

Design and Equipping of Play Areas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Town Council has developed a Policy for the Design and Equipping of Play Areas for the following reasons:

- To support its objective of promoting healthy living
- To encourage children to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age
- To maintain its play areas in a safe, clean and well equipped condition
- To ensure the appropriate design and layout of playgrounds
- To ensure that appropriately designed play equipment, for a suitable age range is installed at play areas

2.0 THE BENEFITS OF PLAY

The information below highlights a selection of benefits that play can provide to children to young people:

- Play helps to keep children healthy and active, with active children being more likely to become active adults
- Play promotes social inclusion. It helps children to learn about their environment and to develop a sense of community
- Play promotes children's development, learning, independence and creativity
- Play can be therapeutic. It can help with emotional stress and provides an opportunity for children to expend energy and have fun

3.0 MANAGING RISK

Play provision is uniquely placed to offer children the chance to learn about risk in an environment designed for that purpose, helping to equip children to deal with hazards in the wider world and later in life.

The Town Council's play areas are inspected at least twice weekly with one weekly documented inspection of all play areas. This inspection document takes into account a general site check covering access, pathways, signs, fences, gates, seats, litter bins, surfacing and cleanliness. In addition each item of play is checked in relation to its supports, seats, moving and static parts, means of access, safety features and safety surfacing.

Any necessary action is taken either in house or through reputable contractors and where necessary, play equipment is taken out of use by the installation of hazard warning tape and notices. Remedial action is taken as quickly as possible.

Inspection documents are retained in accordance with the Management of Records Policy for an indefinite period (a minimum of 40 years).

A record is maintained of any reported injuries and serious incidents within the Town Council's play areas.

PROVISION OF NEW OR REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT

In considering the provision of new or replacement equipment the Town Council will:

- Take into account the stated age range within its play areas of up to 12 years when choosing equipment
- Give consideration to the provision of equipment which might be suitable for the above age range but which might also be used by older children/adults in appropriate areas
- Endeavour to include equipment which is DDA compliant
- Request designs from at least three reputable play equipment providers
- Obtain estimates from at least three reputable play equipment providers
- Consult with representatives from nearby schools, the Youth Town Council, parents/children and other interested parties as appropriate in each case following local advertisement
- Ensure that all surfaces are constructed of wetpour of an appropriate depth, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations for each piece of play equipment
- Ensure that appropriate Health and Safety regulations are adhered to during construction/refurbishment periods, for example the provision of Heras fencing

Responsible Officer	Town Clerk	Date effective from	Jan 2011	Review date	March 2017
Author	Town Clerk	Date last amended	May 2016		