

Report To:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	21 March 2018
Reporting Officer:	Councillor Gerald P Cooney – Executive Member (Healthy and Working) Emma Varnam – Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods
Subject:	INVESTING IN CHILDREN’S PLAYGROUNDS
Report Summary:	This report sets out details of the investments required towards the improvements of children’s playgrounds together with the approximate costing, project plan and on-going cyclic maintenance programme.
Recommendations:	That Executive Cabinet AGREES that this proposal is taken to the next stage and that further work is undertaken to produce detailed business case for investment up to £600K providing fully specified and costed scheme together with implementation plan setting out how the current revenue expenditure will be reduced as a consequence of this investment.
Links to Community Strategy:	The proposals in the report will support the delivery of the Community Strategy in terms of creating a more attractive Borough, creating a Healthy Borough, School Readiness, a welcoming place to live.
Policy Implications:	The reported improvements are helping to create an attractive Borough which will promote economic growth, employment opportunities and provide a nice place to live, work and visit. The reported improvements will increase opportunities for children and their families to live healthy lives.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the Section 151 Officer)	<p>The estimated costs for the proposed programme of work are based on a desktop exercise and further work is required to specify the precise nature of works required at each site, following consultation with users and Members. A further detailed business case should be brought back to Members once plans have been further developed and the works are fully specified and costed, with a detailed plan for delivery. The report states that one of the aims of this programme is to reduce the maintenance requirements for playground equipment. The detailed business case must ensure that the revenue budget requirements are properly considered and specified.</p> <p>The Three Year Capital Programme recommended for approval on 9 October 2017 did not include a scheme for Children’s Playgrounds, and consequently there is currently no resource allocated to support this scheme. Funding this scheme will either require reprioritisation of existing schemes on the programme, or identification of additional resources.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough	A strategic approach incorporating up to date safety standards will reduce the risk of successful challenge in the event of

Solicitor)

accidents or damage, which the report demonstrates. Council Insurers must at all times be happy with the approach taken.

Access to Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer Nick Sayers – Operations & Neighbourhoods:



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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Strategic Capital Group on 27 November 2017 it was reported that a number of capital projects be approved subject to a further business case. This report sets out the improvements required to children's play areas together with the approximate costs, project plan and a regular cyclic maintenance programme.
- 1.2 Improvements to children's play areas will contribute towards giving all children in Tameside a healthy start in life. The improved play areas will encourage young people and their families to get outside, to be active and to spend time together. All the play areas are free to attend and are open every day therefore there are no economic barriers to access as there are with commercial indoor soft play areas.
- 1.3 The existing play areas have not had significant investment for around 10 years and were designed and installed at a time when most parks were staffed and there was a greater maintenance budget. Therefore some of the play areas include features such as sand and equipment which is high maintenance.
- 1.4 This project will improve the 35 play areas across Tameside. It will ensure that there are good quality play areas which young people can enjoy. There will be additional benefits such as reducing the resources required for maintenance through replacing sand with wetpour on most sites and reducing the risk of personal injury claims against the Council which may result from accidents on poor quality play equipment.

2. LOCATION OF PLAY AREAS

- 1.1 A desktop exercise to establish approximate spend across each play area has been undertaken; the costs are approximate and based on recent quotes and catalogue prices. See Appendix 1 for examples. To reiterate the criteria for prioritising works are: reducing maintenance liabilities such as replacing sand with wetpour and replacing kit which the Council can no longer get spare parts for; replacement of kit which is reaching the end of its economic life; reducing liability by removing and replacing large pieces of kit which are complex to inspect such as pieces of large timber play equipment.
- 1.2 The budget will be spent over two years, 2018/19 and 2019/20, and will be approximately £300,000 per annum.
- 1.3 Table 1 demonstrated the approximate spend on each play area based on the criteria set out above at point 7.

Table 1.

PLAY AREA	Replacement Play Equipment	Replacement Safety Surfacing	Infrastructure Improvements	Total
ASHTON				
King George Vth	£18,000	£30,000	£10,000	£58,000
Waterloo Park	£10,000	£16,000	£0	£26,000
Cedar Park	£20,000	£5,000	£1,000	£26,000
Oxford Park*	£0	£0	£0	£0
AUDENSHAW				
Ryecroft Hall	£0	£30,000	£12,000	£42,000
Shepley Wood	£2,500	£0	£2,500	£5,000

Leechbrooke	£0	£0	£1000	£1000
DENTON				
Victoria Park	£25,000	£15,000	£1,000	£41,000
Haughton Green	£10,000	£5,000	£2,000	£17,000
Granada	£10,000	£12,000	£2,500	£24,500
Tame Street	£5,000	£5,000	£1,500	£11,500
St. Annes	£2,000	£4,000	£2,500	£8,500
DROYLSDEN				
Medlock	£10,000	£10,000	£2,000	£22,000
Sunnybank Park	£25,000	£25,000	£3,000	£53,000
Benny Lane	£0	£0	£1000	£1000
Floral Gardens	£1,500	£12,000	£2,000	£15,500
York Road	£1,000	£5,000	£2,000	£8,000
Peregrine Crescent				£0
DUKINFIELD				
Dukinfield Park	£10,000	£45,000	£1,000	£56,000
Dewsnap Lane	£5,500	£2,500	£2,000	£10,000
Tower Street	£3,000	£6,000	£1,500	£10,500
HYDE				
Hyde Park	£17,000	£10,000	£5,000	£32,000
Croft Street	£0	£0	£1000	£1000
Matley Lane	£1,500	£3,000	£2,500	£7,000
LONGDENDALE				
Longdendale Recreation Centre	£0	£6,000	£1,000	£7,000
Hillend Playing Fields	£1,000	£4,000	£1,750	£6,750
Mottram Small Park	£800	£500	£300	£1,600
Water Lane	£0	£0	£1000	£1000
MOSSLEY				
Mossley Park	£25,000	£10,000	£0	£35,000
Egmont Street	£9,000	£7,000	£1,500	£17,500
Roughtown Green	£10,000	£5,000	£1,000	£16,000
STALYBRIDGE				
Stamford Park	£15,000	£0	£3,000	£18,000
Cheetham Park	£5,500	£5,000	£1,000	£11,500
Ridge Hill	£6,000	£5,000	£1,000	£12,000
Contingency			£60,000	
Project Management Fees			£60,000	
	£249,300	£283,000	£190,550	£602,850

*Oxford Park playground will be redeveloped from funding received through a s106 Agreement.

