Item 3

22nd August 2023

Glasgow City Council

Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods City Policy Committee

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PLAY AREA RENEWAL

Purpose of Report:

To update committee in relation to Scottish Government Play Area Renewal Funding, and to provide details of citywide allocations.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that committee note:

1. Funding already committed to projects from the 2021/22 and 2022/23 allocation, and the status of these projects
2. The funding allocations per year from 2023/24 to 2025/26 and Scottish Government funding criteria

Ward No(s):	Citywide: ✓
Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ✓	consulted: Yes ☐ No ✓

***PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING**:*

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1. Background

1.1 With an increasing demand on open space for other purposes such as passive recreation, formal sport, biodiversity and strategic urban drainage initiatives, the importance of providing good quality, accessible play parks is more important than ever. Children need the social and play opportunities purpose-built play areas can offer and the benefits they provide in physical and mental health, social cohesion, and overall wellbeing.

1.2 The Council currently has 287 equipped play areas. Although the provision of play areas themselves is not a statutory duty their routine inspection and maintenance is a statutory requirement.

1.3 The Play Strategy for Scotland highlights the need to ensure all children and young people have sufficient time and space for playing within their community and have contact with nature in their everyday lives. It recognises the need for various public bodies and charities to work towards this, including the land use planning and community planning systems. As part of the Scottish Government's commitment to play, all Local Authorities were awarded a five-year programme of capital funding to support children having access to quality play parks in their own community.

1.4 The eligibility for funding of the Scottish Governments Play Area Renewal Fund is set out within section 5 of this report.

1.5 The British Standard BS EN 1176 informs the design and installation of play equipment, and BS EN 1177 specifies the safety surfaces required to reduce the consequences of a child falling. All equipped play areas are designed and built to comply with these standards.

1.6 Play specific revenue funding ensures all Council owned play areas receive regular safety inspections, routine equipment maintenance, and repairs to damaged equipment and surfaces. Our current inspection regime includes weekly visual inspections and quarterly NRS technical inspections by RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) trained personnel.

1.7 Our inspection regime generated 375 instructions for repair across the play area estate from 1st April 2023 to 31 June 2023. These range from minor faults such as damaged swings to major repairs such as full surface repairs being required, and the volume of repairs demonstrates the high level of usage these play areas receive

1.8 Capital funding from the Council, developer's contributions and third-party grants are also used to refurbish play areas and replace damaged or dangerous equipment.

1.9 Children's right to play and relax; freedom of association; and their right for their views to be heard and be given due consideration are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Articles 31,15 and 12 respectively.

1.10 The new National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) contains a new policy on Play, Recreation and Sport, with a requirement for Local Authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in preparing the evidence report for their local development plan.

1.11 Work is ongoing with the Centre for Civic Innovation to co-design our Play Sufficiency Assessment with our young people. The Play Sufficiency Assessment, which is contained within National Planning Framework 4, recognises that providing quality play opportunities for children of all ages will benefit their physical and cognitive development. This will form part of the evidence report for the next version of the City Development Plan and will be the start of an ongoing conversation with our young people about what it is like to live, learn and play in Glasgow. Play Sufficiency Assessments will, as they develop, inform our play area renewal work citywide.

2. Stakeholder/Community Engagement

2.1 Stakeholder and community involvement will inform the replacement/ refurbishment of play areas and this engagement, will continue for all refurbishment projects listed on Appendix 3. Consultees will include local schools, community groups, friends' groups, community councils and after school clubs.

2.2 Officers attended the Glasgow Schools Forum 8th and 9th June 2023, hearing from children and young people from Primary 1 to S3. Consultation materials included '*what does better look like'* images shared by Make Space for Girls, who campaign for parks and public spaces to be designed for girls and young women, not just boys and young men. Officers from this service presented some information in relation to this programme, with children invited to share their thoughts in relation to the following questions:

- *Where do you go to play near where you live and why, locally, citywide, and nationally?*
- *What are the positives about your local play areas?*
- *What are the negatives about your local play areas?*
- *How would you improve your local play areas?*

2.3 A summary of the findings is provided in Appendices A and B (with these posted on noticeboards within the participating schools), with high level themes including;

- The value of both play spaces close to home, and also of those which form part of a day out.
- The importance of social as well as play space, with a clear ask for bench and picnic bench provision, both as part of equipped play and wider greenspace.
- The importance of a variety of greenspace for play, with this facilitating physical activity, social activity, and outdoor learning through activities such as hide and seek and informal ball games.
- Equipment selection.
- The contribution that habitats and biodiversity within parks can make to the play experience.
- Litter, dog fouling and broken glass, with this associated with perceptions of safety and of feeling valued.
- Repair of vandalised or broken equipment, with this associated with perceptions of safety and feeling valued.

2.4 To further build on, and apply the recommendations shared by Play Scotland in relation to Inclusive and Accessible Play we will also facilitate a series of 6 workshops over a 3-year period that will take place in conjunction with Glasgow Disability Alliance and their young people. It is envisaged that each workshop will focus on developing the design for a specific play area, with this also generating some wider principles that will be applied to the wider programme.

