

To: Council

On: 29 September 2016

Report by: Director of Community Resources

Heading: Investment in Renfrewshire's Parks

1. Summary

1.1 At its budget meeting on 3 March 2016, the Council agreed to;

- provide £2.250 million to support major investment in Parks across Renfrewshire as follows;
 - £1million of capital resources
 - £1 million from Renfrew Common Good Fund,
 - £0.250million from Paisley Common Good Fund, and
- instruct the Director of Community Resources to develop a detailed and prioritised programme of investment in consultation with communities and key stakeholder groups and where appropriate consider community led delivery mechanisms to maximise the opportunity to lever in other external sources of funding and to provide a full report to Council after the summer recess.

1.2 Strategies and masterplans, along with detailed investment proposals have been developed in partnership with our stakeholders, including local community groups and friends of groups, to develop regeneration options and community led projects in our parks. They also support the Council's wider strategic priorities, including Tackling Poverty, Youth Unemployment, Community Empowerment, Paisley 2021 and also the National Play Strategy. The flagship parks at Robertson Park in Renfrew and Barshaw Park in Paisley have been the key focus of future investment proposals. Prior to the investment commitment by the Council, in March 2016, considerable joint working and progress had already been made on strategies and masterplans for both flagship parks. Ambitious master plans have been further developed which can be delivered through a combination of Council investment and

by pursuing potential external funding opportunities. The preliminary estimated total cost of these flagship master plans is £3.14 million for Barshaw Park and £2.437 million for Robertson Park respectively, total £5.577m.

- 1.3 Suitable projects have also been identified for 5 other neighbourhood parks across Renfrewshire. These are
- (i) Thomas Shanks Park, Johnstone
 - (ii) Barwood Park, Erskine
 - (iii) Houston Road Public Park, Bridge of Weir
 - (iv) Howwood Public Park, Howwood
 - (v) Kilbarchan Public Park, Kilbarchan
- 1.4 These 5 neighbourhood parks have sufficient community involvement and interest to support a viable investment programme, although prioritisation for current / early investment and potential complementary external funding opportunities is still being developed.
- 1.5 Master plans and key improvement priorities for the 2 flagship parks and the other 5 proposed neighbourhood parks have been developed through early stakeholder (community and friends groups) and officer joint working but exceed the Council's investment funding of £2.250m. However, a number of common early infrastructure priorities, in particular paths, roads & drainage and improved play facilities, could proceed, early in 2017, utilising the £2.250m and including dedicated employee resources, with a specialist set of skills (£125k). This specialist employee resource, employed by the Council, being used to support community and friends groups to pursue external funding opportunities (at a 100% funding level) that are additional to the Council's £2.250m investment.
- 1.6 It is being proposed that the Council's £2.250m investment funding be used to deliver the common early and key infrastructure priorities and be allocated as follows:
- £1 million (including a £50K employee resource allocation) Renfrew Common Good funding for the redevelopment of Robertson Park to provide improved infrastructure ie paths, roads & drainage and play facilities in the park
 - £750,000 capital resources and £250,000 Paisley Common Good Fund (including a £50K employee resource allocation) for the redevelopment of Barshaw Park to provide improved infrastructure ie paths, roads & drainage and play facilities in the park
 - £250,000 capital resources (including a £25K employee resource allocation) for investment in 5 neighbourhood parks across Renfrewshire
- 1.7 This investment by the Council in the common early priorities within infrastructure regeneration projects, along with dedicated specialist employee resources will act as a catalyst for external funding applications to realise the wider strategies and masterplans of the 2 flagship parks, 5 neighbourhood parks and across all of

Renfrewshire.

- 1.8 The common early priorities within the flagship projects at Robertson Park and Barshaw are being commissioned and further progressed through autumn 2016, to allow works to commence on site, weather permitting, in early 2017. The early priorities for the proposed 5 neighbourhood parks will take slightly longer, to allow more detailed project scopes, designs and costs to be fully developed. Site starts would be later, potentially spring 2017.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Council is asked to:

- (i) Approve the investment proposals and spend of the Council's £2.250m in the 2 flagship parks of Robertson Park, Renfrew and Barshaw Park, Paisley and 5 neighbourhood parks as set out and detailed in this report, including the dedicated & specialist employee resources to support community and friends groups in pursuing additional / complimentary funding opportunities and bids.
- (ii) Note the anticipated commencement timescale of common early infrastructure works and improvements to play facilities at Robertson Park, Renfrew and Barshaw Park, Paisley is early 2017.
- (iii) Note the anticipated commencement for investment in the 5 neighbourhood parks, as detailed in paragraph 1.3 of this report is spring, 2017.
- (iv) Note that the investment proposals focus on parks which have already identified investment plans, through established stakeholder groups / community and friends groups.
- (v) Note that future progress updates on the Council's £2.250m investment in Parks will be reported to the Environment Policy Board.

