



Scottish Government Funding for Children's Outdoor Play – Refurbishment of Play Areas

Report by Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place

1 Recommendations

Council is recommended to approve:-

- A capital expenditure budget of £0.097 million in the General Services Capital Plan, to be fully phased in 2022/23 and to be fully financed by £0.097 million of Scottish Government Capital Grant funding;
- Subject to Council approval, the proposal to install the outdoor play equipment be progressed.

2. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to advise on the proposed expenditure of £0.097 million across the council play estate to replace equipment that has either been removed or requires replacement along with appropriate safety surfacing and where required an access path to the refurbished play area in accordance with equalities legislation.

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3. Proposal

- 3.1 In February 2022, the Scottish Government advised that capital funding of £5 million has been agreed and will be distributed between each of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland based on the agreed funding model of: a) 93% on population 0-14 years and b) 7% on rurality.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government allocation to Midlothian Council is £97,000 of capital grant funding. As part of the grant conditions we are required to prioritise play areas where there is a clear need to replace equipment:
- already removed due to risk level or unrepairable with new equipment offering a similar play experience
 - recommended for removal following play inspections with new equipment offering a similar play experience
- 3.3 The new play equipment will not therefore result in an expansion or creation of new play areas but instead the proposed equipment will replace existing equipment in order that play areas do not suffer a loss in amenity.
- 3.4 It is proposed to undertake the works in Financial Year 2022/23.
- 3.5 Scottish Government have allocated further funds for later years which will be subject to future reports. Capital allocation for year 2023/24 £197,000 year 2024/25 £295,000 and year 2025/26 £492,000.

4. Report Implications

4.1 Resource

Capital

- 4.1.1 The capital costs of the proposed supply and/or installation of play equipment are anticipated to incur expenditure of up to £0.097 million, with the works/purchases/installations fully phased in the 2022/23 financial year.
- 4.1.2 The capital expenditure will be fully financed by £0.097 million of Scottish Government Capital Grant.
- 4.1.3 Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of the proposed expenditure for this financial year including the locations and reasons for the replacement equipment proposed.
- 4.1.4 Appendix 1 provides costs for each item based on estimated purchase and installation costs.
- 4.1.5 The proposed equipment to be installed will be amended to accord with the available budget once returned prices are received. If more of the priorities for equipment in Appendix 1 can be installed, then this will be undertaken up to the budget limit of £97,000. Equally, if the prices returned exceed this sum the number of items will be reduced to bring final expenditure within budget.

- 4.1.6 It is proposed that a capital expenditure budget of £97,000 be included in the General Services Capital Plan, to be fully funded through the release of £97,000 of Scottish Government capital grant funding for Play Park Renewal.

Revenue

- 4.1.7 As the capital costs are fully grant funded, there are no loan charges implications from the above.
- 4.1.8 The ongoing maintenance of these facilities will be met from existing budgets.

4.2 Risk

- 4.2.1 The funds can only be spent by the Council on children's outdoor play equipment.
- 4.2.2 The risk of overspend will be prevented by setting fixed budgets including contingencies as part of the procurement process.
- 4.2.2 The respective play areas will be procured through a procurement framework with Scotland Excel, the Scottish Governments procurement hub.
- 4.2.4 Upon completion of the project, grounds maintenance going forward will incur little or no extra cost, since equipment is being replaced within existing play areas and the service is already maintaining these areas. Consequently, maintenance of the site will be met from the existing Land and Countryside Service budget.
- 4.2.5 It is expected that the full works including installation will be complete by 31 March 2023 and therefore in compliance with the timescale requirements set out in the Scottish Government Offer of Grant.

4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

4.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

This project will contribute to one of the long-term outcomes of the Single Plan 2022/23 for the Sustainable Growth theme under, "*Places – that are sustainable, and attractive to live and work*" within Midlothian while providing opportunities for healthy lifestyles.

4.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The quality of Midlothian's Open Spaces is a key measure in the annual Citizens Panel survey and the new equipment will add to the quality of the amenity. Delivering improvements to open spaces is embedded in Land and Countryside Services' performance monitoring matrix.

4.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Replacing play equipment in existing outdoor equipped play areas will mean communities do not suffer a diminution in amenity and consequent reduction in opportunities for healthy living with potential impact on reducing risk of poor health.

4.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Elected members will be advised of the replacement programme and the list of equipment circulated to local community councils once the report is approved. Since the programme of works has focused on replacement or equipment that has either been removed already or will require to be removed there is little scope for meaningful community consultation.

4.8 Ensuring Equalities

All the proposed play equipment is designed for inclusivity and where there is an opportunity to replace with equipment for use by people with mobility issues, such as roundabouts which cater for wheelchair users, this is included in the programme.

4.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The projects support components of the Council's Single Plan under the Sustainable Growth theme as described in Section 4.4.

4.10 Digital Services Issues

There are no Digital Services issues associated with any aspect of this project.

Appendix 1

List of Play Equipment, Safety Surfacing and Access Paths

Location	Proposed equipment	Replacement of existing	New safety surface	New access path	Estimated cost (£ '000)
Mayfield – Dougal Court	Inclusive Roundabout	Roundabout	Wetpour	Yes	11
Mayfield – Dougal Court	See-saw	See-saw	Bark	Yes	7
Dalkeith – Clarinda Gardens	See-saw	See-saw	Bark	Yes	7
Penicuik, Ladywood	Springer	Springer	Wetpour	Yes	2
Gorebridge, Blrkenside Park	Springer (x2 No.)	Springer (x2 No.)	Bark	No	3
Loanhead, Hunter Terrace	Infinity Bowl	Springer	Bark	No	3
Loanhead, Memorial Park	Infinity Bowl	No	Bark	No	3
Easthouses, Main Park	Infinity Bowl	No	Bark	No	3
Newtongrange, Gowkshill Park	Infinity Bowl	No	Bark	No	3
Bonnyrigg, Staiside Park	Infinity Bowl	Springer	Wetpour	No	4
Danderhall, D'hall Park	Inclusive roundabout	Roundabout	Wetpour	Yes	11.5
Gorebridge, Burnside Play	Springer	Springer	Wetpour	Yes	2
Bilston, by Primary School	Infinity bowl	See-saw	Artificial Grass	Yes	5
Penicuik, Cornbank	Inclusive roundabout	Roundabout	Wetpour	No	11
Mayfield, Oak Crescent	Springer	Springer	Bark	No	1.5
Penicuik – Queensway LC	See-saw	See-saw	Bark	Yes	7
Dalkeith, Shade Park	Springer (x2 No.)	Springer (x2 No.)	Bark	No	3
Bonnyrigg, Waverly Park	Cone Climber	Roundabout	Bark	No	10
Total £97K					
Reserve Equipment Should Budget Allow or Consideration for 2023/24					
Bonnyrigg, King George V Park	Flying Fox	Flying Fox	Bark	No	15
Vogrie CP, Adventure Play Area	Wooden platform	Wooden Platform	Bark	No	15
Edgehead, Edgehead Park	See-saw	See-saw	Rubber tiles	No	7