

**Staffordshire
Moorlands
Play Strategy
2007 - 12**

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Contents

		Page
Summary	Planning for the future: Summary of Strategy Recommendations	3
Introduction	1.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership	16
	1.2 Definition of Play	17
	1.3 Scope of Strategy	17
	1.4 Vision, Aims and objectives	19
	1.5 Policy Statements	20
	1.6 Glossary of Terms	23
The Strategy	3 The Case for Play	24
	4 Background and Policy Context	26
	5 Review of Community Engagement	37
	6 Staffordshire Moorlands - Child Population & Deprivation Profile	41
	7 Local Provision Examined - Play Services	45
	8 Local Provision Examined - Play Spaces	53
The Action Plan	9 The Action Plan	64

Appendices

1. Play Partnership Terms of Reference
2. Performance Indicators - Play
3. Best Play - Key Play Objectives
4. Strategy & Policy relating to Play
5. Consultation Findings and Analysis
6. GIS maps of Play Services and Facilities
7. The Play Audit - details
8. The Proposed Local Standards
9. The Action Plan

Planning for the Future: Summary of Strategy's Recommendations

This section highlights the main issues arising from the Strategy development process, and summarises all the Strategy's proposals (found throughout the main body of this document) as to how the Play Partnership can respond in order to improve play provision across the District. The Recommendations are structured in relation to the 5 key themes of the Staffordshire Children and Young People's Plan.

1. Being Healthy

Health and Wellbeing

The Strategy recognises that Play and Informal Activity opportunities have a vital part to play in improving the health and well-being of children and young people through the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles.

Children in need

The need for improved access to provision for children and young people with disabilities (and their families) and other children in need was raised widely throughout the consultation both by children and young people with disabilities, their families and indeed by the wider community. It is recommended that:

- An access review group should be established with the Play Council to assess play areas and identify means by which they could be improved to be more appropriate to children with various disabilities and special needs. A programme of improvements should then be drawn up.
- Survey work should be undertaken with the Play Council to establish priorities in relation to access to play provision for children and young people with special needs. This should include identifying the needs of parents and young carers.
- Funds should be sought to provide additional special needs play and activity schemes as identified through the consultation process.
- The local Health Trusts should help identify children and young people who are sick or unwell (eg in hospital or recovering from serious illness) and help plan improved access to play for such children.
- Training should be provided re disability and inclusion for front line play and youth worker staff as noted above.
- Work be undertaken with the County Council to improve access to specialist play facilities at special schools out of school time.
- Consider developing transport to specialist play facilities for children with disabilities outside of the District.

2. Staying Safe

2.1 Risk and Play Provision

The strategy recognises the potential conflict between offering challenging and stimulating play opportunities and health and safety concerns. It therefore proposes the following Position statement as recommended by the Play Safety Forum (2002).

Managing Risk in Play Provision

Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

2.2 Safety and Security

Issues around safety and security in relation to open access play areas and youth facilities were identified throughout the consultation process. It is therefore recommended:

- Secured by Design principles be considered in relation to all new provision and refurbishments
- Lighting be provided at appropriate youth facilities, in the first instance at appropriate facilities in the main towns, in response to demonstrable demand from local young people.
- Consideration be made by all partners as to targeting detached and outreach staff at open access play and youth facilities
- The Play Partnership should convene a working group to identify other measures aimed at addressing identified concerns with bullying and "stranger danger"

2.3 Safe Access Routes to Play

Access to good, safe walking and cycling routes to play opportunities is essential in order to maximise their use.

The Play Partnership will support initiatives aimed at improving safe and secure routes to play opportunities.

2.4 Play in residential developments

Children and young people do not restrict their play and hanging out to play areas and parks and residential design should take into account their use of all aspects of public open space. In relation to the design and the use of public open space and civic spaces it is recommended that:

In relation to future housing developments full account should be taken of elements of residential design and the design of public open space early in the planning cycle to specifically recognise the needs of children and young people as key users of public open space and the outdoor environment. This would involve considerations such as Secured by Design principles, homezones, seating and meeting places within the development, as well as provision of specific play and youth facilities.

2.5 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities

The District Council's Diversity Officer raised a number of relevant issues:

- the council is aware of some - but not many - BME families in the district and is currently trying to map them as they are scattered through the district and not easy to reach;
- this piece of work is not yet completed and so the council do not currently have information on the issues that families may experience.

The Play Council noted that there is work in the district with the traveller community and that:

- The relationship has been carefully built up over a period of time;
- It is developed in a way which is careful to respect the traveller's culture;
- It is outreach with activities organised at travellers sites rather than expecting them to come to locations off site.
- Run in this way the play schemes are well attended and popular.

Experience elsewhere suggests that some of the issues likely to be relevant to children and young people from BME backgrounds will include:

- Isolation - children and young people can feel quite isolated when they are in a minority.
- Children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can also feel very "visible" due to this isolation.
- They may experience some incidence of racial abuse or harassment incidents which may put them off using play facilities. This is likely to be under-reported.
- It may be helpful for those working with the children and young people from BME backgrounds to have training on the implications of the cultural and ethnic differences.
- There may be a need to use languages other than English, particularly for publicity targeted at parents and carers.

It is recommended that the play partnership work with relevant partners to identify any specific needs of BME children and young people and plan for measures that will help address identified issues.

3. Enjoying and achieving

3.1 Quality of Play Provision

The Strategy highlights various elements of good practice and quality models in relation to Play Provision. It is therefore recommended that the Play Partnership:

- Utilise the models of good practice highlighted in the Strategy for the design of new and refurbished play areas and for improving inclusivity in play services and facilities and promote the availability of these models to all providers.
- Aim to develop quality assurance schemes to childcare, play and youth service providers based on the nationally recognised models highlighted.

3.2 Play Services

In relation to play services the following summarises the main observations and recommendations for future development. In line with the primary focus of the strategy the recommendations do not generally cover play opportunities provided in settings primarily providing for child care.

Playschemes and Holiday Clubs (5-11s)

Analysis indicates that the provision of playschemes is well distributed to serve the main towns and larger villages (though Biddulph is slightly less well served) but that there is scope to review provision in some of the medium sized villages. Actions suggested are to:

- Review historic locations for rural playschemes in the smaller villages and target at settlements with the larger child populations.
- Secure funds to expand the programme to maintain current venues and add new venues as appropriate.

Junior Youth Clubs

Consultation feedback shows that children hold this kind of provision as a high priority. The Play Council currently supports 4 clubs in the main towns. Provision is therefore very limited and it is suggested that:

Consideration should be made as to securing funds to enable the Play Council to establish and support additional junior clubs giving priority to villages with the higher child populations eg. Blythe Bridge, Werrington, Tean, Checkley, Cheddleton, Endon and Brown Edge.

Out-of-School provision (5-11s)

Analysis indicates a likely need for a number of additional clubs where there appears to be a gap. Though these schemes are primarily child-care based they provide many good play opportunities that could be made available free of charge if appropriate subsidy schemes were introduced.

It is therefore recommended that where partners have influence they consider supporting out-of-school provision in Biddulph, and Churnet and Cellarhead wards.

3.3 Play Spaces - Overall Strategy

The overall strategy for provision of play and youth facilities in relation to future planning is to adopt an aspirational aim in the long term to meet the Local Standards for provision that have been developed through the strategy process (see 2.5.2 below). This is combined with the adoption of national guidance and recognised models of good practice in relation to the design and quality of provision (for example in relation to inclusivity and risk management).

For Play Spaces and outdoor open access youth facilities the standards are based upon the principle of providing reasonable access (in terms of walking time) to various kinds of high quality inclusive play and youth facilities designed to meet the needs of different age groups for all of the Moorlands' children and young people.

3.4 Prioritisation for Improvements/additions to Play Spaces

The achievement of play and youth provision across the District based upon the standards is a long term goal. In the shorter term there will be a need to determine which of the play areas and youth facilities should be brought "up to standard" and where new provision should be. That is, what are the priorities for new or improved play areas and youth facilities?

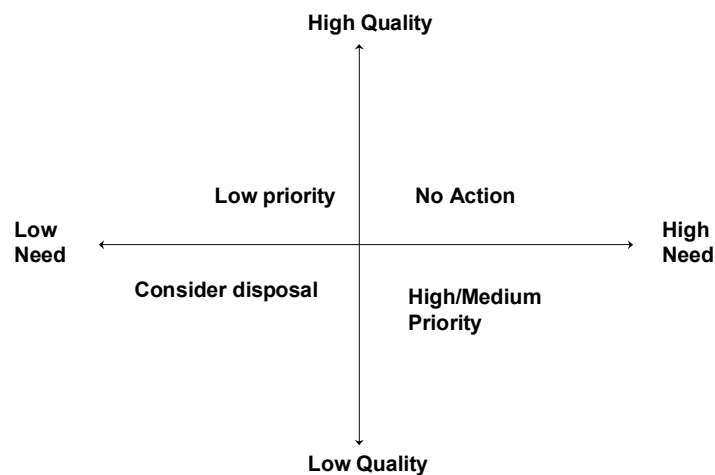
Planning for Play (national guidance) suggests that this question should be answered by prioritising provision in those areas where it is most needed¹. The strategy follows this guidance by suggesting an approach based upon 6 factors, namely:

- Where there are gaps in provision
- The location of the site in terms of safety and access and its suitability to meet the requirements of the new standards
- Provision in the 10 most deprived wards
- Provision in rural areas

¹ Detailed criteria for prioritisation are provided in Section 8.5

- Benefit to areas of high child population where there is a poor provision per head of population or where there is a paucity of any kind of public open space (eg due to high density housing)
- Potential for external funding and/or a high degree of active community support for the project.

The principal behind the approach is illustrated by the diagram below.



Local Consultation with children, young people and their parents reveals a view that in the first instance making the most of what currently exists is most important. In response, the broad strategy is to focus on refurbishments and enhancements on existing facilities combined with new provision relating to new residential developments in line with the new standards.

The strategy process involved an audit of facilities including assessments of quality. It is suggested that the Play Partners undertake a detailed analysis of the audit and plan for a longer term programme of refurbishments and developments based upon these prioritisation criteria.

Refurbishments and Improvements

In very broad terms, analysis of the audit undertaken for the strategy and deprivation and child population factors suggest some initial areas that should be supported in terms of potential refurbishments and improvements in the short term. These are:

- Biddulph East (Church Road Playing Fields)
- Brown Edge
- Cheddleton

Following this a programme of refurbishments and improvements should be developed by appropriate partners taking into account the Prioritisation Criteria, Play Strategy Good

Practice advice, and making use of the quality assessments undertaken within the play strategy process. Sites that should be considered early in this process include Halls Road, Biddulph Valley and St Lawrences Recreation Ground, Biddulph; Churchill Road Recreation Ground and Cheadle Recreation ground, Cheadle; Ball Haye Green Recreation Ground, Westwood Recreation Ground, and Woodcroft, Leek; Blythe Bridge Recreation Ground; Waterfall Lane, Waterhouses; and Werrington Playing Fields.

The prioritisation criteria suggested by the Strategy (see section 8.5) should be used to help guide decision making and the planning of the programme of refurbishments. Where it is difficult to choose between projects on this basis (as the projects appear to meet the criteria equally well) the poorest quality site should take precedence for refurbishment.

New Facilities

In very broad terms, audit and mapping undertaken for the strategy suggest that support should be given for the development of a Family Play facility in Biddulph and for youth provision in Checkley. Support should also be given in the longer term for new youth provision in the towns and larger villages in accordance with the strategy standards and prioritisation criteria.

Wards that have relatively few play and youth facilities per head of young person population include:

- Biddulph East
- Leek East
- Leek South
- Cheadle South East
- Cheadle West
- Forsbrook
- Werrington
- Cellarhead

Play Areas and youth facilities in the more rural areas should be developed with local Parish councils and appropriate partnership projects should be implemented to meet local needs and circumstances.

3.5 Community Use - School sites (Extended Schools)

The potential for school sites and facilities for providing play opportunities has been raised frequently within the consultation process. The new extended schools programme will allow for greater community use of school facilities. This could be of particular value in the rural areas where the local school may be one of the few community resources available. It is recommended:

- That a pilot project be identified to develop open access dual-use play or youth facilities at a school site where currently there is a shortfall of provision.
- School sites be considered when reviewing potential play scheme venues and in relation to out-of-school and holiday club provision.

3.6 Provision for Teenagers

A consistent message from the consultation process was that provision for teenagers was particularly poor across the District. Equally clear was that the kind of provision needed was for informal, unstructured, meeting places without adult organised activities or "education". This clearly fits within the free play concept.

In terms of responses to this need, the clear priority is for meeting places; both indoor and outdoor. For outdoor spaces, Youth Shelter-type provision and Multi-use Games areas fit the bill. Crucial in such provision is the active involvement of local young people in the design and location of such facilities. The indoor equivalent is the non-alcohol bar or youth café model. The "old fashioned" youth club with pool, table football, table tennis etc also meet these needs. It is recommended that:

- A programme for provision of additional meeting places be developed in response to local demand from young people. This must involve young people's engagement in both design and location.
- The play partnership work through the voluntary and statutory youth sectors to identify potential youth café and youth club developments.
- MUGAs and Wheeled Sports generally come high on the preferences of young people, and wider provision is a key part of the strategic vision for the future. In the main towns the long term aim should be to provide sites with MUGAs/and or Wheeled sports across the towns so that access is within 20 minutes of homes.
- In the rural areas, provision should be considered in consultation with local Parish Councils.

Youth Services

The youth service have a project based approach utilising a wide range of venues across the district as well as detached work in the main towns (meeting with young people where they congregate "on the street"). This is a good approach for a rural area where the youth population is widely dispersed.

However, there is potential to extend provision to a wider number of medium sized settlements that do not currently have a base for provision such as Cheddleton and Endon.

3.7 Play in the natural environment

Many children, young people and parents expressed the view that more should be made of the potential for free play in natural "wild" areas for imaginative play, den-building, hide and seek, climbing trees etc. The Moorlands has a number of sites where this idea could be further developed, for example, local nature reserves and countryside sites. Also, it is possible to make more of unequipped

"amenity" sites and other areas of green space in this respect. It is recommended:

- The partnership should explore project ideas to develop play on local nature reserves and other suitable countryside and environmental sites.
- Areas of open space are identified across the District that lend themselves to safe natural play, and that these are promoted along with equipped areas as child friendly spaces.

3.8 Improving communications, publicity and promotion

Consultation has revealed a concern from the public that there is not enough co-ordination and communication between the various agencies involved in children's play and youth provision eg County, District and parish councils; the voluntary sector etc. In addition that there is little co-ordination between the various partners regarding publicity and promotion of existing facilities and schemes.

In addition the Play Partnership recognises that there is relatively little publicity promoting the positive involvement of children and young people in society and the importance of highlighting their positive contribution.

It was also identified that currently there is very little awareness of provision of voluntary sector youth and play services, such as village and church youth clubs, scouts and guides etc.

It is therefore recommended that:

- The Play Partnership consolidates its role as an ongoing mechanism for effective communication and reviews its membership to ensure all relevant agencies and organisations are included.
- Opportunities for improved joint publicity and promotion be explored and an awareness campaign be planned and implemented promoting available play opportunities.
- The positive engagement of children and young people in planning their own play opportunities be publicised wherever possible.
- An audit of voluntary sector play and youth provision be undertaken so that the availability and access to such provision can be promoted.

4. Making a positive contribution

4.1 Consultation and Engagement with Children and Young people

Ongoing consultation and engagement with children, young people and their families is crucial for the success of the Strategy and children and young people will continue to be involved in the planning and delivery of the Strategy Action Plan.

It is recommended that all Play Partnership members sign up to the Hear by Rights Framework²

4.2 Parish and Town Councils/Recreation Trusts

The District Council has provided a reasonable degree of Capital funding towards refurbishments of its own play spaces over recent years, as well as supporting ongoing maintenance.

Some Parish Councils and recreation trusts believe that they fare unfavourably in relation to the resources available to the District Council. A number of Parish Councils and trusts have identified a local demand and need for improved or new provision in relation to play/youth facilities, yet have insufficient resources to meet this local need.

Many play areas are owned and/or managed by the District Council but a significant number are managed/owned by Town and Parish Councils and trusts. Some Town and Parish Councils and trusts may prefer to own and manage their own facilities and for such local facilities, there is every reason to encourage local ownership and control.

It is suggested that in establishing Capital Budgets for refurbishments/new provision of play/youth facilities, the Council may wish to consider a system of Grant-aid for Parish Councils and trusts to enable partnership working to address prioritised needs for new provision/improvements in line with strategy conclusions. In addition, or as an alternative, it is recommended that the Council consider methods by which advice and guidance to Parish Councils and trusts can be improved in relation to their securing external funding for play/youth projects.

It is also recommended that in principle where a town/parish council or trust wishes to assume control or ownership of local play facilities that are currently under the control of the District Council, the Council will respond favourably to such initiatives. Assuming the long term future of the play facility is assured by the town/parish council or trust, the District Council will normally grant such a request (unless demonstrable that transfer will be detrimental to ongoing provision for children and young people in the town/parish).

4.3 The Voluntary and Community sector

The voluntary and community sector plays an important role in supporting play and youth opportunities.

² Nationally recognised good practice guide for consulting and engaging with children, young people and their families.

The Play Partnership will wherever possible support voluntary sector organisations involved in promoting play and youth opportunities, in particular in relation to youth provision in the rural areas.

4.4 Village and Community Halls

Village and Community Halls can play a very important role in providing bases for play and youth club activities, though gaining access to these facilities can be difficult sometimes due to fear of misuse and damage.

The Play Partnership will use their influence wherever possible to support local access to Village and Community Halls for play and youth club activity.

4.5 Youth Services and Rural Areas

The county youth service is targeted at the more deprived areas and in this respect is using its resources well to cater for those most in need. However a consequence of this is that areas outside of this are much less well served. There is potential to develop voluntary sector support to focus on this gap.

It is well established that in rural areas deprivation can be fairly significant, but widely dispersed, meaning it is hard to "target" geographically. Given the feedback from the parish councils about a lack of youth provision, the Play Partnership will work to develop appropriate schemes to provide services in the rural areas, supporting the voluntary sector in particular.

5. Achieving economic well-being.

5.1 Cost as a barrier - playschemes and out-of-school provision

The consultation process revealed that for a significant minority of children cost was a barrier to attendance to playschemes and out-of-school clubs. It is recommended that:

The Play Partnership will, wherever possible, devise subsidy schemes whereby organisers and managers of playschemes and out-of-school clubs can offer free places to children in need.

5.2 Play/youth Space Standards

The Strategy suggests local play space standards that differ from NPFA (National Playing Field Association) national standards, based upon the consultation findings and local circumstances. The main variations relate to the local preference for fewer but higher quality provision for which parents, children and young people were prepared to walk further than NPFA standards suggest; a stronger preference for ball games, wheeled sports, and landscaping for imaginative play than is shown in the NPFA standards; and more developed provision for teenagers and families.

It is proposed that the Council should move away from the NPFA national standards and adopt local standards that are more appropriate to the local circumstances and needs of Staffordshire Moorlands. A Supplementary Planning Document should be drawn up including design quality recommendations³.

5.3 Play and Youth Workers - training and staff development

The need for training and staff development has been raised as an issue. This involves both longer term professional qualifications and short courses, for example, Managing Challenging Behaviour. Another area of training raised was in relation to disability awareness and inclusion. It is therefore recommended:

- Partners undertake a review of "front line" play/youth work staff training needs and provide staff with a professional development plan appropriate to these needs.
- Partners work to ensure that there is sufficient provision of accessible qualification training in the area.
- Funding be identified to subsidise part-time and volunteer play and youth workers in relation to training and courses relating to their professional development needs.
- Disability awareness and inclusion training be provided as appropriate for front line staff in partnership with the Play Council.

5.4 Transport

Access to transport to facilities and services was identified as a particularly difficult issue for children and young people in rural areas. This needs to be addressed from two perspectives: i) Providing local facilities and activities such that transport is not needed and ii) Improving public transport from the rural areas to the towns. It is recommended that:

- New provision is sought re play and youth venues/PODs⁴ etc in settlements that are relatively poorly provided for and that outreach services are targeted at these areas.
- The voluntary sector be supported to provide play and youth opportunities in the rural areas.
- A review of Community Transport options is undertaken with Rural Access to Services Partnership (RASP) to plan for the use of such transportation to help address children and young people's access to play in rural areas.
- Consideration should be made as to the possibility of providing subsidised transport for young people on local public transport, particularly in relation to access to leisure and recreation facilities.
- The play partnership should approach the transport authority to raise the issue of safe routes to Play in the Local Transport Plan alongside the concept of safe routes to school.

³ In accordance with the procedures of the Local Development Scheme.

5.5 The Partnership and Funding Opportunities

There are many potential sources of external funding for play and new opportunities arise over time. Some of these sources are only available to particular kinds of organisations, for example, some schemes are aimed at Local Authorities, others at Charitable Trusts, some for Parish Councils etc. By working together through the Play Partnership the most appropriate partner can apply for the most appropriate funding in the interests of the Partnership as a whole.

The partnership will work together to maximise the potential of securing external funding for the benefit of play opportunities in the District.

⁴ PODs are temporary mobile youth facilities

1. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of the Play Strategy is to bring together all agencies in Staffordshire Moorlands who have an interest and involvement in Children's Play, to improve play opportunities for all children in the area. The intention is that this process will create a long term Play Partnership that will work together to plan for the future, and in particular to oversee the implementation of the Partnership's first 5 year Action Plan arising from the Strategy.

1.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership

This strategy has been prepared by a local Play Partnership comprised of representatives from:

- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (Community Development)
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (Sports Development)
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (Countryside Service)
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (Planning)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Local Strategic Partnership
- Staffordshire Moorlands Community Safety
- Moorlands Housing Association
- Staffordshire County Council - Extended Schools
- Staffordshire County Council - Youth service
- Staffordshire County Council - Children and Lifelong Learning
- Parish Councils (2)
- Peak District National Park Authority
- Newcastle and North Staffordshire Play Council
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- Staffordshire Moorlands CVS
- Staffordshire Moorlands Community & Learning Partnership
- Staffordshire Moorlands Children's Centre
- Home Start Staffordshire Moorlands
- Haregate Junior Youth Club

The Terms of Reference for the Play Partnership are attached as Appendix 1.

The Partnership has elected Cllr. Margaret Locker as a local "Play Champion". Margaret is a strong advocate for children's play and has an important role in promoting support for the Play Strategy in the District Council and the Local Strategic Partnership. The Play Partnership has an ongoing role in relation to the implementation and monitoring of the strategy over its 5 year life.

1.2 Definition of Play

There are a number of possible definitions of Play and for this strategy we have based ours on that contained in the Children's Play Council's document *Best Play (2001)*

Definition of Play
"Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. Play can be fun or serious. Through play children and young people explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter".

1.3 Scope of strategy, timescale, monitoring and review.

This strategy seeks to inform the shape and direction of the Play Partnership's policy priorities and proposed service developments for Play and Youth opportunities over the next five to ten years. It sets out the role and case for Play in the context of the District's Community Plan and the County Children and Young People's Plan. It aims to provide a strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands District in general, recognising the potential contributions of all partners involved in providing and developing Play and Youth Facility opportunities for children and young people of the District.

It aims to complement relevant regional and national strategies while placing the needs and aspirations of local people at its core. In so doing it will place the development of local Play opportunities in the wider regional and national context.

The scope of the strategy includes:

- Unsupervised spaces and facilities used for play.
- Supervised play-schemes and out-of-school provision.
- Youth facilities and informal Activity Schemes.

The primary focus for the strategy is “free” play falling under the “3 Frees” concept, that is:

- Free - no charge
- Free - children/young people choose play activity
- Free - children/young people free to attend or not (child/young person’s choice)

The age range for the strategy is for children and young people up to 19 years old.

In general terms, the strategy is intended to provide an overview for the development of Play facilities and services within the District, and to complement specific detailed service based strategies and studies (such as the Local Plan, Community Safety Strategy, and Local Transport Plan).

The strategy aims to inform the development of specific work programmes and action plans for those services and partners involved in the delivery of Play and informal recreation services to children and young people. It will aim to encourage greater partnership working across all agencies and organisations in the public, private, voluntary and commercial sectors that have a part to play in providing opportunities for children and young people in Staffordshire Moorlands District.

The strategy has been produced through an extensive consultation process. Consultation has also included key stakeholders such as parents and the Play Council. Strategic partners such as the Town and Parish Councils, the County Youth Service, County Children’s Services, Village Agents, the Rural Community Council and the Police, have been directly involved; and most importantly direct consultation has been undertaken with children and young people through, schools, play-schemes, youth clubs and the District Youth Forum (YOMAC).

In order to monitor the implementation of the strategy and to review its progress, there will be regular six-monthly reports, as relevant, to District Council committees and local forums and organisations (such as the Youth Forum). Overall performance will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed quarterly by the Play Partnership.

The Action Plan provides performance measures to aid monitoring and evaluation. In addition a number of general performance indicators for

play have been drawn up based upon recent research undertaken by the Children's Play Council (Appendix 2).

The Play Partnership endorses the adoption of the local performance indicators detailed in Appendix 2.

1.4 Vision, Aims and objectives of the strategy

Vision Statement

"Working through the Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership to ensure all children in the District have access to high quality inclusive Play opportunities".

General Aims.

The aims of the strategy are:

- To enable the provision of an integrated range of high quality informal opportunities in play that is sufficient to meet the needs and aspirations of the District's children and young people.
- To provide play opportunities that provide positive challenges which enhance children's confidence and develop important life skills.
- To ensure inclusive play opportunities are provided where they are needed and help facilitate the provision of high-quality facilities that are accessible to users.
- To ensure that play opportunities should meet demand, encourage participation and enable children and young people "to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child" (Article 31 UN Convention).
- To ensure that such provision is effectively planned and co-ordinated.
- To ensure that the strategy supports the aims of relevant national strategy such as *Every Child Matters* and key local strategic documents such as the *Children's and Young People's Plan* and the *Community Strategy*.

Objectives

- To provide evidence of the need for play opportunities and facilities identifying shortfall and surpluses in provision to enable an informed approach for the future.
- To analyse existing provision and establish the future policy of children's play provision within the District.

- To provide a practical Action Plan to detail concrete outcomes that the Council and its partners will aim to achieve over the next 5 years.
- To help identify a portfolio of projects to be submitted for funding to the BIG Lottery Children's Play Programme.

General Principles

- The Strategy is for Staffordshire Moorlands as a whole - not just the District Council. Through the establishment of a Play Partnership it will aim to encompass the roles and contributions of all partners involved in Play in the district.
- The Strategy endorses the broad objectives relating to the provision of high quality play opportunities expressed in Best Play - a widely recognised guide to good practice produced by the NPFA, CPC and Playlink (2000). Appendix 3.
- Consultation will be a key element and will aim to be as extensive as possible (involving direct consultation with children and young people).
- The strategy will place local issues in the context of relevant local strategy, regional strategy and the national agenda.

1.5 Policy Statements

The Policy Statements are structured in relation to the 5 key themes of the Staffordshire Children and Young People's Plan.

Being healthy
<p>P1. The Strategy recognises that Play and Informal Activity Programmes have a vital part to play in improving the health and well-being of children and young people through the promotion of active and healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>P2. Play Partners will work towards ensuring that a wider range of play opportunities are available for disabled children and young people, and that all provision aims towards becoming fully inclusive and accessible.</p>
Staying safe
<p>P3. Play Partners will seek to protect and enhance Play and Youth Facilities in the District, particularly in relation to safety and security for children and young people, and encourage appropriate management regimes. The partnership also recognises that play and youth facilities need to be stimulating and challenging and "controlled risk" is an essential part of design and management.</p>

P4. Play Partners will make appropriate public spaces as child friendly as possible, ensuring that parks, thoroughfares, schools, youth settings, housing estates, shopping areas and other public spaces within the District, are as safe and conducive as possible to children's play and outdoor activities.

Enjoying and achieving

P5. Enjoyable Play opportunities will be provided on the basis of a strategic analysis of local need with the aim of providing an equitable distribution of facilities and services across the borough with priority being given to provision where it is most needed.

P6. The Strategy recognises the role that Play and Informal Activity Facilities and Programmes play in enriching the lives of young people, in offering them stimulating and rewarding alternatives to anti-social behaviour, and in providing a strong sense of achievement.

P7. The Strategy recognises the importance of ensuring that Play services and facilities in the District are effectively promoted and publicised, encouraging integrated promotion from the various partners involved in provision.

Making a positive contribution

P8. Children and young people will be positively engaged in the planning of play opportunities provided in Staffordshire Moorlands through appropriate consultation and active involvement. Consultation will encompass "hard-to-reach" communities and children and young people at risk from social exclusion

P9. The Strategy acknowledges the vital role played by Parish Councils and the Voluntary and Community sector in relation to the provision of play opportunities and wherever possible we will work in partnership to support their efforts.

P10. The Strategy recognises the specific issues relating to play provision in rural areas and will seek to improve access to play for children and young people in such areas.

Achieving economic well-being.

P11. The Strategy will seek to maximise returns from external funding opportunities and the potential of planning obligations and agreements with developers in order to facilitate the improvement and enhancement of Play and Youth Facility provision and to support its future maintenance.

P12. The strategy will aim to ensure training needs are identified for play and youth workers and that appropriate partners provide training to meet these needs in relation to professional development.

Policy Positions relating to Policy Statements

The Strategy adopts a number of specific policy positions in relation to the broad statements above, and these are detailed below:

	Being healthy
P2	The Strategy adopts recommended models of good practice for provision for children with disabilities; specifically those produced by KIDS (the service delivery charity for disabled children and their families) in relation to play activities; and <i>Developing Accessible Play Space - A Good Practice Guide (2003)</i> published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
	Staying safe
P3	The Strategy adopts the Play England recommended statement on <i>Managing Risk in Play Provision</i> drafted by the nationally recognised <i>Play Safety Forum</i> .
	Enjoying and achieving
P5	The Strategy adopts a model of good practice relating to the design of play areas, which will be followed in relation to new provision and refurbishments. The Strategy provides Prioritisation Criteria to help with decisions regarding investment in potential refurbishments and new provision (fixed play areas and youth facilities).
	Making a positive contribution
P8	The Strategy confirms that Play Partnership members will sign up to the <i>Hear by Right Framework</i> which is a nationally recognised good practice guide for consulting and engaging with children, young people and their families.
P9	The Strategy confirms that Play Areas in the rural areas should be developed with local Parish councils, and appropriate partnership projects will be implemented to meet local needs and circumstances. Provision for youth will also be considered in consultation with local Parish Councils. The Strategy establishes the principle that where a town or parish council wishes to assume control or ownership of local play facilities that are currently under the control of the District Council, the Council will respond favourably to such initiatives. It confirms that assuming the long term future of the play facility is assured by the town/parish council, the Council will normally grant such a request (unless demonstrable that transfer will be detrimental to ongoing provision for children and young people in the town/parish). The Strategy confirms that wherever possible the Play Partnership will support voluntary sector organisations involved in promoting play and youth opportunities, in particular in relation to provision in the rural areas.
	Achieving economic well-being.
P11	The Strategy confirms that the Council will work towards new local play standards for Planning (in accordance with the principles of PPG17), that are appropriate to the local circumstances and needs of Staffordshire Moorlands.

1.6 Glossary of terms

In a document like this the use of a few technical and perhaps unfamiliar abbreviations is unavoidable. Where first used they have been defined at the relevant point in the text. However, for convenience they are also reproduced below.

Term	What it means
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CPC	Children's Play Council
CVS	Council for Voluntary Services
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DOP	Doorstep Outdoor Play Space
FOP	Family Outdoor Play Space
GIS	Geographical Information system - Mapping system
Homezone	Street designed with facilities for pedestrians and children foremost in mind
IDACI	Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index - indicator of child deprivation
JOP	Junior Outdoor Play Space
KIDS	National charity for disabled children and their families
LAP	Local Area of Play
LEAP	Local Equipped Area of Play
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MUGA	Multi-Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play
NPFA	National Playing Fields Association
NYA	National Youth Agency
Ofsted	The official body for inspecting schools, childcare and play services
POD	Temporary mobile youth club base
PPG 17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Sport and Recreation)
SMDC	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
SOA	Super Output Area (smaller area than ward used in statistical analysis)
YOMAC	Youth of Moorlands Action Council
YOP	Youth Outdoor Play Space
YSQM	National Quality Mark for Services for Young People

3 The Case for Play

The General Case for Play⁵

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in December 1991 recognises the importance of play for the child. Article 31 of the Convention says that:

"States parties recognise the right of the child 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."

Related to that right are the child's rights to freedom of expression and association, enshrined in Articles 12, 13, 14, and 15 of the UN Convention.

The importance of Play can be illustrated from two perspectives:

- The benefits of Play for children
- The wider social benefits

The benefits of play for children

It is widely accepted that play is a vital activity in relation to healthy child development, for example, Play:

- Provides children with opportunities to enjoy freedom, and exercise choice and control over their actions.
- Offers children opportunities for testing boundaries and exploring risk.
- Offers a very wide range of physical, social and intellectual experiences for children.
- Fosters children's independence and self-esteem.
- Develops children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction.
- Supports the child's well-being, healthy growth and development.
- Increases children's knowledge and understanding.
- Promotes children's creativity and capacity to learn.

⁵ Much of this section is drawn from Best Play – NPFA, CPC, Playlink (2000)

Play Deprivation

There is also a growing consensus about some of the possible implications of play deprivation, based on reasonable assumptions about the role of personal experience and self-directed activity in the development of a range of competences. Depending on the types of play opportunity that are lacking, children could be affected in the following ways:

- poorer ability in motor tasks
- lower levels of physical activity
- poorer ability to deal with stressful or traumatic situations and events
- poorer ability to assess and manage risk
- poorer social skills, leading to difficulties in negotiating social situations such as dealing with conflict and cultural difference

The Social Benefits of Children's Play

In summary, Play:

- Helps reduce the involvement of children and young people in anti-social behaviour, in the short term; and plays a part in promoting social cohesion in the longer term.
- Supports families and communities, by providing a focus for informal networks of family support, and by allowing children autonomy within an environment which parents feel secure about.
- Makes an important contribution, in parallel with education, in developing adults who are creative and effective in the social and economic sphere
- Offers opportunities for exploring cultural identity and difference

These outcomes, which are in part the consequences of play, as well as of family life, genetic inheritance, education and so on, are of importance to a range of stakeholders. The potential benefits are of relevance to community health targets, social and economic regeneration and youth justice, for example.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Play Strategy recognises these benefits and on this basis the Play Partnership believes it is of crucial importance to invest in Play services within the District.

4 Background and Policy Context

4.1 Introduction - Local Profile

Staffordshire Moorlands district is situated in the North Eastern part of Staffordshire. It is the most rural district in the County, and is characterised largely by an upland landscape. A section of the Peak District National Park is found to the north east of the district.

Although the district is largely rural, the market towns of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek provide important service centre facilities, and contain around half of the district's population of 94,500 people.

The district has close links to parts of Derbyshire and Cheshire, as well as to the city of Stoke-on-Trent, which exerts a strong influence on the west of the district in particular, and provides employment opportunities and services for many people in the district.

Traditionally, the most important industry in Staffordshire Moorlands has been agriculture and farming. While the industry is still prevalent, the recent collapses in farming have seen its share of importance decline. Manufacturing and service industries are also important in relation to their share of the total employment in the district

Although there are not significant concentrations of people living in areas high of deprivation, just under 3,000 people in the Biddulph East are living within the 20% most deprived SOA⁶s nationally. The proportion of people living in the 20% most deprived SOAs is well below the average for England and the West Midlands Region, and Staffordshire County Council. Significant parts of the district, however suffer from medium levels of deprivation - within the most deprived 20% - 50% areas nationally.

Staffordshire Moorlands district is ranked 182 out of 354 districts in England based on the average of ward scores (it falls into the 60% most deprived districts nationally by this measure).

1 Super Output Area (SOA) falls within the 10% most deprived nationally and 1 SOA falls into the 10%-20% most deprived SOAs nationally by the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004. Both of these SOAs are in the

⁶ Super Output Area (smaller area than ward used in statistical analysis)

Biddulph East area, a former coal board housing estate which suffers from a range of socioeconomic and environmental deprivation problems.

4.2 National Policy Framework

The need to improve the provision that is made for children to play is acknowledged in a range of national policy areas: from planning, open spaces and transport to health, education and childcare. Local authorities in England have a statutory duty, under the Children Act (2004), to cooperate in their provision for the enjoyment of play and recreation as part of the five key outcomes for all children.

Play is now appreciated by government not simply for its own intrinsic value, but also for its potential contribution to achieving other government objectives relating to health and urban renaissance, for example:

- Play helps promote active lifestyles, and can therefore help to meet national targets set by government for physical exercise and recreation (see for example 'Gameplan' from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit).
- Play and playspace in general is a user of open space, and can therefore help in improving and conserving the stock of open space in towns and cities. This will not only have benefit for play, but also for local amenity, health and in realising 'sustainable communities', as promoted by the government. (See for example various publications available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.)

The following provides a general flavour of the range of government and other national guidance available that should influence local planning for and management of play.

Getting Serious about Play - A Review of Children's Play

The report led by Frank Dobson provides a national framework for development of play. The report outlines how the £200m pledged by the Government for play should be spent and allocated. The aim of the report and the funding is to improve play based opportunities for children and young people aged 0-16 years.

The report recommended that local authorities should be allocated resources based on child deprivation in their area, partnerships should be

formed with local partners and high quality projects should be developed which meet local needs and which have reasonable prospects of being a long term success.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children

The Government's 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' strategy published in December 2004, provides a national framework to guide change at local authority level. The ten-year strategy for early years and childcare was published at the same time. Together, these documents set out the bigger picture in terms of national and local change. The five main outcomes for children and young people, described as key to well-being in childhood and later life, are:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well-being.

The play strategy can make a major contribution to the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. The benefits of children's play are closely linked to the five outcomes for children and young people as illustrated below:

Being healthy

Play is important in relation to health and development throughout childhood. It contributes to social, physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional and psychological development. Physical activity involved in play provides children and young people with a significant amount of their regular exercise. In relation to mental health good play opportunities give children and young people the chance to try out and experience a range of emotions in a 'safe' way. It allows them to learn and develop emotionally by promoting resilience and fostering self-esteem.

Staying safe

One of the main reasons children and parents give for not playing outdoors more is that they are afraid for children's safety. "Stranger danger", traffic risks and bullying are all barriers to more outside play. Good play provision reduces unacceptable levels of danger, while allowing children the opportunity to challenge themselves and use their initiative.

Play enables children to take risks, to think through decisions and gain increased self-confidence and greater resilience.

Enjoying and achieving

Playing is all about enjoyment! When playing, children define their own goals and interests, decide what is success or failure and pursue those goals in their own way. Children's enjoyment through play is linked to the control and choice they are able to exercise. Giving children the chance for free, uninhibited play allows them a psychologically safe space in which to try out new roles and experiences and enhances their enjoyment of life.

There are many developmental benefits associated with children's play, such as the development of problem-solving and language and literacy skills. Play is also important in the development of children's imaginations and creative interests and abilities. Play allows children and young people to explore boundaries, be fully absorbed in what they are doing and feel satisfied with what they have achieved

Making a positive contribution

Children's involvement in the development of their own play is of great importance. In good supervised play provision, adults involve the children and young people in decisions about resources and facilities that might be available to them.

Increasingly Local Authorities are involving children and young people in the development of local play areas and discussions about their play and free-time needs. This often results in more appropriate provision, helps children and young people develop their skills and knowledge and ensures they are valued as active community members. Respecting and incorporating children and young people's views into plans and provision helps develop motivation and, potentially, participation in society.

Economic well-being

Comprehensive play provision can enable parents to work or train and allows them to feel their children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves. Play provision often acts as a focal point for parents and carers to meet, giving them an opportunity to socialise with other adults.

Good play provision promotes community well-being and security. It brings economic benefits through providing jobs and training. Good play

provision, which offers those seeking it genuine challenge and excitement, can help prevent bored children and young people behaving in ways that are socially unacceptable. Development of outside play and recreation spaces has been shown to have a measurable impact on local interaction, new friendships, community cohesion and community safety.

Planning for Play

Guidance on the production of local play strategies was jointly published by the Children's Play Council and the BIG Lottery Fund in April 2006. The purpose of this document is to support local authorities and their partners in preparing strategies for improving children's play opportunities within the framework of national policy.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Play Strategy process has been completed in line with the guidance provided in "Planning for Play"

Other Links with National Policy

There are many other national policy and strategy initiatives to which Play is strongly linked:

- The Youth Matters Green Paper
- The Extended Schools Initiative
- Choosing Health White Paper
- Joint area review (Every Child Matters)
- Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer, Greener
- National Planning Policy Guidance Note 17- Sport and Recreation (PPG17)
- The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Six-Acre Standard (2001)
- Safety standards and legislation, for example, European safety standards for playgrounds - EN1176 and EN 1177-
- Transport strategies

Detail on how play links in to the above can be found in Appendix 4.

4.3 Local Policy

The two key strategic frameworks that the play strategy needs to tie in with are the County wide "Children and Young People's Plan" and the

District "Staffordshire Moorlands Community Plan". Other important local strategies of relevance are also covered in this section.

Staffordshire Moorlands Community Strategy (2003 - 2010)

The Local Government Act 2000 placed a duty on every local authority to prepare a Community Strategy and also introduced the concept of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's). In 2002 Staffordshire Moorlands established a Local Strategic Partnership known locally as the Staffordshire Moorlands Partnership. This is responsible for the delivery of the Staffordshire Moorlands Community Strategy. The Community Strategy is currently under review and it is likely the revised strategy will make particular reference to meeting the needs of children and young people in the Moorlands.

The current Community Strategy has 7 "Community Ambitions" for Staffordshire Moorlands. These are noted below along with comments of their relevance to the Play Strategy.

