

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	24 Nov 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	City Play Areas
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/309
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Committee of the progress of the 2016/17 Environmental Services programme of Play Area Refurbishment Works and provide an update on proposed works for 2017/18.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- (i) Acknowledges the success of the 2016/17 refurbishment programme.
- (ii) Agrees that the Service should continue the rolling programme of play area refurbishment for 2017/18 as proposed in this report, subject to the necessary funding being in place.
- (iii) Approves the use of the ESPO Framework 115 'Playground Equipment – Outdoor' or Scotland Excel Contract 0215 'Outdoor Play Equipment' as part of the 2017/18 procurement process.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All works associated with play areas is undertaken within existing budget levels.

Capital funding of £470,000 was allocated to play areas in 2016/17 with £300,000 allocated from the HRA account and £170,000 from the Capital Condition and Suitability Programme.

## 2016/17 Programme Budget

Revenue	£120,000
Capital	£470,000

## 2017/18 Programme Budget (Provisional)

Revenue	£120,000
Capital	£470,000

An additional £160,000 was allocated from the council's underspend in the previous year's budget and earmarked for refurbishment of the play areas at Allan Park, Coronation Rd, Westerton of Auchmill, Seaview Place and Findon Ness play areas.

There are no further financial implications as a result of this report.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Services staff undertakes implementation of all works associated with the rolling programme of Play Area Refurbishment.

There are positive implications of this rolling programme against International, National and Local Children's' Play Policy:

**Aberdeen City Council** upholds children's rights to play in the City's Play Policy. Some of the key action points contained within this policy are to:

- *Monitor the city's network of fixed play equipment sites to ensure that they are safe, well lit and maintained to a high standard.*
- *Provide play opportunities within the city that are high quality challenging and safe.*
- *Promote the importance of play within the lives of 'Aberdeen's Children so that they are active and healthy.*

It is clear that the Council recognises that play is an essential part of a child's development and important to the future of Aberdeen. This can be clearly seen in the Council's Children's Strategy statement:

*"Play is an essential part of everyone's life and is fundamental to human development and is freely chosen and self directed. Children engage in play as a mechanism to explore the world around them, for enjoyment and creative expression and as the medium through which skills are learned and developed. Play is the stimulus for physical, intellectual, emotional and social development."*

**Nurtured Outcome Group** have identified in their 'Early Years Framework Implementation Plan 2014-15' that:

*“Increasingly and consistently, evidence shows that giving children the best start in life offering the highest quality of health, learning and play experiences, improves outcomes for children that will have a life long impact for them as adults. These experiences enable children to become active citizens who can make significant contributions to society and participate fully in their own lives and those of their communities.”*

There are direct implications arising from this report in terms of health and safety under BS EN 1176 Playground Equipment Standard and BS EN1177 Impact Absorbing Playground Surfacing.

**United Nations**, Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31 of the Convention states:

*“Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”*

**The Scottish Governments**, Play Strategy for Scotland 21<sup>st</sup> June 2013 states:

*“Children’s play is crucial to Scotland’s well being; socially, economically and environmentally. Our people are our greatest resource and the early years of life set the pattern for children’s future development.*

*‘The experiences children have in early life – and the environments in which they have them – shape their developing brain architecture and strongly affect whether they grow up to be healthy, productive members of society’ (Harvard University, 2007).*

*Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and ‘when children play their brains do two things: they grow and they become organised and usable’ (Hughes, 2013). By investing in all our children and young people now we can strengthen their ability to achieve their full potential.”*

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

### 5.1 Aberdeen City Play Areas

At present there are 146 play areas (**60no HRA**) throughout the City with an estimated asset value of £10 million. The play areas are categorised according to the industry standard of:

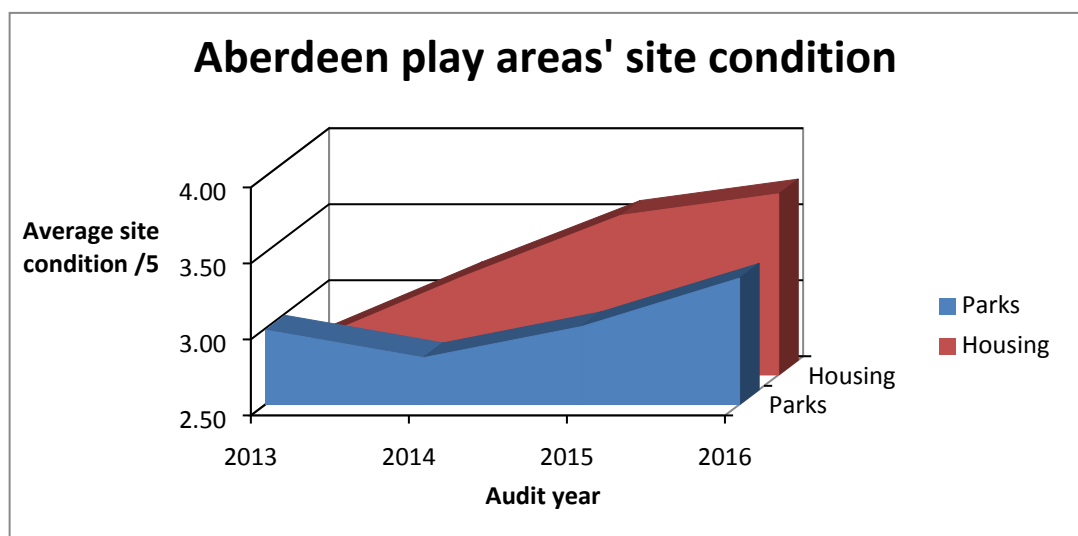
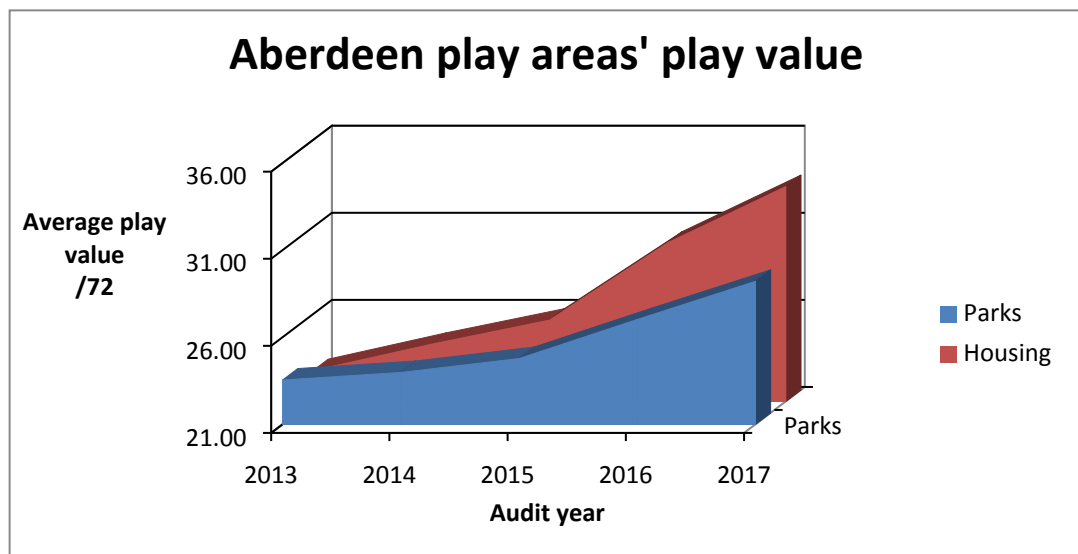
- 50no Local Areas of Play (LAP) (**17no HRA**), small play area.
- 64no Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP) (**34no HRA**), medium play area.
- 32no Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAP) (**9no HRA**), large play area.

- The Revenue Budget for maintenance of these areas is currently £120,000 a year, which gives approximately £816 per play area for repairs and maintenance. A rolling programme of refurbishment is underway to replace all 146 play areas over a 15 year period.

