



# Play Area Action Plan: 2025 - 2035



Date December 2024  
Version 1

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## Forward.

The Council needs a clear strategic vision for the future of its play areas, so that resources are applied effectively. This will ensure that the community can enjoy high quality, safe accessible and sustainable play areas that maintain and improve the quality of their lives.

It will require significant investment to ensure that the play areas are inclusive and exciting; easily accessible for all users; that they comply with more robust health and safety requirements; and that the equipment can be used to increase physical activity in our young people.

We will collaborate with partner organisations in the design and development of the existing provision of play areas and additional play areas that will accompany new housing to ensure the play spaces supports the needs of the whole community.

# Summary.

The purpose of the original Play Area Action Plan was to guide the improvement of existing play area facilities and to identify new opportunities for future facilities across the Borough. It was commissioned following the recommendations from a review group established in December 2012 to consider the council's approach to the provision of new and existing fixed play areas. This review considers the progress made in the delivery of the plan and the changes that have occurred in the preceding seven years.

Milton Keynes Council Plan 2022-2026 is a key document setting out the term vision for our city and the future, seeking to ensure that everyone in Milton Keynes can lead happy, healthy lives. Of the three key objectives public open space and play areas sits best with:

**A progressive city** *Everyone in Milton Keynes deserves to have the same opportunities and chances in life, where people are valued, feel safe and are encouraged to participate in their community and lead healthier, fulfilled lives.*

The COVID pandemic showed how important local spaces are for the community and concerns around childhood obesity and lack of movement have also been identified as cause for concern. Access to high quality public open space and play areas is important for all citizens, playing together builds healthy communities. Play is essential for children's physical, social, and emotional development, providing a place to explore, interact with their peers, and express themselves.

The overall provision and quality of play areas in Milton Keynes is particularly good compared to the National context. With 466 play areas serving approximately 105,000 children under 16 years (2019) that is one play area per 225 children, which is amongst the best in the country<sup>1</sup>. However, we cannot be complacent, older play areas are often less inclusive in their design and communities want more from their open space and play areas. With the expansion of the city, it is key we do not leave communities behind.

***“We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”***

***George Bernard Shaw***

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.api-play.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2022/02/EqualPlay-Report.pdf>

# What is play?

The concept of play is more complex than it might first appear. It is not particular to humans; never mind children, where it is often considered their preserve. In its simplest form it allows the young to role play scenarios they may come across later in life and to develop their physical, social, and mental skills. In its highest state play is an essential element of culture and society.

This paper is concerned with the creation and maintenance of fixed “play area” within public open space and their role in facilitating playfulness in the community. Overtime there has been a movement away from small play areas with a swing and a slide to large play areas acting as a focus for the whole community. These larger spaces allow for events and social gatherings with areas for all ages, swings, and slides for the youngest, challenging dynamic equipment for the older child, wheeled sport, multi-use games areas and fitness equipment for teens and adults. Even the oldest residents enjoy and benefit from play be it walking and talking with friends, sitting, and playing chess or use of dedicated equipment.

Consideration is given to making the spaces accessible for all ages, abilities, and genders. The backdrop of the public open space should provide accessible walking and cycling routes within an attractive landscape that makes space for wildlife.

The outcome should then be a healthy and active community. One that everyone can share safely, that has spaces for groups to meet and areas where the community can come together. Public Health England state one in two women and a third of all men in England are damaging their health through a lack of physical activity. Tackling physical inactivity is a key part of making this step change to reduce the burden of preventable death, disease and disability, and support people and their communities to achieve their potential.

Being active increases your chances of staying independent in later life. The benefits do not stop there. Being active is also good for children’s educational attainment, it can boost workplace productivity and reduce sickness absence and it can even reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

Whilst play areas are not a panacea, they can help to build the active habitat. They should be truly democratic spaces:

- free to choose, free to come and go and free to access.
- high quality and professionally managed
- for all ages genders and abilities
- catalysts for the community

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<sup>2</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7d595e40f0b60aaa293e6a/Everybody\\_Active\\_\\_Every\\_Day\\_evidence\\_based\\_approach\\_CONSULTATION\\_VERSION.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7d595e40f0b60aaa293e6a/Everybody_Active__Every_Day_evidence_based_approach_CONSULTATION_VERSION.pdf)

# Play Area action plan review.

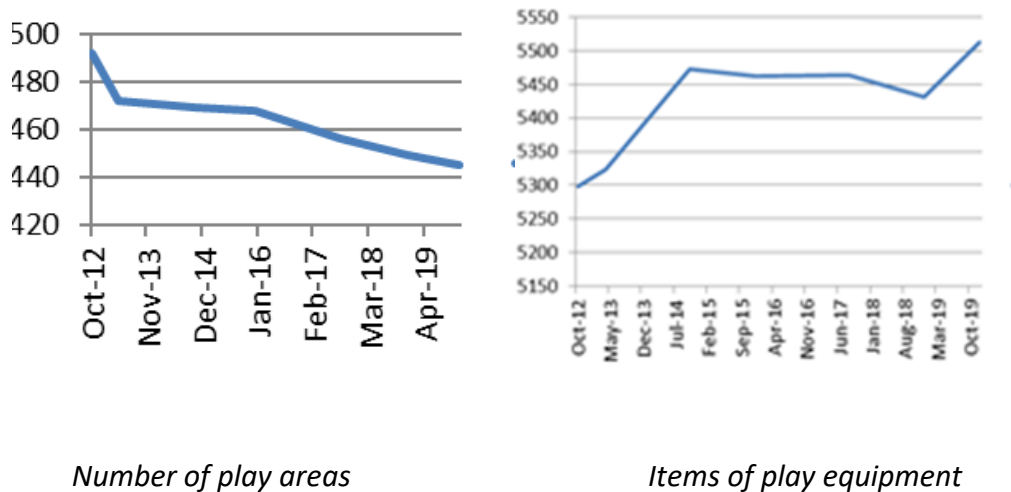
The review looks at the progress of the original action plan and what lessons have been learnt over the 10-year period that will inform the next plan. The review also considers the changes that have occurred in terms of the wider Council objectives, changes in demand, new guidance, and wider industry innovations. From this analysis a new ten-year action plan is proposed with a suite of actions to guide its direction and allow progress to be measured

It is important to understand the context of the previous action plan. It was acknowledged that the Borough had a high number of play areas and that some may not be delivering the benefits they originally intended. This could be for a number of reasons; equipment was not suitable for the demographic, in poor condition, poorly located or limited in scope. Given that budgets are never infinite targeting spend in the correct locations is key.

Play area plans were produced and shared with Ward members and Parishes, following feedback these were modified as needed. The main outcome being to identify and improve key play areas, creating accessible, high quality play areas for the whole community. Once improvements have been made those play areas delivering low play value and poorly located are removed.

The older sites require more maintenance but often offer low play value and are poorly located. Renovation of play areas allow more inclusive items to be added such as basket swings, ground trampolines and accessible roundabouts. Fewer sites focus resources making the maintenance more efficient.

Fig 1. Numbers of play areas and number of assets per site



*The graphs above show the progress of reducing play areas has been accompanied by an increase in the overall number of assets, therefore overall play value has increased. Better equipped play areas provide for a wider range of children, a greater number of play activities and experiences and makes the maintenance more efficient.*

# Play standards.

Play areas are not distributed evenly across MK due to early estates being designed in an ad-hoc manner, older estates contain multiple small play areas with 2 or 3 items of equipment. After 1990 newly designed areas followed the adopted local plan ensuring a more constant approach to both numbers; principally based on accessibility, and quality in a description of what a typical play space should contain.

