

## Leisure and Recreation Committee

**Report:** Play Area Report

**Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026

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### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides Members with an update following the Play Area Working Group meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026.

1.2 The report summarises the outcome of further resident consultation undertaken for the proposed Alanbrooke and Barnum Court play area refurbishments.

1.3 The report seeks approval to proceed with both schemes.

1.4 The report also provides Members with an update on wider play area priorities, including Edinburgh Street Recreation Ground, Mannington Recreation Ground and Trowbridge Close.

### 2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

2.1 **Note** the outcome of the additional resident consultation undertaken for Alanbrooke and Barnum Court.

2.2 **Note** the recommendations of the Play Area Working Group.

2.3 **Support** the progression of the Alanbrooke play area refurbishment based on the revised Wicksteed design, including the retention of swings and the inclusion of accessible and inclusive play features.

2.4 **Support** the progression of the Barnum Court play area refurbishment based on the revised Wicksteed design, subject to the train unit being amended to remove the rear access lip/panel where this can be done safely and without affecting the structural integrity or certification of the equipment.

2.5 **Recommend** to Full Council that approval is given to proceed with both the Alanbrooke and Barnum Court play area refurbishment schemes at an estimated combined cost of £91,550

2.6 **Recommend** to Full Council that available ward, CIL and/or S106 funding is allocated towards the schemes where eligible, with the remaining balance funded from the approved play area capital budget.

2.7 **Authorise** officers to begin consultation and concept design work for Edinburgh Street Recreation Ground as the next potential major play area refurbishment priority, with any future costed proposal to be brought back to Committee and, where required, Full Council for approval.

2.8 **Note** that Mannington Recreation Ground and Trowbridge Close remain future play area priorities and that officers will undertake further scoping and consultation before bringing any formal recommendations back to Committee.

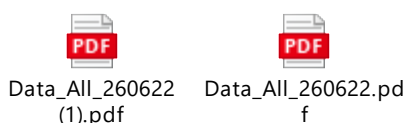
### 3. Background

3.1 At the June meeting of the Leisure and Recreation Committee, Members considered proposals for the refurbishment of Alanbrooke and Barnum Court play areas.

3.2 Members requested that further consultation be undertaken with local residents before final recommendations were brought back for approval.

3.3 Officers subsequently leafleted in excess of 100 properties in the vicinity of both play areas. This generated 33 responses for Alanbrooke and 21 responses for Barnum Court.

3.4 The Play Area Working Group met on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026 to review the consultation feedback, revised designs and proposed next steps.



### 4. Consultation Feedback

4.1 The consultation feedback was generally positive. Residents recognised the need to improve both play areas and supported investment in better play provision.

4.2 The main themes raised were:

- support for refurbishment of both play areas;
- a desire for improved surfacing;
- a desire to maximise play value and equipment within the available space;
- at Alanbrooke, a clear request to retain swings;
- a need to consider accessibility and inclusive play;
- some concern regarding possible noise and anti-social behaviour due to proximity to residential properties.

4.3 It should be noted that both sites are existing play areas. The proposals do not relocate play activity to a new location. Any anti-social behaviour concerns will therefore need to be managed through normal site management arrangements, including liaison with local PCSOs where required.

### 5. Alanbrooke Revised Proposal

5.1 Following consultation, the Alanbrooke proposal has been amended to retain swings within the play area.

5.2 The revised proposal includes:

- a cradle/toddler swing seat;
- a high-backed accessible swing seat;
- a wheelchair accessible ramped play unit;
- a seesaw with high-back seats and footrests;
- a flush-to-ground spinner;
- sensory and interactive panels;
- improved safety surfacing.

5.3 The inclusion of the high-backed swing seat provides an inclusive element while remaining suitable for wider use. Feedback from the Working Group was positive, particularly in relation to the improved accessibility of the revised design.

5.4 The Working Group discussed whether an additional swing could be included. Officers will ask Wicksteed to confirm whether this is possible within the required safety zones, although this may not be achievable within the current footprint.

