



Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

Date: 2nd March 2020

Title: Play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes.

Purpose of the Report: To provide Members with an update on the wider play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes.

Contact Officer: Ian Haynes – Head of Grounds and Environmental Services

Corporate Aim/s		Leighton-Linslade Town Council Five Year Plan & Objectives 2019-2024 Objective 30 – “To continue to provide excellent play equipment across the parish and to expand the range of accessible play equipment available.”
Implications:		
Financial	√	Demonstrable negotiated discount of £28,975 to date
Human Resources		None
Operational/Service delivery		None
Procedural/Legal	√	Moral obligation to maintain our assets and Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 will be relevant
Risk/Health and Safety	√	Legal obligation under The Workplace, (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Should Members be minded, to support the proposal to:-**
- 1.2 To note the report.**
- 1.3 To endorse the updated wider play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes as per the attached gantt charts.**

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The play equipment replacement programme is mainly funded through the councils' annual capital programme.
- 2.2 The approach over the last few years has been to remove the majority of existing equipment in an area and replace with new. Replacing all equipment (depending on size) costs anything from £40k to £60k. From start to finish the process takes around 6 to 8 months.
- 2.3 Therefore, in the foreseeable future it should only be necessary to replace specific items of equipment which have reached the end of their useful life or to add one or more items of new equipment to increase the play value of a particular area. This is a change of approach which Members have already approved.
- 2.4 For information, the maintenance of play areas and play equipment is carried out in-house by Grounds staff who are trained in the methods of inspection and assessment of risk. Health and safety risks revealed by inspections are acted on as a matter of priority. In addition, an annual external inspection is undertaken by RoSPA Play Safety and any significant issues highlighted are dealt with immediately.
- 2.5 A revenue budget covers general maintenance, spare parts, minor repairs and vandalism as and when required. However, play equipment is notoriously expensive and replacement parts can cost anything up to £1k. Therefore, the limits on the revenue budget mean it is sometimes more economic to remove rather than repair equipment leading to a consequential loss of play value at a site.
- 2.6 Being able to replace particular items within an area rather than waiting until the whole area requires refurbishment will allow a more flexible approach to replacing equipment.
- 2.7 Play equipment has a life expectancy of around 15 years although many factors affect the life and play value of items including vandalism and high use of popular equipment.
- 2.8 The attached gantt chart starts with the priority areas and covers financial years 2016/2017 to 2020/2021. It is the intention that Officers will try and secure extra funding and this will operate on a 5-year review cycle per area which feeds into the annual capital programme.

2.9 The revised replacement programme is **attached**.

2.10 It should be noted that future reviews or external reports may influence future requirements and this report incorporates comments from the Grounds Maintenance staff who undertake inspections.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 If Members are minded, that future capital allocations for play areas/equipment are used to fund;

- single items of equipment which have reached the end of their useful life
- upgrades to existing equipment/areas
- one or more new items of equipment to increase the play value of a site.

3.2 Deviations from the attached programme will be kept to a minimum and this item becomes a standing Committee item to ensure that the Town Council's investment in its assets is being maintained.