

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL	Agenda Item No.
THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2009	Public Report

Report of the Commercial Services Director

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PROVISION OF FORMAL PLAY AND RECREATION FACILITIES

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the play area improvement programme and works completed since the last report on 15 February 2007.

2. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

2.1 Children's play helps make the city a better place in which to learn and work and supports the agenda for learning and ensuring that children are safe. Play areas can create a vibrant local centre which is attractive and is expected to be visited by pedestrians from the local catchment area rather than individuals using private transport. The vision of the cities play strategy produced in March 2007 is

“The health and well being of Peterborough’s children and young people will be improved by imaginative and dynamic play provision and management of spaces and opportunities for play”.

2.2 The Peterborough Play Partnership was developed in 2007 to progress the outcomes and actions arising from the play strategy. The Play Partnership has recently aligned with the Greater Peterborough Partnership (GPP) who will now chair the partnership.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The last report was completed following the city wide review of children's play provision in 2003. The review was identified as being necessary for a number of reasons:

- Addressing levels of vandalism
- Introduction of European standards for play areas
- To prioritise where improvements are needed

3.2 In 2003 Peterborough was found to have an oversupply of play facilities in comparison with other similar Authorities. However, at that time, only 5% of play facilities met National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) minimum standards. At that time there were 330 designated play areas within Peterborough. It is fair to say that the arrangements in place at that time supported quantity over quality and many of the “doorstep” play areas were inadequate rather than safe. As a result of this Members agreed that the Council would consolidate its play area provision to create high quality neighbourhood facilities which provide safe but stimulating opportunities for children.

3.3 As of the date of this report Peterborough now has 180 designated play areas of which 70% met the NPFA minimum standard.

3.4 The play area improvement programme was identified as a corporate priority and was registered with the Programme and Project Management Team. Funding for these schemes is provided

through a number of sources; the main funding being from Section 106 developer contributions, Big Lottery Fund, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Playbuilder initiative and the Council's capital resources.

3.5 In August 2008, the Council received confirmation that it had been awarded £1.1million funding from the DCSF Playbuilder programme. Over a three year period 22 new play areas will be developed, many on the sites of existing play spaces. The funding is to provide innovative and stimulating areas with equipment and landscaping which will deliver physically active play and be attractive to 8 to 13 year olds. Ensuring that the sites are attractive to girls as well as boys, to ethnic minorities and have good disabled access is essential.

3.6 Members have previously accepted the rationale for prioritising improvement works using the following criteria:

- Level and quality of provision in each Ward with NPFA standards
- Level of Risk Assessment for each site
- Play value of areas and comparison with recognised play standards
- Availability of resources

3.7 Improvement works to play areas carried out since January 2007 and those scheduled for completion by year include:

Completed	Scheduled for Completion Before April 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dell - Fletton • Oakdale Avenue - Stanground Central • Werrington Recreation Ground - Werrington South • Hodgson Avenue - Werrington North • Ambleside Gardens - Werrington South • William Law School Dual Use - Werrington North • Maxey Parish Field - Northborough • Northborough Parish Field - Northborough • Beckingham - Orton Longueville • Botolph Green - Orton Longueville • Oakleigh Drive - Orton Longueville • Longthorpe Memorial Hall - West • Watergall- Bretton North • Tirington - Bretton South • Quorn Close - Newborough • Cleve Place -Thorney and Eye • Little Close -Thorney and Eye • Thorney Park - Thorney and Eye • Crabtree - Paston • Morris/Wellington Street - East • Bishops Road - East • Henshaw, Parnwell - East • Saltersgate, Parnwell - East • Heron Park- Parnwell - East • Central Park - Park • Itter Park - Walton • Walton Recreation Ground - Walton • Stanley Recreation ground - Central • Hobsons Field - Central 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodfield Park - Dogsthorpe • Orton Wistow School Dual Use - Orton Waterville • Park Farm - Stanground East • Fletton Avenue Recreation Ground -Fletton • Ailsworth Recreation Ground - Glington and Wittering • Glington Recreation Ground - Glington and Wittering • Wittering Parish Field - Glington and Wittering • Drayton - Bretton North • Gladstone Park - Central • Hampton Court - Ravensthorpe • Cranford Drive - Ravensthorpe • Celta Road Recreation Ground - Fletton • Chapel Street - Stanground Central • Byron Close - Stanground Central • Plough Lane - Newborough

