

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

11 March 2015

CABINET

18 March 2015

PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT PLAN 2015- 2020

REPORT OF HEAD OF LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB2118 – Playground Five Year Refurbishment Plan Update – 9 February 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report proposes a five year plan for the refurbishment of play areas in the Winchester Town area and asks the Town Forum to approve expenditure for Year One of the plan and consider how future refurbishments are to be funded. Cabinet is requested to authorise expenditure from the Winchester Town Open Spaces Fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To Winchester Town Forum

- 1 That the Capital Expenditure budget growth proposals totalling £120,000 for year one (2015/16) of the refurbishment plan be recommended to Cabinet.
- 2 That Members note and give consideration to the future funding requirements in relation to play expenditure for year's one to five of the plan.

To Cabinet

1. That the Capital Expenditure budget growth proposals totalling £120,000 in 2015/16 (Year 1 of the plan) be approved.
2. That authority to incur Capital Expenditure under Financial Procedure Rule 6.4 be granted.
3. That any proposals made by Town Forum on the future funding requirements be considered, noting the current funding shortfall of £336,000.

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REPORT OF HEAD OF LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACES

DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The City Council is responsible for the management of 24 children's play areas all located in the Winchester Town area.
- 1.2 Parish Councils provide the majority of play areas on other parts of the District as they consider appropriate.
- 1.3 The Council has a five year plan for the refurbishment of its play areas. The previous plan runs from 2010-2015 and has been completed. This work has been funded through the Open Space Fund and in the case of North Walls Skate Park external funding organisations. The completion of this plan and the Council's investment has resulted in high quality play provision which better meets the needs of the local community.
- 1.4 This report sets out the requirements for the next five years in order to ensure the continuation of high standards of play provision in Winchester. This programme of capital work is in addition to the annual maintenance programme which deals with all regular maintenance work and is funded by existing revenue budgets.

2 Selection of Equipment

- 2.1 Play areas should offer a selection of equipment which provides a challenging environment for children to develop skills and grow in confidence. The equipment should also be enjoyable over a number of visits.
- 2.2 The City Council only uses reputable manufacturers to supply equipment and aims to use a variety of suppliers in order to ensure that different opportunities and choice are offered throughout the area. Choice of equipment is also dependent on the location and characteristics of each site. Following installation, all play areas and equipment are inspected by an independent body to ensure they meet British and European safety standards.

- 2.3 Where major refurbishment works are deemed necessary, local residents are consulted in order to help choose the new equipment. They are informed at an early stage and asked to provide input on the changes they would like to see made to the area. When tenders are received, residents are given the opportunity to view several chosen designs and comment before the final decision is taken about which scheme is to be installed. Involving local residents and young people in the process helps the community to have ownership of the site and value the play provision and equipment.
- 2.4 There is still a need for traditional play areas and the City Council needs to continue a rolling programme of investment in order to ensure high quality standards are maintained, risk is controlled and issues are not permitted to build up to a point where an unaffordable level of investment is required at one time.

3 Maintenance

- 3.1 Maintaining equipment in good condition is essential to ensure safety and encourage play area use. Most damage to equipment is the result of vandalism but fortunately the incidence of this in Council play areas is very low. All sites are inspected by the Streetcare Team on a regular basis and minor repairs are completed at the time of the inspection.
- 3.2 In addition to the inspection regime, an annual independent inspection is carried out on every individual piece of equipment and a full report made on the condition and suitability of both site and equipment. The inspection includes a risk assessment of each item of equipment. Any item which poses an unacceptable level of risk is repaired or removed from use as appropriate. The annual inspection reports show Winchester play areas to be in a safe condition and requiring mostly only minor remedial works.
- 3.3 All maintenance work is undertaken as a separate function, funded by a separate budget and is not part of the refurbishment programme.

4 Site Prioritisation

- 4.1 Given the significant costs involved in refurbishment and provision of new equipment it is essential that a planned approach is taken to play area investments. This ensures that works are tackled in priority order making the best use of resources. Appendix One lists the sites requiring capital investment in the next five years.
- 4.2 The sites are listed in order of priority and each site assigned a year for when works are required. The pace at which work progresses depends on the resources available including officer time and contractor availability however, every effort is made to complete the works within the timescale quoted and the previous two refurbishment plans have been completed on time.

