

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission
2 December 2013

Report to Cabinet
4 December 2013

Play Facilities – Investment Proposals

Report of the Director of Community Services
CTY/100

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper sets out proposals for the future provision of unsupervised and supervised play facilities in Crawley for the period 2014/15-2018/19.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

2.2 To the Cabinet

- 1. Approve the proposed capital programme for children's play facilities over the period 2014/15 – 2016/17 for the schemes as set out in section 7 and Appendix 1 of this report.**
- 2. Request a supplementary capital estimate to the value of £92,700 to be funded from Section 106 to cover the increase in budget requirement of £785,000 above the existing budget provision of £692,300.**
- 3. Note the capital schemes proposed as priorities for the period 2017/18 and 2018/19 will be subject to future capital bids as part of the budget strategy.**
- 4. Note the proposed priorities and purposes of the town's four adventure playgrounds and the children's play outreach programme.**

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1 The recommendations are made to agree priorities for investment in children's play facilities' and to confirm budget allocations against those priorities for the period 2014/15 – 2016/17.

4. Background

- 4.1 Over the last 5 years, the Council has invested in new and improved play facilities across the town with the focus being on the larger (type C and type B) facilities, ensuring these are accessible and of a high standard. Typically, such facilities offer a higher play value, retain interest for children as they grow and enable young and older siblings to play at the same location. Notably, this investment has taken place in Tilgate, Maidenbower, Bewbush, Broadfield, Ifield and Northgate. This investment has been well received and these facilities continue to be popular and well used.
- 4.2 There are three categories of facilities:
- Type A' Facilities: Doorstep spaces within sight of home where children (especially young children) can play within view of known adults.
 - 'Type 'B Facilities: A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends
 - Type C Facilities (including adventure playgrounds): A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.
- 4.3 Alongside the investment in unsupervised play facilities, the Council has extended use of the Adventure Playgrounds with the introduction of 'Playcare' (holiday play scheme providing supervised childcare) as well as a number of third party hire arrangements with other providers delivering children and youth activities.
- 4.4 The distinctive design of individual neighbourhoods across the town is reflected in different approaches to the provision for play. Despite this it is proposed that consideration for future investment is based on the following principles:
1. At least one accessible and high quality larger (type C) facility serving each neighbourhood within the town
 2. A balance of more local Type A and Type B facilities which ensure that overall the local space standard for children's play (0.05ha per 1000 people) is met (or where this is not possible, there is a good geographic spread of facilities and all of the facilities are rated as satisfactory or better).
 3. he Adventure Playgrounds serve as community settings for a variety of young people's activities (these activities being delivered directly by the Borough Council and / or in conjunction with other voluntary sector / other statutory agencies).
 4. Design of any new or improved facilities will be in consultation with local residents and in particular young people in the local catchment.
 5. With regard to the design of specific play facilities, the design principles of Design for Play (Play England) are adopted.
 6. Through the Outreach Programme, the Council will work in areas not served as well by the built play facilities and will work with residents to develop their own opportunities to promote children's play within their neighbourhoods.
- 4.5 In 2013, the Council rationalised the number of strategies it formally adopts with the focus being on those only required statutorily. Although it is not a statutory requirement to formally adopt a Play Strategy, these recommendations are brought forward to Cabinet given the proposed capital allocations over the next five years.

5 Description of Issue to be resolved

- 5.1 There is a need for a clear rationale to agree priorities for future investment in play. The process for determining priorities has been thorough and provides a sound rationale.

6 Information & Analysis Supporting Recommendation

- 6.1 In considering recommendations for future provision of children's play facilities, the analysis and recommendations are developed on a neighbourhood basis utilising the following data sources:

1. Crawley Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study
2. Demographic and 'Mosaic' population group data
3. Play Value Assessments of existing play facilities
4. Usage analysis of existing facilities
5. Community consultation and views from residents and service users.

- 6.2 The recommendations for investment are divided into two categories:

- **Short /Medium Term:** These proposals are costed and budget provision is available within the existing capital programme for play covering the period 2014/15 – 2016/17.
- **Longer Term:** Provisional budget requirements are indicated. There is not currently budget provision to meet these proposals and delivery of these would be subject to capital programme allocations within the period 2017/18 - 2018/19.

