



# **SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **Play Strategy**

**2006 - 2011**

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## FOREWORD

As Cabinet Member for Culture and Recreation, I am pleased to endorse the development of a play strategy for the Borough of Sedgefield.

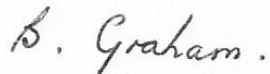
For the benefit of the strategy, the definition of play opportunities is that contained in the Department of Culture Media and Sport's 'Getting Serious about Play' 2004 document.

"A space, some facilities or equipment or a set of activities intended to give children the opportunity to play. At its most successful it offers children and young people as much choice, control and freedom as possible within reasonable boundaries. This is often best achieved with adult support, guidance or supervision. The children and young people may themselves choose play involving certain rules, in some cases, informal sport."

The strategy is written against a backdrop of change in the way in which Children's Services are being shaped and it will be important for all partners to talk up the value of play in the way in which these different groups are coming together to consider future provision.

The Borough is committed to a process of on-going consultation with stakeholders in the way in which resources can be assembled and the action plan is monitored and refreshed.

My personal thanks go to everyone who has made a contribution to the play strategy during its development, and I look forward to working with those people and organisations in its delivery over the next five years.



Cllr B Graham

## **VISION**

By 2011, every child and young person living in the Borough of Sedgefield will have access to age appropriate accredited play opportunities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The importance of play in the development of young people and the enjoyment from playing together are vital ingredients which help to bring communities together.

Whether provision is available within an extensive fixed play site, the area of grass on the street corner, the countryside and all it has to offer, the youth club or leisure centre, the school playground or the back garden, each setting contributes towards making play possible.

When playing fields are under threat because of the demand for open space to be developed for housing; when adults appear to be less tolerant of young people "playing out;" when the amount of vehicle traffic on the roads continues to increase, the need for a strategy for play is vitally important if play settings are to be protected and quality play spaces and equipment are to be established.

The play strategy for the Borough of Sedgefield is a 5-year plan. It is set out in 4 sections.

Section 1 considers play in context and covers how important play is, what legal responsibilities must be discharged and looks at some of the current barriers to play.

Section 2 examines the need for a play strategy while section 3 covers the detail of the strategy, (structure of the strategy).

Section 4 provides some conclusions from the work.

Thanks must go to the many partner organisations that have helped in the development of this strategy for play.

## **1 PLAY IN CONTEXT**

Many papers have been written and published on the subject of play, and the importance of play in the life and development of young people.

Play provides the mechanism for children to explore their environment and is the means through which life skills are practised and developed.

Play is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth. It assists in the intellectual and educational development of young people and it helps in the acquisition of social and behaviour skills.

We all have memories of play and playing, some good, others less good, but in general, play and the opportunity to play was available, and as such was never given a second thought. It was something that we just did when not at school and was part of growing up.

Today's world is somewhat different and there are some significant issues which if not considered in the planning of a play strategy will render future development ineffective these are the barriers to play and are considered later.

## **1.1 Responsibilities in Statute**

Although at first glance spending on children's play may be seen to be a discretionary activity for a Local Authority, however the opportunity to allow children to play is set in law.

There are numerous pieces of legislation and conventions set around children's play, and for the purpose of this study 4 key areas are included, the first is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of The Child.

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 1989. The Convention recognized that children are individuals with the right to develop physically, mentally and socially to their fullest potential, and to express opinions freely. In December 1991 the UK Government ratified the Articles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, which have a strong and direct relevance to the importance of Play Provision.

Article 31; "States parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life."

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

Articles 12,13,14 and 15 enshrine the rights of the child to freedom of expression and association and for opinions to be heeded.

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) is the second area impacting on children's play.

Under sections 3 & 4 of this Act a clear responsibility is placed on the Council to ensure the health and safety of users so far as is reasonably practicable. The Health and Safety Executive is keen to see a systematic approach to health and safety within play facilities and supports the adoption of relevant standards and guidance. By adopting management systems for the proper planning, installation and maintenance of play facilities, the Council will be doing all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of users.

The Children Act 2004 is the third key area which underpins the Every Child Matters; Change for Children Programme.

Under section 17 of the Children's Act 2004, Local Authorities are required to publish a single children and young people plan for the services which affect children and young people which includes play.

Section 10 of the same Act confirms the duty to co-operate in the development and delivery of all services for children and young people. This in County Durham is

leading to the establishment of a Children's Trust, and will serve as the vehicle for the Children and Young People block of the Local Area Agreement.

The Every Child Matters: Change for Children, approach to the well being of children and young people, established in the wake of the Victoria Climbié tragedy is anchored around five outcomes, being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well being. The Local Authority and the emerging Children's Trust have and will continue to have a central role in helping to deliver on these outcomes.

## **1.2 Barriers to Play**

A lack of understanding by statutory organisations, the voluntary sector and the local neighbourhood of the value of play lies at the very heart of lack of provision of opportunities to play.

Statutory organisations will always have other funding priorities to consider before investing in, as some may say, a "frivolous" activity. Play by definition is not work and therefore has to be constantly justified as an activity on which to spend public money.

However, without play opportunities which will lead to less well developed individuals unable to occupy their spare time constructively, unable to get on with each other and respect one another's views and opinions, society as a whole will be picking up costs of lack of community cohesion at a level far greater than that required in the provision made for play.

Some would say that voluntary/Community organisations that have sovereignty over community buildings but exclude young people are just as guilty of anti-social behaviour as any other section of that community. However, exclusion policies within facilities are understandable if the investment in youth workers and appropriate and relevant spaces have not been provided. If the views of children and young people are not considered in the planning of play opportunities, those opportunities will be spurned at best or destroyed at worst.

Local communities, or neighbourhoods can present barriers to children's play. Cars speeding in built up areas, young people roaming the streets and congregating outside the local shop or on the street corner, vandalism and anti-social behaviour are all ingredients which contribute towards neighbourhoods being intolerant of children playing.

The fear of crime and the safety of children has led to a huge drop in the number of children being allowed to play independently away from their home. For those with cars, parents are much happier driving their children to and from more formal play settings, rather than allowing them to walk, cycle or use public transport.

A Home Office survey in 2005 revealed that 33% of 8-10 year olds never play out unsupervised. Those children walking to school declined from 61% in 1994 to 53% in 2004. In 1990, 80% of 7-8 year olds walked to school, whilst in 2004 this figure dramatically reduced to only 5%.

The growing claim culture in society can lead some public bodies to positively disinvest in play spaces. The threat of increased insurance premiums can scare

owners of play spaces resulting in a reduced number of fixed play sites. However, set against these circumstances lies the ever more demanding “public” of young people who will, given a lack of alternatives, continue to play inappropriate games in inappropriate spaces.