That the environment is protected and improved and it is an attractive, enjoyable place to be.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highlighted priority is "to promote culture and leisure opportunities" and an identified measure of success is to achieve Green Flag status for the district's parks. • The Play Strategy is identified as a key strategy to link with this ambition.
That it is a safer place in which to live, work and visit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth safety and conduct is identified as a priority for this ambition as is the reduction in anti-social behaviour. • The plan notes the need to identify priority areas for intervention for young people and the need to provide constructive activity including access to sport and recreation opportunities • It notes the need to support parents and young people • It also highlights the importance of consulting and engaging with young people through groups such as YOMAC (Youth of Moorlands Action Council). • The Youth work Plan is identified as a key strategy to link with this ambition.
To improve the health and well-being of all the community and to reduce inequalities in health across different groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing play and learning opportunities is identified as a measure of success in relation to this ambition. • The need to promote exercise is also highlighted

That local areas and towns are regenerated and that everyone has a decent home environment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though not specifically highlighted the provision of play opportunities and youth facilities contribute greatly to the regeneration of local areas and are a critical element of public open space in residential areas.
That everyone is able to learn, train and develop throughout their lives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As noted in Section 1 Play opportunities are widely recognised as an important element of learning, particularly for younger children.
The community is able to shape the Moorlands and its future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people, their parents and the wider community have all contributed to the development of the Play Strategy through an extensive consultation and engagement process (see Section 3).
To ensure that everyone who wishes has access to services, learning opportunities, health provision and leisure activities in a way that is effective and sustainable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A highlighted priority is "to address the passenger transport needs of residents and visitors to the area with particular reference to the needs of the elderly and the young". • Another relevant priority is to "to improve access to services in rural areas".

The Staffordshire Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three year agreement between central Government and the local authorities, and other partners such as health, colleges, police, fire and the voluntary and community sector in Staffordshire. It will run from April 2007 to March 2010.

The LAA will be the main means of delivery for the community strategies in Staffordshire, and will ensure that it is used to deliver specified outcomes for local residents. Essentially the LAA will enable partners to work together to address issues that concern local people and aims to give the flexibility to target resources where they are most needed.

Staffordshire's LAA is based around five blocks:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Sustainable Development

The Children and Young People block

This is based upon the Children and Young People's Plan (see below) and shares its "vision". It has adopted 5 "high level outcomes" to guide its development.

- Outcome 1 - Improving the physical health and emotional and mental well-being of children and young people with a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people
- Outcome 2 - Improving the life chances of children and young people who are at risk
- Outcome 3 - Improving standards of enjoyment and achievement with a particular focus on vulnerable children and young people
- Outcome 4 - Increase the opportunities available for children and young people to make a positive contribution
- Outcome 5 - Achieve economic well-being

The Staffordshire Children and Young People's Plan

The Staffordshire Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is the single, strategic, overarching plan for all services affecting children and young people aged 0-19 in Staffordshire. It focuses on services available to children and young people throughout their pre-statutory, statutory and post-statutory schooldays. The vision of the CYPP is:

Children, young people and their families experience Staffordshire as a great place to live, play, learn and achieve in, and that they will be supported to be healthy and safe from harm.

The Plan has 3 "Overarching Priorities":

- Develop partnership working to improve children's well-being.
- Ensure that children and young people are directly involved in the production of the Staffordshire Children & Young People's Plan.
- Improve outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people.

It also adopts the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes for children, young people and their families. The plan provides detail on all 5 of these outcomes and some elements clearly related to play are highlighted in the table below:

Be Healthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan highlights the need to reduce the prevalence of obesity in children and young people, which active play opportunities and sports activity can help address.
Stay Safe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan notes that bullying is a concern for some children and young people, which can be explored and addressed through creative play experiences. The plan notes the importance of developing "preventative services" to support families and so reduce the potential for children and young people needing to enter the "looked after" system. Play Services can have an important role in this respect. It also notes the need for multi-agency provision for children with disabilities, which is an important factor for the play strategy to address. The need to maintain and develop programmes of "positive activity" to young people is highlighted as well as the need to prevent young people engaging in anti-social behaviour and crime.
Enjoy and Achieve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan notes that "various opportunities are provided to maximise the enjoyment of children and young people through their school and college life, and through sport, leisure and cultural activities. However, play provision in Staffordshire is patchy and new ventures need support to provide a fully inclusive service". It has a specific priority to "increase accessible opportunities for participation in cultural and recreational opportunities for children, young people, their families and their communities". It includes a commitment to "work with District/Borough councils to develop and implement the (County) Play Strategy, ensuring opportunities for play are developed for all young people aged 0 -14, across Staffordshire". A specific progress measure is to "increase children and young people's participation in sport".
Make a Positive Contribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan notes that "services targeted at developing the participation of children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are under-developed". It highlights that "all of the District/Borough Councils in Staffordshire offer targeted programmes to engage young people in positive activities". <p>Priorities identified include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate active involvement of children, young people, parents, carers and the community in the design and delivery of services. Continue the development of Youth Forums in each District/Borough. Produce guidance and support about how to tackle bullying and harassment.

Achieve Economic Well-being

- The plan notes that Young people's personal and social skills are well supported in both education and leisure settings.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Children and Young People's Plan

The Staffordshire Moorlands LSP is currently drafting a local Children and Young People's Plan sharing the vision of the County CYPP, but focusing on the issues and concerns identified locally. The Plan will ensure the delivery of services at a district level that will achieve the Every Child Matters 5 outcomes. The Plan has been informed by the Staffordshire CYPP as well as the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Block on Children and Young People as it will assist with the delivery at a local level of the LAA.

Staffordshire County Council Play Strategy 2006 (Draft)

Staffordshire County Council is currently finalising a County Play Strategy. This strategy also utilises the Every Child Matters framework as its basis. The strategy identifies its purpose as below:

The purpose of preparing a County Play Strategy is to demonstrate the commitment of stakeholders to providing play services which meet the needs of all children and young people in Staffordshire.

The strategy proposes that the first step in the implementation of the county play strategy would be to form a consortium of representatives from the stakeholders. Representatives would be recruited from across the eight districts. It is suggested that the consortium could sit under the Staffordshire Children's Trust and will aim to ensure that play is given a high priority by the trust.

The Strategy envisages that a major role of the consortium will be to convert the aims and objectives identified in the strategy into implementation plans for each of the eight districts. The Strategy suggests that the consortium could also make recommendations on the prioritisation of funding monies, sharing of good practice across the county, implementation of strategic aims and objectives and maintenance of the profile of children's play within the public realm in Staffordshire.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership is the obvious mechanism through which representatives could be selected to join any future County-wide Play Consortium.

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan

The Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan was adopted in 1998. Current local plan policies of relevance are detailed below:

Policy R1 of the adopted Local Plan sets out the minimum standards of public open space for the Staffordshire Moorlands as follows:

R1 The District Council will seek to achieve a minimum standard of 3.2 ha of public open space per 1000 population as follows:-

- sports grounds 1.6 ha
- children's play areas 0.6 ha
- major open space 0.4 ha
- incidental open space 0.6 ha

Policy R2 of the adopted Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan states that:

R2 Where there is a proven deficiency, qualifying new residential development will be expected to make provision for public open space which is necessary and reasonably related in form and scale in accordance with the standards in Policy R1.

There a number of other policy and strategy initiatives to which Play is strongly linked, including:

- Supplementary Planning Guidance - Public Open Space
- Community Safety Strategy
- Staffordshire Moorlands Parks and Countryside Strategy (2003-07)
- Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Strategy (2003-07)
- Staffordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-11

Detail on how play links in to the above can be found in Appendix 4.

5 Review of Community Engagement

5.1. Introduction

This section outlines the various methods through which information has been gathered to establish the needs and aspirations of children, young people, their parents/carers, and the wider community in relation to play provision for children and young people. Consultation and engagement has been achieved through:

Surveys and Questionnaires

- Questionnaire surveys to children and young people
- Surveys of parents/carers
- Survey of local play and youth organisations
- Parish Council Survey
- Play Partnership

Focus Groups and direct contact

- YOMAC / "Shadow" Play Partnership
- Children attending "Local Democracy Week" events
- Children with disabilities
- Parish Councils Focus Group
- Village Agent Focus Group
- Play Partnership
- Surgeries with key stakeholders/individuals

This section pulls together the key points arising from the needs assessment process in relation to the development of the Staffordshire Moorlands Play Strategy. Full details of consultation methods and findings are included in Appendix 5.

5.2. Key Issues

A number of key issues have been identified from the various consultations undertaken. These include:

General Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children still like to spend time playing in places that are not designated play areas. This means the strategy should consider enhancing and protecting the "play-value" of neighbourhoods and streets as well as public green spaces. This could mean, for example, addressing the speed and volume of motor vehicles.

- In general children, young people and the wider community think there are *not* enough spaces to in which to play and hang out, nor are there enough play and youth services.
- Provision for teenagers is thought to be particularly poor.
- Lack of provision for teenagers is perceived as one of the key causes of clashes between different age groups of young people.
- Many parents and children themselves think that it is reasonable for under 11 year olds to visit play and youth facilities and services without an adult - This suggests a priority need for safety and security in design of the routes to facilities.
- Potential for more community use of school facilities (extended schools).
- Need for better communication between county, district, parishes and voluntary sector.
- Access to services is a big issue for families with children of different ages in rural areas, where public transport is extremely limited / non-existent.

Play Spaces and outdoor Youth Facilities

- How useful a play area is highly dependent on location - younger children value proximity more than teens.
- It is important that younger children have access to local play space within 5-10 minutes walking distance from home and that teenagers have access to spaces to hang out independently with friends within 10-15 minutes walk from home.
- Both children and young people say they will walk further to access high quality sites and these will therefore have a larger "catchment".
- Young people will walk further than 7-11s to access more interesting sites and a clear majority are not satisfied with existing provision.
- Safety and security are key issues in relation to the design of future play/youth areas.
- The main priority for younger children appears to be provision of appropriately equipped high quality "traditional" play areas. For teenagers meeting places and informal casual access sports facilities are high priorities along with swings. For both age groups various forms of "wheeled sports" facilities feature in many children's priority lists.
- While in general terms most parents think existing facilities are at least adequate there were significant concerns over suitability for children with disabilities and with the level of imaginative design of facilities to create stimulating and attractive play/youth areas.
- Parents highlighted a need for natural spaces designed for adventurous play in addition to equipped areas and their priority age range covered a wide age range (7-16)
- "Wild" natural areas for imaginative play were also highlighted as a preference by many children..
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained and they should be easy to get to for all members of the community
- Lighting for Youth provision is desirable because it makes facilities useable all year round and safer.

Play Services

- In general teenagers attend less supervised and organised sessions than younger children and the most used provision for both age ranges is for stand alone sports and arts activities.

- Children and young people who attend schemes and activities are generally quite happy about the quality of provision.
- The main reason given for not using schemes and activities is that the children and young people "prefer to do other things" in their free time
- Poor access in terms of distance and cost were factors for a significant minority in relation to playschemes but less so for youth clubs.
- There seems to be widespread agreement that priorities for future provision of services is for more sports and arts activities and youth clubs.
- Outreach youth work brings play to where young people are, but it would be better if it was carried out at times when most young people were around.
- Expectations of young people in rural areas can be low, as they don't expect to be able to access services due to transport difficulties, this could mean there is latent demand that is not picked up through consultation.

Inclusive Play

- Supervision of open access play make would mean more young people with disabilities could access it.
- Lack of accessible transport prevents children with disabilities in outlying areas from accessing schemes.
- Need for a mix of greater inclusivity re all schemes; and special provision at the request/preference of the children/young people
- Need for specialist indoor/outdoor play area specifically designed for use by children with various disabilities
- Families with some siblings with and some without disabilities have significant practical difficulties accessing facilities and services.
- Facilities in Schools for young people with special needs should be better utilised for community use.
- It is difficult to consult effectively with children and young people from BME community to identify general issues of concern because of dispersed demography.
- Children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can feel isolated and very "visible" due to dispersed small population.

5.3 Ongoing Consultation - The "Hear By Right" Framework.

The National Youth Agency has developed a framework called 'Hear by Right'. This framework offers a tried and tested framework that can assist organisations to assess and improve on their practice and policy around involving children, young people and parents.

The Hear by Right Framework is a based on seven standards with which an organisation can self assesses themselves. The standards look at area's such as:

- Shared values
- Structures
- Strategy
- Systems
- Staff, elected members or trustees
- Skills and knowledge
- Style of leadership

Locally there are many organisations looking at ways to involve children, young people and parents in decision making and shaping services they use. All services have a variety of different ways of doing so. This is also evident on a national basis

It is recommended that all Play Partnership members sign up to the Hear by Right Framework.

6 Staffordshire Moorlands - Child Population and Deprivation Profile

Before analysing in detail the supply of and need for play services and facilities in the District it is important to understand the demographic profile of children and young people in Staffordshire Moorlands.

6.1 General Demographic Background

In mid year 2003 the resident population of Staffordshire Moorlands district was 94,500 people. In general the age structure of the district shows much lower proportions of people in younger and middle aged groups, and a much higher proportion of people in older age groups than the average for England. Less than 1% of the population (around 700 people) are from a Black or Minority Ethnic background.

Over the next 20 years the overall population of Staffordshire Moorlands is forecast to rise slightly, by around 4% to 98,500 people. The age structure of the population however is forecast to change, with the older age groups making up a much greater proportion of the population, and a subsequent reduction in the proportion of population made up from younger age groups.

6.2 Child Population

The current (2006) child population (under 18) of Staffordshire Moorlands is 21,636 which is 22.9% of the total population of 94,489. This breaks down as:

AGE RANGE	Number
AGES 0-4	4,797
AGES 5-9	5,302
AGES 10-14	5,936
AGES 15-19	5,598
TOTAL	21,636

The distribution of the child population across the District is very varied across wards as is illustrated in the table and map below (based on the 2001 census).

Ward	Total Pop	Under 18s pop	% U18s	Ward	Total Pop	Under 18s pop	% U18s
Alton	1396	290	20.8	Cheddleton	4474	944	21.1
Bagnall and Stanley	1481	301	20.3	Churnet	3226	713	22.1
Biddulph East	5996	1837	30.1	Dane	1586	368	23.2
Biddulph Moor	1689	352	20.1	Forsbrook	5008	1079	21.5
Biddulph North	5122	1014	19.8	Hamps Valley	1685	400	23.7
Biddulph South	1626	250	15.4	Horton	1784	369	20.7
Biddulph West	5079	1146	22.3	Ipstones	1817	420	23.1
Brown Edge and Endon	4759	957	20.1	Leek East	4645	930	20
Caverswall	1707	346	20.3	Leek North	5412	1396	25.8
Cellarhead	3342	740	22.1	Leek South	5093	1236	24.3
Cheadle North East	3581	939	26.2	Leek West	4730	1105	23.4
Cheadle South East	3664	832	22.7	Manifold	1834	402	21.2
Cheadle West	4921	1210	24.6	Werrington	3430	746	21.7
Checkley	5402	1338	24.8				

6.3 Child Deprivation

In considering prioritisation of provision it is important to consider children from poorer families who are likely to be most in need of play provision and for whom barriers such as cost and transport are likely to be most significant. In this respect a good tool for analysis is the index of deprivation within the governments Index of Multiple Deprivation named *Income Deprivation Affecting Children*.

Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI)

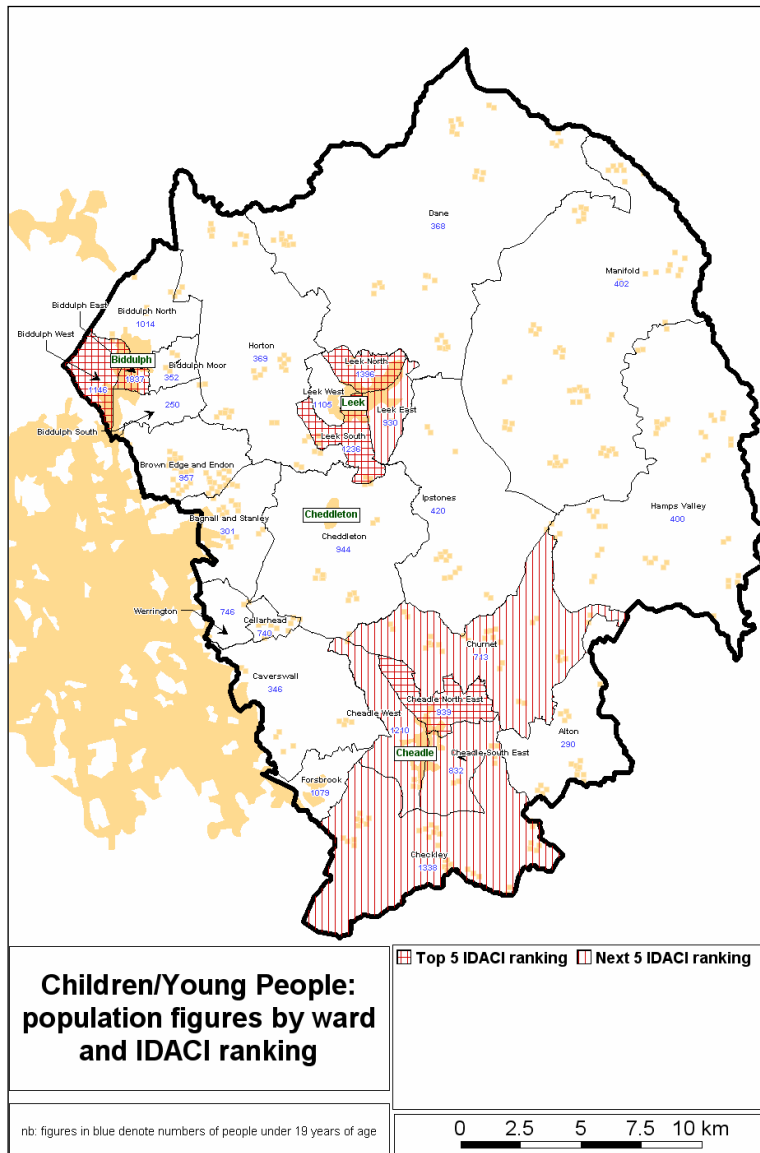
Income deprivation affecting children is a subset of the income deprivation measure. It comprises the % of a Super Output Area's⁷ (SOA's) under 16 population who were living in families in receipt of Income Support and Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or in families in receipt of Working Families/Disabled Persons Tax Credit whose income is below 60% of the national median, before housing costs.

Ward	U 18s Pop	% U18s	Number of SOAs with IDACI 0.15 or over	Highest IDACI Score
Biddulph East	1837	30.1	4	0.36
Leek North	1396	25.8	4	0.35

⁷ Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a new geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. They are smaller than wards.

Leek South	1236	24.3	2	0.25
Cheadle North East	939	26.2	1	0.25
Biddulph West	1146	22.3	1	0.19
Cheadle South East	832	22.7	1	0.17
Leek East	930	20	1	0.17
Cheadle West	1210	24.6	1	0.16
Checkley	1338	24.8	1	0.15
Churnet	713	22.1	1	0.15

An easy way of interpreting the index score is by noting that it directly relates to the proportion of the under 16 population living in households claiming means tested benefit, for example, the score of 0.36 in Biddulph East means that 36% of the under 16 population live in households claiming at least one of the stated means tested benefits. Biddulph East and Leek North Wards both have SOAs which fall in the 20% most deprived wards nationally in relation to the IDACI Index



6.4 Child Population Projections (2007 -17)

The table below shows the projected population of Staffordshire Moorlands children and young people over the next ten years as provided by the Staffordshire County Council Research Unit.

AGE GROUP	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% change
AGES 0-4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	-9.1
AGES 5-9	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.5	-10.0
AGES 10-14	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.0	-10.7
AGES 15-19	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.1	5.0	-13.8
TOTAL 0-19	20.8	20.6	20.4	20.0	19.8	19.5	19.3	19.2	18.9	18.6	18.5	-11
ALL AGES	95.6	95.8	96.0	96.2	96.3	96.5	96.7	96.9	97.0	97.2	97.4	+1.85

The Total population is projected to rise by 1,800 from 95,600 to 97,400 (1.85%). In contrast, the total under 19s population is projected to fall by around 11% with the largest fall in 15-19 year olds (13.8%) and the smallest for under 5s (9.1%).

Given the identified overall shortfalls of play provision identified in the strategy, in particular in relation to youth facilities (and the high demand for such facilities) any additional provision arising from the strategy action plan is, however, unlikely to result in over provision.

It should also be noted that in practice there may well be wards and settlements that buck this trend and where child and teenage population may increase (for example, in relation to new residential developments).

7 Local Provision Examined - Play/Youth Services

7.1 Services Audit - Method

The audit of play services and informal activity programmes has been undertaken via information provided by key play partnership members including Staffordshire Children's Services, Staffordshire County Youth and Community Service, and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. A summary of provision and GIS Maps of key elements are included in Appendices 6 and 7.

7.2 Scope of Audit

The audit included:

- Children's Centres, Pre-schools and Childcare Services
- Playschemes and Holiday Clubs
- District Council Holiday Activities
- Out-of-School clubs
- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Services
 - Sports Development
 - Arts Development
 - Community Safety Programmes
- Newcastle & North Staffs Play Council
 - Holiday Playschemes
 - Junior Youth Clubs
 - Out-of-school Club
- Scrapstores (Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent)
- Youth Clubs and Organisations

7.3 Analysis of Supply - Play and Youth

Children (under 13s)

Children's Centres

In terms of deprivation the two most deprived areas on the basis of the IDACI index are Biddulph East and Leek North. This corresponds to the location of the 2 children's centres (Beresford Memorial Children's Centre in Leek and Staffordshire Moorlands Early Years Childcare Centre in Biddulph). The 2 centres are therefore appropriately placed to cater

for the District's most deprived families. The primary focus of the centres is pre-school and family support.

Out-of-School provision (5-11s)

Leek is well provided for in having 9 out-of-school clubs providing childcare and play opportunities. Cheadle is reasonably provided for with 5 clubs.

Biddulph is less well provided for with only one club (2 in the adjacent Biddulph Moor ward). Given the high numbers of children in Biddulph and its high deprivation this is surprising. Other noticeable gaps are in Churnet ward which has areas of relatively high child deprivation and a relatively high child population but no provision and Cellarhead ward which has no provision but a relatively high child population.

It is therefore recommended that where partners have influence they consider supporting out-of-school provision in Biddulph, and Churnet and Cellarhead wards.

Playschemes and Holiday Clubs (5-11s)

Only a few areas of the district benefit from daily schemes that could provide care for children. In terms of recreation/play based schemes there is a reasonable spread of schemes across the District. Schemes generally run for 4 hour blocks from three to five days a week. Providers include the District Council (Play Council), local schools, and the voluntary and private sectors.

The playschemes serve the 3 main towns and all the larger villages ie. Werrington, Blythe Bridge, Tean, Chedleton, Endon and Brown Edge. In terms of the smaller villages Longnor and Kingsley are also covered. Other of the villages that could be considered for provision are Alton, Ipstones, and Caverswall but given their relatively small child populations they may not be viable for regular provision.

Cost as a barrier

The consultation process revealed that for a significant minority of children cost was a barrier to attendance to playschemes, even those provided at a low cost by the Play Council/District Council (£1 per hour). Given that low-income families may have children who can benefit most from such provision the Council should consider two options (both of which carry financial implications).

- Cease charging for playscheme sessions
- Provide free places for children in low income families (as is done in Biddulph).

In terms of *Planning for Play* guidance and the "free play" concept the latter option would be preferable. The loss of income may be partially offset by savings in any administration costs associated with charging.

Within the providers of schemes it is primarily the Play/District Council who have a degree of flexibility and capacity to vary the location of schemes, particularly in relation to rural venues through the playscheme programme. Currently, however, there are very limited resources through existing budgets of partnership members to provide schemes at low cost or free to local children.

Options for future development are:

- Review historic locations for rural playschemes in the smaller villages and target at settlements with the bigger child populations.
- Secure funds to expand the programme to maintain current venues and add new venues as appropriate.

Junior Youth Clubs

Currently the 4 Junior Clubs supported by the Play Council are in Biddulph (2), Leek and Cheddle. In terms of deprivation and child population density these are well located. There are likely to be various other regular junior clubs held across the District organised but there are no comprehensive records held of such provision.

Given the consultation feedback that children hold such provision as a high priority extension of this support would be desirable.

Consideration should be made as to securing funds to establishing and supporting additional junior clubs giving priority to villages with the higher child populations eg. Blythe Bridge, Werrington, Tean, Cheddleton, Endon and Brown Edge.

Provision for Youth

Youth Projects (County Youth Service)

The youth service have a project based approach utilising a wide range of venues across the district as well as detached work in the main towns (meeting with young people where they congregate "on the street"). This is a good approach for a rural area where the youth population is widely dispersed.

There are, nevertheless, some gaps in provision in some of the larger villages that do not have the benefit of bases for project work, for example, Cheddleton and Endon. Other villages with significant numbers of young people who could benefit from project work are Alton and Caverswall.

It is therefore suggested that in terms of planning for future youth projects provision should be considered that would benefit Cheddleton, Endon, Alton and Caverswall. If venues cannot be found in these settlements consideration could be made of utilising mobile provision visiting local recreation grounds or through PODS (temporary mobile youth centres).

Outreach Services and Mobile Services

District Council Sports Development and the Youth Service currently work together on outreach projects in Biddulph and Cheadle. There is potential to build upon this approach to provide a strategic and demand responsive service to the rural areas also. This would require fairly significant investment, however, in which the establishment of mobile provision should also be considered (for example PODS and mobile youth vehicles carrying a range of activity equipment, IT, arts etc.)

It is well established that in rural areas deprivation can be fairly significant but widely dispersed meaning it is hard to "target" geographically. Given the high degree of priority to facilities and programmes for young people in the rural areas established through the consultation process the partnership should work to develop appropriate schemes to provide greater coverage in the rural areas across the District as well as maintaining its role with the larger settlements and more deprived areas. The voluntary sector will be supported wherever possible.

7.4 Quality Standards and Promoting Good Practice

Childcare

There are government standards relating to childcare suppliers. The national standards represent a baseline of quality below which no provider may fall. However, they are also intended to underpin a continuous improvement in quality in all settings.

There are 14 national standards. Each standard describes a particular quality outcome, and is accompanied by a set of supporting criteria giving information about how that outcome is to be achieved. Regulations under the Children Act require providers (technically the registered person in each setting) to meet the 14 standards and to have regard to the supporting criteria. The law also requires Ofsted to have regard to both the standards and criteria.

The national standards do not override the need for providers to comply with other legislation such as that covering health and safety, food hygiene, fire or planning requirements.

The criteria differ between each of the five categories of day care and childminding provision:

- full day care
- sessional day care
- crèches
- out of school care
- childminding

In Staffordshire Moorlands Children's Services take responsibility for ensuring such provision is registered as required and that the quality standards are met.

Other Play Service Quality Schemes

There are no similar requirements that other play settings must adhere to quality standards. However a number of schemes are being developed to encourage good practice in providing quality play opportunities. For example, London Play has developed *Quality in Play* which is a quality assurance scheme based around assessing a wide range of areas such as:

The play environment - meeting the play needs of children

- Physical & personal health & safety
- Opening times and days
- A warm and welcoming environment
- Choice and range of activities
- Children's involvement
- Play environment audit
- Equalities and inclusion
- Information, notices and displays
- Behavioural boundaries

Management

- Clear aims, objectives and values
- The management committee
- Project management
- Financial management
- Staff and volunteers
- Qualifications and training
- Families and the community
- Peer observation

These schemes tend to be best suited to ongoing supervised play provision such as staffed Adventure Playgrounds and open access staffed Play Centres of which there are none in the District. However such schemes may be of value to childcare settings who wish to further develop the quality of their provision and obtain independent assessment of their work.

It is recommended that the play partnership explore the potential of offering such a quality assurance scheme to childcare providers in the District as well as considering the potential of developing a scheme to cover holiday playschemes and other such play provision.

Developing Good Practice - Inclusion for Children with Disabilities

Improving access to play opportunities for children with disabilities has been identified as a high priority through local consultation.

KIDS, the service delivery charity for disabled children and their families has developed a number of initiatives to improve the inclusion of disabled youngsters in play and childcare, for example:

Paths to Inclusion - a publication comprised of two parts:

- All Of Us - Inclusion Checklist For Settings - outlines good practice for playworkers, childminders and other childcare staff in including disabled children, and
- All Of Us - Inclusion Framework For Local Authorities - offers ways for local authorities to move policy into practice in including disabled children.

Both are intended to support the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream services for children aged five to 16 years, but are also relevant to settings for younger children. They are the result of a UK-wide consultation process by KIDSactive, a division of KIDS, and produced under the Playwork Inclusion Project contract with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

Pick & Mix

This publication provides a selection of inclusive games and activities. It contains many practical ideas, games and activities for all children to enjoy, while helping to promote the inclusion of disabled children in any play or early years setting.

It is recommended that the play partnership utilise such models of good practice and promote their availability through all providers.

Quality Mark for services for young People

The *YSQM Quality Mark for Services for Young People* has been designed as a management tool to support an organisation's development and improvement of its quality management systems. It tests the processes and structures, which are the building blocks of an organisation. By using the self-assessment framework, organisations will be able to check monitoring and reviewing procedures and how management information is used to improve the quality and outcomes of an organisation.

The YSQM enables organisations to look across all their functions. It can usefully assist them in addressing questions set out in Ofsted's self-assessment. As is the case with other systems, the YSQM is an indicator to external bodies, including Ofsted, of the rigour which has been brought to performance management. Commissioning bodies wishing to satisfy themselves of the quality and solidity of an organisation they may wish to engage as a service provider could also use it.

This is a bespoke Quality Mark which focuses on work with young people and the building blocks to sound quality youth work organisations. Its greatest strength is that it has been commissioned and funded by the DfES, overseen by The NYA's Quality Action Group (made up from representatives from Ofsted, Government Office, Voluntary Sector, DfES, The NYA and the Statutory Sector) and designed with the participative input of fifteen youth work organisations.

It is recommended that the youth service and the voluntary sector promote the take up of YSQM Quality Mark for Services for Young People (or a similarly well recognised quality Assurance scheme) by relevant organisations.

8 Local Provision Examined - Play Spaces and Youth Facilities

8.1 Auditing Provision - Method

Planning for Play highlights the importance of a comprehensive audit of both play spaces and play services in order to establish a "base line" from which to plan for future provision. The play space audit involved both a quantitative audit of provision and site visits to all play spaces during which an assessment of quality was also undertaken. The scope included both District Council sites and public play areas owned or managed by other agencies (Eg. Parish Councils and Recreation trusts). In total there are 57 sites with some form of fixed play or youth equipment across the district. In addition 8 public recreation ground sites were visited which, though not containing formal play equipment are used locally for informal play.

The full audit is available as an excel spreadsheet and has been inputted onto the District Council's GIS system. Details of provision and GIS Maps of key elements are included in Appendices 6 and 7.

8.2 Play Space Typology

In terms of spaces for play, sites were categorised in a locally derived typology as outlined below:

- Toddler Equipped Play Areas (primarily aimed at under 8s)
- Junior Equipped Play Areas (primarily aimed at 8-12s)
- Toddler/Junior Play Areas (covering both age groups)
- Family Sites (aimed at all age ranges)
- Youth Facilities (primarily for 13+ youth shelters, wheeled sports)

8.3 Analysis of Provision

While all wards contain at least one play area only 11 wards (40%) have any form of open access outdoor youth provision. In quantitative terms, of the more deprived areas Biddulph East has the fewest play areas per head of child population. Leek East has relatively few play areas per head of child population, followed by Leek South, Cheadle South East and Cheadle West. Other wards with few play areas per head of population are Forsbrook, Werrington, and Cellarhead.

In terms of facilities for youth, provision generally is less extensive across the District. Of the more deprived wards Cheadle West, Checkley, Churnet and Leek East have no youth provision.

This would suggest that in terms of new play areas there is a prime facie case for additional provision in Biddulph East, Leek East, Leek South, Cheadle South East and Cheadle West. Similar quantitative analysis would suggest a case for new provision in Cheadle West, Checkley, Churnet and Leek East.

The above, however, simply provides a quantitative analysis of provision and it is important to consider the quality of existing provision before drawing conclusions about potential priorities for future investment in play areas and youth facilities.

The site visits revealed a large variation in quality across the district. Many play and youth facilities were of average to low quality, with much of the equipment old, outdated and in poor condition. Where this is the case it appears to be due to limited resources to maintain the sites over the years and little planned capital investment in relation to refurbishment and improvement. Observations on quality relating to the site assessments can be found in Appendix 7.

8.4 The Strategy for Future Provision

The overall strategy for provision of outdoor play and youth facilities in relation to future planning is to adopt an aspirational aim in the long term to meet the Local Standards for provision that have been developed through the strategy process. These standards are based upon the principle of providing reasonable access (in terms of walking time) to various kinds of high quality inclusive play and youth facilities designed to meet the needs of different age groups for all of the Moorlands' children and young people.

This approach is combined with the adoption of national guidance and recognised models of good practice in relation to the design and quality of provision (for example in relation to inclusivity and risk management).

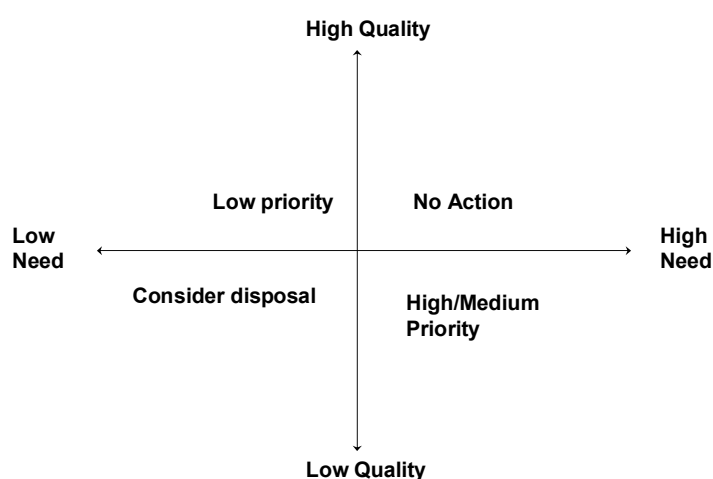
Prioritisation for Improvements/additions to Play Spaces

The achievement of play and youth provision across the District based upon the standards is a long term goal. In the shorter term there will be a need to determine which of the play areas and youth facilities should be brought "up to standard" and where new provision should be. That is, what are the priorities for new or improved play areas and youth facilities?

Planning for Play suggests that this question should be answered by prioritising provision in those areas where it is most needed⁸. The strategy follows this guidance by suggesting an approach based upon 6 factors, namely:

- Where there are gaps in provision
- The location of the site in terms of safety and access and its suitability to meet the requirements of the new standards
- Provision in the 10 most deprived wards
- Provision in rural areas
- Benefit to areas of high child population where there is a poor provision per head of population or where there is a paucity of any kind of public open space (eg due to high density housing)
- Potential for external funding and/or a high degree of active community support for the project.

The principal behind the approach is illustrated by the diagram below.



⁸ The detailed criteria for prioritisation are provided in Section 8.5

Local Consultation with children, young people and their parents reveals a view that in the first instance making the most of what currently exists is most important. In response, the strategy is to focus on refurbishments and enhancements on existing facilities combined with new provision relating to new residential developments in line with the new standards.

The strategy process involved an audit of facilities including assessments of quality. It is suggested that the Play Partners undertake a detailed analysis of the audit and plan for a longer term programme of refurbishments and developments based upon these prioritisation criteria.

Refurbishments and Improvements - In very broad terms, analysis of the audit undertaken for the strategy and deprivation and child population factors suggest some initial areas that should be supported in terms of potential refurbishments and improvements in the short term. These are:

- Biddulph East (Church Road Playing Fields)
- Brown Edge
- Cheddleton

Following this a programme of refurbishments and improvements should be developed by appropriate partners taking into account the Prioritisation criteria, Play Strategy Good Practice advice, and making use of the quality assessments undertaken within the play strategy process. Sites that should be considered early in this process include Halls Road, Biddulph Valley and St Lawrence's Recreation Ground, Biddulph; Churchill Road Recreation Ground and Cheadle Recreation ground, Cheadle; Ball Haye Green Recreation Ground, Westwood Recreation Ground, and Woodcroft, Leek; Blythe Bridge Recreation Ground; Waterfall Lane, Waterhouses; and Werrington Playing Fields.

The prioritisation criteria suggested by the Strategy (see below) should be used to help guide decision making and the planning of the programme of refurbishments. Where it is difficult to choose between projects on this basis (as the projects appear to meet the criteria equally well) the poorest quality site should take precedence for refurbishment.

New Facilities - In very broad terms, audit and mapping undertaken for the strategy suggest that support should be given for the development of a Family Play facility in Biddulph and for youth provision in Checkley. Support should also be given in the longer term for new youth provision in the towns and larger villages in accordance with the strategy standards and prioritisation criteria.

Wards that have relatively few play and youth facilities per head of young person population include:

- Biddulph East
- Leek East
- Leek South
- Cheadle South East
- Cheadle West
- Forsbrook
- Werrington
- Cellarhead

Play Areas and youth facilities in the more rural areas should be developed with local Parish councils and appropriate partnership projects should be implemented to meet local needs and circumstances.

8.5 Playspace Strategy Prioritisation Criteria

The following Criteria are provided to help assess potentially competing playspace facility projects.

Priority Rating	Definition
High Priority	<p>Projects which:</p> <p>Provide new or enhanced existing play/youth facilities in an area currently lacking good quality facilities of the kind to be provided (fills a gap).</p> <p>AND where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The site is well positioned in relation to "Secured by Design" principles 2) The site is easily accessible by foot to the community it serves taking into account access restrictions such as main roads, railways and other barriers 3) The site is large enough to fully accommodate the play space standards as recommended (including buffer zones). <p>AND where at least two of the following conditions is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project benefits a priority ward or provides in a rural area • Benefits an area of high child population where there is poor provision per head of child population and/or provides in an area which has very little public open space of any kind (eg high density housing area) • The project is likely to attract significant external/partnership funding and/or the project can demonstrate active community support and involvement, for example, partnership with residents/community association, parish council, local school, youth group etc.

Medium Priority	<p>Projects which:</p> <p>Provide new or enhance existing play/youth facilities in an area currently lacking good quality facilities of the kind to be provided (fills a gap)</p> <p>AND where:</p> <p>1) The site is well positioned in relation to "Secured by Design" principles</p> <p>2) The site is easily accessible by foot to the community it serves taking into account access restrictions such as main roads, railways and other barriers</p> <p>3) The site is large enough to fully accommodate the play space standards as recommended (including buffer zones) or it is the most appropriate site locally available.</p> <p>AND where at least one of the following conditions is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project benefits a priority ward or provides in a rural area • Benefits an area of high child population where there is poor provision per head of child population and/or provides in an area which has very little public open space of any kind • The project is likely to attract significant external/partnership funding and/or the project can demonstrate active community support and involvement, for example, partnership with residents/community association, parish council, local school, youth group etc.
Low Priority	<p>Projects which:</p> <p>Address deficiencies in the District's Play/Youth Facilities infrastructure but which do not fulfil the conditions for High or Medium priority.</p>
Non Priority	<p>Projects that duplicate existing provision and which might create a surplus of supply and result in under-use of existing facilities.</p>

8.6 Quality Standards and Promoting Good Practice

Design Principles

Any Play Space should be designed to encourage as wide a variety of play activities as possible. In relation to the various types of play highlighted in *Best Play* the play partnership has made the following general observations in relation to potential implications for the design of play space.

Type of Play	Design implications/ideas
Symbolic Play - play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding, without the risk of being out of one's depth.	Using pieces of timber to symbolise a person; interactive and tactile equipment, bark, sand, water, planting, and materials with different smells, surfaces and colours. Ground modelling

	would provide different contours and imaginative ways of getting around the equipment.
Rough and Tumble Play - close encounter play to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength, and discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display.	This requires open spaces of different sizes with strong barriers of differing character between them. It will involve climbing using ropes, nets, different heights and demarcation of posts etc to encourage king of the castle type games. The equipment must be appealing to all age groups, so different levels are to be encouraged offering greater challenge.
Socio-dramatic Play - the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature. For example, playing at house, going to the shops, being mothers and fathers, organising a meal or even having a row.	This requires symbolic places to be created with platforms, seat and table like structures, possibly murals depicting people as they open up discussions between children and young people. The opportunity to control their own play space by enabling children and young people to den build or make changes to their play environment.
Social Play - play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended. For example, any social or interactive situation, which contains an expectation on all parties that they will abide by the rules or protocols, i.e. games, conversations, making something together.	Seats and seat like structures on which to perch and interact. These need to at different scales to cater for all age groups including teenagers. It could include woven natural materials such as willow, changing the flow of sand or water, together with plaques to explain the problem.
Creative Play - play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise. For example, enjoying creation with a range of materials involving loose or moveable materials.	Play that stimulates the senses; equipment that provides tactile materials, makes different sounds, uses colours and shades, is at different levels and uses different shapes and contours. An opportunity to take part in transforming the environment.
Dramatic Play - play which dramatises events in which the child is not a direct participator. For example presentation of a TV show, an event on the street, a religious or festive event, even a funeral.	Enclosed spaces are needed where children feel safe to explore their drama. This could be in an amphitheatre shape with raised banks trees and natural screening, with moveable equipment and 'hidden areas'.
Deep Play - play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear. Often involving high level work involving climbing, swinging, sliding and balancing	Leaping onto an aerial runway, balancing on a high beam, trim trails, rope work, climbing apparatus, fast spinning equipment and adventure trails, skate ramps, boulders that can be jumped across

<p>Exploratory play - play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, banging or objects. For example, engaging with an object or area and, either by manipulation or movement, assessing its properties, possibilities and content.</p>	<p>Creative use of the environment is essential in providing exploratory play, loose materials such as sand, bark and water help to facilitate this style of play.</p>
<p>Fantasy play and Imaginative play - play which rearranges the world in the child's way; a way, which is unlikely to occur or where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply. For example, playing at being a pilot flying around the world.</p>	<p>Imaginative structures are helpful, different colours, shapes and surfaces</p>
<p>Locomotor play - movement in any and every direction for its own sake. For example, sliding, balancing, rocking, swinging, climbing, hide and seek.</p>	<p>A variety of spaces and structures are required but could include handicaps to an activity in the form of mobility or visual impediments eg pulling the body through cylinders and the creative use of mirrors.</p>
<p>Mastery play - control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments.</p>	<p>Areas where digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires are allowed. Strength challenges where logs could be rolled over different terrain, to encourage the competitive spirit and so challenging the individual to better their own performance.</p>

A play area developed to accommodate various types of play will be rich and varied and is likely to include some or all of the following elements:

- safe overlooked spaces using trees, hedges, fences, wooden walls etc,
- significant changes of level creating mounds, elevated places and also places where water collects temporarily
- many structures - posts, balance beams and some formal play equipment
- natural materials and surfaces planting grass stones, boulders, gravel, sand etc
- Patterns incorporated into the design and places for messages

At a practical level the play area will also take into account the requirements of those with disabilities and provide appropriate impact absorbing surfaces. All play equipment will conform to appropriate European standards and a risk assessment will be carried out on all natural features. Fencing (metal) will be needed where dog exclusion is essential, where sand and water is included and where there are hazards nearby.

