

Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Draft Play Plan

Prepared By **PLAYBOARD NI**



Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Bál
Derry Citty & Strabane
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1.0 Introduction



1.0 Introduction

Play is central to the lives of children and young people contributing to the development of essential skills that support social, intellectual, physical and emotional well-being, providing a means of connecting with the wider community and critically, providing opportunities for fun and enjoyment.

Derry City and Strabane District Council is committed to fulfilling the child's right to play as enshrined in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The development of this 15 year Play Plan represents a key component of this commitment, establishing a strategic approach to the enhancement of play opportunities across the district.

In developing the Play Plan, a number of key activities have been undertaken including:

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An assessment of the Play Value associated with all 84 fixed play areas within the District.

An analysis of underlying demographic need and settlement patterns using Geographical Information System software to determine fixed play coverage levels, identify gaps in provision and identify redundant play areas.

Community engagement on the issue of play and play provision through online surveys and Local Growth Area (LGA) focus groups.

Development of key recommendations aimed at supporting the enhancement of play opportunities across the Council area.

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It should be noted that whilst the Play Plan has been developed with a view to implementation over a 15 year period, interim reviews will be undertaken to ensure that new and emerging play need is identified and addressed under its auspices during the intervening period.

1.1 Aims of the Play Plan

Underpinning the Play Plan are a number of key aims which have been developed through consideration of community feedback gained through the public engagement and consultation process. In reviewing the views expressed by children and young people, parents and carers and community organisations the key aims of the 15 year plan have been established as being:

Key Aims

- A. To support children and young people to be able to engage in play opportunities that meet their developmental needs whilst providing fun and enjoyment
- B. To ensure that Councils overarching portfolio of Fixed Play Areas offer attractive, welcoming, safe but challenging, accessible and inclusive high play value sites, through a process of upgrading and renewal, maintenance and new play development

- C. To ensure effective targeting of capital investment in new fixed play development at those locations identified as being in need through assessment of demographic demand
- D. To ensure that children, young people, parents and communities have a role in decision-making on play provision
- E. To enable communities to take an active role in the development of play opportunities
- F. To highlight the benefits of play whilst encouraging adults within the wider community to recognise both the importance of play and the valuable contribution children and young people make to community life
- G. Where local demographic circumstances preclude Council intervention, to support communities to develop sustainable solutions to meeting local play need.

1.2 Why develop a Play Plan?

The development of this 15 year Play Plan provides an agreed strategic approach which is aimed at enhancing children and young people's access to high value play opportunities across the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

The Play Plan will support Council and other stakeholders to work in

partnership to address those barriers that restrict play opportunities whilst ensuring that available resources are invested in a manner that best meets play need.

The Play Plan establishes for Council:

- A play value baseline for each fixed play area
- Play value assessments have established a baseline for fixed play across the Council and have highlighted those sites which require priority action to enhance their play value.
- Using the play value assessments, Council will be better able to target capital investment at those areas in most need, whilst also having a means of measuring progress in terms of the overall quality of play value across the area.
- **An Agreed Criteria to Identify Areas of Need**
The provision of fixed play areas has been and will remain at the core of Council's investment in play. Whilst fixed play areas (which contain swings, roundabouts etc.) are the primary form of play provision, the level of capital investment required for installation and maintenance is not always appropriate to underlying levels of population demand, household distributions etc.
- The Play Plan establishes a set of criteria which will be used to assess the applicability of fixed play development based on underlying population demographics and household spread. This will help to ensure that capital investment is targeted towards meeting areas of highest need.
- **A Common Design Approach**
Council are the primary providers of fixed play, however in recent years additional investment has been made through non-Council routes, for example through Neighbourhood Regeneration funding or funding secured by community organisations.
- Additional investment in play is welcomed by Council, however it is important that play areas developed by non-Council providers adhere to agreed minimum standards. The Play Plan establishes a set of core quality design principles which, when applied across all fixed play provision (regardless of funding source) will enhance play value and ensure consistency of delivery.
- **A means of responding to Demographic Change**
Over time the needs of a community change. In the context of play, as the resident population in an area grows older the need for a fixed play area may reduce.

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- The Play Plan recognises this potential for demographic change, acknowledging that a decline in the number of children and young people in an area may lead to play areas becoming redundant. In such cases the Play Plan provides a mechanism for exploring, with communities, how best to use such sites through a transformation of land use to better meet community need (this may be play or non-play based or a combination of both).
- **A system for meeting play need in Rural Areas**
A significant proportion of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area is rural in nature with an often dispersed population and household base. This presents a particular challenge to Council in terms of meeting play need through fixed play areas.

The development and installation of fixed play areas represents a significant financial commitment for Council, both in terms of the initial capital outlay (which dependent on size and scale of the play area can range from £300k to £750k) and ongoing annual maintenance costs.

Given the financial outlay required to develop and maintain them alongside the need for Council-owned land to facilitate site development, fixed play areas do not always represent a viable solution for meeting play need in areas with low and/or

dispersed populations. Recognising the challenges of meeting play need in rural areas, the Play Plan establishes a process aimed at ensuring that rural areas are not disadvantaged.



2.0 Overview of the Area



2.0 Overview of the Area

Derry City and Strabane District Council was established in 2015 following the Review of Public Administration which saw the number of Councils reduced from twenty six down to eleven.

The Council was created from an amalgamation of two legacy Councils, Derry City Council and Strabane District Council. In order to support the administrative and electoral process the Council is divided into seven District Electoral Areas (also known as DEAs).

8 Local Growth Areas (LGAs) have been created for Strabane Town and the 7 District Electoral Areas (Ballyarnett, Derg, Faughan, Foyleside, Sperrin, The Moor and Waterside) as shown on the map



2.1 Population Demographics

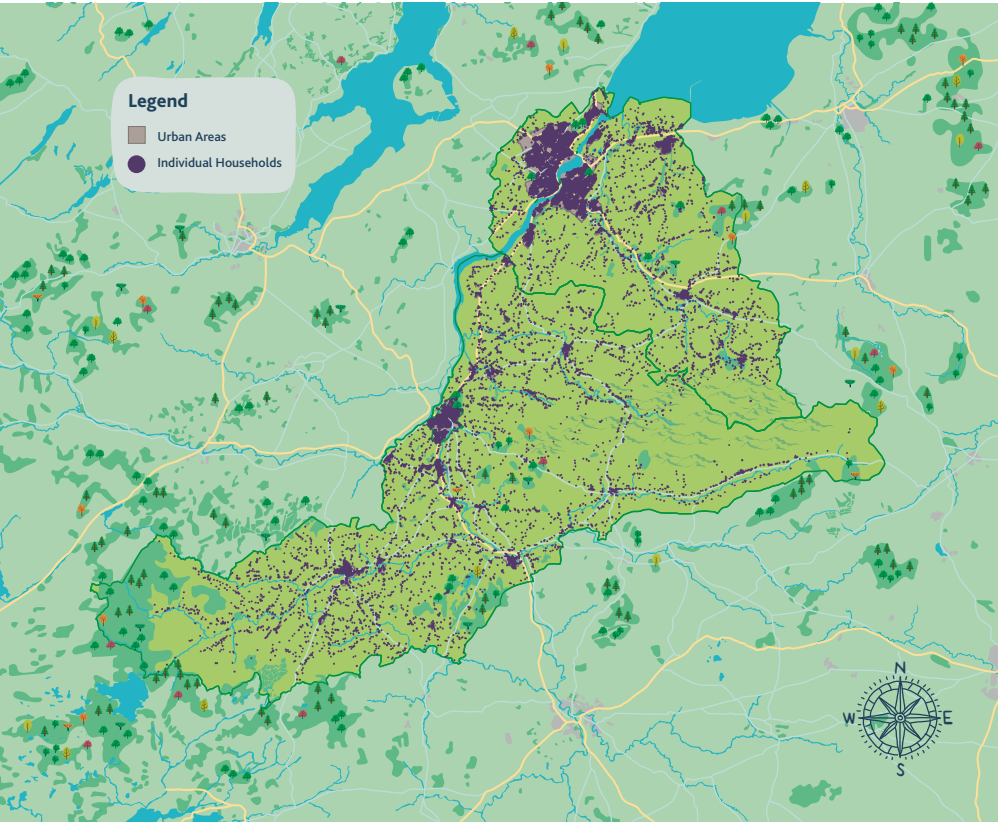
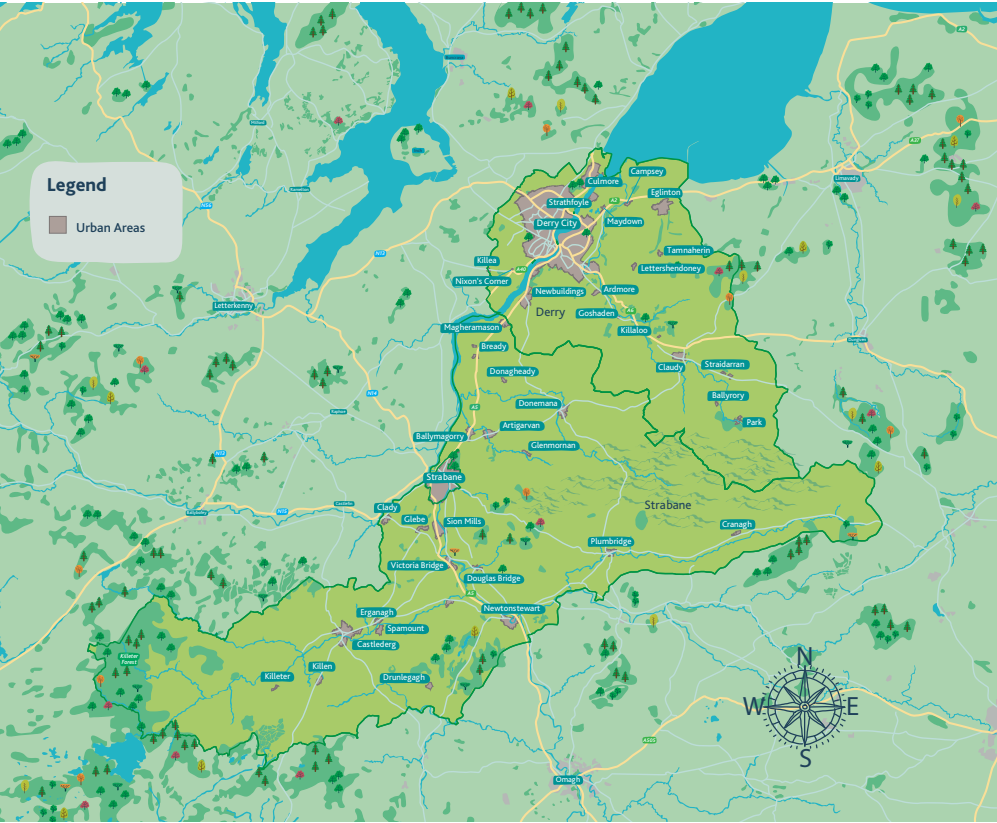
Based on the most recent projections, the population of Derry City and Strabane District Council is approximately 150,680 which equates to 8% of the overall population of Northern Ireland. The age profile of the population is slightly younger than that of Northern Ireland as a whole with 21.8% of the Council population aged under 16 compared to 20.8% for the whole of Northern Ireland.

Based on the designated Settlement Development Limit (SDL) classification the Council area is made up of a combination of rural and urban areas with the resident population located across a range of residential classifications. These include rural settlement based, dispersed rural living and urban residential.

Key settlements, alongside and their estimated residential and household number's are set out in the table.

Settlement	Population & Households	
	Total Residents	Households
Derry City	83,163	32,243
Strabane	13,147	5,113
Eglinton	3,650	1,304
Culmore	3,465	1,086
Castlederg	2,985	1,213
Strathfoyle	2,412	910
Sion Mills	1,903	769
Newtownstewart	1,547	619
Glebe	733	263
Artigarvan	721	287
Donemana	586	237
Clady	538	214
Park	509	170

The Council is predominantly rural in nature as highlighted on the map below which shows the dispersion of individual household units. Darker areas indicate a higher density of households around settlement areas whilst the dispersed dots show the location of households within rural areas.



3.0 What is Play?

“Play
is any behaviour,
activity or process
initiated, controlled
and structured by
children themselves.”

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3.0 What is Play?

The term play is most often used to describe those activities that children engage in during their free time. This can include:

- Physical activities such as running, jumping and climbing
- Social activities such as engaging in team games, sharing experiences through play or simply communicating with others during play
- Creative activities such as constructing or making things, painting etc.
- Imaginative play such as making up games, dressing up etc.
- Challenging play which involves the child pushing their developmental limits in order to achieve a positive outcome.

As an activity, play can be social, where the child chooses to play with another child or group of children, or solitary where the child chooses to play alone. In General Comment 17, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child describes play:

“Play is any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves. Play happens whenever and wherever there is an opportunity to play. The key characteristics of play are fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity. These factors contribute to the enjoyment of playing and the incentive to continue playing.”

Adults often view play as an activity that only takes place at certain times and in certain locations e.g. in a play area. However for children play can (and does) take place at any time and in any place. By their very nature, children are constantly on the lookout for play opportunities regardless of where they find themselves, be it at home, in the community or in public spaces.

It is important to acknowledge that play is different to organised activities led by adults such as those that take place in sporting and youth clubs. In recognition of this distinction Council have therefore agreed to adopt the definition of play set out by the Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group in 2005:

Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. Children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.

3.1 Why is Play Important

Play is central to children and young people’s lives. Through play children are able to have fun whilst engaging in activities that support their social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Critically, play provides children with an opportunity to interact with the world around them, exploring ideas and concepts whilst developing understanding and learning new skills.

Research highlights the role of play in supporting children and young people’s development in a number of key areas:

	<p>Physical Health</p> <p>Play often involves activities that require the child to be engaged in physical movement bringing multiple physical development and health benefits.</p> <p>By way of example, running and jumping supports the development of bone density, climbing helps to develop strength and coordination whilst running and chasing games develop fitness, stamina and agility.</p>		<p>Risk and Challenge</p> <p>Children and young people have a natural thirst for challenging play and will often seek it out regardless of whether or not safe provision has been made. Challenge in play is important as it allows children to test the boundaries of their limitations, develop new skills to overcome the challenges they face and develop the ability to better manage risk on an individual basis.</p>
	<p>Learning</p> <p>From the moment of birth play supports the learning process with research indicating that 75% of post-birth brain development is influenced by the range and variety of play activities children engage in. Play has been shown to positively influence language development, creativity and problem solving and enables children to explore new ideas and concepts, testing their own abilities and learning new things about the world around them.</p>		<p>Social Skills</p> <p>Through play children develop social skills that support them to establish friendships and interact with others. Key amongst these is the ability to communicate, learning to negotiate and share, dealing with conflict and develop and maintaining friendships. At a wider level, play has been shown to contribute to active citizenship, the developing of community cohesion and can be a vehicle for increasing cross-community and inter-generational sharing and understanding.</p>
	<p>Connections to the Natural Environment</p> <p>Research indicates that where children are able to play in natural environments, for example on green/grass spaces, parklands, fields, forests and beaches they gain a greater appreciation for, and connection to the natural environment.</p>		<p>Teenagers and Play</p> <p>Play as an activity is not restricted only to younger children but remains a key part of young people’s lives right through into their late teenage years. As children become teenager’s social connection through recreational activities becomes increasingly important. Research by PlayBoard NI has shown that many 16 year olds equate the activities they engage as part of their recreation time as being a form of play.</p>

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3.2 Barriers to Play

Despite the many benefits associated with play, children and young people often face barriers that restrict their ability to fulfil their natural drive and urge to play. Common barriers include:

- Increased levels of traffic within residential areas which limit traditional street and community play opportunities due to safety concerns
- A loss of accessible public, green spaces which are openly available for children to play on
- A lack of understanding about the importance of play and a low level of tolerance towards children playing outdoors from adults in the community
- A lack of appropriate play infrastructure (e.g. fixed play areas, open recreation spaces, playable public realm etc.) to meet the play needs of children and young people
- Limited opportunities for the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities or complex needs within play spaces and environments.

- Whilst the solutions to these barriers are not all within the gift of Council, through this Play Plan Derry City and Strabane District Council makes a clear commitment to taking real steps towards addressing those barriers in partnership with other public bodies and with communities.

3.3 Approaches to Meeting Play Need

At its core, the Play Plan aims to increase children and young people’s access to high value play opportunities. In seeking to do this, the Play Plan advocates for a broadening of approaches to meeting play need.

Traditionally Council has sought to meet play need through the construction and maintenance of fixed play areas. Whilst fixed play areas will continue to provide a key means of meeting play need, the Play Plan acknowledges that other approaches may be required if we are to meet play need across the district.

