

# **PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**

## **Environment and Infrastructure Committee**

**30 October 2019**

### **Greenspace Asset Annual Status Report**

#### **Report by Executive Director (Housing and Environment) (Report No.19/306)**

This report presents a status summary of the Council's Greenspace assets based upon the latest published Scottish local authority data as at 31 March 2019. It describes the current condition of the asset; the standards achieved and provides performance indicator information.

#### **1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 The role of Community Greenspace is to manage and maintain all greenspace sites within Perth & Kinross. Greenspace sites are used by most, if not all, residents of Perth & Kinross as well as businesses and visitors. They provide many benefits and make an important contribution to service delivery and the strategic aims of the Council.
- 1.2 Using current replacement rates and greenspace officers' knowledge, the estimated value of the Greenspace asset is more than £170m. This is calculated on infrastructure such as play equipment, bridges, seats, bins etc.
- 1.3 The asset management system used to record data on our Greenspace assets is Environmental Landscape Manager (ELM). The first phase of the system was successfully implemented in 2016, enabling electronic work scheduling and improved data management. Future developments including scenario planning and performance reports will allow more strategic investment decisions to be made, based on accurate Greenspace asset information.
- 1.4 The Council's Greenspace Asset Management Plan was approved by the Strategic Policy and Resource Committee on 29 November 2017 (Report No. 17/392 refers). The plan requires the publication of an annual status report to provide an update on current asset condition and performance information which is the purpose of this paper.
- 1.5 Work has been undertaken to produce an Impact Analysis for programmes across the asset base which will form part of the Capital budget discussions in the lead up to full Council in February 2020. The Impact Analysis and the annual status report will provide Elected Members with information and options around different levels of investment with associated impact and risks (positive or negative). As such an informed decision on investment can be made at a political level.

- 1.6 The report presents a status summary of the Council's Greenspace asset as at 31 March 2019, with future Capital Investment decisions for the asset programmes approved in the Greenspace Asset Management Plan. The report describes the current condition of play area equipment, and bridges and also confirms the play areas refurbishment programme for 2019/20. The figures quoted within the report are as at 31 March 2019, unless otherwise stated.

## 2. CONDITION

### Play Areas

- 2.1 The status of the greenspace asset is provided in terms of current replacement age, usage and the outputs achieved as a result of Council investment.
- 2.2 The Council's current play areas assets are defined by the hierarchy outlined in the Play Strategy (2006) which categorises plays areas into Premier, Neighbourhood, Rural and Local areas:

Asset Type	Quantity	No. Items of Equipment	Total Estimated Replacement Cost*
Premier Play Area	9	143	£3,150,000
Neighbourhood Play Area	29	238	£2,320,000
Rural Play Area	51	298	£3,060,000
Local Play Area	52	227	£2,600,000

Table 1 – Play Area Types and Quantities

\* Estimated replacement cost of play equipment and play area surfacing

- 2.3 Play areas are inspected on an annual basis. It is generally expected that full refurbishment would occur when the equipment and surfacing reaches 15 years old.
- 2.4 As play equipment approaches its replacement date, the greenspace team will determine whether or not to replace the asset in order to meet the standards set out in the Council's Play Strategy (2006). This is carried out on a case-by-case basis to ensure asset lives are maximised.

- 2.5 The chart below shows a breakdown of play equipment across all the Council's 141 play areas per the hierarchy and the current stage in expected life cycle for these assets.

