

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

1st September
2015

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

No

Play Area Capital Improvement Programme 2015/16-2017/18 - Update

Final Decision-Maker	Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Dawn Hudd – Head of Commercial and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. The committee note the update provided on the Play Area Capital Improvement Programme.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by providing improved play facilities

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee	1 st September 2015

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to provide an update to the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee on progress with the Play Area Capital Improvement Programme 2015/16-2017/18
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Work on this project began in 2011 and has been progressed via a number of different Cabinet Members and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This document is to provide members of the newly formed Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee with the background to the project and how it is progressing.
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3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 There are 120 play areas across Maidstone Borough, 73 of which are owned by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). Other play areas are owned by other organisations including Parish Councils, Kent County Council and Housing Associations.
- 3.2 The last major capital investment in play was as part of the Green Spaces Strategy in 2005.
- 3.3 In 2009 it was agreed to introduce a formal system for allocating capital resources for play areas. All play areas in the borough were assessed to establish their condition. The information was then used to direct the available capital to the MBC play areas most in need of replacement.
- 3.4 In 2012 the Parks and Leisure Team carried out a further play area review which looked in more detail at the current condition and their distribution across the borough. This then led to looking at future options for play areas across the borough and the most effective use of available resources to support all residents' needs.
- 3.5 The three options that were reviewed at that time were:
- 3.5.1 No change in policy – maintain MBC play areas to current level which would cost in the region of £250k per year.
 - 3.5.2 Prioritise 5 main play areas only.
 - 3.5.3 Agree a borough wide strategic play provision standard - based on the majority of residents being a maximum of 12 minutes walk from an amber or green play area.

- 3.6 The initial findings of the play review were presented to the Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22nd April 2013 which resulted in further work being undertaken on the third option.
- 3.7 The results of the further work, including a draft Play Area Strategy, were presented to the Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th July 2013 and 14th January 2014.
- 3.8 A 6 week public consultation was then undertaken to seek views on the proposed strategy. In total 195 individual responses and two petitions were received. The majority of responses focused on individual play areas.
- 3.9 The council's capital programme for the period commencing 2015/16 approved by Full Council on 25 February 2015 includes approximately £1.8 million for play areas improvements over a 3 year period.
- 3.10 On 6th May 2015 the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services agreed to the list of play areas that would be improved over the 3 year period and this can be seen below:

YEAR 1		YEAR 2	Adisham Drive	YEAR 3	Braunstone Drive
	Stratford Drive		St Francis Close		Groewood Drive
	Ashurst Close		Gallants Lane		Corben Close
	Foxden Drive		Albert Reed Gardens		Senacre Square
	Gatland Lane		Mallards Way		Dicken's Road
	Timber Tops		Pested Bars		Brookbank
	Nettlestead		Lime Trees		Clare Park
	Whatman Infant	Cornwallis Park			
	Whatman Junior	Midley Close			
	Queen Elizabeth Sq	Upper Fulling Pits			
	Barming Heath	South Park			
		Penenden Heath			
		Bridge Mill Way			

- 3.11 Also in May 2015, it was recognised that the original draft play area strategy, which had been consulted on, was limited in its scope and should have been more explicitly linked to the council's priorities, in particular improving health and wellbeing.
- 3.12 It was considered more appropriate to develop a strategy for play that covers more than just the play areas and also addresses the needs of adults and older people, as well as children and young people.
- 3.13 It was acknowledged that time to develop the strategy further was required. It was proposed that a more comprehensive strategy would be produced, but so that this did not delay the improvements required to the play areas, it was agreed by the cabinet member that the play area improvement programme should be given the go ahead and that work on this project

would begin in June 2015.

- 3.14 The updated play strategy document will now be incorporated in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, which it has been agreed that the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee will receive an update on at the November meeting.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 A project board has been set up and a project manager appointed. A specification has been prepared and a tender package for all of the equipment required is currently being put together. This will be sent out to play equipment suppliers on the ESBO procurement framework. They will have six weeks to prepare their tender submissions and following this a submissions will be scored, and a play supplier will be selected.
- 4.2 The procurement will be based on supply and installation over three financial years as this is how the capital funding is allocated. This will ensure that the procurement process only has to be carried out in the first year, and in years two and three work can begin once the money becomes available.
- 4.3 It is likely that the first equipment will start to be installed in early 2016.
- 4.4 All previous reports, recommendations and decisions are enclosed with this report

5. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 5.1 This report is as an update for committee

6. PREFERRED OPTION

It is recommended that members of the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee note the contents of this report.

7. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Between 24 Jan 2014 to 7 March 2014 a 6 week public consultation was carried out to allow ward members, parish councils, community groups, residents and other parties the opportunity to review the draft strategy and make their representations about the options being taken forward. The results of this can be seen in previous Cabinet Member reports on this subject.
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8. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

8.1 This report is to update the committee and includes information on how the project is progressing.

9. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – by providing improved play facilities	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
Risk Management	A risk register has been produced and will be monitored by the chairman of the project board	Head of Commercial & Economic Development 21 August 15
Financial	The estimated capital resources required to complete this project have been set aside in the capital programme. Revenue resources required for continued management and maintenance of the play areas must be found within the current Parks and Open Spaces' budgets.	Head of Finance & Resources
Staffing	A project Manager has been appointed. Other staffing resources will be met existing MBC staff.	Jason Taylor – Parks and Leisure Manager
Legal	All contracts will be provided by Mid Kent Legal Partnership	Head of Legal
Procurement	All procurement is being overseen by MBC Procurement Team	Property & Procurement Manager

10. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- No Appendices
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11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Play Area Strategic Standard Draft Report July 2013
Appendix A 2012-13 Play Area Scoring Table
Appendix A Non Strategic Play Areas

Draft Play Strategy Document 2014-24
Play Area Review SCRAIP April 22nd 2013
Play Areas Review SCRAIP July 26th 2014
Draft Report for adoption of Maidstone Play Strategy 2014-24 (as presented
to Scrutiny Committee)
Adoption of Maidstone Play Strategy 2014-24 Report July 2014
3 Year Improvement Plan April 2015