

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**HIGHWAYS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS
CABINET MEMBER**

ST. ALBAN'S CLOSE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek permission to close St. Alban's Close children's playground (CPG) at the request of residents, ward councillors and the Brumby NAT (Neighbourhood Action Team).

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The land, where the Westcliff estate now exists, originally formed part of Brumby Grove. The Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Scunthorpe purchased the land on 31 October 1959 from the land owner Charles Arthur Briggs. The housing estate was built as part of the nationwide housing reforms of the 1960s to provide better standards of living and more accommodation for the increasing population. The estate was built between 1965 and 1974. The playground would have been incorporated in the plans to provide local recreational play to the surrounding community.
- 2.2 A request has been received from ward councillors, the Safer Neighbourhoods team, residents and representatives from the emergency services to consider closing St. Alban's CPG. This is a small CPG with limited amounts of equipment. It has suffered from repeated vandalism and anti-social behaviour for many years. The nearest CPG's to this facility are shown in appendix 1:
- 'Westcliff Precinct' is a North Lincolnshire Homes site with only two climbing frames for four to eight year olds and a seat.
 - 'Parkwood' is about ¼ mile away. This is a council facility on the opposite side of West Common Lane off Plymouth Road. It incorporates a wide range of equipment for all ages including a teen shelter and Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The site was developed with money from 'playbuilder' and supplemented by money from the national lottery fund.
 - 'Manor Park' is just over a quarter of a mile away. This is also a council facility incorporating a wide range of equipment for all ages. This includes a dedicated playground for two to eight year olds, a skate park and 'Adizione' for teenagers/adults. This site was also developed with money from the 'playbuilder' scheme.

- 2.3 The issue of vandalised play equipment was first raised at Brumby NAT in December 2011. It was then escalated to NAT priority in November 2012. It has been discussed at every NAT meeting since. The park suffers with people congregating, causing nuisance, vandalising equipment and setting fires, causing the surfacing to become dangerous and unusable. The playground also suffers from regular fly tipping.
- 2.4 Ward councillors with the support of the council's Safer Neighbourhoods team have undertaken their own consultation exercise with the local residents. In summary, from 25 replies received, 17 supported closing the CPG, four against and four had no preference.
- 2.5 Due to the request and in line with the council's policy on closing CPGs, neighbourhood services carried out a consultation exercise with the immediate community. The results are set out in appendix 2 to the report. In summary the majority of respondents did not use the CPG and there was support for the closure.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1: To close the St. Alban's CPG in line with the consultation and grass the area over.
- 3.2 Option 2: To take no action and leave the CPG in its current condition.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option. Closure of the CPG should reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour and reduce costs on the continuous repair and maintenance of the existing equipment and surfacing. Grassing the area in keeping with the adjoining areas and maintaining to the same standard as the surrounding area will enhance appearance. Results from the consultation exercise suggest there is little or no support for a CPG in this location.
- 4.2 Taking no action will result in the two remaining items of equipment being removed as they are currently unrepairable. When equipment is removed this could attract more vandalism and become more of a magnet for anti-social behaviour, litter and fly tipping, as only the surfacing and fencing would remain.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Financial – To close the CPG and grass down the area in-keeping with the immediate surroundings would cost approximately £1,000 plus ongoing grass cutting maintenance. To do nothing will cost approximately £250 per annum to maintain the site. This figure does not include vandalism costs or replacement equipment in the future which would be expensive. Costs can be met from within existing budgets.
- 5.2 Staffing – There are no changes to the current staffing establishment arising from the proposal. Grass cutting works can be carried out at the same time as other grass cutting in the area by the existing staff team.
- 5.3 There are no other resource implications for consideration.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out and there are no adverse impacts.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 Two consultation exercises were undertaken. The first exercise was carried out by the Safer Neighbourhoods team with the support of ward councillors. The consultation questionnaire was posted through the letterboxes of 146 properties in the "Closes" area that surround the St. Albans Park. A total of 25 replies were received. Out of the 25 replies, 17 supported the closure, four were against closing the CPG and four had no preference.

