

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	11 March 2020
Subject:	Increase in Play Provision 2009 to 2019		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Environment		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. New (and Refurbished) Play Areas 2009 and 2019		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the increase in number and quality of play areas across the city.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the increase in number and quality of play areas across the city be noted

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Using a combination of funding sources the Council has, over the past 10 years, invested over £2,000,000 in the construction of new, and refurbishment of existing, play areas.
- 3.2 Of this total approximately £1,000,000 has come from developer contributions in the form of section 106 payments. A further £600k of funding resulted from capital expenditure by the Council. Grants and other payments made directly to the Council have contributed a further £300k towards playground construction and refurbishment. As a result of the Council's adoption of Asset Based Community Development (**ABCD**), community involvement in the design and funding of play areas has increased in recent years, with local communities contributing a further £200k towards the cost of new play provision.
- 3.3 Safety inspections and maintenance of play areas, including grass cutting, is carried out by the Council's grounds maintenance contractor Amey. The Council has recently increased the frequency of play area inspections and grass mowing in order to ensure that the areas remain safe and appealing to users.

3.4 Additionally, there are three publicly accessible play areas within the City which are owned and managed by Quedgeley Town Council, and one which is managed by a private management company.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 Research shows that play has many benefits for children, families and the wider

community, as well as improving health and quality of life. Recent research suggests that children's access to good play provision can:

- increase their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-respect
- improve and maintain their physical and mental health
- give them the opportunity to mix with other children
- allow them to increase their confidence through developing new skills
- promote their imagination, independence and creativity
- offer opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds to play together
- provide opportunities for developing social skills and learning
- build resilience through risk taking and challenge, problem solving, and dealing with new and novel situations
- provide opportunities to learn about their environment and the wider community.

Evidence is also available that outlines wider benefits of play provision for families and communities, suggesting that:

- parents can feel more secure knowing that their children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves
- families benefit from healthier, happier children
- buildings and facilities used by play services are frequently seen as a focal point for communities
- it offers opportunities for social interaction for the wider community and supports the development of a greater sense of community spirit, promoting social cohesion
- public outside spaces have an important role in the everyday lives of children and young people, especially as a place for meeting friends
- parks and other green spaces are popular with adults taking young children out to play and for older children and young people to spend time together.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 Visiting green spaces to use play equipment results in children experiencing more regular contact with nature, helping them to value wildlife and the natural world.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 None

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 To update Cabinet on the increase in number and quality of play areas across the city.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 The Council will continue to seek opportunities to increase in number and quality play areas across the City.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no further financial implications as a result of this report. Details of financial expenditure are included in the report.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 Due to the paucity of large development sites within the City, it is likely that in the future the Council will become more reliant on its own capital funds, grants and community fundraising to secure playground improvements and new developments.

Background Documents: None