

Play Strategy



RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLAY STRATEGY 2025-2030



January 2025



Funded by
UK Government

QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd

Company No: 9145032 (England)

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Registered Office: 1 -2 Frecheville Court, off Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0UF

T: 0161 764 7040 E: mail@knp.co.uk www.knp.co.uk



Contents

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING PLAY1

PART 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPROACH5

PART 3: DISTRICT PROFILE AND POLICY REVIEW6

PART 4: PLAY REVIEW..... 19

PART 5: CONSULTATION.....30

PART 6: PROVISION STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKING40

APPENDIX A: FULL LIST OF SITES.....43

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY AND PARISH SURVEYS.....45

APPENDIX C: GENERAL DESIGN GUIDE PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY.....46

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING PLAY

There are many definitions of what play is but the general definition within the play industry is that it can be best described as follows:

'Through play, children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationships with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals and as members of the community'.¹

Who is play for?

Play is not only for the young, play is a natural process that should take place at all ages. Playfulness in adulthood can enable love and affection, it can facilitate creativeness and lateral thinking. Learning to play as a child can engender in adults a work hard and play hard philosophy.

In the context of young people, as opposed to children², the word play has a different meaning. Young people identify this more as positive activities, challenge and/or the enjoyment of recreation provision where this is appropriate.

Types of play

There are many types of play identified, the most common are:

Types of play	Explanation
Exploratory play	Can be handling, throwing, banging or mouthing objects; an example of this can be stacking bricks.
Fantasy play	Play that rearranges the world from the child's perspective in a way that is unlikely to occur; an example of which is to pretend at being an airplane pilot or racing driver.
Imaginative play	Where conventional rules do not apply for example imagining you are an object, a tree or a ship.
Locomotor play	Where movement is applied for example chase, tag, hide and seek etc.
Mastery play	Using the physical ingredients of our natural environment for example digging holes, altering the course of streams and constructing shelters etc..
Object play	Uses an infinite and interesting sequence of hand-eye manipulations and movements which could be examining and use of any object for example a cloth, paintbrush or cup
Role play	Explores ways of being, for example, brushing with a broom, dialling with a telephone or driving a car.

¹ definition adapted from the Hampshire County Council and the early years development and childcare partnership and children's play council (1998) 'new charter for children's play', children's society and the excellence of play edited by Janet r. Moyles, Open University Press, 1995.

² a definition of 'child' is from 0-18 and also includes young people with Special Educational Needs up to 24.

Where does play take place?

Play is not just about ‘swings and roundabouts’ at the Local Park or open space it can and does take place anywhere. An illustration of this can be seen in the research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation into children’s play (1997) which revealed amongst other things: -

- ◀ Children’s needs are diverse, including places for physically active play and quiet games, places which encourage social contact and places which allow them to be mobile whether on foot or by bicycle.
- ◀ Children stay at each individual attraction for a relatively short time. They enjoy being mobile, travelling from one location to another, their access to as large an outdoor environment as possible was best served by the incorporation of footpath networks and cul-de-sac layouts.
- ◀ Children enjoy socialising and want to play ‘where it’s at’. These are places where there are strong possibilities of interaction with other people, i.e. junctions of paths, by shops and in front gardens.
- ◀ Most children play where they can ‘see and be seen’. This suggests that parks and formal and informal open spaces are best located along the footpath network or adjacent to well used pedestrian routes.

Play also happens when young people “hang out”, even if it is in places where adults do not want them e.g. village greens, shopping precincts, which young people are likely to see as ‘play provision’.

What are the barriers to play?

There are a number of perceived barriers preventing children’s play, some of which are identified as follows:

- ◀ Children are restricted in their freedom to choose how and when they play and especially in their opportunities to play without adult supervision.
- ◀ Children’s play is restricted by a lack of access to good quality play opportunities.
- ◀ Lack of suitable play environments for disabled children.
- ◀ Until now a failure of central and local government to recognise the importance of play and to allocate sufficient financial resources to improve opportunities for play.
- ◀ Restriction on children’s freedom of movement leading to decreased physical fitness, fewer social contacts and increased levels of stress and frustration.
- ◀ Limiting factors of discrimination, poverty, disability and special needs, lack of available space and other environmental factors.
- ◀ A lack of understanding of the issues, needs and aspirations of children’s play.
- ◀ Society’s perceptions of the risks and levels of safety attached to play.

Is play safe, what are the risks?

First and foremost children and young people’s needs for care, nurturing and learning are paramount and can often only be met by indulging in activities which will include some dangers and hazards. As the adage suggests ‘we fall over in life so that we can learn to get up again’.

The following text draws on extracts from the National Play Safety Forum’s position on managing dangers and hazards in play provision.

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 must manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks.

Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision, and of all environments in which children and young people legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children and young people the chance to access stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environments whilst ensuring that the risks associated with those environments are identified assessed and managed. The Best Play publication³ points out that play provision should aim to manage the balance between the need to offer challenge and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm. Robust risk management principles and strategies therefore need to lie at the heart of any play strategy and the provision delivered under it.

It is acceptable that in play provision children and young people may be exposed to the risk of minor and easily healed injuries such as bruises, grazes or sprains. On the other hand, play provision should not expose children and young people to significant likelihood of permanent disability or life-threatening injuries. However, it may on occasions be unavoidable that play provision exposes children and young people to the risk - the very low risk - of serious injury. But this would only be tolerable in the following conditions:

- ◀ The likelihood was extremely low.
- ◀ The hazards were clear to users.
- ◀ There were obvious benefits.
- ◀ Further reduction of the risk would remove the benefits
- ◀ There were no reasonably practicable ways to manage the risk.

Where does play sit?

- ◀ Community Play - delivers the needs of children and their families in local neighbourhood communities in facilitating and developing play initiatives that build on and supplement existing ones already being undertaken in the home and at school.
- ◀ Environmental play - relates to structured and unstructured play in parks, formal and informal open spaces
- ◀ Formal Play Provision - these can be specific play sites as part of parks and open spaces and school playgrounds.
- ◀ Parenting - need to inform, encourage, and support parents in encouraging and providing play opportunities and activities for their children.

³ <http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/bestplay.pdf>

Making the Case for Play

What are the benefits and importance of play? There are numerous benefits deriving from the act of play as defined in Best Play and the Charter for Children’s Play, these include:

- ◀ Play is enjoyable.
- ◀ Play promotes children’s development, learning, creativity, independence, self-esteem, knowledge and understanding.
- ◀ Play keeps children healthy and active and active children and teens become active adults.
- ◀ Play fosters social inclusion and helps children understand the people and places in their lives and also to learn about their environment and develop their sense of community involvement.
- ◀ Play is therapeutic and helps children to deal with difficult and or painful circumstances such as emotional stress or medical treatment.
- ◀ Play gives children the chance to let off steam and have fun.
- ◀ Play provides children with opportunities to enjoy freedom and exercise choice and control over their actions.
- ◀ Play offers children opportunities for testing boundaries and exploring risk.
- ◀ Play also helps reduce the involvement of children and young people in anti-social behaviour and plays a part in social cohesion.
- ◀ Play supports families and communities by providing a focus for informal networks of family support.
- ◀ Play also provides a focus for tackling social exclusion through community development.

Very often we only understand the inherent value of something once it has been taken away. Without the ability and opportunity to play, children’s very lives and development are adversely affected in ways that will inevitably have a significant impact on them in their later adult life. For some groups, including children with disabilities and some older children, this lack of provision is the current norm.



PART 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT APPROACH

2.1 Introduction

This Play Strategy Review for Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC) is prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page Ltd (KKP).

This Play Strategy Review follows the previous Strategy (2007) and aims to:

- ◀ Review current policy in relation to play, including guidance such as the Government's new disability action plan for play and recent research and guidance on providing sufficient, suitable play space for tween and teenage girls.
- ◀ Provide an up-to-date list of all play sites within the Borough, broken down into; Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP), Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and Local Area for Play (LAP).
- ◀ Present a gap analysis of current play provision. This analysis will illustrate if there is any additional provision required, or if any analysis areas would benefit from additional provision
- ◀ This gap analysis will link with areas of health inequalities, to strengthen the case for play should any gaps be identified.
- ◀ Undertake a series of consultations via online surveys and focus groups. This includes a particular focus on understanding the needs of tweens & teens, girls and disability groups in an effort to improve accessibility and inclusion for all.
- ◀ Engage with key stakeholders who can influence the development of the strategy, including parish and town councils.
- ◀ Review and refresh the borough guidance for new play areas in relation to housing development contributions. This will ensure the correct level of funding is provided.

2.2: The need for this Strategy

This strategy provides an overview in supporting the development of play in the Borough of Rushcliffe. Initially it presents the current supply and identifies if there are any gaps in provision. It also provides perceptions of current provision from a wide range of stakeholders, and what people would like to see, particularly at key sites such as Bridgford Park and Bridge Field, Rushcliffe Country Park, Wharf Lane Radcliffe-on-Trent, Gotham Road East Leake, Cotgrave Precinct, Keyworth Recreation Ground and The Hook in Lady Bay for example.

In addition, the strategy reviews existing provision standards relating to future developments, benchmarked against neighbouring authorities and leading play industry manufacturers. This will inform the approach to calculating the play and youth facility requirements as part of any new housing development.

PART 3: DISTRICT PROFILE AND POLICY REVIEW

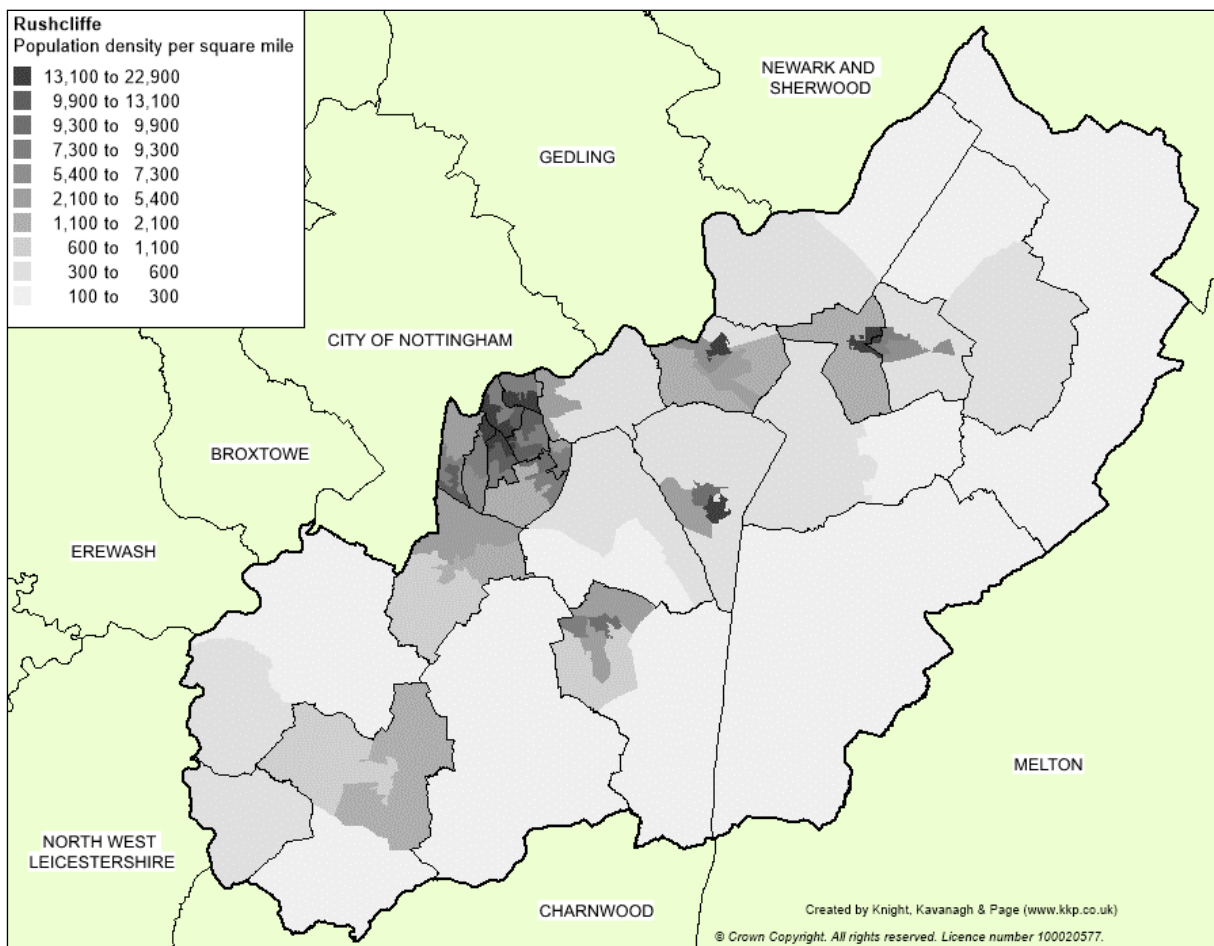
The following is an overview of Rushcliffe Borough based on data taken from nationally recognised sources. It includes the most up to date information presently available although it should be noted that new data is published regularly, often at different intervals.

In addition, a review of national and local policy documents, relevant to play provision, is presented.

Population and distribution *(Data source: 2022 Mid-Year Estimate (MYE), ONS)*

The total population, from the 2022 MYE, in Rushcliffe was 121,583 (males = 59,659 and females = 61,923). The key concentration of its population is centred on the West Bridgford, Cotgrave, Bingham and Radcliffe on Trent areas.

Figure 3.1: Population density in Rushcliffe Borough



The following chart (Data source: 2022 Mid-Year Estimate, ONS) illustrates the Borough's population's age and gender composition.

There are 12,975 people aged between 0 and 9 (6,720 boys and 6,255 girls) making up 10.7% of Rushcliffe's population and the main age-range using play provision for younger children.

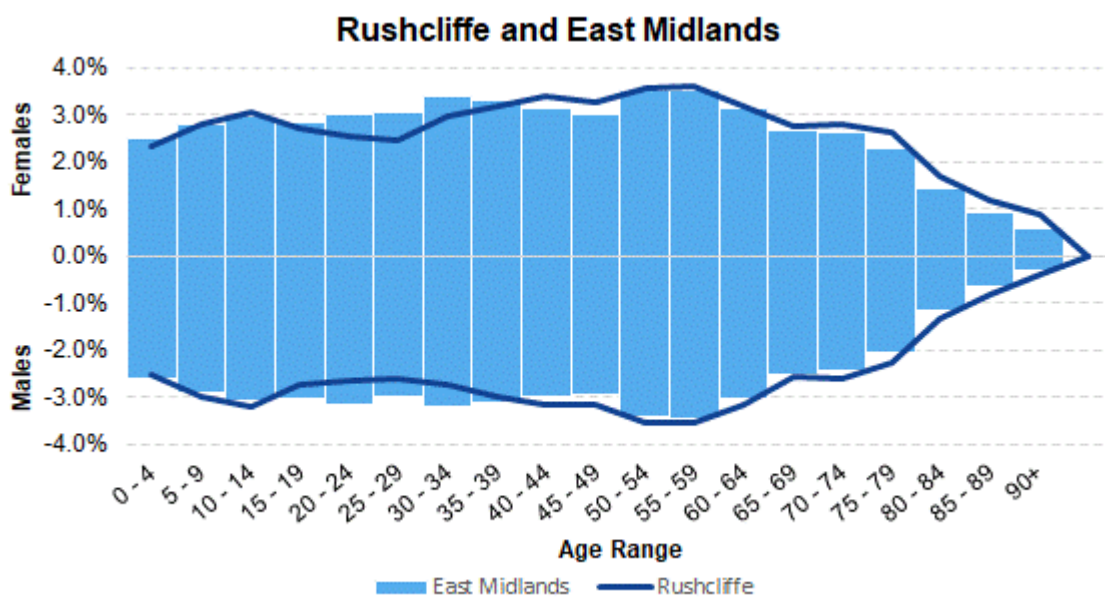
RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

For those aged between 10-19 years, a key age range for using play provision for older children and teens, there are 14,249 people in Rushcliffe (7,246 male and 7,003 female). This makes up 11.7% of Rushcliffe’s population.

