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an Iúir, Mhúrn
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**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council



Play Strategy Review

2024- 2029



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**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council



Play Strategy Impact Review and Assessment of Current Need

2024 - 2029

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1.0 Introduction

This report outlines the key findings of an impact review of the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Play Strategy (2017-2022). The review was undertaken by Playboard NI, the lead organisation for play in Northern Ireland.

Council commissioned this impact review to provide:

- An assessment of Council delivery against the agreed Play Strategy Capital Programme (Fixed Play) plan as outlined within the 2017 strategy.
- Updated Play Value Assessments for all play parks within the council area to determine and outline:
- The impact of capital investment made under the strategy on the enhancement of play value levels across the area.
- Next phase fixed play capital development priorities based on play value scores.
- A review of current population needs against fixed play park provision with a view to identifying emerging potential gap sites for fixed play development.
- A review of progress towards the development of non-fixed play opportunities across the Council area.

In addition, the report provides updates and additional guidance on a number of key areas which have emerged since publication of the original Strategy in 2017.

1.2 Overarching Observations

The Play Strategy has delivered a significant level of capital investment in council fixed play park infrastructure with circa £3.3 million invested to meet identified gaps in provision through new play parks and to enhance play value through the upgrade of existing play parks.

As a result of the investment to date, council has achieved an overall increase in the level of play value across the district, securing:

- A 23% increase in the number of play parks meeting a high level of play value, resulting in over half (55%) of play parks being rated in the high play value category.
- A reduction in the number of mid value play parks by 12%.
- A reduction in low play value sites by 11%.

The improvement in overall play value ratings across council has been the result of an internal focus and commitment to the embedding of quality design principles for new play parks/upgrades in-line with developing play industry standards. This has resulted in the design and installation of play parks that offer increased levels of challenge, variety, accessibility, creativity, and overall play value.

The increase in quality has further been supported through the focus council has placed on community engagement. At the outset of the play strategy delivery process, council developed and embedded a three-stage community involvement and consultation process which has provided children, young people, families, and wider communities an opportunity to feed into the design and development process. This has resulted in play parks designs that better meet the needs of local communities, ultimately enhancing levels of use and tailoring play opportunities to individual site locations and populations.

With regards to residential play need, the play strategy review notes that since its adoption no planning provisions have been specifically placed on private developers to provide appropriate play spaces in line with the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.

Given anticipated continued population growth within the area, it is important that over the coming period council ensure that developers incorporate suitable fixed play/open space allocations within development in line with Planning Policy Statements 7 and 8. This will help to alleviate the development of gaps in play provision which council will ultimately be expected to meet, often with little or no land available.

Beyond fixed play parks, the play strategy recommended the development of non-play-equipment based play opportunities through community based ‘free’ play sessions.

Council has rolled out such community-based approaches, with evaluations highlighting the value of such programmes at local level in expanding play experiences for children whilst also opening existing open spaces for outdoor play. Council should continue the roll-out of non-fixed play approaches sessions, thereby supporting children, young people, and families to engage in accessible play activities at local community level.

1.3 Capital Recommendations

It should be noted that the scope of works outlined within the Play Strategy apply wholly to Council owned and maintained play parks.

Following review of impact associated with the Play Strategy, a capital programme, based on level of assessed play value (2023) and indicative level of demand has been established for a further 4-year period (2024/2028), with a view to maintain the significant progress made to date.

Year 1

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Crotlieve	Granite View	65	111	Capital Upgrade
Downpatrick	Seaview	79	198	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Conway Park	82	180	Capital Upgrade
Mournes	Scrogg Road	84 <i>(Note: Further decline since audit)</i>	504	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Belleek	85 <i>(Note: Further decline since audit)</i>	129	Capital Upgrade
Rowallane	Hillfoot Junior	79	-	Closure and removal of equipment
Newry	Springhill Drive	85	-	Closure & return of site to NIHE management.

Year 2

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Newry	Derrybeg	85	788	Capital Upgrade
Downpatrick	Bishops Court	83	103	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Ard Ross	84	709	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Whitecross	106	-	Introduction of inclusive fixed play equipment to meet local need.
Downpatrick	Bridge Street	80	-	Transformation

Year 3

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Mournes	Island Park	85	566	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Lismore	85	709	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Rathview	85	709	Capital Upgrade
Mournes	Ben Crom	85	560	Transformation
Newry	Emmett Street Mourne Park	85 86	675	Consolidation onto one site

Year 4

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Households	Recommendation
Newry	Peter McParland Park	84	438	Capital Upgrade
Mournes	Rooney Road	85	381	Capital Upgrade
Slieve Croob	Drumaroad	85	-	Capital Upgrade
Mournes	Pious Hill	81	51	Transformation
Downpatrick	Model Farm St. Dymphnas	71 79	-	Consolidation onto one site

Year to be Determined in line with wider Capital Works

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Recommendation
Crotlieve	Clonallen	78	Capital upgrade to commence in line with planned Health and Wellbeing Hub development

Capital Works Outside Play Strategy

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Recommendation
Crotlieve	Kilbroney Forest Park	120	Falls outside scope of the Play Strategy. Further consideration to be given under Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism.



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Section A - Background and Area Overview

2.0 Context

In 2017 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council agreed a five-year Play Strategy (running to 2022) which aimed to establish a strategic framework within which decision making, as it relates to the provision of fixed play and the development of non-fixed play would take place. Development of the play strategy was a significant step by council, establishing a clear commitment to meeting the child's right to play as enshrined within Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Within the strategy, Council adopted a forward-thinking approach to the provision of both fixed (equipment based) and non-fixed (equipment free) play across the district. The aim was to achieve an enhancement in the play value associated with identified play parks within the councils fixed play park estate, whilst developing non-fixed approaches to enhancing play opportunities at community level. In developing the strategy, council considered a broad range of strategic policy frameworks that operate at local, regional, and international level.



2.1 International Strategic Framework

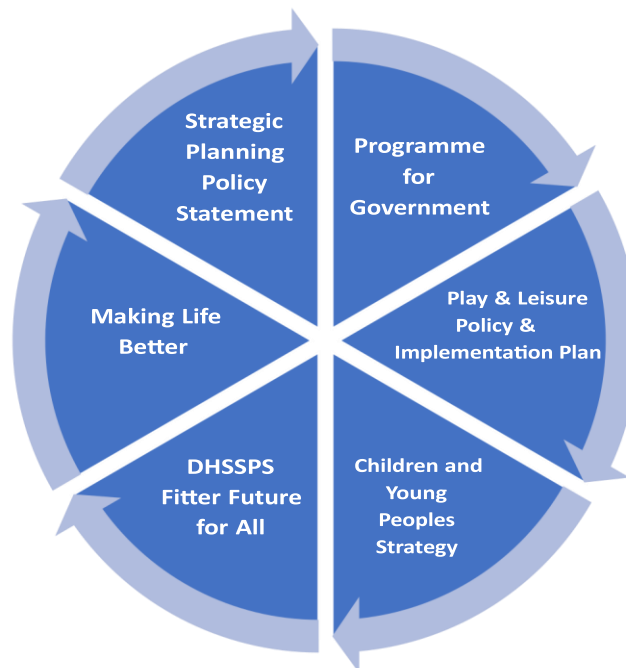
At the core of the strategy was a commitment to Article 31 of the UNCRC, the right to play and leisure. The UNCRC is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights.

Ratified by the UK government in 1991, the UNCRC commits all branches of central, regional, and local government across the UK to ensuring its fulfilment. Article 31 of the UNCRC states:

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

2.2 Regional Strategic Framework

In developing the Play Strategy, Council considered a range of regional overarching policies and strategic frameworks, all of which have an impact on the play and its role as a key element in children and young people's growth and development.



2.3 Local Strategic Framework

At local level, the play strategy acknowledged the impact of a number of key strategies within council which have an impact on the delivery of play and leisure opportunities for children and young people.



At its core, the strategy acknowledges that play and the urge to play is a natural part of children’s lives, supporting the achievement of a broad range of developmental outcomes as well as providing opportunities for fun and enjoyment.

For children and young people, the drive to play is a constant and by their very nature, children and young people are always on the lookout for play opportunities regardless of where they find themselves.

Within the strategy the word play is used to describe the wide range of activities that children and young people engage in during their free time including, but not restricted to:

- Physical activities such as running, jumping, and climbing.
- Social activities, which may include self-organised team games, sharing experiences or simply communicating with others during play.
- Creative activities such as constructing or making things, painting etc.
- Imaginative play such as making up games, dressing up, daydreaming • Challenging play which involves the child pushing their developmental limits in order to

achieve a positive outcome. The strategy acknowledges the importance of play as a mechanism for driving development in childhood, highlighting its role within a number of key areas including:



Physical Health

Play often involves children being engaged in a physical activity, for example running, jumping or climbing.

Physical play brings multiple developmental and health benefits, for example running and jumping supports the development of bone density, climbing helps to develop strength and coordination whilst running and chasing games develop fitness, stamina and agility.



Learning

Play is central to the learning process with research indicating that 75% of post-birth brain development is influenced by the range and variety of play activities children engage in.

Play has been shown to have a positive influence on language development, creativity and problem solving, enabling children to explore new ideas and concepts, testing their own abilities and learning new things about the world around them.



Risk and Challenge

Children and young people have a natural thirst for challenging play, often seeking it out regardless of whether or not safe provision has been made.

Challenge in play is important as it allows children to test the boundaries of their limitations, develop new skills to overcome the challenges they face and develop the ability to better manage risk on an individual basis.



Social Skills

Play provides children with an opportunity to develop their social and communication skills enabling them to interact and engage with others, learn to negotiate and share, deal with conflict and develop and maintain friendships.

At a wider level, play has been shown to contribute to active citizenship, supporting the development of community cohesion.



Teenagers and Play

Play is often viewed as something only younger children engage in when in reality it remains a key part of young people's lives throughout their teenage years.

As children become teenagers social connection becomes increasingly important, with play and recreational activities often providing the central basis for such interactions.



Connections to the Natural Environment

Playing outdoor in natural spaces (parklands, fields, forests, beaches) not only benefits health and wellbeing, but help children and young people to gain a greater appreciation for, and connection to the natural environment.

2.5 Barriers to Play

Despite the benefits associated with play, the strategy acknowledges the barriers children often face in seeking to fulfil their natural drive and urge to play. Barriers identified include:

- **Increased levels of traffic within residential areas which limit traditional street and community play opportunities due to safety concerns.**
- **A loss of accessible public, green spaces which are openly available for children to play on.**
- **A lack of understanding about the importance of play and a low level of tolerance towards children playing outdoors from adults in the community.**
- **A lack of appropriate play infrastructure (e.g. fixed play areas, open recreation spaces, playable public realm etc.) to meet the play needs of children and young people.**
- **Limited opportunities for the inclusion of children and young people with disabilities or complex needs within play spaces and environments.**

The play strategy acknowledged that, given the range of barriers that exist across society, it would not be able to address all of the barriers that exist.

