

Report to Cabinet

23rd November 2017

By the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture

DECISION REQUIRED

Not Exempt for Publication



**Horsham
District
Council**

Play Strategy 2017 - 2027

Executive Summary

Horsham District Council's Play Strategy is in need of updating,

This report introduces members to the draft Play Strategy 2017- 2027 which reviews successes over the last ten years and sets the context for play provision in the district over the next ten years. The strategy identifies a vision and aims for play and details actions and projects prioritised for delivery within the term of the Strategy.

This report seeks approval for its formal adoption.

Recommendations.

Cabinet is recommended to agree and adopt the new Play Strategy 2017 – 2027, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, having noted and considered the feedback from the consultation which informed the Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendations

Some of the council's play infrastructure is aging and in need of replacement. Additionally, the Horsham District Planning Framework plans for the delivery of 16,000 new homes between 2011 and 2031 and, although pressure on public finance is unlikely to abate during this period, the framework brings opportunities to secure and deliver new play infrastructure. Given these factors, it is important that the Council has a clear vision of its play priorities and how these can be delivered.

Background Papers: Horsham District Play Strategy 2007 – 2012, Review of Previous Play Strategy

Wards affected: All

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Background Information

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Horsham District Council's previous play strategy spanned the period 2007 to 2012 and whilst actions have been undertaken between 2012 and 2017 the strategy has not been formally updated in this period.
- 1.2 This report introduces members to the draft Horsham District Play Strategy 2017-27 and seeks approval for its formal adoption.

2 Relevant Council policy

- 2.1 The strategy is set within the context of Corporate Plan Priorities as identified on page 7 of the strategy document.

3 Details

- 3.1 The strategy has been created through dialogue with parish councils and other stakeholders and feedback from a limited on line survey. However, it is predominantly driven by:
 - the ongoing assessment of play provision within the district and forming part of the Council's estate
 - the need for up to date and well maintained facilities and opportunities that serve existing and emerging communities.
- 3.2 The strategy sets the context for play provision in the district and highlights successes over the last ten years. It identifies an overall vision and aims and details actions and priority projects to be delivered in the future.
- 3.3 Actions are grouped under 7 headings being
 - Stimulating – new or improved facilities at Council owned sites that inspire a new generation of users
 - Safety – replacement of existing play areas reaching the end of their life and repurposing of a small number of low value play areas
 - Well used – interactive mapping, improved signage and marketing of established places to play
 - Barriers – facilitation of community run events to encourage more people into our parks and reduce anti-social behaviour
 - Partnerships – introduction of an annual play seminar and partnership group on Facebook
 - Natural – improved access and new play features within woodlands and meadows
 - Performance – improved customer feedback, inspection and maintenance processes

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Several of the actions are already in motion but if the strategy is adopted it provides a firm framework for the direction and travel and proposed future work to deliver the overall action plan.

5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations

- 5.1 The Leisure and Culture PDAG has been sighted on this draft strategy, vision and aims for a number of months and has supported the proposed key deliverables including

- Improve play for older children by replacing Horsham Skate Park with a concrete Skate park.
- Through new developments, look for opportunities to deliver a network of bike tracks across the District.
- Improve the range of play for children with disabilities.
- Regenerate Roffey Recreation Ground in North Horsham.
- Install a Rotary Club sponsored roundabout in Horsham Park.
- Maintain our renewals programme of at least 4 play areas per year.
- Improve the ability for our residents to self-serve by introducing an interactive mapping system to find local places to play.
- Support events and activities happening in our open spaces such as Junior Park Run and the activities that the Sports Development Team run like Frisbee, Skate Jam, Summer activity programme.
- Support Community policing and Church and Community Youth Worker schemes such as Purple Bus and the Snack Wagon.
- Run an annual play seminar for Parish Councils to inspire partners to think about play creatively.
- Encourage families to walk and explore by introducing features into natural spaces, such as the Riverside Walk.
- Remove litter clearance task from rangers to focus on maintenance.
- Fund more projects through external grant funding.

- 5.2 Additionally, an on line survey advertised through social media and sent to all Parish Councils was conducted in March 2017. The results of the survey can be found at the end of the Strategy attached to this report.

6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

- 6.1 Whilst it could be argued that the actions would happen with or without the strategy it is considered useful to reinforce the context for strategic decision making via an adopted strategy.

7 Resource Consequences

- 7.1 The action plan identifies where capital and revenue resources have already been identified, including use of s106 where appropriate. However, not all projects are fully costed at this stage.

8 Legal Consequences

- 8.1 There may be some legal consequences where facilities are secured through s106 before being transferred to local parishes.
- 8.3 Additionally, any repurposing of low value play areas may involve sale and transfer of land.

9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 There is no significant change in direction as a result of this strategy but there has been concern expressed about reputational risk by some members when low value play areas have been recommended for decommissioning. No decommissioning will take place unless evidence is produced demonstrating ongoing access to other proximate facilities.
- 9.2 There is also a risk that the production of an action plan could make the Council hostage to fortune. It should be noted that many leisure related action plans, whilst setting direction of travel and priorities, still remain couched within the context of competing agendas and scarce resources. Several of the identified projects do not yet have approved funding and thus have to be considered aspirational until s106 or CIL is identified.

10 Other Considerations

- 10.1 The Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. An Equalities Impact Assessment can be found attached to this report.
- 10.2 It is the intention of this plan is to make play opportunities freely accessible to all sections of the community.
- 10.3 All new installations are designed to reduce the potential for Crime & Disorder to occur and to be durable and sustainable.