

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 2 NOVEMBER 2010
title: CALDERSTONES PARK PLAY AREA AND WOODLAND - UPDATE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide members with an update report about the Calderstones Park play area

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – this report contributes towards protecting and enhancing the existing environmental quality of our area, and improving access for all;
- Community Objectives – this scheme aims to improve outcomes for children and young people;
- Corporate Priorities - this scheme aims to provide services for people where they live, to improve access to services, and to promote the exceptional environment of the area and lifestyle.

2 BACKGROUND

Members will recall that the Calderstones Park play area was completed and opened earlier in the year, and that it is now in use and proving popular with families living nearby.

Since the play area opened, the Council has received an email from a resident of Calderstones Park estate expressing concern that the site of the play area is near an old tip, and that surface evidence had been seen of bricks, glass, pottery etc. The resident then asked about mitigation measures that had been taken in completing the development, and whether it was, in fact, safe for children to play there.

3 ISSUES

Not surprisingly, we take the issue of health and safety in children's play areas very seriously, and so it was felt appropriate to bring a report to Committee explaining the measures that had been taken in this area as the development progressed.

Potential contamination of the land was identified as a risk, and has been presented as such to Committee in the capital evaluation reports since 2008, before the scheme commenced.

A desktop study and a site visit were carried out by the Council's senior environmental health officer, Norman Pedley. His conclusion was that there was, at the time, no surface evidence of contamination on the site of the play area, although he noted that there may be issues when excavation commenced.

During the construction of the play area, the site was excavated to a depth of 300mm down to a regular granular base formation. The ground was then sheeted with a PVC membrane that, on completion, has been covered with bark mulch, all in accordance with the measures specified by Groundwork Pennine Lancs.

When I heard of the concerns expressed by the resident, I visited the site myself, and saw that there were areas where bricks, rubble and glass were visible, quite close to the new footpaths. Since then, our staff have hand picked the worst of the debris (mainly glass) from the surface adjacent to the paths and in the vicinity of the play area. Our engineering staff are now developing a further, limited scheme of mitigation measures in these areas with a view to completing the works by the end of the year.

4 CONCLUSION

There is no question that the play area itself is safe. This view is re-inforced by the fact that the site has been inspected and approved by ROSPA. However, we do recognise the existence of some risks in the extended perimeter of the site, and we are taking measures to address those.

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