

 Culture & Leisure Services

Erewash

Play Strategy

Summary

Document

improving the
quality, range and
provision of play
opportunities for
every child and
young person
in the borough




Foreword

We were all children once! We all have childhood memories of climbing trees, making mud pies, playing conkers, getting grazes on our knees, racing round the block on our bike, or simply hanging out with our mates.

Play is a fundamental part of growing up. It encourages children to explore their relationship with their world, their surroundings and other people. Play can happen at home, out on the street, in the woods, in the park, inside or outside. But in our modern world, there is increasing competition for children's attention – computer games, television, the internet can hold more interest than swings and roundabouts.

Health issues such as childhood obesity and community issues like anti-social behaviour are growing concerns, and with increased threats to our open space from demand for new housing, the future of play is changing.



There is a need for a co-ordinated approach for Play provision, and the development of a five year Play Strategy and Action Plan for Erewash is the starting point. It will enable all those organisations, agencies and

groups who are involved in play provision to work together to improve play opportunities for the children and young people across the Borough.



Introduction

This document sets out the Children's Play Strategy for Erewash. Its aim is to improve and develop the quality and quantity of opportunities offered to children and young people for play and for 'hanging out'. It provides the framework for implementing Erewash's vision and policy commitments to play. The objective will be to deliver these commitments through a five year action plan which will provide an achievable programme of activities.



Our **vision for play** is

“For every young person to have the opportunity to play in places that are accessible, exciting and imaginative, where they can interact and which are free to use and safe”

Our **mission for play** is

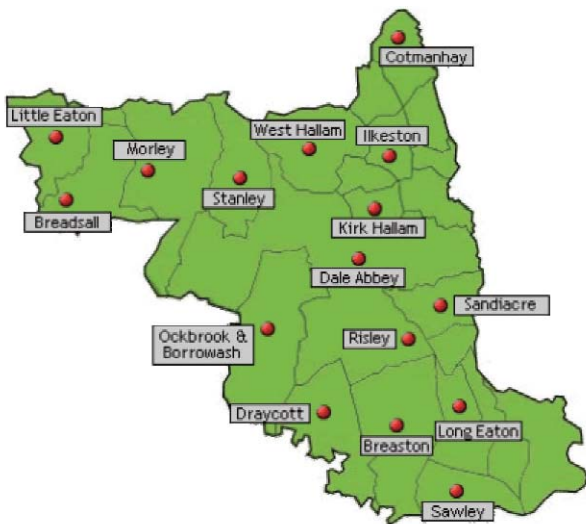
Children and Young People throughout Erewash will be directly consulted on all matters relating to play provision in the district. Public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations will then work in partnership to deliver quality play opportunities which meet the needs of children and young people identified through the consultation process.





The Borough of Erewash

Erewash Borough covers an area of about 110 sq.km and lies between Derby and Nottingham in the south east of Derbyshire. It takes its name from the River Erewash which flows down its eastern border.



Erewash is a borough of contrast: to the eastern side are the market towns of Ilkeston and Long Eaton, whilst to the west the borough is more rural with some isolated villages. The two large cities of Derby and Nottingham both border the borough, and have an influence on the area.

The population of Erewash is 110,099 of which 49%

are male and 51% per cent are female. (Office for National Statistics 2001 Census).

The Borough has a black and minority ethnic population of 2% which is well below the national average of 5.5%.

Overall the borough is considered as 'mid table' in terms of levels of deprivation ranking 138th out of 345 districts in England. However a number of communities are amongst the 25% most deprived wards in England with Ilkeston North in the top 2.5% of deprived wards.

The traditional coal mining and lace industries have declined and the local economy is now based largely on engineering and the manufacture of textiles and furniture. In the west of the borough the majority of employment is in agriculture as this area is extensively farmed.

The unemployment rate in Erewash is 3.3%, just below the national average of 3.4%. Transport links are excellent by Road (including the M1), rail and air (East Midlands Airport).



