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**REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 5 JUNE 2019****PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT****REPORT FROM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PLACE & ENVIRONMENT****SUBJECT: PLAY SPACES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That the allocated 2019/20 capital budget for play space improvements of £658,000 be spent as set out in Appendix 2 of this report; to supplement 2018/19 council budgets carried forward and external contributions.
- 1.2 That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, to award contracts for the delivery of the Play Spaces Improvement Programme;
- 1.3 That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, to seek and secure appropriate match-funding to assist in the delivery of the Play Spaces Improvement Programme.

**2 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT REFERENCE No: 4/19****3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The suggested programme of works allows the capital programme to target those play areas with the greatest need, and/or those with the greatest potential to offer significant play value to residents.
- 3.2 The timescale of the programme will allow officers a suitable amount of time to seek and secure any potential match-funding opportunities that may be available and thus allow the Council to deliver further play space improvements at no further cost to the Council.

**4 SALIENT INFORMATION**

- 4.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy allocated £658,000 of capital budget, funded from New Homes Bonus, to invest in new play space equipment in 2019/20. This is in addition to play space budgets for 2018/19, of which £30,000 was spent in year and a further £43,000 is requested to be rolled forward into 2019/20, including £18,000 for works already committed. This brings the total projected council spend on play spaces to £731,000, before any external contributions.
- 4.2 The prioritisation of play space investment has been set out in Appendix 1. The rationale behind the list is explained below.

- 4.3 In March 2018 an inspection of all Council play areas was undertaken by a qualified play equipment consultancy: The Play Inspection Company. As part of the inspection, the company provided qualitative scores for two aspects - 'Play Value'; and a 'Locality Score' for each play area. These two scores have been used to assist in prioritising the order of works that is to be undertaken in the play areas and have been ranked into three broad categories of High; Medium and Low. Each score is explained below.

### **Locality Score**

- 4.4 The 'Locality Score' of the site is based on the locality of the site, which reflects the inherent qualities of the site's location and its suitability for the siting of a play space.
- 4.5 Areas with a higher Locality Score reflect those that have the potential to provide the best play space experience; on the flip side, those with a low Locality Score indicate play areas that, irrespective of the investment made in play equipment, will still have a reduced play experience due to their location. For example, a small play space that can only be accessed through a single alleyway will always score a fairly low Locality Score regardless of the investment in play equipment made.
- 4.6 Therefore, investment in play equipment made on sites deemed to have a High Locality score will yield a better overall play experience for an equivalent investment made upon a site with a low Locality Score
- 4.7 The sites have been grouped according to their Locality Score, with those in the high locality being afforded the higher priority in terms of investment. The three classes of play area are set out below:

#### High Locality Score

- Hawkwell Common
- Rochford Recreation Ground
- Hullbridge Recreation Ground
- Fairview Recreation Ground
- Bedford Close Play Space
- Ashingdon Recreation Ground
- Clements Hall Recreation Ground, Play Area
- Clements Hall Recreation Ground, Skatepark
- Sweyne Park Recreation Ground

#### Medium Locality Score

- St John Fisher Recreation Ground
- Great Wakering Recreation Ground
- Canewdon Recreation Ground.
- Grove Recreation Ground

- Rayleigh Leisure Centre Skate Park
- Hockley Woods
- Little Wakering

#### Low Locality Score

- Conway Avenue, Great Wakering
- Morrins Close, Great Wakering
- Rawreth Recreation Ground
- Causton Way, Rayleigh

#### **Play Value**

- 4.8 The play value of the site is based on the range and suitability of the equipment available within a site. Investment in play equipment will improve the overall play experience and increase the Play Value score. However, the overall play experience will still be constrained by the site's locality.
- 4.9 Therefore, the Play Value will be used to determine which sites to prioritise within each broad class of play area as determined by the Locality Score and set out above, with a lower Play Value score being given a greater priority in each class.

#### **Programme of Works**

- 4.10 From the rationale set out above, play areas can be ranked in terms of prioritisation, as set out in Appendix 1, leading to a suggested programme of works in Appendix 2. Recent and committed schemes have also been included to demonstrate how the 2018/19 allocated funding has been spent so far.
- 4.11 It should be noted that the survey was undertaken approximately a year ago; therefore, some of the scores are not reflective of the current status. Additional notes have been provided to indicate where investment has been made since that time or is already committed to be undertaken. It is assumed that these areas will be a low priority in terms of additional investment at this time.
- 4.12 An additional project is proposed to be included in the programme: the construction of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in Great Wakering Recreation Ground. This is ensuring that the £20,000 Section 106 monies that were specifically earmarked for a MUGA in Great Wakering are spent.
- 4.13 The current total for committed and existing spend is £56,000, but the officers have been successful in leveraging in a further £135,000 of match funding. Therefore, given the significant level of match funding achieved, the opportunity to continue to gain further match funding for the scheme should be given consideration. With this in mind, the play space scheme has been spread over a two to three-year period to allow time to identify and explore

potential sources of funding. If successful, this would allow further improvement schemes to be considered at a later date using the same original allocated funding.

### **Procurement of Play Equipment**

- 4.14 The items of play to be tendered will incorporate modern design elements to ensure maximum play ability for a wide range of users. This will also incorporate the use of high-quality bonded rubber/wet pour safety surfacing.
- 4.15 Community engagement and consultation will be sought on the design of each play area project to ensure design reflects the needs of the wider community. An emphasis on inclusivity will be included in any tenders to ensure equal opportunities of play for the wider demographic and, where possible, additional funding will be sought to support the incorporation of DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant items of play.
- 4.16 All new equipment will be tendered with the provision of a minimum of ten years' warranty, with additional points being scored to companies who can offer 20 years and beyond to ensure the structural integrity of all new play equipment.
- 4.17 As part of the purchase of any new equipment, all contractors will have to demonstrate their ability to provide spare parts for a period at least covering the warranty. This ensures the longevity of any investment into play spaces
- 4.18 Where practical, only high-grade steel and aluminium powder-coated structures will be sought to ensure structural integrity, longevity and to ensure vandalism will be kept to a minimum.
- 4.19 Health and Safety will form a weighted part of any tender process, ensuring that any contractor fulfils its duty to provide welfare facilities and to provide evidence that any site will be made safe to the public during construction.
- 4.20 All new sites are required to be signed off by an independent RPii (Register of Play Inspectors International) to ensure compliance with BS:1176/1177 before payment and opening of any site. Any snags will be made good at the contractor's expense.

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 To identify a programme of spend, based upon a single procurement exercise, whereby all play equipment is erected within one year. This will significantly reduce the ability to secure match-funding, with a resultant distinct possibility that the programme will be unable to deliver the full range of improvements initially identified. It will also potentially require many play spaces in the District to be closed at the same time, if the works are to be undertaken in the shorter timescale, resulting in an adverse impact upon residents.

**6 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There is an inflationary risk to the cost of play equipment by lengthening the time the programme is scheduled to complete. However, it is felt that any opportunity to lever in additional match funding by taking the 3-year approach to delivery outweighs any financial impact likely to occur from inflationary pressures.

**7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposed programme of works will be funded as set out in paragraph 4.1 and Appendix 2 of this report
- 7.2 There are no other additional resources required to deliver the programme.

**8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 None.

**9 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

LT Lead Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**Assistant Director Place & Environment**

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**Background Papers:-**

None.

For further information please contact Marcus Hotten on:-

Phone: 01702 318117

Email: [Marcus.hotten@r@rochford.gov.uk](mailto:Marcus.hotten@r@rochford.gov.uk)

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

APPENDIX 1

Play Space	Ward	Potential Value (based on location)	Play Value (based on March 2018 survey)	Priority	Notes
Hawkwell Common	Hawkwell West	HIGH	LOW	1	
Rochford Rec	Roche North & Rural	HIGH	MED	2	
Hullbridge Rec	Hullbridge	HIGH	HIGH	6	New equipment installed in 2018 – hence lower priority
Fairview Rec	Trinity	HIGH	HIGH	6	New equipment installed in 2018 – hence lower priority
Bedford Close	Wheatley	HIGH	LOW	1	
Ashingdon Rec	Hockley & Ashingdon	HIGH	MED	6	New play equipment has just been completed – Hence lower priority
Clements Hall	Hawkwell West	HIGH	HIGH	6	
Clements Hall Skatepark	Hawkwell West	HIGH	LOW	1	
Sweyne Park	Downhall & Rawreth	HIGH	MED	2	Contract & funding to install Play Equipment – in place
St John Fisher	Sweyne Park & Grange	MED	HIGH	6	New equipment installed in 2018
Great Waking Rec	Great Waking	MED	MED	4	Funding already secured to install new play equipment in 2019
Canewdon Rec.	Roche North & Rural	MED	MED	4	
Grove Rec	Lodge	MED	MED	4	
Rayleigh Leisure Skate Park	Downhall & Rawreth	MED	LOW	3	To be moved to the adjacent Sweyne Park site, presently in a state of disrepair
Hockley Woods	Hockley	MED	MED	4	Installation of equipment pending
Little Waking	Great Waking	MED	LOW	3	
Conway Avenue	Great Waking	LOW	LOW	5	
Morrins Close	Great Waking	LOW	LOW	5	
Rawreth Rec	Downhall & Rawreth	LOW	MED	7	
Causton Way	Great Waking	LOW	LOW	7	Installation of play equipment pending

## APPENDIX 2

<b>Present Existing/Committed Spend</b>				
			<b>Council Contribution</b>	<b>Match Funding Contribution</b>
Ashingdon Rec.	Play Equipment	Hockley & Ashingdon	£10,000	£45,000
Sweyne Park	Play Equipment	Downhall & Rawreth	£10,000	£45,000
Hockley Woods	Play Equipment	Hockley (pending)	£18,000	£0
Conway Avenue	Play Equipment	Great Wakering (pending)	£8,000	£0
Great Wakering	Play Equipment	Great Wakering (pending)	£10,000	£45,000
		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£56,000</b>	<b>£135,000</b>
<b>Year 1 – 2019/20</b>				
			<b>Planned Spend</b>	
Hawkwell Common	play equipment	Hawkwell West	£55,000	
Bedford Close	play equipment	Wheatley	£40,000	
Rochford Rec	play equipment	Roche North & Rural	£55,000	
Little Wakering	play equipment	Great Wakering	£30,000	
Rayleigh Leisure	skateboard park	Downhall & Rawreth	£150,000	
		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£330,000</b>	
<b>Year 2 – 2020/21</b>				
Great Wakering	MUGA	Great Wakering	£100,000	£20,000
Canewdon Rec	play equipment	Roche North & Rural	£25,000	
Grove Rec	play equipment	Lodge	£25,000	
Clements Hall	skateboard park	Hawkwell West	£150,000	
		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£300,000</b>	
<b>Year 3 – Ward Investments</b>				
Fairview	Outdoor gym	Trinity	£15,000	
Hullbridge	Outdoor gym	Hullbridge	£15,000	
St John Fisher	Outdoor gym	Sweyne Park & Grange	£15,000	
		<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>£45,000</b>	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>£731,000</b>	<b>£155,000</b>