

# **Herefordshire Play Facilities Study**

**On Behalf of Herefordshire Council  
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# Herefordshire Play Facilities Study

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# Herefordshire Play Facilities Study

## Section 1: Introduction and Methodology

### 1.1 Purpose, Aims and Objectives

**1.1.1** Purpose: The purpose of this study is to provide guidance and a framework for the development, delivery and continued sustainability of providing new and improved play facilities for children and young people in Herefordshire to meet the needs of the local communities.

**1.1.2** This study should not be seen as static: it should be used to inform future work at the Council and partner organisations and to maintain a consistency in the face of the complexity of overlapping initiatives. It provides the framework for the aspirations of a wide range of partners and the communities of Herefordshire. It is aimed at planners, developers and the wider community and will provide the detailed evidence to support robust decision making about the prioritisation of future facilities and investment. This is particularly important in a constantly changing environment and of particular relevance to development nationally of the Big Society and the Localism Bill, which in a major shift aims to put the community at the heart of taking action in their local area, for example, by giving them a greater say over local planning.

**1.1.3** It will:

- Provide a robust evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF);
- Provide reasoned justification for the provision of new play areas and requirements for new housing developments;
- Inform relevant planning applications and provide reasoned justification for securing section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from new housing developments;
- Provide reasoned justification for investing and improving existing play provision;
- Develop priorities to ensure that all parts of the county are catered for including all age groups;
- Support and underpin applications for grant funding;
- Enable the Council and partner organisations to challenge existing practices for play facilities, which are led by the fear of litigation and develop new standards which will promote the benefits of play over risk.

**1.1.4** Aims: The study aims to provide direction in providing good quality accessible play facilities to meet the current and future needs of the population,

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particularly taking into consideration the new homes and projected population increase up to 2031. Therefore, it will aim to:

- Improve quality: of existing play facilities by ensuring play areas offer good play value and are of “bespoke” design.
- Improve quantity: of play provision across the county to meet the needs of all ages especially teenagers.
- Improve access: this includes physical access via safer routes to play space, access for all to include minority and disabled children and having play provision in “the right place”.

**1.1.5 Objectives:** The main objective of this study is to develop a planned approach to provision to enable the following:

- Population: No residents unable to access a play facility especially in the main areas of population by developing a network and hierarchy of play areas.
- Community: Meeting needs arising from both existing communities and from proposals for new residential developments.

## 1.2 Scope and Methodology

**1.2.1 Scope:** The Study is countywide and has been undertaken and managed by Herefordshire Council’s Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development Services.

**1.2.2** It includes all publically accessible play areas owned and maintained by a variety of providers, on stand alone and multi use sites and for all age groups: toddlers, juniors and teenagers. These are categorised as 0 -8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds provision.

**1.2.3** It provides a refresh and more detail to the work undertaken in 2006 to produce the “Open Space Assessment and Audit for PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation” building on previous consultation and findings in respect of provision for children and young people. It follows the 8 areas defined in the PPG17 report: Hereford City North, Hereford City South, Bromyard, Ledbury, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Kington, Golden Valley and Central Herefordshire.

**1.2.4** The assessment has looked at facilities in all 8 areas, associated towns, wards and parishes. The 8 areas showing the 0 – 16 year old populations are:

AREA	WARD	PARISH	POPULATION 0 – 16 year olds 2001 Census
Bromyard Area	Bringsty	Bredenbury	61
		Brockhampton	22

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		Edwyn Ralph Linton Norton Tedstone Delamere Tedstone Wafer Thornbury & Collington Upper Sapey & Wolferflow Wacton Whitbourne CP	48 64 40 25 27 28 111 13 188
	<b>Bromyard</b>	Avenbury Bromyard & Winslow Felton Little Cowarne Pencombe with Grendon Warren Stoke Lacy Ullingswick	56 809 85 21 65 59 41
	<b>Frome</b>	Actoon Beauchamp/Evesbatch Ashperton Ayleton Bishop's Frome Castle Frome & Canon Frome Little Marcle Much Cowarne Munsley and Pixley Putley Stanford Bishop Stretton Grandison/Eggleton Yarkhill	50 36 58 171 49 32 86 25 61 24 27 62
<b>Central Herefordshire</b>	<b>Backbury</b>	Dormington /Stoke Edith Fownhope Hampton Bishop Mordiford Tarrington Weston Beggard	68 181 82 111 93 39
	<b>Burghill, Holmer &amp; Lyde</b>	Burghill Holmer & Shelwick Pipe & Lyde	346 317 61
	<b>Credenhill</b>	Breinton Credenhill Kenchester /Stretton Sugwas	109 519 64
	<b>Hagley</b>	Bartestree Lugwardine Preston Wynne Westhide /Withington	88 390 36 309
	<b>Hampton Court</b>	Bodenham Docklow/Hampton Wafre/Grendon Bishop Ford & Stoke Prior & Newton Hampton Charles/Hatfield/Newhampton Hope Under Dinmore Humber	141 33 61 37 87 71 44

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		Puddlestone	
	<b>Sutton Walls</b>	Marden	225
		Moreton-on-Lugg	279
		Sutton	171
	<b>Wormsley Ridge</b>	Bishopstone	27
		Bridge Sollers /Byford/ Mansell Gamage	46
		Brinsop & Wormsley	25
		Canon Pyon	15
		Kings Pyon	52
		Mansell Lacy	25
		Wellington	265
		Yazor	33
<b>Golden Valley</b>	<b>Golden Valley North</b>	Blakemere/Tyberton	18
		Bredwardine	30
		Clifford	107
		Cusop	72
		Dorstone	58
		Moccas	25
		Peterchurch	218
		Preston-on-Wye	42
	<b>Golden Valley South</b>	AbbeyDore /Bacton	94
		Craswall	32
		Dulas /LLancillo / Rowstone	27
		Ewyas Harold	51
		Llanveynoe	28
		Longtown /Walterstone	32
		Michaelchurch Escley	28
		Newton	11
		St. Margarets	33
		Turnastone/Vowchurch	41
	<b>Stoney Street</b>	Clehonger	274
		Eaton Bishop	60
		Madley	279
	<b>Valletts</b>	Allensmore	120
		Kenderchurch /Treville / Wormbridge	55
		Kentchurch	67
		Kilpeck	35
		Kingstone /Thrupton	388
		Much Dewchurch	111
		St Devereux	20
<b>Hereford - North City</b>	<b>Aylestone Central St. Nicholas Three Elms Tupsley</b>	Hereford City	Total 10,765
		Hereford City	
<b>Hereford-South City</b>	<b>Belmont St. Martins &amp; Hinton</b>	Belmont Rural	751
		Hereford City	355
		Lower Bullingham / Hollington	
<b>Ledbury Area</b>	<b>Hope End</b>	Bosbury /Coddington	702
		Colwall	509

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		Cradley Mathon Wellington Heath	313 47 92
	<b>Ledbury</b>	Donnington / Eastnor Ledbury	71 1714
	<b>Bircher</b>	Croft & Yarpole Kingsland Lucton Orleton Richards Castle	82 160 67 169 54
	<b>Leominster North</b>	Leominster	Total 2,282
	<b>Leominster South</b>	Leominster	
	<b>Upton</b>	Brimfield Eye, Moreton & Ashton Eyton Kimbolton Leysters Little Hereford Luston Middleton-on-the-Hill	113 43 27 90 36 60 83 37
<b>Kington Area</b>	<b>Castle</b>	Almeley Brilley Eardisley Huntington Kinnersley /Sarnesfield Letton Norton Canon Staunton-On-Wye Willersley & Winforton Whitney on wye	77 30 119 24 41 26 68 83 49 14
	<b>Golden Cross with Weobley</b>	Birley with Upper Hill Dilwyn Eardisland Monkland & Stretford Weobley	63 164 88 33 273
	<b>Kington Town</b>	Kington Kington Rural /Lower Harpton	521 119
	<b>Mortimer</b>	Aymestrey Brampton Bryan / Willey Buckton & Coxall /Walford/Letton/Newton Burrington /Downton Byton /Combe /Kinsham Elton/Leinthall/Starkes/Pipe Aston Leintwardine Lingen Stapleton Wigmore	58 60 55 23 56 37 218 30 23 151
	<b>Pembridge</b>	Knill /Rodd Nash/Little Brampton /Titley	49

