

# PLAY POLICY RISK/BENEFIT ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

“How well do the sites provide the play opportunities our Parish Council aims to offer, while managing the risks?”

## PLAY AREA : RECREATION GROUND (PLAY SPACE AND SKATEPARK)

ISSUE	COMMENTARY
Are there regular inspections for litter hazards?	Yes; Litter picker visits three times per week during periods of high use and twice weekly during periods of low use. Litter picked and bins emptied.
Are there regular inspections for wear & tear or damage?	Yes; Inspections every week by council asset inspector staff, any points arising are actioned. Litter picker is also a qualified asset inspector, so would notice anything obviously amiss when visiting on the other 2 times each week. Staff are suitably trained via RoSPA playground inspection training course.
Has there been an annual safety inspection by accredited supplier?	Yes: Wicksteed carried out the annual independent safety inspection of the play space and skatepark in May. Some minor points raised which are being addressed by the council.
Is the site well used?	Yes: both the skatepark and play space see very heavy footfall, constantly busy in out-of-school hours, weekends and school holidays. Usage greatly increased since the installation of the new equipment (play space, skate park and ball court) and nearby facilities.
Is the site safe and accessible?	Yes; Easy access in centre of village, flat entrances. New concrete footpath connects play space, skate park and memorial hall through to Castlemead, Vicarage Road and the car park. Enables easy wheelchair & pushchair access.
Is there car parking nearby, with appropriate surface and flat access?	Yes, Memorial Hall car park and dedicated car park. 1 x Tarmac and 1 x block. Some dedicated disabled bays. Flat access from car park to site.
Are there areas for young people to play and socialise?	Yes; the new play space includes a wide variety of play equipment for all ages including (a) some with spaces to socialise such as the Birds Nest Tree and Nest Carousel (b) and some items where young people can share experiences by playing together such as the Viking Swinger, Cantilever Swing & Climbing Whirl. There are also several benches and picnic tables provided. The wider recreation ground also houses benches, open space and cricket practice nets.
Does the site promote inclusion and access for disadvantaged and disabled children?	Yes: Prior to commissioning the new play space, the parish council consulted with families of disabled children in the community to determine the features that would most enhance their child's use of the play space and their ability to integrate and socialise with able bodied friends and family. The site development has been assessed against the RoSPA Access Audit and Disability Act requirements.  Play England urge developers to “imagine a play space where disabled and non-disabled children play together” and we have strived to achieve this within our plan which fully endorses the values and principals of inclusive play. It also recognises that accessible play space is not just about getting the right fixed equipment, but also the design of the space and how it enables people to use it.

	<p>The design is formulated on an inclusive basis, allowing able and disabled bodied children to play and socialise together. A wide range of DDA compliant equipment has been incorporated into the design, predominantly located close to the central hard surfaced picnic area for easy access. This includes equipment to cover a wide range of play experiences such as rocking, sliding, bouncing, swinging and spinning.</p> <p>Children are also stimulated through colour, movement, tactile elements and varying levels of challenge. When assessing against this criteria, RoSPA say “Good to see the play equipment is obviously suitable for children with “special needs” and that it can be played with (and enjoyed) by all children without any stigma or embarrassment.”</p> <p>DDA compliant benches with backs and arms have been incorporated into the design, as has firm surfacing and obvious access points/routes.</p> <p>Bi-annual disability consultation with residents is undertaken, inviting parents to submit any difficulties or alternative equipment requirements.</p>
Does the cost/availability of transport provide a barrier to access?	No. The site is freely available to all residents and accessible via a number of footpath links.
Do the recreational opportunities reflect the needs and interests of the community?	<p>Redevelopment of this site has been a long-term project.</p> <p>The parish council purchased the plot of Leisure Land from Pitstone Parish Charity in 2019/20, which has enabled the leisure development at this site and secured its future use for leisure and recreation. The council continues to work on the upgrade of this location from a LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play) to a NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play). The first element of this project was the installation of the replacement play space completed during 2020/21, and the skatepark followed in 2021/22.</p> <p>Children need to experience risk, challenge and excitement in their play so that they can “stretch and challenge themselves in every way” (Play England). To achieve this aim, a range of equipment to reflect all sizes, abilities and functions has been provided. Play experiences include role play, spinning, sliding, climbing, bouncing, rocking, gliding, balance, traversing, crawling and natural play. Challenging, stimulating and fun items of equipment have been included to appeal to older children for which the previous playground offered no facilities at all. The height (Cheops pyramid is 5.6m tall), speed (zip wire) and movement (climbing whirl) of some of this equipment, combined with its location on site, will allow users to play high alongside the tree canopies, experience new sensations and push their abilities in order to grow in confidence. The RoSPA evaluation reported “Good to see such a wide range of equipment, play values and play challenges for all ages and abilities. The new play space certainly has the “WOW” factor.”</p> <p>The Play England principle asks developers to “imagine a play space where children of all ages play together”, where the boundaries are set by the users themselves rather than being imposed upon. The new design is a fully integrated area that will aid the child’s progression, confidence building and motor skill development rather than restricting the play experience dependant on age or ability. RoSPA</p>