The National Agenda for Play

The government's Every Child Matters framework and Change for Children programmes identify the enjoyment of recreation, including play, as a key outcome for children and young people to be considered in the preparation and implementation of Children and Young People's plans under the Children Act

(2004). There are 5 outcomes of the Children's Act to which Play can contribute and it is recognised that the need to make better provision for play cuts across a range of policy areas that include planning, open spaces, transport, health, education and childcare.



More access to active, outdoor play opportunities has also been identified within the Choosing Health Physical Activity Action Plan (DOH), as a key to combating childhood obesity making the play agenda a serious issue for all Local Authorities, Children's Services, Primary Care Trusts, Local Strategic Partnerships and Children and Young People's Partnerships.

To assist local authorities and their partners in

meeting increased play provision, £15 million has been allocated from the Big Lottery Children's Play Fund, to be distributed across the Local Authorities in England and Wales. BIG has provisionally allocated £253,000 to fund improved play provision within Erewash, subject to the successful application of a lottery bid in September 2007.

What is Play?

Getting Serious about Play defines play as "what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way and for their own reasons."



The guidance goes on to explain that "while the play strategy may adopt a simple definition, it is important to recognise the diversity, complexity and richness of children's play. Recognising this level of variety and complexity is helpful when planning for play as it helps us think beyond play equipment and kick-around pitches."



Strategic Objectives

The Erewash Play Strategy is the net result of a large audit and consultation exercise with stakeholders in the play community – children, young people, parents and carers, and partner agencies in the public, private and voluntary/community sectors.

It sets out a framework within which the various partners can work together to deliver improved play provision which meets the needs of the children and young people aged 0-18 in the borough over the next 5 years. It is a cross-sector document and addresses many other issues concerning play provision such as community safety, inclusion, health and location and quality of provision.

County Strategic Objectives

Erewash Borough Council is a partner in the countywide work to develop a Play Policy for Derbyshire, from which the following strategic objectives have been adopted:

- Develop a co-coordinated approach to play
- Develop a play service that is accessible to all children

- Develop existing and new opportunities
- Involve children and young people in meeting their needs
- Share resources and ensure the highest quality provision is sustainable and appropriate to local needs.

Local Policies for Play

The vision for play will be achieved by delivering the Play Erewash Action Plan which responds to the county Strategic Objectives and the local Play Policies, which are to:

1. Establish a Partnership approach to Play Provision
2. Provide safe places to play
3. Consider different play needs according to age and gender
4. Provide for inclusive and integrated Play
5. Maximise funding opportunities
6. Provide venues for play in appropriate locations



Play in Erewash

Erewash Borough Council has a responsibility as a local authority to provide and develop play opportunities for children and young people across the Borough. Play is embedded within both the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy, and current service provision covers fixed play sites, play schemes and youth facilities.

A large number of partnership agencies and groups from the public, private and voluntary/community sectors are involved in providing for Play across the borough, in addition to the services provided by the Borough Council. Provision ranges from fixed play sites to out-of-school clubs, playschemes, soft play, youth clubs and mother and toddler groups. These include:

- Erewash Borough Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Parish Councils
- Community Safety Partnership
- Three Valleys Housing
- Childrens Centres
- Groundwork Derby & Derbyshire
- Schools (infants, juniors and secondary)
- Special Schools
- Umbrella
- Community groups & forums
- Arts organisations
- Extended schools/community hubs
- Private Sector play organisations

The Erewash Play Partnership was formed in December 2006 to help steer the development of the Play Strategy. It is clear from consultation and the production of the action plan, that the play needs of Erewash cannot be met by lottery money alone and the successful delivery of the action plan will depend on the various organisations and agencies providing for play in the Borough to work together to help realise the vision for play.



Current provision

The term 'play provision' is used to describe settings whose primary aim is that children should play there. The Children's Play Council objective for good play provision has been summarised as being to deliver play provision that:

- is accessible, welcoming and engaging for all children and young people including those who are disabled or have specific needs and wishes; and,
- recognises that children and young people of different ages have different play interests and needs.



