



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 30th March 2006

Title: PLAY AREA POLICY

Report of: HEALTH AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Report reference: CS0806

Summary:

This report provides as an appendix, the Executive Report on the draft play policy. The report provides the proposal for the strategic prioritisation and investment in the play area portfolio.

Recommendations:

Members note the report and provide a response on the draft policy.

Contact Officer: MARK BEVERIDGE

Ext: 7350

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. INTRODUCTION

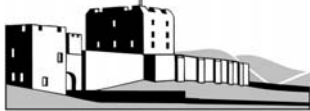
- 1.1 The draft play area policy has been written to provide a basis for investment in play areas utilising the recurring £50,000 capital budget provided from 1st April 2006.
- 1.2 The Executive considered the appended report on 20th March 2006 and have forwarded to Community Overview and Scrutiny for comment prior to it being considered back at the Executive on 24th April 2006 and Council on 2nd May 2006.

2. The Draft Policy

- 2.1 The policy outlines how the play areas will be classified and proposes a scheme for scoring each of the current 68 play areas. If approved by Council, officers would then apply the scoring system and create a timetable for the refurbishment or replacement of play areas across the Council's area. This prioritisation of individual play areas will be used to determine the work programme linked to the capital budget.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The development of a play area policy will ultimately be a part of a play strategy, which will be written in 2007.
- 3.2 The play area policy will for the first time establish a timetable for investment which will determine the capital resource allocation. However, through community involvement, were a group to be established for a specific play area the investment timetable would be flexible enough to accommodate changes over time.



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: HEALTH AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Date of Meeting: 20TH MARCH 2006

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: PLAY AREA POLICY
Report of: COMMUNITY SERVICES
Report reference: CS0806

Summary:

To establish a policy for the assessment and prioritisation of play areas owned by the City Council which will then be used to determine an investment programme.

Recommendations:

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Approve the Draft Policy and refer it to Community O&S 30/03/06 for comment.

Contact Officer: Mark Beveridge

Ext: 7350

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Carlisle City Council has a portfolio of 68 outdoor equipped areas for play which it manages and maintains. These are a combination of areas which have been built by the Council or acquired as a result of a planning requirement linked to housing developments.

The range of play areas varies both in age, condition and size. However, to date there has been no investment programme over and above the annual maintenance programme.

- 1.2 Play area provision itself should be set in the wider context of play provision as a whole. While recognising this necessity, this policy does not attempt to place play areas in this context. That will be taken up within an overall Play Strategy that will be drafted in 2007.

- 1.3 It is widely recognised that children and young people enjoy playing outdoors and that it benefits them in many ways.

- Physical outdoor exercise will help to combat the prevalence of obesity in children and young people.
- Children playing out will encounter potential difficulties and challenges – physical, emotional, mental and social. They will learn from adults, friends and through their own experience how to cope.

Good outdoor play opportunities also help families and communities. If there are good play opportunities provided, children should be discouraged from encroaching on adult spaces, parents should be reassured their children are not causing trouble and improvement of the actual spaces should contribute to local social cohesion through the consultation process and subsequent use.

- 1.4 A number of play areas have been subject to anti social behaviour problems in the past, however in considering the issue of assessment this will not form part of the determination of investment. These issues should and will be addressed by other means such as secure by design and involving the CDRP.

2. PLAY AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

- 2.1 Playareas should be seen as only part of the outdoors environment where children can play. Distinction needs to be made between playareas where equipment is provided for children to play on and places where children play. Consideration should be given to improving all places where children and young people play to make them accessible. How this can be achieved is outside the scope of this report but should be addressed by the wider play strategy. Basic ideas are listed in Appendix 1. This is in keeping with City Council policies and objectives – see Appendix 2.

3. SAFETY

- 3.1 There are concerns about the safety of children and young people at play. These cover two areas: playing out generally and playing on fixed equipment playareas.

- 3.2 Playing out generally:

- Stranger danger

It is important to keep this threat in perspective and remember that the numbers of children harmed by adults they do not know is extremely low. One way to address this fear is to encourage more children to play out and provide a “safety in numbers” factor. More child friendly design of open places, and playareas, with increased lighting, oversight where children “can see and be seen”, should also contribute to the decrease of fears.

