

REPORT TITLE: Play Area Improvement – 5-year programme update

24TH JUNE 2021

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Angela Clear, Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report provides an update on the progress of the play area refurbishment programme for play areas in the Winchester Town area. Budget approval has already been secured for years 1-4 of the programme. This report asks the Town Forum to approve the additional budget request for year 1 and the total budget for year 5 of the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Members approve the updated 5-year refurbishment programme for play areas as detailed in Appendix 1.
2. That Members approve a supplementary capital budget of £40k in 2021/22, funded by the town earmarked reserve, and authority to incur capital expenditure. This increases the KGV play area and skate park budget from £200k to £240k.
3. That Members note the funding requirement of £120k for works detailed in year 5 of the refreshed plan.
4. That Members give delegated authority to the Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager to amend the evaluation weightings from those set out in the Contract Procedure Rules

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District

1.2 All play area refurbishments are secured through a procurement process. The quality evaluation part of this process includes consideration of both the contractors activities and the scheme and will allocate a percentage to sustainability and environmental. This may include use of materials, operating procedures and installation methods. Where appropriate the designs for play areas include areas for biodiversity, wildlife and wildflower planting as part of the overall scheme.

1.3 Vibrant Local Economy

1.4 High quality play areas contribute to the local economy, attracting visitors to the area particularly at destination sites such as Abbey Gardens, North Walls and King George V playing fields.

1.5 Living Well

The Council Plan includes the priority of "Living Well" which seeks to encourage greater participation in physical activities. It aims to achieve this by supporting communities to extend the range of sports facilities across the district and enhancing open spaces and parks that support good mental and physical health for residents of all ages. The City Council provides and invests in all its play areas providing free, safe, accessible, challenging play experiences for children of all ages.

1.6 Your Services, Your Voice

1.7 All play area refurbishments are undertaken through direct consultation with local residents and the final design that is installed is selected by the residents through a voting process.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The play area refurbishment programme shown in Appendix 1 identifies the priorities for expenditure over the next five years.

2.2 The total town expenditure of £830k is within existing budgets. The total programme of £950k is split with £830k coming from the town account and £120k from the district. The total expenditure forecast for the previous 5-year plan presented last year was £830k.

2.3 Winchester Town Account play area refurbishment, proposed at £830k in 2.2 above, is funded within the baseline town revenue budget through town precepts. The effects of uneven expenditure between financial years are harmonised through the town earmarked reserve.

- 2.4 The early profiling of the plan in years one and two places pressure on the availability of funding within the town account and is therefore dependent on the availability of resources identified within the budget setting process. If resources are not identified, then one of the proposals within year two may need to be delayed.
- 2.5 Abbey Gardens is considered to be a district wide open space and play area and is therefore funded by the Winchester City Council district account rather than the town account.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Proposals to introduce a play area refurbishment programme should be introduced following consultation of the relevant group of the public who use the facilities. All new play equipment will be procured in line with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015(PCR2015), where applicable. The budget for the play area refurbishment is set and therefore all tenders received will be in line with this budget figure. The Council's Contract Procedures Rules require an evaluation split based on 40% quality 60% price unless an exemption has been approved. This report therefore seeks approval to give delegated authority to the Natural Environment and Recreation Team Manager to amend these weightings as appropriate to enable the tenders to be evaluated in favour of quality.
- 3.2
- 3.3 Under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to undertake any activity a normal person could undertake, for the benefit of the authority, its area, or persons resident or present in its area. The Council is satisfied it has the enabling power(s) to procure and award a contract for services following the robust procurement exercise and subsequent contract.
- 3.4 The Council has an obligation as a best value authority under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness." By following due process through the compliant procurement process, upon entering into the relevant contractual arrangements, the Council will have observed its other statutory duties, including in regard to the duty to obtain best value.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Delivery of the programme will be managed by existing staff within the Natural Environment and Recreation Team.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no new sites recommended as part of this 5-year plan. All sites are already in existence and this report is recommending appropriate action to effectively manage these assets.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Each refurbishment will be subject to a consultation exercise prior to refurbishment works being undertaken.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 In recognition of the Climate Emergency and to support the Council Plan priority to create a greener district, as part of the procurement process, the quality evaluation will include consideration of both the contractors activities and the scheme and will allocate a minimum of 10% to sustainability and environmental. This may include use of materials, operating procedures and installation methods.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 When new play areas are designed the needs of all user groups are considered and designed to be accessible for a wide range of users enabling children of different abilities to be able to play together.
- 8.2 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken for each play area design prior to commission.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None required

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
Financial Exposure	Refurbishment reduces costs to the Council of maintenance associated with older, worn equipment.	
Exposure to challenge		
Innovation	Different suppliers are used to ensure variety of equipment across the town.	Explore new suppliers and choice of equipment.
Reputation	The 5-year plan ensures a high standard of play provision and ensures play areas do not have broken, missing or dilapidated equipment.	

