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AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2019

A MEETING of the AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE will be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS. COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS on THURSDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2019 at 10.00 am

J. J. WILKINSON,
Clerk to the Council,

17 October 2019

BUSINESS		
1.	Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Order of Business.	
3.	Declarations of Interest.	
AUDIT & SCRUTINY BUSINESS		
4.	<p>Minute. (Pages 3 - 8)</p> <p>Minute of Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 September 2019 to be approved and signed by the Chairman. (Copy attached).</p>	5 mins
SCRUTINY BUSINESS		
5.	Petitions	60 mins
	<p>(a) Petitions Procedure at Committee (Pages 9 - 10)</p> <p>(Copy attached).</p>	
	<p>(b) Kelso Play Parks Petition (Pages 11 - 30)</p> <p>(i) Petition – “Save Kelso’s Playparks”. (Copy attached).</p> <p>(ii) Briefing paper by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure. (Copy attached).</p>	
	<p>(c) Hawick Play Parks Petition (Pages 31 - 54)</p> <p>(i) Petition – Hawick Play Parks. (Copy attached).</p>	

	(ii) Briefing paper by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure. (Copy attached).	
6.	Community Access to Schools (Pages 55 - 60) Consider report by Interim Service Director Children & Young People. (Copy attached).	10 mins
7.	Any Other Scrutiny Items Previously Circulated.	
8.	Any Other Scrutiny Items which the Chairman Decides are Urgent.	

NOTES

1. **Timings given above are only indicative and not intended to inhibit Members' discussions.**
2. **Members are reminded that, if they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in any item of business coming before the meeting, that interest should be declared prior to commencement of discussion on that item. Such declaration will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.**

Membership of Committee:- Councillors S. Bell (Chairman), H. Anderson, K. Chapman, J. A. Fullarton, S. Hamilton (Vice-Chairman), N. Richards, H. Scott, E. Thornton-Nicol, S. Scott, Mr M Middlemiss and Ms H Barnett

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E-mail: ee Graham@scotborders.gov.uk

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of Meeting of the AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in Council Chambers. Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Monday, 23 September 2019 at 10.15 am

Present:-

Councillors S. Bell (Chairman), H. Anderson, K. Chapman, J. A. Fullarton, S. Hamilton (Vice-Chairman), N. Richards, H. Scott, S. Scott, E. Thornton-Nicol, Ms H. Barnett and Mr M. Middlemiss.

In Attendance:-

Chief Financial Officer, Chief Officer Audit and Risk. Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull).

Ms G Woolman, Mr A Haseeb and Mr G Samson – Audit Scotland

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

SCRUTINY BUSINESS

2. **MINUTE.**

There had been circulated copies of the Minutes of 22 August 2019.

DECISION

APPROVED for signature by the Chairman.

AUDIT BUSINESS

3. **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2018/19**

3.1 With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of 24 September 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Financial Officer presenting the annual report of treasury management activities undertaken during the 2018/19 financial year. The report was presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee for review as part of their scrutiny role in relation to treasury management activities in the Council. The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services (the Code) required an annual report on treasury management to be submitted to Council following the end of each financial year. This report highlighted the Council's treasury activity in the year ended 31 March 2019 and the performance of the Treasury function. Appendix 1 to the report comprised the annual report of treasury management activities for 2018/19 and contained an analysis of performance against targets set in relation to Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators. All of the performance comparisons reported upon were based on the revised indicators agreed as part of the mid-year report approved on 29 November 2018.

3.2 The Appendix also showed the Council's borrowing requirement to fund the capital investment undertaken during 2018/19, how much the Council actually borrowed against the sums budgeted, and the level of external debt carried on the Council's balance sheet

within approved limits. The Council had, whenever possible, deferred borrowing and used surplus cash rather than undertaking new borrowing. However, the Council had undertaken long term borrowing for debt rescheduling during the year, amounting to £10m. Treasury management activity had been undertaken in compliance with approved policy and the Code and the Council remained under-borrowed against its Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as at 31 March 2019.

- 3.3 The report was fully discussed and in response to questions, the Chief Financial Officer, Mr Robertson, advised that the Council sought to maintain a level debt profile. Where opportunities were identified to refinance debt, these were considered to ensure best value over the 10 – 25-year period. With regard to the £10m debt rescheduling this was to take advantage of a lower interest rate of 2.74% as opposed to 4.80%. Regarding capital expenditure, Mr Robertson acknowledged that there had been slippage on a number of projects and reassured Members that these were being monitored with appropriate action taken. Audit Scotland added that although slippage had increased in comparison to previous years, this was not considered significant.

DECISION

AGREED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:

- * (a) **that treasury management activity in the year to 31 March 2019 was carried out in compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy and Policy as detailed the report and Appendix 1, attached to the agenda; and**
- * (b) **to increase the investment limit for AAA Money Market Funds from £20m to £25m.**

4. EXTERNAL AUDITORS' ANNUAL AUDIT REPORTS 2018/19

4.1 Scottish Borders Council Annual Report and Accounts

With reference to paragraph 7.1 of the Minute of 24 September 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by Audit Scotland, the Council's external auditors. The report explained that Audit Scotland had now completed the audit of the Council's Annual Accounts for 2018/19 and had given an unqualified audit opinion in all cases. In addition Audit Scotland has reached positive conclusions in respect of financial sustainability, financial management, governance, transparency and value for money. Ms Woolman, Audit Scotland was in attendance and summarised the report; in addition she advised that there were no material adjustments or unadjusted errors arising from the audit.

- 4.2 In response to questions, Ms Woolman advised that Audit Scotland had carried out an audit on community engagement which would provide comparative information across local authorities. Regarding the £10.2m purchase price for Lowood Estate, Mr Robertson clarified that this figure included legal fees and tax costs. He further advised that the Estate had been acquired for economic development and it was reasonable to pay all legal fees associated with such transactions. Regarding payroll creditors' balances, Mr Robertson acknowledged that the Council had not taken sufficient action to reflect the Audit Scotland opinion of 2017/18; however, configuration changes to the system had now been concluded as required. Regarding invoice payment performance Mr Robertson stated 84% of invoices were paid within 30 days and all invoices were processed within two days of receipt; an update on progress would be provided to the December 2019 meeting. Regarding the arrangements around recurrent and non-recurrent savings, Mr Robertson clarified that there were no formal targets around temporary savings, incidences occurred when projects had been delayed. With regard to digital transformation, a number of lessons had been learned including that necessity for the Council to be fully involved and retain ownership of such projects.

4.3 Charitable Trusts administered by Scottish Borders Council

With reference to paragraph 7.2 of the Minute of 24 September 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by Audit Scotland in respect of Charitable Trusts administered by Scottish Borders Council. Mr Haseeb of Audit Scotland advised that

there were no material adjustments to the financial statements. However, he highlighted that the cash flow statements for Common Good Funds had required a number of changes and these had been amended.

4.4 Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund

With reference to paragraph 7.1 of the Minute 24 September 2018, there had been circulated copies of a report by Audit Scotland in respect of Scottish Borders Council Pension Fund. Mr Hasseb of Audit Scotland presented the report, advising that there were no material adjustments to the unaudited financial statement arising from the audit. Mr Haseeb highlighted that the triennial valuation showed a funding level of 114% - which was the highest in Scotland. In response to questions, Mr Robertson advised that the Council policy was auto-enrolment for new employees; the Fund's investment strategy focused increasingly on income bearing assets which would fund future pension payments. The next triannual valuation was March 2020 and would set contribution rates for the next three years. Regarding members' lack of attendance at training events during the year, Mr Robertson stressed the importance of this issue and advised that it had been addressed with the individuals concerned.

DECISION

NOTED the Annual Reports from the Council's External Auditors prior to Council approval.

5. SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2018/19

- 5.1 With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of 24 September 2018, there had been circulated copies of the Council's audited Annual Accounts for 2018/19. The audit appointment of Audit Scotland for Scottish Borders Council accounts included the requirement to provide an auditor's report for the Council as well as related charities. Audit Scotland had now completed the audit of the Council's Annual Accounts for 2018/19 and had given an unqualified audit opinion in all cases. In addition, Audit Scotland concurred with Management's accounting treatment and judgements; and had reached positive conclusions in respect of financial sustainability, financial management, governance, transparency and value for money. Audit Scotland had identified two recommendations for improvement requiring action and these had been accepted by Management and would be enacted within the agreed timescales.
- 5.2 As required under the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, the audited Annual Accounts for Scottish Borders Council, SBC Common Good Funds, the SBC Charitable Trusts, Bridge Homes LLP, SB Supports LLP and SB Cares LLP, Lowood Tweedbank Ltd and Scottish Borders Council's Pension Fund had been presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee prior to signature.
- 5.3 The report also referred to KPMG's external audit of the Council subsidiaries SB Cares, SB Supports and Bridge Homes which were not registered charities. KPMG had concluded that the ongoing review of SB Cares was a going concern and had included this comment in its audit opinion. Late in the audit process KPMG had identified a consistency issue with actuarial valuation of pensions fund liabilities for SB Cares. Regarding Bridge Homes, KPMG had raised no issues and had no matters to report.
- 5.4 In response to a question regarding contingent liabilities and contingent assets, Mr Robertson advised that further information on failure to conclude the land sale transaction would be provided in due course. Regarding the High Court ruling with regard to Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMP), there was still material uncertainty as reconciliation was still being progressed. With regard to the claim against Capita Plc, the Council had requested a cash settlement and the claim was still ongoing. Mr Robertson also advised that the £613k exit packages had been calculated in accordance with Council policy.

DECISION

AGREED to APPROVE the following accounts for officer signature and Council approval:

- (a) the Scottish Borders Council's audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (b) the Scottish Borders Council's Pension Fund audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (c) the Scottish Borders Council Common Good Funds' (Charity SC031538) audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (d) the SBC Welfare Trust (Charity SC044765) audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (e) the SBC Education Trust (Charity SC044762) audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (f) the SBC Community Enhancement Trust (Charity SC044764) audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (g) the Ormiston Trust for Institute Fund (Charity SC019162) audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (h) the Scottish Borders Council Charity Funds' (Charity SC043896) audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (i) the Bridge Homes LLP audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (j) the SB Supports LLP audited Annual Accounts for the year to 31 March 2019;
- (k) the SB Cares audited Annual Accounts for the year to the 31 March 2019; and
- (l) Lowood Tweedbank Ltd Annual Accounts for the 30 November 2018 to the 31 March 2019 (part year).

6. FRAUD AND IRREGULARITY UPDATE 2018/19

There had been circulated copies of a report by Audit Scotland, which contained a summary of the cases of fraud and other irregularities at public bodies reported by external auditors for the financial year 2018/19. The report was designed to share best practice and lessons learned. The Chief Officer Audit & Risk, Ms Stacey, explained that the report had been discussed at a number of national forums and was a valuable resource to establish key controls, monitoring effectiveness, as well as sharing prevention and detection fraud controls. In response to a question, Ms Stacey advised that the report would be considered at the Corporate Fraud Steering Group, any recommendations arising would be presented to Corporate Management Team.

DECISION

AGREED to request that the Corporate Fraud Steering Group consider the Audit Scotland's Fraud and Irregularity Update 2018/19 and make any recommendations arising to Corporate Management Team.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT WORK TO JULY 2019

With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of 13 May 2019, there had been circulated copies of a report by the Chief Officer Audit and Risk which provided details of the recent work carried out by Internal Audit and the recommended audit actions agreed by Management to improve internal controls and governance arrangements. The work Internal Audit had carried out during the period 1 April to 2 August 2019 was detailed in the report. During the period a total of five Internal Audit reports had been issued. There were 10 recommendations made relating to three of the reports which had been accepted by Management for implementation. An Executive Summary of the final Internal Audit reports issued, including audit objective, findings, good practice, recommendations (where appropriate) and the Chief Officer Audit and Risk's independent and objective opinion on the adequacy of the control environment and governance arrangements within each audit area, was included in Appendix 1 to the report. Ms Stacey summarised the findings in the report and advised that, once finalised, the executive summary of the Attendance Management Internal Audit Report would be presented to Committee in November 2019. In response to questions, Ms Stacey advised that in relation to Emergency Works there had been challenges for Management in responding to the draft internal audit report and the recommendations. However, discussions had been constructive and they were reviewing processes to ensure sustainability in the longer term. An action plan had also been agreed which would be followed up by Internal Audit before determining the timing of the next planned audit for this service. With regard to the anomalies identified with performance management data, all queries had been corrected prior to the LGBF submission by the Council. The Committee made reference to the 26 September 2019 Council report on the Strategic Review of SB Cares – Future Provision of Adult Social Care Services; Mr Robertson clarified that the Council report reflected the outcome of the Internal Audit consultancy review of SB Cares commissioned by the Chief Executive.

DECISION:

(a) NOTED:

- (i) the final assurance reports issued in the period from 1 April to 2 August 2019 associated with the delivery of the approved Internal Audit Annual Plan 2019/20; and**
- (ii) the Internal Audit consultancy and other work undertaken in this period.**

(b) AGREED to acknowledge the assurance provided on internal controls and governance arrangements in place for the areas covered by this Internal Audit work.

8. THANKS

The Chairman thanked Audit Scotland for their attendance and the comprehensive, clear reports provided to the Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.55 pm.

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Scottish Borders Council
Extract from the Audit & Scrutiny Committee Petitions Procedure

14. The procedure at the meeting, for each petition considered, shall be as follows:
- (i) the meeting shall be in public unless the subject matter of the petition would be deemed to be confidential under the terms of Section 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
 - (ii) the principal petitioner, or named deputy, shall give a statement in explanation of the petition;
 - (iii) there will be an opportunity for Members of the Committee to ask questions of the petitioner or their named deputy;
 - (iv) there will be an opportunity for any Director(s), Executive Member(s) and Community Planning Partner representative(s) present to ask questions of the petitioner or their named deputy;
 - (v) a response to the petition may be heard from a Director, Executive Member and/or Community Planning Partner representative present at the meeting;
 - (vi) there will be an opportunity for Members of the Committee to ask questions of any Director, Executive Member(s) and Community Planning Partner representative(s) present at the meeting;
 - (vii) there will be an opportunity for the petitioner or their named deputy to ask questions of any Elected Member, Director or Community Planning Partner representative present at the meeting;
 - (viii) Members of the Committee shall then discuss the information available and consider their findings. The Committee may defer a decision should further information be required.

Note: any contribution on behalf of the petition from a second or other speaker(s) shall be at the discretion of the Chairman. The public will not be allowed to speak at the meeting unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

15. The Audit & Scrutiny Committee shall agree to one of the following:-
- (i) refer the petition to another Committee or Director, with or without a recommendation or comment. That Committee or Director shall then make the final decision which could include taking no further action;

- (ii) refer the petition to the relevant Community Planning Partner, with or without a recommendation or comment, if appropriate;
 - (iii) that the issue(s) raised do not merit or do not require further action.
- 16. The decision of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, and any reason for that decision, shall be recorded in the Minute of the Meeting and a copy of the Minute shall be sent to the principal petitioner by Democratic Services staff. Where the petition is referred to a Director or another body, the responsibility for communicating the final outcome of the petition is also referred. Updates on these outcomes will be provided to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.
- 17. There will be no right of appeal in response to a final decision made in response to a petition.
- 18. The usage and effectiveness of the petitions procedure shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

Reference (official use)



Petitions – submission form

If you wish to submit a petition for consideration by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, please complete the form below. You are advised to refer to the Guidance Questions and Answer sheet provided.

Details of Principal Petitioner	
Please enter the name and contact details of the person raising the petition. <i>The Principal Petitioner must be on the Register of Electors for the Scottish Borders Council area.</i>	
Name:	Kirsty Wichary
Address:	24 Oakfield Court
	Kelso
	Roxburghshire
Postcode:	
Telephone no:	
Email:	

Title of Petition and Petition Statement
Please enter the title of the Petition and a statement to cover the main subject of the Petition or the action you would like the Council to take.
Title: Save Kelso's Playparks

Statement (no more than 250 words):

The smaller, local parks in Kelso currently threatened with closure are well-used by the under-12s.

Although the investment at Shedden Park is to be applauded, we still need access to local parks, especially for smaller children in Kelso.

These parks should also attract investment to keep them smart and in full working order.

Please keep our playparks!!

Further information.

Please enter below any measures already taken, or persons/organisations approached to attempt to resolve the issues. Attach additional sheets to this form if required but please note that this information must be limited to no more than 4 sides of A4 paper.

Presentation of petition to the Committee.

Please indicate below if you would like the opportunity to make a statement at the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee when your petition is considered. Whether or not you will be invited to do so will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

*I do not wish the opportunity to make a brief statement about the petition.

Name of deputyN/A.....

Contact details

Signature of deputy.....

* please delete as appropriate

Signature of Principal Petitioner.

If you are satisfied your petition meets all the requirements as stated in the Guidance Questions and Answers please add your signature and date below.

Signature of Principal Petitioner.....

Date..... 6.8.19

Accompanying signatures.

Your petition must be accompanied by at least 10 signatures in total, from persons aged 16 and over, resident in the Scottish Borders. The signatures must be from a minimum of 3 separate addresses.

Please be aware that if the petition is on the agenda for a meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee the names and addresses, but not signatures, of all signatories will be published on the Council website.

	Name	Address	Signature
1	J LINDSAY	7 SHEDDEN PARK COSE KELSO TD5 1DQ	
2	F. WICHARY	24 OAKFIELD COURT KELSO TD5 7NW	
3	F. WICHARY	10 PADDOCK COURT KELSO TD5 7UB	

4	BIRYAR A. NAMIK	24 OAKFIELD COURT KELSO TD5 7NW
5	EMMA WICKART	10 PADDOCK COURT KELSO TD5 7UB
6	Agnieszka Sztando	4/5 Mill Wynd TD5 7HP Kelso
7	Rebecca Edwards	67 Castlegate Jedburgh
8	Inga Brown	2 West Lowland Cottage Homeliffe, Berwick-upon- Tweed, TD15 2XT
9	Charlotte Todd.	Whitsonne Lams Farm, Duns, TD11 3LU
10	Corna Pate	HALLBURN LONGFOLMACUS DUNS

Attach additional sheets of signatures if you wish.

Please submit this form and any additional sheets to:-

Clerk to the Council, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown
St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA,

or email to:

committeepapers@scotborders.gov.uk

* Please also allow signatories previously
sent, collected via change.org.
(492 signatures)

(EW)

change.org

Recipient: Scottish Borders Council

Letter: Greetings,
Save Kelso's playparks!

