

ANGUS COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 16 JANUARY 2024

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CAPITAL GRANT ALLOCATIONS FOR RENEWAL OF PLAYPARKS
2023-26**

REPORT BY GRAEME DAILLY, DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

ABSTRACT

This report provides information on the capital grant allocation to Angus Council from the Scottish Government for Renewal of Play Parks. It recommends projects for approval to use the grant allocation for the financial years 2023/24 to 2025/26.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) agrees the list of proposals, as detailed in section 4, for use of Renewal of Play Park Capital Allocation of £1,116,000 for financial years 2023/24 to 2025/26; and
- (ii) notes the need for further investment in Angus playparks in following years.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following Angus Council Plan 2023-2028 priorities:

Caring for **People**:

- We will Support children, young people and adults to access appropriate opportunities which allow them to progress in their learning.

Caring for our Place:

- We will maintain our roads, pavements, lighting, and other infrastructure efficiently and will focus on our priority routes and infrastructure.
- We will engage with communities to support their ambitions to deliver on local aspirations (e.g., community asset transfer requests, community gardens, food hubs).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Angus Council's Parks Services manage 96 play areas that offer a range of play equipment for various age groups, abilities and play activities. Following a review in 2013 of all playparks including the revenue costs to maintain them, the 'Standard for Play Area Provision for Angus' was approved by the Communities Committee (Report No **601/13** refers). This report identified the need for investment in the upkeep of the playparks, a series of parks that were surplus to the standard and would experience no further investment, the immediate removal of six parks and where public play was not available. Of the three gaps identified in the play provision, two have now been filled through the installation of the new play areas at Brechin Community Campus and Chapman Drive Park in Carnoustie.

Renewal of Playpark Fund

3.2 In 2021 the Scottish Government made a commitment to renew play parks across Scotland, so that all children have access to quality play in their own community and as part of this established a £60m fund. As part of the fund Angus Council will receive a total of £1,319,000 up to March 2026. This is ringfenced as follows:

Year	Funding	
2021/22	£108,000	Works have been completed in 7 playparks in Kirriemuir, Montrose, Letham, Forfar, Arbroath, Crombie and Monifieth
2022/23	£111,000	The renewal of units at Friockheim Park; MacDonald Park and Spink Street (both Arbroath), will be undertaken in the current financial year
2023/24	£220,000	See proposals
2024/25	£330,000	See proposals
2025/26	£550,000	See proposals
2025/26	£16,000	Use of additional Planning Obligation payments in Forfar and Montrose

3.3 The playpark renewal projects in the first two years of funding were agreed in Report Nos [390/21](#) and [389/22](#). The 2021/22 programme saw the partial redevelopment of six playparks across Angus. The play equipment for the three parks as part of the 2022/23 programme is on order and will be installed once delivered.

3.4 To allow Local Authorities to plan ahead, the funding for the following three years has been allocated. For Angus this means a budget of £1,116,000 including three planning obligation payments in Forfar and Montrose has been made available for refurbishment works.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 The guidance for the fund establishes that the whole play estate should be considered and that all play park refurbishment is to be carried out in line with the nationally agreed principles. These are:

- the views of children, young people and families must be sought in the process of planning the renewal programme.
- access to play should be as wide-reaching and inclusive as possible.
- play parks and spaces should seek to bring together local communities by creating a greater sense of place and cohesion.
- the use of existing national resources can help local authorities to take a strategic and evidence-based approach to the design and renewal of their local play parks.

4.2 Eligible play parks are local authority owned, managed or maintained sites, designated for play, aimed at children aged 0-14, which are free to access and open to all. Play parks in private ownership cannot be considered.

The fund is set up to replace existing play equipment and associated furniture, but grants cannot be used towards maintenance or new play areas.

4.3 As the total costs for the complete renewal of all playparks by far exceeds the funding available a review of the condition of all 96 play areas was undertaken to establish a list of priority projects with the view of achieving improvements for as many local communities as possible, but also based on the need for renewals of the current play provision.

At the same time the assessment also reviewed aspects required through the new National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) which calls for Scottish planning authorities to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment. This involves assessing the extent and quality of children's opportunities for play in their settlements. In preparation for this the play evaluation incorporated additional criteria such as access, inclusion, play on offer for various age groups etc.

The outcome of the assessments has been rated from category A with the lowest scoring to category D achieving the highest marks. The playparks in categories A and B were then reviewed again to identify the units most requiring renewal and other works such as access improvements or Health and Safety enhancements.

