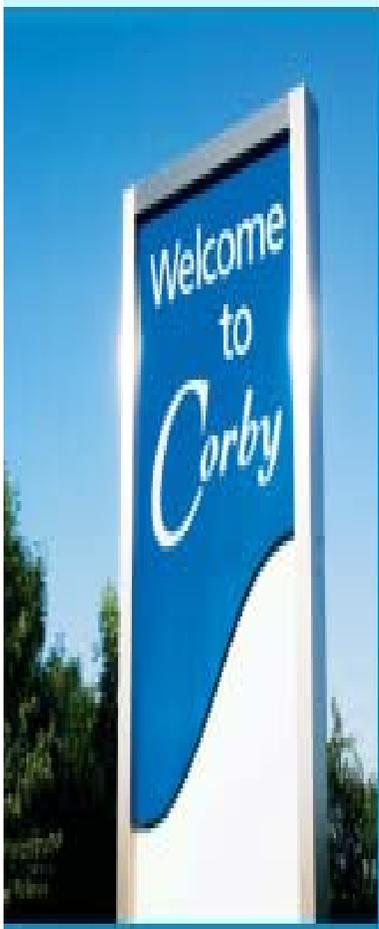




A Play Area Strategy for Corby 2009-2019



What we want to achieve



Our Ambition is....

"To double the population of Corby by 2030, with a complementary increase in jobs, prosperity and public services that rank with the very best!"

Our Mission is....

"Working together for the future to improve the quality of life for the people in the Borough"

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1. Introduction

The Corby Play Area Strategy is a 10 year plan to assist the Borough Council in its future management of existing play areas within the borough and the prioritisation development and redevelopment of Play Spaces. It supports the Corby Play Strategy concentrating more on the physical play assets that are the responsibility of the Borough Council.

The Play Area Strategy aims to:

- Outline the current provision and ensure these are met within the strategy and identify what and where the gaps are
- Examine current challenges and identify future opportunities
- Consider how the Council, in partnership with the local community and partner agencies, can ensure total inclusion and improve existing provision
- Prioritise future spending on play area improvement and development through an action plan. (See Chapter 8).
- Ensure that any targets identified through the strategy are delivered in a clear, collaborative and inclusive manner.
- Ensure a robust inspection process is viewed as an integral part in the delivery of this strategy.
- Ensure the Borough of Corby demonstrates equality of accessibility across both the rural and urban areas.
- Ensure that play space provision is built around the local needs of children and young people linking to the Every Child Matters 5 Outcomes.

Every Child Matters 2004 is a framework document which sets out the changes needed locally to help build the services around the local needs of children and young people to ensure that they are able to access services that are relevant to them and that their opportunities are maximised. The five outcomes for children specified in Every Child Matters are:

1. Being Healthy
2. Staying Safe
3. Enjoying and Achieving
4. Making a positive contribution
5. Economic well being

This Strategy considers recent Government guidance for play sites and has provided the opportunity to the Council to re consider its approach to how sites are designed and developed in partnership with the local community. It has introduced challenges on how to include an element of risk on a play site and the benefits this brings to children. It is important to provide opportunities for children and young people to play in different ways using non-prescriptive equipment and to encourage creativity and imagination.

2. Corby's Profile



Corby Borough Council is located in the East Midlands Region in the county of Northamptonshire. The 2001 census found that the total population of the Borough was 53,225 of which 22.6% were below the age of 16 compared with 20.2% nationally.

Corby is a largely urban conurbation with 7 parishes and has now been identified as a growth area with an estimated additional 16,800 dwellings to be built in Corby between 2001 and 2021, by 2030 it is expected that Corby will double in population. North Northamptonshire Development Company is the local delivery partnership managing the growth planned for the area with Corby Borough Council.

Corby Borough has 7 rural parishes situated on the fringe of the town of Corby, split into 3 wards, rural east, rural west and rural north. By the end of 2008, there was a total population of 7,713. Children and young people living in rural areas experience certain challenges such as limited public transport and limited leisure activities. Other restrictions to play can also include heavy commuter/through traffic and a lack of amenities such as pavements. Being able to access quality facilities, including play areas, is vital in terms of maintaining well being and making the rural environment more stimulating and life enhancing.

Play areas play a vital social role in the rural areas, by providing a space for children and young people to interact together in a safe environment and acting as communal meeting places for parents and families. Such spaces help to develop positive relationships between different generations, reducing social isolation and improving community cohesion. Rural areas also provide opportunities for more unstructured play by developing the potential for initiating play in a natural 'greener' environment.



Currently Corby is undergoing a regeneration programme which is seeing not only an increase of housing in the borough but also new amenities including: new shopping facilities, a new 50m swimming pool and complex, new schools, improved leisure facilities, a new train station and a new Civic Hub which will include a new library and a new theatre.

3. Current Provision

3.1 EXISTING PROVISION

There are currently 38 sites that are formally defined as play areas under the jurisdiction of Corby Borough Council, which are identified on a Map in Appendix 1. The majority of public play areas in the Borough belong to Corby Borough Council, with installation, maintenance and repair costs being a huge responsibility of the Council. Corby Borough Council has funded the majority of play areas through its Capital programme but others have been funded either fully or in part by other funding bodies such as WREN, Section 106, Playbuilder, Corby Community Partnership and Money 4 Youth (See Appendix Eight).

Play Provision in the Corby Borough is as follows:

- Each Parish in the Corby Borough has its own play area; Cottingham and Middleton share a play area due to the location of the site. In total there are 2 NEAPS, 3 LEAPS and 3 sites that are not categorised. (See Appendix Three).
- Each estate in Corby has a minimum of one play area.
- Corby Borough has a total of: 5 NEAPS 23 LEAPS and 2 LAPS. The rest of the sites are undefined due to not meeting the exact criteria.

FIT identify 4 categories of play area:

- **Local Area for Play (LAP)** – A small area of open space specifically designated and laid out for young children to play close to where they live, located within a walking time of 1 minute from home which covers a minimum area of 100 Square Meters
- **Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)** – An open space that is designed and equipped for children of early school age. Such areas need to be located within a walking time of 5 minutes from home and covers a minimum area of 400 Square Meters.
- **Local Landscaped Area for Play (LLAP)** – An alternative provision to the LEAP. It is imaginatively designed to include a natural element to play to promote a suitable mix of areas for physical activity and areas for relatively calm relaxation and social interaction. The minimum area covered is 900 square meters.
- **Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area (NEAP)** – A site that is designed and equipped for older children but does have provision for younger children as well. It is located within a walking time of 15 minutes from home and is the largest type of play area with a minimum recommendation of 1000 Square Meters.

The equipment that caters for the provision of the under 5's is surrounded by a fence with gates that open outwards which is to prevent dogs entering the play site. Many also have a bench which is popular with those who accompany young children to the park. The play equipment caters mainly for the needs of toddlers and juniors: those who are under 13 years of age.

'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play' (PAD) formally known as 'The Six Acre Standard', published by the Fields in Trust, recommends the benchmark standard for the provision of equipped play areas is 0.25 hectares per 1000 population. Currently Corby Borough Council complies with this recommendation ensuring that all new sites also fulfil the recommendation. Appendix Four demonstrates the comparison of Corby Borough to the rest of Northamptonshire County in the play provision that is provided. Appendix Six details the current provision in Corby Borough by the segregated wards.



Corby also has a number of parks that are not maintained by Corby Borough Council. These include nurseries and schools, public houses and housing associations. These Play areas are not included within this Play Area Strategy.

Respondents to the National Play Strategy said that the biggest gap in play provision was simply a lack of suitable play areas in their communities and the poor condition of some existing facilities.

3.2 AGREED PROVISION

The regeneration of Corby means that by 2030 Corby will have doubled its population. To accommodate for this there are currently 3 new housing developments with an estimated total of 10,020 new dwellings. Table one demonstrates what new play areas are proposed to be provided on these sites. They are identified on a map in Appendix Two.

Table One:

New Development Area	Proposed Number of New Dwellings	No of Play Area's required to meet the PAD.
Little Stanion	1,020	11 LAPS; 4 LEAPS; 1 NEAPS
Oakley Vale	3,500	2 NEAPS
Priors Hall	5,500	33 LAPS; 14 LEAPS; 3 NEAPS

3.3 PROPOSED PROVISION

Once the above mentioned sites have been completed the Council are looking to develop the land west of Corby with 5,000 new houses. To comply with PAD this site will contain 3 NEAPs, 14 LEAPs and 33 LAPs.

There is also a proposal of 1000 new dwelling on the land East of Weldon. If this site is agreed as a development area, the provision the Council hopes provide is 11 LAPS; 4 LEAPS and 1 NEAP.



As well as ensuring that new developments have the right provision for outdoor play, it is imperative that existing sites are maintained and kept up to date. The Council wish to update all sites to the current and relevant standards, as well as those with a low play value.

As this strategy has a ten year life span it is a requirement that every year the proposed provision is reviewed and the strategy will undertake a complete review in 2014. This is imperative as the Council budgets will change as will future trends. For example currently natural play is high on the government's agenda but over the period of time the Strategy will cover, this may change.

Prior to installation of new play equipment, Corby Borough Council completes a comprehensive consultation period to ensure that the local community and other outside agencies get the play equipment they deserve. In consultation with local communities, the Council will aim to install new play equipment in existing parks over the next 10 years that is exciting and has a high play value for the users. However due to stringent safety standards and budgets creating the desired play areas may require the Council and local communities to think creatively to ensure this is achieved.

3.4 PLAY VALUE

The FIT (Field in Trust) are advocators of the concept of *Play Value*. This is the attempted assessment of the quality of play equipment. When equipment is fun and engaging, it is said to have play value. Corby Borough Council has attempted to calculate the Play Value scores of the current play provision. The calculations are based on 5 criteria with a score of 0-5, with 5 being the highest. The five criteria are:

- Play equipment for 2-6 year olds
- Play equipment for 7-12 year olds
- Play provision for 13-17 year olds
- Conformity to Disability Discrimination Act
- Risk assessment of each site

The total play value of each site can be found in Appendix Five, along with the matrix used to calculate each score. Those sites that have a play value lower than 15 are the play areas that Corby Borough Council will aim to replace, or move to a new site. However the Council must be aware that those sites with a high play value may require more frequent maintenance due to the high volume of children accessing the equipment.



3.5 NATIONAL STANDARDS

Fields in Trust (FIT) formally known as The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) produced minimum standards for the provision of children's play facilities. Although these are not mandatory, they are useful when local authorities can judge what equipment is needed and where (See Appendix Three for a detailed explanation of what constitutes a LAP, LEAP and NEAP). Appendix Six outlines the current play area provision in Corby in relation to the FIT classifications and gives current play value scores.

3.6 IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

Before considering the gaps in the play provision in the Corby Borough it is worth noting that some gaps can be addressed and for some it would be difficult to. For example the new housing development site Little Stanion has a proposal for 16 play areas; it is the same size as Stanion Village which only has 1 play area. It is beyond the Council's means to install new play areas in Stanion Village as there is not the space to build new sites.



The Council have long been aware that there is a current gap in provision for 13-18 year olds and overcoming this gap is explored in Chapter 4.

4. Current Challenges

4.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Over recent years the pressures for increased safety standards has created a 'clinical environment' in which toddler equipment and junior equipment is now required to be separated from each other. Due to these standards, in some cases space confinements and budget allowances has meant that equipment has not been replaced, leaving gaps in current play provision.

In January 1999 the introduction of European Safety Standards for Outdoor Playground Equipment (EN1176 and EN1177) also introduced more demanding safety standards. These laws focused heavily on absorbent surfacing, the spacing between play structures and the height at which there is a need to provide barriers with guard rails to prevent falls. In light of these regulations the Royal Society of the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) stated that:



“The new European standard was published on 1st January 1999 when existing standards were withdrawn. There are a number of areas where existing equipment may fail the new standard. **This does not mean that equipment has suddenly become dangerous or that remedial action is required.** The new Standard is not mandatory or retrospective”

Therefore not all of the current play equipment conforms to the EN1176 and EN1177; however it does conform to the previous standard: BS5696. As this equipment deteriorates and becomes costly to replace, and parts may no longer be available, the equipment will be removed and eventually be replaced by equipment that does conform to the new standard.

The new standard also relaxed some regulations. Previous to the EN1176 law, there was the British Standard: BS5696. This stated that roundabouts should have a restrictor on them which prevented them spinning over a certain speed in an effort to reduce the number of accidents that occurred. However the introduction of the European Standard meant that the restrictors were no longer required.



The introduction of the new Standards also means that those Councils who install play equipment that does not conform to EN1176 and EN1177. Councils must carry out risk assessments on the equipment and have a justified reason for installing it. Corby Borough Council will not install play equipment that does not meet the requirements of the European Standard.

The Council ensures that there are no dog bins placed on or near play sites. This hopefully discourages dog owners from walking their pets near the play equipment.

There is a notice that is placed on every play area that gives the following information:

- What causes accidents: Vandalism; wrapping swings; fires; broken glass; damaging safer surfacing;
- Corby Borough Council contact information;
- Out of Hours Contact information;
- Fenced in areas are for under 5s only – keep dogs out.

A copy of the sign can be found in Appendix Ten. The Council employ members of staff who carry out weekly inspections of the play equipment and the site, recording any problems and issues. See Appendix Nine for a copy of the routes taken and an example of the inspection report for one site. For example: Weldon Woodland Park has an issue of fly tipping as it is close to the Borough Recycling Centre and therefore can suffer fly tipping when the centre is closed. This occurs on the entrance to the park and this is recorded on every occasion and the inspection staff will remove the rubbish. Any equipment that is awaiting new parts will be recorded each week until the new equipment arrives, who repaired the equipment and when will also be recorded. This also monitors repair and maintenance costs and can also be used when disputing claims made against the Council.



4.2 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995

In 1995 the Disability Discrimination Act was introduced and gave disabled people the same rights as others in the areas of:

- Employment
- Access to goods, facilities and services
- Buying or renting land or property



Part III of the Act requires that organisations may have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the physical environment to overcome barriers to access. This includes parks and open spaces. The adjustments include steps, seating, access points, paths and equipment. Previous to October 2004, before this part of the Act came into commission, Corby Borough Council made changes to play equipment throughout the Borough. The Council spent £68,000 on improvements to access including levelling all path ways to the sites, dropping the curb to allow access and changing many of the gates to DDA accessible gates. Now any equipment that is now installed conforms to the regulations.

Corby Borough Council want to ensure that play is accessible for all and that all sites as they are developed are inclusive and offer the opportunities for all children to play alongside their peers. All new sites to be developed will ensure that the design, access and equipment are fully inclusive. In 2007 Corby Borough Council installed 6 'buddy baskets' with funding from The Big Lottery. This gave those children with

limiting physical disabilities more opportunities for outdoor play as well as promoting inclusion.

4.3 PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (13-17 YEAR OLDS)

Young people often congregate around local shops, outside supermarkets and on children's play equipment. This can sometimes lead to the misuse of the equipment, including vandalism and fire damage, as well as leaving rubbish and broken glass strewn across the equipment making it unsuitable for the intended users. It is not all young people who act in this way and engage in anti social behaviour, and the council is very aware of this.

The Home Office recognise that young people, who are able to access activities that are appropriate for their age and particular needs, are less likely to cause anti-social behaviour. Creating more provision for 13-17 year olds may help to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour. Corby Borough Council working in partnership with Northamptonshire County Council submitted a funding application to Myplace for a world class youth facility. This building would have included:



- Multi Use Hall
- Dance Studio
- Arts and Craft Room
- Games and Chill Out Room
- Climbing Wall
- Music Practice Room
- IT Suite
- Group Work Rooms

Unfortunately the application was turned down there may be an opportunity to resubmit at a later date. The centre will hopefully be a step towards closing the gap in provision of 13-17 year olds as it will be situated next to West Glebe Pavilion and the Outdoor Facilities at West Glebe Park.



In recent years the Council has received many requests from members of the public to install skate parks. Currently Corby is home to Adrenaline Alley a charity run indoor skate venue. It is a facility where children and young people can go and practice extreme sports including skateboarding, as well as practice rooms for local bands and a chill out room. The facility is based on an industrial estate on the outskirts of the town and attracts large numbers from outside the Borough as well.

Due to the success of Adrenaline Alley the Council have identified a higher percentage of skaters in the borough. Therefore the installation of local skate parks that include various pieces of equipment will allow those who do not engage in outdoor play and enjoy skating/BMX the opportunity to do both.

Currently 4 sites around the Borough contain pieces of skating equipment: Weldon Woodland Park; West Glebe; Stanion and Hazelwood. (See Appendix Seven). Through the Money 4 Youth grant scheme Corby Borough Council are currently exploring the possibility of installing a local skate park on the Kingswood Estate. This site is centrally located for many young people, with easy access via one of the town's major bus routes.

Providing a skate park has numerous benefits: it is used by a great deal of young people as they have easy access to the skate park. It also reduces the number of teenagers who congregated to skate in the town centre giving them a place to go that is exclusively theirs. Getting the young people involved in the design and installation process gives the young people a sense of ownership, and gives them the opportunity to respect the equipment leading to a reduction in anti-social behaviour. Young people were involved in the design and development of the skate park at West Glebe and it is in constant use by young people giving them somewhere to 'hang out'.

4.4 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Corby Borough Council recognises the need to consult the community on matters that affect their neighbourhood. It is imperative that the Council involves local tenants and residents, children and young people as it the local community who will be using the facility and can help the borough Council in protecting and preserving local play spaces. Community Consultation is achieved through various ways:

- Virtual Play Forum
- Youth Forum
- Tenants and Residents Association
- Open Public Consultations
- Play Partnership
- SHAPE contacts
- Lead Members of the Community
- Children and Young Peoples Groups
- Schools

During the consultation period, children in the local community are asked to design their ideal playground. It is from these drawings that an initial design is completed with equipment similar to the designs drawn by the children. These drawings are then sent to companies who design and install the play areas. They send back their vision for the play park and these are taken back into the community for a decision. The design with the highest number of votes is awarded the contract.



The Council have found that there is division in the support for new play areas. For example: residents with children, those who live a short walk away and those who will benefit from the play park will want to see new play parks installed. However those without children, residents who live next to a play area will be on and those who have no use of a play area will not want to see it installed due to a variety of issues including a fear of disruption, noise and anti-social behaviour. This creates a

problem for the Council in the sense that not everyone will be happy to see the play area installed.

4.5 COMMUNITY SAFETY

There have been problems with anti social behaviour in the Borough's parks. At a national level the government have recognised the importance of community safety and developed 'The Community Safety and Tolerance Agenda' which recognises that although '*childhood has changed, children need to thrive and develop [and] staying safe is vital for health and well being*'. Therefore it is paramount that the area's in which children are encouraged to play in are kept safe and any vandalism is dealt with quickly and appropriately. 'The National Community Safety Plan 2008-2011' takes a holistic approach to the cycle of anti social behaviour and as part of the plan aims to 'improve people's lives so they are less likely to commit offences or re-offend'.

4.6 RISK/BENEFIT:

We should not prevent children and young people from doing things they enjoy because of risks that can be managed. Children and young people themselves recognise that 'you can't make everything safe' and that a balance is needed between risks and fun. Children recognise that knowing about risks and how to manage them is an essential part of growing up. (DCSF 2007: Staying Safe: A consultation document).

Play England and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) have reintroduced a previously considered approach to how children play: Risk/Benefit to allow children to play in a less clinical way. The underlying principle of this is that children should not be 'bubbled wrapped' when playing and that child should be taking risks and making their own risk assessments. The Play Safety Forum (PSF) summary statement says that:

'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'.

Therefore Corby Borough Council will ensure that there is an element of risk in new play parks. This will stimulate the cognitive development of children and young people who use the equipment. There are three factors that are central to determining whether or not the risk is acceptable or tolerable. These are:

- The likelihood of coming to harm
- The severity of that harm
- The benefits, rewards or outcomes of the activity.



These three factors should be exhausted before deciding to install play equipment that has a risk element. If the risk is so great that serious injury or death may occur, the Council will under no circumstance install the equipment.

If all play equipment were the same, with equal spacing and heights the children who use it will become bored as there is no challenge to their play. Creating play areas with equipment that has a motion feature and is of various heights will keep them engaged. The new play areas at Stephenson Way, Glastonbury Road and Ollerton Walk all consider the risk/benefit element in their design.

4.7 TRAVEL

The Department for Transport is currently developing guidance on the design of new residential areas, this will hopefully see more traffic calming measures which will benefit all residents and users of the street. Government planning guidance promotes traffic calming, home zones* and improvements to amenities which will make walking and cycling to play areas more accessible. This will also create more play opportunities as the journey to and from the area will become an adventure in itself. However the volume and speed of traffic passing by children on their way to the play areas may pose a danger. It is for this reason that the Department for Transport is developing new guidance.

