

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE  
AND CULTURE**

Decision Made: 05 January 2011

**PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11**

**Issue for Decision**

To consider the recommendations of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan dated 23 December 2010 regarding the Call In of the Play Area Capital Programme 2010/11 Decision made on 10 December 2010.

**Decision Made**

1. That £50,000 of the available capital budget be utilised to carry out works to play areas with the highest priority and the remaining £75,000 be returned to the capital budget.
2. That the review of play areas, as set out in my original decision, be reported to the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee when available.

**Reasons for Decision**

On 10 December 2010, I made the Decision as set out below:

1. That £25,000 of the available capital budget be utilised to carry out works to play areas with the highest priority and that the remaining £100,000 be returned to the capital budget.
2. That a detailed review of play areas be undertaken in early 2011 to rationalise the play area provision with a view to reassessing provision across the borough in line with the parks hierarchy, exploring community management and reducing future financial commitment.

This Decision was called in and considered by the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 December 2010.

The recommendations from that meeting are as set out in the attached Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).

I have accepted these recommendations and this is reflected in the above Decision.

### **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

I could dismiss the recommendations of the Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but since I agreed to this action at the meeting on 23 December 2010, I do not consider this appropriate.

### **Background Papers**

Record of Decision by the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture - 10 December 2010

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SCRAIP)**

**Committee: Leisure & Prosperity**

**Meeting Date: 23 December 2010**

**Minute N<sup>o</sup>: 97**

**Topic:** Call-In: Play area improvement capital programme 2010/11.

Extract from minutes:

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Garland, Leader of the Council, Mr Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager and Councillor Mike Fitzgerald, Member for Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton to the meeting, and invited the Members who had called in the item to present the report.

Councillor Wilson summarised the reason for calling in this item; the decision had been made to reduce the capital budget for play areas prior to a play area review which would likely highlight areas in need of improvement. Councillor English informed Members that this decision was premature as the discussion of concurrent functions and asset transfers was still to be finalised.. Councillor Fitzgerald stated that the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture had responded in writing to the Councillors original concerns after the call-in, and believed that he had misunderstood their concerns as they were not proposing to get rid of the budget, but rather wanted to earmark it for future use. He informed Members that should they have received this letter prior to the deadline for the call-in, they may have been able to avoid the need to bring this to Committees' attention. The Members were informed that in 2003 an assessment was made of the play areas in the urban and rural areas which identified that there was limited scope for development. Councillor Fitzgerald stressed that the safety of the children must not be compromised as a result of the proposed budget cut.

Councillor Garland informed the Committee that there was a need to assist the pressures on the capital programme, and to unlock the money set aside for play areas would create flexibility. Mr Taylor informed the Committee that there were 74 play areas in the borough, which were either controlled by the Council, Golding Homes or Parish Councils and ranged from toddler to teenage use. The Committee noted that maintenance was funded through the revenue budget not capital budget. The rationalisation review

would take a couple of months to complete, however, many parks were assessed daily by his team, and a report was sent to the insurance company every six months. In response to a question Mr Taylor informed the Committee that the review was based on time taken to get to each play area on foot. The Committee highlighted that this review should be done with sensitivity and consideration for how children access the play area, whether any major roads are nearby for example.

Councillor Garland informed the Committee that this proposed budget was for 2010/11 only, and that 2011/12 budget may remain at £125,000. However, as the capital programme must remain flexible he proposed that until the review was undertaken, the budget for the play areas should be kept at £50,000 allowing the capital programme £75,000. Councillors Wilson, English and Fitzgerald informed the Committee that they were in favour of this proposal and thanked the Leader of the Council for this compromise. The Committee accepted this proposal from the Leader of the Council as a way forward.'

<b>Recommendation<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Chief Officer/ Cabinet Member<sup>ii</sup></b>	<b>Response<sup>iii</sup></b>	<b>Timetable<sup>iv</sup></b>	<b>Lead Officer<sup>v</sup></b>
<p>That the Leader of the Council be thanked for his approach to the call-in and it be recommended that:</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture amend the decision from £25,000 from the capital budget to £50,000 to be utilised to carry out works to play areas and the remaining £75,000 be returned to the capital budget for 2010/11; and</p>	<p>Cllr Ash</p>	<p>Agreed, new Decision made</p>		

The review of play areas will include detail on how reasonable provision has been assessed and the completed review will be reported to the Committee when available.	Jason Taylor / Cllr Ash	Agreed, new Decision made		
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### Notes on the completion of SCRAIP

<sup>i</sup> Report recommendations are listed as found in the report.

<sup>ii</sup> Insert in this box the Cabinet Member whose portfolio the recommendation falls within.

<sup>iii</sup> The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box either the acceptance or rejection of the recommendation.

**If the recommendation is rejected** an explanation for its rejection should be provided. The 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes can be left blank

**If the recommendation is accepted** an explanation of the action to be taken to implement the recommendation should be recorded in this box. Please also complete the 'timetable' and 'lead officer' boxes.

<sup>iv</sup> The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box when the action indicated in the previous box will be implemented.

<sup>v</sup> The Officer/Cabinet Member responsible for responding to the recommendation should indicate in this box the Officer responsible for the implementation of the action highlighted in the 'response' box.