

OUTCOMES FROM PLAYSPACE SITE VISITS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Members have now concluded a series of visits to all of the 27 playspaces maintained by the District Council. The visits took place over three separate days, with a number of relevant Officers in attendance to provide background information and answer Members' questions on each location.
- 1.2 A playspace inventory document was circulated to all Members prior to the visits. This provided photographic and other information that would be helpful on the visits and also to give Members more detailed knowledge of the playspace facilities.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Playspace Sub Committee on 20 November 2003 reported to Community Overview & Scrunity Committee (575/03) that before any further discussion could take place, it would be necessary to visit all of the playspace sites in the District.

3 VISIT METHODOLOGY

3.1 Pre Visit

- 3.1.1 Officers responsible for playspaces, both in terms of day to day maintenance, management and design, assembled an inventory document to aid Members in their preparation for the site visits.
- 3.1.2 The number of sites indicated that there would be a need to carry out the visits over a three day period, visiting approximately 9 sites each day. Three dates were identified, the first being lost to snow, but an additional date was identified which delayed completion of the site visits until 18 March 2004, later than originally anticipated.

3.2 Site Visits

- 3.2.1 At each site Members were given an introduction by officers which provided a background on the issues that affected each site:
 - Whether officers had a view on site usage.
 - When last refurbished.
 - Age of equipment.
 - Neighbour problems.
 - Whether locked at night.

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- Vandalism issues.
 - Other Crime and Disorder issues.
 - Whether alternative use could be made of the site.
 - Whether Parishes had any previous involvement.
 - Whether the site was used locally or had a more strategic role across the District.
- 3.3 After a detailed inspection of the site, during which officers provided answers to questions raised by Members, each Member was requested to complete a questionnaire on that site (Appendix A). Bearing in mind that 27 sites were to be visited and inspected, this was considered to be the most appropriate means of building up an information database for use during later meetings of the Sub Committee.
- 3.4 Following the last visit on 18 March, Members were then asked to complete an overall questionnaire, to reflect on the three day visits to the playspaces. This survey was carried out to provide a snap shot picture of playspaces overall and how Members perceived the condition and maintenance.
- 3.5 **Post Site Visits**
- 3.5.1 Following the visits, summaries have been prepared from the questionnaires. These summaries are of the information provided by Members and have not been interpreted or amended. They are therefore the Members' comments as made at each site. Appendix B provides a summary of the site visit questionnaires and Appendix C provides the overall feedback.
- 3.5.2 In preparation for the discussions with Town and Parish Councils, there are a number of items that will need to be clarified by Members. Suggestions to the possible list of items are:
- Which sites are strategic i.e. form an essential provision across the District, and so remain the total responsibility of the District Council.
 - Which sites are in unsuitable locations and therefore could be considered for alternative use/ development.
 - Which sites are no longer required.
 - Which sites could be enhanced to develop the network.
 - Which sites are to be considered as part of the District / Parish discussions.
 - How is the Council going to promote playspaces.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS**4.1 Strategic Risk**

Playspaces are not a statutory provision. However, as part of the strategy to reduce youth nuisance, the Council provides a number of facilities across the District, serving local communities.

4.2 Operational Risk

Failure to update equipment and ensure good quality maintenance could incur a health and safety insurance risk to the Authority.

4.3 Reputation Risk

Failure to update equipment and ensure good quality maintenance could incur a reputational risk to the Authority.

4.4 Regulatory Risk

Failure to update equipment and ensure good quality maintenance could incur a risk to the Authority in terms of Health and Safety.

4.5 Third Party Risk

The maintenance procedures adopted for playspaces have provided the Council with a sound basis for responding to Insurance claims.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Playspaces provide part of the Crime and Disorder Strategy to reduce youth nuisance across the District.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Good quality play provision in locations that are attractive and local encourage outdoor play and good contact with the external environment for children.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Maintenance of play spaces is carried out through the Grounds Maintenance Contract and is currently included in the Council 's budgets.

7.2 Play spaces are refurbished on a rolling programme of £50,000 financed through the Council's Capital programme.

8 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The recommendations from this Sub Committee will form the basis for discussions with Town and Parish Councils over future partnership arrangements for the playspaces in the District.

9 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**
- (1) To note the outcome of the site visits as detailed in the questionnaire summaries
 - (2) To consider each of the points in paragraph 3.5.2 and make recommendations on the potential options for each item.

