

# **APPENDIX N**

## **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16 JUNE 2009**

**EXECUTIVE - 7 JULY 2009**

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**Title:**

**PROPOSED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME FOR PLAYGROUNDS AND  
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 2009-2011**

[Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Youth:  
Cllr Roger Steel & Cllr Carole King]  
[Wards Affected: All]

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**Summary and purpose:**

To present the proposed methodology for allocating capital funding to playgrounds and youth facilities in parks and open spaces over the coming two years and to seek approval of the resultant provisional priority list.

The Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered this report at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 and supported the recommendations as set out in the report.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The proposals contained within this report will make a contribution to a number of the Council's Corporate Priorities, as follows:

- **Improving Lives**- The provision of high quality, well-maintained, accessible and inclusive play facilities will help to improve the quality of life for many people, including those with disabilities.
- **Leisure**- The proposed programme of works will improve opportunities for children and young people to take part in freely available outdoor recreation.
- **Value for money**- The programme is designed to bring together a variety of funding streams, both internal and external to the Council, and therefore maximises the investment available for these important council assets.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

The projects detailed within this report have been assessed against a number of measures and prioritised accordingly. Among these is their compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Refurbishment works will take account of these findings, with new and improved play areas embracing fully the requirements of the DDA.

### **Resource/Value for Money implications:**

As detailed in the report, the proposed programme is designed to bring together a variety of funding streams, both internal and external to the Council, and therefore maximises the investment available.

Waverley's proposed funding towards the projects is within the approved Capital programme for the years 2009/10 and 2010/11, but the Capital Programme will require amendment to incorporate the additional external funding sought.

It is proposed that the implementation of these projects, including local consultation, procurement and project management, will be resourced from within the existing Parks and Landscape team.

### **Legal Implications:**

There are no legal implications.

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### **Background**

1. In 2006 the Council embarked upon a major replacement and refurbishment programme of many of its play areas, allocating a total capital budget of £942,000 to undertake this work. This sum was supplemented with a further £170,000 from a combination of S106 funds and external funds, and resulted in the substantial upgrade of 25 sites, with minor improvements carried out to a number of other play areas around the borough at the same time.
2. This work was completed at the beginning of 2008 and has brought about considerable improvements to the range and quality of play opportunities across the borough, but despite the considerable investment outlined above, there are a further 30 play areas in this Council's ownership which did not benefit from this work and are still in need of attention. This report sets out a proposed approach for prioritising these works and looks at current and future funding opportunities to enable this programme to take place

#### The proposed prioritisation approach

3. The prioritisation of potential projects for funding needs to be looked at under two distinct headings, the first being the improvement, where necessary, of existing playspace and youth facilities, and the second being the provision of additional facilities where a need has been identified.
4. In order to identify areas potentially in need of additional playspace it will be necessary to carry out a spatial study of existing provision to highlight any significant gaps, to compare this with childhood population and deprivation data, and then to identify any sites that could potentially accommodate any additional provision considered necessary. This exercise will also assist in identifying any sites that may be considered surplus to requirements. It is proposed that comprehensive survey and consultation work is carried out over the coming year as part of a wider open space and recreation study in order to inform this process, and a report covering this will be brought forward in

due course. However, in order to enable capital spend to be prioritised in a robust and equitable way in the meantime, this report addresses those play areas and youth facilities that fall into the first category until a fuller picture can be presented.

