

Project Documentation - Initial Project Proposal Document

Project: Play area refurbishments

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1. Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to justify the undertaking of the project based on the estimated cost of delivery and the anticipated benefits to be gained. The proposal outlined in this document will be used as part of the process for prioritising future projects.

2. Project Description

Parks and play areas are integral to people's quality of life. They provide accessible and inclusive spaces for people to exercise, socialise, learn and relax. Five of our play areas are now due for refurbishment. This report identifies the top level scope of refurbishing five of CDC's play areas as they are now in need of updating or replacement.

In scope:

- Replacement costs of 5 existing playparks with like for like or similar equipment.
- Officer time to deliver the refurbishment programme

Out of scope:

- Enhanced play park provision at existing sites
- New playparks

3. Background

There is currently £440,000 within the playpark Asset Replacement Programme for

- Florence Park
- Oaklands Park
- Priory Park
- Sherbourne Park
- Whyke Oval

This budget however represents the cost of installation 12 years ago. Inflation since 2011 is circa 57% and this would need to be added to provide sufficient budget to replace current play equipment with similar. In addition, the general play park sector has seen an increase irrespective of inflation. This has been estimated at circa 20%.

Some parks were due refurbishment in FY 22/23 which were held due to the requirement to see the outcome of the levelling up bid made in 2022.

Play area refurbishments require significant officer time to deliver, particularly when multiple sites are grouped together. This work includes designing and

delivering public consultations with each group of residents as well as equipment specification, procurement and project planning.

The last play area refurbishments were planned and coordinated by a dedicated project officer. There is not currently capacity within the Green Spaces team to manage a refurbishment project of this scale.

If funding was maintained at the ARP level a reduced level of play provision would result or some sites prioritised over others to receive the available funding.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

Safe, appealing and suitable play area provision in five of our parks.

5. Timescales

Each site will require some form of public consultation to ensure the community are engaged in the process to replace these community assets.

On completion of the consultations a recommendation report will be required to be approved by Cabinet (and possibly Full Council)

Procurement and installation can then follow.

It is estimated this will take between 12 and 18 months. Some sites are already having items of equipment removed as they become un-economic to repair and to be made safe.

6. Project Costs and Resources

	FY22/23	FY23/24
Playground Replacement - Florence Park		£120,000
Playground Replacement - Oaklands	£70,000	
Playground Replacement - Priory Park		£100,000
Playground Replacement - Sherborne	£80,000	
Playground Replacement - Whyke Oval		£70,000
Sub Totals	£150,000	£290,000
Total		£440,000
RPI and Market sector increase	57%	£250,800
Market sector increase	20%	£88,000
Addn Officer Support		£35,000
Grand Total		£813,800
Funding Sources	ARP	£440,000
	Reserves	£373,800

7. Benefits vs. Cost

While the cost of play provision is relatively high research shows that early and sustained engagement in play can promote many physical and mental health benefits. Play areas are safe spaces where children develop crucial physical, social, emotional and imaginative skills necessary to gain self-confidence, improve coordination, and advance critical thinking capabilities. Well designed and maintained play areas also have the potential to attract visitors from further afield and support the local economy. Therefore, making play interesting, fun, accessible and free to our residents has many benefits that arguably outweigh installation and maintenance costs.

Due to the increased replacement costs of the equipment the ARP will need to be increased by approximately £40,000 per annum on a 10 year depreciation schedule.

8. Identify Risks

- Impact on child development and quality of life for residents through reduced play provision
- Public perception if play provision is removed or reduced
- Unpredictability of rising costs (materials and labour) in the industry
- If nothing is done, all equipment will at some time be removed and the location made safe.