



Horsham
District
Council

Play Strategy

2017 - 2027



Approved November 2017

PLAY –

What children do when
they follow their own ideas and interests
in their own way, for their own reason

Contents

Executive Summary	2
1. The strategy in context	
1.1. Introduction	4
1.2. Review of previous Play Strategy 2007 to 2012	4
1.3. The national context	6
1.4. The local context	6
2. Current provision	7
3. Strategy	8
 Aim 1 – Improve the public realm as a child friendly environment which offers stimulating and challenging play opportunities	9
 Aim 2 – Ensure our play spaces are clean, safe and non-threatening	10
 Aim 3 – Encourage local people to use our play spaces to benefit their health and wellbeing	11
 Aim 4 – Work to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing and playing in the general public domain	12
 Aim 5 – Work with partners to identify opportunities for improving places for children and young people to play	13
 Aim 6 – Encourage children and young people to encounter the natural environment	14
 Aim 7 – Deliver excellent value and high performance while keeping the customer at the heart of what we do	15
4. Governance, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review	16
5. Equality and Diversity	16
6. Resourcing the Strategy	16
7. Action Plan	



Executive Summary

Play is an essential part of every child's life. It is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development.

The Council believes that parks, open spaces, town and village centres should allow children (ie. people under the age of 18) to move around in safety and seeks to ensure that there are appropriate spaces where children can play freely, experience nature, explore their environment and be with their friends.

There are two national agendas which reinforce the importance of play; Public Health England's report on the prevalence of childhood obesity and Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Horsham District Play Strategy 2017-2027 responds to these agendas and seeks to reconcile them within the context

of the Council's Corporate Plan. It reflects on significant improvements to children's play across the Horsham District since the first Council Play Strategy in 2007 and identifies the direction of travel for play in the district over the next 10 years.

In summary, the Horsham District Play Strategy 2017-2027 seeks to ensure that all children have access to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation. It identifies 6 aims within a vision for play which will guide Council, and influence partner activity over the next ten years. It identifies actions required to achieve these aims and in doing so reinforces the Council's key play priorities.

According to Public Health England in 2015/16 one third of 10 to 11 year olds and over one fifth of 4 to 5 year olds were overweight or obese. The World Health Organisation regards childhood obesity as one of the most serious public health challenges for the 21st century. The UK ranks 9th for overweight prevalence (including obesity) in children aged 2-19 years out of the 34 OECD countries. In 2013 local responsibility for the prevention and management of obesity transferred from Primary Care Trusts to local authorities.

Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the right of every child to rest, leisure, play recreational activities and free and full participation in cultural and artistic life. The Committee on the Rights of the Child is concerned by the poor recognition given by the Government to these rights. Rising urban populations, violence in all its forms, the commercialisation of play provision and increasing educational demands are all affecting children's opportunity to enjoy their rights. In 2013, the committee produced a 'General Comment' that explains in detail measures governments are urged to take to ensure implementation of the rights in article 31 for all children.

VISION

To provide, protect and enhance a publicly accessible network of diverse and innovative play spaces that meet the needs of our communities, and have a positive impact on the health and well-being of local children.

To achieve this vision for the Horsham District, the following aims have been identified:



Aim 1 Improve the public realm as a child friendly environment which offers stimulating and challenging play opportunities



Aim 2 Ensure our play spaces are clean, safe and non-threatening



Aim 3 Encourage local people to use our play spaces to benefit their health and wellbeing



Aim 4 Work to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing and playing in the general public domain



Aim 5 Work with partners to identify opportunities for improving places for children and young people to play



Aim 6 Encourage children and young people to encounter the natural environment



Aim 7 Deliver excellent value and high performance while keeping the customer at the heart of what we do

Our successes in the past 10 years

- Creating a destination park at Dinosaur Island, Southwater Country Park, which people travel to from outside of the Horsham District.
- The first wheelchair swing in a public park in the Horsham District.
- Introducing electronic play equipment at Kilnwood.
- Lifting the cycling ban in Horsham Park.
- More park based activities in the holidays.
- Introducing more challenging play spaces for older children to play.
- Providing more open access ball courts.
- Removing the need for fences in appropriate locations.
- Starting a renewals programme aimed at replacing four play areas per year.

1. The strategy in context

1.1 Introduction

The Play Strategy and Action Plan for Horsham District 2017-2027 is a 10 year plan that has been developed by Horsham District Council. It picks up on the outcomes of the previous 5 year plan which covered the period from 2007-2012. The principles of the 2007-2012 strategy have continued to be delivered to the present day.

The Play Strategy and Action Plan creates a set of guidelines and priorities in the provision of outdoor play and aims to be a practical tool for relevant people to use and refer to whenever issues concerning play become prevalent.

The Play Strategy and Action Plan is encompassing to most aspects of outdoor play in children's and young people's lives. It can be used as a framework for good practice by individuals, statutory bodies, voluntary sector organisations or anyone else with an interest in the development of play and play services.