**Table 1: Open Space Standards in Milton Keynes (Local Plan, 2005)**

Category	Per 1,000 population	Catchment	Characteristics
Local Play Areas	0.2 hectares If surrounded by housing, then 0.35 ha	300 metres	Mainly for children up to age 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsupervised play close to home</li> <li>• Located at 500m intervals</li> <li>• Active Zone should be at least 20m from residential property boundaries and 30 metres from roads</li> <li>• Approximately 5 items of play equipment and small games area</li> </ul>
Neighbourhood Play Areas	0.6 hectares	600 metres	For all children, but emphasis on 8+ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For unsupervised play</li> <li>• Located at 1,000 metre intervals</li> <li>• Active Zone should be at least 40m from residential property boundaries and 30m from roads</li> <li>• Approximately 8 items of play equipment and ball games area, goal wall, cycle area; larger more adventurous equipment.</li> <li>• The inclusion of youth shelters, wheeled sports facilities and multi-games walls for teenagers is essential</li> </ul>
District Scale Play Sites	As part of a new country park or significant large scale open space	5 km  Will require innovative funding mechanisms to be sustainable	For all – Multi generational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For unsupervised play</li> <li>• Facilities for a prolonged stay including free to access toilets and shelter. Car parking and refreshments</li> <li>• Should be accessible by the whole community, in terms of arrival and stay.</li> <li>• A wide range of play experience which complement the surroundings, which provide challenge and provide a significant opportunity for meeting, imagination, role play and manipulation of the environment</li> <li>• Potential to include larger wheeled sports facilities and other facilities for teenagers.</li> </ul>

*For sites of 10 to 49 dwellings, on-site provision will not normally be sought. For sites of 50 to 199 dwellings, on-site provision for Local Play Areas and Local Parks will normally be sought. For sites of two hundred dwellings or more, on site Neighbourhood Play provision will also normally be sought. Where schemes are too small for play provision and/or open space to be provided an off-site contribution will be sought and be used to improve existing play areas or open spaces within the catchment of the development. See appendix 6.*

# Changes in the life of the last plan

Since the commissioning of the previous action plan significant changes have occurred, some of which were not anticipated and these in turn have created new opportunities and challenges.

The 2011 localism act allowed communities to take over the running of community assets, initially this was mainly buildings. However, due to the reduction of central government payments to principal authorities; and subsequent tightening of budgets, Parish and Town Councils have sought to take on assets including play areas through the Community Asset Transfer (CAT). The process of transferring sites to parishes and Town Council's has thrown up other issues, in particular land ownership. Despite practical difficulties Parishes and Town Council have shown interest in taking on these areas

**Table 2: Play area devolvement.**

Parish	Approach	Number
West Bletchley	Taking on key local parks and new developments	5 transferred – more requested
Campbell Park	Key local park - CAT	1 Kernow crescent
Walton Community Council	Key local park - CAT	2 – Browns Wood sports pitch and play area and Hind Head Knoll play area
Newport Pagnell	Take on all sites and related open space	19 transferred with another 2 potentials
Shenley Brook End and Tattenhoe	Take on all sites and related open space	11 transferred another 9 potentials

There continues to be requests from parishes to take on play areas and these will be considered on a case by case basis where the resource exists to deliver the programme from start to finish including legal execution. It is recognised that the fracturing of responsibilities could create issues with skills and knowledge so it is proposed that a management group is convened so all responsible authorities can share knowledge and experience.

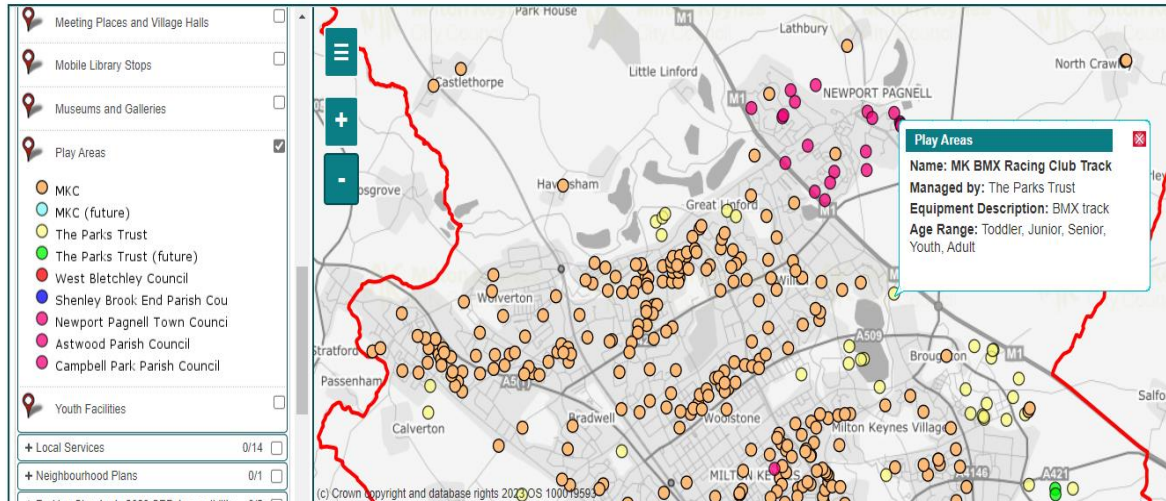
For historical reasons MKCC maintains some play areas that it does not own. The CAT transfer process has identified some of these and these are being resolved. However, MKCC also maintains play areas that are on land owned by parish councils, listed in **Appendix 2**, these are generally the rural ones. It is a **recommendation (Action 1)** that this relationship is formally established so all parties are aware of their responsibilities.

### **Action 1 Parish Play Area Maintenance Agreement**

Engage Councillors and effected parishes to consider how play areas not in MKCC ownership should be managed.

As well as the maintenance issue it is also clear that the community may also find it hard to locate play areas and to report any issues, therefore MKCC has updated the MYMK map layer to show all play areas, regardless of owner and include details of the equipment that can be found there. Part of the role of the proposed management group will be to ensure this central data point is updated.

Fig 2. MYMK – Play area layer showing location, operator, and equipment.



The location and type of play area is also important for the planning enhancements or upgrading a play area. Using gap analysis, it is possible to locate areas with a deficiency of provision, **Appendix 4 (Catchments and gap analysis)** contains these maps. Additionally, where new developments are proposed it is important to know where existing facilities are. For example, rather than creating a new play area on a development there maybe the opportunity to improve or enhance an existing play area to meet the needs of the new residents.

### Current management and resources

The Council currently manages 398 sites across the Borough. The Parks Trust are offered all new play areas in the growth areas and presently manage twenty-eight with more to come at Oakgrove and the expansion areas East and West of the city. There has also been a transfer of thirty play areas to parishes. Therefore, there are a total of 466 public play areas across the Borough as of November 2024.

### **Action 2 Working in Partnership: Play Area Group**

Establish a group with our play area partners and establish priorities and deliver a priority plan.



