

Southend-on-Sea

Play Strategy

	Healthy			
			Challenge	
Change				
				Inclusive
			Free	



Contents

Foreword by Councillor Ann Robertson	3
1 Executive Summary	4
2 Introduction	5
2.1 <i>Southend-on-Sea's Vision for Children and Young People</i>	5
2.2 <i>Play Strategy Vision</i>	5
3 The Principle of Play	6
3.1 <i>Purpose and Scope</i>	6
3.2 <i>Definition of Play</i>	6
3.3 <i>The Value and Significance of Play for Children and Young People</i>	7
3.4 <i>Play and Health</i>	7
3.4.1 <i>Physical Health and Fitness</i>	7
3.4.2 <i>Childhood Obesity statistics</i>	8
3.4.3 <i>Mental Health</i>	8
3.5 <i>Play and the Environment</i>	9
3.6 <i>Play and the Crime and Disorder Agenda</i>	9
3.7 <i>Barriers to Play</i>	10
4 Context of the play strategy	11
4.1 <i>National Policy</i>	11
4.2 <i>Regional Policy</i>	12
4.3 <i>Local Policy</i>	12
4.4 <i>Profile of the Council Area</i>	14
5 Review of Community Consultation	16
5.1 <i>Conclusions from Community Engagement</i>	17
6 An Audit of Play Provision	18
6.1 <i>Conclusions from the Audit</i>	18
7 Appendices.....	21
7.1 <i>Appendix 1</i>	21
7.1.1 <i>Objectives and Priorities</i>	21
7.2 <i>Appendix 2</i>	22
7.2.1 <i>Development Plan</i>	22
7.3 <i>Appendix 3</i>	29
7.3.1 <i>Evaluation and Monitoring</i>	29
7.4 <i>Appendix 4</i>	30
7.4.1 <i>Details of Community Consultation</i>	30
7.5 <i>Appendix 5</i>	37
7.5.1 <i>Details of the Audit Play Provision</i>	37
7.6 <i>Appendix 6</i>	45
7.6.1 <i>Local Standards</i>	45
7.7 <i>Appendix 7</i>	47
7.7.1 <i>References</i>	47

Foreword by Councillor Ann Robertson Play Champion for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council



The Council has the clear vision to create a better Southend, a safe, clean, healthy and prosperous Southend. Providing better play opportunities for our children will contribute to making this vision a reality. Creating a Southend where parents and carers can feel confident that their children have somewhere to go, something to do, to be challenged but safe.

I believe that play is every child's right and is of fundamental importance to the healthy development of our children and young people. Play is central to their physical, mental and social development. I also recognise that there are barriers to enjoying play. Many parents and carers can have genuine concerns for their children playing outdoors in the 21st century. The internet and computer games play little or no part in my childhood memories but no doubt will make up a big part of many children's memories today.

It is for these reasons that the council formed a team of officers and representatives from partner organisations to develop the Play Strategy for Southend. The strategy is intended to link to existing policies and to guide the future development of play in Southend. As the council's play champion I am determined to ensure that our children and young people have the opportunity to play freely and safely in good quality, attractive and well maintained play spaces.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Robertson'.

Councillor Ann Robertson
Play Champion

Supported by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Holland'.

Councillor Ann Holland
Executive Councillor
Culture, Sport and Amenity

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Carr'.

Councillor Sally Carr
Executive Councillor
Children's and Learning services

1 Executive Summary

Southend-on-Sea's Play Strategy recognises that play is every child's right and forms a fundamental part of childhood. It acknowledges the central importance of play to children and young people's health and well-being, personal development and learning.

The importance of play and the need to improve play provision is acknowledged in a range of national and regional policies. The government's Every Child Matters framework and Change for Children programme identify the pleasure of recreation and play as a key outcome for children and young people. The Children Act (2004) places a duty of co-operation between agencies that promote the well-being of children and young people. It specifies that one of the purposes of co-operation is to improve the well-being of children in relation to education, training and recreation.

Good play facilities and opportunities benefit the community as a whole and, in so doing, help to deliver a number of the council's key priorities and objectives together with those in Southend on Sea's Children and Young Peoples Plan (2006 – 2009).

The views of children, young people and the community and an analysis of current play provision have been used to establish key objectives and priorities for service improvements.

The Play Strategy sets out to deliver real improvements in play provision. Implementing the strategy can only be achieved by involving children and young people, their families, partner organisations and the wider community. It will require making the best use of existing resources, creative new approaches and attracting external funding.

2 Introduction

2.1 Southend-on-Sea's Vision for Children and Young People

Southend-on-Sea's Children and Young Peoples Plan (2006-2009) aims to ensure that all children and young people living in Southend are able to take full advantage of the opportunities which are here now and to enhance these opportunities for the future.

The Plan aims to continue to improve outcomes for children and young people and to narrow the gap for those who do well and those who do not, whilst raising expectations of what all children and young people can achieve.

The plan reflects the intentions of the council, schools, partner agencies and children and young people themselves.

The Play Strategy will play an integral part in achieving improvements in the five outcome areas of:

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

2.2 Play Strategy Vision

The Southend-on-Sea Play Strategy recognises that play is a child's right and a fundamental part of childhood.

It is based on the belief that all children should be able to play within their local neighbourhoods and have access to stimulating, challenging play spaces. Play spaces that are free from unacceptable risks, inclusive for all and developed and improved in partnership with children and young people. It aims to provide opportunities for older children and young people to meet friends and to enjoy and develop their own cultural and recreational pursuits.

This statement is founded on the principle of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989.

3 The Principle of Play

3.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Southend Play Strategy is to ensure recognition of the importance of play to the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of children and young people living and visiting the town.

The strategy aims to highlight the benefits of extending the choice and control that children and young people have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.

The strategy acknowledges the importance of managing the balance between the need for play to contain an element of risk and the need to keep children and young people free from harm.

In addition the Southend-on-Sea Play Strategy strives to capitalize on the range of play opportunities available throughout the borough, ensure that play is inclusive, regardless of economic circumstance, ethnicity, disability, or special needs.

The importance of health and development, knowledge and the capacity to learn through play of both children and young people is integral to the Southend Play Strategy.

The strategy aims to create greater understanding and build respect between the generations and seeks to reduce potential conflicts caused by differing perceptions of play.

3.2 Definition of Play

Play means many different things to different people. The definition of play which forms the basis of the Southend-on-Sea Play Strategy is taken from Best Play – what play provision should do for children produced by the National Playing Fields Association/PLAYLINK/Children’s Play Council in 2001. This definition is widely accepted within the industry.

“Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages a child. 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.”

Fundamental to this strategy are the beliefs that play

- should be freely available at all times
- free of charge at the point of participation
- freely chosen by children and young people.

3.3 The Value and Significance of Play for Children and Young People

A strong community is important in raising the quality of life within an area. A community where there is somewhere safe to go and something to do, such as recreational activity for children and young people, helps in building the constitution of communities and increasing young people's skills, confidence and self-esteem. This approach to play is highlighted in the government green paper September 2003 'Every Child Matters' and subsequently in the Children's Act 2004.

Play is essential to the development of children and young people it also impacts on their health and happiness. The UN Convention on the Right of the Child (1989), gives all children the right

“to rest and leisure; to engage in age-appropriate play and recreational activities.

However, particularly in our towns and cities there is increasing evidence that play opportunities are under threat, with many young people not having the choice or access to the physical and social spaces and environments that they need to play. As a result, there is a real potential that their immediate quality of life and long-term health and development may be affected.

Although this decline in play opportunities affects children generally, it has a disproportionately greater impact on those with disabilities and those living with social or economic disadvantage, for whom access to free, safe and enjoyable play spaces is particularly important.

3.4 Play and Health

3.4.1 Physical Health and Fitness

Play is essential for healthy, physical and emotional development of children and young people. The Chief Medical Officer advises that

“children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of at least moderate-intensity physical activity each day”.

There is increasing evidence that improved opportunities for free play are the most efficient way for children and young people to achieve this. Research has also identified that a decline in free play opportunities increases health problems in children and young people.

The government White Paper Choosing Health 2004, noted that

“many children appear to have less time being physically active because of the increase in car use and heightened concern about the potential risks of unsupervised play outdoors”.

3.4.2 Childhood Obesity statistics

The prevalence of obesity among children aged 2 – 25 years is estimated as 19% among boys (an increase of 8% since 1995) and 18% among girls (an increase of 6% since 1995). These figures are based on the Health Survey for England 2004.

This breaks down to 26.7% of girls and 24.2% of boys aged 11-15 recorded as obese and 46% of girls and 30.5% of boys either overweight or obese. Among children aged 2-10 12.8% of girls and 15.9% of boys were recorded as obese.

The International Obesity Taskforce (2006) estimates that almost 2 million schoolchildren are overweight and 700,000 are obese. If no action is taken an estimated one in five English children will be obese by 2010

The Department of Health requested all Primary Care Trusts to weigh and measure all children aged 4 – 5 years old and 10-11 years old during the summer term of 2006. 84.7% of Southend children in this cohort were measured and 12.47% of children and young people in these age groups were found to be obese. This equates to 371 children out of the 2,974 who were weighed and measured. This measurement will be repeated in subsequent years in order to track the change of prevalence of obesity among children in these age groups.

It should be noted that the obesity prevalence amongst children in Southend-on-Sea measured during this intervention is 4th highest in Essex

Increasing the opportunities for children and young people to participate in free play, especially physical outdoor play can only help in reducing this growing health problem.

3.4.3 Mental Health

Evidence also points to an increase in mental illness amongst children and young people. The Mental Health Foundation report, Bright Futures, states that the

“opportunities for risk taking in unsupervised play helps children build self-confidence and resilience – key protective factors for mental health. “

Due to the decline in opportunities for unsupervised outdoor play, the report also recognises the role of supervised play in supporting children’s mental health.

