



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 27th October, 2016

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Publication date: 19 October 2016

Contact

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Sandra Hancock in Democracy and Governance on 01923 278377 or by email to legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

Access

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Committee Membership

Councillor K Hastrick (Chair)

Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Fahmy, Asif Khan, R Martins, A Rindl, N Shah, D Walford and T Williams

Agenda

Part A - Open to the Public

1. **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**
2. **Disclosure of interests (if any)**
3. **Call-in: Investment in Watford's Adventure Playgrounds (Pages 5 - 86)**

The following decision taken on 10 October 2016 by Cabinet has been called in:

Investment in Watford's Adventure Playgrounds

The reason for call-in, signed by 3 members, is as follows –

“Alternative funding arrangements were not properly examined and given a chance, including the proposals drawn up by S.W.A.P. Their proposals and other funding streams and ideas used by other councils need to be looked at.”

The following documents are attached –

- (a) Proforma requesting the call-in of the decision signed by Councillors Joynes, Bell and Mills received 18 October 2016
- (b) Call-in procedures to be followed
- (c) Extract of the minutes of Cabinet on 10 October 2016
- (d) Report to Cabinet from the Head of Community and Customer Services
- (e) Appendix A to the report (Equality Impact Analysis)
- (f) Appendix B to the report (Overview of the designs for Harwoods and Harebreaks Adventure Playgrounds)
- (g) Revised appendix B (Updated overview of design for Harebreaks Adventure Playground)
- (h) Appendix C to the report (Examples of the equipment for each site)
- (i) Appendix D to the report (Attendance figures for the period January – June 2016)
- (j) Additional document circulated to Cabinet: S.W.A.P's Business Plan
- (k) Additional document circulated at Cabinet: Hertfordshire County Council's position

CALL-IN OF KEY DECISIONS

To: The Head of Democracy and Governance

We the undersigned call-in the following key decision:-

Title: INVESTMENT IN WATERBURY'S ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS!

Date Decision taken 10 / 10 / 16

Decision maker (Cabinet/Portfolio Holder/Officer) CABINET

Reason for Call-In:

(e.g. cost/consultation/policy/lack of clarity/other options)

Please feel free to state reasons more fully on the back of this form

"ALTERNATIVE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS WERE NOT PROPERLY EXAMINED AND GIVEN A CHANCE, INCLUDING THE PROPOSALS DRAWN UP BY S.W.A.P."

NB: If no reasons are given the Overview and Scrutiny Committee WILL NOT consider your request for call-in

Signed: 1. Councillor Anne Joyce
2. Councillor N. Bell
3. Councillor [Signature]

Date: 17 / 10 / 16 .

Note: Call-In does not include

- Urgent decisions of the Cabinet
- Decisions referred by the Cabinet to Council
- Decisions previously Called-In

(CONTINUED) OVERLEAF

THEIR PROPOSALS AND OTHER FUNDING
STREAMS AND IDEAS USED BY OTHER
COUNCILS NEED TO BE LOOKED AT."

**PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CALL-IN BY THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The protocol for dealing with call-in was agreed by the Co-ordination & Call-in Committee at its meeting on 10 July 2002 and amended by Council at its meeting on 19 July 2006. Following Council's agreement to a revised scrutiny structure at Annual Council on 25 May 2011, call-ins are considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that as a convention the Vice-Chair, a member of the opposition, would chair this part of the meeting, or in his/her absence another member of the opposition on Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The following procedure will be adopted at the meetings where a call-in decision is being considered.

- The Member who requested the call-in to present their case (including if they have already given advance notice any members of the public to speak if appropriate).
- The Scrutiny Committee and the Mayor/portfolio holder or officer whose decision is being questioned can ask questions of the Members requesting the call-in.
- The Mayor/portfolio holder/ officer to present the case for the Cabinet to explain the reason behind the decision.
- The Scrutiny Committee and the Member requesting the call-in can then question the Mayor/portfolio holder/ officer.
- The Scrutiny Committee will then deliberate and make its decision.
- If the Scrutiny Committee ratifies the Cabinet decision it can be implemented immediately.
- If the Scrutiny Committee decides to refer the decision back to Cabinet for re-consideration it will be required to send written notice of the reasons to the Head of Democracy and Governance within 3 working days of the meeting who will forward it to the original decision taker and the Mayor.
- Cabinet must give not less than 7 working days notice to the Head of Democracy and Governance and the Chair and Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the date and time it intends to re-consider its decision.
- Any member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is entitled to attend the meeting at which Cabinet re-considers the decision, unless they have a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter being discussed.
- Cabinet will be free to take whatever decision it sees fit on re-consideration and the decision will not be open for further call-in except as provided in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, paragraphs 13.11 – 13.17 of the Constitution (pages Dvi-7 – Dvi-8).
- A member who has a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter being called in will not be able to be a party to the call-in request, neither will they be able to participate in the call-in meeting.

Extract of minutes from Cabinet

10 October 2016

Present:

Mayor Dorothy Thornhill	(Strategic partnerships/external relationships and community safety)
Cllr Peter Taylor	(Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Client Services)
Cllr Karen Collett	(Portfolio Holder for Community)
Cllr Stephen Johnson	(Portfolio Holder for Property and Housing)
Cllr Iain Sharpe	(Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development)
Cllr Mark Watkin	(Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Service)

Also present:

Councillor Nigel Bell (Labour)
Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa (Labour)
Councillor Anne Joynes (Labour)
Councillor Asif Khan (Labour)
Councillor Mo Mills (Labour)
Councillor Anne Rindl (Liberal Democrat)

Officers:

Managing Director
Shared Director of Finance
Head of Democracy and Governance
Head of Community and Customer Services
Partnerships and Performance Section Head
Section Head Culture and Play
Interim Communications and Engagement Section Head
Democratic Services Manager
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (AG)

38. Investment in Watford's Adventure Playgrounds

A report was received from the Head of Community and Customer Services on proposals for investment in two of the Council's Adventure Playgrounds.

The Mayor introduced the report and explained that council members wanted to make sure that the right decision was made after considering everything raised following the last meeting. The council had received advice, including legal advice. It was up to the Cabinet to determine what sort of service was run in Watford and prior to the meeting there had been considerable discussions and briefings. There were four things for Cabinet to consider: 1. the possibility of a legal challenge, 2. the proposal received from the SWAPS (Save Watford Adventure Playgrounds) group, 3. the feedback received, 4. the recommendations contained in the report.

The Head of Democracy and Governance commented that, as stated in the report, the council had received a legal letter challenging the previous decision. Whilst officers did not agree all grounds, it was prudent to consider the decision again. The council had a discretionary power under section 19 (1) Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 to provide adventure playgrounds (APG); therefore, there was no statutory duty to consult on future provision. However, all comments received since the proposals had become public in June 2016 had been included in the report and copies had been given to Cabinet. The report contained a detailed Equalities Impact Analysis (EIA) and members' attention was drawn to its contents, and paragraph 5.6 of the report commented on issues raised regarding crime and disorder. Correspondence had been received from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) who had confirmed that under Sections 507 and 508 of the Education Act 1996 there was a separate and distinct statutory duty placed on HCC as the education authority not Watford Borough Council. HCC did not require the use of APG in order to discharge their duty in Watford. The County Council used children's centres and an HCC owned youth centre. The APG were not registered as child care provision as they were open access sites where children were free to come and go.

The Head of Community and Customer Services explained that, in terms of Appendix B to the report, he had circulated a revised proposal at the meeting which showed a larger tower at the Harebreaks site following feedback. He continued that a key reason for the decision was that the council had a £3m gap in the revenue budget due to the removal of the government grant. The proposals would provide modern, enhanced equipment available all year which would be done using capital money. There would be revenue savings of £250k per year, and it would preserve the areas for play. There was no statutory duty to undertake formal consultation. The council had consulted staff as an employer. As part of this consultation a submission was received from staff (the SWAPS' submission). Whilst the submission was admirable, it failed to address the investment needed in the equipment whilst achieving the revenue savings. It also had

an ambitious target for fundraising and hire. Therefore, the proposal could not be recommended.

The Head of Community and Customer Services continued that the EIA was contained in the report as was consideration of the public sector equality duty as well as responses to the contact and petition received from the public. There would be Easter and summer holiday activities. He highlighted that with regards to Harebreaks Wood, surveys had been undertaken as well as contact with the Friends of Harebreaks Wood group which had concluded that there was no significant impact.

The Head of Community and Customer Services addressed the issue of crime and disorder and explained that Watford was a safe place, where the existing parks and open spaces were not supervised and were also not a great source of anti social behaviour (ASB). Where ASB did occur, there was a multi-agency response to end the activity in that location. Whilst there was a possibility of some vandalism the council would look to deploy CCTV during the building phase and just after the playgrounds had opened.

The Mayor then invited Anita Grant from Islington Play Association, as the registered speaker, to address Cabinet.

Ms Grant explained that she ran the Islington Play Association. This organisation ran a play centre and six adventure playgrounds. There were models which meant that APG could be kept open and also make savings. In Islington the council had protected the sites through deeds of dedication. They had also committed to pay through a contract and tender for APG to remain open for children aged 6+ and the organisation had just won another three year contract.

Ms Grant commented that when APG were turned into playgrounds parents worried about children walking through streets and who they would meet. When this occurred then parents would put the children in front of a computer at home which added to obesity and other issues for children. Parents trusted Islington APGs because they were staffed.

Ms Grant continued that there were children in Islington with additional needs, and there were also children living in flats with no gardens. Her organisation worked closely with the local authority to ensure any issues were identified early and would refer families to services. As a charity, the association raised £100k in addition to the contract. The playgrounds cost £88-92k pa to operate. Having an external partnership meant it was possible to harness community action to create better services.

The Mayor thanked Ms Grant. She commented that Islington was a unitary authority and a London borough therefore the funding weighting was different and a district

council did not have the same abilities.

The Mayor requested that the Managing Director should meet with councillors for both wards where the APG were located to hear key issues on crime and disorder and vulnerable families so that contact could be made with appropriate partner organisations like the police and HCC to address any issues arising.

In response to a question from Councillor Watkin, the Shared Director of Finance explained that local authorities had strict rules around revenue and capital expenditure. Revenue was to be used for staff costs and running buildings; capital was for maintaining assets. The council could not spend capital money on revenue items.

Councillor Bell commented that, whilst the council was under no duty to consult, it would have made more sense to have launched a meaningful consultation and reassured families that the council would listen to their views. He commented that the council could give the alternative proposals a year.

The Mayor responded that the council was aware that it was a service valued by the people who used it. In the interim time between meetings, cabinet had made sure they listened and challenged but having regard to the contents of the report had reached the same conclusion as before.

Councillor Collett commented that currently the APG were closed most of the time. However, the new playgrounds were going to be free, inclusive, accessible and open to more young people with high quality equipment. Play was changing and culture was changing, the council would keep the two playgrounds open but with a different sense of play.

Following a question from Councillor Bell the Shared Director of Finance explained that under recent rule changes it was possible to use some capital money for redundancy costs.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet:

1. having had full regard to the content of the report, including comments and views expressed by members of the public and users of the current service and having regard to the attached equality impact analysis, and the implications for crime and disorder, that the outline design plans for the investment of up to £1.4 million into the two Adventure Playgrounds be approved.

2. ratifies the service of termination notices on the Adventure Playground staff issued on 26 August 2016 and that the current staffed service be terminated with effect from 31 October 2016.
3. agrees that play activities be commissioned for the 2 week Easter break and for 6 weeks in the summer.
4. agrees that the new adventurous play areas be opened for public use in Spring 2017.
5. agrees that an additional £150,000 be added to the capital programme of £1.25m for this project.

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 10 October 2016
Report of: Head of Community & Customer Services
Title: Investment in Watford's Adventure Playgrounds

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for investment in two of the Council's Adventure Playgrounds at Harwoods and Harebreaks to create high quality, modern, creative and challenging Adventure Playgrounds with improved accessibility.
- 1.2 Funding for significant capital investment of up to £1.4 million into the Adventure Playgrounds has been made available by the Council for these new facilities, which will be open to all at all times.
- 1.3 The new Adventure Playground facilities will be designed so that they can be used without supervision. The current staff presence will be withdrawn, which will help the council achieve the significant revenue savings it is required to make.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Having had full regard to the content of this report, including comments and views expressed by members of the public and users of the current service and having regard to the attached equality impact analysis, and the implications for crime and disorder, that the outline design plans for the investment of up to £1.4 million into the two Adventure Playgrounds be approved.
- 2.2 That Cabinet ratifies the service of termination notices on the Adventure Playground staff issued on 26 August 2016 and that the current staffed service be terminated with effect from 31 October 2016.
- 2.3 That play activities be commissioned for the 2 week Easter break and for 6 weeks in the summer.
- 2.4 That the new adventurous play areas be opened for public use in Spring 2017.
- 2.5 That an additional £150,000 be added to the capital programme of £1.25m for this project.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact:
Gary Oliver, Section Head, Culture and Play
Telephone extension: 8251, gary.oliver@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Alan Gough- Head of Customer and Community Services

3.0 **Detailed Proposal**

Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 4 July 2016 Cabinet considered a report setting out proposals to invest £1.25m in the council's two Adventure Playgrounds at Harwoods and Harebreaks (APGs). The proposal was approved and the decision was subsequently called-in and considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 21 July 2016, who ratified the Cabinet's decision.
- 3.2 Following this the council received a letter from solicitors acting on behalf of a parent whose children use the APGs seeking to challenge the decision on a number of grounds. Whilst the council is of the opinion that a number of the issues that it has been challenged on are without merit it is considered prudent for the matter to be brought back before Cabinet for a fresh decision.
- 3.3 The council provides the APGs under a discretionary power in section 19 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976. Section 19(1) allows a local authority to provide such recreational facilities as it thinks fit, including amongst other things premises, equipment and staff.
- 3.4 The council is not the Education Authority or Social Services Authority for the Borough, this is Hertfordshire County Council and, therefore, it has no statutory duties in relation to the provision of facilities for children and young people and neither does it operate the APGs on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council.
- 3.5 The council has however always recognised that play is an important factor to a child's development and has made considerable investment in many local play facilities across the Borough using its discretionary power under s19. It is proposed that this investment be now extended to the APGs.
- 3.6 The current facilities at both APGs are in need of modernisation and current accessibility to the facilities is restricted to specific opening times. These are:

Summer opening (April to October)

Harebreaks:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday

- Term time: 3.30pm - 6pm
- School holidays: 10am - 5pm

Tuesday

- Closed

Saturday and Sunday

- Term time: 11am - 5pm
- School holidays: 11am - 5pm

Harwoods:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

- Term time: 3.20pm - 6pm
- School holidays: 10am - 5pm

Wednesday

- Closed

Saturday and Sunday

- Term time: 11am to 5pm
- School holidays: 11am - 5pm

Winter opening (November to March)

During the winter months, the APGs opening has been reduced from six to four days a week and opening hours have also been reduced as set out below:

Harebreaks

Monday & Thursday

- Term time: 3.30pm – 5.30pm
- School holidays: 12.30 – 3pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday

- Closed

Saturday and Sunday

- Term time: 11.30am - 4pm
- School holidays: 11.30am - 4pm

Harwoods

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday

- Closed

Tuesday & Friday

- Term time: 3.20pm – 5.30pm
- School holidays: 12.30 – 3pm

Saturday and Sunday

- Term time: 11.30am - 4pm
- School holidays: 11.30am - 4pm

- 3.7 The APGs are staffed at these opening times and these staff also provide Play Ranger services to the community at various locations throughout the year. Analysis of attendance figures show that the current take up of the facilities is focused on the local community with reach to other areas of the borough more limited. User registration from 2014 is mapped in the equality impact analysis (EIA) associated with this report: Appendix A

3.8 The reduction and then removal of the Revenue Support Grant by Central Government means that the council has to make savings in its revenue expenditure of approximately £3m by April 2019. When this requirement is balanced against a council desire to create an improved play offer that is high quality, modern, sustainable and more accessible, a transformational change is required.

