

# **Appendix 1**

## **Play Audit 2012-13 & Play Action Plan 2013-14**

**East Cambridgeshire District Council**

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# 1.0 Executive Summary

East Cambridgeshire District Council has carried out an audit of play spaces and developed an Action Plan to support play development across the district. The Audit and Action Plan will guide the Council's approach to play issues and will provide the strategic framework that will guide relevant agencies in the provision of play spaces.

Since the Play Policy 2006, there have been some major changes and funding cuts affecting play provision and the Council has developed a programme of support to help communities improve their play areas and open space. Decisions taken by national government have meant a reduced national role for play and support for play development will now, more than ever, need to be generated locally.

Safe and stimulating play facilities are essential for a child's well-being, health and future development. Children and young people need free, inclusive and accessible spaces offering high-quality play and areas of open space. The East Cambs Play Audit and Action Plan seeks to ensure that all children and young people have access to such provision.

This Audit and Action Plan will be used to inform communities of their play provision needs and also inform developers of best practice when designing and installing play space. This Audit and Action Plan should be taken into account when decisions are being made that potentially impact on children's play e.g. building developments, public health, transport, leisure and the environment.

This Audit and Action Plan looks at the current provision of play areas and informal space for children and young people aged 0-18 years. This information should be used by communities when working up local plans and deciding where monies are to be spent.

There are currently around 19,300 children and young people aged 0-19 living in East Cambridgeshire. East Cambridgeshire's 0-19 population is projected to increase to 21,000 by 2021<sup>1</sup>. This Audit and Action Plan will look at the provision of play and informal open space that's required to meet these needs.

The review of current provision identified that 96.5% of the parishes that responded to the audit had some shortfall in provision. Deficits in youth provision were a common theme throughout the district, with 41% of parishes having no youth provision at all. 80% of parishes advised that there were facilities for children and young people with disabilities however many noted that provision was very limited. Generally play areas and areas of informal open space scored highly in terms of usage and maintenance.

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<sup>1</sup> Mid-2010 ward-age population forecasts for East Cambridgeshire, January 2012, Cambridgeshire County Council

A number of recommendations were identified following the audit of provision; these were considered when shaping the Play Action Plan 2013-14. Such recommendations include that the Audit is refreshed every 2 years in accordance with housing growth, and that new provision standards may need to be applied. It is recommended that a full accessibility Audit be undertaken of existing play space. It is recommended to consider undertaking a review of the content of the ECDC Supplementary Planning Document to include information on minimum standards for play provision and best practice guidance.

## 2.0 Aims and objectives

### 2.1 Aim

The Play Audit and Action Plan aims to ‘support communities in delivering free, inclusive and accessible spaces offering high-quality play and areas of open space to ensure healthier and happier children and young people in East Cambridgeshire.’

### 2.3 Objectives

The District Council will strive to meet this aim through the implementation of the objectives below:

Objective One	To establish the role of ECDC in working alongside communities to ensure high quality play provision
Objective Two	To review the current context of play and its role within the health agenda
Objective Three	To assess and understand gaps in provision now and in the future and to target resources according to evidence of need and inform local communities
Objective Four	To ensure that play remains embedded in all service areas which impact on child welfare

An Action Plan accompanies this Audit which sets out the activity that ECDC will undertake in 2013-14.

### 2.3 Play Audit statements

The following Audit statements underpin the East Cambridgeshire Play Audit and the Action Plan:

- All children and young people have need and right to play
- Play environments should provide safe and stimulating play opportunities
- A variety of play experiences should be offered recognising that children and young people have the need for different kinds of play
- Action should be taken to remove barriers so that all children and young people can have easy access to the widest possible range of play experiences and play environments both inside and outside
- A commitment to strong partnership working between agencies, networks and the community to provide a co-ordinated and strategic approach to development of play opportunities
- Children need to encounter and learn to manage an acceptable level of risk in their play

- Priorities should be based on needs assessment and consultation.
- Children's views about their play needs should be sought and given appropriate consideration in shaping new and existing provision

## **3.0 Introduction**

### **3.1 What is play?**

*‘Play is what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons’*

Charter for Children’s Play 2009 (Rev. Ed), Play England

Play can be described as ‘what children and young people do when not being told what to do by adults’. It is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child.

### **3.2 Need & Purpose for a Play Audit**

East Cambridgeshire District Council has a play Audit and Action Plan for the following reasons:

- To commit to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which states ‘Children have the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts’
- To have an understanding of what play provision currently exists within East Cambridgeshire and identify where additional resources are required
- To commit to and recognise the health and social benefits of play
- To gather an overview of play in the district and take a strategic lead
- To raise the profile and promote play to colleagues, partners and communities
- To respond to gaps in current provision by directing funds and acting as a source of support to communities
- To ensure that ECDC owned play areas are fit for purpose and accessible to all

### **3.3 Values of Play**

East Cambridgeshire District Council recognises the right to play and informal recreation is a human right for children and young people up to 19 years of age, enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention was ratified by the UK in 1991.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the rights of children to:

- rest and leisure
- engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age
- participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

To support these principles Play England has produced the Charter for Children's Play, which offers eight statements of what play means for children, and what we should all do to promote their right to enjoy it.