7.2 The second consultation exercise was sent out to 538 properties within a 250 metre radius of the park. The results are set out in appendix 2 to the report. In summary 96 questionnaires were returned and 92% of these respondents did not use the CPG. Out of the respondents 74.5% supported the closure of the CPG, 14.29% were against closing the CPG and 11.2% had no preference.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

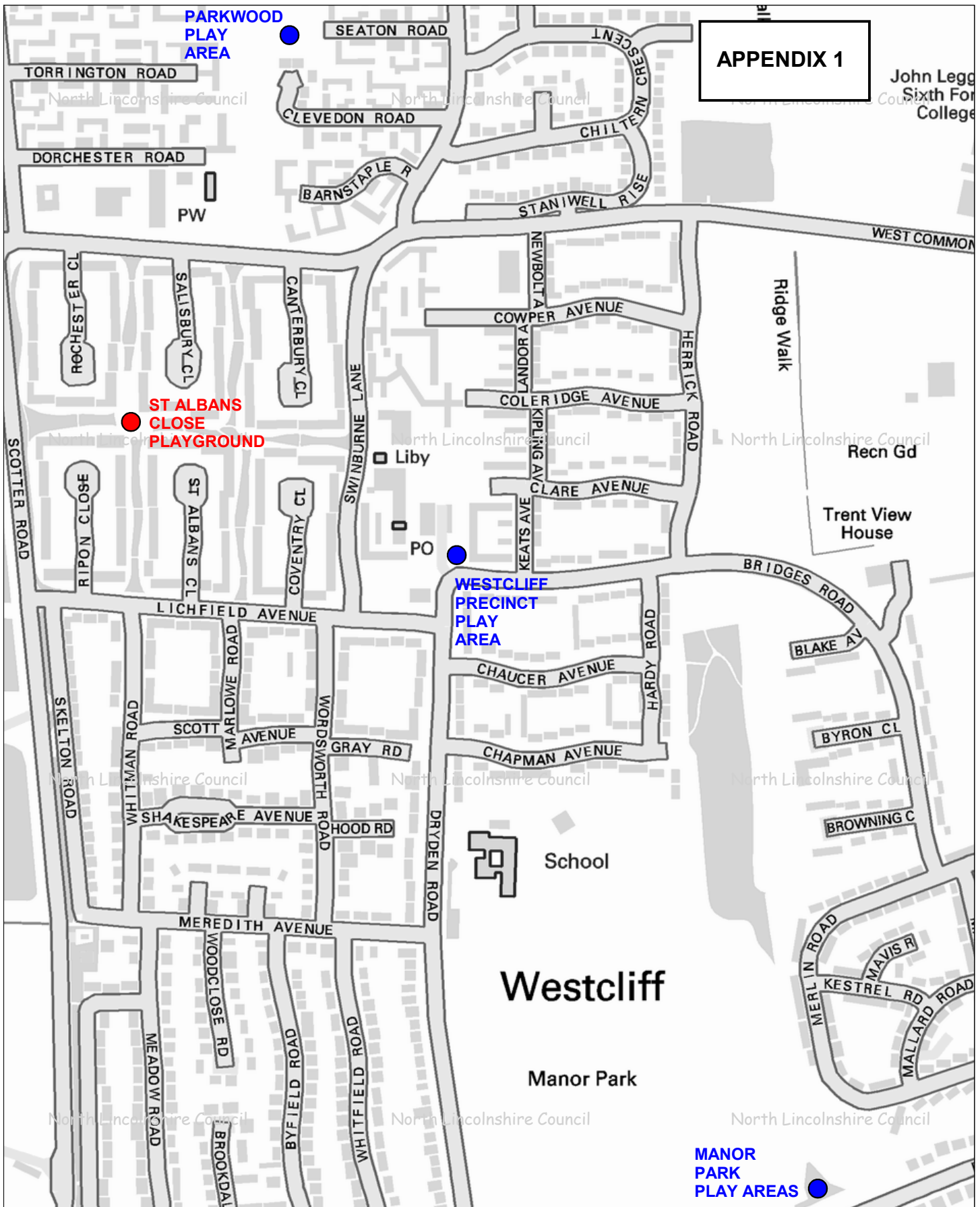
8.1 That the Cabinet Member supports the closure of the CPG and that the play equipment and safety surfacing be removed and the area returned to grass and be maintained as per the immediate adjoining areas.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Date: 24 June 2013

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Consultation carried out by local ward members and the Safer Neighbourhoods team
Consultation carried out by the Neighbourhoods team



Drawing Title: St Albans Close CPG - Scunthorpe - Appendix 1

OS Grid Ref: SE87820908

Drawn by: MD

Scale: 1:5,000

Date: 26/06/2013



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Ordnance Survey 0100023560



Places
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Westcliff Closes Children's Playground Consultation

Between 11th and 25th March 2013 538 premises, within a 250m distance of Westcliff Closes playground, were consulted on a proposal to close the play area.

