

Notice of a public meeting of

Play Opportunities Scrutiny Review Task Group

To: Councillors Craghill, Fenton and Wells

Date: Tuesday, 9 August 2016

Time: 5.00pm

Venue: The King John Room (GO59) - West Offices

AGENDA

- 1. Election of Chair**
To formally elect a Chair of the Task Group.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
At this point in the meeting, Members are asked to declare:
 - any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
 - any prejudicial interests or
 - any disclosable pecuniary interestswhich they might have in respect of business on this agenda.
- 3. Public Participation**
At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is **5.00pm on Monday 8 August 2016**. Members of the public can speak on agenda items or matters within the remit of the committee.

To register to speak please contact the Democracy Officers for the meeting, on the details at the foot of the agenda.

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The Council's protocol on Webcasting, Filming & Recording of Meetings ensures that these practices are carried out in a manner both respectful to the conduct of the meeting and all those present. It can be viewed at http://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/6453/protocol_for_webcasting_filming_and_recording_of_council_meetingspdf

4. Opportunities for Play (Pages 1 - 86)

This report presents some initial information in support of this new scrutiny review on developing high quality play opportunities for children, young people and families across the city, and asks the Task Group to agree a method for progressing this review.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officers:

Name: Louise Cook/Catherine Clarke (job-share)

Contact Details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551031
- Email – louise.cook@york.gov.uk
catherine.clarke@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officers responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 (01904) 551550

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Play Opportunities Scrutiny Review Task Group**9 August 2016****Opportunities for Play Report****Purpose of Report**

1. This report presents some initial information in support of this new scrutiny review on developing high quality play opportunities for children, young people and families across the city, and asks the Task Group to agree a method for progressing this review.

Background to Scrutiny Topic

2. At a Decision Session in June 2016 the Executive Member for Economic Development & Community Engagement (inc. Play) agreed:
 - i. The play policy should be updated to provide a clear steer to direct resources for the development of future play opportunities
 - ii. Criteria for the release of the Council's capital programme for playground improvement
 - iii. Allocation of £30k of the capital funding as match funding for the Rowntree Park scheme
 - iv. A new playground inspection regime to reflect best practice and local experience
3. Ahead of the Executive Member's Decision Session, a discussion took place at a Scrutiny Committee Pre Decision Call-In, at which councillors agreed with the general principles of the paper and expressed hope the policy would clearly support the different play needs of both children and young people, and provide effective play areas to support children's natural inclination to play.
4. However, the discussion included a number of scenarios relating to the difficulties of developing play in community settings and the different perspectives that exist within communities.
5. Those conversations between officer and councillors indicated the need for this agenda to be taken up as a scrutiny topic, which in turn led to a scoping report being considered by the full Learning & Culture Policy &

Scrutiny Committee in July 2016. The Committee agreed to proceed with the review with the aim of developing improved play opportunities across the city and identifying ways of enabling communities to bring forward potential schemes. The Committee agreed to form this Task Group to carry out the review on its behalf and set the following review objectives:

- i. Examine national best practice and methodology and consider examples of recent good practice locally from engagement through to delivery of a project
- ii. Identify future positive ways to engage with children, young people and families in order to evidence local need and inform the development of play opportunities at a neighbourhood level.
- iii. Examine how best to allay resident's concerns and improve buy in from the whole community, thereby improving community/ward cohesion
- iv. Identify best ways (methodology) to bring forward/ develop potential new schemes.

Information Gathered to Date

Objective (i) – National Best Practice & Local Good Practice

6. National Best Practice
The Government's Children's Plan 2007 and subsequent play strategy consultation 'Fair Play' in 2008 placed children's play at the centre of one of the great challenges of our time i.e. how better to recognise and respond to children and young people as stakeholders and users of public space.
7. Play England (national charity) aims for all children and young people in England to have regular access and opportunity for free, inclusive, local play provision and play space. It provides advice and support to promote good practice and works to ensure that the importance of play is recognised by policy makers, planners and the public.
8. The Government and Play England believe that children's well-being, safety, learning and social development, as well as their essential enjoyment of childhood, are affected by the extent and the quality of their opportunities to play. By the same token, the cooperation of many different professionals and roles is needed to ensure a cohesive and

effective approach. Council officers and members, children's services professionals, planners, developers, architects, housing managers, landscape architects and designers, play equipment suppliers, parks and recreation managers, community groups, health professionals and, of course, play practitioners, are just some of the people who have, or should have, an interest in promoting enjoyable play spaces that feel safe for children and young people.

9. Play space needs to be of high quality and good design to attract children and families and become a valued part of the local environment. Poor quality unimaginative space will not be attractive to children, will not be valued by the local community and will fall in to disuse and disrepair. Good design is a good investment. Play England's guide to creating successful play spaces (Design for Play 2008) explains how good play spaces can give children and young people the freedom to play creatively, while allowing them to experience risk, challenge and excitement. It also contains advice on how play spaces can be affordably maintained, and a number of case studies based on national examples of good practice – see Annex A.
10. Local Good Practice
The latest version of City of York Council's Play Policy recognises the importance of play within communities, with a commitment to invest through the introduction of a capital programme. It provides a clear focus to respond in a targeted way and to direct funding to identified need. In addition, the policy outlines a strategic approach which recognises that play opportunities should be developed taking into consideration the importance of community involvement and reflecting best practice.
11. By taking a more localised approach to the development of play the policy states that play in the city should be progressed based on 5 key principles which build on the priorities established in the previous policy (2013-2016). Some specific examples of previous successful schemes will be provided at this meeting.
12. This is not the first time the Learning & Culture Policy & Scrutiny Committee has worked to support the Council's vision for play. In 2010 it carried out a scrutiny review to participate in the consultation on revisions to the Council's Play Policy (2010-2013). As part of that review it carried out a comparison of the play opportunities for 5-13yr olds across a range of different types of local residential areas/wards, and considered an update on the Playbuilder scheme ongoing at that time (see paragraphs 17-20 below for further information on Playbuilder).

13. In carrying out that review, the Committee recognised some of the same issues that we are aiming to address through this review e.g. that in some areas of the city there is zero tolerance towards children playing in open spaces near homes, and that there are barriers to play that needed addressing. As a result of that review it was recommended that Ward Committees, Parish Councils and Residents Associations reach out to their local communities and work with them to encourage a more positive attitude. It was also recommended that a pilot scheme be undertaken involving all the relevant agencies to:

- Work with children and parents through schools in the identified areas to identify what they perceive to be barriers to play
- Gather the views of other residents, local businesses and other interested parties
- Create a 'Safe Routes to Play' document for the pilot area
- Identify any improvements required to road crossings/markings to reduce the danger of traffic

Objective (ii) - Identify future positive ways to engage with children, young people and families in order to evidence local need and inform the development of play opportunities at a neighbourhood level

14. The pilot scheme recommended by the previous scrutiny review was subsequently taken forward by a 'Taking Play Forward' Strategic Board, and this provides one example of how the Council has previously engaged with children and young people on their issues/priorities i.e. through the introduction of Change Champions – see the update on the implementation of those recommendations provided to the Learning & Culture Committee in September 2011 at Annex B.

15. Moving forward, and in response to the changes in managing ward budgets, Councillors will in the future be an integral part of the process for bringing forward / developing potential new play schemes. In order to do this successfully councillors will need to talk more to children, young people and families in their local ward and may need further support/training to do so. This review provides an opportunity for this to be explored further.

Objective (iii) – Examine how best to allay resident’s concerns and improve buy in from the whole community, thereby improving community/ward cohesion

16. Considering how best to encourage buy in from local communities will be examined at a future Task Group meeting – see proposed timetable for future Task Group meetings at paragraph 27 below.
17. **Playbuilder**
Playbuilder aimed to develop public open access to outdoor play spaces close to where children live that were safe, exciting, stimulating and accessible to all, and promote active, imaginative and adventurous play targeting predominately the 8 - 13yr age range. It was overseen by a multi agency steering group representing Play, Parks, Young Peoples Service, Extended Schools, City Development, Transport Safety, Grants and Partnership and Neighbourhood Management, North Yorkshire Police, PACT, CVS and the Executive Member for Children and Young People’s services.
18. In 2009, as part of their commitment to the play agenda, the then Government invested £235 million nationally to the Playbuilder Project. At the time of its introduction, York had a growing focus on the importance of play and the Playbuilder funding provided greater access to higher quality outdoor play areas which directly linked to York’s then play strategy ‘Taking Play Forward’, and assisted in the Council’s aim to raise the standard of play provision.
19. York was allocated £1,165,391, consisting of £1,120,453 capital and £44,938 revenue. The plan was to build 22 new and upgraded play sites across the city over a two year period, each to be developed in consultation, and with the participation of local children and young people, families, communities and representatives as appropriate.
20. However, following the general election and resulting change in Government, the Department of Education wrote to all Local Authorities announcing their need to identify savings from a number of capital budgets in 2010-11 where commitments were no longer affordable. This led to the Department of Education reviewing the planned spend on Playbuilder scheduled for the second-year of the project. In the case of York, a majority of the allocation had already been committed and therefore the Council was able to complete the planned works at 19 of the 22 sites – see list at Annex C.

Consultation

21. In support of this review and in an effort to identify gaps in current provision, the Council's Operations Manager (Strategy & Contracts) will be in attendance at this meeting and will provide maps of the city which show current play sites for young children and those for teenagers. The Head of Communities & Equalities will also be in attendance.
22. In support of objective (ii) The Task Group is asked to consider the consultation feedback contained within the council's new Play Policy from prominent strategies and children and young people from across the city, which was gathered as part of the consultation process to develop the 2016–2019 Children and Young People's plan. These key messages highlight the need for play and its far reaching impact (see pages 7 - 12 of the Play Policy at Annex D).
23. Further consultation is also underway via the summer edition of Shine inviting suggestions from children and young people, parents and carers in York to identify potential capital projects.
24. At the same time the capital programme has been launched through Shine, and an application form and supporting information has been made available for communities, groups and organisations to apply to the fund. If money is sought to create a new play area, this would only be considered if the location has been identified as being deficient in play provision in Open Space and Green Infrastructure Final Report September 2014.
25. Completed applications are due to be considered, alongside feedback received from children and young people through the Shine consultation, by a multi-agency panel consisting of representatives from the Council, parish councils, play organisations and young people's forums. The panel will recommend a final list of schemes to the Executive Member for formal approval in September 2016.
26. To ensure that money is allocated to those play areas with most need, it has been agreed that play areas that have been in receipt of Playbuilder, or significant lottery or section 106 funds since 2008 will not be eligible for consideration.

Proposed Timetable for Future Task Group Meetings

27. Below is a suggestion for some future meetings:

Proposed Meetings	Purpose
Meeting 2 - September (date to be agreed)	In support of Objective (iii): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider previous schemes in detail, examining feedback on good and bad experiences from different stages
Meeting 3 – Early October (date to be agreed)	In support of Objective (iv): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review list of successful schemes approved by Executive Member in September 2016 • Examine unsuccessful schemes to understand why they were refused

28. Requirements for further meetings will be identified as the review progresses.

Implications & Risks

29. Associated implications and risks will be identified as the work on this review progresses and will be included in the draft final report arising from this review.

Council Plan 2015-19

30. This scrutiny review supports the following council priorities:

- All York's residents live and thrive in a city which allows them to contribute fully to their communities and neighbourhoods
- Delivering frontline services for residents is the priority
- All children and adults are listened to, and their opinions considered
- Every child has the opportunity to get the best possible start in life
- Residents are encouraged and supported to live healthily
- Focus on the delivery of frontline services for residents and the protection of community facilities.
- Focus on cost and efficiency to make the right decisions in a challenging financial environment.

Recommendations

31. At this early stage in the review, the Task Group are recommended to:
- i) Note the update information on previous steps to encourage play provided in this report.
 - ii) Consider the consultation feedback contained within Annex D and identify any further consultation required.
 - iii) Agree the timetable of future meetings at paragraph 27 and identify specific meeting dates.
 - iv) Outside of what is already planned, identify any further information required in support of this review

Reason: To progress this review in line with scrutiny procedures, and protocols.

Contact Details

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Scrutiny Services
Tel No. 01904 552054

Chief Officer Responsible for Report:

Dawn Steel
Head of Civic & Democratic Services

Report Approved **Date** 1 August 2016

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes:

Annex A – National Examples of Good Practice

Annex B – Update on Implementation of Recommendations from previous Play Scrutiny Review

Annex C – List of Playbuilder Sites

Annex D – Play Policy 2016-19

Appendix 3: Case Studies

Abbey Orchard Community Garden, Westminster

Balmaha Play Landscape, Stirling

Bus Station Skate Park, Milton Keynes

Causewayhead Park, Stirling

Climbing Forest, Coombe Abbey Country Park, Coventry

Chapelfield Play Area, Cowie, near Stirling

Cowley Teenage Space, Lambeth

Cutsyke Play Forest, Castleford

Darnley Park, Stirling

Diana, Princess of Wales' Memorial Playground, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Dilkes Park, Thurrock

Horsham Town Play Space, Horsham

Invermead Close, Hammersmith and Fulham

Langdon Park, Tower Hamlets

Mast House Terrace Youth Space, Tower Hamlets

Priory Park Play Area and Skate Park, Reigate

Provost's Park, Gargunnoch, Stirling

Spa Fields Park and Play Space, Islington

Spacemakers Youth Space, Bristol

Telegraph Hill Park, Lewisham

Trefusis Playing Fields, Redruth

Waverley Park, Stirling

Wyvis Street Play Space, Tower Hamlets

Stirling Council: organisational case study

Abbey Orchard Community Garden, Westminster

Client:	Peabody Trust
Location:	Abbey Orchard Road, Westminster, City of Westminster
Designers:	Farrer Huxley Associates
Project timescale:	2001–04
Capital cost:	Approximately £600,000
Funding:	Peabody Trust

Remodelling of this small internal courtyard space was completed in 2004, in association with major repairs to sub-surface drainage. Led by landscape architects' practice Farrer Huxley Associates, the scheme's brief focused on recreating a garden for residents to include an enclosed ball games area (5-a-side scale) along with play facilities aimed (notionally) at children aged between 6 and 12. The design was informed by the site history, and signage at the main entrance makes this explicit with a reference to the 'monk's vineyard and orchard'. Consultation was carried out with residents, including children on the estate.

The courtyard had been used previously as a car park, ball court and traditional style playground, leaving little space for more general recreation. The new layout makes good use of existing sight lines through the courtyard, and entrances into the space are aligned with the outer entrances into the courtyard area itself.