When comparing Rushcliffe’s population against the regional average, there is a lower proportion of 15-34 year olds (Rushcliffe: 21.5%, East Midlands: 24.7%), this may suggest a lower level of demand from what are generally regarded as the main sports participation groups.

There are, however, more in the age groups from 35-64 (Rushcliffe: 40.3%, East Midlands: 38.3%) and more in the age group 65+ (Rushcliffe: 21.8%, East Midlands: 19.7%).

Figure 3.2 Comparative age/sex pyramid for the East Midlands region and Rushcliffe



Weight and obesity (Data sources: NCMP⁴ and NOO⁵)

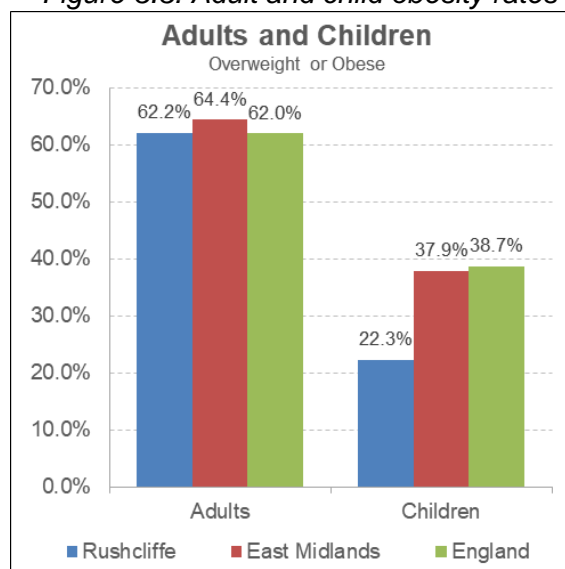
Obesity is widely recognised to be associated with health problems such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

At a national level, the resulting NHS costs attributable to overweight and obesity⁶ are projected to reach £9.7 billion by 2050, with wider costs to society estimated to reach £49.9 billion per year. These factors combine to make the prevention of obesity a major public health challenge.

Adult obesity rates in Rushcliffe are below the regional average, however, they are similar to the national averages.

Child rates for obesity are significantly below both the regional and national averages, supporting a case for continuing investment in play as a form of physical activity.

Figure 3.3: Adult and child obesity rates



Active Lives Survey (Data Source: Sport England November 2021/22)

This is based on 16+ year olds taking part in walking, cycling, fitness, dance and other sporting activity. As identified in table 3.4 a much lower percentage of the Rushcliffe population is inactive compared to England and the East Midlands and a higher percentage is considered to be active. This is specified by Sport England as follows:

- ◀ Inactive: <30 minutes per week.
- ◀ Fairly Active: 30-149 minutes per week.
- ◀ Active: 150+ minutes per week.

Table 3.4: Active Lives Survey results: November 2021/22.

	Inactive	Inactive %	Fairly active	Fairly active %	Active	Active %
England	11,874,800	25.8%	5,131,700	11.1%	29,062,000	63.1%
East Midlands	1,098,500	27.5%	458,000	11.5%	2,442,600	61.1%
Rushcliffe	16,200	16.6%	9,300	9.4%	72,500	74.0%

⁴ National Child Measurement Program

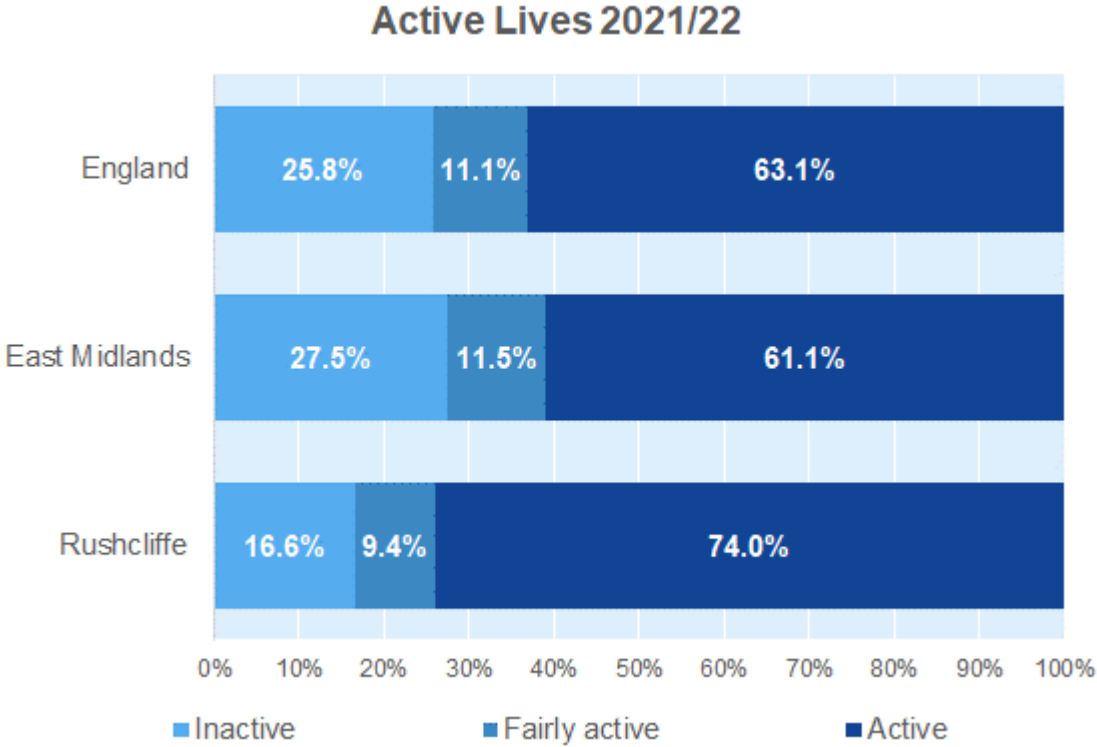
⁵ National Obesity Observatory

⁶ Adult Weight Data is for the period 2016-2017. The child data is for the period 2017-2018

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

The rate/population totals for sport and physical activity levels (excluding gardening) of adults (16+) who are active in Rushcliffe (74%) is greater in comparison to East Midlands (61%) and England (63%).

Figure 3.5: Levels of activity.



National Policy & Guidance Review

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework is the key national policy document and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The previous guidance ‘Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play’ (PDOSP) predates the NPPF and the Benchmark Guidelines in the revised guidance reflect the relevant requirements of the NPPF, and the revocation of Planning Policy Guidance 17: Sport and Recreation on which the PDOSP was based.

The NPPF advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development and identifies the three dimensions of sustainable development as economic, social and environmental. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation are highlighted as an important aspect of healthy communities.

The NPPF seeks to ensure that developments “create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users...”. The NPPF states that “access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision”.

The NPPF also promotes the protection of existing open space (paragraph 104) which is a key aspect of Fields in Trusts’ operations as a national charity that safeguards recreational spaces.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. Characteristics protected under the Act include age, sex and disability.

The public sector Equality Duty introduced through this act means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy and delivering services. It also requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.

Making Space for Girls

A national charity Make Space for Girls (MSfG), founded in 2021, provides wide-ranging guidance to ensure that parks and public spaces are designed for girls and young women, not only boys and young men. This can be found on their website <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk> and includes resources for Councils, Developers and Design Professionals.

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

Key factors to consider include; listening to teenage girls to understand their perception and use of local spaces, the barriers they face to enjoyment of those spaces, involving them in the design process and developing new policies to support inclusive spaces.

Principles for Councils:

- ◀ Create parks which are more inclusive for all: *Better spaces can promote healthier lifestyles and add social value. Spaces that work better for teenage girls can work better for many other groups.*
- ◀ Understand what teenage girls want from parks and social spaces: *Skate parks and MUGAs only work for a small proportion of young people – a wider range of facilities is much more inclusive.*
- ◀ Recognise the barriers to change: *Lack of information and policies that don't recognise the issues both embed unequal treatment for teenage girls into practice. Engagement, research and equality law provide tools to overcome this.*
- ◀ Make Sure Teenage Girls are heard: *Reaching girls and minority groups can be difficult but their voices are essential for change.*

Example design features in MSfGs' 'What Does Better Look Like' resource, include:

- ◀ Playful mixed-height spaces that allow people to sit, climb, or lie around.
- ◀ Dividing up MUGAs and other spaces, so no group can dominate the space.
- ◀ Social exercise spaces; arranging equipment so people can exercise and chat.
- ◀ Social seating; allowing people to face each other while they chat.
- ◀ Swings; suited to the age-group, including accessible swings.
- ◀ Lower, mixed-height gym bars; to hang from, swing round, lean against.
- ◀ Stages and seating space; for performances, exercise classes and informal fun.
- ◀ Shelters and shade, for all weathers.

Figure 3.6: Key principles to consider for enabling girls to use outdoor spaces

Eyes on the Park	Awareness	Inclusion
The presence of other people can make the park feel safer; either through activation which brings in other users or making the most of park staff and other officials.	The design of parks can make women and girls feel more secure in a space, helping them to see and be seen, ensuring they don't feel trapped and giving them the ability to navigate their surroundings.	How to create parks where all women and girls feel they belong by identifying and addressing the barriers which exist for different groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUSYNESS • • STAFFING • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VISIBILITY • • ESCAPE • • LIGHTING • • WAYFINDING • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BELONGING • • IMAGE • • ACCESS • • ENGAGEMENT •

Government’s National Disability Strategy (2021)

The National Disability Strategy sets out the long-term vision to transform disabled people’s lives for the better. The Strategy focuses on 14 different areas, of which one is to make playgrounds more accessible for people with disabilities.

Currently, the accessibility of playgrounds differs significantly, meaning that disabled children and children with disabled family members are not always able to use the playgrounds in their local areas. The Strategy sets out that play areas need to focus on:

- ◀ the importance of inclusivity as well as accessibility.
- ◀ the need to ensure playgrounds have equipment that caters to all disabilities.
- ◀ the importance of the wider area being accessible, including pathways, car parks and toilet provision where possible.
- ◀ Encourage authorities to have on-line hubs to ensure parents can search what type of facilities are at playgrounds. This allows parents of children to see if a playground is suitable. City of Westminster Council is a good example of listing play areas which have provision for people with disabilities: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/leisure-libraries-and-community/parks-and-open-spaces/playgrounds-and-green-gyms>

Homes England: Inclusive Spaces and Places for Girls and Young People, An Introduction for Local Government, June 2023

This guidance summarises the issues on inclusive play spaces, legal duties and provides guidance for local government. Key issues include the narrowness of typical play provision for teens, lack of consideration for safety when siting facilities and patterns of use that often exclude girls, including from the surrounding area. Results of recent research, case studies and suggestions for inclusive provision are provided.

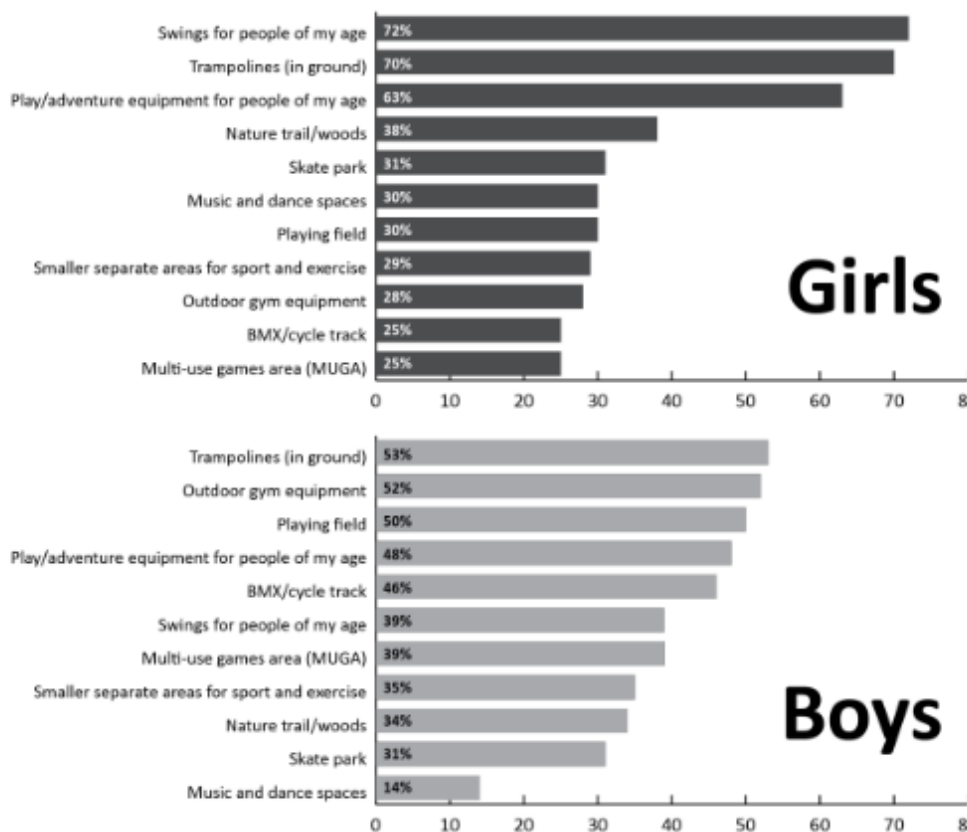
‘This absence of provision has a number of implications: for the rights of girls and for their sense of belonging in the wider community, and for councils’ obligations to consider equality in their decision making. But another really important one is health. Girls are less active than boys at every stage of teenage life, but we rarely connect this with the fact that we don’t give them anything to be active on. Access to nature is also proven to have a big positive effect on mental health in teenagers, and teenage girls are three times more likely to suffer from low moods and anxiety than boys. It’s also true that many boys are also not interested in the facilities which are on offer or don’t feel they can access them. Furthermore, improving parks has the potential to benefit many other groups too, such as older people, adult women... and those with disabilities.’

The research and guidance section incorporates findings from research by **Women in Sport and Yorkshire Sports (2022)**, which surveyed nearly 400 teenagers across three schools in Yorkshire to find out what would help them be more active in parks.

