

## Appendix 6 Options analysis and risks

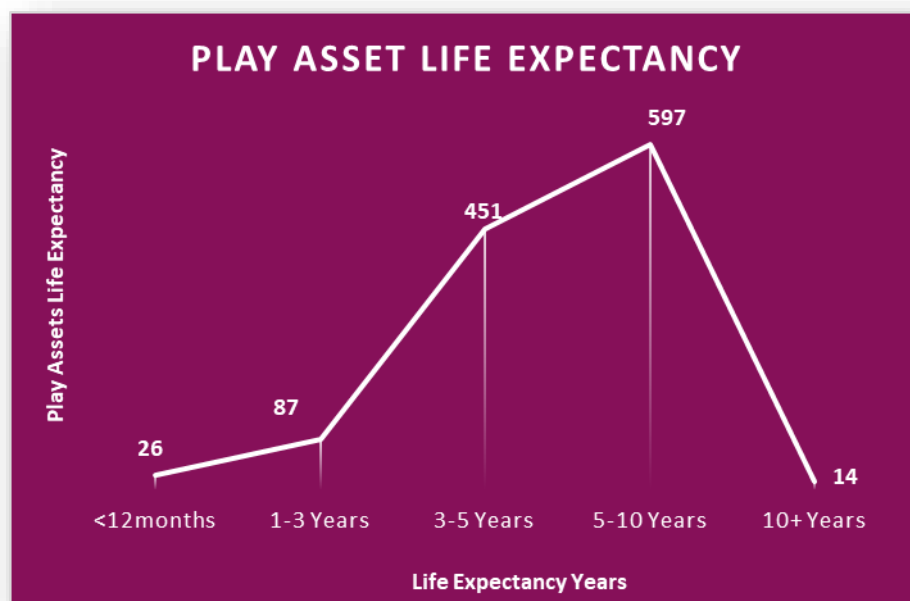
The Plan for Play has brought forward a strategic and holistic approach to addressing BCP Council's play needs for future generations. The evidence base shows a clear rate of decline and issues faced by the Council in providing a sufficient level of play provision for the current and next generation of people who have a right to play.

The following options have been brought forward for potential investment.

### Option 1: Do Nothing

The graphics below show the predicted rate of decline if investment in play spaces is not made.

By 2033 at the current rate of decline there could be as few as two functioning play areas left in BCP.



The Plan for Play provides the detail on the impact and importance of play, for health and well-being, growth and development of children and as their fundamental right to play.

Play England are seeking 'Play Sufficiency' legislation. The Plan for Play acts as a starting point for BCP on a journey to meeting our own play sufficiency needs, but that will only be met if these spaces are invested in soon.

Current revenue budgets are insufficient to maintain the rate of defects and keep equipment and sites open and are currently unable to be used under Council spending controls as a result of financial pressures.

The high cost of play area construction makes it difficult for significant fund raising to come from communities. External bids are extremely resource intensive and come with no guarantee of success in competitive arenas. These can help support infrastructure needs but are not an answer in isolation.

### **Summary:**

- Deferring any action or holding the current position will see our play areas continue to decline to an increased rate of closure.
- Not addressing defect repairs and replacing consumable pieces of equipment exacerbate the situation as it will cost more in the future to replace whole items of equipment, rather than making repairs now.

### **Option 2: Cabinet recommendation to fund the Improvement Plan**

The Plan for Play creates a phased approach considering limited access to funding.

Any significant funding will require consultation and publicity raising that should help support later phases, through community development, bidding for supportive match-funding and potential investment from business and other sources.

Decision making for phased delivery is based on the evidence base and scoring system that identifies priorities. This creates a schedule of improvements in different sites based on their location (areas of deprivations, walk times to play facilities and other local factors) alongside life expectancy of the play equipment and site audit assessments. This has been used alongside some other factors, such as weighting for destination sites and where they support commercial opportunities, to re-consider the sites to be included within each option.

The Improvement Plan list of sites to be included in each phase is indicative at this stage, pending funding and future detailed work on costings and approach to consultation.

