

Date: Thursday 22 February 2024 at 4.30 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Stockton-on-Tees,
TS18 1TU

Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair)
Cllr Paul Rowling (Vice-Chair)

Cllr John Coulson
Cllr Jason French
Cllr Barbara Inman
Cllr Alan Watson

Cllr Richard Eglington
Cllr Shakeel Hussain
Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

AGENDA

4 Minutes

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 January 2024. (Pages 7 - 12)

5 Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility

To consider information on external bodies associated with this scrutiny topic, the experiences of other Local Authorities in managing outdoor play provision, and the views of Stockton Parent Carer Forum on the Borough's existing offer. (Pages 13 - 32)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Harrison on email rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday 25 January 2024.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Rowling (Vice-Chair), Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Richard Eglington, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Shakeel Hussain, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Alan Watson

Officers: Iain Robinson, Mike Smith (R&IG); Stephen Bowerbank, Keith Jackson, Neil Mitchell (CS,E&C); Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

1	Evacuation Procedure The evacuation procedure was noted.
2	Declarations of Interest There were no interests declared.
3	Minutes Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on 21 December 2023 for approval and signature. AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
4	Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility The third evidence-gathering session for the Committee's ongoing Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility comprised consideration of a submission from the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Town Centres Development service. Led by the SBC Assistant Director – Town Centre Development, and supported by the SBC Programme Delivery Manager, a report was presented in response to the following key lines of enquiry: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Town Centres Development department's responsibility for development of new facilities (brief outline including key personnel and their roles):</u> The team was made up of a broad range of roles with the focus on overseeing and co-ordinating the development, design and delivery of capital projects, predominantly under the funding umbrellas of the Levelling-Up Fund, Towns Fund, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and

Future High Streets Fund, as well as town centre business engagement and market management. The management and delivery of the new Stockton waterfront scheme required close liaison with the developers.

- Interdepartmental consultations on new facilities (i.e. how this works / what is the process?): The inclusion of formal play space and equipment within the new Stockton waterfront park was established as a fundamental element of the space at concept stage and through the preliminary design process in 2021. The SBC Town Centres Development team relied upon the expertise and knowledge of colleagues within SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure as plans for the urban park were in development, particularly in regard to play equipment. This collaboration, along with public consultation in summer 2022, led to a design brief for the play space being developed by Ryder Architects in October 2022.

Since then, officers from both SBC Town Centres Development and SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure have attended workshops and meetings to refine the design of the park, and have formed part of the appraisal panel for prospective play equipment providers as part of the initial procurement phase for play equipment from a quality, aesthetics, accessibility and sustainability (choice of materials) perspective – subsequent queries and challenge have been raised by both directorates in relation to guarantees, spares, play surfacing, play value and safety. The interrelationship between Council teams extended to site visits and individual design meetings, as required, alongside the architect design team.

Further refinement to specific elements of equipment and play areas were still to be made, with further input from SBC Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure colleagues intended. Given the Council was potentially oversubscribed in terms of equipment, identifying best 'play value' would be central to discussions.

- Summary of new and improved play / informal sport provision under the Town Centres programme (including new Stockton waterfront plans): Led by the Town Centres Development team, new and improved play / informal sports provision had been delivered, or was under development, at Stockton waterfront (with the intention of using naturally differing levels as part of the offer), Romano Park (complete), Victoria Park (complete), and Snaiths Field (still in preliminary design stage – likely to focus on enhancements of the existing offer).
- Understanding of revenue commitments around large-scale play facilities (historic and future projections): As part of the assessment process for Stockton waterfront play equipment providers, the sustainability and quality of materials was a key consideration in regard to minimising maintenance liabilities and the need to replace equipment. Warranties and guarantees on equipment, along with spare parts, had also been sought as part of the procurement / design of play equipment and play

areas to cover any issues or defects with equipment in the short-term. Furthermore, allowance for some maintenance and repair / replacement packages had been included within the initial costing for equipment, minimising revenue commitments maintenance as far as possible in the early years of operation. Beyond this, longer-term revenue requirements would be picked up and included as part of the future MTFP budget-setting process, with detailed work undertaken already with colleagues across the Council to assess the revenue impact of the park in its entirety from its completion in early-2026.