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	<b>&amp; Lyonshall with Titley</b>	Lyonshall Pembroke Shobdon Staunton on Arrow	107 168 157 36
<b>Ross on Wye Area</b>	<b>Hollington</b>	Ballingham /Bolstone Callow /Grafton Dewsall /Haywood Dinedor Holme Lacy Little Dewchurch	34 35 22 52 82 68
	<b>Kerne Bridge</b>	Ganarew /Whitchurch Goodrich /Welsh Bicknor Walford	179 127 261
	<b>Llangarron</b>	Bridstow Llangarron Marstow Peterstow Sellack Welsh Newton /Llanrothal	159 250 70 57 52 75
	<b>Old Gore</b>	Brampton Abbots Brockhampton Foy How Caple Kings Caple Much Marcle Upton Bishop Woolhope Yatton /Sollers Hope	78 42 20 24 72 128 106 94 38
	<b>Penyard</b>	Aston Ingham Hope Mansell Lea Linton Weston Under Penyard	75 41 158 169 150
	<b>Pontrilas</b>	Garway Hentland Little Birch /Aconbury Llanwarne /Llandinabo Much Birch Orcop St. Weonards Tretire with Michaelchurch /Harewood/Pencoyd	103 88 81 77 10 92 91 50
	<b>Ross-on-Wye East</b>	Ross Rural Ross-on-Wye	Total 171
	<b>Ross-on-Wye West</b>	Ross-on-Wye CP	1802

**1.2.5** Map 1a in Appendix 1 shows location of all sites within these areas.

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**1.2.6** Methodology: This has been undertaken in accordance with methodology established by PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, together with Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG17. The methodology includes 5 steps:

## ***Step One - Identifying Local Needs***

**1.2.7** Standards: need to be set that reflect local need, therefore it is important to obtain a statistical evidence base of local needs as well as carrying out consultations.

**1.2.8** As such the study includes a desk research study and consultation has been undertaken to include accessibility, quantitative and qualitative research methods.

**1.2.9** Desk research includes undertaking:

- Analysis into where the majority of children reside to help to understand where provision is most required and where there may be potential gaps;
- Analysis of “access thresholds” to facilities for different age groups (0 – 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds) using National Playing Field Association (NPFA) time and distance standards.
- A review of all relevant policy and strategy documents at a local and national level.

The key findings of this desk research are set out later in the report.

**1.2.10** The consultation process has involved engagement with play facility providers and key stakeholders as listed below.

- Parish and Town Councils;
- Recreational Trusts;
- Primary Care Trust;
- Other Local Authority Departments including Planning, Children’s Services, Parks and Countryside, Highways and Transportation, Education and Property Services and Community Safety;
- Housing Associations.

**1.2.8** Further consultation will be carried out on individual schemes, particularly at the design and development stages of delivering a new or improving an existing play facility as it is an important part of the process to involve the views of the community, families and those that work with them and their children.

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## ***Step Two – Auditing Local Provision***

**1.2.9** Geographical analysis: In recognising the different needs and access issues of the urban and rural areas an analysis and audit of existing play provision has been undertaken based on individual areas, including Hereford City, the Market Towns and the rural areas. Herefordshire Council's GIS mapping has been used to compile the schedule of play facilities in each area.

**1.2.10** Audit of Provision: This includes for each area:

- A comprehensive audit and mapping of existing play facilities;
  - Condition and type of facility;
  - Potential to improve and develop them and
  - Whether they are appropriate for toddlers, juniors or teenagers;
- Full details are set out in the Action Plans in Appendix 5.

## ***Step Three – Setting and Applying Local Standards***

**1.2.11** PPG17 advocates that planning policies for open space, sport and recreation facilities should be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need. For play facilities these standards include quantity, quality and accessibility currently based on National Playing Field Association (NPFA) standards.

**1.2.12** Quantity - The map audit provides details of the quantity of provision in each area. Taking each area using the maps, it shows where:

- There may be deficiencies in provision for 0 – 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds.
- Where most provision is needed for 0 – 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds based on where they live.
- And enables us to judge whether or not new residential development would require on or off site provision.

**1.2.13** Quality - A qualitative assessment has been undertaken for each play facility to provide:

- An overall view of the existing quality based on play value and RosPA criteria
- It provides good practice criteria on which to base new standards for new facilities and as an aspiration for existing facilities with a poor rating to achieve.

**1.2.14** Accessibility - accessibility standards can be set in terms of distance thresholds (time and distance) for each age group 0 – 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds based on walking and cycling as recommended by PPG17 Companion Guide and the National Playing Field Association (NPFA). This assessment helps identify:

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- Areas of child populations which lie outside the catchment of each type of play facility.
- Those areas lacking ready access to a type of play facility.
- Local access thresholds which are directly reflective of local need.

## ***Step Four – Study and Action Plans***

**1.2.15** The Study has been developed to fit with the development of the Core Strategy and timescales.

**1.2.16** The Action and Delivery Plans cover the individual areas including Hereford City (north and south), the Market Towns and the Rural hinterlands and are to be viewed as separate documents as they need to be flexible, practical and realistic. They will identify what may be achievable and who would be responsible for delivery and as such will:

- Cover a shorter period of time than the study
- Be kept up to date, adjusted and reviewed while the broad direction of the study is maintained
- Prioritise actions, assess resource requirements and monitor delivery.

## ***Step Five –Monitoring and Evaluation***

**1.2.17** Appropriate systems for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and success of the study and action plans will ensure future resources are directed at the most needy areas.

## **Section 2: Strategic Context**

### **2.1. Document Review**

**2.1.1** The study is based upon a sound understanding of local and national strategic priorities in relation to children and young people. Particular influences are ensuring that they stay healthy and enabling them to influence decisions in the provision of safe, accessible, well designed play facilities which are supported by local communities.

**2.1.2** Previous Government responded to the poor state of child welfare in the UK through a number of policy drivers which included the provision of better play opportunities for children to be embed at a local policy level. Although the study has been written at a time of flux with not only a new political direction at national level but a planning system which is under reform, the recognition that opportunities for play and recreation are important to the health and well being of local communities is still as important as ever. The effective and appropriate provision of play and recreational facilities can generate significant wider benefits which can contribute to the achievement

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of a number of national and local policies, particularly in improving health, well being and safety.

**2.1.3** For Herefordshire in particular, achieving better partnership working with the different agencies and services involved with children is beginning to ensure positive outcomes and recognition that the provision of good play opportunities is an important, integral aspect of every child's life.

**2.1.4** The following sections provide a summary of these policy documents.

## ***National/Regional***

**2.1.5** Department of Education (DoE): "Every Child Matters".

This is a set of reforms supported by the Children's Act 2004. It aims for every child whatever their background or circumstances to have the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

This means every local authority area, through Children's Trust Partnerships, needs to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and acting on it. They will need to involve children and young people in this process.