3.9 This transformational change should not be seen as a reflection on the current Play Services provided. The attendance figures for the period January – June 2016 are shown in Appendix D.

4.0 **The Proposal**

4.1 A company called Southern Green was commissioned to provide design possibilities for the two APGs, with a brief including:

- making the Adventure Playgrounds accessible at all times, for ages 5 – 15 years
- modern, innovative and challenging play experiences
- designs to take into account health and safety guidance
- play areas to be durable and sustainable and equipment to have a 20 year lifespan
- providing a destination for families from across the borough
- specifically in relation to Harebreaks to work with the existing natural environment

4.2 This has given rise to the outline designs shown at appendix B. Please note that these are still only outline proposals and are still subject to change.

4.3 In summary:

Harwoods Adventure Playground will be a number of play zones which encourage different types of adventurous play opportunities in different environments:

- a welcoming space for families gathering together, seating, and play equipment for younger children so that there is a full family offer provided
- a climbing wall
- an iconic tower with aerial tunnel, slides, and bridge
- adventure trail challenges
- double zip wire
- exciting swing area and natural play areas

This all to be integrated and linked to the existing MUGA and other outdoor areas. The whole area will be connected by a landscaping scheme including new planting and walkways. It will be necessary to remove some trees from this site in consultation with the Council's Arboricultural Officer.

4.4 For Harebreaks Adventure playground the same design criteria remain, however the proposals are tailored to the existing habitat. The play zones will include:

- a welcoming space for families gathering together,
- woodland transition, to encourage and intrigue visitors to venture within the woodland
- an iconic tower with aerial tunnel, slides, and walkway
-
- some of the former play area reverting back to a more natural habitat.

Again this will be linked to existing outdoor areas such as the existing playground.

- 4.5 The above proposals are innovative, challenging and creative and represent an investment in play which continues to add value and experiences to children's lives. These proposals are transformational and can be enjoyed all year round by children and families. Examples of some of the specific equipment at each site are in Appendix C.
- 4.6 The above investment of up to £1.4m will create APGs that are not restricted to specific opening hours and do not require staffing. It is proposed that in addition, play activities will be commissioned for the 2 week Easter break and for 6 weeks in the summer. These activities will support use of the two new APGs, Watford's parks and open spaces, the Big Events programme and other locations.
- 4.7 Regular inspection and maintenance of the new APGs will become part of the contract with Veolia. Appropriate signage will be placed at the entrances to the APGs welcoming visitors and advising on use of the equipment.

5.0 Considerations

- 5.1 The council has not undertaken any formal consultation on the proposals with either users of the current APGs or the wider public. The council is under no statutory duty to consult as it is exercising a discretionary power which does not require consultation, and having regard to the nature and likely effect of the proposals it is not considered that this is an exceptional case where non-statutory consultation is required. It has, however, undertaken formal consultation with staff affected by the proposal as an employer.
- 5.2 Although the council has not carried out a formal consultation exercise, staff were notified of the proposals on 23 June 2016 prior to the publication of the Cabinet agenda for the 4 July meeting and all registered users were also notified of the proposals and of the Cabinet meeting by letter dated 23 June 2016.
- 5.3 As a result the council has received e-mails, letters, a petition and representations made by members of the public to both Cabinet and call-in and from staff all questioning the withdrawal of the supervisory element of the APGs - copies of the communications from members of the public will be made available to Cabinet members before the 10 October meeting. After the Cabinet decision the council also held two drop in sessions on 9 and 11 July 2016 to show the community the proposed new equipment and took the proposed designs to the APGs on 16 August (Harwoods) and 18 August (Harebreaks) to allow the current users see what is being proposed as well as to gather suggestions and feedback on

potential activities for the Easter and summer holiday programmes.

5.4 The following is a summary of the representations that have been received from the public by the council since 23 June 2016. Copies of the representations received will be made available to Cabinet members before the 10 October meeting. These were received by: the Elected Mayor of Watford, Partnerships and Performance Section Head and the Community and Customer Services department, which is responsible for the delivery of the current play service. The representations were made by email, phone call and by letter. A number followed the distribution of a letter to the parents/carers of registered users (dated 23 June 2016) and a follow up leaflet (dated 1 July 2016). There were 1,503 email addresses on the mailing list used.

Number of representations received: emails – 15 , phone calls – 3, letters – 5

Number of objections: 22

Number in support: 0

Number where specific question raised: 1

The points that have been raised and officer responses are summarised below.

- Against closure of supervised provision:
- Officer comment: whilst it is recognised that the proposal will end supervised play as currently provided, the investment in new, exciting play equipment will deliver an improved play offer with a wider appeal to local young people with the aim of attracting a broad range of ages and abilities. Furthermore, the proposals for Easter and summer activities mean that young people will still be able to access free play activities.
The annual cost of the current Play Service is approximately £375,000, excluding support service and other costs. The council must find significant savings in its day to day expenditure and these proposals would allow it to enhance the layout and equipment of the APGs using capital funds, which would then be available for use all year round, while helping to reduce revenue pressure on other critical areas of council expenditure.
- Lack of public consultation:
- Officer comment: this is covered in 5.1 of this report.
- Concern over loss of a free service:
- Officer comment: the APGs will continue to be free to use as will be the Easter and summer activities programme. The loss of supervision is the result of the council having to make hard choices at a time of reduced funding.
- Impact on community/social cost of closure:
- Officer Comment: the proposed investment secures play at both Harwoods and Harebreaks and so they will continue to be a focus for play activity for 5-15 year olds within their respective communities. The aim of upgrading the sites is to encourage a greater take up by young people, which will enhance a wider sense of community

across the borough. The proposed Easter and summer activities will be developed to target areas where a demand is identified and will be tailored to meet the needs of young people. These activities will be at a time when young people are not in school and will ensure that they and their parents/carers continue to have options on how they spend this free time.

- Impact on local young people of loss of current service:
- Officer comment: all young people currently using the APGs will be able to access the new provision from spring 2017 and so their opportunity to play, meet other young people and engage in shared activities will not be lost. As outlined above, the Easter and summer programme will take into account the areas identified by young people as being of interest and which they would, therefore, wish to take part in. This could include activities which challenge the young people in terms of adventurous play and those which they would not usually have an opportunity to enjoy without an element of organisation and encouragement. In terms of vulnerable young people, this is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council, which works with schools and other agencies to identify and manage issues relating to safeguarding.

- Loss of free supervision/childcare:
- Officer comment: the current service was designed to offer play opportunities for young people rather than childcare provision. Childcare is not a responsibility of a district authority and there is provision available from other agencies and organisations in Watford for parents and carers, which has been set up to meet these specific requirements. The council can signpost parents and carers to appropriate childcare services if this is requested.

- Impact on Harebreaks Wood:
- Officer comment: as part of the development of the designs for both sites, an ecological analysis was undertaken by independent specialists. This has informed the plans/designs and ensures that there is no significant ecological impact on the Wood. Issues considered included key/significant trees (none of which are being removed), bats and woodland fauna.

- Anti-social behaviour and community safety related issues:
- Officer comment: this is covered in 5.6 of this report

- Design of new provision including loss of character and current popular equipment:
- Officer comment: drawing on best practice from around the country, the equipment within the proposed design has been chosen to maximise appeal and excitement for young people as well as providing appropriate challenge for the age range and for differing abilities. Each site has been designed with its own 'character' and to fit into its immediate surroundings. This means more of an urban design for Harwoods, with Harebreaks taking on a woodland and more natural character in keeping with its setting

- Maintenance cost of new equipment:
- Officer comment: a budget of £25k for maintenance has been identified and the works will be included in the Council's contract Veolia, which is responsible for the

maintenance of play areas across the borough

- Volunteering opportunity lost:
- Officer comment: there are a significant number of volunteering opportunities in Watford, including working with young people. Watford and Three Rivers Trust would be able to provide this information if required
- Impact on staff:
- Officer comment: consultation with staff was carried out from 11 July to 8 August 2016. The main feedback related to the impact on the current users and any who are potentially vulnerable. This is covered earlier in this report. Furthermore, two members of staff were involved in the development of the alternative business case/model outlined below.

A petition was presented to the Mayor at Cabinet on 4 July. It was also available online. As of 20 September, this had 1,888 signatures. The petition was titled: 'Stop the proposal to replace staffed Adventure Play Services with fixed equipment parks'.

- Officer comment: the reasons for the recommendation to replace the current supervised service are detailed throughout this report as are the proposals for investing in fixed equipment and the benefits of upgrading the playgrounds and providing greater access throughout the year.

Save Watford Playgrounds (SWAP) submitted its own representation to Call-In Committee on 21 July 2016.

- Officer comment: The SWAP submission raised a number of points, relevant to the proposal, for consideration:
 - Lack of public consultation:
Officer comment: this is covered in 5.1 of this report
 - Long term impact on crime and anti-social behaviour for local communities:
Officer comment: this is covered in 5.6 of this report
 - Consequences for marginalised and disenfranchised communities in Watford
Officer comment: the new play provision is designed to attract a much wider range of users and remains free to users as does the proposed programme of Easter and summer activities. The latter can be tailored to meet the needs of the young people in the borough within the 5-15 years age range, including those with disability and other specific needs. In addition, the programme will ensure it reflects the town's diversity and will identify the key locations where activities will be most appropriate
 - Information to local communities relating to the closure of staffed play services:
Officer comment: the claim was that the council literature sent to parents/carers did not make clear that the new provision would not be staffed. However, the letter dated 23 June 2016 stated: *the new offer does mean that the current, supervised service will end from October 2016* and the leaflet sent on 1 July: *These new facilities are designed so that there isn't a need for staff*

to supervise children's play at Harwoods and Harebreaks. The fact that both sites remain dedicated to young people's play is seen as continuing the commitment at Harwoods and Harebreaks to play.

- Conflicting strategic planning for the maintenance and development of play areas and the protection of green spaces:
Officer comment: the proposal does not conflict with the council's Green Spaces Strategy. Both sites remain designated open spaces
- Under-investment in the current APGs through use of S106 funds:
Officer comment: The current proposal has identified £1.4million investment for the playgrounds. This is capital funding rather than revenue funding, and it is the in the latter that the council is facing pressure on its finances. The proposal generates an annual saving to the council of £250k, which will help it meet savings targets necessitated by government cuts.
- Incorrect calculation of the £250k savings figure:
Officer comment: This saving figure is within the council's medium term financial strategy and is accurate and achievable.
- Comment on involvement of Watford Community Housing Trust:
Officer comment: This was not relevant to the APG proposal.

In addition, a business case (dated 9 August 2016) was presented by staff and users during the staff consultation outlining a proposal to retain the APG provision by the setting up of a body managed by some of the existing staff and others with expertise in the play profession. Council officers undertook an analysis of this business model and are of the opinion that, primarily on the grounds of financial viability, it is not something they would recommend the council pursue. The business model required the council to provide revenue funding of £300k for the first three years of operation under the assumption that the council could use the capital funding identified to deliver its proposals to support the alternative business model instead. Under financial regulations, capital funding cannot be used to support revenue spending. The business model would have also meant the council would not achieve the £250k revenue saving identified in its proposals. Given its need to find a further £3million worth of savings by 2020, the council would need to find a further £750k over the next three years in addition to this sum in order to meet financial targets.

5.5 Officers have undertaken an equalities impact analysis (EIA) which is appended to this report. The EIA addresses the council's public sector equality duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is intended to assist the council to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- **eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act**

The EIA considers the possibility that the withdrawal of staff from the APGs may lead to increased discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other conduct prohibited by the Act. It notes that measures are in place to deal with these behaviours should they arise within the new playgrounds and also highlights the need for the proposed holiday activity programmes to clearly set out expectations in terms of behaviours and actions. All the borough's outdoor play areas are monitored by the Park Ranger service (managed by Veolia) and the rangers can deal with issues as they arise and as notified. Where incidents

are of a more serious nature, the borough has a very effective, multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, which has seen incidents fall significantly over recent years. Any issues that would be deemed anti-social behaviour would be reported through the council's Community Safety Co-ordinator. Organisations and individuals commissioned to run and manage the Easter and summer holiday activities would be expected to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to equalities and the duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- **advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics (age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation) and persons who do not**

The opportunity provided by the investment means that both APGs can be designed to maximise accessibility for children of all ages. This will include not just the equipment installed but also the pathways and access to and around the site. The provision remains free and so there is no barrier created through affordability. By creating stimulating, challenging and enjoyable play opportunities within safe, well-maintained environments, the council will be providing a service that will appeal to young people across all the protected characteristics.