	<p>comments in relation to this matter are “Excellent. Good to see.” A central picnic area with hard surface has been provided, along with other seating/picnic facilities to provide social areas for parents and carers to meet whilst their children play freely and safely. RoSPA concur saying “Excellent idea to provide a focal point and good seating area.” This area will be illuminated at the request of Thames Valley Police.</p> <p>A multi-use games area for basketball, football, was installed by Nicholas King Homes in 2021 on parish council owned land and will eventually transfer to the parish council. There remain some issues with this facility, with both the parish and Buckinghamshire Councils liaising with NKH.</p> <p>The skatepark was installed in 2022, completing the upgrade of the LEAP to NEAP providing a range of facilities for all ages and enabling families to all play together at the same site.</p> <p>The wider recreation ground includes a football pitch and cricket pitch, where the council works with the associated sports clubs to ensure the grounds meet their requirements. In 2023 the council and I&amp;PUCC jointly installed a new set of double lane cricket practice nets that are available for the whole community to use.</p>
Is the value to the community of this space maximised?	<p>The current space is very tightly constrained with; children’s play, areas to socialise, informal sports areas, organised football and cricket training/matches.</p> <p>The purchase of the additional land enabled the replacement play space, skate park and cricket practice nets. By working with Nicholas King Homes, we have been able to secure replacement car parking and the installation of the ball court, further expanding the leisure provision.</p>
Are there any procurement requirements for this site?	<p>Multi use ball court still being maintained by Nicholas King Homes due to ongoing issues with unit installed.</p> <p>No other immediately identified procurement requirements for this site.</p>
Has there been any improvement to the site during the year?	<p>New memorial bench installed on the wider Recreation Ground by the Oak tree, replacing a previous metal bench.</p> <p>Double lane cricket practice nets installed adjacent to the playground and available for all the community to use.</p>
Any areas identified for improvement?	<p>Ongoing issues with Nicholas King Homes regarding the quality of the installed ball court</p>
Insurance	<p>The skatepark and zip line generated extra insurance requirements which have been, and will be, met by the parish council.</p>

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## PLAY AREA : WINDSOR ROAD

ISSUE	COMMENTARY
Are there regular inspections for litter hazards?	Yes; Council employed litter picker attends weekly or more frequently if required during periods of high use, to pick litter and empty bins.
Are there regular inspections for wear & tear or damage?	Yes; Council employed staff carry out asset inspections every week, any points arising are actioned. Staff are suitably trained via RoSPA playground inspection training course. Litter picker is also a qualified asset inspector, so would notice anything obviously amiss when visiting at other times each week.
Has there been an annual safety inspection by accredited supplier?	Yes, by Wicksteed in May. Minor points being addressed by the council. Remedial works to the wetpour and bearings of the seesaw commissioned with Wicksteed.
Is the site well used?	Yes; often occupied, especially by younger children.
Is the site safe and accessible?	Yes; Easy pedestrian access in centre of Castlemead estate, flat entrances, good visibility and overlooked by residential properties. Interior mainly hard surfaces – wet pour or macadam – allowing easy access between equipment. Grassed area at side.
Is there car parking nearby, with appropriate surface and flat access?	On road parking only, with tarmac footpaths to play space. Dedicated cycle path and two footpaths. Designed for use by local residents who tend to walk, scoot, cycle etc to the park.
Are there areas for young people to play and socialise?	Yes; Play equipment, benches and picnic tables plus grass area. Neighbouring grass site for informal sports etc owned & managed by Buckinghamshire Council.
Does the site promote the inclusion and access for disadvantaged and disabled children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features multi-purpose equipment with slide, springers and cradle seat swings that can be enjoyed by majority of children.</li> <li>• Site fully accessible.</li> <li>• Bi-annual disability consultation with residents for them to feedback any difficulties or request any alternative equipment</li> </ul>
Does the cost/availability of transport provide a barrier to access?	No. Open access. Good foot & cycle path network access.
Do the recreational opportunities reflect the needs and interests of the community?	<p>This is a small local area of play predominantly designed for use by young children resident in the Castlemead estate. There is a limited amount of equipment (focusing mainly on swinging, sliding and rocking) and therefore limited stretch of experience, but equipment choice offers different experiences to the other Castlemead play area in Hever Close.</p> <p>Buckinghamshire Council granted permission for the parish council to replace the hopscotch and alphabet snake ground decals in 2021/22. These sit on BC land just outside the fenced play area.</p>
Is the value to the community of this space maximised?	Yes. Given the size of the area the space includes children’s play, informal/natural play on hill area, areas to socialise and informal sports areas.
Are there any procurement requirements for this site?	Not at present.