**2.1.6** Department of Education (DoE): "Children and Young People – Participation" .

The Government is committed to Children and Young People's rights and participation. They believe that they should be given opportunities to express their opinion in matters that affect their lives. Effective participation and involving them in planning and delivery of services is not only likely to improve them but will help them make a positive contribution to their communities and to develop skills and confidence and self esteem to make them engaged and responsible citizens in the future.

**2.1.7** Links: The development of better opportunities to improve existing and develop new play facilities which involve the engagement of children and young people in their design locally, will help support the DoE's aims of children and young people being healthy, safe, enjoying, and achieving and overall will help make a positive contribution to the local community.

**2.1.8** Play England "Play Strategy 2008" and "Embedding the Play Strategy". A new Government took office in May 2010. A ministerial task force on Childhood and Family Policy, chaired by the Prime Minister, has been set up to consider new solutions to providing spaces where children can play, where they can feel completely free, where they can safely push at the

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boundaries, learning and experimenting. Places where different generations can meet, binding the community together. (Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, June 2010).

- 2.1.9** Whilst this work progresses, the “Play Strategy” produced by the previous Government (DCSF) in 2008, which although may not reflect current Government thinking, in the absence of a current strategy, is still influential in providing a good foundation and sound principals. For example, as well as focusing on the specific places where children play, like parks and green spaces, it also considers how communities and neighbourhoods can become more child friendly overall.
- In 2010 the last Government also published non-statutory guidance called “Embedding the Play Strategy”, to assist local authorities and their partners in the planning needed to improve local play offers. The publication was designed to help local decision makers put children’s play at the heart of their communities. It shows how planning and investing in local play space and considering children’s needs in the wider environment, can benefit children, families and the whole community.
  - Links: The principals set by the last Government and Play England around engaging with communities, and developing play space to meet local needs will still be influential drivers for Herefordshire’s Play Facilities Study to deliver play facilities. They are important in taking this study forward particularly the following objectives:
    - **Create child friendly communities:**
      - Local neighbourhoods should feel like safe, interesting places to play and should be accessible for all children and young people, including disabled children, and children from minority groups in the community. Play facilities therefore, should be well used places where families can share leisure time; they should be attractive and welcoming to children and young people; and they should be well maintained and in good condition.
    - **Develop More Places to play:**
      - Engaging with communities and involving children in decisions will enable children and young people to have a clear stake in their public space and to help ensure that their play facility is accepted by neighbours. Taking an active role in developing local play spaces will ensure that they are developed to meet their needs.
    - **Embed play in local priorities:**
      - A shared understanding across local partners and local communities of the value of play, what good play opportunities look like and where they are needed will help to ensure that children’s needs are fully reflected in planning which will support the delivery of residential development and new housing growth areas that meet children’s needs and interests.
    - **Support play throughout childhood:**

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- A range of facilities need to be provided and improved to meet the needs of children of all ages
- **Promote playing safely:**
  - Provision of safe, accessible and stimulating places to play. Safety is a big issue that stops children from playing, both on the routes to play areas and at play areas: Working with planners, developers and transport officers will help to create neighbourhoods which meet the needs of children and families.
- **Drive local performance:**
  - Since April 2009 a new national play indicator has been introduced: P1 199 which asks children how satisfied they are with local parks and play areas.
- National Planning Policy (Department of Communities and Local Government): National Planning Policy Framework –
  - Requiring Good Design: the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should positively make places better for people. Development should create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses including incorporation of green spaces.
  - Promoting Healthy Communities: access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sports and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning Policies should be based upon robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs of open space sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space sports and recreation facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.
- National Planning Policy (Department of Communities and Local Government): Assessing Needs and Opportunities: Companion Guide to PPG17 2001

This guide reflects the Governments policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation.
- **2.1.15 Links:** This study provides a detailed needs assessment in respect of quantity, quality and accessibility for the provision of facilities for children and young people.
- **2.1.16 The Localism Bill (Department of Communities and Local Government) June 2011:** This will have considerable influence “on the way we do things”. It will put in place:

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- “new freedoms and flexibilities for local government”. The Bill contains proposals to make the planning system clearer, more democratic and more effective. The abolishment of regional planning strategies will give local authorities greater freedom in responding to what local people want and allowing them to set the strategic vision for the area.
- “new rights and powers for communities and individuals”. The Bill will make it easier for people to take over the amenities they love and keep them as part of local life.
- “reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective”. Communities will be at the forefront of decision making locally in their areas in a more democratic less bureaucratic way with the introduction of Neighbourhood Development Plans. These will allow communities to come together through a local parish council or neighbourhood forum and say where they think new houses, business and shops etc should go and what they should look like in line with more simplified national planning policy.

**2.1.17** Links: The Study will provide both evidence and details of future play provision requirements arising from new housing development for the Core Strategy and Area Action Plans. Consultation with communities via Parish and Town Councils and will make sure that any Neighbourhood Development Plans are taken account of.

## **Local**

### **2.1.18** Demographics/facts and figures:

- The county has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest population density in England (0.9 persons per hectare). A particular challenge for service delivery is how scattered the population is. A quarter of the population live in areas defined as “very sparse” and over half (54%) live in areas defined as “rural”. About one third of the population live in Hereford City, a little more than a fifth in the market towns.
- As the county’s age structure continues to age, of the local population in Herefordshire, the number of under 16s is 17.7% of the population and has decreased since 2001 by 7%. This trend is expected to fall over the next few years stabilising at around 29,000 in 2016 (15% of the population). This change in the demographic make up in the county brings with it specific challenges in terms of ensuring equality of opportunity for all our young people.
- The proportion of children living in income deprived households in the most deprived areas of Herefordshire has increased relative to the county as a whole. These are in Leominster and Newton Farm, Hereford. This impacts in many ways on the lives of children and young people and brings significant challenges in terms of making sure they lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

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- In Herefordshire 19% of children from the most deprived 18 Super Output Areas are obese compared with 12% in areas outside this group. Childhood obesity is of particular concern with 23% of reception class and 31% of year 6 children either overweight or obese.
- 50% of residents consider road safety and speeding traffic a problem. This is a problem for children and young people in accessing play facilities safely. (*Herefordshire Council Research*)

## **2.1.19** Herefordshire Partnership Sustainable Community strategy –2010 - 2011:

The Herefordshire Partnership acknowledge that this strategy needs to be reviewed but in light of recent changes nationally and locally to take account of the Localism Bill and other influences on how services are delivered, the review is now planned for 2012. The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the aspirations for the county by 2020 and how we may achieve them through the following vision and aims:

- **Vision:** Herefordshire will be a place where people, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and well being for all.
- **Aims:** It has a number of aims which are relevant to the Play Facilities Study. These are:
  - **Children and Young People:** The aim is to improve the lives of children and their families, and enable children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and judgement they need to lead a fulfilling life. Issues and challenges include promoting more physical activity to help tackle health and obesity issues in children and young people.
  - **Safer and Stronger Communities:** The aim is to make Herefordshire an even safer place to live, work and visit. Issues and challenges include increasing road safety and reducing anti social behaviour.
  - **Healthier Communities:** The aim is to work with people and their communities to enable them to lead healthy and fulfilled lives. Issues and challenges include supporting people to maintain a healthy weight (including children and young people).

**2.1.20** Links: The development of play facilities can contribute towards helping to keep children and young people active and healthy particularly in areas of deprivation where obesity is a problem and help to reduce anti social problems by encouraging children and young people to play an active part in their design and development. By working with planning and highways we can ensure that they are located in the right places and access to them is safe which will help to keep children safe from road traffic accidents.

