LEAP and £219,662 for a NEAP.
- 1.8 The Parks Service are currently unable to commit to create new play facilities due to budget pressures. Funding may occasionally be available for the creation of new

playgrounds from sources such as Section 106 agreements (as part of the Town and Country Planning Act) or through external grants such as those available from the Landfill Communities Fund or WMCA Community Grant scheme. These are competitive grant programmes however and any application would need to be made by a relevant residents' group such as a 'Friends of Moseley Avenue Park'. No such group currently exists.

- 1.9 Playgrounds on land managed by the City Council's Parks Service are inspected by Streetpride on a weekly basis and also maintained by Streetpride as required. The repair and replacement of damaged or worn-out equipment is undertaken as necessary to ensure the equipment, safety surface and associated infrastructure is kept in a safe and usable condition. The budget for ongoing maintenance by Streetpride is severely limited and would not be adequate to maintain a new playground.
- 1.10 If a new playground were to be proposed for Moseley Avenue Park, any such proposal would need the full support of the residents living near to the park, especially those whose houses are on the other side of the road to the park.
- 1.11 The old Tarmac tennis courts within Moseley Avenue Park are suspected of being built on a clinker sub-base. Clinker was a by-product of industrial processes and is often contaminated with hazardous chemicals as a result. If the material beneath the Tarmac is contaminated, its removal and disposal would be especially expensive.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. There is an absence of play facilities in the area of Sherbourne ward closest to Moseley Avenue Park if the area is to meet the Fields In Trust recommendations. The option to do nothing has therefore been rejected.
- 2.2. The Parks Service do not have the existing resources to fund a new play facility at Moseley Park Avenue even excluding any additional costs for dealing with any contaminated ground. Nor do Streetpride have capacity or funding to cope with any ongoing maintenance. The option for the Parks Service to fund the creation of a new playground is therefore rejected.
- 2.3. The recommended proposal is for the Parks Service to explore all funding opportunities including S106 agreements and external grants with a view to providing a suitable play facility in Moseley Avenue Park and explore options for providing a LEAP or NEAP within the area.
- 2.4. It is likely that some if not all the residents of properties which neighbour Moseley Avenue Park would oppose the creation of a LEAP or NEAP within the park due to the risk of noise and associated nuisance from ASB, especially after dark. As a result and in addition to the recommendation in 2.3 above, the Parks Service are considering the following ideas for converting the Tarmac area in Moseley Avenue Park to provide alternative forms of play to that of a playground with fixed play equipment. These options include:
 - 2.4.1 Creating a LAP in the park by capping off the Tarmac area with a layer of clay onto which soil mounds could be created and shaped and then planted with grasses etc. Logs and boulders or sculptures could be added to form a natural play area. This would be relatively cheap to create but may also have future issues with drainage and maintenance. This option is therefore rejected.

- 2.4.2 Covering the old Tarmac with a new wearing course onto which a 'pumptrack' for younger cyclists could be created by bolting down section of a preformed track. This would make good use of an otherwise unsightly area and be a somewhat unique feature in the city. It would also link in with the sustainability and cycling initiatives in the Coundon area. It would reduce the risk of excavating contaminated ground but not exclude it altogether. As a result, this would be likely to be an expensive option and is therefore rejected.
- 2.4.3 Covering the old Tarmac with a new wearing course onto which a road layout could be painted along with signage etc. This would enable very young cyclists to practise cycling skills before going onto the open road. Although this would not provide any fixed play equipment in the park, it would make good use of an otherwise unsightly area, link in with the sustainability and cycling initiatives in the Coundon area and avoid issues with excavating the contaminated ground. This is the preferred option for providing some form of play facility within Moseley Avenue Park, coupled with the proposal outlined in paragraph 2.5 below.
- 2.4.4 The preferred option as described above is estimated to cost up to £60,000. This relatively high cost for an apparently simple task of resurfacing the old Tarmac plus the cost of road-marking is due to limited access into the park, the presence of contaminated ground and the need to 'key' in the new Tarmac. The cost is based on the similar scheme in Spencer Park. The actual cost for the work at Moseley Avenue would be obtained via tendering the work however to obtain best value.
- 2.4.5 No funds are available from existing budgets for the works suggested in 2.4.3 above. The proposal would only be developed further if external funding is secured. Possible sources of funding could include a S106 agreement or an external grant as detailed in 1.8 above.
- 2.5 The area indicated within the map shown in Appendix 1 shows a deficit of play facilities in the part of Sherbourne Ward which includes not only Moseley Avenue Park but also Lake View Park. Lake View Park is a large area of green space with relatively few properties adjoining it. Although a proposal to put a new playground in Lake View Park was rejected some 10 years ago, this park is a better location for a new playground as it can be located sufficiently far away from neighbouring properties to reduce noise nuisance and associated ASB. This option is advocated as the location for a new LEAP or NEAP playground, if and when appropriate funding is secured – and with the support of the local residents of course.

The Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities is requested to:

1. Consider the content of the petition and note the concerns of the petitioners.
2. Note that there is insufficient funding for a new playground to be provided from the existing Park Service budgets however the Service will consider all available funding opportunities available from any resource which may be used to create a new LEAP or NEAP at the earliest opportunity.

3. Agree that when opportunity and resources allow, a LEAP and/or NEAP playground should be provided in a suitable green space in or near to Moseley Avenue Park which will provide for children who are resident in the area concerned.
4. Agree that plans for an alternative play feature for Moseley Avenue Park should be considered in the interim, separate to providing a LEAP or NEAP playground in or near to the park. This will be subject to the necessary funding being identified.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- a. No consultation has taken place on this issue

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

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

5. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Governance

a. Financial Implications

The preferred option outlined in section 2.4.3 is estimated to cost up to £60k. However, there is currently no funding available for this. Officers will explore opportunities via a S106 agreement or external grant funding.

b. Legal Implications

No legal implications

6. Other implications

a. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

Parks and green spaces are highly valued by the citizens of Coventry and contribute greatly to improving the quality of life to those that live and work in the city and help address health inequalities and provide valuable wildlife habitats

b. How is risk being managed?

Risk will be managed through the existing Place directorate risk profile.

c. What is the impact on the organisation?

Continued maintenance of the site will be delivered using existing resources.

d. Equalities / EIA?

No equality impact assessments have been undertaken.

e. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

No direct impact

f. Implications for partner organisations?

There are no implications

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Cath Crosby	Accountant Business Partner	Finance	29 th July 22	4 th Aug 22
Gill Carter	Team Leader, (Regulatory)	Law and Governance	29 th July 22	3 rd Aug 22
Usha Patel	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	28 th July 22	29 th July 22
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Andrew Walster	Director (Streetscene and Regulatory Services)	Streetscene and Regulatory Services		
Councillor A S Khan	Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities	-	17 th July 22	17 th July 22

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