The play activities commissioned during the Easter and summer holidays will reflect the need to be accessible and to cater for a wide range of young people and abilities. In terms of young people with disability, this will include both physical and learning disabilities. In addition, these activities will be designed to meet the needs and reflect Watford's diverse community. Locations for these activities are yet to be confirmed but they will need to take into account areas which will advance equality of opportunity in terms of diverse neighbourhoods with a high number of young people.

Parents and carers who currently make use of the supervised service will be affected by its withdrawal. As parents and carers with responsibility for children during the day tend to be women, they are likely to be disproportionately affected, as are parents from lower-income households. However, there are other child care services in the borough which the council can direct users to, and during the Easter and summer holidays the council will arrange for a programme of free play activities

- **foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it**

The changes to the playgrounds will broaden the offer available to young people from 5-15 year olds and their families/ carers. By providing facilities 24/7 throughout the year there will be more opportunity for young people to use the facilities and to engage with each other through play. As shown in the analysis of registrations there is a strong correlation between registered users of the facilities compared with the overall population of 5-15 year olds. The aim of the upgraded facilities will be to appeal to a far broader range of young people from across the borough thus meeting the duty to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

The quality and range of equipment on offer will also broaden the APGs appeal and encourage greater usage from across the borough – ultimately providing a ‘go to’ destination for young people and their families. The proposed designs include integrated picnic areas, a meeting space with seating, which will provide more opportunities for families to gather and be part of the new experience.

- 5.6 As Cabinet will note from the objections/comments set out in 5.4 above there have been concerns expressed about the implications for crime and disorder by removing a supervised APG and installing equipment that is unsupervised and accessible 24/7.

The council has a public duty under s 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 set out as follows:

“(1) Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent

- (a) crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and
- (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area; and
- (c) re-offending in its area.”

Officers would comment that the council has in the region of 52 play areas and 29 parks, gardens and recreations grounds and playing pitches across the borough plus a skate park, all unsupervised. There is no evidence that unsupervised play areas of themselves are a cause of crime and disorder. Whilst some open spaces sometimes have incidents of alcohol and drugs misuse, whenever an area in the borough is seen to be a reporting hot spot for the misuse of alcohol and/or drugs, specific operations are used to deal with and end the identified activity at that location. The Council has a well established community safety action group involving neighbourhood policing and community safety experts that address and prevent issues of re-offending, criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.

The previously raised issue of the removal of fencing and formal boundaries leading to increased drug taking /dealing are not borne out by police mapping for such activities.

The council’s Community Safety Coordinator has also advised:

“all new play equipment/areas or facilities in parks are targeted by vandals in their construction phase. Notable are the instance of arson during the pre- opening or just opened phase, with slides and swings, because of their composite material, being the primary targets. Consideration should be given to the use of CCTV through the construction and initial use phase of the new provision, as experience shows once this time of change has finished the equipment’s presence is normalised and serious attacks on it cease”.

This recommendation will be considered within the project plan.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Despite the fact that the council has not formally consulted on this proposal, it has been

widely publicised and a number of comments have been received. The substance of these has been set out in this report. Officers have had regard to the council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to the implications for Crime and Disorder. Officers are of the view that to continue with the existing supervised service is not sustainable. The council is facing increasing pressure on its limited financial resources and will need to find approximately £3m of revenue savings by April 2019. By making this significant capital investment in adventurous play equipment and making it open and easily accessible the council is continuing to make provision for play whilst having regard to maximising the best use of its resources. Cabinet is asked to approve the recommendations.

7.0 **Implications**

7.1 **Financial**

7.1.1 The Head of Finance (shared services) comments that resources have been allocated in the capital programme 2016/17 to deliver the investment proposals of up to £1.25 million, with an additional £150,000 to be requested as part of the budget setting process. Savings of up to £250,000 per annum will be delivered from the Play Service revenue budget from April 2017. The costs of redundancies (where applicable) will be recovered from the savings within the first 12 months following the redundancies. Once agreed, service budgets will be adjusted to reflect the savings.

The cost of ongoing maintenance of the two playgrounds has been identified from existing budgets.

7.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

7.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that as stated in the main body of the report the provision of recreational facilities by the council is a discretionary power under s19 Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 and not a statutory duty. The Council is not the Education Authority, nor the Social Services Authority; that is Hertfordshire County Council. The council has no statutory requirement to consult either users or the wider public when determining how to exercise its discretion under s19.

In any event users and the wider public have informed the council of their views and these are set out in the report for members to consider.

The Council has complied with its employment policies with respect to affected staff.

The Council has also carried out an equalities impact analysis and has had due regard to the effects of this proposal on its equality duties and crime and disorder as set out in the report.

7.3 **Equalities and Human Rights**

7.3.1 Under s149 (1) of the Equality Act 2010 the council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, to the need to –

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.
- foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.

In order to have regard to the council's obligations under s149, officers have undertaken an equalities impact analysis, which is appended (Appendix A).

Cabinet is asked to consider the public sector equality duty (see 5.5) and the EIA. Officers would particularly draw members' attention to the identified positive impact of broadening the play offer for 5-15 year olds in terms of fostering good community relations by bringing together a higher proportion of the borough's young people in this age range (currently around 12,000 young people) through shared play experiences. The EIA also recognises the importance of the commissioned play activities for the Easter and summer holidays in terms of meeting the needs of Watford's diverse community and, in particular, for young people with disabilities (both physical and learning) and from black and minority ethnic communities. The change from the current play provision has potential negative impacts or risks for current registered users. These include: the loss of supervised play; potential issues around ASB/criminal behaviour at the sites; and the risk of the specific needs of some users not being taken into consideration when developing the transformed play service. The EIA notes that alternative supervised play activities and childcare are available within Watford and these need to be signposted to parents/carers as appropriate. As in 5.5, the EIA has regard to the Council's successful approach to tackling ASB (which might also constitute discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct as set out in the Equality Act 2010) and more serious criminal behaviour, should these occur within and in the vicinity of the two sites once they are re-opened. The impact on users with specific needs will be addressed through the final design stage of the upgraded plans and, as outlined, above the commissioned services should be accessible to all abilities and ethnic groups, and will be at locations where young people will be able to attend and there is an identified need and demand.

7.3.2 Officers do not consider that the proposals in this report engage the Convention rights of any users of the APGs to any significant degree. Even if there was an interference with the rights of users under Article 8 of the Convention (right to respect for the individual's private and family life), it is considered that the interference would be slight, in accordance with the law and proportionate.

7.4 **Potential Risks**

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
Costs exceed budget	1	4	4
Future revenue savings not achieved	1	4	4
Designs not implemented in time	1	3	3

7.5 **Staffing**

7.5.1 All current play staff have been consulted in accordance with the council's redundancy restructure and reorganisation policy and notices to terminate their employment were served on 26 August 2016. All staff have been offered outplacement support. A post will be created to continue the commissioning of play activities and provide resilience to the Culture and Play section in responding to future challenges.

7.5.2 In the event the Cabinet decides not to proceed with the proposals in this report the Council will need to consult with affected staff on mutually agreeing that the redundancy notices will be withdrawn.

7.6 **Accommodation**

7.6.1 There are no accommodation implications. The new post will be located at Watford Town Hall.

7.7 **Community Safety**

7.7.1 The council has had regard to the implications of the proposals on crime and disorder and community safety as set out in paragraph 5.6 above

7.8 **Sustainability**

7.8.1 The equipment will have a 20 year lifespan.

Appendices

Appendix A – Equalities impact analysis

Appendix B - Overview of the designs for Harwoods APG

Appendix C – Overview of the designs for Harebreaks APG

Appendix D – Attendance figures

Background Papers:

- letters, e-mails and petition from users, Cabinet report 4 July 2016, overview and scrutiny call-in report 21 July 2016

- ecological assessments for Harwoods and Harebreaks



Equality Impact Analysis

Title of policy, function or service	Improvements to Watford's Adventure Playgrounds
Lead officer	Alan Gough
Person completing the EIA	Kathryn Robson
Type of policy, function or service:	New/Proposed X
Version & Date	June 2016 V4. UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2016

1. Background

UPDATE

A proposal has come forward to enhance the play offer for young people in Watford at two adventure playgrounds (APGs), combined with the withdrawal of staff who currently supervise the APGs. This proposal was originally considered by Watford Borough Council's Cabinet on 4 July 2016 and subsequently upheld by the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 July 2016.

Since this time, the council has received a letter from solicitors acting on behalf of a user of the current service threatening a legal challenge to the decision taken by Cabinet on 4 July 2016 (and which was subsequently upheld by Call-in on 21 July 2016), in relation to the proposals for investment in its adventure playgrounds at Harebreaks and Harwoods on a number of grounds.

The council has considered the content of the letter carefully and has taken the view that it would be prudent to retake the decision on the future of the Adventure Playgrounds at its Cabinet meeting on 10 October 2016.

Also in response to the legal challenge, the equality impact analysis has been reviewed and updated where appropriate and where additional information has been made available that is relevant to the issues raised.

Overview of improvements to Watford's Adventure Playgrounds

Whilst significant investment has been made in the town's play areas as part of the delivery of the borough's Green Spaces Strategy, these improved facilities meet the needs predominantly of a younger age range (under 12s).

Extension of provision

A gap in provision has been identified for adventurous play for an older age range than is currently catered for within Watford's play areas. This provision needs to have a wide appeal and meet the demands of today's young people for outdoor play facilities

In addition, a review of the council's two Adventure Playgrounds (APGs) at Harebreaks and Harwoods identified that, whilst offering a good service for those young people who did attend, take up was limited in comparison to the number of young people within the age range of 5-15 years across the borough, with a significant correlation between users and their proximity to the site.

Furthermore, the facilities themselves are outdated, with substantial investment required to bring them up to an acceptable and, in the long term, safe standard. The buildings had a limited life span when erected, which they have now far exceeded.

Financial pressures

The reduction and then removal of the Revenue Support Grant by Central Government means that the council has to make savings of approximately £3m by April 2019. At the same time the council wishes to create an improved play offer that is high quality, modern, sustainable and more accessible.

The Proposal

A company called Southern Green was commissioned to provide design possibilities for the two APGs, with a brief including:

- making the Adventure Playgrounds accessible at all times, for ages 5 – 15 years
- modern, innovative and challenging play experiences
- designs to take into account health and safety guidance
- play areas to be durable and sustainable and equipment to have a 20 year lifespan
- providing a destination for families from across the borough
- specifically in relation to Harebreaks to work with the existing natural environment

This has given rise to outline designs, which, whilst developing towards a final, agreed design, at this stage, are still outline proposals and could be subject to change.

The design proposals in summary:

The playgrounds at Harwoods will include a number of play zones which encourage different types of adventurous play opportunities in different environments:

- a welcoming space for families gathering together, seating, and play equipment for younger children so that there is a full family offer provided
- a climbing wall
- an iconic tower with aerial tunnel, slides, and bridge
- adventure trail challenges
- double zip wire
- exciting swing area and natural play areas

This will all be integrated and linked to the existing MUGA and other outdoor areas. The whole area will be connected by a landscaping scheme including new planting and walkways. It will be necessary to remove some trees from this site in consultation with the council's Arboricultural Officer.

For Harebreaks playgrounds the same design criteria remain, however the proposals are tailored to the existing habitat. The play zones will include:

- a welcoming space for families gathering together
- woodland transition, to encourage and intrigue visitors to venture within the woodland
- an iconic fixed play structure to excite and challenge young people
- adventure trail challenges
- some of the former play area reverting back to a more natural habitat

Again this will be linked to existing outdoor areas such as the existing playground.

The above proposals will lead to improved facilities at the playground sites that can be enjoyed all year round by children and families. This can be contrasted with the current opening times for the APGs, which are as follows:

April to October (summer opening hours)

Harebreaks Adventure Playground

	MON	WEDS	THURS	FRID	SAT	SUN
Term Time	3.30 to 6pm	3.30 to 6pm	3.30 to 6pm	3.30 to 6pm	11am to 5pm	11am to 5pm
School Holidays	10am to 5pm	10am to 5pm	10am to 5pm	10am to 5pm	11am to 5pm	11am to 5pm

Harwoods Adventure Playground

	MOND	TUES	THURS	FRID	SAT	SUN
Term Time	3.20 to 6pm	3.20 to 6pm	3.20 to 6pm	3.20 to 6pm	11am to 5pm	11am to 5pm
School Holidays	10am to 5pm	10am to 5pm	10am to 5pm	10am to 5pm	11am to 5pm	11am to 5pm

November to March (winter opening hours)

Harebreaks Adventure Playground

	MON	THURSDAY	SAT	SUN
Term time	3.30 to 5.30pm	3.30 to 5.30pm	11.30am to 4pm	11.30am to 4pm
School holidays	12.30 to 3pm	12.30 to 3pm	11.30am to 4pm	11.30am to 4pm

Harwoods Adventure Playground

	TUES	FRID	SAT	SUN
Term time	3.20 to 5.30pm	3.20 to 5.30pm	11.30am to 4pm	11.30am to 4pm
School holidays	12.30 to 3pm	12.30 to 3pm	11.30am to 4pm	11.30am to 4pm

Easter and summer holiday play activities

The upgraded APGs would not be restricted to specific opening hours and would not require staffing. It is proposed that in addition, play activities will be commissioned for the two week Easter break and for six weeks in the summer holiday period. These activities would support use of the two new playgrounds, Watford's parks and open spaces, the Big Events programme and other locations in the borough. Following the decision in July, informal engagement was undertaken at two sessions in August with users of the two playgrounds to seek their feedback on what could be included in the Easter and summer holiday activities programme as well as their views on the playground designs.

Maintenance

Regular inspection and maintenance of the new play grounds will become part of the contract with Veolia. Appropriate signage will be placed at the entrances to the play grounds welcoming visitors and advising on use of the equipment.

Impact on current staffing

The major staffing change delivered by these proposals is that the playgrounds will no longer be supervised, which means the members of staff employed to deliver the current service will be affected. Engagement with the staff was initiated in advance of Cabinet in July. Since the decision in July, statutory consultation has been undertaken with staff and, subsequently, redundancy notices have been issued. The threatened legal action has not affected these notices, although if Cabinet decides not to proceed with the proposals the redundancy notices will be withdrawn.

