
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19 – INVESTMENT IN PLAY AREAS AND OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACES

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

31 May 2018

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposed programme of work to deliver a strategic network of outdoor community spaces across the Borders, approved as part of the council’s 2018/19 Financial Plan and proposes the establishment of an Elected Members Reference Group to oversee delivery.**
- 1.2 As part of the Council’s Financial Plan 2018/19 – 22/23 £2.8m will be invested in Outdoor Community Spaces with the aim of improving community wellbeing and enhancing activity levels for all ages with a beneficial impact on the health of the population. Appendix A to this report outlines the programme of proposed projects across the Scottish Borders and provides an indicative timescale for delivery. The programme proposes a range of provision including Children’s Playparks, Pump bike/Skate tracks and Fitness/Youth Shelter provision as well as the rationalisation of obsolete equipment, where this is no longer fit for purpose.
- 1.3 The programme is subject to change, with possible new priorities emerging in consultation with communities and through the Elected Members reference group. Any recommendations for amendments will be brought to future meetings of the Executive committee for consideration through the normal financial monitoring process.
- 1.4 The Members Reference Group will support the delivery of the Play area and Outdoor Community spaces investment over the next four years, and will:
- oversee the procurement and delivery of the programme;
 - make recommendations on which obsolete play areas should be removed, particularly in areas where this programme will deliver significant new investment;
 - support community consultation in the delivery of the projects
 - make recommendations on appropriate changes to the programme should additional resources become available, particularly should projects not proceed to construction, or if delivery timescales change.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- (a) Approves the proposed programme of work set out in Appendix A**
- (b) Approves the establishment of the Members Reference Group , as detailed in Section 5 of this report to support delivery of the proposed programme and appoints the Members of that Group;**
- (c) Agrees an addition to the Scheme of Delegation to give authority to the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure: ""After consultation with local Members, the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Legal Officer, declare play parks obsolete or those surplus to community requirements and arrange for the removal of equipment and disposal, if appropriate."";**
- (d) Approves the Capital budget adjustments required and the revenue funding requirement as detailed in Section 6; and**
- (e) Agrees that recommendations on changes to the programme will be highlighted as part of the established Financial Monitoring process to the Executive Committee.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Borders currently has 243 play parks, including those located within schools, ranging from smaller local areas of play (LAPs) to strategic destination play areas. Benchmarking informs us that the quantity of provision per head of population is significantly higher than the national average; however the average play value of the facilities (i.e. quality of provision) is significantly lower than the national average. The trend over the past decade has seen play value slowly improving on the back of the incremental investment that has taken place.
- 3.2 In recent years a more significant level of investment in play across the Scottish Borders has been delivered through the Council's capital programme supplemented by a range of different opportunities that have been realised by community led initiatives including funding from developer contributions, Scottish Government or Heritage Lottery Fund grants. (see Appendix B) These include, most recently, facilities in Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick and in Galashiels where the new facilities are providing significant benefits to these communities. The strategy is to now provide further additional high quality facilities in a range of other locations across the region thereby encouraging play, greater physical activity and outdoor access for children, young people and adults with attendant benefits in terms of general health and wellbeing for people of all ages.
- 3.3 The Council recognises the provision of funding as a vital tool to help communities realise their aspirations in terms of green space use and the development of modern, inclusive facilities. The investment allows the Council to deliver significant benefits across the Borders through taking a more strategic approach, with the flexibility to respond to opportunities and community aspirations.

4 PROPOSED DELIVERY OF PLAY AREAS AND OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACES PROGRAMME

4.1 Greenspace Strategy

The Council's Greenspace Strategy, published in 2008 established that "capital investment is required across many areas of open space in the Borders, particularly in... teenage facilities and play parks"(para. 3.2). It goes on to set out the need for ongoing investment in parks and notes that;

"The Council will establish an annual capital programme for improvements to its strategic parks and major semi-natural green space sites, as well as play facilities, reviewed on a five yearly basis, based on a new strategic network."

- 4.2 A range of proposed investments in play areas and community spaces were approved by Council in 2017. Building on the work done to date, and in conjunction with community feedback and Member discussion, an updated list of proposed projects has been developed based on current need.

