

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
29TH JUNE 2009**

OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS

SUMMARY REPORT**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members on recent play area improvements and further improvements planned over the next two years.

Summary

2. A number of play areas have seen improvements carried out in the last three years, mainly from Local Area Agreement funding, which on some sites has been supplemented by other external funding and Section 106 monies.
3. A report to Cabinet on 3 March 2009 released further Section 106 funds, which will enable improvements to take place at Sadberge, Albert Hill, Green Park, South Park and Broken Scar.
4. The Council has been successful in its application to Playbuilders and has received a grant from the Department for Children, Schools and Families of £1,128,558. This funding has been allocated over two years for 2009/10, £530,535 and for 2010/11, £598,023. Eleven sites per year must be developed and the emphasis on these projects will be around natural play using the landscape as an integral part of the play experience for young people.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Ian Thompson : Extension 4446
CLD

S17 Crime and Disorder	Providing well designed, maintained play areas has a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Providing well designed, maintained play areas has a positive impact on health and well being.
Sustainability	All projects are designed with a view to being sustainable into the future.
Diversity	There is a range of individuals involved in the development and delivery of play projects from interested groups and organisations.
Wards Affected	The majority of Wards have seen play areas improved across the Borough.
Groups Affected	Improvement of play areas is mainly aimed at young people, who are involved in the development of projects and selection of equipment. In addition, an inclusion group from DAD were involved in the selection of suitable designs.
Budget and Policy Framework	The content of this report does not change Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	A programme of play area improvements contributes across a number of themes within the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Efficiency	Upgrading and improving play areas reduces the amount of officer time required to maintain old, rundown equipment.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. In the last two to three years there have been a number of improvements carried out to play areas as a result of Local Area Agreement funding and other contributions from external sources and Section 106 monies. In particular:
 - (a) New play area, Auckland Oval
 - (b) New play area, Bensham Park
 - (c) New play area, Eggleston View
 - (d) Climbing Boulder, Eastbourne Sports Complex
 - (e) New play area, Eastbourne Park
 - (f) Improvements to open space and new play area, Open Space, Lascelles
 - (g) New play area, Fryers Crescent
 - (h) New slide at play area, Heighington Village
 - (i) Fencing around play area, Hurworth
 - (j) New play area and new multi-use games area and other improvements at North Park
 - (k) Refurbishment of play areas and open space, Green Lane, Springfield
 - (l) Improvements to open space and provision of play equipment, Pensbury Street.
 - (m) Improvements to park and new play area, the Denes
 - (n) Improvements to play area, Minors Crescent
7. In recent site visits in the last two years, Members have seen a number of these sites and the excellent work that has taken place.
8. Further work is planned to continue the programme of play area and open space improvements. Recently a report was presented to Cabinet on 3 March 2009, when Members approved the release of funding to carry out improvements to a number of sites, particularly:
 - (a) Play area, Sadberge
 - (b) Play area, Albert Hill
 - (c) Play area, Green Park
 - (d) Play area, South Park
 - (e) Play area, Broken Scar
9. Work is ongoing and at various stages on each of these projects.
10. The play area at Grass Street will be replaced in the near future as part of the redevelopment of North Road School. An allocation of funds from this project has been set aside for the provision of a new play area.
11. Through Lottery Funding as a result of the development of the Play Strategy, £90,000 was identified for additional play equipment within the Denes. Following completion of works by Northumbrian Water, it is proposed to develop a play area/facility in the Tennis Court Dene which goes some way to filling a gap in provision within that part of the Borough.

12. The Council has been successful in its application to Playbuilders and has received a grant from the Department for Children, Schools and Families of £1,128,558. This funding has been allocated over two years for 2009/10, £530,535 and for 2010/11, £598,023. Eleven sites per year must be developed and the emphasis on these projects will be around natural play using the landscape as an integral part of the play experience for young people.

13. As well as the capital funding, there is also a revenue allocation of £45,618. The first year, 2009/10, £27,371 and the second year, 2010/11, £18,247. The Council is currently going through a tender exercise to select a partner to deliver the community engagement, design and project management for the range of Playbuilders projects.

14. The eleven sites identified for Year 1 are:

- (a) Albert Hill
- (b) Cocker Beck
- (c) Eastbourne Park
- (d) Lascelles
- (e) Red Hall
- (f) West Park
- (g) Bensham Park
- (h) Bushel Hill Park
- (i) Green Park
- (j) Eastbourne Park
- (k) Skerne Restoration

Work is underway on a number of these projects as they must be delivered in financial year 2009/10.

15. For Year 2, further work is required but the initial list of sites is:

- (a) North Lodge Park
- (b) Alderman Crooks Park
- (c) Ettersgill Drive
- (d) North Park
- (e) Darrowby Drive
- (f) Springfield, Green Lane
- (g) Faverdale
- (h) Auckland Oval
- (i) Sugar Hill Park
- (j) Fryers Crescent
- (k) Beech Wood

Work will take place during the first year of the project to develop and finalise individual briefs for each of the Year 2 projects.

16. In the majority of case, Playbuilders funding will be utilised to enhance/improve existing play facilities alongside other recent improvements or as part of a bigger programme of improvements for the individual sites. Three new sites have been identified, those at West Park, Skerne Restoration and Faverdale. These sites are consistent with the aims and actions within the Open Space Strategy.

Outcome of Consultation

17. With regard to the existing projects that have been delivered and those that are in development stage, full consultation has taken place with relevant groups, Friends of parks, young people, DAD, Ward Members and local residents.