



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee

28th January 2022

**Report of the Head of Steetcare
M.Roberts**

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Management and Maintenance of Council Playgrounds

Purpose of the Report:

To provide information regarding the management and maintenance of Council playgrounds as requested by members of the Scrutiny Committee as part of the Forward Work Programme.

Executive Summary:

In the main, responsibility for council playgrounds falls within the remit of Neighbourhood Services which has a management plan in place. The current financial and operational resources in place as part of the management plan is set out in the report.

Background:

General

This report covers the playgrounds owned and managed by this council. It is noted there are also some facilities within the county borough owned and maintained by other parties including Community / Town Councils, social housing organisations, and community sector organisations.

Responsibility for the Council's playgrounds lies mainly within the remit of Neighbourhood Services, a section within the Streetcare Division of the Environment and Regeneration Directorate. The exception is facilities that lie within the management of Margam Park which are outside the scope of this report.

Neighbourhood Services are responsible for the management and maintenance of 47 playgrounds. The sites and the associated Management Plan are detailed in Appendix A.

Day to Day Management

As detailed in the management plan, there is currently a Mobile Ranger who carries out weekly inspections of the play areas as a function of their duties. The dedicated ranger is supplemented by trained operational employees located in permanently staffed parks when required. There is also a Parks Technician whose role is to inspect and make routine repairs to playground equipment and furniture.

Maintenance resources

There is a revenue allocation of £91,263 within the Neighbourhood Services budget for day to day maintenance and equipment renewal. After paying for the staff costs above, and other costs such as annual RoSPA inspections, there is approximately £30k available annually to fund maintenance work such as replacement seats, chains and panels etc.

Issues

The available routine maintenance funding equates, on average, to only £638 per site per year.

There is no standing annual capital allocation for investment in equipment renewal, which is subject to the success of bids in the annual budget round.

If the number of playgrounds were to be expanded, resources would need to be expanded to match.

A number of swings were removed from Council playgrounds during 2020 as part of meeting national social distancing requirements. Whilst many of these swings have now subsequently been reinstated, others have yet to be re-installed due to damaged or worn components. The required parts and materials are on order and the remaining swings will be re-commissioned as soon as possible on delivery.

Current investment programme

In the current year there is a capital allocation for investment of £75,000 on playgrounds, which when combined with the available revenue funding and some capital slippage is providing for significant investment this financial year of £121,500. Furthermore, alongside this officers in Neighbourhood Services have been liaising with other sections, such as the Project Development and Funding Service within Leisure Services, to maximise 'matched' funding opportunities for additional improvements. In addition, officers have been successful in obtaining funding to the value of £36,400 through the All Wales Play Opportunity Grant. Overall these actions have brought the **ongoing investment total up to £356k** as shown in Appendix B. There is also an anticipated further investment of £120,000 included in the draft capital budget for next year which is currently out to consultation.

Financial Impacts:

None, this report is for information only.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

Areas where there is ongoing investment is shown on the report.

Workforce Impacts:

No implications.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

Equipment renewal will help to reduce risk of items of equipment becoming unserviceable.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Playground Management Plan including list of sites
Appendix B – Programmed spend on playground in 2021/22

List of Background Papers:

None

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