

 **Date of Release:** 3 March 2025**Ref:** 4446

**Residents invited to have their say on exciting plans to refurbish and enhance city play areas**

Children and their carers will be able to see the exciting schemes being put forward to refurbish several play areas in the city, as part of a public consultation launched this week.

Last January, Chichester District Councillors agreed to invest £800,000 to refurbish six play areas: Parklands in Sherborne Road; Whyke Oval; the Amphitheatre; Priory Park; Florence Park; and Oaklands Park.

Having visited each play area to consult with children, parents, and carers about how they use the play equipment and to gather their views and ideas for improvements, the council invited several play area specialists to bid for the work. This was part of a tender exercise, in line with the councillors’ agreed budget.

Following this process, a preferred contractor has been selected for the project, and people can now see the proposals and make comments as part of a second stage of consultation, which is now live and will run until 5pm on Monday 31 March2025. People can view the plans and have their say at: [**letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas/participate**](https://letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas/participate)**.**

“Over the last few years, our play areas have started to look a bit tired and are now in need of an upgrade,” explains Councillor Mark Chilton, Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate Services and Chichester Contract Services at Chichester District Council. “Once completed, our new and improved play areas will offer an experience for a range of ages all year round.

“As well as being fun and enjoyable to use, they also encourage creativity and provide a space for everyone to play and socialise together. It’s also important to us that each play area is inclusive to all so the plans feature arange of play equipment that can be used by disabled children and those with health conditions and impairments.

“In addition, we’ll also be working with Chichester City Council to enhance Oaklands Park so that it becomes a flagship ‘destination’ play area. As part of this it will include a wider range of play equipment to provide an extended play experience. This kind of play facility then becomes more of a ‘day out’ for residents as well as visitors from further afield, which in turn helps support the local economy.”

Work has already begun in Florence Park. As part of last year’s consultation, users said that the play area and equipment were in good condition and that only minor improvements were needed. This means that Florence Park will be the first of the play areas to be refurbished, with work due to be completed before the Easter holidays.

Once feedback has been received and incorporated for the other play area proposals, it is hoped that work will begin after the Easter break in a phased approach so that four play areas will always be open. It is hoped that whole project will be completed by the end of the school summer holidays.

Mark adds: “To help you share your views on the final designs for these play areas, we’ve created a short and simple survey where you can see the plans and have your say. You can complete this by visiting: [**letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas/participate**](https://letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas/participate).”

“You can also visit our designated consultation web pages —[**letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas**](https://letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas) — where you will find background information; a range of frequently asked questions; and visuals of the proposed improvements.”

The ‘Let’s Talk: Play Areas’ consultation is **now live and will run until 5pm on Monday 31 March**. People can share their views by visiting: [**letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas/participate**](https://letstalk.chichester.gov.uk/playareas/participate)**.**

**For further information, please contact Terri Foster, Senior Communications Officer on 01243 534537 or by emailing tfoster@chichester.gov.uk**

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