

Draft 1

# Everything To Play For

**A Play Strategy for North  
Wiltshire District Council**

**2007 – 2012**

*“Play is what I do when everyone else has stopped  
telling me what to do.”*

*North  
Wiltshire  
District  
Council*

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### **Our Vision for Children's Play in Wiltshire**

**Wiltshire should be a place where all children and young people are able to play freely and safely, making their own choices about how, where and when they play.**

**Foreword** *(to be added by Play Champion)*

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

*(From Playwork Principles, developed by the UK play profession and endorsed by the Skills Sector Council in May 2005)*

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 recognises:

**‘The right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child, to participate fully in cultural life and the arts’ (Ratified by the UK Government 1991)**

Why do we feel play is so important? Play is the primary way in which children learn before formal education. At all ages it helps develop skills in communication, problem solving, negotiating, creativity, imagination, listening, team-working and analysing opportunities. It helps develop physical ability and stamina, allows them to test the boundaries and learn how to take risks. Play assists young people and children to deepen their understanding of themselves, their emotions and the world around them, and is vital in developing them into young people and adults who can successfully engage and interact in their communities and social groups.

***“Play is the highest form of research”***

*Einstein*

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## Executive Summary (to be added following consultation)

### Introduction

This Play Strategy has been drafted and researched by North Wiltshire District Council in partnership with:

Kennet District Council  
Salisbury District Council  
West Wiltshire District Council  
Wiltshire County Council

It has been widely consulted on throughout the county at a variety of forums, including the full partnership meeting of the Wiltshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, where the Wiltshire Play Partnership was launched. This Partnership is made up of senior managers representing a number of organisations in Wiltshire as well as Play Champions and officers from the District and the County Councils.

Town and Parish Councils, a wide range of play providers, parents, children and young people have also been given the opportunity to comment and analyse key findings.

The catalyst for this has been the availability of ring-fenced funding from the BIG Lottery for the play provision. This Strategy clearly links to a number of wider agendas and strategies offering the chance for North Wiltshire District Council to work with our partners to raise the profile of and improve play opportunities.

### Strategy Ownership

This Play Strategy was developed by Wiltshire Play Partnership, Wiltshire County Council and North Wiltshire District Council. It will be implemented, monitored and evaluated by North Wiltshire District Council. Further monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken by the Wiltshire Play Partnership.

**Lead Officers**            David Stirling, Team Leader, Asset, Design and Regeneration  
Jo Cogswell, Team Leader, Community Partnerships  
Shelley Parker, Project Officer, Community Partnerships

**Portfolio Holder for Community Partnerships and Play Champion** – Councillor  
Ross Henning

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### 1. Definition of Play

For the purpose of this Strategy play should be:

- **Freely** chosen
- **Free** of charge
- **Freely** accessible

“Play is an essential part of every child’s life and vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practice skills. It is essential for:

- Physical, emotional, and spiritual growth
- Intellectual and educational development
- Acquiring social and behavioural skills

Play is a generic term for a variety of activities, which are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child. Children’s play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own or with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light hearted or very serious.”

(Children’s Play Council – The New Charter for Children’s Play, 1998)

and

“Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child..... Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges which they encounter.”

(Best Play – NPFA / PLAYLINK / Children’s Play Council, 2001)

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## 2. Purpose and Scope

This Strategy seeks to inform all the agencies working with children and young people in the arena of play in North Wiltshire and encourage collaborative partnership working to improve the quantity and quality of play provision in our area. It has been written by Wiltshire County Council and the four District Councils, drawing heavily upon information from partner providers and agencies throughout the county.

This Strategy recognises that play is an end unto itself – that there is no need to achieve a desired outcome but that the play process itself is the achievement.

This Strategy aims to meet the ‘Best Play’ objectives taken from the NPFA/Playlink/Children’s Play Council, 2001):

1. Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it
2. Recognise the child’s need to test boundaries and respond positively to that need
3. Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm
4. Maximise the range of play opportunities
5. Foster independence and self-esteem
6. Foster children’s respect for others and offer opportunities for social interaction
7. Foster the child’s well being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn

This Strategy will also:

- Recognise that people of all ages like to play but that this Strategy will focus on ages 0 - 25
- Increase understanding of the need for and importance of play to children and young people in their development and attainment of the key skills necessary for competent learning
- Ensure inclusive practice, both in terms of existing provision and in the planning of new play opportunities
- Ensure play opportunities are accessible to young people, overcoming issues of distance and safety as appropriate
- Encourage children and young people to exercise choice and control over their play
- Allow children and young people to contribute their opinions when analysing options for new plan opportunities

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- Manage the need to provide challenging play opportunities which allow children to take risks, whilst maintaining the need for them to be able to play safely
- Extend the area which children and young people have available to them for play, including utilising areas not traditionally associated with play
- Encourage active play to help improve physical and mental health
- Encourage partners to provide a stimulating, innovative and creative range of play activities across the district
- Support children and young people in becoming adept at interacting socially, improving their feelings of self-worth and respecting the views and opinions of other people
- Begin to dismantle barriers to play which have arisen over the last few decades
- Work in partnership to overcome popular misconceptions about youth and play



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## 3 Key Policy Statements

This Strategy is directly linked to the five outcomes from the Government's agenda for Every Child Matters and also to North Wiltshire District Council's own Corporate priorities. It also works towards helping to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations under the Children's Act 2006 through play provision.

The Council will aim to achieve the following key outcomes and objectives:

### **Being Healthy**

Provide active play provision for children and young people  
Promote health and physical activity

### **Staying Safe**

Provide safer opportunities for play  
Provide play that contributes towards creating safer communities

### **Enjoying and Achieving**

Providing fun play opportunities  
Creating challenging play opportunities

### **Making a Positive Contribution**

Involve children, young people and families in the design and development of play in our area  
Promote equality and social inclusion for all children and young people within in our community

### **Economic Well-being**

Planning policy which allows for innovation  
Promote activities which allow children and young people to develop key skills such as communication, problem solving and team building

The key policy statements and principle objectives will be delivered through the project portfolio in the short term and through the Action Plan and local standards in the long term.

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### 4. Organisations involved in Delivery

A number of organisations are crucial to the Action Plan in this Strategy, and in addition there are further agencies, departments and organisations who contribute to the play provision in North Wiltshire and who contribute to, support and guide the Council in the achievement of wider strategic goals.

- ∅ Parents, families, carers
- ∅ Town and Parish Councils
- ∅ North Wiltshire District Council, especially:
  - Asset Design and Regeneration
  - Community Partnerships (including Arts Development, Youth Involvement, Sports Development, Community Safety/Anti Social Behaviour Reduction)
  - Spatial Planning
  - Development Control
  - Housing
- ∅ Wiltshire County Council, especially:
  - Children's and Education
  - Youth Service
  - Planning
  - Transport
  - Schools
  - Social Services
  - Library
  - Looked-After Children Service
  - Gypsy and Traveller Service
  - Childcare / Early Years, including Wiltshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
  - Sure Start, including Children's Centres
- ∅ Health Services – PCT, Hospital and Hospice play services
- ∅ Police, and Splash
- ∅ North Wiltshire Partnership
- ∅ Wiltshire & Swindon Activity & Sports Partnership (WASP)
- ∅ Pathways Partnership
- ∅ Arts Council
- ∅ Bright Horizons Childcare Training and Recruitment
- ∅ Extended Services providers
- ∅ Voluntary and community sector, especially:
  - Pre-School Learning Alliance
  - Wiltshire Scrapstore and Resource Centre
  - ASK – Children's Information Service
  - Wiltshire Children's Fund
- ∅ Private sector, e.g.
  - Trio childminding
- ∅ Potential funders
- ∅ Commercial providers

*This is not an exhaustive list and other providers will be identified during consultation of this Strategy.*

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## 5. Value & Significance of Play for Children and Young People

There are significant benefits of play for a variety of groups.

