

TITLE:	PHASE II OF THE EQUIPPED PLAY STRATEGY
TO/ON:	Executive 13th November, 2006
BY:	Nick Wiggins, Acting Head of Leisure Services
PORTFOLIO:	Strong Communities
STATUS:	Report

STRATEGIC FACTOR CHECKLIST

The Council's Corporate Management Team has confirmed that the Strategic Factor Checklist has been applied to the development of this report, and there are no key issues, over and above those set out in the body of the report, that need to be brought to Members' attention.

1. SUBJECT MATTER AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 It was recently agreed to extend the Council's Equipped Play Strategy and create new provision in five additional Wards. This report highlights the proposed locations of those play areas, and the procurement method in which they will be installed.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following a meeting of the Council's Executive on 10th July 2006 it was agreed to create additional local play areas in the Wards of:
- Burnhope
 - Burnopfield
 - Dipton
 - Tanfield
 - Ebchester & Medomsley
- 2.2 Since that meeting much work has been done to consult with Ward Members and within communities to choose the preferred locations for these play areas.
- 2.3 Members also expressed some concern over the procurement method of any new play areas, and the budget set for each location. The installation in 2004 of eight new Local Play Areas allowed for a capital budget of £30,000 per Play Area. This figure was first specified in 1998 within the original Play Strategy. Given that this was some eight years ago there was some concern of effectively getting less play equipment than originally envisaged. A figure of £40,000 was suggested, however members instructed Officers to provide the evidence to support such a figure and advise on the best method of procurement
- 2.4 Commuted Sums balances are currently £324,057 of which £60k is earmarked for financing the regional play area at Oakey Park, and £35k for replacement

gates and Allensford play equipment at (as reported to Executive in July 2006), leaving an available balance of £229,057

3. RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS/OPTIONS

3.1 Site Location

The process of choosing specific locations for the play areas required Ward Members to draw up a short list of three possible sites within each ward. Once Officers had received that list a number of investigations and consultations were carried out. They included:

- Written consultation with all adjacent properties and residents
- Risk Assessments
- Review underground services
- Investigate land ownership /status
- Access impact of community safety following installation
- Full site inspection

3.1.1 Following that process, the most suitable sites selected are as follows:

- Burnhope – Holm lea / Whitehouse Avenue
- Burnopfield – Friar’s Row
- Dipton – Adjacent to The Bute Arms
- Tanfield – New Front Street
- Medomsley – South Magdalene
- Hamsterley – Derwent Crescent

Detailed location maps are attached as **Appendix A**. All relevant Ward Members have agreed these locations.

3.2 Ebchester & Medomsley

Members will be aware that the Ward of Ebchester & Medomsley is made up of three distinct communities, namely:

- Medomsley
- Hamsterley
- Ebchester

3.2.1 Links between the three communities are poor, with no direct public transport available directly between the three villages. There is no central point, equidistant from all three that would be suitable for a play area. Ward Members, in consultation with their communities, have struggled therefore to find a single suitable location that meets the needs of all groups.

3.2.2 It is also worth noting that a similar situation arose over the location of CCTV cameras within the ward. On that occasion it was agreed by Executive not to install a camera but use the available money (£12,000 capital, plus £3,000 revenue) to fund an alternative method to reduce anti-social behaviour / diversionary activities. Wards Councillors and the communities themselves believe that providing play equipment is a valid use of that resource. Discussions with the Systems Integration Manager have confirmed that this funding is still waiting to be spent, and he agrees that this would be a suitable use of this resource.

- 3.2.3 On the assumption that this £12,000 can be added to the standard allocation for a local play area (see section 3.4), it is likely that capital in the range of £42,000 - £52,000 would be available to spend. This would provide enough equipment for two slightly smaller play areas. Members have suggested locations within Medomsley and Hamsterley for these areas. This provides for one in the valley area (also accessible by public transport from Ebchester) and one on the hill top,
- 3.2.4 Whilst two play areas within a single ward are likely to cause a revenue cost greater than a single one, as they would be smaller that cost would be less than double. An additional revenue budget of £3,000 already exists for the original CCTV project that was never delivered, which would now be used to support and maintain the second new play area. This, in addition to the revenue costs already agreed as part of Phase II, would provide adequate resources for inspection and maintenance.
- 3.2.5 Whilst this provides play equipment in the communities of Hamsterley and Medomsley, it may be possible to subsequently install a Kickabout area in Ebchester. Over the last two years we have installed a number of these across Derwentside following requests from communities or Ward Councillors. The installation costs are minimal and can be met within existing revenue budgets, and grass cutting already takes place at these location. Following such an installation, all three communities will have benefited from improved recreational facilities.

