



## MEETING PAPER

Meeting: Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee (agenda item 12)

Date: Tuesday 18 June 2024

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/NON-CONFIDENTIAL

### Introduction

An agenda item has been added for the Parks and Open Spaces Sub-Committee to consider the procurement process for the two play areas identified as the priorities for 2024 – 2025 – Clarkes Lane and Thirlmere Walk.

### Details

Clarkes Lane currently has no play areas. There is one piece of equipment remaining from the former play area and that is reaching the end of its serviceable life. The provision we are therefore putting into Clarkes Lane would be a brand new play area, rather than a refurbishment, which is something the Town Council has not done before. My suggestion for this site is to install a fully inclusive and accessible play area, to appeal to children of a range of ages and abilities. Though we have individual pieces of accessible and inclusive equipment in many of our play areas, currently none of them are fully accessible and inclusive.

Given the site's proximity to the Warren School, I met with them recently to seek advice on what we would need to think about when developing a fully accessible site. They cater for children with a wide range of physical and mental health requirements and were able to provide me with some valuable advice, which we can refer to when developing the specification for this site. I was also given a tour of their new play area, which has given me some very useful pointers when considering how to develop our site.

Installing a fully inclusive, accessible play area will be a very involved and expensive project. If Council is minded to proceed with this idea, it will need to think very carefully whether it would be feasible to complete two play areas this year, or whether we should first focus attention on Clarkes Lane, then make a decision regarding Thirlmere Walk. The Town Council has done incredibly well so far with its programme of play area refurbishments, so deferring one to next year should not be detrimental.

To complement the new play area provision at Clarkes Lane, my suggestion would also be to develop a sensory garden nearby. This would enhance the inclusivity of the site and would provide a quiet space for children and adults alike.

Going forward, we will need to procure our play areas via Contracts Finder. If the Sub-Committee is minded to support the suggestions for Clarkes Lane, I can start to put together a specification for you to consider.

When Thirlmere Walk does proceed it should be more straightforward. It has an existing play area but much of the equipment is old. It may be possible to refurbish a couple of the smaller items of equipment, but generally the site would benefit from brand new equipment, to cater for a range of ages and abilities. The site is very popular with dog walkers, who often allow their dogs off the lead. When planning for the refurbishment of this

site, the Sub-Committee may wish to consider dog control measures at this site (please refer to the meeting paper provided for item 10 of this agenda) and/or installing a fence around the play area.

#### Recommendations/Decisions

The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the following:

- Whether to proceed with the Clarkes Lane and Thirlmere Walk play areas this year.
- Whether it would like to proceed with the suggestions for the Clarkes Lane inclusive and accessible play area and sensory garden.
- The suggestions for the Thirlmere Walk play area, giving particular consideration to any dog control measures.