

**Name of meeting:** Cabinet  
**Date:** October 8<sup>th</sup> 2019  
**Title of report:** Playable Spaces - Revised Strategy

**Purpose of report:** To approve the amendments to the Playable Spaces Strategy

<b>Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?</b>	<b>No (In the context of this report)</b>  If approved will result in spending more than £250k and will have an effect on all wards.
<b>Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)?</u></b>	<b>Key Decision - No</b>  <b>Private Report/Private Appendix - No</b>
<b>The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> &amp; name</b>  <b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?</b>  <b>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?</b>	<b>Karl Battersby - 27/09/2019</b>  <b>Eamonn Croston - 27/09/2019</b>  <b>Julie Muscroft - 27/09/2019</b>
<b>Cabinet member <u>portfolio</u></b>	<b>CIr Rob Walker - Culture and Environment</b>

**Electoral wards affected:** All

**Ward councillors consulted:** No

**Public or private:** Public

**Has GDPR been considered?** Yes, personal data will not be collected or retained.

## 1. Summary

The original Playable Spaces Strategy was approved at Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Following discussions that have taken place subsequently, and the feedback that has been received from a variety of sources, the Strategy has been revisited and revised. This is to alleviate concerns that any decisions have been made regarding the future of the existing play areas.

## 2. Information required to take a decision

The updated Strategy document is not a change to the policy, but the revised document has been developed to make the intentions of the policy clearer.

The amendments to the Strategy incorporate the following:

- Additional references to community involvement have been added to assure citizens that there will be opportunities to discuss their play areas.
- References which distinguish between traditional, equipped or natural play have been removed to promote flexibility when discussing and designing facilities.
- The play area classifications (i.e. Doorstep, Community & Destination) have been removed to help understanding that all play spaces are remaining, and there aren't any pre-determined decisions made regarding their design.
- The appendices, including the list of sites and maps has been removed, to again advise that play areas are not being closed, and no final decisions have been with regards to their future design.

## 3. Implications for the Council

The implications for the council that were discussed as part of the original March 2019 cabinet report remain relevant to the updated Strategy;

- **Working with People**

We are keen to ensure that citizens are involved in any changes taking place to their local open spaces. Communities will be consulted, involved and informed as part of the delivery of the programme to ensure that sites meet their needs and to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility over their open spaces.

It is important that this work is co-produced in order to ensure that our playable spaces are used equitably across Kirklees. It is acknowledged that the district is varied, with a wide range of environments, landscapes and communities, and these proposed developments will recognise these differences. Through the involvement of those living and using the spaces, as well as ward councillors – who are important community leaders - we will strive to make the most of the assets within our diverse spaces. We wish for our spaces to help identify and characterise their local area, and so be different from other spaces across the district. We will key in to the Place Based Working approach as appropriate.

We intend to deliver this is by working with communities across Kirklees in order to:

- understand local inequalities in access and play;
- identify physical and social barriers to accessing playable spaces;

- enable communities to gain the maximum opportunity to access these spaces and to benefit from the wellbeing benefits delivered by active, imaginative and environmentally engaged play.

- **Working with Partners**

The Strategy has been led by Greenspace colleagues, with support from Public Health and Policy colleagues. The partnership between Greenspace and Public Health will continue as the Operational Plan develops. Key to the success of this work is partnership working with other Council colleagues from Communities as well as partnerships with local communities and the voluntary and community sector.

- **Place Based Working**

The places of Kirklees are complex and varied, and our residents are similarly diverse. Our portfolio of open spaces is also diverse and through the involvement of our residents and ward councillors we hope to place a greater emphasis on these differences, and the benefits that this diversity brings.

It is important to recognise that a child or a family's ability to access and use play areas is influenced by a wide range of factors. This includes their relationship with their local environment or place, how attractive it is, how safe people feel, the ease of walking or cycling, perceptions of the meaning and value of play and local social norms.

The Playable Spaces Strategy is not just about providing physical places to play but also about clearly understanding what physical and social factors influence the ability to access play – and how the Council can enable equitable access to play throughout Kirklees.

Sites will be refurbished on a case-by-case basis, in conjunction with the local community, rather than applying a “one size fits all” solution and will take into consideration areas of deprivation, housing density, health inequalities and equipment’s physical condition and age.

- **Improving outcomes for children**

There is a wide range of evidence which demonstrates the positive impact of play for children as well as their parents/carers and families. This includes the opportunity to:

- access and participate in physical activity for both children and adults.
- enjoy good mental health for both children and adults
- children to enjoy social interaction with peers and adults
- develop bonds and attachments between children and parents/carers

- **Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

The Strategy will also contribute to the delivery of a number of the shared outcomes in the Corporate Plan, including:

- *Best start*: Providing neighbourhood environments and facilities that nurture children, offering them opportunities to explore their abilities, develop their skills and socialise both with their peers and intergenerationally.
- *Well*: Encouraging people of all ages to engage in physical activity and enjoy contact with the natural environment, contributing to good physical and mental health and well-being amongst our citizens.
- *Sustainable economy*: Improving the physical attractiveness of neighbourhoods by creating high quality green spaces, improving local property values and attracting events and other community activity and associated investment.

- *Safe and cohesive*: Ensuring all communities have access to safe places to play, providing spaces where communities can come together, and encouraging community stewardship over their play spaces.
- *Clean and green*: Ensuring all citizens have access to high quality, well maintained green spaces.
- *Efficient and effective*: Improving the efficiency of play area management within the Parks and Greenspace Service to ensure a future network of high quality equipped play areas and playable spaces which is financially sustainable.

Due to the proposed changes which would be created by this strategy, and the changes to service delivery, a Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment was carried out. This EIA covered the strategy as a whole, rather than one for each site. The EIA shows that there will be positive levels of impact for service provision for residents in the characteristic groups of age and disability, with enhanced inclusivity being one of the key foci of the operational plan. All the other protected characteristic groups show a neutral level of impact. The risk score of the EIA was calculated as 10.

#### **4. Consultees and their opinions**

Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care  
Cabinet Member for Greener  
Cllr Viv Kendrick

The consultees are in support of the strategy and moving this forward.

#### **5. Next steps and timelines**

Once approved officers will re-engage with ward Councillors to review each play area in their respective ward. This is hoped to be completed for January 2020. Following that the public engagement will be planned and scheduled to commence post local election period.

#### **6. Officer recommendations and reasons**

We recommend that Cabinet approve the revised Strategy in order to proceed with gathering and obtaining vital feedback from the ward Councillors. This will feed into, and influence, the operational plan and the public communications. It is also recommended that authority to make subsequent minor changes is delegated to the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and within authorised financial constraints.

#### **7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations**

Kirklees Council is committed to ensuring that every child has the best start in life, that people live as well as possible for as long as possible and that we all have the opportunity to enjoy a clean and green environment. The experience of positive and creative play is an essential element of enabling our communities to achieve these outcomes. This strategy provides the opportunity for significant investment in the play experience of our Children, parents and carers in Kirklees.

#### **8. Contact officer**

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Greenspace Operational Manager  
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#### **9. Background Papers and History of Decisions**

- Playable Spaces Strategy and Operational Plan 19/03/2019  
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7328>
- Revised Play Strategy and Delivery Cabinet paper 27/06/2017  
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4208>

**10. Service Director responsible**

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