Key elements of any delivery:

- increase quality of provision, reduce the number of spaces
- prioritise defect repairs to keep spaces open
- prioritise sites in deprived areas and according to life expectancy of the play equipment, alongside other metrics.
- significant investment in play facilities whilst making difficult decisions on some smaller spaces.

It is recognised that funding across the Council is limited, and this includes strategic CIL funds, with £3.411m available in November 2024.

To provide options for consideration and to reflect the available funding, the following sub-options have been brought forward.

**Option 2a. £548,047 existing allocations for investment (No CIL)**

- 4 sites improved
- Use existing reserves, developer contributions and funding in ring-fenced budgets. These budgets are identified and allocated to these sites only, so wider prioritisation is not possible. All funds to be used on these sites.
- Staff resourcing to be funded specifically from these schemes
- Deliver works in specific places:

Site	Fund	£	Note
Kings Park	Income for green space improvements	150,000	Ashley road play area improvements. The Improvement Plan identifies £200k of funding required.
Hamworthy park	Developer contributions / beach hut income	100,000	The Improvement Plan identifies £210k of funding required.
Alexandra Park	Developer contributions	43,047	The Improvement Plan identifies £100k of funding required.
Baiter Skate Park	Neighbourhood CIL	100,000	Needs additional funds on top of this to rebuild the skate park, including external grants.

- The remaining £155,000 will be used to add to the above allocations to maximise the improvements and benefits in these play spaces only.
- Public consultation limited to those sites in scope.

**Option 2b. c. £1m investment, £500,000 from CIL, £548,047 existing allocations (2a).**

- All sites defect repairs.
- 4 sites improved using legacy funds (2a).
- Focus on making immediate defect repairs to replace consumable parts, make surfacing repairs and get as many existing pieces of equipment as possible operational again. This keeps as many play areas as possible open and in improved condition.
- Additional funding to support the delivery of improvements in option 2a above.
- Public consultation limited to those sites in scope in 2a.
- Staff resourcing to be funded from total project budget
- 1 year of delivery

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>£</b>	
Defect repairs	171	350,000	Based on £2,000 per site, averaged across all sites. Prioritised to keep as many play facilities operational as possible in the short term. Eg swing chains, swing seats, bearings, surfacing patching.
Refurbishment	Contribute to sites identified in 2a	100,000	Enables full delivery against these sites.
Replacement	0		
New	0		
Repurposing	0		
Sites in option 2a		548,047	
Resourcing	1 sum	50,000	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,048,047</b>	

**Option 2c. c. £2m investment, £1.5m from CIL, £548,047 existing allocations (2a).**

- 8 sites full replacement
- Significant funding of this level will enable works across all sites for essential defect repairs and 4 sites for full replacement, plus those listed in 2a.
- Deliver spend in ring-fenced budgets (2a).
- Wider public consultation to consider locations of play spaces, investment and proposals.
- Seek to repurpose sites linked to replacements and where required to reduce revenue budget pressures.
- Staff resourcing included below.
- 1 year - 18 months of delivery.

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Defect repairs	Sites most in need of defect repair.	100,000	Averaged across as many sites as possible and prioritised to keep as many play facilities operational as possible in the short term. Eg swing chains, swing seats, bearings, surfacing patching.
Refurbishment	As in 2a, 4 sites.	200,000	Add to options in 2a to increase existing allocations
Replacement	4	950,000	
New	0		
Repurposing	5	100,000	
Sites in option 2a		548,047	
Resourcing	1 Sum	150,000	
<b>Total</b>		<b>£2,048m.</b>	

**Option 2d. c. £3.9m investment - using 100% of available CIL, and £548,047 existing allocations (2a).**

**Option being recommended in the BCP Cabinet report, 10 December 2024.**

- 18 sites refurbished/replaced, 1 new.
- Defect repairs across 75 sites.
- Remedies immediate defect repairs.
- Requires significant public consultation on decisions to be made on individual sites, design of new facilities etc.
- Staff resourcing to be funded from total project budget.
- 2 years of delivery.

