

16th DECEMBER 2019

KEY DECISION? YES

RUSHMOOR PLAYGROUND STRATEGY

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The Chairman of the Policy and Projects Advisory Board (PPAB) presents the Rushmoor Playground Strategy which has been developed through PPAB with cross member involvement.
- The Strategy seeks to ensure provision of a network of high quality, diverse play facilities across the borough through the adoption of a hierarchy of sites. It seeks to maximise safety and play value by ensuring facilities are managed and maintained to a high standard. The strategy recognises the value of play facilities across the borough but highlights that additional consideration should be given to provision within areas of deprivation.
- Cabinet are recommended to approve the draft Rushmoor Playground Strategy 2020-2030.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. After referral from the Cabinet, the Policy and Projects Advisory Board have met on three occasions to consider the strategic approach to provision of playgrounds in the borough.

1.2. The Strategy has one overriding objective;

“For every resident in the borough to have either a local equipped playground within a five-minute walk (0.4 km) or a neighbourhood playground within a fifteen-minute walk (1.2 km), complimented by destination facilities at key parks”

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. The borough is well served by a network of play areas, some are owned and managed by the Council and others are privately owned. The quality of these facilities is highly variable, and many are nearing the end of their operational life.

- 2.2. A strategy is required to ensure investment is appropriately targeted across the network and to maintain a high-quality provision of playgrounds boroughwide.

3. THE STRATEGY

- 3.1. Details of the strategy are included below, but for reference, the draft strategy is included at Appendix 1.

- 3.2. In developing the strategy, members of the Policy and Projects Advisory Board considered the following factors:

- 3.2.1. The right to play
- 3.2.2. Assessment of demands
- 3.2.3. Assessment of supply
- 3.2.4. Good design and diversity of facilities
- 3.2.5. Management and maintenance
- 3.2.6. Community engagement
- 3.2.7. Funding arrangements

- 3.3. The board concluded that the borough was well served with equipped playgrounds throughout the borough. There were very few areas where provision seemed light and some areas where there was clear overprovision.

- 3.4. Members also visited a range of playgrounds and concluded that the standard of provision was highly variable with some facilities at the end of their operational life, while others were provided to a very high standard. In most cases, members noted that the levels of use for the older, lower quality sites were notably less than the more recently provided facilities.

- 3.5. The strategy includes five key objectives:

- 3.5.1. **For every resident in the borough to have either a local equipped playground within a five-minute walk (0.4 km) or a neighbourhood playground within a fifteen-minute walk (1.2 km), complimented by destination facilities at key parks**

- 3.5.2. **The Council will provide an appropriate hierarchy encompassing Destination, Neighbourhood and Local playgrounds.**

- 3.5.3. **The Council commits to manage and maintain playgrounds to a high standard to ensure a safe and high-quality experience.**

- 3.5.4. **The Council commits to continued assessment of population demographics to ensure appropriate level of provision**

- 3.5.5. **The Council commits to consideration of levels of deprivation when considering playground provision.**

- 3.6. The strategy also refers to the financing of the implementation of the plan, outlining that many required actions could be met from existing budgets, but others will require capital funding. The Council will also seek any opportunities to secure external funding for such schemes.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Risks

- 4.1. Failure to agree a strategic approach to the provision of playgrounds across the borough could lead to a less coordinated approach to renewal or replacement with greater variability in the quality of facilities.

Legal Implications

- 4.2. With many play facilities nearing the end of their operational life, the risk of claims due to injury is likely to increase.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 4.3. The revenue budget of £60k is already allowed for and there will be a requirement for Capital funding which will be brought forward on an annual basis as part of the budget setting process. Opportunities for external funding will also be sought.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.4. None

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1. The Rushmoor Playground Strategy sets the strategic direction for the provision of equipped playgrounds for the next 10 years and is designed to help ensure appropriate and consistent provision across the borough.
- 5.2. The strategy has been developed by the Policy and Projects Advisory Board at the request of Cabinet and had strong cross-party support from the group.
- 5.3. Cabinet are recommended to approve the strategy as outlined in this report and attached at Appendix 1.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

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Rushmoor Playground Strategy 2020 – 2030



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Context and Background

This strategy has taken into account the following factors when formulating its strategic objectives.