The Charter for Children's Play states that:

- Children have the right to play
- Every child needs time and space to play
- Adults should let children play
- Children should be able to play freely in their local areas
- Children value and benefit from staffed play provision
- Children's play is enriched by skilled playworkers
- Children need time and space to play at school
- Children sometimes need extra support to enjoy their right to play

## **4.0 The Case for Play**

### **4.1 Why does play matter?**

*'All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities.'*

Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group, 2005

Outdoor play is particularly valuable as it provides unique opportunities to experience the elements and because of the sense of well-being and enjoyment that being outdoors can bring, access to the outdoors also gives children more space to move freely and run around.

### **4.2 The Benefits of Play**

Play is central to children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development as well as contributing to a child's health. Whilst playing, children can experience real emotions, create their own uncertainty, experience the unexpected, respond to new situations and adapt to a wide variety of situations. Play enables children to form friendships and attachments to adults and to places, allowing for the development of familiarity and intimacy with both. It can provide opportunities for independent learning and building confidence, resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The table below highlights a selection of benefits play can provide to children and young people:-

<u>Social benefits</u>	<u>Emotional benefits</u>	<u>Cognitive benefits</u>	<u>Health benefits</u>	<u>Physical benefits</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cooperation</li> <li>- sharing</li> <li>- turn-taking</li> <li>- conflict resolution</li> <li>- leadership skill development</li> <li>- self-confidence</li> <li>- self-esteem</li> <li>- anxiety reduction</li> <li>- therapeutic effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enjoyment and fun</li> <li>- relaxation</li> <li>- release of energy</li> <li>- tension reduction</li> <li>- encouraging children to explore and discover together and on their own</li> <li>- allowing children to extend what they are learning</li> <li>- encouraging children to experiment and take risks</li> <li>- providing opportunities for collaborative learning with adults and peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- creativity</li> <li>- abstract thinking</li> <li>- imagination</li> <li>- problem-solving</li> <li>- social cognition</li> <li>- empathy</li> <li>- perspective-taking</li> <li>- mastering new concepts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- positive attitudes towards physical activity</li> <li>- healthy brain development</li> <li>- promotion of and improved health and wellbeing throughout whole life</li> <li>- development of motor-skills</li> <li>- increased energy expenditure</li> <li>- the prevention of chronic disease</li> <li>- relief of anxiety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- develops motor functioning</li> <li>- fine motor experiences</li> <li>- physical challengeself-help skills</li> </ul>

## 5.0 Context

This Audit and Action Plan is being developed at a time of change. National strategy is moving to a much more localised agenda and financial pressures have provided powerful drivers for a fundamental review and redesign for children's services, including play.

This Audit and Action Plan has been developed taking the following national, regional and local policies and strategies into account:

### **5.1 National**

#### The National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012, Department for Communities and Local Government

The NPPF sets the government's objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and supports accessible local services that reflect a community's needs and supports its health, social and cultural well-being.

#### Communities in Control: real people, real power, 2009, The Communities and Local Government department

The paper provides a blueprint for how communities can be given more control over local decisions and services. It gives individuals and communities real opportunities to better influence children's services and the provision of local play facilities.

In April 2009, a new duty on local councils to involve local people in key decisions was introduced, encouraging local authorities to develop a culture of community engagement, including when regenerating or developing play space.

#### Managing risk in play provision, 2008, Play England

This document is a briefing for risk managers in local authorities and other public and voluntary agencies that manage play provision. It builds on the Play Safety Forum position statement and the recent implementation guide, and argues for a balanced approach to play safety: one that ensures that overall goals and objectives are not compromised by excessive risk aversion.

#### Playable Space: Quality Assessment Tool, October 2009, Play England

The aim of the quality assessment is to assess the quality of children's play spaces. It is designed as a tool to help play providers look at the spaces available for children's play and assess what sort of improvements could be made to enhance the use and quality of those spaces.

#### Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces, 2008, Play England

The guide explains how good play spaces can give children and young people the freedom to play creatively, while allowing them to experience risk,

challenge and excitement. There is also advice on how play spaces can be affordably maintained.

## **5.2 Regional/County**

### **Cambridgeshire Together: a vision document 2007-2021, Cambridgeshire County Council**

The Vision aims for Cambridgeshire to be a county of strong, growing, prosperous and inclusive communities supported by excellent services where people can fulfil their potential, live longer, healthier lifestyles and influence decision-making.

The purpose of this vision is to set the long-term priorities for Cambridgeshire, which will promote the wellbeing of the local people, the economy and the environment.

### **A Time for Play, Cambridgeshire County Council**

The County Play Policy promotes the development of play for all children and young people in Cambridgeshire. The Policy informs the County Council's work with children and young people and how they work with stakeholders.

### **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Children and Young People, 2010, Cambridgeshire Health & Wellbeing Board**

This document gives an overview of needs and key issues affecting Children and Young People outcomes in Cambridgeshire.

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the means by which Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local authorities describe the future health, care and wellbeing needs of the local populations, the strategic direction of service delivery and the commissioning requirements to meet those needs.