The aim was however to provide a central point from which Council could address those barriers within its control, whilst working with other stakeholders to alleviate and remove the wider barriers that restrict play opportunities.

2.6 The Strategy Development Process

In developing the Play Strategy, a number of key actions were undertaken which aimed to provide a baseline for fixed play provision that would enable assessment of impact over time.

These actions included:

- An audit of the play value associated with fixed play areas to identify those that offer a limited or restricted play experience and are in need of remedial action to enhance their play value.

- An evaluation of underlying demographic needs and settlement patterns to identify gap areas that may require fixed play development over the duration of the strategy.
- An assessment of underlying demographic needs and settlement patterns in areas of existing fixed play provision to identify potentially redundant fixed play areas that are no longer required.
- A combination of online consultation surveys, public engagement events and focus groups with children and young people gathered the views of the local community regarding current and future play provision across the district.

2.6.1 Comprehensive Strategy for Play Facilities within Forest Environments

As part of its commitment to offering a high-quality visitor experience in its Forest Parks, the Council has recognised the need for a specific action focused on play facilities within the forest environments. These environments present unique challenges and opportunities that require a dedicated approach, integrating all relevant aspects such as access, security, health and safety, tree management, and customer facilities.

Proposed Actions

To address these needs, the Council should focus on play provision for forest park areas independent additional piece of work.

The key elements of this strategy will include:

- **Comprehensive Assessment:** A detailed evaluation of all play facilities within the forest environments, including an analysis of current access routes, security measures, compliance with health and safety regulations, tree management practices, and the integration of customer facilities such as restrooms, seating, and signage.
- **Holistic Approach:** The strategy will adopt a holistic view, ensuring that all factors ranging from natural environment considerations to the safety and accessibility of play equipment—are addressed in a coordinated and cohesive manner.
- **Implementation of a 5Year Plan:** Based on the assessment, the consultant will develop a 5year plan of action, providing clear timelines, resource allocations, and key milestones to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy.

Expected Outcomes

- The appointment of an independent consultant and the development of this strategy will maintain and enhance the play facilities under its management in a manner that is safe, sustainable, and aligned with the unique demands of forest environments. This proactive approach will provide high quality, secure, and accessible play spaces for the visitor and local community, while also preserving and integrating the natural elements of the forest settings.

2.7 Key Aims

At its core, the strategy established seven key aims which sought to enhance the developmental value, scope, and range of play opportunities available to children and young people across the district.

Play Strategy Key Aims

1. To support children and young people across the district to be able to engage in both fixed and non-fixed play opportunities that meet their developmental needs.
2. To ensure that Fixed Play Areas are attractive, welcoming, safe but challenging, accessible and inclusive for all abilities offering a high level of play value through programmed capital upgrading and renewal.
3. To ensure effective targeting of capital investment in new fixed play development at those locations which are identified as being in most play need through assessment of demographic need.
4. To ensure that children, young people, parents, and communities have an integral role in decision making on play provision, both fixed and non-fixed.
5. To establish an effective partnership process for play, embedding the Play Strategy within the wider community planning process thereby enhancing its ability to connect across the statutory, community and voluntary sectors.
6. To enable communities to take an active role in the development and delivery of non-fixed play opportunities through dedicated support including volunteer training, mentoring and access to „loose-parts“ play pods.
7. To highlight the benefits of play whilst encouraging adults within the wider community to recognise both the play needs and valuable contribution children make to community life.

3.0 Area Overview and Fixed Play Provision

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council was established under the Review of Public Administration (2015) which brought together the legacy Newry and Mourne and Down District Councils into one 'Super Council' area.



The council area is split into 7 District Electoral Areas (DEAs) which return a total of 41 elected representatives who provide political leadership and decision making. A map showing the split of the council area by DEA can be viewed below.



3.1 Key Settlements

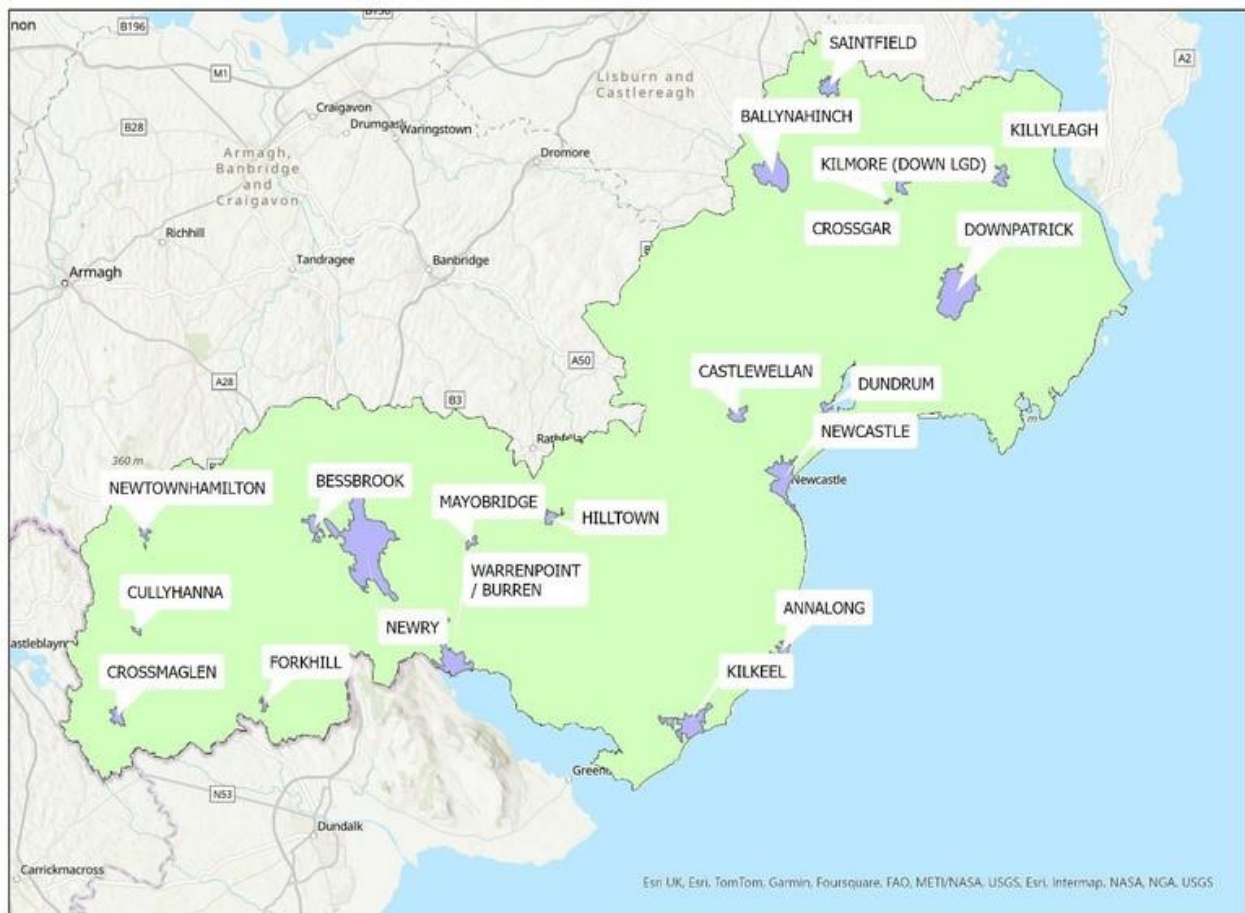
The council covers approximately 629 square miles with the resident population spread primarily across a number of key

settlements, small towns, and villages. Key settlements and their associated residential population numbers include:

Settlement Name	Resident Population (2021)
Newry	11,065
Downpatrick	4,597
Newcastle	3,551
Warrenpoint	3,504
Kilkeel	2,699
Ballynahinch	2,688
Saintfield	1,510
Killyleagh	1,252
Bessbrook	1,167
Castlewellan	1,101
Annalong	825
Crossgar	822
Dundrum	693
Crossmaglen	693
Hilltown	657
Mayobridge	409
Newtownhamilton	347
Forkhill	216
Cullyhanna	133

Outside of the urban areas, the council area is predominantly rural in nature and is characterised by a dispersed household spread across the council area.

A map showing the location of key settlements across the council areas can be viewed overleaf.



3.2 Fixed Play Park Provision

A fixed play park is defined as being a dedicated area or space that has been designed to provide access to a variety of fixed play equipment aimed at a range of age groups.

Examples of fixed play equipment range from traditional (for example swings, roundabouts, climbing frames etc.) to more extensive and modern play structures including bespoke play installations and electronic activity panels.

Play parks can be tailored towards the needs of specific age groups, for example for younger children and toddlers (swings, low level climbing frames, slides etc.) through to more challenging play equipment for older children e.g. complex climbing structures, aerial zip lines etc.

Play areas are typically fenced off for both safety and security purposes and are often closed at set times of the day limiting access opportunities to designated timeframes. Play areas may also incorporate within them environments provision for older teens, for example through the provision of a covered hang-out or seated area. Whilst the overarching strategy is based on a recognition that for children play can, and does take place at multiple locations,

council acknowledge the value and importance of fixed play provision in providing more formal environments for play. For that reason, the development and maintenance of high play value fixed play parks is a core component of the Play Strategy.

3.3 Fixed Play in Newry, Mourne and Down Council

There are within the Council area a total of 125 fixed play areas divided into one of three designations which define their type, form, and focus. These play parks typically consist of a range of fixed play equipment including swings, roundabouts, climbing units etc, located within a designated, often fenced-off area. The fixed play parks vary in size and scope, generally dependent on their location and the number of households they are designed to provide for. Play parks are classified according to the Field in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards' (also known as the 'Six Acre Standards') which is used to determine the level of geographical area typically served by a fixed play park.

The table overleaf outlines the classifications contained within the 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards' alongside their associated radial catchment area which defines the level of geographical coverage associated with each classification.

