

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Delegated Officer Decision – 30 January 2023

**Report Title**

Play Area Improvement Programme

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

**Officer Approving Submission of the Report**

Leanne Buchan, Head of Creative Programming & Engagement

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

Borough-Wide

**Report Summary**

This report details the progress to date made against the Play Area Improvement Plan as agreed in the Year Ahead Plan 2022/23, alongside proposed future improvements.

**Recommendations**

1. That the progress to date is noted.
2. That the proposed additional works are endorsed.

**List of Appendices Included**

Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Screening & Assessment (Part A & Part B)  
Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

**Background Papers**

N/A

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

Name of Committee – [Click here to enter a date.](#)

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## **Play Area Improvement Programme**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2019 Rotherham adopted a new Cultural Strategy, the first of its kind in more than decade, with a clear mission to: get more people, more active, creative and outdoors, more often. The Cultural Strategy seeks to redress the downward trend in participation that sees Rotherham communities participating 10% less than the national average, and to encourage local residents to celebrate local provision through the work to deliver its 'Vital Neighbourhoods' strand.
- 1.2 The Green Spaces service manages 35 play areas across the borough which incorporate everything from Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), traditional play equipment such swings, roundabouts and slides, infant cycle courses, large scale bespoke adventure playgrounds and outdoor gym equipment. This provision provides a free, accessible and inclusive resources for communities and families local to where they live. Alongside this the service also offers a chargeable service to Parish Councils to support the maintenance of Parish-owned play areas.
- 1.3 Of the 35 play areas in the care of Green Spaces, 30 had not benefitted from external funding for five years or more. As such where equipment was damaged or vandalised it was often removed, depleting the play provision across the borough. As part of the Council's budget setting process for 2021/22 a proposal was made for a two-year programme of play area improvements which would provide improvements in a minimum of 13 play areas across the borough.
- 1.4 In the 2022/23 Year Ahead Plan the Council committed to the completion of this programme.

### **2. Key Issues**

#### **2.1 Programme Delivery to Date**

- 2.1.1 To date a £43,199 of the Capital investment has been committed or delivered. The programme has operated in response to casework requests received from Elected Member via the casework system, working closely with the Neighbourhoods Team to respond to local needs and ward priorities.
- 2.1.2 The following improvements have been delivered to date as a result of this programme:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Park</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Value</b>
Kilnhurst & Swinton East	Kilnhurst Recreation Ground	Refurbishment of play tower	£5,071
Swinton Rockingham	Highfield Park	Replacement of infant play tower	£8,588

Dinnington	Dinnington Park	Replacement of infant play tower	£5,536
Rother Vale	Well Lane Park	Replacement of climbing tower	£1,787
Boston Castle	Clifton Park	Replacement of seesaw	£4,702
Hellaby Maltby West	Barrie Grove Park	Addition of new seesaw	£3,375
Rotherham East	Ferham Park	Removal of broken equipment, replaced with seesaw and new swings	£6,656
Dinnington	Chestnut Grove Park	Removal of broken equipment and addition of new Spinning Pole and Accessible Springy	£3,742
Rotherham West	Old Hall Park	Addition of new Spinning Pole and Accessible Springy	£3,742
<b>Total</b>			<b>£43,199</b>

- 2.1.3 In addition to the investment secured from the Council's Capital Programme the service has also worked with Ward Members and local developers to implement play improvement via Section 106 and ward budgets in the following locations:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Park</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Value</b>
Greasbrough	Greasbrough Park (Muga funded from Ward capital, Football Foundation, Veolia Environment Trust, Green Spaces and Housing Hub. Basket swing funded from Ward Budgets)	New MUGA and basket swing	£127,055 MUGA £4,640k Swing
Rawmarsh East	Sandhill Park (Funded through Ward Budgets)	New spinning dish	£3,118
<b>Total</b>			<b>£134,813</b>

These additional works have a total value of £134,813.

With the additional works included to date the service has delivered improvement to 11 play areas across the borough, with a total investment value of £178,012.

## 2.2 Proposed Additional Investment

2.2.1 All casework requests have been responded to and there is £56,801 of the original £100,000 Capital Programme budget remaining. As the programme comes to an end in March 2023 there is only a short space of time to order and install new play equipment ahead of the busy Spring/Summer season in parks. Given that there are no outstanding caseworks related to play, the service has checked its maintenance records for areas where there has been little to no investment or where there are known issues such as damaged or broken equipment to develop a proposed list of play areas or the remainder of the programme budget.