Other play facilities referenced within the report would be maintained within existing revenue budgets for play and open space.

Whilst the report focused mainly on the new Stockton waterfront plans, the Committee began its questioning on the developments at Snaiths Field. It was reiterated that plans for this site revolved around building on what was already there (akin to what had happened at Romano Park), though Members were advised that fitness equipment aimed at adults was unlikely to feature since there was little evidence that this apparatus was well used – indeed, there was a desire to veer away from this type of provision due to the liabilities it carried and vandalism it can attract (Members subsequently noted evidence of both these aspects at Kiora Hall, Roseworth).

Staying with the Snaiths Field offer, Members asked if maintenance of this particular site lay with Yarm Town Council. Officers confirmed that SBC had responsibility for inspecting and maintaining the play area on behalf of the Town Council, and would consult with the latter regarding developments. The Committee drew attention to other outdoor play facilities in Yarm which were not maintained by SBC and queried why this was the case – officers committed to providing clarity after this meeting, though thought it may be linked to who originally agreed to install the play space.

Broad enthusiasm was expressed by Members on the proposals for the Stockton waterfront development, though the need for adequate security of the site was also highlighted. Officers stated that SBC was very conscious there may be individuals who did not wish to use the space as it was envisaged, and that whilst some aspects of anti-social behaviour were hard to stop, the Council must be mindful of those who spoil good intent. It was also noted that making play spaces open and visible can help minimise inappropriate behaviours, and that CCTV can assist in identifying issues but requires adequate monitoring. Officers added that fencing around the waterfront park was being considered in order to manage risk.

In terms of the Stockton waterfront plans, the Committee reflected on the fact that this would, ultimately, add another significant resource to the Council's portfolio which would need to be maintained. Given SBC was not in a position to maintain what it already had, and that Local Authority funding was likely to get even tighter, this would represent a further challenge regarding decisions on existing provision across the Borough.

Continuing this theme, the Committee acknowledged the ongoing developments around the Stockton blueprint to make it a more attractive place – however, it was also stressed that establishing long-term revenue costs was a key consideration in ensuring sustainable provision. Responding to a subsequent query around the consultation exercise on the Stockton waterfront, officers confirmed that feedback had indeed impacted upon the design of the play space and that it was hoped that this would ensure a positive visitor experience. After working on this for four years, there was confidence and excitement about the new development, and the introduction of risk / jeopardy in the play space remained important (particularly to teenagers), though did provide a challenge with regards modern regulations. Officers were subsequently asked if any visuals of the Stockton waterfront plans could be provided to the Committee following this meeting.

Mindful of the anticipation around the scale and content of the Stockton waterfront plans, Members asked if larger play spaces were inherently more appealing to users and whether the Council had any evidence of this. Officers felt that much would depend on the perceived play value associated with an individual site, but it was known that young people (and adults for that matter) travelled from greater distances to use, for example, the skate park at Preston Park (even from outside the Borough). As had been discussed in previous evidence sessions for this review, resource limitations meant it was difficult to ascertain overall use for specific provision, and smaller offers may still have value for very young children or for those who were not as close to a larger ‘destination’ site.

When considering the appeal of larger play areas and the potential that this can lead to an overwhelming number of users, the Committee wondered if this could be managed by considering the level of equipment in smaller nearby sites which could be tweaked to appeal to a broader range of ages (thereby relieving pressure on the ‘destination’ locations). For those larger play areas, officers noted that the Council does try to make a space available and applicable to a spread of ages and needs.

Given the ongoing financial challenges faced by the Council, Members felt the Borough was in a fortunate position to have several sizeable play sites already in existence (with another imminent). As such, in order to safeguard these well used and much valued spaces, resources may need to focus on preserving the quality of such areas in the first instance, with smaller areas being addressed where and when funding and staffing allowed. The Committee did, however, also highlight the situation for those young children and / or their families who were unable to travel to larger sites – this would need careful consideration in terms of the overall future prioritisation of the Borough’s outdoor play provision.