Play Park Classification	Radial Area (m)
Local Area for Play: Small scale play spaces play opportunities primarily for younger children (aged under 5 years).	100
Local Equipped Area for Play: Covering a wider radial catchment, play parks are larger in size and scale, offering a greater variety and number of fixed play equipment pieces.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play: Offer a wide variety of fixed play opportunities alongside non-fixed play through grassed areas. District play areas will typically incorporate support facilities, for example dedicated car-parking, toilets, picnic areas etc.	1000

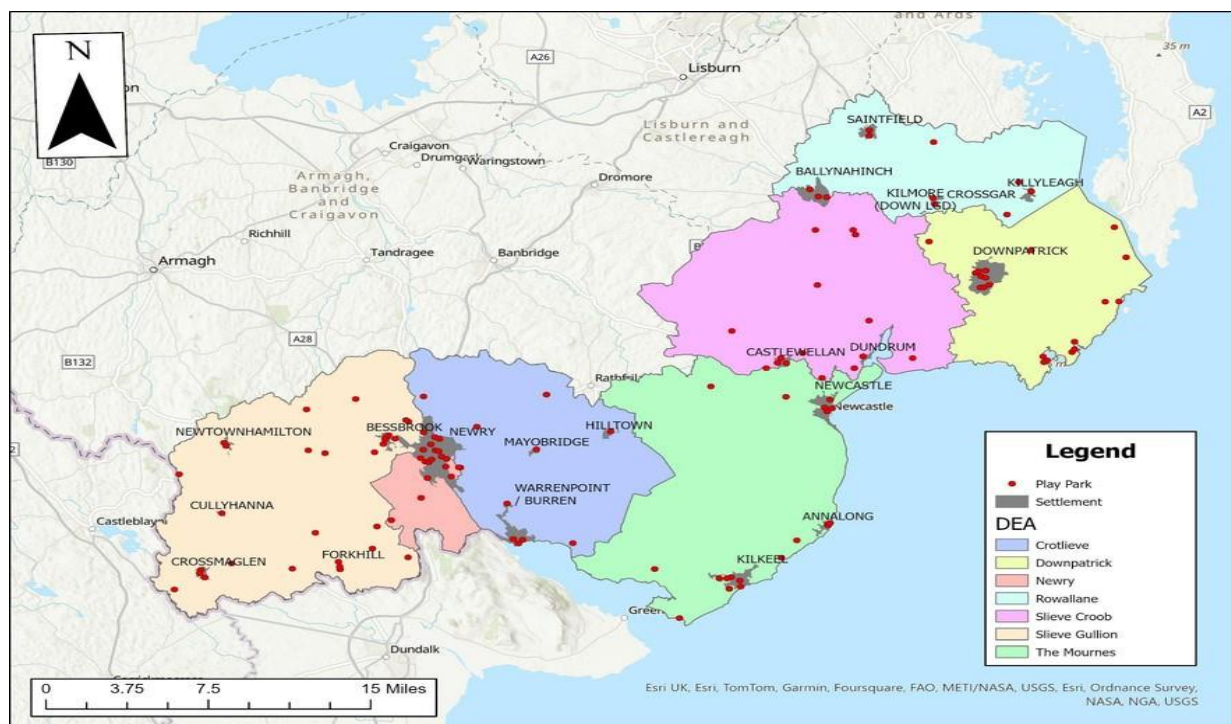
The majority of the play parks within Newry, Mourne and Down area (122) are classified as Local Equipped Areas for play. Such play parks have been designed to meet the play needs of the resident population falling within an approximate 400m radial emanating from the play park location.

There are currently 3 Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play – sometimes referred to as Destination or District play parks across the council areas, these are located at:

- Slieve Gullion
- Kilbroney

- Tollymore Forest Park

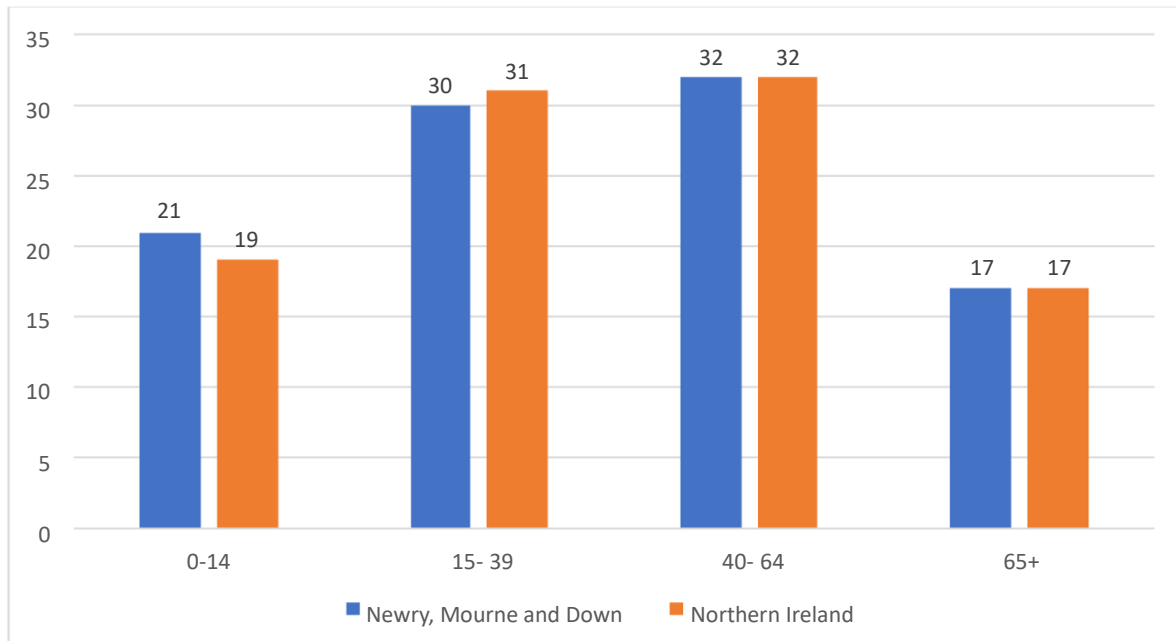
Such district level play parks offer an enhanced outdoor play experience, typically containing a wider range of play equipment that meets the needs of a broader age (including early teens) and ability range, incorporating both accessible and inclusive play opportunities. Due to the nature of the location, district play parks often offer non-fixed play opportunities, for example through the presence of green spaces that facilitate active play, ball play areas/spaces and natural environmental play opportunities. District level play parks also generally, provide access to support services such as toilets to Changing Places standard, car parking, refreshment outlets etc, that facilitate longer term family stays. A map showing the location of play parks across the area can be viewed overleaf.



3.4 Demography

The demographic information used within the mid-point review of the Play Strategy is taken from the most recent census of the population which took place on 21st March 2021. On Census Day 2021 the overall population of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council was 182,074 residing within 68,397 households. This represents an increase of 6.1% from the previous census (2011) when the overall population of the council was

found to be 171,533. From a play delivery perspective, the age profile of the council is of importance as it provides an indication of both existing potential demand for play services as well as providing a future growth indicator. On Census Day 2021, the 0 to 14 age group accounted for 38,235 individuals equating to 21% of the Council's population, 2% above the Northern Ireland average and representing an increase of 2,213 individuals from the previous census in 2011. In percentage terms, the 2021 census figures place the Council above the Northern Ireland average for 0 to 14 years olds which stood at 19.19%.





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Section B –

Play Strategy Capital Programme Delivery Review

4.0 Play Strategy (2017 to 2022) Capital Recommendation Overview

The play strategy made four key recommendations aimed at enhancing access to quality fixed play across the area through a focused capital programme.

No.	Areas of Focus	Recommendation																											
1	<p>New Fixed Play Park Development The development of new fixed play parks within areas identified as being in need based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underlying area demographic data Household density levels Absence of existing fixed play park provision Application of the criteria as established within the Play Strategy 	<p>Commence Consultation on Development of New Fixed Play Areas within six areas of identified need:</p> <table> <tr> <td>1. Mayobridge</td> <td>4. Kilmore</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Ballymartin</td> <td>5. Barnamaghery Villas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Magennis Villas</td> <td>6. Kildief</td> </tr> </table>	1. Mayobridge	4. Kilmore	2. Ballymartin	5. Barnamaghery Villas	3. Magennis Villas	6. Kildief																					
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2	<p>Play Park Upgrades The upgrading of low play value fixed play parks located within areas assessed as having a continued need for fixed play provision based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The underlying level of demographic need The level of household density within the assigned radial (as per Accessibility Benchmark Standards), and with A low level of play value as assessed at the development of the Play Strategy (2017). 	<p>Initiate capital upgrade programme to enhance play value of 24 fixed play areas identified as offering a low level of play value:</p> <table> <tr> <td>1. Backfield (Newcastle)</td> <td>8. Cullyhanna</td> <td>17. Lurganaire</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Ballyholland (Innisfree)</td> <td>9. Dungormley</td> <td>18. Meigh</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Bog Road Picnic</td> <td>10. Drumaness</td> <td>19. Mourne Gardens</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Bridge Centre</td> <td>11. Drumintee</td> <td>20. Newcastle Centre</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Burren Village Green</td> <td>12. Fairview</td> <td>21. Newtowncloghue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Carrivemaclone</td> <td>13. Jonesborough</td> <td>22. Oliver Plunkett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Cullaville</td> <td>14. Killough Playing Fields</td> <td>23. Spelga Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>15. Kittys Road</td> <td>24. Westlands</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>16. Lislane</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	1. Backfield (Newcastle)	8. Cullyhanna	17. Lurganaire	2. Ballyholland (Innisfree)	9. Dungormley	18. Meigh	3. Bog Road Picnic	10. Drumaness	19. Mourne Gardens	4. Bridge Centre	11. Drumintee	20. Newcastle Centre	5. Burren Village Green	12. Fairview	21. Newtowncloghue	6. Carrivemaclone	13. Jonesborough	22. Oliver Plunkett	7. Cullaville	14. Killough Playing Fields	23. Spelga Park		15. Kittys Road	24. Westlands		16. Lislane	
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No.	Areas of Focus	Recommendation										
3	<p>Consolidation of play parks The consolidation of play parks was recommended in areas where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There remained a demographic need for fixed play provision. Existing Play Park provision is spread across a number of play parks, assessed as offering a low level of play value. Existing play provision location leads to duplication of coverage area. <p>The aim of consolidation was to focus capital funds towards the development of a single, high play value park to better meet local need rather than diluting capital investment across a number of smaller play park sites.</p>	<p>Commence consultation regarding the consolidation of play parks within 9 locations identified as offering a low level of play value but subject to duplication of fixed play coverage (see table overleaf for site specific details).</p> <table> <tr> <td>1. Charlemont Sq., Pond Field, Fr Cullen, and College Square</td> <td>5. Hillfoot Toddler and Junior</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. McCreesh Park and Barcroft</td> <td>6. Emmett Street and Mourneview</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Windmill Road and Heather Road</td> <td>7. Springhill Drive and Shandon Park</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Bridge Street, Ardmore, and Marian Park</td> <td>8. Mona View and Annalong</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>9. Model Farm and St. Dymnys</td> </tr> </table>	1. Charlemont Sq., Pond Field, Fr Cullen, and College Square	5. Hillfoot Toddler and Junior	2. McCreesh Park and Barcroft	6. Emmett Street and Mourneview	3. Windmill Road and Heather Road	7. Springhill Drive and Shandon Park	4. Bridge Street, Ardmore, and Marian Park	8. Mona View and Annalong		9. Model Farm and St. Dymnys
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3. Windmill Road and Heather Road	7. Springhill Drive and Shandon Park											
4. Bridge Street, Ardmore, and Marian Park	8. Mona View and Annalong											
	9. Model Farm and St. Dymnys											
4	<p>Transformation of Play Parks Transformation refers to the reconfiguration of a play park location to better meet the needs of the local population.</p> <p>Transformation is only recommended in areas of low demographic demand for play where a play park is currently in-situ but has a low level of play value, making it effectively obsolete as a space for play.</p>	<p>Commence consultation regarding the transformation of fixed Play in 10 areas identified as being of low demand (see table overleaf for site specific details).</p> <table> <tr> <td>1. Ballymaderphy</td> <td>6. Latt Crescent</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Carnbane Crescent</td> <td>7. Lisnalee</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Clonallen Park</td> <td>8. Pious Hill</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Drumaroad</td> <td>9. Station Avenue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Drumilly</td> <td>10. Tullydonnell</td> </tr> </table>	1. Ballymaderphy	6. Latt Crescent	2. Carnbane Crescent	7. Lisnalee	3. Clonallen Park	8. Pious Hill	4. Drumaroad	9. Station Avenue	5. Drumilly	10. Tullydonnell
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5. Drumilly	10. Tullydonnell											