## **2 THE NEED FOR A PLAY STRATEGY**

This strategy is the vehicle to protect the right of every child and young person in Sedgefield to be able to play in age appropriate settings.

The strategy will inform every department of the Council of their responsibilities towards children and young people when planning services which may impact on play opportunities.

It will provide a framework within which future funding decisions are made in relation to play.

It will be a tool to influence the play policies of partner organisations and agencies.

Finally, the strategy will provide the evidence needed that play by children and young people makes a positive contribution towards the Council’s ambition for a Healthy Borough.

For the purpose of this strategy, play is defined as the way that young people in the age range 0-19 years occupy themselves in forms of structured and unstructured activity in both formal and informal settings.

The benefits of structured sport and associated physical activity are covered in detail in other related strategies, although touched on in this document.

Sedgefield Borough is at the centre of change. The need to develop and reshape decision making processes has resulted in a new look Local Strategic Partnership, a revised Community Strategy and an internal Corporate Plan all underpinned by robust public consultation methodology.

The new Local Area Foras with improvement grants being made available to them will allow local consultation to be made on how best to improve a local area.

The delivery of the Housing Policy to achieve decent homes with a remit change for housing officers and neighbourhood wardens, and the County Transport Plan and its impact on how easy it will be for people to take advantage of services not located in their community are both crucial documents which do impact on the planning for play.

Planning guidance to safeguard open space and Section 106 agreements set against an influx of private sector development enquiries are important considerations, as is the Health of the Borough Report written by Sedgefield Primary Care Trust’s Director of Public Health which still paints an alarming picture of ill health amongst our residents while advocating the importance of regular physical activity.

Workstreams for the emerging developments in delivering Children's Services must continue to be reflective of the need for more opportunities for young people to play and in some way the £700,000 of Borough Council capital resources to improve and build new fixed play areas, is a clear statement of the Council's commitment to the play agenda as is the Big Lottery Capital allocation for play of £230,000.

This is the start, and the Play Strategy will be able to influence future investment from the Council's own resources and from third party organisations. Critical to the investment plan is the soon to be published Open Space Needs Assessment which will add significant depth to this document.

All the work of these groups, organisations and their plans and strategies must connect with each other around a common theme. It is essential that this Play Strategy acts as the common theme, the theme is play.

### **3 STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Scope of the Strategy**

Play, and the provision for play has such a huge impact on the child as the end user and those responsible for creating the opportunities. Not every play issue is covered in this strategy but the following settings and issues are included:

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Equipped Play Sites              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their location, standard of provision, walk time, ownership, independent assessment of play value</li><li>• Consideration of their impact on antisocial behaviour.</li></ul>   |
| Informal Play Areas              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing policies in the way that public open space is being used.</li><li>• Cycle paths and their coverage across the Borough</li><li>• Access to the Countryside and the places young people use</li></ul>   |
| Staffed Services to young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considers the role of Education in the Community and its presence in the Borough. Pre-school provision and Children's Centre play policies, leisure centre/programmes for children and young people, after school clubs and the impact of extended school and voluntary sector clubs</li></ul> |
| Funding                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlights the current revenue and capital expenditure in the Borough with future funding opportunities</li></ul>  |
| Indoor Provision                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looks at Community Centres, Village Halls and voluntary sector sports clubs and examines their use by young people</li></ul>   |
| Entitlement                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considers existing policies or those being developed and their impact on play</li></ul>  |



## 3.2 Methodology

The development of this play strategy has relied on the benefit of both primary and secondary research findings. Used together, a picture of the play landscape for Sedgefield Borough has been established (section 3.4) which in turn has helped to shape the gap analysis (section 3.5) and action plan (section 3.6).

### Primary Research

The play strategy benefits from the outcome of a number of specific primary research programmes.

A clear directive from the Council's Cabinet to ensure that when proposals are presented to them for consideration, specific subject related public consultation has been carried out.

In respect of fixed play area provision and investment proposals Cabinet have agreed to score each proposed site and public consultation has a factor of 3 attached to it. The implementation of the action plan at section 3.6 must first be tested and results set against the outcome of public consultation which must include all existing networks.

Play programmes for young people are the result of feedback gathered from a range of methods including written feedback forms, internet based information gathering techniques, school visits and discussions, young people focus groups and personal interview.

To be able to get an accurate picture of the extent of play work in the voluntary sector, clubs were asked to complete a registration form from which information has been gathered to plot the range of play settings in the Borough and individual access policies.

Specific to Village Hall/Community Centre access policies, these settings were individually contacted for their details.

In order to try to reach young women who have a tendency of dropping out of physical activity during their teenage years, two specific groups have been established in Spennymoor and Ferryhill. Responsible for directly reaching over 130 young women via focus group work, their observations and comments have been incorporated in this policy document.

### Secondary (desk research)

This section of the strategy highlights the key issues and themes which already form part of the Borough's policies and plans.

The issues as they relate to play are highlighted which helps in the assessment of current and future opportunities for play in the Borough.

Seven specific play related topic areas have been considered:

## Community Cohesion

If as part of a young person's developmental needs, safe spaces to meet with friends are important, how do local communities cope with the fear that those young people gathered together present? Play and the provision for play can be seen as fuelling that fear of crime.

Sedgefield Borough has to be mindful of the tightrope of public opinion set against the demands by young people for "something to do and places to go."

The fear of crime in the Borough runs far ahead of the actual statistics.

In 2003/04 of all the antisocial behaviour incidents reported to the police, 41% were youths causing annoyance or young people hanging around, rowdy behaviour, drinking in public places and playing football.

In 2005, 73% of anti-social behaviour incidents reported to neighbourhood wardens were attributed to young people.

Section 3.4 of this strategy draws on the existing provision of "play" opportunities and the geographical spread of antisocial behaviour hotspot areas and considers the correlation of data.

## Open Space Needs Assessment

The first draft of the Council's Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA) was produced in September 2006.

The importance of this document as a reference point for this play strategy cannot be over stated, and should be used together in the future planning of play provision.

The OSNA refers to the development of draft standards for a range of settings being a major outcome of the study and once adopted will help inform future investment.

## Cycleways in the Borough

According to the Chief Medical Officer, physical activity is the single most important contributing factor for living a healthy life. Cycling is one of the best forms of exercise and together with the County Council, the Borough has been working hard to establish a network of cycleways for people to enjoy.

