



**Glasgow City Council**

**Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability**

**Contact: Denise Hamilton**

**Ext:**

**OUR DEAR GREEN PLACE: A VISION FOR GLASGOW'S PARKS AND GREENSPACES – UPDATE**

**Purpose of Report:**

To update members on the progress of Our Dear Green Place – a vision for Glasgow's parks and greenspaces and to update on the Scottish Government Play Renewal Fund.

**Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that Committee note:**

- The outcomes to date for Our Dear Green Place – a vision for Glasgow's parks and greenspaces
- The updated consultation methodology noted in Section 3 for the roll-out of the Scottish Government Play Renewal Program
- The order of delivery of individual projects to reflect the Council's approach to Child Poverty
- For initiatives currently being developed to enhance our parks estate

Ward No(s):

Citywide:

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐

consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

## 1. Background

1.1 Our Dear Green Place – a vision for Glasgow’s parks and greenspaces was approved by the City Administration Committee on 7 February 2019. An update was thereafter provided to Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Committee on 2 February 2021. The document can be accessed [here](#).

1.2 The Parks Vision outlined a new approach to Glasgow’s greenspaces which was focussed on ensuring that communities were involved in planning and managing the greenspaces which are important to them, and which affect their everyday lives. The report to the City Administration Committee noted:

*The Vision for Parks and Greenspaces commits to the delivery of the Strategic Plan by –*

- *Creating more opportunities for citizens to become involved in local decisions that affect their neighbourhoods, on how money is spent and how services are delivered.*
- *Supporting partnership working.*
- *Supporting active and healthy Glaswegians.*
- *Supporting access to and promoting the city’s history, heritage and culture.*
- *Supporting excellent and inclusive education by developing our parks and greenspaces as outdoor learning opportunities for all ages and abilities.*
- *Supporting active travel, including walking and cycling.*
- *Enhancing the connectivity of greenspaces, improving and connecting habitats and making greenspaces accessible for people and wildlife.*
- *Support the development of Glasgow as a Sustainable Food City.’*

1.3 Glasgow’s Open Space Strategy was adopted in February 2020 and sets out a long-term vision for Glasgow’s open spaces to ensure they meet the city’s needs in years to come.

1.4 In addition, both an Ecological Emergency and a Climate Emergency have been declared since the publication of the Parks and Greenspaces Vision, with recommendations being agreed by committee.

- [Ecological Emergency – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020](#)
- [Climate Emergency - 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020](#)

1.5 The Parks and Greenspaces Vision encompasses the delivery of our two statutory functions: food growing and biodiversity duty. Actions for both are agreed within the [Food Growing Strategy](#) and the [Local Biodiversity Action Plan](#) and [Pollinator Plan](#)

1.6 Our response to the policies highlighted has been enhanced further with priorities for our parks and greenspaces within the following topics:

- The approved [Climate Adaptation Plan](#)
- Development and delivery of the Glasgow Tree Plan: [Glasgow Tree Plan](#)

- Development and delivery of the Green Connectors project: [Grassland Management: Green Connectors](#)
- The Play Area Renewal Programme
- Supporting outdoor nursery provision following the Scottish Government Policy in the delivery of 1140 hours:  
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/early-education-and-care/outdoor-play-and-learning/>

## **2. Update on Actions**

2.1 The actions associated with the Parks and Greenspaces Vision are delivered by a range of services within NRS with input across a wide range of stakeholders including Friends of Groups, local schools and community groups and organisations such as the Conservation Volunteers.

2.2 Key achievements include:

- Transforming Pollok Country Park, including play renewal, active travel and green energy interventions including a free electric bus service and EV charging points
- Delivery of the Tree Action Plan with over 24,000 trees planted in 2023/2024
- Developing and implementing the GCC response to Ash Dieback Disease
- 69 new species of flora & fauna identified in the city's parks and captured within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Review of parks lighting and implementation of the associated actions – more detail on this can be found here:
- <https://onlineservices.glasgow.gov.uk/councillorsandcommittees/submissionsdocuments.asp?submissionid=113873>
- Increasing our Local Nature Reserves with 5 new and 4 extended Local Nature Reserves declared in December 2023, and further declarations planned for this December.
- Development of new food growing sites across the city including Drumchapel and Greyfriars and the creation of the Let's Grow Together Fund
- Supporting the development of the Friends of Glasgow Parks and Greenspaces Forum
- Over the past 12 months volunteers have participated in a wide variety of projects across our park estate which has resulted in 2,785 volunteers generating 11,756 hours of activity which includes: tree planting, bulb and wildflower planting, peatland restoration, community litter picking days and biodiversity monitoring.

## **3. Scottish Government Play Renewal Fund**

3.1 A paper was presented to Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods on [22 August 2023](#) which provided an update on how the above fund would be received and distributed across the city.