Fixed Play Areas

The construction, maintenance and upgrade of fixed play areas (where local demand can be evidenced) will remain a core focus for the Play Plan.

Depending on their size and scale, fixed play areas typically include a range of play equipment from more traditional play items like swings, roundabouts, climbing frames etc. to more extensive bespoke play structures designed specifically for an individual site or location.

In relation to fixed play areas, the Play Plan aims to:

- Identify and fill gaps in fixed play provision (where demand can be evidenced)
- Achieve an enhancement of play value by upgrading low value play areas through the introduction of new equipment and through the use of creative play space design approaches
- Ensure that the Council’s portfolio of fixed play spaces offers a broad range of accessible and inclusive play opportunities for children of all abilities, incorporates natural play opportunities and offers a level of challenge and risk to support children’s growth and development.

Non-Fixed Play

Non-fixed play (sometimes referred to as ‘free play’ or ‘loose parts’ play) refers to the wider use of green and open spaces within communities for the purpose of play.

Non-fixed play allows children to play in a way that meets their developmental needs without formal direction from adults. Through non-fixed play children are able to make use of the wider environment (natural or synthetic) and loose play parts (cardboard boxes, balls, skipping ropes, art and craft materials etc.) in order to create their own play experience.

Whilst not explicitly addressed within the Play Plan, Council makes a commitment to further explore and move towards the implementation of non-fixed play approaches at community level. This will be undertaken in conjunction with key stakeholders as part of the Play Partnership which will be established to oversee and support the roll-out of the Play Plan.

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Street Play

Within urban areas, streets have traditionally provided spaces for play and social engagement where open space was limited. The rise in traffic levels and resultant concerns regarding safety has led to a reduction of street play, restricting community based play opportunities for many children and young people.

Council recognises that a number of approaches to increasing street play opportunities have been piloted in Northern Ireland and beyond and will look to pilot similar approaches over the duration of the Play Plan to review impact on play at local level.

Youth Provision

The opportunity to engage in play and recreational activities remains an important component in the lives of older children and teenagers, many of whom have 'outgrown' the opportunities afforded by fixed play areas.

The consultation that supported the development of the Play Plan highlighted a need for improved play and recreational facilities for this age group. As part of the Play Plan Council are keen to explore how this need can be met in conjunction with other stakeholders

including relevant statutory agencies (e.g. EA Youth Service), local youth and community groups and through direct engagement with older children and teenagers themselves.

Urban Sports (Skateboarding, BMX etc.)

The consultation supported the development of the Play Plan highlighted a need for greater recognition of, and provision for urban sports such as skateboarding tracks and bike pump tracks.

Council recognises that there is a need for urban sports provision within the Council area and will seek to address this need through the development of facilities at appropriate locations. In taking this area forward, Council will work in partnership with key stakeholders to maximise the impact of developments for those involved in urban sports.

4.0 The Strategic Context for Play



4.0 The Strategic Context for Play

In addition to the individual and societal benefits of play, Council operates within a wider International, Regional and Local area strategic policy context.

At each strategic level, a range of policies highlight both:

- the importance of play in the lives of children and young people, and
- the obligations on government agencies to ensure that children are able to play in a way that best meets their developmental needs.

Over recent years acknowledgement of play's critical role in shaping the lives of children, young people and its positive impact on wider society has become more explicit at policy level regionally, nationally and internationally. It is clear that the wider policy environment both recognises the importance of play in relation to children's health and wellbeing, welfare and development and is supportive of Council's decision to establish a Play Plan.

Critically, whilst recognising the role of Council in meeting play need, policies consistently acknowledge that no single organisation has within its remit the capacity to address all of the issues that impact on or restrict children's play opportunities.

The diagram overleaf provides an overview of the key International, Regional and Local strategies and policies which impact upon play, with a more in-depth overview provided in Appendix A.



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4.1 Cross-Sectoral Play Partnership

Responsibility for meeting the play needs of children and young people sits across a range of policy arenas. It is therefore envisaged that a strategic Play Partnership will be established (linked into/emanating from the existing Local Community Planning Forums) to support the roll-out of the Play Plan.

The purpose of the play partnership will be to feed into the delivery of the Play Plan, ensure strategic and operational connection to broader strategies and activities and play an active role in the Play Plan’s development to meet emerging needs, including a focus on the development of non-fixed play approaches.

Membership of the Play Partnership will be on a cross-sectoral basis with a view to ensuring a broad representation of views and support. An indicative overview of representation is provided on the diagram overleaf, however this is for illustrative purposes only and is subject to change and growth.





5.0 **Consultation and Community Engagement**

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5.1 Introduction

As part of the Play Plan development process PlayBoard NI undertook online surveys with parents/carers, children and young people and community providers.

The aim of the process was to gather views on a range of issues including:

- The importance of play
- The types of play activities children and young people typically engage in across the Council area
- Barriers to children and young people playing
- Views on the current standard of fixed play provision across the Borough and indications of fixed play need
- Views on how Council could enhance children’s play experience.

Whilst a detailed break-down of the consultation will be provided to Council to support the roll-out of the strategy, this section outlines the key findings.

5.2 Methodology

The consultation was based on a mixed methods approach in order to increase the level of engagement:

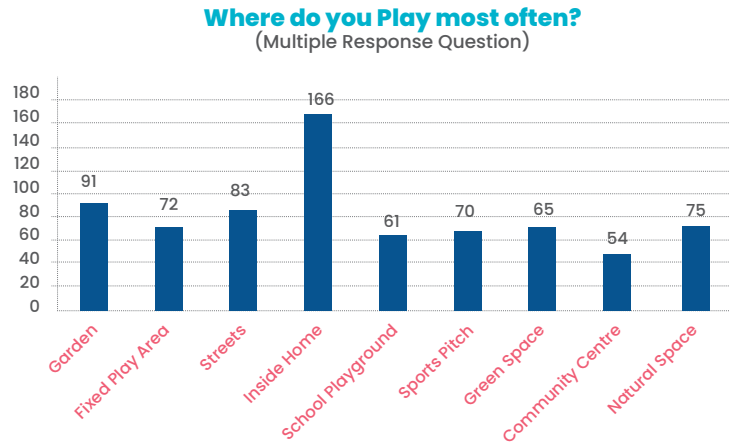
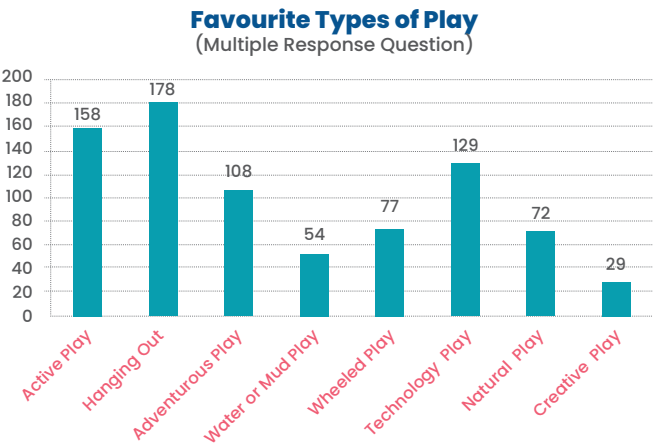
- Online surveys were undertaken with dedicated surveys for three groups exploring perceptions and experiences of local play opportunities, fixed and non-fixed approaches to meeting play need, the standard of fixed play provision and areas requiring action. The total number of responses received was 400.
 - o Children and Young People (301 responses)
 - o Parents and Carers (491 responses)
 - o Community organisations (66 responses)
- The delivery of open community consultation workshops within each of the eight Local Growth Areas (LGAs)

5.3 Survey Findings: Children and Young People

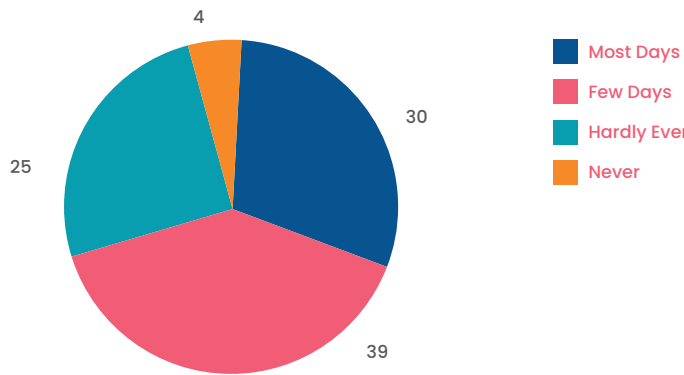
A total of 301 children and young people participated within the survey giving their views on a range of issues.

Patterns of Play

Respondents were asked to provide a general overview of their play patterns, including the types of activities they enjoyed most, locations for play and how often they got to play outdoors with friends.



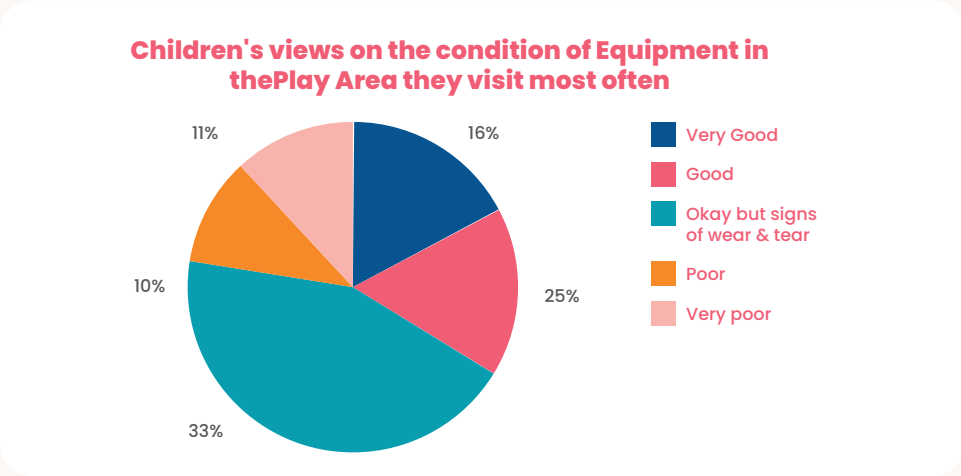
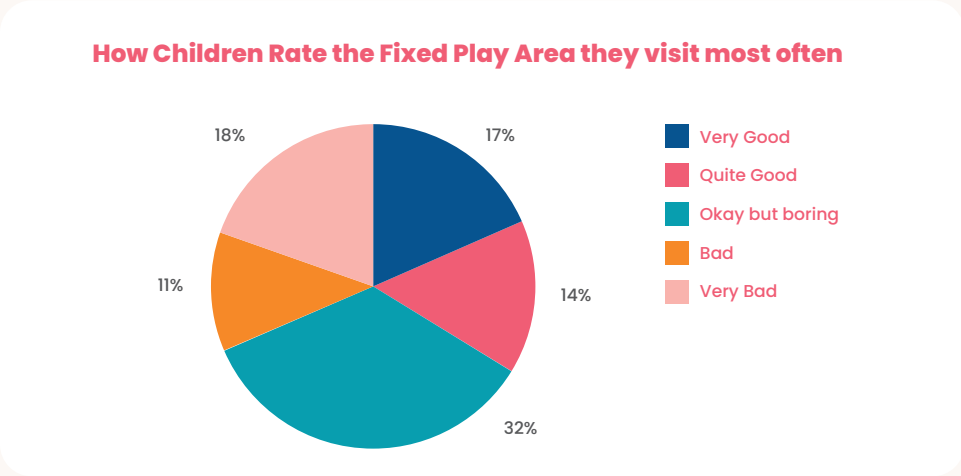
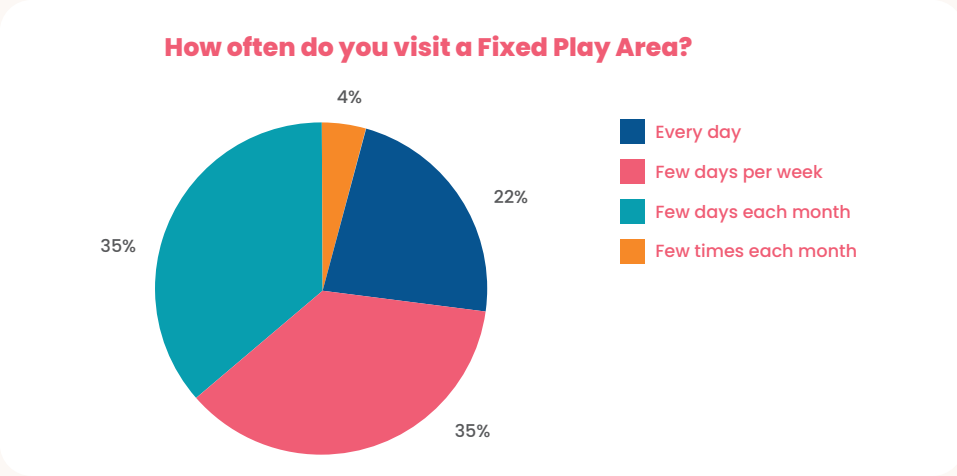
How often do you play/hang out with friends



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Fixed Play Area Use

When asked specifically about play in fixed play areas, 61% of children indicated that they had visited and played at a fixed play park with 38% reporting that they had never played at a fixed play park. The majority, 57% indicated that they would like to visit fixed play areas more often.



Local Green Spaces and Play

The consultation highlighted that for many children and young people locally accessible green spaces remain important as places for play with 83% indicating that they enjoyed using green spaces for free (non-fixed) play.

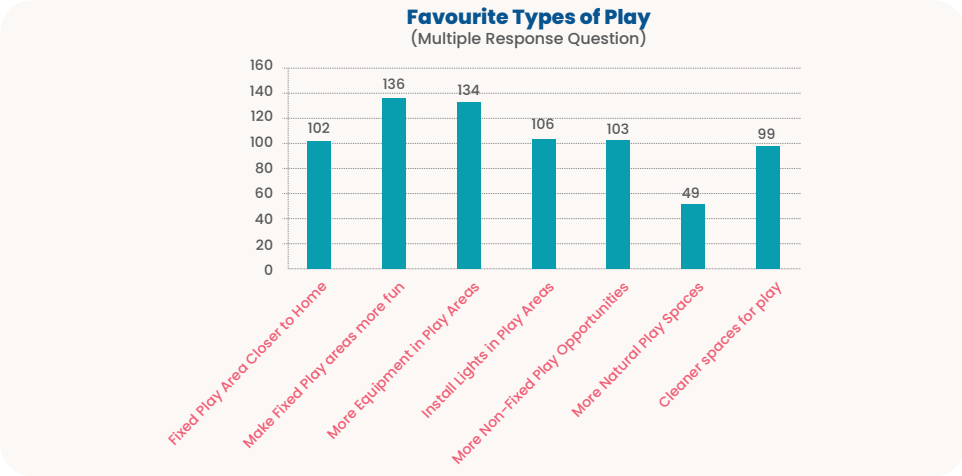
When asked what they liked best about green spaces for play, children and young people identified a number of reasons:

- Close to home and easy to get to
- Plenty of space to run around and play with friends
- Space for ball games
- Good place to hang out with friends
- Enjoy playing in the natural environment (grass, trees etc.)
- Safer space to play as it is away from cars and traffic

What could Council do to help you Play more?

