

Multi-use Games Areas

Report to Executive



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PORTFOLIO	GS&A
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PURPOSE

1. To provide the Executive with a detailed overview of the current position, and a proposed way forward, regarding the provision, condition and work needed (including costed options), for improvement of the Council’s Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs) stock.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Executive:
 - a. Notes the current position regarding the Football Foundation’s Play Zones programme.
 - b. Agree to not proceed with the previously secured £30,000 per annum Capital investment programme (to be used as match funding) for the Football Foundation’s Play Zones programme.
 - c. Notes the MUGAs 2023/24 Condition Inspections report findings.
 - d. Agree to the development of a MUGA Improvement Programme with £70,000 of capital investment each year for 5 years starting from 2024/25.
 - e. Allow Green Spaces to explore potential sites for a new (or upgraded) MUGA where Play Zones funding could be pursued, working with other relevant organisations.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3. a & b. Stipulations of the Play Zones funding criteria would not allow us to upgrade existing MUGAs. In addition, the necessity for charging, a gate access system and online booking would not be applicable for use of our MUGAs.

c & d. To ensure the Council’s MUGA stock is safe, of good quality, fit for purpose and sustainable in the future.

- e. To address the shortfall in provision for MUGAs in West Burnley/Padiham.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Introduction

4. The Council provides 23 MUGAs, which is a high level of provision compared with similar sized local authorities, with 70% of the population living within a 700-metre walking distance of one. 18 MUGAs are floodlit, and all are available for use free of charge 24/7 and provide recreation opportunities for an age group that is under-provided for.
5. MUGAs are maintained from the Council's very limited playground maintenance budget with any floodlighting repairs undertaken by Liberata through the Council's property maintenance budget. Both these budgets are stretched, and the majority of the play area budget gets spent on maintaining the 50+ play areas we have, with a small proportion used to keep MUGAs at the minimum, safe and usable.

Play Zones

6. The Council had hoped that funding from the Football Foundation's Play Zones programme could be used to improve some of the MUGAs identified as priorities for investment in the Football Foundation's Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP).
7. However, the Football Foundation have made it a pre-requisite that gate access systems must be installed on these facilities and charges made for use by pre-booked groups/organisations on each MUGA they fund. This would disadvantage young people that currently use our facilities. They have also stated that the Play Zones programme is not intended as a funding stream for Councils/Facility Operators to upgrade and improve their existing aging MUGA stock.
8. Although the above stipulations would not be applicable for most of the Council's MUGA provision, there may be an opportunity to secure Play Zones money in the future for a new (or upgraded) MUGA that fits the eligibility criteria and where there is an identified shortfall in provision as well as an operating partner, such as Burnley Leisure & Culture or Burnley Football in the Community, to manage the facility and bookings. 25% match funding would be required from the Council and/or partner organisations.
9. A three-year capital programme item for Play Zones has already been included in the Council's Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27 with £90,000 (£30,000 per year) of Council funding intended to match Football Foundation and other Section 106 and 3rd party contributions.

MUGA Improvement Programme

10. The Council's Engineer has undertaken a detailed inspection of all MUGAs (see Appendix 1). Using this condition inspection report as our main reference point, a 5-year MUGA Improvement Programme 2024/25 – 2028/29 has been developed – (see Appendix 2). The programme prioritises upgrades based on the following:
 - Condition score – this is the cumulative condition score for Surfacing, Fencing and Line Marking from the Conditions Report.
 - When the MUGA was last refurbished.
 - Usage
 - Whether it is a Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) priority
 - Availability of match funding
11. To enable the programme to upgrade all MUGAs over a five-year period, a capital allocation of £70,000 per year has been suggested. The Council's capital programme already includes £30,000 per year over the three years 2024 – 2027. Therefore, it is proposed that this is deleted, and provision made in the capital programme for a budget of £70,000 per year for the financial years 2024/5 to 2028/29.
12. The programme also includes Section 106 and 3rd party contributions that have been identified and secured for specific sites. Funding from the Carbon Reduction Scheme has been identified for replacing existing halogen lights with LED ones at all relevant MUGA's. Additional funding would still need to be sought from Town/Parish Councils and other funding streams though to ensure that all MUGA's, identified for remedial and improvement works in the Improvement Programme, can be upgraded.
13. The Improvement Programme table in Appendix 2 shows the annual shortfall that will need to be made up to enable all the planned work goes ahead (figures will be altered accordingly to take in to consideration the Carbon Reduction Scheme funding referenced above). Subsequently, there will need to be a degree of flexibility associated with the programme with some MUGA improvements being brought forward or deferred dependent upon whether they have the requisite funding in place to carry out the identified works from the Condition Inspections report.
14. A new floodlit MUGA is currently being built at Stoneyholme Recreation Ground as part of the Section 106 agreement for the Burnley College extension and is scheduled to be completed by the end of January 2024.

Summary

15. The condition assessment identifies the need to upgrade the MUGA stock, particularly those facilities that are over 15 years old and/or have a combined

condition score of less than 10. Several sites would become unsafe to use and if nothing is done and they would potentially be closed. The programme offers a sustainable strategic plan to ensure MUGAs are safe, good quality and accessible facilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

16. Capital investment of £70,000 per year for a 5-year period, starting from 2024/25 would be provided.
17. This would supersede the original 3-year capital programme item for Play Zones which had been included in the Council's Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2026/27 (£30,000 per year), which is now not needed.
18. Some match funding has already been secured from Section 106 and 3rd party contributions for certain sites. Additional funding would also be sought from Town/Parish Councils and other relevant funding streams to add to the funding pot and enable all proposed MUGA improvements to come to fruition.
19. Energy efficiency costs relating to the improvement of floodlights (replacing halogen with LED) at relevant MUGA's will be paid for from the Carbon Reduction Scheme fund. Figures relating to the MUGA Improvement Programme will be altered accordingly.
20. Ongoing maintenance and minor repairs of the MUGAs will continue to be carried out by the Playground Maintenance Operative utilising the annual revenue budgets highlighted in 5.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

21. The proposed MUGA improvement programme will implement the recommendations contained in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (2023), specifically:

"improve the quality of MUGAs across Burnley and work with relevant stakeholders to establish new provision in areas not currently serviced."

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

22. A briefing note on Multi-use Games Areas was originally taken to Policy Board on the 18th September 2023.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

23. Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs) 2023/24 Condition Inspections report – Appendix 1.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

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ALSO:

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