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gunthorpe Recreation Ground - Paston • Cerris Road - Dogsthorpe • Myrtle Avenue - Dogsthorpe • Sycamore Avenue - Dogsthorpe • Fulbridge Road - Dogsthorpe • Saxby Gardens - Dogsthorpe • Welland Road Recreation Ground - North 	
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Provision for Older Children

3.8 Increasing numbers of facilities have been provided for older children; with a significant number of skate parks, wheeled sports areas and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) developed across the city. The Council now has:

- 8 Skate Parks
- 2 BMX facilities
- 13 MUGAs

and the following table shows the facilities completed since January 2007 and those scheduled for completion by the year end:

Completed	Scheduled for Completion Before April 2010
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulbridge Road Recreation Ground Multi Use Games Area – North • Hobsons Multi Use Games Area – Central • Manton, Multi Use Games Area - South Bretton <p>Residential developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alma Road multi-use games area - Park Ward 	<p>Big Lottery Fund Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New England Recreation Ground - Floodlighting existing multi-use games area- Central Ward • Fletton Recreation Ground - Floodlighting existing multi-use games area - Fletton • Walton Recreation Ground- Floodlit MUGA (Pending Planning approval) - Walton • North Bretton Skate Park- North Bretton <p>Section 106 Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ailsworth Recreation Ground - MUGA and shelter (Pending Planning approval)

3.9 Facilities for older children are particularly important as many young people feel that there are insufficient opportunities for them and do not necessarily like structured meeting arrangements such as youth clubs or formal organisations. As a result they tend to cluster in areas which have an attraction to them and this may involve shopping areas or other facilities. This grouping does create concerns particularly for elderly residents who may live in the area as a result of noise or perceptions of threat. By providing the MUGAs linked to youth shelters which are covered facilities that allow young people to congregate in inclement weather then some elements of the perception of nuisance are reduced.

3.10 In recent years increasing work has taken place to ensure that residential facilities that meet the Councils' specification are provided through new residential developments. Officers provide guidance to planning officers and/or developers to ensure that facilities are developed to meet the council's requirements and also to encourage council adoption of play areas. Officers have worked to enable the early adoption of play areas, at the point of practical completion, to ensure that situations where new play facilities are kept closed of by developers do not continue. In

2008 new play facilities have been adopted at Alma Road (Park), Cane Avenue (Fletton), Plough Lane (Newborough), Temples Court and Helpston (Barnack)

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The key issue for Members to consider is the on-going programme of improvements to existing play areas to ensure that all will reach the required Peterborough Play Strategy minimum standards in due course.
- 4.2 That subject to continued support from the Councils' capital programme, Big Lottery Fund, Section 106 funding and DCSF Playbuilder expand the number of facilities; play areas and wheeled sports facilities and MUGAs. Locations to be decided as indicated in Section 3 above and the Open Spaces Strategy as previously accepted by this Panel.
- 4.3 Inspection and maintenance of existing play areas will continue in accordance with the existing schedule of maintenance which has been set according to use and budget together with guidance from the Council's Insurance Section. The recent introduction of BS EN 14974 Facilities for users of roller sports equipment has required the authority to inspect all wheeled sports facilities on a daily basis, increasing budgetary pressures.
- 4.4 As stated above the Council has no skate parks. However, it should be noted that the facilities at Cleve Place, Eye, Werrington Sports Centre and the Horseshoe land (Orton Longueville) are all in need of major refurbishment. Officers are currently working with the local community, at Werrington, so as to encourage the grant application to be made. If successful we will replicate the approach at the other locations.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report does not have any specific financial or legal implications in respect of existing facilities as they are maintained within defined budget and inspection and maintenance is carried out by or under the supervision of employees qualified in this area.
- 5.2 New play areas and new MUGAs are funded from the sources as set out in paragraph 3.4 above.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation with community groups, Parish Councils, Ward Members and other Departments is an important aspect of the improvement programme, ensuring that all interested parties are kept apprised of progress. Each new play area will be developed with community consultation, including involvement of young people as appropriate.

7. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 7.1 The Scrutiny Panel will have evidence of significant improvements to the provision of children's play facilities, and services will continue to improve for the benefit of our residents and customers.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Officers will continue with the programme of inspections, maintenance and installation of new facilities in accordance with the established principles. The next report will be produced in early 2011 unless a request is made to produce an update earlier.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Report to Community Well Being Policy Overview Committee dated 15 February 2007.

10. APPENDICES