

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Streetscene Policy Development and Review Panel

Date **05 March 2015**

Report of: **Director of Environmental Services**

Subject: **PLAY AREA SAFETY SURFACE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME**

SUMMARY

To provide an update on the progress of the safety surface replacement programme.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the contents of the report

INTRODUCTION

1. The opportunity to play creatively in high-quality environments is essential to the development of children. Through their play they acquire skills and abilities which can be learnt in no other way. It is therefore important for the Council to continue to provide these facilities within easy walking distance of local residents to ensure all the children in the Borough have access to this development opportunity.
2. To achieve the above provision the Council maintains 43 play areas that are located throughout the Borough, mostly on Leisure and Housing open space land.
3. In 2013, as part of a management review of these facilities, Officers from the Streetscene Department carried out a condition survey of all the Council owned play area safety surfaces (Appendix A). The survey revealed that at a number of these sites the play equipment was still providing a good play environment for children however, the safety surfacing (predominantly rubber crumb) was beginning to reach the end of its useful life and was either become worn smooth, and therefore slippery when damp, or was deteriorating and in need of repair or replacement.
4. A report was approved by Council's Executive in October 2013 that included setting aside funding of £350,000 to implement a programme of works over a ten year period to replace the rubber crumb safety surfacing at all of the Council's play areas that include this type of surface.

PROGRESS TO DATE

5. The 2013 condition survey identified the sites that were most in need of replacement and the options for the most appropriate type of replacement safety surfacing were assessed.
6. The preferred solution was sand filled artificial turf. This product has been widely used as a play surface on park and school sites nationwide. Local Authority users include Glasgow City Council, Manchester City Council, Dorset County Council and Oldham Metropolitan Council. Sand filled artificial turf was chosen for durability, the ease of on-going maintenance and cost effectiveness and was trialled successfully at Fareham's Park Lane site in June 2013.
7. During 2013 and 2014, tenders were put together that included the use of the ESPO Framework for Outdoor playground Equipment to replace the play surfaces on the areas identified as having rubber crumb most in need of attention.
8. The cost of the works accomplished to date is £60,000 and the sites that have been completed are listed below.

2013

- Eastern Parade
- Stubbington Rec Play Area
- Sarisbury Green Swing Areas

2014

- Castle Street Zip Wire
- Course Park Crescent Open Space
- Clydesdale Open Space
- Dore Avenue Open Space Swings, Junior Multi Play and Adventure Trail
- Portchester Park Swings and Multi Play
- Bath Lane Recreation Ground Basket Swing and Spinners
- Locks Heath House Park Swings & Trim Trail
- Harbour View Open Space Swing Areas

PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME

9. In addition to the on-going safety surface replacement programme work, the Leisure Development team also surveyed the play areas in 2014 to assess the overall site facilities and as a result have put in place a priority refurbishment programme, as shown in the below table, to upgrade the play areas identified as having equipment and infrastructure that is reaching the end of its useful life and therefore requiring replacement.

Year 1 (2015/16)	Year 2 (2016/17)	Year 3 (2017/18)
Park Lane Play Area	Drake Close Play Area	Newtown Play Area
King George V Play Area	Fareham Park Play Area	Sarisbury Green Play Area
Birchen Road Play Area	Priory Park Play Area	Howerts Close Play Area
Segensworth Play Area		Warsash Rec Play Area
Stubbington Rec Play Area		Funtley Rec Play Area

10. The upgrade of these play areas will include the complete replacement of the existing safety surfacing and therefore, will result in the sites identified in the above table being removed from the safety surface replacement programme.

REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

11. During the first two years of the replacement programme the majority of sites categorised as being in poor condition have either been replaced or are planned to be

replaced as part of the above refurbishment programme (see right hand column of Appendix A).

12. The remaining play areas, or parts of, that have not yet had replacement surfacing and are not included in the refurbishment programme will once again be the subject of a condition survey during the first half of 2015.
13. The new survey will update and inform the safety surfacing priority replacement programme for the coming years and is considered necessary due to the varying nature in the use and wear of safety surfacing that may result in the original priorities altering accordingly.
14. In line with the Council's contract procedure rules the value of the works would require a competitive tender process or the use of an existing framework agreement. The tender process is likely to take place during the summer of this year.
15. Following the tender process it is anticipated that that the next tranche of works will be completed in this financial year.