## **2.1.21** The Children and Young People’s Plan “Yes we Can” : Children and Young People Partnership Forum: 2011 -2014

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It contains the key priority areas that the partnership will work to. This is a partnership of different organisations and a consultative group of young people aged 11 – 16 to make things better for children, young people and their parents and carers. The vision for Herefordshire is for:

- Children and young people to grow up healthy, happy and safe, with supportive families and carers, and to make sure they have the best education and opportunities”

The aims are to prioritise the top issues or problems that are identified in Herefordshire and to concentrate on improving them over the next 3 years and these priorities include:

- Promoting health and well being: One of the aims to achieve this includes reducing childhood obesity in reception year pupils and year 6 pupils and the plan sets out % reduction targets. It recognises that one of the ways to help to do this will be to provide opportunities for active play, sport and exercise.

**2.1.22** Links: Prioritising the development of play facilities in areas which are both deficient in provision and are among the most deprived areas in the county (which have high levels of childhood obesity) will encourage opportunities for a more active lifestyle to help meet the targets set out in the “Yes we Can” study.

**2.1.23** The Council’s Corporate Plan 2011- 2014 sets out the shared vision for Herefordshire’s Public Services. Working together to deliver efficient , excellent services and improve outcomes for the people of Herefordshire, future policies need to ensure that they:

- Improve the **localities** where we live, work and play;
- Are **evidence** based;
- Improve **well-being** in Herefordshire.

Priorities to meet the vision which have particular relevance to this study include:

- Raising standards for children and young people. Long term outcomes include: a reduction in health inequalities among children and young people.
- Promote self reliant local communities. Long term outcomes include: enhanced local democracy and community engagement; ways of working that reflect the needs and priorities of people and place; a balanced housing market to meet resident’s needs.
- Create a resilient Herefordshire. Long term outcomes include: The protection of peoples health and wellbeing; increased equality of opportunity.
- Commission the right services. Long term outcomes include: High quality assessments of need.

**2.1.24** Rising to the Challenge: The shared vision for Herefordshire’s Public Services will be delivered through the implementation of the “Rising to the Challenge” change programme which will transform the way in which Herefordshire

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Public Services will work. It has five work streams all of which include projects and programmes that will help to contribute to delivering the organisation's strategic objectives:

- Customer Focus
- Communities First
- Streamlining the Business
- Better Services
- People and Performance

**2.1.25** One of the five work streams is “the communities first”, which aims to bring together key strands to deliver joined up working with communities and service providers at a local level. These strands are:

- Better Engagement.
- Localised Services.
- Empowered Communities.

**2.1.26** Links: This assessment will provide robust evidence, undertake consultation with Parish Councils etc and ensure that priorities for future investment will meet the needs of local communities. It will help to put local people and children at the heart of decision making and enable them to make choices about what they want. In doing so it will help promote self reliant communities, provide the right facilities and improve children's health and well being.

**2.1.27** Local Development Framework: Planning for the Future of the County (2011 – 2031).

Herefordshire has an aging population and an overarching necessity of the Local Development Framework is to develop the right environment to reverse this trend to support young people to live, work and play within the County and at the same time recognising the need for growth to be sustainable.

**2.1.28** The Core Strategy sets out these requirements. This includes locations of new housing and economic growth, the evidence for which has been produced in the Local Housing Requirement Study (June 2011). This identifies that there is a need to accommodate around 16,500 new homes over the next 20 years (the plan period runs from 2011 – 2031) for the economy to grow at a reasonable rate. This is an average of 825 new homes per annum across the county. Broken down this includes:

- A focus for new development in Hereford City with around 6,500 new homes proposed over the next 20 years which is an average of 325 per annum.

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- The market towns will continue to provide a focus for local homes and jobs, improving these places to live, work and enjoy with around 4,700 new homes in total around 235 per annum and
- In recognising the Government's new neighbourhood planning measures around 5,300 new homes in rural settlements are proposed, which is around 265 per annum. This growth in rural areas will help to tackle issues of affordable housing and to support local services.

**2.1.29** The Infrastructure Delivery Plan is now a requirement as part of the Local Development Framework, to demonstrate the sustainability of new development and in particular that housing sites are both affordable and deliverable. More detailed evidence has been produced to show that the infrastructure requirements arising from the strategic housing sites are viable. This includes the "green infrastructure" requirements from new development and potential section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

**2.1.30** Neighbourhood and Area Plans. With the introduction of neighbourhood development plans through the Localism Act, communities will be positively encouraged to produce their own development plans for their area taking on board the strategic objectives of the Local Plan - Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has been prepared to provide a strategic base for neighbourhood development plans, along with other development plan documents, to allocate sites for employment, housing and other uses as well as providing more locally detailed policies. Neighbourhood development plans will form part of the statutory development plan (but not the Local Plan) and be referred to within the council's Local Development Scheme.

**2.1.31** Links: The Play Facilities Study and Action Plans will be used to both inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and guide the Neighbourhood Plans in respect of future play facility requirements, which is particularly important for young families. Decisions will not only take account of the evidence produced by this study but will also ensure that relevant recommendations in other strategic plans and documents are considered. This includes the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Biodiversity Action Plan (Managed Green-space Policy). This will ensure a network of open spaces is developed which takes account of both existing and new public open space and recreational areas and links to other green infrastructure such as cycle ways, green corridors etc. It will also ensure that sites which are sensitive to nature are respected and biodiversity is taken into account when developing new sites, for example, green spaces arising from new housing sites can provide both play and wildlife opportunities.

## Section 3: Key Findings and Recommendations

### 3.1 Supply: Quantitative Assessment.

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**3.1.1** Quantity standards should consider having the “right type of play opportunities” that are both in the right location and accessible within reasonable distance thresholds. Therefore, standards of provision should take account of a number of factors, including, social factors, and provision for different age groups, for example, provision for 0 – 8 year olds will differ for that of 9 – 16 year olds.

**3.1.2 Current Provision:** There are currently **145 sites** that have equipped provision for children and young people across the county (Dec 2011). These are shown in Appendix 1. Of these sites:

- **26.5 (18%)** are owned by Housing Associations
- **51 (35%)** are owned by Parish or Town Councils.
- **63.5 (44%)** are owned by Herefordshire Council.
- **4 (3%)** are owned by Voluntary Groups.

Splitting them between urban and rural areas the break down is as follows:

- **70 (48%)** are in the Rural Parishes
  - **12 (17%)** are owned by Housing Associations.
  - **46 (66%)** are owned by Parish or Town Councils.
  - **8 (11%)** are owned by Herefordshire Council.
  - **4 (6%)** are owned by Voluntary Groups.
- **75 (52%)** are in the Urban areas (Hereford City an the Market Towns)
  - **14.5 (19%)** are owned by Housing Associations.
  - **5 (7%)** are owned by Parish or Town Councils.
  - **55.5 (74%)** are owned by Herefordshire Council.
  - **0 (0%)** are owned by Voluntary Groups.

