

Agenda item 5

For decision: Resurface the circular path and Victoria Path

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Summary

This report follows the report presented to the Council Matters committee in November 2017; and provides an update on the Section 106 (S106) funding attached to the Garston Road development (now called Trinity Park.)

It proposes to use circa £35,000 of this S106 budget to improve the circular path in Victoria Park as soon as possible; and if it is not possible to use that budget, to use the income received from the NHS following the agreement now reached regarding their re-sale of the land for Victoria Hospital.

Background

The S106 agreement – totalling £233,195 - must be spent in Frome by December 2025. In partnership with MDC, FTC has negotiated that these funds can be used in - or to benefit and enhance – the following parks & green spaces:

- Rodden Meadow
- Welshmill
- The Old Showfield
- New Road
- Mary Baily
- Along the riverbanks, including the space next to the library

The Council Matters committee agreed various projects to be funded by this S106 budget in November 2017. The following projects have now been completed:

- Improved ramps at the skatepark ([Appendix 5.1](#))
- Improved play surfacing underneath the two sets of swings in Welshmill play area
- Second-phase path improvements at the Old Showfield: creating a network of better, more universal paths; including a complete circuit around the space

Proposed footpath improvements in Victoria Park

Decisions such as these are usually made at Council Matters. However, we would like to proceed with the proposal below as soon as possible to avoid the risk of ground conditions and inclement weather delaying the work until the spring. The next meeting of Council Matters is not until 31 October when this risk would be significantly higher.

Having recently completed the footpath improvements at the Old Showfield there has been interest in seeing similar improvements made to the main footpath that runs around Victoria Park. The path is certainly in need of improvement. Over time frost action, tree routes and heavy use have combined to make it not accessible to all. Wheelchair and small wheeled buggies in particular struggle to get around.

Improving the path is included in the Management Plan for Victoria Park (as agreed by the Council Matters committee). When this project was discussed by the Council Matters in November 2017, the estimated budget of £100k reflected a method that would have seen the top layer of the worn and patchy surface scraped off and removed; before laying a new wearing course over the top. The works would also have included a concrete or metal edge on the interior of the path. We also felt at the time that complete removal of the old path and a total rebuild could have approached £200k.

An alternative and more economic approach is now being proposed. This would see a layer (or layers) of a regulating and levelling course applied to the existing path to even out the worn, cracked and damaged areas. This would then be followed with a new wearing course laid over the top of this. This approach is quicker and therefore cheaper and does not include the costs associated with the disposal of the old path. It would result in a similar finish to that of the area recently resurfaced at the entrance to the park near the bowls club.

As a result, significant savings can be made and the estimate for the works is circa £35,000 which is based on an estimate received from one of the contractors that quoted for the Showfield path works. We have requested quotes from three other contractors and are awaiting these.

The downside for this approach is that if it's repeated it would add (say) 60mm of new surfacing each time the path is improved. Over time, this would continue to raise the level of the path and at some point, this might become more obvious and potentially problematic. However, at this time, this approach would seem a sensible and reasonable way of making a significant and very good value improvement in the park.

Although the S106 agreement does not explicitly include Victoria Park in its list of parks and green spaces, it does allow for projects that enhance the play opportunities on the Mary Baily playing field. We believe play opportunities would be enhanced if there was a new path – accessible to all – taking users through Victoria Park to the play equipment at Mary Baily. However, in their capacity as the s106 budget holder, if this isn't accepted by Mendip, it is proposed to use some of the budget we received from the NHS money recently instead.

Recommendations

1. Approve the project to resurface the circular path at Victoria Path as described in the report
2. Use the s106 budget from the Trinity Park development for this purpose
3. If MDC does not approve the use of the s106 budget, utilise the budget recently received from the NHS in reference to an uplift clause in the sale of a part of Victoria Park in the 1990s.