



Leisure, Culture & Arts

PLAY STRATEGY

for WEST LANCASHIRE



2004



WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

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Glossary of terms/abbreviations

ASBO:	Anti-social Behaviour Order
BME:	Black and minority ethnic
CSP:	Community Safety Partnership
DCMS:	Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
EYDCPs:	Early Years Development Childcare Partnerships
LANPAC:	Lancashire Partnership Against Crime
LCA:	Leisure, Culture and Arts
LEA:	Local Education Authority
LSP:	Local Strategic Partnership.
NPFA:	National Playing Fields Association
RAP:	Recreational Activity Programme
SDO/U:	Sports Development Officer/Unit
SAS:	Sport Action Skelmersdale
SRB:	Single Regeneration Budget.
WLDC:	West Lancashire District Council
WLPA:	West Lancashire Play Association

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FOREWORD

I am proud to introduce the first play strategy for the District of West Lancashire.

Play is without doubt an essential part of children's lives and their development, and West Lancashire District Council is committed to providing good quality play services for all local youngsters.

The District Council provides and maintains many children's play areas around the District, organises play opportunities through the many facilities and operates a strong outreach programme through grant aid and voluntary sector provision.

The Play Strategy offers a challenge to the Council to deliver the recommendations and, in doing so, to make a significant contribution to the quality of life of all those who live - and play - in West Lancashire.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Management of play

Play is an essential aspect of children's development and their initiation into wider cultural and leisure experiences. Play activity programmes and provision of fixed children's play site, are separately managed and considered. Programmes and fixed play provision demonstrates, based upon individual rather than corporate, evaluation, reasonable quality and a degree of value for money. The opportunity to exploit physical provision to support programmes designed to positively engage with children, young people and their parents is, thus, often missed. Inadequate strategic direction and cross-service thinking is, therefore, limiting the value for money obtained. The Strategy clarifies the rationale for involvement in Play and issues affecting provision. The Council's role in provision, is defined as follows:

Age	WLDC role
Children aged under five	To act as an enabler of services, where input is led by agencies such as social services, the Primary Care Trust and specific schemes, such as Surestart.
Children aged 5-13 years	To lead on key projects, stimulate and contribute to work with a range of partners agencies from all sectors.
Young people aged 13-18	To ensure effective integration with schemes of work defined and delivered within the remit of the wider cultural strategy.

Main categories of play provision in the District, at present, are as follows:

Element	Description
Play schemes	School holiday programmes at specific locations, play days delivered throughout the District, and after school activities.
Development	Delivered in partnership with schools, voluntary funding agencies, community groups and with challenge fund agencies (e.g., SRB5).
Playgrounds	Open access, Council managed, playgrounds located throughout West Lancashire. These are also provided by parish councils in certain areas.

WLDC needs a clear policy statement for play/informal recreational services for young people.

It should set up a multi-agency based co-ordinating forum to oversee play provision and development. This could/should be linked, via the Cultural partnership to the LSP.

WLDC should consider appointing (or re-designating) a full-time member of staff to co-ordinate delivery and to oversee issues such as referral, goal setting and monitoring.

A community capacity audit should be commissioned. Pending the results, WLDC, with partners, should identify, facilitate and resource a capacity building function. This should incorporate identification of local partners as 'start points' for training and development.

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Playdays

The Playday programme (for 5-8 year olds) involves delivery of school holiday play sessions throughout the District. At least one is run at venues located in, or accessible to, each ward/parish. It has intrinsic value and could make a strategic contribution to District play provision. The lack of a clear plan for play provision means that the possible value to be from the programme is not being maximised

The play days concept should be retained. Target provision should be, within 5 years, to deliver the equivalent of 10 play days in every ward in the District; 260 days - pro rata based on population. Consideration should be given to utilising the subsidy provided to support a change in the mode of delivery from WLPA to local community functions. Local work should be led by volunteer networks with a part-time/temporary staff as appropriate.

District wide, open access, sports and arts based schemes

WLDC manages a school holiday activity programme (aimed at 8-13 year olds) at leisure centres and the Chapel Art Gallery using sports coaching as the basic delivery vehicle. It is popular and well attended but only attracts a narrow catchment. In and of itself it is useful, popular and relatively inexpensive but it does not contribute (fully) to delivery of achievement of organisational goals.

10 additional school holiday programmes at key locations should be established (in the medium and long term supported, organised and run by local community/voluntary sector agencies). Priorities to be determined by specific local need and broader indices (e.g. IMD).
WLDC and other partners should identify support resources from existing budgets

Target group work with young people.

WLDC supports a range of diversionary activity programmes that target, as priorities, either young people within designated areas of deprivation or those who are deemed to have particular needs. They include the following:

- The Recreation Activity Programme (RAP), RAP Plus' and RAP Plus Plus'.
- Grove Youth and Community Centre Easter and Summer holiday play schemes.
- WLPA after school provision in designated wards in Skelmersdale.
- Support for the work of West Lancashire Disability Sports Forum plus schemes in Skelmersdale and at Edge Hill College and Moss Lea Day Centre.
- Sport Action Skelmersdale (SAS).
- Lancashire Youth and Community Service funded services.

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All programmes should be reviewed to allow designated places to be reserved for targeted SAS and RAP 'referrals. An integrated outreach programme should be introduced specifically targeted at work with community agencies to attract current 'non participants'.

Timetabling, content and pricing should be reviewed to support an extension of open access holiday programmes delivered through local community voluntary sector networks.

Programme providers should work with local groups to promote local involvement and sessional employment as part of a wider commitment to capacity building and sustainability at a local level. Accredited qualification opportunities should be provided where possible.

Target provision should be to provide 20% of places for referrals from other targets schemes.

WLDC and other partners should identify support resources from existing budgets.

Playgrounds

By 2018 WLDC will provide/assisted in the provision of, an appropriate distribution of *quality* children's play areas servicing the maximum number of the District's children and young people'. To do this is it will via a central play co-ordination function set standards for, and monitor, the location and maintenance of, designated built play sites, ensure resources are effectively applied, secure existing and seek out new, resources for play provision.

WLDC should commission, or undertake in house, a detailed appraisal of fixed play site provision.

Pending the results of this, WLDC should rationalise play site provision based upon a presumption to move away from maintaining small play sites in favour of improving larger facilities with better equipment and ancillary provision.

Greater local involvement in play site management should be encouraged. This should be linked to work designed to increase community capacity to deliver and support play work.

Resource allocation should, in part, be based upon assumptions about (plus measurement and appraisal of) maintenance costs and evidence of local juvenile nuisance/ crime reduction.

WLDC should, with parish councils, identify a District wide programme of community 'ownership' and management.

Consideration should be given to 'contracting out' site maintenance - linked to incentives to work with local groups (and/or other agencies) to improve site security, support local youth work programmes and clean, maintain and repair sites in line with local needs.

Consideration should be given to investment in a wider array of options including street sports facilities, (skateboard/roller-blade/BMX) youth shelters and multi-use activity areas.

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INTRODUCTION

This strategy document has been drawn up following, and is, in part, based upon a consultation process with individuals and agencies that work in and with the play sector, conducted by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) between October 2002 and May 2003. It covers the four year period from 2003-2006.

Generic rationale

Play is not only a right for all children but is also an essential aspect of their development, culture and quality of life and their initiation into wider cultural and leisure experiences.

Children are entitled to special consideration in strategic planning because they rely on the advocacy of adults in the social, economic and political spheres. It is the responsibility of adults to ensure that children's views are taken into account. This strategy is designed to ensure that children's play and free time needs and aspirations are met. It aims to ensure that children and adults are given opportunities, independently and together, to enjoy play and leisure activities and to benefit from the physical, emotional, cultural and social benefits these bring.

Children spend significant amounts of their time in provision they are required to attend and where creating free play opportunities is only one of a number of service objectives if it is an objective at all. Though play may be valued, such provision will often operate within a number of constraints. These include:

- ❑ The time available for free play - for example in schools.
- ❑ The nature of the physical environment - for example, out of school clubs in shared premises.
- ❑ An absence of a rich, outdoor play environment.
- ❑ Where management practicalities are prioritised at the expense of children's wishes.

In order to ensure that children's interests are reflected, a local authority should have a clearly stated policy on play. A corporate play policy, underpinned by a process that engages with those with an interest in, or responsibility for, children and their play, is the document that resolves and clarifies an authority's understanding of play. It is founded upon:

- ❑ Clear articulation of what is meant by play.
- ❑ Commitment to respond to children's needs and wishes.

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District rationale

The range of interests, organisations and agendas that impact upon children's play is wide. These include, in addition to those officers within WLDC with specific responsibility for this area of provision; housing, transport, planning, Early Years Development Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs), education, voluntary sector and commercial organisations. This play policy is intended to be a practical working tool that addresses issues affecting provision. It makes explicit:

- ❑ The objectives of play provision and services.
- ❑ The connection between acceptable levels of risk and play.
- ❑ A presumption in favour of inclusive provision.
- ❑ Criteria for a quality play environment.
- ❑ Play as an aspect of children's cultural life.
- ❑ How and why play can contribute to alleviating issues and problems associated with the Council's corporate priorities (outlined below).

The purpose of the Play Strategy is to more clearly determine the Council's rationale for involvement in this aspect of provision and ensure that investment and input is based upon this clearer purpose. The aim is, thus, to provide a framework for play provision in West Lancashire. In particular, it seeks to:

- ❑ Clarify and refine the role and function of WLDC.
- ❑ Where relevant and applicable, translate corporate aims and priorities into a clear, strategic action plan format.
- ❑ Take account of the role of the voluntary, commercial and other sectors in the organisation, provision and development of cultural activity.
- ❑ Identify whether and how partners can contribute to local play development.
- ❑ Dovetail play provision into other aspects of the district's cultural offer.
- ❑ Suggest output/outcome measures via which progress should be assessed.

WLDC is well placed to co-ordinate play provision and activity within the District. In terms of direct service provision however, it is only one of a number of providers; others include voluntary groups and parish councils. It has a key role supporting, financing, accommodating and delivering a substantial proportion of the fixed play and activity-led provision in the District. Play is a key element in the cultural offer that is part of any vibrant community. It is widely recognised that it stimulates a range of benefits by:

- ❑ Providing opportunities for creativity and self-expression.
- ❑ Enabling early years social interaction, personal development and underpinning ensuing lifelong learning processes.

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WEST LANCASHIRE: DISTRICT PROFILE

West Lancashire covers 34,688 hectares, a large proportion of which is agricultural land. As shown below, the District comprises 26 wards.

West Lancashire District



The District has a population of 108,377 residents. Just over half (54.4%) of the population is aged between 25 and 64 years (2001 Census). The breakdown associated with young people in the District is shown below:

Age group	Number	% of WLDC population
0-4	6,123	5.6
5-9	6,977	6.4
10-14	7,403	6.8
15-19	7,187	6.6
20-24	5,770	5.3

The District suffers from slightly higher unemployment (3.5%) than the UK average (3.1%). Long term unemployment is higher in Skelmersdale than in any other urban area in Lancashire. It is the 99th most deprived district in England on a measure of the average of IMD ward scores. Almost one quarter (23%) of its population lives in wards ranked among the 10% most deprived in the Country.