Children were asked to indicate what they felt the Council could do

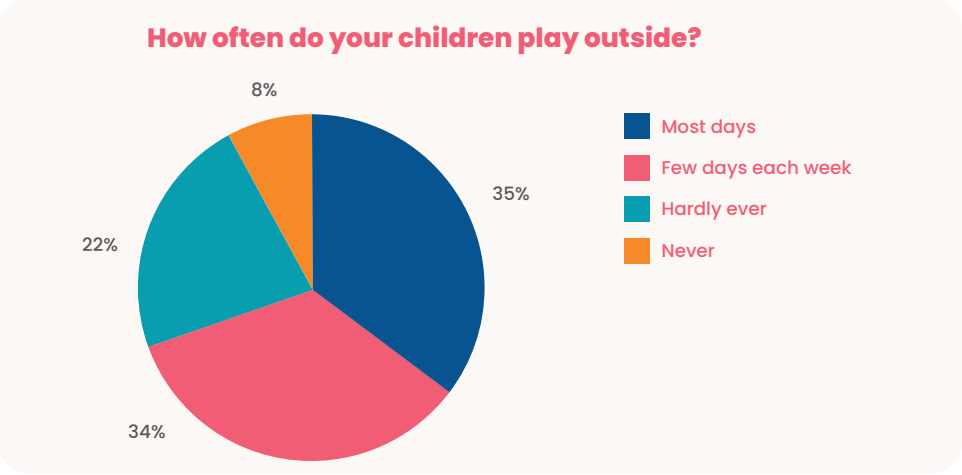
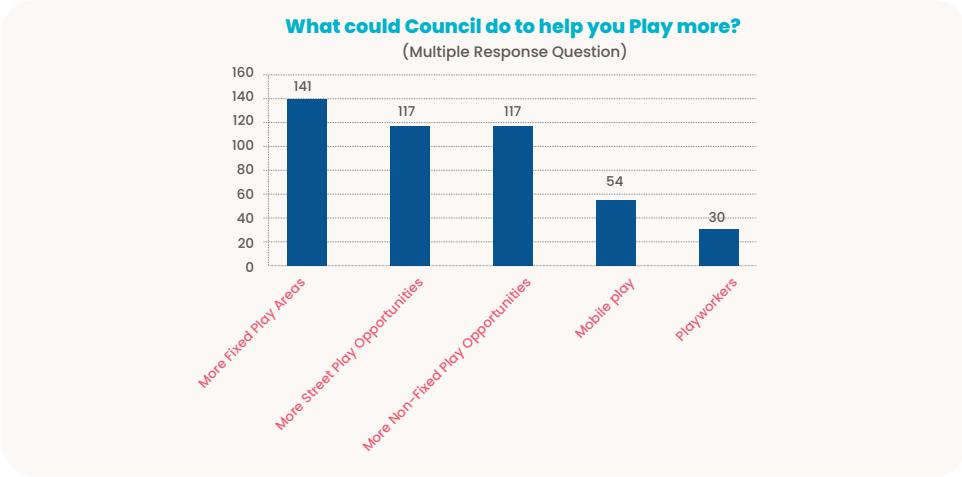
in order to help better meet their play needs.



What types of play would you like to see more of?

Children were asked to indicate what types of play they would most like to see developing as a result of the play investment strategy. Increased access to fixed play spaces was the most popular response, however there was also a need identified for more street play and non-fixed play opportunities to supplement fixed play.

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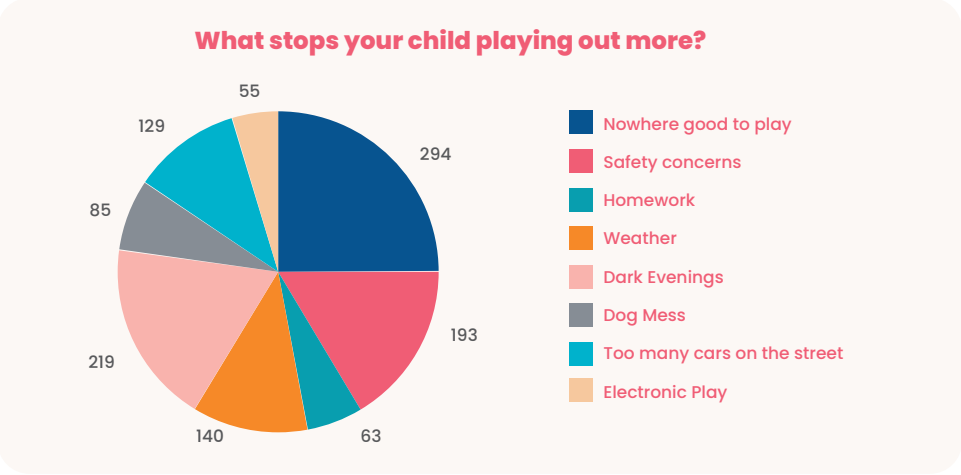
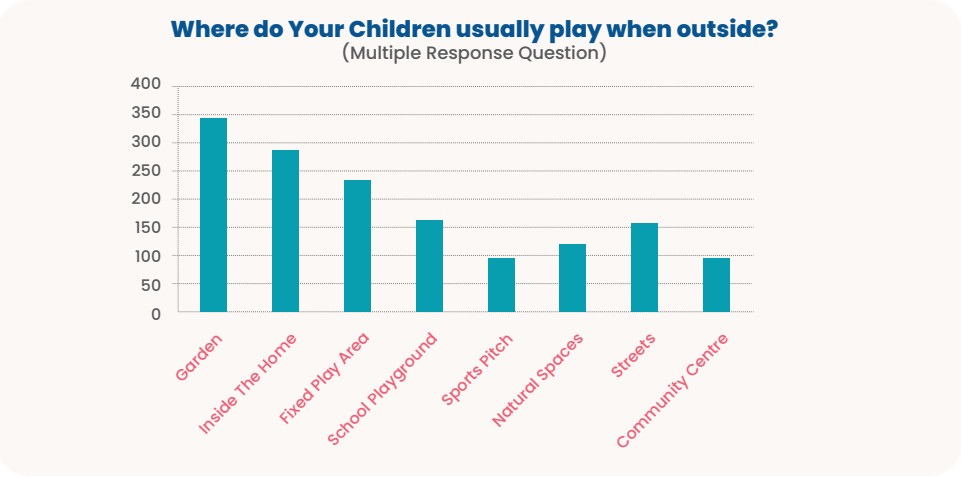
5.4 Survey Findings: Parents and Carers

In total 491 parents/carers participated in the survey expressing views on a range of issues through an online questionnaire.

Importance of play

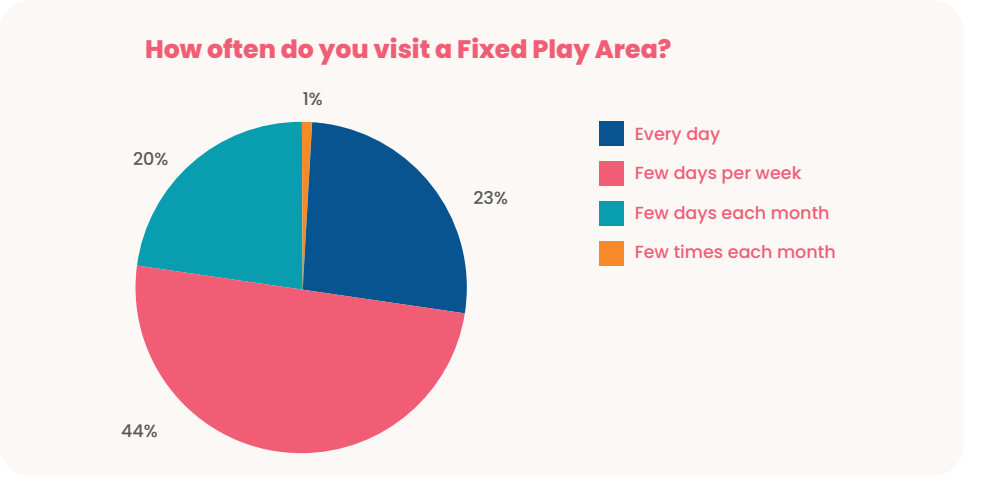
Parents and carers were asked for their views on the importance of play for children and young people in their area. There was a strong overall recognition of the importance of play and the need to ensure that children had access to play opportunities. Ninety-nine percent strongly agreed that play was an important aspect of children’s lives and that all children should have access to play opportunities.

Ninety-eight percent felt that all children should have access to a variety of quality play opportunities with 73% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing that children should be involved in the decision making by Council and other providers as it relates to play.

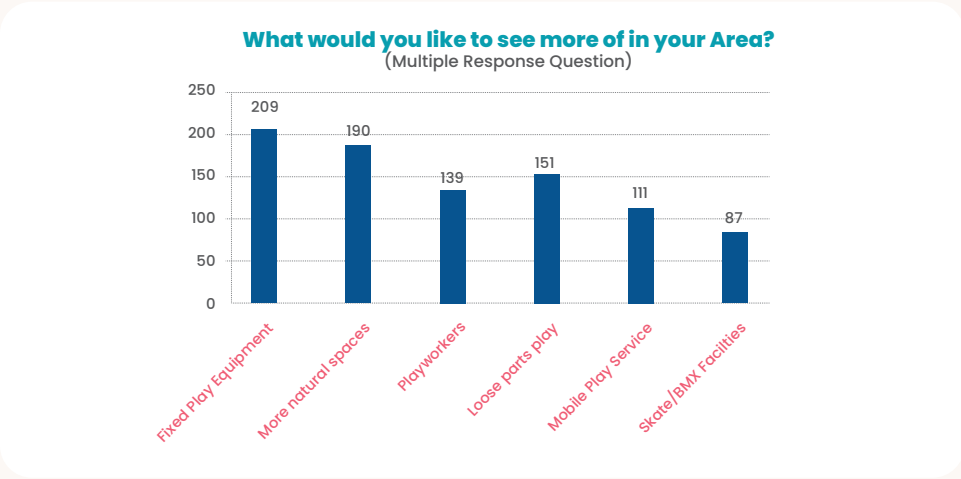
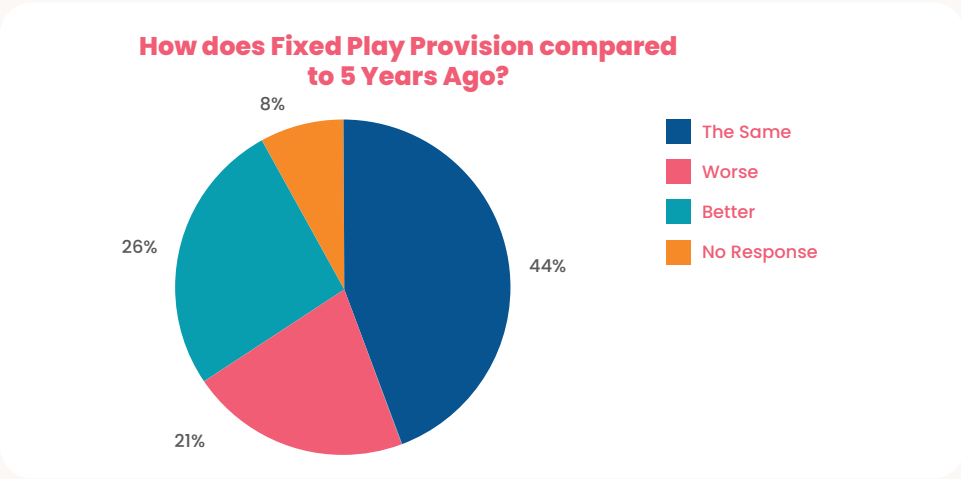
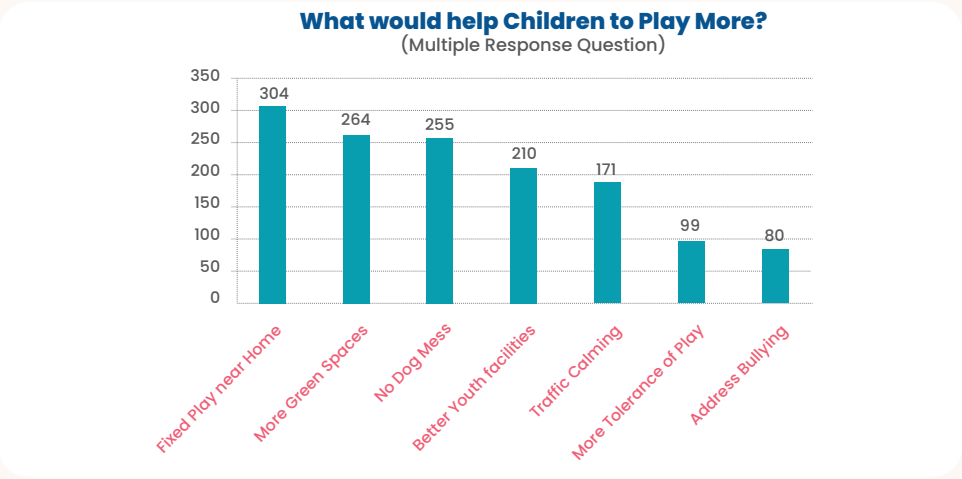
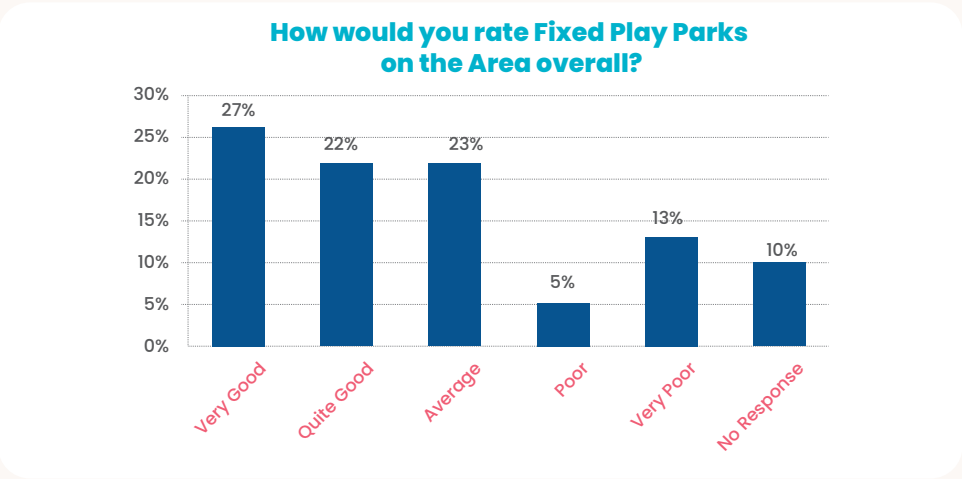


Fixed Play Parks

The majority of parents/carers (84%) indicated that they take their children to a fixed play park area, 3% said they did not whilst 12% indicated that they had no fixed play within travelling distance.



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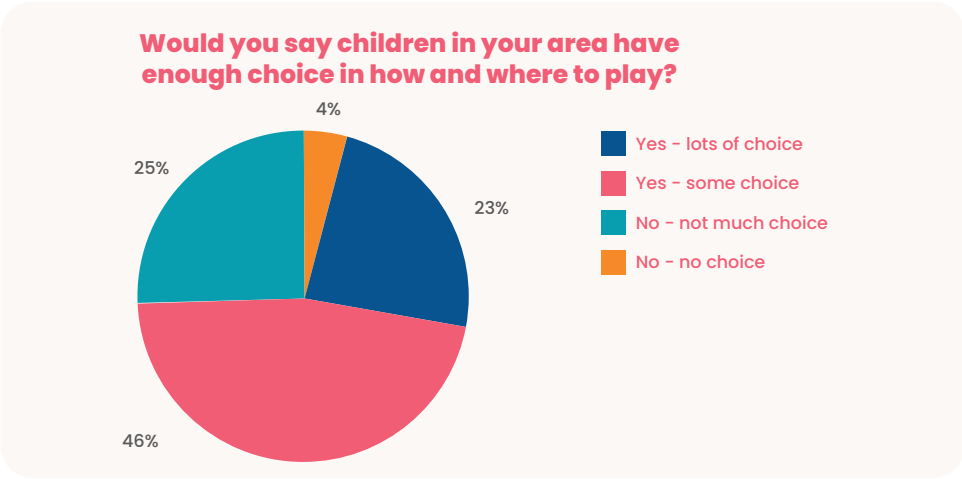
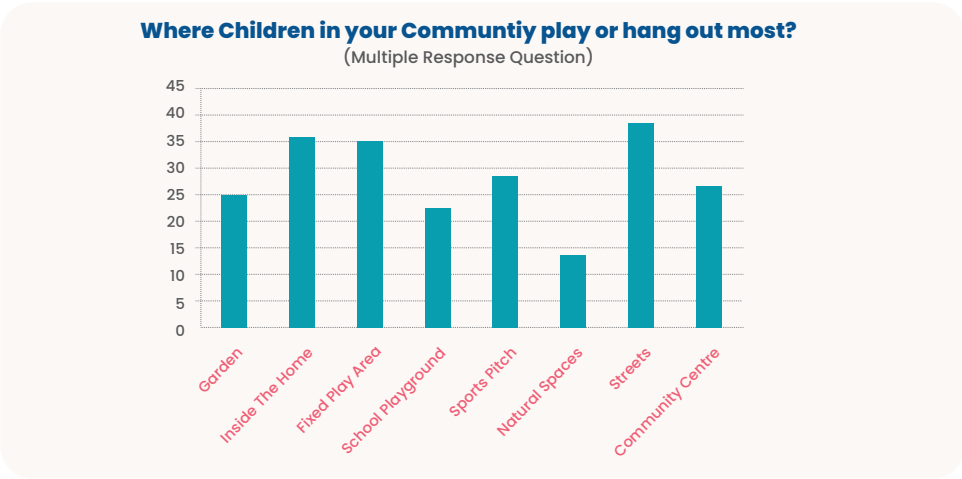
5.5 Survey Findings: Community Groups

In total 66 responses were received from community groups.

