

PLAYSPACE ROLLING PROGRAMME 2007/08 – REVISION

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The playspace rolling programme for 2006/07 and 2007/08 was agreed at the Leisure Tourism and Heritage Committee on 20 June 2006.
- 1.2 Works for the 2006/07 programme are proceeding and will be completed this financial year.
- 1.3 The programme for 2007/8 is shown in the table below. It was agreed to allow time for consultation with the Parish Councils, to seek additional grant funding from sources not available to the District Council.

Site No.	Site Name	Parish	Reason
RDC005	Althorne Way	Canewdon	Replace Scales of Justice swing and Update Ariel Runway
RDC 017	Hockley Woods	Hockley	Additional Infant / Junior equipment
RDC003	Bedford Close	Rayleigh	Update / renew site
RDC024	Boston Avenue	Rayleigh	Re-fence Site and update equipment

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A situation has again arisen, whereby the playspace at Seaview Drive, Great Wakering has been subject to some youth nuisance that has caused serious issues for the neighbours of that playspace.
- 2.2 The playspace was initially locked for a short period to see whether the nuisance could be displaced. However, when reopened the nuisance returned and the playspace has remained locked during the summer of 2006, to ensure that there were no further disturbances.
- 2.3 On 12 July 2006, one Ward Member arranged a public meeting with the neighbours of the playspace. The issues that had caused the problems were discussed and views on the long term use of the playspace were considered. Notes of the public meeting are included as Appendix A.
- 2.4 Residents were happy that the playspace remained closed until a permanent solution could be found.

3 FUTURE USE OF THE PLAYSACE

- 3.1 Residents were very keen that an infant playspace should be retained in this location, but of sufficient size that would remove the ability for older youths to play ball games.

Proposals

- 3.2 In looking at the area it was considered that the overall size of the playspace could be reduced, with a large buffer zone being densely planted between the smaller playspace and the boundary walls of Seaview Drive and Brookside Avenue.
- 3.3 A buffer zone could be created by fencing of a 5 metre strip along the two boundaries, with 2 metre high steel paling. Planting could create a smaller play area, with a significant buffer zone to the neighbouring properties. This type of arrangement has worked well at other locations in Great Wakering.
- 3.4 The playspace would require a complete refurbishment and infant only equipment installed to facilitate future use.
- 3.5 The programme for 2007/08 included Playspace RDC 024, Boston Avenue, Raleigh. This site is now under consideration with the Housing Transfer process, as it is on land within the Housing Revenue Account. It is considered that this scheme could be delayed for one further year, to enable the work at Seaview Drive playspace in Great Wakering to be done in 2007/08.
- 3.6 It is likely that Seaview Drive would have been included in the 2008/09 programme for refurbishment, so that this proposal would in essence, swap these two schemes around.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The problems at Seaview Drive have been cyclic over a number of years, but have grown more serious in the last few months. Unless the Council is seen to act to protect the neighbours, whilst retaining an infant playspace, there may be a reputational risk to the Council.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Although the problems at Seaview Drive are not of a criminal nature, the site is at the rear of properties and cannot be used for any other purpose. This solution would make this area unattractive for youths to use and so reduce the potential for other activities.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 By seeking to revise the playspace rolling programme, this problem would be dealt with without additional financial resources

7 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 It will be necessary to hold discussions with Great Wakering Parish Council, to follow up additional funding from external sources.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

To agree the revision in the Playspace Rolling programme for 2007/08, to bring forward Seaview Drive Playspace and defer Boston Avenue until the outcome of the LSVT process is complete.

Graham Woolhouse

Corporate Director (External Services)

Background Papers:-

None

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Appendix A

SEAVIEW DRIVE PLAYSPLACE

NOTES OF MEETING HELD 12 JULY 2006 – 6PM.

Attendees: Councillor Mrs B J Wilkins, District Council
David Timson, Property Maintenance & Highways Manager
Richard Tatton-Bennett, Principal Engineer
Residents (12) of Seaview Drive and Brookside Avenue.

Venue: Seaview Drive Playspace

A meeting was arranged with residents from Seaview Drive and Brookside Avenue, whose gardens back on to Seaview play area and who had requested a meeting with Officers. Complaints had been received over many months and the play area had been closed.

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. It was important that everyone's views be heard, including those from the children.

We discussed the way forward for the play area. These were the suggestions from **all** the residents:

1. Clear out the wooden climbing frame because older children hid in there; even stayed over night. Drugs, bad language and football were all nuisances.
2. As a play area it needs to be locked up every night, youths have been talking as late as 3am. Several residents said that they would be happy to be key holders.
3. Need a gate at the beginning of the alley and needs to be locked at night.
4. CCTV was suggested but quashed by the Officers as impracticable.
5. Wood chips around new play equipment.
6. New smaller equipment as in Conway Avenue – roundabout, boat, spring toys and swings (note: spring toys were really only for young children).
7. Notices to say the play area is only for children up to 11 years old.
8. Residents then all voted for the area to be closed for the summer.

Mr Timson suggested a buffer of planting up to the wall of Brookside residents' gardens.

All residents were thanked for their attendance and they in turn thanked us for arranging this very important meeting.

Councillor Barbara Wilkins - 12.7.06.

12 Local Residents attended