- Fear of street crime and bullying

Again, good design, lighting and oversight and the “safety in numbers” factors should help prevent the likelihood of this happening.

- Traffic dangers

- 3.3 The City Council recognises these concerns. Addressing them is not within the scope of this report but will be dealt with in the forthcoming play strategy.

- 3.4 Playing in fixed equipment playareas

Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play

provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

“Managing Risk in Play provision: a position statement” – Play Safety Forum, August 2002

Summary statement:

This statement has been widely accepted as best practice by the Health and Safety Executive, playarea providers and the play industry.

- 3.5 Playareas provided by the City Council will follow the precepts of this statement and will be as exciting and physically challenging with as much play value as possible and as much safety provision as necessary. It is noted in the statement and reiterated here, that if playareas are not challenging enough, then children will probably seek out risks elsewhere in environments that are not controlled or designed for them. See Appendix 3. Regular weekly structural inspections carried out by the Council’s playarea inspection and maintenance staff, an annual inspection by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and an annual risk assessment will continue to be carried out and provide an acceptable management of any risks involved.

4. LOCATION

- 4.1 Location of playareas is a vital component of their use; poorly used playareas are often poorly located.
- 4.2 It is not always possible to site playareas in good locations as sufficient space is not always available where needed. Many new playareas are provided by housing developers as part of a planning agreement. These playareas are built to serve only that particular development and are often poorly sited. These issues are outside the scope of this report but will be addressed by the wider play strategy and a Special Planning Document relating to housing developers which is being prepared by Planning Services. See Appendix 4.
- 4.3 The City Council will endeavour to locate its playareas where high use can be encouraged. It will achieve this by carrying out meaningful consultation in the future, with playarea users i.e. children, young people and their carers.

5. DISABILITY

- 5.1 “The aspiration of those providing play facilities must be to create challenges for all and barriers for none. Where totally shared play experience is not always possible, then at least opportunities can be created for similar, and if possible, qualitatively equal experiences for all children. If every item of play equipment is not wholly accessible, then more needs to be gained from those that are.”

Hicks, John with Heseltine, Peter (2001) “Playgrounds for Children with Special Needs” Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents.

- 5.2 The City Council recognises the validity of the above quotation and will endeavour to provide playareas which are accessible to children of all abilities and will provide some qualitative play experience for all.

6. PLAY AREA CATEGORIES

- 6.1 Three categories of play areas are proposed which will contribute as a factor for the investment programme.

The Council’s playareas have traditionally been grouped in areas according to the major obstacles children encounter to reach playareas such as main roads, rivers and railway lines. Within these areas the playareas have then been sorted further into three categories:

A - playareas of primary importance

B - second tier playareas

C - playareas serving clearly defined areas of housing

See Appendix 5

Categorising the playareas thus, helps identify which ones are the most used and therefore most important and therefore warrant the most attention and renovation.

Category A Play Areas

Those which are of primary importance, to be retained and improved.

These play areas are better, larger and newer than the average. These will be the ones which will be the focus for the immediate future. If commuted sums are made

available from developers then these would be the play areas that would be invested in.

These should cater for a wide age range, be freely accessible and provide play facilities for all abilities.

Category B Play Areas

These are not of primary importance but none the less should be retained and renovated where appropriate.

Category C Play Areas

Those which serve specific areas of housing which should be retained and renovated where appropriate.

The geographical distribution of categories proposed is in appendix 5. However, it must be stressed this is not the sole criteria for assessing investment.

7. Play Area Schedule of works

- 7.1 It is proposed that each play area will be assessed against a number of factors that will then be scored and this will produce a priority list for every play area the Council owns.
- 7.2 Once agreed, the scoring system would be applied to each play area and a timescale for investment can then be determined.
- 7.3 Appendix 6 outlines the scoring system which will be used to determine a schedule of works.

8. FUNDING

- 8.1 The current arrangements for funding rely on the revenue budget for repairs and replacement and repair of play areas. The extent of damage incurred each year to

the play area stock determines the amount of budget available for renewal of equipment.