In detail this breaks down as follows:

Rural Area Total Play Facilities	Housing Association	Parish/Town Council	Herefordshire Council	Voluntary Group
Ledbury Area 8	0	8	0	0
Kington Area 16	3	10	3	0
Ross Area 12	3	9	0	0
Leominster Area 3	0	3	0	0
Bromyard Area 3	0	2	0	1
Golden Valley Area 10	3	5	0	2
Central Area 18	3	9	5	1

Urban Area Total Play Facilities	Housing Association	Parish/Town Council	Herefordshire Council	Voluntary Group
Ledbury 9	0.5	1	7.5	0
Kington 5	2	1	2	0
Ross 12	2	2	8	0
Leominster 13	3	0	10	0

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<b>Bromyard 1</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Hereford City North 19</b>	1	0	18	0
<b>Hereford City South 16</b>	6	0	10	0

Types of play provision across Herefordshire have been assessed based on National Playing Field Association standards of play as to their current suitability for different age groups including any potential to develop them for the age groups 0 – 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds, this also helps to analyse where there are any deficiencies for the different age groups. For the purposes of this study we have included the following categories:

- **Destination/Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP):** Larger areas which provide a range of equipment for toddlers, juniors and teenagers and can provide opportunities for all the family to enjoy. They serve a wider population as older children are able to travel longer distances independently if they can be accessed safely and if appropriate families will use them as “destination parks”.
- **Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP):** Smaller spaces which provide a limited range of play equipment primarily for younger children. They should be within site of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.
- **Local Area for Play (LAP)** For the purposes of this study we have included existing these but in recognising that these offer little in play value, providing little more than one or two items for toddlers and are costly to maintain have identified those which are unsuitable for expansion as a potential “gap” in provision for older children.
- The distribution is as follows:

<b>Rural Area Total Play Facilities</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Local</b>
<b>Ledbury Area 8</b>	4	4
<b>Kington Area 16</b>	3	13
<b>Ross Area 12</b>	2	10
<b>Leominster Area 3</b>	0	3
<b>Bromyard Area 3</b>	0	3
<b>Golden Valley Area 10</b>	4	6
<b>Central Area 18</b>	7	11

<b>Urban Area Total Play Facilities</b>	<b>Neighbourhood</b>	<b>Local</b>
<b>Ledbury 9</b>	5	4
<b>Kington 5</b>	2	3
<b>Ross 12</b>	4	8
<b>Leominster 13</b>	3	10
<b>Bromyard 1</b>	1	0
<b>Hereford City North 19</b>	9	10
<b>Hereford City South 16</b>	5	11

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In addition there a total of **80** primary school sites in the county which provide equipped play facilities. However, as these sites are predominantly provided for the use by the pupils of that particular school and not open to the wider community they have not been included in the assessment.

**3.1.3** Location: . The countywide GIS mapping exercise (Appendix 1 Map 1 a) shows that existing play facilities are predominantly located in the Hereford City and the Market Towns as you would expect with not all rural parishes having access to one. Not all parishes need or are able to sustain a play facility so access to the countryside can be important in providing more natural play opportunities. The Action Plans provide full details of location, type and size of play facilities across the county.

## 3.2 Thresholds and Accessibility

**3.2.1** Acknowledging that these findings alone do not take account of children’s ability to access good quality play facilities safely from their homes, the study also recommended that more detailed work should be carried out specifically aimed at the needs of different age groups which entails developing a “hierarchy” of provision taking into account access and distance thresholds.

**3.2.2** Setting access and distance thresholds for play areas is not easy to achieve as many factors will influence travel times and accessibility. Different demographic profiles will influence where play areas are located and what access thresholds are acceptable. Given the mix of urban, market towns and rural areas across the county, it is not considered possible to apply the same distance threshold standards everywhere and the same approach is not practical given the notable differences in being able to access services between the more sparsely populated rural areas and Hereford City and the towns.

**3.2.3** **Urban Areas: Hereford City and the Market Towns:** Thresholds are based on the size of play area and the age group it is intended for. The distance children can travel to a facility provides an indication of the overall “coverage” of play facilities and where future investment is needed to plug gaps in provision. Older children are able to travel further distances unsupervised to more challenging neighbourhood play facilities, but for younger children access should be provided at a local level closer to homes.

Thresholds are calculated using the existing National Playing Field Association standards (NPFA) accessibility standards for local residents to individual play areas. These are:

- Walking:
  - 0 – 8 year olds should be able to access a Play Area within 5 minutes walk, or a straight line distance of 240m, this can be either a play area designed specifically for younger children

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(Local) or a play area which serves older children as well (Destination/Neighbourhood)

- 9 – 16 year olds should be able to access a Destination/ Neighbourhood” area within 15 minutes walk or a straight line distance of 600m

- Cycling:

- 9 – 16 year olds should be able to access a Destination/ Neighbourhood” area within between 5 and 15 minutes access time.

**3.2.4** Using data provided by Herefordshire Council, on child populations this data is presented in three sets of GIS maps (details below) which show:

- The resident populations of young people and children.
- Access to different types of play areas for different age groups.
- Different modes of access – walking, cycling
- And the overall coverage for each type of play facility.

Note: Child population statistics use the addresses of all known children in Herefordshire (aged 0-16) as at 31st August 2010 (taken from the Early Years and School census data – the data does not include 0 – 2 year olds) under the condition that the addresses cannot be identified in detail in the final mapping in order to protect the identity of the children. Each map shows the total number of children in each area: Hereford and the Market Towns.

## **3.2.5 Urban Areas GIS Maps: Provision and Density Maps (Appendix 2 and 3) Provision**

- Set 1:
  - Maps using “time” NPFA distance thresholds to facilities for 0 - 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds. This approach uses actual walking and cycling routes taken from the local transport databases set within the NPFA time thresholds described above. In showing residential areas that will be either within or out of walking or cycling range from existing facilities, this provides a realistic picture of surpluses and deficiencies and gaps in provision.

### **Population Density**

- Set 2
  - The demographics of a population also need to be taken into account, as there is little point in providing a child’s play facility if there are little or no children present in the local area. These maps show how useful in terms of location a play area is in relation to the children it potentially caters for. In this way it can be shown which play areas serve the highest child populations and areas of child population where there is no or limited access to existing play areas.

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**3.2.6 Rural Areas (Appendix 4):** It is difficult to set thresholds in rural areas based on distance as the very nature of some of the more remote parts of Herefordshire would render this impossible. In accordance with recommendations taken from the Open Space Assessment/Audit 2006, thresholds in rural areas are based on the size of parish and the sustainability of providing a local facility in areas which can often have access to informal play opportunities in the countryside, particularly smaller parishes. School catchment areas are also included as these could provide opportunities for those children who live in a parish with limited or no access to a play facility to access one. Such areas could benefit from either developing a vulnerable play area or the possibility of using a school play facility for community use.

**3.2.7** This information is presented in 2 sets of maps: Rural Parish Population Density and School Catchment Area Maps, using data from Herefordshire Council Research. (Appendix 4).

- Set 1:
  - Shows parishes of different populations: 1000+, 500+ and under 500 and locations of existing play facilities
- Set 2:
  - Shows Primary school catchment areas and existing play facilities

## 3.3 Social Factors

**3.3.1 Social Factors:** Whilst the GIS data indicates where best to locate play facilities based on age groups thresholds and population, it is important to understand that planning for play facilities is not just about “putting them where most children live or have safe access”. There are other social factors to consider which cannot be “mapped” in such a way as they will be individual to a particular area and play facility. For instances, many of our worst facilities are in areas of high deprivation and social housing and resulting issues can often present “unseen” barriers to the use of facilities which can adversely affect the use of a play area or mean that additional facilities/equipment may be required. For example:

- Under use of a facility or extensive vandalism doesn’t necessarily mean it is not needed but inappropriate usage and run down sites can be a reason for local children not wanting to use it.
- It may not be appropriate for the users it is intended for, for example, teenagers.
- Community safety will have an impact on whether a site is suitable for future development, for example, are they overlooked, or are they isolated?
- Local perception to barriers will also have an impact for example, there may be “no go” areas which may present problems for children walking to a site.
- Neighbourhood territories can cause children to feel very threatened when using a facility.