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LOCAL CONTEXT

WLDC corporate objectives

The 'vision' of West Lancashire District is 'to put customer services first and build a community second to none'. The Council's stated values are:

- ❑ Putting customers and frontline services first.
- ❑ Listening to, informing and consulting local people.
- ❑ Being open and accountable in the way we make decisions.
- ❑ Embracing innovation and partnership as a way of bringing about step change improvement in our services.
- ❑ Promoting equality of opportunity and valuing the diversity of our communities.
- ❑ Valuing and developing our employees.
- ❑ Ensuring local services offer the best possible value

These guiding principles are the foundation for the Councils' corporate priorities:

- ❑ Protecting and improving the environment.
- ❑ Combating crime and the fear of crime.
- ❑ Working to create good quality jobs for local people.
- ❑ Improving housing and ensuring that there is affordable housing available for local people.
- ❑ Improving access to, and satisfaction with, our services.
- ❑ Improving the health of local communities.
- ❑ Providing opportunities for leisure and culture.

Provision for play features in the District's Community Strategy in the context of the Council's ambition to 'improve leisure opportunities (i.e. by increasing investment in leisure, culture and sports facilities within the district).

In the Community Strategy WLDC re-states its intention to function as a facilitator to encourage partnership working and develop varied cultural infrastructure within the district. It has, in its own words; 'a sport and recreation development role co-ordinating activities ranging from the promotion of national, regional and local sporting initiatives to children's play activities, both formal and informal'. Initiatives provided to date include co-ordinated summer holiday programmes involving a range of activity providers and the 'Recreational Activities' programme; a scheme developed to encourage positive activities for teenagers throughout the school holidays in a bid to reduce juvenile delinquency.

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STRATEGIC VISION

The strategic vision for West Lancashire and the various disciplines and services to which it applies, is outlined under three main 'headings'. These encapsulate a number of the corporate values and priorities outlined earlier in this document:

1. ***'Providing opportunities for leisure and culture'*** and ***'Building a community second to none'*** are translated into the cultural strategy aim to: Improving the quality, quantity and sustainability of cultural activity - for all residents; and the quality of time spent in the district - for visitors.
2. ***Promoting equality of opportunity and valuing the diversity of our communities has been taken to mean:*** Making additional effort to enhance the quality of life and (via this) the life-chances of people from identified groups in the District.
3. ***Ensuring local services offer the best possible value:*** This is interpreted as confirming the need to measure the impact and value of, balance quality and quantity of provision, and the need to secure appropriate, well-targeted, future investment in play in West Lancashire

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PROVIDING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Providing services for children should, particularly in the wider context of a cultural strategy, recognise that:

- ❑ Play is an essential aspect of children's culture and quality of life.
- ❑ Children's play is an initiation into a wider cultural life.
- ❑ Play and culture share the characteristic of being intrinsically worthwhile.

When considering play and cultural strategy a useful distinction can be drawn between two forms of engagement. Those which:

- ❑ Arise out of an element of compulsion.
- ❑ Are voluntary and rooted in free choice.

In creating the space and time for play, adults need to:

- ❑ Affirm the intrinsic value of play, and by implication cultural engagement generally.
- ❑ Create the context for initiating children into key societal values.

It is not possible to respond to children's rights, needs and wishes without a clear understanding about free play, both as cultural expression and in terms of children's development.

'Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals, and as members of the community'. New Charter for Children's Play (Children's Play Council).

Social inclusion

The provision of play opportunity, and its use as a vehicle through which to engage people, can impact right across the community in terms of wider educational achievement, health and exclusion. Priorities are required to ensure that good quality, well-organised opportunity is made available and accessible. Voluntary sector and parish council managed resources need to be marshalled effectively to provide a greater range of quality opportunity in a manner that improves accessibility to/for local communities.

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PROGRAMME DELIVERY

This Strategy incorporates an assessment of the nature and extent of WLDC work with children and young people through provision of play and informal recreational opportunity. The strategic context for the report is as follows:

- ❑ The need for clear identification of policy-based and operational priorities.
- ❑ A linked appraisal of how WLDC could and should apply its support and resources - in order to be most effective.
- ❑ How the impact and value of such work should be assessed.
- ❑ Recommendations on practical steps required to address issues highlighted.

Play provision and the structures within which work supported, driven or delivered by WLDC is managed, are defined as follows:

Age	WLDC role
Children aged under five	To act as an enabler of services, where input is led by agencies such as social services, the Primary Care Trust and specific schemes, such as Surestart.
Children aged 5-13 years	WLDC role: To lead on key projects, stimulate and contribute to work with a range of partners agencies from all sectors.
Young people aged 13-18	WLDC role: To ensure effective integration with schemes of work defined and delivered within the remit of the wider cultural strategy.

The provision and maintenance of fixed play sites owned and managed by WLDC is also considered. This includes their size, quality, distribution and maintenance

WLDC (and partner-managed/delivered) commitment is categorised as follows:

Element	Description
Play schemes	These take the form of school holiday programmes at specific locations, play days delivered throughout the District, and after school activities.
Playgrounds	WLDC is directly responsible for a number of open access playgrounds located throughout the District. The majority of these are in Ormskirk, Skelmersdale, and, to a lesser extent, Burscough. It also works with, and alongside, parish councils that provide playgrounds in other parts of the District.
Development	Working with partners in schools, voluntary funding agencies, community groups and with challenge fund agencies (e.g., SRB5) to provide programme input and expertise. This should dovetail with local sports development work and County Partnership managed 'Active Sport' processes. It should also be linked to policies on facility access, management and the targeting of subsidy.

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Scope of work

A number of children orientated programmes and activities are delivered across the Authority. In addition to locally organised play and crèche opportunities; provided by local groups at church halls and parish facilities, WLDC supports targeted and general access schemes. These comprise, in the main:

- School holiday play-days for young people aged 5 to 8 years.
- District wide sports and arts based schemes with open access.
- Target group based work with young people.

The nature of these programmes means that they overlap with sports and arts development and associated facility concerns. The need to maximise value at these 'common interest' points areas is addressed below.

School holiday play days for 5 to 8 year olds.

This work is currently co-ordinated and delivered by the West Lancashire Play Association (WLPA). Its annual programme is based around delivery of approximately 85 'activity days' at a variety of venues throughout the District.

WLPA is a registered charity which, underpinned by grant availability, has one full time and 15 part time paid staff. For it's planned 2003/4 work it envisages making regular use of approximately 10 unpaid volunteers. The programme runs year round and incorporates the delivery of play sessions principally in the Easter and summer school holidays, as well as a number during intervening half term breaks. It is delivered at locations throughout West Lancashire, with at least one in or accessible to every ward/parish.

Play days are targeted at local residents and provide all day cover. Activities include arts, craft, drama informal sports and a range of games within a structured environment.

Two broad issues need to be considered with regard to the provision of this part of the service. They relate to:

- The value of the play day concept (both the sessions themselves and as part of a wider play delivery programme).
- The effectiveness and efficiency of WLPA in delivering it

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The value of the play day concept

Play days, as they are delivered in the Authority, comprise a single day, stand-alone programme. This can be delivered at different locations and be aimed at different children on a rolling programme basis.

The content usually varies, if/where they are delivered at the same location or when delivered within the same or adjacent school holidays. It is important to note that, in principle, they are presented as complete in themselves and not part of a wider/progressive experience. In practice, the programme could evolve to some extent and delivery at the same location (where a majority of the children attending might be expected to have attended previous days) could incorporate the development of ideas or themes previously dealt with. Strengths and weakness are dealt with below.

Strengths:

- ❑ It allows delivery across the whole Authority area at relatively low cost.
- ❑ It brings skilled, experienced and qualified staff into local communities which otherwise would struggle to develop or attract this level of input.
- ❑ The programmes offered, within the context of the limitations outlined below, appear to provide interesting and varied experiences to/for young people.
- ❑ It exploits, and make use of, facilities that might otherwise not be particularly well utilised.

Weaknesses:

- ❑ It targets a relatively narrow age band (5-8 year olds) leaving a significant number of children outside its provision.
- ❑ There is limited, if any, continuity in any one location.
- ❑ No area gets consecutive day-on-day access throughout holiday periods.
- ❑ It is difficult for children and play workers to get to know each other and establish positive relationships.
- ❑ There is limited opportunity to build up positive group dynamics.
- ❑ There is less opportunity for parents/carers to become involved in delivery, limiting potential for local skill development, ownership and capacity building.
- ❑ Children whose parents have access to cars are more likely to travel to place their children in/at play days outside their area of residence and there is consequential inequality of opportunity.
- ❑ In and of itself the play day programme has limited strategic impact.
- ❑ It is difficult to use it as a platform for other work, for example, with parents where it might, for example, complement access to vocational skill training.

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On an individual day programme basis, provision appears to be appropriately structured and organised and recognises the needs of children of the target age with appropriate activities and supervisory concern.

The inherently 'transient' nature of play days means, however, that strategic value is greatest when such activity is planned and delivered as part of a wider, more comprehensive activity programme. At present, there is no overarching programme in WLDC and the play day programme sits as a fairly isolated series of activities.

WLPA reports that because no access restrictions are applied, some parents travel from location to location on consecutive days to 'deposit' their children at its sessions. This leaves the programme open to accusations of 'child-minding' and undermines the value of the subsidy input into the days by WLPA and the Council's commitment to the concept. It is interesting to note that, outside the Surestart programme area, there is no strategic organisation of childcare linked to support for parental lifelong learning and employment in the District. Certainly play days do not try to provide this service, although they may be contributing by proxy.

The programme exists in an environment in which it is set no explicit, clearly designated targets for it, or for children's play more generally. Notwithstanding the presumption that play is important in its own right and carries with it generic personal and social benefit, the WLPA programme is not bound by, or set within, any clear target or outcome based framework. The play day programme has evolved in response to funding availability and emerging/changing priorities (see below). Because it has not been fundamentally reviewed and 'reconstructed' its ability to confidently tackle important issues, either as they might affect young people or the wider community, is inconsistent.

It does, for example, provide support to parents and children in rural communities and, within this, complements the Vital Villages scheme. Similarly, its work in Skelmersdale, supplements programmes such as Surestart and RAP providing access to play for a wide range of young people, some from disadvantaged areas.

Value for money

Based on the information available the play day programme in the WLD appears, in and of itself, to be appropriately priced and to this extent represents acceptable value for money, aggregating at approximately £320/day. This assumes that the cost includes all staffing expenditure (wages, expenses, training etc), necessary planning and publicity and hire of premises. It also is based on providing 4 'full day' members of staff and provision of appropriate equipment and material.

