



# SHAPING NEIGHBOURHOODS: PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

SEPTEMBER 2012

LONDON PLAN 2011  
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

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# **SHAPING NEIGHBOURHOODS: PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION**

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**GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY  
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The Mayor would like to thank those who contributed to this document by sharing case studies, photographs and responding to the consultation.

This guidance will form part of the over-arching Shaping Neighbourhoods Portfolio. It is currently envisaged that it will have 4 parts:

- A. Understanding Place
  - B. Lifetime Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Planning
  - C. Play and Informal Recreation
  - D. Accessible London
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# FOREWORD

Amid the bustle of living and working in a fast-moving, densely developed world city, it is all too easy to overlook the needs of London's children and young people and the importance of our urban environment as somewhere to grow up and learn.

Play is a vital part of growing up. It helps children learn about their environment, to relate to others and to burn off energy. It helps start the process of becoming a citizen, and improves their health. On top of these important and worthy aims, it helps them have fun and, perhaps, lift the spirits of their parents and carers.

That is why it is so important to find and protect space in our city for children to play, and for young people to meet. We need a mixture of more formal play spaces such as playgrounds, and of "playable" places where the most important play equipment is children's imaginations.

These spaces have to be safe and fit for purpose, well-located in relation to where children live and readily accessible. Many of them will be significant as part of London's green infrastructure of parks and open spaces, delivering on my wider environmental priorities as well as providing a stimulating place for children to enjoy themselves.

Finding these spaces is obviously easier in the countryside or in smaller towns than it is in a densely built-up city like London where space is often at a premium. The planning system is one of the key mechanisms for making sure that play spaces are secured and protected from encroachment.



This guidance gives practical advice about how this should be done, in particular by negotiating for enough playspace to be set aside in new development to meet the needs of the children and young people likely to live in them. This is a policy we have been applying in London since 2008, and is a way of making a real improvement in Londoners' quality of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Boris Johnson'.

**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London

# GLOSSARY

## **Play**

“Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.” *From Play Wales (2005) and endorsed by SkillsActive (May 2005)*

## **Children (0-11) and young people (12+)**

The age ranges in the document are indicative. They do not mean that users of different ages should be excluded from the play space. This recognises that children and young people have differing needs and that the space where they play or socialise will have different characteristics, space and location requirements. A playable space typology (table 4.6) addresses the potential for multifunctional spaces.

## **Playable space**

A playable space is one where children’s active play is a legitimate use of the space. Playable space typically includes some design elements that have ‘play value’: they act as a sign or signal to children and young people that the space is intended for their play. Playability is not just a matter of the physical characteristics of a space. It can also be influenced by social and cultural characteristics. For instance a space that is dominated by people hostile to children’s presence is not playable, whatever its physical characteristics.

## **Multifunctional space**

A Multifunctional space is a ‘shared’ public space or communal space, which offers a range of leisure and recreation opportunities for users of all ages. Multifunctional spaces for all ages should be the optimum.

## **‘Incidental’ playable space**

It is a public space where recreational features such as landscaping or high quality public art make it playable.

## **Dedicated play space**

Spaces where play is identified as one of the prime functions. These include playgrounds, playing fields, skate parks and other recreation areas. Dedicated play spaces can be publically owned, open to public access or private (e.g. play areas in shopping centres, private gardens). They can be supervised (such as some adventure playgrounds) or unsupervised. They can be with formal equipment or non-equipped areas, such as landscaped areas and playing fields that can be used for a variety of recreational activities. All dedicated play spaces should be genuinely playable and attractive to count as play provision. It is also essential that they are accessible (see chapter 3 on location and accessibility). Dedicated play space can therefore be formal and informal but informal provision should not replace formal provision entirely.

Dedicated play space can fall under the following typology:

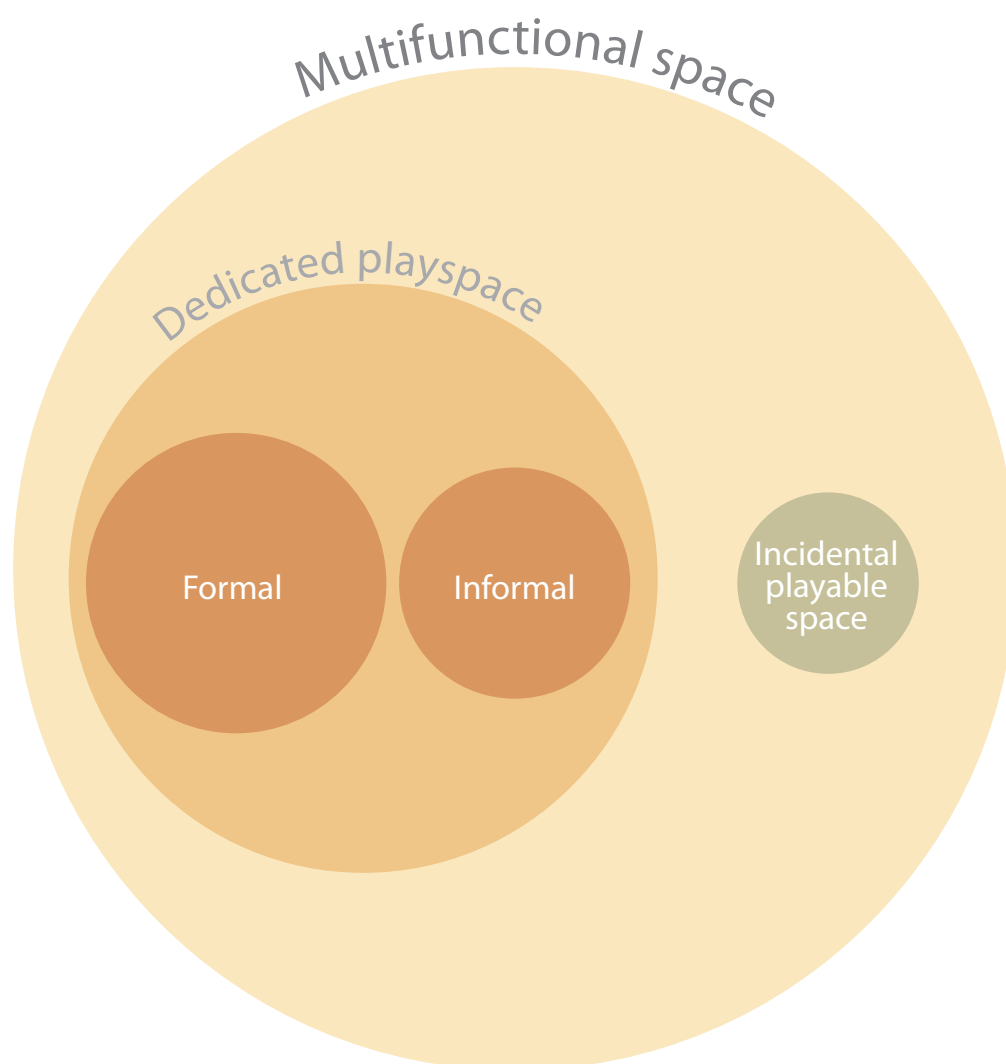
Doorstep playable space: a landscaped space including engaging play features for young children under 5 that are close to their homes, and places for carers to sit and talk.

Local playable space: a landscaped space with landscaping and equipment so that children aged 0 to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk

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Neighbourhood playable space: A varied natural space with secluded and open areas, landscaping and equipment so that children aged 0 to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk, with some youth facilities for young people over 11.

Youth space: A social space for young people aged 12 + to congregate together, socialise and participate in informal recreation or physical activity.



**Components of playable/multifunctional space**





Wild Kingdom - Three Mills Playspace (Newham, London)  
Project - The Legacy List and London Legacy Development Corporation with Lee Valley Regional Park  
Photo - Dan Childs Films



## CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 In a densely developed, highly urbanised city like London, safe and stimulating play facilities are essential for a child's well-being, health and future development. Ensuring this is taken into account in planning and development through the London Plan has been a significant achievement of the London planning system, and will become of increasing importance with the emphasis in the new London Plan on encouraging lifetime neighbourhoods meeting the needs of all Londoners, at every stage of their lives.
  - 1.2 London is home to 1.94 million children and young people under the age of 18. London's 0 – 18 population is projected to increase by over 266,000 over the next ten years. Increased provision of play and informal recreation will be required to meet their needs.
  - 1.3 Children and young people need free, inclusive and accessible spaces offering high-quality play and informal recreation opportunities in child-friendly neighbourhood environments. Policy 3.6 of the London Plan seeks to ensure that all children and young people have access to such provision. The challenge facing boroughs and their partners in play provision will be to find opportunities to retain and increase the provision of play and informal recreation, particularly in housing developments, and to make planning for play and young people's informal recreation more responsive to needs, improving the quality, range and accessibility of provision.
  - 1.4 In London, where space is increasingly at a premium, planners, developers and designers must take account of the ways that adults, children and young people will actually use places, whether together or separately, at different times of the day. It will usually be best to allow for flexible and multifunctional use of spaces so that many different user groups can enjoy them. Planners, developers, designers and architects should promote approaches accommodating the presence of children in the built environment (such as shared public and communal space), and encouraging playable spaces where appropriate. In this way, London can be made a child friendly city. This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared in response to these challenges.
  - 1.5 This Supplementary Planning Guidance relates to the implementation of London Plan Policy 3.6, but also a range of policies on shaping neighbourhoods (see Chapter 7 of the London Plan). It provides the opportunity for more detailed guidance that cannot be covered in the Plan. It proposes benchmark standards that were developed for the Mayor's SPG on Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation in 2008, and in the light of consultation with London boroughs, play specialists and designers, builds on the experience of implementing that earlier guidance. The benchmark standards provided in this guidance are flexible enough to meet the varying needs of children and young people across London and should be used as a reference to guide boroughs in the development of
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their own local standards. The proposed methodology for calculating play space requirements is indicative and boroughs may want to supplement them or use their own, based on locally-derived evidence and data.

### **POLICY 3.6: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAY AND INFORMAL RECREATION FACILITIES**

#### **Strategic**

- A The Mayor and appropriate organisations should ensure that all children and young people have safe access to good quality, well-designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision, incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible.

#### **Planning decisions**

- B Development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs. The Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance *Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation* sets out guidance to assist in this process.

#### **LDF preparation**

- C Boroughs should:
- a undertake audits of existing play and informal recreation provision

and assessments of need in their areas, considering the qualitative, quantitative and accessibility elements of play and informal recreation facilities.

- b produce strategies on play and informal recreation supported by LDF policies to improve access, safety and opportunity for all children and young people in their area.

- 1.6 The requirements for play and informal recreation space provision for children and young people given in the SPG are intended to:

- apply the concept of lifetime neighbourhoods and the role playable spaces have in creating these neighbourhoods;
- assist in identifying existing and future needs for play provision and how these could be accommodated;
- provide guidance and a tool to calculate the requirement for play which can be easily applied to housing proposals and a framework to ensure adequate on- and off-site provision is made to meet the demand created by the development;
- address issues of accessibility to new and existing facilities and the critical issue of site location;
- take into account public spaces such as parks, open spaces but also social housing estates that offer good play opportunities and transform them into multifunctional spaces that offer a range of leisure and recreation

- opportunities for users of all ages;
- encourage more innovative approaches to play provision in terms of facilities, location, accessibility, design (including use of natural features) and management;
- encourage schools to open their facilities such as playgrounds and sports facilities to the public;
- provide best practice guidance on how to use resources cost-effectively and secure adequate revenue streams for maintenance and upkeep including developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);
- encourage the review of local play strategies; and
- provide inspiring design examples of sustainable play spaces in dense urban environments.

1.7 This SPG does not cover sports facilities in detail. These will be dealt with in the portfolio of guidance on Shaping Neighbourhoods (see Figure 1.1).

1.8 This document contains guidance supplementary to London Plan policies. While it does not have the same formal development plan status as these policies, it has been formally adopted by the Mayor as supplementary guidance under his powers under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (as amended). Adoption followed a period of public consultation, and a summary of the comments received and the responses of the Mayor to those comments is available on the Greater London Authority website. It will therefore be a material consideration in drawing up development

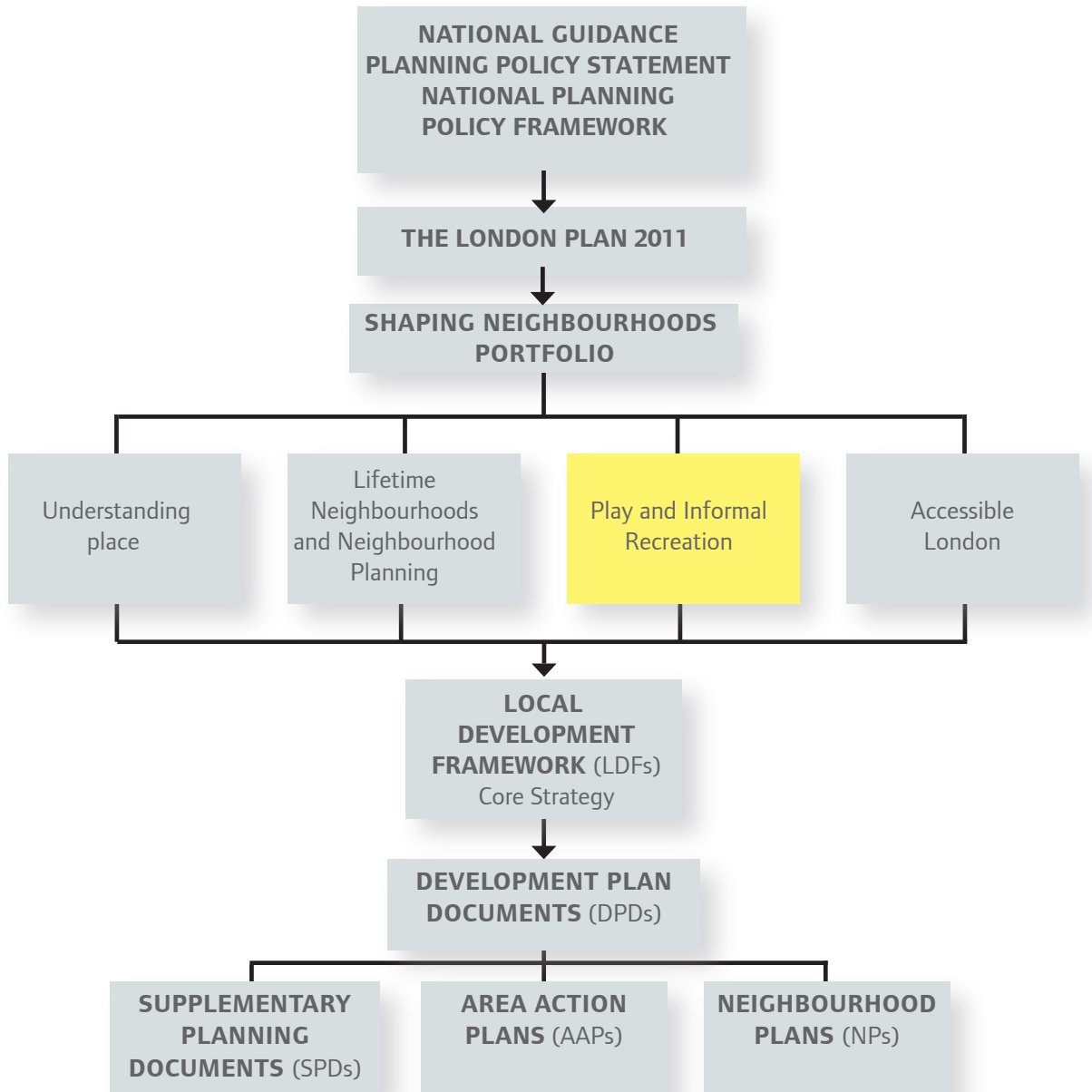
plan documents and in taking planning decisions.

1.9 Where the London Plan and this guidance refer to LDFs it is advice to boroughs in preparing their Local Development Frameworks (what the Government's National Planning Framework terms 'local plans') and to those preparing neighbourhood plans.

1.10 This Supplementary Planning Guidance is directed at local authority planners, developers, community groups and a range of consultants (including landscape architects and urban designers) who all have roles in ensuring the implementation of the objectives set out in this Guidance. Local authorities have the responsibility of ensuring robust play strategies and establishing the overall context for implementation of the Supplementary Planning Guidance, as well as detailed roles in determining requirements for specific sites. Developers and consultants are largely responsible for the delivery of child-friendly developments and public spaces, and they must ensure adequate size, design and access to new and improved play and informal recreation areas. The SPG will also provide guidance for neighbourhood forums and local communities in shaping their neighbourhood plans.



Figure 1.1 Planning Policy Framework







Kilburn Grange Park Adventure Play-ground (Camden, London)  
Project and photo - erect architecture



## CHAPTER TWO

# POLICY CONTEXT

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## NATIONAL

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets the government's objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by creating a high quality built environments, with accessible local services that reflect a community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being. It recognises the important role of the planning system in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities and it acknowledges that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. The NPPF protects existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields. The NPPF also encourages local planning authorities to ensure viability and deliverability in plan-making and decision-taking (see para 2.21 below).

## LONDON PLAN POLICIES

2.2 The London Plan includes a specific policy on the provision of play and informal recreation facilities (Policy 3.6). A range of other policies, such as Policy 3.16 on the protection and enhancement of social infrastructure, Policy 7.1 on the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods and Policy 7.18 on the protection of local open space also deal with play. The range of London Plan policies related to play is introduced below.

### Policy 3.6: Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation Facilities

- 2.3 Policy 3.6 identifies the requirement for the provision of play and informal recreation within London as well as the need for London boroughs to undertake audits of existing play and informal recreation provision and assessment of needs in their areas. The policy also encourages boroughs to produce strategies on play and informal recreation to improve access, safety and opportunity for all children and young people in their area. This Supplementary Planning Guidance provides more detailed advice to assist implementation of this policy.
- 2.4 The Plan raises the importance of providing for safe and stimulating play facilities for children's well-being and future development, as well as for preventing health problems such as obesity. This should be addressed in Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) (local plans and appropriate neighbourhood plans) by providing policies on play provision, including the need for high quality design. Through the development of play strategies, boroughs should ensure the integration of play provision into overall open space strategies.
- 2.5 The Plan states that new development including housing should make provision for play space. This should normally be made on-site, and be in accordance with LDF play policies for the area. Where development is to be phased, there should be early implementation of the play space. Off-site provision, including the creation
-

of new facilities, improvements to existing provision, and/or an appropriate financial contribution towards this provision may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it fully satisfies the needs of the development whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing residents.

### **Policy 3.16: Protection and Enhancement of Social Infrastructure**

2.6 Play is covered in Policy 3.16 as an integral part of social infrastructure. The policy supports the provision of social infrastructure and encourages boroughs to regularly assess the need for social infrastructure at local and strategic levels to ensure that adequate social infrastructure provision is made or enhanced. Development proposals which provide for this infrastructure will be supported in light of these assessments; and those causing their loss will be resisted. Facilities should be accessible to all sections of the community and be located within easy reach by walking, cycling and public transport. Wherever possible, the multiple use of premises should be encouraged. Further guidance on social infrastructure will be given in future supplementary guidance on Shaping Neighbourhoods.