Key findings from this survey are presented below:

Figure 3.6: Women in sport play survey results

What would help you be more active in your local park?



Other facilities and design features which can make parks more inclusive are:

- ◀ walking loops around the perimeter of a park and no dead-end paths.
- ◀ seating which allows users to face each other.
- ◀ breaking down spaces into more smaller areas so that no one group can dominate.
- ◀ outdoor gyms – but with equipment arranged more socially and not weighted for adult men.
- ◀ public toilets where possible.

Scope: 'Let's Play Fair' campaign

Scope, a national disability charity, states that inaccessible playgrounds are stopping too many children with disabilities or special educational needs from having fun and friendship. It highlighted that the benefits for including play are as follows:

- ◀ Every child is equal in inclusive play. This removes stigmas and separation between Disabled and non-Disabled from an early age, helping mindsets change and society progress in a positive way.
- ◀ Children become more independent, confident and develop different ways to communicate. It can help non-Disabled children become more open to new people and different situations too.

- ◀ Outdoor play alleviates stress, improves mood and boosts wellbeing. It helps children be physically active, engage with the natural world and have fun.
- ◀ For sensory impaired children, play can strengthen their other senses and ways to interact with the world. Calming spaces can also help neurodivergent children find comfort, and sensory play helps children develop fine motor skills as they learn how their bodies work.
- ◀ Play helps children learn about risk in a safe supportive environment, as well as adjust to change and build resilience.
- ◀ It helps children develop social and empathy skills, make friends and form connections.

Scope has created, in collaboration with PiPA Play, (PiPA Play is a social enterprise with the sole aim of helping to improve accessible and inclusive play facilities) a guide to make inclusive playgrounds happen in all communities. The guide features the following:

- ◀ Developing a universal design concept of creating environments that are accessible to everyone. The principle is that by eliminating a barrier for one group, more people overall can use it.
- ◀ Ensure all equipment has features which are accessible - this includes that all equipment and features are inclusive. Examples include; providing wheelchair accessible roundabouts/seesaws and features such as shaded areas.
- ◀ Influencing your local councils- the guide presents options on how to encourage individuals to lobby local councils to provide inclusive play- such as contacting local councillors with portfolio responsibilities.

Play England: A new 10-year strategy (2024)

The latest 10-year strategy from Play England outlines its Vision for Play across England. This states that 'England will be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years, as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 31 and the Charter for Children's Play'.

To achieve this vision, Play England aims to ensure that:

- ◀ All children and young people have the freedom — time, space, permission and opportunity — to play throughout their childhood and teenage years;
- ◀ All residential neighbourhoods are child-friendly places where children and young people can regularly play outside; and
- ◀ Everyone is aware of the importance of play — outdoors and indoors — as part of children and young people's daily lives.

To support this vision, in addition, Play England will:

- ◀ Work with key partners supporting front line play providers
- ◀ Provide expert play information - by signposting important information
- ◀ Develop strategic partnerships through working with other nations and organisations
- ◀ Raise the profile of play in the media

Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Fields in Trust (2015) and Beyond the Six Acre Standard^[1]

As part of its protection work, Fields in Trust (FiT) offers guidance on open space provision and design. This is to ensure that provision of outdoor sport, play and informal open space is of a sufficient size to enable effective use; is in an accessible location and in close proximity to dwellings; and of a quality to maintain longevity and to encourage its continued use.

Beyond the Six Acre Standard sets out a range of benchmark guidelines on quantity, quality and accessibility for open space and equipped play. It also offers some recommendations to minimum site sizes.

Plan Inclusive Play Areas (PiPA)

PiPA is an organisation that exists to empower the true meaning of inclusion, equality and diversity in play area design. It has provided a guide for local authorities and designers to ensure play areas meet a certain standard. The design guidance covers three key themes:

Accessibility - Need to ensure there is a hard standing path network throughout the play space and the surfacing is suitable for wheelchair users.

Nurturing the Senses - Making sure at least 3 of the senses from the Six Senses Wheel are engaged from both a seated and standing position at a play area.

Figure 3.7: Six senses wheel



Dynamic Play - offer an opportunity for dynamic play. This allows the opportunity to engage in proprioception and promote the development of a healthy vestibular system.

Best Play: What play provision should do for children (National Playing Fields Association, 2000)

'Best Play: What play provision should do for children' has been produced as a result of a partnership between the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), PLAYLINK and the Children's Play Council (CPC).

The document is about how children benefit from play opportunities. It is also about how play services and spaces can provide these benefits, and how they can show that they are providing them.

^[1] [Fields in Trust PDF](#)

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

Local Policy

Rushcliffe Borough Council: Corporate Strategy 2024 - 2027

The latest Corporate Strategy sets the Council's strategic direction until 2027. Below, are the strategic objectives which the Council will prioritise.

Objective	Description
1	Deliver Rushcliffe's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030.
2	Implement the Environment Act commitments
3	Deliver Rushcliffe's Leisure Strategy 2021-2027.
4	Be an active partner in the delivery of the East Midlands Devolution Deal.
5	Support Uniper Technologies in the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar site
6	Implement Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill commitments.
7	Adopt a Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan.
8	Develop and deliver an Economic Growth Strategy for the Borough.
9	Deliver good value for money in Council operations for residents.
10	Conduct a review of the Council's asset base

As part of delivering the leisure strategy (Objective 3), the Council is committed to maintaining the existing local standards for provision of open spaces and children's play areas across all sites, to address inequalities in participation, support the inactive into regular activity and provide more outdoor wellbeing opportunities.

Rushcliffe's Leisure Strategy 2021-2027 (Mid-Point Review)

In this latest leisure strategy The Council recognises the importance of *'providing leisure facilities to enable all of our community to lead healthy lives, by participating in a wide range of activities'* and aims to *'provide high quality, financially sustainable leisure facilities to support Rushcliffe residents to enjoy healthy, active lives'*.

Guiding principles are:

- To protect and enhance facilities where there is evidence of need.
- To invest in major facility enhancements only where a sound business case exists.
- To work in partnership to meet the needs of communities.
- To focus on improving community health and wellbeing.

To achieve this vision, the Council has set out six key objectives:

- To retain five indoor leisure facilities and ensure they are fit for the future;
- Supporting partners/parishes to deliver the priority projects within the playing pitch strategy;
- To address inequalities in participation;
- To work with local health services to support 'the inactive' into regular activity;

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

- To maintain the existing local standards for provision of open space, children’s play and allotments.
- To create more outdoor wellbeing opportunities, including walking and cycling throughout the Borough

To maintain the existing local standards, the following standards are noted:

Type of provision	Standard
Formal and informal amenity open space and formal paths and gardens	0.72 hectares per 1,000 population
Equipped children’s play areas	0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
Unequipped children’s play areas	0.55 hectares per 1,000 population

To address inequalities in participation, which includes a drop-off in physical activity among teenage girls, the Council is committed to understanding girls’ active leisure preferences and how it can support these, especially outside of team sports. This will include developing play spaces to support these.

In addition, the Council is developing more wellbeing opportunities supporting mental health. This can be achieved by developing high quality facilities both indoors and outdoors including parks and open spaces. The Council is committed to working with key partners to deliver programmes and activities in parks and green spaces to support mental wellbeing such as the Green Social Prescribing initiative. This could include working with youth delivery agencies to deliver outdoor sessions.

Rushcliffe Playing Pitch Strategy 2022

A review of the playing pitch strategy in 2022 allowed information on emerging issues and opportunities to be gathered, highlighting changing priorities for the Borough. These included issues also relevant to playgrounds:

- ◀ Due to a significant increase in housing growth applications, the playing pitch strategy and action plan is becoming increasingly important to inform planning policy.
- ◀ Demand-mapping – this is needed for wider parks, green-spaces and outdoor leisure opportunities, as well as for playing pitches and play areas.
- ◀ The importance of creating more opportunities for residents to enjoy the Borough’s outdoor parks and open spaces to improve their mental and physical wellbeing was highlighted by Covid-19 and the current cost of living crisis. Also, that these opportunities are free at the point of entry.

Understanding demand and benefits includes understanding how people are accessing pitches, parks and playgrounds. The health benefit of visiting a park, pitch or playground will depend in part upon whether active travel is part of the experience and upon what else visitors do while there e.g. running around, playing games in surrounding greenspace.

Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2021 – 2025

The Nature Conservation Strategy makes a connection between access to wildlife-rich green spaces and human health. Many playgrounds are sited within parks that provide access to green-space, alongside or as part of the experience of visiting the playground.

‘The objective of the strategy is not only to benefit wildlife; visitors and residents will also benefit through the opportunities to observe and enjoy nature. A wildlife-rich environment has been shown to provide health benefits and economic benefits.’

Increasing numbers and accessibility of playgrounds might therefore result in improved access to wildlife-rich greenspace so wider health benefits; while improving the wildlife-richness of greenspace surrounding playgrounds might improve the health benefits of visiting those playgrounds.

The strategy references Natural England’s ‘Access to Natural Greenspace Standards’ (ANGSt) (Natural England, 2003). ANGSt standards recommend that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:

- ◀ Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- ◀ At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- ◀ One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home;
- ◀ One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home, plus
- ◀ A minimum of one hectare of statutory local nature reserve per thousand population.



PART 4: PLAY REVIEW

4.1 Current provision

Play areas can be classified in the following ways to identify their effective target audience, as defined by the Fields in Trust (FIT) (adapted)

- ◀ LAP - Local Areas for Play. aimed at very young children.
- ◀ LEAP - a Local Equipped Area of Play. Designed for unsupervised play generally aimed for younger aged children containing a wider range of equipment types which allows for progression through the age ranges.
- ◀ NEAP - a Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play. Catering for all age groups. Often contain an extensive range of play equipment which including teen/casual provision.

The following table details the characteristics and guidelines for each type of play area.

Table 4.1 Definition of the various play types (adapted)

Area	LAP	LEAP	NEAP
Age group	Up to 6 years	4-10 years	Predominantly for older children
Location	Adjacent to a well-used pathway, on a well-used route overlooked by houses and on a flat site that is well drained.	Adjacent to a well-used pathway, on a well-used route overlooked by houses and on a flat site that is well drained. Preferably the play equipment should not overlook nearby gardens.	Adjacent to a well-used pathway, on a well-used route overlooked by houses and on a flat site that is well drained. Preferably the play equipment should not overlook nearby gardens.
Minimum activity zone	Minimum of 100m ² .	Minimum of 400m ² .	Minimum of 1000 m ² that is divided into two parts, one containing a range of playground equipment and the other having a hard surface of at least 465m ² (the minimum area needed to play five-a-side football).
No. and type of play equipment	Contains features that enable children to identify the space as their own domain, e.g. low-key games such as hopscotch, a footprint trail, mushroom style seating, rocks, bunds, tree logs etc.	Contains at least 6 types of play equipment, of which at least 2 are individual pieces, rather than part of a combination multi-play unit. Each type of play equipment should be designed to stimulate balancing, rocking, climbing/Agility, sliding and social play. Additional items may focus upon rotating, swinging, jumping, crawling, viewing, counting or touching.	Contains at least 10 types of play equipment comprising at least 2 items to stimulate rocking, touch, social or developmental play among younger children. At least 2 items to facilitate sliding, swinging or moderate climbing; at least 5 items to encourage either more-adventurous climbing, single point swinging, balancing, rotating or gliding (e.g. cableway). At least 3 of these items should be individual play items rather than part of a combination multi-play unit.

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

Area	LAP	LEAP	NEAP
Buffer zone	Has a buffer zone of 5m minimum depth between the activity zone and the nearest dwelling that faces the LAP. This should include planting to enable children to experience natural scent, colour and texture.	Has a buffer zone of not less than 10m in depth between the edge of the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling and a minimum of 20m between the activity zone and the habitable room facade of the dwelling. This zone should include planting to enable children to experience natural scent, colour and texture where possible.	Has a buffer zone of not less than 30m in depth between the activity zone and the boundary of the nearest dwelling. A greater distance may be needed where purpose-built skateboarding facilities/Teen shelters are provided. This zone should include planting to enable children to experience natural scent, colour and texture.
Fencing	600mm high fencing and barrier to limit speed of child entering or leaving the facility. Self-closing pedestrian gate to prevent access by dogs. In some instances, it may be appropriate for the LAP to not require formal fencing	Has fencing of at least 1m in height around the perimeter of the activity zone, with two outward opening, self-closing gates, on opposite sides of the play area, to deter entry by dogs, restrict opportunities for bullying and to limit speed of child entering/leaving the facility In some instances, it may be appropriate for the LEAP to not require formal fencing particularly in natural environments or linear parks	Has fencing of at least 1m in height around the perimeter of the activity zone, with two outward opening, self-closing gates, on opposite sides of the play area, to deter entry by dogs, restrict opportunities for bullying and to limit speed of child entering/leaving the facility In some instances, it may be appropriate for the NEAP to not require formal fencing particularly in natural environments or linear parks
Features	Contains features that enable children to identify the space as their own domain, e.g. low-key games such as hopscotch, a footprint trail, rocks, bunds, tree logs, styled seating etc.	Has adequate space around the equipment to enable children to express their general exuberance and play games of tag or chase, informal ball games.	Has adequate space around the equipment to enable children to express their general exuberance and play games of tag or chase, informal ball games.
Furniture	Contains seating for parent(s), carer(s) etc.	Contains seating for parent(s), carer(s) and a litter bin.	Contains seating for parent(s) and/or carer(s) in the vicinity of the play equipment and other seating within the hard-surfaced games area. Also appropriate number of litter bins and convenient and secure parking facility for bicycles.
Signs and notices	Has a sign indicating area is solely for use by children. Adults are not allowed unless with children and dogs are to be excluded. What 3 words location	Has a sign indicating area is: Solely for use by children. Adults are not allowed unless with children. Dogs are to be excluded. Name and telephone number of the	Has a sign indicating area is: Solely for use by children. Adults are not allowed unless with children. Dogs are to be excluded. Name and telephone number of the

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL – PLAY STRATEGY

Area	LAP	LEAP	NEAP
		operator of the facility to report any incident or damage to the play equipment. What 3 words location	operator of the facility to report any incident or damage to the play equipment. What 3 words location

A total of 69 play sites are identified in Rushcliffe. Table 4.2 below presents a breakdown of the types of provision using the FIT guidance. Most are identified as being a LEAP (66%) classification. It must be noted that there were no quality ratings undertaken as part of the study.

Table 4.2: Breakdown of play provision in Rushcliffe

LAP	LEAP	NEAP	Standalone skateparks	Total
14	46	8	1	69

A full list of sites is located in Appendix A.

Accessibility analysis

To ensure the local population has sufficient access to provision, catchment mapping is utilised. Guidance on appropriate accessibility distances for play provision is published by FIT in its document *Beyond the Six Acre Standard* (2015). These vary depending on play type. The analysis is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Table 4.3: FIT accessibility guidelines

Play type	FIT Walking guideline	Approximate time equivalent
LEAP	400m	5 minutes
NEAP	1,000m	12 ½ minutes
Youth/Casual	700m	9 minutes

Catchment Analysis

The Borough is split into five distinct areas (termed analysis areas) for the purpose of this study. The analysis presents all play sites within the Borough along with the appropriate catchments applied, broken down into the following analysis areas. The analysis areas also list the populations (2022).

