

Meeting: Executive

Agenda Item:

5

Portfolio Area: Environment & Regeneration
FTFC Co-Operative Neighbourhood
Programme: Management

Date: 22 FEBRUARY 2017



Co-operative Neighbourhood Management: Investing in Play Areas

KEY DECISION

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with a summary of current play area provision, and to make proposals on the future investment, of £1,488,700, to enhance play spaces in Stevenage, providing exciting places to play and attractive environments for local residents.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That of the three investment options contained in the report it is recommended that Members support the preferred option – Option 1, which will:

- double the number of primary play spaces making provision for 0-16 year olds,
- increasing the number of play spaces suitable for teenagers,
- improving a further 10 local play spaces to provide play landscapes.

A detailed play space strategy will be prepared on the selected option to be subject to consideration of the Environment and Economy Select Committee and reporting the proposed strategy to Executive Committee.

- 2.2 That Members note that a major investment allocation of £1,488,700 is already included within the capital programme to support the delivery of these improved play areas.

- 2.3 That investment be delivered, over five years, as a module of the Future Town Future Council Co-Operative Neighbourhood Management (CNM) programme with the decision on the proposed future status of individual play spaces being subject to consultation with Ward Councillors and the development of a play space strategy.
- 2.4 That consultation on the content and design of play spaces be determined by local children, young people and residents as the investment programme is rolled out, and in line with co-operative neighbourhood management priorities.
- 2.5 That Members note that a further capital investment allocation will be required in 10-15 years to ensure the continued delivery of high quality play areas for children and young people in Stevenage.
- 2.6 That Members note an additional £36,971 funding is included within the revenue budget to enable an additional, dedicated operative to improve the standard of cleanliness and maintenance and provide more timely repairs.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During 2016/17 the Council has invested in the delivery of significant improvements to six play areas, one per neighbourhood, across the town:
 - York Road
 - Scarborough Avenue
 - Cook Road
 - Bedwell Park
 - The Donkey Park
 - The Noke
- 3.2 The provision of good quality play spaces offers a range of benefits to our community:
 - Access is free to all
 - These equipped play areas and green spaces are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks of the year.
 - Play helps to promote children's development, learning, creativity and independence
 - Early development of children active and healthy lifestyles, tackling obesity issues in children
 - Through play children cultivate social skills
 - Play also helps children to find out about themselves, their abilities and their interests.
 - Contributes to the mental wellbeing of families

Research suggests that children playing outdoors and establishing relationships with other children in their community can also have a positive effect on community cohesion. The more social networks children have in a neighbourhood, the greater the confidence parents have in the safety of that area. (Play England).

Other research tells us that well designed sport and play areas can contribute dramatically to reducing ASB and have a positive effect on the community as a whole. (Association of Play Industries)

3.3 There are currently 57 designated, unsupervised, equipped play spaces in Stevenage, which are managed and maintained by the Council. A further site at Spencer Way is due to be adopted from developers in the next few months, and so for the purposes of this report has been included in the considerations, therefore taking the number of equipped play spaces to 58.

This figure equates to 3.1 play areas provided per 1000 population of under 16 year olds (based on ONS estimates for mid-2015). The table in Appendix 1 provides a comparison with other Hertfordshire authorities and new towns.

Stevenage makes the highest level of provision of these authorities, with the next highest being Corby providing 2.5 play areas per 1,000 population under 16 year olds, with the lowest, Bracknell providing 1.1.

3.4 The play areas vary in size from small sites within residential areas that often have just one item of equipment aimed at toddlers, through to larger park sites making provision for toddlers, juniors and teenagers.

3.5 It is the accepted view that children and young people in Stevenage deserve play spaces that:

- Are safe, good quality and well equipped
- Provide a range of play opportunities (formal and informal) that help promote a child's development and independence
- Make provision, across the town, for all age ranges from toddlers to teenagers
- Allows children and young people to test themselves, and their abilities, in a relatively safe environment
- Are fun and exciting, and help to keep children active and healthy
- Are freely, and safely, accessible throughout the year
- Include equipment that can be accessed by all children and young people regardless of any disability
- Are well maintained, with repairs being undertaken promptly.

3.6 In 2005 the Council appointed consultants PMP to undertake an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, July 2002).

At that time the consultation relating to Provision for Children and Young People found that:

- 87% of respondents considered provision important
- 54% of respondents felt that there was not enough provision, while 37% felt that provision was 'about right'.
- More particularly there was a lack of the right type of provision – areas specifically designed for young people were in demand.
- Over a third of respondents rated play equipment, maintenance and management as unsatisfactory.

3.7 During the past 10-12 years there has been significant investment to a number of play areas across the town, and premier play area provision has now been achieved in 8 of the 11 main parks ensuring good quality play facilities to age ranges from toddler through to teenager. These 11 main parks are:

1	Canterbury Way Playing Fields
2	Chells Park
3	Fairlands Valley Park
4	Hampson Park
5	King George V Playing Fields
6	Meadway Playing Fields
7	Peartree Park
8	Ridlins Playing Fields
9	Shephalbury Park
10	St Nicholas Park
11	The Town Centre Gardens

Chells Park, Canterbury Way Playing Fields and Meadway Playing Fields are the only main park sites yet to be upgraded.

- 3.8 The improvements to these sites have been informed by effective consultation and interaction with toddlers, juniors and teenagers when choosing equipment and designing new play area facilities.

In recent years consultation has been undertaken through:

- partnership with local schools - Peartree Spring Junior School for Peartree Park and Fairlands Primary School for King George V Playing Fields.
- community groups, such as the Parent & Toddler Group at Symonds Green when consulting on improvements to Skegness Road play area
- Consultation events at Bedwell Park and York Road, for example
- online surveys

The numbers who participate in any consultation ranges, and often depends on the site and the size of its catchment area. We received responses from almost 400 children and young people about proposed improvements to six play areas in 2016 (York Road, Scarborough Avenue, Cook Road, Bedwell Park, The Noke, Bandle Hill Donkey Park), and in 2014 received over 100 responses to the consultation for Ridlins End Playing Field play area.

- 3.9 Although no formal statistics have been recorded for the numbers of children and young people using the improved play areas, observations confirm a significant increase in user numbers, of all ages, and the length of their visit. Some of the larger sites now see young families spending an afternoon, during the summer months, to have a picnic and enjoy the play space.

- 3.10 Equipment designed for children and young people is constantly evolving in order to provide them with experiences that meet their expectations, desires and needs. Many of the play areas in Stevenage, certainly those that have benefitted from

capital investment in recent years, provide children and young people with play value far beyond the play spaces of 10-15 years ago.

However, increased play value comes at a price. Items of equipment now tend to have more technical elements which take longer to inspect to ensure that they are safe for continued use, and are more costly to replace. For example, a traditional flat swing seat costs around £27, whereas a buddy swing seat that caters for several children at a time (and is extremely popular) costs around £1,000 to replace.

- 3.11 The current revenue budget allocation for scheduled playground inspection / repairs / responding to vandalism and undertaking minor improvements is £71,150. This equates to an average of £1,227 per site, per annum.

This is in comparison to East Herts District Council who allocate an average of £2,317 per site, North Herts District Council who allocate an average of £2,260 per site, and Hertsmere who allocate an average of £1,574 per site.

The majority of the work to play areas in Stevenage is undertaken by the Council's Environmental Services, although specialist works such as large repairs to safer surfacing, for example, require specialist contractors.

- 3.12 There is one member of staff who is tasked with the health and safety elements of play area maintenance, i.e. weekly inspections and the maintenance of the play equipment. As a guide, three days of each week are taken up with the inspection of the play areas, clearing litter / broken glass, and ensuring that the equipment is safe for continued use. The remaining two days are available to undertake any repairs required.

A majority of repairs requiring replacement parts should be possible within 2-3 weeks. However, the limited time available for undertaking repairs sometimes results in items of equipment being out of use for much longer.

- 3.13 There is currently no provision, within existing resources, to undertake additional works associated with good practice for the maintenance and management of play areas. These tasks might include:

- Sweeping of the site - wet fallen leaves become slippery and dangerous, while a build-up of dust/soil provides a host for weeds.
- Proactive maintenance to prolong the life of the play equipment
- Herbicide application to keep weeds / moss in check. Moss growing on tarmac surfaces will become slippery, weeds left unchecked look unsightly, and both moss and weeds will also lead to a breakdown of tarmac surfacing, which in time will become dangerous and costly to repair
- Painting of equipment – if undertaken every 3-4 years fresh paint will help protect the play equipment from weathering, and will also help the play area look inviting and well cared for.

- 3.14 Despite previous capital investment in play provision there has been little scope to increase in the revenue allocation to maintain these improved play areas. The level of inspection and cleansing of the play areas is currently basic and it would be good practice to increase the levels of maintenance of equipped play areas in the future to ensure that they remain clean, tidy and attractive to children and young people .

3.15 It should be noted that not all play spaces have to be equipped in order to provide good play opportunities for children. Providing carefully designed, attractive, green spaces (including grass mounding, appropriate tree planting etc) can provide valuable places for informal and imaginative play, as well as a visually pleasing aspect for local residents – see Appendix B 1.

Each of the options set out within this report proposes sites for future play landscapes. It is intended that these play spaces be designed and developed with local residents as part of the co-operative neighbourhood management programme.

3.16 Fields in Trust (previously the National Playing Fields Association) set out guidance for the provision of equipped / designated play spaces to help ensure that the provision of play: is sufficient to enable effective use; is located in an accessible location; and of a quality to maintain longevity and to encourage its continued use. They recommend equipped / designated play spaces be promoted in the form of:

- Local Areas for Play (LAP's) – aimed at very young children
- Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP's) – aimed at children who can go out to play independently
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP's) – aimed at older children.

3.17 Fields in Trust (FiT) recommend accessibility standards for play:

	Distance Criteria (metres)	
	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance
LAP's	100	60
LEAP's	400	240
NEAP's	1000	600

3.18 FiT recommended benchmark guidelines set out quality guidelines for play areas including:

- Locating them where they are of most value to the community to be served
- Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with the available finance
- Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary
- Provision of ancillary facilities and equipment
- Provision of footpaths
- Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards.

3.19 Officers have considered the national guidance of FiT, and used this to inform a local determined three tier level of provision in Stevenage:

	Accessibility Straight Line Distance (m)	Minimum Number of Play Activities	Age Range (years)
Primary	600 (approx. 8 min walk)	8	0 - 16
Secondary	400 (approx.. 5 min walk)	5	0 – 10
Play Landscape	60	Imaginative play	0 - 6

3.18 Following the 2005 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study local standards of provision for children and young people were set as:

- Accessibility Standard: 400m (straight line distance) for all play areas in Stevenage regardless of their size, location, barriers to access or level of provision
- Quantity Standard: 0.8 play areas per 1000 population

3.19 At the current time we are providing 0.7 play areas per 1000 population, or 3.1 per 1000 population under the age of 16 years. A figure per 1000 population under the age of 16 years would appear to be more meaningful than a value which takes in to account elements of the community that do not directly use play areas.

3.20 During 2016/17 capital funding has enabled the delivery of significant improvements to six play areas, one per neighbourhood, across the town (see 3.1)

Improvements to these sites were identified ahead of the co-operative neighbourhood management (CNM) programme. However, officers propose to deliver future play space improvements in line with the CNM programme.

Year	CNM Programme	Proposed Play Improvement Delivery
2016/17	Pin Green & Shephall	As above
2017/18	St Nicholas & Martinswood	Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas & Martinswood
2018/19	Bedwell & Longmeadow	Bedwell & Longmeadow

A programme of delivery to the remaining seven wards (Bandle Hill, Chells, Manor, Old Town, Roebuck, Symonds Green and Woodfield) is yet to be determined, but will be rolled out in line with the emerging CNM programme beyond 2019. However, there may be some specific sites which might be brought forward if refurbishment cannot reasonably wait until the scheduled delivery timescale, within the CNM programme.

All play areas will be maintained at their current level of provision until the programme of investment is undertaken, in line with the emerging CNM programme. This would mean that any site that is to be developed as a play landscape, for example, would not see any change until the CNM programme focussed on that Ward, and would be subject to resident engagement in determining the design.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1. There are three options set out for delivering high quality equipped play spaces across the town. It is proposed that there is no reduction in the number of play spaces within the town, but that investment is made to provide a variety of play spaces that meet the needs of local children and young people, and that are sustainable, good quality, well maintained sites that offer long term affordability.

4.2 All options set out below would provide good access to equipped play spaces, with most residents within an 8 minute walk of a good quality, well equipped site. Although a site may be located within one ward, it is very likely that it provides good and ready access to residents living in neighbouring wards.

- 4.3 Within the underlying co-operative principles of the Council, the improvements to all sites will be informed through consultation with local children, young people and local residents. Consultation and engagement may involve consultation events on site, work through local schools and community groups to ensure that the investment programme delivers play spaces that meet the needs of the local community.

A wider consultation, with local community groups, will be undertaken on the strategy that will be developed during 2017, following a decision from this report.

- 4.4 For each option it is also proposed for levels of investment to be improved to ensure:
- Sufficient revenue funding to keep remaining play areas well maintained, enabling reactive and proactive maintenance to be delivered in a timely fashion.
 - Initial capital funding to enable remaining play areas to receive improvements to bring them to a standard in line with the levels of provision outlined in 3.16.
 - Ongoing revenue, and future capital, investment to enable the replacement of items of equipment and/or surfacing that are beyond economical repair (due to age or vandalism)

The capital funding set out within this report is in addition to the £360,000 spent on improving six play areas during 2016/17.

- 4.5 Each option also proposes increased revenue funding for an additional, dedicated, operative to improve the standard of cleanliness and general maintenance associated with the play areas, and to release more time for the existing member of staff to undertake proactive maintenance and timely repairs.

There may be opportunities for this new role to link with neighbourhood team working in the future. It is envisaged that the Stevenage Direct Services and Neighbourhood Wardens will work together to achieve the full potential of co-operative neighbourhood management principles with regards the consultation and engagement around play area improvements.

- 4.6 There are currently three equipped play areas making provision for shoppers and visitors to the town centre. The future of the existing play areas will be considered within the wider public realm project led by the Regeneration Team. However, a longer term strategy for equipped play space provision will need to be considered within the plans for the town centre regeneration.

- 4.7 There is currently an equipped play area, at Bray Drive (Woodfield), which is the responsibility of the developer. The site was never to be adopted by the Council.

This play area has not been managed or maintained for several years, and the developer has closed the site and locked the gates. This has, understandably, generated a lot of enquiries and complaints from local residents. Despite contact with the developers, over a number of years, there has been no suggestion that they will open the site again.

The Bray Drive area falls within the five minute walk catchment for the Riccatt Lane play area, and within the eight minute walk catchment for St Nicholas Park play area.

Although the play area is not the responsibility of the Council it is proposed to approach the developer to suggest that this site to be included within this investment programme in order to deliver an attractive play landscape for local residents.

4.8 There are currently two play areas in both St Nicholas Park and Shephalbury Park. It is proposed to consolidate the play provision to provide one excellent equipped space, at each site, making provision for toddlers, juniors and teenagers.

4.9 With adequate maintenance and without vandalism / theft etc most steel play equipment items would be expected to have a safe life expectancy of around 15 years, whilst timber would be around 10 years.

It is therefore anticipated that a significant capital programme of play area improvements needs to be in place every 10-15 years to ensure that our sites continue to deliver good quality opportunities that meet future demands. Based on today's prices and allowing for the current level of inflation it is estimated that investment of at least £250,000 a year, for seven years, will be required from 2029/30.

4.10 There are sites across the town where play equipment has previously been removed, when they were beyond economical repair, but that now require reinstatement of the surfacing to make them clean and safe. The cost of this element of work has been estimated at £35,500 and this has been included within all of the options that follow.

4.11 In determining the proposed future status of the 58 sites officers have considered a number of issues including:

- Proximity to other equipped play spaces
- Extent and / or condition of existing equipment provided
- Opportunity for future play development, in consultation with the local community.
- Opportunities / suitability of sites for landscape improvements to provide attractive, imaginative spaces suitable for informal play.

4.12 It is considered that that the options set out below will provide children and young people in Stevenage with play spaces that:

- Are safe, good quality and well equipped
- Provide a range of play opportunities (formal and informal) that help promote a child's development and independence
- Make provision, across the town, for all age ranges from toddlers to teenagers
- Allows children and young people to test themselves, and their abilities, in a relatively safe environment
- Are fun and exciting, and help to keep children active and healthy
- Are freely, and safely, accessible throughout the year
- Include equipment that can be accessed by all children and young people regardless of any disability
- Are well maintained, with repairs being undertaken promptly.

Each option could provide a number of attractive play landscapes that would deliver a good quality experience for all local residents – a locally designed landscape that provides a visually attractive space, with opportunities for imaginative play for local young children.

4.13 Current Position

4.13.1 There are currently 58 equipped play spaces delivering 3.1 play areas per 1000 children under 16 years old (0.67 play areas per 1000 population). This would retain the 400m accessibility standard for all play areas, as adopted in 2005.

4.13.1 To deliver high quality play areas to these sites would require:

- improvements to the play areas at Chells Park, Canterbury Way Playing Fields and Meadway Playing Fields in order to deliver primary play areas making provision for toddlers, juniors and teenagers
- improvements to the remaining sites to bring them to a good standard of provision
- reinstatement of previous play area surfacing as per 4.9.

4.13.2 The capital investment for this would be £1,796,000, and revenue investment would be £24,971 annually.

4.13.4 This position is not sustainable with the current financial constraints and may not achieve the full benefits of improve quality of play provision and the optimum public environment.

4.14 Option 1: Preferred option

4.14.1 This option would see an investment to upgrade and provide 21 primary sites in the main parks and larger open spaces, along with 24 secondary sites, all of which will ensure an excellent level of sustainable provision across the town - 2.31 equipped play areas per 1000 children under 16 years old.

This will result in:

- Double the number of primary sites which will make provision for 0-16 year olds
- Increasing the number of sites making provision for teenagers
- Better quality secondary play areas for toddlers and juniors
- Improved local areas through the development of 10 play landscapes.

4.14.2 The premier sites would have an increased catchment area of 600m (in line with the national guidance) and would be supplemented by the secondary sites, which would continue to have a catchment of 400m, as at present.

4.14.3 A further 10 sites would receive investment to deliver play landscapes, which would benefit the whole community – see Appendix B 1.

4.14.4 The capital requirement to deliver this programme of improvements is £1,488,700 based on today's prices.

4.14.5 The additional revenue investment required would be £36,971.

This would enable the appointment of an additional operative (£21,971) to improve the standard of cleanliness and general maintenance associated with the play areas, for five days a week, and to release more time for the existing member of staff to undertake proactive maintenance and timely repairs.

It would also make provision of an additional £15,000 to support the budget for replacement of parts and minor repairs.

4.14.5 This is the preferred option. It will deliver significant improvements to well-placed play spaces throughout the town, making excellent and sustainable provision for toddlers, juniors and teenagers.

This option will place Stevenage second within our benchmark group, delivering 2.4 play areas per 1000 population under 16 years old, with Corby delivering 2.5.

4.15 Option 2

4.15.1 This option would see an investment to upgrade and provide 21 primary sites in the main parks and larger open spaces, along with 10 secondary sites will ensure an adequate level of provision across the town – 1.8 equipped play areas per 1000 children under 16 years old.

4.15.2 The premier sites would have an increased catchment area (in line with the national guidance) and would be supplemented by the secondary sites, which would continue to have a catchment of 400m, as at present.

4.15.3 24 sites would receive investment to deliver play landscapes, which would benefit the whole community – see Appendix B1.

4.15.4 The capital requirement to deliver this programme of improvements is £1,273,000 based on today's prices.

4.15.5 The additional revenue investment required would be £22,683.

This would enable the appointment of an additional operative (£13,183) to improve the standard of cleanliness and general maintenance associated with the play areas, for three days a week, and to release more time for the existing member of staff to undertake proactive maintenance and timely repairs.

It would also make provision of an additional £9,500 to support the budget for replacement of parts and minor repairs.

4.16 Option 3

4.16.1 This option would see an investment to upgrade and provide 11 premier sites in the main parks and 30 secondary play areas. This will ensure an adequate level of

provision across the town – 2.6 equipped play areas per 1000 children under 16 years old.

4.16.2 The premier sites would have an increased catchment area (in line with the national guidance) and would be supplemented by the secondary sites, which would continue to have a catchment of 400m, as at present.

4.16.3 14 sites would receive investment to deliver play landscapes, which would benefit the whole community – see Appendix B1.

4.16.4 The capital requirement to deliver this programme of improvements is £1,340,000 based on today's prices.

4.16.4 The additional revenue investment required would be £20,183.

This would enable the appointment of an additional operative (£13,183) to improve the standard of cleanliness and general maintenance associated with the play areas, for three days a week, and to release more time for the existing member of staff to undertake proactive maintenance and timely repairs.

It would also make provision of an additional £7,000 to support the budget for replacement of parts and minor repairs.

Table 1: A Summary of Proposed Options

Option	Number of Equipped Sites	Number of equipped sites /1000 population under 16 years	Number of equipped Sites /1000 population	Capital Cost	Revenue Cost
1: Preferred Option	45	2.4	0.50	£1,488,700	£36,971
2	32	1.8	0.37	£1,273 ,000	£22,683
3	46	2.6	0.53	£1,340,000	£20,183

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 All options have capital and revenue implications.

Depending on the option selected there would be a capital cost of between £1,273,000 and £1,488,700 to complete the play area works required.

Based on Option 1 the capital profile for the initial works is:

2017/18	2018/19	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
£372,500	£232,700	£137,000	£243,000	£283,500	£220,000

The revenue implications vary between £20,183 per annum and £36,971 per annum depending on the option selected.

5.1.2 Officers have included capital investment of £1,488,700 (Option 1) within the 2017/18 Capital Strategy to be approved at the February Executive and Council. In addition costs totalling, £36,970 have been included in the 2017/18 General Fund budget also for approval at the February Executive and Council.

5.1.3 There may be some Section 106 monies that can be applied to the programme and these will be reviewed and applied if applicable. The programme is currently fully funded from a combination of New Homes Bonus and capital receipts.

5.1.4 It is anticipated that a significant capital programme of play area improvements needs to be in place every 10-15 years to ensure that our sites continue to deliver good quality opportunities that meet future demands. Based on today's prices, and allowing for the current level of inflation, it is estimated that investment of at least £250,000 a year, for seven years, will be required from 2029/30. These sums will need to be included in future updates of the Capital Strategy.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 places a clear duty of care to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of those who use the facility.

5.2.2 The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992 require that a 'suitable and sufficient assessment of risks' to the health and safety of anyone using the playground is carried out.

5.2.3 The Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 (revised 1984) provides a common duty of care to all visitors, taking into account current developments and good practice rather than relying on what has been acceptable in the past. It states that greater care is required where children are concerned, as 'an occupier must be prepared for children to be less careful than adults.'

5.2.4 The Equality Act 2010 imposes various obligations on the Council relating to disability discrimination. The general public sector duty is addressed in the Equality Impact Assessment set out in Appendix F and there is also a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that people with disabilities are not put at a substantial disadvantage.

5.3 Policy Implications

- 5.3.1 A detailed play space strategy will be prepared on the selected option, for referral back to Executive Committee at a later date.

5.4 Environmental Implications

- 5.4.1 It is proposed that a number of suitable sites be identified which would benefit from minor landscape improvements to provide opportunities for informal, unequipped play. These sites would be recognised, and promoted, as suitable spaces for play, but would not require weekly inspections or maintenance of equipment.

5.5 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

- 5.5.1 All options seek funding for the appointment of an additional operative post.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - Play England reports - <http://www.playengland.org.uk/>

BD2 - Association of Play Industries (API) reports - <http://www.api-play.org/api-welcome>

BD3 - Office for National Statistics -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates>

BD4 - Fields In Trust (FiT) (formerly National Playing Fields Association) reports - <http://fieldsintrust.org/>

BD5 - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

BD6 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 -

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1992/2051/contents/made>

BD7 - Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/5-6/31/contents>

BD8 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>

APPENDICES

- Appendix A Comparison of Quantitative Levels of Provision for Children & Young People
Appendix B Case Studies
Appendix C Option 1: Accessibility Standards Map & List of Proposed Sites
Appendix D Option 2: Accessibility Standards Map & List of Proposed Sites
Appendix E Option 3: Accessibility Standards Map & List of Proposed Sites
Appendix F Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix A: Comparison of Quantitive Levels of Provision for Children & Young People

(as at November 2016)

Authority	No of sites for children & young people per 1,000 population under 16 years old* ¹	No of sites for children & young people per 1,000 population * ¹
Bracknell	1.1	0.25
Broxbourne	1.8	0.40
Corby	2.5	0.60
East Herts	2.0	0.43
Harlow	2.1	0.47
Hertsmere	1.2	0.26
North Herts	1.7	0.35
Stevenage	3.1	0.70

*¹ based on ONS mid-2015 figures

Appendix B: Case Studies

Most sites proposed for removal currently deliver poor play value, would require significant investment to improve them and / or are in very close proximity to a more suitable site.

1. Play Landscapes



Minehead Way



Wellfield



Newcastle Close

These play areas are typical of the small sites located within residential areas. They largely have just one item of equipment, which show little sign of regular use. They are often located within an area of hard surfacing set within a slightly larger green space.

Most of the sites are land locked open spaces providing poorly maintained, uninspiring play areas. They provide little play value for children, and little amenity / aesthetic benefit for local residents.

All options set out above would see the equipment and hard surfacing removed and replaced with grass. A small amount of landscape work could see these sites become more attractive green space for local residents to look out on and enjoy, and provide an ideal safe space for young children to enjoy through imaginative and informal play.

New landscape features might include:



An at-level maze



Suitable tree planting



Earth mounding and / or boulders



Community designed stepping stones

2. A Secondary Site



Cook Road is typical of a Secondary play area providing opportunities for toddlers and juniors. The photo on the right is taken prior to the 2016 improvement works. It is a tired looking play area providing limited play value for children in the local area.

The works undertaken in 2016 saw the installation of new equipment, the existing equipment was painted to freshen the site up and make it look more attractive, and new safer surfacing to replace damaged / worn areas. The site will look more inviting and vibrant, and offers greater play value.

3. A Primary Site



Before

York Road represents a typical primary site, which makes provision for toddlers, juniors and teenagers.

Despite being situated in a larger green open space the site made limited provision for toddlers and juniors, but nothing for teenagers. Officers had received a number of requests, from local residents, for improvements for all age ranges.

However in 2016/17 this site has benefited from the installation of equipment designed for toddlers, juniors and teenagers, surfacing improvements. The site now makes excellent, fun and challenging play provision for all age ranges.

4. Primary / Premier Sites



These sites are located in our main parks – like Ridlins End Playing Fields, above. Like the other primary sites they make provision for toddlers, juniors and teenagers but with much greater variety of equipment. They are destination sites for which people will be willing to travel further for the experience. In sites completed to date there has been a distinct increase in the levels of usage, with families spending more time, particularly during the summer months - bringing a picnic and spending the day in the park with family and friends.

Chells Park, Meadway and Canterbury Way Playing Fields are the only sites, of this type, that have not yet received any level of investment in recent years. The last site to benefit from improvement was Ridlins End Playing Fields, in 2015 (see images above). The play area at this site was relocated, and was installed with a range of equipment, for all age ranges, that was informed through consultation with local children and young people. The play area at Ridlins has gone from being an extremely poor, little visited, site to a bright, welcoming play area, well used play area that attracts families (with their picnics) to spend an afternoon in the summer.

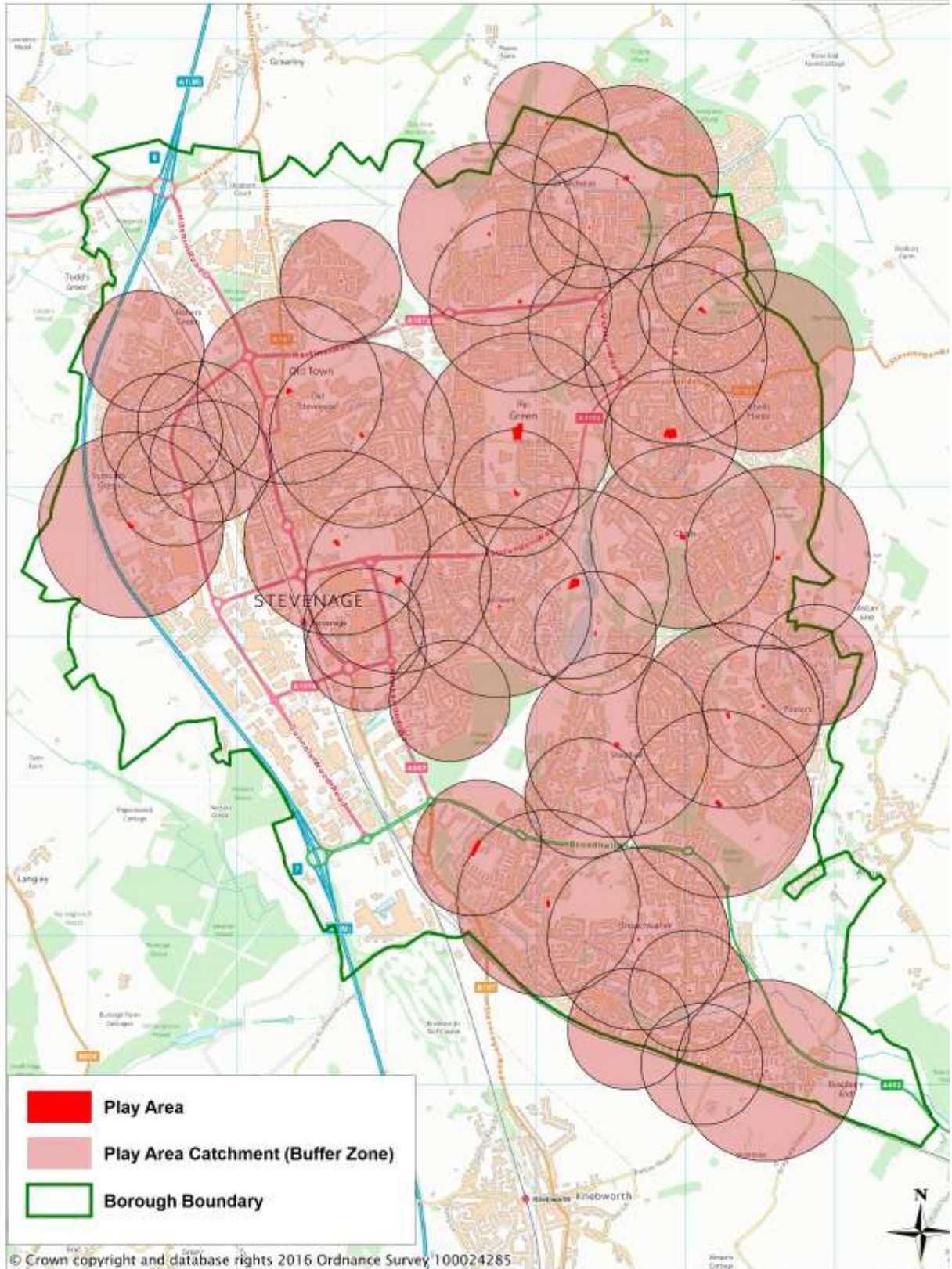
Appendix C: Option 1

	Site	Ward	Proposed Status
1	Bandley Hill (Donkey Park)	Bandley Hill	Primary
2	Jackdaw Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
3	Lapwing Rise	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
4	Lime Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
5	Parishes Mead	Bandley Hill	Secondary
6	Ridlins End Playing Fields	Bandley Hill	Primary
7	Shearwater Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
8	Sparrow Drive	Bandley Hill	Secondary
9	Bedwell Park	Bedwell	Primary
10	Fairlands Valley Park – Main	Bedwell	Primary
11	Fairlands Valley Park – Café	Bedwell	Secondary
12	Market Place	Bedwell	Public Realm consideration
13	Queensway	Bedwell	Secondary
14	Rockingham Way	Bedwell	Secondary
15	Southgate Library	Bedwell	Secondary
16	The Dell	Bedwell	Play Landscape
17	Town Centre Gardens	Bedwell	Primary
18	Camps Hill Park	Chells	Primary
19	Chells District Park	Chells	Primary
20	Cook Road	Chells	Secondary
21	Raleigh Crescent	Chells	Play Landscape
22	Balmoral Close	Longmeadow	Secondary
23	Blenheim Way	Longmeadow	Primary
24	Holly Leys	Longmeadow	Secondary
25	Emperors Gate	Manor	Primary
26	Chepstow Close	Martins Wood	Primary
27	Martins Wood	Martins Wood	Secondary
28	The Oval	Martins Wood	Secondary
29	Burymead	Old Town	Primary
30	King George V Playing fields	Old Town	Primary
31	Whitesmead Rec	Old Town	Primary
32	Archer Road	Pin Green	Secondary
33	Hampson Park	Pin Green	Primary
34	Burydale / The Noke	Roebuck	Primary
35	Shephalbury Park – Lodge Way	Roebuck	Primary
36	Shephalbury Park – Main Entrance	Roebuck	Consolidate provision on site
37	Spencer Way	Roebuck	Secondary
38	St Margarets	Roebuck	Secondary
39	Leaves Spring	Shephall	Secondary
40	Peartree Park	Shephall	Primary
41	Canterbury Way	St Nicholas	Secondary
42	Glanville Road	St Nicholas	Secondary
43	St Nicholas Park – Main	St Nicholas	Primary
44	Wellfield	St Nicholas	Play Landscape
45	York Road	St Nicholas	Primary
46	Clovelly Way	Symonds Green	Secondary
47	Fleetwood Crescent	Symonds Green	Secondary
48	Kessingland Avenue	Symonds Green	Secondary / Play Landscape

49	Meadway Playing Fields	Symonds Green	Primary
50	Minehead Way	Symonds Green	Play Landscape
51	Scarborough Avenue	Symonds Green	Secondary
52	Skegness Road	Symonds Green	Secondary
53	Torquay Crescent	Symonds Green	Secondary
54	Canterbury Way Playing Fields	Woodfield	Primary
55	Chancellors Road	Woodfield	Secondary
56	Newcastle Close	Woodfield	Play Landscape
57	Riccatt Lane	Woodfield	Secondary
58	St Nicholas Park – Old Bourne Way	Woodfield	Consolidate provision on site

Play Review

Scenario 1: February 2017



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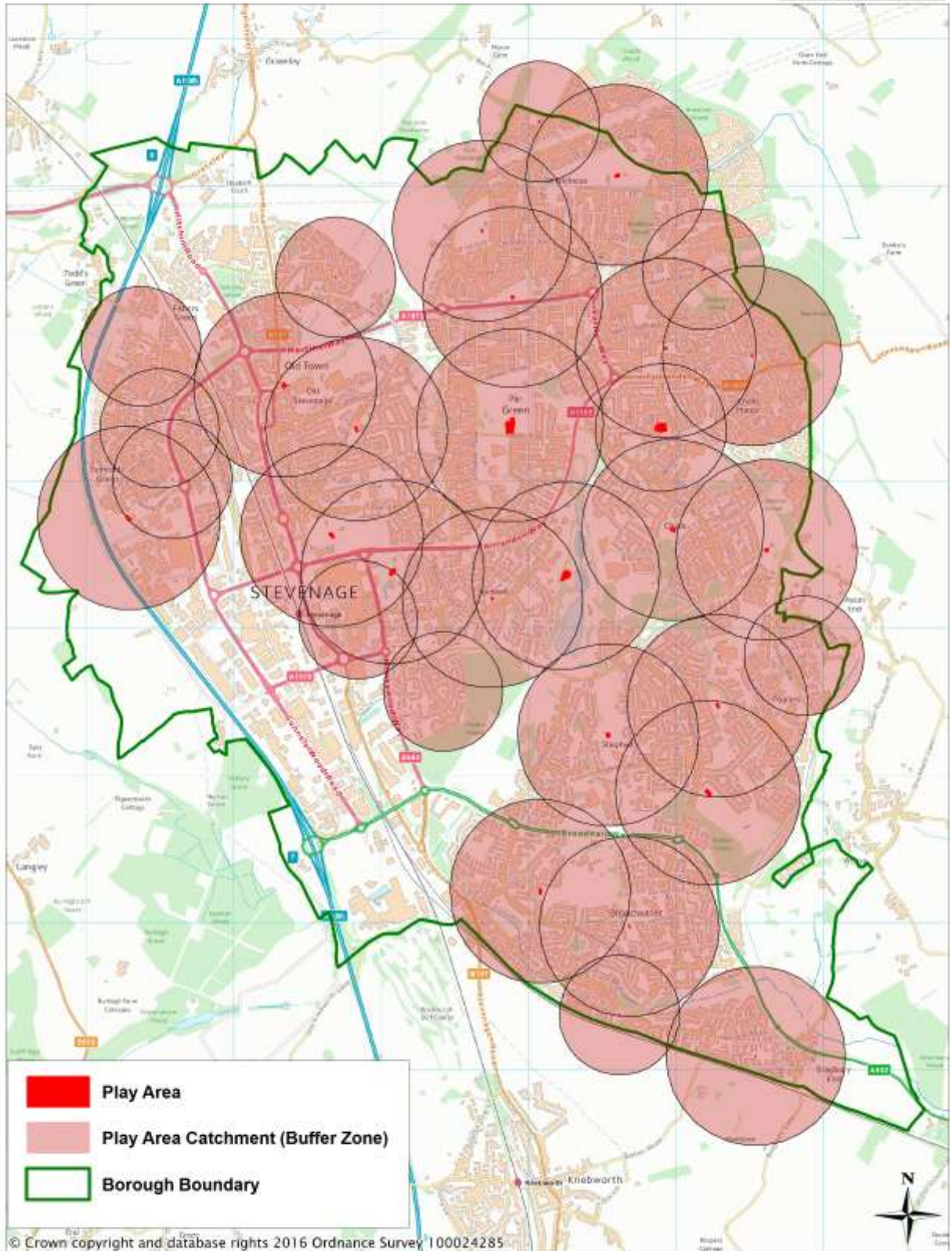
Appendix D: Option 2

	Site	Ward	Proposed Status
1	Bandley Hill (Donkey Park)	Bandley Hill	Primary
2	Jackdaw Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
3	Lapwing Rise	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
4	Lime Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
5	Parishes Mead	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
6	Ridlins End Playing Fields	Bandley Hill	Primary
7	Shearwater Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
8	Sparrow Drive	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
9	Bedwell Park	Bedwell	Primary
10	Fairlands Valley Park – Main	Bedwell	Primary
11	Fairlands Valley Park – Café	Bedwell	Play Landscape
12	Market Place	Bedwell	Public Realm consideration
13	Queensway	Bedwell	Secondary
14	Rockingham Way	Bedwell	Secondary
15	Southgate Library	Bedwell	Play Landscape
16	The Dell	Bedwell	Play Landscape
17	Town Centre Gardens	Bedwell	Primary
18	Camps Hill Park	Chells	Primary
19	Chells District Park	Chells	Primary
20	Cook Road	Chells	Secondary
21	Raleigh Crescent	Chells	Play Landscape
22	Balmoral Close	Longmeadow	Play Landscape
23	Blenheim Way	Longmeadow	Primary
24	Holly Leys	Longmeadow	Play Landscape
25	Emperors Gate	Manor	Primary
26	Chepstow Close	Martins Wood	Primary
27	Martins Wood	Martins Wood	Play Landscape
28	The Oval	Martins Wood	Play Landscape
29	Burymead	Old Town	Primary
30	King George V Playing fields	Old Town	Primary
31	Whitesmead Rec	Old Town	Primary
32	Archer Road	Pin Green	Play Landscape
33	Hampson Park	Pin Green	Primary
34	Burydale / The Noke	Roebuck	Primary
35	Shephalbury Park – Lodge Way	Roebuck	Primary
36	Shephalbury Park – Main Entrance	Roebuck	Consolidate provision on site
37	Spencer Way	Roebuck	Secondary
38	St Margarets	Roebuck	Play Landscape
39	Leaves Spring	Shephall	Play Landscape
40	Peartree Park	Shephall	Primary
41	Canterbury Way	St Nicholas	Play Landscape
42	Glanville Road	St Nicholas	Secondary
43	St Nicholas Park – Main	St Nicholas	Primary
44	Wellfield	St Nicholas	Play Landscape
45	York Road	St Nicholas	Primary
46	Clovelly Way	Symonds Green	Secondary
47	Fleetwood Crescent	Symonds Green	Play Landscape
48	Kessingland Avenue	Symonds Green	Play Landscape

49	Meadway Playing Fields	Symonds Green	Primary
50	Minehead Way	Symonds Green	Play Landscape
51	Scarborough Avenue	Symonds Green	Secondary
52	Skegness Road	Symonds Green	Secondary
53	Torquay Crescent	Symonds Green	Play Landscape
54	Canterbury Way Playing Fields	Woodfield	Primary
55	Chancellors Road	Woodfield	Secondary
56	Newcastle Close	Woodfield	Play Landscape
57	Riccatt Lane	Woodfield	Secondary
58	St Nicholas Park – Old Bourne Way	Woodfield	Consolidate provision on site

Play Review

Scenario 2: February 2017



Appendix E: Option 3

	Site	Ward	Proposed Status
1	Bandley Hill (Donkey Park)	Bandley Hill	Secondary
2	Jackdaw Close	Bandley Hill	Secondary
3	Lapwing Rise	Bandley Hill	Secondary
4	Lime Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
5	Parishes Mead	Bandley Hill	Secondary
6	Ridlins End Playing Fields	Bandley Hill	Primary
7	Shearwater Close	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
8	Sparrow Drive	Bandley Hill	Play Landscape
9	Bedwell Park	Bedwell	Secondary
10	Fairlands Valley Park – Main	Bedwell	Primary
11	Fairlands Valley Park – Café	Bedwell	Secondary
12	Market Place	Bedwell	Public Realm consideration
13	Queensway	Bedwell	Secondary
14	Rockingham Way	Bedwell	Secondary
15	Southgate Library	Bedwell	Secondary
16	The Dell	Bedwell	Play Landscape
17	Town Centre Gardens	Bedwell	Primary
18	Camps Hill Park	Chells	Secondary
19	Chells District Park	Chells	Primary
20	Cook Road	Chells	Secondary
21	Raleigh Crescent	Chells	Play Landscape
22	Balmoral Close	Longmeadow	Secondary
23	Blenheim Way	Longmeadow	Secondary
24	Holly Leys	Longmeadow	Secondary
25	Emperors Gate	Manor	Secondary
26	Chepstow Close	Martins Wood	Secondary
27	Martins Wood	Martins Wood	Secondary
28	The Oval	Martins Wood	Secondary
29	Burymead	Old Town	Secondary
30	King George V Playing fields	Old Town	Primary
31	Whitesmead Rec	Old Town	Secondary
32	Archer Road	Pin Green	Play Landscape
33	Hampson Park	Pin Green	Primary
34	Burydale / The Noke	Roebuck	Secondary
35	Shephalbury Park – Lodge Way	Roebuck	Primary
36	Shephalbury Park – Main Entrance	Roebuck	Consolidate provision on site
37	Spencer Way	Roebuck	Secondary
38	St Margarets	Roebuck	Play Landscape
39	Leaves Spring	Shephall	Play Landscape
40	Peartree Park	Shephall	Primary
41	Canterbury Way	St Nicholas	Play Landscape
42	Glanville Road	St Nicholas	Secondary
43	St Nicholas Park – Main	St Nicholas	Primary
44	Wellfield	St Nicholas	Play Landscape
45	York Road	St Nicholas	Secondary
46	Clovelly Way	Symonds Green	Secondary
47	Fleetwood Crescent	Symonds Green	Play Landscape
48	Kessingland Avenue	Symonds Green	Play Landscape

