

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet **DATE:** 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011

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**WARDS:** ALL

**PORTFOLIO:** Education and Children – Councillor Pantelic  
Environment and Open Spaces – Councillor Parmar

### **PART I** **KEY DECISION**

#### **PLAY STRATEGY 2011-2014**

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report is to seek Cabinet's approval for the Council's Play Strategy, 2011-2014. The strategy builds on substantial improvements to play provision since 2008. It sets out plans to make further improvements to the network and ensure that high quality play provision can be sustained within affordable resources.
- 1.2 The measures proposed will deliver the administration's manifesto commitment to "refurbish or replace the remaining Slough play areas not yet modernised, and implement a maintenance programme to keep them up to a quality standard".

##### **2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- a) That the future strategic direction for play as set out in the strategy be agreed.
- b) That the Assistant Director for Culture and Skills be authorised, following consultation with the Commissioner for Education and Children, to implement proposals to redesign play spaces as set out in section 6.7 of this report, subject to the outcome of consultation with the local community and Ward Councillors in the areas affected.
- c) Agree that implementation of the Council's planning policy will reflect the principles and aspirations of the play strategy.
- d) Note that delivery of the strategy is dependent on additional revenue and capital funding as set out in section 4.1ff, which will be considered as part of the Council's annual Medium Term Financial Strategy process.

##### **3 Community Strategy Priorities**

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**
- **Adding years to Life and Life to years**
- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**

- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**

3.1 The provision of play opportunities for all children and young people in Slough will enable them to enjoy their younger years, play in harmony, and be more active. Constructive play helps children develop skills that contribute to learning achievement and to live together harmoniously. Parks and play areas make a major contribution to the quality of life in Slough, providing a natural and sustainable environment.

#### 4 **Other Implications**

##### 4.1 Financial

In 2011/12 there is an allocated revenue budget of £53,500 to cover all maintenance and repairs of the 75 play areas for which Slough Borough Council has management responsibilities. In 2010/11 revenue funding amounting to £72,000 was spent on play area maintenance and repairs. In addition, there is an unfunded liability of £55,000 a year to pay for annual health and safety and other repairs to maintain equipment in good condition.

4.2 The strategy has identified additional resources to cover the cost of maintaining housing play areas areas. The table below estimates the levels of revenue expenditure proposed for the next four years, subject to a growth bid for £55,000 to be added to the base budget as part of the Council's budget setting process to cover health and safety and lifeterm costs.

	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
	<b>(£'000)</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>	<b>(£'000)</b>
Total current revenue spending	125	122	117	109
Planned base budget	70	70	69	68
Additional health & safety/lifeterm	55	52	48	41

4.3 Plans to implement daily inspections for play areas will be delivered through the Council's contract with Enterprise, funded by contract and other efficiencies at no further cost to the Council. Proposals for weekly inspections are subject to a further growth bid for £30,000 to be added to the base budget.

4.4 It is proposed that 16 play areas be redesigned and improved at a one-off capital cost of £150,000. A further £50,000 capital expenditure is identified to bring a further 4 areas up to standard. This expenditure will be funded as part of the Council's capital programme, subject to the business case being approved

##### 4.5 Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no immediate Human Rights implications arising from this report. As part of the grant conditions received from the Department of Education and the BIG Lottery the Council has a commitment to ensure that where capital grant funding has been used to install new play areas that they be maintained to appropriate levels. This would include evidence of regular health & safety checks and reports and the replacement of damaged and worn equipment.

##### 4.6 Equalities Impact Assessment

The current programme of play development and refurbishment is supported by a comprehensive equalities impact assessment. A new EIA will be produced once the strategy is agreed and adopted by Members

4.7 Workforce  
There are no workforce implications arising from this report.

## **5 Supporting information**

### **5.1 Achievements since 2008**

Since 2008, there has been substantial investment in new play areas and a major refurbishment programme. There has also been investment in a play development programme to involve local communities and ensure play fulfils its role in helping children be active and achieve more.

