

# Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	<b>Your Fund Surrey Application – CF221 Bletchingley Parish Council</b>
Divisions Affected:	Tandridge - Godstone
Key Decision:	No
Reason Key:	N/A
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	Cabinet/ Committee decision Cabinet 21st July 2020 Min Ref: 112/20 COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND [Item 10] <a href="#">Decision - Community Projects Fund - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)</a>

## Summary

This decision record sets out the key information for publication on the decision by the Executive Director for Customer, Digital and Transformation to approve expenditure for a Your Fund Surrey project located in Tandridge. The agreed recommendations are set out below and details of the project are set out in a decision report attached as an annex to this record.

## Decision made

### Decision made:

It was AGREED to:

1. Fund project CF221 for the full £95,000 requested, composed of:
  - £95,000 capital funding towards demolishing existing playground and replacing with new playground equipment.
  - Including 5% to be held by SCC until final evidence of income and expenditure and building control sign-off is provided.

### Reasons for Decision:

This decision is to enable expenditure from Your Fund Surrey to be awarded to a project which has been the subject of a rigorous assessment by Officers, as set out in Annex 1.

Officers consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund, has been considered by the Your Fund Advisory Panel and satisfies the requirements to award funding.

Decision taken by:	Michael Coughlin - Executive Director - Customer, Digital & Transformation
Decision taken on:	21 March 2024
To be implemented on:	24 March 2024

--	--

**Alternative options considered**

N/A

**Summary of any financial implications**

This project has been through due diligence and agreed governance processes.

Cabinet agreed in March 2020 the funding for these projects will be drawn from capital funding allocated to Your Fund Surrey within the Capital Programme.

Cabinet agreed in March 2020 to establish a core team to manage the delivery of the fund and risks associated with it, funded from the Corporate Feasibility budget.

**Declarations of conflicts of interest**

None

**Consultation/Process Followed**

Decision taken in consultation with Cllr Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, following the Your Fund Surrey Advisory panel review.

**Background Documents**

Exempt:

Annex 1 – Your Fund Surrey Decision Report CF221

No

**YOUR FUND SURREY - DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION REPORT**

**DATE:** 13 TH MARCH 2024

**SUBJECT:** YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION –  
BLETCHINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

**PROJECT NAME:** STYCHENS LANE PLAYGROUND

**CF REFERENCE:** CF221

**Purpose of the Report:**

This report sets out the key information on the shortlisted **Bletchingley Parish Council - Stychens Lane Playground** Your Fund Surrey (YFS) Application for the consideration of the YFS Advisory Panel.

The vision of YFS is to bring community-led and place-making projects to life, with a focus on wider community benefit that leaves a real legacy.

The role of the YFS Advisory Panel is to review shortlisted applications following the assessment and scoring of bids by Officers, and to advise and inform the final officer recommendations to the appropriate decision-maker on the proposed funding awards to be made.

**Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that the YFS Advisory Panel:**

1. **Consider whether to fund the full amount requested of £95,000 comprised of:**
  - **£95,000 of capital funding towards demolishing the existing playground and creating a new playground. To be paid in staged payments, on evidence of spend.**
  - **5% final payment to be held by SCC until evidence of completion and completed Investment and Income form approved.**

**Reason for Recommendations**

- This application has been the subject of a rigorous assessment process by officers, as set out in the body of this report. Officers consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund and to satisfy the requirements to award funding.
- The project aims to remove the existing playground equipment and surface, currently unsafe and not fit for purpose, and turn it into a new modern playground with safe, eco-friendly and durable playground equipment. A new safety surface will be laid down, the existing path replaced to become more accessible and new benches and signage will be added around the area to encourage residents, families and children to visit the area.

**Executive Summary**

1. Bletchingley Parish Council (BCP) owns Stychens Lane field where the existing playground is situated. The playground is located away from the main road, in a fenced-off area. A public footpath connects the centre of the village and the housing properties at the western end of the village directly to the field. It was donated to BPC in 1929 and

is designated for children under the age of 14. The playground equipment is now over 20 years old.

2. The YFS application supports the replacement of existing playground equipment with new durable playground equipment, groundwork and benches. It plans to become a place known by the residents and community as a safe and stimulating local play area, particularly aimed at younger children. It is hoped the new playground will bring children and families together to socialise, encourage physical activity, increase wellbeing, and explore the outdoors and natural environment. This project will provide volunteers with an opportunity to assist with the upkeep of the playground and improve a green space that will be more accessible to all. By encouraging the community to walk to the new, improved playground, the site will also reduce vehicle movements.

### **Project Summary**

3. Stychens Lane Playground is located in Bletchingley within the Godstone electoral division. By car, the playground is located approximately 2.4 miles from Nutfield station and 3.2 miles from Redhill station. There are a number of bus stops near the site, which are on route to the two stations. The site is within easy walking distance of Bletchingley village.

Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)	11778
National Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)	4
Surrey Index of Multiple Deprivation	1
Neighbouring LSOAs	12101 (Surrey Decile1) 11615 (Surrey decile 1)

4. The project aims to remove the existing unsafe, unimaginative playground equipment at the site which has reached the end of its lifespan and replace it with new and more inviting playground equipment to provide a new safe and stimulating environment.
5. BPC identified a need for the area to have a safe and stimulating local play area, aimed at young children. According to BPC, there are 547 residents in the Village aged 14 and under, and there are approximately 270 households (out of 1175) at the west end of the village for whom the alternative play facilities are more than a 20-minute walk away at Grange Meadow.
6. The Grange Meadow playground is aimed towards older children, and some parents have reported they are deterred from using the facilities at Grange Meadow as it is near the main road, difficult to access on foot and mainly used by older children and adults.
7. The existing play equipment does not meet current safety regulations and has failed recent council safety inspections due to damage and wear and tear, so it is urgently needing replacement. Some equipment has been cordoned off and the safety surface beneath is worn and uneven.

