

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism  
**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010  
**SUBJECT:** RoSPA Play Quality Award  
**WARDS AFFECTED:** All  
**REPORT OF:** Graham Bayliss, Director of Leisure  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Phil Esseen, Head of Landscape Development & Management, ext 2392  
**EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To inform Cabinet Member of the Council's achievement in reaching the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Play Quality Award at bronze level.

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

The report notes the success of the Council, and outlines our commitment to achieving the highest possible standards of quality in the maintenance and inspection of outdoor play facilities.

**RECOMMENDATION (S):**

Cabinet Member:

- 1.) Notes the Department's achievement in reaching the bronze level of the RoSPA Play Quality Award.

**KEY DECISION:** No

**FORWARD PLAN:** No

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** N/ A

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

The accreditation supports and measures the Council's systems for maintaining and inspecting play facilities. Not to do so would create accident liabilities and financial risks for the authority.

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**Budget/Policy Framework:**

**Financial:** None

<b><u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b>2009/ 2010 £</b>	<b>2010/ 2011 £</b>	<b>2011/ 2012 £</b>	<b>2012/ 2013 £</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b><u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u></b>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? No	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?	N/a			

**Legal:**

**Risk Assessment:**

**Asset Management:**

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS:**

## CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	√		
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity		√	
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability		√	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		√	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

### LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Application Process for the RoSPA Play Quality Award.

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Leisure and Tourism Department currently manages a diverse range of outdoor play facilities including children's playgrounds, multi games areas and skate parks. The provision of these facilities forms an integral aspect of many parks and green spaces and attracts considerable use by many of the borough's young people. The service is now expanding further with the provision of Playbuilder 'natural play' sites.
- 1.2 Play equipment is manufactured and installed against strict European wide safety standards that require those managing facilities to have in place inspection and maintenance regimes preventing the risk of accidents. The Council established a PHAST (Playground Health and Safety Team) in 1998 and this expanded as a result of restructuring in 2007 to comprise three inspectors and an appointed Play Facilities Officer.

## 2.0 ACCREDITATION SUCCESS

- 2.1 In 2009 Sefton Council was successful in achieving Play Quality accreditation with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and this has

now been re-assessed and re-accredited to the higher, bronze level. Previously the service had reached the 'merit' entry level of the award.

- 2.2 RoSPA is the leading body in the UK concerned with the prevention of accidents. It played a major role in developing international playground manufacturing standards and is respected as the lead professional body involved in providing playground training and checks on safety and inspection.
- 2.3 RoSPA operate the accredited Play Quality Award to rigorously test that playground operators are managing their sites to the highest possible standards. The accreditation involves a detailed application form, disclosure of all accident records and a judging visit to the Council's offices to investigate the inspection and repair systems in place.
- 2.4 The judging visit looked at and tested our ability to:
  - Provide a robust repair and inspection regimes.
  - Prevent accidents and respond to incidents.
  - Provide stimulating play provision that has a good play value.
  - Demonstrate commitment to inclusion for disabled persons.
- 2.5 Sefton was awarded the accreditation in October 2010.
- 2.6 Cabinet Member is asked to note that the RoSPA Quality Play Operators Award is the only accreditation possible for managing children's play facilities and involves a robust judging process. Sefton is the first and only Merseyside local authority to be awarded this accreditation. Currently, of the 43 local authorities in the North West only one other Council has achieved this status underlining the hard work and commitment shown by Leisure and Tourism.
- 2.7 In his written judging comments to the Council, RoSPA's Head of Play Safety wrote Sefton Council have, 'continued to show a high standard of effectiveness.' They judges go on to say, 'It is noted that no accidents have been reported since last year's application. Congratulations are due to all members of staff who are involved in Sefton Council's play provision. The continued improvement is a credit to all.'

### **3.0 SUSTAINING HIGH STANDARDS**

- 3.1 In order that the Council delivers and sustains high standards of maintenance and inspection of its play facilities the following actions have become an integral aspect of our management of these facilities.
- 3.2 We undertake an annual independent safety inspection, and recorded routine inspections of each site. In 2009 the PHAST undertook over 5,000 safety inspections and response times to dealing with defects continue to improve,

resulting in a substantial decline in the number of accidents and claims made against the Council. This year there were no accidents and no claims made against the Council, this represents a reduction from 4 accidents in 2008.

- 3.3 We operate PlaySafe, recognised within the play industry as the most advanced software system for managing playground inspections and we maintain very detailed recording systems.
- 3.4 All staff are trained by RoSPA and have undertaken professional courses to develop their competency base. In particular the team is led by a qualified RPII (Register Play Industries Inspector) ensuring a high degree of skill and expertise is reached.
- 3.5 The Parks & Greenspace Service add value to the inspection regime by having added into our grounds maintenance contract a requirement for an added daily visual inspection. English Landscapes play a key role in alerting the Council to defects, allowing us to address issues immediately before children are put at risk of injury. Our commitment to the use of technology has continued to improve response times and meant that the service is equipped to adjust to reductions in resources.