As Milton Keynes continues to grow there will also be play areas in construction or with developers awaiting adoption. MKCC position is clear all public open space, including play areas, should be offered to the Council to ensure public accountability. This should be set out in planning permission via a S106<sup>3</sup> agreement that also includes funds for the future maintenance. Open space and play areas may then be leased to the Parks Trust or Parish or Town Council on a 999-year basis. On occasions where an existing play area can be accessed by new residents of a development it may be appropriate to seek a contribution to enhance it, again through a S106 agreement.

**Action 3 New City Plan: Play standards and contribution calculator**

Engage with planning to secure new play areas, secure funding to build and for future maintenance and repair and replacement.

MKCC manages the play areas through its wider service contract, over the last few years there has not been a dedicated officer to oversee the contract and drive the service forward. The recruitment to this role should be considered as it ensures the contract runs smoothly and assist in grant funding. In September 2023, the play and landscape contract were awarded to Glendale. Glendale offers an all-encompassing green space management service and can call upon a wider resource including designers, suppliers, and distributors of playground equipment. The team includes a team supervisor, inspectors and installation and repairs team.

**Action 4 Client manager and play lead to support contract management and external funding bids**

Allocate or redeploy personnel within the team.

Play equipment requires regular inspection by suitably qualified staff and remedial work actioned promptly. The inspection regime should not be slavish, but be based on good data collection, which builds over time to identify inspection frequency. The data is captured on the PSS database which records all inspections, items of equipment, risk assessment and work conducted. It also provides a legal platform for any insurance claims. Additionally, an external inspection is carried out annually to ensure standards are maintained and independently assessed.

In 2016 an audit of play areas was undertaken, this included risk, play value, equipment condition, site opportunities, constraints, and brief recommendations. It was clear that many sites fell short of the Local Plan standard in terms of quality, but far exceeded it in terms of quantity. The main reason for this disparity is that sites that were built prior to the

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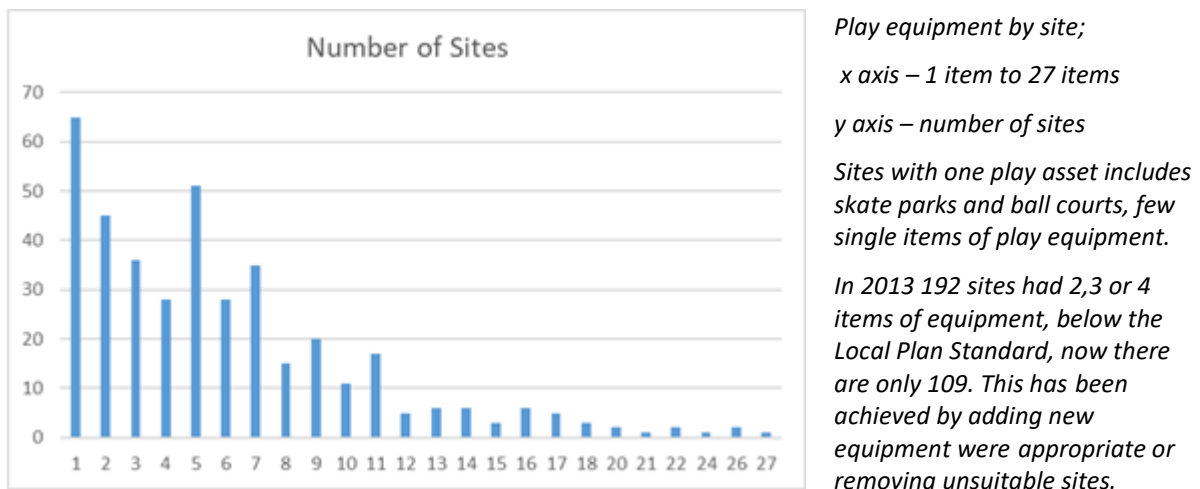
<sup>3</sup> Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements (based on that section of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The land itself, rather than the person or organisation that develops the land, is bound by a Section 106 Agreement, something any future owners will need to take into account.

Local Plan standards and represent an earlier understanding of needs and play. A plan for each parish was created and shared with Ward and Parish Councillors, the plans proposed a strategy of: Improve, maintain, and remove.

**Action 5 Maintain baseline Improve – Maintain - Remove**

Continue to undertake surveys to consider quality. Engage with Ward and Parish Councillors to consider where to improve, maintain or remove equipment.

Fig 3. Play area assets per site.



Over the last seven years there has been considerable progress on the delivery of the approach outlined. Projects have been carried out across the Borough from painting and refurbishment to complete removal and reconstruction. Over the past ten years nearly all the bark pits have been removed as they are costly to maintain and less suited to urban environments. Where possible grass mats are used as a safer surface as these are less expensive than rubber surfaces, more environmentally friendly and provide the same level of impact absorption.

Rubber surfaces, generally referred to wet pour can provide an attractive surface, especially if coloured or with patterns. However, the surface is prone to shrinkage over time, creating trip hazards on the edge, it is also difficult to patch if damaged and is expensive to lay and repair. There have also been concerns that it gives children and adults a false sense of safety. Safer surfaces are there to limit the effects of head impacts and can do little to prevent broken bones.

Loose surfaces such as sand do have play value, but communities can be concerned about hygiene. The use of pea shingle under large climbing frames has worked well, providing good impact absorbency and an interesting aesthetic, unlike bark it does not biodegrade so does not require topping up. Whilst most play areas are in good or average condition work is required to target those in poor condition. Some will be surplus to need, or lack the scope to enhance, due to a confined space or proximity to homes but, others will require enhancement.

Photo 1. Refurbishment of a play are makes it more attractive to use and extends the serviceable life.

Before



After

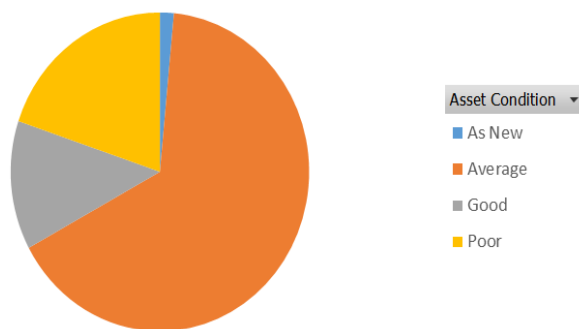


Beeward, Greenleys, whilst the is over 30 years old the safer surface and equipment were basically sound, repairs over time had left it looking uninviting. A full revamp was undertaken, installing a new spring toy, painting the equipment, and adding new features to the multiplay.

The present asset value of the play equipment, safer surface, and ancillary infrastructure; signs, bins, seating etc is £17.2 million, given the approximate life span of a play area of 20 – 30 years. There needs to significant ongoing investment to maintain the condition and replace equipment when necessary.

Fig 4. Play area condition (November 2023).

Condition	Number
As New	6
Average	261
Good	52
Poor	79
Total	398



Over the last 10 years funding for this ongoing work has come from a variety of sources, S106, external grants, internal funding (Community Infrastructure Fund), Parish and Town Councils and through the maintenance contract. Larger projects over the last 7 years are detailed within **appendix 1 (Major projects 2017 – 2024)** and total £2.38 million.

### Action 6 Refurbishment Programme

To be informed by survey work. Develop a business case to carry out a programme of refurbishments.

