

Crawley Borough Council

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Commission 22 November 2021

Report to Cabinet 24 November 2021

Unsupervised Play Investment Programme

Report of the Head of Community Services, **HCS/33**

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper sets out the investment priorities and necessary capital programme for Unsupervised Play in Crawley for the period 2021/22 – 2022/23.

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

- a) **Approve the proposed Investment Programme for Unsupervised Play for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B adding £218,000 to the capital programme fully funded from S106 contributions.**
- b) **Delegate authority to the Cabinet member for Wellbeing in consultation with the Head of Community Services, to conduct review stage/s and agree where necessary to reprioritise the order of delivery for the relevant phase of the investment programme.**

3. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 3.1. The recommendations are made to agree a programme of improvement projects for Unsupervised Play facilities and set the priorities for capital spend, ensuring the continued up keep in the quality and condition of assets.
- 3.2. It establishes a formal process for the regular review of the investment programme; and where necessary to reprioritise the order of investments if any project conditions change over time and where health and safety risks vary the urgency.

4. Background

- 4.1 Crawley has over 80 playgrounds and recreation facilities across the borough. There are three main categories of unsupervised play facilities ranging in play value. The playground categories are scaled further in some cases to recognise their differences in size and scope. There are also a range of other free to use facilities that typically sit under the same remit as play, these reach wider age groups as well as provisioning sports & fitness: outdoor gyms, BMX track, Multi Use Games Areas, Skate Park.
- 4.2 These facilities are maintained, tested and inspected by a dedicated 'in house' team and subject to annual external inspection.
- 4.3 An in depth review of the Unsupervised Play Investment Programme was conducted in 2020, this covered in detail the investments between 2014/15 and 2019/20 and included review of the Play Investment Strategies from 2007 through to 2014.
- 4.4 The performance between 2014 and 2019/20 had proven very successful, many of the highest priorities had been met with a total spend of £1.2 Million across a 5 year programme.
- 4.5 With an overrun toward the end of the programme, reprioritisation was needed in order to bring forward other higher priority sites that had emerged in the latter part of the programme. Some play facilities had deteriorated further than a number of programmed sites, which in comparison were not displaying a need for capital investment at that time.
- 4.6 A cross party working group 'Unsupervised Play Area Investment Programme Working Group' (UPIPWG) and its Terms of Reference, was agreed at Annual Council, to;
 - 4.6.1 Provide all party support for a coordinated approach to investment in unsupervised play areas.
 - 4.6.2 Consider the short term reprioritisation of the remaining seven play areas in the current programme, with the view to postponing and / or bringing other key sites forward.
 - 4.6.3 Agree prioritisation criteria and; apply the criteria to the current stock and; agree a new unsupervised play area investment programme.
 - 4.6.4 Consider variations to the agreed programme in future years should circumstances require.
- 4.7 The 2020/21 investments were actioned by a [Cabinet Decision](#) and a [Key Decision](#), this short period of investment was also crucial in restoring continuity in the delivery of play investment projects after disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.8 The capital investment required to convert Cherry Lane and Millpond Adventure Playgrounds into unsupervised play areas is being funded outside of this programme.
- 4.9 In addition to the short term reprioritisation the 'Unsupervised Play Area Investment Programme Working Group' (UPIPWG) was formed as the consulting group for the production of the investment programme as set out in this report.
- 4.10 The review and assessment process has been conducted using similar methods as previous investment programmes, with sites being assessed based on safety, condition and service life.
- 4.11 Prioritisation also takes into account factors such as play value, size and usage, linked to the guiding rule of safety, condition and life expectancy. Ensuring that expenditure is in accordance with the S106 agreement is also considered.

5. Description of Issue to be Resolved

- 5.1. In order to continue the investment programme and address the highest priority sites, it is recommended to agree the next two years of investments set out in the programme in Appendix B.
- 5.2. Approve the proposed Investment Programme for Unsupervised Play for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix B adding £218.000 to the Capital Programme.

6. Implications

Timeline

- 6.1. The programme is forecasted based upon an established delivery process, when taking into account the consultation, procurement, manufacturing and construction stages this currently governs the number of sites that can be delivered in any given year.
- 6.2. Other conditions influence the delivery timelines such as time of year for construction with typically slower progress during autumn/winter; also the time of year that consultation is conducted, as well as any specific local requirements that are established through consultation.
- 6.3. It should be noted, due to the likely start position in the year for the investments listed in 2021/22, project completions are now likely to occur toward the end of 2021/22 and moving into 2022/23. This presents a short interruption to the continuity of the capital programme however the schemes in 2022/23 then will follow in close succession throughout the year.