The ball games area is laid out on a diagonal axis, which adds a sense of movement to the underlying geometry of the space and means that it dominates the space less than it might have done otherwise. Recessed slightly to reduce noise from ball games, it forms a space in its own right. The play equipment sits informally alongside the ball games area in an area of wet-pour surfacing, and a number of oversized sculptures of fruit (apples and pears) sit at locations around the garden, helping to reinforce the historic concept underlying the layout. A hornbeam hedge and planted borders help to define the courtyard and to baffle noise.

A question remains over how feasible it is to introduce a ball games facility of this scale and kind into such a high density housing area, on a site where space is at a premium. Noise remains an issue, and the ball court fencing has been upgraded to reduce rattle.

The scheme is drawing young people from outside the immediate courtyard and estate, and some residents feel that these users discourage children and adults who live on the estate from using the space, identifying the need for better provision in other areas.

Creating a new landscape to meet the needs of a large number of residents of all ages in a limited space is difficult, and inevitably decisions can be made that have left some people disenchanting.

For more information, contact:

Landscape Regeneration Manager, Asset Management, Peabody Trust,
45 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB, tel: 020 7021 4422, www.peabody.org.uk
Farrer Huxley Associates, London office, Unit 4, Union Wharf, 23 Wenlock Road,
London N1 7ST, tel 020 7490 3625, fax 020 7490 3626, www.fha.co.uk.

Annex A



The layout has been carefully designed to emphasise pedestrian routes through the garden.



Aerial view of garden.



Giant fruit sculptures provide informal play opportunities.



Play equipment between the ball games area and shrub beds.

© Farrer Huxley Associates

© Farrer Huxley Associates

© Aileen Shackell

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Balmaha Play Landscape

Stirling

Client:	Stirling Council
Location:	Balmaha, Loch Lomond
Designers:	Judi Legg, Play Space Designer, and Mike Hyatt, Landscape Architect
Project timescale:	Main contract completed in 2004, but work continues
Capital cost:	£45,000
Funding:	Stirling Council; Stirling Landfill Tax Trust; Leader Plus (European funding); Scottish Natural Heritage; Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park; Stirling Council Local Community Development Fund

Balmaha Play Landscape is situated near the shore of Loch Lomond next to a Visitors' Centre. It attracts a mixture of regular local users and visitors to the area. The main impetus for the design of this new play space was the connection between land and water and the way that people through history have lived in the local environment.

The central area represents a beach as the focus where water and land meet, where boats are hewn from mature trees and launched to fish the plentiful waters. The stilted structure echoes the ancient crannogs, which were built out into the water as living spaces where families, livestock and belongings could be defended. At low water, remains of ancient crannogs can still be seen on Loch Lomond. Local artists and craftspeople contributed to the design and construction of the play landscape, in the dugout canoes, the willow maze and the turfed stone wall.

Balmaha sits in one of the most naturally beautiful and bio-diverse areas of Scotland, yet children are often separated from it. The 'play area' is designed to be an integral part of the landscape, giving opportunity for children to experience and care for their environment.

There is a deliberate avoidance of standard play equipment in favour of mounds, dips, copses, wetland, and special places to allow the children to operate in a more authentic 'natural' environment. The use of the existing changes in level, of natural materials and undulating surfaces aims to provide a stimulating landscape, where children can experience the irregularity of life, and develop the real skills and abilities to assess risk. The play area is unfenced, blending naturally into the surrounding area and welcoming all comers. The design aims to create a play landscape that is a space that adults will enjoy sharing with their children whether they are local residents or visitors.

This project was supported in important ways by the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Its strong community development programme led to local community initiation of this project and sustained involvement with its development.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk
Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

Annex A



© Aileen Shaddock

Carved longboats at Balmaha.



© Stirling Council Play Services

The hammock, Balmaha Play Space.



© Stirling Council Play Services

Equipment nicely located, close to a tree.



© Stirling Council Play Services

A fallen tree encourages jumping as well as climbing.

Bus Station Skate Park

Milton Keynes

Client:	Milton Keynes Council
Location:	Milton Keynes
Designer:	Richard Ferrington and Rob Selley
Project timescale:	Design started in early 2004 with construction taking place between January and March 2005
Capital cost:	£115,000
Funding:	English Partnerships and Milton Keynes Council with additional funding provided by EBMK.

Years of use by street sport enthusiasts had taken their toll on the city's infrastructure. Street sport enthusiasts were as concerned about the levels of damage as the authorities – they had never set out to vandalise the objects they use, and were keen to see them enhanced and protected.

An area at the former Central Bus Station was identified as a possible location for facilities, and negotiations took place with building owners English Partnerships. The space was already legendary in the street sport community, and had been skated for many years since its construction in 1980. A key concern was to create a new facility without losing its familiar feeling and quality. The heritage of the place had to be respected, and the local street identity needed to be reflected in the overall design.

An innovative approach was needed to engage members of the street sport community. Branding and communication were important strands. Using techniques established in street subculture – email, texting and logos (tags) – a communication and branding framework was devised. The SK8MK 'brand' was instrumental in holding the process together. The SK8MK message, 'Your city, Your sport, Your future, Get involved', encouraged people from the street sport community to participate in the process.

The new facility was purpose-built as a 'street style' facility, which recreates the environment and furniture of street skating. It is constructed from concrete, granite, terrazzo tiles and stainless steel. The robustness of the materials, combined with the smooth surfaces they offer, provide a very good play value for skateboarding. The materials used are of good quality and employ a carefully selected palette of construction materials, which complement the existing architecture of the city.

The central location of Milton Keynes Bus Station Skate Park is key – it creates a place where young people feel secure, rather than isolated in a remote corner of the park. The facility provides a challenging experience for young people and a place to meet friends.

The site blends so seamlessly with the location that people often say: "Is that it?" or "Where is it?" The facility does not detract from, but enhances the existing site.

For more information, contact:

Senior Landscape Architect, UDLA, Development and Design, Environment Directorate, PO Box 113, Milton Keynes Council, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3HN, tel 01908 252270, richard.ferrington@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

Annex A



© Aileen Shackell

The site blends well with the surrounding streetscape.



© Aileen Shackell

Improvising with 'loose parts'.



© Aileen Shackell

Structures have been designed and specified to a high standard, and to stand up to high levels of usage.

Causewayhead Park

Stirling

Client:	Stirling Council
Location:	Causewayhead Park, Stirling
Designers:	Judi Legg, Play Space Designer, and Mike Hyatt, Landscape Architect
Project timescale:	Planning started 2005. Opened August 2006. Planting in 2006/07
Capital cost:	Approximately £70,000
Funding:	Section 75 (Scottish equivalent of Section 106) housing developers' contributions; Scottish Natural Heritage; local Causewayhead Community Council donation

Causewayhead Park is a popular park, situated at the foot of Stirling's Wallace Monument and used by the immediate neighbourhood and people from further afield. Its paddling pool and sand area is a big attraction, along with its wide range of play equipment and ball games area.

During summer 2005, a team of parents with children aged 2–11 (the Roving Reporters) used, observed and evaluated the park, engaging with other users. Their findings made an important contribution to the design brief. The following key decisions were made.

Fencing was removed from around the play area, paddling pool, sand area and most play equipment. Children are no longer corralled into a small area, but can expand into the whole landscape. Whilst internal fences were removed, the boundary alongside a busy main road was strengthened. The park is popular with dogwalkers, and there was concern about the proximity of dogs to water and sand. This was countered by signs and dog bins to encourage dog walkers to skirt the park, and by working with the Dog Warden to run a local information campaign with posters, flyers and free poop scoops.

The paddling pool was surrounded by decking, and given decked islands, making it more interesting. The sand area was extended, and a new water pump and cobbled rilled area runs into it, enabling children to mix sand and water.

Although set at the foot of a wooded hill, the park had almost no planting. A Scottish Natural Heritage grant enabled introduction of Scots pines, birches and beech hedging as well as amelanchier which adds interest to the sand and bark areas. Willows have been planted in the sand play area to help address (along with improved drainage) waterlogging problems caused by water running into the sand. Some areas of grass have been left to grow long, helping connect the park to its wider landscape.

Almost all equipment has been retained, but repainted to a consistent and subtler colour scheme. Raised timber edging around equipment has also been removed so boundaries are more blurred, and surfaces flow into each other.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk
Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

Annex A



© Aileen Shaddock

Planting rather than fencing helps to sub-divide the site internally.



© Stirling Council Play Services

No fencing round equipment means children use the whole park.



© Stirling Council Play Services

Sand and water together.



© Stirling Council Play Services

Interactive water play.

Climbing Forest

Coombe Abbey Country Park

Client:	Coventry Council
Location:	Coventry
Project timescale:	January – July 2006
Designer:	Coventry City Council/TimberPlay
Capital cost:	£80,000
Funding:	Coventry Council Parks Service, capital works budget

Development of the detailed design for this scheme was carried out in close co-operation with English Heritage and the local Conservation Officer, to ensure that the finished scheme was appropriate for this Listed landscape. Consultation with park users, including interviewing carried out by teenagers, identified that more adventurous provision was needed for older children.

The Climbing Forest consists of a number of tall oak posts set into the ground, supporting a complex network of ropes, nets, rails and ladders, each set at varying heights. At over 4 metres tall and with a diameter of approximately 300mm, each of these posts echoes the form and density of the surrounding tall trees. The untreated posts, with their natural finish, blend naturally with the surrounding oak forest, and though the bark has been removed, their tree-like form makes the posts recognisably only a few (manufactured) steps removed from the surrounding tree trunks.

Though at design stage the feature was aimed predominantly at children and young people aged between 8 and 15, the Climbing Forest now caters for all ages, including adults in their twenties. The Climbing Forest is consciously 'non-age-specific' in appearance. It attracts boys and girls equally.

The Forest is carefully designed to accommodate a very wide range of abilities, with the lowest and highest climbing elements as low as 0.5 metre and as high as 4 metres above ground level. Children exploring the equipment are encouraged to work within their capabilities and to stretch themselves – when they are ready.

The scheme has been very carefully designed to provide an exciting and challenging play experience for older children. The manufacturer carried out a full risk assessment of the equipment throughout the design stage. Hand-holds in timber, and knots in climbing ropes, are carefully located and dimensioned to permit access at the lowest levels for younger children but to prevent their access to higher levels where longer legs and a stronger grip are essential for their safety.

The number of claims against the council has fallen since this scheme was implemented, compared to those arising from use of the existing traditional style play area. Vandalism in the woodland areas has also fallen since the scheme's completion

For more information, contact:

Coombe Abbey Country Park, Brinklow Road, Binley, Nr Coventry CV3 2AB, tel 024 7645 3720
 Coventry City Council, Coombe.countrypark@coventry.gov.uk, www.coventry.gov.uk
 TimberPlay, Aizlewoods Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, tel 0845 458 9118
 www.timber-play.com.

Annex A



© Aileen Shackell

There's room for lots of people to use the Climbing Forest at the same time.



© Coventry City Council

Collaborative, social play, for girls as well as boys.



© Aileen Shackell

Challenging play for older children too.

Chapelfield Play Area

Cowie, near Stirling

Client:	Stirling Council
Location:	Cowie near Stirling
Designers:	Judi Legg, Play Space Designer, and Mike Hyatt, Landscape Architect
Project timescale:	Planning started 2000. Opened 2006
Capital cost:	Approximately £110,000
Funding:	Section 75 (Scottish equivalent to Section 106) housing developers' contributions; BBC Children in Need; Stirling Landfill Tax Trust; Cowie Play Areas Group fundraising

In 2000, a child drowned in a farmer's pond in Cowie, an ex-mining village near Stirling. This tragedy prompted residents to campaign and fundraise for a local play area.

A suitable site was identified – the site of a neolithic settlement that was of archaeological significance and therefore not available for housing. Although children already played there, the site was contentious because it was adjacent to the pond where the child had drowned. It took time to work through painful feelings about the drowning and to achieve design solutions that addressed safety issues, without compromising the children's need for independence and to experience challenge and risk.

Ideas from a visit by local children to a pre-history park and information about the site's history have been built into the park design including shelters, cooking and seating areas, and a raised beach, along with mounds, tunnels, slides and a climbing wall. The design contains elements which feel familiar to the children who were involved. Relatively few pieces of equipment are set in a succession of carefully inter-connected spaces. Quite dramatic changes in level have radically changed the previously flat site. Although the site is quite small, the feeling that 'there's always something round the corner' encourages visitors to explore. The routes through the site invite the use of bikes and wheeled toys. The natural elements include ditches which can hold rainwater for a short time.

The site was originally treeless. Local children were involved in planting rowan, birch, Kilmarnock willows and Japanese maples. These planting sessions included environmental games, explanations and discussions about the importance of trees to wildlife and to people, the reasons for including native species, and how the children could help to look after them. The hedge that reinforces and will eventually hide the fence between the play area and the farmer's pond includes blackthorn, hawthorn and dog rose. There are also attractive shrub areas of witch hazel, holly and honeysuckle.

Some initial problems with misuse/over enthusiastic use of the site in the evenings by teenagers were dealt with firmly and constructively by local residents who have taken responsibility for locking the park at night.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk
Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

Annex A



General view from site entrance.

© Stirling Council Play Services



Semi-circular walls set into the mould are climbable on the inside face.

© Stirling Council Play Services



Plenty of room to ride a bike too.

© Stirling Council Play Services



Balance features alongside the footpath draw the visitor into the site.

© Stirling Council Play Services

Cowley Teenage Space

Lambeth

Client:	Estate Management Board
Location:	Cowley Estate, Brixton Road, LB Lambeth
Designer:	Snug and Outdoor
Project timescale:	Project completed in 2003
Capital cost:	£100,000 for whole scheme (plus £12,000–£15,000 for consultation/and Snug and Outdoor's design work)
Funding:	Estate Management Board

Snug and Outdoor were contracted in the summer of 2003 to consider improving provision for teenagers as part of a wider refurbishment project on the estate.

The aim of the project was to engage young people on the estate in an imaginative design process which ensured that their needs were at the heart of the new scheme to build an outdoor space for teenagers. The core of the consultation took place on the proposed site itself, which became a large-scale experimental area for two weeks. Objects such as large wooden cubes, ramps and platforms were utilised by the teenagers to shape the space for themselves and try out new ideas.

