

(x) Mr D Macpherson

**With the summer holidays fast approaching, can you please give an update on the number of Highland & Island play parks that are still closed and awaiting the delivery of bark ground coverings and also for the play park areas currently cordoned off while they wait for the replacement of worn out and broken play equipment to arrive to ensure that this Council is delivering on its own commitments towards localism and improving the facilities for its families and young people of all ages?**

*The Council has 339 play parks and over 2500 pieces of play equipment. The provision of play parks is not a statutory duty; but the inspection and maintenance of equipment once installed, is a mandatory requirement. As at Friday 11 June there were 50 closed sites. 31 sites will reopen when play chip ordered arrives. 12 require for repairs or new equipment needed and do not yet have reopening dates. There is no Service budget for the replacement of play equipment.*

*The Highland Council made decisions this year at the meetings in January and March regarding play areas including new investment opportunities. This includes:*

- *devolving decisions about play areas to local committees;*
- *local committees being able to allocate any unspent COVID ward funding towards playparks;*
- *providing a further £240k of Covid Ward funds available to make sure each Ward had the same amount of Covid ward funding;*
- *considering other local sources of potential funding such as coastal communities funding, any Common Good Funds, any appropriate national funding streams as well as local donations;*
- *agreeing a further £110K investment for each of the 21 wards (£2.31m in total) as part of the place-based investment strategy, with this funding available to invest in playparks; and*
- *officers attending Ward/Area Business meetings and working closely with Members to develop strategies for the play parks in their areas. This is underway and some Area Committees have already made decisions to invest in play areas.*

*These funding options can all be considered locally.*

*Play areas are also in scope of the amenities review and this reports to the Redesign Board.*