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Request/Response

1. How many children’s playgrounds were managed by the local authority in each year from 2009-10?

‘Play area’ is interpreted as being an equipped, public outdoor play area. It excludes skateparks, basketball hoops and pads, outdoor gym equipment and kickabout goals. The only difference in the figures between 2009-10 and the current time is as a result of the addition of the seafront (West Parade) facilities in 2011 and loss of the old swings and slide at St. Mary’s Recreation Ground, Bexhill in 2016-17.

Financial year
 2009-2010: 23
 2010-2011: 23
 2011-2012: 24
 2012-2013: 24
 2013-2014: 24
 2014-2015: 24
 2015-2016: 24
 2016-2017: 24
 2017-2018: 23
 2018-2019: 23 (sites listed below)

Battle and Rural		
Levetts Lane	Levetts Lane	TN32 5UL
Coronation Gardens	Coronation Gardens	TN33 0DN
Darvel Down	Darvel Down	TN33 9QF
Barrack Hall Park	Belle Hill	TN40 2AP
Bexhill		
Bending Crescent	St. Georges Road / London Road	TN40 2BG
Bexhill Down (Lower) Laundry Site	A259 (opposite Down)	TN39 4HU
Bexhill Down Upper	Down Road	TN39 4HU
Collington Wood	Westcourt Drive	TN39 3NA
Egerton Park	Egerton Road	TN39 3HL
Galley Hill	Galley Hill	TN40 1PQ

Ingrams Farm (Crowhurst Lane)	Crowhurst Lane	TN39 5AS
Levetts Field	Preston Road	TN39 5BN
Little Common Rec	Green Lane	TN39 4PH
Preston Road	Preston Road	TN39 5BN
Seabourne Road Play Area	Seabourne Road, Pebsham	TN40 2SW
Seabourne Road Rec	Seabourne Road, Pebsham	TN40 2SW
Sidley House	Turkey Road	TN39 5BD
Sidley Recreation Ground	Canada Way	TN39 4BL
Southlands (Jubilee Road)	Jubilee Road/Putlands Crescent	TN39 5DR
West Parade	West Parade	
Rye		
King's Avenue	Kings Avenue	TN31 7LU
Masons Field	Mason Road	TN31 7BE
Rye Town Salts	Fishmarket Road	TN31 7LP

2. How many children's playgrounds (existing or planned) have been closed or cancelled because of cuts to the local authority's budget in each year since 2009-10?

One. A play facility comprising just a set of swings and a slide was removed in 2016-17 as the expenditure needed to install new safety surfacing around the two items could not be justified. The items of play equipment were themselves very old, albeit still safe to use. The decision was not purely financial; it also took other factors into consideration including the proximity of an alternative local facility and the limited value and use of the existing facility.

A single swing at a different open space (Broad Oak Park) was removed in 2009-2010 due to rusting at the base. It was the only piece of equipment on the site and couldn't be considered a play area as such. The decision not to replace it was not taken due to financial reasons.

3. How much local authority money has been spent on children's playgrounds in each year since 2009-10?

Note that the Council doesn't not have a dedicated budget for public children's play areas. Expenditure for play areas comes out of a general budget for parks and open spaces and therefore expenditure varies from year to year depending on what other work needs to be dealt with.

The amount spent on children's play areas in each year since 2009-10 is broken down by:

- money has been spent on maintenance of existing areas and
- money has been spent on building new areas.

The costs provided in relation to 'maintenance' include expenditure on refurbishment and the replacement of individual items of equipment and repairs as well as routine safety inspections, grass cutting and bin emptying within play areas. Litter picking is not included as this is calculated for entire sites and most play areas are just a small part of these bigger sites. The money spent includes funding secured through external grant providers as well expenditure through the council's own capital and revenue budgets. The costs relating to 'new' exclude refurbishment works.

Year	Maintenance of existing areas	Creation of new facilities	Notes
2009-2010			Information not available.
2010-2011	£31,555.50	0*	Records of ad-hoc repairs carried out by the grounds maintenance contractor at this time are not available and therefore the amount shown is less than actual expenditure. * Play equipment was incorporated into the re-landscaping Bexhill's seafront in 2010-11. The cost of this has not been included in this enquiry due to the time that would be needed to locate and extract that information.
2011-2012	£32,967.07	0	
2012-2013	£378,782.86	0	This includes a Corporate Priority Project funded outside of the normal revenue budget for Parks and Open Spaces and includes external grant funding.
2013-2014	£87,755.34	0	
2014-2015	£50,585.95	0	
2015-2016	£68,423.83	0	
2016-2017	£134,898.55	0	
2017-2018	£172,059.08	0	This includes external contributions to the value of £15,335.04.
2018-2019	£100,685.95	0	The figure includes the cost of routine maintenance in relation to play areas for the whole financial year even though we are not at the end of March as yet. There will be a small amount of additional expenditure relating to non-routine work (repairs etc.) between the time of completing this FOI and the end of the financial year.

4. How many children's playgrounds are proposed for closure within the next year?

None

5. Has the local authority charged for the use of any children's playgrounds under its control and, if so, when this charge was introduced, how much was this charge introduced and how many children's play areas the charge has applied to in each year since 2009-10?

No