Analysis area	Population
Bingham	21,552
Cotgrave & Radcliffe on Trent	14,674
East Leake	12,905
Keyworth	13,642
West Bridgford and Ruddington	51,701

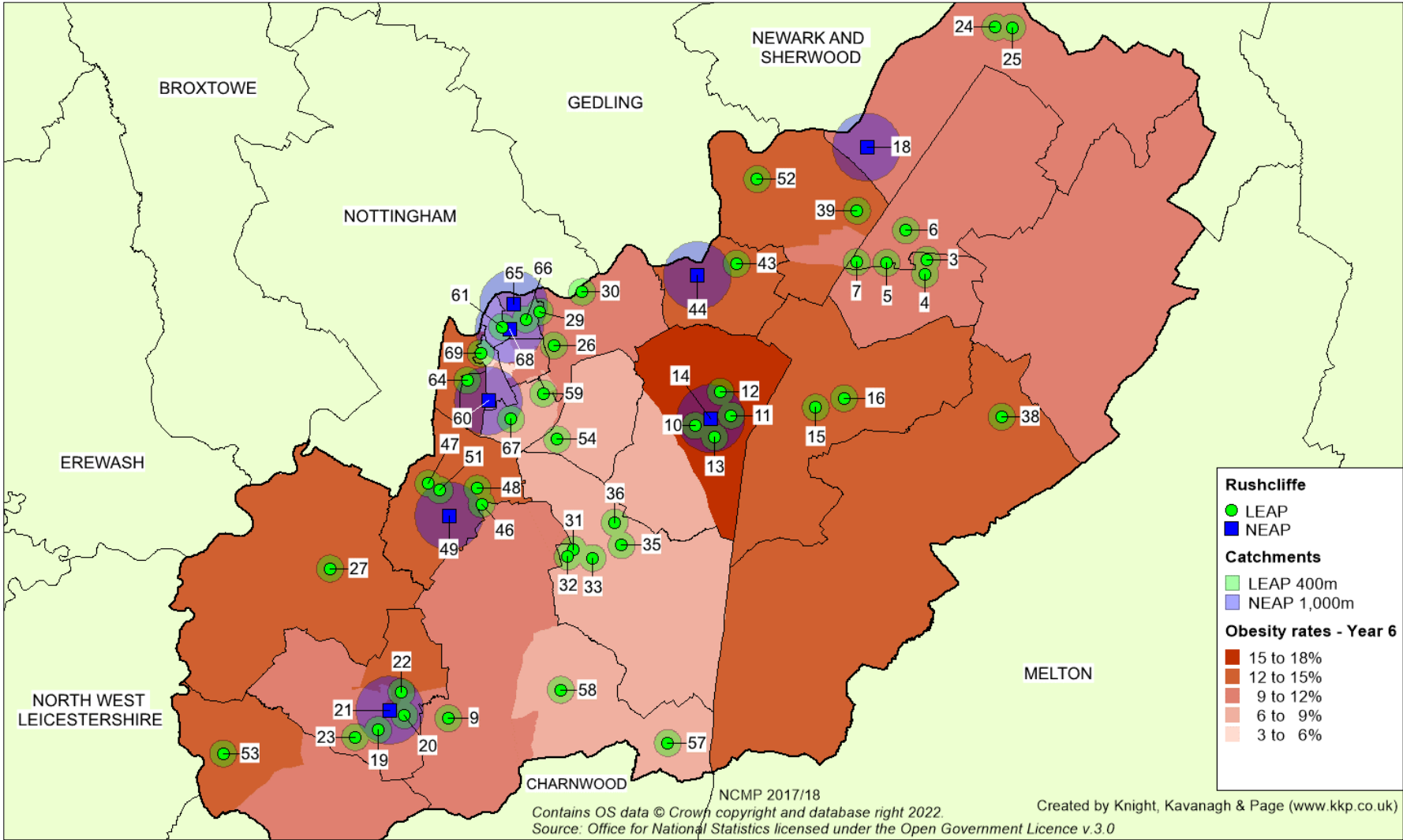
The study also considers play sites in neighbouring authorities, as these could affect residents within Rushcliffe. Sites in neighbouring authorities which could affect residents in Rushcliffe, located in Nottingham City, are illustrated in the mapping. It must be noted quality of play was not assessed, and this analysis only looks at existing provisional gaps. Below each map, a summary box illustrates any gaps in catchments and possible recommendations (if required).

The analysis has used two useful backgrounds. Figure 4.1 shows the overall authority with obesity levels for Year 6 (10-11 yr) children. Unfortunately, data was not available at ward level. However, it does show the highest levels of Year 6 obesity is in the Cotgrave and Radcliffe area (darker shaded area), when compared to the more rural areas of Keyworth. Although this is not reflective of all children, it provides a snapshot of a single school year and highlights the added benefits play and investment in play can help to bring.

The analysis area maps (figures 4.2 to 4.6) use overall health deprivation levels as backgrounds. Commentary in relation to this is provided in the analysis boxes.

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 4.1 All LEAP and NEAP plays areas across Rushcliffe with appropriate catchments against Year 6 obesity levels



PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 4.2: LEAP (400m) and NEAP (1000m) sites with catchments (Bingham)

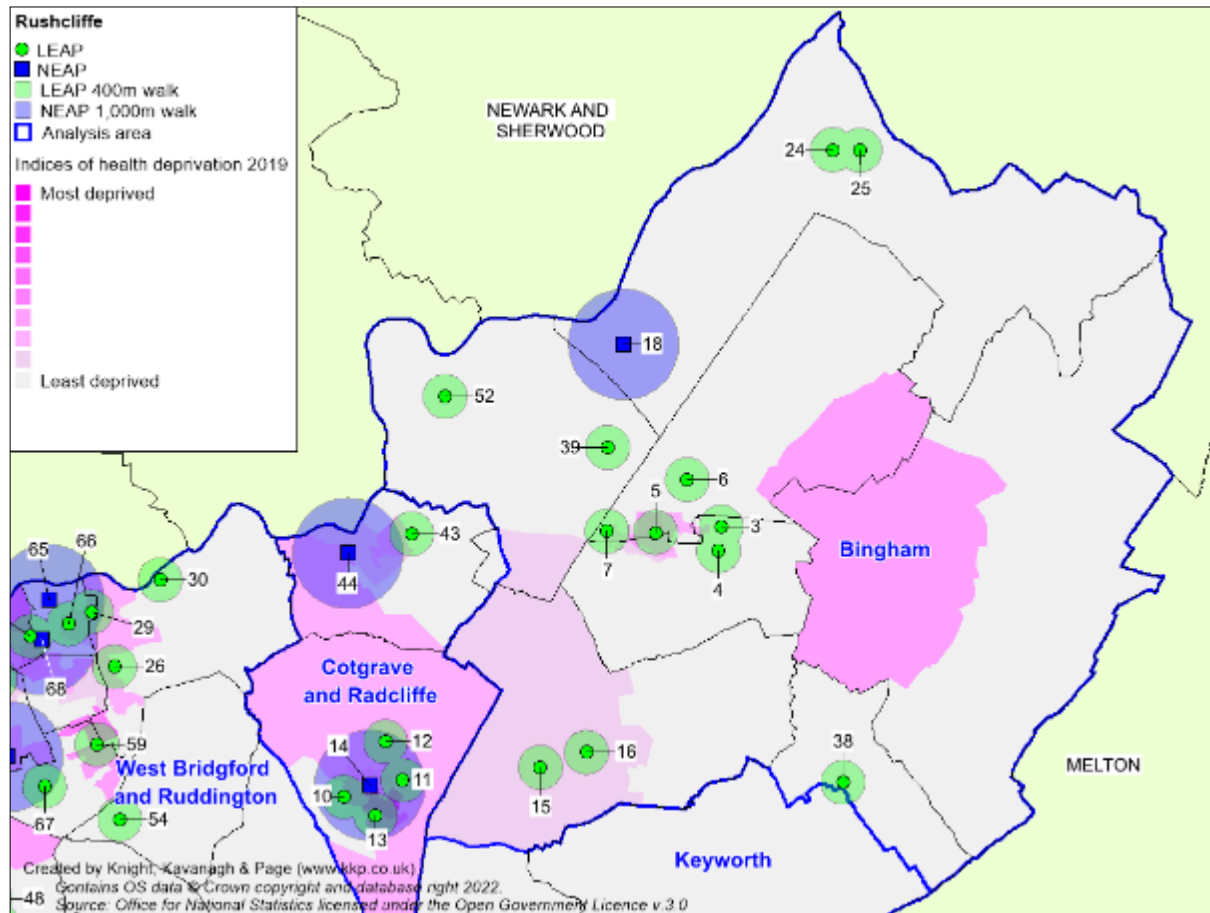


Table 4.4: Catchment gaps for Bingham Analysis Area

Town/Settlement	Identified gap	Potential options
Bingham	Gaps in catchment in areas of dense population	Explore options to upgrade a LEAP site to a NEAP

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 4.3: LEAP (400m) and NEAP (1000m) sites with catchments (Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent)

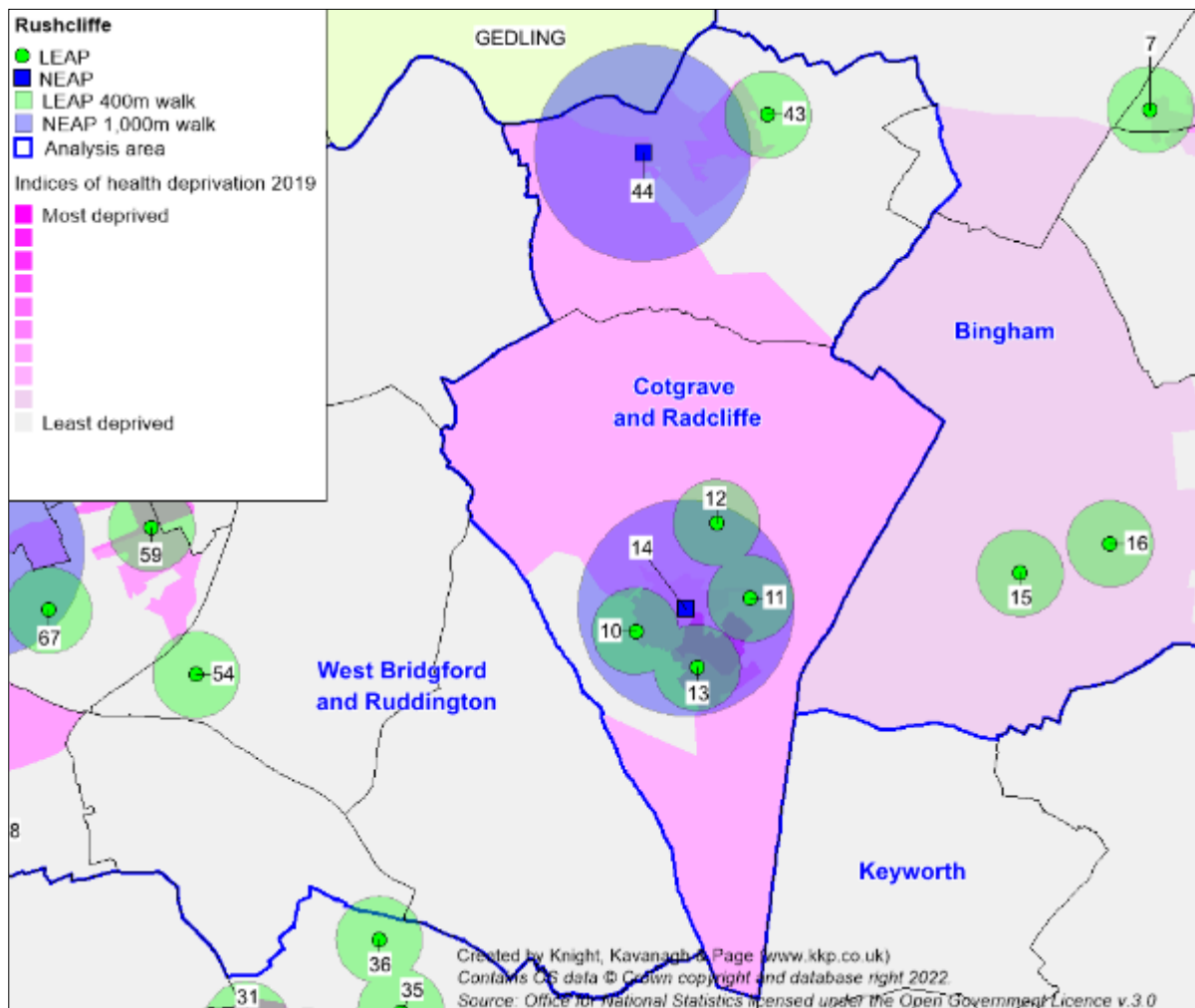


Table 4.5: Catchment gaps for Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent Analysis Area

Town/Settlement	Identified gap	Potential options
Radcliffe	Gaps in catchment in areas of dense population. Area also has medium levels of health deprivation.	Explore opportunities to upgrade a LEAP site to a NEAP

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 4.4: LEAP (400m) and NEAP (1000m) sites with catchments (East Leake) and neighbouring local authorities.

