



## Agenda item 7

For information: **Poulton Park play area**

Written by: Chris Stringer, Deputy Town Clerk

### Background

In April 2022, the town council took on responsibility (from Wiltshire Council) for most of the play areas and play spaces in the town.

And in October 2022, councillors agreed to spend over £370,000 over 15 years to improve the play opportunities in the town.

Working with [Wicksteed](#) – a specialist play manufacturer - the first play area that we've come up with designs for is Poulton Park.

In August 2023, we asked for people's views on an initial design for the play area in Poulton Park.

We reported what people said to us at the Environment & Green Spaces committee meeting in December 2023.

Generally, people were somewhat disappointed by the initial design.

There were also some common suggestions for ways in which the design could be improved:

- More opportunities for creative and imaginative play.
- Sensory play opportunities.
- More climbing opportunities to challenge older children.
- Equipment that toddlers and younger children could use by themselves.
- Traditional monkey bars.
- More accessible and universal equipment.
- Agility items such as balance beams, obstacles and multi height bars.
- Materials in keeping with the park and the town's other play areas.

Following the discussion at the meeting, councillors agreed to explore a more ambitious design for the play area – noting that this approach would likely mean an increase in the overall budget for Poulton Park.

The committee also noted the possibility that a more expensive and ambitious design might need to be completed (and paid for) in more than one phase.



## New design

Appendix A is Wicksteed's drawing of the new design for Poulton Park.

The main changes and additions in the new design for Poulton Park are:

- A second trampoline next to the single trampoline shown on the initial design.
- A play trail featuring balancing elements.
- Space for a sand pit and a mud kitchen.
- Multi-height bars.
- A basket spinner.
- A climbing frame aimed predominantly at toddlers and younger children.
- A more challenging climbing frame aimed at older children.
- Monkey bars.

The new play equipment is also mainly timber, whereas before the new climbing frames were made of metal.

As reported in December, these changes mean the new design is more costly.

And as such, we're going to have to complete this project in phases.

### Phase 1

The first phase is scheduled to start in early June.

Subject to the weather and ground conditions, the work should take 4 to 5 weeks – so the first phase should be complete in July, before the start of the school holidays.

We've placed an order with Wicksteed to complete a first phase of improvements. This phase is costing £75,000 – and includes the following:

- Replacing the existing climbing frame with the new timber climbing frame.
- Multi-height bars by the new climbing frame.
- Replacing the existing roundabout.
- A new basket swing.
- New types of swing on the existing frames.
- New seating.

We're also working on designs for a sand pit and a mud kitchen – and we hope to include one or both in this first phase.

We'll also be planting new trees in and around the play area this autumn (after the main works have been completed)

Things including the trampolines, the basket spinner, the toddler climbing frame and the play trail are **not** set to happen in this phase.



## Next steps for Poulton Park

Future phases to complete the new design

We would prefer to complete the play area in 2 phases.

We have already applied for funding that would enable us to do this – but we’ve been advised that lots of other organisations have also applied to this fund.

We’ll continue to identify other sources of funding – and submit applications.

What this means is that the rest of the design is dependent on successful funding bids – and this could mean more than one additional phase in the future.

## Elsewhere in the town

When the project to improve all the town council play areas was approved in October 2022, the notional schedule and budgets were as follows:

Year	Where	Notional budget
2023	Poulton Park	£60,000
	St Aldhelm’s	£20,000
2024	Bearfield	£35,000
	Spencers Orchard	£15,000
2025	Sladesbrook	£45,000
2029	Barton Farm	£30,000
	Victory Field	£60,000
2030	Greenland View	£25,000
2035 & 2036	Kingston Wood	£50,000
TBC	Culver Close tennis courts	£12,000
	New outdoor fitness equipment	£20,000

Both the schedule and the budgets were subject to change though – and because of the time we’ve spent looking at Poulton Park – and the cost of improving the play area in Poulton Park - the schedule and the budgets for our other play areas has changed.

Immediately, we’re going to use £15,000 of the budgets identified for St Aldhelm’s and Spencers Orchard to complete the first phase of works in Poulton Park.

Then - once the first phase in Poulton Park has been completed - we’ll look at St Aldhelm’s, Bearfield, Spencers Orchard and Sladesbrook together so we can update the schedule and budgets that we’re working to for these play areas.



**Appendix to this report**

Appendix A: A drawing showing the new design for the play area in Poulton Park