6.3 Unsupervised Playgrounds

Utilising the analysis set out in paragraph 6.1, the recommendations for each neighbourhood are presented in Appendix 1 to this report with the budget allocations summarised in section 7.

6.4 Adventure Playgrounds

The Council manages four adventure playgrounds across the town. The operating hours of these facilities have been revised in recent years to reflect the core times when local children seek to access these. The review of operating hours and continued attention to promoting a varied play programme has helped maintain good levels of attendance at the open access sessions with over 15,000 visits to the sites over the school summer holidays in 2013.

- 6.5 Consultation with adventure playground users (parents and children) as well as children across the town more generally has recently been undertaken and the following are proposed as priorities for the future provision and management of the Adventure Playgrounds:

1. Provide a free and open access high quality play programme from the Adventure Playgrounds at times when there is evidence of strong demand from residents
2. Promote the availability of the adventure playgrounds to voluntary sector and other statutory sector organisations to deliver children's / youth activities from the sites
3. Promote the availability of the adventure playgrounds for children's parties and other hiring activities
4. Utilise the adventure playgrounds to provide a dedicated school holiday childcare facility for working parents
5. Seek to 'open up' the outdoor facilities at the adventure playgrounds to facilitate their use at times' when they are not staffed or providing structured programmes.

6.6 Outreach Direct Delivery

The Outreach Play workers deliver innovative play programmes in key locations, typically where a neighbourhood is not served by an adventure playground. As well as encouraging the development of playful environments in the immediate locality, participants and their families are encouraged to use their nearest adventure playground and access the full

range of services. The Play workers will also link with primary schools to encourage greater use of the playgrounds as an outdoor classroom environment and in doing so exposing children and their families to the wider play service offer.

6.7 Play Training Programme

The Council's Play Outreach workers are experienced in setting up and delivering creative, imaginative and developmental play programmes. As a new initiative, the Play Training Programme will look to pass on these skills and experiences to voluntary sector organisations working with younger children as well as directly to parents.

6.8 Streets Alive

As part of the Outreach Programme, it is recommended that the Council actively supports the Street Alive 'Street Play Programme.' This programme has successfully been implemented in a number of towns and cities, most notably, Bristol and various areas in London. Street Play has successfully helped to extend children's play opportunities as well as promote greater community spirit and encourage residents to work together. Under the Streets Alive Programme, residents apply for occasional temporary road closure orders to 'open up' their streets for children's play. Further information on the Streets Alive Programme can be found at

<http://www.streetsalive.org.uk/my-street/play.aspx>

7 Implications

7.1 The tables below set out recommendations for future investment in children's play facilities to the value of £785,000. There is current budget provision of £692,300 within the existing capital programme to fund the recommendations for 2014/15 – 2016/17. A supplementary estimate of £92,700 from Section 106 receipts is therefore required to fully fund the programme.

Financial Year	Revised Costs	Existing Provision	(Shortfall) To be funded by Sec 106 receipt
2014/15	290,000	181,000	
2015/16	260,000	511,300	
2016/17	235,000		
Total	785,000	692,300	(92,700)

2014/15			
N'Hood / Site	Recommendation	Budget	Comment
Broadfield / Broadfield Barton	Improve existing Type B	£65,000	Neighbourhood is significantly below the local space standard and this area is currently rated as satisfactory.
Broadfield Creasy's Drive	Improve and Open Access to Adventure Playground	£120,000	Neighbourhood is significantly below the local space standard. Opening up to provide unsupervised access would provide a Type C facility in Broadfield South.
Pound Hill / Knepp Close	Improve existing Type B	£65,000	Neighbourhood is significantly below the local play space standard and this area currently rated as satisfactory.
All neighbourhoods with Type A facilities.	Improvements to Type A facilities	£40,000	Assumed an average of £5,000 - £8,000 per play area. The focus will be on improving areas currently rated as poor. Where feasible, residents will be encouraged to take an active role in designing and improving these local play areas.
Total		£290,000	