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**3.3.2 Consultation:** with local people, particularly children, is often the only way to find out if these issues are causing problems. If future changes to existing play facilities or the provision of a new play facility involve consultation with local residents and all age groups, it will help to ensure the area will be tailored to meet their particular needs. This is particularly important at the planning and design stages as it will help to ensure local “buy in” thereby reducing the effects of anti social behaviour and vandalism often common in poorly designed play areas and areas of high social deprivation. The Action Plans look at some of these issues in more detail but it is acknowledged that consultation at the design and development stages will give the truest picture.

## **3.4 Developing Local Standards: Quantity**

**3.4.1 Adequacy of current provision:** The GIS mapping indicates that in some places current provision does not meet the accepted threshold standards for different age groups. To ensure that the right mix of play facilities is provided in the future in the right locations to meet the needs of the local community, planning and priorities for investment should:

- Promote sustainable development of facilities in locations appropriate to local need.
- Ensure secure, safe and convenient access by choice of transport based on the accessibility thresholds.
- Respond to local needs when there is a clear articulated consensus of opinion.
- Provide opportunities for the local community to be proactively involved in developing and maintaining local facilities.
- Where appropriate develop the potential for wider use of existing facilities with restricted access e.g. schools.

**3.4.2 Future Standard Provision:** Current planning policy standards of provision are taken from the National Playing Field Associations standards. New robust local standards will be developed based on the findings of this study in respect of need and the audit of existing facilities. These will form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process and will be included in Local Development Framework.

**3.4.3** New standards of provision will take account of demographic differences across the county particularly its rural nature and new standards will reflect these differences accordingly including the presence of other opportunities such as access to less formal play in the open countryside found in some of the county’s smaller parishes.

**3.4.4** Therefore, it is proposed to look at provision for urban areas (Hereford City and the Market Towns) in a different way to the rural parishes based on the following methodology:

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- **Hereford City and the Market Towns:**
  - Develop a hierarchy of provision in each centre based on play provision for 9 – 16 year olds (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play – NEAPs) and 0 – 8 year olds (Local Equipped Areas for play - LEAPs).
  - Reduce the provision of new and where appropriate remove existing sites provided as part of new development for toddlers (Local Area Play – LAPs 0 – 5 year olds).
  - Rationalise and consider other use of play areas which are not perceived as “valuable or used” by the local community for example, LAPs which are old and out of date.
- **Rural Settlements:**
  - Prioritise investment in key settlements (identified in the Local Development Framework) which can sustain formal provision (NEAPs / LEAPs) and which have an identified community need – e.g. Parish Plan.
  - On development sites move away from providing small toddler play grounds (LAPs) unless there is no alternative for off site provision.
  - Support the development of more informal play opportunities in rural areas where access to the countryside is practical and formal play provision is not viable.
  - Identify potential opportunities for school sites which could be developed for community use as well.

## 3.5 Policy Requirements: Development

- 3.5.1** The existing Unitary Development Plan saved policy H19 requires all new housing developments of 10 and above to provide an amount of children’s play space. Evidence suggests that this may not always be necessary or beneficial to the local community, in particular the provision of very small Local Areas for Play (LAPs) for toddlers which are not always practical or useful, being of very limited play value and high maintenance costs. Therefore a more flexible approach to meeting local needs, plugging gaps and improving existing facilities will be taken in the future and where appropriate equivalent off site contributions will be sought to improve existing provision within accepted access thresholds. This will be supported by the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations and evidence from this study. In rural parishes this could include improvements to accessing the countryside for informal recreation opportunities.
- 3.5.2** Policy requirement in the Core Strategy will therefore identify open space, sport and recreation (including play facilities) requirements from all residential dwellings.
- 3.5.3** In order to meet the needs of the community, provision for open space, sports and recreation facilities (including play facilities) all new residential development will need to provide appropriate open space, sports and

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recreation facilities. They will need to take account of a number of principals. These include being in accordance with standards of provision (quantity, quality and accessibility), and providing facilities either on or off site which will result in either an enhancement to an existing facility or provision of a new facility to the benefit of the local community.

**3.5.4** Off-site contributions will be sought on an equally beneficial basis for the local community and will include provision for appropriate maintenance (as defined by the local planning authority) of the open space, sports or recreation facility.

**3.5.5** Unfortunately, not all communities within Herefordshire are sufficiently catered for in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility of open space; so it is essential that new developments within the county meet the needs of new communities as well as protecting and enhancing those existing facilities which are valued by existing communities.

**3.5.6** New local standards of provision have been calculated as follows taking into account of the different requirements of both urban and rural areas, for provision of children’s play space.

**3.5.7 Hereford City and the Market Towns:**

- Urban Areas Outdoor Children’s Playing Space are based on the total ha and population of 0 – 16 year olds in each area, on the basis that facilities can be accessed within acceptable thresholds, as follows:

Area	Hectares for play (taken from GIS data)	0-16 population 2001 census	Existing standard of provision (Ha per 1000 pop)
Hereford City	2.155	11,851	0.3ha
Bromyard	0.358	809	0.4ha
Kington	1.833	640	2.8ha *
Ledbury	1.18	1,714	0.7ha
Leominster	1.087	2,282	0.5ha
Ross-on-Wye	1.095	1,972	0.6ha

*\* Kington’s large amount of play facilities for its population is due to recently developing a play builder site at Crooked Well meadow. Large parts of this site are informal and semi natural POS but which make excellent informal play opportunities and the play equipment is located to make the most of this site to encourage children to explore the less formal parts.*

**3.5.8** The results of the audit undertaken for PPG17 in 2006 indicated that 0.33ha of provision per 1000 population should be considered as a new standard, which was based on existing provision across the whole county. But this was based on no increase in provision and it also recommended that as a result of consultation standards of provision to meet the needs of teenagers should be increased. Most urban areas as indicated above have achieved a higher standard as a result of investment over recent years.

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**3.5.9** Existing and new provision will be developed as follows in Hereford and the Market Towns:

- Neighbourhood Equipped Area Play (NEAP) (0 – 16 year olds): They represent local centres of excellence for use by a wider audience and should be located in main urban areas:
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) (0 – 8 year olds): They represent local play areas provided in local residential areas primarily for local residents to use and where access within accepted thresholds to larger Neighbourhood facilities is limited.

## 3.5.10 Rural Areas

- Rural Areas Outdoor Children’s Playing Space are based on the total ha and population of the rural areas as follows:

Area	Hectares for play (taken from GIS data)	0-16 population 2001 census	Existing standard of provision (Ha per 1000 pop)
All rural areas	5.66	17,053	0.33ha

Whilst this is the same standard as recommended by PPG17, it is difficult to set exact standards as accessing facilities is not always possible or sustainable in some of the more remote rural areas and other factors should be considered such as access to the other types of less formal recreational open spaces. Therefore the following is recommended.

**3.5.11** Existing and new provision will be developed as follows in the rural parishes:

- **Rural Parishes (1000+)**
  - Neighbourhood Equipped Area Play (NEAP) (0 – 16 year olds). In order to be sustainable, these areas are capable of serving a larger catchment area.
- **Rural Parishes (500+)**
  - Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) (0 – 8 year olds): These areas serve a smaller catchment area and the likelihood of future housing development is limited to smaller developments.
- **Rural Parishes (under 500):**
  - Develop informal play opportunities: No requirement for formal play opportunities.

## 3.6 Quality Assessment

**3.6.1** The benefits to children and teenagers of designing excellent play spaces is far reaching not least the health benefits but allowing children and young people opportunities to play freely and creatively allowing them to experience risk, challenge and excitement. Children often have no clear

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distinction between play and active travel so play spaces can often reach beyond their boundaries into the surrounding streets and environment. Being able to walk or cycle safely to a play facility can have a huge impact upon children and young people's ability to stay healthy.

