

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 1 March 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Adoption of EDDC Play Strategy, Town and Parish Council criteria to access EDDC capital funding

Report summary:

This report introduces the updated Play Strategy to be adopted by the council. It also outlines the fairer play provision for Town and Parish Councils, enabling them to bid into the Council's capital budget for up to 25% of the project total with conditions.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. Agree to adopt EDDC Play Strategy 2022-2032 for the reasons set out in the full report.
2. The section on fairer play provision for Town and Parish Councils is noted, which will allow community groups to bid into the Council's capital budget for up to 25% of the project total, if the budget is available and the stated criteria in Section 4 is met.

Reason for recommendation:

Completion and adopting of EDDC's updated play strategy is in line with the Service Plan Play strategy will help guide EDDC and public on direction for play provision for the next time period.

Allows a mechanism for Town and Parish council's to bid for additional funding towards projects in their community, providing access to fairer play provision, but acknowledging that the current model for new play sites in housing development being maintained by a management company with an estate charge does lead to a two tier system between adopted EDDC sites and new sites. The strategy intends to investigate ways to improve this position during its life.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets

- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

[EDDC Play Strategy 2022 - 2032](#)

[Appendix A](#) East Devon District Council is the right level of Government to own and maintain exciting play space – supporting information;

[Appendix B](#) Working in harmony with OSS and GSP strategies

[Appendix C](#) Existing Play Provision

[Appendix D](#) Capital Forecast and life expectancy

[Appendix E](#) Inspection frequency

[Appendix F](#) Inspection information and RoSPA guidance

[Appendix G](#) Risks, hazards, and safety in play

[Appendix H](#) Economic value of play space – Financial benefits to East Devon

[Appendix I](#) Action Plan

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Report in full

1. Adoption of EDDC's Play Strategy:

1.1. Introduction

The EDDC Play Strategy is an essential strategy document to help plan for the council's future play provision, guiding its approach and linking in to national policies. The Play Strategy will highlight the council's priorities regarding play and how future provision will be both inviting and exciting for our residents and tourists, but also reduce carbon footprint. It highlights the importance of play in young people's development, and how the district level is the most suitable level of government to deliver play provision, working with others through consultation to design and maintain these spaces. Crucially the strategy sets a level of provision to be provided across our play sites, whether general fund or HRA, along with a commitment to fund their ongoing provision.

1.2. The aims of the Play Strategy are to:

- 1.2.1. Demonstrate how play provision contributes towards the Council Plan and benefits the health and wellbeing of our communities.
 - 1.2.2. Reduce the carbon footprint of installing and maintaining play provision, and in turn reduce the carbon footprint of users.
 - 1.2.3. Demonstrate why EDDC is the right level of Government to own and maintain exciting play space within a town setting.
 - 1.2.4. Identify where EDDC will and won't be responsible for play provision.
 - 1.2.5. Set out clear guidance for the type of facility we will aim to deliver, that meets our vision.
 - 1.2.6. Work in harmony with GSP and OSS strategic documents.
 - 1.2.7. Explain our existing play provision and how we ensure access for all.
 - 1.2.8. Resources required to maintain the existing level of provision.
 - 1.2.9. Demonstrate the economic value of play space
 - 1.2.10. Provide an action plan to implement the strategy.
- 1.3. We want East Devon's outstanding environment to work for everyone. A big part of this is ensuring we provide outstanding play facilities, which offer our children and young people life enhancing daily experiences that positively impact their health and wellbeing across land we have responsibility for as well as setting standards that other landowners, such as Town and Parish Councils and community groups, can use as guidance.
- 1.4. Play is such an important fundamental that should be easily available to all children and young people, including those with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds. We aim to ensure children and young people can access good quality play opportunities in a range of settings which offer variety, adventure and challenge. They should be able to play freely and safely while learning to manage risk, with play spaces offering a range of features of a good quality, that are well maintained, modern, fit for purpose and regularly reviewed.
- 1.5. One key deliverable is to provide a flagship play area within each of our towns. The site could be themed, bespoke or tailored to the town and will be a stand out attraction for the local community and visitors alike. The recently completed play parks in Exmouth are renowned by residents and tourists alike for their destination appeal.
- 1.6. We will also deliver provision outside of our pre-existing sites known as 'play along the way' and 'sensory play' including tactile surfacing which provides additional value to those with visual impairments. Details of these key deliverables can be found in Section 2 of the Strategy.
- 1.7. We are committed to delivering the Government's Fair Play aims, which have been tailored to form the following Policy Statements:
- 1.7.1. Policy Statement 1: In every urban residential area, there is a variety of places for unsupervised play which is free to use.
 - 1.7.2. Policy Statement 2: Local neighbourhoods are, and feel like safe, interesting places to play.
 - 1.7.3. Policy Statement 3: Children, young people and their families take an active role in the development of local play spaces.
 - 1.7.4. Policy Statement 4: Play places are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people, including disabled children.
 - 1.7.5. Policy Statement 5: Routes to children's play spaces are safe and accessible for all children and young people

