

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET - 23 JUNE 2010**

### **PLAYPARK INVESTMENT PROGRAMME**

#### **Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a prioritised programme of playpark investment across East Ayrshire.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the installation of five playparks and two Streetsport cages at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009. This work completed the initial priority list of playparks and consideration now needs to be given to establishing future priorities for investment.
- 2.2 In order to assist with the development of a future prioritised programme of playpark investment, an external independent Inspector was engaged to carry out a condition survey of the Council's playparks to identify any significant health and safety issues relating to playparks. This work was carried out in addition to the weekly checks on equipment that are carried out by Council staff and provides an objective, external, assessment to assist Cabinet in agreeing priority areas for investment.
- 2.3 The independent Inspector was asked to categorise each playpark in terms of potential health and safety risk. Whilst risk can never be fully eliminated in relation to playparks it is considered that all playparks should be medium / low risk and that any identified as high or medium/high risk should be given a high priority in any future investment programme, or be considered for removal.
- 2.4 A report by the then Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services was considered by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in which recommendations were made on a priority list of playparks which were to be replaced. This list had been developed using the findings of the independent Inspector and local knowledge, where appropriate.
- 2.5 This report was subsequently called in to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee which considered the matter on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2009. Cabinet, at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2010, considered the recommendations of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee and agreed that consultation be carried out with those Elected Members and Community Councils with a proposed playpark within their ward/area and who were asked to consider the proposals set out in the Cabinet report of 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009. Community Councils were also asked to consult with residents and other community groups along

with tenants associations in their areas, where possible. A copy of the Cabinet report of 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 was attached to the consultation questionnaire.

### **3 SURVEY FINDINGS**

3.1 The basis of the consideration and determination of the priority list of playparks for future investment was the independent Inspector's report which identified the levels of risk at the remaining playparks. The independent Inspector categorised the parks into 3 priorities:-

Priority 1 Playparks to be replaced or removed as soon as funds are available.

Priority 2 Playparks to be considered for future development due primarily to age.

Priority 3 Playparks to be considered on the completion of the first 2 priorities or

When deciding on priority the inspector considered the following:-

- Risk value
- Age of equipment or site
- Location
- Central and high amenity play areas

3.2 Appendix 1 gives further information on the Priority 1 sites identified in the Inspector's report. The Priority 1 playparks identified in the November 18<sup>th</sup> 2009 Cabinet report, and the revised list developed after consultation are shown in section 5 of this report.

### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 The original consultation was carried out over a period of 8 weeks, with consultation papers being sent out on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2010 with a return date of 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2010.

4.2 The consultation period was extended in respect of Community Councils to allow them further time to consult with residents affected by the proposals as well as local groups and Tenant and Resident Associations. The extension consultation letters were sent out on the 26<sup>th</sup> April, with a return date of Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2010.

4.3 The outcomes of the returns are shown below:-

- Elected Member returns - 29 Elected Members were consulted with 15 responding.
- Community Council returns - 13 Community Councils were consulted with 8 responding.

- In the second phase of the consultation with the same Community Councils - 13 Community Councils were consulted with 3 additional returns received.
- Fenwick Community Council also returned a questionnaire; however, there are no priority playpark proposals in their area.

4.4 A summary of returns from both rounds of consultation is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

## 5. PROPOSED PRIORITY LIST

5.1 The priority list proposed in the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 Cabinet report is shown below:-

1. Piersland Park, Kilmarnock	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Med/High
2. Minnoch Road, Bellsbank	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
3. Greenside, Newmilns	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	-
4. Braehead Place, Lugar	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Med/High
5. Strandhead, Stewarton	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	-
6. Hayhill	(Modular unit only)	Med/High
7. Cessnock Place, Kilmarnock	(Toddler equipment)	High
8. Cairn View, Muirkirk	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Low/Med
9. Cairnston Avenue, Drongan	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Low
10. Rugby Road, Kilmarnock	(Toddler equipment)	Med/High
11. Craighens Road, Netherthird	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
12. Ness Glen Road, Bellsbank	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
13. Merlin Park, Auchinleck	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
14. McTurk Court, Cumnock	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
15. Alexander Terrace, Mauchline	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
16. Dalton Avenue, Dalmellington	(Toddler equipment)	Medium
17. School Brae, Waterside	(Surfacing)	Medium

Greenside, Newmilns was included on this list as it was considered to be a more central location than the Claremount playpark which had the higher priority in the Inspector's report.