3. Background

- 3.1 All of the Council's parks are considered to be highly valued as community assets. The Council regularly assesses and reviews their condition and opportunities for investment. Wherever possible, this is undertaken in partnership with community groups such as Friends of Groups at Barshaw, Knockhill and Thomas Shanks Park; Community Councils; and Community Growing Grounds Groups.
- 3.2 A number of highly successful investment projects have been delivered in partnership with our communities and organisations such as the Lottery and Historic Environment Scotland. In particular, recent partnership investments have included £890,000 investment in new facilities and improved infrastructure at Knockhill Park,

Renfrew from the Big Lottery Fund, with an additional £100,000 provided to improve community cohesion there; and over £500,000 investment to restore the Grand Fountain in Fountain Gardens to its original condition funded by Historic Scotland.

- 3.3 In addition to these particular investments the Council also provides investment funding and support to community groups engaged in activities in parks & open spaces through the allocation of funding from Local Area Committees and from external funding applications. The Council also spends almost £9 million per annum on StreetScene activities across Renfrewshire. This spend includes maintenance activities to all of the Council's parks and open spaces.
- 3.4 Prior to the Council budget investment decision of March 2016, considerable progress had already been made on strategies and master plans for Barshaw Park Paisley and Robertson Park Renfrew. The strategies and master plans were developed in partnership with community and friends groups and link with wider corporate priorities including Paisley 2021, Tackling Poverty, Community Empowerment, Youth Unemployment, and National Play Strategy.

4. Barshaw Park, Paisley

- 4.1 Although £150,000 was allocated by the Council for investment in Barshaw Park to celebrate its centenary in 2012, it has otherwise suffered from a lack of investment over the last 40 years. In order to address this, the Friends of Barshaw Park were constituted in 2014 to
- promote community interest and involvement in the park,
 - meet the requirements of funders with regards to community involvement in redevelopment projects, and
 - provide an 'umbrella' group for all active groups within the park.
- 4.2 Over the last 12 months, the Council has worked in partnership with the Group to prepare an ambitious Master Plan which details a community vision for the park. This has involved consultation events, online questionnaires and interviews with groups operating in the park. The Master Plan comprises ambitious proposals to replace or repair infrastructure within the park (in particular paths, & drainage), renovate the walled garden, repair the boating pond, create an outdoor performance venue and introduce new play facilities.
- 4.3 This Master Plan has been developed to:
- meet the aspirations of the Council and park users in terms of facilities and attractions,
 - act as a catalyst for community led delivery mechanisms to maximise the opportunity to lever in other external sources of funding,
 - support Paisley's City of Culture 2021 bid, and
 - contribute to the Quality of Life within Renfrewshire, for residents, visitors and businesses.

- provide a suitable venue for events and attractions in the park

4.4 The aspirations described in the Master Plan will be delivered using a phased approach. Phase 1 common early priorities involving infrastructures repairs to paths, roads & drainage and improved play facilities, as set out in Appendix 1, will be funded directly by the Council and will enable subsequent, externally funded projects.

5. Robertson Park, Renfrew

5.1 The Council has worked in partnership with community groups in Renfrew to prepare an ambitious Master Plan which details our vision for Robertson Park. These groups include the Renfrew Community Development Trust and Renfrew Community Council.

5.2 This Master Plan has been developed to

- meet the aspirations of the Council and park users in terms of facilities and attractions,
- act as a catalyst for current and future community led delivery mechanisms to maximise the opportunity to lever in other external sources of funding
- support the regeneration of Renfrew through complimenting Renfrew's range of attractions for both residents and visitors.
- contribute to the Quality of Life within Renfrewshire, for residents, visitors and businesses

5.3 The proposals include renewal of roads and paths throughout the Park, provision of play facilities, creation of a hub which will incorporate a café and toilet facilities, upgrading of the model traffic area, upgrading of the Pets Corner and creating a new performance space.