5 The Programme

- 5.1 The programme has been designed to ensure that play areas are refurbished as they reach the end of their serviceable life. This avoids the Council incurring excessive costs in maintaining dilapidated equipment and reduces the risk of accidents for which the Council could be held liable.
- 5.2 Where play areas cannot be maintained to the required standard, the site and/or equipment must be decommissioned and rendered safe, which may subject the Council to additional expenditure. Equipment must be rendered inoperable, the site made secure with appropriate fencing (hired or purchased) and regular inspections arranged to ensure the site remains secure. The City Council remains liable for accidents arising from use of the site, even though it is closed, if it has failed to take appropriate steps to avoid accidents taking place.
- 5.3 It is thus more cost effective to maintain a proactive refurbishment programme, which ensures that facilities are maintained, accessible and serviceable for the community.
- 5.4 Members are asked to approve the programme which will be reviewed annually and updated as part of the business planning process.

6 The Open Space Fund

- 6.1 There is not currently any remaining funding in the open space fund for play, however the current balance of the open space fund for sport, taking into account expenditure already allocated to existing projects is £439,851 (as at 28/02/2015).
- 6.2 It is proposed to finance year 1 of the refurbishment plan through the use of the open space fund as follows:
- a) £100,000 from the sport element for Somers Close Recreation Ground (£80,000 to replace the existing skate park which is at the end of its life and is becoming a health risk, £20,000 for the proposed outdoor gym)
 - b) And £20,000 from the sport element for North Walls Bowling Green.
- 6.3 The proposed refurbishment of North Walls play area in year 2 of the plan is dependent on the future plans for the leisure centre and the impact it may have on the play areas current location. If the refurbishment of this site is to go ahead Members would need to give consideration to other sources of funding for this project at a cost of £120,000. There is currently no funding for this project.
- 6.4 As there is not currently any uncommitted funding within open space play, it is not possible to advance any of the projects identified in the five year plan (Appendix 1). This means the Stanmore Recreation Ground in year 1 (2015/16) cannot be progressed until funding has been identified.

- 6.5 The annual independent play inspection will take place at the beginning of April and the subsequent report will provide more details about the level of risk posed by the surfacing at Stanmore Recreation Ground. At this time a decision will be taken on the timescale for completing this work.

7 Future Funding of Play Area Refurbishments

- 7.1 There is not currently any uncommitted funding within the open space fund play element balance for Winchester Town. Funding for future refurbishments within the plan attached at Appendix One need to be given consideration by Members. The total cost identified in the five year plan is £146,000. It is not anticipated that there will be any further S106 funding into the Open Space Fund. All new planning contributions will form part of the Community Infrastructure Levy, 15% of which is allocated to the Winchester Town area.

- 7.2 In summary the additional capital resources required to fund the next 5 years of the refurbishment programme are:

Year 1	£16,000
Year 2	£190,000 (if the site as North Walls is developed)
Year 3	£25,000
Year 4	£80,000
Year 5	<u>£25,000</u>
Total	£336,000

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

8 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 8.1 The refurbishment of play areas as indicated in this plan will contribute to the delivery of the following outcome within the Active Communities theme of the Community Strategy 2010 -2020, helping children to 'lead active and healthy lifestyles byexercising regularly'. Specifically, the play areas contribute to the following priority:

'provide opportunities for everyone to become more active through organised sport, walking, cycling and other recreational activities, making the most of our natural environment and countryside',

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 9.1 The play area refurbishment programme at Appendix 1 identifies the priorities for expenditure over the next four years. Funding has been identified for the first year of the programme but funding has not yet been fully identified for year's two to five. Budget approval is therefore requested for Year one of the programme and Year's two to five be noted as the expenditure requirements.
- 9.2 The below table shows the summary expenditure requirements totalling £456,000 and the funding proposals, highlighting the current funding shortfall of £336,000.