## 3.2 Engagement

- 3.2.1 The report outlined our engagement with Glasgow Schools Forum and provided background in relation to the then-emerging Play Sufficiency Assessment.
- 3.2.2 A paper was subsequently brought to a meeting of City Administration Committee [6th June 2024](#) approving the Glasgow Play Sufficiency Assessment, submitted to Scottish Ministers as part of the City Development Plan 2 process.
- 3.2.3 This represents a significant, innovative and award-winning process which has been co-produced by children and young people and delivered by the Centre for Civic Innovation.
- 3.2.4 The findings from the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) will be used to inform the ongoing play area renewal programme; the existing maintenance and management activity for play areas and Open Spaces as well as forming part of the Evidence Report for the new Development Plan.
- 3.2.5 The PSA will also help to inform development management decisions that impact on existing play areas and open spaces or require the development of new play areas and informal spaces.
- 3.2.6 With reports undertaken by individual schools providing insights into specific play areas, and the quality of spaces, some general themes emerged that young people feel that the Council's responsibilities are (in order of priority):
- ***Cleaning of Spaces*** - as the highest priority over other things such as, 'building more.'
    - Work has commenced on a digital asset management system which is being rolled out with the aim of enhancing both the asset data and the business processes around our visual and technical inspections of play areas and supporting the management and cleanliness of areas.
  - ***Adding more things to do*** - range of sports options available are limited, especially those that are free.
    - It is envisaged that this funding will allow existing features to be upgraded and some additional features to be added.
  - ***Repairing equipment and building more***
    - Work has commenced on a digital asset management system which is being rolled out with the aim of enhancing both the information being captured and speeding up the process of repairs to play areas in addition to improving our visual and technical inspections of play areas.
    - It is envisaged that the allocated funding will allow existing features to be upgraded and some additional features to be added across the estate.
  - ***Asking citizens their opinions/thoughts***

- Over 400 pupils at St Paul's High School in Pollok have not only helped to design this engagement model but told their stories. A further 18 high schools have participated in the consultation, reaching and involving over 4,000 young people.
  - Education services has also been collecting information from children aged 3-8 across 12 schools in Glasgow and asking them about where and how they play and what they do in our outdoor spaces. So far over 300 early years and primary school pupils have told us their play stories and we are adding to that number every day.
  - Moving forward it is anticipated that there will be additional phases of rollout allowing every primary and secondary school an equal opportunity to participate and contribute to the Place Sufficiency Assessment for Glasgow. Where community-based organisations wish to carry out additional play area specific consultation activity this can supplement the above process.
- **Adding more natural play**
    - This is something we are facilitating across the estate with our woodlands, grasslands and wetlands providing places to explore, wildlife to discover and providing materials for arts and crafts.
    - Outdoor learning spaces, outdoor nurseries and dipping platforms can be found across the estate such as our local nature reserves and Pollok Country Park.
    - Further information in relation to educational and participation opportunities available via our NRS Countryside rangers can be found here:  
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/countrysiderangers>
    - High levels of footfall within our equipped play areas tends not to lend itself to areas of planting or raingardens as part of the play area footprint as levels of muddiness at certain times of year can generate Health & Safety concerns. We would therefore seek to link our equipped play areas to nearby areas of natural habitat.
    - We will also be looking at scoping and designing a natural play area for Hogganfield Loch. This is at an early stage and will follow the usual consultation process to meet the needs of users.
- **Providing information on events/activities**
    - Resources are available with information on events and activities:
      - [Activity Finder - Glasgow Life \(sportsuite.co.uk\)](#)
      - [Youth Programmes — Glasgow Life](#)
      - [Glasgow Life Community Touring Programme — Glasgow Life](#)
      - [Children & Families — Glasgow Life](#)
      - [Upcoming Events - Glasgow City Council](#)
      - [What's On in Glasgow - Visit Glasgow](#)

### 3.3 Programmed Delivery

- 3.3.1 With a significant volume of funding in place to invest in a substantial number of play areas, it is important to arrive at a rationale for programme delivery. This

will allow the available resources, including Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS), GCC Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) staff time, to be aligned to the Council's strategic priorities.

- 3.3.2 Glasgow City Council's approach to addressing Child Poverty can be found [here](#), with the goal of strategic alignment which places eradicating family poverty at the very heart of the city's shared agenda.
- 3.3.3 This has highlighted the opportunity to align our data for play area investment against that held in relation to Child Poverty. This ensures play areas serving higher numbers of children in poverty are prioritised and can be refurbished first.
- 3.3.4 Examples of this approach include the recent refurbishments of Beardmore Play Area and Bonnyholm Play Areas.
- 3.3.5 Other priority areas where tenders for improvements are being finalised include Lethamhill and Helenslea Play Areas.
- 3.3.6 In addition, our NRS Landscape Design Team is currently exploring the design and build process, with both KGV Carnwadric and Southdeen Park being considered as possible pilot projects for this process.
- 3.3.7 Updates to Committee in relation to a range of NRS capital projects have noted that, due to recent world events, there was an adverse impact on project delivery between 2019 and 2021; these issues have largely been overcome with design and construction activity progressing at pace.
- 3.3.8 It should be noted that some challenges, including high levels of inflation, persist across a range of NRS capital projects and this is being factored into the delivery programme moving forward.