### 5.1 Children and Young People

The benefits of play to children and young people are:

- Improved health and fitness
- Social development
- Important educational tool at pre-school level, and helps to allow children to fully engage in the curriculum once at school
- Improved self-esteem and confidence
- Allows children to deal with increasing levels of freedom and develop independence in a safe environment
- Developing confidence
- Developing respect for peers (and possibly adults)
- Giving a sense of respect and belonging to communities and fosters respect for local citizens
- The ability to test boundaries and take risks in reasonably safe environments
- The development of understanding of their local community and the world in general
- Contributing to dealing with trauma through therapeutic play
- Opportunities to enjoy their free time and 'let off steam'

### 5.2 Parents and Carers

The benefits to parents and carers are:

- A widening circle of friends for parents / carers where their children play together
- A better relationship between family members, especially where adults join in with children's play
- Children with improved health and fitness
- Children with better social skills
- Happier children

### 5.3 Local Communities

The local community can benefit from the play children engage in by:

- Reducing boredom levels and providing alternatives to less desirable activities
- A reduction in local crime and anti-social behaviour by young people where they have construction activities to participate in and facilities to use
- Producing a community where children contribute to a positive culture and where young people show concern for others and have good team-working and problem-solving skills
- Utilising youth facilities for other purposes to the benefit of other community groups

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### 6. Barriers to Play

Barriers to play in Wiltshire are similar in many ways to those present in other counties, with the exception of a few areas which are more specific to our locality. These have increased over the past decades and have affected the quality and quantity of play in Wiltshire.

- New technology. Games consoles, DVDs, MSN and text-messaging can all limit imagination and the development of social and communication skills. Young people are now part of a growing consumer market, placing financial pressure on parents/ carers
- An increase in traffic - our streets now have little area available where children can play. This increases anxiety for parents who can be reluctant to allow children to walk/cycle to play facilities
- An increase in parental perceptions of the danger of child abuse and other crime have reduced opportunities for play. This is largely due to media coverage as, in general, the danger from serious crime against young people has not altered over the last few decades
- Robust child protection policies dictate that organisations must protect themselves from potential child protection issues which further reduce opportunities for play
- An increase in building development has reduced the public open space available for play
- Some Government initiatives have altered parental working patterns leading to higher use of structured after school childcare. This is replacing the play that children and young people previously enjoyed, for example, by being allowed to 'play out' after school. This is coupled with an increase in 'play resources' as society has become more affluent and time being replaced by money, resulting in more 'directed play' and less imaginative play
- A culture of risk adversity. Increasing litigation has resulted in play providers (particularly, childcare providers) offering play opportunities which carry no risk of injury. This reduces challenge and stimulation.
- A lack of tolerance. There is an increasing intolerance amongst adults for children to be allowed to play outside. A 'nimby' (not in my backyard) approach is sometimes adopted where new play opportunities are proposed.
- Academic pressure. There is an increased expectation (e.g. league tables) on children and young people to perform well academically. There are now more structured educational clubs and pursuits leaving less time for children to play freely

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- Poor opportunities for the involvement of people with backgrounds of impaired physical ability, impaired mental health, financial difficulty, problems with social interaction, discrimination in grounds of ethnicity, race, etc
- Historical lack of understanding and foresight from local and central government to identify and invest in the right opportunities and resources to facilitate children's play
- Lack of suitable premises, opportunities and trained play workers to encourage play
- Bullying. Children can be afraid of other children due to actual or perceived bullying
- The current negative perception of young people has led to increased fear of groups of young people with communities believing that they are creating anti-social behaviour

### 6.1 Barriers in North Wiltshire

- In a large rural area resources for play provision are spread thinly over six towns and many surrounding villages and rural areas
- Lack of affordable, frequent and reliable public transport to play facilities especially for children living in the more remote rural areas. Parents are busier and less able to spend time in transporting and accompanying children
- Prohibitive costs of available play and recreational facilities
- Lack of co-ordination and collaboration between various agencies and voluntary organisation in their approach to play provision
- Lack of dedicated service section within District Council
- A lack of volunteers and playworkers
- Uncertainty around the future of North Wiltshire's six leisure centres
- A transient and significant population at military bases for example, at RAF Lyneham (population of 4,600) in North Wiltshire
- Lack of information about what is already available
- In some cases, lack of involvement of children and young people in the design, development and implementation of play provision

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### 7. Risk and Play

**WARNING**  
**Playing it safe can cause a lot  
of damage in the long run**

Sign displayed at an unofficial  
children's play area

The County Council and District Councils recognise that it is important for children and young people to be able to undertake play activities which have an element of managed risk attached to them, in order that they are challenged and have the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities.

Play and safety experts agree that there is currently a tendency for providers to minimise accidents and injuries of any kind, often at the expense of play environments that offer real challenge and enjoyment. The effect is to stop children from enjoying a healthy range of play opportunities, limiting their enjoyment and causing potentially damaging consequences for their development. It is also a poor use of resources, as facilities that lack a degree of challenge and risk will tend to be under used or abused. Good play provision should be safe and stimulating, protecting children by reducing unacceptable levels of danger, while allowing them the opportunity to challenge themselves and use their initiative.

***'Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risk of death or serious injury'***

From Managing Risk in Play Provision, Play Safety Forum, 2002

***' Play should be about children having fun and learning to manage risk through adventurous activity. This is an essential part of child development and important to the future health of the nation'***

*RoSPA June 2005*

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### 8. Contribution Play Makes to Wider Agendas

Central government has set a number of wider agendas which play strategies can clearly contribute towards. With this in mind, this Strategy shows a clear bias towards several of these agendas. As there is currently no on-going funding to create sustainable play opportunities, the ability to sustain programmes put in place by the Big Lottery Fund grants and other developments will currently have to be funded by linking the outcomes of this Play Strategy with current local government priorities, which are developed through central Government agendas. The key actions in this Strategy will therefore be to work towards achieving much more than just improved play opportunities for our district's children.

A chart showing how the Play Strategy links to national agendas is at **Appendix 1**.

#### 8.1 Links to Other Strategic Documents

This Strategy also links to strategic documents formulated by external agencies, from within the County Council and the District Council. Most of the organisations which are represented on the Wiltshire Play Partnership have strategy documents which are relevant to a Play Strategy, and within Council, strategies relating to other areas of both the County and District Council are relevant to the formulation and implementation of this Strategy.

A chart showing links to District Council Documents is at **Appendix 2**

A chart showing links County Council Documents is at **Appendix 3**

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### 9. Sustainability Issues

There are sustainability issues surrounding play opportunities within North Wiltshire. However, there is a statutory obligation upon local authorities through the Children's Act 2006 to commit to working towards achieving the Every Child Matters outcomes and if partners can successfully raise the profile of play within their organisations then play can begin to become embedded and seen as a priority. The aim is to encourage partner organisations to commit to long term funding.

### 10. Inclusion

The District Council and Play Partnership recognise the importance of ensuring inclusion for **all** children and young people, regardless of gender, race, ethnic background, physical and mental ability, affluence, geographical location or sexual orientation.

An issue which significantly affects the equality of opportunity within North Wiltshire is the rural and widely spread population, leaving most areas outside of the six towns with fewer opportunities for play. Also, there is a significant military presence in North Wiltshire with its own transient population made up of children, young people and their families who can feel isolated and without access to play opportunities.

All actions listed in the Action Plan will ensure inclusion especially with regard to compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act and Equalities and Diversity policies.



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## 11. Profile of Council Area

### 11.1 The County of Wiltshire

Wiltshire is a large, rural county comprising four districts – Kennet, North Wiltshire, West Wiltshire and Salisbury, each of which has its own District Council. The county has one city and a few major towns, but most of the county's population reside in rural villages and small towns. The county also has several armed forces bases and a large military population and therefore a highly transient population.

Wiltshire covers 3,485km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of around 446,600. Around 25% of Wiltshire's population are children aged 0-19, and 94% of these children are classed or class themselves as 'white British' (national average 86%).

### 11.2 The District of North Wiltshire

North Wiltshire covers an area of approximately 767sq km and is officially classified as 81% rural. It has six main towns Malmesbury, Cricklade, Wootton Bassett, Calne, Corsham and, the largest, Chippenham. There are a number of military bases in the district, most notably RAF Lyneham which is one of the largest military Stations in the UK.

The pattern of settlements in North Wiltshire is unusual, having four medium sized and two small sized market towns surrounded by numerous villages and rural settlements. The District is located between the Bath/Bristol and Swindon urban areas. These larger urban areas have a substantial impact on the District, most notably through the high levels of commuting from all the settlements in the District to these larger urban areas. It is important that future patterns of development across the District reverse the unsustainable influences from these large urban areas whilst still providing the housing and community infrastructure our market towns and rural communities require. Play provision is a vital element in this planning.

Under National Indices of Deprivation, North Wiltshire fares favourably when compared to many areas of the UK. Nevertheless, there are pockets of deprivation which affect the District.

