

## Committee Report Checklist

**Please submit the completed checklists with your report. If final draft report does not include all the information/sign offs required, your item will be delayed until the next meeting cycle.**

### **Stage 1**

#### **Report checklist – responsibility of report owner.**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Date</b>
Councillor engagement / input from Chair prior to briefing	<b>Yes</b>	<b>1/9/2025</b>
Commissioner engagement (if report focused on issues of concern to Commissioners such as Finance, Assets etc)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2/9/2025</b>
Relevant Group Head review	<b>Yes</b>	<b>2/9/2025</b>
MAT+ review (to have been circulated <b>at least 5 working days before Stage 2</b> )	<b>Yes</b>	<b>8/9/2025</b>
This item is on the Forward Plan for the relevant committee	<b>Yes</b>	<b>5/9/2025</b>
	<b>Reviewed by</b>	
Finance comments	<b>OO</b>	<b>3/9/2025</b>
Risk comments	<b>JT</b>	<b>3/9/2025</b>
Legal comments	<b>JC</b>	<b>11/9/2025</b>
HR comments (if applicable)	<b>N/A</b>	

**For reports with material financial or legal implications the author should engage with the respective teams at the outset and receive input to their reports prior to asking for MO or s151 comments.**

**Do not forward to stage 2 unless all the above have been completed.**

### **Stage 2**

#### **Report checklist – responsibility of report owner.**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Date</b>
Monitoring Officer commentary – <b>at least 5 working days before MAT</b>	<b>JC</b>	<b>11/9/2025</b>
S151 Officer commentary – <b>at least 5 working days before MAT</b>	<b>Ola Owolabi</b>	<b>03/9/2025</b>
Confirm final report cleared by MAT	<b>MAT</b>	<b>23/9/2025</b>

# Environment & Sustainability

Date of meeting Thursday 13 November 2025

<b>Title</b>	Play facility in Memorial Gardens, Staines Upon Thames (SUT)
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a Key Decision
<b>Report Author</b>	Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	Not applicable
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Community Environment Services
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>Committee is asked to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree for a new play facility to be built within Memorial Gardens SUT, to replace the five swimmers' statue, subject to planning approval.</li><li>• Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to commence a planning application for the installation of a new play facility.</li><li>• Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to commence a consultation for the installation of a new play area in Memorial Garden SUT.</li><li>• Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to commence the procurement process for the construction and installation of a new play facility and safety surfacing in Memorial Gardens SUT including site preparation.</li><li>• Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to select the preferred tenderers and award the contracts not exceeding the CIL Community Infrastructure Levy CIL funding of £300k set out in this report.</li><li>• Authorise the Group Head Corporate Governance to enter the contracts and necessary legal documentation for the preparation of the site and the purchase and installation of the new play equipment and safety surfacing.</li></ul>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<i>This new play facility will utilise the empty space in Memorial Gardens, following the relocation of the five swimmers' statue and provide a much-needed play facility for the increasing number of properties that have been built within SUT. It is anticipated that this new play provision will increase footfall into the town centre, thereby boosting the economy of SUT.</i>

## 1. Executive summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>The Five Swimmers statue has been relocated from Memorial Gardens to a private development within SUT, leaving an empty space within the Memorial Gardens.</i></li><li><i>The local CIL Board has approved £300,000 in funding to support the creation of a new play facility within Memorial Gardens, SUT.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Several new high-rise developments have been built within SUT who have referred to the local green spaces as provision within planning applications.</i></li><li><i>There are no existing children's play facilities within the town centre.</i></li><li><i>The local CIL board has agreed to fund the purchase and installation of a new play facility within Memorial Gardens</i></li></ul>
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Commence a public consultation to gather feedback from members of the public and key stakeholders on the proposed development.</i></li><li><i>Initiate a planning application, followed by a procurement process for groundworks, play equipment, and installation.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Create project documents.</i></li><li><i>Commence an external consultation exercise.</i></li><li><i>Commence the procurement process for all aspects of purchase and installation.</i></li><li><i>Award the contracts.</i></li><li><i>Commence installation of the play facility</i></li></ul>