5.5 The existing play area footprint is not proposed to be extended. This helps control cost and avoids the significant additional expense associated with increasing the play area boundary and surfacing area.



## 6. Barnum Court Revised Proposal

6.1 Barnum Court is a smaller play area and therefore has more limited scope for additional equipment.

6.2 The Working Group supported the proposal in principle but requested an amendment to the train unit. The current train design includes a rear lip/panel which could restrict access for some children and may reduce the accessibility of the unit.

6.3 Officers have discussed this with Wicksteed, who have indicated that the panel can potentially be removed. This would not make the train fully wheelchair accessible, but it would make it easier for children with mobility needs, children using support, and younger children to access the play feature.

6.4 This amendment should only be made if Wicksteed confirms that it does not affect the structural integrity, safety certification or play value of the item.

6.5 The Working Group also discussed the position of benches. There is a balance to be struck between avoiding congregation immediately at the entrance and ensuring parents/carers can supervise the gate. Officers will review the final positioning before order placement.



## 7. Budget Position

7.1 The combined cost of the revised Alanbrooke and Barnum Court proposals is approximately £91,550, subject to final quotation confirmation.

7.2 The revised designs are slightly cheaper than the earlier proposals considered by Members.

7.3 There is currently just under £7,000 of ward funding potentially available towards the schemes, made up of approximately £4,500 from previous ward allocations and a further £2,200 allocation.

7.4 Officers will also review whether any CIL/S106 funding can be applied to the projects.

7.5 The play area capital budget currently has approximately £190,000 remaining, subject to final coding corrections. If Members approve both Alanbrooke and Barnum Court, approximately £100,000 would remain for future play area works.

## **8. Accessibility and Inclusion**

8.1 The Working Group gave specific consideration to accessibility and inclusive play.

8.2 At Alanbrooke, the revised design includes a wheelchair accessible ramped unit, high-backed swing seat, seesaw seating with back support and footrests, flush-to-ground spinner and sensory/interactive play panels.

8.3 At Barnum Court, the proposed amendment to the train unit will improve access, although the site size limits the extent of fully wheelchair accessible equipment that can be accommodated.

8.4 The Working Group recognised that not every item of equipment can be fully accessible on small sites, but the aim should be to improve accessibility wherever practicable within the site constraints and available budget.

## **9. Risk and Site Management**

9.1 Both sites currently have ageing equipment and poor surfacing. Refurbishment will reduce ongoing inspection concerns and improve the quality and safety of the play environment.

9.2 The Council will continue to manage risks through routine inspection, post-installation inspection and ongoing maintenance.

9.3 Any residual concerns around anti-social behaviour will be managed through normal Council procedures and, where appropriate, liaison with local PCSOs.

9.4 Officers will ensure the final designs comply with relevant play safety standards and that appropriate independent post-installation inspections are undertaken before opening.

## **10. Wider Play Area Priorities**

### **Edinburgh Street Recreation Ground**

10.1 The Working Group identified Edinburgh Street Recreation Ground as a potential next major play area refurbishment priority.

10.2 The existing play area is in poor condition, with dated equipment, poor surfacing and timber/fencing elements requiring attention.

10.3 The site has high footfall and is close to a primary school. The Working Group considered that the current equipment is not well matched to the location or likely user group.

10.4 Rather than committing significant spend to piecemeal repairs, the Working Group supported officers beginning consultation and concept design work for a wider refurbishment.

10.5 Officers will consult local residents and the nearby school and will then bring a further report back to Committee.

## **Mannington Recreation Ground**

10.6 Mannington Recreation Ground was also discussed as a future priority. There is resident interest in improvements and some funding has been identified, currently estimated at around £5,000.

10.7 The site has potential, but further consideration is needed due to layout, parking constraints, proximity to housing and the potential reuse or relocation of existing equipment.