In addition, the Cowley Teenage Space website provided an interactive forum for the expression of opinions, and this also allowed the young people to post their own photos. With a multi-generational population, it was seen as crucial that everyone who had a view was able to express it.

The young people were keen to have their 'own' space, but wanted to ensure that the new layout would not be so exciting as to attract large numbers of visitors, even gangs, from off-site, and they wanted the space to be used flexibly and for different functions. And though ball games were to be provided for, the aim was that these should not dominate the space to the exclusion of other activities.

The new layout included a small combination 'low-key' ramp and mound; a 5-a-side football pitch and basketball area, and better entrances and planting around the boundary. Two different sitting places were also included, specially designed to accommodate the different ways in which boys and girls socialise – boys tend to sit in rows, and girls prefer to sit in a huddle.

The layout successfully accommodates both space for ball games and quieter social spaces for children and young people to sit and chat, as well as a feature for bikes, whereas most ball games areas have only the one function.

The Teenage Space has been redesigned to a high standard, and for the young people using the site this is appreciated – high quality design and materials tell the young people that they are valued. Complaints about teenage behaviour have dropped considerably, along with a decrease in vandalism and graffiti.

For more information, contact:

Snug & Outdoor, 127 Rathcoole Gardens, London N8 9PH, tel: 020 8374 2176
 fax 0870 706 4654, enquiries@snugandoutdoor.co.uk, www.snugandoutdoor.co.uk.

Annex A



Entrance to Teenage Space: high quality design and specification.

© Aileen Shackell



Seating alongside the ball games area.

© Aileen Shackell



Informal seating/shelter structure.

© Aileen Shackell



Ramp for wheeled play is also a place to meet.

© Snug and Outdoor

Cutsyke Play Forest

Castleford

Client:	The Castleford Project
Location:	Cutsyke, West Yorkshire
Designers:	Steve Warren, Estell Warren and Sutcliffe Play
Project timescale:	The project was completed in April 2005
Capital cost:	£220,000
Funding:	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and supporting regeneration agencies

Cutsyke, once a thriving West Yorkshire mining town, is now classed as an area of high deprivation where children's play facilities were, until recently, virtually non-existent.

The Cutsyke Play Forest – a 400-square-metre play forest with no designated ways in or out and no prescribed routes to follow – was the first community-led scheme to be completed as part of The Castleford Project, a major regeneration initiative involving Channel 4, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and supporting agencies.

The local community played a leading role throughout, from the initial design and planning stages to completion. Children were at the heart of the project, and selected the final design from a number of plans submitted as part of the Channel 4 project.

The process of design was unusual and of interest for a number of reasons. The design was the subject of a competition, where the brief was written between Wakefield MDC and the community. The children of Cutsyke then chose the winner, Architects Allen Todd Associates, who had subcontracted the design to Landscape Architects Estell Warren.

Sutcliffe Play was contracted to develop the concept play forest design, essentially consisting of 6-metre poles, platform, slides and netting into a scheme that could be built. This involved an elevated open platform 4 metres above the ground, which could have been interpreted as contravening the European Standard EN1176. This problem was overcome by a RoSPA risk assessment of the scheme, which decided that the benefits outweighed the risks.

The success of this project depended on the close working between all partners from an early stage in the process.

The project has been successful in transforming former derelict council allotments into a showcase play scheme that has attracted interest from all over the world. Although designed for older children, with an adult scale to it, younger children are also attracted to the play forest, underlining its appeal to the community as a whole.

Cutsyke Community Group, with members aged 7 to 74, has taken complete ownership of the forest. The group has been presented with the Duke of York Community Initiative award in recognition of 'outstanding work to support and develop its local community'.

For more information, contact:

Sutcliffe Play, Sutcliffe Play Limited, Waggon Lane, Upton, Pontefract WF9 1JS
tel 01977 653200, www.sutcliffeplay.co.uk.

Annex A



© Nicola Butler

Cutsyke Play Forest and log seats.



© Nicola Butler

Even young children can reach right up to the top.



© Nicola Butler

Graduated risk and challenge for all ages.

Darnley Park

Stirling

Client:	Stirling Council
Location:	Stirling
Designers:	Judi Legg, Play Space Designer, and Page and Park Architects, Glasgow
Project timescale:	Planning started 2001. Opened 2004
Capital cost:	£280,000, including paths, steps, lights, infrastructure, etc.
Funding:	Stirling Council housing, environment and children's services; Stirling Local Community Development Fund

Darnley Park was created on a formerly neglected city centre site. With dramatic views over Stirling to the River Forth and the Ochil Hills, it forms a serene and interesting space for people living in the immediate area of high density housing, for the many visitors to Stirling's historic Old Town, and for those using it as a through route between the upper and lower parts of the town

In developing this site, the main aim was to create a space that encouraged imaginative and child directed play, in a landscape that held local significance and meaning. The distinct but connected play spaces contain grit and sand providing safe surfaces and good play material at the same time. All actual play structures and equipment (for climbing, sliding, balancing, swinging, ball games and much else besides) have been built or chosen specifically for the site, to integrate with, complement and enhance the landscape. The site includes an unconventionally shaped ball court cut into the woodland on one side of the site.

Natural wooded areas on the embankment bordering the long flight of steps connecting the site to the town centre below and surrounding the ball court have been left wild but not neglected, and are managed in such a way as to encourage children to explore and use these areas.

Local residents, who had first raised the need for the park were involved throughout, participating in all project meetings during the construction period and visiting the site regularly. Local children worked with playworkers, a sculptor and an artist/blacksmith to design, make and site special boulder features.

Since the site opened it has been the focus for numerous events. Stirling Council Play Services work with local children on a regular basis, and children themselves have been involved in the organisation and hosting of community events in the park, including working with playworkers and a pyrotechnician to design their own fireworks display. They have most recently been involved in planning and executing a new phase of planting on the site – the edible area – including raspberries, currants and pear, plum and apple trees.

The park has won wide acclaim, being the sole Scottish winner of an International Architecture for Children Award in 2004.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk
Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

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© Stirling Council Play Services

The play space has a panoramic view over Stirling.



© Stirling Council Play Services

Artist-made play sculpture.



© Stirling Council Play Services

Children bring their own toys to use in the sandy areas.



© Aileen Shackell

The play space is on the doorstep of a large housing estate.

Diana, Princess of Wales' Memorial Playground

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Client:	Royal Parks Agency
Location:	Kensington Gardens
Designer:	Land Use Consultants
Project timescale:	Inception early 1999; project completion 2000
Capital cost:	£1.2 million
Funding:	The facility was funded by the DCMA/Royal Parks Agency

Soon after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, it was decided to commemorate her life by creating a high quality children's play space in Kensington Gardens by upgrading an existing facility on a site at the north side of the Gardens.

The scheme's layout was based on the story of *Peter Pan* (author JM Barrie had lived overlooking Kensington Gardens and often spent time there), and a number of elements from this classic children's novel appeared in the scheme: a pirate ship and treasure chest; teepees; and a ticking crocodile, lurking half-buried in the sand.

The main objectives of the scheme were to create a play space which would be as inclusive as possible, so that all children would feel welcome and ready to explore, whether disabled or non-disabled. It would provide a wide range of play opportunities, and a variety of different spaces – busy and quiet; peaceful and noisy. It would allow children to experience and enjoy natural elements – especially working with sand and water – and facilitate creative play, with children choosing how and where they wanted to play without the need to be dependent on adult assistance.

The site has been hugely successful, with around 3,000 children a week enjoying this play space. High levels of usage have meant that there have been some concerns with water quality. These have been dealt with by converting the recycling/filtration system with a non-recycling system using water from a borehole in the Gardens, with the water running into soakaways (via the sandy areas which provide so much play value).

Equipment provided for access by wheelchair users has been designed carefully so that it also appeals to those on foot. Firm, smooth wheelchair-accessible paths connect the main sandy spaces where wheelchair users can, with assistance, play in the sand along with non-disabled children. Impact absorbent sandy surfacing doubles successfully as a play feature in its own right.

Play-related desire lines have appeared through planting in numerous places, and these could now be accommodated by revising the layout locally, as appropriate.

For more information, contact:

Land Use Consultants, tel 020 7383 5784, www.landuse.co.uk.

Annex A



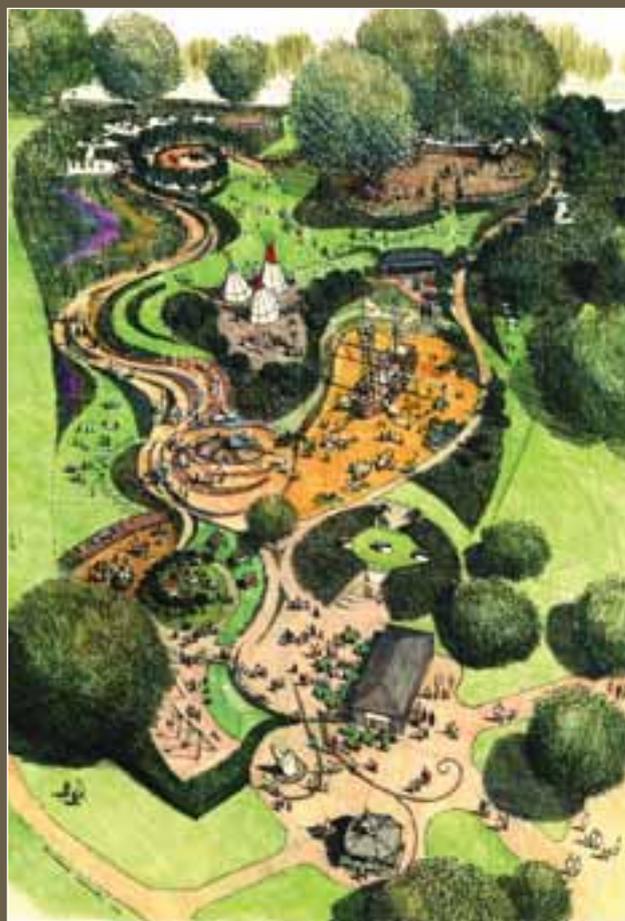
Through the main activity on the site focuses on the pirate ship there are plenty of quieter spaces too.



Sand is used extensively as an impact absorbent surface with lots of 'creative' play value.



A drinking fountain like this can be a simple way of incorporating water into a site.



Artist's aerial perspective view of playground.

© Nicola Butler

Aileen Shackell

© Land Users Consultants

© Land Users Consultants

Dilkes Park

Thurrock

Client:	Thurrock Council
Location:	South Ockendon, Essex
Designers:	Thurrock Council's Cleaning and Greening department (Andy Furze, Head of department 1990–2002, with Peter Scott and Peter Golding); since 2002 Carol Spencer, project officer
Project timescale:	Regular changes since 1990
Capital cost:	£109,000 between 1998 and 2008 (ball court, shelters, sand volleyball court, play equipment)
Funding:	Since 1998 all capital funding has come from Veolia ES Cleanaway Mardyke Trust (Landfill Communities Fund)

Dilkes Park, was chosen in the mid 1990s by the Cleaning and Greening Department at Thurrock Council as the best location for new teenage provision. A combination of all-weather surfaced ball courts, floodlighting, and new youth shelters encouraged young people to move their activities out of the town centre and into the park.

One early teenage shelter in the park was not, by itself, enough to draw teenagers away from the centre. New shelters around the ball court were designed in close consultation with the young people, to allow both inside and outside use, and to include multiple exits (to discourage bullying). Two structures were included to accommodate more than one group of teenagers at a time.

The introduction of ball games areas and shelters was carried out alongside gradual refurbishment of the existing, nearby play area. This facility was a small, fenced play area, surfaced in rubber tiles. The council removed the boundary fencing, replaced some of the rubber surfacing with bark chips and, over time, extended the play area by adding other items of equipment. This is an ongoing process. Wherever possible, old equipment is left in place so new items add to the play opportunities on the site.

New equipment has been located at a low density in between existing mature trees. The lack of boundary fencing combined with careful locating of the equipment means that the play space has a natural, informal quality that is very appealing. Without any defined boundary, the play area blurs into the surrounding parkland. The massing of the trees means that not all of the equipment is visible together, which positively invites exploration. Footpaths through the park wind through the play space, informally, and the presence of passers-by makes the space feel safer.

Locating equipment informally within a natural environment has given the facility a strong sense of place. The approach to refurbishment does not depend on large capital outlay but can be implemented in an incremental manner as funding becomes available. Rubber, sand and bark have all been used as safety surfaces, giving a more varied feel.

For more information, contact:

Veolia ES Cleanaway Mardyke Trust, Parish Farm, South End, Much Hadham
Herts SG10 6EP, tel 01279 84 3675, andyfurze@aol.com.
Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL
tel 01375 652350, cspencer@thurrock.gov.uk.

Annex A



© Aileen Shackell

Equipment is located informally between trees.



© Aileen Shackell

Without fencing the whole woodland becomes part of the play space.



© Andy Furze

This bench was installed in consultation with a local special school.

Horsham Park

Horsham

Client:	Horsham District Council
Location:	Central Horsham
Designer:	Landscape Architect Arlene McIntosh
Project timescale:	Project completed in 2003
Capital cost:	£230,000 for whole scheme (including £130,000 for relocating existing play equipment and purchase of new play equipment)
Funding:	From a parks capital budget

Horsham Park's new play space is seen as a great improvement on the previous facility, which was a traditional play area, largely surfaced in rubber wet-pour. The construction of the new Leisure Centre on the site of the old play space made replacement essential.

The aim was to provide a breadth of play opportunities for all children aged from birth to 14 years. A deliberate decision was made to move towards creating a play 'experience' rather than a play 'area'. The site is characterised by gently rising topography, with good views over the park, as well as a small number of mature trees. The new layout is designed to take advantage of both these aspects. Some equipment was retained and relocated. New equipment was placed within the remodelled hillside, which was carefully designed to enhance the existing tree planting. A 'valley' running down between these trees became a dry 'river' filled with sand and crossed by a bridge, designed by a local wood sculptor.

'Zoning' the equipment geographically, means there is no need for internal fencing to separate different age groups. Planting and ground modelling help create the feeling of different spaces and places to go to. Young people over 14 are also welcome.

The site is located close to a café and toilets and the new Leisure Centre and swimming pool. People now visit from as far away as south London, and use other park attractions such as the children's maze, a sensory garden, and children's entertainments.

Staff are delighted with high levels of usage and continuing positive feedback from users. 'Effort put in at planning and design stage and also in consultation has allowed us to look at the project in a holistic sense – this has allowed us to achieve so much more, for not much extra cost.'