Has there been any improvement to the site during the year?	No, only maintenance works, including the replacement of one gate.
Any areas identified for improvement?	Not at present. Replace equipment as needs arise. Pedestrian safety barriers requested for the end of the path adjacent to this playground.

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## PLAY AREA : HEVER CLOSE

ISSUE	COMMENTARY
Are there regular inspections for litter hazards?	Yes; Council employed litter picker attends weekly or more frequently if required during periods of high use, to pick litter and empty bins.
Are there regular inspections for wear & tear or damage?	Yes; Council employed staff carry out asset inspections every week, any points arising are actioned. Staff are suitably trained via RoSPA playground inspection training course. Litter picker is also a qualified asset inspector, so would notice anything obviously amiss when visiting at other times each week.
Has there been an annual safety inspection by accredited supplier?	Yes, by Wicksteed in May. Minor points being addressed by the council.
Is the site well used?	Yes; often occupied, but less well known than other sites and predominantly used by children from Castlemead due to location.
Is the site safe and accessible?	Yes; Situated at end of Castlemead estate, flat entrances, good visibility and overlooked by residential properties. Interior entirely hard surfaces between equipment – soft play or macadam – allowing easy access between equipment. Benches have high backs. Grassed kick about area at side with open access park goal (NB this part of the site is only accessible via the grassy bank) Requested that Taylor Wimpey clear the woodland path leading from the rear playground gate.
Is there car parking nearby, with appropriate surface and flat access?	On road parking only, with tarmac footpaths to play space. Designed for use by local residents who tend to walk, scoot, cycle etc to the park.
Are there areas for young people to play and socialise?	Yes; Play equipment and benches. Neighbouring grass site for informal sports etc. Neighbouring woodland walk & woodland for natural play opportunities.
Does the site promote the inclusion and access for disadvantaged and disabled children?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features multi-purpose equipment with roundabout and springers that can be enjoyed by majority of children.</li> <li>• The enclosed area of the site is fully accessible.</li> <li>• Bi-annual disability consultation with residents so they can feedback any difficulties or request any alternative equipment</li> </ul>
Does the cost/availability of transport provide a barrier to access?	No. Accessible by foot & cycle path.
Do the recreational opportunities reflect the needs and interests of the community?	This is a small local area of play predominantly designed for use by young children resident in the Castlemead estate. There is a limited amount of equipment and therefore limited stretch of experience, but equipment choice offers different experiences to the other Castlemead play area in Windsor Road (focusing mainly on climbing, balancing and rotating).
Is the value to the community of this space maximised?	Yes; children’s play, informal/natural play, areas to socialise and informal sports areas
Are there any procurement requirements for this site?	Not at present.

Has there been any improvement to the site during the year?	No, just maintenance
Any areas identified for improvement?	BC/TW no longer plan to install improved path to secondary gate off woodland walk as part of transfer of Phase III open space as DDA compliant as is. However the parish council has requested Taylor Wimpey clear the path of vegetation to improve access.

Bellway have installed a children's play area in the Tun Furlong development. The parish council is currently in negotiation with Bellway regarding the adoption of the area inside the playground fence.

This risk/benefit assessment of the three play spaces managed by the parish council was undertaken and approved at the following meeting:

Signed : .....*D Nicholls*..... Date: .....*8/8/24*..... Minute Ref: .....*SL32/24*.....

With the following amendments required:

*None*