Strandhead, Stewarton was included as this site is a larger, well used location in preference to the smaller Merrygreen site which featured in the Inspector's report.

5.2 Utilising the independent Inspector's findings and local knowledge regarding the levels of use at playparks along with the results of the consultation process outlined in section 4 above, the amended proposed priority list for new playpark installations can be detailed as follows:-

1. Cessnock Place, Kilmarnock	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	High
2. Piersland Park, Kilmarnock	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Med/High
3. Merrygreen, Stewarton	(Toddler equipment)	Med/High
4. Hayhill	(Modular unit only)	Med/High
5. Braehead, Lugar	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Med/High
6. Rugby Road, Kilmarnock	(Toddler equipment)	Med/High

7. Ness Glen, Bellsbank	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
8. Claremount, Newmilns	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
9. Alexander Terrace, Mauchline	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
10. Merlin, Auchinleck	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
11. Craighens Road, Netherthird	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
12. Minnoch Road, Bellsbank	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
13. McTurk Court, Cumnock	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Medium
14. Dalton Avenue, Dalmellington	(Toddler equipment)	Medium
15. School Brae, Waterside (South)	(Surfacing only)	Medium
16. Cairn View, Muirkirk	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Low/Med
17. Cairnston, Drongan	(Toddler and Junior equipment)	Low

5.3 The changes from the initial priority list resulting from the consultation process are:-

- a) Ness Glen Road, Bellsbank, has replaced Minnoch Road, Bellsbank as the higher priority for this community. Both sites have the same medium rating in the Inspector's report, and both remain in the proposed priority list. Consultation returns show a preference for Ness Glen Road, Bellsbank; and therefore this site is given the higher place on the priority list.
- b) Claremount replaces Greenside as the proposal for Newmilns. Claremount was identified by the independent Inspector as a medium priority recommended for removal or redevelopment, however, Greenside is a central site which is more easily accessible. Consultation was inconclusive with support for the replacement of both playparks. Claremount has returned to the priority list as the health and safety priority while Greenside, which is not a priority in terms of health and safety, has been removed from the list.
- c) Merrygreen has replaced Strandhead for Stewarton. Strandhead is no longer on the priority list. Consultation did not offer conclusive support for Strandhead Park, and therefore Merrygreen has replaced Strandhead on the proposed priority list. Merrygreen is a medium/high priority; Strandhead is not a priority in terms of health and safety.
- d) Carston Drive/Millmannoch, Drongan has been suggested as a new area in place of Cairnston Avenue, Drongan. There is currently no equipment at Cairnston Avenue, and this site was therefore given a low risk rating.
- e) A higher priority has been given to Alexander Terrace, Mauchline where a local group has funding available to assist with the provision of a new playpark.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Cabinet on the 11 February 2009 approved a total capital budget allocation of £0.795m in relation to the playpark investment programme. Initially, this was allocated £0.155m in 2009/10 and £0.480m for 2010/11 to 2012/13 and £0.160m for 2013/14 to 2015/16. However, during 2009/10 an opportunity

was identified to accelerate £0.300m from future year's allocations, leaving a balance of £0.340m.

6.2 Cabinet on the 16 June 2010 subsequently allocated the balance of funding equally between 2010/11 and 2011/12 financial years, with £170,000 available in each year, in order to reflect anticipated spending patterns in relation to the installation of the play park equipment.

6.3 Maintenance and inspection of the upgraded playparks will be carried out with the existing revenue budgets.

## **7. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that any play facilities it provides are properly maintained and meet appropriate safety standards.

## **8. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Provision of playparks supports the delivery of Community Wellbeing objectives within the Community Plan.

## **9. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The playpark refurbishment programme allows for the replacement and upgrading of play equipment. Where equipment is in poor condition and cannot be repaired, removal is the most appropriate method of managing risk to the Council.

## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 The proposed priority programme for playpark improvements has been developed using the findings of the independent Inspector's survey, local knowledge of existing issues relating to the availability of playparks, and the results of the community consultation process.

