

CABINET

7 September 2016

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

21 September 2016

ABBOTTS WALK PLAY AREA

REPORT OF HEAD OF LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACES

Contact Officer: Susan Lord Tel No: 01962 848533

RECENT REFERENCES:

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In October 2015, the open space at Abbots Walk, part of the Redrow housing development, was transferred into City Council ownership. Linked to the planning permission is a Section 106 agreement which covered the arrangements for the transfer of the open space and provided for the payment of £79,655 to the Council for the delivery of a play facility. Following consultation with local residents a bespoke solution was designed by the Landscape and Open Spaces Team to meet the needs of people living in the area which complements this unique location, adjacent Winnall Moors Nature Reserve.

This report invites Members to approve the release of the £79,655 sum to procure and install this play facility for the benefit of local residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS:To Cabinet:

- 1 That the Head of Landscape and Open Space be authorised to procure the laying out and installation of a play facility at Abbots Walk, Winchester, in accordance with the Financial Procedural Rules.
- 2 That authority be given under Financial Procedure Rule 7.2 for a supplementary capital estimate of up to £79,655 for the project, and under Financial Procedure Rule 6.4 for the expenditure to be incurred.
- 3 That the £79,655 developer sum secured under the Section 106 agreement for the development (planning application (11/01798 FUL) be released for the laying out and installation of the play facility.
- 4 That a Direction be made under Rule 2.4 a) of the Contracts Procedure Rules and the Head of Landscape and Open Spaces be authorised to enter into contracts with the suppliers referred to in the report for the supply and installation of the necessary equipment.
- 5 That the consequential baseline revenue expenditure requirement of £2910 be noted and that this will initially be funded from the Section 106 commuted sum which is expected to last for approximately 20 years.

To Winchester Town Forum:

- 6 That the proposals for the creating of the play facility for Abbots Walk, which would involve capital expenditure of up to £79,655 and recurring revenue expenditure of £2910, be supported.

CABINET

7 September 2016

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

21 September 2016

ABBOTTS WALK PLAY AREA

REPORT OF HEAD OF LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACES

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The open space at the Abbots Walk development, Worthy Road, Winchester, was transferred into City Council ownership in October 2015 and the details of this arrangement were set out in the Section 106 agreement which was entered into prior to the grant of planning permission for the housing scheme. The agreement provided for the payment by the developer of a sum of £79,655 for the delivery of children's play on this site, and also payment of a commuted sum of £200,221 towards maintenance of the meadow area and the proposed play facility. In order to provide a bespoke, natural play area enhancing and blending with its unique location adjacent Winnall Moors Nature Reserve, the Landscape and Open Spaces Team's Landscape Architect designed a play area specifically for this location which was considered to be a better approach in this instance than following a more traditional route of commissioning a consultant to develop a design (see 2.1 below). The purpose of this report is to approve the procurement process and release of funds for the installation of this play area.

2. Background

- 2.1 Procurement of play areas is usually undertaken through a tender process with specialist play companies and this option was explored in December 2015 when a quotation brief was sent to 6 play companies. Despite emphasis on the uniqueness of the site and the requirement for play equipment to be sympathetic to the ecologically sensitive area, none of the tenders were able to achieve this requirement in a way which was acceptable to Council Officers. For this reason, the decision was taken to design the play area and layout of the open space in-house, utilising the expertise of both the Landscape Architect and the Outdoor Recreation Officer.

3. The Abbots Walk Meadow

- 3.1 The site is unusual in that it is adjacent to a sensitive wildlife area. The Winnall Moors Nature Reserve is designated as a Site of Special Scientific

Interest (SSSI) and includes a section of the River Itchen SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC); it is also within the South Downs National Park. The northern part of the reserve, next to the Abbots Walk site, is the most ecologically sensitive and has restricted access.