5.2 Since 2008 the Borough Council's successes include:

- £1.5m invested in play areas since 2008
- 24 new play areas since 2008, including 2 new flagship sites in Salt Hill Park and Upton Court Park
- 11 upgraded play areas, 2 involving community volunteers to do basic refurbishment
- Natural play equipment and innovative landscaping to provide more challenging and attractive environments
- Over 30 consultation events engaged the community, particularly children
- 8,000 children in organised play sessions since July 2009
- Play linked closely with schools, Sure Start centres and many other community groups
- Play Partnership Group established
- Hosted Slough's first National Play Day 2010
- Over 3,000 people attended Play Day 2011
- Extensive play ranger outreach programme targeting disadvantaged communities promoting play as part of children's broader development
- Major presence at many community events, including Sunday Fun-day, 2012 Open Weekend, Britwell Cultural Day, Manor Park Community Day

### **5.3 Play audits 2010-2011**

An audit of play areas was carried out in the summer of 2010 and updated in July 2011. There are 75 play areas in the borough maintained by the Borough Council for public use.

5.4 The audits identified that play areas are well distributed across the borough and provide residents with good access to high quality play areas. It showed also that play areas differ greatly in condition and quality and that it should be a priority to introduce more frequent inspections and maintenance visits to help maintain areas at a good level.

## **6 Play strategy 2011-2014**

6.1 Slough's play strategy sets out Slough Borough Council's priorities until 2014. Its aim is that:

- Play areas should be places where children feel safe and welcome and they will be involved in telling us what they need
- Every child will have access to good play facilities within a 10 minute walk from home
- We will provide a variety of play opportunities for children and young people, including an element of adventurous play

- Play will be promoted to local people and organisations so that all children will benefit and play areas are supported
- Play facilities will offer value for money for local residents

6.2 Children, their families and the local community will be at the centre of the play strategy and will continue to be involved in making sure that play areas meet their needs.

6.3 A short version of the strategy for publication is attached as Appendix A. Appendix B is the Executive summary of the full strategy document

#### 6.5 **Play development**

The strategy proposes continuation of a play development programme at the level provided through flexible team roles in the Culture and Sport team established in 2011. This model will provide:

- Strategy development and delivery with Parks in conjunction with local Members and other stakeholders
- Help for community organisations to encourage local people to get involved and use play to address issues in communities
- Advice and support to other organisations to help them set up play activities across the borough
- Identification and targeting of communities in particular need of provision, including hard to reach groups and ways to help them
- Organisation of annual Play Day

#### 6.6 **Play areas**

The 75 play areas in Slough were plotted on a map to test the 10 minute walking distance to each one and were assessed against the following criteria:

- Health & Safety – an annual inspection
- General condition – monthly assessments
- Level of use and variety of challenging equipment (play value and quality)
- Levels of anti social behaviour

6.7 This analysis identified that:

- 39 are excellent and need no further investment (Appendix B; List 1)
- 20 need some improvement (Appendix A; List 2)
- 16 in need of redesign to improve the quality of play (Appendix A; List 3)
- A further 7 new areas are in progress (Appendix A; List 4)

##### 6.7.1 **List 1 – excellent areas**

No further changes are required to these. They deliver high quality play opportunities.

Examples include:

- Upton Court Park
- Faraday Recreation Ground
- Grampian Way

It is recommended that there are no further changes to areas in List 1.

#### 6.7.2 **List 2 – need some improvement**

Sites have significant play value

Examples include:

- Chalvey Recreation                      Stornaway Road
- Deerwood Park Junior                      Spackmans Way Junior
- Two Mile Drive

Improvement includes clean up, replacing equipment, minor surfacing, repainting. Some sites are suitable for community painting projects, an approach which has been successful in Rochford Gardens

It is recommended that areas in List 2 are improved at a one off cost of £60,000.

#### 6.7.3 **List 3 – sites that will be redesigned to improve the quality of play in consultation with local communities**

Sites have significant problems in terms of health and safety, condition or anti social behaviour

Examples include:

- Copse Close
- Upton Court Park East
- Quantock Close

Redesigning will create attractive new informal play spaces at a one-off cost of £150,000.