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. The main issue arising from a worn safety surface is the increasing risk of a child slipping on the smooth surface and colliding with the equipment causing an injury. As well as the distress caused to the child and family there could be a loss of reputation for the Council and possible financial risks due to potential insurance claims and any resulting negative publicity.
17. The Council has a duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the health & safety of users, so far as reasonably practicable and also the Occupier's Liability Act (1957 - revised 1984) that requires that people can expect to be reasonably safe when using the Council's playgrounds.

CONCLUSION

18. Access to free play is an important contribution to a child's health and development. Fareham Borough Council supports this development by providing facilities that include open spaces and equipped play areas. It is important that children and their parents feel welcome and safe in this environment and are able to access them easily and close to where they live.
19. In order to facilitate the above aim it will be necessary to continue to invest into these sites to ensure they remain fit for purpose by reviewing and updating the rolling safety surface replacement programme during the first half of 2015. This information will be used to update the subsequent tenders over the coming years.

APPENDICIES

Appendix A - 2013 Condition Survey

Background Papers:

October 2013 Executive Report

Reference Papers:

2014 Play Area Tender Documents

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Mick Gore. (Ext 4459)

Appendix A.

Location	Date of Installation	Condition	Work Completed (C) or Planned Refurbishment (PR)
King George V multi play	1992	Poor	PR
Birchen Road	1994	Poor - Fair	PR
Drake Close	1994	Poor	PR
Sarisbury Green	1994	Poor	C
Clydesdale (swings, senior multi play & trim trail)	1994	Poor- Fair	C
Portchester Park (swings, multi play & seesaw)	1994	Poor- Fair	C
Howerts Close	1994	Poor	PR
Park Lane	1995	Poor	C
Stubbington Rec.	1995	Poor	C
Dore Avenue (swings, multi play & trim trail)	1996	Poor- Fair	C
Abshot Road	1998	Poor- Fair	C
Harbour View (swings, roundabout & senior multi play)	1998	Poor- Fair	C
Fareham Park	1998	Poor- Fair	PR
Locks Heath House Park (swings & trim trail)	1999	Poor	C
Swanwick Lane	1999	Fair	C (Part)
Blackbrook Park (swings, junior multi play & trim trail)	1999	Good	
Sweethills (swings, multi play & space net)	1999	Fair	
Funtley Rec.	2000	Fair	PR
Castle Street	2000	Fair (Zip wire poor)	Zip wire C
Course Park Crescent	2000	Poor- Fair	C
Eastern Parade	2000	Poor	C
Priory Park	2001	Poor	PR
Segensworth	2001	Poor	PR
Barry's Meadow	2001	Poor	
King George V	2002	Poor- Fair	PR
Newtown	2002	Good	
Warsash Rec.	2003	Poor	PR
Seafeld Park	2003	Good	
Metcalfe Avenue	2003	Poor- Fair	
Bath Lane	2003	Poor- Fair	C (Part)
Longacres	2004	Poor	
Sweethills (roundabout & seesaw)	2004	Fair	
Badgers Copse	2005	Fair	
Portchester Park (rotator, roundabout & space net)	2005	Fair	
Salterns Park	2006	Fair	
Harbour View (multi play, play panel,	2007	Good	

roundabout, stepping stones)			
Crossfield Walk seesaw	2007	Good	
Clydesdale (junior multi play & seesaw)	2008	Fair	
Burridge	2009	Good	
Fielding Road (swings, junior multi play, roundabout & springle)	2009	Good	
Bellfield	2010	Good	
Kenwood Road	2010	Good	
Kites Croft	2010	Good	
Bath Lane roundabout	2010	Fair	
St Michael's Road	2011	Good	
Blackbrook Park (basket swing, space net, springle & stepping stones)	2011	Good	
Dore Avenue (basket swing, space net, senior multi play & stepping stones)	2011	Good	
Fielding Road (basket swing, senior multi play & springle)	2011	Good	
Locks Heath House Park (junior multi play & seesaw)	2011	Fair	
Crossfell Walk	2012	Good	
Hollybrook Gardens	2012	Good	
West Street	2012	Good	
Laurel Gardens	2013	Good	