Although coverage across the Borough of safe cycle routes is patchy, (see section 3.4) and there seems to be some connectivity issues particularly around cycle routes to schools, this work should continue to develop into "on and off" road settings catering for the full range of machines and their riders.

Work in this area will reflect the County Council's aim contained in their Local Transport Plan 2, which is 'to develop a countywide cycle network which will link settlements across the county, provide connections to adjoining areas and the National Cycle Network.'

## Green Space Strategy

Sedgefield Borough Council is currently developing a Green Space Strategy to set out the vision and goal for local green space, plus the resources, methods and time required to create welcoming inclusive and sustainable green space. It is essential that such public spaces enable play opportunities to flourish.

Planning Policy Guidance Note PPG17 allows for the protection of existing places for play, and the Council's Local Development Framework should also be a tool to help set standards of provision for open space including play.

PPG17 includes provision of open space for children and young people and can include consideration for equipped play areas, skate parks, multiuse play areas, youth shelters et al.

Interesting to note is that PPG17 allows the Authority to ensure that within new housing developments, provision is made for either new areas/facilities to play or that improvements are made to existing play areas.

Both the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Agency are engaged in play opportunities for children and young people. Today, these agencies have particular initiatives aimed at promoting the use of woodland (Growing Adventure) and making the countryside more accessible to encourage outdoor play and learning (Green Start Programme).

Natural England (which started its work in October 2006) have similar aims of getting people close to their natural environment with grant schemes, new outdoor recreation strategies, a wild adventure space study and a learning strategy.

## Funding

Funding for Children's Play has recently gained momentum from a national and local perspective. The realisation by Government Departments and Agencies that play opportunities make a significant contribution in society has led to some important initiatives.

The Big Lottery have a number of play initiatives which are allocated funding and include the Children's Play Initiative which has £155m available nationally to improve play spaces. Sedgefield Borough has been allocated £230,000. £16m is available nationally via the Playful Ideas initiative to support voluntary and community groups develop play projects.

Big Boost is aimed at young people led projects and will allocate between £250 to £5,000 to successful schemes.

Big Lottery have joined with the Heritage Lottery Fund to promote a Parks and People fund with £70m being available to improve local community spaces.

Awards for All, perhaps the best known funding programme have now an increased upper grant level of £10,000 and includes play projects accessing its eligibility schemes.

Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have made £2m available for Zone Parks, a scheme created to transform primary school playgrounds located in areas of high deprivation. DfES are working with DCMS to improve playgrounds including Zone Parks and are making £10m available for the scheme. Other National Funders include the Barclay's Spaces for Sport programme, Children's Fund, Carnegie UK Trust, BBC's Children in Need, Tesco Charity Trust, Nestle Trust and Sport Relief.

### Local Funding

On a more local level there are funding schemes aimed at play, some of which include

The County Durham Foundation Local Network Fund with grants of between £250 and £7,000.

Esh (North East) have grants up to £10,000 for children and young people initiatives.

The Youth Opportunity Fund which came out of the Green Paper Youth Matters provides Durham County with £105,000 for young people activity programmes.

Sedgefield Borough has seen a number of play related project applications to the Local Improvement Programme from local communities to improve play activity.

KOOLKA\$H is a Borough initiative aimed at providing projects developed by young people and £150,000 was provided to the fund and 73 projects received £95,000 in grant aid, since 2005.

Section 106 Agreements linked to standards of open space contained within the Borough's Local Development Plan is the opportunity to lever investment from developers into play opportunities.

The Borough is following Government Circular 5/05, practical guidance in its negotiations with developers, however, this play strategy when read in conjunction with the Open Space Needs Assessment and Local Development Framework policies will ensure maximum benefit to the Sedgefield Borough residents.

### Delivering health improvement in Sedgefield, Annual Report of Public Health 2005/06

The third Public Health Annual Report for Sedgefield has recently been published. It identifies health related priorities and which will cover the work of the Local Strategic Partnership and other health partners.

Progress over the last year in the area of physical activity is seen by the Primary Care Trust as helpful in contributing to the health and well being of the residents of the Borough.

Specifically related to children's play, the Local Strategic Partnership priorities for the future include developing a leadership role in relation to physical activity, and supporting health programmes in schools and youth settings.

## Community/Corporate Plans

The Borough Council is reflecting the views and aspirations of residents articulated within the Community Plan, has set out four key ambitions. These are to work towards creating and sustaining a Healthy Borough, an Attractive Borough, a Prosperous Borough with Strong Communities.

The provision of Leisure and Cultural opportunities contributes towards the Health ambition and the implicit inclusion of play is contained within the Leisure Department Policy and Development Service Plan.

Although specific to health, play opportunities contribute greatly to the ambitions of strong and attractive.

Lack of investment in the stock of fixed play areas gives a visual impression of dereliction, while young people with “nothing to do and nowhere to go” contributes to the sense of insecurity within local communities.

Working across internal departments and external agencies to bring the importance home of shared responsibilities and shared solutions will assist in the successful delivery of this policy action plan and will raise the value of children’s play in the contribution that it can make to community cohesion and give a clear message to young people that they are part of their community and have a role to play in shaping the opportunities on offer.

### **3.3 Play Quality**

This play strategy reflects the responsibilities placed on the Council to comply with National Standards for fixed play sites, safe locations, good access to them, appropriate Borough wide coverage of staffed settings and use of informal areas where children choose to play.

#### **3.3.1 Standards for Fixed Play Sites**

Many local authorities are measured anecdotally by local communities on the quality of fixed play sites. On one hand, having well maintained, secure and safe, bright and inviting “playgrounds” is welcomed, on the other, these sites can be seen as a catalyst for anti-social behaviour and a blight on the neighbourhood.

With such conflicting emotions surrounding these facilities, this strategy must be seen as a helpful guide in the identification, management and development of such facilities.

The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) “Six Acre Standard” is referred to in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG17) and is the benchmark used for calculating open space provision required as part of new housing developments. Although the standard is currently under review, this strategy uses the existing document to assess the Borough’s landscape for play. However once the Open Space Needs Assessment has been adopted by the Council, the action plan will be re-assessed in light of the creation of local standards. The Six Acre Standard uses three levels of play provision, Local Areas for Play (LAPS), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPS).

## LAPS

Catering for children up to the age of 6 years old within 100m of their home or 1 minute walk time, a LAP site is an informal area for play with no requirement for any equipment. The Authority must designate such sites, sign them accordingly, and locate them within well used public areas.

## LEAP

These are equipped play areas located within 400m of houses or 5-minute walk time.

