



Folkestone & Hythe Play Area Strategy

2020-2030



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Folkestone & Hythe District Play Area Strategy

Prepared by LUC
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document follows on from the report *Planning for Play in Shepway 2007-2012* which was developed by Folkestone & Hythe District Council (F&HDC) and the Shepway Play Partnership (a range of organisations and agencies involved in the Play sector) in response to a commitment from central Government to raise the national profile of Play. Since the 2007 Strategy was adopted by F&HDC, there have been many improvements to play provision in the district as well as changes to the available resources to manage and maintain features. It is therefore now timely to review and update the Strategy which will guide the management and maintenance of play spaces in Folkestone & Hythe District.
- 1.2 The Shepway Play Area Review (2017) assesses the current provision of play spaces across the district. The findings of the review have provided a foundation for this Play Area Strategy. This report therefore outlines the aspirations for play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District, in the context of what is achievable and realistic.
- 1.3 Following the completion of the Play Area Review the following key aspects should be considered within the Strategy:
 - Ensure play provision meets the recreation needs of the community for the period 2020 – 2030 linked to the Council’s priorities, in particular improving health and wellbeing for not just children and young people, but adults and older people.
 - Develop a prioritised network of strategic and non-strategic sites to ensure all residents are able to access a good quality and good value play space.
 - Develop a robust mechanism for consulting towns, parishes and communities about the provision of play in their local areas.
 - Establish a framework to guide the future ownership and sustainable management of play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District.
 - Utilise the assessment of the volume of play provision for all age groups across the district within the Play Area Review to identify those areas of under and over provision.
 - Consider the financial position of providing play areas with currently available resources and into the future.
 - Consider and utilise the standards of provision to take forward alongside setting key objectives.
 - Raise the overall quality and value of a network of identified strategic and priority play area facilities within the district.
 - Develop a mechanism for securing developer contributions towards the provision and maintenance of a strategic play network e.g. Section 106 planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges.
- 1.4 Relevant guidance has been referred to whilst compiling this Strategy including *Planning for Play - Guidance on the development and implementation of a local play strategy (2006)*.¹

¹ National Children’s Bureau / Big Lottery Fund, 2006. *Planning for Play - Guidance on the development and implementation of a local play strategy Guide* [pdf] Available at: <http://www.playengland.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/planning_for_play.pdf> [Accessed 12/01/2017].

2 Benefits of play

- 2.1 This section sets out the latest research and evidence on the importance of providing play opportunities for children and young people. It sets out the definition of play and how play supports the development of children and young people. Details of the type of play that can be provided, together with the respective benefits, are also set out. The section concludes with an examination of the importance of ensuring play opportunities are inclusive, accessible to all, and include elements of risk-taking.

The definition of play

- 2.2 The Playwork Principles were drawn up by the Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group in 2004; the Principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork. Playwork is the work of creating and maintaining spaces for children to play. Notably Play Principle 2 states:

*"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."*²

- 2.3 Play behaviours include things like running, chasing, climbing, play fighting, shouting, role playing, fantasy and imagination, creating and destroying, using all sorts of 'objects' in new ways, games where children are in control and make their own rules, dressing up and playing with identity, taking risks. Play is different from organised sports, groups, clubs and classes, which have external rules and definitions, and are usually controlled by adults.

Play and child development

- 2.4 It is important to recognise the significance of play in children's **physical and emotional health development**. The development of key skills obtained from play can improve a child's self-esteem and encourage exploration of their environment whilst improving social interactions, fitness, stamina and agility.
- 2.5 Play can be divided into the following three main types:
- **Imaginative play:** A child takes objects or an environment and imagines it is something else. Imaginative play is a key factor in healthy brain development.
 - **Physical play:** Graded challenges allow the child to understand risk, conquer fear and develop physical skills. Physical play is vital to help develop coordination and confidence in the body.
 - **Social play:** A child learns turn taking, looking after others, delayed gratification and many other skills essential to forming successful adults.
- 2.6 Good play design allows aspects of all three types of play to develop and furthermore allows multiple modes of use to allow problem solving and creativity on the part of the child. Play provision can take many forms and does not simply happen in designated playgrounds or play areas.

² Play by nature: policy and planning for play website, 2016. Available at: <<http://playbynature.org/what-are-the-playwork-principles-2/>> [Accessed 11/01/2017]

Natural Play

- 2.7 Benefits of natural play are widely recognised. By its very nature play equipment has associated maintenance requirements, which in turn have an associated cost. Natural play is about children and young people experiencing play in natural environments.
- 2.8 Play England highlights the following values and benefits of natural play:

"Natural environments support a wide range of children's play. The diverse, dynamic and flexible features that can be found in natural spaces afford opportunities for extensive intentional play behaviours.

Whilst children do not necessarily differentiate between natural and artificial elements in their play, predominantly natural outdoor settings are more likely to be perceived by children as free from adult agendas and thus more open to the possibilities of play.

Playing in natural spaces offers possibilities for: control and mastery, construction of special spaces, manipulating loose parts, different ways of moving, risk-taking etc. Childhood experiences of playing with nature also instil a sense of wonder, stimulating creativity, imagination and symbolic play.

Children's opportunities to playfully access their immediate natural environments support the development of a sense of place and attachment. Playing in natural spaces also supports child's sense of self, allowing children to recognise their independence alongside an interdependence and connectedness with their ecological worlds.

The powerful combination of a diversity of play experiences and direct contact with nature has direct benefits for children's physical, mental and emotional health. Free play opportunities in natural settings offer possibilities for restoration, and hence, well-being. Collectively, the benefits fully support the outcomes established in Every Child Matters.

Playful, experiential and interactive contact with nature in childhood is directly correlated with positive environmental sensibility and behaviour in later life."³

- 2.9 Adding natural play to the portfolio of play provision across the district will introduce a variation of play experiences that is currently lacking. Resulting in an increased quality and value of play areas for the benefit of the community. In addition, the Play England review quotes The Dissolution of Children's Outdoor Play: Causes and consequences' presentation to 'The Value Of Play', Frost (2006) which "*contrasts the high cost and maintenance associated with 'mammoth, multi-tiered structures that have little play value' and the reduced expenditure associated with play spaces that use natural materials, plentiful loose parts and 'wisely selected built or purchased equipment' (Frost, 2006:14).*"⁴ A natural play approach with robust features could potentially result in more creative, stimulating and challenging play provision and reduce the Council's expenditure on maintenance.

³ Play England, 2007. *Play Naturally* [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/play_naturally_a_review_of_childrens_natural_play.pdf> [Accessed 02 February 2017].

⁴ Frost, J., 2006 'The Dissolution of Children's Outdoor Play: Causes and consequences', presentation to 'The Value of Play'; a forum on risk, recreation and children's health, 31 May 2006 [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.fairplayforchildren.org/pdf/1291334551.pdf>> [Accessed 02 February 2017].



"Natural play" sand play features at the Lower Leas Coastal Park (Picture: LUC)

The importance of risk in play

- 2.10 Risk taking enables children and young people to extend skills, develop physical and emotional capacities, challenge themselves in new ways, and gain direct experience of the consequences of their actions. Being brave and conquering fears helps children to grow.
- 2.11 In 2002, the Play Safety Forum endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive agreed that:

"Children would never learn to walk, climb stairs or ride a bicycle unless they were strongly motivated to respond to challenges involving risk or injury. All children need and want to take risks in order to explore limits, venture into new experiences and develop their capacities, from a very young age and from their earliest play experiences. Disabled children have an equal if not greater need for opportunities to take risks, since they may be denied the freedom of their non-disabled peers.

Children need and want to take risks when they play and good play provision should enable this by offering stimulating and challenging opportunities and environments. The level of risk should be managed to ensure that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks or dangers such as death or serious injury."⁵

- 2.12 The Health and Safety Executive stated in 2005:

"Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them all. HSE is not in the business of stamping out simple pleasures wherever they appear and at whatever cost. We recognise the benefits to children's development of play, which necessarily involves some risk, and this shouldn't be sacrificed in the pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety."⁶

- 2.13 It is therefore recommended that all of Folkestone & Hythe District's play sites should balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children.

⁵ Ball D, Gill T, Spiegel B (Play Safety Forum), 2012. *Managing Risk in Play Provision – Implementation Guide* [pdf] Available at: <<http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/172644/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf>> [Accessed 11/01/2017].

⁶ Play Wales: Play and change website, 2016. Available at: <<http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playandchallenge>> [Accessed 11/01/2017]

Play deprivation

2.14 As highlighted in 2003 by Bob Hughes, a writer and researcher on children's play:

*"play deprivation is the name given to the notion that not playing may deprive children of experiences that are regarded as developmentally essential and result in those affected being both biologically and socially disabled."*⁷

2.15 Studies have shown that the effects of play deprivation are devastating to children. If normal play experiences are absent throughout a child's life, that child is more likely to become highly violent and anti-social. This may also manifest itself in symptoms ranging from aggression, repressed emotions and social skills, to an increased risk of obesity. As adults, they are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.⁸

2.16 It is therefore vital that all children and young people have a wide range of places and opportunities to play. Play is an essential part of children's and young people's healthy development.

Inclusive play

2.17 Inclusive play means children having access and the opportunity to play together regardless of disability, race or gender. However there can be barriers to the provision of inclusive play opportunities, such as accessibility, funding and staffing. There have been no significant issues of lack of inclusivity identified within Folkestone & Hythe District. However it will be necessary to investigate ways to address any identified shortfalls in disabled access and for children getting to play areas so that F&HDC works towards all play being inclusive. An example of good practice of inclusive play in the district would include Lower Leas Coastal Park.

2.18 In line with the Equality Act (2010) play provision should be as fully inclusive as possible with all ages catered for, particularly up to the age of 25.

2.19 Groups that are considered "hard to reach" and therefore not able to access play provision as easily include:

- Children and young people that have been excluded from school - these people are unable to access any school-based services and therefore are less likely to be accessing play opportunities.
- Teenagers and young adults - frequently these groups are excluded due to lack of provision of appropriate facilities such as skate parks, youth shelters and multi-use games areas.
- Children and young people from traveller communities.
- Children of different ethnicities with cultural barriers preventing access to play, particularly for girls.
- Young carers – with many responsibilities at home, young carers often miss out on opportunities that other children and young people have to play and learn.

⁷ Play Wales: Play deprivation website, 2016. Available at: <<http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playdeprivation>> [Accessed 11/01/2017].

⁸ Manwaring B, Taylor C (The Community and Youth Workers Union & Skills Active). *The Benefits of Play and Playwork – Recent evidence-based research 2001-2006 demonstrating the impact and benefits of play and playwork* [pdf] Available at: <<http://www.playscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/Documents/CYWURResearchComplete.pdf>> [Accessed 11/01/2017].

3 Local and national context

- 3.1 This section sets out the local and national context relating to provision of play opportunities in Folkestone & Hythe District. Consideration is firstly given to the national context including Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Details of how play is promoted are also set out together with the latest best practice guidance on play. Further detailed information is contained within the Shepway Play Area Review (2017).

International and national context

- 3.2 The importance of providing children and young people with opportunities for play is endorsed by national and international policies including the following:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

- 3.3 Article 31 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by the UK Government in December 1991) states:

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

National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012

- 3.4 The National Planning Policy Framework includes a specific requirement for planning policy 'to be based on a robust and up to date assessment of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision' (para. 73). This Strategy, combined with the *Play Area Review (2017)*, provides that evidence base.

The Play Strategy, Department for Children's Schools & Families and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2008

- 3.5 The Strategy sets out the Government's vision and commitments for better play opportunities for children and young people in England. A robust strategy for future provision of play in Folkestone & Hythe District needs to consider this together with factors such as ensuring:

"Play spaces are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people."

Every Child Matters, Department for Education & Skills, 2004

- 3.6 The UK government initiative acknowledges that play is fundamental to a healthy happy childhood and the Government recognises its importance to outcomes for children and young people.

Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard, Fields in Trust, 2015

- 3.7 The document sets out a benchmark for the provision of outdoor sport and play and, in so doing, seeks to secure the opportunities for future provision to help build healthy neighbourhoods. Benchmarks, standards and classifications are detailed further within the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)*.

Managing Risk in Play Provision, Play Safety Forum, 2012

- 3.8 The guide suggests “how play providers can develop an approach to risk management that takes into account the benefits to children and young people of challenging play experiences, as well as the risks.”

Chief Medical Officer of England

- 3.9 In the Chief Medical Officer of England’s report of 2012 ‘*Our Children Deserve Better: Prevention Pays*’, published in August 2013, there are key messages for organisations forming strategies and policy that focus on providing facilities and services to young people that help to prevent physical, mental, educational and social health problems in later life.
- 3.10 In summary the report recommends approaches toward promoting and providing opportunities to access formal and informal physical activity in the local community. Children and young people should be enabled to build resilience and positive capacities through play and exercise. By specifically equipping children and young people with these opportunities they can fully explore their own personal and social behaviours. Furthermore the benefits of a healthy diet will be fully realised when complimented with physical activity and go a long way towards tackling long term obesity.
- 3.11 Providing the environment for children and young people to build self-esteem, self-confidence, skills, physical and social experience and knowledge, gives them the tools for coping with demands at home and school, and later on at work, whilst making the transition into adulthood.

Play England

- 3.12 Play England is a registered charity which aims to ensure everybody is able to fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years. The organisation achieves this through awareness raising and campaigns as well as supporting research and sharing best practice.

Design for Play: A Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces, Play England, 2008

- 3.13 The guidance sets out a framework and principles for the design of play spaces, based around the “golden rule” that “a successful play space is a place in its own right, specially designed for its location, in such a way as to provide as much play value as possible.”
- 3.14 The achievement of this vision is supported by 10 core principles:

1. Imagine a play space designed to enhance its setting.
2. Imagine a play space in the best possible place.
3. Imagine a play space close to nature.
4. Imagine a play space where children can play in different ways.
5. Imagine a play space where disabled and non-disabled children play together.
6. Imagine a play space loved by the community.
7. Imagine a play space where children of all ages play together.
8. Imagine a play space where children can stretch and challenge themselves in every way.
9. Imagine a play space maintained for play value and environmental sustainability.
10. Imagine a play space that evolves as children grow.

- 3.15 These values and principles have been used as a foundation for evaluating and understanding the quality and value of play area provision across Folkestone & Hythe District.

Sowing the seeds: reconnecting London's children with nature, GLA, 2011

- 3.16 Within this report, Tim Gill, one of the UK's leading thinkers on childhood, provides an analysis of children's engagement with nature. The Report does this in three ways:
- Summarising the wealth of previous research into the benefits of children's engagement in nature.
 - Analysing the numerous activities to engage in nature currently taking place in London.
 - Recommending a clear vision that every London child has the chance to experience nature as part of their everyday lives, and a range of policy and practical recommendations in order to achieve this vision.
- 3.17 The report suggests that giving children access to nature promotes their mental and emotional well-being and may have a positive effect on the behaviour of some children.
- 3.18 Information is provided on measuring progress by setting out useful existing spatial standards and possible metrics and performance indicators.

Local context

- 3.19 The Places and Policies Local Plan, Submission Draft (2018) (PPLP) has two policies that directly relate to the provision of play opportunities in the district. Firstly Policy C3, provision of open space, which was informed by the Shepway Open Space Review and Strategy (2017 and is set out below.)
- 3.20 "To meet the additional need in open space generated by new residential developments the Council will require proposals of 20 or more dwellings to provide for open space in accordance with the standards set out in Table 12.1 of the PPLP.
- 3.21 Where full provision on-site would not be appropriate or desirable, or the proposed development is less than 20 dwellings, the space needed may be met by commuted sum payment towards the provision or improvement of open space nearby on a scale related to the size and scale of the development.
- 3.22 This gross open space calculation may include provision of publicly available:
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), provided they do not compromise the safety of open space users;
 - Informal sports pitches; and
 - Formal play spaces.
- 3.23 Any new open space should be transferred to and maintained in perpetuity by a management company or, if agreed, the local Town or Parish Council, the District Council or appropriate community group or charity, subject to payment of a commuted sum.
- 3.24 Existing open spaces, as defined on the Policies Map, will be safeguarded. Development proposals that would result in the loss of open spaces will be granted provided that:
1. An assessment has been undertaken which clearly identifies the open space is surplus to requirements; or
 2. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of the standards set out in Table 12.1 of the PPLP; or
 3. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss."
- 3.25 The second Places and Policies Local Plan Policy is Policy C4 children's play space, which has been informed by The Shepway Play Area Review (2017) and is set out below:
- 3.26 To meet the additional need for children's play space generated by new residential developments, the Council will require proposals of 10 or more family dwellings (2 or more bedrooms) to provide for child play space in accordance with the standards set out in Table 4.1 of this document.
- 3.27 Areas should be set out and located so as to minimise loss of amenity for nearby occupiers, maximise children's safety and be visible from neighbouring properties.

Where full provision on-site would not be appropriate or desirable, the space needed may be met by commuted sum payment towards the provision or improvement of play space nearby on a scale related to the size and scale of the development.

- 3.28 Any new play space should be transferred to and maintained in perpetuity by a management company or, if agreed, the local Town or Parish Council, the District Council or appropriate community group or charity, subject to payment of a commuted sum.
- 3.29 In addition Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan (2013), Policy SS5 District Infrastructure Planning, is relevant. It sets out the approach to overseeing the delivery of new or upgraded infrastructure (including play space) alongside development.

Kent Children and Young People's Plan

- 3.20 The draft Kent Children and Young People's Plan – Working Together to Improve Outcomes 2016-2019 sets out the shared ambition of public and voluntary sector partners to improve the lives of children and young people growing up in Kent. The following themes with supporting indicators are outlined:
- Children and young people grow up in safe families and communities
 - Children and young people have good physical, mental and emotional health
 - Children and young people learn & have opportunities to achieve throughout their lives
 - Children and young people make safe and positive decisions⁹

Local Children's Partnership Groups

- 3.21 Local Children's Partnership Groups' primary purpose is to drive improvement in specific outcomes for local children and young people. The work of Local Children's Partnership Groups support both the development and delivery of Kent's Children and Young People's Plan - which will be aligned to aims and ambitions of the Kent 0-25 Health and Wellbeing Board (Kent 0-25 HWB). LCPGs play a key role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and as such provide an important link between the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and local services and organisations working with children and young people.

Kent Community Safety Agreement

- 3.22 The Kent Community Safety Agreement 2014-17¹⁰ highlights priorities (updated in 2016) and cross-cutting themes including safeguarding children and young people and early intervention, prevention and education. The agreement also aims to deliver against the three countywide ambitions set out in the Vision for Kent 2012-22: to grow the economy; to tackle disadvantage; and to put citizens in control. These themes and ambitions link directly to play provision in the area.

South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- 3.23 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy highlights several priorities which have been produced by the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board. The Board consists of members from Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Dover District Council, Kent Public Health, South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the voluntary sector. It will be important to align the relevant priorities within play provision.
- 3.24 The South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Strategy has identified the following six priorities (from the localised Kent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment):

⁹0-25 Health and Wellbeing Board & Local Children's Partnership Groups, 2016. Draft - *Kent Children and Young People's Plan – Working Together to Improve Outcomes 2016-2019* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://committeedmz.dartford.gov.uk/documents/s53736/Kent%20CYPP%20DRAFT%20Young%20Peoples%20Plan.pdf>> [Accessed 11/01/2017].

¹⁰ Kent County Council Community Safety Unit, 2014 (updated 2016). *Kent Community Safety Agreement 2014-17* [pdf]. Available at: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/6184/Kent-Community-Safety-Agreement.pdf> [Accessed 12/01/2017].

Priority 1: Tackling Health Inequalities
Priority 2: Urgent Care - Avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions
Priority 3: Supporting Children and Families
Priority 4: Healthy Living and Quality of Life (Prevention of Illness)
Priority 5: Improving Long-Term Conditions
Priority 6: Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing¹¹

3.25 It will be important to align the relevant priorities within play provision.

Corporate Plan

- 3.26 F&HDC's Corporate Plan outlines the vision and priorities for the Council through its Strategic Objectives. The Corporate Plan 2017-2020 – Investing for the next generation – delivering more of what matters, outlines priorities based around supporting local economic growth, developing housing provision, fostering localism, maintaining an attractive district and providing local people with value for money. The six strategic objectives include: more homes; more jobs; appearance matters; health matters; achieving stability and delivering excellence¹².
- 3.27 The objectives contribute in some way to securing the shared commitment to providing good quality play provision particularly in reference to appearance, health matters and delivering excellence.
- 3.28 Work is currently underway to develop a new Corporate Plan for the period 2020-2030. Early indications are that there will be support for accessible, quality open spaces and play provision as well as collaborative working with Town & Parish Councils.

Shepway Play Area Review

- 3.29 The Shepway Play Area Review compiled in 2017 outlined the approach taken during the assessment of provision and sets out the current situation and proposed standards for play provision across the district. The results of the review provided a foundation for this Play Area Strategy.

Additional relevant local strategies

- 3.30 The following documents have also informed the preparation of this report:
- Shepway Open Space Strategy 2017
 - A Needs Assessment relating to the Provision of Natural Greenspace in areas with Low Levels of Physical Activity – Shepway District Council 2016
 - Shepway Core Strategy Local Plan 2013
 - Planning for Play in Shepway 2007 – 2012
 - Shepway Open Spaces: Sports and Recreation Report 2011
 - Shepway LDF 'Open Space Audit' 2011
 - Green Infrastructure Report 2011
 - A Playing Pitch Strategy Update 2011
 - Shepway District Local Plan Review (2006) 'Saved' Policies

¹¹ Shepway District Council: Health and wellbeing website, 2016. Available at: <<http://www.shepway.gov.uk/community/health-and-wellbeing>> [Accessed 12/01/2017].

¹² Shepway District Council, 2017. *The Corporate Plan 2017-2020 – Investing for the next generation – delivering more of what matters* [pdf]. Available at: <https://www.shepway.gov.uk/media/4222/corporateplan2017/pdf/Corporate_Plan_2017-2020.pdf> [Accessed 31/05/2017].

Population and socio-economic deprivation

- 3.31 According to the census, the population of Folkestone & Hythe District in 2011 was 107,969. Of which 49.2% are males and 50.8% are females¹³. The more recent 2015 Mid Year Estimates from The Office for National Statistics (ONS) indicates that Folkestone & Hythe District's population was 110,03414.
- 3.32 The Indices of Deprivation (IMD) 2015 data reveals that Folkestone & Hythe District is the third most deprived area in Kent, ranking 113 out of 326 local authority districts nationally. 21.6% of the population of children in Folkestone & Hythe District are being brought up in poverty; this is the third highest rank in Kent and higher than the overall average in Kent of 18.4%¹⁵. In addition 20.6% (206) of children who are in school year 6 are classified as obese.¹⁶ Further population and socio-economic context is set out within the Folkestone & Hythe District Council document *Shepway in Context: A Socio-Economic and Property Analysis (2015)* and the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)*.
- 3.33 The Indices of Deprivation (IMD) 2019 data reveals that Folkestone & Hythe District remains the third most deprived area in Kent, ranking 90 out of 317 local authority districts nationally. 20.1% of the population of children in Folkestone & Hythe District are being brought up in poverty; this is the third highest rank in Kent and higher than the overall average in Kent of 16%

¹³ Shepway District Council, 2015. *Shepway in Context: A Socio-Economic and Property Analysis* [pdf]. Available at: <<https://www.shepway.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s16097/rcabt20150225%20app%202%20Draft%20Final%20Shepway%20in%20Context%20Report.pdf>> [Accessed 31 October 2016].

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics Website, 2016. *Ward Level Mid-Year Population Estimates*. Available at: <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/wardlevelmidyearpopulationestimatesexperimental>> [Accessed 27 October 2016].

¹⁵ Kent County Council, 2016. *Business Intelligence Statistical Bulletin – Children living in low income families in Kent* [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/7956/Children-in-poverty.pdf> [Accessed 23 February 2017].

¹⁶ Shepway District Council: Places and Policies Local Plan Preferred Options – 15 Health and Wellbeing website, 2017. Available at: <http://consult.shepway.gov.uk/portal/pplp/preferred_options?pointId=ID-3549432-POLICY-HW3> [Accessed 21/07/2017]

4 Summary of Play Area Review

- 4.1 The Strategy has been informed through the Shepway Play Area Review (2017) which involved consultation with residents and key stakeholders to understand local need. This consultation exercise was supplemented through an audit of each play area in Folkestone & Hythe District. The results of this assessment and analysis will help to determine standards of future provision and inform decision making. This section summarises the key findings from this work with further information on the methodology and analysis of results contained within the Shepway Play Area Review (2017).

Consultation results

Household survey

- 4.2 Public consultation was undertaken through an online survey. The scope of this questionnaire covered the frequency of use, perceived value and satisfaction with the quality and quantity of open spaces and play areas within the district. The survey elicited responses from 380 people.
- 4.3 Of those who stated that they do not use parks and open spaces regularly:
- 19% of respondents cited lack of play facilities.
 - 19% of respondents felt litter, anti-social behaviour and the appearance deterred visits.
 - 43% of respondents highlighted other reasons for not visiting including poor weather, time at work and general lack of time.
- 4.4 Just over 60% of respondents confirmed that they use equipped play facilities in Folkestone & Hythe District. Results indicate:
- 24% of respondents use equipped play areas once a week.
 - 23% of respondents use equipped play areas 2-3 times a week.
 - 20% of respondents use equipped play areas once a fortnight.
- 4.5 The majority of respondents access local play facilities on foot and for 80% of respondents it takes less than 15 minutes to travel to the play facility they visit most often.
- 4.6 The play facilities that respondents visited most often include:
- Lower Leas Coastal Park
 - Radnor Park
 - Cheriton Recreation Area
- 4.7 Responses to the household survey indicate that overall there are high levels of satisfaction with the amount and quality of play in Folkestone & Hythe District. However responses to questions relating to play opportunities for 11+ years indicate there is a need for improvement.
- 4.8 Respondents were provided with the opportunity to provide further comments on play facilities in Folkestone & Hythe District. Many of the comments cited site specific issues however general comments included:
- A recommendation to increase play facilities for 11+ age groups and under 5's.
 - Increase toilet facilities at destination sites.
 - Improve the speed in which maintenance issues are addressed.
 - Lower Leas Coastal Park and Brockhill Country Park are recognised as being good sites for play.

Telephone/email consultation

- 4.9 Consultation with stakeholders revealed that respondents are generally positive about the district's flagship play areas such as Lower Leas Coastal Park and Brockhill Country Park although issues such as litter and vandalism were a common theme with one respondent noting "Parents seem to prefer play areas which are safe, not strewn with litter (especially dog waste and needles) and where the play equipment is not broken or otherwise rendered unsafe".
- 4.10 Some further interesting opportunities for improving play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District identified by stakeholders are summarised below:
- Use local ward member grants and trust funds, such as those offered by The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust, to improve play provision.
 - Improve CCTV coverage or increase supervision of play areas to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour.
 - Improve street lighting along the coastline.
 - Encourage community groups to take responsibility for supervising and maintaining play areas alongside community fundraising.

Workshop with local authority officers and stakeholders

- 4.11 The majority of play areas within Folkestone & Hythe District are managed by F&HDC. However the workshop revealed that there is a desire to increase community involvement in the delivery of play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District with town and parish councils expressing interest in managing play areas.
- 4.12 The workshop highlighted issues with the condition of play areas across Folkestone & Hythe District including ageing equipment and vandalism. Budget restrictions were noted as reasons for some of these issues. Attendees identified a need to share knowledge on the management play areas as well as external funding streams which could support enhancement projects.

Audits and results

- 4.13 In consideration of the latest FiT guidance¹⁷ and Play England guidance¹⁸ the following classifications of play area were assessed as part of the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)*:
- Type A: **Local Areas for Play (LAPs)**.
 - Small, low-key games area (may include "demonstrative" play features);
 - Minimum activity zone of 100sqm.
 - Type B: **Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)**.
 - Approximately five types of equipment;
 - Minimum activity zone of 400sqm.
 - Type C: **Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)**.
 - Approximately eight types of equipment;
 - Kickabout and/or wheeled activities;
 - Minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures;
 - Hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football).
 - Type D: **Destination Play Space**.

¹⁷ Fields in Trust, 2015. *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/PAD/FINAL%20ONLINE%20Planning%20Guidance%20for%20Outdoor%20Sport%20and%20Play%20Provision%20Oct%202015.pdf>> [Accessed 8 September 2016].

¹⁸ Play England, 2009. *Tools for evaluating local play provision: A technical guide to Play England local play indicators* [pdf]. Available at <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/202750/tools-for-evaluating-play-provision.pdf> [Accessed 8 September 2016].

- Play spaces which can attract visitors for a wider catchment, usually within larger parks they often have supporting facilities such as car parking, catering and toilets.

4.14 The Play Area Review identified and assessed 85 equipped play areas in Folkestone & Hythe District in accordance with the latest guidance. The scoring system developed from the FiT and Play England guidance enabled the assessments of play area quantity, accessibility, quality, value and location.

Overview of audit findings

4.15 All play areas included in the Review are publicly accessible, 43 of the play areas were a standalone space with the primary typology of 'Provision for children and young people'. The remainder of the equipped play provision were located within larger open spaces and primarily within parks and gardens.

4.16 Not all of the district's residents are within easy walking distance of a suitable facility. This was also highlighted as an issue through stakeholder consultation and confirmed by the mapping of accessibility catchments. The Play Area Review identified particular deficiencies in play areas within the centre of New Romney, intermittent areas along coastal residential areas in Romney Marsh, to the south-east of Folkestone Harbour and within Broadmead. It also discovered that a variety of play areas were considered to have better location and play values when compared to quality which was generally of a lower standard.

Play area provision for age groups

4.17 The Play Area Review revealed that the distribution of play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District is generally good. However the Review identified a shortage of play areas catering for the 11+ age group. While 86.8% of play areas have provision suitable for 5-11 age groups, only 41.2% have equipment that would appeal to older children/young people (11+). However, it should be noted that older children/young people are likely to be more able to travel further to access suitable play provision such as multi use games areas (MUGAs) and skate parks. There is generally good provision for 0-11+ age groups throughout most wards however Broadmead and Folkestone Harbour have no provision for 11+ age groups with potential for greater quantities of 11+ provision in Cheriton and North Downs West. There is a lack of provision for the youngest age category (LAPs) in the southern half of the district. Adding to this, the condition of the existing sites are mainly average, poor or very poor throughout the district.

Proposed local standards for play area provision

4.18 Following the site audit process as part of the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)*, proposed standards for play provision were formulated and these are set out in **Table 4.1**. The standards were calculated based on current provision and using the population figures of 110,034 as set out in the 2015 Mid-Year Estimates from The Office for National Statistics (ONS)¹⁹.

¹⁹ Office for National Statistics Website, 2016. *Ward Level Mid-Year Population Estimates*. Available at: <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/wardlevelmidyearpopulationestimatesexperimental>> [Accessed 27 October 2016]

Table 4.1: Proposed standards for play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District

Type of standard	Proposed standard	Justification
Quantity	Destination: 0.003 hectares per 1,000 population NEAP: 0.080 hectares per 1,000 population LEAP: 0.077 hectares per 1,000 population LAP: 0.005 hectares per 1,000 population	This is based on the current provision of play spaces in Folkestone & Hythe District. Setting the standard at this level of provision will ensure that provision should (as a minimum) not fall below the existing quantity per 1,000 population as the population grows. Guided by the Fields in Trust guidance <i>Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard</i> ²⁰
Accessibility	Destination 1000m (15 minute walk) NEAP 600m (10 minute walk) LEAP 240m (5 minute walk) LAP 60m (1 minute walk)	Straight line distance outlined by the Fields in Trust guidance <i>Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard</i> ²¹ A new district wide standard of play provision being “that most residents across the district will live within 15 minute walk of a high quality and high value play area.” Many will live closer than a 15 minute walk. It is deemed reasonable provision within easy reach for all age groups.
Location	Destination 85.71% - Exemplar: Lower Leas Coastal Park Fun Zone NEAP 74.29% - Exemplar: Canterbury Road Recreation Ground LEAP 62.86% - Exemplar: Tayne Field (adjacent public house) LAP 62.86% - Exemplar: Megan Close Play Area	Expected score for a good well located site
Value	Destination 74% - Exemplar: Brockhill Country Park NEAP 72% - Exemplar: Canterbury Road Recreation Ground LEAP 68% - Exemplar: Elmfields LAP 55% - Exemplar: Megan Close	Expected score for a good value site
Quality	Destination 65.71% - Exemplar: Brockhill Country Park NEAP 60% - Exemplar: Cheriton Recreation Area LEAP 54.29% - Exemplar: Newington Village Hall LAP 52% - Exemplar: Atkinson Road Play Area	Expected score for a good quality site

4.19 The FIT recommended benchmark quantity standard is 0.25 hectares per 1,000 head of population for equipped/designated play areas. The Folkestone & Hythe District standards fall below this standard. However there a number of local factors which explain this, including Folkestone & Hythe District’s older population and rural character. The FIT standards are aspirational and have limitations because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in the urban context

²⁰ Fields in Trust, 2015. *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/PAD/FINAL%20ONLINE%20Planning%20Guidance%20for%20Outdoor%20Sport%20and%20Play%20Provision%20Oct%202015.pdf>> [Accessed 8 September 2016].

²¹ Fields in Trust, 2015. *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/PAD/FINAL%20ONLINE%20Planning%20Guidance%20for%20Outdoor%20Sport%20and%20Play%20Provision%20Oct%202015.pdf>> [Accessed 8 September 2016].

where insufficient land is available. The FIT standards could be a long term aim but the priority should be to work towards ensuring the standards in Table 4.1 are met.

Contribution criteria for strategic decision making

- 4.20 Alongside guidance on location, quantity, quality, value and accessibility aspects, a range of data sources can be used to inform the decision making process.
- 4.21 **Table 4.2** below summarises a range of considerations that impact on how a play area contributes to its local community and outlines an indicative sliding scale from those aspects which lead to reduced contributions to greater contributions for the community. This should be referred to whilst reviewing the findings of the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* to ascertain contribution levels and therefore help to inform F&HDC’s decisions over whether certain play areas should be retained, removed, modified or enhanced.
- 4.22 For example regarding the criteria of proximity, those sites with a larger number of accessibility buffers overlapping will invariably have good levels of existing play area provision and subsequently a reduced contribution. This is in contrast to an area with a single play area and no accessibility buffer overlaps which is likely to provide a greater contribution to its local community.

Table 4.2: Contribution criteria of play areas

Criteria	Reduced contribution	Greater contribution
Accessibility	Limited or no access	Unrestricted
Proximity	Based on GIS Analysis using FIT Accessibility Standard Buffers. Increased overlaps	Based on GIS Analysis using FIT Accessibility Standard Buffers. No overlaps
Quantity	Based on level of provision at ward level assessed against FIT standard quantity benchmark. Greater Ha	Based on level of provision at ward level assessed against FIT standard quantity benchmark. Reduced Ha
Hierarchy	Based on prescribed typology derived from audit. LAP	Based on prescribed typology derived from audit. Destination NEAP LEAP
Deprivation	Percentile of deprivation with reference to percentage of children and teenagers: <i>Index of Multiple Deprivation</i> <i>Health Deprivation</i> <i>Living Environment Deprivation</i> Least deprived	Percentile of deprivation with reference to percentage of children and teenagers: <i>Index of Multiple Deprivation</i> <i>Health Deprivation</i> <i>Living Environment Deprivation</i> Most deprived

5 Local provision and management

- 5.1 The following section sets out the current supply of play areas by parish and town. It also identifies ownership and management responsibilities with an overview of some of the key issues affecting play area provision. Brief summaries are provided of recent play area enhancements within the district.

Current play provision

- 5.2 There are a total of 85 play areas in Folkestone & Hythe District which were recorded as part of the 2016 audit. The majority are owned and managed by F&HDC as shown in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Ownership and management of play areas in Folkestone & Hythe District

Ownership/management	Number of play areas
Burmarsh Children's Fund	1
Dymchurch Parish Council	1
Elham Parish Council	1
Hawkinge Town Council	6
Hyde Housing	1
Hythe Town Council	4
Ivychurch Parish Council	1
Kent County Council	1
Lydd Town Council	1
Lyminge Parish Council	5
Lympne Parish Council	1
Ministry of Defence	3
New Romney Town Council	2
Newchurch Parish Council	1
Newington Parish Council	1
Orbit Housing Association	1
S106 - With Developer	1
Saltwood Parish Council	1
Sandgate Parish Council	1
F&HDC	40
F&HDC Housing	8
Sellindge & District Playing Fields Benevolent Society	1
St Mary in the Marsh Parish Council	1
Unknown ownership	1
Total number of play areas in Folkestone & Hythe District	85

- 5.3 **Appendix 2** details the ownership and management responsibilities by site.

Inspection, management and maintenance

Folkestone & Hythe District Council

- 5.4 The maintenance of the play areas managed by F&HDC is carried out by a maintenance team.
- 5.5 Each play area is inspected on a weekly basis by RoSPA trained personnel this is known as the visual inspection. These inspections assess the safety of the equipment and form the basis of maintenance schedules.

- 5.6 Every play area is inspected on a quarterly basis by a RoSPA trained personnel this is known as the operational inspection. These inspections are more meticulous inspecting bearings and other hidden elements, records are provided using a risk based approach.
- 5.7 An annual independent inspection takes place looking at all Folkestone & Hythe District's play areas by Zurich Insurance Inspectors, in order to satisfy our insurance requirements. From these inspections Crimson Reports are generated which then inform the work plan in terms of ongoing maintenance and renewal of equipment. Crimson Reports can be used to assess the number of defects in a play area. A scale from A-D is used to indicate the seriousness and urgency of a defect.
- 5.8 F&HDC are currently following recent inspection guidance from RoSPA which advises additional quarterly inspections which are more detailed, and encompass all moving parts.
- 5.9 In general, most repairs can be undertaken quickly and cost effectively however, where an item is irreparable or past its useful life, it will be removed without replacement.
- 5.10 Sustainability of play areas is being addressed internally by implementing the following requirements for new play provision:
- No varnished finishes, avoid painted finishes.
 - Recycled products or sustainably sourced timber.
 - Timber to only be used when pressure treated.
 - All moving parts to be accessible and not hidden.
 - Grass matting should be used where appropriate and wet pour surfaces should be seamless and not involve the use of tiles.
 - Replacement parts should be universal and available through many suppliers to remain competitive.
- 5.11 F&HDC also advise outside organisations including town and parish councils on suitable arrangements for play facilities.

Parish and town councils

- 5.12 Parish and town councils are responsible for coordinating the inspection, maintenance and insurance of play areas under their management. Many of the councils hire a private contractor to undertake these works although management arrangements vary.
- 5.13 Parish councils can access a wide variety of community funding sources towards the upkeep and development of play facilities under their management. Ongoing consultation and sharing of information is vital to help secure external funding. This could be achieved through play forums and appropriate conduits/officers to link various groups and management approaches. Further useful information is contained within Play England guidance *Parish councils and children's play – Community play briefing 7 (2011)*²².

Other

- 5.14 Other free play areas in the district are managed independently. Many of these are currently managed by developers as part of Section 106 agreements on new housing developments. Three play areas are managed by the Ministry of Defence.

Overview of current play area issues

- 5.15 The following key issues have been identified through the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* assessment:
- Insufficient budget to support the ongoing management and maintenance of play areas which has resulted in a backlog of repairs. The impact of continued reduction in play space will exacerbate the decline in play value and quality in Folkestone & Hythe District.

²² Play England, 2011 *Parish councils and children's play – Community play briefing 7* [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/283002/parishcouncils_ver4%20-%20final.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2017].

- Problems with anti-social behaviour and litter at a number of sites.
 - Gaps in provision due to a lack of identified on-site play areas.
 - A need to share relevant knowledge and skills between play area stakeholders.
- 5.16 While the majority of play spaces can be accessed by children and young people with disabilities, there is limited play equipment for these groups to engage with. Play England's vision is supported by an objective to "*imagine a play space where disabled and nondisabled children play together*"²³, a focus on fewer sites could enable improvements to play value and to increase play opportunities for children and young people with disabilities.

Summary of recent play area enhancements

- 5.17 Recent play area enhancement projects in Folkestone & Hythe District are described briefly below by ward. These examples help to highlight the community interest and support in play area management and also the desire for play areas to provide a good range of features and facilities. Information is largely drawn from the series of Folkestone & Hythe District Ward Profile documents prepared by Folkestone & Hythe District Council in 2015.

Cheriton

- 5.18 Cheriton has strong community involvement which influences play areas within the ward. Cheriton Young Persons Working Group looked at regeneration of parks and leisure space in Cheriton. ~~In addition South Cheriton Action Group is a community group, set up by residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Shorncliffe development. The group has a Facebook page and a page on Cheriton Matters. Cheriton Recreation Ground, in recent years has had new play equipment and street lighting. Future plans, might include a skate park. (South Cheriton Action Group no longer exists as of amendments 19 May 2020)~~
- 5.19 Firs Lane Play Area has a play unit including a slide and a climbing wall. There are also two swings, spinning stools and bench seating. Harcourt Primary School raised the funds for the equipment at this park and the children chose the design of the equipment.

East Folkestone

- 5.20 Canterbury Road Residents Group was formed in 2007 with the aim of improving the area and the lives of local families. The group secured a large amount of external funding to revamp Canterbury Road Recreation Ground including play areas. Improvements that were implemented included a multi-use games area (MUGA) and additional practice area, teen shelter, practice running track, new play equipment for older children and young people, and improvements to the toddler play area. Other improvements were made to footpath lighting and litter bins. A dog mess bag dispenser, benches, signs and seating were also installed. Since then the residents have planted daffodils all around the recreation ground. The group are currently seeking funding to run a youth scheme at the recreation ground to support young people to take ownership of the park and ensure that it used positively. It is hoped the scheme will discourage anti-social behaviour and encourage young people to participate in positive activities.
- 5.21 Creteway Estate Residents Association similarly contributed to Brabner Park's enhancements through planting saplings during national tree week and organising estate clean up days. At present the Association is considering undertaking a project to add extra play equipment for the younger children at the George Gurr Crescent Play Area.

Folkestone Central

- 5.22 The Lower Leas Coastal Park was redeveloped between 2000 and 2006 into a unique undercliff with pine avenues, flower gardens, historic Zig Zag path (c. 1921), a labyrinth and picnic areas leading down to the sea. Also the park contains the largest free children's adventure playground in the south east complete with zip wires, slide tubes, a toddler's builder's yard and a pirate ship. The

²³ Play England, 2008. *Design for Play: A Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/play-naturally-a-review-of-childrens-natural-play/>> [Accessed 02 February 2017].

regeneration of the park, once a derelict and undesirable part of the town, was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, SEEDA, F&HDC and the European Union.

- 5.23 In 2007, the Coastal Park received four awards, including the Green Flag Award, best regional and best overall Regeneration Project from the Royal Town Planning Institute 2007. It was also winner in the Landscape category of the 2007 Kent Design Awards. More recently in 2013 the Coastal Park was awarded the Trip Advisor Certificate of Excellence and has retained the accolade each year since. The park now features in their Hall of Fame, having maintained the Certificate of Excellence for the last 7 years. It continues to receive the Green Flag Award annually and is now flying the flag for the 13th consecutive year.



Lower Leas Coastal Park (Picture: LUC)

- 5.24 A flagship project at Upper Radnor Park saw recent play equipment improvements with an official opening on July 2017. The project has been developed with support of multiple organisations and partners, and nearly £400,000 of funding. This funding included the renovation of the Lodge House which is now a tea room and the complete refurbishment of the Victorian drinking fountain and statue of St Eanswythe.
- 5.25 Significant additional funding for the play equipment has come from the efforts of the Radnor Park Community Group. The new play area includes; a railway themed zone for toddlers, with a climbing train and carriages, a tunnel, tracks, turntable roundabout and a station; a raised hill with places for scrambling, perching and climbing and a striking centre piece and; exciting and challenging climbing equipment for 8-12 year olds including a 6 metre high net pyramid and 20 metre long zip line.²⁴
- 5.26 Further funding in excess of £50,000 was raised in 2019 from Cabinet Member environmental improvement grants, local ward member grants, KCC member grants and a contribution from the Radnor Park Community Group to install an outdoor adult gym and a wheel chair swing.

