# <u>CABINET</u>

10 JULY 2006

#### REVIEW OF THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND FUNDING SYSTEM

#### REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Contact Officers: Stuart Dunbar-Dempsey Tel No: 01962 848425 & Margaret Kirby Tel No: 01962 848170

## RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB 1049 - Review of the Open Space Strategy and Funding System - 23 March 2005

EN14 – Report of Open Space Fund Informal Scrutiny Group - 25 January 2006 (Cabinet 1 March 2006).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks approval for the updated 2006-2007 open space strategy which reviews the operation of the open space funding system in the light of the recommendations of the Open Space Funding Informal Scrutiny Group (Report EN14 refers). It provides information on schemes implemented in the last year using developers' contributions, and amounts existing in the Open Space Fund for the various parishes and Winchester. It also seeks the approval of the revised contribution levels for 2006/2007 and draws attention to the proposed major new sports facility in Winchester to which is it is proposed to apply 'sport' category contributions.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1 That the Winchester District Open Space Strategy 2006-2007 (Appendix 4 to this report) be adopted as the relevant background paper to the Winchester District Local Plan, the Winchester District Local Plan Review, and the Open Space Funding System, for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 to 31 March 2007, and thereafter subject to annual review.
- 2 That the Open Space Funding System continues to operate throughout the District, using the procedures approved by the City Council on 16 November 1994, and subsequently amended on 26 March 1998.

- 3 That the updated contribution scales set out in paragraph 5.4 of this Report be approved for use with the System for applications determined between 1 July 2006 and 31 March 2007.
- 4 That, subject to a successful planning application and compliance with the requirements for use of funds, up to £1,000,000 of contributions received into the Open Space Fund for Winchester be utilised to assist with the development of a new major community sports facility at Bar End (report CAB 1247 elsewhere on this agenda refers).
- 5 That an additional part-time Open Space Officer be appointed to assist with the increasing workload, funded from an increase in the administration charge levied on all open space contributions.

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#### DETAIL:

- 1 Introduction
- 1.1 The Open Space Funding System has now been operating for nearly 15 years in the southern part of the District, and for more than 11 years throughout the rest of the District.
- 1.2 The District Open Space Strategy is reviewed annually to ensure that the details of the provision of children's play areas and sports grounds remain accurate, and that proposals for improving provision remain relevant and up to date. This is essential to maintain the integrity of the scheme.
- 1.3 The Strategy identifies local deficiencies in play and sports provision wherever they arise in the District and the improvements required to meet the Local Plan standard. It therefore complements Proposal RT3 in the Winchester District Local Plan, which forms the basis of the operation of the Funding System.
- 1.4 The first part of this report provides an update on the planning policy background, and the changes proposed to the 2006/2007 Open Space Strategy. This is followed by a review of the operation of the System and the current contribution levels. Information is then given on the amounts currently held in the Open Space Fund, and schemes implemented during the last year
- 1.5 The Open Space Funding System was reviewed by the Open Space Fund Informal Scrutiny Group earlier this year. At its meeting of 1 March 2006, Cabinet resolved to consider an updated version of Report EN14 when the Open Space Strategy was reviewed. A copy of the updated version of report EN14 is attached as Appendix 3.

#### 2 Planning Policy Update

- 2.1 In January 2006, the Council published Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan Review to reflect the Inquiry Inspectors' recommendations in their Report which was itself published in September 2005. Policy RT3, through which the open space funding system operates, was subject to a small number of objections concerning matters of detail, and the Inspectors recommended only one minor wording change. They have, however, endorsed the principles of the system.
- 2.2 While the Local Plan Review has been making its long journey through due process, the system has continued to operate through Proposal RT3 in the adopted Local Plan. The policy has, however, been carried forward from the adopted Local Plan without any significant change, and, now that the Inspectors' Report has been

