

Review of Burnley's Play Area Strategy 2017 – 2026

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to review progress implementing Burnley's Play Area Strategy 2017-2026 and to further consult with members on the proposed closure of a number of smaller play areas.

A copy of the Play Strategy can be seen by clicking on [this link](#).

This review also introduces a proposed strategy for the provision of wheeled sports areas, including skate parks and pump tracks. This is necessary because requests are being received from councillors and community groups to develop new facilities which need to be considered within the context of an overall plan for provision across the borough.

Progress Implementing the Play Area Strategy

The Strategy made recommendations for each of the 58 play areas in the borough:

- 17 play areas were identified for improvement,
- 34 play areas required no significant works
- 7 smaller, underused play areas were identified for closure.

Four play areas have been added to the list of sites to be improved: Clifton St, Tay St, Hart St and Memorial Park, as detailed in the table below.

Good progress has been made implementing the Strategy:

- 9 play areas have been refurbished
- 3 schemes are currently in progress
- 7 play areas remain to be improved in future years.

The schemes that have been completed include large play areas in three of the main parks; Towneley, Thompson and Scott Park and the total capital spend has been approximately £442,000, with funding obtained from external grants and Section 106 contributions in addition to the funds from the Council's capital programme.

Two additional new play areas are being provided by housing developers: one on the Kiddrow Lane housing development (Rosegrove with Lowerhouse), adjoining the Sweet Clough Greenway. This is identified as a priority for new provision in the Play Strategy. The other new play area will be provided on the Red Lees Road housing development, (Cliviger with Worsthorne). Both sites will be managed by private management companies set up by the developers.

Summary of recommendations for play areas to be refurbished and progress

Name of Playground	Ward	Residential Area	Use	Play value	Condition	Estimated Refurb Costs	Recommendation	Progress
Outcome 1: Play areas to be refurbished								
Thompson Park	Bank Hall	Top 'O' the Town	High	58	B	£142,000	To be refurbish in 2017/18, funded by HLF restoration of Thompson Park (£142K)	Complete 2017/18
Hargrove Park	Gawthorpe	Padiham East	Low	32	B	£15,000	Improve to NEAP standard. Relocate equipment from Partridge Hill play area	Complete 2017/18
Cliviger Park	Cliviger	Cliviger	Low	56	C	£15,000	Work with Cliviger PC to secure windfarm grant to refurbish play area	Complete 2017/18
Calder Park	Whittlefield	Calder	Med	35	B	£15,000	Work with Friends of Calder Park to obtain funding to extend play area	Complete 2018/19
Towneley Riverside	Cliviger	Red Lees Road	High	79	B	£160,000	Work with Friends of Towneley on major refurbishment of this important play area	Complete 2018/19
Faraday Street	Whittlefield	Calder	Med	51	C	£35,000	replace old items of equipment	Complete 2018/19
Scott Park	Coalclough	Bleakhouse	Med	52	B	£60,000	Work with Friends of Scott Park to provide new play area preferably located on lower (un-used) bowling green	Complete 2019/20
Lane Bottom	Briercliffe	Lanebottom	V Low	37	C	£18,000	Work with Briercliffe PC to refurbish	Improvements to be completed 2022
Stoneyholme Gdns	Daneshouse	Stoneyholme	Med	35	C	£16,000	Relocate equipment from Burns St	Complete 2022
Lockyer Ave	Gannow	Sycamore	High	58	A	£5,000	Improve with equipment relocated from Glamorgan Grove	New items of equipment to be installed Autumn 2022.
Harold Avenue	Rosegrove	Griffin	Low	26	B	£28,000	Relocate to vicinity of Valley Community Centre further along Harold Ave (work with Calico to fund this)	Complete 2022
Vanguard Park	Trinity	Trafalgar	Low	46	C	£12,500	Replace worn out items of play equipment	To be implemented Autumn 2022
Queens Park	Bank Hall	Turf Moor	High	63	B	£40,000	Work with Friends of Queens Park to refurbish.	Improvements scheduled 2022/23

