

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/Correspondence/Cllr NH

Date: 15 October 2020



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Councillor Peter Bradbury  
Cabinet Member, Culture & Leisure  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bradbury,

### **Playground Areas Refurbishment**

Thank you for attending Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee on 13 October 2020, along with Steve Morris and Rosie James to discuss the above.

Members were interested to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on playgrounds. We applaud the safety first approach taken to re-opening playgrounds in line with Welsh Government guidance and the clear communication campaign to raise public awareness of re-openings and safety measures. We note that lessons have been learnt that can be applied in the event of further closures and re-openings and that Welsh Government has been requested to provide regulations and guidance as far in advance as possible prior to announcing reopening dates.

Members were also keen to understand the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of the planned play area Section 106 and capital programme funded schemes, some of which had already slipped from their scheduled implementation. Members note the pandemic has compounded delays to scheduled works, with an impact on the availability of staff and materials to undertake refurbishment. Members heard that there is currently a £4.2M backlog in Section 106 schemes and a £533,000 backlog in Capital Programme schemes. Members are reassured to hear that there are no red risks with regard to Section 106 schemes, with none being near their time limit.

Members were pleased to hear that you have given clear political direction to tackle the backlogs and spend the monies; playgrounds are essential for children and young people's health and well-being and have an impact on overall communities in terms of addressing anti-social behaviour.

Overall, Members broadly support the proposed plans to address the backlogs, including an annual delivery programme, additional capacity via consultants, agency

staff and utilising in-house expertise and implementing a new procurement framework. It is clear that the service area needs more capacity to be able to demonstrate that spend can be achieved and schemes delivered. This in turn will strengthen the case when arguing for additional resources to renew existing playgrounds and look at new play experiences, including disabled and accessible play space, which Members were pleased to hear you support. Members also noted the issues with revenue resource for reactive repairs and maintenance of playgrounds, which are important to ensure timely repairs.

Members are pleased to hear that a schedule programme showing dates for schemes will be circulated to Members in the near future and that you welcome suggestions from Members on appropriate schemes to use available play area Section 106 monies in their wards.

At the meeting, we discussed how best to provide adventure play areas and we recommended that officers speak to Wrexham Council to find out how they have managed to deliver three adventure play areas; we are pleased that Steve Morris offered to do this and we request that Members be informed of the outcome of this.

Finally, Members note that new drainage regulations may lead to significant additional costs and that Steve Morris will ask his team to provide a ballpark figure for how much these could be; we look forward to receiving this information.

Thanks again to you and all who attended with you for this informative scrutiny. This letter requires a response, please, regarding the following:

- Outcome of the recommendation that officers speak to Wrexham Council regarding how they have delivered three adventure play areas;
- The ballpark figure for costs due to the new drainage regulations.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS**  
**CHAIR, ECONOMY & CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Members of the Economy & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
Neil Hanratty Jon Maidment  
Steve Morris Rosie James  
Clair James Cabinet Support Office