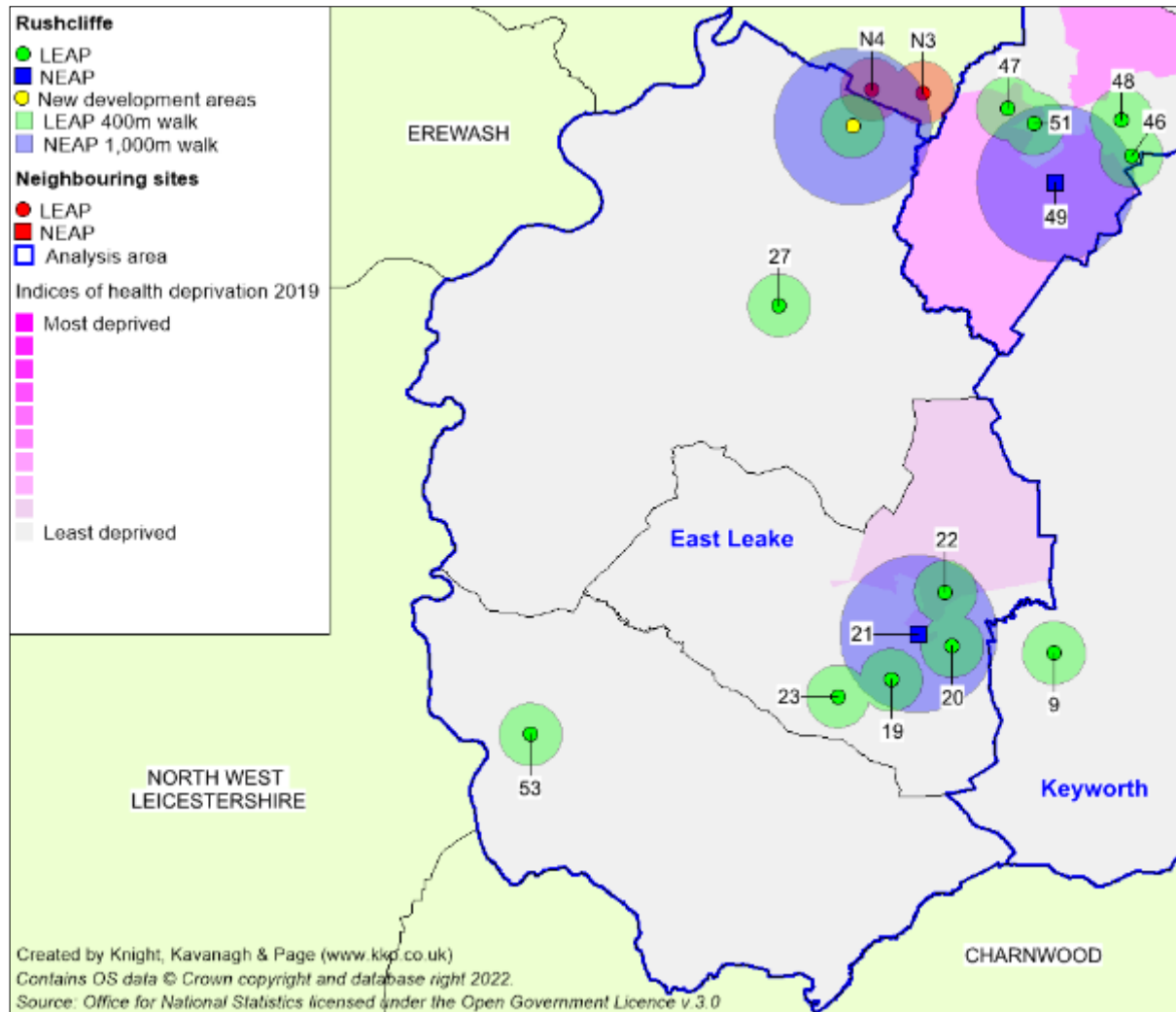


Table 4.6: Catchment gaps for East Leake Trent Analysis Area

Town/Settlement	Identified gap	Potential options
East Leake	No gap identified	n/a

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 4.5: LEAP (400m) and NEAP (1000m) sites with catchments (Keyworth)

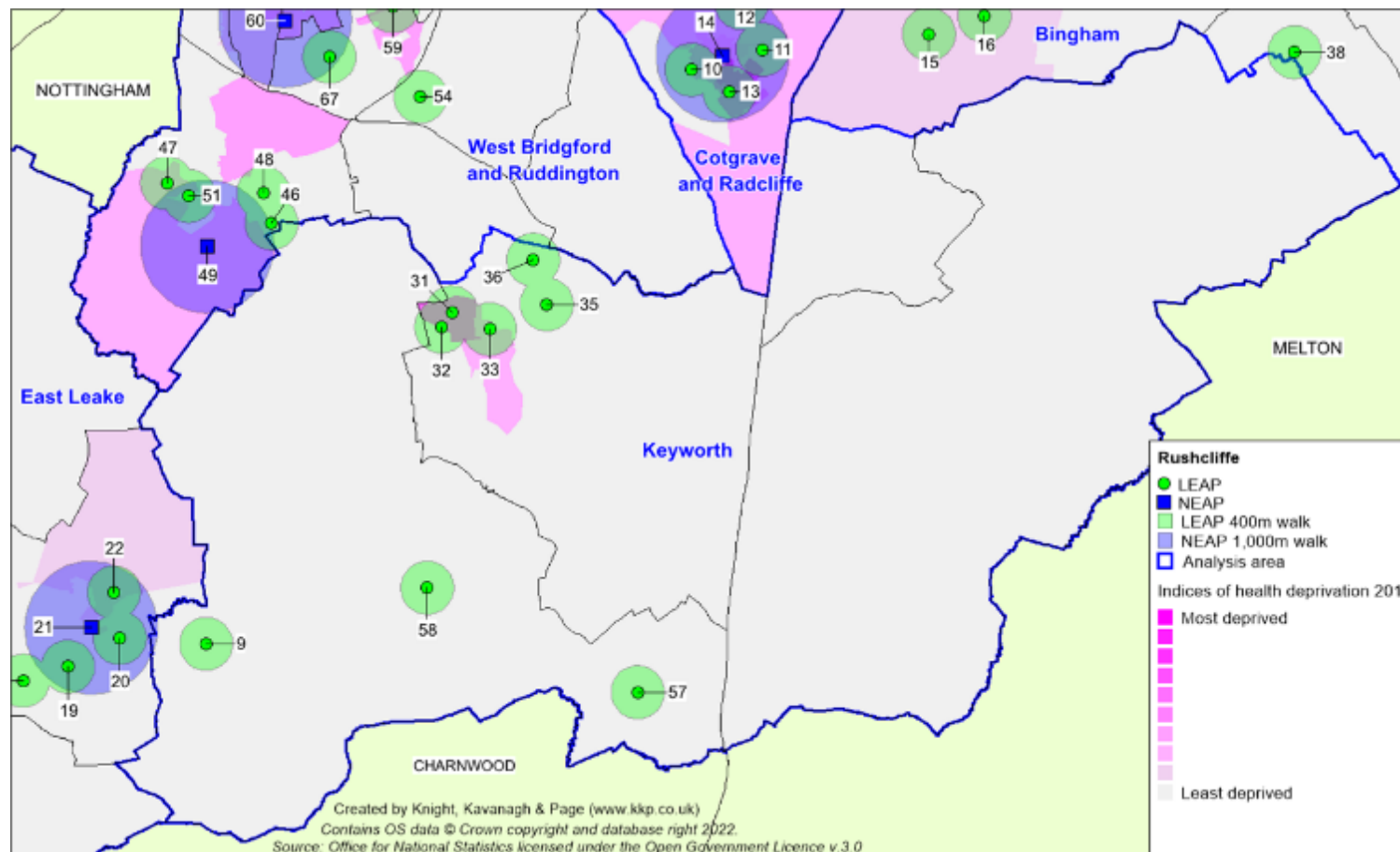


Table 4.7: Catchment gaps for Keyworth Analysis Area

Town/Settlement	Identified gap	Potential options
Keyworth	Lack of provision in areas of high population	Explore options to upgrade one LEAP site to a NEAP

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 4.6: LEAP (400m) and NEAP (1000m) sites with catchments (West Bridgford and Ruddington) and neighbouring local authorities

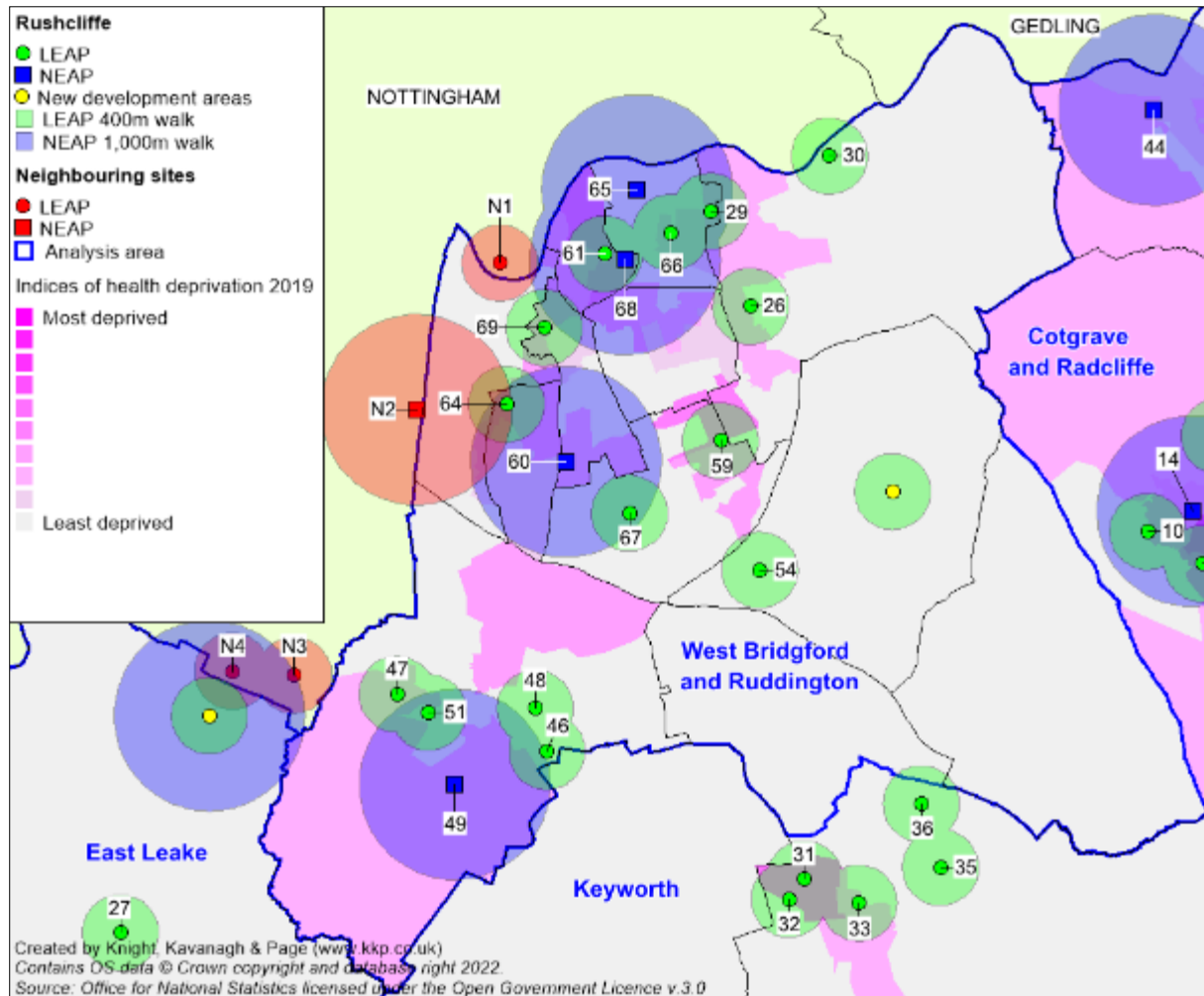


Table 4.8: Catchment gaps for West Bridgford and Ruddington Analysis Area

Town/Settlement	Identified gap	Potential options
West Bridgford and Ruddington	Gaps in catchment in areas of dense population. Area also has medium levels of deprivation.	Explore options to upgrade one LEAP site to a NEAP in West Bridgford and Ruddington analysis area

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

In summary, there is generally a good spread of play provision for younger and older children across all areas of Rushcliffe, especially within the areas with greater population densities.

Most settlements are observed as being served by some form of play and youth provision. However, some gaps in catchment mapping are highlighted in Radcliffe on Trent, Bingham, Keyworth and West Bridgford and Ruddington analysis areas and recommendations have been made to either expand existing provision or provide new facilities to meet this demand.

Future developments

In addition to the existing sites, two new housing sites will also feature play. Both are illustrated on the maps above and show the respective catchments. These are:

- ◀ Fairham development - Located on the border of Clifton (Nottingham City Council), the development will consist of 3,000 new homes. No play sites have been built yet; however, it is proposed there will be 1.73 ha of formal play space including a full range of LAP, LEAP and NEAPs.
- ◀ Gamston Development - a significant development consisting of circa 4,000 new homes on the former Nottingham City Airport site. The proposal is to create two key play areas, one part of a recreational facility, the other in the south-west of the development. There will also be some trim trails with fitness provision associated including a full range of LAP, LEAP and NEAPs.

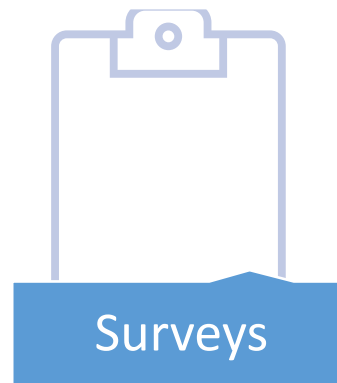


PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PART 5: CONSULTATION

As part of developing the Play Strategy, engagement with stakeholders who use and manage play areas across Rushcliffe has been undertaken. This has been divided into a series of consultation sessions and online surveys. Consultation sessions were targeted at users across the Borough. In addition, there have been three surveys; a community, management company and a parish council survey (see Appendix B for a copy of surveys questions).



Focus groups

There were three invitational youth focus groups which aimed to gather the current perception of play across the Borough. Each had a specific focus. These were:

- ◀ West Bridgford Young People's Centre: at the "Link" session which serves young people across the entire borough with additional needs and disabilities.
- ◀ Open session in Keyworth, Cotgrave and Ruddington; to gather general perceptions to on play across the three areas.
- ◀ Rushcliffe Arena: focus on play for tween and teenage girls.

The key themes from the youth sessions were:

Better use of interactive equipment across all sites - it was felt that fusing technology with play across all sites would improve the experience. Equipment which uses technology to improve agility and allow children / young people to express themselves would make visiting play sites more attractive to a younger audience. It would also provide a better sensory experience for those with disabilities. An example of such equipment is the interactive play at Tollerton's as illustrated the right).



Lack of provision for girls, especially tweens & teens - the majority of play sites for older children are geared towards males, with provision (such as MUGAs, basketball courts and skate ramps) encouraging sports such as football, basketball and skateboarding, consequently restricting opportunities for many girls and for those boys less interested in these sports.

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Preferences emerging from our focus groups include more social / informal areas, more dispersed facilities and less focus on sport and formal physical activity, more on informal activity. Ideas included seating, climbing facilities, age-appropriate swings, exercise and gymnastic equipment and covered shelters.

Improvements across all sites - It was felt that certain sites were poorly presented. General improvements are required across all key sites, which include better flooring, lighting, improved landscaping, more benches and better use of the natural environment (use of boulders) would make visiting play sites a better experience.

