



Subject:	Playground Improvement Programme
Date:	12th May 2015
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Alan McHaffie, Senior Woodland and Recreation Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues	
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the successful Playground Improvement Programme 2014 - 2015 and outline plans for a new two year rolling programme of playground refurbishments for 2015 -16 and 2016 – 2017. Members are asked to note that the refurbishments are funded under the Capital Programme and that an allocation of £580,000 has been agreed for the next two years for this programme	
1.2	Members will be aware that as part of the LGR 16 playground sites were transferred to the Council which brings the total number of playgrounds across the city to 93. Members are asked to note that the SP&R Committee agreed in January 2015 that £2m from the new boundary rate base should be applied to projects in the new boundary areas which included playground refurbishments at Brooke; Areema; Mount Eagles; Roddens Crescent and a new playground in Poleglass. Preparatory work is being advanced on these projects and will be taken forward in conjunction with the playground refurbishment programme.	
2.0	Recommendations	
2.1	1. Recommend to SP&R Committee the refurbishment of the sites below under Year 1 and Year 2 of the Playground Improvement Programme which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme for the next two years (see Appendix 1 – Playground Improvement; location mapping)	
	Year 1 2015 -2016	Year 2 (2016 – 2017)
	a) Skippers	a) Cregagh

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Horn Drive, Lenadoon c) Belmont Park d) Drumglass Park e) Tirna nog Ligoneil f) Willowbank g) Nubia Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Jubilee Park c) Alloa Street d) Wedderburn e) Grove f) Glencairn g) Ardoyne h) Springhill Site A i) Castleton
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2. Agree to replace eight, two-seater rotators that no longer comply with the BSEN 1176 safety standards during Year 1 of the Programme.

3. Agree the use of Framework Agreement 'E' (Landscape Architecture) to assist delivery of the LGR playground improvements during Year 1 of the Programme.

Members are asked to note that it was agreed in January 2015 that **£2m from the new boundary rate base should be applied to projects in the new boundary areas** which included playground refurbishments at Brooke; Areema; Mount Eagles; Roddens Crescent and a new playground in Poleglass. Work on these will be progressed at the same time as the Playground Refurbishment Programme.

3.0 Main Report

Playground Refurbishment Programme 2014/15

3.1 Since its inception in 2012, the Playground Improvement Programme has made a significant impact on overall quality and play value of the city's playgrounds. Through the Programme a total investment of £745k has improved accessibility and play value at each of the sites, providing new inclusive equipment, safety surfacing, boundary fencing, site furniture and landscaping works.

3.2 In 2012 independent inspection reports classified 25% of our facilities as 'poor' (quality score of 3.0 or less). Continued investment over the last four years has achieved the desired improvement in overall safety, quality and play value at each of the sites refurbished under the Programme. Based on this year's cycle of inspection reports only 2% of all sites are classified as 'Fair'. In terms of their quality, the remaining sites are recorded as 'sufficient' through to 'excellent'. None of the sites are recorded as being 'insufficient' to 'extremely poor'. The playgrounds improved under previous programmes are now more inviting, inclusive and exciting places for children and parents to visit. **The 2014 - 2015 Improvement Programme will be fully complete by the end of May 2015 and has resulted in the following playgrounds being transformed.**

- Stewart Street
- Queen Mary's Gardens (completion delayed until late May 2015)
- Carnamore
- Lemberg Street
- Falls Park
- Cherryvale Playing Fields.

See Appendix 2 – Images of recent playground improvements.

Proposed Playground Refurbishment Programme 2015/16

3.3 Members should note that this year's cycle of independent inspections has been undertaken by Play Services Ireland Ltd in March 2015. The 'quality' score for each playground is based on compliance with European safety standards BS EN 1176 & 1177. Inspection reports also continue to identify and prioritise repairs to existing equipment for ongoing maintenance purposes. The 'quality' score awarded for each playground (see Appendix 3 – Copy of Independent Inspection Report March 2015) is categorised as:

- Score 9 - 10 Excellent
- Score 8 - 9 Very Good
- Score 7 - 8 Good
- Score 6 - 7 Fairly Good
- Score 5 - 6 Sufficient
- Score 4 - 5 Fair
- Score 3 - 4 Insufficient
- Score 2 - 3 Poor
- Score 1 - 2 Very Poor
- Score 0 – 1 Extremely Poor

3.4 Following this assessment, it is proposed that the playgrounds as listed in Table 1 above are refurbished **under Year 1 and Year 2 of the Playground Improvement Programme which has an allocated budget of £580,000 under the Capital Programme.** These playgrounds had the lowest overall quality scores (See Appendix 4 – March 2015 - Quality Scores). As a result of refurbishment work all selected playgrounds will move from 'fair' to the new classification of 'excellent' (quality score 5.4 –10.0) when re-inspected.

3.5 Members are asked to note that Avoniel has not been included on the list of proposed refurbishments as there are wider proposals for this site as part of the leisure transformation programme. Refurbishments to Brooke, Areema and Roddens Crescent, which also all scored low, are being taken forward as part of £2m which has previously been agreed by the SP&R Committee for projects in the transferring in areas.

3.6 Members are asked to note that to deliver playground improvements for the additional

<p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p>	<p>sites above will require the engagement of consultants through the Council's existing Framework Agreement 'E' (Landscape Architecture).</p> <p>Members should also be aware that as a result of this year's suite of independent inspections it has come to light that eight of our older model two-seater rotating units are no longer compliant with current BSEN 1176 safety standards. In order to ensure compliance with the safety standard all eight units should be replaced in Year 1 of the new two year refurbishment programme.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refurbishment work at existing Belfast City Council sites will be funded through the capital programme and a budget of £580k has been allocated for each year of the programme. • Staff from the Landscape Planning & Development Unit will continue to deliver and project manage the Playground Improvement Programme and will be using the Council's framework agreement 'E' (Landscape Architecture) to deliver improvements to the new acquired LGR playground sites. As in previous years, Community Park Managers and park Outreach officers will continue to assist with the distribution of information relating to playground improvements to members and local communities. • The use of the framework agreement 'E' (Landscape Architect) will incur a range of professional fees, dependent upon the level of assistance required. <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The processes proposed in this report will be subject to the council's existing equality screening process.
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Appendix 1 - Playground Improvement Programme, location mapping Appendix 2 – Images of recent playground improvements Appendix 3 – Copy of independent inspection report March 2015 Appendix 4 - March 2015 Quality Scores.</p>