

# Report to Council

Agenda  
Item:

**10. (b)**

Meeting Date: 4th March 2014  
Portfolio: Environment and Transport  
Key Decision: Not Applicable:  
Within Policy and  
Budget Framework NO  
Public / Private Public

Title: PETITION TO RECONSIDER THE DECISION TO REMOVE THE  
PLAY AREA EQUIPMENT AT BELAH  
Report of: The Director of Local Environment  
Report Number: LE05/14

## Purpose / Summary:

The report responds to the residents' petition seeking to change the Council's decision to remove play equipment at Belah Parkside.

## Recommendations:

That the Council invites representatives of the Belah community to meet with officers to explore the options available to them for future management of the play area located at Belah Parkside, without prejudice as to any possible outcome.

## Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** After a thorough review of all 69 play areas in its control, Carlisle City Council has drawn up a schedule of strategically important sites to receive continued investment and development. These are the sites that provide the most exciting play opportunities for the greatest number of children. At a time of limited resources it is logical to apply them to achieve the greatest benefit.
- 1.2** Inevitably, not all play areas can be in the 'high priority' category and 21 sites have been identified, based on the criteria of the review, as being below standard. These play areas have been earmarked to have their equipment removed and to be kept as informal green space.
- 1.3** As a result of this recommendation in regard of the Belah Parkside play area, local residents have brought forward a petition seeking to keep the play area intact and asking the City Council to change its decision.

## **2. PROPOSALS**

- 2.1** In the light of the petition, which is the only one received by the Council in respect of the outcome of the Play Area Review, it is reasonable to meet with petitioners and see if a mutually acceptable solution is available. Accordingly a meeting has been arranged to include the Director of Local Environment and the Portfolio Holder (Cllr Martlew). The meeting will be held in an open and transparent manner and without prejudice to the prior recommendations of the Director in relation to Belah Parkside play area.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** The original Play Area Review was first taken to the Council's Executive who referred it, without comment, to Overview & Scrutiny. O&S comments were then fed back to the Executive.
- 3.2** After the Executive had made their recommendations, consultations were held with Group leaders; O&S Chairmen; Riverside Housing; and Parish Councils.

## **4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1** The Play Area Review is a sound piece of work that attempts to identify those facilities that represent the best value for money for Council Tax payers at a time when resources are not available to continue with current maintenance regimes.
- 4.2** However, the Council acknowledges that residents may wish to seek alternative arrangements for maintaining play areas within their own communities and

welcomes the initiative of the Belah community in pursuing this option. It is with this spirit of mutual assistance that we look forward to meeting with representatives of the community to explore all options for the future management of the play area.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES**

**5.1 AIM: Working effectively through partnerships to achieve the City Council priorities**

**5.2 ACTION: Develop a partnership approach to add value and animate parks and open spaces**

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**Appendices  
attached to report:**

**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

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:**

**Chief Executive's -**

**Deputy Chief Executive –**

**Economic Development –**

**Governance –** The “Keep our Park” Petition has been received, acknowledged and acted upon in accordance with procedural 10.11 (a to e) of Carlisle City Council's Constitution.

**Local Environment –**

**Resources –** The financial implications, including insurance liabilities, with regard to the future management of this play area must be considered as part of any discussions with residents.