

North Lanarkshire Council

Report

Youth, Equalities and Empowerment Committee

approval noting

Ref LMcM/MC/EW

Date 29/04/19

Play Area Accessibility Audit

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to outline the progress made in developing the methodology and mechanism for carrying out an accessibility audit of all Council play areas following agreement on a motion (Agenda item 13) considered at Council on 20 December 2018 which stated *"While we recognise this Council incorporates disability friendly play equipment into play areas whenever they are upgraded, replaced or refurbished. We request that the Council agrees to examine the disabled access to all existing play areas to ensure that no child is disadvantaged. We also request that Disability play provision should also be considered as part of the planning process for new developments."*

Recommendations

The Youth Equalities and Empowerment Committee is recommended to:-

- (1) note the content of this report and the progress made by the Community Partnership team towards the development of an accessibility audit for all Council play areas; and
- (2) agree that the Head of Communities prepare a report on the outcome of the audit for consideration at a future meeting of the Youth, Equalities and Empowerment Committee.

Supporting Documents

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

All of the *Plan for North Lanarkshire* priorities are underpinned by strong participatory democracy which is reflected in the work of Community Matters (Locality Partnerships). This approach supports the partnership work to deliver on the following ambition statements:-

Ambition 19. Improve engagement with communities and develop their capacity to help themselves; and

Ambition 20. Improve the involvement of communities in the decisions and development of services and supports that affect them.

Appendix 1

Examples of inclusive and accessible play features currently incorporated across North Lanarkshire facilities.

1. Background

1.1 Council Motion

At Council on 20th December 2018 the following motion was submitted by Councillors Goldie and Magowan for consideration (Agenda Item 13):

"While we recognise this Council incorporates disability friendly play equipment into play areas whenever they are upgraded, replaced or refurbished. We request that the Council agrees to examine the disabled access to all existing play areas to ensure that no child is disadvantaged. We also request that Disability play provision should also be considered as part of the planning process for new developments."

The motion was supported and agreed.

The accessibility audit will be overseen by the Community Partnership Team who hold the development remit for Council play areas. The audit will be carried out in partnership with other appropriate Council services.

Accessibility of play areas is already a key component of planning for such facilities. Appendix 1 illustrates some of the features already incorporated in play areas across North Lanarkshire.

2. Report

2.1 Approach to Audit

Following approval of the motion at Council on 20th December 2018, work began on the development of an accessibility audit for all Council play areas.

The following definitions for accessibility and inclusiveness as set out within "Free to Play: A Guide to Creating Accessible and Inclusive Public Play Spaces" (Scot Govt. 2018) will be used as a frame of reference for the audit:-

Accessibility refers to equal access to the physical environment, transport, information, facilities and services. In relation to play spaces, accessible design would seek to minimise environmental and physical barriers to participation including, for example, entrances, movement around the space, ease of access to the features or opportunities within the space, types of surfaces used, width of gates and paths, steepness of inclines, ease of access to play equipment, location and access to and from the site.

Inclusive: accessibility alone is not sufficient to create an inclusive play space as social factors and play value should also be considered. It may not be possible for every child to access every feature or opportunity of the space in the same way, however an inclusive play space aims to enable satisfying play opportunities for all children. In inclusive play spaces disabled and non-disabled can play together. Creative design solutions are sought to ensure opportunities for all children to actively engage in play in their own way and to provide plenty of variety for high play value.

The Scottish Government has recognised the fundamental value of play through the development of the first Play Strategy for Scotland. This strategy has the following ethos at its heart:-

‘ Wherever they live, children and young people of all ages, abilities and interests, should be able to play in a variety of ways, in high quality spaces, within sight of their homes or within easy walking distance, where they feel safe whether or not they are ‘accompanied by adults’.

(Getting it Right for Play, Play Scotland)

The importance of play in communities is also emphasised in the Scottish Government’s Play Map which sets out the following objectives to support the wellbeing of children, young people and their families across communities:-

- Supporting play in communities – so that children and young people have sufficient time and space for playing and are welcomed in their communities; and
- Ensuring positive support for play – through commitment to play across all sectors and services within communities.

2.2 Assessment Process

An independent playground inspection company will develop an accessibility matrix to assess and score each play area. These scores will be recorded during the independent annual inspection of play areas which takes place in March/April each year.

Direct consultation will be carried out via the NL Access Panel to determine the aspirations from communities in relation to play area accessibility. Broader consultation will be carried out via Survey Monkey to ensure as wide a range of views as possible are gathered to inform future decisions.

As members will be aware, the Council already require play provision within new housing developments to comply with the Equalities Act 2010.

2.2 Next Steps – Timeline

The timeline for the audit programme of work is set out in table 1 below:-

Table 1 – Play Area Accessibility Audit – Timeline

Task	Timescale
Complete Accessibility Matrix scoring process and collate results	May 2019
Carry out face to face consultation	April 2019
Produce and widely circulate Survey Monkey on accessibility for play taking into account results from accessibility matrix analysis	May/June 2019
Compile a priority list of play areas requiring accessibility improvements	June 2019
Produce follow up report on findings for Committee	June 2019

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

A Fairer Scotland assessment will be carried out, informed by consultation.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

An assessment will be carried out, informed by consultation.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

There are no financial implications at this stage, these will emerge from the audit process.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

None.

4.3 Environmental Impact

There are no environmental impacts at this stage in the audit process.

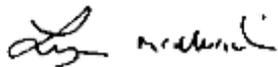
4.4 Risk Impact

There are no significant financial risks which have been identified at this stage. However the outcome of the audit may identify areas where additional budget is required for remedial and/or upgrading works to improve the play infrastructure.

5. Measures of success

5.1 Accessibility Audit of all play areas completed and recommendations provided on future improvement options.

5.2 Relevant communities affected by accessibility issues are satisfied with the outcome and feel empowered by the process.



Lizanne McMurrich
Head of Communities

Inclusive and Accessible Play Features



Wheelchair Roundabout: Birkenshaw



Fully Accessible Crannog Play Area: Drumpellier



Accessible Play Panels: Condorrat



Wheelchair Accessible Trampoline: Cardowan



Fully Accessible Play Area: Viewpark



Sensory Play Features: Queenzieburn