

Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	Cabinet	
Date:	23 March 2026	
Report Title:	Play Area Project – elected Member Feedback regarding play area improvement requirements	

1 Purpose / Summary

- 1.1 Fenland District Council has been allocated the £1.5 million grant from the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund. Cabinet has previously decided to focus this grant funding on enhancement of open spaces facilities and play areas across the district in line with the Fenland Inspire! project aims, which also matches one of the objectives of the Pride in Place Impact Fund.

2 Key Issues

- 2.1 Following an assessment of existing FDC play areas, a report to Cabinet in February 2026 split the budget as follows;
- Towns; £250,000 budget per town
 - Rural areas and villages; £500,000
- 2.2 Additionally, Cabinet instructed the Portfolio Holder for the project to consult with Elected Members in each town and across the rural areas to ascertain what improvements Members would like to see in their areas.
- 2.3 This report summarises Member feedback with estimated costs of Members' suggestions and requirements.
- 2.4 All costs remain an estimate until a formal procurement process is completed and tendered costs are available.

3 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 3.1 Cabinet considers the feedback within the report from Elected Members regarding improvements desired in their areas and decides which particular projects or improvements to move forwards with taking into account the budgets previously allocated by Cabinet in 2.1 above. Cabinet should note that each town was allocated a notional budget of £250,000 and the rural areas £500,000. Cabinet is asked to ensure that Elected Member requests for the entire project falls very close to the total budget of £1.5m.

Additionally;

That Cabinet delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder responsible for the Fenland Inspire! Open Spaces and Play Areas Project to consult with local Elected Members with regard to any necessary adjustments to current expected spend against the budget and adjusts the notional budget allocations as necessary and matches these revised budgets with Elected Members priorities.

- 3.2 That Cabinet instructs officers to inform the local MP of what plans have been approved, pending the necessary community engagement to further shape

proposals, as is required by the Government Prospectus for the Pride in Place Impact Fund;

- 3.3 Notes that community feedback regarding any proposals is a requirement of the Government Grant and that feedback may alter proposals accordingly. Community engagement will take place throughout April based on decisions made by Members in paragraph 3.1;
- 3.4 Notes that the deadline for committing the Pride in Place Impact Fund which is funding open space and play area improvements is no later than 31 March 2027;
- 3.5 That Cabinet authorises officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder responsible for the Fenland Inspire! Open Spaces and Play Area Project and the Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces to deliver the improvements approved by Cabinet in paragraph 3.1. Those improvements will be subject to the MP's feedback and feedback as part of a community engagement process, ensuring compliance with MHCLG's prospectus for this grant funding.
- 3.6 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Portfolio Holder for the Fenland Inspire! Open Spaces and Play Area Project to consult with local Elected Members regarding alternative projects where, from the options approved by Cabinet, permission to use a third party's land is denied, or including where MHCLG rejects a project as unsuitable for the funding.
- 3.7 That Cabinet authorises the Monitoring Officer to execute and complete all requisite legal documentation in relation to the matters above related to play area and open spaces improvements, procurement and their delivery.

Wards Affected	All	
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/15JAN26/01	
Portfolio Holders	Cllr Sidney Imafidon	Portfolio Holder for Fenland Inspire! Open Spaces and Play Area Project
	Cllr Chris Boden	Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance
	Cllr Jan French	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Open Spaces
Report Originator	Phil Hughes Heidi Smith Gemma Newell	Head of Leisure and Open Spaces Play Area Project Officer Open Spaces Officer
Contact Officers	Phil Hughes Carol Pilson	Head of Leisure and Open Spaces Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer
Background Papers	February 2026 Cabinet Report January 2026 Cabinet Report November 2025 Cabinet Report December 2023 Cabinet Report	

1 Background and Intended Outcomes

1.1 This report summarises Elected Members' requirements for play area and open space improvements, split by individual towns and the rural areas.