2015/16			
N'Hood / Site	Recommendation	Budget	Comment
Pound Hill / Wakehams Green	Improve existing Type B	£65,000	Neighbourhood is significantly below the local space standard.
Maidenbower / Site tbc	New Type B Area	£65,000	Neighbourhood is significantly below the local play space standard. It is noted that no site is currently allocated and this provision is subject to a suitable site being found.
West Green / West Green Playing Fields	Improve existing Type C	£90,000	Neighbourhood is below the local space standard and this area is currently rated as poor.
All neighbourhoods with Type A facilities.	Improvements to Type A facilities	£40,000	Assumed an average of £5,000 - £8,000 per play area. The focus will be on improving areas currently rated as poor. Where feasible, residents will be encouraged to take an active role in improving these local play areas.
Total		£260,000	

2016/17			
N'Hood / Site	Recommendation	Budget	Comment
Bewbush / Lutyens 1	Improve and change to Type B	£40,000	Neighbourhood is above the local standard however this will provide a better balance of Type A and Type B facilities.
Furnace Green / Furnace Green Playing Fields	Improve existing type B facility	£65,000	Neighbourhood is marginally below the local play space standard and this area is rated as poor.
Langley Green / Langley Green Playing Fields	Improve and extend to provide Type C	£90,000	Neighbourhood is marginally above the local play space standard however there is currently no unsupervised Type C area Langley Green.
All neighbourhoods with Type A facilities.	Improvements to Type A facilities	£40,000	Assumed an average of £5,000 - £8,000 per play area. The focus will be on improving areas currently rated as poor. Where feasible, residents will be encouraged to take an active role in improving these local play areas.
Total		£235,000	

2017/18 – 2018/19			
N'Hood / Site	Recommendation	Budget contribution	Comment
Bewbush / Millpond Adventure Playground	Improve and open up to provide unsupervised access	£50,000	Neighbourhood is above the local space standard and there is already a Type C facility. Despite this, opening up access would improve the usage of this site and could benefit residents of Ifield West as well as Bewbush.
Bewbush / Glanville Walk and Persktead Court	Improve and change to Type B	£40,000 (across the two sites)	Neighbourhood is above the local standard however this will provide a better balance of facility type.

Bewbush (west – site tbc)	Improve and change to Type B	Assumed funded by developer contributions.	Neighbourhood is above the local standard. This will provide a better balance of Type A and Type B facilities and compensate for the potential loss of Henty Close and Gemini Close.
Furnace Green / Waterlea	Improve and open up to provide unsupervised access	£40,000	Neighbourhood is marginally below the local space standard. There is already a Type C facility. Despite this, opening up access would improve the usage of this site and could benefit residents of Maidenbower as Furnace Green.
Furnace Green	Southgate Playing Fields	£90,000	Neighbourhood is marginally below the local space standard and this area is rated as satisfactory.
Gossops Green / Kidborough Road	Improve existing Type B (look to improve to a Type C).	£60,000	Neighbourhood is above the local play space standard. This area is rated as satisfactory however there is not currently a Type C facility in the neighbourhood.
Ifield / Ewhurst Playing Fields	Improve existing Type B	£65,000	Neighbourhood is above the local standard however this area is rated as poor.
Ifield / Stoneycroft	Improve and change to Type B	£40,000	Neighbourhood is above the local standard however this will provide a better balance of Type A and Type B facilities.
Langley Green / Medlar Close	Improve existing Type B facility	£65,000	Neighbourhood is marginally above the local play space standard. This area is rated as satisfactory.
Langley Green / Cherry Lane	Improve and open up to provide unsupervised access.	£40,000	Langley Green is marginally above the local play space standard. This provision would seek to improve the equipment at this site and provide unsupervised access.
Southgate / Ditchling Hill	Improve existing Type B	£65,000	Neighbourhood is marginally above the local space standard. This facility is rated as satisfactory.
Three Bridges / Tinsley Lane*	Provision of new play area (Type A or Type B)	Assumed funded by developer contributions	To address the potential loss of public open space and the access issue for the Tinsley Lane area
Tilgate / Gainsborough Road	Improve existing Type B	£65,000	Neighbourhood is marginally above the local space standard however Tilgate Park facility arguably serves a wider catchment than just the neighbourhood. Gainsborough Road is currently rated as satisfactory.
West Green / Meadowlands	Improve and open up access to existing Type B facility.	£40,000	Neighbourhood is below the local play space standard. This facility is located close to the primary school and shops and serves an important function within the local catchment.
All neighbourhoods with Type A facilities.	Improvements to Type A facilities	£40,000 (x 2 years).	Assumed an average of £5,000 - £8,000 per play area. The focus will be on improving areas currently rated as poor. Where feasible, residents will be encouraged to take an active role in improving these local play areas.
Total		£740,000	

