

Agenda Item No:	<b>6</b>	
Committee:	<b>Cabinet</b>	
Date:	<b>4 November 2019</b>	
Report Title:	<b>Open Spaces - Play Areas</b>	

### **Purpose / Summary**

Further to the September 2019 Cabinet discussion regarding Fenland's play areas, this paper details a planned refurbishment programme for FDC's play areas and the potential FDC capital investment necessary for a 5 year plan.

### **Key issues**

- The Council recognises the importance of play areas for our local communities, for both health and community cohesion.
- Fenland manages many open spaces throughout the District - around 135 hectares in total. This includes 5 open cemeteries, 42 play areas, 6 skate parks and 20 closed churchyards.
- Play areas receive a weekly safety inspection from a qualified member of the grounds maintenance contractor. Additionally, FDC commissions an annual comprehensive ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) inspection of the play areas. As a result of weekly inspections, maintenance is carried out on issues identified.
- Fenland continues to replace individual items of equipment in play areas as and when required from the revenue repair budget.
- A programme of play area improvement and replacement continues. Since 2015, the Council has facilitated a spend of £622,577. In this financial year, this will be further supplemented by spending of circa £350,000 on further improvements. These improvements have been funded mainly by Section 106 funding, as well as leveraging in supplementary third party grants from bodies such as FCC and Amey Cespa Community Fund.
- The approach detailed above has been funding led instead of needs led. This paper details the play areas across Fenland and their current condition. This paper then details which play areas will reach the end of their useful life in the coming five years and the subsequent planned expenditure per site, alongside anticipated FDC capital contributions to the programme if Section 106 funding or other external funding cannot be identified.
- The replacement programme for FDC's play equipment will be costly as equipment comes to the end of its useful life, therefore the Council will seek to use Section 106 contributions to focus on the maintenance and replacement of current equipment rather than seek new initiatives except of course where there is currently no equipment in the area covered by the section 106 monies. This does not prevent Members from making a separate allocation in capital programme for other play related projects.

## Recommendations

Cabinet approves the planned approach to capital spending identified in the report and asks that the S151 officer makes appropriate funding available within the Council's capital programme where identified, should additional Section 106 funding or external funding not be available by the time the replacement work is due.

<b>Wards Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Forward Plan Reference</b>	N/A
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<b>Background Papers</b>	Council Motion 23 May 2019; Fenland District Council Play Equipment Cabinet paper July 2019; Fenland District Council play areas Cabinet paper September 2019; Fenland District Council play areas

## 1 Day to day management of Fenland's Play Areas

- 1.1 The Council manages and maintains many play areas on our open spaces. Further information may be found on the council's website at:  
<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/playareas>
- 1.2 Each play area has an average of 5 pieces of equipment available - the Council is looking after hundreds of different pieces of equipment.
- 1.3 A weekly safety inspection is carried out at all play areas and skate parks, with any significant issues attended to promptly.
- 1.4 The Council uses a revenue budget to maintain the play areas safely and replace minor items. In the past 5 years the council has spent £139,037 on play park maintenance from the revenue budget.

## 2 Improvement or Replacement of Play Areas

- 2.1 Fenland saw a significant programme of key play area replacements take place 10 years ago. Whilst the replacement programme has slowed down since then, significant investment continues, as highlighted by investment over the past 4 years in the following table:
- 2.2 Open Spaces capital spend in the past 4 years:

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total
Wenny Rec', Chatteris		131,072			
Manor Play area, Whittlesey	111,491				
The Avenue, Gaul Rd, March		45,039			
Wisbech Park - Bandstand			62,113		
Benwick Play Park			103,375		
Bath Road Skate Park				75,000	
Jasmin Park, Wisbech				13,607	
Wisbech Park				23,880	
Water Tower Play, Whittlesey				57,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£111,491</b>	<b>£176,111</b>	<b>£165,488</b>	<b>£169,487</b>	<b>£622,577</b>

- 2.3 Improvement and replacement works are currently reliant on Section 106 contributions, often supplemented by third party grant applications. In the past Fenland has been successful with attracting matched funding from Amey Cespa Community Fund, WREN (now renamed FCC Communities Foundation) and Clarion Futures.

## 3 Committed 2019 / 2020 programmed works

- 3.1 In the coming months Fenland will be:
- Replacing play equipment in Wenny Rec, Chatteris £45,000
  - Replacing the skate park in West End Park, March £130,000
  - Working with Manea Parish to provide a replacement skate park £110,000
  - Working with Wisbech Town Council £TBC

#### **4. Current play area conditions survey**

4.1 Fenland's play areas have been assessed, with a summary of each facility, approximate installation date and equipment condition detailed in Appendix A.

4.2 Currently the Council does not have a formal equipment register to log equipment and location. As part of our Tree Management Plan work, software should soon be available to log play area equipment, including ancillary equipment such as benches and bins.

4.3 The conditions survey work has informed the following matrix of planned play area replacement works over the coming 5 years.

#### 4.4 Play Areas - planned replacement work

Location	Park name	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Current Section 106 Funding	FDC Capital funding requirement
Chatteris	Cricketers Way				£40,000			£20,000
Chatteris	Huntingdon Road			£30,000			£5734	£15,000
Chatteris	Larham Way		£30,000					£15,000
Doddington	Beech Avenue		£45,000				£21,235	
Doddington	Beech Avenue					£30,000		£15,000
Manea	Skate Park (Identified by Parish Council)	£110,000					£64,000	Parish Council to meet shortfall
Parson Drove	Parson Drove Play area		£30,000				£48,000	
Whittlesey	Burdett Grove			£45,000				

Location	Park name	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Current Section 106 Funding	FDC Capital funding requirement
Whittlesey	Snowley Park		£40,000				£92,917	
Wisbech	Conference Way					£35,000	£32,220	£10,000
Wisbech	Jasmine Close				£20,000			£10,000
Wisbech	Wisbech Park		£20,000					£10,000
Total		£110,000	£180,000	£75,000	£60,000	£65,000		
Potential FDC Capital Funding requirement			£25,000	£15,000	£30,000	£25,000		£95,000

4.5 It should be noted that:

- The capital funding requirement is at the minimum level, subject to the Council being successful with third party funding bids. Should some bids fail, then equipment may have to be removed for safety reasons unless, exceptionally, additional financial report is provided.
- Additional S106 contributions may be made over the period of this plan. This additional funding will support the planned play area improvements and may reduce FDC's capital funding requirements accordingly.

## **Appendix A; Play Area conditions survey**

### **Play Area Conditions Survey; Summary**

1. Fenland Council supports 42 play areas and 6 skate parks. Inspection of equipment at every site takes place weekly through the contractor, currently Tivoli, and annually through ROSPA (most recently March 2019).
2. The sites are spread about the district amongst 4 towns (Wisbech and Chatteris have 9 play areas, March 8 and Whittlesey 6) and 8 villages (Coates and Eastrea have 2 areas each, the others one).
3. There are other play areas in the district managed by Clarion, housing developers, Town and Parish Councils and these have not been included.
4. Size of the play areas varies, as does the nature of the equipment, but in total there are 342 pieces of play equipment across the Fenland managed sites. This does not include bins, benches, fences or signage.
5. In general the equipment is in reasonable to good condition. Where items have been vandalised beyond repair or have become structurally unsafe, these have been removed. Where items can be repaired they have been and Tivoli carries equipment which can remedy many eventualities without further intervention.
6. Three areas have been greatly improved in 2019. The Water Tower Park at Whittlesey, the new Skate Park at Bath Road, Wisbech and, shortly, the toddler and junior play area at Wenny Rec, Chatteris as well as the skate park at West End Park in March will be refurbished.
7. The table and comments below list the existing stock, note the approximate installation date(s) and anticipated replacement dates that should be considered as part of the play area future investment programme. Any dates, historic or predicted, are indicative only. Whilst a piece of equipment or the entire stock of a park may be expected to last 15 - 20 or more years, heavy usage, vandalism, extreme weather or misuse will inevitably reduce the lifespan.
8. The Council is also contacting Housing Associations and Town and Parish Councils to ascertain the play equipment they manage and maintain so that we have a complete picture of the play equipment available across the District.

## **Benwick**

- High Street. All equipment is in good condition. New site installed 2018. Replacement 20+ years

## **Chatteris**

- Cricketers Way. Installed circa 2002. Equipment showing signs of deterioration. Fence and multiplay both with decay to timber. Replacement 4 years
- Furrowfields Rec. Equipment is in reasonable condition with some deterioration to surfaces. Installed c 2012. Replacement 6+ years
- Hunters Close. Equipment in reasonable condition although slide has been bent. Installed by developer c 2005. Replacement 10+ years
- Huntingdon Road (Infant and Junior). Surfaces in poor condition. Benches need replacement. Equipment in average condition but dated – possibly pre-2000. Replacement max 2+ years
- Larham Way. Equipment very dated – possibly pre-2000. Below average condition. Replacement 1 year
- St Paul's Drive. Old equipment in rusty and poor condition – installed before 2000. Benches need replacement. Replacement 1 year; suggestion is to remove area completely. Furrowfields Rec is 300m away.
- Wenny Rec. New equipment to be installed Sep/Oct 2019. Replacement 20+ years
- Willey Terrace. Surface deterioration. Equipment old, (installed c 2012) limited but functional. Suggestion is to not replace at end of lifespan as other facilities are more appropriate. 5 years life