²⁴ Shepway District Council website, 2017. *Contract awarded for play equipment at Radnor Park*. Available at: <<https://www.shepway.gov.uk/news/radnor-park/play-equipment>> [Accessed 08/06/2017]



Radnor Park Playground Opening (Picture: Shepway District Council)

Folkestone Harbour

- 5.27 St Mary’s Church of England Primary Academy was involved in a local community project to renovate a piece of Southern Water land into a children’s play area in 2005 known as the Southern Way Play Park. The project involved the local community and the staff and children at St Mary’s Church of England Primary Academy. The Southern Way and St Mary’s Community Association was set up to facilitate the project and was chaired by the Chief Executive of the school. Pupils from the Academy were involved in the whole process including choosing all the equipment installed in the play area. The community group no longer assists, passing a small one-off maintenance budget to FHDC. The play park has been in constant use since the renovations were completed.

Hythe Rural

- 5.28 Lympne Village Hall Playground is designed for younger children and there is currently a group who are fundraising to add new play equipment and skate facilities.

Hythe

- 5.29 Hythe has a skatepark known as The Hythe Golden Jubilee Skatepark, located close to the Cricket Ground, near Wakefield Walk within South Road Recreation Ground. Recently Hythe Town Council installed two new pieces of equipment a grind box and rail. The Skatepark has its own Facebook page. Hythe also has numerous play areas distributed across the town.

North Downs East

- 5.30 Hawkinge has several newer play areas serving the recent housing developments and containing a range of equipment. These are located at Stombers Lane, Campbell Road, Proctor Walk, Kettle Drive, Haven Drive, Millfield, St Luke’s Walk, Megone Close, Heron Forstal Avenue, Harvest Way, and Blenheim Drive. King George V Play Area is a fenced site located in Elham, and benefits from a range of modern play equipment to suit all ages. There are flat, cradle and basket swings, two slides, climbing areas, zip slide as well as seating and picnic areas. There is also a football pitch with goals.

Romney Marsh

- 5.31 Dymchurch Recreation Ground includes a play area which contains several innovative forms of equipment together with a De Haan Charitable Trust funded multi use games area.

Walland and Denge Marsh

- 5.32 The triangular common in Lydd is known as the Rype, and was given to the men of Lydd by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 905AD for having repulsed the Danes. It is now managed by Lydd Town Council and contains a popular play area. There has been recent investment through trust funds including those from the De Hann Charitable Trust which have transformed the play facility.

6 The Strategy

- 6.1 This section sets out the vision and objectives for future play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District. These have been informed through consideration of existing levels of play in the district together with understanding the current management context. Funding and developer contributions are discussed separately.

Vision

- 6.2 F&HDC acknowledges the importance of play to the health and well-being of its residents. F&HDC is therefore committed to ensuring all residents are able to access high quality and high value play provision. Subsequently F&HDC's vision for play provision is as follows:

Play experiences are fundamental to the health and development of children and young people. Folkestone & Hythe District Council will therefore seek to ensure all residents are able to access a high quality and high value play area. We will work with town and parish councils, together with other providers, to create play spaces which offer challenging and exciting environments for children and young people of all ages and abilities.

Applying Play Area Provision Standards

The *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* provides an assessment of play areas in the district in terms of quantity, accessibility, location, value and quality.

National guidance suggests that play strategies should be based on locally derived standards. These standards are determined through analysis of existing provision of play spaces, consideration of local and national standards for play and an understanding of local need. The proposed standards for Folkestone & Hythe District are set out in the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* and **Section 4** of this Strategy.

F&HDC acknowledges that, due to ongoing financial constraints facing local authorities, achieving these standards in Folkestone & Hythe District will be a challenge. It is therefore proposed that any investment will be prioritised on the management and enhancement of play areas where there is considered greatest need i.e. play spaces located in areas with the largest concentration of children and young people. Based on this assessment 9 play areas have been identified as being priorities for F&HDC known as **Priority Play Areas (PPAs)**. The Strategy identifies another 5 PPA's within the district in other ownership. F&HDC will work with town and parish councils to identify priority play spaces in their areas.

In addition F&HDC will work in partnership with parish and town organisations, together with housing trusts and other community groups, to deliver a network of **Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPAs)**. The network of SIPAs has been identified with the aim of ensuring the majority of the district's residents live within a 15 minute walk of a high quality and high value play area. FHDC will look to transfer these sites to the Town and Parish Councils who are best placed to provide these facilities for their local residents.

Those play areas not considered to be part of this network will be known as **Non-Strategic Play Areas (NSPA)** and will be offered to F&HDC's partners as part of an asset transfer. If after one year no interested parties come forward, play equipment will be removed from these play areas and the ground returned to open space.

Appendix 2 outlines those sites which form part of the PPA, SIPA and NSPA network with locations shown within **Appendix 3**.

NB In reference to national guidance, proposed local standards should strive to be met in the first instance with the accessibility requirement that residents across the district will live within 15 minute walk of a play area. Many will live closer than a 15 minute walk. It is deemed reasonable provision within easy reach for all age groups. As a visual guide the Destination Play Space accessibility threshold of 1000m represents a 15 minute walk and caters for a range of age groups including 0 to 11+.

6.3 To achieve the Vision, F&HDC will deliver the following objectives.

Objectives

6.4 The *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* identified a need to take a strategic approach to future play area provision in the district. The following objectives and supporting action plan (see **Section 7**) have been informed by the findings of the Play Area Review, which involved desk based analysis, stakeholder consultation and an audit of play areas. Each play area in the district was assessed to record:

- Location: Safety and security, accessibility (including disabled access) and extent of use.
- Quantity: Amount of play areas by classification.
- Quality: Care and maintenance of equipment and facilities.
- Value: Provision of equipment offering a variety of challenging play and movement incorporating natural features and offering value to a range of age groups and abilities.
- Accessibility: FiT guidance²⁵ provides a benchmark for accessibility catchments.

Objective 1: Improve the location, quality, value and accessibility of play provision for all children and young people.

To be achieved by:

1. Referring to the **standards within the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)*** and set out in **Table 4.1** of this Strategy when planning play area enhancement projects. It will be important to ensure any new residential development in the district provides or contributes towards sufficient play space to achieve the play area standards. New play provision should cater for children and young people of all ages based on the characteristics of the population within the proposed development as well as to meet any deficiencies within the wider area. F&HDC will also strive to improve the location, quality, value and accessibility of each play area. Where appropriate recommendations for play areas are set out within the action plan (see **Section 7**).
2. Continuing to **maintain and seeking to enhance the Priority Play Areas (PPAs)** as identified in this Strategy.
3. **Supporting the provision of a network of Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPAs)** to ensure the majority of the district's residents are within a 15 minute walk of a high quality and high value play space, which meets the needs of the community.
4. Ensuring the provision of new play areas considers the **design principles** outlined in Play England's *Design for Play: A Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces (2008)*, which advocates that "a successful play space is a place in its own right, specially designed for its location, in such a way as to provide as much play value as possible."²⁶

²⁵ Fields in Trust, 2015. *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard* [pdf] available at: <<http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/PAD/FINAL%20ONLINE%20Planning%20Guidance%20for%20Outdoor%20Sport%20and%20Play%20Provision%20Oct%202015.pdf>> [Accessed 8 September 2016].

²⁶ Play England, 2008. *Design for Play: A Guide to Creating Successful Play Spaces* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.playengland.org.uk/resource/play-naturally-a-review-of-childrens-natural-play/>> [Accessed 02 February 2017].

5. **Creating additional play sites** where there is an identified lack of provision in the SIPA network. These will be delivered in partnership with others and as part of new developments.
6. Offering Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPA's) as identified within this Strategy to the Town and Parish Council's, community groups and partners as part of an **asset transfer**.
7. Offering Non-Strategic Play Areas as identified within this Strategy to the community and partners as part of an **asset transfer**. Where an asset transfer is not possible, the play area will be removed and returned to open space. Reference should be made to the *Asset Management Strategy 2017-2022*²⁷.
8. Incorporating **play opportunities for all age groups and abilities** in the design of new or refurbished play spaces.
9. **Conducting an audit of play provision every ten years** in reference to the previous Play Area Review assessments and in accordance with the latest best practice guidance.

Objective 2: Effectively utilise planning policy to benefit play provision.

To be achieved by:

1. Using planning policy to **support a response to addressing the identified need** for play in the district and to take a strategic approach to provision, enabling targeted improvements to the quality and value of play areas across Folkestone & Hythe District.
2. **Embedding the principles of the PPA and SIPA network**, together with the play area standards (as set out in **Table 4.1**), within F&HDC's development plans. This in turn will inform the collection of contributions for on-site and off-site Section 106 contribution requests.

Objective 3: Raise awareness of play opportunities and the importance of play.

To be achieved by:

1. **Improving promotion of the distribution and features of play areas** throughout the district. Methods could include producing an online map, newsletters and leaflets to be distributed at children's centres, schools, libraries and youth facilities.
2. **Creating greater awareness of the benefits of play** to a child's development. This could be achieved through promotional material and supporting parent/carers to access play provision.
3. **Highlighting the risk benefit approach** during the play area decision making process.
4. **Promoting natural play opportunities** and highlighting their importance and value.

Objective 4: Maximise funding opportunities for the maintenance and enhancement of play areas.

To be achieved by:

1. **Reviewing appropriate developer contributions** and re-evaluating formulae for maintenance contributions to ensure that these are sufficient to meet the costs of wear and tear during the play areas life time (25 years).
2. **Utilising design guidance** to formulate a landscape approach to play which reduces annual maintenance costs and provides a challenging and exciting space for children and young people of all ages and abilities.

²⁷ Shepway District Council, 2017. *Asset Management Strategy 2017-2022* [pdf]. Available at: <<https://www.shepway.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s24160/ros20170711%20app%20%20to%20asset%20management.pdf>> [Accessed 04 October 2017].

3. Ensuring **Section 106 planning obligations** are secured to enable the delivery of appropriate play improvements to the network of SIPAs and/or PPAs at or close to the proposed development.
4. **Securing funding through CIL.** It will be important for Engineering & Buildings to ensure that Destination play areas are included on the “123” list which will define CIL spending across the district. CIL will also be used to secure the future of key play sites across the district. CIL contributions could also be used to support parish and town councils deliver play area improvement projects.
5. Seeking **alternative funding initiatives**, such as government funding schemes and Landfill Communities Fund, to support play area enhancement projects. Other funding sources may be identified through searching online with GRANTfinder and through the Association of Play Industries.
6. Using the **Shepway Play Area Review (2017)** and the results of the play area assessments to prioritise funding to PPA sites.
7. Dowry payments will be made available from FHDC on completion of transferring SIPA and NSPA play areas. Dowry payments will be calculated on the basis of the next five years maintenance amount that the Council would be liable for. Calculation would include an amount to rectify any outstanding faults, 5 years maintenance, 5 years inspections and an amount per year for vandalism. The Dowry payment may be reduced if there is S106 money available on transfer.

Objective 5: Communicate and engage with key partners and stakeholders.