2 Chatteris Member Feedback

2.1 Further to local elected Member discussions, Cllr Murphy met with FDC officers to discuss Member requirements for Play Area and open space improvement in Chatteris.

- FDC officers were instructed to estimate the cost of any improvements highlighted as required by the Play Area Project Officer's inspection of the Chatteris play areas.
- Additionally, officer were asked to cost lighting for Wenny Recreation Ground and Furrowfields open space.

2.2 Local Members Key Priority:

2.3 Proposed Lighting Works in 2 key open spaces to improve lighting to reduce crime and the fear of crime in popular open spaces, that are also key routes to schools.

2.4 Note all costs are estimates until a specification has been developed and confirmed quotations are received.

2.5 Lighting at **Furrowfields** recreation ground:

Requirement	Cost
5 lights needed @ £3,000 per column	£15,000
Final specification to be confirmed once final design works are in hand.	
UK Power Network works requirement TBC, following previous power works on site	£20,000
Ducting / cabling	£25,000
Feeder Pillar approximately £6,000	£6,000
Design costs £3,500	£3,500
Contingency @ 10%	£7,000
Total	£76,500

2.6 Lighting at Wenny Rd recreation ground

Requirement	Cost
15 lights needed @ £3,000 per column	£45,000
Final specification to be confirmed once final design works are in hand.	
UK Power Network works requirement	£30,000
Ducting / cabling	£25,000
Feeder Pillar approximately	£12,000

Design costs & site inspections	£3,500
Contingency @ 10%	£12,000
Total	£127,500

2.7 Local Members Priority 2

2.8 **Any work identified below to be undertaken from any remaining budget from the lighting priority.** Current estimates expect a £21,000 play equipment budget, but as noted above the lighting costs are currently estimated and will not be confirmed until a design has been developed and work procured.

2.9 When the final play area budget is confirmed, the local lead Member will be consulted on which of the mix of improvements across those detailed below should be taken forwards.

2.10 Chatteris – play area audit summary;

2.11 Following instruction from elected members, council officers have carried out audits on all play areas in Chatteris. The majority of play areas only require minor works, such as repainting, or adding an additional piece of equipment. Further to feedback, lighting is realised as a priority for two main areas; Furrowfields and Wenny Park recreation ground. Estimated costs for these can be found at the end of this page.

2.12 Where an existing FDC play area is not mentioned, this is because the assessment determined that no improvements to equipment were required.

2.13 The findings from the audits are detailed below:

- **Cricketers Way** - Equipment found to be in good condition, requiring a possible repair to the surfacing under the swing which has become uneven in places.
- **Furrowfields Recreation Ground (MUGA)** - Specifically the Multi Use Games Area (Muga) is in good condition, the lines in the space would benefit from repainting.
- **Furrowfields** - New equipment was added in 2024 –2025 and is in therefore good condition. The swings, spinner and multi play would benefit from a repaint to improve their appearance, additionally the basket swing could do with replacing.
- **Hunters Close** - Equipment is in reasonable condition, slide has a few small dents. Equipment would benefit from repainting and repair to the surface is required in places. As an alternative – replace the existing play area with new equipment and resurface the area.
- **Huntingdon Road, MUGA** - Potential to reline the sports area and install a high fence.

- **Larham Way, MUGA** - Side panels are waist height – potential to install a high fence
- **St Pauls Drive** - Equipment to be repainted.
- **Wenny Road Play Area** - Equipment in generally good condition, surface and equipment would benefit from a clean but no major work required.
- **Wenny Road – MUGA** - Potentially reline the sports area

Cricketers Way – Equipment in good condition. Possible safety surface repair required where uneven.	Estimated cost: £5,000
Furrowfields Recreation Ground MUGA – repaint lines in the MUGA area.	Estimated cost - £2,000
Furrowfields Recreation ground – Replace basket swing for new. Repaint swings/spinner/multi play to refresh.	Estimated repaint cost: £4,000 New Basket seat without install approximately: £675
Hunters Close – Equipment is reasonable condition. Repaint equipment/surface	Est. repair of surface cost: £2,784 Est.£15,000 for repainting/surface.
Huntingdon Road - Muga	Est cost £2,000 to reline sports area
St Pauls Drive – Improve by repainting swings/changing the surface. Remove and reinstate to grass.	Repainting estimated at £5,000
Wenny road MUGA – reline sports area	Est cost: £2,000
Larham Way - MUGA	Awaiting approximate cost of a higher fence installation/supply.