Importance of play

There was a strong overall recognition of the importance of play and the need to ensure that children had access to play opportunities. Ninety-seven percent strongly agreed that play was an important aspect of children’s lives and that all children should have access to play opportunities.

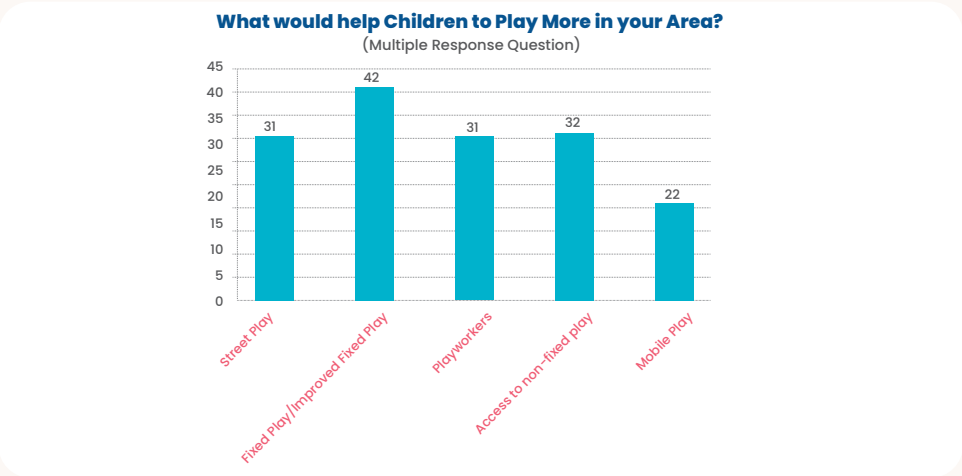
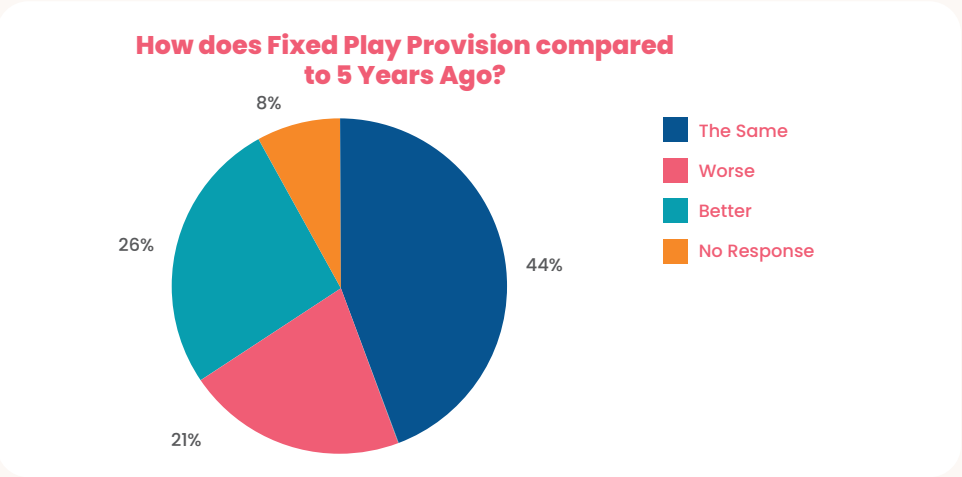
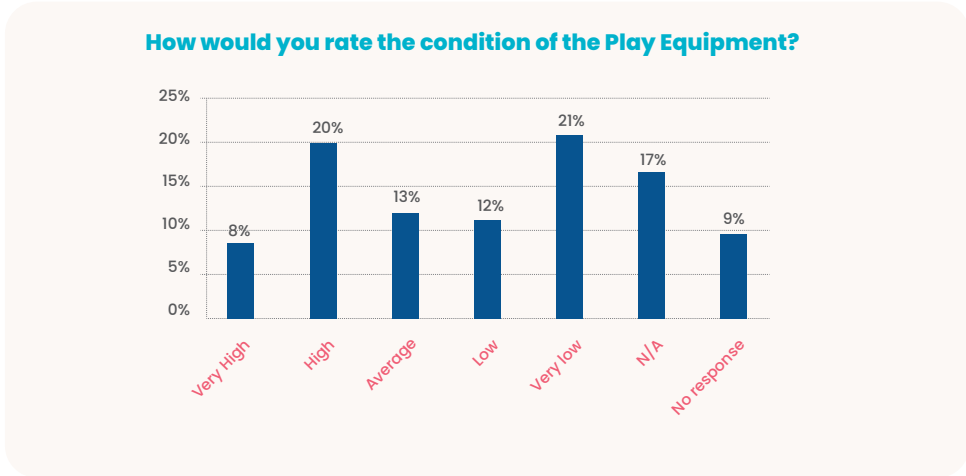
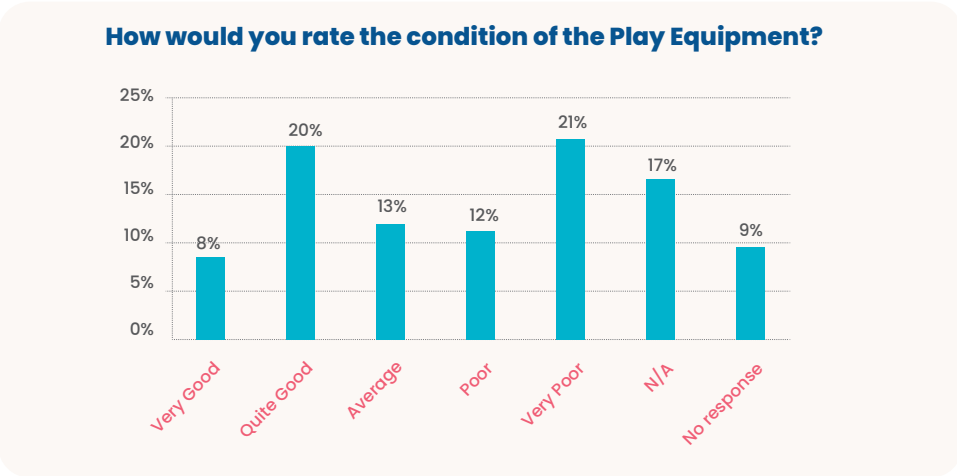
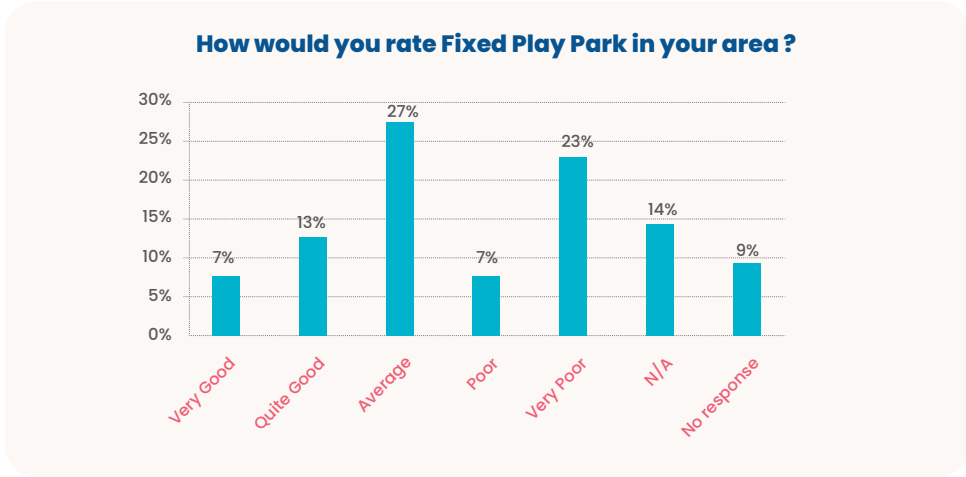
Ninety-four percent felt that all children should have access to a variety of quality play opportunities with 82% strongly agreeing and 15% agreeing that children should be involved in decision making by Council and other providers as it relates to play.



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Fixed Play Parks

Forty eight of the respondents indicated that they had a fixed play park located within or near to their area.



6.0 Fixed Play Areas



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6.1 Introduction

Derry City and Strabane District Council is currently responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of 84 fixed play areas. A fixed play area is defined as a designated, often fenced off space that provides access to a range of fixed play equipment (for example swings, slides, roundabouts etc.)

Fixed play areas vary in terms of the type and range of play equipment available; this is often due to underlying locational factors including the size of the site, the underpinning geography of the location and the indicative number of households the play area has been designed for.

In the case of smaller play areas, equipment may be limited to 6 pieces of play equipment with some larger play areas offering in excess of 15 pieces, often alongside wider green space and recreational activities.

It is important to note that fixed play area development represents a significant financial outlay for Council in terms of the initial capital costs for design and construction of the play area, the ongoing renewal of equipment and upkeep and maintenance.

Given the level of financial investment required, Council is committed through this Play Plan to working to ensure that our collective fixed play offering provides variety, challenge and

enjoyment; offers inclusive play opportunities for all ability levels and supports children’s growth, development and learning through access to innovative and creative play activities.

This section of the Play Plan provides an overview of current fixed play provision, an analysis of population needs and an overview of assessed play values for each of the 84 fixed play areas by Local Growth Area.

For each LGA a series of recommendations are made aimed at addressing identified gaps in fixed play provision and enhancing levels of play value in existing play areas.



6.2 Classification of Fixed Play Areas

Fixed play areas are typically defined according to the ‘Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play’ produced by Fields in Trust. The purpose of the Accessibility Benchmark is to establish a radial walking distance measurement for different types of play area. This measure defines the population catchment area for each type of play area.

The Accessibility Benchmark Standard (outlined in the table below) is based on 3 identified types of play area and establishes a set of distance thresholds which set the radial catchment area for each ‘type’ of play space.

Whilst acknowledging the value of the Accessibility Benchmark Standards, following a review of existing local provision, settlement patterns and in line with the previous Play Plan within the legacy Derry City Council, Council has agreed a tailored categorisation for fixed play areas with associated revised distance criteria which relates more closely to local conditions.

Type Of Play	Distance Criteria (Metres)
Walking Distance	
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) Play areas specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) Areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) Areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

Derry City And Strabane District Council Play Area Designation	Radial Distance Criteria (M)
Local Play Area: Local play areas are designed to cater primarily for local residents within walking distance of the facility.	400
Neighbourhood Play Area: Neighbourhood play areas offer a high level of play value, attracting users from a larger Neighbourhood area. Typical features can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Free play MUGA/kickabout areaHigh quality play provision including inclusive play equipmentDependent on wider site infrastructure, may include access to Community Hub (centre) with toilets and possibly Changing Places Toilet facilityCar-parking	750
District Play Area: District play areas represent the largest fixed play provision in terms of both size and scale, offering a wide variety of fixed and non-fixed play opportunities. Often set within larger park landscapes, features can include:	1000

- Support services including café and toilet provision to facilitate longer term site use
 - Changing Places Toilet
 - High quality play provision including inclusive play equipment
 - Greenway connections/pathways
 - Car parking
 - Pitches/grassed areas to facilitate ball games and free play
-

6.3 Fixed Play Provision

There are at present 84 fixed play areas across the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. The locations of fixed play areas across Council are set out on the map.

As can be seen on the map, fixed play areas are largely located within or in close proximity to settlements. Those located outside of settlements tend be centred on larger parklands in rural areas.



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Local Play Areas

Under the agreed ‘Council Play Area Designation’ the majority of play areas (71) are classified as Local play areas which have been designed to cater primarily for users residing within walking distance of the facility. Sites designated as local play areas are identified in the table below:

Allen Park	Fountain Hill	Mitchell Park
Ardstraw	Galliagh	N’townstewart (Vaughans Holm
Artigarvan	Glebe (Bells Park)	Nicholson Gardens
Ballycolman (Bottom)	Glen	Oakland Park
Ballycolman (CC)	Glenabbey	Pinewood Crescent
Ballynagard	Glenmornan	Dergborough Rd)
Beechmount Avenue	Goshaden	Plumbridge (Riverside)
Brandywell	Hazelbank	Primity Crescent
Bull Park	Hillview Park	Riverview Park
Camus	Kildrum Gardens	Rose Court
Carlton Drive	Killen	Rosstowney Drive
Carnmoney	Killeter	Roulstone Avenue
Castle Park (Children)	Lapwing Way	Shantallow

Castle Park (Toddler)	Leafair Park	Sion Mills (Garden Road)
Cluny Gardens	Learmount	Sion Mills (Parkside)
Courtrai Park	Lettershandoney	Spamount
Currynierin	Lisnafin	Sperrin Heritage Ctr
Donemana (Metal)	Listymore	Springhill Park
Donemana (Wood)		Stevenson Park
Douglas Bridge	Melvin (Grass)	Templemore
Enagh Crescent	Melvin Play Park	The Fountain
Faughan Crescent	Melvin Sport Centre	Victoria Bridge
Faughanview (Sperrin)	Millbrook Gardens	Mourne Park (N’tstewart)
Faughanview (Waterside)	Milltownview	
Faughanview (Sperrin)	Millbrook Gardens	
Faughanview (Waterside)	Milltownview	

Neighbourhood Play Areas

Across the Council area there are 8 Neighbourhood designated play areas, offering a higher level of play value and a wider range of fixed and non-fixed play opportunities. Neighbourhood play areas are located at:

Bishops Field	Irish Street	Patrician Villas
Eglinton (post upgrade)	Kilfennan	Strathfoyle
Ballymagroarty	Magheramason	

District Play Areas

There are at present 7 District play areas, representing the largest fixed play provision in terms of both size and scale and offering a wide variety of fixed and non-fixed play opportunities.

District play areas are located at:

Ballyarnett Play Park	Cumber House	Pennyburn Play Trail
Brooke Park	Drumahoe	St Columbs (Junior)
St Columbs (Adventure)		

6.4Fixed Play Area Play Value Assessment

As part of the Play Plan development process all fixed play areas were assessed against a set of criteria and assigned an indicative Play Value Score. As part of the assessment process consideration was given to the condition of equipment and, as a result were identified sub-standard equipment which failed to meet health and safety standards was removed by Council.

The Play Value Score provides a means of determining the degree to which a fixed play area provides a stimulating play space for children and young people of differing ages and abilities.

Play value is a critical consideration within the Play Plan as a play area with low play value is unlikely to provide play appeal to children and young people; is likely to have low levels of usage and is unlikely to enhance children’s play experiences or support their development.

In completing the play value assessment, a range of information was considered including:

- The range and variety of play types supported by the play area
- The appeal of the play area across a broad range of age groups
- The presence or not of all ability play opportunities or specialist disability play equipment

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- Wider locational and site factors including the attractiveness of the site for play, overall condition, indicative level of usage, damage to equipment through vandalism, environmental factors etc.
- Accessibility of the play area for those who would wish to use it.
- Play value audits were undertaken by PlayBoard NI and considered a number of key areas including:

Areas Assessed	Description
Locational factors	Attractiveness and welcoming nature of the play setting; level of community oversight; vandalism and cleanliness of site; height of perimeter fencing etc.
Accessibility factors	Condition of pathway surfaces; condition of play surfaces; entrance and layout accessibility etc. (inclusive play opportunities assessed separately)
Environmental factors	Presence or not of natural vegetation e.g. trees, bushes, shrubs; grass levels; presence of sunny, shaded and sheltered areas; ground modelling; presence of natural play opportunities e.g. rocks, logs etc.; water play opportunities.

Physical play opportunities	Review of physical play opportunities afforded by the play area; range of play equipment available.
Creative play opportunities	Presence of sand, soil or mud play; water play opportunities; presence of loose play parts; opportunities for pretend play (e.g. natural spaces and places that stimulate the imagination, materials which can be manipulated etc.).
Inclusive play opportunities	Presence, scope and scale of inclusive and accessible play opportunities for children with disabilities.
Social play opportunities	Presence of quiet places to sit/chat/think; places to hide; opportunities to interact with children of different ages and abilities; focused recognition of the social aspect of play for older children e.g. teen shelter.

The maximum score possible using the play audit tool is 800. The table overleaf outlines the scoring framework and provides a description of conditions based on the Play Value Score.