## **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

11.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) Approve the amended priority programme detailed in 5.2 above; and
- (ii) Otherwise note the content of this report

Elizabeth Morton  
Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

EM/JAG/CF  
17<sup>th</sup> June 2010

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Dunlop Playground Services Report
2. Consultation Letters
3. Consultation returns

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**5.0 PRIORITY 1****PLAYGROUNDS RECOMMENDED FOR REMOVAL OR REDEVELOPMENT DUE TO HIGH RISK AND OR AGE OF EQUIPMENT.**

The following playgrounds should be replaced or removed as soon as funds allow:

**5.1 Piersland Park, Kilmarnock****Medium/High**

This area has two swing frames, one of which dates back to the mid-1960's and, with no impact absorbing surfacing, the risk of a child suffering an injury due to a fall could be far greater than another similar play area with impact absorbing surfacing. The play area has a limited life span, is unfenced and is surrounded by roads, forcing children to cross the road. I would therefore give careful consideration to the location of the site before redevelopment.

**5.2 Cessnock Place, Kilmarnock****High**

This play area has only one item of equipment, which, as above, dates back to the mid-1960's also with no impact absorbing surfacing. The area is set well back from nearest housing and is quite secluded. The main A77 carriageway is nearby. Nearest facilities are some distance away being either at Bellfield Estate or Carron Avenue.

**5.3 Merry Green, Stewarton****Medium/High**

There are only two items of equipment on site with limited play value – 1) Turnstile/Roundabout and 2) Swings, neither of which have impact absorbing surfacing. There are no play provisions close by and, if the site were to be removed, children would have to travel some distance and cross a busy road to the nearest facilities at Robertland.

**5.4 Claremount Estate, Newmilns****Medium**

There are two items of equipment on site, only one of which has impact-absorbing surfacing. Equipment dates back to the mid-1970's and mid-1980's. One of the swing frames has lain derelict for some years and has no impact absorbing surfacing. The remaining swing frame does have impact-absorbing surfacing and, although there is corrosion to metalwork, the swing frame could be refurbished and the remainder of the site redeveloped. There are no facilities close to this area, with the nearest site being Greenside, Newmilns, which requires redevelopment.

**5.5 Rugby Road, Kilmarnock****Medium/High**

While the equipment on site has some life left, the design in my opinion places visitors to the site at risk of collision with the swings. It is difficult to access the slide without passing through the path of the swings, thereby increasing the risk of collision. New facilities are some distance away at Howard Park. The site itself if

quite small and, with the inclusion of swings, has led to the congestion and risk of collision. Therefore, I suggest that when the site is being considered for redevelopment and if swings were to be re-installed, they are placed to the rear of the site, furthest away from the entrance and are lower in height and suitable for the toddler age group.

#### **5.6 Alexander Terrace, Mauchline**

**Medium**

Site is well back from housing with one item. There is insufficient impact absorbing surfacing and equipment dates back to late 1970's and is coming to the end of its' life. The nearest facilities are located at Jean Armour Drive.

#### **5.7 Cairn View, Muirkirk**

**Low/Medium**

There is only one unit, i.e. swings and the site has a low play value. There is insufficient impact absorbing surfacing below the swings. The nearest play facilities are some distance away at Victoria Park and children have to cross a busy road to gain access to the site.

#### **5.8 Lugar**

**Medium/High**

There is only one item on site dating back to the early 1980's with no impact absorbing surfacing and no play facilities nearby.

#### **5.9 Netherthird, Cumnock**

**Medium**

Equipment and surfacing on site has reached the end of its life. Site has a variety of items swinging, climbing, sliding and rocking.

#### **5.10 McTurk Court, Cumnock**

**Medium**

The site play value is limited with only four climbing structures and no impact absorbing surfacing installed. The nearest facilities are at Glenweir.

#### **5.11 Merlin Park, Auchinleck**

**Medium**

There are four items on site consisting of swinging, sliding and rocking. The equipment is coming to the end of its life. Surfacing is in a poor condition. The location of the site is not ideal, i.e. it is set well away from housing and is susceptible to vandalism. There are good play facilities at the nearby Well Road site.

#### **5.12 Dalton Avenue, Dalmellington**

**Medium**

There is only one swing frame on site. Equipment is heavily corroded and coming to the end of its life and there is insufficient impact absorbing surfacing. The nearest facilities are at Dalmellington Park some distance away.