Risk and Challenge - Managing Risk in Play Provision

The provision should balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm. The provision should extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it'. Best Play 2000

There is growing concern about how safety is being addressed in children's play provision. Fear of litigation is leading many play providers to focus on minimising the risk of injury at the expense of other more fundamental objectives. The effect is to stop children from enjoying a healthy range of play opportunities, limiting their enjoyment and causing potentially damaging consequences for their development.

This approach ignores clear evidence that use of play provision is a comparatively low risk activity for children. Of the two million or so childhood accident cases treated by hospitals each year, fewer than two per cent involve playground equipment. Participation in sports like soccer, widely acknowledged as 'good' for a child's development, involve a greater risk of injury than visiting a playground. Fatalities on playgrounds are very rare - about one per three or four years on average. This compares with, for instance, more than 100 child pedestrian fatalities a year and more than 500 child fatalities from accidents overall.

The Play Safety Forum, a national body with government funding, was set up to consider this issue, and the Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership has adopted the Forum's summary Position Statement *Managing Risk in Play Provision* as a statement of its own position in relation to risk management.

Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership

Managing Risk in Play Provision - Position statement

Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury⁹.

⁹ From *Managing Risk in Play Provision*, Play Safety Forum, 2002

Play in the wider public environment

- In relation to future housing developments, full account will be taken of elements of residential design and the design of public open space early in the planning cycle to specifically recognise the needs of children and young people as key users of public open space and the outdoor environment. This will involve considerations such as Secured by Design principles, homezones, seating and meeting places within the development, as well as provision of specific play and youth facilities.
- Secured by Design principles will be adopted in relation to all new play provision and refurbishments

Developing Good Practice - Inclusion for Children with Disabilities

All children do not need to access play spaces in the same way but they are all fundamentally entitled to go out to play. Good design of public play spaces is needed in order to make this possible. Each child is different - not every piece of equipment in a play space needs to be accessible to every child but access to the social experience of play is key.

In 2003 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published *Developing Accessible Play Space - A Good Practice Guide*. The key recommendation of the guide is that providers "should concentrate on making the environment fit the child" and the guide notes that "there is no need to focus on impairment specific issues - rather identify the obstacles to play for any child who might wish to access the play space and think about ways to circumvent them".

The good practice guide provides examples of how careful attention to design can help to ensure that play spaces are inclusive, comfortable and appealing to disabled children and their families.

The Play Partnership will promote *Developing Accessible Play Space - A Good Practice Guide* and all members will apply the guidance in relation to refurbishments and new play provision.

8.7 Developing Local Standards (Planning)

The full detail and rationale for the proposed local standards is contained in Appendix 8.

The Council will move away from the NPFA national standards and adopt local standards (in accordance with the principles of PPG17) that are more appropriate to the local circumstances and needs of Staffordshire Moorlands. A Supplementary Planning Document will be drawn up including design quality recommendations¹⁰.

The suggested standards differ from NPFA national standards based upon the consultation findings and local circumstances. The main variations relate to the potential for fewer but higher quality provision (for which most parents, and many children and young people say they are prepared to walk further than NPFA standards suggest); a stronger preference for ball games, wheeled sports, and landscaping for imaginative play than is shown in the NPFA standards; provision for teenagers and families; and the addition of a quantitative element (provision per 1000 population).

In relation to new development and as an aspiration for existing built-up areas it is suggested that a network of play/youth facility areas should be provided in accordance with the needs of varying age groups. The detailed standards are contained in Appendix 8 and are based upon a network of the following 4 kinds of provision:

- **Doorstep Outdoor Play Space - DOPS** (primarily for accompanied children up to 7 years of age). These represent the base level of facility provision. The aim is to create child-friendly, accessible open spaces within easy reach of accompanied young children.
- **Junior/Toddler Outdoor Play Space (JOP)** These are equipped play areas aimed at covering the needs of both pre-school and junior age children.
- **Youth Outdoor Play Space (YOPS)**. These are larger facilities including elements to meet the needs of older children and teenagers.
- **Family Outdoor Play Space (FOPS)**. These are "destination" sites to cater for all age groups (young accompanied children to youth). Such facilities need to be accessible from the rural areas.

The standards also take into account the need to vary the approach appropriately in rural areas so that their specific needs can be met.

¹⁰ In accordance with the procedures of the Local Development Scheme.

8 The Action Plan

The Action Plan provides a framework for implementing the recommendations of the Play Strategy over a 5 year period highlighting actions over that period with a short, medium or long-term timeframe.

The plan is structured within the framework of the Children and Young People's Plan and its five main outcomes. The plan highlights specific tasks relating to each individual Policy Statement in the Play strategy. For each Action Point a lead role is assigned thereby identifying responsibility for delivery.

The Action Plan provides a list of outline projects and outputs linked to a set timetable. The plan also identifies key partners and indications of the level of funding required to implement the actions.

The Action Plan is produced as a separate document and will be reviewed on an annual basis. It is included as Appendix 9 of the Strategy.

Appendix 1 – Staffordshire Moorlands Play Partnership- Terms of reference

Terms of reference

- To assist with the development of a “Play Strategy” for Staffordshire Moorlands
- To provide the consultants Leisure and the Environment (L and E) with information and background material relating to local play and youth provision (facilities and services). Eg existing consultation material and relevant policy and strategy documents.
- To supply Land E with available material and information to assist with the audit/mapping and consultation processes.
- To comment and advise on the BIG Lottery funding bid to the Children’s Play Programme including help with agreeing priorities for inclusion in the “portfolio” of projects to benefit from lottery funding.
- To ensure that children and young people are consulted and engaged in both the development of the strategy and its implementation.
- To ensure that the strategy is inclusive of all children, whatever their particular needs or backgrounds.
- To help promote and publicise the strategy process
- To assist with the implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of the strategy and its action plan over the 5 years of its scope.
- To report to relevant agencies regarding progress on strategy implementation.
- To provide an annual report to the District Council and Play Partnership

Appendix 2 - Performance Indicators - Play

Indicator 1 - Participation.

- Description - The percentage of children and young people aged birth to 16 from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled, who play out for at least four hours each week.
- Method of Generation - School and Household Survey

Indicator 2 - Access to a variety of facilities and spaces

- Description - The percentage of children and young people aged birth to 16 that have access to a dedicated place for play and informal recreation, which is within appropriate walking or cycling distance
- Method of Generation – The open space and play strategy audit. GIS mapping

Indicator 3 - Quality of play spaces

- Description - The proportion of dedicated play spaces that meet a quality score of at least 60% of the potential of the site as determined by the play space audit.
- Method of Generation - Assess against the quality standards utilised in the play space audit.

Indicator 4 – Quality of Play services

- Description – The number of play services and youth clubs having achieved a recognised quality mark status such as *Quality in Play* or *YSQM Quality Mark for Services for Young People*.
- Method of Generation – Confirmation of numbers from the accrediting organisations.

Indicator 5 – Satisfaction

- Description - The percentage of children and young people from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled, who think that the range and quality of play facilities and spaces they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good/very good.
- Method of Generation - School and Household Survey

BVPI 115 – Extent of Play Strategy Development

The Audit Commission has developed a voluntary performance indicator BVPI 115 on the development of local play policies. This is summarised below.

Services/ practice (from BVPI 115)

Every county, unitary and district authority should have an agreed play policy and strategy:

- The play policy should be widely scoped, including any local authority services that might directly or indirectly impact on children's play opportunities.
- The play policy should clearly identify the importance of play
- The policy should be integrated with other relevant community, corporate and departmental plans.
- The policy should be developed drawing on consultation with a range of relevant stakeholders.
- The policy should be endorsed by the Chief Executive and / or Members of the relevant committee
- The play policy should be based on a clear baseline assessment of local needs and identify current provision and opportunities for play.
- The play policy provides a clear framework for implementation and delivery.
- A Play Policy working group with key partners should be established to oversee the implementation and delivery of the policy
- A framework is in place for monitoring progress and regular reporting on plans.

The BVPI provides a detailed method of quantifying how far a local strategy goes in terms of meeting each these key elements and at overall score can be calculated.

Appendix 3 – Key Play Objectives and Criteria for an enriched play environment area (Best Play 2000)

The Seven Key Play Objectives

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

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

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

Objective 4 - The provision maximises the range of play opportunities.

Objective 5 - The provision fosters independence and self-esteem.

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

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

Criteria for an enriched play environment area

The following criteria for an enriched play environment are adapted from those given in Hughes (1996). The examples given for each section are in no sense exhaustive, merely indicative.

Play provision should provide opportunities for:

- **A varied and interesting physical environment**

Examples: Things at different levels, spaces of different sizes, places to hide, trees and bushes as well as things that have been made, places to inspire mystery and imagination.

- **Challenge in relation to the physical environment**

Examples: activities which test the limits of capabilities, rough and tumble, sports and games, chase.

- **Playing with the natural elements - earth, water, fire, air**

Examples: campfires, digging, playing snowballs, flying kites.

- **Movement - e.g. running, jumping, rolling, climbing, balancing**

Examples: beams and ropes, soft mats, bike riding, juggling equipment, ladders, space.

- **Manipulating natural and fabricated materials**

Examples: materials for art, cooking, making and mending of all kinds; building dens; making concoctions; using tools; access to bits and pieces of all kinds.

- **Stimulation of the five senses**

Examples: music making, places where shouting is fine, quiet places, different colours and shapes, dark and bright spaces, cooking on a campfire, rotting leaves, a range of food and drink, objects that are soft, prickly, flexible, large and small.

- **Experiencing change in the natural and built environment**

Examples: experiencing the seasons through access to the outdoor environment; opportunities to take part in building, demolishing, or transforming the environment.

- **Social interactions**

Examples: being able to choose whether and when to play alone or with others, to negotiate, co-operate, compete and resolve conflicts. Being able to interact with individuals and groups of different ages, abilities, interests, gender, ethnicity and culture.

- **Playing with identity**

Examples: dressing up, role play, performing, taking on different kinds of responsibility.

- **Experiencing a range of emotions**

Examples: opportunities to be powerful/powerless, scared/confident, liked/disliked, in/out of control, brave/cowardly.

Appendix 4 Other Strategy & Policy of Relevance to Play

National

Youth Matters

The Youth Matters Green Paper builds on the Every Child Matters outcomes with the intention of reshaping services for young people. The proposals aim to address four key challenges:

- Engage and empower more young people in positive activities
- Encourage more young people to become involved in their communities
- Provision of better information, advice and guidance to young people to enable them to make informed choices
- Provision of better and more personalised support for each young person.

Throughout the Green Paper, there are strong references to the opportunities and contributions that sport can make to these challenges and outcomes, including the proposed national pilot of a Youth Opportunities Card.

Extended Schools Initiative

The government aim that by 2010, all children should have access to a variety of activities at schools beyond the school day.

It is intended that extended schools will provide a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of children, their families and the wider community. The aim is for all schools and children and families to be able to access a core of extended services which are developed in partnership with others.

Extended services can include childcare, adult education, parenting support programmes, community-based health and social care services, multi-agency behaviour support teams and after-school activities.

For primary schools, this will mean working with a range of local providers to enable children and families to have access to extended services. The expectation is that all secondary schools will be open from 8am-6pm all year around, offering a range of activities for young people. It is not

required that all primary schools will offer extended services on their own sites.

Choosing Health White Paper

The Department of Health's Public Health White Paper sets out action by Government to support the individual to make healthy choices. Its overarching priorities are to:

- Reduce the number of people smoking
- Reduce obesity and improve diet and nutrition
- Increase exercise
- Encourage and support sensible drinking
- Improve sexual health
- Improve mental health.

Joint area review

Guidance from the Department for Education and Skills suggests that the play strategy should link to the Children and Young People's Plan, helping to meet the requirements of Joint Area Review of the Ofsted Children's Services Inspection framework. This includes the following key judgements in relation to children's enjoyment of play and recreation.

Key Judgements	Evidence
Parents and carers receive support in helping their children to enjoy and achieve.	Targeted guidance and support is provided to parents and carers, in line with their expressed wishes, in helping children and young people to enjoy play, achieve educationally and make productive and enjoyable use of leisure time.
All children and young people can access a range of recreational activities, including play and voluntary learning provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are safe and accessible places where children and young people can play and socialise. • A range of affordable, accessible, challenging and rewarding recreational and voluntary learning opportunities is provided. • Action is taken to ensure that the cost or availability of transport are not undue barriers to participation in recreational and voluntary learning activities. • Recreational and voluntary learning opportunities reflect the needs and interests of individuals as well as groups.

Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer, Greener

The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce published its report 'Green Spaces, Better Places' in May 2002. The report considers the benefits urban

parks and green spaces bring to cities, the problems affecting them and how these can be overcome, some good practice examples and the means of achieving solutions. Fifty-two recommendations were made and the Government has considered these and responded in its document 'Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer, Greener' (October 2003). Seen in this context, the protection of playspace is now part of a wider environmental agenda.

The report specifically highlights the importance of play areas/youth facilities in relation to health and community safety.

National Planning Guidance

Originally published in 1991, Planning Policy Guidance note 17- Sport and Recreation (PPG17) recognised the special significance of Play Areas for their recreational and amenity value, urged local planning authorities to recognise their long-term community value and advised that in general terms that they should be protected.

A revised PPG17 (published on 24 July 2002 and entitled 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation') strengthens the need to protect play areas and outdoor youth facilities, and reiterates the need for robust local assessments of need, which take into account quantity, quality and accessibility. Play Areas should be considered in the wider context of open space in general, of which an adequate supply should always be maintained. 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17' was published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2002, and sets out examples of good practice, advises local authorities on means of delivering good quality open space and play/youth facilities and links to the Best Value agenda and the management and maintenance of facilities.

The guidance highlights that youth should not be overlooked when planning for outdoor play, promotes the need for locally derived standards, supports planning for play within the street environment (e.g., "Homezones") and recommends the general approach outlined in *More than Swings and Roundabouts* (Children's Play Council).

The Revised National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Six-Acre Standard (2001)

The recommendation from the NPFA in 2001 is that local authorities should aim to achieve a minimum standard of outdoor space for children's

play of 0.8 hectares (two acres) per 1000 people. In terms of quality standards the NPFA suggest a hierarchy of provision as outlined below:

LAP (Local Area of Play)

Location	one minutes walking time from home.
Target age group	four to six-year-olds.
Purpose	low-key games, French cricket or play with small toys.
Equipment	Equipment should be small-scale and appropriate for younger children; seating and dog fencing.
Area	activity zone (to avoid disturbance to neighbours) at least 5 m from the nearest residential property.

LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play)

Location	five minutes walking time from home.
Target age group	four to eight years. Consideration should also be given to very young children and unaccompanied eight to ten-year-olds.
Purpose	LEAPS should cater for a large range of play activity, including informal ball games.
Equipment	at least five types of play equipment. Should also have seating for accompanying adults and be fenced to exclude dogs.
Area	activity zone approximately 400 sq m. Buffer zone 20 m between the edge of the activity zone and residential property. The buffer zone should include footpaths and planted areas.

NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)

Location	within 15 minutes walking time from home.
Target age group	Unaccompanied and unsupervised 8 to 14-year-olds.
Purpose	to provide challenging and stimulating play opportunities.
Equipment	a minimum of eight types of play equipment, kickabout area and facilities for skateboarding, bicycles or similar activities. Seating for adults and for teenagers to use as a meeting place. The area should also be fenced to exclude dogs.
Area	activity zone approximately 1000 sq m. Buffer zone at least 30 m from activity zone to nearest residential property.

The recommendation is to achieve 0.8 hectares of outdoor playing space, by:

- Providing LAPS, LEAPS and NEAPS in locations based upon walking time; and,
- Providing the balance as casual play space within areas of amenity open space.

In relation to standards for equipped play areas there has been a significant change in emphasis. Previous NPFA guidance was that the area of equipped play space should be a minimum of 0.2 - 0.3 hectares (of the overall 0.8 hectares of play space). The new guidance however places much more emphasis on accessibility in terms of walking time and the quality and design specification of the play facilities rather than the amount of space available.

Safety standards and legislation.

European safety standards for playgrounds - EN1176 and EN 1177 - have been in place since 1999. The UK adoption of these standards has caused some concern nationally about the safety of existing items of play equipment and safer surfacing.

Playground managers are recommended to purchase new equipment and surfacing that meet the new standards and evidence of compliance or third party testing needs to be sought from a supplier.

The position with old equipment is more complex. Whilst the new standards are not retrospective, and it should be appreciated that equipment that formerly met the old standards will not become unsafe overnight, compliance with the standard may well be considered as part of any accident claim.

The Health and Safety at Work Act is the major legislation covering play areas. There is a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of users, and providers could be found negligent if they failed to take reasonable care to ensure their play areas are safe (and avoid accidents they could reasonably have foreseen might happen).

Transport strategies

Government planning guidance promotes traffic calming, home zones and measures to improve walking and cycling, all of which can improve children and young people's access to play opportunities. These measures also directly create opportunities to play, since for children the act of getting from one place to another is often part of their play, whether or not it is a purposeful trip.

Transport policies can, however, work against children's freedom of movement and limit their play opportunities if traffic speeds and volumes are too high in neighbourhoods. The Department for Transport is

currently drafting new guidance on the design of residential streets, which is likely to take a more balanced approach to accommodating all users of the street.

Local

Supplementary Planning Guidance - Public Open Space

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was adopted by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in 2004. It supplements Policies R1 & R2 in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and sets out how the public open space policies will operate. In relation to Children's Play it states that:

On sites capable of accommodating 20 or more dwellings provision of a children's play area is normally required within the development. It may consist of a grassed amenity or kickabout area and/or an equipped play area which should include an appropriate 'buffer zone'. The play area and open space landscaping provision should be incorporated in close proximity to housing development. The facility, however, should be located so as not to cause unacceptable noise conflict, and should avoid users having to cross busy roads. Larger, more comprehensive facilities should be provided on the larger residential development sites. However, on-site provision may not always be practicable and so a payment into the District Council's Central Fund for Open Space may sometimes be more appropriate.

The local standards for play suggested in this strategy should be considered within the overall set of open space standards that may be developed when the Council undertake a full PPG17 study.

Community Safety Strategy

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities, the police and local partners to work together to produce a Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy every three years. The current Staffordshire Moorlands strategy covers 2005-08. It is based upon addressing 5 priority issues:

- ***Quality of life in Moorlands Communities*** - Tackling: disorder, nuisance, vandalism, racial abuse, environment by listening to local people and acting
- ***Road Safety*** - speed and accident reduction

- **Assaults** - From common assault to wounding, alcohol or drug fuelled, domestic or stranger related
- **Significant other crime** - Burglary, vehicle crime, robbery, arson, supplying controlled drugs, hate crime
- **Domestic violence** - Encouraging reporting but working to reduce the number of repeat reports
- **Young people**- As victims of crime and in fear of crime

Young People

The strategy explicitly recognises the importance of informal activity programmes and youth facilities in reducing crime and the fear of crime. It highlights in particular the need for informal places to meet and young person "night clubs". This preference of young people is reinforced in the Play Strategy consultation.

Staffordshire Moorlands Parks and Countryside Strategy (2003-07)

Vision

The Service Vision is for the parks and green spaces of the Staffordshire Moorlands and its countryside to meet the recreational needs of residents and visitors, and be valued for the cultural and natural qualities found there.

While the Parks and Countryside Strategy has no specific references to children's play it is clear that parks, green space and countryside sites have immense play value. While obviously so for formal play areas it is important to fully acknowledge the value of unequipped areas for play.

Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Strategy (2003-07)

A strategic priority for the Sports Strategy is "to increase opportunities for target groups" and one of the target groups is children and young people (7-19 years). Our consultation has shown that children and young people see holiday and out-of-school sports activities and informal open access sports facilities as important elements of their free play options.

Staffordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-11

The Staffordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) outlines a long term strategy for all transport in the county. The LTP centres on five shared priorities as set out by the Department for Transport:

- Delivering accessibility;

- Tackling congestion;
- Better air quality;
- Safer roads;
- Other quality of life issues.

The most relevant aspect of the LTP is that of “delivering accessibility” and its objective “to improve access to everyday facilities for all, particularly for those without access to a car”. The LTP notes that “younger age groups are more prone to experiencing accessibility problems. Those aged under 17 must rely on walking, cycling and public transport to get around, or be reliant on parents and friends for any journeys by car”.

The strategy recognises the importance of improving pedestrian and cycling routes as well as addressing the issues of access to facilities from rural areas. It specifically highlights the value of its “Safer Routes to Schools” initiative and there is potential to widen this concept to leisure and play facilities.

Appendix 5 Consultation and Needs Assessment

1. Introduction

This section details the various methods through which information has been gathered to establish the needs and aspirations of children, young people, their parents/carers, and the wider community in relation to play provision for children and young people. Consultation and engagement has been achieved through:

Surveys and Questionnaires

- Questionnaire surveys to children and young people
- Surveys of parents/carers
- Survey of local play and youth organisations
- Parish Council Survey
- Play Partnership

Focus Groups and direct contact

- YOMAC / “Shadow” Play Partnership
- Children attending “Local Democracy Week” events
- Children with disabilities
- Parish Councils Focus Group
- Village Agent Focus Group
- Play Partnership
- Surgeries with key stakeholders/individuals

The report also outlines the findings of these various consultation exercises and pulls together the key points in relation to the development of the Staffordshire Moorlands Play Strategy.

2. Consultation – Methods and Findings

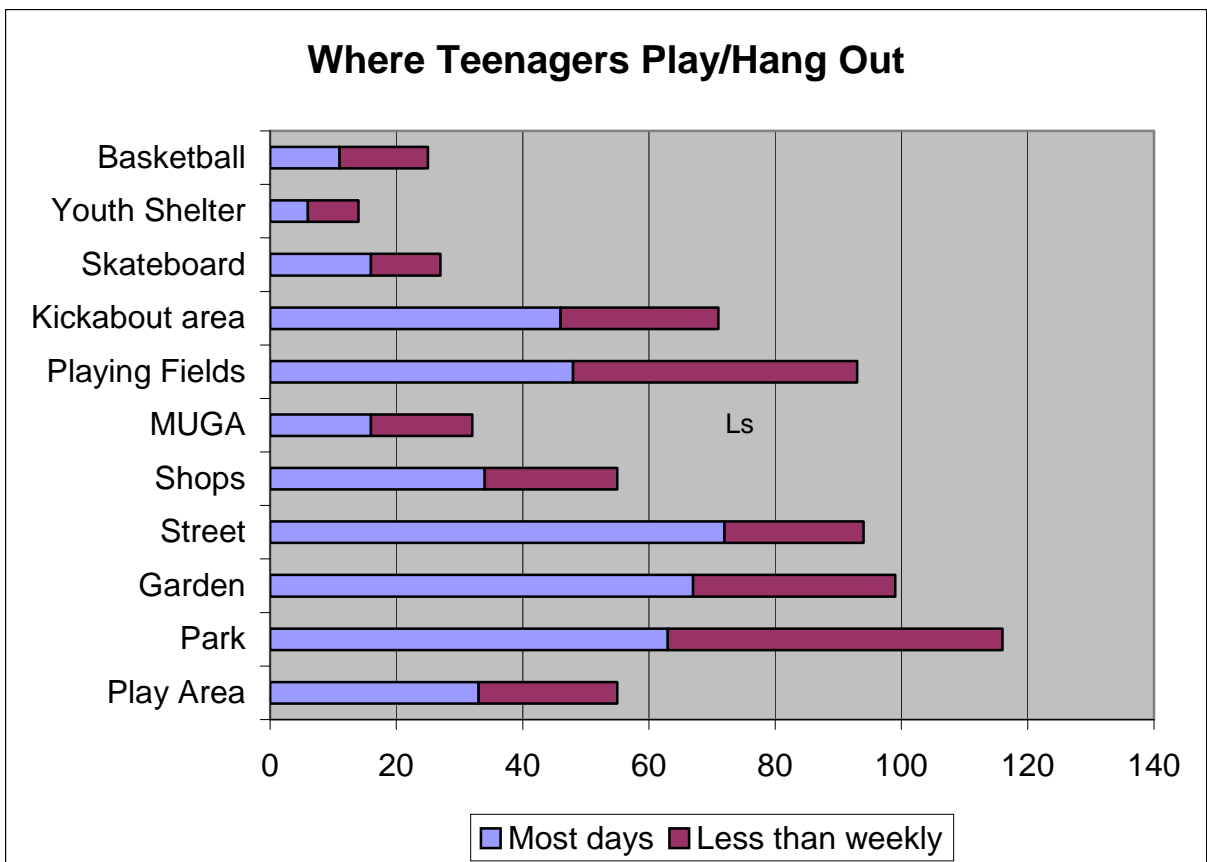
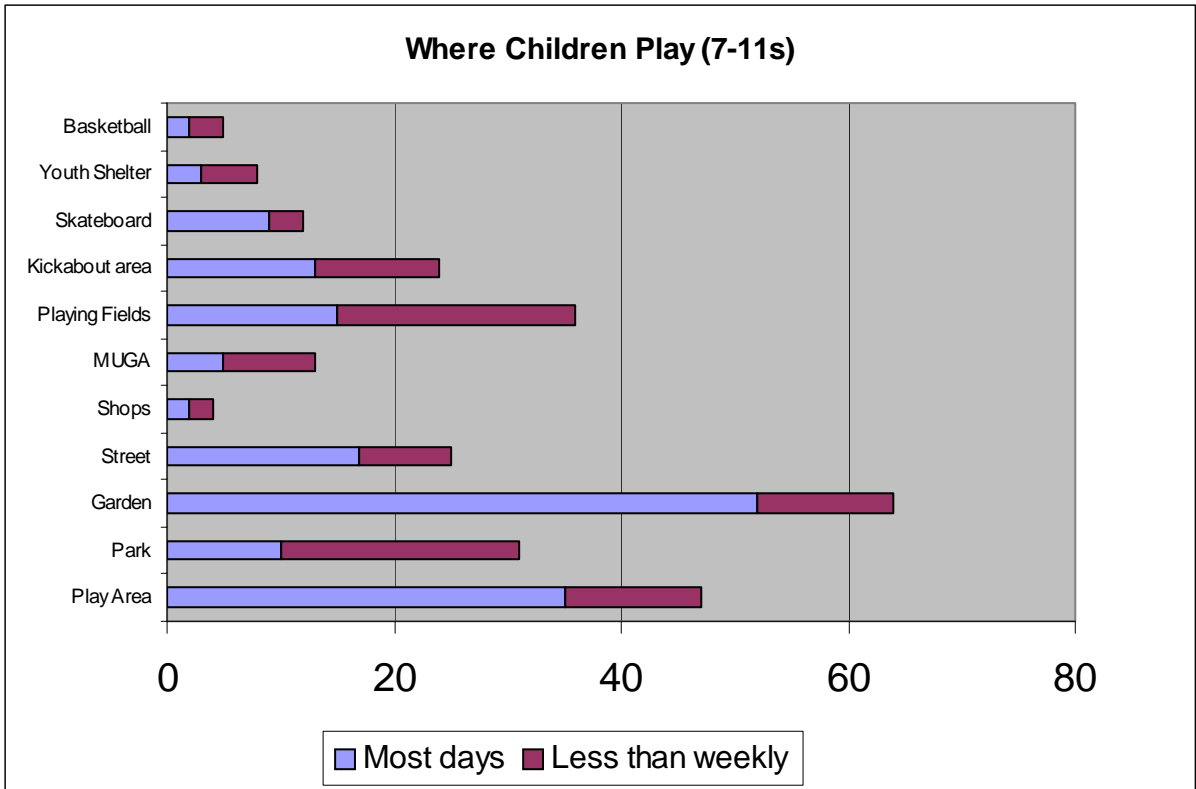
2.1 Children and Young People

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken through primary and secondary schools across Staffordshire Moorlands.¹ The surveys were sent to a selection of schools intended to give a picture across the District. The surveys provided responses from 89 children aged from 7-11, and 203 young people aged from 12 to 18. The main findings are provided below:

2.1.1 Where do Children Play and Hang out?

In terms of planning for the future it is important first of all to understand where children and young people currently play and hang out.

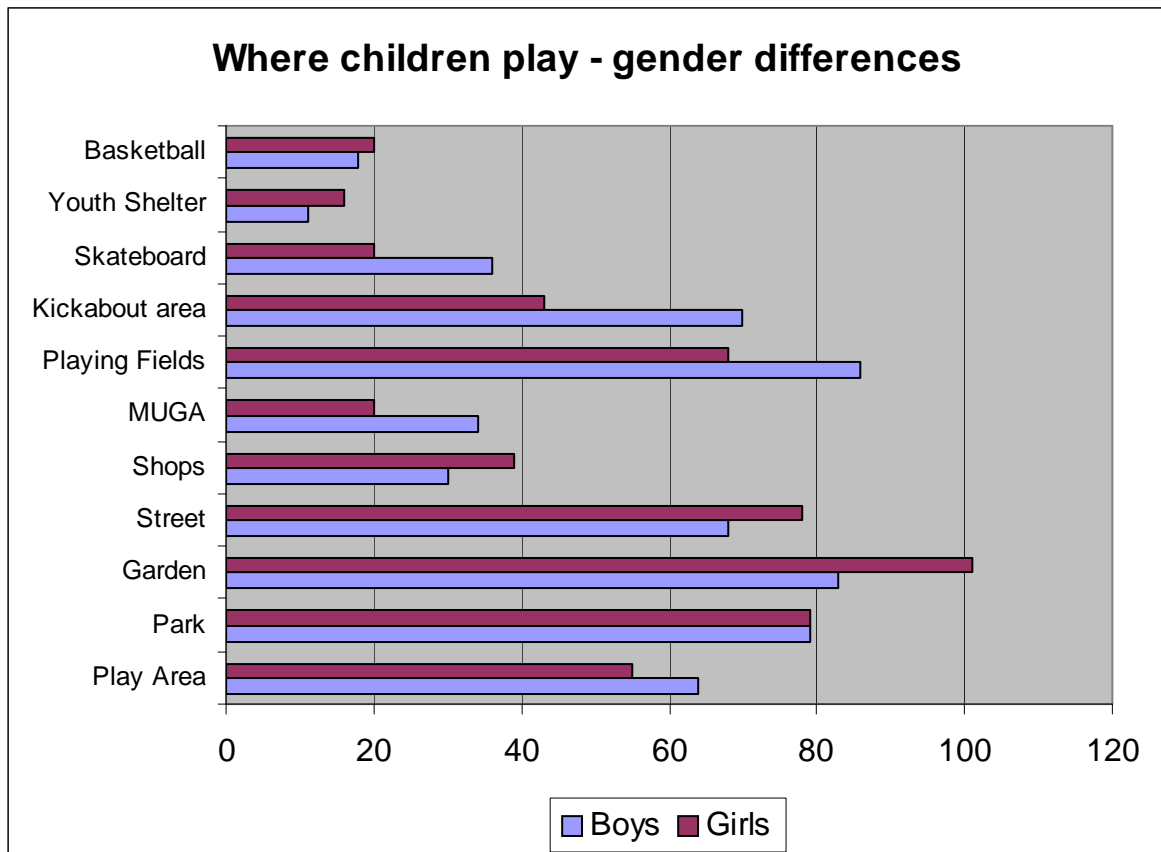
¹ A copy of the survey and the schools whose children completed surveys are named in Appendix 1.



This indicates that for younger children the garden is the most common space used for play, and that local equipped play areas are important facilities.

For older children play areas are less visited but local parks, kickabout areas and playing fields are used, as well as the garden. Hanging out on “the street” and “near local shops” are also important activities for older children.

The gender differences were analysed too and showed a male bias towards kickabout area, playing fields and skate parks and female bias towards hanging out in the street and playing in the garden.

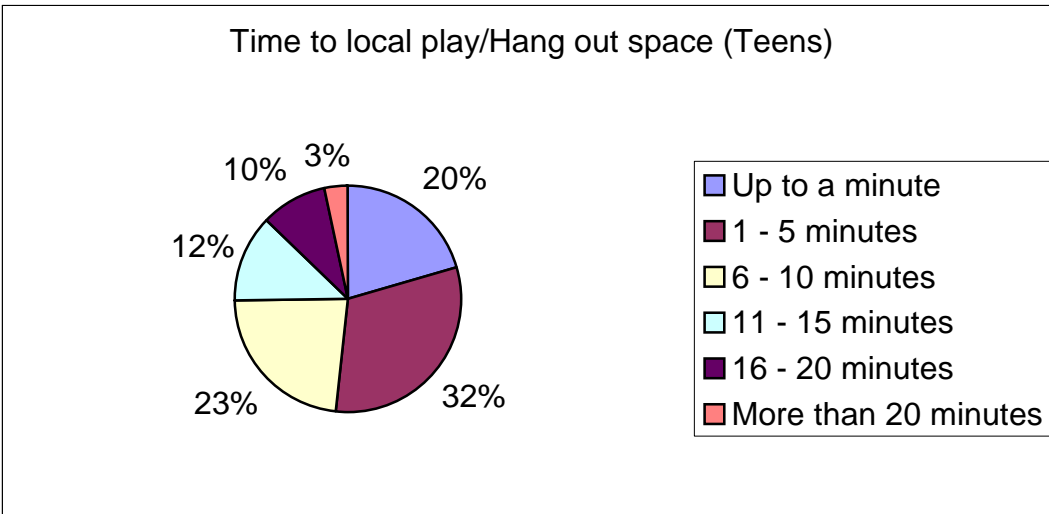
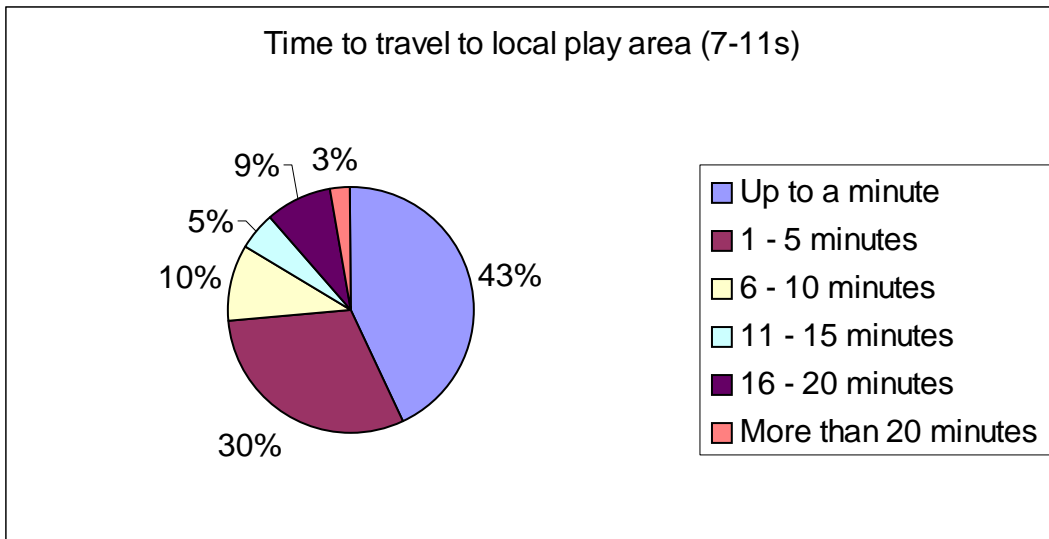


This suggests that as well as public green space the strategy should consider issues about making streets and public areas around shops etc more child friendly.

2.1.2 Access to most used local play/hang out space

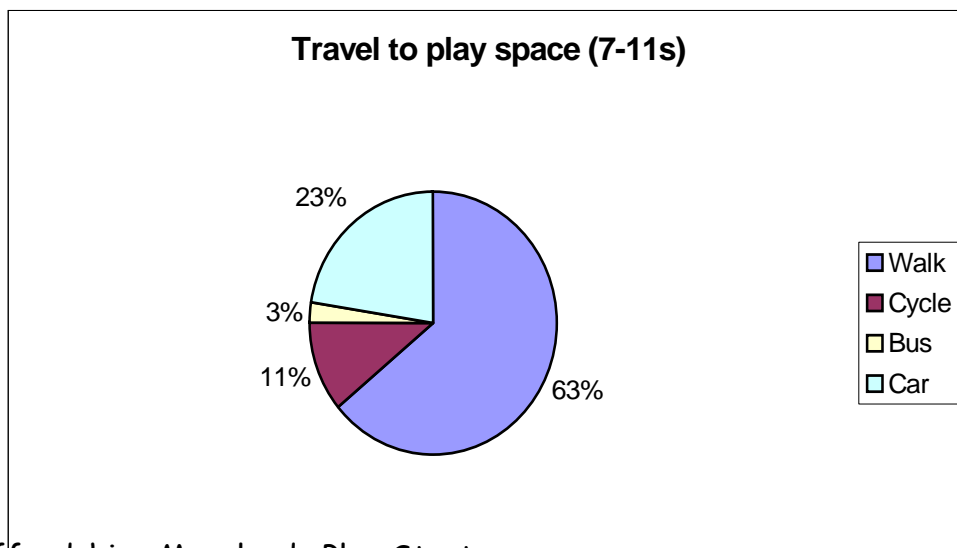
Children and young people need to have reasonable access to areas where they can meet and play/hang out within reach of their homes. We therefore asked a number of questions regarding access to their most used public play/hang out space (this excludes their own garden play space).

How long does it take to reach the most used play/hang out space?

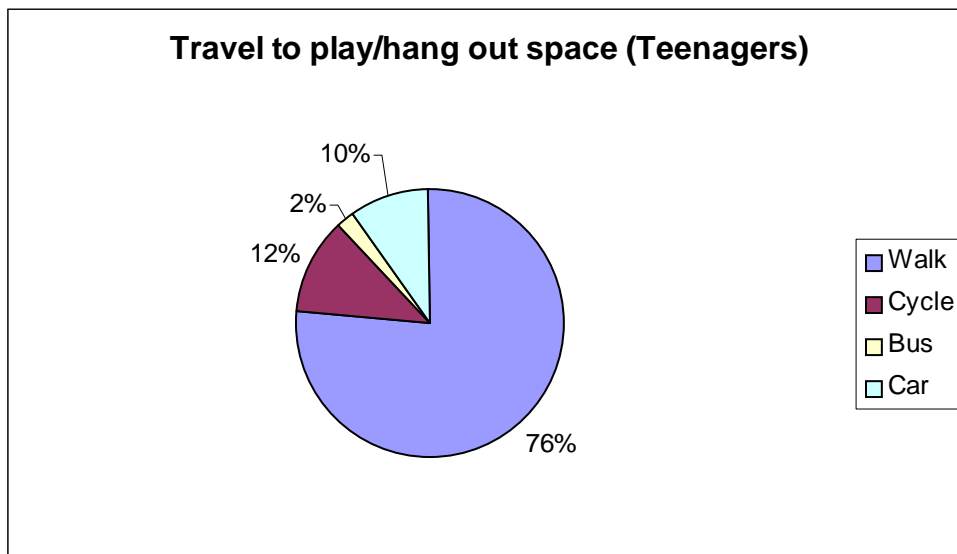


This shows that for younger children over 70% travel less than 5 minutes to visit their most used play space and 75% of teenagers travel less than 10 minutes to where they hang out most regularly.

Mode of Travel



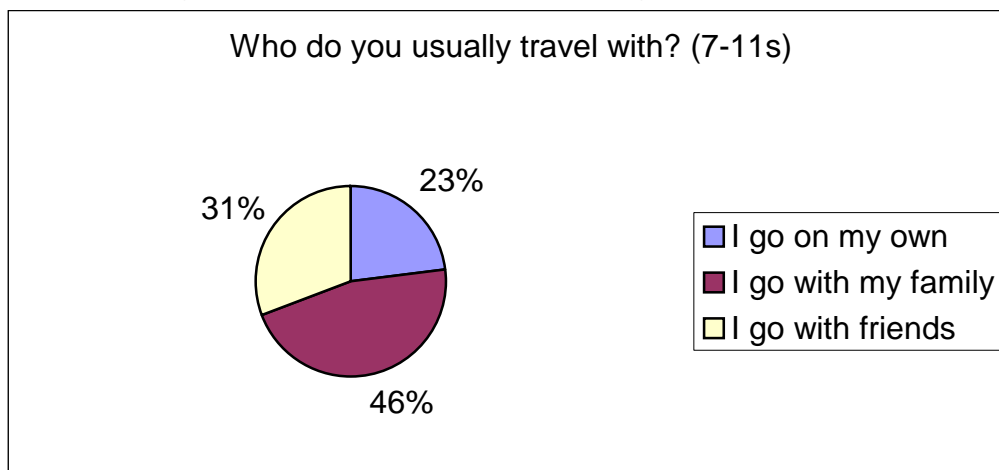
This demonstrates that 75% of younger children walk or cycle to their most used space and 23% of younger children travel accompanied by car to their most used space.

