

Community Brief

Upgrade to Whittons Park Children's Play Park

Prepared by Long Leys Residents Association (LLRA)
& West End Residents Association (WERA)

Version 1.3 (18 December 2019)

1. Introduction and Tender Process

An upgrade to the Whittons Park playpark equipment has been suggested by residents as part of the Long Leys 2021-2040 Neighbourhood Plan activity. In response, LLRA working with WERA consulted with the community and formed a small group of parents to help evolve this brief. The brief is being shared with the Long Leys and West End communities for further feedback before a final version is presented to City of Lincoln Council.

This document is intended for use as supporting evidence for a City Council issued tender to playpark suppliers, for designs which meet the community brief and budget available. Once tender responses have been received from suppliers, it is anticipated a shortlist of designs will be presented to local children to give feedback on the preferred designs, via both schools and a selection event at Whittons Park.

2. Indicative budget & timescales

City of Lincoln Council have indicated that circa £120,000 may be available for capital spend on a play area upgrade within Carholme ward. No specific timescales have been set. LLRA & WERA are keen, if money is available, for completion by the end of 2020.

3. Summary of Brief

The successful supplier design will be the one that best meets the following requirements:

- Reflects the green look and feel of the Long Leys area and its link with surrounding local wildlife spaces (Hobblers Hole, Newt Hollow) and the West Common
- A range of different equipment which together caters for children in age ranges 5 & under, 6-11, 12-15
- Possible themes that balance challenge & risk:
 - A: Revamp of the existing fenced area play equipment, to ensure adequate coverage for those 5 & under and 6-11
 - B: Double or triple zip wire downhill experience to use contours of park
 - C: Trim trail / agility trail / assault course / rope bridge experience
 - D: Sports wall / kick about zone allowing football goal with basketball / netball hoops (with informal seating / social zone)
- Encourages creativity, imagination and respect for wildlife/nature
- Inclusive design for all ranges of ability and mobility
- Capable of being operational over a ten-to-fifteen year period without extensive maintenance demands
- Key activities sited away from existing housing to reduce noise & disturbance
- Encourages children and parents to arrive by foot or by cycle, rather than car
- Provides the opportunity to include the journey to/from the park as part of the experience in the future (such as the potential for nature/wildlife themes if coming over West Common, or past a re-instated Newt Hollow pond if travelling from St George's. This would require additional grant funding at a later date.

4. Possible Themes

The following themes (A-D) have been suggested by members of the community. All photos used in this brief are illustrative of the type of equipment imagined. Suppliers will be encouraged to provide their own creative interpretations of the themes, rather than to take the photos as an exact specification. Designs should reflect the green look and feel of the Long Leys area and its link with surrounding local wildlife spaces (Hobblers Hole, Newt Hollow) and the West Common

Theme A: Revamp of the existing fenced area play equipment, to ensure adequate coverage for those 5 & under and 6-11

Some of the existing play equipment in the fenced off area is considered dated with insufficient variety / suitability for 5 and under. Suppliers should review the existing equipment and recommend upgrades and additions which would appeal to the target age groups. Various residents have commented on the lack of variety on swings, slides and climbing frames/monkey bars and an inclusive roundabout has been suggested.

Whilst the existing play area is fenced, the view of LLRA & WERA is that little or no money should be spent on reconfiguring the fenced area, with the possible exception of adding new entrance points:

- on the south west side of the fenced area (Long Leys Road side)
- on the westerly side of the fenced area, adjacent to the existing seating.

Theme B: Double/triple zip wire using natural terrain of Whitton Park

The upper half of the park has a steep slope which lends itself to a zip wire experience. The historic use of the slope for tobogganing during heavy snowfall should be considered within any design.



Theme C: Trim trail / Agility trail / Assault course / Rope Bridge Experience

This could potentially lead on from the zip wire experience and allow a wide range of challenges on balance, co-ordination and agility. The potential is there to use the natural features of the park to create more stimulating play options. Possibly incorporating a simple outdoor gym trail (eg bar for pull ups and ways of exercising other muscle groups).