2.2.2 The proposed areas of investment are outlined below:

Ward	Park	Improvements	Value
Anston & Woodsetts	Greenlands Park	Replacement of damaged equipment	£8,500
Hoover	Barnsley Road Play Area	Provision of accessible springy	£3,067
Keppel	Barkers Park	Replacement of damaged equipment	£3,385
Sitwell	Herringthorpe Valley Park	Install inclusive spinning dish	£3,563
Boston Castle	Canklow Road Play Area	Refurbishment of climbing frame, rotator and infant spinners	£10,984
Boston Castle	Clifton Park	Install x2 British Sign Language panels	£1,978
Maltby East	Cherry Tree Park	Removal of damaged equipment, replace with accessible spinning dish	£4,500
Greasbrough	Greasbrough Park	Refurbishment of rotator	£2,459
Rawmarsh East	Sandhill Park	Addition of new Accessible Springy	£2,500
Rotherham West	Barberwood Road Play Area	Replacement of broken springer	£1,757
Rotherham West	Bradgate Park	Replacement of broken rotator	£734
	Rosehill Victoria Park	Install x2 British Sign Language panels	£1,978

Wath	Strathmore Gardens Play Area	Removal of vandalised equipment, replacement with alternative	£1,594
Kilnhurst & Swinton East	Victoria Gardens Play Area	Bench top replacement	£1,250
<b>Total</b>			<b>£48,252</b>

2.2.3 With the proposed spend above there would be £8,549 remaining as a contingency for any fluctuation in pricing or additional install costs for these works.

2.2.4 In addition to the above schemes funded through the Play Improvement Programme the following sites will also receive investment in the coming months:

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Park</b>	<b>Improvements</b>	<b>Value</b>
Dalton & Thrybergh Ward	Bill Winder Play Area (Funded through S106 contributions)	To be agreed with ward members.	£46,600
Maltby East	Coronation Park (Funded through S106 contributions)	To be agreed through further consultation	£40,000
Rotherham East	Eldon Road Recreation Ground (Town Deal Funding)	New play area, CCTV, and new paths	£150,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>£236,600</b>

2.2.5 If all of the above works are completed the Play Improvement Programme will have made improvements to a total of 28 play areas across the borough with a total investment value of £462,864 over the last two years.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 Undertake proposed works as outlined above – The proposal above enables a proactive approach to improving play areas and ensures that investment is spread further across the borough. The proactive interventions will enable more play areas to be brought back into use and improved, sooner.

3.2 Retain remainder of the Capital Programme budget and continue to offer a responsive casework service – the number of request via casework are now relatively low. As not all issues are reported through this system this could see some play areas with damaged or broken equipment take longer to repair.

3.3 It is recommended that the proposed improvements outlined in this report are taken forward for completion.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 All works undertaken to date were done so in consultation with Ward Members and the Council's Neighbourhood Team via casework and informal escalation.

4.2 Where new works are proposed Ward Members have been made aware of the proposals and in some cases have chosen to enhance these proposals via Ward Budgets.

## **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 Should the proposed improvements be endorsed work take place over the winter period with completion expected by April 2023.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (Richard Young, Head of Finance and Karen Middlebrook, Head of Procurement)**

6.1 The engagement of any third-party suppliers to carry out the planned works, must be undertaken in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

## **7. Legal Advice and Implications (Stuart Fletcher, Service Manager)**

7.1 There are no direct implications arising from the recommendations within this report. As stated above, any third-party suppliers who are to carry out the planned works must be compliantly procured, and appropriate contractual arrangements put in place with them.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications (John Crutchley, HR Business Partner)**

8.1 There are no direct HR implications contained arising this report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 Play is an important activity for the mental and physical development of children. The Council's Green Spaces Strategy highlights the need for every child to live within 400m (5 minutes' walk) of a good-quality, equipped play area.

9.2 Through the improvement of 28 play areas across the borough, children and young people will have greater opportunity for outdoor play and exercise helping to deliver on the Cultural Strategy goal of getting more people, more active, creative and outdoors, more often.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 An Equalities Impact Screening, Assessment and Action Plan has been completed for the proposed guidance and can be found at Appendix 1.

- 10.2 Whilst the Green Spaces service has a clear commitment to ensuring that high quality play provision is available for all children and young people across the borough regardless of geography or economic means. The Green Spaces Strategy sets out the intention to ensure that every child in Rotherham will live within a five-minute walk of a play area and for the first time the Play Area Improvement Programme includes accessible provision including British sign language panels and accessible swings in seven of the borough's play areas. Whilst the intention to create an inclusive and accessible offer is clearly present, the ability to understand the current user base and the potential barriers and opportunities to further support existing and new users is not currently available to the service, which could provide barriers to inclusion.

The Equalities Action Plan sets out a series of measures for improving equalities across play areas through three key areas:

- the delivery of the proposed Play Area Improvement Programme
- implementation of learnings and equalities considerations for future iterative improvements as funding becomes available
- strategic development and understanding of audiences and their needs

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 A Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed for this programme and can be found at Appendix 2.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1. All play areas contained within this report are within Council ownership and therefore there are no implications for partners as part of this programme.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 Play areas are not appropriately maintained –If play areas are not maintained appropriately there is a risk of personal injury. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that its play areas provide a safe and welcoming environment for all children. A regular inspection schedule and documentation of repairs is maintained, alongside a work programme of repair and replacement.
- 13.2 Play areas could be removed if investments are not made – In areas where there is recurring damage, vandalism or broken equipment, and service budgets do not allow for improvements and repairs equipment is removed to avoid potential injury. The Play Improvement Programme will enable the borough's play areas to remain in operation, improving access, participation and wellbeing for children and young people.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Leanne Buchan, Head of Creative Programming & Engagement  
Andy Lee, Green Spaces Manager  
Tim Archer, Play Service Manager



Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	<a href="#">Named officer</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>
Head of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	<a href="#">Named officer</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter a date.</a>

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