

DRAFT DERWENTSIDE PLAY STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

“We don’t cease to play because we grow old, we grow old because we cease to play”

George Bernard Shaw

The importance of play for children – for their physical, creative, emotional, social and intellectual development – is well documented. Not having access to appropriate play opportunities can result in less developed, creative and confident children.

This document is Derwentside’s strategic plan for the development of play. It sets out a vision for play over the next five years and outlines how play will contribute to the collective visions for the District of Derwentside and for children and young people’s services in the wider County Durham area:

‘the community believes in itself and knows that working together can build a district people want to live in and be proud of.’

The plan has been developed by the Derwentside Play Partnership, a multi-agency group, which is responsible for the strategic development of play within Derwentside. The Partnership acts as a sub-group of the Derwentside Children and Young People’s Planning Group.

Derwentside has made significant strides towards improving children’s services and delivering the Government’s Every Child Matters programme. Play has an important role in supporting children’s learning, raising achievement, reducing anti-social behaviour and supporting work to reduce child poverty. The plan is a shared vision of all the partners who represent play in Derwentside.

WHAT IS PLAY?

What we mean by Play

Different people have different definitions of play. From an early age, play is important to a child's development and learning. It is not just physical. It can involve cognitive, imaginative, creative, emotional and social aspects. It is the main way most children express their impulse to explore, experiment and understand. Children of all ages play. Some may need support to get the best out of play.

The Derwentside Play Partnership has, for the purposes of this strategy, defined play as:

'What children and young people in Derwentside do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way for their own reasons.'

Children's rights to play are recognised in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the UK Government in 1991. The convention recognises the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

What we mean by Play Provision

Play provision can be a space, some facilities, equipment or asset, or activities intended to give children the opportunity to play as previously defined. At its most successful, it offers children and young people as much choice, freedom and control as possible within reasonable boundaries. This is often best achieved with adult support, guidance or supervision.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

National strategic framework

The Play Strategy has been developed within the national strategic framework for Children and Young People and Play. Derwentside's plan does not sit in isolation, it is closely linked with other key plans and is 'cross cutting' in its nature. Key strategies which have influenced the nature and direction of this document are as follows:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by the UK Government in December 1991. Article 31 is particularly pertinent. It states that signatory nations will 'recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.'

Getting Serious about Play - A Review of Children's Play

The report provides a national framework for development of play. It outlines how the £200m pledged by the Government for play should be spent and allocated. The aim of the report and the funding is to improve play-based opportunities for children and young people aged 0-16 years.

The report recommended that local authorities should be allocated resources based on child deprivation in their area, partnerships should be formed with local partners and high quality projects should be developed which meet local needs and which have reasonable prospects of being a long-term success.

The play strategy process has identified a number of priority projects which will form the basis of lottery funded applications.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children

The Government's 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' strategy, published in December 2004, provides a national framework to guide change at local authority level. The ten-year strategy for early years and childcare was published at the same time. Together, these documents set out the bigger picture in terms of national and local change. The five main outcomes (which are further sub-divided into 25 aims) for children and young people, described as key to well-being in childhood and later life, are:

- ❑ Being healthy.
- ❑ Staying safe.
- ❑ Enjoying and achieving.
- ❑ Making a positive contribution.
- ❑ Achieving economic well-being.

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It imposes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies to improve children's well-being and on key partners to co-operate with this. Changes signalled, and the ten year strategy, include the following:

- ❑ Improvement and integration of universal services in early years settings, schools and the health service.
- ❑ More specialised help and early intervention.
- ❑ More integrated front-line services and multi-disciplinary teams.
- ❑ More leadership at all levels. Shared multi-agency responsibility to safeguard children.
- ❑ Listening to children, young people/their families in planning provision.

The Government will use an 'outcomes framework' to work with local partners, to prioritise the delivery of related local public service agreement (LPSA) targets and to monitor progress.

Consultation has shown a strong demand for places to go and things to do for children and young people. Play has a positive role in improving the quality of life, promoting children's well-being and building community cohesion. The play strategy can support all of the Every Child Matters outcomes.

Choosing Health White Paper

The Department of Health's Public Health White Paper sets out action by Government to support the individual to make healthy choices. Its overarching priorities are to:

- ❑ Reduce the number of people smoking.
- ❑ Reduce obesity and improve diet and nutrition.
- ❑ Increase exercise.
- ❑ Encourage and support sensible drinking.
- ❑ Improve sexual health.
- ❑ Improve mental health.

Play can support the Choosing Health agenda, as increasing physical activity and facilitating emotional and interpersonal interaction are integral to play. It is also a means of contributing to tackling obesity.

Youth Matters

The Youth Matters Green Paper builds on the Every Child Matters outcomes with the intention of reshaping services for young people. The proposals aim to address four key challenges:

- ❑ Engage and empower more young people in positive activities.
- ❑ Encourage more young people to become involved in their communities.
- ❑ Provision of better information, advice and guidance to young people to enable them to make informed choices.
- ❑ Provision of better and more personalised support for each young person.

Regional strategic framework

This section of the strategy details some of the key local plans which make up the local strategic framework in relation to children, young people and play. The strategy has been developed to sit within this local strategic framework. The key strategies and plans which have influenced the nature and direction of this Children's Play Strategy are as follows.

Every Child Matters in County Durham/Children and Young People's Plan

The Children and Young People's Plan, written in response to the Every Child Matters agenda, is an important part of Durham's programme of change for children. It pulls together a programme of action from a wide range of partner organisations aimed at improving the lives of children and young people across the County. The Plan, structured around the five outcomes of Every Child Matters, sets out key priorities and actions that will enable the achievement of a healthy, safe, successful, positive and prosperous future for every child and young person across County Durham, as follows:

- ❑ *Being Healthy* – In order to ensure that more children and young people in County Durham choose a healthy lifestyle, a key priority is to increase opportunities for physical activity through improving the provision of and access to local facilities including extended use of school premises, school holiday activity programmes, and enhanced access to leisure services.
- ❑ *Staying Safe* – A key priority is to ensure that children and young people in County Durham are safe from bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour as both victims and perpetrators. This is to be achieved through a number of actions including providing crime and disorder prevention and reduction programmes and initiatives, and identifying and then addressing the needs of young people most at risk of offending.
- ❑ *Enjoying and achieving* – One of the main priorities is that children and young people in County Durham can access safe play, learning and recreational facilities which provide opportunities for personal and social development and enjoyment. This will be achieved through making more effective use of school facilities and extending access to school facilities, providing good youth and community facilities and high quality youth programmes, and providing good quality learning experiences through play for children aged 0-5 in all local settings.
- ❑ *Making a positive contribution* – Opportunities are to be developed to ensure that children, young people and their parents are engaged in shaping and improving their communities and have their views on decisions that affect them represented and responded to in a meaningful way. Actions will also be taken to promote a positive image of children and young people so that they are respected in their communities.

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- ❑ *Achieving economic well-being* – To reduce the number of children and young people in County Durham living within or suffering the effects of poverty, the Children and Young People's Plan aims to increase childcare provision and high quality out of school childcare places to enable parents to work.

This strategy recognises that play is a fundamental part of a healthy and happy childhood. It is acknowledged that play is fundamental to the development and enjoyment of children and therefore contributes significantly to the key themes that have been identified through the Every Child Matters agenda.

County Durham's Local Area Agreement

County Durham's Local Area Agreement (LAA) has been developed as a catalyst for change in partnership working in County Durham and to drive forward a new integrated approach to local service delivery.

The focus of the Agreement is on improving outcomes for local people, with specifically identified aims to:

- ❑ Narrow the deprivation gap.
- ❑ Improve access to services.
- ❑ Support sustainable service improvements.
- ❑ Improve public satisfaction with their local area and increase the number of people who feel able to influence public services.

The development of Derwentside's Play Strategy is set within this context and the plan aims to use play as a vehicle to contribute to this 'cross cutting' agenda for change within the District. The outcomes for the Children and Young People theme are coordinated on a countywide basis by the Durham Children's Executive Board. At a local level, decisions are taken in conjunction with the Local Children's Board. The Derwentside Play Partnership is a sub-group of the Children and Young People's planning group, which is soon to evolve into the Local Children's Board.

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The LAA is built around four main themes:

Theme	Outcomes
Children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Children eating and drinking healthily and taking regular exercise. <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting emotional well-being. <input type="checkbox"/> Helping parents and carers to develop appropriate skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting children and young people from homelessness and failing tenancies. <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting young people from crime and anti-social behaviour. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving attainment levels and reducing the gaps between different groups. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving access to safe play, leisure and recreational facilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Enabling children and young people to shape and improve their communities. <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting a positive image of children. <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing levels of participation in learning opportunities. <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing the effects of poverty.
Economic development and enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting employers to tackle worklessness. <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing entrepreneurial activity. <input type="checkbox"/> Raising the GVA of the County. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the need to meet current and future business needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing the supply of business space to meet current and future business needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting the economic needs of the most disadvantaged areas.
Healthier communities and older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing life expectancy and substantially reducing premature mortality rates. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving health in disadvantaged areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving access for vulnerable people to services, leisure and social activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving opportunities for vulnerable people to play a full and active role in their community. <input type="checkbox"/> Providing greater independence and choice for vulnerable adults.
Stronger and safer communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. <input type="checkbox"/> Building a strong sense of community in a cleaner, greener, more attractive environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging the community in shaping and improving more accessible services. <input type="checkbox"/> Improving quality of life in disadvantaged areas. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring housing is of a decent standard and is affordable and accessible. <input type="checkbox"/> Providing access to an integrated transport system.

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County Durham Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006 – 2011

County Durham's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006 – 2011 outlines a long-term strategy for all transport in the County. The LTP centres on five shared priorities:

- Delivering accessibility.
- Tackling congestion.
- Better air quality.
- Safer roads.
- Other quality of life issues.

Highlighted within the plan is the importance of providing safe travel routes to and from local services and to improve young people's access to a wide range of opportunities, including leisure facilities, and promoting the value of travelling to play facilities by alternative means of transport such as walking, cycling and using public transport.

County Durham Cultural Strategy

The County Durham Cultural Strategy celebrates the rich cultural traditions of the area. It aims to inspire local people and nurture local talent; engage communities in cultural and recreational activity; stimulate the economy; enhance lifelong learning; increase understanding of the environment and foster a sense of enjoyment and fun for residents and visitors.

The Strategy is focused around four key aims:

- *Promoting Strong, Healthy and Safe Communities*
To support the development of strong communities by the provision of stimulating activities, improved facilities and cultural opportunities for all which promote safe and healthy lifestyles.
- *Building a Strong Economy*
To work towards making County Durham a premier location for tourism and the creative and cultural industries, for the social and economic benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.
- *Looking After the Environment*
To actively encourage the conservation/preservation of and access to the environment by maximising use of existing cultural resources and facilities, and ensuring developments enhance the conservation and understanding of the County's environment.
- *Developing Lifelong Learning*
To make cultural activity central to the lives of County Durham residents as they pursue lifelong learning and acquire new knowledge skills.

Extended Schools Programme

The DfES (Department for Education and Skills) expects that *"By 2010, all children should have access to a variety of activities beyond the school day. Well organised, safe and stimulating activities before and after school provide children and young people with a wider range of experiences and make a real difference to their chances at school. It gives them the opportunity to keep healthy, to acquire new skills, to build on what they learn during the school day or simply to have fun and relax"* (Extended Schools: Access to opportunities and services for all, A prospectus).

The Extended Schools Programme is a key component of the Government's five year strategy for Children and Learners and the ten year strategy for Childcare. Current progress on the development of extended school functions in Derwentside has been good, with eight schools designated as full service extended schools (Moorside Comprehensive, Castleside Primary, Consett Infant and Juniors, Delves Lane Primary and Juniors, Moorside Primary and The Grove Primary). These have access to high quality wrap-around childcare, parenting support, a varied menu of activities, adult learning and parental and community involvement.

In terms of Children's Play, the Play strategy will help to foster links between play and the extended schools programme in Derwentside through:

- Consulting with local schools in the strategic development of play services for children and young people in the District;
- Involving schools in the development of any new play facilities within their local communities;
- Supporting schools in the development of out of school hours and school holiday play provision.

Local strategic framework

Derwentside Community Strategy

The Community Strategy has been developed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), known as Derwentside Partnership. Derwentside Partnership's vision for 2010 is 'the community believes in itself and knows that working together can build a district people want to live in and be proud of'.

Derwentside's Play Strategy is closely aligned to Derwentside's Community Strategy. The Play Strategy is organised around the same themes which have been highlighted through the Community Strategy. These are the key issues that are important to the residents of Derwentside.

The plan is organised around the following key themes:

- ❑ *Supporting people and communities* - "Through listening, responding and providing resources, we will support people to achieve and maintain their voice".
- ❑ *Economy* - "We will have developed a diverse, thriving economy that offers opportunity and encouragement to all".
- ❑ *Lifelong learning* - "Through partnership we will have created a culture in which people will want to learn, we will have the opportunity to learn and enjoy learning".
- ❑ *Community safety* - "By working together we will build safe communities and reduce fear".
- ❑ *The built and natural environment* - "Through working together we will make Derwentside an attractive place in which to live and work".
- ❑ *Health* - "Through partnership we will address the underlying causes of ill health by promoting preservation, education and economic well-being with the community, achieving equity of access to Health Services".

Derwentside Youth Strategy (draft)

The Derwentside Youth Strategy, which is still in draft format, draws upon consultation undertaken with young people across the District over the last two years. The aim of the strategy is to make Derwentside a better place to live in as a young person, recognising that young people have a right to have their voices heard and be involved in decision-making and steering provision of youth services. The Strategy highlights six areas of concern and interest:

- ❑ Education and economy.
- ❑ Feeling healthy and staying safe.
- ❑ Environment.
- ❑ Having a say.
- ❑ Things to do.
- ❑ Housing.

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Derwentside Local Plan

The Derwentside District Local Plan was formally adopted in January 1997. It sets out the local planning authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in its area up to 2006, with policies now saved until the Autumn of 2007 as part of the new Local Development Framework process. The Local Plan contains two policies particularly relevant to the provision of play

HO22 Recreational Public Open Space within Housing Sites

This policy recognises that the open space within housing areas helps to meet the immediate recreational needs of people living there, particularly the less mobile and small children. It highlights the importance of providing safe and interesting areas for children to play close to their homes. The policy requires developers of housing sites which contain family housing to provide appropriate levels of open space and play equipment. The Council will seek the minimum standards for outdoor space as specified within the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) guidelines. This establishes a standard of 2.43 hectares of open space per 1,000 population, which must be met for planning permission to be granted.

RE2 Protection of Existing Recreational Open Spaces

This policy recognises that the District contains a wide range of open spaces and leisure facilities, which provide relaxation and recreation opportunities, whilst contributing to the pleasantness of the area as a whole. It again highlights that the Council will apply the NPFA standard in the assessment of applications that could result in a loss of recreational open space and that planning permission will not be granted for developments which would result in the loss of existing recreational open space if that loss would create a deficiency in provision, is in an area where there is already a deficiency or where retention is necessary as part of the character of the area.

Local development framework

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires DDC to prepare a local development framework (LDF) to replace the existing District Local Plan. The LDF will comprise local development documents, including development plan documents which are part of the statutory development plan, and supplementary planning documents which expand policies set out in a development plan document or provide additional detail. The LDF, together with the regional spatial strategy, provides the essential framework for planning in Derwentside. The core strategy (outlining policies) will be published in early 2008. It will include revised standards for the provision of play in the District.

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Derwentside District Council (DDC) Equipped Play Area Strategy

The equipped play area strategy has shaped the provision of Council-owned equipped play areas over the past nine years. Its aim is to ensure that there is equitable distribution of formal play facilities across the District, which are properly designed and maintained. The strategy sets out the following policy for provision of equipped play areas:

- To provide the following minimal level of formal play areas in the District:
 - 1 district play area
 - 3 regional play areas
 - 8 local play areas.
- To ensure they are properly designed and maintained.
- Seek to enhance the quality of play provision and ensure an equitable distribution throughout the District.

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Local Context

Demographics

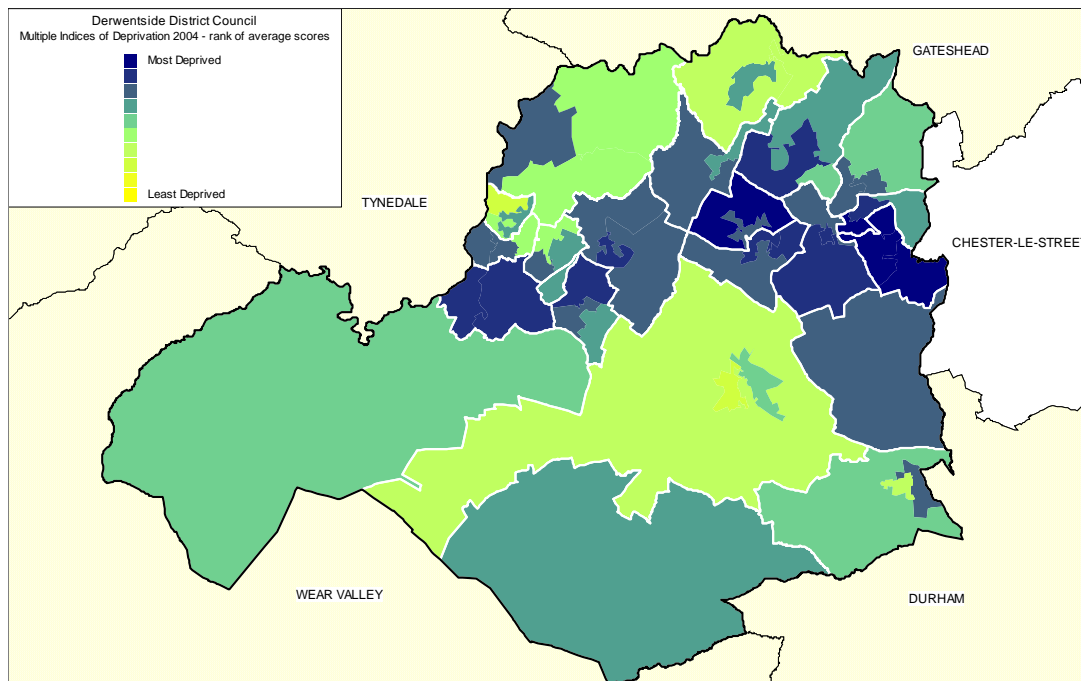
Based on the findings of the latest (2001) Census, Derwentside's population is relatively young, with almost 24% aged 19 or under and only 8% aged 75 or over. Other characteristics of the District's population include:

- ❑ Almost 35% of households with no car or van (less than 27% nationally).
- ❑ Almost 8% lone-parent households with dependent children (6.5% nationally).
- ❑ Almost 57% employed (nearly 61% nationally).
- ❑ 25% permanently sick or disabled (5.5% nationally).
- ❑ 14% with a degree or higher level qualifications (almost 20% nationally).
- ❑ Almost 69% of owner-occupied houses (almost 69% nationally).

Deprivation

Derwentside has an indices of deprivation (2004) average score ranking of 62nd in England (where 1 is most deprived and 354 is least deprived). Of 55 super output areas (SOAs), five (9.1%) are in the 10% most deprived and 15 (27.3%) in the 20% most deprived SOAs in the Country.

Figure 1: Index of multiple deprivation - Derwentside



PLAY AUDIT

Equipped play provision

As part of the strategy process (and to sit alongside the Derwentside PPG17 open space, sport and recreation study) a full and comprehensive play area audit and assessment has taken place across the District. A database has been created which holds records of all the play area provision across the District and site assessments have been carried out to determine the quality and value of each facility.

All of the play areas are mapped on a GIS system and records outline the current condition of facilities within Derwentside. The mapping process has been used to identify any gaps in play provision within the District.

In total, 26 play areas are recorded in the open space database. Separate assessments were undertaken for the different elements of play offered by a site, e.g. if a play space provided an equipped play area, a space for casual play and provision for youth, three separate assessments have been undertaken. In total 39 play area assessments have been carried out to evaluate the quality and value of sites. Full details are included in Appendix 2.

The audit identifies the total amount of formal play provision in each significant residential area or neighbourhood. The audit also identifies the quality of each of these spaces.

Using Derwentside's local standards (currently being developed) and the population statistics for each neighbourhood, areas which are under or over provided for can be identified. In addition, the quality scores for spaces can be compared to quality standards.

This information enables one or more of the following actions to be chosen:

- Creation of new areas of play provision
- Protection of existing areas of play provision
- Improvement of the quality of existing play provision
- Disposal of existing play provision

Efforts will be made to achieve these actions by focusing existing resources or attracting external resources. Focus will also be made on securing funding for improvements through either developer contributions, working to attract grants or building effective partnerships.

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Current provision

There is a wide range of other play provision in Derwentside.

DDC Leisure Services (transferred to LeisureWorks in June 2007)

Other play provision by DDC includes:

- Out-reach play work throughout the summer months. Community play days are facilitated by DDC leisure rangers who rotate between open spaces across the District and provide activities such as inflatable and soft play, sports, games and crafts.
- DDC Leisure Services also organises annual 'Lark in the Park' fun day events throughout the summer. These events take place in key open space sites across Derwentside and hosts various play activities such as arts and crafts, sports, games, soft and inflatable play, children's entertainment. A free bus service operates throughout the summer holidays to all the Lark in the Park events to facilitate access for parents/carers and children.
- During school holidays DDC operates out of school clubs at the Louisa Centre, Stanley and Belle Vue Leisure centre, Consett. These run a flexible programme of activities such as arts and crafts, sports, games, books and other play.
- DDC Leisure Services also organises an extensive activity programme available throughout school holiday periods for children aged 4-16 years. This ranges from live entertainment shows, sports coaching, survival days, parachute games and day trips.

'Try Five'

'Try Five' provides a comprehensive range of physical activity opportunities both within and beyond the school curriculum. It aims to reduce health inequalities by targeting activities at children, young people and their families in the most deprived wards free of charge. The project attracts several thousand attendances a year, providing free activities, including outdoor adventurous activities, during the holiday period. It delivers activity in community facilities, open spaces and schools as part of the Extended Schools programme.

SPICE project (ELLIE the Youth Bus).

SPICE (The Special Project to Implement Children's Elections) is a project run by DDC and funded in partnership with various funding bodies including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The Project aims to encourage young people throughout the District to have an active role in citizenship by becoming involved in community issues and local democracy.

ELLIE the Youth Bus developed as a DDC project in response to consultation held in 2003, where young people identified the need for mobile youth provision in the District. The aim of the project is to provide a wide range of

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diversionary activities and resources for all children and young people across Derwentside, especially those living in more rural wards with little or no access to services. These include access to the internet, use of DJ equipment, playstations, televisions and videos and a range of games. The Youth Bus also facilitates information and educational sessions e.g. healthy eating. It targets 'hot spot' areas of youth nuisance and/or recognised areas lacking youth provision.

Youth service

Durham County Council Children and Young People's Service also undertakes youth work delivery throughout Derwentside. This includes detached youth work, drop in sessions and supervised youth club provision delivering guidance and information to young people, support with accreditation qualifications, sports and free time activities.

Supporting Parents Network

The Supporting Parents Network (SPAN) recognises the benefits to children's learning and development that creative play can offer. In 2005 SPAN secured funding from Derwentside Children's Fund to set up a valuable resource for parents/carers to gain ideas and materials to carry out creative, educational play in their own homes with their own children. The 'Arty Pants' project collects any useful, clean, safe materials from local businesses that can be used in arts and crafts. The materials collected are offered to parents and carers to facilitate creative play. SPAN also operates an outreach service travelling to different community facilities throughout the District to facilitate craft activity.

Real Care Ltd

Real Care Ltd provides fully inclusive after school and holiday care for children up to 19 years. The provision is based at Villa Real School, which is working towards extended school status, but is open to all in the wider community. Facilities at the School, such as the sensory room, soft play and outdoor classroom, are utilised. Real Care Ltd is working towards the development of an outdoor learning centre, which will facilitate forest learning. Again this will be fully accessible to all children and young people.

There are a further two elements to Real Care Ltd. Real Adventure is registered to provide outdoor activities. Fully trained staff enables children and young people to participate in a wide selection of challenging adventures such as archery, climbing and orienteering. Allensford Country Park is a site used to facilitate 'forest play'. Real Training, although established to meet the demand for professionals and parents who require training to support children with disabilities, also delivers training suitable for all childcare providers e.g. first aid, disability awareness, moving and handling.

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Children's centres

As part of the programme to integrate services for children and young people in Derwentside, six children's centres, providing and co-ordinating a range of services and activities for this group, have been developed and an additional centre is due to be completed in Benfieldside in 2008. The core offer includes childcare, children and family health support and parental support and training. The centres offer numerous activities aimed at early year development that incorporates play e.g. 'Wiggle and Giggle', story time and parent and toddler sessions as well as toy libraries. Each site provides outdoor play opportunities that are supervised by the facilitator of the activity and/or parent/guardian.

- ❑ Stanley
- ❑ Craghead
- ❑ Burnhope
- ❑ Moorside
- ❑ Catchgate
- ❑ Leadgate
- ❑ Benfieldside (to be completed 2008)

All of the centres, with the exception of Stanley and Craghead, are attached to nursery/schools.

YMCA Consett

A key provider of opportunities for young people in Derwentside is YMCA Consett. As well as operating a youth club in Consett four nights a week, it also provides:

- ❑ An 'Alternative Education' programme, which offers an alternative curriculum programme tailored to suit the needs of today's young people, helping them to achieve and gain certification in an environment other than that of the classroom. Over 200 young people have been through this programme.
- ❑ The Princes Trust Team Challenge is a twelve-week personal development programme for young people aged 16 - 25 years
- ❑ Activities as part of the partnership which runs the local division of the Youth Inclusion Programme (YIP): tailor-made programmes for 13 to 16-year-olds who are engaged in crime or are identified as being most at risk of offending, truancy, or social exclusion.
- ❑ An activity centre catering for up to 45 people in Consett. Consett YMCA's base at Parliament Street also provides accommodation for groups and individuals from around the world.

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Consultation

As evidenced by the achievement of beacon council status for Positive Youth Engagement in 2006/07, consultation with and the participation of young people have been and will continue to be integral to strategy development and implementation. As a result, considerable consultation has taken place with children, young people and the communities of Derwentside in the development of play and services for children and young people, and in the development of this strategy. A variety of methods have been used, which are summarised when discussing results. The strong focus on consultation with children and young people in the District will be maintained and enhanced in taking the Play Strategy forward.

The Ninth Derwentside Citizens' Panel survey

The Ninth Derwentside Citizens' Panel survey, carried out during summer 2003, focused on leisure services and provision within Derwentside. A section of the questionnaire specifically considered the provision of children's activities. In total, 703 questionnaires were completed by local residents, who were members of the panel at that time. Key findings are:

- A fifth of respondents (19.9%) expressed an interest in organised children's play, with provision in the evening being the most popular.
- Of the 703 respondents:
 - 64 respondents said that they had used the facilities at the Louisa Centre – only six reported the facilities to be fair, good or excellent. (N.B. this was before provision of the new swimming pool.)
 - 54 respondents had used the facilities at Belle Vue Leisure Centre, with 51 advising that they found the facilities to be fair, good or excellent.
 - 90 respondents advised that they had used the children's facilities at Belle Vue Swim Centre. Of those, 80 respondents found the facilities to be fair, good or excellent.
 - 47 respondents stated that they had used the Lamplight Arts Centre children's facilities. Of those respondents, 45 found the facilities to be fair, good or excellent.
 - The Empire Theatre children's facilities had been used by 74 respondents. Of those respondents, 59 found the facilities to be good or excellent.
- Overall, only 13.9% reported themselves to be fairly or very satisfied with the amount of play areas in Derwentside; almost a third (31.8%) rated it as fairly or very dissatisfactory; almost half (47.5%) did not give a response or were unable to provide a rating of the amount of play areas in Derwentside.
- When asked about the level of provision, 43.9% of respondents did not comment and 42.2% felt that the current level of provision was too low.
- When asked what type of provision they would prefer, the majority stated a small local play facility (43.6%) compared to a large well equipped area (27.3%).

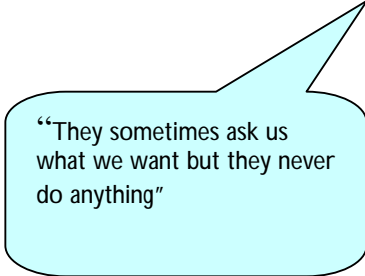
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Youth Strategy Consultation

As part of the drafting of the Derwentside Youth Strategy Derwentside District Council undertook consultation with over 1,000 young people aged 8 to 19 years. The young people were asked what they wanted from their area and for themselves in the future. There are a number of issues and concerns identified through this consultation exercise which are relevant to this Strategy.

Education and Economy

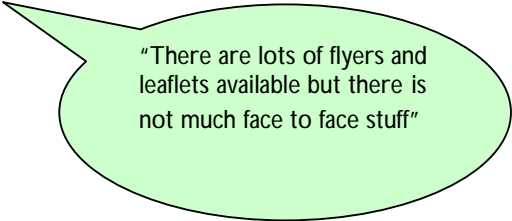
Young people would like to be involved in making decisions about their school, in a format which they have control of and which gives them genuine involvement in the working of the school. They would also like to see more extra curricular activities available to them inside and outside of school. Young people would like to see the Youth Bus as a tool to access information on careers, etc. and would also like to receive recognition for their achievements and a yearly celebration event.



“They sometimes ask us what we want but they never do anything”

Feeling Healthy and Staying Safe

Young people want to be, and stay, healthy. They also want to feel safe in their communities and be able to access safe exciting activities. Concerns were expressed regarding young people's safety whilst 'hanging around' on the streets and young people feel there is a need for greater publicity to inform young people about what is going on in the area.

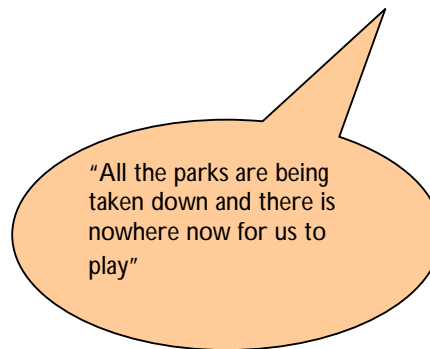


“There are lots of flyers and leaflets available but there is not much face to face stuff”

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Environment

Consultation highlighted that young people would like to have more places to go including better parks and more sports facilities. There is demand for more youth shelters but only when linked to other facilities. With off road motorbiking being a popular activity amongst young people young people highlighted a desire for the provision of off-road tracks.



Having a Say

Young people want to take pride in the District and be offered the opportunities they deserve. Consultation highlights that young people would like greater support to work in partnership with other residents to benefit the whole community. Through the Young People's Forum and involvement with a range of organisations working with young people, they are increasingly being involved in relevant decision-making activities. There is desire for a youth letter to be produced a few times a year with information on opportunities available to young people and for improved access for young people to council services. The SPICE project is commended and young people wish to continue using the SPICE website to enable young people to vote on key issues. Young people would like to see evidence on how their views are taken forward and inform decision-making.

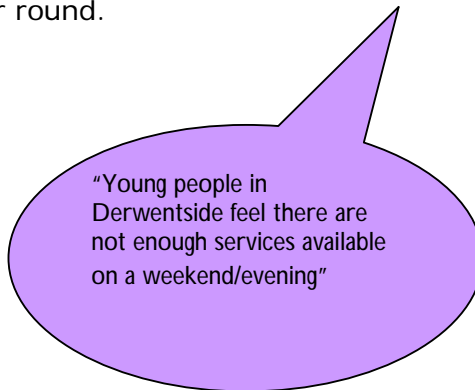


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Things to do

The consultation process identified that young people in Derwentside want plenty of fun activities and places to go within their area. They also want to be able to enjoy themselves at a low cost. Suggestions collated during consultation include

- ❑ Provision of more clubs and opportunities for children and young people between 5 to 13 years.
- ❑ More places for young people to 'hang out' including youth shelters linked to other facilities.
- ❑ More parks, especially for teenagers.
- ❑ More and bigger/improved skateparks.
- ❑ Continuation of the Youth Bus and more buses throughout the District.
- ❑ Provision of an off-road motorbike track.
- ❑ More projects open to children with disabilities.
- ❑ Cheaper activities/outings all year round.



First SPICE Project Survey (August 2001)

In August 2001 the SPICE Project undertook a survey to collect data regarding young people's knowledge of the role of local government and their satisfaction with council service delivery. The survey was also used to collect data regarding young people's perception of crime and safety in Derwentside and their relationships with various groups of adults in the community. Key findings from the 243 returns are:

- ❑ The majority of respondents (91.8%) felt that the parks and playgrounds service was in need of improvement.
- ❑ The most commonly mentioned things that young people liked about Derwentside were the parks, fields and countryside.
- ❑ Things they disliked were graffiti and rubbish, dog fouling and a lack of parks and sports facilities.
- ❑ The main improvements requested were 'more or better parks' and improved sports and swimming facilities.

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- Respondents were asked to state how safe or unsafe they felt in various situations and places. When in parks over a quarter of respondents (31.8%) reported feeling quite or very unsafe. However, over half (54.1%) reported feeling very or quite safe. Intimidation by young people older than themselves is the main reason for children and young people feeling quite or very unsafe in different places (37.4%).

Consultation undertaken for the Derwentside Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, April 2002

The Derwentside Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) sets out a vision and action plan to deliver positive change in the district by narrowing the gap between the most deprived wards and the rest of the district. The main problems and requirements highlighted by the priority communities and service providers during these exercises that are relevant to this strategy are summarised below:

Theme	Issues
Housing and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Lack of good quality open spaces and play areas with facilities for young people. □ The existing play areas in Catchgate are small and lack equipment.
Crime and community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The Community Safety and Young Persons' Task Group is a good example of joint working. However, resources are spread thinly. □ Anti social behaviour and vandalism (especially amongst young people) are cited as common problems. Closely associated to this is the lack of activities/facilities for young people, resulting in concentrated incidents of anti social behaviour and vandalism where youths congregate. □ Children and young people need their own space.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Concern exists regarding poor health in general including mental health problems. □ Desire for more guidance on leading healthier lifestyles. □ Shortage of affordable sporting activities locally. □ More sporting activities are required locally.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Need to raise expectations of children.
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Children and young people need their own space i.e. an area to congregate and socialise. □ Although Langley Park has three community centres and two detached youth workers operating every Monday for two hours a week, some residents have a perception that there are no facilities. There is a need for greater partnership working between community groups to rationalise activities. □ Lack of youth workers in Annfield Plain was highlighted as an issue. The School-based youth centre and football club ceased to operate because young people could not afford the charges. □ The cost of travelling reduces involvement in community activity for those in isolated areas of the district.

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ELLIE the Youth Bus Project Evaluation, 2007

A recent evaluation has been undertaken of ELLIE the Youth Bus. This included much consultation with key stakeholders, schools, young people and the community. Key findings and conclusions are summarised below:

- The project is extremely well regarded, in high demand from stakeholders and young people, and is delivering good work across the District. The popularity of the Bus with young people consulted is clear and also evidenced by a growing free membership scheme.
- Responses from young people demonstrate the value of the Bus and the activity provided, both in terms of immediate and short term impact.
- There is evidence of the tension between meeting demand for the service and delivering depth of activity with young people.
- The Bus is delivering as much activity as possible in order to respond to needs of young people and meet demand. However, there is only one bus for 22 wards in the District and consultation identifies concerns about the dilution of activity delivered.
- Clear benefits of this provision were identified:
 - Positive leisure activities for young people.
 - Provision to fill obvious gaps.
 - Access to information, advice and guidance on a number of issues.
 - A place for young people to socialise.

Community appraisal findings

A series of community appraisals have been undertaken across Derwentside to enable local residents to identify priorities for improving their community. Detailed findings relating to play, children and young people are set out in Appendix 3. It should be noted that the summary concentrates on outstanding issues; a number of those identified by the community appraisals have already been implemented.

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Derwentside Play Partnership

Core to the development of this strategy is the Derwentside Play Partnership. This Partnership consists of key organisations and stakeholders involved in the delivery of play opportunities across the District. The Play Partnership will be responsible for the delivery of this strategy and ensuring that the actions are taken forward to improve play services in Derwentside.

To initiate the development of the Play Strategy, the Derwentside Play Partnership came together in March 2007. The Partnership discussed issues concerning the delivery of play opportunities in Derwentside, focusing on the following:

- How do we define play?
- What constitutes good play provision?
- What should be our objectives in terms of play provision?
- How do we make it inclusive?

The main points from the group discussions can be summarised as follows:

- Children and young people (C&YP) should have plenty of choice for play.
- C&YP should be comfortable in their own space.
- They should be encouraged and empowered to use their imagination in play.
- Play should be something that C&YP opt to do themselves – they may join in with others but it should be of their own free will, not imposed on them.
- The appropriate definition of play depends on the ages of C&YP.
- We need a strategy for all children and young people.
- In the past, the Council has focused on children under 12 years of age, particularly the under 8's.
- Should we perhaps cater for young people up to the age of 25, particularly those in care, or those with a disability?
- Play can develop social skills – but not in isolation.
- Sustainability of the Play Strategy is critical.
- We need to focus on 'spaces' rather than Council-equipped premises.
- The Children's Fund (for example) invested in "drop-in" centres, rather than youth clubs or community centre facilities.
- Safety is critical.
- Traffic is a major barrier.
- Exploration of the environment and natural play should be encouraged.
- Parenting is important to allow for the freedom of C&YP in safety.

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Discussions then focused on:

- ❑ What are the barriers to play?
- ❑ Are there any issues that we need to be aware of?

The main points raised were:

- ❑ Legislation sometimes makes it impossible to provide enough play opportunities, e.g. police screening of parents and volunteers.
- ❑ To make a choice, you need knowledge.
- ❑ Early intervention is important in terms of 'teaching' parents and children to know how to play. It's crucial that parents have knowledge and experience of what's best for them and their children.
- ❑ Free play for young children from birth to 3 years old should be encouraged.
- ❑ Extended schools projects are valuable for out-of-school clubs and play activities – this provision mustn't be overlooked by the Play Strategy.
- ❑ There should be more litter bin provision in open space areas.
- ❑ C&YP are often made to work towards 'accreditation' in projects – but this puts off a lot of young people, when they just want to enjoy themselves and not be concerned with achieving targets.
- ❑ Do the benefits of play outweigh the risks?

Parent and toddler groups

During March and April 2007 a number of parent and toddler groups were visited throughout the District. Face-to-face consultation was undertaken with parents and carers in attendance to collate views regarding current play opportunities available for children, predominately aged 0-5yrs. Focus sessions were also held with two Surestart Children's Centre parent forums. Key findings from this consultation are:

- ❑ There is demand for local equipped play area provision, particularly with equipment targeted at under 5's, accessible within a 5-10 minute walk. Many parents commented negatively on the removal of a number of local play areas over the last couple of years and feel that there is a lack of equipment suitable for toddlers. (DDC has recently taken out four local play areas e.g. Harperley Royal Estate.)
- ❑ However, some parents with access to a car indicate that they are willing to drive 10-15 minutes to access a good quality play area.
- ❑ A key concern expressed by parents and carers is the congregation and abuse of parks and play areas by young people. The presence of undesirables and teenagers in and around play areas deters parents from allowing their children to use the facilities due to issues associated with poor safety perception, intimidation, vandalism and littering, in particular broken glass.
- ❑ There is demand for greater supervision/staff presence within parks and play areas to ensure they are used appropriately.

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- ❑ Users commend the services and activities provided through the Derwentside Surestart children's centres. These include toy libraries, parent and toddler play groups, 'wobble and giggle' and 'story time' sessions.
- ❑ Those parents whose children access the holiday activities provided by DDC Leisure Service rate the provision highly. However, a number of parents are unaware of the opportunities provided and perceive there to be a lack of holiday and out of school provision. In addition, the age range catered for is considered to be too restrictive.
- ❑ There is varying awareness regarding the community play days provided by DDC Leisure Rangers. Those parents and carers whose children have made use of these activities, which include games, inflatable play and soft play, commend the service and report that children enjoy the experience and would like to see it more often. However, one limiting factor is that the activities are only provided on weekdays, which can restrict attendance due to parents' work commitments. This is also highlighted as an issue surrounding the 'Lark in the Park' events.
- ❑ Lack of play areas providing interesting equipment suitable for older children (10 yrs +).
- ❑ The play area at Consett and Blackhill Park has raised expectations of residents; in particular in relation to the provision of CCTV and vandal-proof design of some equipment
- ❑ There is a perceived deficiency of play provision in the rural communities. Mobile provision, such as a play bus, would be well received and used in outlying settlements across the District.
- ❑ Parents recognise the value of open spaces for play. Allensford Country Park and Oakey Park/Oakies Playing Field are popular family destinations for play due to the variety of opportunities available, e.g. equipped play area, woodlands, water, open space.
- ❑ Many parents stressed the importance of good quality toilet facilities in sites that host community events or are particularly popular with families with young children.

Easter holiday activities programme and out of school clubs, 2007

In order to establish views of children aged between 5 and 11 years, face-to-face consultation was undertaken during the Easter holiday activity programme and out-of-school clubs. Focus sessions were arranged with children in groups of 3-5 and discussions focused around favourite places to play, favourite play activities, likes and dislikes concerning equipped play areas and barriers to play. Parents and carers dropping off and picking children up were also consulted. The key findings are summarised below:

- ❑ The majority of the children undertake a lot of informal play using open spaces and playing fields close to their homes rather than equipped play areas. They most often travel to and discover play sites with their friends.
- ❑ An ideal play area would consist of:
 - Climbing frames.
 - Monkey bars.
 - Paddling pool.

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- Big twisty slide.
 - Pirate ship.
 - Climbing wall.
 - Tyre swings.
 - See-saw.
 - Bouncy equipment
-
- The most popular piece of equipment that children would like to see in play areas is climbing apparatus. Having grassed open space surrounding it is also a key feature.
 - Older children (aged 8+) consider equipped areas to be “boring”. They would like more “challenging, adventurous and interesting” equipment to be provided and used the zip-wire at Allensford Country Park as an example.
 - Children report enjoying the inflatable play and soft play offered during ‘Lark in the Park’ and the community play days. In particular the children like the use of the bouncy castle.
 - A key concern highlighted by consultation is older children/teenagers and “hanging” around on children’s play areas. Children report feeling threatened when older children and “hoodies” are present preventing them from using the equipment. Teenagers drinking and smoking around play areas makes younger children feel unsafe and children report disliking the broken glass and litter that is left on the play areas and the vandalism/graffiti.
 - During consultation children suggested putting age restrictions on play areas and separating provision for different ages e.g. for under 5 yrs, 5-8 yrs, 8-13yrs and 14+.
 - Children report that they would feel safer and use equipped play areas more often if there were a greater staff presence within sites to control older children and the trouble they cause.
 - All the children consulted enjoy the activities provided by DDC Leisure Services during the school holidays.
 - Boys in particular would like adventure type activities, such as woodland den building, rope swings and fire play, to be provided as part of the holiday activity schemes. A number of children commented on how much they enjoyed the assault course/survival course provided as part of the holiday programme the previous year. Many of the boys highlighted that they like to “explore” woodlands close to their homes and often make rope swings that other children also use. “I like adventures and finding new places”.
 - Allensford Country Park was often mentioned as a favourite place to play because of the variety of equipment and the woodlands and stream at the site. This provision is considered to be “really good”. However, children report that usage is limited as they can only access the provision by car with their parents. There is demand for more provision of this nature across the District.
 - Riding bikes is a popular activity in free time. However, children report that they have few places to ride close to home. They do not like riding in the streets because of cars and broken glass and so would like more BMX type provision such as is provided at Snows Green Road Park.

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- ❑ There is a perceived deficiency of play provision in Burnopfield due to the absence of a park and play area. However, one is scheduled to be provided in 2007. The community play days operated by DDC Leisure Services are popular in this area and both children and carers would like more play days to be provided more often. Bringing play to children is considered to be a good method to fill the gap in provision.
- ❑ A number of carers who have responsibility for children of varying age highlight difficulty in finding sites that offer play opportunities for all ages "it is difficult to find somewhere that I can take all the children that I look after where they can all be occupied". There is demand for more sites that cater for all ages e.g. toddler, junior, teenage.
- ❑ A large number of the children felt the play areas should limit the age of the children that could use play facilities and more children would access play facilities if they were supervised by adults or play workers. Parks should be made safer places for children and should be free from litter, vandalism, etc.

Youth consultation and survey

Between 10th and 27th April 2007, two questionnaire surveys - one for children aged between 7-11 years and one for children aged 12-19 years - were available on the DDC and SPICE project websites. Over this time period 132 questionnaires were completed - but all by those aged 7-11. The findings are summarised below (greater detail is attached at Appendix 4):

- ❑ The most popular location for young people to play/hang out is their own garden (67%), followed by playing on the street (63%).
- ❑ Just under half (44%) travel for under a minute to get to the place where they play/hang out at the most. Only 7% travel for longer than 10 minutes to get to their preferred location.
- ❑ The most popular method of travelling is to walk, with 75% of young people indicating this is how they get to the place where they play/hang out at most.
- ❑ The majority of young people (78%) travel to the place where they play /hang out the most with others, either family or friends. There is an equal split between those who travel with friends and with family.
- ❑ Almost two-thirds (62%) think that the place where they play/hang out is above average (i.e. very good or good). Only 15% report the areas to be below average (i.e. poor or very poor).
- ❑ The majority (67%) believe that there are not enough playgrounds, places to hang out, parks and other open spaces in their area.
- ❑ The most popular suggestion for what young people would like to see is more equipped playgrounds, with swings, slides, climbing frames (77%). The least popular suggestions are youth cafés, with informal drop-in centres (33%) and 'Ellie' the youth bus (25%).
- ❑ The most common outside school day activities were after-school clubs (61%) and sports/arts activities (51%).
- ❑ Sports/arts activities receive the most positive ratings from those who attend them, with 88% indicating that the activities are above average (i.e. very good or good).

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- ❑ Of those who do not attend an activity, 59% state that the reason is because their friends do not go and they have no one to go with. The least cited reason was that they did not like any kind of supervised activities (24%).
- ❑ 63% would like to see more sports/arts activities and 47% would like to see more after-school clubs.

Direct face-to-face consultation with young people attending youth club and skatepark facilities in the District highlights that:

- ❑ Young people perceive there to be little to do in their free time if they do not like sports.
- ❑ There are a number of youth clubs operating across the District. However, this is perceived to be insufficient and there is demand for greater provision. Young people dislike the amount of accreditation now associated with attending youth clubs. This is deterring many young people from attending, as they do not want to undertake work towards accreditation but would rather have somewhere to “hang around with friends to listen to music and play games”.
- ❑ There is demand for Mc-ing and dj-ing equipment at youth clubs.
- ❑ Many youth club buildings are dated and in a state of disrepair. This makes them unattractive places for young people. There is demand for high quality modern buildings and youth cafés.
- ❑ Young people report that they congregate in bus shelters during the evening because of the shelter and seating provided. There are mixed views regarding the need for youth shelter provision. Some young people would like youth shelters to be provided in open spaces but others feel that youth shelters would attract anti-social behaviour from certain groups and become vandalised and unusable.
- ❑ The two skateparks, at Kings Head Field Stanley and the Belle Vue Leisure Centre Consett, are commended and consultation suggests very well used. There is demand for floodlighting to facilitate use in the evenings; currently car headlights are being used.
- ❑ The majority of young people know of the SPICE bus. Those who have accessed it commend the service and would like to see it more regularly. However, consultation identifies an issue surrounding awareness of how often and where the SPICE bus operates. Some young people state “we don’t always know when it is coming to our area”.
- ❑ A number of older young people use South Stanley Woods to ride off-road motorbikes. There is demand for an official site to be provided in the District to allow for motocross.
- ❑ There is demand for play areas which are more adventurous and offer greater challenges for children aged 10 years and above. Play in the natural environment was also suggested, with one group in particular being enthusiastic about provision of rope courses and obstacle courses in woodlands.
- ❑ There is demand for greater provision of casual play, e.g. MUGAs and basketball hoops. Young people would like spaces for them, where they would not get moved on.

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PPG17 consultation

Derwentside's PPG17 open space, sport and recreation assessment has been conducted during the early months of 2007 and is currently in draft stage. However, a range of consultation was carried out to feed into the PPG 17 assessment including resident street surveys, focus sessions with user groups and interviews with resident and community groups. Key findings from this consultation, relevant to this strategy, are:

- Although the current Derwentside Play Area Strategy has resulted in the removal of a number of small local play areas, consultation identifies demand for localised play areas to be provided.
- There is a need to generate greater interest and participation of out-of-school holiday activities provided by Leisure Services.
- There is potential to provide greater play opportunities through the extended schools program.
- The SPICE project has been successful in engaging with young people. The mobile provision of a youth bus through the SPICE project has been and continues to be successful.
- There is perceived to be little free holiday provision.
- There is a gap in youth provision and demand for provision of MUGAs.
- Demand for more challenging and interesting play opportunities (including equipped play areas).
- The skate park provision is well used. There is demand for bigger provision.
- There is a perceived lack of play facilities for all ages.
- There are no play spaces in some local areas. There is concern regarding the number of play areas being removed by DDC.
- Play spaces attract inappropriate use by the wrong age groups. This impacts on safety perception and quality of the sites, which results in decreased usage by children.
- Consultation identifies concern amongst residents across the District regarding the removal of a number of local play areas cross the District. Although residents in the main recognise that this has been in order for DDC to concentrate resources on fewer sites residents are displeased with the gaps in play area provision which now exist in a number of settlement areas.
- Consultation identifies that there is a lack of facilities for children and young people of all ages in Ebchester, with no equipped play area and no formal park provision.

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VISION FOR PLAY

The strategic vision for play in Derwentside is to:

Develop a network of high quality, accessible, safe and creative play opportunities and facilities that contribute to making Derwentside a district people want to live in and be proud of

Principles

The underlying principles for this vision are:

- ❑ The management of risk.
- ❑ Providing greater access to supervised play.
- ❑ Good standards of design and maintenance.
- ❑ Greater use of natural space for play.
- ❑ Inclusion - play environments will be attractive, enjoyable, accessible and stimulating for all of Derwentside's children and young people regardless of their age, abilities, gender or background.
- ❑ Greater involvement of children and young people.

The management of risk

Safety in play provision can never be absolute. Play provision is first and foremost for children and young people, and if it is not exciting and attractive to them, then it will fail, no matter how 'safe' it is.

Children and young people will often find spaces and activities that are not controlled and hold a greater risk to their safety if designed play spaces offer no excitement or stimulation. Risk taking is an essential feature of play and should therefore aim to allow children and young people to encounter acceptable risk.

Places still need to be created that are inspiring and stimulating. A balance will be achieved between the risk and play benefit of provision in Derwentside by ensuring that:

- ❑ Risk should be made as apparent as possible to children and young people.
- ❑ Any risk forms part of the learning experience, equipping children and young people to learn to deal with wider environmental hazards.
- ❑ Children are not exposed to significant likelihood of permanent disability or life threatening injury.

Supervised play

Well used parks are often safer and cleaner, benefiting from natural policing. In addition, staffed parks and green spaces can provide reassurance to children, young people and their families, provide supervised activity and improve the maintenance and safety of both formal and informal play spaces. This 'supervised play' will be encouraged by ensuring that:

- ❑ Play provision is provided at sites with other facilities e.g. cafes, toilets and sports facilities.
- ❑ Community ownership is encouraged through supporting Friends of Park Groups.
- ❑ Parents and carers are encouraged to get involved in play-based events and activities.
- ❑ A range of staffing is available including ranger staff, neighbourhood wardens and gardeners.
- ❑ Partnerships are established to encourage other staffing types including play and youth workers.

Design and maintenance of play space

Good standards of design and maintenance are essential to encourage play in both formal and informal play spaces. Play spaces need to be attractive, welcoming, clean, and safe. This can be encouraged by ensuring that:

- ❑ Design of all green spaces encourages inclusion, maximum play value and encourages sense of place.
- ❑ Design takes place in consultation with local communities with a focus on children and young people.
- ❑ Mixed provision is provided to prevent inappropriate use of children's facilities by young people.
- ❑ Equipment and surfaces conform to EN 1176/77.
- ❑ Play inspectors are specifically trained and competent.
- ❑ Improvements are made to maintenance standards and signs of vandalism or neglect are quickly removed.

The importance of nature

Fixed play equipment has an important role in the provision of play environments for children and young people. However, when provided with suitable opportunities, children play instinctively with natural elements, for example climbing trees and digging in earth. Natural areas can provide excellent play spaces as they are varied, multi-sensory, flexible and resilient. These spaces, free from adult design, open up the possibilities of more intent play.

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The national decline of green spaces, coupled with a fear of green spaces, has stripped many natural features from parks. Improvements will seek to:

- ❑ Include opportunities for natural play spaces in the development of all new parks and play spaces.
- ❑ Incorporate natural features into the design of all new fixed play grounds.
- ❑ Work towards reintroducing and protecting natural features in existing green spaces.
- ❑ Encourage the use of environmental play activity through appropriate training of play workers and park staff.
- ❑ Encourage the use of natural sites for play through supported play visits to expansive natural sites

Inclusion

Play environments will be attractive, enjoyable, accessible and stimulating for all of Derwentside's children and young people regardless of their age, abilities, gender or background. In order to ensure this, play spaces will be:

- ❑ Well designed, meeting DDA standards and offering contrasting play opportunities and sensory experiences.
- ❑ Designed in consultation with disabled children and their families.
- ❑ Designed to encourage social interaction.
- ❑ Sited, where possible, near to other facilities including accessible toilets.

Involvement of children and young people

All children and young people have ideas about how their areas could be improved. This doesn't always mean that they get involved in projects for designing or improving public space. The development of green spaces and, in particular, areas for play should be participatory. In order to achieve this, development will:

- ❑ Make informed and balanced decisions, if the local community perceive young people as victims or villains.
- ❑ Make time for effective consultation and participation.
- ❑ Not let children and young people down, e.g. by developing projects unlikely to establish funding.
- ❑ Be flexible enough to involve different types of young people in different ways.
- ❑ Help children and young people to imagine something new and develop ideas outside of their current experience.
- ❑ Involve those working with children and young people to support effective participation.

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Adoption of principles

In adopting these principles, the Derwentside Play Partnership recognises the significance and value of play and the poverty of play opportunities in the general environment. It is committed to ensuring that all children have access to rich, stimulating environments, both in and out of doors, free from unacceptable risks, thereby offering them the opportunity to explore through their freely chosen play, both themselves and the world. This policy is based on the understanding that every child needs opportunities to play both on their own and, crucially, with others.

The Partnership is committed to ensuring that environments, services and provision for play are attractive, welcoming and accessible to every child irrespective of age, gender, background or origin, or of individual capacities and abilities.

The Partnership will work towards increasing play opportunities for and eliminating barriers to the take-up of play provision by disabled children with specific cultural needs. This will take the form of developing increased inclusive provision or, if necessary, separate provision, recognising that separate provision may sometimes be a valuable staging post for particularly vulnerable children. Use of specialist services should only be at the choice of the child or their advocate and all mainstream services must be welcoming and accessible to all children.

3 Frees

Derwentside Play Partnership will ensure that children and young people in the District:

- Are provided with opportunities which are free to access.
- Are free to come and go.
- Are free to do what they want when they are there.

Best Play objectives

The Partnership has also adopted the seven Best Play objectives, outlined below (as developed by the Children's Play Council), to ensure its future play provision:

- Extend the choice and control that children and young people have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
- Recognise that children and young people need to test boundaries and respond positively to that need.
- Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm.
- Maximise the range of play opportunities.
- Foster independence and self-esteem.
- Foster children and young people's respect for others and offer opportunities for social interaction.
- Foster children and young people's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

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Derwentside Play Partnership recognises that:

- ❑ Children play in a variety of public spaces as well as dedicated provision.
- ❑ Play environments should provide safe, stimulating play opportunities that place children at the centre of the play process.
- ❑ Children need to encounter and learn to manage an acceptable level of risk in their play.
- ❑ Children's views should be sought and listened to.
- ❑ Children should have access to the widest possible range of play experiences and play environments, both indoor and outdoor.

Judgements about quality in provision will be based on the degree to which children are provided with opportunities to experience directly:

- ❑ The natural elements – earth, air, fire and water.
- ❑ Fabricated and natural materials and tools.
- ❑ Challenge – in the physical environment, in the social context and in private.
- ❑ Free movement – running, jumping, climbing, rolling, balancing.
- ❑ Emotions – both painful and pleasurable, the chance to validate a range of feelings.
- ❑ A variety of stimulation to the senses – hearing, taste, smell, touch, sight.
- ❑ Play with identity.
- ❑ Change.

Core themes

The Strategy is based around six strategic core themes, which are identified in Derwentside's Community Strategy:

- ❑ Supporting people and communities.
- ❑ Economy.
- ❑ Lifelong learning.
- ❑ The built and natural environment.
- ❑ Health.
- ❑ Community safety.

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Core theme 1: Supporting people and communities

The Every Child Matters Green Paper highlights that 'a consistent theme is the importance of having communities where there is somewhere safe to go and something to do (providing) recreational activity for children and young people...building the fabric of communities and increasing young people's skills, confidence and self-esteem.'

Aim: To increase the capacity within Derwentside to provide safe play opportunities that are accessible and inclusive for all residents.

Objectives are to:

- ❑ Promote equality of opportunity for all through play.
- ❑ Build the capacity and sustainability of voluntary play organisations.
- ❑ Increase recruitment, support and training of volunteers.
- ❑ Develop opportunities for local community groups to support the development of supervised play sessions in parks.
- ❑ Identify and disseminate best practice in play across Derwentside.
- ❑ Ensure consistency across all agencies in the delivery of play within Derwentside.

Core theme 2: Economy

The expansion of childcare, and OFSTED's requirement for qualified staff within registered play-schemes, have both led to an increased need for good quality playwork training. The demands of children's centres and extended schools are likely to continue this trend. In July 2006, Skills Active published the first UK Strategy for Playwork, Education, Training and Qualifications. Its vision 'anticipates that by 2016 playwork will be a profession acknowledged as central to provision for children and young people and the fulfilment of their individual potential.' Central to this work is the aim to professionalise and upskill the play workforce and to develop and implement coherent pathways for workers.

Good play provision enables parents to work or train and allows them to feel their children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves.

Aim: To develop a highly skilled and trained play workforce in Derwentside.

Objectives are to:

- ❑ Ensure a skilled and motivated workforce through a co-ordinated workforce development programme for all those delivering play in the District (regardless of sector).
- ❑ Provide play training and information for workers in other sectors working with children and young people, e.g., park workers, community wardens.

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Core theme 3: Lifelong learning

Through their play, children develop key skills for learning. It is the process of a child's own self-directed learning that has validity for all ages of children and young people. Through the freedom, choice and control they experience at play, children learn about themselves and how to interact with their surroundings. Children's physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills all develop when they are playing.

Aim: To utilise play to raise the self-esteem, aspirations and achievements of young people.

Objectives are to:

- ❑ Increase awareness of all play opportunities in the District.
- ❑ Promote learning and development through play for all children.
- ❑ Work with all schools in Derwentside to ensure they have quality school playgrounds.
- ❑ Promote to all schools the importance and benefits of having skilled play staff and resources for break time to ensure inclusive and quality play experiences.
- ❑ Increase out of school hour use of all school buildings, grounds and other community property for play opportunities.
- ❑ Promote the importance of quality play environments/experiences in all settings where children and young people receive services, with priority to vulnerable children and young people.

Core theme 4: The built and natural environment

Improving the maintenance and quality of open space and the environment is seen as an essential component of making Derwentside an attractive place to live and work. People, especially children and young people, can be encouraged to become more responsible towards their environment through community involvement, which increases their understanding and ownership.

Aim: To ensure that play provision contributes to making Derwentside an attractive place in which to live and work.

Objectives are to:

- ❑ Maintain and enhance the quality of play opportunities in Derwentside to meet agreed standards.
- ❑ Seek innovation in play through good design, natural play and work with partners.
- ❑ Increase opportunities for natural play.
- ❑ Encourage transport policy to incorporate reduced speed measures around parks and play areas.
- ❑ Ensure new play provision takes account of options to travel by public transport, walking and cycling.

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Core theme 5: Health

Play is essential for children's healthy physical and emotional development. The Public Health White Paper – 'Choosing Health' and the Choosing Activity action plan highlight the 'major contribution to children's overall level of physical activity' of outdoor play, including playing in the street. There is growing research evidence that increased opportunity for free play is the most effective way to ensure this for children and that a range of increasing health problems are associated with the decline in such opportunities.

Aim: To promote the use of play in work to improve the health of children and young people in Derwentside by providing a network of high quality, accessible play opportunities.

Objectives are to:

- ❑ Increase the number of play opportunities to ensure that all children and young people in Derwentside have access to appropriate provision.
- ❑ Promote the benefits of leading a physically active life from a young age through play.
- ❑ Encourage parents to ensure children take part in regular active play, e.g., by developing schemes to equip parents with the appropriate skills to help their children play.
- ❑ Promote play as a way of reducing and preventing childhood obesity.

Core theme 6: Community safety

Play has an important role to play in developing safer communities, both by providing safe opportunities for young people and engaging young people.

Aim: To support the development of safe communities by developing a network of safe, high quality accessible play opportunities and facilities.

Objectives are to:

- ❑ Engage with and strengthen local communities through play.
- ❑ Develop a play ranger project that increases opportunity to access play in the District and provides appropriate supervision.
- ❑ Enhance and expand the provision of mobile play to increase its accessibility across Derwentside.
- ❑ Ensure that children and young people are actively involved in the identification of locations for play opportunities in Derwentside and their design and development.

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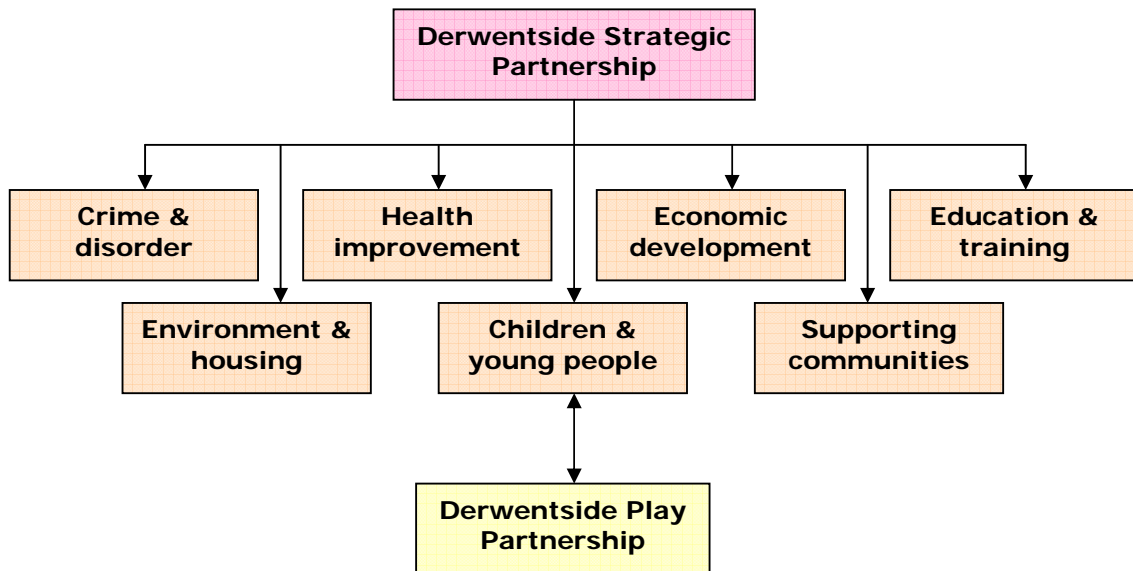
MONITORING

The detailed action plan for delivery of the play strategy for Derwentside is set out in Appendix 1.

Core to the development of this strategy is the Derwentside Play Partnership. This Partnership consists of key organisations and stakeholders involved in the delivery of play opportunities across the District. The Play Partnership will be responsible for the delivery of this strategy and ensuring that the actions are taken forward to improve play services in Derwentside.

Delivery of the strategy and this action plan will, therefore, be monitored by the Derwentside Play Partnership. This sub-group forms part of the Derwentside Children and Young People's Planning Group. This link will ensure, therefore, that delivery of the play strategy and action plan is closely aligned to the strategic priorities of both the Community Strategy and the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan. The membership of the Derwentside Play Partnership is set out in Appendix 5.

Figure 2: Relationship of Derwentside Play Partnership



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A series of performance indicators for play have been identified to monitor the overall success of the Play Strategy:

KPI 1: The percentage of children and young people aged 0-19 who 'play out' for at least four hours each week.
KPI 2: The percentage of children and young people aged 0-19 that lives within agreed catchment of play provision (as determined by PPG17 standards).
KPI 3: The proportion of facilities and spaces meeting the agreed quality criteria.
KPI 4: The percentage of children and young people who think that the range and quality of play opportunities and facilities they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good/very good.

Quality assurance

To ensure that play provision in the District maintains high standards of quality, the Derwentside Play Partnership will work with all providers to meet the quality areas laid down in 'Quality in Play', established by London Play. This will support the monitoring and evaluation of the Play Strategy and ensure high quality of provision and delivery. The 19 quality areas are detailed in Appendix 6.

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APPENDIX 1 - ACTION PLAN

Short = in next 18 months

Medium = in next 2-3 years

Long = in next 5 years

BIG = Potential projects for Lottery portfolio

Action	Timescale	Resources	Outputs/outcomes
Core theme 1: Supporting people and communities			
Employ a play development officer to lead on the provision of play opportunities in Derwentside	Short	Play Partnership	Improved leadership for play in the District
Develop a programme of capacity building and sustainability workshops and training for all voluntary and community groups providing play opportunities	Medium	Play Partnership DDC DCC DCVS	Increased capacity to provide play opportunities
Linked to the play workforce development plan, develop a programme to increase recruitment, support and training of volunteers	Medium	Play partnership DCVS	Trained workforce delivering play opportunities Improved quality of play provision across Derwentside Improved satisfaction amongst young people
Establish local groups, working with volunteers and agencies in each locality to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for funding to improve play opportunities • Deliver own play programme in local community • Offer training • Employ play workers and sessional staff 	Short	DDC Parish councils Community groups Schools Local residents Play partnership	Greater community engagement Increased capacity to provide play opportunities More localised play opportunities for young people
Utilise the Derwentside Play Partnership as a forum for sharing and disseminating best practice in play provision	Short	Play partnership	Improved quality of play provision across Derwentside

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outputs/outcomes
Core theme 2: Economy			
Establish a workforce development programme for all those delivering play in the District	Medium	Play partnership	Trained workforce delivering play opportunities Improved quality of play provision across Derwentside Improved satisfaction amongst young people
Provide play awareness training for workers in other sectors working with children and young people	Medium	Play Partnership Development Officer	Increased use of play by, and awareness of opportunities amongst, groups working with children and young people
Develop a website that includes all relevant information on play provision in Derwentside and publicise its availability to children and young people and all agencies that work with them	Short	DCC LeisureWorks Play Partnership	Increased awareness of play opportunities amongst children and young people and agencies working with them
Ensure information on play opportunities and Derwentside Play Strategy incorporated in all play and childcare training	Short	Play Partnership	Increased awareness of play opportunities amongst children and young people and agencies working with them
Core theme 3: Lifelong learning			
Run a variety of events during the year for children and families, using the opportunity to demonstrate the range of provision available and the value of play	Short	LeisureWorks Play Partnership BIG	More opportunities for children and young people to access play Increased awareness of play opportunities and their value amongst children and young people and agencies working with them
Establish a rolling programme of visits to school assemblies to present information on the range of opportunities for play	Medium	Play Partnership Development Officer	Increased awareness of play opportunities amongst children and young people and agencies working with them
Work with all schools in Derwentside to ensure they have quality school playgrounds	Long	DCC External funding	Increased range of provision within schools to provide play opportunities in both curricular and extracurricular time
Establish play training programme for school staff, focusing on mid-day supervisors and others providing opportunities out of lesson time	Long	LeisureWorks DCC Play Partnership	More individuals able to deliver high quality play opportunities
Establish a pilot project promoting use of school grounds for play/community use outside of school hours	Medium	DCC Extended Schools	Greater use of available resources to provide play opportunities

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outputs/outcomes
Develop signage which promotes play and its importance to children's development at all public play sites	Long	DDC DCC Play providers	Increased awareness of the value of play
Offer play training and information to all staff/agencies providing services for children and young people, especially those working in residential children homes, foster carers, social services and health	Medium	Play Partnership Development Officer	Increased use of play by, and awareness of opportunities amongst, groups working with children and young people
Core theme 4: The built and natural environment			
Develop a rolling programme to bring all existing play provision up to agreed standard and to maintain standard subsequently	Long	DDC Section 106 funding External funding	Improved quality of provision
Adopt a revised policy that will facilitate the development of play opportunities through planning obligations/Section 106	Short	DDC	Increased access to play provision
Increase the opportunities for natural play by taking this into account when redesigning and managing existing and future open space provision	Medium	DDC Section 106 funding External funding	Increased access to a range of play opportunities
Develop a programme of play opportunities delivered in the natural environment	Short	LeisureWorks DDC YMCA Play Partnership BIG	Increased access to a range of play provision
Work with DDC/DCC to develop transport/ planning policy that facilitates easier access to play provision (public transport, walking, cycling)	Short	DCC Play Partnership DDC	Improved access to play provision across Derwentside
Develop secure storage for bicycles at play area facilities	Long	Play providers Play Partnership	Increased access to play provision
Develop reduced speed measures around parks and play areas	Medium	DCC Play Partnership Durham Constabulary	Improved safety of play provision

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outputs/outcomes
Core theme 5: Health			
Determine over/under provision of play areas and opportunities and prioritise the development of provision in areas of significant deficiency	Long	DDC LeisureWorks Play providers Play Partnership Section 106 funding External funding BIG	Increased provision of play opportunities in Derwentside that reflects need
Enhance holiday play provision so that all children in the District have equal access to free provision	Short	DDC LeisureWorks YMCA Play Partnership BIG	Increased range of play opportunities
Upgrade play settings to ensure they are fully inclusive	Long	DDC DCC LeisureWorks Play providers Play Partnership Section 106 funding External funding BIG	Fully accessible play provision in Derwentside that meets the needs of all children and young people in the District
Promote the benefits of play through information, leaflets and website	Short	Play Partnership Development Worker DDC	Increased awareness of play opportunities amongst children and young people and agencies working with them
Develop a programme that offers parents the opportunity to learn the skills required to play with their children and provides opportunities to practise these skills	Medium	Play Partnership Sure Start Extended Schools	Increased awareness of the value of play amongst parents Increased skills and confidence of parents to support children and young people in accessing play

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outputs/outcomes
Core theme 6: Community safety			
Develop a play ranger project that increases opportunity to access play in the District and provides appropriate supervision	Short	DDC YMCA Play Partnership Durham Constabulary BIG	Increased workforce to increase number and quality of play opportunities
Enhance and expand the provision of mobile play to increase its accessibility across Derwentside	Short	DDC Play Partnership Durham Constabulary BIG	Increased opportunities for young people to access play, especially in rural communities
Utilise the Young People's Forum and local groups established (see earlier) as a consultative body for all decisions regarding the location, design and development of play opportunities in Derwentside	Short	Play Partnership	Young people actively engaged in decisions about provision

APPENDIX 2 – CURRENT EQUIPPED PROVISION

Quantitative and qualitative site assessments were conducted for all sites classified as provision for children and young people, to identify for example the range, nature and type of equipment provided. The criteria used for the children's play area assessments is summarised below and is also based upon those used for Green Flag (national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by the Civic Trust) and guidance taken from 'The Six Acre Standard', published by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA).

Children's play area site visit criteria (summary)

- Signage.
- Fencing.
- Seating.
- Number of pieces of equipment.
- Surface.
- Provision for toddlers, children, teenagers.
- Type (NPFA classification).

Children's play area classifications

The quantitative element of the children's play area site visits identified the number and type of equipment provided at each site. Depending on their size and total number of pieces of equipment, each has been given a classification utilising NPFA guidance:

- Unclassified. This area is classified as such when there is less than 0.01 hectares of play area.
- No equipment.
- A local area for play (LAP). This area must contain more than or equal to 0.01 hectares and contain more than or equal to one piece of play equipment.
- A local equipped for play (LEAP). This area must contain more than or equal to 0.04 hectares and contain more than or equal to five types of play equipment.
- A neighbourhood equipped area for play (NEAP). This area must contain more than or equal to 0.1 hectares. This area may be divided into sub-sections and possibly contain play equipment catering for a variety of ages, including multi use games areas (MUGA).

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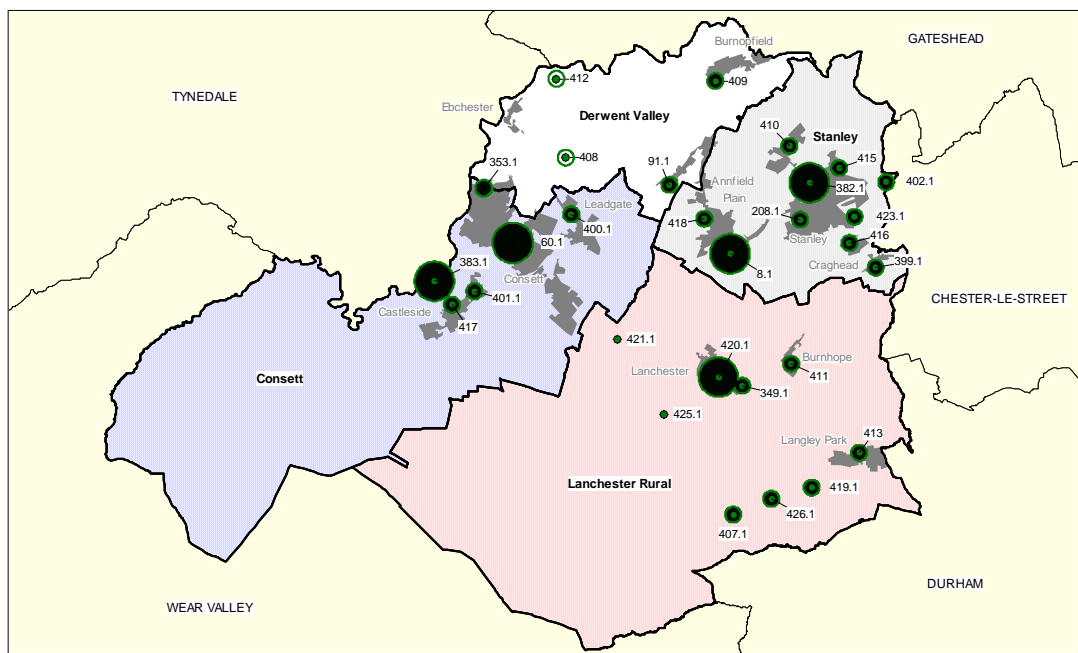
Table A2.1: Distribution of play areas by analysis area

Analysis area	Casual play	Youth provision	LAP	LEAP		NEAP	Total no. of sites	
	Current	Current	Current	Current	Proposed	Current	Current	Proposed
Consett	2	2	-	4	-	2	7	-
Derwent Valley	-	1	-	-	4	-	1	4
Lanchester Rural	7	-	2	4	2	1	8	2
Stanley	3	2	-	7	1	2	10	1
DERWENTSIDE	12	5	2	15	7	5	26	7

In total, there are 26 freely accessible play sites in the District, including those owned and managed by DDC, parish councils and voluntary and private organisations. A number of sites have more than one element of play provision e.g. one site may include an equipped play area, an element of casual play and also an element of youth provision. In this case, three separate records have been made for one site in order to ensure that the different elements of play value are recognised. There are seven proposed play areas due to be installed during 2007.

Accessibility

Figure A2.2: Equipped play areas (including proposed) across Derwentside



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Table A2.2: Key to map of equipped play areas (including proposed) across Derwentside

KKP Ref	Site	Sub-typology	Catchment (m)
8.1	Annfield Plain Park	NEAP	600
60.1	Consett Park play area	NEAP	600
97.1	Dipton Park play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
208.1	Eastfields/Westfields Doorstep Green	LEAP	240
349.1	Manor Grange play area	LEAP	240
353.1	Snows Green Road play area	LEAP	240
382.1	Oakey Park	NEAP	600
383.1	Allensford Country Park	NEAP	600
399.1	Craghead Community Park play area	LEAP	240
400.1	Watling Bungalows play area	LEAP	240
401.1	Thornfield Road play area, The Grove	LEAP	240
402.1	Schoolfield play area	LEAP	240
407.1	Cornsay Colliery play area (equipped)	LEAP	240
408	South Magdalene play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
409	Friars Row play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
410	New Front Street play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
411	Whitehouse Avenue play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
412	Derwent Crescent play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
413	Sir Bobby Robson Park play area (proposed)	LEAP	240
415	Shield Row play area	LEAP	240
416	The Middles, Standerton Terrace play area	LEAP	240
417	Moorside Community College play area	LEAP	240
418	Holly Terrace play area	LEAP	240
419.1	Esh play area (equipped)	LEAP	240
420.1	Park House play area (equipped)	NEAP	600
421.1	Hurbuck Cottages play area (equipped)	LAP	60
423.1	Cookson Place play area (equipped)	LEAP	240
425.1	Hollinside play area (equipped)	LAP	60
426.1	Quebec play area (equipped)	LEAP	240

Even taking into account the proposed provision, there are significant gaps in provision of equipped play areas across the District. The vast majority of these play areas are classified as LEAP provision. Only the installation of new equipped play areas in some areas will reduce these gaps, for example in Consett and Ebchester. Whilst in other areas, the upgrading of certain play areas from LEAPs to NEAPs will meet the gaps.

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There are some gaps in the provision of casual play areas across Derwentside. As with equipped play areas, there is no provision in Ebchester, Burnopfield (although provision will be made here shortly) and Burnhope. In addition, there is no provision in Langley Park. Stanley is well catered for in terms of casual play in comparison to Consett, which has little provision.

There are significant gaps in youth provision across Derwentside. As with casual play, there is good coverage in Stanley but Consett has less coverage. Youth provision tends to be located in the major settlements. Lanchester analysis area has no provision.

Figure A2.3: Casual play areas (including MUGAs) across Derwentside

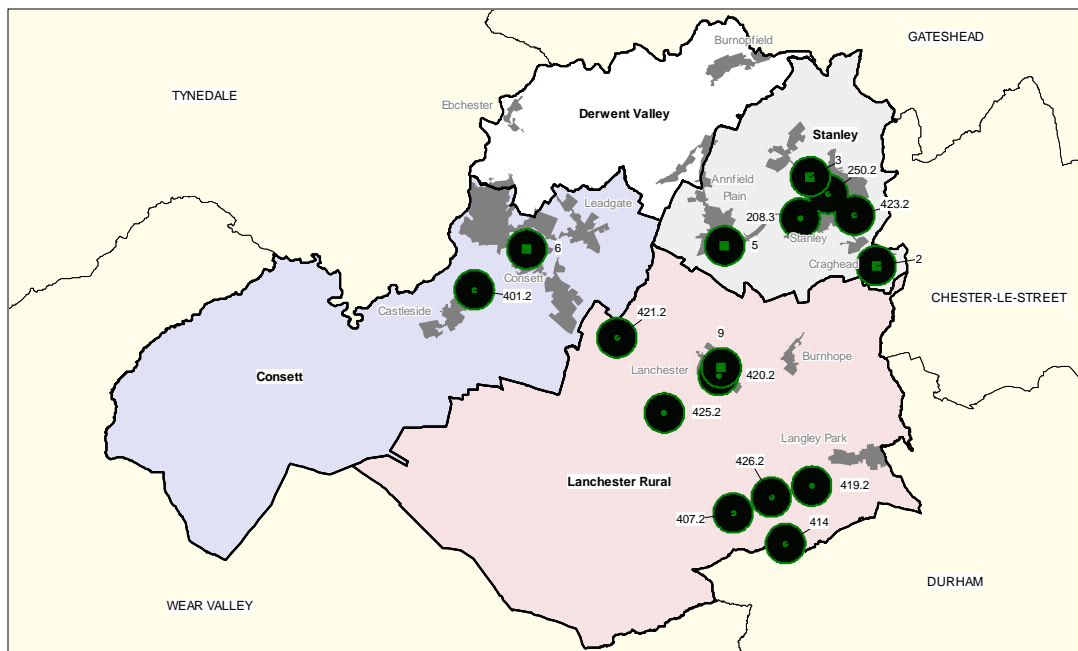


Table A2.3: Key to casual play areas (including MUGAs) across Derwentside

KKP Ref	Site	Type
423.2	Cookson Place play area (casual)	Casual play
407.2	Cornsay Colliery play area (casual)	Casual play
208.3	Eastfields/Westfields Doorstep Green	Casual play
419.2	Esh play area (casual)	Casual play
414	Hamsteels Estate play area	Casual play
425.2	Hollinside play area (casual)	Casual play
421.2	Hurbuck Cottages play area (casual)	Casual play
250.2	Kings Head Field Youth Shelter	Casual play
420.2	Park House play area (casual)	Casual play

