

Report of: Executive Director City Services

To: City Executive Board

Date: 1st April 2009

Item No:

Title of Report : Oxford City Council Operational Play Policy

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek approval for the adoption of an operational Oxford City Council Play Policy

Key decision: Yes

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Antonia Bance

Report Approved by:

Executive Member: Councillor Antonia Bance

Executive Director: Tim Sadler

Legal: Lindsay Cane

Finance: Andy Collett

Policy Framework: Stronger and more inclusive communities, improve the local environment, economy and quality of life

Recommendation(s): City Executive Board is recommended to approve the adoption of an operational Play Policy for Oxford City Council

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to identify a need for Oxford City Council to adopt an operational Play Policy, detailing how play provision, play values and principles are practised within Oxford City.

1.2 By committing to a Play Policy, Oxford City Council will be able to adopt a good practice commitment to the children and young people of Oxford and provide a set of clear values and objectives that can be agreed on and may enable Oxford City Council to obtain additional external funding to achieve its goals.

2. Background

2.1 In August 2005 a Green Space Study was completed which provided an assessment of the quantity, quality, and value of all green space in Oxford including play facilities

2.2 The Oxford City Green Space Study incorporated several different assessments including

- (a) An assessment of the supply of open space through a quantitative audit.
- (b) A quality audit of sites
- (c) An assessment of value, which considers the wider role of the site within its local context, level and type of use and the wider benefits.
- (d) Evaluation of current needs for open space through consultation
- (e) An estimate of possible future demand and the establishment of a hierarchy of green space provision to meet this need.

2.3 As part of the Green Space Study it was highlighted that provision of play facilities would need to be improved and the approval for a programme of the refurbishment of play areas was approved in January 2009,

2.4 Oxford City Council has also signed up to the Greenspaces GreenSTAT project, which is a system that gives local residents the opportunity to comment on the quality of their open spaces, which include play areas

2.5 Oxford City Council Children and Young Peoples plan 2006-09 also identifies some of the challenges that children and young people in Oxford face with the rest of the county.

2.6 The Play Policy is based on the Playlink Policy, which has been adopted by various other local authorities. Playlink.org.uk

Financial Issues

3.1 By adopting a Play Policy the council will ensure that a high standard and best value will be maintained at our play areas, and help support the current refurbishment programme to be achieved within budget.

Legal Implications

4.1 This document is intended as guidance for future decision-making and reflects adopted strategies, Plans and Studies, including the Green Spaces Strategy.

Climate Change/Environmental Implications

5.1 None

Risk Management

6.1 Without a Council Play Policy there is a risk of the council not being able to secure additional external funding for play provision

Equalities Issues

7.1 There are no implications contained within the attached documents that are prejudicial against any individual or group.

Recommendations

8.1 That the City Executive Board approve the adoption of an operational Play Policy for Oxford City Council

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Background papers: None