Concluding the session, the issue of accessibility was raised, with the Committee acknowledging the significant cost attached to certain equipment which was not necessarily compatible for all those with a similar need (e.g. wheelchair-users). Officers agreed that sourcing appropriate resources was

	<p>difficult, but also noted innovative approaches that adapted spaces and promoted access for a wider range of users. The Council was aware of equipment options which could be used at different heights and also for the need for ramps / suitable surfacing to foster easier access.</p> <p>Plans for the next (and final) evidence-gathering session were outlined. It was anticipated that information in relation to relevant external organisations would be presented at the next meeting in February 2024 – this would include research around the experiences of other Local Authorities who had considered outdoor play provision, as well as the views of the Stockton Parent Carer Forum on the Borough’s existing offer.</p> <p>AGREED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the information submitted by the SBC Town Centres Development service be noted. 2) clarity be provided regarding the maintenance agreements for outdoor play facilities in Yarm. 3) further information be provided in relation to the proposed visuals for the new Stockton waterfront play area.
5	<p>Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2023-2024</p> <p><u>Chair's Update</u></p> <p>The Chair had no further updates.</p> <p><u>Work Programme 2023-2024</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the current Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme. The next meeting was scheduled for 22 February 2024 and would feature the next evidence-gathering session for the ongoing Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision.</p> <p>AGREED that the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme 2023-2024 be noted.</p>

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Crime and Disorder Select Committee

22 February 2024

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF OUTDOOR PLAY PROVISION: QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION, MAINTENANCE, AND PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY**Summary**

The fourth (and final) evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility will focus on external bodies associated with this scrutiny topic, the experiences of other Local Authorities in managing outdoor play provision, and the views of Stockton Parent Carer Forum on the Borough's existing offer.

Detail

1. As part of the scoping process for this review, in addition to the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) departments with oversight and involvement in the provision of outdoor play areas, the Committee identified several external organisations whose work required consideration in relation to this scrutiny topic.
2. Officers from the SBC Community Services, Environment and Culture directorate have therefore prepared a presentation which is included within these meeting papers. Information covers commentary on:
 - Play England (www.playengland.org.uk)
 - Association of Play Industries (API) (www.api-play.org/)
 - RoSPA (www.rospace.com/)
 - Disability Discrimination Act 1995
 - Information from other Local Authority officers
 - Local Authority publications

In readiness for the informal 'summary of evidence' session which will follow the completion of the Committee's evidence-gathering, a list of suggested principles / discussion points is also included for Members to reflect upon prior to this next phase of the review (scheduled to take place immediately after the formal meeting in March 2024).

3. The Chair of Stockton Parent Carer Forum (www.stocktonparentcarerforum.co.uk/) has also been invited to this meeting to provide views on the Borough's existing outdoor play offer.
4. A copy of the agreed scope and plan for this review is included for information.

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Crime and Disorder Select Committee

Play and informal sport
background information



Play England advice

The 10 principles for designing successful play spaces

Successful play spaces...

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution.

Play England is the national children's play charity for England. Its vision is for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years.

Play England advice

Successful play spaces offer:

- **Movement and physical activity**
- **Stimulate the five senses**
- **Good places for social interaction**
- **Allow children to manipulate natural and fabricated materials**
- **Offer children challenge**



Association of Play Industries

The Association of Play Industries (API) is the lead trade body in the play sector. It represents the interests of manufacturers, installers, designers and distributors of both outdoor and indoor play equipment and safer surfacing. The API promotes best practice and high-quality play provision within the play industry.

Aims and Objectives

- To promote good play space design, installation and workmanship within the industry.
- To promote an understanding of play and risk.
- To maintain and assist the development of British, European and other Standards for play.
- To liaise closely with governing bodies of play, nationally and internationally.
- To ensure members comply with standards and good practice.
- To provide a united voice for the play industry.



