

# **Bishopston Cotham Redland Neighbourhood Partnership - Briefing Paper**

## **REPLACEMENT OF HORFIELD ARDAGH PLAY AREA:**

*Prepared by Mark Gundry, Project Manager, Bristol Parks, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.*

### **Introduction**

This project originally proposed replacement of the existing play area at Horfield Ardaagh with a new play area in the same location.

The project is funded with £100,000 of Capital Stimulus Funding which is to cover all costs associated with the successful delivery of a replacement play area.

Project officers held an initial project consultation event in January to inform local residents and stakeholders about the council's proposal to replace the play area on the existing site and to receive feedback on the general proposal.

### **Relocating the play area**

A group of residents living adjacent to the play area who attended this meeting requested the new play area to be moved slightly further away from the existing site which is close to the boundaries of their adjacent properties because of the anti-social behaviour they have experienced from youths attracted to the play area in this corner of the common.

7 residents signed a list at this event asking for the play area to be moved and 8 other residents attending signed that they didn't wish to see it moved.

Our experience tells us that the re-built play area will attract much greater usage and inevitably cause greater intrusion to those living adjacent. The new play area which was constructed on the common close to the leisure centre was moved from its original location for similar reasons and is considerably busier than the old play area it replaced. As a consequence it seems reasonable to take the opportunity to relocate the play area slightly further away to avoid these problems increasing in the future.

There is strong support and demand for play area facilities to remain on the common in this area as a result we felt constructing the new play area slightly further away from the existing site to reduce the problems being experienced by nearest residents whilst putting it in a location which is no further to walk to for other users would be a reasonable and sensible option, meeting the needs of those living adjacent as well as those visiting the play area from further afield.

### **Cost of moving the play area**

The project budget of £100,000 is sufficient to provide a good new local play area including taking into account the additional cost of moving it.

The cost of moving the play area is for the removal of the old tarmac surfacing and grassing it over as all other parts of the old play area will still have to be removed whether we build on the same site or an adjacent new site.

I would estimate the additional cost of moving it is in the order of £5-8,000. (We won't know definitely until we receive out tenders back from design build contractors at the end of March.)

Moving the play area will require planning consent which will add about 3 months to our delivery programme.

### **Consultation on moving the play area**

As a result of the first consultation meeting we decided to undertake a very local consultation on moving the play area to a new location close by. We focussed this on informing nearest neighbours of our proposal to relocate the new play area slightly further away from their boundaries to confirm this was sufficient to deal with their concerns and to invite their comment. We also included the Friends of Horfield Common as a key stakeholder with the ability to reach a wide audience in the local community to invite wider comments on our proposal. We also included all those that had attended the original consultation meeting. We kept the consultation focussed as we were mindful that people are increasingly telling us they are being over consulted and that the relocation close by would have little impact on users visiting from further afield. The consultation leaflet is attached.

The result was that we received a number of emails mostly arising from a campaign on the Friends of Horfield Common web site opposing the move. A number of these dismissed the concerns of those living next to the old play area. In response we met with Sam Thomson of the Friends of Horfield Common and a couple of residents to discuss an alternative location proposed by FHC. A plan showing this new location 'C' is attached.

### **Guidance on siting a play area**

Our play officer has advised us that the development of any playground has to fit into the following guidance:

- It should have a buffer zone between it and adjacent homes
- Be capable of passive surveillance from surrounding areas
- Have safe access and good visibility
- Have vehicle access for maintenance and emergency services

The width of a buffer zone between nearest housing and the play area increases with its size and designed age range. This new playground is likely to have in excess of eight types of play equipment and guidance states that the buffer zone should be 30M wide. This can be reduced but only with the consent of the effected residents.

The nearest property boundary is less than 5m from the existing play area with other properties between 15m and 24m distance. A proposed new play area would occupy an increased size footprint bringing more of the houses into closer proximity against guidance advice.

Currently there is also low passive surveillance at the existing site as visibility from the main road is poor. The access to this site is also directly off of a low use road with no pavement. This presents a higher risk to users than any of the play equipment.

### **Possible new locations**

#### *Location A*

The existing site whose disadvantages are outlined above.

#### *Location B*

Our original recommendation relocated the play area between the access road to the Ardagh and the existing play area. FHC have informed us this area is popular for ball games and would prefer

the play area moved to location C. We have no objection to this as this meets the need to move the play area whilst keeping it close to the Ardagh and not too far away from the original play area.

### *Location C*

Friends of Horfield Common proposed a location on the east side of the access road to the Ardagh to avoid using an area popular for ball games whilst retaining a close proximity to the Ardagh to enable access to toilets, a toddlers group and anticipated future café facilities. This site is also very visible from the main road offering good passive surveillance. It is also located near existing trees providing some shade which has been requested. The site is more exposed to wind during the winter and some low mounding might need to be provided to alleviate this.

### **Recommendations**

We recommend the play area is rebuilt in a new location for the reasons stated and we recommend location C which is approved by the Friends of Horfield Common.

### **Next Steps**

We agreed with the Friends of Horfield Common we would carry out additional consultation on the three proposed locations.