3.3 Procurement Process

- 3.3.1 Working in partnership, Leisure Services and Corporate Procurement have agreed on the proposed procurement method for these play areas, and believe it falls within the guidelines of the Corporate Procurement Strategy. The principle of stating a specific budget, rather than allowing a competition on price alone, is detailed in paragraph 3.4
- 3.3.2 The original Equipped Play Area Strategy, written in 1998, specifies specific budgets for local, regional and district play areas. The reason for doing this is that it enables better community consultation, and ultimately ownership, of the play area. A budget is set, a competitive tendering process is entered into, and the successful contractor is selected on the basis of:
- Quality of product
 - Range of Product
 - Method of Community Consultation
 - After Sales / Product Support
 - Compatibility with BS5696
 - Suitability with the Disability Discrimination Act
 - Main Contractor Installation / Subcontractor
 - Recommendation / Business References / Financial Stability
 - Proven record of delivery
 - Programme of Work

A draft Sourcing Summary Sheet is attached as Appendix B. If Members choose to recommend this method of procurement this will be further developed in collaboration

- 3.3.3 Once a successful contractor is appointed, we arrange consultation events with representative Ward Members, children and young people from each location. They are then provided with a specific budget / number of points and are allowed to choose items of play equipment as part of the group. Working with the children, Officers ensure that a balanced range of equipment is chosen, and suitable for both the relevant age group and the given location. Allowing this local choice of equipment is proven to increase community ownership and reduce ongoing damage and vandalism, and ultimately maintenance costs.
- 3.3.4 The only alternative to this method, which would enable a direct competition on the basis of cost, would be for Officers to choose specific items of equipment prior the tendering process, and the same pieces of equipment at each location. However not only does this remove the children from the selection process, each manufacturer produces very different equipment – and therefore the tenders would either be wildly different and impossible to judge against each other, or they would be non-competitive as we would need to specify exact pieces from a specific manufacturer.

3.4 Local Play Area Allocation

- 3.4.1 The existing Play Strategy specifies a budget of £30,000 per local play area. This figure was originally set in 1998, and has been used on all local play areas since that date. However, play equipment has increased in cost significantly over the last eight years, and above the general rate of inflation.
- 3.4.2 The main component of play equipment is steel, and due to increasing demand globally the cost has risen considerably. In 2005 the prices for finished steel rose 10% in just one year (source: BBC News, 18th December 2005), and more than doubled since 2003 (source: BBC News, 20th August, 2006).
- 3.4.3 Recent years has seen a considerable price increase by all significant play manufacturers. There is concern that should a budget of £30,000 per play area remain, the newer areas would effectively be getting “less play for their money”.
- 3.4.4 By way of comparison your Officers instructed HAG’s (the successful contractor from the last tender) to re-quote for two of the play areas they installed in late 2004 using their current pricing structure. Both these play areas cost £30,000 in 2004, but would now cost £39,185 and £42,094 for an installation in the next three months. A detailed breakdown is listed in Appendix C
- 3.4.5 Therefore in order to provide a similar level of play experience, Members may wish to increase the specified budget for a local play area to around £40,000.
- 3.4.6 It should be noted that these funds come from Commuted Sums. This money can only be used on play equipment and not on any other Council services. The current level of available balances within Commuted Sums stands at £227,567. This would enable the installation of four play areas at £40,000 and two areas at £26,000 (Hamsterley and Medolmsley, including the additional £12,000 CCTV funding). This still provides adequate funding to replace damaged equipment within the play areas from 2007/08 onwards (as agreed by Executive on 10th July, 2006). The Council has received £64,500 in payments from developers in this financial year (as at 5th October) and anticipates similar receipts in 2007/08.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REASONS

It is recommended that Members agree the following:

- (i) That £12,000 earmarked to provide diversionary activities and prevent anti-social behaviour in Ebchester & Medomsley be used to provide play equipment
- (ii) That officers progress the installation of new local play areas in the locations detailed in Appendix A
- (iii) That the procurement method for Phase II of the Play Strategy is continued as detailed in paragraph 3.3
- (iv) That the specified budget for Local Play Areas be £40,000, with the exception of Medomsley and Hamsterley where it will be £26,000

Reasons:

Consultation with residents and work within Strong Community Scrutiny Panel has continually requested a more balanced provision of play areas across the District. Appropriate locations have been secured in partnership with local residents. The specific need of Ebchester and Medomsley have been taken into account, which enables an appropriate use of funds identified to reduce anti-social behaviour. An appropriate procurement method has been identified which allows maximum input from communities whilst still obtaining best value. Significant increases in equipment costs over the last eight years has led to a need to increase the budgeted amount for local play area installation.