#### Improvement of existing playspace

5. Following the replacement programme outlined above, all WBC-owned play sites and youth facilities throughout the borough were subjected in 2008 to an annual independent inspection and audit. This not only looked at the operational safety of the equipment on site and its compliance with British and European standards, but also provided an overall Risk Assessment for each site, as well as a “Play Value” Assessment and an assessment of its compliance with the requirements of the DDA.
6. These inspections were intended to both help inform future management decisions and indicate where resources should be directed when available, to improve the portfolio of sites.
7. However, some sites, particularly the smaller areas (the type often found on housing estates for example) will always struggle to score highly on Play Value and will always generate a higher than average risk score when viewed per item of equipment (due to the low number of items, and the risk they must carry with respect to ancillary items such gates, fences, bins, etc). Many have been refurbished relatively recently, and there is simply no more that can be done to reduce the risk or increase the “Play Value” score significantly. Therefore for the purposes of this exercise, the “Risk Assessment”, “Play Value Assessment” and “DDA Assessment” scores have been combined with the approximate date of construction or refurbishment of each area to take this into account.
8. Finally, in order to take account of areas of particular need around the borough, a fifth measure looking at relative deprivation by Super Output Area was also incorporated into the process.

In summary therefore, the assessment took five parts, as follows

- (i) Play Value (Scored out of 5)
- (ii) Date Refurbished/ Constructed (Scored out of 3):
  - i. 2007/08 = 3 Points
  - ii. 2003-2007 = 2 Points
  - iii. Pre- 2003 = 1 Point
- (iii) Risk Per Item (Scored out of 4, with the safest areas scoring 4, and the least safe scoring 1):
- (iv) DDA Assessment (Scored out of 5)
- (v) Index of Multiple Deprivation (Scored out of 4)

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|-------------|---|----------|
| i. 0-4      | = | 4 Points |
| ii. 5-9     | = | 3 Points |
| iii. 10-20  | = | 2 Points |
| iv. Over 20 | = | 1 Point  |

Taking all the play facilities in the borough and applying the above assessment criteria, a priority list (appended at Annexe 1) was generated. A separate list, using the same criterion as above was developed for skateparks in the borough, and this too can be found at Annexe 1.

8. The sites highlighted in grey are those that have been constructed or refurbished since 2007, and will therefore not require any further investment for the foreseeable future. It is worth noting that, as testimony to the assessment approach outlined above, these are mostly towards the bottom of the list.
9. Finally, although not subjected to detailed inspection, there are five Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and a number of 'Ball Hoops' across the borough, which need to be considered as part of this process. Although the MUGA's are all less than three years old (and therefore require no further investment or upgrading for the foreseeable future), there is a need to identify where further such facilities might be required (the five existing facilities are all located in Farnham and Godalming). Also, the majority of the ball hoops are now nearing the end of their useful lives and will either require removal, replacement or upgrading over the coming years. Both the MUGAs and ball hoops are listed in Annexe 1.

#### Future funding for playground/ youth facilities replacement/ enhancement

10. Detailed below are the various funds either specifically allocated, or potentially available to be spent on the improvement of play space over the coming two years:

- a) WBC Capital Programme

The Council's three-year capital programme currently identifies a sum of £50,000 for 2009/10, and sums of £165,000 each year for 2010/11 and 2011/12 for playground replacement.

In addition to this is a sum of £22,000 in both 2009/10 and 2010/11 for recreational facilities for young people- a fund that is generally used for partnership funding the development or enhancement of facilities such as Multi-Use Games Areas and Skateparks.

- b) Section 106 Contributions

The Council currently has approximately £55,000 of S106 money that has been allocated specifically to play areas and open space improvements across the borough.

In addition to the above is a sum of £53,600, arising from the Farnham Hospital development, which has been allocated for off-site play

provision. This is payable by the developer following the 40<sup>th</sup> occupation of the development, and is to be used within 1 mile of the site.

Of course, the use of S106 money is governed in each case by the specific agreement signed, and is generally restricted to the particular geographical area in which the development has taken place. There is therefore a degree of inflexibility as to where this can be spent. An example of this is the sum of £4,400 arising from developments in the Beacon Hill area, which is to be allocated to replacing the ball hoop on site despite the fact that the playground on site is towards the bottom of the priority list.

c) Infrastructure Tariffs

The infrastructure tariff system has been in place since April 2008, and despite the economic downturn, some small sums are now beginning to come in under the various headings, including play provision.