The area in question is Westcliff Closes Children's Playground located on the mounded open space area between Rochester Close, Ripon Close, St Alban's Close & Salisbury Close in Scunthorpe. (Plan attached)

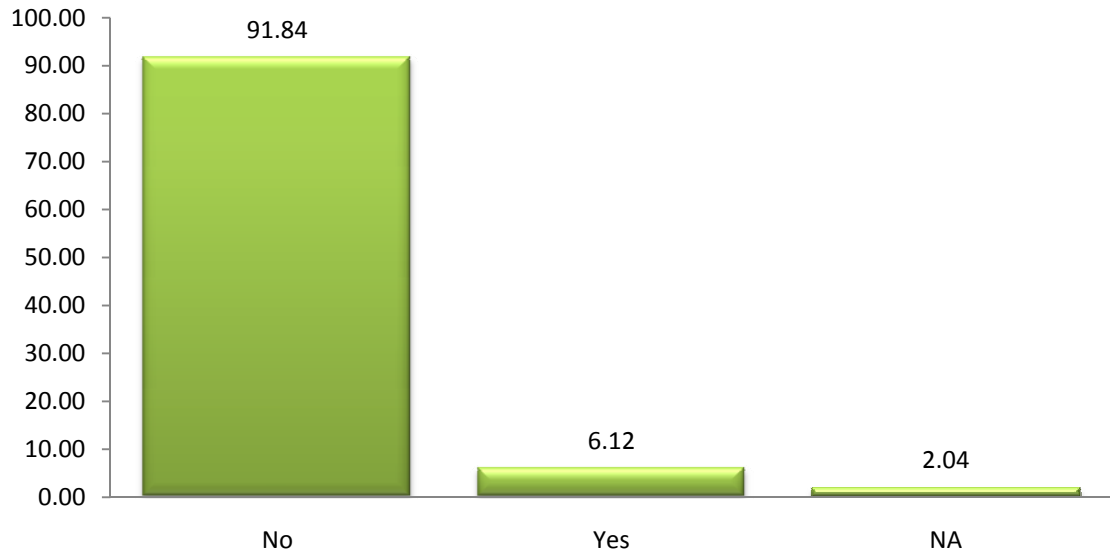
The proposal was originated by ward members and the Cabinet Member for Highways & Neighbourhoods requested this consultation process to commence. The proposal was based on many years of complaints regarding:

- Youths congregating in the area leading to anti-social behaviour
- Youths congregating leading to noise nuisance
- Graffiti & vandalism of the playground

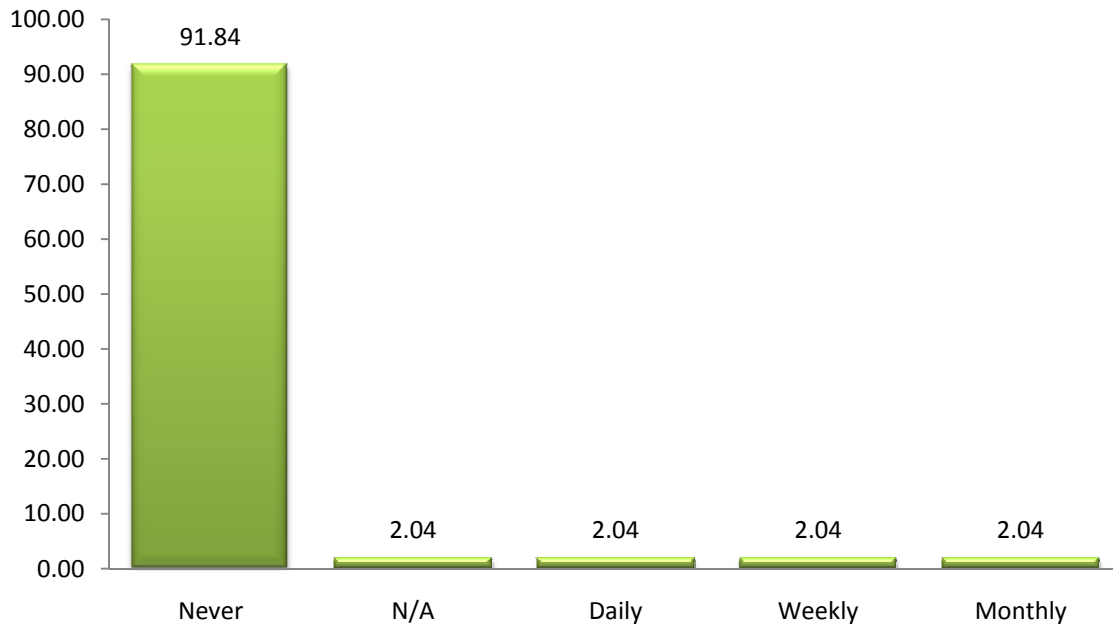
Of the 538 questionnaires sent out 98 were returned, a response rate of 18.22%.