<u>Play Area Refurbishment Plan 2015/16 to 2019/20</u>	Capital Expenditure Req.'s	Funding Proposals	
		Open Spaces Sport	Currently Unfunded
	£000	£000	£000
Opening (Uncommitted) Balance		-440	
Year 1 (2015/16)	136	120	16
Year 2 (2016/17)	190		190
Year 3 (2017/18)	25		25
Year 4 (2018/19)	80		80
Year 5 (2019/20)	25		25
TOTALS	456	120	336
Projected Closing Open Spaces Fund Balance		-320	

10 When identifying potential sources of funding to support the refurbishment programme it is important to note that work cannot be committed until the funding has actually been received. Whilst the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is an important source of future funding the Levy is still at an early stage and so far there has not been any CIL collected for the Winchester Town area. This could potentially delay delivery of the programme unless other sources of funding are identified.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

11.1 The risk of failure to refurbish play areas in line with the proposed programme may result in a loss of play provision as equipment and areas have to be decommissioned and removed. Such decommission also has cost implications.

11.2 A programme of regular refurbishment of play areas mitigates the risks associated with equipment becoming worn and potentially dangerous once outside the period of use for which it was designed. Refurbishment also reduces costs to the Council of maintenance associated with older, worn equipment.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Five year plan of Play Area Refurbishment for 2015-2020

Appendix 2 – Summary of all Council owned sites

Appendix 1**Five Year Programme of Play Area Refurbishment 2015 - 2020**

No.	Play Area Name	Original Installation Date	Refurbishment Date	Additional work identified	Cost of works	Funding source	Programme Year
1.	Stanmore Recreation Ground	1997	2004	Replace safer surfacing	£16,000		1
2	Somers Close Skate Park			Complete replacement	£80,000	Open Space Fund (sport)	1
3	Stanmore Outdoor Gym				£20,000	Open Space Fund (sport)	1
4	North Walls Bowling Green			Replacement of edging boards around the green	£20,000	Open Space Fund (sport)	1
				Total	£136,000		
5.	North Walls	1999	2006 (partial)	Complete Refurbishment	£120,000		2
6.	Winnall Manor Road			Replace toddler play equipment	£70,000		2
				Total	£190,000		
7	Marnhull Rise			Complete refurbishment	£25,000		3
				Total	£25,000		
8	Gordon Avenue	2003		Complete refurbishment required	£80,000		4
				Total	£80,000		
9	Teg Down Meads	2001	2009/10 (partial refurbishment)	Complete refurbishment required	£25,000		
				Total	£25,000		

Appendix 2**Summary of all Council owned sites**

Play Area Name	Original Installation Date	Refurbishment Date	Additional work identified	Budget cost of works	Programme Year	Financial Year
Abbey Gardens	1993	2002(Partial)	No work required			
Arlington Place	1997	2008	No work required			
Bath Place		N/A	No work required			
Chaundler Road	1990/94	2004	No work required			
Friary Gardens	2000	2007	No work required			
Dean Park	2001	2009 (partial)	No work required			
Fairdown Close	1999	2004	No work required			
Gordon Avenue	2003		Due for refurbishment 2015-2020	£80,000	4	2018/19
Imber Road	1998	2005 (partial) 2012 (slide replaced)	No work required			
KGV	2004		No work required			

Marnhull Rise		N/A	Due for refurbishment 2015-2020	£25,000	3	2017/18
Monarch Way		2013	No work required			
North Walls	1999	2006 (partial)	Due for refurbishment 2015-2020	£120,000	2	2016/17
Nursery Gardens		2013	No work required			
Orams Arbour	1993	2013/14	No work required			
Somers Close	2000	2009	Provision of outdoor gym and replacement skate park	£100,000	1	2015/16
St Martins Close	1993	2005	No work required			
Stanmore Recreation Ground	1997/2004	2011	Replacement safer surfacing	£16,000	1	2015/16
Taplings Road	2002		No work required			
Teg Down Meads	2001	2009/10 (partial refurbishment)	Due for refurbishment 2015-2020	£25,000	5	2019/20
Thurmond Crescent	1994	2004	No work required			
Walpole Road	2000	2009 (partial refurbishment)	No work required			

Westman Road			No work required. Site to be used for development			
Winnall Manor Road			Replace toddler play area. Due for refurbishment 2015-2020	£70,000	2	2015/16