

Mandate Proposal – capital bid for Stoke Park Paddling Pool 8 October 2022

Introduction and background

We are seeking capital funding to replace the Stoke Park paddling pool rubber crumb surface. The surface is now five years old, and the crumb is delaminating and blocking the pool filters. This is causing significant operational difficulties and we are not certain that we can operate the pool for a further season without a breakdown occurring. We need to install a new surface during April 2022 to be able to open the paddling pool for next year.

1. Why should a project be started now?

This is a bid for capital funding and the project will then need to be tendered before it can be implemented on site. We need to start the project now to have any chance of completing all stages in time for the first week of May 2022, when the paddling pool traditionally opens. There remain several risks with this programme, including speed of procurement, legal input, and availability of materials, including marquess needed to keep the pool dry while the work is carried out.

2. What is the good idea or problem to be solved?

The wetpour paddling pool surface is near the end of its life and needs replacing. It is causing problems with the two filters in the pool plant room by blocking the sand filter media with blue rubber pieces from the pool wetpour surface. This leads to frequent backwashing of the filters to dislodge some of the rubber crumb, using lots of water, and reducing the effectiveness of the filtration process for several hours until the sand in the filters settles again. Ideally backwashing should only happen once a day, but we are now backwashing every few hours to keep the water in a hygienic state. The only way to completely remove the rubber crumb from the filters is to change the sand in them to new sand and dispose of all the old sand. This is not possible while the pool is operating, it would have to be closed, and is expensive and wasteful.

3. What is the purpose of the project? What will be delivered? What are the success criteria?

The purpose is to replace the surface on the Stoke Park paddling pool, allowing it to continue to operate and provide a popular free facility to residents. Ideally, we are seeking to find a surface that will not delaminate in the future, but we are also mindful of the public experience of changing the surface to something that is perceived to be 'less child friendly'.

The priorities have been established as financial and environmental. We have chosen to replace the wetpour with a fiberglass surface that will seal the pool. This surface does not delaminate and will stop all problems with rubber crumb polluting the pool filters and can include the existing attractive and child friendly seascape design. It has a 5-year guarantee and an estimated life span of 25 years. Initially, it is more expensive to install than replacing the current wetpour surface with a new wetpour surface, but wetpour has been shown to only last a few years before it starts to shed rubber pieces. By year 6, we would be looking to replace it once again, and rubber is not environmentally friendly to dispose of.

The fiberglass requires no maintenance other than repairs if vandalism occurs (as does wetpour). It also seals the surface in a way wetpour does not, helping to prevent the risk of leaks.

In terms of cost, we have estimated that fiberglass will cost around twice as much to install as wetpour. However, it will reduce the operational time and cost of frequent backwashing (saving water, chemicals and freeing up staff time caused by the rubber crumb in the filters) caused by rubber in the filters, it will not require the staff resource to tender a surface every 5 to 6 years, it will not create a huge volume of rubber

to be taken to landfill every 5 to 6 years and it will be less expensive over the course of 20 years than replacing wetpour 3 or 4 times in that time.

The disadvantages are that it is a hard surface, so from the public's use point of view, it will not feel as comfortable for small children to use. It has a slightly rough texture to prevent slippiness rather than the slightly cushioned feel of wetpour. It should be noted though that fiberglass has been used at another site at Cuckfield Recreation Ground in West Sussex, where they report no problems during the first season. The majority of public paddling pools seem to have bare concrete surfaces. This surface has been dismissed as an option for reasons of customer satisfaction, aesthetics and has no advantages in terms of sealing potential leaks.

4. What priority, corporate objective or strategy is fulfilled by this project?

This project ensures that a popular leisure facility continues to operate and therefore fulfills the 'Community' vision to enhance recreational facilities.

5. What are the strategic options available to GBC to deliver a solution?

- 1 – capital fund a new surface
- 2 – do nothing - continue to run the paddling pool as it is, leading to increasingly poor water quality, high water use, closure during the summer months if the filters become too clogged to cope or the water fails hygiene tests.
- 3 – close the paddling pool and save the revenue cost of running it, estimated to be around £20,000 per annum.