3.5 Play and the Environment

“Children are losing their connection with the natural environment and their well-being and environmental quality are inextricably linked. The worse a local environment looks, the less able children are to play freely”

A Child's Place – why environment matters to children, Green Alliance/Demos, 2004

A research report by Demos and the Green Alliance highlighted a gap between children from rural and urban backgrounds in their level of access to the natural environment and that this is detrimental to children and young people living in urban areas. One of the reports key recommendations was that children from disadvantaged backgrounds should be provided with better and increased opportunities to access good quality open space.

Many children and young people have become sheltered from the outside environment that might support their developmental play needs. Many are driven to schools and leisure activities which has limited their experience of play without supervision. However, to acknowledge this is not to criticise parents and carers who have genuine concerns for their children living in the twenty-first century.

Evidence shows that contact with the outdoor and natural environments helps children and young people especially those in the middle years build a sense of identity with the environment and the natural world.

When looking at play and the environment it is important not to overlook the built environment. Opportunities for play should be taken in to account when planning new developments and improving existing areas. The freedom for young people to play in the street without the risk of being hit by a speeding vehicle is an important play opportunity and can help to develop social and physical skills. By using imaginative design in urban public spaces, such as traffic calming, physical barriers and well thought out planting, children and young people can be given the opportunity to use their imagination to create play opportunities.

3.6 Play and the Crime and Disorder Agenda

Antisocial behaviour is often associated with young people, although only a minority of young people are involved in this type of behaviour. The perception of many adults is that when young people congregate in groups they are up to no good. This is not always the case. Often the young people just want somewhere safe to meet up and 'play' A good example of this can be seen in Southend-on-Sea High Street where the local police receive a number of calls from residents complaining about the large groups of young people congregating. Although there was not a crime problem people felt intimidated by the young people. When this was more closely examined young people reported that they gathered here because they felt safe and were less likely to be picked on by other young people due to the presence of CCTV.

Well planned areas where young people can meet, socialise and play can and do have a positive impact on reducing actual and perceived antisocial behaviour within an area and the wider community.

3.7 Barriers to Play

Many parents and young people perceive that there are no facilities for young people. In 2005 Margaret Hodge, who was at that time the Minister for Children and Families, said

“The overwhelming cry from both parents and young people is around the lack of activities and facilities... the thing they say would most improve family life is the provision of places to go and things to do, where they can spend their leisure time with their friends”.

Many of the nationally identified barriers to play can be seen in Southend-on-Sea. Some areas of the town are lacking open space within easy walking distance of home and a lack of public transport can also cause problems.

Parents and carers can hold genuine concerns for their children growing up in the twenty-first century. Fears about traffic, and ‘stranger danger’ amongst a general feeling that the outside environment has become too dangerous for unsupervised children can restrict the natural curiosities and adventurousness of children and young people.

Play providers find it more difficult to meet children’s play needs in the light of increased insurance premiums as part of the cover against legal action.

Physical, mental and sensory disability can also produce significant barriers to play for many children, young people and their parents and carers. This can be made more difficult by the need for specialised transport and other facilities.

Economic factors can also affect many children’s ability to access play opportunities. This can be a serious barrier for many families looking for summer holiday clubs and play schemes for their children.

Play spaces must also take into account the differing needs of an ethnically diverse culture. Not accounting for these needs can produce barriers for different nationalities as well as ethnic and religious groups.

4 Context of the play strategy

4.1 National Policy

The government's Every Child Matters framework and Change for Children programme identify the pleasure of recreation, including play, as a key outcome for children and young people to be considered in the preparation and implementation of Children and Young People's plans under the Children Act (2004).

Getting Serious About Play – a review of children's play (2004) recommends that 'the local authority or a local partnership should be responsible for drawing up proposals... prepared in partnership with other local agencies, children and young people and local communities'.

The Extended Services Initiative, part of the National Childcare Strategy to offer 'wrap-around care' for all children up to age 14 looks at opening school grounds and buildings for out-of-school activities, including play.

Childcare partnerships and early years have been encouraged by the Department for Education and Skills to promote play as an integral part of childcare plans. Government guidance to the partnerships highlights a number of measures to guarantee the quality of play opportunities within childcare provision.

Within national planning guidance the need for dedicated outdoor play and recreational facilities is recognised. PPG17 makes the requirement for local authorities to assess the needs and opportunities for dedicated outdoor space for play and recreation.

Public Service Agreement (PSA) – to halt the rise of obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. Responsibility for delivering this target is shared by a number of government departments – Department of Health, Dept. of Education & Skills, Dept. of Culture, Media and Sport

National Service Framework for Children and Young People – Standard one – promoting health and well being, identifying needs and intervening early. This standard focuses on the importance of preventative work and early intervention carried out in partnerships between the NHS and Local Authorities in order to ensure long term gain

Choosing Health - an active life is the key to improving and maintaining health – three in ten boys and four in ten girls aged 2 – 15 are not meeting the recommended levels of physical activity

Small Change, Big Difference – national healthy living social marketing campaign with specific focus on parents/carers of under 11's to be launched in 2007

4.2 Regional Policy

Regional Planning Policy The East of England Regional Assembly is currently finalising Regional Planning Guideline 14 (RPG14). This will provide the framework to guide local planning and development throughout the East of England. This has allocated an additional 6,500 dwellings to be built in Southend-on-Sea between 2001 – 2021. This could generate an additional 13,200 residents in the borough. It will inevitably place additional demands on existing play spaces and facilities.

Thames Gateway - Greengrid is an exciting long-term project to encourage the development of a network of open spaces and green links throughout Thames Gateway South Essex.

Greengrid is for everyone living in south Essex who wants to get out and explore their local environment. It is for businesses who want to be a part of and benefit from a regenerated Thames Gateway area and for the local community and environmental groups who have an interest in conserving the diverse Essex landscape and wildlife. Find out more - Greengrid Strategy.

South East Essex Weight Management and Obesity Strategy. Children and young people are a specific target group within this multi agency strategy and a delivery plan has been developed detailing actions to be taken to increase the uptake of health lifestyles, including healthy eating and physical activity, among children and young people. Target areas include encouraging formal and informal physical activity for children and young people.

4.3 Local Policy

Southend Together; Community Plan aims to create a vibrant coastal town and prosperous regional centre where people enjoy living, working and visiting.

Southend Council's Corporate Plan sets out the vision, values and aims of the authority. The vision is to create a better Southend and acknowledges the council's core values as value for money, people, integrity, honesty and openness, customer care and equality and diversity. The Council will deliver the corporate aims by working with partners and focusing on the Critical Corporate Priorities

- Improving community safety and reducing anti-social behaviour
- Driving up performance of the housing service
- Improving outcomes for Looked After Children within agreed budgets
- Waste disposal and refuse collection
- Improving public satisfaction
- Promoting economic well-being
- Embedding a high performance culture

Southend-on-Sea's Children and Young Peoples Plan aims to ensure that all children and young people who live in the borough are able to take full advantage of the opportunities which are here now and to enhance these opportunities for the future. It reflects the intentions of the council, schools, partner agencies and children and young people themselves to secure further improvements in the five key outcome areas of:

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

The plan has identified that young people would like to see

“a greater ranger of enjoyable activities would improve the atmosphere of the community”

Young people also commented on the importance of access to play.

“If people can go to places they will be happy but they can't go because of the cost and they can't get there because parents don't drive.”

This is particularly relevant in areas of Southend where car ownership figures are below the national average.

The Extended Schools initiative, part of the National Childcare Strategy, provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. One part of this is to provide 'wraparound childcare' for children and young people up to the age of 14, and in special schools up to the age of 16. This provision will give access to:

- supervised play opportunities through 'out of school hours' provision
- supervised play opportunities outside the school environment.

Local Development Framework is an emerging document that will guide the future development of Southend. It aims to balance the need for additional residential and commercial growth with the need to safeguard and enhance areas of urban and nature conservation interest and protect attractive townscape, urban green spaces, open countryside and the surrounding coastline. It specifically recognises the need to provide a range of recreational and play facilities to address areas of deficiency where this is possible. It recognises that increased residential and commercial development will put added pressure on current facilities. The framework seeks to harmonise the requirement for developers to make financial contribution towards new and improved community facilities or appropriate usable open space and community facilities as part of new developments.

Local Area Agreement – halt the increase in obesity in Southend children aged 5 – 10 ; establishing a baseline for the percentage of young people participating in at least one hour of moderate intensity sport an physical activity each week (outside school) – both indicators for the Healthy Communities & Older People block mandatory outcome “Improve health and reduce inequalities”

4.4 Profile of the Council Area

Southend is a vibrant seaside town situated at the mouth of the Thames estuary that attracts 6.4 million visitors a year (source; East of England Tourist Board, Economic Impact of Tourism, 2004).

Southend-on-Sea is a densely populated town. During the last census the local population was reported to be 160,269 and is currently home to 35,016 children and young people under the age of 18 (according to the 2005 Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimate). However it should be noted that the Council is in dispute over the census figures and report the overall population of the borough to be higher.

There are 70,978 households in Southend and the majority are owner-occupied (73%) which is a higher percentage than the average for England and Wales. There is a lower percentage of households renting from the council in Southend (8%) than England and Wales and a higher percentage renting from a private landlord or letting agency (13%) compared with England and Wales (9%).

About 30% of the people aged 16 – 74 in Southend have no qualifications. This is slightly higher than the national percentage (29%). A lower percentage of people in Southend (14%) have a degree than the national average (20%).

9% of residents living in the town described their health as ‘not good’ which is the same as the national average.

There are high levels of deprivation within a number of areas within the town. Levels of deprivation are measured by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) which provides comparative information on sub-ward geographical areas known as ‘Lower Layer Super Output Areas’ (SOA’s). There are 107 SOA’s in Southend each of which contains about 1,500 people. The ONS report that:

- Southend has five SOA’s that fall within the top 10% most deprived areas of England on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, two of these are found in the Kursaal Ward, and one each in the Milton, Victoria and Southchurch Wards.
- 26 SOA’s are among the top 10% of the most deprived areas in England in at least one aspect of deprivation, which represents about 39,000 residents
- 73 SOA’s are identified as being in the top 20% of the most deprived areas in the Eastern region in at least one aspect of deprivation
- 48 SOA’s are ranked on the Index of Multiple Deprivation within the top 20% of the most deprived areas in the East of England

Unemployment rates in Southend have remained above the national and regional levels for many years. Southend has 7 SOA's in the top 10% most employment deprived areas in England.