# Design

The approach to the design of play areas should follow a multi - professional ethos. It should include all those who will be involved in the play area over its life i.e., Landscape architects, environmental health officers (noise), maintenance staff, Police Officers, play and community workers. The design of new play areas proposed by developers are reviewed by MKCC landscape architects to ensure they meet local plan standard and are of high quality. These designs are further reviewed by the adopting body, generally the Parks Trust who share with MKCC a Green Infrastructure officer.

When a play area is to be substantially altered or a new one provided then it is vital that the community stakeholders, ward and parish councillors and residents, are also consulted to ensure community buy-in. There may be opportunities to include public art (i.e. the Dragon Park, Great Linford and the Dinosaur Park, Caldecotte) or ecological elements in the design (i.e. tree planting at Wind in the Willows Park, Two Mile Ash) to create additional interest and offer further opportunities for engagement with the community.

As the main reason is to promote children's play the process should be child centred, based on their desires, expectations, how they play and what they need to get out of the play experience. Table 1: Open Space Standards in Milton Keynes (Local Plan, 2005) above shows the ages play areas should be designed for. Designs are also governed by the need to meet the play standard BS EN 1176 Parts 1 to 11. The choice of equipment and layout of the play space needs to allow for inclusion, allowing as wide a range of children to play together as possible. The play space must be sustainable, meet consulted needs and not be easily vandalised.

## Play and Risk

Play is unusual in that it is one of the few areas that the Health and Safety Executive have accepted that it is desirable to have a degree of acceptable risk present. Children need and want to take risks during active play. Quality play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities, striking a balance between the risks and the benefits. This is done through risk assessment which:

- Ensures the likelihood of severe injury is extremely low
- Makes sure potential hazards are clear
- Uses practical ways to manage reasonable risk

Lord Young's Cabinet report 'Common Sense Common Safety' (2010) highlights the importance of children being able to experience risk and endorses the use of risk-benefit assessment and proposes a review of legislation, so that play areas will no longer be covered by regulations designed to cover workplaces.

*“Safety in play provision is not absolute and cannot be addressed in isolation. Play is first and foremost for children and if it is not exciting and attractive to them it will fail, no matter how*

*'safe' it is. Designers, managers, and providers will need to reach compromises in meeting these sometimes-conflicting goals."*<sup>4</sup>

Many play items allow for incremental risk taking, swinging higher or jumping off, or going faster on a roundabout. Every child will have their own risk tolerance and its important equipment can scale to this. All play areas are assessed before they are open to the public and equipment will be certified for compliance.

### **Inclusive play – all abilities**

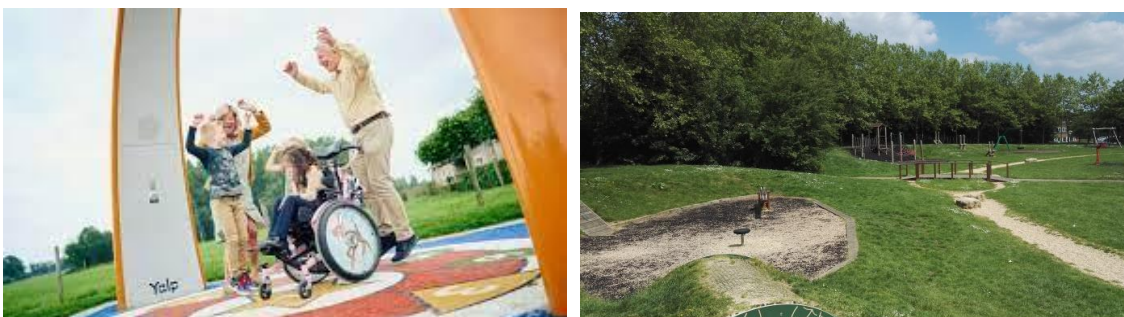
The goal of inclusive play is not to encourage the provision of specialised items of equipment, as this may only serve to segregate users. Nor should it look like it is 'for' disabled children. Rather it should bring together play value and accessibility in creative ways. Disabilities may not be obvious, such as cognitive impairment so consideration needs to be given to sensory play, imagination, role play and quiet spaces.

Designing for inclusion requires a careful consideration of the overall design and elements within it. The result should not be an accessible but boring space. The best play spaces have a balanced offer with higher and some lower challenge activities, to provide something for as many ability groups as possible. Not every space has to be able to do everything for every child and each element of a play space does not need to be accessed in the same way. The important thing however is that there are no unnecessary or avoidable barriers, and all children have choices about how they play.

It is unrealistic to expect all pieces of play equipment or indeed all areas of play space to be accessible to all children. It is inevitable that certain pieces of equipment will be specifically designed not to be accessible to certain groups of children, for example where age and height mean children would not cope with inbuilt risk factors.

### *Photo 2. Friendship Park, Conniburrow*

*The play area has a mix of spaces and different feels - an enclosed rubber bound area with accessible roundabout and novel spring rockers with flashing lights, table tennis area, sand play, woodland climbing trail and basket swing and an electronic play arch. The areas mix play types and allow groups to find their own space, the park is used for community events and has power supply for the annual Christmas tree.*



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<sup>4</sup> Managing Risk in Play Provision, Play Safety Forum, National Children's Bureau, 2002

We rate the play areas by their accessibility and the equipment they offer, see **Appendix 3 (Play Area accessibility)** for details. The guide finds the most suitable play areas across Milton Keynes for people who may have limited mobility. Presently twenty are rated good, 110 average, 222 poor and twenty-three poor. Over the last ten years we have installed accessible equipment into all major projects, items such as ground trampolines, basket swings and surface mounted roundabout all of which can be used by a wide range of abilities.

Additionally, we have incorporated sand play, sculptures, artwork, and planting to stimulate cognitive play. Clearly there is more to do in this respect and the aim should be that every play area has inclusivity designed in. However, we recognise the need for more specialist locations that can offer disability parking and inclusive toilet facilities, such as at Emberton Park. Opportunities should be sought to provide other large all ability space to serve the whole of MK.

### **Inclusive play: all genders**

Currently provision for young people consists almost entirely of facilities such as skate parks and Multi Use Games Areas. These are seen as meeting the needs of all young people but are often places dominated by boys. Girls can feel that parks are unsafe and offer nothing for them.

Spaces should be designed to respond to their needs, this can be done by improving the design of existing parks to make them more welcoming to girls, and to prevent boys from dominating the spaces. There are proven ways of doing this, and many interventions are inexpensive:

- Safety: key barrier and needs to be considered. Surveillance is an important part of this and maybe achieved through site lines to nearby properties or local centres.
- Social seating and shelter: Girls specifically want seating which allows them to face one another, which most park benches do not do.
- Outdoor gyms: Girls like the opportunities that these provide, but the equipment can not only sometimes be 'coded male' but also weighted for adult men.
- More, smaller areas: When one single large area is provided, it can often be territorialised by the most dominant group. A spread of smaller spaces allows several distinct groups to share the space.
- Walking loops: One of the most popular activities in parks for girls and young women is walking, and looped paths, preferably around the perimeter have been demonstrated to feel safer for them and to encourage greater activity levels.

One of the most important actions is to ask girls what they want and provide facilities which they are interested in and will use. Only by doing this can the council, designers and planners find out what girls want from parks, and what the problems are with the current provision. Girls do want to be involved, 82% of girls thought that they should be more involved in designing playgrounds, parks, and outdoor facilities<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/>

Photo 3. "Barista" Coffee Hall.