Comments

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Amanda Middlemiss	UK	2019-06-21	"The children need these play parks. They are well used x"
Laura Whellans	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Most of these parks give younger kids somewhere to play right at their front doors, safely in view of their parents, without having to cross any of the very busy roads in town. If decommissioned, children would only have access to a play park if and when parents could take them to the town centre."
Wendy richardson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"I disagree with this decision, you all had them growing up, the new kids need the same pleasure."
Jennifer Fairbairn	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"My kids access at least 2 of these parks on a weekly basis. Kids need parks and especially parks near their homes."
Heather Freeland cook	Yetholm, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Children need safe, outside parks to play, not iPads!"
K Stuart	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"One of the parks affected by this my little boy and his cousin regularly use as well as many other children around about it in the housing scheme's, as well as all the other parks that are affected they could be all some children have around them and cant get down to shedden park or another one, such a shame that the children have to have to miss out and be penalised when the majority of the parks listed are used all the time by kids"
Catherine Bauer	Grennlaw, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"When sbc claim to encourage children to spend more time active and outdoors - this makes sense at all!"
Samantha Douglas	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"We need our parks to keep children from indoors, iPads, screens and computers!! We should be encouraging outdoor play!! Losing these amenities is unacceptable when the council are investing thousands on iPads!!"
David Kilpatrick	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Please don't decommission these. Look at Ali Hay's initiative with the skate park, think of your responsibilities and resources, and compare it with voluntary work. You should be committed to maintaining play parks and expanding all kinds of play and sport, or cultural, activities for children and families. Ultimately these producing a net saving for the council in many other areas, through improved physical and mental health, family relationships and appreciation of the town environment and the services the council provides."
Sue Guthrie	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Small children need local play parks near their houses where they can safely play and parents can keep an eye on them."
Susan Molyneux	Duns, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Children need playparks ..always have, always will, and near to home"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Diane Hogarth	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"It's disgusting"
jacqueline anderson	Gordon, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"I have Grandchildren in Kelso they play at the parks all the time!"
steph canning	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Not much for kinds these days unreal what they thinking"
Jane Jackson	Edinburgh, UK	2019-06-21	"My kids use the ones close to our home."
Karen Young	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"My kids use the one at orchard park when they are at their granny's also the one at meadow court as it's close to home!!"
Brieghe Walker	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Kids need a nice place to play and safe place x"
Kayleigh Davidson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"My kids love the park where we live in orchard park it's the heart of the community!!! The council clearly don't have kids or sense to be taking playparks away! And why? To save money!!! Bunch o t***s!!!"
Hollie Hogarth	Kelso, UK	2019-06-21	"It would be such a shame to get rid of any of theses parks. As most of them are well used by kids."
Michelle Louise Pratley	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"I'm signing this because kids need small parks near there homes to play in, instead of being attached to phones, ipads and TV etc. Kids need to be kids and parks are the way!"
Val Dunn	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Kids need play parks so please reconsider."
Sara Boulton	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Smaller children should have access to areas to play close to their homes"
Veronica Sullivan	Kelso, England, UK	2019-06-21	"These little parks are great for the little ones near by you can't take that away from them"
Helen Sewell	Perth, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"It is important that small children can safely play near their homes"
Harriet Manning	Blairgowrie, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"It takes too long to walk to Shedden Park for a quick play before dinner. The small ones are quick and easy to get to for 10 mins on the swings. I thought we were trying to encourage kids to play outdoors- how can taking their parks away be a good idea?!"
Peter gillespie	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Because I grew up, in Kelso and know that the 'smaller' (less fancy) green spaces - near to where you live are more important and safer places to play (often within calling distance of the family - hugely important in todays age)"
Lesley Riseam	Kirk Yetholm, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Local play parks are more important than one centralised one far from where families live . Council should look at the

Name	Location	Date	Comment
			School roles information re the distribution of the youngest children and family housing ."
KERRIE GRANT	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"These parks are still used by younger children as close to there homes !! Not fair to deprive them of there play park"
Matthew Storey	Edinburgh, UK	2019-06-21	"I have toddlers who use these small parks already with supervision and in a few years will hopefully play there with there friends, like other younger children do now"
Matthew Storey	Edinburgh, UK	2019-06-21	"What will happen to these areas if they are decommissioned? My guess is they will become waste ground and eyesores, potentially being used by fly tippers and causing a health hazard"
Margaret hill	Roxburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Removing play parks and forcing children to play on the street is not in the best interests of the child. Shame on you 💎"
Sandra Turnbull	Scottish Borders, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"S Turnbull"
Russet Turnbull	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Kids enjoy parks and they are great fun for them. They should not be taken away."
fiona black	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"I regularly take my grandchildren to 3 of the parks that's facing closure. they're all within walking distance of there homes and will be a big blow to us if closed. one park is not big enough to accommodate all the kids in the town. we need all the smaller local parks so our kids can play safely near their homes. whoever came up with this ridiculous idea needs their P45"
June Regulski	Kelso, UK	2019-06-21	"Not all children can go to Shedden park to play as they are not old enough. !!"
Shona McCreddie	Galashiels, UK	2019-06-21	"My granddaughters love to play in the park and we should do all we can to encourage outdoor play."
Heather Waddell	Kelso, UK	2019-06-21	"These small play parks are used and loved daily by many of the children in Kelso. It's not always feasible for children to travel further afield to Sheddon Park. We should be continuing to encourage our children outside and playing and away from screens as much as possible, taking away parks which are still in use daily is absurd in a country with growing child obesity rates."
Robin Patterson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"I have a grandson who uses some of these parks"
Debby Brotherston	Falkirk, UK	2019-06-21	"My children use these parks. Where are they meant to play?!"
Daniel Basak	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Children need a safe place to play."

Name	Location	Date	Comment
naomi johnston	Newtownards, Northern Ireland, UK	2019-06-21	"My children love going to one of these parks every time they are at their grandparents. It's far safer for younger children than having to go all the way down to Shedden Park, which they would not be allowed to do alone."
JOYCE LYALL	Edinburgh, UK	2019-06-21	"kids need little playparks"
Anne Howieson	Scottish Borders, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Please reconsider children need a safe place to play ."
Moirra Henderson	Kelso, UK	2019-06-21	"Bloody ridiculous, closing then will cause more problems in the long run 💎💎"
Lee Pettitt	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"These small parks in kelso should be revamped and improved not decommissioned by the constantly failing SBC. Surely the council should be encouraging young children to use the already minimal facilities on their doorsteps not taking them away. Advice to SBC: STOP DEMINISHING PUBLIC AMENITIES TO FUND THE IPAD FOR EVERY CHILD PROJECT, SO THEY CAN BECOME TECH SAVVY. WE LIVE IN THE LEAST TECH SAVVY AREA IN THE UK! TELL ME, AT WHAT COMPANY IN THE BORDERS WILL OUR CHILDREN USE THEIR NEW TECH SAVVY SKILLS???"
Patrick Carrick	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"It's a disgrace that councils can consider closing playgrounds when the parents need to keep their children active."
julie mclean	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Our play parks are very important, our children need access to outdoor facilities and they should not be taken away to save money. I am a childminder and use play parks everyday, they are important to children for accessing their community and for socialising and having exercise."
Fiona Chippendale	Kinross, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"I may not have young children now but they loved these play parks"
Celia Whellans	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"We need those play parks so that kids have some where safe and that it's closer to home so that we no where they are too"
tom davidson	Coldstream, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Totally disgusts me the way this tory council is penny pinching these days"
Simon Potter	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Cutting childhood obesity is perhaps a tad more important than money spent by SBC subsidising Apples corporate greed!"
Andrew Brunton	Kelso, UK	2019-06-21	"We should refuse to pay council tax"
Debbie Marie Thomson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"All 3 of my daughters use the play park right opposite my house daily and so do all the children in our court. Shame on you for wanting to take them away... All because you would rather spend money on things that kids can't enjoy and take away their happiness and safety."

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Megan Mcneish	Glasgow, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Im signing this petition because the kelso parks have hundreds of memories and shouldnt be took away and kids need psrks aswell"
Gillian Shapley	Rotorua, New Zealand	2019-06-22	"Kids playing outside is SO important for their development"
Carra williamson	Glasgow, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"I think that child should be able to go to parks to play and meet other children this is how they learn and are able to share with others plus they are not stuck in doors and playing computer games all the time. Think it's awful that the parks are getting taken away from these young children."
Louise Lodge	Kelso, UK	2019-06-22	"My children love our local play parks as do so many others we know. Its the first steps to young children enjoying the outdoors and is exercise while having fun!"
Elaine Dawson	Canada	2019-06-22	"Played in many o these parks when growing up, we are supposed be encouraging keep fit not discouraging with kids 💎💎💎"
Steve Onley	Kelso, UK	2019-06-23	"Kids need to be outside playing"
Stephen Smith	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"Children need to be safe and these play parks are essential."
Karen Little	Cumnock, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"Absolutely ridiculous this would even be considered. We are trying to encourage our children to engage in outdoor play with less screen time to improve health and wellbeing. Sometimes I wonder who on earth makes these things up!!!!"
Patricia Grierson	Gattonside, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"SBC are completely hopeless at managing our money."
Eilidh Porrelli	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"SBC can afford to give £16 million of public money to Apple for Ipads and classroom tv's but there's no money for the upkeep of outdoor spaces for children? Flies against all policy of encouraging greater levels of activity in our children."
Shirley Smith	Earlston, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"Children should be encouraged to play outdoors, these play parks are beneficial especially to younger children."
John Weierter	Haddington, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"My kids enjoyed the Kelso playparks and so have my grandchildren. Often they changed a dull day into a day of delight. I would be dismayed if the next generation could not enjoy the same delight while developing their confidence and motor skills."
steve turnbull	jedburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"We need these parks for the kids"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
			memories of my childhood and if there is park where the kids going to play"
Jonathan Dryden	Falkirk, UK	2019-06-22	"O"
Mary Gammie	Galashiels, UK	2019-06-22	"Kids should have access to the outdoors. Why are they trying to stop kids having fun. Should be promoting play parks."
Kathleen Kerr	earlston, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"I'm just gobsmacked that they can take these parks away from the bairns"
Katie Warnock	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"My child uses the park at Springwood Rise every day. In the current climate of trying to encourage children to move more and be attached to electronics less, this proposal sounds ludicrous. Please don't decommission the parks."
elspeth neal	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"I live in Kelso and the parks are such an important part of the local childrens life. With polititions going on about childhood obesity its a bit of a cheek to then shut the parks down!"
JO Kemp	Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Children's play parks are part of childhood. It is a reason to go out for a walk, especially these days when children want to stay indoors to play - a trip to the park is a fun treat and a motivation to play outdoors."
craig Hogarth	kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Scottish borders council have a nerve ."
Stuart Mackenzie	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Kids need as many opportunities as possible to use their imagination in play. These play parks provide something different than what they have in their garden (if they have a garden) and they are within easy reach of home."
Sean Connor	Croydon, UK	2019-06-22	"It's not the kids fault the government spends all our tax money irresponsibly."
Zeth Gardner	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"My young daughter lives in the borders and shutting down the parks will negatively affect her and her friends development"
Jason Ramage	Grantham, England, UK	2019-06-22	"I used to live in Kelso and I know how important the parks are. We should be encouraging the kids to play outside before they become the PlayStation generation."
David Cross	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"It's an absolute disgrace on all levels..preaching about obesity and health care then removing these parks is diabolical..this Tory led council which I myself voted for is a complete and utter farce ..never again."
Lorna Smith	South Queensferry, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"I'm signing this because your intending to shut two parks used by my 6 year old granddaughter and it's a disgrace"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Simon Beeley	Huddersfield, England, UK	2019-06-21	"Children need good places to play outdoors"
Danielle Marr	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-21	"Kids need a safe environment to play and interact with others."
Lisa Wakenshaw	Berwick-upon-Tweed, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Children need playparks it's a safe place to get rid of their energy."
pattie allan	Coldstream, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"The kids have very little to do as it is and all kids need a swing park"
Joanna Stewart	Stichill, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Play parks are what child hood memories are made of. Fun, exciting, discovery, exercise and where friendships are made. Getting rid of play parks would be detrimental to communities in so many ways."
Alexandra Bartram	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"I am signing because I have 2 children who visit kelso's parks regularly"
Morag Higgins	Eyemouth, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Children need play areas"
Debbie Forster	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"We need more opportunities not less for children to get outside and play."
Louise Cleminson	Penrith, England, UK	2019-06-22	"I'm signing because, we use Kelso park when we visit my family. The kids, and their cousins love it. Parks are a wonderful place for children to run about, have fun and feel free especially if they dont have a garden at home."
Ann Stephen	Duns, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"Children must have somewhere to play other than the street."
Steven David Patterson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"My kids love a trip to a park of any size, stop taking and start giving."
Helen Cuthers	Camberwell, UK	2019-06-22	"These are still a very valuable resource - leave them be..."
Eva Douglas	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"It is essential that we encourage children to spend time playing and exploring outside and provide safe facilities and areas, close to their homes in order to do this."
Paula Graham	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"We need to invest in our children, give them the best start we can. They are the future after all."
Lynsey Mcharg	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-22	"play is essential for a child's development, limiting opportunities for our children will be detrimental to overall wellbeing"
Nick Whiteley	UK	2019-06-22	"We regularly use these parks"
samarah davidson	Nantwich, UK	2019-06-22	"I'm signing this because I have a park in my neighbourhood And it's getting knocked down and I am really sad about it because in the park are so many

