

To Hythe Town Council
Date 20 August 2020
Status **Non Exempt**
Responsible officer Responsible Financial Officer

Subject **PLAY AREA STRATEGY 2020-2030 REPORT F&GP 09/20**

SUMMARY: This report is a review on the anticipated adoption from Folkestone and Hythe District Council on a number of smaller playgrounds in the Hythe district.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because:-

- a) The Council is committed to provide key strategic recommendations when acquiring land to reflect local need.
- b) The Council is committed to protect, enhance and provide open spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To receive and note the report F&GP/09/20**
- 2. To authorise the Town Clerk/RFO and Chairman of F&GP to negotiate with FHDC and report back to Council before final proposals are submitted.**

INTRODUCTION

At FHDC's Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 19 May 2020, Play Area Strategy 2020-2030 - Consultation Responses and Outcome Report No. C/19/48 considered the draft Play Area Strategy 2020-2030 as presented to Cabinet on 11/12/2019. The report detailed how high-quality play areas will be provided and maintained throughout the District over the next ten years.

The formal consultation began 20/12/2019 and concluded on 31/01/2020 with results being published on the District Council's website.

Maintenance, regular health and safety inspections and replacement of older equipment are significant ongoing costs being considered.

FHDC are looking to work closely with Town & Parish Councils throughout any asset transfers and will provide a 5 year maintenance dowry.

Providing play areas should be a function of all tiers of local government and local Councils have the power to acquire land such as Open Spaces and maintain under the Public Health Act 1987 s.164 and Open Spaces Act 1906 ss 9 & 10.

The Folkestone and Hythe Play Area strategy 2020-30 has been designed so that the District Council can direct resources to bigger, destination play areas allowing partners and other stakeholders to take on ownership of the smaller play areas -

both SIPA and NSPA (Strategically Important Play Areas; Non-Strategic Play Areas). Recent discussions with Town & Parish Councils have proved positive

The four that FHDC want to hand over to HTC on a lease (length to be determined) are four small ones - Peregrine Close, Turnpike Hill and St George's Place (all deemed strategic within the strategy,) and one deemed non-strategic, Reachfields. Figures with regards to proposed dowry payments for consideration are attached along with maps of the open spaces and their proposed boundaries. (Addendum 1).

There is a possibility that there will be legal costs for the transfer of play areas, although these costs have not yet been accepted by HTC. They may be at a reduced rate of £250.00 per lease to be met by HTC. In addition, there is a proposed fee of £60.00 plus VAT to advertise within the local paper for 2 weeks which is required when disposing of public open space. The advertisement fee is for all rather than individual locations (These charges and figures will need to be confirmed and agreed by F&GP before action is taken).

HTC has already established a working group and members conducted an inspection of the prospective play areas to ascertain future maintenance costs in comparison with FHDC's report. A copy of the working group's findings will be circulated to Councillors once collated. The next step will be to obtain the history of maintenance costs on the current play areas that are owned by HTC and see how they are comparable.

SUMMARY

The adoption of the play areas will need further investigations into future related costs before a decision by HTC can be made. It is recommended that the Town Clerk/RFO and the Chairman of F&GP continue to negotiate with FHDC until an agreeable proposal is ready to be submitted to full Council and once resolved submitted to FHDC.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A summary of the perceived risk follows;

Perceived Risk	Seriousness	Likelihood		Preventative Action
FHDC do not transfer the smaller play areas to the Town Council and play equipment is removed.	High	Low		Hythe Town Council take over the play areas and open spaces and maintain them.

CONTACT OFFICER

If you have any queries about this report please contact The Responsible Financial Officer of the Council

Tel: 01303 266152 or email RFO@hythe-tc.gov.uk prior to the meeting.