Aimed at children between 4 and 8 years old ideally there should be equipment provided for 5 different types of activity including a small area where ball games can be played.

## NEAPS

Like the LEAP standard, the neighbourhood facility provides for young people from the age of 8 years upwards and should be located within a 15 minute walk time. The equipment will be more challenging and a hard surfaced ball games area and/or wheeled sports area should be included.

Taking such standards at face value and recognising that following a consultation exercise lead by NPFA and the Audit Commission, some alterations may be made in future, but at the time of writing this strategy, the Council recognises the need to work towards achieving the current Six Acre standard and section 4.4 of this document shows what is being delivered, whilst section 4.5 shows the gaps in provision. Appendix 1 shows clearly the standards required for each type of designated play site.

### 3.3.2 Quality Play Equipment

Identified earlier in the document is the need to provide a range of play equipment where appropriate, but compliance with standards in design, manufacture and play value is critical.

The days of hand made, DIY fixed play equipment are over. Although not a legal requirement, the Council has adopted BSEN 1176;1998 Parts 1-7 for play equipment and BSEN 1177;1998 for safety surfacing, as minimum standards required when new equipment is being installed which represents good practice. The Authority must ensure that all documentation confirming compliance is obtained as part of the contractual conditions.

### 3.3.3 General Standards and Guidance

A quality play space will only retain its value to the local community if it is designed in consultation with that community, installed correctly and inspected regularly to minimise disruption caused because equipment is out of order.

The Council should continue to work closely with those organisations that will provide advice and guidance including The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA), National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), The Institute and

Leisure Amenity Management (ILAM), Zurich Municipal insurers and other in house safety specialists.

#### 3.3.4 Inspection Regime

Best practice is where each designated play area is inspected at no longer than 7 day intervals. Data records must be kept electronically for ease of access and a rapid response to serious failure of equipment must be able to be activated every day of the week. At present best practice for inspection is being complied with.

#### 3.3.5 Informal Public Open Space

Young people play where they want to, where they are allowed to (usually by parents) or where they are taken to. The play value of public open space which falls outside the LAP standard cannot be underestimated.

Natural play areas, these being water and ecological areas, provide children with some of the highest quality play opportunities. In particular these types of area provide stimuli for creative play, conservation, play work and environmental opportunities and on larger sites, interpretative features help children achieve a greater understanding and appreciation of their surroundings.

#### 3.3.6 Staffed Settings

The inclusion of a staffed setting within the context of children's play recognises the important role within the Borough of preschool provision, indoor leisure centres, youth clubs, smart bus, holiday play-schemes including sports coaching opportunities, voluntary sector sports clubs and the impact of the extended school provision.

#### 3.3.7 Pre-school

There is a mixed economy within the Borough of provision for pre-school children which includes private nurseries, school based nurseries, voluntary playgroups, SureStart/Children's Centres and sessional/informal crèche provision.

Although it is not intended to spend a lot of time here examining these types of setting, suffice to say that there are clear guidelines, accreditation and inspection protocols which cover preschool activity.

It is important however to make the link between the quality of on-site provision where best practice calls for an area outdoors in which to play, and the opportunities available for such groups to visit play areas because they too are of sufficient play value to preschool children for the "staff" to make arrangements to visit.

A mapping exercise, such as that contained in section 4.4 of this document will be a signpost to appropriate play facilities and venues.

#### 3.3.8 Leisure Centre Based Activity

The simple rationale for including Leisure Centres in this Play Strategy is because

the playing of sport and the engagement of young people in the arts programme attracts the highest number of visits by young people outside of the school curriculum.

Working now with the County Sport Partnership, and the schools sport co-ordinators via Sedgefield's Sporting Hub, quality controls are in place to ensure full and total understanding and training in child protection issues, where thorough coach education programmes are in place. Detailed documents for sessional staff in more informal venues are well developed and risk assessment training and its application is common practice.

However, the demand by young people for a range of activities which tend to reflect fashion and fads can provide managers with the task of balancing competing demands on the programme, maximising revenue, access and restricted access into facilities and the training/skills needed to engage at times with young people who confront staff with challenging behaviour and issues.

Working with colleagues from the Youth Engagement Service and the Primary Care Trust, the training needs of leisure staff and coaches are beginning to be met by specialists in the area of general youth work and sexual health.

Cabinet at its meeting on the 8 December 2005 showed an unparalleled commitment to young people and the need to use the Borough's Leisure Centres for Sports Development and young people by allowing the clearing of Sports Halls during the week between 3.30pm and 7.30pm exclusively for programmes aimed at them. The early results of this policy has already seen an additional 15 hours of sports development programmes in operation, with development set to continue in the future.

The need to co-ordinate programmes, activities and resources to enable young people to start to get involved in sport and physical activity, stay in the sport and maximise their potential has led to the development via the Sporting Hub, of geographically based sports fora.

Already established are the Aycliffe & Spennymoor Sports Fora, and there are plans for similar groups to form in Shildon, Ferryhill and the eastern part of the Borough.

### 3.3.9 Holiday Playschemes and the Smart Bus

Each year during the school summer holidays, an extensive programme of activity is developed in partnership with a wide range of organisations using market research material.

In 2006 there were 2310 visits to the Council operated playschemes at a cost to the Borough of £16,485.

Venues are decided historically but programmes are the result of extensive user research. What young people say is they want the opportunity to get out of the Borough and visit places of interest/attractions that ordinarily they might never see.

Trips are very labour intensive and require thorough planning, and skilled people to



lead them. This issue does raise a wider issue for policy advisors in the area of community development, transport and admission pricing.

The future planning for the holiday programme may need to link more closely with targeted communities whilst sports coaching is being extended across the Borough during all school holidays with help from Neighbourhood Renewal Funding over the period 2006/08. Making a conscious decision not to invest in holiday programmes in a particular area of the Borough will put more emphasis on existing quality play opportunities which may be of a more informal nature and can be left to young people themselves to use without interference.

The SmartBus however makes mobile youth provision across the Borough possible. Administered by the Youth Engagement Service and staffed by qualified youth workers, its role is to visit geographic areas in the Borough where there is little or no youth provision.

It operates throughout the year for 22 hours each week and its route is kept under review. It has in the past been able to support other youth work initiatives where hotspots of anti-social behaviour have been experienced and work with target groups such as travellers and young offenders.

As the SmartBus was originally funded with external grant, its sustainability is in question and decisions on mainstreaming have to be made in 2008.