- 3.2 Following completion of the housing development, the site was seeded with a meadow mix. A plan showing the location of the meadow in relation to the housing development is attached at Appendix 1. The aim for the site is that it remains part meadow and part play area with mown grass paths, enabling local residents to enjoy the benefits offered by this open space whilst delivering a resource which responds positively to its setting both in visual and ecological terms.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation has been undertaken on this site starting in March 2015 and the public have been involved in the setting out of the open space and choice of play equipment through the use of questionnaires and two public meetings.
- 4.2 At a public consultation event in March 2016, an outline design was presented to local residents. The proposal received very positive feedback and has the full support of local residents who wanted to see its installation made a priority. Full comments received from this consultation are attached at Appendix 2.

5. The Design

- 5.1 The play area has been designed using natural, rustic material and caters for children of all ages. There are mounds, swings and imaginative play features for younger children and more challenging climbing and swinging experiences for older children. There is also a flat area for informal games and picnics.
- 5.2 The aim is to encourage children to engage with the environment so the play area has been designed to feel enclosed without the use of fencing through creative use of mounds and animal totems have been hidden in the wooded areas for children to explore. There is also a walking trail with features around the meadow to encourage children to explore all parts of the site.
- 5.3 The play area is located slightly down the slope so as to maintain views across the nature reserve and a wild meadow perimeter has been left in front of the closest properties.
- 5.4 A copy of the design is attached at Appendix 3.

6. Procurement

- 6.1 One of the key benefits of bespoke design is the ability to choose play equipment from a variety of suppliers. This provides the best value for money, the most innovative and uncompromising design and a unique play experience. In order to deliver this play area, there are 2 options:

- i. Ask a generic landscape contractor to purchase the equipment and undertake the installation
 - ii. Divide the work into sections which are procured directly from the manufacturers and installed by them on site.
- 6.2 Generic landscape contractors with the ability to install play equipment are few in number and due to current levels of demand, their prices are running 25% above expected costs. The Council has recent experience of this during a separate procurement process where the intended scheme was undeliverable using this method. Accordingly, officers are recommending that the work is divided into sections (the second option above).
- 6.3 Procuring the equipment directly from the manufacturer in this way enables costs to be kept lower and in line with existing budgets. This would enable the delivery of the scheme that the public viewed and accepted at the consultation in March 2016. Another benefit of this approach is that there is no third party involvement in the installation of the equipment, giving direct contact with the manufacturers.
- 6.4 Officers have negotiated with suitably qualified equipment providers for the supply and installation of the proposed equipment, in order to implement the proposed design, and are satisfied that the prices obtained constitute best value. As the design has selected equipment from specific manufacturers, who will supply and install the equipment direct, it would not be possible to obtain three quotations for each element. The equipment will be procured from Timberplay, Eibe, Handmade Places, Russell Play, Greenspan and Playdale. A direction under Rule 2.4 a) of the Contracts Procedure Rules is therefore sought to authorise officers to enter into contracts with these suppliers to deliver the project.
- 6.5 In order to ensure the completed play area complies with BSEN 1176, the scheme will be inspected post-construction by an independent registered play inspector prior to being opened to the public. As an additional cost saving, Timberplay have offered to complete the first annual inspection free of charge.
7. Funding
 - 7.1 Funding for this project is already in place by reason of the Section 106 agreement which was entered into prior to the grant of the planning permission secured by Redrow.
 - 7.2 The Agreement provides:-
 - a) a sum of £79,655 to be used for play provision on this site;
 - b) a maintenance contribution of £200,221 to cover the ongoing maintenance of the meadow area (which includes the play area).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

8 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 8.1 The delivery of the play area will contribute to the delivery of the following outcome within the Active Communities theme of the Community Strategy 2010-2020, helping children to 'lead active and healthy lifestyles by exercising regularly'.

