



**Cabinet**  
23 February 2015

**Report from the Strategic Director of  
Children and Young People**

For decision

Wards affected:  
Stonebridge

**Contract with Brent Play Association for Stonebridge  
Adventure Playground**

**1.0 Summary**

This report seeks to determine the future of the contract with Brent Play Association for the provision of play activities at Stonebridge Adventure Playground (SAP). The current contract runs until 31 March 2015.

**2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees that the contract with Brent Play Association for the provision of play services delivered from Stonebridge Adventure Playground is allowed to expire on 31 March 2015 and that the council does not enter into a further contract for the delivery of play services from Stonebridge Adventure Playground.

**3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Stonebridge Adventure Playground (SAP) is a council-owned building with indoor and outdoor play facilities. Brent Play Association (BPA) manages and maintains the SAP and provides after school and holiday play services to children in the Stonebridge area. BPA has provided play services in Brent for a number of years, initially under a grant but in recent times under contract. The council awarded a contract for a one year period from 1 April 2014 to BPA to deliver play services primarily from SAP. In addition to this contract with the council which provides core revenue funding of £118,000 for the financial year 2014/15, BPA has indicated it also brings in £45,031 of match

funding from a variety of other sources to support the running costs of the SAP.

3.2 The SAP enables children and young people to take part in a range of outdoor and indoor play experiences. Outdoor activities at the SAP include: outdoor adventure play, go-karting, gardening, and sports. Indoor activities at the SAP include: games, arts and crafts, a ball pond, Wii games, and cooking. Other linked activities include trips, access and use of a narrow boat. The scheduled opening hours are:

- Monday – Friday term-time, 2-7pm;
- Saturdays, 11am-4pm;
- School holidays (summer, Christmas, Easter, and during the three School half-term breaks), 7am-6pm.

3.3 The Children with Disabilities (CwD) service also separately procures holiday activities/events from BPA for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Whilst the SAP is used to host some of these activities/events, the majority of these are hosted at BPA's main site at Peppermint Heights.

3.4 Officers monitor the contract with BPA and the usage of SAP reported by BPA is as follows:

**Table 1 – Average daily usage during term-time  
(based on quarter one 2014 monitoring data return)**

Age range	Note	No.
0-4	Accompanied by parents / carers	10
5-13	Core Group	90
14-18	By agreement with Staff on site	20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>

**Table 2 – Average daily usage during holiday period  
(based on quarter two 2014 monitoring data return)**

Age range	Note	No.
0-4	Accompanied by parents / carers	9
5-13	Core Group	135
14-18	By agreement with Staff on site	36
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>

3.5 While SAP is a valued and popular facility, it is the only facility of its kind in Brent which receives financial support from the council. In previous decades, play and after-school provision was funded through a number of sources across the borough. A wide range of play and after-school provision is on offer to children across the borough at schools and other establishments, especially in Brent's many areas of social deprivation, but it is funded either from parental contributions, charitable sources or (for specific children) schools' Pupil Premium. This is in line with other local authorities where

services have ceased to be funded as children's services are reduced to a statutory core.