- 4.3 Appendix A outlines the list of capital projects currently approved or proposed for investment over the next 5 years. These proposed projects have been identified at areas of lower value play in strategic locations across the region. However the programme is not static – as previously untapped community aspirations or potential funding opportunities emerge, the investment programme will adapt accordingly. As such the programme will be subject to update reports for appropriate decision and monitoring.
- 4.4 As part of the investment programme, the existing network of play park assets will undergo an appraisal, and play parks of low value and low need, which are deemed obsolete or largely surplus to community requirement, will be decommissioned and removed, ensuring the Council is directing resources where benefits can be maximised.
- 4.5 An initial appraisal of Play Park Value has been undertaken internally by officers and this will be reviewed as the project progresses. This initial appraisal identified play parks of Low Value in each area, and these would be potentially earmarked for closure thus focussing resources on higher value and higher need play areas. This appraisal did not take into account those play parks within the School estate; however, these would be assessed as part of the review.
- 4.6 The initial appraisal identified that the Scottish Borders has a relatively large proportion of play parks of 'Low Value'. At the same time the region has relatively large number of play parks per 1000 children according to benchmarking data– almost 3 times the national average. In summary, the breakdown is as follows;

Play Value	No. of Play Areas	
High	32	16%
Medium	89	46%
Low	73	38%
TOTAL	194	
(n.b. this does not include the 49 play parks within the school estate)		

Benchmarking data: Number of play areas per 1000 children		
	SBC	National Average
2015/16	10.72	3.69

The investment programme seeks to redress the balance between quantity and quality, through rationalising the estate and targeting resources to those areas of higher impact.

5.0 MEMBERS REFERENCE GROUP

- 5.1 It is proposed that the delivery of the investment programme is overseen by a Members Reference Group, with support from officers. The primary purpose of the Members Reference Group will be to maintain a strategic overview of the delivery of the investment programme in Outdoor Community Spaces, ensuring the projects agreed deliver on key Greenspace and Play Strategy objectives. The Group will:
- oversee the procurement and delivery of the programme

- make recommendations to the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure or the Executive Committee (as appropriate) on which obsolete play areas should be removed, particularly in areas where there has been significant investment
 - support community consultation in the delivery of the projects
 - make recommendations to Officers or the Executive Committee (as appropriate) on appropriate changes to the programme should additional resources become available or particular projects not take place
- 5.2 It is proposed that membership of the Members Reference Group comprises the Council Convenor as the Chairman, with Cllr Aitchison as Executive Member for Neighbourhoods & Locality Services, along with a representative Member from each of the 5 Area Partnerships. Support to the Group will be provided by appropriate Council Officers.
- 5.3 The Scheme of Delegation will require to be altered to give the necessary authority to the Service Director Assets & Infrastructure: "After consultation with local Members, the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Legal Officer, declare play parks obsolete or those surplus to community requirements and arrange for the removal of equipment and disposal, if appropriate".

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

- (a) The Capital funding for the programme of work detailed in Appendix A is fully funded within the current financial plan per Table 1 below

INVESTMENT PROPOSALS - Playparks & Community Spaces	2018/ 19 £'000	2019/ 20 £'000	2020/ 21 £'000	2021 /22 £'00 0	2022/ 23 £'000	Total
Parks & Open Spaces - Upgrades (existing block)	103	100	105	106	107	521
Timing movements from 2017/18	438	0	0	0	0	438
Developer Contributions	87	0	0	0	0	87
Outdoor Community Spaces (2018/19 financial plan)	700	700	700	700	0	2,800
External Funding secured	262	0	0	0	0	262
Total	1,590	800	805	806	107	4,108
Programme of planned works (Appendix A)	1,046	947	1,047	640	428	4,108
Timing Movement required	(544)	147	242	(166)	321	0

Table 1

- (b) To ensure that the facilities can be replaced at the end of their useful life a replacement fund should be established. This will require permanently identifying £78k of revenue funding from existing budgets in year and further sums per Table 2 below as part of the 2019/20 Financial Planning process.

These amounts will provide for depreciation and inflationary increases

- (c) as well as an additional part time Play Inspector to support the delivery of the programme and the ongoing maintenance and development of facilities.

Revenue Funding required (incremental)	2018/ 19 £'000	2019/ 20 £'000	2020/ 21 £'000	2021/ 22 £'000	2022/ 23 £'000	2023/ 24 £'000
Depreciation	45	110	159	213	241	257
Inflation	13	33	49	66	75	81
Play Inspector (0.5FTE G7)	20	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Plan Entry	78	85	65	71	37	22

Table 2

- (d) Funding of £253k is included in Appendix A for removing redundant equipment and improving surfacing in existing playparks.
- (e) Significant reduction to the number of play parks maintained by Neighbourhood Services will be required to ensure that sufficient resource can be deployed to maintain the new facilities and ensure that the revenue impact on the service is cost neutral.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that as a project progresses through the various phases from inception to construction and commissioning, adjustments will be required to the phasing of the projects delivery or cost estimate, or that the project may not be able to be progressed as anticipated. These risks will be managed through regular capital project monitoring meetings with budget holders and project managers and timely reporting to elected members for decision-making at an appropriate Committee.