On the Income for Deprivation Domain, 15.8% of residents are classified as living in income deprivation. Eleven SOA's in Southend are ranked in the top 10% of the most income deprived areas in England.

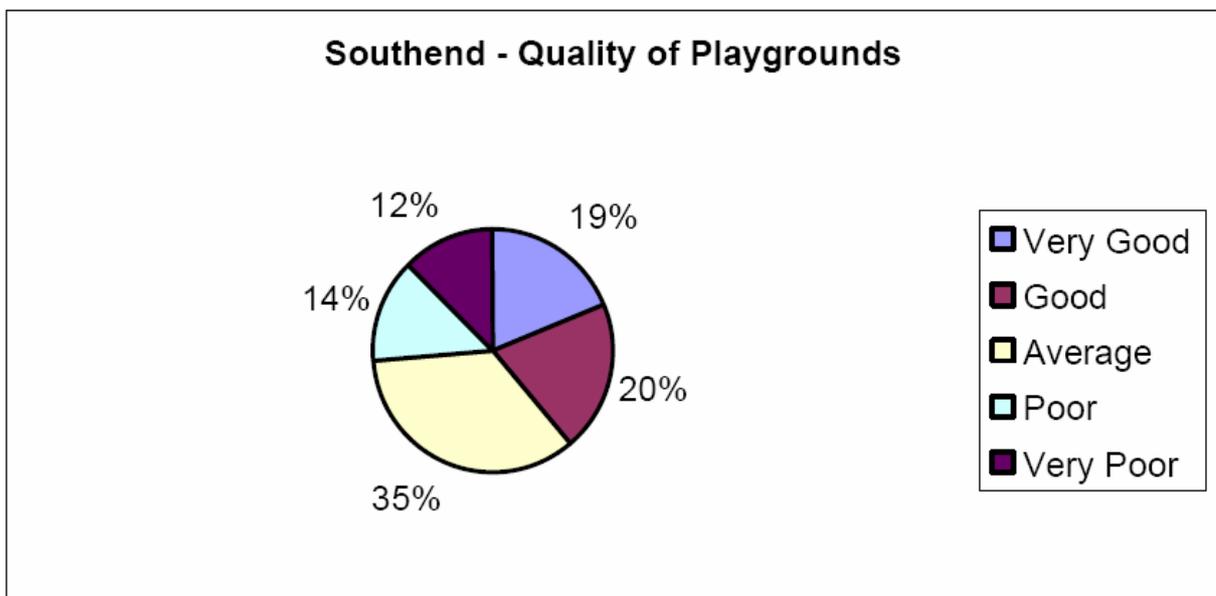
5 Review of Community Consultation

As part of the preparation of this strategy document all existing consultation information has been reviewed and analysed. This has provided a considerable amount of information on the community's views and priorities. The views of residents in conjunction with the audit of existing facilities have informed the key objectives and priorities for play in Southend. Further details consultation work can be found in Appendix 4.

'One Voice' Survey 2003 was conducted by Integrated Youth Support Service. This surveyed the views of 122 children and young people aging from 10 to 19 years old and covered a wide range of topics and specifically looked for views on playgrounds and youth facilities in the town.

Leisure and the Environment were retained by Southend Borough Council in 2004 to prepare the report Open Spaces and Recreation Assessment in Southend on Sea. As part of this work the company sought the views of the community on a range of subjects including local recreation facilities for children and young people, and parks and green spaces.

During 2006 the Department of Leisure, Culture and Amenity Services (DLCAS) researched the views of children and young people as part of the work to develop a Green Space Strategy. 580 surveys were returned by school pupils from year one to year eleven. The survey highlighted a number of issues effecting the use of parks and open spaces and in particular the kind of facilities the children and young people would like to see.



Source: 'One Voice Survey' – Quality of playgrounds

DLCAS has carried out further consultation work as part of the development of site specific management plans for the town's 'flagship' parks of Chalkwell, Belfairs, Priory, Southchurch and Shoebury. Here again, residents have been asked to give their views on what they like, what they don't like and what should be improved. This consultation has taken many forms including surveys and questionnaires, meeting

with user and interest groups, community circles and young people projects. This work is ongoing as part of the service's commitment to engaging and involving the community.

The council has retained MORI to carry out a review of household opinion every two years from 1999. Of necessity, the subjects cover a broad range but also specifically look for views on parks and green spaces and play and playgrounds.

5.1 Conclusions from Community Engagement

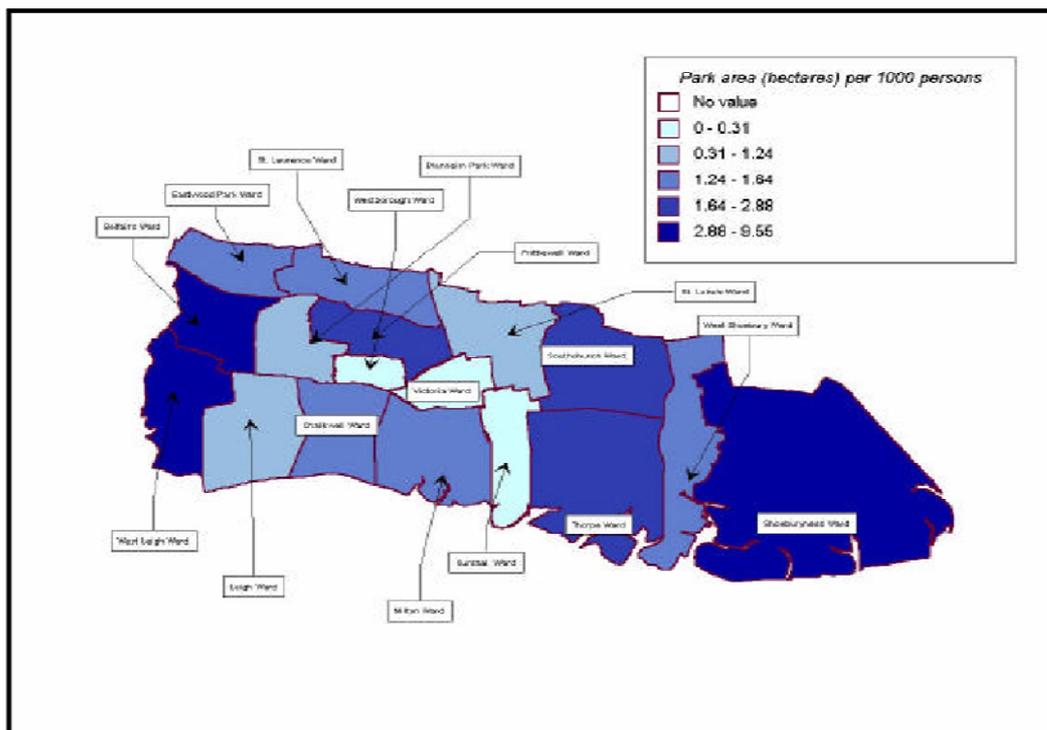
- Parks and open spaces are well used and highly valued by the community.
- Seafront facilities and the beach are well used and highly valued by local people.
- Playgrounds are valued by the community but also in need of improvement
- There is a strong feeling that the council should involve children and young people in planning the services provided for young people
- Residents consider that access to exciting and enjoyable evening, weekend and holiday activities for children and young people should be improved
- A strong feeling that there is a need for facilities aimed specifically at young people - hang out areas, 'wheels facilities'.
- A desire to have places simply to meet (hangout areas, drop in centres, community centres etc). Generally parks and open spaces in Southend are seen as a very important local resource.
- There are concerns about vandalism in parks and open spaces, and a desire to see greater security measures in place.
- There is a general view that not enough is provided by way of informal facilities for young people.
- Parks and open spaces are multifunctional. They not only serve a recreational role, but also an amenity role. They also are capable of being better used to achieve greater local biodiversity.

6 An Audit of Play Provision

As part of the preparation of this strategy the current provision of play spaces, equipment and opportunities has been audited. The audit considers the quantity, quality, functionality and accessibility of public play places for children and young people.

The purpose of the audit is to identify gaps in provision and to account for any shortcomings in their quality or functionality. It provides the background information for the improvement of existing spaces and the development of new sites.

Details of the audit have been included as Appendix 5.



Overall level of park provision (hectares per thousand people)

6.1 Conclusions from the Audit

Parks and Open Spaces

- The audit has indicated that there is no evidence of any significant quantitative deficiency in the provision of parks and open spaces in the town as a whole. However, there are areas of the town where access to open spaces is poor namely Westborough ward, Victoria ward and Kursaal ward.
- An increase in the local population as a result of new developments will put pressure on existing facilities and create a need to enhance existing facilities or provide new facilities.
- The evidence shows that they are popular, well used and highly valued.
- There is a need to improve or renovate or replace public toilets.

Playgrounds

- There are thirty nine playgrounds across the borough offering free access
- The quality of these sites is variable with some offering good facilities with a high play value and others in a poor condition
- There is generally a lack of good accessibility to equipped play areas for children throughout the borough. Parts of Victoria, Prittlewell, Leigh, Belfairs, Eastwood, Southchurch, Thorpe and Shoeburyness are poorly served with outdoor equipped play areas. Westborough ward only has one playground within its boundaries.

Youth facilities

- There is a significant lack of fixed 'play' facilities for older children and young people.
- There are currently only two wheeled sports facilities in the borough at Chalkwell Park and Shoebury Park.
- There are a limited number of youth shelters in the borough (Eastwood Park, Oakwood Park, St. Laurence Park, Bournes Green Park and Shoebury Park).
- The Integrated Youth Support Services runs valued services for 10-13 year olds from its three bases, but the level of funding of this service is low compared to other authorities (see Cabinet Report Comparison of Education Budgets 06-07, Nov. 2006).

School Play Provision

Extended Services Agenda

The council will be extending and developing new provision through a range of providers in areas where play opportunities are currently unavailable or limited to small numbers of children.

School-based play provides continuity on the same site with the same network of friends for children who want to stay at their school. It also supports parents who work or undergo training for the whole day while feeling certain that their children are in a safe environment where they are continuing to learn and enjoy themselves.

The advantages of school-based play is the access to all of the resources the school premises offer, including opportunities for study, sports, art and IT access. School based play provides the ideal opportunity to integrate out of school play with out of school learning and sports. This strengthens the opportunities to improve health, and to raise school achievement and provides exciting opportunities for children to continue to learn outside the National Curriculum which is consistent with the development of extended schools.

The services will help towards crime reduction by providing safe play opportunities, engaging children in stimulating activities which are appropriate to their age in a safe environment, supervised by adults and providing an opportunity to exercise and socialise with their peers.

Many children and families choose community providers for their play which are not based in schools. The main reason for this is that the service provider is within easy reach of their home or community and provides facilities that are safe and accessible to all ages. These supervised play activities are responsive to the children's needs and are more likely to meet the needs of older children between the ages of 8-14 years. Activities provided such as dance, karate, judo, mc-ing, drama, art and many others bring together play, sports and fitness activities.

Clear signposting of the range of play activities available in local areas will be undertaken to ensure children and families are able to access to all opportunities available.

Linking with the Integrated Youth Service, play activities for young people will be strengthened in order to improve the transition of young people from play to youth activities.

Charging for play activities by schools and providers is essential in order to make services sustainable taking into account the views of parents to enable the services to be affordable and inclusive. The Extended Schools agenda states 'Some of these services such as health and social care will be provided free of charge. But for other services, such as childcare, which includes play activities, charges will need to be made'.

Voluntary Sector

- Southend Play Council fund a variety of out of school, holiday activities across the town for children of all ages. Residents groups, churches amongst other voluntary organisations are involved in delivering these services.

Local churches offer a variety of holiday activities to parishioners and non-parishioners.

Most activities incur some costs and the number of free events is extremely limited.

The Civic Realm

- The biggest and most popular recreation resource is the seafront including the foreshore and seafront promenade.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1

7.1.1 Objectives and Priorities

1. To improve and develop existing play spaces
 - To replace unserviceable play equipment
 - To develop new facilities for older children
 - To develop and improve play opportunities in the borough's schools
 - To maximise the opportunities of S106 planning gain funding
2. To create new play spaces to address the gaps in current provision and to meet the anticipated increased demand
 - To develop new facilities for older children and young people
 - To maximise the opportunities for S106 planning gain funding
 - To increase the play opportunities available to children with special needs
3. To enable children and young people to participate in the planning and decision making about play and to make a positive contribution to their environment
 - To involve children and young people in the design and procurement of site specific projects
 - To involve children and young people in conservation and planting schemes
4. To improve awareness of the importance of play and to build respect between the generations
 - To raise awareness of the play strategy and the implementation plan
 - To work with partner organisations and local groups
5. To balance the need for challenging, stimulating play while ensuring that children and young people stay safe from harm
 - To regularly inspect and maintain fixed play equipment
 - To explore and develop the opportunities for environmental play
 - To work with partner organisations to address anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime

7.2 Appendix 2

7.2.1 Development Plan

Objective One: To improve and develop existing play spaces						
Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
Maintain/replace and upgrade play equipment in Parks & Open Spaces.	Implement the results of the audit of fixed play equipment in parks and open spaces	Cultural services	Ongoing	Revenue funding Capital funding External funding Officer time	Departmental Performance indicator.	1,2,4,7,9
To support the development of the extended schools agenda, especially varied activities 8am – 6pm	Audit of school provision. Co-ordination of targeted grants.	Extended services remodelling adviser	Complete by February 2007	Officer time	Completed Audit	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Allocate development funding for extended school services especially 8am – 6pm activities for the 2007/2008 financial year.	Carry out consultation	Department of children and Learning: Manager Integrated Youth Support	Complete by February 2007	Officer time Revenue funding Capital funding	Budget Plan	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Access external funding for play improvements in Park & Open Spaces	Identify and access external funding opportunities. Prepare and submit bid each year.	Cultural services Economic regeneration	September 2007,2008,2009	Officer time Revenue funding	Bid submission	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9

Objective Two: To create new play spaces to address deficiencies in current provision and to accommodate future additional demand						
Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
Develop portfolio of projects for submission to BIG Lottery	<p>Consultation with stake holders and partner organisations.</p> <p>Consider consult results from children and young people</p> <p>Prepare project management plan, key mile stones and risk assessments.</p>	<p>Play strategy team</p> <p>Cultural services Southend Play Council</p> <p>Schools Residents Groups</p> <p>Integrated Youth Support Service</p> <p>December 2006</p>	Bid submitted by March 2007	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Revenue costs</p>	Bid submission.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
To develop opportunities for informal/environmental play within Parks & Open Spaces and new amenity space	<p>Research best practise</p> <p>Identify potential sites</p> <p>Prepare project management plans</p>	From December 2007	Cultural services Planning	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Revenue costs</p> <p>Capital costs</p> <p>S106 funding.</p>	New environmental play areas.	1,2,5,6,9
To maximise the opportunities for S106 planning gain funding for play improvements in Parks & Open Spaces	Develop formula for S106 developer contribution for inclusion within Local Development Framework	Cultural services Planning	December 2006 February 2007	Officer time	Adoption of formula within Local Development Framework.	1,2,4,7,9,10

Objective Two: To create new play spaces to address deficiencies in current provision and to accommodate future additional demand

Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
To increase the play opportunities available to children with special needs within Parks & Open Spaces.	Carry out Equalities Impact Assessment of all sites Identify sites for new and improved inclusive play opportunities Consult on ways to improve provision.	Cultural services Southend Access Group	January 2007 – October 2007 October 2007 – April 2008	Officer time Capital funding	Departmental records. New and improved facilities.	1,3,5,8
To develop new facilities for older children and young people within Parks & Open Spaces.	Produce project plans for new youth facilities in areas highlighted as being poor in provision. Priory Park, Southchurch Park and Leigh Marshes.	Cultural services	January 2007	Officer time	Outline project plans	3,8

Objective Two: To create new play spaces to address deficiencies in current provision and to accommodate future additional demand						
Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
To complete implementation of Phase 2 children's centres programme, providing 7 more children's centres, providing a total of 11 centres, providing multi-agency facilities including play and nursery provision for 0-5 year olds.	Implementation of agreed plans	Children and Learning: Interim Head of Early Years	Incrementally in 2007-08	Resource determined from SureStart grant	Progress reports and opening of centres.	1,2,5,7,8,9,10
Continue to enhance quality of childcare provision	Various, as set out in Early Years and Extended Schools Strategy	Children and Learning: Interim Head of Early Years	2006-08	As set out in Early Years and Extended Schools Strategy.	Progress reports, OfSTED inspection ratings	2,4,5,8,9,10
To increase the play opportunities available to children and young people along the Foreshore.	Identify possible sites for additional facilities. Consult children and young people. Develop detailed project plans	Cultural Services Economic regeneration	2007 – 2010	Officer time Revenue funding Capital funding	Project plans	1,2,7,9,10

Objective Three: To enable children and young people to participate in the planning and decision making about play and to make a positive contribution to their environment

Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
To involve children and young people in the design and selection of all new play facilities.	Engage local children and young people in the project initiation and evaluation stages. Advertise the opportunities to be involved, Council web site local media, and onsite publicity.	Play strategy team Cultural services Integrated Youth Support Service Southend Play Council Schools Residents Groups South Essex Homes	Ongoing	Officer time Revenue costs	Consultation results	3,5,8,9
To involve children and young people in improving their local environment.	Engage local children and young people in the project initiation and evaluation stages. Advertise the opportunities to be involved, Council web site local media, and onsite publicity.	Cultural Services Integrated Youth Support Service Schools Southend Play Council	Ongoing	Officer time Revenue cost	Consultation results Cultural services Departmental service plan	3,5,8,9
Develop opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution through Southend Youth Council and associated activity.	Target 200 young people directly involved from the 2005/2006 baseline of 124.	Integrated Youth Support Service	March 2007	Officer time Within existing resources.	Consultation results	3,5,8,9

Objective Four: To improve awareness of the importance of play and to build respect between the generations						
Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
To raise awareness of the play strategy and the development plan.	Produce summary version of the strategy and distribute	Play strategy team	Complete by June 2007	Officer time Revenue funding	Production of summary documents, play leaflet.	8
	Post strategy on council website	Play strategy team	By June 2007		Entry on Council website	
	Produce play leaflet summarising the benefits of play and availability of existing facilities and services	Play strategy team	By July 2007		Press cuttings	
	Produce articles for Civic News and media release	Play strategy team	From April 2007			
To work with partner organisations and local groups to build respect between the generations.	Promote community circles	Cultural services Children and Learning Essex police Youth Offending team Integrated Youth Support Service	From April 2007 ongoing	Officer time Revenue costs	Community circles held	6,8
Attend residents and tenants' group meetings.	Meetings minutes					
Facilitate and support public events	Events held					
Encourage clubs to develop youth sections	New youth sections within clubs					

Objective Five: To balance the need for challenging, stimulating play while ensuring that children and young people stay safe from harm						
Task	How (Action)	By who	When	Resource Required	Evidence	Outcome (See evaluation table)
Develop the agenda for the community safety sub group of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.	Further development of the workplan	Head of Specialist Services	By February 07	Officer time	Workplan	6,8
Assess the challenge, stimulation and play value of equipment at the time of design and procurement for facilities within Parks & open Spaces.	Benchmark against other authorities and play suppliers Purchase equipment appropriate to the target age group	Cultural services	Ongoing	Officer time Capital funding	Results of benchmarking.	2,4,7,9
Raise awareness of the need for challenge and an element of risk in play	Develop play leaflet Council website	Cultural Services Children and Learning Southend Play Council	April 2008	Officer time Revenue costs	Leaflet Entry on council website	2,7
Ensure all staff involved in play are CRB (enhanced) checked	CRB checks are undertaken before new staff take up positions. Annual review that checks are up to date. Assist outside organisations in applying for CRB checks.	Cultural services Children and Learning Human Recourses	Ongoing	Officer time Revenue cost	All relivant staff enhanced CRB checked.	6

7.3 Appendix 3

7.3.1 Evaluation and Monitoring

Evaluation

The following outcomes have been identified as the key priorities for assessing new play schemes and projects.