## 2. Key issues

- 2.1 The underground electrical plant room which operated the five Swimmers statue was flooded in 2014 and due to the extensive damage could not be repaired. The statue remained in place but was not operational. In 2022 the statue was removed from Memorial Gardens due to structural defects and was placed in storage pending a decision on the future of the statue.
- 2.2 In 2024 a construction company offered to host the statue within the private gardens of a new development in SUT. The statue was repaired and can now be seen in working order by the public in the garden area of this new development of flats.
- 2.3 The moving of this five swimmer's statue has left a large inaccessible area in Memorial Gardens, which is considered by many as a waste of public open space.
- 2.4 The area the swimmer's statue sat in is approximately 50cm below ground level and fenced on all sides and provides no amenity value.
- 2.5 In 2025 a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) bid was submitted to the local CIL board seeking £300k of funding to install a much-needed children's play

facility within this area. This funding has subsequently been approved by the board. The new play facility would be suitable for children under the age of twelve years and would serve the new flatted communities that have been developed within SUT. It is also anticipated that this new play facility will encourage more families into SUT which could lead to an improvement of the footfall and subsequently the economy of this key shopping area in Spelthorne.

### **3. Options appraisal and proposal**

- 3.1 **Option 1 PREFERRED OPTION** Procure, prepare the site, and install all required services and equipment to complete this project which will provide a much-needed children's play area within the town centre for residents and visitors alike.
- 3.2 **Option 2** Do not install a new play facility within Memorial Gardens; this area could then just be opened for use by removing the fencing and used as a general seating. The agreed funding from CIL would then need to be returned to the general local CIL fund for SUT. This option is not recommended as this has the potential to create an area open to anti-social behaviour.
- 3.3 **Option 3** Reconsider the purpose and use of this funding and seek potential alternative options for use of this fenced off empty space.

### **4. Risk implications**

- 4.1 The need to raise the level of this area requires specialist engineering advice which has been sought externally, early indications suggest that there will be no issues related to raising the level of the ground.
- 4.2 Where creating new play facilities there is always a risk that these facilities might attract youths who cause Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the town. The provision of this new facility could create a "meeting place" and lead to a further increase of ASB in the town centre.
- 4.3 Installing playground equipment may be considered "development," which will require planning permission. Because of this and as part of the planning process Spelthorne will undertake a consultation period to gather views on the proposed new installation.
- 4.4 Given the proximity of the new play area to the River Thames, it will be necessary to identify and address any environmental concerns raised by the Environment Agency.
- 4.5 There is a risk that consultation with the local community, which is vital to understand their needs identifies that there is no local or wider support for a new play facility in this location.
- 4.6 Initial enquiries have been made with key stakeholders regarding the proposal to install the new play area. Feedback received from these stakeholders has highlighted several concerns and potential risks associated with the proposal. Appropriate mitigation measures will be developed and considered as part of the forthcoming public consultation process, subject to agreement by the committee.

### **Police**

There are concerns regarding the proposed location of the play area, as it is out of public view, has limited lighting and CCTV coverage, and may become

a hotspot for antisocial behaviour (ASB) after hours, similar to other parks in the borough. Additionally, its proximity to the river raises safety concerns for young children, and the presence of another nearby play park at Lammas Park could create additional management and resource demands.

### **Fire Service**

The fire service supports the police's concerns about the site's proximity to the River Thames, noting that it may attract more children and young people, thereby increasing water safety risks. If the proposal proceeds, a water safety awareness event could be organised during peak periods to promote safe behaviour near the river.

### **Environment Agency**

Issue: The proposed development lies within 20 metres of the River Thames, a designated main river.

Implication: Works within this distance may affect the river's flood defences, water quality, and ecological value.

Issue: The site is underlain by a Secondary A Aquifer, which contributes to local river flows and supports water supply.

Implication: There is potential for groundwater contamination if appropriate pollution controls are not in place.

Issue: The site lies within a Source Protection Zone 3, which safeguards groundwater used for public drinking water.

Implication: Activities with potential to pollute groundwater are subject to stricter control.

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1 Funding of £300k for the engineering works and purchase of new play equipment, the local CIL board has agreed safety surfacing and fencing, and it is anticipated that this amount will cover all costs.
- 5.2 However, it is possible that once the procurement exercise is complete the £300k allocated funding will not be sufficient to meet all costs. If this is the case a further application to CIL or CPRC to meet any additional costs may be forthcoming.
- 5.3 Once the new play area has been commissioned the play facility will be inspected, monitored, and maintained by the parks team along with all other play areas in the borough. Any associated costs will be absorbed within the existing grounds maintenance budgets.
- 5.4 This new facility may increase the cost of the Councils overall insurance policy.
- 5.5 As part of local government reorganisation, directions have been issued under section 24 of the 2007 Act to those councils being reorganised to ensure new agreements will be in the best interests of the new council(s) or the residents of the area, and do not undermine or diminish the benefits or savings anticipated as a result of unitarisation, or which may have an effect on the financial position of the new council/s. There is a risk that due to this direction this expenditure of £300k on a new play facility for Memorial Gardens may be called into question.

