

Agenda Item 15

Housing Review Board

10 September 2009

AG



To provide funding to reinstate Play Areas on Council Housing Estates

Summary

The report initiates the process to address Health and Safety issues that have been identified at two Play Areas at Park Close, Clyst Hydon and Turner Close, Newton Poppleford.

Recommendation

To approve the budget sum of £30,000 to enable essential repairs and improvements to be undertaken to two Play Areas at Park Close, Clyst Hydon and Turner Close, Newton Poppleford

a) Reasons for Recommendation

To maintain and improve children's play areas which are seen as important amenity within local communities.

b) Alternative Options

To do nothing and close the parks.

c) Risk Considerations

Should any of the facilities be removed, it would provide adverse publicity for the Council. It may also be seen as a failure of the Council to meet its objectives.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

As a matter of policy we obviously need to maintain play areas to comply with health and safety requirements. The financial implications are contained within the report.

e) Date for Review of Decision

August 2010.

1 Background

1.1 There are 15 play areas on our estates which are maintained through the Housing Revenue Account.

Newton Poppleford	Millmoor/Turners Close
Sidford	Higher Brook Meadow
Sidbury	Furzehill
Upton Pyne	Glebe Close
Honiton	Joslin Road
Honiton	Philips Square
Honiton	Charles Road

Honiton	Langford Avenue
Honiton	St Leonards Road
Axminster	Millwey Rise
Axminster	Loretto Road
Beer	Underleys
Clyst Hydon	Park Close
Aylesbeare	Scotchmead
Clyst St Lawrence	Foretown

It would appear that a number of these play areas, are beginning to show signs of being in need of major reinstatement and improvement.

- 1.2 We have a play area budget of £36,200 and within this annual budget a sum of £23,590 has been allocated for day to day repairs and maintenance, re-painting, and urgent works required identified for Health and Safety reasons.
- 1.3 Recent inspections undertaken by the Engineering Section have identified two play areas, which are in need of works that have health and safety implications (2 reports attached in **annex 1**).
- 1.4 With limited investment into the play areas over recent years, it may be anticipated that more problems will become apparent due to the age of the safety surfaces and play equipment coming to the end of its life cycle.
- 1.5 It is proposed that we arrange for the Council's Engineer to undertake a comprehensive survey of all of the Council Housing Play Areas. The survey information will show details of the facilities and a record of their condition.
- 1.6 With the information obtained from the survey a programme of works would be developed, and provision made in future budgets.
- 1.7 We currently need to address the problems identified at Park Close, Clyst Hydon and Turner Close, Newton Poppleford. For Health and Safety reasons both of these sites require attention to the playground safety surface.

2. Conclusions

- 2.1 The Engineers within their reports have identified in detail the problems that currently exist within two play areas.
- 2.2 The problems will only become worse if left unattended.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the sum of £30k be taken from the Housing Revenue Account to meet the current need and any potential further urgent works that may become evident.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications set out within the report.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are detailed in the report. The projected 2009/10 HRA surplus looks able to support this budget without falling below the minimum advised level.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

None.

Background Papers

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