Theme D: Sports wall / kick about zone/ informal seating zone

A sports wall providing an ability for park visitors to play a variety of sports as a communal / impromptu activity with a football goal, basketball and netball hoop. This would ideally be on the bottom, flatter part of the park, without sacrificing too much of the grass area. This is intended to support small scale ad-hoc games where anyone can join in, rather than organised ones. This is not a Multi Use Game Area (MUGA) for competitive sports; these activities are more suitable for the nearby Yarborough Road Leisure Centre.

An informal area close by where visitors could picnic or watch activities could be included.



5. Maintenance

Equipment should be designed for robustness and reliability over a ten to fifteen-year period, without significant requirements for regular maintenance. Equipment that is likely to be regularly out of action or requiring continuous adjustment should be avoided.

6. Layout to Avoid Disturbance to Residential Neighbours

Suppliers should consider siting key activities away from existing housing to reduce noise & disturbance. There is no plan to introduce additional lighting to the area, with use during daylight hours only.

7. Encourage Children & Parents to Arrive by Foot or By Cycle (rather than car) to Extend the Play Experience

Figure 1 (see next page) shows that Whittons Park is within a 1km radius of the populations of Long Leys, the West End and the Burton Road (pink circle).

To maximise wider health benefits, funding should be prioritised towards play equipment and improving and encouraging walking/cycling access, rather than expanding vehicle access/ parking facilities. A cycle rack, potentially themed would be a useful addition. Local parents have commented that an upgraded Whittons Park would reduce their car travel to other playparks not within walking distance.

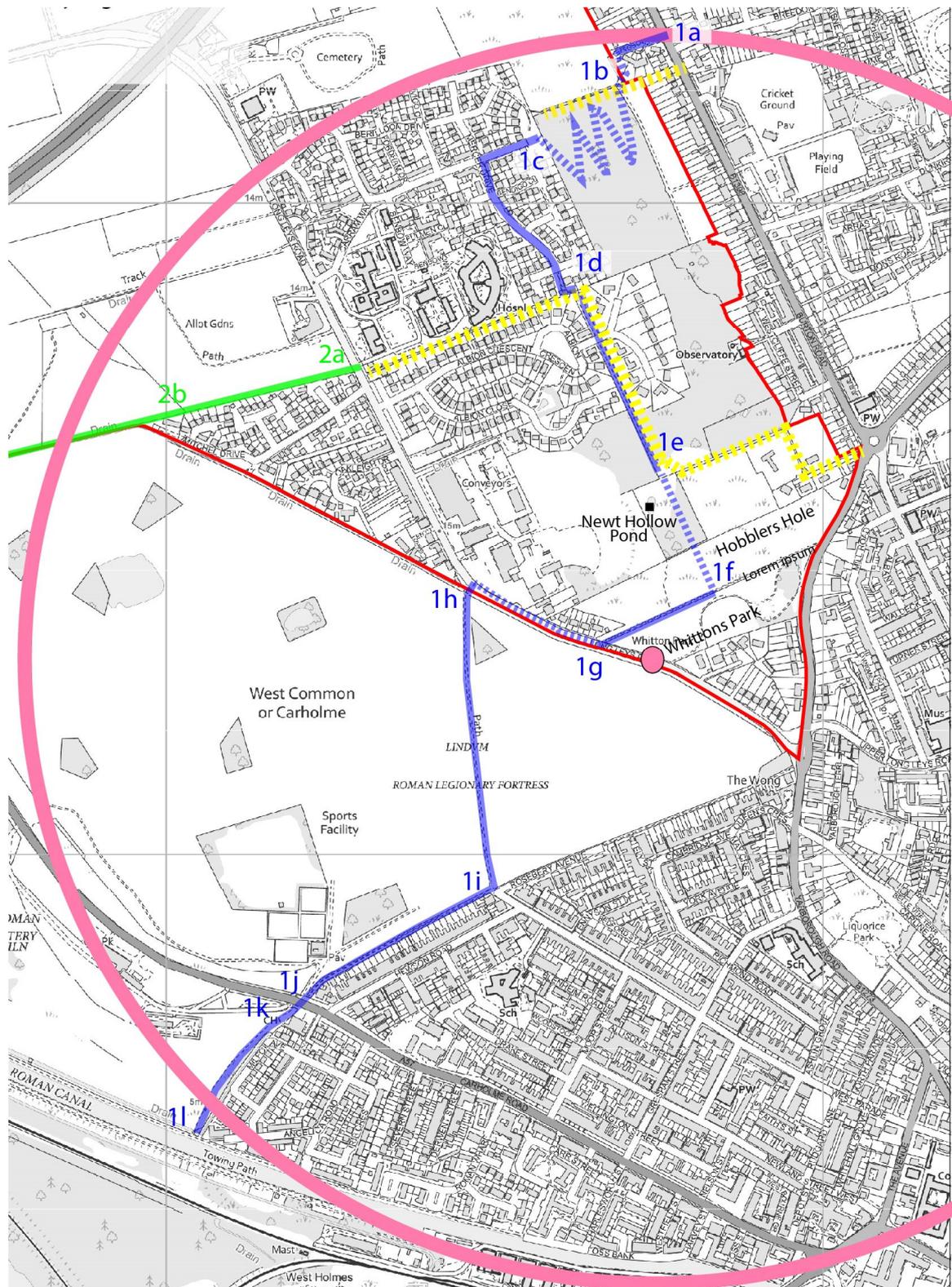
The solid blue line shows a potential future off road cycle route allowing safe cycle access for children to the park from both St. George's and the West End. Elements of this are likely to be included in the 2021-2040 Long Leys Neighbourhood Plan. However, there are two elements which have the potential to be implemented sooner, if given funding support from city/county council:

- A section (1e-1f) between St George's & Whittons Park which is currently the subject of an LLRA Right of Way application. Subject to landowner agreement this section would not be lit and a semi porous surface compatible with a wildlife site would be used (not a tarmac or metalled surface).
- A section of footpath (1i-1j) running alongside the West Common and the rear of homes on Hewson Road overlooking the common. This currently has no-cycling signs along its length but has the potential for a multi-use path.

Outside of Whittons Park, LLRA & WERA will look to exploit opportunities to include the journey to/from the park as part of the play experience in the future. There is the potential for nature/wildlife themes if visitors are coming over West Common and for those travelling from St George's a re-instated Newt Hollow pond could be an appropriate stopping off point (with appropriate safety fencing). This would require additional grant funding at a later date, rather than use of the existing play area budget. Engagement with other organisations and landowners, such as Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, would also be required.

Figure 1: 1km Radius Circle Centred on Whittons Park (pink circle), showing accessibility from Long Leys, West End and Burton Road

Solid Blue line represents potential future footpath/cyclepath (dotted blue where route additions would be required rather than conversions). Yellow dotted lines represent existing footpaths. Note this map is an extract from a separately prepared multi use path map.



8. Other Aspects

The lower part of Whittons Park is susceptible to flooding and improving the drainage would allow ball games to be played on the flat grassed area (Long Leys Road end).

Additional seating within the fenced off areas would be appreciated for parents/grandparents escorting children, potentially some of it shaded by trees if possible.

Following various problem incidents in 2019, the hedge and gated area along Long Leys Road would benefit from “target hardening” work. Ideally CCTV coverage would be an element of this, to avoid a repeat of previous incidents and to discourage any anti-social behaviour.

An access point through the hedge into Whittons Park would be provided, from the marked multi-use path over Hobblers Hole (Figure 1, point 1f) once the exact path route is agreed.

References

1. Summary of Views on Whitton Park Playpark Upgrade, LLRA, 30 August 2019. Available by email request from LLRA@long-leys.org

Version Control

- 1.1 19 November 2019
- 1.2 29 November 2019: incorporates small clarifications to multi-use path routes
- 1.3 18 December 2019: incorporates consultation feedback on gate access to existing fenced area