All costs set out in the table above, are estimated costs only.

2.14 Chatteris total expected cost: **£250,000**

3 March Member Feedback

3.1 Officers were asked to estimate costs for identified potential new play areas or improvements to existing spaces;

- Peas Hill Road open space

3.2 Wigston / North Drive, Robingoodfellows, Gaul Road, The Avenue, West End park, Southwell Close and Smiths Drive have all been identified as areas for improvement following work at the initial two open spaces.

3.3 Local members key priority:

3.4 As listed above; these areas have been identified as priority spaces that would benefit from a new playground or improvement to the existing play area.

3.5 Note, all costs are estimates until a specification has been developed and confirmed quotations are received. Note that the equipment listed is subject to local community consultation.

Peas Hill Road	
Surfacing under climbing frame	£3,000
Removal of old ramp and wooden posts	£10,000
Replacement climbing frame (estimated cost as prices vary according to size and design)	£13,000
Treat wooden Multi play	£3,000
New basket swing	£1,500
Zip Wire	£16,200
Cradle Swings (incl. inclusive option)	£5,000
Flat swings with new frame:	£4,700
Seesaw	£3,500
Contingency 10%	£5,990
Total:	£65,890

Robingoodfellows	
Zip wire	The space already has a zip wire.
Seesaw	£3,500
Roundabout (inclusive)	£16,000
Total:	£19,500

Wigstones / North Drive	
Footpath	£10,000
Springer	£1,700
Seesaw	£3,500
Total:	£15,200

Gaul Road	
Zip wire (note: insufficient space within fenced play area)	£16,200
Seesaw	£3,500
Springer	£1,700
Goal Posts	These are currently positioned away from the play area and the road. They are unable to face the road or be any closer to the play area. Improvement is possible by adding in a football wall if desired
Total:	£21,400

The Avenue	
Zip wire	£16,200
Goal posts	Not possible for this location due to domestic properties surrounding the grass area and the road in close proximity. A football wall is already in place.
Total:	£16,200

West End Park - the current play area can't be extended due to underground services: Gas and Water	
Zip wire	£16,200
Goal Posts	Prices vary according to size; allow £5,000
Climbing frame	£13,000 (cost varies depending on size and design)
SEND swings	£3,500 (costs vary according to design)
Wetpour under existing cradle swing	£6,000
TOTAL	£43,700

Southwell close	
Wetpour under items to improve use during wet weather/ winter months	£10,000
Total	£10,000

Smiths Drive	
Seesaw (requires a similar surface to grass)	£3,500
Trail equipment (varies in price according to size and design).	£17,500
Total:	£21,000

Location unknown	Prices vary according to size & design
Climbing Rock	£17,000

3.6 March total expected cost: £229,890.

3.7 The costs detailed above fall short of the budget of £250,000. Cabinet should determine how this shortfall may be resolved.

4 Whittlesey Member Feedback

4.1 Local Members key priorities are shown below:

- Play area for Church street play park (next to St Andrews Church)
£100,000 open space land owned by FDC currently not being used
- Play area for Birds estate play park £100,000 Open space land owned by FDC currently not being used
- Add in limited play equipment closer to housing at Station Road play park
£25,000
- Water tower play area £25,000 for additional play equipment
- Whittlesey country park £25,000 for phase 1 costing plan

4.2 Note, all costs are estimates until a specification has been developed and confirmed quotations have been received – please see table below. Please also note that the equipment listed is subject to local community consultation.