1.	Improving access to play
2.	Improving play value
3.	Consulting and involving children and young people
4.	Improving existing play spaces
5.	Promoting equality and social inclusion
6.	Increasing community safety
7.	Promoting health and physical activity
8.	Involving the community and partner organisations
9.	Promoting enjoyment of children and young people
10.	Promoting economic well being

Monitoring

The Play Strategy and play development plan require constant review and monitoring to assess progress towards achieving its key aims and objectives. A number of key performance measures have been identified to evaluate progress.

- Residents satisfaction rating with play facilities
- The number of new, replaced and upgraded items of play equipment per year
- Residents satisfaction with parks and open spaces

The Play Strategy will be formally reviewed annually.

7.4 Appendix 4

7.4.1 Details of Community Consultation

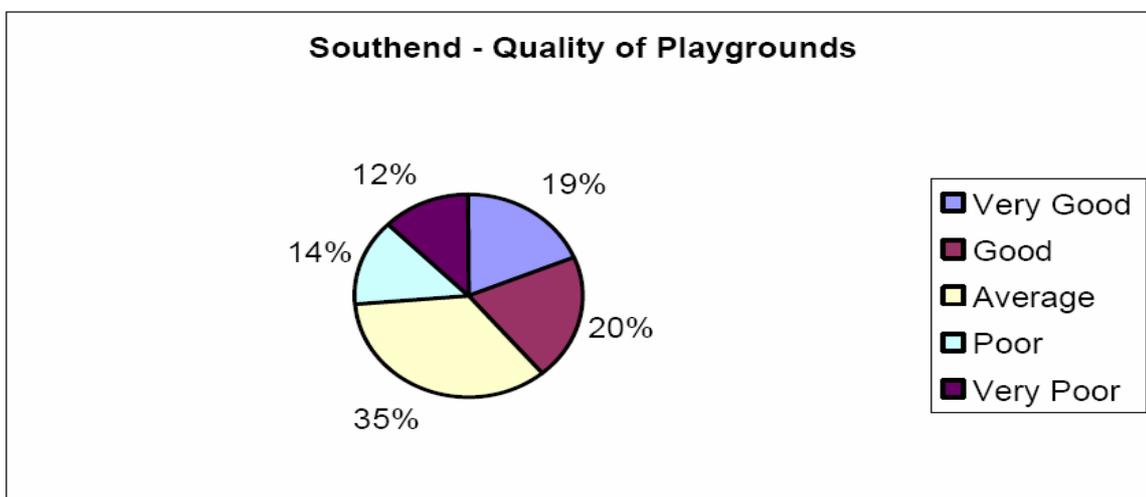
'One Voice' survey

Integrated Youth Support Service regularly conduct surveys of young people. The One Voice project offered free bowling in return for cooperation in filling in a questionnaire. Although this survey also covered issues beyond the immediate scope of this report, some questions were included to specifically inform this study. 122 young people took part in the survey, 63 females and 59 males, with ages ranging from 10 to 19 years old as follows:

- 6 x age 10
- 7 x age 11
- 9 x age 12
- 9 x age 13
- 15 x age 14
- 14 x age 15
- 27 x age 16
- 17 x age 17
- 12 x age 18
- 6 x age 19

A question was asked about the quality of local playgrounds. Of the 122 young people surveyed:

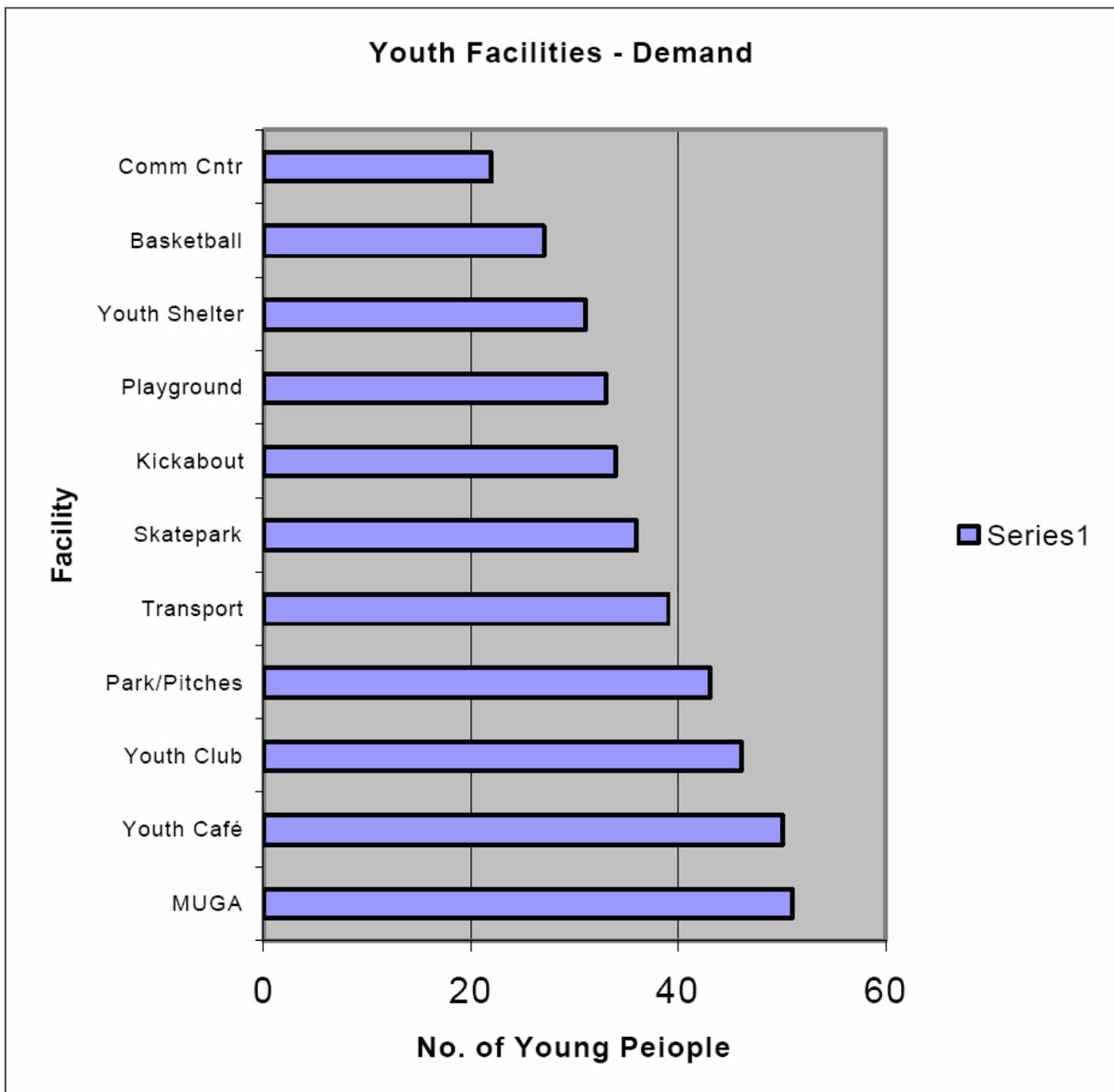
- 42 considered their local playground to be Average
- 24 thought theirs is Good
- 23 thought theirs is Very Poor
- 17 thought their local playground is Poor
- 15 considered theirs to be Very Good
- 1 said they did not have a local playground



When asked what sort of facilities they felt were most needed by their age group:

- 51 considered that a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is most needed in their area
- 50 wanted a Youth Café / Drop-In Centre
- 46 wanted a local Youth Club
- 43 wanted a Park or Sports Pitches
- 39 wanted a Bus to get to better facilities
- 36 wanted a Skateboard or BMX facilities
- 34 wanted a Kickabout Area
- 33 wanted a Playground
- 31 wanted a Youth Shelter
- 27 wanted Outdoor Basketball Hoops
- 22 wanted a local Community Centre

Demand for youth facilities



What is perhaps most noteworthy about these findings is:

- A strong feeling that there is a need for facilities aimed specifically at teenagers.
- A desire to have places simply to meet (hangout areas, drop in centres, community centres etc).

Survey of community organisations

As part of the study commissioned by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council in 2004 a survey of community groups views was conducted. This involved the distribution of a semi-structured questionnaire survey, where respondents were encouraged to provide detailed comments on a wide range of matters, including:

- Sports pitches and recreation grounds.
- Other local recreation facilities (including facilities for children and teenagers).
- Green open spaces in general
- Community halls and meeting places
- Footpaths and cycleways
- Access to the countryside
- 'Most used places'
- Other matters that people wished to mention

Although the responses level was not high, comments received were both interesting and illuminating. In the main they tended to confirm the findings and conclusions of the Parks Strategy, and other local research in that:

- Generally parks and open spaces in Southend are seen as a very important local resource.
- There are concerns about vandalism in parks and open spaces, and a desire to see greater security measures in place.
- There is a general view that not enough is provided by way of informal facilities for young people. - hang out areas, 'wheels facilities' and the like.
- Parks and open spaces are multifunctional. They not only serve a recreational role, but also an amenity role. They also are capable of being better used to achieve greater local biodiversity.
- The value of the seafront facilities and the beach for local people.

