

# Haslemere Playground Rejuvenation Programme

## *CIL Funding & Establishment of Working Party*

**Submitted to:** Amenities, Infrastructure & CIL Committee (“AI&C”)

**Agenda Item:** Haslemere Playground Rejuvenation Programme

**Category:** Youth (Strategy) & Local Environment & Amenity

**Relevant Frameworks:** HTC Strategy 2023–2027; HTC Draft Strategy 2026; Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan; Planning Act 2008 ss.59 & 216

## 1. Summary of Proposal

Given Full Council’s decision to commit funds and delegate authority, the AI&C committee is asked to review the application and score given the background and justification within. If accepted as is, this would represent:

1. **Commit £250,000** of CIL funding for the comprehensive redevelopment of the playground at Lion Green, Haslemere’s premier destination playground;
2. **Commit £140,000** each of CIL funding for the comprehensive redevelopment of the playground at Haslemere Recreation Ground and the playground at High Lane Recreation Ground;
3. **Establish a Working Party** with delegated authority to lead the full development and procurement process across all three sites, including site evaluation, resident engagement and setting out tender specifications, tender process, and shortlisting of developers and designs.

## 2. Background and Context

### 2.1 Lion Green Playground – Destination Provision

Lion Green is Haslemere’s premier public open space, centrally located adjacent to supermarkets, public houses, and coffee shops, and within walking distance of the town’s largest primary school. It functions as the town’s destination playground, serving families and young people from across the parish and beyond. Its prominence means it reflects directly on the town as a whole, and its central position makes it the natural focal point for any serious programme of play provision improvement.

The existing equipment is significantly dated and deteriorating. Recent investments — zip wire resurfacing (2023, £20,000), replacement swings (2024, £1,201), and a new Rodeoboard (2025, £9,774) — have addressed individual assets but fall well short of the comprehensive redevelopment the site requires. A budget of £250,000 reflects Lion Green’s status as the town’s most prominent equipped play space, its significantly larger catchment, and the ambition to deliver a genuinely transformative improvement.

The playgrounds at High Lane Recreation Ground & Haslemere Recreation Ground provides play provision for areas of the parish less well-served by the town centre sites. Unfortunately, the equipment at these sites is lacklustre and, in many cases, in disrepair. Limited offerings, coupled with aged and failing assets no longer provide the quality or breadth of play experience that children deserve.

## 2.4 Town-wide Context and the Case for a Programme Approach

Having successfully executed the redevelopment of the Town Meadow play area, this Town Council is now well suited to efficiently execute on a town-wide rejuvenation program. Leveraging the learnings and expertise developed in the prior project, the current council is now uniquely positioned to drive substantial value to the community at pace.

The Haslemere Playground Rejuvenation Programme builds on this foundation, addressing three further sites simultaneously at an investment of £530,000. By leveraging experience from the Town Meadow program and empowering the working party with delegated authority, these projects can be delivered at pace, with groundbreaking in time for the 2027 season.

Playgrounds are among the most important community assets a town can provide. They are free to use, accessible to all children regardless of background, and serve a function that reaches well beyond simple recreation. High-quality play spaces are places where children develop physical fitness, confidence, and resilience; where social skills are learned through interaction with peers; and where families gather and community bonds are formed across generations. They are also a primary means by which children develop a lasting relationship with the outdoors — a habit of outdoor activity that underpins lifelong health and wellbeing.

When play facilities fall into disrepair, it is not merely an aesthetic issue. Deteriorated playgrounds reduce the incentive for families to spend time outdoors, diminish community gathering spaces, and send a visible signal of neglect that affects the character and pride of the neighbourhood. Conversely, investment in modern, well-designed play provision is an investment in the social fabric of the town. The Haslemere Playground Rejuvenation Programme addresses this directly, ensuring that children and families across three distinct areas of the parish have access to play facilities that are fit for purpose, genuinely enjoyable, and reflective of the standards the community deserves.

A programmed approach — rather than addressing these sites piecemeal — allows the Working Party to develop consistent standards, reduce administrative overhead, and pursue combined procurement where advantageous. The table below summarises the three sites and their proposed funding allocations.

Site	Role	CIL Ringfence
Lion Green	Destination playground	£250,000
Haslemere Recreation Ground	Neighbourhood playground	£140,000
High Lane Recreation Ground	Community playground	£140,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£530,000</b>

### 3. Strategic Justification

This programme aligns with the adopted HTC Strategy 2023–2027 (Youth and Local Environment & Amenity priorities), the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan (open space and children’s provision), and the 2016 WBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which explicitly names expansion of the Lion Green playground as an identified infrastructure requirement to be funded through developer contributions — precisely the mechanism CIL exists to deliver.

Under the Planning Act 2008, CIL receipts are established to fund infrastructure needs arising from development (s.59), and may be spent on play areas, open spaces, parks, and sports facilities (s.216(2)). This programme meets all relevant criteria: the projects are identified in or consistent with the Council’s strategic plans, respond directly to population growth, and fall unambiguously within the definition of eligible CIL expenditure.

### 4. Proposed Working Party

#### 4.1 Purpose

The Working Party would be provided delegated authority to lead the Haslemere Playground Rejuvenation Programme from inception through to the shortlisting of contractors and designs across all three sites, reporting back to the AI&C Committee at key stages.

#### 4.2 Authority and Scope

The Working Party would have authority to:

- **Evaluate the sites** — assess the existing playgrounds across all three locations, their condition, capacity, and potential, including any constraints or opportunities associated with each wider setting.
- **Assess resident opinion** — engage with the community, including children, families, and local residents, to understand needs and preferences for each reimaged playground.
- **Set requirements** — establish specifications or design briefs for each site that reflect community input, best practice in inclusive play provision, and the Council’s strategic priorities.
- **Establish Requests for Proposal (RFPs)** — prepare and issue formal tender documents to playground developers and designers, either individually per site or as a combined programme tender where advantageous. Report to Amenities at this stage.
- **Go to tender** — manage the competitive tender process in accordance with the Council’s procurement procedures.
- **Shortlist developers and designs** — evaluate submissions and recommend preferred developers and designs to the Committee, to enable the committee to make a final recommendation to Council.

Building on learnings from the Town Meadow project, the Working Party should be able to work at greater pace, and delegated authority to move from phase to phase will facilitate this. The Working Party should target a Spring 2027 groundbreaking for the Lion Green project, with additional sites to begin in parallel.

#### 4.3 Suggested Membership

Membership of the Working Party should be drawn from the AI&C Committee and may include co-opted members with relevant expertise. Recommendation is that this working party share some members from the Town Meadow working party. The Deputy Clerk would support the Working Party in an advisory capacity.

### 5. Recommendation

The Amenities & CIL Committee is asked to resolve:

1. **That £250,000 of CIL funds be ringfenced** for the redevelopment of the playground at Lion Green, to be drawn down subject to further approval by the Committee following the Working Party process.
2. **That £140,000 each of CIL funds be ringfenced** for the redevelopment of the playgrounds at Haslemere Recreation Ground & High Lane Recreation Ground, to be drawn down subject to further approval by the Committee following the Working Party process.
3. **That a Working Party be established** to lead the development and procurement of the Haslemere Playground Rejuvenation Programme across all three sites, with delegated authority as described in Section 4 of this proposal.