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KKP Ref	Site	Type
426.2	Quebec play area (casual)	Casual play
401.2	Thornfield Road play area, The Grove	Casual play
5	Annfield Plain	MUGA
2	Craghead Community Association	MUGA
9	Lanchester College	MUGA
3	Oakey Park	MUGA
6	Sherburn Park	MUGA

Figure A2.4: Youth provision across Derwentside

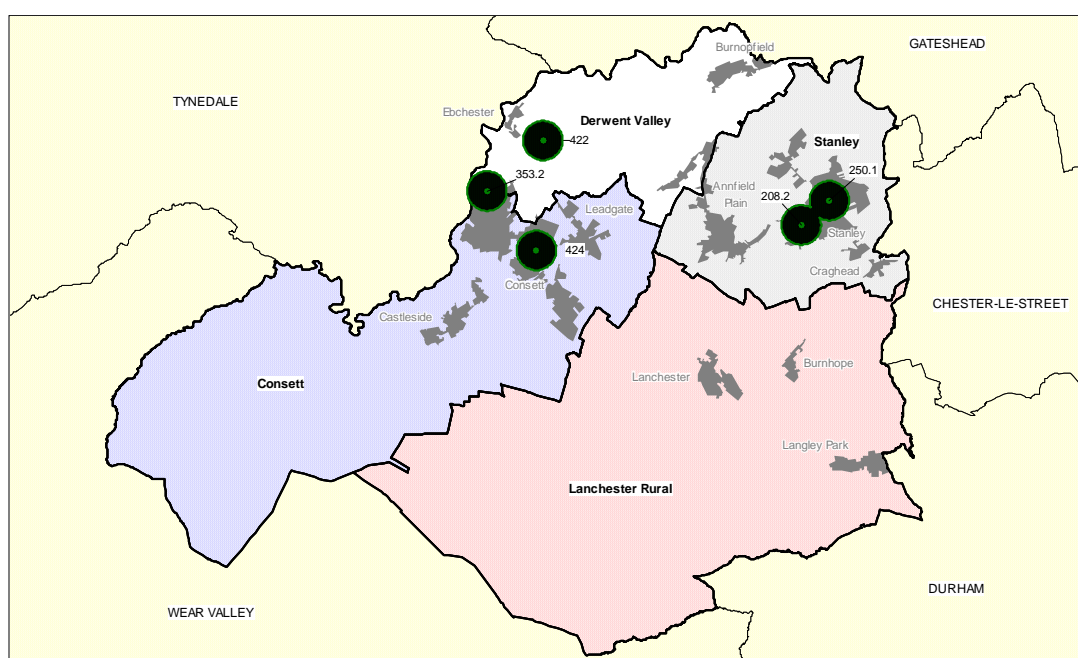


Table A2.4: Key to map of youth provision across Derwentside

KKP Ref	Site
424	Belle Vue skate park
422	Denecrest play area
208.2	Eastfields/Westfields Doorstep Green
250.1	Kings Head Field skate park
353.2	Snows Green Road BMX

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Quality

The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment of play areas in Derwentside. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table A2.5: Quality scores for equipped play areas

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60% ¹	above 60%
Consett	97	68%	76%	87%	19%	-	6
Derwent Valley	97	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lanchester Rural	97	22%	62%	82%	60%	2	5
Stanley	97	64%	73%	82%	18%	-	9
DERWENTSIDE	97	22%	70%	87%	65%	2	20

The majority of equipped play areas have been assessed as high quality, with the mean score lying significantly above the threshold at 70%. This is mainly due to good quality equipment and a good variety of equipment. It is interesting to note that the only two play areas scoring low quality are both located in Lanchester Rural. Suggesting that rural provision tends to be of poorer quality in Derwentside.

Table A2.6: Quality scores for casual play area (including MUGAs)

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Consett	97	55%	59%	64%	9%	1	1
Derwent Valley	97	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lanchester Rural	97	16%	52%	67%	51%	4	3
Stanley	97	43%	60%	73%	30%	1	2
DERWENTSIDE	97	16%	55%	73%	57%	6	6

¹ Threshold set at 60% (based on Green Flag pass score)

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Only half of the casual play areas in Derwentside scored as high quality and the mean score lies just below the threshold at 54%. As with equipped play areas, the majority of low quality casual play areas are located in Lanchester Rural.

Table A2.7: Quality scores for youth provision

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Consett	97	63%	70%	76%	13%	-	2
Derwent Valley	97	27%	27%	27%	-	1	-
Lanchester Rural	97	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stanley	97	38%	48%	59%	21%	2	-
DERWENTSIDE	97	27%	54%	76%	49%	3	2

The majority of youth provision in the District has been assessed as low quality. Only sites in Consett have been assessed as high quality. Snows Green Road BMX site is assessed as high quality but is only just above the threshold (63%). However, Belle Vue Skatepark scored significantly above the threshold (76%). This is likely to be because the skatepark is quite new.

Value

The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for play areas in Derwentside. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value.

Table A2.8: Value scores for equipped play areas

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Consett	55	44%	58%	68%	24%	-	6
Derwent Valley	55	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lanchester Rural	55	33%	45%	53%	20%	-	7
Stanley	55	46%	63%	73%	27%	-	9
DERWENTSIDE	55	33%	56%	82%	49%	-	22

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All of the current equipped play areas in the District are assessed as high value, with the mean score lying significantly above the threshold at 56%. This reflects the importance of play opportunities in Derwentside also highlighted during the consultation.

Table A2.9: Value scores for casual play area (including MUGAs)

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Consett	55	47%	60%	73%	26%	-	2
Derwent Valley	55	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lanchester Rural	55	24%	40%	51%	27%	-	7
Stanley	55	42%	44%	46%	4%	-	3
DERWENTSIDE	55	24%	44%	73%	49%	-	12

All of the casual play areas in the District are assessed as high value, with the mean score lying above the threshold at 44%. The highest scoring site is located in Stanley, Cookson Place Play Area (73%). This reflects the importance of play opportunities in Derwentside also highlighted during the consultation.

Table A2.10: Value scores for youth provision

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Consett	55	35%	45%	55%	20%	-	2
Derwent Valley	55	31%	31%	31%	-	-	1
Lanchester Rural	55	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stanley	55	42%	50%	58%	16%	-	2
DERWENTSIDE	55	31%	44%	58%	27%	-	5

All of the youth provision in the District is assessed as high value, with the mean score lying significantly above the threshold at 44%. This reflects the importance of play opportunities in Derwentside, also highlighted during the consultation.

APPENDIX 3 – COMMUNITY APPRAISALS

Burnhope Community Appraisal, 2001.

Burnhope Community Association and Burnhope Community Partnership produced an update of the Community Appraisal in 2001. This identified the importance of developing facilities within Burnhope, particularly for young people, in addition to improving links to services outside the area.

Castleside Ward Appraisal 2003-2004.

The community consultation undertaken in Healeyfield, as part of the Castleside Ward Appraisal, highlights issues regarding provision for children and young people. The main concerns for young people of all age groups and their parents are the lack of play and sports facilities. A large number of respondents to the questionnaire survey thought there was a need for more facilities for children and young people. Several suggestions included provision of a safe play area, a youth club or shelter, and a mother and toddler group. However, there were concerns that a play area without supervision would attract vandalism, noise and become a gathering place for young people in the evenings. Some residents therefore suggested provision of a supervised play area that was closed in the evenings. Older children who took part in the consultation suggested the provision of bicycle tracks in Birks Wood.

As the provision for children and young people, and anti-social behaviour, were high priorities for residents in Castleside, a specific young people's survey was undertaken to collect views of children and young people in the area to feed into the Community Appraisal. The consultation found that the young people feel that there is very little to do in Castleside. Younger children tend to play near to their homes, on the school field, or at a friends' house and also enjoy visiting Allensford Park with their families. The survey identified demand for a play park in the area as well as a youth shelter. Some of the suggestions for improvement included trips, after-school clubs, a skate park and a park with staff and security.

Consultation undertaken for this Play Strategy identifies that there is still demand in the Castleside area for play provision for children and young people.

Catchgate Community Appraisal, 1998.

The Catchgate Community Appraisal was undertaken in 1998. To identify current issues concerning provision for children and young people consultation has been undertaken with the Community Partnership. This identified that despite the lack of youth provision being highlighted as an issue in 1998, it remains a key concern in Catchgate. A detached youth worker is now based at the Bethany Chapel in Catchgate and there are aspirations for the worker to develop at least two organised youth sessions for young people in Catchgate. Currently there is no organised youth provision. Consultation also identifies that not all young people want to access organised youth provision such as youth clubs and would prefer greater informal provision such as youth shelters

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and MUGAs. The Partnership consultation notes that Catchgate is served by one equipped play area, in Harperley Gardens. This is felt to be inadequate provision for the whole settlement and concerns were raised regarding the removal of local play areas. The SPICE bus locates at Harperley Gardens. Catchgate Partnership commends this mobile youth provision which is well utilised by young people in the area and highlights that there is demand for the provision more frequently.

Consett North Community Appraisal, 2002.

The consultation undertaken to feed into the Appraisal identified opportunities for teenagers are seen as inadequate as is the availability of local playgrounds. Younger children are concerned about the lack of play areas and about intimidation from teenagers. Older teenagers express demand for space of their own such as a youth shelter.

A number of suggestions to improve provision for children and young people in the area were raised. These included more play schemes available for younger children (including soft play, bouncy castles and other managed activities) and local sites with portable equipment kept in lockable stores and managed by parent committees with support from outreach staff.

Consett South Community Appraisal, 1998.

A Community Appraisal was conducted in 1998. This identified that there had been some improvements to youth facilities and the environment, but that more progress is needed.

Lanchester Parish Plan, 2005.

The consultation that was undertaken for Lanchester Parish Plan in 2005 aimed to identify needs of the community including children and young people. The main findings relating to play provision were:

- ❑ Play areas on estates are poor.
- ❑ No funding has been available for youth workers and there are not enough volunteers to run the youth clubs.
- ❑ Inadequate out-door facilities, particularly for young people.

The Lanchester Partnership has recently been established (in response to the Lanchester Appraisal in 2006). The Partnership is currently working through the aims of the Lanchester Parish Plan and consultation finds that lack of youth provision remains a key issue. The Partnership organised a well-attended youth club for the village. However, lack of volunteers to run the sessions and limitations imposed on youth workers had led to the youth club ceasing.

To address issues impacting on young people in Lanchester and in response to recommendations made through the Parish Plan, the Partnership has produced a report looking at 'working with teenagers in Lanchester' (2006). Consultation undertaken for this report, which is still in draft format, highlights that it would be beneficial to have more youth shelters to ease the pressure on the existing

one. There are opportunities to improve youth provision through the improvements planned at Kitswell Road Recreation Area. Suggestions include incorporating a skate-board park and for the football dug-outs to double up as teen shelters. One of the main priorities identified by the project is to respond to young people's desire for "safe and accessible places to play and socialise". There is demand for a drop-in centre but this is restricted due to no suitable facility to host sessions, no one to supervise sessions and lack of funding to ensure sustainability.

Leadgate Community Appraisal.

The Leadgate Community Appraisal is no longer a working document as it is outdated. However, it is noted that a range of concerns are highlighted in the Appraisal including the lack of facilities for young people, especially teenagers.

New Kyo and Oxhill Community Appraisal, 2002.

This community appraisal was undertaken in order to enable local residents to identify priorities for improving their community. Consultation identifies a need for a local supervised play area to replace the one that was removed in 2006. Local residents consider the old school fields to be a key opportunity to provide community open space and play provision. As a high percentage of households in the area do not have access to private gardens, resident consultation highlights the importance of open space provision.

Tantobie, White le Head, Part of Flint Hill, Sleepy Valley, Tanfield & Clough Dene Community Appraisal, 2000.

The Community Appraisal was conducted to establish the key issues, problems and opportunities regarding the villages. Over half of residents who completed the questionnaire survey identified the availability of children's play areas as a problem. The top priority identified through the resident consultation is the provision of a children's play area. Consultation with children and young people as part of the appraisal process found that the most common location and activity for out of school activity is playing in the streets with friends. Going to a park and playing football are activities that children reported wanting to do more of, but felt restricted in doing so. Unfortunately over three quarters of children reported that watching television and using a computer are activities that they like to do.

Consultation undertaken as part of this strategy with the Community Partnership established that lacking play opportunities for children and young people remains an issue with no play area provision in Tantobie. The Partnership is aware that a new play area is planned to be installed at Tanfield Lea. However, consultation suggests that residents and children from Tantobie would not often travel the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to access this provision and would prefer a play area provided within their own settlement.

Consultation also identifies that poor public transport links limits families from Tantobie from accessing Allensford Country Park.

Stanley Hall Community Appraisal, 2002.

Consultation feeding into the community appraisal highlighted a lack of recreational facilities, in particular for children and young people, to be a key concern. This is reflected in the high priority given to providing opportunities for children and young people. A number of suggestions for improvement were recorded during the resident consultation including provision of a park/recreational ground and safe play areas for children.

Cornsay Parish Plan, 2003-2004.

Throughout the consultation undertaken for the Plan, the issue of there not being enough for children and young people to do is repeatedly identified. Many respondents would like to see more activities provided for young people, with improved play areas and more youth clubs.

Healeyfield Parish Plan 2004.

Resident consultation undertaken to feed into the Parish Plan identified concern regarding the lack of play and sports facilities. Concern regarding the vandalism and anti-social behaviour that an unsupervised play area might attract lead to the suggestion that local residents could take an active role in supervision.

Stanley Parish Plan, 2003-2004.

Although absence of provision for children and young people in not identified as a high priority by residents, there is a consensus that a certain level of provision, particularly for young people, is required. The lack of public transport is also highlighted as a restriction for older children to access activities outside of the community.

APPENDIX 4 – SURVEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Knight, Kavanagh and Page conducted an online survey with young people aged between 7 and 11, in Derwentside.

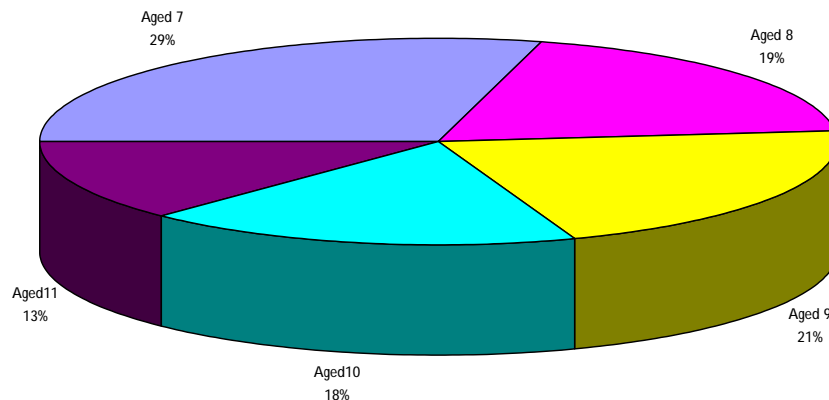
The aim of the survey was to discover the young people's attitudes towards the quality of provision where they play/hang out.

There were 124 responses to the survey in total; however, not all respondents answered all of the questions.

ANALYSIS

Q1. How old are you?

Figure 1 - How old are you?

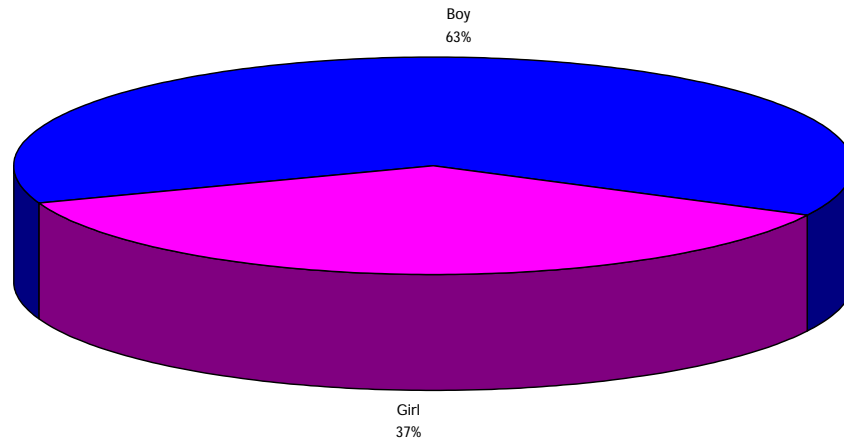


The young people sampled were between the ages of 7 and 11. The breakdown of the sample was fairly equal across each of the ages. The largest group of young people were those aged 7, who made up 29% of the survey sample. The smallest proportion of those sampled were those aged 11 (13%).