Drop in sessions: July 2016

The proposals will provide play facilities for older children across the borough. In view of this, it was expected that there would be community interest in what is planned at the two sites and people would want to find out more. Two information events were held in July 2016 These were 'drop in' and gave people an opportunity to view the plans, which were also made available via the council's website and to provide suggestions for the Easter and summer programme of play activities

2. Focus of the Equality Impact Analysis

This EIA, therefore, considers the potential equality related impacts, both positive and negative of the investment in Watford's adventure playgrounds on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010.

These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership

4. What we know about the Watford population

The proposals for the investment in the APGs focus on providing broader adventurous play opportunities for 5-15 year olds.

Age

In terms of Watford, the most recent population figures (mid 2015 estimate) show there are the following numbers of young people in this age category:

5-9 years	6,740
10-14 years	5,692
TOTAL	12,432

This equates to around 12.9% of the population (96,400 in total). We also know that there are 7,424 0-4 year olds in Watford as of 2014. These children will move into the 5-9 years category over the next 5 years, which shows a rising number of young people in the borough within the target age range for these play facilities (the 0-4 years who will be 5-9 years are greater in number than the 10-14 years who will be leaving the 5-15 year age range)

Ethnicity

In terms of Watford overall, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown for the top five ethnicity groups: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), Indian (5.5%) and Other Asian (4.4%).

Religion

In Watford overall, the religious breakdown in the Census 2011 between the main belief groups was: Christian (54.1%), Muslim (9.8%), Hindu (4.8%), with no religion stated at 21.4%.

Health

In terms of health, we know that as of 2014/15, 30% of Watford children were classified as 'overweight'. The link between a healthy weight and physical activity (as well as healthy eating) is well signposted.

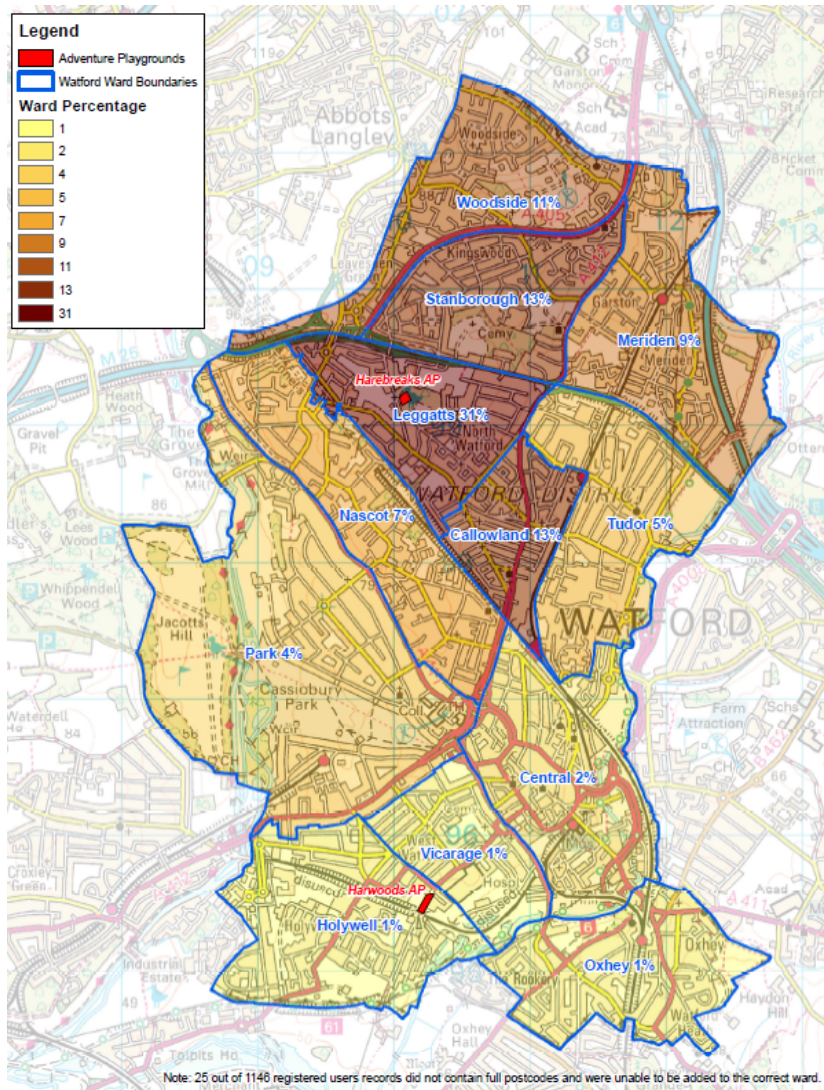
5. What we know about current users

i. Harebreaks

As of end of June 2014 there were 1614 children registered at Harebreaks Adventure Playground. Of these 433 (27%) were not Watford residents.

From the data provided the following is the ward breakdown of registered users who were Watford residents (i.e. the 1171 registered users who stated they were Watford residents 25 did not give details of their ward/postcode):

Callowland	150 (13%)	Oxhey	14 (1%)
Central	28 (2%)	Park	45 (4%)
Holywell	13 (1%)	Stanborough	153 (13%)
Leggatts	361 (31%)	Tudor	57 (5%)
Meriden	105 (9%)	Vicarage	10 (1%)
Nascot	82 (7%)	Woodside	128 (11%)

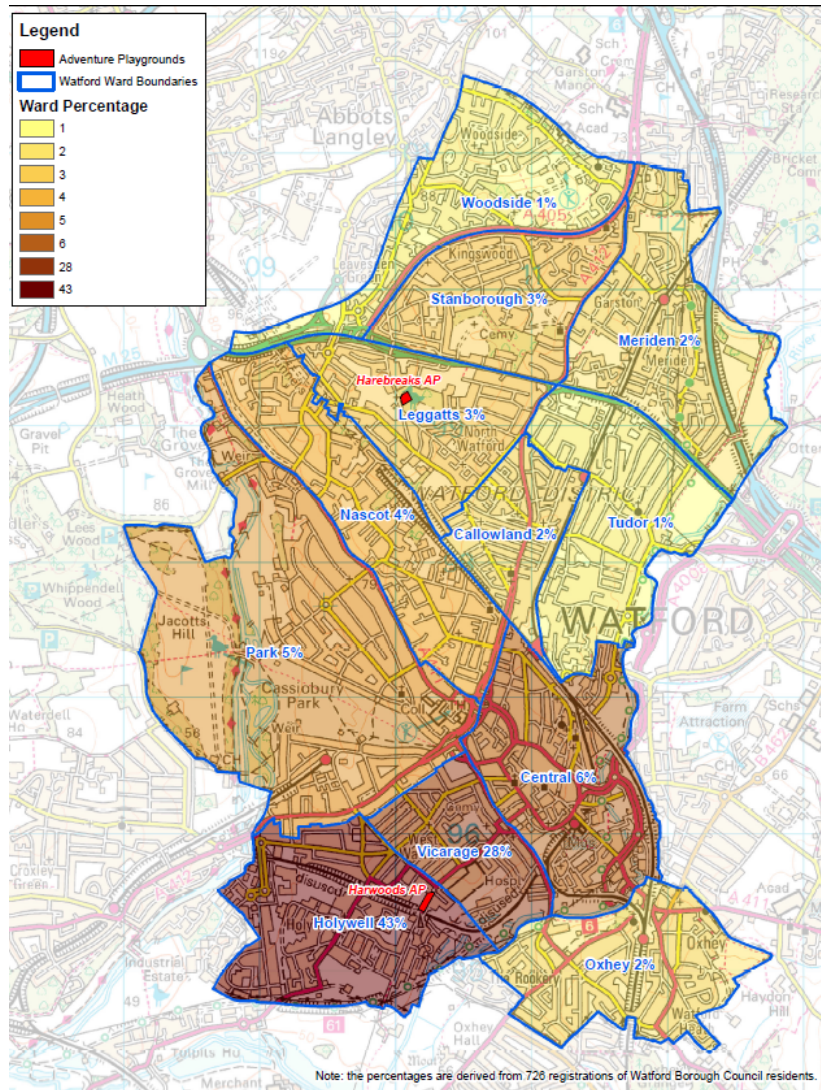


ii. Harwoods

As of end of June 2014 there were 876 children registered at Harwoods Adventure Playground. Of these 133 (15%) were not Watford residents.

From the data provided the following is the ward breakdown of registered users who were Watford residents (i.e. the 726 registered users who stated they were Watford residents). From the data provided (i.e. not all gave postcodes), the following is the ward breakdown of registered users – 71% of registered users are from two wards (Holywell and Vicarage).

Callowland	15 (2%)	Oxhey	18 (2%)
Central	43 (6%)	Park	35 (5%)
Holywell	315 (43%)	Stanborough	22 (3%)
Leggatts	19 (3%)	Tudor	6 (1%)
Meriden	17 (2%)	Vicarage	202 (28%)
Nascot	28 (4%)	Woodside	7 (1%)



iii. Equalities related data available at the time of developing this revised EIA

The following data has been collated from new registrations in 2015/16 at the two adventure playgrounds. It provides the most up to date equalities related information available on users of the centre across: sex, age, disability, ethnicity and religion.

Harebreaks APG

Total registration forms received: 769

a. Sex

	Male	Female	Not reported
Actual	412	353	4
%	54%	45%	1%

There is a slightly higher percentage of males registered than in the population overall.

b. Age

Years	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Not reported
Actual	103	104	100	92	92	76	94	43	39	17	4	5
%	13%	13%	13%	12%	12%	10%	12%	6%	5%	2%	1%	1%

This data shows that the average (mean) age of the children attending is just over 8.5 years – towards the lower end of the age range provided for at the playground. The median age is 8.

c. Ethnicity

Ethnic group	Number	Percentage
White British	444	58%
White Irish	5	1%
White other	49	6%
Indian	26	3%
Pakistani	18	2%
Bangladeshi	0	0%
Chinese	3	0.5%
Other Asian / Asian British	11	1%
African	17	2%
Caribbean	10	1%
Other Black / Black British	0	0%
Mixed	49	6%
Not recorded	137	18%

The level of ‘not recorded’ means that it is difficult to assess the ethnicity data against that for the area and Watford overall.

Harebreaks is within Leggatts ward; from the registration data in 2014 just over 30% of those registered came from this ward. At the time of the Census 2011 Leggatts had the following ethnic make up (largest 3 groups): White British: 61.4%, Pakistani: 11.1% and White Other: 5.9%. The take up shown above for the Pakistani community would be expected to be higher (data shows 2%)

given the population in the immediate area (Leggatts: 11.1% Pakistani residents) from which the highest percentage of registrations is drawn.

d. Disability

	Yes	No	Not reported
Actual	24	703	42
%	3%	91%	6%

There is no breakdown between physical and learning difficulties within the registration information.

e. Religion

Religion	Number	Percentage
Buddhist	0	0%
Christian	256	33%
Hindu	22	3%
Muslim	25	3%
Jewish	8	1%
Sikh	2	1%
Other	45	6%
Not recorded	411	53%

The registration form did not allow for a 'no religion' option, which was an option in the Census 2011 and registered a significant response in both wards.

In terms of the options available, the main religions in the Leggatts ward were Christian (52.6%) and Muslim (13.8%).

Harwoods APG

Total registration forms received: 324

a. Sex

	Male	Female	Not reported
Actual	183	130	11
%	56%	40%	4%

There is a higher percentage of males registered than in the population overall.

b. Age

Years	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Not reported
Actual	48	50	33	45	43	31	34	13	16	7	2	2
%	15%	15%	10%	14%	13%	10%	11%	4%	5%	2%	0.5%	0.5%

This data shows that the average (mean) age of the children attending is just under 8.5 years – towards the lower end of the age range provided for at the playground. The median age is 8.

c. Ethnicity

Ethnic group	Number	Percentage
White British	106	33%
White Irish	3	2%
White other	42	13%
Indian	5	1%
Pakistani	47	14%
Bangladeshi	2	1%
Chinese	0	0%
Other Asian / Asian British	6	2%
African	25	8%
Caribbean	7	2%

Ethnic group	Number	Percentage
Other Black / Black British	0	0%
Mixed	28	9%
Not recorded	53	16%

The level of 'not recorded' means that it is difficult to assess the ethnicity data against that for the area overall.

Harwoods is just within Holywell ward in west Watford, which at the time of the Census 2011 had the following ethnic make up (largest 3 groups): White British: 48.5%, Pakistani: 14.4% and White Other: 9.5%. The neighbouring ward – Vicarage – had the following ethnic make up in 2011 (largest 3 groups): White British: 35.8%, Pakistani: 18.5% and White Other: 12.5%

Registration data from 2014 shows that over 70% were from these two wards so the expectation would be that attendance should reflect the community in which the playground is situated. Overall, this is broadly the case.

In terms of Watford overall, the Census 2011 shows the following breakdown: White British (61.4%), Pakistani (11.1%), White other (5.9%) and other Asian (5%).

d. Disability

	Yes	No	Not reported
Actual	9	277	38
%	3%	85%	12%

There is no breakdown between physical and learning difficulties within the registration information.

e. Religion

Religion	Number	Percentage
Buddhist	0	0%
Christian	110	34%
Hindu	9	3%
Muslim	55	17%
Jewish	4	1%

Religion	Number	Percentage
Sikh	0	0%
Other	137	42%
Not recorded	9	3%

The registration form did not allow for a 'no religion' option, which was an option in the Census 2011 and registered a significant response in both wards.

In terms of the options available, the two main religions in both the Holywell and Vicarage ward were Christian and Muslim with 49.5% Christian and 19.0% Muslim in Holywell and 47.4% Christian and 23.5% Muslim in Vicarage respectively.

Staff

In total, 15 staff would be affected by the change in service provision.

Of these 4 are male and 11 female.

6. Engagement

Engagement and information events were undertaken on 9 July and 11 July to show local people the plans and to take feedback. There was limited attendance at these events and so there is little further information to be added to this analysis.

Overall, feedback received to the council through various routes, such as letters to the Mayor and Mayor's office and in response to the communications sent out on 24 June and 1 July 2016, has been concerned with the loss of the supervised element of the service and the impact this would have on young people. Whilst there will still be opportunities at Easter and summer for young people in the 5-15 years age range to participate in play activities with qualified play workers and without a parent/carer present – thus offering a similar 'discovery' experience, feedback remains concerned with the loss of this service on a daily basis throughout the year.