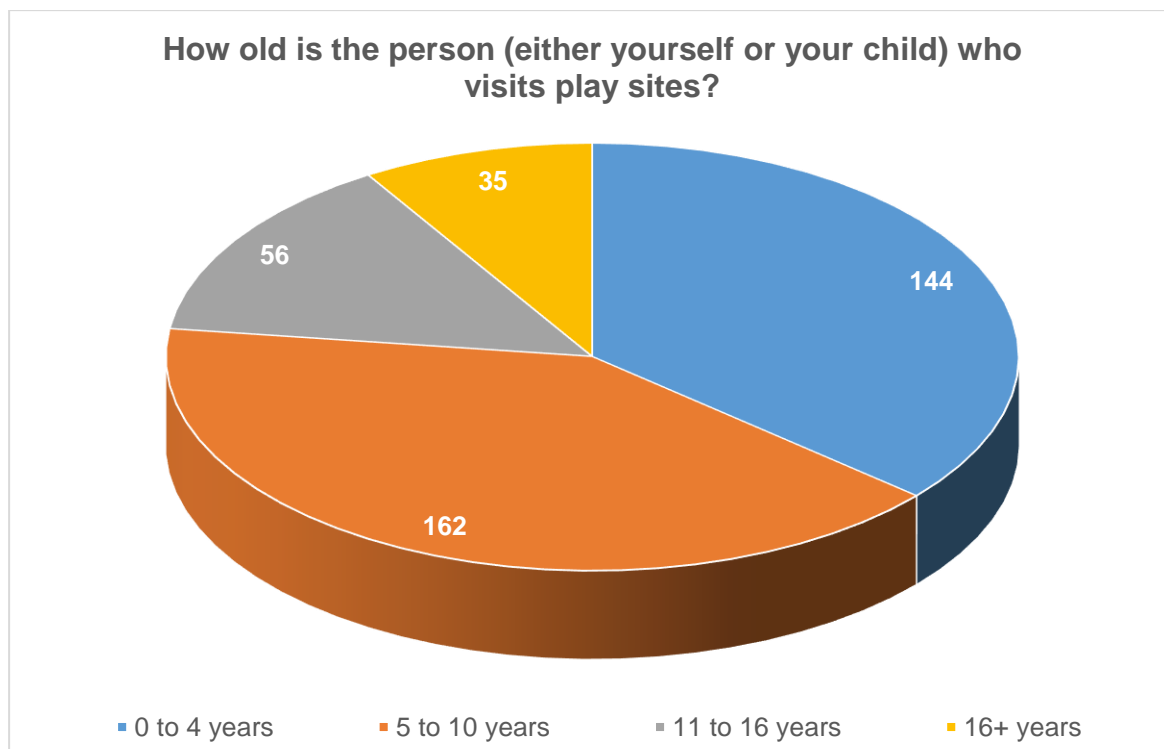
Use of alternative equipment - the Council could consider something different at key sites, including bouldering opportunities and gymnastics equipment.

Online Surveys

There were four online surveys issued, a public, a parish council survey, management company and an online survey undertaken by Skate Nottingham around wheeled sports. The purpose of the public questionnaire was to understand usage and perceptions of each site, in terms of quality, range and quantity of equipment, experience of visiting and suggestions for improvement.

A total of 397 responses were received, with many responding for more than one age group. The majority of responses were for children aged 10 and under (308 respondents), with 91 responses for and from people aged eleven and above. Across all responses, Rushcliffe Country Park and Bridgford Park were the two most popular sites. Of the top 10 most popular sites, Wharf Lane Recreation Ground was the site most frequently visited, with 30% of people visiting this site, doing so at least five times a week.

Figure 5.1: Age of respondent who visited play sites



PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 5.2: Most popular play sites visited (top 10)

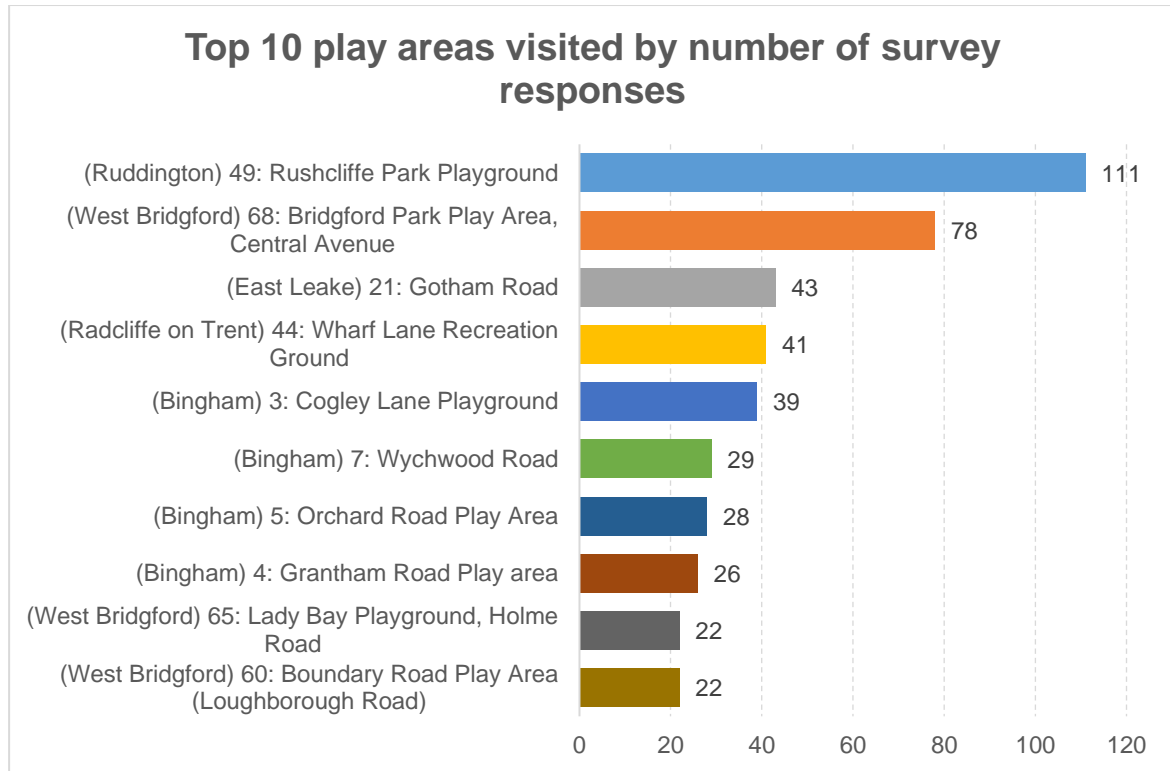
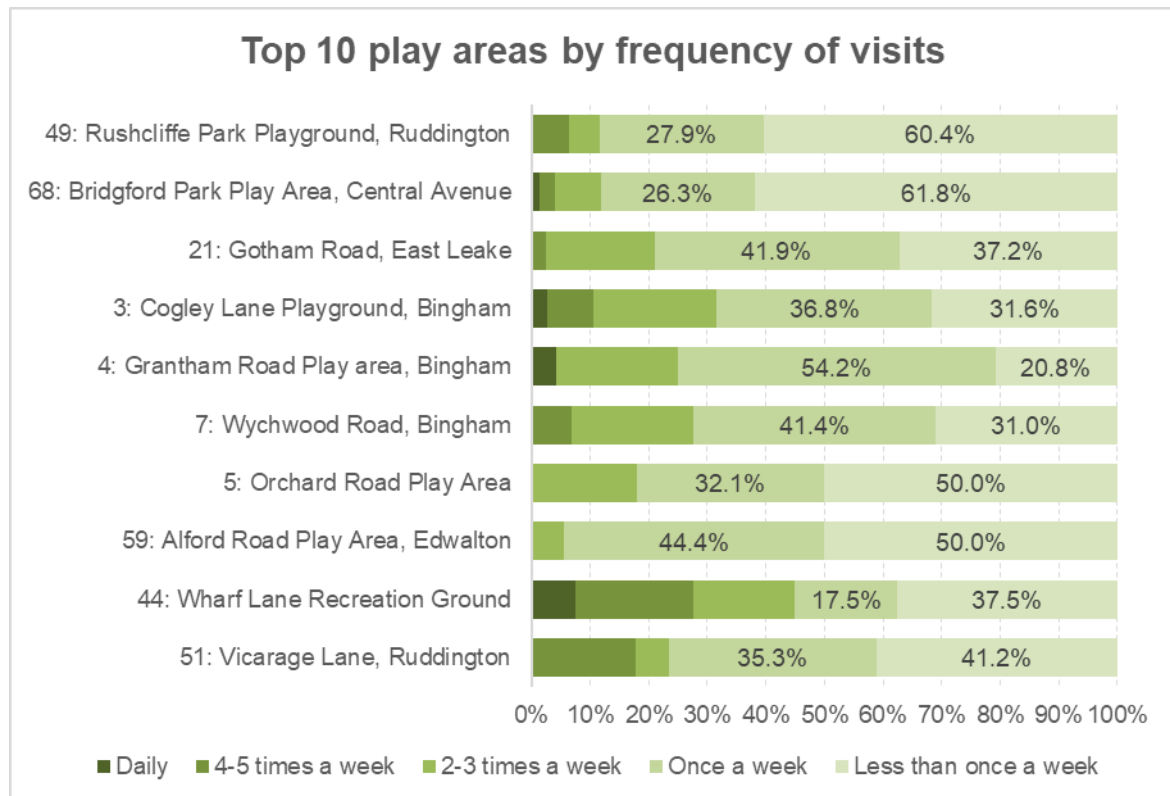


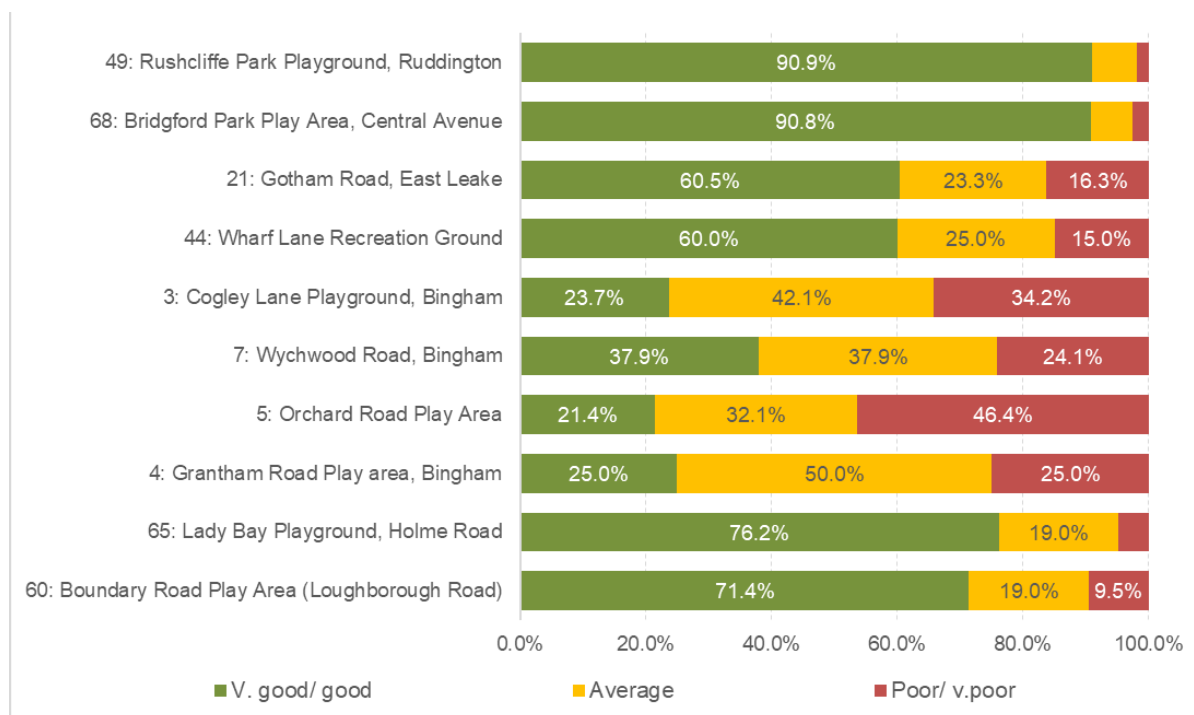
Figure 5.3: How often do you visit these sites (top 10 most popular)



PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 5.5: Of the top 10 most visited sites, how do you rate the play area and site it sits within, in terms of ambience, experience and safety.



In terms of overall ambience, safety and experience, the big parks at Rushcliffe Country Park and Bridgford Park both scored very well, with over 90% of respondents reporting these sites were very good.

In terms of overall quality, quantity and range of equipment at the sites, over half of the respondents felt that the quality was either good or very good (52.9%) whereas just under half felt that the range of equipment was either good or very good (47.8%). A slightly higher proportion of respondents rated quantity of equipment as either poor or very poor (28.9%) compared to quality and range. However, 46.8% rated quantity as good/very good.

Table 5.1: Overall quality, quantity and range of equipment across Rushcliffe

	Good/very good	Average	Poor/very poor
Quality of equipment	52.9%	25.4%	21.7%
Range of equipment	47.8%	26.7%	25.5%
Quantity of equipment	46.8%	24.2%	28.9%

Sites which respondents rate as either very good or good, across quality, quantity and range of equipment were:

- ◀ Rushcliffe Country Park
- ◀ Elms Park, Ruddington
- ◀ Lothian Road Play Area, Tollerton
- ◀ Bridgford Park Play Area
- ◀ Greythorn Drive Park, West Bridgford

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Conversely, sites which respondents rate as poor or very poor were:

- ◀ Main Street, Sutton Bonington
- ◀ Sellors Playing Field,
- ◀ Bingham Road, Radcliffe on Trent
- ◀ Memorial Hall Rec. Ground, Gotham
- ◀ Ring Leas (East Moor) Play Area, Cotgrave
- ◀ Broad Meer Play Area, Cotgrave
- ◀ Grantham Road Play area, Bingham
- ◀ Bingham RFU

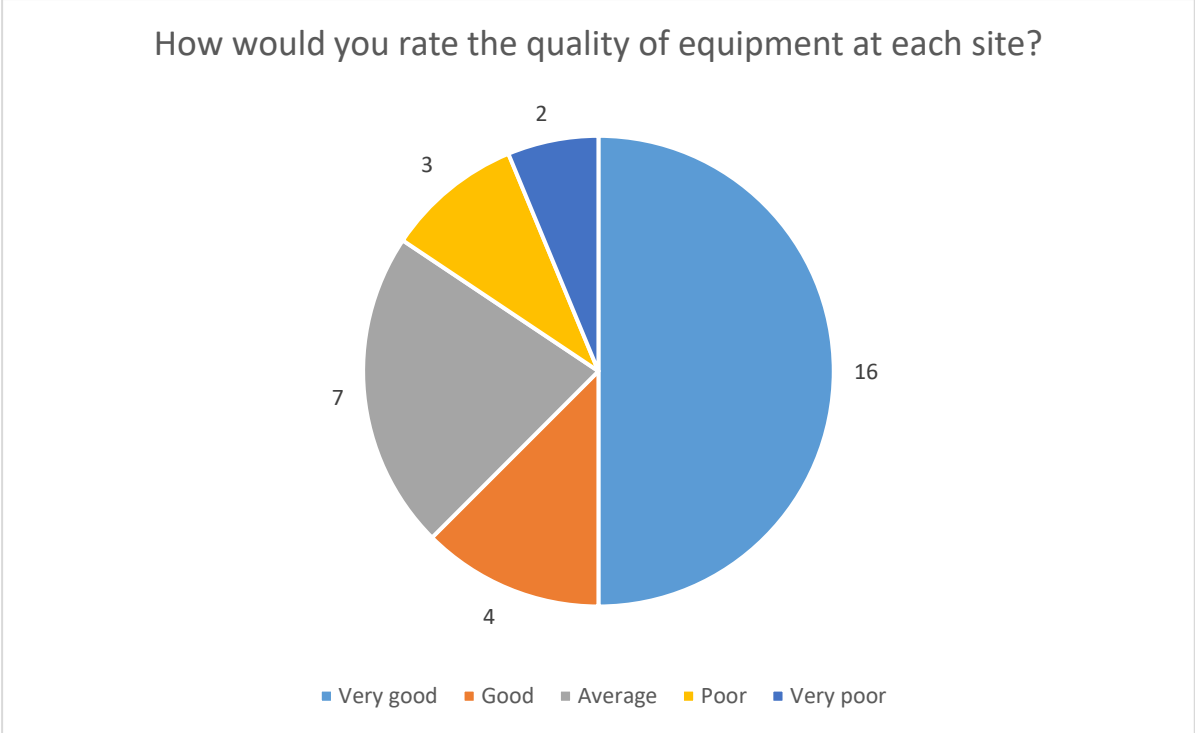
Town and Parish Councils were surveyed because they are responsible for publicly managed playgrounds in parished areas. In West Bridgford, Rushcliffe Borough Council is responsible for playgrounds. Some playgrounds are managed privately and management companies were surveyed separately.