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Mark Dodyk	Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"Free play is vitally important to the healthy physical and mental development of children and young people. Denying children the right to play is cruel."
Karen Loch	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-23	"So where are all the children supposed to go?"
Emma baxter	Berwick-upon-Tweed Scotland, UK	2019-06-24	"I travel all over the Scottish Borders to let my 3 children play in all our beautiful towns playpark a!"
Stephen Tees	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-24	"This is NOT how to save money SBC. Children's physical and mental health is so important. The larger parks are great but we don't want parents to drive there. A small local park is great for meeting friends who live nearby."
David Payne	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-24	"Playparks are a key element in children's development; from physical development, to exploration and even social interaction. Don't get rid of them!"
Nancy McAulay	Glasgow, Scotland, UK	2019-06-24	"These parks are the start for many younger children to experience fun outside instead of being entertained by a television. It's also a good start to be able to make friends through play learning them good social skills."
Gail Chandler	Jedburgh, UK	2019-06-24	"We need to keep play areas close to where wee ones live, so Mums and Dads, Nanas and Papas can walk with them to their park and not use a car!"
Christine Dodge	Brentwood, England, UK	2019-06-24	"Play is central to emotional and physical well being. Children need safe spaces to explore, take risks and develop physical skills and emotional wellbeing. Restricting access to play parks is storing up problems for the future. This is an extremely short sighted response putting finances ahead of the well being of the new generation."
Eric Falconer	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"We have a Council with a very bizarre set of priorities."
Sandy Watson	Coldstream, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Playparks provide an opportunity for parents and children to be outdoors together in, hopefully, a safe environment and one that is close to where they live. It is something they can do together to release energy and perhaps relieve some of the pressures of the often humdrum and busy life of work and school. So, benefits in health and well-being."
Izabella Taylor	Glasgow, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Families need spaces"
Cheryl Shoemaker	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"Our park is under threat and my kids love that park..."
Gillian Jackson	Kelso Roxburghshire, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"Please keep your parks and maintain them for the children"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Jenny Coombs	Saint Boswells, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"Play parks are essential for young children"
Marie Thomson	Eyemouth, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"I'm signing because my grandchildren love playing in their local playpark and they are safe and happy playing there away from traffic"
Danielle Bodkin	Kelso, UK	2019-06-28	"Smaller kids cant get to the bigger parks safely alone without crossing major busy roads. These smaller parks are essential and very much used and loved."
Lisa Smith	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"Because kids need place to play"
Sarah Dickson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"These parks encourage children to play outside somewhere safe."
Craig Dickson	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"I think play parks are vital to get children outside and playing, a great social and physical benefit. The council could cut back in many other ways rather than this."
Deana Thackeray	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-06-29	"Ali Hay raised money for a skate park for the kids of Kelso to have somewhere safe to play Then the council want to shut all the little parks It's disgusting"
norma wood	borders, Scotland, UK	2019-07-01	"I'm signing this petition because play parks, large and small are very important to all the townspeople and beyond. There are so many other areas where savings can be made I.e. upper management within the council. They clearly haven't a clue what they're doing. Middle management are every bit as bad, having no integrity by being 'yes' people to those already mentioned. I'm bloody sick of all the corruption that goes on these days. DO NOT CLOSE THE PLAY PARKS."
JULie Seymour	Kelso, Scotland, UK	2019-07-05	"Kids need safe spaces. Angers me!"

KELSO PLAY PARKS PETITION

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 October 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report summarises the content and context of a petition received by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 6 August 2019. The petition, titled 'Save Kelso's Playparks', inclusive of the accompanying change.org submission, received a total of 492 signatures from the Borders Area.**

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Scottish Borders Council proposed a Play Facilities Strategy as context for the substantial Capital investment of £5.036m in play facilities over a 10 year investment programme which was approved by Scottish Borders Council on 31 May 2018. The Council had agreed to review the distribution of play equipment provision across play parks in the Borders, which can 1) inform decision making around future investment in communities and 2) guide the rationalisation of obsolete play facilities which are deemed no longer fit for purpose, ensuring a cost neutral impact on established budgets within the service.
- 2.2 In conjunction with the strategic investment across the region, at Scottish Borders Council on 31 May 2018 members agreed to;
- Changes to the scheme of delegation to give authority to the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure to *"after consultation with local Members, the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Legal Officer, declare play parks obsolete or those surplus to community requirements and arrange for the removal of equipment and disposal, if appropriate."*

Following approval, a report was taken to Cheviot Area Partnership on 19 June 2019.

- 2.3 In this context, officers have undertaken an appraisal of the wider network of play equipment aimed at responding to the issue of low play value, which SBC has within its play facilities assets. The evaluation has been undertaken to ensure that SBC retains and develops a network of valued, well equipped spaces for local communities. In the Scottish Borders currently the quantity of play provision is high per head of population, but the quality is very low (compared to national benchmarking). This diminishes the wider benefits of these facilities to communities. This programme of investment will address the challenge of balancing quantity against quality, ensuring optimal provision of play facilities across the Scottish Borders.

- 2.4 Low value play facilities, where there is a recognised need (i.e. they are the only play park in the locality) will be identified as priorities for potential future investment (subject to a future paper).
- 2.5 As no additional revenue resources are being provided to support the long term management and maintenance of the new play parks being created, the removal of obsolete facilities is essential to ensure there is a cost neutral impact on established budgets with the service. No play facility will be decommissioned until the appropriate investment in new facilities in that locality have been completed. Any sites of decommissioned play parks would be reviewed for future use; options such as local food growing, informal play or community use could be considered.
- 2.6 In the Kelso context, the following play parks were recommended for decommissioning:

PLAY PARK	PLAY VALUE	FIT SCORE	ALTERNATIVE LOCATION NEARBY
Kelso Berry Moss Court	L	14	Kelso Sydenham Court (B)
Kelso High Croft	L	13	Kelso Croft Park
Kelso Meadow Court	L	16	Kelso Croft Park
Kelso Orchard Park	M	20	Kelso Croft Park
Kelso Rosewood Gardens	L	16	Kelso Shedden Park
Kelso Springwood Rise	L	16	Kelso Wallaceneuk
Kelso Spylaw Park	L	15	Kelso Wallaceneuk
Kelso Sydenham Court (A)	L	14	Kelso Sydenham Court (B)
Kelso Woodside Gardens	L	14	Kelso Shedden Park

- 2.7 Details of the planned disinvestment along with an explanation about the reasons behind the need to decommission play parks were taken to all five Area Partnerships in early 2019. Following this a consultation was undertaken, inviting feedback via email or telephone. The responses to this are outlined in section 4 below.

3 PETITION

- 3.1 Of the 492 signatures received, 107 respondents included comments. Of these, 18% cited concerns about children's health and wellbeing, 13% cited concerns about proximity of nearest play facilities on offer and 2% cited concerns about road safety. The remaining 77% of comments comprised general objections to the proposal in principle.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Within the 72 responses received during the consultation process, 207 individual unsupportive comments were received, broken down geographically as follows;
- Berwickshire - 17%
 - Cheviot - 23%
 - Eildon - 23%
 - Teviot & Liddesdale - 22%
 - Tweeddale - 15%

4.2 The main concerns raised in these responses were across 4 broad themes:

Concerned about children's health and wellbeing, independence and opportunity for social interaction	17%
Concerned about need for parks or safe and quiet spaces closer to home and/or distance to alternatives (9% regarding travel and times; 7% regarding dependency on cars/public transport; 5% regarding road safety)	14%
Concerned that the parks were currently well used	12%
Concerned that sites will become unsightly if left unmaintained	5%

A further 18 specific comments ranging from 3% to 0.5% of total were received, those being:

Lack of parking at alternative or new, need to invest in these smaller parks, currently in good condition/not obsolete, children not able to go to alternative or new on own, lack of maintenance currently so no cost so why close, increased carbon emissions from vehicle use/effect on climate change, lack of consultation, lack of toilets at new, parks provided through Developer Contribution/Planning Condition, new facilities don't cater for age of children using the smaller parks, poor condition of equipment at alternatives, only facility in village, new housing planned so a short-sighted vision, big new parks are only for special visits, having more parks per head of population should be seen as a good thing, too few facilities as it is, a slap in the face to a community currently working with the council to mitigate the effect of cuts, and reduced choice.