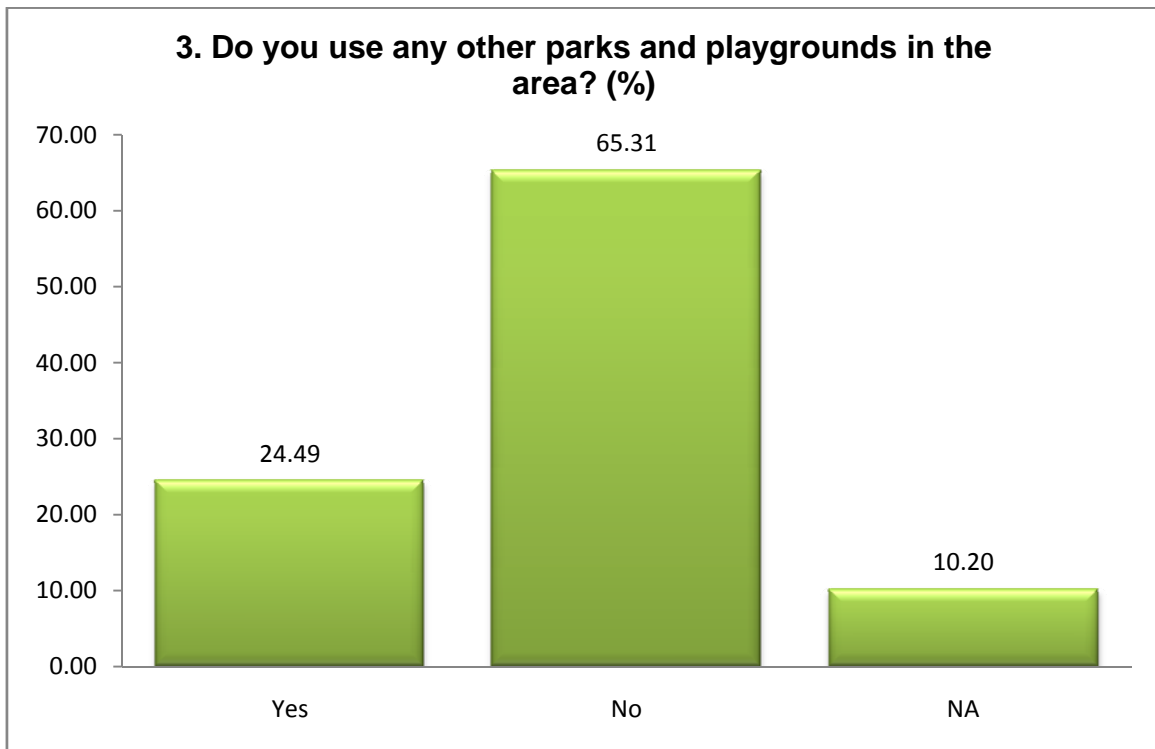
Results of the consultation are detailed below.

**1. Do you use the Westcliff Close's Children's Playground?
(%)**



**2. How often do you use Westcliff Close's Children's
Playground? (%)**





4. Which other parks and playgrounds do you use?

75.51% of respondents did not use other parks

Of those that did go to other areas (no.):

Parkwood Park	22
Manor Park	11
Westcliffe Precinct	4
Riddings	2
Enderby Road	1

5. Would you support or not support Westcliff Close's Children's Playground being closed? (%)

