

Report of the Strategic Director, Place to the meeting of the Bradford South Area Committee to be held on 15 February 2024

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Subject:

Investments within Bradford South from the Council's Playable Spaces and Sports Pitches Investment Programmes

Summary statement:

This report provides a progress update on delivery of the Council's Playable Spaces and Sports Pitches Investment Programmes within Bradford South.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

The Playable Spaces and Sports Pitches Investment Programmes aim to deliver the objectives of the Council's Organisational Equalities Culture by ensuring that the facilities provided are fit for purpose, sustainable and fair and inclusive in their offer. The programme recognises and supports equality of opportunity between different groups through provision of relevant, accessible and in some cases bespoke playable spaces and/or sports pitches.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Regeneration and Environment

1. SUMMARY

This report provides a progress update on delivery of the Councils Playable Spaces and Sports Pitches Investment Programmes within Bradford South.

2. BACKGROUND

The Council's Parks & Green Spaces Services provides multiple opportunities for people from all backgrounds to enjoy recreational activity. Playable spaces and sports pitches are maintained to allow children, young people and adults to participate in either formal or informal physical activity. The Council Executive in June 2019 recognised the value of these facilities and their contribution to its Better Health, Better Lives outcome through the allocation of £20m capital funding to deliver the improvement and refurbishment works identified within the two Strategies.

2.1 Playable Spaces Strategy

£5m of the £20m was identified to fund the delivery programme of the Playable Spaces Strategy together with the available Capital Section 106 monies already received together with Community Investment Levy (CIL) monies totalling £1.329m allocated by the Executive to determine an original overall budget of £6.396m.

The Authority currently manages and maintains 292 play facilities across 163 sites through its Parks and Greenspaces Services. This number is predominantly made up of fixed play equipment facilities (150 total), skate parks, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's), single goal/ ball sports walls, 5-aside pitch goals and outdoor fitness trails/gyms.

The play stock is of mixed age and condition with many in a condition that requires heavy maintenance expenditure whilst a significant number of others require substantial 'capital' investment to refurbish or replace to meet current standards.

The Playable Spaces Strategy continues to be developed alongside the Investment Programme and provides a strategic policy against which requests for new play facilities or proposals for housing development can be measured and assessed in an objective manner to ensure a needs based and proportionate distribution of facilities across all parts of the District. The key principles together with the involvement of key partners for the strategy were approved by the Executive on 7 January 2020 and remain core to the delivery programme.

To create confidence in achieving best value from the significant level of corporate capital investment required to refurbish the District's play areas and play facilities, the funding programme seeks to provide a network of refurbished/improved spaces and facilities that are sustainable in terms of maintenance together with:

- a. A dramatic reduction in the numbers of individual items of equipment being decommissioned for long periods of time or, in future permanently removed and not replaced.
- b. Reduction in the level of potential litigious claims for compensation in the event of an accident and/or injury on outdated or un-maintainable equipment.
- c. Provides a detailed refurbishment plan for the District that is financially sustainable within existing revenue maintenance budgets

2.2 Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)

The current PPS, agreed and adopted by the Council in 2019 provides a clear, strategic framework for the future maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches and ancillary facilities up to 2030 (in line with the Bradford Local Plan period).

The PPS incorporates the aspirations and outcomes for each of the individual National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB's): football, cricket, rugby league, rugby union, tennis, and athletics) in concert with Sport England. There are three key aims:

- To protect the existing supply of sports facilities where needed for meeting current or future needs.
- To enhance outdoor sports facilities through improving quality, capacity and management of sites.
- To provide new outdoor sports facilities where there is current or future demand to do so.

The Strategy also delivers on the Council's priority outcome for Better Health, Better Lives by helping people from all backgrounds to lead long, happy and productive lives by improving their health through recreational and physical activity.

To fund the delivery plan of the PPS the council previously approved an investment programme Sports Pitch Investment Programme (SPIP) with an indicative project spend of £15m. Grant funding and asset sales are projected at £5m leaving a net capital funding requirement of £10m from the Councils Capital Programme.