## **Trowbridge Close**

10.8 Trowbridge Close was discussed as a smaller adopted play area with limited current play value.

10.9 The Working Group considered that this may offer a lower-cost improvement opportunity, subject to consultation with local residents and consideration of fencing/safety due to the open nature of the site and proximity to Cricklade Road.

## **11. Funding Opportunities**

11.1 The Working Group noted that there are several smaller CIL/S106 funding allocations which may be capable of supporting future play improvements.

11.2 Indicative allocations discussed included:

- Pinehurst: approximately £4,900;
- Rodbourne / Moredon / Ferndale: approximately £5,685;
- Even Swindon: approximately £637;
- smaller allocations linked to Gorse Hill and Mannington.

11.3 Officers will develop a clearer programme of future play area priorities so that these funding pots can be linked to specific schemes and brought back to Committee for approval.

## **12. Environmental and Maintenance Considerations**

12.1 The Working Group noted the Council's general move away from bark surfacing where possible. Bark surfacing can be difficult to maintain, less accessible and less user-friendly than modern safety surfacing.

12.2 Where play areas are fully refurbished, officers will consider whether any existing equipment can be safely reused or relocated elsewhere within the parish, subject to condition, compliance and value for money.

### **13. Financial Implications**

13.1 The estimated combined cost of the Alanbrooke and Barnum Court schemes is approximately £91,550, subject to final quotation confirmation.

13.2 Available ward, CIL and/or S106 funding will be used where eligible, with the balance funded from the approved play area capital budget.

13.3 Following delivery of these schemes, the remaining play area capital budget is expected to be approximately £100,000, subject to final coding and allocation of external funding.

13.4 Future schemes, including Edinburgh Street, Mannington and Trowbridge Close, will be brought back to Committee with costed proposals before any commitment is made.

### **14. Legal and Procurement Implications**

14.1 The Council must ensure that any award or instruction to proceed is compliant with the Council's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and wider public procurement principles, including transparency, fairness, value for money and proper decision-making.

14.2 The proposed Alanbrooke and Barnum Court schemes are linked to the Council's previous procurement process for the Rodbourne Cheney play area project. As part of that procurement exercise, the Council allowed for the potential extension of the arrangement to deliver further play area schemes, subject to contractor performance, value for money and the Council's future requirements.

14.3 Wicksteed were appointed following that procurement process and have now delivered the Rodbourne Cheney scheme. Officers are satisfied that Wicksteed have met the relevant performance expectations, including quality of installation, responsiveness, delivery standards and ability to work with the Council on design amendments and accessibility considerations.

14.4 On that basis, officers consider it appropriate to use the extension provision from the original procurement process to progress the Alanbrooke and Barnum Court schemes with Wicksteed, subject to Full Council approval of the expenditure.

14.5 This approach avoids the need to restart a full procurement process for schemes which were contemplated as potential follow-on works, while still ensuring the Council can demonstrate that the decision is based on the original procurement route, contractor performance and value for money.

14.6 The revised designs have also been reviewed following further resident consultation and Working Group feedback. The proposed amendments, including the retention of swings at Alanbrooke and the accessibility amendment to the Barnum Court train unit, demonstrate that the Council has considered local feedback before making a final recommendation.

14.8 All installed play equipment must comply with the relevant play safety standards, and the Council will require appropriate certification and an independent post-installation inspection before the play areas are reopened for public use.

14.9 As the combined estimated project value is approximately £91,550, Committee is asked to recommend the schemes to Full Council for approval rather than approve the expenditure directly.

## **15. Conclusion**

15.1 The additional consultation demonstrates local support for improvement at both Alanbrooke and Barnum Court.

15.2 The revised designs respond to the main consultation themes, particularly the retention of swings at Alanbrooke and the need to improve accessibility where practicable.

15.3 The Working Group supports progressing both schemes and recommends that Committee approves delivery, subject to the final minor amendments set out in this report.

15.4 The Working Group also recommends that Edinburgh Street Recreation Ground is progressed as the next potential major play area project, with consultation and concept design work to begin.