Church Street, Whittlesey (Next to St Andrews Church)

The site lies within a designated Conservation Area and is immediately adjacent to a listed church building and its associated boundary wall. The presence of several mature trees significantly restricts the available space for installing play equipment, as the existing tree canopies limit usable ground area. Any proposal to introduce new play equipment at this location is likely to require planning approval due to the site's heritage constraints.

In addition, the installation would likely necessitate the felling or substantial pruning of mature trees to create sufficient space, which may conflict with Conservation Area protections and heritage considerations.

Roundabout	£15,000
See-Saw	£6,000
Slide	£7,000
Multi play	£20,000
Swing	£15,000
Improve fence at North boundary	£21,000
Picnic Bench/s	£5,000 with concrete base
Litter Bin/s	£1,000
Sub Total	£90,000
Contingency 11%	£10,000
TOTAL	£100,000

Public Open Space Teal Road, Whittlesey (pedestrian footpath from Curlew Close, Kingfisher Road and Teal Road)

The installation of a new play area on this site may require planning permission. The open space is enclosed on three sides by residential properties, which creates the potential for impacts relating to noise, overlooking, and changes to the character of the area.

As a result, early engagement and consultation with adjacent residents should be considered a priority to identify concerns, manage expectations, and ensure that any proposed layout or equipment selection is appropriate.

Roundabout (accessible)	£15,000
See-Saw	£6,000
Medium Slide	£7,000
Multi play	£20,000
Complete Swing Unit (incl. accessible seat)	£15,000

Bow top fence, self-close gate and maintenance gate	£27,000
Sub Total	£90,000
Contingency 11%	£10,000
TOTAL	£100,000

Station road play park	
Complete swing unit (incl.1 accessible seat)	£15,000
Junior Slide	£10,000
Total	£25,000

Water Tower, Tower Road, play area	
Inclusive roundabout	£15,000
Junior Slide	£10,000
Total	£25,000

Whittlesey country park	
Phase 1 costing plan	£25,000

Manor Field	
5 x metal benches for along the river on in the Manor Park	£10,000

4.3 Whittlesey total expected cost: **£285,000**

4.4 The costs detailed above exceed the budget of £250,000. Cabinet should determine a priority for the projects above within the £250,000 budget scope.

5 Wisbech Member Feedback

5.1 Local Members key priority:

- 5.2 To provide improvements in Wisbech Park to attract more users into the historic park.
- 5.3 To improve the play area at Burcroft Road by adding a selection of equipment and to provide a new play area at Guild Road.
- 5.4 Please note: Guild Road is not FDC owned and requires permission from the landowner (Clarion Housing) to carry out any works.
- 5.5 Note, all costs are estimates until a specification has been developed and confirmed quotations have been received.

Wisbech Park	
Additional tables and seating;	
Estimated cost (depending on the number of units required)	£5,000
Storage to increase flexibility for community events and security of equipment;	
Estimated cost (subject to container size required)	£3,500
Additional Activity Equipment inside Wisbech Park Pavilion;	
Estimated cost	£4,000

Burcroft Road (keep existing seesaw and swings)	
Budget allocation	£75,000

Guild Road	
Budget allocation	£105,000

- 5.6 This leaves a budget of **£57,500** remaining following the key projects identified above. This will allow a selection of additional toddler equipment in **Jasmin Close play area** as requested by Members.
- 5.7 Wisbech total expected costs: **£250,000**

6 Rural Member Feedback

6.1 Local members key priorities

Tydd St Giles	
Roundabout	£10,000
See-Saw	£6,000
Slide	£7,000
Rocker	£2,000
Safety Fence with self-close gates and maintenance gate	£30,000
Bench (without concrete base slab)	£1,000
Bin	£500
Sub Total	£56,500
Contingency 10%	£5,650
Total (rounded)	£62,000