3. Funding Allocated

3.1 Glasgow was awarded £525,000 for 2021/22 and £514,000 for 2022/23 by the Scottish Government as part of the Play Area Renewal Fund. This was allocated to the following play areas to support projects and fundraising already in the pipeline, with a status noted below:

WARD	Location	Funding allocated from this source	PROGRESS
1	Linn Park	£18,200	On site Autumn 2023
2	Pollok Country Park	£101,200	Completed March 2022
2	Ashtree Park	£30,000	On site Autumn 2023

3	Raeswood Road Play Area	£50,000	On site Autumn 2023
4	Bonnyholm Play Area	£70,000	Expected Completion August 2023
4	Penilee Park	£25,000	On site Autumn 2023
5	Festival Park	£65,200	Consultation planned for Autumn 2023, with delivery planned for 2024
6	Maxwell Square	£70,000	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
7	Holmlea Park	£5000	Delivery planned for 2024
8	Balvicar Street (Queens Park)	£59,294	Consultation planned for Autumn 2023, with delivery planned for 2024
8	Riccarton Street Play Area	£50,000	Consultation planned for Autumn 2023, with delivery planned for 2024
9	Bridgeton Community Centre (Dale St) Play area	£85,000	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
9	Tobago St	£34,200	Completed July 2023
WARD	**Location**		**PROGRESS**
10	Yorkhill Park	£5,200	Consultation planned for Autumn 2023,

			with delivery planned for 2024
11	Kelvingrove Park	£70,900	Initial works planned for Autumn 2023, with consultation and delivery for further works planned for 2024
12	Victoria Park Play Area	£48,600	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
13	Yoker Park Play Area	£25,000	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
14	Temple (Fulton Street) Play Area	£50,000	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
14	Peel Glen Road Rec Centre (Summerhill Road) Play Area	£70,000	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
15	Hotspur St Play Area	£23,200	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
16	Ruchill Park	£136,300	Consultation planned for Autumn 2023, with delivery planned for 2024
17	Wallacewell Rd Play Area	£68,300	Consultation and delivery planned for 2024
18	Lethamhill Play Area	£52,600	On site autumn 2023
20	Garrowhill Park Toddler Park	£37,000	On site autumn 2023
22	Coll Place Play Area	£50,000	Delivery planned for 2024

23	Dorchester Avenue	£30,000	Completed June 2023

4. Play Area Renewal Funding allocations for 2023/24 to 2025/26 and Scottish Government Funding Criteria

4.1 The Scottish Government recognised that a multi-year grant settlement would allow Local Authorities to plan accordingly. Distribution was based on population 0-14 years (93%) and rurality (7%).

4.2 The Scottish Government in 2022 advised the Council of the investment sums over the next three years, and these are detailed below.

- 2023/24 £1,028,000
- 2024/25 £1,542,000
- 2025/26 £2,570,000

4.3 The funding can only be used to continue a programme of play area renewal. The extent of renewal, and refurbishment varies across the whole play estate and is influenced by local plans, investment priorities and engagement and consultation with children and young people.

4.4 An eligible play park for investment through this funding is one which is:

- Local authority owned and managed.
- Designated for play; and
- Free to access and open to all.

and it is recognised that a wider network of valuable spaces for play exists out with its scope

4.5 Play parks in private ownership, those that require an entry fee or those only available to specific groups or with conditions for entry are outwith scope.

4.6 Play parks with equipment (swings, slides etc) aimed at children aged 0-14 are included as are other facilities used by the same age group, for example skateparks.

4.7 Multi-purpose Games Courts (MPGCs) or dedicated sports fields are outwith the scope. A wider programme of pump tracks and cycle skills areas across the

city is being supported by the Scottish Cycling Facilities Fund and will form the subject of a separate paper to the relevant committee.

4.8 Outdoor gyms are not intended for use by under-14's so are considered out of scope for this programme. Officers from this service will continue to work with colleagues at Glasgow Life to identify opportunities to invest available Developer Contributions allocated to Informal Sport i.e., areas which are not within a letting system such as informal cricket wickets, football kick about spaces.

5. Prioritisation of Funding

5.1 If applied equally across each of the Council's eligible play areas (Appendix 2), the funding available would provide for an average investment of £21,529 per play area, with this sum being less than the average installation cost of a climbing frame.

5.2 The cost of refurbishing a play area is dependent on several factors including the condition of existing equipment, whether there is a local requirement to maintain or to upgrade the play value and the durability/longevity of the equipment installed. The average cost to refurbish a play area is currently estimated at £100,000.

5.3 The 2016 Scottish Household Survey showed that most children have access to play areas, but availability differed according to levels of deprivation, especially within urban areas. Deprived neighbourhoods have less access to the natural environment and parents are less likely to think it is safe for children to travel alone to play areas. A previous study of play areas in Glasgow showed that, although there were more playgrounds in disadvantaged areas, there were greater concerns about the quality of these spaces (*source: Ellaway, A., Kirk, A., Macintyre, S. and Mutrie, N. (2007) Nowhere to play? The relationship between the location of outdoor play areas and deprivation in Glasgow, Health & Place).*

5.4 It is therefore proposed that priority will be given to the refurbishment of play areas and equipment located in areas where deprivation levels are considered high. Appendix 1 shows the distribution of Council maintained play areas against the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Play areas located within the lowest 15% data zones are highlighted in red. Priority will also be given to parts of the city with a higher population of children under 15 as listed on ward factsheets.