The involvement of local artists, especially a wood carver, has introduced some unusual and tactile structures (seating and a bridge). These have not been any more expensive than off-the-peg items but are unique to this site.

The large sandy surfaces are enormously popular with the children, and have proved to be simple and inexpensive to maintain. The dry garden area and interpretation boards have provided an additional educational element to the play experience.

For more information, contact:

Parks Community Liaison Officer, Horsham District Council, Park House, North Street, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1RL, tel 01403 215201, www.horsham.gov.uk.

Annex A



The bridge by a local woodcarver forms part of the entrance into the site.

© Aileen Shackell



Planting makes the setting for equipment both attractive and playable.

© Horsham District Council



The totem pole sits surrounded by a lush planting scheme specially designed to need little watering.

© Horsham District Council



The play space includes different types of surfacing, to increase the variety of play experiences there.

© Horsham District Council

Invermead Close Playable Space

Hammersmith and Fulham

Client:	Dominion Housing Association
Location:	Queen Charlotte's Estate
Designer:	Paul Shaw, PLAYLINK
Project timescale:	Project completed January 2008
Capital cost:	£20,000
Funding:	From capital budget

This high density housing development is relatively new, having been opened some three years ago. Children and young people had been using a fenced area adjacent to a housing block. The area was located within only a few metres of residents' sitting room windows and noise from the ball games and from the large numbers using it were proving to be a great source of irritation to residents.

A lengthy process of engagement and involvement followed. Workshops were held on the site, which included discussions with all the local residents – adults without children, families, and the children and young people who used the space mainly for ball games.

A design was developed by a landscape architect for a shared communal space on the grassy verge adjacent to the housing block. The design created a playable space – a space which invited play, though one not designated solely for play. The new layout included a fallen tree, shrub planting to provide a protective buffer to the residents' windows, and a small 'play mound', as well as some boulders, a new pathway, and two separate timber seating areas that double as stepping stones or climbing structures.

The new layout for this area has already encouraged adults and children to meet and talk to each other, even though the space was opened to the residents in January 2008, the coldest time of year when people's use of the outdoors is minimal.

Time spent on developing design proposals was time well spent, to make sure that 'the right answer is found for the right problem'. A creative approach was needed to make the most of such a small space so close to housing.

Though the design fee added to the cost, in this situation using a designer's skill meant that a satisfactory design solution was found, even on a very low budget.

For more information, contact:

Dominion Housing Group, 15th Floor Capital House, 25 Chapel Street,
London NW1 5WX, tel 020 8840 6262, fax: 020 8799 2220, info@dominionhg.co.uk
www.dominionhg.co.uk
PLAYLINK, phil@playlink.org.uk, www.playlink.org.uk.

Annex A



© Phil Doyle

Children undertake their own 'risk assessment' when they play.



© Phil Doyle

Detailed view of timber seat and boulders.



© Paul Shaw Design

Sketch proposal for scheme.



© Phil Doyle

This small playable space has been located very close to housing.

Langdon Park

Tower Hamlets

Client:	LB Tower Hamlets
Location:	Poplar, next to the new Langdon Park Docklands Light Railway (DLR) Station
Designer:	LB Tower Hamlets Landscape Design team
Project timescale:	Project completed spring 2007
Capital cost:	£70,000 for whole scheme (including fees)
Funding:	From DLR capital budget

Langdon Park was originally laid out as an open expanse of grass in the heart of one of east London's most deprived areas of social housing. Until 2006, the park's play area was located behind 100 metres of metal fencing, which separated it from the rest of the park. The play equipment inside the fenced play area was laid out in an ad hoc fashion, and was dominated by rubber safety surfacing, and tarmac footpaths.

As part of a scheme to develop a new DLR station adjacent to the park, the decision was taken to decommission the existing play area and replace it with a facility which was much more sensitively integrated within the wider park.

Some of the existing play equipment was relocated within the new space to provide a number of play activities along the new footpath crossing the park, and leading to the new DLR station. Now that the old multi-play unit is surrounded by new playable mounds, it has a 'sense of place' and is more enjoyable for children to use as a result.

The new scheme has added visual interest to the park and, being unfenced, has a very flexible layout which could easily be extended and augmented if and when funding allows.

The scheme shows that using tree and shrub planting, mounding and boulders gives the equipment a new setting and helps extend the range of play opportunities. Removing fencing also seemed to make people realise that the whole park is for children to play in and not just the play space.

The tree planting on this scheme was heavily vandalised soon after the scheme opened. With hindsight it might have been better to do the tree planting as a second (later) phase, once the novelty value of the scheme had worn off. It might also have been helpful to have included local young people in helping with the planting (the original timescale had not allowed for this). The good news is that new trees were planted in March 2008.

For more information, contact:

Head of Parks and Open Spaces, Communities, Localities and Culture, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Mulberry Place, PO Box 55739, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 1BY, tel 020 7364 5000 generalenquiries@towerhamlets.gov.uk.
Phil Doyle, tel 07734 837323.

Annex A



© Kate Shackell

Some equipment was relocated and surrounded by new mounding and boulders.



© Nicola Butler



© Nicola Butler



© Kate Shackell

Other equipment was relocated alongside the main footpath.

Mast House Terrace

Tower Hamlets

Client:	LB Tower Hamlets
Location:	Park adjacent to residential housing area on the Isle of Dogs
Designer:	The Landscape Partnership/Fearless Ramps (wheel park)
Project timescale:	Project completed August 2006
Capital cost:	£470,000 for whole scheme (including fees) which included £70,000 for wheel park
Funding:	Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF)

This site had originally been laid out as a park, including a play space. The site had, for many years, been subject to extensive vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Though very close to housing, views into the park from outside were very limited and over the years it had effectively become a no-go area.

It was felt that only a major redesign could rescue this troubled site from the misuse and abuse from which it suffered; a major scheme was therefore developed for a completely new urban park. The focus of the scheme was on providing a place that young people would feel was somewhere they could meet and socialise with friends. It was also seen by the designers as crucial that the space was designed to a high quality in order to help the young people who use it feel valued.

The scheme included a new wheel park, ball games area and climbing stones. The scheme also included new and improved pedestrian routes through the park, which have helped integrate the space better within the surrounding streetscape and also create through traffic which helped make the space feel busy and safe to use.

As part of the focus on integrating the site within its surroundings, new views into the site were created from the road. The wheeled play area for skaters and BMX bikers now makes a very positive addition to the street scene, and passing pedestrians and bus passengers particularly enjoy watching the young people showing off their skills.

The high quality of the design has encouraged young people from different ethnic minority groups to share the space together in a way that was never possible in the past, reducing the sense of 'territorial' ownership.

The new wheel park has been located immediately next to housing, not in accordance with the existing National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) (now Fields in Trust) guidance, which recommends a buffer of 30 metres between skate parks and housing. However, in this situation, not only would it not have been achievable but it would have detracted from the principles of the scheme – to integrate it within the street scene. Though tensions arise from time to time, generally having it so close to housing has worked.

For more information, contact:

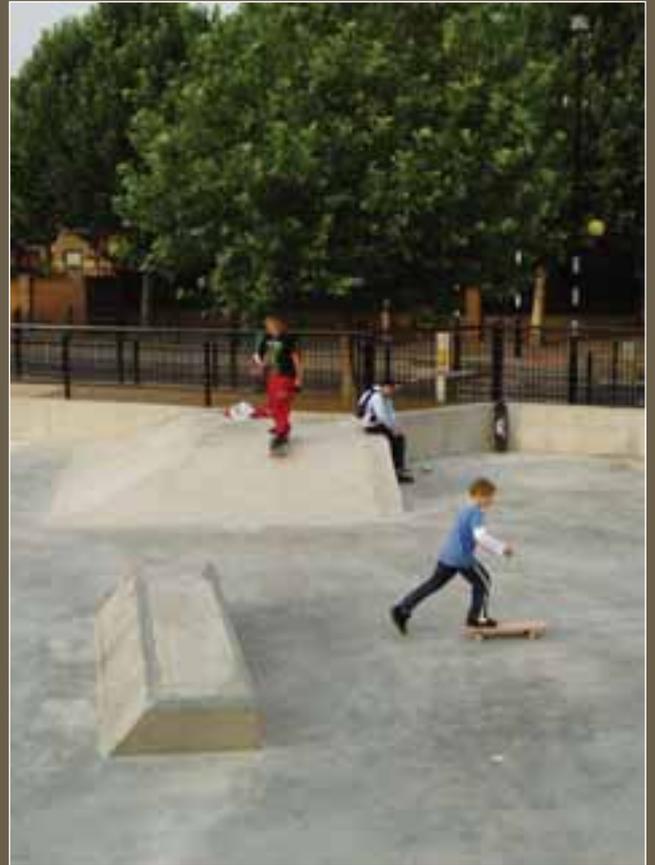
The Landscape Partnership, London Office, Tunnel Wharf, 121 Rotherhithe Street, London SE16 4NF, tel 020 7252 0002, fax 020 7237 1003, tlp@london.tlp.uk.com
www.thelandscapepartnership.com.

Annex A



A place to meet as well as skate.

© Phil Doyle



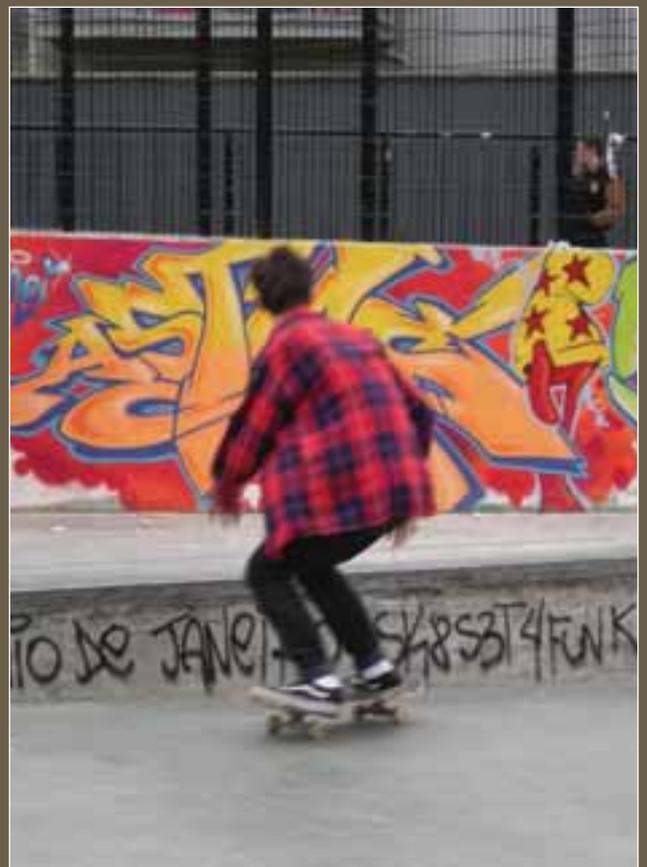
Good wheel parks like this one are very popular, but tend to attract boys rather than girls.

© Phil Doyle



The youth space is located close to housing.

© Phil Doyle



Graffiti art alongside tagging is part of the ethos of the site.

© Kate Shackell

Priory Park Play Area and Skate Park

Reigate

Client:	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC)
Location:	Priory Park, Reigate, Surrey
Designers:	Land Use Consultants (LUC) (play area); The Fountain Workshop in association with LUC (water play); Bendcrete (skate park)
Project timescale:	Opened autumn/winter 2007 (water play opening spring 2008)
Capital cost:	Play area approximately £400,000; skate park approximately £206,000
Funding:	Heritage Lottery Fund, with matched funding from RBBC

Being set in a large and popular park, it was always intended that this scheme would serve as a 'destination' play area. The wider scheme also included a new pavilion with café and toilets. As a result people now travel some way to get to the new scheme.

The play area includes a large quantity of equipment but all carefully set within mounded, vegetated areas. Great emphasis has been placed on integrating the space within the wider park landscape, and though the play space is bordered by an evergreen hedge, the designers have tried to maintain visual continuity with the park landscape by keeping the play area's path surfaces in similar finishes to those elsewhere in the park, and including tree planting within the play space which is similar to that in the surrounding park.

The skate park was constructed in concrete, and is located partly above, partly below ground, to minimise noise intrusion. It has been designed mainly for skateboarders but it is expected that BMX bikes will also use this space. It has been located in its 'own' space, and the boundaries have been kept open, so maintaining good visibility of skaters from the wider park.

The experience of Reigate is that sand makes an excellent impact-absorbent surface. It is relatively low cost to install, low cost to maintain, and has considerable play value in its own right.

Water play is relatively expensive to design, construct and maintain. However, the feature here is quite low-tech compared to many (for what is essentially a 'destination' play space) which means that overall the costs are lower and it is more likely to be in use for more of the year.

For more information, contact:

Land Use Consultants, tel 020 7383 5784, www.landuse.co.uk.

Annex A



Grass mats were used extensively around equipment, to ensure that the play space blended with the parkland setting.

© Land Use Consultants



Sand was also used, for impact absorbency and for extra play value.

© Land Use Consultants



Tyre swings are popular with children of all ages.

© Land Use Consultants

Provost's Park

Gargunnock, Stirlingshire

Client:	Stirling Council
Location:	Gargunnock near Stirling
Designers:	Judi Legg, Play Space Designer, and Mike Hyatt, Landscape Architect
Project timescale:	Planning started in 2004. Project largely completed by May 2006
Capital cost:	£54,000
Funding:	Housing developer's contribution (£24,000); grants and fundraising by Gargunnock Playgroup (£30,000)

This project was to redesign an existing long-established play area which consisted of pieces of mostly old play equipment dotted randomly around all four sides of a football pitch. As moving or reducing the size of the pitch was not an option, this project presented considerable design challenges. In its favour, the site was well located in the centre of the village, with numerous access points from surrounding streets. While mostly flat and treeless, one side of the site included gently sloping mature woodland.

Local workshops and surveys contributed to development of a design and local community representatives participated in project and site meetings. The main aims were to improve the range and quality of play opportunities for all ages, to create a pleasant and inviting space for adults and create a coherent space.

The re-designed play space wraps itself around one end (including the woodland) and partly down two of the sides of the pitch. Areas of mounding separate the play spaces from the pitch, providing changes of level and a sense of enclosure, and strimmed grass, bark and stepping stone paths join the spaces and invite exploration and journeys through the space. Existing equipment that still had life in it was refurbished, repainted and relocated to form part of the new play landscape. New features include a large sand play area contained by dune-like mounds, an aerial runway that travels through the trees, a trampoline set into the ground, and a series of four-metre-high climbing poles.

