

Report

Report to:	Community and Enterprise Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 September 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Play Park Renewal Fund – Landscape Development Officers
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update members on the funding received in relation to play parks
- ◆ seek approval for 2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Landscape Development Officers to be added to the Resource's establishment on a fixed term basis for 23 months

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the addition of 2 FTE Landscape Development Officers on Grade 3, Level 2-4, SCP 63-74 (£32,994.19 to £38,779.13) to the Facilities, Waste and Grounds Services establishment, for a fixed term of 23 months, as detailed in section 6, be approved;
- (2) that the update on the funding for play parks be noted; and
- (3) that it be noted that the outcome of the review of all 233 play areas be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

3. Background

3.1. The Scottish Government made a manifesto commitment to renew play parks across Scotland, so that all children have access to quality play in their own community, backed by £60m. Ministers further pledged to agree the first allocation of funding to local authorities within the first 100 days of the new Government.

3.2. For 2021/2022, initial funding of £5m capital funding has been agreed and will be distributed between each of the 32 local authorities in Scotland based on the agreed funding model of:-

- ◆ 95% on population aged 0-14 years
- ◆ 5% on rurality

3.3. South Lanarkshire's allocation has been confirmed as £0.298m for 2021/2022.

3.4. The funding profile of the remaining £55m across the remainder of the Parliamentary term is being considered and the Council will be informed of any decision as soon as this is agreed. The Scottish Government, in collaboration with stakeholders, will develop some nationally agreed principles against which spending plans should be developed.

- 3.5. The £5m funding is to be used to commence the programme of renewal within each local authority.
- 3.6. The agreed definition of an eligible play park, as set by the Scottish Government, is one which is local authority owned, managed or maintained sites, designated for play, which are free to access and open to all. Play parks in private ownership, those that require an entry fee or those only available to specific groups / with conditions for entry would be outwith scope for funding. It is expected that play parks with equipment (swings, slides etc.) aimed at children aged 0-14 years 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.
- 3.7. The Council has 233 existing play areas that will be assessed for renewal through the future allocation of the £60m fund. The breakdown over geographical area is as follows:-

Area	Number
Hamilton	41
East Kilbride	75
Cambuslang/Rutherglen	17
Clydesdale	100
Total	233

4. Proposal

- 4.1. Amenity Services is currently responsible for the delivery of a range of landscape design projects for all Council resources as well as working in partnership with a number of community groups to access external funding for the redevelopment of existing assets. The Service currently employs 3 Landscape Development Officers.
- 4.2. The Landscape Development team is the sole provider of a landscape design function for the Council. As such they are required to cover the legislative provision for cemeteries and allotments, internal and partnership projects for redeveloping play areas and regularly undertake design projects for other resources such as Housing, Roads, Education and the South Lanarkshire Leisure and Cultural Trust.
- 4.3. For each design project, the team must:-
- ◆ create an outline design and budget costings
 - ◆ consult with clients and partners and / or the wider community
 - ◆ create detailed contract drawings
 - ◆ prepare all tender documentation and detailed specification
 - ◆ evaluate returned bids
 - ◆ agree programme of work with the successful contractor
 - ◆ undertake regular site visits to monitor contract
 - ◆ deal with contractor claims and variations to contract
 - ◆ manage project budgets and reporting
- 4.4. Existing staff are fully committed in delivering the existing work programme and with managing, developing and programming additional requests as they are received.
- 4.5. Given the requirement to review all 233 locations, develop detailed plans for sites to be refurbished and to manage the delivery on site, additional capacity via the appointment of 2 Landscape Development Officers are required to undertake these works.

4.6. From the above, it is considered that the most appropriate use of the current funding allocation is to employ 2 Landscape Development Officers. In doing so, it will ensure that the Council has a detailed and costed improvement programme and, therefore, will be in a position to implement the programme when the next phase of funding is allocated. It should be borne in mind, that subject to a review of all 233 play areas, as outlined in section 3.7, that it is possible that not all play areas will require to be renewed. Funding allocation should focus on those in most need of renewal and have a wider public benefit. However, as noted below, the outcome of this review will be reported to Committee for consideration.

5. Next Steps

5.1. The following actions will be taken, and an update report provided to the Committee for consideration:-

- ◆ commence and complete condition review of all 233 play areas
- ◆ commence and complete play value assessment of all 233 play areas
- ◆ commence and complete inclusive play assessment of all 233 play areas
- ◆ consider how allocated funds could be aligned considering the outcome of the above assessments
- ◆ continue discussions with COSLA on the impact the level of funding provided has on refurbishing/improving all 233 play areas

6. Employee Implications

6.1. It is proposed that the following are added to the establishment of Facilities, Waste and Grounds Services for a 23 month fixed term period.

Post title	Number of posts	Grade / SCP	Hourly Rate	Annual salary (excluding on-costs)	Gross salary (including on-costs 30.3%)
Landscape Development Officer	2	Grade 3 Level 2-4 SCP 63-74	£18.08 - £21.25	£32,994.19 - £38,779.13	£42,991.43 - £50,529.20
Total (23 months)	2				£164,800.48 - £193,695.26

7. Financial Implications

7.1. The costs associated with employing the two additional posts for a period of 23 months (£193,695) will be funded from the Scottish Government allocation of £298,000. The remaining funding £104,305 will be used to support any additional design and assessment work to inform the development of the renewal programme.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

8.1. Although there are no direct climate change or sustainability implications from this report it is likely that the improved and increase play value in any refurbished play area will encourage increased use of the Council's outdoor space and encourage healthy activity in children.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This matter does not require an equality impact assessment to be undertaken.
- 9.2. As part of the design process consultation will be undertaken with partners and/or the wider community.

Michael McGlynn
Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

6 September 2021

Links to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities;
- ◆ Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for inclusive growth;
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration.

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

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