

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: TUESDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2010  
title: SALTHILL PLAY AREA, CLITHEROE – TOWER HILL YOUTH ACTION GROUP  
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP - DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: GRAHAM M JAGGER – STREET SCENE MANAGER

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To tell members about the progress being made with this project, and
- 1.2 To agree to recommend an increase in the grounds maintenance and play equipment maintenance budgets to reflect the changes that are being made to this children's recreation area.
- 1.3 Relevance to the Council's aims and ambitions
  - Mission Statement & Vision: -
    - An area with an exceptional environment and quality of life for all; sustained by vital and vibrant market towns and villages acting as thriving service centres meeting the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
  - Council Ambitions
    - To protect and enhance the existing environmental quality of our area; especially to protect the natural and built environment and ensure that we provide clean streets and open spaces;
    - To be a well managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
  - Ribble Valley Locality Plan 2009/10
    - Children and young people.
      - support and develop the work of the Ribble Valley Play Alliance to highlight the importance of children's play and improve play facilities.
      - maintain and develop children's play areas.
  - Citizens Charter – Parks and Open Spaces
    - We will
      - cut the grass in our parks and open spaces regularly.
      - maintain children's play areas so they are safe to use.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The recreation area off Salthill Road in Clitheroe was originally maintained by Clitheroe Town Council under a lease from the Borough Council. The lease was relinquished by the Town Council in 1992 and the responsibility for its maintenance and development therefore returned to the Borough Council.
- 2.2 The recreation area has been the subject of a number of improvement schemes over the years. Between 1992 and 1996 in conjunction with the then Salthill Play Area Improvement Committee both the provision of significant amounts of new locally

constructed play equipment and a new subsoil drainage system happened on this site which increased its use and value to the community enormously. Further work to the football pitch took place in 2002. Much of the locally constructed play equipment has been dismantled and replaced with alternative items funded from the capital budget for improvements to children's play areas.

- 2.3 In 2008 the Tower Hill Youth Action Group was formed with the intention to encourage young people to participate in healthy and positive lifestyles as well as helping fund young peoples activities with equipment as appropriate. Membership was open to all individuals interested in supporting and pursuing healthy and positive well being.
- 2.4 At the meeting of this Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008 it was resolved that: -
- Committee agreed, in principle, to the future provision at Salthill Park and that a member of the Tower Hill Youth Action Group be invited to present their proposals to Committee (Min 226).
- 2.5 At the Committee meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2008 members of the Group gave a presentation about their ideas during the public participation items on the agenda (Min 532).
- 2.6 A bid in the sum of £58,000 was made by the Group into the People's Millions Lottery Fund but was unsuccessful.
- 2.7 At the meeting of this Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009 an update report on progress was given which confirmed that a sum of £47,390 had been approved from the Lancashire County Council administered Playbuilders Fund towards a scheme estimated to cost a total of £53,890. This Committee resolved the following: - (Min 191).
1. note the contents of the reports;
  2. agree to implement the first phase of the scheme;
  3. agree to offer in kind support in managing the project;
  4. agree to reflect any increase in maintenance costs in future budgets, and
  5. agree to a maximum of £1,500 being contributed to the project from the capital budget for improvements to children's play areas.

The gross cost of the scheme of £57,980 has now been added to the Council's capital programme.

This consists of: -

- £1,500 transferred from Improvements to Children's Play Areas
- £47,390 from Playbuilders Grant – LCC
- £5,000 from Aggregates levy
- £4,000 Internal salary costs
- £57,980

### 3. ISSUES

- 3.1 The Tower Hill Youth Action Group are the promoters of this project and it is through their work that the funding has been secured. The County Council have entered into a Service Level Agreement with the Tower Hill Youth Action Group over the delivery of the project and payment of the grant. As the Borough Council are the owners of the land on which the project is to be constructed and will ultimately have the responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the site and new items of equipment

it was considered to be appropriate that the work was to be commissioned and supervised by the Council in this case. Accordingly it has been necessary for an agreement to be prepared by our Legal Department to tie in the Council and the Tower Hill Youth Action Group regarding the delivery of the project and payment over of the grant money received from the County Council.

- 3.2 A significant proportion of the project relates to the supply and installation of off the shelf items of equipment from specified manufacturers. This will therefore not need to be subject to a formal procurement process.
- 3.3 The project also includes the provision of a new surfaced footpath through the site and the creation of earth mound embankments which significantly change the shape and contours of the site. These will have a considerable effect on the way the site has to be maintained in the future. Bulb, shrub and hedge planting also forms part of the project which will also impact on future maintenance requirements.
- 3.4 At present maintenance of the site overall is relatively straight forward and does not require the use of many different pieces of grounds maintenance equipment. Play equipment inspections involve only a small number of items collected in one closely linked location. The newly designed site is much more complex and will take more time and resources to keep in good condition. The new equipment is spread throughout the site and there is more of it. These points have been alluded to in previous reports regarding this project and identified at Min 191(4) of the meeting of this Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009. I estimate it will eventually cost in the region of £1,500 - £2,000 extra per annum in staff time to maintain the site and around £1,000 in materials for repairs. Capital improvements invariably always have revenue implications particularly when facilities increase in both size and complexity.
- 3.5 To meet the requirements of the Playbuilder Fund the project must be substantially complete and be in use by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. This is an additional project to the planned workload of the Engineering Services team in the Street Scene Section along with the project to extend the Clitheroe Cemetery. With the recent loss of one of the two Engineering Assistants within the team and the delay in replacement as part of the restructuring exercise this has placed a considerable burden on very limited resources.

#### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications.

##### Resources

- As mentioned in the report there are financial implications for the Council as a result of this project. The capital investment through external funding is to be welcomed. A sum of £1,500 has been allocated to the project from within the existing capital budget for improvements to children's play areas and the gross cost of the scheme of £57,980 has been incorporated into the 2009/10 capital programme. The estimated revenue implications are also highlighted in the report and can be dealt with in one of two ways, either by a reduction in maintenance work carried out on other public open space, recreational facilities and children's play areas or by an appropriate increase in the respective maintenance budgets. Staff resources to implement the project are very stretched under the circumstances.

#### Technical, Environmental and Legal

- The technical detail of the scheme has been agreed with drawings and specifications already prepared by Lancashire County Councils Environmental Projects Team. The implementation of the scheme now rests with the Borough Council as the agents/sub contractors for and on behalf of the Tower Hill Youth Action Group. The resources available to do this are referred to above. There will be an improvement in play value and the general environment of the site by virtue of the proposed works. There will be a legal agreement put in place between the Council and the Tower Hill Youth Action Group as regards the construction and funding of the project.

#### Political

- There are no known political issues arising out of this particular project.

#### Reputation

- The improvement of this play area as an asset to the local community and in particular the young people in the area can only help improve the reputation of the Council. However there is a compelling need to keep the new facilities well maintained in order to retain the reputation gained from carry out the project.

#### 5. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Agree to proceed with the first phase of the scheme.

5.2 Consider how the additional maintenance cost of the site should be funded.

JOHN C HEAP  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Background Papers - None

For further information please contact Graham Jagger on 01200 414523.