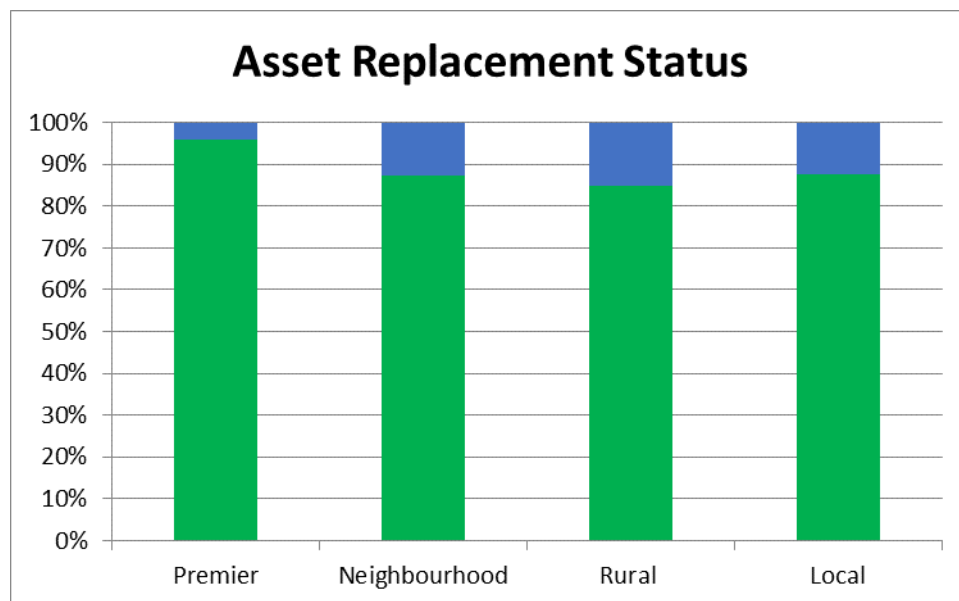


Chart 1 – Play Equipment Asset Replacement Status

Green	Play equipment is not due for replacement
Blue	Play equipment is due for replacement

- 2.6 The chart illustrates the equipment that is due for replacement based on its anticipated 15 year life span. Through a programme of systematic independent and contractor inspection, play equipment is assessed to determine which items can continue to be safely used beyond their expected replacement date. This saves unnecessary replacement costs and focuses investment on specific assets identified as life expired, while ensuring equipment is still safe.

### Bridges

- 2.7 Community Greenspace bridges are inspected on an annual basis by the infrastructure squad. It is generally expected that full replacement would occur when the bridge reaches 15 years old.
- 2.8 The chart below shows a breakdown of the condition of all 169 Community Greenspace bridges ranging from satisfactory to bridge replacement required.

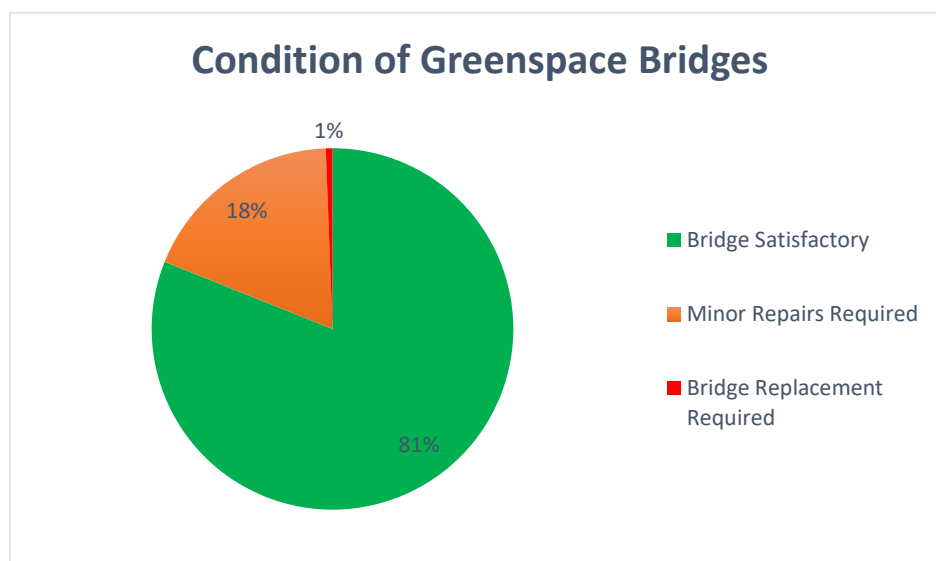


Chart 2 – Condition of Greenspace Bridges

### Performance Indicators

- 2.9 Service standards derived from The Community Greenspace Asset Management Plan reflect the previously approved funding levels for greenspace asset maintenance and represent the standards that customers can expect from the Council's Greenspace Assets during the plan period. The status of the specific greenspace assets are shown below.
- 2.10 The LAMS (Land Audit Management System) is a quality inspection system, initially developed by local authorities in Scotland and now rolled out on a UK wide basis, to monitor grounds maintenance.

