March 2026 Update

Belmont Rec masterplan and PlayZone update

In response to mixed feedback received about the PlayZone throughout our engagement, we have undertaken an options appraisal to look at the impacts of various routes forward as follows:

1. Continue with the PlayZone project and re-engage to finalise the masterplan as planned
2. Pause PlayZone and masterplan works in Belmont until post-election. Then proceed with PlayZone and re-engagement on masterplan
3. Re-engage with residents on a referendum about whether to have the PlayZone, using the newly integrated masterplan
4. Move the PlayZone to another location and use the match funding in Belmont Rec
5. Move the PlayZone and match funding to another location
6. End the PlayZone project at Belmont Rec and decline the Football Foundation grant altogether. Use match funding in Belmont Rec

Each option has highlighted several impacts including both the disappointment and contentment to different members of the community, the cost and delay to the masterplan process, the best use of the overall investment and cost to the council, and the potential loss of benefits from BNG tree planting and other associated works like pathway lighting, ecology surveys, seating and bins.

Having discussed the issue with colleagues across the service, Ward Councillors and the Football Foundation, we have decided to move the PlayZone project to another location. We are disappointed in this outcome and regret the impact this will have on local children and young people whom we have positively engaged in the process.

The match funding will need to remain with the PlayZone project and therefore the current investment in Belmont Recreation Ground will be limited to the current £30,000 for this financial year.

Project Priorities

Throughout 2025 we carried out extensive engagement with the local community and in September published our Engagement Report. Based on this, and in line with the priorities identified by the Friends group, the Council has agreed the following improvement priorities for Belmont Recreation Ground:

1. Alleviate flooding

2. Increase biodiversity
3. Improve accessibility
4. Enhance amenity
5. Improve safety

Following this commitment, the Council have:

- Supported the Friends of Belmont Rec to plant Spring bulbs
- Planted 15 trees in the playground, picnic area and main field
- Improved sight lines and safety in the picnic area by removing old fencing and reducing the height of the hedge
- Promoted and planted 1 sponsorship tree in the park
- Undertaken the third Women and Girls survey in the park

Planned works for March include:

- Drainage clearances and a CCTV survey of the drainage run
- A full topographical survey to assist with technical design of sustainable drainage
- Community ecology events, including a wildlife pond, sand bee bank and loggeries
- Repair works to the Downhills Road entrance brick wall
- Relocation of picnic benches from the picnic area
- Amendments to the masterplan
- Initial sustainable drainage design
- Whip planting in the picnic area

We are working to secure funding for delivery of a sustainable drainage system and further project priorities including improvements to pathways, older children's play and outdoor gym facility.

In addition to the above, the Council has secured external funding over £50,000 between 2023 and 2025 to plant 36 mature trees and create a tiny forest, supporting long-term biodiversity, flood management and climate resilience.

We will be sharing a programme of community events and further masterplan engagement soon. This will also include an opportunity to discuss the PlayZone decision in person.