Specifically, the play area and meadow contribute to the following priority:
'provide opportunities for everyone to become more active through organised sport, walking, cycling and other recreational activities, making the most of our natural environment and countryside'

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 9.1 Capital expenditure of up to £79,655 is required for the delivery of the play facility in 2016/17, to be funded from the Section 106 sum for provision of the play area.
- 9.2 The play facility will require a recurring revenue budget in order to support a regular programme of maintenance. This is forecast to be approximately £2910 per annum (£910 for grass cutting and £2000 for maintenance of the play equipment) and will be funded from the Section 106 maintenance contribution of £200,221, which is available to support the ongoing maintenance of the meadow area (including the play facility). There will be no net increase in play inspection costs as one play area (Bath Place) will be removed.

The play facility is classified within the Town Account and along with reflecting the income and expenditure within this Account, there will be a point at which the Section 106 commuted sum has depleted and any further renewal / maintenance will require funding to be identified. The existing funding is expected to last approximately 20 years based on the forecast expenditure requirements for the entire meadow area, the maintenance of the safer surfacing and the replacement of the play area at the end of its life.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 10.1 Failure to provide a play area on site would mean that the housing development would not provide suitable recreation space for residents. .
- 10.2 If a play area is not provided on site by the City Council, the developer could request the return of the Section 106 funding.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1 – Location Plan
- Appendix 2 – Consultation Comments
- Appendix 3 - Play Area Design

Abbot's Walk Location Plan

1:1,770



Abbotts Walk Consultation Event

21st March 2016 4pm – 6:30pm

Feedback forms completed

29

Comments on the play area

- all good, I love the tractor and trailer
- I love the basket swings, balance trail and climbing forest
- Looks good
- Great design, love the stuff for different ages, great job
- I think the play area is fantastic, climbing forest favourite thing
- Nice design, like the natural design and equipment
- Very, very happy with the proposed design and feel it fits the area perfectly. Build it quick!
- Play area – fantastic plan incorporating natural materials and environment, age range appropriate, excellent as on area originally laid out in plan.
- Very happy with the designs. Looking forward to it being built.
- All looks great
- Really like the planned equipment and layout.
- The look of the play area is very nice and in keeping with the area. Perhaps the swing basket could be swapped for a spinning basket. Could there be 2 swings for older children next to each other? Other popular equipment are zip wire and trampoline.
- Lovely wooden play area – great material. Wonderful that it has not been enclosed with fences. Only addition would be a double seat at the bottom of the play area – one side for parents to sit and watch kids and the other for grandparents to look at the view.
- Love design and use of natural materials, play area looks great
- Looks very good, not sure we need a baby swing, really like the basket swing. Like the areas for different ages and the walk around the meadow.
- Really lovely design
- Play area looks very good
- Like the overall design – good choice of equipment, scale of play area and sympathetic to the surroundings. Play area needs additional litter bin.
- Really like the plan designed for the meadow. Sooner it gets built the better, looking forward to this coming.
- Play area should be at least 40m from housing – 30m close given the flat terrain at the top of the meadow
- Overall design and equipment good
- Park design looks great needs to be built asap
- Like peace and quiet and natural materials. Looks great and in keeping with area.

- Design is generally very pleasing
- Like the plan in principle, good variety of equipment, sympathetic to natural surroundings. Size and scale of play area larger than anticipated and covers a wider age range. This will increase noise to neighbouring properties and attract visitors from a wide area. Could it be moved below the balancing pond adjacent the picnic area?

Comments on play area fencing

- Would prefer some form of hedging or fencing for the play area but see that this could challenge its fluid shape and it would be a shame to spoil that. Protecting the tiger mulch area for younger children might be possible?
- Needs to be fenced in
- Concerned about lack of fence – small children and dogs not a good combination.
- The play area needs to be fenced in, lots of dog walkers and needs clear segregation
- Might be an idea to fence off the park
- It would benefit from wooden fencing, the meadow is ideal for dog exercising but concerned they will foul the play area and equipment
- Would prefer some sort of fencing to keep dogs from messing around the main play area
- Only concern is the meadow is used by quite a few dogs and I understand the playground will not be fenced, in my experience with having 3 grandchildren, a fence is a must.