Appendix 1

Name of Playground	Ward	Residential Area	Use	Play value	Condition	Estimated Refurb Costs	Recommendation	Progress
Healey Wood	Rose Hill	Healywood Toddler PA	Med	27	C	£25,500	Develop a new combined toddler & junior play area using relocated and some new equipment	Improvements scheduled 2022/23
Barden Lane	Queensgate	Queensgate	Med	41	A	£20,000	Relocate existing equipment from Barden Lane to new play area on Disraeli Street Rec	Consult during 2022 with scheme to be undertaken 2023/24
Burnley Rd B'Cliffe	Briercliffe	Briercliffe North	Low	22	C	£10,000	Work with Parish Council to refurbish	Improvements to be done 2022/23
Piccadilly Gardens	Trinity	Piccadilly	Med	39	B	£10,000	Improve play area using refurbished equipment relocated from Baker St (Jessie's Park)	Not progressed as it is dependant on closure and relocation of equipment from Jessie's Park
Additional Schemes that are being progressed								
Clifton Street	Trinity	Clifton Heights	Low	36	B	£10,000	Undertake some improvements linked to college development	2023/24
Memorial Park (Park Rd)	Gawthorpe	St John's	High	72	B	£45,000	Additional scheme: Installation of inclusive play equipment	Improvements scheduled 2022/23
Hart Street	Bank Hall	Top O the Town	Med	34	c	£6,000	Replacement play equipment funded by Safer Streets	Complete 2022
Tay Street	Coalclough	Hargher Clough	Med	41	B	£5,000	Replacement play equipment funded by S106 contribution	2023/2024

Proposed closure of play areas

The Strategy identifies that the Council has more play areas that it can afford to maintain, given the very limited revenue budget for spares and replacements and the shortage of staff needed to clean and maintain play areas (which is done daily/weekly depending on location).

The Strategy also identifies that there are significant costs involved in the periodic refurbishment of play areas, which involves the replacement of equipment and surfacing every 15-20 years.

The seven play areas that are identified for closure are in locations where there are alternative play areas nearby. In 5 of these cases, it is proposed that equipment from the play area being closed will be relocated to the nearby play area, which would be improved.

After the proposed closures have taken place, the borough will still have 51 play areas, which is significantly more than comparable authorities and importantly the remaining play areas are relatively well distributed across the borough, ensuring that the great majority of children and families have access to a play area within 10 minutes' walk.

Progress with play area closures

Partridge Hill play area has been closed and the play equipment relocated to Hargrove Park. However, due to COVID19, the implementation of the play strategy was delayed and the closure of the remaining play areas was suspended.

The position with the play areas is as follows:

Play Area	Ward	Progress/notes
Helena St	Bank Hall	Remains open. Fulfilled play area (Mitella Street) is in the same residential area and it is proposed to relocate suitable equipment to Fulfilled.
Barley Grove	Brunshaw	Remains open. However, the climbing unit has been removed due to rot. One single-seat swing and one spring rocker remain.
Burns St	Stoneyholme	Agreed following consultation with Councillors that the small Burns St play area will close and equipment to be removed, refurbished and relocated to Stoneyholme Community Garden. The site of the play area will be transferred to the adjoining mosque and maintained as a community garden.
Partridge Hill	Gawthorpe	Closed and equipment relocated to Hargrove Park.
Jessie's Park (Baker St)	Trinity	Remains open. Proposed to remove the equipment from this small play area, refurbish it and relocate it onto the existing Piccadilly Gardens play area, which is only 175 metres away. There is good play provision in this area as the newly refurbished play area in Scott Park is 525 metres away and Tay St Play area is 475 metres away.
Richard St	Bank Hall	Remains open. A see-saw has been removed following vandalism. Climbing unit and swing remain on site.
Glamorgan Grove	Gannow	Remains open. The sand works was removed due to rotten timber. Steel swings and basket swing remain on site. Proposed to relocate equipment to Lockyer Ave play area, which is in the same residential area.

Consultation with Councillors

The views of ward councillors on the proposed closure of play areas and any other aspect of the Play Area Strategy are welcome.

It is proposed that the review of the Play Area Strategy will be reported to the Executive with a recommendation that the proposed closures are progressed in tandem with the improvement of nearby play areas, as identified. The views of ward Councillors will be reported.

Consultation with the community

There will be a public consultation with local children and families in respect of all of the refurbishment schemes, including those play areas that are being closed and the equipment relocated. Ward councillors will be advised of consultation arrangements.

Provision of Wheeled Sports Facilities

What does the term mean?

The category '*wheeled sports*' includes use of skateboards, mini wheel scooters, BMX, balance bikes, roller blades and some mountain bike activities.

The term '*wheeled sports facilities*', hereafter abbreviated to WSF, is a general term that includes skate ramps and concrete skate bowls, pump tracks, BMX tracks, junior cycleways and could be extended to include the network of paths in parks that are used by children & young people on bikes, scooters, roller skates, etc.

The specific term 'pump track' refers to short undulating loops of tarmac or stone tracks that can be ridden around without pedalling, using the pumping action of the body alone (if sufficiently skilled).