4 .1 New Play Park Development

The play strategy established an agreed criterion to be used by Council to identify gap locations in need of fixed play park development. The criterion was based on the number of resident children and young people. Acknowledging the population differentials between urban and rural areas, the strategy established criterion for both, namely:

- Urban Areas: An area would be deemed in play need if, within the defined area there was a minimum 150 resident children and young people.
- Rural Areas: Population criteria dropped to 100 children and young people in acknowledgement of reduced population density within rural areas.

The play strategy initially identified 6 locations as being in need of new fixed play development:

1. Ballymartin
2. Barnamaghery Villas (Darragh Cross)
3. Magennis Villas (Carlingford Park)
4. Mayobridge
5. Kilclief
6. Kilmore (Teconnaught)

In addition, a further 3 areas for new play park development were identified during operational roll-out of the play strategy as requiring new fixed play development.

1. Killough Harbour
2. Loanda New Park.
3. Meadowlands

In total, 9 new play parks were therefore developed through the play strategy, with all assessed as delivering a high level of play value in the most recent assessment.

New Play Park Location	Play Value Score (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Ballymartin	140			
Barnamaghery Villas (Darragh Cross)	150			
Magennis Villas (Carlingford Park)	156			







New Play Park Location	Play Value Score (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Mayobridge	127			
Kildief	155			
Kilmore (Teconnaght)	159			

New Play Park Location	Play Value Score (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Meadowlands	149			
Killough Harbour	149			
Loanda New Play Park	145			

4.2 Capital recommendation 2: Upgrading of Low Play Value Play Parks

Recommendation 2 focused on the upgrading of play parks found to be offering a low level of play value in areas of continued demographic need. In total 24 play parks were identified for upgrade within the strategy with 21 being completed, all assessed as delivering an improved level of play value in the most recent assessment. One additional upgrade took place outside those identified within the strategy at Warrenpoint Town Park, bringing total upgrades to 22.

One upgrade did not proceed at Killough Playing Fields due to development of a new high play value play park at Killough harbour, whilst the Bog Road Picnic and Fairview upgrades (Forkhill) were consolidated into a new high play value site located at Forkhill Greenspaces. It should be noted that an upgrade was undertaken at Hillside Drive, Kilkeel funded through third party funds secured by the local community group.










Play Park Upgrade	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Backfield	63	150			
Ballyholland (Innisfree)	69	131			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Bridge Centre	74	157			
Burren Village Green	87	142			
Carrivemaclone	80	151			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Cullaville	93	148			
Cullyhanna	94	141			
Cumber Road, Drumaness	83	144			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Drumintee	88	149			
Dungormley (Jim Steen Park)	74	142			
Jonesborough	85	153			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Kitty's Road	85	142			
Lislane	70	146			
Lurganaire	80	138			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Meigh	76	134			
Mourne Gardens, Castlewellan	78	148			
Newcastle Downs Road (Additional to Play Strategy)	113	162			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Newtowncloughe	87	144			
Oliver Plunkett	86	147			
Spelga Park	94	149			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Westlands, Crossgar	76	145			
Warrenpoint Town Park (additional to strategy recommendation)	106	120			

4.3 Consolidation of Play Parks in areas of Duplication

The Play Strategy recommended the consolidation of play parks in areas where:










- There was an identified, continued demographic need for fixed play provision.
- Existing Play Park provision was spread across a number of play parks, assessed as offering a low level of play value.










- Existing play provision location showed radial coverage duplication.

The aim of consolidation was to focus capital funds on the development of a single, high play value park to better meet local need rather than diluting capital investment across a number of smaller play park sites.

The Strategy recommended that consolidations be undertaken at 9 locations, with a view to enhancing access to high value fixed play: in total 7 of the identified consolidations were completed with 3 not proceeding within the 5-year timeline. An additional consolidation was undertaken in Forkhill with the sites at Bog Road and Fairview, originally identified for upgrade, subsequently consolidated into a new play park located at Forkhill Greenspaces.

Play Parks to be Consolidated	Play Value (2017)	Consolidation Site	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
<u>Bessbrook</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlemont Sq. Fr. Cullen College Square Pond Field 	65 79 84 89	Pond Field (Play Value = 141)			

Play Parks to be Consolidated	Play Value (2017)	Consolidation Site	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
<u>Newry</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McCreech Park Barcroft 	86 110	Loanda New Park (Play Value = 145)			
<u>Newry</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Windmill Road Heather Road 	92 96	Kilmorey Park (Play Value = 146)			
<u>Ballynahinch</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hillfoot Toddler Hillfoot Junior 	80 88	Hillfoot Junior (Play Value = 146)			

Play Parks to be Consolidated	Play Value (2017)	Consolidation Site	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
<u>Newry</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Springhill Shandon Park 	89 86	Shandon Park (Play Value = 141)			
<u>Annalong</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mona View Cornmill 	86 89	Marine Park (Play Value = 160)			
<u>Forkhill</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bog Road Picnic Fairview 	80 88	Forkhill Greenspace (Play Value = 159)			

As noted previously, 3 consolidations recommended within the play strategy did not progress within the 5-year delivery period. These were located at:

1. Downpatrick – St. Dymphna’s and Model Farm (aka Ballymote Walk)
2. Downpatrick – Bridge Street, Ardmore, and Marian Park
3. Newry – Emmett Street and Mourneview.

Recommendations for the three locations over the next phase of delivery can be found in section 3 of this report.

4.4 Transformations

Acknowledging that the needs of communities change over time due to changing demographic patterns, a reduction in the number of children and young people within an area, the play strategy provide an option to transform existing play parks which were underutilised and off low play value.

The purpose of a transformation is to retain the play park site for recreational use by the community whilst undergoing a process of reconfiguration in order to better meet the needs of the local population.

As noted above, transformation was only recommended in areas of low demographic demand for play where a play park is in-situ but has a low level of play value, making it effectively obsolete as a space for play.

It should be noted that transformations, as with all strands of the capital programme, are subject to community consultation prior to action being taken. The community ultimately have a role in shaping the space and determining the speed of progression.

The play strategy identified 10 locations for transformation.

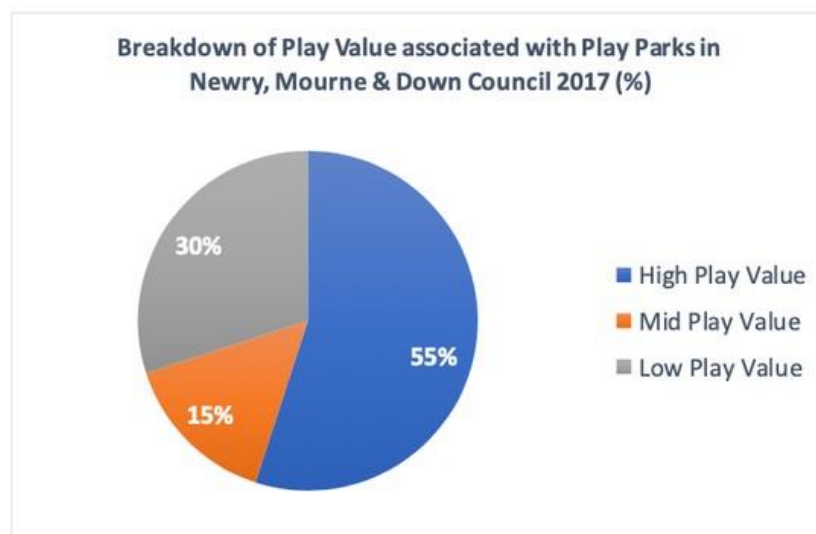
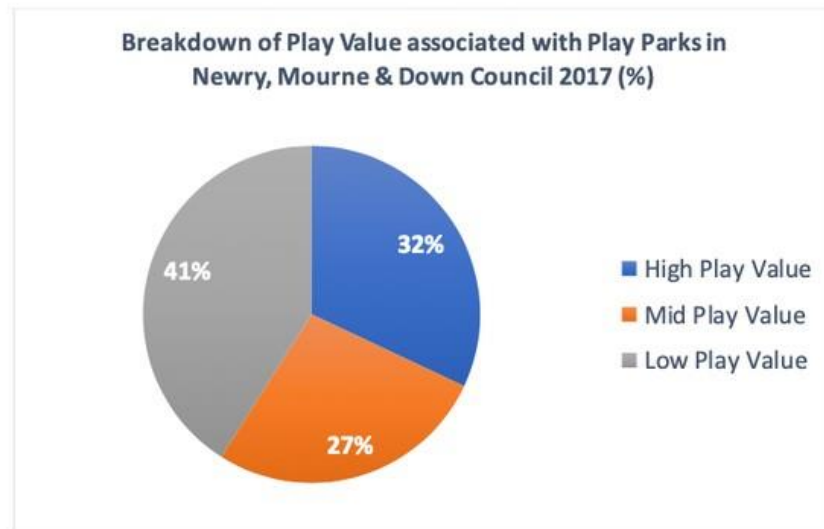
Location	Status
Ballymaderphy	Not Completed
Carnbane Crescent	Complete
Clonallen Park	Not Completed
Drumaroad	Not Completed
Drumilly	Complete
Latt Crescent	Not Completed
Lisnalee	Complete
Pious Hill	Not Completed
Station Avenue	Complete
Tullydonnell	Not Completed

Recommendations for sites identified for transformation in the initial play strategy but where work was not completed can be found in section C of this report.

