New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Design Guidance for Outdoor Play Space

New Forest District outside the New Forest National Park

.....'Play and recreation facilitate children's capacities to negotiate, regain emotional balance, resolve conflicts, and make decisions. Through their involvement in play and recreation, children learn by doing, explore and experience the world around them, experiment with new ideas, roles, and experiences, and in so doing, learn to understand and construct their social position within the world'.....

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Foreword

This document provides planning guidance on the provision of outdoor play as part of new residential development across the New Forest District (outside of the New Forest National Park).

It sets out the Council's approach to the provision of outdoor play for children and young people through play spaces and playable landscapes:

- As part of an Integrated masterplanning approach to new residential development,
- As part of well-designed informal public open space and Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace,
- As part of their home environment.

It describes how high-quality design for play can be delivered, maintained and managed into the future, reflecting current knowledge and best practice.

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images kindly supplied by:
Jupiter Play
New Forest National Park Authority
NFDC Environmental Design Team

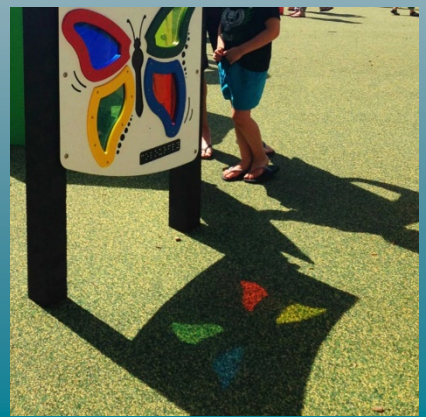
Purpose of the Design Guide

The purpose of this document is to assist developers and designers in providing play spaces and play opportunities as part of an integrated masterplanning approach to new residential development.

This document describes the types of play spaces, and the quality of design that New Forest District Council (NFDC) requires as part of the planning process, and to inform the enhancement and refurbishment of existing provision.

The guidance sets out:

- How to provide a hierarchy of identifiable play spaces within development – how much and what type of space
- How to integrate play design into wider, enjoyable landscapes
- What materials and construction methods are acceptable to provide robust and manageable play space
- The requirements and process for bringing into use by the community



1 Introduction

What is play?

Leisure pursuits and play, whether undertaken by adults or children, share the common characteristics of being undertaken voluntarily, requiring no necessary outcome. These activities are intrinsically worthwhile, and in creating space and opportunities for children's play, adults affirm the value of children in our society. Play is adaptive, restorative, intergenerational, and is fundamental to promoting health and wellbeing.

Play takes many forms and happens in a variety of settings, both formally and informally. For this design guide we focus on designated outdoor play spaces as part of public open space: creating playful landscapes.

Why is play important?

NFDC recognises the value of high quality, well designed outdoor play spaces and are committed to delivering a range of play opportunities to enable children and young people to learn through play, develop essential life skills and an understanding of their culture and local environment, as an important element on the path to adulthood.

How will we achieve our aim?

Our aim is underpinned by the principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, NFDC's Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance, Play England's best practice guidance publications and the Charter for Children's Play[1]. It is guided by the benchmark standards of the Fields in Trust (FiT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard, 2015, and NFDC's Corporate Plan. Our aim aspires to meet the following objectives:

- To meet the spatial quantity requirements for children and young people set out in planning policy, as a minimum

In the New Forest District, the aim is to provide high quality, design led play provision as part of the home environment.

Play provision in New Forest District's public spaces will be an integral part of new residential layouts, with a view to encouraging a rich diversity of play opportunities.

[1] Appendix A

- To embed the concept of design led, high quality provision as part of playable landscapes
- To deliver a range of provision that provides sufficient challenge and adventure-acknowledging the benefits of challenging play experiences using appropriate risk management tools
- To deliver safe, manageable play spaces that are located in the right places
- To contribute to high quality, distinctive places to live, that are sustainable
- To support the development and well-being and to enrich the lives of children and young people in our District.

2 Principles of Designing for Play

Creating Successful Play Spaces

In the next chapters we set out the expectation of the quantity and type of play spaces that the Council want to deliver, and set out the requirement to embed play spaces as part of the landscape, that stimulates playful behaviour in the wider environment.

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Natural Play

The term Natural Play was developed to promote children's access to the natural environment as part of a playscape: enabling children to manage their own risk taking and providing the loose part of play that gives endless variety and can be manipulated in different ways.

By ensuring that play spaces are located well, and integrated with planting, natural features and materials; the benefits to children become greater than the sum of the parts.

We know that the more complex the play environment the greater the quality of learning through play, and recognise that play takes many forms

Design for play should be site specific and use the landscape as its starting point to integrate play opportunities within an informal recreational setting

Where children play

Successful locations for play are where children want to play, where they feel safe and can play freely without being stopped or criticised by adults. Play activities are often undertaken in spaces which are not designated specifically for play purposes.

When reviewing development proposals, due regard will be given to the design of all recreational green space as areas where children will undertake 'play' activities.

However this guidance focuses in particular on the provision of spaces specifically designed to meet Local Plan requirements set out in Policy CS7 of 0.2 hectares per 1000 population of designed play spaces for children and young people.

The following matters need to be considered and addressed in the design of play space.

Getting there easily

Younger children in particular need places very near their home where they can play freely, within an easy walk.

Being able to walk or cycle to a local play space is important in developing independence as children get older. Locating play spaces on familiar routes, such as walking routes to school, also helps accessibility for children gaining independence.

Accessible and Inclusive to all

There is a wealth of guidance on designing inclusive and accessible ifacilities for disabled people which should be used to ensure that play spaces are accessible and attractive, including disabled parents and carers.

All children of all abilities should be able to access their local play space in the same way. This is especially pertinent when considering the range of play offered in one particular space with a focus on abilities rather than age.

While a play space may be accessible, it also needs to be inclusive.

Informal Oversight or Natural Surveillance

Depending upon age and independence, children want to 'see and be seen' and later, 'be where it's at' to a greater or lesser degree. This should be considered alongside the level of need for natural surveillance to reduce risks of anti-social behaviour. Finding the right balance can be difficult to anticipate in a new residential development, but providing the design of the place is right, informal oversight will promote its use by children allowing ownership to occur naturally.

Ground Conditions

Play spaces should be well drained and free from standing water all year round, unless specifically designed to provide a water-based play activity. Land performing as part of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is unlikely to be suitable for a play space. Play equipment should notbe sited too close to SUDs

Community Hubs

Locating large, well equipped play spaces near community hubs, such as schools and sports facilities, will bring wider benefits by bringing other people near to the play space, which makes it feel safer and more social, and will provide a focal point for the community.

Flexibility

Careful design can include elements for both younger and older children, recognising that differing age ranges access play spaces at different times of day, requiring differing levels of supervision and challenge, and creates fully accessible and inclusive play spaces.

Design for flexibility also recognises that the requirements of local communities change over time, therefore capacity to adapt play spaces in the future to meet different needs should also be a siting and design consideration.

Zoning

Sometimes it may be appropriate to link spaces visually and with landscape feature to ensure that siblings and families can enjoy the landscape together. Often creating age appropriate zones within a play environment will offer the best solution.

Play area designed as a series of 'play zones'.
Zones are arranged according to age and ability.
The zones are distinct areas but also blend into the next zone.
This allows children to progress to the next challenge when they are able, encourages socialising with the next age group, whilst still providing play areas that feel safe to use for the younger children and play zones geared towards older age groups.

Key:

- Pre-school/accessible play
- Junior play
- Older children and teenagers

Transitions between play zones are indicated with overlapping symbols.

Example Play Area:

Using active zoning to enable play focused on abilities rather than age that provides a truly inclusive and accessible play space and flexible enough to adapt in the future.
Images on the right are the play area in use

Summary:
Use the principles above to create successful play spaces that are site specific and focused on ability rather than age:

- Located in the right place
- Easy to get to
- Accessible and inclusive
- Overseen by others
- Connected
- Flexible

3 Standards for Play Space Provision

Benchmark Standards for Play Provision

Fields in Trust (FiT) guidelines have long been recognised as the appropriate resource in developing benchmarks for considering play typologies, quantities and accessibility for open access play provision, as shown on the table at appendix B.

New Forest District Standards for Play Provision

The Council requires clearly identifiable play spaces in a hierarchy based upon the FiT guidelines. The typologies are described in detail in chaper 4, maintaining the spatial requirements, scale in relationship to size of development, and accessibility standard of the benchmark standard.

Local Plan Policies

New Forest District Council require provision of defined children and young peoples's play space at a rate of 0.2 ha, or 2000m2 per 1000 population, as a minimum.