The importance of WSF

The provision of WSF is important:

- The popularity of wheeled sports is increasing; boosted by skateboarding and freestyle BMX being introduced as Olympic sports.
- Bespoke WSF provide opportunities for children and young people to be active
- The path network in parks provide safe locations for children, whose parents may be reluctant to allow them to cycle on roads.
- WSF are used by a demographic of young people who may not engage in any other sport or physical activity.
- Wheeled sports facilities are free to use and open 24/7

Council officers have received requests from councillors and community and park friends' groups to support development of new facilities in their areas and so a strategy for the provision of wheeled sports facilities across the borough is needed to ensure that the Council's resources and limited external grant funding is directed at providing facilities in a way that ensures a fair distribution of facilities across the borough.

As with other sports facilities identified in the Green Spaces Strategy, it is recommended that the provision should be made at the borough-wide and district level, as detailed in sections below, rather than at the residential area which is used for the provision of children's play areas.

Provision of Skate Parks

The Council currently provides skate ramps at the following sites:

- Queens Park (East Burnley)
- Hapton Recreation Ground (Hapton)
- Hargher Clough Park (South Burnley)
- Memorial Park (Padiham)
- Piccadilly Gardens (South Burnley)
- Sunny Clough Park (South Burnley)

The skate parks at Queens Park and at Hargher Clough are the main sites, whilst the other locations provide just a single ramp or half-pipe.

Skateboarding provision is costly, and it is recommended that any future investment is focussed on replacing the ramp in Memorial Park, Padiham and in developing a replacement for the existing wheeled sports facility in Queen's Park which would serve as a borough-wide facility.

Memorial Park Padiham

The existing galvanised steel half-pipe skate ramp in Memorial Park, Padiham was constructed in 1991 and it has reached the end of its' operational life and has limited 'skate value'. Funding is currently being secured from a variety of sources to replace it with a more modern concrete wheeled sports facility in 2022 at a cost of circa £100K.

The advantage of modern concrete ramps is that they can be used by a wide variety of small-wheeled devices, including scooters and BMX and are very durable.

In addition, there may be funding to develop an additional roller rink area (that could be used by skateboards, scooters, balance bikes, small bikes) near to the youth shelter for beginners and for people transitioning from novice status to using the Wheeled sports facility across the road or the two existing tarmac surfaced pump tracks. However, this development may only be possible once the situation with the Greenway bridge is resolved because this area provides the only access to the bridge

Queens Park skate ramps

The existing skate park in Queens Park consists of older style steel ramps and was developed in 2003 alongside the provision of a ball court and 4 refurbished tennis courts. It offers a reasonable range of activities but, like the Padiham facility, is nearing the end of its operational life and the Council needs to plan for replacement over the next 5 years.

A new concrete wheeled sports area of comparable size will cost in the range of £250,000 - £300,000. This may seem a lot, but over a 25-year operational life represents good value.

However, Queens Park may not be the best place for this investment because it is not in a central location, there is limited public transport and access for children and young people consequently very difficult.

An alternative location for a borough-wide, state-of-the-art wheeled sports facility would be in Burnley Town Centre. (the area required is relatively modest: 500-700m²)

The advantages of a town centre location are:

- Good public transport from all areas of the Borough
- Proximity to Burnley College and Uclan
- The town centre is non-territorial
- Attracting more younger people to the town centre with knock-on economic benefits
- Creating a dynamic, lively and youthful atmosphere
- Demonstrating that the town values young people
- Higher levels of casual supervision and a safer environment for young people

Recommendation

Explore the opportunity to develop a town centre wheeled sports facility, which will be dependant on a suitable location being identified, appropriate consultation undertaken, planning approval and the availability of funding.

Other existing skate facilities

The smaller facilities at Hapton, Piccadilly Gardens and Sunny Clough Park offer very limited skate value to a small, local community of users.

It is recommended that these smaller skate facilities continue to be maintained but not replaced when they reach the end of their operational life unless a parish council or other group provides funding.

Provision of Pump Tracks

The Council provides Pump Tracks at the following locations:

- Memorial Park, Park Road (Padiham) – a beginner and intermediate track.
- Calder Park (West Burnley)
- Worsthorne Recreation Ground (East Burnley)
- Jubilee Meadows (East Burnley)
- Hapton Recreation Ground (Padiham & Hapton)

The tracks at Calder Park and Memorial Park are surfaced with tarmac, in good condition and are very popular. These cost in the region of £20,000 each at current prices.

The pump tracks at Worsthorne, Jubilee Meadows and Hapton are stone surfaced but have been neglected and have become overgrown and subsequently require refurbishment.

Hapton Parish Council has indicated that it would like to upgrade the existing pump track at Hapton Recreation Ground. This would cost around £25,000 and they would look to secure grant funding, with the help of Burnley Council, to pay for the work.