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Background Papers

Survey questionnaires from play space visits

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Appendix (A)

PLAYSPACE SITE VISITS QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE:

SITE:

1.	QUALITY OF SITE	Excellent	V. Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Comments						
2.	LOCATION	Ideal	O.K		Poor	
Comments						
3.	SOCIAL NEED		YES		NO	
	<i>(No other site in the area)</i>					
Comments						
4.	CRIME & DISORDER ISSUES		YES		NO	
	<i>(If this space were removed would there be C&D issues)</i>					
Comments						
5.	ALTERNATIVE USE	Development	Open Space	Potential Disposal	Create a Problem	
Comments						
6.	IS THIS SITE STRATEGIC		YES		NO	
	<i>(Does it serve a wider catchment area i.e. tourism)</i>					
Comments						
7.	SHOULD RDC KEEP THIS SITE		Agree	Undecided	Disagree	
Comments						
Additional Comments						

Appendix (B)

* Please Note Cllr Mrs Lumley unable to attend site visits on 18.3.04. Subsequently contacted by telephone to provide update on information provided. Site visits to Rayleigh undertaken by 4 members only.

QUALITY OF SITE

Playspace	Excellent	V.Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Clements Way	3	2				- Sits comfortably in location.
Rowan Way				3	1	- Limited. - So small to be insignificant
Ashingdon Rec.	3	1		1		- Needs updating
Fairview	1	2	1	1		- Multiplay being replaced 2004/5
Hawkwell Common	3	2				
Hockley Woods	2	2	1			- Good site, very good facilities. - Suits the environment
Pooles Lane	5					
Betts Wood		2	3			- Limited facilities. - Equipment o.k. fencing to be replaced.
Althorne Way	4	1				
Grove Road	3	2				- Needs upgrade and repaint.
High St. Gt.Wakering.	2	1	1	1		- Equipment needs to be upgrade. - Swing & multiplay being replaced this year.
Warwick Drive			1	3	1	
Seaview Drive	2	2	1			
Conway Avenue	5					
Glebe Close	5					
Morrins Close	1	4				
Doggetts Close	5					
Barling				4	1	- Fire damaged (2). - Multiplay must be replaced urgently,
Boston Avenue			3			
Hartford Close		1	3			
St John Fisher	4	1				
Rawreth Lane	1	4				- Wider usage potential but would have to consider additional car parking.
Bedford Close			2	2		
Causton Way			4			- Unusual site. - Locked at night.
Elsenham Court			4			
Fyfield Path		3	1			
Sweyne Park	2	2				

LOCATION

Playspace	Ideal	O.K.	Poor	Comments
Clements Hall	3	2		- Well used, good site with pitches. - Local amenity.
Rowan Way		3	1	- Not practical for general use. - Inappropriate.
Ashingdon Rec.	3	2		- Pity site is not visibly viewed. - Nice to see it being used.
Fairview	3	1		- Good.
Hawkwell Common	4	1		
Hockley Woods	5			- Ideal because of closeness to Hockley Woods.
Pooles Lane	5			- Only one in Parish.
Betts Wood	2	3		- Local use.
Althorne Way	5			- Local use.
Grove Road	5			
High St. Gt.Waking	3	2		
Warwick Drive			5	
Seaview Drive	3	2		
Conway Avenue	4	1		
Glebe Close	5			
Morrins Close	3	2		
Doggetts Close	5			
Barling		5		- New equipment being considered.
Hartford Close	3	1		
Boston Avenue		3		
Sweyne Park	4			
Fyfield Path	4			- Local usage only.
Elsenham Court		4		- Local usage only.
Causton Way		4		
Bedford Close		4		- Local usage only
Rawreth Lane	4			
St John Fisher	4			

SOCIAL NEED

Playspace	Yes	No	Comments
Clements Hall	5		
Rowan Way		5	- Secluded to local houses – is it actually used by children from surrounding estate.
Ashingdon Rec.	5		- Key local facilities. - Local
Fairview	5		
Hawkwell Common	5		- Local and visitor use.
Hockley Woods	5		- Because of Hockley Woods
Pooles Lane	5		- Local plus many visitors to the area. - Very well used by all ages.
Betts Wood	5		- Local community use.
Althorne Way	5		- Local facility. - Well used by community.
Grove Road	4		
High St. Gt. Wakering	5		
Warwick Drive	5		- Acquire an alternative site. - Would need to make provision elsewhere nearby.
Seaview Drive	5		
Conway Avenue	5		- Very suitable for very young children.
Glebe Close	5		
Morrins Close	5		- As a site for older children, it is ideal.
Doggetts Close	5		
Barling	5		- Local play facility.
Hartford Close	4		- Local need.
Boston Avenue			- Site in close proximity to Hartford Close.
Sweyne Park	4		
Fyfield Path	4		
Elsenham Court	2	2	- Local usage only.
Causton Way	3		- Restricted to local use
Bedford Close	2	1	- Local usage only.
Rawreth Lane	4		
St. John Fisher	4		