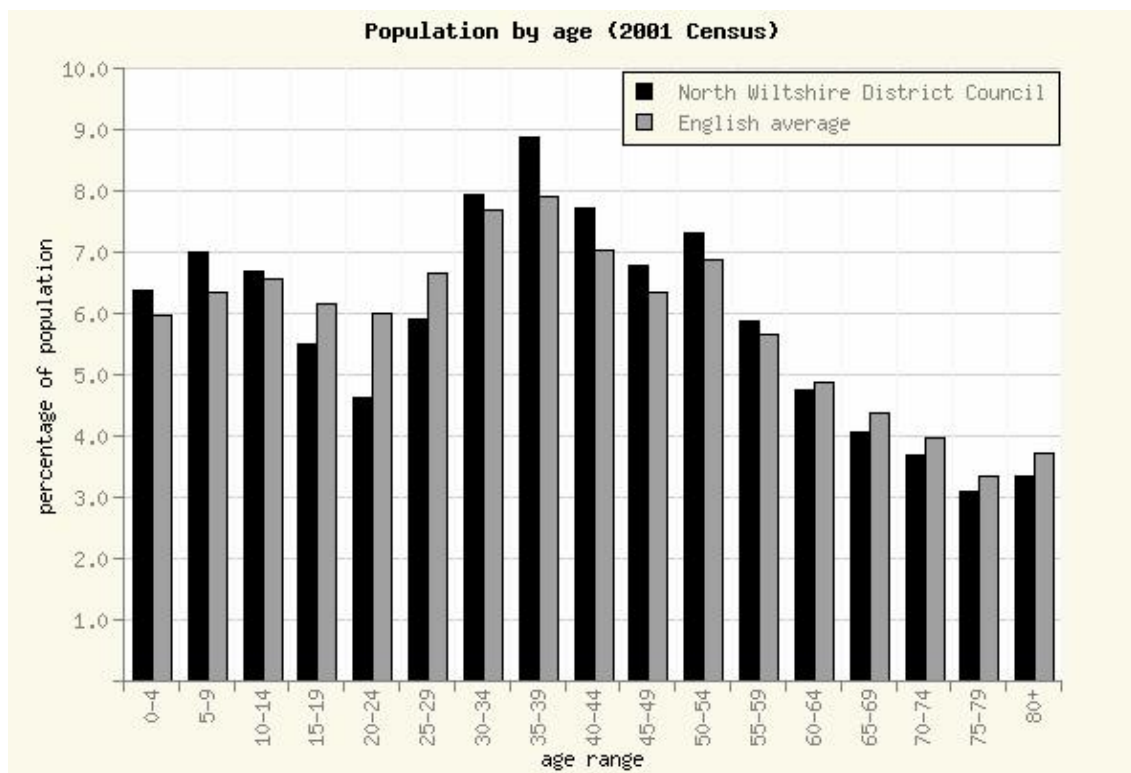
Rural deprivation is difficult to identify because it is dispersed spatially unlike urban deprivation which tends to be geographical. Rural deprivation can be economically attributed partly to a limited amount of permanent employment in rural areas and a reduction of the agricultural labour force. Key findings of a report, Challenging Perceptions: A report of Rural Deprivation in Wiltshire 2003 (Wiltshire County Council) shows that there are rural areas where there is a higher than average number of unemployed claimants, a higher number of dependant children of benefit claimants, where there is only limited access to affordable childcare and poor public transport. Young people in rural areas suffer from social isolation due to the lack of transport and local activities, particularly teenagers. This further compounds the need for improved free play opportunities in these areas.

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## Population

The district has an estimated total population of 129,410 (Wiltshire County Council, Population Estimates for Wiltshire 2005). In 2001, 95.93% of the population were white British. The largest ethnic minorities in the District are mixed Caribbean at 0.26%, Indian at 0.25%, Asian at 0.24% and Chinese at 0.24%.

The population has risen by 10.9% in the last ten years, and is forecast to grow at the same level for the next ten years – in real terms that will mean an increase in population equivalent to Calne. (See graphs below). This reiterates the need for increasing and broadening play provision.



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## 12. Development of Play Provision in Wiltshire

The abilities and needs of our children and young people are the same today as they were decades ago. Children and young people need to play to prepare themselves for the future, but play opportunities have been gradually eroded as communities focus on other priorities and play has been relegated on agendas.

## 13. Development of Play Provision in North Wiltshire

Provision in North Wiltshire is supplied by a number of providers and details are at Section 5. The District Council has no statutory duty to provide play facilities or opportunities for play. However, wide consultation has shown that there is a strong local desire and need for better and broader play provision. Generally there has to date been little co-ordination between the play providers in the District, and this Strategy is being used as the catalyst to set up a countywide play partnership to act as key strategic influencing group.

### 13.1 Funding and Resources

North Wiltshire District Council does not have a dedicated resource for children's play. However, there is a programme of enhancement and repair for those play areas owned and managed by the District Council which is supported by a capital budget.

The District Council does have resources dedicated to sports development, arts, youth involvement and community partnership working. Whilst not specifically dedicated to play these resources do offer play opportunities.

### 13.2 Section 106 Agreements

New housing growth has also increased play provision where developers have committed funds towards play areas through Section 106 Agreements. This has already made a substantial difference to new housing developments in Calne, Corsham and Malmesbury.

Developers are now encouraged to work more closely with North Wiltshire District Council to ensure that play provision is properly planned for (including relevant consultation) prior to building commencement. New provision around Section 106 will involve projects throughout the district.

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*“There is a need to change our way of thinking. Our aim should be to provide a safe and interesting environment for play, not just a safe place to play. Children’s needs for safe access to a diverse outdoor environment on the front street and opportunities for extending their free range mobility along the footpath network and traffic calmed roads, need to be incorporated in the design and management process.”*

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

### 13.3 Home Zones

Home Zones are a relatively new concept in the UK and have only been legal here since 2001. They clearly offer potential benefits to a child’s home environment. A key feature is that the road space is shared between all road users encouraging low vehicle speeds. Planting and street trees are often used to 'green' the space with other features to encourage community activity including small areas of open space where children can play. North Wiltshire district Council supports the Home Zone concept as, alongside other benefits, they can provide increased opportunities for children to play in a safe environment close to their homes.

### 13.4 Countryside and Open Space

There is a wealth of open space throughout the district as identified in the North Wiltshire Open Space Study. In recent years there has been a growing demand for recreation opportunities in the countryside. This includes play provision in a much wider sense – cycling, walking, nature conservation, environmental and wildlife projects. After many years of decline the management of open spaces is high on the national and local agenda with the realisation that open space is playing an increasingly important role in leisure.

North Wiltshire District Council has responded to increasing public desire and supported various external initiatives for both leisure access and recreational use of the countryside. These include the North Wiltshire Rivers Route and Cricklade Country Way (both of which form part of the National Cycle Network), restoration of the Wilts and Berks and Cotswold Canals, and several wildlife projects such as those centred around the Braydon Forest, as well as the Cotswold Water Park.

Copies of the Council’s **Countryside and Open Spaces Strategy** and the **Open Spaces Study** are available to download at [www.northwilts.gov.uk](http://www.northwilts.gov.uk). Copies are also available on request from Asset, Design and Regeneration, North Wiltshire District Council, Monkton Park, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 1ER. Telephone 01249 706111

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### 13.5 Community Safety Partnership – Staying Safe, Feeling Safe

There is good partnership working between the District Council and North Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership. This group concentrates on the areas that experience the most crime and anti-social behaviour. It works with the local community to reduce crime and improve quality of life. An Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer (ASBRO) works with young people, the Police, Neighbourhood Policing Teams and Community Safety Officers to identify schemes and projects to help alleviate anti-social problems.

A recent DCLG Household Survey (November 2006)\* used postal questionnaires to random addresses across the County. In all over 1,800 completed questionnaires were returned. The survey around satisfaction levels showed that activities for teenagers were among the most important three areas for improvement across Wiltshire. The DCLG survey indicated that Calne is among the highest areas in the county for combined anti-social behavioural problems. (This included, amongst others, vandalism and graffiti, lack of parental responsibility, teenagers in the street, and being drunk or rowdy in public places.)

Separate consultation shows that young people themselves are intimidated by anti-social behaviour. Consultation around North Wiltshire's Community Safety Partnership's Strategy – Staying Safe, Feeling Safe - shows that young people are nearly twice as likely as adults to say that they felt unsafe in their local neighbourhood after dark.

Projects involving improvements to and creation of better provision for children and young people have been driven by this Partnership's work. For example, there are now monthly discos at Priestly Grove in Calne coordinated between the District and County Councils and other partners. The Partnership is working towards improvements to a drop in centre for young people at the Grove in Calne. Work is also planned for better multi use of the community facility at Coleman's Farm, promoting inter generational projects to improve the perception of young people.

### 13.6 Community Awards Scheme

Local community groups and town and parish councils are encouraged to apply for funds for local projects to their North Wiltshire District Council Area Committee under its Community Award Scheme. (Budget for each of 5 Area Committees for 2006/7 - £50,000). These awards are linked to community projects identified in the 5 Community Area Plans. A number of children's play areas and activities have been funded successfully through this scheme. Larger projects have gone on to receive further funding through a centrally controlled Executive Capital Partnership Scheme.

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Examples include:

### **Corsham - Skate Park - NWDC Award - £48,000 - 2006**

Need originally identified by County Council in consultation with local secondary school. Consultation took place through public meetings with young people and local residents. A Skaters group formed to work alongside project workers and parents. Fundraising events took place over the course of 2 years. Skate park decorated with local artists graffiti work and opened in June 2006.

### **Chippenham – NWDC Award - £1,000 -2005**

Award made to North Wilts Holiday Play Scheme for disabled children

### **Wootton Bassett - New Play Area - NWDC Award - £20,000 – 2006**

The Town Council built a completely new play area to replace run-down and inadequate equipment. The overall project was match-funded by NWDC. The new playground was designed and developed with the help of a nearby local primary school. It provides play areas for infants and junior age children. Opened in Spring 2006

### **Jubilee Lake (Wootton Bassett) - Work to Nature Reserve NWDC Award - £40,000-2006**

This award involved environmental work around a local district park including work to footpaths, signposting, disabled access and tree planting. Local children were involved in planting saplings and in the design of the play area adjacent to the site. Great Western Forest will hold their first festival in the district at this site in May 2007

### **Corsham - Youth Shelter NWDC Funding Award- £5,000**

Corsham Youth Shelter Project was set up in February 2006. Young people in the area were asked for their views and given a choice of design. Full consultation took place with young people and local residents. A graffiti art competition was held inviting local young people to design the graffiti for the shelter.

### **Charlton NWDC Award £9,000 - 2005/6**

Award to Charlton Recreational Centre for a new playground in the village for young people aged 7-14 years to complement play equipment for younger aged children. It is also used by children in neighbouring Hankerton.

### **Ashton Keynes – Award - £5,000 - 2006**

Award to Ashton Keynes Parish Council to refurbish 2 play areas in the village.

### **Calne – BMX/Skate Park Refurbishment NWDC Award - £20,000 - 2007**

The Town Council has worked closely with local young people and community groups for plans to update the existing skate park facility. Plans are to enhance it with a BMX/skateboard/in line skating park.

### **Malmesbury Skate Park - NWDC - £16,000 – 2006/7**

Original need identified by survey work around 7-8 years ago. Finding a suitable site provided challenges. It will be part of a new youth development centre of the town. This identified need appears in the Community Plan as being important to local young people as well as adults in the town and surrounding villages

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## 14. Community Engagement

### 14.1 Approach

Consultation with children and young people, parents and the wider community is crucial to the Play Strategy. We have encouraged them to be involved in the development of the action points in the Strategy and will continue to consult widely with them in developing more detailed and focussed plans. The decisions we make regarding play influence our children and young people directly and we must continue to ensure that they have their views and opinions heard and given due consideration.

### 14.2 Community Consultation and Engagement in North Wiltshire

Consultation with all age groups is vital. The District Council has used a variety of methods including, focus groups (e.g. for young people and adults living in rural and urban areas), consultative events, postal questionnaires, on-line surveys, People's Voice (a panel of North Wiltshire Residents), Tomorrow's Voice (a panel of teenagers from across the county), electronic hand-held voting sets at events.

The following illustrates the range of consultation that has already been undertaken to inform the development of this Strategy. It includes that which will further inform the document during its consultation period of 8-12 weeks as set out in the Wiltshire Compact to which North Wiltshire District Council adheres.

Information	Background and Data
Consultation 2001-2007	A Leisure Facilities Strategy for North Wiltshire 2001-2007  Community Area Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Malmesbury &amp; Villages – Community Plan</li><li>• Northern Community Area Plan (Cricklade, Wootton Bassett and surrounding villages)</li><li>• Chippenham and Villages Community Plan</li><li>• Corsham Area Community Plan</li><li>• Calne Community Area Plan Parishes</li></ul> Youth Strategy for North Wiltshire (supported by a version compiled by young people)  Community Strategy for North Wiltshire  Community Safety Strategy  Cultural Strategy

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	WASSP Sports Strategy
Parks and Play Area Provision	<p>Open Spaces Study</p> <p>The Countryside and Open Space Strategy</p> <p>Playing Pitch Strategy</p>
Consultation on Draft Strategy April – June 2007	<p>Town and Parish Councils – To include short audit of play provision to update current data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area Committees</li> <li>• North Wiltshire Partnership</li> <li>• Community Area Partnerships</li> <li>• Young People’s Council</li> <li>• Youth Development Service</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Youth Action Wiltshire</li> <li>• Community Safety Partnership</li> <li>• Neighbourhood Policing Teams</li> <li>• Youth groups (e.g. Youth and Leisure in Lyneham (YELL))</li> <li>• Leisure Service Providers (Leisure Centres)</li> <li>• Housing Associations (e.g. Westlea Housing)</li> <li>• Those organisations listed at 1.4 of this Strategy</li> </ul>

### Detail

#### **14.3 A Leisure Facilities Strategy for North Wiltshire 2001-2007**

A dedicated section within this strategy deals with play provision and shows the results and analysis of consultation undertaken by Bath University with providers, partners, voluntary and statutory organisations, children and young people, schools, town and parish councils, sports clubs and community groups. *The University research showed that the most important issues for local people were new or improved facilities for children and young people to play.*



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### 14.4 Community Area Plans

In each of the district's five community areas local people have formed Community Area Partnerships. These are:

- Malmesbury and Villages Community Partnership
- Northern Community Area Partnership (Covering Cricklade and Wootton Bassett)
- Chippenham Area Community Partnership
- Corsham Area Community Partnership
- Calne Community Area Partnership

Through consultation these partnerships have identified local issues and areas of importance to their local community and are working at a local level to try to address them. These findings have been collated in five Community Area Plans. *Each of the plans identifies a lack of facilities and satisfactory range of activities for children and young people as a major concern.* In some cases these plans include specific references and projects to address these needs and have been included in the Action Plan.

### 14.5 Community Strategy for North Wiltshire

Informed by each of the Community Area Plans and a wide range of consultation shared with other local organisations, this sets out the picture of the needs of the whole population of North Wiltshire. *A common thread running through the district is the lack of facilities and activities for young people.*

The Community Strategy and all five Community Area Plans are available to download at [www.northwilts.gov.uk](http://www.northwilts.gov.uk)

### 14.6 North Wiltshire Open Space Study

Planning Policy Guidance 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation (ODPM; 2002) recommends that as well as ensuring that there is sufficient open space (including play areas) and in the right place, that a local assessment and audit is undertaken. This was done in North Wiltshire in 2004 to inform the Council's Open Spaces Study and the Countryside and Open Space Strategy. A wide range of parish councils and key partners as well as via the People's Voice resident's panel. In turn, this consultation provided a quantitative and qualitative audit of existing provision and makes recommendations.

## 15. Consultation with Children and Young People

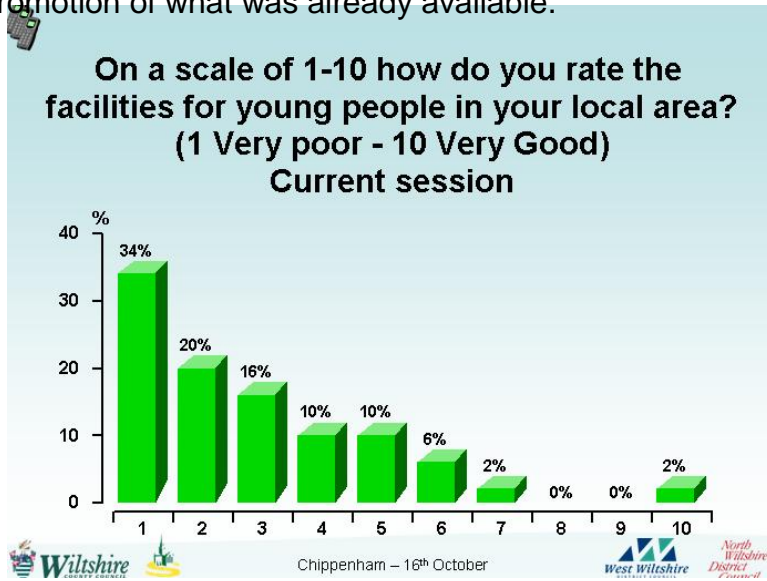
Various consultative events with young people have been held.

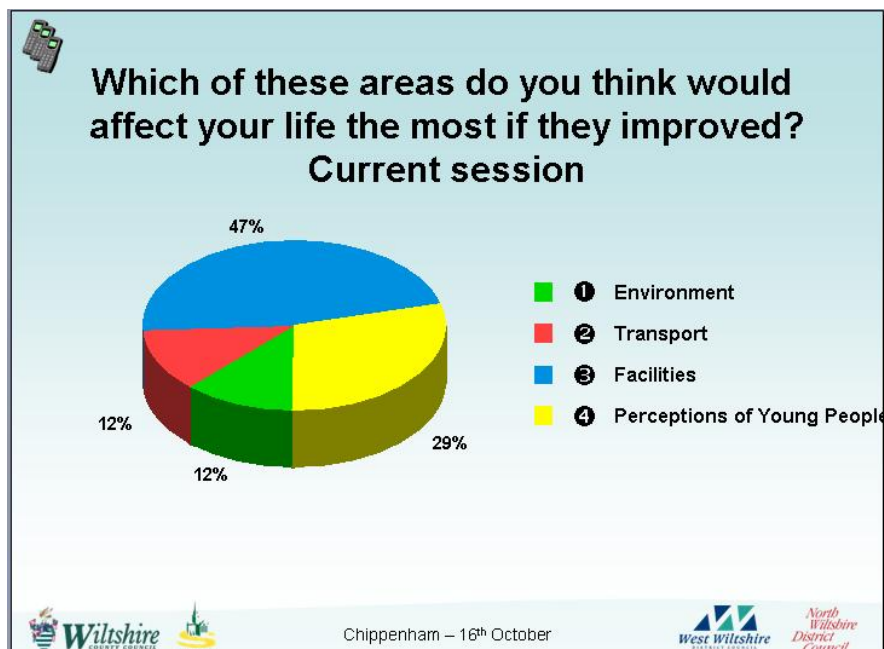
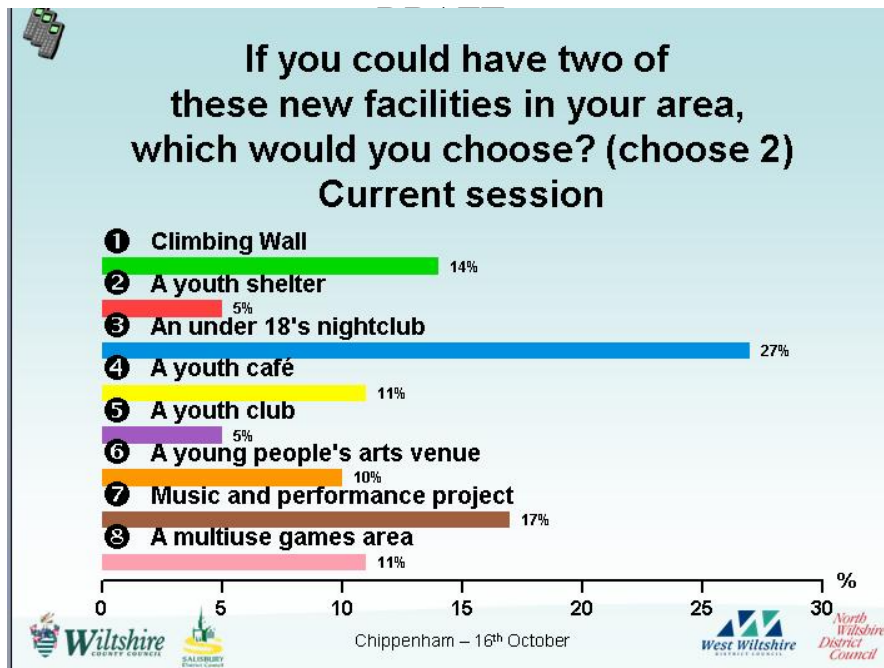
### 15.1 Take Part Take Power

In October 2006 an event - Take Part Take Power – took place involving over 70 young people from across the district aged between 13-18 years. This was held as part of Local Democracy Week. All had the opportunity to explore a

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range of issues using electronic hand held voting equipment. Improving facilities for children, an improved public transport system, asking young people what they actually wanted all ranked highly as desirable along with better promotion of what was already available.

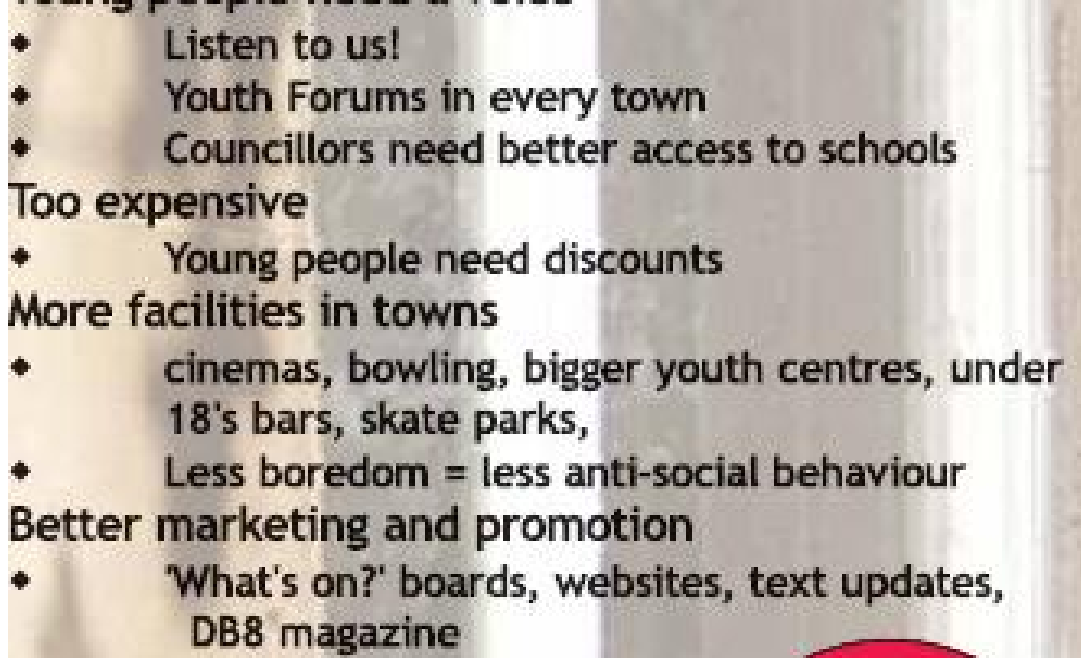




## 15.2 Who gives a Hoody? (Consultative event with hard to reach young people)

The District Council worked in partnership with Wiltshire County Council and North Wiltshire's Young People's Council (YPC) to host a consultative event - Who gives a Hoody? - for hard to reach groups of young people in October 2005. The event involved over 50 hard to reach young people including, young people not in employment, education or training, young carers and young farmers.

One of the key themes of the day revolved around leisure and facilities for young people. Consultation took place through workshops via a variety of mediums including art, drama and the outdoors. Key findings taken from the event's Record of the Day were that:



### 15.3 North Wiltshire Festival

The North Wiltshire Young People's Council (YPC) ran consultation through questionnaires around a range of issues during the 2 day North Wiltshire Festival in July 2006. Just under 100 questionnaires were completed. Leisure and play provision was among issues of most concern to young people (alongside perceptions of young people, transport and education).

General findings were that:

- There should be more facilities for younger teenagers
- More leisure provision was needed during school holidays and weekends

### 15.4 Consultation with Young Disabled People and Children

In 2005 a new partnership was formed bringing together the Equal Access Service at ASK (Wiltshire's Children's Information Service, New Pathways for Disabled Children and Young People (NPDCYP), Wiltshire Children's Fund; the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership; Youth Development Service, Family Support Services, St Nicholas School and the Wiltshire Music Centre. This is known as COMMUNIK8. This partnership led consultation with disabled children and young people in Wiltshire. (Particular guidance was given by St Nicholas Special School in Chippenham where the Head teacher and her pupils had drawn up a model for consultation).

Consultative events were held throughout Wiltshire including events in Malmesbury and at St Nicholas School in Chippenham. A main topic area for discussion was play and leisure, out of school activities and holidays. Key findings were:

- More swimming –not just public sessions, also with skilled supporters to help
- More trampolining – lessons and fun sessions.
- To try new things – even risky ones such as go-karting,

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- A place to 'chill out', chat, relax and have fun – with friends or alone. A place where they were accepted as themselves, and where amenities are adapted so they can join in.
- To be taken to places where that other children & young people go – days out, the cinema, horse riding, concerts.
- Many felt clubs and activities should be free.
- Several stated that they would be happy to play and do leisure activities with children from other schools.
- Information should be easily accessible to all – posters - using symbols/pictures to support the written information.
- 

*“Things happen **to** me – I don’t **make** things happen.”*

A young physically disabled person at a  
COMMUNIK8 event

More information about work with disabled young people and children both locally and on a national level is available from the Children’s and Young People’s Partnership. The website is at [www.wiltshirepathways.org](http://www.wiltshirepathways.org)

### 15.5 Tomorrows Voice

Tomorrows Voice is a panel of 1500 young people in Wiltshire, supported by Wiltshire County Council, the District Councils, the Police and Health Primary Care Trusts. Tomorrows Voice members are aged between 11 and 18 and are consulted twice yearly via questionnaires and conferences on issues of importance to them. About half of schools take part and questionnaires are also distributed to schools and youth clubs in Wiltshire by Youth Democracy Workers, which allows non-panellists to give their opinions. Reports from 2001 onwards are available at [www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk](http://www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk). The Tomorrow’s Voice Survey for early 2007 will concentrate in part on leisure and play provision.

## 16. Other Consultation

### 16.1 Towns and Parishes

Many towns and parishes managing their own play areas also consult with local children, parents and residents around the design and development of play areas. An example of this can be found in Wootton Bassett where the Town Council has developed its own strategy and a rolling programme for improving for play areas. In the North of Calne the Town Council is engaging in consultation with young people around the design and construction of a new play area and on the refurbishment of the existing skate park. Many parishes have their own playground committees. Some villages have parish plans again informed by local consultation. *All identify facilities for young people as a priority.*

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### 16.2 Voluntary Groups

Local voluntary groups are also working with their communities. For example, in the village of Lyneham a group made up of young people and military personnel living at the RAF Station are working together with civilians and their children in the village. Known as YELL – Youth Entertainment and Leisure in Lyneham – it is working to improve play and facilities in the village for young people.

Consultation is achieved through questionnaires and public meetings between local people, the RAF and the Parish Council. Response to local consultation in 2005 showed that there was a strong need for an increase in provision in Lyneham for the older age group in particular – *92% of respondents stated that there were not enough recreational facilities and opportunities available for young people*. The results also showed that the level of provision and services for children and young people decline as they get older – this is largely reflected right across the district.

In Lower Compton local residents are working with the Calne Community Area Partnership to undertake a consultation process to look at the future design and provision of play in their locality.

In Malmesbury, a local group of residents in the western part of the town have formed the White Lion Recreation Association. Their ambition is to transform a local open space to enable them to exercise, play sport, play and relax – a place for everyone to enjoy. Extensive consultation has taken place and recent lottery funding (BIG 50k) has enabled them to provide play zones for 2-8 year olds and 8-14 year olds as well as football pitches and landscaping.

### 16.3 Childcare Audit

In Autumn 2006, a comprehensive audit was undertaken by the Early Years Service at Wiltshire County Council regarding childcare provision and facilities in the county. This substantial survey of parents was undertaken by ASK, and administered through pre-schools, nurseries, schools and parent and toddler groups, etc.

This survey highlighted holiday activities (35%) and outdoor play for 0-8 year olds (32%) as the most popular request from parents for their children. (The survey covered parents of children from 0 – 14 years). This result is reflected across the county.

### 16.4 People's Voice

People's Voice is a panel of around 3,500 Wiltshire adult residents chosen at random from the electoral register and organised into 20 mini panels to represent the 20 community areas in Wiltshire. The panel is consulted up to 4 times a year using postal questionnaires with questions issued by a partnership of the County, District councils, Health, Police and Fire Brigade.

Respondents in North Wiltshire in 2001 and 2002 highlighted anti-social behaviour in the district as a community safety concern. In 2003, indoor and

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outdoor sports clubs, youth clubs and play areas all ranked highly as the right play provision for children and young people. Of North Wiltshire respondents in 2003, 63% agreed that more should be spent on facilities for young people with 50% setting this as a community priority. Also, 54% of all Wiltshire respondents agreed that more activities for young people would be an appropriate method of tackling anti-social behaviour.

### 16.5 An Assessment of Leisure and Recreational Needs

The District Council will also be undertaking a comprehensive assessment of leisure and recreation which will involve further consultation and audit. This will set out the basis for planning future recreation needs across the district. and appears in the Action Plan.

### 16.6 Future Consultation

The District Council recognises that more focused consultation is needed around the provision of play. This Strategy is the catalyst for this and further consultation is planned and appears in the table in the Action Plan.

## 17. Audit Findings: North Wiltshire

### 17.1 Audit Methodology

This section looks at the methods of how local play provision has already been examined. Generally, existing provision was ascertained from the work around PPG 17 and the Open Spaces Study. The Action Plan clearly sets out how this will be supplemented through a further audit of towns and parish councils as well as other providers in the private and voluntary sectors.

### 17.2 Local Provision Examined

#### 17.2.1 Open Spaces and Assessment of Supply

There are 102 play areas in North Wiltshire. The following play facilities are owned and managed directly by the District Council. Other facilities are owned and managed by town and parish councils or managed on our behalf by them.

Kingsley Road	Chippenham	Suitable for 4-8 year olds
Kingham Close	Chippenham	Suitable for 4-8 year olds
Monkton Park	Chippenham	separate play areas for toddlers 4-8 year olds Multi use ball games area for youths
Barrow Green	Chippenham	Suitable for 4-8 year olds
Bence's Lane	Corsham	suitable for 4-8 year olds

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Pockeridge	Corsham	Two play areas suitable for 4-8 year olds Basketball area.
Rodbourne Road	Corston	Basketball area
Fynamore Gardens	Calne	Suitable for 4-8 year olds
Pinewood Way	Coleerne	suitable for 4-8 year olds

The North Wiltshire Open Space Study identified the varying types of space available for public use including play areas and the standards governing them. An audit of all these play facilities was undertaken in 2004 to assess both the quantity and quality of the facilities across the district. In terms of quality the play areas were scored against a set of criteria including the standard of the equipment, signage and disabled access, and then ranked excellent, good, fair or poor based on the following percentages:

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Poor	0 – 24 %
Fair	25 – 49%
Good	50 – 74%
Excellent	75 – 100%

As prescribed in the Companion Guide to PPG17: Assessing Needs and Opportunities, this system was based on local circumstances. The list of play areas and their rankings is at **Appendix 4**. The audit was undertaken in 2004 and many play areas have since been improved. A new audit will be undertaken and this appears in the Action Plan.

### Mapping and Gapping

As well as formal equipped areas, the Open Space Study also includes areas that offer much more informal opportunities that are likely to develop children's independence and senses of adventure and safety. These areas include amenity greenspace and semi-natural greenspace, as part of a 'network of play'. These 'networks of play', as well as the equipped play areas, in general form part of the overall park provision which is described below:



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### Adopted North Wiltshire Open Space Hierarchy

Type of Open Space	Approximate size and Catchment	Characteristics
<p><b>District Park (DP)</b></p> <p>Weekend and occasional visits by foot, cycle, car and short bus trips.</p>	<p>Min. of 2 hectares. Catchment of 3.2km (2.2km pedestrian)</p>	<p>Likely to be the major open space in a town (and possibly the Community Area). Features could include semi-natural areas, landscaped areas, sports area and/or multi use fields, play areas and picnic areas. Should also strive to have fully accessible toilet facilities (or facilities near-by) and regular attendance by park staff. Car parking.</p>
<p><b>Community Park (CP)</b></p> <p>Visits by foot, cycle, and short bus trips.</p>	<p>Min. 1 hectares. Catchment of 1 km (700m pedestrian)</p>	<p>Primarily to meet the needs of a number of linked neighbourhoods. A range of facilities including play areas, pitches, seating, landscaped areas and semi-natural areas.</p>
<p><b>Local Park (LP)</b></p> <p>Pedestrian visits, especially by old people and children, particularly valuable in areas of high density housing.</p>	<p>Min. of 0.2 hectares. Catchment of 400m (280m pedestrian)</p>	<p>Predominantly for local use within easy reach by foot or cycle. May have some of the following facilities: play area, kick about area and turfed open space.</p>
<p><b>Open Space (OS)</b></p> <p>Other open space. Space Left Over After Planning (SLOAP), but also large areas with no facilities.</p>	<p>Ranging in size upwards from 100m<sup>2</sup>.</p>	<p>Can act as landscaping, or be semi-natural habitat, for example a small area of scrub. May have a play area. Minimal management e.g. grass cutting.</p>
<p><b>Linear open space (greenway)</b></p> <p>Pedestrian and cycle visits.</p>	<p>Various.</p>	<p>A 'green' corridor such as a river corridor. Could be of conservation interest and also have a high recreation usage.</p>

The amount of each type of Park is summarised in the following table:

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Open Space Type	Number of Sites	Hectares
District Park	3	20.05
Community Park	10	44.62
Local Park	59	93.7

As part of the Study a full mapping and gapping exercise to identify those areas of the district with the greatest deficit of public open space was undertaken. Again the methodology for doing this was based on local needs rather than a national standard such as the National Playing Field Association's Six Acre Standard which is difficult to apply to both rural areas and urban areas consistently. The locally derived standard took into account the populations of settlements and the current provision of the different types of park as described above. Using this approach it was able to determine the areas where there was a large deficit of open space, and therefore where resources should be targeted. The following settlements are the least well provisioned:

- Cricklade
- Lydiard Millicent
- Lyneham
- Corsham and Rudloe
- Colerne
- Malmesbury

The Open Spaces Study is currently under review as part of the preparation of an Open Space Supplementary Planning Document.

### 17.2.2 Other District Council Provision

North Wiltshire District Council has no statutory duty to supply play provision and currently it has no specific leisure or recreation responsibilities. However, through partnership working it does support a number of development programmes and opportunities for children and young people. In addition to the managed play areas listed above, the Council

- Owns 6 leisure centres in North Wiltshire (currently managed by commercial providers)
- Owns and contributes towards the running of the Community Centre at Rudloe in Corsham
- Funds a number of new recreational facilities and schemes for children through its the Community Award Scheme
- Contributes to the Participatory Arts Workshop Scheme (PAWS)
- Contributes towards Rural Arts Wiltshire (RAW) which brings artists to locally run projects
- Plays an active role in Wiltshire Alternative Youth Sports (WAYS)
- Plays an active role in the Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership (WYAP)
- Contributes towards improvements to the Pound Arts Centre in Corsham as well as supporting the Trust to run it as a district wide facility. Alongside wide ranging programmes this provides facilities for children and young people with an outreach service for rural areas

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- Supports an awarding winning Young People's Council which is regularly consulted on a range of local issues
- In partnership with the Youth Development Service (YDS), supports training and development opportunities for young people involved in youth forums and other representative groups
- Enables, through its Sports Development Officer, more than 250 young people from across North Wiltshire to take part in the annual Youth Games
- Supports the development of schools sports programmes and festivals, club and coach development as well as sports college development
- Has supported the Open Blue Bus Trust., a faith-based charity. This uses a bus to deliver opportunities to people in North Wiltshire. It has been totally refitted with a kitchen, café-style area, TV and music system, play station equipment, arts and a play area.

### 18. County-Wide Provision

A comprehensive audit of services and facilities available to children and young people has been carried out through a combination of desk-based results, consultation with key providers and physical audit. The opportunities have been categorised as those available to children across the county without districts boundaries (often provided or commissioned by the County Council) and those available in our specific district and subject to district boundaries, often but not always in the control of the District Council.

#### 18.1 List of Services and Facilities for Children and Young People

##### Toy Libraries

There are 9 toy libraries in Wiltshire, each offering loan of toys, and some offering 'stay and play' sessions and equipment loan. Most are open once a month and charge a nominal amount to parents and carers, including formal childcare providers, to enable children to access ever-changing play resources and continually extend their play opportunities. Most also offer short-term membership to support families who are only in the area on a short-term basis, which particularly supports traveller families and those attached to mobile employment, such as the military. Toy libraries are also linked with Children's Centre and provide outreach.

##### School Playgrounds

Each school in Wiltshire has outdoor play areas which are utilised at playtimes and lunchtimes except in poor weather. The size and quality of play opportunities available vary from school to school depending upon the emphasis which the school places upon play. (In some schools there are trained playworkers). In addition, there are play opportunities inside schools during poor weather. Although outside the remit of this Strategy, we also recognise that within the classroom play is often seen as the best way to encourage learning, especially at Foundation Stage.

##### Out of School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes

Many of the County's schools now have out of school clubs as part of the provision of childcare, with breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and holiday

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clubs being provided by mostly external providers. These clubs offer a variety of play opportunities, including outdoor play and sports, indoor games play, cookery, creative activities and organised team games. Although some of these activities are directed, activities are not usually compulsory but are on offer, and children are free to choose their activities and can drop in and out of different activities as they choose.

### **Contribution to Bristol Play Day**

A South-West Play Day is held annually in Bristol to train playworkers, and is organised by a partnership of organisations led by Playwork Partnerships. This day, at a nominal cost, encourages playworkers and others interested in encouraging children to access good quality play opportunities to attend wide-ranging workshops and participate in practical activities, and with play provision for children in the form of crèches and activities, the day truly caters for all concerned with play. Although this is outside of our county-boundary, the day is partly funded by Wiltshire County Council and supported by County employees.

### **Pre-Schools and Nurseries**

As in all counties, Wiltshire has a good number of pre-schools and nursery schools offering pre-school education to children under 5. These settings offer opportunities for children in this age group to learn to play with other children and include a period of free play as well as directed activities working towards the achievement of Early Years Goals. There are currently 292 nurseries and pre-schools in Wiltshire.

### **Parent and Toddler Groups**

In common with other areas, there is a wide assortment of parent and toddler groups in all areas of the county, totalling 230 groups. These are supported by a Service Level Agreement with ASK (Children's Information Service) to ensure quality.

### **Creches**

There are a few crèches in Wiltshire for less regular childcare, ranging from facilities in hotels to leisure centres. There is good provision in Kennet and Salisbury but fewer crèche facilities available in West and North Wiltshire; however the Childcare and Family Services Survey 2006 shows that there is no critical need for further crèche facilities in either of these two districts.

### **Wiltshire Scrapstore & Resource Centre**

Wiltshire has an excellent Scrapstore and Resource Centre which houses a vast variety of industrial waste materials which can be used by children in creative activities. Membership of the service is nominal and the price of purchasing scrap materials within the reach of most families and settings in Wiltshire. The centre has recently purchased a new outreach bus, taking their total to two. This allows them to take their service from Lacock, near the centre of our large county, to outlying areas. In addition, the Wiltshire Scrapstore and Resource Centre offers creative activities to children and young people from their central base, some on series basis. They also visit Children's Centres as part of their outreach.

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### Library Service

The library service is run by the County Council, with branches throughout the county. There are a variety of activities run for children, with the quantity and provision depending upon the library and the population which it serves. The main activities are:

- Story Times for under 5s – some libraries
- Rhyme Times for babies & toddler – some libraries
- Summer Reading Challenge – incentives & activities to encourage children (4-12) to read throughout the summer) – in all libraries
- Family Learning activities – various – currently looking at our Learning “Offer”
- General activities throughout the year to promote a love of books and libraries – book related events, themes (e.g. Christmas, Chinese New Year), crafts, stories, games, competitions
- Loan of jigsaws – limited libraries
- Bookstart (national books for babies initiative) - promotional activities related to e.g. special rhyme times, Book Crawl (to be introduced this year)
- Pre-school activities in library – introduction to library/stories
- Reading groups – limited libraries – most linked to schools
- Homework “clubs” (9 year olds+)– Calne, Melksham & Salisbury
- Mini Street – evening for teenagers where they can engage with local businesses, leisure and recreational activity providers and musicians etc. - Salisbury

### Museum Service

The county Museum Service supports 19 museums organisations throughout Wiltshire, which offer a variety of activities and opportunities for children and young people. Over the last few months these have included Knights In Armour days, Victorian activity days, including dressing up, creative activities and junk workshops. Admission to many museums is free or nominal.

### Bright Horizons

Bright Horizons is contracted by Wiltshire County Council to co-ordinate childcare training courses for playworkers in the county. They support playworkers to achieve Level 1, 2 and 3 qualifications, in addition to administering the Early Years Professional Status applications for funding and organising one-off training events utilising outside agencies and in-house providers. They also provide a training course entitled ‘Everyone Can Play’ which concentrate on inclusion issues in relation to play opportunities.

