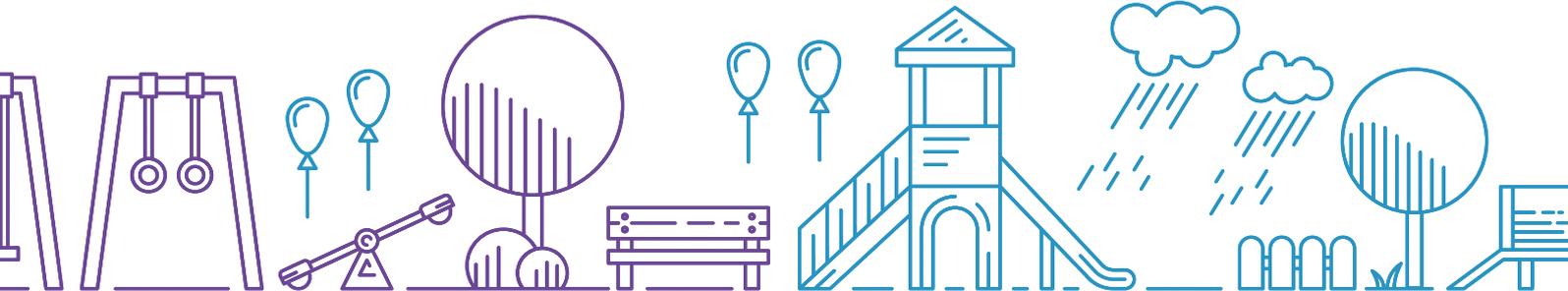


---

# Play Strategy 2021-2026

---



# Foreword

**Janet Turner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services**

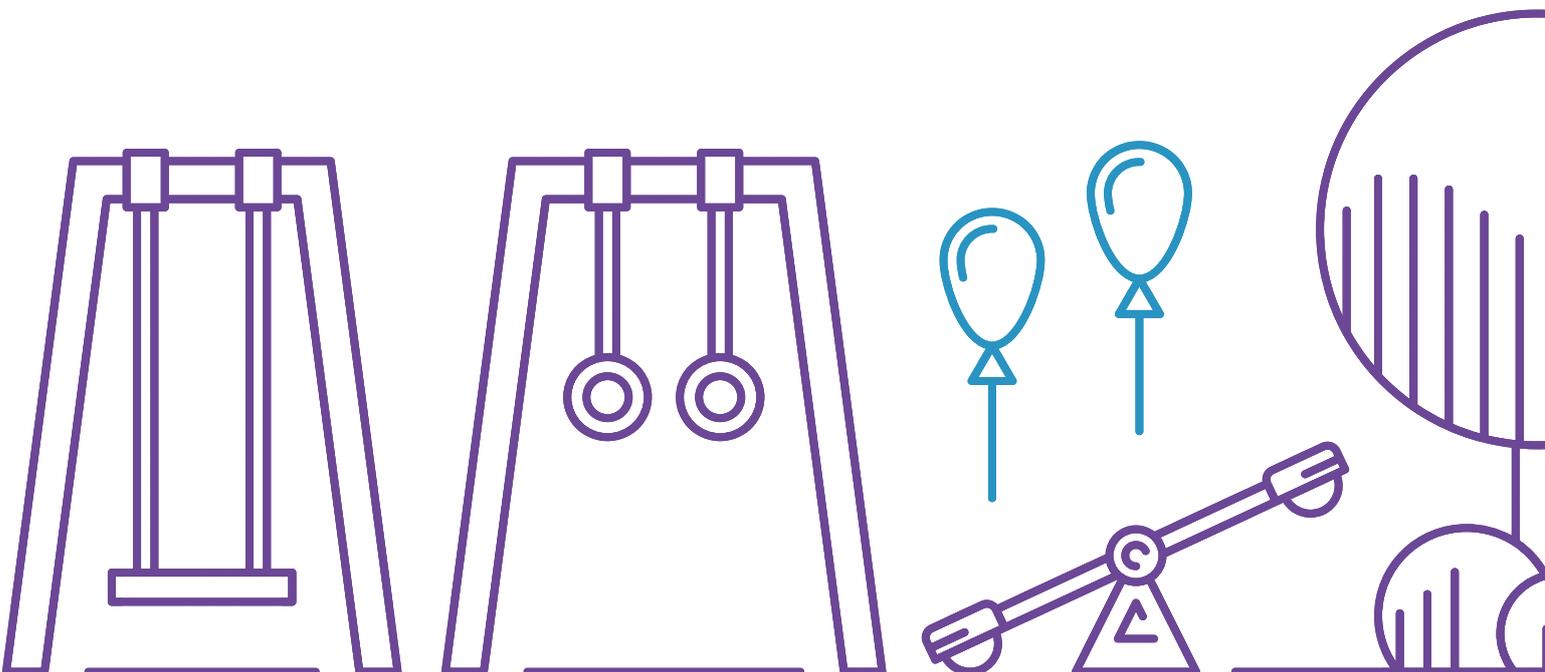


Play allows children to experience fun, joy and laughter in a way that is important to them. It is a vital part of their growth and development. Active Play lays the foundation for a healthy lifestyle and helps children develop essential social skills through sharing, respecting others, patience and tolerance. It is also often through play that children develop their imagination and creativity. I am sure we can all remember with great fondness playing as children and the fun and happy memories it evokes.

Elmbridge Borough Council recognises the important social, physical and mental well-being benefits that play provides to children and it is why I am very proud to introduce the 2021-2026 Elmbridge Play Strategy.

The strategy is broken into two distinct sections and sets out how the Council will provide facilities and activities for children to play. The first section focuses on how play is important in children's health and wellbeing and the diverse range of activities the Council supports across the Borough. The second part of the strategy focuses on Elmbridge's fixed play equipment and the Council's commitment to creating exciting, stimulating, safe and fun environments for children to play.

Importantly, the strategy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders and in-depth research. It looks at all aspects of play and how these benefit children and help them to achieve their full potential.



# Contents

Play Strategy 2021-2026 .....	1
Foreword.....	2
Introduction - What is the purpose of the Play Strategy? .....	5
<b>Part 1 – Play development.....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Play development strategy .....	7
1.2 Stakeholders.....	7
1.3 The meaning of play and why it is important? .....	7
1.4 Profile of Elmbridge.....	10
1.5 Why do we need a Play Strategy?.. .....	11
1.6 Vision, aims and objectives for the future of play in Elmbridge. ....	11
1.7 The adult role in supporting play.....	12
1.8 Barriers to play.....	13
1.9 Scope of the strategy.....	13
1.10 Links to other strategies and plans.....	14
1.11 Developing the strategy – research and consultation.....	15
1.12 Consultation findings.. .....	18
1.13 SWOT analysis of play development and Shout! holiday scheme. ....	21
1.14 Summary and developing an action plan.. .....	23
1.14.1 Play Development action plan.....	24
<b>Part 2 - Fixed play equipment .....</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 Fixed play equipment strategy .....	28
2.2 Standards for design and maintenance of play provision.....	37
2.3 Current play provision in Elmbridge Borough.....	42
2.4 Play value assessments and findings.....	50
2.5 Findings and priority sites.....	50
2.6 Resources and funding.....	52
2.7 Summarising our policy for fixed play equipment.....	53

## Appendices

Appendix 1A - Stakeholders.....	54
Appendix 1B - Playwork Principles.....	55
Appendix 1C – Play types.....	56
Appendix 1D – Public consultation, online questionnaire.....	57
Appendix 1E – Public consultation, focus group questions.....	62
Appendix 1F – Public consultation, online survey summary results.....	63
Appendix 1G – Public consultation, focus groups summary results.....	79
References.....	84
Bibliography.....	86
Appendix 2A - Elmbridge Borough Council Green Space Play Area Development plan.....	88
Appendix 2B - Classification of play areas, Fields in Trust (FIT).....	91
Appendix 2C - General design principles - Fields In Trust (FIT) guidance, Design for Play and Managing Risk in Play Provision.....	96
Appendix 2D - Design of accessible play spaces.....	98
Appendix 2E - Planning New Residential Developments.....	99
Appendix 2F - Open Space and Recreation Assessment Oct 2014 (OSRA).....	100



# Introduction –

## What is the purpose of the Play Strategy?

The Elmbridge Play Strategy 2021-2026 is a comprehensive and wide-ranging strategic document that will provide a clear focus in the council's approach to play development.

The overall purpose of the Play Strategy is to bring together all agencies in Elmbridge who have an interest and involvement in children's play, which collectively will improve play opportunities for children in the area. The intention is that this process will create a long-term action plan arising from the Play Strategy. The strategy is divided into two key parts, Play development (part 1) and Fixed play equipment (part 2).





# Part 1

## Play development

# Part 1 – Play development

## 1.1 Play development strategy

This part of the strategy will focus on council's approach to play development.

## 1.2 Stakeholders

This strategy has been developed in consultation and collaboration with local key stakeholders (Appendix 1A).

Stakeholder engagement has been a key aspect in developing this strategy because they represent the people of Elmbridge, and what matters most to them regarding Play. Workshops and meetings have been instrumental in creating the vision, aims and objectives of this strategy. Importantly, participating in these engagements encourages knowledge and skills to be shared, thus it helps the Council meet expectations, negating risks and fostering accountability.

## 1.3 The meaning of play and why it is important?

Play is described as *'what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interest, in their own way, and for their own reasons'* (Play England, 2018). This is underpinned by the Playwork Principles (Appendix 1B), the professional and ethical framework for play work where:

- **Play is freely chosen** – children choose when, how and what to play
- **Personally directed** – children control the content of their play
- **Intrinsically motivated** – play is a process and undertaken for its own sake

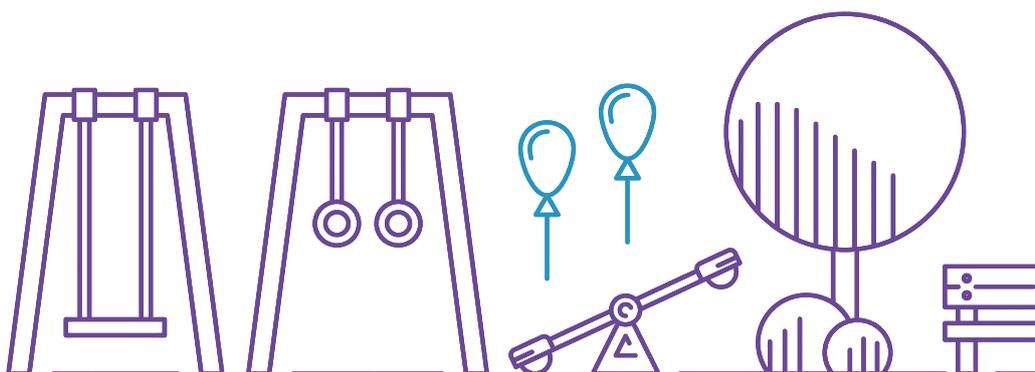
Playing is a primary need for children, closely linked to their innate need to express themselves, to explore, learn about and make sense of the world around them. The benefits of play derive from children choosing and doing it for themselves. The adult role in play provision is to enable rather than to direct.

According to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, a child has a right to play and *'the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right'* by investing in the provision of activities whether structured or non-structured and creating time and space for children to play safely to develop, essential to health and well-being (United Nations, 2013).

The role of play has a direct influence on a child's development, and it can cover many areas of development. Tassoni (2005), splits the development opportunities into social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional. Therefore, as well as being a right, the benefits of play are extensive and can prepare children for the future, by building self-reliance and self-esteem thereby helping them to make their own choices in life, helping them to make decisions and gain confidence and skills.



(Play England, 2018)

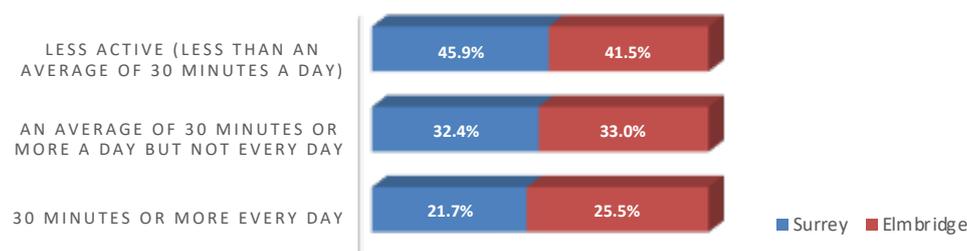


There is growing concern over childhood obesity with 16.6% of children aged 5 to 6 years being overweight/obese in Surrey (Surrey-i, 2019) and *'in the last year of primary school, on average, six children out of a class of thirty are obese and a further four are overweight, twice as many as thirty years ago'* (Davies, 2019). In Elmbridge, 16% of reception children are overweight/obese/severely obese, and by year 6 this has increased to 25% who are overweight/obese/severely obese (Davies, 2019).

Davies' report stresses that action is needed to improve child health as the level of obesity is increasing as children progress through primary school (Davies, 2019). By providing access to play, children can achieve the recommended physical activity required for health and well-being and to combat childhood obesity. Encouraging physical activity and the social interaction through play can help a child get the best start in life, an ambition of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board, 2019).

The first National Active Lives children and young people (CYP) survey was carried out in the academic year 2017/18 with over 1.2 million children and young people in England surveyed of which 2,770 responded from Surrey. 266 CYP out of the 2,770 responded from Elmbridge; 218 from Primary schools and 48 from Secondary schools (Active Surrey, 2018).

For the question of sport and physical activity levels outside school (years 1 to 11) the following data was collected:



(Active Surrey, 2018).

Guidelines recommend that children and young people should be active every day with 60+ minutes of moderate or vigorous activity every day (Department of Health, 2011) and this data indicates that children in Elmbridge fall short of this with only 25.5% achieving 30 minutes or more every day.

Play is the best way to get children active to combat the negative effect of inactivity. The University of Bristol's street play project found that increasing children's activity levels was *'important to develop healthy habits, enjoyment of physical activity and physical literacy skills'* (Play England, 2018).

Lack of play opportunities defined as *'play deprivation'* can have a contra effect on children by denying them the experiences to develop, thereby affecting their development which can have far reaching impact on a child's development and future life (Play Wales, 2003). Surrey-i (2018) data indicates that of the 23.9% of the population under 18 years of age, 8.7% of children (2300) under 16 are living in poverty even though *'Elmbridge is one of the 20% least deprived authorities in England'* (Public Health England, 2017).



## 1.5 Why do we need a Play Strategy?

Using this Strategy, Elmbridge Borough Council will be able to support a range of services and play equipment to meet the needs of the Borough. It will provide a long-term plan, working with stakeholders to create direction for play in the next 5 to 10 years ensuring that children's health and wellbeing are at the fore.

## 1.6 Vision, aims and objectives for the future of play in Elmbridge

The stakeholder consultation was the basis of the formulation of the vision, aims and objectives of the strategy.

### Elmbridge vision for play and future priorities developed in collaboration with stakeholders

Developing strong partnership working with parents and professionals to ensure that all Elmbridge's children and young people have an equal right to play opportunities through a range of enjoyable, creative, stimulating and safe provision to develop their health and well-being and future life chances.

### The key objectives highlighted as part of the stakeholder consultation and research were to identify opportunities in:

- Widening participation of play in Elmbridge
- Advocating for play
- Improving children's health and wellbeing through play
- Bringing play into the closer community/neighbourhood

### Aim of this strategy

- To support the provision of high-quality play, indoor and outdoor facilities to meet the needs of Elmbridge's children, young people and their families
- To ensure that such provision is effectively planned and co-ordinated, well designed and that appropriate budgets are available to enable sustainable implementation
- To ensure that the strategy supports the aims of relevant national strategy, corporate vision and local strategies and, in turn, influences and feeds into the development of future local strategy and policy
- To ensure that all provision is planned with the active involvement of the borough's children, young people, their families and the wider community including key stakeholders
- To ensure inclusive play spaces are provided with high-quality facilities that are accessible to all
- To ensure that play opportunities meet demand, and encourages participation which enable children and young people to play

- To bring the health, development and well-being of Elmbridge’s children and young people to the fore
- Work with partners to provide and safeguard services or facilities for children and young people
- To protect, enhance and celebrate the quality of the Council’s green spaces for the enjoyment of the community and enhancement of play opportunities

### Objective of this strategy

- Develop a strategic and planned approach to enhance play opportunities in the borough and to ensure the quality of play provision in Elmbridge.
- Raise the profile of play and encourage communities to place a greater value upon it
- To analyse existing provision, develop new provision and establish the future of children’s play provision within Elmbridge
- Encourage the creation of communities more inclined to play.
- To develop inclusive play opportunities that promote greater social inclusion in accordance with local needs
- To develop a balance of supervised and unsupervised play provision, according to local needs
- Ensure children and young people can participate in the design, development and evaluation of play provision
- Develop play opportunities to encourage healthy lifestyle and physical activity
- To devise an action plan facilitating an informed approach for the future
- To develop a system that is clear and transparent which manages, monitor and review the implementation of the action plan

### 1.7 The adult role in supporting play

The Playwork Principles (Scrutiny Group 2004, cited by Play England, 2018) (Appendix 1B) establish a professional and ethical framework for playwork where the adult role is to:

- Support and facilitate the play process
- Develop a play policy, strategy, training and education
- Advocate play
- Support children in the creation of their play space
- Respond to children with knowledge of the play process and reflect on their practice
- Understand their impact on a child’s play
- Understanding risk, benefits, and safety when intervening in play.

Well balanced activities and opportunities is emphasised in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (Department for Education, 2017). The adult role is to provide opportunities for all types of play (Appendix 1C) with a balance of adult-directed and child-led activities to enable children to learn new concepts and ideas to expand their knowledge. Also, this enables children to be completely free in their play choices, and to make/do whatever they want. The level of support encourages independence, self-reliance and self-confidence – life-long skills for children to take into adulthood (Tassoni, P and Beith, K, 2002).

Children require adults around them to understand why play (both indoors and outdoors), is essential to them, as well as, to ensure they develop their full potential, grow physically, intellectually and emotionally through play and exploration.

## 1.8 Barriers to play

Research has shown that children's motivation to participate in play, indoors and outdoors, is hindered by several barriers, including:

- The weather - too hot, cold or raining
- Fear of teenagers in their play areas; (Brockman et al., 2011)
- Traffic and safety - increased traffic in road travelling at speed
- Negative attitudes to children making 'noise' outside
- A reduction in free time due to competing school time and club activities
- Sedentary lifestyle by increasing access to computer consoles and games

Parental anxiety where a fear of strangers, traffic, bullying, dog fouling and risk-averse attitude contribute to children using the outdoor play space and participating in physical activity less. This is likely to be more prevalent following the Covid19 Pandemic and social distancing guidance.

## 1.9 Scope of the strategy

This strategy seeks to inform the shape and direction of play in Elmbridge over the next five years. Focussing on the 3-15 age group, this play strategy aims to enhance and develop play opportunities within Elmbridge. It provides a strategy for Elmbridge in general, recognising the potential contributions of all partners involved in providing and developing play for children and young people in the borough.

This strategy lies within the scope of the Council's Play Development service and excludes commercial play activities and any opportunities outside the borough. It does not include childcare nor youth services as these are within the scope of statutory duty of Surrey County Council.

Elmbridge Borough Council recognises that children may also have opportunities to play at home and at school, however, these are not under the control of the Council and therefore not included in this strategy.