### **A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010 –2015, Cambridgeshire ACRE**

The Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy is a plan for the future viability of the County's rural areas. It assesses the upsides and challenges of living and working in the countryside, reviews the area's economic wellbeing and looks at the land and environment that surrounds us. It goes on to set out a long-term vision for rural Cambridgeshire, how we can get there and who can make it happen.

## **5.3 Local**

### **Corporate Objectives 2012, East Cambridgeshire District Council**

- To run an efficient and effective Council to deliver best value for its residents

- To build the foundations for the growth of the economy of East Cambridgeshire; supporting job and wealth creation and improving quality of life and the environment

Supplementary Planning Document on Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations, October 2011, East Cambridgeshire District Council

This Supplementary Planning Document sets out East Cambridgeshire District Council's approach to seeking planning contributions from development schemes. It is aimed at developers, agents and the general public, and seeks to provide people with a better understanding of when planning contributions will be sought and how they will be used.

East Cambridgeshire Sports Facilities and Play Area Assessment, Final Report, 2005, Leisure and the Environment on behalf of East Cambridgeshire District Council

The Report was commissioned by East Cambridgeshire District Council to inform the Council's future approach to the provision and protection of sports and play facilities.

ECDC Sports Facilities, Play Areas and Informal Open Space Parish Summaries report, 2006.

The summary report combines the finding of the East Cambridgeshire Sports Facilities and Play Area Assessment 2005 and the ECDC Informal Open Space Assessment 2005 to help inform Section 106 negotiations involving the provision of open space and recreational facilities where such a need is brought about by a new development.

Green Infrastructure & Informal Open Space Assessment, 2009, East Cambridgeshire District Council

The report provides an update on the provision of open space, informal open space and green infrastructure in East Cambridgeshire, taking into consideration the changing economic and social infrastructure of the district. The report uses the minimum provision standards set out in the ECDC Informal Open Space Assessment 2005.

Green Infrastructure Strategy, 2011, Cambridgeshire Horizons

This Strategy demonstrates how Green Infrastructure can be used to help to achieve four objectives:

- To reverse the decline in biodiversity
- To mitigate and adapt to climate change
- To promote sustainable growth and economic development
- To support healthy living and well-being

East Cambridgeshire Health Profile, 2012, NHS

The profile gives a picture of health in this East Cambs. It is designed to help local government and health services understand their community's needs, so that they can work to improve people's health and reduce health inequalities.

## **5.4 ECDC Management Arrangements**

The District Council are a provider of children's play and are responsible for the management of 16 play areas in the district (18.4% of the total number of play areas in the district), these are:

- Beresford Road, Ely
- Bittern Grove, Soham
- Brooke Grove, Ely
- Jubilee Gardens, Ely
- Kingfisher Drive, Soham
- Kingsley Walk, Ely
- Lapwing Way, Soham
- Meadow Way, Mepal
- Pocket Park, Ely
- Sandys Crescent, Littleport
- Teal Avenue, Soham
- Victoria Green, Witchford
- Tennyson Place, Ely
- Morley Drive, Ely
- Murfitt Close, Ely
- Goldsmith Court, Ely

All of these have been included as part of the 2012/13 Audit of Play Space.

ECDC receive a commuted sum from developers when a play area or informal open space is adopted, which contributes towards the future maintenance of sites.

The 2012/13 Audit (Section 7.0) identifies that there are 87 public play areas in East Cambridgeshire, 71 of which are owned and managed by parish councils. There are 135.5 hectares of informal open space in the district.

## **5.5 Summary of Context**

In summary, decisions taken by national government in an attempt to reduce the budget deficit have meant a reduced national role for play and support for play development will now, more than ever, need to be generated locally.

The change of government and financial pressures as a consequence of the recession and the national deficit have served as powerful drivers for a fundamental review and redesign of children's services. The scale of resource reduction means that a reduction in service provision is inevitable, and there will be increasing emphasis on looking at different and more effective ways to deliver services. As part of overall reductions, services are likely to become

more targeted to those children and young people most in need, and in communities where need is highest.

It is in this context that the East Cambridgeshire District Council Play Audit and Action Plan is being refreshed and provides an opportunity to make some critical decisions about the allocation of resource based on local need, for example Section 106 monies. For this reason much of the Audit section is broken down to parish area to inform communities of local need.

The funding environment has become increasingly challenging due to the withdrawal of funding from central government however communities are now in the driving seat and are actively involved in ensuring provision is fit for local need and ensuring effective use of resource.

The importance of play to children's health and wellbeing is becoming increasingly recognised. Play is also increasingly becoming seen as being a key preventative factor in tackling health issues in later life and therefore has a much higher profile on the health agenda.

## 6.0 Local evidence supporting the need for play

### 6.1 District Profile

East Cambridgeshire is a largely rural district, which covers an area of almost 65,500<sup>2</sup> hectares and has a population of approximately 83,180.<sup>3</sup> The population and services are centred in the 3 market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport.

The district has an outstanding built and natural heritage, including the internationally recognised Ely Cathedral, The National Stud, The July Racecourse, Wicken Fen and Anglesey Abbey. Close to Cambridge, the district enjoys excellent connections to the regional road and rail networks, as well as London Stansted Airport. It is an attractive location in which to live and work, combining the best of town, village and rural life. The area is predominantly rural which creates issues such as poor public transport and the need for services to be accessible locally.