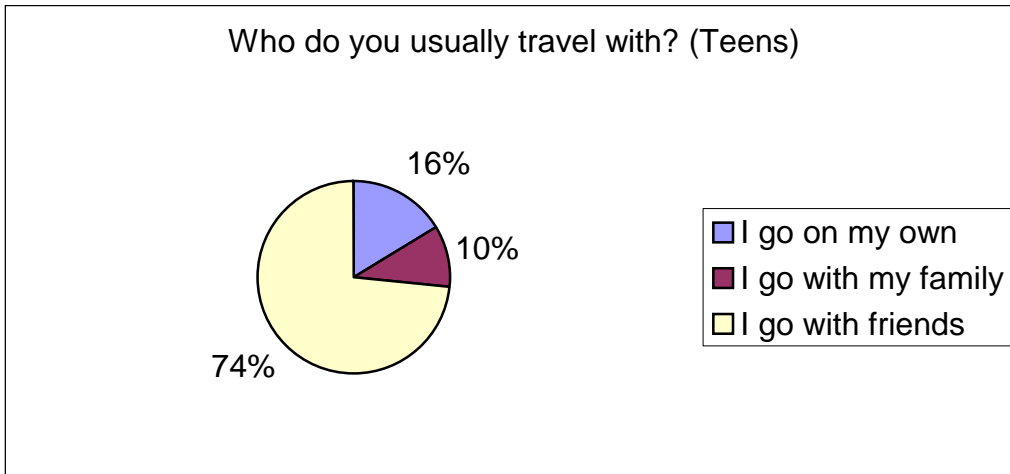


This shows that nearly 90% of older children walk or cycle to their most used play space and only 10% travel by car.

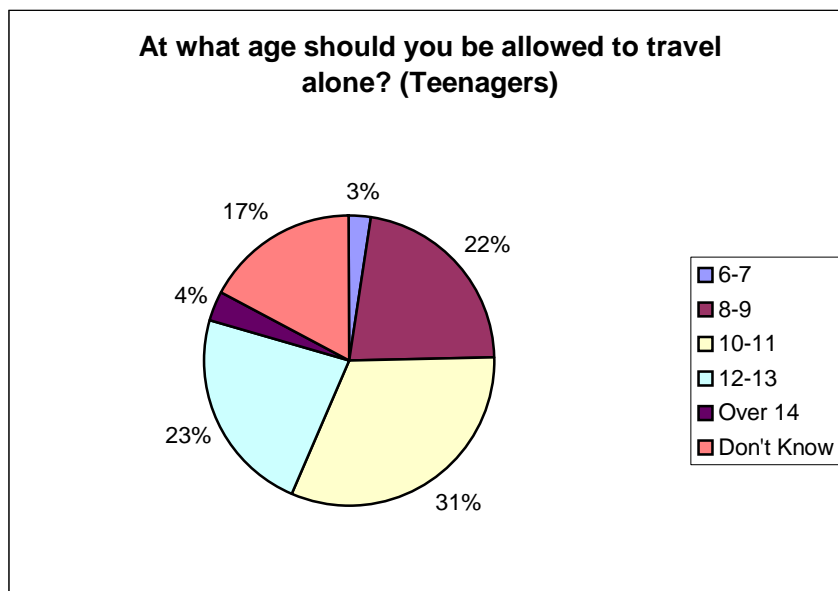
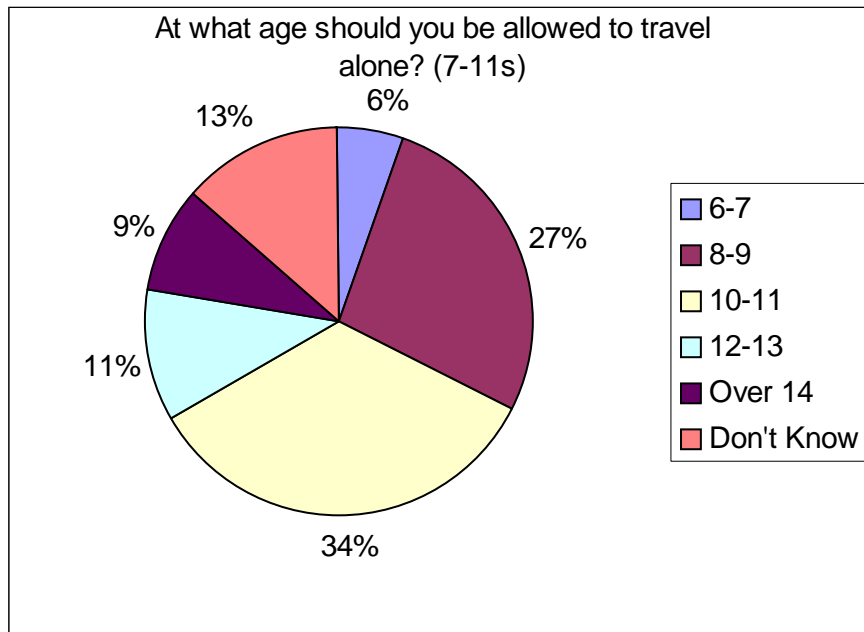
Who do children and young people go with to reach play/hang out space?

This shows a significant variation between younger and older children.





46% of younger children do not tend to visit their most used play space other than with their family compared to only 10% of teenagers. 74% of teenagers visit with their friends compared with 31% of younger children.

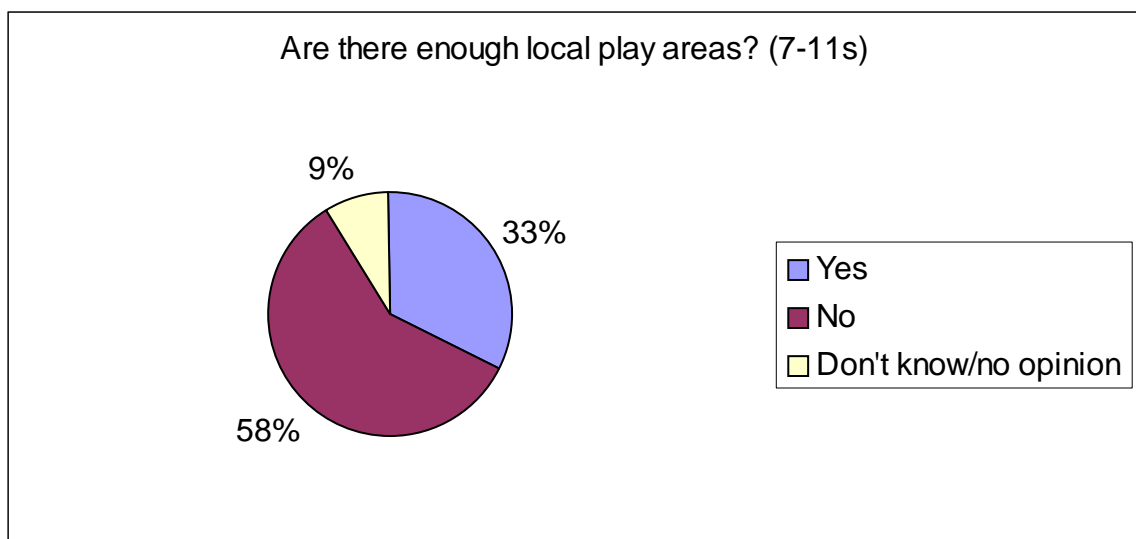


We also asked how old children and young people needed to be to visit a play area or park without an adult. 67% of younger children thought that it was reasonable for under 11s to visit without an adult as did 56% of teenagers.

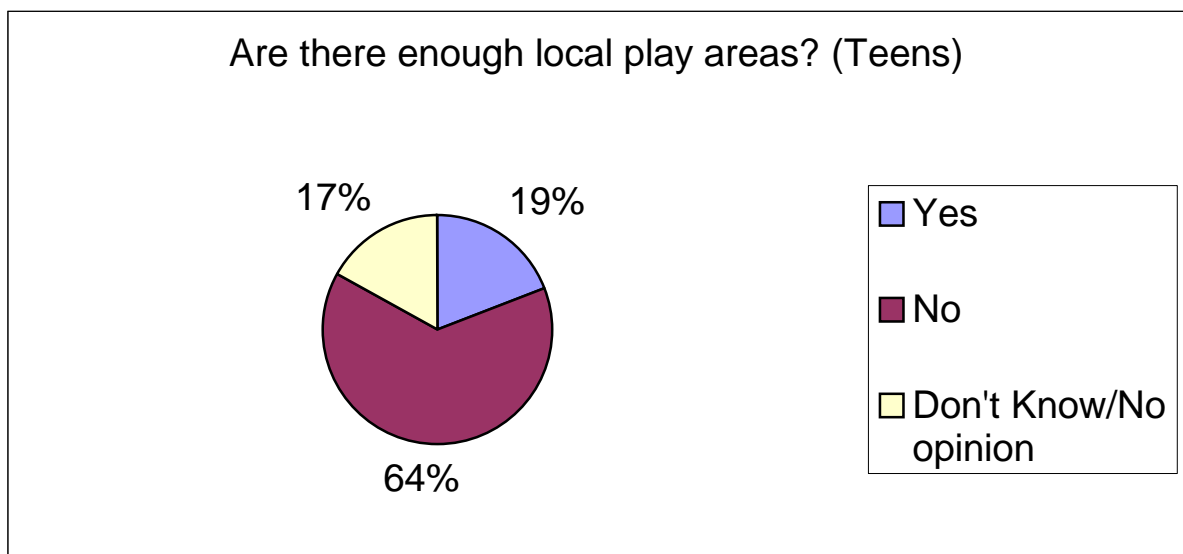
These findings suggest that it is important that younger children need to have access to local play space within 5 minutes walking distance from home and that teenagers need access to spaces to hang out independently with friends within 10 minutes walk from home.

2.1.3 Quantity and quality of play/hang out spaces

Quantity



58% of younger children thought there were **not** enough play spaces in their town or village, 33% thought there were enough, and 9% said they didn't know.

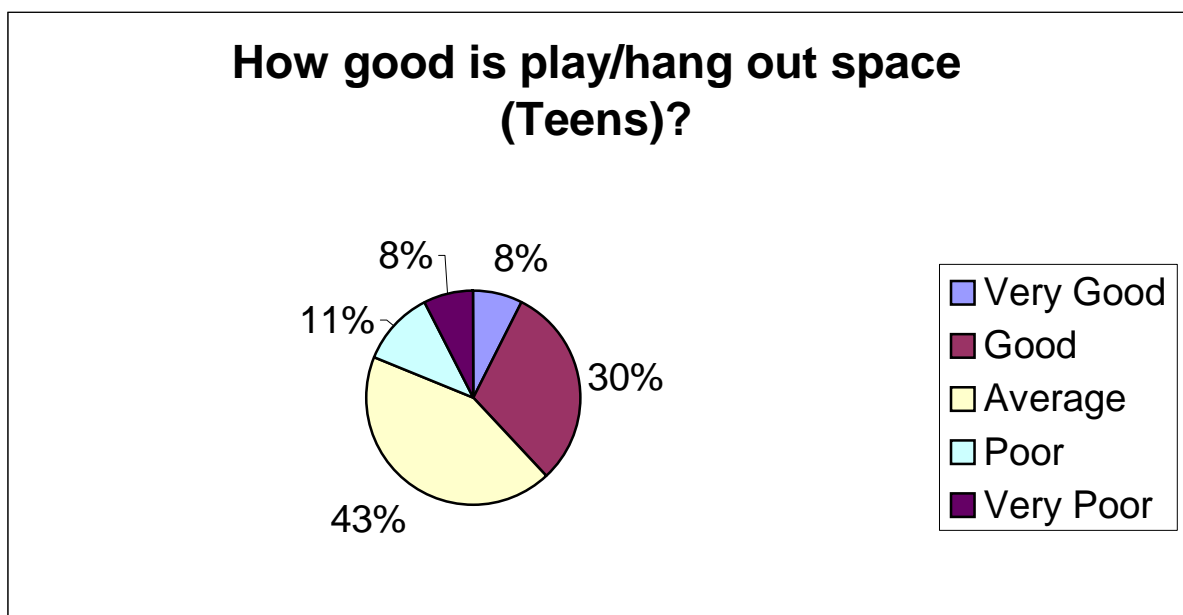
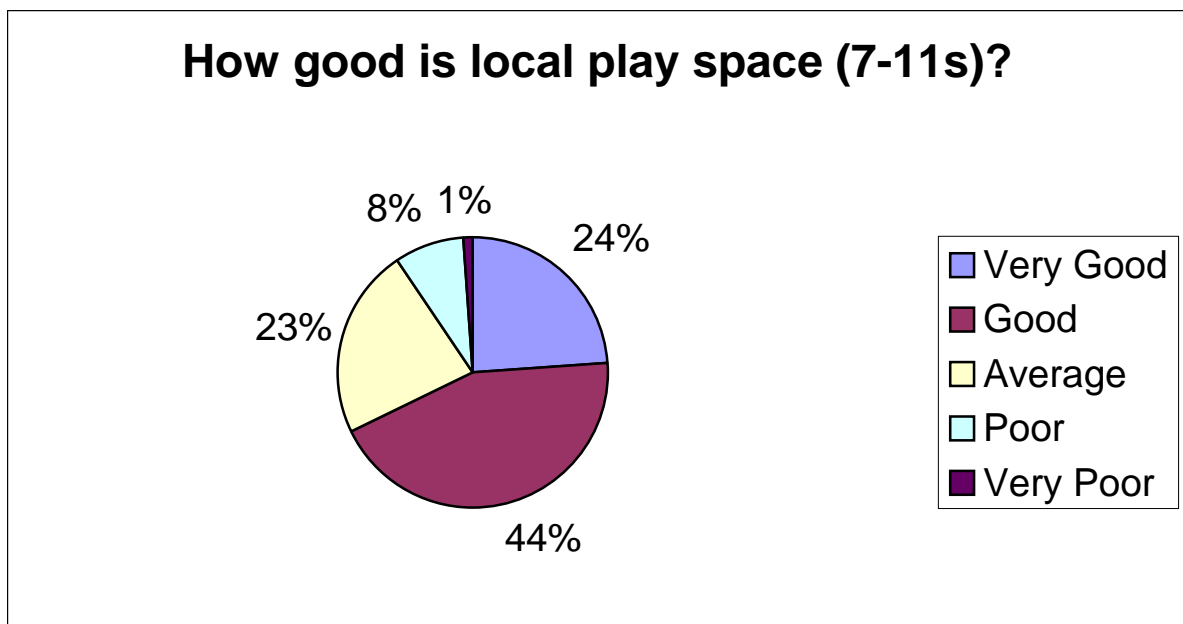


This compares to 64% of teenagers who said there were **not** enough spaces to hang out, 19% who thought that there were and 17% who said they didn't know.

Quality of most used space

We asked how good the children and young people thought the space they used most was.

68% of the younger children thought that their local space to play was good or very good, compared to 38% of teenagers. 9% of younger children said it was poor or very poor whereas 19% of teenagers thought it was.

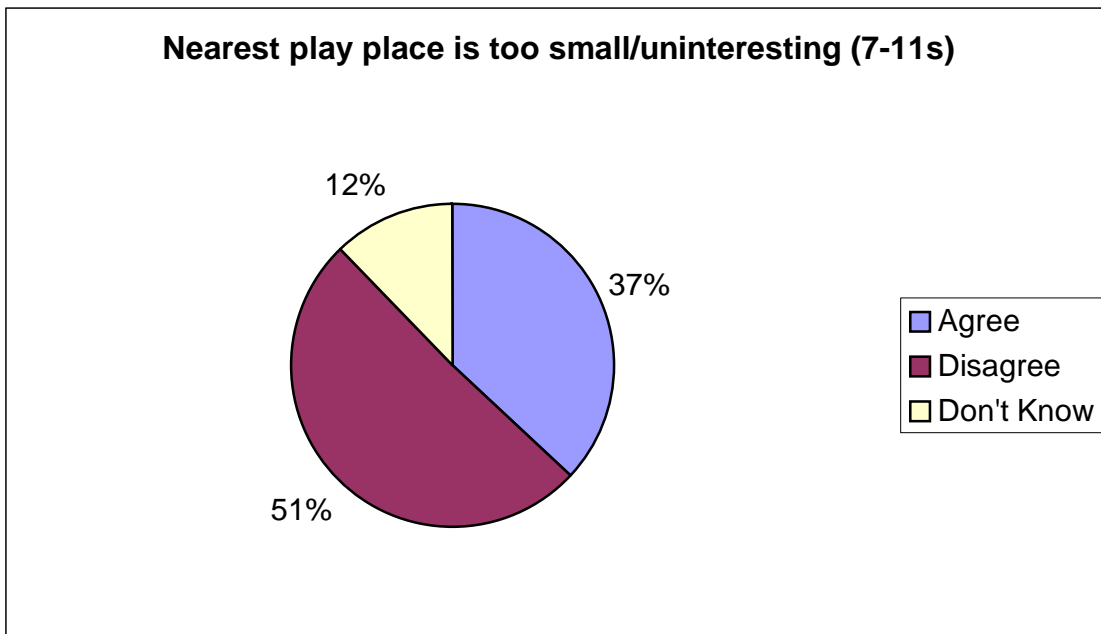


While this might indicate that most children and young people are reasonably happy about their local play/hang out space it should also be noted that they may have fairly low expectations as to what is “adequate” and little experience of better quality provision.

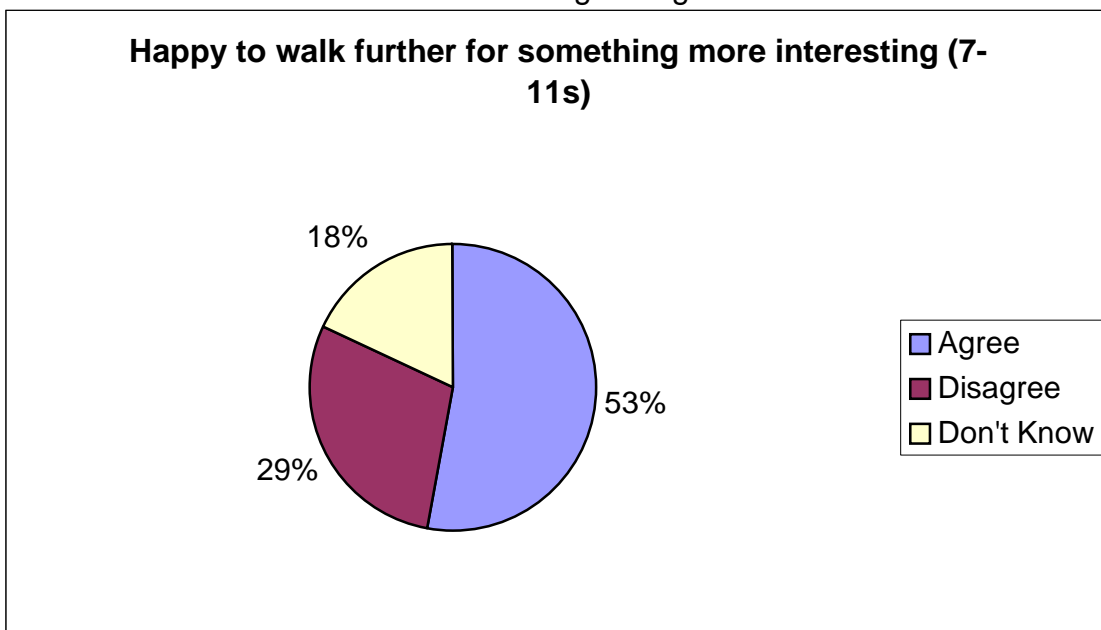
Access to higher quality provision but fewer equipped sites?

We put a number of statements forward to test whether there was any consensus over whether children and young people might prefer a smaller number of higher quality sites. The findings in this respect were not conclusive.

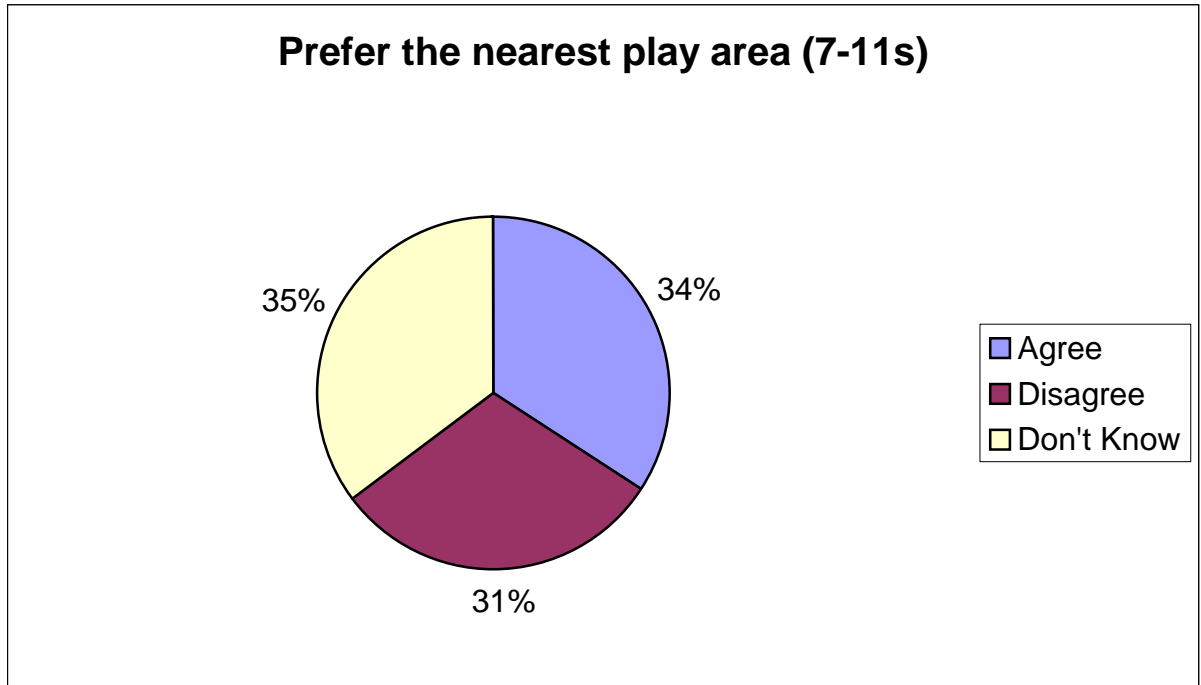
Children



- 51% of the children (7-11s) did **not** agree that their local play space was “too small and not interesting enough”

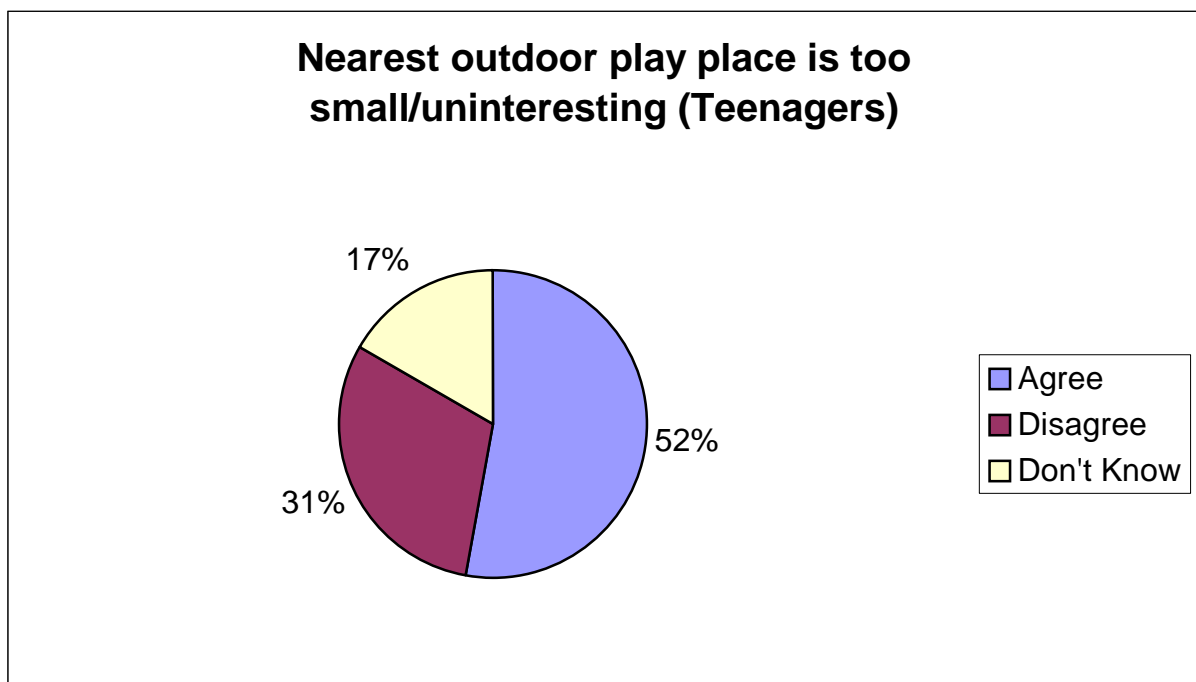


- 53% of the younger children who expressed a view said they “would be happy to walk a bit further to somewhere that would be bigger, have more to do, and be more interesting”.

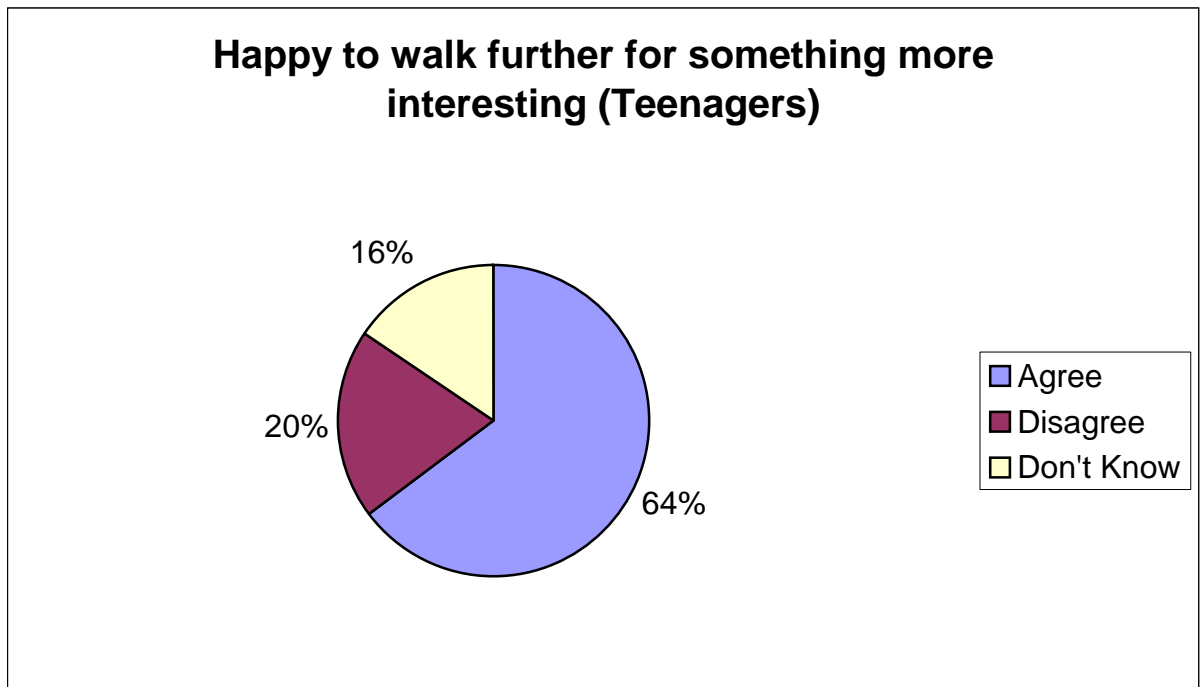


- However, 35% agreed that “it is more important to keep my local play area open than have a better area a bit further away”.

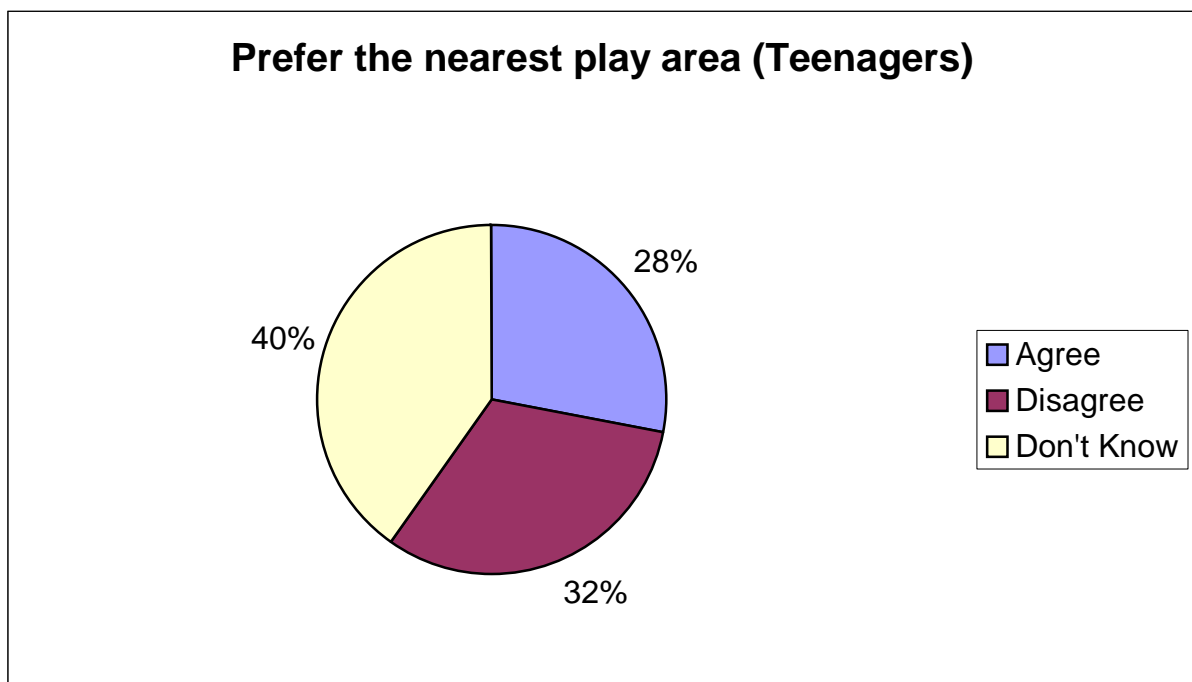
Young People



- 52% of teenagers **did** agree that their local space to hang out was “too small and not interesting enough”



- A slightly larger proportion (64%) than the younger age range said they would be happy to walk a bit further for better facilities.
- Teenagers, who took a view, were fairly evenly split on the importance of keeping their local site open versus having access to a better one a bit further away.

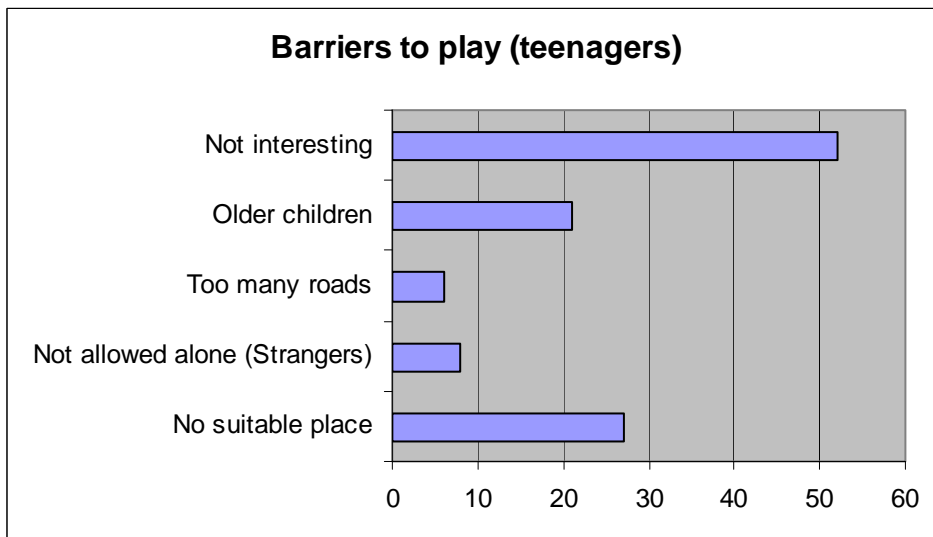
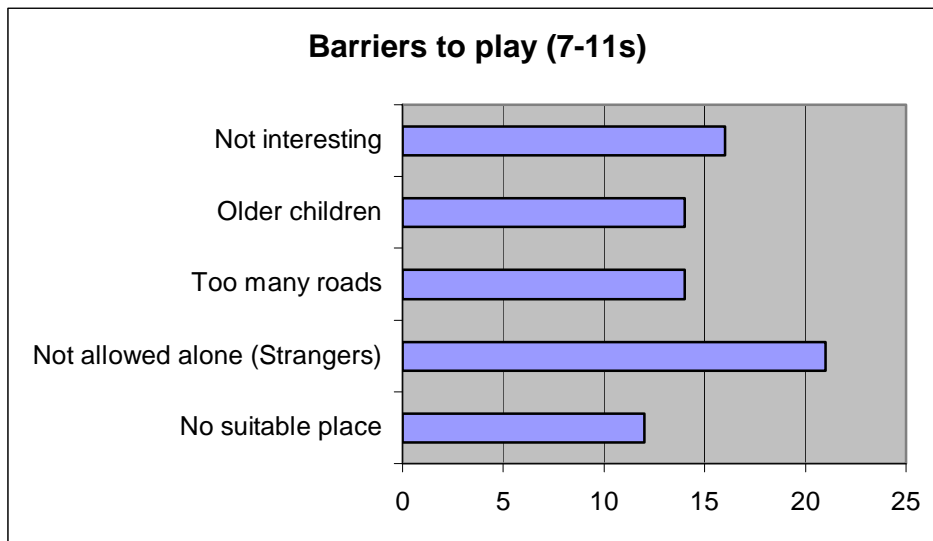


- In general both children and young people think there are **not** enough spaces to play and hang out.
- Younger children are reasonably happy with the quality of existing play spaces.
- There is no clear evidence to suggest that most children and young people think that to provide a smaller number of higher quality sites at the expense of smaller more local spaces is acceptable. However it appears that both children and young people will walk further to access such sites and hence that they will have a larger “catchment”.
- Young people will walk further than 7-11s to access more interesting sites and a clear majority are not satisfied with existing provision.

2.1.4 Barriers to use of play/hang out space

We asked the children and young people what the main reasons were for not using local public spaces for play more.

There are significant differences between barriers preventing more use from the point of view of the younger children and teenagers.

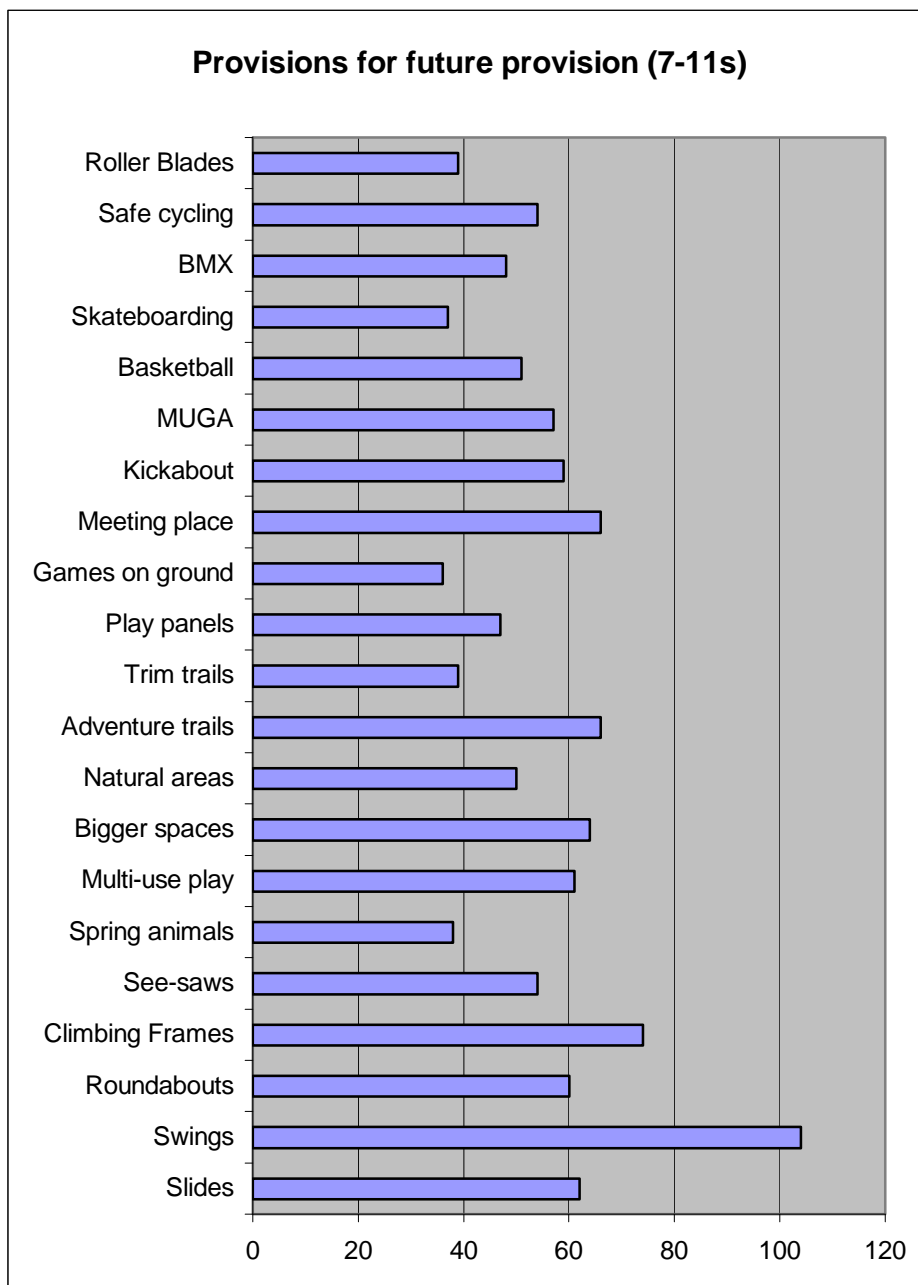


Children not being allowed to use spaces due to parent’s fear of “stranger danger” is the main reason given. “Too many roads”, “not being interesting enough” and the dominance by older children and fears of bullying are also significant barriers. For teenagers the primary reason is simply that they are not interesting enough. Following this, reasons given are that they are not suitable for their needs.

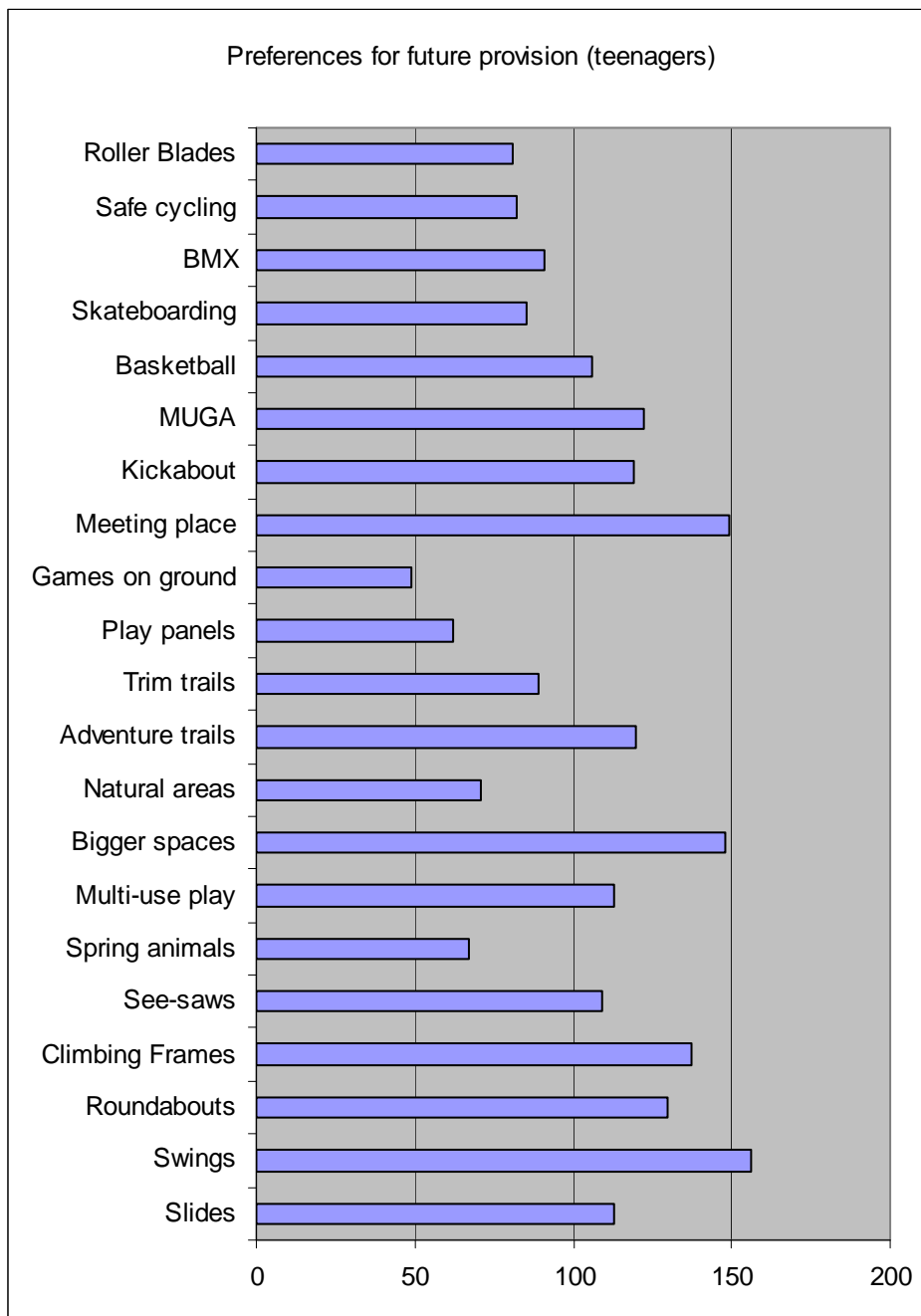
Because many younger children are not allowed to use play space due to fears of stranger danger and bullying, security issues will be important in terms of future planning. Teenagers need more interesting provision of their own which if provided may also mean they do not monopolise facilities aimed at younger children.