Priorities from consultation

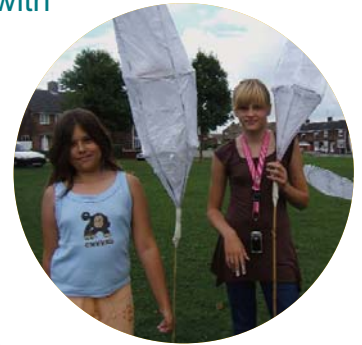
A number of consultation exercises have been carried out in relation to Play and Open Space provision over the past year. Over 1650 responses have been logged from children and young people, and targeted consultation of Parish Councils and Surestart (Children's Centres) has also been done. The consultation exercises undertaken are as follows:

- Web-based survey of school children mostly aged between 6 years and 16 years undertaken for the Play Strategy
- The Sure Start Survey of parents undertaken for the Play Strategy in Spring 2007
- Questionnaire survey of representative sample of local residents of Erewash for the Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study



- A qualitative study involving children and young people undertaken as part of the for the Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study

- Informal consultation with young people of a variety of ages, to explore their play experience and aspirations undertaken for the Play Strategy



- Two surveys of Parish Councils:
 - Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation Study Spring 2006
 - Play Strategy Spring 2007
- Surveys undertaken by Derbyshire County Council Youth Service
- Interview with staff of Stanton Vale Special School

Key Themes identified

A number of themes emerged from the various consultation exercises:

- Where children play
- Barriers to Play
- The activities that children and young people prefer
- Opportunities to play or 'hang out'.
- What makes a good place to play or 'hang out'?
- What improvements are needed?



Where children play

Under 12's play mostly at home or at friend's houses, less frequently at parks and even less in equipped play areas. Many prefer to play out on the street, using grassed open spaces to play and 'hang out'. Most walk to their play areas, and Victoria Park and West Park were the most frequently visited.

Young People largely 'hang out' on the streets or in the park preferring socialising over 'activity'.

Barriers to Play, according to:

Children & Young People:

- Behaviour of older kids; Anti-social behaviour and bullying
- Adults' complaining, more a problem for girls
- Not feeling safe, especially at night
- Lack of places to go which are accessible, safe and lit
 - Lack of provision for children/young people with disabilities



Parents:

- Safety issues
 - Traffic
 - Stranger danger
- Dog mess and litter

Parish Councils:

- Lack of suitable land
- Lack of suitable premises
- Lack of volunteers



Activities children and young people prefer

- Organised sports
- After-school clubs
- Outdoor play preferred
- Hang out with friends rather than organised activities
- Mobile facility (DCC) very successful
- Under 5's supervised outdoor play

Are there enough opportunities to Play and 'Hang out'?

- Not enough safe places to hang out
- Parents not happy about children playing out
- Adult perception of young people – ASB issues
- More local play space needed, especially in Ilkeston and Long Eaton
- More space and provision for teenagers, especially in rural areas
- Local opposition presents difficulties in siting teenage provision



What makes a good place to play?

- Somewhere safe close to home
- Space to run about and play sports/games
- Shelter & somewhere to sit (older children)
- Play equipment – especially to swing and climb on (younger children)
- Suitable for range of ages
- Casual surveillance by adults (parents)
- Somewhere indoors to meet and hang out (older children)
- More challenging equipment (older children)

These comments and responses have been incorporated into the Action Plan which supports the Play Strategy.

Inclusive Play

Every child has the right to play and the challenge is therefore to ensure that every child and young person is reached, engaged and involved in play provision.



Inclusion is easy to sign up to in principle but there are many barriers to making it work in practice which first must be identified and then overcome.



In Erewash there are a number of organisations who already work closely with disabled children & young people, hard-to-reach groups, minority groups, pupils at risk from harm, excluded children. They will be engaged in the development and delivery of the Play Strategy to ensure that all play opportunities provided within the Borough are truly inclusive.

Balancing risk

Consultation has demonstrated that children and young people placed a high priority on safe places to play. This not only means ensuring that equipped play areas are maintained to the required standards, but above all, play areas should be socially safe and free from the fear of attack, intimidation or bullying.

