

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 12th July 2016

Greenspace Development play area assessment and capital improvement programme 2016 to 2021

Accountable member	Councillor Chris Coleman, Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment
Accountable officer	Tracey Crews
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	The purpose of this report is to agree a five year enhancement and improvement programme with capital expenditure for play areas of Cheltenham. Capital sums have been previously approved and allocated for this use at budget setting.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cabinet approve the programme ‘Greenspace Play Assessment and Capital Improvement Programme 2016 – 2021’ attached as Appendix 3, and2. Delegate any changes arising under £10,000 to the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment in consultation with Director of Planning

Financial implications	<p>Council approved the allocation of annual budgets within the Capital Programme in February 2016. This report identifies the intended use of the previously allocated funds.</p> <p>Any revenue costs arising from the investment identified in the programme will be managed within existing resources.</p> <p>Contact officer: Nina Philippidis, nina.philippidis@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264121</p>
Legal implications	<p>The Council has a broad power under section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to provide “such recreational facilities as it thinks fit”.</p> <p>Where the Council provides play areas it must ensure that they are safe for the anticipated users in order to comply with its various obligations as landowner. Regular assessments need to be carried out, and appropriate maintenance undertaken.</p> <p>Contact officer: Rose Gemmell, rose.gemmel@tewkesbury.gov.uk, 01684 272014</p>

HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>No change to personnel or roles</p> <p>Contact officer: , @cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242</p>
Key risks	<p>The Greenspace play assessment and capital improvement programme 2016 – 2021 will reduce the risk to the council of insurance claims due to equipment not meeting current BS/EN standards as it ages or wears. This is identified in the Greenspace Development Risk Register.</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>The proposed programme supports the spirit of the following in the Corporate Strategy 2016/17</p> <p>Under the section Strategic Direction, Our environmental outcome ‘Challenges looking forward’, there is the statement ‘Continuing our investment programme in our parks and gardens’</p> <p>Implementation of this plan will support Healthy Lifestyle objectives</p>
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>No implications arising</p>
Property/Asset Implications	<p>No property and asset management issues arise from this report</p> <p>Contact officer: David Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>

Background

1.1 The Greenspace Development Team is responsible for the design; build and management of the councils play areas. Providing safe and innovative play spaces to encourage children and young people to socialise and exercise in the open air is a key element of this responsibility and in part is achieved by a programme of enhancement and improvement schemes. Historically, council officers have been responsible for allocating funds. In order to formalise this in the context of the council's financial regulations, a programme has been prepared which sets out a rolling programme of works to which funds will be allocated. Funding is derived from three sources, these are;

- Council capital allocated at budget setting (CAP102 Play areas enhancement)
- Planning derived funds such as Section106 (CAP101 Play areas)
- External funding; these funds are mainly raised by 'Friends of' groups by donations, local fund raising events and grant applications

1.2 Play area enhancements are guided by suggestions and requests from residents, children and ward members; the result of independent inspections and guidance and the results of the councils play inspectors reports and local knowledge. The methodology used to prepare the rolling programme of capital works is provided at Appendix 2.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to review Appendix 3 - Greenspace Play Assessment and Capital Improvement Programme and agree this rolling five year programme for implementation. Minor changes to the programme to be agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment. Any proposed changes arising requiring Cabinet or Council approval in the context of the financial regulations to be reported as appropriate.

2. Reasons for recommendations

2.1 To allow implementation of proposed scheme of works.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 None.

4. Consultation and feedback

4.1 Where appropriate, site specific consultation takes place via local groups, by signs and plans posted in the relevant play areas to stimulate debate and by direct contact with interested residents and members. Speaking to children is also a key element in any scheme and may be formal such as approaching schools and local playgroups or less formal such as conversations in a play area.

The proposed Greenspace Play Assessment and Capital Improvement Programme was presented to the councils Asset Management Working Group on 17th June 2016 and Members were invited to feedback in due course.

5. Performance management –monitoring and review

5.1 Monitoring is by the physical evidence of the enhancements in the play areas and inspected and risk assessed by an independent play inspection organisation. Monitoring of expenditure is via the appropriate budgets and balances in the councils accounting system. Planning derived funds and expenditure details are additionally monitored on a separate spreadsheet maintained by the planning team.

The plan will be subject to an annual review in consultation with the Cabinet Member Clean and Green Environment. This will be based on the findings of the annual independent inspection and risk assessment, council inspectors and play officers recommendations together with proposals for new projects resulting from community interests and requests.

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Risk Assessment2. Methodology employed in assessment3. Greenspace play assessment and capital improvement programme 2016 - 2021

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If S106 derived funds are not utilised within the time limit, they may be returned to the relevant developer	Adam Reynolds	17/6/2016	3	1	3	Reduce	Approve proposed play area schemes and implement within time scale			
	If S106 returned to developer, there is a risk to the good reputation of the council	Adam Reynolds	17/6/2016	2	1	2	Reduce	Approve proposed play area schemes and implement within time scale			
	If play equipment ages or deteriorates, it may fail to comply with the current European and British Standards exposing the council to potential insurance claims in the event of injury to play area users	Adam Reynolds	17/6/2016	3	2	6	Reduce	Approve proposed play area scheme that is partly based on an independent risk assessment identifying any risks arising from non-compliance with relevant standards			
	If there is no programme of systematic improvements and enhancements to play areas, the play areas may become out of date and unattractive to users	Adam Reynolds	17/6/2016	2	2	4	Reduce	Approve proposed play area schemes to allow new and different equipment to be installed in play areas			
<p>Explanatory notes</p> <p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											

Greenspace Development play area assessment and capital improvement programme 2016 – 2021

Methodology

Proposed play area capital schemes and their associated expenditure is shown in the spreadsheet (Appendix 3 of this report) for a five year period covering 2016/17 to 2020/21 financial years. Section 106 and planning derived funds are shown for a single year, 2016/17, as availability of sums from future consents is unknown.

This work has been based on various sources. The methodology employed has been derived from four main assessments or approaches, these are;

1. A location by location ranking based on play value, this was in turn derived from four sources'
 - A council assessment based on the 'Playable space quality assessment tool' issued by Play England
 - A council assessment based on the template 'Play value assessment for playgrounds' issued by Fields in Trust.
 - A Playable space assessment carried out by an independent third party, The Play Inspection Company in October 2015
 - An equalities assessment also carried out by The Play Inspection Company in 2015

Sites have been ranked according to the scores for each of the above assessments and the rankings totalled to produce an aggregate score. This in turn has been ranked with the poorest quality resulting in a low numerical ranking and the higher scoring sites resulting in a higher rank. While not a precise measure, this aggregate ranking gives a feel for the relative play value of each site. Generally, larger sites tend to score higher due to the greater variety of equipment and the wider age range catered for. None of the scores or rankings have been weighted.

2. The Play Inspection Companies first impression of the site and play assessment. This has been précised and the full text is available in another report commissioned by this department. This covers ‘first impressions about the site including location, hazards, overall look and feel, for example: does it look and feel friendly?’
3. The Play Inspection Companies risk assessment carried out as part of an annual independent inspection commissioned by this department. This risk assessment is based on EN/BS1176 and ENBS1177 as well as the general condition of the play area and equipment. Usefully for this exercise, this includes an assessment of the expected lifespan for each piece of equipment. Equipment listed as having a lifespan of less than five years has been recorded in this spreadsheet.
4. Local and site specific knowledge based on the councils play inspectors reports, observations and recommendations together with other input from other members of this department who have been trained in play inspection and European and British play standards.

Together, these four attributes have been used to inform the proposed five year programme for play area improvement.