

Agenda Item No: 5

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 2 March 2015

Report Title: Hastings and St Leonards Play Space Strategy Refresh

Report By: Virginia Gilbert
Head of Amenities, Resorts and Leisure

Purpose of Report

To present the refreshed Hastings and St Leonards Play Space Strategy, with proposed actions, for consideration.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That the contents of the revised Play Space Strategy be agreed.**
- 2. That the proposed actions be agreed.**

Reasons for Recommendations

The Council and its partners are committed to the implementation of the Hastings and St Leonards Play Space Strategy (2011). This refreshed version continues to embrace the agreed framework and proposes new actions. The strategy will ensure that a maximum number of children and young people from across the Borough have access to quality play spaces, which can be sustained within allocated budgets.

Introduction

1. Access to good quality play spaces enables children and young people to enjoy their right to play and enhances their ability to achieve their true potential. Play is recognised by Hastings Borough Council as vitally important to the wellbeing of Hastings. It is important to read this document in conjunction with HBC's Play Development Strategy 'Right to Play', which has a broader focus than play spaces.
2. AmicusHorizons Ltd, Orbit Housing Association and Hastings Borough Council are the principle providers of our local publically accessible equipped play spaces. In September 2011 the initial version of this joint strategy was agreed. To inform the strategy a comprehensive audit was carried out which highlighted the quality and value of equipped play spaces. It was clear that large numbers of poor value sites could not be sustained as lifetime maintenance costs or improvement costs were high, this remains the case.
3. The refreshed version, attached, continues to embrace the original agreed framework which determines a realistic and sensible distribution of equipped play spaces that can be sustained within allocated budgets.
4. Increasingly the Council now favours improving existing facilities in the local area of the new development, (off site contributions), but ask for on-site play facilities where there are no other sites nearby. This model of strategically locating good quality play spaces has enabled us to sustain and enhance the coverage of good play spaces. This approach is soon to be reflected in the revised supplementary planning guidance relating to the provision of play spaces in proposed housing developments.
5. Historically AmicusHorizon and Orbit Housing Association consider areas where they have the greatest density of their tenants, when making decisions regarding investing in play sites. The audited list of playgrounds helps to highlight the priorities for any potential funding, regardless of which organisation owns the site.

Update

6. The refreshed strategy has two aims.
 - a. Improve and sustain existing key play spaces and subject to funding, develop new sites so that the maximum numbers of children can access good value and good quality rated equipped play spaces, within a 600 metre straight line distance from their home.
 - b. Seek to provide informal space to play where there is an identified play need.
7. Updated assessments of each playground were completed in October 2014, using the same robust criteria, based on Play England national guidance. The assessment scores are based on the quality of maintenance, accessibility and the quality of play value.

8. To further inform the process, 600 metre straight line catchments for each good rated equipped play space have been mapped. Additional maps contain further layers of information such as numbers and ages of children living in lower super output areas.
9. Since the 2011 audit the number of residential properties within a 600 metre straight line catchment of good rated playgrounds has been extended from an estimated 24,308 to 32,047. 5 new equipped play spaces have been built, 2 removed and 2 have been improved from a low to good rating. All good rated equipped play spaces have been retained in this period.
10. The strategy recognises that a greater understanding of our local neighbourhoods is essential in order to properly address local play need. The strategy reflects a flexible approach as in some neighbourhoods it may be appropriate to adopt a local play solution to address the specific local need, rather than rely solely on the 600 metre catchment mapping information.

Conclusion

11. The strategy outlines key actions for 2015-17 which are achievable with current planned budgets. These include: i) planned improvements at 4 HBC sites and 1 closure, ii) condition surveys for all equipped play spaces to enable a planned response to life cycles of equipment iii) further review of informal play need, including spaces within 60 metres of children and young people's homes. AmicusHorizon and Orbit Housing Association have yet to confirm plans.
12. Improvements have been made since the 2011 audit, however there remains significant areas of the town still not within a reasonable distance of a good rated equipped play space.

Wards Affected

Ashdown, Baird, Braybrooke, Castle, Central St. Leonards, Conquest, Gensing, Hollington, Maze Hill, Old Hastings, Ore, Silverhill, St. Helens, Tressell, West St. Leonards, Wishing Tree

Area(s) Affected

Central Hastings, East Hastings, North St. Leonards, South St. Leonards

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Yes
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	Yes
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	Yes
Organisational Consequences	No

Local People's Views

Yes

Background Information

Hastings & St Leonards Play Space Strategy 2015-17 'Space to Play'

Officer to Contact

Keith Duly
Leisure Development Manager
kduly@hastings.gov.uk