*Subject to development of playing field site

8. Background Papers

Crawley Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2013)
Demographic and 'Mosaic' population group data (2011)
Play Value Assessments of existing play facilities (2010 and 2013)
Usage analysis of existing facilities (2012 and 2013)
Community consultation and views from residents and service users.(2012 1and 2013)

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Neighbourhood Analysis of Unsupervised Play Provision

Neighbourhood	Recommendations	Reasons
Bewbush	<p>1. Explore the potential to 'open up' the outdoor equipment at the Millpond Adventure Playground effectively providing an additional 'Type C' playground within the neighbourhood.</p> <p>2. Seek to provide a better balance of 'Type A, B and C' areas to better reflect the age profile of pre teenage children within the neighbourhood. This could be achieved by adopting a cluster approach and upgrading specific 'type A' areas on the following basis;</p> <p>Central Bewbush Lutyens Close 1</p> <p>East Bewbush Glanville Walk and Perkstead Court</p> <p>West Bewbush Site to be confirmed however assumed adjacent to proposed residential development</p> <p>3. Improve the offer to younger children at the following 'Type A' areas; Cowfold Close Wisborough Court, Halnaker Close, Coxcombe Walk, Morecambe Close, Pyecombe Court Ninfield Court.</p> <p>4. The following sites have either minimal equipment remaining, would require significant expenditure just to maintain them at their current standard and / or have other facilities within the immediate vicinity which are due for improvement and are therefore likely to be increasingly underused.</p> <p>As and when these sites require expenditure to maintain them at their current standard, the remaining equipment be removed and the areas grassed.</p> <p>Lutyens Close 2</p>	<p>Providing unsupervised access to the Millpond would significantly enhance play opportunities to an existing provision within the neighbourhood.</p> <p>There is a predominance of Type A areas in Bewbush which does not appropriately reflect the age profile of children within the neighbourhood. These provisions would provide a better balance With regard to specific proposals</p> <p>Is popular and the most suitable site to upgrade</p> <p>There has been considerable interest from local residents in retaining and improving Glanville Walk. There is not the space to significantly extend Glanville Walk. Funding could be put into Glanville and the adjacent Perkstead Court.</p> <p>West Bewbush site to be agreed however this would be within the context of potential residential development which would see the removal of Gemini Close and Henty Close.</p> <p>These areas are currently rated as poor. Anticipated improvements would include jet washing, painting and installation of new natural play equipment including ground graphics, interactive games and natural features.</p> <p>This equipment is likely to require expenditure to maintain the current standard and the adjacent Lutyens Close</p>

