

REPORT TITLE: PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENT - 5 YEAR PROGRAMME UPDATE

23 JANUARY 2020

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Lynda Murphy, Cabinet Member for Environment

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WARD(S): ALL WARDS

PURPOSE

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 the budget for the next 5 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Members approve the refurbishment programme to play areas as detailed in Appendix 1.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 The emerging Council Plan (recommended by Cabinet in December 2019 for adoption by Full Council) 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.

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 £710k is within existing budgets. The total programme of £830k is split with £710k coming from the town account and £120k from the district. The total expenditure forecast for the previous 5 year plan presented last year was £760k, all funded from the town account.
- 2.3 Winchester Town Account play area refurbishment, proposed at £710k 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 revenue 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.
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 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 consideration.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Delivery of the programme will be managed by existing staff within the Landscape and Open Spaces 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 percentage to sustainability and environmental. This may include use of materials, operating procedures and installation methods.

- 7.2 .

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.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property</i>	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.	
<i>Community Support</i>		Consultation is undertaken with the local community who are actively involved in the choice of new equipment.
<i>Timescales</i>	Regular refurbishment mitigates the risks associated with equipment becoming worn and potentially dangerous once outside the period of use for which it was designed.	
<i>Project capacity</i>	Project will be delivered within existing resources.	
<i>Financial / VfM</i>	Refurbishment reduces costs to the Council of maintenance associated with older, worn equipment.	
<i>Legal</i>	Council Contract Procedure Rules and PCR2015 where applicable will be followed.	Encourage competition in an open, fair and transparent way
<i>Innovation</i>	Different suppliers are used to ensure variety of equipment across the town.	Explore new suppliers and choice of equipment.
<i>Reputation</i>	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.	

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 previous plan from 2015-2020 has been completed. This work has been funded through the Open Space Fund and funding allocated by Town Forum. 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.

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 seeks approval for the programme for the next five years which will ensure the continuation of high standards of play provision in Winchester. A budget has already been identified to cover this cost of the refurbishment and this report authorises the Natural Environment and Recreation Manager to incur expenditure in line with this budget allocation.

12 Play area principles

12.1 A set of principles were agreed by Town Forum on 2^{1st} September 2016 (report WTF237 refers and attached at Appendix 3) and the proposed 5 year plan for 2020-2025 has been written in line with these principles.

13 The Programme

13.1 All works detailed in the current five year plan (which finishes in 2019 / 2020) have been completed with the exception of the decommissioning of the play area at Marnhull Rise. The design for this open space is in progress and local residents will be consulted on the proposals in February. It is anticipated that work will begin in spring 2020.

13.2 Members are asked to approve the programme which will be reviewed annually and updated as part of the business planning process.

13.3 Year 1 of the plan includes the replacement of the play equipment in Abbey Gardens which although in the town area is funded by district. Funding has already been approved for this play area and it is included in the capital receipts reserve.

13.4 Thurmond Crescent play area has already had a large multiplay unit removed as it was no longer possible to maintain this in a safe condition and it is for

this reason that this partial refurbishment is included in year 1 of the proposed plan.

- 13.5 Year 2 of the programme includes the replacement of the play area and skate park at King George V Playing Fields with a budget of £200k. This will be split with £80k for the replacement of the skate park which is the only facility in Winchester which has not yet been replaced with a spray concrete park and £120k for the new play equipment. This budget is in line with Winnall Manor Road which was replaced in 2018.
- 13.6 Imber Road is in year 3 of the programme for a partial replacement. Some work was undertaken on this site in 2004 but the trim trail has been on site since 1990 and it requires replacement to bring it up to current standards.
- 13.7 Year 4 and 5 of the programme feature standard replacements for play areas at the end of their life.

14 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 14.1 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

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Five year programme of play area refurbishment 2020-2025

Appendix 2 – Summary of all Council owned sites

Appendix 3 – Play Area Principles

Appendix One**Five Year Programme of Play Area Refurbishment 2020 - 2025**

No	Play Area Name	Original Installation Date	Refurbishment Date	Additional work identified	Cost of works	Funding source	Programme Year
1	Abbey Gardens	1993	2002(Partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000	Capital receipts reserve	1
2	Thurmond Crescent	2004		Replacement of toddler equipment	£40,000		1
				Total	£160,000		
3	KGV play area and skate park	2004		Replace play area and skate park	£200,000		2
4	North Walls Recreation Ground	1999	2006 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£150,000	Funding allocated by Town Forum	2
				Total	£350,000		
5	Imber Road	1998	2005 (partial) 2012 (slide replaced)	Partial refurbishment	£40,000		3
				Total	£40,000		
6	Chaundler Road	1990/94	2004	Complete refurbishment	£80,000		4
				Total	£80,000		

