

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 05 March 2018

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Leisure and Community
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Play Area Improvement Programme</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Leisure and Corporate Services
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Leisure Opportunities for Health and Fun

**Purpose:**

To agree a five-year improvement programme for the Council's play areas in the Borough.

**Executive summary:**

The Council has 43 play areas located across the Borough that are provided for children and young people up to the age of 15.

In March 2015, the Executive approved an initial three-year play area priority improvement programme, funded by section 106 developer contributions collected by the Council for the provision of play and recreational facilities.

The programme identified those play areas with the greatest need for improvement following a strategic review. During 2015 to 2018, 11 of the Council's play areas have undergone refurbishment.

In order to continue maintaining the current standard of play provision in the Borough, it is estimated that a minimum of four play areas will need refurbishment every year. Attached as Appendix A to this report is a new five-year improvement programme that illustrates the proposed phasing of play area refurbishments across the Borough.

The draft version of the programme was presented to the Leisure and Community Policy Development and Review Panel in January 2018 and members endorsed the programme.

**Recommendation/Recommended Option:**

It is recommended that the Executive approves:

- (a) the five-year play area improvement programme as detailed in Appendix A to the report; and
- (b) a budget allocation of up to £500,000 from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions to fund the improvement programme.

**Reason:**

To continue to provide and maintain a good standard of play provision and to ensure play facilities across the Borough remain safe, attractive and accessible to all children and young people.

**Cost of proposals:**

£500,000 funded from Community Infrastructure Levy contributions (the current available balance is £3.03m).

**Appendices:**                    **Appendix A:** Five Year Play Area Improvement Programme (2018-2023)

**Background papers:** Report to the Executive, March 2015. Play Area Refurbishment Programme

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### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	05 March 2018
<b>Subject:</b>	Play Area Improvement Programme
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Head of Leisure and Corporate Services
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Leisure and Community

#### INTRODUCTION

1. The Council has 43 play areas located across the Borough that are provided for children and young people. These are managed and maintained by the Council's Streetscene team who also undertake regular inspections to ensure that the facilities are safe and to address any repairs or maintenance that is required.
2. Over recent years major refurbishments to play areas have been funded from section 106 developer contributions, collected by the Council for the provision of play and recreational facilities.

#### BACKGROUND

3. In 2014/15 a review of all 43 play areas was undertaken. The purpose of the review was to identify those play areas with the greatest need for improvement and prioritise those that required attention over the next three years. The review process also identified some other less extensive improvements required to maintain the on-going standard of provision.
4. In March 2015, the Executive approved a three-year priority improvement programme to refurbish 11 of the Borough's existing play areas. In addition, 20 other play areas benefited from a 'mini makeover' i.e. the painting of equipment, fencing and seating to help improve its overall condition. This was undertaken to ensure they remained at an acceptable standard until such time they featured in the play area improvement programme for more extensive refurbishment.
5. Funtley Recreation Ground Play Area and Warsash Recreation Ground Play Area were both identified in the final year of the priority improvement programme and will have improvement works completed in time for summer 2018.
6. Virtually all of the section 106 contributions available for the provision of play and recreational facilities have been used. Therefore, to enable the Council to continue to maintain the standard of play area provision, consideration has been given to the on-going maintenance and standard of play provision and how this is funded.

## **IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS GOING FORWARD**

7. In previous years, play area improvements have consisted of complete refurbishments, including new equipment, surfacing and ancillary items. Those play areas identified in the three-year priority programme were some of the oldest facilities in the Borough, with the greatest need for improvement.
8. In order to continue maintaining the current standard of play provision in the Borough, it is estimated that a minimum of four play areas will need refurbishing every year. Appended to this report is a new programme that illustrates the proposed phasing of play area refurbishments across the Borough over the next five years.
9. The section 106 contributions that have been used to fund the original play area improvement programme have now been allocated and there are limited funds available.
10. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has largely replaced section 106 contributions as the mechanism for collecting funds from development for infrastructure improvements. It is recommended that £500,000 is allocated from CIL contributions to fund the new play area improvement programme for a period of five years. The CIL available balance is currently £3.03m.
11. The approach going forward to improve the play areas will still involve consultation with local residents and ward councillors. However, in order to ensure that the available funding is used to deliver upgrades to tired and outdated equipment there will be a different focus.
12. Streetscene will coordinate a programme of safety surface replacement works and the reinstatement of dilapidated or broken equipment. This has been introduced following a review of the play area inspection and maintenance arrangements undertaken as part of the Streetscene Vanguard Intervention. This will help to ensure that these issues are dealt with promptly rather than having to wait until play area refurbishment works are undertaken. Leisure and Streetscene teams will work together to ensure these works are coordinated.
13. These new arrangements will help to ensure that the five-year play area improvement programme can have a greater emphasis on providing new, challenging and inclusive play equipment.

## **CONCLUSION**

14. The opportunity for children and young people to play creatively in good quality environments is essential to their development. Through play they acquire skills and abilities which can't be learnt in any other way. It is therefore important for the Council to continue to provide good quality play facilities within easy walking distance of residents and to ensure all children and young people in the Borough have access to this development opportunity.
15. In order to continue maintaining the current standard of play provision in the Borough it is estimated that a minimum of four play areas will need some form of improvement every year.

16. Funding improvements to our existing schemes will no longer be achievable through section 106 contributions. Therefore, alternative sources of funding will be needed to maintain the standard of play area provision.
17. When determining the next programme of improvements, Officers have considered the findings from the comprehensive review that was previously carried out and have carried out subsequent site visits as well as considering feedback from residents and ward Councillors to help identify the next series of play area improvements.
18. The five-year play area improvement programme for 2018 - 2023 can be funded from Community Infrastructure Levy contributions collected by the Council.

**Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Emma Watts, Leisure and Community Manager, Ext. 4440.