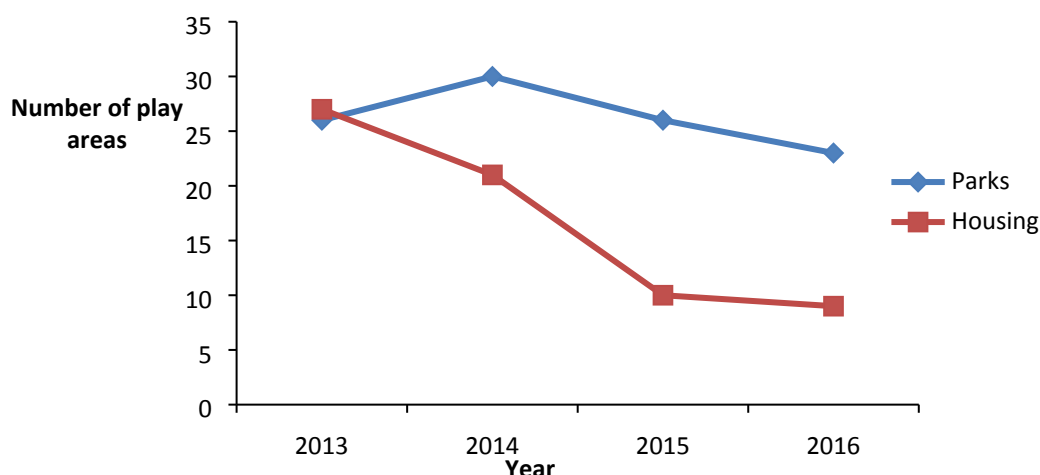
## 5.2 Play Area Inspection and Maintenance 2016

A review of the Aberdeen's play area inspection regime was carried out by the Service in 2012/13, as a result of an identified decline in the overall condition of play areas. Following on from that review new inspection, reporting and maintenance procedures have been put in place. These improved procedures are contributing to the overall improvement in the quality of play areas city wide.

Consistent audits of all play areas have now been carried out in five consecutive years. Analyses of the results clearly demonstrate a positive trend. See graphs 1-3 below. The graphs also demonstrate the gap that is growing between the areas held in the Housing and Parks budgets.



## Areas identified as requiring immediate attention



### 5.3 Programme 2016/17 Update

Following on from a fourth audit, a priority list for play area refurbishment during 2016/17 was created. This was based on site condition, play value and proximity to other play areas. Along side this, a separate list of individual items requiring renewal, removal or immediate repair was compiled using recommendations from the Annual Independent Play Inspection Report.

This allowed the service to develop a programme to move the refurbishment forward as funding was made available. The programme was structured to target the areas most in need of refurbishment, balanced against overall condition, play value and proximity to other areas.

Capital Funding of £470,000 a continued Revenue Budget of £120,000, and the addition of £160,000 allocated from an under spend in the previous years' budget have enabled the Service to make good progress with the Refurbishment Programme previously described.

This has been taken forward on a priority basis and has involved community consultation on the final design of each of the larger play areas.

By the end of the 2016/17 financial year the Service will have fully refurbished play areas at the following locations:

Play Area	Budget allocation	Capital Budget
Laburnum Walk	£45k	C&S programme
Buckie Wynd	£28k	C&S programme
Balnagask Circle	£28k	C&S programme

Coldstone Place	£15k	C&S programme
Craigielea Avenue	£17k	C&S programme
Wellside Place	£17k	C&S programme
Eday Cr	£59k	HRA
Morrison Drive	£25k	HRA
Froghall Place	£53k	HRA
Ferrier Cr	£79k	HRA
Marquis Rd	£22k	HRA
Kings Court	£23k	HRA
Ruthrieston Circle	£39k	HRA
Allan Park	£60k	Underspend
Coronation Rd	£15k	Underspend
Seaview Place	£30k	Underspend
Westerton of Auchmill	£30k	Underspend
Findon Ness	£25k	Underspend

And carried out several partial refurbishments as follows:

<b>Play Area</b>	<b>Budget Allocation</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>
Persley Cr, Replacement climber unit.	£10k	Direct developer contributions
South Esplanade West, Swings	£7k	Direct developer Contributions

Around 10 items, identified as nearing the end of their useful lives were removed from sites around the city throughout the year.

