

<b>Draft Play Investment Strategy</b>	<b>14 August 2018</b>
<b>To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Decision</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
<b>Outcome</b>	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Head of Sport & Wellbeing
<b>Cost:</b> (If applicable)	N/A

**The purpose of this report is to seek Member's 'indicative approval' for the Draft Play Investment Strategy (Annex A – electronically circulated) and seek approval to progress as follows:**

- proceed to a 12 week, S75 compliant, public consultation in advance of decisions relating to:
  - Any need for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA); and
  - The formally adoption of the Plan Investment Strategy.

### **Background**

In March 2017 Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council commissioned PlayBoard NI to develop an overarching Play Investment Strategy for the Borough.

The purpose of the commission was to:

1. Conduct a quantitative and spatial audit of current fixed play provision, identifying areas of inadequate or over provision of fixed play.
2. Complete an audit of the play value associated with each of the 99 council owned fixed play areas within the council.
3. Undertake community engagement on the issue of play and play delivery in order to influence the development of an overarching play strategy.
4. Provide strategic recommendations to council in the form of a Play Strategy that makes recommendations regarding the future provision of play, both fixed and non-fixed.

As part of the project, PlayBoard NI representatives:

- Visited all 99 fixed play facilities and reported on condition and play value.
- Hosted public consultation events across the Borough
- Met with special interest groups
- Delivered a Councillor's Play Workshop
- Discussed draft proposals with officers; and
- Presented options and implications to the Councillors in their DEA groups.

Members had previously considered and approved demographic criteria for fixed play prioritisation (with specific consideration given to the needs of tourists to the CC&GBC area) and a gap analysis that prioritised the need for additional/expanded provision in the following areas:

<b>DEA</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Ballymoney</b>	Cloughmills	Consider initial expansion of Bio-Park.
	South Ballymoney	Possible land issues.
<b>Bann</b>	Castleroe	Review in line with wider Coleraine DEA proposals.
<b>BenBradagh</b>	Ballykelly	Possible land issues.
<b>Causeway</b>	Portrush	Consider site to the rear of Portrush PS.
	Bushmills	Possible land issues.
<b>Coleraine</b>	Waterside	Consider partnership with schools.
	The Cuts 1	Demand to be tested.
	Knocklyn	Possible redevelopment of Rugby Avenue site.
<b>The Glens</b>	Ballycastle West	Possible land issues.
	Waterfoot	Consider green space identified by community (possible land use planning restrictions).
<b>Limavady</b>	Limavady Town	Development of Destination accessible play area. Possible further need – test post destination play site development.

### **Play Value**

Play value is a critical consideration as a play area with low play value has little appeal for children, is likely to have low levels of usage and will not enhance children's play experiences or support their development. Fourteen fixed play areas were proposed for renewal/upgrading during the first 5 years of the strategy due to low play value as follows:

- Lisnagrot.
- Feeney Picnic Area.
- Garvagh Road.
- Lansdowne Road.
- Dhu Varren (partial – replace old, worn equipment).
- The Warren.
- Daneshill.
- Rugby Avenue (Consideration for destination play area).
- Anderson Park.
- Middle Park.
- Cottagewood 1 and 2 (Amalgamate and renew).
- Quay Road (To destination play area).

- Swanns Bridge.
- Larchfield Gardens.

### Site Transformations

5 sites have been identified as having potentially low levels of demand coupled with low play value and would be suitable for transformation into more general public open space. The sites identified are:

- Ballynagarvey.
- Glenullin.
- Islandmoore.
- Shane's Park.
- Ballyknock.

### **DEA Area Workshops**

The initial findings of the spatial analysis and play value audits were presented to each DEA group of Councillors. The key points raised by Councillors in these sessions are included in the Draft Play Investment Strategy.

### **The Draft Play Investment Strategy and Action Plan**

Copies of the complete Fixed Play Area Play Value Audits and the Draft Play Investment Strategy are available in the Member's library for detailed review.

The key recommendations of the Strategy are summarised within the costed Action Plan within the Executive Summary section and attached to this report at **Annex B** for ease of reference. While the Action Plan will act as a tool to prioritise projects for future investment in fixed play, approving this Strategy will not constitute budget approval. All proposed investments in play will be the subject of proportionate business cases and investment decision making in compliance with Council's capital project procedures and delegated approvals.

