

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility

As part of the scrutiny review process, information has been requested with regards to outdoor play provision. Responses to the specific points raised are set out below.

Town Centres Development Team

The Town Centres Development Team (TCDT) are part of the Regeneration and Inclusive Growth Directorate and have responsibility for the development and delivery of a wide range of interventions across the Borough's six town centres

The team is made up of a broad range of roles with the focus on overseeing and coordinating the development, design and delivery of capital projects, predominantly under the funding umbrella's of Levelling Up Fund, Towns Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Future High Streets Fund as well as town centre business engagement and market management

In regard to the development of proposals for Stockton Waterfront, the core team from within the Town Centres Development Team is

Iain Robinson - Assistant Director Town Centre Development

Mike Smith - Programme Delivery Manager

Faye Dunnill – Senior Capital Projects Officer

Interdepartmental Consultations

The inclusion of formal play space and equipment within the park was established as a fundamental element of the space at concept stage, through the preliminary design process in 2021

In regard to interdepartmental consultations, discussions and exchange of information happen in a number of ways. In regard to play areas and play equipment in the Waterfront Urban Park, the TCDT relied upon the expertise and knowledge of colleagues within Environment Leisure & Green Infrastructure as plans for the urban park were in development particularly in regard to play equipment

Following public consultation in summer 2022, a design brief for the play space was developed by Ryder Architects in October 2022 in collaboration with TCDT and with input from colleagues in Environment Leisure

Officers from both TCDT and Environment Leisure & Green Infrastructure attended design workshops and meetings to refine the design of the park and in particular areas and locations for play equipment.

Officers from both TCDT and Environment Leisure & Green Infrastructure formed part of the appraisal panel for prospective play equipment providers as part of the initial procurement phase for play equipment from a quality, aesthetics, accessibility and sustainability perspective.

The interrelationship between Council teams extended to site visits and individual design meetings as required alongside the architect design team.

As designs have progressed since selection of a preferred supplier, specific pieces of equipment and layouts have been proposed via submissions and meetings for comment from TCDT and Environment Leisure & Green Infrastructure prompting queries and challenge regarding a variety of points of detail including guarantees, spares, play surfacing, play value and safety.

Further refinement to specific elements of equipment and play areas are still to be made with further input from Environment Leisure & Green Infrastructure in regard to aesthetic, quality, accessibility, sustainability and safety over the coming months.

Summary of new and improved play / informal sport provision under the Town Centres programme

The following new and improved play and informal sports provision has been delivered or is under development with TCDT as the lead.

Stockton Waterfront

- Two main play areas along with play features throughout the urban park including a variety of accessible pieces of equipment and features catering for young children through to teens
- Play areas include swings, slides, climbing structures, nets

Romano Park

- Installation of new bespoke play feature and new play equipment.
- Repairs and replacement of some existing equipment and surfacing
- Installation of accessible play equipment and sensory trail,
- Clean and remarking of existing MUGA surface

Victoria Park

- New play equipment and accessible elements throughout the park

Snaiths Field

- Improvements to exiting play space, surfacing and equipment planned. Still in preliminary design stage

Understanding of revenue commitments around large-scale play facilities (historic and future projections)

As part of the assessment process for play equipment providers, the sustainability and quality of materials was a key consideration in regard to minimising maintenance liabilities and the need to replace equipment .

Warranties and guarantees on equipment along with spare parts have also been sought as part of the procurement and design of play equipment and play areas to cover any issues or defects with equipment in the short term. Furthermore, allowance for some maintenance and repair/replacement packages have been included within the initial costing for equipment, minimising revenue commitments maintenance as far as possible in the early years of operation

Beyond warranties, guarantees, spares and maintenance packages detailed above, longer term revenue requirements will be picked up and included as part of future MTFP budget setting process with detailed work undertaken already with colleagues across the Council to assess the revenue impact of the park in its entirety from its completion in early 2026.

Other play facilities detailed earlier in this paper will be maintained within existing revenue budgets for play and open space.