Unemployment in the district is low (1.1%) and the quality of life is good, with 84% of residents expressing satisfaction with the district as a place to live<sup>4</sup>.

This is an exciting time for the district. Strategic policies recognise much of the district as suitable for substantial employment led growth and the Council has already been successful in attracting high tech companies to locate in the area and in securing European funding for economic regeneration and community initiatives.

East Cambridgeshire is among the fastest growing districts in the country. Housing growth in the settlements of Ely, Littleport and Soham for the period 2000 - 2021 has been set at 8,600 new dwellings. Population is forecast to increase by 17,900, from 80,300 in 2009 to 98,200 in 2013. This suggests 22% growth at an annual average of 1,400. East Cambs' most populated settlements are Ely (18,750), Soham (10,910) and Littleport (8,290).<sup>5</sup>

Despite East Cambridgeshire having an aging population, children and young people will make up 23% of the population in 2021.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> East Cambridgeshire Annual demographic and socio-economic report, 2011, Cambridgeshire County Council

<sup>3</sup> 2011 Census, Neighbourhood Statistics, January 2013

<sup>4</sup> East Cambridgeshire Annual demographic and socio-economic report, 2011, Cambridgeshire County Council

<sup>5</sup> East Cambridgeshire Annual demographic and socio-economic report, 2011, Cambridgeshire County Council

<sup>6</sup> Mid-2010 ward-age population forecasts for East Cambridgeshire, Research, Performance & Business Intelligence Team January 2012

## **6.2 Children's Health in East Cambridgeshire**

The health of people in East Cambridgeshire is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 1,700 children live in poverty.<sup>7</sup>

Life expectancy is 4.8 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of East Cambridgeshire than in the least deprived areas.<sup>8</sup>

Children and young people make up almost 1 in 5 of Cambridgeshire's population. While most are healthy and achieve their potential, there are still key inequalities in outcomes for some children and young people, and these are demonstrated in a number of key indicators, including differences in life expectancy, attainment rates across all key stages of education, rates of young people Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEET), and rates of unhealthy weight, childhood deaths and hospital admissions. Approximately 16.6% of Year 6 children in East Cambridgeshire are classified as obese.

Energetic play contributes to the one-hour per day of physical activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officer. However, research conducted in 2009 by the British Heart Foundation found that out of 4,000 children, one in three are physically active for just a single hour each week.

In 2001, the British Medical Journal reported an 'obesity epidemic in young (pre-school) children'. The article went on to state that providing opportunities for energetic play may be the only incentive children need to be more physically active.

"All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day."

Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer for England

Regular participation in physical activity among children and young people is vital for healthy growth and development. Less than a third of boys (32%) and a quarter of girls (24%) aged 2 – 15 achieve the minimum physical activity levels needed for good health in England<sup>9</sup>. There is therefore an urgent need to significantly increase opportunities for our children to be active. Childhood obesity is linked to physical inactivity.

Every year since 2005, as part of the National Child Measurement Programme, children in Reception and Year 6 are weighed and measured during the school year to inform local planning and delivery of services for

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<sup>7</sup> East Cambridgeshire Health Profile 2012 (NHS)

<sup>8</sup> East Cambridgeshire Annual demographic and socio-economic report, 2011, Cambridgeshire County Council

<sup>9</sup> Start active, stay active, 2011, Chief Medical Officers

children; the population level surveillance data gathered allows analysis of trends in growth patterns and obesity<sup>10</sup>.

Between 2006/07 and 2008/09 the trend in childhood obesity in Reception and Year 6 varied in Cambridgeshire districts. However, for all areas, there was a significant increase in the percentage of obese children from Reception to Year 6, in common with the national trend.

The priorities of the East Cambs Health & Wellbeing Partnership Action Plan 2013-14 are diabetes, mental health (working population and older people) and falls prevention. As mentioned previously, play is an important preventative factor in tackling such future health issues.

Proportion of obese and overweight Reception and Year 6 pupils, 2008/09

	Reception			Year 6		
	Over weight	Obese	Total number measured	Over weight	Obese	Total number measured
East Cambs	13.70%	7.90%	827	14.60%	15.30%	751
Cambridgeshire	12.90%	7.80%	5,860	14.80%	15.70%	5,685
England	13.20%	9.60%	506,169	14.30%	18.30%	497,680

Source: National Child Measurement Programme England, 2009/10

**6.3 Anti Social Behaviour in East Cambridgeshire**

Not catering for the needs for young people can give rise to anti-social behaviour problems. The Home Office’s ‘Respect Agenda’ recognises that young people who are able to access activities that are appropriate for their age and particular needs, are less likely to cause anti-social behaviour. Creating more provision for young people may encourage and help to reduce anti-social behaviour.

The number of ASB incidents in East Cambridgeshire has steadily decreased over the past five years from an average number of 282 incidents each month in 2007/08 to an average of 174 each month in 2011/12<sup>11</sup>.

The rate of ASB incidents has steadily reduced from just over 3.5 incidents per 1,000 residents each month to just over 2 incidents per 1,000 residents each month. This is a reduction of 41%. Analysis of five years data indicates that incidents tend to be higher around the summer months and lower around the winter months. East Cambridgeshire has the second lowest rate of ASB in Cambridgeshire and half that of Cambridge and Fenland.

<sup>10</sup> National Obesity Observatory, 2010

<sup>11</sup> Strategic Assessment of Crime & Disorder, October 2012, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Team

## **6.4 ASB Hotspots**

ASB shows some strong geographic patterns across the district, with a high proportion of offences occurring in a relatively small number of locations; these are known as hotspots.

### Ely Hotspot

Within East Cambridgeshire the most significant hotspot was in Ely City Centre.

### Soham Hotspot

There is a concentrated cluster around the High Street and then a second, but more wide spread cluster in the north of the town. Incidents of criminal damage can occur anywhere within Soham.

### Littleport Hotspot

ASB in Littleport is focused on Main Street and to a lesser degree along the three arms of the town. Incidents of criminal damage can occur anywhere within Littleport.

### Sutton Hotspot

ASB and Criminal Damage are concentrated firmly in the centre of the village around The Brook. Though Sutton has around half the number ASB incidents as Littleport it has a slightly higher number of incidents of criminal damage.

## **7.0 2012/13 Audit of Play Space in East Cambridgeshire**

In order to establish the state of existing provision and aspirations for the future, East Cambridgeshire District Council has worked in partnership with Parish Councils to carry out an Audit to provide an overview of Play Space in East Cambridgeshire.

The purpose of the audit was to:

- Provide an overview of play areas and informal open space within each parish
- Identify any gaps in current provision
- Identify any barriers preventing play provision
- Assess the accessibility of existing play space
- Identify requirements for future provision

### **7.1 Methodology**

A questionnaire was sent out to all 35 Parish Councils during the summer of 2012. All known play areas and areas of informal open space were listed in a table and plotted onto a map which was sent out alongside the questionnaires.

Parish Councils were asked to score all existing play areas and areas of informal open space and update any missing information. They were asked to draw any missing areas onto the maps provided. The play areas were scored using criteria from the Play England Quality Assessment Tool Kit to ensure results were consistent and measurable.

Following the return of questionnaires, all play areas and informal spaces were mapped onto the Council's GIS Mapping System, enabling the area to be measured. Once areas and age groups were identified, local standards were used to measure whether provision was adequate or whether there was a deficit.

Local provision standards set by the East Cambs Sports Facilities & Play Areas Assessment 2005 and the East Cambridgeshire Informal Open Space Study 2005 were used to measure against existing provision in order to determine whether or not there is a surplus or deficit of provision.

The East Cambs Sports Facilities & Play Areas Assessment 2005 explains why a modified standard categorisation is required for East Cambs rather than using the Fields in Trust guidance, or any other.

East Cambridgeshire's Sport and Play Areas Assessment 2005 and the East Cambridgeshire Informal Open Space Study 2005 advises that the future

provision of play facilities should be made in accordance with the following standards:

<b>Category of Space</b>	<b>Space per person (m2)</b>	<b>Standard size of area (ha)</b>
Informal Open Space	25 square metres (2.5 ha)	
Toddler Outdoor Play Space	0.2 square metres (0.02 ha)	0.01 ha
Junior Outdoor Play Space	0.8 square metres (0.08 ha)	0.04 ha
Youth Outdoor Play Space	1 square metres (0.1 ha)	0.1 ha

Categories of Play Spaces used for the 2012 Audit:

1. Play Areas including equipped playgrounds and skateparks
2. Informal space including village greens and recreation grounds (non-marked open areas)

Categories of Play Area Provision

The audit uses the following three categories to assess play area provision:

Toddler Outdoor Playing Space – 2 to 5 year olds  
 Junior Outdoor Playing Space – 6 to 12 year olds  
 Youth Outdoor Playing Space – 13 to 18 year olds

The quality of play provision was assessed using Play England's Play Space Quality Assessment Tool Kit which considered the following criteria:

- Level of usage
- Maintenance
- Health & Safety
- Location
- Range of play experiences

Response rate

34 of the 35 parishes responded to the Audit. Some parishes did not complete the full questionnaire, however they did provide either a verbal update or a paragraph summarising the state of play in their parish. 7 parishes submitted either an incomplete response or included areas that could not be identified on ECDC's mapping system.

## Mapping Methodology

For the Audit, areas were drawn using OS MasterMap. It was assumed that if the required feature was shown on the OS MasterMap layer then this was used to represent the required polygon. If the required feature was not shown on the OS MasterMap then the latest available aerial photography (2009) was used. This drawing method is less accurate with an estimated +/- 10% in area recorded. Finally if the feature is not shown on either OS MasterMap or the 2009 aerial photography then the polygon was then hand drawn based on information supplied, obviously the accuracy of the data is always questionable.

