

| Report of   | Meeting           | Date     |
|---|-------------------|----------|
| Director of Leisure and Cultural Services<br>(Introduced by the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Wellbeing) | Executive Cabinet | 09/11/06 |

## A PLAY STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report seeks Members' approval of the adoption of a Play Strategy for Chorley.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. The Play Strategy will have a positive impact on several Corporate Priorities, for example:
  - Improving the chances for children and young people.
  - Improving the quality of life of the borough's older people.
  - Healthier communities and reducing health inequalities.
  - Involving people in decision making and improving the well being of their communities.
  - Improving the local environment.
  - Contributing towards safer communities.

### RISK ISSUES

3. The issue raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

|            |   |                  |   |
|------------|---|------------------|---|
| Strategy   | ✓ | Information      |   |
| Reputation | ✓ | Regulatory/Legal |   |
| Financial  | ✓ | Operational      |   |
| People     |   | Other            | ✓ |

4. An assessment of the key risks has been carried out. The production of the strategy mitigates the risks. There are financial risks related to the distribution of lottery funding. The application process and the grant conditions address the risks.

### BACKGROUND

5. The Executive Cabinet, at their meeting on 30 March 2006, approved a recommendation for the Council, working with the Chorley Play Partnership, to apply for Big Lottery Play Initiative funding. The cabinet also approved a recommendation that the Council be the accountable body for the Lottery grant.

6. The guidance for the Big Lottery Play Initiative funding described two key tasks that need to be completed in order to strengthen a bid for funding. The first is the development of a local play partnership that is fully engaged in the bid. The second is the production of a strategy that highlights local play needs and informs the allocation of lottery funding.
7. Chorley Council has been invited by the Big Lottery Fund to submit a bid up to the value of £208,007. This figure has been calculated using Chorley's child population weighted by the local level of poverty. Our project may last up to three years and requires no match funding, although the Big Lottery Fund will expect to see appropriate existing budgets working in harmony with Big Lottery Fund resources.

## **CHORLEY PLAY PARTNERSHIP**

8. Chorley Play Forum was set up in April 1997 to find ways of making more effective use of limited resources for children's play in the borough. Over the next six years, the Forum, made up of representatives of voluntary, community and statutory organisations – including the Council – was involved in an advisory capacity mainly in relation to Council play initiatives. In 2004 the Forum felt that there was a need to become more pro-active in its own right, and consequently re-formed as Chorley Play Partnership. The Chorley Play Partnership mission statement is :

“Working in partnership to promote and increase quality play opportunities for children and young people across the borough of Chorley”.

## **DEVELOPING THE PLAY STRATEGY**

9. Between January and May 2006, Chorley Play Partnership held a series of sub-meetings to draft a Play Strategy that was discussed at a Re-Visioning Day in early June, then taken out for 10 weeks' consultation. Distribution included: all Parish Councils; primary and secondary schools across the Borough via the Neighbourhood Wardens; Homestart and Barnardo's families; Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators; community organisations and events; Playday 2006; Community Safety Target Area groups; Celebrating Young Children event at Woodlands; Yarrow Valley Park and Get Up and Go activities.
10. Adults were encouraged to consider their own childhood experiences of play before commenting on their experiences of children playing today. Children, young people and adults were asked what they meant by "play", about the things that stopped people from playing, and about where and how play spaces could be improved.
11. Responses to the consultation were collated by a working group in August 2006, then incorporated into the Play Strategy and a preliminary action plan drawn up. A copy of the Play Strategy and the preliminary action plan is attached to this report. The strategy is designed to cover a 10 year period, to allow a realistic timescale for change. The preliminary action plan covers the first 5 years 2006 – 2011, when there will be a review of the strategy. The preliminary action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. This is important given the investigate/explore etc nature of many of the tasks. It is important to note that this is a partnership strategy, rather than a Chorley Council document.
12. The plan covers a wide range of initiatives and activities designed to improve access to quality play opportunities over a long term period. Some of these are dependent upon bidding successfully for external funding, including the £208,000 of lottery money, but most involve reviewing and possibly refocusing local energies by finding more effective ways of working in partnership. Therefore it is recommended that the Council's play expenditure is aligned to the Strategy and the delivery of its aims.

13. The single most important issue relating to play, borough-wide, was bullying and intimidation. Both children and adults rate this as their greatest concern. For children it is at least twice as important as their next highest concern which is vandalism and mess. Adults are also concerned about traffic.
14. The main priorities highlighted within the strategy can be grouped under three headings:
  - Safer Play
  - Inclusion and Involvement
  - Development of Skills and Information

## **THE NEXT STEPS**

15. If the Play Strategy is approved, outline project bids will be invited in November/December. The criteria for the bids will reflect the priorities within the Play Strategy and those set out by the Big Lottery.
16. The bids will be considered by a small panel of assessors. The panel will have four members – two from Chorley Council (Councillors Perks and Bell) and a representative from the Chorley Play Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnership.
17. The approved bids will then form part of our application to the Big Lottery.
18. An officer group has been established to manage the bid process.
19. If approved, the Strategy will be reformatted so that it is easier for the general public, including children and young people, to read than the present format.

## **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

20. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

## **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

21. Members should note that the Council will act as the accountable body for the lottery funding. The Council must therefore ensure that funds are used appropriately and due process is followed. The Partnership and strategy set out a clear vision for the area. Attracting funding to achieve the aims will be key and the Council has a part to play in facilitating this and aligning its own resources to the strategy to meet its own aspirations in the Corporate Strategy.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

22. That the Executive Cabinet approve the Play Strategy and that play expenditure be aligned to ensure it contributes towards the aims of the Strategy.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

22. Approval will enable progress on actions within the Play Strategy and enhance partnership working that will ultimately help to reduce inequalities, get people more involved, improve access to quality play opportunities and develop Chorley as a good play to live and to play.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

23. An option would have been not to produce a strategy and not to apply for the £208,007 earmarked for Chorley. This was rejected.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

| <b>Report Author</b> | <b>Ext</b> | <b>Date</b>     | <b>Doc ID</b> |
|----------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Liz Morey            | 5812       | 16 October 2006 | CSREP/1710DJ1 |



# A Play Strategy for Chorley



# A PLAY STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY

## **How this Strategy was developed**

Between January and May 2006, Chorley Play Partnership held a series of meetings in order to draft a Play Strategy, that was discussed in detail at a Revision Day in early June, before being taken out for 10 weeks' consultation.

The adults taking part in the consultation were encouraged to consider their own childhood experiences of play before commenting on their experiences of children playing today. Children, young people and adults were asked what they meant by "play", about the things that stop people from playing, and about where and how play spaces could be improved.

Responses to the consultation were collated by a Working Group in August 2006, then incorporated into the draft Play Strategy and preliminary action plan.

The Strategy and action plan cover a wide range of initiatives and activities designed to improve access to quality play opportunities over a long term period. Some of these are dependent upon bidding successfully for external funding, but most involve reviewing and possibly refocusing local energies by finding more effective ways of working, in partnership.

The main priorities within the Play Strategy and action plan:

- Safer Play
- Inclusion and Involvement
- Developing skills and information

# A PLAY STRATEGY FOR CHORLEY

## 1. Why Chorley needs a Play Strategy

'A consistent theme is the importance of having communities where there is somewhere safe to go and something to do...(providing) recreational activity for children and young people ...building the fabric of communities and increasing young people's skills, confidence and self-esteem'.

