



Tuesday, 3 September 2024

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

Play Area Strategy Action Plan

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To consider the Play Area Strategy Action Plan which has been developed following the adoption of the Play Area Strategy.

Recommendations

In noting the work undertaken to develop the action plan it is recommended that the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Endorses the Play Area Strategy Action Plan and for this to become the Council's principal document when determining the repair and maintenance of play areas.**
- 2. Agrees to receive a further update detailing the progress made against the actions identified in twelve months time**

Decision Information

| | |
|---|---|
| Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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 and Procurement

- 1.1 The development of the Action Plan to accompany the Play Area Strategy is welcomed in order to set out how the Council plans to fulfil the aims of the Strategy and provide investment and maintain its 38 play areas across the District. The Council does not have the financial resources to replace all the equipment that has reached, or is reaching end of life, and the Action Plan provides a basis for the Council to prioritise spend in this area. This includes a priority replacement programme, options to transfer specific play areas to third parties, utilisation of s106 developer contributions, as well as reviewing the support required to undertake the Council's inspection programme.
- 1.2 In a meeting of Council on 29 February 2024 the General Fund Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27 was presented and a budget of £100,000 was approved for investment into play parks for the current financial year. It is proposed that spend on this budget line will be prioritised in line with the Action Plan. In order to supplement this approved budget and to enable further investment to be made, an application has been made to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund,

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**

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, particularly in relation to children and young people.
- 2.3. At a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 June 2024, the Members present considered a draft Play Area Strategy for South Kesteven. The Strategy was subsequently approved by the Cabinet on 09 July 2024 (see **Background Papers**).
- 2.4. When considering the adoption of the Strategy it was agreed by Cabinet that an action plan be developed to complement the Strategy, and for this to be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 2.5. The Action Plan has been developed by Officers using the findings from the play area inspections which are undertaken by Council Officers, Kompan Limited (who undertake monthly operational inspections) and Zurich Insurance (who undertake insurance inspections on behalf of the Council). In addition a life expectancy audit was undertaken by Kompan Limited in March 2024 providing the Council with an indicative timeframe for when equipment will need to be replaced. Consideration has also been given to any s106 developer contributions available which have been agreed specifically for enhancing play equipment.
- 2.6. The Action Plan lists how each action will be achieved and which service area is responsible. Each action has been assigned a priority level and further notes and considerations have been highlighted where appropriate.
- 2.7. The action plan will be used as a live document and reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the Strategy and takes account of any new information.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. Spend on play areas is discretionary for the Council, and it is important that the management and investment of them demonstrates value for money, and that the resources invested deliver the priorities the Council is seeking. The Action Plan

aligns with the Play Area Strategy and the Council's corporate vision, taking into account a challenging financial backdrop.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Within the Council's 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 provides a basis for the Council to manage and prioritise the replacement of equipment or refurbishment of its play areas. The Action Plan which has been developed sets out how the Council will achieve this with clear actions being identified for the forthcoming year.
- 5.2 The Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to receive a further update in twelve months' time to assess the effectiveness of the Action Plan and ensure that it has been effectively implemented.

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>
- 6.2 *Play Area Strategy* – Report to Cabinet, published 01 July 2024, available online at:
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s42566/Play%20Area%20Strategy.pdf>

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix One – Play Area Strategy 2024 Action Plan.