## **Coates**

- North Green. Equipment meets current standards. Installed 2014. Replacement 15+ years
- South Green. Limited equipment (installed c 2015) but slide (pre-2000) is in poor condition. Remove imminently and do not replace as a slide is available at North Green. Other equipment replace 10+ years

## **Doddington**

- Beech Avenue. Equipment in reasonable condition (possibly pre-2000) but surfaces have deteriorated. Replacement 5 years. Current equipment is rather dated and would benefit from additional more up to date equipment adding, which could be used to merge the 2 play areas.

## **Eastrea**

- Springfields. All good condition (installed 2014). Replacement 20+ years
- Thornham Way. All in reasonable condition - installed c 2005. Replacement 10+ years. Would benefit from revenue funded painting in 2019/20.

## **Friday Bridge**

- West Drive. Reasonable condition. Installed by developer c 2010. Replacement 10+ years



## **Manea**

- Williams Way. Good condition. Installed c 2012. Replacement 20+ years.
- Skate Park; maintained by Parish Council and requires imminent replacement.

## **March**

- Albert Drive. Installed 2011. All good condition. Replacement 20+ years
- Dagless Way. Installed c 2012. Good condition. Replacement 20+ years
- Gaul Road. Installed c 2012. Equipment in good condition. Some deterioration of surfaces. Replacement 20+ years
- North Drive. Installed c 2014. All in reasonably good condition. Replacement 20+ years
- Robingoodfellows. Installed c 2012. Mixture of new and old equipment. Replacement of new 20+ years. Replacement of old (swing) 1-2 years from revenue budget.
- The Avenue. Installed c 2012. Good condition. Replacement 20+ years
- West End Park. Installed c 2009. Good condition. Replacement 15+ years
- West End Park Outdoor Gym (Parts 1&2). Installed c 2014. Periodic repairs to equipment but generally in good condition with infrequent use. Replacement 10+ years
- Parson Drove. Installed c 2002. Mix of old (c 2002) and new equipment (c 2015). Replacement of old equipment and expansion of current offer imminent. Replace other equipment 15+ years

## **Parson Drove**

- Relatively new equipment. Requires some cleaning and replacement signs. Add in additional more exciting elements in 2020/21. Replacement 10 - 15 years.

## **Wimblington**

- Relatively new, with limited equipment. Replacement 10+ years.

## **Whittlesey**

- Burdett Grove. Installed c 1996. Old equipment requires replacement. Replacement 2021/22.
- Manor Field. Installed c 2015. All in good condition. Replacement 15-20 years
- Pinewood Avenue. Installed c 1996. Old equipment – suggestion to consider termination of area in 2020. Other facilities available locally.
- Snowley Park. Installed c 2002. Old equipment – fence repairs required. Consider replacing and relocate to centre of park area in 2020.
- Station Road. Installed c 2013. All in good condition. Replace in 20 years
- Water Tower Park. Installed 2019. No changes required. Replace in 25 years

## **Wisbech**

- Barton Rd. Installed in different stages. Swings and multi-point swings relatively new (c 2012) and other equipment c 2005. Average to good condition. Replacement 10 years

- Burcroft Rd. Installed new swings and see saw in 2018. Replacement 20 years. Limited equipment in this space. Install additional equipment when funding is available.
- Conference Way. Installed c 2000. All equipment in average condition. Replacement 5 years
- Heron Road. Installed c 2001. Average condition – paintwork needs work in 2019 / 20 from revenue budget along with the replacement of bins and bench. Surfaces showing signs of wear. Minor repairs within 1 year. Replacement 7 years
- Jasmine Close. Installed climbing unit 2018. Swings installed c 2000. Remove swings at end of useful life.
- Malt Drive. Installed c 2001. Equipment is old but in average to good condition. Paint work required in 2019 / 20 from revenue budget. Suggested removal in 5-10 years with other local parks available.
- Westmead Ave. Installed c2003. Average condition. Surface needs attention in 2020. Replacement 5-10 years
- Wisbech Park (Harbour Line). Wooden equipment installed c 2012 in average condition – some pieces already removed. No replacement considered – remove equipment as it deteriorates with facility in the same park available.
- Wisbeck Park. Installed over multi-years. Most recent 2018, oldest c2000. Consequent mix of condition – replacement of toddler equipment 2020 / 2021, junior equipment 15 years.