

Community Leisure and Recreation Committee

Report Title:	MUGA & Elms Park Improvements
Meeting Date:	18 July 2023
Contact Officer:	Mandy Sturdy, Town Clerk

Purpose of the Report

1. Following April's meeting, to provide an update to Community Leisure and Recreation (CLR) Committee on the Elms Park improvement plans.
2. To consider revised options and make recommendations regarding the project's next steps.

Background

3. Following the meeting of the Open Spaces Sub-Committee (OSSC) on 25 May 2023 the project to improve the facilities at Elms Park had been relaunched. Officers contacted the original design company The Environmental Partnership (TEP) who have revised their costs to refresh the designs for the whole park at a cost of circa £25K.
4. Since this meeting the timeframe for receiving most of the funding (£300K) has slipped and it is now unlikely to be available until July 2025.
5. Whilst there is no urgency to move the MUGA or install the new connecting footpaths; Options should be considered to refurbish / replace the play park as soon as possible. Whilst it is not normally possible to retrospectively claim S106 funds it may be possible to do so for this project. We will be required to brief SODC 's Heads of Service prior to starting the project to ensure it is documented in their minutes of a s106/CIL application meeting.
6. Open Spaces Sub-Committee have the delegated responsibility to manage this project and spend the £300K S106 Allocation. They would require further delegations to request forward funding via a loan from Town Council investments to progress works prior to receiving the main allocation of S106. The whole project fund is estimated at a maximum value of £400K.
7. A high-level review of available funding has identified the options below:

Spent to date		
Consultation and design	£19,729	This was paid from General Reservices and will be added to the S106 Draw down in the future.
Available Funding		
S106 – 14S08 (TBC it was from)	£4,959	Received
S106 – 15S32	£300,000	Due July 2025 at the earliest

S106 – 15S32	£7,221	After 20 th Occupation (2025+)
S106 – 15S32	£8,075	After 20 th Occupation (2025+)
Elms Park Ear Marked Reserves	£16,706	Available Now
S106 – Other Contributions – 15S46	£14,255	
S106 – Off site Green Space - 15S46	£6,549	Confirmation pending
Play maintenance – 14S31 & 14S08	£7,474	Confirmation pending
Play Capital - 14508	£2,307	Confirmation pending
Subtotal	£367,547	Of which just £47,291 could be available 2023/24

8. Estimated cost for replacement of the play area is c£100K
9. A loan of up to £55K (subject to confirmations above) would be required to forward fund the play area for delivery before 2025.
10. A procurement exercise would be carried out for the play park element of the project in line with the Council's Financial Regulations and Procurement Policy.

Action Required

11. To enable this project to progress, propose to Full Council to allow OSSC to progress the play area phase of this project in advance of receiving the main £300k S106 funding.
12. Consider proposing to Full Council that up to £55K is used from investments to forward fund the play equipment. Any funds would be returned to the investments on receipt of the S106 monies.
13. OSSC will be required to update CLR/Council on all progress and budget control.

Resource Appraisal

14. The allocated funds as identified in the above table.
15. A loan of up to £55K from investments which will incur a small loss of investment income.
16. Officer time to carry out due diligence and deliver the project.

Risk Assessment

17. Although safe, the play park equipment is in a tired and poor state, if not replaced the play park may have to close.
18. The Community Youth Hub building at Southern Road Recreation Ground could put additional demand on Elms Park play area to be refurbished.
19. Funds are not available for the project. No contracts will be awarded until the S106 application has been completed and the funds are available.

20. The quotations for all works are greater than the available budget. In this case options relating to the scope or additional funding would be brought back to CLR / Council for a decision to progress.
21. The second phase of the development is not completed, and no funds are released from 15S32. This would result in a shortfall in funding for the play area, which would have to be paid by Thame Town Council.
22. Additional funding options from grants could be considered.
23. A funding risk assessment would be carried out prior to progressing with the play area refurbishments.

Legal Powers

- Local Government Act 1972 101 (1) (a) & (2)
- Public Health Act 1875 s164
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976, s19
- Parish Councils Act 1957 s3
- Highways act 1980 s301

Recommendation:

- i) To approve Open Spaces Sub-Committee progressing with the play area element of the project by drawing down on any available S106 funds and seeking confirmation from South Oxfordshire District Council that further funds can be applied for retrospectively for this project.**
- ii) To approve pausing the remainder of the project including the moving of the MUGA, installation of the new paths and performance space until the remainder of the S106 funds are available.**
- iii) To recommend to Full Council to approve drawing down up to £55k from the investment fund as a loan to forward the shortfall to deliver a replacement play park in the Elms Park before 2025.**
- iv) To recommend to Full Council to increase to £400K the delegated spend by CLR/OSSC on the total project for all the alterations to Elms Park.**