## **4. Park Initiatives**

### **4.1 Winter Grounds Maintenance Works**

- 4.1.1 Accessible parks foster community cohesion, promote mental health, and improve the overall quality of life. Furthermore, investment in park maintenance boosts economic vitality and tourism by attracting visitors, enhancing property values, and stimulating local businesses. Sustained park stewardship not only promotes environmental sustainability but also contributes to community prosperity and resilience.
- 4.1.2 Maintaining our parks and open spaces year-round is essential for their health, functionality and resilience, particularly in alignment with Glasgow's Climate Plan. A comprehensive maintenance programme is being developed that includes winter vegetation management, invasive species control, and the nurturing of native flora preserves biodiversity and ecological balance, which is crucial for mitigating the impacts of climate change.

- 4.1.3 Additionally, regular practices such as pruning, mulching, and cultivating soft landscaped areas ensure the vitality of vegetation, delivering environmental benefits like carbon sequestration and air purification. These efforts support Glasgow's broader climate objectives. Beyond the environmental impact, year-round maintenance enhances social and recreational wellbeing by ensuring parks remain safe and inviting spaces for physical activities and community gatherings.

## **4.2 Full Park Assessments**

- 4.2.1 Parks Operations and Greenspace & Biodiversity work closely to create a cohesive and sustainable NRS Parks Service. A new initiative being developed is to identify parks located within high SIMD areas to focus resources and funding allowing for a holistic improvement in the park itself. A review of the current Local Area Management System (LAMS) which is designed to assess the condition of our parks, has been carried out.
- 4.2.2 A Full Park Assessment process is currently being developed which will see each park across the city assessed and have, where applicable, actions attributed to where improvements should be made. This process will be developed at three locations: Hogarth Park, Fruin Street Openspace and Garscadden Burn Park.
- 4.2.3 On completion, and prior to the final version being agreed, the process will be rolled out to each park from 2025-2028. Each park will subsequently be re-assessed every 5 years.

## **5. Park Pilot Projects**

- 5.1 To contribute to the delivery of outcomes from our strategies and key objectives of our Strategic Plan 2022-2027, we are assessing further how our maintenance, look, feel and community activity within our parks contribute to health, climate and improvements with additional focus on Social Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas.
- 5.2 By identifying parks within the highest areas of deprivation where less investment has taken place, we aim to develop a series of initiatives to improve these spaces, increase use and activities and engage more with local communities, while also assessing the impact of this work for adoption across the city.
- 5.3 The areas have been chosen, Hogarth Park, Fruin Street Openspace and Garscadden Burn Park, which will also correlate with the Full Parks Assessment process.
- 5.4 Discussions have already taken place to create and implement evaluations of each park in relation to conditions of gullies, parks furniture, such as benches, picnic tables and bins, conditions of paths and fencing. After initial discussion it is hoped that this exercise will be delivered via an app which will allow

Supervisors to complete a comprehensive review of each park within the pilot but also for all other parks within their area of responsibility.

5.5 NRS Parks/Greenspace & Biodiversity will also identify the costs for any proposed improvements and seek opportunities for financing improvements internally and externally.

5.6 It is also hoped that as a pilot of the above we will work with other internal partners and work in partnership with local schools who can become involved thus achieving the overall aims and objectives of the Community [Green Flag awards](#). Sessions could include, however not limited to:

- Bulb/Wildflower Planting sessions
- Litter Picking with our colleagues at Neighbourhood Enforcement and Improvement Service
- Sessions with Countryside Rangers
- Child Friendly Environmental Visual Audit depicting the children's hopes and aspirations for the park.

## 6. Policy and Resource Implications

### Resource Implications:

*Financial:* Current and future play area investment will be met from the £6.179m Scottish Government funding, Developer Contributions where available and any other grants secured.

*Legal:.* The report raises no legal issues

*Personnel:* Those actions within the Scottish Government Play Renewal Program will be undertaken within existing resources, with certain works being contracted out.

*Procurement:* Procurement for works stated within the report will be procured mini competition on 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.*

It is envisaged that this investment could contribute towards Outcome 6, by providing spaces which better support children, young people and families to meet outdoors, and contribute towards Outcome 14 by providing spaces which better support outdoor learning for disabled children and young people.

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

Potential 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 support in addressing socio-economic disadvantage through proposed investments in play areas reflecting the Councils approach to tackling child poverty.

## Climate Impacts:

*Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:*

**The proposals support the following themes and actions.**

**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 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

## **7. Recommendations**

7.1 It is recommended that Committee note:

- The outcomes to date for Our Dear Green Place – a vision for Glasgow's parks and greenspaces
- The updated consultation methodology noted in Section 3 for the roll-out of the Scottish Government Play Renewal Program
- The order of delivery of individual projects to reflect the Council's approach to Child Poverty
- For initiatives currently being developed to enhance our parks estate