- 5.6 The Secretary of State's Direction under section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Section 24 Direction) and the restrictions it places on different types of expenditure by Spelthorne Borough Council without the consent of the successor Council in the period to 1 April 2027 (Vesting Day).

## **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1 All contracts must comply with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Standing Order Procedural Rules. The Council has a duty to deliver best value under the Local Government Act 1999.
- 6.2 Legal Services are to be instructed to prepare contract documentation.

## **Corporate implications**

### **7. S151 Officer comments.**

- 7.1 The total project cost is estimated at £300,000, which has been fully funded through an approved allocation from the local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) board. This funding is expected to cover all associated costs, including groundworks, equipment purchase, and installation. Should procurement costs exceed this amount, a further application to CIL or the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (CPRC) may be required. Ongoing maintenance and inspection of the new play facility will be incorporated into existing grounds maintenance operations, with no immediate pressure on revenue budgets. However, there may be a marginal increase in the Council's overall insurance premium due to the addition of a new public asset.

### **8. Monitoring Officer comments.**

- 8.1 All the relevant legal implications have been considered.

### **9. Procurement comments**

The Procurement Team will be consulted to assist with the carrying out of a compliant tender exercise in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Council's Contract Standing Order Procedural Rules

### **10. Equality and Diversity**

- 10.1 To ensure equality and diversity when building a new playground, we focus on universal design by providing a range of accessible, inclusive equipment and surfaces for all abilities, such as flat, wide paths and sensory play components.
- 10.2 Additionally, we ensure the surrounding environment, such as accessibility to the site, is also inclusive and consider the site's aesthetic and features reflect the diversity of the users.
- 10.3 The procurement process will take the National Model design code into consideration which encourages the design of children's play facilities to be inclusive and accessible.

### **11. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 11.1 When building a play facility, climate change has several key implications which will all be considered at the procurement stage.
- (a) Robust waste management for construction.

- (b) Using sustainable, and where possible locally sourced materials.
  - (c) Consider shade and appropriate materials to keep the play space safe.
  - (d) The need for durability in play equipment must be carefully balanced with environmental conservation from the materials through to conservation.
- 11.2 The eco-friendly materials gaining prominence in playground equipment include:
- 1. **Recycled Plastics:** By re-purposing plastics, the playground industry contributes to reducing plastic waste. Recycled plastics are now being used to create robust, weather-resistant playground structures.
  - 2. **Sustainable Wood:** Wood sourced from responsibly managed forests presents an eco-friendly alternative. It is biodegradable, renewable, and has a lower carbon footprint compared to traditional materials.
  - 3. **Rubber from Recycled Tires:** Old tires, previously a significant waste problem, are being repurposed into safety surfaces for playgrounds, providing a soft landing for children and reducing waste.
- 11.3 The effective procurement of suitable play equipment will ensure the playground is a cherished space of play, learning, and community engagement for all.
- 12. Other considerations**
- 12.1 Leisure Services support any intervention that makes it easier for local communities and young people to be active in their daily lives, and which make better places to live, and bring people together.
- 12.2 This aligns with Sport England's strategy, Uniting the Movement which sets out their vision: Sport and physical activity has a significant role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all. In relation to connecting communities they state: The built environment is one of the key factors in the stronger and more connected communities we all want.
- 12.3 Sport England state that positive experiences for young people form the foundation for a long and healthy life. Their starting point is that all children, irrespective of their abilities, should enjoy being active, and the establishment of a playground in SUT would support this endeavour.
- 12.4 Feedback from stakeholders will be taken into account, and appropriate mitigation measures will be proposed within any planning application to address concerns, satisfy planning requirements, and resolve identified issues.
- 13. Timetable for implementation**
- 13.1 The timetable will be subject to committee approval, planning approval and the procurement process. Having completed all these stages successfully we would anticipate that installation of this new play facility would commence during the latter part of 2026.
- 14. Contact**
- 14.1 Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services 01784 46418

**Please submit any material questions to the Committee Chair and Officer  
Contact by two days in advance of the meeting.**

**Background papers: There are none**

**Appendices: there are none**