- 3.6 BPA has been aware since the summer of 2014, and following meetings with council officers, that the council needed to give serious consideration to not letting a further contract for play services delivered from SAP given the financial constraints on the council from 2015 onwards.
- 3.7 Elsewhere on Cabinet's agenda is a report on the proposed regeneration scheme for Stonebridge which includes a one form of entry expansion to Stonebridge Primary School. Expansion of the school will enable a larger offer of after school provision by the School. The report proposes the land on which the SAP is located is re-planned to form part of the expanded Stonebridge Primary School. There has been consultation with BPA as part of these proposals and Members are referred to the contents of that report as to the consultation and the results of the consultation. Members will note that the majority of responses to the consultation expressed a desire to keep the SAP.
- 3.8 Officers have carried out an Equalities Impact Assessment into the effect of not letting a further contract for play services delivered from SAP. Members are referred to Section 6 below and to Appendix 1 for further details.
- 3.9 In view of the financial constraints facing the council, Officers have concluded that they must recommend the contract with BPA for the provision of play services delivered from SAP is allowed to expire on 31 March 2015 and that the council does not enter into a further contract for the delivery of play services from SAP.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The SAP received revenue funding of £118,000 from the council for the 2014/15 financial year. The funding is used to support the ongoing running costs of the SAP. This is matched funded by £45,031 from BPA.
- 4.2 The council entered into a Deed of Dedication for 10 years, on 22 July 2008, with the Big Lottery Fund to receive £199,555 in capital grant to develop the Adventure Playground. This included a requirement that the site only be used for the purposes of the project, and not to dispose of the site without the consent of the fund. If the Adventure Playground ceases to be used for this purpose, the one-off grant payback to the Big Lottery Fund, has been estimated at £40,000. This one-off cost will be funded from the Early Years service within the Children and Young People budget.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The SAP was part funded by the Big Lottery Fund and therefore is subject to title restrictions to reflect the funding agreement, which require the consent of the Big Lottery Fund to any works, or disposal of the site.

- 5.2 Play services delivered from SAP are not a council core service, and the council has no legal duty to provide or fund play facilities.
- 5.3 BPA has provided play services in Brent for a number of years, initially under a grant but in recent times under contract, the most recent contract being for a one year period from 1 April 2014. The contract will therefore expire automatically on 31 March 2015. As indicated in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7, there has been consultation with BPA regarding not letting a further contract for play services delivered from SAP. The impact of not letting a further contract is addressed in Section 6 below.
- 5.4 The current contract with BPA includes provision for a confirmatory non secure lease to be formally granted to BPA following receipt of Big Lottery Fund consent to the council's letting application (Big Lottery Fund consent is required due to the financial contribution it made to the establishment of the SAP). Consent from the Big Lottery Fund has not to date been received and hence a non secure lease has not yet been formally granted to BPA. In the absence of the grant of such lease, it is considered that BPA has a non secure status under their contract with the council and could be required to vacate SAP on expiry of the contract.

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 The SAP serves a sub-set of the children and young people from the Stonebridge ward. While Stonebridge is a ward with a high level of deprivation, there are many areas and communities of young people across Brent with high levels of deprivation, reflecting the borough's high level of child poverty.
- 6.2 The reduction in provision at SAP, or the potential non provision, will have an impact on children and young people in the Stonebridge ward. However, there are alternatives such as after-school, and play activities, provided by the local primary schools. In addition the neighbouring Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre hosts some play activities by various providers through the school holiday periods, and local schools also offer holiday activities.
- 6.3 Since the council contributes revenue funds towards the SAP it is free of charge to children and young people who wish to use the facilities. As described earlier in the report, schools have to charge for after school clubs and it is likely that if the SAP free provision is no longer in place, the local offer from schools and other providers will widen their provision.
- 6.4 Other diversity implications are discussed in detail in the Equality Impact Assessment, attached as Appendix 1.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

- 7.1 There are no staffing/accommodation implications in relation to council staff.

- 7.2 There are a number of full-time, sessional and volunteer staff that BPA use to deliver the SAP service, and average staffing figures are detailed in Table 3 below. Some of the staff and volunteers also work at BPA's main site at Peppermint Heights.

**Table 3 – Staff involved in delivering the SAP service  
(based on quarters one and two 2014 monitoring data return)**

<b>Who is involved?</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Full / part-time Staff involved	Term-time	9 (3 of which are management)
Volunteers supporting	Term-time	4
Full / part-time Staff involved	May half-term holidays	7 (3 of which are management)
Volunteers supporting	May half-term holidays	4
Full / part-time Staff involved	Summer holidays	36 (at least 3 of which are management)
Volunteers supporting	May half-term	6

### **Background Papers**

Report for 23.02.15 Cabinet - Stonebridge Redevelopment Proposals including Primary School Expansion and the Stonebridge Day Centre – Update

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