	The high standards reduce the risk of injury and litigation.	
Achievement of outcome		
Property	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.	
Community Support		Consultation is undertaken with the local community who are actively involved in the choice of new equipment.
Timescales	Regular refurbishment mitigates the risks associated with equipment becoming worn and potentially dangerous once outside the period of use for which it was designed.	
Project capacity	Project will be delivered within existing resources	
Other	Council Contract Procedure Rules and PCR2015 where applicable will be followed. Advice sought from the Procurement Team	Council Contract Procedure Rules and PCR2015 where applicable will be followed. Advice sought from the Procurement Team

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 Introduction

11.2 The City Council is responsible for the management of 24 children's play areas all located in the Winchester Town area with the exception of one in Newlands Parish.

11.3 The Council has a five-year plan for the refurbishment of its play areas. The plan operates on a rolling programme and is updated every year by agreement and funding through Winchester Town Forum. The Council's

investment has resulted in high quality play provision throughout Winchester City Centre which meets the needs of the local community and offers a variety of play experiences.

- 11.4 It should be noted that this report relates only to play area refurbishment and does not include annual maintenance costs which are included in the town and district revenue budgets.
- 11.5 This report provides an update on the progress of the programme over the last year and seeks approval for Year 5 which has been updated to ensure the continuation of high standards of play provision in Winchester. A budget has already been identified to cover this cost of the refurbishment for Years 1-4 and the Natural Environment and Recreation Manager has authority (WTF280 refers) to incur expenditure in line with this budget allocation.
- 11.6 Although it is a district facility and funded from Capital Receipts, Abbey Gardens is shown within the programme to provide a complete overview of all play areas managed by the City Council.

12 The Programme

- 12.1 The play area works detailed in the plan for last year are shown in the table below.

Play Area Name	Ward	Additional work identified	Cost of works
Abbey Gardens	St Michael	Complete refurbishment	£120,000
Thurmond Crescent	St Luke	Replacement of toddler equipment	£40,000
		Total	£160,000

- 12.2 The play area refurbishment for Thurmond Crescent is complete and now provides better play provision for young children in the area.
- 12.3 The refurbishment of Abbey Gardens play area has been delayed due to the complexities of the project. The whole recreation facility on this side of the river requires improvement to ensure an accessible, safe, cohesive, high quality play area for the benefit and enjoyment of all visitors. The existing play area has a number of health and safety issues which will not be addressed by replacement of the existing equipment. The ground level has sunk across the site creating trip hazards within the play area, throughout the paths and grass are raised by tree roots. In addition to the provision of new play equipment we need to review the entire site layout, raising the levels and creating a new path network.
- 12.4 In order to achieve this, additional funding will be required. The entire cost of the project has been assessed at £230k and a CIL application for the

additional £110k will be assessed at the next panel meeting in June 2021. It should be noted that the play area is at the end of its life and as equipment becomes unsafe it may have to be taken out of operation for health and safety reasons. The refurbishment of the play area will be rolled over to the next year of the programme and it is hoped that installation will take place early 2022.

- 12.5 Work has already started on the consultations for the other two play areas (North Walls and King George V) in the programme for this year.
- 12.6 Additional funding of £40k is required to deliver the new skate park for KGV. The existing metal ramps are to be replaced with a new spray concrete park designed by users. The increase in the costs of construction and materials has resulted in the need to increase the budget to deliver this project.
- 12.7 Years 2-4 of the programme remain unchanged.
- 12.8 Year 5 of the programme has been added to include the refurbishments of the play areas at Fairdown Close and St Martins Close. The play area at Fairdown Close is small and has the lowest usage of all play areas within the Town so it is recommended that when this site is due for refurbishment, options for other play provision on this site are considered through consultation with local residents and discussion with Members. A budget for full refurbishment is included in the programme to ensure funding is secured should this option be required.
- 12.9 At the last meeting of the Town Forum, a question was raised about the availability and locations of multi-use games areas in the Town area of Winchester. As part of the previous refurbishment programme, facilities for basketball have been provided at St Matthews Field and Taplings Road in Weeke, a combination basketball / football area has been installed in Winnall Manor Road play area and a complete multi-use games area has been provided at Stanmore Recreation Ground. The MUGA at King George V playing fields will be refurbished in year 1 of the current programme.