Whilst it is accepted that private fee charging play provision has a role within the community, the aim of the Play Strategy and Action Plan for Horsham District is to ensure that wherever they live or spend the majority of their free time, children and young people should have access to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation, which meet the three free's test and as such:

Are **free** of charge, where they are **free** to come and go and **free** to choose what they do whilst there

Horsham District Council shares the view of the Children's Play Council that the primary aim of investment in and support for play, should be to increase the numbers and frequency of children and young people, from all social groups, playing freely in their local neighbourhood.

1.2 Review of previous Play Strategy 2007 to 2012

The previous Horsham District Play Strategy was developed in response to the national Children's Play Initiative which aimed to create, improve and develop inclusive play provision across England that responds to the needs of the community.





The strategy was instrumental in achieving a successful bid for Big Lottery funds of £213,378 which delivered six key projects across the Horsham District, including the mobile street sports worker, part of Southwater Country Park play area, more adventurous play spaces for older children at Sullington, Ashington and Broadbridge Heath and a new ball court at Pixies Hollow, Horsham.

The strategy also played a key role in a successful bid for Playbuilder funding in 2009, which resulted in further improved play areas at Station Road Gardens,

Billingshurst, Beech Road, Horsham, Pixie's Hollow (Woodstock Close, Horsham) and Memorial Playing Field Steyning.

The principles of the Play Strategy continue to be implemented and further improvements to our play offering were incorporated into the Horsham District Green Space Strategy 2013 to 2023. These improvements included securing an increased annual revenue budget to enable us to replace every Horsham District Council owned play area at least every 15 years. It is also included a vision to develop Southwater Country Park

play area into a destination play area and resulted in the development of the incredibly popular Dinosaur Island.

The Play Strategy was developed by the District Council and has most influence on District Council owned spaces. The intention was that the Parish Council's would also use it as inspirational guidance to encourage improvement in play spaces across the Horsham District.

In 2017 an online survey attracted responses from residents in Horsham, Ashington, Shipley, Nuthurst, Storrington, Coolham, Southwater, Billingshurst, Warnham, Five Oaks, West Chiltington, Rudgwick, Pulborough, Upper Beeding, Steyning and Maplehurst. The majority of responses came from people with responsibility for children in the 0-10 age group.

A summary of the feedback is available as a separate document and some of the priorities in the action plan were guided by this feedback. These include:

- Significant improvements are needed at Roffey Recreation Ground, North Horsham play areas and rural play areas
- Consider the introduction of splash parks
- More information is needed on where good play spaces are
- Anti-social behaviour issues were identified at some specific sites
- Continue to provide challenging equipment for older children
- Speed up the improvement and maintenance programme on existing play areas
- More natural play features in woodlands and local greens

1.3 The national context

There are two main national and international agendas which continue to reinforce the importance of maintaining a Horsham District Play Strategy. These are Public Health England's report on the prevalence of childhood obesity and Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

According to Public Health England in 2015/16 one third of 10 to 11 year olds and over one fifth of 4 to 5 year olds were overweight or obese. The World Health Organisation regards childhood obesity as one of the most serious public health challenges for the 21st century. The UK ranks 9th for overweight prevalence (including obesity) in children aged 2-19 years out of the 34 OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. In 2013 local responsibility for the prevention and management of obesity transferred from Primary Care Trusts to local authorities.

Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the right of every child to rest, leisure, play recreational activities and free and full participation in cultural and artistic life. The Committee on the Rights of the Child is concerned by the poor recognition given by the Government to these rights. Rising urban populations, violence in all its forms, the commercialisation of play provision and increasing educational demands are all affecting children's opportunity to enjoy their rights. In 2013, the committee produced a 'General Comment' that explains in detail measures governments are urged to take to ensure implementation of the rights in article 31 for all children.

The continued delivery of conducive, local, places to walk, play and be freely active is a major element of the agenda to tackle both these significant issues.

1.4. The local context

All Council activities are ultimately driven by the Corporate Plan and the desire to enhance and protect the quality of life for our residents and visitors. The table opposite highlights how the play strategy aligns with these priorities.



Corporate Plan Priorities 2016-19

The Play Strategy helps to translate the following strands of the Corporate Plan.

Communities – support our communities

Supports the reduction of anti-social behaviour

The provision of free play spaces, ball courts, skate parks, outdoor gyms, walks contributes towards improved health outcomes

Improve quality of life for vulnerable people

Economy – Improve and support the local economy

The provision of good quality play facilities in parks close to town centre locations encourages families to stay for longer and in turn boosts the local economy.

Horsham Park play area and Southwater's Dinosaur Island are destination parks which means that people travel from outside of our District to visit them, therefore boosting the local economy.

Plans to renew Horsham skate park and improve Horsham Park play area play a role in the master plan for Hurst Road and Horsham town centre

Efficiency – Great value services

Continue to pursue best value delivery of the service, through re-alignment of staffing.

Continued effort to access external grant funding and utilise developer contributions.

We work closely with volunteer and friends groups and therefore benefit from a volunteer workforce and access to a wider range of funding options.

Continue to develop a clear and transparent rationalisation and repurposing programme for surplus play areas.