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Q2. Are you a boy or a girl?

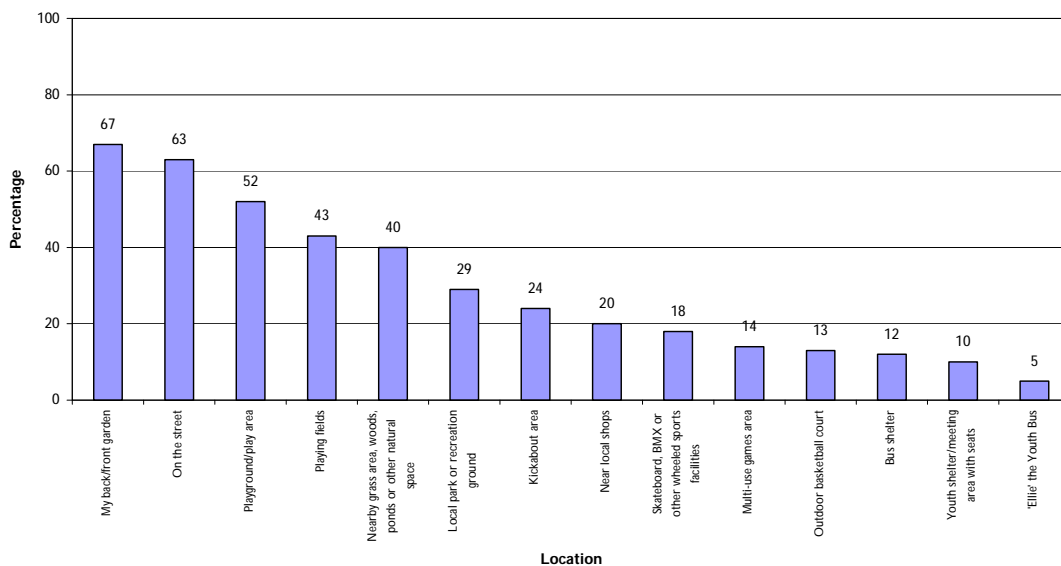
Figure 2 - Are you a boy or a girl?



A large proportion of those sampled were boys (63%). Gender does not appear, however, to have a strong impact on the results of the survey.

Q4. Where do you play/hang out?

Figure 3 - Where do you play/hang out?



This question allowed respondents to select multiple answers, to indicate all of the places that they play/hang out. Of the sample of 124, 97% of young people answered this question and due to multiple responses, 491 places were indicated as play/hang out areas.

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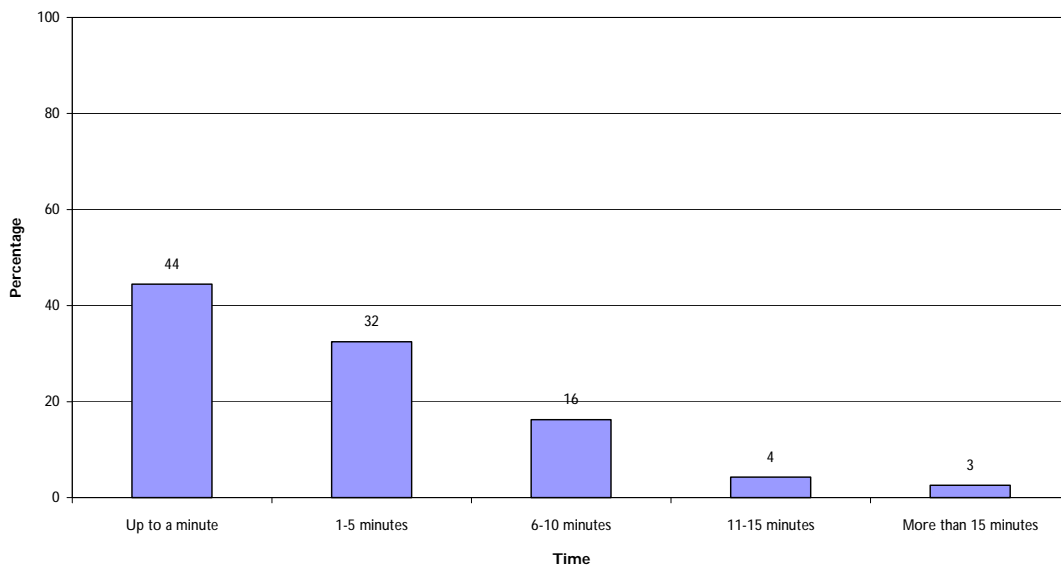
The most popular location for young people to play/hang out was their own gardens (67%), followed by playing on the street (63%). Playgrounds/play areas were indicated as popular play/hang out areas (52%). The least popular areas to play/hang out were youth shelters/meeting area with seats (10%) and 'Ellie' the youth bus (5%).

Q5. Which playground, park or other space do you play in/hang out at most?

There were 97 responses to this question. Many responses were, however, very general (for example park, field, garden). Very few places were actually named. Of those that were named, the most commonly mentioned was Allensford Country Park.

Q6. How long does it take to reach the place you play in/hang out at most?

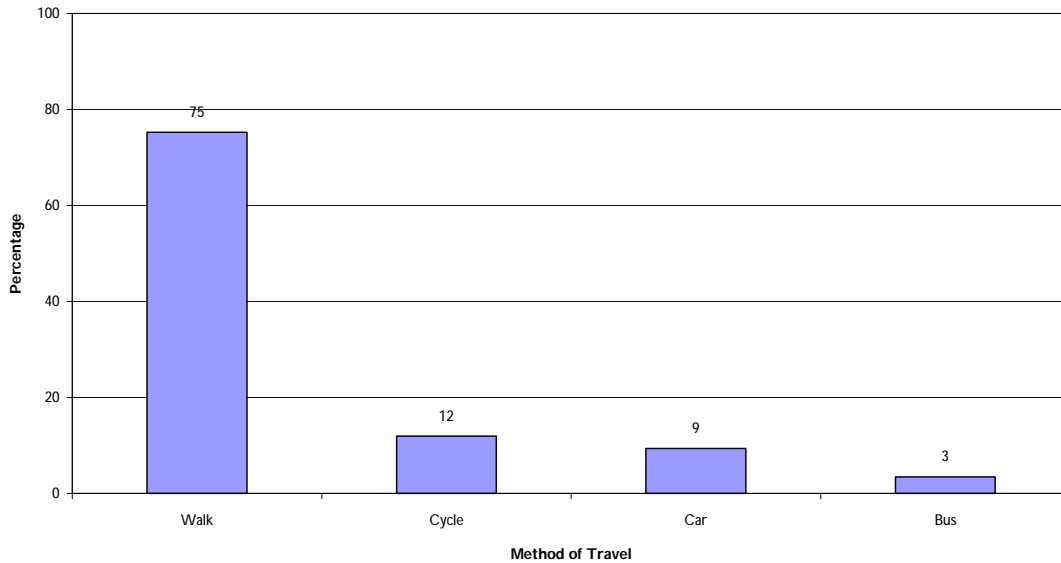
Figure 4 - How long does it take you to reach the place you play in/hang out at most?



Of the 117 young people who responded to this question, 52 (44%) travelled for under a minute to get to the place where they play/hang out the most. This result is not surprising as the most common play/hang out areas were the young people's own gardens or on the local streets. Only 8 (7%) travelled for longer than 10 minutes to get to their most commonly visited play/hang out location.

Q7. How do you normally travel to the place you play in/hang out at most?

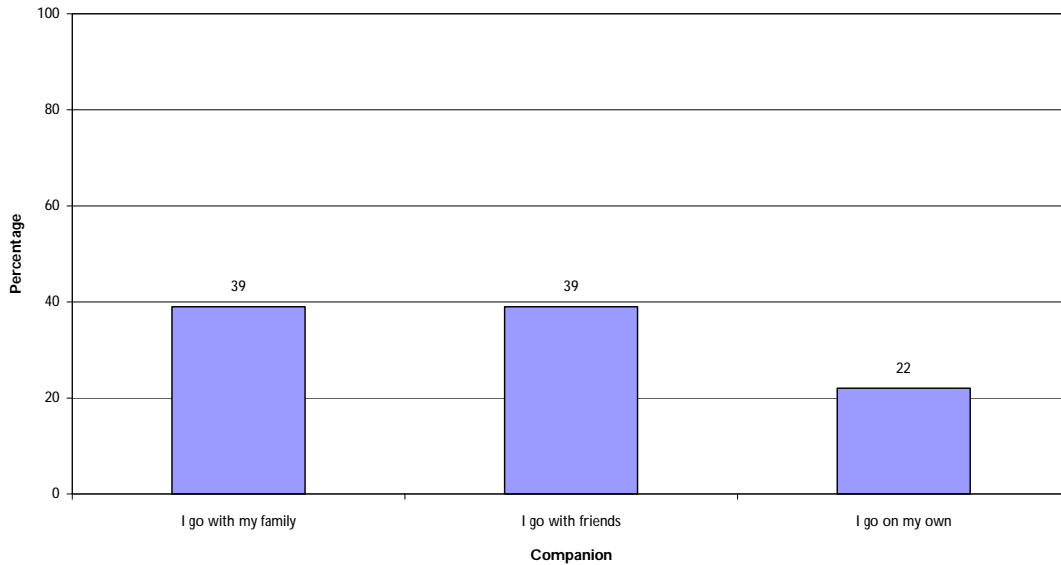
Figure 5 - How do you normally travel to the place you play in/hang out at most?



The most popular method of travel was to walk, with 88 (75%) young people indicating that this is how they get to the place that they play/hang out at most. Only 11 (9%) young people indicated that they travel by car and the least commonly used mode of transport was the bus. Again, due to the locations that most of the young people play/hang out, this result is not surprising.

Q8. Who do you usually travel with?

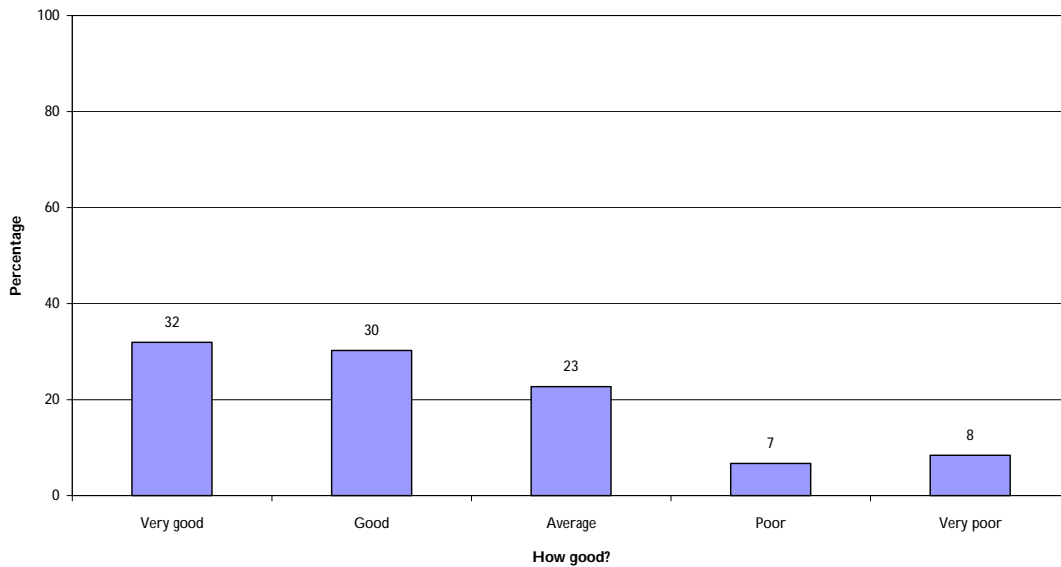
Figure 6 - Who do you usually travel with



Of the 96% of young people who answered this question, the majority of them (78%) travelled to the place that they play/hang out the most with others (either family or friends). There was an equal split between those who travel with friends and with family.

Q9. How good is the place that you play in/hang out at most?

Figure 7 - How good is the place that you play in/hang out at most?

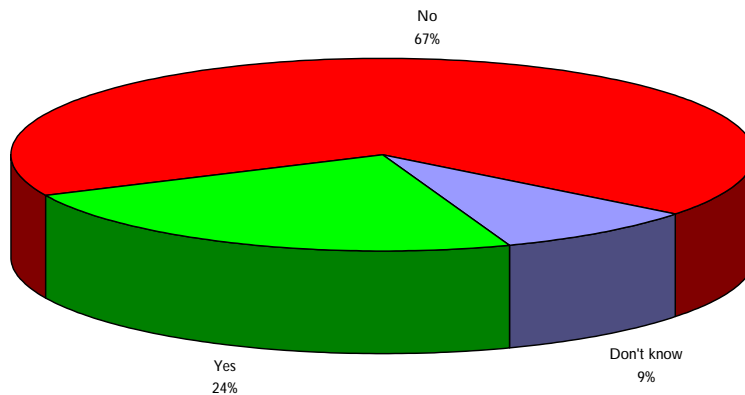


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Of the 96% of young people who answered this question, 62% thought that the place that they play/hang out at was above average (i.e. very good or good). Only 15% thought that the areas were below average (i.e. poor or very poor).

Q10. Do you think there are enough playgrounds, places to hang out, parks and other open spaces in your area?

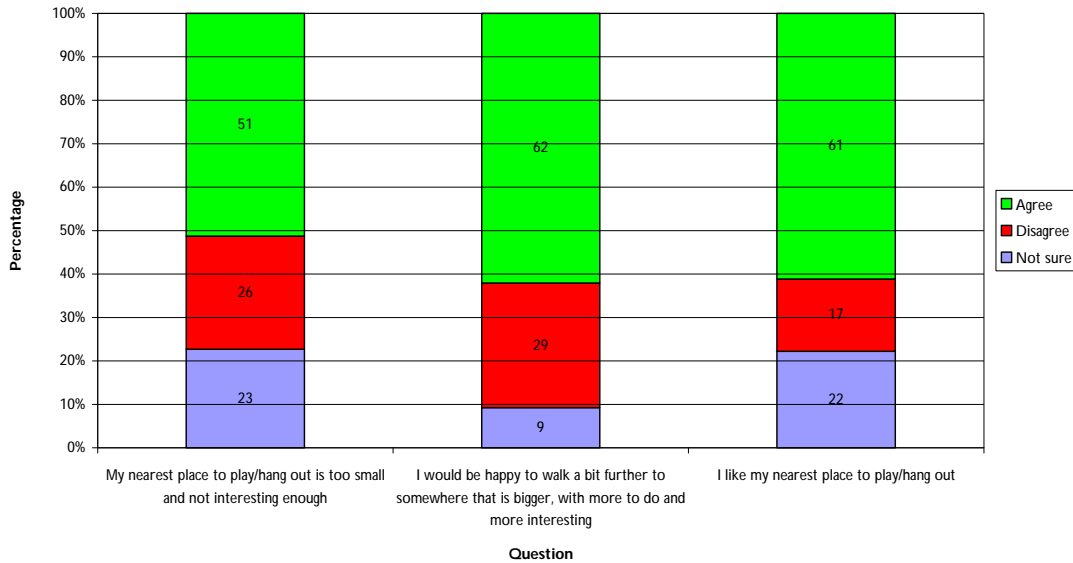
Figure 8 - Do you think there are enough playgrounds, places to hang out, parks and other open spaces in your area?



All but one of the young people responded to this question, and the majority of young people (67%) believed that there are not enough playgrounds, places to hang out, parks and other open spaces in their area. This may be why such a large proportion of the young people indicated that they play/hang out in their own gardens or on the streets.

Q12. Could you please tell us whether you agree or disagree with these statements?

Figure 9 - Could you please tell us whether you agree or disagree with these statements?