This scope of this strategy includes:

- Organised play such as supervised play schemes and out of school provision
- Free play events
- The aligned Fixed Play Equipment strategy aims to address the play needs of children in the borough by identifying the re-development needs of the fixed play areas within the borough council's remit
- Unsupervised spaces and facilities used for play

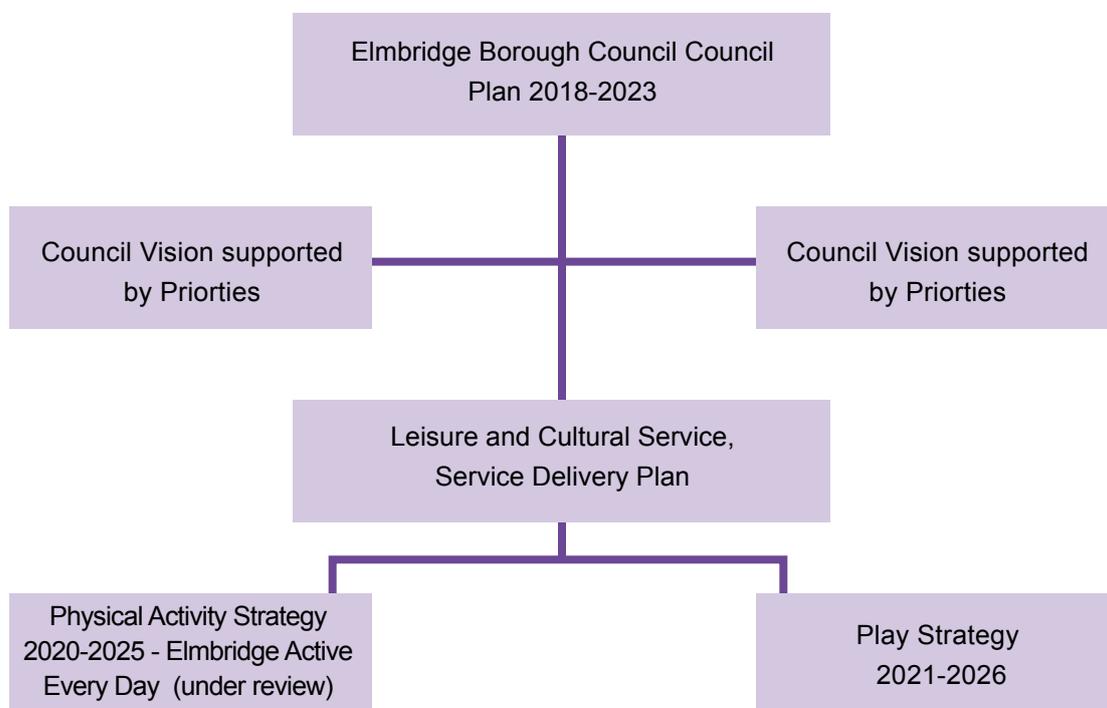
## 1.10 Links to other strategies and plans

### National

The UK Government’s strategy on play, published in 2008, set out plans to improve and develop play facilities for children throughout the country. With a change in administration in 2010, ministerial responsibility for play was removed and the coalition created the Department for Education to carry through reforms in schools, early years and child protection with goals of “*safety and wellbeing, education excellence and prepared for adult life*” (Department for education, 2016).

### Regional

In 2019, the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board published a 10-year Health and Wellbeing Strategy based in the Surrey Join Strategic Needs Assessment (Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board, 2019).



### Local

The diagram below shows how the Play Strategy forms part of the Elmbridge Borough Council’s Plan and other local strategies.

### Council Plan

The five- year Council vision (2018-2023) is:

*“A responsive and effective Council, protecting and promoting the interests of residents and businesses and safeguarding our environment, while maintaining a community for all”.* (Elmbridge Borough Council, 2018).

## Leisure and Cultural Services – Service Delivery Plan

The Service objectives are revised annually and supports the Council Plan.

### Physical Activity Strategy

The Play Strategy supports the Elmbridge Active Every Day, Physical Activity Strategy 2020-2025 by providing opportunities for children and young people to start moving through supervised play such as holiday play provision (Shout!) and free play events (Play day, play picnics) as well as unsupervised play (fixed play areas).

#### 1.11 Developing the strategy – research and consultation

When developing the Play Strategy, it was important to ensure that a wide range of views were sought and a full evaluation of the existing provision. This was split into desk research and consultation, including children and young people, parents and residents, and stakeholders.

##### Desk research

##### Guidance on play

Play England is a charitable company whose vision is for “*England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years*” (Play England, 2018). It campaigns for play and works with national partners and other organisations to raise awareness of the importance of play and provides support for schools, street play and play work.

##### Current play provision in Elmbridge

Unsupervised play and play areas, are within the scope of fixed play equipment (see Part 2 of this document). Wheeled sport, youth shelters, basketball courts and multi courts are outside the scope of this strategy.

##### Supervised play

Within this strategy ‘supervised play’ refers to settings where informal, structured or free play occurs under the supervision of staff members or playworkers. Such settings within the scope of this strategy include holiday clubs and activity clubs.

##### Holiday play provision in Elmbridge

There are 13 Ofsted registered holiday schemes (Surrey County Council, 2018) in the Borough providing supervised play activities for children aged 5 to 13 years. In addition to this, there are 26 private activity schemes such as Camp Beaumont, Super Camps and Barracudas and specialist sports activity clubs such as theatre, dance, football, rugby, who provide activities during the school holidays. This level of holiday care has more than doubled since the last review in 2007 (12 settings).

For those with special educational needs or disability, such as autism, speech and language impairment and higher-level needs, there are holiday schemes who provide specialist play services with one-to-one support to suit individual needs (Surrey County Council Family Information Service, 2020).

## **Elmbridge Borough Council current play provision**

### **Principles of our play provision**

The aim of this strategy is to highlight Elmbridge Borough Council's commitment to providing high quality play as integral to children's enjoyment of their lives, health and development. All children and young people need and want to play, indoors and out, in whatever way they can. Play stimulates social interaction and allows them to explore the world around them, whether materially or imaginary, and fosters cognitive and imaginative development. These are vital to children's development, as it could enhance soft skills such as problem-solving and emotional intelligence.

- Elmbridge Borough Council recognises children's right to play as contained in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991

### **Shout! Holiday Activities**

Leisure and Cultural Services has a well-established programme of play activities throughout the year providing free play events managed by the Play Development Officer. Shout Holiday sessions will continue to offer free drop in activities in a variety of settings across the Borough that will facilitate fun, unstructured and imaginative play opportunities. The Play Development Officer will also work in partnership with the leisure operator to ensure best practice is adopted and families have access to high quality and affordable play schemes during school holidays at the Xcel Leisure Centre.

### **Shout! Out**

In 2017, Shout! extended its provision to offer free play sessions in recreation grounds around the borough during the summer holidays. They are free to attend and children over 8 years can join these sessions unaccompanied. The sessions are generally attended by up to 40 children with 9 events offered in summer 2019.

### **Play Events**

These are annual events organised during the summer holidays. The Teddy Bears picnic is held in Hersham, organised in collaboration with a local nursery and in 2019 drew 420 attendees. Play Day is an annual event in Hurst Park, Molesey to celebrate National Play day. It has been running since 2013 and in 2019 had 37 stalls with up to 3,000 children and adults attending. These events are popular with families and well attended each year.

In 2018, Shout! worked in collaboration with PA Housing to provide a week of free access play for children in the St John's area for 6 hours each day. The morning session offered arts and crafts followed by an afternoon session of sports coaching. The sessions were well attended for a new venture, with 15-20 children per day.

For the unprecedented times of 2020, play development moved online with activities for children using their dedicated Shout! Facebook page. 'Virtual' Play Day saw 99 posts with over 6000 reaches and an 823% increase in post engagement and October half term activities saw 60 posts with 1,357 reaches and a 96% increase in post engagement. Similar activities were planned for all 2020 school holidays, including arts and crafts, games and activities. With this significant increase in reach to residents, this methodology will be repeated in future years.

## Consultation

### Stakeholder consultation

An initial consultation meeting was held with stakeholders to identify the following:

- Is there a need for a play strategy?
- What should we include in the strategy?
- What is our vision for Elmbridge?
- Who should be included in this process?

### Resident's views of play provision in Elmbridge

Consultation with children and young people in the borough, residents, parents and stakeholders is vital when developing a strategy and action plan. The objective of this strategy is to "ensure children and young people can participate in the design, development and evaluation of play provision" is achieved.

The aim of the consultation process is to give the residents of Elmbridge an opportunity to give their views and to help shape the future of play provision in Elmbridge, ensuring it reflects the community they live in.

The objective was to gain feedback on the existing play scheme run by the Council and the other play opportunities offered across the borough, including free play events, fixed play and natural play areas. This helps to identify where children like to play, what they like to do and barriers to their play.

The consultation involved the following approaches:

- Online questionnaires devised to suit consultees (parents and residents, and stakeholders) (Appendix 1D)
- Stakeholder meetings
- Focus Groups (children and young people, parents and stakeholders) (Appendix 1E)

The questionnaires were promoted in several ways:

- Elmbridge Borough Council website
- Elmbridge Borough Council social media
- Direct mail to Shout! users
- Shout! Facebook
- Twitter
- Mail drop
- Flyers in borough libraries
- Focus groups
- Local media/magazines
- E-review
- Local schools parent information
- Councillor circulation

## 1.12 Consultation findings

The views collated from the consultation process are vital to the shape the continued service provision. Findings have been summarised below with infographics in Appendix 1F. This data has been used to shape the action plans found in Section 3.

In total 237 responses were received. The results are as follows:

### 1. Barriers to playing outdoors

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of various barriers to playing outdoors using a rating scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not important and 10 extremely important). The barriers are shown below in bold.

On a scale of 1 to 10, 60% of parents thought '**Stranger-danger**' was the most deterrent factor to playing outdoors (8 to 10 on the scale) with 43% rating it as a 10 on the scale.

On a scale of 8 to 10, 59% of parents thought that there was a **lack of suitable play areas** in the borough.

47% of parents stated that, overall there was a **lack of local opportunities to play** (scale 8 to 10).

38% of parents (scale 8 to 10) thought that the **streets are too dangerous** places to play. **Traffic** is also an aggravating factor for 47% of parents (scale 8 to 10).

Although 53% of children are **interested in outdoor play** (scale 1 to 3), 34% of parents (rating scale 8 to 10) identified the **rise in screen time** as a barrier to play. **Supervision time** spent in play areas was not perceived as an obstacle for parents, nor were **risks taken by children when playing**. 43% of parents saw it as a positive factor (scale 1 to 3).

The **overload of extra-curricular activities** seemed to play an important factor in preventing children to play outdoors with 31% of parents thinking it made an impact (rated 7 to 10 in the scale).

## 2. Feedback on Shout! play scheme

Shout! holiday activities are run by Elmbridge Borough Council and caters for 5 to 13-year-old children. In addition, Shout! runs various free drop-in sessions across the year at various locations.

The following feedback concentrates on the paid-for scheme operating at Easter and Summer school holidays.

**57%** of respondents had heard about the council's play scheme and **47%** of them had used Shout! in the last 2 years.

### 2.1 Feedback on service aspects

Respondents were asked to give their feedback on various aspects of the holiday scheme:

- Qualities of activities on offer
- Frequency of holidays
- Hours run
- Staff
- Location
- Value for money

76% of respondents indicated they were happy with the **quality of activities** on offer. 45% thought they were good and 31% very good. 75% of respondents are happy with the **frequency of holidays**. The satisfaction is also high with the **hours run** (76%). Extended hours are available at the sports camp based at Xcel.

**Staff** are rated highly with 47% of parents thinking they are good and 34% very good.

82% of parents are satisfied with the **location**.

**Value for money** is the aspect of the service that families rate the highest with 93% of parents thinking it is good or very good.

### 2.2. Recommendations to friends

Parents would be willing to refer the scheme to friends: 91% would highly likely or likely do so. However, they would be more likely to recommend it (59%) than highly recommend it (32%).

### 2.3. Loyalty to the scheme

Although Shout! parents seem loyal to scheme, they are sensitive to a variety of factors that would make them want to switch from the scheme. 48% have indicated they would be likely to choose other childcare options during the holidays in the next 2 to 5 years.

## 2.4) Reasons for changing from Shout!

It seems that children's age is the main reason to move from Shout! but another reason to take into consideration is the perceived lack of suitable activities for children aged 10+. Respondents highlighted the fact they were looking for specialist activities or trips.

## 2.5) Other forms of childcare used during the school holidays

Most parents take annual leave or use relatives or friends as an alternative to holiday camps. This might indicate that childcare costs are carefully taken into consideration and that free or low-cost childcare is the preferred choice for parents.

## 3. Feedback on Council's play events: Stay and play / Play Day / Wild at play / Countryside Events

The Council offers 4 types of free play events in the summer. The Stay and Play, Play Day, Wild at play and Countryside Events.

72% of respondents had NOT attended any council play events. Amongst the 28% of people who attended: 43% attended 2 events; 28% 1 event, 21 attended 5 events and 8% attended 10 events.

### 3.1. Feedback on quality of activities at free summer council events

The feedback on the quality of activity at the **Stay and Play events** was positive with 74% of participants thinking they were good or very good. These events recorded an average of 20 participants with up to 40 attendees at specific locations.

**Play Day**, the leisure flagship event attracted 3000 visitors in 2019 and offered a wide range of activities to cater for all age groups. 75% of respondents rated the activities as good (40%) or very good (35%).

**Wild at Play**, run in partnership with the countryside team and the play development team proved to be the most popular with 81% of respondents judging them very good (46%) or good (35%). Depending on the season and activities on offer, the number of participants can range from 20 to 80.

Attendance at **countryside events** is influenced by the weather or season. They attract from 20 to 40 participants on average, with some specific activities like pond dipping recording up to 60 participants. They are based on a different nature theme every time. They are popular with families. 93% rate them as very good (59%) or good (34%).

### 3.2) Perceived benefits from attending council free play events

The events' success can be linked to the various benefits families draw from attending. 49% of respondents thought their children benefitted a lot from attending, 40% average and 11% a little.

Getting children active outdoors (82%) and developing social skills (77%) are the main advantages drawn from taking part in the events. However, the physical development element also plays a large role (46%) and 38% of parents view taking risks as an important factor in outdoor events.

### 3.3. Additional benefits highlighted by respondents included:

- Picking up new crafting technics, making new friends or getting introduced to new sport
- Speaking with emergency services people
- Countryside arts and crafts
- Wide variety of sports and activities
- Interesting and engaging activities
- Developing interest in wildlife

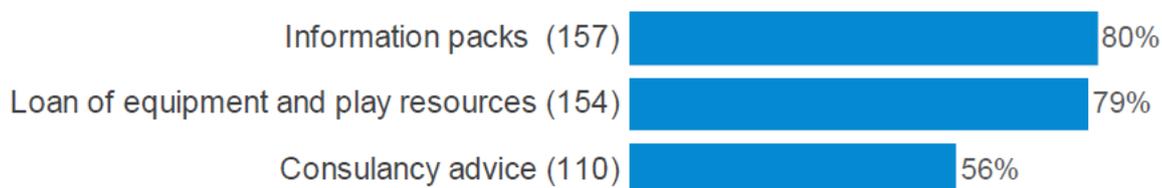
### 3.4. Future holiday childcare choices

The free drop-in sessions introduced in 2017 seemed to be popular with parents with 49% wishing to attend with their child while 47% preferred leaving their children to be supervised by Shout! on the day.

With the success of the virtual play days during 2020, and the decrease in numbers in recent years, the decision was taken at Council in December 2020 to discontinue the week long scheme and signpost parents/guardians to other local play providers and look to provide other free drop in sessions. The Leisure Centre operator will extend their holiday activity scheme and provide a concessionary scheme as part of the new leisure contract.

## 4. Potential unsupervised play opportunities / Street Play

85% of respondents had not heard about Street Play\*. However, 85% showed an interest in the scheme being introduced in their neighbourhood and said Elmbridge Borough Council should play the following role in the project:



**\*Street Play is an initiative developed by Play England. It is a simple and low-cost way for children to be able to play out in the streets where they live. Local authorities allow temporary road closures and local parents and other residents act as marshals while children play in the street.**

### 1.13 SWOT analysis of play development and Shout! holiday scheme

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis has been completed in collaboration with the Leisure Development Team taking into account the consultation data. This has been used to draw up the action plan (section 3) to build on what we are doing well above and where we can develop play opportunities in Elmbridge.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitably qualified EBC staff and casual employees. Free events offered – play day, stay and play events, wild at play with 74% of respondents thinking they were good/very good</li> <li>• Strong branding. Wide age range (5-13 years)</li> <li>• Variety of play options/event types (stay and play, drop-ins and childcare) with 59% of respondents reliant of full-time childcare/</li> <li>• Good working relationships with service providers (coaches/artists/ venues)</li> <li>• Venues used are varied. 82% of respondents are happy with the locations</li> <li>• Supportive Facebook network to share posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pricing currently too cheap against local competition.</li> <li>• Budget restrictions influence activity choices/options</li> <li>• Reliant on student staff</li> <li>• Limited budget for promotion</li> <li>• Limited opportunities for older children – age 10 years plus</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play strategy and consultation will allow for rejuvenation of play development service</li> <li>• Increase free play events as there are limited opportunities provided in the borough</li> <li>• To be the leading scheme for those on a budget</li> <li>• Attract the loyalty of quality staff recruited</li> <li>• Users get to know and trust staff who remain for 3-4 years</li> <li>• New housing developments as part of the Local Plan</li> <li>• Specialist play and countryside officers to develop outdoor play – natural crafts</li> <li>• Incorporate video game ideas into the structure/play – e.g. Wii sports sessions, mission cards in activities – team challenges to pick activity</li> <li>• Wide variety of sports and activities, opportunities to learn new crafts</li> <li>• 85% of respondents had not heard of Street play however 85% were interested in the scheme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Council’ scheme can be perceived as for those ‘in need’</li> <li>• Increasing competition offering a wide range of activities</li> <li>• Shrinking market (working from home, using annual leave, other relatives for childcare)</li> <li>• Local demographics</li> <li>• Council image can be limiting</li> <li>• Financial constraints – using other childcare options (friends, family etc)</li> <li>• Screen time</li> <li>• Increasing use of concession places 10% in 2017 and 14.6% in 2018 to 32% in summer 2019 has impact on income thereby increasing costs.</li> <li>• Competition from other local providers</li> </ul>

## 1.14 Summary and developing an action plan

The Play strategy vision, and delivery will be achieved through the play development action plan found below.

The Play development action plan has been developed by the Play Development Officer taking into consideration the consultation results and within the parameters of resources available.

A review of the 5 year action plan will be undertaken annually or sooner as required to monitor progress and revise/set new targets for the coming year.

The review panel will consist of key members of this strategy including the Play Development Officer, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Senior Sports Development Officer and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture.



### 1.14.1 Play Development action plan

Key: PDO=Play Development Officer; MCO=Marketing and Communications Officer; LCSM = Leisure and Culture Services Manager; ESO=Environment Officer; SHD=Sports and Health Development Team

Action	Target/milestone	Responsibility	Target date(s)	Review and monitoring
Deliver an annual marketing and communications plan for Play development services using key events to raise the profile of play opportunities in the borough.	Produce and deliver a co-ordinated marketing and communications plan for Shout! play activities, play events and stay and play sessions.	PDO MCO	annually	Annual review and update as required
Ensure parents receive effective information by delivering a broad programme of holiday activities information on the website (Shout!)	Update webpage before each holiday period and share on Shout! Facebook page.  Use 'subscribe to mailing information' data to disseminate information regarding children and family's activities.	PDO MCO	Before each holiday period	Annual review and update as required
Provide free events that reduce barriers to play in relation to cost, transport, outcomes focussed provision, negative attitudes and parental anxiety.  Use events to role model 'good play' and activity ideas.	Review Shout! free sessions plan for 2021 (2020 impacted by COVID-19) including stay and play events (Play day and Teddy Bears picnic).	PDO	annually	Annual review and update as required
Provide opportunities for reading and communication skills	Add reading to stay and play events (already included at Play day and Teddy Bear's picnic)  Explore providing story CDs for the younger age group at holiday camps held at Elmbridge Xcel leisure complex.	PDO  PDO	annually  Summer 2021	Annual review and update as required

Evaluate Shout! to ensure children's and young people's needs are reflected in the design and delivery of services	Use white boards to obtain feedback from children and young people attending Shout!	PDO	At Shout! events	Annual review and update as required
Increase participation of children including those from vulnerable communities and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) by working in partnership with key agencies	Review plan for 2021 (2020 impacted by COVID-19) working with PA Housing and Lower Green CIO	PDO	annually	Annual review and update as required
Review planning for Shout! out stay and play events to create self-accessing free play opportunities for over 8 years.	Review planning to create varied and interesting environments that maximise the potential for physical activity, socialising, creativity, imagination and fun thereby increasing attendance rates.	PDO	April annually	Annual review and update as required
Review opportunities for play for older children aged 10+ years	Explore signposting to specialised clubs via the Shout! web page	PDO	Autumn 2021	Annual review and update as required
Explore, in collaboration with Sport and Health Development Team, opportunities for free sports during the summer holidays (skateboarding, tennis, golf, football, rugby)	Review free sports provision with aim to offer free sessions.	PDO SHD	Summer 2021	Annual review and update as required
Support community led initiatives that reduce the barriers to playing outdoors for children	Research "Street Play".  Work with Environmental services to develop scheme (road closures).  Research and design accessible resources to support "Street Play" initiative.  Deliver a "street play" publicity and marketing campaign to raise awareness.	PDO MCO EO	Summer 2021	Annual review and update as required

Review policies and procedure to ensure good practice is embedded in delivery	Review and update policies and procedure for Shout!	PDO	Autumn annually	Annual review and update as required
Supporting parents in play development at home by sharing the activity plans for Shout! camps on the website	Update website before each holiday period with activity plans	PDO	Before each holiday period	As required
Embed commitment to ongoing staff training to ensure quality of provision is maintained	Review staff training before each holiday period in respect of safeguarding, GDPR, playwork, policies and procedures.	PDO	summer 2021	Before each holiday – Easter and summer annually
Promote holiday places in the new leisure contract	As part of the new leisure contract PDO and LCSM will liaise with new supplier to promote Shout! Holiday Activities	PDO LCSM	December 2022	Before each holiday – Easter and summer annually
Continue to promote other local providers during holidays.	Ensure website up to date. Share other activities and schemes through Facebook pages.	PDO MCO	Each holiday	Before each holiday – Easter and summer annually



## Part 2

### Fixed play equipment

# Part 2 – Fixed play equipment

## 2.1 Fixed play equipment strategy

This strategy sets a framework for the Council to advocate for children’s right to play. This is the second part of the strategy and will focus on Elmbridge’s fixed play equipment.

The challenge in respect of play areas and play spaces is to make sure they deliver a good experience for their users. Children want play spaces they can enjoy. Adults want play spaces where children can develop physical and decision-making skills that will help them in all parts of their lives. To do this a play area must have an element of risk otherwise, the learning opportunities derived from risk-based decision making are lost and it reduces the fun.

The Council needs a plan to maintain the existing play areas to the best standard they can. Residents naturally regard play areas as valuable community assets and so do we. These assets must be maintained so they can meet the expectations of the community that use them. We need good parks in the right places and this strategy will help to ensure this is the case going forward.

### Introduction

In order to be able to set out a plan to maintain and develop excellent play spaces, we need to understand the overview of the current position including the different types of play space and the guidelines that set out the best practice. We must be aware of the planning context, so that new developments can have suitable facilities to help build new communities. We also have to understand the nature and quality of the existing play spaces, so we can target resources at the locations most needing them.

We have profiled the key demographic information for each ward within the borough and mapped each play area to identify gaps in provision, so that we can plan for the future. Excellent play provision has to meet the needs of the local community and in order to find out what is important to the users, we have consulted on this strategy and will continue to consult during the refurbishment or installation of play areas to meet local needs as best we can.

A plan to manage assets can only be successful if it recognises the availability of resources to deliver it. The plan for the first five years of this is set out at Appendix 2A.

In summary, this fixed play equipment strategy:

- Gives a rationale for investment in play provision as an important part of infrastructure in the borough
- Identifies the play provision that exists, and its play value.
- Sets standards for investment in play provision in Elmbridge
- Presents a development plan identifying priority for future investment

## Rational for play provision

The Play Strategy establishes that play provision is part of the necessary infrastructure for healthy communities.

It outlines the evidence for the enormous value of outdoor play for healthy learning and development.

Although children's impulse to play is innate and is fundamental to development and wellbeing, the more complicated, busy and risk-averse our lives become, the more opportunities for children to play need to be planned by public authorities, who are one of the main providers and facilitators of play spaces.

“There are many barriers to play today - traffic, commerce, a public realm that takes little account of children, fear of predators and bullying, increased demands on their structured time and society's ambivalent attitude to young people. Increasing anti-social behaviour and obesity may be just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the potential damage to our future generations. In acknowledging play as part of the infrastructure for healthy communities, the Council is committed to preserving and equipping open space for play, as an integral part of existing and new residential areas.

## Why the provision of outdoor facilities for play is important?

The last 15 years have seen academic research, both qualitative and quantitative, that demonstrates the benefit of play, particularly outdoor play, for children and families in terms of keeping families active and healthy, maintaining positive contact with the natural world and developing communities.

Research has evidenced the positive role of open space and physical activity for children and adults alike in reducing health inequalities and improving mental as well as physical health. Outdoor activity has been shown to benefit children who find it difficult to concentrate indoors, to benefit mental health and general physical health and thereby contribute to healthy communities. There is also evidence that the more children play outside, the more likely they are to use outdoor spaces as adults and therefore go on to encourage their own children to play outside. This research is reflected in the physical activity guidelines for children and adults produced by the Department of Health.

## Policies and guidance relating to outdoor play and open space for recreation and sport

### Fields in Trust benchmark guidelines

Fields in Trust (FIT) is the operating name of the National Playing Fields Association, whose core principle is to protect outdoor space for sport and recreation. Within its work to protect these spaces, FIT has offered guidance for practitioners on open space provision and design since the 1930's. The 'Six Acre Standard' (minimum standard for outdoor playing space per 1,000 populations) has influenced various reviews of this guidance since the 1930's: Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play (2008) and most recently 'Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2015)'.

Whilst retaining the primary rates of provision, the 2015 guidance draws out new recommendations for accessibility, the application of standards and the minimum dimensions of formal outdoor space under the following benchmarks:

- Quantity descriptions
- Accessibility
- Quality
- Spatial requirements
- Buffer zones

Fields in Trust's benchmarks form a suitable basis for informing planning policies, decisions, and proposals, which include the provision of outdoor play at borough or neighbourhood levels. Using the most current guidance will help the Council ensure that the provision of outdoor play is of a sufficient size for effective use; is located in an accessible location in proximity to dwellings; and of a suitable quality to maintain longevity for continued use.

The guidance recommends that equipped or designated play spaces are grouped under the following descriptions:

- A Local Area for Play (LAP) is a small area of open space, specifically designated and primarily laid out for very young children to play close to where they live (i.e. within 1-3-minute walking time). The LAP is a doorstep play area. It could be a grassed area, open space, residential street in a home zone or a small designed play area, where young children can play within sight of known adults.
- A Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) is an area of open space specifically designated and laid out with features including equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently close to where they live, usually within 5 minutes walking time. It could be a grassed area, small park, local open space designed for play or informal recreation or a school play area open out of school hours. Play features, including equipment, are an integral and attractive part of the LEAP.
- A Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) is an area of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children but with play opportunities for younger children as well. It is designed for children and young people who are used to travelling longer distances independently to get to safely on their own. It might be a park, playing field, recreation ground or natural open space, such as a woodland, moorland or beach - accessible and attractive to older children and young people. It might include ball courts, multi-use games areas (MUGA) or skateboard areas. The area should be capable of meeting the needs of children with a range of impairments.

**More detail of the criteria for the above designations is set out at Appendix 2B.  
Classification of play areas, Fields in Trust (FIT)**

## Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

Produced by Play England in association with the Free Play Network to support the previous government's Playbuilder and Pathfinder programme, Design for Play explains how good play spaces can give children and young people the freedom to play creatively, while allowing them to experience risk, challenge and excitement.

It shows how good play space can be designed to be affordably maintained, challenging some of the myths and risk averse thinking that has created a culture of uninspiring play spaces with prescriptive equipment that lacks any challenge or adventure.

The guidance is underpinned by ten principles:

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow different children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are suitable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution

Design for Play advocates for good play spaces as being good for all of the community.

### Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide.

This guide shows how play providers can develop an approach to risk management that takes into account the benefits to children and young people of challenging play experiences, as well as the risks. It aims to help providers achieve two objectives, which are fundamental to play provision: to offer children and young people challenging, exciting, engaging play opportunities, while ensuring that they are not exposed to unacceptable risk of harm.

Fundamental to the approach within this guidance is a commitment to offer opportunities for risk and challenge in the provision of play facilities. This then forms the framework for the use of risk benefit assessments, which are supported by a technical play inspection.

**Appendix 2C sets out the general design principles encompassed in the FIT guidance, alongside those of 'Design for Play' and 'Managing Risk in Play Provision'**

### The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which, encompasses three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental.

Included within the social element, and of relevance to this Strategy, is the objective to create and support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

Chapter 8 'Promoting healthy and safe communities' sets out detailed Government policies as to how local authorities are expected to help achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places. This includes enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles, addressing identified local health and well-being needs, for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure and sports facilities.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further details of how the Government expects the NPPF to be implemented. In regard to open space, sports and recreation facilities, local authorities are encouraged to assess the need for provision using Sport England's guidance.

## **Local Plan – Core Strategy & Development Management Plan**

The Elmbridge Core Strategy sets out a plan for the future development of the Borough in the period 2011 to 2026. Its role is to provide a delivery strategy to deal with particular challenges and issues that have been identified as being of local importance. The Core Strategy co-ordinates the delivery of development and accompanying infrastructure. It is a key Council document where key decisions have been made in order to deliver a high quality of life in the most sustainable way possible. Its role is to set out what sort of changes we need to plan for, where they should take place, when they should happen and how they will be delivered.

Policy CS14 'Green infrastructure' sets out how the Council will seek to protect, enhance and manage a diverse network of accessible multi-functional green infrastructure. Included within this definition, and of relevance to the Fixed Play Strategy, is provision for children and teenagers – including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters).

In regard to fixed play provision, the Council seeks to require developer contributions from new development in accordance with Policy CS28 - Implementation and Delivery, to facilitate new provision or quality and access improvements to existing facilities in order to increase their capacity. In addition, provision of facilities for public use on-site as part of development schemes over 50 dwellings, where appropriate is required.

Adopted in 2015, the Development Management Plan provides further details on the implementation of the Core Strategy Policies and sets out policies for assessing the details of planning applications. Relevant to the Fixed Play Strategy is Policy DM9 – Social and

community facilities. Including indoor and outdoor recreation and sports facilities, the policy encourages the development of new facilities provided that it meets local need, the site is in a sustainable location that is safe and accessible to the local community and will accord with the character and amenity of the area, particularly in residential areas.

## Emerging Local Plan

The Council is working on a new Local Plan to shape how Elmbridge is developed in the future (up to 2036). This long-term plan for the borough must respond to the shortage of new and affordable homes as well as ensuring that future development happens with the necessary infrastructure (roads, health facilities and school for example) while protecting the environment. Once adopted the new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and Development Management Plan.

At the heart of the new Local Plan will be addressing the causes of climate change and taking a proactive approach to mitigating the effects of, and adapting to, climate change to ensure the future resilience of both communities and infrastructure. Policies that seek to provide for community facilities including those relevant to the Fixed Play Strategy will also be included in the new Local Plan.

## Evidence Base

Underpinning the new Local Plan are a number of evidence base documents which seek to understand the challenges that our future policies should address. Relevant to Fixed Play Strategy are:

- Green & Blue Infrastructure Study
- Open Space and Recreation Assessment
- Playing Pitch Strategy

This Fixed Play Strategy will also form part of the evidence base to the Local Plan.

## Green & Blue Infrastructure Study

The Green and Blue Infrastructure Study is intended to sit alongside and support the delivery of the Elmbridge Local Plan. The Strategy sets out a vision for the borough's green and blue infrastructure for the next 15 years after reviewing the policy context and other relevant strategies and understanding the rich assets of the borough's green space and water environment.

The Study looks at the Green & Blue infrastructure we have, how it is connected and, the positive benefits that it has to our communities and environment. It also explores the improvements that could be made, to either improve provision or connectivity, and how these could be funded through developer contributions.

## Open Space and Recreation Assessment

The purpose of the Open Space and Recreation Assessment (OSRA) is to identify the specific needs and quantitative and/or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space and recreational facilities in the local area. The OSRA looks at and analyses the quality, value, accessibility and quantity of existing open spaces and recreation facilities and the needs of local people.

The results of the assessment will:

- Inform future planning policies and decisions on existing and future development proposals.
- Provide a robust evidence base and help to shape the approach to open space policy within the borough.
- Provide the council with adequate planning guidance and open space standards to assess development proposals affecting open spaces.
- Assist in identifying needs for new and upgraded open spaces and outdoor sports activities.
- Inform the future management of open spaces and sports facilities.
- Enable the council to identify priorities for future investment and provide a rationale for securing external funding for improvement and additional provision of facilities particularly via developer contributions.

## Playing Pitch Strategy

Following the updated methodology approved by Sport England, the Playing Pitch Strategy updates those Studies previously completed in 2006 and 2013. The Strategy provides a baseline for current and future supply and demand for each of the sports being considered and also sets out a strategy towards playing pitch provision in the borough in the short, medium and long-term, with clear sport; area and site-specific recommendations and prioritised action plans.

The Strategy forms part of the evidence base informing the new Local Plan, providing a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities between 2017 and 2035, in line with population projections.

## Developer Contributions

The Council's Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), (2012) sets out the principles for the contributions the local authority will require developers to make towards the provision of infrastructure in the borough. Contributions can be collected through two key mechanisms: The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Planning Obligations (S106).

## The Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy, (CIL) which was adopted in Elmbridge in April 2012, is a tariff-based method of collecting funds from some forms of new development to help fund the physical infrastructure needed to mitigate the impacts of new development.

The regulations that govern how CIL is spent require that it be used to fund the provision of infrastructure to support the development of the charging authority's area. The definition of infrastructure is broad and includes:

- Roads and other transport infrastructure
- Flood defences
- Schools and other educational facilities
- Medical facilities
- Sporting and recreational facilities
- Open spaces

Most of the money raised through CIL goes towards strategic borough-wide schemes (80% of the funds raised) such as highway schemes, permanent school expansions or flood works. Each year the council holds a Strategic Spending Board to consider awarding funding to those applications submitted for funding<sup>1</sup>.

As part of the process, the council also annually allocates the local portion of CIL funds (15% of the funds) to be spent locally on smaller infrastructure schemes that are required in the communities where development took place.

The council has formed settlement area committees known as Local Infrastructure Spending Boards where local Councillors decide on how these local CIL funds will be allocated. In the case of Claygate, the local proportion of CIL funds is passed directly to the Parish Council.

Successful local CIL applications for funding to date have included projects such as capital improvements to state schools to better enable them to meet the needs of an increasing school population, improvements to community facilities including play areas, footpath works and countryside access improvements.

Developers may still be required to directly provide specific infrastructure through planning obligations (see below) to mitigate the direct impact of the development proposed (e.g. a specific road junction or crossing), however a standard fee is then also charged through CIL.

## Planning Obligations

Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements (based on that section of The 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The land itself, rather than the person or organisation that develops the land, is bound by a Section 106 Agreement, something any future owners will need to take into account.

---

1. In September 2019, amendments to CIL regulations now require local authorities to produce an Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement. The Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement requires the creation of a strategic priority programme list of projects across all sectors (education, health, transport, environmental, etc.) that CIL funding could be used to support in delivering. The first statement will be published in December 2020, and discussions are currently taking place with infrastructure providers to determine the priority projects needed to support the growth of the borough. This list will replace the invitation of applications for funding from the Strategic pot.

Through planning contributions, new open space can be sought within new developments to ensure demand from increased numbers of residents is met. However, the limitations of S106 contributions is that as the financial contribution or infrastructure provision is directly associated with specific development, if open space is not being provided on-site, the monies can only be used to develop or improve play provision within a limited distance from the development. S106 contributions are also required to be delivered within a set time frame. The result of this can be that areas where new developments are prevalent become saturated with provision for play that is not necessarily delivered in the best place and with the best use of resources.

Similarly, areas of the borough without new development lack continuous investment in infrastructure and facilities for play.

### Tools for evaluating play provision- Play England

In conjunction with the introduction of a national indicator for play during the previous government's administration (2009), Play England developed a suite of local play indicators to support local evaluation of children's play. Based on the collection of data, the indicators measure the extent to which children have access to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation.

Play indicators:

- Participation
- Access
- Quality
- Satisfaction with play provision

Methods for collection of data:

- Household survey to establish local play participation levels
- Applying classification of play spaces and distance thresholds in play strategy audits and GIS mapping to establish access
- Using play value assessment tools to establish quality
- Using surveys of children and young people to establish satisfaction with provision

The national indicator for play was withdrawn along with other national indicators with the change in government (2010). However, this guidance provides the Council with a set of indicators and tools to better understand and meet the play needs of local children and young people, which supports the development of its strategy for play.

**Appendix 2B - Classification of play areas, Fields in Trust (FIT)** provides a summary of classifications of local and neighbourhood play areas, introduced in the FIT and 'Tools for evaluating local play provision guidance.

The Council has used the guidance set out above to develop its strategy for play, identifying requirements for play provision in each of its wards. Evidence of the application of the various tools and guidelines can be found throughout the Play Strategy and Fixed Play Equipment Strategy. These guidelines will continue to provide a rationale for investment in play and to influence the design of new or development of existing local play provision.

## 2.2 Standards for design and maintenance of play provision

Children play in many ways according to their own interests and abilities and enjoy different forms of play at different times and places.

The Council aspires to create and manage play space that enable children and young people to experience types of play within a progressive and challenging environment.

In its statutory role as a Local Planning Authority, the Council encourages developers to incorporate play into the design for new developments, as an important part of the community's infrastructure.

This section sets out the standard of play provision the Council aspires to achieve, in order to maximise the range of play opportunities for children and families in Elmbridge.

### Quantity of play space

The quantity of play spaces in the borough has been established through the findings of the Open Space and Recreation Assessment (OSRA).

The detail of this data can be found in **Appendix – 2F Open Space and Recreation Assessment (OSRA)**.

### Quality of play provision and play space design

The quality of local provision for play across the borough has been established through play value assessments.

### Play value

Play England and Fields in Trust have identified a list of key play values, all of which are important to children's enjoyment and day-to-day experience. It is not possible to incorporate every play type into every play area design; some will only be revealed when children are playing. In endeavouring to create spaces that maximise play opportunities, new designs and plans for refurbishment take the different types of play and different abilities into account.

The Council have undertaken play value assessment of the borough's play areas.

These assessments have informed the recommendations for future investment.

### Play space design

Where appropriate, the Council will design a play space that is in keeping with the principles of Design for Play, aspiring to create successful play spaces in their own right, specially designed for their location, in such a way as to provide as much play value as possible. As such, an Elmbridge play space will follow these ten principles of design:

1. Designed to enhance its setting - inspired by the background, whether that is a park, open space or urban landscape
2. Located in the best possible place - where children naturally play, away from dangerous roads, noise, and pollution, but near through routes and well-used public footpaths.
3. Close to nature - many studies have shown that children benefit from access to natural environments. In densely populated urban areas, the use of grassy mounds, planting, logs, and boulders can help to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment.
4. Designed so that children can play in different ways, incorporating different ages, abilities, and interests.
5. Designed so that disabled and non-disabled children play together.
6. Loved by the community.
7. A space where children of all ages have the opportunity to play together where there is space to do so.
8. A space where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way.
9. Maintained for play value and environmental sustainability.
10. A space that evolves as children grow where there is space to do so.

The Design for Play principles were drawn up to counteract a reductionist approach to play provision, where risk was minimised, and maintenance simplified. They are complemented by Managing Risk in Play Provision, which encourages play providers to respond to the needs children have to take risks when they play, offering stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities, whilst aiming to manage the level of risk to which they are exposed, rather than taking a risk averse approach. Given the pressure on land use, it is not always possible to choose the ideal location of a play space, to change the fundamental layout of an existing play area or to separate types of play spaces, but these principles remain the basis of the Council's design, evaluation and development of play spaces.

### **Accessibility of play provision**

Access to play provision has been established through applying the classification of play spaces and distance thresholds in the play strategy audit through the Open Space and Recreation Assessment (OSRA) findings and GIS mapping which have contributed to area profiles.

### **Inclusive design**

A fundamental aspect of accessibility is ensuring that play spaces offer opportunities for children and young people of all abilities. It is tempting to invest more heavily in equipment that can be accessed by children with mobility difficulties at larger sites where there is access to car parking, changing facilities and refreshment facilities.

However a National Playing Fields Association study by Rob Wheway and Alison John in 2004 found that disabled children have a desire to use their closest play areas for everyday play, and to play locally with their friends, not only at neighbourhood or destination play areas, just like other children. They found that there are several social and educational barriers to this, beyond the design of the play area.

Some play areas are situated in locations that are just less accessible due to the topography of the area, but it may be possible to make physical adjustments to play areas to enable better accessibility. Suitable design and adaptation are also important.

Where possible, new, and refurbished play areas will be designed and include equipment that enables all children and young people to experience different types of play, in keeping with Design for Play principles. There may be conflicting choices to be made: 'A play space offering little in the way of texture, light and shade or planting can limit engagement for some young people with sensory and cognitive impairments... (but)...play areas designed to maximise sensory engagement may compromise access for other children.

The former Office of Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) guide Developing Accessible Play Space (2003) contains a list of popular ranges of equipment that promote accessibility (see appendix 2D).

## Risk and challenge in play

### Safety standards

"Play area risk is exceedingly small in terms of fatalities, and in terms of lesser injuries is far lower than for most traditional sports which children are encouraged to engage in" (Ball 2007).

A qualified Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII), annual inspector, assesses new play areas and an independent inspector, inspects all play areas annually. In addition, regular operational checks, where frequency is assessed by the type of site and its level of usage, are conducted throughout the year, to advise the play area manager about hazards and maintenance needs. These inspections are carried out to check the play equipment and play area against the recommended British and European safety standards.

The recommended safety standards related to play provision in Britain are BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177.

They are concerned with ensuring that any play equipment is installed safely, that there are appropriate distances between the equipment and adjacent materials (free fall zones) and that there is sufficient safety surfacing to reduce the severity of the impact of any falls from heights. There are other elements involving trip hazards, finger or head entrapments and general maintenance of play features.

Where there is a discrepancy between a piece of play equipment and the standard, an assessment should be made on the risk of an accident against the benefit for children's play and development from using the equipment. This will be done by the site owner in the design stages, with input from both the designer and an inspector registered with the RPII scheme and experienced in assessing play provision.

### Risk management

Much has been written about our risk adverse society; the increasing need we feel to protect children from risk and the long-term damage this can do to children and to our communities.

Exposure to risk is an essential part of ensuring children grow, develop, and are equipped with the skills and ability to fulfil their adult life.

Applying the fundamental principles of risk management outlined in Managing Risk in Play Provision, the Council takes a risk-benefit approach to play provision. This approach weighs up the potential risk involved in using a play space or item of play equipment against the potential benefit to children's play.

It gives the Council the opportunity to move away from a risk averse approach that tended to incorporate rubber safety surfacing, fencing and gates, for good economic and insurance reasons, sometimes at the expense of the benefit to children's play.

The Council recognises that ultimately, children will play and if play spaces do not offer them the level of challenge they desire, they will play elsewhere, possibly in less safe spaces.

Designing a play space to fit its environment often leads to a preference for natural materials, which in some cases include using fallen trees, boulders or stepping-stones as climbing/play structures. These sorts of structures will not come with confirmation of meeting play safety standards (such as BS EN 1176), so their use needs to be risk assessed on site. Immediate hazards should be minimised, for instance:

- The removal of small branches at height that could snap easily when stepped on
- Consideration of some form of safer surfacing if children could jump from a height

These should then be monitored for changes (such as branches becoming fragile with use or bark coming off, leaving more slippery surfaces). Similar risk assessment should be undertaken for the use of water in play provision (e.g. ponds and pumped water).

### **Fencing, boundaries, animals, and children's play space**

The BS EN 1176 and 1177 standards do not specify fencing, gates or wet pour as necessary to children's safety but specify standards for these features if they are used.

A boundary is useful for play spaces for many reasons, but a play area does not need to be fenced. In fact, fencing around play areas is not as common in many European countries as it is in the UK. The key issue in using fencing is to determine whether children need to be protected from danger.

An unfenced area may prove more of a danger to small children than to older ones.

An area adjacent to a busy road or a car park is likely to prove dangerous for all children.

An area within a larger park is unlikely to need fencing. Despite the belief that fencing will protect children from animals, in particular from dogs, there is little evidence to show that this is the case.

Clear boundaries are important as many children, particularly those with certain disabilities, need to know where the boundaries of a space are.

However, boundaries may be denoted using planting, surfacing or mounds rather than fencing.

Funds spent on fencing will detract from the amount available for play features. The key question, therefore, is what additional value fencing will add to a play space. In some cases, it will be significant, in others, the lack of fencing may well add to the play opportunities available. A risk-benefit analysis, on a site-by-site basis, is the best approach. Managing Risk in Play Provision provides useful guidance setting out some risks and benefits relating to fencing.

### **Types of safer surfacing and moveable/'loose' parts**

A similar risk-benefit approach should be applied to different types of surfacing and use of moveable parts.

Different textures and the ability to move things around as children play (such as logs, sand and water) adds to the play experience, although the risk of harm from enabling this sort of play on unsupervised play areas must also be taken into account.

For instance, sand and bark surfacing may have additional play value, but need to be checked for sharp objects or animal faeces frequently and need regular topping-up to maintain the correct impact absorbency. Rubber matting-type surfacing (grass mat for example) is economical.

To work well it should have a good swath of grass growing through it, so it must be maintained so that the grass grows fully. This is not always easy in high wear areas, so the impact absorbency of the surfacing is reduced. Wet pour (rubber bonded crumb) is expensive to install and expensive to repair; it can include graphics that increase play value and is relatively long lasting.

However, its tendency to shrink around the edges and the difficulty of creating seamless joins increases the cost of maintaining it.

### **Vandalism and maintenance**

A high standard of maintenance is essential across all play provision. This includes litter collection, making safe unexpected hazards as well as repair and replacement of play equipment. The quality and safety of the public play areas was rated as "Most Important Factor, for good play" by 98% of respondents in the survey as seen in Appendix 1F.

If play areas have equipment that is not working or appear poorly maintained, they soon become vulnerable to further damage.

All Council managed play areas will be inspected a minimum of once a week by a qualified inspector. These inspections concentrate on wear and tear, damage, minor maintenance, and cleanliness.

Currently the reporting of issues is currently carried out via an asset management system, whilst the inspector is on site. This system helps highlight trends and any repeat problems, whilst also keeping a record of the results of every inspection.

An independent annual inspection is carried out across all sites in accordance with BS and EN guidelines.

Signage is fitted at all play sites. These include contact details for reporting issues so visitors can report damage of the play areas directly to the correct provider. They should all be welcoming.

## Stakeholder and community engagement

The Council has a process in place for ensuring stakeholder involvement and expert advice is included when developing a play area so that all the above points are included as practically as possible. The views of parents and children are incredibly valuable to delivering a successful facility in the community.

Wherever possible, the process for developing a new play area or refurbishing a large part of one is:

1. Consult with the community to set the design brief
2. Obtain designs from play companies (tender)
3. Assess designs in accordance with our play value and quality requirements, public opinion, and price evaluation
4. Appoint contractor
5. Minor refinements to the design/equipment through public consultation

Information concerning play areas shall continue to be made available throughout all of the stages above using social media and the Council's website. This includes keeping residents informed when play areas are partially closed for repairs or equipment replaced.

## Summary

Good design for play requires knowledge of the site, of local needs (based on local consultation) and technical skill. The play needs of different communities vary over time, so design for play areas needs to take a long-term view and balance the benefits of different types of play with its inherent risks.

## 2.3 Current play provision in Elmbridge Borough

### Council owned play provision

The Council owns and manages the following range of play facilities across the borough. These are:

- 33 children's play sites - ranging in size and types of play equipment
  - 7 Local Areas for Play (LAP)
  - 17 Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP)
  - 8 Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area for Play (NEAP)
  - 1 Natural Playground

- 13 MUGAs
- 4 skate parks
- 1 BMX track at Brooklands Community Park
- 9 Agility trails
- 2 paddling pools
- 1 splash pad
- 1 free to use table tennis table
- 2 all year goal posts

### Other equipped and playable spaces

There are other providers of equipped outdoor play and youth areas that are not included in this strategy, for example:

- Play areas on private housing developments
- Local children and youth charities and voluntary organisations
- School sites
- Third sector providers such as The National Trust and Forestry Commission

A significant contribution to Elmbridge's play areas are 'playable space', defined by Fields in Trust as 'Local Landscaped Area for Play', which are not identified in any of the figures above.

Fundamentally, this unequipped space is specifically laid out to allow imaginative play for all ages. It is beyond the scope of this strategy to consider all these areas as they cover woodlands, opens space, and grasslands and are managed and provided by a range of landowners including the Council, National Trust, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Surrey County Council.

### Views about play and play provision

As part of the process to produce this strategy, a consultation with children and young people, parents, and residents took place to establish current participation, views on play space design, access to and quality of current provision.

The views relating to fixed play equipment from the [consultation results](#) have been listed below:

#### Additional barriers to play identified by respondents ([Appendix 1F, 1.1](#))

The table below is a summary of comments on additional barriers to play identified by respondents together with the number of times they appear in the overall comments.

Literal comments from respondents can be found in **Appendix 1** (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

Barriers	No of occurrences
Accessibility – playgrounds too far away from home (2 instances – responses from Esher residents)	7
Weather	5
Litter in children’s playgrounds. Broken glass, syringes etc. Litter pickers not thorough enough	5
Need for shelter from rain or sun	5
Outdated/tired equipment	3
Lack of all-weather appropriate equipment	3
Lack of suitable play equipment for OLDER children	3
Lack of play equipment for several age groups in one playground	3
Lack of off-road cycling paths/bike safety	3
No lighting in park when it gets dark in winter	3
Lack of toilet facilities at playgrounds	2
Dog mess	2
Play areas not exciting enough	2
More splash pads needed	2
Older children taking over the playground	2
Older children being intimidating and inappropriate in their behaviour	2
Ability to walk and cycle is key	2
Too far or no adequate pedestrian crossing to get to the next park or playground	2
Lack of seating areas in playgrounds	1
Unlock tennis courts	1
Lack of Scooter or BMX park	1
Lack of professional care to supervise children	1
Parents busy schedules	1
Neighbours objecting to noise	1
Parental willingness	1
Tired parents, not taking kids out and falling back on tech to keep them busy	1
Pollution (near busy roads)	1
Other parents’ heightened fear of stranger danger, stigma from other parents associated with letting your kids play outside.	1

### Provision of Fixed play equipment in the borough [\(Appendix 1F, 5\)](#)

### Current provision of traditional play equipment/play areas [\(Appendix 1F, 5.1\)](#)

Overall, 55% of respondents were satisfied with the provision of traditional play equipment/play areas in the borough (7% were very satisfied and 48% satisfied). 27% were dissatisfied and 18% neither satisfied or dissatisfied.

## Comments about existing traditional equipment/play areas [\(Appendix 1F, 5.1.1\)](#)

When asked to make additional comments about the existing traditional equipment/play areas in the borough, the main recurring aspects mentioned were that the equipment was outdated, there was not enough age appropriate equipment and that maintenance needed to be improved.

The table below showed the variety of responses made by respondents, together with the number of times they appeared in the total number of comments.

Full comments are available in **Appendix 1**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

Outdated/tired equipment	15
Insufficient age appropriate equipment	12
Badly maintained parks	9
Lack of provision (Walton & Hersham, Claygate & Esher)	3
School kids use school equipment instead	1
Opening time of splash pad and paddling pools not flexible enough	2
Splash pad is not maintained properly	2
Play areas are too far away from where we live	2
Elmbridge needs a BMX park or skatepark	2
More paddling pools needed	2
Cameras and lights important for additional safety/security	2
Needs café to draw people	2
Provision is good for younger children	2
Bad condition of concreted areas in parks	2
Dogs in play area	1
Dog mess	1
Pleased with local play area improvement (Brooklands)	1
Churchfields rec play area busy all the time- long waiting time	1
Lack of play equipment in Weybridge Heath	1
Play areas to be installed away from houses to avoid noise disturbance	1
Youth problems in play areas	1
Difficult to comment unless you have used a lot of different play areas	1
Roller blade path and basketball nets (Hersham)	1
Need to pay for car park next to play area	1
Cans and broken glass in play areas	1
Good provision at Xcel and Brooklands	1
Update needed in Cobham Rec	1
Don't separate equipment by age groups as children will feel excluded	1
Not enough investment Vs other boroughs (Wimbledon – Kingston)	1
Lack of play areas in Esher	1
Lack of shade	1

## Most important features for play areas [\(Appendix 1F, 5.1.2\)](#)

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements regarding various aspects of local play area provision. They had to rate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed. The areas explored were:

- Features: range of equipment / quality and safety / maintenance
- Provision of seats/benches for parents/carers
- Provision of toilets and café
- Use of public funds to maintain, enhance and develop play areas
- Provision in new housing development
- Strategic location of new play areas

## Residents identified the most important factors for good play areas were:

Full results are available in **Appendix 6**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

The summary is as follows:

- A range of equipment and play features for children of different ages and abilities (98% of strongly agree and agree)
- Quality and safety of public play areas (98%)
- In larger play areas, distinctive play zones catering for different age groups (90%)
- Provision of seats/benches for parents/carers to use and socialise is an important feature of a play area (89% - 45% strongly agreed and 44% agreed)
- The provision of facilities such as toilets and cafés near to a play area would mean parents are more likely to choose to use it (61% strongly agreed and 30% agreed)

86% of respondents said that the opportunity to play and explore in parks and open spaces should be extended to the whole area, not just a fenced-off area with play equipment.

In terms of using public funds to maintain and develop play areas, residents' views were as follows:

- 96% thought that public funds should be spent maintaining and where possible enhancing the sites/play areas which have a high value to communities
- 89% thought that where new housing developments are built, focus should be on providing larger, centralised play areas rather than a number of individual/smaller play areas on the fringes of the development, whereas
- 78% thought that providing fewer but better quality, strategically important play areas would be a sensible strategy for the Council to adopt
- 48% strongly agreed or agreed that spending public money maintaining and replacing equipment in play areas that rarely get used is a poor use of Council resources

## Current provision of natural play equipment/area [\(Appendix 1F, 5.2\)](#)

Respondents were also asked to rate **the current provision of natural play equipment/ play spaces in the borough** (Xcel leisure complex, Brooklands, Cobham Downside, sculpted play space on Esher Common). **50% of respondents were satisfied (40%) or very satisfied (10%).** 38% were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'

## Comments about the natural play equipment and play spaces [\(Appendix 1F, 5.2.1\)](#)

**Summary:** Respondents indicated that they would like to see more natural play equipment in Elmbridge. They thought the existing natural play areas were too small, too far away or not easily accessible. Those who had visited the sites at the Xcel leisure complex and Brooklands community park were satisfied with the provision and hoped to see it replicated across the borough. Maintenance, cleanliness and safety were also highlighted as important issues.

The table below shows the variety of responses made by respondents, together with the number of times they appeared in the comments:

Full comments can be found in **Appendix 7.** (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

There are not enough natural play areas in the borough	9
Not been to any so can't comment or don't use any	8
Too far away / not accessible	8
Xcel play area looks great	8
Natural play areas are too small	6
Lack of awareness – more publicity needed	6
Equipment appealing for younger kids, but not older children	5
Brooklands play area looks great	5
Problems with dogs off lead + dog fouling	4
Lack of toilets on site	4
Natural play areas should be fenced off	3
Unsafe because of broken equipment	2
Too dangerous to use when wet	2
Not enough for younger children	1
Only offering bare minimum	1
Esher natural area – sculpted area has fallen	1
Sculpted play area on Esher Common needs better signage and a proper marked trail	1
Cobham Downside is good	1
Too muddy	1
No natural play area provision in East Molesey	1
We use Bushey Park	1
Café needed in Brooklands	1
More benches needed for parents	1
Introduction of Forest School for natural play areas	1
Great additions to keep children active playing outdoors and to bring people together	1
Money needs to be invested where there is little for children to do	1
Make sure natural play areas are well maintained and improved	1
Need to be built next to traditional play areas	1

## Improvements to local play areas [\(Appendix 1F, 5.3\)](#)

Respondents were asked to summarise in a couple of sentences how local play areas could be improved. The table below shows the variety of responses made by respondents, together with the number of times they appeared in the comments:

Full comments can be found in **Appendix 8**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

### Suggested improvements for local play areas (+ number of occurrences in responses)

Better maintenance - Safety	62
More diverse equipment catering for all age groups	33
Updated / additional equipment	29
Need suitable/ challenging facilities for older children	29
More creative / imaginative / interactive /exploratory more fun play areas	17
Cleanliness improved – broken glass and rubbish to be collected more regularly	15
More natural play equipment or trails in open spaces	13
Shade for summer months and shelter from rain in winter months	11
BMX track or skatepark	8
Teen equipment	7
Revise opening hours of splash pad and paddling pools	7
Cafes / mobile cafes	7
Dog-free zones / problems with dog mess	7
Toilet facilities	6
More benches / picnic areas	6
Hersham splash pad defective / not satisfactory	6
More local play areas	5
Larger play areas	5
Lighting needed in the evening	5
Fences around play areas	5
Accessibility - Fewer destination play areas and more local ones	4
Separate facilities for teenagers	4
More splash pad / paddling pools	4
More tarmac areas to cycle	4
More outdoor sports equipment (green gyms) to encourage older kids and young people to exercise outdoors	3
More trees	3
More bins	3
Creating spaces in the common land to add to the experience of the family walks/ trim trails	2
More inclusive equipment	2
Water fountain	2
Larger play areas near schools	2
There is already a great range of play areas in borough	2
Running track around park	2
Pathways for stroller access	2
Replicate good play areas like Weybridge	1

More play areas without fences	1
Safe gate (with latch)	1
Different areas / zones for different age groups	1
Focus on the more run-down playgrounds	1
Relocate play areas that are not being often used	1
Work with local open spaces not under council ownership to develop play areas	1
More places to use in bad weather	1
Speed limit on roads next to parks and rec areas	1
Splash park in Weybridge rather than paddling pool	1
Focus on fewer and better play areas	1
Communal covered areas for secondary school age children	1
Design that enables parents to supervise children of various ages across the whole park	1
Focus on outer areas outside of 'bigger' towns	1
Sports taster sessions in parks during summer and in school holidays	1
Lock play areas after dark to avoid criminal damage	1
Events to be held near play areas	1
Free parking at weekends (Weybridge)	1
Initiatives to teach children to love & respect the natural world	1
All weather equipment	1
Better advertising of play areas	1

## 12 words to describe ideal play areas [\(Appendix 1F, 5.4\)](#)

Respondents were asked to describe their idea play area in no more than 12 words.

The 14 most popular words used in description were as follows (+ number of occurrences).

Full definitions are available in **Appendix 9**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

Safe	100
Suitable for all ages - varied	86
Clean	58
Fun	55
Natural	37
Challenging	30
Exciting / engaging	36
Well-maintained	27
Toilet facilities	20
Adventurous	14
Imaginative / creative	13
Water play	11
Accessible	10
Café	10

## 2.4 Play value assessments and findings

In 2019, the Council commissioned play value assessments of all sites within its ownership and the ownership to inform the Play Strategy. The specific aim of the play value assessments is to establish the quality of provision and priorities for improvement and investment using established assessment criteria.

All scores date to the October 2019 and do not include any play area refurbishments after this date.

### Methodology

#### Play Value Assessments

The Council reviewed the available guidelines and assessment tools from Play England, The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and “A Playworkers Taxonomy of Play Types” Hughes. B (2002) This produced a play value assessment template and methodology. The template was trialled by council officers and peer reviewed by officers from the Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum. The assessments were undertaken by an independent RoSPA inspector.

A separate Assessment of Playground type was also carried out, as set out by Fields in Trust (FIT) guidelines. The survey used a simple scoring scale with assessment criteria for the assessor. According to the type of play areas: Local Area for Play (LAP), Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP), and Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP), a nominal score was established for each type and they were then assessed giving a score for each category.

A nominal Risk Assessment value was also produced for each playground using the standard RoSPA model.

The following components of play area provision and value were assessed:

- General access and safety
- Landscape and environmental quality
- General play layout and play value
- Equipment longevity
- Safety

## 2.5 Findings and priority sites

### Elmbridge Borough Council sites

The development plan that follows in Appendix 2A is a long-term plan covering fifteen years. The development plan includes estimated costs for maintaining each of the play areas to the current playground standards EN1176.

The development plan follows an criteria (priority order) that provides flexibility and priority based on an annual assessment to take in unforeseen changes. This plan covers a partial replacement of individual play equipment rather than the replacement of the whole play area

1. **Play equipment life expectancy** (likelihood of failure where repair is no longer viable).
2. **ROSPA Play inspection report** - risk level
3. **Unforeseen wear & tear / vandalism** e.g. failure of internal parts on roundabout where parts are no longer available.
4. **Available funding** – i.e. the combination of funding available such as two medium sized play areas OR one large and one small.
5. **Play value** – replace equipment / play areas which have a low play value (assessed within the independent ROSPA report)
6. **Local requests / complaints** over a 5-year period.
7. **Large changes to local population** i.e. population increase – more likely to be financed by 106 funding where there is requirement for further play areas.

Play areas have been rated in priority. Any play areas that do not require immediate improvements “Priority Sites” will be assessed on an annual basis dependent upon the development plan criteria.

Investment in play provision also needs to consider the resources available, potential development sites and play areas where large pieces of equipment that offer high play value may need replacing. Five to six years to refurbish these maybe optimistic and its likely these may take longer to resource.

Other sources of partnership and grant funding will be sought to complete these sites.

The PPG17 audit identified urban areas within the borough as deficient in play space. Each area has several play facilities, but the needs of individual communities need to be considered in identifying priorities for keeping, improving, or combining play facilities.

### **Investment required from 2021 – 2026**

The play area development plan produced by RoSPA’s assessment and other criteria has highlighted that the estimated capital investment required over the next three years (2021 – 2024) is £419,000 for replacement of individual play equipment only, within 12 play areas. This figure excludes day-to-day maintenance and staff costs and is for the Council owned and managed sites only. Further funding will be sought for 2024 – 2026, dependent upon a condition assessment of the play equipment requiring replacement. There is a requirement for flexibility within the schedule of replacement due to the unforeseeable degradation of equipment within the next 5 years.

### **Maintenance funding**

RoSPA’s independent assessment of annual maintenance costs, estimate that Elmbridge Borough Council’s revenue costs for day-to-day maintenance is in the region of £50,000 per year or approximately £1,515 per play facility per year. Currently £19,000 is included within the Green Spaces contract which was awarded in 2015 for seven years with the option of a 1 + 1 year extension until 2024.

## Funding for refurbishment/new sites

Planning obligations - S106 and CIL - Developer funding is dependent on the developments that will take place and their locations. As a result, likely figures for income from the developing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or S106 for the next five years are not guaranteed. Additionally, it may be unlikely that the funding will be specifically aimed at those play areas requiring urgent refurbishment.

## External funding

Funding to support the provision of play within the borough can also come from:

- Grants
- Awards
- Loans
- Corporate donations

These are usually available for not-for-profit organisations such as social enterprises, community groups and charities. Sometimes funds are available for statutory organisations including local authorities. These may come from grants awarded by charitable trusts or foundations, new initiatives delivered from central government, the National Lottery, and local businesses. Opportunities for sourcing additional external funding will be explored where feasible. It is therefore imperative that the Council develops effective partnerships with external organisations to secure such funds for the benefit of communities.

**Case Study:** Merton Council has utilised Crowdfunding for the replacement of individual items of play equipment up to the value of £5,000, where there was clear community support for the improvement.

## 2.6 Resources and funding

The priorities for replacing existing sites are as shown in the findings section and development plan based on criteria assessments. However, these will be balanced against available resources, knowledge about the lifetime of equipment gained from regular inspections and opportunities that may arise (for example from external funding).

The Council will continue the inspection and maintenance of play areas to British and EN standards and its ongoing capital investment for improving existing play areas to ensure they meet local needs.

Strategic CIL funding for play area refurbishments will be sought alongside other sources and opportunities for funding as necessary in order to carry out the development plan.

The Council will continue to improve both access to, and the quality of information relating to play provision through signage, social media, press releases and the Council website.

## 2.7 Summarising our policy for fixed play equipment

The Fixed Play Equipment Strategy seeks to provide guidance for the Council's decision-making processes related to play space provision for the next 5 years (to be reviewed on an annual basis dependent upon equipment failure).

### Our approach to play

The Council acknowledges that children's play areas are one of the safer activities in which children engage.

The approach to future provision will continue to be underpinned by risk-benefit assessment.

Play space design will reflect the Design for Play guidelines, balancing the benefits for children's play and the needs of a local community with the risks involved.

### Sustaining and delivering new play provision

Developers of all new housing within the Borough will be required to contribute to on or off-site play provision in accordance with the standard of 0.8ha per 1000 people.

On-site provision will be made where possible or off-site contributions to additional or improved play space will be sought where we are able to secure it by S106 planning obligation.

The Council will secure clear conditions with developers for ongoing maintenance of on-site play spaces that are adopted by management committees/residents' associations, rather than the Council.

All existing play areas should be retained unless it is identified through consultation with residents that there is an over provision within certain locations within the borough, or that the provision is no longer needed or can be sustained through a different mix of play facilities within an area.

The Council will continue to replace and refurbish its play spaces in order to provide for local community needs. Improvements will be based on inspection reports, play value assessments, life expectancy and needs identified through local consultation, with a view to creating play provision for young children, juniors, and young people in any given community.

# Appendix 1A - Stakeholders

## Elmbridge Borough Council key stakeholders

- Leisure and Cultural Services – Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Play Development Officer
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Marketing and Communications Officer
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Senior Sports Development Officer
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Green Spaces Manager
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Green Spaces Officers
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Museum Learning Officer
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Countryside Liaison Officer
- Leisure and Cultural Services – Sports and Health Development Officer
- Environmental Services – Environment Officer
- Planning Services – Planning Policy and Strategic Manager
- Planning Services – Senior Planning Policy Officer

## Other Elmbridge stakeholders

- Lower Green Community Worker
- PA Housing Resident Involvement Officers
- Parents and children attending Elmbridge's Shout! holiday activity events

# Appendix 1B - Playwork Principles

Elmbridge Borough Council Shout! Holiday Activities operate in accordance with the Playwork principles and are incorporated into the planning of Shout!

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.
2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.
3. The prime focus and essence of play work is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.
4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult-led agendas.
5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.
6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.
7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.
8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and well-being of children.

(Scrutiny Group 2004, cited by Play England, 2018)

# Appendix 1C - Play types

**Communication Play** – play using words, nuances or gestures for example, mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

**Creative Play** – play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise.

**Deep Play** – play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear.

**Dramatic Play** – play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator.

**Exploratory Play** – play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviours such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects.

**Fantasy Play** – play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur.

**Imaginative Play** – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.

**Locomotor Play** – movement in any or every direction for its own sake.

**Mastery Play** – control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments.

**Object Play** – play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements.

**Recapitulative Play** – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

**Role Play** – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

**Rough and Tumble Play** – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display.

**Social Play** – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended.

**Socio-dramatic Play** – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

**Symbolic Play** – play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of one's depth. (Hughes, 1996)

# Appendix 1D - Public consultation, online questionnaire

## Play opportunities in Elmbridge

We are in the process of putting together a new play strategy to provide the right play opportunities and equipment to meet the needs of residents and their children, while ensuring tax payers' money is spent in the most efficient and appropriate way.

Your responses will help shape Elmbridge's future play strategy. Please fill in this survey by 30 November at the latest. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. If you wish, your contact details will be entered in a prize draw for a chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher.

### Barriers to play and play opportunities

**Q1 We have identified below a range of barriers to playing outdoors. How important do you think they are? (1 being not important to 10 extremely important)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety - stranger danger	<input type="checkbox"/>									
No interest from children	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Rise of screen time	<input type="checkbox"/>									
No time to supervise children playing outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Taking risks when playing outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Lack of outdoor play opportunities locally	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Overload of scheduled activities	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Play areas' condition	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Dangerous streets	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Lack of suitable play areas	<input type="checkbox"/>									

**Q2 Can you think of any other barriers to playing outdoors?**

### Council play scheme: Shout!

**Q3 Have you heard of Shout!, the Council's play scheme?**

- Yes
- No

**Q4 If yes, have you used Shout! in the past 2 years?**

- Yes
- No

**Q5 If you said, you have used Shout!, what did you think of the following?**

- |                     |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
|                     | Very good             | Good                  | Average               | Poor                  | Very poor             |
| Activities on offer | <input type="radio"/> |

- |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Frequency of holidays | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hours run             | <input type="radio"/> |
| Staff                 | <input type="radio"/> |
| Locations             | <input type="radio"/> |
| Value for money       | <input type="radio"/> |

**Q6 How likely are you to recommend Shout! to a friend?**

- Highly likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Highly unlikely

## Free Council play events

**Q7 Have you attended any of the following Council's play events: Stay and play / Play Day / Wild at play?**

- Yes
- No

**Q8 If you have said you have attended, how many did you go to?**

- 1
- 2
- 5
- 10

**Q9 How do you rate the quality of activities on offer at the events?**

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Stay and play	<input type="radio"/>				
Play Day	<input type="radio"/>				
Wild at play	<input type="radio"/>				
Countryside events	<input type="radio"/>				

**Q10 To what extent do you think your child benefits from attending?**

- A lot
- Average
- A little
- Not at all

**Q11 What benefits do your children draw from attending?**

- Develop strength and balance
- Develop social skills
- learn to assess risks
- Get them active
- Other

Other, please specify

## Fixed play equipment

**Q12 How strongly do you agree/disagree with each of the following statements about play areas?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
"Good play areas should provide a range of equipment and play features for children of different ages and abilities"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The provision of seats/benches for parents/carers to use and socialise is an important feature of a play area"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The provision of facilities such as toilets and cafés near to a play area mean I would be more likely to choose to use it"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The quality and safety of public play areas is important"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Public funds should be spent maintaining and where possible enhancing those sites which have a high value to communities"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Spending public money maintaining and replacing equipment in play areas that rarely get used is a poor use of Council resources"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The opportunity for children to play and explore in parks and open spaces should extend to the whole area, not just a fenced off area with play equipment"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Where new large scale housing developments are built, focus should be on providing larger, centralised play areas rather than a number of individual/smaller play areas on the fringes of the development"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Where an existing high value play area may exist within close proximity to a new housing development, funding for play provision should be directed towards the existing facility"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Providing fewer but better quality, strategically important play areas would be a sensible strategy for the Council to adopt"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q13 How would you rate the current provision of traditional play equipment/play areas in the borough?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

**Please add any comments you would like to make**

**Q14 How would you rate the current provision of natural play equipment/play spaces in the borough (Xcel Leisure Complex, Brooklands, Cobham Downside, sculpted play space on Esher common)?**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied

**Please add any comments you would like to make**

**Q15 Summarise in a couple of sentences how the local play areas could be improved**

**Q16 Please give us 12 words what would describe your ideal play area**

## **Unsupervised play opportunities / Street Play**

**Q17 Have you heard about Street Play\* initiatives?**

- Yes
- No

**\*Street Play is an initiative developed by Play England. It is a simple, effective and low-cost way for children to be able to play out in the streets where they live. Local authorities can use their existing powers under road traffic legislation to allow temporary street closures at regular weekly or monthly intervals, typically for three hours at a time. Local parents and other residents act as marshals, allowing their neighbours to drive to and from their homes at walking pace, while through traffic is re-directed. The result is usually a significant increase in children playing out and making friends on their street. In turn, adult neighbours get to know each other and community spirit grows.**

**Q18 Would you be interested in 'Street Play' being introduced in your neighbourhood?**

- Yes
- No

**Q19 If 'Street Play' was introduced in Elmbridge, in what capacity do you think Elmbridge Borough Council should be involved?**

- Loan of equipment and play resources
- Information packs
- Consultancy advice

## **About you**

**If you have said you wanted to enter the prize draw for a chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher, please enter your details below:**

**Q20 Name**

**Q21 Contact number**

**Q22 Email address**

Thank you for your time. If you would like information about Leisure and Cultural Services or have any queries about this questionnaire, please call 01372474544 or email [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk)

# Appendix 1E - Public consultation, focus group questions

## Play opportunities in Elmbridge

We are in the process of putting together a new play strategy to provide the right to play opportunities and equipment to meet the needs of residents and their children, whilst ensuring taxpayers' money is spent in the most efficient and appropriate way.

We are asking for your help at this half term Shout! with the following questions:

Please add your responses to the flip chart using the post-it notes.

## Adult questions

1. How can we increase participation in play?
2. If the council was to become an advocate for play, how will this look in real terms?
3. How can we improve children's health and wellbeing through play?
4. How can we bring play into your closer community/neighbourhood?

## Children and young people's questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where do you like to play?
3. What is your favourite thing to do when you play?
4. If you go to the park, what is your favourite piece of equipment?
5. If we could close your street for you to play outside, would you like that?
6. What games would you like to play outside?

# Appendix 1F - Public consultation, online survey summary results

## Play strategy survey results January 2020

A survey on current play opportunities in Elmbridge ran from 20 October to 16 December 2019. It was distributed via Elmbridge schools' newsletters, EBC and local social media/web pages.

This survey was carried out to inform Elmbridge's future play strategy which will run from 2020 to 2025. It covered the following areas:

1. Perceived barriers to play and play opportunities
2. The council's play scheme: Shout! holiday activities
3. Free council play events
4. Potential unsupervised play opportunities / Street Play
5. Fixed play equipment (including current traditional and natural play areas)

In total 237 responses were received. The results are as follows:

### 1. Barriers to playing outdoors

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of various barriers to playing outdoors using a rating scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not important and 10 extremely important). The barriers are shown below in bold.

60% of parents thought '**Stranger-danger**' was the most deterrent factor to play outdoors (8 to 10 on the scale) with 43% rating it as 10 on the scale.

On a scale of 8 to 10, 59% of parents thought that there was a **lack of suitable play areas** in the borough.

47% of parents stated that, overall there was a **lack of local opportunities to play** (scale 8 to 10).

38% of parents (scale 8 to 10) thought that the **streets are too dangerous** places to play.

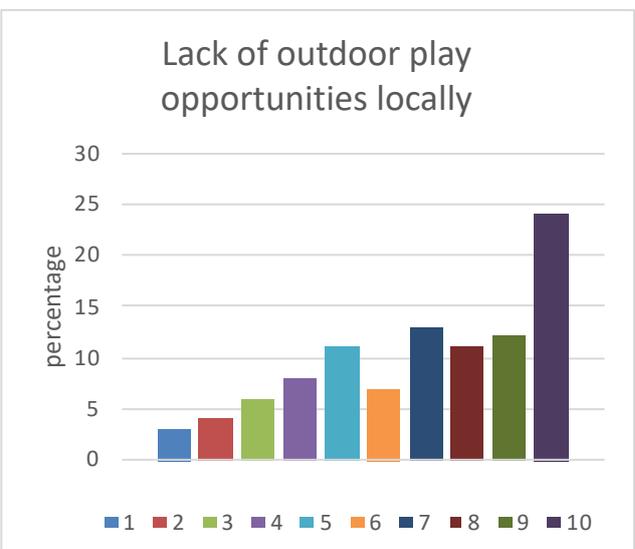
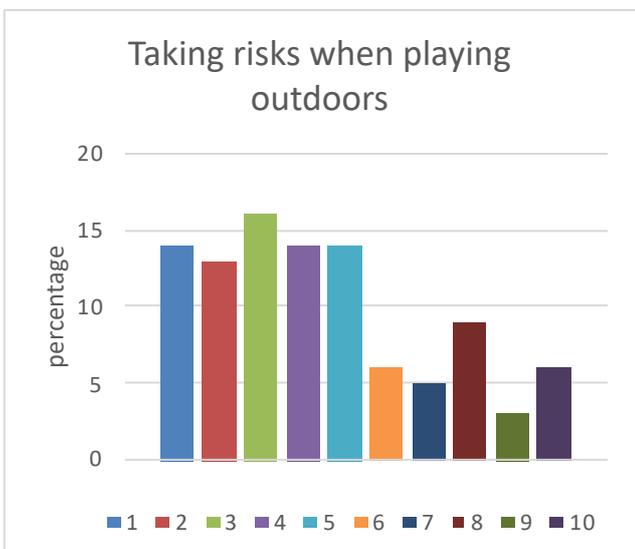
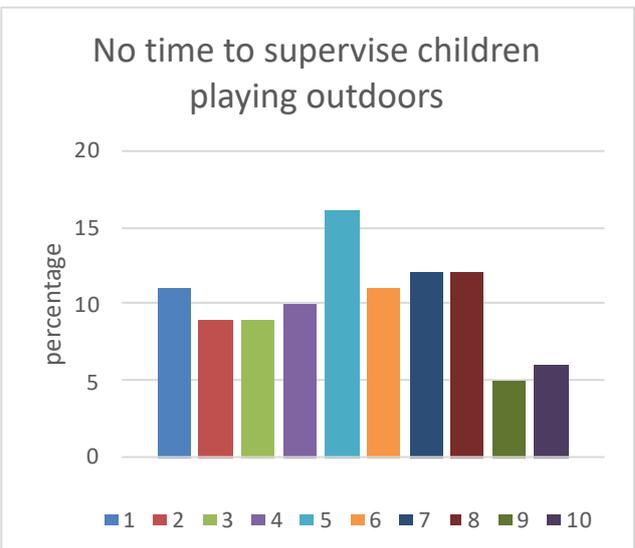
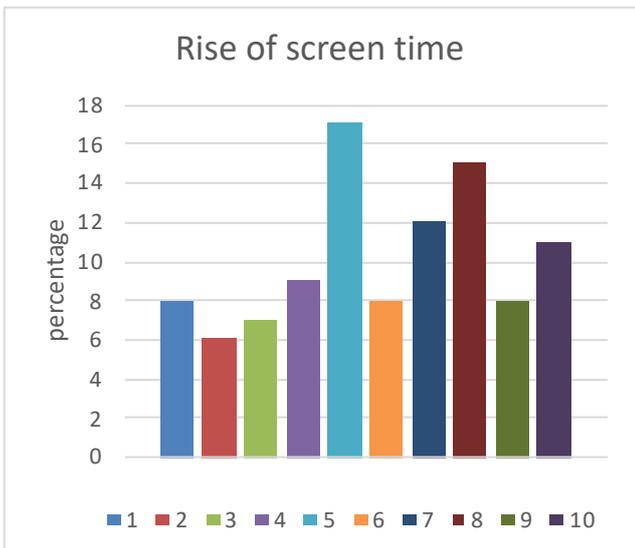
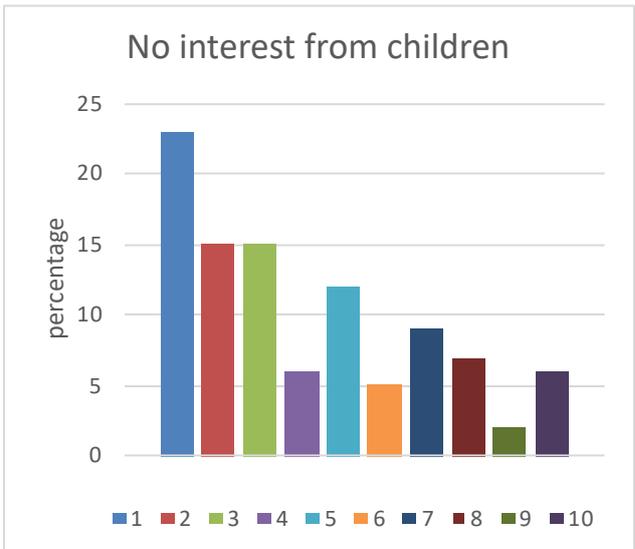
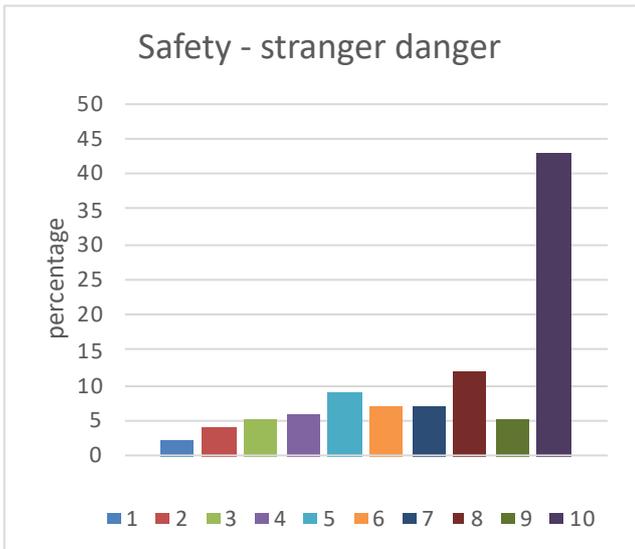
**Traffic** is also a barrier for 47% of parents (scale 8 to 10).

Although 53% of children are **interested in outdoor play** (scale 1 to 3), 34% of parents (rating scale 8 to 10) identified the **rise in screen time** as a barrier to play. **Supervision time** spent in play areas was not perceived as an obstacle for parents, nor were **risks taken by children when playing**. 43% of parents saw it as a positive factor (scale 1 to 3).

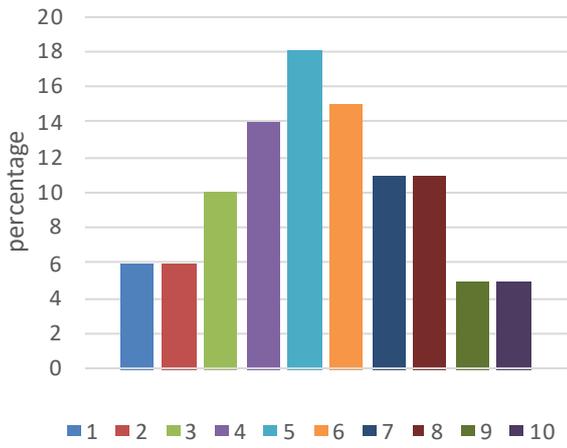
The **overload of extra-curricular activities** seemed to play an important factor in preventing children from playing outdoors with 31% of parents thinking it made an impact (rated 7 to 10 in the scale).

**Full results on the various identified factors area as follows:**

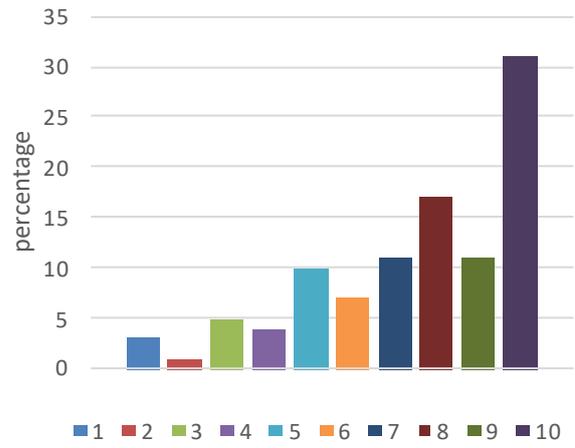
**Rating scale of 1 to 10 (1 being not important and 10 extremely important).**



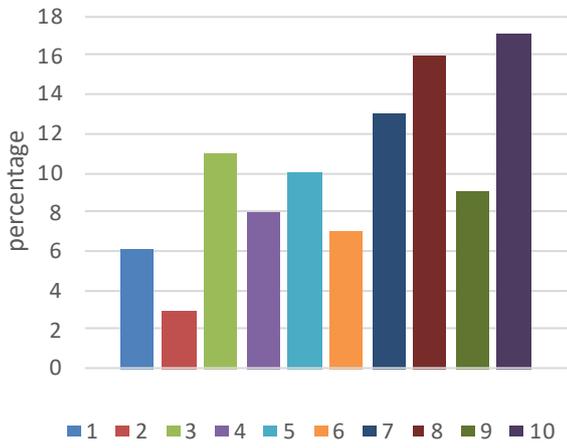
Overload of scheduled activities



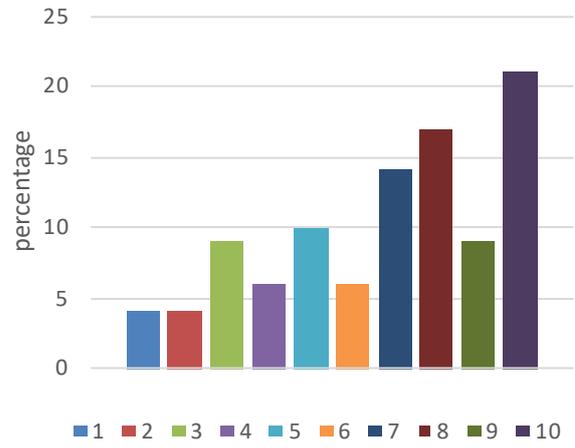
Play areas' condition



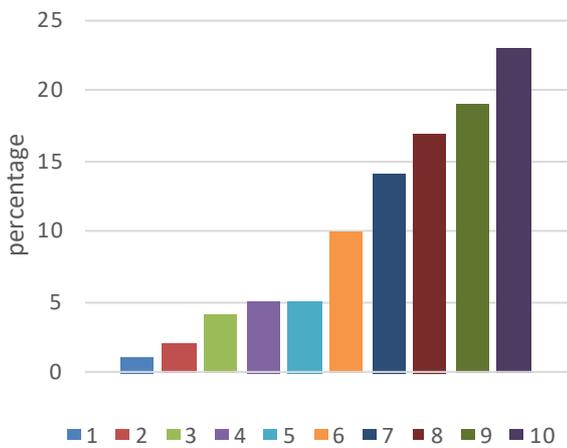
Dangerous streets



Traffic



Lack of suitable play areas



## 1.1. Additional barriers to play identified by respondents

The table below is a summary of comments on additional barriers to play identified by respondents together with the number of times they appear in the overall comments.

Literal comments from respondents can be found in **Appendix 1** (available by request to shout@elmbridge.gov.uk)

Barriers	No of occurrences
Accessibility – playgrounds too far away from home (2 instances – responses from Esher residents)	7
Weather	5
Litter in children’s playgrounds. Broken glass, syringes etc. Litter pickers not thorough enough	5
Need for shelter from rain or sun	5
Outdated/tired equipment	3
Lack of all-weather appropriate equipment	3
Lack of suitable play equipment for OLDER children	3
Lack of play equipment for several age groups in one playground	3
Lack of off-road cycling paths/bike safety	3
No lighting in park when it gets dark in winter	3
Lack of toilet facilities at playgrounds	2
Dog mess	2
Play areas not exciting enough	2
More splash pads needed	2
Older children taking over the playground	2
Older children being intimidating and inappropriate in their behaviour	2
Ability to walk and cycle is key	2
Too far or no adequate pedestrian crossing to get to the next park or playground	2
Lack of seating areas in playgrounds	1
Unlock tennis courts	1
Lack of Scooter or BMX park	1
Lack of professional care to supervise children	1
Parents busy schedules	1
Neighbours objecting to noise	1
Parental willingness	1
Tired parents, not taking kids out and falling back on tech to keep them busy	1
Pollution (near busy roads)	1
Other parents’ heightened fear of stranger danger, stigma from other parents associated with letting your kids play outside.	1

## 2. Feedback on Shout! play scheme

Shout! holiday activities are run by Elmbridge Borough Council twice a year during the Easter and Summer school holidays at 2 different sites in Hersham and Walton. The holiday scheme caters for 5 to 13-year-old children. In addition, Shout! runs various free drop-in sessions across the year at various locations.

The following feedback concentrates on the paid-for scheme operating at Easter and Summertime.

**57%** of respondents had heard about the council's play scheme and **47%** of them had used Shout! in the last 2 years.

### 2.1. Feedback on service aspects

Respondents were asked to give their feedback on various aspects of the holiday scheme as follows:

- Qualities of activities on offer
- Frequency of holidays
- Hours run
- Staff
- Location
- Value for money

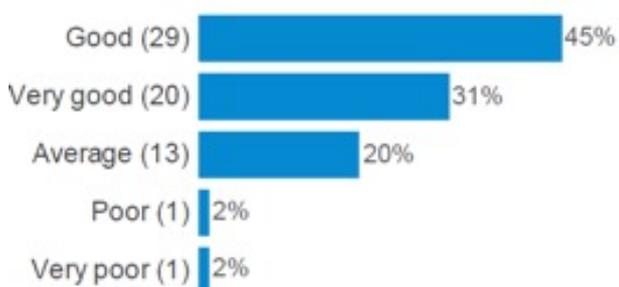
76% of respondents indicated they were happy with the **quality of activities** on offer. 45% thought they were good and 31% very good. 75% of respondents are happy with the **frequency of holidays**. The satisfaction is also high with the **hours run** (76%). Extended hours are available at the sports camp based at Xcel.

**Staff** are rated highly with 47% of parents thinking they are good and 34% very good.

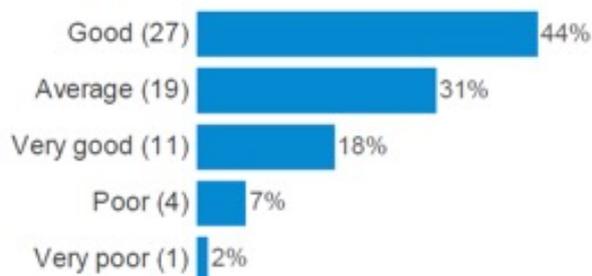
82% of parents are satisfied with the **location**.

**Value for money** is the aspect of the service that families rate the highest with 93% of parents thinking it is good or very good.

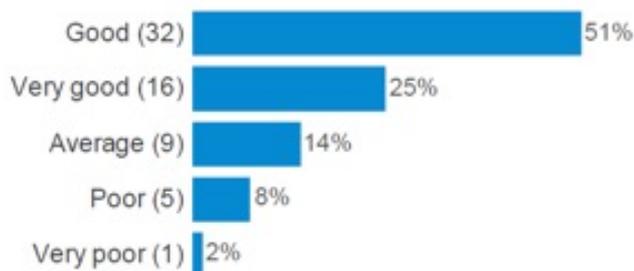
#### Quality of activities on offer



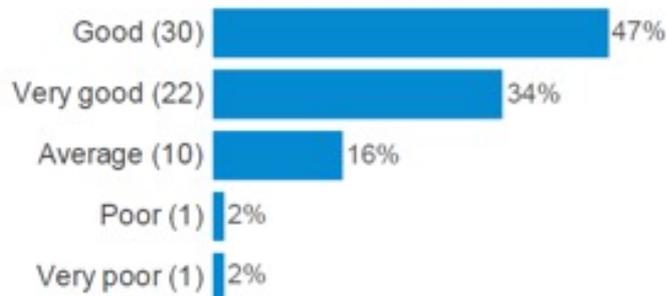
#### Frequency of holidays



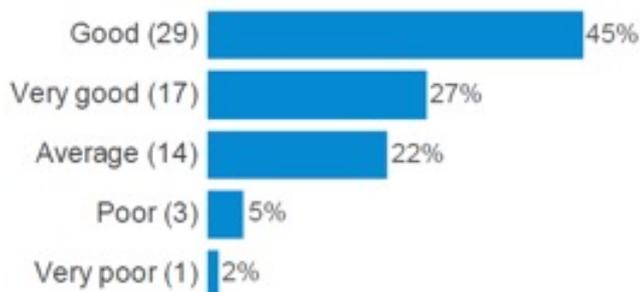
## Hours run



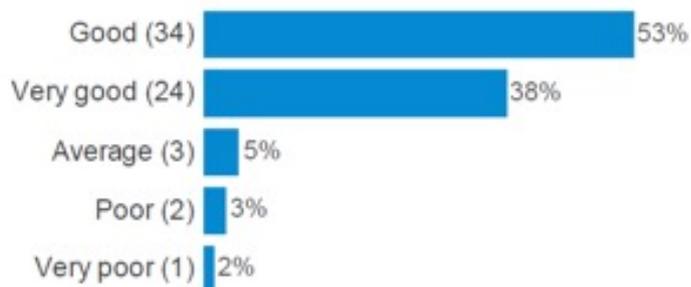
## Staff



## Locations

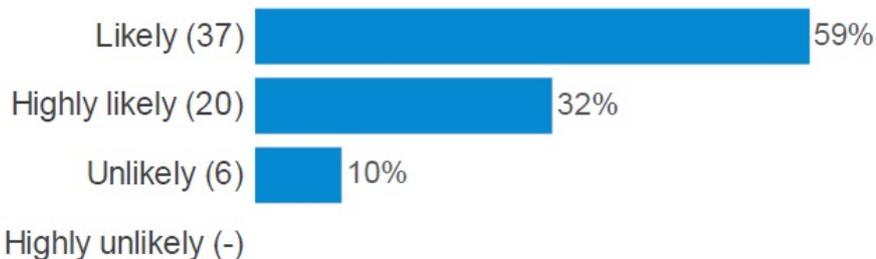


## Value for money



## 2.2 Recommendations to friends

Parents would be willing to refer the scheme to friends: 91% would highly likely or likely to do so. However, they would be more likely to recommend it (59%) than highly recommend it (32%).



## 2.3 Loyalty to the scheme

Although Shout! parents seem loyal to scheme, they are sensitive to a variety of factors that would make them want to switch from the scheme. 48% have indicated they would be likely to choose other childcare options during the holidays in the next 2 to 5 years.

### Likelihood to change from using Shout! in the next 2-5 years



## 2.4. Reasons for changing from Shout!

It seems that the children's age is the main reason to move from Shout! but another reason to take into consideration is the perceived lack of suitable activities for children aged 10+. Respondents highlighted the fact they were looking for specialist activities or trips.

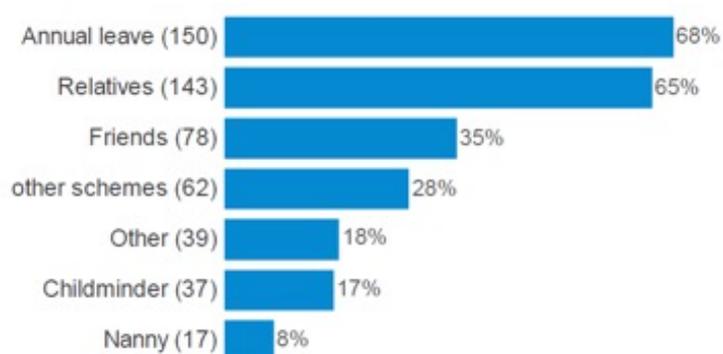
Literal comments from respondents can be found in **Appendix 2**. (available by request to shout@elmbridge.gov.uk)

Reasons	No of occurrences in comments
My children are getting older	14
Not many activities for age 10+	3
Children are getting older and are more specific about holiday clubs or prefer other options.	2
Children need specialised activities such as football camps	1
Will change when kids are too old or if costs are too high	1
I haven't used the holiday schemes for a few years because booking was hard	1
We changed but came back. It's mostly re exciting activities of offer. Although I think Shout really tries to improve i.e. SUP/ kayaking. But sadly, those days didn't work for us. keep offering more of those special activities like trips and animal visits etc	1
Lack Quality	1
Already have changed, used shout summer 18, our son was very bored, there was also a session for children to take in bikes/scooters etc, he didn't have one so felt quite isolated. We use Walton Firs activity centre now, which burns off the energy an 8-year-old boy has.	1
To try something new or if child wanted to do a different specific activity	1
It depends on the offering, my child's interests at that age, what their friends are doing, and availability.	1

## 2.5. Other forms of childcare used during the school holidays

Most parents take annual leave or use relatives or friends as an alternative to holiday camps. This might indicate that childcare costs are carefully taken into consideration and that free or low-cost childcare is the preferred choice for parents.

### Options used for childcare during the school holidays



## 2.6 Other forms of childcare used during the holidays – summary of comments

The main other forms of children identified were:

Childcare solutions	No of occurrences in comments
Other camps and activity providers	42
Respondents worked in school so had the school holidays off	5
Parents took annual leave	4
Stay at home mothers	3
Grand parents	1
Au pairs	1
Childminder	1

Further comments regarding alternative holiday clubs or camps were invited from respondents. There is a wide spectrum of childcare choices, including known competitors to the Shout! scheme (Barracuda, Clubland, after school clubs, sports providers, outdoor adventures centres etc). Parents also use a combination of paid-for full-time, part-time activities or individual days out.

Full comments from respondents, including the list of other childcare and activity providers can be found in **Appendices 3a and 3b**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

### 3. Feedback on Council's play events: Stay and play / Play Day / Wild at play / Countryside Events

The council offers 4 types of free play events in the summer. The Stay and Play, Play Day, Wild at play and Countryside Events.

72% of respondents had NOT attended any council play events. Amongst the 28% of people who attended: 43% attended 2 events; 28% 1 event, 21 attended 5 events and 8% attended 10 events.

#### 3.1. Feedback on quality of activities at free summer council events

The feedback on the quality of activity at the **Stay and Play events** was positive with 74% of participants thinking they were good or very good. These events recorded an average of 20 participants with up to 40 attendees at specific locations.

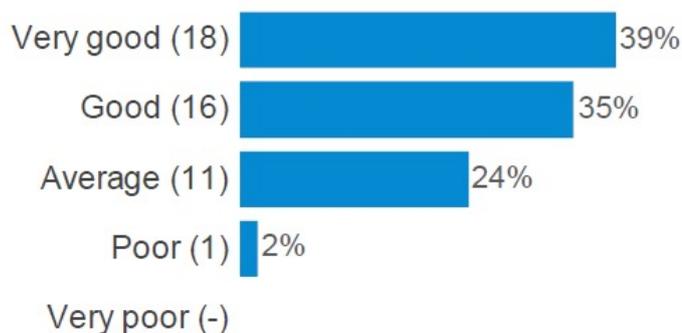
**Play Day**, the leisure flagship event attracted 3000 visitors in 2019 and offered a wide range of activities to cater for all age groups. 75% of respondents rated the activities as good (40%) or very good (35%).

**Wild at Play**, run in partnership with the countryside team and the play development team proved to be the most popular with 81% of respondents judging them very good (46%) or good (35%). Depending on the season and activities on offer, the number of participants can range from 20 to 80.

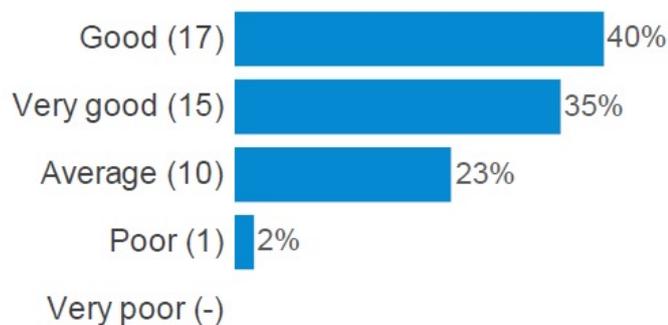
Attendance at **countryside events** is influenced by the weather or season. They attract from 20 to 40 participants on average, with some specific activities like pond dipping recording up to 60 participants. They are based on a different nature theme every time. They are popular with families. 93% rate them as very good (59%) or good (34%).

The full feedback on the various types of events was as follows:

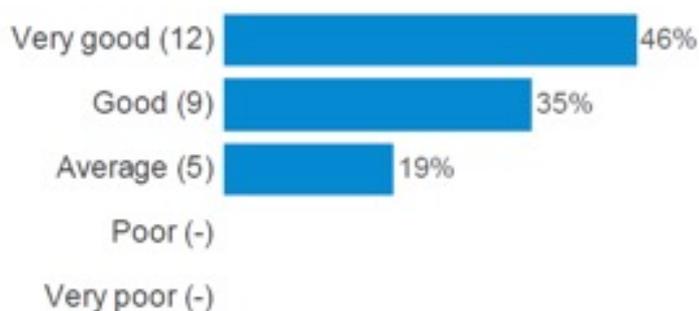
#### Feedback on the quality of activities on offer at Stay and Play events:



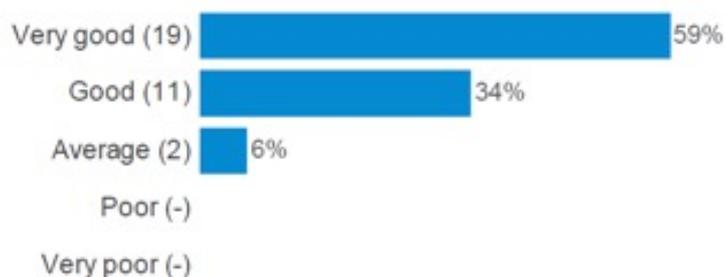
#### Feedback on the quality of activities on offer at Play Day:



#### Feedback on the quality of activities on offer at Wild at Play:



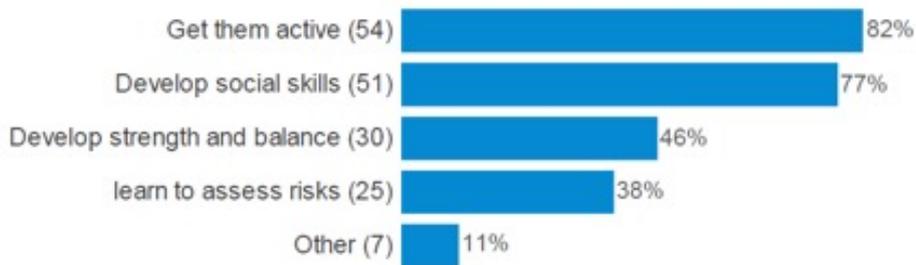
#### Feedback on the quality of activities on offer at the Countryside events:



### 3.2 Perceived benefits from attending council free play events

Families identified specific benefits from attending. 49% of respondents thought their children benefitted a lot from attending, 40% average and 11% a little.

**Perceived benefits from attending were as follows:**



Getting children active outdoors (82%) and developing social skills (77%) are the main advantages drawn from taking part in the events. However, the physical development element also plays a large role (46%) and 38% of parents view taking risks as an important factor in outdoor events.

### 3.3. Additional benefits highlighted by respondents included:

- Picking up new crafting techniques, make new friends or getting introduced to new sport.
- Speaking with emergency services people
- Countryside arts and crafts
- Wide variety of sports and activities
- Interesting and engaging activities
- Develops interest in wildlife

Full literal comments from respondents can be found in **Appendix 4**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

### 3.4. Future holiday childcare choices

The paid-for daily play scheme remains the preferred option for 59% of parents who are reliant on full-time childcare, possibly to suit their work pattern. 35% prefer to book on week-long scheme and 32% would prefer to book half days.

However, the free drop-in sessions introduced in 2017 have proved popular with parents with 49% wishing to attend with their child while 47% preferred leaving their children to be supervised by Shout! on the day.

## 4. Potential unsupervised play opportunities / Street Play

85% of respondents had not heard about Street Play\*. However, 85% showed an interest in the scheme being introduced in their neighbourhood and said Elmbridge Borough Council should play the following role in the project:



\*Street Play is an initiative developed by Play England. It is a simple and low-cost way for children to be able to play out in the streets where they live. Local authorities allow temporary road closures and local parents and other residents act as marshals while children play in the street.

## 5. Provision of Fixed play equipment in the borough

### 5.1. Current provision of traditional play equipment/play areas

Overall, 55% of respondents were satisfied with the provision of traditional play equipment/play areas in the borough (7% were very satisfied and 48% satisfied). 27% were dissatisfied and 18% neither satisfied or dissatisfied.



#### 5.1.1. Comments about existing traditional equipment/play areas

When asked to make additional comments about the existing traditional equipment/play areas in the borough, the main recurring aspects mentioned were that the equipment was outdated, there was not enough age appropriate equipment and that maintenance needed to be improved.

The table below showed the variety of responses made by respondents, together with the number of times they appeared in the total number of comments.

Full comments are available in **Appendix 1**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

Outdated/tired equipment	15
Insufficient age appropriate equipment	12
Badly maintained parks	9
Lack of provision (Walton & Hersham, Claygate & Esher)	3
School kids use school equipment instead	1
Opening time of splash pad and paddling pools not flexible enough	2
Splash pad is not maintained properly	2
Play areas are too far away from where we live	2
Elmbridge needs a BMX park or skatepark	2
More paddling pools needed	2
Cameras and lights important for additional safety/security	2
Needs café to draw people	2
Provision is good for younger children	2
Bad condition of concreted areas in parks	2
Dogs in play area	1
Dog mess	1
Pleased with local play area improvement (Brooklands)	1
Churchfields rec play area busy all the time- long waiting time	1
Lack of play equipment in Weybridge Heath	1
Play areas to be installed away from houses to avoid noise disturbance	1
Youth problems in play areas	1
Difficult to comment unless you have used a lot of different play areas	1
Roller blade path and basketball nets (Hersham)	1
Need to pay for car park next to play area	1
Cans and broken glass in play areas	1
Good provision at Xcel and Brooklands	1
Update needed in Cobham Rec	1
Don't separate equipment by age groups as children will feel excluded	1
Not enough investment Vs other boroughs (Wimbledon – Kingston)	1
Lack of play areas in Esher	1
Lack of shade	1

### 5.1.2. Most important features for play areas

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements regarding various aspects of local play area provision. They had to rate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed. The areas explored were:

- Features: range of equipment / quality and safety / maintenance
- Provision of seats/benches for parents/carers
- Provision of toilets and café
- Use of public funds to maintain, enhance and develop play areas
- Provision in new housing development
- Strategic location of new play areas

## Residents identified the most important factors for good play areas were:

Full results are available in **Appendix 6**. (available by request to shout@elmbridge.gov.uk)

The summary is as follows:

- A range of equipment and play features for children of different ages and abilities (98% of strongly agree and agree)
- Quality and safety of public play areas (98%)
- In larger play areas, distinctive play zones catering for different age groups (90%)
- Provision of seats/benches for parents/carers to use and socialise is an important feature of a play area (89% - 45% strongly agreed and 44% agreed)
- The provision of facilities such as toilets and cafés near to a play area would mean parents are more likely to choose to use it (61% strongly agreed and 30% agreed)

86% of respondents said that the opportunity to play and explore in parks and open spaces should be extended to the whole area, not just a fenced-off area with play equipment.

In terms of using public funds to maintain and develop play areas, residents' views were as follows:

- 96% thought that public funds should be spent maintaining and where possible enhancing the sites/play areas which have a high value to communities
- 89% thought that where new housing developments are built, focus should be on providing larger, centralised play areas rather than a number of individual/smaller play areas on the fringes of the development, whereas
- 78% thought that providing fewer but better quality, strategically important play areas would be a sensible strategy for the Council to adopt
- 48% strongly agreed or agreed that spending public money maintaining and replacing equipment in play areas that rarely get used is a poor use of Council resources

## 5.2. Current provision of natural play equipment/area

Respondents were also asked the rate **the current provision of natural play equipment/ play spaces in the borough** (Xcel leisure complex, Brooklands, Cobham Downside, sculpted play space on Esher Common). **50% of respondents were satisfied (40%) or very satisfied (10%)**. 38% were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'

### 5.2.1. Comments about the natural play equipment and play spaces

**Summary:** Respondents indicated that they would like to see more natural play equipment in Elmbridge. They thought the existing natural play areas were too small, too far away or not easily accessible. Those who had visited the sites at the Xcel leisure complex and Brooklands community park were satisfied with the provision and hoped to see it replicated across the borough. Maintenance, cleanliness and safety were also highlighted as important issues.

The table below shows the variety of responses made by respondents, together with the number of times they appeared in the comments:

Full comments can be found in **Appendix 7**. (available by request to shout@elmbridge.gov.uk)

There are not enough natural play areas in the borough	9
Not been to any so can't comment or don't use any	8
Too far away / not accessible	8
Xcel play area looks great	8
Natural play areas are too small	6
Lack of awareness – more publicity needed	6
Equipment appealing for younger kids, but not older children	5
Brooklands play area looks great	5
Problems with dogs off lead + dog fouling	4
Lack of toilets on site	4
Natural play areas should be fenced off	3
Unsafe because of broken equipment	2
Too dangerous to use when wet	2
Not enough for younger children	1
Only offering bare minimum	1
Esher natural area – sculpted area has fallen	1
Sculpted play area on Esher Common needs better signage and a proper marked trail	1
Cobham Downside is good	1
Too muddy	1
No natural play area provision in East Molesey	1
We use Bushey Park	1
Café needed in Brooklands	1
More benches needed for parents	1
Introduction of Forest School for natural play areas	1
Great additions to keep children active playing outdoors and to bring people together	1
Money needs to be invested where there is little for children to do	1
Make sure natural play areas are well maintained and improved	1
Need to be built next to traditional play areas	1

### 5.3. Improvements to local play areas

Respondents were asked to summarise in a couple of sentences how local play areas could be improved. The table below shows the variety of responses made by respondents, together with the number of times they appeared in the comments:

Full comments can be found in **Appendix 8**. (available by request to shout@elmbridge.gov.uk)

## Suggested improvements for local play areas (+ number of occurrences in responses)

Better maintenance - Safety	62
More diverse equipment catering for all age groups	33
Updated / additional equipment	29
Need suitable/ challenging facilities for older children	29
More creative / imaginative / interactive /exploratory more fun play areas	17
Cleanliness improved – broken glass and rubbish to be collected more regularly	15
More natural play equipment or trails in open spaces	13
Shade for summer months and shelter from rain in winter months	11
BMX track or skatepark	8
Teen equipment	7
Revise opening hours of splash pad and paddling pools	7
Cafes / mobile cafes	7
Dog-free zones / problems with dog mess	7
Toilet facilities	6
More benches / picnic areas	6
Hersham splash pad defective / not satisfactory	6
More local play areas	5
Larger play areas	5
Lighting needed in the evening	5
Fences around play areas	5
Accessibility - Fewer destination play areas and more local ones	4
Separate facilities for teenagers	4
More splash pad / paddling pools	4
More tarmac areas to cycle	4
More outdoor sports equipment (green gyms) to encourage older kids and young people to exercise outdoors	3
More trees	3
More bins	3
Creating spaces in the common land to add to the experience of the family walks/ trim trails	2
More inclusive equipment	2
Water fountain	2
Larger play areas near schools	2
There is already a great range of play areas in borough	2
Running track around park	2
Pathways for stroller access	2
Replicate good play areas like Weybridge	1
More play areas without fences	1
Safe gate (with latch)	1
Different areas / zones for different age groups	1
Focus on the more run-down playgrounds	1
Relocate play areas that are not being often used	1
Work with local open spaces not under council ownership to develop play areas	1

More places to use in bad weather	1
Speed limit on roads next to parks and rec areas	1
Splash park in Weybridge rather than paddling pool	1
Focus on fewer and better play areas	1
Communal covered areas for secondary school age children	1
Design that enables parents to supervise children of various ages across the whole park	1
Focus on outer areas outside of 'bigger' towns	1
Sports taster sessions in parks during summer and in school holidays	1
Lock play areas after dark to avoid criminal damage	1
Events to be held near play areas	1
Free parking at weekends (Weybridge)	1
Initiatives to teach children to love & respect the natural world	1
All weather equipment	1
Better advertising of play areas	1

#### 5.4. 12 words to describe ideal play areas

Respondents were asked to describe their idea play area in no more than 12 words.

The 14 most popular words used in description were as follows (+ number of occurrences).

Full definitions are available in **Appendix 9**. (available by request to [shout@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:shout@elmbridge.gov.uk))

Safe	100
Suitable for all ages - varied	86
Clean	58
Fun	55
Natural	37
Challenging	30
Exciting / engaging	36
Well-maintained	27
Toilet facilities	20
Adventurous	14
Imaginative / creative	13
Water play	11
Accessible	10
Café	10

# Appendix 1G - Public consultation, focus groups summary results

## Adult questions and responses

<b>Q1 - How can we increase participation in play?</b>	
<b>Play development</b>	<b>Fixed play</b>
Better/wider advertising of events (x6) – include schools, social media	Paddling pools filled in good weather (not just school holidays) to allow younger children to enjoy
More information on the web pages	
More Shout! free play session (x7)	Age 10+ activities (x2)
Age 10+ activities (x2)	
Playing outside	
Going for walks	
Libraries have resources could join with	
Pop-up play areas in libraries – increases footfall in libraries at the same time	
Look up Cheshire Children’s Museum in Keane US – local businesses sponsor a play area (i.e. vets, pizza) and advertise. It’s like a little street. (parent contact details given here as reference)	
Toy library – bus	
Bring it into schools – children participate better when friends are there	
<b>Q2 - If the council was to become an advocate for play, how will this look in real terms?</b>	
<b>Play development</b>	<b>Fixed play</b>
More days like today (Shout! free play sessions) (x2)	Activities that improve communication
Free play sessions (inside and out) (x2)	
Forest school type activities	Forest school type activities
Advertising events – involve housing trust	
Great as locals already have council backing and things will happen	

Play events, play groups, local schools sharing services – workshops to advocate play and importance	
Giving ideas that can be done at home	
Activities that improve communication	
Play experts modelling what good play looks like to parents e.g. how to engage good use of language	
Not cutting services and centres	
<b>Q3 - How can we improve children's health and wellbeing through play?</b>	
<b>Play development</b>	<b>Fixed play</b>
Bicycle, scooter, swimming, walks, (x2)	More outdoor play for older children
Free tuition session – skateboarding, tennis, golf, football, rugby. More free sports taster sessions in parks. (x2)	More toys, slide, trampoline
10-minute story time/reading time	Outside play – all weathers using natural resources, utilise woodlands
More outdoor play for older children	Equipment in parks to suit 8+ as lots has a focus on the pre-schools at the moment More equipment for age 10-16 Need better playgrounds for older children. Play grounds are all for toddlers/ small children at the moment
Outside play – all weathers using natural resources, utilise woodlands	Outdoor play, fresh air, lots of different life learning
Don't close Children's Centres	
More council funded drop-in support advice sessions in play centres	
Bring back children's centres	
Reward schemes	
Involve professionals such as health visitors, speech therapists, OT, dietician.	
Basic cookery classes including nutrition	
Group games	
One to one games	

10-minute mindfulness/calm down time during or at end of a session	
Promote more physical/sports activities indoors and outdoors i.e. introduce yoga for children	
Do mindfulness activities	
Are there tennis courts open to the public again?	
P.S. you already do a good job ☐	

<b>Q4 - How can we bring play into your closer community/neighbourhood?</b>	
<b>Play development</b>	<b>Fixed play</b>
Street play – street closures - community focus - Pop play areas in different street - Love the idea of closing the road. You do a great job though (x4)	Play equipment for older children, i.e. skatepark Older play equipment in parks, skate ramp, bike park
Thought Shout! summer locations were good, I think you do well utilising the use of council owned land and halls in various locations (x2)	Use outside spaces, they already have resources like Esher woods
Use outside spaces, they already have resources like Esher woods - Outside locations e.g. local forest and woods (x2)	Treasure hunts
Don't close Children's Centres	More playground, open green space for play
Afternoon soft plays – make spaces available so people can create more toddler groups	Playground – play groups
National Play Day	

### Children and young people's questions and responses

<b>Q1 – How old are you?</b>										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	total
28/10/19		1	1	3	2	3	3	4	1	18
29/10/19	1			3	3	2	1			10
30/10/19			2	3	2	2	1	2		12
total	1	1	3	9	7	7	5	6	1	40

## Q2 – Where do you like to play?

	home	garden	Soft play	The green	outside	School	At Shout!	Friend's house	park	Play ground	Xcel leisure	woods
28/10/19	5	2	1	1	3	1	1	1				
29/10/19	2	1	1						2	2	1	1
30/10/19	4				1	2	3		1		1	
total	11	3	2	1	4	3	4	1	3	2	2	1

## Q3 - What is your favourite thing to do when you play?

	Role play, schools, paw patrol, dressing up, disco	Video games/x-box	Playing with friends (tag, spy, hide & seek)	talk	Games	dodgeball	Lego, trains	exploring	Crafts, colouring, play dough	wrestling	frisbee		riding	Jumping, climbing
28/10/19	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
29/10/19					2	1	1		1					2
30/10/19	2		1				2		2				3	1
total	4	3	4	1	3	2	4	1	4	1	1	1	3	3

## Q4 – If you go to the park, what is your favourite piece of equipment?

	Bridge	Climbing frame	swings	Zip wire	slide	football	roundabout	Monkey bars	netball
28/10/19	1	3	3	3	2				
29/10/19			2	2	1	1	1	2	
30/10/19		4	9	3	3	1			1
total	1	7	14	8	6	2	1	2	1

**Q5 - If we could close your street for you to play outside, would you like that?**

	yes	Maybe/ 50:50	no
28/10/19	10	4	1
29/10/19	6	0	3
30/10/19	8	1	1
total	24	5	5

**Q6 - What games would you like to play outside?**

	Racing, carts	Fantasy play, fairies, spies, fighting, super heroes, police, castle, barbie house, animals	Skipping, jumping, climbing	cycling	Video games	Hop scotch	Ball games – dodgeball, football, netball, bat & ball, rugby, tennis	Outdoor games -Hide & seek, stuck in the mud, tag, wink wink murder, duck duck goose	Water fight	Potion making, scary stuff
28/10/19	4	2	1	1	3	1	3	1		
29/10/19		1	3				1	3		1
30/10/19		2	3			1	8	7	1	1

# References

- Active Surrey. (2018). *Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, academic year 2017/2018*. Active Surrey.
- Brockman, R. J. (2011). Children's active play: self-reported motivators, barriers and facilitators. *BMC Public Health*.
- Davies, P. D. (2019). *Time to solve childhood obesity: an independent report by the Chief Medical Officer*. London: Department of Health and Social Care.
- DCSF. (2008). *The Play Strategy*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2008). *The Play Strategy*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.
- Department for children, schools and families. (2010). *Embedding the Play Strategy*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.
- Department for education. (2016, March). *DfE strategy 2015-2020, World-class education and care*. Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/508421/DfE-strategy-narrative.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508421/DfE-strategy-narrative.pdf)
- Department for Education. (2017). *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage*. London: Crown.
- Department of Health. (2011, July). *Physical activity guidelines for children and young people (5-18 years)*. Retrieved from Department of Health: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/213739/dh\\_128144.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213739/dh_128144.pdf)
- Elmbridge Borough Council. (2015). *Active Elmbridge, Physical Active Strategy 2015-2020*. Elmbridge: Leisure and Cultural Services Team.
- Elmbridge Borough Council. (2018). *Elmbridge Council Plan*. Esher: Elmbridge Borough Council.
- Guildford Borough Council. (2016). *Guildford Play Strategy*. Guildford: Guildford Borough Council.
- HM Government. (2003). *Every Child Matters*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Hughes, B. (1996). *A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types*. London: Playlink.
- NPFA. (2000). *Best Play*. London: National Playing Fields Association.
- Office for National Statistics. (2018, July). *Population estimates by 5 years age groups and gender*. Retrieved from Surrey-i: <https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/dataset/population-estimates-by-5-year-age>
- Play England. (2009). *Policy Summary - The Play Strategy*. London: Play England.



# Bibliography

- Active Surrey. (2018). *Active Lives Children and Young People Survey, academic year 2017/2018*. Active Surrey.
- Brockman, R. J. (2011). Children's active play: self-reported motivators, barriers and facilitators. *BMC Public Health*.
- Davies, P. D. (2019). *Time to solve childhood obesity: an independent report by the Chief Medical Officer*. London: Department of Health and Social Care.
- DCSF. (2008). *The Play Strategy*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families. (2008). *The Play Strategy*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.
- Department for children, schools and families. (2010). *Embedding the Play Strategy*. Nottingham: DCSF Publications.
- Department for education. (2016, March). *DfE strategy 2015-2020, World-class education and care*. Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/508421/DfE-strategy-narrative.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508421/DfE-strategy-narrative.pdf)
- Department for Education. (2017). *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage*. London: Crown.
- Department of Health. (2011, July). *Physical activity guidelines for children and young people (5-18 years)*. Retrieved from Department of Health: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/213739/dh\\_128144.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213739/dh_128144.pdf)
- Elmbridge Borough Council. (2015). *Active Elmbridge, Physical Active Strategy 2015-2020*. Elmbridge: Leisure and Cultural Services Team.
- Elmbridge Borough Council. (2018). *Elmbridge Council Plan*. Esher: Elmbridge Borough Council.
- Guildford Borough Council. (2016). *Guildford Play Strategy*. Guildford: Guildford Borough Council.
- HM Government. (2003). *Every Child Matters*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Hughes, B. (1996). *A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types*. London: Playlink.
- NPFA. (2000). *Best Play*. London: National Playing Fields Association.
- Office for National Statistics. (2018, July). *Population estimates by 5 years age groups and gender*. Retrieved from Surrey-i: <https://www.surreyi.gov.uk/dataset/population-estimates-by-5-year-age>
- Play England. (2009). *Policy Summary - The Play Strategy*. London: Play England.



# Appendix 2A - Elmbridge Borough Council Green Space Play Area Development Plan

Priority for Refurbishment		Playgrounds	Ward	Type (Indicative)	Risk Assessment Value	Play Value	Annual Maintenance £ - Estimate	5 Year Capital Estimate	Estimated value to replace all equipment	Life Expectancy of play area	Reasons for difference between Officer value / RoSPA values	What Needs doing?	Life expectancy of items
Officer	RoSPA												
1	2	West Molesey Recreation Ground	Molesey West	LAP	12	12	1000	22,000	182,000	9+	Further degradation of wooden and metal parts 2020	Tower unit coming to the end of its life - multiple failures	>1
2	1	Coronation Recreation Ground	Hersham Village	LEAP	20	11	2000	144,000	350,000	8+		Large tower unit & Springer seesaw coming to end of life, 2 springers out of action	>2
3	5	Lower Green Recreation Ground	Esher	NEAP	8	7	3000	11,000	81,000	3+	Sudden degradation in surfacing across play area	Surfacing is coming apart, damaged equipment	>2
4	3	West End Recreation Ground	Esher	LEAP	9	9	1000	22,000	112,000	7+		Tower unit coming to end of life.	>2
5	3	George Froude (Teen)	Walton North	LAP	10	6	1000	5000	10,000	10+	Sudden increase in vandalism led to removal of equipment 2020	Basket swing damaged beyond repair.	>1
6	1	Littleheath Recreation Ground	Oxshot/Stoke D'Abernon	LEAP	12	10	1000	24,000	174,000	8+		Tower unit coming to end of life, springer seesaw damaged,	>2
7	1	Claygate Recreation Ground	Claygate	LAP	19	10	3000	24,000	199,000	5+	Surfacing issues resolved 2020 lowering priority	Some rot on wooded equipment	>2
8	2	Hersham Recreation Ground	Hersham Village	NEAP	12	14	2000	20,000	300,000	8+		Tower unit coming to end of life	>2
9	1	Hurst Meadows	Molesey East	LEAP	13	11	1000	31,000	221,000	2+	High Priority ancillary items to be fixed 2020	Springer come to end of life, some rot on wooden equipment	>2
10	2	Molesey Hurst Recreation Ground	Molesey East	LEAP	12	9	1000	22,000	172,000	8+		Some rot on wooded equipment	>3
11	2	Grovelands Recreation Ground	Molesey West	LEAP	12	14	2000	22,000	172,000	8+		Wooden tower unit coming to end of life	>3
12 **	5	Cobham Recreation Ground	Cobham/Downside	NEAP	8	12	1000	72,000	172,000	5+	Further degradation of wooden and metal parts 2020	Wooden tower unit coming to end of life, springer removed,	>3
	1	Summer Road Recreation Ground	Thames Ditton	LAP	13	8	1000	15,000	155,000	6+	Main issues concerning play value & Ancillary items	Low play value	
	1	Downside Common	Cobham/Downside	LEAP	16	12	1000	35,000	115,000	9+	Equipment issues resolved 2020	Damaged wooden items	
	1	Brooklands CP Natural PA	Weybridge/St Georges Hill	N/A	16	14	2000	30,000	130,000	5+	Issues around installation	Many faults with equipment - to be investigated with manufacturer	

2	<b>Long Ditton Recreation Ground</b>	Long Ditton	LAP	11	12	3000	150,000	150000	4+		Roundabout broken
2	<b>Brooklands CP Fenced PA</b>	Weybridge/St Georges Hill	NEAP	10	10	2000	40,000	130,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
2	<b>Elmgrove Recreation Ground</b>	Walton Central	LEAP	10	15	1000	100,000	160,000	3+		Minor damage to equipment
3	<b>Station Road Open Space</b>	Oxshott/Stoke D'Abemon	LEAP	10	9	1000	10,000	130,000	9+		Budget for life expectancy
3	<b>Nielson's Field</b>	Molesey East	LEAP	9	11	1000	30,000	170,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
3	<b>Hersham Green</b>	Hersham Village	NEAP	9	13	1000	80,000	200,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
3	<b>Oatlands Recreation Ground</b>	Oatlands Park/Burwood Park	NEAP	9	13	3000	80,000	200,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
4	<b>Thamesmead Recreation Ground</b>	Walton North	LEAP	9	8	1000	20,000	160,000	5+		Budget for life expectancy
4	<b>Stoke D'Abemon Recreation Ground</b>	Oxshott/Stoke D'Abemon	LEAP	9	8	1000	10,000	130,000	7+		Budget for life expectancy
4	<b>Thrupps Lane Open Space</b>	Hersham Village	LAP	9	8	1000	10,000	130,000	9+		Budget for life expectancy
4	<b>Giggs Hill Field (Thames Ditton)</b>	Thames Ditton	LEAP	8	11	1000	50,000	110,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
4	<b>Lynwood Road Recreation Ground</b>	Hinchley Wood/Weston Green	NEAP	8	13	1000	50,000	170,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
4	<b>Churchfields Recreation Ground</b>	Weybridge/Riverside	NEAP	7	20	5000	100,000	450,000	5+		Budget for life expectancy
5	<b>Cricket Way Open Space</b>	Oatlands Park/Burwood Park	LEAP	8	8	1000	40,000	80,000	10+		Budget for life expectancy
5	<b>Riverhouse Gardens</b>	Walton Central	LEAP	8	11	1000	30,000	170,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
0	<b>Graburn Way Open Space</b>	Molesey East	LEAP	8	9	1000	0	100,000	8+		Budget for life expectancy
0	<b>Waterside Meadow Playground</b>	Walton North	LEAP	8	9	1000	0	110,000	9+		Budget for life expectancy
0	<b>Vaux Crescent Open Space</b>	Hersham Village	LEAP	7	11	1000	0	90,000	9+		Budget for life expectancy

\* RoSPA report carried out late 2019, some priorities have changed / been resolved 2020

\*\* Officer assessment of equipment does not go past this point due to unforeseeable changes

## Appendix 2A - Glossary

Officer Priority for Refurbishment	Priority based on current site visits, visible failure of parts, likely failure.
RoSPA Priority for Refurbishment	RoSPA lead assessment for refurbishment made late 2019. Based on equipment age, condition and play value.
Type (Indicative)	LAP's (Local Area for Play), LEAP's (Local Equipped Area for Play) and NEAP's (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play) are acronyms used to define different levels of outdoor space.
Risk Assessment Value	RoSPA assessed risk assessment - average of all individual items assessed within the play area including ancillary items.
Play Value	The current assessed play value (i.e. benefit to children) of the playground.
Annual Maintenance £ - Estimate	An estimated cost of replacement of individual items required within the next 5 years. These items are expected to fail within the next 5 years.
5 Year Capital Estimate	Costs are estimates to replace individual items that require replacing in the next 5 years, based on today's market price.
Estimated value to replace equipment	Total estimated cost to replace all equipment within the play areas, based on today's market price.
Life Expectancy of play area	This is the estimated life expectancy of the whole play area based on the overall current condition and expected life span of different types of equipment.
Reasons for difference between Officer value / RoSPA	Officer value and RoSPA priority for refurbishment may differ due to recent changes such as vandalism, unexpected non-repairable failure.
Values What Needs doing?	Brief description of works required.
Life expectancy of items	This is the estimated life expectancy of individual items based on the current condition and normal life span. This may differ from the whole play area expectancy as items degrade at different rates

# Appendix 2B - Classification of play areas, Fields in Trust (FIT)

Summary of definitions of local and neighbourhood play areas

Source: **Fields in Trust Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play**

The following section summarises the qualitative aspects of the FIT guidelines:

A **Local Area for Play (LAP)** is a small area of open space, specifically designated and primarily laid out for very young children to play close to where they live (i.e. within 1-minute walking time). The LAP is a doorstep play area. It could be a grassed area, open space, residential street in a home zone or a small designed play area, where young children can play within sight of known adults. The space could incorporate some interesting and attractive landscaping features and/or a small number of items of play equipment and create an environment that will stimulate young children's play, providing opportunities for a variety of play experiences, bearing in mind that older children and young people may also use the space from time to time. It should be capable of catering for the needs of children with a range of impairments. Seating may be available for carers to be able to sit, watch and meet other people. It should have the following characteristics:

- It is intended primarily for children up to the age of 6, though it will be used by older children at different times of the day or evening
- It is best positioned beside a pedestrian route that is well used
- It occupies a well-drained, reasonably flat site surfaced with grass or a hard surface
- The recommended minimum activity zone is 100 sq. m

A buffer zone of 5 metres minimum depth normally separates the activity zone and the forward-most part of the nearest dwelling that faces the LAP. Gable end or other exposed walls can be protected from use for ball games by, for example, providing a dense strip of planting of 1 metre minimum depth.

The buffer zone may include varied planting to provide a mix of scent, colour and texture.

- It may contain demonstrative features that allow young children to identify and claim the space as theirs
- Depending on location, it may have a 600mm guard rail, low fence or planting to indicate the perimeter. Similarly, depending on location, there may be a need to be a barrier limiting the speed of a child entering or leaving the LAP.
- There should be a sign indicating that the area is for children's play and that dogs are not welcome
- The activity zone of the local area for play counts towards the quantitative element of these recommendations and local standards

A **Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)** is an area of open space specifically designated and laid out with features including equipment for children who are beginning to go out and

play independently close to where they live, usually within 5 minutes walking time. It could be a grassed area, small park, local open space designed for play or informal recreation or a school play area open out of school hours.

Play features, including equipment, are an integral and attractive part of the LEAP. The space should provide a varied and interesting physical environment including natural features such as sand, water and varying levels and contours. There might also be features designed for specific activities such as ball games, wheeled sports meeting places or play equipment. Children who use these spaces ought to feel safe and be able to interact with individuals and groups of other children of different ages. It is also important that the space can be used for physical activity and games. Because LEAPs can be used for boisterous games, they should be properly sited, overseen and maintained, in order to meet the needs of children, without being a source of nuisance to other residents. The characteristics of LEAP include:

- It is intended primarily for children who are beginning to go out and play independently
- It is best positioned beside a pedestrian route that is well used
- It occupies a well-drained, reasonably flat site surfaced with grass or a hard surface, together with
- Impact absorbing surfaces beneath and around play equipment or structures as appropriate
- The recommended minimum activity zone is 400 sq. m

The area is designed to provide a stimulating and challenging play experience that may include opportunities for balancing, rocking, climbing, overhead activity, sliding, swinging, jumping crawling, rotating, imaginative play, social play and play with natural materials. Provision for a minimum number of six play experiences is recommended, although the exact amount and nature of equipment will depend on local decision.

- A buffer zone of 10 metres minimum depth normally separates the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest property containing a dwelling. A minimum of 20 metres should normally be provided between the activity zone and the habitable room façade of the nearest dwelling.

Where these minimum distances do not apply, careful consideration needs to be given to the:

- Design of any means of enclosure, planting scheme and/or other physical features on the boundary of the residential property
- Siting of features including equipment within the activity zone, to preclude opportunities for overlooking nearby gardens or dwellings, potential loss of privacy and creation of nuisance.

To enhance accessibility, **LEAPS** will have:

- Pathways to the entrances
- Flat entrances
- Sufficient circulation space for wheelchairs (and buggies) to move between equipment
- Seating for parents, carers and families - some with access for wheelchairs

A **Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)** is an area of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children but with play opportunities for younger children as well. It is designed for children and young people who are used to travelling longer distances independently to get to safely on their own. It might be a park, playing field, recreation ground or natural open space, such as a woodland, moorland or beach - accessible and attractive to older children and young people.

It might include ball courts, multi-use games areas or skateboard areas. The area should be capable of meeting the needs of children with a range of impairments.

- It is intended primarily for use by older children of relative independence, who have the freedom to range further from home
- It is within 15 minutes' walking time of the child's home
- It is best positioned beside a pedestrian route that is well used
- It occupies a well-drained site, with both grass and hard surfaced areas, together with impact absorbing surface beneath play equipment or structures as appropriate

The recommended minimum activity zone is 1000 sq. m, comprising an area for play equipment and structures and a hard-surfaced area of at least 465 sq. m (the minimum needed to play 5-a-side football)

The area is designed to provide a stimulating and challenging play experience that may include opportunities for balancing, rocking, climbing, overhead activity, sliding, swinging, jumping, crawling, rotating, imaginative play, social play and play with natural materials, ball games, wheeled areas or other activities.

Provision for a minimum number of nine play experiences is recommended, although the exact amount and nature of equipment will depend on local decision.

- A buffer zone of 30m minimum depth normally separates the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest property containing a dwelling. A greater distance may be needed where purpose-built skateboarding facilities are required.
- There is adequate space within the area of the NEAP to allow for children to be generally active and play chase type games
- Boundaries should be recognisable by landscaping
- Seating for accompanying adults and siblings should be provided, together with one or more litterbins
- There should be a sign indicating that the area is for children's play and that dogs are not welcome, along with the name and telephone number of the facility operator and an invitation to report any incident or damage to the operator
- Convenient and secure parking facilities for bicycles should be provided

**To enhance accessibility, NEAPS will have:**

- Car parking, with disabled bays next to the access route
- Play equipment that is inclusive, by offering choice of play experiences for children with different abilities. These may include lower-level nets for crawling/scrambling/lying on; swings with support (cradle, nest swings or possibly specialist swings),

roundabouts that are flush with the ground, play panels that are low-level and tactile, access ramps to some equipment to enable children to get higher if they cannot climb independently, double width access steps, with rails and double-width slides.

- Pathways to the entrances
- Flat entrances with gates of at least 1m width to allow for wheelchair access
- Self-closing gates, closing in between 3 and 5seconds (to allow time for access with wheelchairs or prams/buggies)
- Pathways within the area, at least 1.2m wide and with passing spaces for wheelchairs (1.8m).
- Sufficient circulation space for wheelchairs (and buggies) to move between equipment
- Seating for parents, carers and families - some with access for wheelchairs (arm rests and the ability to place wheelchairs at tables). Provision of seating along pathways of more than 50metres.
- Equipment that can be accessed in a wheelchair - based on tarmac, wetpour/ rubber crumb, or reinforced grass that has access ramps. Reinforced grass matting must be fitted according to manufacturers' instructions and be flush with the ground and have grass growing through it.

**Destination play areas** are defined as those within key sites, aimed at attracting family and similar groups for longer visits. Most children will be accompanied by adults. There should be a greater variety of equipment and facilities for car parking and access to café's and public toilets. Disabled children should be made to feel welcome, with suitable access arrangements in place and adaptations being made to equipment where appropriate.

### **Classification of play areas, Play England**

Source: '**Tools for evaluating local play provision: A technical guide to Play England local play indicators**',

Ashley Godfrey Associates, INSPIRE, Bristol City, October 2009

#### **Type A: 'Door-step' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation**

**A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children, can play within view of known adults.**

For example, this could be a grassed area, open space, residential street in a home zone or small designed play area. The space could incorporate some interesting and attractive landscape features and/or a small number of items of play equipment and create an environment that will stimulate young children's play, providing opportunities for a variety of play experiences, bearing in mind that older children and young people may also use the space from time to time.

A doorstep space would be sufficiently close to home for the children who use it to feel safe and be able to interact with individuals and groups of other children.

It should also be capable of catering for the needs of children with a range of impairments. Seating may be available for carers to be able to sit, watch and meet other people.

## **Type B: 'Local' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation**

**A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.**

For example, this could be a grassed area, small park, local open space, designed space for play or informal recreation or school play area open out of school hours, which is attractive to children as they begin to move around their neighbourhoods without being accompanied by adults. These spaces and facilities provide varied and interesting physical environments including, for example, natural features, sand and water, and incorporate landscape features with varying levels and contours that test children's capabilities.

There might also be features designed for specific activities such as ball games, wheeled sports or meeting places and/or several items of play equipment offering a variety of play experiences.

Play facilities might also include local staffed play provision such as play centres, playschemes, play ranger projects and adventure play areas. These spaces and facilities should also be capable of catering for the needs of children with a range of impairments. The children who use these spaces and facilities ought to feel safe and be able to interact with individuals and groups of other children of different ages.

## **Type C: 'Neighbourhood' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation**

**A larger space or facility for informal recreation that children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely, spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers, and have a wider range of play experiences.**

For example, this might be a park, playing field, recreation ground or natural open space such as woodland, moorland or a beach, accessible and attractive to older children and young people.

The space or facility provides for a variety of age appropriate play and informal recreational experiences.

It might provide a varied and interesting physical environment incorporating some interesting and attractive landscape features with varying levels and contours.

There are likely to be more challenging items of equipment that meet the needs of older children and young people.

Larger facilities, specifically designed for informal recreation could be present, such as a ball court, multi-use games area or skateboard area, which can provide the opportunity for a variety of experiences to young people with differing skill levels.

These spaces and facilities should also be capable of catering for the needs of children and young people with a range of impairments. There is likely to be sufficient space to play large group ball games and seating/shelter to enable young people to socialise with their friends.

# Appendix 2C - General design principles - Fields In Trust (FIT) guidance, Design for Play and Managing Risk in Play Provision

**This appendix sets out the general design principles encompassed in the FIT guidance, alongside Play England Design for Play and Managing Risk in Play Provision.**

Both sets of guidance aim to achieve good quality children's play provision. The first offers some detailed advice, which has sometimes been implemented in a risk-averse (or reductive) fashion.

The second encourages play site developers to aspire to create great play spaces and undertake an analysis of the benefits to children, alongside the risks.

## **General design principles for children's play areas**

- Appropriate to the needs of the local community
- Accessible for every child within the appropriate walking time for LAP, LEAP and NEAP
- Accessible without having to cross main roads, railways or waterways
- Sited in open, welcoming locations
- Separated from areas of major vehicle movements and accessible directly from pedestrian routes
- Sited on land of natural topography or on land capable of being landscaped for the type of play experiences intended
- Designed in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995
- Designed so that any high climbing structures are as far as possible from nearby dwellings and any potential visual intrusion is minimised
- Integrated, as far as possible, with other open spaces and areas of amenity planting, to provide separation from nearby dwellings
- Visible from nearby dwellings or well used pedestrian routes
- Accessible by footpaths with a firm surface
- Surfaced in a manner fitting to the intensity of use
- Provided with seating for accompanying adults, carers and siblings

Designed to provide a stimulating and challenging play experience that may include equipment and other features providing opportunities for balancing, rocking, climbing, overhead activity, sliding, swinging, jumping, crawling, rotating, imaginative play, social play, play with natural materials such as sand and water, ball games, wheeled areas or other activities

All equipped play areas should be subject to an independent post-installation inspection; details of certificated inspectors can be obtained from the Register of Play area Inspectors International (RPiI)

- provided with impact absorbing surfacing beneath and around all such equipment as appropriate
- designed with appropriate physical features on the perimeter to enable recognition as a play area

The Design for Play principles focus on creating successful play spaces in their own right, specially designed for their location, in such a way as to provide as much play value as possible.

They are aspirational, concerned less with aspects such as buffer zones, post installation and safer surfacing and more with the types of play a good play space can promote.

Design for Play is accompanied by an implementation guide, Managing Risk in Play Provision which promotes a risk-benefit approach to the design and management of play spaces.

“Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities.

In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

The Design for Play principles promote play spaces that are:

- Designed to enhance their setting - inspired by the background, whether that is a park, open space or urban landscape
- Located in the best possible place - where children naturally play, away from dangerous roads, noise and pollution, but near through routes and well-used public footpaths
- Close to nature - many studies have shown that children benefit from access to natural environments.
- In densely populated urban areas, the use of grassy mounds, planting, logs and boulders can help to make a more attractive and playable setting for equipment.
- Designed so that children can play in different ways, incorporating different ages, abilities and interests
- Designed so that disabled and non-disabled children play together
- Loved by the community
- Spaces where children of all ages play together
- Spaces where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way
- Maintained for play value and environmental sustainability
- Able to evolve as children grow

# Appendix 2D - Design of accessible play spaces

Play spaces are unique to their location and community. Their design should take into account the range of play needs found in the community, which includes those of children (and carers) with disabilities as well as the play principles outlined in appendix 1C.

Plan Inclusive Play Areas (PiPA), in association with Kids, the disability children's charity, have produced a checklist to assess the inclusion of the design of play areas. The checklist can be accessed via the website ([www.inclusiveplay.com](http://www.inclusiveplay.com)) which includes examples of products that improve inclusive play in play areas.

The following principles are taken from *Inclusion by Design: A guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments*. This publication cites seven principles of inclusive design, gleaned from visits to and research about different play environments. The team visited eight sites, of which three were unsupervised environments. The guide contains some useful information and pictures, but some of the principles may be more difficult to apply to unsupervised public play areas:

- **Ease of use:** facilitate the fact that disabled children may well travel a distance to an inclusive facility by providing services such as car parking, toilets (with changing space and assisted showering facilities), level access between play spaces, low level facilities that encourage independent use
- **Freedom of choice:** choose equipment and activities that can be used by different children in different ways, e.g. multi-user swings, boats and cradles, sandpits
- **Diversity and difference:** hiding places, manipulation of scale, pattern and texture, use of sand and water
- **Legibility and predictability:** use of planting and hard and soft landscaping to enable children to navigate around the different parts of a play space without necessarily having to read signs (e.g. scents, sight lines, heights, tactile surfaces)
- **Quality:** aesthetically pleasing as well as functional play features
- **Safety:** appropriate supervision and risk management processes
- **Inclusive process:** consultation with and involvement of all children and facilities in the design and management of play settings (e.g. in relation to gradients, path widths, places to hide, boardwalks, planting, story-telling chairs, stepping stones, textures)

Source: *Inclusion by Design: A Guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments*, Goodrich et al. KIDS/DCSF, 2008.

## Appendix 2E - Planning New Residential Developments

The selection of sites for children's play environments should be an integral part of the design process for all new housing developments. The pattern and landscape of streets, paths, open spaces, the gradient of footpaths, the size of steps, the height of handrails and other factors must all be considered from a child's perspective'. Safe access to and from the designated play space should be incorporated into the design.

# Appendix 2F - Open Space and Recreation Assessment Oct 2014 (OSRA).

Please select link to view and download pdf document:

[Recreation Assessment Oct 2014](#)