

CABINET

DATE	16/06/2021
REPORT OF	Councillor Stewart Swinburn, Portfolio holder for Environment and Transport
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Sharon Wroot Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources
SUBJECT	Playground improvements
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 06/21/14

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The recommendations in this report will make a positive and tangible contribution to improving access to good quality play parks for children across our area and therefore contribute effectively to the Council's priorities of a Sustainable Communities, Feel Safe and Are Safe and Health and Wellbeing.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Full Council meeting on 18th February 2021 approved in principle a programme of investment in the play parks across the borough, in support of the health and wellbeing of our residents and to recognise the value placed in our parks and open spaces, be approved."

This report seeks Cabinet approval to commence a programme of improvement and increased maintenance of play parks across the area, currently there are 53. The programme seeks to address the reduction in play equipment due to age, vandalism, and/or maintenance costs over the past decade and ensure children of all abilities have access to good quality local play parks.

The replacement arrangements will comply with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and ensure that the Council achieves its duty of Best Value.

The Council's estimated whole life spend of the replacement arrangement is £800,000 over the next 3 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves the proposal to release the approved capital to commence a procurement exercise for the Play Area Equipment including installation and repairs and maintenance arrangements.

2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport to deal with all matters leading to and including the award of such contracts.
3. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport, and following consultation with ward councillors, to agree the implementation plan and allocation of equipment across play parks.
4. Delegates to the Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets the responsibility to execute all documentation arising.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Investing in play parks will ensure children of all abilities and age ranges have access to good quality local play space, important to their health and wellbeing. The decision allows the Council to commence a procurement exercise for Play Area Equipment including installation and a repairs and maintenance arrangement and allows the Council to award the contract.

1.0 BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for 53 play areas across the Borough.
- 1.2 More than 10 years ago the Council received more than £3million funding from Play Builder to refurb and install new play equipment across the Borough. Since this investment, play equipment has gradually deteriorated and some items have been taken out of use due to their age, vandalism or excessive maintenance costs.
- 1.3 There is a high need to look add to the play value provision within play parks for all age ranges, including increasing the offer for children with disabilities, which is currently very limited.
- 1.4 Access to a well-designed, local play park offer is important to promote health and wellbeing of children of all ages and abilities. Climbing, jumping and running leads to increased cardiovascular health and increased upper- and lower-body strength. Municipal playgrounds also help improve balance, agility, hand/eye coordination, strong bones and muscles.
- 1.5 Physical activity also helps children maintain a healthy weight. Children aged 5 to 18 years old should be active for 60 minutes every day. Children who are a healthy weight are more self-confident, have a better ability to learn and are much less likely to have health problems later in life.
- 1.6 Investing in this play scheme provides an opportunity to bring the play areas up to an improved standard for the community and provide an inviting place for families, providing a wider social benefit to the local community.

- 1.7 Undertaking planned repairs will further prevent play equipment decaying further and reduce the maintenance liability to the Council in the future.
- 1.8 A formal Invitation to Tender and award criteria will be developed, and the procurement will be undertaken in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, and ensure the resulting contract represents value for money for the Council.
- 1.9 A project team has been established in readiness to undertake the procurement which consists of officers from Grounds Maintenance, Commissioning and Strategic Support Unit and Procurement. Advice and support will be sought from Legal Services in relation to development of the terms and conditions and formation of the contract.
- 1.10 A consultation process has been established to ensure the ward and parish councillors have the opportunity to consider and influence final plans and designs for play parks in their areas.

2.0 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Capital investment in play parks will prevent play equipment decaying further and reduce maintenance and potential health and safety liabilities to the Council in the future.
- 2.2. Not investing in play areas will result in its further deterioration and will leave the Council without any outdoor play facilities for communities and visitors to the borough. There would also be significant reputational risks, in not providing suitable facilities.
- 2.3 There is a risk that new equipment will suffer damage and vandalism, increasing maintenance budget and reducing life of equipment. To reduce this risk, durability and prevention of anti-social behaviour will be key considerations during the final design and procurement stage of the project.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 **Do Nothing** – To do nothing would mean that the Council would not invest in improved maintenance and play equipment. This would lead to gradual continued reduction in play value of play parks, reducing their benefit for children.
- 3.2 **Implement decision as set out at Full Council on 18 February 2021-** to invest in increase maintenance and capital investment in play parks across the borough **(RECOMMENDED)**.

4.0 REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Investing in play parks will generate positive reputational and communications benefits for the Council, as it will benefit children of all ages and abilities and make a positive contribution to families.
- 4.2 A communication plan will be in place to ensure the positive message is highlighted and support the Authorities commitment to high quality green space.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 To achieve the proposed improvements within the Borough, allocation of £90,000 in annual maintenance budget and £800,000 capital funding invested between 2021-2024.

6.0 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This proposal will make an overall positive contribution to the Council's published commitments on climate change and the environment by improving use of green space in North East Lincolnshire.

7.0 CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 7.1 There has been no consultation with Scrutiny.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As part of the Council's approved Medium Term Financial Plan a budget was agreed for capital investment of £800,000 and an ongoing revenue maintenance budget of £90,000 per annum that will both be available to cover the costs of the proposal.

9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Any procurement exercise will be conducted so as to comply with the Council's policy and legal obligations, specifically in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and supported by relevant officers.
- 9.2 The delegations sought are consistent with an exercise of this nature

10.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Recruitment of posts has been through VM panel.

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The play parks affected are located across all wards in the Borough.

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Executive Director for Environment, Economy Resources	Assistant Director Environment	Strategic Lead, – Bereavement, Grounds Maintenance, Ecology and Resort
Sharon Wroot	Carolina Borgstrom	Lisa Logan
NELC	NELC	NELC
01472 324423	01472 326207	01472 324869

COUNCILLOR STEWART SWINBURN
PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT