

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT OF: Director of Environment

TO: East Area Committee

6/6/2013

WARDS: Abbey, Coleridge, Petersfield and Romsey

**DEVOLVED DECISION-MAKING AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS:  
PROGRESS ON EAST AREA PRIORITY PROJECTS**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Area committees now have devolved decision-making powers over how certain types of developer (S106) contributions are used. In the East Area, residents and community groups were consulted at a workshop last September on local needs and ideas for new/improved local facilities to help address the impact of development.

1.2 The first priority-setting round was focussed on project ideas that were eligible for developer contributions and could be delivered by March 2014. Last November's East Area Committee identified three priority projects in Abbey ward in the first round. These are:

- ▶ Increase biodiversity at Stourbridge Common
- ▶ Install adult gym equipment next to Ditton Fields play area.
- ▶ Improve access to Abbey paddling pools from Coldham's Common

In line with a commitment to give a progress report to each area committee, Section 3 provides an update on the steps being taken to develop and deliver these priority projects by March 2014.

1.3 Although the East Area workshop generated a number of ideas for improving local play areas, the Area Committee was not in a position to consider prioritising any of these for short-term delivery as there were not enough devolved 'provision for children and teenagers' developer contributions available (around £22,500) at that time.

1.4 The Area Committee's concerns were highlighted last January in a report to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on options for the use of city-wide developer contributions (see section 6). As a result, supplementary funding for play area improvements has been made available. The Area Committee now has an opportunity to identify a fourth priority from the first round.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the steps being taken to deliver the East Area Committee's current first round priority projects (to be funded by devolved developer contributions) and the progress of other on-going projects.
- 2.2 To identify a play area improvement in the East area as a fourth priority project from the first round of devolved decision-making.

## 3. UPDATE

- 3.1 All three projects are moving forward for delivery before the March 2014 project delivery target. The planned milestones for the current three East Area priority projects are as follows:

Description	Budget	Consult	Project Appraisal	Start work
Increase biodiversity at Stourbridge Common	£15k	July 2013	Not applicable	Oct/Nov 2013
Install adult gym equipment / trim trail next to Ditton Fields play area	£30k	June 2013	July 2013	August 2013
Improve access to Abbey paddling pools from Coldham's Common	£10k	August 2013	Not applicable	October 2013

- 3.2 Given the current estimated costs of the biodiversity and access improvement projects, these would be below the threshold for carrying out detailed project appraisals. If the local consultations on the project proposals highlighted a desire for larger schemes, however, project appraisals may be necessary: in any event, this should not unduly affect delivery timescales.
- 3.3 The consultation on the adult gym equipment will be launched at the East Area Committee: it will take the form of an online survey which local residents will be able to complete in the coming weeks. More details on this and other consultations will be publicised via the Developer Contributions web page ([www.cambridge.gov.uk/s106](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/s106)).
  - a. Residents neighbouring the proposed projects and local councillors will be contacted. Area workshop participants and local community groups will also be notified of the consultations by email (where up-to-date addresses are known).
  - b. As well as the online survey, there will be a leaflet drop for residents neighbouring the play area, offering to send paper copies of the survey by post (on request).

- c. Staff also plan to spend a few hours at the play area on a weekday afternoon and at a weekend in order to make people who use the play area aware of the proposals and the consultation.
- 3.4 The delivery of the East Area Committee's first round priority projects needs to be placed in the wider context of other project delivery.
- a. Between them, the area committee have identified 14 priority projects (over £550,000 in total) in the first round.
  - b. The Executive Councillors last January approved ten strategic priority projects, amounting to over £900,000 of city-wide developer contributions in total. Alongside the supplementary funding for play area improvements in the East Area, the priorities include the refurbishment of the Cherry Trees Centre in Petersfield ward, which is under way and is due to be completed this summer.
  - c. In addition, over 20 on-going projects funded from developer contributions, which were approved prior to (or alongside) devolved decision-making, are also being delivered. There are a dozen or so such projects in East Area, including those funded from the East Area (community facilities) Grants Programme.
    - The Peverel Road play area improvements (Abbey), the King's Church community centre development (Petersfield) ward and phase 1 of the St Martin's Church centre (Coleridge) have already been completed (see photos in the Appendix).
    - The completion of improvements to the Petersfield and Flower Street play areas are expected by the end of June.
    - Other local projects are due to be delivered between September 2013 and March 2014. These include: Stanesfield Road scout hut, Abbey Pool (Coldham's Common) play area facilities; Abbey padding pool water play, improvements to Coleridge Recreation Ground; Coleridge paddling pool water play; Flamsteed Road scout hut; Mill Road Cemetery public art and phase 1b of St Martin's Church centre.
  - d. Beyond the delivery of developer contribution-funded schemes, the work involved in implementing other projects (eg, from the Environmental Improvement Programme) is also worth noting.

There will be an oral update from officers at the committee meeting.

- 3.5 The report to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee last January clarified that decisions on a second round of project priorities under devolved decision-making would take place in the second half of 2013. The proposed process and timetable will be reported to the

Environment Scrutiny Committee on 11 June 2013. It is envisaged that this would draw on project ideas not prioritised in the first round and enable area committees to consider longer-term project ideas.

#### 4. PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

4.1 **Background:** Last January, the Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places agreed to make available to the East Area at least £35,000 of city-wide developer contributions funding for provision for children and teenagers.

- a. The actual figure for this supplement is more like £42,500. This is in addition to the £35,000 or so already now in the East Area's devolved fund for play area improvements. This means that there is around £67,500 of provision for children and teenagers contributions available to East Area overall.
- b. Members may also wish to note that, as at late May 2013, there are around £200,000 of informal open space contributions in the East Area Committee's devolved fund.