- 2.3 received, it is clear that the System's main principles can be continued into the Local Plan Review without amendment.
- 2.4 Through Policy RT4, the Local Plan Review reserves a number of areas of land for future recreational use adjacent to the larger settlements, designed to meet identified land shortfalls. The Inspectors have recommended two changes to these areas the deletion of part of the area to the north of Harestock Road, Winchester, and the extension of the area west of Arlebury Park, New Alresford. The Council proposes to modify the Plan to take account of these recommendations. The Strategy's map of New Alresford already indicates the possibility of a larger area west of Arlebury Park as being suitable for future recreational use and therefore no modification was necessary to reflect the Inspectors' recommended changes to the Local Plan inset map for New Alresford. The map for Littleton and Harestock has, however, been amended to reflect the proposed deletion of part of the area proposed for future recreational use to the north of Harestock Road.
- 2.5 The revised PPG 17 (July 2002) provides the latest relevant Government advice on Open Space, Sport and Recreation. PPG17 endorses the principle of seeking contributions from development to meeting recreational need. As the basis for this it requires each authority to undertake a comprehensive assessment of open space and recreation facilities. Although the Council's Open Space Strategy contains a considerable amount of the information required, the PPG 17 assessment will cover a wider range of facilities and set local standards for them. Given the progress on the Local Plan Review it was not possible to undertake the wider assessment and adopt local standards in time for incorporation into the Local Plan Review itself.
- 2.6 However, an allocation has been made from Planning Delivery Grant in 2006/07 towards the cost of the PPG17 study which, in the interests of efficiency, is being conducted jointly with East Hampshire District Council. Consultants have been appointed and a programme set out and agreed with them. The assessment has to be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of PPG 17 and the Companion Guide, and it will need to cover a much wider range of types of open space than the current strategy and also indoor sport and recreation provision. The work should be complete by the end of 2007. Once the work is complete, and new local standards have been set for a wider range of facilities than those currently contained in the Local Plan's standard, there may be a need for revisions to the funding system and the Strategy, but this cannot be confirmed until the wider implications of any revisions can be considered. In the meantime, the District will continue to rely on the annual assessment of play areas and sports grounds contained in the Open Space Strategy.
- 2.7 Members will also be aware that the system operates using planning obligations, and that, since the last strategy update, the Government has published Circular 05/05, which replaces the earlier Circular 1/97 on the subject of planning obligations. This covers short-term improvements to negotiated agreements, in advance of more major reforms, with the proposed introduction of a Planning Gain Supplement, which has recently been the subject of a Government consultation. Circular 05/05 is very similar to Circular 1/97 in many respects, retaining the same "tests of reasonableness" for seeking financial contributions. However, it is worth noting that it does give greater support than Circular 1/97 to a number of the Open Space System's features, including standardised legal agreements and formulae, and pooled contributions. No amendments will therefore be required to the System's operating procedures as a result of the revised Circular.
- 2.8 On the horizon is the proposed Planning Gain Supplement (PGS), recommended to Government in the Barker Report. It is a proposal to capture a portion of the increase in land value created by the grant of planning permission, to help finance

the infrastructure needed for additional housing. It would be payable to the Government as permissions are granted, with a proportion (not yet specified) returned to local authorities to be used locally for infrastructure improvements. It is understood that the intention is to introduce the charge by 2008, to cover all off-site infrastructure requirements, with negotiated Section 106 agreements scaled back to include only on-site matters.

- 2.9 If introduced, PGS will cover off-site infrastructure including matters such as highway, transport, education and health facilities, as well as recreation and open space facilities. The Council's Open Space Funding System could not then continue to exist, but the need for recreation and open space improvements would have to compete with other off-site infrastructure needs to obtain funding. With the proposal for the PGS being considered, it is therefore even more important that the PPG 17 assessment is completed as soon as possible, so that there is the necessary knowledge about the need for improvements to facilities, so that appropriate funding can be secured.
- 3 Proposed Changes to the Strategy
- 3.1 The Open Space Strategy provides the detailed justification for seeking financial contributions for children's play and sports facilities for the next financial year.
- 3.2 Contributions may only be sought where facilities are deficient, although a deficiency may be in land area, standard, quality or distribution. The Strategy sets out the nature of deficiencies in each parish and in Winchester town (the unparished wards), and then makes proposals for improvements to rectify any deficiencies identified.
- 3.3 A draft copy of the 2006 2007 Strategy is circulated to Members with this report. It will be noted that at clauses 2.5 2.7 new paragraphs have been drafted to both clarify the role of the Open Space Project Officer and set out how valid projects that require funding during the year, but which have not been included in the strategy, can be assessed and funded as if they had been.
- 3.4 The children's play and sports facilities within each parish and Winchester town have each been reassessed against the estimated current population (based on Hampshire County Council's forecasts).
- 3.5 This information has been supplemented by a consultation with all the Parish Councils, requesting their views on:
  - any improvements that need to be made to their local facilities; and
  - the details of any schemes they propose to implement in the near future, using funds held for their Parish.

