

Name of meeting: Economy & Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel

Date: 14th November 2019

Title of report: Playable Spaces – Revised Strategy

Purpose of report: To provide an overview and an update on the Playable Spaces Programme

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?	No (In the context of this report) The approved programme will result in spending more than £250k and will have an effect on all wards.
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	Key Decision – No Private Report/Private Appendix – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Karl Battersby – 04/10/2019
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Rob Walker

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 revised version of the Playable Spaces Strategy was approved at Cabinet on the 8th October 2019 (Attached as Appendix 1).

Since then works to re-start the programme have commenced:

- 24th October – Re-start meeting held with the Project Team, the Comms team and Cllr Walker
Next steps are to re-arrange ward meetings with all councillors, develop the communications plan, including a case study of a Playable Space and investigate options for and logistics of public engagement
- 28th October – Meeting held to discuss engagement with children through Community Hubs and Play.
Next steps are to develop and review engagement plan, aligned with comms plan
- 31st October – Meeting arranged with Project team and Comms team to plan the communications programme
- 11th November – Commence Case Study
Site visit with Project team, Comms and Cllr Walker to design case study materials for use with Ward meetings and social media

2. Ward Meetings / Member Briefings

During the summer a number of meetings were held with councillors to discuss their play areas and to obtain vital local knowledge.

These meetings proved invaluable in gathering additional knowledge to help guide the design process and the public engagement plan.

It is anticipated that the ward meetings will recommence prior to the Christmas break (after the General Election) pending Councillor availability and will continue into the new year.

3. Public Engagement

As per the original plan, public engagement is a key and essential part of the programme. There is a huge emphasis on this as reinforced by Cllr Walker at Full Council on the 16th October:

The following quotes are taken from the webcast recorded on the 16th October 2019:

“A park would only be closed if there is a very clear call from a community to do so.

If there is no express desire to change things then the team, the parks team, would carry out the regular checks on the play equipment and the general environment of the park. It's inevitable that at some point items of play equipment may need to be replaced or refurbished. There is no secret plan to spirit away equipment in the dead of winter as the examiner article suggests and we would look at each park and ensure that it maintains its play value.

...what we need to do now is to have a proactive approach which is all about working with communities and all of us as councillors I think have got a really important role to play in that. We know our communities best and the parks team [and] with myself need to work with councillors through you to identify who the key people are in particular communities when we're making the decisions about the future of each park and I'll return to that in the answer to some of the later questions.

Any changes to play areas will only be made in consultation with both ward councillors and communities. We care very much about the views of local people. Friends of groups can act as the voice of many communities and are very important in part in making sure that we get things right for people. They will be just one of many ways though in which we will engage with the community. I know that not all play areas have established Friends of

groups that are there to articulate local opinion and activity. If ward councillors or members of the community wish to establish such groups there are officers in place to provide such support and I have worked with them along with my fellow ward councillors within my own ward and found that a very satisfactory way forward. I would expect ward councillors may be involved in such activity and I would very happy to discuss that with them so if anybody wants to come along and have a chat with me about help setting up Friends groups in your area or if you want to go directly to the appropriate officers please do that.

I know from experience that in some cases there can be differences of opinion within a community about a particular park, this again is a situation when I would hope ward councillors will help in identifying key stakeholders and in helping to judge the most appropriate way forward for the benefit of the community.

I think we do need to work with the people who know the communities best, which in many cases is the ward councillors.”

A copy of the report to Cabinet is attached at Appendix 2

Regarding engagement with the general public the current suggestion is to have a two-phased approach:

Phase 1 (winter 2019/20) – gather views and opinions from children across the district in addition to promoting positive comms messages through various channels. There is also an option to hold generic drop-in sessions across the district to take any feedback directly from communities. These options are currently under discussion.

Phase 2 (spring 2020 onwards) – a more focussed and detailed engagement by site. This phase requires further research and planning to determine the logistics of carrying out this intense, high level style of engagement.

4. Financial Implications / Ongoing Discussions

The original programme was designed to complete within 3 years. Following the revised strategy there are some potential challenges that may be faced in terms of the original budget.

We are now working towards developing a 5 year programme. Officers are reviewing the impact of this on the budget, but it is likely that additional funds will be required to align the 15 year age rule for equipment.

In addition to this, should during community engagement, communities request a strong desire to retain/replace equipment not currently budgeted for, then the programme will likely incur additional costs for the supply and installation of equipment and also for the ongoing maintenance.

Finally, the original programme put working with communities at the heart of the programme, however it didn't include the amount of resource required to complete detailed engagement for each play area. Options for this process is being considered by the project team but may require additional resource not currently budgeted for.

