1. **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Services Committee:-

   (i) notes the responses from the public consultation undertaken on the proposals and agrees to the changes as set out in Appendix 1.

2. **BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Neighbourhood Services Committee at their meeting of 18 August 2011 agreed, in principle, the outline proposals for the development of a new West Links Play Area and agreed to remit the Director of Neighbourhood Services to undertake public consultation on the proposals.

2.2 The consultation period extended from 7 to 23 September 2011 during which time plans of the proposals were distributed to all 7 primary schools and 2 secondary schools in the town, to the Red Lion Caravan Club, Arbroath Library and the ACCESS Office. A total of 2,500 comment sheets were distributed that people were encouraged to complete and return. The proposals were also placed on the Council’s “Have Your Say” website. Further consultation was carried out at the Housing Consultation Roadshow and a presentation of the proposals was given at the Arbroath and Area Local Community Planning Partnership meeting.

3. **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

3.1 Of a total of 2,500 comment sheets distributed, 95 responses were returned. On the question on the general design and layout of the proposals, 45 respondents (which equals 86% of those answering this question) thought the design was either "good", "very good" or "fantastic", an outcome which reinforces the design prepared. Three responses were neutral and only seven were negative or very negative.

3.2 Some concerns (3 responses) were voiced about the proposed location of the park being close to a nightclub and that this may result in the park being vandalised. Vandalism generally was a concern to 13.7% of respondents. Although it has been observed that a new play development can initially raise a lot of interest and this can sometimes result in concerns about small scale vandalism, the problem tends to gradually decrease as the development becomes familiar and loses the novelty factor. Some consultation responses mentioned the installation of CCTV cameras to help counteract the risk of vandalism, which could be part of future development proposals at West Links.

3.3 The second question on the comment sheet asked for any further suggestions to the proposals. Over half of the responses, or 56.8%, asked for a skatepark to be either incorporated into the West Links upgrade or to be developed instead of the play area proposals. This high figure shows the strong desire in the community for such a facility. The concept proposals for the entire West Links Park already envisage a wheeled sports facility in the location of the existing play park, which is to be removed during the current project. It would be desirable if any future development of the West Links could accommodate such a leisure facility.

3.4 Another area for improvement the consultation revealed was the paddling pool, with suggestions on modernisation and regular maintenance and other respondents asking for
interactive water play in the form of water splash and spray equipment. Also mentioned was additional tourism signage to inform visitors of the new play park. Again, these suggestions could be incorporated into future development of the West Links Park.

3.5 In addition the following suggestions were made by the consultation respondents:

- Picnic or sheltered seating areas;
- Additional climbing frames;
- The existing play tower to be fitted with additional steps;
- An aerial runway and a basket swing in the play area.

3.6 The design proposals have been revised to take these suggestions into account and are either illustrated on the revised drawing (Appendix 1) or will be incorporated in the detailed play area design later. Other ideas like wetpour play surfaces and safety surfacing under the climbing wall already formed part of the original proposals.

4. **RISKS**

4.1 This report does not require any specific risk issues to be addressed.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Funding for the development of the play area up to a maximum of £500,000 of contingencies from the Local Capital Fund was approved in Report No. 465/11. There are no further financial implications directly arising as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

6. **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

7. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

8. **ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2011-2014:

- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit;
- Individuals are involved in their communities;
- Angus has a sustainable economy with good employment opportunities;
- Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant;
- Individuals are supported in their own communities with good quality services;
- Our communities are developed in a sustainable manner.

9. **CONSULTATION**

9.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Infrastructure Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10. **CONCLUSION**
10.1 The design and layout proposals for the new play area at West Links have overwhelmingly received positive comments as part of the public consultation. Additional suggestions made by respondents have been adopted in the revised design of the play area.

RON ASHTON
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.