4.5 Impact of Capital Play Improvement Programme

The aim of the play strategy was to enhance children and young people's access to high quality play opportunities through the development and enhancement of fixed play parks across the council area based on identified need.

The primary mechanism for determining the degree to which council have been successful in achieving this aim is the comparison of play value assessments undertaken in 2017 at the outset of the strategy against those undertaken in 2023 as part of the review. The charts below show the breakdown of play value for fixed play parks in 2017 and 2023.



As can be seen, through delivery of the play strategy council has successfully delivered:

- An 23% increase in the number of fixed play parks falling within the high play value category, rising from 32% in 2017 to 55% in 2023.
- A 12% decrease in the number of fixed play parks falling within the mid play value category, falling from 27% to 15%.
- An 11% decrease in the number of play parks falling within the low play value category, falling from 41% to 30%.

The rise within the high play value category is due to the focus council has placed on embedding quality design principles and ensuring that play park designs remain in step with good practice and industry standards.

Continued capital investment by council aimed at addressing play parks which fall within the low and mid play value categories will ensure that the positive progress made to date continues.

4.6 Inclusive Play Provision

Despite progress over recent years, many disabled children and their families continue to face significant barriers in seeking to access quality, developmentally critical play opportunities. These barriers can include a lack of access to inclusive play parks, a poor level of understanding of disabled children’s play needs, continued negative public attitudes, and limited inclusive play opportunities.

The barriers faced by disabled children and their families were highlighted recently in Northern Ireland based research entitled “Let me Play,” published by Playboard NI and the Mae Murray Foundation (a ‘lived experience led’ membership-based organisation focused on creating true inclusion within society) in 2022.¹



Whilst the experiences highlighted are not specific to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area, they highlight common areas of challenge for disabled children and their families across Northern Ireland.

The research, conducted on a regional basis, involved over 500 disabled children and their families, and was focused on the barriers they face in seeking fulfil their right to play. Key findings included:

- 60% viewed playgrounds as important spaces for their child/children which they would like to attend more regularly.
- 40% rated the play experience on offer within playgrounds as being poor or very poor.
- 57% were unable to engage in play as often as they would like.
- 66% identified a lack of opportunity to actively take part in play as a key barrier faced.
- 56% reported having to travel long-distances just to access a playground that met their children’s needs.

(Note: Percentages above are reflective of family’s regional experience s and are not Newry, Mourne and Down District Council specific)

¹ <http://www.playboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Let-me-Play.pdf>

Emerging from the research, 6 key thematic areas were identified which were seen to cause or contribute to the exclusion of families from playgrounds:

1. Getting to the Playground - Families highlighted continued challenges in getting to the play park, for example a lack of appropriately located drop kerbs to support wheelchair access, a lack of suitable accessible public transport on route and broader design flaws within the public realm.
2. Wider playground facilities - Families highlighted that a lack of wider playground facilities often functioned as a barrier, even in the case of larger destination playgrounds.

Issues included a lack of adequate toilet facilities (up to Changing Places standard at destination sites), inadequate parking, poorly designed refreshment and picnic areas which do not accommodate wheelchair movement.

3. Access to Play - Families noted a need for improved accessibility within playgrounds including attention to internal wayfinding, space for mobility devices to freely move around, ramped play features and wheelchair accessible play features, wide slides etc.
4. Participation in Play - Families noted that for many disabled children play opportunities within playgrounds can be limited. Respondents highlighted the importance of offering choice and challenge for all children, regardless of individual ability. Suggestions for improvement included more sensory play, wheelchair accessible equipment (swing, trampoline, roundabout etc.), sand and water play.
5. Communication - Effective communication regarding the facilities available within playgrounds was seen as being critical to allow families to make informed choices regarding which best suited their child's needs. This includes accessible pre-visit information, signage, and an overview of how the playground meets the needs of children.
6. Negative Social Attitudes - Unfortunately, respondents reported continuing to face negative attitudes within playgrounds including being excluded from play equipment, being treated differently and with disdain by other users.

Whilst playground providers alone cannot address the issues of negative societal attitudes, adopting a pro-active approach to celebrating diversity and tackling negative attitudes can help to make playgrounds spaces for all children.

The Play Strategy acknowledged that despite progress, children with disabilities continued to face significant barriers in accessing quality fixed play opportunities.

The Strategy sought to address these barriers through the adoption of a series of principles aimed at ensuring that fixed play park design recognised these barriers and pro-actively sought to address them. Amongst these principles were:

- At least 1 ground level, accessible and inclusive moving fixed play piece, for example ground level seated roundabout, Seesaw.
- The incorporation of a variety of sensory play elements (visual, sound, and tactile).
- The use of gentle landscaping and the incorporation of natural play elements.
- Creation of a play space that allows for an encourages play-interaction between all children and young people regardless of individual ability or disability.
- Ongoing review of emerging research and good practice relating to the enhancement of access to play for children with disabilities.

Reviewing progress to date, across the capital improvement programme council has sought to incorporate inclusive play opportunities, placing a focus on ensuring, where feasible that inclusive play equipment is incorporated within play park designs.

Within new and upgraded play parks this has included the installation of a range of inclusive equipment pieces as standard including:

- Inclusive Wheelchair accessible roundabout
- Inclusive Seesaw
- Inclusive supported swing seats
- Basket swings
- Accessible play panels.

In addition, a number of specialist pieces of equipment have also been installed including wheelchair accessible swings at a number of locations. The tables overleaf show the extent of inclusive play equipment installed through the strategy to date.

New Play Parks

Play Park	Inclusive Play Equipment installed
Ballymartin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Play Panels • Play Van • Playhouse • Inclusive Roundabout
Barnamaghery Villas (Darragh Cross)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Play Panels • Talk Tubes • Inclusive Seesaw • Rain Wheel • Play Chimes • Inclusive Roundabout
Magennis Villas (Carlingford Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dish Roundabout • Play Train • Cradle Swings • Mirror Play Panel • Talk Tubes • Play Panels • Spooky Cog Play Wheel • Bongo Drums • Rain Wheel • Inclusive Roundabout • Basket Swing
Mayobridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cradle Swings • Train Play Panel • Express Play Train • Inclusive Roundabout • Basket Swing
Kildief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Panels • Basket Swing • Inclusive Multi Play Unit • Inclusive Roundabout • Talk Tubes
Kilmore (Teconnaght)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive See Saw • Sign/Braille Play Panel • Talk Tubes • Inclusive Roundabout • Talk Tube • Play Panels • Rain Wheel • Play Chimes
Meadowlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Inclusive Swing • Basket Swing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toddler Slide Unit • Playhouse • Play Pods
Killough Harbour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Cardel Swings • Talk Tubes • Basket Swing • Play Panel
Loanda New Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Inclusive Roundabout • Cardle Swings • Dish Rotator • Play Chimes • Bongos • Play Panels (Inc. Signing) • Play Mounds • Boat Rocker

Play Park Upgrades

Play Park	Inclusive Play Equipment installed
Backfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Bongo Drums • Play Panels • Basket Swing
Ballyholland (Innisfree)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Play Panels • Rotating Dish
Bridge Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Bongo Drums • Memory Play Unit • Play Panels • Play Chimes • Rockers • Dish Rotator • Talk Tubes • Boat Play Unit
Burren Village Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk Tubes • Play Drums • Play Panels • Play Chimes • Play Mirror • Story Telling Area • Inclusive Roundabout
Carrivemaclone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Play Panels • Cradle Swings • Basket Swing
Cullaville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Inclusive Roundabout • Play Panels • Inclusive Rocker • Cradle Swings
Cullyhanna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Play Panels • Inclusive Swing • Tent Play Panel • Talk Tubes • Mirror Play Panel
Cumber Road, Drumaness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Cradle Swings • Playhouse • Piano Play Panel • Drum Play Panel • Play Bongos



Dromintee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play Xylophone• Dish Roundabout• Inclusive Multiunit• Basket Swing• Play Panels
Dungormley (Jim Steen Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive Roundabout• Play Panels• Basket Swing
Jonesborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive Roundabout• Play Safari Tuck• Play Huts• Play Panels• Drum Play Unit• Play Chimes• Cradle Swings
Kitty's Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive Swing• Basket Swing
Lislane	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive Swing
Lurganair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play Car• Play Panels• Play Hut
Meigh	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusive Swing• Talk Tubes
Mourne Garden, Castlewellan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basket Swing• Playhouse• Play Car• Play Panels• Dish Roundabout
Newcastle (Downs Road)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playhouse• Play Panels• Mirror Play Panel• Play Chimes• Bongo Drums• Signing Play Panel• Rain Maker• Hammock• Inclusive Roundabout• Wheelchair Swing• Inclusive Swing• Basket Swing• Talk Tubes
Newtowncloughoge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basket Swing• Dish Roundabout• Play Panels
Oliver Plunkett	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basket Swing• Play Panels• Companion Swing



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Talk Tubes
Spelga Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Play Panels • Inclusive Roundabout
Westlands, Crossgar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk Tubes • Play Panels • Mirror Play • Inclusive Roundabout • Basket Swing • Play Drums • Play Chimes
Warrenpoint Town Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Talk Tubes • Inclusive Slide Unit • Inclusive Roundabout • Play Panels • Dish Rotator • Cardale Swings

Consolidated Play Parks

Play Park	Inclusive Play Equipment installed
Pond Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Basket Swing • Cradle Swings • Inclusive Trampoline • Inclusive Rocker
Loanda New Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See New Park List
Hillfoot Junior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Braille Play Panel • Signing Play Panel • Basket Swing • Inclusive Rocker • Playhouse
Shandon Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket Swing • Inclusive Roundabout • Cradle Swings
Marine Park, Annalong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Roundabout • Basket Swing • Play Panels • Cradle Swings
Forkhill Greenspaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Swing (Parent) • Play Panels • Rocker • Talk Tube • Play Panels • Basket Swing • Inclusive Roundabout

Overall, the play strategy has led to the enhancement and expansion of inclusive play opportunities for children and young people across the district by incorporating inclusive play equipment within new park and park upgrade designs where possible.

In reviewing the progress made under the play strategy, it is important to note that whilst progress has been made, there remains work to be done at a broader play industry and societal level to ensure that the right to play is delivered for all children and young people.

In 2022 a joint position statement entitled ‘Including Disabled Children in Play

Provision’ was released by the UK Play Safety Forum and UK Children’s Play Policy Forum.

The statement acknowledged that society has failed in producing enough accessible and inclusive places for children to play within a reasonable distance of their homes.

The Position Statement highlights the distinction between “accessible” and “inclusive” play spaces. It acknowledges that, although all play spaces should be accessible, not all play spaces can or will be inclusive. The terms “accessible” and “inclusive” should therefore not be used interchangeably as confusion around terminology contributes to a lack of appropriate provision.

