

For Publication

Consultation on the Draft Play Strategy 2021 – 2026 (L000)

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	6 July 2021
Cabinet portfolio:	Health and Wellbeing
Directorate:	Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing
For publication	

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 For Cabinet to approve the draft Play Strategy for public consultation.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet approves the draft Play Strategy 2021 – 2026 for public consultation.

2.2 That a report is brought to Cabinet with a final draft of the Play Strategy for adoption following completion of the public consultation.

3.0 Background

3.1 The first Chesterfield Play Strategy was adopted by the Council in July 2007.

3.2 Since that time the Council has delivered numerous projects that have improved the quality, range and accessibility of play spaces and raised awareness of the benefits of the play offer in Chesterfield.

3.3 The Council has invested heavily in the refurbishment of our play spaces and a range of challenging and innovative play equipment, outdoor gyms, multi-use games areas and skate parks have sprung up across the Borough.

- 3.4 The Council has reviewed the Play Strategy to ensure that going forward it meets the requirements of our children and young people and their parents and carers for the next 5 years.
- 3.5 The Council also commissioned an Open Space Assessment to support the review of the now adopted Local Plan and to provide a robust evidence base of need for open space including play spaces. The review now complete, provides evidence to support the investment into open and play space owned by Chesterfield Borough Council.
- 3.6 In undertaking the Play Strategy review and Open Space Assessment a series of audits have been undertaken to provide detail about what open and play space provision exists across Chesterfield; its condition, distribution, overall quality and accessibility to our communities. The Play Strategy review and Open Space Assessment set out the findings of the research, consultation, site assessments and GIS mapping undertaken as part of the study.
- 3.7 When assessing the quantity and distribution of play space, equipped play spaces are considered, however children and young people can and do use the informal spaces outside the defined play space for play. Informal play spaces are those where there is no equipment or specific design for play, the area is suitable and used for play. These spaces have been audited as part of the Open Space Assessment to arrive at quantitative measures for overall provision. Informal play spaces included here are neighbourhood amenity open spaces, parks, woodlands, natural open spaces, playing fields and recreation grounds.
- 3.8 The updated draft Play strategy 2021 - 2026 now takes account of the open space assessment and gives a direction as to how we best utilise our resources for the continued benefit for play within our communities.
- 3.9 The audit of provision (understanding supply) and identifying needs (understanding need) will through the strategy help inform direction and decision making going forward.
- 4.0 **Consultation on the Draft Play Strategy 2021 - 2026**
- 4.1 Through the strategy we will aim to address the play needs of children and young people in the borough by producing a plan for the refurbishment and development of fixed play structures as well as

considering how we can influence informal play space within the Council's ownership to provide natural play opportunities.

4.2 The Play Strategy will provide guidance on the standards for play provision, which we will encourage other play area developers to adopt on growth sites.

4.3 **Our Vision for Play.** It is the Council's aspiration to ensure that:

"Every play space is a destination, by creating a variety of sustainable play spaces that offer children and young people of all ages and abilities accessible, quality, challenging and fun opportunities for play."

4.4 The updated and refreshed Play Strategy 2021 – 2026 has therefore determined the following working aims as part of the development of the strategy:

- To understand the current quality of children's play in Chesterfield.
- To understand what children and the local community need to help improve access to play; to include race, disability, gender, religion and belief.
- To facilitate play opportunities that are inclusive and accessible.
- To raise the standard, quality and experience of play opportunities across Chesterfield.
- To ensure that play opportunities are resourced and sustainable.
- To widen the understanding of play and support local communities to access play.
- To encourage play in local communities and amongst families.

4.5 The draft Play Strategy is attached at **Appendix A.**

4.6 Consultation on the draft Play Strategy will ensure that Chesterfield citizens have a direct say in how the council can address local needs and priorities for its play spaces.

4.7 Consultation on the Play Strategy will take place in two phases, influenced in part due to the current restrictions pertaining to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.8 **Phase 1** – general consultation on the draft Play Strategy will take place via the council's online website.

4.9 **Phase 2** – analysis of the data captured from the general consultation will help to inform our further consultation with stakeholders including ‘Friends’ groups and other local open space groups and elected members.

4.10 When consulting with specific interest groups the green spaces team will undertake the consultation using appropriate methodologies that adhere to Covid – 19 social distancing measures and government guidance at the time.

4.11 Once the consultation has taken place the updated Play Strategy will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

5.0 **Implications for consideration – Council Plan**

5.1 The play strategy contributes to the following council plan objectives:

- Improving quality of life for local people.
- Improving our environment and enhance community safety for all our communities and future generations.
- Helping our communities to improve their health and wellbeing.

6.0 **Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money**

6.1 No specific financial implications have been identified from the consultation on the strategy. This implication will be considered further when the revised strategy is presented to cabinet following consultation.

7.0 **Implications for consideration – Legal**

7.1 Article 31 of the UN Convention on the rights of the child states;

‘Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.’

‘Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.’

8.0 **Implications for consideration – Human resources**

8.1 No specific human resource implications have been identified. This implication will be considered further when the revised strategy is presented to cabinet following consultation.

9.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Residual Risk
Strategy not adopted	High	Low	<p>The strategy has been developed to fully reflect the challenges of land use and open space development presents. It has been informed by a varied evidence base and as such it supports the Council vision and council plan objectives.</p> <p>Full consultation programme being undertaken to ensure local input and engagement to reflect local need.</p>	Low

10.0 Implications for consideration – community wellbeing

10.1 Being active through play can make unique contributions to children’s health, wellbeing and holistic development, which cannot be obtained from more structured forms of physical activity or formal sport. Anyone can take part in it, there is little or no cost to the participant and does not need high skill levels to specifically engage. This along with the natural creativity and flexibility of play makes it an important part of a child /

young person's development. The Play Strategy will seek to positively contribute to this.

- 10.2 Outdoor play provision can also be beneficial to mental health and well-being by providing important opportunities to interact with nature and other people. The positive effect interaction such as this can have on our mental well-being has been well documented.

11.0 **Implications for consideration – Economy and skills**

- 11.1 Providing good quality play opportunities will support the Council's wider ambitions regarding Making Chesterfield a thriving borough by actively contributing to making Chesterfield A great place to live, work and visit.

12.0 **Implications for consideration – Climate Change**

- 12.1 Opportunities exist within our open space to explore the inclusion of natural play settings. Existing features can be utilised such as woodlands, streams, slopes and fallen wood. These opportunities need to be measured against the risk of engagement but equally the approach needs to reflect the positive outcomes from such engagement. By adapting play spaces to include natural elements through the strategy we could further influence the design of open space on growth sites to take account of these less traditional options and opportunities for play which will have a positive impact on Climate Change.
- 12.2 Through the strategy our procurement processes can be looked at again to include for example details pertaining to specifications that would ask suppliers to consider the use of materials that are more sympathetic to the environment. For example, the types of paint used and where and how those materials are sourced and transported.
- 12.3 By adapting our play spaces to accommodate and utilise existing natural play elements this may attract additional funding support from some of our external funding providers. The landfill tax credit scheme, whilst supporting amenity projects also supports those projects that include biodiversity and land adaptation in them.
- 12.4 A full Climate Change Impact Assessment is attached at **Appendix C**.
- #### 13.0 **Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity**

13.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is attached at **Appendix B**. No negative impacts for groups with protected characteristics have been identified.

14.0 Recommendations

14.1 That Cabinet approves the draft Play Strategy 2021 – 2026 for public consultation.

14.2 That a report is brought to Cabinet with a final draft of the Play Strategy for adoption following completion of the public consultation.

15.0 Reasons for Recommendations

15.1 To bring the Play Strategy up to date to include the recent open space assessment and national, regional and local initiatives in the provision and management of play spaces.

Decision information

Key decision number	1032
Wards affected	All

Document information

Report author	
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Appendices to the report	
Appendix A Part 1	Draft Play Strategy 2021 – 2026
Appendix A Part 2	Evidence base
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix C	Climate Change Impact Assessment