

Report Title:	Improvements to Whitaker Park Toddler Play facilities		
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	11 th February 2026
Report of:	Head of Environmental Services	Cabinet Portfolio:	Environment and Corporate Services
Cabinet Lead Member:	Councillor Lythgoe	Wards Affected:	Longholme
Key Decision:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency
Integrated Impact Assessment:			
Required:	No	Attached:	No
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Valley Plan Priorities	Thriving Local Economy: This involves securing new inward investment, creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills with future job opportunities, and supporting town centres as unique destinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	High Quality Environment: This includes having a "clean and green" local environment, reducing the borough's carbon footprint, improving waste and recycling rates, and delivering new homes with a good mix of housing tenures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Healthy & Proud Communities: This priority focuses on improving the health and physical/mental wellbeing of residents, reducing health inequalities, ensuring access to better leisure facilities and health services, and fostering a sense of pride in the community.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Effective & Efficient Council: The aim is to provide good quality and responsive services, embrace new technology, be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook, and ensure sound governance.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Green Spaces Team have a budget of £143,000 allocated to improving the existing play facility at Whittaker Park and aimed at children ages 2-8 years. The budget is made up from RBC capital and will be spent on replacing the current equipment and surfacing to bring the play area in line with the new Junior Area. The report requests authority to be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services to tender the project and to appoint the successful contractor at the end of this process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the expenditure of £143,000 on the new play area at Whitaker Park, Rawtenstall and authorises officers to tender for the works in compliance with the Council's Constitution.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Head of Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member to accept the most advantageous tender.

3. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1 Following the installation of the new Junior Play Area at Whitaker Park, refurbishment of the existing toddler facility is a priority from the Whitaker Park Masterplan.
- 3.2 A budget of £143,000 has been set for the project and is made up entirely of RBC capital funding.

- 3.3 A tender has been prepared with a brief to allow play companies to base a design upon utilising the available budget, as was the approach with the junior play area.
- 3.4 The tender will be published in February with a target of the work being completed by the school summer by the selected contractor.
- 3.5 A refurbished play area will further improve one of the Borough's main parks and increase its reputation as a destination site, whilst reducing the increasing maintenance costs associated with its current form.

4. RISK

- 4.1 Failure to invest in the site will risk deterioration leading to increased maintenance liability and health and safety issues.
- 4.2 Extensive consultation has taken place with local residents who have voiced their desire for the area to be improved. To ignore this would negatively affect the Council's reputation.

5. SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS (FINANCE)

- 5.1 There is an existing budget available of £143k for this project. A full tender will be carried out to ensure best value is achieved.

6. MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS (LEGAL)

- 6.1 As the expenditure is over £100k, authority of the Corporate Management Team and Cabinet is required prior to going out to tender.
- 6.2 The tender will be in full compliance with the Council's Constitution and Procurement Act 2023.

7. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As this is a contract for works there are no equality implications.
- 7.2 The design brief has specified that there must be inclusive and accessible features incorporated.

8. POLICY/STRATEGY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The improvements to the toddler play facilities are a high priority from the Whitaker Park Masterplan.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The improvements will contribute towards the legacy of Rossendale Borough Council as being committed to providing first class facilities for residents.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 There are no background papers.