**Every Child Matters, Government Green Paper, September 2003.**

- 1.1 We know that play is essential to children's happiness, health and development. If children do not have the degree of freedom or access to the environments that they need to play, there are serious consequences for their quality of life and long term health and development.
- 1.2 A decline in play opportunities affects children generally, but affects disabled children and children with other social or economic disadvantages disproportionately.
- 1.3 The enjoyment of play and recreation is one of the key outcomes for children that local authorities are required to consider in drawing up co-ordinated children and young people's plans under the Children Act 2004.
- 1.4 'Getting Serious About Play: A review of children's play (2004)', written to advise the government on lottery funding for play, recommended that 'authorities should take the opportunity...to improve the planning and operation of play facilities across their area...in partnership with other local agencies, children and young people and local communities...'

In spring 2005, the Big Lottery Fund announced a £155 million strategic funding programme for play provision in England, to be based broadly on the recommendations of this review.

- 1.5 From September 2005, all local authority services for children and young people became subject to a joint area review. The review provides a comprehensive report on the outcomes for children and young people in the local area, and evaluates how local services work together to contribute to their achievements, progress and well-being. Joint area reviews are normally carried out at the same time as the Audit Commission's corporate assessment of the Council.

1.6 An effective Play Strategy for the Borough will:

- Promote longer term, more cross-cutting partnership working
- Develop strong leadership and support for play
- Promote and develop commitment to play at a strategic level
- Promote and develop inclusivity
- Enhance decision making and service provision

1.7 Play and best value

The Audit Commission identifies the development, adoption and implementation of an appropriate play policy and strategy by the local authority as a Best Value Performance Indicator in the Strategic Objective/Quality of Life category. Indicator PI 115.

While Chorley Council does not currently use this Performance Indicator within Best Value Reviews, good quality play provision, both supervised and unsupervised, developed strategically and managed properly, should represent best value over time as a valuable community asset.

1.8 Whilst the Play Strategy is informed by the findings of local organisations and agencies and relevant local statistics, we have used the views of 174 children and young people and 78 adults, collected through a consultation exercise carried out across the Borough in July and August 2006, to ensure that we are on the right track.

1.9 This Strategy is mainly targeted at play provision for children and young people aged up to sixteen years, but some projects may also benefit young people who are slightly older.

1.10 To allow sufficient time to address play-related issues across the Borough, we propose that this first Strategy should cover a 10 year period from 2006 – 2016, and that it should be reviewed in 2011.





## 2. What we mean by 'play'

Play can be difficult to define! The National Occupational Standards of the playwork, childcare and early years professions define play as 'freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child ... by playing, children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community'.

**Children in Chorley believe that play is (in order of importance):**

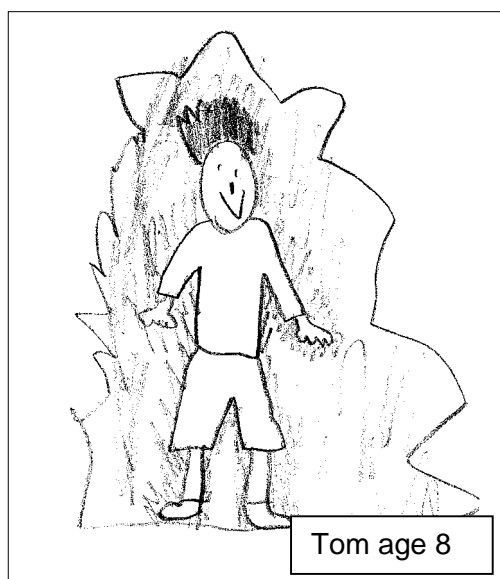
- Something you do with your friends
- Having fun
- Sporting activities
- Playing games like kerbie and tig
- Hanging out / being free
- Being active or occupied
- Outside or on the Rec or play area
- Riding bikes
- Inside, occasionally playing on computers

**We asked adults in Chorley to think back to their own childhood, and tell us how THEY used to play:**

- In the country, or fields
- On the Rec or play area
- Traditional games like marbles, hopscotch, jacks, conkers, skipping
- In the street or at home
- Sporting activities
- Riding bikes or roller skating
- In the woods or near water, climbing trees, making dens
- Make believe play and picnics
- Uniformed activities like Brownies, army cadets, or attending clubs and groups

I play mostly in the living room or in my room, in my house. I would like to row a boat or go fishing.

**Jack, aged 9 years.**



### 3. The benefits of play

- 3.1 Play is essential for children's healthy physical, emotional, social and cognitive development, and growing research shows that opportunities for free play are the best way of ensuring this.  
We know that play contributes to children's physical and emotional wellbeing, and is part of a healthy lifestyle.
- 3.2 Community-based play activities can help make the best use of natural environments, and contribute to children's environmental awareness.
- 3.3 The development, usage and sustainability of opportunities to play is a priority issue for most neighbourhoods, and is often the catalyst for community action.
- 3.4 Positive play experiences and opportunities could help to reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour, which children and young people often attribute to boredom and frustration.
- 3.5 "Play" can be seen as an adult concept – children tend to "do" play, rather than talk about it. Engagement in play is a universal activity, and with the right support, can be inclusive for all.
- 3.6 Play can contribute significantly towards achieving the five inter-dependent outcomes of Every Child Matters, a shared national programme of change with clear focus on children and young people. These outcomes are:
- Being healthy
  - Staying safe
  - Enjoying and achieving
  - Making a positive contribution
  - Achieving economic wellbeing



## 4. Removing barriers to play

'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.'

**Margaret Hodge, Minister for Children and Families, January 2005**

'Both children and adults would like there to be less vandalism and no bullying, and to feel safer'

**Chorley Play Partnership Play Survey results Oct/Nov 2005**

4.1 Children and young people commonly identify many things that can get in the way of their play, recreation and enjoyment of public space.

**Children in Chorley said that the following things stopped them from playing when and where they want to:**

- Bullying and intimidation – these were rated as the main obstacle to play by more than 90% of children and young people responding to the consultation
- Vandalism/mess
- Parents or being grounded
- Lack of time, too many responsibilities
- Nowhere to play, or damaged facilities
- Neighbours or other adults' attitudes
- Traffic and parked cars
- The weather

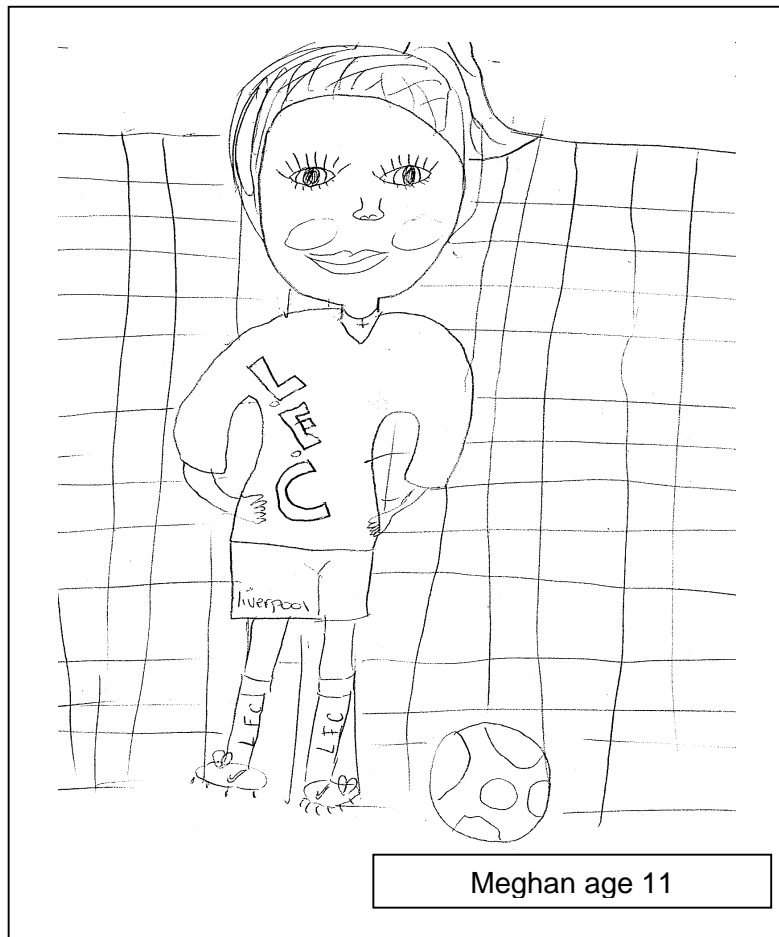
**The adults that responded listed similar obstacles to children playing in their area:**