**3.6.2** Based on previous consultations, set out below, the County needs to aspire to provide "good" quality facilities. **Children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas 2008 "TellUs 3" survey found that while a good proportion of children rated parks/play as good, a higher percentage rated them as poor.**

**3.6.3** The provision of good quality facilities should take account of the following:

- Play Value,
- Health and Safety,
- Design,
- Age Group it is intended for,
- Management,
- Ambience.

Overall the intention is to create a sense of place and ownership for its users and local community. For example, this can include; locally related features, arts features and seating, the development of more "non prescriptive play" and more "natural" play opportunities alongside the more formal areas and allowing children the freedom to play beyond the "playground".

**3.6.4** The Play Partnership carried out the most recent consultation in 2009/10 across a number of different stakeholder groups, including young people and it was specifically aimed at play. In particular it identified that children should be key to the development of effective play provision and that they should be encouraged to express their preferences, needs and wishes to ensure new provision is of high quality play value seen from a child's perspective. It also concluded that young people showed a preference to using open spaces, local parks and woods and that these environments could be improved with more interesting types of equipment suggesting that existing facilities can be uninspiring. Young people also indicated that "feeling safe" was an issue in some cases.

**3.6.5** In general some key issues that came out of the consultation which could affect the design and delivery of good play spaces and which should be considered include the following:

- Provision of more outdoor, nature and adventure play.
- Better perception of safety.
- Fear of litigation
- Commitment to produce good quality play provision.
- Provision of new and exciting activities, all easily accessible.

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**3.6.6** Consultation undertaken for the Open Space Assessment and Audit 2006 with the general public identified some of the main barriers to the use of play facilities. In general, these are the perceived condition of the play areas including high levels of dog fouling and vandalism and the perception of “not feeling safe” when using the sites. Some key issues came out of the consultation and the following recommendations should be taken into account:

- Improve the security of play areas.
- Develop quality standards of provision.
- Involve young people in the design and choice of provision.
- Improve provision for young people especially teenagers and toddlers.
- Develop play grounds that cater for children with disabilities.
- Move away from the provision of small fragmented sites to provide larger better value play spaces. This will reduce the number potentially but will increase the quality and size of play areas to improve play value and serve a wider audience of young people.

## **3.7 Developing Local Standards: Quality**

**3.7.1** The quality of a play facility is dependent on three things:

- Good Design.
- Good Practice.
- Community Involvement.

**3.7.2** There are no national standards or quality survey criteria for play facilities. Making use of good practice in the development and improvement of new and existing play facilities will help to shape new standards of provision which in turn will help to support future investment into play facilities, meet local expectations and inform both planners and developers. These include the Green Flag Standard which has 8 criteria of which 6 are applicable to play provision and RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) standards as follows:

Green Flag standards include developing spaces which are:

- A welcoming place
- Healthy safe and secure
- Well-maintained and clean
- Sustainable
- Involve the community
- Are managed

RoSPA standards including developing play facilities which are:

- Well designed – avoid future “ad hoc” ad ons.
- Involve the community.
- Secure continual investment.

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- Are accessible for disabled children to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005

**3.7.3** “Play value” will also be used as an indicator of the quality and suitability of a play facility in meeting the needs of its users. Play value is scored according to the suitability of play equipment for its intended age groups based on the RoSPA criteria for play value. Individual assessments have been made on each play area and these are included in the Action Plans. The overall rating is based on the provision of the following skills appropriate for the age group:

- Balancing,
- Climbing,
- Crawling,
- Gliding,
- Group swinging,
- Single swinging,
- Ball play,
- Jumping,
- Rotating,
- Sliding,
- Rocking,
- Agility bridges,
- Viewing platform,
- Wheeled play

**3.7.4** Those play facilities which fall short of an “average/good rating as described above, and which will most benefit local communities will be seen as priorities for future investment to ensure that good quality facilities are provided in the right locations.

**3.7.5** The future development of good quality play facilities to meet these standards and the needs of the local community should be guided by the following criteria:

- **Balancing health and safety against risk and benefit:** Managing risk is an essential part of growing up, and play is one of the most important ways in which they develop this important skill.
- **Development of sustainable facilities:** Consider the use of durable equipment and natural materials and settings that are cost effective to maintain. Consider developing facilities on school sites where appropriate particularly in rural areas as these are considered important places for children to play, both in terms of play opportunities throughout the school day and in terms of making facilities available outside school hours or consider developing several smaller poor quality sites into one larger neighbourhood park for instance.

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- **Take an Inclusive approach:** By making sure play areas are suitable for disabled children and ensuring the most vulnerable children have their say, by taking an inclusive approach to understanding demand and need, for example, understanding the demographic profile of an area including details of planned developments and local attitudes to use of a facility. Work with the social housing sector and regulators to ensure play is supported in some of the most deprived areas.
- **Community and voluntary sector engagement:** continued involvement with local communities will help to encourage local ownership and management and support underrepresented groups which should help to reduce the costs of vandalism and reduce anti social behaviour and thereby increase the use of play grounds. It will also help to support opportunities for local fundraising and securing section 106 monies. Working with the local police and community support officers will help to create safer areas and reduce “no-go” areas.
- **Creation of child friendly place making.** Designing a play friendly environment calls upon planning and highways to ensure that the needs of children and young people to play outside and travel to play spaces actively and independently are reflected in decision making processes. Wider environmental factors have a huge impact upon children and young people’s ability to stay healthy. For example, walking, cycling to school or play areas is a key way to improve children’s health and reduce obesity. Children often have no clear distinction between play and active travel and developing a child friendly neighbourhood environment will allow children to be free, unstructured and spontaneous. Play spaces reach beyond their boundaries and the surrounding streets and environments should also be assessed to identify barriers to walking, cycling etc to access them. No matter how good “formal” play provision is, some children will always prefer to play in the street. Key features and elements of child friendly areas include:
  - Low vehicle speeds,
  - A strong sense of place and human presence,
  - Features of interest and delight for children, this can include the use of arts features to act as gateways, play equipment and route markers.
  - Provision of ample flexible space for play,
  - Tolerance and mutual respect between children and adults.

## Section 4: Resources and Management.

### 4.1 Prioritisation

- 4.1.1** Resources required to improve existing and to develop new facilities as identified in the “Action Plans” will be difficult to secure in all cases as competition is high for limited resources. Therefore the findings of this

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assessment will help to set priorities for future investment, whether external or through planning obligations, in order to benefit local communities effectively.

- 4.1.2** It will also help to target where existing maintenance and management budgets are most needed and where pressures can be eased.

## **4.2 Play Facility Providers**

- 4.2.1** It is acknowledged that a number of other organisations own and maintain play facilities including Parish and Town Councils, Housing Associations and Recreational Trusts. They will be encouraged to adopt the principals set out in this study and to help to provide facilities to meet the needs of their local communities, by either improving existing or providing new ones through partnership working.

## **4.3 Disposal**

- 4.3.1** Where a decision is made to dispose of a play ground for development, the income from its sale should ideally be invested in improving other play facilities based on the findings of this assessment and in consultation with the local community.

## **4.4 Planning Obligations**

- 4.4.1** Monies secured through planning obligations for “off site” facilities will be used in accordance with the findings of this assessment and the priorities identified in the Action Plans/Investment Plans and will involve working in partnership with community groups, town and parish councils in support of the development of new and existing play areas.
- 4.4.2** Where new play facilities are developed as a result of new housing where appropriate particularly in the more rural locations, local communities through parish councils and associations will be encouraged to adopt the new facility and where this happens they will be in receipt of the commuted sum for future maintenance.