Planting has been used to define, integrate and add interest to this site. It includes a native species wildlife garden enclosed by willow that forms a restful part of the route through the space, Scots pines, wild cherry and resilient shrub planting of dogwood, virbinium, photinia and amelanchier. New areas of beech hedge were planted to fill in gaps in the existing site boundary.

Local children and teenagers worked with playworkers, the play space designer and an artists/craftsperson to design and make a range of features connected to the wildlife garden and the park as a whole.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk.

Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

Annex A



Small individual play spaces were successfully fitted around the perimeter of the sports pitch.

© Stirling Council Play Services



Flying through the air.

© Stirling Council Play Services



Picnic tables and planting make another place to go.

© Aileen Shackell



A small wildlife garden complemented other spaces focused on equipment.

© Aileen Shackell

Spa Fields Play Space

Islington

Client:	LB Islington
Location:	Adjacent to Spa Fields Park, Clerkenwell
Designer:	Parklife
Project timescale:	Project completed in July 2007
Capital cost:	Contract value of £175,000 for play area only
Funding:	EC1 New Deal for Communities and Islington Council

The designers were appointed by Islington Borough Council in 2006 to prepare a Framework Plan for the regeneration of this important but neglected park in the heart of Clerkenwell.

'Participative design' lay at the heart of the process, and children and young people were involved in all phases of the rejuvenation of the park including the new play area. The involvement of teenagers was particularly important as this group had been the focus for many of the 'problems' on the site. The involvement of adults in the consultation process was very carefully managed – adults were consulted separately to prevent their views from dominating. The Spa Fields scheme was developed in such a way as to bring the whole community together, including the 'hard to reach' groups such as older teenagers.

The play area is next to a busy through route, and feels a very safe place. The layout itself is intricate, and the site includes a complex arrangement of mounds, ditches, hollows and paths, all edged by planting and walls at sitting height, to help enclose the site and screen passing traffic.

Consultation with nine local schools involved the children drawing their ideas for a playground – and one particular drawing formed the main inspiration for the ultimate proposal, with mounding, circuitous paths, talking trees, and a 'Hobbit's House' all being expressed in some way in the final detailing. The designer saw engagement of children in the design as critical – this drove the design process throughout.

The project is successful in allowing the inclusion of bespoke play equipment designed specially for this site, which achieved safety certification. This proved a more affordable option than the standard off-the-peg equipment, though some of these savings were offset against additional design time. The equipment is designed to be non-prescriptive to allow flexibility of use and to give children's imagination free rein.

The scheme has restored a sense of safety to this site – which had latterly become a no go area. There has been no vandalism or anti-social behaviour on the site since completion.

For more information, contact:

Parklife, 27 Holywell Row, London EC2A 4JB, tel 020 7247 5800 fax 020 7247 5809, phil@parklifelondon.com, www.parklifelondon.com.

Annex A



© Parklife

The completed scheme.



© Parklife

Above view, prior to implementation of the play area.



© Parklife

This equipment was specially designed for the site.



© Aileen Shackell

Equipment suitable for a wide range of ages.

Spacemakers

Bristol

Client:	Local young people
Location:	Hartcliffe, Bristol
Designers:	Landscape Architect: Greg White of Loci Design; Artists: Kathrin Böhm, Cleo Broda, Calum Stirling
Capital cost:	Approximately £200,000, of which £150,000 was allocated to capital costs
Funding:	Bristol City Council; Hartcliffe Community Campus; ERDF Urban 2; The Home Office; Living Spaces (ODPM)

Spacemakers was a two-year project in which young people, aged between 13 and 15, designed a public space within their own community in the Hartcliffe and Withywood area of Bristol. The young people were the clients for the scheme and made key creative decisions throughout its progress.

Prior to the development of the scheme, the site consisted of a neglected grassy field. The site did, however, have three positive features which were built into the new scheme. The naturally sloping topography was emphasised by placing the new youth shelter on top of the highest point of the site, and a contour slide – the only piece of play equipment in the scheme – was set into the side of the slope. The stream which ran below the site in an underground culvert was brought back to the surface to form a new, gently curving channel which winds through the site before disappearing back underground.

The site also benefited from the presence of a small number of very fine mature oak trees and, along with the new channel, these formed the focus for the level paved seating area in the lower part of the site.

A custom-designed stainless steel shelter is a main feature at Spacemakers. This provides a meeting place and somewhere to shelter in bad weather. It is clearly a well-designed structure, constructed in high quality materials, and the young people who use the site appreciate the message this sends out, that the site and its users are valued.

The safety of the participants was described by the Project Manager as being 'the biggest issue', and it was essential to gain the trust of parents from the outset. Involvement in the lengthy design and construction process led to significant personal development on the part of the young people on the team, and their involvement in the scheme has been key to the site's long-term sustainability.

Lessons learned include finding that headwall structures with flimsy gratings tend to be quickly removed by curious children and need to be made very sturdy.

For more information, contact:

The Architecture Centre, Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA, tel 0117 922 1540, info@architecturecentre.co.uk, www.architecture.co.uk.

Annex A



© Nicola Butler

The specially designed youth shelter located on the highest point of the site forms an impressive focal point.



© Aileen Shackell

The lower parts of the site are laid out as an informal park, for the whole community to use.



© Aileen Shackell



© Aileen Shackell

The view from the top of the slide just below the shelter, across the whole site.



© Aileen Shackell

Wide steps make informal seating and overlook the level paved area below.

Telegraph Hill Park Youth Space Lewisham

Client:	LB Lewisham
Location:	Telegraph Hill, Lewisham, south east London
Designer:	Land Use Consultants
Project timescale:	2002–04 (part of a larger scheme)
Capital cost:	Approximately £100,000
Funding:	Heritage Lottery Fund, with match funding from LB Lewisham

A key objective for this scheme was to improve the way in which play facilities were provided within the park so as to enhance the historic landscape.

Restoration of the missing historic ponds meant that the older children's play area had to be relocated elsewhere in the park. It was agreed that locating it on the side of the hill would allow the natural changes in level to be used to full effect. The omission of fencing from the scheme proved the key to sensitive integration of the layout within the park landscape, a key requirement of the Park User Group. Rubber impact absorbent surfaces were avoided and instead grass mat surfacing was used around the equipment, which further enabled the play area to blend seamlessly with surrounding grass.

The detailing of the sides of the contour slide proved the biggest design challenge. Advice received from the playground inspectors during the development of the design stated that access to the sides of the slide should be prevented, to avoid possible 'conflict' between children sliding down with others scrambling up on foot. Though lots of ideas to design in this access were developed, none were followed through as all were deemed too 'risky' by inspectors. The rubber wet-pour surfacing to the sides was the resulting compromise.

The advice received from the playground inspection process in relation to the treatment of the contour slide sides proved unnecessarily restrictive and resulted in detailing which reduces play value. A more considered approach to risk assessment by the designer would probably have resulted in a more play-friendly outcome.

Grass mat surfacing has proved less successful on high-wear points around equipment, with localised settlement below the tiles being an ongoing issue. In these areas the use of a loose-fill surface such as sand or grit might have been more practical.

For more information, contact:

Land Use Consultants, tel 020 7383 5784, www.landuse.co.uk.

Annex A



© Adrian Wikeley

Equipment is located to make best use of the naturally sloping site.



© Aileen Shackell



© Aileen Shackell

Unfenced equipment is more likely to be used by children and young people of all ages.

Trefusis Playing Field

Redruth

Client:	Kerrier District Council
Location:	Redruth, Cornwall
Designers:	Kerrier District Council in-house landscape architects, working in association with Greg White of Loci Design; Simon Fraser of Play On; David Jarvis Associates Ltd; and Redruth Community School
Project timescale:	2006–07
Capital cost:	£212,000
Funding:	Liveability Fund – Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Trefusis Playing Field is located on the outskirts of Redruth, a historic tin-mining town currently undergoing significant regeneration. The playing fields were very under-used and most of the space consisted of close mown grass with old and dilapidated play equipment. The site has dramatic long views towards Carn Brea, a hillfort of important cultural significance with a former tin mine, castle, and older prehistoric remains.

Design Action: Devon and Cornwall was a 2-year Pilot Programme run locally by CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment), to promote involvement of young people in the design and regeneration of open space. Council officers decided to involve local young people in designing improvements for the playing fields, to make them a useful space for teenagers who had little provision in the neighbouring park.

Working with local young people from Redruth Community School, the design team undertook a design process, encompassing an 'inspiration field trip' to Spacemakers in Bristol; half day visits to local sites, and 'hands-on' design workshops. Initial design concepts were sketched and modelled in 3D, before being presented to all the members of the group. The design workshop kick started ideas for a new play area. Over several weeks a series of creative workshops with young people and close consultation with David Jarvis Associates fed into the design development to integrate the young peoples ideas, which were based on waves, surfing and spirals.

The final scheme includes a number of pieces of conventional fixed play equipment located in an attractive and well-designed setting which makes the most of the superb views, and benefits from the informal oversight provided by the adjacent housing.

As well as the play equipment a number of structures were chosen for their ability to be used flexibly – a curved sculptural skate wall doubles as a seating area; an artist designed 'loop' of metal can be played on or sat under; a steel beam could be another lower seat, or a balance feature. A distinctive Cornish hedge forms the boundary. A stone wall curves around the play area, with protruding steps allowing children to climb up and down easily and arrive in the play space by a more playful route.

For more information, contact:

Senior Landscape Architect, Kerrier District Council, Council Offices, Dolcoath Avenue, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 8SX, tel 01209 614466, jon.mitchell@kerrier.gov.uk
www.kerrier.gov.uk.

Annex A



At Trefusis Park, the play equipment and its landscape setting were designed together from the start.

© Aileen Shackell



Projecting 'climbable' steps in the dry-stone wall.

© Aileen Shackell



A good example of equipment being enjoyed by a younger child than would normally use it.

© Kerrier District Council



The wall forms quite a steep drop around the play space but this forms part of the play experience.

© Kerrier District Council



Structures are included which promote flexible use of the play space, such as this concrete seat/skate surface.

© Aileen Shackell

Waverley Park

Stirling

Client:	Stirling Council
Location:	Stirling
Designer:	Judi Legg, Play Space Designer, and Mike Hyatt, Landscape Architect
Project timescale:	Planning started 2003. Completed 2005
Capital cost:	£50,000
Funding:	Housing developers' contributions relating to three different developments

Waverley Park consists of a football pitch and play area. It is long established and, as the only play area for this expanding neighbourhood, is an important neighbourhood facility that is well used by a wide range of children, young people and carers. It is also used regularly by the nearby primary school, nursery, playgroup and out of school care project. The site boundary is fenced as it is completely surrounded by roads.

An earlier re-design of the site in 1993 had, importantly, re-sited the football pitch to one side of the site, rather than in the centre, and reduced it to a seven-a-side size. At this stage much of the existing old play equipment was removed, and what remained was relocated, with new equipment and a sand play area on the rest of the site.

Among the aims of the most recent re-design were to introduce changes of level and planting to this completely flat and treeless space. The detailed brief for the design was put together slowly and was drawn from a number of sources. These included the Play Space Designer's long-term observation and use of the park as a local resident; discussion and observation sessions with relevant local groups; discussion with park users in the context of staffed 'play in the park' sessions.

The design sought to incorporate the priorities identified by users: to extend the sand play, to introduce more challenging climbing opportunities, and to introduce shade and wind breaks. Mounds, ditches, logs, boulders, bridges, reeds, trees and areas of long grass were introduced incorporating all of the existing equipment to create an interesting and challenging play landscape. Very little new equipment was bought, but all of the existing equipment was refurbished and repainted. During the very rainy construction period, the mud was greatly enjoyed with sponsored mud fights taking place as part of Comic Relief. This resulted in requests to keep a mud area – which has been done (rainfall allowing).

The planting, in which local children were involved, is very important in giving seasonal interest, and includes hazel, rowan, birch, amelanchier and willows as well as an embryonic rhododendron den. In 2007, a tree that was being felled at a nearby construction site was brought to Waverley Park, adding a new focus of interest.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk
Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

Annex A



New mounds transformed this previously level site and made the equipment even more exciting.



Mounding helps sub-divide the site and create individual places for the different items of equipment.



Sand and grit surfacing at Waverley Park offer different play experiences.



Maintaining grass at different lengths creates more play opportunities.

© Stirling Council Play Services

© Stirling Council Play Services

© Aileen Shackell

© Stirling Council Play Services

Wyvis Street Play Space

Tower Hamlets

Client:	LB Tower Hamlets
Location:	Poplar, East London
Designer:	Aileen Shackell/Marc Armitage
Project timescale:	August 2006–June 2007
Capital cost:	£50,000
Funding:	Thames Gateway London Partnership

As the nearby park included a traditional approach to play, it was decided to pilot a different approach on this site, focusing on the landscape setting, emphasising natural features rather than on fixed equipment. In addition, it was felt that the small scale of the space and its close proximity to housing meant that the site lent itself better to small scale, more modest provision, which would not attract such large numbers of users.

In the summer of 2006, a play consultant spent some time watching how young people used the site, and by the end of the summer a concept plan, in the form of a 'zoning' diagram, had been drawn up, based on the research findings. The scheme included very little equipment and, most controversially, an open sandpit.

The proposed improvements aimed to introduce a sense of place into what was rather a bland, characterless space. Low mounding around the open edges of the site helped screen traffic and provide a feeling of enclosure. Existing paths were retained, and these allowed the site to be divided into two distinct areas, one for older children, with a tyre swing, and one for younger children, with a sandpit. Gentle depressions in the ground emphasised the different spaces.

The site remains, as before, unfenced, with only the mounding separating the space from the surrounding roads. Dogwalkers are encouraged to use the dog refuse bins which have been relocated away from the play space. The most contentious element was the inclusion of a sandpit. Though local parents doubted that it would survive vandalism, or that the council would be able to maintain it, the sandpit has remained in use since the summer of 2007 and is extremely popular with all ages, including the teenagers who are drawn to the seating area next to it.

The absence of fencing around and within the site has allowed it to be used very flexibly; though designed in two 'age zones', the entire site is used in practice by children and young people of all ages.

The scheme is one of very few in the borough to include an open sandpit. The anticipated problems with dog fouling have not materialised, partly due to extra targeted support from the dog warden (and a few highly publicised fines for fouling).

