

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>		
<b>MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:</b>	<b>Cllr Martin Veal, Cabinet Member for Communities</b> <b>Cllr Charles Gerrish, Cabinet member for Finance &amp; Efficiency</b>	
<b>MEETING/ DECISION DATE:</b>	<b>On or after : 1 March 2017</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:</b>
		<b>E2932</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Replacement of Parks Outdoor Play Equipment</b>	
<b>WARD:</b>	<b>All Wards in B&amp;NES District</b>	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report: N/A</b>		

## 1. THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Approval is required to deliver the 2017/18 element of a three year programme which will replace end-of-life equipment at B&NES outdoor play areas across the District. Provisional approval for a three year programme of replacement is detailed within the Council's Provisional capital programme.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Approval is given to release capital expenditure of £278k on essential improvements to outdoor play areas owned and managed by B&NES across the District.

## 3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 All work will be funded through Corporate Supported Borrowing (the Corporate Capital Programme).
- 3.2 Where possible, necessary improvements to play areas are funded separately with financial contributions from section 106 Agreements (s.106) made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 but all of the projects, within this play capital programme are in areas where s.106 funds are not available.
- 3.3 The alternatives to not investing in the replacement of outdoor play equipment would be to de-commission equipment and play areas, resulting in no provision.

3.4 The proposed works will allow the Council, as landowner, to maintain its site infrastructure in good order and safe condition and to enable B&NES to meet its statutory obligations (see below).

3.5 The upkeep & maintenance of this Council owned play equipment is programmed within the Parks revenue budgets. This regular capital update programme enables maintenance to be managed within the existing overall budget envelope.

#### **4. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

4.1 This work will enable the Authority to meet its statutory responsibilities and manifesto commitments: i.e.,

- To promote the health and wellbeing of the inhabitants of its area and to reducing inequalities amongst its population; To promote the welfare of children under the Children Act 2004
- To protect the natural environment under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- To ensure that the facilities that it provides in public places are safe, fit for purpose, and sufficiently insured to protect the Councils' liability.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

5.1 The adopted 2015 Green Spaces Strategy identifies a deficit of provision for children's outdoor play space across much of the District. The 2015 Conservative Manifesto for Bath and North East Somerset pledged that the annual rolling programme of replacement and regeneration of Council owned play equipment would carry on "to modernise and upgrade ageing children's play areas". This is essential in order to avoid outdoor play areas becoming dilapidated or requiring removal.

5.2 Provisional approval for a three year programme of replacement was given in 2015 but annual approval must be sought for each year of the programme.

5.3 Year 2 of the programme (17/18) will implement the ongoing repair, replacement and removal of facilities at existing, well used, play areas as part of an ongoing strategic programme of repair, replacement and removal of ageing/old equipment across the District. End-of-life play equipment needs to be replaced or removed to meet the Council's commitments to safety and quality, and to help reduce increasing ongoing repair and maintenance costs, as equipment ages.

5.4 The alternatives to investment would include the loss of play area safety surfaces, higher revenue costs due to more frequent and more costly repairs and maintenance, reduced play provision at very popular sites, and at some sites the complete loss of play provision within Wards – leading to a further overall increase in the deficit in youth and children's play provision across the District.

5.5 This current round of play equipment replacement will:

- Reduce maintenance costs associated with maintaining ageing and old play equipment.
- Relocate equipment which has been damaged by water from natural springs around Bath and reduce ongoing revenue costs by installing equipment in more suitable locations thereby reducing future maintenance.

- Provide a wider range of play experiences informed by community requirements that will improve local communities.
- Contribute to delivering a long term ongoing programme of replacing end of life children's outdoor play equipment across the District thereby installing cost effective and long lived equipment to reduce future spend.

5.6 The project has been informed by a prioritisation system based on the results of regular inspections of outdoor play equipment, the findings of the draft Green Space Strategy and partnership working with other local authorities (Parish and Town councils).

5.7 The programme will continue to be critically analysed and informed by an assessment of the current level and distribution of provision and the most cost-effective, long term solutions will be developed. Where possible necessary improvements to such play areas are funded separately by deposits from s.106s Agreements (see separate Parks Capital programme Project Initiation Document) but all of the projects, within this play capital programme, will be in areas where s.106 funds are not available.

## **6. RATIONALE**

6.1 Approval of these proposals will enable the Council to deliver its commitments to prevent play areas from becoming dilapidated, the removal of equipment and the reduction in overall provision.

## **7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

7.1 To not undertake any improvement works. This would mean that the Council would be :

- a) In breach of its legal duties
- b) In breach of its safety responsibilities and risk failing to meet the minimum requirements for insurance cover, and
- c) Compelled to remove equipment (and/or close play areas) which would face widespread public opposition

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 Those consulted in preparing this report include Divisional Directors Group and officers in the Parks and Finance Teams.

8.2 The Council's Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and Strategic Director for Place have had the opportunity to input to this report.

## **9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Paul Pearce 01225 396879</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<p>The Children Act 2004</p> <p>The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006</p> <p>Single Member Decision report E2931 – <a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk">www.bathnes.gov.uk</a></p> <p>The Council's Green Spaces Strategy 2015 –  <a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/sport-leisure-and-parks/parks-green-spaces-information/green-space-strategy-review">http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/sport-leisure-and-parks/parks-green-spaces-information/green-space-strategy-review</a></p>
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