

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	24 May 2017
REPORT TITLE	Play Area Refurbishment 2017/18
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/094
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Steven Shaw

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

To advise the Committee of the progress of the 2017/18 Environmental Services programme of Play Area Refurbishment Works and request authority to spend up to the additional £826,000 allocated to the service at February's Council Budget Meeting to deliver the 2017/18 Play Area Refurbishment Works, and to authorise expenditure via a range of call-offs from a relevant Framework Agreement.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- a. Agrees that Environmental Services continue the 2017/18 rolling programme of play area refurbishment utilising the approved additional £826,000 Revenue Funding and the existing £450,000 Capital Funding (giving a total refurbishment fund up to £1,276M for 2017/18), and in accordance with the overall and individual estimated expenditure for each play area as detailed in this report. This subject to the service having the capacity to deliver and subject to the industry suppliers having the capacity to supply within the current financial year.
- b. Approves and authorises the use of the ESPO Framework 115 'Playground Equipment – Outdoor or Scotland Excel Contract 0215 'Outdoor Play Equipment' as part of the 2017/18 for individual call-offs for the play areas detailed in this report;
- c. Approve the appointment of additional fixed term staff, paid for through the additional revenue funding, to assist permanent staff in the delivery of the programme; and

- d. Report back to this Committee at or around year end to advise of expenditure made within 2017/18 and cumulative expenditure against initial estimate

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

At present there are 146 play areas (**60no HRA**) throughout the City with an estimated asset value of £12 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.

Programme 2016/17 Update

Following on from a fifth annual audit in early 2017, a priority list for play area refurbishment during 2017/18 has been 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 will be compiled using recommendations from the Annual Independent Play Inspection Report to be carried out in May 2017.

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

Capital Funding of £450,000 a continued Revenue Budget of £120,000 and the additional extra Revenue Budget allocated for 2017/18 of £826,000 will allow the Service to make good progress with the Refurbishment Programme previously described.

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

Existing £450K Capital Funding Spend

By the end of the 2017/18 financial year the Service will have fully refurbished play areas at the following locations from the existing approved £450,000 Capital funding budget allocated:

Play Area	Budget allocation	Capital Budget
Lee Crescent	£28k	C&S programme
Clova Park	£62k	C&S programme
Ash Hill Road	£50k	C&S programme
Wales Street	£20k	HRA
Clifton Road	£14k	HRA
Orchard Street	£30k	HRA
Oldtown Terrace	£60k	HRA
Abbey Place	£44k	HRA
Persley Crescent	£34k	HRA
St Ninians Court	£60k	HRA
Piries Lane	£35k	HRA

Additional £826K Revenue Funding Proposed Spend

Using data collected from the January 2017 Equipment Audit we can advise that the following play areas are the top priorities for the 2017/18 financial year from the Additional £826,000 Revenue funding budget allocated:

Play Area	Budget allocation	Capital Budget
Cult Skate Park	£51k	Additional Funding
Devenick Place	£80k	Additional Funding
The Meadows	£45k	Additional Funding
Cove Playing Field	£41k	Additional Funding
Stewart Park	£55k	Additional Funding
Westfield Park	£51k	Additional Funding
Portal Terrace	£73k	Additional Funding
Colthill Road	£23k	Additional Funding
Westburn Skate Park	£105k	Additional Funding

Hilton Community Centre	£28k	Additional Funding
Ferryhill Community Centre	£18k	Additional Funding
Westerton Crescent	£55k	Additional Funding

The following are for areas where partial refurbishments will be implemented for the replacement of equipment approaching the end of its useful life or already removed:

Play Area	Budget allocation	Capital Budget
Sunnyside Park	£37k	Additional Funding
St Fitticks Skate Park	£17k	Additional Funding
Powis Circle	£9k	Additional Funding
Gallowgate	£7k	Additional Funding
North Grampian Circle	£14k	Additional Funding
Scotstown Gardens	£9k	Additional Funding
Duthie Park North	£11k	Additional Funding
Duthie Park South	£19k	Additional Funding

Programme Delivery

The additional £826k budget allocated for 2017/18 brings the total budget available for this year's refurbishment programme to £1.3 million. This trebling of the programme budget means that the present staff resources are insufficient to deliver the programme.

It is proposed that an additional Administration Officer and Supervisor are appointed on a fixed term basis to enable delivery of this programme. The cost of this additional staff of £62k would be taken from the £826k additional funding.

This programme cannot be delivered on time at the present staffing levels.

4. 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 £150,000 from the Capital Condition and Suitability Programme.

The additional £826,000 was allocated at the Council Budget Meeting on 22 February 2017.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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.

The ESPO framework agreement has approved in terms of the Council's internal Procurement Regulations.

The Scotland Excel framework went live on the 1st May 2017, prior to any individual call offs being made will be approved in line with the Council's internal Procurement Regulations.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

This report is seen as a benefit to all with the main risks being as follows.

There is a reputational risk if the service fails to deliver as this programme of work has already been publicised.

There is a risk that the suppliers and contractors required to supply and install the equipment will not be able to meet the additional demand and timescales. The play industry is small and it is the same suppliers and contractors who operate across the UK. The additional spend in 2017/18 will significantly challenge the suppliers and contractors to deliver and this will have to be managed carefully. This risk is seen as high.

To help manage the increased number of play area refurbishments additional staff will have to be employed in the play team. It is possible that suitable staff will not be available for recruitment and that this will put additional strain on the existing officers to manage the additional programme of works. This risk is high.

7. IMPACT SECTION

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 lifelong 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 Government's, Play Strategy for Scotland 21st June 2013 states:

“Children’s play is crucial to Scotland’s wellbeing; 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.”

Economy

Improvements to the play areas should encourage visiting families to use these facilities and spend longer periods in the area.

There is also a benefit in the reduced time and cost associated with maintaining old equipment.

People

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.

Place

This programme provides improvements to the play environment throughout the City with new up to date equipment replacing run down play environments. Improvements to accessibility are also included within the refurbishments where possible.

Technology

There is no technological improvement through this programme.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

City Play Areas Report 2016/17

<http://councilcommittees.acc.gov.uk/documents/s65450/City%20Play%20Areas%20CHI.16.309.pdf>

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

N/A

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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