For the purposes of calculating the population of a new housing development the following occupancy levels will be assumed.[2]

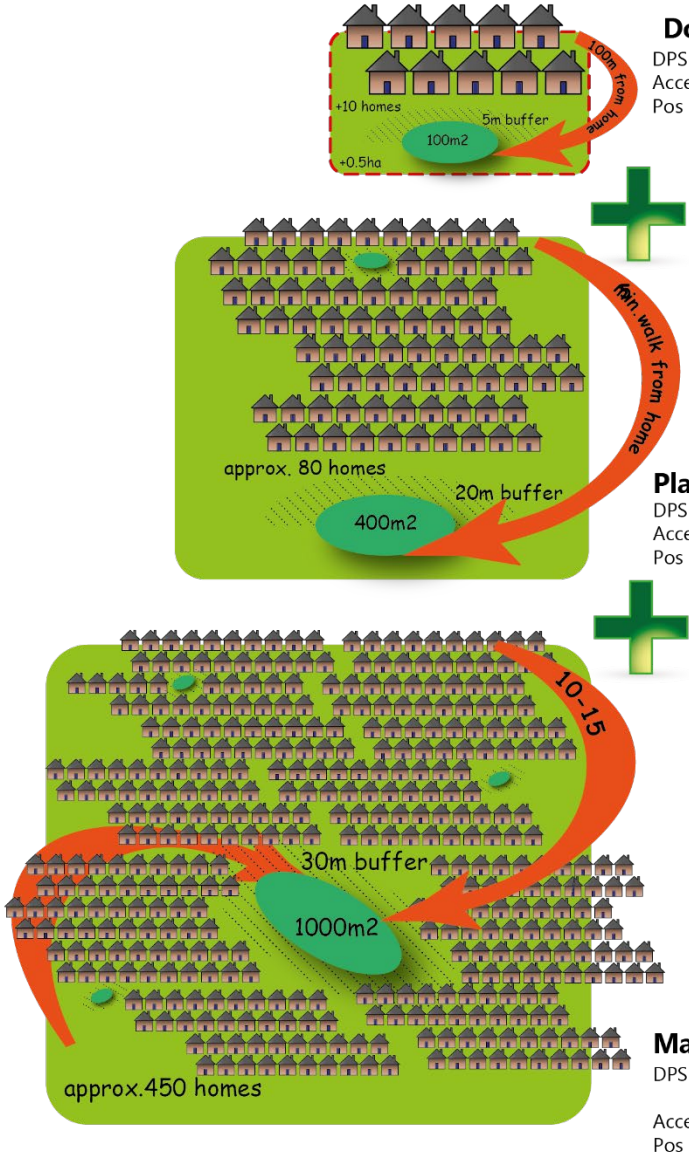
Dwelling	Assumed population/occupancy
1 bedroom	1.4
2 bedrooms	2.1
3 bedrooms	3
4 bedrooms	3.75

Table 1: Assumed population in new dwellings by bedroom provision.

Residential develoment sites of over 0.5ha will be expected to provide play space on site though there maybe situations where a contribution is taken.

It is important to note the that changes to the mix of dwellings proposed changes the spatial requirements, as a guide, the infographic below expresses the general scale of development and resulting play space requirements.

It is essential that the planning of play areas, along with all other green infrastructure requirements, is considered as an integral part of the development from the earliest concept masterplanning stage of a scheme. Taking into account advice in this guidance, local knowledge, current best practice, and National Design Guidance, developers will be expected to set out their approach to play provision and show how it meets policy requirements from an early stage in discussions with the local planning authority.



Doorstep Playable Space

DPS • 100m2 play space
Access • 100m from home
Pos • 5m buffer to habitable rooms

Play Area

DPS • 400m2 play space
Access • 400m from home (5 min walk)
Pos • 20m buffer to habitable rooms

Major Play Area

DPS • 1000m2 play space, including hard surfaced area of approx.450m2
Access • 10-15 minute walk from home
Pos • 30m buffer to habitable rooms

Key:
DPS Defined play space - the minimum amount needed for play type
Access The ideal maximum distance from home, with no barriers to access
Pos Position of a defined play space to neighbours living rooms

NFDC Typologies: scale and spatial parameters

4 New Forest District Typologies

Doorstep Playable Space

equivalent to a Local Area for Play (LAP)
Tier 1

Policy Requirement

New residential development on sites over 0.5ha shall normally offer a Doorstep Playable Space as a minimum. The exact provision requirement will depend on the number of dwellings and their sizes, and will be subject to consideration of connectivity, surveillance and character of the landscape.

Where

Doorstep Playable Spaces are likely to be appropriate as small green spaces or parts of wider green spaces where they can be easily reached without crossing roads and cycleways and where overlooked by people's homes to offer natural surveillance – often small greens at intersections between housing blocks.

In providing 'doorstep play' the aim is to ensure that very young children can access a safe space for play within close proximity to the home and have ample opportunity to experience play in a natural environment.

Example Doorstep Play location:
Small development sites

What

Doorstep Playable Spaces enable young children to play safely outdoors, very close to home, and should be an integral part of the external home environment.

These spaces should include a flat area, earth modelling to give some 'humps and bumps' and planting, with static features that allow young children to identify and claim the space as theirs. Seats or opportunities for sitting should be designed into the space.

In more urban locations, these spaces could also be part of the street design: more linear in nature and using components such as level changes and planting to create alternative, playful detours.

The key quality being 'space that invites play'

Play Area

equivalent to a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)
Tier 2

Policy Requirement

This type of play space will be generated by residential schemes proposing a population increase of 200 people (or approximately 80 units, depending on the mix of housing). The required provision should be fully met on-site as part of the integrated masterplanning approach to the development. For developments at this scale, a Play Area may be required in combination with Doorstep Play Spaces.

For development proposals where the population requirement does not meet the threshold for this Play Area provision, the play area requirement may be met by more or larger Doorstep Play areas.

Design of these spaces will need to complement the natural landscape and its features to present play opportunities within the space and any features will also need reference in the wider landscape beyond.

Where

Play Areas should be located where children can gain access safely, avoiding barriers such as busy roads. They may be alongside well used familiar walking routes or as part of larger areas of informal recreational greenspaces. They need to have some natural surveilence from neighbouring homes.

What

Using the FiT guidance (appendix B), the size and buffering dimensions provide a base from which to develop a combined equipped and natural play space.

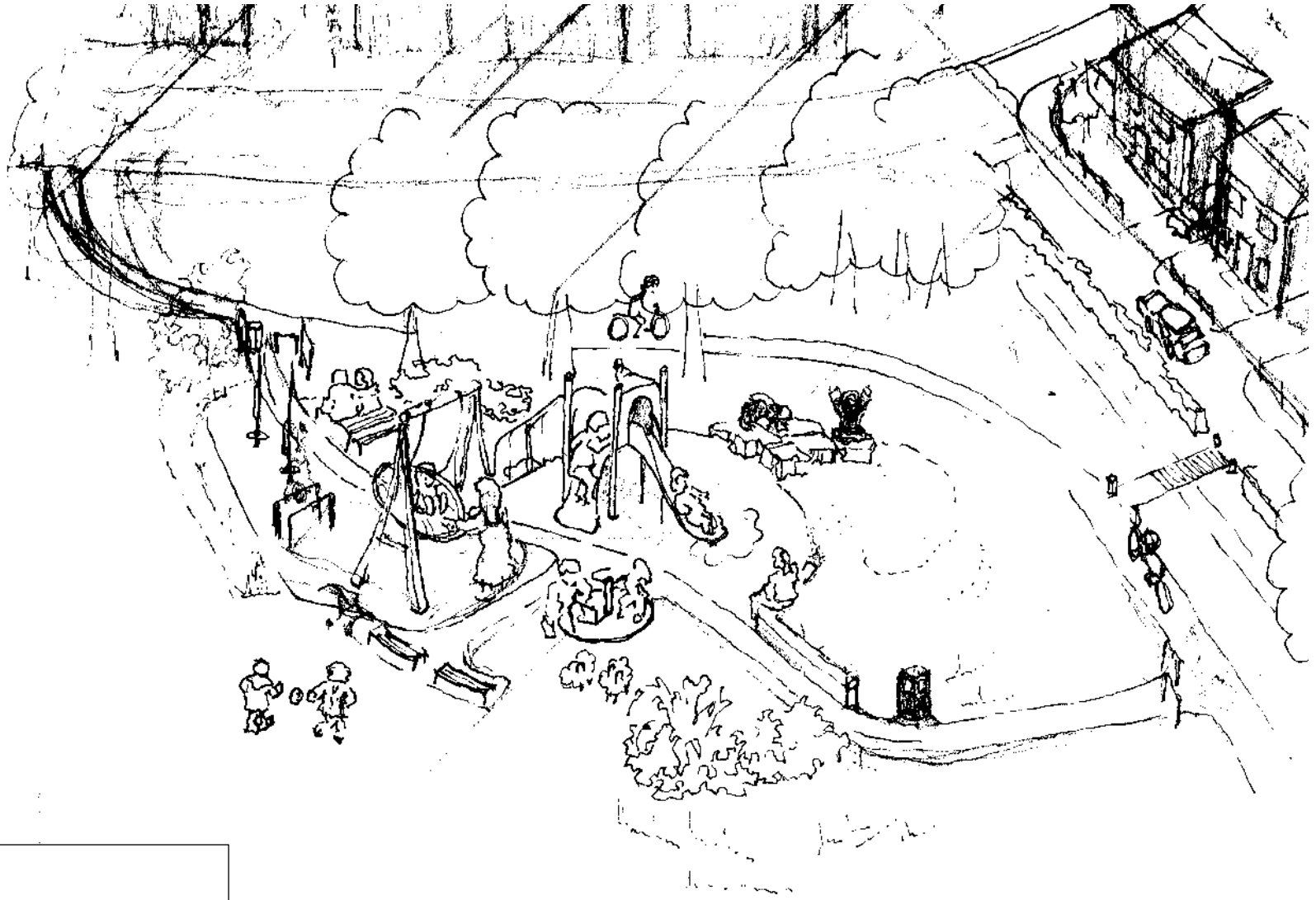
As a minimum, the equipped part of Play Areas should be 400m2 with a sufficient range of equipment to offer a variety of locomotive activities, such as swinging, sliding, climbing and rotating, (that are difficult to replicate without fixed equipment), together with its

The aim is to provide a well distributed range of Play Areas that meet the needs of accompanied younger children, and children gaining independence through a combination of fixed equipped spaces that actively link to the wider environment.

layout and ancillary features that encourage many types of play[3].

Play Areas should provide for a range of children's abilities, offering appropriate, challenge. Careful choice is needed to ensure the play equipment installed provides a range of opportunities for active play. Grouping a range of equipment aimed at a variety of abilities needs careful consideration to minimise conflicts. A zoning approach (see example at chapter 2) works well, in that it minimises conflict between ability ranges, introduces graduated challenge and has the advantage of peer learning and sharing, as well as enabling supervision across abilities.

Ensuring that equipment and landscape features relate to each other is an important way to add value. Linking items with fun routes; creating a theme or circuit and combining equiped activities with the natural materials and form of spaces will ensure optimum play value.



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Play Area

Major Play Area

equivalent to a Neighbourhood Play Area (NEAP)

Tier 3

Policy Requirement

Where a development forms part of a new neighbourhood[4] (500+ dwellings) provision of a major play area can provide a focus for the new community. A single 'Major Play Area' will not replace the need to provide accessible Doorstep Playable Spaces and Play Areas, but there are occasions where the masterplanning of the new neighbourhood, in combination with the scale of development and location, determines that Major Play Area provision is appropriate.

Design of these places will need to complement the natural landscape and its features to present play opportunities within the play space and such features will also need reference in the wider landscape beyond.

Where

A major play area can provide a focal point for a new planned neighbourhood, particularly when located at the heart of a community alongside other facilities such as formal sports pitches. These areas are designed for older children and young people who are able to travel longer distances independantly, to get there safely on their own, as well as catering for the whole range of abilities. Careful consideration should be given to the location and interaction of different facilities, and community involvment and consultation is a key ingredient of successful design and community acceptance.

What

As a minimum, Major Play Areas should be at least 1000m^2 in area. They should include approximately 500m^2 (20x25m) which are suitable for ball games or wheeled activities. It should also provide for more challanging

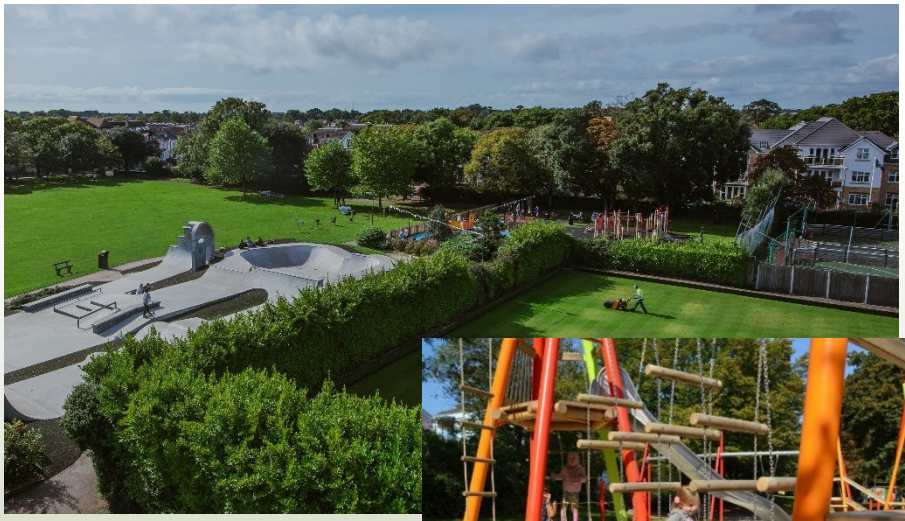
The aim is to provide a neighbourhood focal point that, as well as offering sufficient challenge for young teenagers, also meets the needs of accompanied younger children and children gaining independence, through a combination of fixed equipped spaces that actively link to the wider environment.

[4] The New Forest District Local Plan 2016-2036 has strategic land allocations which will create new Neighbourhoods at North Totton, Marchwood, Fawley Waterside, Ringwood and Fordingbridge.

activities attractive to older children such as skateboard ramps, a rebound wall, or climbing structures, with places for meeting and socialising, as well as equipment for all abilities. Seating and cycle parking facilities will also be required.

The form of provision will be expected to provide opportunities for contact with nature through planting, ground modelling and features that link to the wider context to optimise play value.

Elements of a Major Play Area, in accordance with the FiT benchmark standard, also fall into the category of a Multiple Use Games Area, but don't meet the ultimate space needed for a formal open space Mulitple Use Games Area. Therefore, where provision for older youths and teens is required, as noted above, they may be provided as an element of on site provision, off-set against the formal open space requirement.



Summary:
New Forest District typologies are based on the FiT benchmark standards, but are re-described to better reflect our local requirements.

5 Defining the 'Play Space'

Equipped play spaces are subject to specific legal requirements regarding safety, and therefore need to be clearly defined on the ground so that a play inspector can easily identify the equipment and features that make up what is designated as the 'play space', as described by the typologies in the previous chapter.

Play Space

This space must meet the required safety standards. The defined area will have undergone a suitable risk/benefit assessment at design and implementation stages.

The defined play space will be clearly shown on statutory signage for play spaces.

Visual boundaries to help identify the play space should be achieved through imaginative use of a variety of features, such as embankments, surfacing, physical markers, planting or fences (where appropriate). Where items such as logs, ditch crossings, banks, boulders, etc are located within a defined play space, they need to meet the requirements of the relevant standards for play.

Landscape Features

-beyond the 'play space'

Landscape features are the elements that extend the play value beyond the 'play space' boundary through the use of such elements as embankments, bridges, boulders or logs, existing features and new planting, drawing playful behaviour into the wider environment. These features are also valuable as sitting, meeting areas or even landmarks and destination points of interest, and also make up the landscape's character.

Where such features are outside the defined space, they will be subject to different safety and maintenance inspections.

Play will not stop at the edge of the play space. It should flow into the wider environment by design.

These examples illustrate how Doorstep Playable Spaces and Play Areas can be designed based on the principle of a clearly defined 'play space' within a wider enjoyable landscape with 'landscape features' that take advantage of existing natural features and therefore offers a rich and inspiring play environment.

Risk Management Approach

Managing risk is an important part of the design of Play Areas. Applying the fundamental principles of risk management outlined in Managing Risk in Play Provision[5], the Council encourages the designers of play spaces to take a risk/benefit approach to play provision.

This approach weighs up the potential risk involved in using a whole play space or individual item of play equipment against the potential benefits to children's development, enabling children to manage their own risk by providing sufficient and graduated challenges.

