

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**17 JUNE 2015****REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS****PLAY AREA EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT PROPOSAL****1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek members endorsement to renew play equipment at three play areas: The Crescent, Baldocks lane and at Melton Country Parks Visitors centre.
- 1.2 To seek members approval of the Avon Road Play Area Business Case

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members approve the Project Mandate and Business Case (Appendices A&B) for the replacement/renewal of play equipment as detailed within this report for three of Melton Mowbray's play areas: The Crescent , Baldocks lane and the Melton Country Park Visitors Centre Play area and include this into the 2015/16 Capital Programme.**
- 2.2 **Members approve the Business Case attached at Appendix C, which relates to the play equipment on Avon Road and include this project into the 2015/16 Capital Programme**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 A comprehensive 2015-2020 programme to renew or replace play area equipment was agreed by members of the Community & Social Affairs Committee at their meeting of 12 November 2014

Officers with the assistance of Finance have been analysing the programme and current indications show that an annual sinking fund contribution of £35,000- £40,000 from 2015/16 onwards would be needed to maintain the play areas the council manages with adequate equipment.

This request follows on from that report and is seeking approval for replacement equipment as identified within that programme.

- 3.2 Generally the councils play areas are popular community facilities that offer healthy outdoor activity providing further benefits to health, physical development and social cohesion.
- 3.3 A high number of council play sites have been somewhat neglected in terms of a replacement programme/strategy that would ensure the sustainability and on-going fitness for purpose of those play area sites and equipment.
- 3.4 To address this, a comprehensive and detailed on-going programme of play equipment and play site infrastructure requirements, in regards to their maintenance renewal and replacement over time, was agreed by members at the end of 2014.
- 3.5 Most recently a significant amount of play equipment installed during the 1980's, at the three sites mentioned in the recommendation, and was removed specifically on the grounds of the danger it posed to users and its absolute failure to meet the health and

safety standards required of useable play equipment. This action was pre-empted by notices erected at the sites to be affected explaining the reason for pending major works and giving an assurance that the process to replace the equipment was already underway. This was then followed by a consultation process which included the use of social media, advertising in the local newspapers and further signage placed within the play areas affected as well as on the town's community centre notice boards, informing locals of forthcoming consultation meetings.

- 3.6 This report seeks member support to commence working in line with the agreed programme by installing new equipment in the three aforementioned play areas as identified within the programme document
- 3.7 The programme will also be used to identify annual capital requirements in future years as well as identify years in which single year budget enhancements will need to be requested to cover the increased revenue requirement for the reconfiguration or refurbishment of site infrastructure which would include significantly increased requirement for refreshed or renewed safety surfacing and replacement renewed or refurbished to seating, bins, fencing, lead and internal paths, and signage.
- 3.8 The councils Communities and Neighbourhoods section is responsible for the Boroughs play strategy. This includes most of the children's play areas and open green spaces in Melton Mowbray.

However there does remain a few area that residents in very localised communities have felt are missing dedicated play areas and the Avon road playing green within the Dorian Ward is one such place. It is here that a group of local residents have managed to raise the funds required to purchase the play equipment they want and it is that group that are seeking our assistance with the purchase.

The councils Environmental Maintenance Team will be responsible for all on-going inspection and maintenance requirements, the purchase, installation inspection and installation sign off will support and improve the understanding required to carry out the general upkeep of the new equipment.

Members are being asked to approve the business case attached as appendix C to enable this project to proceed.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The renewal and replacement programme is supported by a policy document and the entire initiative is designed to facilitate safe, attractive and desirable play areas, and play facilities that best meet the preferences of the regular local users. Accordingly there are not expected to be any negative policy or corporate implications as a result of this report

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The sites in question have all been considered for replacement of equipment no longer fit for purpose using 106 developer contribution funds together with council capital monies. Currently it is expected that the cost of the new equipment for all three sites can be achieved through the use of £30k from external 106 funds together with £35k from existing capital reserves.
- 5.2 The physical resource implications are mostly inclusive of the costs incorporated into the renewal of the new play equipment. These costs invariably include all aspects of the process: removal of the old equipment and where necessary removal of associated degraded safety surfacing, installation of the new equipment and where required new safety surfacing. These works which are incorporated into the purchase price and are

undertaken by specialist contractors. The essential requirement for an on-going safety inspection regime for the proposed new equipment will be carried out by the council's play area/equipment inspectors and added to their weekly inspection round.