4.3 A further 2 respondents put forward 3 supportive comments, those being:

Play park is hardly used, selling off the land to residents would reduce maintenance costs, and parents would like to take on the play park concerned.

Several queries for further information and/or discussion were also included.

5 FINANCE

5.1 The Parks and Environment Service have a revenue spend of approximately £100,000 per annum for maintaining play facilities.

5.2 In order to maintain the new play facilities approved at Council on 31 May 2018, it was highlighted, a reduction in a significant number of existing low value facilities would be required to ensure the revenue impact on the service was cost neutral.

5.3 The annual cost of maintaining the full programme of new play facilities is estimated at £30k, and low value parks to this value will be declared obsolete and decommissioned, once the appropriate investment in that locality has been completed.

5.4 A replacement fund has been created for the new facilities, to allow for replacement at the end of their useful life. The existing play facilities do not have such a fund, therefore, no budget exists, to refurbish or replace them in the future.

6 COMMENTARY

6.1 The response to the Consultation, and the petition, is summarised above at 4.2. Comments regarding the concerns raised during consultation and from the petition are noted below;

Concerns raised	Commentary
<i>Concerned about children's health and wellbeing, independence and opportunity for social interaction</i>	The removal of equipment will not preclude use of these space for recreation – once they are made safe they remain available to children and communities for informal recreation, community food growing/community gardening or other such community based usage. The Council may also consider the disposal of the asset.
<i>Concerned about need for parks or safe and quiet spaces closer to home and/or distance to alternatives (including travel times; dependency on cars/public transport; road safety)</i>	See above point – these spaces remain available to communities for local, informal use, therefore removing the need to travel for incidental play.
<i>Concerned that the parks were currently well used</i>	The Councils observed usage pattern is low or high. Low is defined as the area is never usually observed as in use when maintenance is taking place, and observations during maintenance suggest that play equipment is not frequently used. High is defined as the area is always in use when maintenance is taking place, and observations during maintenance suggest the equipment is very frequently used. According to officers observations from regular inspections these sites are deemed Low Usage.
<i>Concerned that sites will become unsightly if left unmaintained</i>	Sites will be cleared of all equipment and made available for alternative uses, mitigating any visual impact. The Council will continue to maintain the areas as fit for use.

Approved by:

Martin Joyce
Service Director Assets & Infrastructure **Signature**

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jason Hedley	Chief Officer Roads

Background Papers:

Capital Programme 2018/19 – Investment in Play Areas and Outdoor Spaces - Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure. Scottish Borders Council, 31 May 2018

Public Play Facilities Strategy – Cheviot - Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure. Cheviot Area Partnership, 19 June 2019

Previous Minute Reference:

Scottish Borders Council, 31 May 2018, Item 9 -

<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=132&MIId=3726&Ver=4>

Cheviot Area Partnership, 19 June, 2019, Item 3 -

<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=23290>

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Craig Blackie can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Craig Blackie, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells – Tel. No. 01835 824000 Ext. 8036; Email- cblackie@scotborders.gov.uk

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Reference (official use)

Chief Executive
- 9 191 203



Petitions – submission form

If you wish to submit a petition for consideration by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee, please complete the form below. You are advised to refer to the Guidance Questions and Answer sheet provided.

Details of Principal Petitioner	
Please enter the name and contact details of the person raising the petition. <i>The Principal Petitioner must be on the Register of Electors for the Scottish Borders Council area.</i>	
Name:	MR GREG DALGLEISH
Address:	5 BRANXHOLME ROAD,
	HAWICK
Postcode:	
Telephone no:	
Email:	

Title of Petition and Petition Statement
Please enter the title of the Petition and a statement to cover the main subject of the Petition or the action you would like the Council to take.
Title: STOP SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL CLOSING PLAYPARKS
Statement (no more than 250 words): PLEASE SEE STATEMENT SHEET PRINTED.

Statement

We believe in this instance 'bigger and better facilities' should not be justification to remove the smaller parks that are situated in the various housing estates in Hawick and the Scottish Borders. It is very clear from the comments associated with this petition and via social media these smaller parks are still well used and have been described as a safe place to play and exercise on the doorstep of many homes. Not everyone can access the likes of Wilton Lodge Park on a regular basis and children with additional needs also find these areas too busy and noisy.

We would like to call into question how Scottish Borders Council 'Carefully looked at playparks that aren't (supposedly) used as much and arrived at their decision.

We would also like to question why some of these parks are in a poor state of repair? If it's a case of the council has neglected these parks over the years, then again it should not be a justification to remove.

It should also be noted that Priority 2 within the Borders Director of Public Health Report 2018 where SBC is a partner highlights 'Investing in children's play one of the most important things we can do as a community to support children's health and wellbeing.

Forget that by removing these play parks Scottish Borders Council will still be within the national average... We should be fighting to shout that we are above the national average for playparks!!

Signature of Principal Petitioner.

If you are satisfied your petition meets all the requirements as stated in the Guidance Questions and Answers please add your signature and date below.

Signature of Principal Petitioner... ..

Date... 1/9/19

Accompanying signatures.

Your petition must be accompanied by at least 10 signatures in total, from persons aged 16 and over, resident in the Scottish Borders. The signatures must be from a minimum of 3 separate addresses.

Please be aware that if the petition is on the agenda for a meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee the names and addresses, but not signatures, of all signatories will be published on the Council website.

	Name	Address	Signature
1	* ALL SIGNATURES ARE INCLUDED WITHIN THE PETITION THE		
2			
3			
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8			
9			
10			

Attach additional sheets of signatures if you wish.

Please submit this form and any additional sheets to:-

Clerk to the Council, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown
St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA,
or email to:

committeepapers@scotborders.gov.uk

+ 581 signatures on accompanying
sheets

Further information.

Please enter below any measures already taken, or persons/organisations approached to attempt to resolve the issues. Attach additional sheets to this form if required but please note that this information must be limited to no more than 4 sides of A4 paper.

- ① CREATED AN ONLINE PETITION AND ALSO DISTRIBUTED PAPER COPIES IN AND AROUND HAWICK TO GATHER SUPPORT AND VIEWS.
- ② E-MAILED ALL THE HEADTEACHERS IN HAWICK TO GAIN THE VIEWS OF ALL THE CHILDREN WHO WOULD BE AFFECTED WITH ANY PLAYPARK CLOSURES.
* PLEASE NOTE THIS REQUEST WAS DENIED BY SCOTTISH BORDER'S COUNCIL AND ALL HEADTEACHERS WERE TOLD THEY COULD NOT ASSIST *
- ③ E-MAILED ALL THE HAWICK COUNCILLORS TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF THE COUNCIL'S POTENTIAL DECISION, THE PETITION AND ASK FOR THEIR SUPPORT.
- ④ E-MAILED MEMBERS OF THE HAWICK COMMUNITY COUNCIL AS ABOVE.
- ⑤ COMPLETED THE ONLINE PLAYPARK STRATEGY AND ENCOURAGED MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO DO SO.

Presentation of petition to the Committee.

Please indicate below if you would like the opportunity to make a statement at the meeting of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee when your petition is considered. Whether or not you will be invited to do so will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

*I do/~~do not~~ wish the opportunity to make a brief statement about the petition.

*I would like my deputy named below to make a statement on my behalf.

Name of deputy

Contact details

Signature of deputy.....

* please delete as appropriate

STOP SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL CLOSING PLAYPARKS

Scottish Borders Council are seeking to decommission eleven playparks in the Teviot and Liddesdale Locality (74 in total in the Scottish Borders) With the UK Government constantly battling to get kids exercising, we feel this decision by SBC is ludicrous and only makes the challenge tougher.

We the undersigned urge SBC to adopt a totally different approach and invest in giving the playparks a much needed revamp with new and exciting equipment.