Newton-In-The-Isle	
Repairs to existing equipment	£24,200
Monkey Bars	£10,000
Spring Rocker	£2,000
Sub Total	£36,200
Contingency 10%	£3,620
Total (rounded up)	£40,000

Manea play area (costs shown provided by Parish Council)	
Double Cradle Swing	£1,800
Carousel	£3,700
Essential Tower	£4,048
Carousel Picnic Bench	£1,368
Mountain Net Climber	£7,900
Bali Climber	£5,400
Wheelchair Carousel	£7,580

MUGA Refurbishment	£2,950
Installation and Health and Safety	£10,000
Sub total	£44,700
Contingency 10%	£4,500
Total (rounded up)	£50,000

Christchurch	
Replacement skate park equipment - quotation already received	£60,000
Contingency 10%	£6,000
Total	£66,000

Elm	
Play area improvements	£30,000

Morrow	
Play area improvements	£30,000

Leverington (The Foal Ground)	
Note this open space is owned by the Parish Council	
Play area improvements	£52,000

Wimblington - War Memorial Park	
Replacement swings and roundabout (HAGS quotation in hand)	£13,000
Playcubes project (HAGS quotation in hand)	£9,000
Total	£22,000

Doddington	
MUGA	£100,000
Contingency 10%	£10,000
Benwick Road play area	£30,000
Total	£140,000

6.2 Rural areas total estimated costs: **£492,000**.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 Recommendations are determined by Elected Member feedback and as detailed will be subject to MP feedback and community consultation – as required by the prospectus to the Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF).

8 Consultation

- 8.1 Following Cabinet's discussion and decisions regarding this report, the local community will be consulted to ensure that improvements are what the community would like to see in the spaces selected.
- 8.2 Additionally, as detailed in the PiPIF Prospectus, the local MP will be consulted on the plans to take forwards.

9 Alternative Options Considered

- 9.1 None – feedback has been sought from Elected Members regarding their towns or villages to allow locally informed projects to be brought forwards.
- 9.2 MP feedback and community consultation will refine suggestions to determine final specification of play equipment to be delivered as required by the Pride in Place Impact Fund prospectus.

10 Implications

10.1 Legal Implications

- 10.2 Any procurement will be conducted with the Council's Procurement Team, likely using framework agreements that the Council already has access to ensure that all procurement regulations are complied with.
- 10.3 The majority of the work contained in this report will be grant funded by the Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF). Officers will ensure that the Fund's protocols are adhered to. This includes community consultation regarding all projects, as well as ensuring that the local MP is informed as to how the PiPIF is being spent and how local communities have been involved in determining the type of play areas and equipment they would like to see in their play areas.
- 10.4 In the event that play areas or improvements have been selected to take place on land that is not in FDC ownership, discussions and a formal legal agreement will be required from the landowner. Should this not prove possible, officers will revisit Member's priorities for the areas where a landowner does not want equipment on their land. Any changes will be agreed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the designated play area project elected Member representative for the town or rural area in question.

10.5 Financial Implications

10.6 This project is funded by Central Government's Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF).

10.7 As this is the case, there should be little to no financial impact on FDC for the PiPIF grant funded work that this project is delivering, depending on final costings and contingencies required.

10.8 It should be noted that until a procurement process has been followed, after initial MP consultation and community consultation, all costs are estimates.

10.9 The budgets apportioned for each area within Fenland were as follows:

Each town	£250,000
Rural areas	£500,000

10.10 The estimated costs per Elected Member feedback, detailed above by area as follows:

Chatteris	£250,000
March	£250,000
Wisbech	£250,000
Whittlesey	£285,000
Rural Areas	£492,000
Total estimated cost:	<u>£1,527,000</u>

10.11 Equality Implications

10.12 Facilities added into open spaces will have an accessible element, where possible, ensuring that all users are able to enjoy themselves in the Council's open spaces.