#### 4 The Operation of the System

#### 5 <u>Level of Contributions</u>

- 5.1 It had been agreed by the then Planning (Policy) Committee that a full review of the contribution levels sought, and the costs incorporated, would be undertaken every five years. This last full review took place in 2001, and therefore the next full review should be undertaken this year. However, this task cannot be accommodated this year due to a lack of resources and will have to be postponed until next year. In the intervening years, the retail price index figure for December of the previous year is applied to the contribution scales to apply for the subsequent financial year.
- 5.2 There are separate contribution scales for children's play and sports provision, with a Scale A (High) and Scale B (Low) applying to each type of facility. The scale of contributions is determined by whether there is a need for additional land for a facility (which justifies the higher scale A), or the need for improvements to facilities on existing recreational land (justifying the lower scale B). Where no additional land or improvement can be justified, no contribution will be sought in the coming year.
- 5.3 Currently 5% of all open space contributions is reserved to cover project management costs and this has been sufficient to fund the work of the Open Space Project Officer in administering the system. However, with the increased work load and in an effort to increase resources it has been suggested that this be increased to 7.50% to allow the appointment of another Open Space Officer. Half of this post would be funded by this 2.50% increase in the administration fee and the other half would be funded directly from the Open Space Fund for Winchester.
- 5.4 The intention would be that whilst the new officer would be based in Planning, assisting the current Open Space Project Officer with the administration of the Open Space Funding System throughout the District, 50% of the new officer's time would be spent assisting the Communities Directorate with the implementation of play and sport facilities in Winchester using open space contributions. If this is agreed by Cabinet a detailed report will be prepared for Personnel Committee.
- 5.5 The contribution scales proposed for 2006/2007 have been increased by 2.2 % in accordance with the increase in the Retail Price Index. The new contribution scales proposed are therefore:

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	518	470
2 Bed	866	779
3 Bed	1039	931
4+ Bed	1385	1246

For Children's play

For Sports Grounds

Dwelling Size	A (High)	B (Low)
	£	£
1 Bed	518	470
2 Bed	866	779
3 Bed	1039	931
4+ Bed	1385	1246

5.6 These contribution levels should be sought for all permissions for new dwellings determined between 10 July 2006 and 31 March 2007, in accordance with the appropriate scale recommended for each parish or in Winchester town. It will then be subject to further review.

#### 6 <u>The Open Space Fund</u>

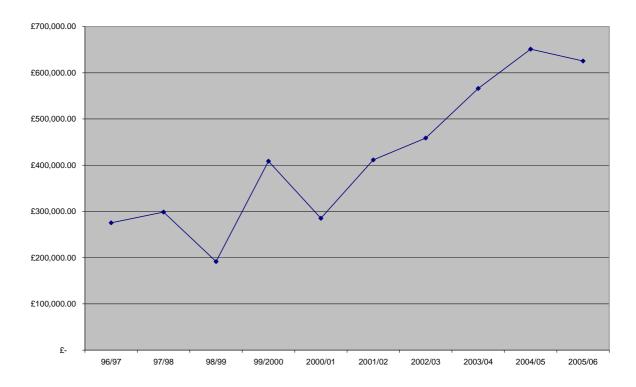
6.1 There has been a total of £625,374 contributed to the Open Space Fund over the past 12 months, between 1 March 2005 and 28 February 2006. This is a 4% reduction compared with last year but is still a very large amount reflecting the continued high level of house building in the District.

Financial Year	Open Space Fund Receipts (excluding admin. and receipts subject to Planning Appeals)	
1996/7	£ 275,636.10	
1997/8	£ 298,655.38	
1998/9	£ 191,647.81	
1999/2000	£ 408,807.20	
2000/1	£ 285,232.30	
2001/2 (to 28 Feb 2002)	£ 411,451.40	
2002/3	£ 458,850.00	
2003/4	£ 566,156.00	
2004/5	£ 651,221.78	
2005/06	£ 625,374.00	