For more information, contact:

Aileen Shackell Associates, aileen@asa-landscape.com, www.asa-landscape.com.

Annex A



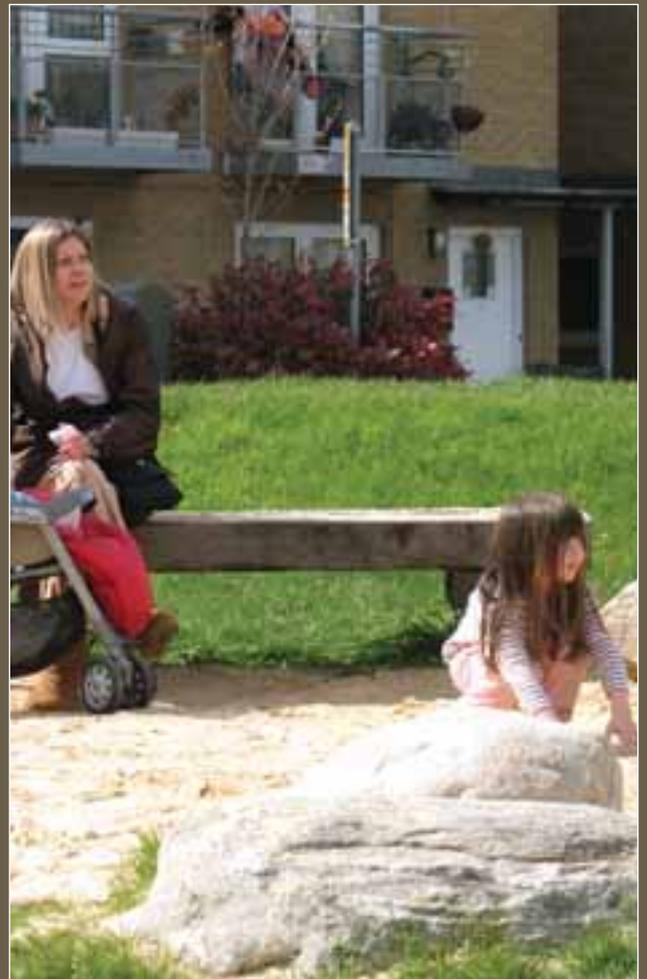
© Aileen Shackell

The new tyre swing is situated in a hollow in the ground, surrounded by mounding to screen traffic and for biking over.



© Aileen Shackell

Playing with sand, close to home.



© Nicola Butler

Comfortable seating makes the visit more enjoyable for parents too.



© Nicola Butler

Checking that the daffodils have all come up.

Stirling Council

Organisational case study

A new approach

Stirling Council has successfully constructed a number of play areas which exemplify the design principles set out in this document. The council's success in delivering good quality play spaces is due to: an integrated team approach; a dedicated Playgrounds Team, directly responsible for play area maintenance; a commitment to professional design; and the design process.

Service structure, organisation and principles

Play Services, headed by a service manager, is based in Children's Services and is responsible for staffed play and crèche provision and direct management, development and maintenance of all of the council's 90 plus play areas (including several skateparks and informal sports areas). Two teams, each headed by a team leader – the Play Programmes Team, and the Playgrounds Team – are responsible for the two elements of the service. They work closely together, following a shared set of values and principles focusing on children and the importance of play.

The Playgrounds Team consists of the team leader, a playgrounds inspector/supervisor, three permanent playgrounds operatives, and two seasonal staff. The team is responsible for all aspects (except litter collection) of the care and maintenance of play areas – including planting, mowing regimes, etc, along with installation, checking and maintenance of play equipment and surfacing. Each team member is multi-skilled, which is necessary to implement the basic principles of treating each site individually and holistically. Close connection and shared values with the Play Programmes Team is an essential component of an approach that puts children and young people at the heart of the thinking about play areas. Design, construction, development and maintenance of play areas is informed by continuing work in communities with children and young people. The structure of the service makes children and young people's involvement possible and natural.

The importance of design

The council is unusual in the UK for routinely using a play space designer (with specialist expertise in play) alongside a landscape designer (with design and technical expertise). The most successful schemes are those where the play and landscape designers work closely together and each are able to fully utilise their expertise. All major refurbishments and new projects are professionally designed. The design process includes contributions and involvement of others in gradually building the brief, and agreeing a final costed design. The design process is regarded as so important that the council commits to pay design costs even for aspirational projects that are initiated with no capital budget yet identified.

Stirling Council's integrated approach driven by a clear vision for children's play has enabled it to implement a wide range of high quality schemes.

For more information, contact:

Children's Services – Play Services, Stirling Council, Unit 12, Back O'Hill Industrial Estate, Back O'Hill Road, Stirling, FK8 1SH, tel 01786 430120, play@stirling.gov.uk
Sue Gutteridge, Play Consultancy, tel 0131 662 9984, suegutteridge@btinternet.com.

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Update on Implementation of Approved Recommendations Arising From Casual Play Scrutiny Review

Approved Scrutiny Recommendation	Update on Implementation of Recommendations 28 Sept 2011
<p>The introduction of a pilot scheme, by working with the new Taking Play Forward Strategic Board to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. identify three diverse areas within the 'area based service delivery' pilot area which would benefit from such a scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Play Team have aligned this work with that of the Neighbourhood Working pilot that was launched in October 2010 in Acomb, Dringhouses and Woodthorpe; Holgate; Micklegate; Rural West and Westfield wards of the City. As part of this initiative, ward partnership board meetings were held in November 2010, which brought together ward councillors, council officers, and representatives of local organisations. At these meetings key priorities were identified for each of the 6 participating wards. A common theme that emerged from these meetings was young people, and a task group was set up to look at issues that affect them at a ward level.

<p>ii. identify all the relevant parties from within the Council, external organisations, and from within the identified area of the City to participate in the scheme.</p>	<p>ii. To establish whether the issue/priorities identified through the partnerships were the same as those of the young people, Change Champion events were set up. Change Champions are children and young people from schools within the selected wards. They consult with their peers to establish issues and concerns which they want to resolve or raise awareness of. The young people bring these along to a workshop style event to explore possible solutions. Also in attendance at the meeting/event are local councillors, council officers and other service providers who can assist in discussions in relation to possible solutions and available resources. The identification of solutions may also include the young people taking ideas away to work on through a school-based project. The Change Champions are supported by officers and the event is lead by young people trained in facilitation. These events have so far taken place in Micklegate and Westfield and Acomb wards. Play has been a key theme at these sessions.</p>
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<p>iii. draft a framework for the scheme for the Executive's consideration.</p>	<p>iii. As a result of the Change Champion events, an action plan is produced which is then fed back into the relevant tasking groups (as there may be cross cutting themes) to ensure that young people's ideas and issues are recognised within service delivery planning and decision making. The overall aim of this approach is to ensure local solutions to community issues are developed in conjunction with young people and therefore are better informed to utilise resources more effectively. The Play Team will continue to align with the Neighbourhood approach which is due to be rolled out from October, to ensure play issues can be raised and addressed at a local level.</p>
<p>2. The encouragement of ward committees parish councils and residents' associations to promote the value of outdoor play and take up any opportunities for encouraging community buy-in to play opportunities in their locality.</p>	<p>As the action plans are implemented and projects begin to take place at a local level, best practice will be captured through case studies as well a range of resource, which in turn can be shared with ward committee, parish councils and other stakeholders, including resident, to promote the benefits of play.</p>
<p><u>Scrutiny Comments on Update Received 28 September 2011</u></p>	

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Play Areas with Major Investment Since 2008

Ward	Site	Funding source	Date of investment
Acomb	Viking Road	Playbuilder	2009/10
Bishopthorpe	Keeble Park	Playbuilder	2009/10
Clifton	Ashton Avenue	Playbuilder	2009/10
Dringhouses and Woodthorpe	Leeside	Lottery	2008/09
Guildhall	Clarence Gardens	106	2015
Haxby and Wigginton	Mancroft (Haxby)	Playbuilder	2010/11
Heworth	Barfield Road	Playbuilder	2009/10
	Bell Farm Adventure Playground	Playbuilder	2010/11
	Arran Place	Housing Revenue Account and 106	2014
Heworth Without	Stray Road	Playbuilder	2010/11
Holgate	Balfour Street (Back Park)	Playbuilder	2009/10
	Sowerby Road	Playbuilder	2009/10
	Garnett Terrace	Playbuilder	2010/11
Hull Road	Hull Road Park - main	Playbuilder	2010/11
	Hull Road Park – small	Housing Revenue Account	
Huntington and New Earswick	Orchard Park	Playbuilder	2009/10
Rural York West	Brecksfield (Skelton)	Playbuilder	2009/10
	Copmanthorpe Recreation Ground	Playbuilder	2010/11
Osbalwick and Dunnington	Dunnington Recreation Ground	Big Lottery Fund	2010
Strensall		Playbuilder	2010/11
Westfield	Chesney's Field, (Foxwood Lane)	Playbuilder	2009/10

Annex C

	Grange Lane	Playbuilder and Yorventure	2010/11
	Acomb Green	Big Lottery Fund	2012
	Cornlands Road	106 and Yorventure	2014
Wheldrake	Naburn	Playbuilder	2009/10
	Elvington	Playbuilder	2009/10
		Playbuilder	

Taking Play Forward 2016-2019



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Foreword

Within our parks and open spaces in York we are lucky to have a wide range of play provision, which our children and young people have enjoyed for generations. In 2002, the city adopted a play policy and this latest version recognises the continued importance of play in the healthy development of our children.

We are committed to supporting excellent play provision across the city and promoting the access and availability of play to all children and young people. Our 2016 policy takes a more localised approach to the development of play. It aims to empower and encourage communities to help ensure all children are able to access quality and locally based play opportunities.

Cllr Keith Aspden, Deputy Leader of City of York Council and Executive Member for Community Engagement (including Play)

Introduction

Taking Play Forward was first written in 2002 and has been refreshed a number of times and now again in 2016. Over the years the play policy has become increasingly focused on developing play at a neighbourhood and community level.

City of York Council has a longstanding commitment to support the development of play provision across the city. National and local initiatives have contributed to locally-developed schemes which have helped inform the policy through each version. We are continually reviewing how, as a local authority, we can enable communities to develop their opportunities for play in the best way possible to ensure that play is embedded and sustainable with communities.

York's Play Policy

Taking Play Forward is the name for the ever-evolving collective vision and strategy for play in York. It provides a framework and a focus to direct, respond to, and enable the development of play and to identify relevant support and resources. The policy outlines a strategic approach which recognises that play opportunities should be developed where there is a need, taking into consideration the importance of community involvement and being reflective of best practice. Taking Play Forward aims to:

- Clarify the Council's commitment to supporting the development of play. The play policy is a working tool to enable the development of children's play environments.
- Commit to supporting high-quality play experiences for all children and young people across the City of York.
- Illustrate how the Council will enable communities to develop their play provision and adopt best practice.

York's Mission Statement on Play

- We will enable our communities to provide the best possible play opportunities, activities, events and environments, which are safe, appropriate, easy to access, stimulating and above all fun!
- We want more people to understand the value and benefits of play, not only as a worthwhile activity, but as an essential part of every child's development.
- We will respect the right of children to play freely and safely on their own or in their interactions with other children, adults and carers. In each context, we must be responsive to choice, suitability and accessibility.

The 9 Better Play Objectives:

Taking Play Forward is based on the 9 Better Play Objectives for York, which provide a framework for developing and monitoring the quality of play. They draw upon the national better play criteria (see Annex x).

Objective 1: The provision extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it

Objective 2: The provision recognises the child's need to test boundaries and responds positively to that need

Objective 3: The provision manages the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm

Objective 4: The provision maximises the range of play opportunities

Objective 5: The provision fosters independence and self-esteem

Objective 6: The provision fosters children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction

Objective 7: The provision fosters the child's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn

Objective 8: The provision meets the necessary legislative requirements

Objective 9: The organisation involves users in decision making and consultation

Through the Better Play Objectives we aim to:

- Raise the standards of play provision
- Make sure children and young people know and exercise their rights to play, culture, rest and leisure

- Encourage genuine communication and interactions between children and young people, individuals and services with interests in play
- Create flexibility in the use of play resources
- Identify accessible criteria for funding and developing play opportunities
- Increase public recognition of the importance of play and enable relevant legislative requirements to be met
- Better manage play environments and increase recognition of the complex resources needed to provide stimulating children's play opportunities. (This is as important in settings such as schools as it is in open natural play spaces)

York's Play Successes Since 2013

- The Council has worked collaboratively with community groups and volunteers to develop and improve play opportunities at a neighbourhood level, including Aaron Place, Cornlands Road, Grange Lane, Clarence Gardens and phase 2 of the Rawcliffe County Park Bike Track
- Through the Better Play Grants (2013-2016) the Council has distributed up to £87K per year worth of funding to voluntary and community play sector organisations in York to improve the quality of play experiences and help support groups.
- The city celebrates National Play Day annually hosted by voluntary sector organisations
- Secured £120k worth of funding to upgrade Rowntree Park Skate Park facilities – work to commence 2016

Evidence for the Development of the Policy

Key Messages

It is recognised that play affects, influences and benefits many other agendas. Below are key messages from a number of prominent strategies that highlight the need for play and its far reaching impact.

Health, Well Being and Play

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that: All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day. This improves cardiovascular health, maintains a healthy weight, improves bone health, improves self confidence and develops new social skills. Through promoting the values and benefits of active play we will improve health outcomes for our children and young people.

City of York Child Poverty Strategy 2011 – 2020

Priorities in the plan include – Ensure all children and young people have access to local, safe and freely available quality play experiences that are within easy walking distance, and that communities are involved in the development of this equipment.

