

Record of officer decision

Decision title:	Closure to public of all Play Areas on Monday 23 March 2020 until further notice
Date of decision:	23 March 2020
Decision maker:	Director for Economy & Place
Authority for delegated decision:	The Chief Executive's Scheme of Delegation
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	Commissioning, Procurement and Assets, Cabinet Member Infrastructure and Transport, Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council, Acting Assistant Director (Highways and Transport).
Decision made:	To close all public Play Areas in Herefordshire until further notice. A full listing of which is available at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200137/things_to_do/684/parks_play_areas_and_sports_pitches_search#tab3
Reasons for decision:	The decision has been taken due to the unprecedented threat to Public Health posed by the outbreak of COVID-19. Closing Play Areas will support the recommendations of national government for people to avoid places where people will, as a result of the natural use of Play Areas, particularly by Children and parents, congregate in a way that is contrary to the recommendations of national government in regard to social distancing. The decision has been taken to protect the public from the threat of COVID-19.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	That people choose to congregate at other locations. However, the ability for all reasonable persons to abide by the recommendations of national government in regard to social distancing will, typically be greater in other public spaces, such as parks and sports pitches.
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	To close all Parks, Sports Pitches and Play Areas until further notice. This option has been rejected as, with the exception of Play Areas, public open spaces provide facility for all who can leave their house, in accordance with the prevailing Government guidance to exercise and travel by sustainable means. Such exercise and travel can be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of national government in regard to social distancing and as a result can support the mental wellbeing of residents. If access to all Parks and Sports Pitches were prevented, then those residents who can legitimately leave their homes will be obliged to exercise or travel via other public places, such as public highways or on private land, this risks concentrating people into less public space and reducing the ability for all reasonable persons to abide by the recommendations of national government in regard to social distancing.
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Ball', written in a cursive style.

Signed

Date: 23 March 2020

Name: Richard Ball
Director for Economy & Place