

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Audit
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	25 September 2013
<b>Subject:</b>	Update on Playground Inspections Audit
<b>Report of:</b>	Simon Dix, Financial Services Group Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor A L Keyte
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	None

## **Executive Summary:**

This report is to update Members of the implementation of a playground management and inspection scheme. The implementation of the scheme is to address concerns raised by the 2012/13 audit report. Officers have opted to where practically possible to introduce procedures based upon the BS EN 1176:2008 management of play equipment guidelines and this report outlines progress to date and work streams for the future.

## **Recommendation:**

**To CONSIDER the update on the implementation of a playground management and inspection scheme.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

The report outlines the response made by Officers in relation to the concerns raised by Internal Audit.

## **Resource Implications:**

The identified work programme can be met from existing resources.

## **Legal Implications:**

None

## **Risk Management Implications:**

The implementation of the scheme reduces the risk of litigation within Tewkesbury Borough Council owned playgrounds

## **Performance Management Follow-up:**

A documented inspection routine and maintenance programme has now been agreed and will provide essential ongoing management information in order to provide an ongoing quality service to the public.

## **Environmental Implications:**

The programme established by Officers will ensure that the Council's playground offering is of a good standard providing a clean and safe environment for users.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** An internal audit of Tewkesbury Borough Council playgrounds was completed reviewing ownership, risk assessments, inspections, defects recording, maintenance programming and prompt repairs.
- 1.2** Following the audit report and recommendations, a number of work streams were developed to ensure the authority meets its 'duty of care' to provide safe play equipment with a robust maintenance, inspection and repair programme. This programme was developed by the Asset Manager as part of the re-assignment of responsibilities in the new management structure.
- 1.3** BS EN 1176:2008 the European standard for play equipment is considered best practice within the industry. Officers have introduced a number of work streams to ensure the Council, where practically possible, adhere to this guidance.

### **2.0 WORK PROGRAMME FOLLOWING AUDIT**

- 2.1** Playsafe was appointed to complete the annual inspection of the playgrounds and this was completed in March 2013. In a majority of cases all defects were minor and a work programme was implemented to complete or monitor the findings. All items that were judged to be high risk have been completed.
- 2.2** Ownership of the playgrounds was reviewed and subsequently the following changes have been made:
- two playgrounds in the Wheatpieces have now been formally adopted;
  - the Finches is now part of the inspection programme; and
  - the Tudor Mead playground is under licence to Churchdown Parish and will be included in the annual inspection scheme.
- 2.3** Following a visit to all sites and in line with BS EN 1176:2008 risk assessments have been completed to establish the frequency of visits based upon location, repair history and the risk of injury from the equipment on site. This has reduced the number of inspections in a majority of sites to one inspection per week therefore reducing resources required for inspections.
- 2.4** A service level agreement has been developed and agreed between Property Services and Environmental Health to provide the weekly and quarterly routine and operational inspections. 12 Officers from Environmental Health and Property Services have completed the relevant qualifications to carry out the routine inspections and in October will have completed the operational inspection training. Property Services will be procuring the annual independent inspections to ensure best value. Possible savings may be realised as the Council's insurers will no longer be required to complete similar inspections.

**2.5** The inspection programme and risk assessment process categorises repairs from very low risk to high requiring immediate attention. This therefore gives clear work programmes, objectives and timescales for the Property team to provide safe play equipment. Current work streams are to develop a robust repair programme to meet with the current and future demands of the playgrounds. The costs of this programme are likely to be met from current budget allocations.

**2.6** In addition to the weekly inspections and operational inspections, a maintenance programme of grass cutting and litter picking is in place. Frequency of these visits is adapted with seasonal issues and changes i.e. school holidays and increased usage. The weekly inspections are reviewed periodically to ascertain any change in trends and to insure the maintenance schedule meets with the service delivery.

**2.7** A playground file has been introduced and a monitoring and a review programme is currently being set up to ensure all playgrounds continue to be maintained in line with the BS EN 1176:2008.

### **3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**3.1** None.

### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

**4.1** All service areas directly involved with the service provision were consulted along with advice being sought from the industry regulators.

### **5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**5.1** None

### **6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**6.1** None

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

**7.1** Ongoing training for staff to ensure inspection routine is maintained.

### **8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

**8.1** None

### **9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

**9.1** None

**10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

**10.1** None

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**Background Papers:** None

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**Appendices:** None