

Play areas and informal sport facilities – current position

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Introduction

- Existing portfolio
- Classification of play areas: destination, neighbourhood and doorstep
- Play value
- Types of informal sport provision
- Inequalities in provision

Existing portfolio

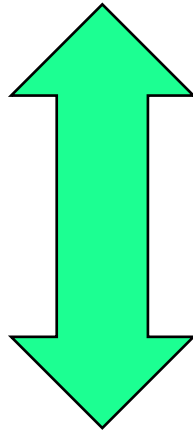
- The Borough currently has 48 publicly accessible play areas, and 20 sites with informal sport facilities (some of these are located at the same sites).
- Stockton Borough Council owns and manages the vast majority of these sites, and also manages 5 sites on behalf of town/parish councils.
- Any facilities not freely accessible to the public (such as those located within school grounds, sports centres or locations such as RSPB Salthome) are not within scope of this review.
- Plans and tables listing all play areas and informal sport facilities across the Borough have been circulated to Committee Members. *Note: these do not include all play areas or informal sport facilities that are planned (or under development) as part of new housing developments*

Classification of play areas

The Council categorises play areas as follows. These classifications are based mainly on the quantity and size of play equipment, but also take into consideration the provision of other facilities and services:

Larger sites serving wider catchment areas

- **Destination**
- **Neighbourhood**
- **Doorstep**



Smaller sites serving local areas

Destination sites

- Sites with a significant quantity of equipment (suitable for a wide range of users, including toddlers, juniors and teenagers)
- Located within parks and generally well-landscaped.
- Refreshments and toilets available at peak times
- Generally located close to other facilities which add to the overall recreational value



Four destination play areas:

- Preston Park (*below*)
- Wynyard Woodland Park (*left*)
- John Whitehead Park
- Ropner Park



Neighbourhood sites

- Sites with a moderate quantity of equipment (generally suitable for a range of users, which may include toddlers, juniors and teenagers)
- Often located within larger green spaces.
- Preferably with access to toilets and refreshments and close to other facilities which add the other overall recreational value of the site – but this is not essential.



e.g. Victoria Park, Thornaby

Doorstep sites

- Sites with a small quantity of equipment (not suitable for all age ranges, and often designed for younger children).
- May be located within a larger green space, but can be small self-contained sites within housing areas.



e.g. Grangefield Park

Play Value

- 'Play value' relates to the quality and variety of the play experience.
- RoSPA has developed a methodology of assessing the play value of any site. This considers the play value of the equipment itself for different age (teenagers / juniors / toddlers), as well as the characteristics and quality of the site itself (e.g. landscape, infrastructure, access).
- Equipment and sites are awarded overall scores: excellent / good / average / below average / poor.
- Play Value scores for most locations are included in the list of play areas circulated to Committee Members. However, please note that most of these assessments were carried out in 2018 and may not reflect any changes that have occurred since that date. If Play Value is to be used to inform future decision-making then updated assessments would be required

Types of informal sport provision



Skate park – Preston Park



Outdoor gym - Grangefield Park



Multi-use games area (MUGA) – John Whitehead Park



Other surfaced games area – Victoria Park

Inequalities in provision – why?

- Many sites have been provided as part of housing developments (or improved with Section 106 contributions). Areas of the Borough where housing development has not taken place have not benefitted in this way.
- The last major Borough-wide investment in play provision was through the government's Play Builder programme, launched in 2008. Schemes were agreed in consultation with ward councillors and local community organisations, but not all areas benefitted from this investment.
- Some Town / Parish Councils have been proactive in supporting the development and management of play provision in their local areas.

Inequalities in provision, e.g. South Billingham

The Bulgarth is currently the only play area in south Billingham, comprising just one piece of equipment