- Fear and intimidation – again, this was listed by a high percentage of people
- Traffic
- Nowhere to go, nothing to do
- Neighbours or other adults' attitudes
- Parents not around to support or encourage play
- A few people felt that television and computers had a negative effect

I don't play out. I would really like to play football.

**Rebecca, aged 10 years**

I like to play at the park with my friends there are some things that are ok...not so good is that it has lots of things for toddlers when not so many go, so it gets really boring. **Amy, aged 10 years**



Meghan age 11

## 5. Developing inclusive play

'Inclusive play provision is open and accessible to all and takes positive action in removing disabling barriers so that disabled children and non-disabled children can participate'.

**Alison John, for *Kidsactive* and the Better Play Awards**

- 5.1 Negative attitudes and inaccessible physical environments exacerbate the general problems experienced by most children, and create enormous barriers to the enjoyment of disabled children's right to play independently.

A sensory garden - lots of things to touch and feel - play equipment for wheelchair users

**A Chorley Parent – July 2006**

- 5.2 Certain children can be disproportionately excluded from play provision. For example, Asian children – and girls in particular – are sometimes discouraged from attending mainstream play services because of a range of cultural and ethnic pressures. We need to ensure that children and families are actively encouraged to take part in the planning, design and enjoyment of play facilities.

- 5.3 Anti-social behaviour is cited as a barrier to play, both nationally and locally. Groups of children or young people 'hanging out' in public areas are often seen as posing a threat or a nuisance, even when they are simply enjoying being together. Many children and young people complain that they don't have access to space that is theirs because of perceived, or actual, anti-social behaviour.

I like playing on the park there is lots to do and lots of my friends go there too. But the bad point is that lots of older kids wander around there too, so it doesn't feel so safe at times.

**Abbie, 10 years old.**

- 5.4 Young people are often seen as the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, but in terms of parks, recreation grounds and play spaces, they also suffer from the anti-social behaviour of both other children and young people, and of adults – ranging from the possibility of attack in unlit areas, to adults allowing dogs to roam loose in children's areas. Involving children and young people in the design process could alleviate some of these issues.

- 5.5 Children and young people, and their parents and carers, are also concerned about the maintenance of parks and green spaces.
- 5.6 The Kids Inclusion Framework for Local Authorities sets out guidelines for putting policy into practice to include disabled children and young people in play and childcare services.

'This Framework reflects Kids' belief that disabled children and young people should have a right to be part of any local play environment they choose. Local authorities can use this ... to help meet their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act and the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare, promoting equal access to play for disabled children...'

**KIDS, 2005.**

The Framework suggests key areas to address in promoting and supporting inclusive play that can be considered within a play Action Plan for Chorley

Involvement in the development of good quality, local play facilities would provide enormous opportunities to increase young people's positive participation in their community.

I play on the park sometimes if my mates are there so sometimes it is good and sometimes it is bad because people don't treat the things with respect

**Rachael, aged 11 years**

### 5.7 **Levels of deprivation in the Borough**

Chorley Borough is divided into 65 Super Output Areas, which are each given a ranking in the index of multiple deprivation.

The areas of the Borough falling into the 20% most overall deprived of English wards in 2004 included:

- The area between Stump Lane and Lyons Lane.
- Cowling and Eaves Lane South/and the Healey Nab area.
- Botany Bay / Coltsfoot Drive area.
- Chorley Town Centre East.
- East of Pall Mall / West of Pilling Lane area.
- Moor Road North / Eaves Green Area.
- Clayton Brook North West.

Areas within the Borough which, in 2004, fell into the 20% most deprived in terms of health and disability included all the above areas, plus:

- Adlington Town South
- Buckshaw Village and Astley Village North
- Gillibrand South / Moor Road South area.
- Gillibrand Central / Tootell Street Area
- Whittle le Woods North and West
- Clayton Brook South West and North East
- Coppull Central

Although Chorley is not considered to be a deprived area on the whole, the statistics mask the Borough's poor health and levels of disability. Good quality play provision is an accepted way of improving children and young people's health, and needs to be developed in response to these statistics.

Wards in the Borough amongst the 20% most deprived in terms of access to housing and services were shown to be:

- Brindle and Hoghton
- Great Knowley and Little Knowley
- Ulnes Walton
- Pennine and Whittle le Woods South East

If access to services such as GP's, post offices and schools is limited, it could be assumed that access to play services might also be limited. Rural areas, though not traditionally deprived, may be in urgent need of play services.

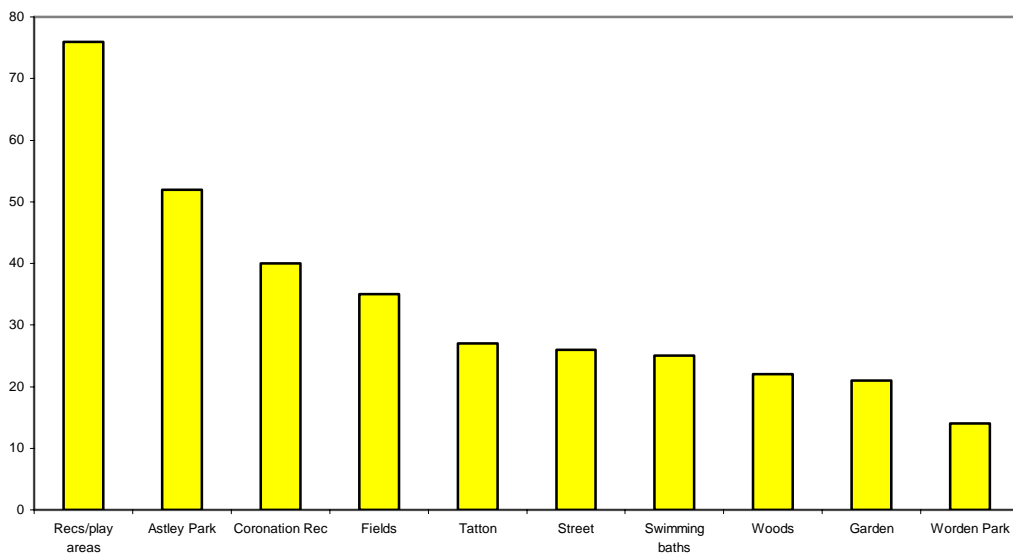
We need to consider all of the above areas of the Borough within our play Action Plan.