5.5 To support this, it is recommended that a distribution of funding by ward is based on a 25% weighting by population under 15, and a 75% weighting for 15% most deprived SIMD data zones Priority within each ward will be given to adding accessible and inclusive provision to play areas with particular focus on locations where this would align to complementary facilities already in place

such as accessible and/or changing places toilets, accessible café facilities and/or blue badge parking.

6 Design Considerations

6.1 It is recognised that Glasgow has seen transformational investment in housing and educational facilities in recent decades, and that this may mean that the distribution of some of our play areas could be realigned in order to better support play being conveniently integrated into families' day to day journeys between, say, home, school and after school activities. In line with wider measures to deliver Liveable Neighbourhoods, we will seek to invest in our play estate in a manner which supports:

- Local Town Centres
- Everyday Journeys
- Active Travel
- Streets for People

6.2 Consultations undertaken by our Greenspace and Biodiversity team (NRS) on individual play area proposals to date have often noted a strong preference by families for play areas which are conveniently located near schools, sports centres, and other community facilities. A number of responses provided narrative that these play areas were more likely to feel welcoming, with visibility from staffed facilities improving perceptions of safety and reducing likelihood of anti-social behaviour and were preferred to locations which might be closer to steeply banked water bodies, transport infrastructure or housing.

6.3 To minimise exclusion from play, refurbished play areas (regardless of size) will have accessible qualities built into their design. Play areas are designed to support play across a range of abilities and life courses and help improve fine and gross motor skill for all users.

6.4 Design considerations include results from user group and community feedback, site accessibility, path widths, safety surface quality, sensory equipment, pet free areas and the zoning into age-appropriate areas.

6.5 Wherever possible, equipment is accessible using ramps, railing and ground level access. Colour, shape, and form are further components to support a play area appealing to a broad range of abilities.

6.6 Appendix 3 includes a summary of the inclusion and accessibility characteristics of the city's play areas and shows those with inclusive equipment, other equipment, disabled parking and other facilities, access paths and the types of surfaces in the play area.

7. Sums recommended for investment 2023/24 to 2025/26

7.1 Eligible play areas within each ward were assessed against their capacity to be upgraded to a standard of ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’, through interventions such as equipment installation, improved accessible footpath access, etc. It should be noted that this assessment measures a range of play and greenspace qualities in addition to technical equipment condition- it represents a snapshot taken at a point in time, and isn’t undertaken as frequently as our technical inspection reports.

7.2 Those which already scored as Good or Excellent, and which had less capacity to add accessible and inclusive equipment to increase their score, were recommended as ‘Continue to Maintain’.

7.3 Those which were considered to have the capacity to be upgraded to a standard of Good or Excellent, by adding accessible and inclusive equipment to increase their score, but where sufficient funding is potentially available or already committed from other sources (such as Developer Contributions) were recommended as ‘Invest in through other Programmes’.

7.4 Those which were considered to have the capacity to be upgraded to a standard of Good or Excellent, by adding accessible and inclusive equipment to increase their score, but where but where officers are not aware of sufficient funding available from other sources (such as Developer Contributions) a recommendation was made as to the amount of funding which could be made available from this programme to ‘Bring up to Good or Excellent by adding accessible and inclusive provision’.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Appendix 3 details the play area investment planned for 2023/24 onwards and the column titled ‘Action’ details the Outcome/Action planned for each of the areas Where there is capacity for a higher play value e.g., moving from good to excellent standard, this is indicated in the same column titled.

8.2 Local Authorities nationally are working with Scotland Excel, and Scottish Government to identify solutions to some of the supply chain and market capacity considerations associated with a major national programme of investment. Appendix 3 shows the financial year at which capital funding becomes available, rather than the year that investment work is scheduled to be complete. Updates can be provided to this committee providing a programme once supply chain and engagement activity has been more fully explored.

9. 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:	No new Legal Issues have been identified
Personnel:	Investment will be managed via existing staff resources
Procurement:	Existing Glasgow City Council and Scotland Excel frameworks will be utilised.
Council Strategic Plan:	Grand Challenge 4 Mission : Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods. Develop, secure funding for and implement local infrastructure changes in line with a Liveable Neighbourhoods approach for every single community by 2030 so that our local streets are safe and pleasant for everyone to walk, wheel, cycle, play and spend time in.

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.	Investment is targeted towards areas with the lowest 15% datazones per the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	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 neighbourhoods plan
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	Potential positive impacts by supporting active travel and livable neighbourhoods
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	Potential positive impacts by supporting active travel and livable neighbourhoods

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report	No

10. Recommendations

It is recommended that committee note:

1. Funding already committed to projects from the 2021/22 and 2023 allocation, and the status of these projects
2. The funding allocations per year from 2023/24 to 2025/26 and Scottish Government funding criteria