

## Report to Cabinet

09 June 2022

By Cabinet Member for Finance and Parking

**DECISION REQUIRED**



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

Not Exempt

### Forum Fountain Upgrade

#### Executive Summary

This report seeks capital funding of £120,000 to upgrade the Forum fountain treatment system to support interactive play.

Due to children playing in the fountain, that is not designed for that purpose, high levels of bacteria build up in periods of hot weather. This risk has been managed to date by shutting down the fountain for it to be cleansed, treated and retested. This process can take up to three weeks.

The installation of a Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group compliant treatment system for an interactive splash pad will minimise bacterial risks experienced with the existing fountain and will mean that the fountain can be left operational in the hot summer months.

#### Recommendations

That the Cabinet is recommended:

- i) To agree that the Forum fountain should be upgraded to a splash pad
- ii) Recommend to Council that a capital budget be created for £120,000 in 2022/23 for this purpose.

#### Reasons for Recommendations

- i) The Forum fountain is located within a public open space without controls on its use as an interactive facility. An upgrade of the treatment system will mean that residents can enjoy the feature safely.
- ii and iii) The constitution states that only full Council can approve changes to the budget

#### Background Papers

Nil

**Wards affected:** Horsham Denne ward

**Contact:** Elizabeth Williams, Property Management Team Leader, ph 07717 807 835

## **Background Information**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The existing fountain was constructed as part of the mixed-use Forum development in 2004. It is categorised as a display fountain with 49 jets that 'dance' at varying heights.
- 1.2 The dosing equipment and tank are located in a room beneath the Piazza and the nearby playground respectively. The equipment is limited to operation in weather five degrees or higher and therefore the fountain operates annually from April to October. The system reuses the tank water.
- 1.3 With warmer summer temperatures a greater number of residents and their young children congregate and play in the fountain. This results in an increase of bacteria. Bromine dosing can combat low levels of bacteria but excessive bromine dosing, would be necessary for higher levels of bacteria, which elevates the risk of chemical burns.
- 1.4 During sustained periods of hot weather the bacteria levels result in the fountain being shut down for a full clean of the pipes and tank. For this process and to obtain clear laboratory results can take 2-3 weeks, during this period the fountain cannot be safely operated.
- 1.5 It is recommended to upgrade the fountain treatment system to an interactive splash pad, so that it can continue to be run during the hottest months and children are able to play in the water safely.

### **2 Relevant Council policy**

- 2.1 An interactive splash pad aligns with the Corporate Plan by providing leisure activities for the wellbeing of our community.

### **3 Details**

- 3.1 The existing system has been reviewed by Ustigate, a company with 56 years' experience in providing splash pads. With advances in technology, making equipment smaller, they have confirmed a PWTAG (Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group) compliant dual tank dosing system can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure arrangement.
- 3.2 In addition to the treatment system the surface drains can be upgraded, shifting from a latticed open drain, which has the potential to trap the toes of small children, to a perimeter drain with a grate over the top.
- 3.3 It is estimated the cost of the upgrade will be £120,000 including consultant fees to develop the scope, sterilisation and recommissioning of existing equipment, installation of new M&E equipment, building of the new tank and treatment facility and the replacement of the paving and surface drains.

- 3.4 Maintenance currently costs £11,000 per annum. The maintenance cost for the new treatment system is estimated at £20,000 per annum.
- 3.5 The work on site is estimated to take 6 weeks with a lead time of another 6 weeks for equipment. It is expected that the works would be undertaken in late autumn this year, depending on the result of the competitive tender and contractor availability.

## **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 To prepare a scope for the upgrade of the system to a PWTAG compliant splash pad followed by a competitive tendering exercise.

## **5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations**

- 5.1 The proposal was presented at the Town Centre PDAG and the Finance and Parking PDAG, where it was supported.

## **6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected**

- 6.1 The other course of action would be to continue with the existing arrangement which includes significant risk to Council if someone became ill. In addition, the fountain operation would continue to be intermittent throughout warmer periods while the system was fully cleaned of any bacteria build up.

## **7 Resource Consequences**

- 7.1 This decision will increase the capital programme in 2022/23 by £120,000. The £120,000 capital expenditure will impact on the Minimum Revenue Provision which the Council must charge to its revenue budget each year to 'fund' this capital expenditure.
- 7.2 Annual revenue costs will also increase. The current maintenance costs are £11,000 per year if additional cleansing is not required, which is unlikely. The maintenance costs will increase to £20,000, an 82% increase of £9,000 per annum.

## **8 Legal Considerations and Implications**

- 8.1 The work will be competitively tendered in accordance with procurement rules.
- 8.2 A warranty for the work will be included.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 An existing risk exists where a member of the public could become ill because of exposure to unsuitable levels of bacteria.

9.2 A construction risk assessment and method statement will be carried out prior to work taking place **10 Procurement implications**

10.1 The main contractor will be procured via lot 3 of the Essex Procurement Hub Playground Gym and Urban Play Framework, in accordance with the Council's Procurement Code. The procurement process will be overseen by a Procurement Officer.

## **11 Environmental Implications**

11.1 The proposed upgrade reuses 50% of the freshwater intake. Uses for the wastewater include watering neighbouring planters or for use as grey water in the nearby toilets. Connection of this is not included in the estimate.

## **12 Other Considerations**

12.1 Although the fountain is located in a public open space, the fountain is within the overall Piazza where CCTV cameras are sited and maintained by Sussex Police as part of the Town Centre CCTV system.