# Figure 1a: Open Space Fund Receipts 1996-2006: Table

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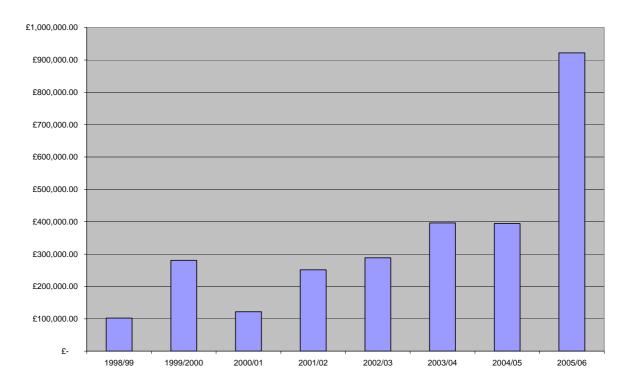




- 6.2 Details of the amounts held for each parish and for Winchester Town, up to 28th February 2006, are set out in Appendix 1. They include the amounts of interest that have accrued.
- 6.3 A list of the amounts released to the various Parish Councils and Winchester City Council's Communities Directorate to implement schemes in the last year is attached at Appendix 2. Those schemes that were funded but were not included in the Open Space Strategy as proposed improvements are marked with an asterisk.
- 6.4 A total of £921,829.00 has been released from the Open Space Fund between 1 March 2005 and 28 February 2006. This is the largest amount ever released in a single year and for the first time exceeds the amount of funds contributed for that year.

Year	Amount Released
1998/99	102,390.62
1999/00	280,875.10
2000/01	121,758.86
2001/02	251,318.26
2002/03	288,435.13
2003/04	396,304.34
2004/05	394,516.90
2005/06	921,829.00
TOTAL	£2,757,428.20





## Figure 2c: Proportion of receipts that have been spent 1998-2006: Table

Year	% of funds received that are	
	spent each year	
1998/99	53	
1999/00	69	
2000/01	43	
2001/02	61	
2002/03	63	
2003/04	70	
2004/05	60	
2005/06	147	

6.5 The unusually high level of spending this year is a combination of large sums being released for the Denmead pavilion project, the improvements in Eversley Park, Kings Worthy and the continuing high level of spending on Winchester's older play areas.

#### 7 Funds reserved for sports provision in Winchester

7.1 The provision of sports grounds, including new pitches and an athletics facility at the former Bushfield Camp has long been the subject of a proposal in the Local Plan (W.2 in the Local Plan Review), as it would help to meet the substantial recreational land shortfall that exists in Winchester. £300,000 has been set aside within the Winchester part of the Open Space Fund, specifically to assist with the implementation of sports facilities at Bushfield. Although the Bushfield area was the preferred location for a new recreational facility, discussions with the landowners have led officers to conclude that the land is unlikely to be available in the near future and that this position is unlikely to change.

- 7.2 In view of this it is recommended that the funds reserved for use at Bushfield are now utilised to make similar sports provision elsewhere in Winchester. Improvements to the existing recreation areas at Bar End and River Park have been proposed, and the Local Plan reserves two other areas north of Stockbridge Road / west of Littleton Road and north and west of Courtenay Road that could provide additional recreational land.
- 7.3 Of these two additional areas, the land north and west of Courtenay Road is unlikely to be available in the immediate future, but the area north of Stockbridge Road and west of Littleton Road is worthy of further investigation, particularly as it is already owned by the Council. This land has a varied physical landform, and therefore may not be suitable for all sports uses without substantial re-modelling. It could however offer opportunities for some sports and teenage facilities within an attractive area of countryside and would be a suitable use for land in the Local Gap between Winchester and Littleton. It is therefore recommended that it should be the subject of a feasibility study this year, which, subject to the outcome, would identify provision here as the main focus for additional provision within the Assessment of Sports Grounds in the Winchester schedule of the Strategy once the Bar End project described below is implemented. However, the "Improvements Proposed" to sports grounds should still reflect the three RT4 reservations in the Local Plan Review, and refer to all three areas.
- 7.4 After detailed discussions with the University of Winchester it now appears possible that a substantial project would be possible by combining resources with the University at the Bar End recreation area. This would involve the construction of an athletics track and an all weather training pitch. The athletics track will be a longoverdue 'state-of- the-art' full size facility for the town. The University of Winchester owns most of the land involved, with smaller parcels owned by Winchester City Council and Hampshire County Council. The new facilities would have full community use and will thus increase the extent of recreational facilities and land available for public use. A release of up to £1,000,000 from the open space fund for Winchester (using the £300,000 currently retained for Bushfield) is likely to be necessary as partnership funding. The funds will be required in 2007 at which time there is unlikely to be sufficient in the Winchester sport 'pot' alone to cover this amount. If Cabinet agrees to the proposal contained in a report elsewhere on this agenda it is proposed to provide advance funding for the project from the General Fund which will then be repaid from the Open Space Fund receipts for sport in Winchester as they arise. This process is expected to take three to four years. A detailed report on the athletics track project is to be found elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda (CAB 1247 refers). The scheme has yet to gain planning permission and any contribution from the Open Space Fund would comply with the requirements for the release of funds.
- 8 <u>Conclusion</u>
- 8.1 The proposed revisions to the Open Space Strategy reflect current deficiencies identified in the District, and the improvements proposed will therefore provide the basis for assessing schemes implemented through the Funding System in the next financial year.
- 8.2 The System has continued to operate without any significant problems for planning applications or appeal procedures.