### **Policy 7.1: Building London's neighbourhoods and communities**

2.7 Play also has a role in contributing to creating lifetime neighbourhoods which are dealt with in Policy 7.1. Lifetime neighbourhoods are places where people can, at all stages of their lives enjoy a

good quality environment, in an active and supportive community, with the best possible access to services, infrastructure and public transport. Their neighbourhoods should provide a character that is easy to understand and relate to.

2.8 Development should be designed so that the layout, tenure and mix of uses interface with surrounding land and improve people's access to social and community infrastructure, the Blue Ribbon Network, local shops, employment opportunities, commercial services and public transport. Development should enable people to live healthy and active lives; should maximise the opportunity for community diversity, inclusion and cohesion; and should contribute to people's sense of place, safety and security. Places of work, leisure, streets, neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces should be designed to meet the needs of the community at all stages of people's lives, and should meet the principles of lifetime neighbourhoods. The design of spaces should help reinforce or enhance the character, legibility, permeability and accessibility of the neighbourhood.

2.9 Boroughs should prepare plans to ensure infrastructure and services will be delivered to meet the needs of existing and new development. They should work with their local communities to set goals for their neighbourhoods and strategies for achieving them. Cross-borough working is encouraged where appropriate. The Mayor will be preparing guidance to assist the implementation of the lifetime neighbourhoods policies later in 2012.



### Policy 7.18: Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

2.10 Policy 7.18 supports the creation of new open space in London and includes a public open space categorisation table (Table 2.1) that provides a benchmark for boroughs to assess their own provision for

the different categories of multifunctional open space found throughout London. The table categorises spaces according to their size and sets out a maximum desirable distance that Londoners should travel in order to access each category of open space. The standards can be used to highlight areas of open space deficiency

**Table 2.1 London's public open space categorisation**

Open space categorisation	Size guideline	Distances from homes
<b>Regional Parks</b> Large areas, corridors or networks of open space, the majority of which will be publicly accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. Offer a combination of facilities and features that are unique within London, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.	400 hectares	3.2 to 8 kilometres
<b>Metropolitan Parks</b> Large areas of open space that provide a similar range of benefits to Regional Parks and offer a combination of facilities and features at the sub-regional level, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.	60 hectares	3.2 kilometres
<b>District Parks</b> Large areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing for a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits.	20 hectares	1.2 kilometres
<b>Local Parks and Open Spaces</b> Providing for court games, children's play, sitting-out areas and nature conservation areas	2 hectares	400 metres
<b>Small Open Spaces</b> Gardens, sitting-out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.	Under 2 hectares	Less than 400 metres
<b>Pocket Parks</b> Small areas of open space that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation that sometimes have seating and play equipment.	Under 0.4ha	Less than 400 metres
<b>Linear Open Spaces</b> Open spaces and towpaths alongside the Thames, canals and other waterways; paths; disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.	Variable	Wherever feasible

Source: GLA, London Plan 2011

and facilitate cross-borough planning and management of open space. The public open space hierarchy does not specify play provision for children and young people but play and informal recreation opportunities are identified for each category of open space according to its size and characteristics.

### Other London Plan Policies

2.11 Other relevant London Plan policies and SPGs which should be considered in the development of policy and consideration of proposals in the provision of play and informal recreation include:

- Policy 2.13 Opportunity and intensification areas and Policy 2.14 Areas for regeneration: Play is likely to be among the policy areas that boroughs and their partners are likely to address in devising strategies to tackle deprivation and exclusion.
- Policy 2.18 Green Infrastructure: The Policy aims to protect, promote, expand and manage the extent and quality of, and access to, London's network of open and green spaces.
- Policy 3.1 Ensuring Equal Life Chances for All: The Policy promotes London's diversity. It encourages boroughs to engage with local groups and communities to identify their needs and make appropriate provision for them.
- Policy 3.2 Addressing health and reducing health inequalities: supports the role of play and specific interventions to improve health.
- Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of housing development: The Policy introduces a presumption against development on back gardens or other private residential gardens. This may expand opportunities for play.
- Policy 3.7 Large residential developments: Sites over 5 hectares or capable of accommodating more than 500 dwellings should be progressed through an appropriate plan-led process to coordinate provision of play and other social infrastructure.
- Policy 3.8 Housing Choice requires developments to provide a range of housing sizes and types, including family housing. This will offer greater choice for families.
- Policy 3.19 Sports Facilities seeks to support developments which increase provision of sports and recreation facilities and increase healthy lifestyles.
- Policy 6.9 Cycling seeks to encourage cycling and safe and convenient direct routes to key uses such as schools or play areas.
- Policy 6.10 Walking seeks to encourage walking in a high quality pedestrian and street environment and accessible, safe and convenient direct routes to key uses such as play areas.
- Policy 7.2 An Inclusive environment requires that all development in London achieve the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design.
- Policy 7.4 Local Character: Policy supports the development of places that improve or build on the local character of the area.
- Policy 7.5 Public Realm supports the development of high quality public spaces in London by ensuring that landscape treatment, street furniture and infrastructure in the public realm are of the highest quality and have a clear purpose.

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

2.12 Play and informal recreation is also addressed in a number of the Mayor's cross-cutting strategies and initiatives. The overarching strategy is set out in *Young Londoners - Successful Futures* but a number of other strategies are relevant, including the Mayor's Transport, Sport<sup>1</sup>, Health Inequalities and Culture strategies. The Mayor's Great Outdoors initiative aims to upgrade public spaces in London, promoting the wide ranging benefits of open space and setting out the need to make London a more child-friendly city, including opportunities to make streets safer for children, the creation of new and diverse opportunities for play and places for young people, and the promotion of open space as a cultural resource for London. *The London Housing Design Guide*<sup>2</sup> (chapter 1.2), published by the Mayor in 2010, and the *Housing SPG*<sup>3</sup> both reflect the needs of children and young people in setting out design of open spaces, internal space standards and environmental requirements for housing in London (including the protection of back gardens – London Plan Policy 3.5). The *All London Green Grid (ALGG) SPG*<sup>4</sup> promotes the creation of a high quality multifunctional green infrastructure network that maximises the opportunities for improving quality of life. The network includes open spaces (including both publicly accessible and private land, such as parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, amenity space and children's play areas), corridors and the links in between, of

varying size and character. It promotes the provision, protection and improvement of sports facilities, including playing fields, as well as encouraging the use of parks, play facilities and other green spaces to encouraging more active lifestyles and improved mental well-being.

2.13 Other Supplementary Planning Guidance such as the forthcoming guidance on *Shaping Neighbourhoods* (which will pull together a number of existing revised SPGs, Best Practice Guides (BPG) and new documents), will provide advice and guidance on a number of play connected issues, in particular the implementation of Policy 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities (see Figure 1.1).

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1 Mayor of London. *A Sporting Future for London*. GLA, April 2009

2 Mayor of London. *London Housing Design Guidance (LHDG)*. LDA, 2010

3 Mayor of London. *Housing SPG*. GLA, 2012

4 Mayor of London. *All London Green Grid SPG*. GLA, March 2012

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## REVIEW OF LOCAL PLAY STRATEGIES

2.14 The 33 London boroughs now all have their own play strategies. These inform each borough's play policies and provide comprehensive guidance on play provision including quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in provision relative to future need as well as mechanisms to address these. It is important that they are kept under review and are regularly updated to reflect the changing needs of the community and its children, in consultation with children and young people.

2.15 Play strategies should encompass all categories of play space and informal recreation areas within the public domain, including provision within residential areas where coordination with organisations such as housing providers, the tenant and residents associations and those who maintain the spaces is required. Play strategies should identify opportunities to improve and upgrade provision and access to it in accordance with this supplementary planning guidance. Deficiencies in provision should be addressed in the planning of new provision to meet the needs of existing and new communities. This will generally be associated with new residential development but account should also be taken of needs generated in other places with high child populations such as town centres.

2.16 The review of play strategies should be viewed in the context of sustainable community strategies, local development frameworks and other related corporate strategies covering areas such as

regeneration, health, culture, education and crime and disorder as well as open space. Local open space strategies for instance can have a complementary role in meeting the objectives of the play strategies, in the sense that they present an opportunity to embed play within open spaces and address some of the deficiencies in play provision. Play strategies may be useful in expanding further on certain types of open spaces or uses within open spaces. The Mayor's *Best Practice Guidance on Open Space Strategies*<sup>5</sup> provides advice on how to prepare an open space strategy. It is intended that an updated version of this guidance will be issued for public consultation in winter 2012.

2.17 Figure 2.2 below shows the relationship between the different corporate strategies and assessments. Play strategies should make reference to a range of corporate strategies within a local authority.

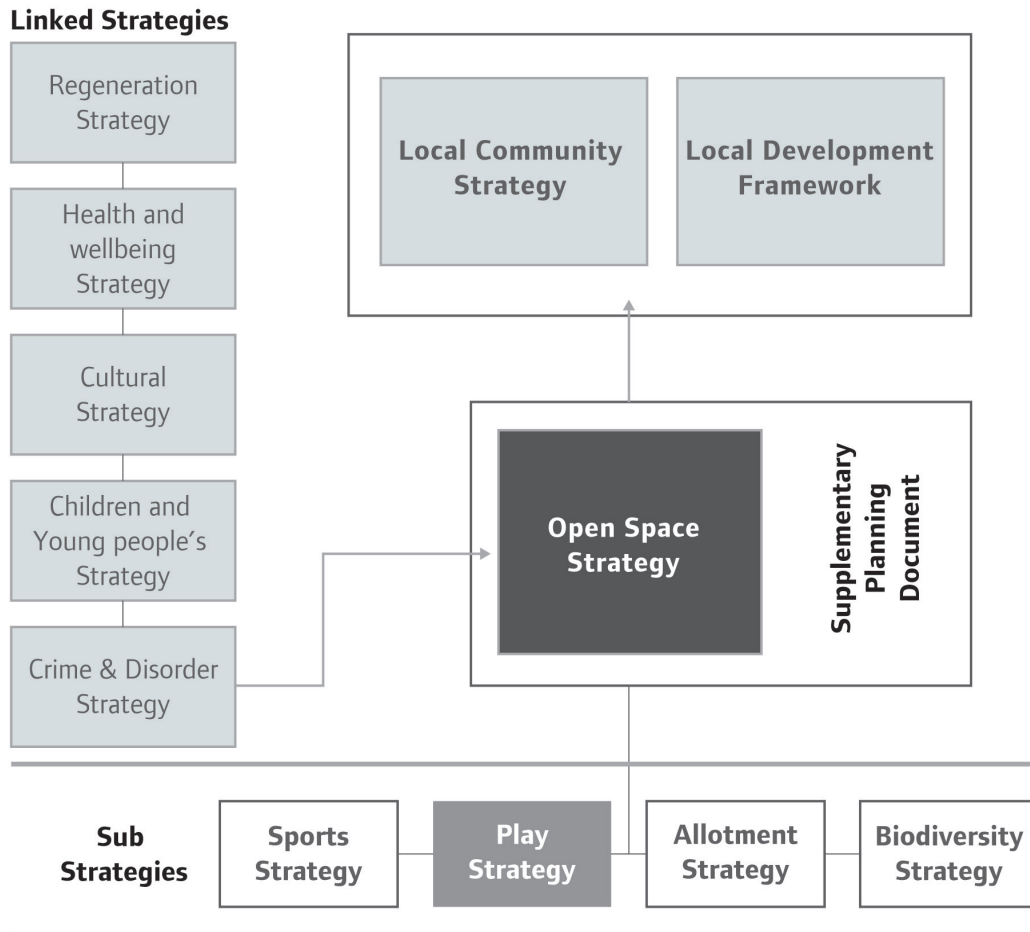
2.18 To assist London boroughs with the development of play strategies, the Mayor published in 2005 a *Guide to Preparing Play Strategies*.<sup>6</sup> This guidance is still useful for methodologies and general advice but has now been superseded to some extent by *Planning for Play*<sup>7</sup> from Play England. London boroughs may want to refer to these guidance when reviewing their play strategies.

<sup>5</sup> Mayor of London and Cabe Space. *Best Practice Guidance Open Space Strategies*, 2009

<sup>6</sup> Mayor of London. *Guide to Preparing Play Strategies*. GLA, April 2005

<sup>7</sup> *Planning for Play*. Guidance on the development and Implementation of a local play strategy. Play England, March 2006

Figure 2.2 Relationship of play strategy to other local strategies



2.19 When reviewing their play strategies, boroughs should carry out an audit of current provision. A series of steps on how to identify, map and audit current provision is proposed in Chapter 4A.



## **DEVELOPING LOCAL BENCHMARK STANDARDS**

- 2.20 It is recommended that boroughs develop benchmark standards in the context of their play and open space strategies, taking into account their local circumstances. The link between setting standards and local play strategies is essential, as the standards can be applied most effectively when boroughs have an understanding of the state of play and informal recreation provision in the area locally. Standards for local play provision should be adapted to reflect local needs, taking into account children's needs, the socio-economic context and the health status of the area. In some cases, it may be appropriate to adopt different thresholds for different sub-areas of a borough to reflect the needs of different neighbourhoods.
- 2.21 To ensure viability, the NPPF encourages local planning authorities to assess the likely cumulative impacts on development in their area of all existing and proposed local standards, supplementary planning documents and policies that support development plans, when added to nationally required standards. The cumulative impacts of these standards and policies should not put implementation of the plan at serious risk, and should facilitate development throughout the economic cycle.
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Caledonian Primary School  
(Glasgow, Scotland)  
Project - LTL  
Photo - Malcolm Cochrane



## CHAPTER THREE

# WHAT MAKES A GOOD QUALITY PLACE FOR PLAY?

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3.1 The provision of good quality places to play is an integral part of the creation of lifetime neighbourhoods (Policy 7.1). These are neighbourhoods where access to places to meet and relax, green and open spaces, cultural facilities, local shops, basic amenities and public transport are within easy reach of homes, and where facilities such as public toilets and seating consciously planned into proposals at the outset help to build cohesive, successful and sustainable communities. They are places where the needs of communities are met at all stages of their lives. This SPG gives guidance on the role that playable spaces can have in creating these neighbourhoods.

3.2 Creating a good place for play requires careful consideration and effort. Success is a matter of securing enough physical space in the right locations, understanding user requirements, designing and creating spaces that attract and engage children and young people, and ensuring appropriate long-term management and maintenance.

3.3 A good quality playable space is one providing all children and young people with safe access to physically accessible and inclusive facilities that are stimulating and fun. A good place to play needs a number of key elements:

- space
- location and accessibility
- an environment that encourages healthy lifestyles
- inclusion
- diversity in lifetime neighbourhoods

- playable space in a child-friendly city
- access to nature
- safety and security
- management and maintenance.

## SPACE

3.4 If children and young people are to have the chance to play out in the fresh air, to be physically active and to socialise with friends and peers, they need access to out of doors space. The first step to securing this is ensuring there is sufficient physical space, of quality in the neighbourhoods where children live. Quantitative benchmark standards, which closely reflect the London situation, are proposed in this guidance to boroughs to secure spaces for play. There is a case for linking the amount of space devoted to play to the numbers of children living, or expected to be living, in a proposed development. A methodology to calculate the number of children that a housing development will generate is proposed in Chapter 4. Play and informal recreation space should be properly integrated into new development and the surrounding area.

3.5 In addition to the provision of play and informal recreation space in new housing development, it is important to create more child-friendly neighbourhoods. This involves making different types of public space and the public realm more generally, safe and 'playable,' welcoming and enjoyable for children, their parents and carers as well as for young people. (see section on Playable space in a child friendly city)

## CASE STUDY - FITTING A PLAY SPACE IN A HIGH-DENSITY ESTATE



**Project - Evelyn Court (LB of Hackney), erect architecture.** Evelyn Court is a high-density housing estate in Hackney. It lacked usable communal space. An existing green buffer space between the estate and the main road was fenced off and inaccessible and the small existing playground only catered for very young children and was in dire need of an upgrade. The architect's objective for the public space design was to open up the existing green space for users of all ages by creating playable connections, which made use of the existing change in level. The design comprises a series of sliced mounds of differing characters. The mounds are constructed out of retained solid earth, timber or climbing nets. They offer exciting spaces on top, underneath and in-between for both play and socialising. These spaces are as valued by the children as the more traditional pieces of play equipment. The design uses oak railway sleepers throughout, is hardwearing and able to withstand the intensive use. *See front cover image.*

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 1

New housing developments that will house 10 children or more should make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs (see Chapter 4).

Public spaces and the public realm in general should be designed and managed so as to offer real opportunities for recreation and socialising to a wide range of potential users.

### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation  
 Policy 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities  
 Policy 7.5 Public realm

## LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

- 3.6 Location is partly a matter of physical proximity to children's homes, to their schools and to other places where they spend time. Studies show dramatic decreases in recent years in children's independent mobility and this has affected their access to play opportunities. Fear of traffic is the highest barrier for both parents and children for unaccompanied outdoor play. Young children are dependent on their parents or carers to get to and from places for play.
- 3.7 Well-located places for play are ones that are well-connected with the wider built environment. They should be near and have easy access to well-used pedestrian, cycling or bus routes, adjacent to well-used buildings (i.e. shops, school) or homes to allow for a level of informal community supervision and generate a sense of social safety and security (see also Table 4.8 on location). Play spaces should not be isolated by large expanses of open space, or severed from the rest of a neighbourhood by physical barriers such as busy roads or railway lines. Social divisions and social risks should also be considered, such as areas that are known or widely perceived to be a focus for street crime or harassment. Provision of car parking for disabled users should also be planned for.
- 3.8 In new developments, the use of **roofs** and terraces may provide an alternative to ground floor open space where they are safe, large enough, attractive and suitable for children to play, careful consideration should be given to these options, including the need for supervision and any restrictions that this might put on the use of the facilities. **Indoor space** can also have a role in providing sufficient play space for 0-5 year olds.
- 3.9 It is recommended that housing development proposals refer to the distance benchmarks provided in Table 4.4 and consider how particular types of playable space are accessed, in particular where proposals require young people to walk longer distances to access off-site provision. (see Chapter 4 and Tables 4.5 and 4.8).
-

**IMPLEMENTATION POINT 2**

Play space should be well-connected to well-used pedestrian, cycling or bus routes. They should be accessible to all sections of the community (including disabled people and their parents or carers) and be located within easy reach by walking, cycling and public transport.

New housing developments should make provision for play and informal recreation based on Table 4.4 on accessibility to play space.

The use of roofs, terraces and indoor space can be an alternative to ground floor open space but issues about safety and supervision should be given careful consideration.

**LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST**

Policy 3.5 Quality and design of housing development

Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation

Policy 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure

Policy 6.9 Cycling

Policy 6.10 Walking

Policy 7.1 Building London's

Neighbourhoods and Communities

Policy 7.2 An inclusive environment

Policy 7.3 Designing out crime

**AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

*"All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day."*

*Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England<sup>1</sup>*

3.10 Regular participation in physical activity among children and young people is vital for healthy growth and development. Less than a third of boys (32%) and a quarter of girls (24%) aged 2 – 15 achieve the minimum physical activity levels needed for good health in England (Start Active, Stay Active p.14). There is therefore an urgent need to significantly increase opportunities for our children to be active. Childhood obesity is closely linked to physical inactivity, and London has the highest rates of childhood obesity in England.<sup>2</sup> There are inequalities in childhood obesity by deprivation and ethnicity. Areas of greatest development potential in London (opportunity areas and areas for intensification) are often closely aligned with deprived areas and communities. New development, including housing estate renewal programmes present a real opportunity to improve the quantity and quality of play spaces in deprived areas and thereby improve the health of Londoners and reduce health inequalities.

<sup>1</sup> Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical activity from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers

<sup>2</sup> National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) for England, 2010/11 school year, December 2011

3.11 To enable children and young people to live healthy and active lives, they should grow up in high quality environments that are safe and offer them access to opportunities to participate in physical activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. These environments should include:

- Transport: safe routes for active travel to school, safe routes to parks and play space
- Play: access to quality play spaces for outdoor play, dedicated play centres for indoor play, access to schools and colleges with good playground provision, and physical education activities
- Sport: access to sports infrastructure such as playing pitches, dance clubs and swimming pools.

The location of play spaces should be accessible by walking and cycling routes which are suitable for children to use.<sup>3</sup>

3.12 *‘Investment in parks and green spaces should be seen as an investment in public health’*<sup>4</sup> and parks should provide a range of formal and informal recreation activities for children and young people (see London’s public open space categorisation table 2.1). The potential health benefits of outdoor play in natural settings include: positive attitudes towards physical activity; development of higher cognitive processes and healthy brain development; and promotion of and improved healthy wellbeing throughout the whole lives. Interaction with other children and

the opportunity to ‘make friends’ also contribute to the good health of children.

3.13 Health and Wellbeing Boards will establish a shared view of the needs and potential assets of the community through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and will be responsible for developing and implementing a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS). This will present an opportunity to align strategies and programme to promote physical activity, including planning interventions to promote child play opportunities and ensuring that all local journeys can be carried out by children using physically active modes.

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 3

Play spaces and their urban environment should enable children and young people throughout their whole lives to be physically active, in travelling, in formal play and sport.

The preparation of Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks or Area Action Plans can provide opportunities to increase physical activity and respond to play space needs in large scale development.

### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

Policy 2.13 Opportunity Areas and Areas for Intensification  
 Policy 2.14 Areas for Regeneration  
 Policy 3.2 Improving health and addressing health inequalities  
 Policy 3.6 Children and young people’s play and informal recreation  
 Policy 3.7 Large residential developments  
 Policy 6.9 Cycling  
 Policy 6.10 Walking  
 Policy 7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

<sup>3</sup> Promoting physical activity, active play and sport for pre-school and school-age children and young people in family, pre-school, school and community settings, NICE Public Health Guidance 17, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2009)

<sup>4</sup> NHS Ashton, Leigh and Wigan study, through the Heart of Wigan Partnership



## CASE STUDY - FUN ROUTES TO PLAY



Sustrans' guide *Routes to play*<sup>1</sup> makes some recommendations on ensuring children and young people can play actively and travel independently around the areas in which they live. Stimulating lightly trafficked routes for instance with artworks, paint on the path's surface and natural play features can offer excellent opportunities for spontaneous and creative play and can encourage children to walk to school, the park, shops or visit friends. Transport for London's Legible London initiative also aims to simplify wayfinding and improve access to play spaces for people on foot.

<sup>1</sup> Routes to play: A guide for Local Authorities: How to ensure children and young people can get to play spaces actively and independently. Sustrans, August 2009

## INCLUSION

3.14 Disabled children and young people have the right to play and be included in their local communities but this will only be achieved if the barriers to accessible play are identified and overcome. The guidance *Playing Outdoors? Disabled children's views of play pathfinder and playbuilder play spaces*<sup>5</sup> provides an overview of disabled children's perceptions of play spaces. It identifies access into and around play spaces as one of the most significant barriers that excludes disabled children from play spaces. The existence of steps, the lack of dropped kerbs and associated tactile paving or wide smooth level paths around and to play equipment, the lack of accessible toilets and the lack of parking often prevents disabled children and their families from getting into and using play spaces.

3.15 All children should be able to access equipment and play opportunities that are exciting and fun and offer various levels of challenges. Sensory experiences as well as the use of equipment that can be used in different ways by children at different stages of development and with differing levels of ability should be encouraged. The appendix in this guidance provides an example of the work that KIDS, the disabled children charity did on creating an inclusive world for disabled children in parks, open spaces, play opportunities and playgrounds, using 6 principles of inclusive design:

<sup>5</sup> *Playing Outdoors? Disabled children's views of play pathfinder and playbuilder play spaces*. KIDS, 2010

- diversity and difference;
- ease of use;
- freedom of choice and access to mainstream activities;
- quality;
- legibility and predictability; and
- safety.

3.16 Different age ranges – child, teenagers and adults – will in practice want to, and will:

- use the same space separately at the different times of the day;
- and also *share* the same space at the same time as a matter of course.

This approach is underpinned by the principles of inclusivity. Such spaces can also foster informal sociability between generations. Design and management practice should support the cross-generational use of the outdoors.

#### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 4

To ensure that all play spaces and routes to play space are accessible to, and usable by, disabled children and disabled parents, local authorities should be actively identifying and addressing the shortage of play provision for disabled children in their areas. New proposals should provide inclusive play space and equipment by meeting the highest standards of accessible and inclusive design.

#### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

Policy 3.1 Ensuring equal life chances for all  
 Policy 3.6 Children and young people’s play and informal recreation  
 Policy 7.1 Building London’s Neighbourhoods and Communities  
 Policy 7.2 An inclusive environment

#### CASE STUDY - INCLUSIVE LANDSCAPE DESIGN SPD



#### Islington Council’s Inclusive Landscape Design SPD <sup>1</sup>

provides comprehensive guidance on delivering inclusive design in a historic urban setting which includes parks, open spaces, tow paths, squares and residential areas, adventure playgrounds and hidden oasis. Illustrated with photos of good and bad examples, this SPG fills a gap in inclusive design advice helping to ensure that planning applications for public realm and landscape projects implement the principles of inclusive design.

SEE ALSO: Stephen Hawkings Special School case study below and Appendix 3 on Inclusion.

<sup>1</sup> London Borough of Islington. Inclusive Landscape Design Supplementary Planning Document, January 2010

## CASE STUDY – INCLUSIVE PLAY LANDSCAPE



©James Whitaker

**Project - Norwood Park Waterplay (LB of Lambeth), erect architecture.** The new water play area in Norwood Park is an extension to an existing equipment based playground. The clients' brief was to create a natural, inclusive play landscape offering water and sand play specifically catering for children with special needs and their families and carers. The design of two gently sloping mounds linked with a timber bridge exaggerates the play areas naturally elevated position within the park. The mounds embrace a generous, partly sand-filled sculpted valley and shelter it from the prevailing winds. Purpose designed play structures, climbing features and sand and water play elements are embedded in this landscape to provide a multi-level, all-weather play offer. Playing with mud, transporting, shaping and building with sand and water are basic needs, which bring together all age groups. The water and sand play offers children the opportunity to engage in 'proper' work and has some of the appeal of a real building site encouraging creative and co-operative play by enabling children to work together and engage in self-initiated 'projects' and games. This project recognised the difficulties wheelchair users can encounter with sand as a ground covering, and so combined solid, firm, and smooth ground surfaces with the sand to enable wheelchair users to enjoy the area.



## DIVERSITY IN LIFETIME NEIGHBOURHOODS

3.17 In a diverse city like London, children have different needs for play; these can vary depending on their age, sex, ethnicity, religion and level of ability. To ensure all children have equal access to play opportunities in accordance with equalities legislation,<sup>6</sup> it is important that those needs are identified and that places are tailored to ensure they are effectively met.

3.18 Teenagers also have specific needs. They particularly enjoy socialising and congregating together and should have a legitimate presence in shared public and communal realm. Not all of them enjoy being physically active and provision for most girls, and many boys who do wish to participate in informal recreation should be considered and provided for.

*According to a Play England survey, 81% of adults believe children playing outside helps to improve community spirit.*

3.19 Children playing outside their homes can result in neighbours getting to know each other better and build trust between local residents. It can enable the development of social networks and a sense of community belonging. Outside dedicated play spaces, making neighbourhoods with playable environments can benefit people of all ages in the neighbourhood. They can provide for places for quiet enjoyment as well as for places to be active. Interactions between people of different ages in parks and public spaces can contribute to building trust and understanding and

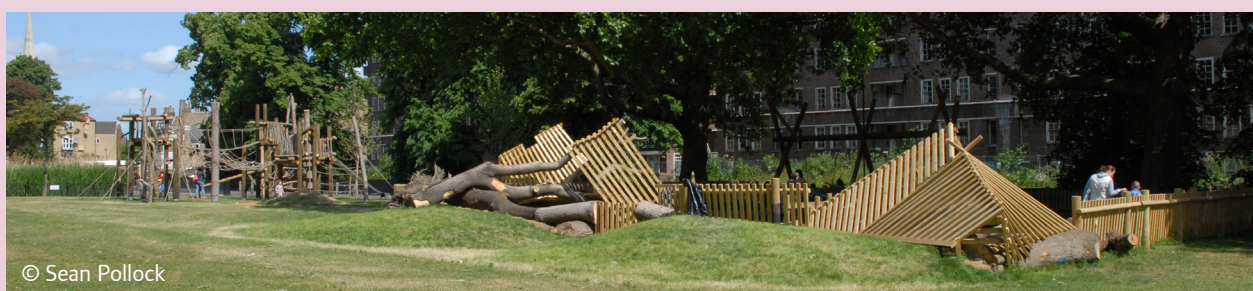
address any negative perceptions or tensions between young people and other members of the community alike.

3.20 Boroughs should support the development of networks within/between families and the wider community to help foster stronger relationships within the neighbourhood, build solutions to issues that concern the community and give a greater sense of belonging to the neighbourhood (see case study on Play Streets' models in Chapter 5). This will contribute to achieving the lifetime neighbourhood principles promoted in Policy 7.1.

3.21 A lifetime neighbourhood is also a place that people relate to and feel they belong to. The design of play space should be site-specific to create a sense of place and reflect the character of the local area. The type of play provision should be appropriate to the characteristics of the site and surrounding areas. See Table 4.6 Playable space typology.

3.22 Emphasis should be placed on the creation of family friendly environments, and requirements such as accessible toilets, baby-changing facilities and seating should be provided to make the neighbourhood accessible to all, including parents, carers and grandparents accompanying children. These supporting amenities that should be provided where the play area is not close to where people live should be included in management plans to prevent them deteriorating over time.

## CASE STUDY – ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY



**Project - Clapton Common Playground (LB of Hackney), erect architecture.** The design was developed to accommodate the wishes of the predominantly Hasidic Jewish community, specifically to avoid water and sand, to provide space for buggies and a generous amount of seating. A boundary for the under 5s area was designed to meet the requirements of the users. To maximise the available space in a relatively small site, the boundary incorporated seating, perching, balancing and other play opportunities. Fallen trees (which are an Orthodox Jewish icon) and playhouses were located and designed to be playable from the inside and outside of the play area. The provision of seating enables parents and carers to supervise their children's play, but also incites social interaction and the building of social networks. In a busy city where we often hear about people and families feeling socially isolated, this encourages community cohesion and promotes health and wellbeing.



## CASE STUDY – A ‘SOCIAL’ MULTI-USE GAMES AREA (MUGA)



**Project – S(MUGA) Memorial Park (LB of Newham), muf.** Expanding the functionality of the traditional MUGA as ‘social’ as well as ‘sporty’ space. The designated games area includes a more loosely defined space for informal play and sitting, enabling both the users of the games area and spectators or other users, including those hard to reach groups that are either unwilling or unable to take part in sports or formal youth schemes to socialise. The design for this MUGA was based on a series of workshops held with pupils in a nearby school.

## CASE STUDY – REFLECTING THE CHARACTER OF THE LOCAL AREA



©muf

**Project – Climbing tree (LB of Camden), muf.** The climbing tree is located in the small green space of Leighton Crescent, Camden. The scheme turns the tree as play opportunity on its head whilst references the architectural language of the conservation area.

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 5

Boroughs, developers and designers should identify the needs of children and their families, and those of other users of the space by engaging with them at the earliest opportunity (see Chapter 5, Engagement).

### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

Policy 3.1 Ensuring equal life chances for all  
 Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation  
 Policy 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities  
 Policy 7.4 Local Character



## PLAYABLE SPACE IN A CHILD-FRIENDLY CITY

3.23 For children and young people, the key feature of a successful space for play is its 'playability.' A playable space is one where children's active play is a legitimate use of the space. Playable space typically includes some design elements that have 'play value': they act as a sign or signal to children and young people that the space is intended for their play. The creation of play value through fixed equipment, informal recreation activities or engaging landscaping features should be a key requirement.

3.24 In London, where space is at a particular premium, public space, streets, pavements, walkways and various forms of public open space have the potential to be treated as incidental spaces for play. The creation of **incidental playable spaces** is dependent on the creative use of the public realm to provide enjoyment and discovery for children and young people for example through the creation of landscaping and high quality public art. These spaces can, with good design, be **multifunctional** offering a range of leisure and recreation opportunities for users of all ages as well as being playable. The playable space typology in Table 4.6 builds on the multifunctional concept of 'playable' play and defines a hierarchy of play provision.

3.25 The measures below give examples of how new developments such as high density housing and mixed-use schemes can be designed and operated to improve the environment/public realm for children, young people and other users and create

multifunctional spaces. They include:

- Imaginative integration of amenity and play space by incorporating planting, landscape, street furniture and play features (particularly on spaces that are above ground). Chapter 4 deals with some of the design issues that need to be resolved
- Playable street landscaping that includes planting, changes of level, boulders, logs and other engaging features, in order to create incidental play opportunities
- Stimulating play features scattered along lightly trafficked, accessible pedestrian and cycling routes, linking play spaces and informal recreation areas to housing, schools, shops and other key neighbourhood destinations that promote independent mobility and active travel ( See Sustans case study)
- Integration of public art as a means of enrichment and animation
- Commissioning of artists and designers to produce work within the general landscape scheme as well as prescribed play spaces
- Play Streets (see Chapter 5) and other highway measures, such as car parking located away from public play spaces, to create playable space in streets and other public spaces.
- Sharing of space, including new and existing school playgrounds and sports facilities.

### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

Policy 3.5 Public realm

Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation



### CASE STUDY - INCIDENTAL PLAYABLE SPACE

The creative use of the public realm and imaginative landscaping can provide opportunities for children to play throughout the city, where appropriate.



© Tim Gill

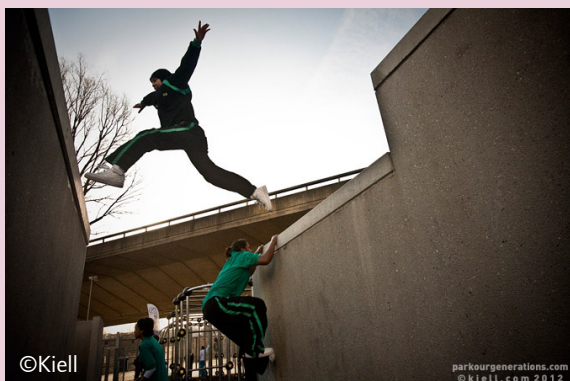
Water features in a residential development (Hammarby Sjostad, Stockholm)



© H Sanson

A river to play in a privately owned public space (More London, LB of Southwark)

## CASE STUDY - PARKOUR: ACTIVE IN THE CITY



**Project - Westminster Academy (LB Westminster).** Westminster opened the UK's first dedicated Parkour Park in a school facility (Westminster Academy). Parkour consists of finding new ways through the city landscape by scaling walls, jumping down steps and vaulting obstacles. It is about mastering body movement (and not predefined movements), moving in any terrain and becoming autonomous in one's own body. The sport is naturally accessible and does not require any specific adaptation. Over 8s can join regular classes which start at £1 and more seasoned Parkour professionals can use the school's Park unsupervised once they pass a competence test with qualified instructors from Parkour UK. Parkour UK as the National Governing Body (NGB) delivers nationally recognised coaching qualifications, leadership awards for young people aged 14-24 and teachers training courses.

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 6

Public and communal spaces should be designed so they are multifunctional and offer a range of leisure and recreation opportunities for users of all ages, as well as being playable. The proposed playable space typology in Table 4.6 addresses the potential for multifunctional spaces.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

- 3.26 School facilities and school playing fields can provide an important contribution to high quality play spaces for a range of community activities, such as pre or after school cultural and other sports activities. Where possible, children should be allowed access to use them outside school hours. Maximum use of schools after school hours or at weekends can contribute to reducing deficiencies in play provision, providing children with greater choice for play activities, respond to the needs of working parents as well as supporting educational attainment. Already undertaken initiatives have also demonstrated that it contributes to social inclusion, community cohesion, improved health, youth diversion and parental engagement.
- 3.27 Increasingly, secondary schools are developing leadership skills in their students and applying them in local settings whereby students (Young Leaders) often work in primary schools and run activities for children after school. Sport's national governing bodies are starting to establish coaching and training courses for young people in the community in exchange for the use of facilities (see case study on Parkour).
- 3.28 During the school day, physical activity and organised sport at school are also important and schools and colleges should look to make arrangements to share each others services (local on-site or off-site provision for play) when these are not fully used during school day. This may be particularly relevant for free schools



that may not have sufficient space to accommodate sports facilities on site. School collaboration is key and there are many examples of strong progression and continuity taking place within families of schools. Containers of materials, play bags of equipment (loose parts) or small world play (small equipment) also present an opportunity to optimise the use of schools' playgrounds that cannot be physically improved to stimulate, facilitate and enhance children's play at school. This has been tested successfully through the TOPS program in Scotland and successfully supports early years play (Learning Through Landscapes' contact in Appendix 4).

- 3.29 Sport England recently published an *Opening Schools Toolkit for Schools*<sup>7</sup> that offers best practice options and solutions to opening up school facilities to the community. It emphasises a number of models to address the concerns of management and maintenance. The key is to have a realistic business plan in place which covers all costs including staffing and site/equipment maintenance and makes the balance between income generation and costs. Establishing links with or utilising information from sport's national governing bodies is important to gain expert advice on how to use facilities correctly and on maintenance schedules as well as to save costs.

