

REPORT PC26.113 Condition of Cableway Structures – OSCC and Saunders Avenue Play Parks

Report Author: Operations Officer

Date: 15/09/2026

Purpose

To update Members on the condition of the Cableway structures at Old Sarum Community Centre (OSCC) and Saunders Avenue Play Parks, following further investigation recommended as part of the 2025 annual play equipment inspections, and to seek a decision on how the Council wishes to proceed.

Background

Following the annual play equipment inspections carried out in late 2025, it was recommended that resistograph testing be undertaken on the wooden support structures of the zip wires at OSCC and Saunders Avenue.

The testing was subsequently carried out at both sites.

At each site, one of the eight wooden support legs showed an indication of a small amount of decay at ground level. The decay is approximately 25mm deep in each of the two posts.

The tester recommended that the affected poles be replaced. No specific timescale for replacement was given.

The testing did not indicate that either structure was in any way in imminent danger of collapse.

Further Investigation and Supplier Information

Following the test results, Officers contacted the original suppliers of the equipment.

OSCC – Jupiter Play

Jupiter Play confirmed that the equipment is outside its warranty period and that the replacement pole is not covered by warranty. However, Jupiter Play has supplied a replacement post, which has now been delivered to the Parish Council at zero cost.

Saunders Avenue – Norna

The equipment at Saunders Avenue is also outside its warranty period. Norna advised that if the affected pole was removed and found to have significant decay, they would meet the cost of a replacement pole only. The Parish would have to pay for a new Pole as well as installation up front and would receive reimbursement if decay is found.

Officers have also excavated around the affected pole at Saunders Avenue. The pole remains solid at ground level, although the resistograph testing has identified 25mm of decay within the outer section of the timber.

Repair / Replacement Options

Officers have obtained a quotation from Alvian Parks Ltd for approximately £8,980 + VAT to carry out works to the two affected poles.

This would involve:

- Replacement of the affected pole at OSCC with a like-for-like hardwood pole supplied by Jupiter Play.
- Replace the affected pole at Saunders Avenue using a new hardwood pole sourced by Alvian.

Jupiter Play has been consulted regarding the use of a galvanised steel leg on its equipment and has advised that they do not recommend this approach.

Given that there are 16 wooden support legs in total across the two zip wires, replacing the two currently affected poles would resolve the immediate identified defects, but there remains the possibility that other timber poles could develop decay in the future.

Full Replacement Option

Officers have obtained a quotation to completely replace the existing cableway structure at OSCC.

This would involve removing the existing structures and installing a new Kompan metal frame cableway of the same length, at a cost of approximately £8,998.77 plus VAT.

A similar cost is expected for the Saunders Avenue site, as it is the same length, although a quotation has not yet been obtained.

Options for Members

Members are asked to consider the following options:

Option 1 – Replace the two affected poles

Proceed with the quotation from Alvian Parks Ltd at approximately £8,980 replacing the two affected pole at OSCC and Saunders Avenue. This would leave fourteen additional poles to monitor for potential future decay issues.

Option 2 – Replace both cableways

Replace the complete cableways at OSCC and Saunders Avenue with new Kompan metal frame units at a total cost of approximately £20,000 (£8,998.77 per cableway).

The replacement could be funded from the Asset Replacement Fund.

In the interim, both cableways would remain open, with regular physical monitoring and hammer testing carried out by the Operations Officer, who has previous experience of this type of inspection. Though carries no current qualification for such.

Resistograph testing was completed in January 2026. Although replacement of the affected support posts was advised, no specific timescale for replacement was given, and there was no recommendation that either cableway should be taken out of service.

Option 3 – Remove the cableways from service, and act once the Council Play Strategy is in place.

Remove both cableways from service until a decision is made on their replacement, or until the proposed Play Area Strategy work has been completed and which may recommend alternative play equipment at these locations.

Taking the cableways out of service would remove any concerns or risks associated with the existing timber structures. However, it would have a significant impact on the play value of both parks and would remove a popular piece of play equipment from the local community.

This could also result in considerable resident interest and input regarding the loss of the equipment. There would also be no set timescale for replacement, meaning the cableways could remain out of service for an indefinite period.

Financial Implications

The estimated costs currently available to the Council are:

Replacement/repair of two affected poles: approximately £8,000

Complete replacement of both cableways: approximately £20,000 from asset replacement.

The Council will need to consider the costs of the options against the condition and expected future life of the existing structures.

Officer Recommendation

The Officer recommends that Council resolve in principle to replace both cableways with metal-frame Kompan or other supplier systems, subject to sufficient funds being available within the Asset Replacement Fund. The Finance Officer has suggested that the total replacement cost for both sites should not exceed £25,000 + VAT. This is subject to full procurement rules being followed, in particular in regard to quotes sought / obtained.

This would remove the ongoing risk associated with physical decay and the potential for further financial expenditure on the existing wooden structures. Regular monitoring would continue in the interim until the replacement works are carried out.

While this may not align with the impending Play Area Strategy Project, it is felt that cableways are an extremely popular element of both parks and are worth retaining.

If this option is chosen by Council, the Operations Team will need to obtain two further quotations in order to meet the requirements of the Financial Regulations.

The Clerk would like members to note that there is a risk, though minimal, of structural failure if the cableways are kept in full service until restored or replaced.