Continue to evaluate and update a programme of prioritised investment in new and existing play areas and to ensure that investment is in high value play facilities, not in maintaining low value play facilities.

Continue to work in partnership with parish councils, schools, clubs and societies to advise on design and signpost to funding to improve facilities across the District.

Environmental – manage our natural and built environment

Ensure sustainable materials are used in new projects

Continue to look for opportunities to provide new play equipment that can be used by children with disabilities.

Ensure that key play environments are delivering effective play environments which enable children with disabilities to play too.

2. Current provision

Whilst responsibility for green spaces across the District lies with a number of organisations, Horsham District Council owns and manages over 400 hectares spread across a similar number of sites.

This includes 53 play areas plus recreation grounds, woodlands, allotments, cemeteries, green corridors and a number of strategic green spaces including Southwater Country Park and Chesworth Farm, Warnham Local Nature Reserve and Horsham Park.

Local Parish Councils and Housing Associations maintain most green spaces in their local areas but there are a few green spaces maintained by management companies.

West Sussex County Council maintains most grass and trees on roadside verges.



3. Strategy

VISION

To provide, protect and enhance a publicly accessible network of diverse and innovative play spaces that meet the needs of our communities, and have a positive impact on the health and well-being of local children.

To achieve this vision for the Horsham District, the following aims have been identified:



Aim 1 Improve the public realm as a child friendly environment which offers stimulating and challenging play opportunities.



Aim 2 Ensure our play spaces are clean, safe and non-threatening.



Aim 3 Encourage local people to use our play spaces to benefit their health and wellbeing.



Aim 4 Work to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing and playing in the general public domain.



Aim 5 Work with partners to identify opportunities for improving places for children and young people to play.



Aim 6 Encourage children and young people to encounter the natural environment



Aim 7 Deliver excellent value and high performance while keeping the customer at the heart of what we do

These aims are described in more detail below and will be achieved through the delivery of the Action Plan.



STIMULATING



SAFETY



USAGE



BARRIERS



PARTNERS



NATURE



PERFORMANCE

Aim 1: Improve the public realm as a child friendly environment which offers stimulating and challenging play opportunities.

PRINCIPLES

Play is what children do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way for their own reasons. Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child identifies 'play' as an essential part of every child's life. It is vital for their enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual, health and physical development.

Continue to integrate play spaces into a wider landscape setting to maximise play experience and provide opportunity for community cohesion.

Continue to improve existing local and neighbourhood play spaces and ensure there is a good range of equipment for all age categories including under fives.

Work with Parish Councils to develop a network of destination play spaces (ones which people will travel to) to boost local economy.

- We will seek to identify opportunities and funding for improvement of existing play spaces in each of the larger villages.

Work with partners to improve play environments for children with disabilities to play too at key neighbourhood play areas.

- More specifically we will expand the offering at Horsham Park to include a wheelchair accessible roundabout, a sand table and sensory sound objects and identify funding for a wheelchair

swing at Dinosaur Island along with interactive electronic dinosaur sounds. We will identify opportunities to select equipment which is accessible for the widest range of abilities at other play areas.

Influence the provision of new innovative play spaces within new developments by having early involvement in strategic planning through review of neighbourhood plans and by being a key consultee in the planning application process.

- Look for opportunities to incorporate more challenging features such as bike tracks, climbing boulders and electronic play.
- Ensure play spaces on larger developments include play features for children with disabilities.
- Play should be an essential part of green space provision and opportunities should be sought to incorporate small incidental natural play features near people's houses and in woodland areas to encourage active walks.
- Buffer zones to play spaces and leisure activities should be regarded as absolute minimum design criteria.
- Support the design of home zones, traffic calming and cycle ways.
- Ensure play facilities are delivered in a timely manner.

Improve opportunities for older children to play in the public realm to improve their social, physical and mental wellbeing.

- Replace Horsham Skate Park with a concrete skate park within the next five years.
- Identify opportunities to deliver a network of bike tracks across the District, to include facilities for children to practice riding on challenging surfaces for BMX and mountain bikes.

- Identify opportunities to deliver a network of free access ball courts across the District.
- Create places for older children to hang out and chat in appropriate locations where they will feel safe and not been to seen to be intimidating local residents. This could be in the form of standalone nest swings, informal seating, youth shelters.
- Introduce more climbing boulders outside of play areas which allow young people to use without intimidating younger children or adults.
- Use the findings of the Sports Pitch Strategy to align the provision of grass pitches and development of opportunities for 3G pitches within new developments.
- Support the provision of outdoor gym equipment which is appropriate for children aged 14+.
- Work with Parkour UK to investigate the provision of opportunities for Parkour training.





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PARTNERS



NATURE



PERFORMANCE



Aim 2 – Ensure our play spaces are clean, safe and non-threatening.

PRINCIPLES

Risk taking is an essential feature of children's play; children and young people both need and want to take risks in order to explore limits and develop their capabilities.

Ensuring that all children and young people have access to stimulating and challenging play environments where they can take acceptable levels of risk, but where they are not exposed to unavoidable risks of death or serious injury is very important.

