

AGENDA ITEM 10

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

12 NOVEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY & NEIGHBOURHOODS

PLAY AREA EQUIPMENT, APPARATUS & SITE

RENEWAL, REPLACEMENT & MAINTENANCE POLICY 2014

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek members support for the adoption of a replacement and renewal programme, together with guiding policy for the authorities play area sites, play equipment and apparatus.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members approve the:

- Play Area Equipment, Apparatus & Site Renewal, Replacement and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1)
- Developing Play Area Equipment, Apparatus & Site Renewal, Replacement and Maintenance Programme with a view of establishing a replacement and renewal fund. (Appendix 2)

3.0 KEY ISSUES - BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Melton Borough Councils Environmental Maintenance Team (EMT) currently oversees and manages all the councils play areas. This involves responsibility for each of the sites play infrastructure i.e. equipment and apparatus as well the sites general condition. In addition the section manages, and is responsible for the maintenance and development of all the council's leisure and recreational open green spaces.
- 3.2 The EMT section based at Snow Hill incorporates the operational team as well as the administration and management officers for a number of services, including Environmental Maintenance within the Community and Neighbourhoods Division and Waste management within Regulatory Services.
- 3.3 All play equipment and apparatus currently in use has been procured and purchased outright. This is standard practise within the play infrastructure industry, as all associated equipment and apparatus is not available to hire or lease. This report seeks to set out a clear renewal and replacement programme with an associated policy document that will ensure all aspects of the play area service are duly considered, i.e. sites and equipment that is fit for purpose being safe, secure, well maintained and retained through a comprehensive renewal and replacement programme.
- 3.4 It is hoped that one major outcome from this report will be the establishment of a

renewal and repair fund in line with the details within the new Renewal and Replacement Programme (Appendix 2) which identifies both the Revenue and Capital requirements for the service for the next 5 years and beyond.

3.5 To date the replacement and renewal process for play area equipment and general site infrastructure has been undertaken using a number of methods and funding streams. However primarily, the financing of the service has been achieved through prudent use of annual revenue budgets, associated with the service as well as funds identified for capital expenditure made available through section 106 agreements.

In essence the selection of new or replacement play equipment and apparatus as well as general site infrastructure initiatives have been based on a number of key factors :

- The desire to in general maintain the play value and type of play experience available at each site through the use of replacement or new equipment similar to that currently in place.
- To ensure sites are maintained to meet the recognised Health and Safety requirements and standards for play areas and similar recreational sites
- The types and range of play equipment and apparatus available.
- To develop sites as budget constraints permit, to meet the changing demands for play.
- To address and acknowledge the need to consider changes/swings to climate and seasonal patterns i.e. Increased flood mitigation at a number of waterlogging prone sites i.e. increased drainage capacities, increased use of low maintenance landscaping, increased use of drought resistant grasses and flora.

3.6 To date the capital renewal and replacement requirements of the service have not been supported by a repair and renewal fund. The key recommendation of this report seeks members endorsement to establish an on-going annual sinking fund, which will be used to renew or replace the equipment and the sites infrastructure, based on the policy for renewal/replacement (Appendix 1) with key considerations being :

- Expected operational life in a healthy and safe working condition.
- The mechanical and technical specification being appropriate and as a minimum fully compliant with current regulations and legislation.
- The play value and likely play experience i.e. exploratory, exercise based, adventure based, imaginative play based, challenging, physical development i.e. co-ordination / balance based.
- Basic operational aspects and type to be retained if possible when alternatives be sought

3.7 The policy set out as Appendix 1 aims to ensure Melton Borough Council provides play areas that are appropriate for the local area they serve, are maintained and inspected on a regular basis, clean tidy and safe, equipped appropriately with apparatus fit for purpose and of a type that ensures the sites provides the play value and play experience expected of them.

3.8 Next Steps

The approach taken to develop this policy has already been adopted for EMT front line vehicles and machines and will be further used to develop a similar renewal/replacement/maintenance programme policy for all elements of the Town Centre Street Furniture, to be presented to members early in 2015.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This report proposes a guiding policy (see Appendix 1) that will be used to ensure Play Equipment & Apparatus, as well as site maintenance and development are always of a high standard, and the replacement and renewal programme ensuring the play area service meets with the desired 3E's, that being the expectations of maximising Economic benefit, Environmental benefit, and Effectiveness in regards to service application and delivery.

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposed programme is expected to provide better budgetary estimation and control, with the capital requirements of the service presented as a fixed interval gap rolling programme, of renewals and replacements. Designed to ensure maximum efficient working lives of the equipment and apparatus in service, as well as advanced knowledge of the services expected requirements, allowing for investigation and research before purchase, to ensure optimum 3 E's procurement is achieved and maintained.

One of the next steps will be to analyse the figures against realistic costs taking into account inflation and the market. If the figures are likely to change then this will be reported back to members as part of the budget proposals from 2015/16 onwards

The medium term plan is then to ensure the Renewal & Replacement fund will allow sufficient resources to be built up in a proactive way that is utilised against a clear plan we have.

We will be monitoring the actual life and the optimum to pick up any issues of poor maintenance and/or abuse.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications or powers issues resulting from this report

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

- 7.1 All play equipment is inspected weekly to ensure it's safe and fully compliant with current regulations and as such Community Safety will remain largely unaltered. However this report may further enhance community safety through an approved renewal and replacement programme and guiding policy document ensuring all equipment in use is renewed and replaced at appropriate intervals.

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

- 8.1 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed and any negative impacts will be reported to this committee.

9.0 **RISKS**

9.1 This report is expected to provide for a sustainable, 3E's balanced and logical replacement and renewal programme.

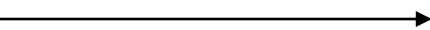
Any risks associated with the proposed programme would be primarily external, in so far as on-going development of play equipment and apparatus is to an extent unknown. However, ensuring sufficient research and investigation into what play equipment and apparatus are available in advance of the proposed pre-agreed times of change should ensure the selection meets the 3E's. In addition climate shifts and changing seasonal patterns will need to be considered to ensure the optimum selection of equipment as well as suitable site development and improvement

Probability



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1		
Very Low E			2	
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Impact



Risk No.	Description
1	Equipment and apparatus identified as replacements are not the optimum models available
2	Not adopting the proactive policy and replacement programme appended to this report

10.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

10.1 Today's modern play area equipment and apparatus are designed to be robust and to withstand high levels of impact and force and are built to meet the highest levels of environmental standards. The regular consistent and comprehensive maintenance and service regime, fully aligned with manufacturers recommendations, contributes to its longevity and accordingly minimises replacement and or renewal and therefore reduce negative impacts associated with manufacture.

11.0 **CONSULTATION**

11.1 Consultation in regards to utilising the proposed renewal programme will occur with a wide range of stakeholders , both user groups and internal sections and officers of the council who have direct and indirect responsibility and duties for the Boroughs play provisions.

12.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

12.1 The play areas and open spaces for which the council are responsible are mainly located within Melton Mowbray and as such it will mainly be Town Wards that are affected

Contact Officer
Date:

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27th October 2014

Appendices :

- Play Area Equipment, Apparatus & Site Renewal, Replacement and Maintenance Policy (Appendix 1)
- Draft Play Area Equipment, Apparatus & Site Renewal, Replacement and Maintenance Programme (Appendix 2)

Background Papers: None

Reference : X- Cttees/CSA/2014.15/121114/HR- Play Equipment