5.3 As mentioned above, indications are that an annual sinking fund contribution of £35,000-£40,000 from 2015/16 onwards would be needed to maintain the play areas the council manages with adequate equipment. This is £5k-£10K above what is being budgeted for at the moment. This will be adjusted as part of the 2016/17 budget setting process.

5.4 The Initial capital funding for the Avon Road Play area will be met from external funds, on-going inspection and maintenance costs will be met from existing resources.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1 The health and safety aspects and considerations of play provisions especially traditional formal play areas, with a wide range of play apparatus is considerable. Acknowledgement and actions in line with the renewal and replacement programme will support the high level of health and safety standards that are maintained at all the council responsible play sites, thereby minimising any potential risks associated with this service and ensuring legal compliance.

6.2 The s106 is non-specific in terms of the use of the funds, but s106 rules (now found in Reg 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regs 2010) require that it must be reasonably related to the development concerned.

In regards to s106 funds referred to in section 5.1, they will be used at the Crescent and the Visitors centre play areas, which are locations which enable its use to comply with the above requirements of the legislation.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 One of the main driver for renewing or replacing play equipment and ensuring all play area site infrastructure is satisfactory is significantly focused around the condition and safety of those elements. These primary considerations benefit users from the local community as well as passing visitors. Accordingly adherence as far as is practical to the programme is expected to at least better ensure, if not increase, community safety.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 The choice of replacement equipment for any given site will always include DDA consideration in regards to play area patrons of differing physical ability. Where possible the inclusion of equipment suitable for those with physical limitations will be incorporated into new designs. This consideration will be applied to all renewals and replacement in line with the programme irrespective of any sites existing play facilities. There are no further equalities implications as a direct result of this report.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 To consider and give any Risks related to this report and if there are risks to complete the tables below. If there are no risks identified, then delete the table

Probability
↓

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

→
Impact

Risk No.	Description
1	Unsafe equipment identified for replacement is removed but not replaced as needed.
2	Unsafe equipment identified for replacement is not removed or replaced

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 An agreed procedure for renewing or replacing play area equipment includes consultation with users of effected sites. A consultation procedure for the three sites that are the subject of this report was undertaken and followed the following stages :

- Notices of our intension to carry out works in the coming weeks with an apology for an inconvenience and a contact number for anyone wanting to know more or ask questions were erected within each of the sites. Social media was also used to alert site users to the fact that major works were going to take place shortly , apologising for any inconvenience or disruption together with a press release issued along the same lines, all had contact details for residents wanting more information
- Concurrently and alongside the removal of the potentially dangerous equipment further notices were put up notifying residents of meetings at community venues local to each site, inviting attendance by anyone interested is having their views and preferences heard in regards to the choices for new equipment . In addition the social media and press releases were used to further disseminate that information
- The consultation meetings took place and user views of possible new equipment as well as their preferences and dislikes were discussed and considered resulting in an understanding of what new equipment those local users prefer. This information has been used to develop the new designs for the three sites and visual examples of the chosen options are attached as Appendix A

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 Craven, Egerton, Newport.

Contact Officer Raman Selvon

Date: 27.03.15

Appendices : Appendix A- Project Mandate- 3 play areas
Appendix B- Business Case- 3 play areas
Appendix C- Business Case- Avon Road
Visual examples of replacement equipment

Background Papers: Play Equipment replacement/renewal programme

Reference : X : Committees\PFA\2014.15\140415\HR- Play Equipment replacement