

Essential to fill funding gap for play

Cllr Lang who represents Almond Ward has highlighted the problem of funding our city's playparks.

At the recent council meeting, the Convener of Culture and Communities confirmed it will take over £4 million to bring our city's play areas up to a suitable standard.

There are 45 Edinburgh playparks identified which either need repairs or a complete makeover. The price tag for a new playpark is around £100,000, and in computing the total funding needed, council officers have estimated around a quarter of that for repairs.

Coronavirus restrictions mean that indoor play centres are still closed and outdoor play areas are much more important than ever.

Cllr Kevin Lang said: "In too many of our parks, children are having to play on old and damaged equipment which desperately needs replaced and upgraded. However these new figures show a massive funding gap when it comes to getting the new equipment which is so desperately needed.

"Indoor play areas like soft-play and activity centres have obviously had to be closed because of COVID and it's unclear when these will reopen. It makes safe and secure outdoor play areas for children even more important.

“The Council needs to make this a priority and work to secure the extra funding needed. It’s no good waiting years for repairs which will simply mean today’s children will be all grown up by the time improvements are in place.”

Cllr Donald Wilson, Culture and Communities Convener, said: “We fully recognise the importance of play parks to children and families, which is why we have a long term upgrade and replacement programme in place to make sure that there is sufficient provision across the city to allow them to be used by as many people as possible. We also ensure regular quality assessments and never compromise on health and safety thanks to the frequent inspections and regular repairs carried out by our play equipment engineers – this also includes annual independent safety inspections carried out by RoSPA.

“The great majority of our play parks are in a good condition, however the costs of maintaining them to our high standards can be high. We should prioritise outdoor play and are always exploring options to fund the replacement of equipment which has reached the end of its lifespan or has had to be removed due to vandalism. We have identified 13 play parks across the city that will be refurbished over the next two years with £850,000 of funding from grants, developer contributions and our own investment, and will shortly be developing funding options for beyond this period.”



South Queensferry Farquhar Terrace Play park. Photo © Martin McAdam