
Subject: REFURBISHMENT OF PLAY AREAS IN SANDWICH, WALMER AND DEAL

Meeting and Date: Cabinet – 3 June 2024

Report of: David Parish, Head of Property Assets

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Charlotte Zosseder, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property

Decision Type: Key Decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To seek approval for the refurbishment of three play areas during 2024/25: The Bulwarks in Sandwich, Marke Wood Recreation Ground in Walmer and Travers Road in Deal.

Recommendation:

1. To release funds from agreed developer contributions, compensation packages and the Medium-Term Capital Plan for the above projects as set out in section 5.
2. To accept contributions towards the refurbishments from Sandwich Town Council and Walmer Town Council.
3. To authorise the Strategic Director (Place and Environment) to award contract(s) following the tender process.

1. Summary

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to begin procurement for the partial refurbishment of three play areas across the district and grant the Strategic Director (Place and Environment) delegated powers to award the main works contract(s) following a competitive tender process and to release funds on completion of works.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 All action points identified within the Dover District Review of Play Area Provision 2012-2026 have been completed, therefore the Council intends to develop a new strategy over the coming couple of years. In the interim, three priority projects have emerged, and it is proposed these are progressed in advance of the new strategy.

2.2 The Bulwarks Play Area is located adjacent to the town walls in Sandwich. The site is not identified as a priority by the Dover District review of play provision; however, it is in a prominent location and has not benefited from significant investment for many years. In addition, the wooden multiplay unit was removed in April 2024 due to health and safety concerns. It is proposed the multiplay unit be replaced, alongside other existing equipment that is close to the end of useful life. This project will be delivered in partnership with Sandwich Town Council which has allocated funding as identified in 5.1 as well as using funding secured from Southern Water following a flooding incident.

- 2.3 Marke Wood Recreation Ground Play Area in Walmer is identified as a strategic facility in the Dover District review of play provision. Funding was allocated within the Medium-Term Capital Plan following the removal of the Wooden Multiplay Unit in 2023 due to health and safety concerns. The unit was one of the key features of the play area so the proposed refurbishment includes replacing this with a new play feature alongside potential replacements of other existing equipment. Walmer Town Council has provisionally agreed to contribute towards the project but will only confirm the grant once tenders have been received and the WTC project representative has evaluated the bids. Therefore, the Council procurement documents will seek two separate designs across two different budgets. Further budget details are provided in paragraph 5.2.
- 2.4 Travers Road Play Area is a non-strategic facility based in the Middle Deal Ward. It is surrounded predominantly by council housing and is supported by the Housing Revenue Account. The play area is proposed for investment because the multiplay unit was removed in 2023 due to safety concerns, meaning that limited features now remain in the play area. The proposed refurbishment includes replacing this unit as well as supplying additional play equipment where possible. These works will be fully funded by a S106 contribution.
- 2.5 Consultation for all sites was completed during May 2024 as set out in Appendix A. This included an online questionnaire, on-site consultation and engagement with elected members and local schools.
- 2.6 A tender process for each project will be undertaken during July 2024 with support and guidance from the Council's Procurement team.
- 2.7 Following discussions with Sandwich and Walmer Town Councils, it is proposed that the projects will be programmed to enable re-opening of the play areas in early spring 2025. This will avoid construction taking place when the ground is wet during the winter months.

3. Identification of Options

- 3.1 Option 1 – Not to proceed with all the projects, not to release funds and not to give delegated authority to the Strategic Director to award contract(s) following a tender process.
- 3.2 Option 2 – To proceed with all the projects, release funds and provide delegated authority to the Strategic Director to award contract(s) following a tender process.

4. Evaluation of Options

- 4.1 Option 1 - This option is not recommended because the improvements to all three play areas are urgently needed following the removal of existing equipment over the past year due to health and safety concerns. A considerable proportion of the funding has been secured from external sources and can only be used for the proposed purposes so it is likely to be lost if the projects do not go ahead.
- 4.2 Option 2 is preferred for the following reasons: The majority of DDC-owned play areas have received substantial investment over the last ten years but The Bulwarks and Travers Road have received minimal investment. Marke Wood, although partially redeveloped in 2008, is one of the most heavily used play spaces in the district given its strategic location within the popular recreational grounds. It requires investment

following the removal of a key play item to enhance overall provision and to help maintain the high standards expected of strategic play areas across the district.

- 4.3 User group expectations have been raised through the publicity of proposed improvements and public awareness of the availability of external funding; delays to the project could result in the loss of support and confidence among users. Much effort and resource has been undertaken to secure funding and to consult with the users on their needs and preferences. A substantial delay might result in a requirement to re-consult and there is limited resource for this with no budget provision.

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 Project A: The Bulwarks, Sandwich implemented to a scale that does not exceed £58,300.

Capital Project funded by	2023/24 £	Total £
THE BULWARKS		
Sandwich Town Council (secured)	13,300	
Capital Allocation From The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan	30,000	
Southern Water Compensation	15,000	
Total sum to be approved		58,300

N.B. following refurbishment DDC will seek reinstatement of the previous service level agreement with Sandwich Town Council to support the maintenance cost of this site.

- 5.2 Project B: Marke Wood, Walmer implemented to a scale that does not exceed £62,700 or £87,700, subject to tender review.

Capital Project Funded By	2023/24 £	Total £
MARKE WOOD		
Developer contribution received from DOV/16/00017 Land at the former Barracks site (East Section) Trafalgar Drive, Walmer	22,700	
Capital Allocation From The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan	40,000	
		62,700
<i>Subject to tender review</i>		
Walmer Town Council	<u>25,000</u>	
Total sum to be approved		87,700

- 5.3 Project C: Travers Road, Deal implemented to a scale that does not exceed £33,785.

Capital Project Funded By	2023/24 £	Total £
TRAVERS ROAD		
Developer contribution received from DOV/19/00216 Land north west of Pegasus, London Road, Sholden	33,785	
Total sum to be approved		33,785

N.B. Maintenance of Travers Road play area is funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

6. **Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

Contractors as part of the design briefs will be recommended to minimise the use of plastics on equipment and encouraged to use recycled materials should the contractor provide such a service where budgets allow.

7. **Corporate Implications**

Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money (ZW)

Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make (BD).

Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report seeking approval for the refurbishment of three play areas during 2024/25: The Bulwarks in Sandwich, Marke Wood Recreation Ground in Walmer and Travers Road in Deal, does not specifically highlight any equality implications. However, in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149> (KM)

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Consultation Approach

9. **Background Papers**

Dover District Play Area Redevelopments 2023/24 files – Property Services

S106 agreements for planning applications DOV/16/00017 and DOV/19/00216

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