All too often, children and young people who play and use public spaces are perceived as a threat by the general public. The Play Strategy should enable provision for children to experience acceptable risk and overcome challenges, within an atmosphere of support and acceptance. Play provision that does not cater for this need could fail and children will seek their thrills elsewhere. A degree of managed risk in play provision is therefore essential.



Action Plan

Informed by the audits and consultation, and linking into key strategic documents and priorities, a series of Play Policy Statements have been developed. These set out the core objectives for the Play Strategy and will be the reference point for all action and delivery plans arising from the strategy. This has a five-year life span and will be reviewed annually.

Six Play Policy Statements with accompanying outcomes and actions have been identified:

Play Policy 1: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PLAY PROVISION

OUTCOME: Those responsible for play provision will work together to meet the play needs of children and young people, through better understanding and sharing of ideas, responsibilities and resources.



ACTIONS:

- Establish and sustain cross-sector Play Partnership, with clear terms of reference and a signed declaration from members

- Establish and sustain close links with Erewash LSP
- Establish close links with the PCT and Children's Centres in developing Play opportunities
- Establish close links with those agencies responsible for delivering the Extended Schools agenda
- Work closely with the EBC departments responsible for implementing the Green Space Strategy
- Continue to work closely with Erewash Community Safety Partnership and Derbyshire County Council Youth Service in planning for and delivering play provision for young people
- Work with and support the Voluntary, Faith and Community Sectors in planning for and delivering play provision
- Work with Housing associations/RSL's in planning for and delivering play provision
- Work closely with Parish Councils to support them in delivering appropriate play provision



Play Policy 2: PROVIDE SAFE PLACES TO PLAY

OUTCOME: A range of safe play opportunities will be provided, which address the actual and perceived fears around personal and community safety, and meet the Safeguarding Children agenda.

ACTIONS:

- Develop and adopt an Improvement Plan for existing play sites (lighting, landscaping, appropriate siting of equipment) through audit and consultation
- Carry out consultation on design and siting of new play areas (as identified in Green Spaces Action Plan) with children and young people, residents and appropriate agencies
- Continue to engage Community Safety Partnership (including ASB Co-ordinator, Police, PCSO's and other associated agencies) and Derbyshire County Council Youth Service in planning for play provision
- Address personal and community safety



issues at key play sites for young people

- Increase formal supervision/casual surveillance of play sites through staffing or appropriate siting of equipment (to include sites owned by EBC, Parish Councils and Three Valleys Housing)
- Provide training for volunteers in e.g. Child Protection/Safeguarding Children, Health and Safety, Risk Management, First Aid and Play activities
- Set standards of compliance for cleanliness and safety of play areas



Play Policy 3: CONSIDER DIFFERENT PLAY NEEDS ACCORDING TO AGE AND GENDER

OUTCOME: Play opportunities will be provided which are appropriate to and meet the different needs of children and young people of all ages, and the different requirements of girls and boys.

ACTIONS:

- Fill gaps in provision according to age groups/genders using PPG17 (Green Space Strategy) mapping and consultation data and prioritise provision for under-represented groups,



identifying their needs through targeted consultation

- Deliver an extended playscheme programme to offer a range of activities (play, sport, art, dance, soft play, water play)
- Ensure all play provision is fun, imaginative and challenging for all ages and abilities as appropriate
- Deliver an intergenerational project to break down the barriers between young people and older people
- Deliver programme of volunteering/coaching/leadership training for young people

Play Policy 4: INCLUSIVE PLAY

OUTCOME: To ensure that appropriate play opportunities are provided for children and young people regardless of ability and that the play needs of excluded, marginalised and hard-to-reach groups are met.