Where potential risks are identified these should be addressed in a risk management plan of the site. The Council recognises that ultimately children will make choices where they play and if play spaces do not offer them the level of challenge they desire, they will play elsewhere possibly in less safe places.

[5] Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide. Play England 2012

6 Materials and Construction

In this chapter we set out how the common elements of all play spaces should be considered, and when used creatively together, will enhance the overall play value on offer.

By setting out these requirements the Council can be certain that the required quality, safety, robustness and longevity is provided.

A set of common construction details have been published by the Council.

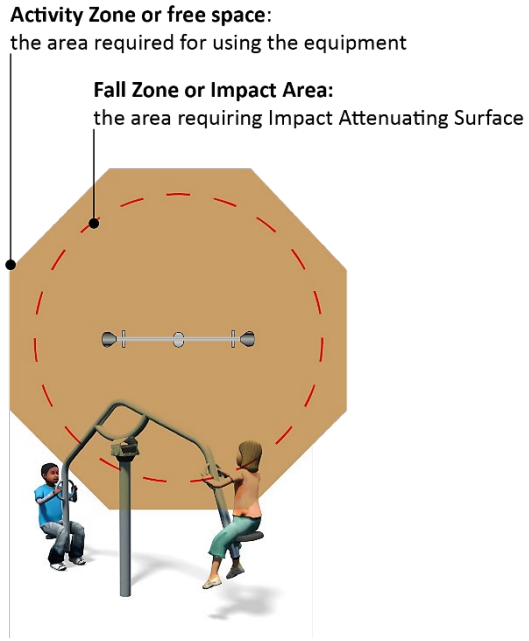
Manufactured Play Equipment

There are many suppliers of play equipment. The Council is not prescriptive about which manufacturer or supplier is used, provided that each piece is certified, its layout conforms to BS EN1177, and is suitable for its environment.

Careful choice is required in order to get equipment that offers a range of play opportunities and has the flexibility to be used by children of different abilities Also, layout is important to ensure that the play space can be used as intended and avoids some common pitfalls that create unnecessary hazards.

Activity and Fall Zones

Any item that is used for play needs to have due regard to recognised standards of layout that determine fall zones (the space likely to be taken up should a fall occur) and activity zones (the space around a play item that is required for its intended use).



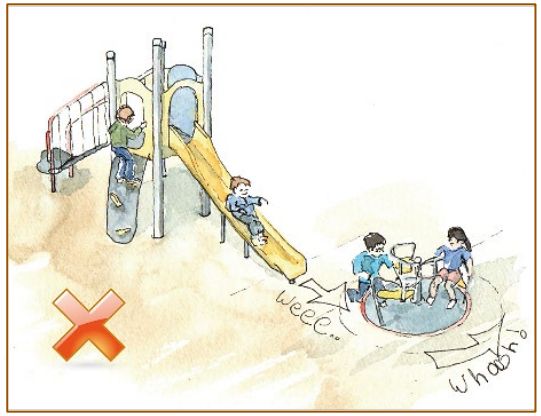
Design Note:

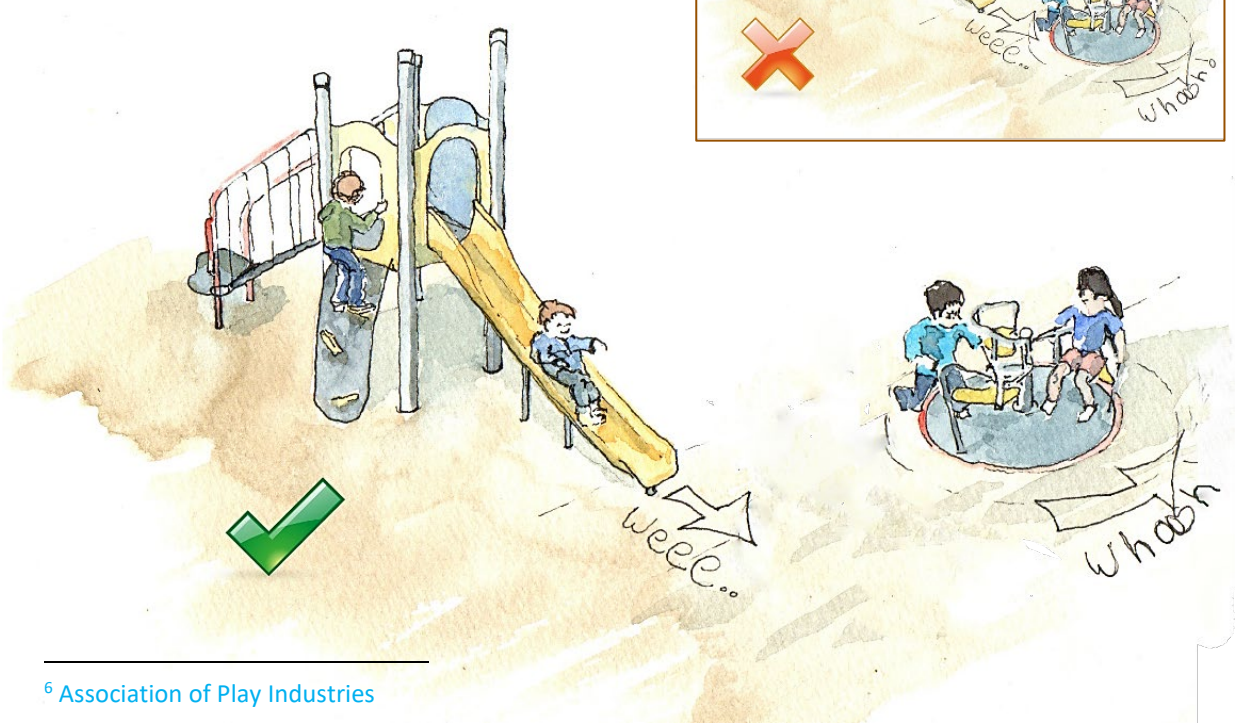
- Land performing as part of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is unlikely to be suitable for a play space
- Consider how to accommodate the needs of less abled children inclusively and children of different ages
- Consider where you would wait for a turn on a swing or take 'time out'
- Think about how equipment is orientated – slides facing south get very hot.
- Consider the interaction of various movements of each piece of equipment, such as the run-off area at the end of a slide: where children need space to lose the physical momentum of such an experience or use it to propel them to the next activity.

Equipment Relationships

Locate equipment carefully. Unintended consequences can arise if the way equipment is used has not been considered.

The Council expects any proposal for fixed, equipped play spaces to be appropriately laid out, and recommends that an on-plan assessment by an API[6] registered play inspector is undertaken.





[6] Association of Play Industries

Basics – Falls, Tripping, Trapping

It sounds obvious, but attention to detail is required to prevent avoidable hazards such as objects placed within fall or activity zones, tripping on poorly installed or worn surface edgings or at the interface of differing surfaces, and trapping of body parts – whether that's fingers in a gate or a head between railings or netting on climbing structures.

Management Note:

- **Do not mix and match between different suppliers on the same site:** From a management aspect it is more efficient to be able to inspect and maintain play equipment from the same source, as materials and fixings will be common.
- **Ensure bespoke equipment is certified** to BS EN1176, or where this is not available, it is accompanied by a risk assessment where the TuV* certificate or Kitemark forms part of that assessment.
- **Ensure materials and workmanship are guaranteed** – to provide certainty that supplied equipment is fit for purpose and has an appropriate life span.
- **Ensure spare parts are readily available:** most play equipment suppliers offer a kit of spare parts- those items that will need replacing at regular intervals.

**A recognized test mark that validates that product-specific quality has been checked by an independent third party*

Construction Quality Note:

- Timber play equipment should not be installed straight into the ground, unless it is a class 1 resistant timber and can be evidenced by case studies to last more than a decade
- Play spaces should be well drained and free from standing water all year round, unless specifically designed to provide a water-based play activity.

Surfacing

Impact Attenuating Surfacing (IAS or safer surfacing) is required under and around play equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, BS EN1176 and BS EN1177. In addition, areas of high wear, such as at access or meeting points, will require reinforcement.

