

Burnley Play Strategy Review

Report to the Executive



DATE	July 2022
PORTFOLIO	Health and Well Being
REPORT AUTHOR	Simon Goff
TEL NO	01282 477223 ext. 7223
EMAIL	sgoff@burnley.gov.uk

PURPOSE

1. To review the Play Strategy 2017-2026 and to seek approval to progress implementation.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Executive:
 - a. Notes the progress made implementing the Play Strategy 2017 – 2026.
 - b. Approves the implementation of the Play Strategy as identified in this report.
 - c. Notes the recommendation to identify a town centre location for the future development of a wheeled sports area.
 - d. Approves the proposal to develop pump tracks in the locations identified in the report, subject to external grant and S106 funding.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. To ensure that the Council maintains an equitable distribution of play areas across the Borough within the constraints of the limited resources available and makes adequate provision for wheeled sports in the borough.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

4. Play Area Provision

The Council adopted [Burnley's Play Area Strategy](#) in 2017 and has been making progress implementing the recommendations of the strategy which included recommendations for each of the 58 playgrounds under 3 outcomes:

Outcome 1: 7 smaller play areas were identified for closure/relocation.

Outcome 2: 34 play areas to be maintained as they required no significant works.

Outcome 3: 17 Play areas to be refurbished.

Outcome 1: 7 smaller play areas that were identified for closure/relocation

5. Partridge Hill play area has closed with the equipment refurbished and relocated to Hargrove Park.
6. Burns St play area has closed, and the equipment has been refurbished and relocated to Stoneyholme Gardens Pocket Park.
7. The closure of 5 other play areas (Helena Street, Barley Grove, Jessie's Park, Richard Street and Glamorgan Grove) was suspended by a previous administration and has remained in abeyance during the Covid19 pandemic.
8. The Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing recommended that there should be a review of the Strategy and consultation with elected members prior to undertaking any further closures.
9. A [Review of Burnley's Play Area Strategy 2021--2026](#) (Appendix 1) was circulated to all councillors. It provided an update on progress implementing the Strategy. Councillors were invited to submit comments, which have been attached as Appendix 2.
10. The reasons for closing the 5 remaining play areas were outlined in the Play Strategy 2017-2026 and the Executive report when it was first approved in 2017:
 - These are smaller play areas with low play value and low levels of use.
 - They would require investment to refurbish them that is not available and can't be justified compared with spending scarce resources on other well used/well located play areas.
 - In all but two cases, the equipment from playgrounds to be closed will be relocated onto a nearby play area to improve its play value.
 - The Council's resources are over-stretched maintaining 58 equipped play areas. Each requires cleaning, litter picking and inspecting weekly and the revenue budget of £19,000 for spare parts and equipment is not adequate. Reducing the number of play areas to 50 will help alleviate this pressure and help to ensure that the play areas that the Council provides are maintained in a clean and safe condition.
11. It should be noted that Burnley has a high level of provision relative to its population compared with other authorities (1 play area per 1,534 people).

Authority	Number of equipped play areas	Population
Burnley	58	89,000
Blackburn w Darwen	20	150,000
Hyndburn	26	81,000
Pendle	40	92,000
Preston	50	146,000
Rossendale	40	71,000

After the 7 closures, we will be left with 51 play areas which equates to 1 play area per 1,745 people which is still the highest ratio compared to other nearby Local Authorities.

Councillors Comments

12. Following circulation of the Review of the Play Strategy to all councillors, Trinity Ward Councillors have objected to the closure of Jessies Park:

Objection	Response
The distance for parents and children will have to walk to Piccadilly Gardens	<p>The distance is 175 metres between the two play areas, and both are in the same residential area.</p> <p>The adopted local standard is an 800 metre walk to the nearest play area.</p> <p>The play areas in Piccadilly are for the whole population (370 children) of the residential area and not just those immediately adjoining an individual play area.</p> <p>Piccadilly residential area is ranked 29th out of 50 residential areas in the Index of Play Value. This will not change significantly due to the relocation of equipment from Jessie's Park to Piccadilly gardens</p>
Younger children and their parents don't like to mix with older children	<p>It is better to have a range of equipment for different ages on one site, enabling younger children to progress to larger equipment and siblings of different ages to play at the same location</p>
The equipment on Jessies Park was funded through grants raised by local residents.	<p>It is common for friends and residents' groups to raise money for play equipment to be located in a public park, but it doesn't mean that they own it.</p> <p>The equipment will be factory refurbished and remain in use by the same community.</p> <p>A memorial bench is proposed to be installed for Jessie and some sympathetic tree planting and landscaping of the site will be carried out.</p>
	<p>Jessie's Park play area is located on back Baker Street which is frequently heavily littered and suffers from fly-tipping and is a very difficult site to maintain in a clean and safe condition.</p>