Asset Portfolio

- 6.4. For this phase of review the work has focussed in greater detail on the highest priorities between 2021 and 2023.

Financial

- 6.5. The table in 6.7 sets out the financial projections for 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 6.6. The budget 2021/22 and 2022/23 can be met in full by S106 contributions, subject to the necessary approval procedure for the release of S106 monies.

6.7. Proposed Investment Programme

Scheme Description			Scheme Budget	Current Budget 2021/22	2022/23
Play Schemes Included in Capital Programme	Neighbourhood	Ward			
Chichester Close	Tilgate	Tilgate	45,000	45,000	
Dormans Play Area	Gossops Green	Gossops Green & NE Broadfield	45,000	35,447	
Newbury Road	Pound Hill	Pound Hill South & Worth	39,339	38,131	
Ninfield Court	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	15,000	15,000	
Rushetts Road	Langlely Green	Langlely Green & Tushmore	9,923	9,923	
Southgate Playing Fields	Furnace Green	Furnace Green	47,619	47,619	
Perkstead Court Play Area Bewbush	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	20,000	20,000	
Additional Schemes to be approved					
Halley Close	Broadfield	Broadfield	15,000		15,000
Curteys Walk	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	15,000		15,000
Meadowlands	West Green	Northgate & West Green	65,000		65,000
Brideake	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	17,000		17,000
Wakehams	Pound Hill	Pound Hill North & Forge Wood	55,000		55,000
Puffin Road	lfield	lfield	18,000		18,000
Browness Close	lfield	lfield	18,000		18,000
Plantain Crescent	Broadfield	Bewbush & North Broadfield	15,000		15,000
Total				211,120	218,000

6.8. Request that £218,000 be added to the capital programme for the additional play schemes in 2022/23 fully funded from S106 contributions.

6.9. Issues within the supply chain currently present risks to the delivery of future programmes on time and on budget, specifically due to longer lead in times and higher costs for equipment and parts.

7. Information & Analysis Supporting Recommendation

7.1. In preparing recommendations for the future provision of play facilities, the review and analysis is based upon data sources listed below:

1. Play Value Assessments and Usage analysis.
2. S106 Open Space Developer Contributions
3. Annual Inspection data and supporting condition assessments of existing play facilities
4. Financial performance data from capital programme records.
5. Consultation trends and project completion data.

The recommendations are based upon the feedback and consultation with:

1. Unsupervised Play Area Investment Working Group
2. Economic Regeneration for allocation of S106 contributions
3. Head of Community Services and Cabinet Member for Wellbeing
4. Finance Team/Senior Finance Business Partner

7.2. The assessment in relation to the use of S106 contributions has been conducted by the Regeneration Programme Manager who manages the allocation of S106 contributions.

- 7.3. The Investment programme, assessment rationale and the prioritisation has been supported by the Unsupervised Play Investment Programme members Working Group, with Cross Party appointments.
- 7.4. With the ability to reprioritise investments based on changing conditions this would ensure the most effective use of funds on the facilities most in need of improvement. It would reduce complaints, and would also lead to improved community engagement in crucial areas due to the process of consultation and visible action.
- 7.5. Such a process would also enable greater continuity in project delivery and therefore greater consistency in financial terms.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. [2021/2022 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1 report FIN/531](#).
[Play Facilities Investment Proposals 2014-2019 CTY/100](#)
2021/2022 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 2 report FIN/535
[2020/21 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 3 report FIN/516](#)

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APPENDIX A.