- 8.2 In addition to the Council budget, when a new play area is provided via an housing development, once the area is handed over to the Council a commuted sum of £10,000 is payable to cover maintenance in the first 10 years. This sum will be reviewed by the Planning section.
- 8.3 There are various sources of external funding available for playareas, which the Council will seek out to maximise the value of Council budgets.
- 8.4 Playareas attracting external funding will be renovated as soon as the funding becomes available, and will be given priority despite their rating in the overall scoring system.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The number of play areas managed and maintained by the City Council is such that to address all at one time would require financial and human resources beyond the capacity of the Council. However, having a planned approach to investment and using the budget provision made available 2006/07 and subsequent years will enable a strategic approach to be taken.
- 9.2 The policy outlined and measures proposed in this report will, if agreed, enable officers to draw up a time table for investment for each play area, which with the release of funding from the Council's budget enable the investment programme to be implemented.
- 9.3 In a recent Citizens Panel Survey one of the five key issues to improve local communities was providing more things for young people to do. The enhancement of play areas will help contribute to this demand.

10. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

11. CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation to date
PFH, Executive, CMT

11.2 Consultation proposed
Community O&S, Executive, PFH

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Approve the Draft Policy and refer it to Community O&S (30/03/06) for comment.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To provide a policy to enable staff to determine the investment programme for play areas providing a timetable allocating a schedule for each play area in the city.

13. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – The policy will be implemented using the existing staff resources.
- Financial – The budget provision of £50,000 has been approved for refurbishing play areas.
- Legal – The policy document is intended to be processed for adoption by full Council as part of the authority's Policy Framework. It is consistent with putting measures in place to fulfil the council's new duties under the Children's Act 2004 to make arrangements to ensure that it carries out its functions having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at all times.
- Corporate – Play Area Provision is integral to the Council's Priority of Cleaner, Greener & Safer, in addition the play development of young children is a key aspect of the Learning City priority.
- Risk Management – All play areas are fully risk assessed.
- Equality Issues – All new play areas are designed to provide play for all.
- Environmental –
- Crime and Disorder – The play areas provide something for young people to do and if designed well add to the overall quality of life for local residents.

Appendix 1 – Child friendly open/public spaces

Children will play everywhere, not just in playareas. Although well located and well maintained playareas are important, emphasis should also be placed on how to make all open and public spaces child and young person friendly and welcoming for play/recreation.

Public Spaces

- Child sized seating
- Tolerance of, or alternative provision made for, skaters and skateboarders

Green open spaces/Parks

- Hard surfaced areas/paths for bike riding and winter ball games with markings – hopscotch etc
- Stepping stones/trails/mazes in grass or on paths
- Natural features – trees/shrub planting/longer grass/flower meadows
- Mounds
- Trees (climbable or otherwise)
- Fallen logs, stumps
- Shelter
- Child sized seating
- Lighting
- Fencing where appropriate, if adjacent to busy roads
- Dog waste bins and signs, regular patrol to catch offenders (owners not dogs)
- Park warden patrolling
- Regular and efficient litter and dog waste clearance

Streets – living street/Woonerf (a Dutch term to describe such areas)

Design streets in new developments and renovate existing streets, (especially in areas of dense terraced housing) for pedestrians and recreation, not primarily for traffic

- Traffic calming – chicanes, road humps
- Trees

- Seats

Appendix 2

The italicised sections describe how playarea provision fits into the Corporate Plan 2004-7 and Best Value Performance Plan, 2005-6

Corporate Plan 2004-2007

Promise 1 – Ensure Carlisle is a safe and attractive place where people are included and feel they belong

AIMS

- Improve the perception of Carlisle as a place to live

Well designed and well maintained playareas with exciting, challenging equipment for a wide range of ages and abilities will prove a highly visible reminder that Carlisle City Council provides good services for its children and young people.

- Increase community engagement and access to local services

It is widely recognised that playareas need to be sited in the right localities and provide suitable risks and challenges if they are to be used by children and young people. Wide consultation with local communities, particularly children and young people, is a tried and tested way of ensuring that playarea providers are “getting it right”. Playareas need to be accessible for children of all abilities.

- Improve cultural, leisure and sporting facilities

Play is a vital ingredient of all children’s lives, encouraging physical, mental and social development. Playarea provision is one of the ways that the City Council provides cultural, leisure and sporting facilities for its younger citizens. Thoughtful design of new, and refurbishment of older playareas, will encourage children to play in many ways and thus enhance their lives.