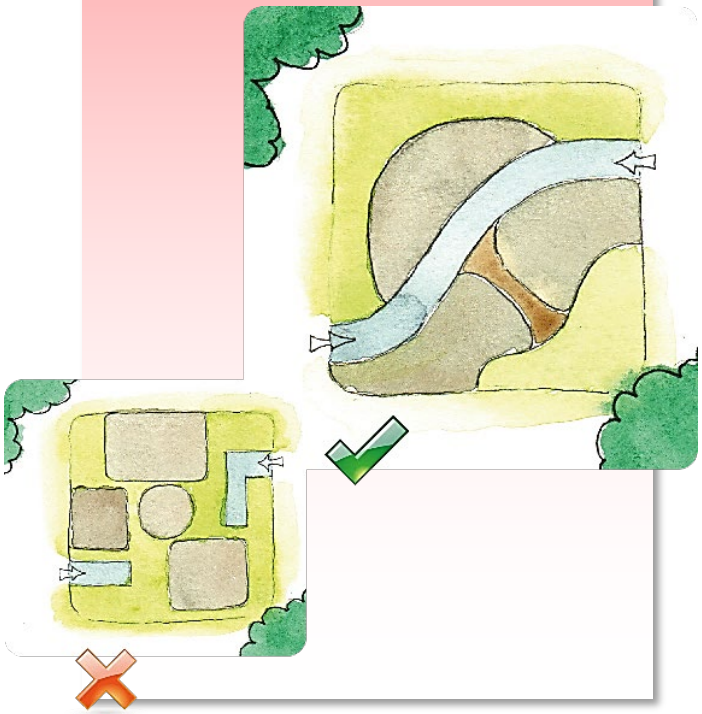
Preferred materials are:

- Bonded rubber mulch
- Wetpour rubber crumb
- Grass mats, for low fall heights (less than 600mm) and as ground reinforcement

Loose fill materials, such as sand or bark mulch, offer high play value as materials for manipulation, but require intensive management and are therefore are expensive to maintain. If these materials are proposed, an early discussion is required to ensure that the management of such surfaces are agreed.

Design Note:

- Within a defined play space avoid unnecessary surfacing material changes and unmanageable fragments of grass cover
- Do consider the play value offered by a variety of colours and textures, and the access requirements for wheelchairs and buggies.



Construction Quality Note:

- A permeable sub-base must be used under wet pour rubber crumb and bonded rubber mulch.
- Use soft rubber grass matts for impact attenuation and ground reinforcement.
- Where different materials join, such as wear pads in bonded rubber mulch, the adherence of materials will be carefully inspected to ensure there is no lifting or shrinkage.

Enclosure

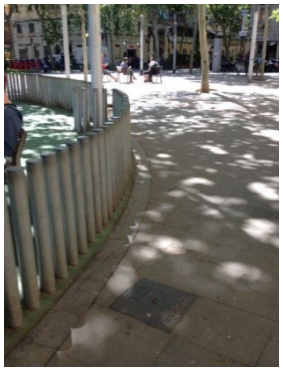
The location and type of boundary needed will depend on a number of influencing factors: adjacent uses; location of potential hazards such as roads; or to steer and direct movement.

Is it not usually desirable to tightly enclose a play space as the use of fencing often detaches a space from its environment, and so limits its play value for the present and its flexibility for future change.

Barriers such as fencing, railings and hedges can be used to enhance safety, but not necessarily located on the edge of the defined play space.

Defining the play space can be achieved through a number of recognisable features used in combination, always recognising that the definition of the space is two-fold:

- Physical/visual edges, barriers, and surface changes
- Signs to define extent of play space with a simple plan.



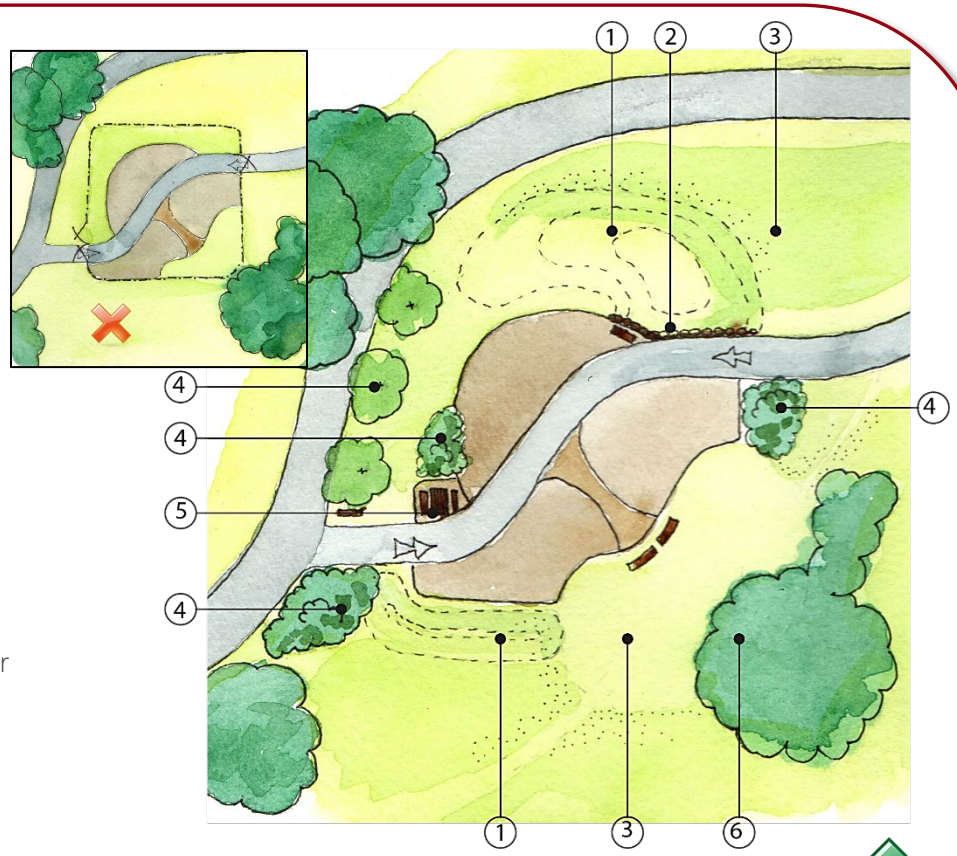
Management Note:
All open spaces, including play spaces, should enable easy access for regular maintenance:

- A minimum width of 3m clear access for machinery is required as a general rule of thumb
- The ground may need to be reinforced to enable all year access
- Parking for maintenance vehicles should be practical: usually within 100m of the access

Design Note:

- Tight fencing of fixed play equipment should be avoided.
- Consider the site as a whole to locate boundary features that provide sufficient safety effects, such as discouraging uncontrolled dogs from gaining access or deterring children from running into a road.
- Consider methods of using boundary features that also have play value: low walls for balancing or seating, mounds or ditches, planting, or level changes, for example
- Consider accessibility
- Consider intervisibility of boundaries: is a clear view over a boundary feature required?
- Boundary features must be visually appropriate to the character of the place.
- Where fencing is required to deflect access to hazards, use fencing outside the defined play space where possible. Where fencing is used to define the play space in whole or in part, it must conform to BS EN1177, together with any matching gates.

In this example it is clear what constitutes the defined play space. For legal and management purposes, this should also be defined on the welcoming sign.



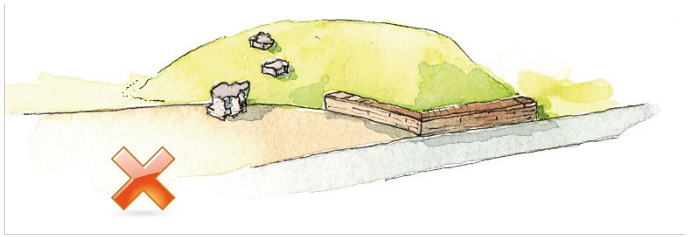
1. Use mounds and ditches to create level changes
2. Use retaining features or low walls
3. Use mowing patterns and long grasses to create fuzzy edges
4. Use appropraite planting to create soft bounderies and entrance features
5. Use seating (intercept opportunies)
6. Use existing features

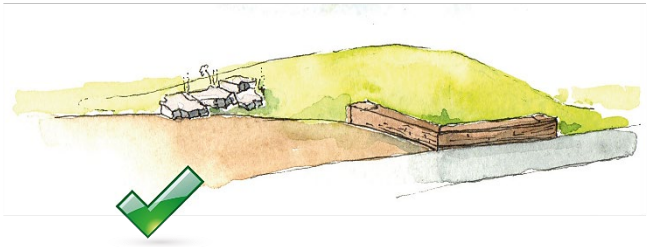
Ground Modelling and 'Natural Features'

Natural features and elements provide the 'loose parts' of play and can enhance and give special character to individual play spaces, supplementing the experience derived from the formal play equipment. They can be used in a variety of ways according to the abilities and interests of the player. Such play is uniquely satisfying as there is no pressure to conform and offers a different experience with every visit; these features can be especially valuable in doorstep play spaces that do not offer formal play equipment.