## **5.8 Population figures – children and young people under 16**

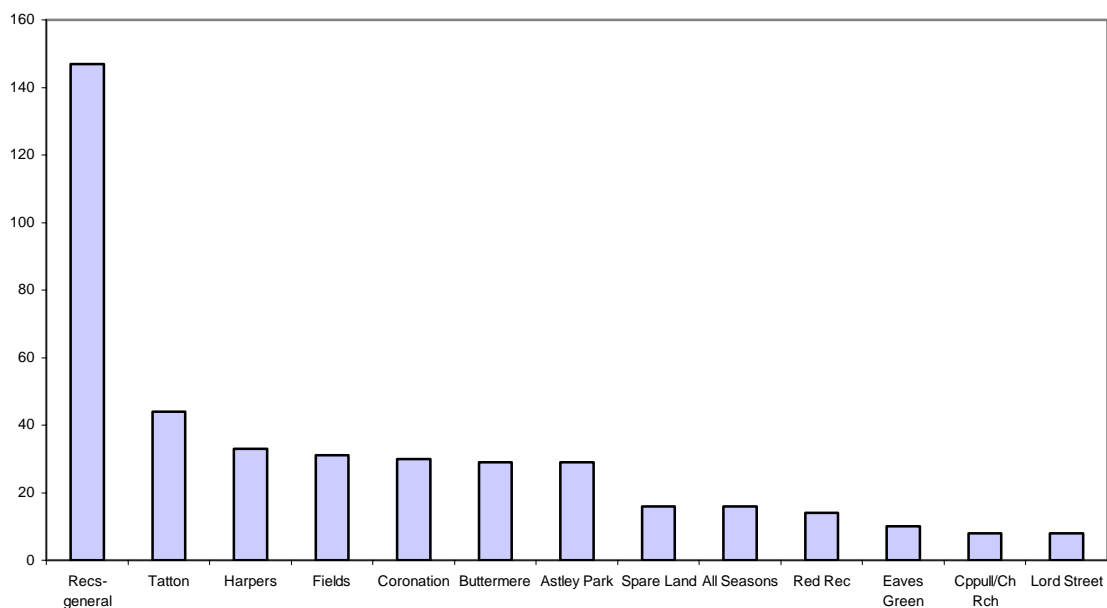
The 2001 Census of Population shows percentages of total population of children and young people under 16 in Wards within the Borough, which can be used to assess needs within a play Action Plan. These are shown as an appendix to this Strategy.

## 5.9 Where are the good places to play – and which places need to be improved?

In their responses to the Summer 2006 consultation, children said that the following were good places to play across Chorley:



They also felt that certain areas needed to be improved:

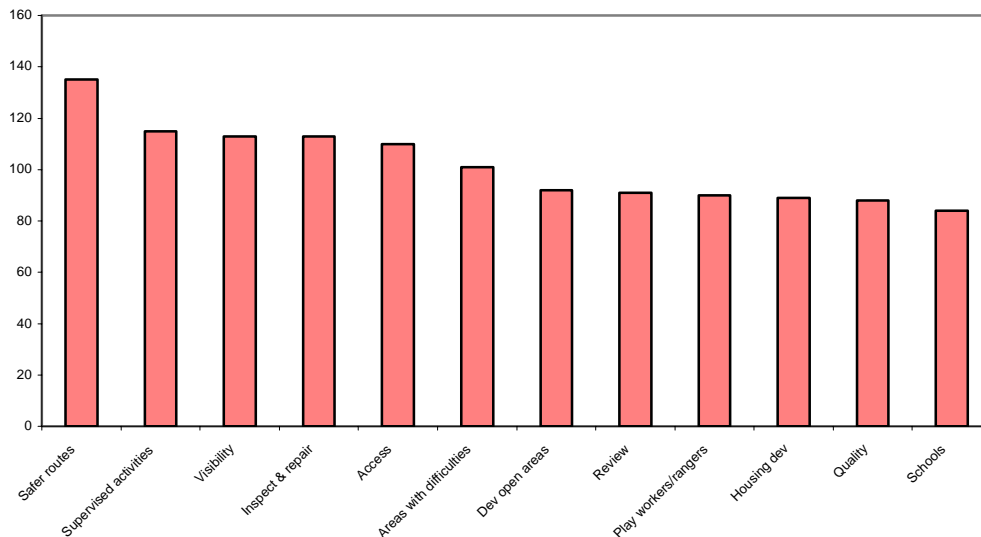


Children and young people's reasons for highlighting certain play places, and their suggestions for improvements are shown as an appendix to this Strategy.



## 5.10 What do children and young people think should be included in the Play Strategy?

As part of the Summer 2006 consultation, children were offered a range of 12 different topics that might be included within the Strategy, if they felt that they were important enough. They a great deal of thought and consideration into this exercise, which led to these results:



These topics will be considered within the play Action Plan.

## 6. Developing Opportunities for Play

- 6.1 Children need to be allowed to be children, wherever they are. A certain number of prescribed, fenced-off areas with a quota of manufactured equipment are just one response to their needs. The Play Strategy and Action Plan are intended to help develop and create the widest possible range of play opportunities.
- 6.2 We want to create a child-friendly Borough and greater recognition of the importance of play across a range of policy areas that affects children's lives. By engaging with children and young people, we can promote a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for sustainable public space. In this way, we can encourage the Borough's young people to identify with, and feel a sense of belonging to their physical, social and natural environment.
- 6.3 We need to promote access for all children through inclusive principles and good practice, as well as by highlighting distinct areas for action to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- 6.4 Half of all days in the year are weekends or school holidays, when, given the opportunity, children will play for many hours. If given the opportunity, they will also play before, after and on the way to and from school.

I play everywhere      Jay, 11 years old

- 6.5 Children's preferred out-of-school play spaces are often where they can see and be seen by a trusted adult. Putting children and their play spaces 'out of sight and out of mind' leads to facilities that are little used and often vandalised.

Children like their play space to be visible and readily accessible, to be at the heart of the community and environment that they are familiar with, where they feel socially secure.

Successful play spaces take into account children's need to see and be seen, without compromising the need for a rich and varied environment, and the ability to hang out, chill, and feel free – one of Chorley children's top 5 criteria for "play" .

- 6.6 Children instinctively like to be within the heart of their neighbourhoods, and tend to play where they are likely to meet friends and other members of the community. This is why they like to congregate in front of shops, on street corners and other well-used public spaces. Being with friends was the number one play priority for children responding to recent consultation.

I play on my street because there's lots of friends and it is busy.  
**Jasmine, aged 10 years**

All children depend upon the suitability of communal environments to be able to play safely.

If they don't actually play on the roads and pavements themselves (and many often do) they depend on these being safe routes to spaces where they can play.

Children responding to the Play Strategy consultation have raised the issue of busy roads and also parked cars, as obstacles to safe play. Parents and other adults feel extremely strongly that traffic danger is a significant obstacle.