### CASE STUDY - COMMUNITY USE OF WESTMINSTER ACADEMY'S SPORT FACILITIES

It is the ambition in Westminster that each and every secondary school site will open up their sport facilities to the community and have a formal community use agreements in place by 2017.

Academy Sport, part of Westminster Academy provides an excellent and unique range of facilities on offer to clubs, community groups, schools and residents. Facilities include: 5 multi use synthetic pitches, tennis court, 4 badminton court sports hall, exercise studio, UKs first dedicated Parkour Park on a school site, beach volleyball court.

Westminster Academy manages the facility under a legally binding lease and a community use agreement provides consistency in terms of pricing policy and priority order of user groups. Each community use agreement is a formal requirement as part of the planning process. The Academy also has a dedicated Academy Sport facility operations team and general manager.

A community management group represented by the City Council, the Academy PE department and community groups meets on a monthly basis to review the ongoing programme, financial performance and participation levels. In 2011/12, 200,000 customers visited and made use of the facilities. More recently an overarching business plan has been developed to enhance the linkages between what is offered in PE, extracurricular time and community use (typically 6pm onwards Monday to Friday). One example of this in practice is volleyball, as a focus sport the PE department are now able to signpost young people to the senior session during community use and also benefit from club coaches working with the extracurricular clubs session.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.sportengland.org/support\\_\\_advice/opening\\_schools.aspx](http://www.sportengland.org/support__advice/opening_schools.aspx)

**CASE STUDY – NATURAL PLAY IN SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS**



**Project - Caledonian Primary School (Glasgow, Scotland), LTL.** Play should be seen as a fundamental aspect of children’s school life experiences. The school grounds charity Learning Through Landscapes (LTL) has recently explored how European school playgrounds and their inspiring and creative play practice (in particular natural play) could be adapted to a UK context in 8 primary schools in Scotland. To find out more on the practicalities of making them work and their many benefits for children see: <http://www.ltl.org.uk/scotland/programme.php?cs=2>

**IMPLEMENTATION POINT 7**

Where possible, schools should make appropriate arrangements to open their building (playgrounds and sports facilities) to the community outside school hours and/or share their facilities with other nearby schools..

**LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST**

Policy 3.6 Children and young people’s play and informal recreation  
Policy 3.18 Education facilities  
Policy 3.19 Sports facilities

## ACCESS TO NATURE

*One in seven children in London has not visited a green space in the last year.*

*Sowing the Seeds, London Sustainable Development Commission<sup>8</sup>*

3.30 Two thirds of the area of Greater London is covered by green spaces (including gardens) or water,<sup>9</sup> and 9.8% is designated as Metropolitan Open Land. However, many children in London, in particular from Black and Minority Ethnic groups still do not have adequate access to these natural places. Children in London face additional barriers compared to those in other parts of the UK, as a result of high population densities, pressure on green space, deficiencies in provision of public open space in many areas and poorer access to private gardens. The report *Sowing the Seeds: Reconnecting London's children with nature through play*<sup>10</sup>, commissioned by the London Sustainable Development Commission explores how children can be reconnected with nature, and the benefits that may be experienced as a result. It puts forward 12 recommendations to address the issues identified in the report and to make contact with nature a part of everyday life for more of London's children.

3.31 Access to nature is an important contributor to children's health and access to both existing and new wildlife habitats should therefore be enhanced for children. London Plan Policy 3.6 seeks to ensure all children and young people have access to play and informal recreation incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible. The Mayor expects London's biodiversity and natural heritage to be conserved and enhanced for the benefit of current and future Londoners and trees and woodlands should be protected, maintained and enhanced. Policy 7.19 sets out criteria and procedures for identifying land of importance for London's biodiversity for protection in LDFs and identifying areas of deficiency in access to nature. If new play provision is proposed in Areas of Deficiency for Access to Nature, the design should incorporate higher quality natural landscaped areas. Care should be taken when considering formal play spaces and equipment in a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC), to avoid damaging the valued habitats. In these areas, natural features could provide a valuable experience.

### **Interactive GIS-based map**

Savlon and Play England, in conjunction with Natural England, have launched a fully interactive GIS-based map where the public can search for and add good natural places to play, and upload comments and photos to show why they are good or need improving.

<sup>8</sup> London Sustainable Development Commission. *Sowing the Seeds: Reconnecting London's children with nature through play*. GLA, November 2011

<sup>9</sup> Communities and Local Government. *Generalised Land Use Database Statistics for England 2005, February 2007* <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/generalisedlanduse>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid



### CASE STUDY - A DEAD TREE COMES BACK TO LIFE



© Tim Gill

**Project- Highgate New Town (LB of Islington), muf.** The creative use of a trunk and the net around it promotes natural play.

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 8

LDF play policies and play strategy should establish a shared vision that all children in London have good access to sites where they can experience nature as part of their everyday lives, and have engaging everyday nature experiences in such a site, beginning in their early years.

Wherever possible, play spaces should incorporate trees and greenery.

### CASE STUDY –THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY GARDENS



© Calthorpe Project

**Project – The Calthorpe Project, LB of Camden.** The Calthorpe Project is a 1.2 acre ‘inner city oasis’ in Kings Cross where the community mostly lives in flats with no gardens. The project enables local children to reconnect with the natural environment by participating in organised activities or creating their own. Children can learn about nature, get plenty of exercise and meet friends. Holiday, after-school and weekend programmes provide outdoor, creative and social activities for local children. Volunteers with a few hours to spare help maintain the garden and food growing area.

### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

- Policy 2.18 Green infrastructure
- Policy 3.6 Children and young people’s play and informal recreation
- Policy 7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency
- Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and access to nature
- Policy 7.21 Trees and woodlands

Map 3.1 Local park indicative deficiency area



Source: Map derived from GiGL data 2011 © Crown Copyright and database right 2012. Ordnance Survey 100032216.

Children are able to adopt and make the most of wild spaces, if they are given the opportunity to play.



©LTL/Malcolm Cochrane



## SAFETY AND SECURITY

*“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 injuries”*

*Managing Risk in Play Provision: Summary Statement, Play Safety Forum<sup>11</sup>*

- 3.32 Good places for play should include a degree of physical challenge and allow managed opportunities for children and young people to take risks. There is a growing consensus that play space design has become overly influenced by fear of litigation and a subsequent drive to minimise injuries. The risk of injury cannot be eliminated in any space, and minor and easily healed injuries are part of every child’s experience.
- 3.33 There is no specific legislation on play safety in the UK and there is widespread confusion about the status and applicability of industry Standards, Guidance and advisory notes issued by a range of organisations and interests. A ‘suitable and sufficient’ risk-benefit assessment, a risk assessment process endorsed by the HSE, is the vehicle for making judgments as to whether or not a Standard, guidance or advisory note is applicable in a particular situation. *Managing Risk in Play Provision: implementation guide* (MRPP) quotes written advice<sup>12</sup> given by Raymond Machell QC, of Byrom Street Chambers:

*‘Thus, in my opinion, the proper approach to British or European standards is not to regard them as laying down a compulsory standard to be followed slavishly in all cases, but as a guideline demonstrating the general consensus as to what would constitute sensible precautions in any given case. If a rational process of risk assessment, together with a balance of cost, risk and benefit can justify departure, then there would be no failure to exercise reasonable care.’ [emphasis in original Opinion<sup>13</sup>]*

- 3.34 The primary legal requirement for providers is to undertake a ‘suitable and sufficient’ risk assessment of play provision. Risk assessments should strike the balance between the risks and the benefits of risks and consider trading-off risk-benefit between safety and other goals. *Play England’s Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation Guide*<sup>14</sup> shows how play providers can replace current risk assessment practice with an approach that fully takes into account the benefits to children and young people of challenging play experiences. It provides a useful approach for those who manage spaces and settings in which children play, and for those involved in designing and maintaining them. Risk-benefit assessment focuses on making judgements and identifying measures that manage risks while securing benefits. Given children’s appetite for risk-taking, one of the factors that should be considered is the likelihood that they will seek out risks in environments that are not controlled or designed for them, if play provision is not challenging enough. Another factor is the

11 Play Safety Forum. *Managing Risk in Play Provision: Summary Statement*, June 2008

12 Commissioned by PLAYLINK

13 <http://www.playlink.org/articles/?p=8>

14 Play England and Play Safety Forum. *Managing Risk in Play Provision*. 2008

learning that can take place when children are exposed to, and have to learn to deal with, environmental hazards. London Play's Implementation guide explains how risk-benefit assessment can address issues such as the selection of surface type, the use of fencing and self-build structures in a particular location.

- 3.35 Good design can also help to make spaces be – and feel – more secure for children and young people and their parents and carers, and less prone to misuse or vandalism. Routes to play spaces should be legible, well-connected and well-maintained. Sufficient and attractive provision for young people for instance can play a part in preventing anti-social behaviour.
- 3.36 Young people often enjoy being near activities, or simply 'watching the world go by.' Sensitivity is required in judging how, in each individual space, the best possible balance is to be struck between, on the one hand, providing specifically for young people and, on the other, ensuring that they are seen as a legitimate presence in shared public and communal space. There is no one way of achieving this but seating circles – of various materials – boulders, mounding, planting, trees and varied mowing regimes (allowing for uncut grass areas) can provide settings that are flexible in use and inviting to use.
- 3.37 Good design should also take into account that a recognisable physical boundary or barrier can be beneficial for some disabled children and young adults, particularly children with autism and

other neurodiverse conditions, who may not be fully aware of their surroundings and the dangers that may exist, and may wander. This is particularly applicable to formal play areas to identify the edge of the play space. Formal play spaces should also consider observable space, i.e. how the space can be observed by parents or carers of disabled children particularly those with autism to use the space more independently. Where physical barriers are required; for example to the edge of formal play areas, they should be recognisable and robust, but also attractive and not look purely functional.

- 3.38 The design of play space should take into account a **changing climate**. Children and young people should be protected from risks such as exposure to the sun, hot weather, poor air quality or noise (from busy main roads for instance). Measures could include the incorporation of canopy trees and shading structures/canopies to provide shade and refuges from the heat/weather. Water fountains should be provided nearby where practical as well as biodiverse vegetation or food growing opportunities to enhance the outdoor experience. Any water-based play features should be water and energy efficient. *Managing Risks And Increasing Resilience: the Mayor's climate change adaptation strategy*<sup>15</sup> looks at who and what is vulnerable to extreme weather today, considers how climate change will affect the existing climate risks, or create new risks or opportunities in the future and provides a framework for action.

<sup>15</sup> Mayor of London. *Managing Risks and Increasing Resilience: the Mayor's climate change adaptation strategy*. GLA, October 2011

## CASE STUDY - PLAY IT 'SAFE' AT BUSH HILL PARK



### Project – Bush Hill Park, London Borough of Enfield.

This demonstrates how a stack of simple stones can provide an opportunity for children to challenge themselves and for young people to sit and 'hang out' in the seating circle. The sand and pebbles used attenuate impacts from a jump or a fall at a low cost and with little maintenance. The play features also encourages natural play.

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 9

Boroughs should promote a balanced approach to managing risk in play provision. The need for children to take risks should be clearly highlighted in play strategies and play strategy reviews and should set the framework for making judgements about play provision, risks and benefits for children.

Boroughs should follow the approach provided in Play England's *Managing Risk in Play Provision Implementation Guide* to inform the ways in which play is provided.

Measures should be included in the design of play space to take account of the changing climate.



## CASE STUDY – SEARCHING FOR BETTER SOLUTIONS

BEFORE



AFTER



### Project - Stephen Hawkings Special School (LB of Tower Hamlets), Free Play.

This primary school for children with severe learning difficulties has transformed its playground from a blank grey concrete canvas with very little shade, no covered area and very little to do to an oasis of play and curiosity. A ‘Slow Design’ approach (see Chapter 5, Engagement) was taken up to develop a playground that would be accessible and where children would participate in meaningful activities. The whole playscape construction was spread over three years. This allowed the play designer/builder to get to know the children attending the school, observe how children played in the space, and progressively build a stimulating playground around the children’s developmental and sensory needs rather than their chronological age. Swings were used as one key therapeutic medium to develop sensory integration with children. Bamboo trees and raised boxes with sensory plants now link the playground to a wooden house where children can play with numerous sensory-based activities indoors if the weather is bad. A hoist within the indoor area allows the children to come out of their wheelchairs and sit in the sand area or ball pool if desired. A level access trampoline and level access see-saw, mirrors and a water play area also form part of the play space. Lots of planting for shade and quiet areas allow the children to sit and play on the playground.

### LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST

Policy 3.6 Children and young people’s play and informal recreation

Policy 5.10 Urban greening

Policy 7.3 Designing out crime

## MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

3.39 Successful places for play will only remain successful if an effective management and maintenance regime is in place. All spaces will require a degree of ongoing inspection and site maintenance, and the responsibility for this should be clarified at the outset.

3.40 Control of dogs and potential related health hazards is one aspect of management that many children, young people and parents are concerned about. Historically, play spaces have relied upon dog-proof fencing to keep dogs out. However, fencing limits children's freedom of movement, make for less flexible use and reinforces the tendency to restrict unnecessarily children's play to specific parts of public spaces. Dog management issues and actions to prevent any negative impacts should be reflected as part of open spaces strategies and management plans.

3.41 Play spaces do not have to be neat and tidy and grass or mounding can be left to grow longer and provide immense play value, whilst worn areas of grass around seating areas just prove that a park is well used. The level of maintenance required will depend on the size and content of a play space and design solutions can be found for these spaces to generate low maintenance costs. Below are some examples:

- Grass: Grass can be left to grow longer, creating different textures and areas for exploration (saving on grass cutting)
- Mounding: Mounding can be left to

grow longer as general use keeps the grass from growing out of control – simply mowing a line around the edge of mounding indicates to adults that the area is being maintained and not neglected

- Sand: Sand does not need to be raked and heavily maintained on a daily basis. Apart from having excellent play value and acting as a safety surface, through experience local authorities have realised that they can do a quick daily inspection and rake/fork weekly, with disinfecting happening monthly (see case study on sand pit maintenance below)
- Off the shelf equipment: due to it being more readily available is often used but is also more costly when replacing parts and whole pieces. After all fallen logs are much cheaper to replace!

3.42 Choices for landscaping shrubs, trees and plants need to be sturdy enough to handle kids at play. Child-resistant materials that are durable such as wood and attractive shrubs and plants that are low maintenance are the best option to help ensure that greenery grows and thrives as well as children. Those responsible for developing, delivering and maintaining innovative natural play spaces within parks and similar spaces may find it helpful to refer to Play England's *Nature Play: Maintenance Guide*<sup>16</sup> to get advice on how to maintain and sustain natural play spaces, the level of maintenance required and the involvement of the community in long-term maintenance. Routes and links to play spaces should also be appropriately

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<sup>16</sup> Play England. *Nature Play: Maintenance Guide*, 2009

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managed and maintained for people to be able to continue using the space easily and safely.

- 3.43 Developers should agree a management and maintenance scheme with the local planning authority. The scheme should provide for the maintenance of the play facilities and their supporting amenities, in perpetuity to the agreed standard by the developer or an appropriate agency or the transfer of the facilities to the borough for it to manage with an agreed maintenance sum (See also chapter 5).

#### **IMPLEMENTATION POINT 10**

In all development proposals, appropriate arrangements for the long term management, retention, access to and maintenance of any play space and communal facilities should be secured.

The creation and management of good play space will be dependent on the application of the design principles in table 4.8 when creating or improving existing space.

#### **LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST**

Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation

Policy 8.2 Planning obligations

Policy 8.3 Community Infrastructure Levy

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### **CASE STUDY - SAND PIT MAINTENANCE, LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON (LONDON)**

Sand is one of the most popular play space materials and greatly enhances the quality of play opportunities and children's play experiences.

The London Borough of Islington has sand pits in 11 parks. As part of their grounds maintenance contract, each day park keepers record anything found in sand pits.

#### **Current guidance**

The *Natural Play Maintenance Guide*<sup>1</sup> recommends site-specific assessment of how to maintain sand pits. PlayLink has found that maintenance varies across the country from daily to monthly visual inspections, raked daily to raked rarely, and topped up several times a year to every other year. RoSPA Information Sheet 26 *Sand Play in Children's Play Areas*<sup>2</sup> argues that the problems associated with maintaining sand pits are "much less than folk-lore suggests." It recommends that regular raking will be needed (ideally daily but never less than weekly), with periodic forking, regular use of disinfectant, annual topping up and occasional replacement.

#### **What did Islington do and how much did it cost?**

Sand was inspected and cleared daily, forked and disinfected weekly, topped up as necessary and replaced roughly every three years. The total annual cost of maintaining sand pits in 2010/11 was £35,000.

<sup>1</sup> Nature Play: Maintenance Guide. Play England, 2009

<sup>2</sup> Play Safety Information Sheet, Information Sheet Number 26: Sand Play in Children's Play Areas. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 2004

#### **Evidence for change**

Islington reviewed park keepers' records and found that over 5 months from July to November 2010 nothing was found in sand pits at most sites. At Highbury Fields and Wray Crescent substances were found that might require subsequent disinfectant around 2 to 3 times a month.

#### **What does Islington do now?**

Based on the latest guidance and the latest site specific findings, Islington has put in place a new maintenance regime:

- Inspect and clear all sites daily, fork all sites weekly
- Disinfect Highbury Fields & Wray Crescent sand pits every other week
- Disinfect all other sand pits once a month
- Top up and replace sand as necessary
- Monitor what is found at each site over the next year and reassess after 12 months

#### **The results**

Making a small change to the maintenance regime has seen the total cost of maintaining sand pits go down by around £20,000 per year. This has helped us to reach current savings targets and helps to dispel the myth that sand is problematic and expensive to maintain. (January 2011)



### ATTENTION TO PLAY DESIGN DETAILS

It is important to incorporate subtle details in scheme design which can be enjoyed by children.







Gascoyne Estate Playground  
(Hackney, London)  
Project/Photo - erect architecture



## CHAPTER FOUR

# APPLYING THE BENCHMARKS

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4.1 This chapter provides benchmarks for London to assist boroughs in setting standards for local provision and devising strategies for improvement of play and informal recreation facilities. The objective of providing attractive play spaces for all children and young people within walking distance of their homes is dependent on the application of such standards within the context of the overall play strategy, local characteristics and a comprehensive approach to understanding local needs, aspirations and opportunities.

4.2 London Plan Policy 3.6 highlights the need to make provision for play and informal recreation in development proposals that include housing, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs. This chapter provides benchmark standards that can be used as:

- A **baseline** to understand the extent to which the needs of children and young people living in an area are currently met. This can be used as an evidence base in policy and strategy development and;
- A **development management tool** to establish the requirement for new provision to meet the needs arising from new residential developments when dealing with planning applications.

### **Recommended steps in the application of benchmark standards**

4.3 The benchmark standards apply to assessing the needs of the existing population **(A)** and the needs arising from new development **(B)** and address the following key elements of play provision:

- The **Quantitative** requirement for play provision
- **Accessibility** to play provision
- The **Quality** of play provision

All three elements need to be considered.

