

---

**REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 20 JUNE 2012****PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT****REPORT FROM HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES****SUBJECT: PLAY SPACES REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME 2012/13****1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 That this year's budget allocation is used to provide new gates for play areas across the district; to make provision for new safety surfacing; to begin the rollout of new signage in accordance with industry best practice and to replace equipment at Canewdon public open space.

**2 FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE No: 07/12****3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Each year the Capital budget provides £50,000 for the on-going improvements of the play spaces to ensure that they meet health and safety requirements and the needs of the residents.
- 3.2 Last year's budget was used to improve the facilities at Sweyne Park Rayleigh, in order to ensure that the play equipment met the current health and safety standards. Following an assessment of all sites by officers and consultation with Parish and Town Councils, it is proposed that the programme for 2012/13 should include:-
- The installation of new gates with internal self-closing mechanisms to replace out-dated existing gates for play areas across the district in order to ensure that access standards meet industry best practice. This issue was identified following a safety audit and the proposed scheme will enable all seven gates of the substandard design to be replaced. (Estimate £7,000)
  - The provision of synthetic play surfaces aimed at replacing loose material play surfaces in key areas, this is again mindful of industry best practice and to reduce long-term maintenance costs. This is part of an on-going district wide replacement programme and is included each year. The sites to be improved are determined on the basis of the annual safety audit and will include both solitary equipment in open spaces and that contained within play areas. (Estimate £37,000)
  - To begin rolling out new information signage for play areas in order to comply with industry best practice. (Estimate £3,000)
  - The installation of two sets of replacement swings at Canewdon public open space. (Estimate £3,000)

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The works referred to in this report have been developed in consultation with our Legal, Estates & Member Services Division following a report from the independent Playground Safety Consultant.
- 4.2 Alternatives include an assessment of play areas, with regards to their long-term viability in terms of maintenance and play value in order to provide a more strategic approach for the future. (Estimate £9,000). It is intended to include this in the programme at the earliest opportunity.
- 4.3 Suggestions from the Parish and Town Councils included the provision of a skateboard park for the Pooles Lane recreation ground Hullbridge and the provision of additional play equipment for Clements Hall targeted at children aged between 5 and 12 years. These options were discounted as they related to the provision of new equipment rather than replacements, in consequence there would be additional on-going revenue implications in respect of maintenance and inspection that cannot be contained within existing budgets.

**5 RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The works identified in this report will reduce the potential for injury and thereby minimise potential insurance claims.

**6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report recommends expenditure in the order of £50,000 which is within the annual budget of £50,000. There are no additional on-going revenue implications as a result of the proposals.

**7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The renewal of the play equipment will ensure that there is an area which is safe and physically stimulating for young children.

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.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Head of Environmental Services**

---

**Background Papers:-**

None.

For further information please contact Marcus Hotten (Open Spaces Manager) on:-

Phone: 01702 318117

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

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