



Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 July 2024

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes,
Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Leisure and
Culture

Play Area Strategy

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

Following the recommendation by Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny on 18 June 2024, the purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven.
2. Recommends an Action Plan be developed and be presented to a future Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance

- 1.1 The development of a Play Area Strategy is welcomed in order set out a framework and provide clarity on the future responsibilities of the District Council. The Strategy sets out the current play area locations, the current inspection and maintenance methodologies that are deployed and how a process to manage any future adoptions or transfers to Town and Parish Councils.
- 1.2 During financial year 2023/24, a decision was made to appoint external inspection contractors to undertake the monthly operational play equipment inspections and undertake a lifespan audit on all the play equipment at an annual cost of £25,821. The contractor is also currently assessing the life expectancy of the current play equipment at the 38 locations as set out in the Strategy. The Council does not have the financial resources to replace all the equipment that has reached or is reaching end of life and so it is recommended that a prioritisation replacement programme is undertaken alongside exploring options to transfer specific play areas to third parties who will be able to access external funding.

Completed by: **Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer**

Legal and Governance

1.3 There are no legal and governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: **James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer**

Risk and Mitigation

1.4 To satisfy the requirements of BS EN1176 Zurich Insurance undertake six monthly independent inspections of all the play equipment.

Completed by: **Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer**

Health and Safety

1.5 The Health and Safety Executive recommend that at least one inspection is undertaken every year by an independent suitably qualified body such as The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), to ensure the long-term safety of the site, equipment and ancillary item. This also meets the legal and insurance responsibilities as well as complying with the requirements of BS EN1176 (the British and European Playground Standard). As a Council this is undertaken by Zurich as detailed in paragraph 1.4.

1.6 In addition to this the Council has a defined inspection regime in place and employs qualified staff to undertake weekly visual inspections, and has commissioned KOMPAN to undertake monthly operational inspections. All inspection findings are recorded in real time on a specialist mobile app called PSS Live.

1.7 Following the installation of any new play area an independent post installation inspection is carried out to ensure that the playground meets modern standards and has been installed correctly.

Completed by: **Phil Swinton, Health and Safety & Emergency Planning Manager**

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan (2024-27) sets out the corporate ambition to be 'A thriving District to live in, work and visit' with the aim of encouraging physical activity to support healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities. Underpinning this are the key priorities for the Council of 'Connecting Communities' and being an 'Effective Council'.

- 2.2 The provision of high-quality play areas supports the Council's corporate ambitions and provides opportunities for improved health and wellbeing outcomes for local communities.
- 2.3 A draft Play Area Strategy (the Strategy) has been developed and was presented to Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2024 (see **Background Papers**).
- 2.4 The Strategy will ensure that the Council effectively manages the 38 play areas across the District that it is currently responsible for, providing young people with safe and sustainable places to play. This is attached at **Appendix One**.
- 2.5 Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a slight amendment to the Strategy under the heading 'Future Design Principles' for play areas to be accessible and to provide opportunities for inclusive play. The Strategy has been amended to reflect this.
- 2.6 Members also requested that stakeholders such as 'Friends Of' groups and local Town or Parish Councils were consulted on the development of the Strategy. Whilst this wasn't undertaken during the development of the Strategy it was confirmed that consultation would be undertaken moving forwards should it affect a play area within their area and this is already identified in the Strategy under the heading 'Our Priorities'.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Spend on Play Areas is discretionary for the Council, and it is important that the management and investment into them demonstrates value for money and that the resources invested deliver the priorities the Council is seeking. This Play Area Strategy aligns with the corporate vision and takes account of the Council's challenging financial backdrop.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Within its Corporate Plan there is a key theme of supporting healthier lifestyles and the provision of high-quality play areas supports this ambition. The Council is responsible for the safety of those using its play areas and has a defined inspection and maintenance regime in place to satisfy the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive and BS EN1176 (the British and European Playground Standard). Therefore the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The Play Area Strategy will become the guiding principal document to enable the Council to prioritise the replacement of equipment or refurbishment of play areas

within the allocated budget. It will be a material consideration for planning applications and be used to support decisions on planning applications.

5.2 The draft Play Area Strategy has previously been presented to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2024, with the recommendation for the Strategy to progress to Cabinet for approval, as well as an action plan to be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Background Papers

6.1 *Draft Play Area Strategy* – Report to Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published 10 June 2024, available online at: <https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s42356/Play%20Area%20Strategy.pdf>

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix One – Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven