

COPELAND PLAY STRATEGY UPDATE FEEDBACK FORM

- **VISION**

“We want children and young people in Copeland to be able to take part in and enjoy play in all its forms in their local communities. We will ensure that Children and Young people have access to a range of good quality facilities, opportunities and environments that stimulate free play.”

- **Current Policy**

(a) the present policy of phasing out existing play areas as they became unsafe be extended and a long term programme devised to ensure that eventually all major areas with a concentrated population be served by a strategic play area, with particular emphasis on Wards identified as having the highest incidence of deprivation and in which a shortfall in play area provision can be demonstrated;

(b) the phasing out of smaller play areas be continued as they became unsafe;

(c) major maintenance projects be funded as future Capital projects or a non-recurring revenue bid;

(d) that responsibility for Parish Council play areas presently inspected and maintained by Copeland be reverted back to the respective Parish Council should unserviceable equipment not be replaced;

(e) support be given to Parish Councils in the form of advice regarding equipment conditions and purchases, and limited minor ground maintenance tasks on a one off basis by prior arrangement; and

(f) open sites, where appropriate, in or near housing estates be designated as open play areas in consultation with the relevant parties as outlined in the report

- **PLAY POLICIES**

Play Policy 1: PROVIDE A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PLAY PROVISION

OUTCOME:

Promote the importance of play to children's health and well-being, and to their learning, to all those working with children and to parents and carers. By linking the Play Strategy to wider local, regional and national strategies it will become an effective tool for providing good quality, appropriate play opportunities across Copeland and will help meet targets for other partners.

Emerging Actions:

- Ensure Play contributes to healthier communities by increasing provision in poor health areas
- Identify areas of need through statistics such as population densities, deprivation indices and geographical location
- Planning for play to be strategic rather than ad-hoc – provision is proactive not reactive
- Concentrate on improvements to existing play sites
- Plan for revenue funding considerations/implications of outreach programmes
- Consider sustainability of programme beyond lifetime of Lottery grant to ensure continuity of Free Play provision
- Link directly to Community Strategy and Parish Plans – Play Policy for the Babies, Children and Young People of Cumbria and Copeland Corporate Plan
- Ensure Copeland Play Partnership has good representation from Public, Private and Voluntary/Community sector organisations
- Action Plan to be agreed and delivered by multi-agency Play Partnership
- Ensure progress on Action Plan is monitored and reported back to relevant agencies
- Copeland Play Partnership governance to be linked to WCLSP (through Local Planning Group)

Play Policy 2: PROVIDE SAFE PLAY FOR ALL

OUTCOME:

Offer all children and young people the chance to encounter acceptable risks in stimulating and challenging play environments, free from unacceptable risk of serious injury or death.

Work to ensure that all parks, thoroughfares, housing estates and other public spaces within the borough are as conducive as possible to children's play.

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.

Emerging actions:

- Invest in improvements to existing sites – lighting, landscaping, appropriate siting of equipment
- Ensure appropriate design and location of new play sites
- Work with Community Safety Partnership, Police/PCSO's, Youth Service and Schools to reduce opportunities for ASB/Bullying incidents (barriers to play)
- Support development of younger age groups to prevent ASB issues in the future
- Appropriate siting of play area's
- Monitor impact of improved play provision on Calls to Service and ASB incidents
- Involve and engage children and young people in the design and provision of play opportunities to ensure ownership and reduce the likelihood of vandalism
- Be careful to manage expectations of children and young people, especially where there are issues around siting of facilities (teen shelters, skate parks)
- Provide training for volunteers in issues such as Child Protection, Health and Safety and First Aid

Play Policy 3: PROVIDE PLAY NEEDS ACCORDING TO AGE AND GENDER

OUTCOME:

Develop and maintain a variety of local and accessible dedicated play and teen spaces. In doing so it will be guided by the 'Objectives for Play and Teen Provision' and the 'Criteria for an enriched play environment' identified in the document 'Best Play' (published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport by the National Playing Fields Association, Children's Play Council and Playlink; 1999).

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.

Emerging actions:

- Understand the different play needs of each age group through consultation and partnership working
- Ensure all ages are adequately catered for
- Provide more activities and venues for teens age group
- Support agencies in providing Youth Clubs/meeting places
- Mix of organised events to participate in and non-prescriptive places to 'hang out'
- Address parental concerns over safety; a barrier to free play for younger age groups
- Offer a range of activities for both genders to cater for different demands
- Provide outdoor play opportunities close to communities
- Work in partnership with other providers to increase access to free play opportunities
- Subsidised/free access to play schemes, youth clubs and organised activities

Play Policy 4: PROVIDE INCLUSIVE PLAY PROVISION

OUTCOME:

Work towards ensuring that a wider range of opportunities is available to disabled children and young people, and that all provision aims towards becoming fully inclusive and accessible.

Work to ensure that play providers actively seek to address the needs of children from “hard-to-reach” communities and those at risk from social exclusion.

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

Emerging Actions:

- Work closely with disabled children and young people through formal or informal consultation to better understand their play needs
- Ensure new and existing play areas comply with DDA legislation
- Play areas to be accessible for all
- Consult and work with disabled user groups to develop play opportunities
- Work with partners to engage hard to reach groups in planning for and providing play opportunities
- Work with excluded children and 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 Surestart to educate parents in play
- Organise intergenerational projects to break down the barriers between young people and older people

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.

Emerging actions:

- Link Play Strategy with PPG17 Action Plan to ensure maximum benefits from s106 funding
- Match-funding to be identified to ensure added value of Lottery bid
- Strategy to be driven by need rather than funding
- Members of Copeland Play Partnership to identify possible sources of funding
- Partnership working to ensure a co-ordinated approach to funding
- Link strategy to other agendas to increase funding sources for play
- Support for partner organisations/agencies in applying for funding
- Copeland Play Strategy and statistical data to be available to partners making funding applications as evidence of need

Play Policy 6: PROVIDE VENUES FOR PLAY IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS/COMMUNITIES

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.

Emerging actions:

- Increase outdoor play provision
- Volunteer programme for workers
- Choose locations carefully
- Consult with users and neighbours
- Identify suitable indoor venues
- Schools – extended schools and school grounds
- Community venues
- Consider accessibility issues
- Informal areas for play – grass areas