Worsthorne Parish Council wish to upgrade the track on Worsthorne Recreation Ground, linked to the other improvements that are ongoing, and there may be some Section 106 funding available to contribute.

The stone surfaced pump track that was developed at Jubilee Meadows is under-used but there is real potential and space to re-develop and upgrade the existing facility in to a larger, better-quality stone/tarmac pump track. This could be the flagship pump track for Burnley.

Recommendations

Officers will support parish councils at Worsthorne and Hapton to upgrade the existing stone pump tracks.

Improvements to the Jubilee Meadows pump track to be funded from the remaining Brun Valley Forest Park capital budget matched with external grant(s).

To provide a reasonably equitable distribution of pump tracks across the borough, it is recommended that the Council should support community and friends groups that wish to develop track facilities in the following locations:

Fulledge Recreation Ground (Bank Hall)

The layout and topography of Fulledge Recreation Ground lends itself well for the development of a pump track at this location and would attract young people from the Fulledge, Brunshaw and Burnley Wood areas of East Burnley.

Sycamore Park (Rosegrove)

For West Burnley, which only has the Calder Park track on the periphery of this area, there is potential to develop a new pump track along the Sweet Clough Greenway around the Lockyer Avenue/Middlesex Ave area. Locating the track on the greenway would provide good access for a large population of children and young people.

Byerden Holme (Stoneyholme & Daneshouse)

North Burnley currently has no pump track facilities and Byerden Holme, where this is already a play area and MUGA, and with good access to the canal towpath greenway, would be the most obvious site to develop one.

The Friends of Stoneyholme Gardens indicated that they would be willing to work with the Council to pursue a pump track in the future.

Kibble Bank (Lanehead)

There is land behind the former Black Bull pub, which is part of Kibble Bank, that could also be developed into a pump track to cater for young people from the Lanehead/Briercliffe areas of North East Burnley.

There have been several requests (including the Friends of Scott Park and local Councillors) for a pump track facility in the Rosehill/Scott Park area of South Burnley.

Rosehill/Healywood (Rose Hill with Burnley Wood)

There have been several requests (including the Friends of Scott Park and local Councillors) for a pump track facility in the Rosehill/Scott Park area of South Burnley.

The Healywood also has space to develop more recreational provision including a pump track to serve the Rosehill with Burnley Wood residents (within the South Burnley area). The Council is scheduled to upgrade the existing play facilities at Healey Wood in 2022/23.

Summary of recommendations for Wheeled Sports Facilities

Name of Site	Ward	District	Estimated Costs	Proposal
Skate Facilities				
Queens Park	Bank Hall	North Burnley	£250,000	Work with Friends of Queens & Thompson Park Group to obtain funding to refurbish existing Wheeled sports facility or consider eventual closure following development of a facility in Burnley Town Centre
Hapton Rec	Hapton with Park	Hapton		Refurbish with funding from Hapton PC
Hargher Clough Park	Trinity	South Burnley		Maintain
Park Road	Gawthorpe	Padiham	£100,000	Existing Skate Ramp to be replaced with a concrete Wheeled sports facility in 2022.
Piccadilly Gardens	Trinity	South Burnley		Maintain
Sunny Clough Park	Rosegrove with Lowerhouse	West Burnley		Maintain
Pump Tracks				
Park Road - Beginner	Gawthorpe	Padiham		Maintain - Minor improvements to existing tarmac surface and grass edging.
Park Road - Intermediate	Gawthorpe	Padiham		Maintain – Minor improvements to existing tarmac surface and grass edging.
Calder Park	Whittlefield	West Burnley		Maintain
Worsthorne Rec	Cliviger with Worsthorne	East Burnley	£25,000	The stone track is currently overgrown and disused. Work with Worsthorne Parish Council to secure funding to refurbish existing track.
Jubilee Meadows	Bank Hall	East Burnley	£25,000	The stone track is currently overgrown and under-used. Secure funding to refurbish existing track.
Hapton Rec	Hapton with Park	Hapton	£25,000	The stone track is currently overgrown and disused. Work with Hapton Parish Council to secure funding to refurbish existing track.
Proposed locations for additional pump tracks (in priority order)				
Byerden Holme	Stoneyholme & Daneshouse	North Burnley	£25,000	
Rosehill/Healywood Park	Trinity	South Burnley	£25,000	Develop new track at Healywood
Sycamore Park	Rosegrove	West Burnley	£25,000	
Kibble Bank	Lanehead	North Burnley	£25,000	
Fulledge Recreation Ground	Bank Hall	East Burnley	£25,000	Develop new track in partnership with Friends of Towneley Park