Comments on drainage basin

- Concerned about the safety of the balancing pond.
- Needs to be fenced
- Hazard – safety should be paramount, needs to be addressed
- Will need robust fence
- Water hazard even though temporary would have the same impact as being near a main road making it suitable for fencing for the security of young children.
- Too close to play area, worry about small children
- Concerned – need to speak to management company as we need a fence for safety reasons
- Concerned about the safety of the pond, fencing the play area may help but ideally would like to see the pond itself fenced.
- Possibly fencing around soakaway pond
- Concern over safety of pond as such no management company in place, at least not been communicated

- Can there be a protective barrier around the balancing pond as it is dangerous when full

Comments on parking

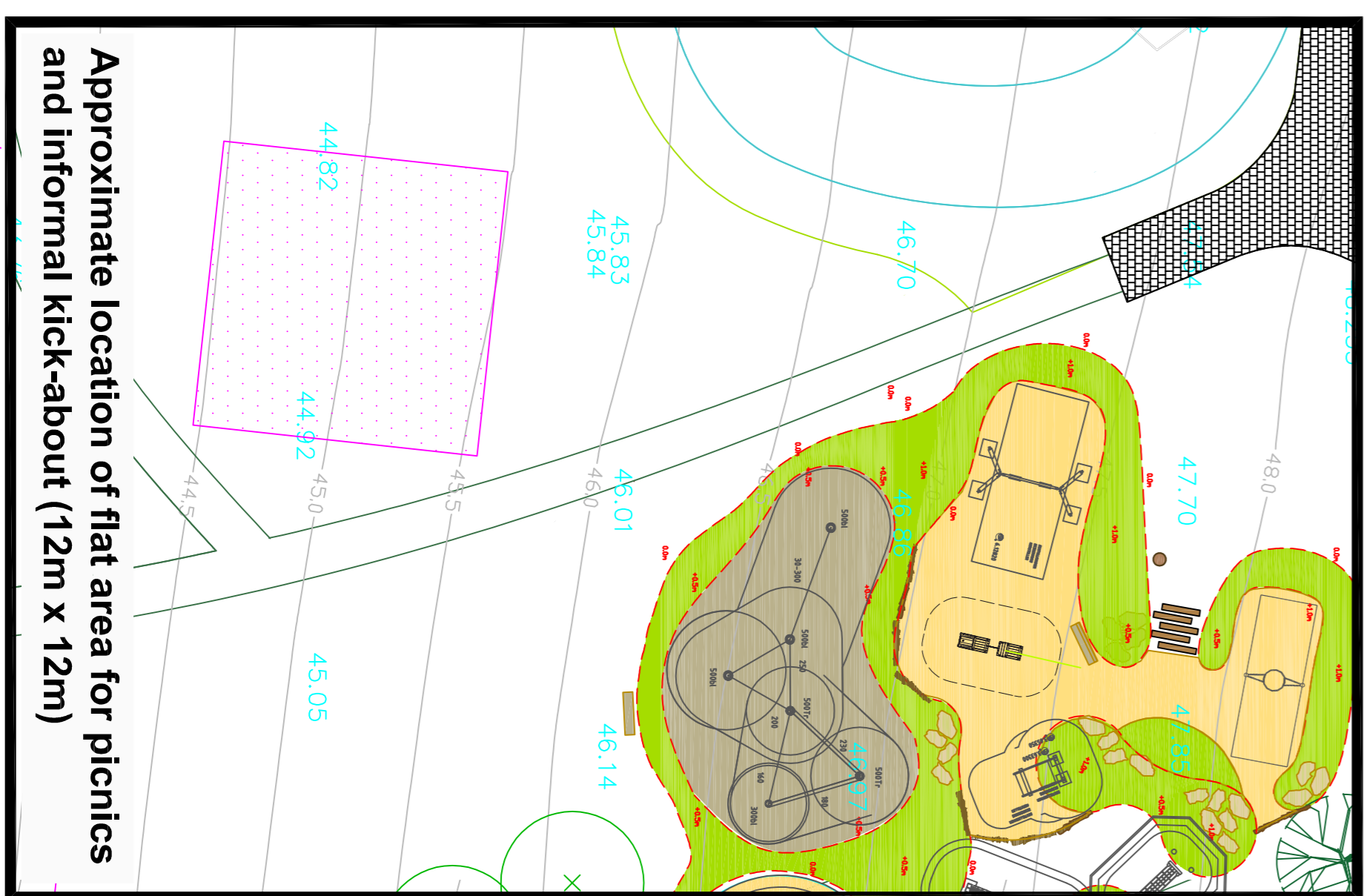
- Parking is an issue on the estate and concerned visitor spaces and other properties will suffer.
- Drawing people in may impact on parking
- Concern over visitor parking
- Major issue will be for visitors need to park as development does not have space for this currently
- Parking for visitors to the playground
- Concerned about parking implications as more people will visit to use the playground