Background documents:

None

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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APPENDIX A

LOCATION MAPS



Scale
0 6 12 18 24 30 m

Derwentside Leisure Services

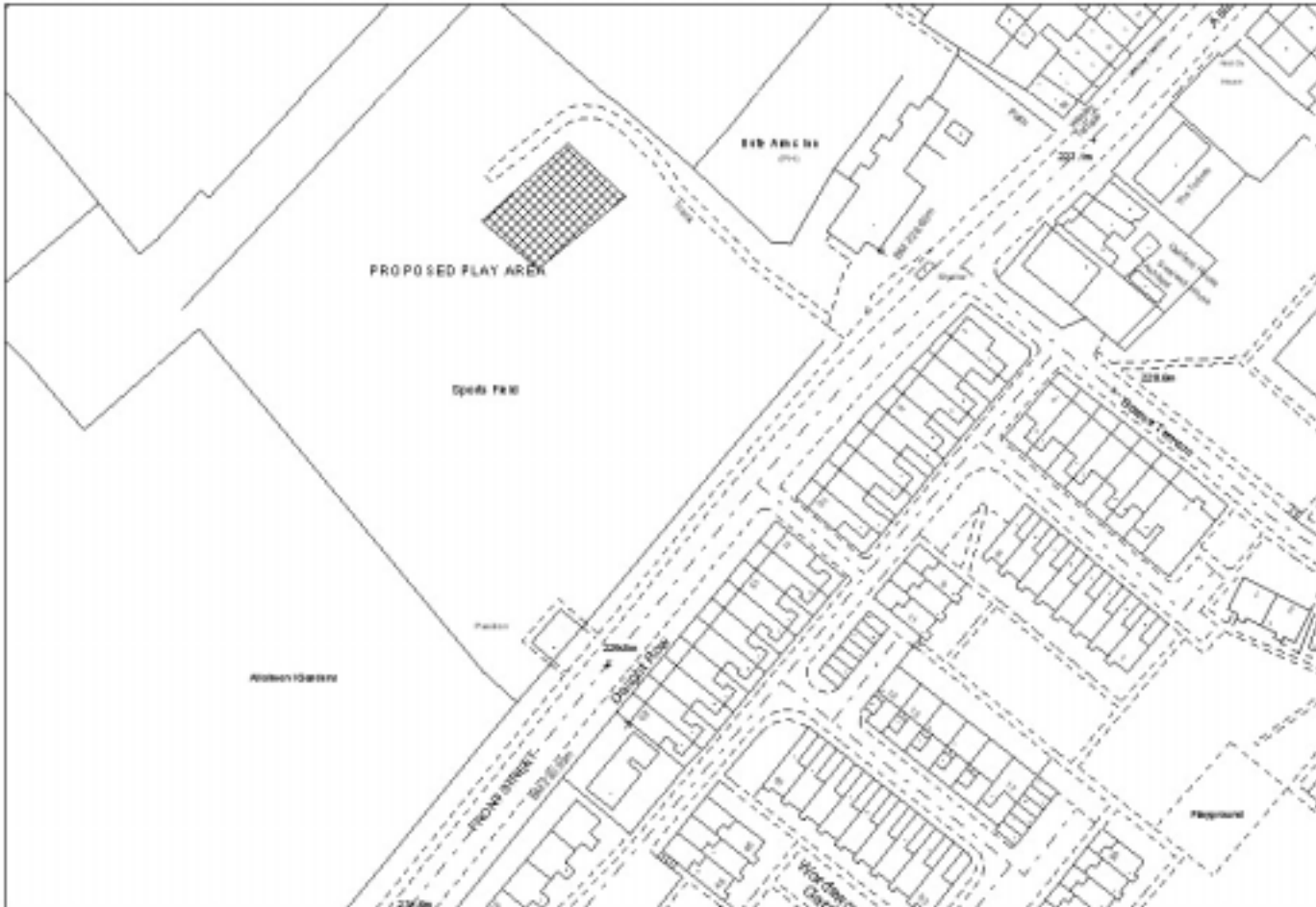
Burnhope Play Area: Proposed Location



Derwentside Leisure Services

Burnopfield Play Area: Proposed Location

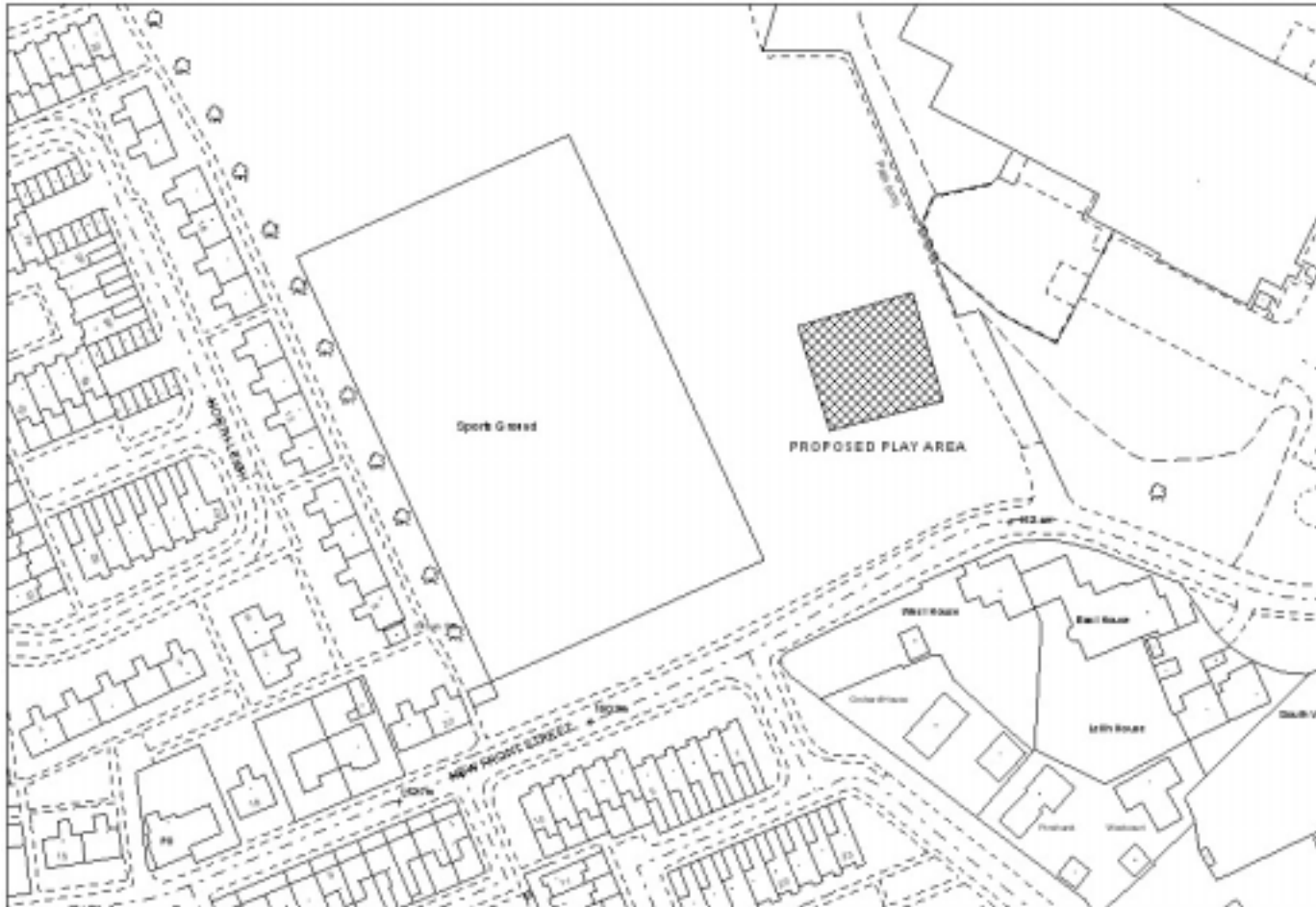
Scale
0 6 12 18 24 30 m



Scale
0 6 12 18 24 30 m

Derwentside Leisure Services

Dipton Play Area: Proposed Location



Derwentside Leisure Services

Tanfield Lea Play Area: Proposed Location

Scale
0 6 12 18 24 30 m



Scale
0 6 12 18 24 30 m

Derwentside Leisure Services


Medomsley Play Area: Proposed Location



Derwentside Leisure Services

Hamsterley Play Area: Proposed Location

Scale
0 6 12 18 24 30 m



APPENDIX B

SOURCING SUMMARY SHEET

TO FOLLOW

APPENDIX C

INDICATIVE PLAY AREA COSTINGS

(SUPPLIED BY HAGS)