6.3 Equalities

It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no direct economic, social or environmental issues with this report although there may be within individual projects and these will be identified and addressed as appropriate as part of their specific governance arrangements.

6.5 Carbon Management

There are no direct carbon emissions impacts as a result of this monitoring report; however, there may be within individual projects and these will be identified and addressed as appropriate as part of their specific governance arrangements.

6.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

A change to the Scheme of Delegation is required as a result of this report and this is detailed at paragraph 5.3.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted in the preparation of this report and any further comments received on the report will be reported at the Council meeting.

Approved by:
Martin Joyce
Service Director
Assets & Infrastructure

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jason Hedley	Neighbourhood Operations Manager

Background Papers: Report by Chief Financial Officer - Emergency powers, 31 March 2017

Previous Minute Reference: None

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Capital and Investment Team can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at:

Contact- Jacqueline Whitelaw, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA, 01835-824000, ext. 5431.

Appendix A – Programme of Works

Planned Programme of Works	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Total
Children's Play						
Galashiels - Public Park*	292	0	0	0	0	292
Oxton*	60	0	0	0	0	60
Stow*	30	0	0	0	0	30
Croft Park Kelso - Shedden Park	248	0	0	0	0	248
Jedburgh – Harestanes	315	0	0	0	0	315
Coldstream - Home Park*	0	250	0	0	0	250
Peebles Play park	0	225	0	0	0	225
Earlston Playpark	0	0	225	0	0	225
Duns - Public Park	0	0	135	0	0	135
Eyemouth - the Bantry	0	0	180	0	0	180
Jedburgh Cannongate	0	0	0	135	0	135
Pump Tracks/Skate Boarding						
Hawick - Wilton Lodge Pump Track	19	0	300	0	0	319
Peebles Skate Park	0	270	0	0	0	270
Jedburgh Skate Park	0	0	0	270	0	270
Galashiels Public Park	0	0	0	0	270	270
Fitness/Youth Shelter Provision						
Jedburgh - Harestanes	27	0	0	0	0	27
Hawick - Wilton Lodge Park	0	27	0	0	0	27
Gala - Scott Park	0	0	27	0	0	27
Peebles - Haylodge Park	0	0	0	27	0	27
Duns - Public Park	0	0	0	27	0	27
Kelso	0	0	0	0	27	27
Other required Works						
Gavinton Drainage	43	0	0	0	0	43
Eyemouth*	11	0	0	0	0	11
Clovenfords (landscape)*	1	0	0	0	0	1
Play Facilities & surfacing review	0	75	75	75	24	253
General upkeep	0	100	105	106	107	418
Upkeep of School play facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total of programmed works	1,046	947	1,047	640	428	4,108

APPENDIX B – CONTEXT: SUMMARY OF RECENT INVESTMENT

LOCATION	SUMMARY
Pringle Park, Selkirk	Selkirk's Pringle Park (2013) and Bannerfield Park (2014) have both undergone significant improvements led by community groups who fundraised for capital costs. Scottish Borders Council provides ongoing support via operational inspections and minor repairs.
Tweedbank Park	In 2008 Tweedbank Loch and Park was developed as a destination play area at the Loch, complete with Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), on the back of significant funding secured by Developer Contributions.
Canongate, Jedburgh	The Canongate play area in Jedburgh, received a £145k investment in 2010 as part of a successful bid to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund.
Woodcote Park, Lauder	As part of the relocation of community services, Woodcote Park in Lauder received a significant Council investment in 2012 to create a new relocated play area and associated sporting facilities at the park.
Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick	The Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) Parks For People Project at Wilton Lodge Park, Hawick, saw the conclusion in 2017 of a £350k project to create a destination play area complete with associated infrastructure at the park.
Shedden Park skate park, Kelso	The recently-completed removal of an existing Skate Park and creation of a state of the art small wheels facility at Shedden Park, Kelso (£400k) has been led by the community.
Public Park, Galashiels	Currently, a significant project is being delivered in Galashiels at the Public Park which will see the removal of an existing play area to be replaced by a vastly improved play facility serving the town and surrounding villages