

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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

Decision Made: 10 December 2010

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

##### **Issue for Decision**

To consider the use of the Play Area Improvement Capital for 2010/11.

##### **Decision Made**

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.

##### **Reasons for Decision**

Given the continuing pressures on the Council's capital budget, all areas of expenditure are being reviewed.

With regard to the Council's Play Area Improvement Programme a number of play areas have been refurbished in recent years and several still need repairs and upgrading. Currently, there is £125,000 in the capital budget for play areas improvement. Given the capital budget pressures, it was proposed to reduce this to £25,000 in the current year to enable works to be undertaken in areas with highest priority.

It was also proposed that a detailed review of play areas be undertaken in early 2011 with a view to rationalising the number and type of play facilities provided across the borough in the future. This could lead to a recommendation for a reduction in the number of play areas managed by the council. Any play areas that were deemed to be surplus to operational requirements could be offered to community organisations, groups or parish councils to operate. However, there will still be a focus on ensuring that there is a reasonable provision of play areas across the borough.

## **Alternatives considered and why rejected**

Allocating all of the available £125,000 capital for Play Area Improvements could be considered, but this was not deemed appropriate as this would not assist with reducing the pressure on capital finances elsewhere in the council.

Not allocating any of the £125,000 capital to maintaining quality standards in existing play areas was considered, but this was not deemed appropriate as this action would result in the decline of existing play areas across the borough.

The proposed review of the play areas could be delayed but this would not enable the longer term requirements to be assessed and in particular the overall quality, locations and value for money.

## **Background Papers**

'Play for Today

Application details from Parish Councils

Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play, Fields in Trust

ESPO Pro 5 procurement framework

The above documents are available for viewing at the Council's Maidstone House offices.

Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Change and Scrutiny by: <b>17 December 2010</b>
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