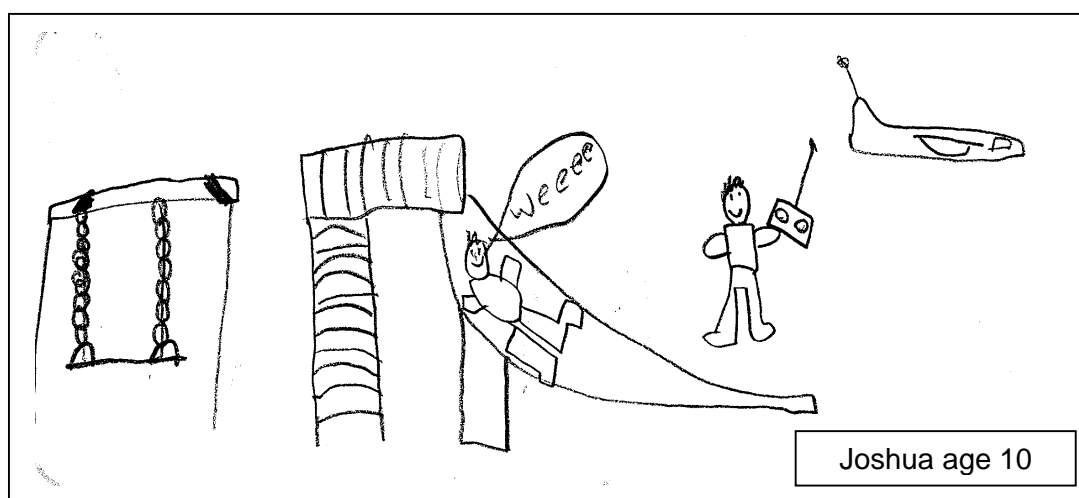
Our Play Strategy needs to find ways to minimise the threat of traffic and other perceived dangers to children playing outdoors by linking with Street Scene initiatives.

I play on my bike a lot. It is not very good because cars always come.  
**Ben, 8 years old**

- 6.9 Chorley's Play Areas Strategy highlights the need for larger, showcase facilities, offering central neighbourhood facilities that bring communities together, with as varied a range of attractions as possible. Tatton Recreation Ground in East Chorley has been a good example of this. The 2006 play consultation results will allow us to review this as part of an Action Plan.
- 6.10 Fixed equipment playgrounds have their place, but children also need access to space to run, climb, skip, hide, play with ropes, jump, practise cartwheels, throw and kick balls, make friends, fall out, grow things, tell stories, climb trees, take risks, get wet, explore nature, build dens, get dirty, dress up, keep animals, dig holes, swing on tyres, shout, fight, invent games, make things, paint pictures, talk with their friends or just sit.
- 6.11 We need to address safety not just by ensuring the safety of play equipment, but by striving to provide spaces and activities where children feel socially safe, but are also able to engage in exciting and challenging activity.

I play on a field it is fun and you can make dens and make a bridge to cross the river. But I don't like it when people set the trees on fire and trash all your hard work.  
**Georgina, aged 8 years.**

- 6.12 The need to feel free from fear of bullying and intimidation and a desire to see a reduction in vandalism at play places has been highlighted as a major concern for both children and adults in the Borough. The play Action Plan must consider ways to increase effective supervision and security, whilst still encouraging a sense of freedom and creative play.
- 6.13 Although a large number of people in Chorley currently provide play work as part of, for example, Early Years provision, or activities within uniformed groups and out of school provision, we do not currently have a specifically recognised play workforce.
- 6.14 We have also experienced difficulty in the past in attracting workers to undergo training that is specifically geared to Playwork. We need to address this as part of the play Action Plan, particularly with a view to developing inclusive play.



## 7. Where play fits in locally

### **Chorley Council's Corporate Strategy for 2006/07 – 2008/09**

Producing a Play Strategy is a strategic priority Chorley Council, with the objective of reducing pockets of inequality within the Borough.

### **Creative Connections – Chorley Borough's Cultural Strategy 2003-2008**

Play is seen as an important element within Chorley's Cultural Strategy. This Strategy uses a definition of culture that includes children's play, playgrounds and play activities within the material dimension of culture, and states that:

'Culture is an integral element in improving the quality of life of the Borough's communities and tackling social, regeneration, health and other issues'.

### **Chorley Borough's Community Strategy 2005 – 2025**

The Community Strategy outlines a vision for the future of the Borough, which includes:

- People in the Borough will be safe and feel safe
- People will be involved in decision-making and in improving the wellbeing of their communities
- All people will have good access to good public services, including public transport.

Children's play is not currently listed specifically within the Borough's Community Strategy or Action Plan for 2005 – 2008 but we aim to redress this within the next Community Strategy Action Plan.

### **Lancashire County Council's Children and Young People's Plan**

The County Council's draft Plan identifies 28 priority areas of work aimed at delivering the five "Every Child Matters" outcomes.

The Lancashire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership would be responsible for ensuring co-operation between local partners on the delivery of the priority outcomes.

Chorley Borough Council have proposed that more local priorities be included within the County's draft Children and Young People's Plan.

## **The Chorley Community Safety Strategy 2005 – 2008**

Includes within its Safe and Secure Streets priority area youth issues, road safety and anti social behaviour. Actions include an assessment of youth provision, targeting 'hotspot' areas by Neighbourhood Wardens, working with Leisure and Cultural Services at Chorley Borough Council to appropriately target play equipment, and improving communications about available facilities to young people. Funding has been targeted to provide activities that will divert young people from committing anti social behaviour. Community Safety Target Area Groups work in partnership to develop and maintain play space, and also raise funds to deliver play and recreational activities within their areas. This model has also been used in other areas, for example, Astley Village, Euxton and Wheelton where there are nuisance issues. There are very clear links between the work of the Council's Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment Directorate, and the issues and concerns raised by the July-August 2006 consultation responses.

## **Chorley Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report into Provision of Youth Activities in Chorley – May 2005.**

This report, following consultation, makes a list of recommendations which include better promotion of services, lobbying for more use of school facilities out of school hours, linking the Borough and County Councils' websites, re-establishing the Borough's Youth Council, encouraging volunteer training and development and looking at ways to promote the involvement of parents.

## **Chorley Borough Council Street Scene, Neighbourhood and Environment Services - Play Areas Strategy**

A five-year Play Area Development Programme formulated by Chorley Borough Council's then Leisure Services Department, in 2003 – 2004, is nearing the end of its term. The fifth year of the plan was specified as a review year, so that a new rolling programme for refurbishment could be developed.

This plan is being reviewed in line with the recent play consultation findings.

## **Chorley Borough Council – Green Spaces Strategy September 2004**

The Borough's Green Spaces Strategy states that new guidance places greater emphasis on the quality of open space, rather than the quantity, and the development of provision standards specific to the needs of the local area. Revisions to the guidance recognised the importance of sport and recreation in people's quality of life, and in promoting social inclusion, community cohesion, health and well being. A number of general principles are included within Planning Policy Guidance 17:

- Promoting accessibility by non-motorised forms of transport and public transport
- Locating intensive forms of use where they can promote town centre vitality and visibility
- Avoiding loss of amenity or biodiversity
- Improving quality through good design
- Adding to and enhancing the existing range of facilities

- Considering security and personal safety
- Meeting regeneration needs of areas, and social inclusion.