To be achieved by:

1. **Consulting on the findings of the Shepway Play Area Review.**
2. **Consulting with parish and town councils on Strategic Play Areas (SIPA) and Non-Strategic Play Areas (NSPA)** to identify opportunities for asset transfer of play areas.
3. **Encouraging Friends and community groups** to support the development and enhancement of play spaces across the district, by tapping into funding schemes that F&HDC is unable to access.
4. **Encouraging management companies and parish and town councils** to take ownership of local play areas.
5. Making reference to actions and recommendations within the forthcoming **Heritage Strategy for Shepway together with the draft Destination Management Plan for Shepway – Folkestone, Hythe, Romney Marsh and North Downs – Executive Summary 2016-2020 (2016)**²⁸.
6. **Engaging in a programme of consultation with users and residents** to ensure proposed play area improvement projects are responding to local need. A comprehensive programme of consultation will also encourage positive community participation in the delivery of local projects.
7. **Strengthening links with the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board.** Seek opportunities to secure funding for health and well-being priorities. The benefits offered by good quality open space should be promoted to this Board as a potential mechanism for delivering its objectives.

Objective 6: Ensure appropriate and regular communication and review.

To be achieved by:

²⁸ Shepway District Council, 2016 *Draft Destination Management Plan for Shepway – Folkestone, Hythe, Romney Marsh and North Downs – Executive Summary 2016-2020* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://folkestone.works/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Shepway-Destination-Management-Plan-Draft-Executive-Summary-03.10.16.pdf>> [Accessed 02 May 2017].

1. **Ensuring data is maintained and kept up to date** so that it can be used to support decision making, strategy and funding applications. F&HDC Environment & Corporate Assets and Communities will put in place a system for ensuring data is updated as changes occur and reviewed on a regular basis.
 2. **Sharing information**, including the findings of the Play Area Review and Strategy, with other F&HDC departments and organisations. This will support a strategic approach to play area provision which is based on existing data and current policy and thinking.
 3. **Ensuring appropriate consultation** with the community prior to the removal or any significant alteration of play areas.
- 6.5 Further actions which will support the vision and objectives set out above are contained within **Section 7** of this Strategy.

Funding and developer contributions

- 6.6 F&HDC's Engineering & Buildings Service is under pressure from increasing budget demands. In response, the Service is considering options to support day-to-day maintenance operations and one-off improvement projects. However there is a range of external funding schemes that could be used to support the maintenance and enhancement of play areas in Folkestone & Hythe District. The following paragraphs outline possible sources of external funding.

Landfill Communities Fund

- 6.7 The Landfill Communities Fund is a tax credit scheme which enables landfill operators to support the delivery of community projects. The Fund is available to community groups, charities and other voluntary organisations. At present there are limited community groups and charities actively involved in the management of play areas in the district. An exception is the Folkestone Parks & Pleasure Grounds (FPPG) Charity, which aims to ensure the maintenance of parks and recreation grounds in Folkestone and Sandgate are managed appropriately. Open spaces that fall under the FPPG Charity include:
- Canterbury Road Recreation Ground, Folkestone
 - Morehall Recreation Ground, Cherry Garden Lane, Folkestone
 - The Lower Leas Coastal Park, Folkestone
 - Radnor Park, Folkestone
 - Jocks Pitch, East Cliff, Folkestone
- 6.8 The Landfill Communities Fund is not available to local authorities or parish and town councils.
- 6.9 Friends groups have the potential to support the management and enhancement of play provision in Folkestone & Hythe District, through raising funds for capital investment. However the council has limited capacity to support the development of new groups.

Ward Member Grants and Trust Funds

- 6.10 Each Ward Member holds a fund which may be used to support projects within their ward.
- 6.11 A number of sites have received recent investment through trust funds including those from The Roger De Hann Charitable Trust supported by local groups and town and parish councils.

Section 106 planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.12 F&HDC receives funding for open space improvements through the collection of 'Section 106 planning obligations and contributions'. Section 106 planning obligations or 'commuted sums' are legal agreements negotiated by the local planning authority with the developer (or landowner) of a proposed development. In relation to the provision of play areas, commuted sums must be spent on improvements at existing sites at or close to the development that gave rise to the funding. Recommendations that are in compliance with the relevant planning policy are put to the Area Committee in which the development occurred. Commuted sums in the form of Section 106 are

critical to the enhancement and development of play areas across Folkestone & Hythe District. Contributions secured through Section 106 can be used as match funding to support the delivery of larger projects.

- 6.13 Section 106 planning obligations sit alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), described below, but will be restricted to the infrastructure required to directly mitigate the impact of a proposal. Further information on Section 106 planning obligations is available on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website²⁹.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.14 Improvement projects for parks and play areas may also be funded through the collection of CIL. CIL charges are based on simple formulae that relate to the size and character of the associated development. The proceeds from the levy can be spent on local and sub-regional infrastructure, including parks and play areas. F&HDC's Regulation "123" list defines the type of infrastructure and projects that will be funded through CIL in the district. The funding can be directed to parish and town council's to deliver projects within their jurisdiction. Further information on CIL is available on the Folkestone & Hythe District Council website²⁹.

CASE STUDY: Hawkinge Town Council

"Hawkinge Town Council had Section 106 funds available for community projects and after consultation with the local community we were looking for sites to install some multi use games areas on.

We contacted Folkestone & Hythe District Council and arranged to take over the management and control of five open and play spaces. We have provided two multi user sports areas and other outdoor fitness equipment at some of the sites.

The advantage of having control of the sites for us is that we can maintain them to a high standard for the local community and it gives us flexibility over how they are used.

The regular maintenance is included within our grounds maintenance contract and funds were transferred to us on a sliding scale which helped incorporate the future maintenance in our budget.

We have since taken on five additional open/play spaces from the developers. These sites are also included in our grounds maintenance contract meaning that we work hard to maintain them to a good standard for local residents to enjoy. The more sites we incorporate into our maintenance contact, the better deal we can negotiate.

We have taken ownership of the amenities in our community and this helps us create a sense of buy-in from the community who help with litter picking and other volunteering."

Provision of play facilities and enhancement

- 6.15 New play area provision will be considered where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists.
- 6.16 Sufficient supply or under supply of play areas for each agreed area or ward can be calculated based on the standards in **Table 4.1**. The amount of play facilities required for the increased population can also be calculated using the quantity standards. The use of the quantity standards should be considered alongside the access standards. For example, even though quantity standards may be met locally, there may be gaps in access and therefore new provision may still be required.
- 6.17 The *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* and **Appendix 3** provides mapping which show where there are deficiencies and potential over supply of play facilities. This information can be used alongside

²⁹ Shepway District Council website, 2017. *Community infrastructure Levy (CIL)*. Available at: <<https://www.shepway.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy>> [Accessed 08/06/2017]

the quantity standards to determine if new provision of a particular classification should be provided or improved accessibility is required. These gaps could be met by a residential development.

Delivering new provision and enhancements to existing provision

- 6.18 The future provision of play in Folkestone & Hythe District will be guided by locally derived standards as set out in Table 4.1. These standards have been developed through the Shepway Play Area Review (2017) and will apply to proposals of over 10 dwellings. The locally derived standards setting out quantity and accessibility standards propose quantities of play space by play area classification which should be delivered on-site where feasible. Where full provision on-site would not be appropriate or desirable, the space needed may be met by commuted sum payment towards the provision or improvement of play space nearby on a scale related to the size and scale of the development.
- 6.19 In assessing the requirement for play space provision, this will be based on the number of properties with two or more bedrooms in the proposed scheme. The requirement for any proposed developments will be based on the current provision identified in the Play Area Review. For example, if a scheme is located within 240m of an existing LEAP, then a commuted sum could be provided to upgrade that facility to meet the additional demand from the new development. In some cases it may be appropriate for youth or adult equipment (such as 'outdoor gyms') to be provided.
- 6.20 Areas should be set out and located so as to minimise annoyance to nearby occupiers, maximise children's safety and be visible from neighbouring properties.
- 6.21 Any new play space should be transferred to and maintained in perpetuity by a management company or, if agreed, the local town or parish council, subject to payment of a commuted sum.
- 6.22 *The Places and Policies Local Plan, Submission Draft (2018)* contains Policy C4 Children's Play Space; which highlights current requirements for developer contributions, these closely relate to the latest Fields in Trust guidance. The standards aim to ensure any deficiencies are met, as well as providing for an increase in population with development.

Protecting existing play area provision or judging surplus to requirements

- 6.23 Reference should be made to the PPA, SIPA and NSPA approach, *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* and the contribution criteria shown in **Table 4.2**.
- 6.24 F&HDC will seek to protect existing open spaces and play areas in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Any assessments for the loss of open space should draw on the latest F&HDC Open Space Strategy and Play Area Review/Strategy and the provision at that time in the first instance.
- 6.25 Development proposals that that would result in the loss of open spaces and play areas will be granted provided that:
1. An assessment has been undertaken which clearly identifies the play area is surplus to requirements; or
 2. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of the standards in **Table 4.1** above; or
 3. The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

Calculating on-site contributions:

- 6.26 The requirement for play areas and open space should be based upon the number of persons generated from the net increase in dwellings in the proposed scheme, using the average household occupancy rate in the UK of 2.32 persons per dwelling as derived from Census data. On this basis, 1,000 persons at 2.32 persons per household represent 431 dwellings.
- 6.27 To calculate the play area requirement by classification per dwelling, this is calculated by multiplying 431 (dwellings) x the appropriate provision per dwelling by classification (if appropriate).

6.28 Using NEAPs as an example, the recommended standard is 0.077 ha per 1,000 population (770 sq. metres per 1,000 population) or 431 dwellings. Therefore, by dividing 770 sq. metres by 431 dwellings a requirement for 1.79 sq. metres of LEAPs per dwelling is obtained for the district.

Calculating off-site contributions

6.29 Where it is not realistic for new provision to be provided on-site, it may be more appropriate to seek to enhance the existing quality of provision and/or improve access to sites. Standard costs for the enhancement of existing open space and provision of new open spaces should be clearly identified and revised on a regular basis by F&HDC.

6.30 Costs have been calculated using F&HDC costings information (informing policies LR9 (open space) and LR10 (equipped play areas)) and based on known industry standards. Contributions towards the provision or improvement of play areas are calculated using the capital cost of provision. Contribution per person is taken to be a reasonable measure of impact irrespective of whether there is new provision or improvement of existing facilities and features. A summary of the costs are outlined in **Table 6.3** below.

Table 6.1: Costs for providing equipped play areas

Classification of play areas	Standard m ² per person	Cost of provision per m ² (£)	Contribution per person (£)
Destination	0.03	170	5.10
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)	0.8	170	136.00
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)	0.77	170	130.90
Local Areas for Play (LAPs)	0.05	170	8.50
Total contribution			280.50

6.31 F&HDC will seek to secure £280.50 per person to provide new play areas to meet the required standard. These calculations will be used to calculate developer contributions for on-site provision and where feasible any off-site projects.

Maintenance contributions

6.32 If a development is required to provide play areas on-site, the developer will normally be expected to maintain the play area for an agreed minimum period (typically one year). For larger open space sites a management plan should have been submitted and approved by F&HDC as a planning condition.

6.33 If the play area is to be adopted by the Council, a commuted sum may be accepted and arrangements made for management and maintenance of the play area through the council or third party. The amount payable for the commuted sum for all classifications of play area will be calculated using the figure of **£4.59 m² per annum** for all classifications of play area. The figure has been calculated from average unit rates for maintenance of different classifications of play areas drawn from *SPON'S External Works and Landscape Price Book (2017)*³⁰ as well as indicative maintenance costs supplied by F&HDC with appropriate inflationary uplift. Commuted sum to be reviewed as per action 2.6 in the Action Plan.

