

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change

### Parks Standard

#### 1. Purpose of Report

To update Members on the results of the 2025 Parks Standard consultation. This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priority for Environment – 'Protect the environment for the future'.

#### 2. Recommendation

**Cabinet is asked to NOTE progress to date and the results of the 2025 parks consultation.**

#### 3. Detail

There are currently 63 Parks and Open Spaces (covering 240 hectares) and 14 Local Nature Reserves across the Borough. 37 of these spaces has a play area, which in total contains 430 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 £2 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 (2025/26) will have delivered improvements or refurbishments in 3 play areas; Coronation Park, Eastwood, Eastcote Avenue, Bramcote, Smithhurst Road, Giltbrook) 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 (£70,000) and external (£90,000) funding. 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.

The Council is now in the process of refreshing its Play Strategy into a broader Play and Parks Strategy. A consultant has been identified to undertake this work, and procurement details are currently being considered.

Once the strategy review and rewrite have been completed and progressed through the appropriate procedures. Environment will return to Cabinet to seek approval to undertake a public consultation on the refreshed strategy and then ultimately, its adoption.

It is anticipated that this piece of work will be finalised and brought back to Cabinet for adoption in autumn 2026. The refreshed strategy will also inform a wider Pride in Parks programme, aligning asset management inspections to prioritise necessary works such as paths, fences, gates, and seating, which were not included in the current Play Strategy and therefore received less focused investment.

#### 4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

#### 5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not applicable.

#### 6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The approved Capital Programme for 2025/26 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 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

Not applicable.

9. Union Comments

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

Not applicable.

13. Background Papers

Nil.