## 7.2 Key 2012-13 Audit Findings

Overall, the audit found that all parishes had insufficient provision in at least one category. The table below highlights the key findings of the 2012/13 Audit:

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Finding</b>	<b>Comments</b>
% of parishes where some shortfall in provision was identified	96.5% of parishes had a deficit of provision in at least one category	Only Coveney & Wardy Hill had a surplus of provision in all categories  Kirtling and Upend, Kirtling and Sutton have deficits of play provision for all age groups and informal open space
% of parishes that identified deficits in Toddler provision	31% of parishes had a deficit of toddler provision	17% of parishes have no toddler provision at all
% of parishes that identified deficits in Junior provision	72% of parishes had a deficit of junior provision	17% of parishes have no junior provision at all
% of parishes that identified deficits in Youth provision	86% of parishes had a deficit of youth provision	41% of parishes have no youth provision at all
% of parishes that identified deficits in Informal open space provision	79% of parishes had a deficit of informal open space	Significant surplus of open space in Witchford
% of parishes that identified that disabled access was available in some of their play areas	80%	Many noted that access was very limited

<b>Parishes with highest deficits</b>	
Toddler	Soham (-10.52 facilities) Isleham (-4.75 facilities) Cheveley (-3.98 facilities)
Junior	Soham (-18.84 facilities) Littleport & Black Horse Drove (-11.06475 facilities) Burwell (-6.77920 facilities) Sutton (-6.49250 facilities) Ely (-6.38206 facilities)
Youth	Soham (-10.09970 facilities) Ely (-8.94515 facilities) Littleport & Black Horse Drove (-7.45680 facilities)
Informal Open Space	Littleport & Black Horse Drove (-19.772 hectares) Ely (-16.578 hectares) Sutton (-6.485 hectares)
% of parishes that advised that their play areas enabled children of different ages to play together	65%

### **7.3 Analysis of Key 2012 Audit Findings**

The information below provides further explanation of the key findings stated above and the qualitative data gathered through the questionnaires:

- In recent years, play area design encourages play spaces to accommodate a range of age groups; this is represented in East Cambs as 65% of parishes stated that their play areas enabled children of different ages to play together. A good example of this design is the Pocket Park play area in Ely.
- Although 80% of parishes advised that there were some facilities suitable for children with disabilities, many noted that provision was very limited
- The District Council recognise that maximum use of schools after school hours or at weekends can contribute to reducing deficiencies in play provision and support Play England's Opening Schools Toolkit for Schools which offers best practice options and solutions to opening up school facilities to the community. The Toolkit emphasises a number of models to address the concerns of management and maintenance.
- Kirtling still no provision, however a play area is currently being considered by the Parish Council
- Generally the quality of equipment was scored highly, however where play areas received low scores (e.g. 2 out of 5), this was often due to the location of play spaces

## **7.4 SWOT Analysis of Play and Informal Open Space**

The following SWOT Analysis provides an overview of the current state of play for East Cambridgeshire. The Analysis considers the review of national, regional and local policies and strategies, comments from parish councils and ECDC officers.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p>Commitment and responsibility from the District Council to maintaining a Play Audit and Action Plan, conducting an audit of provision and producing an Action Plan</p> <p>Local planning standard of play provision</p> <p>Communities in East Cambs willing to take ownership of their play space</p>	<p>ECDC do not have a landscape architect to advise on play ground and landscaping issues</p> <p>96.5% of parishes have a deficit of provision in at least one category</p> <p>No national policy or government funding</p> <p>The Supplementary Planning Document needs reviewing and updating</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>Gather future population figures and use to work out local standards to assess future demand</p> <p>Opportunity to review local provision standards</p> <p>Use of other community facilities such as school for play use</p> <p>Opportunity to improve communication between ECDC and parish councils when considering new or enhanced play provision</p> <p>Section 106 and CIL funding</p>	<p>Developers going bankrupt before paying commuted sum to ECDC</p> <p>Developers not installing quality play equipment</p> <p>Play equipment installed not meeting needs of community</p>

## 8.0 Future Provision of Play Areas & Informal Open Space

### 8.1 Priorities and Recommendations

The 2012 Audit Analysis (7.3) identifies a number of issues to be addressed; these were determined from both the data and comments made by parish councils. The list below summarises the key priorities to take forward in the district and identifies where these points will be addressed in the 2013/14 Action Plan. The list is in order of priority:

1. Addressing provision deficits

The 2012 Audit identifies shortfalls in all categories of play and informal open space. The areas with the largest deficits are:

- open space provision in Littleport, Ely and Sutton
- toddler provision in Soham, Isleham and Cheveley
- junior provision in Soham, Littleport, Burwell, Sutton and Ely
- youth provision in Soham, Ely and Littleport

**Action Plan Priority 1.1**

2. Developers to provide quality play equipment

It is important that play equipment is of high quality and meets the needs of the local community. It is recommended that the Best Practice Guidance set out in Appendix 1 is followed when designing, locating and installing new play provision.

**Action Plan Priority 1.5**

3. Raise Value of Play

It is essential that the value of play is recognised throughout East Cambridgeshire. With the localism agenda, community groups and parish councils now play an increasing role in the funding and development of taking forward play provision. ECDC will raise awareness amongst parish councils of the importance of play and the role in which they now play in the development of provision.