- The Right to Play – Rushmoor recognises every child’s right to play opportunities within the borough.
- Assessment of demand – The demographics of the borough and the number of children playgrounds are to serve.
- Assessment of Supply – The national and local guidelines for playground provision and the number of sites currently available.
- Good design providing exciting and diverse facilities.
- Appropriate management and maintenance
- Community engagement.
- Appropriate finance.

Summary

This Strategy covers the following objectives;

- To provide a network of high quality, diverse play facilities across the borough.
- To utilise a hierarchy of play facilities
 - Destination
 - Neighbourhood playgrounds
 - Local playgrounds
- To ensure that the facilities are managed and maintained to a high standard to ensure a safe and high-quality experience.
- To ensure additional consideration is given to sites located within areas of deprivation.

The Strategy provides the guidelines for the continued and future provision of equipped playground sites and informs the final Playground Action Plan for the next ten years.

Implementing the Strategy

The objectives identified will provide direction for the next ten years, (2020 – 2030). A number of the suggested actions can be addressed within the existing budgets, including the annual funding allocated to playground maintenance. Others, such as the upgrade, replacement or relocation of playgrounds will require a commitment of capital funding. It is recommended that projects are submitted for capital funding each year based on priorities identified in the Action Plan. Developer contributions (S106), external funding (Landfill Community Fund) and grant funding can also be sought to contribute to project development. It is important to note that the Playground Strategy does not commit the Council to implementing all suggested actions. However, the Strategy will guide the Council in improving playgrounds and better servicing the community as resources become available.

Vision

This strategy sits under the Councils overall vision **Your Future, your place – a vision for Aldershot and Farnborough 2030**

- Strong communities, proud of our area – great public spaces and places where people can meet for a wide range of affordable leisure, cultural and community activities.
- Healthy and green lifestyles – everyone will have access to parks and green spaces and to affordable facilities so they can lead active and healthy lifestyles.

The underlying vision that underpins the provision of playgrounds within this Strategy is:

“The Council is committed to providing a range of play experiences that are accessible, safe and fun.”

Overriding Objective

“For every resident in the borough to have either a local equipped playground within a five-minute walk (0.4 km) or a neighbourhood playground within a fifteen-minute walk (1.2 km), complimented by destination facilities at key parks.”

Strategic Objectives

High Quality Diverse Play Facilities

The Council recognises the value of high-quality equipment and appropriate design when implementing playground provision across the borough and the need for different challenges across different sites.

To help meet this objective and to provide a wide ranging and diverse level of playgrounds across the borough to cater for differing play needs the Council will adopt a system of hierarchical provision as follows;

- Destination sites within select main parks with complimentary facilities such as parking and café.

- Neighbourhood sites within parks and larger open spaces.
- Local sites within residential areas.

Quality Objectives	Objective 1: The Council commits to providing a network of high-quality, diverse play facilities. ‘For every resident in the borough to have either a local equipped playground within a five-minute walk (0.4 km) or a neighbourhood playground within a fifteen-minute walk (1.2 km), complimented by destination facilities at key parks.’
	Objective 2: The Council will provide an appropriate hierarchy encompassing Destination, Neighbourhood and Local playgrounds.

Management & Maintenance

The Council understands and commits to ensuring that playground facilities are managed appropriately to ensure they remain in good condition, are safe and fit for purpose.

Management Objective	Objective 3: The Council commits to manage and maintain playgrounds to a high standard to ensure a safe and high-quality experience.
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Demographics and Deprivation

The Council will continue to assess the demographics of given areas when considering new or refurbished facilities and commits to considering levels of deprivation and how such factors may impact provision.

Demographic Objective	Objective 4: The Council commits to continued assessment of population demographics to ensure appropriate level of provision.
Deprivation Objective	Objective 5: The Council commits to consideration to levels of deprivation when considering playground provision.