- 1.8. Evidence of our commitment to the Government's Fair Play strategy are highlighted by the above Policy Statements throughout the Play Strategy.
- 1.9. Children and young people have suffered immensely during the global pandemic with multiple lockdowns affecting their physical development, mental well-being and social interaction. The Play Strategy is vitally important to help alleviate these issues and ensure the next generation has the opportunity to access high quality play provision across the District.
- 1.10. An important section of the strategy discusses how we will reduce carbon emissions when procuring play equipment. We will ensure that all new play procurement takes account of this and strives to actively reduce carbon; pursuing natural or low carbon alternatives when sourcing new equipment and surfacing, in maintenance of existing provision and minimising the carbon footprint of the Play Inspector through the use of electric vehicles and equipment.
- 1.11. Another carbon reducing initiative is to modify the tendering process and encourage suppliers to source materials from the UK and demonstrate how their manufacturing process contributes towards carbon reduction. This will enable continuation of this service whilst minimising our carbon footprint. Weighted quality questions will be used to ask suppliers to detail where and how their products are manufactured and how carbon will be minimised. Suppliers who can evidence how they minimise carbon emissions will score more favourably during the evaluation process which will increase the likelihood of them being the Council's preferred supplier.
- 1.12. Forward plan of capital investment in EDDC sites:

Play Park Name	Community	Residual Life estimate	Capital bid Money allocated
H07 - Millwey Rise Play Area	Axminster	2022-2024	Yes
H15 - Glebe Close	Upton Pyne	2022-2024	
S19 - Maer Play Trail	Exmouth	2022-2024	
S21 - Jerrards Close	Honiton	2022-2024	Yes
S31 - Butts Close	Honiton	2022-2024	Yes
S45 - Greenway Lane	Budleigh Salterton	2022-2024	Yes
H05 - Charles Road	Honiton	2022-2024	
H06 - Phillip Square	Honiton	2022-2024	
H10 - Higher Brook Meadow	Sidford	2022-2024	
S09 - Liverton Copse	Exmouth	2022-2024	Yes
S29 - Pale Gate Close	Honiton	2022-2024	Yes
S43 - Lime Kiln - Play Area	Budleigh Salterton	2022-2024	Yes
S47 - Bakers Close	Sidmouth	2022-2024	Yes
S54 - The Crescent	Exmouth	2022-2024	Yes
S57 - Jubilee	Beer	2022-2024	Yes
G2 - Land of Canaan	Ottery St Mary	2022-2024	Yes
S26 - Whitebridges	Honiton	2022-2024	Yes
S46 - Norman Crescent	Budleigh Salterton	2022-2024	Yes
S53 - Littleham Village Hall	Exmouth	2022-2024	Yes
H01 - Heath Park, St Leonards	Honiton	2024-2027	
H03 - Joslin Road	Honiton	2024-2027	
H04 - Middle Park	Honiton	2024-2027	
H11 - Turner Close - Newton Pophelford	Newton Pophelford	2024-2027	
H12 - Underleys	Beer	2024-2027	

H13 - Foretown	Clyst St Lawrence	2024-2027	
H14 - Park Close	Clyst Hydon	2024-2027	
S02 - King George's Field	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S03 - Phear Park	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S07 - Durham Close	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S12 - Ivydale	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S13 - Lady Byron	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S15 - Thomas Close	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S16 - Whitman Close	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S18 - Keats Close	Exmouth	2024-2027	
S34 - Willow Walk	Honiton	2024-2027	
S35 - Dove Close	Honiton	2024-2027	
S37 - North Street Allotment	Axminster	2024-2027	
S59 - Slewton Crescent	Whimple	2024-2027	
G3 - Phear Park	Exmouth	2024-2027	
G4 - Sunken Gardens	Exmouth	2024-2027	
G5 - The Green - Fitness	Budleigh Salterton	2024-2027	
G6 - Lime Kiln - Fitness	Budleigh Salterton	2024-2027	
G7 - Jubilee Gardens	Beer	2024-2027	
S55 - The Crescent MUGA	Exmouth	2027-2028	
S08 - Truro Drive	Exmouth	2027-2028	
S14 - Byron Way	Exmouth	2027-2028	
S22 - Allhallows	Honiton	2027-2028	
S28 - Woodman's Park	Honiton	2027-2028	
S30 - Heron Road	Honiton	2027-2028	
S33 - Upland Chase	Honiton	2027-2028	
S36 - Bonners Glen	Axminster	2027-2028	
S50 - Land of Canaan	Ottery St Mary	2027-2028	
S01 - Imperial Recreation Ground	Exmouth	2027-2030	
S06 - Cheriswood Avenue	Exmouth	2030-2034	
S17 - Betje man Drive	Exmouth	2030-2034	
S58 - The Signals	Feniton	2030-2034	
H02 - Langford Avenue	Honiton	2030-2034	
S52 - Ottery St Mary MUGA	Ottery St Mary	2030-2034	
S04 - Phear Park Skateboard Park	Exmouth	Recent Replacement	
S23 - Allhallows Skateboard Park	Honiton	Recent Replacement	
S10 - Redgates	Exmouth	Recent Replacement	
S25 - Old Elm Road/ Cherry Tree Close	Honiton	Recent Replacement	
S39 - Foxhill	Axminster	Recent Replacement	
S40 - Seafeld Gardens	Seaton	Recent Replacement	
S41 - Seaton Skateboard Park	Seaton	Recent Replacement	
S44 - Lime Kiln - Skatepark	Budleigh Salterton	Recent Replacement	
H08 - Loretto Road	Axminster	Recent Replacement	
H09 - Furzehill	Sidbury	Recent Replacement	
S05 - Brixington Lane	Exmouth	Recent Replacement	
S11 - St Malo	Exmouth	Recent Replacement	
S20 - Davey's Playing Field	Honiton	Recent Replacement	
S24 - Glenn Farm	Honiton	Recent Replacement	
S27 - St Mark's Road	Honiton	Recent Replacement	
S38 - North Street	Axminster	Recent Replacement	
S42 - Meadway	Seaton	Recent Replacement	

