

CABINET

7 JULY 2020

ADDITION TO THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME – PLAY AREAS

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Doe, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Services

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

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Summary

This Report seeks Cabinet approval to add £135,000 Play Area investment to the Council's Capital Programme, supporting Medway's ambitions to be recognised as a Child-Friendly City. This programme of investment is for the financial year 2020/21; proposals for future years will be considered as part of the Council's Budget Setting process.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. It is the responsibility of Council to approve additions to the Capital Programme. This report is asking Cabinet to recommend that Council approves an addition of £135,000 to the Capital Programme to enable the development of Play Areas across Medway.
- 1.2. Investment into Medway's Play Areas supports the Council's Priority of "Healthy and Active Communities".
- 1.3. Medway has an aspiration to become a Child-Friendly City, putting our young people at the centre of everything we do. This investment will support that agenda, and assist in addressing the challenges of childhood obesity.
- 1.4. This Report has been included on the Forward Plan in accordance with Section 10 (General Exception) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meeting and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2021. However, this Report has been circulated separately to the main agenda. Therefore, the Cabinet is asked to accept this Report as urgent to enable it to make recommendations for the required addition to the Council's Capital Programme

to Full Council on 16 July 2020. The subsequent Full Council meeting is scheduled to take place on 08 October 2020.

2. Background

- 2.1. During the Covid-19 pandemic, on advice from Government, all children's play areas and adult outdoor exercise equipment have remained closed throughout. During this time, officers have been working to prepare a play area improvement programme.
- 2.2. Following that review of all the Council's play provision sites, 11 play areas have been identified as in need of refurbishing within the next 1-2 years. It is proposed that there is an addition to the Capital Programme to cover the costs of these Play Areas in FY2020/21, as well as a reasonable allocation on an ongoing basis to cover the maintenance/up-keep for all Medway's play areas.

3. Costs by Play Area

No.	Site Name	Ward	Proposal	Capital Funding Cost	Financial Year	Notes
1.	Maidstone Road Sports Ground	Chatham Central	3 items need replacing in FY20-21.	£75,000	FY20-21	-
2.	Low Meadow	Cuxton & Halling	One item (multi-play unit) needs to be replaced in 2021-22.	£50,000	FY21-22	-
3.	Fort Apache (Strand Toddler Play Area)	Gillingham North	This play area will be refurbished with s106.	-	FY21-22	Section 106 is due from Chatham Docks scheme for the Strand
4.	Hamilton Road	Gillingham North	Replace one item (slide) in 2022.	£10,000	FY21-22	-
5.	Lamplighter Close	Hempstead & Wigmore	Replace one item (multi-play unit) in 2021.	£30,000	FY21-22	-
6.	Iona Close	Lordswood & Capstone	Complete refurbishment in FY21-22.	£60,000	FY21-22	-

7.	Whimbrell Walk	Lordswood & Capstone	Complete refurbishment in FY21-22.	£50,000	FY21-22	-
8.	Crestway	Luton & Wayfield	Complete refurbishment in FY21-22.	£75,000	FY21-22	-
9.	Darnley Road	Strood South	Replace 3 items ASAP (junior and toddler multi-play units and flat swings). Total cost is £50,000 (£30,000 from S106 received + £20,000 from Capital budget FY20-21).	£20,000	FY20-21	£30,000 Section 106 received (MC/19/0260 - 11-17 High Street, Strood)
10.	Goudhurst Road	Twydall	This site will be funded by the HRA.	-	FY21-22	To be funded by Section 106 from the Eastcourt development (HRA scheme)
11.	Heritage Drive/ Darland View	Watling	3 items to be replaced FY20-21 (2 swing frames and roundabout)	£40,000	FY20-21	-

4. Financial Implications

4.1. A further review will take place in winter 2020/21 as part of the annual play inspections of all Medway Play Area sites. This is carried out by an Independent Inspector (the Playground Inspection Company) who will include the life expectancy of each item of play equipment across all of Medway's Play Areas. These findings will help inform the refurbishment programme for future years and a report will be produced in late 2020/early 2021 to inform the Capital Programme FY2021-22.

4.2. It is requested that the following be added to the Capital Programme:

Year	Description	Cost
FY 2020/21	3 priority sites in urgent need of refurbishment.	£135,000

- 4.3. As part of the Budget-Setting Process for FY2021/22, consideration will be given to the following:

Year	Description	Cost
FY 2021/22	6 priority sites in need of refurbishment To be reviewed in 2021 following the annual play inspection (see Section 4.1 below).	£275,000
FY 2022/23 – annual cost going forward	Proposed annual cost to be added to the Capital Programme going forward from FY22-23 to ensure all play areas are adequately refurbished, in line with annual play inspections.	£250,000

- 4.4. The Cost of borrowing required for the 2020/21 works can be met from existing resources.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. If this programme is approved the Capital Projects team will follow the Council's financial procedure rules supported by the Category Management team in the appointment of contractors to complete the various elements of works proposed.

6. Risk Management

- 6.1. Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Play Areas are not invested in.	Medway's Play Areas could require specific items needing replacement or being removed all together. There will be a cost to remove and "make good" equipment. In cases where	A planned programme of investment is put in place.	B2

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
	there are multiple items that need replacing, this could ultimately lead to the Play Area closing.		

7. Recommendations

7.1. The Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council the capital addition of £135,000 to the Capital Programme, to refurbish Play Areas as set out in this Report, to be funded from prudential borrowing.

8. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

8.1. Without investment, play areas in Medway will continue to deteriorate and will become increasingly unattractive to children and their families. The funding requested will allow necessary development to provide a long-term future for play areas across Medway and will support the Council's aspiration to become a Child-Friendly City, putting our young people at the centre of everything we do and assist with the Council's drive to address childhood obesity.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None