8. The path up to the playground from Stychens Lane is slippery in wet weather and is difficult for families with pushchairs and small children to access. The signage around the playground is also poor, so some residents and visitors do not know it exists.
9. Consultation on the new playground has been held with the playgroup, the local primary school and at the summer village fair. Furthermore, a survey was conducted asking children what types of playground equipment they would like to see. As a result of this feedback, popular pieces of equipment were explicitly incorporated into the design. There will be a variety of equipment, allowing different age groups to play independently or together.
10. The chosen contractor uses a green range of equipment called Kompan, made from sustainable materials, which is particularly appropriate within the rural setting. New seating will also be provided for parents and carers to use whilst their children play and enjoy the area.
11. BPC will carry out regular inspections and produce an annual report for local residents. Observational and verbal feedback will also be compiled by BPC.
12. BPC is contributing £10k to the total project costs from its own reserves.

## Details

### Description of project benefits

13. The benefits to the project include:
  - Enhancing children's social skills through outdoor and natural play.
  - Increasing physical activity and improving wellbeing.
  - Increased opportunities for volunteering.
  - Improving green open spaces to ensure they are accessible to all.
  - Reducing vehicle movements by improving local facilities.

### Project Timeframes

14. It is estimated the project will take approximately four months to complete. New equipment will be delivered to the site, the existing equipment removed, and the groundwork undertaken. A new safety surface will be laid after the installation of the new playground equipment.

### Management of the Project

15. The project will be managed by BPC in conjunction with the selected contractor, Komplan. The contractor will be responsible for providing guidance and advice regarding any future improvements that may be required.
16. BPC will be responsible for conducting regular maintenance and health and safety checks with the guidance of the contractor as and when needed. The playground is an unsupervised area, and maintenance checks will be performed by a third-party organisation, employed by BPC.

## Financial and Value for Money Implications

17. YFS funding is requested to contribute towards removing and fitting of new playground equipment. The project has applied for £95,000 which equates to 90% of the overall

project costs. The remaining monies needed for the project have been raised or are expected from various sources (see Table 1).

18. Table 1. Financial Summary details the £95,000 of other funding against the total project cost of £105,000. Table 2 details the total project cost breakdown.

**Table 1. Financial summary**

<b>Amount applied for:</b>	£95,000
<b>Total project cost:</b>	£105,000
<b>Percentage of cost against total:</b>	90%
<b>Have other funding sources been secured?</b>	No
<b>Other funding:</b>	BPC Reserves - £10,000
<b>Is there a commercial element to the project?</b>	No

**Table 2. Project Cost breakdown:**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Total Cost (Including VAT)</b>	<b>YFS Contribution</b>
Wooden seating and features for playing field	£9,000	£0
Access road/path	£1,000	£0
Swings	£ 7,700	£ 7,700
Carousel	£3,040	£3,040
Climbing frames/slide	£14,020	£14,020
Playhouse	£2,780	£2,780
Springer buggy	£880	£880
Installation of eco-friendly playground equipment	£4,234	£4,234
Groundworks	£1,974	£1,974
Installation of new Safety Surfacing	£13,720	£13,720
Removal of unsafe equipment and surface	£2,635	£2,635
Prelims (site fencing, skip hire, shipping, inspection etc)	£6,039	£6,039
Site works, repaint fencing, seating, signage etc	£15,000	£15,000
Additional costs, price rises since quotations etc	£11,560	£11,560
VAT	£11,418	£11,418
<b>Total</b>	<b>£105,000</b>	<b>£95,000</b>

19. As with all applications, there is a risk that construction and purchase costs will increase between application and approval. The applicant has secured quotes that support their costing, and will ultimately be funded based on evidenced, actual spend, up to the amount awarded.
20. Finance - This funding requested is for investment into a community area, which will be managed by the local parish council. They are themselves contributing some funding to the project. The YFS contribution of 90% is relatively low risk given the nature of the project and the support from the local community.

## Consultation

### Summary of Support

21. Have Your Say, which featured the Stychens Lane Playground Project, received 43 comments, all of which were positive. The application has also benefited from a significant number of signatures and supporting letters from local residents.
22. Letters of support have been received from the following organisations, groups and individuals:
  - Surrey County Councillor Chris Farr – Godstone Ward
  - The Ark Toddler Group
  - Bletchingley Village Primary School
23. The Divisional Councillor Chris Farr fully supports the application and has commented as follows:

*“The Stychens Lane Playground project I consider important to the community and is something which I very much continue to support.”*

### Risk Management and Implications:

24. The applicant has provided an overview of risks against the project in Table 3 below. Officers consider there to be adequate control measures in place.

**Table 3. Summary Table of Risks and Key Mitigations**

Risk description	RAG	Mitigation action/strategy
Play equipment is being shipped from overseas with potential for delays.		Establishing earlier deadlines with the contractor and anticipating any delays that may arise.

---

### Report Authors:

Alice Bainton, [yourfund@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:yourfund@surreycc.gov.uk)

Nikki Tagg, [yourfund@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:yourfund@surreycc.gov.uk)

### Consulted:

Division County Councillor

Commercial, Corporate Finance – Surrey County Council