

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	CABINET
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	PLAY SITE DEVELOPMENT
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	19 FEBRUARY 2013
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND LEISURE
<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
None	

### **BRIEF SUMMARY**

Southampton City Council has responsibility for 115 Open Access Play Areas throughout the city, the general maintenance of these sites has been resourced from the council's revenue budget. Any larger development comes from Capital funding, Section 106. As part of this provision Play Areas are identified each year by the Play Task Force Group for refurbishment. This report provides information on the proposed development of play areas in the city for 2013.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (i) To add, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules a sum of £263,500 to the Housing & Leisure Capital Programme for play area development.
- (iii) Individual scheme spending will be processed through the Capital Board and authorised by the Executive Director for Children Services or relevant officer.

### **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Section 106 funding is allocated to play areas that are close to housing developments over one bedroom in size. The anticipation being that children will live in these houses and need facilities where they are able to play.
  - The amount allocated through the planning gain is based on the number of bedrooms in each house. The money becomes available to spend once all of the houses within the development are occupied.
  - These funds are specific for the development of play areas. Although the play areas to be developed are identified when planning permission is applied for, it is normally somewhere between three and five years before the money is available for spend.
  - The Section 106 resource has to be spent within ten years. Given suitable time for sizeable amounts to be accrued so that significant development can take place.
2. Southampton City Council has a responsibility to provide play spaces for children young people and families in dense urban areas, in support of the overarching city objectives of Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing, and School Attendance.
3. Play Areas are a highly visible community resource. Extra funding is sometimes found by residents and local groups. Consequently parents and families lobby hard for their protection and development.

### **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

4. Not to undertake these refurbishments could result in some of the play areas becoming a Health and Safety risk and subsequently needing to be closed.

5. Developing more sites, using council resources other than Section 106 money, would be difficult to sustain in the current financial climate.

**DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)**

6. The Play Strategy was adopted by the Council in 2008. The aims of this strategy are to:
  - To provide free play to allow all children to develop their full potential so they may participate fully in society in a constructive way.
  - To provide play areas that do not expose children to unacceptable risk.
  - To provide stimulating play areas that encourage a child to develop their life skills.
  - To provide accessible play areas that all children want to use and are within easy reach of their homes.
7. Play Areas are currently maintained with funding set aside annually to support maintenance, basic wear and tear and vandalism. The City Council has a considerable fund of ringfenced money, accumulated through legacy arrangements from more substantial builds.
8. The Play Areas to be developed this time around have been identified and are situated in the wards of Freemantle, Sholing, Bargate, Portswood, Harefield, Millbrook and Shirley.
9. Consultation, with children young people parents and carers, will be undertaken to understand what is required locally. For substantial developments a minimum of three contractors are invited to assess needs and produce detailed designs based on the consultation results. Once designs are returned (this is a free service) a second consultation is organised to gain public approval on the preferred design. A contract is then awarded in accordance with City Council procurement rules and timescale for installation agreed.
10. For 2013/14 the following sites have been identified by the Play Area Task Force as having substantial section 106 funds available and are in need of repair and development
  - The Common;
  - Bugle Street;
  - Golden Grove;
  - Bentley Green;
  - Cheriton Avenue;
  - Lawn Road;
  - Newtown;
  - Ivy Dene;
  - Butts Road;
  - Inkeman Road; and
  - Sullivan Road.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Capital/Revenue**

11. An amount of £263,494 of ring fenced Section 106 funding is available to be spent on the wards listed in 8. above.
12. All sites are currently maintained through a revenue budget which will not be altered by these developments. A re-developed site will potentially reduce maintenance because of the installation of new equipment in place of old.

### **Property/Other**

13. All Play Areas need to be designed and maintained to meet Health and Safety standards in order to mitigate the Council should any accidents or personal injury claims arise.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

14. Play areas are provided and maintained in accordance with a variety of site specific powers contained in a variety of legislation. The provision of play areas generally and the matters set out in this report are authorised by virtue of Section 1 Localism Act 2011 (the general power of competence) whereby the Council may do anything that an individual may ordinarily do subject to any pre or post commencement limitations contained in site specific powers.

### **Other Legal Implications:**

15. All Council property, including play areas, must be provided and maintained in accordance with the provisions of relevant health & safety legislation, having regard to the Council's duties under the Equalities Act 2010 and s17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

## **POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

16. The development and refurbishment of Play Areas supports the Play Strategy adopted by the Council in 2008.

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**KEY DECISION?** Yes

<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	Freemantle, Sholing, Bargate, Portswood, Harefield, Millbrook and Shirley.
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### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Non-confidential appendices are in the Members' Rooms and can be accessed on-line**

#### **Appendices**

	none
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#### **Documents In Members' Rooms**

	none
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#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	No
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#### **Other Background Documents**

**Integrated Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:**

Title of Background Paper(s)

	none	
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