**Home Zones:* Home Zones are an attempt to strike a balance between vehicular traffic and everyone else who uses the street, the pedestrians, cyclists, business people and residents. Home Zones work through the physical alteration of streets and roads in an area. These alterations force motorists to drive with greater care and at lower speeds. Many countries support this with legislation allowing the Home Zones to enforce a reduced speed limit of 10 miles an hour. The benches, flower beds, play areas, lamp posts, fences and trees used to alter the streets and roads offer many additional community benefits to the Home Zones and are considered to enhance the beauty of an area and increase the housing prices. (www.homezones.org)

4.8 THE 'DESTINATION' PLAYGROUND

Super Parks, as West Glebe Park can be described; have proved to be very popular with children and young people of all ages. Some children are able to visit the park themselves as they are from neighbouring housing estates but others are brought to the park by parents on foot or by car. This type of park with wide ranging facilities and equipment is also known as a 'destination' playground.

'A 'destination' playground can provide a very stimulating experience but however excellent and enjoyable that experience is it should not become a replacement for the opportunity to play within walking distance from the home, in play areas or elsewhere. Too great reliance on such provision, however popular, may tempt authorities to ignore the need for a generous distribution of smaller local spaces in the urban matrix. It is therefore no substitute for local provision. Local and neighbourhood playgrounds must not be subject to a closure programme in order to justify investment in destination provision, however attractive this may seem operationally and financially in terms of capital investment, management and maintenance.' (Fields in Trust 2008)

4.9 HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AGENDA

In 2005 the government introduced the 'Health and Physical Activity Agenda' a physical activity plan which outlines recommendations as suggested by the Chief Medical Officer. For children, he recommends that children and young people spend a total of 60 minutes each day involved in moderately intensive physical exercise. The agenda also highlights that choice and a range of options are needed so that people can be active on a daily basis. One of these choices could be interpreted as having the choice to play outdoors and therefore there needs to be adequate provision in encourage children to engage in physical exercise as outlined in the Heath and Physical Activity Agenda.



In 2008, Ed Balls (Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families) announced there were concerns regarding children's play. These included:

- Parents regret that their children no longer play outside as they did due to fears of safety;
- Decline in healthy lifestyles and lack of healthy activity cause by inactiveness as a results of home-based interests and poor diet.

Although it is important to remember that play is important to the development of children but it also contributes heavily to other agenda including the Health and Physical Activity Agenda and The Community Safety and Tolerance Agenda.

4.10 QUALITY

The 2004 report 'Getting Serious about Play', a review of children's play described that play should be:

- Value-Based
- In the Right Place
- Top Quality
- Appropriate
- Long Term



This is more commonly known under the acronym: **VITAL**. This is reinforced by FIT, Children's Play Council and PLAYLINK which addresses what play provision should do for children. They developed a criterion for an enriched play environment. The following elements were considered most important:

- A varied and interesting physical environment
- Challenge in relation to the physical environment
- Playing with natural elements – earth, water, fire air
- Movement such as running, jumping, rolling, climbing, balancing
- Manipulating natural and fabricated materials
- Stimulation of the five senses

- Experiencing change in the natural and built environment
- Social interaction
- Playing with identity
- Experiencing a range of emotion

FIT also outline the following attributes as essential for all open spaces:

Accessibility – The sites should be convenient, inclusive and have safe accessibility for all levels of mobility.

Quality – This is dependant on the needs, expectations, and experience of the users. This will be discovered through community consultation.

Conflicting Uses – Many open spaces are not available for one type of recreation, there are many different users, including children, dog walkers, football teams, and joggers. Therefore these users need an agreement which does not cause conflict for others. For example, dog walkers using the perimeters of the space.

Multi Functionality - An open space does not have a single use, there is an environmental concern of the maintenance. For example: moderating surface water run off, air pollution and wind speeds.

Primary Purpose – Each open space has a primary purpose, however this is subject to change, day to day and hour to hour. For example when a football match is taking place the pitch becomes the primary purpose, when a solitary child is playing on the equipment provided the equipment becomes the primary purpose.

Quantity – This is outlined in chapter 3.1, and ensures that each neighbourhood has sufficient play areas. The creation of the 'destination' playground would serve a larger area however the need for LAPS, LEAPS and NEAPS is not removed.

5. Considerations

There are 19 sites in the Borough that do not conform to the EN1176 safety standard, but do meet the previous BS5696 standard. It is one of the Council's aims is to bring the 19 sites up to the current standard. Corby Borough Council hopes to replace and update all the equipment that has a low play value by 2020. Appendix Six demonstrates the outdoor play provision of each ward that makes up the Borough as it stood in 2006, however since then the boundaries have change, but currently it is not possible to obtain the new information.

5.1 WHAT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED?

Funding: Sources of funding are considered in detail in Chapter 6.

Design and Cost: Research into the cost of creating a play area has found that £1 in every £3 spent represents poor value for money and 21% of the total cost of a play ground is spent on safety surfacing. Other alternatives to expensive play surfacing should be explored and the Council will ensure that the equipment used is of the highest standard and has a high play value for the users.



Legal: Once the Council has provided play areas they have a duty to maintain them. This includes weekly inspections of the site by two employees, repair and maintenance and any improvements that need to be made.

Performance Information: All 38 play areas are inspected on a weekly basis by Corby Borough Council; more often if the site is proving difficult. Detailed external inspections are carried out by independent companies each month and the Council's insurers complete an annual inspection.