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WLPA

WLPA was established more than twenty years ago. It has, over this time, changed and developed both as an organisation and in the way in which it organises and delivers children's play. It previously acted as a management and training agent, in this role being responsible for the co-ordination of District-wide, comprehensive programmes principally funded by external sources.

Its core funding was originally linked to delivery of training opportunities for local people. For some time its main vehicle of delivery has been the play day programme. Although recently in receipt of funding to deliver other schemes, this is the area of work of which it has greatest knowledge and experience. Similarly, over this time it has acquired considerable knowledge about the District, its population and inter-agency working within it.

While recognising this, its skills and knowledge base revolves principally around the input of its principal member of staff. This is a weakness. It narrows the intellectual base and represents an over-reliance on the one individual. The organisation also demonstrates a degree of professional competence. Technically, its management structure is accountable although the extent to which this accountability is exercised is a matter for debate. Notwithstanding its limitations, the play day programme is delivered effectively, assisted by its good local knowledge and experience of the profession in general.

In summary

The school holiday play day programmes for 5 to 8 year olds has intrinsic value and could make a strategically important contribution to delivery of District play provision. WLPA, within the remit of its grant contract with WLDC, appears to be a sound and experienced organisation. However, the lack of a clear plan for play provision means that not all the possible value is being drawn from the programme.

Reviewing play provision allows the opportunity to reconsider the deliver of the 5 to 8 programme. Although currently delivered by WLPA, other agencies may be appropriate vehicles and this should be done in order to demonstrate an open and challenging approach. Reappraisal would be assisted, and would need to be pre-empted, by the clarification of WLDC expectations.

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District wide sports and arts based schemes with open access.

WLDC delivers and manages a programme of school holiday activity programmes for young people. This is delivered at leisure centres in Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale and at/with the Chapel Art Gallery in Ormskirk. The scheme, which is aimed principally at young people aged 8-13 year, has open access and uses centre staff. Sport programmes, although not formally developmentally orientated, use sports coaching as the basic delivery vehicle. They are organised round half-day blocks through a 'pay on the door policy'. The strengths and weaknesses of the programme are as follows:

Strengths:

- ❑ It attracts young people into sports and arts facilities in their local area, where they might not otherwise attend.
- ❑ It provides supported, non-threatening opportunity to participate in new activities that can be taken further outside of the programme.
- ❑ It addresses the needs of an important age group during holiday periods.
- ❑ It provides diversionary activities for young people that may otherwise be vulnerable to becoming involved in criminal or unsafe activities.
- ❑ It is not reliant upon attendance with friends.
- ❑ It engages sports centre staff in direct delivery encouraging a positive community interface.
- ❑ It opens up facilities at what are otherwise off-peak periods.
- ❑ It is a potential platform for links to other sports or arts development work.
- ❑ It brings sports development, community development and facility management professionals together to design and deliver activities.
- ❑ It is delivered by trained staff in safe, well managed facilities

Weaknesses:

- ❑ Activities can be, and often are, run on a stand-alone basis with no structured or progressive tie-ins to other strategic programmes.
- ❑ Although it offers subsidised/affordable access, it is widely considered to attract those most able to afford the entry fees.
- ❑ Due to the location and nature of delivery it is thought to attract attendance from the expected participating groups (i.e. those with interested, active and or mobile parents).
- ❑ Strategic dialogue between delivery agents is limited and the quality, marketing and style of the days reflects current facility management regimes.
- ❑ Sports facility based programmes tend to leave people with traditionally poor access to services in general outside of the core catchment.

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These programmes are popular and generally well attended. However, as is noted above they have probably attracted, by virtue of their facility based nature and the way they are organised, a fairly narrow population catchment. Like some other aspects of service delivery for children and young people in the District they appear to operate independently of wider strategic or 'joined up' approaches. To this extent, while in and of themselves, they are useful, popular and relatively inexpensive to provide, they do not contribute (to their full potential) towards delivery of achievement of organisational goals.

Target group work with young people.

Antisocial behaviour by young people is a key area of concern to WLDC and it supports a range of diversionary activity programmes. A number of specific children's and youth activity projects, which target, as priorities, either young people within designated areas of deprivation or those who are deemed to have particular needs are in place. They include the following:

RAP

The Recreation Activity Programme (RAP) incorporates a summer programme for targeted young people from across the WLDC area and year round activities (including evenings and weekend work) for children aged 10-13, principally in Skelmersdale. It works very successfully at a number of levels with a group of young people with whom it is normally very difficult to meaningfully engage.

RAP was developed following a proposal by the Police to create a multi-agency summer holiday scheme aimed at children and young people at risk from crime or of becoming involved in it. In conjunction with the Lancashire Community Safety Partnership, the scheme was incorporated into the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime (LANPAC) Action Plan.

On this basis, key statutory sector partners work with the voluntary sector to support and co-ordinate RAP's work. The scheme is resourced through statutory agency officer time, volunteers and a raft of grant aid, including LANPAC's grant fund, WLDC and private sector sponsorship (initially including support from the Co-op Bank). Principal funding is through SRB5 and, because of this, some targeting of work occurs in and around Skelmersdale.

Additional resource has recently been acquired through the Children's Fund to expand this work, allowing an extended programme and supporting administrative functions. Management responsibility linked to this additional funding rests with the County Council's Youth and Community Service. This part of the overall programme has become known as 'RAP Plus'.

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Reflecting the value of work with young people at risk, a third element of the programme has been developed which provides activities based on motorcycling, arts (film making) and sports development for a small number of referred young people. The working title for this element is 'RAP Plus Plus'.

An important element of this work is the provision of resources to allow delivery of activities targeted at young people in Skelmersdale based at informal 'youth/teenage' areas and community centres. It is intended that this function will link into, and to some extent 'feed', other services in the area.

The tie up with informal recreational and play space is important also because, in general terms these areas have not been linked into any structured or strategic programming. The concept of 'off site' working, and the practical lessons learnt through it, will perhaps inform a wider review of services.

The combined impact of this is significant and constitutes an important platform for working with young people. The necessary interagency partnerships are relatively cordial and could form the basis of working arrangements that have the potential for further extension. As its often the case in this type of work, the development of the programme has, to a large extent 'followed' the course set by the funding opportunities that underpin it. It has, thus, in many ways, been a fairly reactive programme.

Although the longer-term security of the various funding streams is, almost by definition, uncertain, the strategic context of the work needs to be recognised and considered within a wider understanding of provision for children and young people. This will provide a framework to help secure the extension of the scheme beyond current grant periods and ensure that it informs the direction and shape of other complementary work. At the moment, in strategic terms, it parallels the play day concept for 5 to 8 year olds, in that it sits to some degree in isolation from other programmes.

Children's Fund support for other additional activities; Grove Youth and Community Centre and WLPA

Although not formally linked under the RAP brand other additional funding has been sourced from the Children's Fund to deliver additional programmes in Burscough and Skelmersdale. The Grove Youth and Community Centre has received funding to deliver Easter and Summer holiday play schemes at rural playgrounds, servicing young people who otherwise would 'not easily be able to access services'. WLPA has also received a grant to allow it deliver year round after school provision in designated wards in Skelmersdale for five to ten year olds.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Integrated working and multi-agency co-operation has helped to secure this funding and, in line with the RAP programme's growth should be maintained. This model, as with other elements of current work, will usefully inform a review of the organisation and co-ordination of services for young people across the District.

Special needs provision

Notwithstanding programmes that have general 'all-ability' access, WLDC does not directly provide play/recreational opportunities for children with special needs. It does support the work of West Lancashire Disability Sports Forum (WLDSF). It runs a 'sportsability' club. This is a broadly holiday play scheme based activity club operating in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. It uses sport as a principal vehicle for delivery. It is currently seeking funding to allow year round opportunities and to enable the formation of a regular after school club.

In addition to the work of WLDSF, a local group of parents independently organise a weekly specialist scheme in Skelmersdale. Similarly summer holiday schemes for children with a disability are run at Edge Hill College and Moss Lea Day Centre.

This is, self evidently, an important aspect of provision. There is a legitimate rationale for a significant part of it to be delivered and organised by specialist groups working purely with disabled people and their parents or carers. This should not, however, be conceived or delivered in isolation. Links with a wider programme of access to established sports clubs and the proper provision of equitable access to all play programmes should also be a priority.

Sports Action Skelmersdale

Sport Action Skelmersdale (SAS) is a year round programme operating in Skelmersdale. It is targeted at young people in the area who would normally not join sports clubs or take part in organised physical activity outside school. It uses a mixture of sport and play activities run at local sports centres, schools and community venues.

The programme is funded jointly by SRB 5 and WLDC. It is managed by the Authority's sports development function and is, on this basis, juxtaposed with other work linked to Lancashire Sport's Active Sports programme, TOPs, the District's GP Referral programme and the North West Millennium Volunteers programme.

Glenburn School, principally through the successful youth and community programme it delivers, is an important partner and joint work here has demonstrated positive outcomes with young people in a neighbourhood delivery context. This may be a model for future work.

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The SAS is seeking to bridge the gap between community delivery and sports development work. Where it has engaged local partners this is working well. Its weakness is, however that it has failed to establish strong operational links with a wider range of service providers. Because of this, its funding sources limit its remit to work within the Skelmersdale area.

Its management by the sports development function does provide it with good opportunity to dovetail into other initiatives. In practice, however, because it absorbs a considerable staff resource and because of the present orientation and capacity of the staff involved, links with other development work are not particularly well developed.

Lancashire Youth and Community Service programmes

The Youth and Community Service funds year round services at a number of community facilities across the District. This includes the delivery of play and recreational opportunities in rural areas. The service provides three day a week youth club provision at three rural, locally access venues where access to services in general is deemed to be more difficult.

Community centre based work includes art and music activities at in Ormskirk and a year round programme, with additional school holiday provision at the Grove Youth Centre in Burscough.

The Burscough scheme is based around a regular three day a week regular youth club programme and includes four-day-a-week school holiday provision for 8-13 year olds, and separate programmes for over 13 year olds. In delivering this, the centre is an important contact point for the RAP programme and, by virtue of its location, is able to attract usage from a number of the rural communities in the north of the District.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

PLAY AREAS

Fixed play areas are distributed across West Lancashire and are owned and managed by either WLDC or local parish councils. This section of the report is concerned principally with WLDC sites, although there is an obvious interrelationship between both categories of provision.

Information used here is based, largely upon survey work carried out by WLDC staff. This identified play areas in Council, parish/town council and voluntary sector ownership. It initially identified location and category (based on size and equipment). This allows identification of radial catchment zones (RCZs) for each play area using the framework below. This is the notional catchment of a play site based, broadly on its size and the number of items of play equipment it contains. Using the NPFA standards (see also Appendix 1) sites are defined as follows:

- LAP: Local Area for Play.
- LEAP: Local Equipped Area for Play.
- NEAP: Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play.