### **Impact on play areas in other parks**

Many Bristol play areas were sited many decades ago at a time when it was not conventional to consult with local people over their location and when the variety of equipment provided was very limited attracting less use and anti-social behaviour less of an issue than it is today. As a consequence where play areas located adjacent to residents property boundaries are to be rebuilt it is reasonable to assume that residents may request the play areas to be moved. This is a project risk which was anticipated on Horfield Ardagh.

## Horfield Common Ardagh

### **MOVING THE PLAY AREA TO A NEW LOCATION**

Bristol City Council intends to rebuild the existing play area at Horfield Common Ardagh under the cities capital stimulus programme, which is providing funding for improving parks and green spaces across the city. Initial public consultation has shown strong local support for this proposal.

Residents living adjacent to the existing play area who attended a consultation event have asked for the new play area to be built further away from their boundaries to reduce intrusion from noise and occasional anti-social behaviour. As a consequence Bristol City Council is proposing to build the new play area in location 'B' shown on the aerial photo below. The old play area in location 'A' would be removed and its site grassed over.

***If you have any comments you wish to make regarding the proposal to relocate the play area please contact the project manager by post, email or telephone – contact details below by:***

***By MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2013***



***Please ensure your views are sent to the project manager by post to the following address:***

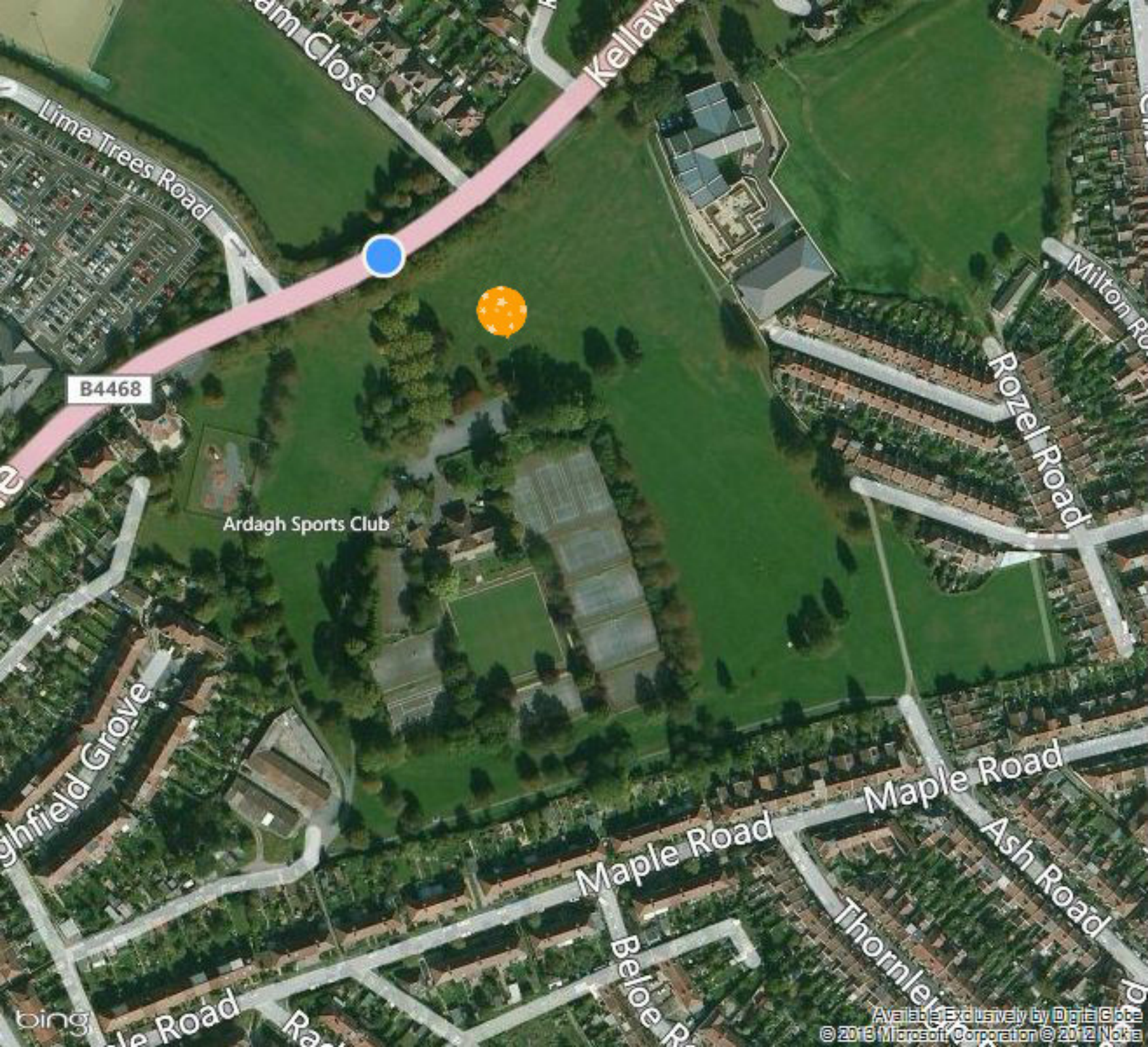
Mark Gundry, E&L Project Team, Neighbourhoods, Brunel House, St George's Road, Bristol, BS1 5UY

***Or alternatively email to:*** [mark.gundry@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:mark.gundry@bristol.gov.uk)

***Or telephone:*** Mark Gundry on 0117 9223502







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