In addition to allocated budgets, the service has worked closely with community groups who raised funding for play facilities in their own areas. This year groups have secured

<b>Play Area</b>	<b>External/community Funding</b>
Kincorth Circle, additional work to new skate park.	£10
Pocra Quay, Bespoke Boat play feature	£15
Eric Hendrie Park, paths and picnic tables	£22

This gives an overall total of **£47K** of secured external funding. Whilst welcome this figure represents only around 50% of the external funding secured in the previous year. The reduction in external funding secured is of concern and highlights the growing importance of community engagement.

Public feedback has been extremely positive to the works carried out to date and we anticipate positive press coverage once this year's refurbishments are complete.

## 5.4 Programme 2017/18 Update

Priorities for 2017/18 will be set following completion of the fifth audit and will be based on site condition, play value and proximity to alternative facilities. Using data from the most recent audit which was carried out in January 2016 we can advise that the following play areas are likely to feature in next year's priority list.

<b>Housing Sites</b>	<b>Parks Sites</b>
Seaton Gardens South LAPS	Kingswood Gardens LAPS
Persley Crescent LEAP	Callum Park LAPS
Orchard Street LEAP	Colthill Rd LAPS
Oldtown Terrace LEAP	Ash Hill Rd LAPS
Seaton Place East LEAP	Lee Crescent LAPS
Middle Brae LEAP	Devenick Place NEAP
Sheddocksley Community Centre LEAP	Stewart Park NEAP
Piries Lane NEAP	The Meadows NEAP
Westfield Park	Westfield Park NEAP

Depending on the allocated budget, we will aim to refurbish between fifteen and twenty play areas of different sizes through out the year. This number is an estimate and is based on the funding levels provided and experience gained during previous years of the refurbishment programme.

Once priorities are finalised and budgets set, design briefs should be completed and out to tender by May. As in previous years Communities will be consulted on the proposals for higher value sites. All refurbishment work will be completed within the 2017/18 financial year.

## 6. IMPACT

### **Improving Customer Experience –**

Actively managing play areas within the city is leading to a demonstrable improvement in the quality of the facilities on offer

### **Improving Staff Experience –**

In continuing with the commitment to provide the necessary resources, officers are empowered to continue the programme of play area improvements identified in their play area improvement plan. This leads to greater job satisfaction and raised motivation in the team tasked with play area management.

### **Improving our use of Resources –**

Actively managing play areas will contribute to the continued provision of good quality play areas with an increased amenity value.

### **Corporate –**

**Contributes to the following sections of Aberdeen: The Smarter City**

- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.
- We will challenge inequalities wherever they exist and bring our communities closer together.
- We will promote Aberdeen as a great place to live, bring up a family, do business and visit.
- The City Play Areas will contribute to the delivery of the five year plan “Aberdeen the Smarter City” commitments to:-
- “promote and improve opportunities for physical activity and sport to enable Aberdeen's citizens to lead more active, healthier lives.”
- “provide a clean, safe and attractive streetscape and promote biodiversity and nature conservation. We will encourage wider access to green space in our streets, parks and countryside.
- Assist the Council in delivering the **Single Outcome Agreement's National Outcome 12** “We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and enhance it for future generations” and will contribute to several other outcomes including **No.6** “We live longer, healthier lives”, **No. 7** “Tackling inequalities” and **No. 10** “We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need”.
- The report contribute towards the delivery of **the Aberdeen Open Space Strategy 2011-2016** particularly in delivering objective 2 and action 2.4 of the Strategy action plan

#### **Public –**

This report will be of interest to the public as the improvements made to play areas to date have been very well received. Each stage of the process has been well reported and in several communities has inspired groups to get involved in sourcing additional funding for play facilities in their own areas.

#### 7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

This report is seen as a benefit to all, the assessment of risk associated with this report is very low.

#### 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

City Play areas update 2014/15  
Play area audit 2016

#### 9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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