Measured By			
	Target	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Parks and Open Spaces</b>			
Ensure our Parks and Open Spaces are managed and maintained in accordance with the schedules and specifications. Sample of selected sites (70) out of approximately 1500 sites inspected in accordance with Land Audit Management System (LAMS) scoring.	LAMS Score 67 or above	LAMS Score 73	LAMS Score 71
<b>Play Areas</b>			
Carry out play area maintenance and inspection by PKC Contractor	All sites every 2 months	100%	100%

Measured By			
	Target	2017/18	2018/19
Inspected once a year by independent contractor	All sites annually	100%	100%
Number of play areas meeting play strategy standards	80%	89%	89%
<b>Sports Pitches</b>			
Ensure renovation works are identified and implemented on a prioritised basis	90%	100%	100%
<b>Bridges</b>			
Ensure all bridges are maintained in a safe condition for public use through a visual inspection	2 years	100%	100%
<b>Trees and Woodland</b>			
Ensure our trees on our high use sites are inspected and appropriate work undertaken	Every 6 months	100%*	100%*
<b>Water Safety</b>			
Ensure our watercourse sites are inspected and appropriate work undertaken	100%	100%**	100%**

Table 2 – Greenspace Service Standards

\* Trees are inspected as part of a wider parks and open spaces inspection regime, with reactive inspections being undertaken where required.

\*\* All watercourse sites inspected and programme of works underway including works to Craigie Burn in Darnhall Park Perth.

## Revenue and Capital Investment

### Revenue

2.11 The table below shows the revenue expenditure for financial year 2017/18 and 2018/19 on greenspace assets not including staff costs. A full breakdown of the revenue expenditure is shown in Appendix 1.

- 2.12 The infrastructure expenditure covers verge cutting, play area maintenance, inspection and repairs, street weed killing, material and equipment for repair to greenspace assets, pest control, tree and roadside scrub.
- 2.13 Policy and Projects expenditure covers planned maintenance (repairs and maintenance to sites), support to the bloom campaign and path groups.
- 2.14 The Community Environment Challenge Fund (CECF) allows communities to bid for environmental improvement funding, which can link to conservation area appraisals and other regeneration initiatives.
- 2.15 Community Greenspace work in partnership with Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust (PKCT) through an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA sets out the working relationship between the partners and the Council.

<b>Cost Category Revenue</b>	<b>Total Spend 2017/18</b>	<b>Total Spend 2018/19</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	£842,904	£821,423
<b>Policy &amp; Projects</b>	£412,553	£181,590
<b>North Inch Golf Course</b>	£111,974	£17,486
<b>Grounds Maintenance Operations</b>	£79,824	£76,717
<b>Community Environment Challenge Fund</b>	£95,848	£70,564
<b>North Muirton Play Areas</b>	£216,639	£6,509
<b>Communities</b>	£40,885	£45,109
<b>Community Greenspace Management</b>	£30,000	£30,000
<b>Nursery</b>	£2,115	£71,703
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	£1,832,742	£1,321,101

Table 3 – Greenspace Investment Revenue

### **Progress and Issues**

- 2.16 Due to the 2013 reduction in funding for shrub bed maintenance, many shrub beds are now over mature with insufficient resources to maintain them to satisfactory levels.

- 2.17 In 2018/19, a shrub rationalisation trial was carried out in Fergusson Park, Davie Park Place in Rattray and Western Edge in Perth. The trial was a great success amongst residents, with the majority of areas being grassed and selective appropriate replanting carried out. A combination of contractors, operations, horticultural squad and community payback worked together to achieve this outcome. Based on the expenditure of the trial and the total area of these shrub beds across the area, (108,189m<sup>2</sup>) we estimate that a total of £2,437,862 would be required to grass over two thirds of the beds and plant more appropriate species for maintenance in the remainder of the shrub areas. This would ensure good quality, safe and welcoming open spaces and allow the planting of areas that cannot be grass cut. Community Greenspace will continue with this activity incrementally using current available budgets, and staffing.
- 2.18 Extensive repair works were carried out to the pond at Norie Miller Park in support of the Light Nights event to showcase the park. There was a pump fitted in the Tay and a sensor fitted in the lower pond. Further improvement works to improve the electrics and on the cascade have been identified for 2019.
- 2.19 There were pitch improvement works carried out at Primrose Park, Auchterarder. These works were carried out in conjunction with the community to improve the condition of the pitch.
- 2.20 2018/19 was a very positive year for North Inch Golf Course, with further increases in usage. The detail of this can be found in the specific report to the Environment and Infrastructure Committee of 30 October 2019 (Report No. 19/313).
- 2.21 The Community Environment Challenge Fund (CECF) allows communities to bid for environmental improvement funding, which can link to conservation area appraisals and other regeneration initiatives. The CECF has supported 7 new projects in 2018/19 ([Report No. 19/136](#) refers), with the total cost of these 7 projects amounting to approximately £0.522M.
- 2.22 It is essential that we maximise the opportunities to work in partnership with our communities on the maintenance and improvement of greenspace assets. For 2018/19, approximately 26,552 volunteer hours were recorded across Perth & Kinross on Greenspace sites. Communities we support also levered in £1,045,780 of external funding to support projects on greenspaces (community gardens, path upgrades, park upgrades).
- 2.23 The transition of nursery services from the Shaw Trust in late 2017 to the Council and managed as Westbank Enterprises, was fully completed for 2018/19. Some of the discretionary budget that was previously included in the management agreement with the Shaw Trust, has now been included in the Community Greenspace budget and is reflected in the changes in expenditure shown in table 3 above.

