

Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Update on capital investment to implement the Play Park Improvement Strategy

Recommendation 1:

To provide written clarity on the proposed engagement process, to include in consultation with key community groups such as Torbay Communities, Torbay Greenspace Forum etc.

Response/Update:

Stage one immediate safety works are by nature specifically targeted to individual pieces of equipment so master planning is not appropriate, however a minimum of three options for each required piece of equipment will be provided on site via posters and a web link for further information and preferences to be provided, local ward members and a minimum of two schools in the locality will be consulted in person with the options. This is intended to ultimately improve these public spaces and access to safe, inclusive and higher quality play parks.

Whilst we are engaging with schools, we will also seek to have collaborative conversations as to play design, this will include the wider picture in terms of site access, health, wellbeing and sports provision and anything else young people feel is important to them. This information will then be fed into the ten-year masterplan.

At all points colleagues from children's services will be engaged within the process so wider young people's strategies and engagement opportunities can be utilised.

Full written consultation program will be provided ahead of its implementation, this will include a ward-by-ward plan in conjunction with relevant councillors, engaging with schools and community groups.

Recommendation 2:

To ensure that young people are engaged with in a meaningful way in respect of all play parks.

Response/Update:

As part of the engagement process presentations in schools in each ward will be organised, these events will focus on gathering input from young people as to what they would like to see in their parks.

An essential element of the meaningful engagement is honesty and transparency we will endeavour to make clear that stage one works by nature of the budget are limited, we will seek opinion on options where possible. In terms of the masterplan, we will aim to be as creative as possible incorporating as wide a range of input as possible.

Play Torbay have been heavily involved in the work thus far and will continue to be, both at a local design level and also reflecting national policy and best practice.

The masterplan will aim to incorporate green and recreational space, including former countryside trust land adjacent to and surrounding existing playparks.

There is also the possibility that opportunities could be created at the implementation stage to involve young people in the actual works. The community payback team have already been engaged to support in these works.

Recommendation 3:

That the first tranche of funding should be focussed on repairs and not landscaping and that landscaping should be picked up as part of the later tranche.

Response/Update:

This is certainly the intention with the focus on repair providing momentum through these initial works with landscaping being largely the final aspect of the project and coordinated with cyclical works and the development of the longer-term masterplans.

Any removal works and subsequent landscaping will be carried out by SWISCo and will not be charged to the £500k budget.

Recommendation 4:

That the Board note the emerging Play Park Improvement work and acknowledged that this is work on play improvement which will be further developed into a Strategy and used to inform Masterplans.

Response/Update:

This is the first stage of a larger project and we are currently working on a 10 year masterplan to bring all the playparks to the standard we would all hope to see. The masterplan will be aligned with wider Council strategies on wellbeing and activity.

Ward Members will be contacted to discuss and provide input into engagement strategies and plans for specific local areas. It is intended that engagement with relevant local schools will take place for every park. Members views will also be sought for other routes into local opinion including community groups and youth organisations in their area.

Recommendation 5:

To provide a written list of which groups have been engaged to date.

Response/Update:

During the first stage of an ongoing consultation programme:

All ward Members were invited to an onsite consultation on a ward-by-ward basis during summer 2025.

Working in partnership with Play Torbay public engagement surveys were carried out at Shiphay Park, Parkfield, Victoria Park (Torquay) and Abbey Park as well as Children's Week at Paignton Seafront. Over 100 surveys were completed by young people and families.

Much of the immediate work required is dictated by the need to replace dangerous and worn-out equipment. This first stage of consultation allowed the development of some broad principles and areas for consideration in terms of the available funds. As per recommendation 1 and 2 targeted and site-specific consultation on options around individual pieces of equipment will be carried out.