NAME	ADDRESS AND POSTCODE	SIGNITURE
Natalie Welling	3 ^{TD9 0AG} Silbrig Bank	
Ross dunn	High mead pka Tda 7AS	
KEITH GRANTAN	7/6 DUNE ST	
B. Brady	50 wellfield Rd	
D Oliver	16 Havelock St	
B. Rossion	315 WILTON HILL	
R Cole	1 WILTON HILL	
CP Matthews	6/4 Doremaint PLACE	
ALAN BOWS.	2 - TD9 8BH	
STUART HUNTIL	2/11 HUNTER TOWER	
KATRINE MCMICHAEL	11 DELORANE COURT	
Paul Adam	6 Wilson Hill Terr Silverburnhill Rd	
A Taylor	THE COTTAGE 20	
TYE GRIERSON	2, WELFIELD BANK	
A Stomont	5/1 HAVELOCK ST	
R Richardson	29 WILTON HILL TERR	
amagalay	127 Stonefield Place	

change.org

Recipient: Scottish Borders Council, Tracey Logan, Shona Haslem

Letter: Greetings,

STOP Scottish Borders Council Closing Playparks

Name	Location	Date	Comment
David Cross	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Absolutely disgraceful decision by this totally inept Tory led council who have had my last vote on the back of their shambolic handling of almost everything they touch ."
Gabrielle murray	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"The playparks encourage outdoor play in a life now full of iPads and computer consoles"
Alison Clarkson	Gateshead, UK	2019-06-25	"It's a disgrace!!!"
allan moffst	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"We need our parks"
brian warnock	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"SBC Are not fit for Purpose. First they target the elderly now the young while paying huge amounts to ex employees"
Kathleen Pringle	North Shields, England, UK	2019-06-25	"I have grandchildren who use these play parks and we are doing all we, can to get kids outside to play and closing play parks are not going to help this matter."
Amy Vosper	Westminster, UK	2019-06-25	"There is very little for young kids to do in Hawick without taking away play parks, absolute disgrace"
D Anderson	carrickfergus, Northern Ireland, UK	2019-06-25	"Kids need to be kids, they need to PLAY , not confined in 'organised' group activities or fantasy electronic games."
Anne Adams	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"We need all the play parks we have"
kathryn Walsh	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Kids need parks!!!"
Paul Waumsley	Morton, England, UK	2019-06-25	"Kids need play areas."
Jean Newman	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Children need these play areas both for exercise and fun"
Lesley Hogg	Walsall, UK	2019-06-25	"My grandkids n their friends need the fairhurst drive/Wilson drive park made safe to at. Its derelict. Scrap the ipads n other things council waste money on xxx"
linda corcoran	MELROSE, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Because i think play parks are more important to kids than ipads!!!!"
Julie Herbert	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Kids need somewhere to play and let off steam"
Elizabeth Reid	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Children already spend too much time indoors, without play parks where will they go to spend time outdoors?"
Jane Henderson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Safe areas for them to play in this day and age....."

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Julie Hmamly	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Against closer of the smaller parks"
Karen Readhead	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Children need somewhere safe to play. If they close smaller parks it may be deemed dangerous for children to go further afield by crossing busy roads to get to an available park."
Bob Brown	Kinlochewe, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Health being a major issue, playparks are often the only outdoor activity kids get."
Susan Darcy	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Get voting, kids need space to play and be kids!"
Laura Melville	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Kids need to have safe space to play, how can it be good for them to take away parks??"
Claire Lawton	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Play parks are vitally important for children and access to them on the estates are much needed, not everyone can get to the other side of town to go to Wilton park. Sleepy valley park and other parks around Hawick are just as vital."
Gill Francombe	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"We should be encouraging our young children to be outside playing in the fresh air instead of being stuck indoors watching TV, or playing computer games as is the case nowadays. Playparks teach children social skills as well as being beneficial to their health and well-being."
Jacqueline Riddell	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Because children and parents need these small local parks. They say that children don't get enough exercise what better way than to play and have fun with other children you're taking everything away from the young and older people.."
Tracy Wood	Leighton Buzzard, England, UK	2019-06-25	"I used to live in Hawick and have cousins there. The parks are wonderful places to go and play. I loved them when I was there. Don't close them!"
Lesley Fraser	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Children should be encouraged to play outside in a safe place. Closing these parks takes these safe places, close to their homes away. By closing these parks you increase the risk of children getting knocked over as they will need to cross busy roads to get to the alternatives. Also it is likely to increase anti social behaviour, with kids wandering further away from home, and supervision, and running the risk of getting caught up with groups who cause trouble or bully."
Roy Cook	Hawick, UK	2019-06-25	"Disgusted at the thought of the council taking away anything for the youngsters of the town as there is very little for them as it is and should not have to travel to enjoy playing outside. There are so many people complaining about youngsters being on xbox machines etc... are they seriously thinking of taking away an outside leisure facility to force kids into their bedrooms."
Amanda Hamilton	Hawick, UK	2019-06-25	"Kids need outdoor safe places to play.. And we have a childhood obesity crisis 廊"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Lynn Ramage	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Find this a ridiculous idea to get rid of so many playparks when we should be encouraging children outside to explore and play while building confidence and learn to cope with risks and make friendships."
jordan manning	HAWick, UK	2019-06-25	"Our wee street play ground is so well used, i cant believe they are considering this when we do all the maintenance, disgusted by this decision when we are battling against the screens."
Kevin Elliot	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Outraged how are young kids ment to get to the parks that are further away if their local park is closed. Oh I forgot they will just have to get fat and play x boxes or sit on I pads"
Karen Lammie	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"I use the parks every day with my kids, rain hail or shine, keep the parks!"
Paul Chetwynd	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"The poor kids have supposedly nothing to do already in the Scottish Borders, so don't take the parks away,.If they were maintained to a good standard in the first place, they would not end up in the sorry state they are in."
Siobhon Walby	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Getting rid of children's playparks is a joke. There's already not very much for them in this town and they wonder why kids just hang about the streets causing mayhem"
Ruth Murray	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Our play parks are essential to the well being of our young people. They must be saved."
Kym Mackenzie	Hawick, UK	2019-06-25	"If the Borders have the highest rate of obese children in the UK we need to promote active play, outdoor exploration and give kids freedom locally not across the busy roads...iPads will not do this. Sort out the budgets, increase staffing to share the heavy workloads to maintain these parks & sort out priorities... to invest in the future of this awesome region! Learning starts with play!"
Vanessa McClure	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"I just don't understand why they'd do this!! There's not enough for young kids to do without taking away parks that are already there. There parks are a necessity. I wouldn't be able to cope with my children and their energy levels if we did not have our parks to let them run and play off some steam! Please don't do it!!!"
Eileen Davies	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"I actually find this hard to believe. Closing children's playparks?? When we're trying to encourage outdoor play for so many reasons??"
Lesley Johnston	Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"We have an obesity crisis, children are failing to develop physicall, they can't take risks or learn resilience. It's time to invest in our young people."
barry armstrong	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"If they can waste money on a tapestry that we don,t want they can find money to keep play parks open ,what's kids gan to do during school holidays ,cause bother?"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Lynsey Neilson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"I think it would be a total shame to close parks for our kids as there isn't much more in Hawick for kids to do on a lovely summers day. My kids love going to the park and I know they would Defo be upset in the parks were to close."
Elaine Smith	Edinburgh, UK	2019-06-26	"Every child loves a play park, every adult has great memories of play parks. Play parks are essential. (I'm originally from Hawick and still have family there)"
Suzanne dalgleish	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"Utter disgrace, our family regularly use 3 of the play parks that risk possible closure. At anyone time we have children's and adults of all ages gaining a positive experience using these facilities, please save!"
ger hunter	hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"They are well used and needed"
Ann Gallagher	UK	2019-06-26	"We want to keep the play parks so that the children can enjoy outside play"
Greg Fordyce	UK	2019-06-26	"Kids should have more places to play, not less."
David Lauder	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"All kids need a playpark local to where they stay. The larger parks are great but are in some cases miles from home and kids have to be accompanied in most cases. Keep parks local and get kids outside."
Susan Heatley	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"All children deserve to have a safe environment to play in close to theirhome."
Elizabeth Robertson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"When are these crucial cutbacks going to end, and that's typical on these Scottish Borders when the person that's working from the top is conservative and people whom voted for this nasty political party has to reap what they sow by voting for these cutbacks and who does it affect once again the poor, vulnerable and this country's future Generation our children. 💎"
Joe Fox	Grantham, England, UK	2019-06-26	"Fit and clever kids are our investment in their future which must be preserved!"
s gillespie	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"It's absolutely ridiculous! These play parks are the ONLY places that some kids can go to. Nevermind though, they'll just have to wander the streets eh?!"
Caroline Smith	Chesters, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"Play parks give children a communal play space to exercise and interact socially and safely."
james colin molloy	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"These Parks are part of our heritage"
Julia Templeman	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"Kids need space to play SAVE OUR PARKS!! Scrap the tapestry....."

Name	Location	Date	Comment
MICHELLE RABBITT	Scottish borders, UK	2019-06-26	"Kids today need parks to play how dare the council take thwm away"
Fiona Macpherson	Newtown Saint Boswells, Scotland, UK	2019-06-26	"We have the same issue in Newtown....we need to join together and fight for our kids playtime"
enid watson	Rotherham, England, UK	2019-06-27	"My relatives little girl uses one of these parks almost every day"
Miranda Whellans	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"I am signing because I take my kids to play parks as I live in a flat with no grass area at my flat and when I take my kids to the park it gives them a chance to run around and burn off steam"
Russell Bouglas	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"It's a very long time since I used the play parks, but seriously SBC the next generation need places to go exercise and have so fun. Some of my happiest childhood memories are of pl"
Chris Atkin	Spennymoor, England, UK	2019-06-27	"Kids need play parks"
Christine Kyle	UK	2019-06-27	"Children need to play outside to stay healthy and to socialise with other children. They should NOT be indoors on iPads!"
John Paton Day	Gordon, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"Its a no brainer."
Hazel Cameron	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"We need to keep our children active, there is already far too great a sedentary lifestyle among our younger generations. What signal are we giving out, every child to be given an iPad but we can't afford to maintain our play parks. There has to be a way found to keep these playareas."
Margot Montgomerie	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"I grew up in Earlston & used the playparks that are to close . Now my friends kids use them. The new fancy playparks are good but the small ones need to stay too. What if you don't drive / cannot afford to travel to harestanes etc? The small ones encourage kids to gain independence and getting outdoors supports them (and their parents) mental & physical health. Please keep them ."
Keith Douglas-Hogg	Scottish Borders, UK	2019-06-27	"Play parks have been a huge part in many a child's journey in life, they build outdoor skills, confidence and social skills, fundamental to kids. I have no idea why the authority would want to dispose of these, a sad day for many generations to come if these facilities are removed."
Jane Smith	Chesham, England, UK	2019-06-27	"Play areas should be extended. They are great for mums and kids."
Angela Reid	Hawick, UK	2019-06-27	"Can't believe how wrong the council have this, swapping play parks for iPads!! We need to keep kids outside playing in a safe place.... like a play park!"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
John Stewart	Tranent, Scotland, UK	2019-06-27	"Play parks are essential to our children's health and well being"
Adrian Randles	London, UK	2019-06-27	"It important kid have some where to play"
cheryl taylor	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"It's important to be able to get our kids outside to play. Not everyone can get to wilton Lodge Park with ease and it seems that it is being over run by teenagers anyway. The last time I was at the big park it was mobbed with big kids our local park is a safe area where we can play and have never had an issue with antisocial behaviour."
Laura McMichan	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"We should be encouraging children to play outside. What message is this sending to our children if we take all the small parks away. Money constantly spent in all the wrong places."
Wilma Rule	Scotland, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"I disagree with taking money from the bairns' playparks whilst wasting money on a tapestry and tablets for schools."
sandra Brown	Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"Omg what next. It all the kids have left. Let them be"
Frances Russell	Hawick, UK	2019-06-28	"We're trying to encourage children to play outside and keep fit and healthy"
Linda Henderson	Denholm, Scotland, UK	2019-06-28	"I grew up with this playpark my children grew up with this playpark it has always been a part of ashloaning and should remain so for the children of today."
June Wilson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-29	"The money would be better spent on playparks than on iPads, kids need somewhere to play and use their imagination rather than look a screens all day."
Caroline Hamilton	Hawick, UK	2019-06-30	"Children need somewhere safe to play if that means running about or at swing park. More importantly it is not safe to cross busy roads to get to one swing park from your home, the distances involved are unreasonable. The council should do proper risk assessments ask people children and parents what they would like. We need to get moving increasing physical activity is one of fairer Scotland's goals"
lynsey bouglas	HAWICK, Scotland, UK	2019-06-30	"Think its ridiculous that because we got a new playpark at wilton lodge park all the other parks in hawick have to shut that wasnt pointed out at the time ❖❖❖❖"
Kerry Mcelrath	Luton, UK	2019-06-30	"My daughter uses this park. I really think this is rediculace!! You waste all our money on a bloody tapestry!! Take away thinks that kids and family actually use!!!!!! ❖郎"
moira birney	scotland, Scotland, UK	2019-06-30	"how about getting rid of the ipads and getting children outside in the fresh air instead of sitting on there ipads or computers , if you get rid of parks our children wont want to go outside , children need somewhere safe to play"