Promise 4 – Improve local housing, health and well being

AIMS

- In partnership, promote healthy living and lifestyles

One of the ways to counteract the recent rise in childhood obesity and its consequent health risks is to encourage children to play out again. Challenging and exciting playareas, designed to be overlooked and to eliminate unacceptable risks, can play a major role here.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- In partnership, increase the amount of young peoples activities in target areas

Well sited and well designed playareas can help to increase and encourage children's and young peoples activities, but can also be used as a base and starting point for other activities.

- Increase the number of people taking regular moderate exercise by 1% annually

Children who play out and therefore use playareas regularly will hopefully become adults who are used to going outside for recreation and will hopefully continue to exercise.

Cleaner, Greener, Safer

A cleaner, greener and safer city means a city with a Council that is working with partners to get the basics right. It means setting and achieving challenging targets for the resource-intensive front line services that are important to local people. In the Council's view, the themes "clean", "green" and "safe" are mutually dependent.

Playarea provision definitely falls into the "resource-intensive front line services that are important to local people"

Playareas are often the target of anti-social behaviour and siting, design, and lighting will help to solve this problem

Consultation with local communities, particularly direct users should also alleviate the problem of the playareas as locations for anti-social behaviour.

Learning City

Our ambition is to create a lifelong learning society in Carlisle that will benefit our citizens and future generations. We will work together to promote learning and encourage all members of our communities to take pride in their city and understand its cultural value.

Play is fundamentally a learning process for children. Lifelong learning can begin in the City's playareas.

Enjoying outdoor playareas can be the first steps children take in understanding they are part of a community that they can take a pride in.

Appendix 3 – Safety in Playareas

Exciting and physically challenging play equipment

British Standards Institute (1998) BS EN 1176-1 “Playground Equipment” is the recommended standard for play equipment and playarea design. Not all play equipment on the market conforms to this standard in every aspect. Carlisle City Council will generally install play equipment which conforms to this standard. However, should there be a piece of equipment which is of high play value and appropriate to the location, then there is no reason why it should not be installed provided there is a risk assessment carried out for it which would weigh the risks against the benefits. As described in “Managing Risk in Play provision: A Position Statement”, exposure to minor and easily healed injuries such as bruises, grazes and sprains is acceptable. Exposure to significant likelihood of permanent disability or life-threatening injuries is not acceptable.

Use of safety surfacing

Impact absorbing surfacing will be installed under play equipment where it is thought to be appropriate. In certain situations where the fall height is low (e.g. up to 600mm) and on to well maintained grass it may not be necessary to install surfacing. Installation of surfacing can reduce the amount of money available to be spent on play equipment. In some circumstances it would be appropriate to dispense with the surfacing in favour of more play equipment. Again a risk assessment would be written to cover any perceived risks, weighing up risk against benefits. Exposure to minor and easily healed injuries such as bruises, grazes and sprains is acceptable. Exposure to significant likelihood of permanent disability or life-threatening injuries is not acceptable.

Fencing

Low fencing round playareas serves two functions: keeping out dogs and preventing small children running away into potentially dangerous situations. In order for this to be effective any gates into the playarea must be self-closing. It is virtually impossible to purchase and install a gate which will self-close fast enough to exclude dogs but slow enough to prevent small children being trapped between the gate and the post. There have been several reported instances in recent years of children's faces being cut and bruised by playarea gates. There have been no reported instances of dogs fouling and/or frightening children within a fenced playarea.

Fencing round playareas will only be installed in future if it is felt to be appropriate i.e. to prevent excessive dog fouling as in St James Parks or to prevent life threatening instances to small children. Risks and benefits will be closely weighed for each situation.

As with safety surfacing, installation of fencing can reduce the funds available to spend on play equipment.

Appendix 4 - Location

A poorly located playarea will not be used, and is a poor use of resources.

Considerations for a well-located playarea

- Oversight – “see and be seen” by trusted adults
- High probability of other people passing by or through
- Accessible. Children’s range often restricted by busy roads i.e. 30mph
-

Young people will also appreciate the above factors with the addition of lighting so the facility can be used in the evenings

Each area is unique and special to its own community; only the local children, young people and their carers are really qualified to advise the best location for a play facility. Other members of the community should also be consulted.

