

## Revenue Budget Summary - Parks and Play Areas

Budget Description	Budget Holder	2024/25 Gross Budget	2024/25 Net Budget
Parks and Play Areas	Steve Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)	£230,200	£230,200

### **Purpose of the Budget:**

The purpose of the Parks and Play Areas Budget is to fund the operational resources including staffing, vehicles, machinery, and equipment required to operate and maintain the Council's various parks, play areas and park pavilion buildings.

### **Scope of Activity and Nature of the Service:**

The Council currently operates the following parks and play areas:-

- Moore Lane Park
- Simpasture Park
- St. Oswald's Park
- West Park
- Town Park
- Aycliffe Village Play Area
- Byerley Park Play Area
- School Aycliffe Play Area
- Scott Place Play Area
- Sports Complex Play Area
- Woodham Park
- Horndale Park
- Cobblers Hall Park

The parks offer a combination of open space, flower beds, public seating, picnic areas and play equipment for a variety of ages, while the play areas offer a wide range of enclosed areas of infant and junior play equipment.

The Council also provides multi-use games areas at Woodham, Moore Lane, Simpasture, Horndale and Cobblers Hall Parks, as well as tennis courts at Simpasture Park, a skate park at the Town Park, a scoot track at Horndale Park, a toddlers' play area and sand pit at the Town Park, and a BMX track at Woodham Park.

The Parks and Play Areas Budget provides for the costs of the works department staff who undertake grounds maintenance work within each park, the building maintenance and other running costs of the park pavilion buildings, external parks maintenance including the maintenance of the lakes at West Park, and the inspection, insurance, maintenance and repair of play equipment.

The budget also provides for a significant proportion of the cost of the Council's Park Patrol Service.

Parks and play area provision is a discretionary service area.

### **Contribution to Council Aims:**

Parks and play areas contribute to the following Council Strategic Aims:-

*Aim 2: "To manage the Council's finances and assets in a responsible manner"*

*Aim 3: "To provide accessible, affordable leisure facilities and opportunities"*

*Aim 5: "To contribute to the environmental improvement of Aycliffe by managing and developing parks, play areas and green spaces"*

### **Performance Measures and Indicators**

The Parks and Play Areas Budget contribute towards the delivery of a number of targets linked to Strategic Aims 2, 3 and 5 within the Service Delivery Plan, as follows:-

- Improve advertising of the parks and play areas using the Council's newsletter publication.
- Ensure that social media is used to advertise the parks and play areas.
- Deliver the parks and play area related work set out in the Asset Management Plan via the Capital Programme Budget.
- Continue to work with Northumbrian Water to improve silt clearance and maintenance in West Park.
- Carry out repairs to St Oswald's play area safety surface.
- The Works and Environment Manager and Park Patrol Officers to work with DCC Officers and the Police in regard to anti-social behaviour issues.
- Work in partnership with residents and friends' groups to improve our parks and play areas.

### **Key Budget Changes for 2024/25**

The Parks and Play Areas Budget has reduced by £450 to £230,200 per year.

This reduction is as a direct result of reduced electricity, water and insurance costs.

### **Importance of Service to the Community**

The parks and play areas are very important and well used community facilities.

Respondents were asked to rate the parks and play areas for cleanliness, safety, maintenance, range of play equipment and value for money. Results were very positive, with satisfaction scores of more than 80% for most parks in most categories.

Horndale, West Park and the Sports Complex play area scored the lowest for value for money, although this was based on only 20 responses.

There were 39 individual comments, including requests for more park patrols for security, more and better play equipment, public toilets and a tea room.

### **External Funding and Fees and Charges:**

There is no income currently receivable in respect of the parks and play areas service.