Landform and ground modelling can be used to define spaces or provide boundaries. It inspires different activities and provides enhanced play value. For example, earth banks provide support for slides, enable tunnels and bridge crossings, or can create quiet or performance spaces.

Consider how natural features can blend the defined play space into the wider environment. See enclosure illustration above.





Management Note:

- Unless the Land Management Plan indicates otherwise, grass swards within defined play spaces will usually be keep short.
- Bank and dip gradients should be mowable rather than relying on strimmer or spray operations.
- Bank and dip gradients are usually mowable at 1:3 provided that there are level access margins alongside banks, structures, or hedges
- Carefully consider maintenance and inspection requirements – propose adaptive management

Design Note:

- Ensure mounds and dips can be maintained as intended
- Use boulders purposefully
- Apply activity and fall zone principles
- Where stepping features are used, ensure that they are within safer surfacing (to limit strimming and enable cleaning and sweeping) or part of an acceptably natural long sward.

Construction Quality Note:

- Ensure soil depths over tunnels are sufficient where they are covered with reinforced grass
- Ensure climbing logs and boulders are secure from rolling or lifting

Planting

Planting and grassy areas should be introduced within defined play spaces first and foremost to enhance play value. It can provide colour, texture, scent, sound, enclosure. Importantly, it also enhances the attractiveness for accompanying adults, carers and siblings and provides shade and shelter. Plant material is also a key component of enabling access to and experiencing nature.

Planting proposals, and its management to maturity, should ultimately create definition and loose, filtered views into and over play spaces, but not screened and hidden places.

Hazardous Plants

A vast range of plants can be potentially harmful to people in a variety of ways:

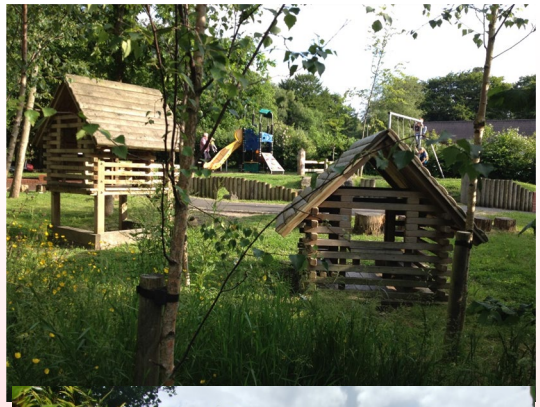
- Skin irritation through handling
- From discomfort to severe poisoning through ingestion
- Physical injury from sharp-edged leaves, spikes and thorns

As a general rule hazardous plants should not be used as part of the playscape: where they are likely to be picked or eaten by a child in sufficient quantities to be harmful, or where the planting would eventually create a hazard within a fall or activity zone (by catching on clothing or skin). [7]

Add; sectional illustration

Management Note:

- Consider carefully maintenance and management of the proposed planting to ensure its success as intended
- Avoid vigorous species that require more than one pruning operation per year
- Ensure planting is robust enough to withstand some trampling
- If invasive species are used, such as bamboo or willow, use root barriers to prevent spread



[7] See references for further reading

Furniture

Where the proposed facility will be adopted by NFDC, site furniture should be consistent with the Councils standard approach and constructed in accordance with the details contained in the 'Guide to Performance Specifications.

For facilities that will be managed through an alternative route, the general principles below apply.

Waste Bins

Combined waste bins should be located appropriately, normally outside of the defined play space, but near to access points.

Dog waste bins are not required.

Seating

Comfortable seating is required for all types of play spaces. Places should be provided for parents and carers as well as children and young people to sit and talk. Careful thought will be required to accommodate social distancing, without diminishing the social interaction opportunities afforded by public seating.

For play spaces, seating will be required at an approximate rate of:

- Doorstep Playable Space
  1 seat or bench
- Play Area
  Seating for at least 8 adults, a combination of seats and benches and provision, through imaginative design, for 'hanging out'. Sufficient space will be needed for buggies and wheelchairs alongside seats
- Major Play Area
  Seating for at least 12 adults, a combination of seats and benches, and provision for 'hanging out' (including shade/shelter)
  Seating must be located to enable social interaction and provide oversight, whilst not interfering with the play activities

Provision for 'hanging out'

The success of a ready-made teen shelter relies entirely on location, therefore the Council prefers to use features that offer potential for use as a space to meet with friends, to watch others from or sit in peace, without becoming a nuisance.

In addition to seats and benches, boulders, hammocks, and logs are useful, or items that are also used for play, such as climbing structures.

Cycle Parking

Play spaces should be provided with that be cycle racks or hoops.

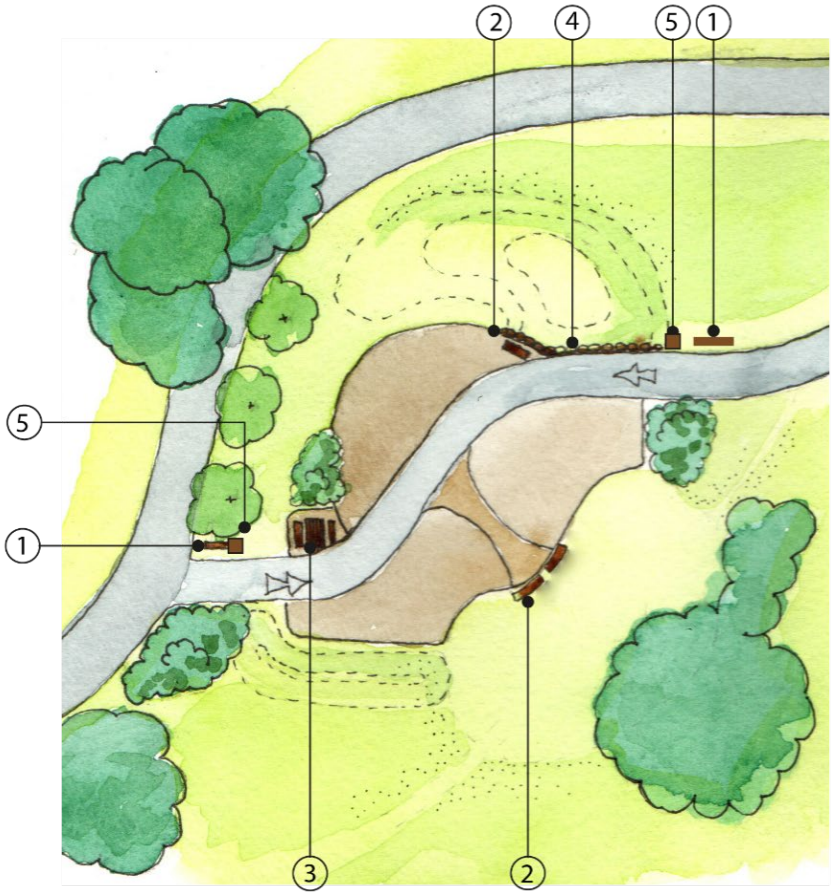
Signage

There are three purposes to play space signage:

- To comply with statutory requirements consisting of basic information such as the provider's details and contact information.
- . pen Space Signage should also interpret and communicate the intended uses of the space and expected behaviours and should convey positive messages- 'please use the waste bin', rather than 'don't drop litter'. Remember: a play space should appear welcoming!

Details of the Council's signage requirements for green space and play areas provided as part of the planning process are set out in separate signage guidance.

For play spaces adopted by NFDC, the Council uses a corporate standard for statutory signage and artwork is available on request.



Site Furniture

1. Interpretation and statutory signage
2. Seating - oversight of play activities and 'defending' access points
3. Picnic table and bench - also provides hang out space for older youths
4. Retaining/boundary feature also becomes useful seating
5. Waste bin- outside of defined space

Summary:
In this chapter we have explained:

- What materials and construction methods are most suitable for equipped play spaces in this district
- How to use various features to create loose boundaries
- How natural features should be provided to facilitate ongoing management and maintenance
- How site furniture should be provided and used.

7 Risk Management

Previous national play policy, and Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a framework which enables designers of play spaces to make judgements about reasonableness in risk management. It does this by recognising that some element of risk is an inherent and necessary part of play. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recognises that play is about being physically active and it is inevitable that accidents will happen, it makes it clear that its aim is to reduce the severity of injuries, not remove all possibility of harm.

