AGENDA 13, Enc ix) NORTH SEATON COLLIERY PLAY AREA DEVELOPMENT - PROJECT UPDATE

1. Project Status

I am pleased to confirm that following a successful tender process and comprehensive community consultation, the North Seaton Colliery Play Area development has been commissioned and equipment has been ordered from KOMPAN Scotland Ltd.

The project timeline anticipates completion and opening of the new play area by February half-term 2026, allowing contingency for potential weather-related delays during the winter installation period.

2. Community Consultation Summary

The consultation process was conducted during September and October 2025.

Response Rate

- 28 questionnaire responses (25 online, 3 hard copy)
- 9 residents attended the community centre drop-in session, special thanks to North Seaton Colliery Community Centre for hosting.
- 22 school council members engaged across James Knott Primary and Bishops Primary schools. Thanks to schools for their involvement.

Key Findings

- 86% of respondents live in close proximity to the site and use the park weekly
- The primary user demographic is children aged 5-11 years
- Current provision does not adequately cater for this age range
- Top priorities identified: Swings, Slides, and Climbing Frames
- Strong emphasis on inclusive and accessible equipment
- Desire for challenging play features that differ from other local parks
- The Mountain Trail emerged as the clear favourite across all consultation groups

Consultation Feedback Themes

- Equipment should cater predominantly for older children (5-11 years)
- Features should be modern and distinctive from other area parks
- Inclusive elements are essential
- Maximum variety of play activities desired

3. Approved Design and Equipment

Based on the consultation feedback, the following equipment has been ordered:

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Equipment

- ✓ Double swing frame installation already in situ will feature the 'you to me' swing, as well as existing toddler and standard swing seats.
- ✓ X2 interactive and inclusive play panels.
- ✓ Carousel Tipi Spinning Seat
- ✓ Flush to ground trampoline
- ✓ Large basket swing
- ✓ Sway bridge, balance beam and stepping pods
- ✓ 1.8m slide
- ✓ Mountain trail spide net with spinner
- ✓ New basketball hoop and backboard

Safety Surfacing

- 35m² black EPDM wetpour safety surface beneath swings
- New PCC kerb edging (9m)
- Grass seeding to remaining areas (25m²)

Total Equipment and Installation Cost: £ 61,004.92 (exc. VAT)

Visuals will be available in coming weeks.

4. Complementary Works

Tree Management: Significant preparatory work has been completed by Barry Wilson, NCC Tree Officer, ensuring the site is appropriately prepared whilst maintaining environmental considerations.

Access Improvements: NCC Highways have planned essential works to the entrance, funded by County Councillor Steven Roberts. These works will ensure the entrance and gateway are DDA compliant, significantly improving accessibility for all users, including wheelchair users and families with pushchairs.

5. Financial Summary

Total Project Cost: £61,000

Funding Sources

- Scottish Power Renewables (Windfarm Community Benefit): £50,000
- Council Reserves: £11,000 (previously £45k agreed)

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Budget Management Approach

For financial year accounting purposes, the full £50,000 Scottish Power Renewables funding will be offset against this project to enable drawdown of funds within the current financial year.

However, the actual deployment of Council funds creates a beneficial budget position:

- Original reserves allocated to North Seaton Play Area: £45,000
- Actual reserves required: £11,000
- Reserves released for reallocation: £34,000

This £34,000 can now be redirected to:

- Other capital projects across the town, or
- Set aside for future play area development and maintenance

This approach maximises the value of external funding whilst maintaining financial flexibility for other community priorities.

6. Community Opening Event

The Council is planning a community opening event to celebrate the completion of the play area, which will be supported by KOMPAN Scotland Ltd. KOMPAN have committed to providing (at no additional cost, valued at £500):

- Press release support and promotion on their social media platforms
- Printed literature including posters, flyers, and invitations
- Manned gazebo with giveaway party bags for children
- Bunting and balloons
- Trained KOMPAN staff to support the event

This celebration will provide an opportunity for the community to come together, take pride in their new facility, and for the children who participated in the consultation to see their ideas come to fruition.