5. Next steps and timelines

Winter 2019/20

- Meet with ward members to discuss local site information
- Establish and articulate public communications
- Start to talk to children through community hubs
- Hold generic drop-in sessions and/or provide positive and creative social media messages

Spring 2020 (post local elections)

- Begin to hold localised community engagement sessions
- Develop play area designs

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

Officers would support the opportunity to be able to talk to both ward councillors and the general public prior to the local elections in Spring 2020. This could be a valuable opportunity to dispel many of the myths and show that progress is being made.

7. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations/comments: Cllr Rob Walker

The playable Space Strategy is an important initiative to invest £9.5 Million in improving the play opportunities for children in Kirklees. This capital expenditure is to be supported by active play development initiatives through the work of public health and community hubs. It is vitally important that we respond to the health and well-being needs of Kirklees children, their parents and carers. Central to this process is working with ward councillors and our communities to ensure that we develop the play opportunities that meet children's needs.

8. Contact officer

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(01484) 221000

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

- o Playable Spaces Revised Strategy 16/10/2019
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=8203>
- o Playable Spaces Strategy and Operational Plan 19/03/2019
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7328>
- o 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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Kirklees Council

Playable Spaces Strategy

1. Introduction by Cllr Walker

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.

Children play in many different ways and at many different times and places. For children and young people, play is more than just 'letting off steam'; it is what they do in their own time, for their own reasons. Through play, children are able to explore the world around them and learn to take responsibility for their own choices.

Play in the outdoors has the potential to have a large and important role in a child's physical, social and cognitive development. Active play helps to build physical strength, increase fitness and teach children vital life skills such as planning, negotiating, being creative and managing risk. It also provides opportunities for children to socialise with friends and their parents and carers, which can help to ensure secure bonding and strong attachments. In addition play areas are important meeting places for parents and carers of younger children to meet and socialise. This can help break down social isolation. Play is not reserved solely for children and young people - it should be encouraged at all stages of life - with many additional benefits experienced by individuals and communities from intergenerational play.

Our Council is passionate about enabling equitable access to play in Kirklees. This ambitious Strategy is our first step towards achieving this. By building on the great and diverse assets and opportunities to play we already have in Kirklees we can ensure that our communities are able to enjoy the fantastic opportunities which play can bring.

2. Vision and Aims

Our vision is a district where all are able and encouraged to access a range of opportunities to play outdoors, benefitting their physical and mental health and well-being as well as encouraging intergenerational interaction and community cohesion.

To achieve this vision the Playable Spaces Strategy aims to:

- provide a diverse range of high quality play spaces for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to access challenging opportunities for play, physical activity, contact with nature and social development close to home;
- encourage active play to help build physical strength, increase fitness and teach children vital life skills such as planning, negotiating, being creative and managing risk;
- improve the overall quality of the play offer throughout Kirklees, and the financial sustainability of the network;
- provide a more effective approach to ongoing maintenance and management both within the Council and by fostering greater citizen involvement.

In order to achieve this, we will work closely with our communities to:

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

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

The Strategy seeks to instill lifelong habits of physical activity through play amongst Kirklees citizens, recognising that this is generational change rather than short term intervention, with a commitment to co-producing and supporting communities and individuals in this programme.

The Playable Spaces Strategy is underpinned by the three key principles of Kirklees Council's Corporate Plan:

- *Working with people not doing to them:* Citizens and communities will be engaged as part of the delivery of the programme to ensure that all play areas meet the needs of the community, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility over their play spaces. Ongoing play engagement programmes will help us to understand local inequalities in play, local barriers to accessing playable spaces, and to address these issues in conjunction with communities.
- *Working with partners:* The Playable Spaces Strategy has been produced as a partnership between Parks and Greenspace and Public Health. Delivery of the Strategy will build on this partnership and link with other Council services such as Communities. Relationships with external voluntary and community sector partnerships will be built up through site-based engagement as well as through the delivery of an ongoing play engagement programme.
- *Place-based working:* 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, taking into consideration areas of deprivation, housing density, health inequalities and other local factors, such as local fundraising initiatives. The Strategy is not just about providing physical places to play but also about gaining a better understanding of what physical and social factors influence the ability to access play, and how the Council can enable equitable access to play throughout Kirklees.

The Playable Spaces Strategy will 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 playable spaces which is financially sustainable.

3. Why is play important?

3.1 Benefits of play

Outdoor play has many benefits for children, families and the wider community and is a subject area that has been widely explored in academic research.