	<p>Hawksomoor Road</p> <p>Brideake Close</p> <p>Colwyn Close</p> <p>It is noted that Gemini Close and Henty Close may close if proposed residential development at Bewbush West proceeds.</p>	<p>1 is proposed for improvement to a Type B.</p> <p>With just 1 piece of equipment remaining, this area experiences low use and would require considerable expenditure to bring it to a suitable standard. The adjacent Lutyens Close 1 is proposed for improvement to a Type B.</p> <p>There is limited equipment at this site. It is adjacent to the Horsham Road and residents did comment about relative inaccessibility. Glanville Walk and Perkstead Court are close to Brideake Close and are proposed for improvement.</p> <p>This site experienced low usage and Morecombe Close is a short walk from this site. It is recommended that Morecombe Close is prioritised within the Type A rolling improvement programme</p>
Broadfield	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain existing provisions at Halley Close, Hammond Road and Webb Close. 2. Improve the Type B Facility at Broadfield Barton. 3. Improve the Type A Facilities at Plantain Crescent, Chadwick Close and Farnham Close. 4. Explore the potential to 'open up' the outdoor equipment at Creasy's Drive Adventure Playground effectively providing an additional 'Type C' playground within the neighbourhood. 	<p>Neighbourhood is significantly below the local play space standard however these facilities are rated as satisfactory.</p> <p>Existing facility at Broadfield Barton is rated as "satisfactory" however the neighbourhood is significantly below the local space standard and this play area serves an important function in Broadfield South with no Type C facility currently available in this area.</p> <p>Neighbourhood is significantly below the local space standard and these facilities are rated as "poor"</p> <p>The Type C facility at Rathlin Road is relatively inaccessible to Broadfield South. This recommendation would enhance access to a Type C facility for Broadfield South residents</p>
Furnace Green	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the 'Type C' Playground at Southgate Playing Fields and the 'Type B' playground at Furnace Green Playing Fields. 2. Explore options to provide access to outdoor play equipment at Waterlea Adventure Playground. 	<p>Provision is below the local space standard and quality at Southgate Playing Fields and Furnace Green Playing Fields is rated as "satisfactory" and "poor" respectively</p> <p>Unless there is a staffed activity session, these facilities are not currently accessible to the public. Opening up these facilities to provide non staffed access times could be useful in serving both Furnace Green and Maidenbower where there is a greater differential between supply and the local provision standard.</p>

Gossops Green	<p>1. Maintain the existing Type B facility at Gossops Green Playing Fields</p> <p>2. Improve the Type B facility at Kidborough Road and seek to upgrade to a Type C</p>	<p>Provision is marginally above the local play space standard and existing facilities are rated as satisfactory.</p> <p>Although rated as satisfactory, there is no Type C facility currently within Gossops Green and this provision would resolve this.</p>
Ifield	<p>1. Maintain existing provisions at Ifield Green, Dobbins, Ewhurst, Hanbury Road and Bowness Close, in Ifield.</p> <p>2. Improve the following Type A facilities; Armfield Close, Grier Close, Puffin Road, Stoneycroft, Conniston, Woodcroft, Abbotsfield.</p> <p>3. Upgrade one of the Type A facilities in Ifield West from a 'Type A' facility to a 'Type B' facility. Subject to consultation, the site at Stoneycroft be proposed for development as a 'Type B' facility.</p> <p>4. Improve the existing Type B facility at Ewhurst Playing Fields</p> <p>5. If unsupervised access can be provided to the Adventure Playground at Bewbush Millpond, this to be promoted to Ifield West residents</p>	<p>Provision is marginally above the local space standard and these facilities are rated as good or satisfactory.</p> <p>These facilities are currently rated as poor.</p> <p>There is a predominance of 'Type A' facilities in Ifield West relative to the age profile of children in this area. Changing this facility to a 'Type B' would better reflect the age profile.</p> <p>Facility is currently rated as poor.</p> <p>Bewbush Millpond is relatively accessible on foot to the Ifield West area and this provision could enhance play opportunities for Ifield West residents.</p>
Langley Green	<p>1. Maintain the existing provision at Rushetts Road, Langley Green Playing Fields and</p> <p>2. Medlar Close. Improve the Type B facility at Medlar Close</p> <p>3. Improve Langley Green Playing Fields to provide a Type C facility.</p> <p>4. Seek to increase access to the Adventure Playground by providing access to the outdoor play facilities at times when the indoor facilities are not open.</p>	<p>Provision in Langley Green is marginally above the local standard and this facility are rated as "satisfactory"</p> <p>Provision is marginally above the local standard. Although rated as satisfactory, there is no type c facility and it would be appropriate to improve this as part of the longer term programme.</p> <p>There is currently no Type C facility within the neighbourhood and this proposal would redress this.</p> <p>There is no unsupervised 'Type C' facility within Langley Green currently and 'opening up' Cherry Lane could significantly enhance play opportunities for children in this neighbourhood.</p>
Maidenbower	<p>1. Maintain the existing Type C facility at Maidenbower Playing Fields</p> <p>2. Provide a new facility in the South of the neighbourhood. Subject to available land and budget, the preferred provision would be a Type B facility.</p>	<p>Facility is well used and rated as very good.</p> <p>Neighbourhood is significantly below the local play space standard with a particular access deficiency in the south of Maidenbower. It is noted that no site is currently available for however.</p>
Northgate	<p>1. Maintain existing provisions at Northgate Playing Field and Memorial Gardens.</p> <p>2. As part of the rolling programme, improve</p>	<p>Provision equates to the local space standard and is rated as good. .</p> <p>Facility currently rated as poor.</p>