Areas Assessed	Description
<400	<p>Site offers a low level of play value and require remedial action. Typically, this will be due to range of factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lack of variety in the range of play equipment available limiting its play value and reducing repeat visits• Poor condition of fixed play equipment due to age/wear and tear e.g. wood rot, corrosion, broken components etc.• Damage to play equipment or the wider site e.g. vandalism or graffiti that detracts from the site as an area for play• A lack of inclusive play opportunities• Wider site aspects, for example poor or restrictive access to the play area, poorly maintained grass/greenery or other natural components. <p>Play areas falling within this category (providing that continued demographic need can be demonstrated) are generally in need of upgrade or significant remedial action aimed at enhancing play value during the lifetime of the strategy.</p>
401-480	<p>Site continues to offer a fair level of play value but will require action to enhance play value</p> <p>Play areas scoring between 400 and 480 will typically offer a limited range of play opportunities and, whilst condition is fair may require remedial action above regular maintenance in order to address underlying issues that reduce their play value.</p>
481-600	<p>Site offers a good level of play value and does not require action at present. Council should continue to maintain and monitor such sites to prevent a reduction in play value.</p>
601+	<p>Sites scoring above 601 are deemed to have a high play value and do not require any immediate action beyond ongoing maintenance and regular monitoring of play value. In the case of those sites identified as being District play areas, recommendations may be made within the Play Plan to bring the site up to District standards in terms of inclusive play opportunities, toilets and supporting infrastructure.</p>

Criteria	No. of Play Areas
Top 5 Highest Scoring Fixed Play Areas	1. Brooke Park (660) 2. Pennyburn Play Trail (635) 3. Ballyarnett Play Park (620) 4. Strathfoyle (615) 5. Patrician Villas (615)
Bottom 5 Lowest Scoring Play Areas	1. Rosstowney (235) 2. Hazelbank (250) 3. Faughan Crescent (260) 4. Sperrin Heritage Centre (270) 5. Kildrum Gardens (285)
No. scoring 400 or under (Low level of play value)	27
No. scoring between 401 and 480 (Lower Mid level of play value)	25
No. scoring between 481 and 600 (Upper Mid level of play value)	26
No. scoring 601 to 800 (High level of play value)	6

Play Value Overview

The table sets out the key overall findings from the play value assessments conducted within the Derry City and Strabane District Council area. The table below gives an overview of key findings, whilst the table overleaf shows the Play Value Score and rank for all play areas assessed.



Rank	Play Area	LGA	Designation	Play Value
1	Brooke Park	The Moor	District	660
2	Pennyburn Play Trail	Foyleside	District	635
3	Ballyarnett Play Park	Ballyarnett	District	620
4	Strathfoyle	Faughan	Neighbourhood	615
5	Patrician Villas	Strabane	Neighbourhood	615
6	Cumber House	Sperrin	District	610
7	St Columb's Park (Junior)	Waterside	District	590
8	Sion Mills Park Side	Derg	Local	590
9	Drumahoe	Waterside	District	580
10	Magheramason	Faughan	Neighbourhood	570
11	Donemana (Wood)	Sperrin	Local	550
12	Galliagh	Ballyarnett	Local	545
13	Glen	Foyleside	Local	545
14	Kilfennan	Waterside	Neighbourhood	535
15	Enagh Crescent	Faughan	Local	530
16	Irish Street	Waterside	Neighbourhood	530
17	Goshaden	Faughan	Local	525
18	Ballymagroarty	Foyleside	Neighbourhood	525
19	Riverview Park	The Moor	Local	515
20	Rose Court	Waterside	Local	515
21	Roulstone Avenue	Waterside	Local	515
22	Lettershandoney	Faughan	Local	510
23	Faughanview	Sperrin	Local	510

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Rank	Play Area	LGA	Designation	Play Value
24	Brandywell	The Moor	Local	500
25	Mourne Park Newtownstewart	Derg	Local	500
26	Pinewood Crescent	Faughan	Local	495
27	Nicholson Gardens	Faughan	Local	495
28	Inniscarn Gardens (Bishops Field)	The Moor	Neighbourhood	495
29	Carnmoney	Faughan	Local	490
30	Leafair Park	Ballyarnett	Local	485
31	Glenabbey	Ballyarnett	Local	485
32	Lapwing Way	Waterside	Local	485
33	Eglinton (Closed for Refurbishment)	Faughan	Neighbourhood	475
34	Learmount	Sperrin	Local	470
35	Killeter	Derg	Local	465
36	Victoria Bridge	Derg	Local	465
37	Melvin Grass Play Area	Strabane	Local	465
38	Oakland Park	The Moor	Local	465
39	Shantallow	Ballyarnett	Local	460
40	Springhill Park	Strabane	Local	460
41	The Fountain	The Moor	Local	460
42	Artigarvan	Sperrin	Local	460
43	Bull Park	The Moor	Local	450
44	Primity Crescent	Faughan	Local	445

Rank	Play Area	LGA	Designation	Play Value
45	Ardstraw	Derg	Local	445
46	Castle Park (Children’s)	Derg	Local	440
47	Donemana (Metal)	Sperrin	Local	440
48	Camus	Sperrin	Local	435
49	Castle Park (Toddlers)	Derg	Local	415
50	Glenmornan	Sperrin	Local	415
51	Melvin Sport (Pirate Ship)	Strabane	Local	415
52	Ballycolman (Bottom)	Strabane	Local	415
53	Plumbridge Riverside	Sperrin	Local	410
54	Lisnafin	Strabane	Local	410
55	Courtraí Park	Strabane	Local	410
56	Ballycolman C Centre	Strabane	Local	405
57	Beechmount Ave.	Strabane	Local	405
58	Mitchell Park	Derg	Local	400
59	Spamount	Derg	Local	395
60	Millbrook Gardens	Derg	Local	395
61	Melvin Play park	Strabane	Local	395
62	Stevenson Park	Waterside	Local	395
63	Listymore	Derg	Local	390
64	Sion Mills	Derg	Local	380
65	Fountain Hill	Waterside	Local	370

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Rank	Play Area	LGA	Designation	Play Value
66	Cluny Gardens	Derg	Local	360
67	Newtownstewart (Vaughans Holm)	Sperrin	Local	360
68	Carlton Drive	Strabane	Local	360
69	Douglas Bridge	Sperrin	Local	350
70	Plumbridge (Dergborough Rd)	Sperrin	Local	345
71	Currynierin	Waterside	Local	345
72	Glebe (Bells Park Road)	Derg	Local	340
73	Templemore (Closed)	Ballyarnett	Local	335
74	Hillview Park	Derg	Local	330
75	Allen Park	Sperrin	Local	330
76	Milltownview	Waterside	Local	330
77	Faughanview	Waterside	Local	310
78	Ballynagard (closed for refurbishment)	Ballyarnett	Local	305
79	Killen	Derg	Local	295
80	Kildrum Gardens	The Moor	Local	285
81	Sperrin Heritage Centre	Sperrin	Local	270
82	Faughan Crescent	Waterside	Local	260
83	Hazelbank	Foyleside	Local	250
84	Rosstown Drive	Waterside	Local	235
85	St Columbs Park Adventure Play (Closed)	Waterside	District	N/A



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Developments since Play Value Assessments

It should be noted that since the initial Play Value assessments were undertaken, Council have progressed work aimed at enhancing play value at a number of locations and have also developed two new play areas.

Based on a review of the plans for each location, an indicative play value assessment has been undertaken the results of which can be viewed in the table below.

Play Area	Nature of Enhancement	Original PV	Projected PV
Magheramason	Full Upgrade	405	570
Sion Mills (Park Side)	New Play Area	n/a	590
Mourne Park	New Play Area	n/a	500
Eglinton	Full Upgrade	475	560
Ardstraw	Partial Upgrade	370	445
Artigarvan	Partial Upgrade	395	460

6.5 Population Coverage Analysis

As part of the Play Plan development process, population coverage analysis was undertaken for each LGA area. In undertaking population analysis, NISRA population estimates of the distribution of 0 to 15-year old’s living within each LGA area by small area (NISRA statistical zone classification) were mapped against household location data.

By combining both data sources, small areas with a higher number of resident 0 to 15-year olds were identified and assessed against household density/ locational spread.

The purpose of the analysis was threefold:

1. To identify those fixed play areas which, whilst currently of low play value continue to locationally meet a level of demand for play
2. To identify potentially redundant sites i.e. low value play areas which no longer locationally meet a demand for play.
3. To identify potential areas of need (gaps) requiring new fixed play provision.

4. It should be noted that the identification of a gap does not indicate a definite need for new fixed play development, rather it highlights that based on underlying demographic and household distribution a potential gap exists. In considering how a gap could be met Council will also give consideration to the expansion of existing fixed play areas within the wider location. Expansion of existing play areas could provide a sufficient increase in coverage to meet the identified need.

Prior to initiating the development of new fixed play Council will undertake a further two stage process consisting of:

1. A review of actual need (as opposed to statistical need) in order to determine the level of demand for fixed play area development through community engagement and consultation processes.
2. The identification of potential land options that lend themselves to meeting fixed play development should demand be confirmed. This will include consideration of Council owned land, other land in ownership of public bodies that could be transferred/accessed on a partnership basis (e.g. schools) etc.



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6.6 Overview of Local Growth Area Recommendations

This section of the Play Plan provides an overview of key recommendations for each of the play areas with regards to:

- Potential gap sites which, following population analysis have been identified as requiring the development of new fixed play provision, providing appropriate land can be accessed
- Existing fixed play areas, based on the assessment of play value
- Redundant play areas which are no longer required due to population change.

Ballyarnett Local Growth Area

Ballyarnett LGA is located to the North West of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of six electoral wards – Galliagh, Shantallow, Skeoge, Carn Hill, Shantallow East and Culmore.

Settlement Structure

The area is predominantly urban in nature with the majority of households within the LGA falling inside the Derry City urban area.

Outside of the Derry City urban area, Ballyarnett LGA is primarily rural in nature with only one other significant settlement (based on NISRA settlement definitions), Culmore village. The population of Culmore village based on the most recent settlement statistics was 3,466.

Beyond Derry City urban area and Culmore village, resident household population distribution is defined as being rural dispersed in nature. From a Council perspective this has implications for fixed play provision.



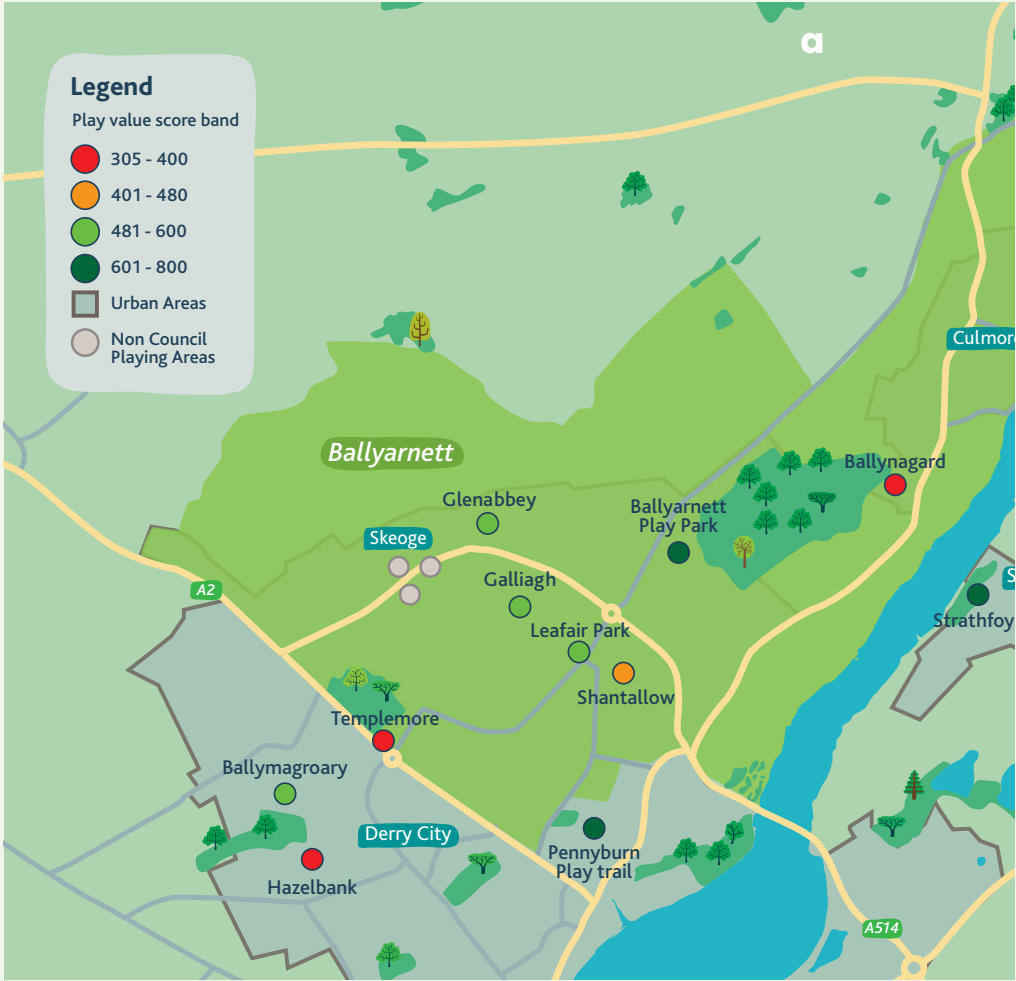
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Fixed Play Areas

There are at present 7 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA, 1 district and 6 local designated play areas. A play value assessment of each play area was undertaken with the table below showing the respective Play Value Scores for each.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Ballynagard	Local	305
Templemore	Local	335
Shantallow	Local	460
Leafair Park	Local	485
Glenabbey	Local	485
Galliagh	Local	545
Ballyarnett Play Park	District	620

The location of each Council owned facility can be seen on the map, colour coded to indicate its respective Play Value Score.



In addition to Council owned facilities, a number of housing developers have installed additional play areas to service local residents. As they were not in Council ownership, play value assessments were not undertaken for these play areas however they were considered as part of the analysis of need in order to give a more complete overview of provision.

Recommendations

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 3 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need. Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are at:

- Carnhill
- Elmore/Earhart
- Culmore Country Park

Play Area Upgrades

In addition to the proposed new play areas, the play plan recommends that enhancements be made at 2 existing play locations, namely:

- Templemore Play area – to be enhanced from local to district designation in line with the development of the sports centre
- Culmore Area – the existing play area at Ballynagard to be relocated to a new site and enhanced from local to neighbourhood designation, providing wider radial coverage. (Planning Permission is secured)

Play Area Partial Upgrade/Enhancement

In addition to the proposed new play areas, the play plan recommends that enhancements or partial upgrades be made at:

- Ballyarnett Play area – as a district designated play area the site should be enhanced to include a range of inclusive play equipment alongside the development of appropriate toileting facilities (to changing places standard)

No Immediate Action

Based on the play assessment process, the remaining 4 play areas located at Shantallow, Glenabbey, Leafair and Galliagh continue to meet play need, offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.

Waterside Local Growth Area

Waterside LGA is located to the North West of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of seven electoral wards – Caw, Clondermott, Drumahoe, Ebrington, Kilfennan, Lisnagelvin and Victoria.

Settlement Structure

The area is predominantly urban in nature with the majority of households falling within the Derry City urban area. Outlying areas which fall outside the Derry City urban area are rural in nature.

Fixed Play Areas

There are at present 14 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA – 2 district, 2 neighbourhood and 10 local designated play areas. A play value assessment of each play area was undertaken with the table below showing the respective Play Value Scores for each.

The location of each Council owned facility can be seen on the map opposite and is colour coded to indicate its Play Value Score.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Rosstowney Drive	Local	235
Faughan Crescent	Local	260
Faughanview	Local	310
Milltownview	Local	330
Currynierin	Local	345
Fountain Hill	Local	370
Stevenson Park	Local	395
Lapwing Way	Local	485
Rose Court	Local	515
Roulstone Avenue	Local	515
Irish Street	Neighbourhood	530
Kilfennan	Neighbourhood	535
Drumahoe	District	580
St Columb's Park (Junior)	District	590
St Columbs Park Adventure	District	closed



In addition to Council owned facilities, the area has one further play area installed by a housing developer to service local residents. As this site is not in Council ownership, a play value assessment was not undertaken, however it was considered as part of the analysis of need in order to give a more complete overview of provision.

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Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 5 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need. Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are:

- Top of the Hill
- Waterstone Park/Windridge Way/Thornlea Gardens area
- Knightsbridge/Pelham Road/Sevenoaks area
- Lincoln Court or Rosstowney Drive (upgrade)
- The Triangle

Play Area Upgrades

In addition to the proposed new play areas, the play plan recommends that upgrades be made at 5 existing low play value locations, namely:

- Currynrierin Play area
- Stevensons Park Play area
- Fountain Hill Play area
- St Columbs Park Adventure Play
- Rosstowney Drive or a new play area at Lincoln Court

Play Area Partial Upgrade/Enhancement

With regards to St. Columb’s Park (Junior), whilst play value remains generally high, the site lacks inclusive play experiences and, given its District status it is recommended that the play park be enhanced through the addition of inclusive play equipment (e.g. wheelchair accessible roundabout, see-saw, swing).

