

To: INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND & ENVIRONMENT POLICY BOARD

On: 26TH MAY 2021

Report by: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Heading: Outdoor Access and Play Area Improvements

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council agreed in March 2021 as part of its budget to invest £2.284million to support improvements in outdoor access and play areas. This report sets the next steps in the development and investment in outdoor access and play area improvements.
- 1.2 The Council currently owns 97 play areas across Renfrewshire, and these range from small (less than 5 pieces of play equipment) to large areas of play equipment areas in parks such as Barshaw, Robertson and Thomas Shanks. The pandemic has shown the importance of our parks, open spaces and free play areas across Renfrewshire for communities to enjoy. Over the next 2 financial years the Council will invest £1,250,000 on enhancing and improving play areas across Renfrewshire to support community use and free play. The capital funding is designed to be flexible, dependant on the condition of the assets, community and the nature of the proposals.
- 1.3 In support of this £780,000 of Cycling, Walking & Safer Streets capital investment will support enhancing the access arrangements to parks, play areas and open spaces across Renfrewshire along with Capital investment support from the Council's £40 million 5 year Roads investment programme to support improvements in infrastructure within our play areas, parks and open spaces.
- 1.4 A full programme of 2021/2022 investment programme will be brought back to the Infrastructure, Land and Environment Board in August which will set out the planned investment across every ward in Renfrewshire during the course of the year.

- 1.5 In addition to the above funding, £150,000 will support a programme of tree works and path clearance across Renfrewshire's key urban conurbations.
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2. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board:

- 2.1 Notes the capital investment to improve outdoor access and enhance play parks over the next 2 financial years across Renfrewshire, with a detailed report setting out the 2021/ 2022 investment being brought to the August Policy Board.
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3. **Background**

- 3.1 Demand from residents for parks and outdoor green spaces has increased since the COVID outbreak began in March 2020, and highlights the important role and benefits provided by parks, especially urban and community parks and play areas.

Renfrewshire Council owns and maintains 97 play areas. These play areas are typically located in parks or open spaces within communities. In order to provide the best possible play experience for children, and to ensure the health and safety of their users, every play area is subject to routine inspection. In addition, an independent annual inspection of our play areas is carried out by The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). Inspections identify the condition of the play area, any faults with equipment or surfaces, and any safety remedial works required. The Council therefore has a detailed asset condition for each play area and piece of play equipment which will be a key aspect of deciding on the investment needs.

- 3.2 Over recent years the Council has supported investment of £3.55 million in parks and play areas. £2.25 million investment in Robertson and Barshaw parks and 5 neighbourhood parks. Most recently over the last two years £1.3 million of investment has been spent, or is committed, to upgrading 17 play parks across Renfrewshire as a result of the Council's Green Spaces, Play Parks and Villages Investment Fund. This fund supports communities to apply for funding of up to £50,000 to deliver improvements to local parks or play areas suggested by local people.

4. **Outdoor Access and Play Park Improvements**

- 4.1 This capital investment will improve outdoor access and play areas across Renfrewshire, encouraging and supporting outdoor play facilities with a focus on enhancing and improving the play experience in council owned recreation areas across Renfrewshire. In addition, the funding will enhance access and infrastructure improves to support increased recreational walking activity and general enjoyment of greenspace in Renfrewshire.

- 4.2 The investment will be led by the condition of the play park assets. As set out above there has been investment in a number of play areas and parks over the last few years, there are however a number of play parks across all wards in Renfrewshire that have not had investment and these will be the focus of this investment programme. There will also be a wider overview taken to look at the provision of play equipment across all communities to seek a balanced provision across communities.
- 4.3 There are many play parks cared for by local communities who actively engage with the Council to deliver enhancements and improvements to their park. Where community involvement is not currently evident, the Service will undertake a community engagement programme to support the investment and obtain local input and views from the community as part of the outdoor access and playpark investment programme.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The budget has been set aside from the Strategic Asset Management Fund as approved by Council. The funding will be allocated based on the asset condition and community requirements.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community Planning**

Our Renfrewshire is well - the services encourages use of our parks and open spaces to promote a healthy and active lifestyle. It supports communities to have their voice heard and influence the places and services that affect them.

Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy - Developing strong community-based services that respond to local need. This is closely aligned to the 'sustainable and connected' priority of the Renfrewshire Community Plan which seeks to 'listen and respond to the needs of communities, and partners.'
4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** – None
7. **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 as the proposals recognise individual arrangements that would have to be accommodated due to particular circumstances. 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.

8. **Health & Safety** – None
9. **Procurement** – Works will be instructed using the Scotland Excel Frameworks.
10. **Risk** - A risk register will be developed as part of the implementation.
11. **Privacy Impact** - None
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
- 13 **Climate Risk** – The Council's green space has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of park improvements and the Council's ambitious actions to tackle climate change.

List of Background Papers – None

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