

# Agenda Item

**Executive Board**

**3 March 2010**



## **Exemption to standing orders for the purchase of play area equipment using 'play value' assessment method**

### **Summary**

The play area in Allhallows, Honiton, contains a large climbing frame which has reached the end of its safe and economic life. Sections of the unit have been removed in the past due to the safety risks that were present. The climbing frame is over 22 years old and is due for replacement. It is estimated that the new climbing frame will cost £20,000 and the existing capital budget can accommodate this.

An exemption is required to allow the procurement of climbing frame using 'play value' method of assessment as opposed to accepting the lowest quotation submitted.

### **It is recommended that:-**

It is recommended that the new equipment is procured using an approved grading method provided by "Fields in Trust". The cost of equipment does not always relate to the value gained from it and the "Fields in Trust" method of assessment will allow best value to prevail.

#### **a) Reasons for Recommendation**

Selecting equipment based on play value rather than cost maximises value for money.

#### **b) Alternative Options**

Procure new equipment from lowest quotation submitted regardless of play value.

#### **c) Risk Considerations**

Procuring new equipment based on cost alone may detract from the play value of the equipment resulting in a lack of use. This can increase the threat of vandalism through boredom and misuse of the equipment.

#### **d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations**

The existing capital enhancement budget for play equipment (83:731) will be used to carry out this work.

#### **e) Date for Review of Decision**

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## **1 Main Body of the Report**

- 1.1 The play area in Allhallows, Honiton, contains a large climbing frame which has reached the end of its safe and economic life.
- 1.2 It is necessary to replace this climbing frame because the 'play value' of the remaining equipment is low. This play area is centrally located in Honiton and is very well used. It is therefore important to improve play value when modifying any piece of equipment.
- 1.3 Play value is a method of measuring the number of activities and challenges an item of equipment offers. Increased play value will give a wider variety of tasks with a greater capacity for learning.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the climbing frame is selected based on 'play value' to gain the best value for money from the equipment.
- 1.5 Play equipment of this value should only be replaced if the play area is not subject to redevelopment. There are no plans to redevelop the play area in Allhallows, Honiton.
- 1.6 This play area is owned and maintained by East Devon District Council and has the following equipment on site: 1 x see-saw, 1 x slide and 1 x double swing bay. The play value of this site without the climbing frame is poor.

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### **Legal Implications**

It would seem sensible to procure equipment which is best suited for the purpose and offers least ongoing risk to the Council, and given the capital sum involved this would seem to be a suitable case for Exemption from Standing Orders.

### **Financial Implications**

There is currently £36,300 in the budget available as at 9 February 2010 in the 2009/10 Capital Programme for parks equipment replacement.

### **Consultation on Reports to the Executive**

None.

### **Background Papers**

Signed off request for exemption to Standing Orders form

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Nicholas Struthers-Frost – extension 1619  
Technical Assistant

Executive Board  
8 February 2010