

Meeting:	Place Scrutiny
Meeting date:	22/09/2025
Report of:	Dave Atkinson – Director of Environmental and Regulatory Services
Portfolio of:	Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Emergency (Cllr J Kent)

Parks Investment Fund – scheme approval

Summary

1. This report seeks feedback from the Committee on the recommended allocation of the park's investment fund. Feedback from the Committee will be incorporated into the report scheduled for consideration by the Executive on 7th October 2025.

Background

2. Following the previous reports on the investment criteria to the Place Scrutiny Committee on 24th June 2025 and the Executive on 15th July 2025 officers have applied the weighted approach to nearly 60 Council play areas, parks, and smaller green spaces. As some sites have multiple issues this results in over 70 assessed sites and schemes.
3. Officers have also undertaken a review of developer Section 106 contributions that the council holds for parks and open space infrastructure. As part of this programme of work
 - Where S106 Agreements allow, funding will be pooled to enhance this programme
 - Where funding is stand alone, projects will be delivered in parallel with the core programme of work.
4. This exercise, along with 3rd party funding means that the core programme budget is now close to £750k. Of which £602k is earmarked for the schemes, £85k for staff costs and £62k held in reserve as a contingency.

5. Where the S106 money is committed to 3rd parties as part of the planning agreements it will be distributed in parallel with this programme of work. This takes the overall budget to circa £925k.
6. The views of Scrutiny Committee are now being sought on how the weighting has been applied and the resulting list of priority schemes recommended for implementation.

Options

7. Members have the option to
 - A. Agree the weighting detailed below in Paragraphs 8 to 10 and resulting schemes detailed in Paragraph 11.
 - B. Suggest an alternative weighting to be used to allocate the available funds.

Weighting and methodology

8. The schemes detailed Paragraph 11 have been compiled using a weighted approach to reflect the agreed order of theme priority.

Sites with higher IMD
Replacing play equipment over 20 years old
Key infrastructure

Then equal weight to

Green Flag award
Availability of external funds

9. Each theme is scored out of a 100% with 100 marks been awarded to the highest score within each theme. Lower scores are than awarded marks based on a % of the highest mark possible within each theme. The resulting score is then given an added weighting to reflect the priority of that theme.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Scores range from 25.70 (100%) to 4.69 (19%). The higher the score the higher the level of deprivation. Weighting x 4

Investment into play areas. Scores range from 20 (100%) to 4 (20%). The higher the score the older the age of equipment in 5-

year bands, 34 years being the age of the oldest equipment identified. The age of play equipment has been established via manufactures tags, photographic and tender records held by the service and Google Street View and noted in Annex 2. Weighting x 3

Key infrastructure. Scores range from 15 (100%) to 3 (20%). The higher the score the greater the need for a rebuild through to minor works. Weighting x 2

Support the expansion and retention of Green Flag Award standard. A single score of 10 (100%) has been allocated. Weighting x 1

Projects which have or have the potential for 3rd party funding contributions. Scores range from 10 (100%) to 2 (20%). The higher the score the greater the contribution defined as external or ward funding. Weighting x 1

10. This can be summarised as follows

Theme					
IMD score	Play area equipment scores	Infrastructure scores	Green Flag score	3 rd party £'s scores	Numerical value used in annex 2 *
25.70	20	15	10	10	100
					90
20.06	16	12			80
					70
15.04	12	9			60
				5	50
10.03	8	6			40
					30
5.01	4	3			20
				2	10

*to which weighting is then applied

Outcome

11. A site-by-site assessment is detailed in Annex 2 including the indicative total cost and cost to the Parks fund. Those schemes

recommended for investment and further investigation are listed in Annex 1, and are summarised as

Recommended for investment

Annex 2 ref no.	Site	Scheme features	Total Marks	Ward
1	Chesney's Field play area - junior	new equipment, seating, new linking path	760	Westfield
2	Hull Road Park main play area	New items of equipment and accessible seating, safety surfacing	731	Hull Road
3	Chesney's Field play area - senior	New safety surfacing	680	Westfield
4	Crombie Avenue play area and adjoining games court	Near 100% rebuild of play area with new entrances. Surface work to games court	669	Clifton
5	Ashton Avenue play area (junior)	play equipment, access improvements	648	Clifton
8	Acomb Green play area	high footfall and wear, replacement steps required	603	Westfield
9	Rowntree Park play area	replacement of 6m high pyramid climber	593	Micklegate
10	Brailsford Crescent play area - Junior	Complete replacement of old equipment	575	Rawcliffe and Clifton Without
14	Hull Road Park - footpath by beck	Rebuild footpath	551	Hull Road
15	Glen Gardens Basketball Court	court surface is worn out, perimeter fencing needs replacing	547	Heworth

16	Batchelor Hill - Tenant Rd entrance	rebuild steps, install handrail	534	Westfield
18	Cemetery Road play area	Replacement of old remaining play equipment. Landscaping work	527	Fishergate
19	Bell Farm / Byland Avenue open space and play area	Create more coherent open space	522	Heworth
21	Hull Road Park - Lions Head area	Renew up of bow top fence, new handrails	511	Hull Road
22	Hull Road Park - Millfield Avenue boundary	Renew perimeter railings and new gate	511	Hull Road
23	Hull Road Park - Millfield Avenue footpath	Upgrade rough path to improve accessibility	511	Hull Road
26	Rowntree Park basketball court	New surface and boundary fence	476	Micklegate
29	Viking Road play area	Reclad bridge mound, renewal of few remaining old play equipment items, access improvements	455	Acomb
30	Cornlands Rd open spaces/ play area	New surfaced path across site with link to play area	454	Westfield

Nine of the above projects are at sites which serve more than one ward, some serve multiple wards. Column E in the Annex 1 identifies such sites.