Easter and summer programme of activities

In August 2016, two sessions were held (one at each APG) to find out young people's views of possible holiday activities. The engagement was informal and the young people were able to choose between a number of activities proposed as well as suggesting any of their own. The engagement highlighted that sports and music related activities were the preferred options for the young people, with sports of particular interest to males.

Also raised were concerns about the age appropriateness of the activities with requests not to mix the younger age group with the older.

Staff

Affected staff were subject to a 30 day consultation period on the proposals from 11 July – 8 August 2016.

7. How will the council ensure equality is promoted through investment in Watford's APGs

Under s 149 of the Equality Act 2010, three areas need to be considered when analysing the equality impact of the investment in Watford's APGs:

The need to:

1. **eliminate** discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
2. **advance** equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
3. **foster** good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not

Given what we know about the Watford population, the registered users of the APGs and from the feedback that has been received, the following is the assessment of the equality impacts, both positive and negative of the proposed changes to play provision in Watford.

A. Positive impacts

The proposed change to the play provision at Watford's two APGs is likely to have the following positive impacts:

1. **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it**

The opportunity provided by the investment means that both playgrounds can be designed to maximise accessibility for children of all ages. This will include not just the equipment installed but also the pathways and access to and around the site.

The play activities commissioned during the Easter and summer holidays will reflect the need to be accessible and to cater for a wide range of young people and abilities. In terms of young people with disability, this will include both physical and learning disabilities. In addition, these activities will be designed to meet the needs and reflect Watford's diverse community. Locations for these activities are yet to be confirmed but they will need to take into account areas which will advance equality of opportunity in terms of diverse neighbourhoods with a high number of young people.

2. **Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not**

The changes to the playgrounds will broaden the offer available to young people from 5-15 year olds and their families. By providing facilities 24/7 throughout the year there will be more opportunity for young people to use the facilities and to engage with each other through play. As shown in the analysis of registrations there

is a strong correlation between registered users of the facilities and the area in which they are located compared with the overall population of 5-15 year olds in the borough. The aim of the upgraded facilities will be to appeal to a broader range of young people from across the borough thus meeting the duty to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

The quality and range of equipment on offer will also broaden the playgrounds appeal and encourage greater usage from across the borough – ultimately providing a ‘go to’ destination for young people and their families. The proposed designs include integrated picnic areas, a meeting space with seating, which will provide more opportunities for families to gather and be part of the new experience.

3. **Sustainable provision**

As outlined above, the council is facing another period of substantial reductions to its revenue budget. This means that all services are under pressure and long-term sustainability cannot be guaranteed under current financial constraints.

Undertaking this investment will ensure there are good quality facilities available for the 5 – 15 age range for the next 20 years – given the lifespan of the equipment being installed.

B. Negative impacts

The proposed change to the play provision at Watford’s two APGs is likely to have the following negative impacts:

1. **Loss of current amenity**

The APG and Play Ranger service as they are currently delivered will cease from October 2016. This means that current service users will no longer be able to access a supervised play service at the two APG sites. This will have an impact on those young people used to accessing a supervised facility with organised activities. Adventurous play will still be available on both sites along with tailored activities during Easter and summer. However, there will not be a staffed service as at present.

It will also potentially impact the parents and carers of those young people. This is because parents and carers will, if they feel the age and ability of their children requires it, need to supervise their children’s play at the upgraded facilities unlike the present service where they are not required to provide supervision. This would be similar to the situation at the borough’s other outdoor play facilities. This change may have a greater effect on those lower-income households that rely on the APGs to provide a form of supervised childcare.

Where parents/carers require childcare provision, including after school provision, this is available at other facilities in the borough that have been established with the specific remit for childcare. Many are in the locality of the current APGs albeit there is likely to be a charge to parents / carers.

2. **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act and possible anti-social behaviour/criminal behaviour**

Unsupervised play means there is potential for unacceptable behaviour not to be dealt with directly. This behaviour could take the form of discrimination, harassment or victimisation or other behaviour prohibited under the Equality Act 2010 and related to protected characteristics. All the borough's outdoor play areas are monitored by the Park Ranger service and the rangers can deal with issues as they arise and as notified. Where incidents are of a more serious nature, the borough has a very effective, multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, which has a positive impact when incidents are reported. Any issues that would be deemed anti-social behaviour would be reported through the council's Community Safety Co-ordinator. A contact number for the Park Ranger service could be included on the information boards on both sites.

The play activities that will be commissioned by the council will be designed to address issues around accessibility and inclusion and should also clearly set out to those attending what is expected in terms of behaviours and actions. The council should expect any commissioned/organisation to explain their approach to equalities within any submissions and the council should assure itself that the duties under the Equality Act 2010 are understood and actioned by any commissioned organisations.

3. **Disabilities**

The equalities data has identified that there are some young people with disabilities attending the current service. It is not clear from the data as to the exact nature of their disabilities. There is a potential negative impact on these young people from the loss of the current service provision, although the extent of that impact is difficult to gauge without knowing how many children with disabilities were left at the APGs under the supervision of staff.

For those with physical disabilities, it is recommended that the design and equipment within the new provision takes into account issues of accessibility and suitability of use by young people across the spectrum of physical abilities.

For those with physical and learning difficulties, it is recommended that the activities commissioned for Easter and summer take into account the wide range of needs and abilities of the young people who might choose to attend and to be clear about the commitment to accessibility within any marketing/promotional literature.

For those young people with physical and learning difficulties who access the service during term-time, it is recommended that the council signposts their parents/carers to the alternative provision available.

4. **Ethnicity**

The equalities data has identified the range of ethnicities attending the playgrounds. At Harebreaks the diversity recorded does not reflect the immediate area and it would be hoped that the new provision would encourage more representative use as well as encouraging young people of all ethnicities from across the borough. Given the data, there is no disproportionate impact on any one ethnic group.

At Harwoods, the registrations are more reflective of the surrounding community. The EIA does not find that there is a disproportionate impact on any one ethnic group as a result of the closure as there is not one ethnic group which is disproportionately using the facility (i.e. the percentage of Pakistani users and White non British users is in line with the surrounding community). However, given the level of ethnic minority use, this diversity should be encouraged in terms of the use of the new provision so that there is use by all ethnic groups within the community. This can be supported through the appropriate communications materials and channels to ensure that the messages about the provision are received across the community as a whole and targeted where appropriate to specific groups e.g. through community organisations, places of worship.

In addition, the activities planned for Easter and summer need to reflect the ethnic diversity of the borough and this is recommended as a factor to be taken into account in developing the programme.

5. Data on the family make up of the registered users of the APGs is not available. However, it would be expected that some of the registered users are from single parent families, where it is likely that the parent with the main caring responsibility is female. The change to provision is, therefore, likely to have a greater effect on women who are also the main carers of registered users and whose children use the supervised service. If the proposals go ahead, these parents will be able to access the Easter and summer activities programme proposed by the council as well as facilities in the borough that will be supervised including after school clubs.

6. Vulnerability is not identified as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and the provision of children's services is a statutory duty for upper and single tier authorities (rather than a district council like Watford BC). In view of this, ensuring there is adequate identification and support for vulnerable young people in Watford is provided for by other agencies/organisations including Hertfordshire County Council and local schools and colleges. In terms of the activities programme that will be commissioned, the expectation would be that any commissioned organisation or individual is appropriately trained, qualified and checked in order to ensure protection for any young people engaging with the activities provided. In addition, the commissioned organisation or individual should be fully aware of where to signpost any issues relating to vulnerability should they arise whilst the programme is taking place.

7. Staff responsible for running the supervised service will be affected by the proposals. Consultation has been undertaken with the affected staff.

8. Overall conclusion

Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty

This EIA has taken into account the council's public sector equality duty under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 and is intended to assist the council in meeting its duty. The council is required to have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act**

Although the removal of staff could mean that there is greater scope for anti-social and/or discriminatory behaviour between users of the playgrounds, measures would be put in place to deal with these behaviours should they arise. All the borough's outdoor play areas are monitored by the Park Ranger service (managed by Veolia) and the rangers can deal with issues as they arise and as notified. Where incidents are of a more serious nature, the borough has a very effective, multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. Any issues that would be deemed anti-social behaviour would be reported through the council's Community Safety Co-ordinator. Organisations and individual commissioned to run and manage the Easter and summer holiday activities would be expected to demonstrate an understanding and commitment to equalities and the duties as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- **advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it**

The opportunity provided by the investment means that both playgrounds can be designed to maximise accessibility for 5-15 years at all times throughout the year. This will include not just the equipment installed but also the pathways and access to and around the site. The provision remains free and so there is no barrier created through affordability, and by creating stimulating, challenging and enjoyable play opportunities within safe, well-maintained environments, the council will be providing a service that will appeal to young people across the protected characteristics.

The play activities commissioned during the Easter and summer holidays will reflect the need to be accessible and to cater for a wide range of young people and abilities. In terms of young people with disability, this will include both physical and learning disabilities. In addition, these activities will be designed to meet the needs and reflect Watford's diverse community. Locations for these activities are yet to be confirmed but they will need to take into account areas which will advance equality of opportunity in terms of diverse neighbourhoods with a high number of young people.

There is likely to be a negative impact on parents/carers who currently leave children at the APGs under the supervision of staff. If the proposals are adopted they will no longer be able to do this, and this is likely to have a greater effect on women, who tend to be the primary carers of children during the day, and lower-income households. There are, however, other child care services in the borough and during the Easter and summer holidays the council will arrange for a programme of play activities.

- **foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it**

The changes to the playgrounds will broaden the offer available to young people from 5-15 year olds and their families. By providing facilities 24/7 throughout the year there will be more opportunity for young people to use the facilities and to engage with each other through play. As shown in the analysis of registrations there is a strong correlation between registered users of the facilities compared with the overall population of 5-15 year olds. The aim of the upgraded facilities will be to appeal to a far broader range of young people from across the borough thus meeting the duty to foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not.

The quality and range of equipment on offer will also broaden the playgrounds appeal and encourage greater usage from across the borough – ultimately providing a ‘go to’ destination for young people and their families. The proposed designs include integrated picnic areas, a meeting space with seating, which will provide more opportunities for families to gather and be part of the new experience.

Overview of EIA findings

The proposals for the APGs are intended to deliver a universal, adventurous and accessible play offer for 5 – 15 year olds within the borough.

Through the installation of the new range of equipment the appeal of the offer in Watford will broaden, with the aim of attracting wider usage from young people across the town. The new provision will be accessible and designed to appeal to young people of all ages and abilities and remain sited at their current locations, minimising the impact to the immediate community whilst extending the offer to appeal to the wider area. The proposals help secure play provision for the older age range at a time when council budgets are under extreme pressure and when difficult decisions are being taken on services by councils across the country.

The absence of staff might mean that there is greater scope for anti-social and/or discriminatory behaviour between users of the playgrounds, but the Park Ranger service will be available to attend to complaints should they arise. For more serious anti-social behaviour, there is the council’s multi-agency approach, which has been successful in tackling incidents in the borough.

There is a potential negative impact for the current users who are accustomed to a supervised facility delivering play activities. However, there will still be arranged activities in the Easter and summer holidays, which are the most popular time for children to participate in organised play programmes. In addition, there are alternative supervised play facilities available in the borough.

The users of these facilities are the young people themselves and it is envisaged that the upgraded equipment and longer opening hours will appeal and strengthen the current play offer. The current playgrounds were not developed to provide childcare, particularly in terms of an after school offer. They are not promoted as such and alternatives are available to parents and carers looking for this type of amenity.

The overall conclusion of the EIA is that the positive impacts of the proposals outweigh the negative impacts, given the aim to expand take up to a wider number of young people within the borough, but there are recommendations to mitigate the negative impacts where possible. The council will seek to ensure the needs of children with disabilities are taken into account as are those of the

borough's diverse community. In particular, the EIA recommends the commissioned Easter and summer play activities actively respond to the equalities requirements of potential users.

