

PLAY PARK FUNDING

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In 2021 the Scottish Government allocated £76k to Argyll and Bute Council for investment in play park equipment, with a further £79k being allocated for 2022.

In August 2022, the Scottish Government confirmed further funding through to 2025. Argyll and Bute will receive a total of £938k for Play Park funding as detailed below. All Scottish Councils have received funding through the Capital Allocation for Renewal of Play Parks Fund for investment in play park equipment. The distribution was based on population 0-14 years with an element for rurality. In 2021/22 the rurality share was 5%, for all other years' rurality increased to 7% in recognition that renewal of equipment costs are higher in rural areas.

- 1.2 The Scottish Government commitment was to ensure that all children have access to quality play in their own community and the budget was specific in that the funding was for renewing play parks. A definition/scope of investment was also issued as part of the grant offer and is as below:-

- *The agreed definition of an eligible play park is one which is local authority owned, managed or maintained sites, designated for play, which are free to access and open to all. Playparks in private ownership, those that require an entry fee or those only available to specific groups / with conditions for entry would be outwith scope. We would expect that playparks with equipment (swings, slides etc) aimed at children aged 0-14 would be included as would other facilities used by the same age group (e.g. pump tracks), but MUGAs (Multi Use Game Areas) or dedicated sports fields would be outwith scope.*

- 1.3 The Scottish Government also required councils to carry out engagement with local youth groups to help to shape the type and style of equipment being installed.

- 1.4 Due to the low level funding in the first two years, officers looked at an equal split across the 4 geographical areas, with a view to re-evaluating this when the final funding was announced. As Scottish Government has now confirmed funding over the 5 years as £938k officers recommend that this is now looked at across the whole play park network and split according to the number of play parks

needing refurbished in each area for the last three years of funding. Table 1 below lists the area and number of play parks, allocation totals and the recommended budget splits, with a short narrative thereafter listing closed or newly built play parks.

Table 1:

AREA	No of Playparks	Adjustments	TOTAL
MAKI	13	Lochgilphead Front Green is newly built and the Mull of Kintyre Play park has been closed. Therefore suggested split for 11 play parks not 13.	£368.5k
OLI	2	OLI – Atlantis Leisure is a relatively new park and does not require refurbishment. Therefore suggested split is based on 1 play park not 2	£33.5k
H&L	11	N/A	£368.5k
B&C	5	N/A	£167.5k
TOTAL (31)	31	28	£938k

- 1.5 In 2021/22 discussion took place with local youth forums together with a review of all play parks. These processes identified which play parks were most in need of refurbishment balanced against the youth forum feedback. This identified a prioritised hierarchy of play parks for year 1 which was then continued into year 2 for each area as per Appendix 1 attached. This was subsequently reported to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee in June 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the available funding for play park equipment as detailed in the report and agree the budget split for each of the 4 administration areas as outlined in table 1; and
- Note and consider the proposed further engagement with youth and that a report outlining process and timelines will be brought to the March 2023 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

PLAY PARK FUNDING

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the 5 year budget allocated to Argyll and Bute Council by the Scottish Government from 2021/22. The Scottish Government commitment was to ensure that all children have access to quality play in their own community and the budget was specific in that the funding was for renewing play parks.
- 2.2 The report further outlines what engagement officers have had locally through Youth Forums and proposes a further consultation approach via schools.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members:
- Note the available funding for play park equipment as detailed in the report and agree the budget split for each of the 4 administration areas as outlined in table 1; and
 - Note and consider the proposed further engagement with youth and that a report outlining process and timelines will be brought to the March 2023 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for delivering the Play Park facilities across all of Argyll and Bute's 30 play parks. The council utilised the Framework Tender Scotland Excel to procure bids for the £76k in year 2021/22, unfortunately no tenders came forward. The year one funding was carried into year two and tenders were sought for the £155k. Again no bidders came forward. As part of the procurement process officers contacted potential bidders to identify the reasons for this. Timescales, as well as full order books, were stated as the reasons why suppliers did not return a tender. This is also being experienced in some other Local Authorities and is very likely due to the fact that all Scottish Local Authorities are carrying out similar work, consequently there is a shortage of organisations able to do this. The geography of Argyll and Bute may also make our area unattractive to bidders.

- 4.2 Officers now believe that this project should be delivered through a mixed economy model of external procurement of equipment which is installed, where possible, in-house and supported by specialist external local businesses. This will help to ensure the programme of play park equipment is delivered.
- 4.3 The Scottish Government had stipulated that key to this will be the engagement of children and young people as part of the process of agreeing local priorities. Initially Officers carried out engagement with local Youth Forums, however it has been recognised by members that this engagement may well not have fully covered our whole area. As such officers propose to engage with our Education Colleagues to agree a programme of contact and engagement with pre-school and primary schools to better understand the refurbishment/replacement wishes of local play park users. This can be extended into early secondary school years too.
- 4.4 Officers are also considering the best way to engage locally with disability forums to gauge the needs of children with disabilities to see if there is anything we can do to assist making play parks more accessible for them.
- 4.5 Should the budget split be agreed by members, Officers will engage with Educational Colleagues and disability forums in early 2023 and propose to provide a short update report outlining the engagement process and timelines for the March 2023 EDI Committee.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has allocated a total of £938k for Play Park funding to Argyll and Bute Council for investment in play park equipment through to 2025 from the Capital Allocation for Renewal of Play Parks Fund. This report recommends that funding is allocated on the basis that the fund is split across the four areas according to the number of play parks within each administrative area as per table 1 above.
- 5.2 Area Officers from Roads and Infrastructure Services have previously engaged with our Youth Forums locally with some success however it has been suggested that this could be improved. It is now the intention to consult more widely through Educational Colleagues as well as disability forums to better understand the needs of local areas and groups.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – In line with Scottish Government policy intent.
- 6.2 Financial – funded from grant funding from Scottish Government.
- 6.3 Legal – None known.
- 6.4 HR – None known.

6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.

6.5.3 Islands – None known.

6.6. Climate Change – None known.

6.7 Risk – None known.

6.8 Customer Service – None Known.

**Executive Director with responsibility for Roads and Infrastructure Services,
Kirsty Flanagan**

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Play Park Hierarchy List for year 1 and 2

APPENDIX 1: PLAY PARK HIERARCHY LIST FOR YEAR 1 AND 2

Inspections and feedback from Youth Forum from 2021/22

AREA	PLAY PARK	PRIORITY RATING
Helensburgh and Lomond	Hermitage	Low
	Kirkmichael	Low
	Red Guantlet	Low
	Arrichar	High
	Bendarroch	High
	Howie	Low
	Kidston	Low
	Kilcreggan/Cove	Low
	Rhu	Medium
	Tarbet	Low
	Cardross	Low
Bute and Cowal	Meadows	Medium
	Port Bannatyne	Low
	Sandbank	High
	Glen Morag	Medium

	Dunoon Skate Park	Low
Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands	Lochgiphead Front Green	N/A New
	Ardrishaig KGV	High
	Bayview	Low
	Tarbert	High
	Kinloch	Low
	Lochend	Medium
	Hillside	Low
	Meadows	Low
	Stewarton	Low
	Jock's Boat	Low
	Bengullion Road Skate Park	Low
	Ramsay Hill	Low
Oban, Lorn and the Isles	Atlantis	N/A New
	Tobermory	High