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## Grounds and Environmental Services Committee

**Date:** 7 March 2022

**Title:** Play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes

**Purpose of the Report:**

To provide Members with an update in the broader play area improvement and safer surfacing replacement programmes.

**Contact Officer:**

Ian Haynes, Head of Grounds & Environmental Services

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<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>	LLTC Five Year Plan – Objective #30	
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Financial</b>	Yes	Within Five Year Plan
<b>Human Resources</b>	No	None
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	No	None
<b>Procedural/Legal</b>	Yes	<b>Moral</b> obligation to maintain our assets and Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 will be relevant
<b>Risk/Health and Safety</b>	Yes	<b>Legal</b> obligation under The Workplace, (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
<b>Environmental Aims</b>	No	None

### 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Committee be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 To note the report.
- 1.2 To endorse the updated broader 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 it 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 that have reached the end of their useful life or 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 £2k. Therefore, the limits on the revenue budget mean it is sometimes more economical 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 site 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 items' life and play value, including vandalism and high use of popular equipment.
- 2.8 The attached Gantt chart starts with the priority areas and covers financial years 2017/2018 to 2022/2023. It is the intention that Officers will try and secure extra funding, and this will operate on a rolling 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. CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1 Should Members be 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 equipment items to increase the play value of a site.
- 3.2 Deviations from the attached programme will be kept to a minimum. This item is a standing Committee item to ensure that the Town Council's investment in its assets is maintained.