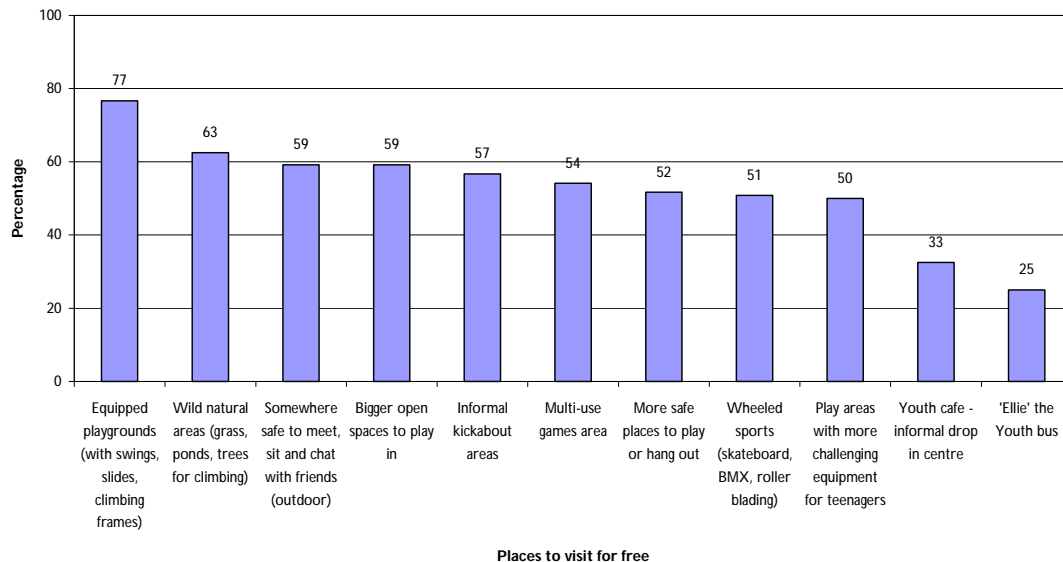
Over 50% of those who responded to this question believed that their nearest place to play/hang out was too small and was not interesting enough, although 26% disagreed with this statement. Nearly a quarter of respondents were, however, not sure.

Nearly two thirds (62%) of those who responded to this question agreed that they would be happy to walk a bit further to somewhere that is bigger, with more to do and that is more interesting. However, 29% would not be happy to do this.

A large proportion (61%) of those who responded to this question do like their nearest place to play/hang out. Although, 17% did not like their nearest place to play/hang out and 22% were not sure whether they liked it or not.

Q13. For places you can visit for free, what would you like to see more of?

Figure 10 - For places you can visit for free, what would you like to see more of?



This question allowed respondents to select multiple answers to indicate all of the free places that they would like to see more of. Of the sample of 124 young people, 97% answered this question and due to multiple responses, 694 suggestions were made about what they would like to see more of.

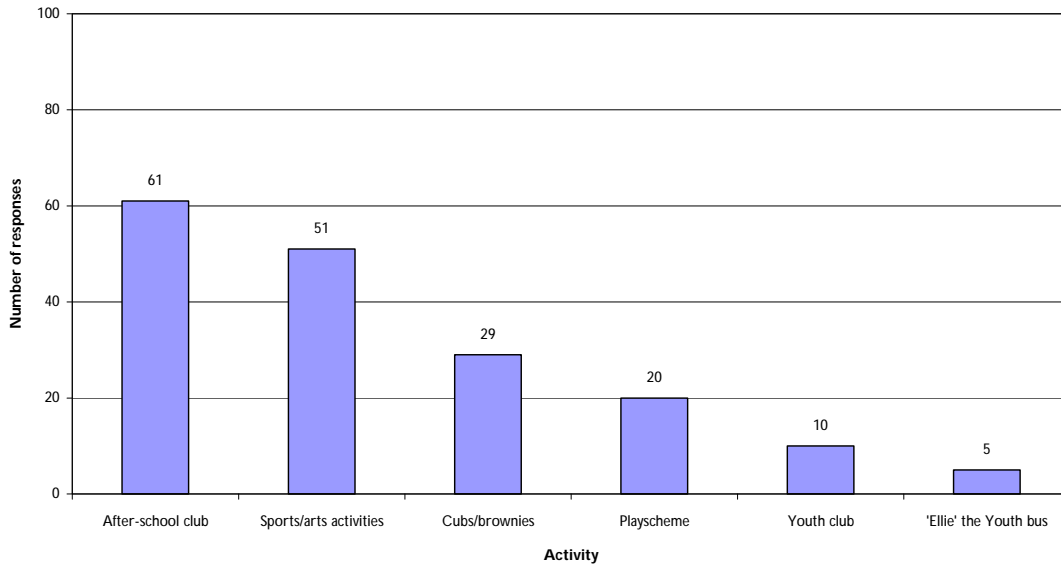
The most popular suggestion for what young people would like to see more of was equipped playgrounds, with swings, slides, climbing frames (77%). The second most popular request overall was for more wild natural areas, with grass, ponds and trees for climbing (63%). However, when considered separately, the second most popular choice for boys was somewhere safe to meet, sit and chat with friends (outdoor) and informal kickabout areas, whilst for girls the second most popular choice was wild natural areas (grass, ponds, trees for climbing).

The least popular suggestions were to see more youth café's with informal drop in centres (33%) and 'Ellie' the youth bus (25%).

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Q14. Outside the school day, do you attend any of the following?

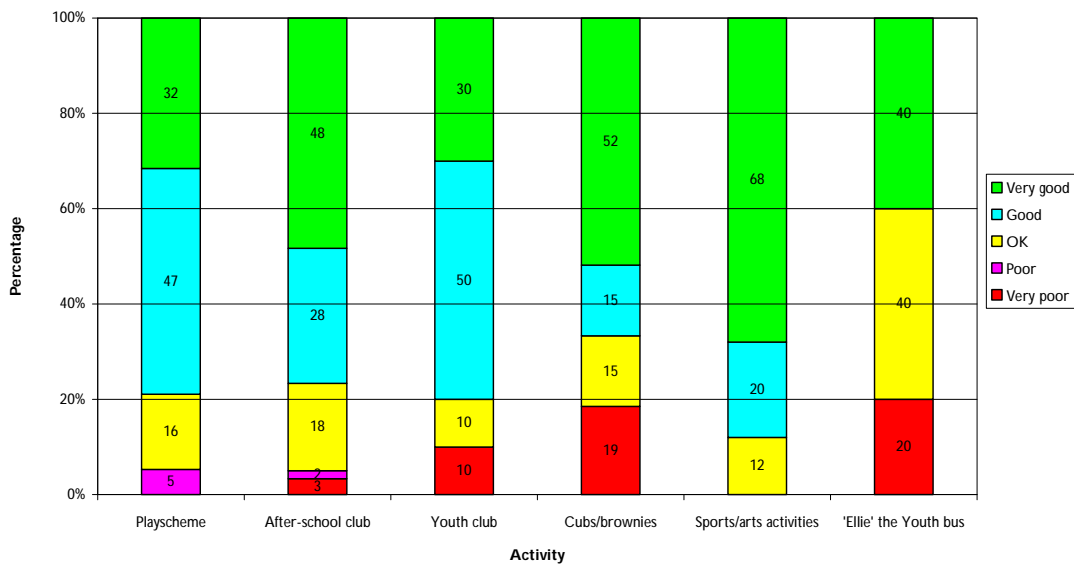
Figure 11 - Outside the school day, do you attend any of the following?



The most common activities undertaken by young people outside of the school day were after-school clubs (61%) and sports/arts activities (51%).

Q15. For each of the activities that you attend, how good are they?

Figure 12 - For each of the activities that you do attend, how good are they?

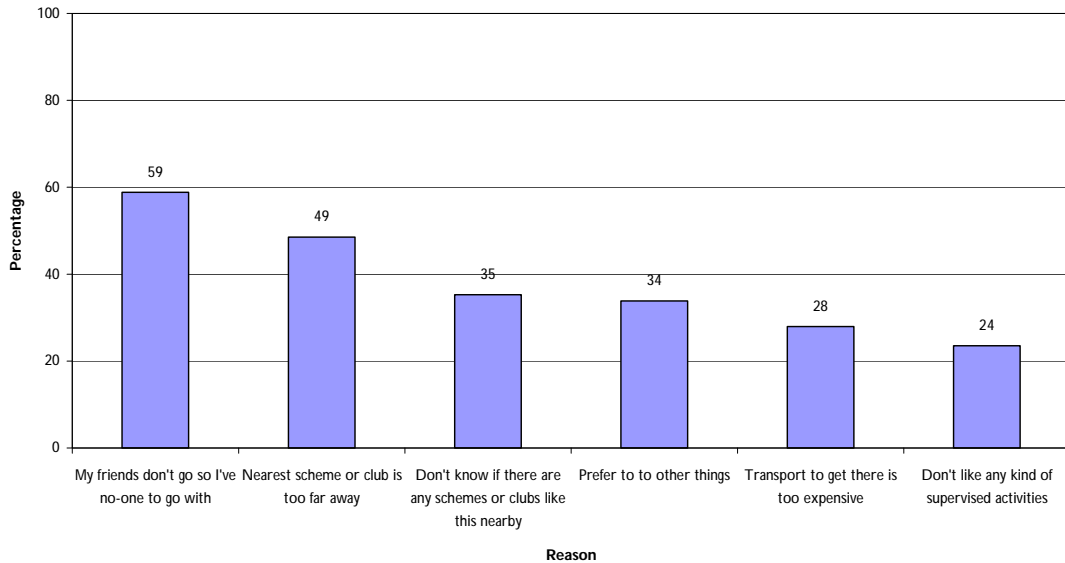


Sports/arts activities received the most positive ratings, from those who attend them, with 88% indicating that the activities were above average (i.e. very good or good). Ellie the youth bus received only 40% above average ratings,

whilst also receiving the highest proportion of below average ratings (20% believing it to be poor or very poor).

Q16. If you don't attend any of these, why not?

Figure 13 - If you don't attend any of these, why not?

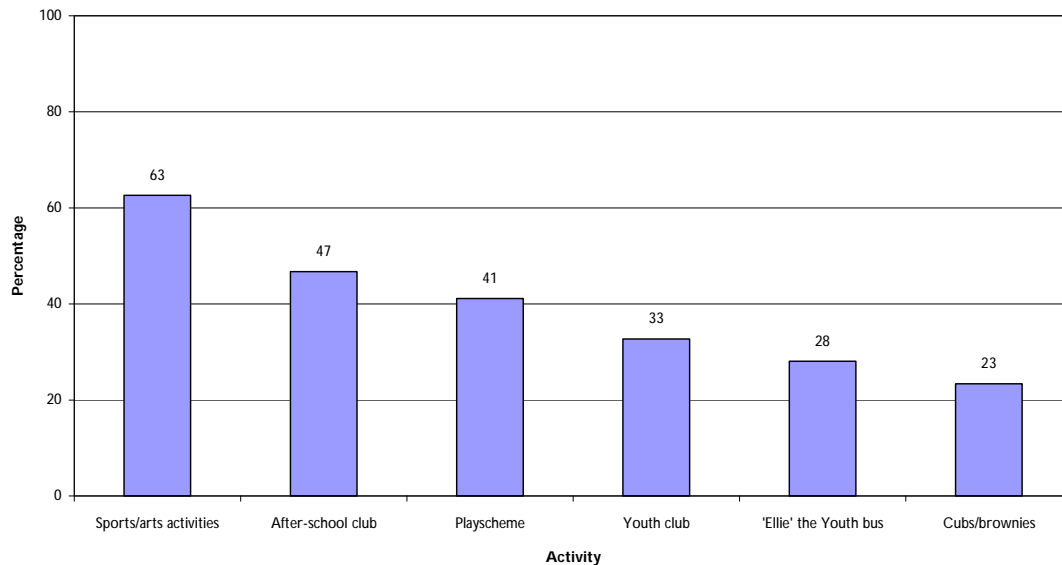


Only 55% of those surveyed responded to this question, but respondents were allowed to select multiple answers to indicate all of the reasons why they might not attend the activities, this generated 155 responses.

Of those that did respond, 59% stated that the reason they did not attend any of the activities was that their friends did not go and they had no one to go with. Also 49% indicated that the nearest scheme or club is too far away from them. The least cited reason was that they did not like any kind of supervised activities (24%).

Q17. What would you like to see more of?

Figure 14 - What would you like to see more of?



Of the 86% of young people who responded to this question, 63% would like to see more sports/arts activities available and 47% would like to see more after-school clubs. These were the two most popular activities in terms of participation, so it is unsurprising that these are the activities that young people would like to see more of.

Q18. Please use the space below to tell us anything else you would like us to know about play in Derwentside

There were forty comments provided by the young people completing the survey. The most common comments related to the introduction of football grounds/activities and the addition of goal posts into parks. There were also requests for better activities/equipment for older children.

CONCLUSIONS

The survey produced some interesting results about play in Derwentside. The results indicated that the young people in the area believe that better provision could be offered for them to play/hang out. This was indicated by the fact that many of them currently play/hang out in their own gardens or on the streets and that many indicated that there were not enough places for them to go to play/hang out.

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APPENDIX 5 – DERWENTSIDE PLAY PARTNERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

(N.B. The partnership is still evolving and therefore the list of members may change, as the strategy develops and is implemented. The current membership is preparing the Terms of Reference for the partnership, which will be formally established in September 2007.)

NAME	ORGANISATION
Nick Tzamaras (Chair)	Corporate Strategy Unit, DDC
Ailsa Fenwick	Education in the Community
Alan Atkinson	Annfield Plain Ward Councillor
Alex Watson	Council Leader, DDC
Alf Addison	Healeyfield Parish Councillor
Angela Harrington	Corporate Strategy Unit, DDC
Anne Taylor	Havannah Ward Councillor
Barbara Armstrong	Cornsay Parish Councillor
Berni Whitaker	Derwentside Partnership
Bill Robson	Healeyfield Parish Councillor
Carol Lonsdale	Sure Start County Durham
Colin McBride	LeisureWorks, Derwentside
David Hodgson	Consett & District YMCA
David Randall	Strategic Housing, DDC
Fiona Malyan	Sure Start Derwentside
Ivan Wood	Durham Constabulary
John Snailham	Parks & Open Spaces Manager, DDC
Karen Gibson	EQUaL Partnership
Kath Ivens	Groundwork West Durham
Ken Bradshaw	Economic Development & Regeneration, DDC
Malcolm Pitt	Sure Start, Derwentside
Margaret Gray	Lanchester Parish Councillor
Maria McArdle	LeisureWorks, Derwentside
Marie Moore	Economic Development & Regeneration, DDC
Michele Deans	Play England
Mike Allum	Planning Development, DDC
Sarah Dougherty	Children and Young People, DDC

APPENDIX 6 – ‘QUALITY IN PLAY’ QUALITY AREAS (LONDON PLAY)

- ❑ Meet the legal and regulatory requirements for health and safety, risk assessment and child protection and use the relevant approved codes of practice.
- ❑ Opening times and days are agreed by management and funders within the legal and regulatory framework and the resources available, clearly signposted to children and families and every effort made to avoid unplanned closures.
- ❑ Ensure as far as possible that children feel welcomed, are respected both as individuals and members of society and that the service provides a safe and challenging environment.
- ❑ Ensure that there is a choice of spontaneous and planned activities in each session, including the choice of rest and relaxation. Activities are planned to allow for a balanced programme over time.
- ❑ Take children’s ideas and preferences into account when planning activities.
- ❑ Check the play environment against the recognised assumptions and values of playwork.
- ❑ Have a written equal opportunities policy statement which complies with equalities legislation, an explanation of what is meant by it and a plan for implementation.
- ❑ Meet the legal and regulatory requirements for information, notices and displays and have basic policies on internal and public communication appropriate for a play provision.
- ❑ Behavioural boundaries policy covers children, staff, management and the public and meets the legal and regulatory minimum requirements for personal and physical safety, equality of opportunity, child protection and complies with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ❑ Have a basic written statement of aims and objectives and are clear about primary users.
- ❑ Management committee (or line management structure) meets all legal requirements, provides basic management support and is accountable to funders and other stakeholders.
- ❑ Basic legal requirements for project management are met and the minimum necessary policies and practices are documented, available and reviewed regularly.
- ❑ Meet the legal and regulatory requirements for financial management and show accountability for all income and expenditure.
- ❑ Project has adequate resources to meet service delivery requirements. Recognise the importance of managing all resources.
- ❑ Meet all the legal and regulatory requirements for project administration, have basic administration systems in place and keep records up to date.
- ❑ Meet the legal and regulatory requirements in the recruitment and management of staff and volunteers.
- ❑ Assess training needs and provide training opportunities to enable legal and regulatory requirements to be met.
- ❑ Provide information to families and the community and seek their views on the service.

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- Actively encourage peer observation linked to staff self-assessment and reflective practice to improve the provision.