CRIME AND DISORDER ISSUES

Playspace	Yes	No	Comments
Clements Hall	1	4	
Rowan Way		3	- Unknown
Ashingdon Rec.	1	1	- Car park issues in top car park. - Car park issues. - Issues only around bring bank.
Fairview	3		- Some graffiti. - Some graffiti – goes in cycles. - Some problems car park. - Car park issues. - Car park issues
Hawkwell Common	1	4	- Some problems.
Hockley Woods	2	3	- Because of Hockley Woods. - Some problems being dealt with.
Pooles Lane		3	- Now contained. - Occasional youth nuisance in car park in evenings. - Minimum in car park.
Betts Wood		3	- 1 unknown.
Althorne Way		3	- 1 unknown.
Grove Road	5		
High St. Gt. Wakering	5		- Some signs of vandalism.
Warwick Drive	4		
Seaview Drive	3	2	- Possibly higher fences. - Should be locked? Cost? - Would be better locked at night if possible.
Conway Avenue	3		- 1 possibly
Glebe Close	4	1	
Morrins Close	5		- Playspace keeps youngsters occupied.
Doggetts Close	4		
Barling	5		
Hartford Close	2	2	
Boston Avenue	1	2	
Sweyne Park	3	1	- Minor
Fyfield Path	2	1	- 1 possible.
Elsenham Court	1	1	- 2 possible.
Causton Way	2	1	- 1 possible - Possibly if not locked.
Bedford Close		3	- 1 possible.
Rawreth Lane		1	- 1 possible
St John Fisher	4		- Noted car park issues currently exist.

ALTERNATIVE USE

Playspace	Development	Open Space/ Retain	Rationalise	Create a Problem	Comments
Clements Hall		5			
Rowan Way	2	1	1		- 1 ? Development
Ashingdon Rec.		5			- Limited problems.
Fairview		5			
Hawkwell Common		4		1	
Hockley Woods		5			- Keep as play area.
Pooles Lane		5			- Retain current use. - Retain as playspace in joint partnership with Parish.
Betts Wood		3		1	- 1 unknown. - Retain playspace.
Althorne Way		5			
Grove Road		5			
High St. Gt. Wakering		5			
Warwick Drive		5			- Providing alternative site can be provided. - Provide an alternate site nearby.
Seaview Drive		4		1	
Conway Avenue		4		1	
Glebe Close		4		1	- In association with Parish.
Morrins Close		4		2	- In association with Parish
Doggetts Close		5			
Barling		5			
Hartford Close		4		1	- Well used by community. - Side field – would need to negotiate with ECC as to possibility for development.
Boston Avenue	1	2			- <i>Noted issues on equipment and fencing. Officers suggested multi kit could be resited to Barling if alternative use considered.</i>
Sweyne Park		3		1	
Fyfield Path		4			
Elsenham Court	1	2		1	
Causton Way		4			- Too difficult to develop.
Bedford Close	1 ?	2	1		- Only after consultation into existing usage and neighbours.
Rawreth Lane		4			- Used mainly weekends / school holidays – disposal could create a problem.
St.John Fisher		3		1	- Unless open space.

STRATEGIC SITE

Playspace	Yes	No	Comments
Clements Hall	2	3	
Rowan Way		5	
Ashingdon Rec.	4		- 1 unknown
Fairview	3	2	- Local only.
Hawkwell Common	3	2	- Local to parish.
Hockley Woods	5		
Pooles Lane	5		- Continue with parish partnership. - Because of River position.
Betts Wood	1	4	- Local only
Althorne Way	4	1	- May do – limited extent – skateboarding. - Because of type of facility – skateboarding.
Grove Road	3	2	- Registered with NPFA
High St. Gt. Wakering	4	1	- Limited
Warwick Drive		5	
Seaview Drive		5	- Serves local residents, families.
Conway Avenue		5	
Glebe Close	1	4	- Local infants.
Morrins Close	1	4	
Doggetts Close	3	2	
Barling		5	
Hartford Close		4	
Boston Avenue		3	
Sweyne Park	4		
Fyfield Path		4	
Elsenham Court		4	
Causton Way		4	
Bedford Close		4	
Rawreth Lane	4		- From visiting teams. - Football and cricket could be a drawn. - Football and cricket only.
St. John Fisher	3		- 1 – possibly - Grange Com.Centre attraction. - Via visiting teams using playing fields.