In seeking to progress understanding of how play need can best be met, the statement establishes definitions for the terms “accessible” and “inclusive” in the context of play space.



An accessible play space is defined as a space which is barrier-free, allows users access to move around the space and offers participation opportunities for a range of differing abilities. Not every child of every ability will be able to actively use everything within an accessible play space.

An Inclusive Play Space provides a barrier-free environment, with supporting infrastructure, which meets the wide and varying play needs of every child. Disabled children and non-disabled children will enjoy high levels of participation opportunities, equally rich in play value.

Inclusive play spaces are defined as having a number of key characteristics:

- The aims of the facility are clearly stated.
- Parents/carers and children have the opportunity to understand layout, play equipment, overall space, and facilities before arrival.
- Designers and providers engage with local transport providers to review accessible transport links.
- Inclusive play equipment is located across the entire scope of the play space and is not confined to a designated or segregated area.
- Known barriers to participation are addressed.

The statement highlights that all playgrounds should meet the accessible definition, to meet the needs of as many children, of as many varying abilities, as possible. And that the strategic provision of truly inclusive spaces at well-chosen destination (district designated) sites is essential, to meet the needs of ALL children. The statement further provides a number of key messages/actions that all play park providers should seek to embed within their play programmes:

Key Message /Action 1

A positive and solution-focused attitude is critical to creating inclusive play space design, based on understanding and prioritising the needs of disabled children and making adaptations to include them.

Those responsible for designing and managing play spaces can make a big difference by championing the importance of including disabled children in play spaces, working in partnership with disabled children, their families, and the local community.

Children and their families want play spaces which include the range of features and facilities they need.

Children and their families can feel let down when play spaces that are referred to as “inclusive” lack the facilities and design features that would make the environment work well for them.

Small adaptations can make a big difference.

Play spaces should offer a balance of high to low challenge opportunities and a good mix of play features.

Play opportunities offering a wide range of play experiences, challenge, variety, and choice are essential for disabled children and families. However, this does not mean that all play features need to be accessible to all children.

Providers need to make value judgements about how to create spaces that work well for all, while meeting children’s varied levels of ability and appetite for risk and challenge.

All children deserve to be able to enjoy play spaces that work well for them and their families within a reasonable distance of their home.

Play providers and operators need to take a strategic approach to planning accessible and inclusive spaces.

All play spaces should be developed through community participation, co-design and co-production.

Plans for provision should always be co-produced with local children and adults. Engaging with children and families will help to ensure there is a broad range of play opportunities for different levels of ability. Further innovation and co-production between stakeholders is necessary to develop more equipment and features that offer inclusive play opportunities for all children. This should include play space providers and operators, play equipment manufacturers, play space designers and families.

It should be noted that Playboard NI and the Mae Murray Foundation are in the process of completing a guidance document and toolkit to support councils to develop inclusive play parks. Upon launch (4th March 2024), council should adopt the guidance and toolkit as a key mechanism for enhancing inclusive play parks.

4.7 Non-Fixed and Loose Parts Play

In the Play Strategy, council acknowledged that whilst fixed (equipped) play parks have a key role in meeting play need, it is not always feasible to provide fixed play parks at all locations, particularly within areas of low population density.

Non-fixed or loose parts play provides an opportunity to deliver play-based opportunities within such area through the use of transportable play materials that can be used within local communities to create pop-up play opportunities.



In acknowledging the role of non-fixed play, council undertook to develop activities:

- Roll-out of Community Play Programmes.
- Active promotion and support for National Play Day.

Community Play Programmes

Commencing during the development of the play strategy in 2016, council rolled out a series of community play programmes each year, with a break in the years 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Year	No. of Play Sessions	No. of Children and Young People
Summer 2016	31	834
Summer 2017	40	944
Winter 2018	10	231
Summer 2019	41	1022
Summer 2022 (Small Groups delivery under PEACE IV)	-	191
Total	122	3222

Sessions took place primarily outdoors (weather dependent), most often on green space area within communities with a range of physical, social, and creative play activities provided.



Imaginative Play

- Dressing Up
- Mask making
- Story Telling
- Loose Parts Play



Physical Play

- Running, Jumping, Skipping
- Ball games
- Assault courses
- Parachute Games



Creative Play

- Painting
- Model making
- Creative arts
- Den Building



Messy Play

- Water Play
- Foam Play
- Bubble Play

Play Day

From a play advocacy and promotional perspective, the Play Strategy recommended that Council should actively promote and participate within national playday with a focus on highlighting the importance of play to families and communities.

Through publicity connected to the community play programmes, council proactively promoted playday (which falls on the first Wednesday each August), promoted local play events and encouraged local communities to plan and deliver play events all whilst highlighting the critical role of play in supporting children and young people's physical and emotional health and wellbeing.



4.8 Participation and Consultation

Council gave a commitment within the play strategy to ensure that any action undertaken (i.e. new play development, play park upgrade etc.) would be subject to focused participative consultation with local communities, including children and young people.

Prior to roll-out of key actions, council developed a rigorous three-stage consultation process which aimed to ensure that local communities, children, and young people had an opportunity to shape play development within their area.

An overview of the three-stage process to be applied for each key action has been provided overleaf.

Consultation Process – New Play Area (4 weeks)

1 WEEK

Stage 1: Children and Young People's Focus Groups

- Maximum 3 focus groups with C&YP from within the area.
- Aim: Engage with users of the new play park to identify their specific needs, gather ideas etc. to guide the design process.
- Where possible focus groups will be held in conjunction with local providers e.g. Primary/Secondary schools, youth groups etc.



1 WEEK

Stage 2: Online Survey

- Online survey of parents/carers/community groups and children and young people within the area
- Aim: Further clarify areas of play need, gather ideas for the play area, seek views on outstanding issues e.g. preferred site if options are available
- Online surveys will broaden community input to the process, further guiding and clarifying the design process.



2 WEEKS

Stage 3: Local Community Consultation Session

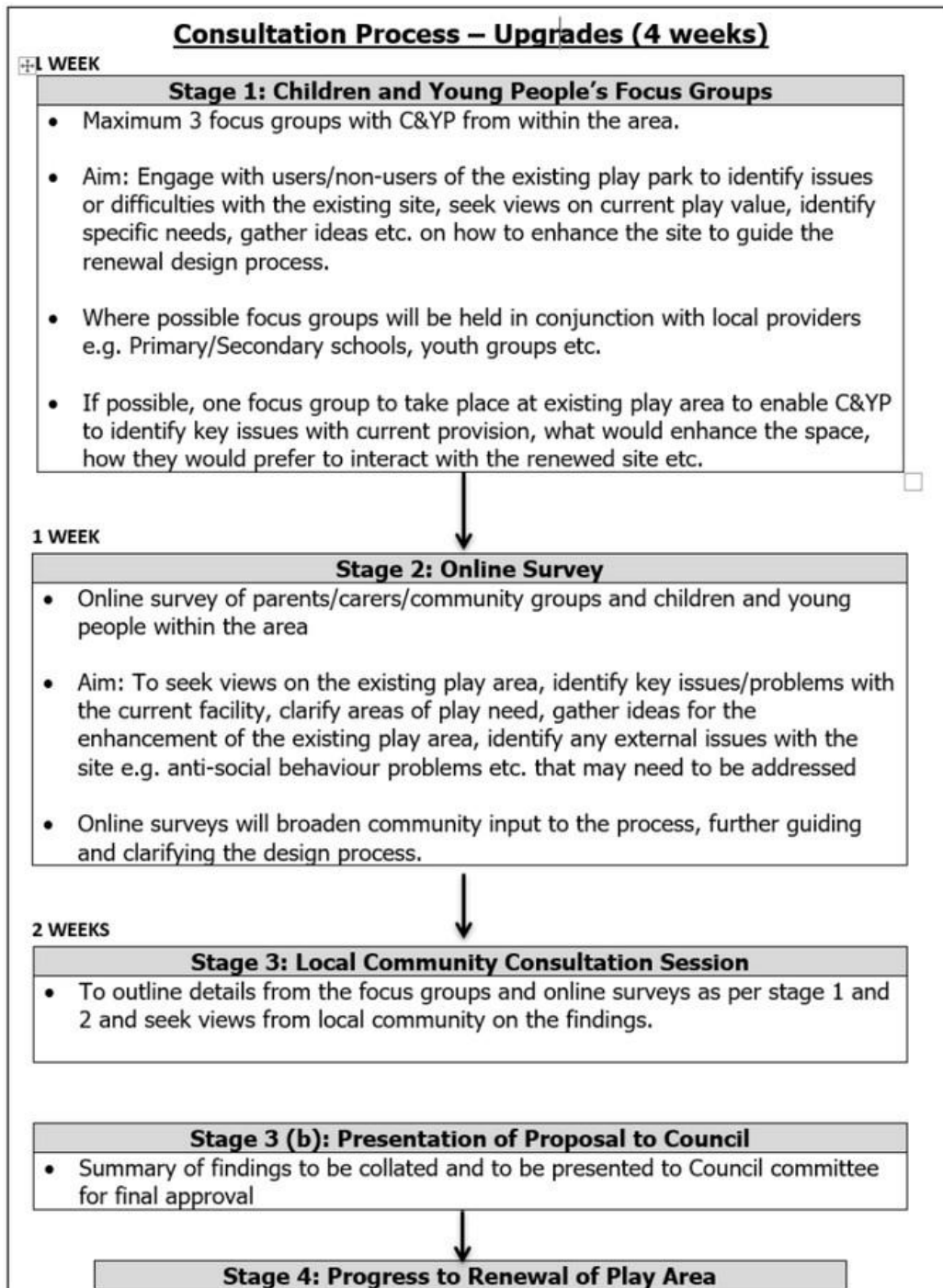
- To outline details from the focus groups and online surveys as per stage 1 and 2 and seek views from local community on the findings.

Stage 3 (b): Presentation of Proposal to Council

- Summary of findings to be collated and to be presented to Council committee for final approval



Stage 4: Progress to Construction of New Play Area



Consultation Process – Transformations (4 weeks)

Transformation sites are those which have a low level of play value and a low level of usage. Such sites tend to be located within more rural areas and/or have a low number of resident children and young people. The aim of the consultation is to get the views of local people as to how the site can be best utilised for local need. This may or may not include the retention of space for play purposes dependent on the consultation outcome.

1 WEEK

Stage 1: Children and Young People's Focus Groups

- Maximum 3 focus groups with C&YP from within the area.
- Aim: Engage with users/non-users of the existing play area to identify levels of usage, thoughts on possible transformation options (which may include retention of play)
- Where possible focus groups will be held in conjunction with local providers e.g. Primary/Secondary schools, youth groups etc.
- If possible, one focus group to take place at existing play area to enable C&YP to explore the site and possible transformation options

1 WEEK

Stage 2: Door to Door Survey (*)

- Sites tend to have low household numbers; therefore door-to-door surveys will be used to identify actual need for the play area and to identify possible transformation options/ideas for the site.