The Parish Council survey received 25 responses across the Borough. Analysis highlights, in general, the quality, quantity and range of equipment is either rated good or very good (as illustrated overleaf). The two sites highlighted as poor across all three elements (quality, quantity and range), also reflected in the public survey, were:

- ◀ Bingham RFU.
- ◀ Butt Field (Bowls Club), East Bridgford.

Fifteen of the twenty-three Town and Parish Councils responding said that they have plans to upgrade playgrounds in their area.

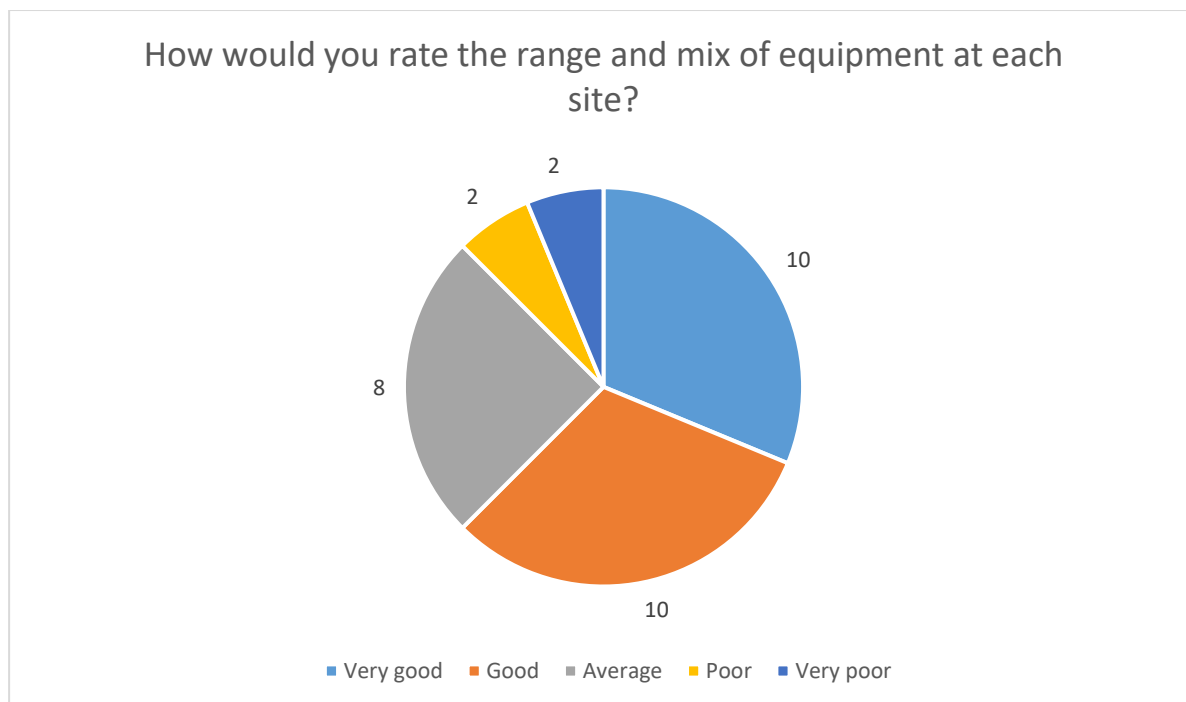
5.4 Quality of equipment



PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

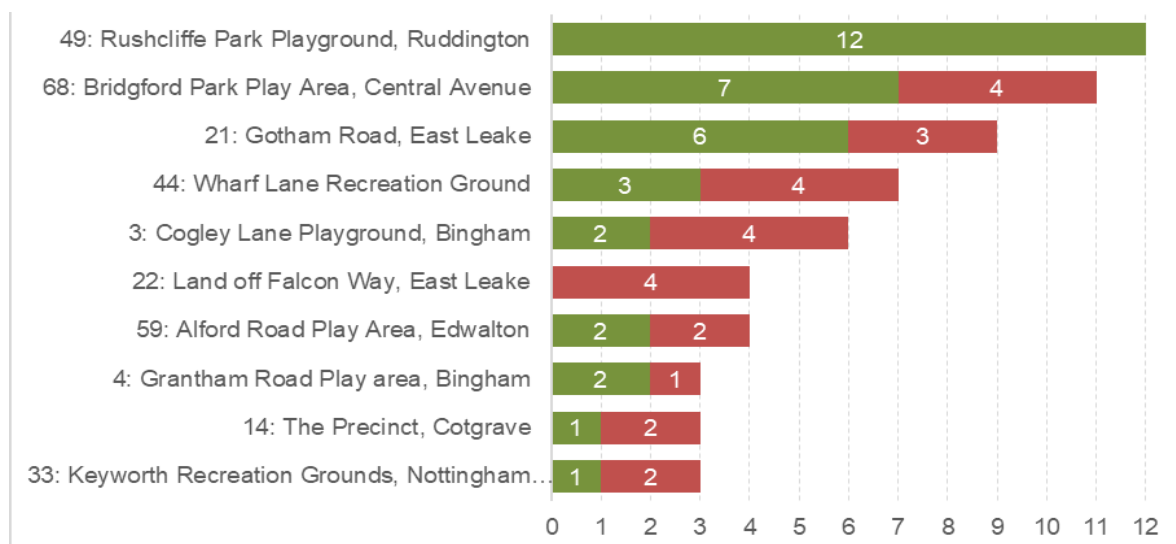
Figure 5.5 Range of equipment



Respondents were asked ‘if you are registered disabled, or care for someone who is registered disabled, is the play equipment at the site inclusive for your needs?’

Rushcliffe Country Park and Bridgford Parks were identified as having the best accessible equipment (fig. 5.7). However, four respondents stated that Bridgford Park did not have suitable equipment. It must be noted, there was a low response to this question.

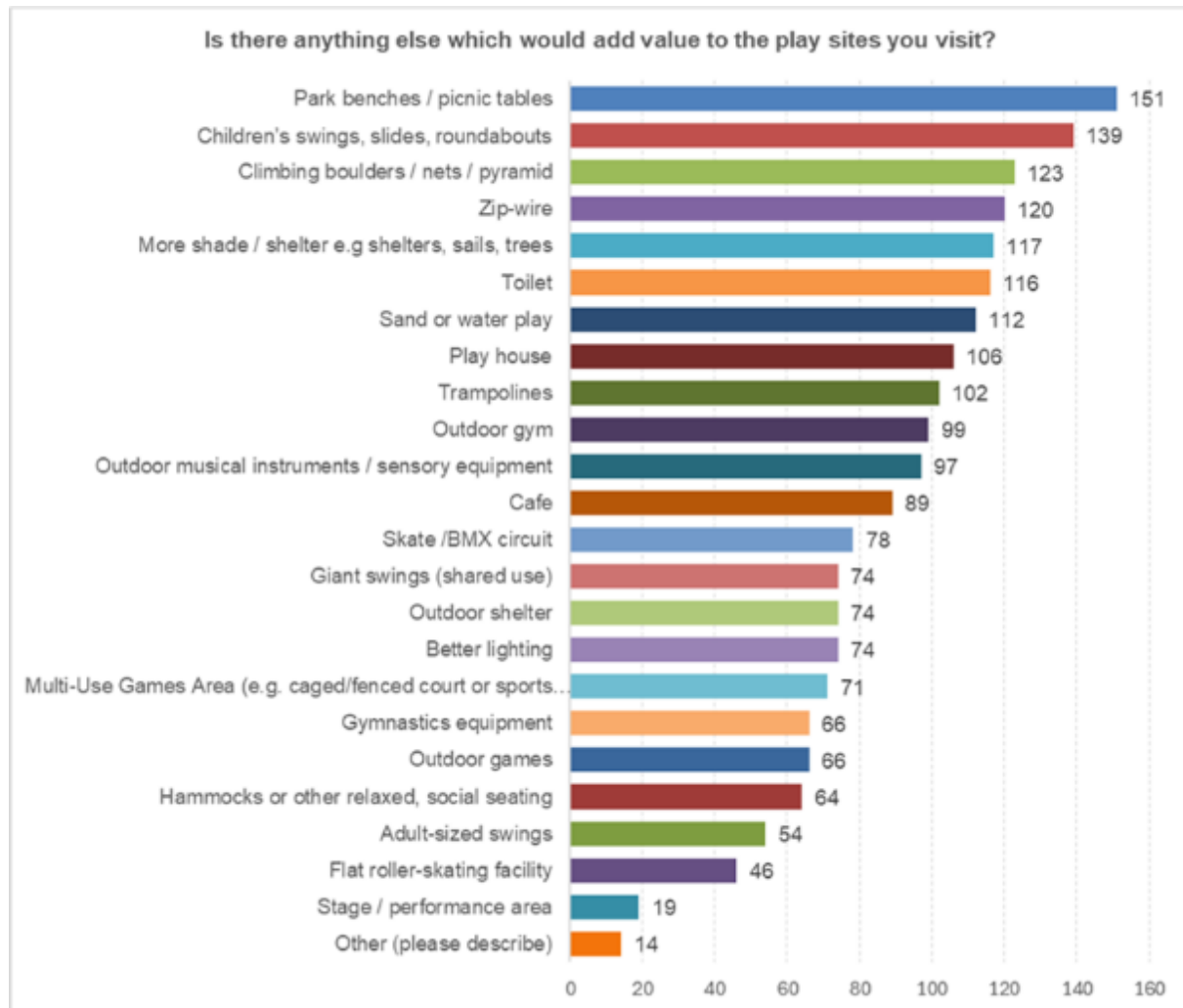
Figure 5.7: Which sites have the best accessible equipment?



PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Respondents were asked what else would add value to the playgrounds they visited, with a list of options and opportunity for free-text response. Responses to the listed options are shown in figure 5.9.

Figure 5.9: What could add value to play sites which you visit.



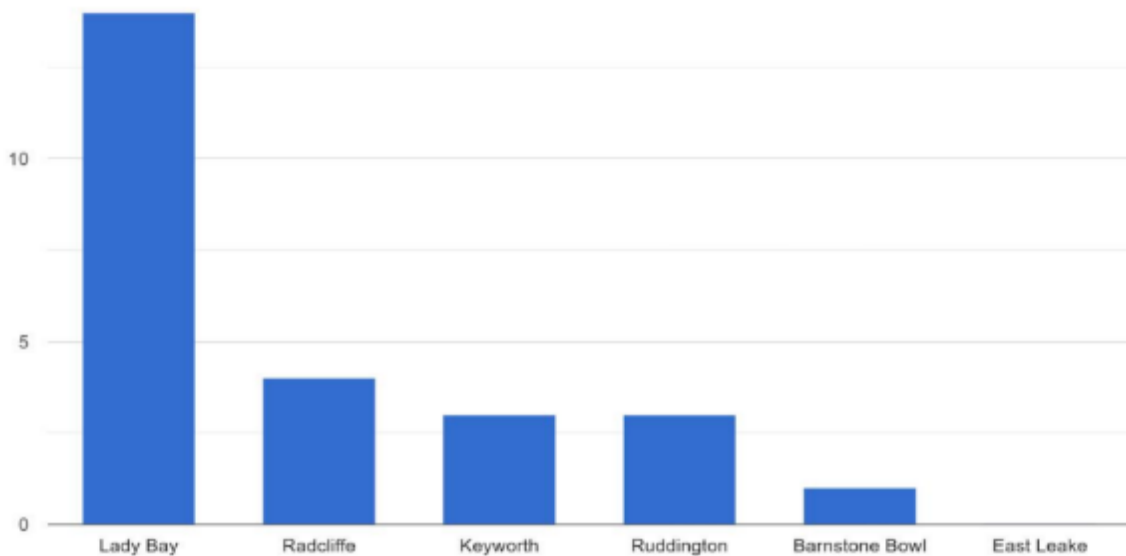
Skate Nottingham survey

Skate Nottingham undertook an online survey with all users of skateparks in Rushcliffe to understand popularity of individual sites along with any challenges faced by users. The survey was promoted through both Instagram and Facebook with 45 responses.

As shown in Figure 5.10, the most popular site for skateboarding in Rushcliffe is Lady Bay skatepark (nicknamed the Hook), followed by Radcliffe-on-Trent, Wharf Lane. Responses indicated that Radcliffe-on-Trent and Keyworth offered the most variety with large expansive areas allowing people to undertake a variety of obstacles/bowls/ramps. The majority of parks had large concrete areas, which provided a modern experience. Keyworth provided opportunities for beginners as well as advance users.

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 5.10: Most visited skateparks in Rushcliffe



To improve users experience, toilets, lighting, bins and additional seating were identified across all main sites. In addition, regular maintenance would benefit sites with graffiti being a key issue at most sites, as this causes slippery surfaces. At some sites the concrete is already cracking, which needs to be addressed with regular maintenance.

