

SUBJECT: AWPOG Capital Funding for PSA Priorities 2021/22

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision

DATE: 10 November 2021

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All Wards

1. PURPOSE:

To create a capital budget in 2021/22 to facilitate the upgrading of a number of fixed playgrounds in different parts of the county.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That a capital budget of £128,000 be created in 2021/22 to fund the upgrading of fixed play areas in the county and on other priorities already approved in the 2021/22 Play Action Plan, and that this is funded by an All Wales Play Opportunities Grant (AWPOG) of £128,000 from the Welsh Government, as set out in its grant variation letter dated 4th October 2021.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Welsh Government has allocated additional capital and revenue funding by way of a variation to the AWPOG (All Wales Play Opportunities Grant) budget in the current financial year.
- 3.2 The council has already received £24,757 Holiday Playworks funding which, together with grants received from a number of town and community councils in the county, has enabled us to run play in the park sessions in the October and February half term holidays and the provision of autumn activity packs for all Year 4 pupils in all Monmouthshire primary schools.
- 3.3 In addition to the above provisions, the council has been allocated extra capital funding of £128,000 and revenue funding of £180,000. The revenue funding is described as the “Winter of Well-Being” fund and officers with a responsibility for play are in consultation with colleagues from across the authority to decide how this funding should be spent to best effect to build on activities similar to the Summer of Fun, taking into account the limitations of the colder weather. The final date for submission of the completed proposals form is 30th November.
- 3.4 The focus of this report is the additional capital funding of £128,000. The proposal is to spend £100,000 on continuing the programme of upgrading the council’s fixed playgrounds to a better standard of play value and the remaining £28,000 on other priorities contained in the approved Play Action Plan for 2021/22.

- 3.5 In 2019, as part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) duty, an independent play consultant carried out play value assessments of 110 council play areas in the county, plus some play areas in town & community council ownership, such as the ones in Caldicot, Llanfoist and Govilon. Although the play areas are safe and regularly inspected, the assessments revealed that only three play areas in the county offered a good standard of play value, twelve offered an adequate standard of play value and the rest ranked as poor.
- 3.6 Since that time, investments in the play areas at The Bayfield and The Danes in Chepstow and at Chippenham village green in Monmouth have uplifted those areas to a good standard and further investments later this year at King's Fee, Goldwire Lane and Hendre Close in Monmouth should result in those areas being ranked as having a good standard of play value when the sites are re-assessed during the lifespan of the new PSA which will last for the period 2022-2025. This should also be the case for the new play areas provided at the Kingswood Gate development in Monmouth.
- 3.7 It is proposed to spend the £100,000 capital funding referred to in para 3.4 at the following sites – these sites have all been the subject of recent local consultation in the areas concerned:

No	Site	Amount	Comment
1	Belgrave Park Abergavenny	30,000	Failing site with further deterioration
2	Cadoc Close Caerwent	8,000	Re-provision as community nature space
3	Clydach Recreation Ground	34,000	Failing site – funding already in place for play areas at Gilwern Playing Field and Llanelly Hill
4	Dingestow Playing Field	10,000	Part of ongoing incremental improvements with local village hall committee
5	Garden City, Chepstow	10,000	Part of ongoing incremental improvements with local volunteer group
6	Trewen, Caerwent	8,000	Failing site
	Total	£100,000	

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

The EQIA is attached to this report at Appendix 1. This highlights the positive impacts of play on children/young people, families and communities.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks
Don't approve the report recommendation	None	The project is unlikely to go ahead within the specified spend and grant claim periods. The funding will be lost and will need to be returned with no benefits to the Monmouthshire community.
Approve the report recommendation	The funding will be available to spend within the specified timescale The equipment orders can be placed and the sites will benefit as part of an overall programme of improvement.	The works cannot be carried out in the lifespan of the grant. The scheme has been tendered and the orders placed but the installations cannot take place due to delays in the supply chain.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Progress will be monitored in February 2022 to ensure that the works are on target and the grant claimed by the end of the financial year.

7. REASON

This is a continuation of the council's planned investment to achieve significant community benefits, but there needs to be an approved budget in place to enable the necessary orders to be processed.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional resource implications, other than the staff time to process the orders and carry out the installations. All expenditure will be covered from external grant aid.

9. CONSULTEES

Chief Operating Officer MonLife Cabinet SLT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Welsh Govt AWPOG grant variation letter dated 4th October 2021.

11. AUTHOR & CONTACT DETAILS:

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