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7	Walpole Road	2000	2009	Complete refurbishment	£80,000		5
8	Dean Park	2001	2009 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000		
				Total	£200,000		
				Programme Total	£830,000		

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	1993	2002(Partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000	1	2020/21
Abbots Walk	2017		No work required			
Arlington Place	1997	2008	No work required			
Chaudler Road	1990/94	2004	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	4	2023/24
Friary Gardens	2000	2007	No work required			
Dean Park	2001	2009 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£120,000	5	2024/25
Fairdown Close	1999	2004	No work required			
Gordon Avenue	2003	2019	No work required			

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Imber Road	1998	2005 (partial) 2012 (slide replaced)	Partial refurbishment	£40,000	3	2022/23
KGV	2004		Replace play area and skate park	£200,000	2	2021/22
Monarch Way		2013	No work required			
North Walls	1999	2006 (partial)	Complete refurbishment	£150,000	2	2021/22
Nursery Gardens		2013	No work required			
Orams Arbour	1993	2013/14	No work required			
Somers Close	2000	2009	No work required			
St Matthew Field	2016		No work required			
St Martins Close	2005	2005	No work required			
Stanmore Recreation Ground	2004 / 2011	2011	No work required			
Taplings Road	2002	2019	No work required			

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Teg Down Meads	2001	2009/10 (partial refurbishment) 2019 – multiplay	No work required			
Thurmond Crescent	1994	2004	Replacement of toddler equipment	£40,000	1	2020/21
Walpole Road	2000	2009 (partial refurbishment)	Complete refurbishment	£80,000	5	2024/25
Winnall Manor Road	2018		No work required			

Appendix 3**PRINCIPLES OF PLAY AREAS**

To help with the future direction and maintenance of the council's play areas the following principles have been identified by WCC Members.

1. Play areas are important and provide multi benefits for residents and visitors to Winchester. Consequently WCC to continue to provide and maintain play areas for the benefit of residents and visitors.
2. The provision of play within the city needs to be strategic i.e. not simply responding to development opportunities but proactive in it's approach taking account of:
 - a. Need and benefit and aims for individual sites
 - b. Location and setting
 - c. Provision across all age ranges (i.e. preschool through to older adults)
 - d. Equipment availability
 - e. Funding availability

When a play area comes up for renovation/renewal consideration to be given to whether it is still needed, relevant and/or appropriate. Sites may be decommissioned as play areas if necessary. In these situations a new purpose to be clearly identified and communicated to interested parties.

Where a play area is failing to deliver a good play experience, assuming funding allows, the area should be modified/renovated even if it is not at the end of its life span.

Play areas do not need to be a minimum size but each site to be bespoke to the area and encourage links to other key areas (including supporting pedestrian/cycle paths), take account of the wider landscape and setting, provide interesting and varied equipment and be promoted.

3. A range of play types to be provided across the city including:
 - a. Destination sites (key play areas which receive greatest investment and provide benefits for a wide geographical area i.e. North Walls, Dean Park and Abbey Gardens)
 - b. Local play areas catering for local use which are within walking distance for communities.
 - c. Other sites which provide a different experience i.e. natural play areas or specific use sites such as the skate park.

Equipment should challenge children, be inventive and encourage imagination. Conflict between users to be minimised through design.

When designing play areas potential users to be engaged with the design process.

4. Play areas need to meet not only the play need but also deliver a range of benefits including biodiversity, flood prevention, pollution mitigation, urban cooling, and amenity value.
5. All play areas to be maintained to a high standard i.e.
 - a. All play areas to be inspected either daily or weekly (in line with the xxx Inspection Plan) and an annual inspection undertaken by an external, qualified inspector.
 - b. All urgent or dangerous repairs to receive an initial response within 24 working hours of the problem being reported.
 - c. All major repairs to be undertaken within xx weeks
 - d. All minor repairs to be undertaken with xx weeks,
6. Play areas and open spaces to be valued by those who use them. To achieve this:
 - a. An audit of all open spaces to be undertaken and updated regularly.
 - b. All areas to have a clear individual and collective identify.
 - c. Play areas to be promoted and awareness increased.
 - d. All play areas to be monitored regularly to assess usage.
7. Funding to be secured from a variety of sources and opportunities to secure funding to be continuously sought.