2. PROJECT PLAN

2.1 The package of work will take place over 2 years. Not all work will be done on site at the same time; for example there is a large piece of play equipment within Victoria Park which is currently in an acceptable condition but after another two years of usage and exposure to

the weather it is likely to need replacing and thus will be replaced towards the end of the project. There is a need to carry out some safety surfacing repairs at Victoria Park fairly quickly so these would begin early in Year 1 of the project.

- 2.2 There are a number of factors which constrain the programme; weather is a factor as wetpour can only be laid when the temperature is consistently above 4C. It is not advisable to carry out major playground repairs during the Whit and Summer School Holidays as it is when all our parks and play areas are at their busiest. The other factor which may affect the programme is vandalism – if a piece of kit or safety surfacing is vandalised we may bring its removal or replacement forward in the programme.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 Each play area has been audited by Officers; this has included an assessment of play equipment, safety surfacing and infrastructure such as bins and benches. All the existing play areas have been photographed so there is a current record of each site.
- 3.2 Greenspace Officers have worked with colleagues in Engineers on the procurement strategy for the project. Officers will be allocate procurement into three work packages, infrastructure which will include the painting of equipment and railings, new bins, new benches and footpath repairs; replacement of safety surfacing; provision of replacement play equipment. Officers will tender for the work each year to ensure best value and will tender in line with the Council Standing Orders.
- 3.3 Project management will be carried out by Engineers; they will be first point of contact for contractors, will organise the programming of the works and will be responsible for signing off all the work.

4. INFORMATION SHARING

- 4.1 Ward Members will receive a photographic record of each play area within their Ward and will be advised in detail of the proposed work to each play area once final tenders have been received. An example has been provided at **Appendix 2**. Officers will also advise of the detailed work programme based on the tenders received and lead in times for delivery of equipment and site set ups.
- 4.2 Officers will notify the relevant Friends' Groups of detailed plans for the relevant play areas prior to the commencement of the works.
- 4.3 Officers will be visiting a local School, Russell Scott Primary, to meet with pupils from Year 4 to ascertain their preferred type of play equipment and what they enjoy about local play areas.
- 4.4 Officers will work closely with the Communication Team to ensure that there is good publicity around the delivery of the project. Officers will utilise social media as well as simple notices within playgrounds to notify the public when work will be taking place.

5. CYCLIC MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

- 5.1 One of the key aims of this project is to simplify and reduce the level of resource required for maintenance. This will be achieved through reducing sandpits which require regular and thorough checking as well as through standardising the play kit on our sites.

- 5.2 During the spring and summer months there are 2 full time playground maintenance operatives; during the autumn and winter this is reduced to 1 full time maintenance operative. These operatives check all playgrounds weekly and carry out minor repairs. In addition there are annual inspections from our own insurers, Zurich, and an independent inspection from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA).
- 5.3 There is an annual maintenance budget of £70,000 which is for repairs to safety surfacing and play equipment, replacement play equipment, spare parts and replacements where needed for infrastructure such as bins and benches. It is vital that this budget remains at least the same value in order to protect the £600,000 investment and keep our play areas safe for their users.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 There are a number of risks related to the project which have been considered; these are mainly due to external factors outside officers' control.
- 6.2 All play areas are outdoor sites and are therefore on occasion subject to vandalism. During the course of the project we may need to re-profile spend to repair or replace play equipment and surfacing which has been damaged.
- 6.3 In order to minimise risk Officers are selecting play equipment which conforms to E1176, the current European Standard for playground equipment. By choosing standard equipment which conforms to this standard and is well maintained the risk of successful litigation from users is minimised.
- 6.4 All of the play equipment and safety surfacing are being installed outside and therefore are subject to delays due to inclement weather. Whilst spring and summer would be ideal for the work to take place these are also the busiest times in our play areas and therefore more work will be carried out in autumn and winter. The Greenspace Manager and Engineers will meet regularly to review the programme and keep weather delays to a minimum whilst also avoiding working during the school holidays.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 As detailed at the front of the report.

APPENDIX 1

Replacement of play equipment cost example

Kompan Multi Deck Play Tower with Steel posts and steel slide.



Multi Deck Play Tower Unit	£6550
Removal of old piece of kit and installation of new unit.	£3600
New wetpour safety surfacing	£3000

Replacement of safety surfacing cost example



Replacement of grass matting with wetpour under double swings at Dukinfield Park £2500

APPENDIX 2

Example of detail to be supplied to each Ward Member for play areas within their wards.

Dukinfield Park

Basket Swing.
Replacement chains and seat.



Dukinfield Park

Replace Flymobile with similar piece of play equipment.



Dukinfield Park

Slide and Carpet

Replace slide with new metal slide.
Remove carpet surfacing and replace with wetpour.



Dukinfield Park

Sand area

Remove all sand and replace with wet pour around play equipment and fall areas. Rest of area to be filled in with tarmac.

Install new piece of play equipment – accessible roundabout.



Dukinfield Park

Toddler Swing.
Paint swing frame.