Summary of potential positive impacts and ways in which they can be ensured

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<p>1.</p> <p>Ensure the design and layout of the new APG provision are attractive, challenging and accessible to ensure they offer a 'destination of choice' for young people to enjoy with their families and friends</p>	<p>Age – younger people - 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Age – parents and carers of children within the 5 – 15 years age group</p>	<p>Challenge design team to develop proposals that will attract young people and adapt to differing abilities.</p>
<p>2.</p> <p>Ensure the equipment and layout of the new APG provision takes into account young people with disabilities</p>	<p>Age – younger people - 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Disability</p>	<p>Finalised proposals to include equipment for all abilities and that the layout is accessible. Test designs with appropriate users to ensure there are no barriers to participation either through the design or layout.</p> <p>New designs should be accessible to young people of all abilities within the 5-15 years age.</p> <p>Appropriate council officer should be able to signpost parents/carers of children with disabilities where a need is identified by the parent / carer for supervised provision.</p>

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
<p>3.</p> <p>Ensure that the benefits of the new provision are understood and communicated effectively to maximise take up once open.</p>	<p>Age – younger people - 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Age – parents and carers of children within the 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Disability</p>	<p>Communications plan to be developed in preparation for launch. Communications to ensure messages relevant to equalities be included and for the design / messages to be developed to ensure inclusion and no barriers to young people taking up the service (e.g. appropriate images / photographs)</p> <p>Undertake on site surveys once opened – recommendation is annually to assess satisfaction of users and to ensure there is take-up across the community.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>Ensure the commissioned play activities in Easter and summer complement the play offer in the town, are accessible and meet the needs of young people; make sure the council complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>Age – younger people - 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Age – parents and carers of children within the 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>Ethnicity</p>	<p>Use data and information on the borough’s profile to support commissioning as well as ensuring a sound understanding of what is already on offer to ensure commissioned services meet the needs in the appropriate locations identified.</p> <p>Programme of activities developed for Easter and summer to take into account the needs of young people with disabilities both in terms of physical and learning disabilities. Also ensure commissioned services are sensitive to cultural and religious requirements and are reflective of the diverse profile of the borough.</p>

Positive Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to ensure the positive impact
		<p>Feedback received from young people to date (August 2016) indicates an interest in a range of activities and the desire from the young people to ensure they are age appropriate. Location will also need careful consideration in terms of ensuring young people can access activities easily</p>

Summary of potential negative impacts and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<p>1.</p> <p>The loss of the supervised play service for 5-15 year olds will impact on current users and their families. The new provision will not provide the supervised activities as has been experienced in the past.</p>	<p>Age – younger people - 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Age – parents and carers of children within the 5 – 15 years age group</p> <p>Sex – more single parent families have a woman as the main carer</p> <p>Ethnicity – Harwoods APG is situated in an area with a high BME community</p>	<p>Access to challenging and adventurous play for 5- 15 year olds is not diminished by the proposals – it is enhanced given the range of new equipment that will be accessible.</p> <p>Where parents / carers require supervised play provision there is alternative provision across the borough – the council has collated this and is in a position to advise parents / carers if necessary.</p> <p>Where parents / carers require childcare, including after school childcare, there is alternative provision across the borough and within the vicinity of the playgrounds – the council has collated this and is in a position to advise parents / carers if necessary.</p> <p>Continue to provide a programme of play activities during the Easter and summer holidays when young people have free time to take part. These should take into account the needs of young people with disabilities and be sensitive to cultural and religious requirements.</p> <p>Undertake on site surveys once opened –</p>

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
		<p>recommendation is annually to assess satisfaction of users and to ensure there is take-up across the community.</p>
<p>2.</p> <p>Unsupervised play potentially leading to unacceptable behaviour in APGs including ASB and in terms of harassment, victimisation and discrimination and other prohibited conduct under Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Evidence from play areas and parks within the borough shows this is not a major issue in Watford. Where issues do arise, the Park Rangers service run by Veolia is alerted and intervenes. If it is more than a minor incident the council's Community Safety Co-ordinator who helps coordinate a multi-agency response to issues in the borough relating to ASB and criminal activity is alerted and measures are in put in place. Incidents relating to discrimination, harassment victimisation and other prohibited conduct under Equality Act 2010 would be addressed in the same way.</p> <p>It is recommended that the Community Safety Co-ordinator monitors ASB etc and prohibited behaviour (such as discrimination, harassment and victimisation) in the area of the APGs once the supervised service has ended to provide early identification of issues and proactive intervention if necessary.</p> <p>It is also recommended that how to contact the Park Rangers is signposted on the council's website within the section on parks and open spaces and on signage at the playgrounds</p>

Negative Impact	Protected characteristics	Ways to mitigate the negative impact
<p>3.</p> <p>15 staff affected by change.</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place with affected staff and they have had an opportunity to feedback their views. The council's relevant policies were applied and assistance provided as requested through the employee assistance programme. Staff redundancy notices have been issued.</p>

This updated EIA has been approved by:

Alan Gough..... Date1 October 2016.....

Appendix B

Overview of the designs for Harwoods APG

Proposed Play Zones

KEY - Proposed Features

- 1 Welcoming Space / Family Gathering Area**
Objective - to encourage visitors and create a welcoming meeting place
- 2 'Urban Play Space'**
Objective - to create an area which has a range of features including a climbing wall and a stand
- 3 Tower & Slides**
Objective - to create a landmark feature within the area and an exhilarating walkway
- 4 Adventure Trail**
Objective - to create an exciting linked trail providing a variety of challenges for all ages
- 5 Double Zip Wire**
Objective - to create an exciting aerial ride through the trees
- 6 Swing Area**
Objective - to provide exciting swings with different qualities

Existing Features

- Existing Circulation
- Existing Recreational facilities including:
 - Play area
 - Outdoor Gym
 - Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
- Residential Areas

New / Improved Entrance
Proposed Circulation

[Proposed numbers applicable to both plans and Feasibility Report]

WATFORD PLAY REVIEW - HARWOODS

southerngreen
chartered landscape architects

Overview of the designs for Harwoods APG

Proposed Play Zones

KEY - Proposed Features

- 1 Woodland Transition**
Objective - to create an exciting introduction to the woodland play area
- 2 Welcoming Space / Family Gathering Area**
Objective - to create a welcoming gathering area
- 3 Highfly Features**
Objective - to create a large unit reflecting characteristics of tree and woodland
- 4 Rope / Adventure Trail**
Objective - to create a challenging trail to test balance and speed
- 5 Rehabilitation of Natural Club Woodland**
Objective - to remove the old play area and restore the old woodland and building
- 6 New / Improved Entrance**

Existing Features

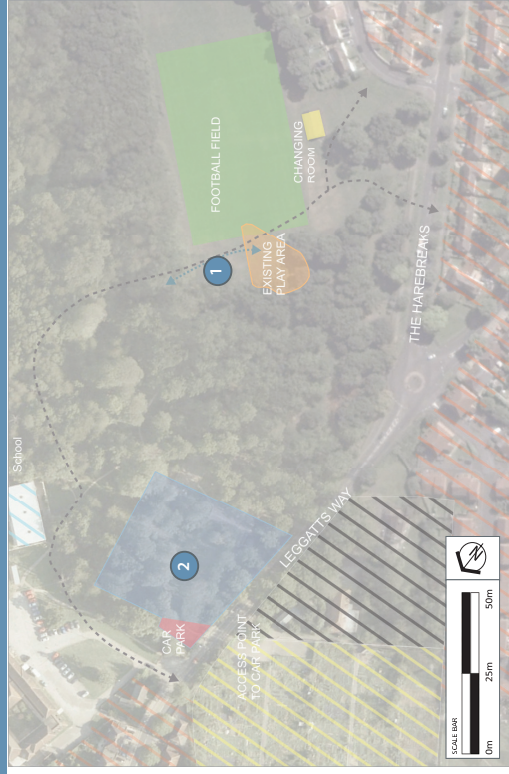
- Existing Circulation
- Access point to Car park
- Existing Play area
- Residential areas
- Cherry Tree Primary School
- Woodland remnants

Proposed Circulation

[Proposed numbers applicable to both plans and Feasibility Report]

WATFORD PLAY REVIEW - HAREBREAKS

southerngreen
chartered landscape architects



KEY:

Proposed Features

1

Flagship Feature - key features include:

Objective - to create a large unit reflecting characteristics of the oak woodland

- The Central tower unit is 13m high
- 12m long Wooden bridge and tunnel bridge
- The highest access point to the unit at 5m in height
- A spiral stainless steel tube slide will be installed at the highest access point totalling 7m in height. The slide is 12 metres long
- A second stainless steel tube slide totalling 12m in length will provide a rapid exit from the second highest platform totalling 6m in height
- Large rope nest providing opportunities to access the central tower with a vertical tunnel rope. This feature provides opportunities to relax and socialise.

2

Restoration of Natural Oak Woodland

Objective - to remove the old play area and restore the oak woodland and habitats

New / Improved Entrance

Proposed Circulation

Existing Features

Existing Circulation

Access point to Car Park

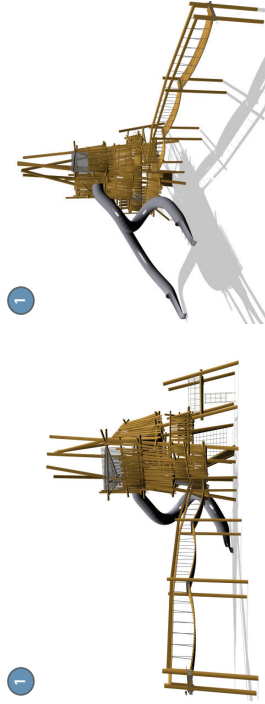
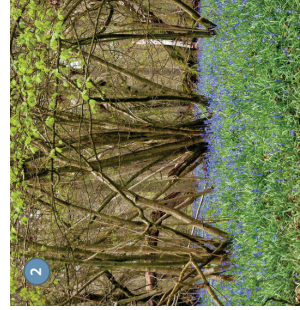
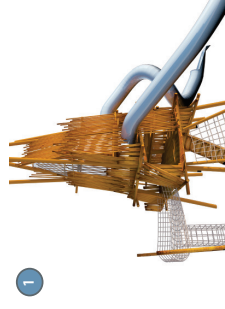
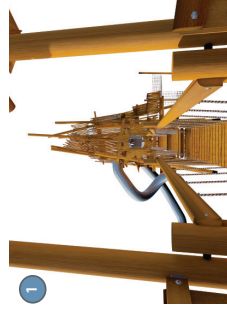
Existing Play Area

Residential Areas

Cherry Tree Primary School

Callowland Allotments

(Proposal numbers applicable to both plans and visualisations)



Appendix C

Harwoods APG



WATFORD PLAY REVIEW - HARWOODS



WATFORD PLAY REVIEW - HARWOODS



Harebreaks APG



Adventure Playground Attendance Figures

January 2016 to June 2016

Overall Totals

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Harwoods	662	657	803	2450	2346	2041
Harebreaks	300	386	488	1804	1393	1376

Average By Session*

*NOTE: this is an estimate based on the totals shown above divided by the sessions per month, using a 4 week month, and on the basis that at each site there are:

For January, February & March there are 2 after school sessions and 2 weekend sessions – the weekend sessions are longer than the after school

For April, May & June there are 4 after school sessions and 2 weekend sessions – the weekend sessions are longer than the after school

Please note that school holiday figures are included in those shown.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Harwoods	41.4	41.1	50.2	102.1	97.8	85.0
Harebreaks	18.8	24.1	30.5	75.2	58.0	57.3

SWAPs Core Working Group

(Martyn Cotrel, Tammi Gustafson, Ben Lewis and Libby Truscott)

Business Plan for:
31st October 2016 to 31st March 2018

Developed on: 9th August 2016

Last Reviewed on:
9th August 2016

Next Review on:
9th October 2016

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Background

Watford Borough Council (WBC) has plans to change how play is delivered to the children and their families in Watford. We believe this will have a profound effect on the entire community in particular vulnerable stakeholders who currently use the service. The Adventure Playgrounds in their current format are important not just to allow children the space to play free, but they provide for moral, psychological and physical support.

The purpose of this proposal sets out an alternative method of how the current play service can be kept, and developed using the capital funding currently set aside for the service regeneration. The new service would be devolved from the council and delivered by a group of professionals and members of a cross section of the community. It will engage in services that are currently not being offered by a creating a community hub; ensure the community is at the heart of a growing, modern charity, that cares about its service users, not just in the borough, but county wide. This proposal, if accepted, would continue Watford's long established history of being at the forefront of delivering quality play opportunities for over 40 years.

The current offering provided by WBC allows users to access two adventure playgrounds and a play ranger service, within the borough. The new organisation would aim to expand its reach, within a period of 10 years. The organisation understands to need to grow the reach of the service currently on offer; this can be achieved through streamlining the organisation, through the reduction in current staffing structure, modernisation of the physical assets and being a centre of excellence for play and playwork. This would make Watford at the forefront of practice and research that can be replicated throughout towns and cities across the UK.

This organisation has grown out of the Save Watford Adventure Playgrounds campaign. The campaign originated from the local community after plans were announced to remove the current play facilities and replace them with fixed equipment parks. The council have set aside £1.25 million to renovate the current play space, however this will leave a huge gap in provision and will result in the removal of all staffed play provision across the borough. There are pay to play services such as the holiday camps run by Fit for Sport, however these do not allow for the spontaneity of Adventure Playgrounds and the staff are often poorly paid, under qualified and in-experienced.

This proposal has been written by the core working group for the charity, which is currently unnamed. If the proposal is accepted, then the working group will seek to formalise the charity by 31st October 2016. The core working group is made up of four Play professionals with many years of experience in the Play sector. One is educated to a post graduate level, one to degree level, a third is studying at degree level and the fourth member has over 25 years of experience in the play sector. One member of the group is a trustee for Play England, the national body for Play. One of the working group members is a resident of Watford Borough, another a resident of Dacorum and two are residents in

Three Rivers. All members of the working group have had first-hand experience working face to face with the children in Watford through the Play service.

The charity recognises that there is a growing trend nationally to reduce and remove staffed play provision for children aged 5-16 years. Alongside this there has been a reduction in youth service for those aged 13-18 years. This trend is alarming and evidence is emerging that this level of service removal has led to increases in person on person crime, instances of racially motivated or hate crime, location based crime and antisocial behaviour (Taken from a report by North Somerset Council from 2015). There have also been cuts made to children's centres across the country, meaning that support for families with children under 5 have diminished in recent years, and this trend is set to continue. With that in mind, we can see that there will be an increased need for local, community based provision that meets the needs of all members of society. The charity recognises this, and see opportunity in using the two Adventure Playgrounds to develop community based hubs that will provide for all ages, races and culture across Watford Borough.

There are over 95,000 residents in Watford, and the two wards in which the Adventure Playgrounds are located are amongst the top 50 most deprived areas in Hertfordshire (taken from 2012 indices for deprivation in Hertfordshire) with Hollywell being in the top 25. This give the charity a huge potential reach area, with an ever expanding population.

The current service profile is narrow, with aims to reach children and young people aged 5-15years old. Under the new charity our service user profile will expand to include first time, young, and lone parents, families with children under 5 years old, families with children aged 5-15 years old. Children and young people aged 8-18 years old, hard to reach communities (Travellers, BME groups, isolated elderly people, workless households). Our organisation will be developed and directed by the community it serves and each hub will offer different sessions, activities and services to meet the needs of those who use it.

Vision

We want to provide a service that will be a centre of excellence for play and the best place for children and young people to grow into valuable members of the community. The organisation understands that as a provider it has an integral place in developing valuable services for the community and creating a substitutable future. We strive to provide a service that has a positive, long lasting, impact not just for children and young people but for the whole community, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Seeking to inspire and nurture community cohesion, through the use of play, by creating a hub of excellence, that is child centred, accessible and user friendly to all members of the community it serves.

Mission

“We aim to foster an environment where children and young people feel they can attend our service freely, where they can be heard, supported and make a difference. As a community hub we aim to offer support to all members of the wider community and to create a welcoming, inclusive and divers space.”

Values

What follows are our core values which outline, what they mean in practical terms and how the related to our work and practice. By implementing these into the operational and strategical delivery and plans, we can create a culture that centres around the beliefs and current needs of children and young people and the wider community, enabling us to provide a sustainable service, that is valued by the entire community is serves.