No comments have been received from Councillors in relation to the closure of other play areas. Objections were previously raised to the closure of Glamorgan Grove.

13 Recommendations for play area provision

Outcome 1: Close 7 play areas

It is recommended that the playground closures are progressed as outlined in the Review of the Play Area Strategy.

Outcome 2: maintain 34 play areas

No change to this outcome.

Outcome 3: refurbish 17 play areas

This has now increased to 21 play areas to be refurbished as outlined in the Review.

Most of these refurbishments will be undertaken as part of the Council's Capital investment Play Area Improvement Programme with the remaining play areas funded by external funding, such as Safer Streets, Disability Facility Grants, etc.

We have completed 9 of the original 17 with a further 3 to be finished before the end of 2022. Completed refurbishments include:

- Thompson Park
- Hargrove Park
- Cliviger Park
- Calder Park
- Towneley Park Riverside
- Faraday Street
- Scott Park
- Stoneyholme Gardens
- Harold Avenue

The following play areas will be refurbished within the next 2-3 years:

- Lane Bottom
- Lockyer Avenue
- Vanguard Park
- Queens Park
- Healey Wood
- Barden Lane
- Burnley Road, Briercliffe
- Piccadilly Gardens

Refer to 'Outcome 1: Play Areas to be refurbished' table for more details of actual and proposed completion dates.

The Executive to note that programme for refurbishment of the remaining play areas will be reviewed and a capital programme bid will be submitted in Autumn 2022 outlining how the play areas due for refurbishment in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 will be funded

14. **Wheeled Sports Area**

Wheeled sports areas (WSAs) were not referred to in the original play strategy but have been covered by the review.

Padiham WSA

Funding of £100K has been raised from S106, Lancashire Environmental Fund, Padiham Town Council and RWE Wind Farm to provide a new concrete surfaced WSA at Park Rd, which is included in the 2022/2023 capital programme.

Burnley Town Centre WSA

For the reasons outlined in the Review, it is recommended that the Council explores opportunities to develop a new wheeled sports area in Burnley town centre as a borough-wide facility to replace the Queens Park skate park.

A suitable and sensitive location for the WSA would need to be found. This would be a dedicated Wheeled Sports facility for young people and would provide diversionary activity in a safe environment. There is evidence that if a purpose-built facility is provided for young people (on the back of appropriate consultation) that ASB would reduce, WSA could be concentrated to a specific controlled area and a sense of ownership would be forthcoming.

15. **Pump Tracks**

These are small, relatively low-cost tracks that can be used by mountain bikes, BMX, and small wheeled scooters.

Provision of pump tracks was not covered in the original play area strategy, but a strategy for provision is needed so that officers can respond to requests from community and friends' groups and councillors and to direct effort to locations where facilities are needed.

It is recommended that, as set out in the review, the Council should support community and friends' groups that wish to raise funds for development of new pump tracks in the following locations:

Location	Ward
Fulledge Rec	Bank Hall
Sycamore Park	Rosegrove
Byerden Holme	Stoneyholme & Daneshouse
Kibble Bank	Lanehead
Healywood	Trinity

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

16. The Council's revenue budget for playground maintenance has remained relatively static whilst costs of spare parts and equipment have increased. The closure of the playgrounds identified will help to ensure that the playgrounds that remain can be maintained.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

17. The proposed closure of play areas is identified in the adopted Play Strategy. Children and families in Burnley will continue to enjoy access to a good network of play areas.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

18. The Play Area Strategy Review was sent out to consultation to all councillors as set out in the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

19. None

FURTHER INFORMATION	
PLEASE CONTACT:	Simon Goff
ALSO:	Kieron Roberts