

## PLAY PARK FUNDING – UPDATE REPORT NO 2

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the December 2022 Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee (EDI), a Play Park Funding report was noted by members with an agreement that officers would submit a further report outlining the suggested process and timelines proposing further engagement with other groups, including Youth Forums and relevant Community Councils. The original report can be found at the following link: [December 2022 EDI Play Park Funding Report](#)
- 1.2 A subsequent update report was presented to the March 2023 EDI Committee as per the following link: [March 2023 EDI Play Park update Report](#)
- 1.3 In August 2022, the Scottish Government confirmed a full 5 year funding package to all Scottish Local Authorities from 2020/21 through to 2025/26. Argyll and Bute Council will receive a total of £938k for Play Park funding. All Scottish Councils have received funding through the Capital Allocation for Renewal of Play Parks Fund for investment in play park equipment.
- 1.4 The March 2023 EDI Committee gave consideration to a report outlining a suggested process and timelines for proposing further engagement with other groups, including Youth Forums and relevant Community Councils in relation to the Play Park Funding Award of £938k which had been awarded by the Scottish Government for the 28 play parks being renewed in Argyll and Bute in a programme running until 2025/26. The EDI Committee also agreed the proposed timeline.
- 1.5 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 existing 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.*

1.6 Area Committee Business days with Elected members have already taken place. A comprehensive engagement process has since taken place with online engagement for adults and young people having closed on Friday 14 July 2023 with the following responses:-

- 1054 Adult Responses
- 408 Young People Responses

The rate of response is considered to be a remarkable return for the play park engagement process, highlighting the importance play parks have within our communities.

1.7 The data received from the consultation response will be analysed to provide information relating to:-

- General age groups of the users for each play park site
- The priorities communities have raised relating to health and safety/equal access and equipment for users of the play parks.

1.8 In the process of establishing priorities, further engagement will take place with Disability Forums to ensure appropriate facilities are considered.

1.9 Given tender exercises have been conducted twice, as well as a direct award, it is proposed to deliver the project by purchasing material/equipment and then either fitting this with in house resource or via a local contractor. Alternatively if capacity is available some installations may be carried out using national suppliers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-

- Note the engagement numbers of 1054 adults and 408 young people responses and that the officer managing this project will review each one over the coming weeks;
- Agree that once the consultation results have been fully reviewed a report will go to each Area Committee to agree the priorities for each play park in their area and allocation of funding, within the area allocation (based on the number of play parks) will be allocated to individual play parks; and
- Agree the amended timeline as set out in section 4.4 of this report.

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**2.0 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 This report provides a further update to the March 2023 Play Park report highlighting the excellent responses to the play park adult and young people engagement in regards to the Funding Award of £938k awarded by Scottish Government for Play Park renewal to Argyll and Bute Council until 2025/26.

2.2 The report further outlines the proposed way ahead when all consultation responses have been reviewed to provide Area Committees with summary responses identifying what local communities have identified as their priorities for play park users in regards to:

- Health and Safety (i.e. fencing and groundworks)
- Equal Access for all
- Equipment renewal/replacement

From this detail, it is then envisaged that funding can be allocated for specific Play Parks by each Area Committee according to requirements and responses from the engagement process.

2.3 The below table highlights the funding split for each area as well as the number of play parks per area. As per previous EDI Committee agreement, funding has been indicatively divided at £33,500 per play park. This can be amended by the local Area Committee once the engagement process has been fully reviewed.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Number of Play Parks</b>	<b>Funding Total</b>
Helensburgh and Lomond	11	£368,500
Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands	11	£368,500
Bute and Cowal	5	£167,500
Oban Lorn and the Isles	1	£33,500

2.4 Engagement with Education Colleagues has taken place and relevant young people specific forms were developed which resulted in over 400 responses from young people throughout Argyll and Bute.

- 2.5 As part of the previous discussions, officers engaged with a Play Park Design Company who costed the supply and fitting of an aspirational play area for Bendarroch Play Park in Garelochhead with a view to identifying indicative costs for a range of equipment with activities such as climbing, swinging, balancing, rotating and other rapid movement. This design is suitable for children of all ages, with included items which are inclusive and can be used by children of varying abilities. The cost was £139,538.18, which should be compared with the budget we have of £33,500. A breakdown of indicative costs is highlighted in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 This costing provides a realistic view as to what can be delivered with a £33,500 budget for each play park.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee:-
- Note the engagement numbers of 1054 adults and 408 young people responses and that the officer managing this project will review each one over the coming weeks;
  - Agree that once the consultation results have been fully reviewed a report will go to each Area Committee to agree the priorities for each play park in their area and allocation of funding, within the area allocation (based on the number of play parks) will be allocated to individual play parks; and
  - Agree the amended timeline as set out in section 4.4 of this report.