	the Type A facility at Kilnmead Close	
Pound Hill	<p>1. Maintain the existing facilities at; Newbury Road, Stone Court** (Type B) and Grattons Playing Field (Type C).</p> <p>2. As part of the rolling programme, improve the Type A facilities at Rowfant Close and Bashford Way</p> <p>3.Improve the existing facilities at Knepp Close and at Wakehams Green</p>	<p>These facilities are currently rated as satisfactory or good” in terms of quality.</p> <p>Provision is significantly below the local space standard and these facilities rated as poor.</p> <p>Provision is significantly below the local space standard and improving Knepp Close and Wakehams Green will ensure all facilities within the neighbourhood are satisfactory or better.</p>
Southgate	<p>1.Maintain the existing provisions at Goffs Park (Type C) and Baker Close (Type B)</p> <p>2 .Improve the existing Type B facility at Ditchling Hill.</p>	<p>Provision is marginally above the local standard and Goffs Park and Baker Close are rated as “good” and “satisfactory” respectively.</p> <p>Ditchling Hill is currently rated as “satisfactory” however deficiencies were identified which it would be appropriate to address as part of the longer term programme.</p>
Three Bridges	<p>1 .Maintain existing provisions at Commonwealth Drive**, Pondwood Road and Three Bridges Playing Fields.</p> <p>2. Ensure local provision within the Tinsley Lane area should the open space within this locality be developed in due course.</p>	<p>Provision is marginally below the local space standard however existing provisions are rated as good and satisfactory.</p> <p>Provision is marginally below the local space standard and there is an access consideration regarding the Tinsley Lane area. This is compensated by the availability of Tinsley Lane Playing Fields however if these are developed, providing a play facility to serve this area would be a priority.</p>
Tilgate	<p>1. Maintain existing provisions at Tilgate Park and Chichester Close.</p> <p>2. Improve the existing facility at Gainsborough Road</p>	<p>Provision is marginally above the local play space standard and existing facilities are rated as good.</p> <p>Neighbourhood is marginally above the local space standard however Tilgate Park facility arguably serves a wider catchment than just the neighbourhood. Gainsborough Road is currently rated as satisfactory.</p>
West Green	<p>1. Improve the Main Type C site at West Green Playing Fields serving the neighbourhood catchment.</p> <p>2. Retain the Meadowlands site and consider options to improve access.</p>	<p>Provision is marginally below the local space standard and the quality of the existing facility at West Green Playing Fields is rated as “poor”.</p> <p>Improved access to the Meadowlands site could make this more usable</p>

** Currently maintained by developer however likely to be adopted by the Council in due course.

Type A Play Areas

The recommendations regarding specific site improvements generally relate to existing or proposed Type B and C play areas. With regard to Type 'A' areas, it is apparent that they can quickly lose their appeal and interest even to younger children. Alongside the site specific recommendations therefore, it is also proposed that a rolling programme of investment into the smaller Type 'A' areas be maintained to keep these current and attractive to younger children. Examples of the types of improvements which will be made to these smaller areas will range from painting and ensuring the areas are bright and colourful, to the installation of new natural play equipment suitable for younger children including ground graphics, play panels, educational and interactive games.