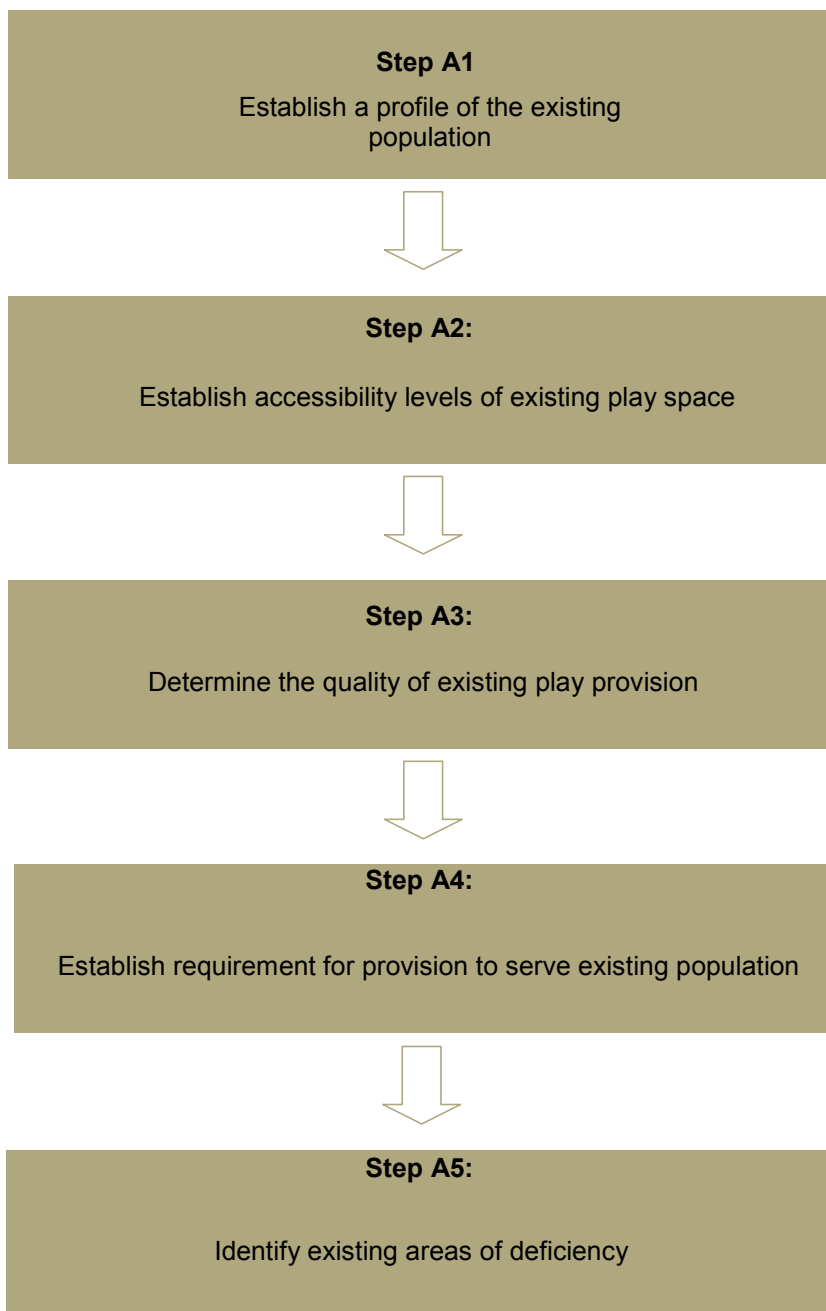
### **A - IDENTIFYING, MAPPING AND AUDITING CURRENT PROVISION**

4.4 A series of steps is proposed in the application of the benchmark standards in assessing the needs of the existing population. These are set out in Figure 4.1 and relate to the audit of existing provision. These steps are recommended as part of the analysis and identification of objectives of the play strategy and as a tool to assist in pre-application negotiations and the determination of planning applications.



Figure 4.1 Identifying, Mapping and Audit of Current Provision

### Identifying, Mapping and Auditing Current Provision



## EVIDENCE GATHERING

4.5 A range of evidence already gathered by boroughs to support their local development framework or various strategies can be used to feed into the audit. London Plan Policy 3.16 on social infrastructure encourages boroughs to assess the needs for social infrastructure at the local and sub-regional level regularly. These assessments should provide borough officers with helpful information on local deficits and surpluses of play provision in their area. Local town centre health checks can also be a source of information to identify play provision in town centres. Open space strategies and findings from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) can also help establish the needs of children and teenagers for recreational space.

### Step A1: What is the population profile?

4.6 A demographic and social profile of the borough should be prepared building on existing data sources to provide an up-to-date picture of the local area and should be examined by output areas or a ward basis. The list below illustrates the type of information that should be considered:

- Population distribution and age structure
- Proportion of children in different age bands
- Poverty, deprivation and polarisation including indices of multiple deprivation such as child poverty

4.7 Based on the GLA's population projections, it will be possible to chart projected population changes. It will be useful to show this information on a series of maps and GIS will allow land and population data to be easily linked, recorded and analysed. This will assist in defining areas of particular need and in assessing these characteristics against the distribution of open space.

4.8 There are significant variations in the population profile of different parts of London. Understanding local needs for play will involve estimating the number and proportion of children and young people in different age bands. This will be a key step in understanding the nature of local needs in the early stages of review of the play strategy.

4.9 The age bands of under-5s, 5-11 and 12+ have been selected to ensure consistency between the application of benchmark standards and the assessment of needs and the approach adopted in the assessment of educational requirements. It is recognised, however, that there will be a range of needs within these age bands and within the characteristics of the area and that provision will be required to reflect the needs of all ages and localities. This will require flexibility in design of play areas (see Chapter 3, Diversity). It will also be necessary to plan for changing demographics over time.

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## Step A2: How accessible is existing play space?

- 4.10 Distance is a key barrier to children's play. All children and young people should have access to play space within reasonable and safe walking distance of their homes. Distance can be a useful tool in helping to identify deficiencies in provision but it will also be necessary to identify any barriers to children accessing those areas within the recommended distance (e.g. traffic, roads where speeds are in excess of 20mph, railways, watercourses, isolated or secluded routes, social divisions associated with/by location) and to make allowance for these in assessing access to existing facilities.
- 4.11 Distance should be measured as actual walking distance from residential units taking into account barriers to movement. This is particularly relevant for disabled parents and children and older people accompanying children. The following benchmark standards are recommended in respect of different age bands.

**Table 4.2 Accessibility to Play Space (existing provision)**

Child Age	Actual Walking distance from residential unit (taking into account barriers)
Under 5s	100 m
5-11 year olds	400 m
12 +	800 m

- 4.12 The preparation/review of play strategies will involve an audit of current play provision. In deciding what play spaces to include in the audit, consideration should be given to the range of spaces within the agreed scope of the strategy. As a minimum, audits should assess areas where play is intended to be at least one of the main functions of the space. The dedicated play spaces included in the audit should be free and accessible and provide unrestricted opportunities for play and informal recreation for children and young people. In undertaking the audit, multifunctional spaces that are genuinely playable (see Chapter 3) can be counted even if they have some other uses. However, categories of open space provision that are not playable should not. (see Table 4.3). Audit tools such as the Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS) identify the quality of routes to play space and any barriers that may exist. Barriers to accessing play space will vary in scale depending upon the age of the child attempting to access play space.

## Step A3: What is the quality of existing play provision?

- 4.13 Following an assessment of quantitative requirements and accessibility to existing provision, it should now be clear whether there is a deficiency in existing play provision in the area. The next stage is to understand in more detail the quality of existing provision in order to assist the integration of decision making, including improvements to existing play spaces.



4.14 Play areas should be assessed for quality and play value and meet a minimum quality and value benchmark standard. The playability of play spaces should be assessed through a site visit, ideally at a time when children are more likely to be out of doors. The quality of space for parents/carers to supervise the play should be assessed at the same time. The basis of this assessment will vary according to local practice, but should include consideration of the following:

- children and young people's **use** of spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation as well as parents/carers supervising them (popularity and levels of existing use)
- children and young people's **access** to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation
- children and young people's **experience** of spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation (social, cultural, economic and physical barriers to access)
- **quality** of local spaces and facilities available for play and informal recreation (provision of a range of play activities and experiences for different age groups, settings that encourage different ages to play together, differing levels of challenge: how they are dealt with and overcome, fitness for use and condition of existing facilities and equipment, equality and inclusiveness)
- **maintenance** of local spaces and facilities (condition of existing facilities and equipment as well as supporting amenities such as toilets, baby changing facilities)

#### **Step A4: How much space is required to serve the needs of the existing population?**

4.15 It will be necessary to assess how much play space is required to meet existing needs. Many London boroughs (particularly in inner London) anticipate being in a position of continuing deficiency of open space. The audit of play space will establish the level and distribution of existing provision. The application of a quantitative standard must therefore take into account local conditions.

4.16 Existing national standards (see appendix 1) are too high for practical application in London. London boroughs have as a consequence been using a more realistic and achievable figure as a benchmark standard for London since the first publication of the Mayor's SPG on Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation in 2008. **This benchmark standard recommends a minimum of 10 sq m of dedicated play space per child as a basis for assessing existing provision within an area.** This standard is also intended to benchmark provision against other areas. If more appropriate to their local circumstances, boroughs are also able to use the local standards that reflect their own local priorities and policies as derived from their play strategy. Standards for play provision are in addition to other quantitative standards for open space provision applied in open space strategies, although opportunities for the multifunctional use of open space should be optimised.

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4.17 The benchmark standard will be applied to the number of children within different age bands in the population to establish an overall requirement. This will be assessed against the level and type of existing play provision in the area to establish whether there is an overall deficiency or deficiency of particular types of provision. Deficiencies in the quality of existing provision should also be identified.

This should be measured against the adopted qualitative guidelines. A list of improvements that are required to meet the standards should be compiled for each site feeding into the production of management and action plans as part of the play strategy. The strategy should also identify how investment in existing play spaces is to be prioritised.

#### **Step A5: Are there existing areas of deficiency?**

4.18 Existing play spaces should be identified for all age groups in the play strategy and catchment areas established by the application of accessibility thresholds. Barriers to movement such as busy roads and rail lines may limit the catchment area and provide its edge. This process will identify areas of deficiency where children and young people do not have access to existing facilities within a reasonable distance from their homes. This should be done through the application of GIS using the criteria and accessibility standards set out in Table 4.3. The table also identifies examples of the types of facility that can be counted as an existing space for play.

4.19 The requirement for new play provision to meet the needs of children and young people in areas of deficiency should be identified in the play strategy which should highlight opportunities for meeting this requirement. It will be important to understand the relationship of the play strategy to other strategies (see figure 2.2) and corporate objectives.

4.20 In developing the borough's open space strategy, it will also be necessary to identify how to address the Mayor's commitment to improving access to wildlife and natural green space (Policy 7.19). The Mayor has identified "Areas of Deficiency" (AoDs) in access to nature and produced guidance "Improving Londoners' Access to Nature" – a London Plan Implementation Report. The relationship and overlap between AoDs in access to nature and areas of deficiency in play provision should be identified. This will have implications for the location and character of future play provision to address existing deficiencies.

Table 4.3 Assessing Areas of Deficiency

	Children under 5	Children 5 – 11	Young people 12+
What counts as an existing space for play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small age appropriate equipped play area</li> <li>• Public open spaces with potential for informal play</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipped age-appropriate play area</li> <li>• Public open spaces with potential for informal play</li> <li>• Kickabout areas</li> <li>• Adventure playgrounds</li> <li>• Skatepark, bike park or other wheeled facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure Playgrounds</li> <li>• Sport or recreation space that is open access (e.g. ball court, basketball court, multi-use games area)</li> <li>• Skatepark, bike park or other wheeled facility</li> <li>• Fitness trails or other age-appropriate equipped areas</li> <li>• Outdoor stage</li> <li>• Youth shelters</li> </ul>
Actual Walking Distance (taking into account barriers to movement)	100 m	400 m	800 m



**IMPLEMENTATION POINT 11**

Standards should be adopted to reflect local circumstances, in the light of observations/engagement on children's play needs, the socio-economic context of the area, health status and the priorities identified in the play strategy.

Audits should assess areas where play is intended to be at least one of the main functions of the space (dedicated play spaces) as well as spaces that are genuinely playable but may be multifunctional and have other uses.

Standards for play provision are in *addition* to other quantitative standards for open space provision applied in open space strategies, although opportunities for the multifunctional use of open space should be optimised.

Needs for play space in large scale development should be progressed through Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks or Area Action Plans.

## **B - NEW DEVELOPMENT: DETERMINING THE PLAY SPACE REQUIREMENTS**

4.21 The steps in assessing the requirement for new play provision to meet the needs arising from new development are set out in Figure 4.2. This approach can assist planners in pre-application negotiations and in determining planning applications for new development.

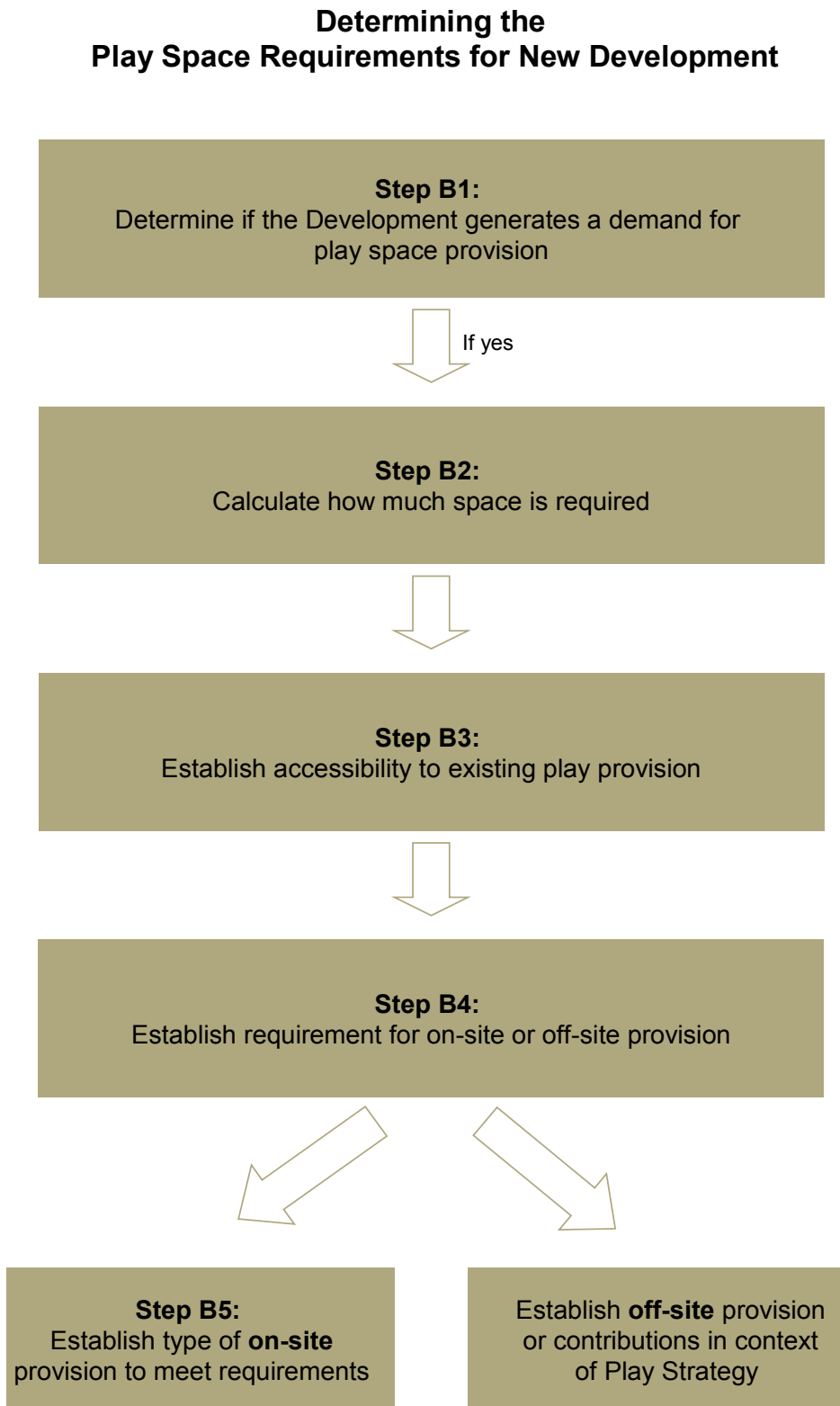
### **Step B1: What is the requirement for new play space provision to meet future needs?**

4.22 In assessing future requirements for play provision, it will be necessary to consider the requirements arising from:

- existing local deficiencies and forecast future needs taking into account the future projected growth in the child population of the area
- requirements arising from new development in the area.

4.23 A borough's play strategy should be based on an understanding of future needs in the area. This will require an assessment of the needs arising from new development and an early understanding of how these needs can be met in the area. This will assist in the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and Area Action Plans and inform the preparation of development proposals at an early stage.

Figure 4.2 Assessing the needs arising from new development



4.24 It is recommended that the benchmark or the locally derived standards should be applied to the forecast child population of the area. **The proposed benchmark standard of a minimum of 10 sq.m. per child regardless of age is recommended as a basis for assessing future requirements arising from an increase in the child population of the area.** In the light of consultation with London boroughs and research on the application of standards elsewhere, this is considered to be a realistic standard to aspire to and of what is capable of being achieved. This proposed benchmark standard is indicative and boroughs may choose to use their own benchmark to reflect their local priorities and policies. It should be noted that the standard for play provision is *in addition* to other quantitative standards for open space provision applied in open space strategies.

4.25 All developments with an estimated child occupancy of ten children or more should seek to make appropriate play provision to meet the needs arising from the development. If there is the opportunity from the new development to access existing provision that has excess capacity or is capable of enhancement from the new development, the benchmark standard of 10 sq m per child does not need to be applied. If it is not the case, it is recommended that benchmark standards should be applied to the anticipated child occupancy of new development. This will give a more effective measure of need and will reflect variations in population characteristics and the mix of housing types and tenures. The play strategy is

also required to set out guidelines for new play provision. Where very large residential developments are proposed, the possibility of creating **multifunctional space** (see Chapter 3) should be specifically addressed in calculating the appropriate provision and when assessing the surrounding local context.

4.26 An appropriate financial contribution to play provision within the vicinity of the development, should be made for developments with an estimated child occupancy of **fewer than 10 children**. If the contribution cannot be made towards an on-site provision in a small development, an equivalent contribution will be required to be made to an existing or new off-site provision (see Step B4).

### Step B2: How much space is required?

4.27 The recommended approach to assessing the level of play provision required is based on the application of child occupancy rates. The use of child occupancy is already an established planning tool in assessing the impact of new development on education services and a range of alternative methodologies have been developed by London boroughs to understand the child occupancy impacts of development projects. The methods used in assessing education and health requirements can be applied in assessing the need for play provision arising from new development. This will ensure a consistency and clarity of approach at the local level.