### Youth Service

Although a lot of the activities undertaken by the Youth Service begin by being structured and youth worker led, as the young people develop and progress through the curriculum they are encouraged more and more to undertake their own projects, make their own decisions, work together as a team and attain independence in their activities, and therefore this is considered to be a more youth-orientated form of ‘play’ in a slightly different context. There is a thriving and very active youth service in Wiltshire with youth clubs and activities in many areas and by considering these activities to be part of the play provision in Wiltshire there is a significant offering to youth in terms of play.

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### Uniformed organisations

There is good provision of uniformed organisations in Wiltshire, but as most activities are directed beyond being considered free play, this area will not be discussed in this Strategy.

### Sure Start Children's Centres

20 Children's Centres are being established in Wiltshire, each bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support for children under 5 and their families. As part of their remit is to improve health and emotional development for young children, which overlaps with the objectives of this Strategy, they are well positioned to work in partnership towards our joint goals. Although they will not provide play opportunities as part of their activities, except indirectly through childcare provision, they are well positioned to advise and promote play opportunities to parents and carers.

### Splash

Splash is linked to Wiltshire Police and runs programmes which promote inclusion and development of young people through a series of activity programmes which aim to involve young people at risk to improve their contribution to society. WASP take part in the development of the programmes, which take place all over the county for varying lengths of time. Activities are available for young people who fit the set criteria from ages 9 to 19 (different programmes having differing age groups) and are free of charge, and although some programmes are fairly structured, others are aimed more at improving personal skills through a fairly fluid structure and given the target age groups, can be considered as 'play'.

### WASP

The Wiltshire and Swindon Activity and Sports Partnership (WASP) is an alliance of organisations which work together to raise the level and standards of physical activity and sport. They are part of forty-five county partnerships, and one of seven which comprise the South West regional structure. By increasing the number of sport and activity participants and frequency of activity, they aim to improve the health and fitness of people in Wiltshire, including children and young people. They hold events which are aimed specifically at disabled people and those with special educational needs. Of the 12 key challenges they are addressing in Wiltshire, two are specifically aimed at our target age group – Early Years and Out of School Hours. In terms of early years, they work in partnership with the Children's Information Service, ASK, to help parents and toddlers become involved in active toddler groups, and aim to ensure more quality active play for children in playgroups and nurseries. They encourage active play in playgrounds and community spaces and sports in after-school clubs and community clubs, and hold a variety of youth activities, including 'Wake and Shake', encouraging young people to take a more active part in sports activities at schools in lunchtimes and after school.

### 'WAYS' (Wiltshire Alternative Youth Sports)

WAYS has worked with the District Council and other partners in North Wiltshire. This has been mainly through informal consultation with groups of

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young people around the area that they live in and what they would like to see provided specifically for them.

The focus is always around open access provision that would be free to use at any time. WAYS is trying to help young people look at different sorts of provision including outdoor bouldering rocks, dedicated areas for power kite flying and mountain boarding, BMX / 4X tracks for bikes, skate parks, mountain bike trails, dedicated areas for Parkour (free running) and orienteering courses.

### Trio

Trio is contracted to provide support and training to childminders in Wiltshire, from initial interest through registration to further training.

### Wiltshire Assembly of Youth

WAY is an elected body of young people who live across all four of the districts in Wiltshire. UK Youth Parliament is a national organisation with elected young people from across the whole of the United Kingdom. In Wiltshire, young people elect 2 UKYP reps and two deputies each year to represent the young people in this county. The UKYP reps form part of WAY, along with 22 other members.

WAY work closely with a lot of organisations and decision making bodies across Wiltshire and are forging good links with the North Wiltshire Young People's Council (NWYPC)– in fact several members of the NWYPC have stood for election onto WAY, in addition to the work they do in North Wilts.

### WYAP

Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership has been a working partnership between Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury and West Wiltshire District Councils, Wiltshire County Council's Youth Development Service and Arts Council England, South West for over four years. It employs a full-time Youth Arts Co-ordinator and has now expanded its team to include an Arts Administration and Information Officer. It has also increased both the range and number of youth arts opportunities accessible to young people aged 13 to 21 years.

### Youth Action Wiltshire

Youth Action Wiltshire is a registered charity and voluntary youth organisation offering training and information for club leaders, together with advice, sporting and creative activities and events for young people aged between 8 and 25 years in youth projects and clubs.

### Community First

Community First is a charity that works at the forefront of community development to help improve the quality of life and economic well being of people and local communities throughout Wiltshire and Swindon. They work in close partnership with local grass roots communities, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies and funders to help develop and deliver wide ranging community programmes that bring social, economic and environmental benefits to local people in Wiltshire and Swindon. The District Council has worked, and will continue to work with Community First on the development of play projects, with particular reference to facilitating public

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consultation.

### 19. Key Findings of Consultation and Audit

Existing consultation and audit clearly shows a lack of facilities and breadth of activities across the district for children and young people. Key findings are that although the District Council has no statutory obligations to provide play provision other than manage its own play areas, it has taken steps to address the local demand for improvements.

- The Corporate Plan has been informed and driven by the five Area Community Plans and Community Strategy (where there is a common theme of better provision for children)
- The adoption of a Youth Strategy in Spring 2007 (supported by a version compiled by young people) setting out a strategic approach to addressing issues raised by young people
- The adoption of an Open Spaces Study which includes a comprehensive analysis of open space, including play areas in North Wiltshire
- The district Council has funded a large number of projects around play provision through the Community Awards Scheme
- Encouraged the use Section 106 Agreements for play provision in new housing development
- The Community Safety Officer and Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer work closely with young people, the police, voluntary groups and local communities to identify projects to tackle anti-social behaviour problems

However, the Council recognises that existing consultation and audit shows that it needs, with partners, to address common needs identified in consultation and audit. These are that:

- There is a general lack of play provision for children and young people across the district
- Improvements are needed around infrequent and unaffordable public transport to access existing facilities
- More involvement is needed from children and young people to identify the right provision for them
- There is a lack of information and poor promotion about what provision is already available
- Improvements are needed to some fixed equipment play areas to make them more innovative and accessible for different age groups and for the disabled
- More variety of play experience is needed at some play areas with the addition of, for example, BMX parks and MUGAs



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- There is a lack of inclusiveness in play provision for some groups (e.g., the disabled, girls)
- There is a lack of activities during school holidays
- The deficit of provision is highest for facilities and activities for the 12+ age group
- There no real coordination about provision between the Council, other agencies, voluntary groups and commercial providers
- The breadth of provision needs to be increased at local facilities – multi-use community facilities

### 20. Key Actions

The key actions for the District Council in the short and medium term are:

1. To undertake a focused consultation exercise around this Strategy and play provision.
2. To undertake a comprehensive audit and needs assessment of all open space, leisure and recreation facilities, including play areas and sports pitches. This to be in line with Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and recreation, and the Companion Guide – Assessing Needs and Opportunities.
3. Compile a portfolio of projects for lottery funding

These actions and the needs set out above will shape the priorities and outcomes for the Action Plan

### 21. Local Standards

Standards that are applicable to play provision but primarily with regard to equipped play areas are:

- The National Playing Field Association's Six Acre Standard (currently under review)
- European safety standards EN1176 – Playground Equipment and EN 1177 – Safety Surfacing

In its current form the Six Acre Standard sets minimum requirements for the three types of equipped play area, Local Areas for Play (LAP's), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP's) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP's). The standards include type and range of equipment, activity and buffer zones and catchment areas.

The safety standards cover aspects of general safety requirements and test methods for various specific equipment, guidance for installation, inspection and maintenance, and the area and depth of impact absorbing surfaces.

The above standards are designed to ensure that basic standards are met rather than provide a high quality play experience and in terms of catchment are very difficult (and not necessarily desirable) to achieve. The Green Flag Award would help to raise standards in open space, which again would

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include equipped play areas but is not specifically play. Developing a local standard which is a mixture of traditional play, a 'network of play opportunities', and more innovative schemes is much more appropriate, but difficult to determine. As part of the intended work on needs assessment for recreation and leisure a play provision standard based on local circumstances will be set.

### **ACTION PLAN – Appendix 5**

The Action Plan has been drafted to reflect the needs identified in the Play Strategy and meet its objectives:

Being Healthy  
Staying Safe  
Enjoying and Achieving  
Making a Positive Contribution  
Economic Well-Being

(Every Child Matters/ North Wiltshire District Council's Corporate Plan)

**Following consultation, the projects listed may change and/or be subject to further research.**

***“People tend to forget that play is serious”***

David Hockney,  
Artist