

PICA PLAY AREA PROJECT

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Hugh Branney
LEAD OFFICER: Keith Parker, Head of Neighbourhoods
REPORT AUTHOR: John Davis, Parks Manager

WHAT BENEFITS WILL THESE PROPOSALS BRING TO COPELAND RESIDENTS?

The proposals will allow the improvement of the play area for the future enjoyment of the young people of the parish to encourage an active lifestyle through regular use of the play area at main street in Pica.

WHY HAS THIS REPORT COME TO THE EXECUTIVE?

Executive approval is required to enable work with the local community group to secure external funding from WREN (£70K) in order to develop the play area on its existing footprint and for agreement to the Council acting as the accountable body and project manager for the development. In addition, Executive approval is sought to put in place a future service level agreement (SLA) between the community group and the Council to cover future maintenance requirements and liabilities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Executive agrees

- a) to allow the development to take place on the site of the existing play area in the Council's ownership.
- b) to act as accountable body and project manager for the new play area in the sum of £83,000.
- c) to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Pica Community group to cover maintenance liabilities and exit arrangements.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2008 a community group was formed in Pica with a view to improve their local environment with organisations which provide services in the area.
- 1.2 During the following years the group have made improvements to their living environment. They have actively taken part in the local In Bloom competition and undertaken other initiatives to enhance the village.

- 1.3 In November 2011 the group sought the villagers views on what they further wanted to see improved. The views which came back were that the play area and surrounding it could be improved in order for the "spirit" of village life could be revitalised and for young people to have a safe place to play which was "theirs".
- 1.4 From this the group set about seeking advice from us as landowner and Copeland Community Fund officers, on how to go about making the improvements to the area and where funding was available.
- 1.5 In parallel and with support from our Parks Dept the community group made immediate improvements to the landscaping around the play area in order to improve visibility so that young people felt safe playing and parents were able to observe activity on the play area.
- 1.6 Between November 2011 and May 2012 the group underwent an indicative procurement process approaching 8 play manufacturers to provide a quotation for the design and installation of a new play area within the existing footprint.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The Community group in Pica wish to seek external funding to the total of £82,700.00 from WREN, Copeland Community Fund and EDF energy for which they ask that the Council fronts as accountable body and manages as landowner.
- 2.2 Inherently as land owner the Council needs to agree the development is acceptable on its ground. As an existing play area this is considered an acceptable use and so it is recommended permission for the project is agreed. This is on the basis 100% of the funding is secured externally and that the play area is constructed to comply with current British Standards and Health and Safety requirements.
- 2.3 The community group are willing to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Council whereby they agree to fund repairs and maintenance of the play equipment for the life of the equipment up to a maximum of 20 years, over a £100 threshold. In return the Council would continue to carry out inspections and undertake any minor repairs and maintenance. Any repairs and maintenance carried out by the Council would be capped at £100 per year, repairs beyond this limit being funded by the community group. If the community group dissolves during this period the assets would be transferred to

the Council who would make a decision on the future of the area and equipment, in effect the same position as now.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Do nothing. This will result in the playground falling into disrepair and eventual removal whilst the maintenance liability would remain with the Council, plus additional costs for its removal from service at the time it becomes beyond economic repair.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The proposals conform to the Council's Corporate plan 1.1 Contribute to reducing health inequalities between Copeland communities and others in the North West

- 4.2 The provision of the Play area land at Pica village supports the community group to lead on improvements in the area without increasing this Council's long term liabilities.

- 4.3 Executive is therefore asked to grant approval as outlined above to enable the play area on main street Pica.

5. STATUTORY OFFICER COMMENTS

- 5.1 S151 Officer comments are:

- 5.2 Monitoring Officer comments are:

- 5.3 EIA comments are:

- 5.4 Policy Framework comments:

The proposals reflect and support the goal outlined in the people theme of the Council Plan – supporting the development of strong, healthy and engaged communities, and Key Projects promoting health and wellbeing.

6. HOW WILL THE PROPOSALS BE PROJECT MANAGED AND HOW ARE THE RISKS GOING TO BE MANAGED?

- 6.1 The Council's Parks Manager and designated Waste and Parks Officer will continue to liaise directly with the community group to ensure all aspects of the proposals are clear and all liabilities under the terms of the approval are met.

7. WHAT MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OR OUTPUTS WILL ARISE FROM THIS REPORT?

- 7.1 The Council will receive the benefit of reduced maintenance liability on the subject land for the term of the SLA.
- 7.2 The Council will be seen to be proactively supporting local groups wishing to improve their natural environment and facilities.

List of Appendices: None

List of Background Documents:

Pica quotation process, Plan of the land, Draft WREN application