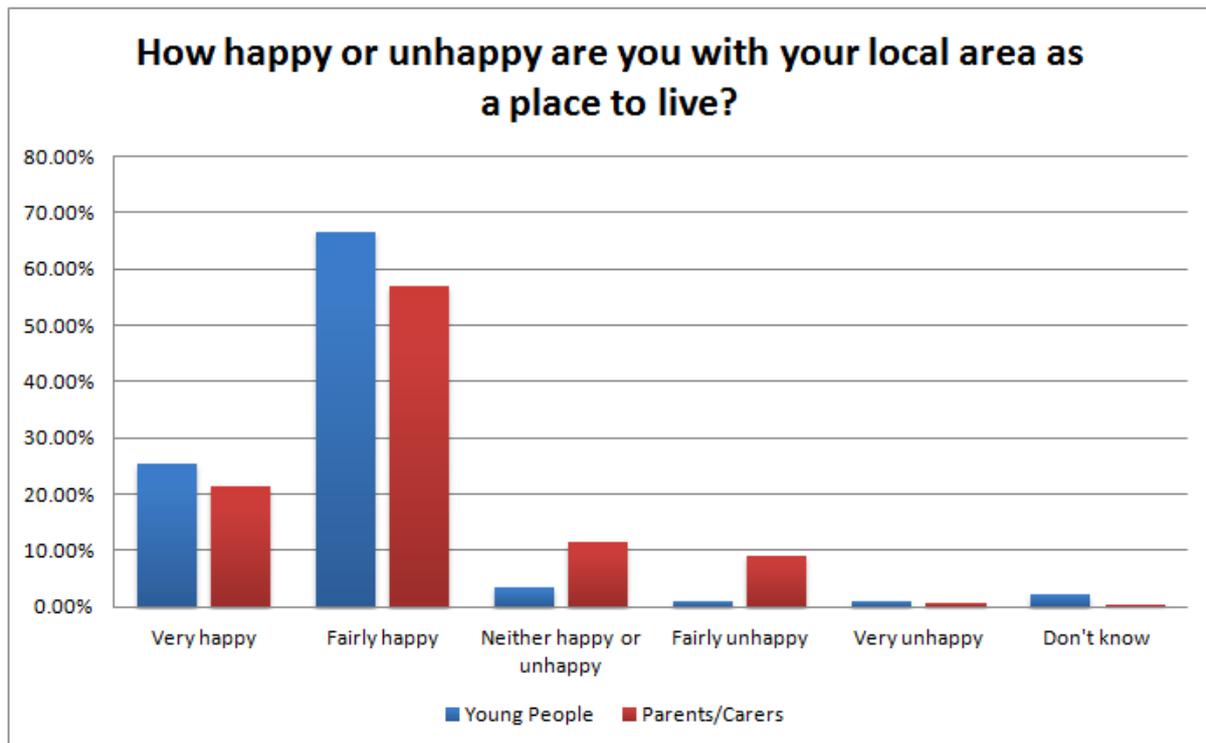
Children and Young People’s Plan 2016-2019

Involving children and young people and hearing their voice is a well-established part of how York works to deliver the best possible outcomes for families. The voices of children, young people, families and practitioners have played a pivotal role in the development of the new Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP).

The annual “Review of Voice”, completed in April 2015, brings together key messages from young people gathered through one-to-one work, participation groups, surveys and consultations. This knowledge of existing messages has formed a critical role in shaping the priorities for the new Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP).

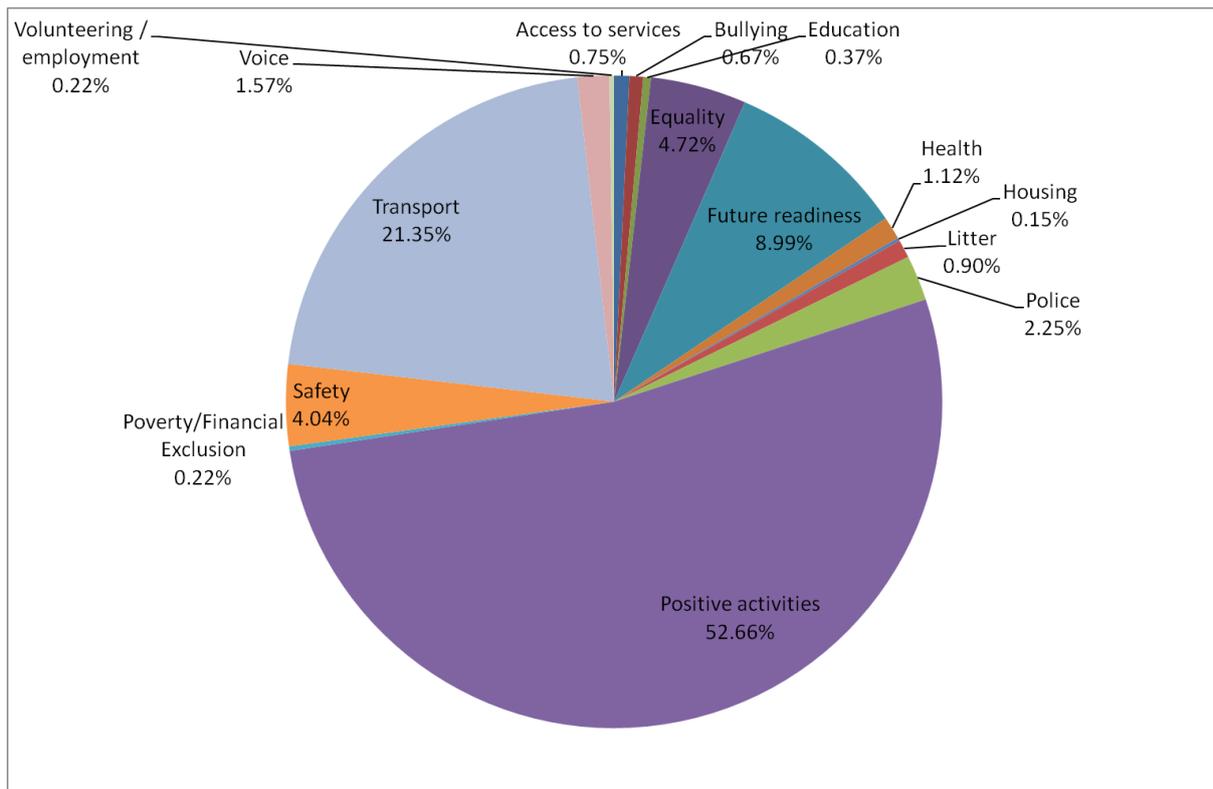
The existing messages taken from the “Review of Voice” represent messages from thousands of children and young people. The direct consultation work engaged around 200 further young people, 400 parents and 184 practitioners and groups.

We can see from the direct consultation work that took place to inform the development of the new CYPP that generally people feel positively about York as a place for children and young people to live. The figure below shows how happy children and young people and parents or carers are with their local area.



There are many comments from children, young people, parents and carers which paint a positive picture of York as a safe and happy place to live.

Children and young people broadly endorsed the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan (early help, narrowing gaps, health and well-being, whole family work). In addition to these core priorities children and young people also identified a sizeable set of additional priorities. These represent a diverse range of priority areas which are summarised in the chart below.

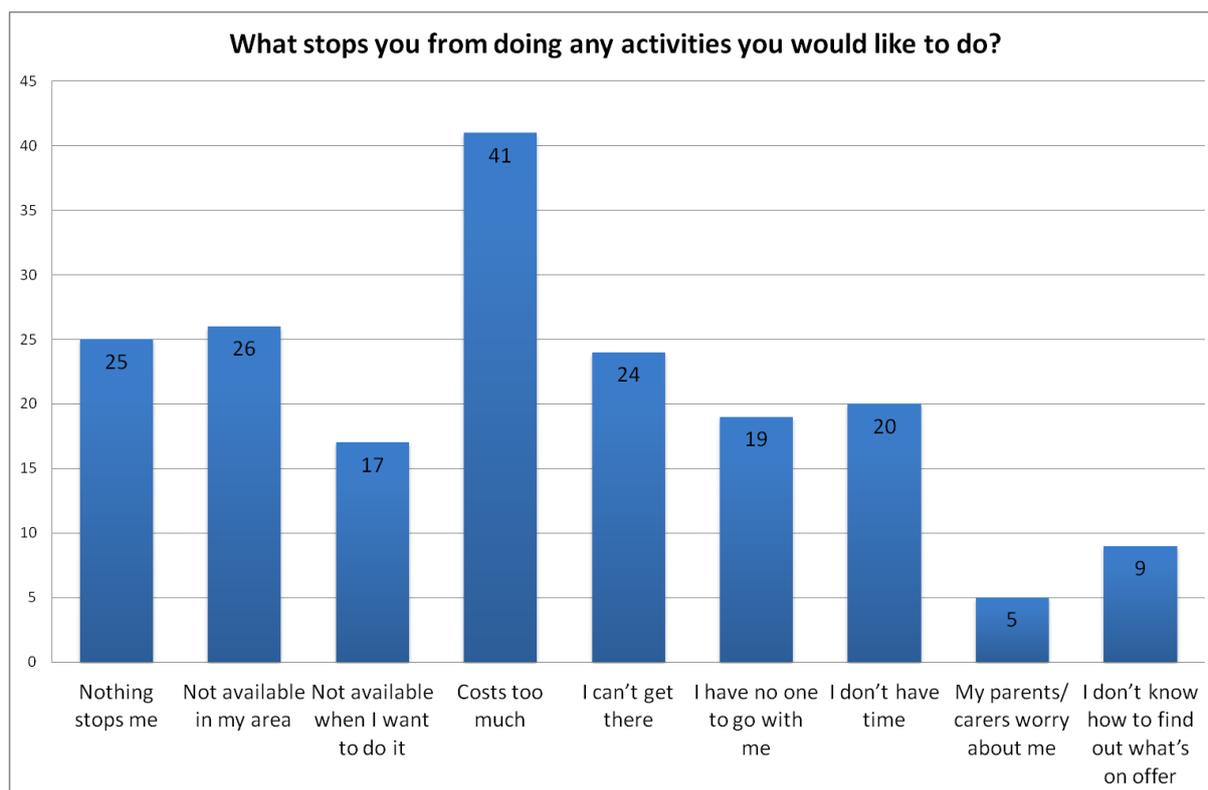


It can be seen that a significant number of the comments from focus groups related to positive activities. A broad range of feedback from children and young people is reflected under this category. For example:

- More places to hang out with friends.
- Cheaper access to things like cinemas, bowling alleys and gyms for children and young people.
- More activities aimed at young people who identify as LGBT.
- More support for disabled young people to be social. For example carers not available to support them to go out in an evening or see friends.

An issue which was closely related to positive activities was transport. The main theme emerging under this category was the cost of transport to get around York and the surrounding villages. This was particularly highlighted as an issue where children and young people wanted to access activities outside of their local area.

From the online consultation the main barriers identified to accessing positive activities were cost, availability in the local area or transport costs. The barriers to activities identified by young people are shown in the chart below.



The feedback gathered by young people who completed the online consultation generally echoed messages given through the focus groups. The table below shows in descending order what children and young people feel would **make their life better**.

What would help make your life better	Count
More help to plan for my future	36
More places where I can go to spend time with my friends	32
More ways I can volunteer or help people	23
More organised activities and things to do	21
Less bullying	20
More chance to have a say in how things are run at school or in the local area	20
More interesting school lessons	16
Someone I can always talk to	11
More help to do better at school	11
More advice about being healthy	6
More help to feel safer at school and in the local area	5

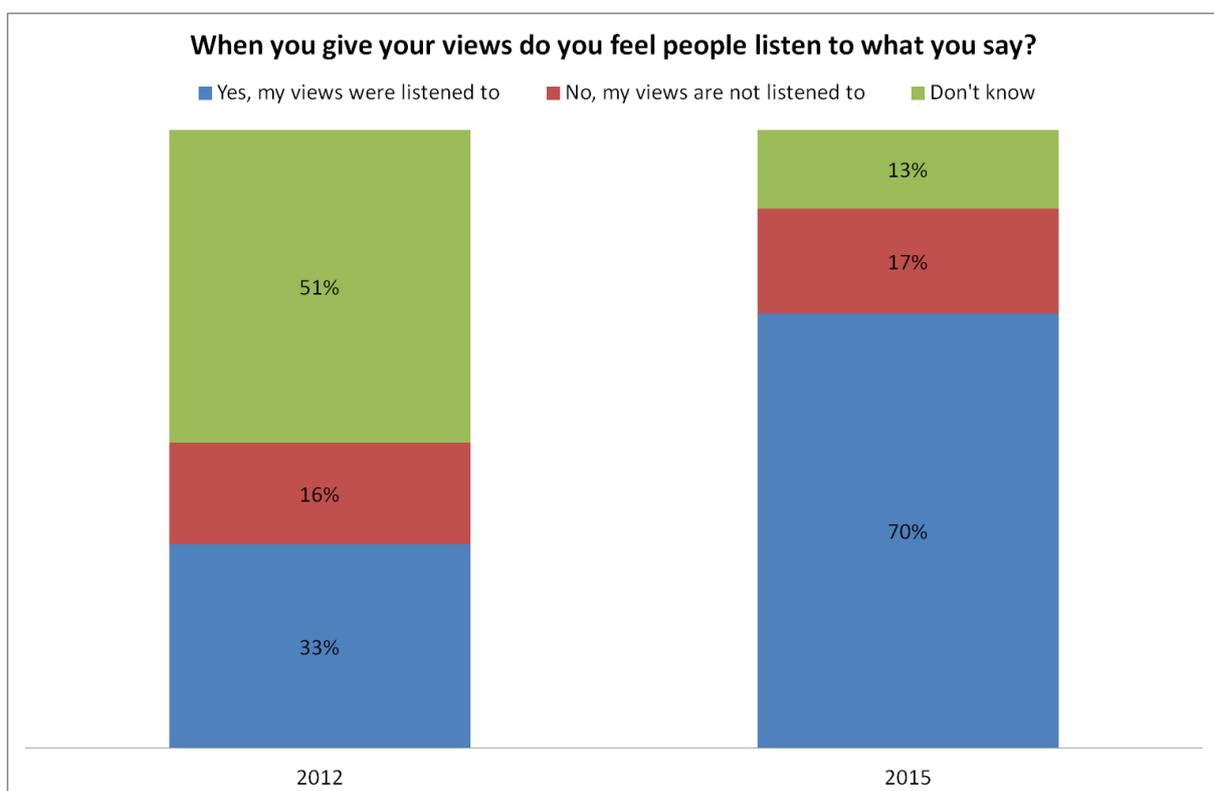
What would help make your life better	Count
Something else	5
More support to attend activities	3
None of these	3
Don't know	2

Key differences are that the online respondents placed a greater priority on planning for the future and ways to volunteer than those in focus groups.

