

Emergency Play Area Improvements at Cobtree Manor Park

Final Decision-Maker	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Boxley

Executive Summary

A report updating Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee on urgent repairs needed on the aging play equipment and exploring options in the current financial situation.

Purpose of Report

To make Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee aware of the defective play equipment and to seek a decision on the actions that can be taken to address it.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That a repairs budget of £20,000 be authorised for the play equipment repairs.
2. That delegated authority for managing the repairs budget is given to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, in consultation with the CMEC Chair.
3. That an updated cashflow forecast is presented to the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	10 September 2020

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1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the corporate priorities for the Council.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	The work of the charity links directly to its charitable objectives and the corporate priorities for the Council.	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Risk Management	Risk management factors are covered at paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Financial	Accepting the recommendations will demand new spending of £20,000. We plan to fund that spending as set out in sections 3 and section 4.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	Staffing implications are managed day to day in line with Council procedures and policies	John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Legal	Under the Council’s Constitution the Committee as Corporate Trustee is responsible for all matters relating to the Charity with the exception of daily management which will be undertaken by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement. Any necessary agreements or contracts entered into must be in accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and should be in a form approved by the Head of Legal Partnership.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no new implications as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy and Information Manager
Equalities	No impact identified as a result of this update report and recommendation.	Policy & Information Manager
Public	The Cobtree Estate works towards improving the health of residents through its day-to-day	Paul Clarke – Senior Public

Health	operations	Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	Crime and disorder implications are managed day-to-day in line with Council procedures and policies	Mike Evans – Leisure Manager
Procurement	Procurement implications are managed day-to-day in line with Council procedures and policies	John Foster – Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The items of play equipment at Cobtree Manor Park were installed between 2008 and 2012. The capital programme has identified the need for them to be replaced in 2020/2021 or 2021/2022, depending on the level of wear and tear which was being monitored by the park manager and rangers along with the daily and monthly play equipment checks which are a legal requirement.
- 1.2 The monitoring regime identified defective play equipment at the start of 2020. CMEC approved repairs for these items at a total cost of £16,781+VAT and this work has been carried out.
- 1.3 Unfortunately there are now more play area repairs needed. The full list of play equipment needing repair comprises 16 pieces of play equipment with a mix of major and minor repairs.
- 1.4 Park staff have been making repairs to this equipment and checking it daily to ensure compliance with safety legislation. The park's insurance company has completed its annual survey of the park and their report has identified the issues that were being monitored by staff.
- 1.5 Some items of equipment are now not safe to use. These were taken out of action in the week commencing 10 August 2020 and they remain out of action.
- 1.6 Despite being in the capital programme for 2020/2021, the significant Covid-19 pressures on the CMEC finances, mean that authorising these repairs at the current time is a much harder decision than it would otherwise normally have been.
- 1.7 There have been enquiries from members of the public about when the play equipment will be repaired with visitors generally being understanding of the situation. However, the play equipment, if left out of action for a length of time, will have a negative impact on visitor numbers at the park and the

amount of car park income achieved. Leaving the play equipment unrepaired will also have reputational impacts.

- 1.8 The costs of repairing the equipment is currently being investigated. At the time of writing officers do not know the costs or the lead-in times for items. Costs can vary based on the condition of the concrete and the fixings, which cannot be determined until items of equipment are removed. Officers estimate the total cost could be £25,000 and some items could take up to 10 weeks to be supplied. Officers will give a verbal update on costs and lead-in times at the meeting.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Do nothing

Committee could decide to leave this play equipment out of action and address the situation at a later date. **This option is not recommended.** The play equipment will not get any less expensive to repair and in the meantime the negative impacts on car park income, reputation and unsightly views will heighten

3.2 Authorise a repairs budget of £20,000 for the play equipment repairs

In the current financial situation this is not an easy recommendation to put forward, but this is the less bad option of those that are available. The budget, if approved, would be used on the items that give maximum repair, maximum value for money in combination with the shortest lead-in time. This will ensure that the maximum amount of play equipment is returned into action while the financial impact of Covid-19 is managed. **This is recommended.**

3.3 Delegated authority for the repairs budget is given to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development

The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development manage this budget in consultation with the Chair of this Committee. Updates on which repairs are possible and the timescales for them will be sent to all Committee members. **This is recommended.**

3.4 Present an updated cashflow forecast to the Committee

This recommendation is linked to recommendation 3.3 in this report, the recommendations in the Senior Finance Manager's *Cobtree Manor Estate Financial Position Report* and the Leisure Manager's *Request to Cobtree Charity Trust Report*. The updated cashflow will identify how some of the emergency repairs budget recommended in paragraph 3.2 can be offset. **This is recommended.**

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report protect Cobtree Manor Estate Charity's assets, its car park income stream and its reputation. Not approving these

recommendations will lead to negative impacts in these areas and while the problem of the defective play equipment remains unsolved.

- 4.2 The difficulty in approving these recommendations link to the current financial situation of the Committee, which is a result of its operators and debtors.
 - 4.3 Paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 include steps that officers can take to ensure CMEC's financial position is protected and managed further once recommendation 3.2 is approved.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Committee does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report at paragraphs 2.7, 3.1 and 4.1. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
 - 5.2 Recommendations 3.3 and 3.4 include further mitigations which are needed at this time. They will also help manage the risks associated with this proposal.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 No consultation has taken place regarding this proposal
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once agreed, officers will put forward a plan of suggested works to the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development. This plan will achieve the greatest value for the repairs budget in terms of the quality and quantity of items that can be put back into action and the timing of those repairs.
 - 7.2 The Head of Regeneration and Economic Development can agree the plan of works with the CMEC Chair and officers will implement the repairs. This will be communicated to all Committee members.
 - 7.3 The Leisure Manager and Senior Finance Manager will prepare an updated cashflow projection for CMEC showing how this repairs budget can be offset in other areas enabling the cashflow position to be managed in these difficult circumstances.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None