Survey for Greenspace Strategy

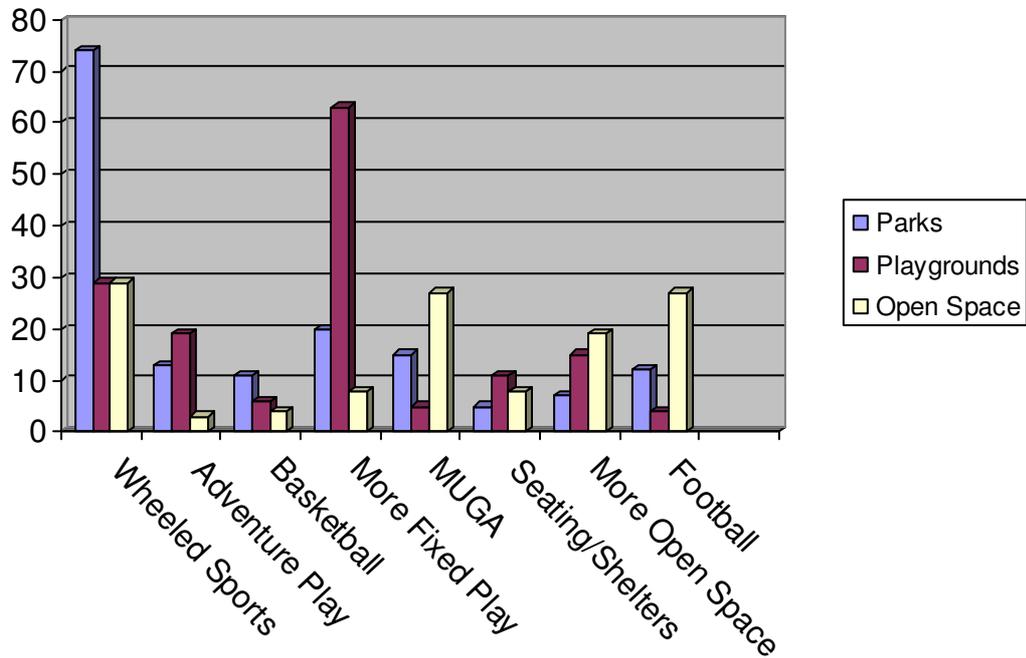
As part of the developing Greenspace Strategy a survey of pupils from schools within the borough was undertaken. 580 surveys were returned with returns from pupils from year 1 to 11. This survey took the form of an informal questionnaire which asked questions such as 'In order of priority what 3 things do you most like about Southend's Parks, Playgrounds and Open Spaces?'

The survey highlighted a number of issues affecting the use of parks and open space by young people and in particular what 'play facilities they would like to see. Some of the results relevant to play were:

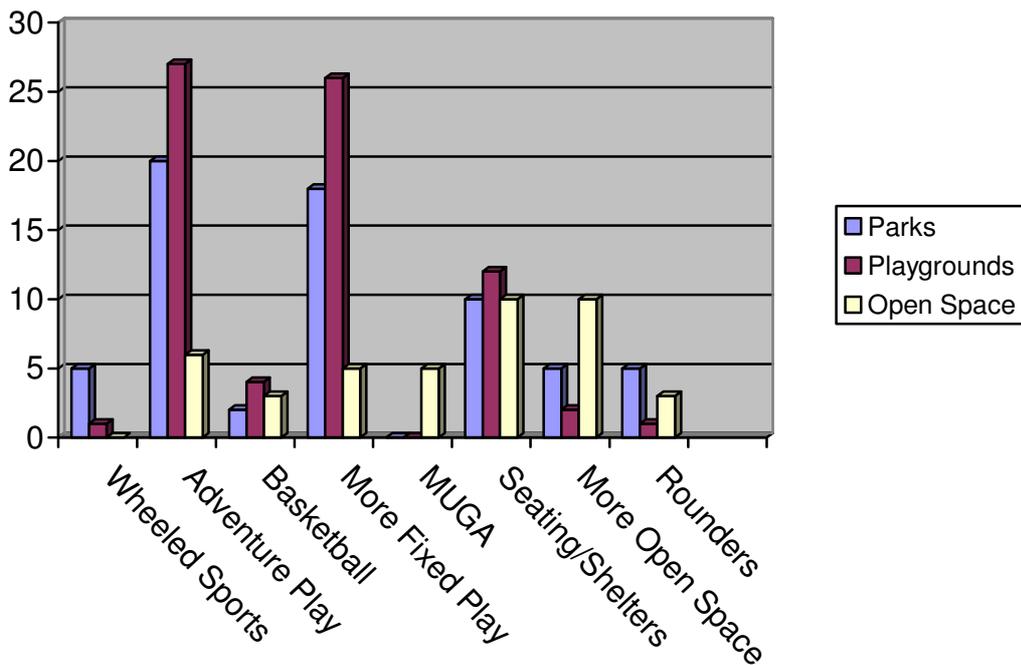
Gender	Number of Surveys Returned
Male	365
Female	210
Unspecified	5

School Year	Male	Female	Unspecified
1	11	20	
2	22	21	
3	6	7	1
4	11	13	
5	15	18	1
6	58	43	
7	78	24	
8	43	11	
9	57	20	1
10	59	19	
11	15	14	
Not Given			2

Top 8 things young males would like to see in Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces



Top 8 things young females would like to see in Parks, Playgrounds & Open Spaces



MORI Survey

In December 2005 MORI published the final top line report based on its findings from the Southend Consultation panel. In total 1,622 panel members were contacted and 1,147 self-completed questionnaires were returned. This represents an overall response rate of 71%. The results were weighted by gender, age and social class to the known population profile of Southend using 2001 census data. Questions sought opinion on a range of services and the following responses have informed the development of this Play Strategy.

The panel were asked which were the three most important and three least important services.

	Most important %	Least important %
Parks and open spaces	21	3
Play service (including adventure playgrounds, holiday schemes, toddlers clubs)	9	19
Pier and foreshore services	9	19
Youth Services	6	10

Users of services were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the quality of services

Service	Base	Very satisfied %	Fairly satisfied %	Neither/nor %	Fairly Dissatisfied %	Very Dissatisfied %	Don't know %	Not Stated %
Parks	859	29	55	8	5	2	*	1
Pier	564	21	45	12	14	5	1	2
Beaches	714	23	54	13	7	1	*	1
Leisure centres (including swimming pools)	303	7	39	20	20	7	5	1

How frequently, if at all, in the last six months have you visited

	Almost every day %	A few times a week %	About once a month %	Once or twice in six months %	Not used in six months %	Don't know %	Not stated %
Parks	9	21	25	23	16	1	5
Pier	1	1	13	35	44	1	6
Beaches	4	15	22	26	25	2	6
Leisure centres	1	8	10	11	59	3	7

Which one or two of the following reason, if any, most commonly prevent you from using

	Expe nsive %	Inconve nient location %	Limited opening hours %	Fear of anti- social behavio ur %	Lack of public transpo rt %	Lack of informati on about it %	Poor access to the buildings %	Poor qualit y servic e %	Don' t know %
Parks	*	1	1	17	2	2	*	2	79
Pier	7	1	4	5	5	4	2	5	72
Beaches	*	*	*	9	5	1	*	5	81
Leisure centres	11	4	7	5	3	7	1	10	59

7.5 Appendix 5

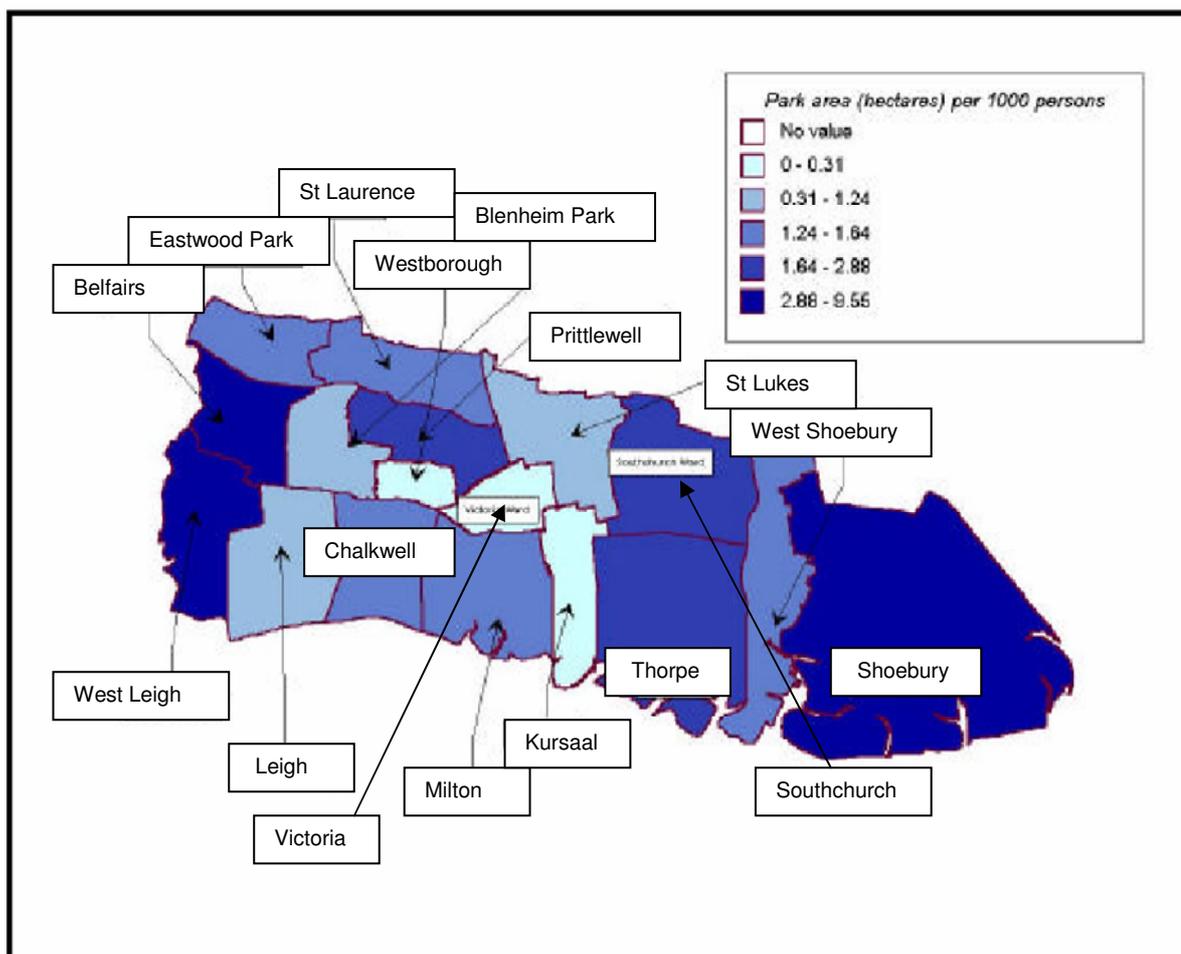
7.5.1 Details of the Audit Play Provision

Parks and open spaces

The council has carried out extensive audits of its open spaces in accordance with government guidance as set out in Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG17) and as part of the developing Green Space Strategy. These studies indicated that there is no evidence of any significant quantitative deficiency in indoor or outdoor sports provision or in the provision of parks and open spaces in relation to the borough's existing population. The evidence from these studies and from MORI polling show that they are popular and well used. An increase in the local population as a result of new developments in the borough will put pressure on existing facilities and will lead the council to seek contributions from developers to enhance existing facilities or where practical provide new facilities.