TABLE 2: COMPLETED PROJECTS 2014-2019 INVESTMENT PLAN and REVISED PRIORITY PROJECTS 2020-2021								
Project Site	Neighbourhood	Ward (current boundaries)	Type	Programme Year	Completion Year	Play Value	Allocated Budget	Actual Spend
Broadfield Barton	Broadfield	Broadfield	B	2014/15	2017/18	TBC	£55,000	£61,746
Coxcombe Walk	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	"	2015/16	"	£13,000	£16,148
Glanville Walk	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	"	2015/16	"	£20,000	£20,000
Knapp Close	Pound Hill	Pound Hill South & Worth	B	"	2015/16	"	£65,000	£66,300
Wisborough	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	"	2016/17	"	£13,300	£13,300
Abbotsfield	Ifield	Ifield	A	2015/16	2015/16	"	£13,300	£10,840.26
Grier Close	Ifield	Ifield	A	"	2015/16	"	£2,000	£2,000
Morecombe Close	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	"	2015/16	"	£2,210	£2,210
West Green Playing Field	West Green	Northgate & West Green	C	"	2016/17	"	£90,000	£81,065
Cowfold Close	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	"	2016/17	"	£17,400	£16,625
Cherry Lane	Langley Green	Langley Green & Tushmore	C	2016/17	2016/17	"	£90,000	£89,931
Furnace Green Playing Field	Furnace Green	Furnace Green	B	"	2016/17	"	£65,000	£61,008
Lutens 1&2	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A/B	"	2016/17	"	£40,000	£43,437
Maidenbower Rec Gnd	Maidenbower	Maidenbower	B	"	2016/17	"	£30,000	£27,996
Oak Path (Bashford Way)	Pound Hill	Pound Hill South & Worth	A	"	2016/17	"	£18,000	£16,691
Pyecombe Court	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	"	"	"	£13,000	£10,192
Kilnmead	Northgate	Northgate & West Green	A	"	2017/18	"	£13,000	£17,861
Halnaker Walk	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	B	2017/18	2017/18	"	£49,000	£46,494
Gainsborough Road	Tilgate	Tilgate	B	"	2018/19	"	£65,000	£71,558
Ditchling Hill	Southgate	Southgate	B	"	2018/19	"	£65,800	£65,428
Pondwood Road	Three Bridges	Three Bridges	B	"	2018/19	"	£69,086	£69,945
Chadwick Close	Broadfield	Broadfield	A	2018/19	2018/19	"	£13,000	£13,000
Farnham Close	Broadfield	Broadfield	A	"	2018/19	"	£13,000	£13,000
Kidborough Road	Gossops Green	Gossops Green & North East Broadfield	B	"	2019/20	"	£65,000	£69,910
Ewhurst Playing Field	Ifield	Ifield	B	"	2019/20	"	£75,000	£75,000
Stoneycroft	Ifield	Ifield	B	"	2019/20	"	£25,000	£25,000
Memorial Gardens	Northgate	Three Bridges	C	2018/19	2019/20	"	£210,000	£210,000
Medlar Close	Langley Green	Langley Green & Tushmore	B	2019/20	2020/21	"	£65,000	£55,077
Tilgate Park	Tilgate	Tilgate	C+	2020/21	2020/21	"	£189,000	£189,000
Newbury Road	Pound Hill	Pound Hill South and Worth	A+	2020/21	2021/22	"	£39,339	£39,339
Chichester Close	Tilgate	Tilgate	B	2020/21	2021/22	"	£45,000	£45,000
Rushetts Road	Langley Green	Langley Green & Tushmore	B	2020/21	2021/22	"	£9,923	£9,923
Dormans	Gossops Green	Gossops Green	B	2020/21	2021/22	"	£45,000	£45,000
Ninfield	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	2021/22	2021/22	"	£15,000	£15,000
PROGRAMME TOTAL							£1,618,358.00	£1,615,024.26

APPENDIX B.

Next Priorities based on revised 2021 assessment							
Project Site	Neighbourhood	Ward	Type	Play Value	Allocated Budget	Spend in 2021-22	Total Spend on Scheme to date
2021/22							
Chichester Close	Tilgate	Tilgate	B		45,000	43,195	43,195
Dormans Play Area	Gossops Green	Gossops Green & NE Broadfield	B		45,000	295	9,848
Newbury Road	Pound Hill	Pound Hill South & Worth	A+		39,339	36,855	38,063
Ninfield Court	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A		15,000		
Rushetts Road	Langley Green	Langley Green & Tushmore	B		9,923	8,561	8,561
Southgate Playing Fields	Furnace Green	Furnace Green	B	39/129	47,619		
Perkstead Court Play Area	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	15/77	20,000		
Total					221,881	88,906	99,667
2022/23							
Halley Close	Broadfield	Broadfield	A	19/77	15,000		
Curteys Walk	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	14/77	15,000		
Meadowlands	West Green	Northgate & West Green	B	28/129	65,000		
Brideake	Bewbush	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	17/77	17,000		
Wakehams	Pound Hill	Pound Hill North & Forge Wood	B	30/129	55,000		
Puffin Road	lfield	lfield	A	21/77	18,000		
Browness Close	lfield	lfield	A	21/77	18,000		
Plantain Crescent	Broadfield	Bewbush & North Broadfield	A	21/77	15,000		
Total					218,000	0	0