³⁰ AECOM (Editor), 2017. *SPON'S External Works and Landscape Price Book 2017: 36th edition*. Taylor and Francis: Abingdon

7 Action Plan

- 7.1 This section sets out the programme of actions which will be carried out to meet the vision for play in Folkestone & Hythe District. It lists each management objective, how each will be achieved and who is responsible for achieving them. Where appropriate a priority level is indicated and further considerations highlighted. The programme will be reviewed annually, and targets monitored to ensure actions have been achieved.
- 7.2 The essential actions have been prioritised on criteria of importance and urgency as follows:
- **Low:** Actions which have a low impact on play area provision
 - **Medium:** Actions which have a moderate impact on play area provision
 - **High:** Actions which have a significant impact on play area provision

Table 7.1: Action Plan

Objective 1: Improve the location, quality, value and accessibility of play provision for all children and young people					
Reference	Action	Implementation/Task if applicable	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
1.1	F&HDC will continue to maintain and seek to enhance the Priority Play Areas (PPAs) as identified in this Strategy.		F&HDC	High	
1.2	Work with Town & Parish Councils to provide a network of Strategically Important Play Areas (SIPAs) based on a 15 minute walking time across the district that meets the needs of residents. FHDC will seek to transfer these assets to Town & Parish Councils with an appropriate Dowry Payment. (see objective 4 of the strategy).		F&HDC	High	
1.3	The Non-Strategic Play Areas (NSPAs) identified will be offered out to Town & Parish Councils, the community and partners for asset transfer, and where this isn't possible will be removed and returned to open space. Where transfer can be agreed an appropriate Dowry payment will		F&HDC	High	

	be paid upon completion. (see objective 4 of the strategy).				
1.4	Ensure play areas meet or exceed the required location, quality and value score benchmarks.	Review findings and standards identified through the Play Area Review and Strategy.	F&HDC	Medium	
1.5	Ensure all Wards achieve the minimum standard for provision.	Ensure any new development provides sufficient play space to achieve the standard for quantity of play and should provide for all age groups where appropriate. NB Proposed standards shown in Table 4.1 .	F&HDC	Medium	
1.6	Where feasible residents should be within the catchment area of at least one play area offering features for all age groups and abilities.	Review accessibility buffers and classifications with the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> to inform F&HDC decision making. Where there is an identified lack of provision through gaps in the SIPA network the creation of additional play sites will be recommended, wherever possible, in partnership with others and as part of new developments.	F&HDC	Medium	There is currently generally good provision but some sections of the population are still not in reach of a play space. Broadmead and Folkestone Harbour have no provision for 11+ age groups with potential for greater quantities of 11+ provision in Cheriton and North Downs West.
1.7	Deliver current commitments to improve play areas including Radnor Park, Coastal Park as well as play areas within New Romney.		F&HDC	High	
1.8	Retain all Destination play areas as core hubs for play and offering well respected play experiences within the wider community.		F&HDC	High	Opportunities for expansion at the Royal Military Canal Area following Princes Parade Development.
1.9	Consider creating new Destination play areas.	Destination play areas should be located in or adjacent to larger open spaces. Consider options in East Folkestone, New Romney and Broadmead. Options at East Cliff and Morehall Recreation Ground which currently offer limited play interest for all age groups, and at The Greens or Greatstone Car Park. Options as	F&HDC	Medium	Destination play spaces are currently limited in terms of play value for all age groups. Reference should be made to actions and

		Dungeness Nature Reserve would cater for anticipated increase in use.			recommendations within the forthcoming Heritage Strategy for Folkestone & Hythe District and the draft <i>Destination Management Plan for Shepway – Folkestone, Hythe, Romney Marsh and North Downs – Executive Summary 2016-2020 (2016)</i> ³¹
1.11	Ensure Strategic/Destination quality play areas are provided within the Shorncliffe Garrison development.		F&HDC	High	
1.12	Seek opportunities to provide natural play features and alternatives to fixed play within informal open spaces including natural and semi-natural green space, green corridors and amenity green space.	Review those sites which are closed for maintenance or requiring enhancement in values referring to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> .	F&HDC	Medium	Engage with RoSPA Playsafety to review designs ensuring they meet applicable standards, but also that they best suit the play space and budget.
1.13	Conduct an audit of play provision every 10 years.	Carry out regular audits in reference to the previous assessment and the latest best practice guidance.	F&HDC	Medium	Consider seasonal aspects and variation of use
1.14	Address the barriers to access and comply with the Equality Act (2010) through a disability and access audit.	Produce a disability and access audit for new sites or those sites due for refurbishment.	F&HDC /Land managers	Low	
1.16	Increase the level of play provision for the 11+ age group.	Refer to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> and coordinate future decisions with reference to the contribution criteria shown in Table 4.2 .	F&HDC	Medium	
1.17	Greater investment required in the management, maintenance and improvement of play spaces throughout the district	Refer to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> and coordinate future decisions with reference to the contribution criteria shown in Table 4.2 .	F&HDC	High	F&HDC can't afford to manage the current levels of provision.

³¹ Shepway District Council, 2016. *Draft Destination Management Plan for Shepway – Folkestone, Hythe, Romney Marsh and North Downs – Executive Summary 2016-2020* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://folkestone.works/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Shepway-Destination-Management-Plan-Draft-Executive-Summary-03.10.16..pdf>> [Accessed 02 May 2017].

1.18	Review maintenance arrangements to ensure high standards are achieved.		F&HDC	High	
1.19	Improve supervision, policing and oversight (e.g. through appropriate vegetation clearance) of public space.		F&HDC	High	
1.20	New play areas should be sensitively designed to reflect sensitivities of landscapes as well as character of the local Kent coastal area.		F&HDC/Land managers	Medium	Future play provision should follow the latest best practice guidance to ensure play spaces are suitable for all abilities and age groups.
1.21	Encourage the community to report issues relating to play areas to F&HDC to enable a quick response to problems.	Advertise appropriate contact details within play areas.	F&HDC	Low	

Objective 2: Effectively utilise planning policy to benefit play provision

Reference	Action	Implementation/Task	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
2.1	Through housing development sites look to enhance current provision for the benefit of both the existing and new community as well as creating new play areas.		F&HDC	High	
2.2	Increase communication and closer working between the planning team and E&B team.		F&HDC	High	
2.3	Consider the appropriateness of LAPs (increased maintenance costs) at some locations where other classifications of play areas are suitably catering for younger age groups within its catchment.	Refer to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> and coordinate future decisions with reference to the contribution criteria shown in Table 4.2 .	F&HDC	Medium	
2.4	Aim to create a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) document: Recreation Open Space Provision & Commuted Space Payments.		F&HDC	Low	This process could take considerable time and will require consultation.

2.5	The E&B and planning teams should work together to re-evaluate developer contributions.		F&HDC	Medium	
2.6	Re-classify and/or review sites for new policy formation.	Refer to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> .	F&HDC	Medium	
2.7	Seek opportunities to secure land for play area provision.		F&HDC	Medium	
2.8	Create and use policy to support a response to identified need and take a district wide strategic approach to play. This will enable targeted improvements to the quality and value of sustainable play provision across Folkestone & Hythe District.		F&HDC	High	Further useful information within Play England guidance <i>Better Places to Play Through Planning (2009)</i> ³²
Objective 3: Raise awareness of play opportunities and the importance of play					
Reference	Action	Implementation/Task	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
3.1	Future plans should be disseminated clearly to the public.	Media options to share information on future plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existing play facilities • newsletters and leaflets • posters • children's centres, schools and youth facilities • libraries • local authority website • local media (TV, radio and newspapers) 	F&HDC	High	DCSF has produced Outdoor play: A communications toolkit for local authorities (see: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090813152455/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/campaigns/outdoor_play/index.cfm). The toolkit is designed to help authorities to engage with local parents and communities on issues relating to outdoor play.

³² Play England, 2009. *Better Places to Play Through Planning* [pdf]. Available at: <<http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/82621/better-places-to-play-through-planning.pdf>> [Accessed 12 June 2017].

3.2	Support parent/carers to access play provision; for example through publicising existing play areas with an online map.	Produce an online map of existing provision and make available to schools, play providers and other outlets.	F&HDC	Medium	
3.3	Highlight the risk benefit approach during the play area decision making process.		F&HDC	Low	
3.4	Natural play opportunities and their importance and value should be encouraged.		F&HDC	High	

Objective 4: Maximise funding opportunities for the maintenance and enhancement of play areas

Reference	Action	Implementation/Task	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
4.1	Review capital investment and separate play budget to inform capital plan for ageing equipment.	Refer to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> and coordinate future decisions with reference to the contribution criteria shown in Table 4.2 .	F&HDC	Medium	
4.2	Maximise and protect the potential of Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding.		F&HDC	High	Utilise scores by ward contained within the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> and present data to town and parish councils. Opportunity to link to CIL revenue.
4.3	Review appropriate developer contributions.		F&HDC	High	
4.4	Seek fundraising opportunities and funding through the Landfill Communities Fund. Other funding sources may be identified through searching online with GRANTfinder and through the Association of Play Industries.		F&HDC	Medium	Grantfinder: http://www.idoxgroup.com/funding-solutions/professional-funding-tools/grantfinder.html API: http://www.api-play.org/resources/funding

4.5	Seek Government funding schemes if available.		F&HDC	High	Government funding towards pathfinder and playbuilder developments through the Play Strategy is intended to enhance and improve local authority provision. Local authorities should not be using this funding to replace or otherwise scale back on local play funding and budgets.
4.6	The E&B service should work to ensure Destination play areas are included in the 123 list to shape and define CIL funding.		F&HDC	High	
4.7	Re-evaluate formulae for maintenance contributions.		F&HDC	Medium	
4.8	Utilise design guidance to formulate a landscaped approach which reduces maintenance costs and provides an interesting space for play.		F&HDC	Medium	
4.9	Potential for reduction in LAPs and subsequent maintenance liability.	Refer to the <i>Shepway Play Area Review (2017)</i> and coordinate future decisions with reference to the contribution criteria shown in Table 4.2 .	F&HDC	Low	

Objective 5: Communicate and engage with key partners and stakeholders

Reference	Action	Implementation/Task	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
5.1	Consultation of SIPAs & NSPAs for asset transfer options. Potential stakeholders invited to presentation sessions.		F&HDC	High	
5.2	Work with town and parish councils to ensure there is suitable play provision		F&HDC	High	Further useful information within Play England guidance <i>Parish</i>

	within their area of interest and encourage local ownership.				<i>councils and children's play – Community play briefing 7 (2011)</i> ³³
5.3	Engage in a programme of user and resident consultation to understand if proposals would be responded to positively and reflect community need. It will also encourage positive community participation in the delivery of local projects.		F&HDC	High	
5.4	Collaborate with providers.		F&HDC	Medium	
5.5	If decommissioning sites are proposed, consultation with stakeholders including adjacent residents will be required.		F&HDC	Medium	
5.6	Work with other play providers such as Housing Associations and the MoD to ensure their provision is secured.		F&HDC	Medium	
5.7	Encourage responsibility through Trusts and Residents Groups.		F&HDC	Medium	
5.8	Encourage community groups to take responsibility for supervising and maintaining play areas alongside community fundraising.		F&HDC	Medium	Further useful information within Play England guidance <i>Managing play provision in the community and voluntary sector – Community play briefing 6</i> ³⁴ . For information about the Engaging Communities in Play programme visit: www.playengland.org.uk/our-

³³ Play England, 2011. *Parish councils and children's play – Community play briefing 7* [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/283002/parishcouncils_ver4%20-%20final.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2017].