### 3.3.10 Voluntary Sector Clubs

#### Sports Clubs

From a recent assessment, the number of voluntary sector sports clubs operating in Sedgefield Borough is 83. Although this number is not complete, it does give some indication of the level of commitment of those volunteer coaches and administrators who gladly give up their time to provide opportunities for young people. A MORI poll commissioned by Sport England revealed that 3.7% of adults in Sedgefield Borough spend 1 hour a week working in clubs as volunteers.

In an effort to ensure a quality approach to Sports Clubs, a club accreditation scheme is being developed in the Borough which will ensure all clubs are operating to a set of minimum standards (child protection policy and coaching qualifications). Clubs will then be encouraged to follow the Durham Sports Accreditation Scheme or their sport's governing bodies standards.

Once the Borough Councils Club Accreditation Scheme is operational all clubs or groups working in partnership with the Council or using Council facilities such as leisure centres will be required to achieve this standard.

It is estimated by Sport England, that nationally the value to sport made by the voluntary sector each year is £14 billion and this equates to 1.2 billion volunteering hours each year. If that value is to be protected, clubs need support. Support can be financial either direct or indirect, it can be information or it can be advice. Although some help is on hand, a quality sporting experience in a voluntary club is much more difficult to achieve and then retain without help.

## Village Halls

The voluntary sector also manage significant community assets in their village halls.

There are 21 village hall or equivalent assets in the Borough and recent research has confirmed that 14 hold local toddler group meeting, 11 have a weekly youth club or uniformed group meeting and 4 have no youth provision; indeed they have policies which bar young people totally from their community premises. Whether such policies are discriminatory is not for debate here but when plotting the current landscape for play, what a difference would be made if these village hall communities were to embrace their entire community, and not only a small percentage.

## Youth Clubs

The statutory responsibility for providing youth clubs rests with Durham County Council.

There are 10 youth clubs across the Borough providing opportunities aimed at young people aged between 13 and 23 years. Since April 2006 1,111 young people have accessed this service 407 times in a variety of settings ranging from dedicated youth centres, detached youth work and community/college environments.

Any youth club working under the auspices of Durham County Council has qualified staff working in each setting and there are examples of excellent engagement.

Access to this type of youth provision varies depending on the venue. Dedicated youth centres in Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor are open 6 days a week and therefore provide evening and weekend access. However those clubs operating from Community Colleges, for example in Chilton and Sedgefield, are only open between 2 and 3 nights a week.

The tradition that youth clubs close during the school holidays no longer seem the case in the Borough with clubs in many cases operating an increased service during this period. In most instance, to increase holiday provision beyond the allocated budget, individual clubs are very pro-active and successful in applying for grants, from schemes such as KOOLKA\$H, in order to provide a more comprehensive and influential programme.

A further example of how these services are increased is through the partnership working between the Borough Council and other youth providers such as a Ferryhill E-Café and the Cornforth Partnership at West Cornforth.

## Extended Schools

The Department for Education and Skills explain their vision for extended schools as providing:

- High quality 'wraparound' childcare provided on the school site or through other local providers between 8am and 6pm all year round. This should be provided for every primary-aged child by 2010 and in at least half of all primary schools by 2008.

- A varied choice of activities ranging from homework clubs to sport to music to special interest clubs such as chess and first aid. In particular this will be delivered by secondary schools being open from 8am till 6pm all year round. Again by 2010 this service should be offered by all secondary school and by at least a third of schools by 2008.
- Fifteen hours of free integrated early learning and care for 38 weeks of the year for all 3 to 4 year olds by 2010.
- Parenting support.
- Swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech therapy, mental health services, family support and behaviour support.
- Providing wider community access to ICT, sports and art facilities and adult learning.

In order to deliver this vision in County Durham and Sedgefield Borough, extended services will be provided through schools working in clusters and through partnership working with other local providers, such as Sure Start Children's Centres, Leisure Centres and Community/Youth Centres.

At present the delivery of extended services across the Borough is varied. For example in the Newton Aycliffe, Sedgefield and Ferryhill clusters extended services and partnership working is already well established. However the service is just being developed in the Spennymoor and Shildon cluster.

### Mapping

Information gathered from a range of sources has enabled a Borough map for each of the area fora communities to be plotted.

Specifically, the following provision is included.

- Fixed Play sites
- Public Open Space
- Cycle Routes
- Community Centres and Village Halls
- Youth Centres/Facilities
- Sports Facilities
- Sure Start
- Library
- Nature Area
- Community Colleges
- Extended Schools Provision

### **3.4 Current Landscape for play in Sedgefield**

The extent of the detail available having conducted a thorough audit of provision is too extensive to include in the main body of the strategy, therefore it is contained in appendix 2 and 3.

Taken from an audit of play provision, the information has been used to plot the current play landscape in the Borough.

The maps relate to each area (1-5) and are attached at appendix 2.

Appendix 3 contains three tables of data.

Table 1 summaries the key facts and figures relating to each area in the Borough, including population, anti-social behaviour incidents, number of fixed play areas and number of other play provision facilities.

Table 2 provides more detail on the fixed play areas provided in the Borough, including location, ownership, type and walking distance.

Table 3 provides more detail on the other play provision facilities provided in the Borough, including the name of the facility, what facilities and activities are provided, age ranges and location.

Set against the above data are agreed standards identified below for play provision which read together provides the basis of the gap analysis.

### Standards

- Fixed play gaps are set against Audit Commission quality guidelines
- Gaps in the coverage of cycle ways are from a visual inspection and are not demand-led
- Standards for public open space have been determined against the Open Space Needs Assessment
- Information gathering of community programmes has identified a lack of youth centred activity
- Durham County Council's extended school strategy provides the basis of assessing future community use of schools
- Gaps in sports facility provision has been identified against the Open Space Needs Assessment and the Borough's Playing Pitch Strategy
- Children's play and Sure Start activity has been solely desk research

### 3.5 Gap Analysis

By analysing the information contained in the section 3.4, a profile of gaps in provision has emerged for each area of the Borough, and are shown below.