The radial catchment framework below is based on the NPFA play area categories and their characteristics. The rationale is that it is assumed that people will travel greater distances to sites that have a greater variety of facilities.

NPFA play area categories

Play area type	Min. size equipped play area	Min. no. of play units	Radial straight-line distance for play area
LAP	100m ²	1-2 types of play features	60m
LEAP	400m ²	5 types of play unit	240m
NEAP	1,000m ²	8 types of play unit	600m

The RCZ takes into account additional facilities that could be located near to play areas that would extend its catchment zone further. These may include a kick-wall, multi-sports rebound wall, basketball or other hard surfaced area, a multi-use games area and a skateboard/BMX park. If the site includes these facilities the catchment zone, as shown above, is increased by 60m. The study also takes into account the locational context of the play area such as whether it is stand alone, on a recreation ground or on an area with formal sport and recreation facilities. The play area catchment is deemed to increase by 10% if it is located on a recreation ground and 20% if on an area with formal sport and recreation facilities.

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ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING PROVISION

This assesses the adequacy of provision within each of the catchment areas based on hectareage provision per 1,000 head of population and the catchment area of each play area using the above framework. There are, according to information provided by WLDC, approximately 61 children's play area sites within the District. WLDC owns the majority of these but a number are owned and managed by parish councils. Site ownership is not identified as part of this exercise.

Play area site analysis; 26 wards of West Lancashire

Ward	Unclassified	LEAP	NEAP	Kick-about	TOTAL
Aughton Park	1	0	0	0	1
Aughton Town Green	0	0	1	0	1
Bickerstaffe	0	0	0	0	0
Birch Green	5	6	0	2	13
Burscough	0	3	0	1	4
Derby	0	3	0	0	3
Digmoor	3	2	1	1	7
Downholland	0	0	0	0	0
Halsall	0	0	0	0	0
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	0	0	0	0	0
Knowsley	1	2	1	0	4
Lathom	0	1	0	0	1
Moorside	4	2	0	0	6
Newburgh	0	0	0	0	0
North Meols	0	1	1	0	2
Parbold	0	0	0	0	0
Rufford	0	1	0	0	1
Scarisbrick	0	0	1	0	1
Scott	1	2	0	0	3
Skelmersdale North	1	3	0	0	4
Skelmersdale South	1	2	0	1	4
Tanhouse	1	2	0	1	4
Tarleton	0	0	1	0	1
Upholland North	0	0	0	0	0
Upholland South	0	0	0	0	0
Wrightington	1	0	0	0	1
WEST LANCASHIRE	19	30	6	6	61

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Play areas: Target aspiration

The following target statement and action plan is suggested as a focus for work

'By 2018 West Lancashire District Council will aim to provide and have assisted in the provision of an appropriate distribution of quality children's play areas which will service the maximum number of the District's children and young people'.

This will be achieved by WLDC having responsibility for and/or facilitating the following:

New and enhanced existing play provision

- Phased programme of new provision and enhancements to existing play to ensure that the majority of the District's settlement areas fall within the catchment of a play area. Prioritise those areas that have high proportion of children and young people, are relatively deprived within the District and are within one of the five main settlements.
- Adopt a planning policy and supplementary guidance seeking contributions to play provision on individual dwellings. Retain a policy seeking play areas on sites over a certain threshold that can contain a viable play area. Seek contributions for existing play areas through Section 106 agreements.
- Seek contributions from developers for each new house and flat (with the exception of residential homes) to go towards facility improvement. Contributions should be apportioned between provision and the maintenance of provision. A commuted sum for 25 years of maintenance should be requested from developers.
- Supplementary guidance to include details of standards of design, layout, construction and maintenance.
- Ensure that within three years each play area has the appropriate fencing, signage, seating and litter bins.

Community involvement

- Continued involvement of the West Lancashire Youth Forum.
- Establishment of 'friends of playground groups' to take forward local residents views of open spaces within their areas and develop strategies for the improvement of these spaces. A key element of this will be to engage young people and identify their needs.
- School user surveys, in partnership with the LEA, to identify issues around play area use.
- Establishment of 'constituted' skateboard groups to enable additional funding and responsibility for the provision of facilities to be shared with young people in the District.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Accessibility

- ❑ Investigate the potential for creating 'safer routes' to parks and play areas through improved highway crossings, dedicated and marked pathways to entrance points, reduced speed zones around parks and play areas.
- ❑ Investigate the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act on improvements to accessing play areas.

Publicity and awareness

- ❑ Publish leaflets on recreation and play area provision for local residents.

Monitor and review

- ❑ Monitor and review the Action Plan on an annual basis.
- ❑ Review the strategy on a three yearly basis.

Priorities and implementation

The process of determining priorities should be based upon a range of standards and assessments. In the context of West Lancashire a simple analysis of the adequacy and distribution of stock according to the NPFA standard is insufficient as a mechanism to determine shortfalls and assess needs. It needs to be overlaid with a range of other factors

Prioritise and rationalise sites according to important issues:

- ❑ Delivery of high quality sites maintained to a high standard.
- ❑ Percentage of population aged U16.
- ❑ IMD indices.
- ❑ Population density.

Plans and proposals:

- ❑ Safe routes to schools.
- ❑ Investment in public open space.
- ❑ Plans for the Green Corridor.
- ❑ Public footpath/cycleway investment linked to the regeneration of Sken town centre.
- ❑ Community consultation preferences.

Based on this framework the wards of Birch Green, Tanhouse, Skelmersdale North, Skelmersdale South, Digmoor and Moorside should be prioritised for development of provision. All of these are in the Skelmersdale area of WLDC. As only two wards are in Skelmersdale are not in the 'high priority' category it seems appropriate to devise a plan looking at the settlement as a whole.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Ward-based priorities for play sites

Ward	IMD rank within District *	% U-16 rank within District	Population rank within District	Overall Score **	Priority
Birch Green	4	4	1	9	High Priority
Tanhouse	1	2	8	11	
Skelmersdale North	5	5	3	13	
Digmoor	2	1	11	14	
Moorside	3	3	12	18	
Skelmersdale South	6	11	7	24	
Burscough	16	7	4	27	Medium Priority
Scott	9	14	6	29	
Lathom	8	8	16	32	
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	19	6	15	40	
Knowsley	18	17	5	40	
Tarleton	20	15	9	44	
Downholland	10	9	26	45	
Upholland North	13	18	14	45	
Derby	21	26	2	49	
North Meols	11	21	18	50	
Upholland South	7	23	20	50	
Aughton Town Green	22	19	10	51	
Bickerstaffe	14	12	25	51	
Parbold	26	13	13	52	
Rufford	23	10	23	56	Low Priority
Scarisbrick	15	22	19	56	
Aughton Park	25	16	17	58	
Halsall	12	25	24	61	
Wrightington	17	24	21	62	
Newburgh	24	20	22	66	

* IMD rankings and proportion of U16 year olds taken from www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

** Overall score is the sum of the three rankings for each ward.

Quality and quantity

It important to note that the identified priority areas already have a large number of play sites, mostly LAPs and LEAPs. Recognising the desire for high quality accessible provision, the effectiveness with which these site deliver appropriate opportunity should be reviewed.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

A GIS analysis of provision identifies parts of Skelmersdale which fall outside existing radial catchments. Evidence from WLDC officers suggest that a number of existing sites are of poor quality. It would appear that the large number of sites also makes maintenance expensive and, in practical terms difficult to deliver to a high standard. Contract specification and monitoring is difficult and expensive.

In summary, provision in Skelmersdale is expensive and, based on reasonable aspirations, is often below standard.

On this basis a review and rationalisation of site would be appropriate, resulting in a smaller number of high quality sites to be delivered which more properly cover the settlement's needs. Illustrating this, maps at Appendix 11 provide an indicative, schematic radial catchment plan based upon different options relating to site closure and development.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE ACTION

In summary, current play provision for children and young people that is delivered directly by WLDC, and that run in partnership with other agencies, offers opportunities for principal target groups in locations through the District. This is presently delivered through several different facilities and service providers and is supported by a range of centrally funded, grant aid based, initiatives.

West Lancashire's present play schemes and programmes demonstrate, in an isolated context and based upon, individual project/scheme based rather than corporate, cost estimate calculations and funding criteria targets, reasonable quality and a degree of value for money. Nevertheless the evolved nature of the programmes and the opportunities to provide programmes linked to the specific requirements of available funding has resulted in lack of cohesion and inadequate overall strategic direction. The strategic value for money represented by this provision is, by virtue of this, limited.

Furthermore, reflecting the geographic and social diversity of the District, significant numbers of young people within the designated target band (5-13 year olds) do not, or cannot, access provision. The absence of clear play policy results in difficulty understanding and planning for service development.

The Authority has strong, established relationships/partnerships, such as with WLPA and agencies linked to the RAP initiatives. Similarly, in-house work through sports development and facility management functions is relatively well-organised and effective at local level.

However, as is noted above these programmes are not strongly linked to wider work and the potential to maximise the value of focused effort and to properly scope new work and opportunities is inhibited. The option to dovetail them effectively into other programmes and services is being missed.

It is demonstrably the case that, in the District at present, work is undertaken by a number of agencies and individuals with significant skills, expertise and resources. This must be harnessed and galvanised. An exemplar would be the RAP committee sub group work linked to Children's Fund applications.

Bringing this group together as part of a wider strategic overview of provision would provide a, potentially valuable, multi-agency co-ordinating forum to oversee much of the work being undertaken. Linked to this, identification of a central, possibly full time paid member of staff to co-ordinate delivery, oversee issues such as referral to targeted schemes, goal setting and monitoring would be useful and enhance strategic service value.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Responding to pressure to deliver opportunities in areas of deprivation, particularly linked to crime reduction/diversionary work is important. This is likely to remain a priority for the Authority and its partners. As noted above these programmes should supplement (rather than 'infill') a District wide commitment to delivering good quality services. The sustainability of this work in general, and individual programmes such as RAP and SAS, will be enhanced if apparently reactive work can be set within a wider framework geared to achieving District objectives.

The District should draw up a clear policy statement on levels and target for play and informal recreational services for young people. This should, in demonstrate recognition that the provision of services for children should, particularly in the context of a cultural strategy, reflect the fact that:

- ❑ Play is an essential aspect of children's culture and quality of life.
- ❑ Children's play is an initiation into a wider cultural life
- ❑ Play and culture share the characteristic of being intrinsically worthwhile.