2 WEEKS

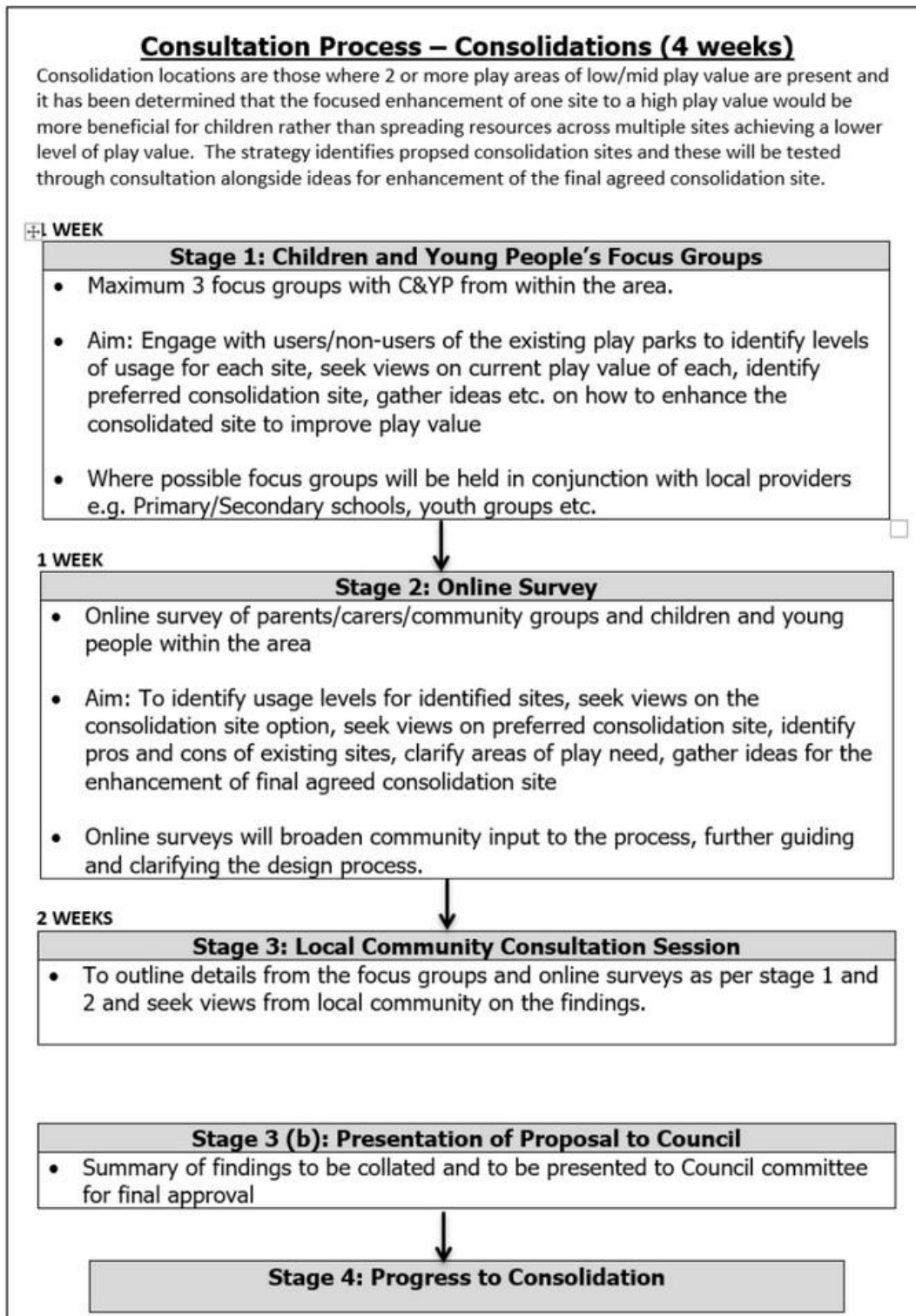
Stage 3: Local Community Consultation Session

- To outline details from the focus groups and online surveys as per stage 1 and 2 and seek views from local community on the findings.

Stage 3 (b): Presentation of Proposal to Council

- Summary of findings to be collated and to be presented to Council committee for final approval

Stage 4: Progress to Site Transformation



Council has applied the agreed three-stage process for all capital works undertaken, ensuring that local communities have an opportunity to help shape play within their area.

The specific focus placed by council on engaging with children and young people through direct consultation has enabled a child led exploration of play need within the area, leading to more targeted developments best suited to meeting the needs of local children and young people.

Through the process, local communities have been able to help shape play investment, whether it be in terms of the location of a play park or the shape, form, and type of equipment to be made available.



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

Section C –

Next Stage Recommendations by District Electoral Area

5.0 DEA Review – Needs Analysis and Recommendations

In addition to undertaking a review of the level of impact made under the play strategy, a further assessment of need was undertaken based on consideration of:

- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0-to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas.
- Residential data from the most recent NISRA Pointer dataset which provides an up-to-date indication of household location across the council area.
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA alongside tier play value assessment score.

This section of the report provides a breakdown analysis by DEA providing an overview of recommendations as they relate to:

- Identified areas of play need which meet the criteria set within strategy for new fixed play parks development.
- Play parks of low play value which meet the criteria set within the strategy for upgrade.
- Play parks of low play value in areas of low demand eligible for transformation
- Play parks of low play value in areas of duplication for which consolidation presents the most appropriate form of upgrade action.

5.1 Crotlieve DEA

Crotlieve District Electoral Area (DEA) is located to the Southeast of the Newry

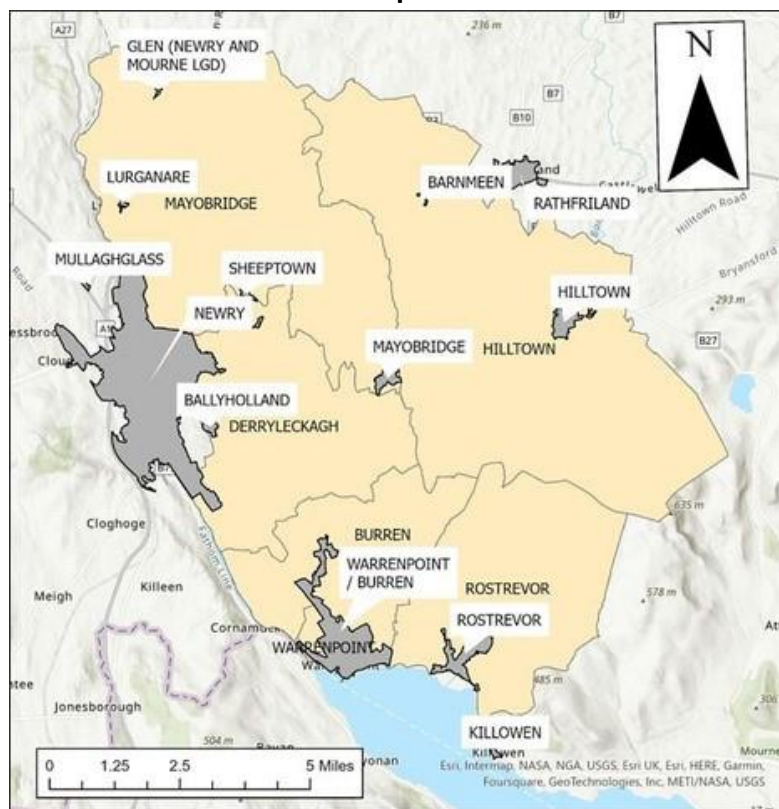
Mourne and Down District Council area and comprises 6 wards – Burren, Derryleckagh, Hilltown, Mayobridge, Rostrevor and Warrenpoint.



Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Ballyholland
- Barnmeen
- Glen
- Hilltown
- Lurganare
- Mayobridge
- Rostrevor
- Sheeptown
- Warrenpoint

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

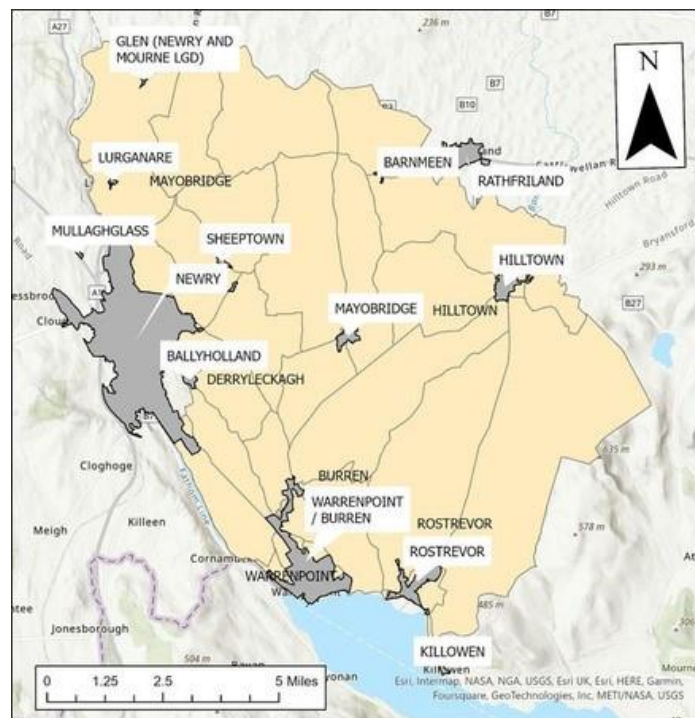
- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and
- Household location data

- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA. By combining data sources an assessment can be undertaken of the level of potential demand for fixed play within allocation based on population and household spread.

Data Zones

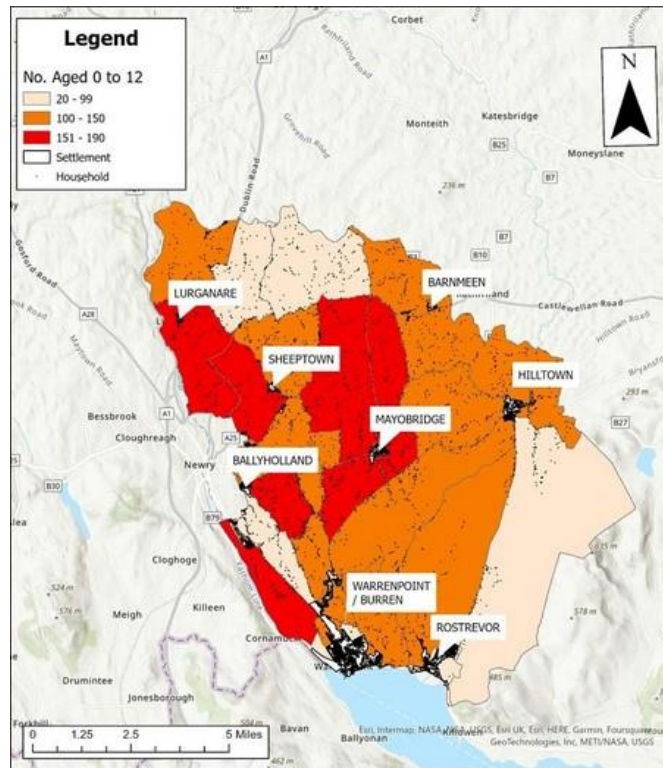
Data zones have been introduced by NISRA to support the analysis of demographic population statistics emerging from the 2021 census. Data zones represent the most localised level of data available, with 3,780 Data Zones nesting within 850 Super Data Zones which in turn nest within DEA areas and overarching local government districts.