<b>Type of work</b>	<b>Sites</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Defect repairs	75 sites	270,000	Lower number of defects as more sites improved.
Refurbishment	10	1,540,000	
Replacement	7	1,450,000	
New	1	200,000	
Repurposing	11	160,000	
Review	3	50,000	Dependent on decision on future use of the site
Resourcing	1 sum	200,000	
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,870,000</b>	

### **Option 3: Allocate funding for additional phases**

Should additional funding become available there is the option for Council to commit to the later phases of the Improvement plan. This would:

- provide certainty to the users and local communities that spaces will be protected and enhanced in the future.
- set a clear programme of investment and work planning
- create economies of scale in the work to seek suppliers and take any investment through to construction and opening.

## Plan for Play - Risks log

Risk	Severity	Likelihood	Risk Impact and mitigation
<b>Financial - revenue</b>			
<p>The Plan for Play illustrates the significant level of capital funding required for investment in play spaces.</p> <p>The Council's financial pressures and spending controls have impacted upon the level of maintenance and care of play equipment, alongside all public realm assets, from revenue budgets. This compounds many years with a lack of investment and funding in facilities.</p>	<p>Major risk to play areas and the impact on users from lack of basic repairs and decline in numbers of equipment.</p> <p>Increase in ASB from poor quality sites, reduced usage and lack of supervision.</p>	<p>Very likely that decline continues because revenue funding is currently unavailable. Immediate repairs are unable to take place.</p>	<p>High impact from a lack of funding.</p> <p>Reducing numbers of pieces of equipment and whole site closures over the next few years.</p>
<b>Financial - capital</b>			
<p>Capital funds are also limited, and this places an importance on their careful allocation and prioritisation for sites that need intervention the most.</p> <p>The options above outline the impact and scale of sites that can be improved from scales of funding.</p>	<p>Major risk to play areas and the impact on users from declining play spaces and access to equipment.</p> <p>Increase in ASB from poor quality sites, reduced usage and lack of supervision.</p>	<p>Very likely that not all play needs will be able to be funded by capital or other sources.</p>	<p>High impact from a lack of funding.</p> <p>Reducing numbers of pieces of equipment and whole site closures over the next few years.</p>
<b>Legal</b>			
<p>Land ownership issues related to play spaces.</p> <p>Most sites are within BCP ownership, some are either unclear or not owned.</p> <p>Any sites being repurposed for other uses need to have detail land registry and title checks before proceeding towards disposal of open space, or other decisions.</p>	<p>Moderate risk, can be verified and checked.</p>	<p>Possible.</p> <p>Site ownership is identified from GIS and known information.</p> <p>Detail</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Engage estates and legal services on any decisions.</p>

There is a legal requirement to consult on the closure or a reduction of a service, which is relevant with the potential closure of several play spaces within the 32 identified for consolidation/repurposing.	Moderate risk through public consultation.	Possible, depending on opinions on individual sites and their use.	Medium risk to be managed through the consultation and project delivery.
<b>Reputation</b>			
Investing multi-millions into new play spaces is high profile good news. However, the reduction in overall number of play spaces will likely be contentious and create negative publicity.	Moderate	Possible, balance between how many new sites and how they are viewed against any reductions.	Medium risk to be managed through the consultation and project delivery. Project website to be hub for communications alongside Engagement HQ.
<b>Time / resourcing</b>			
Dependant on the option and level of funding made available. Resourcing shall be built in to any model of delivery and will be proportionate to the scale and pace of works required.	Minor	Not likely	Mitigated through programme planning.
<b>Decision making</b>			
Steering group to be set up to coordinate delivery, consultation and budget management. Internal group to manage budgets, political process and key Council decision making External group to include stakeholders, inclusion and access specialists and key partners.	Negligible, presence of groups adds robustness to the decision-making process, inclusion and governance.	Not Likely	Groups support mitigation of the above factors.



Risk matrix criteria

Severity	×	Likelihood	=	Risk impact
Negligible		Very likely		Low
Minor		Probable		Medium
Moderate		Possible		High
Major		Not likely		
Catastrophic		Very unlikely		