2.2.1 Sports hub sites – delivery model

The PPS identifies the provision of 'District and potentially neighbourhood hub sites' as a key component to meet and deliver the objectives of the PPS. The principle of creating hub sites is based on:

- improving the quality, quantity and management of outdoor sport provision
- significantly increasing access and opportunities for wider community engagement whilst reducing the level of revenue subsidy required through maximizing pitch/facility use
- providing at least one all-weather pitch in each district-wide hub.

The Bradford main sports hub sites have since been named as priority sites within the District's Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) developed by the Football Foundation and FA. This is important, as it relates to their ten-year funding investment programme.

- Three district-wide multi-sports hub sites:
 - Wyke Community Sports Village
 - Myra Shay Recreation Ground
 - Marley Activities and Coaching Centre
- Five local multi-sports hub sites, where possible one in each of the five distinct district administrative areas. Each site will have improved or replacement changing facilities with improved and where possible increased quality pitch (majority grass) provision.

- A yet unconfirmed number of single pitch and individual pitch site improvement projects. These will consist, in the majority, of refurbishment and/or upgrading of both existing grass pitches and changing facilities or in several cases the provision of ancillary changing facilities.

3 PROGRESS

3.1 Playable Spaces Investment Programme (PSIP)

The first phase of the programme completed with the opening of the refurbished play area at Lister Park £650k in July 2021. A series of consultations with ward members, key internal and external stakeholders and community groups on a District area by area basis completed in Autumn 2021. This was followed by individual ward area consultations with ward members, completed Summer 2022, to agree the future refurbishment programmes for the play areas and play facilities in their wards.

A second phase of refurbishments included the remainder of the larger play areas across the District, together with a proportion of accelerated sites that required more urgent refurbishment, at a total cost of £1.828m, was recommended by the Council's Project Appraisal Group (PAG) and approved by the Executive on 2 November 2021; the works completed in Easter last year.

The original proposed 5-year Investment Programme (ending January 2025) has been extended largely owing to the capacity restriction experienced from the pandemic lockdowns and the subsequent recovery period. The pandemic also led to far higher footfalls (when allowed) within play areas and play facilities across the District and in some cases increased and at times sustained Anti-Social Behavior incidents leading to damage to both equipment and safety surfacing.

The ambition of the third and final phase is to deliver the last stage of the previously agreed investment programme, together with an additional 29 equipped play areas that have been recently identified as requiring some refurbishment. In total, phase 3 works will include an element of refurbishment to 99 equipped play areas subject to the additional funding required being identified as part of the future budget discussion.

- 3.1.1 The list below shows investment in Bradford South from Phase 2 of the programme and the schemes identified within Phase 3.

**Playable Spaces Investment Programme.
Total spend to date £ 352,000**

Site	Funding	£	Project		Completed
Playable Spaces Strategy (PSS) Phase 2					
Russell Hall Park	CBMDC Corporate Capital & S106 & CIL	42000	Play Area	2023	X
Eversley Drive Play Area		45000	Play Area	2023	X
Woodlands Play Area		25000	Play Area	2023	X
Brackenhill Park		70000	Play Area	2023	X

Harold Park		90000	Play Area	2022	x
Playable Spaces Strategy (PSS) Phase 3					
Victoria Park, Oakenshaw	CBMDC Corporate Capital & S106 & CIL	tbc	Play area	2024	
Upper Wyke Rec. Ground		tbc	Play area	2024	
Knowles Park		80000	Play area	2024	
Penrose Drive, Bartle Lane Play Area		tbc	Play Area	2025/26	
Scholemoor Play Area		tbc	Play Area	2025/26	