Those who provide play spaces have legal responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984. These regulations impose a legal duty on providers to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks associated with a site and act accordingly.[8]

As well as complying with law, designers and play space managers must balance safety with an understanding of children's play needs, including suitable challenge and therefore, inherant risk in play provision. Designers should use guidance and standards available in the industry, bearing in mind the advice of the Health and Safety Exectutive to 'focus on the risks that really matter' (HSE 2006 Five Steps to Risk Assessment)

At NFDC it is recognised that risk management:

'is an important tool for ensuring that we make the most of opportunities as well as managing potential threats. Clear understanding of the risks around opportunities enables us to take innovative decisions with assurance. The key is for the council to be risk aware and not risk averse.'[9]

[8] more information can be found in Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide. Play England 2012

[9] NFDC Risk Management and Insurance

Benefits vs Risk

In some instances, especially in spaces that combine bespoke equipment and natural play features, it may be difficult to achieve a hazard free play environment using a standard risk assessment approach. However, the alternative risk/benefit assessment approach provides an opportunity to ask: *'How well does the site maximise the play opportunities on offer, while managing the risk'.*

There are many examples of risk/benefit assessments: and each indivdiual situation should be approached through discussion to enable the right assessment methodology is used. Risk/benefit assessments can be used for individual features, such as a tree used for climbing[10], or a site-wide assessment.

Proposals for play spaces will need to demonstrate where common hazards have been designed out (show fall and activity zones, impact attenuating surfacing, for example), and where hazards are not completely designed out, how risks will be minimised through design and/or management.

Maintenance of Play Spaces

The Council takes the safety of our communities seriously.

The Council, as Local Planning Authority will require the developer to address long-term site management, maintenance and safety issues as part of an agreed Site Management Plan which will be committed to by legal agreement as a part of the planning permission for a development.

As well as ensuring that play spaces and equipment are safe from hazards, arrangement must be put in place, to the satisfaction of the Council, for basic maintenance operations such as emptying bins, sweeping up litter, cleaning equipment when required, and horticultural operations as part of the agreed ongoing management and maintenace of the play space.

[10] Play Safety Forum Risk Benefit Assessment – worked example: http://www.playengland.org.uk/content/uploads/2015/10/psf-risk-benefit-assessment-form-worked-example.pdf

8 Information Requirements as part of the planning process

The location and broad concepts for play space provision (as with all public open space and green infrastruture) needs to be given detailed consideration from an early stage in drawing up proposals for a new residential development. Intended locations and types of play provision will need to be understood at outline planning stage (or earlier) and shown inititally as part of the required 'Landscape Framework'[11]

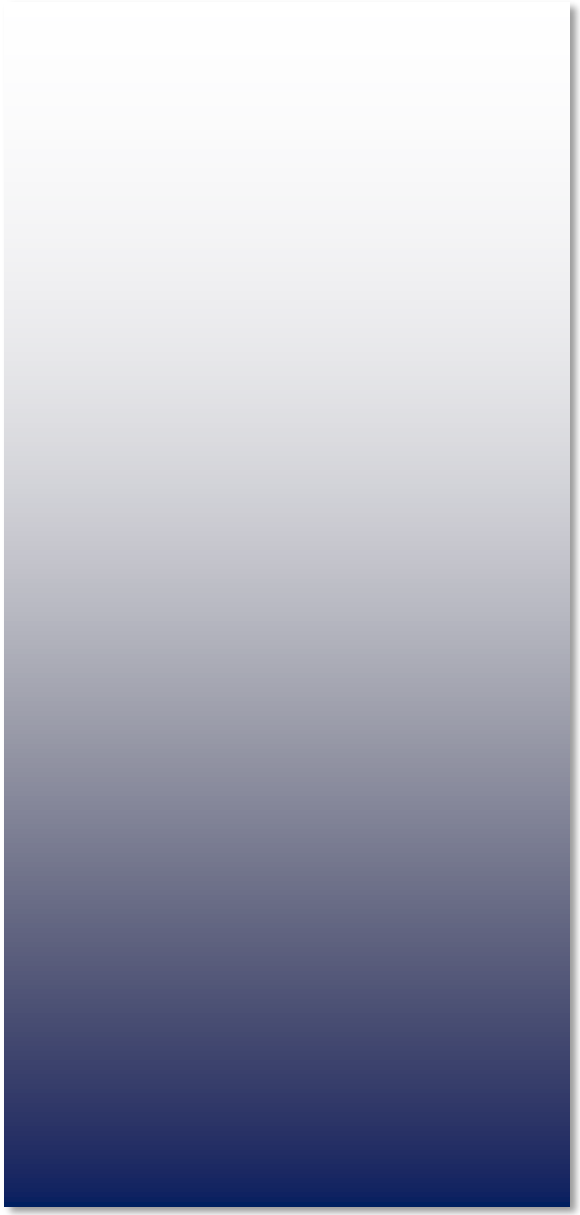
It will need to be remembered that changes to numbers and sizes of dwellings in any scheme will have an impact on all forms of open space requirements. Increased housing densities will result in increased play and other open space requirements that need to be planned as part of the development.

Assessment of Proposals

Play proposals will be assessed at two levels:

- The wider play strategy, ensuring that the principles set out in chapter 2 have been applied appropriately, the spatial requirements are met and that the proposed form of provision is embedded in the wider landscape strategy.
- Defined play spaces, ensuring that the proposals meet the requirments for the typology, offer a broad range of play opportunities through the provision of fixed equipment and connection with nature, offer suitable challenge and are robust and managable.

An assessment tool is available at appendix E, and will be used internally throughout the planning process.



[11] See Appendix D

To satisfy the Council that the proposals are appropriate, safe and can be maintained and managed into the future, as designed, the following information will be required

Pre construction:

- Plans, sections and/or elevations, details of materials, features, equipment and landforms, and their construction
- An (on-plan) pre-construction review to identify any hazards that cannot be designed out
- Agreed risk/benefit assessment for any aspect of the play space that is uncertified.
- Management plan detailing maintenance operations to achieve the design intensions, (forming part of the overall Site Management Plan for the public spaces of the development)

Implementation

- Post installation ROSPA standard inspection report, by an independent play inspector

The receiving adoption party will also require

- Safety certificates, guarantees and warranties of any fixed equipment and surfacing.
- Kit of spare parts and tools

Summary

- Discuss the details of play at an early opportunity
- Agree risk management approach with NFDC, where necessary
- Developers are responsible for inspecting and maintaining play spaces until they are formally adopted by the ongoing management arrangement, including suitable Public Liability Insurance

References and Further Reading

- National Design Guide – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019
- New Forest @Play – NFDC existing play strategy
- Design for Play: a guide to creating successful play spaces – *Play England 2008*
- Planning for Play, Guidance on the development and implementation of a local play strategy – *Children's Play Council 2006*
- Playing on the Wildside –*Playwork Partnership 2009*
- Developing Accessible Play Space – *a good practice guide ODPM 2003*
- More than Swings and Roundabouts, Planning for outdoor play – *Childrens Play Council 2002*
- No Fear, Growing up in a risk adverse society- *Tim Gill 2007*
- Social Housing and Play using evidence informed practice to provide and manage outdoor play spaces – *pilot handbook – research in practice 2011*
- An Essential Guide to BS1176 and BS EN1177 Childrens Playground Equipment and Surfacing Updated for 2008– *The Play Inspection Company/Wickseed playscapes*
- Risk and Safety in Play – the law and practice for adventure playgrounds – *Playlink 1997*
- Managing risk in play provision – Implementation Guide - *Play Safety Forum updated 2012*
- Nature Play: Maintenance Guide – *Play England 2009*
- Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play -beyond the six acre standard - *Field in Trust 2015*
- Childrens Play and Leisure – promoting a balanced approach – *HSE 2012*
- The Good Play Space Guide 'I can Play too' –Sport and Recreation Victoria, Austrailia 2007
- Kidsafe Playground News (Article Rocks and Boulders – Love them! – Kidsafe, New South Wales, Au, issue 34, July 2010
- Step Stone Route Guide – *Lappset*

Appendix A

Play England Charter for Children Play

Children have the right to play

All children and young people have the right to play and need to play: free to choose what they do:– lively or relaxed, noisy or quiet – with the chance to stretch and challenge themselves, take risks and enjoy freedom. The right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Every child needs time and space to play

All children and young people – disabled and non-disabled – whatever their age, culture, ethnicity or social and economic background, need time and space to play freely and confidently with their peers, free of charge, indoors and outdoors, somewhere they feel safe. Play provision should actively include the widest range of children and seek to engage with those from minority groups.