Qualitative responses

The public survey also offered respondents the chance to provide comment on play across the Borough. The key themes which came from the qualitative responses were as follows:

- Equipment to be repaired, maintained or improved, across many sites. More equipment and greater variety is considered desirable at a number of sites.
- More accessible play equipment was a common theme, including swings, sensory equipment and quiet space, accompanied by accessible surfaces, seating and toilets.
- Seating, including benches, tables and picnic areas was a high priority for respondents. A lack of seating was reported to make supervision of children difficult and limit the time families could spend at playgrounds. At one site seats were requested because *'people are sitting on play equipment smoking'*.
- Shade over seating and play areas was referenced repeatedly as a necessity for children and adults. *'Visiting with a 4yr old who wants to play but needs supervising, and a breastfed baby who needed shade there are not enough benches or shade, so we didn't visit as often last summer'*. Drinking fountains were also requested, as a way to cool down and extend visit time.
- Toilet provision, including accessible, changing places toilets. Toilet cleaning & maintenance was also noted as essential. *'The need for more changing places facilities for children with special needs and disabilities.'* *'The cleanliness of toilet facilities in the large parks is poor. This prevents women and girls of all ages from staying for longer. We can't just pee in the bushes like the men and boys do.'*

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

- Access improvements, benefiting people with prams, in wheelchairs and children on bikes, skates and scooters, in particular. These include making play area surfaces and the surrounding ground more even and less prone to puddles, adding access paths, addressing road-safety issues adjacent to parks and making blue badge parking with dropped kerbs available close to park gates. Responses included: *'Pram access is important', 'gets extremely muddy after just a bit of rain', 'Often equipment is on bark which a wheelchair can't go on. Grass is fine only if it is dry otherwise wheelchairs get stuck. Play equipment often in a raised area with no ramp.'* *'Disabled parents exist! I often can't be near my children and it makes me feel excluded and not able to spend time with my children.'*
- Fencing, particularly around play areas for younger children, to keep children in and dogs out, was cited as desirable and as a reason why some people travel to play areas further from home.
- Separate play areas for different age groups but near each other, with a central vantage point. Many adults made the point that with children of different ages, they need to be able to supervise young children while also keeping an eye on older children; supervise siblings while feeding a baby; sit with the family dog; and with other adults. A seating area outside any individual play area but overlooking more than one of these, as well as seating within play areas, would provide the right range of options.
- More play areas for children aged 8-12 and for teens was a major theme. As above, there was a desire expressed for some of these to be close to play areas for younger children to accommodate family groups. Also in the hope that providing play areas suited to different ages would discourage children from using age-inappropriate play areas, to the exclusion of their intended users. *'Kids above 8 need play equipment too - and if they have younger siblings what are they supposed to do?'* *'There are usually teenagers sitting on the equipment chatting and not using it, making it more difficult for others to use the equipment.'* *'...sometimes families with younger children 'take over' the teen area, displacing the teens. More scattered islands of equipment would prevent single-group dominance and make [these sites] more useable by more people at once.'*
- Greater variety of equipment for older children and teens. Suggestions included; climbing equipment, zip-lines, trampolines, obstacle courses, adventure play, exercise equipment, large swings, street-skating / roller-skating / scooter paths or rinks and pump tracks: *'More variety. More facilities that support children getting into a variety of sports. More wildlife attraction, bird hides / feeding stations.'* Facilities suitable for both children and adults were suggested; *'A site for performances would be great for community events e.g. yoga in the park, outdoor cinemas or theatre.'*
- Older and teen girls requiring investment in play provision was a repeated theme. Almost all provision for this age-group is in the form of multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and skate ramps. *'More equipment for teenage girls. If you survey who uses the skate parks and BMX tracks, you will find that this investment has benefitted boys. Engage with experts in designing parks for women and girls.'* *'In 14 years of walking past the MUGA many times a week I've only seen a girl in there once, when a family group had taken it over. Looking across the borough I see expensive skatepark after skatepark. Where is the equal investment in facilities for same-age girls?'*

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

- Skateparks benefitting from beginner ramps, with lighting for use in winter another suggestion. *'I see that a lot of children that come down to the skatepark are overwhelmed by the ramps. This is because there isn't really a beginner section of the park, I think this skatepark would benefit from having an additional area that could suit a variety of abilities.'*
- Bingham was repeatedly identified as lacking suitable playgrounds, for all ages but especially older children. *'Bingham parks are ok for very young children, but by the age of about 7, they have outgrown the equipment there.'* *'Bingham does not have any big playgrounds like Radcliffe-on-Trent, West Bridgford or Ruddington. It would be great if Bingham would have a nice big playground for all-aged children and parents to enjoy for longer than the odd hour here and there.'*
- Over-all, provision of play areas in Rushcliffe was considered good, with some people travelling from further afield to visit the Borough's larger sites. *'Generally Rushcliffe play areas are good and the Council has invested well in children's play. But one or two play areas seem to have been forgotten. During Covid 2020 we used Rushcliffe (Country) Park for exercise a lot and felt very fortunate to live close to such a wonderful facility. Thank you.'*



PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PART 6: PROVISION STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKING

Provision standards are used to help inform what future requirements are needed. The following section provides a review to the existing RBC provision standards and approach to calculating play facility requirements as part of new housing developments.

The basic principle is that a development should provide for the recreational needs it generates and deliver the provision on site where the demand is generated. All new developments should therefore contribute. Consequently, the Council expects appropriate provision of play facilities to be provided. RBC also has general design guide principles for play facilities (Appendix C).

Future need should not just centre on quantity requirements of new developments. In some instances, a new development may not warrant on-site provision but instead could contribute towards the enhancement of an existing site within local proximity.

This is intended to mitigate the impact of increases in demand on existing provision. In most cases, an increase in use, arising from a greater resident population, will reduce the lifespan of certain sites and/or features (e.g. play equipment and maintenance regimes etc.). This will lead to an increased requirement to improve, refurbish and/or replace such forms of provision.

Consequently, the recommended approach is to increase the capacity of and/or enhance the existing provision available. There continues therefore to be a requirement on developers to demonstrate that where new provision is to be provided it will be managed and maintained accordingly. Developers are therefore also required to contribute a sum of money to pay for the costs of the site's future maintenance.

Current approach

RBC currently uses a standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population for equipped children's play areas and 0.55 hectares per 1,000 population for unequipped children's play areas. This is based on previous guidance by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA). The NPFA is now Fields In Trust and has slightly updated quantity guidelines.

Table 6.1: RBC standards

Type of provision	Standard
Formal and informal amenity open space and formal paths and gardens	0.72 hectares per 1,000 population
Equipped children's play areas	0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
Unequipped children's play areas	0.55 hectares per 1,000 population

Table 6.2: FIT quantity guidelines

Type of provision	Standard
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
Other outdoor provision (e.g. MUGAs & Skateboard parks)	0.30 hectares per 1,000 population

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Therefore, the adopted standards for Rushcliffe Borough Council incorporating the above standards are as follows:

Table 6.3: Rushcliffe adopted Play Space Standards

Type of provision	Standard
Equipped children's play areas (LEAP)	0.25 hectares per 1,000 population
Unequipped children's play areas (LAP)	0.55 hectares per 1,000 population
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs & Skateboard parks) (NEAP)	0.30 hectares per 1,000 population
Formal and informal amenity open space and formal paths and gardens	0.72 hectares per 1,000 population

The play standards will therefore include the play type according to the side of the development and in addition the amenity open space to get the overall play and associated open space requirements for a development.

Comparative standards and costs

It is also worthwhile reviewing the standards and costs used by RBC compared to neighbouring local authorities. The following table sets out the existing contributions of neighbouring authorities (where possible).

Table 6.4: Comparative standards and costs

Local Authority	Standard	Offsite contribution
Broxtowe	Not set	-
Charnwood	0.25 ha per 1000 population	-
Gedling	-	-
Mansfield	Open space onsite to be 10% of the developable area proposed	-
Newark	18m ²	£927 per dwelling
Nottingham	2.4 ha per 1000 population ⁷	£1,314 per person
North West Leicestershire	0.25 ha per 1000 population (designated equipped play) 0.55 ha per 1000 population (informal playing space)	-

The existing RBC standard being sought of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population (2.5 m² per person) for equipped play areas reflects the suggested standard by Fields In Trust (2015) and is also in keeping with the standards sought by most other local authorities.

⁷ For all forms of open space provision, not just play

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Onsite or offsite

Whether provision should be made onsite or via an offsite contribution is dependent on the size and location of the development. RBC utilise the following triggers to inform when onsite provision is to be sought:

Play type	Triggers for onsite provision (based on number of dwellings)
LAP	10 dwellings
LEAP	50 dwellings
NEAP	100 dwellings

In some instances, if new provision cannot be sufficiently delivered onsite it is appropriate to seek to enhance the scale and quality of existing provision and/or improve access and linkages to existing sites in order to meet the additional need generated by the development. For example, a development may be located within proximity of an existing site. In such cases, particularly where the development only generates a small space requirement, it may be more appropriate for an off-site contribution to be made to improve or enhance the existing site.

To assist in this approach the following costs are identified:

Play type	Approximate cost by play type ⁸
LAP	£35,000
LEAP	£90,000
NEAP	£170,000

These are based on the average costings for a typical installation for each play type informed by recent local schemes. On this basis, the following cost per metre squared are calculated:

Play type	Minimum activity zone	Approximate cost per m ² ⁸
LAP	100m ²	£350
LEAP	400m ²	£225
NEAP	1000m ²	£170

These are intended to help inform the process; it is however important for each site to be calculated and designed in its own unique right.

Maintenance

Sums for the maintenance cost of a play site are intended to cover a period of **15** years. Based on existing practices it is estimated to be £1000 per annum for inspections and maintenance.

Timeframe	Approximate maintenance cost ⁸
Inspection and Maintenance Per annum	£1000
15-year period	£15,000

⁸ Subject to change based on changes in design, cost for materials, installation, annual inflation etc.

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPENDIX A: FULL LIST OF SITES (LEAPS AND NEAPS)

ID	Site	Type	Analysis area
3	Cogley Lane Playground, Bingham	LEAP	Bingham
4	Grantham Road Play area, Bingham	LEAP	Bingham
5	Orchard Road Play Area	LEAP	Bingham
6	Play area North of Archers Lake, Bingham	LEAP	Bingham
7	Wychwood Road, Bingham	LEAP	Bingham
9	Rear of Costock Primary School	LEAP	Keyworth
10	Broad Meer Play Area, Cotgrave	LEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe
11	Grassmere Play Area, Cotgrave	LEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe
12	Hollygate Park, Harvest Drive, Cotgrave	LEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe
13	Ring Leas (East Moor) Play Area, Cotgrave	LEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe
14	The Precinct, Cotgrave	NEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe
15	Memorial Hall, Cropwell Bishop	LEAP	Bingham
16	Play Area off Hopewell St, Cropwell Bishop	LEAP	Bingham
18	Adj. Butt Field (Bowls Club), East Bridgford	NEAP	Bingham
19	Admiral Close, East Leake	LEAP	East Leake
20	Aldershot Trust play area, Costock Road, East Leake	LEAP	East Leake
21	Gotham Road, East Leake	NEAP	East Leake
22	Land off Falcon Way, East Leake	LEAP	East Leake
23	Woodgate Road, East Leake	LEAP	East Leake
24	Coney Grey Spinney, Flintham	LEAP	Bingham
25	Flintham Pavilion, Inholms Road	LEAP	Bingham
26	Ambleside Play Park, Gamston	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
27	Memorial Hall Rec. Ground, Gotham	LEAP	East Leake
29	Adbolton Lane Play Area, West Bridgford	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
30	Adbolton Lane, Holme Pierrepont	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
31	Bunny Rise - Play area off Lambert gardens	LEAP	Keyworth
32	Bunny Rise, land off Tyler Drive	LEAP	Keyworth
33	Keyworth Recreation Grounds, Nottingham Road	LEAP	Keyworth
34	Keyworth Skatepark, Platt Lane	Skatepark	Keyworth
35	Nickerhill Play area, Keyworth	LEAP	Keyworth
36	Spinners Croft Playpark, Keyworth	LEAP	Keyworth
38	Main Street/Rear Works Lane, Barnstone	LEAP	Bingham
39	RAF Newton Play area	LEAP	Bingham
43	Play area off Hallam Drive, Radcliffe On Trent	LEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe
44	Wharf Lane Recreation Ground	NEAP	Cotgrave and Radcliffe

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ID	Site	Type	Analysis area
46	Land East of Loughborough Road, Ruddington	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
47	Land North of Marshall Drive, Ruddington	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
48	Play area south of Flawforth Lane, Ruddington	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
49	Rushcliffe Park Playground, Ruddington	NEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
51	Vicarage Lane, Ruddington	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
52	West Street, Shelford & Newton	LEAP	Bingham
53	Main Street, Sutton Bonington	LEAP	East Leake
54	Lothian Road Play Area, Tollerton	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
57	Community Park, Widmerpool Lane	LEAP	Keyworth
58	Wysall Village Hall, Main Street	LEAP	Keyworth
59	Alford Road Play Area, Edwalton	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
60	Boundary Road Play Area (Loughborough Road)	NEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
61	Bridge Field, Trent Bridge	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
64	Greythorn Drive Park, West Bridgford	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
65	Lady Bay Playground, Holme Road	NEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
66	Oak Tree Close, West Bridgford	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
67	Shalimar playground, Rose Way	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
68	West Bridgford Park Play Area, Central Avenue	NEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington
69	West Park, West Bridgford	LEAP	West Bridgford and Ruddington

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY AND PARISH SURVEYS QUESTIONS

Community Questionnaire

Which of the following play areas do you regularly visit?

Which of the following play areas do you regularly visit?

How often do you visit the site?

Is the site you regularly use the nearest play site to where you live?

How would you rate the site in terms of quality of equipment?

How would you rate the site in terms of range of equipment?

How would you rate the site in terms of quantity of equipment?

How would you rate the play areas surrounds, including fencing, paving, and access?

Is there anything else which would add value to the play sites you visit?

If you are registered disabled, or care for someone who is registered disabled, is the play equipment at the site inclusive for your needs?

If you have answered no, how can the equipment be improved?

Are there any barriers to access or enjoyment that have not been highlighted, if you used to visit a park but don't visit anymore?

In general, is there anything else you would like to add regarding play sites in Rushcliffe?

Parish Questionnaire

What Parish do you represent?

Which play areas fall within your Parish which the parish manages? (list more than one if applicable) (Drop down list of all sites)

How would you rate this site in terms of quality/quantity and range of equipment?

How would you rate the play areas surrounds, including fencing, paving, and access?

Is there anything else which would add value to the site?

Are there play areas within your parish/Town Council Area which are not managed or maintained by the Parish Council that are publicly accessible (i.e.) within management company ownership and management as part of a new housing development which have not been previously listed.

How would you rate these sites in terms of **quality/quantity/range** of equipment?

If you have highlighted any issues with the equipment at this site, how would you improve it?

PLAY STRATEGY REVIEW

RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPENDIX C: GENERAL DESIGN GUIDE PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY

The following are our principles to the design of play. These are based on the Fields in Trust National Playing Fields Association General Design Principles Guidance (6.1.9).

Play areas should be:

- Appropriate to the needs of the local community
- Accessible for every child within the appropriate walking time for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs
- Accessible without having to cross main roads, railways or waterways
- Sited in open, welcoming locations with appropriate lighting (where applicable)
- Separated from areas of major vehicle movements and accessible directly from pedestrian routes and visible from nearby dwelling or well used pedestrian routes
- Sited on land of natural topography or on land capable of being landscaped for the type of play experience intended
- Designed in accordance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and Equalities Act 2010
- Designed so that any high climbing structures are as far as possible from nearby dwellings and any potential visual intrusion is minimised
- Integrated, as far as possible, with other open spaces and areas of amenity planting to provide separation from nearby dwellings
- Visible from nearby dwellings or well used pedestrian routes
- Accessible for footpath with surface
- Surfaced in manner fitting to the intensity of use
- Provided with seating accompanying adults, carers and siblings which promotes a variety of adaptable spaces for scaling, performing and fun.
- Ensure spaces are not dominated by one activity and provide several opportunities for play and physical activity. e. g. providing swings which allow for multiple users or installing interactive equipment.
- Designed to provide a sociable, stimulating and challenging play experience that may include equipment and other features providing opportunities for meeting friends, undertaking physical activity, imaginative play and expressing yourself or other activities.

Further guidance is also offered in the RBC Design Code Landscape (Section 4.5 focuses specifically on play).



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

T 0115 981 9911
E customerservices@rushcliffe.gov.uk
W www.rushcliffe.gov.uk