It is recommended that areas in List 3 be redesigned at a cost of £150,000, subject to public consultation involving people living locally to those areas, the Commissioner for Education and Children and Ward Councillors.

#### 6.9.4 **List 4 – new sites**

New sites will only be accepted into SBC management where they deliver the play strategy, filling significant gaps in the network or enabling other areas to be released

It is recommended that the Council accept new areas in List 4 which fit within the proposed new strategy.

#### 6.10 **Maintenance**

The strategy proposes that daily and weekly inspections will be implemented. The cost of these can be met from contract and other efficiencies with the available budget.

- 6.11 In addition to the daily and weekly inspections, community wardens will include play areas on their rounds and will report any issues that need action through the Parks team to Enterprise so that swift action can be taken.

#### 7 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

#### 8 **Conclusion**

The play strategy has identified opportunities to improve 16 areas as play spaces . Through this investment, children will have better environments to play and local communities will have a resource they can be proud of. The first phase of improvements will be undertaken in 2011/12.

## **Appendices Attached**

- A Play strategy text for publication
- B Executive summary of the full Play Strategy
- C Play areas in Slough by category. Lists 1-4

## **Background papers**

Make play part of your day – a play strategy for Slough, 2011-2014

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Make play a part of your day**

#### **Main text for published short play strategy and promotional document**

### **A message from Councillor Natasa Pantelic, Slough's Commissioner for Education and Children**

Slough Borough Council's new play strategy for 2011 to 2014 builds on the major programme of investment in play areas and play opportunities created for local children since 2008.

We are committed to continuing to provide play opportunities for local children within a 10 minute walk from their home and ensuring that all play areas are kept to a quality standard in every neighbourhood.

The Council will lead the delivery of improvements in partnership with local residents and local organisations, to create safe and vibrant play spaces for local children and the wider community to enjoy.

Since 2008, the Council has invested £1.5m to create 24 brand new play areas and upgraded 11, contributing to improvements to around half of all play areas in Slough. As well as driving up the quality of play areas, the Council has run organised play sessions, with over 8,000 children having taken part since July 2009.

Play is an important part of a child's development and the Council will ensure children are kept at the core of our play programme.

I hope you find the information in this booklet useful and that you enjoy all the play areas located on the map.

Very best wishes,

Councillor Natasa Pantelic  
Commissioner for Education and Children

### **We are really proud of our achievements**

Slough is a great place for children to play and enjoy themselves, with over 70 play areas. Our successes include:

- 35 play areas have been improved substantially since 2008
- Over £1.5 million invested to improve play provision in the town
- Since September 2009, over 8,000 children have attended our supervised play sessions
- Slough Play Day 2011 was attended by over 3,000 children, young people, parents and carers
- Two new large scale destination play spaces have been developed at Salt Hill Park and Upton Court Park

### **List of play areas**

Venue names

Addresses

Activities

## **Foldout map**

Large map showing all play areas in Slough with index

## **Play in Slough**

Slough Borough Council is committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to play and has access to good play facilities within a 10 minute walk from home.

Play is an essential part of every child's life. Through play, children explore and learn about themselves and the world they live in. As well as being fun, play helps them stay healthy, make friends and form relationships. It also helps them learn and achieve more through life.

The council provides safe and stimulating opportunities for play, through dedicated areas and a programme of play activities.

We hope that this map helps you find and enjoy the play areas in Slough.

## **A Play Strategy for Slough**

Slough's play strategy sets out Slough Borough Council's priorities for play until 2014. We intend that:

- Play areas should be places where children feel safe and welcome and they will be involved in telling us what they need
- Every child will have access to good play facilities within a 10 minute walk from home
- We will provide a variety of play opportunities for children and young people, including an element of adventurous play
- Play will be promoted to local people and organisations so that all children will benefit and play areas are supported
- Play facilities will offer value for money for local residents

## **Play areas**

Since 2008, the council has invested over £1.5 million to improve play provision in the town. 35 areas have been substantially improved. These sites provide all children with high quality play areas within easy reach of home. There are now two large play areas in Salt Hill Park and Upton Court Park with a bigger choice of play opportunities. Children and young people and their parents were involved in the design of these new play areas and helped make them the excellent facilities they now are.