Removal/Transformation

Based on a combination of low play value and indicative low level of population demand it is recommended that 5 play areas be considered to removal/site transformation following local consultation. These play areas are located at:

- Faughan Crescent
- Faughanview
- Rosstowney Drive
- Milltown View
- Rosstowney Drive (if a new play development goes ahead at Lincoln Court)

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, the remaining 6 play areas located at Lapwing Way, Rose Court, Roulstone Avenue, Irish Street, Kilfennan and Drumahoe District Park continue to meet play need, offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.

Derg Local Growth Area

Derg LGA is located to the South West of Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of five electoral wards – Finn, Sion Mills, Newtownstewart, Castlederg and Glenderg.

Settlement Structure

Derg LGA is predominantly rural in nature with the majority of households located in or around a number of key settlement towns, villages and hamlets.

Based on the most recent available statistics, defined settlements , population and household numbers within Derg LGA are:

Settlement	Population & Households	
	Total Residents	Households
Castlederg	2,985	1,213
Sion Mills	1,903	769
Newtownstewart	1,547	619
Glebe	733	263
Clady	538	214
Erganagh	498	188
Victoria Bridge	383	143
Killen	269	103
Spamount	246	96
Ardstraw	221	82
Killeter	92	40
Drumlegagh	92	30

1. Based on NISRA Classifications
2. Based on NISRA Headcount and Household Estimates for Settlements, 2015

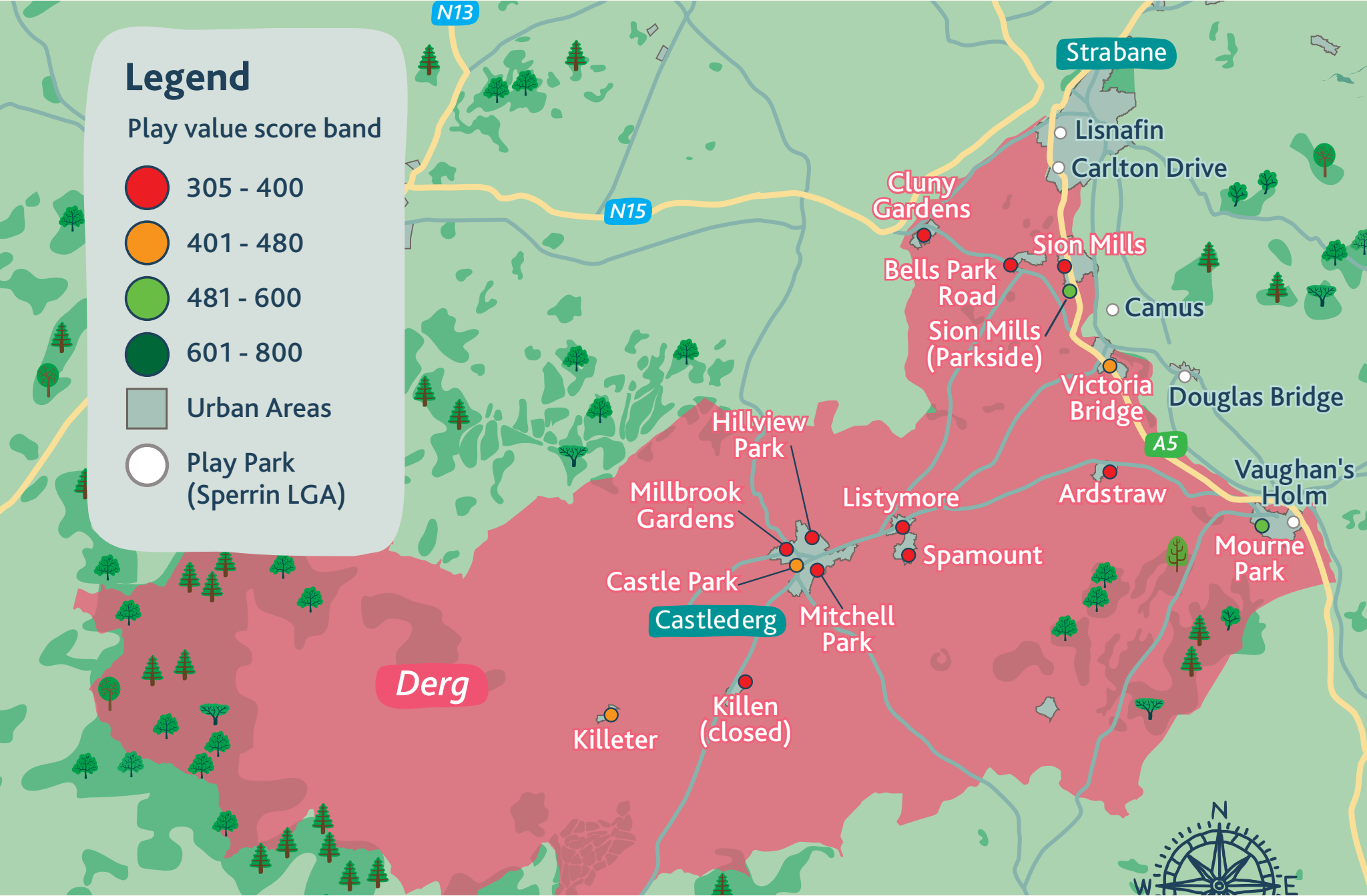
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Fixed Play Areas

There are 14 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA all of local designation. A play value assessment of each was undertaken with the table below showing the respective Play Value Scores for each.

The location of each Council owned facility can be seen on the map below, colour coded to indicate its Play Value Score.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Killen (Closed)	Local	295
Hillview Park	Local	330
Glebe (Bells Park Road)	Local	340
Cluny Gardens	Local	360
Sion Mills (Garden Road)	Local	380
Listymore	Local	390
Spamount	Local	395
Millbrook Gardens	Local	395
Mitchell Park	Local	400
Castle Park (Toddlers)	Local	415
Castle Park (Childrens)	Local	440
Ardstraw	Local	445
Killeter	Local	465
Victoria Bridge	Local	465



Draft Play Plan

Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 1 new fixed play area be developed to meet play need.
Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified location is:

- Drumlegagh

Play Area Upgrades

Upgrades to be made at 9 existing low play value locations:

- Killen Play area (possible re-location to alternative site)
- Hillview Park Play area
- Glebe Play area
- Cluny Gardens
- Listymore
- Spamount
- Millbrook Gardens
- Castle Park to a district designated play area
- Vaughan’s Holm upgrade to Neighbourhood or District designated play area. (located in Sperrin LGA but serves Derg LGA)

Play Area Partial Upgrade/Enhancement

Enhancements or partial upgrades to be made at:

- Ardstraw – some new equipment was recently installed, remaining old equipment needs to be replaced

Removal/Transformation

Based on a combination of low play value and indicative low level of population demand it is recommended that the play areas at Mitchell Park and Sion Mills (Garden Road) be considered for removal/site transformation following local consultation.

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, the play areas located at Killeter, Victoria Bridge and Mourne Park, Newtownstewart and Sion Mills Park Side continue to offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.

Strabane Local Growth Area

Strabane LGA is located to the West of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

Settlement Structure

Strabane LGA is predominantly urban in nature with the majority of households falling within the Strabane town urban area. The LGA boundary also incorporates small areas falling partially within Artigarvan and Finn wards.

Fixed Play Areas

There are at present 11 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA, 10 of which are local designated play areas with 1 neighbourhood designated site. A play value assessment of each play area was undertaken with the table below showing the respective Play Value Scores for each.

The location of each Council owned facility can be seen on the map overleaf, colour coded to indicate its Play Value Score.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Carlton Drive	Local	360
Melvin Play park	Local	395
Ballycolman C Centre	Local	405
Beechmount Ave.	Local	405
Lisnafin	Local	410
Courtrai Park	Local	410
Melvin Sport (Pirate Ship)	Local	415
Ballycolman (Bottom)	Local	415
Springhill Park	Local	460
Melvin Grass Play Area	Local	465
Patrician Villas	Neighbourhood	615

Draft Play Plan

Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it is recommended that 5 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need.

Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are:

- Tulacorr, Grangewood and Glenside area
- Ashdale, Fernbrook and Brookvale area
- Belladoo, Laurel Drive and Five Acres area
- Adria site (developer led)
- Castletown Road

Play Area Upgrades

Upgrades to be made at existing low play value locations:

- Carlton Drive
- Ballycolman (Bottom)
- Ballycolman Community Centre to neighbourhood designation
- Lisnafin to neighbourhood designation
- Courtraí Park (potential development to town park)

Removal/Transformation

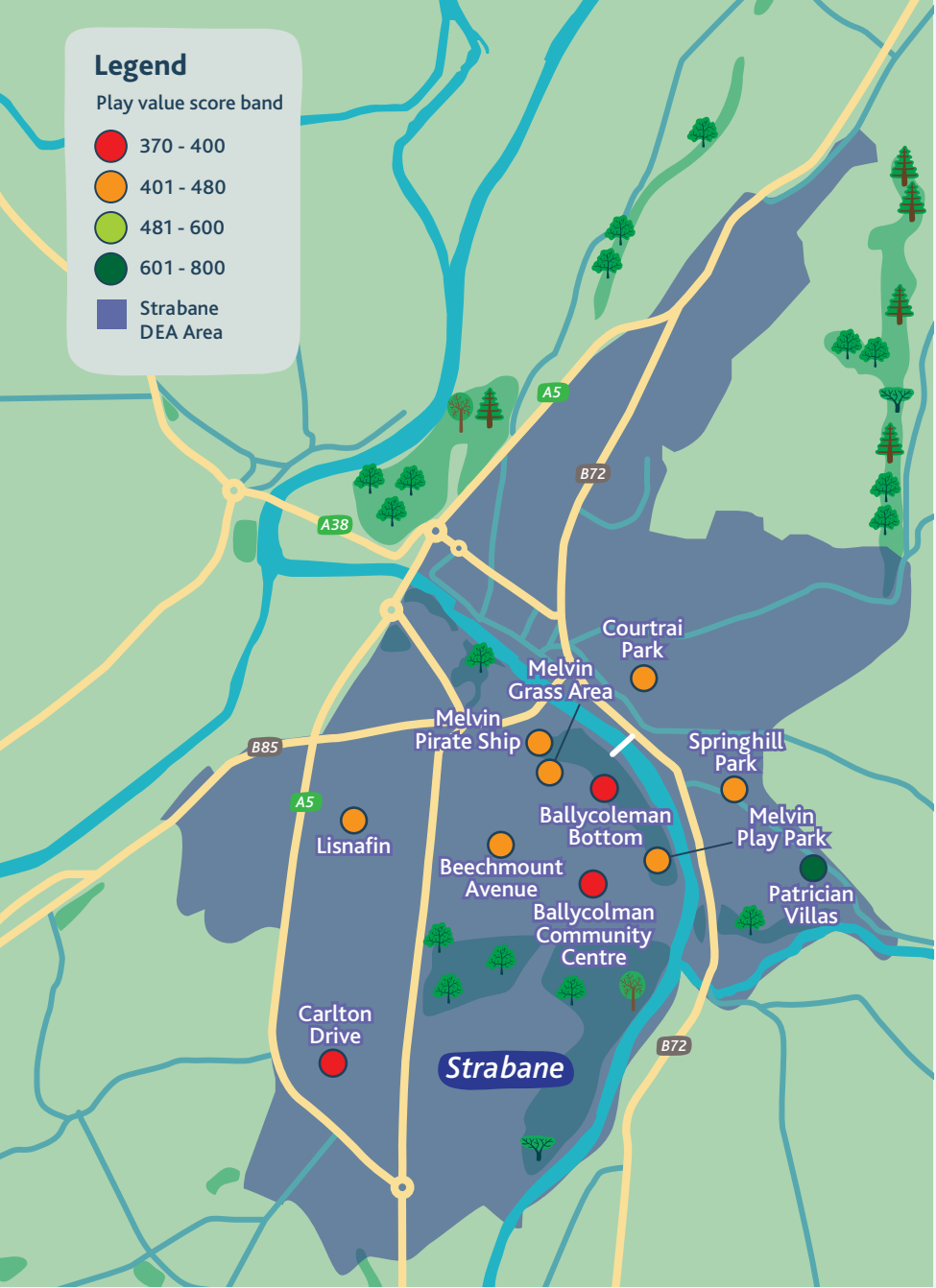
Based on a combination of low play value and duplication with proposed new play at the Adria site, it is recommended that the play area at Beechmount Avenue be considered to removal/site transformation following local consultation.

In considering transformation it is suggested that consideration should be given to the development of activities on-site for older children and teenagers e.g. Multi-Use Games Area.

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, the play areas located at Melvin (including the play park, pirate ship and grass area), Springhill Park and Patrician Villas continue to meet play need, offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.



Foyleside Local Growth Area

Foyleside LGA is located to the North West of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of five electoral wards – Ballymagroarty, Springtown, Foyle Springs, Northland and Madam’s Bank.

Settlement Structure

Foyleside LGA is predominantly urban in nature with the majority of households falling inside the Derry City urban area. Outside of the Derry City urban area, Foyleside LGA is largely rural in nature with no significant settlements (based on NISRA settlement definitions). Within the rural portion of the LGA the household pattern is rural dispersed.

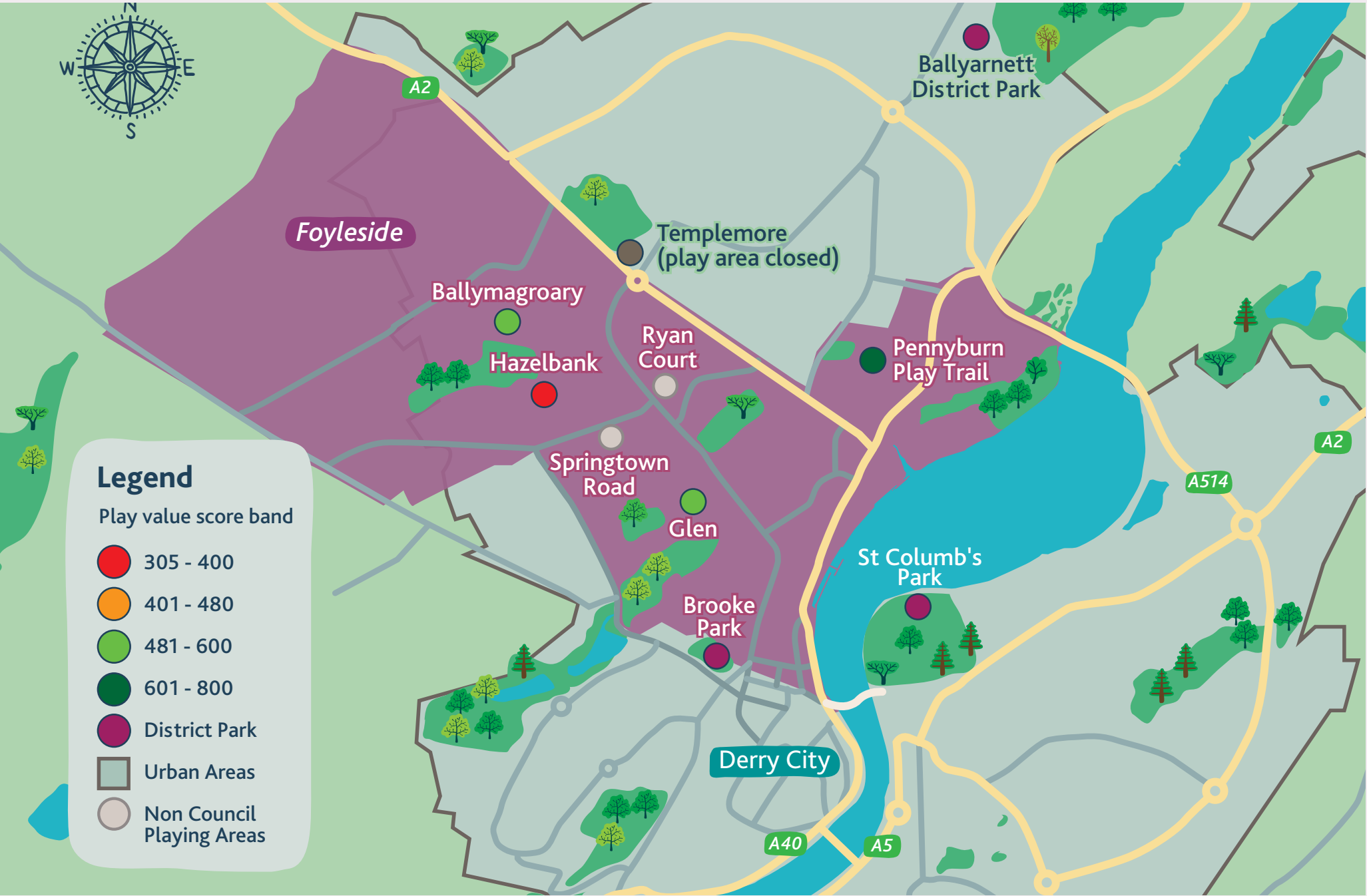
Fixed Play Areas

There are at present 3 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA which are local designated play areas. Pennyburn Play Trail is not a Council owned facility and has a district designation. A play value assessment of each play area was undertaken with the table below showing the respective Play Value Scores for each.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Hazelbank	Local	250
Ballymagroarty	Local	525
Glen	Local	545
Pennyburn Play Trail	District	635

The location of each facility can be seen on the map overleaf, colour coded to indicate its Play Value Score.