2.1.5 Preferences for future provision (facilities)

We asked what sort of facilities or play equipment children and young people would like to have in future spaces for play and asked what their priorities were.



This indicates that for younger children “traditional” play area equipment such as swings, roundabouts, climbing frames, and multi-play units are very popular as are adventure trails (eg balance beams, chain walks etc).



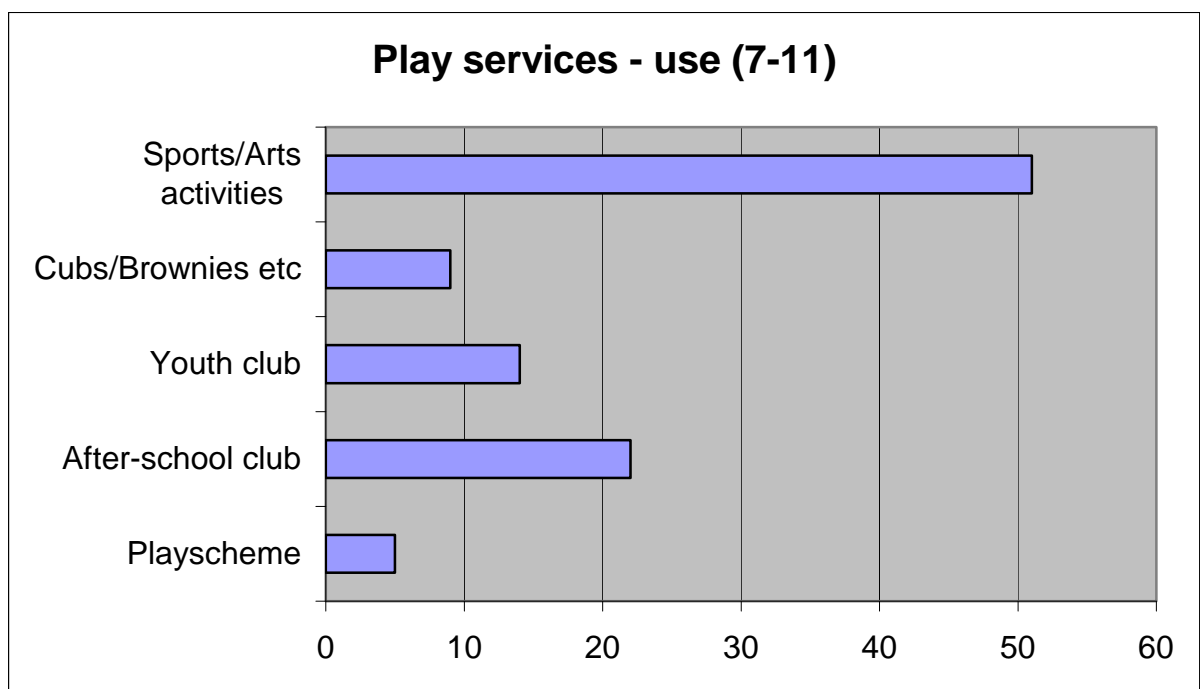
For teenagers, other than swings (which remain extremely popular) the main priority is for the provision of bigger, safe and secure areas to meet. Other priorities are for climbing frames (in relation to “traditional” equipment) and then informal sports provision of hard surface Multi-use Games Areas, outdoor basketball and grass surface kickabout areas

Wheeled sports feature for both age groups with BMX / safe cycling being the most popular for younger children and BMX / skateboarding for teenagers.

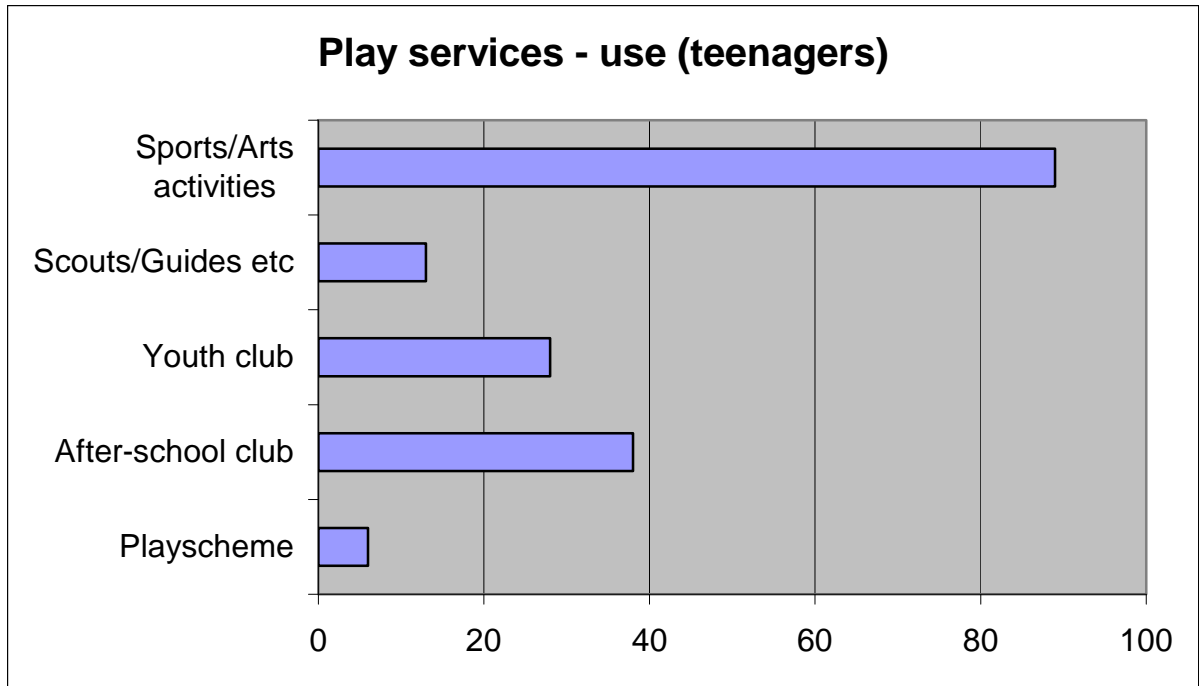
The main priority for younger children appears to be provision of appropriately equipped high quality “traditional” play areas. For teenagers meeting places and informal casual access sports facilities are high priorities along with swings. For both age groups various forms of “wheeled sports” facilities feature in many children’s priority lists.

2.1.6 Play Services – Youth clubs, playschemes, out-of-school clubs, scouts etc.

Many children and young people (over 50%) participate in some form of supervised play opportunity provided by public and voluntary sector organisations.



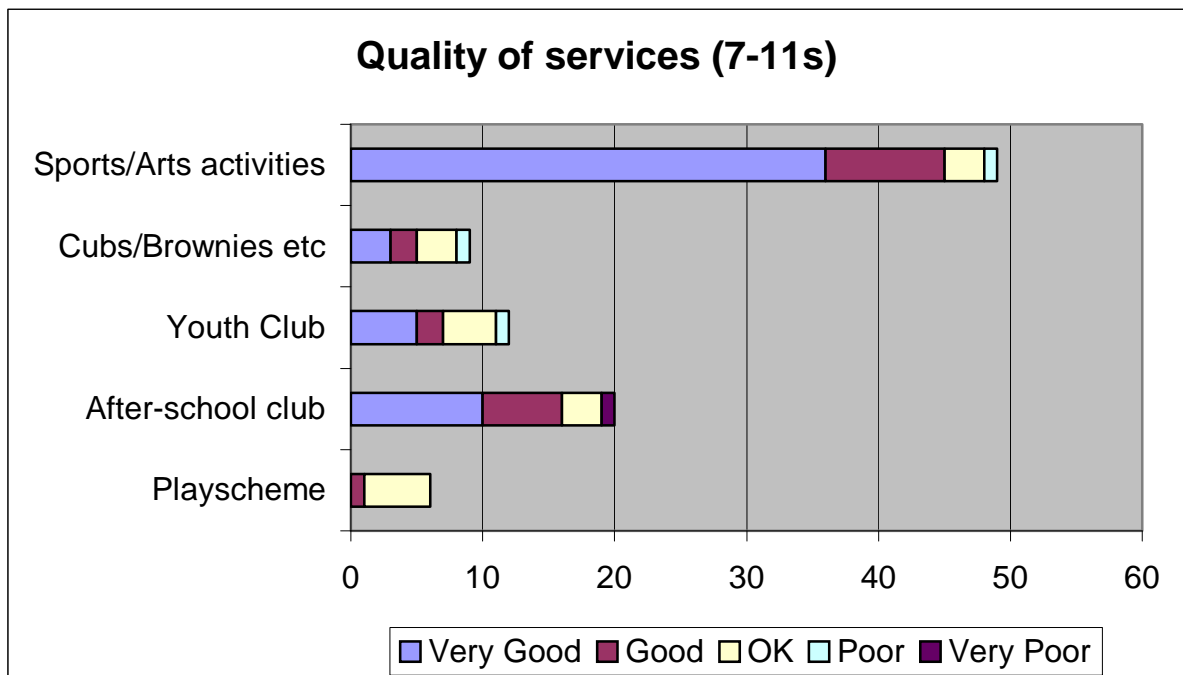
- The most used provision for both age groups are supervised “stand alone” sports and arts activities (57% of the younger children and 44% of teenagers).
- 6% of younger children use playschemes, and 14% of teenagers use youth clubs. Of the two areas that are likely to be of interest to both age ranges, 25% of children attend an after school club and 19% of teenagers. 10% of younger children go to cubs/brownies and 6% attend scouts/guides.



- While a similar and low proportion of children attend playschemes as teenagers attend youth clubs in all other aspects teenagers appear much less likely to attend supervised/organised sessions².

Quality of Services

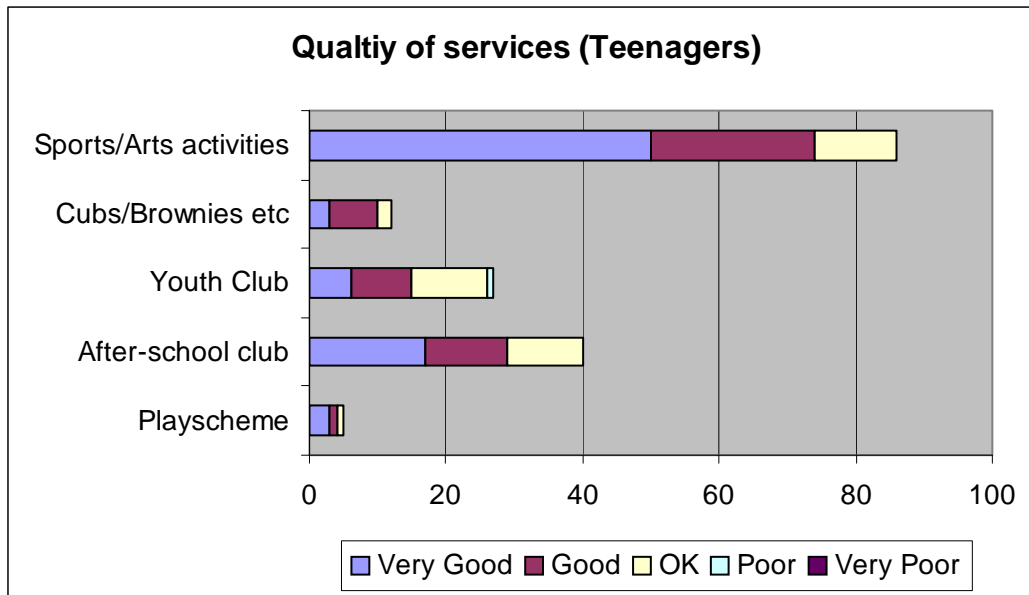
We asked those children and young people who did attend these various services how good they thought they were.



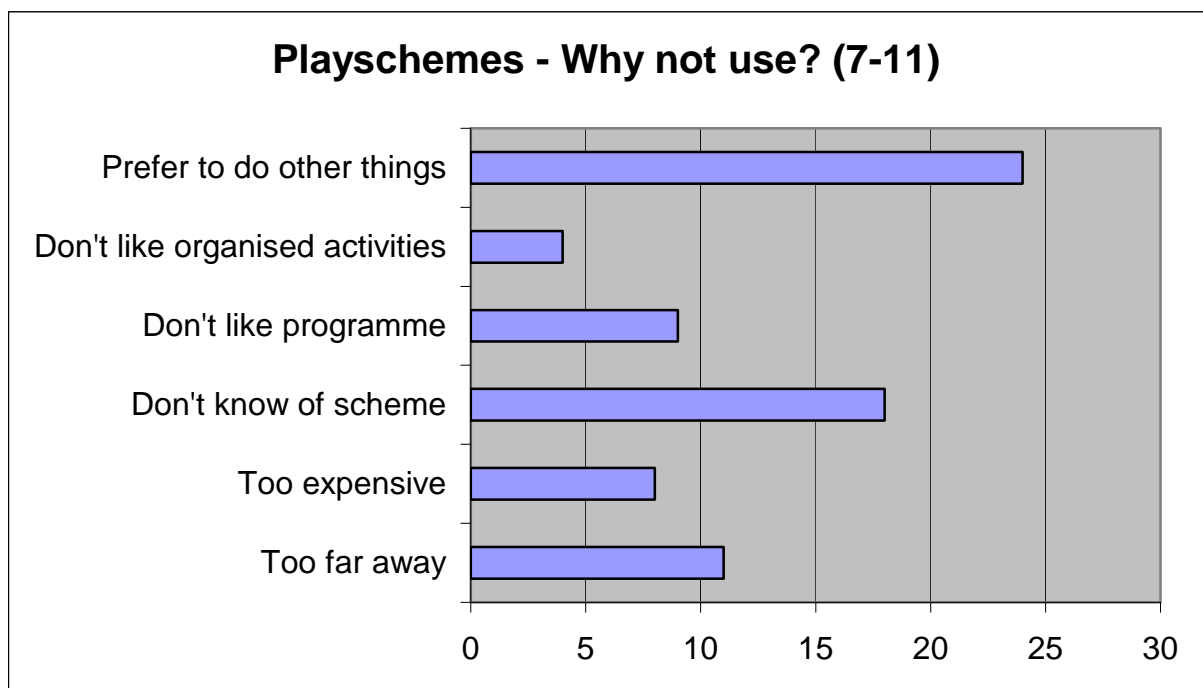
² In all the above it must be remembered that non-attendance is not necessarily a measure of a lack of popularity as it may simply reflect a lack of availability.

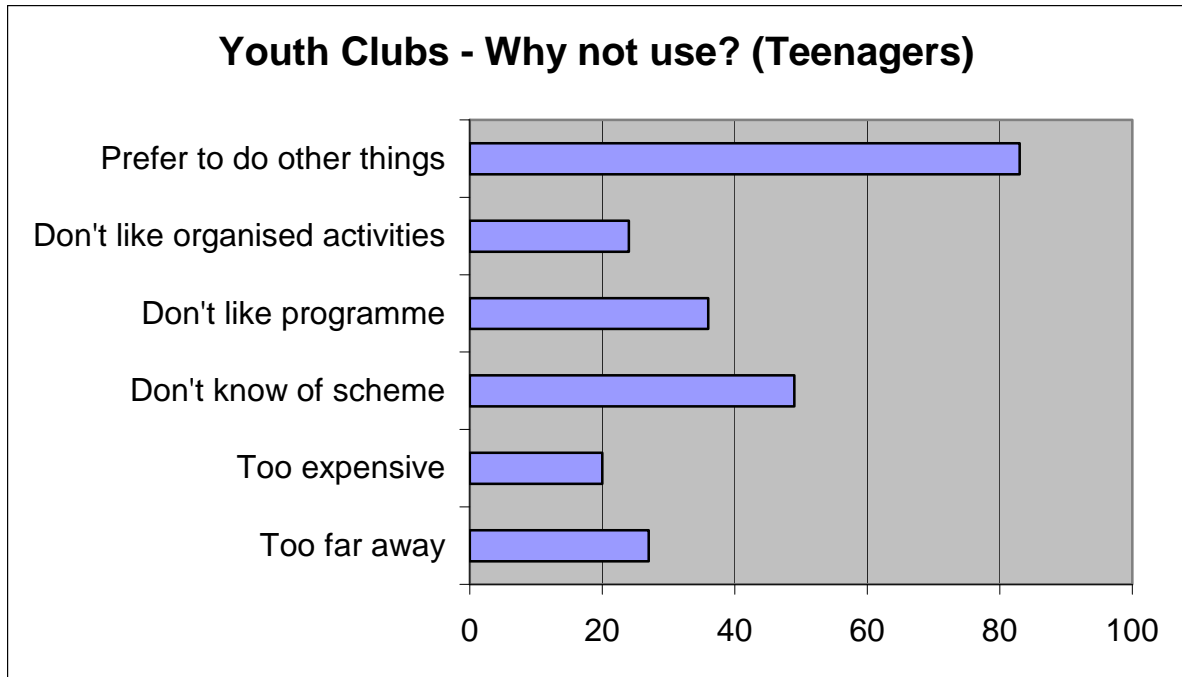
In general this shows that those who do attend the various activities and schemes are fairly happy with the quality of provision with at least 50% regarding all of them as either very good or good (other than playschemes where most say they are “OK”).

Over 85% from both age groups rate their sports/arts schemes as very good or good, and similarly over 80% of younger children and 73% of teenagers rate after school club provision as good or very good.



Finally we asked the children and young people for reasons why they didn't attend a local playscheme or youth club.





This shows that the main reason given is simply that the children and young people “prefer to do other things” in their free time (34% of children give this reason and 41% of teenagers).

For the younger children other significant factors were not being aware if there was a local playscheme (23%) and too far away (14%).

For teenagers, not knowing of Youth Club (24%) and not liking the programme was fairly significant (18%). Cost was an issue for 10% of potential attendees from both age groups.

- In general teenagers attend less supervised and organised sessions than younger children and the most used provision for both age ranges is for stand alone sports and arts activities.
- Children and young people who attend schemes and activities are generally quite happy about the quality of provision.
- The main reason given for not using schemes and activities is that the children and young people “prefer to do other things” in their free time
- Poor access in terms of distance and cost were factors for a significant minority in relation to playschemes and Youth Clubs.

Children and Young People were given the opportunity to make a final comment on the questionnaires and a selection are below:

- Have a riding school.
- I would like to have a junior golf course near.
- Need more places for people who love music and only live for music.
- I hate Leek, it's boring.

- Me and my friends play in Ballington woods but more houses will be built and the woods will be knocked down. They shouldn't be allowed to do this.
- I would like to see a few more astroturf at Brough park. When the clubs play there isn't anywhere we can play.
- I would like to say that the skateboarding park could be bigger with more things to do. It needs a half pint and rails and other things.
- I want some skateboarding facilities in Cheddleton so I can go skating with my friends.
- There should be a new skate park in Leek and Ched.
- The skatepark at Brough Park is too small so you need it bigger with different types of ramps.
- Indoor swimming pool (heated) would be very interesting and would be used a lot.
- I think in Endon there is not very good parks for people my age! Also there are no playschemes.
- The quality should be improved and be cleaned.
- Too dangerous.
- Local ice-cream van.
- We can't go to Hillswood as it's full of bad people and drugs.
- Places to play are fun and enjoyable.
- I want a big park in Packmoor.
- Have multi-areas so areas don't get crowded.
- We need a motorbike track in Biddulph.
- We would like a park for over 23 year olds only!
- We want a good park for over 12 year olds near Sandhole or on Moorland field.
- We want a park near the Sandhole for over 14 year olds!
- There are bullies at these places and there is glass and rubbish on playground floors.
- I think that the play parks commissioner should visit the park at Westport lake and the park at Centre Forest Park, Hanley. I personally was amazed by this park and I wish some one would build one in Biddulph because the parks in Biddulph are a disgrace.
- However many nice facilities are provided, there is always the stupid minority who have to spoil things for other people. It may be more cost-effective not to provide extra facilities so that they do not have to be repaired and replaced.
- Would like somewhere safe to play that is supervised and is suitable for me and my brother who has epilepsy. Most parks seem to have older children and teenagers who are too rough and you can't get a go on anything.
- It would be nice for somewhere to sit down and chat and then be able to be safe and not worried. Some lights would be handy when it gets darker in the winter.
- In the area that I live in there should be facilities for older children.
- I would like a bmx/stunt cycling and a proper football pitch/tennis courts and cricket nets especially.

- To leave the park open longer and do something about the river over flowing and getting the grass soaked. Have events in the holidays where we have rides and carnivals there.
- More places to go. Places where you can learn cool things like clowning around and cool things like that.
- I would like more things for us to do around the area so young and older children can play safe without being hurt or afraid of what is going to happen.
- Make a age limit on parks as it can get dangerous on glass bottles for young ages that go with parents
- I would like lots more teams for Werrington such as hockey, footy, netball and lots of other activities.
- I would like a basket ball and netball court please.
- Older kids smoke and drink around our park, they leave glass and mess everywhere. We need a place for them to go so they don't need to be around us.
- There should be safe places for us to hang around, and in different areas.
- I would like to have a park close to me that is clean and looked after. I would also like a park that is close to me.
- I think that they should allow children to say what they want and you listen then there would not be as much graffiti and things.
- They should turn the Werrington primary school into a new park because it is not being used for anything. There is only one park and bluebell wood which can be dangerous.
- A place off the road because when it's near a road it becomes dangerous. We need a safer environment with less roads and less cars and big lorries.
- A golf place to play on free of cost.
- I would like a bigger basketball court and football and tennis court on my park and better swings.
- I think that with all the grass areas (abandoned) and old schools could be made into a park, as there is already play schemes. I think there needs to be a place for older people but still a park.
- Bigger cricket pitch. Bigger area to play in. Stop us been banned from places.
- Skateboarding and bmx classes. More things to do in holidays. PS2 clubs where you go with friends and play games on consoles like PS2, Xbox etc.
- Teenagers shouldn't be allowed in some places because we feel threatened in their presence by the foul talk and smoking.
- In Cheadle, there is hardly any facilities for my age group, it's all for old people or kids.
- In Tean we would like a skate park like Cheadle as Cheadle is too far away. This would stop us hanging around outside shops and on roadsides. Please do something about this!
- Will it actually happen?
- A bigger place more than 3 acres.
- Please get more activities for Tean!

- Bigger Stables.
- Not enough places safe enough for young children. Like somewhere to go Ten Pin Bowling. McDonalds is what we would like. Less healthy stuff since the only thing I don't like is milk. Learning clups (clubs?) could be good.
- Bowling. Ice skating.
- A tenpin bowling in Leek. A cinema in Leek, and maybe some others like it.
- I would like a youth club closer to me.
- Bowling. Trading card league.
- Go-Karting.
- Tenpin bowling, MacDonalDs. Musical place to go to find talent.
- Disco every weekend, karaoke, dance studio.
- Discos every Friday. Talent competitions.
- A chocolate river shop.
- MacDonalDs.
- Ten Pin bowling. MacDonalDs.
- Ten pin bowling, cinema, MacDonalDs.
- A bowling alley in Leek.
- Cinema.
- It would help if we had more facilities in Leek for children to go to but old enough for over 10's, more cinemas and bowling with more places to go out and eat and also more clothes shops (eg bigger New Looks etc.)
- I would like a rugby cage because I play rugby on Saturdays.
- More parks.
- We should have more interesting playground for children around 8-13 in Cheadle because the ones we've got are for little kids, and it's boring.
- That you shouldn't put play areas across main roads.
- I go dancing everyday so I don't really have time to play out. When I do, the places I like to go are too far and I'm not allowed to walk very far.
- I think there should be more after school activities.
- Could we have a bigger skate park.
- More playschemes and every one should get a turn on everything.
- No local park or play area that I know of.
- Replace the football nets on the goals.
- More places to meet friends close by.
- "Only the Rec close by which is just a tiny field where older teenagers "hang out!"
- More places to hang around with friends and chat.
- More sports facilities by Meir Park
- **Will it actually happen?**

2.1.7 Shadow Play Partnership

An integral part of the process of developing the District Play Strategy is the creation of a “Shadow” Play Partnership. This body meets 3 times and carries out the same function as the overseeing Partnership. In Staffordshire Moorlands this has been taken on by YOMAC – Youth of the Moorlands Action Council. Note the group was biased towards residents of Blythe bridge and Forsbrook.

The first meeting followed a similar format to the 1st full play partnership and was therefore was mostly focussed on consulting the group on goods, bads and areas for improvement in play.

How do Shadow Play Partnership members spend their free time and how do they use play facilities?

- much of their socialising takes place at each other’s houses rather than at official play sites, reasons given being safety and staying out of the bad weather in the winter
- green open spaces / fields are used to ‘hang out’ in summer
- where they play sports, it is in organised teams rather than on an ad hoc basis

Good aspects of current provision

- youth clubs
- parks such as Cheadle Recreation Ground
- various local youth projects such as Streets Ahead, Fix and Ride, Game On, and the Monday sports project at Leek High School

Bad aspects of current provision

- access at Cheadle Recreation Ground – gates closed and locked early and young people have to climb over the wall for evening access, even in summer
- vandalism of existing facilities
- safety – a particular issue at Cheadle Rec., but a general problem on the streets of Cheadle and in Blythe Bridge / Forsbrook
- formal facilities, and their surrounding areas, were often misused by some young people and intimidating to others wanting to use them legitimately
- youth clubs (and skateparks and other facilities) can be ‘colonised’ by one particular group, putting others off from using the facility. Skaters from Blythe Bridge prefer their local streets and car parks to the relatively nearby Meir skatepark which is used by ‘territorial’ locals.
- policing issues – Section 30 legislation is applied in Cheadle and affects all young people, not just troublemakers. Application of Section 30 in Meir (outside SMDC area) had the effect of shifting trouble to neighbouring Blythe Bridge

Possible improvements

- Skatepark for Blythe Bridge
- Youth shelters (though safety issues would need to be addressed)
- More youth consultation with ALL of the following: schools, colleges and youth centres
- Consideration of and consultation with those who abuse existing facilities.

It seems there is a widespread perception of breakdown in inter-group relationships: between groups of young people of different ages or from different areas, residents, police, and in some schools between teachers and pupils. There are obvious implications for play and the provision and maintenance of play facilities where these relationship

Spending Exercise

A quick spending exercise was used to test priorities for improvements to various kinds of provision. Each young person (5) was given a notional sum of £20,000 to allocate between 10 different spending options (see attachment) and their spending 'decisions' were then aggregated to give a spending breakdown as follows for the total notional budget:

Spending Option	Budgeted Spending	
	£'s	%
Over 12s Play Areas (equipped)	7,500	7.5
Youth Shelters	22,000	22
Youth Clubs	0	0
Youth Café	25,000	25
Mobile Youth Truck	2,000	2
MUGAs (multi-use games areas)	2,000	2
Grass kickabout areas	0	0
Skateboarding, BMX, roller-blading, stunt cycling etc	7,500	7.5
Bigger "natural" open space areas	34,00	34
Better paths and cycle-paths to facilities	0	0

2.1.8 Children and Young People with disabilities

In preparing an inclusive play strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands it is important to understand issues that are important for children and young people with disabilities. We have therefore visited and consulted with a well established and respected voluntary organisation, "Cheadle Buddies". The issues raised, by around 20 young people and a supervisor, through this consultation are outlined below.

What members of Cheadle Buddies like doing when they play

- Using walkie-talkies and radios
- Hanging around with mates
- Playing football on the Streets/playing fields
- Pony riding
- Birdwatching
- Dancing
- Wheelchair basketball

Good things about play

- Can play on the streets as there are not too many cars
- Can play on play fields – even though they are really supposed to
- Cheadle Buddies

Things that could be better

- Blythe Bridge has no facilities
- Playing field access needs to be official
- Access to fishing
- Quality of park and especially grass areas
- No charge to use astrotruf
- Less litter / broken glass
- Skatepark needs modernising
- Safer traffic
- More parks
- Less domination by older kids
- More activities in evenings – like pubs without alcohol
- More youth clubs

Specific issues for young people with disabilities

- More adult supervision needed to prevent bullying e.g. parkkeepers / Police Community Support Officers.
- More places that are safe for young people and considered safe by parents – especially PMs
- Wheelchair access to facilities

- Most of issues for young people with disabilities are same for those without.
- The fact that having a disability, of any sort, makes them “different” means that they are particularly vulnerable to bullying and intimidation.
- Parents tend to be more protective because of the potential problems when accessing mainstream activities and open access facilities.
- Independence and meeting with peers is as important as it is to other young people, but background supervision is needed.
- Dividing age groups make a big difference.

2.1.9 Children and Young People from black and minority ethnic communities

We consulted SDC Diversity Officer about issues experienced by BME families in Staffordshire Moorlands in accessing play facilities. She explained that:

- the council is aware of some – but not many - BME families in the district and is currently trying to map them as they are scattered through the district and not easy to reach;
- this piece of work is not yet completed and so the council do not currently have information on the issues that families may experience.

Thelma Twigg of the Play Council explained that there is work in the district with the traveller community.

- The relationship has been carefully built up over a period of time;
- It is developed in a way which is careful to respect the traveller's culture;
- It is outreach with activities organised at travellers sites rather than expecting them to come to locations off site.
- Run in this way the play schemes are well attended and popular.

Experience elsewhere suggests that some of the issues likely to be relevant to children and young people from BME backgrounds will include:

- Isolation - children and young people can feel quite isolated when they are in a minority.
- Children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can also feel very “visible” due to this isolation.
- They may experience some incidence of racial abuse or harassment incidents which may put them off using play facilities. This is likely to be under-reported.
- It may be helpful for those working with the children and young people from BME backgrounds to have training on the implications of the cultural and ethnic differences.
- There may be a need to use languages other than English, particularly for publicity targeted at parents and carers.

2.1.10 Young People taking part in Local Democracy Week

As part of the Local Democracy Week events in the District the District Council organised for school groups to do, amongst other things, “Speed-dating” with local Councillors and exercises on addressing climate change.

At 3 of these events the school groups were invited to take part in an exercise called “The Politics of Play”. The exercise made the pupils imagine they were local politicians who were consulting on how to spend money they had had allocated to them to spend on improving play for 0-19 year olds in the area.

The “twist” being that they did not have enough money to meet the aspirations of all the people they had consulted.

The Groups involved were Moorside High School Werrington, Cheadle High School and Painsley RC High School.

On each occasion they were asked in groups to list (and present) the advantages of 4 different play facilities, and then vote, as individuals, between 4 different options that came in on a budget of £50,000.

Toddler Play Area - £30,000 nominal price

Pro:

- It provides a **safe** place for children to play in
- It doesn't use all the budget
- The example shown provides a good **variety** of activities
- It provides a **safe** place for children to play in
- Children will be **active** which will discourage obesity
- It is **fun** for small children
- Children can **meet** and **make friends** there
- It is **long-lasting**, so value for money



Con:

- No provision for **older children**
- May attract older children to **vandalise** it
- The example shown needs to be more **secure**
- The example shown would be **expensive**

Extras:

- Make it more **secure**, with higher fences and locked gates
- Provide **seating** for parents/carers

MUGA (multi-use games area) - £20,000 nominal price

Pro:

- It provides for **all age-groups** at different times of day – smaller children could use it while the bigger ones were in school
- It is a **social** asset – people might form groups which could make up **sports teams**
- **Inexpensive**, so leaves plenty over for other things



Con:

- nil

Extras:

- Rubbish bins
- Vending machines
- Staff to caretake
- Security – e.g. fencing, gates.

Teen Shelter - £10,000 nominal price

Pro:

- The structure is **hard to vandalise**
- It would attract teenagers away from **vandalising** other places
- **Inexpensive**
- It could be used by **other age-groups**
- Useful for large **age-group** – and younger ones could still use it for shelter in bad weather
- Encourages teenagers to stay **off the streets**
- A site for **information** about youth community groups and projects



Con:

- May provide focus for **drug-dealing**
- May lead to **fights**
- Could encourage **smoking**
- Could draw teens nearer to **younger children**
- Might be **unattractive** to teens
- May provide focus for **antisocial** activity
- Could encourage **smoking**
- Once damaged, would be an **eyesore**
- The example shown is not **interesting**
- The example shown is **small**, providing space for only a few people

Skate Park - £40,000 nominal price

Pro:

- Provides young people with **something to do**
- So discourages **vandalism**
- Encourages **physical fitness**
- **Durable**
- **Free** to users
- Encourages **exercise** in a fun form
- Keeps users from causing **trouble** elsewhere
- Provides opportunity for **practice**, in preparation for skating on pavements
- Good for **good range of ages**
- Good **socialising** venue



- Example shown is **interesting to look at**
-

Con:

- **Expensive** to set up
- **Minority** appeal
- Unsuitable for **very young**
- Expensive, so little money available for **caretaking/maintenance**

Outcome of the vote

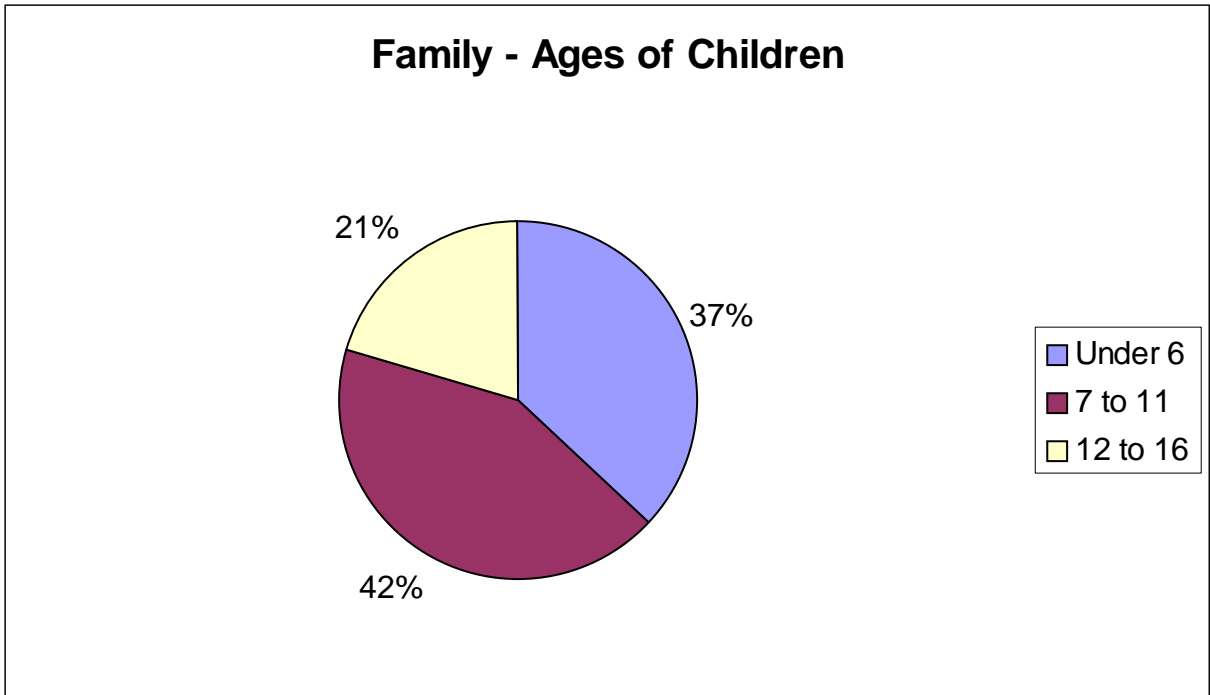
All 3 groups chose the option of 1 MUGA, with 1 Toddler Play Area – demonstrating the Young People’s quick grasp of the need to cater for a wide age range – because it is fair and as problems between different age groups are a significant issue.

General observations

- Encouraging **physical activity** was valued, particularly in keeping children slim
- Opportunities for **socialising** and forming groups were seen as having benefits but also drawbacks: groups could be a threat to others
- The wider the **age-range** of those who could use the area, the better – particularly if different groups would be using it at different times of day
- Vandalism was regarded as a serious problem, and it was thought worthwhile to spend money on **security** measures
- Attracting children **off the streets** was highly valued
- It was thought better to provide two or three **different** areas than to spend all the money on one, no matter how good
- The area and equipment should **look good**

2.2 Parents Survey

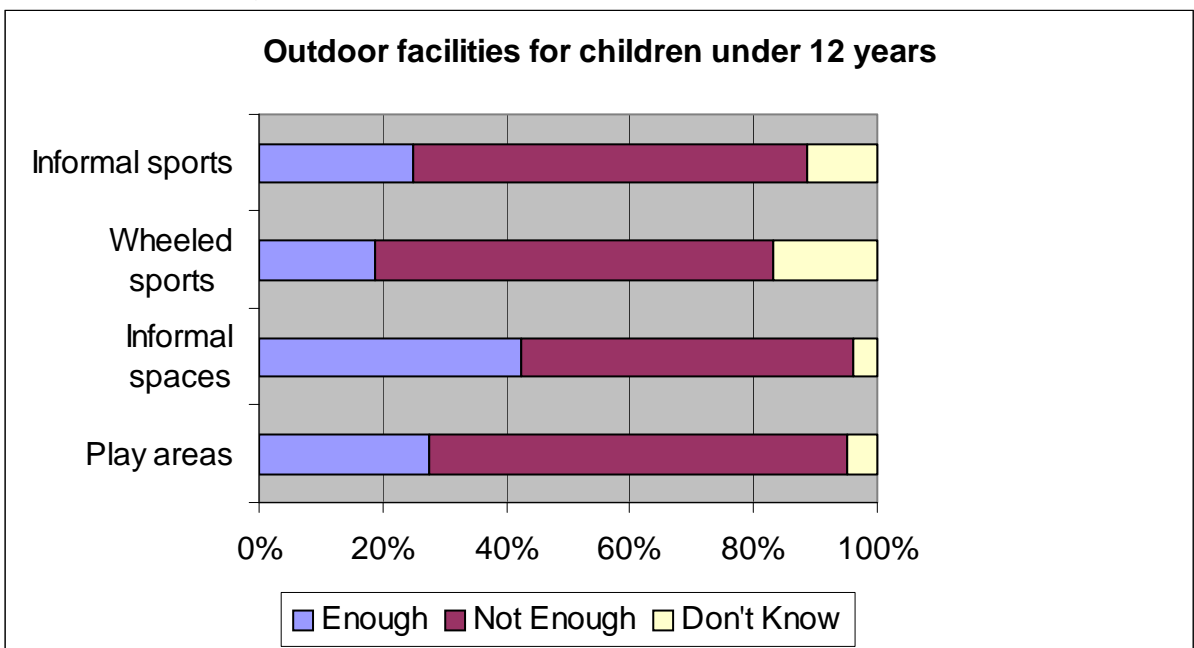
These surveys were distributed through the District Council’s Playscheme database, Home Start, Sure Start and the Newcastle and North Staffs Play Council and the findings represent the views of 107 parents. The ages of the children in the families is shown in the chart which shows a bias towards under 11s. This is quite helpful, considering the biased towards teenagers in the Children and Young People surveys.

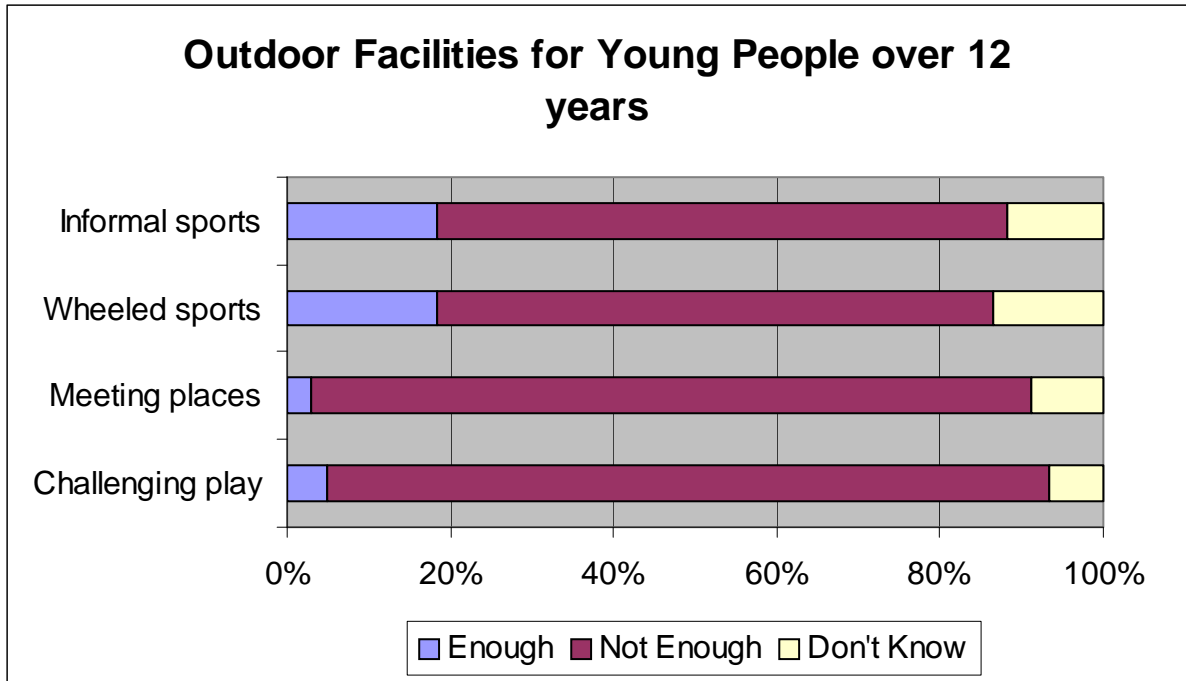


70% of parents confirmed that their children made use of local play and/or youth facilities.