### **4.0 DETAIL**

- 4.1 The Council is responsible for delivering the Play Park facilities across all of Argyll and Bute's 30 Council managed Play Parks. However as per agreement at the December EDI Committee this was reduced to 28 Play parks as two play parks in Lochgilphead and Oban were recently upgraded. The Council utilised the Framework Tender Scotland Excel to procure bids for the 2021/22, unfortunately no tenders came forward. The year one funding was carried into year two and tenders were again sought, 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 It is proposed that this project 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 and national businesses. This will help to ensure the programme of play park equipment is delivered.

4.3 As the March 2023 EDI Committee agreed the engagement process, and bearing in mind there is no dedicated officer to deliver this project, it is being delivered on top of normal day to day duties, an indicative timeline of delivery is presented below. It should be noted that this is a rolling programme and having experienced issues with tenders previously, as well as other Local Authorities indicating that there are extensive delays in providing the equipment, as there are only a few contractors able to supply equipment, it is expected that some play parks will be upgraded for Summer 2024, with others in the following year, however the funding covers a 5 year period until 31 March 2026.

4.4 Officers suggest the following indicative timeline is appropriate:-

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>
Engagement with Community Councils and Education Department	Commenced March-May 2023
Engagement with Disability Forums	Expected to commence Autumn – Winter 2023
Procurement process which may need to include a mixed model delivery of the equipment and fitting and depends on tender bids (which will last in the region of 8 – 12 weeks)	Expected to commence early 2024
Installations	Expected to commence Spring 2024 (dependent on procurement process as above)

## 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 2025/26 from the Capital Allocation for Renewal of Play Parks Fund. This report recommends a suitable engagement process covering local Elected Members, community councils, education and disability forums over a period of approximately 8 months. It is the intention to work during this period to seek timelines for external delivery of equipment as well as make an informed decision on whether this can be delivered in house or externally.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Policy – In line with previous decision and will also pay regard to procurement policy.

6.2 Financial – Funded from Scottish Government play park capital grant.

6.3 Legal – None known.

- 6.4 HR – None known.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None known.
  - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – Engagement will take place with appropriate groups, including the disability forum, to provide a positive impact on our young people.
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – None known.
  - 6.5.3 Islands – Elements of renewal on all council owned play parks, which therefore will not adversely affect islands.
- 6.6 Climate Change – We will endeavour to minimise carbon footprint of this project.
- 6.7 Risk – Failure to deliver within the allotted Scottish Government timescales may result in losing the budget allocated.
- 6.8 Customer Service – The intention of this funding is to provide better facilities for our customers.

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

**Policy Lead for Climate Change and Environment Services, Councillor Ross Moreland**

August 2023

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**APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 – Breakdown of indicative costs for equipment and fitting

## APPENDIX 1: BREAKDOWN OF INDICATIVE COSTS FOR EQUIPMENT AND FITTING

1. CUSTOM Ship £18,800.00 plus installation £3,125.00
2. Featured Springer between £500.00 to £630.00 plus Installation £294.00
3. Spring Seesaw £2,250.00 plus Installation £514.00
4. Climbing Net £11,250.00 plus Installation £3,372.00
5. Frame £4,360.00 plus Installation £698.00
6. Spinner Bowl £680.00 plus Installation £231.00
7. Swing Frame, £5,040.00 plus Installation £1,452.00
8. Flexus stand up swing, £3,120.00 plus Installation £514.00
9. Ground Preparation £54,966.62
  - Site Set up
  - Excavate area and remove spoil off site,
  - Supply & install kerb edging,
  - Supply & lay cultivated turf,
  - Supply & sow seed,
  - Safer Surfacing WETPOUR,
  - Heras site security fencing,
  - Removal of packaging and Waste
10. Equipment Delivery Charge £4,181.20
11. Total Excl. VAT= 115,477.82
12. Total Inclusive of VAT= £138,573.38