Adults should let children play

Parents, carers and other adults can support children and young people's play by respecting the value and importance of all types of play, playing with their children and by creating opportunities and allowing time for children to play independently with their friends, inside and outside the home

Children should be able to play freely in their local areas

Children have the same right to use and enjoy public space as others. Local streets, estates, green spaces, parks and town centres should be accessible for children and young people to move around in safety and offer places where they can play freely, experience nature, explore their environment and be with their friends.

Children value and benefit from staffed play provision

Children should have access to a choice of staffed facilities where children's play rights and needs are the first priority, such as adventure playgrounds, play centres, holiday play schemes, after- school play clubs, breakfast play clubs, toy libraries, play buses and play ranger services.

Children's play is enriched by skilled playworkers

Qualified, skilled playworkers are trained to put children's play needs at the centre of their work in a variety of settings, enhancing the range and quality of play experiences for all children. They are the best people to run staffed play provision for school-aged children. The role of the playworker is as important as that of any skilled professional working with children and should be respected and rewarded accordingly.

Children need time and space to play at school

The school day should allow time for children to relax and play freely with their friends. Young children learn best through play and, as they get older, play supports and enriches their learning. Children learn best if teaching is creative and enjoyable. In school, time and space for play and outdoor learning is as important as formal teaching. School grounds should be good places to play.

Children sometimes need extra support to enjoy their right to play

Children and young people living away from home or visiting unfamiliar or controlled environments such as hospital, prison, immigration centres, and residential homes and schools, sometimes experience fear, anxiety and discomfort. For these children it is especially important to ensure they have good play opportunities facilitated by trained staff and volunteers.

Appendix B

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

Benchmark standards for play facilities				
Typology	Description	Size	Walking distance	Buffer zone
Local Area for Play (LAP)	'Doorstep' spaces aimed at very young children within view of known adults	10x10m Minimum activity zone of 100sqm	100m	5m separation between activity zone and boundary of dwelling
Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease	20x20m Minimum activity zone of 400sqm	400m (5 minutes)	20m separation between activity zone and habitable room façade of dwellings
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP):	A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can reach safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences	31.6x31.6m minimum activity zone of 1000sqm, comprising of play equipment, structures and hard surfaced area of 465sqm	1000m (10-15 minutes)	30m separation between activity zone and boundary of dwelling
Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	A surfaced, fenced area suitable for a variety of informal ball games		700m (10 minutes)	30m separation between activity zone and boundary of dwelling

Appendix C

Play Types

These were developed by Bob Hughes for the purposes of adults who study and facilitate play. It is examined in far more detail in his 1996 book *A Playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types*, London: PLAYLINK, UK.

Children's play is rich, varied, organic and constantly evolving. It can explore different types at the same time, flow from one to another and back again. As such, these definitions are by adults, for adults. They're useful in helping us be more specific when we're talking about play and play provision but will only ever capture a narrow aspect of the wealth of children's play. This list is also evolving and should not be assumed to ever be complete.

Symbolic Play – play which allows control, gradual exploration and increased understanding without the risk of being out of one's depth.

Rough and Tumble Play – close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, tickling, gauging relative strength. Discovering physical flexibility and the exhilaration of display.

Socio-dramatic Play – the enactment of real and potential experiences of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

Social Play – play during which the rules and criteria for social engagement and interaction can be revealed, explored and amended.

Creative Play – play which allows a new response, the transformation of information, awareness of new connections, with an element of surprise.

Communication Play – play using words, nuances or gestures for example, mime, jokes, play acting, mickey taking, singing, debate, poetry.

Dramatic Play – play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a direct participator.

Deep Play – play which allows the child to encounter risky or even potentially life-threatening experiences, to develop survival skills and conquer fear.

Exploratory Play – play to access factual information consisting of manipulative behaviors such as handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects.

Fantasy Play – play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur.

Imaginative Play – play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.

Locomotor Play – movement in any or every direction for its own sake.

Mastery Play – control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments.

Object Play – play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements.

Role Play – play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.

Recapitulative Play – play that allows the child to explore ancestry, history, rituals, stories, rhymes, fire and darkness. Enables children to access play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

Appendix D

The extract overleaf explains the content and form of a Landscape Framework, which includes allocating designated play spaces as part of a combined approach to the provision of open green space. The full document can be found at:

Mitigation-for-Recreational-Impacts-On-New-Forest-European-Sites-Draft-SPD

2.0 A combined approach

2.1 A *Design and Access Statement* (D&AS) should be prepared as part of the submitted planning application. It should include annotated layouts, sketches, elevations and illustrations.

2.2 The D&AS should include a ***landscape framework***, demonstrating how recreational mitigation in the form of ANRG would be achieved in accordance with policy.

2.3 The ***landscape framework*** will be a high level landscape strategy that combines the proposals for green spaces; footpath routes; habitat and biodiversity improvements integrally with existing features, landscape settings and the development layout so that the complementary advantages of each would optimise the recreational uses which would otherwise impact upon the New Forest.

2.4 The ***landscape framework*** should describe how sustainable drainage, public open space, green infrastructure, play and visual amenity will be addressed.

2.5 The ***landscape framework*** should indicate landscape and amenity benefits (some of which may not yet be quantifiable). It should address key matters, and explain how they will be addressed in a co-ordinated and effective way. The landscape framework should include a 1:500 plan clarifying the extent of land intended to be public and the extent of publicly accessible land which is to be calculated as qualifying ANRG. It should be annotated to cover the following issues:

- The existing landform and landscape features of the site – these will influence the design.
- The location and dimensions of proposed green spaces.
- The broad concept for drainage for the major green areas (and any provision for taking surface water from within the development areas).
- The broad treatment types applicable to each area of land and thus the management aspirations for each (for example: woodland; meadow; amenity grass; natural play etc.)
- The network of links and connections (including to the surrounding area) and circular walks and their hierarchy.

2.6 Each of the following matters should be dealt with (details of which may come forward at detailed application stage):

- Good pedestrian connections with existing residential areas.
- Linkages with other existing open spaces, streets, walking routes (and how these will be achieved).
- Provision of attractive walking routes with appropriately surfaced paths.
- Access for dog walking with off-lead areas and facilities to attract dog walkers.
- Boundaries to be secure or defined where needed.
- Optimising opportunities for biodiversity
- Ongoing land management.

2.7 The approximate locations for the following should also be illustrated on the proposed landscape framework in a way that facilitates a legible and attractive landscape.

- Play areas and any formal open spaces, such as playing pitches.
- Qualifying ANRG land
- A three-tiered strategy for planting trees (Forest scale species, medium or small/light canopied garden trees),
- SUDS elements (providing an understanding of scale, based on calculation of appropriate volumes and levels);
- Furniture and features - Seating, litter and dog waste bins.
- Signage and interpretation.
- Any underground encumbrance.

2.8 The landscape framework should demonstrate how the proposed development has reached its full potential in achieving an appropriate character of place and therefore quality of life through good design.

Appendix E

Play Space Design Proposals – Assessment Tool		Scoring				
		0	1	2	3	4
Scale and Location *Policy and masterplanning* 25%	Is the minimum policy spatial requirement met?					
	Is the play space in the right place?					
	Is there natural surveillance?					
	Are inherent risks mitigated?					
Visual Appeal *Placemaking and design* 25%	Does the play space fit with the wider context- an interesting and varied landscape of both natural and manmade materials?					
	Is the play space also a pleasant place for the wider community?					
	Will the play space engage people from different generations?					
	Is the play space design story legible?					
Play opportunities *Play types* 25%	Is the play space attractive to children?					
	Does the play space provide contact with nature?					
	Does the play space form extend play opportunities into the wider landscape?					
	Does the play space offer a range of linked play activities?					
	locomotive activities provided by fixed equipment					
	graduated challenge					
	sensory and elemental experiences					
	opportunities for social and creative play					
Form and materials *Robust and flexible* 25%	Does the landform and built features of the play space provide added value?					
	Is the play space accessible and inclusive?					
	Is there sufficient flexible space?					
	Are the materials and construction methods proven?					

Notes on Scoring Each category carries the same weight: **Scale and Location:** Highest score = 16, lowest=0, minimum satisfactory score =**8** **Visual Appeal:** Highest score = 16, lowest=0, minimum satisfactory score =**8** **Play Opportunities:** Highest score = 28, lowest=0, minimum satisfactory score =**14** **Form and Materials:** Highest score = 16, lowest=0, minimum satisfactory score =**8** **Total points available = 76, minimum total satisfactory score = 38**	non-existent or very poor quality opportunities	few or low quality opportunities	some or satisfactory opportunities	a variety or good quality opportunities	a wide variety or high quality opportunities