**Action Plan Priority 1.1**

4. Accessibility Audit

7.3 of the 2012 Audit Analysis identifies that a full accessibility review should be carried out to ensure that the needs of disabled people are taken into account when implementing access improvement.

**Action Plan Priority 2.2**

5. Review of Local Play Provision Standards

There may be a need to review local provision standards from a planning perspective and developments on Village Visions. Due to substantial population growth since 2005, the local standards may need to be reviewed. Setting robust local standards based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process. Standards should be included in development plans.

Although this review takes into consideration a range of factors that determine the quality of a play area, it is recommended that the provision standards used to measure this are reviewed as existing standards only consider space, not the actual items of equipment in that space or their locations.

**Action: 1.9 and to be considered ahead of undertaking the next Audit**

6. Gather information for parishes with incomplete responses

ECDC will work in partnership with any parishes not included in the original audit and gather the required information to produce a Summary of Play report for that area. These parishes are:

- Isleham
- Kennett
- Mepal
- Reach
- Snailwell
- Swaffham Prior
- Wentworth
- Westley Waterless

**Action: 1.1**

## **9.0 Monitoring & Review of Audit and Action Plan**

### 9.1 Reviewing the Audit and Action Plan

The Play Space Audit will be reviewed after 1,000 new houses have been built in the district. Housing growth figures forecast that this will be approximately every 2 years. The population of the district is still growing quickly, therefore there are likely to be changes in provision which will impact on priorities.

The review will also consider changes in funding circumstances and legislation for Planning, Open Space and Play.

The Action Plan will be reviewed at the end of 2013-14 for the impact and effectiveness of the Actions completed.

## **10.0 ECDC Play Action Plan 2013-14**

### **10.1 Action Plan Aims**

- Raise awareness amongst Parish Councils and ECDC of play deficits now and in the future and to encourage parish councils to target resources according to need
- Work with communities towards achieving access for all and fit for purpose provision throughout the district
- Raise the profile of play and open space throughout the district and within the District Council

### **10.2 Overview of Actions**

The Plan sets out to share the findings of the 2012 Audit with communities and inform them how to best utilise the information when developing play spaces in the future.

The Plan then builds upon the findings of the 2012 Audit by aiming to identify provision requirements for the future using future population figures. The Plan considers that current local provision standards may need to be reviewed. A Summary of Play report will be produced and made available for each parish.

The Council aims to assist communities in achieving access for all and inclusive play by carrying out an Accessibility Audit of Play Space. This audit will contribute to the 2012 Audit and can be used as a key tool in developing and upgrading play space.

The Plan will raise the profile of play, taking into consideration the role of play in tackling health issues and anti-social behaviour. A number of communication methods will be used to achieve this.

## 10.3 Play Action Plan 2013-14

Raise awareness amongst Parish Councils and ECDC of play deficits now and in the future and to encourage parish councils to target resources according to need						
Ref 1.0	Action	Time Scale	Description of Task	Target Dates	Resources	Monitoring & Success Indicator
1.1	<p>Advise parishes of the 2012 Play Space Audit findings to enable them to address provision deficits and offer support to communities with the highest provision deficits to develop play provision in the areas with the most need, these include:</p> <p><u>Open space provision</u> Littleport, Ely and Sutton</p> <p><u>Youth provision</u> Soham, Ely and Littleport</p> <p><u>Junior provision</u> Soham, Littleport, Burwell, Sutton and Ely</p> <p><u>Toddler provision</u></p>	May 2013	<p>Produce Summary of Play reports for each parish</p> <p>Produce map to illustrate how provision is distributed geographically</p> <p>Assist priority areas in addressing deficits</p> <p>Gather information for parishes with no/incomplete responses in order to produce a Summary of Play report</p>	April - May 2013	<p>Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)</p> <p>IT dept. - (GIS Mapping)</p>	Reports complete and circulated

	Soham, Isleham and Cheveley					
1.2	Identify sources of external funding and work with parishes to access S106 to enhance their play provision	May 2013	Produce a list of external funding streams for communities to access for enhancing play provision  Advise parishes that have provision deficits that remaining S106 monies could be used to address shortfalls  Include as part of the Summary of Play reports	April - May 2013	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)  S106 database	List of funding sources produced and circulated Parish Councils aware of remaining S106 funds and how to use funds to address play and informal space needs
1.3	Promote the play services of Cambridgeshire ACRE to play providers	May 2013	Promote ACRE's play services on ECDC website  Promote as part of Summary of Play report	April - May 2013	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Communities aware of the play services of Cambs ACRE
1.4	Promote Fields in Trust's protection of playing space services	May 2013	Promote Fields in Trust services on ECDC website  Promote as part of Summary of Play report	April - May 2013	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Communities aware of the play services of Fields in Trust
1.5	Work alongside ECDC's Planning department to input the findings of the 2012-13 Play Audit	May 2013	Share Audit findings with ECDC's Planning dept and explore opportunities to include Best Practice Guidance on play development into ECDC'S	April - May 2013  April 2013	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services) ECDC Planning	Planning department received Summary of Play reports for each