The following table sets out the types of open space and the area they cover.

Category of site	Number of sites	Area (Ha)
District Park	2	119.4
Local Parks	17	171.41
Neighbourhood Parks	13	25.15
Amenity Open Spaces	40	17.36
Sports grounds	11	103.01
Nature Conservation Areas	6	109.02
Woodlands	2	2.87



Playgrounds

The council currently provides 35 playgrounds across the town. There are four playgrounds provided by South Essex Homes, the arms length management organisation responsible for council housing stock. There is an additional playground provided by Estuary Housing Association.

Each of these sites has been classified as either a Local Equipped Area Playground (LEAP), Neighbourhood Equipped Area Playground (NEAP), or Local Area Playground (LAP).

The audit has plotted the location, condition, and play value of each site. The play value has been calculated by considering the range of activities available for children and young people i.e. climbing, sliding, balancing, swinging etc. .

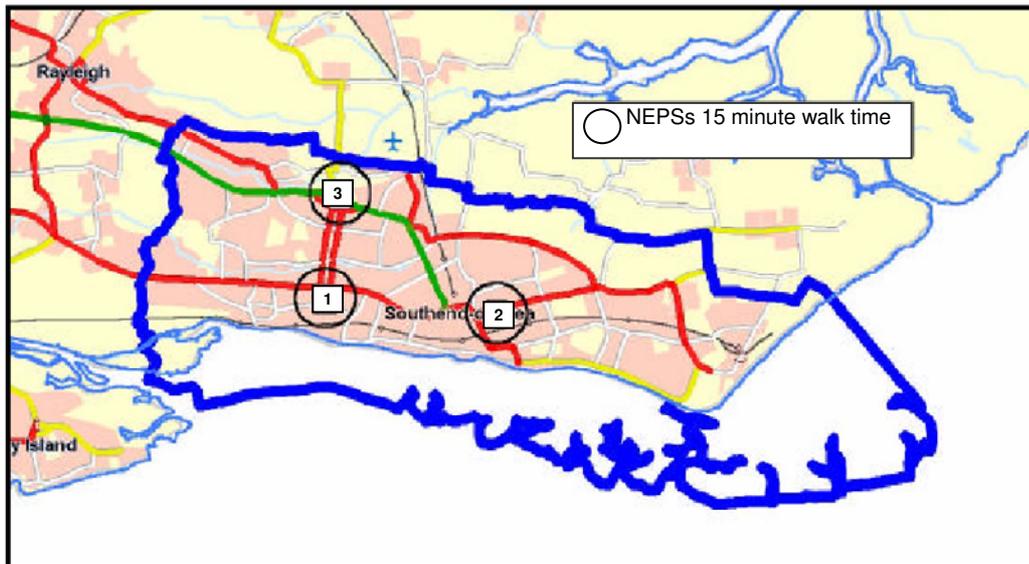
Overall the audit identifies that there are deficiencies in the geographical spread of sites but also that these problems will be extremely difficult to overcome. It also demonstrates that the quality of playgrounds varies from site to site. There are a number of good sites and some in severe need of improvement.

NEAPs

The NPFA recommends that NEAPs should be provided no more than 600 metres 'Straight-line' distance from any house, as they suggest that this equates to walking for about 1000 metres (or about 15 minutes) in the average urban environment. This catchment is smaller than that proposed in the Local Plan (800 metres).

The following map shows the location of NEAPs within the Borough with the 600-metre/15 minute walktime catchments superimposed.

Location of NEAPs and their catchment



1. Chalkwell Park 2. Christchurch Road 3. St Laurence Park

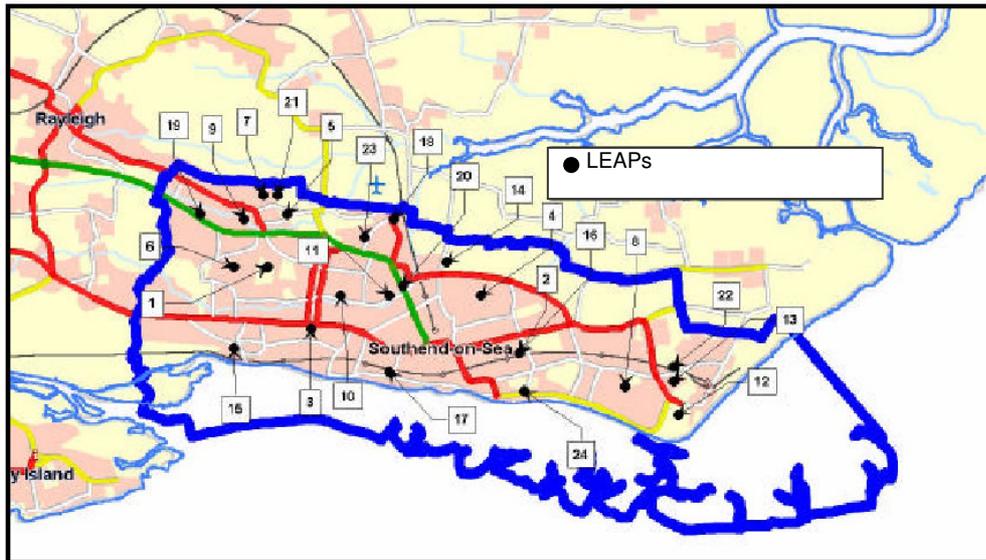
Clearly, the major part of the Borough is lacking easy access to a NEAP standard facility based upon the recommended catchment.

LEAPs

The NPFA recommends that LEAPs should be provided no more than 240 metres 'Straight-line' distance from any house, as they suggest that this equates to walking for about 400 metres (or about 5 minutes) in the average urban environment. This catchment is much smaller than that proposed in the Local Plan (800 metres).

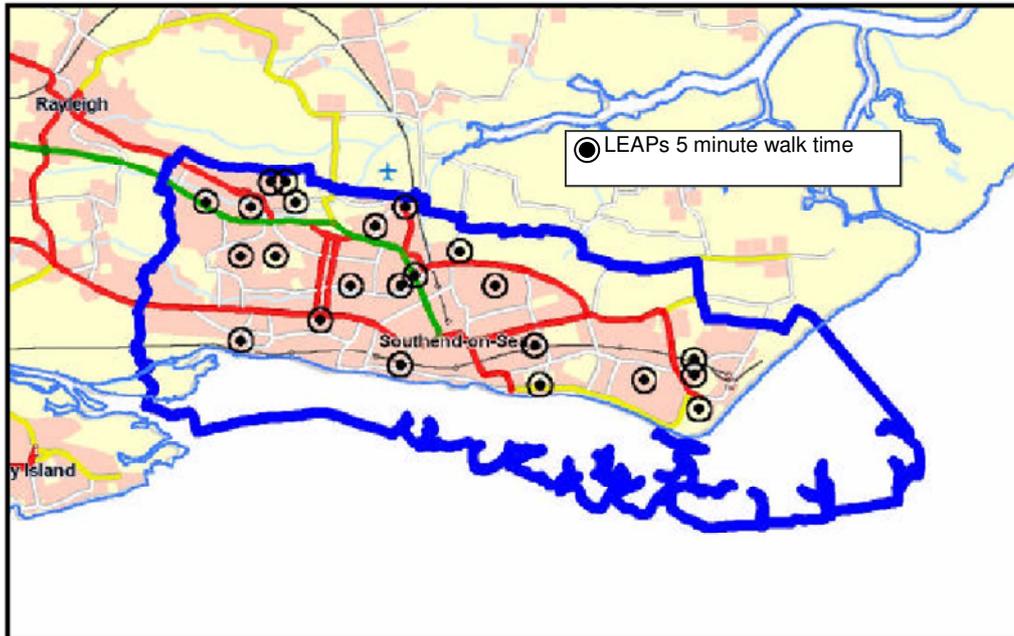
The following two maps shows the location of LEAPs within the Borough with the 240 metre/5 minute walktime catchments superimposed.

