

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

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Report Originator	Pia Bellamy Asset Development Manager	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
Wards Affected	All Wards	26 March 2013	
Title	OUTDOOR PLAY FACILITIES FOR CHILDREN		

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide an overview of outdoor play facilities in the Borough for young people and to inform the committee of the councils approach to such facilities

2. **INFORMATION**

2.1 Kettering Borough Council maintains 40 free to use outdoor children's play areas within the Borough. These are a mixture of Local Areas for Play (LAPs) Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) Of these areas 6 are owned by parish councils and these are Ashley, Great Cransley, Loddington, Rushton, Geddington and Thorpe Malsor. A table listing the sites is attached as Appendix A.

2.2 KBC recognises the immense importance of play in the development of children and young people. The council's play policy is informed by Play England's guidance and aimed at promoting challenging play which is vital for both confidence building and tackling many life style, health related issues. The Northants Area Health Board is a key partner in developing outdoor activities for young people.

2.3 **External Funding Successes**

In the last 5 years almost £700,000 of inward capital investment has been made in outside 'play facilities for young people' within the Borough. This investment comes from Big Lottery, National Playbuilder fund, Landfill Communities Fund and S.106 contributions. The Councils Capital Programme has also been used to match fund schemes and is typically used to lever in larger capital grants from external grant providers. Of this, some £500,000 has been secured through KBC applications, the remainder through other communities such as Parish Councils. In early March 2013 KBC has secured another £48,000 for another play area and an Outdoor Gym.

2.4 **Outdoor Gyms**

We are also expanding on the nature/type of free to use outdoor facilities with the introduction to the Borough of 'Outdoor Gyms'. These facilities are increasing in popularity throughout the UK and we have engaged the support of Health sector colleagues in developing them within the Borough. The first outdoor fitness zone, aimed at young people was installed in Hall Meadow Park last summer. Another is coming to the Green Flag awarded Rockingham Road

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Pleasure Park with a third in the planning stage adjacent to the play area at Brambleside.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

- 3.1 The Councils policy is to provide high quality community facilities and green spaces. Rockingham Road Pleasure park was awarded the prestigious National Green Flag award in 2009 and we have maintained the award annually since. Green Flag status requires parks to have a fully worked up Master Plan for maintenance and future development.
- 3.2 To celebrate the Queens Diamond Jubilee in 2012 the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge was established nationally. This was to give local communities the opportunity to get proactive about the future of their outdoor recreational space. This QEII status is to be applied to one park in each of Broughton, Mawsley and Desborough and a vision for these areas has been agreed. These will be delivered subject to further consultation and securing funding.
- 3.3 All new play areas are constructed with wide community consultation. In recent years new play spaces at Highfield Road Park, Mill Road Park, Ruston Road Desborough, Greening Road Rothwell, Geddington, Stoke Albany and now Rockingham Road Pleasure Park have all been developed in conjunction with local schools. The design stage of the new Ise Skate Park (presently under construction) was done with a committee of local young skaters and BMXers. This committee worked directly with the contractor to work up the final design.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Outside facilities for young people are considered in all responses to planning applications of 10 or more new dwellings. S.106 contributions are based on PPG17 (Planning Policy Guidance 17) seeking contributions to facilities that could be on the site to be developed or off site in the immediate catchment. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will also be a consideration for the future.

5. FINANCIAL RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Another new approach to, where possible, Capitalise schemes in order to reduce longer term revenue costs. For example the all new Ise Skate park will be replacing the existing (maintenance intensive) wooden structures with concrete which is virtually maintenance free. Play equipment that is lower maintenance is also now preferred.

6. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The KBC Grounds Maintenance team have their own inhouse inspection officers who undertake maintenance works. Play areas are regularly litter picked and surrounding grounds are cleared and grass cut.

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7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 All sites are required to meet Health and Safety standards all new equipment must meet relevant BSI certification. All play equipment installers are ROSPA certified.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 ROSPA inspections are carried out every six months on all sites. However, KBC has two ROSPA trained full time staff who undertake weekly inspections of all play areas. In addition to this, play areas are cleansed daily and a visual inspection made of play equipment.

8.2 KBC's Community Services and Grounds Maintenance teams have recently created a new developmental Play Area assessment tool in order to assess the likely longevity of play areas and equipment to future plan for maintenance. This tool will also provide evidence for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

9. PLAY OUTCOMES

9.1 Kettering Boroughs Play areas are designed according to Play England guidelines. These guidelines cover the accessibility of play areas to all users. They are based on creating challenging environments that foster imaginative play that is both physically and mentally challenging. Where possible we use play equipment that requires a good deal of physical input from children but also play items that are accessible by less able bodied children.

9.2 Outdoor facilities for young people also meet the following council policies and objectives:

- An improved physical and social fabric.
- Quality green spaces that people use giving health and community safety outcomes
- More people being more active more often
- Improved health profile for Kettering Borough

10. RECOMMENDATION

Members of the Research and Development Committee are invited to comment on the policies and work of Kettering Borough Council in its provision of quality outdoor activities for young people

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