

ENVIRONMENT CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 7
4 NOVEMBER 2010	Public Report

Report of the Commercial Services Director

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THE PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – THE PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME AND THE PLAYING FIELD REPORT (GREEN SPACE) PLUS OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update about the play area improvement programme, plus information about play improvement and refurbishment works which have been completed since the last report in March 2009. Also, to inform Members about projects which are scheduled to be completed by April 2011.
- 1.2 The report also informs Members about playing field provision within the Council's green spaces including, recommendations for the future. Plus, information pertaining to the design, development, maintenance and management of PCC green space (including developers S106 obligations).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members, continue to support the play area improvement programme and approve the current plan for play improvement works.
- 2.2 That Members support the 'Engaging the Community in Play' initiative.
- 2.3 That Members, support the continued development and improvement of PCC green space and recreation facilities for use by, the community.
- 2.4 That members support engagement with Planning to secure well designed and welcoming public open space to sustain new developments.
- 2.5 That Members support the investigation and progression of devolved management regimes, by the community, for both Cuckoos Hollow and Holywell Ponds.
- 2.6 That Members support the continuing review of public open space provision, management and maintenance, including allotments, play and playing pitches and updating documents and action plans pertaining to these services.
- 2.7 That Members support linking open space policy to other policy areas, for example, Planning, Health, Transport and Biodiversity.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 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 are attractive and which are expected to be used and visited by pedestrians from

the local catchment area rather, than individuals using private transport. The vision of the City's play strategy produced in March 2007 continues to be:

“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”.

This links to National Indicator, NI 199 (Children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas DCSF DSO) the rationale of this indicator being 'to ensure that local authorities invest in safe and stimulating play facilities, leading to an increase in satisfaction (and take-up amongst children) in local authorities'.

3.2 The Department of Education has funded a new Play England initiative called the 'Engaging Communities in Play Programme'. This new programme aims to **'increase the involvement of community and voluntary groups in shaping local play opportunities, especially in relation to the play areas delivered through the play pathfinder and Playbuilder capital programmes'**.

3.3 The Peterborough Play Partnership (PPP) was formed in 2007 to steer the action points for improving play areas in Peterborough, detailed in the 2007 Play Strategy. Improving Peterborough's play areas via the action points in the 2007 Play Strategy, was driven forward and funded by the Playbuilder initiative. Responsibility for steering and leading the PPP group now sits with the City Services' Recreation Team and it is anticipated that the PPP will consider and construct policies for engaging with the Engaging Communities in Play programme.

3.4 In September 2006, ATKINS, delivered an open space report to Peterborough, the vision for PCC green space is:

“To encourage a diverse network of sustainable open space of high quality which meets the needs of those living and working within the City and encourages the development of more inclusive communities, safeguards natural resources and cultural heritage, provides recreational and educational opportunities and helps to promote sustainable development”.

3.5 Whilst no National Indicators govern green space, welcoming, well maintained green space can contribute towards adherence to a plethora of NIs. Examples include, NI3 – civic participation in local area, NI13 – healthy life expectation at age 65, NI110 – young peoples' participation in positive activities and NI8 – adult participation in sport plus NIs which address health and obesity concerns.

3.6 In October 2010, the National Indicator Set was replaced by one comprehensive list for measuring performance. However, the objectives of the NI Sets for example 'healthy life expectancy at 65' remain important and pertinent to green space.

4. BACKGROUND - PLAY

4.1 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 (LAPs) 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 play opportunities for children; we continue to do this.

4.2 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 was 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.

- 4.3 Since 2007 the play area improvement programme has delivered 57 new and refurbished play areas.
- 4.4 In August 2008, the Council received confirmation that it had received £1.1 million funding from the DCSF Playbuilder programme. Over a two year period 15 new and refurbished play area projects have been successfully delivered; £720K of Playbuilder funding enabled these works. These have become flourishing play areas which have greatly improved the community value of the Council's green space and play facilities. The play improvement projects have provided innovative and stimulating play areas using contemporary play equipment and inclusive landscaping to encourage creative and physically demanding play.
- 4.5 In June 2010 funding for the DCSF Playbuilder programme was withdrawn by the coalition government whilst they carried out a review of the various grants that had been made.
- 4.6 In October 2010 confirmation was received from the Home Office and Department of Education that two-thirds of the withdrawn Playbuilder funding would be re-allocated. Peterborough City Council will receive £274,043.75 for this financial year 2010/2011 but no further funding will come from the Playbuilder funding initiative and the programme will end in March 2011. However, this will enable a further four play improvement projects to be developed and completed (see Appendix 1).
- 4.7 As this report is being prepared and presented to Members, a comprehensive audit of the Council's green space play assets has been undertaken and the data is currently being analysed. This will provide new and up-to-date data about the condition of PCC play areas to facilitate updating the 2007 play strategy and describing new action points for delivering further improvement works. The audit will also enable improved processes for managing and maintaining play areas which fall within the Authority's responsibility.
- 4.8 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 the Risk Assessment for each site
 - Play value of play areas and comparison with recognised play standards
 - Availability of resources

The recent play asset audit will underpin the programming and delivery of play improvement projects for several years.

- 4.9 Play area improvement works completed since 2007 and scheduled for delivery by April 2011 include:

Completed	Scheduled for completion by April 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dell – Fletton – PCC capital • Oakdale Avenue – Stanground Central – PCC capital • Werrington Recreation Ground – Werrington South – PCC capital • Hodgson Avenue – Werrington North – S106 • Ambleside Gardens – Werrington South – PCC capital • William Law School (duel use) – Werrington North – PCC capital & CLF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bluebell Avenue – DCSF Playbuilder • The Dell – PCC capital • Russell St – PCC capital • Braybrook – PCC capital • Hoylake Drive – 3 stock items to be added - PCC capital • Fletton Rec – 2 stock items to be added - S106 • Appleyard – 2 stock items to be added - PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxey Parish Field – Northborough – PCC capital • Northborough Parish Field – Northborough – S106 • Beckingham – Orton Longueville – PCC capital • Botolph Green - Orton Longueville – S106 • Oakleigh Drive - Orton Longueville – S106 • Longthorpe Memorial Hall – West – S106 • Watergall- Bretton North – PCC Capital • Turrington - Bretton South – PCC Capital • Quorn Close – Newborough – S106 • Cleve Place -Thorney and Eye – S106 • Little Close -Thorney and Eye – S106 • Thorney Park - Thorney and Eye – PCC Capital • Crabtree – Paston – Big Lottery • Morris/Wellington Street – East – PCC Capital • Bishops Road – East – PCC Capital • Henshaw, Parnwell – East - Fairshare • Saltersgate, Parnwell – East - Fairshare • Heron Park- Parnwell – East - Fairshare • Central Park – Park – S106 • Itter Park – Walton – PCC Capital/CLF • Walton Recreation Ground – Walton – PCC Capital • Stanley Recreation ground – Central – Urban 2/S106 • Hobsons Field – Central - Urban 2/S106 • Gunthorpe Recreation Ground – Paston – PCC capital • Cerris Road – Dogsthorpe – S106/GDP • Myrtle Avenue – Dogsthorpe – S106/GDP • SycamoreAvenue – Dogsthorpe – S106/GDP • Fulbridge Road – Dogsthorpe – S106/GDP • Saxby Gardens – Dogsthorpe – S106/GDP • Welland Road Recreation Ground – North – PCC Capital • Woodfield Park – Dogsthorpe – DCSF Playbuilder – complete refurbishment • Orton Wistow School Dual Use - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bradwell Road – 2 stock items to be added PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Vermont Grove – 2 stock items to be added PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Buckland Close – 2 stock items to be added PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Tansor Garth – Old equipment to be replaced with stock items PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Baker Park – Gym equipment – S106 • Welland Rd Rec – S106 • Longthorpe – S106 • Thurning Avenue – S106
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<p>Orton Waterville – S106 new items added</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Farm - Stanground East – S106, CLF & residents Group – complete refurbishment • Bluebell Avenue – DCSF Playbuilder • The Dell – PCC capital • Russell St – PCC capital • Braybrook – PCC capital • Hoylake Drive – 3 stock items to be added - PCC capital • Fletton Rec – 2 stock items to be added - S106 • Appleyard – 2 stock items to be added PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Bradwell Road – 2 stock items to be added PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Vermont Grove – 2 stock items to be added PCC Capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Buckland Close – 2 stock items to be added PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Tansor Garth – Old equipment to be replaced with stock items PCC capital – funded out of last year budget but installation held up by supply of safety matting • Baker Park – Gym equipment – S106 • Welland Rd Rec – S106 • Longthorpe – S106 • Thurning Avenue – S106 Fletton Avenue Recreation Ground – Fletton – Playbuilder – complete refurb • Ailsworth Recreation Ground - Glington and Wittering – S106 – complete refurbishment • Glington Recreation Ground - Glington and Wittering – Playbuilder – complete refurbishment • Wittering Parish Field - Glington and Wittering – Playbuilder – complete refurbishment • Gladstone Park – Central – Playbuilder – complete refurbishment • Hampton Court – Ravensthorpe – playbuilder – complete refurbishment • Cranford Drive – Ravensthorpe – S106 new items added • Celta Road Recreation Ground – Fletton – S106 new items added 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapel Street - Stanground Central – S106 new items added • Byron Close - Stanground Central – complete refurb – S106 • Plough Lane – Newborough – S106 new items added • Matley – DCSF Playbuilder • St Johns – DCSF Playbuilder • Ambleside Gardens – DCSF Playbuilder • Leighton – DCSF Playbuilder 	
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Provision for Older Children

4.10 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) designed and built across the city.