The British and European safety standard BS EN1176 and the Health & Safety Executive strongly recommend that all play areas are inspected annually by an independent qualified body such as RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents)

We commission RoSPA to carry out the following independent inspections and assessments:

- Annual Inspections of existing play areas and safety surfacing (sites should be as safe as they need to be, not as safe as possible).
- Assessments of the 'life expectancy' of play equipment and play areas
- Post Installation Inspections of new sites - ensuring equipment and surfacing have been correctly installed and meet safety standards
- Play Value Assessments....



RoSPA – Play Value Assessments

These can be used to assess play value of existing play areas or new designs

Three broad aspects of a site are assessed:

- The Overall Site (ignoring equipment, but including the landscape setting, site safety and so on)
- Ambience (visual appeal, condition and layout)
- Suitability and value of play equipment and features for the age groups for which the site is designed (toddlers, juniors or teenagers)

A detailed set of criteria are used and sites are given overall ratings (*excellent, good, average, below average or poor*) for each of these three elements.

The Operator should aim for a minimum rating of 'good' for all sites.



The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act aims to ensure that all those who are disabled have the same access to public services (and by implication, public parks and playgrounds) as those who are not disabled. Successful play spaces should, as far as is reasonably possible, offer the same quality and extent of play experience to disabled children and young people as is available to those who are not disabled, whilst accepting that not all equipment can be completely accessible to everyone.

Inclusion by Design (Goodridge, ed. Douch, 2008) sets out the following six principles, established by the Disability Rights Commission, which form the foundation of inclusive design:

- Ease of use
- Freedom of choice and access to mainstream activities
- Diversity and difference
- Legibility and predictability
- Quality
- Safety

Information from other authority officers

Barnsley

'Barnsley have so far not considered rationalisation of its play spaces, however, since 2018, any new play spaces that are required within in new housing developments as part of the planning process, will not be adopted by BMBC.

These will need to have a management company in place to maintain/inspect and repair.

Any 106 off site contribution raised from any new development will go to support existing play spaces for refurbishment or replacement.

Wakefield

Wakefield are looking at a current proposal to remove 5 play areas across Wakefield – all of which are on tarmac surfacing, and 3 of which are of poor play value. All the visual evidence points to these swings receiving very little use, to the extent that there's moss on the seats at one of the sites.

We are looking at reducing our play area provision, not so much for financial reasons, but more around compliance and quality of what we are actually providing.

Leeds

Leeds are increasing our provision, but also removed a couple in consultation with ward members and residents.

New provision is installed where we have never had a play area and we have obtain a commuted sum.

where possible we like to refurbish existing play areas before building new.

Local authority publications

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Brighton & Hove City Council

Describes the unavoidable impact of aging play equipment and makes suggestions to protect play provision across the city in the future (Sep 16)

<https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s104342/Enc.%202%20for%20The%20Big%20Conversation%20-%20An%20Open%20Spaces%20Strategy%20for%20Brighton%20Hove.pdf>

Burnley Council

Burnley's Play Area Strategy 2017-2026

https://burnley.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Burnleys-Play-Provision-Strategy-2017-2026_0.pdf

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Children's Play Areas / Playgrounds (Nov 21)

<https://democracy.merthyr.gov.uk/documents/s56146/Adroddiad%20Pwyllgor.pdf?LLL=1>

Newcastle City Council

Inclusive play

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/inclusive-play-newcastle--d74.pdf>

Play Area Investment Plan

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/environment-and-waste/green-spaces/play-areas>

Rochdale Borough Council

Play Area Strategy 2022-2031

<https://democracy.rochdale.gov.uk/documents/s94814/Play%20Area%20Strategy.pdf>

Walsall Council

Public consultation opens for proposed £1.6million investment in play facilities (Jan 23)

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/newsroom/public-consultation-opens-proposed-ps16million-investment-play-facilities>

Examples of informal play



15/02/2015
4 1 0

Suggested principles-discussion points

1. Our existing revenue budget does not allow us to maintain the existing formal play parks to the standard we desire.
2. We have an unequal distribution of play facilities within the Borough, we should work to 'balance' provision to allow as many people as possible, to benefit from play.

