



Glasgow City Council

Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods Regeneration and Sustainability

Contact: Denise Hamilton

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES IMPROVEMENT FUND

Purpose of Report:

To update members on the status of projects funded from the Parks and Open Spaces Improvement Fund

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee:

- Notes the status of projects funded from the Parks and Open Spaces Improvement Fund.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1 Background

- 1.1 Glasgow City Council, as part of its [budget for 2021/22](#) made an allocation of £1,500,000, towards a Local Parks and Open Space Improvement Fund, noting that:

“Local parks have been one of the key facilities for citizens through the pandemic. In response to the findings of the Ipsos Mori Budget focus group, this investment will fund a range of improvements in local parks and open spaces. The £1.5m fund which will be assigned to Area Partnerships as a ringfenced fund for improvements to local parks and open spaces. Note: This is a one-off investment.”

- 1.2 Glasgow City Council, as part of its [budget for 2022/23](#) made a further allocation of £1,500,000 to continue the Local Parks and Open Space Improvement Fund. This £1.5m investment would continue our successful Local Parks and Open Spaces Fund. This capital funding will be for improvements to local parks and open spaces e.g. Play equipment, street furniture etc.
- 1.3 This service then worked with colleagues in the Communities team to develop a reporting mechanism to each Area Partnership setting out their allocation and providing recommendations for its allocation in line with wider relevant Council policy and strategy; an overview of which is provided in our Parks Vision report brought to this Committee [26th November 2024](#).

2 Funding Decisions

- 2.1 For the 2021/22 budget, a series of papers were submitted to Area Partnerships in September 2021, with Partnerships approving their allocations across a range of meetings between September 2021 and October 2022
- 2.2 For the 2022/23 budget, a series of papers were submitted to Area Partnership in June 2022, with Partnerships approving their allocations across a range of meetings between June 2022 and February 2025. It is noted that funds not yet allocated to a specific project total £29,388.
- 2.3 Funding themes that Area Partnerships have supported include:
- Tree Planting
 - Improving Access for Walking and Wheeling
 - Provision of Benches and Picnic Benches
 - Planting of Bulbs and other Pollinator Friendly plants
 - Children’s Play
 - Surface Water Management and Wetlands
 - Heritage
 - Active Travel routes and signage
 - Landscapes for Learning
 - Food Growing

- Community Arts and Culture
- Physical Activity and Informal Sport
- Grant funding to Community Councils, Friends of Parks Groups, and similar bodies to support delivery and capacity building

2.4 The Parks and Open Spaces Fund has meant an increase in the workload of the existing teams within the Communities Team and the project delivery teams within NRS Greenspace & Biodiversity and the Corporate Procurement Unit. Participatory budgeting at scale has resulted in a large volume of requests, many at low level, that have required a significant investment of resources to understand the request, build a specification and in some cases visit the sites, provide costings, and then build into the already challenging infrastructure delivery plans, including Green Connectors, Neighbourhood Infrastructure Fund (NIF) and Play Area Renewal. All of which must be carried out with due diligence by the Council. All this has meant that the actual delivery of the funded projects has been slower than some Area Partnerships might like. The process is new for the Council, with learning informing subsequent participatory budgeting processes.

2.5 Where appropriate, sums allocated from the Parks and Open Spaces Fund have been augmented by other sources. This then allowing a more comprehensive scheme to be delivered and has meant that project timescales have been amended to reflect a second funding process. Sources of supplementary funding have included [developer contributions](#), Scottish Government Play Area Renewal and [The Art Fund](#), amongst others.

3. Current Status

- 3.1 From the 2021/22 allocation, 139 projects have been completed, and 60 projects remain to be completed.
- 3.2 From the 2022/23 allocation, 66 projects have been completed, and 76 projects remain to be completed.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 schedules the projects approved and their current status.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 In relation to sums committed to specific projects and where delivery timescales are not yet scheduled, these primarily relate to Children's Play. It is recommended that future progress in relation to expenditure of these all sums allocated to Children's Play is made through annual reporting to this Committee as part of the Children's Play Renewal reporting, so that the available resources from Corporate Procurement Unit and Greenspace and Biodiversity can be prioritised in line with Section 3 of our earlier [report](#) to this Committee on 26th November 2024. It is noted that a capital investment programme of this scale will be a multi-year programme. We would clarify that total funding levels remaining as [reported](#) to this committee 22nd August 2023,

with Scottish Government making annual announcements as each years tranche of funding is released.

- 4.2 In addition, the recent capital and revenue investment for Parks & Open Spaces as outlined within the recent 2025-2026, Council budget has provided the opportunity for additional recruitment to be facilitated within the NRS, Greenspace & Biodiversity, Landscape Design Team. The recruitment process is now underway with interviews taking place this month to recruit a further four landscape technicians to accelerate the work outlined within the approved budget and the outstanding works within the Parks & Open Spaces Fund.
- <https://onlineservices.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/viewDoc.asp?c=P62AFQDNNTDNZLT1UT>. In addition to this, 50 posts were funded within Parks Operations with interviews taking place this month and recruitment for the Head of Service (Parks and Streetscene), is ongoing with interviews scheduled for May 2025. New postholders will each have a role, as part of their wider duties, in supporting delivery and ongoing management of the projects delivered through this fund.

5. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: The report provides details of outcomes from budgets allocated by Glasgow City Council as part of its budget for 2021/22 and 2022/23

Legal: The report raises no legal issues

Personnel: Those actions will be undertaken within existing resource approvals, with certain works being contracted out.

Procurement: Procurement for works stated within the report will be procured mini competition or existing Frameworks and through use of Scotland Excel Frameworks.

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 1

Mission 3: Improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.

Grand Challenge 3
Mission 2: Become a net zero carbon city by 2030.

Grand Challenge 4
Mission 1: Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

Investment contributed towards Outcome 6, by providing spaces which better support children, young people and families to meet outdoors, and contributed towards Outcome 14 by providing spaces which better supported outdoor learning for disabled children and young people.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Positive impacts from spaces which better support children, young people and families to meet outdoors and which better support outdoor learning for disabled children and young people

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Proposals set out within this report are addressing socio-economic disadvantage through investments in play areas reflecting the Councils approach to tackling child poverty.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan

The proposals supports the following themes and actions

actions? Please specify:

Climate plan Theme 1:

Communication and Community Empowerment
To engage with communities about the climate challenge.
To foster participation and collaboration the proposal supports action 27 in relation to outdoor learning and outreach biodiversity work.

Climate plan Theme 2: Just and Inclusive Place Empower and invigorate our communities, strengthening local economies share the benefits of climate action widely

Climate Plan Theme 4:

Health and Wellbeing to protect and enhance local habitat connectivity and biodiversity in the city. To support creation and maintenance of good quality, multifunctional green space to help reconnect communities with nature. To support equitable access to good quality, multipurpose open space and green infrastructure in the city. The proposal delivers towards action 48 by working with partner organisations to fund acceleration of the Open Space Strategy Delivery Plan and contributes to Action 51 by supporting the livable neighbourhood plan.

Climate Plan Theme 5:

Green Recovery Supporting a transition towards a circular economy. Supporting tree planting and maintenance, peatland restoration, and green infrastructure.

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Supporting creation and development of additional new woodland, meadows and wetlands across the city will help provide essential woodland, to absorb harmful carbon emissions and sequester carbon across the long-term. That will greatly contribute to Glasgow working towards their net zero target

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Yes

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report

No

6. Recommendations

- It is recommended that Committee notes the status of projects funded from the Parks and Open Spaces Improvement Fund.