#### **5.13 Minnock Road, Bellsbank**

**Medium**

There are two items on site – a climbing frame and swing structure. Although the swing frame has recently been installed, the climbing frame surfacing would need to be replaced in the near future. The nearest play facility is at Ness Glen Road, which is some distance away.

**5.14 Ness Glen Road, Bellsbank**

**Medium**

There is a variety of equipment – climbing, sliding and swinging. The equipment and surface have reached the end of life and would start to become expensive to maintain properly. The nearest facilities are at Minnock Road and are limited.

**5.15 School Brae, Waterside**

**Medium**

There is only one swing frame on site and insufficient impact absorbing surfacing.

**5.16 Hayhill**

**Medium/High**

The equipment dates back to early 1980's, consists of swings and climbing frame. There is insufficient impact absorbing surfacing and corrosion to structures.

**5.17 Cairnston Avenue, Drongan**

**Low**

There are two swing frames on site; both swing frames have been unused for a number of years, no impact absorbing surfacing and heavy corrosion to structures. The nearest play facilities can be found at Millmannoch Avenue, which is some distance away and across a busy road.

**5.18 Kay Park, Ochiltree**

**Low**

There is only one item and old equipment bases on site. Nearby is a recently installed multi-use games area and the playgrounds at both Broom Crescent and Douglas Brown Avenue have recently been redeveloped.

## Summary of returns and Proposals (Original Consultation)

Ward 1	Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)	Number of Returns	Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)	Suggested Priorities
Councillors	Merrygreen	1 (of 3 issued)	Strandhead	The councillor supported the proposal for Merrygreen.
Stewarton & District Community Council	Merrygreen	1	Strandhead	Merrygreen

Consultation Outcome	Identified Risk Rating
Merrygreen	Medium / High

Ward 3	Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)	Number of Returns	Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)	Suggested Priorities
Councillors	Rugby Road	2 (of 4 issued)	N/A	Both councillors supported the proposal for Rugby Road
Grange / Howard Community Council	Rugby Road	Nil Return	N/A	N/A

Consultation Outcome	Identified Risk Rating
Rugby Road	Medium / High

<b>Ward 4</b>	<b>Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Number of Returns</b>	<b>Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Suggested Priorities</b>
Councillors	Piersland Park	2 (of 4 issued)	N/A	Both councillors supported Piersland Park.
Piersland Bentinck Community Council	Piersland Park	1	N/A	Piersland Park

<b>Consultation Outcome</b>	<b>Identified Risk Rating</b>
<b>Piersland Park</b>	Medium / High

<b>Ward 5</b>	<b>Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Number of Returns</b>	<b>Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Suggested Priorities</b>
Councillors	Cessnock Place	0 (of 3 issued)	N/A	N/A
Bellfield Community Council	Cessnock Place	Nil Return	N/A	N/A

<b>Consultation Outcome</b>	<b>Identified Risk Rating</b>
<b>Cessnock Place</b>	High

<b>Ward 6</b>	<b>Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Number of Returns</b>	<b>Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Suggested Priorities</b>
Councillors	Claremount Park	3 (of 4 issued)	Greenside	1 Councillor requested that both Claremount and Greenside be upgraded. 2 Councillors proposed that Greenside be upgraded as a higher priority.
Newmilns & Greenholm Community Council	Claremount Park	Returned within the extended period for consultation.	Greenside	Claremount

<b>Consultation Outcome</b>	<b>Identified Risk Rating</b>
<b>Claremount</b>	Medium

Ward 7	Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)	Number of Returns	Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)	Suggested Priorities
Councillors	1. Braehead Place, Lugar 2. Cairn View Muirkirk 3. Merlin Park Auchinleck 4. Alexander Terrace, Mauchline	2 (of 4 issued)	N/A	1 Councillor favoured the following priorities, 1. Alexander Terrace, Mauchline (Community funding available) 2. Merlin Park Auchinleck 3. Braehead Place, Lugar 4. Cairn View Muirkirk  1 Councillor favoured the following priorities 1. Merlin Park Auchinleck 2. Alexander Terrace, Mauchline 3. Braehead Place, Lugar 4. Cairn View Muirkirk
Auchinleck Community Council	Merlin Park Auchinleck	Nil Return	N/A	N/A
Mauchline Community Council	Alexander Terrace, Mauchline	1	N/A	Alexander Terrace (Community Council has funding of £29,400 available to contribute towards the overall cost)
Muirkirk Community Council	Cairn View Muirkirk	1	N/A	Cairn View
Lugar & Logan Community Council	Braehead Place, Lugar	Returned within the extended period for consultation	N/A	Braehead Place