So we need to consider our options for the future, for example should we:

- Consider rationalisation of facilities while ensuring all communities have equitable access to play?
- Encourage informal play or play outside of a formal setting?
- Only develop/encourage new sites where there is a clear lack of provision and where we have a clear commitment of revenue for appropriate upkeep and renewal.
- Focus resources on a smaller number of larger, 'Destination' sites which can cater for a wider demographic/catchment? This would allow to invest our limited resources to ensure they meet a wider range of users and concentrate our revenue obligations.
- Deliver/encourage doorstep or neighbourhood facilities only in areas where residents cannot easily access destination sites?
- Continue to provide formal play provision in our rural country parks or should we prioritise urban, local provision?
- Require officers to develop a strategy for play provision based on the guidance of scrutiny?



Crime and Disorder Select Committee
Review of Outdoor Play Provision: Quality and Distribution, Maintenance, and Physical Accessibility
Outline Scope

Scrutiny Chair (Project Director): Cllr Pauline Beall	Contact details: pauline.beall@stockton.gov.uk
Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager): Gary Woods	Contact details: gary.woods@stockton.gov.uk 01642 526187
Departmental Link Officer: Neil Mitchell (SBC Head of Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure)	Contact details: neil.mitchell@stockton.gov.uk
Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?	
<p>The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2023-2026 key objectives (and associated 2023-2024 priorities):</p> <p><i>A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and enhance provision and support for children and young people with additional needs or accessing alternative provision. • Support people to live healthy lives and address health inequalities through a focus on early prevention, long-term conditions, substance misuse, smoking, obesity, physical activity and mental health. • Work with our communities and partners to develop our approach to healthy places, in the context of regeneration plans and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. 	
What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?	
<p>It is widely accepted that play is an essential part of every child’s life and is vital for the enjoyment of childhood as well as social, emotional, intellectual and physical development. Play facilities are therefore seen as an essential element to allow people to live healthy lives and help ensure activity is established at an early age, thus reducing long-term health conditions.</p> <p>Previous analysis has indicated that outdoor play provision is uneven across the Borough, with significant variations in the play value, age and accessibility of equipment and sites. Many older play areas are in decline and, as is being felt by Local Authorities up and down the country, there is insufficient budget to maintain all the current sites.</p> <p>In terms of new sites, the majority of these are established through planning obligations and consequently increase provision in areas where new development is taking place. Conversely, there are limited opportunities to establish or improve play areas in existing residential areas. In either case, it should be noted that all sites are subject to challenge relating to accessibility and play value.</p>	

Play areas can be an emotive topic and have elicited a range of comments (both positive and negative) from the public with regards the existing offer. Like so many other Council-related activities, balancing public expectation with the realities of deepening Local Authority funding pressures is becoming an increasing challenge. There is a well-established need to maintain an effective portfolio of high-quality play area assets within the Borough's communities, but this must be sustainable, provide value-for-money, and be accessible to as many people as is feasibly possible.

The main aims for this review will be to:

- Examine the Borough's existing outdoor play offer in terms of play value and distribution, and identify locations where there is currently an imbalance in provision.
- Ascertain who is responsible for individual facilities and what the management / maintenance and sustainability requirements are now, and are likely to be in the future (including revenue costs).
- Consider accessibility / inclusivity factors in relation to play provision so practical and financial implications are understood and factored into decisions around existing and future plans.
- Contribute to future policy around play area provision, giving an appraisal of potential options.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What is meant by the term 'outdoor play provision' – what does this encompass (what does it not)?

How is 'meaningful play' determined – what are its characteristics and how does / should this impact upon play provision?

Are there any legislative requirements around outdoor play provision?

What is the Borough's existing outdoor play offer – where are these sites located, what do they provide, what is their play value, and where are the identified gaps in provision?

How should the provision of major new play facilities planned for Stockton Waterfront influence decisions around the distribution and management of play provision elsewhere in the Borough, and will it have any impact on budgets to maintain existing facilities?

How are existing sites managed / maintained and what is the cost of this to the Council? How has this changed over time and what are the future projections based on the current offer?