2.2.1 Quantity and quality of play and youth facilities

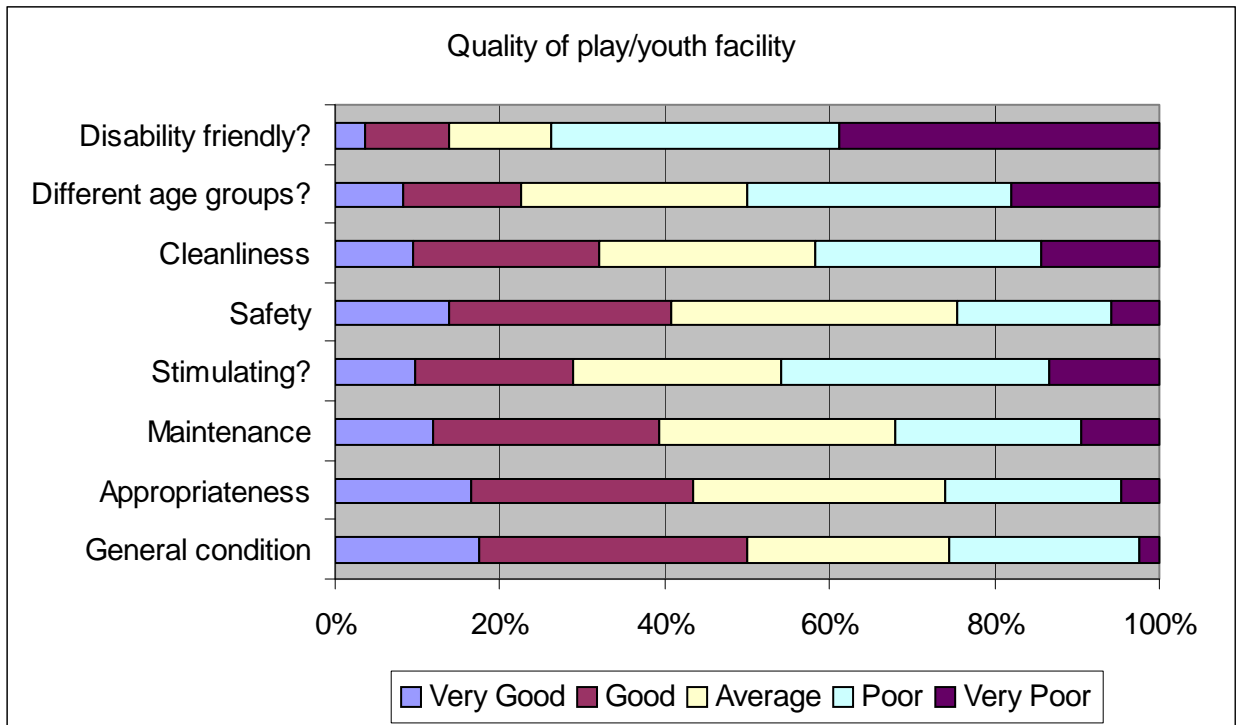
We first asked whether parents thought there were enough facilities for children and young people.





The chart indicates that in general parents feel that there are not enough

In relation to the facility that was most used by the children and/or young people in the family we asked parents to rate different aspects of that facility.



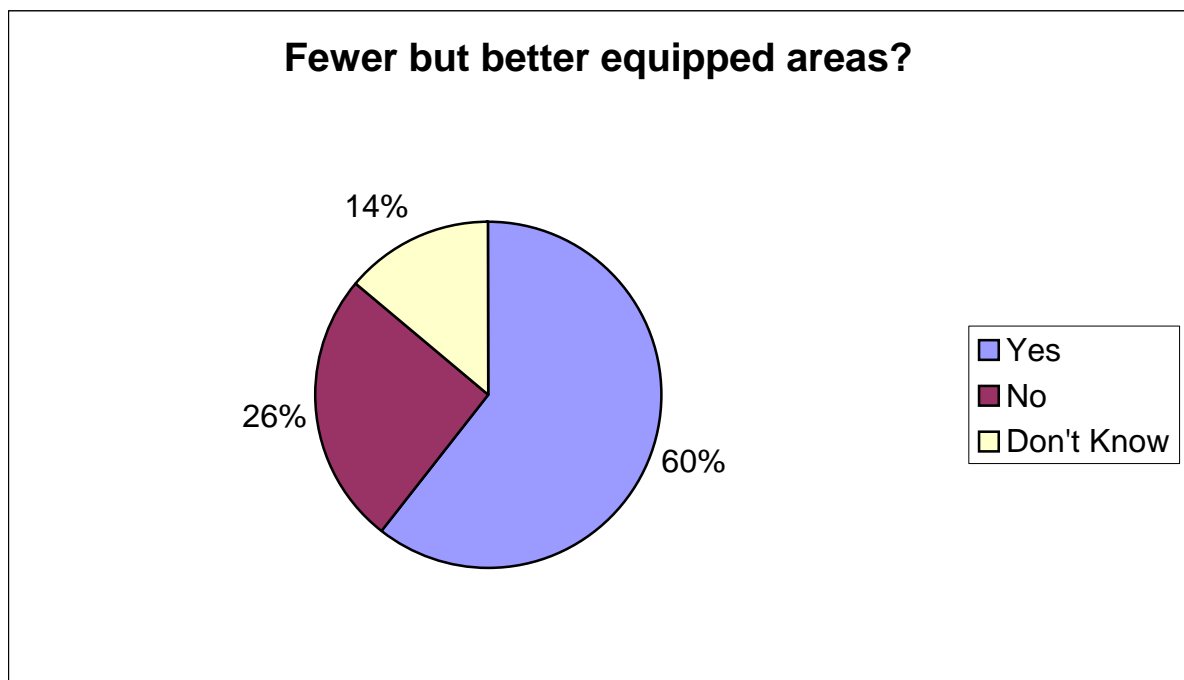
In general over 43% of parents thought that their local facility was either very good or good and 22% thought it poor or very poor. In terms of safety and

maintenance over 55% believed their local facility to be adequate (though about 20% thought these aspects to be poor or very poor).

The main areas for concern were in relation to provision for children with disabilities where over 59% thought provision was poor or very poor and in relation to the adequacy of provision for varying age groups (only 19% agreed this to be good or very good) and the level of attractive and stimulating features (only a 24% of parents thought this aspect to be good or very good).

Access to higher quality provision but fewer equipped sites?

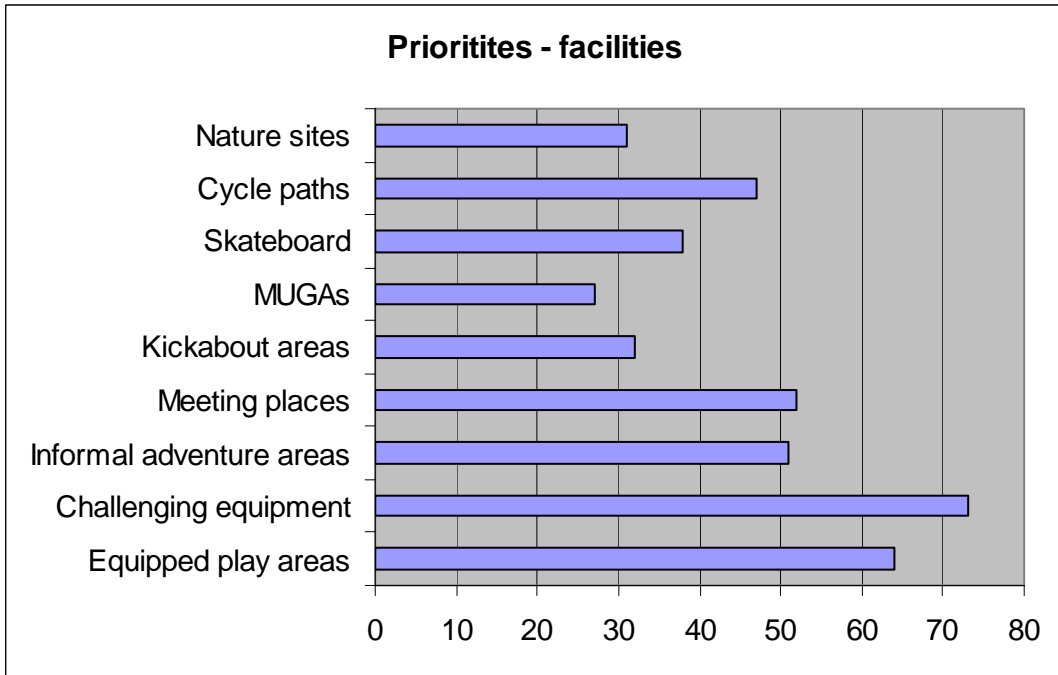
We asked whether parents thought it would be better to have a network of larger, higher quality sites than the current number of small local play areas. 60% of parents were in favour of this option.



- Most parents would prefer to have fewer better quality sites than the current level of smaller, less interesting sites.

Priorities for extra facilities

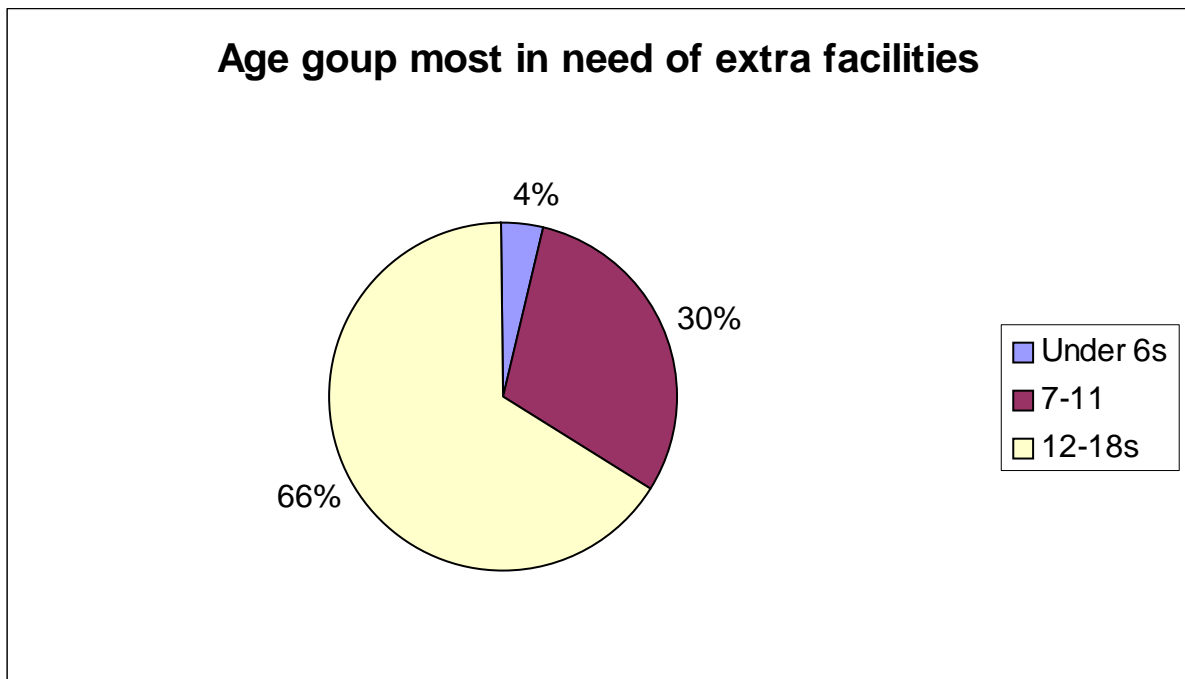
In broad terms we asked parents what kind of additional play facilities were most needed.



For parents challenging equipment was the most popular, followed by equipped play areas, meeting places and informal adventure areas.

Finally we asked what age groups parents thought most needed additional local facilities.

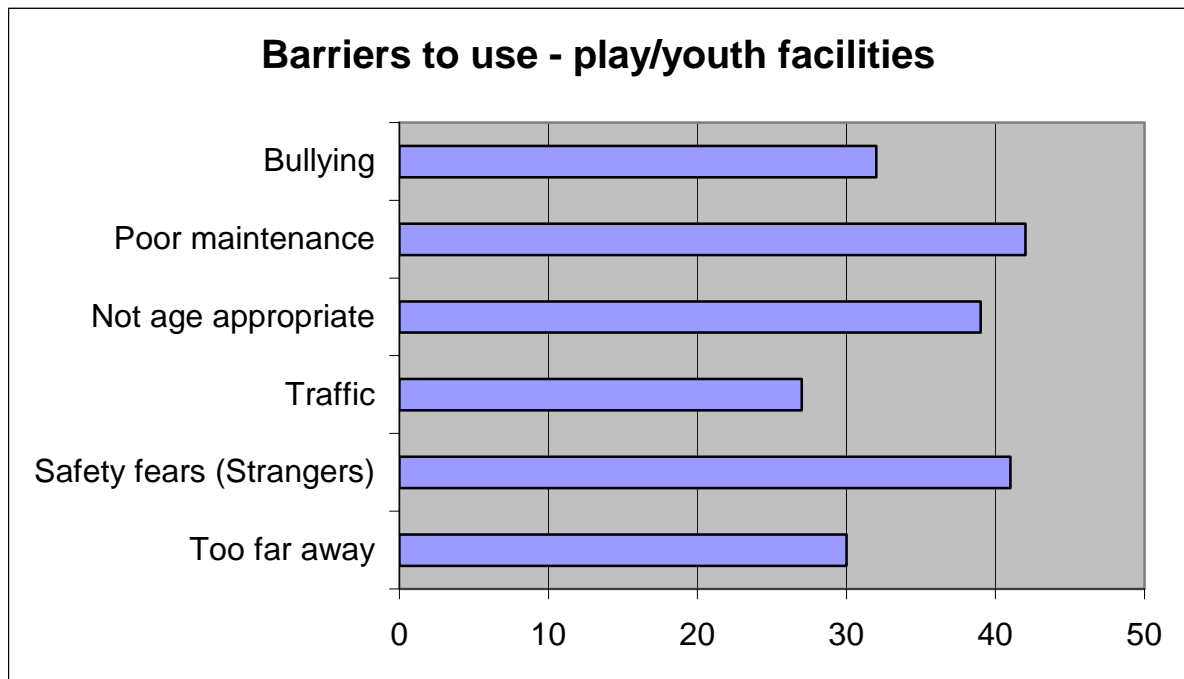
Finally we asked what age groups parents thought most needed additional local facilities. XX% said teenagers; XX% 7-11s; and XX% under 6s.



Finally we asked what age groups parents thought most needed additional local facilities. 66% said teenagers; 30% 7-11s; and 4% under 6s.

Parents highlighted a need for natural spaces designed for adventurous play in addition to equipped areas and their priority age range covered a wide age range (7-18)

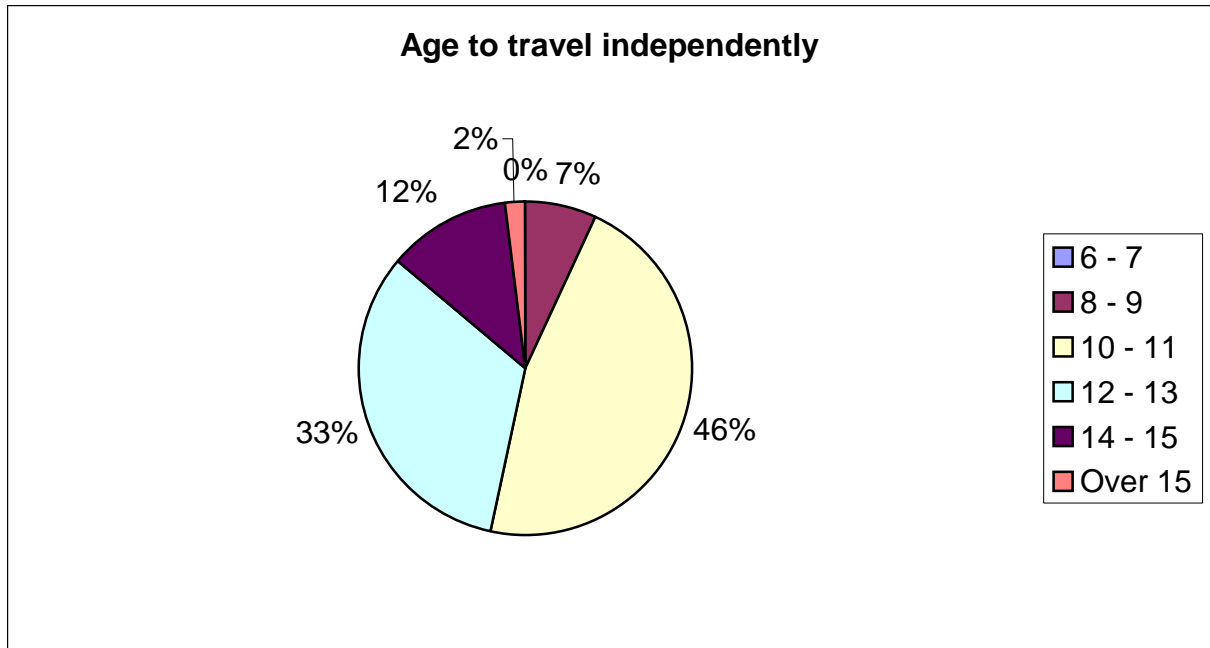
2.2.2 Barriers to use



In relation to why local facilities were not used more, poor maintenance was a barrier for 39%, "stranger danger" was highlighted as a concern by 38% of parents. The other main reason given was that equipment was not suited to the age range of potential users (36%).

Access in terms of distance was less of a significant factor for many though for 28% this was still an issue.

We also asked parents at what age they thought in reasonable for a child to travel to a play/youth facility without an adult.



55% though it reasonable for under 12s to visit a local facility which is slightly lower than the views of younger children (67%) and teenagers (56%).

When asked for other reasons why facilities were not used more the following were mentioned:

- Not enough supervised over 12 areas.
- ASBO threats.
- Problems with young adults littering local recreation park with beer cans (toddler picking the rubbish up).
- Unable to play football due to the grass being too long.
- Have a child with learning disabilities.
- Groups of teenagers making a nuisance of themselves.
- Youths drinking alcohol under age.
- Glass on play area.
- Dated.
- Often facilities being used by older children or swings have been wound round top.
- Dog mess on the grass prevents ball games.
- Litter, Glass, Hypodermic needles.
- Limited equipment at playground so we go to Congleton or Leek more (Biddulph Resident).
- Old equipment and behaviour of older children.
- Lack of toilets.
- Hardly any equipment on Kingsley playground.
- Gangs of teenagers harass adults and use foul language.
- Used Westwood Rec. but not cleaned enough - broken glass.
- Too many teenagers hanging around drinking, swearing etc.
- Teenagers on equipment smoking.

- Have take more than one child of differing ages so activities have to appeal to both age groups. Takes up too much time due to having to travel to everywhere.
- Mud bath in winter.
- Traffic for Alton Towers causes problems.
- Teenagers causing trouble because they have nowhere else to go.
- Not visited new playground by Biddulph Valley Leisure centre due to bad press regarding vandalism - need CCTV to protect individuals.

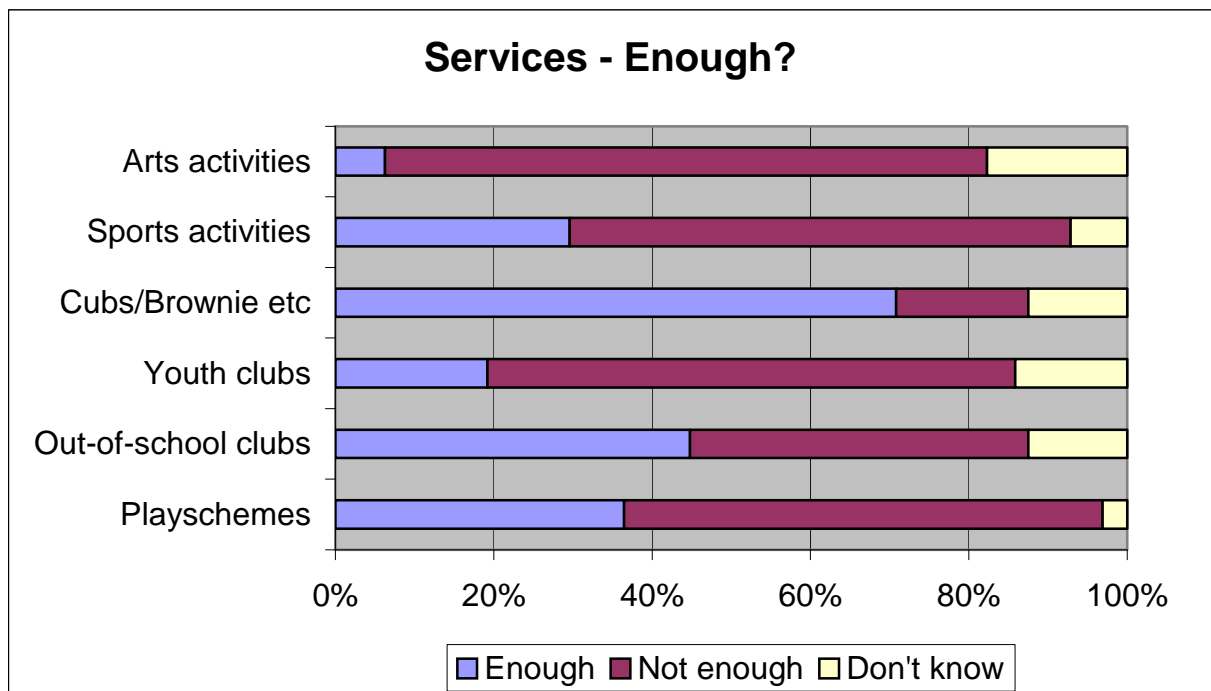
2.2.3 Play and Youth Services

We asked parents whether they thought there were enough of various types of play and youth services.

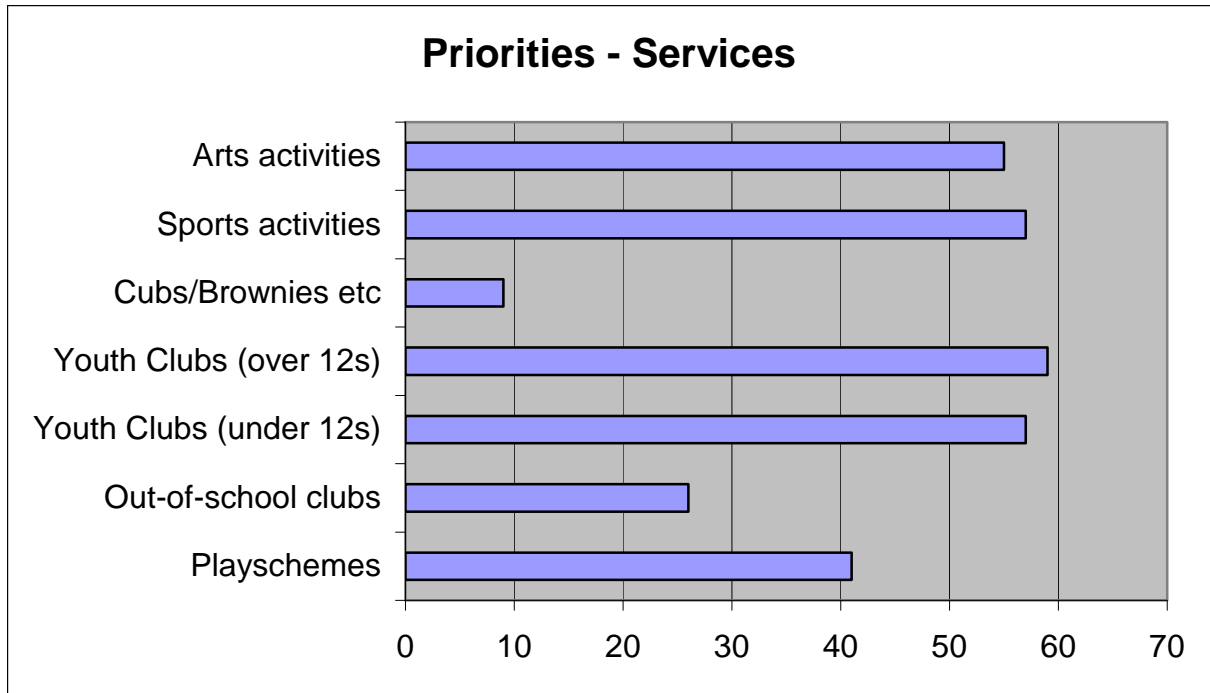
73% of parents thought there were not enough arts clubs, 66% not enough youth clubs and 62% not enough sports activities..

By contrast nearly 68% thought there was sufficient provision of cubs, scouts, guides etc.

58% though there were not enough playschemes and 41% not enough out-of-school schemes.



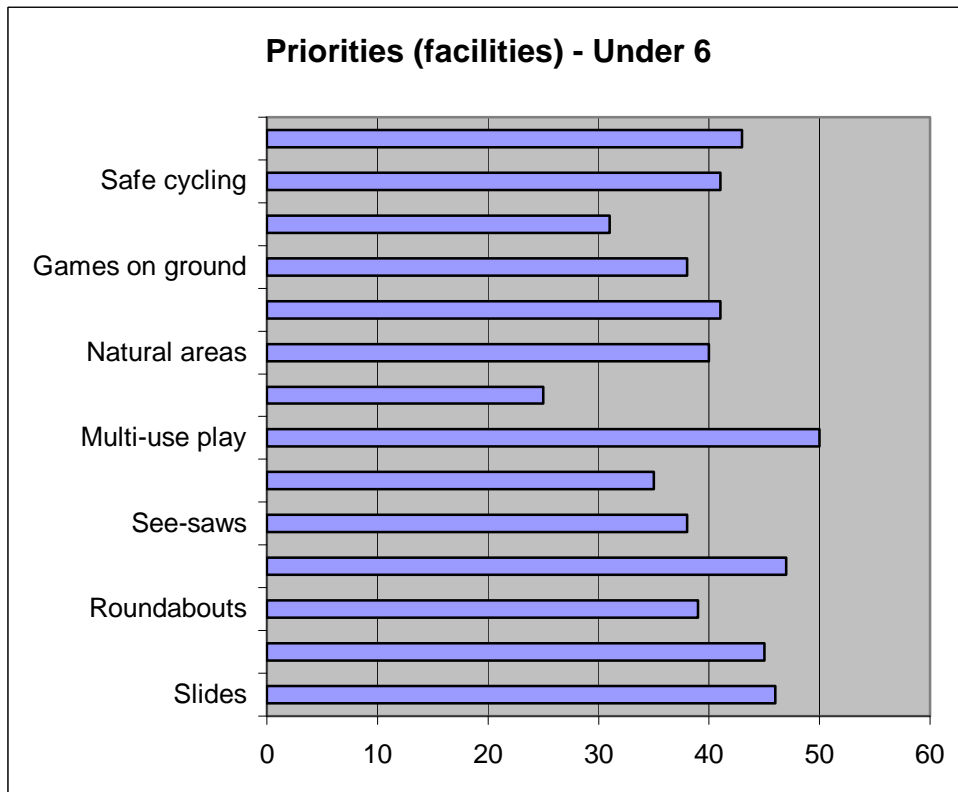
In terms of priorities for future provision parents views generally reflected their opinions upon sufficiency. That is, priority to be given to more sports and arts activities and youth clubs.



Parents priorities for future provision of services was for more sports and arts activities and youth clubs.

2.2.4 Play Spaces for the under 6s

For those parents with children under 6 we asked them to talk to their children and find out what kind of play facilities and spaces they preferred.



Traditional play equipment such as swings, slides, climbing frames and multi-play units appear to be popular for most of the under 6s, but so do many of the other options, such as safe cycling and natural areas..

2.3 Play and Youth Stakeholders

Key organisations involved in play and youth work have been consulted via the Play Partnership. “Pro-formas”, designed with an invitation to flag up the main strategic issues, were circulated to everyone on the Partnership. The Partnership also took part in group work looking at the strengths, weaknesses and issues in the District. Individual “surgeries” were also offered to individuals within each organisation.

2.3.1 Play Partnership group work findings

Feed back on good & bad things about play provision and suggestions for quick wins

2.3.2 Good things

- Provision of 2 detached play workers in Werrington and a club which opens twice a week – a response to particular local issues (eg vandalism).
- Home Start Holiday scheme which offers 20 places for children ages 4 – 13 years from families in need in Cheadle.
- North Staffordshire Holiday Play schemes for 4 – 13 year olds.
- Extent of community based toddler groups (for 0 – 3 years).
- New funding to the youth service has extended the age range they can work with from 11 – 13 to 9 – 13 year olds.
- An increasing recognition that play for the under 11s is important is becoming embedded. This is perhaps not so well accepted for the over 11s?
- Biddulph High School have, via the local neighbourhood partnership, undertaken a consultation with young people (results available) facilitated by the youth service.
- Detached play workers go to Hammersley Hayes on Monday nights.
- Outreach play workers work in Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek with 11 – 13 + year olds.
- Good examples of partnership working resulting in play initiatives such as:
 - Out reach support projects (District Council in partnership with the Youth Service)
 - Summer schemes (DC in partnership with the Play Council)
 - Biddulph bike project involving the police
- Mothers Art Makers (MAMS) a project which focuses on supporting the parents of young children.
- The natural environment is a real asset
- Towns are compact.
- Play areas are well generally respectfully used.
- Vandalism is not a big problem.
- Approach of SMDC to Extended Schools agenda is a big opportunity.
- Youth Forum co-ordination is strong.

- Honeycomb Centre in Longnor.
- Haregate Junior Youth Club.
- Voluntary and Community Sector are generally strong.
- Biddulph Children's Centre.
- Many parents value play.
- Police Community Safety links to SMDC are strong.
- Previous community consultation means there is ownership of many services and facilities.
- Good network of creative people willing to engage with young people

2.3.3 Bad things

- Problems with vandalism of memorial gardens and toddlers play ground in Werrington from 12 – 14 year age group.
- Gaps in provision in the holiday – just when children lose the structure of the school day, they also lose the structure of the out-of-school play provision.
- Gap for over 13 year olds.
- Problem of knowing how to offer something that the over 13 year olds will engage with. When asked they say they don't want any supervision; not too early in the day; and not too structured (ie flexible, drop in). This can be difficult to provide.
- Lack of balance of provision which appeals to girls as well as boys. Focus on facility provision (eg skateboarding parks) tends to be biased in favour of boys.
- Cultural issue of problematic drinking.
- Community toddler groups are oversubscribed.
- Low aspiration among young people – when consulted they don't have very high expectations of what they could be offered.
- Inconsistent provision of services – geographically and through the year.
- Not meeting demand and mixed success in attracting young people to schemes / activities.
- Terminology of branding of what is on offer for >9.
- Access to services due to lack of transport, independence and lack of exposure.
- Cheadle Leisure Centre – intimidating for younger children.
- Fishing is popular, but cannot get to fishing sites.
- Parents perception of risk.
- Providers fear of litigation leading to less appealing facilities.
- Links between providers of different services not good enough.
- lack of provision for Special Needs young people.
- Anti-social behaviour, because nothing to do.
- After dark users of play areas.
- Many families cannot afford to pay for activities for their children.

2.3.4 "Quick" wins

1. Map what the play 'offer' that exists at the moment – including toddler groups, play grounds, open spaces, holiday play-schemes etc - so that people can find out what's there that they could use. Create a central

information resource based on this information and then make this information accessible across the district to parents and children. Consider providing the facility for groups/facilities to update their 'entry' via a website.

2. Run some more pilot inter-generational projects building on successful local examples such as the successful project between bowlers and teenagers in Cheadle and the graffiti art project near the War Memorial.
3. Extend the support that Sure Start developed and piloted in their area in association with the Pre School Learning Alliance for community based providers of play schemes/groups to groups outside of the geographical area that Sure Start cover.
4. Research evidence of a link between when vandalism happens and the gaps in play provision? Should some work be done on this?
5. Investigate role for a community PR strategy to raise the profile of play and why it's important?
6. Raise profile of existing services available from whole range of providers – arrange sub-group meeting of Play Partnership to improve networks, share information.
7. Make links with YHA.
8. Ensure PFI at Biddulph high is considering Play and is considered in the Play Strategy.
9. Press Release about trees in Brough Park, that have been turned in to a play facility by local young people – good news, kids in a positive light, chance to flag up chance to have say about play.
10. Support community driven initiatives for new facilities.
11. Greater information sharing and clearing house for knowing where to look.
12. Education on the matter of risk aversion and to help separate fact from myth.
13. Better coordination and joined up working (could this be a future role for the local play partnership?)
14. Re-brand 'play' as the term is off-putting for older children.
15. Better involvement of potential users in the design and planning process.
16. Identify what types of opportunity and facility best meet the needs of the 'difficult to reach/problem groups'.

2.3.5 Main relevant objectives and aims of Stakeholders

The members of the Play Partnership have aims and objectives that are derived from their experience of working in the District and often through extensive consultation. It is therefore important that what they have found out in the past and decided to focus upon, is reflected in the Play Strategy.

Neighbourhood Plans for the 3 Moorlands ***Neighbourhood Partnerships*** outlines aspirations for children and young people, such as:

- Access to playing fields & amenities
- Access to positive activities
- Support for at risk young people
- Raising aspirations
- Support for community-based activity

The **Haregate Partnership** key actions involve initiating a Community Pride contract that will amongst other things include:

- An action plan for improving the grass verges
- Spell out the commitment of key agencies to routine maintenance
- Identify dog fouling hotspots & consider options for reducing
- Occasional 'Litter Picks' as needed
- Maintain Ball Haye Green Recreation Ground (including quarterly events)
- Feasibility of an outdoor fitness trail
- Develop after school activities for 8-13yr olds
- Promote young volunteers
- Develop a parent and toddler group and/or improved take up of other available opportunities for 0-4 yr olds
- Provide holiday provision for 8-13 year olds based at Churnet View School
- Develop youth activities or improve take up by local young people in Youth Service activities (13 – 18 yrs)
- Ensure activities for 9-14 yr olds are sustainable

The **Hammersley Hayes Neighbourhood Partnership** plans include:

- The development of outdoor play facilities for very young children and for older children/young people.
- Develop a parent and toddler group and/or improved take up of other available opportunities. (0 – 4 years)
- Develop Children's activities (5 – 13 years)
- Develop Youth activities or improve take up by local young people in Youth Service activities (13 – 18 years)

The District Council **Parks and Countryside Service** has clear involvement in play:

- Provides and maintains outdoor space specifically designated for recreational use at more than 200 sites covering 260 ha (640 acres) across the Staffordshire Moorlands District – out with the Peak District National Park area.
- Liases with the Council's Planning Services to identify and monitor recreational needs and ensure adequate new provision is made as new housing is developed. - This can involve s.106 agreements for financial contributions in lieu of on-site provision.
- The Service has a lead role in planning and developing facilities using s.106 monies. Currently we have in excess of £400,000 to be allocated – not solely for play facilities – but also for sports pitch and other open space improvements. Nevertheless this represents a significant cash resource the allocation of which is expected to be heavily guided by the emerging play strategy.

The **Community & Learning Partnership/Extended schools** relevant aims include:

- All children offered access to extended services by 2010
- To work with service providers to deliver co-ordinated, high quality play/activity opportunities within the school holidays
- To work with service providers to deliver age appropriate before and after school activities/play experiences 5-19 years
- To raise aspirations
- To work with service providers to deliver high quality play experiences for pre-school children and their families
- To ensure that the services are accessible to children, young people and their families who find it difficult to access provision.

The **Newcastle and North Staffs Play Council** relevant aims include:

- Deliver provision in an innovative way particularly in areas of social and economic deprivation, whilst at the same time keeping communities at the heart of all the work.
- Deliver provision that is inclusive and incorporates young people with additional needs as well as provision that is aimed specifically at young special needs people and their siblings and gypsies, travellers and asylum seekers.
-

The **Community Safety Team** relevant aims include:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for the children and young people to live and play in, that is also enjoyable.
- To help children and young people fulfil their potential and to have access to a good quality of life.
- To ensure that the most deprived areas have the lion share of the resources, given the correlation of poor neighbourhoods with disadvantage communities for children and young people.
-

The **Peak District National Park Authority** relevant aims include:

- Promote opportunities for understanding the special qualities of the National Park to children and young people especially those living in the Park and in surrounding urban/disadvantaged areas.
- Promote opportunities to participate in diverse recreational activities that enhance the quality of their lives.

The **Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's** most relevant aim is to:

- Engage children and young people in fun, playful and challenging activities connected to nature and the environment.

2.3.6 Key issues with regard to support/services for children and young people

The Council's **Parks and Countryside Service** is aware of the following particular issues, with regard to play areas:

- Existing play areas (7 No. Biddulph/ 8No. Leek) increasingly tired and dated, many from a single era mainly 1980's, exceptions being new toddler play area at Cruso Street, Leek; new skate ramp area at Brough Park, Leek; new full play area at Biddulph Valley Park and new skate ramp at Mill Hayes, Biddulph.
- Play areas cater primarily for a general mid age range (typically 6 to 12) with provision lacking for younger and older age groups ie. infants and later teens;
- Some of the above play areas are very limited, of very poor quality and / or poorly located;
- Several of the play areas are the subject of strong neighbourhood pressure to address perceived or actual problems of anti-social behaviour linked usually either with their poor location or with the lack of appropriate range of provision for older age groups;
- Ability to fund improvements from existing s106 resource presently lacks strategic guidance or information base from which to plan development;
- Winning neighbourhood support for new provision may be problematic given past experience eg with skate ramp facility in Biddulph

Biddulph East has identified two strong issues:

- Raising young people's aspirations (young people lack confidence, self-esteem, self belief, they do not feel able to influence their own future)
- Help & support for young people at risk (e.g. young people from dysfunctional families, anti-social behaviour, risk-taking behaviour, mental health)

The **Community Learning Partnership** flagged up:

- Lack of a co-ordinated approach, in respect that there is duplication of provision in some areas/age range and gaps in provision in other areas of the Moorlands.
- The funding available is related to providing childcare and our experiences/evaluation demonstrates there is also a need for drop in activities/play opportunities. Particularly in the areas of disadvantage.
- Recruitment of play practitioners
- Ensuring that the opportunities available meet the requirements of regulatory bodies such as Ofsted while at the same time allowing the children freedom of choice and access to provision.
- Rural access i.e. Transport

The issues of note for the **Community Safety Team** include:

- The need to provide a wide range of activities that combine diversionary and educational interventions for those children who are likely to be at risk of taking up negative type behaviours.
- The need to provide activity programmes that are connected and allow young people to seamlessly from one activity programme to another..
- The need to establish a range of specific targeted activities and interventions that engage young people who have a propensity to be involved in both anti-social and 'criminal type' behaviours, that ostensibly leads to changes in their behaviour.

Issues for the local **Play Council** include:

- The need for involvement of the residents of Staffordshire Moorlands to encourage projects to have an inbuilt sustainability.
- The requirement to address local authority compact agreements which will sustain the Play Council and will address full cost recovery for services delivered to communities for and behalf of local authorities and organisations.

The main **Peak Park** issue was:

- Providing opportunities for children and young people to access the National Park, mainly due to transport issues and awareness.

2.3.7 Key issues Stakeholders believe should be addressed through Play Strategy

- make recommendations for each existing play area in terms of fitness for purpose with priority ranked proposals whether to simply retain; retain and improve; totally renew in existing location or remove and provide afresh elsewhere based on
 - equipment quality
 - equipment condition
 - age range catered for
 - location
- Recommend locations for enhanced infant / toddler provision and for older teens provision and suggest options for innovation in provision for all age groups

Known problem sites:

- Wallbridge (Rear of Prince of Wales), Leek - It is felt this needs either to be fully up-graded in its existing location; fully re-located eg to Campbel Avenue; or developed in tandem with partial re-location to Campbel Avenue and/or with partial re-location on the existing site.

- The Paddock, Biddulph - It is felt that this site needs to be re-located and developed afresh most probably on the sweep of open space nearby alongside Dorset Drive close to the Craigside footpath.
- Newpool Terrace - Problems with this site could be overcome by a combination of thorough up-grade and enhancement of the play equipment and by an up-grade of provision for older age groups possibly utilising nearby open space at Royce Avenue.
- Halls Road - Provide new enhanced play area closer to the pavilion. Consider older age group provision at site of present equipment.
- Church Road, Westwood and Pickwood - All simply dated and limited – need to up-grade and expand to provide for the three age groupings: infants, 6 to 12s and later teens – this should be possible on these sites as the space is not restricting; ie. older teens could be provided for separately on the same sites.
- Brough Park - Although skate park gives some added provision for older age end, the play area is limited to younger end toddlers / infants – need to add equipment for mid age range.
- Biddulph Valley Park - Since developing the new play area in 2006 a clear demand has developed to provide something for older teens. This should be achievable as the site is reasonably large with good distances to neighbouring houses.
- Other Sites - The service has a large number of other recreational open space sites some of which offer potential locations for new facilities. Land at Biddulph Grange Country Park is one such example where although there is less neighbouring housing than at some other locations there is a high usage of the site by family groups. A play facility here would help build the visitor base and support our objective of encouraging and promoting the discovery and enjoyment of the countryside. - s106 funds can be applied to the above
- Guidance in winning community support for the above especially of neighbouring residents would be helpful
- A project to introduce free forms of play at suitable sites eg using natural elements such as tree trunks or boulders supported by an appropriate level of design to ensure safety and complementary integration with the setting.
- The development of Church Road Playing Field in Biddulph East. A survey at Park Middle School showed there is over 90% support for such a project.
- Outreach Sports Activities with the young people of Hammersley Hayes.