Planning requirements stipulate a distance of 30m between a piece of play equipment and a house. A large area of land therefore is needed for a playarea, which is not always available. Newer playareas therefore tend to be situated in open parkland which is not always overlooked.

Playareas installed before this regulation and with a lesser distance between the equipment and housing can continue, provided that replacement equipment is in approximately the same position. These playareas tend to survive as once entirely removed they are lost forever and cannot be replaced. They are not always in ideal locations for the local community but are better than no playarea at all.

Many new playareas are provided by housing developers as part of fulfilling a planning agreement. As a consequence, they are not located and designed with the needs of the children and their carers in mind. This provision needs to be looked at more closely:

- Is the playarea located in the best position for children?

- Is the entire estate child friendly? i.e. are all places where children play, child-friendly?
Are there speed restriction in the streets?
- When is it appropriate for the playarea provision be converted into cash (section 106 agreement) to be spent on the nearest Council owned playarea?

Appendix 5 - PLAYAREAS BY AREAS – see also plans

Category A playareas – those which are of primary importance, to be retained and improved.

These playareas are better, larger, and newer than the average and if not already, are to be the playareas which will be concentrated on in the future. If commuted sums are made available from developers then these playareas are the ones which will benefit from additional cash.

These should cater for a wide age range, should be fully accessible and provide play facilities for all abilities.

Category B playareas – those playareas which are not of primary importance but nonetheless should be retained and renovated when appropriate. Access and play facilities for children with disabilities will be borne in mind when renovations are made.

Category C playareas – those which serve specific areas of housing which should be retained and renovated when appropriate. Access and play facilities for children with disabilities will be borne in mind when renovations are made. It is generally the case that these are playareas which have been installed as part of a new housing development.

Stanwix – area north of the river Eden

Category A playareas:

Briar bank

Clarksfield

Moorville Drive

Category B playareas

Belah Parkside

Kershope Road

Esk Road

Category C playareas

Etterby Gardens

Hadrians Gardens

Windsor Way

The residential areas to the east of Scotland Road are poorly served for playareas

Central – older residential area close to City centre, bounded by Warwick Road, Botchergate and River Petheril

Category A playareas:

Owing to the built up nature of this area and the paucity of gardens, green spaces and informal play spaces, all the playareas in this area are important.

Bitts Park

Broad Street

Fusehill Street

Melbourne Park

Bitts Park skate park

Bitts Park

Although the playarea in Bitts Park is one of the two major playareas in the City and functions primarily as a family visit playarea rather than one which local children will visit unaccompanied, there are still a number of residential streets for whom Bitts Park is the nearest playarea.

Botcherby – area contained by River Petteril, Eastern Way and railway line to Newcastle.
Contains Botcherby estate.

Category A playareas:

Botcherby Metal Box

Multi Use Games Area

Category B playareas:

Botcherby Avenue

Borland Avenue – Renovation of this playarea for the under 5's was proposed by Surestart, but was abandoned due to lack of funds. If the plans are resurrected then the status of this playarea may change to Category A.

Eden Park Crescent

Durranhill – recommended for closure

Category C playareas

Scotby Gardens

Scotby Road

Broad Oaks Grange

Kingfisher Park

Harraby – area contained by Eastern Way, London Road and railway line to Newcastle
Contains Harraby estate

Category A playareas:

Harraby Community Centre

Keenan Park

Category B playarea:

Lonsdale Grange

Category C playareas:

Parkland Village

Barratts estate (not taken over yet, but destined to be Council playarea)

Petteril Bank – area defined by London Road and main line railway to south

Category A playareas:

Dale End Road

Multi Use Games Area (yet to be completed)

Carliol Drive

Currock/Upperby – area defined by main railway line to south and west coast railway line to Barrow

Category A playareas:

Upperby Park toddler

Upperby Park junior

Upperby Park senior

Upperby Park toddler and junior combined, is one of the two major playareas in the city. Although it functions as a family visit playarea it is also a local playarea and recreation place for local children on a visit alone or with friends basis.