49	Meadway Playing Fields	Symonds Green	Primary
50	Minehead Way	Symonds Green	Play Landscape
51	Scarborough Avenue	Symonds Green	Secondary
52	Skegness Road	Symonds Green	Secondary
53	Torquay Crescent	Symonds Green	Secondary
54	Canterbury Way Playing Fields	Woodfield	Primary
55	Chancellors Road	Woodfield	Secondary
56	Newcastle Close	Woodfield	Play Landscape
57	Riccat Lane	Woodfield	Secondary
58	St Nicholas Park – Old Bourne Way	Woodfield	Consolidate provision on site

Appendix F: Equality Impact Assessment

Full Equality Impact Assessment
For a policy, project, service or other decision that is new, changing or under review

What is being assessed?		Play Area Review 2017			
Lead Assessor	Julia Hill			Assessment team	Gordon Drake
Start date	October 2016	End date	March 2022		
When will the EqIA be reviewed?	Annually				

Who may be affected by it?	Children and young people
What are the key aims of it?	<p>To ensure that children and young people in Stevenage can access play spaces that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are safe, good quality and well equipped • Provide a range of play opportunities (formal and informal) that help promote a child’s development and independence • Make provision, across the town, for all age ranges from toddlers to teenagers • Allow children and young people to test themselves, and their abilities, in a relatively safe environment • Are fun and exciting, and help to keep children active and healthy • Are freely, and safely, accessible through the year • Include equipment that can be accessed by all children and young people regardless of any disability • Are well maintained, with repairs undertaken promptly

What positive measures are in place (if any) to help fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment		Promote equal opportunities	Improvements to play areas include elements of inclusive play for children and young people of all abilities.	Encourage good relations	<p>The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year</p> <p>Improvements to play areas are carried out following consultation with local children and young people.</p>

What sources of data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual inspections of sites • Play area consultation with children and young people • Mapping and GIS data • Comparative quantitative data on play provision
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In assessing the potential impact on people, are there any overall comments that you would like to make?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of the proposed programme of play improvements will see investment to deliver good quality play spaces that benefit the whole community. • The consultative approach to be used will ensure play spaces that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of different residents • The preferred option (Option 1) will result in an increased level of provision for older children and teenagers. It will enable the Council to deliver a high number of equipped play spaces when compared with authorities in the benchmarking group. • Through the development of play landscapes it is believed that we can make a positive impact on the appearance and use of some smaller sites.
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Evidence and impact assessment

Explain the potential impact and opportunities it could have for people in terms of the following characteristics, where applicable:

Age					
Positive impact	<p>The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year.</p> <p>The preferred option will see the number of play areas making provision for teenagers double from the number provided now.</p> <p>Improvements to play areas are carried out following consultation with local children and young people.</p>	Negative impact	Difficulty reading signage or information	Unequal impact	<p>There will be greater numbers of play spaces making provision for toddlers and juniors, than teenagers.</p> <p>Some children / young people may require assistance to access some items of play equipment safely</p>
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All significant play area improvements, in the past 10+ years, have been informed through successful consultation with local children and young people • Some younger users may have difficulty reading information relating to the play areas – it is important to make any signage child friendly • It is usually possible for teenagers to travel further more easily and safely to access a play area than it is for younger children. Also, experience has shown that where play areas are located close to residential properties there is often a conflict between older children / young people using the site until later in the evening, and causing disturbance to local residents. Facilities for teenagers therefore have to be located more carefully. 			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Raise awareness of the location of the play areas, and the age ranges that they are intended to cater for.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Disability					
e.g. physical impairment, mental ill health, learning difficulties, long-standing illness					
Positive impact	Improvements to play areas include elements of inclusive play for children and young people of all abilities. Good levels of access to, and within, play areas.	Negative impact	Visually impaired users may have difficulty reading signage or safely accessing equipment alone.	Unequal impact	Depending on their abilities some children / young people may require assistance to access some items of play equipment safely
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All significant play area improvements, in the past 10+ years, have been informed through successful consultation with local children and young people 			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?	Raise awareness of the location of the play areas, and the type of equipment that can be accessed.	What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Gender reassignment					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Marriage or civil partnership					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Pregnancy & maternity					
Positive impact	Adult seating provided at all play areas.	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Race					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Religion or belief					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Sex					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Sexual orientation e.g. straight, lesbian / gay, bisexual					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?			What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)		

Socio-economic¹					
e.g. low income, unemployed, homelessness, caring responsibilities, access to internet, public transport users					
Positive impact	The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

Other					
please feel free to consider the potential impact on people in any other contexts					
Positive impact	None	Negative impact	None	Unequal impact	None
Please evidence the data and information you used to support this assessment		The play areas are freely accessible to everyone at anytime of the day and throughout the year			
What opportunities are there to promote equality and inclusion?		What do you still need to find out? Include in actions (last page)			

¹Although non-statutory, the council has chosen to implement the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage.

What are the findings of any consultation with:

Staff?		Residents?	<p>In 2005 87% of respondents considered provision for children and young people to be important.</p> <p>Over a third rated play equipment, maintenance and management as unsatisfactory.</p>
Voluntary & community sector?		Partners?	
Other stakeholders?	<p>A benchmarking exercise has found that Stevenage currently provides 3.1 play areas per 100 population of children and young people. Corby is next, providing 2.5 play areas per 100 population of children and young people. While Bracknell provides 1.1 play areas per 100 population of children and young people</p>		

Overall conclusion & future activity

Explain the overall findings of the assessment and reasons for outcome (please choose one) :	
1. No inequality, inclusion issues or opportunities to further improve have been identified	
Negative / unequal impact, barriers to inclusion or improvement opportunities identified	2a. Adjustments made
	2b. Continue as planned
	2c. Stop and remove

Detail the actions that are needed as a result of this assessment and how they will help to remove discrimination & harassment, promote equal opportunities and / or encourage good relations :				
Action	Will this help to remove, promote and / or encourage?	Responsible officer	Deadline	How will this be embedded as business as usual?
Play area signage will continue to be child friendly	Remove	Gordon Drake	As play spaces are improved	Renewal of signage to be delivered with all new future play improvements

Approved by Head of Service / Strategic Director:

Date:

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk

