

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

CENTRAL PARK – WATER PLAY FACILITY

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve further investment by the council towards improving the facilities for customers at Central Park, Scunthorpe.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are as follows:
- The council has recently invested in improvements at Central Park in Scunthorpe.
 - We have looked at other ways to improve the 'offer' for customers.
 - Some proposals are presented for consideration.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The council has made a number of improvements to the visitor experience at Central Park in recent years. These include the reinvigoration of Central Park project that included new footpaths, a new outdoor cafe, new children's play equipment and the refurbishment of the fountain. Further supplementary play equipment was added earlier this year in response to comments from park users, particularly those with younger children.
- 2.2 Since completing the refurbishment of the fountain, the council has struggled to prevent its occasional unauthorised use as a 'paddling/bathing' facility, particularly during periods of warmer weather. This has raised some health and safety related concerns. The lack of any alternative formal water play feature in the park is likely to have contributed to this situation. Some years ago, such provision was by way of a formal paddling pool, but this has long since been removed.
- 2.3 Officers and elected members continually discuss possible further ways to improve the park facilities for the benefit of customers. More recently, we have explored the possibility of introducing a water play feature aimed at younger children.

2.4 **Water 'Splashpad' Play Facility**

2.4.1 Officers have explored the possibility of providing a simple form of water splashpad play facility.

2.4.2 One of the key advantages of a 'splashpad' feature over a more traditional paddling pool type facility is that out of season, the facility can be utilised for alternative purposes, making all year round use of the area possible.

2.4.3 It is suggested that a budget of around £100,000 would be required to deliver this project.

2.4.4 An area close to the existing playground area and cafe is suggested for locating a water play facility.

3 **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 The following options are available for the Cabinet Member to consider.

3.1.1 Option 1 – Agree to take forward the project in question during the current financial year.

3.1.2 Option 2 – Agree to consider taking forward the project in question during a future financial year.

3.1.3 Option 3 - Defer taking forward progress of the project in question.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 **Option 1**

4.1.1 Taking forward the projects in question during the current financial year would ensure that sustained progress is maintained in improving the range of visitor facilities for customers at Central Park. It is likely that the facilities could be available in readiness for the start of the 2015/16 season. Officers and members believe that the new facilities would prove popular with visitors, potentially leading to a boost in visitor numbers to the park.

4.2 **Option 2**

4.2.1 This would delay the delivery of the projects in question, thereby deferring the potential benefits for park visitors. It is unlikely that the facilities could be available in readiness for the start of the 2015/16 season.

4.3 **Option 3**

4.3.1 This would prevent the delivery of the development projects in question. As such, there would be no additional benefits for park visitors.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 **Financial** – Taking forward the project in question is likely to require capital expenditure of around £100,000. This is not included for in the current approved capital programme. However there are a number of approved capital projects that are forecast to underspend against budget in the current financial year. The total level of underspending against these projects will likely prove more than sufficient to fund the project. These underspends will not be required to be slipped into future years. As such it is proposed that they are used to finance the project outlined in this report and that the capital programme is altered to reflect this.

5.2 **Staffing** – Any staffing implications will be given further consideration and be subject to future reports for consideration by the Cabinet Member.

5.3 There are no other resource implications requiring consideration.

6. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 Not applicable.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 The council has previously received feedback from users of Central Park, particularly those with young children that they would like to see additional play facilities provided in the park.

7.3 The Director of Policy and Resources is happy to see the suggested project taken forward as long as any expenditure is contained within the limits of the approved capital programme.

7.4 Previous feedback from users of Central Park suggests that they appreciate the ongoing investment by the council to improve the range and quality of visitor facilities offered.

7.6 There are no apparent conflicts of interest to highlight.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member agrees to take forward a project to provide a water play facility in Central Park, Scunthorpe during the current financial year.

8.2 That the Cabinet Member agrees to use underspends within the current approved capital programme to fund the projects in question.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB

Author: Peter Williams
Date: October 2014

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None