2.24 Community greenspace work in partnership with Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust (PKCT) through an annual Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA sets out the working relationship between the partners and the Council currently provides £30,000 of core funding, office accommodation, IT support and access to pool cars, which helps the Trust deliver an agreed annual work plan. The Community Greenspace Manager is the monitoring officer for the SLA, attending quarterly board meetings and receiving updates on progress with the annual work plan and the Trust's financial position. The Trust's annual work plan for 2019/20 is included in the SLA. Projects completed in 2018/19 include:

- support for the Ceteran Ecomuseum application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- promotion of the Perthshire Big Tree Country sites with a focus on restorative planting on 4 sites.
- support for the International Perthshire Conifer Conservation Programme (PCCP formerly iCONic) in partnership with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Forestry Commission Scotland including seed collection, tree planting and monitoring.
- support for the Forestry Commission Scotland's National Tree Collections of Scotland (NTCS) programme including improving the website, leaflets and developing site management plans.
- managing and promoting the Ceteran Trail including signage upgrades and supporting the Ceteran Yomp.
- phase 3 upgrade of the Provost's Walk in Auchterarder to multi-user standards.
- development of a 'story path' at Innerpefferay Library.
- undertaking route surveys for the River Tay Way long distance route from Kenmore to Perth and implementing an upgrade of the section at Dunkeld House Hotel in partnership with Sustrans.

2.25 Westbank Horticultural squad have issued 864 floral hanging baskets, 82 of which were for business customers. They have also been improving high profile sites such as Rodney Gardens to help support the Bloom campaign with success in the Beautiful Scotland Awards:

- Abernethy in Bloom - Silver
- Blairgowrie and Rattray in Bloom - Gold
- Brig In Bloom - Gold and Best Village in Scotland
- Coupar Angus Pride of Place - Gold
- Crook and Drum - Bronze
- Kinnesswood in Bloom - Silver Gilt
- Coupar Angus, Crichton Laing Court residents – Silver Gilt

2.26 Perth was awarded a gold medal, category winner, and the Parks and Greenspaces trophy for Riverside Park, and was nominated to compete in the 2019 Champion of Champions (one of only 5 communities in the whole of the UK to reach that level of achievement).



2.27 The team working between community greenspace, horticultural and infrastructure squads, operations and community payback was a significant factor in the successes of our communities in achieving these national awards.

2.28 In 2018/19, there were 144 Greenspace events, generating £35,713 income with £8,463 being spent to reinstate damage.

### **Capital**

2.29 The following table shows the capital expenditure on Greenspace assets for financial year 2018/19:

		<b>2018/19 Spend</b>	<b>2018/19 Output</b>
<b>Capital</b>	Play Areas – Improvements Implementation Strategy	£640,000	Design and Site Works at Acharn, Grandtully, Innerleithen, Perth(Mathieson Drive), Almondbank (Kirkhall), Blairgowrie (Ardblair Terr), Coupar Angus (Sidlaw Terr), Friarton Park, Blackford Park, Westfield Common, Pitlochry (Tom na Moan), Forgandenny, Kinross Green Park, Invergowrie, Pitlochry (MacRosty Park)
	Third Party Contributions	(£128,000)	£16,000 revenue contribution £25,000 Blackford Improvement Group £65,000 Friends of McRosty £22,000 Section 75
	Countryside Sites	£4,000	Design Work
	Small Parks	£12,000	Bell Park Culvert, Shrub Upgrades at Rattray and Western Edge, Norie Miller