4.4 It should be noted that those playparks identified for no further investment under the 'Standard for Play Area Provision for Angus' have not been included in the list of areas to be improved despite their low scoring.

4.5 The proposals include the replacement of a series of individual play units, only in very few cases a whole playpark is to be renewed.

4.6 Projects Recommended for Approval

Approval is sought for the proposed programme of works for the years 2023/24 up to 2025/26.

Play area works per year	Estimated Cost (£,000)
2023/24	
Annfield Drive, Arbroath	14
Auchmithie Village	1
Brook Street, Monifieth	7
Cliffburn Community Park, Arbroath	130
Marywell Gardens, Kirriemuir	27
Medicine Well Park, Montrose	10
Monikie Country Park	7
Wards Park, Brechin	14
Total 2023/24	210
2024/25	
Condor Crescent, Montrose	38
Craigo Village	54
Crombie Country Park	48
Dubton Village Park	50
Duriehill Place, Edzell	55
Hillside Park	46
Thornton Park, Forfar	30
Total 2024/25	321
2025/26	
Blue Seaway, Monifieth	190
Cairnie Crescent, Arbroath	28
Lochside, Forfar	147
Tarfside Village	19
Glaxo Play Area, The Splash, Montrose	201
Total 2025/26	585
Total Estimated Costs	1,116

4.7 If approved, the equipment being replaced will be chosen by engaging directly with schools, playgroups and users of the parks. Based on the success of recent engagement with children and families, Environmental Services will continue to work with the communities of Angus, adopting the Participatory Budgeting model. This includes giving equal opportunity to participate in decisions shaping the local community; help deliver on the outcomes in Scotland's National Performance Framework and giving communities more influence to make decisions on how funding is spent in their localities.

5. FUTURE YEARS CONSIDERATION

5.1 After examining the condition of all play areas, it is clear that the public play portfolio in Angus will require substantially more funding beyond the five-year grant received from the Scottish Government. Further play area repair and replacement work has been identified in the existing playparks for the following three years in the region of £1,054,000, for which future funding will need to be sourced.

5.2 Currently there still remains a gap in play provision in the western part of Monifieth. The existing open spaces at West End Park and Wemyss Crescent were considered not suitable as there is limited natural supervision available to ensure the safety of the users. A possible solution is to use an area of green space which is occupied by Grange Primary School and would be directly accessible from Grange Road. Through appropriate groundworks and fencing a suitable Burgh Play Area could be developed, with an estimated cost of around £108,000.

- 5.3 Additionally, the remaining 17 no. playparks identified in 2013 for no further investment continue to require ongoing maintenance and safety inspections but are generally in a poor condition. It would be financially prudent to remove all equipment and safety surfacing and reinstate them to informal play spaces instead. It is proposed to improve alternative playparks in the vicinity at the same time. The costs for these works are estimated at £102,400, which will also require funding to be identified.

Future years funding for play area works	
Play area works per year	Estimated Cost (£,000)
Year 6 works 2026/27	
Various play areas	247
New Grange Road Play area, Monifieth	108
No further investment parks, removal of equipment	102
Total 2026/27	457
Year 7 works 2027/28	
Various play areas	421
Total 2027/28	421
Year 8 works 2028/29	
Various play areas	386
Total 2028/29	386
Total Estimated Costs	1,264

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications as all proposals are contained within the allocated funding, there are indirect financial implications through officer time to support the delivery of projects. To enhance the opportunities for improvement works, the Parks section of the Infrastructure & Environment directorate has forgone the charging of professional fees for designing the proposals, public consultation and contract supervision.
- 6.2 As a consequence of the current volatile market for many materials, especially steel and timber, it is difficult to predict project costs in the future. It is therefore possible that the designs for an individual playpark might have to be amended to some extent, but it is proposed that some work will still be carried out in each of the playparks of the table in paragraph 4.6.
- 6.3 Section 5 provides an indication of the funding that will be required for future years funding beyond the five-year grant period. This is provisional and additional capital funding for the financial year 2026/27 and following years will need to be sourced and agreed.
- 6.4 There are no significant revenue budget implications arising from this report. The cost of maintaining and inspecting all playparks will be met from the Environmental Services Revenue Budget.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 1.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Jutta Scharnberger, Team Leader- Landscape Services
EMAIL DETAILS: environmentalmanagement@angus.gov.uk