#### Area 1

##### Spennymoor

Gap	Detail
Cycle-ways	There are no cycle-ways in or around Kirk Merrington
Open space	There is a sufficient supply of open space, however improvements are required to improve public access to it
Village Hall/Community Centres	Out of the 4 community centres in Spennymoor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middlestone Moor does not provide activities for children or young people</li> <li>• Tudhoe does not provide activities for young people</li> </ul>
Extended schools provision	Out of the 11 schools in Spennymoor only 4 provide extended schools services
Fixed Play	Fixed play provision in Byers Green is insufficient
	Fixed play provision in Kirk Merrington is insufficient
	Fixed play provision in Tudhoe is insufficient
	There is no fixed play provision in Bessemer Park
Sports Facilities	Several of the outdoor sports pitches require improvements in terms of quality
Sure Start	There is no access to Sure Start provision to the south of Spennymoor, for example Middlestone Moor

#### Area 2

##### Bishop Middleham

Gap	Detail
Cycle-ways	There are no cycle-ways in or around Bishop Middleham
Open space	There is an under supply of accessible public open space
Village Hall/Community Centre	There are no youth activities provided in the village hall
Fixed play	The quality of the fixed play equipment in 'The Park' is inadequate

### Chilton

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Cycle-ways	There are no cycle-ways in or around Chilton
Open space	There is a sufficient supply of open space, however improvements are required to improve public access to it
Community College/Centre	There is the potential to increase activities provided in this facility on evening and weekends through Education in the Community and extended schools provision
Fixed play	Fixed play equipment at 'The Downs' play area is insufficient

### Ferryhill

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Cycle-ways	There are no cycle-ways in or around Ferryhill
Open space	Generally there is an under supply of accessible public open space
Youth Centre/facility	There is the potential to increase activities provided for young people, for example at the E-café and Ladder Centre, on evenings and weekends
Sports Facilities	There is an under supply of outdoor sports spaces and some existing spaces are in need of improvement
Fixed play	The fixed play equipment at 'Dean Dank Park' is inadequate

### West Cornforth

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Detail</b>
Cycle-ways	There are no cycle-ways in or around West Cornforth
Open space	Generally there is an under supply of accessible public open space
Village Hall/Community Centre	There is the potential to increase activities provided for young people at the Community Centre on evenings and weekends
Fixed play	The fixed play area at 'Cornforth Community Park' is insufficient for teenagers

### Area 3

#### Fishburn

Gap	Detail
Cycle-ways	There is only one cycle-route on the very outskirts of the village, leading to Sedgefield or the Trimdons
Open space	There is a sufficient supply of open space, however improvements are required to improve public access to it
Village Hall/Community Centre	There is the potential to increase activities provided for young people at the Community Centre on weekends
Sports Facility	There is an under supply in relation to outdoor sports areas and the villages main pitches are in need of improvement
Sure Start	There is no Sure Start provision provided within the village
Fixed play	Fixed play provision in the village is inadequate

#### Sedgefield

Gap	Detail
Cycle-ways	There are no cycle-ways to the North of the village
Village Hall/Community Centre	There is the potential to increase activities provided for children and young people, at the Parish Hall and Ceddesfeld Hall, on evenings and weekends
Sports Facilities	There is a sufficient supply of outdoor sports space, however quality improvements are required at several sites
Fixed play	There is no fixed play provision to the north of the village

#### Trimdon's

Gap	Detail
Cycle-ways	The provision of cycle ways between the three Trimdon's is insufficient
Open space	There is a sufficient supply of open space, however improvements are required to improve public access to it
Village Hall/Community Centres	Out of the 3 community centres in the Trimdons' the following 2 do not provide activities for young people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trimdon Village Hall</li> <li>• Trimdon Colliery Community Centre</li> </ul>
Youth Centre/facility	There are no youth facilities in the Grange or Colliery. Youth provision could be extended in Trimdon Village, through Education in the Community at the community college and providers at Trimdon House, on evenings and weekends
Extended Service	Out of the 4 schools in the Trimdons' 1 does not provide extended schools services

## Area 4

### Shildon

Gap	Detail
Cycle-ways	Although the existing cycle ways are well connected a large proportion of the people living in the area can not access them directly
Open space	There is a sufficient supply of open space, however improvements are required to improve public access to it
Youth Centre/facility	There is no youth facility in Eldon. In Shildon there is the possibility to extend provision for young people, at the Shildon Centre and Jubilee Centre, on evenings and weekends
Extended Service	Out of the 4 schools in the Shildon area none provide extended schools services
Fixed play	There is no play area to the east of Shildon

## Area 5

### Newton Aycliffe

Gap	Detail
Open space	There is a sufficient supply of open space, however improvements are required to improve public access to it
Village Hall/Community Centres	Out of the 6 village halls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middridge &amp; Neville Parade provide no activities</li> <li>• Agnew &amp; School Aycliffe only provide activities for toddlers</li> <li>• Woodham Village &amp; Aycliffe Village only provide activities for young people</li> </ul>
Youth Centre/facility	There are no youth facility in the villages of Middridge, School Aycliffe or Aycliffe Village
Extended Service	Out of the 13 schools in the Newton Aycliffe area 8 provide extended schools services
Fixed play	The quality of the fixed play equipment in Middridge is inadequate
	The fixed play provision around the Horndale and Byerley Park areas are insufficient
	The quality of the fixed play equipment in West Park is inadequate



## Borough Wide Issues

Gap	Detail
Provision for disabled children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the existing fixed play areas have poor disability access</li> <li>• There are no specialised items of play equipment for disabled users in any of the Borough's open access play areas</li> <li>• There is very limited access to activities and services outside specialist provision</li> </ul>
Play support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geographically there are limited community activities developed in and around fixed play areas</li> </ul>
Mobile facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single smart bus facility is unable to meet demand, in particular during school holidays</li> <li>• Availability of Trimdon rural bus</li> <li>• Mobile skate park is only available during school holidays</li> <li>• Mobile Movies is only available in certain geographical areas across the Borough</li> </ul>
Voluntary Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no Borough wide strategy for increasing levels of volunteering, which in turn could lead to an increase in play opportunities</li> </ul>
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no guidelines set regarding youth work qualifications for everyone working in an area where they come into contact with young people</li> </ul>
Play Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benefit and opportunities to play are not high on the agenda of many cross-cutting issues and policies</li> </ul>

The gap analysis is correct at the time of writing, and clearly will change over time.

New housing developments, improvements to existing facilities and access issues, children's centres and building schools for the future will all impact on priorities for the future.

### 3.6 Action Plan

All the research data, plans, policies and consultation has led to the development of the action plan. When looking at table 1 in Appendix 2, some thought has been given to the correlation of the No. of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour and the no. of young people resident in that area. Generally speaking, the more opportunities to play, the less reports are received which is reflected in the time frame column of the action plan in an effort to increase play opportunities in targeted areas.