³⁴ Play England, 2011. *Managing play provision in the community and voluntary sector – Community play briefing 6* [pdf]. Available at: <http://www.playengland.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/managingplay_ver4-final.pdf> [Accessed 12 June 2017].

					work/engaging-communities-in-play
5.9	Strengthen links with the South Kent Coast Health and Wellbeing Board. They may assist in allocating funding for health and well-being priorities. The benefits offered by good quality open space should be promoted to this Board as a potential mechanism for delivering its objectives.		F&HDC	Medium	
Objective 6: Ensure appropriate and regular communication and review					
Reference	Action	Implementation/Task	Resources	Priority	Notes & Considerations
6.1	Implement the Strategy and make available to staff at all levels and by different stakeholders.		F&HDC	High	
6.2	Ensure effective monitoring of the Strategy.	A partnership between Environment and Corporate Assets and Communities should put in place a system for ensuring that data is updated as changes occur and reviewed on a regular basis.	F&HDC	Medium	
6.3	Ensure management is financially sound. F&HDC to commit to provide necessary funding to maintain to necessary standard.		F&HDC	Medium	
6.4	Provide a presentation to Planning colleagues on the new Play Area Strategy.		F&HDC	Medium	
6.5	Ensure that if sites are to be removed or altered significantly there should be appropriate consultation with the community.		F&HDC	High	

8 Evaluation plan

- 8.1 This section describes how the Strategy will be used and the arrangements for its ongoing review and monitoring.

Outcomes

- 8.2 At a national level, play is increasingly recognised as being important not only in its own right but also in helping to achieve wider objectives including the development of healthy, vibrant and sustainable communities. The benefits of children's play are closely linked to the five outcomes for children and young people that form the core of Every Child Matters, namely: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. The *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)* and supplementary Strategy aims to address issues and targets based upon the current evidence base.

Benchmarks

- 8.3 It will be necessary to co-ordinate ongoing data collection as required and evaluate performance against strategic indicators and benchmarks which are set as outlined further within the *Shepway Play Area Review (2017)*.

Indicators

- 8.4 To effectively review the Strategy, F&HDC will aim to monitor performance by agreed indicators as listed below. The data collection for local play indicators should seek to measure the extent to which children and young people have access to spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation that:

1. Are free of charge, allowing children the freedom to come and go, and where children are free to play as they choose (the 'three frees');
2. Are accessible, welcoming and engaging for all, including those who are disabled or have specific needs and wishes;
3. Allow for the needs of different ages of children.

- 8.5 Potential key Play England indicators and corresponding data collection methods are as follows:

- Participation – household survey
- Access to a variety of facilities and spaces – open space and play strategy audits
- Quality of facilities and spaces – quality assessment tool, GIS mapping
- Satisfaction – Questionnaire survey of children and young people

Review

- 8.6 This Strategy and action plan will be monitored through F&HDC's Performance Management Framework and reviewed at least annually. This will include an assessment of progress against targets and whether these need to be modified in the light of changing circumstances. Changes to relevant legislation, funding, linked strategies and planning will be noted and the Strategy modified as appropriate.

- 8.7 The cycle for the Strategy is to:
- Write and adopt the Strategy
 - Operate according to the aims and objectives held within the Strategy
 - Monitor the operation of the Strategy
 - Review the working of the Strategy
 - Revise and improve the Strategy where necessary to reflect on-going developments such as further consultation findings, changes to sites and revised financial circumstances and projections.
- 8.8 The Strategy covers a period of 10 years up to 2030. It will be subject to continual review as it is used and F&HDC will carry out a full review annually to enable any improvements and alterations to be made as necessary.

Appendix 1: Workshop attendees

Name	Organisation
Cllr; Berry, Ann	F&HDC
Cllr; Dearden, Malcolm	F&HDC
Cllr; Hollingsbee, Jenny	F&HDC
Cllr; Lawes, Mary	F&HDC
Karen Lewis	Dymchurch Parish Council
Neil Jones	Folkestone Town Council
Lynne Martin	Hawkinge Town Council
Nick Hilditch	Hythe Town Council
Ben Geering	F&HDC- Head of Planning
Andy Blaszkowicz	F&HDC- Head of Commercial and Technical Services
Sarah Robson	F&HDC- Head of Communities
Karen Weller	F&HDC- Environmental Protection
Jess Harman	F&HDC- Communities Officer
Laura Pinkham	F&HDC- Grounds Maintenance Manager
Piran Cooper	F&HDC- Landscape and Urban Design Officer
Rebecca Chittock	F&HDC- Planning Policy
Isabelle Hills	F&HDC- Planning Policy
Jo Clifford	Folkestone Sport Centre
Ivan Rudd	KCC- Public Health Specialist
Brigitte Orasinski	Strange Cargo
Jon Clarke	East Folkestone Together
Matthew Parkhill	LUC
Sebastian West	LUC

Appendix 2: Ownership, management responsibilities and classifications of play areas

Site ID	Site name	Classification	Ownership/Management	SIPA or NSPA	PPA
1	Atkinson Road Play Area	Type A: LAP	Hawkinge Town Council	NSPA	
2	Blenheim Drive	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
3	Brabner Park	Type C: NEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
4	Brockhill Country Park	Type D: Destination	Kent County Council	SIPA	PPA
5	Bufs Avenue	Type B: LEAP	Ministry of Defence	SIPA	
6	Burmarsh Recreation Ground Play Area	Type C: NEAP	Burmarsh Children's Fund	SIPA	
7	Campbell Road Play Area	Type B: LEAP	Hawkinge Town Council	NSPA	
8	Canterbury Road Recreation Ground	Type C: NEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
9	Cheriton Recreation Area	Type C: NEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
10	Coniston Road (Summer Lees)	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
11	Corbett Road Play Area	Type B: LEAP	Hawkinge Town Council	NSPA	
12	Country's Field	Type A: LAP	Orbit Housing Association	SIPA	
13	Daglish Close	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC Housing	NSPA	
14	Densole Way	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC Housing	SIPA	
15	Downs Road	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
16	Dymchurch Recreation Ground	Type C: NEAP	Dymchurch Parish Council	SIPA	PPA
17	Elmfields	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC Housing	SIPA	
18	Enbrook Valley Play Area	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
19	Etchinghill Cricket Field	Type B: LEAP	Lyminge Parish Council	SIPA	
20	Fairfield Recreation Ground	Type C: NEAP	New Romney Town Council	SIPA	PPA
21	The Rype	Type C: NEAP	Lydd Town Council	SIPA	PPA
22	Firs Lane	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
23	George Gurr Crescent	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
24	Grange Road Play Park	Type C: NEAP	Saltwood Parish Council	SIPA	
25	Greatstone Car Park	Type C: NEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
26	Harvest Way	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
27	Heron Forstall Avenue	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
28	Horn Street	Type B: LEAP	Hythe Town Council	SIPA	
29	Hythe Skate Park	Type C: NEAP	Hythe Town Council	SIPA	
30	Ivychurch Play Area	Type B: LEAP	Ivychurch Parish Council	SIPA	
31	Jefferstone Lane	Type B: LEAP	St Mary in the Marsh Parish Council	SIPA	
32	Jocks Pitch	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
33	Jubilee Field	Type C: NEAP	Lyminge Parish Council	SIPA	
34	Kettle Drive Play Area	Type C: NEAP	Hawkinge Town Council	SIPA	
35	King George V Playing Field	Type C: NEAP	Elham Parish Council	SIPA	
36	Lade Fort	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
37	Lower Leas Coastal Park Fun Zone	Type D: Destination	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
38	Lower Radnor Park Play Area	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
39	Lympne Village Hall	Type B: LEAP	Lympne Parish Council	SIPA	
40	Manor Farm Close	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
41	McKenzie Drive	Type B: LEAP	Ministry of Defence	NSPA	

42	Meads Way	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
43	Megan Close	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
44	Megone Close Play Area	Type A: LAP	S106 - With Developer (overgrown/disused)	NSPA	
45	Meriden Walk	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
46	Millfield	Type A: LAP	F&HDC Housing	NSPA	
47	Moore Close	Type A: LAP	F&HDC Housing	SIPA	
48	Morehall Recreation Ground	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
49	Mount Pleasant Close	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
50	Naseby Avenue	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
51	Newchurch Playing Field	Type B: LEAP	Newchurch Parish Council	SIPA	
52	Newington Village Hall	Type B: LEAP	Newington Parish Council	SIPA	
53	Oak Drive	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
54	Oakham Drive	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
55	Oaklands	Type B: LEAP	Hythe Town Council	NSPA	
56	Palmarsh (St George's Place Play Area)	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC Housing	SIPA	
57	Pannell Drive Play Area	Type C: NEAP	Hawkinge Town Council	SIPA	
58	Payers Park	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
59	Peregrine Close	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
60	Pine Way	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
61	Pond Hill Road	Type A: LAP	Ministry of Defence	SIPA	
62	Queensway	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
63	Reachfields	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC Housing	NSPA	
64	Rhodes Minnis Recreation Ground	Type B: LEAP	Lyminge Parish Council	SIPA	
65	Roman Way	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
66	Royal Military Canal Play Area	Type D: Destination	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
67	Salthouse Close	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC Housing	SIPA	
68	Sandgate Recreation Ground	Type C: NEAP	Sandgate Parish Council	SIPA	
69	St. Luke's Walk Play Area	Type A: LAP	Hawkinge Town Council	NSPA	
70	Station Road	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
71	Stomers Lane	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
72	Swan Lane	Type B: LEAP	Sellindge & District Playing Fields Benevolent Society	SIPA	
73	Tayne Field	Type B: LEAP	Lyminge Parish Council	NSPA	
74	Tayne Field (adjacent public house)	Type B: LEAP	Lyminge Parish Council	NSPA	
75	The Waltons	Type A: LAP	Hyde Housing	SIPA	
76	The Danni & James Community Friendship Park	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	NSPA	
77	The Derrings	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
78	The Green	Type C: NEAP	Hythe Town Council	SIPA	PPA
79	The Greens	Type C: NEAP	New Romney Town Council	SIPA	PPA
80	The Ridgeway Trim Trail	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
81	Turnpike Hill	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
82	Underwood Play Area	Type B: LEAP	Hawkinge Town Council	NSPA	
83	Upper Radnor Park	Type A: LAP	F&HDC	SIPA	PPA
84	Widgeon Walk	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
85	Wraightsfield Play Area	Type B: LEAP	F&HDC	SIPA	
N/A	Shorncliffe	Committed development with planned play area provision at Shorncliffe Garrison. Classification to	To be confirmed once installed. (should be FHDC)	SIPA	PPA

		be fully confirmed.			
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Appendix 3: Locations of SIPAs, NSPAs and PPAs