*The park was developed with Woughton Community Council, community groups and young people. Collaborating with the girls a dance platform incorporated along with gym equipment orientated so they could use it to sit and chat even if they did not want to work out. The park is supported by the Community Council as focus for events and urban art.*

### **Action 7 Inclusive play / urban play**

Incorporate improvements in existing and new sites. Look for suitable key sites and funding and deliver new inclusive play areas.

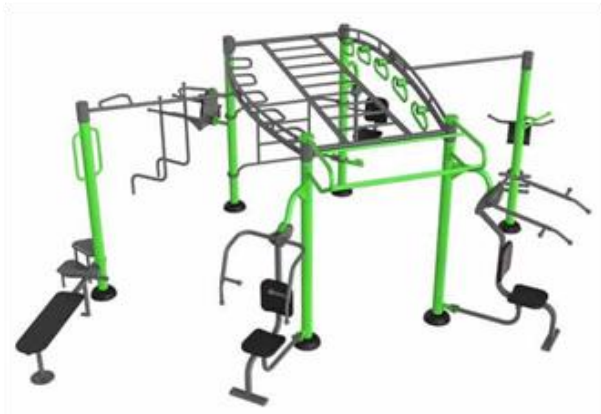
### **Fitness equipment and outdoor gyms**

Over the last 10 years there has been a greater emphasis in outdoor play to include items suitable for informal sport and outdoor fitness. Across the borough there are 33 Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) these are fenced areas with football goals and basketball rings and another twenty-eight single Goal/basketball ends. In addition, there are twelve standalone basketball posts and forty-six goal posts or kick walls and seventeen table tennis tables.

Whilst distinct from play equipment twenty-eight sites also have outdoor gyms of a range of styles. The early style of equipment was reminiscent of gym equipment but used the users body weight as resistance. This style of equipment is relatively cheap but has limited health benefits. Manufactures now provide a greatly enhanced range of apparatus that includes adjustable resistance machines with mobile phone apps costing as much as £10,000 per machine to quite simple calisthenic systems with no moving parts but infinitely adaptable if the user has the necessary skill and training.

The "Big Rig" recently installed as part of enhancements to "Spider Park" in Fullers Slade. It incorporates both conventional weight resistant gym style machines and calisthenics. There are also multiple anchor points for users to add training straps, bands, battle ropes and boxing bags for additional workout options. It has been placed near to a table tennis and table football table and supports other activities from the community hub. The area was designed so it creates a place to exercise and hang out, with clear visibility from the road it so users feel safe.

Photo 4. "The Big Rig" Spider Park" Fullers Slade



There are also two dedicated parkour areas, Dragon Park, Great Linford and Attingham Hill, Great Holm.

### **Wheeled sport**

There are several wheeled sports areas with the trend being to encompass all wheeled sport not just skateboards, these are less divisive in the community, as they cater for all ages of children not as sometime perceived solely teenagers.

Consideration needs to be given to both the layout and its proximity to homes to ensure minimal noise intrusion, sound modelling maybe appropriate.

*Photo 5. The Busy and Walton pump track*



*The Busy has always been a focal point of the skateboard scene in Milton Keynes, even before it became a designated area to skateboard. Its central location is important as is the covered surface and lights, enabling it to be used in the winter. The Walton Pump track offers different routes and skill levels for all wheeled riders.*

There are smaller skate elements in another twenty-eight sites across the city with wheeled features, these range from elements such as grind rails and ramps to several larger facilities suitable for a range of abilities. An expansive urban play space should be considered that provides toilets and other features that allows young people to come together across Milton Keynes, this could combine well with an inclusive play space.

### **Central Milton Keynes (CMK)**



Central Milton Keynes was primarily designed as a business and retail centre with relatively few residential properties, therefore only two play areas were included. Due to changes in the economy and society there is a move to residential densification either through the change of use of existing building or construction of new apartments.

Whilst Campbell Park is within reach smaller spaces and facilities such as play areas, outdoor fitness and seating are likely to be needed within CMK. The landscape strip around CMK offers the potential to become a city park but this will require engagement with stakeholders and a design process. Play could also form a component of future pedestrianisation of Midsummer Boulevard as Identified in previous studies.

Fig 5 Draft CMK Green Infrastructure and Open Space Strategy



*The green infrastructure and open space strategy for CMK echoes the original grid structure for wider Milton Keynes. While greening the east-west boulevards, it also seeks to introduce better north – south green connections.*

**Action 8 CMK – options for new / enhanced open space and play.**

Engage with planning and design. Produce a green Grid open space plan and deliver as development occurs.

# Delivery plan.

Actions have been taken from the discussion above and are set out over the plan period. We will continue to review to consider current demands and trends by carrying out an annual monitoring on our delivery plan. Progress on the delivery plan will be reported on annually to the Cabinet member.

No.	Action	Delivery	Timeline
1	Parish Play Area Maintenance Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage Councillors and effected parishes to consider how play areas not in MKCC ownership should be managed.</li> <li>Deliver outcome of engagement</li> </ul>	2025 2025 - 2035
2	Working in Partnership: Play Area Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a group with our play area partners and establish priorities and deliver a priority plan.</li> <li>Deliver on priorities</li> <li>Develop and deliver</li> </ul>	2025 2026 2027 - 2035
3	New City Plan: Play standards and contribution calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with planning to secure new play areas, secure funding to build and for future maintenance and repair and replacement.</li> <li>Include in new plan</li> <li>Deliver in line with plan</li> </ul>	2025 2025 2026-2035
4	Client manager and play lead to support contract management and external funding bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate or redeploy personnel within team.</li> <li>Seek funding and deliver other elements</li> </ul>	2025 2026 - 2035
5	Maintain baseline Improve – Maintain - Remove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to undertake surveys to consider quality.</li> <li>Engage with Ward and Parish Councillors to consider where to improve, maintain or remove equipment.</li> <li>Develop and delivery plan</li> </ul>	2025 – 2035 2025 – 2035 2025 – 2035
6	Refurbishment Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be informed by survey work. Develop a business case to carry out a programme of refurbishments.</li> <li>Fifteen refurbishments per year</li> </ul>	2025 – 2035 2025 - 2035
7	Inclusive play / urban play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate improvements in existing and new sites. Look for suitable key sites and funding.</li> <li>Deliver new inclusive play areas.</li> </ul>	2025 -2035 2025 -2035

8	<b>CMK – options for new / enhanced open space and play.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage with planning and design.</li> <li>• Produce a green Grid open space plan.</li> <li>• Deliver elements as development occurs.</li> </ul>	2025 2025-2026 2026 - 2035
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# Appendix 1

## Major projects 2017 – 2024.

Project	Year	Funding
New Bradwell	2024	S106 FCC £100k
Coffee Hall	2024	RCCO MKC Inclusive play £100k
Bradville	2024	Regeneration £140k
Fullers Slade	2024	Regeneration £140k
Crown Hill	2024	S106 / FCC 70k
Shenley Church	2023	S106 / Parish – restoration 3 play areas - £250K
Lakes Estate	2021-23	Regeneration - 600k – 4 play areas
Oakhill	2021	S106 – 60k
Neath Hill	2020	FCC MKC/ Parish – total 60K
Ash Pole Furlong	2020	FCC MKC/ Parish – total 80K
Bletchley - Leon	2020	S106 – total 120k
Stantonbury - Skate	2019	S106 – total 50k
Greenleys	2019	Central Government and MKC – total 60K
Fullers Slade	2019	FCC MKC/ Parish – total 80K
Shenley Brook End	2019	S106 50k – plus park improvements
Stony Stratford Recreation Ground	2018	FCC MKC/ Parish – total 80K
Bancroft	2018	FCC MKC/ Parish – total 90K
Monkston	2018	FCC MKC– total 60K
Wavendon	2018	FCC MKC / Parish– total 80K
Great Holm	2017	FCC MKC/ Parish – total 60K
Moulsoe	2017	FCC MKC– total 50K
Bradwell Common	2017	FCC <sup>6</sup> MKC– total 70K
Total		£2,380,000

FCC Communities Foundation, formerly WREN is a grant giving body that redirects funds received from landfill operations.