As with S106 contributions however, these sums too are restricted to a specific geographical area (i.e. a tariff generated from a development in Godalming must be spent in Godalming), meaning there is again a degree of inflexibility as to where this can be spent.

d) Playbuilders Fund

The 'Playbuilder' initiative follows the government consultation on national play strategy 'Fair Play', which was launched in April 2008, and is a key commitment in the Children's Plan.

It is a capital programme investing £235 million nationally on developing play facilities targeted specifically at the 8-13 age range. The initiative is intended for public play spaces close to where children live. These are expected to be safe, but also exciting, stimulating and accessible to all. Promoting an increase in active, imaginative and adventurous play is a key aim of the programme, as is the participation of children, their parents, community members and elected members in development processes.

Where a multi-tiered local government hierarchy exists, this funding is being distributed to County Councils, who are then expected to work with their local district and borough councils to develop a programme of improvement projects that could benefit from this funding.

A total of £1.1m has been allocated to Surrey County Council, and a bid has now been submitted setting out how this money might be spent. It has been agreed that each District and Borough within Surrey will be awarded an equal share of this money (£100k), but each local council will have to demonstrate how the projects they have identified meet the needs of the area where they are to be situated and how they fit in with identified areas of need in Surrey.

The Playbuilder projects identified have to be built within 2 years of the funding being allocated, and revenue funding of £45,000 has been made available to the County Council to appoint a project manager to oversee all aspects of the project. This will include working with the borough and district councils to establish timetables for the implementation of the projects, procurement procedures, monitoring and evaluation.

e) Youth Capital Fund

The Youth Capital Fund provides a capital budget for young people to control and enables them to have a role in deciding how money should be spent on positive activities and youth facilities in their area. Funded activities must support the five Every Child Matters outcomes, benefit the local community and offer good value for money.

The involvement of young people, especially disadvantaged young people, is central to the Funds, as giving young people genuine influence over local services is recognised as the most effective way of ensuring better access and increasing participation in positive activities.

There is £34,000 available from this fund in Waverley for financial year 2009/10, with the same allocated for 2010/11. Applications for the first round are accepted from April 2009 until February 2010.

Young people have to apply for this funding and a Waverley grant-giving panel assesses the applications and allocates the funds.

This funding has been available for the past 3 years and has supported the development of the Skate park at Aarons Hill, Multi Use Games Areas at Sandy Hill, Farnham and Broadwater Park, Godalming and the play area at Northbourne in Godalming.

Allocating funds to the priority list

16. As is explained under the headings above, with the exception of the core capital budget (which, to an extent, can be used on any project within the borough), all other funding streams are more restricted in their use- either geographically in the case of infrastructure tariff and S106 funds, or in terms of the type of project they are spent on in the case of Playbuilders funding.

It is therefore not possible to simply start at the top of the priority list and work down. The list at Annexe 2 therefore attempts to bring together the priority lists as detailed with the funding available, and presents a proposed list of projects for the coming 24 months (when it is hoped a more comprehensive programme, potentially including the construction of new facilities and removal of surplus facilities will be adopted).

## **Conclusion**

17. The proposed approach set out above is intended to take account of the variety of factors contributing towards quality play provision across the borough. The schemes highlighted in Annexe 2 are deemed to be the highest priority projects taking these factors and the availability of funding into account, and the implementation of these projects over the next two years will result in more high quality, safe and DDA-compliant sites being available throughout the borough into the future. The Executive also reaffirmed its commitment to offering to devolve play facilities for young people to Town and Parish Councils where appropriate.

## **Comments from the Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

18. The Committee recommended that the first recommendation be amended to:
  1. endorses the proposed approach for prioritisation of capital spend on playgrounds and recreational facilities for young people over the next two years **in consultation with Town and Parish Councils to identify needs and sources of funding.**

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. endorses the proposed approach for prioritisation of capital spend on playgrounds and recreational facilities for young people over the next two years;
2. approves the proposed list of projects for the next two years; and
3. agrees to the amendment of the 2009/10 Capital Programme to include the additional S106 funding of £4,400 for Beacon Hill Recreation Ground.

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## **Background Papers (SDCS)**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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