

APPENDIX J

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 5 OCTOBER 2010

Title:

**PROPOSAL TO RE-ALLOCATE WBC CAPITAL FUNDS COMMITTED FOR
PLAYGROUND REFURBISHMENTS TO BE ADDED TO THE CURRENT HERONS
SKATEPARK/MUGA REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

[Portfolio Holders: Cllrs Steel, O'Grady and King

**[Wards Affected: Haslemere Critchmere and Shottermill Ward & Godalming
Farncombe and Cattershall Ward]**

Summary and purpose:

The transfer of the funds from the playground replacement capital fund for the Canon Bowring playground refurbishment project, Farncombe, into the recreational facilities fund for The Herons Skatepark/MUGA refurbishment Project, Haslemere. In order to provide the best possible skatepark and MUGA for children, young people and adults who live in the borough within existing resources in the financial year 2010/11.

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 a high quality, safe, well maintained, accessible and inclusive skate park facility that will improve the quality of life for children, young people and adults.
- Leisure – The proposed investment into the skate park will improve opportunities for children and young people to take part in freely available outdoor recreation.
- Value for Money – The proposal 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 project detailed within this report has been assessed against a number of measures and prioritised accordingly. Among these is the 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.

Climate Change Implications:

There are no implications arising from this report.

Resource/Value for Money Implications:

The proposed implementation of this project, 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.

Background

Playbuilders Fund

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

A total of £1.1m was allocated to Surrey County Council, through a bid submitted by Guildford BC and Waverley setting out how this money was to be spent. Each District and Borough within Surrey were to receive an equal share of this money (£100k), but were required to demonstrate how the projects they had identified met the needs of the area where they were situated and how they fitted in with the 'priority' areas identified by Surrey County Council.

Waverley Borough Council Playground and Skatepark Priority List

This year, six refurbishment projects were planned; Boundstone Recreation Ground, Peakfield Recreation Ground, Tilford Road, Herons Skatepark/MUGA, Farnham Park (St James) and Canon Bowering Recreation Ground.

The above projects were short listed for refurbishment in the report "Proposed Investment programme for Playgrounds and Recreational Facilities for Young People 2009-2011" submitted to the Executive Committee 7 July 2009. The priority of the Canon Bowering Recreation Ground playground project has been moved forward in the playground priority list (see Annexe A and 2 of the report) ahead of other higher priority projects. The altering of the priority order was linked to the availability of the 'Playbuilder Fund'. The Canon Bowering Recreation Ground was deemed to be a suitable site to fully explore the design principles of more natural play required in order to meet the criteria of Playbuilder funding.

Introduction

1. Central Government has recently announced that the 'Playbuilder Funding' for the 2010/2011 playground refurbishments projects will be now be cut as part of their spending cutbacks, this applies to refurbishment projects not yet started. Therefore £50,000 of this external funding will now not be available for the £75,000 Canon Bowring refurbishment project, as contracts have not yet been awarded. The project is now considered to not be viable without the external funding.
2. We would therefore like to propose the postponement of this particular refurbishment project and include it in next years rolling programme of capital refurbishment. More WBC capital can be allocated so that a substantial scheme on the same scale as this years project can be progressed.
3. The current skatepark and MUGA facility at The Herons Leisure Centre, Haslemere is very old, tired and nearing the end of its useable life. The facility has been identified in the current rolling programme of playground refurbishment as being in need of refurbishment. An initial consultation evening was held on 5 July 2010 and was very well attended by local young people. The user group that consists of skaters, BMX riders, in-line skaters and users of the ball court are very keen to see the facility improved and have already undertaken research into a new facility with professional skatepark contractors. The current facility is also very limiting to the current users, as it does not provide enough suitable equipment for BMX riders nor does it adequately provide a decent surface for skaters.
4. Initially it was thought that the existing skate ramps could be incorporated into the redesigned skatepark. However, in recent weeks WBC has had to undertake several emergency repairs to skate ramp surfaces, where the welds had come apart. From discussion with skatepark contractors (to be involved in the refurbishment project) and also the professional opinion of WBC Officers, it is now apparent these skate ramps have reached the end of their useable life and will not be suitable to be included in a new design. Therefore the current budget given to this project will not provide enough funds to design and build a facility that the user group so desperately want and need.
5. As a consequence of this we would like to propose the capital fund of £25,000 for the Canon Bowring Project be transferred into the current Herons Skatepark/MUGA refurbishment project in Haslemere.

Conclusion

6. The transferring of the previously mentioned £25,000 capital fund will provide a high quality Skatepark/MUGA facility in Haslemere, which will be well used in many years to come and finally provide a facility in Haslemere that compares well against other areas within the Borough.
7. Canon Bowring will remain a priority and will form part of our capital bid next financial year. By delaying the refurbishment of Cannon Bowring it would give officers the opportunity to potentially source external funding in order to create

a facility that would enhance the area and meet the needs of the local Community.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. approves the transfer of £25,000 capital fund, previously allocated to Canon Bowering playground refurbishment, into the Herons Skatepark/MUGA refurbishment project; and
2. Canon Bowering refurbishment project be deferred until next year.

Background Papers

Proposed Investment programme for Playgrounds and Recreational Facilities for Young People 2009 – 2011 – Executive Committee 7 July 2009

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