## **Play Programme**

There are organised play sessions for children and a outreach programme that takes play into the local community into venues including schools, children's centres, community centres and libraries. Since September 2009, over 7,000 children have attended these sessions.

## **Slough Play Day**

Slough's annual Play Day provides children with opportunities to play and take part in a wide range of activities at Salt Hill Park. The event has gone from strength to strength and in 2011 it was attended by over 3,000 people.



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Executive summary of the full Play Strategy**

This strategy sets out Slough Borough Council's priorities to continue to provide play opportunities for local children over the next three years, to 2014. It builds on the major programme of investment and play improvements the Council has achieved since 2008 and proposes how quality play provision can be maintained in the borough within available resources.

The Council will lead this play strategy and work with the local community and partner organisations to ensure that facilities are well maintained so that they are enjoyed by local children.

Every child should have the opportunity to play and Slough Borough Council is committed to ensuring that Slough is a place that values and provides good quality play opportunities for every child, within a 10 minute walk from their home.

We intend that Borough Council play facilities will be:

<b>Child centred</b>	Play areas should be places where children feel safe and welcome and they will be involved in telling us what they need
<b>Accessible</b>	Every child will have access to good play facilities within a 10 minute walk from home
<b>Responsive</b>	We will provide a variety of play opportunities for children and young people, including an element of adventurous play
<b>Promoted</b>	Play will be promoted to local people and organisations so that all children will benefit and play areas are supported
<b>Sustainable</b>	Play facilities will offer value for money for local residents

### **Achievements since 2008**

Since 2008 the Borough Council's successes include:

- £1.5m invested in play areas since 2008
- 24 new play areas since 2008, including 2 new flagship sites in Salt Hill Park and Upton Court Park
- 11 upgraded play areas, 2 involving community volunteers
- Natural play equipment and innovative landscaping to provide more challenging and attractive environments
- Over 30 consultation events engaged the community, particularly children
- 8,000 children in organised play sessions since July 2009
- Play linked closely with schools, Sure Start and many other community groups
- Play Partnership Group established
- Hosted Slough's first National Play Day 2010
- Over 3,000 attended Play Day 2011
- Extensive outreach programme targeting disadvantaged communities
- Major presence at many community events

### **Play areas**

There are 75 designated play area sites in the borough maintained by the Council. Of these areas:

- 39 have been assessed as excellent, needing no investment at this stage
- 20 areas need some improvement in their current form at a cost of £60,000

- 16 areas are proposed for redesigning as community play spaces at a cost of £150,000

Proposals for redesigning areas are subject to community consultation and bidding for resources.

Community volunteer projects for refurbishing areas will continue, with 4 areas identified for 2011/12.

### **New play areas**

New play areas through development will only be agreed where they fit with the priorities set out in this strategy. They must deliver access within a 10 minute walk for a significant number of residents.

### **Maintenance and management programme**

Daily inspections for play areas will be delivered through the Council's contract with Enterprise, funded by contract and other efficiencies at no further cost to the Council. Weekly inspections are proposed for more practical maintenance on site, subject to a growth bid for £30,000 to be added to the base budget.

In addition to the daily and weekly inspections, community wardens will include play areas on their rounds and will report any issues so that swift action can be taken.

### **Revenue funding implications**

The table below estimates the levels of revenue expenditure proposed for the next four years, subject to bidding for resources. A one-off investment in the base budget from 2012/13 is proposed.

	<b>2012/13</b> <b>(£'000)</b>	<b>2013/14</b> <b>(£'000)</b>	<b>2014/15</b> <b>(£'000)</b>	<b>2015/16</b> <b>(£'000)</b>
Total current revenue spending	125	122	117	109
Planned funding	70	70	69	68
Additional health & safety/lifeterm	55	52	48	41

### **Play development from 2012**

Play development will continue to be resourced to deliver:

- Strategy development and delivery with Parks
- Help for community groups to encourage local people to get involved
- Advice and support to other organisations to help them set up play activities
- Additional resources through funding applications
- Target communities in need of provision, including hard to reach groups
- Organise annual Play Day
- Develop and manage development projects

### **Partnership working**

The existing play partnership will be reviewed to give it a clearer focus as an advisory group to Council services drawn from community based organisations.