SHOULD RDC KEEP THIS SITE

Playspace	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Comments
Clements Hall	5			- Serves the local area well. - In association with the parish.
Rowan Way	1	2	2	- 2 swings only. - Potential for appropriate development. - In consultation
Ashingdon Rec.	4	1		- Well used and only playspace facilities – used by visitors not just local children. - In association with the parish. - Excellent football pitches.
Fairview	5			- Local facility. - In association with the parish.
Hawkwell Common	5			- Very well used. - With Parish. - In association with parish
Hockley Woods	5			- Picnic tables use recycled materials. - Will keep children aware of nature of the woodland. - Ice cream franchise. Tea franchise? - Well situated, ideal for barking residents.
Pooles Lane	5			- Retain as it is now in partnership with parish. - Continue with parish partnership. - In partnership with parish.
Betts Wood	4	1		- In association with parish. - Pass to Hockley Parish Council or work in partnership. - With Parish
Althorne Way	5			- Excellent facilities - In association with parish.
Grove Road	5			- In association with parish.
High St. Gt. Waking	5			- In association with the Parish. - Scheduled for renovation.
Warwick Drive		1	2	- Acquire an alternative site. - Dependent upon Q.5 - Alternative Use x 2. - Provided playspace could be located close by, this would be a value to all residents.
Seaview Drive	5			- In association with Parish - Consider locking at night.
Conway Avenue	5			- In association with Parish
Glebe Close	5			- In association with parish. - Excellent site for young children.

SHOULD RDC KEEP THIS SITE

Playspace	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Comments
Morrins Close	5			- In association with parish. - Specific for local young people.
Doggetts Close	5			- In association with parish. - Well maintained.
Barling	5			- In association with parish.
Hartford Close	4			- In association with the Parish. - Could expand – need some springy animals.
Boston Avenue	2		1	- In association with the Parish. - Relocate equipment? - Could be used for development.
Sweyne Park	4			- Interesting to learn about ground movement due to clay. - In association with the Parish.
Fyfield Path	4			- In association with the Parish. - Should Elsenham Court be developed, could be expanded.
Elsenham Court	3	1		- In association with the Parish. - If developed could be linked to expansion of Fyfield Path. - Provides facility for area.
Causton Way	3	1		- In association with the Parish. - Local use. - Local use only.
Bedford Close	2	2		- Possibility to develop but retain small play area. - In association with the Parish.
Rawreth Lane	4			- Would like more usage encouraged and more public awareness. - In association with the Parish.
St. John Fisher	4			- In association with the Parish.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Playspace	Comments
Clements Hall	- Sits nicely with the football and cricket pitches.
Rowan Way	- Grass cutting by RDC.
Ashingdon Rec.	- Attractive site. - Very good pavilion, some parish involvement.
Fairview	
Hawkwell Common	
Hockley Woods	- Springy animals needed. Being introduced.
Pooles Lane	- Retained as playspace. - Well kept.
Betts Wood	- Adequate in conjunction with Community Centre.
Althorne Way	- Local use, excellent facilities.
Grove Road	- None
High St. Gt. Wakering	- Floodlighting issues. - Pavilion quality? – to be considered as part of DDA report.
Warwick Drive	- None.
Seaview Drive	- One Cllr had locking concerns on all playspaces initially but later qualified this statement only to those where issues occurring. - Problem of use by teenagers late at night – possibly on other sites.
Conway Avenue	- Locked too early for summer time.
Glebe Close	- Well kept site, locked at night.
Doggetts Close	- Well maintained. - Nice site nicely situated. - Declare an interest as I live in Doggetts Close (Cllr Vince).
Barling	- None.
Hartford Close	- None.
Boston Avenue	- Could be used for redevelopment. - Equipment could be relocated.
Sweyne Park	- None.
Fyfield Path	- None.
Elsenham Court	- Whilst mention was made to development as car parking – feel its present use does meet a social need. - Recent consultation (social housing) highlighted car parking issues in the area – not personally recommended.
Causton Way	- Most unusual site in District – local use only. - C&D problems could arise if closed. - Do not believe well used. Do not believe equipment should be replaced when work out – long term usage needs to be considered.
Bedford Close	- Limited facilities. - Local facility which should be maintained.
Rawreth Lane	- Wider usage – however car parking would have to be increased.
St. John Fisher	- A good open space – good facility for Rayleigh

* Please Note Cllr Mrs Lumley unable to attend site visits on 18.3.04. Subsequently contacted by telephone to provide update on information provided. Site visits to Rayleigh undertaken by 4 members only.