<sup>6</sup> FCC – Landfill operator charity, previously known as WREN

## Appendix 2 Parish owned play areas.

Two play areas are owned by MKDP, the remaining twenty-two are parish council owned.

Site Name	Area	Playground Category	Ownership	Inspections per year
MONKP01 Harlesden Place	Monkston Park	Local	MKDP	12
SHN04 Off Clegg Square - Shenley Lodge	Shenley Lodge	Local	MKDP	
CHIC01 TOP OF BEDLAM LANE	Chicheley	Local	Parish Land	4
EMBP01 PLAYING FIELDS, HULTON DRIVE	Emberton	Local	Parish Land	4
HANS01 CASTLETHORPE RD, PLAYING FIELD	Hanslope	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	12
LAVE01 HIGH STREET, BEHIND GREEN MAN P.H	Lavendon	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	12
MOUL02 OFF CRANFIELD ROAD	Moulsoe	Local	Parish Land	8
NEWT 01 CLIFTON ROAD OPP 1-3	Newton Blossomville	Local	Parish Land	8
NORC01 OFF HIGH STREET	North Crawley	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	8
OLNE01 SPORTS CENTRE/ EAST ST BEHIND	Olney	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	12
RAVE01 RECREATION GROUND, COMMON ST.	Ravenstone	Local	Parish Land	8
SHER01 CHURCH ROAD	Sherington	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	26
STOG01 REC. GROUND ADJ 6 HIGH STREET	Stoke Goldington	Local	Parish Land	12
LAVE03 34-40 OLNEY ROAD	Lavendon	Local	Parish Land	12
MOUL03 ADJ. VILLAGE HALL, CRANFIELD ROAD	Moulsoe	Local	Parish Land	8
OLNE02 DAGNALL ROAD BETWEEN 19-21	Olney	Local	Parish Land	12
SHER02 SPORTS GROUND/ PERRY LANE	Sherington	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	8
OLNE03 4 ASHLEA	Olney	Local	Parish Land	12
OLNE04 14-15 LONG MASSEY WEST VIEW	Olney	Local	Parish Land	12
BOWB01 END OF RUSHMERE CLOSE	Bow Brickhill	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	8
LITB03 THE SPORTS FIELD	Little Brickhill	Local	Parish Land	8
WAVE01 REAR OF COMMUNITY CENTRE	Wavendon	Local	Parish Land	8
WOBS01 STATION ROAD PLAYING FIELD	Woburn Sands	Neighbourhood	Parish Land	52
OLNE09 ADJ. No 2 WESTON Rd, OLNEY	Olney	Local	S106	12

# Appendix 3 Play area accessibility.

## Guidelines for Accessibility Levels for Play Areas in Milton Keynes

This guide is to assist you find the most suitable play areas across Milton Keynes for people who may have limited mobility. The grading is based on two key issues:

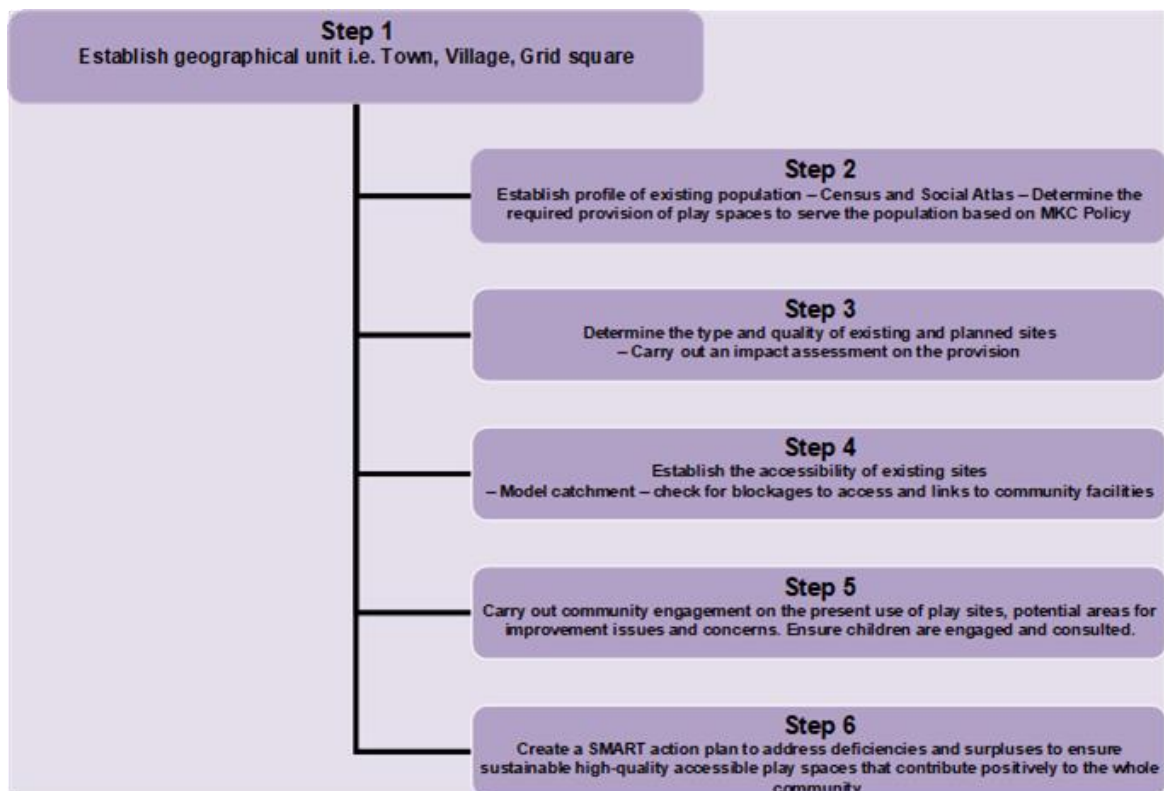
- 1) How good is the access to the site.
  - 2) The extent of any equipment that could be used by those with limited mobility.
- Both factors are taken into account so for example a site with really good access but no specific suitable equipment or play features, will still only score a Low grading.

