

WEST SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL

Leisure & Amenities Committee

Shelfinch Toddler Play Area

1. Background:

- 1.1 West Swindon Parish Council has recently invested in improving the play facilities at Shelfinch play area. This has included new basket ball and football goals, resurfacing the ball court, new toddler equipment and additional swings and climbing equipment.
- 1.2 Work is now complete and a full independent safety inspection report has been completed which confirmed no outstanding faults or actions.

2. Detail

- 2.1 Following the installation and inspection, it has been noted that children using the toddler play area are required to exit the play area through the gate to run up the slope and use the green tube slide back into the toddler play area. This was part of the original design as approved by the Parish Council.
- 2.2 Cllr Makofu has raised concerns from residents that children exit the toddler play area on to the footpath which follows through the site and in doing so, could collide into bikes, runners or dog walkers.



- 2.3 The Parish Operations Supervisor has visited the site and concluded that it would be problematic to create an exit to the slide from inside the play area e.g. steps, netting, ladders as this creates a new 'fall zone' and would most likely then have an impact on the required safety zones of equipment inside the play area.
- 2.4 The suggestion is that if the Parish Council is minded to facilitate an easier exit from the toddler play area, that an opening could be created in the red fencing and would be L shaped to steer the exit back up to the slide rather than onto the path:

The corner fence panel by the roundabout would be removed, the ground levelled and 2-4 red fence barriers installed to guide away from the path.



- 2.5 It is recommended that all children are supervised by an adult to ensure they are secure and safe. The cautionary note with the creation of an opening is that the toddler play area is then not fully enclosed. There is no requirement to enclose toddler play areas however it is generally viewed favourably by parents and carers as it restricts movement and is more likely to keep the play area free from dogs. For many years, the toddler gate was missing from this play area so it is only recently that it has become enclosed. It is possible that changing the layout however well intentioned, may create more negative feedback than the current layout.

3. Financial implications:

- 3.1 Councillors will be aware that it has invested £71,000 in the Shelfinch refurbishment. There are no technical or outstanding safety issues.
- 3.2 The addition of a fenced exit will require the purchase of additional fencing. It should be able to be undertaken and installed manually without machine hire, however, it would require time and expertise and may not be installed for some time. The costs are likely to be in the region of £600 plus two days manual labour. There is play maintenance budget funding available in the existing annual budget allocations.
- 3.3 If the preferred solution is that a form of exit is created from inside the enclosed play area, this would be better designed and delivered by a play specialist and costs would be considerably higher depending on the recommended solution.

4. Recommendations:

- 4.1 That Councillors consider the following options
- to make no changes to the current play area design
 - to make changes only if there is an option to add steps or climbing frame to exit from within the enclosed play area and agree a budget for this
 - to create an additional exit using play barrier fencing

Paula Harrison
Parish Manager