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Lorna Davies	Hawick, UK	2019-07-03	"This is ridiculous! Kids should be encouraged to play outside! That's where I had the most fun and made the best memories!"
Elaine Lunn	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-07-05	"In this digital age we need to do all we can to encourage children to play outdoors!"
Ruth Reynolds	Invercargill, New Zealand	2019-07-06	"Ruth Reynolds"
Sandra Huffadine	Invercargill, New Zealand	2019-07-06	"Children learn by playing. You can't play if there's no playgrounds."
George Thomson	Wilton Dean, Scotland, UK	2019-07-06	"It is a total disgrace and a nonsense.. SBC priorities are sadly misguided!"
Annette Veitch	Jedburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-07-09	"Many parents do not have cars to take children to the big parks and the end of the small play parks will disadvantage these children."
Lawrence Marshall	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-08-13	"Its simply wrong to deny kids of their playparks"

Comments

Name	Location	Date	Comment
Stuart Oliver	Hawick, UK	2019-06-25	"Mind boggling this is even a consideration. Vintage SBC."
Cathy Courtney	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"This is not right!"
Ruth thornburn	Galashiels, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"There's not enough to do in the region as is don't take away a simple park too"
Pearl Lauder	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Our play park is well used ~ there has never been so many kids in the street ~ SBC have never cut the grass this is always been cut by the residents"
Lynne Cook	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"The council should have outlined that these plans were a direct result of the redevelopment of bigger playparks. There's no debate that the work done has benefitted bigger parks greatly, but there is also a need in the local community for smaller Play parks. The decision to close them was not made clear from the beginning!!!!"
Shaunna Read	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"We need these playparks kept up to date or even revamped not condemned. Kids should have plenty safe outdoor spaces to play & we should be encouraging them to do so. Too many kids sit indoors watching tv, playing xbox or hunched over ipads. If these play parks are taken away more kids will spend more time indoors potentially becoming lonely, isolated & in some cases overweight through lack of active play. Save our play parks!!!"
morven brown	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Local play parks allow kids to be out playing independently. It's n8y always possible to take them to the bigger parks."
shona dickson dickson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Bairns don't participate enough in outdoor activity, hence a ride in juvenile obesity, so why take play parks , away council should be encouraging kids to go"
Lesley Birney	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"we need to protect outside spaces for children , one minute it's in the planning of new developments that they have to be there then next minute we can't afford them. i'd like to see the costings and know what they are going to do with the land if they can't afford the up keep."
dale greenlees	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Council is a jokePlayparks are the Best thing for kidsOutside in the fresh air"
David Chapman	Hawick, UK	2019-06-25	"The council need to be challenged on matters like this !"
Rebecca Anderson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-06-25	"Play parks are an essential part of every community and important for kids social skills and physical fitness!!Improve them don't remove them!!!"

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change.org

Recipient: Scottish Borders Council, Tracey Logan, Shona Haslem

Letter: Greetings,

STOP Scottish Borders Council Closing Playparks

+ 660 names on accompanying sheets

Name	Location	Date
Dru Moscrop	Dunfermline, Scotland, UK	2019-07-10
Julie Lamb	Hawick, UK	2019-07-11
sarah cross	jedburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-07-11
Janice Chapman	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-07-11
Steven Finlayson	Jedburgh, Scotland, UK	2019-07-11
Amanda Ritson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-07-17
Sarah Legge	Hawick, UK	2019-07-17
Sarah Thomson	Peebles, Scotland, UK	2019-07-17
alison mckay	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-07-17
Ann-Louise Beaton	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-07-17
margaret imrie	newcastleton, Scotland, UK	2019-07-18
Emma Carmichael	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-07-21
Vicky Flynn	Leeds, England, UK	2019-07-23
Rober Welsh	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-08-13
Amy Hope-Wilson	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-08-13
Lawrence Marshall	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-08-13
Stephen Cook	Hawick, UK	2019-08-14
Hugh Ferguson	Hawick, UK	2019-08-15
Sandra McCallum	Hawick, Scotland, UK	2019-08-20
sarah thomson	peebles, Scotland, UK	2019-08-29

PLAY PARKS PETITION

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 October 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report summarises the content and context of a petition received by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 1 September 2019. The petition, titled 'Stop Scottish Borders Council Closing Playparks', inclusive of the accompanying change.org submission, received a total of 581 signatures from the Borders Area. In the supporting statement submitted with the petition it states "bigger and better facilities should not be the justification to remove smaller parks situated in the various housing estates in Hawick and the Scottish Borders."**

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Scottish Borders Council proposed a Play Facilities Strategy as context for the substantial Capital investment of £5.036m in play facilities over a 10 year investment programme which was approved by Scottish Borders Council on 31 May 2018. As agreed within the Capital Investment Plan, the Council had agreed to review the distribution of play equipment provision across play parks in the Borders, which can 1) inform decision making around future investment in communities and 2) guide the rationalisation of obsolete play facilities which are deemed no longer fit for purpose, ensuring a cost neutral impact on established budgets within the service.
- 2.2 In conjunction with the strategic investment across the region, at Scottish Borders Council on 31 May 2018 members agreed to;
- Changes to the scheme of delegation to give authority to the Service Director Assets and Infrastructure to *"after consultation with local Members, the Chief Financial Officer and the Chief Legal Officer, declare play parks obsolete or those surplus to community requirements and arrange for the removal of equipment and disposal, if appropriate."*

Following approval, a report was taken to Teviot and Liddesdale Area Partnership on 11 June 2019.

- 2.3 In this context, officers have undertaken an appraisal of the wider network of play equipment aimed at responding to the issue of low play value, which SBC has within its play facilities assets. The evaluation has been undertaken to ensure that SBC retains and develops a network of valued, well equipped spaces for local communities. In the Scottish Borders currently the quantity of play provision is high per head of population, but

the quality is very low (compared to national benchmarking). This diminishes the wider benefits of these facilities to communities. This programme of investment will address the challenge of balancing quantity against quality, ensuring optimal provision of play facilities across the Scottish Borders.

- 2.4 Low value play facilities, where there is a recognised need (i.e. they are the only play park in the locality) will be identified as priorities for potential future investment (subject to a future paper).
- 2.5 As no additional revenue resources are being provided to support the long term management and maintenance of the new play parks being created, the removal of obsolete facilities is essential to ensure there is a cost neutral impact on established budgets with the service. No play facility will be decommissioned until the appropriate investment in new facilities in that locality have been completed. Any sites of decommissioned play parks would be reviewed for future use; options such as local food growing, informal play or community use could be considered.
- 2.6 In total, 74 play parks are proposed for decommissioning. In Hawick, the following play parks were recommended for decommissioning:

PLAY PARK	PLAY VALUE	FIT SCORE	ALTERNATIVE LOCATION NEARBY
Hawick Bowden Road	L	19	Hawick Stirches
Hawick Burnfoot School	M	19	Hawick Sleepy Valley
Hawick Green Terrace	M	15.5	Hawick Moat Park
Hawick Hislop Gardens	M	18	Hawick The Stirches
Hawick Leaburn Drive	L	14	Hawick Weensland Road
Hawick Mayfield	L	16.5	Hawick Wellfield
Hawick Millers Knowe	M	19	Hawick Underhaugh
Hawick Waverley Walk	L	15	Hawick Wilton Lodge Park
Hawick Wellington Court	L	14	Hawick Wilton Lodge Park
Hawick Wilson Drive	L	13	Hawick Sleepy Valley

- 2.7 Details of the planned disinvestment along with an explanation about the reasons behind the need to decommission play parks were taken to all five Area Partnerships in early 2019. Following this a consultation was undertaken, inviting feedback via email or telephone. The responses to this are outlined in section 4 below.