Level 1 - Very High	<p>Will have a good flat or shallow incline access via a made-up path without the need to use steps with parking and disabled toilet facilities nearby.</p> <p>Will have at least 5 pieces of inclusive play equipment or play features. This could include such things as baskets swings, accessible roundabouts, trampolines, sand play, sensory and imaginative play and modules that have wide access routes or designed for access using upper body strength.</p>
Level 2 - High	<p>Will have a good flat or shallow incline access via a made-up path without the need to use steps and with parking facilities nearby.</p> <p>Will have at least 2 pieces of inclusive play equipment or play features. This could include such things as baskets swings, accessible roundabouts, trampolines, sand play, sensory and imaginative play and modules that have wide access routes or designed for access using upper body strength.</p>
Level 3 - Medium	<p>Will have a good flat or shallow incline access via a made-up path without the need to use steps and with parking facilities nearby.</p> <p>Will have at least 1 piece of inclusive play equipment or play feature for users with limited mobility such as a basket swing as well as other equipment that could be used with assistance. This could include items such as large roundabouts and rockers, climbing modules.</p>
Level 4 - Low	<p>Some difficulty accessing the site that may be slightly remote or via a steep or uneven path or with no specific inclusive play items of equipment but will have several items of general play equipment.</p>
Level 5 - Very Low	<p>Access likely to be difficult via steps or without a made-up path or with no specific items of inclusive play equipment and very few items of general play equipment on site.</p>

# Appendix 4 Play area evaluation.

## Action A5 - All areas of Milton Keynes to undergo systematic evaluation.

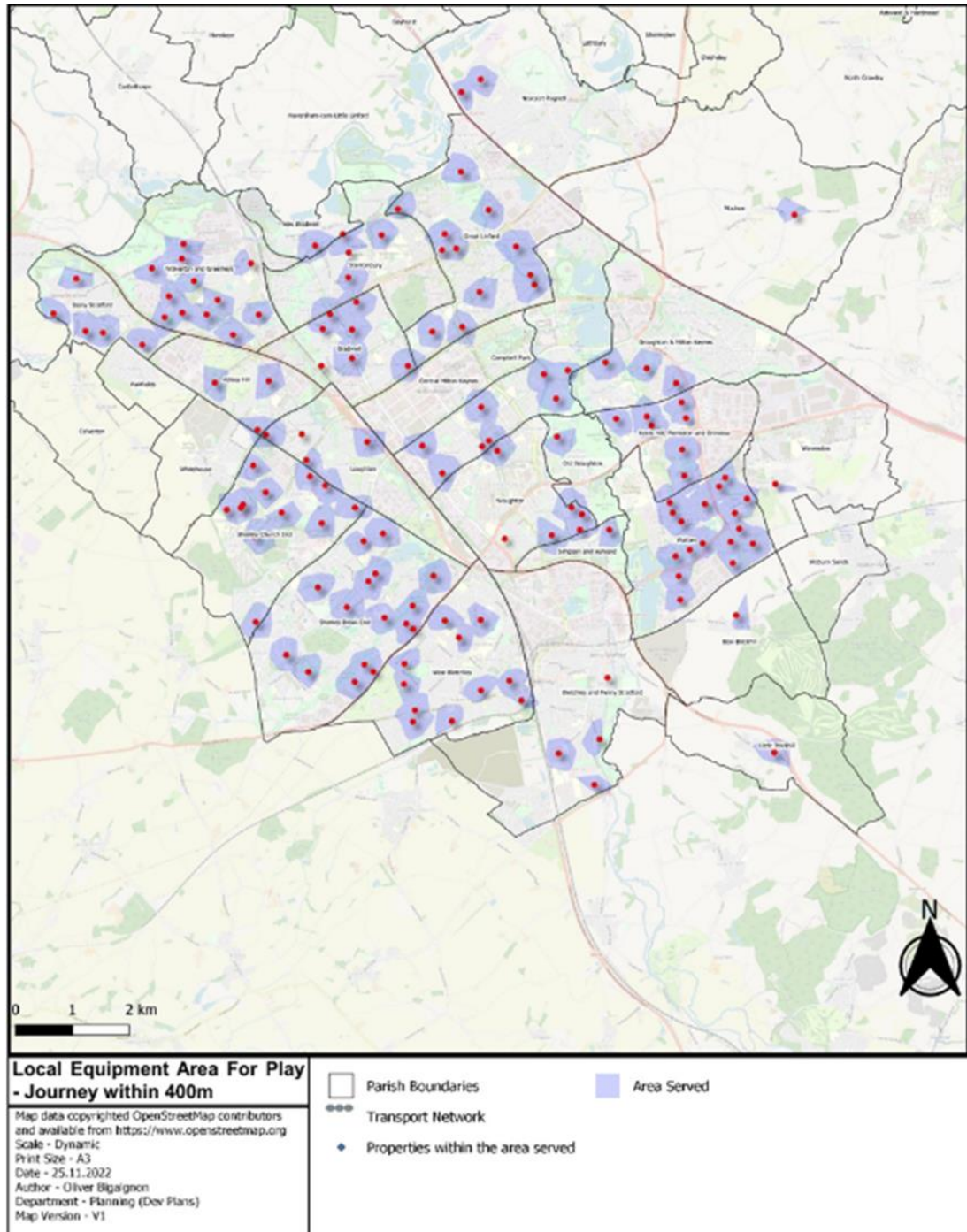
A systematic review of existing play areas was carried in 2012 /13 on a Parish basis, in line with the process set out below. This audit process will be repeated over the life of this Plan, starting with the older settlements as more play areas installed prior to the Local Plan being adopted and thus less likely to be according. This will be coupled with a gap analysis and the use of isochrone mapping, see next section.



# Appendix 5

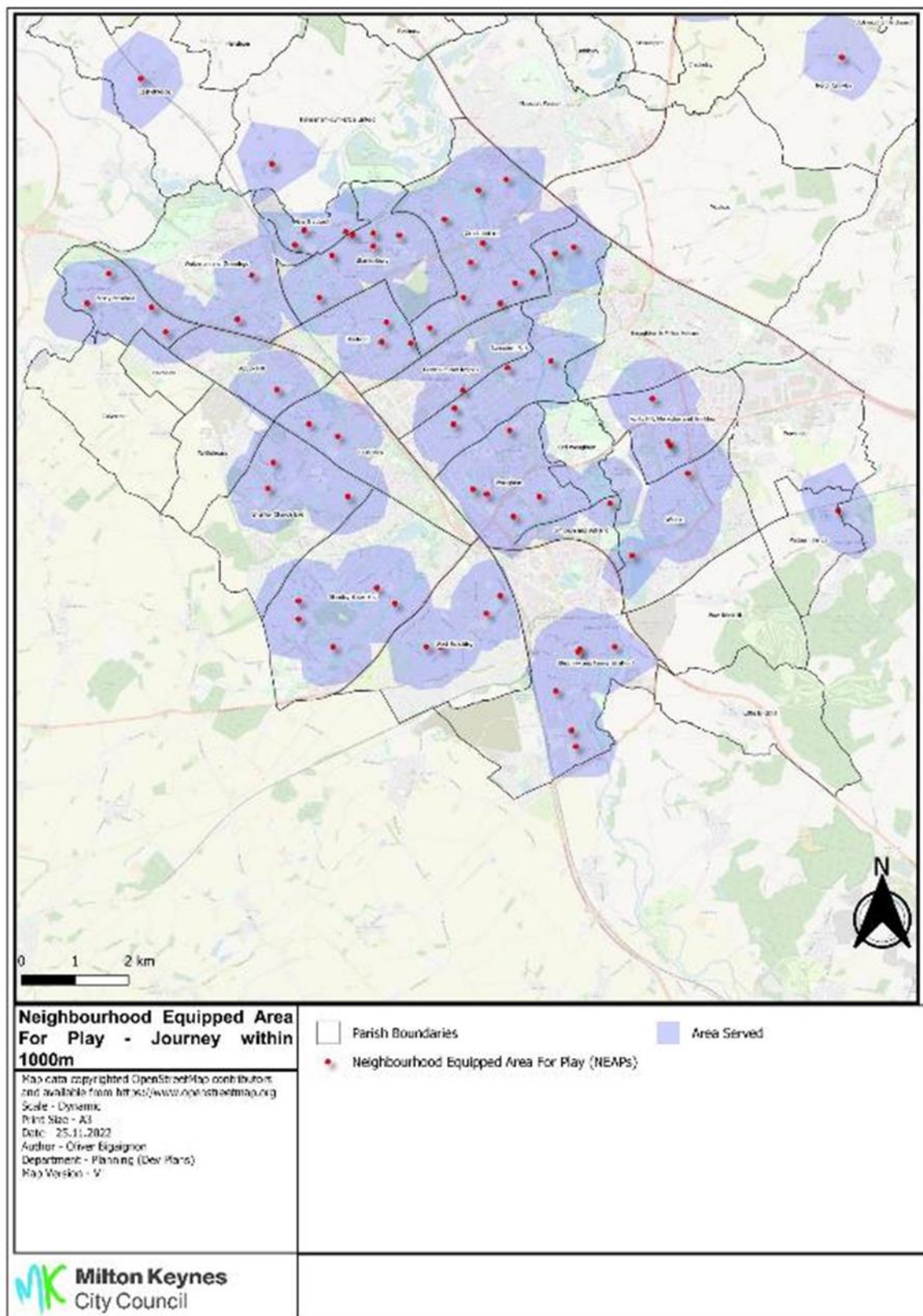
## Catchments and gap analysis.