4.11 The Council currently has the following facilities for older children:

9 Skate Parks:

Woodfield Park, Welland
 Welland Rd Rec Ground, Dogsthorpe
 Unity Park, Paston
 Werrington
 Bretton Park
 Cleve Place, Eye
 Horseshoe Land, Orton Goldhay
 Whittlesey Rd, Stanground
 Fletton Rec Ground, Oundle Rd,

2 BMX tracks

Herlington, Orton Malborne
 Bretton Park

15 Multi-Use Games Areas:

Fletton Rec Ground
 New England Rec Ground
 Saltersgate, Parnwell
 Swale Avenue, Gunthorpe
 Whittlesey Road, Stanground
 Fulbridge Road, Dogsthorpe
 Hobsons Park, Cromwell Rd
 Woodfield Park, Welland
 Sycamore Avenue Rec, Dogsthorpe
 Manton, South Bretton
 Bluebell Land, Dogsthorpe
 Helpston
 Ailsworth
 Walton Rec Ground
 Unity Park

and the following table shows the facilities completed since January 2007 and those scheduled for completion by April 2011:

Completed	Scheduled for Completion Before April 2011
<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>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 - Walton • North Bretton Skate Park- North Bretton, £90,000. £10,000 from Bretton Parish Council, £38,000 from Big Lottery and £52,000 from DCSF (Playbuilder) (JN) <p>Section 106 Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ailsworth Recreation Ground - MUGA and shelter • Stanground Skatepark - £98,000, £50,000 S106. match-funded by Youth Bank Funding scheme. (JN) <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"> • Celta Road Recreation Ground - MUGA (Pending Planning approval) (JN) <p>Capital Programme Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Werrington concrete skatepark, due to start in October / November 2010 - £90,000 plus £13,000 to go towards lighting from Young Peoples funds. (JN) <p>Big Lottery Fund Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 play sculptures (Rockstakz) funded by the Big Lottery - £45,000. One to be installed on Thurning Avenue Playing Fields, Stanground. The second to be installed on the open space between Bringhurst and Clayton in Orton Goldhay. Both to be installed by mid-October. (JN) <p>Other Schemes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorney Park MUGA, donated by the Council - installation funded by Thorney Parish Council

- 4.12 Facilities for older children are particularly important as many young people feel that there are insufficient opportunities for them; they do not necessarily like structured meeting arrangements such as, youth clubs or, formal organisations. As a result they may gather in areas which are attractive to them, for example, shopping areas, street corners or other public spaces. This assemblage may create concerns about noise, boisterous behaviour or perceptions of threat, particularly for elderly residents who may live in the area. By providing MUGAs and skateparks, often linked to youth shelters (which are covered facilities that allow young people to congregate in inclement weather) then some elements of the sensitivity to nuisance are managed and thus reduced.
- 4.13 A report about PCC playing field provision, with action points, has been prepared (2010) as a requirement for the Building Schools for the Future programme. The report offers valuable insight into how playing field provision should be developed and how PCC should respond to need.
- 4.14 The playing field report highlighted the importance of providing informal five and seven-a-side pitches via PCC green space and suggested that responsibility for the provision and management of formal league pitches should shift to schools.

- 4.15 The playing field report describes the importance of multi-use games areas for providing valuable sports facilities and indicates that the successful provision of recreational facilities in PCC green space is underpinned by flexibility.