This Action Plan recommends actions across 7 areas over a 5-year period as follows:

Action Plan Area	Action	Projected Cost
<b>1.3</b>	Review of Megaw park play area and ancillary facilities to ensure full accessibility	£150,000
<b>2.1</b>	Develop new high value fixed play areas at 6 locations	£1,225,000
<b>2.2</b>	Extend and enhance existing fixed play areas at 3 locations	£850,000
<b>2.3</b>	Estimated costs associated with new play development at 4 locations (pending community consultation)	£500,000
<b>3.1</b>	Capital renewal of 11 play areas	£1,175,000
<b>4.1</b>	Transformation of play areas at 5 locations (dependent on community consultation)	£70,000
<b>7.1</b>	Development of non-fixed play services	£159,000
<b>TOTAL ASSOCIATED INVESTMENT</b>		<b>£4,129,000</b>

In addition to this, the Fixed Play Area Play Value Audit undertook a condition audit of all 99 fixed play areas. This has resulted in individual reports which in many cases recommend repairs and renewals in addition to the larger projects listed in the Action Plan. These repair and renewal recommendations are currently being costed by Council's grounds maintenance staff and officers will bring proposals to a future meeting for consideration and decisions on budget allocation for the works required to protect/reinstate the initial play value of these sites.

### **Ongoing Work on Play Business Cases**

When fixed play facilities were last discussed at Committee, Members asked officers to progress business cases for new/improved fixed play facilities in Aghadowey and Limavady. This work has been slightly delayed by the work to complete the Play and Pitches Strategies and the range of other capital projects under development. PlayBoard has now been commissioned to lead a public consultation in relation to the need, demand and best location for such facilities. A report on this is expected to come to Committee in the autumn.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members:

- Give indicative approval for the Draft Play Investment Strategy.
- Provide approval for officers to initiate a S75 compliant, 12 week public consultation on the Draft Play Investment Strategy.

## ANNEX B

### Causeway Coast and Glens Play Investment Strategy Action Plan

Underpinning the Play Investment Strategy are a number of key aims which, if successfully achieved will enhance the developmental value, scope and range of play opportunities available to children and young people.

#### **Aims of the Play Investment Strategy**

- A.** To support children and young people to be able to engage in both fixed and non-fixed play opportunities that meet their developmental needs
- B.** To ensure that Fixed Play Areas are attractive, welcoming, safe but challenging, accessible and inclusive for all abilities offering a high level of play value through programmed capital upgrading, maintenance and renewal
- C.** To ensure effective targeting of capital investment in new fixed play development at those locations which are identified as being in most need through assessment of demographic need
- D.** To ensure that children, young people, parents and communities have an integral role in decision making on play provision, both fixed and non-fixed
- E.** To enable communities to take an active role in the development and delivery of non-fixed play opportunities through dedicated support including volunteer training, mentoring and access to 'loose-parts' play pods
- F.** To highlight the benefits of play whilst encouraging adults within the wider community to recognise both the play needs and valuable contribution children make to community life.
- G.** Where local demographic circumstances preclude council intervention, to support communities to develop sustainable solutions to meeting local play need.

Covering a five year period, the strategy is divided into two key strands, the first dealing with fixed play areas and the second with the development of non-fixed approaches to meeting play need. The action plan will be subject to formal review at both the mid and end

points of the five year period and will also be reviewed as and when new relevant opportunities arise. The action plan will be updated as and when required to reflect new legislative requirements and/or changes at a local level.

## Fixed Play Areas

Indicator	Action	Contributes to Aim	Responsible	Target/ Milestone	Indicative Cost
<b>1.0 Design of New Fixed Play Areas and Play Area Renewals</b>					
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch and implementation of Fixed Play Area design brief to guide the future development of new play areas and play area renewals, ensuring high levels of play value through incorporation of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active play elements</li> <li>Open spaces</li> <li>Creative play elements</li> <li>Inclusive play elements</li> <li>Awareness of Parental/carer needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	A, B	PlayBoard NI		-
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with partner agencies and community organisations to encourage adoption of Fixed Play Area design brief for future Council and non-Council funded fixed play.</li> </ul>	B, D, G	Council		-
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All designs for new play areas and those subject to renewal to give core consideration to incorporation of accessible play opportunities.</li> </ul>	A, B, C, G	Council		-
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance geographical access to accessible fixed play areas through the development of additional accessible fixed play areas similar to that located at Flowerfield.</li> </ul>	B			