6. Who are the lead Director and Service Manager and portfolio Holder (Cllr) who will lead and direct the project and use the products in live service

Service Director, Ian Doyle; Service Manager, Jonathan Sewell; Lead Cllr, Cllr James Steel.

7. What impact assessments have been undertaken? What are the impacts on other service leaders or projects?

No impacts on other services

8. What general approach will be taken to deliver?

A design and build specification will need to be written and tender will need to be prepared. I have already asked for the tender documents to start to be drafted. The tender will need to be advertised as soon as the budget is confirmed, or sooner preferably. If we must wait for the budget to be confirmed before advertising the tender, this will only leave us with two to three months to tender, agree and sign a contract with the awarded contractor, mobilise the contractor and carry out the work (February to April).

The project will need to be project managed and communications with residents managed, especially in the event of any delay resulting in a delay to the pool opening date.

9. When and why must the project start?

The works must take place during April 2022 or the pool opening will be delayed into the summer with resulting public criticism at the loss of access to a very popular facility.

10. What stakeholders will need to be involved?
Parks staff including the Ranger Team, ward/lead councilors, PR and Comms, and appointed contractor.
11. What resources (internal and external) are needed to consider this mandate and to develop the business case?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital bid process (Finance) • Draft spec and evaluation documents and review and agree tender documents (Parks) • Draft the tender documents, advertise and process the tender (Procurement) • Production of a contract for the chosen contractor (Legal Services) • Selection of a contractor and project management of the works (Parks) • Communications with stakeholders (Comms Team and Parks)
12. What Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) are the likely Whole Life Costs (WLC) of the project and live service? What are the potential resource costs to progress to the next stage/gate?
The cost is estimated to be £170,000 for the fiberglass surface, based on a quotation from one supplier. Note: suppliers are limited as this is a relatively new way of surfacing pools. There are no other capital costs. There are no additional maintenance costs, nor are there any savings on maintenance. There is no budget in place for the surface and maintenance is reactive, according to issues like vandalism.
13. What are the strategic Issues, Assumptions, Constraints, Dependencies, Opportunities, Risks
Issues – we are seeking funding from the Council’s capital program for 2022/23
Assumptions – There is an assumption that... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stoke Park paddling pool is considered an important leisure facility that needs to be maintained rather than closed • We wish to minimise the revenue costs and the environmental issues of running the pool where we can.
Dependencies – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paddling pool attracts a large footfall into Stoke Park Gardens. If the pool is not maintained or closed, there will be a reduction in visitors to other facilities such as the mini golf and the café and possibly further afield into the town centre.
Constraints – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a time constraint. The funding and procurement must complete in time for the contractor to mobilise and complete the work in time for a May opening, when residents will expect to have access to the operating pool. • There is a weather constraint as the surfacing is likely to require the temperature to be at a certain level, not too cold or hot, and dry conditions to progress on site. We have included the cost of erecting marquees to deal with the issue of keeping the pool dry while the fiberglass is installed.
Opportunities – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To choose a surface that will not lead to further filter problems or further material wastage or require as frequent replacement as the current surface.
Risks –

- In choosing an option that prevents further rubber in the filters, users of the pool will be disappointed and unhappy, seeing the replacement surface as harder and less 'safe' than the current wetpour surface.
- the work will not be completed in time for an early May opening causing considerable public criticism of the Council. The paddling pool is very popular and there is little understanding of the time and resource needed to operate it and open it each season. **This risk could be minimised if the capital funding is agreed from the contingency budget now, so the tender can proceed sooner.**

14. Reviewer List:

Involved or sighted so far and to be updated on changes:

- Procurement is already instructed to prepare tender documents

Next to be consulted

- CMT
- Councillors – Lead and ward Cllrs
- Head of Culture, Heritage and Leisure – Jonathan Sewell
- Finance – Victoria Worsfold
- Legal – Diane Owens
- Procurement – Faye Gould
- Service Delivery Director - Ian Doyle
- Head of Operational and Technical Services – Chris Wheeler

15. CMT Direction

Next steps: Dependent on capital funding