Maps below show how standards can be applied, and mapping undertaken to show accessibility gaps. - QGIS program and an Isochrone mapping tool identified the catchment of the play type based on the distance thresholds applied and route options people would likely use.

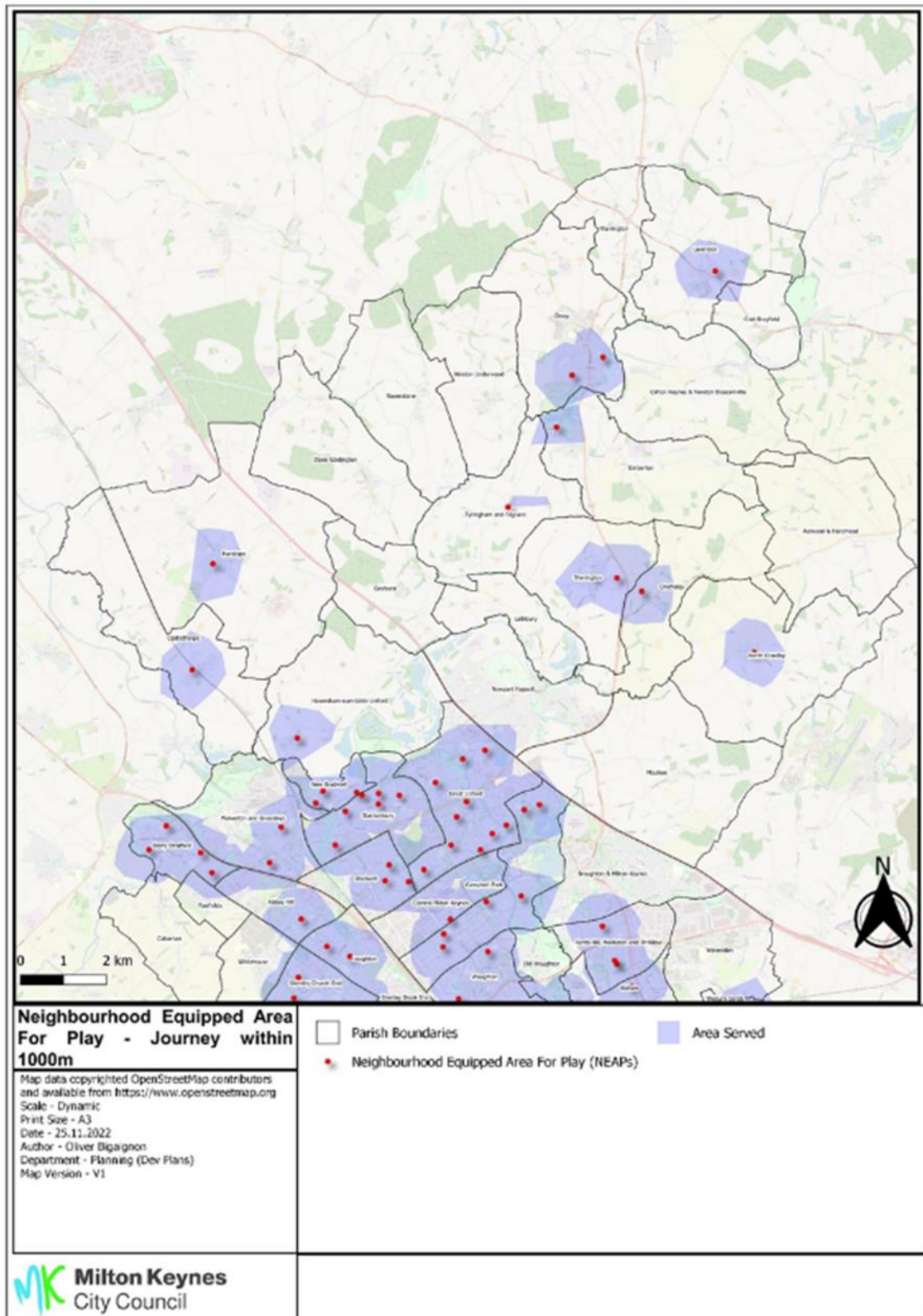


**Map: Accessibility review of Neighbourhood Equipped Area for play within 1000m of residential properties via accessible routes.**





**Map: Accessibility review of neighbourhood Equipped Area for play within 1000m of residential properties via accessible routes- south of MK.**



Map: Accessibility review of neighbourhood Equipped Area for play within 1000m of residential properties via accessible routes- north of MK.

# Appendix 6

## Play and open space contributions.

### Play and open space contributions

For sites of 10 to 49 dwellings, on-site provision will not normally be sought. For sites of 50 to 199 dwellings, on-site provision for Local Play Areas and Local Parks will normally be sought and generally provided by the developer to an agreed design. For sites of two hundred dwellings or more, on site Neighbourhood Play provision will also normally be sought.

Where schemes are too small for play provision and/or open space to be provided an off-site contribution will be sought and be used to improve existing play areas or open spaces within the catchment of the development. If the development is primarily for the elderly / retirement then play contributions would not be sought.

### Contributions in lieu of on-site provision

Category	M <sup>2</sup> per person	Provision Cost £M <sup>2</sup>	Maintenance Cost £M2 <sup>7</sup>	Total Cost per person
Local Play	3.5	158	112	£945
Neighbourhood Play	6	88	112	£1,200
Local Parks	4	18	25	£172
District Parks	8	18	25	£344

A dwelling is considered to have a occupation of 2.4 person per unit

<sup>7</sup> Note These figures assume 2.5% inflation over a 20-year period. They comprise costs per year at 2024 prices multiplied by a factor of 25.54 to allow for inflation over a 20-year period. These figures are based on average current contract costs across Milton Keynes



**Milton Keynes**  
City Council