In addition to Council owned facilities, a number of housing developers have installed additional play areas to service local residents. As they were not in Council ownership, play value assessments were not undertaken for these play areas however they were considered as part of the analysis of need in order to give a more complete overview of provision.



Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 3 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need.

Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are:

- St. Eithne’s
- Coshquin (Planning Permission is secured)
- Lower Strand Road (incorporation of playable features)

Play Area Upgrades

In addition to the proposed new play areas, the play plan recommends that upgrades be made at:

- Hazelbank Play area to neighbourhood designation (located adjacent to new community centre)

It should be noted that the proposed enhancement of Templemore to District designation will impact on Foyleside LGA.

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, the play areas located at Ballymagroarty, Glen and Pennyburn continue to offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.



Faughan Local Growth Area

Faughan LGA is located to the North East of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of five electoral wards – Claudy, Eglinton, Enagh, New Buildings and Slievekirk.

Settlement Structure

The area is predominantly rural in nature with the majority of households within the LGA located in or around a number of key settlement towns, villages and hamlets.

Beyond the settlements identified, resident household population distribution across the remainder of the LGA is defined as being rural dispersed in nature.

Fixed Play Areas

At time of play value audit there were 11 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA, 9 of which were local designated play areas with 2 neighbourhood designated sites. Following completion of the play value the audit, the play area at Gulf Road was removed.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Primity Crescent	Local	445
Eglinton (Closed for upgrade)	Neighbourhood	475
Carnmoney	Local	490
Pinewood Crescent	Local	495
Nicholson Gardens	Local	495
Lettershandoney	Local	510
Goshaden	Local	525
Enagh Crescent	Local	530
Magheramason	Neighbourhood	570
Strathfoyle	Neighbourhood	615

Play value audit scores for each play area can be viewed on the table. The location of each Council owned facility can be seen on the map, colour coded to indicate its Play Value Score.



Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 3 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need.

Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are:

- Prehen
- Tamnaherin
- Bready

Play Area Upgrades

Upgrades to be made at 1 existing low play value locations:

- Eglinton (upgrade underway)

Play Area Partial Upgrade/Enhancement

Enhancement to be made at:

- Strathfoyle Play area – enhancement to incorporate inclusive play equipment and access
- Primity Crescent (minor improvements to enhance play value)

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, a number of play areas continue to offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

- Carnmoney
- Pinewood Crescent
- Nicholson Gardens
- Lettershandoney
- Goshaden
- Enagh Crescent
- Magheramason

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.

Sperrin Local Growth Area

Sperrin District Electoral Area (LGA) is located at the centre of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of seven electoral wards – Artigarvan, Ballycolman, Dunnamanagh, Glenelly Valley, Park, Strabane North and Strabane West.

Settlement Structure

The area is predominantly rural in nature with the majority of households within the LGA located in or around a number of key settlement towns, villages and hamlets.

Beyond the settlements identified, resident household population distribution across the remainder of the LGA is defined as being rural dispersed in nature.

Fixed Play Areas

At time of play value audit there were 14 Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA, 13 of which were local designated play areas with 1 district designated site.

Play value audit scores for each play area can be viewed on the table below.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Sperrin Heritage Centre	Local	270
Allen Park (Donemana)	Local	330
Plumbridge (Dergborough Rd)	Local	345
Douglas Bridge	Local	350
Newtownstewart Vaughans Holm	Local	360
Plumbridge Riverside	Local	410
Glenmornan	Local	415
Camus	Local	435
Donemana (Metal)	Local	440
Artigarvan	Local	460
Learmount	Local	470
Faughanview	Local	510
Donemana (Wood)	Local	550
Cumber House	District	610



Draft Play Plan

Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 3 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need.

Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are:

- Straidarran
- Ballymagorry
- Cranagh

Play Area Upgrades

Upgrades to be made at 4 existing low play value locations:

- Douglas Bridge
- Camus
- Vaughans Holm to neighbourhood/district designation
- Plumbridge (Dergborough Road)

Play Area Partial Upgrade/Enhancement

Enhancements or partial upgrades to be made at:

- Artigarvan – some new equipment was recently installed, remaining old equipment needs to be replaced
- Donemana replacement of old metal equipment and enhancement to neighbourhood or district designation play area
- Learmount (partial upgrade)
- Cumber House (partial upgrade)

Removal/Transformation

Based on a combination of low play value and indicative low level of population demand it is recommended that the play areas at Sperrin Heritage Centre and Allen Park be considered for removal/site transformation following local consultation.

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, a number of play areas continue to offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

- Riverside (Plumbridge)
- Faughanview

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.

The Moor Local Growth Area

The Moor LGA is located to the North West of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area and is made up of five electoral wards – Brandywell, City Walls, Creggan, Creggan South and Sheriff’s Mountain.

Settlement Structure

The area to the North East of the LGA is partially within the Derry City urban area with the remainder predominantly rural in nature. Within the rural part of the LGA the majority of households are located in or around two key settlements, Nixon’s Corner and Killea.

Beyond the settlements identified, resident household population distribution across the remainder of the LGA is defined as being rural dispersed in nature.

Fixed Play Areas

At time of play value audit there were eight Council owned and maintained fixed play areas within the LGA, 6 of which were local designated play areas with 1 neighbourhood and 1 district designated site.

Play value audit scores for each play area can be viewed on the table below.

Play Area	Designation	PV Score
Kildrum Gardens	Local	285
Bull Park	Local	450
The Fountain	Local	460
Oakland Park	Local	465
Inniscarn Gardens (Bishops Field)	Neighbourhood	495
Brandywell	Local	500
Riverview Park	Local	515
Brooke Park	District	660

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The location of each Council owned facility can be seen on the map below, colour coded to indicate its Play Value Score.

In addition to Council owned facilities, a number of housing developers have installed additional play areas to service local residents. As they were not in Council ownership, play value assessments were no undertaken for these play areas however they were considered as part of the analysis of need in order to give a more complete overview of provision.



Recommendations

As part of the Derry City and Strabane District Council Play Plan, a number of key recommendations have been made with a view to enhancing play value and meeting identified areas of need.

New Play Area Development

Taking into account underlying levels of population density, housing locations and coverage associated with existing fixed play provision, it has been recommended that 3 new fixed play areas be developed to meet play need.

Providing appropriate land can be accessed to facilitate play development, the identified locations are:

- Nixon's Corner
- Glenowen
- Ardgrange and Grangemore

Play Area Upgrades

Upgrades to be made at 1 existing low play value location:

- Bull Park

Play Area Partial Upgrade/Enhancement

Enhancement to be made at:

- Oakland Park – inclusive play opportunities to be introduced.

Removal/Transformation

Based on a combination of low play value and indicative low level of population demand it is recommended that the play area at Kildrum Gardens be considered for removal/site transformation following local consultation.

No Immediate Action

Based on Play Value Scores and a continued level of demand, a number of play areas continue to offer a good level of play value and do not currently require any immediate action.

- The Fountain
- Bishop's Field
- Brandywell
- Riverview Park
- Brooke Park

Council should continue to monitor play value and condition to ensure there is no degradation from the existing standard.

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Prepared By **PLAYBOARD NI**

6.7 Meeting Play Need in Rural Areas

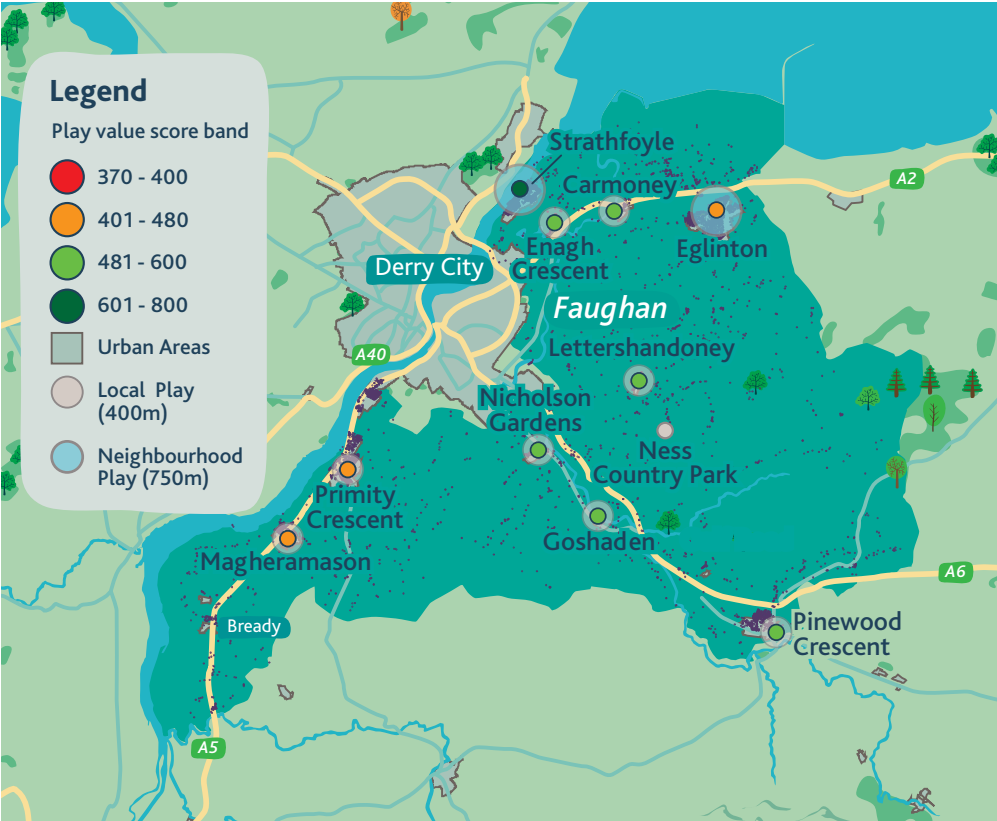
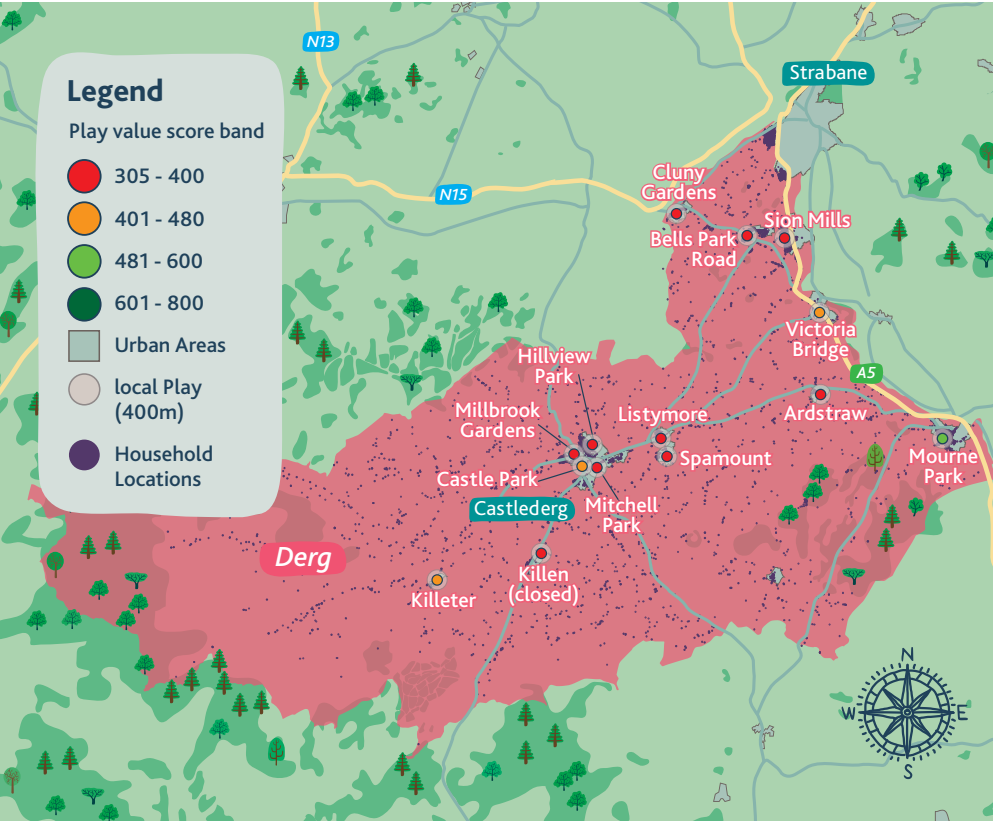
At the core of the Play Plan is a commitment to delivering the right to play as enshrined within article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Traditionally Council has sought to meet play need through the development of fixed play areas which offer children and young people opportunities to engage in play activities that support their development whilst providing fun, enjoyable activities. The fixed play model is particularly effective in areas of higher population/household density, for example within cities, towns, and villages where there is a clear catchment population of users.

A significant proportion of the Council area, particularly Faughan LGA, Derg LGA and Sperrin LGA are characterised by a dispersed population base as shown in the catchment maps below and overleaf.



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Meeting play need in areas of dispersed populations brings a number of challenges for Council:

- From a financial perspective, fixed play development represents a significant capital outlay for Council of between £300k to £750k+.
- In seeking to ensure that the maximum benefit can be gained from public investment it is important that play areas are located so as to be accessible as wide a population/user base as possible.
- In terms of locations, Council has a low level of land ownership in rural areas, restricting opportunities for fixed play development.

In the absence of land Council must look to other potential sources, for example land purchase from private landowners or land banked by other public agencies.

In seeking to ensure that the play needs of children and young people living in more dispersed rural locations are met, the Play Plan identifies a number of approaches to meeting play need.

Approach 1: Dual Fixed Development in Primary School Grounds

Within rural areas, primary schools provide a focal point within rural areas and often have land associated which could facilitate fixed play development.

Under approach 1, Council would seek to establish a partnership with an identified primary school with a view to developing a dual access fixed play area on school grounds. Using a dual gate system, the play area would be accessible to the school and the community during the week, with community access also facilitated during evening and weekends when the school is closed.

Within such play areas a focus would be placed on incorporating play-based educational components which could be used as part of outdoor learning by the school.

From the perspective of capital investment in play and levels of facility use, the development of fixed play within a school location means that levels of usage are likely to be high with the facility open to pupils and wider community members.

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Approach 2: Dual Fixed Play Development with Sport Clubs

Similar to primary schools, sports clubs often provide a focal point for the community within rural areas and have land associated which could facilitate fixed play development.

Under approach 2, Council would seek to establish a partnership with an identified sports club with a view to developing dual access fixed play within the club’s grounds. As with approach 1, a dual gate system would ensure that the play area was accessible to those using the sports club and the wider community.

From an investment perspective, the location of fixed play at a sports club is likely to result in high levels of usage with the play equipment accessible to children attending coaching etc. as well as the wider community.

Approach 3: Dual Fixed Play Development with Statutory Partners utilising Landbanks

Under approach 3, Council will work in partnership with other statutory organisations to complete a review of accessible, publicly owned land which could facilitate fixed play development.

Should land be identified, Council will work with the statutory landowner to negotiate access and development of the site for community play purposes.

Approach 4: Private Land Purchase

In the absence of an alternative approach, where a need for fixed play has been identified within a rural area, Council will review potential land purchase options within a location.

New Residential Developments

With regards to new residential developments across the area, Council will work to ensure that private developers meet the objectives for open space, recreation and leisure as outlined in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS).

Of particular relevance are retained Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS 7) – Quality Residential Environments and Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS 8) – Open Space and Outdoor recreation.

- PPS7 (Quality Residential Environments)

PPS 7 highlights the need for developers to consider the play needs of future residents within development plans outlining that:

- A. Play facilities should be seen as part of local neighbourhood facilities and (where required) should be incorporated into design and layout, designed to high standard and located to provide focal points and landmark features
 - B. It is considered reasonable to expect developers to contribute to the cost of provision and/or to set land aside for use by local community;
 - C. Regard should be given to integrating pleasant, attractive and landscaped areas of open space, including children’s play-spaces, as an intrinsic element of any new residential development.
- PPS 8, (Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation) PPS 8 develops on the strategic guidelines included in PPS7 and states:

“For residential development of 100 units or more, or for development sites of 5 hectares or more, an equipped children’s play area will be required as an integral part of the development. The Department will consider an exception to this requirement where an equipped children’s play area exists within reasonable walking distance (generally around 400 metres) of the majority of the units within the development scheme.”