5. BACKGROUND – OPEN SPACE/GREEN SPACE

- 5.1 In 2006 an open space report was prepared; however, many of the key data elements contained in the report, describing quality, quantity and need, have become inaccurate as the city and surrounding areas have grown. For example, the report's data for Eye is now out of date because the village has grown; it now lacks sufficient green space to support a growing population and to sustain a new community. These are important issues which will be addressed by working with Planning to ensure that well designed, welcoming, safe and useable open space are delivered as an essential component of new developments.
- 5.2 In recent years increasing work has taken place to ensure that developers' obligations concerning the design and creation of Public Open Space to support new developments and subsequent communities meet the Council's appropriate specification and requirements. Recreation Team officers provide guidance to Planning officers and/or developers to ensure that open space facilities are developed which fulfil the council's Planning policies and developers obligations. Officers have recently advised Planning about the open space element of their new S106 policy document.
- 5.3 The recent work with Planning on S106 obligations shows that a coherent and working Open Space strategy needs to be linked with other policy areas, for example Planning, Transport and Health.
- 5.4 The 2006 Open Space report offered data on play provision and need. This element has been successfully addressed as part of the ongoing play programme.
- 5.5 The 2006 Open Space report offered data on playing pitch provision and need and this has been reviewed and updated in the 2010 Play Field report.
- 5.6 The 2006 Open Space report offered data on allotment provision and need. Since the report was delivered in 2006 the profile of allotments and community food growing has been raised by both the media and government initiatives.
- 5.7 Peterborough City Council has 1,800 plots and a short waiting list.
- 5.8 We are reviewing allotment provision and use and also, opportunities for informal allotment sites and community food growing initiatives.
- 5.9 A complete review of the allotment letting and management process is underway and scheduled for completion by April 2011.
- 5.10 The 2006 report had the following objective –

'to manage open spaces in a way which includes all key stakeholders, and strengthens community 'ownership' of open spaces'
- 5.11 The City Services Recreation Team are working with the Neighbourhood Managers to develop and implement the devolved management (to the community) of two sites; these are Cuckoos Hollow and Holywell Ponds.
- 5.12 The review of open space provision, need and management is a big piece of work which is being broken down into manageable elements for example, play and allotment provision.
- 5.13 The review of all elements of open space provision, need and management is anticipated to take 12-24 months and will overlap with City Services move; the Lot 3 initiative.

6. KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 The key issue for Members to consider is the on-going programme of improvements to existing and prospective play areas and to ensure that all will reach the appropriate standards (challenging, rewarding and inclusive, etc) as the programme continues.
- 6.2 That the 2010 audit of play assets will enable the 2007 action points from the Play Strategy to be reviewed and updated.
- 6.3 That supporting provision of play and recreational facilities for older children and young adults as outlined in paragraph 4.9, reduces anti-social behaviour and encourages the community to use green space facilities.
- 6.4 Inspection and maintenance regimes for existing play areas have been improved as new processes have been developed and put in place. Improved maintenance schedules have been set according to use, condition and budget, plus using informed data from the 2010 play asset audit.
- 6.5 That all elements of open space provision, management and maintenance are reviewed to ensure delivery of socially inclusive green space, meeting the needs of those of every age, gender and ethnic group.
- 6.6 Well designed, welcoming and attractive green space is an integral part of successful urban regeneration and underpins the quality of new developments. Members are asked to consider the importance of Parks, Open Spaces and Trees working with Planning to secure S106 funding to design, create, manage and maintain well used and thriving community green space.
- 6.7 That Members acknowledge the importance of collecting data about green space, play, allotments, playing pitches, the need, provision, maintenance and management, etc, to substantiate and evidence applications for S106 and other funding streams to support improving public open space.
- 6.8 That Members consider and endorse the review of allotment processes to deliver a more efficient and inclusive service.
- 6.9 That in order to develop a coherent open space strategy, Members consider and endorse linking the development, management and use of open space, with other policy areas, for example, Planning, Transport, and Health.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report does not have any specific financial or legal implications in respect of existing play, allotment or recreational facilities as they are maintained within defined budgets and inspection and maintenance are carried out by, or under the supervision of employees qualified in this area.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation with community groups, Parish Councils, Ward Members and other Departments is an important aspect of the play and open space improvement programme, ensuring that all interested parties are a key part of the design and build process. Each new play area and/or green space improvement project will be developed with community consultation to secure designs which match need. For example, a key component of our skatepark projects is the input of potential users on the design and layout for new skatepark projects.
- 8.2 An important component of the open space review and updating process will be liaison with other policy areas.

9. NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 Officers will continue with the programme for improving existing play and green space facilities and for creating new and well designed amenities in accordance with established policies and using good practice. The next report will be produced in 2011 unless a request is made to produce an update earlier.
- 9.2 Officers will continue to review and update existing green space reports and policies with the vision and objectives to create public open space which meets the needs of users, engages with non-users and sustains and supports the communities living and working in Peterborough.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1
- Peterborough Play Strategy 2007
 - Peterborough Open Space Report 2006
 - Peterborough Playing Field Report 2010

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Play Capital Budget – Letter from the Secretary of State for Education