

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change****Parks Standard (Pride in Parks)****1. Purpose of Report**

To update Members on the progress of the Pride in Parks programme.

**2. Recommendation**

**Cabinet is asked to NOTE progress to date and the results of the 2024 parks consultation.**

**3. Detail**

There are currently 62 Parks and Open Spaces (covering 236 hectares) and 14 Local Nature Reserves across the Borough. 37 of these spaces has a play area, which in total contains 323 pieces of play equipment. Out of the 37 spaces, 33 have inclusive and accessible play equipment.

In 2017, the Council's Play Strategy (2017-2025) identified a programme of high priority improvements required for the Borough's play facilities. Since April 2018, the Council has approved £1.5 million pounds' worth of investment in parks and open spaces. Some of this funding (£250,000) was shared with the Town and Parish Councils to facilitate the maintenance of their own park facilities.

It is important for parks and open spaces to meet the required standard outlined in the Council's Corporate Plan. This uniform standard is viewed as a fair and positive approach to enhance the quality and visitor experience of these spaces. Annually, the Environment team undertake a consultation process on 20% of its parks and open spaces. The results from this year's survey are provided in **Appendix 1**.

The current Pride in Parks programme has delivered improvements or refurbishments in 23 play areas, across the Borough and includes:

- Addition of play equipment.
- Play area resurfacing to improve accessibility.
- Replacement of old equipment.
- Additional inclusive play equipment

These works were achieved through a combination of Council (£917,000) and external (£634,000) funding bids The Pride in Parks delivery programme, along with associated costs are detailed in **Appendix 2**.

By the end of the 2023/24 financial year, all play improvements identified through the Pride in Parks programme were completed.

In 2025, the Council intends to refresh its Play Strategy to a Play and Parks Strategy. Asset management inspections will prioritise necessary works including for example, paths, fences, gates and seating which were not included in the current Play Strategy and therefore received less focussed investment, a wider Pride in Parks programme will be developed to align with this.

4. Key Decision

Not applicable.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

The approved Capital Programme for 2024/25 includes a budget of £173,250, including capital salaries, for the Pride in Parks scheme. Further details on progress and financial implications are provided in Appendix 2.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, Local authorities have a number of different statutory powers in relation to parks and green spaces, including the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, which gives wide powers to provide recreational facilities. The 1976 Act also permits the Council to make recreational facilities available for use by such persons as the authority thinks fit either without charge or on payment of such charges as the authority thinks fit.

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

Not applicable.

10. Climate Change Implications

The Council's Pride in Parks programme focuses on enhancing the infrastructure of parks and open spaces. By doing so, it creates an opportunity to promote, nature based solutions that mitigate the impacts of climate change. Improved access and enhanced facilities at these sites can help to inspire and educate residents about climate change adaptation and resilience.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this not a change to policy or a new policy an equality impact assessment is not included in the report.

13. Background Papers

Nil.