3.2 Sports Pitch Improvement Programme (SPIP)

3.2.1 Wyke Community Sports Village (WCSV) Phase 1

The Wyke Community Sports Village (WCSV) project is the first multi-sport hub and was completed in May 2022. The facility has been operating for over 12 months now and has received plaudits from the funders (Football Foundation and British Cycling), user groups and the local community. This project served to demonstrate that key elements of the Investment Programme funding can work. The facilities delivered on site included:

- 1.7km Closed Loop Cycle Track with a learn to ride and a Cycle Skills Training area
- A full size 3G Pitch compliant for both football and Rugby (Rugby training and junior play only.)
- 3 x Winter Sports Pitches
- Changing Pavilion with Team Sports & Cycle changing and Café Servery
- Car and Cycle Parking

3.2.2 Football Foundation Investment

Following positive engagement and timely delivery of projects within the investment programme to date, the Football Foundation have identified Bradford as one of just 6 authorities across the country to be offered opportunity for funding from the Foundations Hubs Programme. The Football Foundation is making available £14m of funding to Bradford to deliver a joint funded £21.6m programme which has at its heart the major hub projects originally identified within the Districts Playing Pitch Strategy together with significant improvement to the quality and thereby capacity of grass pitches across a number of other sports.

This will include Phase 2 works at WCSV which will provide a sustainable business model and encourage an operating partner onto the site through construction of a second 3G pitch to increase and maximise the capacity of the site. There will also be several minor modifications to improve the functionality, and maximise use of the changing pavilion.

One of the proposed schemes within the FF investment programme is the creation of PlayZones across the district. Playzones are strategically aligned alongside sports pitches and All-Weather Pitches to create a network of complementary activity in a single location, offering safe, free and accessible outdoor facilities available for use

24/7 365 days a year. They will be based around existing community either based on an existing multi use games area or as a brand new facility. They bring communities together through recreational forms of football and a range of other sports. The investment is aimed at tackling inequalities in physical activity in the communities that have the greatest need allowing the priority groups identified by the FF to be more active.

3.2.3 England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)

The Council's Parks Development Service has a recent history of co-delivering significant investment into cricket facilities across the District with two new Non Turf Pitches were installed at Wibsey Park and Horsfall Playing Fields in 2022. Based on this successful partnership the Council has been chosen as one of only two local Authorities across the Country to pioneer two new innovative pilot projects.

The first, is a £1.2 million investment to replace the existing practice wickets at Park Avenue Cricket Ground with a state of the art covered, heated and lit facility that allows practice throughout the year maintenance. This also included a machinery bank project that is aimed at allowing clubs to maintain their own facilities leading to increased participation and a reduction in cancelled matches. These were completed late last year.

The second is the Grass Pitch Pilot to improve the grass pitches across the District on both council and club sites which will run from Autumn 2024 until the end of 2027.

3.2.5 Summary list of projects within Bradford South from the Playing Pitch Investment Programme.

Sports Pitch Improvement Programme (SPIP) **Total investment to date £7,239,680**

Site	Funding	£	Project		Completed
Wyke Community Sports Village	CBMDC Corporate Capital and external funding	7.11m	Phase 1 - AGP, 1.7km Cycle Circuit, Learn to Ride area, 3 improved grass pitches, Community pavilion with changing facilities	2022	X
Wyke Community Sports Village	CBMDC SPIP Corporate Capital and Football Foundation	tbc	Phase 2 - 2nd AGP	2024	
ARCH, Queensbury	SPIP	100,000	Roof	2024	
Upper Wyke Recreation Ground	Site specific Section 106 monies	24,000	Improve drainage	2024	
Wibsey Park and Horsfall Playing Fields	ECB Non Turf Pitch (NTP)	15,680	Installation of 2 x NTP's at each site	2022	X

	Programme funding				
Various tbc	ECB	tbc	Grass pitch Improvements to existing wickets	2024-27	
Various tbc	Football Foundation	tbc	Playzones (MUGA)	2024	
Various tbc	CBMDC SPIP Corporate Capital and Football Foundation	tbc	Grass pitch improvements	2024-27	

3.3 Parks and Green Spaces Investment

The Park and Green Spaces Development Service has also worked closely with local councillors and communities to deliver other projects as listed below.