### Quality Audit

A Quality Audit carried out as part of the Borough's Green Spaces Strategy in 2004 assessed 26 sites against 27 criteria derived from the national Green Flag Award standard. The criteria used are grouped under eight headings, with a maximum score of 100 for each site:

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, safe and Secure
- Clean and Well maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing
- Management

| <b>Site name</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
|--|--------------|
| <i>Yarrow Valley Country Park</i>                        | 75           |
| <i>Hic-Bibi Nature Reserve</i>                           | 73           |
| <i>Mawdesley Millenium Green</i>                         | 60           |
| <i>Wymott Park, Doorstep Green</i>                       | 60           |
| <i>Balshaw Lane Play Area</i>                            | 58           |
| <i>Astley Park</i>                                       | 56           |
| <i>Coronation Recreation Ground</i>                      | 55           |
| <i>Tatton Recreation Ground</i>                          | 53           |
| <i>Jubilee Recreation Ground</i>                         | 53           |
| <i>Eccleston Millenium Green</i>                         | 51           |
| <i>King George's Field</i>                               | 50           |
| <i>Withnell Linear Park</i>                              | 47           |
| <i>Chorley Borough Average</i>                           | 47           |
| <i>Eccleston Village Playground &amp; Playing Fields</i> | 46           |
| <i>Rangletts Recreation Ground</i>                       | 46           |
| <i>Brinscall Recreation Ground</i>                       | 46           |
| <i>Chorley Cemetery</i>                                  | 43           |
| <i>Rear of Brindle Village Hall</i>                      | 41           |
| <i>Bretherton Parish Institute Recreation Ground</i>     | 41           |
| <i>Abbey Village Playground</i>                          | 38           |
| <i>Lodge Bank</i>  | 38           |
| <i>Blainscough Wood Nature Reserve</i>                   | 37           |
| <i>Carr Brook Linear Park</i>                            | 36           |
| <i>Hurst Brook/Alder Grove</i>                           | 36           |
| <i>Gough Lane Play Area</i>                              | 32           |
| <i>Withnell Fold Recreation Ground</i>                   | 29           |
| <i>Duxbury Park (gardens only)</i>                       | 23           |

These areas need to be included within the play Action Plan for further auditing and review.

## **Chorley Borough Local Development Framework**

### Local Plan

The existing Local Plan includes a number of policies impacting on the management and development of formal and informal play space:

- Public Open Space Requirements in Housing Developments
- Ornamental Open Space Requirements
- Playing Space Requirements
- Sports and Play Provision
- Protection of Existing Play and Other Open Space
- Public, Private, Educational and Institutional Playing Fields, Parks and Other Recreational Open Space
- Amenity Open Space
- Dual Use of Educational facilities

The Local Plan will be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF will be made up of a number of Local development Documents (LDDs). The LDDs covering sport and play provision will contain policies relating to the above and will replace the Local Plan policies when adopted.

### Statement of Community Involvement

The Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement submission to the Secretary of State, September 2005 sets out the Borough Council's intentions to consult as widely as possible about planning-related matters.

Chorley Play Partnership was consulted as part of the process of developing the Statement.

It is important to ensure that groups and organisations working to develop play opportunities in the Borough are included and take an active part in future consultation.

### **Parish Plans**

Several of the Borough's Parishes have produced Parish Plans that refer to the need for adequate and appropriate play and recreational facilities for children and young people, and concerns about juvenile nuisance, in Villages and rural areas around the Borough.

Some Parish Councils are responsible for the maintenance of Play Areas in their catchment area.

### **External Funding**

The Council's Procurement Policy will provide a detailed framework for supporting funding applications and implementing the action plan.



## **Chorley Play Partnership**

Chorley Play Partnership, formerly Chorley Play Forum, devoted a considerable amount of time and effort in 2005 to development work within the Partnership itself. Two main priorities were agreed:

- To look for funding to employ a Co-ordinator to develop involvement by organisations who do not yet see the potential benefits, or their links with play.
- To consult children, parents and carers during October and November 2005.

Other work during the year has been to address the Partnership's public image, consider ways to develop work with children and families, and to promote key partnerships, and to learn more about developing inclusive play. Chorley Play Partnership is also the body through which this Play Strategy has been drafted.



### **PLAY PARTNERSHIP ORGANISATIONS INCLUDE:**

#### **Chorley Council – Directorates and Services**

##### Leisure and Cultural Services

Community Development, Sports Development, Young People's Activities, Yarrow Valley Park.

##### Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment

Green Spaces, Neighbourhood Wardens

##### Planning and Regeneration

Planning Policy.

## **Homestart**

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation operating in Chorley that is committed to promoting the welfare of families with at least one child under five years of age, supporting them primarily in their own homes. Families are also encouraged to take part in family support groups offering a safe environment where confidence and skills such as recognising the importance of play are actively encouraged and developed.

In 2004 Home Start adopted the Early Years "Birth to Three Matters" framework, celebrating the skill and competence of babies and young children, and highlighting the interrelationship between growth, learning through play, development and the environment in which they learn.

## **Neighbourhood Groups**

Since 2004, Positive Action in Chorley East (PAiCE) and the South West Chorley Community Safety Group (SWITCH), and smaller groups within their catchment areas, have actively supported play for children and young people in their neighbourhoods by bidding for funds to develop a wide range of out of school activities. Funding bodies have included Awards for All and the Local Network Fund. Astley Village Action have provided play opportunities for 4 years and are active with the Partnership. Clayton Brook Together are also represented within Chorley Play Partnership.

## **Barnardo's**

Barnardo's work with 180 disabled children and young people living in Chorley and South Ribble. Currently, with the help of the Children's Fund, approximately 90 of the children are supported in Chorley to access activities of their choice. The main aim of the project is to support children in a variety of activities both term time and after school, developing inclusive opportunities in local play and leisure facilities.

Training is available for organisations that children are accessing, and staff and volunteer support is available when children access services.

Barnardo's are currently providing support for children to access brownies, cubs, scouts, leisure centre activities, football, horse riding, after school clubs and youth service activities, and are constantly looking to develop further links.

## **Chorley and District Neighbourhood Watch Association**

Whilst CADNWA may not seem to be an obvious play partner, there are over 250 Co-ordinators working at grass-roots level in local communities, who can provide vital links between all ages, backgrounds and abilities, and help to develop positive responses to difficulties experienced in their neighbourhoods



### Community and voluntary organisations

Community and voluntary organisations in Chorley deliver a variety of play activities for children from birth to teenage years, through play and toddler groups, youth groups, and by volunteering to help run play events such as Playday. They are a vital part of play provision and development across the Borough, and are encouraged to join the Partnership.



Children taking part in the Play Strategy consultation at Playday 2006

## 8. The Purpose and Scope of the Strategy

### Purpose:

- 8.1 To enable the Borough Council and its partners to establish clear policies on play, and convey a vision of what we want to achieve, by considering the needs of children, young people and their families across a range of policy and strategy areas.
- 8.2 To develop an action plan with clear and identifiable milestones, promoting a more holistic view of play provision, distribution and quality, and providing a basis for a more consistent approach, identifying gaps in provision and the need for improvements
- 8.3 Increasing the number of areas of the Borough where all children and young people feel safe and welcomed, and improving quality of life for the whole community, by engaging its young people in challenging negative perceptions and encouraging shared ownership of, and responsibility for, open space and the built environment.
- 8.4 The Strategy seeks to meet the needs of children and young people of local communities, including groups that have traditionally suffered exclusion, such as disabled children and young people, those from minority ethnic and refugee communities, girls and young women, looked-after children and young people, and those at risk from social exclusion.
- 8.5 It will help partners to comply with relevant legislations, and help in meeting requirements for assessments and audits
- 8.6 It will help in identifying priorities, planning for improvements and highlighting issues of quantity, quality and inclusivity.
- 8.7 It will help to target unallocated budgets through Section 106 agreements for play space, and the effectiveness of other budgets by targeting expenditure based on need. It will also encourage flexible and imaginative thinking around the provision of different types of play space.
- 8.8 It will help with development plans, controls, decision-making and reviews, and with the negotiation of developer agreements
- 8.9 It will contribute to best value reviews, and promote partnership working, social inclusion and community involvement.