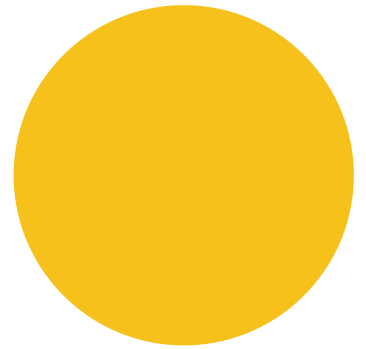
ACTIONS:

- Consult and work closely with disabled children and young people and their parents/teachers/carers through formal or informal



consultation to better understand their play needs and to develop appropriate play opportunities

- Work with and support key partners involved in disabled play provision
- Expand the existing equipped play areas in West Park & Victoria Park to incorporate adventure & modular equipment catering for disabled users to provide one 'Destination Play' site where children and young people with impairments can play and engage equally with others
- Work with partners to engage hard to reach groups in planning for and providing play opportunities
- Work with ethnic minority groups to identify and overcome/address cultural barriers to play
- Work with excluded children & those at risk from harm who don't engage in mainstream provision to ensure their play needs are catered for
- Link with Health visitors and Children's Centres to include and educate parents in play provision
- Develop an 'Equality Impact' Assessment tool for projects to ensure and monitor inclusion



Play Policy 5: MAXIMISE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

OUTCOME: To work in partnership with public, private and voluntary/community sector organisations to secure external partnership funding for play provision.

ACTIONS:

- Develop a Funding plan/strategy to accompany Play Strategy and Action Plan
- Work with Planning and Neighbourhood Services to co-ordinate the allocation of s106 funds to play projects identified through audit and consultation
- EBC Council Executive and LSP to adopt Play Strategy as policy document
- Explore Private sector sponsorship/Corporate Social responsibility funding streams
- Explore cross-border play opportunities with adjacent local authorities

Play Policy 6: PROVIDE VENUES FOR PLAY IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS

OUTCOME: The necessary resources will be secured through partnership working to deliver quality play

opportunities both indoors and outdoors to meet the play needs of children and young



people.

ACTIONS:

- Engage and consult with:
 - children and young people
 - residents and neighbours
 - relevant agencies/partners involved in providing for/working with children and young people on the design, equipment and location of new play sites
- Develop a programme of mobile provision with adequate revenue funding to provide flexible and challenging play opportunities
- Work with partners, including Parish Councils and Derbyshire County Council, to identify suitable venues and resources for indoor play opportunities/youth clubs, including schools and community buildings
- Recruit and train a team of Play Workers/Play Rangers/Volunteers to deliver play opportunities
- Explore the development of home zones and safe routes to play areas where a large proportion of children play on the street
- Examine opportunities to expand facilities for bikes and skating, including ramps and jumps
- Review the recommendations of the Youth Facilities strategy
- Consider the development of 'something different' that would appeal to young people e.g. Outdoor Movie Screen, or a programme of 'Taster sessions'
- Provide more shelter, shade and seating in safe locations



Evaluation

The Play Partnership is central to the delivery of the Play Strategy and will be responsible for ensuring the aims and objectives of the strategy and the targets set out in the action plan are met.

- The Play Partnership will continue to meet quarterly to oversee progress and review/ evaluate at key milestones and create opportunities for feedback
- Quarterly reports will be submitted from all delivery partners with realised outcomes listed and impacts recorded
- The Play Strategy is to be adopted by EBC Council Executive and will be embedded into Corporate Plan and annual action plan
- Regular reporting back to the LSP Children & Young People theme group will ensure strategic links into Community Strategy and annual action plan



Sustainability of the Play Strategy

The development and production of this strategy signifies the starting point for improving the provision of Play in Erewash by the Borough Council and its' partners. It sets Play into the current strategic and political context and outlines a delivery plan responding to the needs of children, young people and play providers.



The Action Plan is the 'live' part of the document and is essentially a working document, in need of regular reviews and updates to ensure it is always appropriate and relevant. The Play Partnership will be responsible for monitoring progress of the delivery of the Action Plan at their quarterly meetings and reviewing and updating the actions as deemed appropriate. The strategy will be reviewed and updated after 5 years and a new Action Plan produced. This strategy will hopefully secure the long-term commitment to continuing to deliver improved play provision in Erewash.





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