Having a Voice

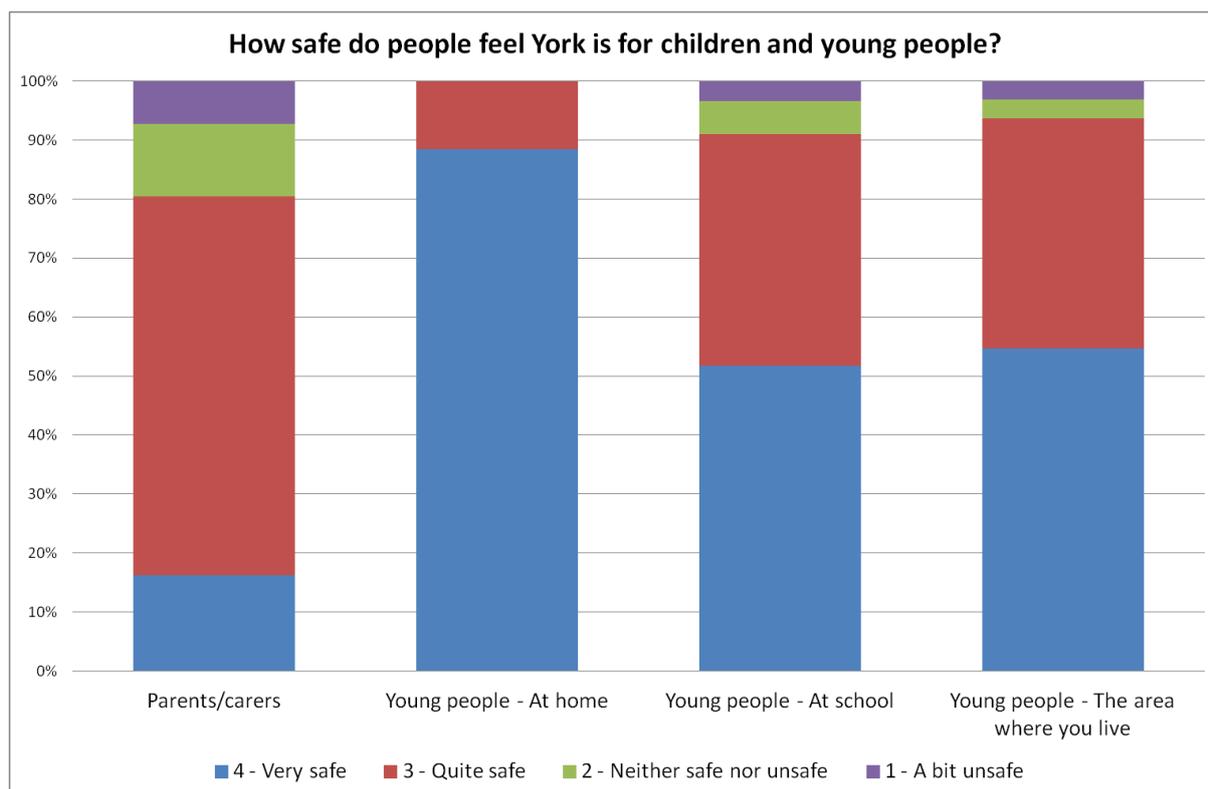
A high priority for all partners in recent years has been on developing the quality and breadth of opportunities for children and young people to have a voice and be involved in service design and delivery.

Encouragingly some clear progress is shown when asking children and young people if they feel their views have been listened to. This is shown in the chart below comparing responses in 2012 to 2015.



The proportion feeling their views were not listened to has remained fairly static (16% in 2012 and 17% in 2015). However the percentage who feel their views have been listened to has increased significantly (33% in 2015 to 70%) now.

Generally young people, parents and carers feel that York is a safe place and a good place to live and grow up. This general sense of feeling safe is shown in the chart below.



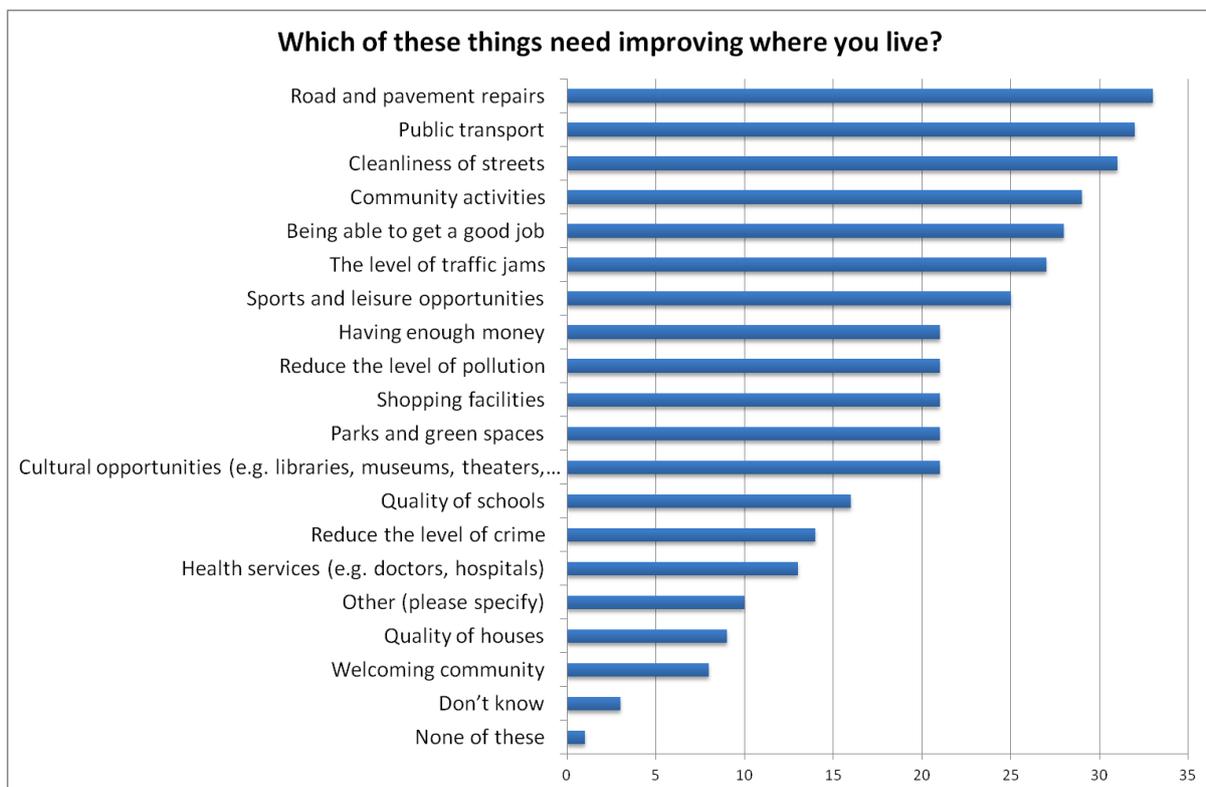
This is generally encouraging and reflects on feedback gathered through existing surveys undertaken with children and young people. For example the table below is taken from the 2014 Stand Up For Us survey where children and young people were also asked about how safe they felt in different locations.

	School building	On school grounds	With other pupils	On public transport	With adults in school	In the local community
Primary	93.5%	92.5%	94.0%	93.6%	94.9%	-
Secondary	94.4%	94.3%	96.3%	87.8%	-	95.5%

Priorities

The consultation showed a huge range of additional areas that matter to children, young people and families. Examples include:

- Many children and young people wanted improvements to the cleanliness and condition of roads and pavements in their local area.
- Transport around the city was also highlighted as an issue. Particularly traffic and the cost of transport to access activities or services not available in the local area. This is demonstrated by the chart below which shows what things children and young people would most like to see improved in their local area.



These key messages have helped shape the 2016 Children and Young People's Plan which sets out 4 priority areas.

Priority 1 – Early Help

Early help has been a priority for the YorOK Board since its inception in 2003, and at the core of all our children and young people's plans. The principle of intervening early to prevent problems emerging at a later

date is widely accepted; during the consultation, it was strongly endorsed by families and by practitioners. Children, young people, parents and carers said that they valued strong and supportive communities and access to activities and services.

Priority 2 – Emotional and Mental Health

National estimates suggest that one in ten children needs support or treatment for mental health problems ranging from short spells of depression or anxiety through to severe and persistent conditions that can isolate, disrupt and frighten those who experience them. Mental health problems in young people can result in lower educational attainment and are strongly associated with behaviours that pose a risk to their general health, such as smoking, drug and alcohol abuse and risky sexual behaviour.

Priority 3 – Narrowing Gaps in Outcomes

York is a relatively prosperous city: most children and young people are healthy and achieve well in their education. However, this is not the case for all of our communities, particularly those on low incomes where the evidence suggests that there is a risk of multiple poor outcomes. We also know that early gaps in speech, language and educational achievement tend to widen during a young person's childhood. It therefore remains a key priority for us to address gaps in educational achievement and in health, working across the YorOK partnership to this end.

Children and young people confirm that health and educational achievement are important to them. During the consultation, many talked about the importance of active lifestyles and healthy eating. Others mentioned the importance of friendships, and the need for self-esteem.

Priority 4 – Priority Groups

Our final priority area is different from the preceding three in that what we want to do is shine a spotlight on five specific groups of children and young people. This would arguably not be necessary if we were to achieve every outcome outlined in the previous sections; however, experience suggests that the following groups of children and young people have particular needs that may require targeted support. Many of

the groups below are the subject of a separate, focused strategy; the job of this plan is not to duplicate that, but simply to ensure that the needs of these groups remain prominent in the minds of the YorOK partners, and that the actions to support them are coherent.

The Way Forward: Developing Play in the Community

Taking account of the evidence presented above it is intended that the 2016-19 policy takes a more localised approach to supporting the development of play in the city and that ideas for projects should be progressed based upon 5 key principles, building on the priorities from the 2013 policy, which will form the basis for both identifying the need to develop play, right through to the implementation and delivery of the project.

The 5 Key Principles

Play provision should:

1. Meet a clearly identified need
2. Be developed through inclusive involvement and participation that empowers and encourages the community to take a lead
3. Be based on the right of the child to access inclusive, quality and locally-based play opportunities
4. Promote and recognise the benefits of play and its impact on health and development of the child
5. Be reflective of best practice

Projects

To aid the development play projects it is recommended that the following practical considerations are taken account of alongside the 5 key principles:

- Resources: Is the necessary funding for staffing, buildings, equipment etc. in place to enable the project to happen?

- Land ownership: Are permissions are in place to let the project take place?
- Ongoing costs: Is the project sustainable in the long- term e.g. in terms of its maintenance and staffing costs?
- Need: Do relevant local, regional and national strategies and research evidence the need for the project?
- Local demographics: Again, do these demonstrate current and ongoing need?
- Support from partner organisations, groups and the wider community: Is the necessary support in place to ensure that the project is sustainable?
- Routes to play: Can the project be easily accessed through, for example, footpath, cycle paths, and roads with crossing points?
- Monitoring: Are arrangements in place to ensure that the views of children and young people, parents/carers, the community and other stakeholders are visible and used to inform further development and help the project to develop and continue?

Equipped Play Areas

There are currently at least 76 equipped play areas in York. These are managed by a variety of organisations including the City of York Council, local Parish and Town Councils, Housing Trusts and developers.

The Council will support the improvement and ongoing care of the city's play areas through advice, supporting grant applications and provision of funding, including the application of section 106 payments. Where improvements are needed those sites with the most need will be prioritised for attention. Factors such as usage, previous investment and resident engagement will be taken into account when establish a priory of need.

To ensure that Council-managed play areas remain safe and well cared for, all equipped play areas will be inspected at least fortnightly by a National Playing Fields Association Inspecting Playgrounds qualified assessor. Sites with high use e.g. Rowntree Park will be inspected

weekly. The assessor not only checks for safety issues but also carries both routine and emergency repairs and maintenance.

Street Play

“Playing out on a street near their homes is vital to children’s health and wellbeing.” (Play England).

City of York Council is committed to supporting communities in developing street play opportunities where there is sufficient need and neighbourhood will to see opportunities created. We are committed to challenging traffic dangers and parent’s confidence as barriers to children playing out. Support and guidance is available for any community or group in the city who wish to work towards creating fun, safe spaces and opportunities for play within the urban environment.

Play Settings

There are 52 staffed Out of School Club settings in York. These settings work to support the Taking Play Forward ethos and are registered with Ofsted, who regulate the quality of provision by ensuring compliance with regulations to safeguard and support children's welfare. The Council support these providers to maintain and improve the quality of their provision through a range of support that is tailored to their level of need. This may include advisory visits, out of school network meetings, advice and support to enable disabled children and young people to access the provision, access to training, and advertising through the Shine programme.

Playwork

The council’s Workforce Development Unit produces an annual Early Years and Out of school club training offer. This supports the staff in settings to become capable, confident and competent professional practitioners, which is critical in ensuring that high quality provision is available to children and young people within York. A range of cross-sector courses are offered and at least one Playwork specific training course is offered per year to the workforce. This training is accessible to all playworkers working across the city, not just those in Ofsted regulated provision. The Council also has a role in signposting playworkers to

training providers who are able to offer more formal Playwork qualifications at level 2, 3 and 4.

Raising the Quality of Play Opportunities at a Neighbourhood Level

To aid the development of play, the Council is also there to support and signpost play organisations, communities and individuals in the following ways to help support the development of play opportunities:

- Funding advice/signposting
- Consultation methods
- Current data and ward profile information
- Inclusivity advice
- Health and safety
- Links to transport and planning information
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Best practice and learning from other projects

Useful Resources

General:

Yor-OK is York's portal for information and resources for anyone working with children and young people, parents and young people themselves. Here you will find York's Children and Young People's Plan and the Child Poverty Strategy 2011-2020. <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk>

Play England's vision is for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years. The website provides resources and information on play in schools, street play, parks and open spaces and playwork.

<http://www.playengland.org.uk>

National Play Day is the national day for play, traditionally held on the first Wednesday in August. <http://www.playday.org.uk>

Playing Out provides ideas, advice and support to residents wanting to bring about change in their street or neighbourhood. <http://playingout.net>

For Out-of-School Providers:

Information to support quality improvement of Ofsted registered Out of school provision in York - <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Childcare%20Strategy/out-of-school-clubs.htm>

The Out of School Alliance (OOSA) provides information and support to individuals and organisations setting up and running out of school clubs, including breakfast clubs, after school clubs, holiday clubs and play schemes. www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/

Safeguarding:

The City of York's Safeguarding Children Board (CYSCB) is a statutory inter-agency forum for agreeing how different services co-operate to protect children in York. We seek to ensure that the children of York are protected from all forms of abuse and neglect by ensuring that everybody working with children works effectively together.

<http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk>

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