## Scope:

- 8.10 Assessing and analysing not just the quantity, quality and current usage of existing play spaces and facilities, but also the current inclusivity of the public facilities against the needs and wishes of local children and young people, taking into account issues of gender, ethnicity and disability.
- 8.11 Assessing and analysing where and how children are playing and identifying where they are not. Assessing what modifications need to be made to existing open spaces and playgrounds against current and future need.

I play in my street and I don't like it because it says No ball games  
Jessica, aged 10 years

- 8.12 Making play a corporate priority, reflected across a range of developments such as neighbourhood renewal and regeneration. The range of partners involved in the play strategy's development will reflect this cross-cutting approach.
- 8.13 Involving a range of stakeholders including children and young people of all ages and backgrounds and their parents and carers.
- 8.14 Assessing the quantity, quality and accessibility of supervised play opportunities, such as the Council's Get Up and Go programme.



## 9. What the Strategy could achieve:

- 9.1 Protecting and improving play provision in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and safety
- 9.2 Ensuring that play provision is inclusive and meets the needs of all local children and young people
- 9.3 Promoting greater social inclusion for all ages and abilities.
- 9.4 Developing a balance between supervised and unsupervised provision according to local need
- 9.5 Ensuring that play space enhances the quality of the local environment, community and neighbourhood.
- 9.6 Providing a clear framework for investment priorities, action and workforce development
- 9.7 Supporting the aims of the Every Child Matters programme of change, by promoting the importance of the 5 outcomes, and working towards achieving them.
- 9.8 Making clear links to other relevant strategies and plans in the Borough

## By basing the Strategy on:

- 9.9 Involving children and young people right from the start
- 9.10 A clear vision and policy framework
- 9.11 Shared understanding of the principles of play
- 9.12 Shared understanding of inclusion and the social model of disability, that looks at the ways in which disabled people are often prevented from taking part on an equal basis by physical barriers or by people's attitudes.

I would love to ride a bike but I can't as I have no balance and need stabilizers but I'm too big for a small bike

**Ryan, aged 13 years**

- 9.13 Understanding the needs and aspirations of local children and young people
- 9.14 Forming collaborative and enabling partnerships

- 9.15 Understanding risk and safety issues in relation to children's play
- 9.16 Quality long-term inclusive and accessible design principles.
- 9.17 Sustainable management and maintenance arrangements

The current facilities are good in and of themselves. However they need to be cleaned properly and better policed/secured.

**A Chorley parent.**

- 9.18 Understanding and promoting the recognised objectives of good play provision



## 10. How we can make the Play Strategy Happen

### **By developing policies for play**

Policies to protect play space, address deficiencies, enhance existing provision and create new provision need to form part of an Action Plan.

### **By involving children and young people**

- Involving all children in the design, location and regeneration of play space, in a meaningful way.
- Enabling children and young people to present projects to others
- Promoting social inclusion by challenging stereotypes
- Developing a safe and secure atmosphere around play space
- Bringing everyone together who can help
- Develop policy-makers' will to involve young people in decision-making.

### **Through the Local Plan / Local Development Framework**

The Local Plan identifies how the need to protect and develop play space is met. The Local Development Framework, which will replace the Local Plan, will also identify this. The Statement of Community Involvement specifies the role of the community play sector.

Development plans identify all open space in the borough that is to be protected, including play space. Consideration is given to the identification of standards for play space in new development.

### **By taking play seriously within Developers' Agreements**

Planning conditions, local area agreements and Section 106 'planning gain' agreements can be used to address identified quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in provision or where new development would increase the need for provision. Agreements can secure both capital and revenue funding to provide for the future maintenance of open space. Boroughs should develop a broad strategy for the use and negotiation of Section 106 agreements.

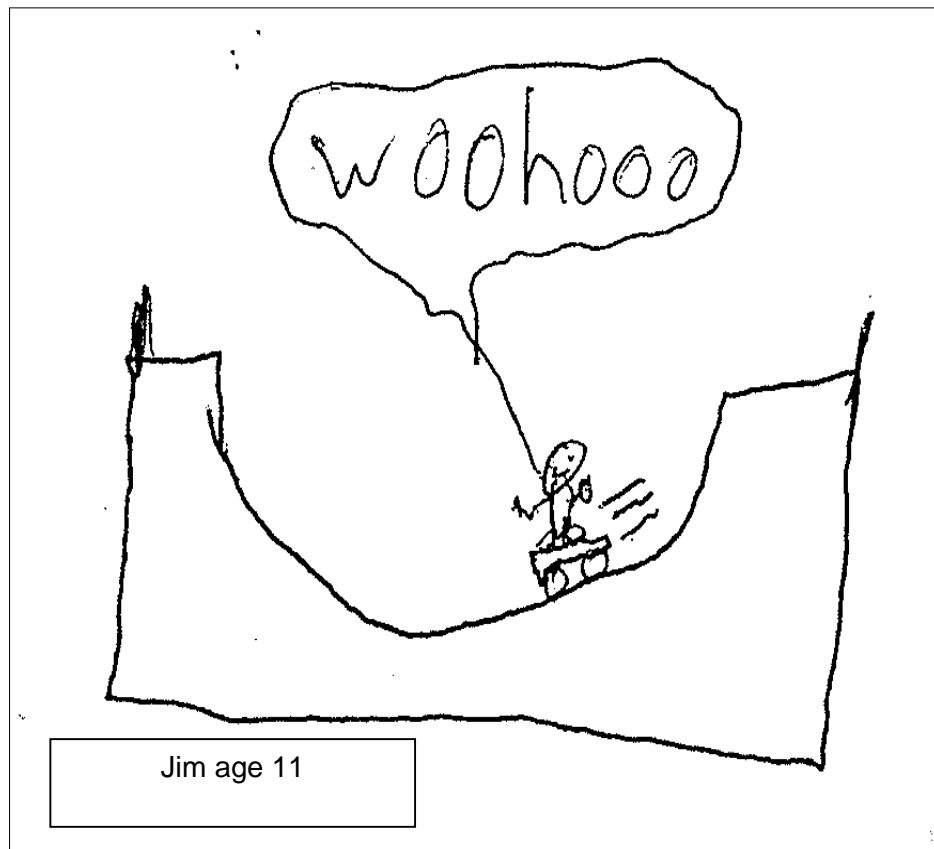
As part of the Local development Framework a Planning Contributions Development Plan Document will be produced which will set out the principles by which planning contributions will be required – including contributions for play space.



## Developing even stronger community and partnership working

Creating partnerships and increased community involvement in the use and management of facilities can help in project implementation. Supporting community organisations may lead to an increase in schemes and greater feeling of ownership of children's play facilities locally.