It should place a significance emphasis on the need and value of partnership working and the legitimacy of targeting provision at areas of particular need. Targets linked with this statement should relate to:

- ❑ Work by WLDC to encourage the centralisation of functional responsibility towards a multi agency body to monitor, oversee and co-ordinate work. The leisure 'wing' of the LSP should be consulted and, in an appropriate form, engaged to model, and possibly perform, this function.
- ❑ Recognising the value of removed (arms length) co-ordination, WLDC's input needs to be clear and offer leadership of, and co-ordination for, all of the Authority's work, and that of its partners. This includes, where possible, delineating budgetary commitments.
- ❑ A recognition that all areas of the District should be serviced by programmes meeting agreed and common standards.
- ❑ The need to support delivery with a designated function, including scheme referral, application of quality standards and co-ordinated forward planning. This should include work with WLDC sports development and facility management functions in line with requirements of the emerging Cultural Strategy.
- ❑ Identification of a single hypothecated budget for provision.
- ❑ Consideration should be given to supporting common branding, staff training and a central programme information point.
- ❑ West Lancashire's EYDCPs and schools must be represented in the play policy (and cultural strategy) development process.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Recommended actions

Establish centralised play co-ordination function

WLDC should work with partners to identify a permanent District wide play co-ordination function. Representatives should include:

- ❑ WLDC.
- ❑ (LANPAC).
- ❑ Lancashire Police.
- ❑ Lancashire County Council - Youth and community service.
- ❑ West Lancashire Early Years and Childcare Partnerships.
- ❑ Skelmersdale SRB.
- ❑ Key schools (Glenburn High School).
- ❑ Local neighbourhood representative structure.

Its principal functions should be to:

- ❑ Set and monitor common standards for delivery of play work across the District.
- ❑ Limit duplication and ensure resources are effectively applied.
- ❑ Secure commitment to maintenance of existing, and to identify and secure new, resources for play provision.
- ❑ Oversee referral of groups and individuals to specific play and youth support projects
- ❑ Facilitate a continuum-based, integrated approach to provision; supporting accessible exit routes from targeted programmes to year round play, youth or other opportunities across agencies.
- ❑ Set standards for, and monitor the location and maintenance of, designated built play sites ensuring effective use of resources; particularly between the District and parishes. This may include contract letting or alternatively work with lead agency (WLDC) on site maintenance procedures.
- ❑ Promoting smarter working and interagency co-ordination by improving communication and flexible use of capital, revenue and human resources.

The co-ordinating committee should be resourced via joint commitment to an administrative budget and, where appropriate, budget re-designation or staff secondments.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Programme delivery - open access

Establish community based play worker capacity for work with five to eight year olds.

There is an identifiable need to strengthen and enhance local community capacity to organise and deliver good quality, locally based play opportunity. The current level of voluntary sector capacity varies from area to area. In nearly all parts of the District it is operating below its potential. The inherently unsustainable nature of the 'bought-in' play day programme emphasises this.

Resources should be allocated to a medium to long term programme of local capacity building. This should be achieved within a broadly comparative budget that:

- Delivers an increased number of play days through the District.
- Delivers an increased programme of school holiday comprehensive play programmes at key locations.

Building upon existing work, WLDC should:

- Undertake a District wide community capacity audit.
- Identify, facilitate and resource a capacity building function within the District
- Identify key local partners to act as 'start points' for training and development.
- Initiate a 5 year programme for development of new community based play opportunities with support which:
 - Starting in year one - incorporates the progressive introduction of community play days at site throughout the District.
 - Starting in year 3 - initiates the progressive programme of school holiday programmes at key locations.

This programme should be co-ordinated by a body operating on an 'arms length' basis (as per Recommendation 1 overleaf) or directly by WLDC. Advice, support and resources should be secured from other partners.

It should be predicated on an assumption of no long-term additional resources. Existing partners' expertise and funding should be hypothecated to the programme and new funding avenues sought. Lead-in resources support will be required. Certainly the need for some transitional funding, to allow continuation of at least the current level of play provision, should be recognised.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

The current role of WLPA should be reviewed. Either contracted to WLDC or via the proposed multi agency advisory panel, it should be retained on an extended, (say 3) year, contract to lead on community capacity building including staff and volunteer training, programme development and expert support and advice. Play days and holiday programmes should be required to operate at new/innovative locations. This might include delivery at play sites (as per recent programmes).

Self evidently the requirements of the Children Act, with regard to building regulations and so on must be considered. Programmes should be designed to accommodate this and, where necessary, funding be sought to undertake building improvements.

Key recommendation 1

Programme designation	Target age range	Location	Preferred delivery agent
Play days	Children 5 to 8 years	Across District	Local community network/WLPA
<p>The concept of delivery of play days should be retained. Direct delivery of this function should, based upon the implementation of a phased 3 to 5 year programme, be moved from WLPA to local community functions.</p> <p>Local work should be led by volunteer networks with a part-time/temporary staff resources as appropriate</p> <p>Target provision should be, within 5 years, to deliver the equivalent of 10 play days in every ward in the District; 260 days - pro rata based on population.</p>			

Key recommendation 2

Programme designation	Target age range	Location	Preferred delivery agent
School holiday play programmes	5 to 8	Key sites; linked to crime reduction/ deprivation	Local community network
<p>At designated locations, and building upon existing work, school holiday programmes at key locations should be established. These should, in the medium and long term be supported, organised and run by local community/voluntary sector agencies. Co-operation with local schools, LCC youth service and EYCP should be sought.</p> <p>The target for provision should be, within 5 year, to deliver the equivalent of 10 additional school holiday programmes at Easter and during the summer. Locations should prioritised according to specific local need and reference to broader indices (e.g. IMD).</p> <p>WLDC and other partners should identify support resources from existing budgets</p>			

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Review open access provision for eight to 13 year olds

The current WLDC programme of open access play provision for eight to 13 year olds is centred on the sports centres at Skelmersdale and Ormskirk and at the Chapel Art Gallery in Ormskirk. As stated earlier in this document, these are well-attended, popular programmes, providing opportunities to experience new activities in a safe, well supervised environment. Using existing facilities and staff they are cost effective to run.

Programme content should include extended or outreach delivery, in tandem with community based sessions at youth and community centres and built play sites. The content of the programme should be geared more strongly to encouraging ongoing participation in voluntary sector based opportunities.

Working on the assumption that no additional resources will become available, some opportunities should be decentralised (with a bias to adding to the level of provision made for the more rural communities located in the north of the District). For this to work effectively, it should run in parallel with an extension of the SAS and RAP concept to other areas with recognised high levels of deprivation/low levels of participation (see Key Recommendation 3 below).

Key recommendation 3

Programme designation	Target age range	Location	Preferred delivery agent
School holiday activity programmes	Children 8 to 13 years	Current facilities plus extension to new locations.	WLDC/LCC - Youth & Community function.
<p>The programme should be reviewed to allow a number of designated places to be reserved for targeted SAS and RAP 'referees'.</p> <p>An integrated outreach programme should be introduced specifically targeted at work with community agencies to attract current 'non participants'.</p> <p>Timetabling, content and pricing should be reviewed to support an extension of open access holiday programmes delivered through local community voluntary sector networks.</p> <p>Programme providers should work with local groups (possibly in the short-medium term through WLPA) to promote local involvement and sessional employment as part of a wider commitment to capacity building and sustainability at a local level. Accredited qualification opportunities should be provided where possible.</p> <p>Target provision should be to provide 20% of places for referees from other targets schemes.</p> <p>WLDC and other partners should identify support resources from existing budgets.</p>			

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

Programme delivery - targeted schemes

Extension and review of SAS and RAP concept

These programmes are already widely recognised, popular and considered to be successful. They properly contribute to crime reduction and inclusion agenda targets. As noted above, however, the development of this work is limited by availability of resources. Their perceived isolation from other elements of provision should be addressed and stronger links established with other work across the District. This might include, as noted above in Key Recommendation 3, secured/reserved places on facility based sports/arts based holiday programmes.

The proposed extension to local community delivery should be aligned to provision of more opportunities to work with young people with whom it is difficult to engage. In this context additional professional/agency input will be required.

Work with partner agencies should be undertaken to identify new, and reallocate existing, resources to extend the concept of SAS and RAP to other areas of the District. Schemes recently funded through the Children's Fund and delivered through LCC/Burscough Community Centre and WLPA should be used as exemplars.

While recognising the requirements of current funding streams for targeted delivery the idea of working with disaffected young people can be developed and included within a wider re-branding across the District.

Playground management

Fixed play sites

As stated above, fixed play provision across the Authority area is the responsibility of WLDC and parish councils. In Skelmersdale and Ormskirk, WLDC provides and maintains all sites. In other settlements, such as Burscough, both parish councils and WLDC provide and maintain sites. Outside these areas, playgrounds tend to be the responsibility of parish councils.

As shown in the attached maps, play sites are distributed across the Authority and vary considerably in the context of size, modernity etc. As a rule they, are of reasonable quality and, in recent years, some improvement work has been undertaken. Site development and maintenance is, however, is largely reactive and significant resource is expended upon repair, particularly after repeated vandalism. The result is community perceptions that play sites are given a low priority.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

In common with many local authorities, in West Lancashire, provision of play opportunities via delivered activity programmes and provision of fixed sites for children's play, are treated as separate functions. This separation often means that opportunities to exploit physical provision to positively engage with children, young people and their parents are often missed. WLDC should address this issue.

Site operation and maintenance - local management

WLDC needs to rationalise its play provision. In general the criteria that underpin this process should be predicated upon a presumption that the District will favour a move away from maintaining small play sites in favour of improving larger facilities with better equipment and ancillary provision. This should, wherever possible, be accompanied by work to improve site access and visibility (remove hedges, locate new sites nearer to/more visible from roads), improve signage, attract users by providing other appropriate activities in adjacent spaces and by providing other features such as youth shelters.

Linked to this rationalisation, local involvement in play site management should be encouraged. Lessons can be drawn from local pilot examples in Skelmersdale. Local community groups should be encouraged to work positively with youth work agencies, schools, WLDC, police, EYCP etc to take an active role in the maintenance and operation of play sites.

This should be linked to work designed to increase community capacity to deliver and support play work. The resource allocation for this will/should, in part, be based upon an initial assumption about (and subsequent measurement and appraisal of) reduced maintenance costs, fewer incidents of juvenile nuisance and evidence of local crime reduction. Other aspirations, for example to deliver more outreach programmes at play sites (as noted above in Recommendation 2), will complement this work.

WLDC should work with parish councils to identify a District wide programme of community 'ownership' and management. This community 'role' may include monitoring site maintenance.

Site operation and maintenance - maintenance contract

Consideration should be given to 'contracting out' site maintenance. Currently this is, at WLDC sites, restricted by delineated working practices and there is, in practice, a hard split between the Authority's leisure and environmental services arms. At parish council sites, work is often more closely monitored, and potentially more sensitive to local need, but can be delivered on an ad hoc basis on behalf of the parish, which itself has no specific expertise.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

A single District wide contract *not let on the basis of day to day or reactive maintenance* would help to address some of these anomalies and efficiencies. Contractors should be given an incentive to work with local groups (as above) and/or with other agencies to improve site security, support local youth work programmes and clean, maintain and repair sites in line with local needs.