05/10/2006

HP/2006/1665a/JS

Derwentside District Council
The Grove, Thornfield
Example - Update

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Part Number</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Total Install</i>
EQUIPMENT					
1	100011161	EACH	2440mm HIGH HEAVY DUTY STEEL SWING FRAME ONLY (IN GROUND FIX)	£1,146	£401
2	rt1264		CRADLE SEAT	£147	
2	rt1256-11		CHAINS1.8M LONG PER PAIR FOR CRADLE SEATS	£52	
1	121161	EACH	MAYFLOWER (DDA COMPLIANT)	£6,394	£591
1	120060	EACH	BUDDY SWING	£3,339	£981
1	150031	EACH	GREEN MULTI PONDO, PREFAB BASE	£2,098	£473
1	152372	EACH	STEEL CROW'S NEST	£2,454	£778
FURNITURE					
1	COL/H/BB	EACH	STEEL BENCH WITH BACK (GREEN OR BLACK)	£263	£126
1	057676	EACH	LITTER BIN POPPEL, GREEN	£171	£85
1		EACH	SUPPLY & INSTALL SIGN	£350	

SAFETY SURFACING

64		M2	2.5MCFH BLACK WETPOUR WITH COLOUR WEARPADS	£3,440	
107		M2	1.2MCFH BLACK WETPOUR WITH COLOUR WEARPADS	£3,745	
171	GW		Groundworks for Wetpour includes machine hire, labour, and cart spoil following excavation for required depths. Supply and lay terram membrane and 150mm depth of Type 1 stone regulated for wetpour surface. Reinstatement of areas disturbed by concrete kerb installation.		£6,283
55	CK	LIN. MTR	CONCRETE KERB EDGING		£924

FENCING

53		LN MTR	1M HIGH BOWTOP FENCING, GALVANISED & PPC GREEN	£1,789	
53		LN MTR	INSTALL FENCING	£994	
6		EACH	SUPPLY & INSTALL CORNER POSTS	£123	
2		EACH	1.2M WIDE SELF-CLOSING GATES, YELLOW	£579	
2		Each	INSTALL GATES	£250	

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

1			RYNAT SAFETY INSPECTION		£438
1			STORAGE FACILITY		£400
1			SECURITY FENCING		£450

TOTAL FOR EQUIPMENT ETC.....	£27,255
TOTAL INSTALLATION	£11,930
TOTAL PROJECT COST	£39,264

06/10/2006

HP/2006/1665b/JS

Derwentside District Council
 The Middles
 Example - Update

<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Part Number</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Total Install</i>
EQUIPMENT					
1	121161	EACH	MAYFLOWER (DDA COMPLIANT)	£6,394	£591
1	151135	EACH	BICYCLE ROUNDABOUT	£4,308	£503
1	120060	EACH	BUDDY SWING	£3,339	£981
1	152060	EACH	SKYWAY POURED FOUNDATION	£4,439	£972
1	col/h/bb	EACH	STEEL BENCH WITH BACK (GREEN OR BLACK)	£263	£126
1	057676	EACH	LITTER BIN POPPEL, GREEN	£171	£85
SAFETY SURFACING					
46		M2	2.5MCFH BLACK WETPOUR WITH COLOUR WEARPADS	£2,473	
44		M2	2.0MCFH BLACK WETPOUR WITH COLOUR WEARPADS	£2,310	
69		M2	1.2MCFH BLACK WETPOUR WITH COLOUR WEARPADS	£2,415	
159	GW		Groundworks for Wetpour includes machine hire, labour, and cart spoil following excavation for required depths. Supply and lay terram membrane and 150mm depth of Type 1 stone regulated for wetpour surface. Reinstatement of areas disturbed by concrete kerb installation.		£5,842
51	CK	LIN. MTR	CONCRETE KERB EDGING		£857

1	EACH	SUPPLY & INSTALL ENTRANCE SIGN	£350	
PATHWAY				
8	M2	TARMAC C/W GROUNDWORKS FOR PATHWAY	£680	
18	CK	LIN. MTR CONCRETE KERB EDGING		£302
FENCING				
49	LN MTR	1M HIGH BOWTOP FENCING, GALVANISED & PPC GREEN	£1,654	
49	LN MTR	INSTALL FENCING	£919	
4	EACH	SUPPLY & INSTALL CORNER POSTS	£82	
2	EACH	1.2M WIDE SELF-CLOSING GATES, YELLOW	£579	
2	EACH	INSTALL GATES	£250	
ADDITIONAL ITEMS				
1		RYNAT SAFETY INSPECTION		£438
1		STORAGE FACILITY		£400
1		SECURITY FENCING		£450
TOTAL FOR EQUIPMENT ETC.....				£30,547
TOTAL INSTALLATION				£11,548
TOTAL PROJECT COST				£42,173

NB:- SUBJECT TO FURTHER FULL SITE SURVEY.