- BMX/ Mountain bike trail on “The Waste” in Haregate.
- Link in with our aims and objectives of Community Safety Team in providing activities in disadvantage areas, address the social inclusion agenda and improve access for ‘vulnerable young people`.
- Improved partnership working to avoid duplication and ensure that the opportunities developed meet the needs of the children/young people.
- Pooled resources and budgets, this would increase the services/opportunities available across the Moorlands.
- Emphasis on a co-ordinated approach for support and capacity building within the community and voluntary sector.
- Children and young people’s opportunity to access the world around, especially the natural environment – and particularly the National Park.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to develop. through access to the National Park and the natural environment.
- Asserting the importance of “wild” play.
- Emphasising need for children to be able to take risks, be challenged, have new experiences.
- Address lack freedom of current generation to be able to access “wild” play, through encouragement of parents and young people.
- Address the needs of children during school holidays, which would address the needs of working parents, reduce the risk of crime and accidents both in the home and on the streets through organised and planned play activities.
- See expansion, in areas of social deprivation, of Junior Youth Provision which would extend the current successful service that is delivered by Play Council under funding received from Staffordshire Childrens Fund.

2.3.8 Other general relevant comments from Play Partnership Stakeholders

There are reasons why the community does not use existing facilities at places like Ball Haye Green Rec, local people say that:

- Too much dog dirt.
- Bigger kids chase us off (bullying).
- No lighting (this is a contentious issue for the immediate residents as they complain about drinking and ASB in the evening).
- They take drugs there and I don’t want my kids there.

The Play Council thought it important to note:

- That their crèche provision in particular is vital in the delivery of training to communities where transport is very poor.
- Their holiday provision is delivered within Ofsted Guidelines and is so regulated. However, whilst meeting the required five outcomes of ECM's this also permits informal play to take place, within an environment of planned activities with qualified, trained and CRB cleared staff.

2.3.9 Staffordshire Youth Service Surgery

Good practice and positives were highlighted, including:

- Cheadle and Hammersley Hayes detached Youth work.
- Partnership work with the Police in Biddulph – “fix and ride” bike scheme.
- Young Parent work in Leek (Sure Start / Connexions, with under 19s).
- Summer activities for under 13sa and extended school funded half-term activities in half-term.
- Youth Clubs in Blythe Bridge, Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek.
- Good co-ordination with sport development teams.
- Cheadle “Streets Ahead” – free access to Leisure Centre, one day per week.
- Leek alternative curriculum via Extended Schools network.
- Voluntary Junior Youth Club (80-100 members) at Church Road Youth centre – Biddulph.
- Non-alcoholic nightclub nights in Leek.

Areas of weakness / problems:

- Funding and resources – with severe vacancy management in recent years, no capacity to cope with e.g. staff absence.
- Cannot respond to need for Friday and Saturday night detached work – know where locations are via close working with community safety teams.
- Relationship between adults and young people – poor perceptions, not helped by media coverage of any problems associated with youth.

Opportunities and areas strategy should emphasise:

- Increased summer activities
- More outreach work
- Need for Longnor Skate Ramp.
- Need for more involvement of Youth Worker in schools.

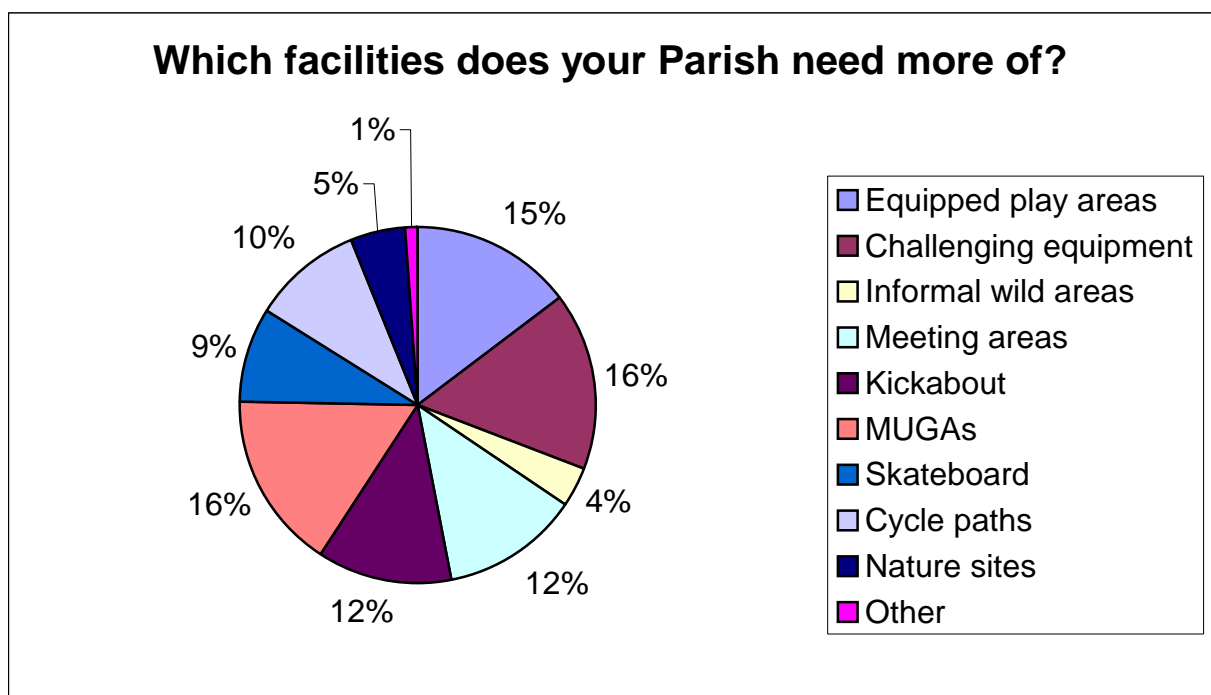
2.4 Town and Parish Councils

All Town and Parish Councils were consulted through a postal survey (with follow up phone calls) and in addition Parish Council and Village Agent Focus Group were held. This section summarises the findings of these exercises in relation to the local needs of children and young people. 26 of the 42 parish councils responded.

2.4.1 Quantity and quality of provision

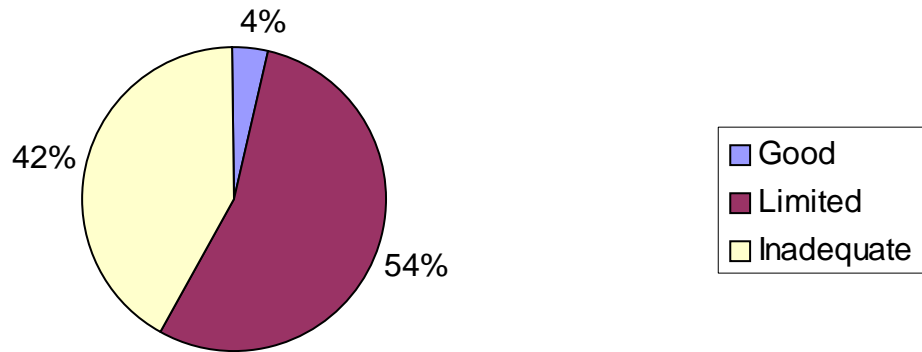
Play/Youth Facilities

- 81% indicated that there is a general need for additional or improved provision of open space and recreational facilities



- The most popular facilities needed were MUGAs and challenging equipment (16%), 15% equipped play areas.

How good are the facilities/activity opportunities?



- 96% said facilities and activities available were limited or inadequate.
- 41% identified a need for more provision for teenagers

Some specific comments relating to play areas were:

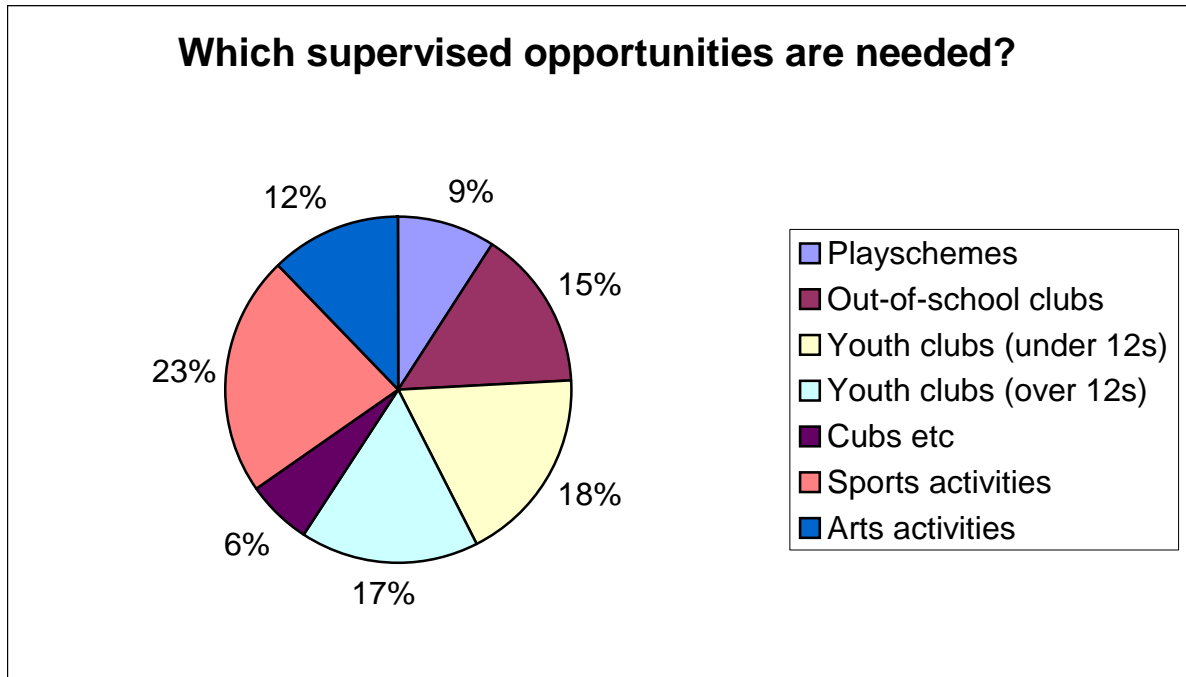
- Local Memorial Committee are reluctant to expand facilities on main playing field which they own due to past vandalism, etc. on equipment already there.
- No space for facilities. Farmers refusing to sell land, considering compulsory purchase and could do with help with this.
- Trying to develop fully equipped play area for 0-17 year olds but costly and time consuming.
-

When asked about “Problems” the following were mentioned:

- Vandalism (most common)
- Lack of funding (2nd most common)
- Lack of available areas of land
- Old/obsolete equipment.
- Facilities for teenagers.
- Lack of finance or support from the District Council.
- Equipment aging and based on timber structures which suddenly rotted, give splinters, etc and needs constant maintenance.
- Lack of youth provision - open space structured for young people.

Play/Youth Services

In relation to services the majority of parish councils reported a lack across all categories (other than playschemes).



- The most popular opportunities needed were sports activities (23%) and then youth clubs (17-18%).

Some specific comments relating to activities were:

- More youth outreach workers to help older children do more worthwhile activities than underage drinking!
- Youth Club closed down due to lack of organisers.
- The current youth club would benefit from support for the volunteers - either equipment or staff support.

2.4.2 Town Parish Councils / Rural Focus Group

The Focus group was a follow up to the Parish Council Survey that had been completed in relation to the Children's Play. The purpose of the session was to gain an understanding of issues relating to children's play and youth facilities from a parish council perspective.

Strengths

- Quantity of provision reasonable – capital available. Most villages have some form of provision.

- Longnor – good play area behind school – accessible – long-term development. PC owned – supported by local Action Group.
- Holiday schemes good and well liked (transport difficulties in rural areas – expensive for some eg fee plus transport)
- Cheddleton Open Space Area – has been transformed – football, play area etc
- Community Activity – strong in many areas
- Ball Haye Green – new investment – involved local residents etc (not so good for younger children)
- Endon – Village Hall site is reasonable and well maintained. 1 or 2 sites good. Mix of activities on hill side site. Local involvement in maintenance.
- Village Agents network

Weaknesses – Room for Improvement

- Transport – major problem in rural areas
- Maintenance – seems OK to get capital but not enough revenue for maintenance
- Potential for use of local schools re play
- Need for better consultation by district and county councils to make sure local need and aspirations are met
- Location of sites difficult – NIMBY response quite common
- Lack of space for facilities eg Stanley. Also securing space when it is available can be difficult.
- Apathy – need for more encouragement and support for local people
- Funding – too short a timeframe to match local needs – opportunities lost
- Publicity and promotion – many people unaware of what is available
- Conflict between needs of young people and other local residents
- Footpaths and access – poor lighting – safety issues generally a concern
- Play surfaces need lots of maintenance eg play bark
- Difficult to act and provide quick enough to match young people's needs and timeframes
- Need to consolidate Village Agents network and link in with long term strategies of district and county
- Need facilities and programmes to retain young people and families in area

Ideas for the Future

- Priority need is for funding a large number of small schemes which can really make a difference in rural areas
- Small grants scheme for voluntary and parish projects
- Build more community capacity and involvement in providing local schemes
- Sustainability must be built into all schemes

2.4.3 Village Agent Focus Group

The session was held to hear from the Village Agents about the important play issues in the areas they covered and to identify any play sites which had not been included in the site audit to date and any other relevant issues. The audit is covered in chapter XX.

Play issues identified

- **Bradnop** – good provision of mother and toddler groups
- **Horton** – the play equipment at Horton Lodge Special School is not available for community use.
- **Horton** – a woodland area at the top of Lake Road in Rudyard has been identified as a possible play site (the existing area being too remote from potential users)
- **Leekfrith** – there is a new site belonging to ‘Leekfrith Action Group’ between the church and the village hall
- **Longnor** – there is now permission for a skate park
- **Longsdon** – no facilities
- **Oakamoor** – the old Boltons sports ground on Dimmingsdale Road (play pitch site no.1 in the SMDC file) has been acquired and is now known as the Community Sports Ground – the community wishes to add a children’s play area here
- **Onecote** – local people wish to add goals and nets to the hardcourt area at the Village Hall (but the fence needs repair first)
- **Quarnford** – the play site at the school in Flash is open for community use
- **Tittesworth** – there is a proposal for a new play area on an ex-Touchstone housing site
- **Waterhouses** – there is a potential new play area at the Hamlet housing site off Portland Place

4. Key Issues

A number of issues can be identified from the various consultations undertaken. These include:

4.1 General

- Children still like to spend time playing in places that are not designated play areas. This means the strategy should consider enhancing and protecting the “play-value” of neighbourhoods and streets as well as public green spaces. This could mean, for example, addressing the speed and volume of motor vehicles.
- In general children, young people and the wider community think there are **not** enough spaces to in which to play and hang out, nor are there enough play and youth services.
- Provision for teenagers is thought to be particularly poor.

- Lack of provision for teenagers is perceived as one of the key causes of clashes between different age groups of young people.
- Many parents and children themselves think that it is reasonable for under 11 year olds to visit play and youth facilities and services without an adult - This suggests priority need for safety and security in design of the routes to facilities.
- Potential for more community use of school facilities
- Need for better communication between county, district, parishes and voluntary sector.
- Access to services is a big issue for families with children of different ages in rural areas, where public transport is extremely limited / non-existent.

4.2 Facilities

- How useful a play area is highly dependent on location – younger children value proximity more than teens.
- It is important that younger children have access to local play space within 5-10 minutes walking distance from home and that teenagers have access to spaces to hang out independently with friends within 10-15 minutes walk from home.
- Both children and young people say they will walk further to access high quality sites and these will therefore have a larger “catchment”.
- Young people will walk further than 7-11s to access more interesting sites and a clear majority are not satisfied with existing provision.
- Safety and security are key issues in relation to the design of future play/youth areas.
- The main priority for younger children appears to be provision of appropriately equipped high quality “traditional” play areas. For teenagers meeting places and informal casual access sports facilities are high priorities along with swings. For both age groups various forms of “wheeled sports” facilities feature in many children’s priority lists.
- While in general terms most parents think existing facilities are at least adequate there were significant concerns over suitability for children with disabilities and with the level of imaginative design of facilities to create stimulating and attractive play/youth areas.
- Parents highlighted a need for natural spaces designed for adventurous play in addition to equipped areas and their priority age range covered a wide age range (7-16)
- “Wild” natural areas for imaginative play were also highlighted as a preference by many.
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained and they should be easy to get to for all members of the community
- Lighting for Youth provision is desirable because it makes facilities useable all year round and safer.

4.3 Services

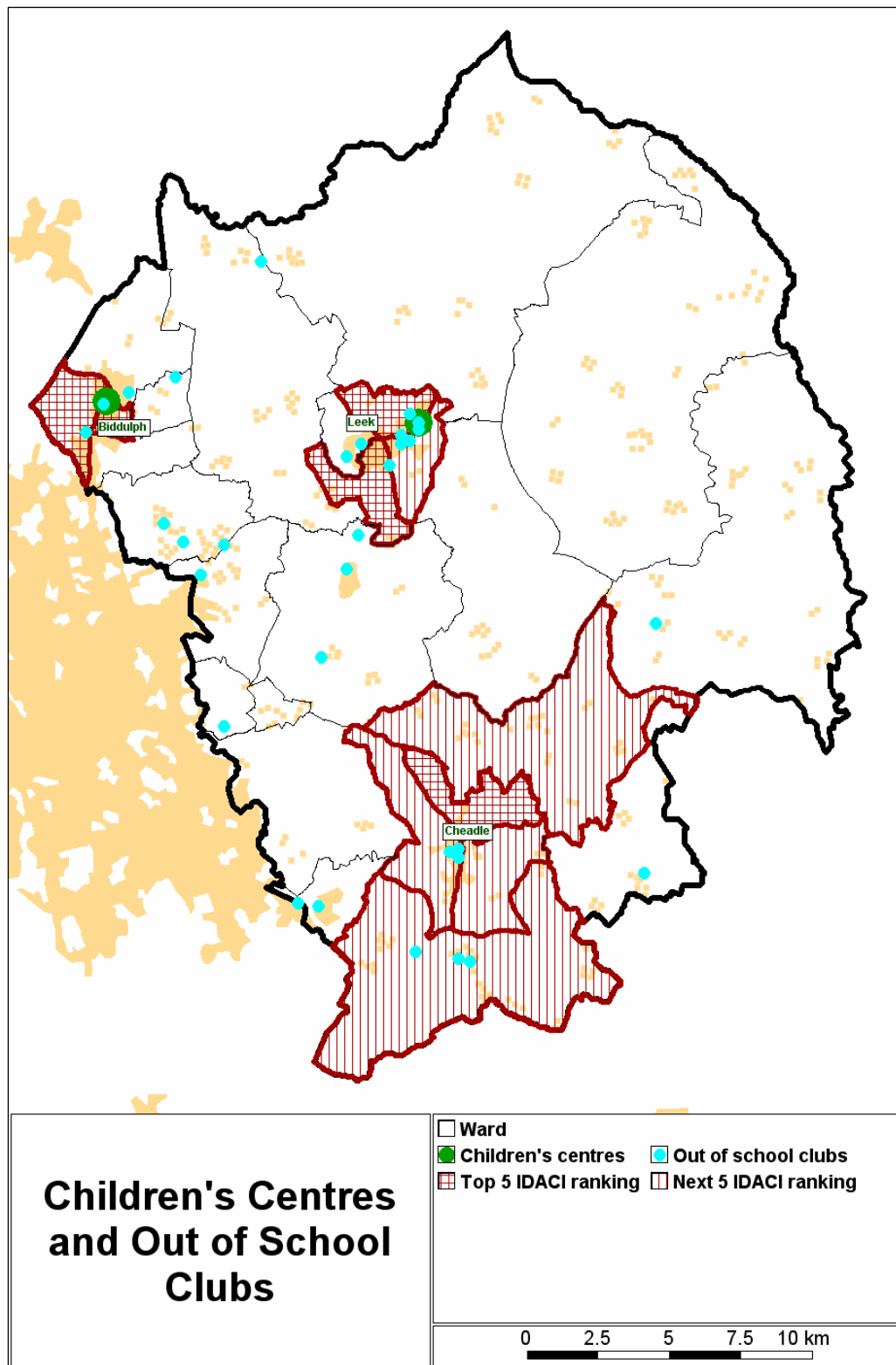
- In general teenagers attend less supervised and organised sessions than younger children and the most used provision for both age ranges is for stand alone sports and arts activities.
- Children and young people who attend schemes and activities are generally quite happy about the quality of provision.
- The main reason given for not using schemes and activities is that the children and young people “prefer to do other things” in their free time
- Poor access in terms of distance and cost were factors for a significant minority in relation to playschemes but less so for youth clubs.
- There seems to be widespread agreement that priorities for future provision of services is for more sports and arts activities and youth clubs.
- Outreach youth work brings play to where young people are, but it would be better if it was carried out at times when most young people were around.
- Expectations of young people in rural areas can be low, as they don't expect to be able to access services due to transport difficulties, this could mean there is latent demand that is not picked up through consultation.

4.4 Inclusive Play

- Supervision of open access play would mean more young people with disabilities could access it.
- Lack of accessible transport prevents children with disabilities in outlying areas from accessing schemes.
- Need for a mix of greater inclusivity re all schemes; and special provision at the request/preference of the children/young people
- Need for specialist indoor/outdoor play area specifically designed for use by children with various disabilities
- It is difficult to consult effectively with children and young people from BME community to identify general issues of concern because of dispersed demography.
- Children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds can feel isolated and very “visible” due to dispersed small population.
- Families with some siblings with and some without disabilities have significant practical difficulties accessing facilities and services.
- Facilities in Schools for young people with special needs should be better utilised for community use.

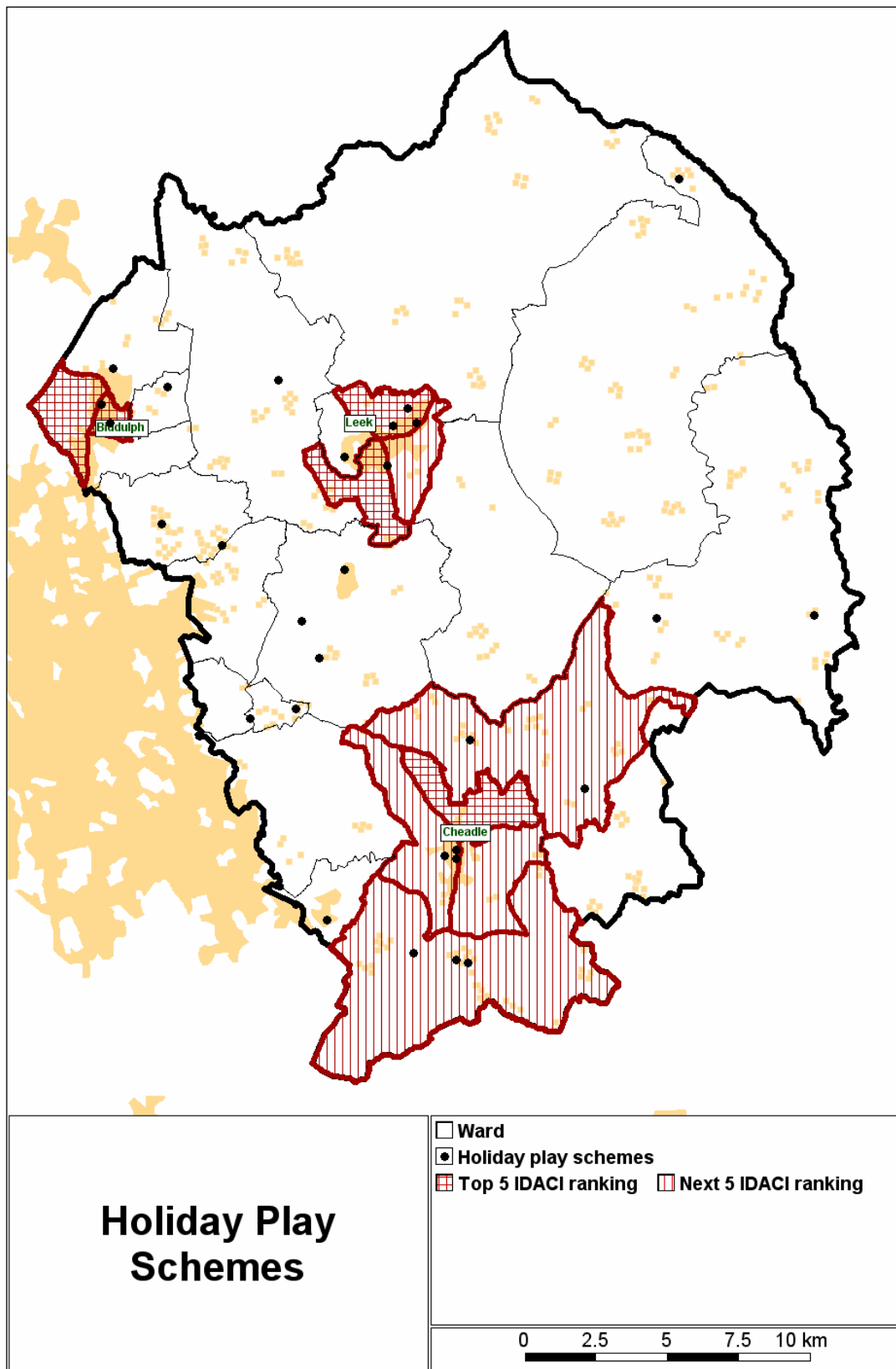
Appendix 6 – GIS Mapping of Play Services and Play Spaces

Play Services Map 1 – Out of School Clubs



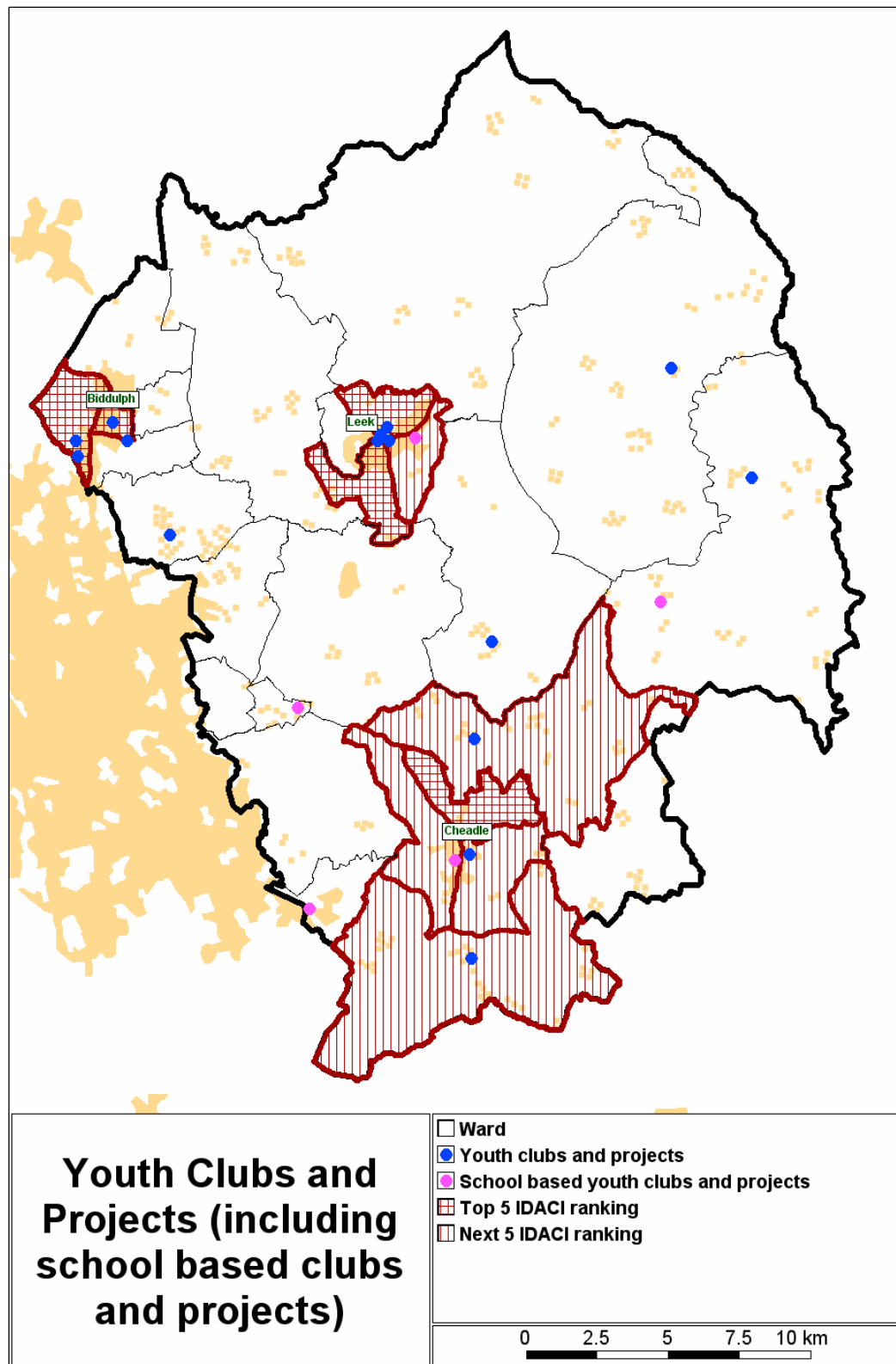
This map shows the distribution of Children's Centres and out-of-school clubs across the District.

Play Services Map 2 – Holiday Playschemes



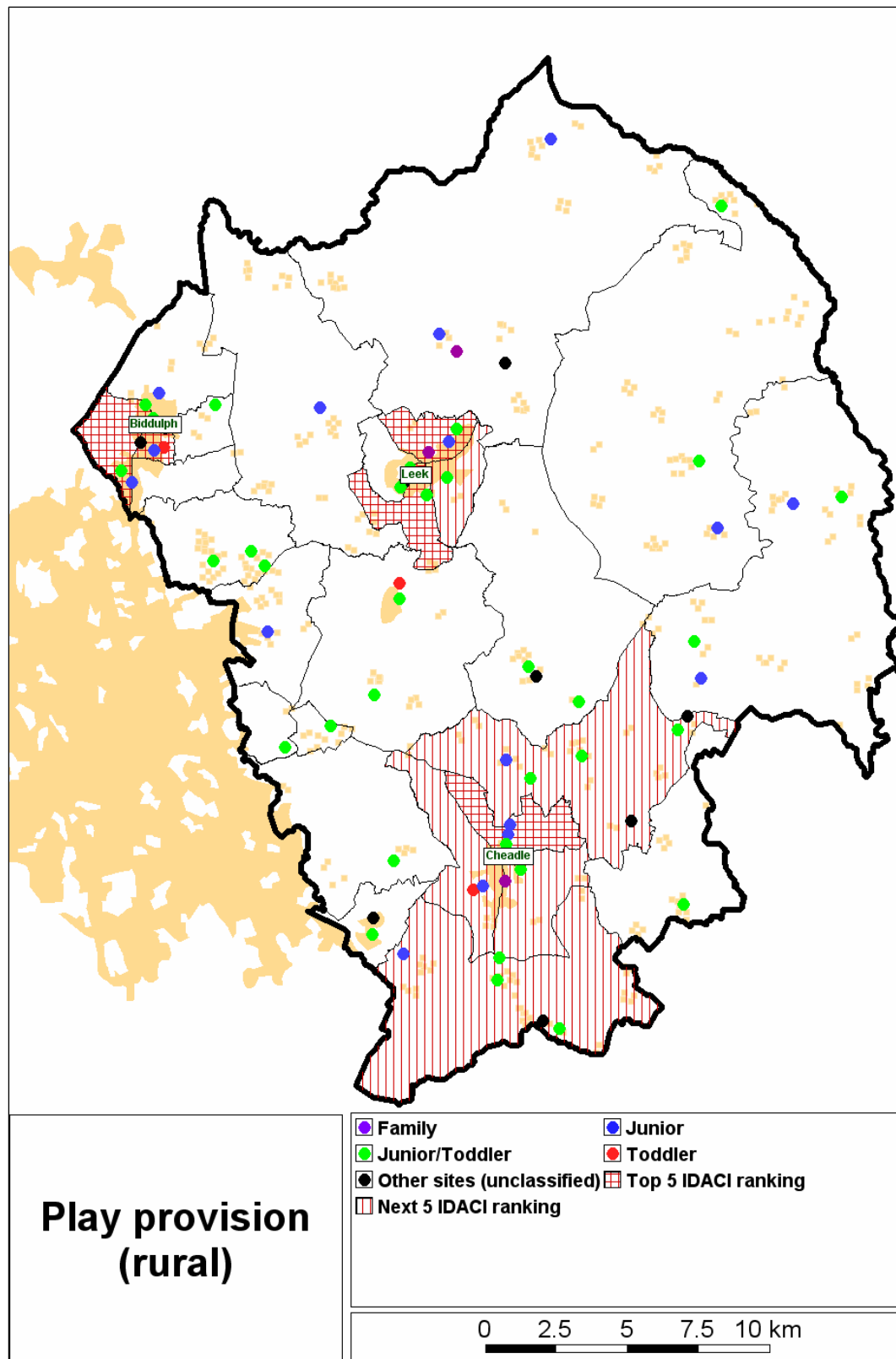
This map shows the distribution of Holiday Playschemes across the District.

Play Services Map 3 – Youth Services



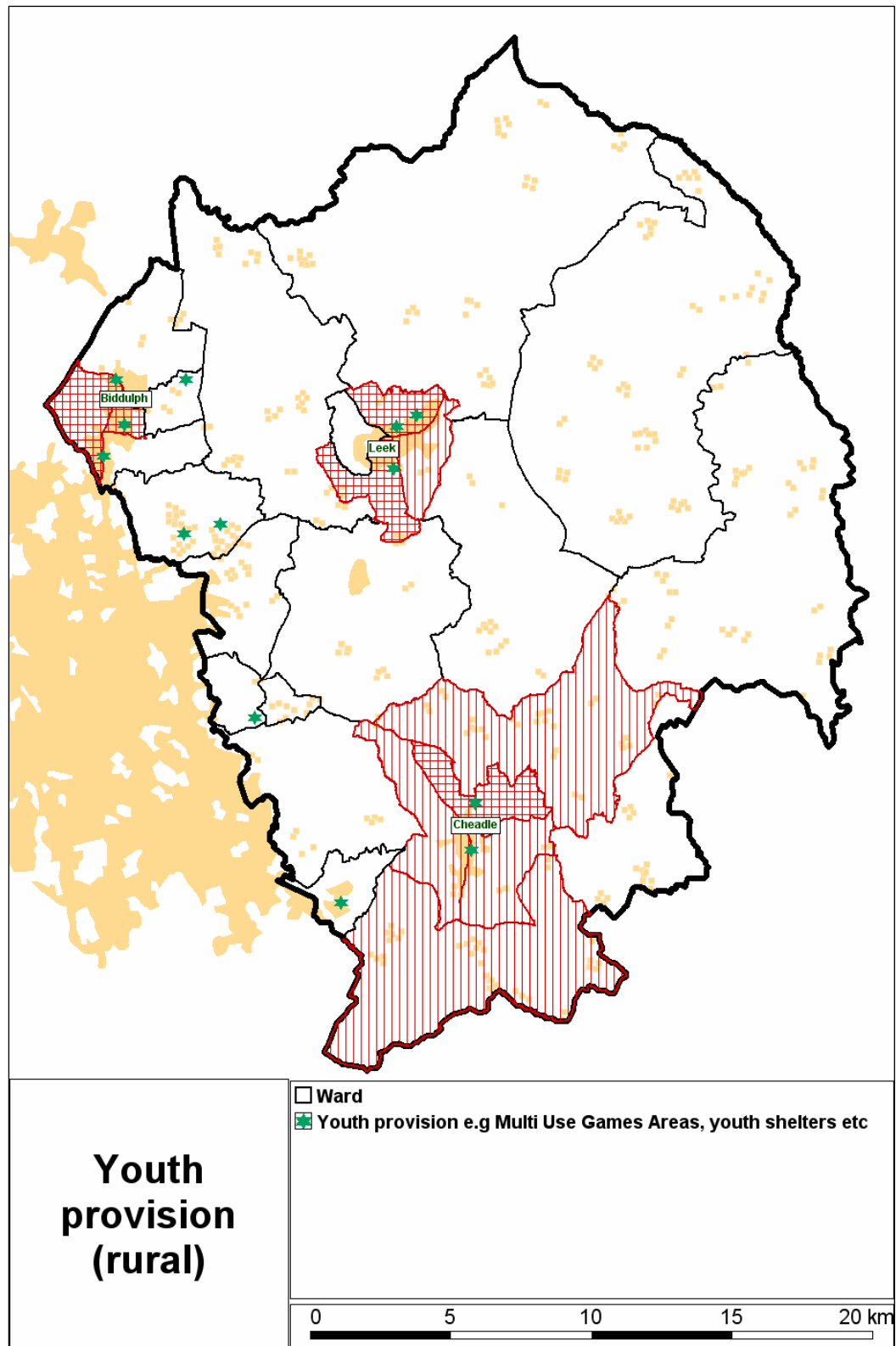
This map shows the distribution of Youth Clubs and Projects across the District supported by the County Youth service.

Play Facilities Map 1 – Play Areas (District Distribution)



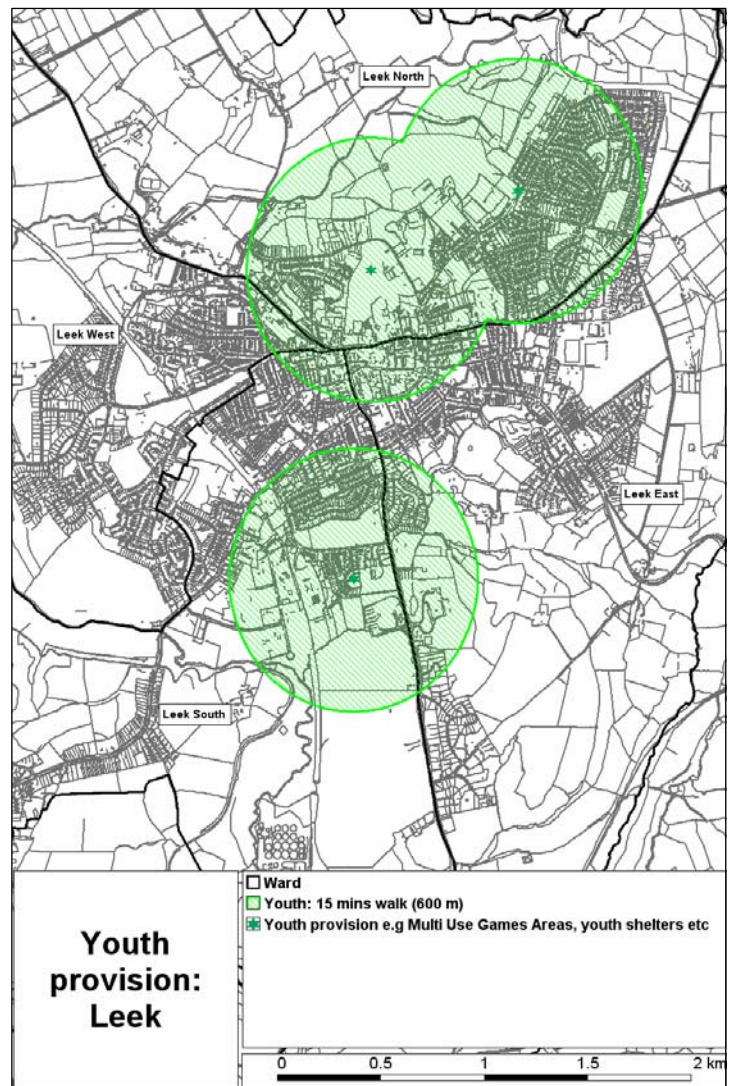
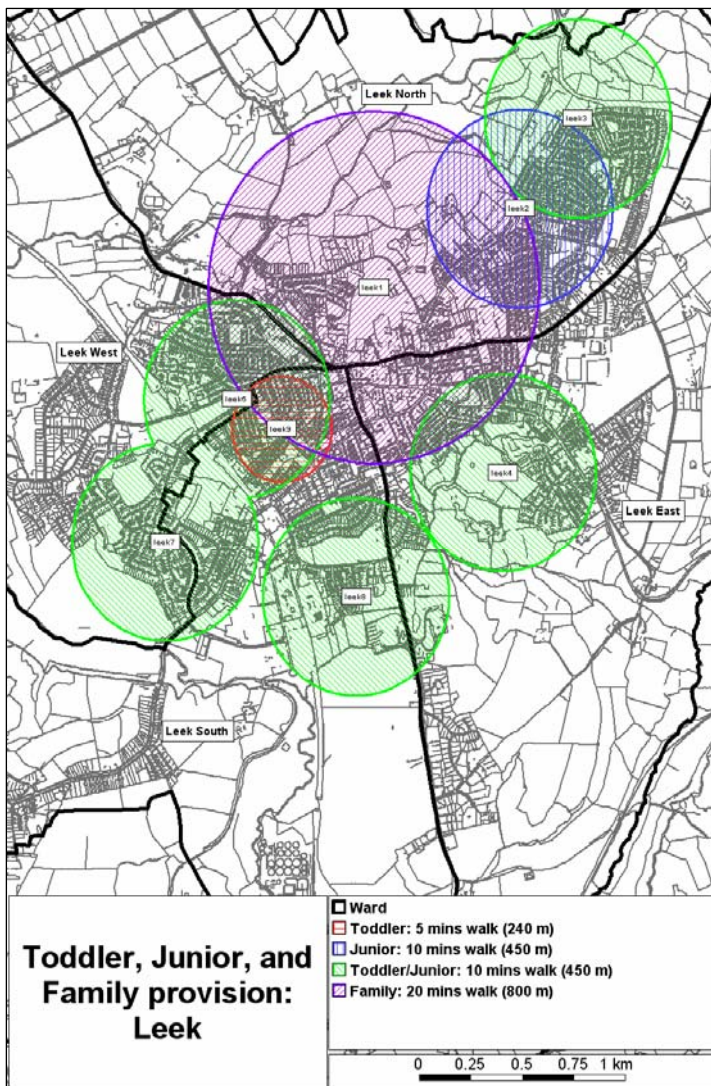
This map shows the distribution of Play Areas across the District.