The benefits of outdoor play include:

- the opportunity to access and participate in physical activity for both children and adults;
- the opportunity to enjoy good mental health for both children and adults;
- opportunities for children to develop their creativity and to build resilience through risk taking, challenge and problem solving;
- the opportunity for children to enjoy social interaction with peers and adults;
- the opportunity to develop bonds and attachments between children and parents/carers;
- physical and mental health benefits of contact with nature; and
- providing a focal point for communities thereby contributing towards community cohesion.

The challenge:

- Across England, 24% of girls and 32% of boys aged between 2 years old and 15 years old are meeting national recommendations of at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day.
- 56% of the Kirklees population are overweight/obese.
- 22% of Reception age children in Kirklees are overweight/obese.
- 36% of Year 6 children in Kirklees are overweight/obese.
- There is a clear correlation between deprivation and use of local green spaces – residents of more deprived areas are less likely to utilise their local green spaces.

Regular moderate physical activity, including walking and active play, can help prevent and reduce the risk of a number of chronic conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health problems and musculoskeletal conditions; this can be achieved in many different forms, most of which can be provided through the provision of play opportunities. Active play is the most common type of physical activity that children take part in outside school. Unstructured play may be one of the best 'pop' forms of physical activity for children (British Heart Foundation 2009, *Couch Kids: The Nation's Future*).

UKActive's report *Turning the Tide of Inactivity* (2014) also suggests that reducing physical inactivity by just 1% a year over a 5 year period would save local authorities £1.2 billion. With Kirklees ranked 114th out of 150, with nearly 32% of people considered inactive, the associated cost of inactivity to Kirklees is £20,750,766 (per 100,000 people per year - UKActive, 2014).

3.2 Barriers to play

There are a number common barriers to outdoor play. These include:

- Traffic – the growing dominance of cars in residential streets restricts the space and opportunity for children and young people to engage in active outdoor play close to home.
- Negative attitudes towards children and young people playing in public spaces, with other members of the community finding this threatening or equating it with antisocial behaviour.
- Outcomes focused play provision – the replacement of free, self-directed play, with an increase in prescribed educational activities or childcare.
- Reduction in free time.

- Parental anxiety – perceived dangers, parental fear and lack of confidence can reduce the amount of time children spend in outdoor open space.

It is important to recognise that a child or 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 – as well as perceptions of the meaning and value of play and local social norms. This can be broadly defined as the ‘wider determinants of play’ and is demonstrated below:



Kirklees Council therefore recognises that this Strategy is not only about providing physical resources but also about clearly understanding what physical and social factors influence the ability to access play – and how we can help break down barriers to enable equitable access to play throughout Kirklees.

3.3 National policy and guidance

Reference has been made to relevant national policy and guidance in the development of this Strategy. This includes:

- Fields in Trust’s *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play* (2015)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- Play England’s guidance document *Design for Play* (2008)
- The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- The Equality Act (2010)
- Bob Hughes’ *A Playworker’s Taxonomy of Play Types* (1996)

3.4 Kirklees policy context

This Strategy links to a number of existing Kirklees Council policy documents:

- The *Kirklees Joint Health and Wellbeing Plan* (2018-2023)
- Kirklees Local Plan
- The *Kirklees Open Space Study 2015* (revised 2016)
- *Kirklees Open Space Demand Assessment* (2015)
- *Kirklees Economic Strategy 2014-2020*
- *Everybody Active: Kirklees Physical Activity and Sport Strategy* (2015)
- *Kirklees Playing Pitch Strategy* (2015, under revision)

- *Kirklees Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2010-2020*
- *Walking and Cycling Strategic Framework 2018-2030*

4. Community Engagement and Desktop Study

To inform the development of the Playable Spaces Strategy a district-wide engagement exercise was undertaken to engage communities and other stakeholders in meaningful conversations about play in order to better understand their feelings about existing provision and their needs for the future play site network. This data was seen alongside the desktop work looking at current play provisions within the Council's ownership focusing on, among other factors, the current quality, compliance and play value.

The overall consensus was that the play site network should provide a balanced mix of traditional play equipment as well as alternative wild play and there should be more provisions for teenagers and older children.

In addition to the community engagement, a desktop study was undertaken comprising both data analysis and a mapping exercise to analyse current play provisions within the Council's ownership focusing on, among other factors, the current quality, compliance and play value. A summary of the findings are below.

