

Amenities Committee 12th December 2022

Feedback from Cheshire West & Chester Regarding Wheelchair Accessible Swings

Background information shared from a Local Town & Parish Council:

Cheshire West and Chester Council supports the overall provision of inclusive and accessible play spaces, specifically the improvement and renovation of the Parish play space at [REDACTED]. The Council is delighted that the project has secured appropriate funding to progress and is looking forward to seeing its financial contribution and officer time materialised in the final development. Guided by your brief and aspirations, the Council's Total Environment Team have provided outline design options and costings, and have considered additional aspects of the space, including access routes, to maximise its inclusivity. Also under HSE CDM Regulation Roles, it is the Council's role (Total Environment Landscape Design Team) to bring to your attention an important Health and Safety consideration.

At this juncture we would like to take the opportunity to make you aware that the Council is currently undertaking a review of the suitability of installing disabled user wheelchair swings at its outdoor play areas, via a programme of due diligence. This is involving seeking feedback from other authorities, ROSPA, community and stakeholders. We do understand your desire to include this equipment in your development but we feel it necessary to highlight the on-going work by the Council.

The Council will be waiting until the outcome of its due diligence programme and we will not be considering installing equipment of this type until we are satisfied that it does not present an unacceptable risk to the user or other visitors and the Council's own position will be informed by the current review.

As the Parish Council is responsible for the health and safety inspection and management of the [REDACTED] play area and if it is the Parish Council's decision to proceed with the installation of the disabled wheelchair swing as being proposed, we would offer the following advice to inform the Parish Council in its final decisions:

- If the Parish Council wishes to proceed with the installation of a disabled wheelchair swing as per your selected specification being considered then it is advised that if this has not happened already, it completes its own due diligence process on the suitability of the equipment taking account of the play area site specifics, location, security, access to ensure that it is used for the purpose designed.
- To ensure that all on going play area site health and safety inspections, independent inspections accommodate the new disabled wheelchair swing equipment as part of regular inspections to ensure that misuse is not taking place. The Council would be grateful if the Parish Council could confirm the details of their current and any updated play area health and safety inspections once site improvements have taken place.
- If the Council's Total Environment Team are formally employed by the Parish Council to procure and implement the play improvement scheme, it is done so on the undertaking that the Parish Council has confirmed the appropriateness and suitability of all play equipment as part of any approved landscape design and the Borough Council is not liable for any equipment misuse.
- For the Parish Council to have undertaken a review of the need to potentially enclose the disabled wheelchair equipment and its access to be via radar key or the like and that suitable supervision is considered to ensure gates remain closed and site users protected during operation.

The Council wishes the Parish Council all the very best in the completion of the play improvements at the Play area and looks forward to hearing from you if you wish for the Total Environment Team to undertake detailed design work stages, then moving on to and procuring, contract administration and delivery of any play area improvements.