Designated sites, with potential for development, or which are currently perceived as 'problems', or which for other specific reasons WLDC may wish to see specific work undertaken at, or around, could be given extra weighting with the contract.

Other investment options

In line with the need to develop programmes that incorporate a degree of progression, consideration should be given to investment in play/recreation sites that present a wider array of options across the age brackets. For example, parallel investment in key sites, including associated development of street sports facilities, (skateboard/roller-blade/BMX) youth shelters and multi-use activity areas. This might include installing floodlighting to key areas to attract teenagers off play sites.

Other issues

Other childcare/children's play opportunities

Given the popularity of the play day and facility based holiday programme concept, consideration should be given to supporting or facilitating, *in parallel* to public programmes, some form of school holiday workers child care provision. This could run on an essentially commercial basis to provide basic childcare for working parents or those seeking to move into employment.

This would relieve pressure on parents to 'follow' play days, and, to this extent, also start to address the concomitant inequality of access that is linked to this tendency.

Additional support may be secured based on economic development criteria. It would also, potentially, free up places on existing schemes for other users. The idea could be 'market tested'. WLP or another similar agent could be approached to explore its viability.

To ensure the adoption of sound principles, which will underpin the development of play provision within West Lancashire, the Council and other providers, should consider adopting the 'Charter for Children's Play' (see Appendix 2).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Main characteristics of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs

	LAP	LEAP	NEAP
Age group	Up to 6 years.	4-8 years.	Older children.
Walking time from home	1 minute.	5 minutes.	10 minutes.
Location	Adjacent to a well used pathway, overlooked by houses and on a flat site that is well drained.	Adjacent to a well used pathway and on a flat site that is well drained.	Adjacent to a well used pathway and on a flat site that is well drained.
Minimum activity zone	100m ² .	400m ² .	1,000m ² divided into 2 parts; at least 465m ² of hard surface area and equipped play space area.
No. and type of play equipment	Demonstrative play features to enable children to identify space as their own domain.	At least 5 types of play equipment where at least 2 are individual items rather than part of a combination. Impact absorbing surface beneath/around play equipment.	At least 8 types of play equipment to allow developmental play amongst younger children and moderate/adventurous play for older children.
Buffer zone	5m depth including planting.	10m depth including planting and other physical features.	30m depth including planting and other physical features.
Fencing	600mm high fencing and barrier to limit speed of child entering or leaving the facility.	1m high fencing with two pedestrian gates and barriers to limit speed of child entering/leaving the facility.	1m high fencing with two pedestrian gates and barriers to limit speed of child entering or leaving the facility.
Furniture	Seating.	Seating and a litter bin.	Seating and litter bins at each access point. Secure bicycle parking facilities.
Signs and notices	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children.	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children, and name and tel. no. of facility manager.	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children, and name and tel. no. of facility manager.

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Appendix 2: Charter for Children's Play

The following model 'charter for children's play' is included below for initial consideration:

- ❑ Children of all ages should be able to play freely, confidently, on their own or with other children or with adults.
- ❑ Parents/Guardians and other carers can help children by respecting and valuing their play needs and trying to maximise their opportunities for safe and stimulating play inside and outside the home. Children also need opportunities to interact and play with their parents/guardians and carers.
- ❑ Play for all - all children should have access to good quality, safe and affordable play opportunities, with supervision provided where appropriate, in accordance with age and need.
- ❑ Safety - play opportunities should be creative, stimulating, adventurous and safe and appropriate to the child's stage of development and physical capabilities. Play opportunities should challenge children's abilities but not survival or well-being.
- ❑ Services - all play services should respect the right of the child to play freely and safely. The role of play services should be to resource and facilitate the play process.
- ❑ Neighbourhood Play - all neighbourhoods should have a range of play provision and play services. Children should be able to play safely near their homes with friends.

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Appendix 3: IMD ward rankings - West Lancashire

Ward	IMD rank	IMD rank within District
Tanhouse	187	1
Digmoor	291	2
Moorside	323	3
Birch Green	774	4
Skelmersdale North	1,186	5
Skelmersdale South	1,337	6
Upholland South	2,256	7
Lathom	2,749	8
Scott	2,793	9
Downholland	2,796	10
North Meols	2,883	11
Halsall	3,004	12
Upholland North	3,094	13
Bickerstaffe	3,220	14
Scarisbrick	3,330	15
Burscough	3,465	16
Wrightington	4,720	17
Knowsley	4,769	18
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	5,158	19
Tarleton	5,685	20
Derby	5,727	21
Aughton Town Green	5,735	22
Rufford	5,895	23
Newburgh	6,162	24
Aughton Park	6,436	25
Parbold	6,809	26

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Appendix 4: U16s as a % of total residents (by rank of % within the District)

Ward	% of U-16s	% U-16 rank within District
Digmoor	31	1
Tanhouse	29	2
Moorside	28	3
Birch Green	27	4
Skelmersdale North	24	5
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	23	6
Burscough	22	7
Lathom	21	8
Downholland	20	9
Rufford	20	10
Skelmersdale South	20	11
Bickerstaffe	19	12
Parbold	19	13
Scott	19	14
Tarleton	19	15
Aughton Park	18	16
Knowsley	18	17
Upholland North	18	18
Aughton Town Green	17	19
Newburgh	17	20
North Meols	17	21
Scarisbrick	17	22
Upholland South	16	23
Wrightington	16	24
Halsall	15	25
Derby	14	26

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Appendix 5: Ward population (ranked by population within the District)

Ward	Population	Population rank within District
Birch Green	11,700	1
Derby	7,700	2
Skelmersdale North	5,800	3
Burscough	5,400	4
Knowsley	5,300	5
Scott	5,300	6
Skelmersdale South	5,300	7
Tanhouse	5,300	8
Tarleton	5,200	9
Aughton Town Green	4,800	10
Digmoor	4,600	11
Moorside	4,400	12
Parbold	4,100	13
Upholland North	3,900	14
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	3,700	15
Lathom	3,700	16
Aughton Park	3,600	17
North Meols	3,600	18
Scarisbrick	3,200	19
Upholland South	3,100	20
Wrightington	2,900	21
Newburgh	2,000	22
Rufford	2,000	23
Halsall	1,800	24
Bickerstaffe	1,300	25
Downholland	1,200	26

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Appendix 6: Ward based analysis

Aughton Park

Aughton Park has a population of 3,600 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 18% are under 16 years (648). There is one play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
17	Convent Close	Unclassified	60

Aughton Town Green

Aughton Town Green has a population of 4,800 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 17% are under 16 years (816). There is one play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
13	Bracknell Way	NEAP	600

Bickerstaff

Bickerstaff has a population of 1,300 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 19% are under 16 years (247). There is no play area site in the ward.

Birch Green

Birch Green has a population of 11,700 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 27% are under 16 years (3,159). There are 11 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
4	Ashmead Road	LEAP	240
8	Beacon Park	LEAP	288
23,24	Fairhaven	Unclassified with kick-about	120
25	Fawcett	Unclassified	60
28	Hallcroft	LEAP	240

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Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
30	Hawksclough	Unclassified	60
31	Helmsdale	Unclassified	60
34	Inglewhite	Unclassified	72
36,37	Longhey	LEAP with kick-about	300
40	Melbreck	LEAP	240
58	Toby Inn	LEAP	240

Burscough

Burscough has a population of 5,400 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 22% are under 16 years (1,188). There are 3 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
42,43	Pickles Drive	LEAP with kick-about	300
46	Priory Close	LEAP	240
51	Richmond Park	LEAP	288

Derby

Derby has a population of 7,700 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 14% are under 16 years (1,078). There are 3 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
44	Pines, Orm	LEAP	240
52	School Lane	LEAP	264
57	Thomson Avenue	LEAP	240

Digmoor

Digmoor has a population of 4,600 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 31% are under 16 years (1,426). There are 6 play area sites in the ward:

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Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
5,6	Banksbarn	Unclassified with kick-about	120
7	Bankfield	Unclassified	60
10	Belfield	LEAP	240
11	Birkrig1	Unclassified	60
12	Birkrig2	LEAP	240
15	Cascades	NEAP	600

Downholland

Downholland has a population of 1,200 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 20% are under 16 years (240). There are no play area sites in the ward:

Halsall

Halsall has a population of 1,800 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 15% are under 16 years (270). There are no play area sites in the ward:

Hesketh-with-Becconsall

Hesketh-with-Becconsall has a population of 3,700 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 23% are under 16 years (851). There are no play area sites in the ward:

Knowsley

Knowsley has a population of 5,300 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 18% are under 16 years (954). There are 4 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
18	Coronation Park	NEAP	720
27	Green Lane	LEAP	264
29	Halsall Park	Unclassified	60
56	Tennyson Drive	LEAP	240

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Lathom

Lathom has a population of 3,700 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 21% are under 16 years (777). There is 1 play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
47	Rees Park	LEAP	240

Moorside

Moorside has a population of 4,400 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 28% are under 16 years (1,232). There are 6 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
1	Abbeystead	Unclassified	60
2	Abbeywood	LEAP	240
9	Beechtrees	Unclassified	60
16	Cherrycroft	Unclassified	60
33	Holland Moor	LEAP	240
54	St. Lukes	Unclassified	60

Newburgh

Newburgh has a population of 2,000 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 17% are under 16 years (340). There are no play area sites in the ward:

North Meols

North Meols has a population of 3,600 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 17% are under 16 years (612). There are 2 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
3	Abrams Fold	LEAP	240
26	Greaves Hall	NEAP	600

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Parbold

Parbold has a population of 4,100 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 19% are under 16 years (779). There are no play area sites in the ward:

Rufford

Rufford has a population of 2,000 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 20% are under 16 years (400). There is 1 play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
32	Highsands	LEAP	240

Scarisbrick

Scarisbrick has a population of 3,200 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 17% are under 16 years (544). There is 1 play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
45	Pines	NEAP	600

Scott

Scott has a population of 5,300 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 19% are under 16 years (1,007). There are 3 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
22	Fairfield Drive	LEAP	240
39	Mawdsley Terrace	LEAP	240
60	Westend	Unclassified	60

Skelmersdale North

Skelmersdale North has a population of 5,800 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 24% are under 16 years (1,392). There are 4 play area sites in the ward:

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Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
14	Busy Bee	Unclassified	60
50	Summer Street	LEAP	288
55	Tanfield	LEAP	240
62	Yewdale	LEAP	240

Skelmersdale South

Skelmersdale South has a population of 5,300 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 20% are under 16 years (1,060). There are 3 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
35	Kiln Lane	LEAP	240
48,49	Stanley, Coronation Park	LEAP with kick-about	384
61	Woodcroft	Unclassified	60

Tanhouse

Tanhouse has a population of 5,300 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 29% are under 16 years (1,537). There are 2 play area sites in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
19,20	Ennerdale	LEAP with kick-about	300
21	Eskbank	LEAP	240
53	Skelmersdale Twon Centre	Unclassified	60

Tarleton

Tarleton has a population of 5,200 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 19% are under 16 years (988). There is 1 play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
59	Trinity Walks	NEAP	600

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Upholland North

Upholland North has a population of 3,900 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 18% are under 16 years (702). There are no play area sites in the ward:

Upholland South

Upholland South has a population of 3,100 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 16% are under 16 years (496). There are no play area sites in the ward:

Wrightington

Wrightington has a population of 2,900 (1998 mid term projections-based estimate) of which around 16% are under 16 years (464). There is 1 play area site in the ward:

Site ref.	Site name	Play area category (PAC)	Radial catchment zone (RCZ) [m]
41	Mossy Lea	Unclassified	60

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Appendix 7: National context

Importance of play

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by the UK Government in 1991, recognises the importance of play for the child. Article 31 of the Convention says that:

“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 and the arts”.