Total Investment to date £3,339,720

Site	Funding	£	Project		Completed
Brackenhill Park Master Plan	Sale of Lodge £225k & Park Dev Fund	70,000	Phase 1 New Multi Games Area, Bike track & play markings, picnic benches	2023	X
Brackenhill Park Master Plan	Sale of Lodge	40,000	Phase 2 Trim trail, zip wire, Contribution to PSS play area project	2023	X
Brackenhill Park Master Plan	Sale of Lodge	5,220	Phase 2 Bowling Green fence	2023	X
Brackenhill Park Master Plan	Sale of Lodge	50,000	Phase 3 - drainage – swale, outdoor gym, walking route	2024	
Harold Park	Parks Development Fund	20,000	Outdoor Gym	2023	X
Brafferton Arbor	Neighbourhoods	5,000	Memorial garden	2022	X
Asa Briggs	Parks & Greenspaces Tech & Dev	1,000	Planting for community food provision	2023	X
Russell Hall Park	Section 106	15,000	Outdoor Gym	2021	X
Russell Hall Park	Section 106	19,500	Teen Shelter	2020	X
Albert Road Rec	Section 106	9,000	Entrance Improvements	2019	X

Wibsey Park	Section 106	13,000	Outdoor Gym	2019	X
	Lodge Sale	32,000	Nature Trail, path improvements, seating and orchard	2019	X
Yateholme Drive	S106	60,000	Improve play provision	2020	X

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 Playable Spaces.

The successful delivery of phases 1 and 2 has cost £2.478m leaving £3.918m of the original budget remaining.

The inclusion of an additional 29 play areas that have been identified as requiring urgent refurbishment works, together with mitigation of recent inflationary pressures will require additional funding to complete the entire programme.

The Executive made the following decisions in line with recommendations from the Council's Project Appraisal Group (PAG):-

- To release the balance of the original approved budget (£3.918m) identified as a reserve within the Capital Investment Plan (CIP)
- To consider the approval of additional funding requirements as part of the 24/25 CIP budget discussion.

4.2 Playing Pitches

The potential total investment opportunity within the District through Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Playing Pitch Strategy, including the Football Foundation opportunity, is now £32.482m (originally £15m).

The Council capital contribution, as part of the overall £32.482m investment, is £11.071m. (originally £10m) This commitment from external funders to provide £14m will require a further £1.071m of Council capital above that currently approved.

The proposal for the Council to engage with the FF grant funding opportunity together with the funding for Phase 3 of the programme has been reported to the Project Appraisal Group (PAG). PAG recommended the following which was duly approved by the Executive last September: -

- Include £1.071m in the Capital Investment Plan (CIP)
- Consider inclusion of a further capital investment within the CIP as part of the 24/25 budget discussion

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 Any significant and lengthy failure in the provision of playable spaces and facilities will cause reputational damage to the Council and damage to the health and well-being of its citizens.
- 5.2 The current revenue budget for play equipment repair is not sufficient to carry out the level of refurbishment required to the current playable spaces. A major increase in annual revenue budgets would be required, in the absence of capital investment, to prevent the need to isolate and/or remove a significant number of individual items of equipment that fail prematurely, come to the end of their viable lifespan or are vandalised.
- 5.3 Any significant deterioration of or failure to meet current or future projected demand of sports pitches and their ancillary facilities in the District would cause both reputational, material and also financial damage to the Council.
- 5.4 Mindful of the current financial position of the Council the projected spend within the Playing Pitch programme has been profiled over the coming 5-year period. This will not only assist with removing a significant financial imposition from a single year but will also assist in the practical delivery of the required works. The profiling of the spend has also been aligned with the funding timescales of the Football Foundation.
- 5.5 There is a reputational risk to the Council if the FF funding programme is not approved as the sport's National Governing Bodies and Sport England investment programmes are produced in conjunction with the outcomes and deliverability of the PPS's agreed Action Plan which references and includes the proposed Councils Sports Pitches Investment Programme.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 All procurement activity will be undertaken in accordance with Council's Contract Standing Orders and in line with internal governance requirements.
- 6.2 The Council has a duty of care to visitors of premises and users of Council services under various legislation which may be applicable to visitors to parks and users of play equipment, including the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 which requires the Council to take reasonable care to ensure the safety of visitors.
- 6.3 Playable spaces equipment and associated facilities are required to be kept up to date and safe to minimise harm to users and ensure compliance with external public liability insurance.
- 6.4 Any disposals of land will have to be in accordance with appropriate legislative requirements, including (but not limited to) should the disposal of land be at less than best consideration, disposals of open space land or any disposal that might constitute a subsidy under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 6.5 The Council will be required to enter into grant funding agreements for grant funding