3 PETITION

- 3.1 Of the 581 signatures received, 100 respondents included comments. Of these, 20% cited concern about children's health and wellbeing; 7% referred to a lack of facilities for young people locally; 12% cited concern about lack of safe and accessible play in their area as a result of the proposals; 9% advised they felt the play parks near them were well used; and 2% felt that the large park (Wilton Lodge Park) was too busy. The remaining 50% of comments comprised general objections to the proposal in principle.

4 CONSULTATION

4.1 Within the 72 responses received during the consultation process, 207 individual unsupportive comments were received, broken down geographically as follows;

Berwickshire - 17%

Cheviot - 23%

Eildon - 23%

Teviot & Liddesdale - 22%

Tweeddale - 15%

4.2 The main concerns raised in all these responses were across 4 broad themes:

Concerned about children's health and wellbeing, independence and opportunity for social interaction	17%
Concerned about need for parks or safe and quiet spaces closer to home and/or distance to alternatives (9% regarding travel and times; 7% regarding dependency on cars/public transport; 5% regarding road safety)	14%
Concerned that the parks were currently well used	12%
Concerned that sites will become unsightly if left unmaintained	5%

A further 18 specific comments ranging from 3% to 0.5% of total were received, those being:

Lack of parking at alternative or new, need to invest in these smaller parks, currently in good condition/not obsolete, children not able to go to alternative or new on own, lack of maintenance currently so no cost so why close, increased carbon emissions from vehicle use/effect on climate change, lack of consultation, lack of toilets at new, parks provided through Developer Contribution/Planning Condition, new facilities don't cater for age of children using the smaller parks, poor condition of equipment at alternatives, only facility in village, new housing planned so a short-sighted vision, big new parks are only for special visits, having more parks per head of population should be seen as a good thing, too few facilities as it is, a slap in the face to a community currently working with the council to mitigate the effect of cuts, and reduced choice.

4.3 A further 2 respondents put forward 3 supportive comments, those being:

Play park is hardly used, selling off the land to residents would reduce maintenance costs, and parents would like to take on the play park concerned.

Several queries for further information and/or discussion were also included.

5 FINANCE

5.1 The Parks and Environment Service have a revenue spend of approximately £100,000 per annum for maintaining play facilities.

- 5.2 In order to maintain the new play facilities approved at Council on 31 May 2018, it was highlighted, a reduction in a significant number of existing low value facilities would be required to ensure the revenue impact on the service was cost neutral.
- 5.3 The annual cost of maintaining the full programme of new play facilities is estimated at £30k, and low value parks to this value will be declared obsolete and decommissioned, once the appropriate investment in that locality has been completed.
- 5.4 A replacement fund has been created for the new facilities, to allow for replacement at the end of their useful life. The existing play facilities do not have such a fund, therefore, no budget exists, to refurbish or replace them in the future.

6 COMMENTARY

- 6.1 The response to the Consultation, and the petition, is summarised above at 4.2. Comments regarding the concerns raised during consultation and from the petition are noted below;

Concerns raised	Commentary
<i>Concerned about children's health and wellbeing, independence and opportunity for social interaction</i>	The removal of equipment will not preclude use of these space for recreation – once they are made safe they remain available to children and communities for informal recreation, community food growing/community gardening or other such community based usage. The Council may also consider the disposal of the asset.
<i>Concerned about need for parks or safe and quiet spaces closer to home and/or distance to alternatives (including travel times; dependency on cars/public transport; road safety)</i>	See above point – these spaces remain available to communities for local, informal use, therefore removing the need to travel for incidental play.
<i>Concerned that the parks were currently well used</i>	The Councils observed usage pattern is low or high. Low is defined as the area is never usually observed as in use when maintenance is taking place, and observations during maintenance suggest that play equipment is not frequently used. High is defined as the area is always in use when maintenance is taking place, and observations during maintenance suggest the equipment is very frequently used. According to officers observations from regular inspections these sites are deemed Low Usage.

<i>Concerned that sites will become unsightly if left unmaintained</i>	Sites will be cleared of all equipment and made available for alternative uses, mitigating any visual impact. The Council will continue to maintain the areas as fit for use.
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Approved by

Martin Joyce

Service Director Assets & Infrastructure Signature.....

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Jason Hedley	Chief Officer Roads

Background Papers:

Capital Programme 2018/19 – Investment in Play Areas and Outdoor Spaces - Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure. Scottish Borders Council, 31 May 2018
 Public Play Facilities Strategy – Teviot & Liddesdale - Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure. Teviot & Liddesdale Partnership, 19 June 2019

Previous Minute Reference:

Scottish Borders Council, 31 May 2018, Item 9 -

<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=3726&Ver=4>

Cheviot Area Partnership, 11 June, 2019, Item 3 -

<https://scottishborders.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=427&MId=4162&Ver=4>

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Craig Blackie can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Craig Blackie, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells – Tel. No. 01835 824000 Ext. 8036; Email- cblackie@scotborders.gov.uk

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COMMUNITY ACCESS TO SCHOOLS

Report by Interim Service Director, Children & Young People

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 October 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details for a proposed review of community access to schools.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 19 April 2018, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee requested a scoping paper on community access to schools. There is no specific policy relating to which schools are available for community use. This report covers the work planned to produce a new policy for community access to schools.
- 1.3 Given the many differences across the Borders with regard to community access to schools and the amount of information that will need to be gathered, it is proposed that a steering group of officers be convened to take this forward. Initially, the group would carry out a full analysis of all community use of schools recorded over a twelve-month period. This work would be reported to the Audit & Scrutiny Committee by June 2020. The next stage would be for the group to formulate policy and undertake consultation, prior to any new policy being presented for Elected Member approval.
- 1.4 The final stage for the group would be to monitor the implementation of the new policy and processes. This would include evaluation of user groups at key points in the first year of implementation. The outcome of this evaluation and the impact of the policy would then be reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee by August 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee approves the process as detailed in section 5 of this report for reviewing community access to schools.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 19 April 2018, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee requested a scoping paper on community access to schools. The paper, covering the work planned, would include details of which schools were categorised as community schools, accessibility, letting, service arrangements and charging policy.
- 3.2 Across the school estate, there is a variety of arrangements for community access to schools. These differ between the PPP schools and other High Schools, as well as those for Primary Schools. Some sports facilities in schools are managed by Live Borders and some facilities by Management Committees.

4 SCHOOL ESTATE – CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 There is no specific policy relating to which schools are available for community use although three schools: Philiphaugh Primary in Selkirk, St Ronan's Primary in Innerleithen, and Burnfoot Primary in Hawick, are classified as "Community Schools".
- 4.2 Three High Schools (Earlston, Eyemouth and Berwickshire) are operated by AMEY Facilities Management on behalf of the PPP funding contract with set hours being available for community use.
- 4.3 In Peebles and Kelso High Schools, the sports facilities are run and managed by Live Borders, with the School being granted full use during school hours.
- 4.4 The new campus in Jedburgh will be different in the opportunity for concurrent use of the building by both school and community at any time. As SBC's strategic partner, Live Borders will manage this.
- 4.5 In the other four High Schools, community access and use of the premises is arranged directly with the School, with costs for caretaking and cleaning met from the charges applied.
- 4.6 Across the primary estate, there is significant variation in community use. While any School can accept a request for community use, the availability of a janitor or caretaker to enable such a request to be met can on occasion be a barrier. Many facilities are offered for use during school term only, with groups and organisations being forced to limit their activity accordingly.
- 4.7 Pricing is based on SBC policy which should ensure consistency, however, there are historic and local arrangements which sit out-with this structure. Within the policy itself there are anomalies in charges applied to different groups and for uses of spaces.
- 4.8 A brief analysis of community use of schools highlights that there are times when several buildings in the same community are being utilised at the same times, each with separate caretaking cover, leading to inefficiency in the operating model.

5 WORK PLAN

- 5.1 Given the many differences across the Borders with regard to community access to schools and the amount of information that will need to be gathered, it is proposed that a steering group of officers be convened to take this forward. This group would comprise officers from Education, the Corporate Landlord, Facilities Management, Finance, Community Learning and Development and Live Borders, and would agree the principles of a review of community use of schools.
- 5.2 The group would carry out a full analysis of all community use of schools over the twelve-month period to June 2019. This would be reported on a school by school basis – number of bookings, number of groups, charges applied, total income and costs. The number of booking requests declined (with reasons) would also be included where available.
- 5.3 The next stage would be for the group to formulate policy by considering rationalising processes, including booking systems, charging and the number of sites available at specific times. Any implications for staffing and finance would also be taken into account. Consultation would then be undertaken with user groups, schools, community groups (including Community Councils) and Area Partnerships. The proposed new policy would then require approval by Elected Members at full Council. It is anticipated this work could take up to a year to conclude however it is proposed that as much as possible be reported back by June 2020.
- 5.4 The final stage for the group would be to monitor the implementation of the new policy and processes. This would include evaluation of user groups at key points in the first year of implementation. The outcome of this evaluation and the impact of the policy would then be reported to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee by August 2021.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report however there is potential for efficiencies to be made in utilities, janitorial overtime and cleaning through alignment of bookings to fewer buildings across the same community and these would be captured in the Fit for 2024 agenda.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

At the moment, there are inconsistencies across the Scottish Borders relating to community access to schools. There is a variety of reasons for this, some to do with historic practices, others to do with suitability of each school and availability of staff and/or budget. It is important that a review is carried out to establish a policy on community access to schools to ensure maximum use of facilities where practicable and within budget. It may not be possible to provide equity across the Borders due to the nature of school buildings and the cost of opening facilities out-with school hours, but reasons for this would be explained within the policy.

6.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the development of any new policy on community access to schools.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no economic, social or environmental effects of carrying out the review of community access to school and any future impacts will be accounted for within any new policy.

6.5 Carbon Management

There is no impact on the Council's carbon emissions from the recommendations within this report.

6.6 Rural Proofing

Rural proofing will be part of the consideration for any new policy on community access to schools.

6.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

7.2 Consultation is also taking place with officers from Live Borders.

Approved by

Stuart Easingwood
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Signature

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Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 19 April 2018

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Lesley Munro can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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