It is the Council's legal responsibility to manage its land in a way that protects users from harm or accident. Both Common Law and Statute Law relating to public safety have a significant impact on the way the Council needs to manage its play spaces.

Continue to abide by the Play Safety Forum's statement which states that children need and want to take risks when they play.

- Provide challenging play opportunities for all age ranges which meets the latest EN standards for children's play, sport and climbing.

Manage the chances of accidents occurring by carrying out regular recorded inspections on all children's play facilities.

- Manage the risk of equipment failure and unexpected financial outlay.
- We will continue to aim to replace four District Council owned play areas per year which would result in all play areas being replaced every 15 years. Given that the estimated design life of a play area is 10-12 years we will need to ensure that towards the end of their lifetime, these play areas are monitored more closely.

- Seek to reduce a few of the small, low value play areas which are in close proximity to other play spaces and focus on improving larger neighbourhood play areas.

Improve rate of maintenance on children's play areas by introducing a Service Level Agreement which will formalise targets for replacing broken play equipment.

Introduce standardised signage on broken equipment which identifies a 'time to fix'.

Ensure all play areas have the correct signage, which identifies the owner of the site and the rules around using the site.

Minimise use of chemicals on play areas and use alternative control measures wherever possible.

Consider the importance of specifying galvanised steel legs on play items which have a greater risk of serious injury.



STIMULATING



SAFETY



USAGE



BARRIERS



PARTNERS



NATURE



PERFORMANCE

Aim 3 – Encourage local people to use our play spaces to benefit their health and wellbeing.

PRINCIPLES

According to Public Health England in 2015/16 one third of 10 to 11 year olds and over one fifth of 4 to 5 year olds were overweight or obese. The World Health Organisation regards childhood obesity as one of the most serious public health challenges for the 21st century. The UK ranks 9th for overweight prevalence (including obesity) in children aged 2-19 years out of the 34 OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. In 2013 local responsibility for the prevention and management of obesity transferred from Primary Care Trusts to local authorities.

Improve information on the Council website to allow people to find out where they can take children to play locally.

- Introduce an interactive mapping system to enable parents and carers to identify places to play and walk.
- Feature recently upgraded play areas on the Council's website.

Make more use of social media to publicise the latest improvements to play areas.

Provide more welcoming signage on our public open spaces and woodlands to encourage people to use them to benefit their health and wellbeing.

Work in partnership with Sports Development team and local sports and church groups to encourage the delivery of park based activity sessions for children and young people to improve their activity levels.





STIMULATING



SAFETY



USAGE



BARRIERS



PARTNERS



NATURE



PERFORMANCE

Aim 4 – Work to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing and playing in the general public domain

PRINCIPLES

Children and young people commonly identify many barriers to play and their enjoyment of public space. These include fears for their safety, especially from bullying; being told off by adults for playing outdoors and fear of traffic.

Parents and the wider community strongly believe that children today have fewer opportunities to play than they did as children and are spending too much time watching television and using computers.

Encourage and support the provision of youth workers, community coaches and enforcement teams in parks and open spaces, subject to available resources.

Support more community run events to encourage more use of local spaces.

Encourage ownership and involvement in local play spaces through friends groups, local action teams, schools and parents groups.

Support and promote safe routes to schools and cycle ways.

Support proposals for home zones and traffic calming within new developments.





Aim 5 – Work with partners to identify opportunities for improving places for children and young people to play

PRINCIPLES

The district council directly provides a wide range of facilities for children's and young people's play and informal recreation. It also actively supports partner organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors in providing and enhancing play opportunities for children and young people.

Investigate the initiation of an annual play seminar to bring together partners and Parish Councils to disseminate best practice and identify opportunities for partnership working.

Introduce a play partnership group on facebook which provides a forum for partners who work with children and young people to influence the development of better places to play.

Support community groups to become self- sustaining.

Actively promote good design principles to Parish and Neighbourhood Councils and work with them to help design better places to play.





STIMULATING



SAFETY



USAGE



BARRIERS



PARTNERS



NATURE



PERFORMANCE



Aim 6 – Encourage children and young people to encounter the natural environment

PRINCIPLES

Studies from around the world show that regular unstructured play in a natural environment produces significant improvements in learning ability, creativity, mental psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Encourage more families to interact with nature by developing a Family Discovery Hub at Warnham Local Nature Reserve.

Introduce more incidental and natural play features in woodlands and meadows to encourage usage of woodland and meadow areas.

Work in partnership with Horsham Town Community Partnership to encourage more people to use the Riverside Walk to increase their activity levels.

Investigate the provision of more features along the walk which will encourage families to explore more.



STIMULATING



SAFETY



USAGE



BARRIERS



PARTNERS



NATURE



PERFORMANCE

Aim 7 – Deliver excellent value and high performance while keeping the customer at the heart of what we do

PRINCIPLES

At the time of writing in 2017, the Government continues to impose unprecedented restriction in public sector spending. This means we have to continually review our ambitions and priorities; options for delivering services in different ways such as outsourcing or sharing; ways of raising income; grant funding; rationalising our services and ensuring the council gets the best possible deal when procuring services.

We must do this whilst being aware that reduced maintenance can lead to anti-social behaviour which can be costly to address and adversely affects quality of life for local residents.

Ensure an annual programme of revenue works (ie. repairs, renewals, clean ups) is developed and approved before each new financial year.

Proactively look for opportunities for external grant funding to support the improvement of existing facilities.

Introduce further efficiencies into the Play Ranger service which removes the low skilled litter clearance element of their job and focuses their attention on the more highly skilled play inspection and maintenance role.

Ensure a regular redecoration programme is carried out on all play areas.

Initiate a customer survey form which allows parents and carers to feedback on any issues.

Consider where appropriate, the removal of fencing which is costly to install and maintain.



Aim 1 – Improve the public realm as a child friendly environment which offers stimulating and challenging play opportunities



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External grant fund estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
1.1	Improve Roffey Rec Play Area	S106/ capital	Approved	£100,000		£38,229	£61,771		2018
1.2	Improve Horsham Park Play Area	S106/ capital	To be approved	£125,000		£75,000	£25,000	£25,000	2019
1.3	Install wheelchair accessible roundabout in Horsham Park Play Area.	Rotary Club	Approved	£11,500	£9,000			£2,500	2017
1.4	Install a sand table and sensory sound objects in Horsham Park Play Area.	Disability funding	To be approved	£10,000	£10,000				2019
1.5	Install a wheelchair swing at Dinosaur Island, Southwater, subject to funding.	Crowd fund	To be approved	£13,000	£13,000				2020
1.6	Install interactive dinosaur sounds at Dinosaur island, Southwater.	One off revenue	Approved	£2,000				£2,000	2019
1.7	Replace Horsham Skate Park with a concrete Skate Park	Consultation required	To be approved	£250,000		£100,000	£150,000		2019
1.8	Deliver a mountain bike skills track to the north of Horsham	Developer funded	To be approved						2022
1.9	Create places for older children to hang out, outside of traditional play areas	Annual revenue	Approved	£2,000				£2,000	2020-2027
1.10	Provide outdoor gym equipment	S106	Majority approved	£42,500		£42,500			2017
1.11	Investigate provision of a Parkour training facility	None	TBC						2018

Aim 2 – Ensure our play spaces are clean, safe and non-threatening



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External cost estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
2.1	Replace four play areas per year	Existing annual revenue	Approved	£75,000	£75,000			£75,000	2017-2027
2.2	Repurpose small low value play areas	Capital	TBC						2017-2027
2.3	Introduce SLA to improve rate of maintenance	None							2018
2.4	Introduce standard 'time to fix' signage on broken equipment	None							2018
2.5	Introduce standard for footings on play equipment that has a greater risk of injury	None							2018

Aim 3 – Encourage local people to use our play spaces to benefit their health and wellbeing



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External cost estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
3.1	Introduce an interactive mapping system to identify places to play	None							2018
3.2	Feature new play areas on social media	None							2017-2027
3.3	New welcoming signage on play spaces and woodlands	Existing annual revenue	Approved	£1,000				£1,000	2017-2027
3.4	Encourage park based activity sessions	None							2017-2027

Aim 4 – Work to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing and playing in the general public domain



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External cost estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
4.1	Encourage and support the provision of youth workers and enforcement teams in open spaces.	None							2017-2027
4.2	Support more community run events to encourage more use of local spaces.	None							2017-2027

Aim 5 – Work with partners to identify opportunities for improving places for children and young people to play



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External cost estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
5.1	Introduce an annual play seminar	Existing annual revenue	Approved	£200				£200	2019-2027
5.2	Create a play partnership group on facebook	None							2018

Aim 6 – Encourage children and young people to encounter the natural environment



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External cost estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
6.1	New family discovery hub at Warnham, dependant on funding	Heritage Lottery Bid	To be approved	£250,000	£250,000				2019
6.2	Introduce new play features in woodlands, meadows and Riverside Walk	Existing annual revenue	Approved					£2,000	2020-2027

Aim 7 – Deliver excellent value and high performance while keeping the customer at the heart of what we do



Ref	Action	Funding Implications	Funding Status	Total cost estimate	External cost estimate	S106 cost estimate	Capital cost estimate	Revenue cost estimate	Timescale
7.1	Annual programme of repairs and maintenance on play areas.	Existing annual revenue	Approved	£28,530				£28,530	2017-2027
7.2	Improve ranger service to focus on improved maintenance	TBC							2017
7.3	Initiate a customer feedback process	None							2018
7.4	Consider removal of fencing where appropriate	None							2017-2027

4. Governance, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Progress against actions identified in this strategy will be monitored by the Head of Culture and Communities and reported annually to the Council via the Portfolio holder for Arts, Heritage and Leisure.

The strategy will be formally reviewed and updated every five years.

5. Equality and Diversity

It is recognised that equal opportunity requires targeted action and the intention of this plan is to make play opportunities accessible to all sections of the community.

The strategy will support the setting of targets for identified groups and recommend that plans and programmes are developed in consultation with group representatives.

6. Resourcing the Strategy

Staff resources

We will introduce further efficiencies into the Play Ranger service which removes the low skilled litter clearance element of their job and focuses their attention on the more highly skilled play inspection and maintenance role.

The resulting staff resource for children's play projects, inspection, maintenance and repairs will be as follows:

Inspections and maintenance	2 FTE
Management including projects	0.8 FTE

Annual revenue budget

It is important to maintain a regular repairs and renewals budget in order to manage the risk of equipment failure and unexpected financial outlay.

Repairs and maintenance	£28,530
Renewals	£75,000

Commuted sum contributions

The Council is in receipt of commuted sums which currently cover the maintenance cost for the following sites:

Forge Way play area, Billingshurst	£12,747
Parsonage Farm/Deer Park, Henfield	£66,657
Hornets play area, Horsham	£7,100
Deer Way open space, Horsham	£67,717
Oaklands open space, Horsham	£18,879
Highwood play area/open space, Horsham	£50,000

These sums are allocated over a 20 year period.

Capital requests

There will be the occasional need for Capital requests to support larger projects for which we may have secured either S106 contributions or grant funding.

Grant funding

From 2007 to 2017, the following grant funding has been received towards play:

2009 Pixies Hollow Ball Court - Big Lottery	£20k
2010 Beech Road Play Area - Playbuilder	£50k
2011 Human Nature Garden - Big Lottery	£100k
2011 Pixies Hollow Play - Playbuilder	£10k
2011 Meadowside, Storrington - Big Lottery	£45k
2016 New Street Green - Tesco Bags	£8k
2016 New Street Green - DCLG Pocket Parks	£15k

S106 contributions

The following S106 contributions have been earmarked or spent towards improved play facilities:

2015 Dinosaur Island	£101k
2016/17 Manor Fields	£26k
2017/18 Roffey Rec	£38k
2017/18 Redkilyn	£49k
2018/19 Horsham Park	£53k

We will continue to work to identify S106 contributions for relevant projects.

Note on CIL

It is currently uncertain how the implementation of the Comunity Infrastructure Levy will impact on the availability of developer funds for infrastructure improvements. This will continue to be reviewed.

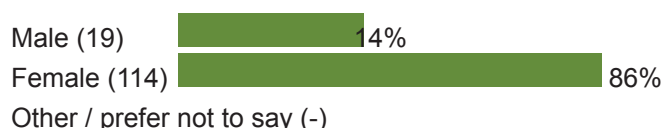
Review of the previous Play Strategy 2007 to 2012

The following summarises the changes that were made, provides an analysis on how people perceive the improvements and a summary of comments received:

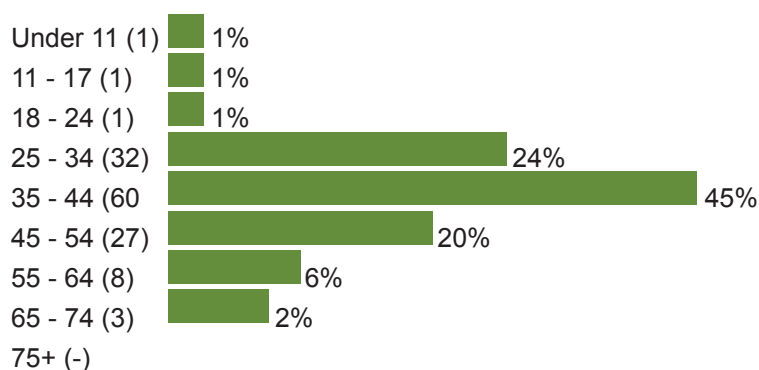
If you are responsible (ie. parent, grandparent, carer, teacher) for any children, please specify which age groups:



What is your gender?



Which age group do you fall into:



Objective 1

Improve the public realm as a child friendly environment, aiming to make parks, thoroughfares, housing estates and other public spaces within the District as conducive to play as possible.

A play standard was adopted which has helped to ensure that new and refurbished play areas are built to provide the best play value within the space available. The play standard puts a value on landscape and sensory features as well as challenge, inclusivity, accessibility, maintenance and safety.

Our flagship play project – Dinosaur Island was developed during the period of the Play Strategy and delivered in 2015. The combination of mounds and swales with wooden structures and prehistoric planting has proved an incredibly popular choice with families who visit time and time again.

We have introduced more accessible play equipment into our play areas and have introduced the first open access wheelchair swing in the Horsham District.

More skate parks have been installed around the District and a move has been made towards concrete skate parks which are easier to maintain. No new bike tracks have been delivered within the period of the strategy; however there are now plans in place for couple of bike tracks within new developments.

A number of play areas now feature pieces that can be used by older

Objective 1

Cont/d

children including electronic play, climbing volcano, aerial walkway, nest swings.

More play areas have been created using wood such as Robinia which offers texture, pattern and organic shapes. More play areas include wildflower planting and trees.

We have been working closely with developers to ensure that new play areas meet the required quantity, quality and accessibility standards. This has resulted in the delivery of much higher quality play areas which are more conducive to play in.

It is quite a time consuming process but we feel that the effort put in pays off in the quality of the play areas delivered and the ability of the space to enhance community cohesion.

Examples – Wheelchair swing

Examples – MUGA's – Southwater

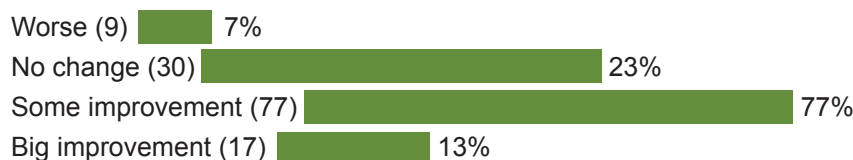
Examples – Henfield Skate Park

Examples – Beech Glade (North Horsham), Wordsworth Place (North Horsham), Butterfly garden (Southwater), Dinosaur Island (Southwater)

Examples – West of Horsham, Kilnwood

Survey Response:

Over the last 10 years have you noticed access to better play spaces for children aged 0 - 17 in the Horsham district?



The survey showed that provision of better places to play is the area of most improvement with over 40% of responders recognising Dinosaur Island, Southwater Country Park as a good example of play provision. Improvements at Horsham Park, Butterfly Garden, Southwater and Dutchells Copse, Horsham were also recognised as well as the new wheelchair swing in Horsham Park.

The survey identified the improvement of the play area at Roffey Rec (Horsham) as the

top priority, which aligns with the Council's top priority, along with the improvement of play areas in the North Horsham housing estates and play areas in the rural parts of the District. Other areas for improvement identified by more than one person in the survey were the Horsham Neighbourhood play areas including Bluebell Park, Owlbeech Play Area, Bennetts Field, Victory Rec, Horsham Park skate park and Wickhurst Green (Broadbridge Heath).

Responders noted some deficiencies including more improvements needed for children with disabilities and a lack of splash parks in the District, also a need for 3G pitches.

Parking charges were identified as a limiting factor for some people visiting certain parks.

Objective 2

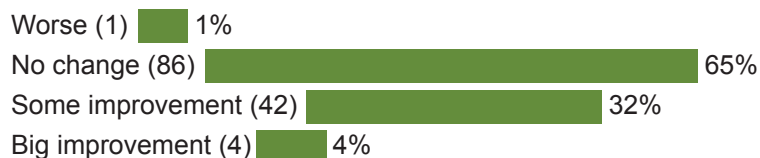
Improve awareness of places to play

A District wide play leaflet was created and is available online. More innovative signage has been installed.

Unfortunately it was not possible to deliver the web based mapping system to identify local play spaces due to a lack of resources.

Survey Response:

Over the last 10 years have we improved signposting to our spaces to play through social media, signage and publicity?



It was clear from the survey results that more should be done to publicise places where we have improved opportunities for children to play. The increased usage of social media makes this a more achievable objective for the future.

We should also have clear, accessible guidance on good places to play and ensure that families of children with disabilities know where the most conducive places to play are.

Opportunities to link up with the Youth Information Service and the Children and Family Centres were also recommended.

Objective 3

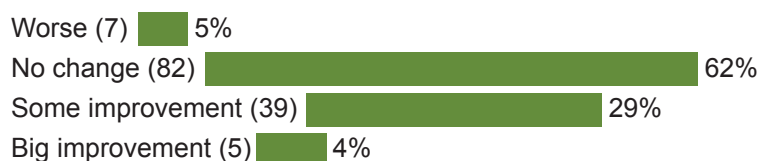
Develop a joined up approach to the distribution of play resources across the District

The Play Forum brought together partners from different organisations across the District such as WSCC, Springboard Project, Youth Council, playgroups to discuss improvements in play opportunities. It was maintained for several years, and then disbanded. No progress was made on working with the Extended Schools initiative.

A play officer's forum has since been developed which brings together officers from across East and West Sussex to share best practice with regard to design, procurement and health and safety.

Survey Response:

Over the last 10 years, have we made more connections with partners to help deliver improved opportunities for children to play?



People were unclear on how to answer this question, but sited Dinosaur Island and High Places at the Pavilions as good examples of partnership working. Opportunities to work more closely with Children and Family Centres, Happy Scamps, Forest Schools amongst others were identified.

Objective 4

Work to reduce the barriers that prevent children from accessing and playing in the general public domain

We worked with street scene wardens to target problem parks and the Youth Support Team who targeted Horsham Park over the Summer periods. The Snack Wagon also worked in key parks and open spaces across the District. Sports Development Officers have been providing more activities in Horsham Park over the Summer.

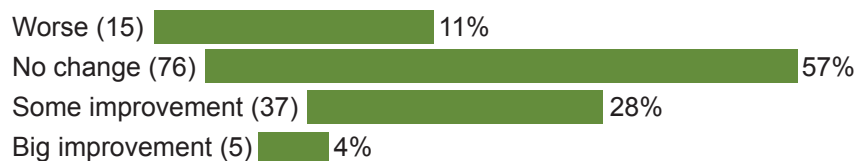
Cycling has now been permitted in Horsham Park, allowing more children to cycle using a safer route.

Ongoing momentum is applied to encourage new developers to consider local areas for play, safe routes to school and cycle ways.

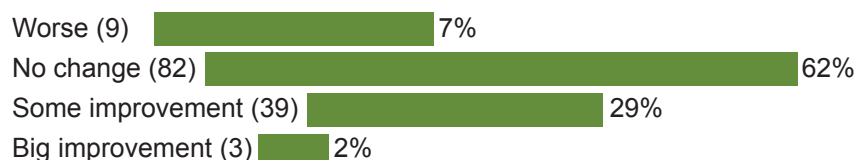
Whenever play area projects are carried out we encourage local ownership of the design of the play area to engage with local people to take an interest in their open space. This has proved to be very successful and there have been limited incidents of anti-social behaviour around newly refurbished parks and play areas.

Survey Response:

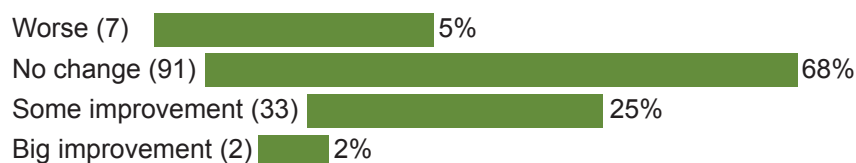
Over the last 10 years have we helped to reduce barriers to play such as: (Fear of gangs)



Over the last 10 years have we helped to reduce barriers to play such as: (Fear of traffic)



Over the last 10 years have we helped to reduce barriers to play such as: (Angry neighbours)



Although a large proportion of responders noted no change in barriers, a significant number of people have noticed an improvement including improvements in Horsham town centre. Particular areas such as Chesworth Farm, Riverside Walk and Rookwood Golf Course were identified as being good for family walks.

A number of play areas were identified as having anti-social behaviour issues including the play area adjacent to Southwater Leisure Centre, Horsham Skate Park, Littlehaven Lane and Roffey Recreation Ground. In response to this, both Roffey Rec play area and the Southwater Leisure Centre play area are due to be renewed in the short term.

Objective 5

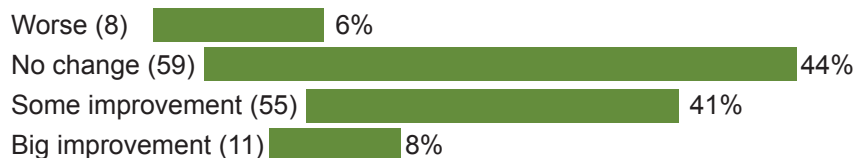
Aim to offer all children and young people the chance to encounter acceptable risks in stimulating and challenging play environments

More challenging equipment has been provided in children's play areas such as a climbing volcano, aerial walkway, zip wires.

More flexibility has been applied to the proximity of water within risk assessment criteria. Fencing of play areas has been relaxed in appropriate areas to enable more incidental use of play spaces.

Survey Response:

Over the last 10 years have we increased the chance for children to encounter acceptable risks within stimulating and challenging environments?



A significant number of people have noticed an improvement in more challenging play features. Dinosaur Island, which includes a climbing volcano and aerial walkway featured quite highly, along with Horsham Park, zip wires, Beech Glade Adventure Play Area (Horsham) and Dutchells green (Horsham) play features. High Places ropes course was also mentioned by a significant number of people, however is not a free facility.

People would like to see more incidental play in woodlands and further more challenging equipment.

Objective 6

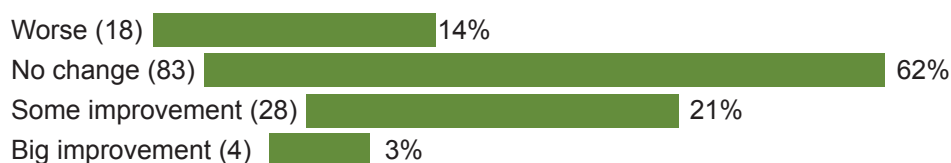
To allow the opportunity for children and young people to have their say in play and youth provision, therefore building community cohesion across the age groups.

We developed a generic email address freeplayzone@horsham.gov.uk and published the child friendly charter for play.

We consulted with residents local to all the play areas that we have made improvements at and where possible have worked with local schools to talk to the children themselves, to help give them a sense of ownership.

Survey Response:

Over the last 10 years have we talked through enough with children and families/carers and are you aware of how important we think play is?



Our level of consultation has mainly been in discrete areas according to the location of renewals.

It was recommended that we use social media more to inform parents of improvements. We should also ensure that the social media links are reaching rural communities.

What improvements could we make to opportunities for children to play freely in the next 10 years?

Lots of ideas were submitted on potential improvements. The most significant was to speed up the improvement and maintenance programme for existing children's play areas.

Other significant responses were to introduce more natural and imaginative play features in woodlands like the features provided

at Dutchells Copse green, to create water splash parks, to improve the ability for children with disabilities to play too, provide more for the under five's and the older children, better access to toilets, more larger adventure play areas and better community policing.