#### Area 1

##### Spennymoor

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Kirk Merrington for suitable cycle way development opportunities</li> <li>• Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & Sustrans	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Spennymoor</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase children and young people access at Middlestone Moor Community Centre ensuring there is at least two dedicated sessions per week</li> <li>• Increase young people access at Tudhoe Community Centre ensuring there is at least one dedicated session per week</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards	SBC, DCC, Town Councils, CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Extended Schools provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every school in the Spennymoor area will provide extended schools services</li> </ul>	DCC & Individual Schools	SBC & activity providers	2006-2010	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Sure Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Sure Start in the development of a new Children's Centre in Middlestone Moor</li> </ul>	Sure Start	SBC	2006-2008	Indirect support costs

					i.e. Officer time
Sports Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply with the standards set in the Playing Pitch Strategy to achieve quality outdoor playing pitches in respect of drainage, cleanliness and indoor changing accommodation</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC, Football Foundation & all other appropriate land owners	By April 2007	To be established
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One of the two fixed play areas in Byers Green requires investment to improve to a NEAP standard</li> </ul>	Town Council	SBC	2008-2009	£130,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fixed play area in Kirk Merrington requires investment to improve it from a LEAP to a NEAP standard</li> </ul>	Town Council	SBC	2008-2009	£130,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment is required in Bessemer Park to provide a new NEAP play area</li> </ul>	SBC	DCC	2008-2009	£130,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in fixed play equipment is required at Tudhoe to provide a NEAP standard play area</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council & Residents Association	2009-2010	£70,000

## Area 2

### Bishop Middleham

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey Bishop Middleham for suitable cycle way development opportunities</li> <li>Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Bishop Middleham</li> </ul>	SBC	Parish Council, DCC & all other	TBC	To be established

			appropriate land owners		
Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase young people access at Bishop Middleham Village Hall ensuring there is at least one dedicated session per week</li> <li>• Support provision currently targeted at pre-school children to ensure it is sustained long term</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards	SBC, DCC, Parish Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in new fixed play equipment at 'The Park' to maintain NEAP standard play area</li> </ul>	Parish Council	SBC	2007-08	£70,000

### Chilton

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Partner Organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Chilton for suitable cycle way development opportunities</li> <li>• Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Chilton</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Community College/Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase activities for young people at the community college/centres through Education in the Community, the sports facilities and extended services provision</li> </ul>	DCC & Community Centre Management Boards	SBC, Town Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest fixed play equipment at 'The Downs' play area increasing provision from a LEAP to a NEAP standard</li> </ul>	Town Council	SBC	2009-2010	£100,000

## Ferryhill

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Partner Organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Ferryhill for suitable cycle way development opportunities</li> <li>• Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Ferryhill</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Youth Centre/Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase youth activities on evenings and weekends at Ferryhill E-café and Ladder Centre by at least one extra session a week</li> </ul>	DCC & Town Council	SBC & CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in new fixed play equipment at 'Dean Bank Park' increasing provision from a LEAP to a NEAP standard</li> </ul>	Town Council	SBC	2007-2008	£70,000

## West Cornforth

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Partner Organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey West Cornforth for suitable cycle way development opportunities</li> <li>• Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for West Cornforth</li> </ul>	SBC	Parish Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established

Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase young people access at West Cornforth Community Centre by ensuring there is at least one extra dedicated session per week</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards	SBC, DCC, Parish Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in new fixed play equipment to increase provision for teenagers</li> </ul>	Parish Council	SBC	2007-2008	£70,000

### Area 3

#### Fishburn

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey Fishburn for suitable cycle way development opportunities improving links to current provision</li> <li>Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Fishburn</li> </ul>	SBC	Parish Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase young people access at the Youth and Community Centre by ensuring there is at least one extra dedicated session per week</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards & DCC	SBC, Parish Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Sure Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support Sure Start in the development of a new Children's Centre</li> </ul>	Sure Start	SBC	2006-2008	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Sports Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply with the standards set in the Playing Pitch Strategy to achieve quality outdoor playing pitches in respect of drainage, cleanliness and</li> </ul>	SBC	Parish Council, DCC, Football	By April 2007	To be established

	indoor changing accommodation		Foundation & all other appropriate land owners		
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in new fixed play equipment to provide a NEAP standard play area within the village</li> </ul>	Parish Council	SBC	2007-2008	£100,000

Sedgefield

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey the north of Sedgefield for suitable cycle way development opportunities improving links to current provision</li> <li>Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To increase children and young people access at the Parish Hall and Ceddesfeld Hall by ensuring there is at least one extra dedicated session per week</li> <li>Support provision currently targeted at pre-school children to ensure it is sustained long term</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards & DCC	SBC, Town Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Sports Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply with the standards set in the Playing Pitch Strategy to achieve quality outdoor playing pitches in respect of drainage, cleanliness and indoor changing accommodation</li> <li>Support Sedgefield Community College, through the Building Schools for the Future programme, in developing facilities for community use</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC, Football Foundation & all other appropriate land owners	By April 2007	To be established
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement public consultation to assess the need and possibility of developing a new play area to the North of the Village</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council	By April 2007	£70,000

Trimdons

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead Organisation</b>	<b>Partner Organisation</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey the Trimdons for suitable cycle way development opportunities improving links to current provision</li> <li>• Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & SUSTRANS	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Trimdons</li> </ul>	SBC	Parish Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase young people access at Trimdon Village Hall ensuring there is at least one dedicated session per week</li> <li>• Increase young people access at Trimdon Colliery Community Centre ensuring there is at least one dedicated session per week</li> <li>• Support provision currently targeted at pre-school children to ensure it is sustained long term</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards & DCC	SBC, Parish Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Youth Centre/facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase youth activities on evenings and weekends at Trimdon Community College by at least one extra session a week</li> <li>• Implement consultation to assess the possibility of developing youth facilities in the Grange and Colliery</li> </ul>	DCC & SBC	CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Extended Schools provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every school in the Trimdons area will provide extended schools services</li> </ul>	DCC & Individual Schools	SBC & activity providers	2006-2010	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time



## Area 4

### Shildon

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Cycle-ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey Shildon for suitable cycle way development opportunities improving links to current provision</li> <li>• Arrange for the implementation of the survey findings over the life span of this strategy</li> </ul>	DCC	SBC & Sustrans	2007 - 2011	To be established
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Shildon</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Youth Centre/facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase youth activities on evenings and weekends at the Shildon Centre and Jubilee Centre by at least one extra session a week</li> <li>• Implement consultation to assess the possibility of developing youth facilities in the Eldon</li> </ul>	SBC & DCC	CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Extended Schools provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every school in the Shildon area will provide extended schools services</li> </ul>	DCC & Individual Schools	SBC & activity providers	2006-2010	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Fixed play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement public consultation to assess the need and possibility of developing a new play area to the east of Shildon</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council	By April 2007	£70,000