4.2 **Process:** The East Area Committee is invited to identify one priority project to provide new equipment at a play area as a fourth priority from the first prioritisation round. This is consistent with the advice given to the North Area Committee, which has also received supplementary funding and has been asked to set a play area priority. Throughout the first round process, officers have sought to take a fair approach where each area committee has been asked to identify as many project priorities as there are wards in the area. This is important in order to ensure that officers can deliver projects within the staffing capacity available.

4.3 Please note also that:

- a. developer contributions can only be used to fund new equipment - not maintenance, which is dealt with through a separate budget;
- b. the latest estimates are that new equipment for a play area could cost between £35,000 and £85,000 (including installation and landscaping) depending on the amount required and the level of work needed to upgrade the play area from its current standard - the Area Committee may wish to consider using some of its devolved informal open space contributions for the landscaping work, as appropriate;
- c. a scheme costing £35,000 for children under 7 years old could provide: two cradle swings; a mini-roundabout; a play-themed climbing frame (say, in the shape of a tractor or fire engine); a platform and slide; safety surfacing and fencing).

- 4.4 Once the Area Committee has identified its new priority project, officers will work up and consult on specific proposals, identify detailed costs, carry out a project appraisal (for approval) and go out to tender for a contractor to undertake the work (with an autumn 2014 target date).
- 4.5 As mentioned in paragraph 3.5 above, there will be further opportunity for the East Area Committee to consider its next set of priority projects for delivery (from across the range of developer contribution types covered by devolved decision-making) in the second round later this year. If there was sufficient funding in the provision for children and teenagers category (taking account of any funding remaining after the first round priority and any further developer contributions received in the meantime), the Area Committee could prioritise another play area improvement then.
- 4.6 **Options:** The East Area workshop last October set out ideas for improving a number of existing local play areas. These are presented in the table under their official names (some of which differ from the way they were described at the area workshop). Photographs of these play areas will be made available at the meeting.
- The table includes an A-E 'play value' rating for each play area listed, based on Play England criteria and drawing on an analysis compiled for the Council's Parks Strategy 2010. This is an assessment of the amount and sophistication of the play equipment (where 'A' is the highest and 'E' is the lowest).
  - Officers have also provided an estimate of the likely costs of the provision and installation of new play equipment by a contractor at each of the play areas listed below.

Play area	Where	Ward	Play value	Likely cost
Ditton Fields	Rear of 24/26 Ditton Fields, off Newmarket Road	Abbey	C	£70k-£85k
Dudley Road	Dudley Road, off Wadloes Road	Abbey	C	£60k-£75k
St Thomas' Square	Rear of No 8 St. Thomas's Square-off Birdwood Road	Coleridge	D	£35k-£50k
Bath House	Behind Bath House, Mill Road	Petersfield	D	£35k-£50k
Coldham's Lane	By 115 Coldham's Lane, off Newmarket Road	Romsey	C	£60k-£75k

- c. The list does not include suggested improvements to the Coldham's Common (ie, Abbey Pool) play area because this developer contributions-funded project is already being taken forward by March 2014 (see paragraph 3.4c). The Brooks Road play area in Romsey ward is not included either because it is being refurbished using repairs & renewals funding and is due to be completed this summer.
- d. Whilst the play areas suggested for improvement are rated 'C' and 'D', the East Area does also have play areas with an 'A' rating (Fison Road play area in Abbey ward) and a 'B' rating (eg, the play areas at St Matthew's Piece in Petersfield and Romsey Recreation Ground. In addition, as mentioned in paragraph 3.4, five other play areas are in the process of being improved.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The specific implications of particular priority projects will be carried out at the project appraisal stage.
- 5.2 The issue of insufficient devolved contributions for provision for children and teenagers for the North and East Area Committees was identified in the updated overview Equality Impact Assessment for devolved decision-making and developer contributions in January 2013. This was addressed in decisions made by the Executive Councillor later that month.

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following papers on devolved decision-making and developer contributions were used in the preparation of this report.

- Report to East Area Committee, 29/11/2012
- Report to North Area Committee, 16/5/2013
- Report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee, 17/1/13

This and other background information can be found on the Council's Developer Contributions web page ([www.cambridge.gov.uk/S106](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/S106)).

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report, please contact:

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## Photographs of recently completed projects in East Area

**Peverel Road play area** (Abbey ward)  
Developer contribution funding: £90,000

Construction works included the removal of the existing play area and the installation of a new play area to cater for all age groups. Works also included the laying of colour surfacing to enhance the design. The new play area was opened on 17 May 2013. The new design includes an aircraft theme and is based on local history of the area, with the main reference being the local Marshall's airfield situated to the east.

BEFORE



AFTER



**King's Church Community Centre** (Petersfield ward)  
Developer contribution funding: £100,000

A grant from the East Area Grants Programme was awarded to King's Church for the development of the existing chapel so that 3 community rooms and a cafe area could be added to the facility. This entailed: the removal of a false ceiling; partition and construction of a mezzanine floor along with partition walls to new community rooms; the installation of a lift

for disabled access to the worship area and installation of new energy efficient heating system. The Council's contribution to the project was completed in December 2012.



**St Martin's Church centre: phase 1** (Coleridge ward)  
Developer contribution funding: £120,000

A grant from the East Area Grants Programme was awarded to St Martin's Church for the phase 1 renovation and improvement of the existing community room. This has entailed: replacing and insulating the flooring; insulating the walls; replacing windows and heating systems; improving lighting and acoustics; improving access with a new external doorway; and creating a separate storage room.

Phase 1 is part of the on-going development project. Grant-funding has also been provided from the East Area Grants Programme for phase 1b. Whilst the photographs below show a work in progress, the project co-ordinator from the church centre has highlighted how the new facilities are already being used and enjoyed by youth and community groups.