Play provision

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation 2002

The Annex to the PPG provides, for the first time in Government guidance, a definition of open space. The typology illustrates a broad range of open spaces that have a public value include ‘provision for children and teenagers - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. ‘hanging out’ areas, teenage shelters)’. There is no further explicit mention of children’s play provision within the PPG but the term ‘open space’ includes children’s play areas as well as other types of open space included within Annex A.

PPG 17 states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering the following broader Government objectives:

- ❑ Supporting an urban renaissance - help to create attractive, clean and safe urban environments,
- ❑ Supporting a rural renewal - contribute to the economy, quality of life and well being of rural areas,
- ❑ Promoting social inclusion and community cohesion - bring together communities and provide opportunities for individuals,
- ❑ Health and well-being - promoting healthy living and social development, and
- ❑ Promoting sustainable development - served by local transport and easily accessible by walking and cycling.

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Paragraph 3 of the PPG states that local authorities should audit existing facilities, the use made of them, access in terms of location and costs and the opportunities for new open space and facilities. Both quantitative and qualitative elements of open space, sports and recreational facilities should be considered within the audits.

Paragraph 5 states that 'Good quality assessments and audits, leading to clear strategies supported by effective planning policies, will provide vital tools for resolving potential conflicts that arise between different uses and users of open space, sports and recreational facilities'. Good practice guidance 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG17' is identified within the PPG as providing 'more detailed guidance on how to undertake these assessments and audits'.

Paragraph 7 of the PPG states that local authorities should use the information from their audits and assessments of needs and opportunities to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their areas'. It goes on to state that 'Local standards should include:

- i. quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed);
- ii. a qualitative component (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities);
- iii. and accessibility (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility).'

Standards based on the above will through the planning process, as long as they are included within local plans, help local authorities redress 'quantitative and qualitative deficiencies' in provision.

Paragraph 12 indicates that development of open space, sports or recreational facilities, may remedy deficiencies in provision. For example, where there is an identified surplus in one type and a deficiency in another planning conditions or obligations may be used to secure part of the development site for the type of open space, sports or recreational facility that is in deficit.

Paragraph 23 states that local authorities should ensure that provision is made for local sports and recreational facilities, either through an increase in the number of facilities or the through improvements to existing facilities, where planning permission is granted for new development particularly housing. In planning for new open spaces and in assessing planning applications for development, local authorities should seek opportunities to improve the local open space network, create open space from vacant land, and incorporate open space within new development on previously used land (paragraph 24).

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Appendix 8: Standards of provision

The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) was founded in 1925 to help ensure that people would have the opportunity of participating in outdoor recreational activity within a reasonable distance of home. Initially, the NPFA recommended that all local authorities adopt a minimum standard of five acres of public open space including playing space and parks and public gardens per 1,000 head of population.

After a number of iterative changes to the type and amount of open space to be included within the standard the NPFA included playgrounds and casual playspace for children to the standard in 1971. Further guidance was produced in 1974 on the practical application of the standard with a suggested breakdown of the six acres into its component parts. The breakdown of the Standard within the 2001 document indicates that 0.8 hectares (2 acres) of land per 1,000 head of population should be available for children's playing space. This playing spaces includes the following:

- ❑ Designated areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play;
- ❑ Casual or informal playing space within housing areas.

In 1992 three new categories of play provision were introduced to meet the needs of children of different age groups; a local area for play (LAP), a local equipped area for play (LEAP) and a neighbourhood equipped area for play (NEAP).

The NPFA indicates that despite an aging population children's needs for playing space are significant and an assessment of that need differs to that of the older population for land for sport and recreation. The children's playing space standard is based upon the provision of a range of facilities within a neighbourhood which is intended to meet a variety of needs for children from different age groups. The Six Acre Standard states that the 'key element in judging adequacy of provision is the time it takes a child to reach it' (pg 8, 2001 NPFA). There are other important factors such as the features, quality and security of the playing space which will influence its perceived value and use.

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Walking time		
Time	Straight line distance	Pedestrian route
1 mins.	60m	100m
5 mins.	240m	600m
15 mins.	600m	1,000m

Note: estimates of walking time were established through trials with children of different age ranging from 4 to 14, and by using a representative sample of pedestrian routes.

Source: page 25, The Six Acre Standard 2001, NPFA

The NPFA advises that where possible actual walking distance should be used to ascertain the catchment area of a particular play area. Straight line distances may not take account of barriers that may impinge or hinder access to the play area such as major transport infrastructure such as roads and railways, watercourses and private land. The NPFA recommends the provision of different types of play area which have been designed to meet the specific needs of each age group of children.

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Appendix 9: Population figures - West Lancashire

Ward figures for the 2001 Census have not been published. The figure for the District as a whole is 108,377 - that is 2,523 (2.3%) lower than the 1998 mid term projection. It is considered acceptable to use the mid term projections as this difference is not considered significant.

Percentage of population by age (2001 Census)

	0-14	15-59	60+
England	18.88	60.32	20.79
Lancashire	19.09	59.14	21.77
West Lancashire	18.92	59.72	21.36

As shown in the above table West Lancashire has slightly more under 14-year olds than the national average but less than Lancashire County. 18.92% of the population is not an insignificant proportion and their needs must be taken into consideration with regards to play and recreational provision.

Percentage of resident population under 16 by Ward (1998 mid-term estimates)

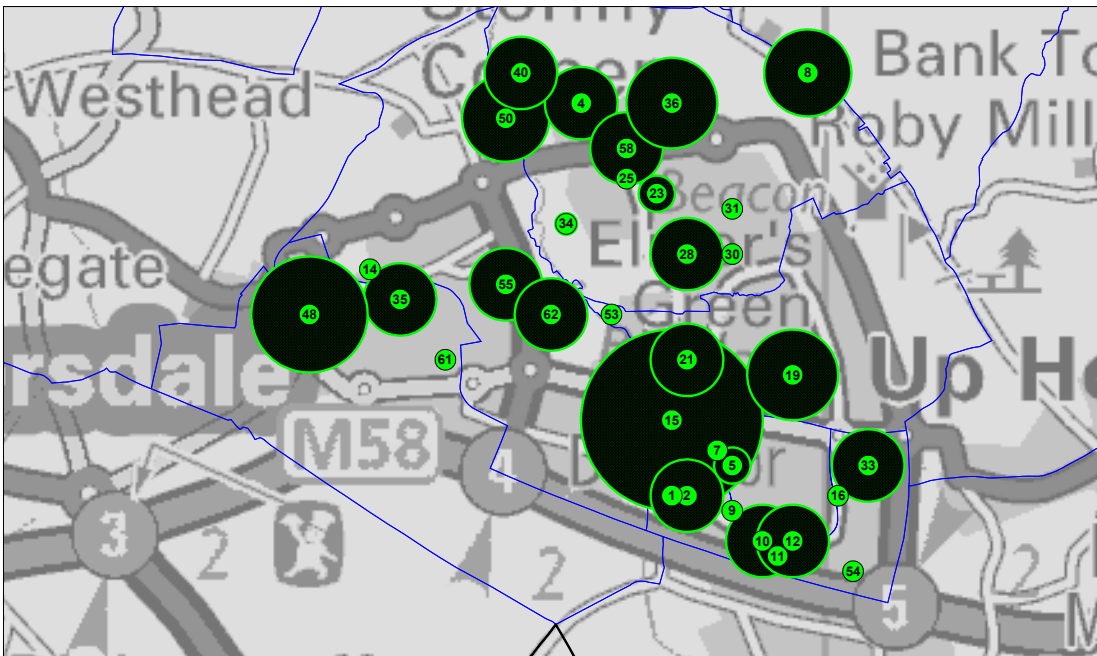
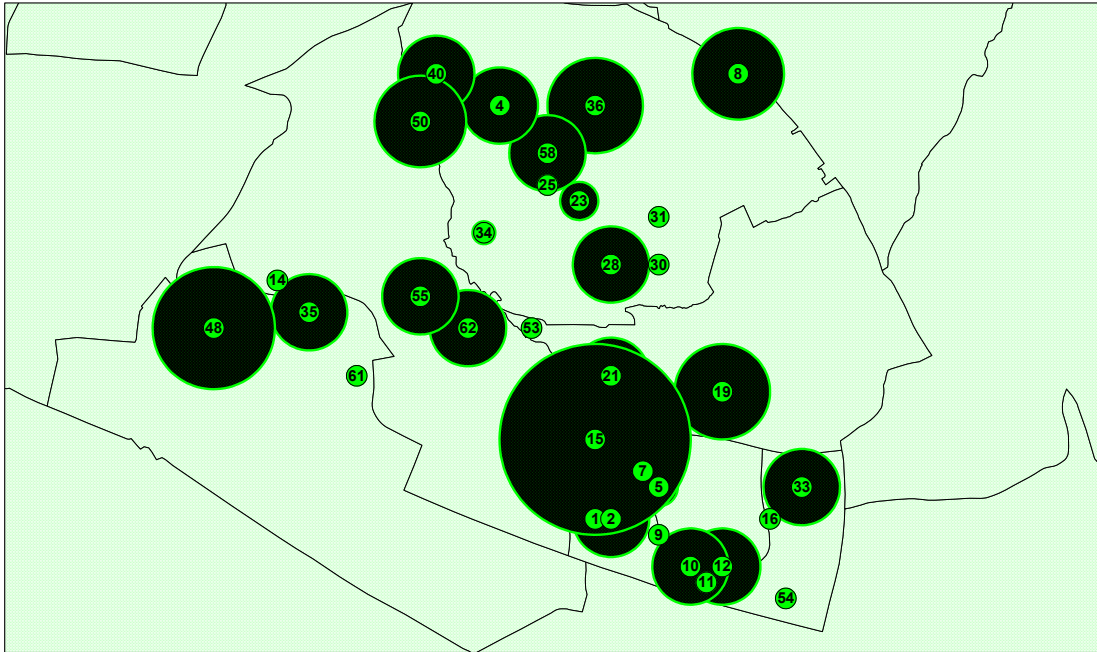
Ward	% under 16	Ward	% under 16
Aughton Park	18	Newburgh	17
Aughton Town Green	17	North Meols	17
Bickerstaffe	19	Parbold	19
Birch Green	27	Rufford	20
Burscough	22	Scarisbrick	17
Derby	14	Scott	19
Digmoor	31	Skelmersdale North	24
Downholland	20	Skelmersdale South	20
Halsall	15	Tanhouse	29
Hesketh-with-Becconsall	23	Tarleton	19
Knowsley	18	Upholland North	18
Lathom	21	Upholland South	16
Moorside	28	Wrightington	16

The table above shows the proportion of under 16 year olds in each of the wards. Digmoor (31%), Tanhouse (29%), Moorside (28%) and Birch Green (27%) (all in Skelmersdale) have a high proportion of young people. Conversely Derby (14%), Halsall (15%), Wrightington (16%) and Upholland South (16%) have the lowest proportion of young people in the District.