and will need to comply with the terms and conditions for the grant funding to mitigate risks of clawbac

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The strategies and investment programmes seek to deliver the most sustainable facility provision achievable over a 10 year period and beyond through the capital investment programme.

7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

Refurbishment of existing equipment and infrastructure rather than replacement will reduce the carbon footprint of this investment programme. The intention to develop doorstep and local playable spaces will reduce car/bus travel and further reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Creating multi-sports sites which share ancillary facilities will replace existing outdated high energy use facilities. The proposed new-build sports hubs and where possible the refurbished hubs will be designed to include energy reduction systems and be more efficient reducing both fuel use and their carbon footprint in both build and operation.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Safe, well maintained, quality playing pitches and playable spaces provide a resource for engaging people in positive activity which can act as a diversion from crime and anti-social behaviour.

The provision of well-maintained playable spaces and facilities limits the exposure of the community to potential injury or harm.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no known Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

7.5 TRADE UNION

There are no significant staffing implications arising from this report although the Trade Unions will be consulted as required through the Council's IR Framework.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

There have been area and ward-based consultations with members to allow play area delivery programmes for each ward to be developed. Extensive local and ward consultation was carried out prior to the final design and construction of Wyke Community Sports Village.

7.7 AREA COMMITTEE WARD PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Playable spaces and sports pitches are maintained to allow children, young people and adults to participate in either formal or informal physical activity. The value of these facilities and their contribution to Better Health, Better Lives outcomes are recognised within the current Bradford South Locality Plan and help to reduce obesity, deliver wellbeing activities and prevent ill health.

The Brackenhill Park master plan is also quoted as a Better Health, Better Lives exemplar case study in line with the ward plan priorities of supporting healthy lifestyles and encouraging use of local green spaces and parks.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Playable Spaces Investment Programme contributes to the Council's wider partnership ambition of creating a more child-friendly District. Article 31 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child includes: "Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child".

Research has also shown that low levels of physical activity during childhood and adolescence can have a negative impact on children and young people's academic achievements, social abilities, and life skills, as well as their health. Born in Bradford data has shown that 77% of 5-11 year olds don't do the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day.

Being active does not only improve children's physical health, but also their emotional wellbeing, meaning that active children are more confident and happier. It is now widely recognised that being inactive is the fourth biggest cause of early mortality in the UK and physical activity patterns are established in childhood.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

That the Bradford South Area Committee notes the content of this report and welcomes the significant capital investment into parks and green spaces facilities within the area.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the Bradford South Area Committee notes the content of this report and welcomes the significant capital investment into parks and green spaces facilities within the area.

11. APPENDICES

None

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Bradford District's Playing Pitch Strategy:
<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/sport-and-activities/policies/playing-pitch-strategy/>
- Sports Pitches Investment Programme Update 2023
<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s42989/Doc%20M.pdf>
- The District's evolving Playable Spaces Strategy (PSS)
<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s28276/Doc%20AO.pdf>
- Bradford District's Playable Spaces Investment Programme (PSIP) Update 2023
<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s42984/Doc%20N.pdf>