			Supplementary Planning Document  Community Services department to be added to Consultee Register of Planning Applications  Community Services to engage in the 'pre-application' process	April 2013	dept.	parish area  Community Services to advise on applications relating to children's play
1.7	Explore any opportunities for outreach play provision across the district, especially in rural areas linking with Sport, Anti Social Behaviour and Health initiatives	March 2014	Explore opportunities to obtain external funding to deliver outreach play in rural areas	ongoing	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)  ECDC Sport & Health Development Officer  ECDC Community Safety Officer	Opportunities identified of how outreach play can be delivered using initiatives from Sport, Health and ASB
1.8	Work with Community Development Team in the Audit of Community Infrastructure to identify priorities for future	March 2014	Integrate the key outcomes of the Play Audit into the Community Facilities Audit that will contribute to future priority infrastructure projects and grant support.	March 2014	Community Development & Engagement Officer (ECDC Community	Play outcomes integrated into Community Facilities Audit

	investment.				services) Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)  Partnerships Officer (ECDC Community Services)	
1.9	Explore opportunities to work collaboratively with Cambs County Council on developing a standard for play development in new communities	March 2014	ECDC Planning Officers to consider reviewing the local planning standards.	March 2014	County Play Strategy Project Manager (Cambridgeshire County Council)  ECDC Planning department	New countywide play provision standard in place

<b>Work with communities towards achieving access for all and fit for purpose provision throughout the district</b>						
<b>Ref 2.0</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Description of Task</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Monitoring &amp; Success Indicator</b>
2.1	Carry out required inspections on Council owned play areas and to carry out necessary maintenance work	ongoing	Health and Safety and maintenance checks carried out when required	weekly, ongoing	ECDC Facilities dept	All ECDC owned play equipment inspected and maintained accordingly
2.2	Subject to resources, conduct an accessibility audit of all play areas in East Cambs and identify where accessible provision could be located for maximum benefit	March 2014	Identify resource Work carried out externally	March 2013 June 2013	Project Officer ( ECDC Community Services )  Funds  External organisation	Accessibility audit conducted of all play spaces
2.3	Ensure that the needs of disabled people are taken into account when implementing improvements to ECDC managed play spaces	April 2013  TBC (dependent on Accessibility Audit)	Advise Parks & Open Spaces team of Best Practice Guidance  Use recommendations following Accessibility Audit of Play Spaces	March 2013  TBC (dependent on Accessibility Audit)	ECDC Facilities dept  Project Officer ( ECDC Community Services )	

			Include best practice guidance in relation to accessibility in SPD	March 2014		
2.4	Promotion of facilities that are fully accessible	TBC (dependent on Accessibility Audit)	Promote accessible play spaces identified in Accessibility Audit  Promote services on ECDC website  Promote facilities to local disability groups and schools twice yearly	TBC (dependent on Accessibility Audit)	Project Officer ( ECDC Community Services )	Accessible facilities promoted
2.5	Undertake youth consultation with a view to identifying any future needs for play provision as part of the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) annual Strategic Assessment for 2013-14.	Summer 2013	The CSP normally conducts comprehensive public consultation every two years to inform its statutory requirement to produce a Strategic assessment of Crime and Disorder in the district. Alternate years have seen an approach whereby sectors of the community are consulted	Consultation over the summer of 2013 with results to feed into a September 2013 final Strategic Assessment	Community Safety Officer, ECDC  Senior Data Analyst, Cambridgeshire County Council.	Youth engagement data from Cambridgeshire County Council locality team forums and surveys; Constabulary research data

			to identify particular concerns around crime and anti social behaviour. Previous years have seen results of youth engagement seminars built into the assessment in order to inform the CSP's work and to identify any links between lack of youth provision and perceived or actual ASB hotspots.	document		from Community Cohesion team; CSP commissioned survey at youth forums and via street based youth work contract.
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<b>Raise the profile of play and open space within the District Council and throughout the district</b>						
<b>Ref 3.0</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Time Scale</b>	<b>Description of Task</b>	<b>Target Dates</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Monitoring &amp; Success Indicator</b>
3.1	Ensure that the recommendations of the Play Audit are communicated to all relevant service areas and priorities of the Action Plan are delivered	March 2013	Promote the Play Policy, 2012 Audit and Action Plan to all ECDC services	March 2013	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Other policies and plans evidence that they have considered impacts on children's play
3.2	Promotion of ECDC's commitment to Play to the public via the press and other media tools	March 2013	Press releases promoting work of ECDC in addressing play deficits	March 2013	ECDC Press Officer  Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Press release in local newspaper
3.3	Use online tools to promote play in East Cambridgeshire	November 2013	Fields in Trust Play Area Map Guide CCC website 'Children and Young People's Services'  ECDC website	November 2013	ECDC Press Officer  Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Websites up to date

					ECDC webteam	
3.4	Share Audit findings with other relevant partners	November 2013	Identify relevant partners and appropriate communication methods	November 2013	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	All partners have received Audit findings
3.5	Update ECDC webpages on Play	November 2013	Promote facilities available to communities	November 2013	ECDC webteam Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Online guide available for residents and communities
3.6	Act as ECDC's main point of contact on the findings of the 2012-13 Audit	ongoing	Provide information to partners on Play	ongoing	Project Officer (ECDC Community Services)	Provide information to other organisations on Play