Paragraph 5.14 emphasises the importance of providing for children’s play stressing the need for play areas to be located within a reasonable walking distance of where they live whilst not being located so close to dwellings that that they are likely to cause nuisance for residents.

By ensuring that developers adequately plan and provide for the current and future projected play needs of an area (whether urban or rural in nature), the planning system will be able to future proof play delivery, negating the need for, by way of example land purchase to meet play need.

7.0 **Play and Recreation Needs of Older Children and Teenagers**





Derry City & Strabane
District Council

Draft Play Plan

7.0 Play and Recreation Needs of Older Children and Teenagers

As children and young people grow older and move into their teenage years, the opportunity to engage in play and recreational activities remains vitally important. The ability to connect socially with peers becomes increasingly important and what was once seen as play becomes 'recreation' as teenagers engage in activities and past-times that they find personally interesting, enjoyable and satisfying.

Providing opportunities for older children and young people to meet their play and recreation needs provides a challenge not only for Council but also for partners across the statutory and community sectors and for society as a whole.

It is also important to recognise that as children grow older outdoor recreation opportunities become diminished for certain groups, particularly for girls or those less interested in sports. Although unintended, available leisure and recreation facilities (due to the nature of their design) tend to be predominantly used by boys and those who are already engaged in sporting activities e.g. Multi-Use Games Areas.

7.1 Views of Older Children and Teenagers

Research undertaken across Northern Ireland as part of the Young Life and Times research programme (entitled "Playscapes at 16") highlighted that for many older children and teenagers the main difficulties they face in terms of meeting their recreation needs include:

- Negative attitudes towards teenagers 'hanging out' in public places and/or in their own community leading to them being moved on to other areas
- Prohibitive costs associated with more formal recreation activities e.g. those provided through leisure centres, private providers etc.
- A lack of appropriate spaces within communities to 'hang out' i.e. a lack of shelter, seating etc.
- For those living in rural areas, difficulty in accessing urban based recreation activities due to the limitations of public transport.

During the Play Plan development process older children and teenagers across the district affirmed the importance of play and recreation to their lives highlighting its importance in relation to:

- Enabling them to hang out in their community and providing opportunities for them to socialise with their peers thereby sustaining and developing social connections
- Remaining active through both formal and informal recreational activity (ranging from attending clubs and formal sports activity through to simply kicking a ball about on a green space area, walking with friends etc.)
- Providing opportunities for fun and relaxation.
- Despite the importance of play and recreation, older children highlighted a lack of dedicated spaces that provide shelter, seating etc. to enable them to 'hang out' with their peers. The need for greater recognition of, and provision for urban sports (skateboarding, BMX etc.) was also noted by the older age group.

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7.2 Meeting the needs Older Children and Young People

Under the Play Plan, Council will seek to enhance provision for older children and young people through a number of key actions including:

- Undertaking a review of the level of demand for teen shelters based on underlying need
- The incorporation of teen shelters into the future design of play spaces/ community places where a need has been identified within the community.
- Initiation of a focused review into the provision of urban sport facilities within the Council area with a view to meeting identified need
- Establishment of an ongoing mechanism for gauging the needs of the older age group, ensuring that they have an opportunity to identify their needs and engage within the decision-making process.

It is acknowledged that meeting the play recreation needs of older children and young people can only partially be addressed within the realms of the play strategy. The issue will also require focused partnership engagement across all sectors in order to establish a single, coherent and strategic approach to meeting the needs of the group.

Such an approach requires input from a range of agencies including the PSNI (for example with regards to the moving on of teenagers hanging around within communities); Youth Service (with regards to ongoing youthwork initiatives/opportunities within the area); the community and voluntary sector (in relation to existing services, opportunities and accessible locations); Education sector with regards to the scope for making better use of school grounds etc.

Given the need for a partnership approach, the proposed Play Partnership has the potential to drive further discussion with regards to how best to meet the play recreation needs of the age group.

As children and young people grow older and move into their teenage years, the opportunity to engage in play and recreational activities remains vitally important.



8.0 Overarching Recommendations



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8.0 Overarching Recommendations

In addition to the individual recommendations made for specific fixed play areas, a number of overarching recommendations are made for consideration by Council. The purpose of these recommendations is to embed with Derry City and Strabane District Council area an overarching commitment to children and young people's play, ensuring that the right to play is afforded to all children and young people across the district.

8.1 Participation of Children and Young People

At the core of the Play Plan is a recognition that children and young people are the experts when it comes to play and the types of play experiences that will bring for them the most benefit and enjoyment.

In rolling out the Play Plan it will be critical that children and young people's views are not only sought but are taken into account in all decisions that impact upon play.

It is therefore recommended that Council proactively seek the views of, and establish effective participation mechanisms to enable children and young people to input on decisions that impact on play delivery including:

- The planning and design of new and upgraded fixed play areas
- Identification of barriers to play at community level
- Identification of preferred play approaches within a location (e.g. fixed play, non-fixed play etc.)



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8.2 Benefit Risk Approach

Children and young people have a natural thirst for challenging play as they seek to test the boundaries of their limitations, develop new skills to help them meet and overcome the challenges they face and develop the ability to better manage risk based on individual capacity.

Unfortunately growing adult anxiety over safety has significantly reduced children's opportunities to challenge themselves through risky play. These fears rest not only with parents and guardians, but also with play providers where the fear of blame or litigation has often led to a watering down of challenge and risk based play opportunities.

In reality, removing elements of risk and challenge from play impacts negatively on children, reducing their capacity to address and deal with the risks and challenges they face as they grow up. In making a case for a more balanced approach to offering challenge and risk through play, most experts agree that:

- Risky and challenging play does not automatically equate to dangerous play

8.3 Overarching Design Principles

Alongside the Play Plan, a separate design brief has been developed to assist those engaged in the design and development of fixed play areas across the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

It is recommended that these design principles should be applied by those involved in fixed play development, both statutory and non-statutory with a view to enhancing the quality of fixed play across communities.

- Encounters with risk and challenge through play supports children to learn from an early age how to manage those risks and challenges. If the experience is removed, a valuable learning opportunity is missed
- Children have a natural appetite for risk-taking which, if not fed through the provision of appropriate challenging play opportunities can lead them to seek out situations which expose them to greater risk
- From the perspective of a benefit/risk approach, engaging in active, outdoor play with an element of risk brings other health and developmental benefits. In such cases it is argued that the benefits of the activity outweigh the often minimal risk of injury or harm.
- In the longer-term, exposure to risk and challenge through play has been shown to have a range of benefits for the individual child including the development of resilience, self-reliance and has been connected to entrepreneurialism.
- It is recommended that as part of the Play Plan Council move towards adoption of a benefit/risk approach to fixed play provision in line with accepted guidance

'Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide' published by the Play Safety Forum
<https://playsafetyforum.wordpress.com/resources/>

Draft Play Plan



8.4 Accessible and Inclusive Play

Note: This section is to be reviewed further in light of impending statement on Inclusive Play from UK Play Safety Forum.

All children have the right to access appropriate play opportunities and a fundamental aspect of the Play Plan will be working to ensure that that fixed play areas offer play opportunities for children of all abilities.

Accessible and inclusive play means more than simply providing children and families with physical access to play areas and equipment. In order to be truly inclusive a play area must offer a wide range of high quality physical, creative and social play opportunities for children regardless of their needs and abilities.

The benefits of universally accessible play areas are well established for children of all abilities:

- Inclusive play areas have been shown to be more fun: Due to the more creative approach applied to the design of accessible and inclusive play equipment they often offer a greater level of variety, higher level of play value and are more engaging for children and young people in the longer-term.

- Inclusive play areas support inclusive communities: Accessible play areas do not segregate children based on ability; rather they encourage children of all abilities to come together through play, supporting the development of mutual understanding, friendships and a sense of community.
- Inclusive play areas encourage creativity: Inclusive and accessible play areas encourage children to play creatively as they include elements that engage with a wider range of senses and involve equipment that can be used in different ways by different users.

With a view to enhancing accessible and inclusive play across the Council area, it is recommended that:

- District level fixed play areas (which represent the largest fixed play provision in terms of both size and scale) will by definition incorporate as standard a broad range of accessible and inclusive play opportunities.
- These will be supported by a range of accessible support services aimed at enhancing visitors experience for all, whilst ensuring that children of all abilities and their families are able to spend time engaged in fun and enjoyable play activities. Support services should include:

- Accessible Café and accessible outdoor tables
- Public and Changing Places Toilet provision to facilitate longer term site use
- High quality play opportunities including a broad range of physical, social and creative inclusive play opportunities
- Accessible parking facilities
- In addition to the focused development of accessible play facilities at district level, the upgrading of existing fixed play areas should ensure that core consideration is given to the needs of children with disabilities including (but not restricted to):
- The provision of multi-ability fixed play equipment which offers play opportunities for children of a wide range of ability levels.
- Presence of ground level, accessible and inclusive moving fixed play pieces, for example ground level seated roundabout, ground level and wheelchair accessible play trampoline.
- The incorporation of a variety of sensory play elements (visual, sound and tactile).
- The use of gentle landscaping and the incorporation of natural play elements.

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- Creation of play spaces that allow for and encourage play interaction between all children regardless of individual ability or disability.
- Non-Council funded fixed play installations seeking post-installation maintenance agreements should give core consideration to the needs of children with disabilities including (but not restricted) to the above.

8.5 Residential Planning

As highlighted in the Play Plan, it is not always possible for Council to meet identified gaps in fixed play provision due to a lack of accessible developmental land.

In order to avoid the development of future gaps in fixed play provision resulting from new housing development, it is recommended that Council seek to ensure that developers incorporate suitable fixed play provision/green space allocations within development in line with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.

8.6 Play Plan review

It is recommended that the Play Plan should be subject to regular review (on at least a 5 year basis) to ensure that changing local circumstances (e.g. demographic/population shifts) can be taken into account and appropriate action taken.

8.7 Use of Green Spaces adjoining Fixed Play Areas

A number of fixed play areas across the district have adjoining green space which is often underutilised for the purposes of play. It is recommended that Council should seek to maximise the play value of such green spaces through minor landscaping, planting, incorporation of natural play materials and features etc.

Taking such action would help to create additional natural play opportunities within communities, complementing existing fixed play areas and providing alternative free play experiences for children and young people.



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Appendix A

Overarching Policy Context for Play

In addition to the individual and societal benefits of play, Council operates within a wider International, Regional and Local strategic context which highlights the importance of meeting play need.

International United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights.

The UNCRC was ratified by the UK government in 1991, committing all branches of government to ensuring that children are afforded the rights and protections contained within its articles. The child's Right

to Play is specifically highlighted in Article 31 which states:

“That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

“That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity”

Regional NI Programme for Government

The Programme for Government acknowledged play as an important aspect of childhood noting its importance in terms of development, well-being and enjoyment of childhood.

NI Executive Play and Leisure Policy and Implementation Plan

In 2009 the Executive published its Play and Leisure Policy Statement which highlighted its commitment to delivering against the play and

leisure needs of children and young people. This was followed in March 2011 by the Executive's endorsement of the 'Play and Leisure Policy' and an associated implementation plan.

At the heart of the policy is a recognition that play is not only critical to the individual child in terms of their health and wellbeing; but also that play has a key role in creating cohesive communities and tackling a range of issues including anti-social behaviour, inter-generational issues and the legacy of community division left over by the troubles. The policy recognises and highlights the importance of risk in play to allow children to explore boundaries and test abilities in such cases where it can be shown that the benefits to the child outweigh the potential risks

NI Children and Young Peoples Strategy (2019 to 2029)

The Department of Education have responsibility for the roll-out of the new ten-year Children and Young Peoples Strategy which will run to 2029.

The strategy is aligned to the eight parameters of children's well-being as identified within the Children's Services Co-operation Act (2015) and includes as one of its key outcome areas the enjoyment of play and leisure.

DHSSPS Fitter Future for All Framework (2012 – 2022)

The overarching aim of 'Fitter Future for All' is to support people to make healthy choices, reducing overall levels of obesity and improving health and wellbeing amongst the general population.

The Strategy recognises the critical role of play in reducing childhood obesity levels and highlights the importance of rural and natural landscapes as well as urban design and planning in delivering playable, green infrastructure (which encourages outdoor activity levels), accessible play areas and play activities, and active travel routes.

Making Life Better (2013 – 2023)

'Making Life Better' outlines the NI Executives objective of creating the conditions for individuals, families and communities to take greater control over their lives, enabling and supporting them to lead healthy lives.

The focus of 'Making Life Better' is on collaborative working between individuals, communities and partner organisations to address the

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range of factors that impact on health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland. Underpinning ‘Making Life Better’ are 6 key themes:

- 1. Giving Every Child the Best Start
- 2. Equipped Throughout Life
- 3. Empowering Healthy Living
- 4. Creating the Conditions
- 5. Empowering Communities
- 6. Developing Collaboration

The importance of play is outlined under outcome 2 of thematic area 1 entitled ‘Healthy and confident children and young people’ which gives a commitment to “Promote the benefits of play and leisure and increase opportunities for children and young people to enjoy it” on a cross-government basis including key Executive departments and local government.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement

The planning system has been reformed and restructured from a unitary system where planning powers rested with the Department to a two-tier model of delivery whereby Councils have responsibility for the implementation of key planning functions.

The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS) was published on the 28th September 2015 and reduces 20 separate

planning policy statements to one, setting out objectives for open space, recreation and leisure. The SPPS also states how the Local Development Plan plays a role in terms of open space i.e. adequate provision for green and blue infrastructure, identification and designation of areas of open space etc.

Under the SPSS the policy provision of PPS 7 (Quality Residential Environments) and PPS 8 (Open Space and Outdoor recreation), both of which have relevance to the provision of play space are retained.

- PP7 (Quality Residential Environments)PPS 7 highlights the need for developers to consider the play needs of future residents within development plans outlining that:
 - d. Play facilities should be seen as part of local neighbourhood facilities and (where required) should be incorporated into design and layout, designed to high standard and located to provide focal points and landmark features
 - e. It is considered reasonable to expect developers to contribute to the cost of provision and/or to set land aside for use by local community;
 - f. Regard should be given to integrating pleasant, attractive and landscaped areas of open space, including children’s

play-spaces, as an intrinsic element of any new residential development.

- PPS 8, (Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation)
PPS 8 develops on the strategic guidelines included in PPS7 and states:

“For residential development of 100 units or more, or for development sites of 5 hectares or more, an equipped children’s play area will be required as an integral part of the development. The Department will consider an exception to this requirement where an equipped children’s play area exists within reasonable walking distance (generally around 400 metres) of the majority of the units within the development scheme.”

Paragraph 5.14 emphasises the importance of providing for children’s play stressing the need for play areas to be located within a reasonable walking distance of where they live whilst not being located so close to dwellings that that they are likely to cause nuisance for residents.

Local Development Plan

In 2019 Derry City and Strabane District Council published its Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP sets out the Council’s vision, objective and strategic Planning policies in relation to the development and use of land in the City and District up to 2032.

The LDP builds on the Council’s overall vision for the District as set out in the Community Plan, namely:

“To make Derry City and Strabane District a thriving, prosperous and sustainable area – Planning for balanced and appropriate high quality development, whilst protecting our environment, and also promoting wellbeing with equality of opportunity for all.”

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Derry City & Strabane
District Council
Comhairle
Chathair Dhoire &
Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cittie & Stràbane
Districk Council



Summary

Over recent years acknowledgement of play's critical role in shaping the lives' of children, young people and its positive impact on wider society has become more explicit at policy level regionally, nationally and internationally. It is clear that the wider policy environment both recognises the importance of play in relation to children's health and wellbeing, welfare and development and is supportive of Council decision to establish a play investment strategy.

Critically, whilst recognising the role of Councils in meeting play need, policies consistently acknowledge that no single organisation has within its remit the capacity to address all of the issues that impact on or restrict children's play opportunities.

Responsibility for delivering play opportunities that meet the needs of children and young people lies across all policy arenas, hence the critical importance of the Community Planning Partnership as we seek to establish and roll-out the play investment strategy. It is proposed that members of the Community Planning Partnership provide input regarding key policy initiatives that lie within their remit, whilst providing connection to existing and emerging work strands that are supportive of play.

This information is available upon request in a number of formats including large print, Braille, PDF, audio formats(CD, MP3, DAISY) and minority languages.

For further information on alternative formats
please contact

Tel 028 71 253253

Text phone: 028 7137 664



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