

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, CORPORATE SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION
8th December 2017

Parks and Open Spaces Quality Improvement – Play Upgrade at Pope’s Meadow

Director of Environment, Culture & Communities

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the allocation of S106 funding (£70,000) to support improvements to play facilities at Pope’s Meadow in Binfield.
- 1.2 To confirm which financial contributions secured from developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be applied to the project. (ANNEX 1).
- 1.3 To confirm that the improvements will be implemented by Bracknell Forest Council, Parks and Countryside service, if approved.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That £70,000 of S106 contributions (as summarised in ANNEX 1) are allocated to fund site works to improve play provision at Pope’s Meadow.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Developer contributions are collected through S106 agreements to support “providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or **outdoor recreational facilities** (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement of land and/or buildings and/or carrying out or assisting in the carrying out of nature/landscaping conservation projects) within 3 kilometres of the Site.”
- 3.2 The justification for requiring developers to supporting the improvement of open space and outdoor recreational facilities is given under point 8. Promoting Healthy Communities, The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that:

“Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.”
- 3.3 The borough council has adopted a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012) and the proposed project is in accordance with delivering the key borough objectives:

Provision:

- Protect and establish public open space for **recreation, play, sport, health**, biodiversity, heritage and climate change adaption that is appropriate to need; strategically located; and adaptable to future requirements.

Use and Enjoyment:

- Make sure public open space supports well-being; encourages participation; and facilitates social inclusion.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not carrying out a project to upgrade play facilities at Pope's Meadow could lead to funds being returned to the developers, if no other qualifying scheme was located through which to deliver enhancements in the time available.
- 4.2 Not using s106 funding could result in a failure to mitigate the impact of residential development and a missed opportunity for 'providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or **outdoor recreational facilities**'.
- 4.3 The wide range of S106 contributions available in the borough have been assessed in order to eliminate those lying outside the distance constraints of the developments as set out in the s106 agreements.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 This project will focus on improvements to outdoor play provision at Pope's Meadow. This will complement and add to existing facilities.
- 5.2 Pope's Meadow was one of the first sites in Berkshire to receive a Green Flag Award, which recognises the highest quality greenspaces, and has retained the award every year without fail since 2001.
- 5.3 Pope's Meadow play area currently contains equipment that is several year's old and that is only suitable for toddlers i.e. 1 x springer, 2 x cradle swings and 1 x toddler multi unit. Increasing the use of the children's play area in this location can be achieved through improved equipment; better visibility and access and reimagined use of the open space.
- 5.4 New play equipment including a multi-unit, various swings, an inclusive play swing, springers, see-saw and a trim trail will be more functional, look more appealing and cater for a much wider age range (suitable for 3-14 year olds). This will better reflect the increase of usage expected due to the new adjacent developments.
- 5.5 Considerations given when providing this new equipment include:
 - New surfacing will replace bark, which will reduce existing maintenance costs and improve accessibility for disabled children and parents
 - Equipment will be chosen to reflect the heritage value of the site, where possible linking in to its history
 - Existing bark to be recycled on site as mulch base to improve the health of veteran trees
- 5.6 In addition to play improvements, Bracknell Forest Council is carrying out improvements to access at the site; a new surfaced path will provide better links from the car park into and around the site.
- 5.7 The Bracknell Forest Residents Survey (2014) identifies that 91% of respondents use parks and open spaces (79% at least monthly). When asked to identify the three best things about living in the borough, the highest response was 'parks and open spaces' (42%) closely followed by '**access to nature**' (30%). Of those who gave a satisfaction rating, the service that the highest proportion of respondents were satisfied with was parks & open spaces (89%).

- 5.8 S106 funding is secured in accordance with adopted planning policy. Of particular significance is section 5.11 of the Planning Obligations SPD, February 2015, whereby works are prioritised towards improving quality of existing open spaces of public value (OSPV) over time and to provide facilities that are of a sufficient size to meet the recreational demands of a growing residential population.
- 5.9 Referring to Annex 1, the S106 contribution from the Farley Hall development was calculated as the financial contribution to active open space provision which could not be provided within the development site. The passive open space provision on site was sufficient, and therefore the contribution was intended to provide enhanced active play provision at the nearest suitable public open space to Farley Hall. Pope's Meadow is the nearest site at only 830m walking distance away.
- 5.10 In addition to being secured to fund quality improvements, there is a requirement that developer contributions are allocated to open spaces capable of serving the development from which the contribution was paid. This means that available funding needs to be allocated to a site within close proximity of the contributing development. The contributions to be allocated are set out in ANNEX 1.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report. The legal basis of the proposed contribution is set out in the body of the report

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The sums detailed above form part of the approved 2017/18 Capital Programme for Environment, Culture & Communities, this report identifies the specific schemes on which this funding is to be allocated.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An EIA scoping assessment has been carried out for this project and included in ANNEX 2. There are no negative impacts resulting from the proposed project.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 S106 contributions will need to be refunded should they not be allocated in accordance with the respective legal agreement. Future revenue costs associated with this project will be met by the Borough Council. The project is designed in such a way that there are no significant increases to maintenance costs and site management can still be accommodated within existing revenue budgets.