What is the process around new play provision created as part of new developments? What are the responsibilities of developers and the Council, how does this change over time, and what are the implications of this?

What are the accessibility / inclusivity requirements around outdoor play sites? Has the Council been challenged regarding this and what is realistically achievable in the context of available space and financial constraints?

What feedback has been received from the public regarding outdoor play provision?

Can we learn anything from other Local Authorities who are likely to be wrestling with similar challenges regarding outdoor play provision?

What are the potential future options around outdoor play provision (including alternative funding possibilities)? How does / might this feed into key corporate policies such as Fairer Stockton-on-Tees / Powering Our Communities?

Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

Council, Cabinet, developers, public.

Expected duration of review and key milestones:

5 months (report to Cabinet in April 2024)

What information do we need?

Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

- SBC review of outdoor play and informal sport provision (2019)
- RoSPA Play Value Assessments (available for specific play area sites in the Borough)
- Resources available from the charity Play England: www.playengland.org.uk

Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

- Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure
- Care For Your Area
- Town Centres Development
- Planning / Place Development

- 'Outdoor play' terminology / definitions
- Existing outdoor play provision offer
- Process / implications of new sites
- Maintenance of existing assets
- Plans for play provision in town centres
- Role of these SBC teams around this topic

Association of Play Industries (API)

- Equal play campaign
- Best practice / Local Authority engagement

RoSPA

- Safety and management of play areas
- Previous analysis of the Borough's offer

Play England

- Design / Quality in Play approaches

Stockton Parent Carer Forum

- Resident views on the existing play area offer

Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF)

- Young people views on existing provision

Local Government Association (LGA) / Other Local Authorities

- Experience of this issue

<p>How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</p> <p>Committee meetings, reports, research, site visits (TBC).</p>
<p>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</p> <p>Committee meetings, information submissions.</p>
<p>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</p> <p>The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. This review will be mindful of these factors.</p>
<p>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</p> <p><u>Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): Physical inactivity:</u> recommended levels of physical activity significantly worse than the national average; specific sectors of the community less physically active than the general population; not all residents derive the same level of physical activity opportunities from the Borough's outdoor public spaces due to variations in quality, quantity, accessibility and connectivity (Dec 2018).</p> <p><u>Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023: All people in Stockton-on-Tees live well and live longer.</u> We know that socio-economic and environmental factors influence health-related behaviours. Therefore working with partners to shape the infrastructure across the Borough which can impact on whether or not a healthy lifestyle is an easy and accessible choice is key.</p> <p><u>All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities:</u> We know that a range of factors including; good housing, warm homes, access to green space and healthy food, opportunities for physical activity, good transport links, air quality, antisocial behaviour and crime are all linked to physical, mental health and wellbeing outcomes. Planning policies and subsequent decisions can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing through the design of neighbourhoods, buildings and public space in the way they encourage people to be socially integrated, physically active or limit the growth of take-away and alcohol outlets.</p>
<p>Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear strategic guidance upon the development of new play facilities and priorities and rationalisation of existing play provision.• Budgetary provision for maintenance of play provision is proportionate to the number of play areas that are retained.

Project Plan

Key Task	Details/Activities	Date	Responsibility
Scoping of Review	Information gathering	September 2023	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	09.10.23	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Agree Project Plan	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	19.10.23	Select Committee
Publicity of Review	Determine whether Communications Plan needed	TBC	Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer
Obtaining Evidence	SBC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure Community Services SBC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive Growth and Development (Planning / Place Development) SBC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Centres Dev. S'ton Parent Carer Forum Play England Other Local Authorities	09.11.23 21.12.23 25.01.24 22.02.24	Select Committee
Members decide recommendations and findings	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	21.03.24	Select Committee
Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders	Circulation of Report	March 2024	Scrutiny Officer
Tri-Partite Meeting	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBC	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
Final Agreement of Report	Approval of final report by Committee	25.04.24	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee	Consideration of report	07.05.24	Executive Scrutiny Committee

Report to Cabinet / Approving Body	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	16.05.24	Cabinet / Approving Body
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