## **4.5 External Funding**

- 4.5.1** Where capital monies are received from external sources to improve and provide new play areas the organisation responsible for it will need to ensure they have the revenue resources to maintain it.

## **4.6 Community Asset Transfer**

- 4.6.1** The Council is looking to lessen the burden on diminishing resources by Community Asset Transfers and as such has a detailed Community Asset

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Transfer policy. The Play Facilities Study will help to identify those communities where this may be possible in respect of play facilities.

## Section 5: Action Plans, Investment Plans and Monitoring

### 5.1 Action Planning: (Appendix 5)

- 5.1.1** The Action Plans have been developed to evaluate all existing provision based on “quantity, quality and access thresholds” identified in this assessment. The differences between rural and urban areas are recognised and there are separate plans for different areas. .
- 5.1.2** As well as play value they included a consideration of local need and community involvement, usage and accessibility, for example if there is a need to improve the surrounding path, cycle and road infrastructure to make it more child-friendly.
- 5.1.3** All types of “fixed” play provision has been evaluated and rated according to play value for their intended audience and any potential to be developed
- 5.1.4** They provide the basis for developing future priorities and monitoring progress against individual evaluations to show which facilities have been improved.
- 5.1.5** It is recognised that a flexible, responsive approach to delivering individual schemes based on local need is required, therefore a list of priority “play facilities” will be identified in each area (urban and rural) taken from the Action Plans and an Investment Plan developed to be reviewed.
- 5.1.6** The Investment Plan will be developed for the play facilities in each area identified in the Action Plans, based on condition, age, usage, local need and play value to meet the needs of the 0 -8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds. This will ensure existing facilities are fit for purpose in the future as they become, old, outdated and worn out. However, where there are acknowledged gaps in provision (based on the findings of this study) they will in most instances take priority over the investment programme where possible. “Plugging a gap” may be achieved through provision of a new facility or expanding an existing facility. It is acknowledged that with limited funds and resources available in some instances the creation of new facilities may not be possible in the short term as this will be dependent on a number of factors including availability of funding and land. For example, opportunities arising from new development, community involvement and fund raising will be key to their success.
- 5.1.7** The current situation as of January 2012 is shown in the GIS maps in Appendices 2 and 3. These will be updated with the annual review. Currently, urban areas of Ledbury and Kington are well catered for and have

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very small gaps in provision based on the thresholds for access and population densities for 0 – 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds. However, the majority of urban areas do have gaps in provision based on the above which are recorded as % on the GIS Maps and future investment will need to take account of these. The following table show shows the % in each area:

0 – 8 year olds without access to a play area	9 – 16 year olds without access to a play area.
Hereford City North and South (23%)	Hereford City North and South (30%)
Leominster (15%)	Leominster (45%)
Ross-on-Wye (12%)	Ross-on-Wye (45%)
Bromyard (21%)	Bromyard (17%)
Ledbury (5%)	Ledbury (7%)
Kington (5%)	Kington (13%)

- 5.1.8** The rural areas use population thresholds to identify any gaps in provision. But this is also evaluated against need, other nearby facilities, primary school catchment areas and access to other types of play provision.
- 5.1.9** Projects will not be time specific in recognition that priorities can change and be influenced by a number of factors including local need, community support and timescales for securing and receiving funding.
- 5.1.10** Each project will be developed and designed with the local community. The success of any new play provision in meeting local needs depends on how much young people and children are involved and the roll of the local community in the process to ensure new provision actually meets with local approval.

## 5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

- 5.2.1** This process will enable us to evaluate how much investment is being secured and what is required to bring play facilities up to a standard which meets the needs of the community and is a of a “good” quality standard.
- 5.2.2** Individual targets set through the Action Plans will be measured using the “quality audit” scores, repeating the exercise over agreed periods of time to see how many play facilities have been improved and in which locations.

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## Appendix 1: GIS Countywide

- **Map 1a:** Play Areas Overview

## Appendix 2: GIS Provision Maps 1b: Hereford City and Market Towns:

- **Maps 1b:** Play Area Access Time Maps: Hereford City and the Market Towns (walking, cycling, public transport)

These show existing coverage of play facilities and “time” NPFA distance thresholds for 0 - 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds. They use the walking, cycling and public transport routes taken from the local transport databases. In doing so they provide a more accurate indication of areas of the local population and children without adequate access within accepted thresholds to a play area and how useful in terms of location a play area is in relation to the number of children it potentially caters for.

## Appendix 3: GIS Density Maps 1c: Hereford City and Market Towns:

- **Maps 1c:** Population Density Map in relation to play area catchment:  
Hereford City and the Market Towns

These show densities of children populations 0 - 8 year olds and 9 – 16 year olds (towns divided into 50m by 50m squares and children counted per square) against play area thresholds taken from maps 1b.

In doing so they provide a truer picture of which play areas serve the highest populations and therefore which play areas should be priorities for future investment etc.

Each map shows the total number of children in each area, e.g. Hereford City North has 4,013 children aged 0 - 8 and records the percentage of children without access to a play area (23%).

### Note:

- *Buffers around play areas were created from the actual boundary of the play area although in all instances the play area is denoted by a point on the map. Hence buffers are not always regular spheres.*
- *The Play Area Study has used Early Years and School census data. The census takes place in January ( 2011 figures have been used)*
- *Where play areas are described as catering for 0 – 8 years old it is important to remember that the data does not include 0 – 2 year olds, but the relative accuracy of the data was deemed more important than the fact it omitted these ages.*

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## Appendix 4: Provision and Density Maps 1d: Rural Parishes

- **Map 1d:** Herefordshire Rural Play Areas Parish Population Density and Primary School Catchment Area Maps.

This map shows parishes of different populations: 1000+, 500+ and under 500, locations of existing play facilities and primary school catchment areas.

This provides an indication of where formal play provision is most needed in areas of higher populations and with primary schools which cater for a wider catchment area. In doing so it will help to identify where future priorities for investment should be.

## Appendix 5 – Action Plans

### Hereford City and the Market Towns and their Wards

- **Hereford City North:** Central, Tupley, St Nicholas, Aylestone, Three Elms
- **Hereford City South:** St Martins and Hinton, Belmont
- **Bromyard:** Bromyard
- **Kington:** Kington
- **Ledbury:** Ledbury
- **Leominster:** Leominster South, Leominster North
- **Ross-on-Wye:** Ross-on-Wye East, Ross-on-Wye West

### Rural Areas and their Parishes

- **Bromyard Area:** Bishops Frome, Putley, Whitbourne
- **Central Herefordshire:** Lugwardine, Withington, Bartestree, Bodenham, Humber, Fownhope, Tarrington, Dormington, Credenhill, Sutton, Marden, Burghill
- **Golden Valley:** Clehonger, Madley, Ewyas Harold, Peterchurch, Dorstone, Cusop, Preston-on-Wye, Kingstone, Much Dewchurch
- **Kington Area:** Leintwardine, Wigmore, Pembridge, Shobdon, Eardisley, Staunton-on-Wye, Weobley, Dilwyn, Eardisland
- **Ledbury Area:** Colwall, Cradley, Wellington Heath
- **Leominster Area:** Oreleton, Kingsland, Brimfield
- **Ross-on-Wye Area:** Lea, Much Birch, Garway, Much Marcle, Woolhope, Whitchurch, Goodrich, Holme Lacy, Little Dewchurch, Llangarron.