Best Value: When installing or upgrading a play area the Council host consultation exercises in which members of the local community are invited to have their say on what they would like to see in their park. A number of tenders are also received for each development and contracts are awarded on the cost and on range type and quality of equipment.



Equalities: The consultation process displays an inclusive approach to ensure all sections of the community are being considered including those with disabilities.

Regeneration: The current regeneration of Corby Borough has meant that 4 new estates/villages have been created. Once competed, the land west of Corby is to be developed. This will see a further 5000 houses being built and will require 3 NEAPS, 14 LEAPS and 33 LAPS.

Private Parks: In the area's it is not feasible to install new play equipment the council is aware that those that are close to schools for example are able to access outdoor play 5 days a week, to install a play park to cater for out of school outdoor play provision does not make financial sense. There may be a gap in the outdoor

play provision that Corby Borough Council provides, but there is not a gap in the outdoor provision. The National Play Strategy found that most respondents to the consultation: '*Believed that schools could open their grounds up after school hours and during school holidays to increase the opportunities children have to play*' Schools have concerns about doing this as this would raise issues of security and maintenance costs for them.

5.2 DESIGNING A PLAY AREA

"Play Space" not "Playground"

There is a difference in the definition of a playground and a play space:

Playground – people have a mental picture of either a school playground or fenced area with standard pre-purchased play equipment

The Play builder programme is challenging some of these ideas for example a **play space** is also a sand pit, a rope swing and a sculpture park.....

"Design for Play" produced by DCSF sets out 10 principles to consider when designing play areas which encompass this thought. The 10 principles allow those to imagine a play space that children will seek out, enjoy and return to. This will ensure that Play England's statement that "the object of play is to play again" is achieved.

Imagine a play space...

- 1. ...designed to enhance its setting:** Those play areas that are most successful are designed to fit into their surroundings and enhances the local environment. Knowledge of the local area and its history will provide the inspiration for the design.
- 2. ... in the best possible place:** Play areas that are located close to where children find themselves playing naturally and away from dangerous roads, noise and pollution. Although children enjoy believing that they are out of view of adults, there needs to be a careful balance between a play area that is 'presently secluded' and a play area that is 'remote and hidden away'.
- 3. ... close to nature:** Play areas that incorporate grassy mounds, planting, logs and boulders may contribute to an attractive and playable setting for equipment.
- 4. ... where children can play in different ways:** Play areas that can be used in different ways by different children and young people of various ages and with various interests. This involves using non-prescriptive equipment which may hinder the user's creativity and imagination.
- 5. ... where disabled and non-disabled children play together:** Creating a play area where all children and young people, disabled or non-disabled can play together is important. It is also important to remember that not all the elements of the play area can be accessible to all children. It is also important to remember that a disability is not just being confined to a wheelchair, being visually impaired will require a play area to be stimulating in other areas such as introducing sand as a safety surface for children to explore different textures.

6. **... loved by the community:** A play area that is designed with the community and users will almost certainly highlight their concerns and aspirations. If these are successfully explored the area will be popular and well used.
7. **... where children of all ages play together:** Play areas that are home to features that do not segregate children on the basis of their age are more likely to be successful in the eyes of the community. The play area will be used by a wide range of children.
8. **...where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way:** The need for children to accept challenges and risks when playing will stimulate their physical and cognitive development.
9. **...maintained for play value and environmental sustainability:** Good play areas are designed to use recycled or sustainable sourced materials. Although this is the underlying principle for design they are not necessarily tidy. Natural resources such as scrub or long grass, fallen leaves and twigs all provide play opportunities in a sustainable approach.
10. **...that evolves as the children grow:** Successful play areas are those which benefit from a process of ongoing change and refurbishment. As children grow so should the play area. Those play areas that do not allow for this to happen will become very boring and uninteresting and maybe used incorrectly (young people may use the play area to gather and perform anti-social behaviour).

6. Funding

The proposals that have been put forward by the Council in this strategy aim to increase and improve the play area facilities for children and young people. This chapter will explore how these proposals may be funded.

6.1 CAPITAL/REVENUE BUDGETS

Capital Funding provides new and replacement equipment as well as the installation costs of new equipment. Corby Borough Council revenue budgets fund repair and maintenance costs, vandalism and inspections of Council play areas.

In 2008/9 the Corby Borough Council revenue budget for play areas was £47,330 this included expenditure on weekly visual inspections, monthly maintenance checks, annual insurance checks as well as repairs to sites resulting from general wear and tear and vandalism. On average each play area costs £1,250 per annum to inspect and maintain, play sites that have a higher rate of usage will require a higher level of revenue funding to maintain. The revenue budget is generally increased by 3% each year; there will also be an increase when new sites are installed from Section 106 agreements.

6.2 EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There are a range of external funding organisations that Corby Borough Council can apply to for Capital to improve or develop play areas., these include Playbuilder and WREN.

The Council can also offer advice and guidance to voluntary organisations who wish to improve or develop their local play spaces in line with the strategy and submit funding applications to relevant organisations.

6.3 LAND FILL TAX

Waste Recycling Environment Limited (WREN) provides grants under the terms and conditions of the Landfill Communities Fund, formerly known as the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme. The Council applies to WREN for grants for projects that benefit the community. These grants add to already sourced funding to give a higher budget for the overall project, for example in April 2008 Corby Borough Council secured £100,000 funding from Play Builder (See Government Funding) to redevelop 3 sites within the borough.