S48 - Stowford Rise	Sidmouth	Recent Replacement	
S49 - Manstone Recreation Ground	Sidmouth	Recent Replacement	
S51 - Winters Lane	Ottery St Mary	Recent Replacement	
S56 - Sidford Recreation Ground	Sidford	Recent Replacement	
S00 - Queen's Drive Play Area	Exmouth	TBC	
Key S – Streetscene Play Areas H – Housing Revenue Account Play Area G – Outside Gym			

- 1.13. It is recommended that Cabinet Agree to adopt EDDC Play Strategy 2022-2032 to ensure a clear future path for play provision, its standards and funding and for the reasons set out in the report and strategy document, being an important service, development essential for children, health and wellbeing fundamental, available to all and rightly expected by our communities.

2. Fairer play provision for Town and Parish Councils and community groups:

- 2.1. Background: EDDC sites are typically in towns, with villages having few EDDC managed play parks within their parish boundaries. The majority of village play parks are managed by their respective parish councils, or other bodies, and there has been discontent regarding the fairness of local access to EDDC play provision across the district. We are not in a position with current resource and funding to take on management of additional play provision currently managed by others, or to cover those associated costs. However we have listened to feedback and seek a middle ground, where top up funding could be sought from EDDC to complete a play park installation that would have not been otherwise affordable. This will help bring top quality play installations to communities outside our towns, doing what we can with our limited capital budgets to help communities deliver what is right for them locally.
- 2.2. This is further detailed in Section 4 of the Play Strategy and goes on to say that it is our intent in the lifetime of the strategy to investigate further. *'Clearly the overall proportion of the number of households that are subject to these types of arrangements will only continue to grow over time. There is a risk that these arrangements are seen to be inequitable, particularly between Cranbrook and the established towns in the District.'*

There is no easy resolution to this position – the District Council would need to either take on the ownership and maintenance of facilities in Cranbrook or cascade existing facilities in the other towns down to the relevant Town Councils to achieve a level playing field. Moving forward it will be important to be aware of the distinction between new and legacy facilities. In order to help mitigate the disparity between the two approaches it is the intention that throughout the life of this strategy EDDC will investigate additional measures to improve fairer play provision across the District.

An example of this would be to review current planning practice which ensures that new areas of public open space provided by developers are maintained by management companies or equivalent, perhaps adopting 1 site in new town areas to concord with the aims of this strategy. The current model leads to communities with mixed ownership and responsibilities for open space and play provision as well as a perception of being double taxed. Reviewing the root cause will facilitate fairer play provision into the future.'

- 2.3. EDDC is committed to assist communities in the progression of a play or skate park scheme where; the community own the land upon which the facility is to be located, the community have local support through a resident vote and from their Town or Parish Council, the community have a constituted group that will look after the maintenance of the equipment, insurance and cleaning of the area (or can contract to EDDC to do the same) and have raised 75% of the project cost through CiL, s106 or other means. In these scenarios EDDC will accept a bid into its capital allocation budget and when funds are available will provide up to 25% funding to help deliver the community project, alongside support and delivery assistance from our Engineering team.
- 2.4. A successful pathfinder project for a similar funding arrangement has been successfully completed with the delivery of both phases of Axminster Skate Park ahead of programme.
- 2.5. Recommendation: That the fairer play provision mechanism be enacted to allow Town and Parish Councils bid up to 25% of the play provision's project value from EDDC funds.

Financial implications:

The amount deemed appropriate to be included in the future capital programme for the 25% top up contribution on non EDDC assets will have to be considered by BSCAP (Budget Setting & Capital Allocations Panel) as a recommendation to Cabinet and Council. It is assumed this will be considered for the 2024/25 budget year.

Legal implications:

There is no direct comment to be made in relation to this Play Strategy report, each and any individual issue will need to be considered as it arises.