	<p>Accessible play areas will be designed to accessible play standards and will incorporate access to toilet and changing facilities within close proximity.</p> <p>In seeking to achieve this Council will :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that the proposed new Destination Play Area in Limavady is fully Accessible with access to suitable ancillary facilities</li> <li>- Refurbish the Quay Road, Ballycastle play area to Accessible standard and ensure access to suitable ancillary facilities</li> <li>- Review the Megaw Park fixed play area and ancillary facilities to ensure it is fully accessible</li> <li>- Maintain Flowerfield to its current high standard</li> </ul>			(Costed in section 2.0)
				(Costed in section 2.0)
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With regards to risk and challenge in play Council to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adopt a risk/benefit approach to the design and development of play spaces in line with accepted good practice</li> <li>– Provide risk/benefit training for key staff to enhance understanding of the approach</li> <li>– Engage with insurers regarding the adoption of the risk/benefit approach</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	A, B, G	Council	£150,000  (Existing maintenance budget)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Apply the design brief (see 1.1 above) to future play area design incorporating, where appropriate more challenging play elements and features</li> <li>– Adopt more open play opportunities were permissible and feasible</li> </ul>				
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## 2.0 Meet identified gaps in Fixed Play Provision by Developing and Extending High Play Value Fixed Play Areas

2.1	<p>Develop new high value fixed play sites at locations identified in the play strategy (subject to land availability) in consultation with local communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limavady Town (Accessible Destination Play Area – NEAP)</li> <li>• Waterfoot (LEAP Play Area)</li> <li>• Portrush (Destination Play Area – NEAP)</li> <li>• Portrush (Play installations to stimulate play along key walkways including East and West Strands, Ramore Head etc.)</li> <li>• Waterside, Coleraine (LEAP Play Area)</li> <li>• Ballykelly (LEAP Play Area)</li> </ul>	A, C	Council	£500,000 £75,000 £500,000 £175,000 £125,000 £125,000
2.2	<p>Extend and enhance existing fixed play sites in order to meet broader demographic need in line with Play Strategy and in consultation with local communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bio Park, Cloughmills (LEAP)</li> <li>• Quay Road, Ballycastle (Accessible Destination play area)</li> <li>• Rugby Avenue, Coleraine (NEAP)</li> </ul>	A, B, C	Council	£75,000 £500,000 £300,000
2.3	<p>Complete land exploration and community consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ballymoney South</li> </ul>	C	Council	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Castleroe</li> <li>• Bushmills</li> <li>• The Cuts 1 (Coleraine)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Costings provided are estimates for budget planning purposes only and assumes no site acquisition costs.</i></p>				£125,000
					£125,000
					£125,000
					£125,000

### 3.0 Enhance Low Play Value Fixed Play Areas through 5 Year Capital Renewal Programme

3.1	<p>Deliver capital renewal programme in consultation with local community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lansdowne Road (PV = 290)</li> <li>• Lisnagrot (PV = 300)</li> <li>• Alexander Road/Blackburn Path (PV = 350 &amp; 475)</li> <li>• Middle Park (PV = 370)</li> <li>• Cottage Wood 1 and 2 (PV = 390 &amp; 375)</li> <li>• Garvagh Road (PV = 385)</li> <li>• Swanns Bridge (PV = 380)</li> <li>• Dhu Varren (PV = 390)</li> <li>• Daneshill (PV = 390)</li> <li>• The Warren (PV = 410)</li> <li>• Anderson Park (PV = 445)</li> <li>• Larchfield Gardens (PV = unavailable) renewal subject to developments within wider Kilrea area</li> </ul>	B, C	Council		
				£50,000	
				£125,000	
				£200,000	
				£125,000	
				£125,000	
				£125,000	
				£25,000	
				£75,000	
				£100,000	
				£100,000	
				£125,000	

### 4.0 Possible Transformation of Low Demand Sites

4.1	Deliver programme of transformation (dependent on outcomes of community consultation):	D	Council		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shanes Park (PV = 255)</li> <li>• Islandmore (Ballylagan Road) (PV = 270)</li> <li>• Ballyknock (PV = 290)</li> <li>• Glenullin (PV = 335)</li> <li>• Ballanagarvey (PV = 365)</li> </ul>				£14,000
					£14,000
					£14,000
					£14,000
					£14,000