6.4 GOVERNMENT FUNDING

A current DCSF scheme is **Play Builder**. The National Play Strategy aims to change the way play areas close to where children live are developed, offering exciting, active and adventurous play. This scheme aims to involve the community which means that parents and families can be part of the development process. To achieve this, consultation takes place with local children in the community in order to gain an opinion on what they want to see installed. Northamptonshire County Council has



been awarded £800,000 from Play Builder to contribute towards the cost of roughly 19 schemes to develop new or refurbish existing play spaces. This funding will be available from September 2008 through to March 2010, incorporating two financial years. Corby Borough Council is able to bid for an amount between £20,000 and £70,000 per annum. To date, the Council has been successful in three bids: two for the amount of £25,000 to improve

the facilities at Glastonbury Road and Ollereton Walk and one for £50,000 to improve Stephenson Way Play Area, (See Appendix 8). The Borough Council continues seek to find other funding sources to contribute to the installation and improvements of high level of play provision.

6.5 SECTION 106 AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

When a new housing estate is being planned, both the building company and the Council sign a Section 106 agreement. This agreement states that the contractors have to provide funding for the installation of play areas in accordance with Planning and Design for Outdoor Space, once this has been done the play areas are adopted by Council. The Council then receives funding from the contractors over a period of 20 years to contribute to the maintenance costs of the sites. In some instances contractors may install the play area sites and maintain them. This again is a 20 year agreement.

In summary the National Playing Fields Association recommend a minimum standard for outdoor playing space of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1000 people. This is broken down between space for outdoor sport and children's playing space (both equipped and informal).

This Supplementary Planning Guidance is based upon the NPFA 6 Acre Standard.



6.6 PUBLIC FUND RAISING

In some cases, communities become involved in sourcing funding for the sites. For example, the Stanion Village community raised £2,000 towards the cost of a new play area. Voluntary sector opportunities are eligible for funding streams that statutory bodies are not, for example, Money 4 Youth. This government funding is only available to young people aged 13-19 to secure funding for community projects. The proposed skate area at Kingswood is being funded through Money 4 Youth. As a local authority Corby Borough Council are unable to apply for this funding.

7. The Way Forward

7.1 TARGETS SET BY CORBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

It has been identified throughout the Play Area Strategy for Corby that existing outdoor play provision in the Borough can be improved. The sites that have been developed over the past 4 years have seen significant improvements in their play value. However some parks have not been developed since the early 1990s, these sites have low play values. Therefore the Council will outline targets and achievement dates for improving the provision of out door play in Corby Borough.

- By 2020 no play areas will have a Low Play Value
- Maintain current high standards of play equipment.
- Continue working in partnership to reduce anti-social behaviour in play areas.
- Aim to close the gap in provision for the Young People aged 13-17.
- Create fun, enthusiastic and inviting play areas for children and young people in Borough that allow children to take risks and explore their own abilities.



8. Action Plan

The Corby Borough Council action plan is outlined over the page. This plan will allow the Council to see which play areas need improving and redeveloping over the life span of the strategy if and when funding schemes become available. It also identifies the location of each site, the classification, play value, proposed action and target dates. This action plan is to be reviewed on an annual basis.



Play Area Action Plan
(To be reviewed on an annual basis)

Site Location	Standard/F.I.T Classification	Description of Equipment on Site	Play Value	Proposed Action	Partners Consultation	Target Date
High Priority						
Glastonbury, Glastonbury Road	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit	Medium	To be redeveloped through Play Builder, WREN and CBC funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	March 2009
Ollerton, Ollerton Walk	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	To be redeveloped through Play Builder, WREN and CBC funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	March 2009
Pen Green, Stephenson Way	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	To be redeveloped through Play Builder, WREN and CBC funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Pen Green Children's Centre, Local School and CBC	March 2009
Abington, Collingwood Avenue	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2009/2010
Burghley, Burghley Drive	BS5696 Standard BSEN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit, Basket Swing, Futsal, Twisslers x 2	Medium	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School , CBC and Corby Community Partnership	2009/2010 (Multi activity Unit) 2021/2022
Cransley, Cransley Gardens	BSEN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2009/2010
Holbein, Holbein Walk	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit	Medium	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2009/2010
Kingsley, Kingsley Drive	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	Awaiting Section 106. Funding Seek external funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2009/2010
Rose, Rose Avenue	BS5696 Standard/EN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Low	Seek External Funding	Parish Council, Local School and CBC	2009/2010

Play Area Action Plan
(To be reviewed on an annual basis)