This group will advise on delivery of this strategy and help mobilise capacity to increase community ownership and delivery of play related activity.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Play areas in Slough by category**

#### **List 1 (Excellent areas)**

Godolphin Rec.	Baylis &Stoke
Granville Rec. Youth	Baylis & Stoke
Manor Park	Baylis & Stoke
Bridport Spur	Britwell
Monksfield Rec.	Britwell
Upper Lees Road Rec.	Britwell
Bowyer Rec.	Central
Leith Close	Central
Lismore Park	Central
Salt Hill Park Youth Area	Chalvey
Salt Hill Park - Water Play Area	Chalvey
Spackmans Way Seniors	Chalvey
Tower House, The Crescent	Chalvey
Avebury	Cippenham Green
Cardigan Close	Cippenham Green
Colin Way	Cippenham Meadows
Concorde Way	Cippenham Meadows
Deerwood Park –Seniors	Cippenham Green
Mercian Rec.	Cippenham Green
Mitchell Close	Cippenham Meadows
Weekes Drive Seniors	Cippenham Meadows
Pippins Park	Colnbrook
Faraday Close Rec.	Farnham
Grampian Way	Foxborough
Horsemoor Green Rec	Foxborough
Longwood Park	Foxborough
Buttermere Avenue	Haymill
Cippenham Rec.	Haymill
Goldsworthy Way	Haymill
Marescroft Road	Haymill
Newchurch Road	Haymill
Scaffell Road	Haymill
Bloom Park Seniors	Langley St Mary's
Maplin Park	Langley St Mary's
Springate Field	Langley St Mary's
Hurworth Avenue	Upton
Upton Court Park	Upton
Upton Court Park West	Upton
Upton Lea Rec.	Wexham Lea

## **List 2 (Needing some improvement)**

Cromwell Drive	Baylis & Stoke
Granville Rec Juniors	Baylis & Stoke
Manor Park Juniors	Baylis & Stoke
Monksfield Rec.Infants	Britwell
Chalvey Rec.	Chalvey
Salt Hill Park Play Area	Chalvey
Spackmans Way Juniors	Chalvey
Deerwood Park – Juniors	Cippenham Green
Moor Furlong	Cippenham Meadows
Richards Way	Cippenham Meadows
Two Mile Drive	Cippenham Meadows
Weekes Drive Juniors	Cippenham Meadows
Westfield Hall	Colnbrook
Harvey Park Seniors	Foxborough
Stornaway Road	Foxborough
Kedermister Park	Kedermister
Langley Memorial Park	Kedermister
Bloom Park Toddlers	Langley St Mary's
Moray Drive	Wexham Lea
Rochford Gardens	Wexham Lea

**List 3 (Proposed for redesigning to improve the quality of play in consultation with local communities)**

Wentworth Avenue	Britwell
Petersfield Avenue	Central
Brammas Close	Chalvey
Bader Gardens	Cippenham Meadows
Copse Close	Cippenham Meadows
Ferrers Close	Cippenham Meadows
Gervaise Close	Cippenham Meadows
Gowings Green	Cippenham Meadows
Hoylake Close	Cippenham Meadows
Pear tree Close	Cippenham Meadows
Plaines Close	Cippenham Meadows
Quantock Close	Foxborough
Bloom Park Juniors	Langley St Mary's
Maryside	Langley St Mary's
Lascelles Park	Upton
Upton Court Park East	Upton

#### **List 4 (New areas)**

Former Western House School (play space)	Cippenham Green
Green Wedge (2 play areas; 2 play spaces)	Cippenham Meadows
James Meadow (play area)	Foxborough
Castlevew (play area; possible scope to negotiate play space instead)	Upton

Other schemes at a less advanced planning stage are Huntercombe (Cippenham Green) and Britwell regeneration (Britwell).