- 4.28 Child occupancy will vary with the type of accommodation and in terms of dwelling size (usually measured as the number of bedrooms) and tenure. It will also vary by locality and by the ages of the children. Census data confirms, for example, that private flats have fewer children and any children tend to be young children or babies. Child occupancy factors should relate to new accommodation and incorporate tenure, dwelling type, size of the accommodation in terms of number of bedrooms and the ages of the children.
- 4.29 The Demography and Policy Analysis Group (DPAG) at the GLA, previously Data Management and Analysis Group (DMAG), can provide advice to boroughs on the analysis of child occupancy from new development. It is recommended that due to the importance of child occupancy factors, boroughs should regularly collect data relating to the initial occupancy of new dwellings particularly in new developments on large sites where the active involvement of developers should be encouraged.
- 4.30 DMAG briefing paper on child yield (DMAG Briefing 2005/25 August 2005) and DMAG Demography Update entitled *Child Occupancy of New Social Housing* (2006/11 May 2006) set out different approaches to the calculation of child occupancy and have been used to create GLA child yield formulae for calculating child occupancy in new development and determining play space. Since the publication of the 2008 SPG, the Wandsworth figures on which the GLA child yield formulae were based have been updated. The GLA child yield figures have therefore been updated accordingly (see appendix 2). However, it should be noted that the guidance provided by the GLA Demography and Policy Analysis Group are interim awaiting the 2011 Census figures.
- 4.31 The 10 sq m per child benchmark should be set in the context of the overall open space requirements, and where open space provision is genuinely playable, the open space may count towards the play space provision.
- 4.32 In assessing the quantum of play space required, consideration should be given to the type of housing proposed and the provision of private gardens. The requirement for provision of play space for children under the age of five may be discounted in relation to houses with **gardens** in assessing play requirements. However, provision will need to be made for play space in addition to private amenities for all children over the age of five to give them the opportunity to socialise with other children. The protection of private back gardens and residential gardens will enable children to make use of these areas (Policy 3.5). The use of **roofs**, **terraces** and **indoor space** can be an alternative to ground floor open space but issues about safety and supervision should be given careful consideration (see Chapter 3).
- 4.33 Where development is itself taking place on land that has previously been used by children for play, and as a consequence results in a loss of play provision in an area of defined need for that type of provision,
-



Assessing child occupancy and play space requirements							
<b>Size of your development:</b>							
<b>Number of FLATS</b>							
	Studio	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Total
Social rented/affordable	0	7	14	0	0	0	21
Intermediate	0	6	13	0	0	0	19
Market	0	7	13	0	0	0	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Number of HOUSES</b>							
		1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Total
Social rented/affordable		0	0	14	0	0	14
Intermediate		0	0	13	0	0	13
Market		0	0	13	0	0	13
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Proportion of children</b>							
	Number of children	%					
Under 5	29	49%					
5 to 11	18	32%					
12+	11	19%					
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100%</b>					
<b>Play space requirements</b>							
GLA benchmark (sqm)*	Alternative local benchmark (sqm)**	Total (sq m play space) required					
10		579.2					
	5	289.6					
* GLA benchmark standard=minimum of 10sqm of dedicated play space per child							
** Borough's local benchmark							

The calculator above is proposed to boroughs and developers to help calculate child yield and requirements for play provision based on information about their proposed development (numbers of units, type (houses or flats) and tenure (social rented/ affordable, intermediate or private) (complete white cells in table)). The proposed GLA child yield methodology and child occupancy figures derived from it are then used to calculate the play space requirements using the GLA benchmark standard of a minimum of 10 sq m per child. Locally agreed benchmark for play space requirement can also be inserted to reflect boroughs' own specific circumstances (complete white cell in table). The Excel tool can be accessed on the Mayor of London website at <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/vision/supplementary-planning-guidance> . As mentioned in paragraph 4.24 a range of methodologies exist and boroughs may choose to use their own-locally agreed child yield methodology as well as their own benchmark standards to reflect local priorities and policies

the development should be resisted or compensatory improvements on top of any need arising from the expected increase in child population should be made. Development proposals involving loss of play spaces without adequate justification or provision for replacement should be resisted (Policy 3.16B). In new housing development, temporary facilities may provide a means of mitigating any loss as part of proposals for permanent re-provision (Policy 3.19)

### Step B3: Establishing accessibility to existing play provision

4.34 All children and young people should have access to places for play within reasonable and safe walking distance of new residential developments. The following benchmark standards are recommended in respect of different age bands in determining whether there is accessibility to existing play provision to serve the needs of the existing population and new residents in the area.

**Table 4.4 Accessibility to Play Space (future provision)**

Child Age	Maximum Walking distance from residential unit (taking into account barriers)
Under 5s	100 m
5-11 year olds	400 m
12 +	800 m

4.35 In areas of deficiency, there will be a requirement for new provision to be made to meet the benchmark standards for accessibility to play provision. The local context needs to be considered in establishing how deficiencies are identified. Existing places for play and areas of deficiency should be identified for the three age bands in the play strategy within the identified walking distances.

4.36 It is recommended that development proposals identify the routes to the proposed play areas to support development proposals. This may be done through a map or a photo sequence that indicates the distance from site, direction of travel and presents solutions to overcome any barriers to movement preventing children accessing the play area (e.g. roads, crossings (including for disabled children), way findings, lighting). Such solutions may be the creation of safer crossings, traffic calming measures or better lighting. (see following photo sequence)

### Step B4: Where should the new provision be located?

4.37 In assessing the needs arising from new development, it will be important to identify existing play facilities within the identified distance bands. This will determine whether there will be potential for enhancing existing provision to accommodate the additional needs arising from the proposed development as an alternative to new provision.

## Route - Marketplace to Open Space, Oak Crescent

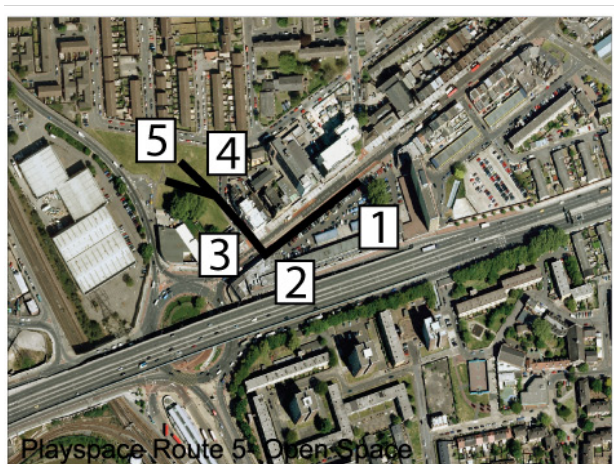


Photo sequence This page describes through a photographic study the route to a local play space. Each image indicates the distance from site and the direction of travel.

- 4.38 The Mayor will expect provision to be made on-site in new development and regeneration schemes wherever possible. Play provision must therefore be considered at an early stage in the preparation of development proposals and masterplans for all sites with a likely child yield of more than ten children. This may include the identification of strategic opportunities that will serve more than one development particularly in areas of major new development and regeneration. This should be addressed in opportunity area planning frameworks and other relevant area action plans (Policy 3.7).
- 4.39 Boroughs' play strategies should establish where new play provision should be located and should identify in development plans where development will take place and consider the opportunities this gives rise to for open space and play provision in the preparation or review of open space and play strategies.
- 4.40 Whilst the Mayor will expect provision to be made on site, off-site play provision including the creation of new provision, improvements to existing play facilities and/or an appropriate financial contribution secured by legal agreement towards this provision may be acceptable in accordance with Policy 3.6 where it can be demonstrated that there are planning constraints and that it fully satisfies the needs of the development whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing residents. If there is existing provision within an acceptable distance of a proposed development, boroughs should consider the option of off-site financial contributions as an alternative to new provision if this would meet the objectives set out in the play strategy. If there is no existing provision within an acceptable radius of the site, there will be a requirement for on-site provision or for an equivalent off-site provision to be made which satisfies the accessibility standards. This is summarised in tables 4.5 and 4.7. The potential for suitable off-site provision may be particularly relevant in the case of smaller development schemes. Larger development proposals (over 5 hectares or 500 dwellings) will be expected to make suitable on-site play provision and for this provision to be planned as an integral part of masterplan preparation (Policy 3.7).
- 4.41 The potential for suitable on-site provision to meet the needs arising from the development will be a function of:
- The size of the proposed development and the number of children: how much play space will be required?
  - The quantitative requirement for play space generated by the development, the provision of private gardens for the under 5s: is it sufficient to provide a suitable facility to meet the needs of different age groups?
  - The potential to meet needs through improvements to existing on-site or off-site facilities and the removal of barriers to accessibility to these facilities or the provision of new off-site facilities: is existing provision accessible to the development or have opportunities for new provision been identified in the play strategy?
  - The provision of multifunctional spaces
-



**Table 4.5 Provision of play space to meet the needs of new development**

		<b>Under 5s</b>	<b>5-11</b>	<b>12+</b>
<b>Existing provision</b>	within 100 m	On site or off-site contribution	Off-site contribution	Off-site contribution
	within 100-400m	On-site	On site or off-site contribution	On site or off-site contribution
	within 400-800m	On-site	On-site	On-site or off-site contribution
<b>No existing provision</b>	within 100 m	On-site	Off-site provision	Off-site provision
	within 100-400m	On-site	On-site	On site or off-site provision
	within 400-800m	On-site	On-site	On-site

that can be used by all ages and other spaces such as roof, terrace or indoor spaces where these are safe, convenient and accessible: what is the potential for flexible use of spaces to meet the needs of all age groups?

4.42 Integration of amenity and play space into high density housing and mixed-use development will require the following design issues to be resolved:

- Ensuring that all publicly accessible and communal open spaces benefit from a degree of overlooking and natural surveillance;
- Retaining trees and encourage planting;
- Making sure that communal areas, particularly above ground, are accessible to all (including wheelchair users);
- Incorporating planting, landscape and play features that create attractive, safe

and inclusive open spaces (particularly on spaces that are above ground);

- Safeguarding the privacy and amenity of neighbouring homes by good site planning, careful layout and the judicious use of planting and screening;
- Safeguarding the privacy of homes that abut communal courtyards or terraces by introducing a private threshold space between dwellings and the open space;
- Considering the sharing of space, including new school play areas; and
- Thinking about management responsibilities and costs and insurance liabilities (particularly for play features) early on in the design process.

4.43 Initiatives to encourage the opening or shared use of on-site or nearby social infrastructure such as school playground or sports facilities, community centres or swimming pools to local residents should

be actively pursued. In cases where schools permit use of their grounds, ways could be sought for developers to provide support to achieve this, particularly where such uses are identified in the play strategy and local circumstances support this provision, this could be considered a contribution to off-site provision.

- 4.44 In meeting the needs for play provision arising from the development, the developer will be expected to consult with the borough council at an early stage on the preparation of an appropriate brief and to include proposals as part of the planning application. The proposals should be in accordance with the borough's play strategy. Developers and their consultants may find it useful to link the process with RIBA Plan of Work to organise the process of managing and designing building projects and administering building contracts into a number of key Work Stage (here Stages B, C and D).

#### **LONDON PLAN POLICY SIGNPOST**

Policy 3.5 Quality and design of housing developments  
 Policy 3.6 Children and young people's play and informal recreation  
 Policy 3.7 Large residential developments  
 Policy 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure  
 Policy 3.18 Education facilities  
 Policy 3.19 Sports facilities  
 Policy 7.18 Protecting local open space and addressing local deficiency

#### **IMPLEMENTATION POINT 12**

On-site and off-site provision should satisfy the accessibility standards in table 4.5. If it is demonstrated that additional provision cannot be made on-site, an equivalent contribution will be required to be made to existing provision or new off-site provision within the distance standards.

Improvement to existing play facilities and any necessary access improvements may be an alternative to the creation of new on/off-site provision and accommodate the needs of both new and existing residents.

Off-site provision may be a suitable option for small development.

Larger development proposals/masterplans will be expected to make suitable on-site play provision (Policy 3.7). Strategic opportunities to provide for play spaces to serve more than one development particularly in areas of major new development and regeneration should be sought.

The possibility of creating multifunctional spaces by integrating imaginatively amenity and play space into high density housing and mixed-use development should be explored.

Initiatives to encourage the multiple use of on-site or nearby social infrastructure should be sought.

### Step B5: What types of play space should be provided and how should existing play provision be improved?

- 4.45 The type of provision will be dependent on the needs arising from the development and existing provision in the area. The type of provision to be made on site should also be appropriate to the size of the development and characteristics of the surrounding area.
- 4.46 Typologies of play space should be developed by individual boroughs to reflect their local characteristics and facilities and how local children perceive their environment. These should be included in the play strategy. A typology is proposed in Table 4.6. It defines a hierarchy of play provision and addresses the potential for multifunctional spaces. It provides greater flexibility in relation to changing local circumstances and needs.
- **Doorstep playable space:** a place, close to home, and suitable for younger children. They can be accommodated in smaller areas whilst the other types of space will require larger areas. These principles are illustrated in Table 4.7
  - **Local playable space:** a place where children aged up to 11 can play
  - **Neighbourhood playable space:** a more extensive place where children aged up to 11 can play, and where there are some facilities for young people over 11. Adventure type space is often popular.
  - **Youth space:** a place where young people aged 12 and above can meet and take part in informal sport-based activities and other informal recreation.
- 4.47 The age ranges stated in the hierarchy in table 4.6 are indicative. They are inclusive, and do not mean that users of different ages should be excluded. All types of space in the hierarchy are public open spaces where children's active play is a legitimate activity. However, the spaces have different characteristics, space and location requirements. Differentiation of space, if any, should be blurred, not rigid, to allow mixed use of spaces and use by family and groups of different ages.
- 4.48 Playable spaces should be properly integrated into new development and the existing context, and designed as a coherent part of the development with effective over-seeing and active and passive surveillance. If leftover spaces, overshadowed or windy spaces are utilised, they should be made worthy through innovative design. Table 4.8 sets out the design principles for different types of play spaces.
- 4.49 It should also be noted that the design of roads (conducive to traffic) and residential areas can sometimes have a greater impact on children's play than the actual provision of play spaces (see chapter 3 on accessibility). Similarly, the success of any play space is as dependant on the supporting amenity as the play opportunities offered within it (accessible public toilets, baby changing areas, seating, water fountains, etc).
- 4.50 The characteristics of the main categories of playable space are set out in table 4.6 below. Other typology such as 'linear play space' where play equipment is scattered along a pedestrian route may be included if relevant in individual borough's typologies.

Table 4.6 Playable Space Typology

	<b>Doorstep Playable Space</b>	<b>Local Playable Space</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Playable Space</b>	<b>Youth Space</b>
<b>Description</b>	A landscaped space including engaging play features for young children, and places for carers to sit and talk. Parental/guardian supervision	A landscaped space with landscaping and equipment so that children aged from birth to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk. Flexible use No formal supervision	A varied natural space with secluded and open areas, landscaping and equipment so that children aged from birth to 11 can play and be physically active and they and their carers can sit and talk, with some youth facilities. Flexible use May include youth space May be supervised	Social space for young people aged 12 and over to meet, hang out and take part in informal sport or physical recreational activities.  No formal supervision
<b>Minimum Size</b>	100 sq m	300 sq m	500 sq m	200 sq m
<b>Age Group</b>	0-5	0-11	all ages	12+
<b>Examples of Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscaping</li> <li>• Climbable objects</li> <li>• Fixed equipment</li> <li>• Seating for carers</li> <li>• Sand and water feature (if possible)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscaping to create natural feel, including changes of level</li> <li>• Equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb</li> <li>• Multigames/ball walls</li> <li>• Kick about area</li> <li>• Basketball nets</li> <li>• Seating area away from equipment</li> <li>• Sand (if possible)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscaping to create natural feel, including changes of level</li> <li>• Equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb</li> <li>• Seating area away from equipment</li> <li>• Bike, skate and skateboard facilities</li> <li>• Kick about area</li> <li>• Basketball nets</li> <li>• Hard surface area if possible</li> <li>• Sand if possible</li> <li>• Water feature if possible</li> <li>• Shelter plus basketball net, small wheeled facility or climbing wall/boulder for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space and facilities for informal sport or recreation activity (e.g. table tennis table, multi-use sports areas (MUSA), multi-use games area (MUGA), climbing walls or boulders, wheeled sports area, skatepark or BMX track, traversing wall, exercise trails, outdoor exercise/fitness equipment)</li> <li>• Kick about area</li> <li>• Seating areas on the edge of the activity space</li> <li>• Landscaping</li> <li>• Outdoor stage</li> <li>• Youth Shelter</li> </ul>
<b>Location</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential areas including housing estates</li> <li>• Pocket Parks</li> <li>• Public Squares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential areas including housing estates</li> <li>• Local Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger residential areas and housing estates</li> <li>• Local Parks</li> <li>• District Parks</li> <li>• School playgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger residential areas and housing estates</li> <li>• Adjacent to community facilities</li> <li>• Local Parks</li> <li>• District Parks</li> <li>• Town centres</li> </ul>



4.51 Similarly, boroughs may wish to consider the approach of creating outdoor space for everyone. The starting point is the understanding that different age ranges – child, teenager, adult – will in practice want to, and will, use the same space in practice separately at different times of the day; and also share the same space at the same time as a matter of course. This approach is underpinned by the principle of inclusivity. Such spaces can also foster informal sociability between generations.

**Table 4.7 Play provision in new developments**

No. of children	10 – 29	30 – 49	50 – 79	80+
<b>Size of space required</b>	100-300 sq m	300-500 sq m	500 – 800 sq m	800 sq m +
<b>Facilities for under 5s</b>	On-site doorstep playable space	On site local playable space	On-site local playable space	On-site local or neighbourhood playable space
<b>Facilities for 5-11s</b>	Off-site within 400 m			
<b>Facilities for 12+</b>	Off-site within 800 m	Off-site within 800 m	Off-site within 800 m or on-site subject to size and local circumstances	On-site youth space
<b>Possible variation to reflect existing provision</b>	If area is deficient in play space for 5 – 11s, some on-site facilities should be provided	If area is within 400m of existing facilities for 5-11s, an off-site contribution may be considered if in accordance with play strategy	If area is deficient in spaces for 12+, some on-site facilities or new off-site provision should be provided within 800 m	If area is within 800 m of existing facilities for 12+, an off-site contribution may be considered if in accordance with play strategy

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

4.52 The creation and management of good play space will be dependent on the application of qualitative standards when creating new space or improving existing space. Chapter 3 sets out what makes a good quality play space. Table 4.8 summarises the main design principles for consideration. Play England's *Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces*<sup>1</sup> outlines six stages of the design cycle for creating imaginative, innovative and stimulating play spaces. These stages are: prepare, design, construct, use, maintain, review. The guide also sets out 10 Principles for designing successful play spaces. Successful play spaces should be:

- 'Bespoke'
- Well located
- Make use of natural elements
- Provide a wide range of play experiences
- Accessible to both disabled and non-disabled
- Meet community needs
- Allow children of different ages to play together
- Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- Sustainable and appropriately maintained
- Allow for change and evolution

### IMPLEMENTATION POINT 13

Play provision must be considered at an early stage in the preparation of development proposals and masterplans for all sites with a likely child yield of more than ten children. Where development is itself taking place on land that has previously been used by children for play, and results in a loss of play provision in an areas of defined needs for that type of provision, the development should be resisted or compensatory improvements on top of any need arising from the expected increase in child population should be made (Policy 3.16).

It is recommended that boroughs and developers apply either a locally set standard or a minimum benchmark of 10m sq of dedicated play space per child to establish the quantitative requirements for play space provision arising from new developments if it responds to their local circumstances.

A play space requirement calculator has been developed to help assess requirements for play space (see Calculator) if boroughs do not already have their own-locally agreed child yield methodology and benchmark standards.

Provision for play space will need to be made in addition to private amenities for all children over the age of five to give them the opportunity to socialise with other children.

It is recommended that development proposals identify routes to the proposed play areas to support planning applications and ensure play spaces are accessible to all.

Typologies of play space should be developed by individual boroughs to reflect their local characteristics and provision.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/design-for-play.aspx>

**CASE STUDY – GOOD DESIGN MAKES SUCCESSFUL PLAYSPACES**

©erect architecture

**Project – Gascoyne Estate (LB of Hackney), erect architecture.**

Gascoyne Estate benefited from extensive green spaces on a sloping site. The new design exaggerates the existing topography to create a landscape of hills and valleys. In one of the valleys a birch grove has been planted to envelop, when it grows, the play structure of platforms and bridges. The design of the playspace makes use of natural features that are accessible to all and allow children to challenge themselves. The space is not delineated so that children of different age can play together. SEE ALSO image at the start of chapter 4.

Table 4.8 Design Principles

	Doorstep playable space	Local playable space	Neighbourhood playable space	Youth space
<b>Quality</b>	Landscape architects or designers who can demonstrate quality work and have expertise in creating child-friendly public space should design spaces. Designs should be site-specific to create a sense of place and reflect the character of the space. Emphasis should be placed on the creation of a high quality child/family friendly environment that are sustainable and associated requirements such as toilets and baby-changing facilities should be considered at the design stage.			
<b>Boundary</b>	The type of boundaries that are needed between space and adjacent public space needs to be considered subject to characteristics of surrounding area and potential hazards (i.e. busy streets, deep open water). The needs of disabled children and young people (for example those with autism) should be considered as this group would benefit from recognisable physical boundaries. Boundaries (including around areas intended for younger children) could be created using landscaping features and informal planting. Where barriers are required, these should be creatively considered and could also act as seating or climbing walls.		No physical barriers needed, though some may be helpful. (i.e. for disabled users, in ball courts and pitches where there is limited open space). Ownership of it for young people	
<b>Location</b>	Not more than 15 m away from the frontage of, and well overlooked by, residential, educational or retail property; or adjacent to main routes through open space. Linked by established footpath system Integrated into design of development Easily accessible	Not more than 30 m from the frontages of, and well overlooked by, residential, educational or retail property; or within 30 m of main routes through open space. Easily accessible Linked by established footpath system Integrated into design of development Appropriate for locating in parks or larger green spaces		Between 10 and 50 m (depending on context) from the frontages of residential, retail, educational or leisure property, or within 50m of main routes through open space. Some privacy will be valued by young people Avoid locations where noise will cause disturbance



<b>Layout</b>	<p>Differentiation of spaces should be blurred, not rigid, to allow mixed use of spaces and use by family and groups of different ages.</p> <p>Spaces should be designed and managed to allow children the chance to take risks and attempt physically challenging activities, while striking a balance that keeps the risk of serious injury to an acceptable level.</p>			<p>Sensitive landscape treatment</p> <p>Permeable layout in terms of entry and circulation</p> <p>Access for children with disabilities</p> <p>Sense of enclosure for users</p>	<p>Sensitive landscape treatment</p> <p>Permeable layout in terms of entry and circulation</p> <p>Access for children with disabilities</p> <p>Secluded and more open areas</p>	<p>Sensitive landscape treatment</p> <p>Permeable layout in terms of entry and circulation</p> <p>Access for children with disabilities</p>	
<b>Detailed design of the space</b>	<p>It should consider context, equipment and informal landscaping together, take account of the density and character of the area, and other standards such as access to nature. It should include landscaping, natural features and informal seating. Well-designed hard landscaping such as walls and steps can serve many uses, including informal seating, stimuli for physical play and goals and surfaces for ball games. Sand should where possible be included in spaces that are used by younger children for its potential for creative and constructive play. Fixed equipment provides a focus for some forms of play activity but should not dominate Quality seating areas that are inviting, attractive and sustainable should also be planned for.</p>			<p>Range of physical and sensory experiences</p>	<p>Multifunctional equipment</p> <p>Range of physical experiences and multisensory recreation opportunities</p>	<p>Multifunctional equipment</p> <p>Range of physical experiences and multisensory recreation opportunities</p>	<p>Range of facilities for physical activities as</p> <p>Quality space for informal recreation</p>
<b>Commissioning of project</b>	<p>Layout and design should start with a clear brief stating the user groups the space is intended for, management and maintenance arrangements and the key characteristics of the space, including access points and safety issues. The brief should reflect the likely population profile and be shaped by an audit of nearby spaces and facilities.</p>			<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>	<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>	<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>	<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>
<b>Indicative Minimum maintenance costs</b>				<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>	<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>	<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>	<p>1.5% build costs/annum</p>





Engagement event: Kilburn Grange Park  
Adventure Playground (Camden, London)  
Project/Photo – erect architecture



## CHAPTER FIVE

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

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## IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The application of benchmark standards in developing local standards for provision will assist in the development of policies to address deficiencies, enhance existing provision and create new play space. The emphasis should be on the achievement of improvements in both the quantity and quality of play space with a clear emphasis on implementation. The development and use of local standards will enable priority actions to be established in the play strategy for the improvement of existing facilities. This may include increasing supervised provision, safe routes to play spaces, review of maintenance and replacement schedules.

## ENGAGEMENT

5.2 There is no one-size-fit all approach or methodology for engaging children and young people but consultation is an absolute minimum requirement. Children and young people should be involved in deciding the design of places for play wherever possible, alongside the involvement of experienced professionals. This will build ownership and help ensure the spaces are shaped by children's needs, wishes and insights into what works and what does not work. Location, in particular can be a thorny issue, and planners will need to make sure that the views of children (including disabled children) are given due weight alongside those of parents, residents and other users. When designing shared and communal spaces, representatives of all ages in the neighbourhood should be brought together to discuss possibilities.

5.3 There is a wide range of methods that can be used to engage children, young people and the community in planning, designing, maintaining and managing play spaces. It will be important to adapt the techniques to the needs and aspirations of the different ages, preferences and backgrounds of the children and young people in question. Informal engagement, such as taking children/young people to a play setting or play space and watch them play should be encouraged. By carefully observing children at play and noting different types of play that are taking place at different times of the day, observing how long is spent on different equipment and settings, how different settings encourage different ages to play together and how differing levels of challenge are dealt with and overcome, it will be possible to test what works and what is missing. In new development where children have not yet moved, activities with pupils in the nearby schools through model building or picture drawing of their ideal play may be a way of helping shape and design new play spaces.

5.4 Successful schemes show that active involvement of children and young people in developing play spaces throughout the construction of the playspace is more effective than simply asking for their views early on. This has been demonstrated through the '**Slow Build**' approach. 'Slow Build' allows for the contractors to assess the playspace annually over a period of 2 or 3 years in order to adapt and re-configure items of playspace. Through 'Slow Build visits', the contractor identifies under-used/over-used items, collect

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young people's, 'Friends of' groups' or user groups' feedback about what may be missing in the current playspace. Regular secured payments over a period of 2 or 3 years enable the contractor to adapt the space to the children's and young people's changing needs and keep the design of the 'playspace alive' once it has been built.

- 5.5 The Mayor's *Guide to Preparing Play Strategies*<sup>1</sup> provides guidance on consultation with children and young people and the wider community. Play England's *Design for Play: A Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces*<sup>2</sup> also

gives some guidance on engaging with the community and on involving children in the construction process. Play England and Participation Works' guide '*How to...*'<sup>3</sup> includes introductory advice on how to engage children and young people in designing and developing play spaces. Groundwork London also recently produced a step-by-step guide to consulting young people about transforming open space.<sup>4</sup>

#### CASE STUDY - SELF-BUILD ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND



#### Project – Stewart Road Adventure Playground (LB of Waltham Forest), Free Play.

Adventure playgrounds, where young people build their own play structures, present a unique opportunity to place 'Slow Build/Design' into the process, as the playgrounds grow and change on a yearly basis. NOTE. Adventure Playgrounds are exempt from European Standards for Playground Equipment (EN 1176).

1 Mayor of London. Guide to Preparing Play Strategies. GLA, April 2005  
2 Play England. Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces, 2008

3 Play England and Participation Works. How To Involve Children and Young People in Designing and Developing Play Spaces, 2009  
4 Groundwork London. No Particular Place to Go: A Step-by-Step Guide to Consulting Young People about Transforming Open Space

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.6 Community involvement can lead to increased use and enhanced quality of play space provision. Partnership working between the community and the local authority can present many benefits. It can encourage local ownership, give access to funding to the community, expert advice, increase the community's understanding of local problems and the local authority's constraints. When the community is involved early enough, it can enable the local authority to understand and better respond to local needs. All these contribute to long term sustainability. For the community itself, community involvement can help shape places that are more attractive. It allows parents to get to know each other better, build trust between them, develop social networks and a sense of community belonging. It can lead to groups forming specifically for the purpose of creating play opportunities in their neighbourhoods, in some cases organising adult volunteers to be out while children play to provide reassurance for the children and other residents. Community-led play initiatives might also stem from existing groups including residents groups, youth clubs, adventure playgrounds, schools, children centres, parent and toddler groups, gardening clubs or groups campaigning for a particular improvement to their neighbourhood such as traffic calming.

5.7 Examples of community involvement activities may be to:

- Involve children and parents in bulb or (fruit) tree planting,

- Involve children and parents in the construction of the play space
- Identify unused/under-used local community spaces such as wide grass verges or pavements, an underused garage forecourt or front garden or the street itself, and reclaim them to transform them into new play spaces
- Increase adult supervision by groups of volunteers made up of grandparents, teenagers, parents and other adults to create greater, safer play options for the children living in the area, giving parents a clear signal that it is fine for their children to play. (see case study on Play Streets)

5.8 Mechanisms may be needed to recognise local voluntary input and ensuring 'people capacity'. Organised or semi-organised activity is often a key part of an overall offer to maximise participation - ensuring 'people capacity' is important.

5.9 A local play partnership can have a vital role in the planning of play and open space in a local authority area. Gaining the shared views of play, parks, housing, planning, third sector, and inclusion professionals will enhance the strategic approach to play at a local level. Play partnerships can advise Councils on the expenditure of Section 106/CIL funding for community facilities, on planning issues, and local development plans. They can also ensure that children and young people assess and monitor play and open space and can influence major developments. Local authorities are encouraged to set up mechanisms to benefit from the input of these partnerships.

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## CASE STUDY - PLAY STREETS



©Pschocker

There are three models of Play Streets currently being explored by London Play:

1. DIY Play Street. This play street model does not require any official street closure. Residents in Peckham (LB of Southwark) have organised themselves to create after school and weekend street play clubs on a quiet residential street. Volunteers in bright tabards are stationed at entry points to the street, alerting children to approaching vehicles, warning cars to slow down and acting as a reassuring presence for children and residents.

2. Play Street status. Residents in Croydon have worked with the local authority to get a Play Street status for their road, using existing, but little-used legislation (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984). Signage on the entrance points of the street specifies 'resident only entry' between specified hours on weekend and school holidays to provide children with a free play space on their doorstep.

3. Sunday Play Street. Weekly play sessions provide children with the opportunity to play out on traffic limited residential streets heralding a return to the days where streets were seen as communal spaces where people can interact, if only for a few hours on a Sunday – rather than simply thoroughfares for cars.

## CASE STUDY - 'PARK MARKER PROGRAMME'

Westminster has over 80 parks and open spaces with recreational facilities. The borough initiated a pilot project targeted at existing parks staff to train them as 'ParkMakers' in addition to their normal duties. As well as the staff, local volunteers and personal trainers were recruited to attend a 2 day training course to equip them with knowledge, skills and understanding to positively engage members of the public in their local areas and aim to increase their physical (everyday) activity. The initiative is widely supported throughout the City Council, Royal Parks and public health authorities and is coordinated by the ActiveWestminster Partnership. Since then, the ParkMakers team has delivered a variety of activity sessions within the parks for the whole community and has been on hand to answer questions and signpost people to clubs and facilities where appropriate.



### CASE STUDY – KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA PLAY PARTNERSHIP

The Kensington and Chelsea Play Partnership is a multi-agency advisory body that supports play provision in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. There are representatives from a wide range of statutory bodies, housing associations, and third sector organisations. The Play Partnership oversees the play strategy and advises on the best use of local resources. It works closely with the borough's planning officers and has had a significant input into the Royal Borough's Local Development Framework (LDF) which provides a clear rationale of the borough's commitment to play and the expectations for new developments. A sub-group of the Play Partnership has been established to comment on the Earls Court Development planning application, the biggest regeneration project in the borough, and advised the developers on the location of facilities within the broader scheme and the type of play opportunities that would be suitable.

### COMMUNITY PROJECT



**Project - Dunbar Estate (LB of Lambeth), FreePlay.** Parents and children painting the playground.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

5.10 There should be a clear requirement for all new residential developments generating more than 10 children (as determined by the application of child occupancy assessments) to provide suitable play space as part of the development scheme. Developments with an estimated child occupancy of less than 10 children should be required to make an appropriate financial contribution to play provision within the vicinity of the development (Chapter 4B).

5.11 Facilities to be provided within the development should be provided in accordance with a scheme to be agreed with the planning authority and either;

- be maintained in perpetuity to the agreed standard by the developer or an appropriate agency; or
- be transferred to the borough for it to manage together with an agreed maintenance sum providing for a minimum 15 year period of maintenance. The borough should take into account revenue funding after the expiration of this period in future budget reviews.

5.12 The scheme should ensure adequate day-to-day upkeep and inspection, and repairs and refurbishment over time. The developer will be required to cover maintenance costs for the specified period. The borough may also wish to consider other mechanisms for ensuring the continued maintenance. These could include endowments, trusts or friends groups.



- 5.13 Where it is determined that provision is to be made off-site, the developer will be required to enter into an agreement to make an appropriate commuted payment to secure an equivalent level of play provision and future maintenance. The use of the commuted payments will be determined in relation to the priorities and opportunities identified in the play strategy.
- 5.14 In phased developments, play provision should be implemented in the early phases of development to ensure that the needs of new residents are met. In HafenCity in Hamburg,<sup>5</sup> residents agreed with the developers to build a temporary playground that could be moved once construction had advanced. This enabled the developers to meet the evolving needs of the community as it developed. Developers should ensure that spaces are completed within the same timescale as the adjacent housing.

## CALCULATION OF THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

### Community Infrastructure Levy

5.15 Play space and equipment will be infrastructure capable of being funded through the CIL (although revenue costs of management are not). If an authority decides to set a CIL, there are limitations in the extent to which planning obligations can also be used (see regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended)). The Regulations seek to prevent CIL and Section 106 both being used to fund the same infrastructure; whether this is the case depends on whether the authority has published a list of infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure they intend to fund through CIL:

- If the list includes play space, Section 106 agreements cannot also be used
- If the list does not include this type of infrastructure, Section 106 agreements may be used (but subject always to the restriction in pooling contributions explained in paragraph 5.17)
- If no list is published, Section 106 agreements cannot be used to fund any infrastructure.

5.16 CIL can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development. There is a power in the Localism Act 2011 enabling ministers to amend the CIL Regulations to allow CIL to be spent on “maintenance activities and operational activities” in connection with

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/hamburg-s-new-quarter-the-challenge-of-making-hafencity-feel-neighborly-a-714008.html>

infrastructure, but at time of writing no such regulations have been made.

- 5.17 Contributions from more than one development within an area may be pooled to improve play provision or to make new provision off-site (although from 6th April 2014 or from the date a borough adopts a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule, such pooling of contributions will only be possible across four or fewer developments). Opportunities for the pooling of contributions should be identified in the Development Plan and play strategy. Further guidance on the CIL will be provided by the Mayor in autumn 2012.

### **Developer Contributions**

- 5.18 Any use of planning obligations ('Section 106 agreements') must comply with the tests set out in regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 and all appropriate national planning guidance.
- 5.19 The calculation of developer contributions to secure play provision to serve the needs of new developments will be determined through negotiation between the local planning authority and developer. Every case must be considered on its merits. Protocols and formulae for securing contributions should be set by local authorities in order that genuinely local approaches, which take account of local needs and circumstances, appropriately inform negotiations with developers. However, in order to provide greater clarity, transparency and certainty, it is

recommended that a standard approach is adopted. The following formulae are proposed for the calculation of contributions.

#### *Costs of On-site provision*

- 5.20 The emphasis will be on the provision of high quality play space which meets the needs of the development and enhances play provision in the area. The cost of on-site provision will be made up of two elements:

- play space provision- design , layout, landscaping and equipment
- maintenance, supervision and management

#### *Costs of Off-site provision*

- 5.21 The calculation of commuted sums to secure off-site provision will be calculated through negotiation but must be adequate to ensure that appropriate provision can be implemented. The level of contribution should be no less than the level of contribution which would be made if provision was to be made on-site. However, consideration should also be given to the type of provision which will be required and whether other costs such as land costs may be involved if new play space is to be provided. Contributions towards off-site provision will be required to comply with relevant planning guidance and statutory requirements.

- 
- 5.22 Developments with an estimated child occupancy of less than 10 children should be required to make an appropriate financial contribution to play provision within the vicinity of the development. The use of the commuted payments will be limited to the provision and maintenance of play facilities and will be determined in relation to the priorities and opportunities identified in the Play Strategy.
- 5.23 Developer contributions can be used both to support the management and development of on-site spaces and to improve play opportunities off-site. Contributions for off-site provision should aim to improve children and young people's access on a daily basis to play and informal recreational opportunities, rather than more structured leisure or youth activities.
- 5.24 Consideration should also be given to linking developer contributions with other funding sources and programmes such as regeneration initiatives, European funding, charitable sources and lottery distributors. Current sources of funding include: Natural England that have funded a number of play projects in London and elsewhere aiming to encourage children to play out more in nature, BBC Children in Need, Help a London Child, BIG Reaching Communities, some elements of Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England and the London Funders Group.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.25 The play strategy will need to be kept under regular review in order to be effective. The need for review will depend on whether there are significant changes in funding, legislation, Section 106 opportunities and other strategies. Boroughs who have adopted a play strategy or open space strategy should review these strategy documents in the light of local policies and priorities, benchmark standards and any local standards for play provision.







# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX 1 - BENCHMARK

The standards provided in the Mayor's SPG have been developed based on research on the application of similar standards elsewhere. The Fields in Trust (FIT) benchmark standard for outdoor playing space for children and young people is the most widely used standard for play provision outside London. It updates and modernises 'The Six Acre Standard' last revised in 2001. The FIT standards differ from the standards proposed in this guidance as they are based on total population forecasts as opposed to forecast child population. Both approaches have their strengths and are useful

as benchmarks against which progress can be evaluated and as planning tools. The tables below summarise the FIT's proposed standards for play.

**Table A1 Children's Playing Space Quantity Benchmark Standard**

Children's Playing Space	Benchmark Standard (Hectares per '000)
Designated Playing Space, including equipped playing space	0.25
Informal Playing Space	0.55
Total Children's Playing Space	0.80

**Table A2 Children's Playing Space Accessibility Benchmark Standard**

Type of Space	Distance Criteria (metres)	
	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance
Local area for play or 'door-step' spaces – for play and informal recreation (LAPs)	100	60
Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play – for play and informal recreation (LEAPs)	400	240
Neighbourhood equipped areas for play – for play and informal recreation, and provision for young people (NEAPs); this also covers what is referred to in the Mayor of London's SPG as youth space	1000	600

## APPENDIX 2 - CHILD OCCUPANCY OF NEW HOUSING METHODOLOGY

The following information from the Demography and Policy Analysis Group at the GLA is provided as guidance on calculation of child occupancy.

**The guidance is interim, awaiting the 2011 Census figures.**

It is intended as **one example** as to how child occupancies from new developments can be determined, and may be useful for local authorities or developers (for the purpose of calculating education contributions), it is expected that the same child occupancy calculations would be used for determining play and informal recreation requirements.

The GLA Demography and Policy Analysis Group used the updated Wandsworth Calculator and the DMAG briefing 2006-11: Child Occupancy

of New Social Housing to update GLA child yield formulae for market and intermediate flats and houses and social rented/affordable flats and houses. As the occupancy of the affordable rent tenure dwellings has not yet been collected and to reflect the government's intention to have affordable rent to meet the same housing needs as social rent, the social rented child yield figures will be used in the interim of awaiting for the 2011 census data. Wandsworth's market child yield figures will also be used for the intermediate tenure as the child yields for intermediate are limited by a small sample size - this again in the interim of awaiting for 2011 census figures.

The SPG proposed figures for market and intermediate differ from the 2008 SPG figures as they reflect the actual tenure of dwellings as recorded by occupants (market or intermediate) as opposed to developer type (private or

### Social rented/affordable flats

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
<b>0-4</b>	0.00	0.20	0.64	0.62	0.41	0.57
<b>5-10</b>	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.74	1.22	1.66
<b>11-15</b>	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.47	1.29	1.76
<b>16-18</b>	0.00	0.00	0.05	0.17	0.37	0.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>4.50</b>

### Social rented/affordable houses

Age	Number of Bedrooms				
	1	2	3	4	5+
<b>0-4</b>	0.20	0.64	0.62	0.41	0.57
<b>5-10</b>	0.00	0.23	0.74	1.22	1.66
<b>11-15</b>	0.00	0.08	0.47	1.29	1.76
<b>16-18</b>	0.00	0.05	0.17	0.37	0.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>4.50</b>

housing association). The market figures include those who indicated they were owner occupiers or rented their home privately.

## **SOCIAL RENTED/AFFORDABLE FIGURES**

The social rented figures are based on the **DMAG briefing 2006-11: Child Occupancy of New Social Housing.**

Assumptions made:

- The figures for 16-17 was used as proxy for 16 to 18
- Social rent child yields equal affordable rent child yields

*DMAG Briefing 2005/25: Child Yield*, surveyed recent data to update previous analysis on child yield in new properties by the London Research Centre that had used data from the 1991 Labour Force Survey. New dwellings survey data from Wandsworth and Oxfordshire were presented alongside data from the 2002 London Household Survey.

This *Demography Update* aims to create revised child yield formulae specific for determining play space together with additional education and health service requirements in social housing developments.

The data available to this *Update* are:

*London and Sub-Regional Strategy Support Studies (SSSS) dataset, 2004* - an analysis of the approximately 500 Council tenants that had moved into their accommodation in the 12 months prior to being interviewed. This shows children by number of bedrooms (1-6). The data refer to all 'new lettings', not just new-build, of

which there is very little in Council stock.

*Wandsworth New Housing Survey, 2004* - an analysis of children by number of bedrooms (1-5+) in 212 new housing association properties. Children are shown by ages 0-4, 5-10 and 11-15.

*Oxfordshire New Housing Survey, 2005* - an analysis of children by number of bedrooms (1-8) in 728 new social housing properties across the county. Data are available by single years of age from 0 to 19.

The SSSS dataset is unreliable for 5 and 6 bedrooms due to small sample size, but provides the following results:

1 bedroom 0.179 children (0.2)

2 bedrooms 0.954 children (1.0)

3 bedrooms 2.056 children (2.0)

4 bedrooms 3.316 children (3.3)

5 bedrooms (4.5)

6 bedrooms (6.0)

The figures in brackets have been taken as the initial occupancy norm for these properties and used in further in this Update. Equivalent data for new housing association tenants show similar outcomes for 1 and 2 bedrooms but only 1.6 and 1.8 children in 3 and 4 bedrooms.

The Wandsworth and Oxfordshire Surveys have been truncated to bedrooms 1 to 4+ due to the small samples of larger properties and show the following numbers of children:

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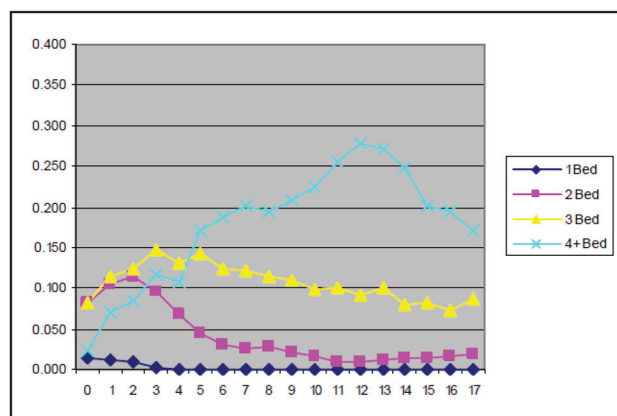


<b>Bedrooms:</b>	1	2	3	4+
<b>Wandsworth (0-15)</b>	0.07	0.40	1.88	1.90
<b>Oxfordshire (0-15)</b>	0.04	0.69	1.76	2.86
<b>Oxfordshire (0-17)</b>	0.05	0.73	1.93	3.21

Both the Surveys show fewer children in all sizes of accommodation compared to the SSSS-based norms, with particularly low numbers in 4+ bedroom properties in Wandsworth. Taking all children under age 18 in Oxfordshire shows a much better fit to the allocations norm, but still with relatively few children in 1-bedroom properties.

In connecting the allocations norm with the survey data links have been made with the Oxfordshire data and include all children under age 18. The age patterns of the child population in social housing in Oxfordshire are shown in Chart 1.

**Chart 1 Children by age in new social housing by number of bedrooms, Oxfordshire 2005**



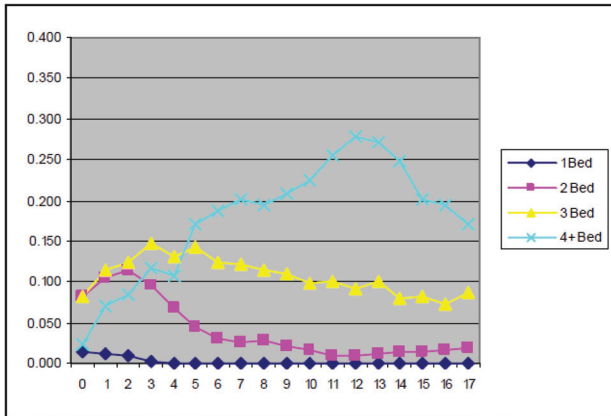
The key results of these patterns are that as the bedroom size increases, as well as having more children, the age-structure of the children changes, with relatively more children at all ages over 3 in 3-bedroom properties than in 2-bedrooms. Larger properties are inclined to have more teenagers and fewer pre-school age children, with the 4+ bedroom properties having peak numbers of children at secondary school ages.

The Oxfordshire data have been linked to the allocations norm, with the single years of age data scaled accordingly, to create new child yield formulae. The age structure for children in 4+ bedrooms has been linked to the separate norms for 4, 5 and 6 bedrooms. The results are as follows:

<b>Bed-rooms</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Age 0-4</b>	0.20	0.64	0.62	0.41	0.57	0.75
<b>Age 5-10</b>	0.00	0.23	0.74	1.22	1.66	2.22
<b>Age 11-15</b>	0.00	0.08	0.47	1.29	1.76	2.35
<b>Age 16-17</b>	0.00	0.05	0.17	0.37	0.51	0.68
<b>Total</b>	0.20	1.00	2.00	3.30	4.50	6.00

These results are illustrated in Chart 2. While the outcomes for 5 and 6 bedroom properties are more speculative there are, in reality, relatively few such lettings available.

**Chart 2 Child Occupancy of New Social Housing**



For more information please contact Ben Corr, Demography and Policy Analysis Group, Greater London Authority, City Hall, The Queen’s Walk, London SE1 2AA. Tel: 020 7983 4347 e-mail: ben.corr@london.gov.uk

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**MARKET AND INTERMEDIATE FIGURES**

The market and intermediate figures are based on the updated Wandsworth calculator.

**Wandsworth calculator**

The population yield calculator has been developed by Wandsworth Council using results of the 2004 New Housing Survey and 2007 New Housing Re-Survey. The GLA child yield formulae are based on figures from Wandsworth 2004 Sites Original Survey.

**Assumptions made:**

*Market assumptions*

- 0 bed flats = yield 1 bed flats
- 5+ bed flats = yield 4 bed flats

*Intermediate assumptions:*

- 0 bed flats = yield 1 bed flats
- 3 bed flats = yield 2 bed flats
- 4+ bed flats = yield 3 bed houses
- 0 bed houses = yield 0 bed flats
- 1 bed houses = yield 1 bed flats
- 4+ bed houses = yield 3 bed houses

- The 16 to 18 figure was three quarter of Wandsworth 16 to 19 figures
- Market child yields equal intermediate child yields

:

**Market and intermediate flats**

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
<b>0-4</b>	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.17	0.00	0.00
<b>5-10</b>	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.11	0.00	0.00
<b>11-15</b>	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.00
<b>16-18</b>	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

**Market and intermediate houses**

Age	Number of Bedrooms					
	0	1	2	3	4	5+
<b>0-4</b>	0.17	0.17	0.08	0.29	0.63	0.36
<b>5-10</b>	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.10	0.31	0.58
<b>11-15</b>	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.05	0.13	0.25
<b>16-18</b>	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>1.36</b>

**New Housing Surveys:** Wandsworth Council regularly undertakes surveys of new housing developments in the borough to assess how well housing and planning policies are working and how they can be improved. The surveys also seek information on the characteristics of households living in new build properties to inform planning of Council services. Population yield data enables the Council to assess the increased demand on local services as people move into new developments e.g. for doctors, schools and public transport. The information can be used to shape future planning policies and secure investment through developer negotiations when new development is proposed.

**Survey Series:** In 1997 and 2004, surveys of new housing developments were conducted, with questionnaires sent to households in new build developments completed in the Borough between 1994-1996 and 1997-2003 respectively. The 2007 New Housing Re-Survey revisited the sites originally surveyed in 1997 and 2004 to see how the composition and characteristics of these households has changed

over time.

**Population Yield Calculator Survey Sample:**

To enable direct comparison of results, the Population Yield Calculator uses data from sites originally surveyed in 2004 only. It compares the original survey data for these sites (2004 New Housing Survey) with re-survey data for these sites (2007 New Housing Re-Survey). In each survey, the same 4,144 dwellings were sent a questionnaire on 127 developments completed between 1997 and 2003.

**Weighting:** As the rate of response varied between developments, the responses used in this analysis have been weighted to remove any bias that may arise from this in line with standard statistical practice. The weights applied to individual developments reflect the overall response rate.

**Response Rates:** To qualify as a response for population yield analysis, questions relating to age, tenure, development type (house/flat) and number of bedrooms must have

been answered by the household. In 2004 the weighted response rate for these questions was 47% (1,965 households) and in 2007 (2004 sites only) 35% (1,436 households), reflecting the overall survey response rates.

**Wandsworth Council does not accept any responsibility for loss or liability occasioned as a result of usage of the data. It is provided for information only.**

Contact: Christine Cook, 020 8871 7177,  
ccook@wandsworth.gov.uk

Borough Planner's Service, Wandsworth Council,  
London, SW18 2PU. [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/  
planning/evidence](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning/evidence).

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## APPENDIX 3 - INCLUSION

KIDS a national charity is working to create an inclusive world for disabled children, young people and their families, provides information, publications and briefings on inclusive play and childcare. They recommend that all children should be able to access equipment and play opportunities that are exciting and fun and offer various levels of challenges. Sensory experiences as well as the use of equipment that can be used in different ways by children at different stages of development and with differing levels of ability should be encouraged.

Their Playwork Inclusion Project (PIP), aimed at turning inclusive policy into inclusive practice, offers strategic development, information and guidance to authorities and settings on inclusive play and childcare. Their PIP Guidelines Series demonstrates good practice in inclusive design and is aimed at planners, designers, parks and leisure officers as well as early years, play and childcare providers who want to ensure that the design of their playspace is accessible, welcoming and inclusive. They have also published a useful guide called *Inclusion by Design - a Guide to Creating Accessible Play and Childcare Environments*<sup>1</sup>.

The KIDS briefing on *Inclusive Design For Play*<sup>2</sup> recognises that a play environment cannot be adapted or designed for every need, nor can every item of play equipment be suitable for all children but as many physical and sensory impairments as possible should be taken into account at the planning stage and good practice should be embedded from the very start of the

design stage. This is illustrated by examples of good practice in delivering disabled children's access to inclusive play spaces using the six principles of inclusive design:

- Diversity and difference - recognising that children even with similar impairments will have different abilities, cultures and backgrounds so they should be involved in the consultation stage of any new project e.g. by consulting with a special school located near a playsite; involving disabled children and their parents in the community consultations; tailoring play equipment to children with different physical and sensory impairments with something that everyone can enjoy.
- Ease of use – children should not be forced to exert undue effort, experience discomfort or a loss of dignity – this has implications for the site location and orientation and choice of materials. Disabled children should have ease of access to and into the site and to the facilities within the site.
- Freedom of choice and access to mainstream activities – independent access along with support and assistance should be provided on the user's terms.
- Quality – design aimed at meeting the specific requirements of disabled children should be to the same standard as the rest of the development and should exceed minimum standards resulting in innovative playful environments for all, e.g. equipment at different heights with adequate space between each piece, wheelchair accessible swings,

<sup>1</sup> *Inclusion by Design - a guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments* Clare Goodridge 2008 Ed. Philip Douch, KIDS 2009

<sup>2</sup> KIDS Briefing on Inclusive Design For Play signposts a number of other useful documents on inclusive play see <http://www.kids.org.uk>.

roundabouts and slides; sensory gardens with plants children can smell and touch, imaginative landscapes using sand and water.

- Legibility and predictability – illustrated child friendly site plans can help orientation, signs that welcome disabled children in accessible formats e.g. pictures, tactile maps and pictograms and the use of tactile surfaces, colour and contrast.
- Safety – safe while inspiring a sense of risk e.g. the use of lighting, materials, finishes and tones can enhance the ability of visually impaired children to read and use spaces.

The KIDS briefing on *Inclusive Design For Play* goes on to set out the process of inclusive design – which

- Begins at the beginning
- Sees design and management of the built environment as inextricable partners
- Takes account of user experience at every stage of the development
- Is equally applicable to the development of landscapes, structure, materials and finishes, fixtures and fittings, management and information.
- Brings together functional and aesthetic considerations – works well and looks good
- Is regularly monitored and evaluated.

### Further Information

KIDS' latest publication, and the final in the Playwork Inclusion Project series, 'Everybody's Business', offers all play, leisure and childcare providers practical advice, activities, and ideas

on how best to include disabled children aged under eight years old in a range of play settings.

*Nothing Special Including Young Disabled People in Youth and Leisure Services* KIDS Briefing Paper<sup>3</sup> explains that inclusion is a process not a product, based on relationships, dialogue and respect offering a range of 'ordinary' opportunities to all, and involves 'ordinary' interaction of disabled and non-disabled young people, and works best when young people, families, and services participate, is young person-centred, modelled at the top in policies and 'plans' and is more than 'access'.

KIDS also has a toolkit which Local authorities can purchase to assess inclusion in policies, management and practice. This is a set of tools and guidelines aimed at organisations and how they can become more inclusive in their day to day service delivery.

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3 <http://www.kids.org.uk/files/103886/FileName/nothing-specialv2.pdf>

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## APPENDIX 4 - USEFUL CONTACTS

London Plan/Planning Decisions Unit  
Greater London Authority  
City Hall  
The Queen's walk  
London  
SE1 2AA  
Tel: 020 7983 4100

Association of Play Industries (API)  
Federation House  
Stoneleigh Park  
Warwickshire CV8 2RF  
Tel: 024 76 414999

KIDS  
6 Aztec Row  
Berners Road  
London  
N10PW  
Tel: 020 7359 8238

Learning through Landscapes  
5th Floor, St Clare House  
30-33 Minorities  
London  
EC3N 1DD  
Tel: 020 7480 4102

London Play  
83-93 Fonthill Road  
London  
N4 3JH  
Tel: 020 7272 2464

Play England  
8 Wakley St  
London  
EC1V 7QE  
Tel: 020 7843 6300

RoSPA  
RoSPA House  
Edgbaston Park  
353 Bristol Road  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B5 7ST  
Tel: 0121 248 2000

Sport England  
3rd Floor Victoria House  
Bloomsbury Square  
London  
WC1B 4SE  
Tel: 08458 508508





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### Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज की प्रति अपनी  
भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित  
नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये  
पते पर संपर्क करें

### Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có văn bản tài liệu  
này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy  
liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa  
chỉ dưới đây.

### Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি  
(কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে  
বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

### Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος  
εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να  
επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυ-  
δρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

### Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں  
چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر  
پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinizde  
hazırlanmış bir nüshasını  
edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki  
telefon numarasını arayınız  
veya adrese başvurunuz.

### Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى  
الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان  
أدناه

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ  
ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ  
ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

### Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં  
જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર  
ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.

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**MAYOR OF LONDON**

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