## 5.0 Review of Fixed Play Area Condition and Play Value

5.1	<p><b>Maintenance of Fixed Play Areas</b></p> <p>The effective management and maintenance of both play equipment and play areas is essential if safe play opportunities are to be provided for. In line with the play strategy and in order to ensure the safety of children and young people using play areas across the Borough, Council will undertake two categories of inspection:</p> <p><b>Maintenance Inspection:</b> All Council play areas will be subject to ongoing maintenance inspections throughout the year.</p> <p>The frequency of inspection for each individual play area will be determined by four key factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of use associated with the play area</li> <li>• The time of year (to take account of seasonal increases in use due to tourism)</li> <li>• The age and condition of play equipment</li> <li>• If present, the level of vandalism associated with the play area.</li> </ul> <p>Play areas with a high level of use will be subject to inspection on a once weekly basis (more</p>	D	Council	As per agreed protocol	
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frequently during the spring and summer months when usage levels traditionally increase).

Play areas with a lower level of use will be subject to inspection on a less frequent basis, albeit subject to increase should maintenance issues requiring more regular inspection be identified at any point.

Sites which have a record of vandalism will also be subject to weekly inspection in order to monitor site and equipment condition until such time as vandalism ceases to impact on the site.

Inspections will be undertaken by trained staff and will include a range of areas including:

- Visual checking of equipment for obvious faults or hazards
- Ensuring wider environment/play surfaces are free from debris that could create a hazard
- Checking that fixings are secure
- Lubrication of all bearings
- Touching in any scratches to paintwork using appropriate paint
- Repairing safety surfacing and other elements from the rest of the site

An accurate record of all maintenance inspections will be kept by council with remedial works undertaken to address identified issues.

	<p><b>Annual Inspection:</b> All fixed play areas will be subject to an annual maintenance inspection conducted by a qualified independent Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII) inspector.</p> <p>A complete record of all annual inspections will be kept by Council with remedial works undertake to address identified issues.</p> <p><i>If any serious defects that put the safety of children at risk are identified during <u>any</u> inspection Council undertakes to correct such defects without delay. If this is not possible, equipment will be immobilised, isolated or removed from the site. When a piece of equipment is removed on safety grounds any anchorages or foundations left in the ground will be removed or made safe along with surfacing (as required).</i></p> <p><b>Staff Training:</b> Carried out as required to ensure that staff have received appropriate training in playground inspections.</p>				
5.2	<p><b>Play Value Inspections</b></p> <p>Conduct overarching play value assessment of all fixed play areas to track progress against existing baseline on a 5 yearly basis.</p>	B	Council	2021/22	
<b>6.0 Review of Demographic Need to Identify Potential Gaps/Redundant sites</b>					
6.1	Conduct a review of underlying demographic need every 5 years to support the identification of potential gap areas and/or possible redundant	C	Council	2021/22	

	sites in line with the parameters established within the play strategy.				
<b>7.0 Non-Fixed Play development</b>					
7.1	Consider 3 year appointment of dedicated Play Development Officer within Council to oversee implementation and operationalisation of the Play Strategy including fixed and non-fixed elements.	A, B, C, D, E, F	Council	2018	£35k per annum (£105k total)
7.2	Engage pro-actively with stakeholder organisations and the wider public to highlight the importance of play, support play development etc.	F	Council	Ongoing	£2.5k per annum (£10k total)
7.3	Consider piloting of 4 community play volunteer training programme aimed at increasing understanding of play approaches and providing practical skills to support community play sessions.	D, E, F	Council	TBC	£2k per pilot site (£8k total)
7.4	Consider establishment of 4 pilot programmes aimed at promoting effective non-fixed play approaches to meeting play need (community play sessions, street play etc.).	D, E, F	Council	TBC	£4k per pilot site (£16k total)
7.5	Review and consider viability of community accessible mobile play resources (e.g. play pods) as a means of supporting community play sessions supported or promoted through the work of a play officer (initial 7 pods, 1 per DEA area)	D, E	Council	TBC	£2k per pod (£14k total)
7.6	Hold three play events as part of National Play Day (first Wednesday of each August)	F	Council	August 2018	£2k per site (£6k total)