## Area 5

### Newton Aycliffe

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply fully with the recommendations contained within the OSNA Area Profile assessment for Newton Aycliffe</li> </ul>	SBC	Town Council, DCC & all other appropriate land owners	TBC	To be established
Village Hall/ Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase children and young people access at Middridge and Neville Parade ensuring there is at least one dedicated session per week</li> <li>Increase young people access at Agnew and School Aycliffe ensuring there is at least one dedicated session per week</li> </ul>	Community Centre Management Boards & DCC	SBC, Town Council, CAVOS	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Youth Centre/facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement consultation to assess the possibility of developing youth facilities in Middridge, School Aycliffe or Aycliffe Village</li> </ul>	SBC	DCC	By April 2007	To be established
Extended Schools provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every school in Newton Aycliffe will provide extended schools services</li> </ul>	DCC & Individual Schools	SBC & activity providers	2006-2010	Indirect support costs i.e. Officer time
Fixed Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in new fixed play equipment at Middridge to maintain LEAP standard play area</li> </ul>	Parish Council	SBC	2007-2008	£70,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fixed play areas at Horndale and Byerley Park requires investment to improve from a LEAP to a NEAP standard</li> </ul>	Town Council	SBC	2009-2010	£140,000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in new fixed play equipment at West Park to maintain LEAP standard play area</li> </ul>	Town Council	SBC	2008-09	£70,000

## Borough Wide Actions

Gap	Action	Lead Organisation	Partner Organisation	Timescale	Cost
Provision for disabled children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an access audit of every play facility in the Borough</li> <li>• Establish a standard within the Green Spaces Strategy to encourage the development of multi-sensory spaces in public areas</li> </ul>	SBC	Town & Parish Councils	By April 2007	Indirect costs i.e. officer time
Play Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Park Ranger and Activity Zone initiatives across the Borough</li> <li>• Increase the number of one-off events happening in community open space across the Borough</li> </ul>	SBC	Town & Parish Councils, community groups	2006-2011	To be established
Mobile facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Youth Engagement Service to sustain Smart Bus presence in the Borough and possibly extend into areas currently not covered</li> </ul>	Youth Engagement Service	SBC	2006-2011	To be established
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Trimdon Rural Project in sustaining and extending availability of the Trimdon Rural Bus</li> </ul>	Trimdon Rural Project	SBC, DCC and Parish Council	2006-2001	To be established
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strategy to ensure better value is achieved from the skate park</li> </ul>	SBC	Town & Parish Council and interested community groups	By April 2007	To be established
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase partnerships with Town &amp; Parish Councils and community groups able to host mobile movie events</li> </ul>	SBC	Town & Parish Council and interested community groups	2006-2011	To be established
Voluntary Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Borough wide volunteering strategy</li> </ul>	SBC & CAVOS		Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect costs i.e. officer time

Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an annual training programme that would enable all appropriate staff working with young people to complete a Level 1 Youth Work qualification. Possible organisation to take part:</li> <li>• Police</li> <li>• Neighbourhood wardens</li> <li>• Tenant Participation Officers</li> <li>• Voluntary sector</li> <li>• Bus Drivers</li> <li>• Leisure Centre Staff</li> </ul>	SBC, DCC & CAVOS	All those interested in taking part	Earliest start time April 2007	To be established
Play profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise the profile of play in the following cross-cutting areas:</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Planning</li> </ul>	Local Strategic Partnership	All Member Organisations	Earliest start time April 2007	Indirect costs i.e. officer time

## 4 CONCLUSION

There are many organisations in Sedgefield who have an interest in play opportunities for children and young people, many of whom have contributed to this strategy.

No doubt exists about the value of play and the need for places to go and things to do, but the major anxieties that communities have are about where play is “acted out.”

Safe play areas balanced against the challenges necessary in their design to maximise their play value will require regular consultation with equipment suppliers and owners of open space if spaces are to be used and valued.

This strategy must be used to raise the stakes for play by acceptance of the play vision, adopting standards, setting benchmarks and allowing partners to discuss play in a range of formal and informal settings.

Although the Borough Council has a significant role in children’s play, it is by no means the only agency involved. Probably the largest task contained in the action plan is to get better use of existing facilities and open spaces.

Work must start to engage with community leaders to develop more appropriate access policies for their buildings.

Sure Start/Children’s Centres have at the foundation stage of formal education a great opportunity to deliver the “curriculum” through play whilst the County Youth Service should be at the heart of creative ideas for improvement in the play agenda lead by their highly experienced staff members.

In planning terms, the tools now exist for the Borough to really influence the development of the area and guarantee that residents achieve the resultant added play value.

Whether young people are able bodied or not, every individual has special play needs and these can only be met by getting closer to communities to understand them, and by encouraging them to help shape the play services that are required.

Funding will always be a barrier to doing everything that is required. However, there are a range of funding schemes which the document highlights which are not beyond our reach. Community Development Officers may consider the support given to those small groups of people scattered across the Borough who want to make a difference through play and could assist them to realise their ambitions.

Working already with local communities, the investment made by the Council of £700,000 in the years 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 has led to £660,500 being invested in 8 play areas (6 have been completed and two will be completed by March 2007)

With Big Lottery funding of £230,00, the balance of funds from the original £700,000, and a further £80,000 in 2007/2008, a further 5 new play areas could be

completed which are referred to in the action plan.

A play area in a community alone will not provide the solution that some look for to stop anti-social behaviour. Play is one component, an important one but not the only one. Putting play at the centre of the debate around community safety, health, transport, planning and “Every Child Matters” will inevitably lead group members to at least consider preventative measures as part of coherent strategic thinking around these key issues.

Having plotted the current landscape for play, (section 3.4), a gap analysis has been provided, (section 3.5) which has led to a 5 year action plan (section 3.6).

It is recommended that the action plan forms part of the work plan of the Youth/Sport section of the Leisure Services Department, that an annual review of the action plan is carried out and that the entire strategy is monitored as part of the responsibilities of the Strategic Working Group on health.

It should also be noted that given the support role of the Borough in specific areas of the action plan, consideration should be given to ways in which the Local Strategic Partnership may wish to adopt the plan as part of its future work stream.

The Borough makes a significant financial commitment to the provision of play opportunities in informal and formal settings, and will continue to do so in the pursuit of its Healthy Borough ambition. It will seek to influence partners in developing priorities for action and explore every avenue of funding to deliver those actions contained in the plan in section 3.6.

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*Continued...*

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