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- 8.3 The contributions sought from developers are proposed to increase in accordance with the increase in RPI for December 2005. These would apply to planning decisions taken between 10 July 2006 and 31 March 2007.
- 8.4 The Open Space Officer will continue to work with parish councils and the Communities directorate to make full use of the amounts held in the fund over the coming year.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

#### CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

The recommendations of the report are consistent with the aims and the intention to take action to improve the recreational facilities in Winchester, and to use Local Plan policies to protect the quality of life in rural areas.

#### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

The uplift in the contributions scale for which the report seeks approval will generate a proportional increase in the contributions received.

#### APPENDICES:

- 1. Amounts held for each Parish and Winchester City at 28 February 2006.
- 2. Amounts released to Parish Councils for Schemes March 2005-February 2006
- 3. Report of the Environment Scrutiny Panel into the Open Space Fund, January 2006, Report EN14.
- 4. Open Space Strategy 2006/07 (because of its size, the Strategy is included for Members only. Copies will also be issued to the main District libraries).

# Appendix One:

Total Amount Held in the Open Space Fund, 28th February 2006

Badger Farm	1,610.00
Bighton	9,073.37
Bishops Sutton	15,984.96
Bishops Waltham	271,800.38
Boarhunt	11,931.38
Bramdean	2,487.04
Cheriton	133.56
Chilcomb	2,818.89
Compton&Shawford	24,032.63
Corhampton & Meonstoke	5,235.75
Colden Common	14,982.42
Curdridge	29,163.02
Crawley	5,113.33
Denmead	25,135.30
Droxford	25,135.30
Durley	23,117.76
Hambledon	
Hambledon Headbourne Worthy	9,009.88 9,812.16
Hursley	<u>9,812.16</u> 189.27
Itchenske&Ovington	109.27
Itchen Valley	19,032.40
	125,108.86
Kingsworthy Littleton	9,996.04
Micheldever	<u>9,998.04</u> 27,393.13
New Alresford	91,153.78
Old Alresford	<u>91,153.78</u> 104.97
Olivers Battery	
Otterbourne	13,482.01
	15,014.42
Owlesbury Shedfield	5,900.80
Soberton	31,275.79
Southwick	28,746.72
South Wonston	4,433.21 20,181.90
Sparsholt	1,802.06 23.202.75
Swanmore Twyford	25,202.75 26,649.67
Upham	
Warnford	22,987.84
West Meon	3,363.75
Wickham	2,285.66 242,326.80
Worston	•
	42,990.66
Winchester	776,227.67
TOTAL	£2,036,420.25