Head of Planning

- 6.5 The proposal represents appropriate use of the S106 monies referred to in Annex 1. The works should not adversely affect the future SANG role envisaged for Pope's Meadow.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 Priorities have been identified in discussion through consultative mechanisms such as the Local Countryside Access Forum and Parish Parks and Public Realm Forum, and consultation prior to publications of the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy in 2012.

7.2 Ward Cllrs

Method of Consultation

7.3 Sent to Ward Councillors and local Parish / Town Councils

Representations Received

7.4 **Background Papers:**

S106 Allocation details - ANNEX 1

EIA scoping assessment for project – ANNEX 2

Contact for further information

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ANNEX 1 S106 Allocation details

YN CODE	PLANNING REF	PLANNING SITE NAME	PARISH	WARD	AMOUNT AVAILABLE	AMOUNT TO BE ALLOCATED	DESCRIPTION	SPEND DEADLINE?
YN529	13/01072/FUL	Farley Hall, Binfield	Binfield	Binfield with Warfield	£46,378	£46,378	...towards the cost of providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement of land and/or buildings and/or carrying out or assisting in the carrying out of nature/landscaping conservation projects) within 3 kilometres of the Site.	10/06/2023
YN390	08/00309/FUL	21 dwellings at Autocross site, London Rd	Binfield	Binfield with Warfield	£37,117	£23,622	...towards the cost of providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement or land and/or buildings and/or carrying out or assisting in the carrying out of nature/landscaping conservation projects) within 3 kilometres of the Site.	31/10/2020
				Totals	£83,495	£70,000		

ANNEX 2 - Equality Impact Assessment Scoping**Initial Equalities Screening Record Form**

Date of Screening: 26/09/2017	Directorate: Environment, Culture and Communities		Section: Parks and Countryside Service
1. Activity to be assessed	Quality improvements to outdoor play provision at Pope's Meadow		
2. What is the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Rose Wicks		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Rose Wicks , Alan Wilson, Graham Pockett		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	<p>The aim is to upgrade outdoor play facilities at Pope's Meadow using s106 developer contributions, in accordance with Planning Obligations SPD (section 5.11) and the BFC Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2012.</p> <p>Provision of new, attractive play equipment will ensure recreational facilities are upgraded alongside the provision of access improvements.</p> <p>This project provides residents and facility users with new equipment ranging from a multi unit, various swings including one inclusive play swing, springers, see saw and a trim trail at this site.</p>		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	<p>These facilities will be well used at this popular location, at which multiple recreational activities are undertaken.</p> <p>This investment will increase the capacity of active play provision to serve existing nearby communities and recent housing developments within the area.</p>		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral please give a reason.	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g. equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation

				results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities including conditions such as dementia.	Y ✓	N		Positive impact resulting from replacing bark mulch surface with wet pour which is much more accessible to those with restricted mobility. New equipment includes accessible items.
9. Racial equality	Y	N ✓		
10. Gender equality	Y	N ✓		
11. Sexual orientation equality	Y	N ✓		
12. Gender re-assignment	Y	N ✓		
13. Age equality	Y ✓	N	Play equipment will be designed to suit a range of ages from 3 to 14 years old	NHS Choices promotes the benefit of exercise as “the miracle cure we’ve all been waiting for” ⁱ Providing opportunities for all age groups to increase their physical activity – through play will promote physical and mental wellbeing.
14. Religion and belief equality	Y	N ✓		
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y ✓	N		Improved safety surfacing & seating makes area more accessible for parents with pushchairs/buggies, combined with improved path from car park.
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y	N ✓		
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces)				

communities) and on promoting good community relations.			
18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?	N/A		
19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?	Positive impact for 13) Age Equality will be more significant for children and parents of pre-teen children. This is not considered significant since many other age groups could benefit directly or indirectly, e.g. grandparents.		
20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?	Y	N ✓	
21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?	N/A		
22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?	Y	N ✓	
23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.			
Action	Timescale	Person Responsible	Milestone/Success Criteria

			<p>Increased usage of play equipment measured by:</p> <p>1) number of children</p> <p>2) age range of children</p> <p>3) increased use and enjoyment by children with disabilities</p> <p>4) improved experience for parents/guardians supervising children</p>
24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?	<p>Parks and Open Spaces Strategy - S106 quality improvement programme, based on the Plus 1 Principle.</p> <p>POSS Study (currently published as evidence base.)</p> <p>Pope's Meadow Management and Maintenance Plan 2013 - 2023 which is reviewed annually for Green Flag Award submission.</p>		
25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?	<p>When carrying out site quality improvements, the following actions are undertaken to ensure that any new / improved site features are made accessible to all park users:</p> <p>1. Follow best practice examples from guidelines from the BT Access For All Project and from organisations such as Fields in Trust (registered charity that protects vital open spaces all across the UK).</p> <p>2. Provide appropriate specifications to contractors, which include the need to adhere to equalities best practice guidelines.</p>		
26. Chief Officers signature.	<p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p>		

When complete please send to abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for publication on the Council's website.

ⁱ <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/whybeactive.aspx>