WEST LANCASHIRE DC: PLAY STRATEGY

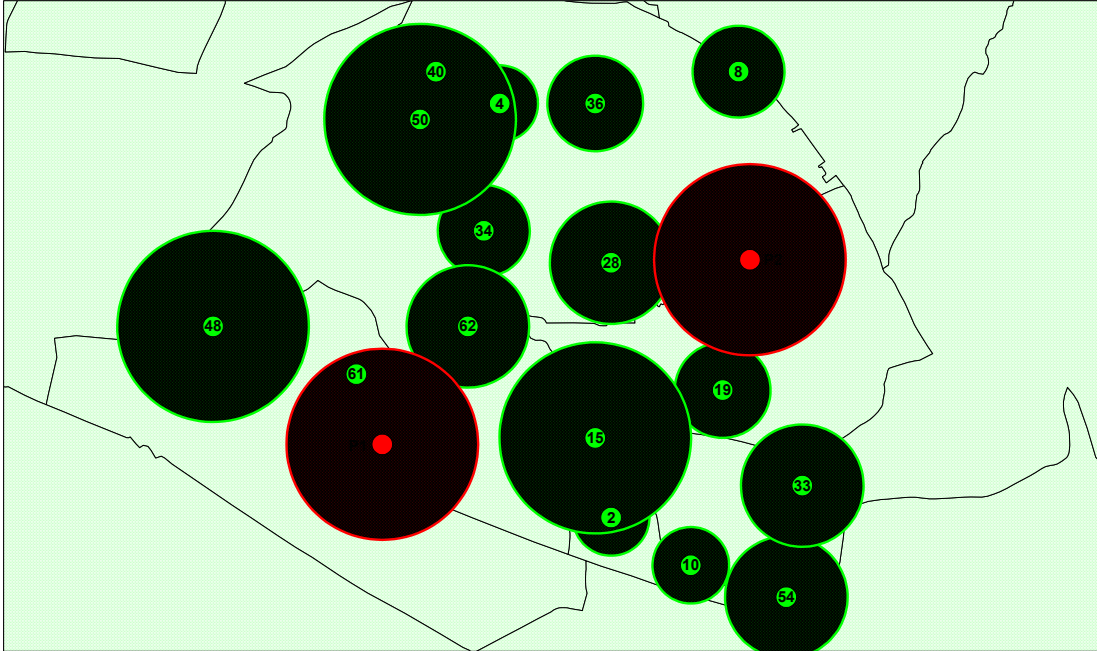
Appendix 10: Indicative sample maps; play sites in Skelmersdale

West Lancashire – Skelmersdale before proposed changes to play areas

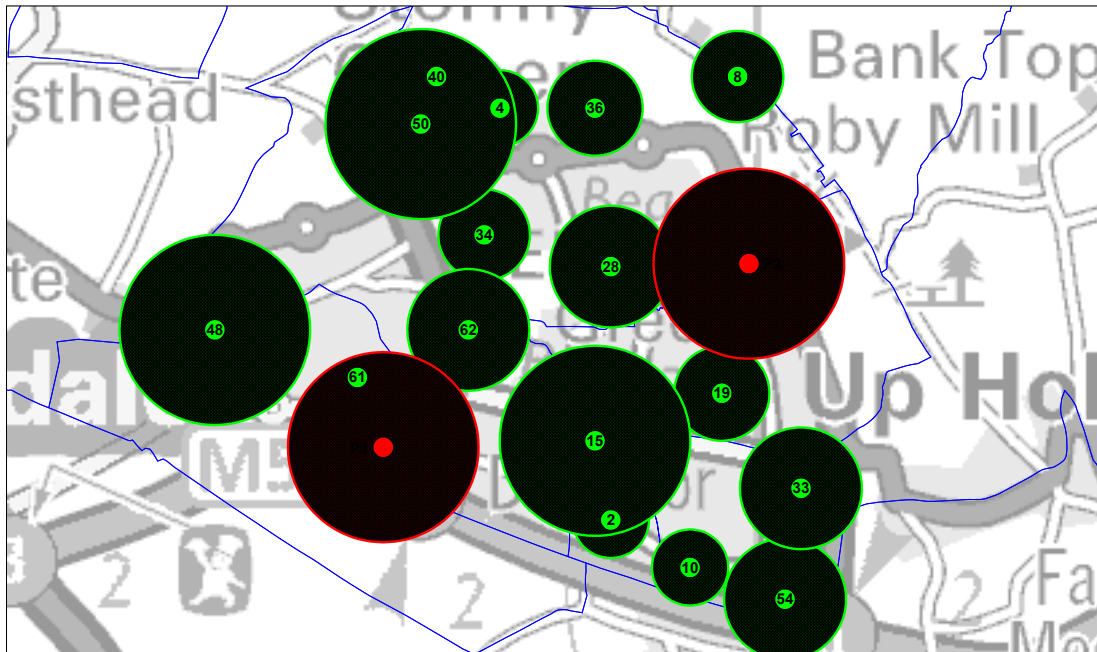


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West Lancashire – Skelmersdale proposed changes to play areas (stage I)

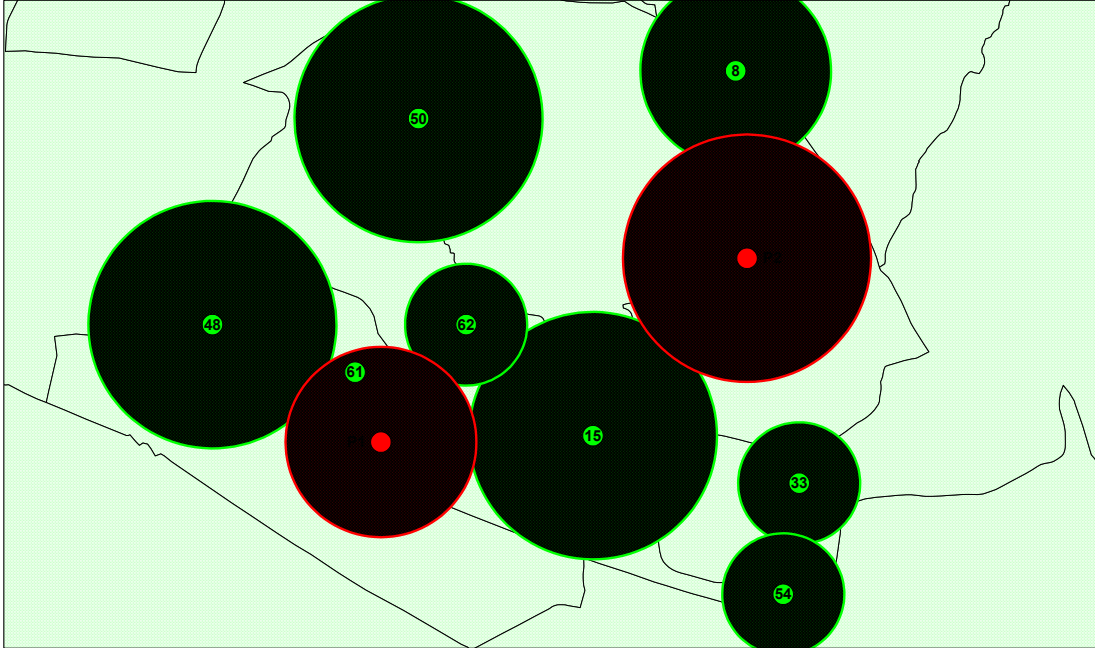


West Lancashire – Skelmersdale proposed changes to play areas (stage I)

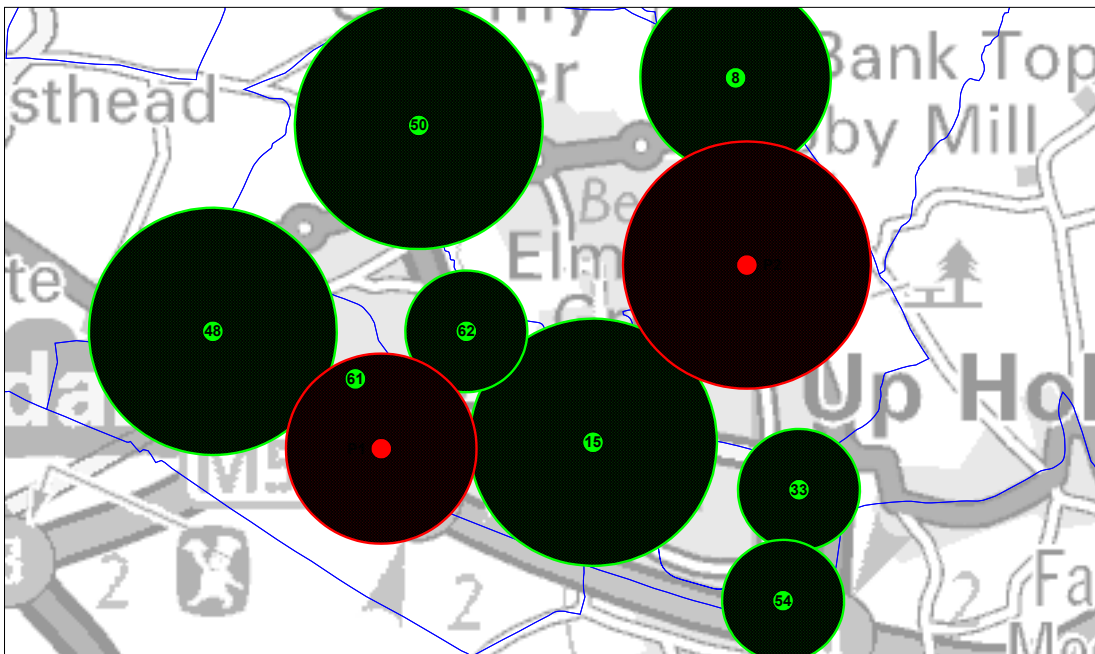


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West Lancashire – Skelmersdale proposed changes to play areas (stage 2)



West Lancashire – Skelmersdale proposed changes to play areas (stage 2)





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