

Informal Session on Review of Casual Play Opportunities

Venue: Leisure Offices, 18 Back Swinegate, York

Date: Thursday 21st January 2010

Present:

Members: Councillors Aspden, Brooks, Crisp, Hogg, Looker and Waudby

Officers: Dave Meigh (Head of Parks and Open Spaces), Mary Bailey (Head of Play),
Melanie Carr (Scrutiny Officer) and Catherine Clarke (Democracy Officer)

Purpose of Meeting:

To enable Members to identify, with the aid of maps, where provision for play currently exists in York and those areas where there are gaps in provision, in order to identify which city centre, suburban and village areas to focus on in the review.

Information Provided:

The Head of Parks and Open Spaces brought 3 maps for Members to consider

- Large scale map of York - showing young children's play areas
- Map showing facilities for teenagers
- Map of Central York

Map 1 – Provision of Facilities for Young Children (within 420m/10 mins walk)

- Play areas mapped in 2007-2008 – some areas removed since then but also some new play areas built which are not shown on map as a result of Playbuilder. For example Bishopthorpe now has a playground which is not shown.
- Still deficit in middle of Strensall, middle of Fulford, Fishergate, part of Woodthorpe, southern side of Poppleton, part of Dringhouses (but new development at former college site includes some provision for play equipment.
- Important to consider casual play opportunities, even in areas with Playbuilder equipment
- Map shows 18 Playbuilder sites – 4 further sites not shown on map - plus further 4 sites to be agreed.

Map 2 – Provision of Facilities for Teenagers (within 700m/15mins walk)

What is classed as “teenage facilities”

- Age specific play areas
- Ball Courts for playing basketball/football
- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA)
- Skateboard facilities (not including Zoo skate park as this is controlled entry)

- Shelters – to enable young people to congregate - these exist in Haxby, New Earswick/Earswick, Fulford (some young people ignore these shelters in favour of congregating in other less formal places)

Map 3 – Central York

Formal play areas shown as follows:

- Glen Gardens (East Parade, Heworth)
- Navigation Road
- St Nicholas Fields
- Olympic Park Court
- Cemetery Road (Fishergate – Opposite Cemetery)
- Rowntree Park (Terry Ave)
- Scarcroft Green
- Low Priory Street
- Clarence Gardens (at junction of Haxby Rd & Wigginton Rd)
- Park Grove School (open to public through lottery funding agreement)

Plus Garnet Terrace, Carlisle Street & Cleveland Street (opposite St Paul's)

Plus, what is planned i.e. two sites for Playbuilder (a possible site in centre and a site on Monk Stray) and a site at York Central (a large grassed area – at back of NRM)

Central Locations Where Play Provision Could Be Introduced:

- Land by rowing club – but issues with proximity to War Memorial Gardens
- Parliament Street
- Market Place
- Tower Gardens
- Bishophill Senior
- George Street
- North Street Gardens

Suggestion of having several small individual areas which together form a play “trail”

General Information

- Examples of Good Practice were shown to Committee Members.
- Problems of vandalism to play equipment
- Definition of “casual play opportunities” – Members agreed this to be ‘play that has not been formally organised’
- Possible barriers to accessing play areas – railway lines, roads, farmland
- In regard to the review’s objective referencing the Local Development Framework (LDF), Members were informed that the Council can meet the requirement of the

LDF by providing only one type of provision in a specific area, but this does not provide choice to young people.

Streetsport – a mobile sports project which brings activities, games and sports to children and young people in York (includes street hockey, football, handball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, a mobile skate park and a mobile climbing tower)

Urbibus/Toybus

Playspace – provides and promotes quality play opportunities for children and young people, including chill out zones and holiday play schemes (run throughout the summer, no need to book, costs have to be met by Ward Committee who require Playspace's facilities in their Ward, Playspace can be reactive e.g. last year it was sent to Playbuilder sites where there were no facilities.

Areas of City Identified As Suitable For Focus Of Review:

- Head of Parks and Open spaces suggested concentrating on only 2 areas then introducing 3rd if necessary later on
- City Centre - Members discussed both St Paul's and Fishergate as being suitable for the city centre area. Whilst both contain busy roads they also have their own specific barriers to play i.e. the railway lines, and the river
- Rural - Deighton was identified as a suitable the village area lacking in facilities for young children and teenagers.
- Suburban – Members discussed the possibility of using Fishergate as the suburban area. Alternatively, the lists of areas within the main report, shown at paragraphs 3 & 4 (page 44)
- include other possible suburban sites e.g. Burnholme, Heworth Without, parts of Osbaldwick. In particular, Heworth Without is shown as lacking in facilities for both young children and teenagers.

Actions:

- The Head of Play agreed to draft a list of questions for Members to use as prompts when talking to parents, to include questions on what parents see as barriers to play.
- Members agreed to consider the results of the Tell Us Survey which are currently being correlated as these may be useful for the review.
- Members agreed that recommendations from review could feed into LDF policy