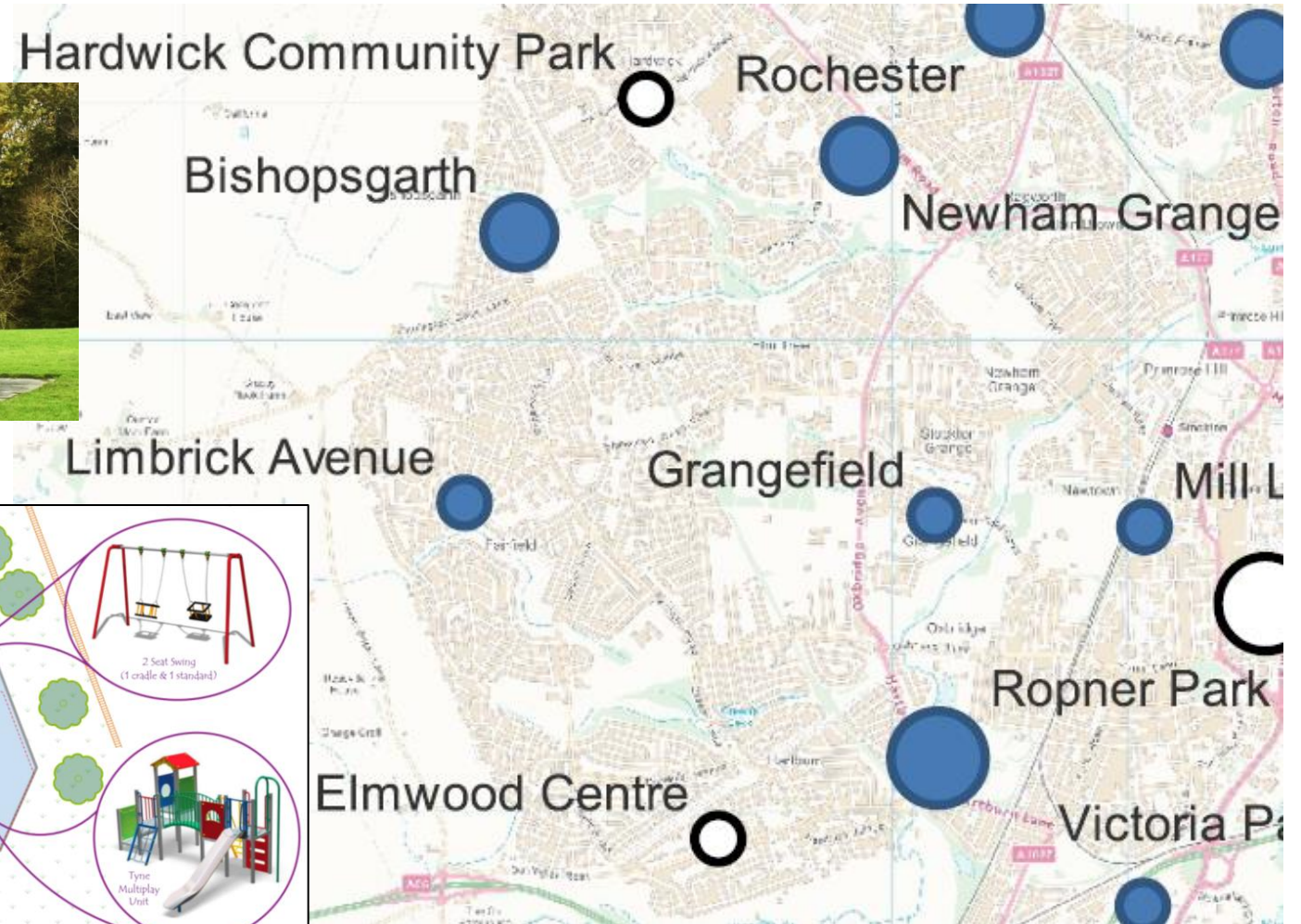
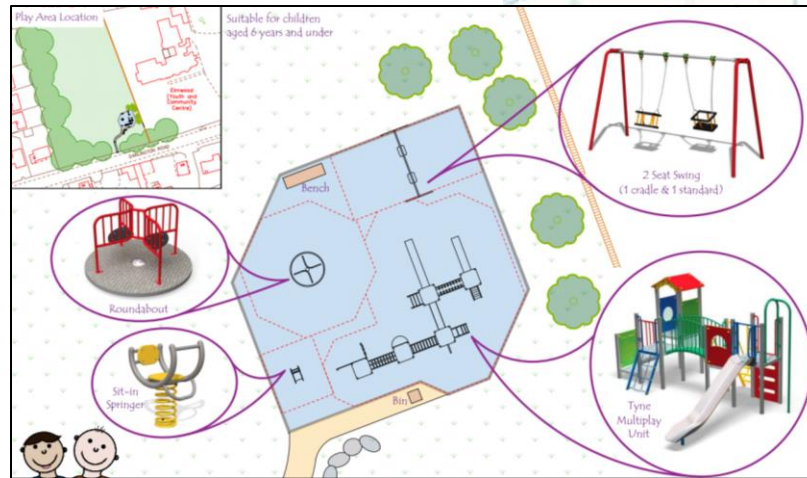


Inequalities in provision, e.g. West Stockton

Currently the only play provision in Fairfield and Hartburn wards is this single slide at Limbrick Avenue



However, a small 'doorstep' play area is planned for the Elmwood Centre, Hartburn



Inequalities in provision, e.g. Ingleby Barwick

In contrast to the preceding illustrations, Ingleby Barwick is reasonably well provided.

The south-east has a cluster of sites, ranging from 'neighbourhood' play areas at Romano Park (*left*) and Windmill Park (*centre*), through to the small 'doorstep' sites – such as Earls Meadow (*right*).

