



# Borough of Oadby & Wigston

Services Committee

12<sup>th</sup> August 2008

## Uplands Park Development Plan

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive      Report Number: 6 (b)  
Author: Margaret Smith, Projects Manager

### NON-EXEMPT

This report is likely to be considered while the meeting is open to press & public

### Summary:

This report details progress against Uplands Park Development Plan and requests Members agreement to refurbish the Uplands Park Play Area using capital monies already allocated to development of the park.

### Recommendations:

- (1) That progress against the Uplands Park Development Plan is noted.
- (2) That Members agree to the request to deviate from the Play Area Replacement Programme.
- (3) That the Uplands Road Play Area is refurbished as detailed in this report using capital monies already allocated to the development of the park.

Level of delegation: Committee

Wards affected: Oadby Uplands Ward

### Comments of Statutory Officers:

Head of Paid Service: No comments

Proper Officer for Financial Affairs: Included in report

Monitoring Officer: Selection of a contractor must be in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules.

### Appendices Attached:

#### Impact Assessments:

Health: Provision of play equipment gives opportunities for healthy exercise

Environment: The park environment is being enhanced by the works undertaken

Community Safety: Opportunities for anti social behaviour have been reduced through the work to the 'Old Nursery' area and an enhanced play area may provide diversionary activities.

Human Rights: No direct impact

Equal Opportunities: The specifications for play equipment will include the needs of users with disabilities

Risk Assessment: Risk assessments are required for any works that take place and for

Commentary:

1. In September 2007, residents in the vicinity of Uplands Park were consulted on the facilities available in the park. The information obtained was used by a Landscape Architect to put together a development plan for the area.
2. In November 2007 a further questionnaire invited residents to comment on the Landscape Architects proposals. The responses enabled the proposals to be placed into an order of priority.
3. The top two residents priorities were:
  - a) to integrate the 'Old Nursery Area' into the park by removing the dilapidated concrete fence and landscaping the area and
  - b) to refurbish and extend the existing young children's play area to cater for a wider age range and provide opportunity for inclusive play.
4. A capital sum of £50,000 was allocated to tackle these two priorities in the 2008-9 financial year.
5. Work began on the 'Old Nursery' in May. The concrete fence has been removed and the undergrowth has been cleared. The area is in the process of being levelled and seeded. Residents whose properties back onto the area are concerned about their security as removal of the undergrowth has opened up gaps in the boundary hedge which is the Council's responsibility. Therefore it is intended to protect neighbouring properties by planting a hedge barrier in the autumn/winter of 2008/9. Further landscaping may be undertaken in the future but the opinion of the Projects Manager and of local residents is that the area should be left as open as possible to prevent creating an out of the way area which may encourage anti social behaviour. The total costs of works in this area are likely to be around £10,000 which includes planting of the hedge but excludes any further landscaping at this stage.
6. The play area equipment has been assessed. The majority of the equipment was installed in 1983 with some upgrades in 1996 and is suitable for an age range of 2 to 10 years. There are 10 items of equipment; 2 items do not meet the current safety standards and present entrapment hazards; these could be modified but due to their age they would be better replaced, 4 items are in fair condition and should be retained but refurbished, 4 items are extremely dated and need replacing with modern equipment. There are 9 'islands' of safety surface; 6 contain safety tiles which are in poor condition and need replacing and 3 areas are in good condition having been replaced in 2007 with 'wet pour'.
7. Further consultation has been carried out with play area users. The majority of respondents think the area is a suitable size and that an extension is not necessary. It is also clear from the consultation that users would like the area to cater for a wider age range than at present. The consultation has highlighted the following:
  - a) the equipment is not challenging enough for 9's – 13's
  - b) more challenging climbing equipment has been requested
  - c) some of the equipment is outdated
  - d) the rubber safety tiles need replacing
  - e) there is a lack of seating for parents
  - f) dogs need to be prevented from accessing the play area
8. Uplands Park Play Area currently stands at priority 10 (out of 14) in the Play Equipment Replacement Programme as reported to and agreed by Service Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008. At that meeting Members agreed that deviations from the programme be brought to Services Committee for approval.
9. Therefore this report is to request a deviation from the Play Equipment Rolling Programme in order to carry out the following work to Uplands Park play area as part of

the Uplands Park Development Plan and to fund this out of the capital money already allocated to Uplands Park less that required for the 'Old Nursery' area.

- a) Retain and refurbish existing toddler and junior swings
- b) Refurbish existing fence and install self closing gates and dog grids
- c) Remove outdated play equipment and tiled safety surfaces
- d) Replace removed equipment with new equipment for a wider age range set in wet pour surface

10. A further £75,000 has been allocated for installation of the skate facility at Uplands Park subject to the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment. Alan Saunders Associates who have experience of undertaking such assessments of skate facilities have been appointed to undertake this work and their report is awaited. Subject to a satisfactory report a contract will be drawn up with the Freestyle Skate Parks who won the tender process and the project will continue to installation stage as quickly as possible.

Background Papers referred to in compiling this report:

'Play Equipment Replacement Programme' Report to Services Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008

Minutes of Services Committee 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008.