Site Location	Standard/F.I.T Classification	Description of Equipment on Site	Play Value	Proposed Action	Partners Consultation	Target Date
High Priority						
Shetland, Shetland Way	BSEN1176 Standard/ PAS 30	MUGA Climbing Frame Springer See Saw	Medium	Awaiting Section 106 funding, add to under 5's area	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2009/2010
Wharfdale, Wharfdale Road	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5s's Area	Low	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2009/2010
East Carlton, East Carlton Country Park	BSEN1176 Standard NEAP	2 Multi Activity Units Wheelchair Accessible Ramps Roundabout Swing	High	Seek External Funding	Parish Council, Friend of the Park, visitors to the park and CBC	(updated to comply to new standards) 2010/2011
Medium Priority						
Boating Lake Adventure, Cottingham Road	BS5696 Standard LEAP	3 Multi Activity Units	Low	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Franchise, Visitors to venue and CBC	2011/2012
Boating Lake Café, Cottingham Road	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit	Low	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Franchise, Visitors to venue and CBC	2011/2012
Hazelwood Neighbourhood Centre, Gainsborough Road	BS5696 Standard PAS 30 BSEN1176	Multi Activity Unit MUGA Play Pro Bike Trail Family Skate Area	High	Replace Safety Surface	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	(All panels and floor plates replaced 2008/2009) 2010/2011
Old Village, High Street	BS5696 Standard EN1176 Standard LEAP	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area Swings	Medium	Seek External Funding	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2010/2011
Spinney, Spinney Road	BS5696 Standard BSEN1176 Standard	Under 5's Area Panna	Medium	Seek External Funding/Capital Funding	Parish Council, local School and CBC	2011/2012

Play Area Action Plan
(To be reviewed on an annual basis)

Site Location	Standard/F.I.T Classification	Description of Equipment on Site	Play Value	Proposed Action	Partners Consultation	Target Date
Medium Priority						
Breck, Breck Close	BS5696 Standard LEAP	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Tenants and Residents group, Local schools and CBC	2012/2013
Stavanger, Stavanger Close	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2012/2013
Cambridge, Cambridge Avenue	BS5696 Standard BSEN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area Swing, Slide, Basket Swing	Medium	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2013/14 (Slide, Swing and Fence) 2023/2024
Kirby, Kirby Road	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	High	Awaiting Section 106. Funding Seek external funding	Parish Council, local School and CBC	2013/2014
Exeter Neighbourhood Centre, Counts Farm Road	BSEN1176 Standard/ PAS 30	MUGA Under 8's Multi Activity Unit BMX Track	High	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2014/2015
Talisman, Motala Close	PAS 30	MUGA Basket Hoop (Free Standing)	Medium	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2014/2015
Kingswood Neighbourhood Centre, Alberta Close	BSEN1176 Standard LEAP	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	High	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2015/2016
Weldon Country Park, Kettering Road	BSEN1176 Standard NEAP	BMX Track Half Pipe Over 8's Multi Activity Unit Under 8's Trim Trail	High	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Parish Council, Local schools and CBC	2015/2016

Play Area Action Plan
(To be reviewed on an annual basis)

Site Location	Standard/F.I.T Classification	Description of Equipment on Site	Play Value	Proposed Action	Partners Consultation	Target Date
Medium Priority						
Becks Green, Seaford Walk	BSEN1176 Standard / PAS 30 LEAP	Trim Trail Multi Activity Unit Springer's MUGA	High	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2016/2017
Studfall, Studfall Avenue	BSEN1176 LEAP	Three Swings, Futsal, Boulders, Under 5's Area	High	Redevelopment of the site completed April 2007 funded by The Big Lottery and CBC. Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, North Northamptonshire Groundwork Trust, Local School and CBC	2016/2017
Long Priority						
Ennerdale, Ennerdale Road	BSEN1176 Standard / PAS 30 LEAP	MUGA Multi Activity Unit	Medium	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents and Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2017/2018
Colyers, Colyers Avenue	BSEN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Swings	High	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Local Residents Tenants Association, Local School and CBC	2018/2019
Rockingham, Main Road	BSEN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Low	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Parish Group, Local School and CBC	2019/2020
Berryfield, Berryfield Walk	BSEN1176 Standard LEAP	Multi Activity Unit Futsal Swings Springer's	High	Continue to inspect and provide new and replacement equipment when necessary	Parish Council, local School and CBC	2020/2021
Stanion Village Hall	BSEN1176 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Medium	To Improve site to upgrade to a LEAP	Parish Council, Local School and CBC	2022/2023

Play Area Action Plan
(To be reviewed on an annual basis)

Site Location	Standard/F.I.T Classification	Description of Equipment on Site	Play Value	Proposed Action	Partners Consultation	Target Date
Long Priority						
Snatchill, Merestone Road	BS5696 Standard	Multi Activity Unit Under 5's Area	Low	Developer to replace before CBC adopt in 2009/2010	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	2023/2024
Bridge Court, Rockingham Road	BS5696 Standard	Roundabout Springer	N/A	Play Area Situated in Homeless unit which will be redeveloped and play area removed	Local Residents and Tenants Association, local School and CBC	Neighborhood Pride Responsibility (to be removed)
Woodnewton Play Centre	BSEN1176 Standard	Roundabout	N/A	Removed (Facility no longer there)	Item won in raffle	N/A

9. Appendices List

- Appendix One:** Map 1 – Existing Play Provision in Corby
- Appendix Two:** Map 2 – Proposed Play Provision in Corby
- Appendix Three:** LAPS, LEAPS and NEAPS
- Appendix Four:** County Provision
- Appendix Five:** Play Value Matrix and Play Area Sites Graded by Play Value
- Appendix Six:** Current Provision in Corby Borough Council
- Appendix Seven:** Map 3 – Skate Provision
- Appendix Eight:** Play Areas Rolling Programme
- Appendix Nine:** Inspection Routes and Example of Inspection Report
- Appendix Ten:** Safety Sign

10. References

DCSF 2007: Staying Safe: A consultation document

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