Lund Crescent

Category B playarea:

Toronto Street

Category C playarea:

Cammock Crescent

Denton Holme – area defined by River Caldew and Dalston Road

Category A playareas:

Denton Holme

St James Park

Milbourne Street

Category B playarea:

Sheffield Street

Category C playarea:

New Mills

Morton – area defined by Wigton Road and Dalston Road

Category A playareas:

Morton Park

Borrowdale Road

Dalston road

Category B playareas:

Raiselands Road

Winscale Way – recommended for closure

Dowbeck Road – recommended for closure

Dowbeck Road is strategically placed to be a category A playarea, but is very run down and constantly vandalised. If it is closed, then constructive thought should be given as to how to turn this into a useful and meaningful informal play space.

Raffles – area defined by Wigton Road and Newtown Road

Category A playareas:

Morton West

Yewdale

Peel Street

Beaver Road

Trinity Churchyard

Raffles

Beck Field/Heysham Park/Heysham Park Extension. Development of Heysham Park area by CHA/Lovells should mean that there will be major new playarea provision in the park in the next few years. No improvements or replacements will go ahead on the playareas below until the plans are finalised. Playareas affected for removal/renovation:

Raffles

Heysham Park

Heysham Park Extension

Green Lane

Category B playareas:

Acredale Road – recommended for closure

Coniston Way

Sandsfield Park/Chesterholm

Hebden Ave – recommended for closure

Heysham Park – recommended for closure

Heysham Park Extension

Green Lane

Category C playareas:

St Edmunds Park

The Beeches

Rural

Category A playareas:

Cummersdale

Category B playareas:

Longtown

Millriggs – recommended for closure

Category C playareas:

Greenfield Lane, Brampton

Sandysike

Summerfields, Dalston

Houghton

The City Council's playarea at Longtown is not among the major playareas in the town.
These are run by Arthuret parish council

APPENDIX 6 - PLAYAREA SCHEDULE OF WORKS

Scoring system for playareas

The playareas have been assessed for a number of factors which will ascertain which ones would most benefit, and are most in need of renovation.

Category score

Playareas of Category A are deemed more important as they will be used more often by more children; they therefore have a weighting in their favour. They will also have a shorter shelf life due to harder wear.

1 – Category C playareas – those serving clearly defined areas of housing

2 – category B playareas – second tier playareas

3 – Category A playareas – those of primary importance

Disability access score

Playareas should be accessible by children of all abilities and should provide some play experience for them. The City's playareas were audited for accessibility by RoSPA in 2003 and are scored with reference to this audit. The higher the score, the less accessible the playarea and the more in need of renovation.

1 – Playarea acceptable for use by children with disabilities

2 – Playarea partially acceptable for use by children with disabilities

3 – Playarea unacceptable for use by children with disabilities

Age Score

Playareas have a limited shelf life; they begin to wear out after approximately five years and generally will need replacing between 10 and 15 years after installation. The older the playarea, the more in need of renovation and hence the higher the score. If partial improvements have been carried out on a playarea, the mean of the original installation

year and the improvement year has been taken to represent the date of installation and used to calculate the age of the playarea.

- 1 Less than 5 years old
- 2 5-10 years old
- 3 10-15 years old
- 4 More than 15 years old

Activity/Status score

Playareas should provide, on average, opportunities for around five activities. These include swinging, climbing, sliding, rocking, rotating, agility, co-ordination and creative play. As the playarea ages and potentially dangerous and worn out pieces of equipment are removed, the number of activities decreases. The fewer activities in a playarea, the more a playarea is in need of renovation and the higher the score.

- 1 – 5 or more activities
- 2 – 3 or 4 activities
- 3 – 2 or less activities

Community Involvement

Play areas are an integral part of the communities, which they serve. As with parks, involvement from local groups will help with ensuring investment proposals meet the requirements of the children and their parents/carers who will be using the facilities. Creation of local groups or incorporation into appropriate ones which exist, for the development of play areas, will also help in building a sense of local ownership of play areas and could facilitate access to external grants to help maximise the Council's own budget provision.

Therefore where local residents have formed a playgroup this will receive a maximum score:

- 1 - Group in the process of being formed, evidence of meetings and volunteers for community.
- 3 - Group established with members and actively involved in fund raising or promoting the issue of play in the local area.

The overall score for individual playareas is reached by adding together the above five categories of scores.

This will be combined with the category of play area for determination of the priority within the work programme for investment.