Comments on picnic area


- This area needs flattening
- Picnic and ball area need to be flat
- Can it be flat for ball games
- Open play area for rounders and family picnics is a great resource with a fantastic view.
- It would be great to level a bit the area for ball play so balls don't run downhill

Other comments

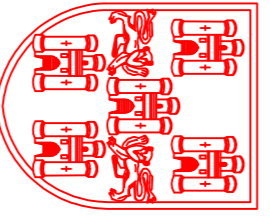
- Could the walking path be longer around the entire perimeter of the green space?
- Concern about access to the area, there are only 2 routes both of which run past lanes and drives
- Could we have signage to suggest dog owners use the lower part of the field rather than around the play area and to provide information on the drainage basin
- Stone picking or burying as there is a lot of flint stone in the field and dog has already had stitches once
- Could the area around the staked trees remain uncut meadow to protect the trees and discourage ball games close to houses?
- I love that the meadow will be maintained as it was so beautiful last summer.
- The trail will protect the meadow long grass and encourage children to explore the area / environment. Using this space as planned will likely reduce risk of anti-social behaviour as it appears purposeful and occupied
- Pleased that dogs have been catered for
- Management company needs sorting
- Would like access at the bottom of the meadow



KEY

-  Pedestrian and vehicular access to site
-  Existing trees to remain
-  New trees (by others)
-  Boulders
-  Timber sleepers
-  Logs (supplied by WCC)
-  Grass mounding (seeded)
-  Spoil on site and from WCC
-  Mound heights above existing ground level
-  RhynoMulch™ surfacing
-  Loose fill bark
-  Benches
-  Bespoke totem (by others)
-  Animal totems (by others)

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn
A	Revised equipment, detailed fall areas and surfacing	27.07.16	CMP



Winchester
City Council

OPERATIONS GROUP
LANDSCAPE & OPEN SPACES

City Offices
Colebrook Street
Winchester
SO23 9LJ

Project: ABBOTTS WALK
OPEN SPACE OFF LEA VIEW
WINCHESTER SO23 7HD

Title: PLAY & LANDSCAPE WORKS

Dwg No: ABTWLK_2016_A_101_REV A
Scale: 1:75 @ A1
Date: 08.07.2016
Drawn: CMP
Checked: SLO

© Crown copyright and database rights
Winchester City Council license 100018531

Play Elements

for Very Young Children (Age 0 - 3)



Tractor and trailer



Basket swing



**Cradle swing
(part of set)**



Mound slide

for Young Children (Age 3 - 6)



Wobbly bridge



Balance blocks



**Flat swing
(part of set)**



Animal totems

for Juniors (Age 6 +)



Tarzan swing



Climbing Forest



Climbing Forest



Climbing Forest

for Everyone



Swan seat



Butterfly seat



Touch & move totem



Taste and smell totem



**Clambering boulders
and mounds**



Logs



Timber benches



Meadow picnic area