Consultation Outcome	Identified Risk Rating
<b>Braehead Place</b>	Medium/High
<b>Alexander Terrace</b>	Medium
<b>Merlin Park</b>	Medium
<b>Cairn View</b>	Low / Medium

<b>Ward 8</b>	<b>Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Number of Returns</b>	<b>Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Suggested Priorities</b>
Councillors	1. Craigens Road, Netherthird 2. McTurk Court, Cumnock	2 (of 4 issued)	N/A	Both Councillors favoured the following priorities, 1. Craigens Road, Netherthird 2. McTurk Court, Cumnock.  Both councillors requested that a new site be found in close proximity to Craigens Road for the Netherthird park
Cumnock Landward Community Council	Craigens Road, Netherthird	1	N/A	Craigens Road area, different location requested and site identified next to Bowling Green.
Cumnock Community Council	McTurk Court, Cumnock	Returned original consultation as well as further comments as part of the Extended consultation.	N/A	McTurk Court

<b>Consultation Outcome</b>	<b>Identified Risk Rating</b>
<b>Craigens Road</b>	Medium
<b>McTurk Court</b>	Medium

Ward 9	Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)	Number of Returns	Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)	Suggested Priorities
Councillors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dalton Ave, Dalmellington</li> <li>2. Minnoch Rd, Bellsbank</li> <li>3. Ness Glen, Bellsbank</li> <li>4. School Brae, Waterside</li> <li>5. Hayhill</li> <li>6. Cairnston Ave, Drogan</li> </ol>	3 (of 3 issued)	N/A	<p>1 Councillor suggested the following priority,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Minnoch Rd, Bellsbank</li> <li>2. Ness Glen, Bellsbank</li> <li>3. Dalton Ave, Dalmellington</li> <li>4. School Brae, Waterside</li> <li>5. Hayhill</li> <li>6. Cairnston Ave, Drogan</li> </ol> <p>1 Councillor suggested the following priority</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ness Glen, Bellsbank</li> <li>2. Minnoch Rd, Bellsbank</li> <li>3. Cairnston Ave, Drogan</li> <li>4. Dalton Ave, Dalmellington</li> <li>5. School Brae, Waterside</li> <li>6. Hayhill.</li> </ol> <p>1 Councillor made no comment on priority, but requested that a new park for Carston Avenue was provided, in place of Cairnston</p>
Dalmellington Community Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dalton Ave, Dalmellington</li> <li>2. Minnoch Rd, Bellsbank</li> <li>3. Ness Glen, Bellsbank</li> <li>4. School Brae, Waterside</li> </ol>	1	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ness Glen, Bellsbank</li> <li>2. Minnoch Rd, Bellsbank</li> <li>3. Dalton Ave, Dalmellington</li> <li>4. School Brae, Waterside</li> </ol>
Drogan, Rankinston & Stair Community Council	Cairnston Ave Hayhill	1	N/A	The Community Council favoured a new playpark at Carston/Millmannoch behind the Community Centre be provided in place of Cairnston.

Consultation Outcome	Identified Risk Rating
<b>Ness Glen</b>	Medium
<b>Carston Ave</b>	New park to replace Cairnston
<b>Hayhill</b>	Medium/High
<b>Minnoch Rd</b>	Medium
<b>Dalton Avenue</b>	Medium
<b>School Brae</b>	Medium

**\*Fairlie Playpark was not in the original consultation; however, a Fenwick Community Council representative requested a copy of the questionnaire. The return made by Fenwick Community Council is shown below for information.**

<b>Ward 6</b>	<b>Parks Proposed (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Number of Returns</b>	<b>Alternative Parks suggested (Questionnaire)</b>	<b>Suggested Priorities</b>
Councillors	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fenwick Community Council	Fairlie Playpark	1	N/A	N/A

<b>Consultation Outcome</b>	<b>Identified Risk Rating</b>
N/A	Medium