		<b>2018/19 Spend</b>	<b>2018/19 Output</b>
			Pump Installation
	Community Greenspace Bridges	£50,000	Rumbling Bridge, Glen Lednock, Perth Golf Course, Cuttle Burn Culvert
	Core Path Implementation	£62,000	Crieff to Comrie
	Third Party Contributions	(£48,000)	Sustrans
	Pitlochry Recreation Park – Phase 2	£4,000	Additional Works to Ramped Access
	Alyth Environmental Improvements	£418,000	Site Works at Alyth Town Square
	Third Party Contributions	£38,000	£20,000 Revenue Contribution £18,000 Alyth Development Trust
	Premier Parks	£27,000	Kirkgate Park Path Upgrades
	The Knock	£9,000	Design Work
	Kinnoull Hill	£9,000	Design Work
	Countryside Access	£8,000	Installation of Gates on Core Paths and Obstruction Removal
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>		<b>£1,029,000</b>	

Table 4 – Greenspace Investment Capital

## **Progress and Issues**

### **Play Areas**

- 2.30 The play areas replacement works programme for 2018/19 included continuing with the programme and implementing postponed works from the previous year, which had been generated as a result of shortages in available contractors.

### **Cemeteries**

- 2.31 A number of cemeteries received stone path upgrades in 2018/19, based on a prioritised list. Infrastructure improvements were also carried out in the overspill car park at Perth Crematorium at a cost of £0.280m.
- 2.32 Bereavement services plan to carry out road repair works to Jeanfield Cemetery in 2019/20.
- 2.33 Work is required to repair road paths and carry out upgrades within cemeteries amounting to 7,289m<sup>2</sup> with an estimated cost of £0.365m which is currently unbudgeted.
- 2.34 A prioritised list of wall repairs within cemeteries has been compiled based on inspections carried out by Property Services and will be progressed in the coming year.

### **Bridges**

- 2.35 Greenspace currently maintain 169 bridges with adoptions increasing this number year on year. The current replacement programme allows for replacing on average 5 bridges per year. Costs are reduced by utilising in-house resources to control quality and design.

## **3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. The overall condition of the greenspace assets continues to be maintained within the funding levels available. The future developments in the greenspace asset management system, Environmental Landscape Manager (ELM), will allow more strategic decisions to be made on investment.
- 3.2 This report forms the second annual status report for the greenspace asset and a further report will be submitted in November 2020.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) notes the contents of the report.
  - (ii) requests the Executive Director (Housing and Environment) to continue to submit an annual report on the performance of, and investment in, the Council's Greenspace Assets in accordance with the approved Asset Management Plan, including benchmarking information.

### Authors

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Gregor Walker	Corporate Asset Management Officer	01738 475000 HECommitteeReports@pkc.gov.uk
Andy Clegg	Community Greenspace Team Leader	01738 475000 HECommitteeReports@pkc.gov.uk

### Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Housing & Environment)	4 October 2019

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>None</b>
Workforce	<b>None</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>None</b>
Strategic Environmental Assessment	<b>Yes</b>
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	<b>None</b>
Legal and Governance	<b>Yes</b>
Risk	<b>None</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	<b>Yes</b>
External	<b>None</b>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	<b>None</b>

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan

- 1.1 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This section should set out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

## **2. Resource Implications**

### Financial

- 2.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from this report. Financial requirements for Greenspace maintenance and replacement will be addressed through the Environment Service Budget setting and monitoring process.

### Workforce

- 2.2 No workforce implication are directly associated with this report.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 This report is the Greenspace Asset Annual Status Report.

## **3. Assessments**

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) Assessed as not relevant for the purposes of EqIA

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.3 This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

### Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act.
- 3.5 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

### Legal and Governance

- 3.6 No direct legal implications within this report.

### Risk

- 3.7 There is a risk to the public and reputational/legal risk to the Council if our Greenspaces are not maintained.

## **4. Consultation**

### Internal

- 4.1 Community Greenspace, Housing Environment Accounting Team, Finance and Resources Manager, the Head of Environmental and Consumer Services, the Head of Democratic Services and the Head of Legal & Governance have all been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### External

- 4.2 No external communication took place.

## **5. Communication**

- 5.1 None.

## **2. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 2.1 There are no background papers with this report.

## **3. APPENDICES**

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Revenue expenditure as at 31 March 2019.