Appendix (C)

SUMMARY OF PLAYSPACE SITE VISITS

* *Italics represent Member response.*

GENERAL IMPRESSION (OVERALL) – please provide summary view		
a). Quality of Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In most cases this is superb.</i> <i>On the whole, very good standard.</i> <i>Very Good</i> <i>Generally excellent.</i> 		
b). Location of Provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In most cases these serve a local need.</i> <i>Well located.</i> <i>Generally good.</i> <i>Generally good.</i> <i>Majority good.</i> 		
GENERAL PROVISION		
a). Do you believe that locations generally meet local needs? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Some exceptions</i> <i>Sutton Court – poor site for both residents and youth</i> 	YES 5	NO
b). Do you believe there are enough playspaces? OR	YES 1	NO
Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>There may be advantages in some amalgamation / relocation of equipment.</i> <i>Difficult to answer without knowing usage figures.</i> <i>Difficult to answer.</i> <i>Do feel able to make judgement</i> 	Too Many	Too Many in certain Areas? 1
c). Do you think the equipment is generally suitable: Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Would not have technical knowledge to say different.</i> 	YES 5	NO

d). Are you happy with the level of maintenance? Comments? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Very good, where maintenance is required reviewed quickly</i> ▪ <i>Very good</i> ▪ <i>First class</i> 	YES 5	NO
e). Have you any thoughts on whether different equipment / provision is required? Comments? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Some upgrading of equipment need</i> ▪ <i>Do not feel able to comment.</i> ▪ <i>Difficult without survey or district</i> 	YES 1	NO
f). Do you believe that provision of play facilities helps to deal with C&D Issues? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Passive supervision</i> 	YES 4 1 <i>Probably</i>	NO
STRATEGIC SITES (Hockley Woods, Pooles Lane etc.)		
Should the district provide more emphasis on “strategic sites” i.e. features in RDM etc? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Could these facilities withstand a large influx of people if advertised.</i> ▪ <i>Provision of additional facilities i.e car parking, light refreshments, toilets – maintenance could help to prevent vandalism. Any features should included pictorial + info +actions.</i> ▪ <i>Pictures and some test in RDM. Also offer catering arrangements.</i> ▪ <i>Look into refreshment franchises.</i> 	YES 4	NO
ANY OTHER COMMENTS		
<p>Hockley Woods, Pooles Lane, Sweyne Park, Cherry Orchard (<i>no current playspace provision</i>) identified as strategic sites that should be financed by the District Council.</p> <p>Members expressed their satisfaction with these visits and thought it could be the way forward on other projects.</p> <p>Members expressed their satisfaction on the way site visits were conducted and thanked Officers for their input.</p>		

FEEDBACK ON PLAYSPACE SITE VISITS

1. Were you happy with the process of visiting all playspaces? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Gt. Wakering session a little on long side – understand reasons – needed comfort break.</i> ▪ <i>Organisation and structure was well prepared.</i> ▪ <i>To get a good balance it may have better to include open spaces provide by Parish Council's, Town Council when considering asking for contributions towards maintenance.</i> ▪ <i>Very useful and informative.</i> ▪ <i>Generally but Gt Wakering session too long without break.</i> 	YES 5	NO
2. Did the process inform you about the overall provision of service? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Definitely.</i> ▪ <i>Well managed, good info on rolling programme, tendering process etc. Generally good.</i> ▪ <i>Input from Officers and other Cllrs. Most useful.</i> 	YES 5	NO
3. Were you sufficiently informed on issues during the visit by Officers: Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Well informed and appreciated the extra information.</i> ▪ <i>Definitely, Officers waited for Member questions and also suggestions given to take note on all aspects without being patronising.</i> ▪ <i>Officers did extremely well – good job – very attentive.</i> 	YES 5	NO
4. Has this process helped you to make informed decisions in the Sub-Committee? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Definitely, essential exercise.</i> ▪ <i>It will help the process.</i> ▪ <i>Definitely helped to make decisions.</i> 	YES 5	NO
5. Could Officers have provided any further information - please indicate if appropriate? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Usage figures.</i> ▪ <i>Don't think so.</i> 	YES 4	NO 1

6. Do you think information was provided in a balanced way? Comments:	YES 5	NO
7. Could you suggest any improvements to the way these visits were arranged and managed? Comments:	YES	NO 5
8. Were you satisfied with the transport arrangements? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Good</i> ▪ <i>Difficulties – knee problems. Morning break would have been welcomed in Gt. Wakering.</i> ▪ <i>Driver very helpful.</i> <p>(With hindsight vehicle had wheelchair access and could have provided easier access – need to be more aware of any mobility problems when booking mini buses).</p>	YES 4	NO
9. Were you satisfied with the catering arrangements? Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent.</i> ▪ <i>Very pleased – plain platter arranged.</i> 	YES 5	NO

* *Italics represent Member response.*