Location of LEAPs



Site Ref.	Name
1	Blenheim Park
2	Bournes Green Park
3	Chalkwell Park
4	Cluny Square
5	Cockethurst
6	Danescroft
7	Dandies Playground
8	Delaware Playground
9	Eastwood Park
10	Fairfax Drive Playground
11	Gainsborough Park
12	Gunners Park
13	Jena Close
14	Jones Memorial Ground
15	Leigh Library Gardens
16	Lifstan Way Playground
17	Milton Gardens
18	Manners Way Playground
19	Oakwood Park
20	Priory Park
21	Scott Park
22	Shoebury Park
23	Sidmouth Playground
24	Southchurch Park

LEAP Catchments

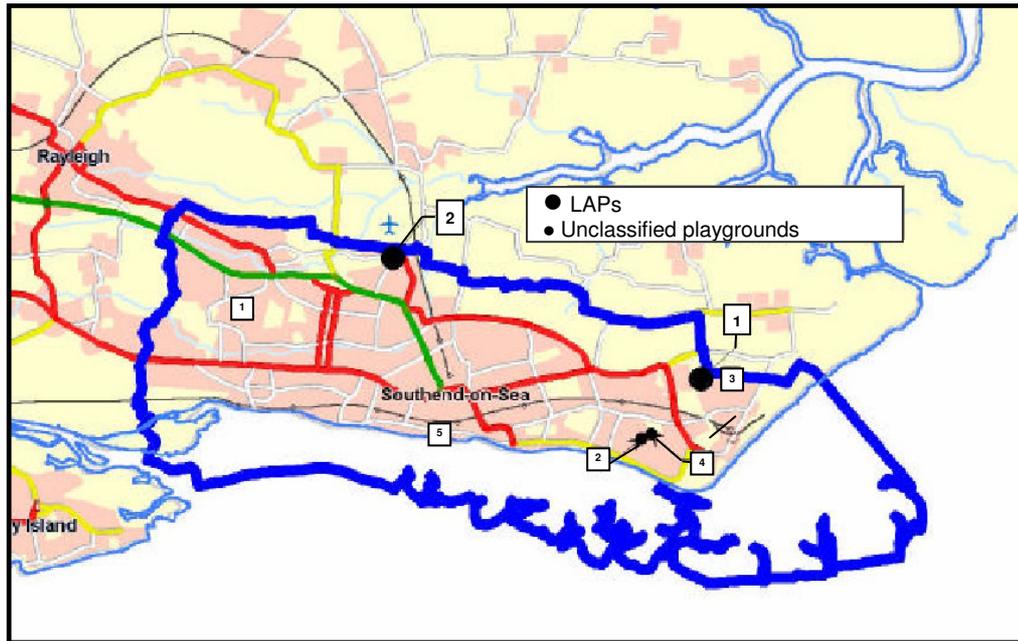


LAPs

The NPFA recommends that LAPs should be provided no more than 100 metres 'Straight-line' distance from any house, as they suggest that this equates to 1 minute's walktime. This catchment is very much smaller than that proposed in the Local Plan (800 metres).

The following map shows the location of LAPs and other (small) unclassified play areas within the Borough. The recommended catchments for LAPs are obviously too small to show on the map.

Location of LAPs and unclassified play areas



Site Ref	Name	Status
1	Colne Drive	LAP
2	Nightingale Close	LAP
1	Bonchurch	Unclassified
2	Caulfield Road	Unclassified
3	Friars Park	Unclassified
4	Saxon Gardens	Unclassified
5	Three Shells	Unclassified

The study report indicates clearly that there is generally a lack of good accessibility to equipped play areas for younger children throughout the Borough. Neither are many parts of the Borough within easy reach of existing facilities specifically designed for young people.

Parts of Victoria, Prittlewell, Leigh, Belfairs, Eastwood, Southchurch, Thorpe, and Shoeburyness are all poorly served with outdoor equipped children's play facilities.

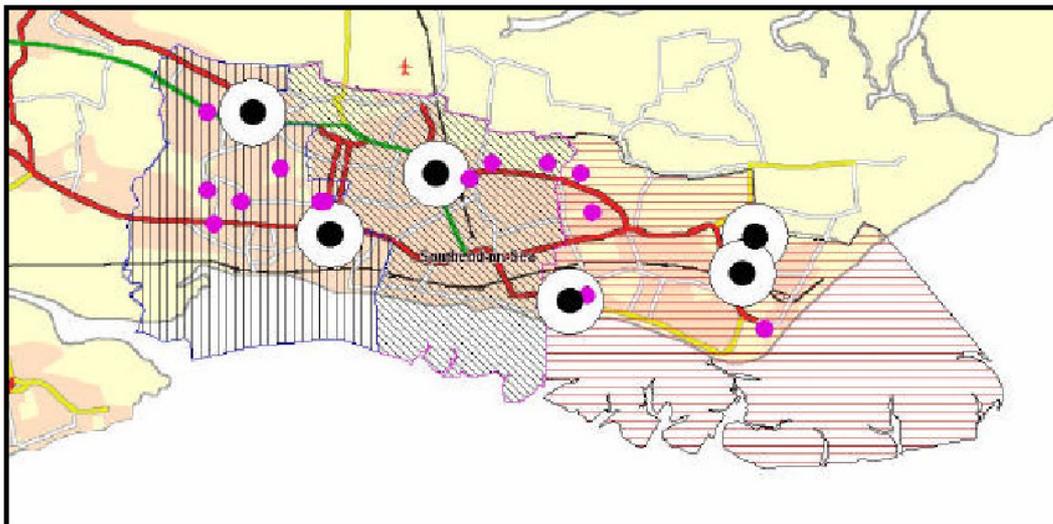
Youth Facilities

When we refer to facilities for youth we are thinking of facilities primarily aimed at the 14+ age range, but which will in reality be likely to cater, in addition, for children and young people at either end of this target group.

Such facilities include:

- BMX tracks.
- Skateboard ramps and pipes.
- Kickabout areas.
- Street basketball facilities.
- Floodlit multi-use games areas.
- Youth shelters.
- Purpose-built outdoor meeting areas for young people.
- Games walls
- Art walls

The map below summarises existing provision and shows several things.



Firstly, it shows the location of 'casual use' facilities that would qualify under the definition of youth facilities provided earlier. These are the large black dots. These facilities are Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) which may also incorporate basketball facilities. They are all located on municipal parks. There are also two skateboard parks (at Chalkwell and Shoebury Parks) which are shown. The white circles are 600 metre radii, which is suggested by the NPFA as a guide to how far can be comfortably walked in 15 minutes within the average urban environment (taking into account physical obstacles like cul-de-sacs and embankments.)

As will be seen, there are many parts of the Borough that are not within the 600 metre catchment of existing facilities. The smaller pink dots are the location of other local authority recreation land.

The Civic Realm

It is generally recognised that children and young people see the whole of their environment as a potential playground. The street outside their front door, High Streets, public squares and shopping areas have long been popular places for children and young people to meet up and socialise. It is also anecdotally reported that many of the older generation feel intimidated by groups of young people or feel that they are in some way “causing trouble”.

By far and away the biggest and most popular recreation resource as well as open space within the Borough is the seafront including the foreshore and the seafront promenade, both of which also form the backdrop to a wide variety of other attractions. These include various parks and gardens (freely available to the public), and other attractions such as the fairground and world famous pier. There are 7 miles of foreshore within the Borough, and considerable areas of this are of environmental significance. There is also a nature reserve and a site of special scientific interest. It is perhaps natural to think of the beach and the promenade as tourist attractions. However, the foreshore and its setting is largely a natural feature with a highly significant role as a habitat and in maintaining local biodiversity; both features are also extremely popular with and well used by local people. The role of the promenade in particular must be recognised in this way. Seafront footpaths and cycleways are flat, and run through a varied and interesting setting. They are a very direct east-west connection, and (combined with existing and proposed cycle routes running north to south) offer good overall connections within the Borough. The Seafront cycleroute will also form part of the Sustrans Regional and National Cycle Network.

7.6 Appendix 6

7.6.1 Local Standards

An extensive assessment of open spaces and sports facilities was carried out in 2003/2004 in consultation with community groups and sports groups by consultants Leisure and the Environment. The audit concluded that parks and open spaces are popular and well used by residents. These findings were mirrored by the results of the 2001 and 2003 MORI polls. Whilst there was no significant quantitative deficiency in the level of provision there are some significant deficiencies in terms of their distribution, accessibility and quality. This coupled with the increase of dwellings between 2001 and 2021 will put significant demands on the Borough's sport, recreation and greenspace facilities and will create demands for:-

- Creation of new Parks, open spaces, playgrounds and sports pitches within or close to new development areas
- Enhancement or extension of existing greenspaces
- Improvement of the quality of existing facilities
- Improvement of access to parks, open spaces, sports pitches and play grounds
- Provision of young peoples facilities

What makes a good play space?

The quality of any play space can be defined and identified by the degree to which it offers the opportunity to experience:-

- Challenge – physical, social and personal
- Free movement – running, jumping, climbing, balancing
- Sensory stimulation – sight, sound, touch, taste, smell
- Social interaction – co-operating, sharing, resolving conflict
- Natural elements – earth, air, fire, water
- Change – building, seasons, predicting, planning
- Emotions – both pleasure and pain, validating a range of feelings
- Materials and tools – both natural and fabricated
- Play with identity – dressing up, face paints, masks, role playing

Parks and open spaces – standards of provision

District Parks: 1 per 22,900 people and wherever possible within 1.2 km of its intended catchment population. The overall size should be no less than 20 hectares.

Local Parks: 1 per 8,900 people and wherever possible within 0.4 km of its intended catchment population. The overall size should be of at least 10 hectares.

Neighbourhood Parks: 1 per 3,800 people and wherever possible within 0.4 km of its intended catchment population. The overall size should be of at least 2 hectares.

The following is the expected content of each kind of park.

District Parks: Landscaping with a variety of natural and semi natural features, including natural habitats and planted beds. Space for outdoor pitch and other sports provision as appropriate (see separate standards). Space for children's and youth play facilities (see separate standards). Car parking. Footpaths. Cycleways. Buildings for secured storage and for catering outlets. Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle, in particular. Events venue. A notable and defining architectural feature. Seating. Litter disposal points. Consideration of zoning between active and passive zones.

Local Parks: Landscaping with a variety of natural features, including natural habitats. Space for outdoor pitch and other sports provision as appropriate (see separate standards). Space for children's and youth play facilities (see separate standards). Car parking. Footpaths. Cycleways. Buildings for secured storage and/or catering outlets (if appropriate). Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle, in particular. Seating. Litter disposal points.

Neighbourhood Parks: Small scale planting and natural habitats. Local Provision for low key play facilities (for young, accompanied children). Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle, in particular. Seating. Litter disposal points.

7.7 Appendix 7

7.7.1 References

- Planning for Play, Guidance on the development and implementation of a local play strategy – Children’s Play Council
- Creating a better Southend, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Corporate Plan 2006-2009
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- Open Space and Recreation Assessment in Southend-on-Sea Borough, Leisure and the Environment
- Mayor of London, Guide to preparing play strategies, April 2005
- Southend-on-Sea Children and Young People’s plan 2006-2009
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