1. Child Centred

This means: that children and young people will be at the centre of any decision making and practice, to enable their voices to be heard prioritising the views and opinions against any adult led agenda.

2. Diversity

This means: that we recognise, accept and respect the uniqueness of all individuals; these include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio – economic status, age, physical abilities, mental abilities, religious beliefs and political beliefs.

3. Inclusivity

This means: that we aim to provide a service and space that is designed to enable all members of the community to fulfil their potential, no matter abilities and needs.

4. Community

This means: that we aim to work in, with and for the local and wider community; this will enable Watford to be at the centre of community cohesion, which will enable them to be connected to their community.

5. Quality

This means: we will maintain a service that has high standards in play, research, training, creativity and community development in order to meet the and support the needs of the service users.

6. Professionalism

This means: all staff, volunteers and partnership organisations will be expected to have high levels of qualifications and personal standards; to facilitate in a quality service that is in line with local and national policies and guidelines.

7. Partnership

This means: In order to provide a cost effective service, the organisation, would seek to work with other partnership organisations and effective networks to deliver serves to the community it serves.

8. Empowerment

This means: as an organisation we will empower children and young people to stand up for their human rights as laid down by the UNCRC and ratified by the United Kingdom government.

Championing the Cause

Our board of trustees will play a key role in championing our charity in its first few years. The board will consist of local professionals, parents and other community members. Each will be selected for their skills and ability, and will need to buy into our values, vision and mission.

The board will direct and support the team to ensure that the charitable message is spread, and will ensure that strong partnerships are made and the hardest to reach and target groups are kept informed. There will be Annual General Meetings held by the board of trustees where the accounts and works of the charity will be open to discussion with the general public. When the charity has become well established it is hoped that a marketing and communications support worker will be appointed to lead on communication and disseminations.

Below is the first annual marketing and communication plan for the charity.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

What groups do we need to serve most?	What do they need to hear from us?	What is the best way to find and communicate with them?	When will we communicate with them? How often?	How will we know if they have heard our message?
Children and Young people	Opening times, services offered, age ranges catered for, contact details, clothing needed, activities available at what times and what days, links to	Face to face through children's forum, AGM's, school assemblies, other local partners and community groups, uniformed groups, referrals from other	Children's forum will meet every six weeks. Staff will attend assemblies once a term. Marketing material through book bags termly and before	Children and young people will be actively engaged in shaping the service, there will be a minimum of 10 elected individuals at each adventure

What groups do we need to serve most?	What do they need to hear from us?	What is the best way to find and communicate with them?	When will we communicate with them? How often?	How will we know if they have heard our message?
	other services (youth support, uniform groups, local events), days dates and cost of outside activities, young volunteering opportunities, open access explanation, behaviour expectations.	organisations and statutory bodies (e.g. anti-social behaviour officer, doctors, social services), other community events. Through marketing leaflets and physical marketing, online marketing through social media and web space. Newsletter.	each holiday. Visits to be organised with uniform groups throughout the year (timescales to be decided). Newsletter produced termly. AGM's date to be decided but to fall within 11 to 13 months of the previous meeting. The first AGM will be held no later than 14 months after the commencement of service delivery.	playground attending the children's forum. Hard to reach and target groups will be identified and attendance increased (percentage to be agreed when current attendance figures are provided). Increase in service use by children and young people from across the borough (percentage to be agreed when current attendance figures are provided). Regular termly and holiday support from 5 young volunteers in year one. Attendance of the elected members of children's council at the AGM, attendance of service users at the AGM.
Parents	Opening times, services offered, age ranges catered for, how the service works, suitable clothing, health eating offering and advice on health lunch boxes, activities available	Through physical marketing materials through schools, mail lists, advertising in local press, community spaces and at community events. Online through social media, web space or blogs	Marketing material through book bags and mail lists termly and before each holiday. Advertising in local press and through online portals and information service termly and before	A minimum of 10 elected parent's representatives to attend each parent's forum. An increase of attendance from families with children under 5. An increase in

What groups do we need to serve most?	What do they need to hear from us?	What is the best way to find and communicate with them?	When will we communicate with them? How often?	How will we know if they have heard our message?
	at what times and what days, links to other services, days dates and cost of outside activities, transition advice (early years), open days and event, volunteering information and opportunities, policies and procedures, explanation of open access service.	and through sites such as net mums, day out with the kids and the Hertfordshire direct family information service. Face to face at parent's forums, local events and AGM's. Newsletter.	each holiday. Parents forum will meet every 6 weeks. Newsletter to be produced termly. The first AGM will be held no later than 14 months after the commencement of service delivery.	participation and attendance by parents with children aged 5-15. Support from 10 parent volunteers at events and fundraising in year one. Attendance at the AGM by parents of service users. Increase of attendance by children aged 5-15 years.
Local Community	Availability of hire, over-view of service provision, contact details, opening times, volunteer opportunities, staff vacancies, changes to service (late night sessions, closures, events), activities and events for the wider community, ways to participate.	Letters to local residents. Physical marketing materials including posters and flyers. Face to face communication at other local events and AGM's. Through local press, and online presence through web space and social media. Newsletter.	Letters to be produced as and when needed. Marketing materials to be delivered before each holiday. Newsletter to be produced termly. Posters and marketing to be produced for each event as and when needed. Newsletter to be produced termly. The first AGM will be held no later than 14 months after the commencement of service delivery.	Support and engagement from local community in the form of volunteering, attendance at AGM's and community events. Regular bookings for room and playground hire. Regular inquires or offers of support.
Partners and other local community groups	Over-view of service, contact details, opening times, availability of hire, ways of referring into	Direct communication through e-mail, phone and written communication. Face to face and teleconference	During conception, fundraising and initial planning stages communication should be weekly,	Project outcomes achieved. Key performance indicators met. Increase in service use, especially

What groups do we need to serve most?	What do they need to hear from us?	What is the best way to find and communicate with them?	When will we communicate with them? How often?	How will we know if they have heard our message?
	service, options for partnership projects, outcomes of projects, key performance indicators, joint funding opportunities,	meetings. AGM's, local community events. Newsletter.	then quarterly reporting and meetings as necessary for projects. The first AGM will be held no later than 14 months after the commencement of service delivery.	from target groups and hard to reach communities. Increase in referrals into service. Well attended community events.
Local Authority	Over-view of service, contact details, opening times, availability of 2 year old funded spaces, availability of 3-4 year old nursery spaces, ways to refer into service, events and open days for wider community, opportunities for partnership working, opportunities for adult education and services that meet the wider needs of the community.	Direct communication through e-mail, phone and written communication. Face to face and teleconference meetings. AGM's, local community events.	Communication will be as and when needed dependant on service delivery and terms laid out in transfer of service.	100% of nursery places filled. Successful partnership work: successful bid writing, strong and productive joint projects delivering throughout the borough, referrals into adult learning services.
Local Education Authority	availability of 2 year old funded spaces, availability of 3-4 year old nursery spaces, opportunities for adult education and services that meet the wider needs of the community. Service over-view, opening times,	Direct communication through e-mail, phone and written communication. Face to face and teleconference meetings. Hard copy marketing delivered to each school in the borough.	Communication will be as and when needed dependant of service delivery. Marketing material delivered termly and before each holiday.	100% of nursery places filled. Successful partnership work: joint projects delivering and referrals into adult learning services. Strong and successful partnerships built with key local

What groups do we need to serve most?	What do they need to hear from us?	What is the best way to find and communicate with them?	When will we communicate with them? How often?	How will we know if they have heard our message?
	ways to refer into service.			schools. Awareness of service availability raised across all schools in the borough.
Press	Over-view of service, contact details, details events and opportunities for the wider community, good news stories, project launches.	Direct communication through e-mail, phone and written communication. Face to face and meetings and photo opportunities. Local community events and fundraising opportunities.	Advertising before every holiday and community events. Invitations for photo opportunities to be sent for each event held and for the launch of each project. Press releases to be sent before each major holiday and at strategic points throughout project lifespan. Press release and photo opportunity to be sent for any fundraising events.	Good news pieces reported, attendance at local events.
Staff	New and continued partnerships, service changes, events and community engagement, referrals into service, Key performance indicators, objectives and achievements.	Direct communication through e-mail, phone and written communication. Face to face through individual supervision and team meetings. Staff notice board. Newsletter.	Communication on an as and when basis dependant on service needs. Team meetings to be held monthly, individual supervision on a monthly basis and open door policy to be implemented for staff outside of supervision. Daily pre-brief and post-session reflection to be held and recorded.	Our values, vision and mission is successfully delivered be each member of staff. Staff team work cohesively and in cooperation with the management and board of trustees. Issues are raised and resolved in a timely manner. Children, young people and the wider community are engaged in the

What groups do we need to serve most?	What do they need to hear from us?	What is the best way to find and communicate with them?	When will we communicate with them? How often?	How will we know if they have heard our message?
				planning and operation of the service. Changes in behaviour, circumstances and attendance patterns are noticed, recorded and acted on by staff. Staff are proactive, engaged and excited about their work.

Objectives and Priorities This Year

1. To provide community cohesion and cultural understanding. This will be achieved by the local community attending sessions and socialising with other families. There will also be various cultural fun days where service users will be able to attend and experience food, music, art, beliefs and culture from around the world. This will be measured through feedback forms and session recordings on observed events. This can be achieved within a relatively early time frame as there are various cultural holidays that can be celebrated throughout the year.
2. The Adventure Playgrounds will continue to provide a space that children can call their own and be themselves without threat of scrutiny or disapproval from family or others. Recent academic studies have suggested that both during school hours and home life most children are restricted by rules and opinions and have very little time to develop their own thoughts, feelings and personality's. Children are leading increasingly structured and sedentary lives which has been linked to lower academic attainment and higher levels of obesity. There is also a strong link to poor mental health in children and young people, as well as links to the increase in cases of ADHD. The results of this is the development of aggressive or unwanted behaviours, negative self-image and harmful behaviours either to self or others. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out in article 31 (and General Comment 17) the fact that children have a right to rest, relaxation, leisure and play. By giving children a safe play space away from home and school life it allows them to come to their own conclusions and ask questions that they may not feel comfortable about outside of the play space and meets their need and right to play. This can be measured through observations where staff note a positive change in behaviour or social skills. These observations can then be noted down and recorded in session recordings. This objective can easily be achieved and can be

seen working in other adventure playgrounds. Changes in children's behaviour should be noted within a month depending on child's attendance to the adventure playground.

3. Creation of a community nursery with the objective of offering much needed spaces for statutory provision of 15 hours for children aged 2 years, progressing in year two to provide 30 hours for children aged 3 to 4 years. With nursery placements in high demand for the local community and current nursery class sizes swelling beyond capacity. This is a much needed service that will help to meet the growing demand after recent changes to the provision of Early Years Education. There is potential to offer one class with 15 spaces at each site, which if successful could be expanded to provide morning and afternoon session.
4. Evening classes will be provided to give local communities a chance at trying something new or exploring a possible start to a new career. Working with local colleges and other partners we could offer basic carpentry, bicycle maintenance, gardening, cooking as well as partnership work with the Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service. This partnership would enable us to offer English and a Second Language course, Maths tuition and other core skills. We would also be able to offer a homework club to support children who are identified as having additional needs (disability, low income, English as a second language for example). These classes can also be hosted by people within the community who have experience or have made careers in their chosen field, allowing for additional income through rental of the space.
5. The adventure playgrounds will be a community hub offering support to families. This will take the form of support groups, signposting to other organisations, one to one counselling. The purpose of this is to provide a support network for those that need it. This could be single parents looking for a support group, individuals needing someone to talk to or families struggling financially and looking for advice. Majority of this can be put together with support from the local charities like the Citizens Advice Bureau, Mencap, Mind: <http://www.mind.org.uk/> and Together: <http://www.together-uk.org/>.

People Development Plan

The charity has a strong commitment to the continuous development of its staff team. This not only includes paid members of the team, but also the board of trustees and parent and young volunteers. It is important that all our staff and volunteers buy into our development ethos, we aim to be a cutting edge, ever evolving organisation and can only achieve this if our staff remain at the forefront of the Play sector. All staff will receive a comprehensive induction, and training in Play and Playwork no

matter what their role in the organisation. Staff will be expected to meet high standards of customer service, and to be instrumental in shaping the future of the Playwork Sector.

Below is an outline of key training that will be on offer to the team throughout the first year:

Area of Development Needed	What will be done	When	Cost of this development (Both in terms of time and money)
Induction to organisation	Welcome and organisational structure, Putting Values into Practice, Understanding our Vision, Completing our Mission	Rolling process to be completed within the first week of employment	1 day in time, 1 days wage for each employee plus 1 manager to deliver the session
Site Induction	Building and site walk around, Health and Safety, Policies and Procedures, Staff handbook, Staffing structure for site, Opening and closing procedures, Uniform handover, Key handover, Operational induction, Team introduction.	Rolling process to be completed on first day of employment.	1 day in time, 1 days wage for each employee plus 1 manager to deliver the session
Safeguarding	Basic Safeguarding for all team members, volunteers and trustees. Advanced safeguarding for supervisors. Designated Persons, safe recruitment and integrated practice for Managers and the chair of the board of trustees.	Safeguarding training to be undertaken within the first month of employment and to be refreshed each year following	Training costs vary greatly, some safeguarding courses are offered free of charge, others cost around £50. Basic safeguarding is a 3-4 hour course, Advanced safeguarding courses last for 1 to 2 days.
First Aid	All workers to be trained in Paediatric first aid (12 contact hours). Managers to be trained in first aid at work.	First Aid training to be undertaken within the first month of employment. Annual basic first aid refreshers to be done.	Average cost of training is £50 per person. Basic first aid is 4-6 hours, paediatric first aid is 2 days, first aid at work is a 3 to 4 day course and costs £195.
Introduction to Playwork	All workers to attend an introduction to Playwork	To be undertaken within the first 6 months of	Training is provided in house.