Playable Spaces engagement: key findings

- Lack of **teenage provisions** was the most common issue raised at the public engagement sessions by both teens and adults: in particular the need for sheltered areas, which are one of the main sources of complaints currently, and age-specific equipment. On only a couple of occasions were concerns about anti-social behaviour raised in relation to teen provisions, and these were usually from the teenagers themselves with regard to other teens.
- The need for **clarity and guidance on how and where people can play** was the next most frequently discussed topic at the engagement sessions. Within these discussions the issues of access to playable spaces in schools and forest schools were frequently raised.
- Respondents to the questionnaires agreed that the current play offer is limited in terms of opportunity for **varied types of play**. Only 25% believed that there were enough opportunities for different types of play.
- 60% of questionnaire respondents wanted to see **more natural play equipment** such as mounds, boulders, logs, tunnels etc. within the district along with more places that would facilitate imaginative and wild play including opportunities for den building, exploring, make-believe and adventure play.
- While there was strong support for a more diverse play offer that encouraged more types of play, it is recognised that there is still a desire for **equipped play areas** within the district as 50% of respondents wanted to see more manufactured equipment.
- Spenborough Trust Youth Parliament unanimously agreed that the play areas in the district are generally too small and 7 of the 8 members believed them to be too basic; **signposts to sites** were also suggested to enable people to find them.
- 6 out of 8 members of Spenborough Youth Parliament expressed an interest in the **wildlife** found in parks and a desire for learning and discovery opportunities. Linked to this was den making which was also a popular request.
- Amongst the primary age children in the lunchtime sticker survey voting trends suggested that the **most popular play features were not always manufactured pieces of play equipment**. Images of a traditional metal framed swing set received only 6% of the votes whilst the highest scoring play feature was a cluster of tall upstanding tree trunks, scoring 22%.

5. Strategy Recommendations

5.1 A varied mosaic of play opportunities

The research undertaken in the development of this Playable Spaces Strategy, in conjunction with the Fields in Trust play space typologies, highlights the need to provide a more diverse play offer across the district. The play offer throughout Kirklees will be designed to give communities access to a variety of safe, fun, relevant and engaging play environments as part of a strategic play network linked by playable routes.

5.2 Kirklees Play Standard

A **Kirklees Play Standard** is proposed to guide both internal (Council led) site development and for use in planning decision-making, in conjunction with the Fields in Trust Guidelines. The Standard takes into account both the community engagement findings and national guidelines. It incorporates the themes in *Design for Play* as its core principles but takes these further, with a commitment to provide playable spaces which are:

- designed for all user groups and all ages (not just for children);
- designed within the context of their environment;
- well connected with the wider community;
- encouraged to be smoke free;
- designed to complement other local play spaces, such as to offer a diverse range of play opportunities across the whole of the district.

The Standard also offers guidance on other key design considerations when refurbishing or designing new play spaces, including issues relating to risk, boundaries, equipment choice, accessibility and playable routes.

5.3 Improvement programme

A comprehensive play area refurbishment programme is proposed as part of this Strategy. The programme will be design and disseminated following ward member and public engagement sessions.

5.4 Play engagement programme

To enable the infrastructure to meet its full potential a play engagement programme will be delivered with the aim to:

- work towards gaining an in-depth understanding of barriers to play in each local area and addressing these in a bespoke manner at each site, and
- embed positive and creative use of whole sites, offering a range of activities as part of each project to encourage the whole community, including hard to reach groups, to engage with a site.

In addition to the activity programme on offer, each project will aim to recruit local volunteers as Play Area Guardians - as local community 'champions' for sites - in order to foster a culture of local stewardship. Play Area Guardians will be offered ongoing support once the projects are complete from existing volunteer networks such as Friends groups and Kirklees Council Volunteer Officers.

5.5 Ongoing risk management and maintenance

Alongside the implementation of the improvement programme an improved and rationalised playground inspection and maintenance regime will be introduced. This will ensure a compliant and robust risk management framework is in place and that the new network of high-quality play areas is well maintained into the future.

6. Strategy Monitoring and Review

Ongoing monitoring of the Playable Spaces Strategy process and outputs will be undertaken to ensure continual refinement of the improvement programme and capturing of lessons learnt to inform future work. Findings from this review and monitoring process will be disseminated within the organisation, including to elected members.

It is intended that an operational plan is put into place to enable the realisation of the recommendations and to enable Kirklees to achieve the aims and objectives as set out in this Strategy.

Appendix 2: Cabinet Report – 8th October 2019



Name of meeting: Cabinet

Date: October 8th 2019

Title of report: Playable Spaces – Revised Strategy

Purpose of report:

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

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 19th 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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9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

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10. Service Director responsible

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