# Appendix Two:

# Funds Released for Schemes: March 2005 – February 2006

Parish	Scheme Details	Date	Amount Released
Bishops Waltham	Health and Safety tree work at Priory	March 05	320.00
	Park play area.		
	Contribution to Swanmore College open	July 05	12,000.00
	space project.		
	Site furniture, landscaping & fencing at	July 05	8490.00
	Hermitage Heights Recreation Ground	0 / 1 07	<b>-</b> 04 <b>-</b> 04
	Landscaping and clearance, Oak Road Recreation Ground	October 05	5,217.24
			774.00
	Access improvements to Hoe Road Recreation Ground	January 06	771.00
Cheriton	Play area improvements – Recreation Ground.	July 05	3,154.73
Colden Common	Youth Shelter, The Green	December 05	1,800.00
Compton	Improved access and parking Memorial	May 05	6,000.00
	Playing Fields		-,
_	Cricket Nets, Memorial Playing Fields	August 05	8,938.50
Corhampton	Improved changing facilities, Pound	May 05	1,000.00
	Lane Recreation Ground	,	
	Skate board facility, Pound Lane	July 05	9,000.00
	Recreation Ground	-	
Curdridge	Contribution to Swanmore College open	June 05	250.00
	space project		
	Play equipment, Reading Room play	July 05	1,076.00
<u> </u>		0 / 1 07	0.004.00
Denmead	Play equipment, Mill Close (2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst)	October 05	6,201.66
	New sports pavilion	March/ April 05	200,000.00
Droxford	Play equipment	June 05	250.00
Hambledon	Contribution to Swanmore College open space project	June 05	1,000.00
Hursley	Play area improvements to Recreation	June 05	4,498.00
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Ground		
Itchen Valley	New nets at the cricket ground, Easton	June 05	2,000.00
	Play area improvements, Old School Field	September 05	425.00
Kings Worthy	Eversley Park Adventure Trail, Trim	June –	85,754.00
	Trail, Play Area and other improvements	November 05	
*	Play equipment and improvements to the	Sept - Nov 05	29,948.00
	Green		
	<ul> <li>Hampshire Paths Partnership – leaflets and sign boards.</li> </ul>	June 05	1,845.00
	Fryers Close play area design fees	September 05	975.00
Littleton and	New play equipment Bradley Road play	April 05	4,500.00
Harestock	area.	I	
New Alresford	Further tree planting at Skatepark	December 05	2,548.40
Old Alresford	Benches and picnic table at the Village Green play area	June 05	533.00
Otterbourne	Youth facilities at Oakwood Park (1 <sup>st</sup> inst)	December 05	13,850.00
Shedfield	Seats for Recreation Ground Waltham Chase and Shedfield	June 2005	2,879.32

	Youth shelters and seats at Recreation	September 05	20,622.00
	Ground, Waltham Chase		
	Bike Trail at Shedfield Recreation Ground	January 06	5,967.00
Southwick	New safety surfacing for play area	July 05	1,550.00
Sparsholt	New play equipment at Woodman Close	February 06	3,273.00
Swanmore	Sports Storage Unit at Broad Lane Recreation Ground	April 05	6,428.00
	Improvements and extension to Pavilion, Broad Lane Recreation Ground		60,000.00
	Contribution to Swanmore College open space project	June 05	6,000.00
Twyford	Disabled access and fencing to Hunters Park (2 <sup>nd</sup> inst.)	July 05	2,981.00
	Ballards Close Play Area improvements	July 05	2,000.00
Upham *		November 05	3,000.00
Wonston	The Gratton Trust - New modular sports pavilion (1 <sup>st</sup> Inst.)	October 05	20,000.00
Winchester:			
St Barnabus	Teg Down Meads Play Area (2 <sup>nd</sup> Inst.)	June 05	4,157.00
St Bartholemew	Tennis pavilion, Riverpark	June 05	12,000.00
or Bartholemew	Bowling Green – synthetic turf	June 05	9,248.00
	Relay of cricket pitch – North Walls	June 05	17,450.00
	Alterations to tennis court fencing	June 05	5,079.00
	Hyde Abbey Garden	June 05	25,350.00
	Tree Planting - North Walls Recreation Ground (1 <sup>st</sup> inst.)	November 05	2,203.00
St Johns	Parking and access improvements to St. Giles Hill park	March – June 05	25,648.00
	Pedestrian Access way KGV Recreation Ground	August 05	1,666.00
	Play improvements – Imber road (1 <sup>st</sup> Inst)	November 05	14,907.00
	Play equipment – St Martins Close (1 <sup>st</sup> inst)	November 05	24,998.00
	Youth Shelter project – Gordon Avenue play area	February 06	11,220.00
St Lukes	Thurmond Crescent play area refurbishments	June 05	62,493.00
	Stanmore Recreation Ground play area refurbishment (2 <sup>nd</sup> inst)	March 05	50,597.00
	Play equipment Walpole Road (1 <sup>st</sup> inst)	November 05	14,965.00
	Play area works Stanmore Recreation Ground	February 06	1,388.00
St Michaels	New seat, new tree, new paving – Abbey Gardens	November 05	2,304
	* Projects not mentioned in the OSS 05/06		
	Total released		£921,829.00