13 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 13.1 Members have previously considered options for management of play areas including balancing risk against the need for refurbishment, but the set of principles agreed in September 2016 approved an ongoing programme of refurbishment.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: -

Previous Committee Reports: -

WTF237, Update of play area refurbishment plan 2015-2020, 21st September 2016

WTF280, Play Area Improvement -5-year programme update, 23rd January 2020

Other Background Documents: -

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Five-year programme of play area refurbishment 2021-2026

Appendix 2 – Summary of all Council owned sites

Appendix OneFive Year Programme of Play Area Refurbishment 2021 – 2026

No.	Play Area Name	Ward	Original Installation Date	Refurbishment Date	Additional work identified	Cost of works	Funding source	Programme Year
1	Abbey Gardens	St Michael	1993	2002(Partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000*	Capital receipts reserve	1
2	KGV play area and skate park	St Michael	2004		Replace play area and skate park	£240,000**	£200,000 already allocated	1
3	North Walls Recreation Ground	St Bartholomew	1999	2006 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£150,000	Funding allocated by Town Forum	1
					Total	£510,000		
4	Imber Road	St Bartholomew	1998	2005 (partial) 2012 (slide replaced)	Partial refurbishment	£40,000	Funding allocated by Town Forum	2
					Total	£40,000		
5	Chaundler Road	St Bartholomew	1990/94	2004	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	Funding allocated by Town Forum	3
					Total	£80,000		
6	Walpole Road	St Luke	2000	2009	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	Funding allocated by Town Forum	4
7	Dean Park	St Barnabas	2001	2009 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000	Funding allocated by Town Forum	

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					Total	£200,000		
8	Fairdown Close	St Michael	1999	2004	Complete refurbishment	£40,000		5
9	St Martins Close	St Bartholomew	2005	2005	Complete refurbishment	£80,000		5
					Total	£120,000		
					Programme Total	£950,000		

* Note: additional budget is required for Abbey Gardens refurbishment as detailed in paragraph 12.3

** Note additional budget required for KGV skate park as detailed in paragraph 12.6

Appendix Two**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	St Michael	1993	2002(Partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000	1	2021/22
Abbotts Walk	St Bartholomew	2017		No work required			
Arlington Place	St Bartholomew	1997	2008	No work required			
Chaundler Road	St Bartholomew	1990/94	2004	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	3	2023/24
Fairdown Close	St Michael	1999	2004	Complete refurbishment	£40,000	5	2025/26
Friary Gardens	St Michael	2000	2007	No work required			
Dean Park	St Barnabas	2001	2009 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000	4	2024/25
Gordon Avenue	St Michael	2003	2019	No work required			
Imber Road	St Bartholomew	1998	2005 (partial) 2012 (slide replaced)	Partial refurbishment	£40,000	2	2022/23
KGV	St Michael	2004		Replace play area and skate park	£240,000	1	2021/22

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Monarch Way	St Paul		2013	No work required			
North Walls	St Bartholomew	1999	2006 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£150,000	1	2021/22
Nursery Gardens	St Paul		2013	No work required			
Orams Arbour	St Paul	1993	2013/14	No work required			
Somers Close	St Luke	2000	2009	No work required			
St Matthew Field	St Barnabas	2016		No work required			
St Martins Close	St Bartholomew	2005	2005	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	5	2025/26
Stanmore Recreation Ground	St Luke	2004 / 2011	2011	No work required			
Taplings Road	St Barnabas	2002	2019	No work required			
Teg Down Meads	St Barnabas	2001	2009/10 (partial refurbishment) 2019 – multiplay	No work required			
Thurmond Crescent	St Luke	1994 / 2004	2021	No work required			
Walpole Road	St Luke	2000	2009 (partial refurbishment)	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	4	2024/25

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Winnall Manor Road	St Bartholomew	2018		No work required			
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