Area of Development Needed	What will be done	When	Cost of this development (Both in terms of time and money)
	course covering: Playwork Principles, Play cues and cycle, Theory of Loose parts, Play Types, understanding risk in play provision, Intervention styles, communicating with children and young people	employment and refreshed on an annual basis.	Cost is 1 days wage for each employee attending plus 1 days wage for the manager delivering.
National Playwork Conference	All workers to attend. Content will vary dependant on each individuals interests and choices. This is a major Continual Professional Development opportunity and will be compulsory for all staff.	Monday 6 th March to Wednesday 8 th March. Then annually in the first week of March each year.	£250 +VAT for each individual attending. Additional £40 for Monday night hotel. 3 days wages for each staff member attending.
Trustee Induction training	All trustees giving training to cover their roles and responsibilities as a trustee.	Within the first 3 months of joining the board.	£280 per person for 1 day training course, plus expenses.
Finance	Training for senior manager on becoming financially sustainable and preparing to run public service contracts.	Within the first 6 months of employment.	£420 for 2 day training course plus 2 days wages and expenses.
Leadership and Management	Level 5 Award in leadership and management skills for Senior manager	Within the first year of employment.	£800 plus 4 days wages.
Health and Safety	All staff trained to level 1 in Health and Safety in the workplace	Within the first 3 months of employment and refreshed annually thereafter.	£20 +VAT per person plus 1-2 hours' wages.
Manual Handling	All staff trained in manual handling	Within the first month of employment and refreshed annually thereafter.	To be done in house as part of the induction process.
Risk Management	All staff trained in Risk-Benefit Analysis	Within the first 6 months and refreshed annually thereafter	TBC. Half a day in wages for each staff member
Lone Working	All staff trained in lone working. Developing positive practices for personal safety	March 16 th 2017	£20 per person plus 3 hours wages.
IT skills	Introduction to cloud based working for all staff.	February 27 th 2017	£20 per person plus 4 hours wages.

Area of Development Needed	What will be done	When	Cost of this development (Both in terms of time and money)
Challenging Behaviour	All staff trained on encouraging positive behaviour	Held in house within the first 3 months of employment	£37 per person
Effective communication	All staff trained on communicating with children and young people.	Held in house within the first 3 months of employment	£37 per person
BSL	4 staff trained in introduction to British Sign Language across 2 sites.	January 2017	£90 per person
Food Hygiene	All delivery staff trained to Level 2	December 1 st 2016	£30 per person
Tool Use and structure maintenance	All service delivery staff to be trained in use of power tools and how to recognise and repair damage	Within the first 6 months of employment	TBC
Fire Marshall training	Key staff to be trained on current legislation around fire safety	Within the first 3 months of employment	£395 +VAT for 10 people 4 hours wages for each staff member.

This initial training will enable our team to grow their skills and develop a sustainable, progressive organisation. It will ensure that we meet the standards as set out by Ofsted and also our statutory duty of care under safeguarding and health and safety legislation. By training all of our staff to the same high standard we will be providing a consistent message to our team, which will then translate into excellent service delivery. By investing time and money into our people we are setting a positive example. Our vision is to be cutting edge and a centre for excellence, by providing opportunities for growth and development we will attract the best possible employees and in turn they will be productive, inspiring and cooperative.

Operating Budget

By taking the service out of the control of the council we are able to increase our budget through fundraising, donations and income generation. In the first 3 years we would expect that the council would use the capital funding of £1.25 million (set aside for the development of the two Adventure Playgrounds) to continue to fund the service while the charity establishes itself. This funding would be used to develop facilities over the first two years with a reduction in funding for year three as the capital works would be completed by then. The budget below reflects the expectation of years one and two.

Below is the projected staff costing to run both adventure playgrounds. Initially there would be a reduction in staff however we would not expect a reduction in operational capacity. We would be able to grow the team in subsequent years with successful funding bids for additional projects.

Projected Costs								
Job Title	Pay Scale	No. of Staff	Hours worked	Weeks worked	Basic Salary	With On-costs	Pro-rata	Total
Project Co-ordinator	SP 35	1	18	52	£30,785	£39,578	£19,522.00	£19,522.00
Senior Playworkers	SP 29	2	30	52	£25,951	£33,037	£27,154.00	£54,308.00
Playworkers	SP 24	6	24	52	£21,962	£27,826	£18,297.00	£109,782.00
Annual Leave cover	SP 18	1	1143	0	£18,070	£22,697	£13,405.00	£13,405.00
							Staffing costs total	£197,017.00

Estimated Operating Budget

	<i>Estimated Amount</i>	<i>Actual</i>
Expected Income		
Grants (Initial council funding)	£300000	
Donations	£1000	
Fundraising	£80000	
Other income (Venue hire, nursery fees)	£25000	
TOTAL:	£405100	
Expected Expenditure		
Staffing Costs	£197017	
Office running costs (rent, etc.)	£20000	
Supplies	£2000	
Mileage	£1000	
Staff development	£5000	
Marketing	£2000	
Other costs	£2000	
TOTAL:	£229017	
Programs/Project Costs		
Building Upgrades (Year one and two)		
Development costs	£150000	
TOTAL:	£150000	
Community Hub		
Development costs	£2000	
Marketing Costs	£800	
Running Costs	£800	
Staffing Costs	£6500	
TOTAL:	10100	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:		£389117
TOTAL Profit/Loss:		£15983
(Income – Total Expenditure)		

Risks and Opportunities

There are many advantages for the charity to take on the running of the play service, this also has its inherent risks. The charity has undertaken a SWOT analysis to identify the key strengths and weakness, look for potential opportunities and to begin to consider the risks.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Both sites are in perfect location's for the community and local services. Both are surrounded by mass housing and schools means that sites will see a lot of use.</p> <p>Sites have a rich trustworthy history which can be seen in previous users returning with their own children to offer them the rich experiences they had.</p> <p>Current staff are of a high quality and have the service users' needs as a priority. There is a reason why children and adults will approach the staff of an adventure playground rather than a teacher or GP,</p> <p>Both sites have the potential for being a Centre of excellence that Watford borough council can be proud of.</p> <p>The playgrounds are unique in their own right in that there is nothing in the area that is equivalent. Once these playgrounds are gone there will be no opportunity to replace them.</p> <p>The strength of play work as an intervention for children that may be struggling with disabilities, problems at home, being bullied, mental health issues and a support mechanism for the wider community.</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>The service is severely underfunded.</p> <p>Facilities at both sites are in need of modernisation and refurbishment.</p> <p>Policies and procedures are not child focused therefore are not supportive of a rich play environment.</p> <p>When we look at the current attitude of the service it deters community engagement and consequently is not supportive of community cohesion</p> <p>The current staffing structure is not supportive of collaborative working. It doesn't allow for staff, service users and the wider community to use initiative to develop the service. There's limited opportunity for feedback from service users and the wider community. There is also limited opportunity for upward feedback from staff.</p> <p>The service has a tendency to be inward looking in that it focuses on risk management. The service is not creative in ways of thinks and does not seek ways to working that are innovative.</p>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <p>Fundraising: additional funding streams are available to the charity (Trust funds, Big lottery, Sport England).</p>	<p>Threats:</p> <p>The removal of the play service by Watford borough council.</p>

<p>Creation of a nursery is an opportunity for additional revenue leading to sustainability.</p> <p>Creation of community hub leads to increased participation and support.</p> <p>Coming out from council control means we can develop more child centred policies and procedures. Which will enable us to better support our service users.</p> <p>Wider opportunity for partnership working for example Hertfordshire adult and family learning service, citizen's advice bureau and west Herts college.</p> <p>To develop training packages for delivery to the play sector and the wider community. Leading to the creation of a centre for excellence.</p> <p>Will look at joining the free time consortium, which will lead to partnership working with Play England.</p>	<p>Financial threat; Service users bringing unsubstantiated claims against the charity. E.g. accidents, loss or theft of belongings.</p> <p>Change of service provider may lead to mistrust by community.</p> <p>The councils vision for play in the borough and how that vision doesn't fit with the current academic research for children's play.</p> <p>Unsuccessful funding bids which would put a strain on the charity.</p> <p>There is a level of risk in leaving council services in that the skill set of the staff may not meet the needs of the charity.</p> <p>Personal agendas of current staff and adult agendas from the wider community impacting on the work of the charity in a negative way. Additionally, current staff not accepting new charity's vision, values and mission.</p>
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Risk Register

Risks Identified	Controls in place	Who is responsible
<p><i>Example: Grant funding is reduced and resources are not available to cover the operating costs of the organization.</i></p>	<p><i>Good relationships with government officials.</i></p> <p><i>Expertise in grant writing in house.</i></p> <p><i>Diversity of income sources developed</i></p>	<p><i>Executive Director</i></p> <p><i>Executive Director Board</i></p>
<p>The removal of the play service by Watford borough council.</p>	<p>Proposal developed.</p> <p>Legal advice sought.</p>	<p>Core working group</p> <p>SWAPs campaign team</p>
<p>Financial threat; Service users bringing unsubstantiated claims against the charity. E.g. accidents, loss or theft of belongings.</p>	<p>Public liability insurance in place.</p> <p>Strong, clear, user focused policies and procedures.</p>	<p>Board of trustees</p>

Change of service provider may lead to mistrust by community.	Community involved in development of charity and ongoing development. Community led initiatives. Clear and transparent communication	Core working group and board of trustees
The councils vision for play in the borough and how that vision doesn't fit with the current academic research for children's play.	Trustees appointed with clear and current understanding of play. Continuous engagement with members of the council to ensure a well-educated play portfolio holder at all times.	Core working group Board of trustees and senior management
Unsuccessful funding bids which would put a strain on the charity.	Training offered for senior staff and trustees in financial controls and fundraising. Seek help from experienced professionals to ensure bids are well written. Advanced planning to ensure that all necessary funds are available.	Board of trustees and senior management.
There is a level of risk in leaving council services in that the skill set of the staff may not meet the needs of the charity.	Comprehensive training programme for all retained staff. Recruitment process to be clear and concise.	Core working group Board of trustees
Personal agendas of current staff and adult agendas from the wider community impacting on the work of the charity in a negative way. Additionally, current staff not accepting new charity's vision, values and mission	Clear values, vision and mission written. Values into practice training for all staff. Clear and consistent performance management of all staff. Clear marketing strategy and community engagement to ensure that the mission and vision are widely known.	Core working group Board of trustees

Success Measures

Below are some examples of how the charity expects to measure its success against this year's objectives:

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Objectives	Measures of Success:	When this will be measured: (Try to have measures throughout the year)
1. Provide community cohesion and cultural understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes to engage all members of the community • Outreach work within the community at events • Parents forum • Feedback forms • Number of BME users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly • At each event • Termly • Weekly • Termly
2. Continue to provide a space that children can call their own	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a children's council • Activities and practices to be child-centred • Increase the number of service users • Feedback from children on staff practice and progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly • Daily • Quarterly • Termly
3. Creation of a community nursery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% attendance recorded • Ofsted "Good" Achieved • Positive feedback and engagement from parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly on registration days • At first Ofsted inspection • Daily, weekly and termly
4. Evening classes and adult education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of courses on offer • Good feedback from attendees on how useful classes are helping them. • Number of return users to classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly • Daily • Quarterly
5. Community hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services to be run by community members • Number of community volunteers • Community hub log to recorded number of visits • Good Feedback from the wider community of projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly • Daily • Quarterly • Quarterly

Additional document for 10.10.16 Cabinet meeting regarding HCC position

HCC have outlined their position regarding Harebreaks and Harwoods Adventure Playgrounds in the context of their responsibilities regarding childcare and early education provision.

A summary of their position is as follows:-

The County Council will not communicate with Watford Council prior to its new decision on 10th October 2016 to ensure the APG's remain open due to the fact:

- The provision of the APG's have been made by Watford Borough Council utilising their discretion under Section 19 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provision Act 1976
- The County Council's duty under Sections 507 and 508 of the Education Act 1996 is a separate and distinct duty placed on the County Council. The County Council discharges its duties in a number of ways which do not require the use of the APG's.
- As the County Council does not secure access to the APG's in discharge of its duties under Sections 507 and 508 of the Education Act 1996, it does not have a statutory duty to consult.

Background to the above position

Sections 507A and 507B of the Education Act 1996 do apply to the County Council. In addition the relevant departments and officers of the County Council are clear of their responsibilities under that provision.

How these legal duties are discharged

In relation to children under the age of 13, the Education Act 1996 and the Childcare Act 2006 place a statutory duty on the County Council to ensure there is sufficient childcare and early education provision for parents/carers who choose to use this. As part of this duty, the County Council publishes an annual report on the sufficiency of such provision on its website. Information about the available provision is also provided through the online childcare directory. In addition Children's Centres help families with younger children to access the provision that best meets their needs.

The APG's are not registered as childcare provision because they are open access sites where children are free to come and go.

The County Council discharges its responsibilities under Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 (relating to provision of leisure activities for persons aged 13-19 and certain persons aged 20-24) through the provision of youth work projects and programmes in all 10 districts / borough areas which is taken forward by its Youth Connexions Teams.

In Watford, these are predominantly delivered at the County Council owned Youth Point

Centre for Young People in Lower High Street, but also in community centres and other facilities across the town. The use and availability of non-County Council facilities does change and provision will move accordingly. Youth Connexions is not reliant on staff, or resources, at non-County Council facilities for the delivery of its offer to young people.

In furtherance of its duty in Section 507B, Youth Connexions consults with young people in a number of ways including;

User Survey - an annual questionnaire which targets young people who access Youth Connexions youth work provisions.

Its Planning and Evaluation Process - young people are consulted termly in projects to ensure the programme is meeting their needs and that the following terms programme will address the Importance to them.

Focus Groups - where a specific need or gap in provision is identified a focus group of young people will be established to confirm the need and plan the format of the proposed new project.

Youth Councils - most areas, including Watford has a youth council / forum. These are regularly consulted as for the provision for young people.

Herts 1125 - the County Council publishes an annual Youth Manifesto which highlights the key priorities for young people. This is written by Herts 1125 - a group of young people from across the county. The priorities are identified by an annual poll where young people can vote for the Issues which are Important to them.

Unsolicited feedback - young people, parents and the public are invited to feedback on the services.

Youth Connexions stopped using Harwoods APG in the spring of this year and Harebreaks APG some years ago as delivery venues for youth work projects, as neither attracted sufficient numbers of young people.

The 2 APG's are provided by Watford Borough Council under Section 19 of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976. Section 19 provides discretion to provide such recreational facilities as it sees fit.