Play Facilities Map 2 – Youth Facilities (District Distribution)

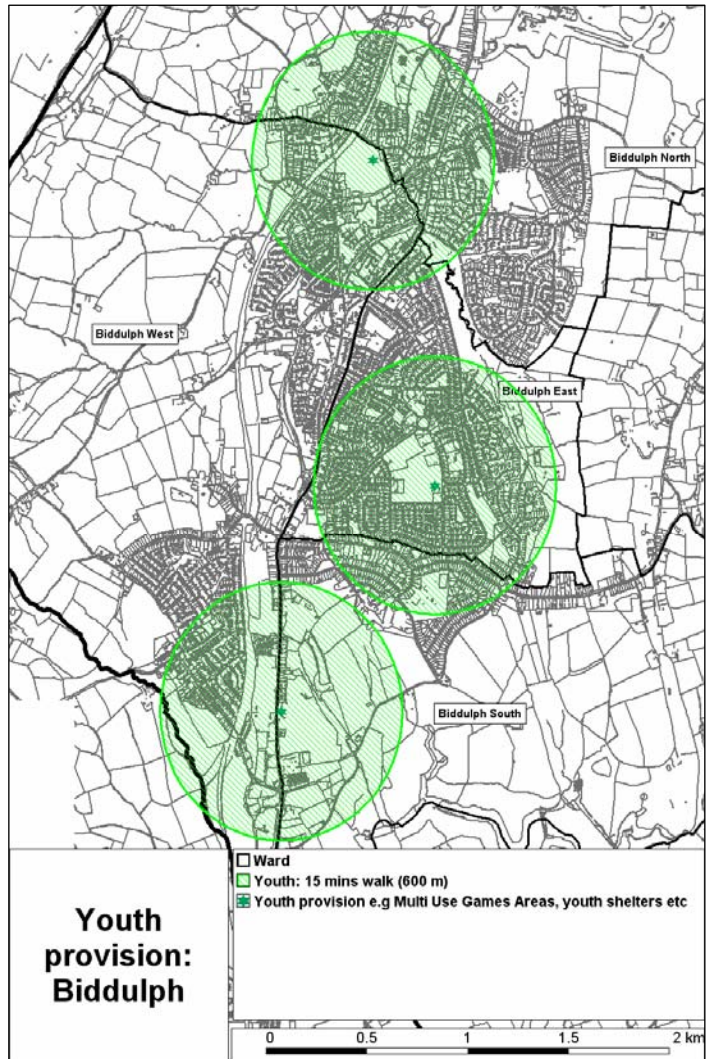
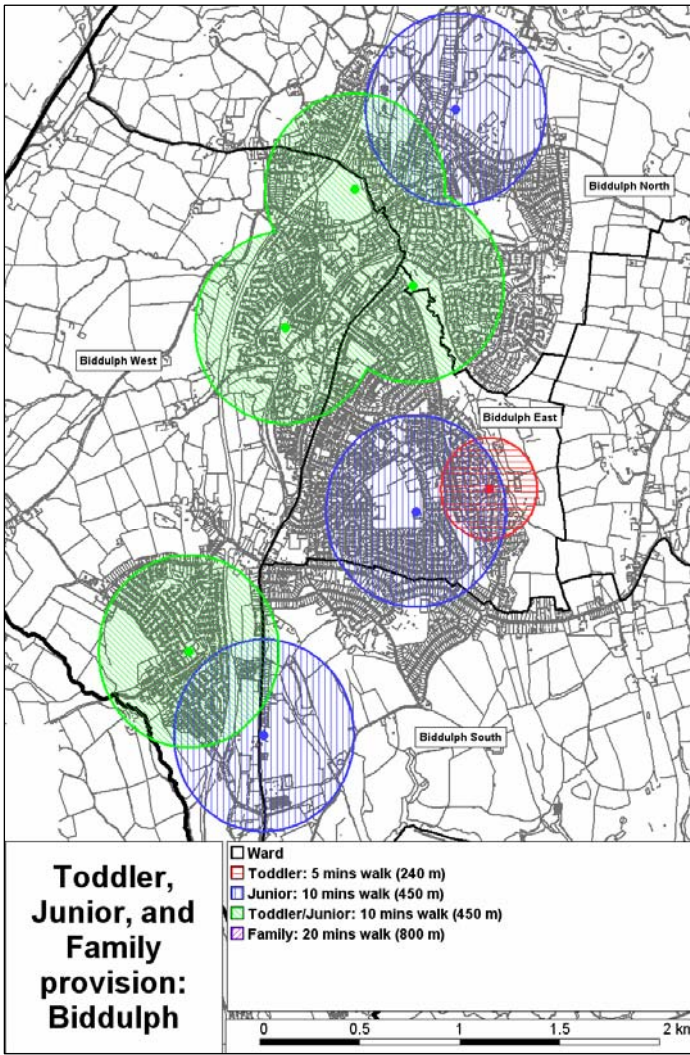


This map shows the distribution of Play Areas across the District.

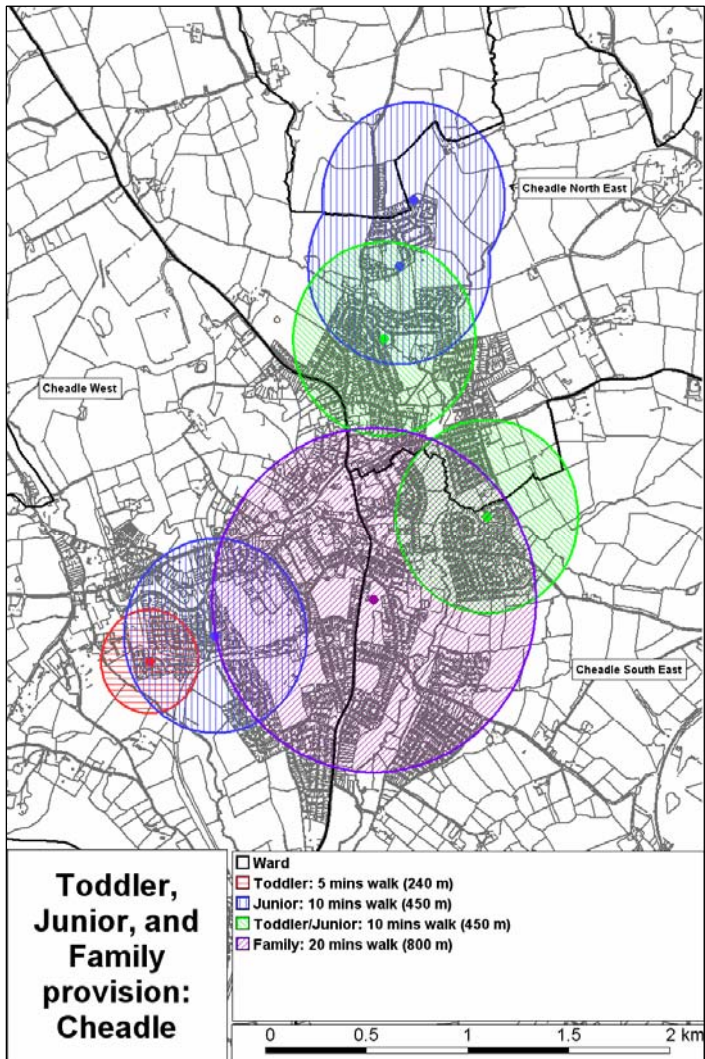
Play and Youth Facilities – Leek



Play and Youth Facilities - Biddulph



Play and Youth Facilities - Cheadle



Appendix 7 - The Play Audit

Play Services

Children's Centres, Pre-schools and Childcare Services

There are 2 Children's Centres in Staffordshire Moorlands, the Beresford Memorial Children's Centre in Leek and Staffordshire Moorlands Early Years Childcare Centre in Biddulph. These provide an extensive programme of childcare and play services for children and support services for their families.

Information provided by the Staffordshire Children's Information Service indicates that there are 21 providers of pre-school play/care sessions (these include private, voluntary sector and LEA providers).

There is provision in:

- Alton
- Biddulph
- Blythe Bridge
- Brown Edge
- Cheddleton
- Draycott
- Endon
- Ipstones
- Knypersley
- Leek (4)
- Longnor
- Rushton Spencer
- Tean
- Warslow
- Werrington
- Wetley Rocks

Parent and Toddler Groups

There are 20 Parent and toddler groups in Staffordshire Moorlands registered with the County Council. Groups are located in:

- Alstonefield
- Blackshaw Moor
- Blythe Bridge
- Bradnop
- Cheadle
- Endon
- Flash
- Ipstones
- Knypersley
- Leek(6)
- Longnor
- Manifold
- Rudyard
- Waterhouses
- Werrington

Playschemes and Holiday Clubs

There are a number of playschemes and holiday clubs that operate in school holidays in Staffordshire Moorlands with most operating in the summer holidays. They are provided by a range of organisations including

the District Council (via the Play Council), voluntary sector and the private sector. The numbers vary from year to year and schemes operating in summer 2006 are considered in this section. Other than holiday clubs acting as care schemes the majority of schemes offer a limited number of morning or afternoon sessions per week. Playschemes vary in the age range catered for between 3 and 14 years.

The following communities benefited from access to playschemes on a regular weekly (at least) basis over the summer:

Playscheme	Settlement
Best Thymes Holiday Club	Biddulph
Staffordshire Moorlands Early Years Childcare Centre	Biddulph
Biddulph Integrated Playscheme	Biddulph
Biddulph Moor Holiday Play Scheme	Biddulph Moor
The Clubhouse	Blythe Bridge
Blythe Bridge Holiday Play Scheme	Blythe Bridge
St Anne's Kids Out of School Club	Brown Edge
Pathways Day Nursery	Cheadle
Playbox	Cheadle
Homestart Playscheme Bishop Rawle	Cheadle
Poppins Day Nursery	Cheadle
All Saints Kids Club	Cheadle
Cheadle Primary Fun Club	Cheadle
Cheddleton HPS	Cheddleton
Endon Fun Club	Endon
Ilam Holiday Play Scheme	Ilam
Kingsley Holiday Play Scheme	Kingsley
Beresford Memorial Children's Centre	Leek
Churnet View Haregate Holiday Club	Leek
Brough Park Leisure	Leek
Buckingham's Out of School, Integrated Playscheme,	Leek
Longnor Holiday Play Scheme	Longnor
Oakamoor Holiday Playscheme	Oakamoor
Funseekers	Tean
Tean Holiday Playscheme	Tean
Acorns Day Nursery	Tean
Waterhouses Holiday Playscheme	Waterhouses
Werrington Holiday Playscheme	Werrington
Teddy's Garden Day Nursery	Wetley Rocks
Integrated Playscheme,	Wetley Rocks

In addition there were various summer activities provided by the District Council for children and young people on a one off or less than weekly basis including:

- Dancetastic
- Multi-skills
- Circus Skills
- Summer Luvvies (drama)
- Sports - Football, Cricket and Golf
- Puppet Making
- Adventure Course
- Drop in sessions on local recreation grounds

Out-of-School clubs

Information provided by the Staffordshire Children's Information Service indicates that there are at least 34 out of school care schemes operating across Staffordshire Moorlands District. These provide out of school care primarily for children from the ages of 5 to 11. Most of these schemes operate independently under a variety of management arrangements ranging from charitable trusts, schools, through to private commercial organisations.

Settlements benefiting from provision are:

• Alton	• Endon (2)
• Ash Bank	• Knypersley
• Biddulph	• Leek (9)
• Biddulph Moor (2)	• Rushton Spencer
• Blythe Bridge (2)	• Stockton Brook
• Brown Edge (2)	• Tean (3)
• Cheadle (4)	• Waterhouses
• Cheddleton (2)	• Wetley Rocks

In general such schemes provide care before and after school and during school holidays (though some of these schemes do not operate during school holidays). All schemes register through the Staffordshire County Council Children's Services.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Services

Sports Development - The sports development team works with the local community (with a special focus on young people) to encourage sports opportunities in the district. As well as providing fun "taster" sessions for various sports it provides two outreach projects, REplay and Streetz Ahead. The projects are based in Biddulph and Cheadle respectively, for

13-19 year olds. Both projects are run in partnership with Staffordshire County Council Youth Services.

Arts Development - The Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Arts Development service is actively involved in the organisation and delivery of many projects across the district including projects for children and young people.

Activity Programmes - Sports and Arts Development also organise sports activity sessions during the school holidays that are promoted alongside the local playschemes that the council provide in conjunction with the local Play Council(see below).

Community Safety - The Community Safety Team based with the District Council support a number of youth projects including, for example, 3 "Activity Groups" (for 8 to 13 year olds) in Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek which provide for children and young people who might otherwise engage in anti-social behaviour.

Newcastle & North Staffs Play Council

The Play Council is a registered charity promoting play as an educational, recreational and social activity for all children, including specific needs, aged from birth to fourteen years across North Staffordshire. It also acts as a training agency (training program provides a variety of courses from basic skills to nationally recognised qualifications) and an information and resource centre for those working with young people. Services it provides in Staffordshire Moorlands include:

Holiday Playschemes - In summer 2006 the Play Council provided 7 Holiday Play schemes across the district (funded by the District Council) for young people in the age range 4 - 14 years, including young people with 'special needs'.

Junior Youth Clubs - The Play Council supports 4 junior Clubs in Staffordshire Moorlands for 4 - 16 year olds. This provision is staffed solely by volunteers, usually recruited from within their own community. The sessions of 1½ - 2 normally run once a week throughout the year.

Out-of-school Club - The Play Council run an out-of-school club in Kingsley. The club includes both before and after school activities. The age of youngsters is 3 - 13 years and includes those with 'special needs'.

Playaway Scrapstores (Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent)

A Scrapstore is a means by which material which would otherwise be disposed of for landfill, such as paper, card, material etc, is recycled for use by children and community organisations. There are 2 Scrapstores in Staffordshire (Playaway) in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. These are both organised by Staffordshire Rural Community Council. It is suggested that Play Partnership should help to promote their availability in virtue of their value to local play and community organisations

Youth Clubs and Organisations

The County Youth Service operates from a number of bases and venues across the district depending upon projects underway at any one time. These include both school and community/standalone centres. In summer 2006 these included:

Youth Club and Community Venues

Base/Venue	Settlement
Biddulph Youth Centre	Biddulph
Blythe Bridge Youth Centre	Blythe Bridge
Brown Edge Youth Centre	Brown Edge Youth Centre
Cheadle Leisure Centre	Cheadle
Ipstones Youth Club	Ipstones Village Hall
Kingsley Youth Club	Kingsley
Fire and Rescue Station (motorbike project)	Leek
Millward Hall Youth Centre	Leek
at 21 Youth Project	Leek
Brough Park	Leek
Tea Youth Cafe	Teen

School Venues

Base/Venue	Settlement
Painsley High School	Cheadle
Cheadle High School	Cheadle
Blythe Bridge High School	Blythe Bridge
Waterhouses School	Waterhouses
Leek High School	Leek
Moorside High School	Werrington

In addition there are a number of voluntary sector youth organisations but currently no comprehensive list of such exists. None of the statutory and voluntary sector youth agencies hold a comprehensive record of such provision. It is recommended that the Play Partnership work with these organisations to establish the full extent and range of such provision in Staffordshire Moorlands

Play Facilities

Summary of Provision³

Quantity

In summary there are:

- 4 sites with Toddler Play Areas
- 16 sites with Junior Play Areas
- 34 sites with mixed toddler/junior play areas
- 3 Family sites

13 of these sites also have Youth Facilities

In total there are 57 sites with some form of fixed play or youth equipment. The most common form of provision is a combined toddler/junior play area and this is not surprising, particularly in the rural areas where the density of child/youth population is quite small so combined provision is sensible. In addition 8 public recreation ground sites were visited which, though not containing formal play equipment are used locally for informal play.

The District Council manage 15 of these sites in Biddulph and Leek (though three of these sites do not currently hold any fixed play equipment). Historically, the District Council has not been the lead provider for site-based play in Cheadle and has limited open space sites in the town at which to develop its provision. The remainder of the sites are managed primarily by local Parish Councils and Recreation Trusts.

Whereas there is a degree of provision of play areas in the rural areas there are very few identified youth facilities outside the 3 main towns (what there is, is located to the west of the district adjacent to Stoke on Trent).

The chart below summarises provision by ward:

³ GIS based maps showing key play facilities are included in Appendix 6

Ward	Pop	U18	%	Play Area	Child per PA	Youth Facility	Child per YF
Alton	1396	290	20.8	1	290		
Bagnall and Stanley	1481	301	20.3	1	301		
Biddulph East	5996	1837	30.1	2	919	1	1837
Biddulph Moor	1689	352	20.1	1	352	1	352
Biddulph North	5122	1014	19.8	2	507		
Biddulph South	1626	250	15.4	1	250	1	250
Biddulph West	5079	1146	22.3	3	382	1	1146
Brown Edge and Endon	4759	957	20.1	3	319	2	479
Caverswall	1707	346	20.3	1	346		
Cellarhead	3342	740	22.1	1	740		
Cheadle North East	3581	939	26.2	3	313	1	939
Cheadle South East	3664	832	22.7	2	616	1	832
Cheadle West	4921	1210	24.6	2	605		
Checkley	5402	1338	24.8	4	335		
Cheddleton	4474	944	21.1	3	315		
Churnet	3226	713	22.1	4	178		
Dane	1586	368	23.2	3	123		
Forsbrook	5008	1079	21.5	1	1079	1	1079
Hamps Valley	1685	400	23.7	4	100		
Horton	1784	369	20.7	1	369		
Ipstones	1817	420	23.1	2	210		
Leek East	4645	930	20	1	930		
Leek North	5412	1396	25.8	3	465	2	698
Leek South	5093	1236	24.3	2	618	1	1236
Leek West	4730	1105	23.4	2	553		
Manifold	1834	402	21.2	3	134		
Werrington	3430	746	21.7	1	746	1	746

The wards highlighted in dark green are the five that contain areas of relatively high child deprivation and the five in light green are the wards with areas with next highest areas of deprivation. Wards highlighted in grey are other wards with few play areas per head of child population (more than 700 children per play area).

Fixed Play Provision in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle

Leek

Play Provision

There is only one standalone toddler facility to the north of Leek South ward (Victoria Court, off Cruso Street) and one standalone junior area to the north east (Ball Hays Green Recreation ground). Most provision for both ages is based in the 5 toddler/junior facilities and in Brough Park (a

family site with something for all ages). Provision is quite well distributed across the main town with most households being within a ten minute walk of a junior or junior/toddler area (or Brough Park). The most notable exception to this is to the west of the town in Leek West ward. There are also 2 areas of housing to the south of the town in wards Leek South and Leek East that do not have reasonable walking access to play areas.

Youth Provision

The residential areas in the north of the town in Leek North Ward have reasonable access to facilities (Leek North is one of the 5 most deprived wards in the district) but much of the town in the other wards do not. Additional provision on 2 areas in the east and west of the town would bring most of the town within a 15 minute walk of youth provision.

General Observations

Given the clear majority of parents (and many children's) indications through the consultation process that they would rather walk a bit further to access better equipped sites it seems sensible to focus on the development of a network of toddler/junior play areas rather than separate toddler and junior areas. In this respect provision of toddler equipment at Ball Haye Green Recreation Ground in Leek North would be sensible. An additional site to the far west of the town would close a gap but in terms of deprivation Leek West ward does not feature within the 10 most deprived wards.

Given the general recognition that provision for teenagers is a top priority new provision in the east and west of the town would be a clear priority. In terms of deprivation Leek East features in the ten most deprived wards in the district which adds to the case for new provision here.

District Council Observations

Leek East has relatively few play areas per head. The District Council has an existing play area at Pickwood Recreation Ground. There is no obvious other location to develop a new facility. Capacity shortfall in this ward can only best be addressed therefore by enhancing the provision at Pickwood.

Leek North is currently adequately provided but it should be noted that the site at Haregate Hall is earmarked for a possible social housing development. Whilst a play area would be retained as part of the

development the scheme could limit the potential to expand facilities on this site. A more obvious location for consideration would be at the Queen's Drive / Horsecroft Crescent green space owned by SMDC. It would be useful to consult on this location as a potential alternative to Haregate Hall.

Solutions to the under-provision in Leek South are limited either by the availability of land or its location - in short there are options but none are ideal. Land at Campbell Avenue offers the space but lacks natural security of overlooking properties and it is believed its use may have been discontinued due to antisocial behaviour problems in the past. There is currently no fixed equipment in situ. It probably cannot be recommended for toddler/junior provision due to its isolation but could be considered for consultation as a site for youth provision. The site is more certainly suitable for recognising, officially, as a location of informal play. It is a location where natural features such as tree trunks or boulders could be incorporated for safe informal, exploratory play. Consultation could be considered for a combination of path improvements and a separate rough cycle trail.

Whilst Westwood Recreation ground is not actually within Leek South it is alongside the northern boundary. As an established and well regarded existing location it may be more cost efficient and appropriate as a first round improvement to focus on this site - due to its general accessibility and its closeness to Leek South. It is also large enough to accommodate some form of youth provision separately from the toddler/junior elements.

Lack of youth provision in Leek East could be addressed at Pickwood Recreation Ground.

Conclusions - District Council Options for Leek

Youth Facilities

- Provide, subject to local consultation, a 'youth' facility at the Westwood and Pickwood Recreation grounds. This could be as simple as installing a teen shelter type facility and/or mini ball court with basket and/or a single piece of adventure equipment suitable for older ages - though these are not the only options.

Toddler / Junior facilities

- Enhance the Pickwood site to provide expanded provision of both toddler and junior facilities.

- Enhance the Westwood site to provide expanded provision of both toddler and junior facilities.
- Enhance Ball Haye Green Recreation Ground to provide Toddler equipment

Biddulph

Play Areas

There is one standalone toddler play area (play area on land off Hawthorn Grove, Biddulph East), and 5 toddler/junior facilities. In addition there are four other designated play areas in the town (St. Lawrence's Rec. ground - Biddulph North; Church Road Playing Fields and Slater Street Rec. ground in Biddulph East; and to the south of the town - Mill Hayes Sports Ground in Biddulph South). Of these, Mill Hayes is a skate park, Church Road currently has fixed play equipment for juniors but not toddlers, and St. Lawrence's Rec. ground and Slater Street Rec. ground have no fixed play equipment.

In terms of sites, provision is quite well distributed across the main town with most households being within a ten minute walk of some form of designated play space. However, there is only one junior area in Biddulph East and this does not provide for toddlers. Much of Biddulph East therefore does not have easy access to toddlers play provision. There are also areas in Biddulph East, North and South that do not have easy access to sites/play areas for toddlers and juniors.

Youth Provision

There are 3 areas providing facilities for youth across the town and these are well distributed from north to south. However there are many households that are more than 15 minutes walk from these facilities.

General Observations

As for Leek it would seem sensible to focus on the development of a network of toddler/junior play areas rather than separate toddler and junior areas. In this respect provision of toddler equipment at St. Lawrence's Rec. ground; Church Road Playing Fields; and Mill Hayes Sports Ground⁴) may be sensible. Given the high deprivation recorded in Biddulph East this would be a high priority along with an additional toddler/junior facility strategically placed to meet this need. Providing a

⁴ Though this would need detailed consideration as currently this site is primarily a skate park and is on the edge of town. It might be thought a little isolated.

toddler/junior play area in the Slater Street Rec. ground may be an option to consider⁵.

Given the general recognition that provision for teenagers is a top priority additional provision for youth should be explored aiming at access to such provision within a 15 minute walk time. An additional 3 facilities, strategically situated could largely close gaps in provision.

District Council Observations

Biddulph East has fewest play areas per head of child population. For the District Council this implicates Church Road or potentially Slater Street or Biddulph Valley Park as sites owned by the council that could be developed to address the under-provision. Slater Street is no longer considered a suitable location however. Biddulph Valley Park has recently (2006) had a new site installed so the recommendation must be weighted to Church Road.

Outwith the deprived area priorities additional analysis would be needed to identify a way forward for other Biddulph sites. Specifically 'The Paddock' at Craigside is poorly located. It is in a secluded hollow which has only limited 'natural policing' from overlooking properties. Subject to reaching agreement with local people on an alternative location - Devon Grove may offer a much improved and possibly only alternative. The play area at 'The Paddock' could therefore be relocated and enhanced to provide a combined toddler / junior site.

A very suitable location at Newpool Terrace is unfortunately a particularly tired and dated site. As a good location it is worthy of priority for enhancement to provide combined toddler and junior equipment. Local consultation should take place to consider some alternative options to provide a youth facility either on this site or on land the other side of Newpool Terrace, off Royce Avenue.

At Halls Road an oddly located play area needs to be reconsidered - possibly for conversion to a youth facility alone and /or for incorporation of a toddler / junior facility at the front of the site with better access and better overlooking security.

⁵ Though this site has narrow restricted access points which may in practice make it unsuitable for development as a toddler/junior play facility. Further consideration and local consultation might help decide the most appropriate use for this site.

Conclusions - District Council options for Biddulph

- Enhance the Church Road site to provide expanded provision of toddler and junior facilities as well as a potential MUGA.
- Slater Street should no longer be considered as an effective play site due to its very limited access. Consultation should take place locally to consider its long term future. Expansion of facilities at Church Road, Devon Grove or Moorland Road (Biddulph Valley Park) can all compensate.
- The Paddock should also be considered for discontinuation but this must be subject to local agreement on an alternative location - land nearby on Devon Grove offers possibly the only alternative. Newpool Terrace should be up-graded to a combined toddler / junior facility together with - subject to local consultation - youth equipment either on the same site (outside of the play area) or on the nearby Royce Avenue field. This could be as simple as installing a teen shelter type facility and/or mini ball court with basket and/or a single piece of adventure equipment suitable for older ages - though these are not the only options.
- Halls Road should be up-graded to a combined toddler / junior facility but re-located closer to the site frontage. Subject to local consultation - a youth equipment facility should be retained at the present location.
- St Lawrence's Recreation Ground offers some possible options as alternatives to the above.

Cheadle

Play Areas

There is one standalone toddler play area to the south west of the town (land off Kenilworth Walk), 3 standalone junior areas and 2 toddler/junior areas. The town is also served by a "family" facility (Cheadle Recreation ground) which is fairly central and accessible by foot within 20 minutes from most of the town (though less so from the north).

Youth Provision

There are 2 areas providing facilities for youth across the town one in the north and one fairly central. However there are many households that are more than 15 minutes walk from these facilities.

General Observations

As above, it would seem sensible to focus on the development of a network of toddler/junior play areas rather than separate toddler and junior areas. In this respect provision of toddler equipment on all three of the standalone junior areas (Hammersley Hayes Road play area; play area off Thorpe Rise; and play area adjacent to Austin Close, Majors Barn) could be considered⁶. An additional toddler/junior play area in the south of the town in Cheadle South East ward would help in providing access to toddler/junior provision for a significant number of households who are currently more than a ten minute walk from such provision.

An additional facility in the south west of the town in Cheadle West ward would help bring many additional households within 15 minutes of some kind of youth provision.

Further Audit Details are available on two Excel Spreadsheets from the District Council:

1. Play Services
2. Play and Youth Facilities

⁶ Local consultation would need to consider the suitability of the sites for this purpose, in particular Hammersley Hayes Road and Thorpe Rise.

Appendix 8 – Rationale for Local Play Space Standards

National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standard

The NPFA 'Six-Acre' Standard is essentially designed for application in new large residential developments and requires modification to suit existing urban settlements and rural areas.

The NPFA standards for equipped children's play provision have been criticised in recent years because they can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities. An additional problem is that the current NPFA guidance does not adequately cover the needs of most teenagers specifically within the standard, and it is felt that this is a significant problem in the City (confirmed by much of the consultation detailed earlier).

Another fundamental problem with the NPFA standard for children's play is how to interpret it in terms of what type of provision is required per head of population. As has been mentioned, whilst the standard suggests an overall level of children's play provision of 0.8 ha per 1000 people it does not specify what should be the ratio between informal and equipped provision within this overall area.

Nor is it always practical or necessarily appropriate to adopt this approach in all settlements. In many rural communities housing is far too scattered for this hierarchy of provision to be relevant. Similarly, the population of under 17 year-olds in some villages is too small to justify the provision of more than one play area. Under these circumstances the quality of the play area will need to cater for a broad age range and its location within the community will be of increased importance.

Developing Local Standards

<p>It is proposed that the Council should move away from the NPFA national standards and adopt local standards that are more appropriate to the local circumstances and needs of Staffordshire Moorlands</p>
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It is suggested that NPFA Play standards provide the starting point for a local standard but that they are amended in line with local needs. For example, the consultation exercise highlighted a number of important

priorities in relation to the planning, provision and management of playspace within the Moorlands, such as the needs to:

- Provide a strategic network of playgrounds, youth facilities and programmes to address the needs of different age ranges and ability levels in locations that are accessible to all sectors of the population (taking into account the varying capacity of different age ranges to travel).
- Plan the street environment with play, safety and "hang out" considerations in mind (given that children and young people view and use "the street" as a play / social environment).
- Provide informal seating/meeting areas, kickabout areas, and wheeled sports facilities alongside (possibly in preference to) more "traditional" equipment.
- Maintain facilities adequately (given children and parents' concerns with graffiti, broken equipment, dirt, litter, broken glass etc).
- Adopt "Secured by Design" principles when planning play and Youth areas e.g. Natural surveillance.
- Improve play areas and youth facilities in relation to access for disabled children.
- Provide, as a priority, facilities for older children and young people such as skateparks, MUGAs, and youth shelters.

These issues have influenced the suggestions of the following standards. However, other important factors have also been taken into account, for example to be useful standards need to be:

- ***Comprehensive, but also flexible and simple-to-understand.*** If it is to be effective, guidance should be clear and unambiguous and provide practical solutions to meet most circumstances. Equally, it should cater for circumstances where alternative solutions are desirable or necessary as a result of testing local opinion; or where unforeseen opportunities arise.
- ***Clear about costs, including those for planning and design, installation, and longer-term maintenance.*** Developers should be clear about what is expected of them. The Council and other agencies should be clear on how they can apply the guidance. Local people should understand at what level to set their expectations. Providing unambiguous guidance on cost will allow developers to make sufficient financial provision at an early stage, and means that through quick

payment of the appropriate contribution they need not become entangled in detailed issues of consultation and design.

- ***Applicable to all sizes of housing development.*** Although only larger housing developments are likely to justify new facilities in their own right, most new housing will increase demand for play opportunities and therefore all house developers should contribute financially to such provision from the single infill plot, to large estates - exceptions will be few and far between.
- ***Reflective of Children's most popular play activities.*** For example, national research indicates that social play, ball play and wheel play are by far the most popular regardless of age, sex, socio-economic group or cultural origin. This is supported locally by the strategy consultation, which shows that both children and young people rate such facilities as a high priority for provision.
- ***Reflective also of how and where Children will play.*** Children will always choose to play in a variety of ways and in doing so, use different locations. Some venues should be very close to home, but others can be farther away- it all very much depends on the age and needs of the target users.
- ***Supportive of local efforts to secure better quality facilities.*** Consultations have clearly demonstrated that local parents value good quality facilities and, within reason, would be happy to walk further to use them.
- ***A celebration of the diversity of play.*** Children don't need to be encouraged to play if given the opportunity. Swings, roundabouts and other equipped play areas can be important; but even small areas of grass can be invaluable to toddlers wanting to let off steam. Similarly, older children may be happy to walk reasonable distances to use a skatepark, but sometimes they may simply just want somewhere near their house to sit and talk with friends. A mixture of and diversity in opportunity is therefore essential.
- ***Co-ordinated in terms of potential and beneficial links between new provision and organised play and 'outreach' work.*** With a little imagination and planning play facilities can be used as a focus for

organised children's activity. For older children they may be a focus for youth outreach work and educational programmes.

- ***Sensitive to safety and nuisance concerns.*** Playgrounds can be 'noisy neighbours' and guidance should take into account potential concern of local residents. It should also reflect the need to ensure reasonable security and safety for users and protection from misuse and vandalism.

National guidance (PPG17)

At the national level government planning policy (PPG17) makes clear that local authority standards covering the provision of all forms of sports and recreation facility (including play) should as a minimum be able to help answer these questions:

- How much is needed?
- What quality should it be?
- How easy should provision be to reach and use for those for whom it is designed?

Towards Local Standards for Staffordshire Moorlands

The suggested standards differ from NPFA national standards based upon the consultation findings and local circumstances. The main variations relate to the potential for fewer but higher quality provision (for which most parents, and many children and young people say they are prepared to walk further than NPFA standards suggest); a stronger preference for ball games, wheeled sports, and landscaping for imaginative play than is shown in the NPFA standards; provision for teenagers and families; and the addition of a quantitative element (provision per 1000 population).

Towns and Large Villages

In relation to new development and as an aspiration for existing built-up areas it is suggested that a network of play/youth facility areas should be provided in accordance with the following local standards.

Doorstep Outdoor Play Space - DOPS (primarily for accompanied children up to 7 years of age - replacing NPFA LAPs)

These would represent the base level of facility provision. The aim would be to make them very accessible and therefore within easy reach of accompanied young children.

Because of their very basic requirements, these facilities might be located on a wide range of open spaces that also serve other purposes. Parks and many existing green spaces will meet this requirement for a very local area for young children, and provision of playspace for the very young should therefore be considered in the context of a wider Open Space Strategy. However, there are parts of the District not within easy reach of a park or green space, and there is a need here to provide some guidance in these circumstances.

DOPS should be within easy walking distance (5 minutes walking time from home). Wherever possible they should be located to coincide with routes and destinations for other regular trips (school, shops, parks etc). They may also be located on open space shared for other compatible recreation (such as in parks, playing fields, or general amenity space). They will need to accommodate, for example, low-key games and exercise, imaginative/social play, and play with small toys. The emphasis would be on encouraging younger children to be accompanied and regularly visiting whilst the parent/carer is on route to (say) school or local shops.

Provision per population	1:1,000 people
Location	5 minutes walking distance from home- straight line distance 240m
Target age group	Primarily for accompanied under 7s, but may be used by older children also
Purpose	Low key local safe spaces for play primarily for accompanied young children
Landscaping	Landscaped and designed to accommodate play primarily for under 7s, including seating but not necessarily formal play equipment
Area	Activity zone 200 sq m. Buffer zone 5 m between the edge of the activity zone and residential property.

The funding and maintenance of such areas will be best dealt with through a wider Open Space Strategy, as well as any future Supplementary Planning Document.

Junior/Toddler Outdoor Play Space (JOP) (replacing NPFA LEAPs.)

These would be aimed at covering the needs of both pre-school and junior age children. The following specification basically reflects the view put across in the local consultation that most parents and many children say they would be happy to walk further to get to better-equipped playspace as well as providing for ball and wheeled play and preferences for well designed and landscaped play space.

Provision per population	1:2,000 people
Location	10 minutes walking time from home - straight line distance 450 m.
Target age group	Accompanied under 7 year olds and accompanied and unaccompanied 7 to 11 year-olds.
Purpose	A JOP should cater for a large range of play activity, including an area for informal ball games and/or low key wheeled sports.
Equipment/Landscaping	<p>Play area designed as per good practice guidelines and include minimum 6 differing items of traditional play equipment.</p> <p>They should also contain 'low key' casual ball play and/or wheeled sports facilities. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An informal Wheel Play facility (Max height 1m approx); • A single ended 'multi use ball games area' comprising Goal mouth; Basket/netball hoop; Cricket Stumps; rear (ball retention) wall (3m high) on a tarmac playing surface. <p>Some form of Shelter (Meeting Place) should also be provided to give some protection from rain & wind.</p> <p>Separate area for the under 7s - equipment included should be small-scale and appropriate.</p> <p>Also to include seating for adults. Landscaping to maximise play value.</p>
Area	Activity zone minimum of 625 sq m. Buffer zone 30 m between the edge of the activity zone and residential property. The buffer zone should include footpaths and planted areas. Buffer zone landscaping to include child-friendly planting (e.g. natural scent, colour and texture).
Consultation	Refurbishment or new provision to be designed through consultation with local children, parents, residents, and relevant agencies.

Youth Outdoor Play Space (YOPS) (replacing NPFA NEAPS)

These would be facilities designed specifically to meet the needs of older children and young people, and to reflect their greater mobility and willingness to walk further than younger children. It is this level of facility that might provide a good focal point for outreach work conducted by the District Council and its partners (Play services, sports development, youth services etc).

Provision per population	1:4,000 people
Location	Within 15 minutes walking time from home - straight line distance 600m
Target age group	Primarily for unaccompanied and unsupervised 12-16 year-olds.
Purpose	To provide challenging and stimulating play opportunities and youth facilities
Equipment/ Facilities/ Landscaping	<p>Play area designed as per good practice guidelines and include 2 separate Areas as below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A range of challenging and stimulating play facilities. At least 8 items (could be variously linked in multi-play units) with at least 4 items to encourage more adventurous climbing, swinging or gliding (e.g. aerial runway). 2. Hard surface floodlit Multi-Use Games Area of at least 465 sq m. and/or wheeled play facilities. <p>Landscaping to maximise play value.</p> <p>Also to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating for adults. • Youth shelter/seating/meeting area for teenagers (well lit). <p>The site may also include additional/alternative youth facilities in line with consultation with local young people.</p>
Area	Total Activity zone minimum of 1000 sq m. Buffer zone at least 35m from activity zone to nearest residential property (50m if formal skateboarding facilities included).
Consultation	Refurbishment or new provision to be designed through consultation with local children and young people, parents, residents, and relevant agencies.

Family Outdoor Play Space (FOPS)

Within the District it would also be desirable to have access to a number of Family Play Facilities These would cater for all age groups (young accompanied children to youth). Such facilities need to be accessible from the rural areas and in this respect planning should take into account lack of access to private cars, access from public transport etc.

Provision per population	1:25,000 people
Location	Within 15 minutes drive time.
Target age group	Families - Unaccompanied and accompanied under 19 year-olds.
Purpose	To provide challenging and stimulating play opportunities for all age groups. Family visits.
Equipment/ Facilities/ Landscaping	<p>Play area designed as per good practice guidelines to include 3 separate Areas as below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Toddler area (under 7s) - small-scale and appropriate for the age; at least 3 types of equipment; seating and dog fencing. Landscaping to maximise play value. 2. Junior area (7-11s) - minimum 6 differing items of traditional play equipment. <p>It should also contain 'low key' casual ball play and/or wheeled sports facilities. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An informal Wheel Play facility (Max height 1m approx); • A single ended 'multi use ball games area' comprising Goal mouth; Basket/netball hoop; Cricket Stumps; rear (ball retention) wall (3m high) on a tarmac playing surface. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Over 12s area - Hard surface Multi-Use Games Area of at least 465 sq m. and/or formal wheeled play facilities. <p>Landscaping to maximise play value.</p> <p>Also to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating for adults. • Youth shelter/seating/meeting area for teenagers. • Nearby toilets and facilities for refreshments

	The site may also include additional/alternative youth facilities in line with consultation with local young people.
Area	Activity zone minimum of 1500 sq m. Buffer zone 50 m between the edge of the activity zone and residential property. The buffer zone should include footpaths and planted areas. Buffer zone landscaping to include child-friendly planting (e.g. natural scent, colour and texture).

Rural Areas

The rural parishes will need to be treated differently from the urban areas, as most parts simply do not have the required population to justify full provision of the above 'hierarchy'. However, children and young people within these will still require access to facilities.

The standards need to be considered alongside practical solutions to transport to facilities from the rural areas and outreach programmes bringing play opportunities to the parishes.

For Rural areas the following standards are suggested (amended from the local standards outlined above).

- For parishes of 4000 people or more there should be full provision of DOPS, YOPS and JOPS.
- For parishes of 1500 - 4000 people there should be provision of DOPS and JOPS relative to the standard plus a youth facility for young people including a meeting place.
- For parishes from 500 - 1500 people there should be at least 1 JOP plus a youth meeting place.
- For parishes (up to 500) there should be at least 1 DOP

Limitations of standards.

It is worth, finally, stressing the need for flexibility in relation to the application of standards. If standards are applied too rigidly without consideration of local circumstance the approach can have certain disadvantages. For example, the process:

- May discourage creativity.
- May be inflexible and unable to take account of local circumstances.

- The application of standards may be difficult in areas where land uses are largely fixed.
- May be applied automatically without checking against local needs or wishes.
- May work against local participation.
- Can be difficult to capture some important factors (is such as location).
- May take less account of quality considerations.

The approach taken in this strategy aims to address these deficiencies by placing consultation specifically within the standards process. It is therefore important in all cases to fully embrace the consultation methodology providing sufficient flexibility to ensure that provision is in line with the needs and aspirations of local children, young people, and residents. This could mean, for example, a greater emphasis upon planning for informal play space through landscaping and imaginative design, rather than simply providing formal play equipment; or developing locally designed meeting places for young people rather than off-the-shelf youth shelters.

Nevertheless, in terms of planning guidance and obligations through development the suggested local standards are sufficiently clear to allow for the "standard" costs of any such provision to be estimated. Providing the cost of the alternative local provision remains within this budget, this should remain a reasonable expectation for developers. It may be, for example, that local people wish to raise funds over and above the developer contribution to allow for implementation of a more ambitious scheme in line with local consultation.