5.4 The aspirations described in the Master Plan will be delivered using a phased approach in a similar manner to Barshaw Park. Phase 1 involving common early priorities and involving infrastructure repairs to paths, roads & drainage and improved play facilities is set out in Appendix 2 will be funded directly by the Council and will enable subsequent, externally funded projects.

6. Other Neighbourhood Parks

6.1 Across Renfrewshire a number of other neighbourhood parks have been identified as suitable for investment. The parks have been selected on the basis of recognised and ongoing need for investment and significantly where local community groups are actively engaging with the Council. Investment would focus on addressing the condition of paths, boundaries and play equipment. The initial list of parks includes the 5 neighbourhood parks of Thomas Shanks Park in Johnstone, Barwood Park in Erskine, Houston Road Public Park in Bridge of Weir, Howwood Public Park in Howwood and Kilbarchan Public Park. This list may expand as more detailed

scoping works progress and external funding opportunities are explored with community groups.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - The Parks Investment proposals involve funding of £2.250m as approved at the Council meeting of 3rd March 2016 comprising £1m of direct capital allocation, £1m from the Renfrew Common Good Fund and £0.250m from Paisley Common Good Fund.

2. **HR & Organisational Development**

3. **Community Planning**

Children and Young People – Enhanced play facilities at key parks in Paisley and Renfrew combined with wider investment in parks across Renfrewshire will improve facilities for children and young people to play, be active and enjoy outdoor space.

Community Care, Health & Well-being – Improved parks contribute to encouraging greater levels of physical exercise. This investment will also attract more people outdoors and promote a sense of wellbeing through exposure to aesthetic and quality spaces.

Empowering our Communities – This project has engaged communities and friends groups, and responding positively to community needs and desires.

Greener – Improved parks enhances the quality and aesthetic of the urban environment. They provide places of peace and calm, encouraging exercise and active travel.

Jobs and the Economy – Investment in Parks contributes to the attractiveness of Renfrewshire for visitors and the investment in Barshaw Park in particular supports the Paisley City of Culture Bid 2021. Event spaces will complement the wider Council offering of venues for major public performances and therefore contribute to increased numbers of visitors.

4. **Legal** - none

5. **Property/Assets**- none

6. **Information Technology** - none

Equality & Human Rights - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the

mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

7. **Health & Safety** - none

8. **Procurement** - none

9. **Risk** - none

10. **Privacy Impact** - none

List of Background Papers – none

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Common Early Investment Priorities / Proposals for Robertson Park, Renfrew					
Appendix 1					
Investment Priorities	Cost	Issues for Consideration	Stakeholder Priority	Council Priority	
Improved paths / roads / drainage	£600,000	The deterioration of the infrastructure within Robertson Park needs to be addressed as quickly as possible to minimise future repair costs. An initial investment will restore the paths, roads and drainage systems within the park to halt their deterioration and protect future investment projects within the park from adverse ground conditions.	✓	✓	
Improved play facilities	£200,000	The play facilities within the park are the principal attraction for most visiting families. However, their popularity has resulted in them nearing the point where they become uneconomical to maintain. Initial investment will ensure that high quality facilities continue to be provided in the park whilst further investment is sought externally.	✓	✓	
Specialist resource	£50,000				
Total Cost	£850,000				

Common Early Investment Priorities / Proposals for Barshaw Park, Paisley					Appendix 2
Investment Priorities	Cost	Issues for Consideration	Stakeholder Priority	Council Priority	
Improved paths / roads / drainage	£650,000	The deterioration of the infrastructure within Barshaw Park needs to be addressed as quickly as possible to minimise future repair costs. Initial investment is required to restore the paths, roads and drainage systems within the park to halt their deterioration and protect future investment projects within the park from adverse ground conditions	✓	✓	
Improved play facilities	£150,000	The play facilities within the park are the principal attraction for most visiting families. However, their popularity has resulted in them nearing the point where they become uneconomical to maintain. Initial investment will ensure that high quality facilities continue to be provided in the park whilst further investment is sought externally	✓	✓	
Specialist resource	£50,000				
Total Cost	£850,000				