## Developing an effective, cross cutting Preliminary Action Plan for play in Chorley



**PLAY ACTION PLAN 2006 – 2011**

| TASK   | ACTIONS  |  | LEAD AGENCY/PARTNERS                     | TIMESCALE<br>(Municipal year) |
|--|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |                               |
| Consider ways to address issue of play space bullying and intimidation | Many of these could be achieved through staff and volunteer time, and by refocusing some priorities. Actions with financial implications are identified. |  | Chorley Council SN&ED                    | 2007-2008                     |
|  | Analyse arrangements for supervision of play space and report back to Chorley Council with proposals   |  | Chorley Play Partnership                 | 2007-2008                     |
|  | Consult Parish Councils within this process  |  | Chorley Play Partnership                 | 2006-2010                     |
|  | Include reduction of bullying and intimidation around play spaces as a priority within BLF Play Initiatives portfolio                                    |  | Chorley Council/Chorley Play Partnership | 2006 – 2010                   |
|  | Consider the possibility of piloting a Play Rangers project and identify potential funding bids  |  | Chorley Council SN&ED                    | 2007 – 2008                   |
|  | Determine the most appropriate locations and designs for future play facilities  |  |  |                               |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  | <p>Continue promoting activity sessions in Community Safety Target Areas for young people at risk of or involved in offending/anti social behaviour – specifically designed by and for young people</p> <p>Identify funding opportunities to further develop after school sessions based in primary schools providing sessions of drama, art, fit kids and dance</p> <p>Continue to support and develop after school Live music sessions on weekdays, and also on Saturday mornings, at the Music Café</p> <p>Identify funding opportunities to continue to develop and promote inclusive play opportunities for children and young people in the Community Safety Target Areas and other areas with play needs</p> <p>Continue to develop sports opportunities through the School Sports Partnership</p> <p>Consider all proposals in line with Secure By Design principles</p> <p>Ensure that the Play Strategy features within the Borough's 2008 –2011 Community Safety Strategy</p> | <p>Prevent and Deter; South Lancashire Arts Partnership, Chorley BC, Connexions, Educational Welfare, Social Services, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service</p> <p>South Lancashire Arts Partnership; Lancs CC Extended Schools</p> <p>South Lancashire Arts Partnership</p> <p>PAICE, SWITCH, Astley Village Action, Clayton Brook Together, parish councils and other groups</p> <p>Chorley BC Leisure and Culture</p> <p>MAPS Team</p> <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p> | <p>2006 - ongoing</p> <p>2006 - ongoing</p> <p>2006 - ongoing</p> <p>2006 - ongoing</p> <p>2006 - ongoing</p> <p>2006 – 2011</p> <p>2007-2008</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Consider ways to address issue of play space vandalism</p>  | <p>Analyse play space inspection and maintenance arrangements and report back to Chorley Council with proposals<br/>Consult Parish Councils within this process</p> <p>Consider all proposals in line with Secure By Design principles</p>                                       | <p>Chorley Council SN&amp;ED</p> <p>MAPS Team</p>  | <p>2007-2008</p> <p>2006 - 2011</p>                      |
| <p>Consider ways to address traffic concerns</p>   | <p>Raise as an issue through the Borough's Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Link Play Strategy to traffic/transport-related policies for the Borough</p> <p>Consider all proposals in line with Secure by Design principles</p>   | <p>Chorley Play Partnership<br/>Lancashire Partnership for Road Safety</p> <p>Chorley Council Planning &amp; Regeneration</p> <p>MAPS Team</p> | <p>2006 – 2008</p> <p>2007 – 2011</p> <p>2007 - 2011</p> |
| <p>Consider ways to address negative perceptions of play and raise the positive image of play across the Borough</p> | <p>Identify funding and other resources to produce and distribute positive publicity material</p> <p>Carry out mapping exercise to identify designated informal open play spaces</p> <p>Develop clear approach to managing play space-related conflict within neighbourhoods</p> | <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p> <p>Chorley Council SN &amp; ED<br/>Chorley Play Partnership</p> <p>Chorley Council SN &amp; ED</p>             | <p>2007-2011</p> <p>2007-2008</p> <p>2007-2009</p>       |

|  |  |   |                                       |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Review provision of organised activities                 | <p>Consider accessibility and inclusivity of the Get Up and Go programme as part of Equality Impact Assessment</p> <p>Carry out an audit of play activities organised by voluntary, community and faith sector organisations</p> | <p>Chorley Council Leisure &amp; Culture, CS Target Area Groups</p> <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p>               | <p>2006-2008</p> <p>2006 - 2008</p>   |
| Review Play Areas Strategy                               |  | Chorley Council SN&ED   | 2007-2008                             |
| Review Green Spaces Quality audit                        | Consider Audit results in line with Play Strategy consultation results   | Chorley Council SN&ED, L & C, Chorley Play Partnership  | 2007-2008                             |
| Develop strategy for involving children and young people | <p>Consider good practice guidelines</p> <p>Draw up possible options</p> <p>Consult children and young people via schools and other organisations, Youth Council, Lancashire Youth Charter.</p>                                  | <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p> <p>Chorley Council Policy &amp; Performance,</p> <p>Lancashire County Council</p> | 2006 - 2008                           |
| Develop inclusive play                                   | <p>Draw up actions using the KIDS Framework</p> <p>Consider the possibility of piloting a Play Rangers project and identify potential funding bids</p>   | <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p> <p>Chorley Council/Chorley Play Partnership</p>                                   | <p>2006 – 2007</p> <p>2006 - 2010</p> |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Ensure that the Play Strategy links with Planning Policy</p>          | <p>Ensure that the Play Strategy is taken into account within the Local Development Framework</p> <p>Consider ways to clarify play space arrangements and information within Developers' Agreements</p> <p>Consider all proposals in line with Secure By Design principles</p> | <p>Chorley Council Planning and Regeneration</p> <p>Chorley Council Planning and Regeneration</p> <p>MAPS Team</p>   | <p>2007-20011</p> <p>2007-20011</p> <p>2007 - 2011</p> |
| <p>Identify playwork development opportunities</p>                       | <p>Consult local groups and organisations, audit existing play workforce and identify training and development needs</p>   | <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p>  | <p>2007-2008</p>                                       |
| <p>Develop playwork training opportunities</p>                           | <p>Identify relevant qualifications and best practice from other areas.</p> <p>Audit training opportunities available in the area</p> <p>Identify possible funding to develop a training programme</p>   | <p>Chorley Play Partnership</p> <p>Lancashire College, Runshaw College, LCC Early Years and Childcare Service, Chorley &amp; South Ribble CVS, community, voluntary and faith sector organisations</p> | <p>2007-2008</p>                                       |
| <p>Consider ways to improve information and signage about play space</p> | <p>Audit and review existing information sources</p> <p>Audit and review existing play space signage</p> <p>Develop improvement strategy</p> <p>Identify funding opportunities</p>   | <p>Chorley Play Partnership, voluntary and community sector organisations</p>  | <p>2008 - 2009</p>                                     |

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Consider ways to further develop Chorley Play Partnership                                      | Identify potential funding to employ a development worker as proposed 2005-2006                                       | Chorley Play Partnership/Chorley Council   | 2006 - 2007                                       |
| Ensure that play is included as an issue within the next Community Strategy                    | Introduce play as an issue of concern within thematic groups  | Chorley Play Partnership/Chorley Partnership   | 2007-2008   |
| Ensure that the Chorley Play Strategy features within the LCC Children and Young People's Plan |   | Chorley Council<br>Chorley Play Partnership  | 2006 - 2008                                       |
| Address Child Protection issues  | Draft and consider adoption of a Child Protection Policy for the organisation   | Chorley Play Partnership<br>Chorley Borough Council<br>Other Chorley Play Partnership member organisations, where applicable | 2006 - 2007                                       |
| Review Play Strategy   | Review progress on action plan annually and report back via Chorley Play Partnership Annual General Meeting (January) | Chorley Play Partnership and partner organisations within  | Ongoing with full review of Strategy in 2010-2011 |