Recommended for further investigation - into the practicality and cost.

Annex 2 ref no.	Site	Scheme summary	Score	Ward
13	Clarence Gardens pavilion	internal remodelling to allow community use / refreshments to be provided	559	Guildhall
20	Hull Road Park pavilion	Building needs modernising to expand use	511	Hull Road
25	Acomb Green - path access	Possible pedestrian ramp onto Green adjacent to bus stop	483	Acomb
28	Monkbridge Gardens	Rebuild access from Heworth Green, possible extension of tarmac path network	459	Heworth
38	Arran Place (King George V Playing Field)	New accessible route from / to Fossway	381	Heworth

12. Where a site is known to be in good order and / or there is other funding available to rectify the issue, such sites have not been put forward even though they may score relatively high.

Implications

13. The implications are as follows:

- **Financial**, there are 19 schemes recommended in the first tranche which will receive funding from the Park Improvement Fund. The projected total cost is £687.5k including the project officer, leaving a contingency of £62.4k. This is funded from £500k parks fund, specific and general 106 funds and 3rd party contributions.
- **Human Resources (HR)** The additional resource referred to in paragraph 29 to deliver this programme has been

established and resourced in accordance with council policy. There are no other HR implications contained within this report.

- **Legal** the Council does not have a statutory duty to maintain parks. However, the Council does have a duty of care to ensure the safety of public play areas and has a statutory duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain footpaths, and certain bridges, in a safe condition and fit for the type of traffic which is ordinarily expected to use it. Under the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923, the Council has the power, but not a duty, to maintain, repair and protect war memorials within its district. The Council's policy approach to the management of parks should take into account all relevant considerations, as set out in this report. There is a growing body of case law which emphasises the importance of public bodies taking proportionate steps to combat climate change.
- **Procurement.** Whilst there are no direct procurement implications relating to this report itself, procurement will be a main tool used to deliver some of the works if this report is approved. Future procurements for all works and/or services must be procured via a compliant, open, transparent, and fair process in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Procurement Act 2023. Further advice regarding the procurement process and development of procurement strategies must be sought from the Commercial Procurement team.
- **Health and Wellbeing** As highlighted earlier in this report, well-maintained parks and play infrastructure support physical activity, but also encourage social interaction and community engagement, all of which are beneficial for health. Prioritising funding for open spaces and play areas for those living in less affluent areas is welcome. We would also encourage development of these areas to take into account local need and views of residents, including children, moving forward as evidence suggests this is key to maximising use of such spaces. Finally, we urge consideration to be given to groups currently less likely to access, or facing barriers to accessing, the city's open spaces and play areas such as disabled people or people from BME backgrounds.
- **Environment and Climate action** Enhancement of the city's parks and green spaces can make an important contribution to tackling the challenges of climate change. The York

Climate Change Strategy sets objectives for increased tree planting, increased carbon storage and sustainable land management. These objectives should be considered in the assessment of potential investment. Capital works have the potential to increase carbon emissions, and these should be mitigated and minimised wherever possible. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and climate adaptation could be considered as part of the assessment for potential investment.

- **Affordability**, Investment in green spaces and play areas supports activities which are free at the point of participation.
- **Equalities and Human Rights**, An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required at this stage but will be required for the proposed work package to be presented later to Members. Specific comments on the proposed way forward are contained within the main body of the report.
- **Data Protection and Privacy** The completion of data protection impact assessment (DPIA) screening questions evidenced there would be no processing of personal data, special categories of personal data or criminal offence data processed, so there is no requirement to complete a DPIA.
- **Communications** Local engagement in – and understanding of - this work will help the council to deliver this objective with the support of people in the areas affected. It is part of a wider story of support for communities across the city and information about this investment will be presented within the context of the range of activities making a difference on the ground. This will help council to explain how the different strands of work, including this investment, work together for the places where they live and work.
- **Economy**, None.

Next Steps

14. Several schemes require input and consultation from users, communities, ward councillors, and specialist advisers before they can start, others can start to be delivered almost immediately. Once the Executive has approved the report briefings will be arranged for Councillors in those wards affected.

Risk Management

15. There are no risks with this decision; the report will inform the planned report to the Councils Executive on 7th October 2025 where any risks will be reported.

Wards Impacted

16. Those wards which are impacted are listed in paragraph 11, and in Annex 1 and 2.

Recommendations

17. Members are asked to

Comment on the weighted approach detailed in Paragraphs 8 to 10 and the resulting priority schemes

Reason: to inform the Executives decision making

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Report.

Contact Details

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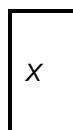
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**Report
Approved****Date** 10/09/2025

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Background Papers

14 New Lane

Meeting of the Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major
Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion the Environment and
Climate Emergency 16th January

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1060&MId=14518>

Budget Council 27th February 2025

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=331&MId=15004>

Meeting of the Executive Member for the Environment and Climate
Emergency 29th April 2025

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=870&MId=14599>

Meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee 24th June 2025

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1122&MId=15314>

Meeting of the Executive 17th July 2025

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=15173>

Annexes

Annex 1 – Sites recommended for investment and further investigation

Annex 2 - Site Scores

Abbreviations IMD - Indices of Multiple Deprivation