A map showing the Data Zone classification areas for the DEA can be viewed below.



Demographic Overview

The map below shows population statistics (mapped by data zone) for children aged 0 to 12 years (the primary focus group for fixed play parks), resident on the day of the 2021 census of the population. The map also shows the household distribution pattern for the DEA.



As a largely rural area, household distribution within the DEA tends to be centred around key settlements or along main roadways; outside of settlement areas, household distribution tends to be of a dispersed nature. Under the agreed criteria, to be eligible for consideration for new fixed play development or upgrade the number of residents children and young people (0 to 12) within an urban defined area should be 150 or more. In the case of rural areas, in recognition of lower population density levels and household spread this has been reduced to 100 children or young people.

Current Play Provision

Current Play Provision Play Parks are designated according to the Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (often known as the ABS). The ABS classifies play parks according to the level of play provision offered by the site and establishes a radial catchment area to identify the resident population whose needs are served by a play park based on its designation:

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the field in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS). There are at present 11 fixed play parks located across the DEA, ten are designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS) with one designated as a Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) or destination play park located at Kilbroney Forest Park.

Play Value Assessment

This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review.

Of the 11 fixed play areas located within the DEA:

- Eight are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- One play park delivers a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- Two play parks within fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).

High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Spelga Park	94	149	+55			
Burren Village Green	87	142	+55			
Lurganaire	80	138	+58			







Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Ringmcilroy	105	134	+29			
Ballyholland	69	131	+62			
Mayobridge	-	127				

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Kilbroney Park	123	120	-3			
Warrenpoint Town Park	106	120	+14			

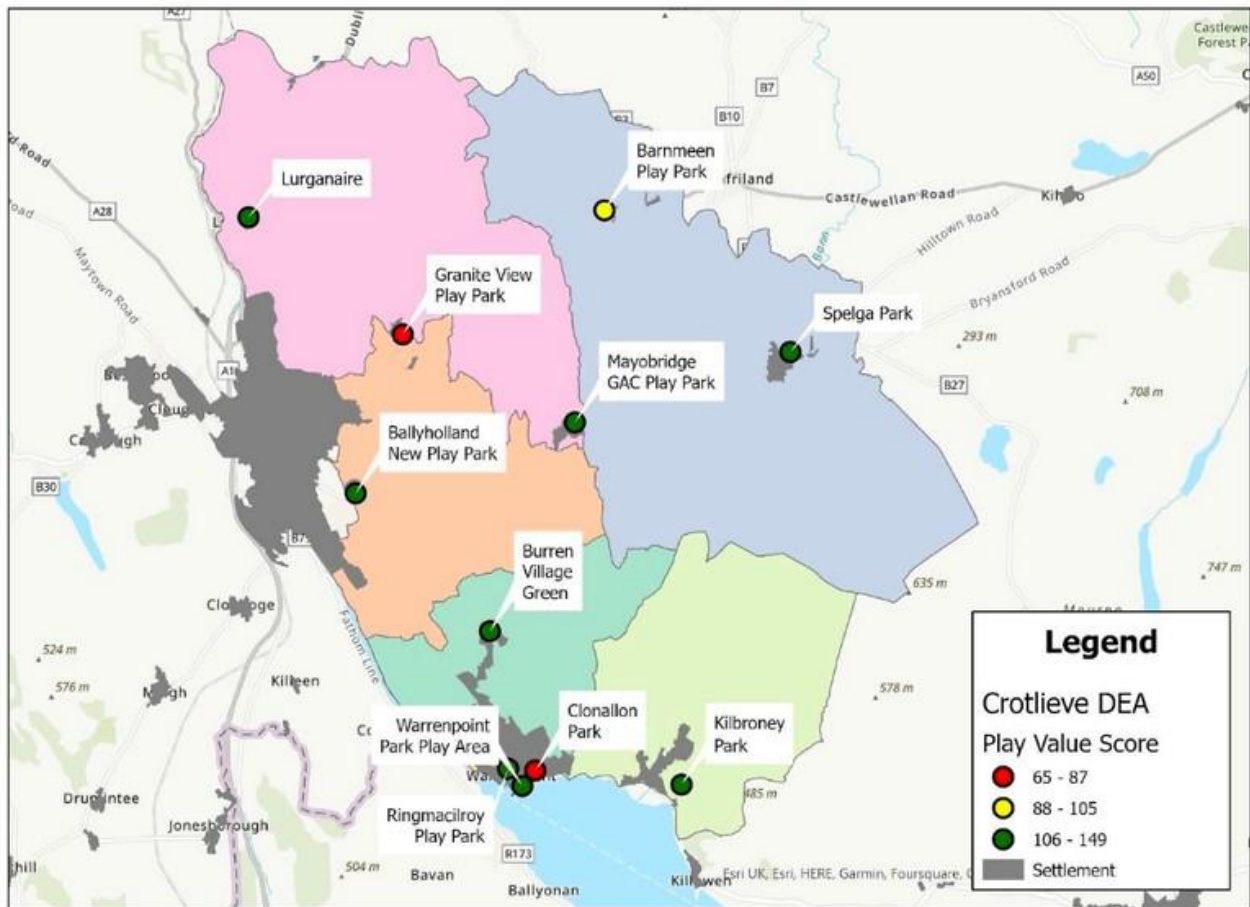
Mid Play Value (88 to 105)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Barnmeen	103	102	-1			

Low Play Value (scoring below 87).

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Granite View	66	65	-1			
Clonallen Park	79	78	-1			

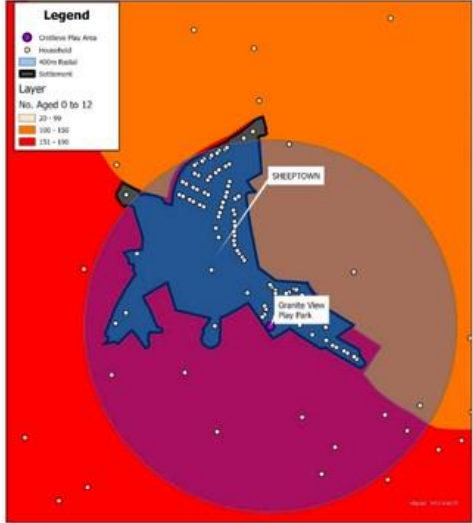
The play value categories for each play park within Crotlieve DEA have been mapped below.




Needs Analysis

Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, a number of locations were identified for further analysis:

- Granite View
- Clonallon
- Kilbroney
- Glen Villas

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Granite View		<p>Granite View play park is located in Sheeptown and scored a low 65 in the most recent play value assessment. A score of 65 indicates that the play park is no longer capable of providing a sufficient level of play value to meet the needs of children and young people within the local area.</p> <p>Demographic review indicates a continued level of need whilst household density analysis shows a total of 111 households falling within the radial emanating from the play park.</p>	<p>Given the low play value associated with the current play park and the continued level of need, it is recommended that Council proceed to upgrade within the next phase of the Capital Play Development Programme.</p>

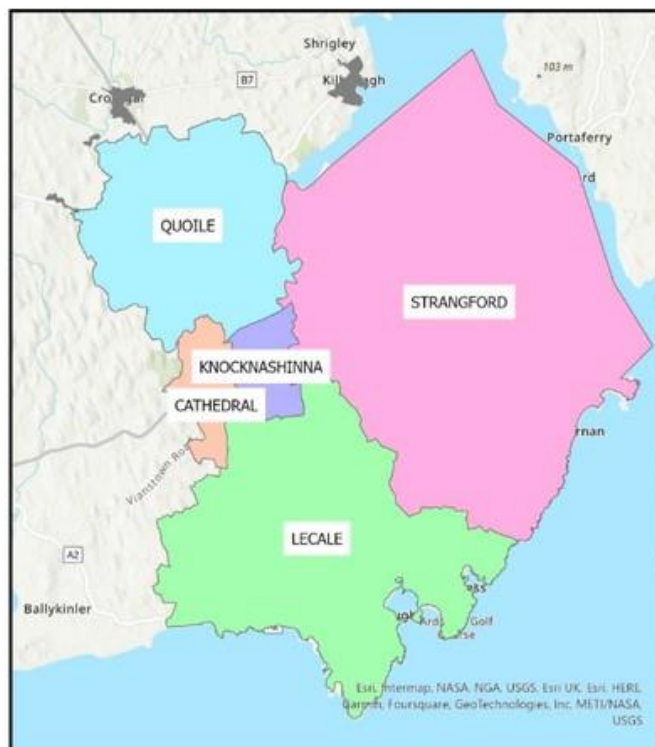
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Clonallon		<p>Clonallon Park play park is located in Warrenpoint and scored a low 79 in the most recent play value assessment. A score of 79 indicates that the play park is no longer capable of providing a sufficient level of play value to meet the needs of children and young people within the local area.</p> <p>Demographic review indicates a continued level of need whilst household density analysis shows a total of 631 households falling within the radial emanating from the play park. It should be noted that some radial duplication occurs with the radial emanating from Warrenpoint Town Park. It is noted that Council is currently in the process of progressing a capital works programme within the area which includes the development of a new Community Centre.</p>	<p>Given the low level of play value associated with the current play park and the continued level of need, it is recommended that Council incorporate upgraded/new play park development within the area, adjacent to/in close proximity to the new community centre.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Kilbroney		<p>Whilst the play park located at Kilbroney scored 120 in the play value assessment, placing in the high value category, given the locations status as a significant tourist destination site the current play park standard falls below the level that would be expected.</p> <p>As a tourist location it is noted that responsibility for future capital investment in fixed play at Kilbroney falls outside the remit of the Play Strategy, lying under the councils emerging Tourisms Strategy (2023 – 2028).</p>	<p>Given its' status as a significant tourist it is recommended that the emerging Tourism Strategy makes provision for the upgrade of the play park located at Kilbroney fully inclusive destination standard.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Glenn Villas		<p>Glenns Villas is a rural hamlet located on the Council boundary with Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council.</p> <p>A review of underlying household demand, based on the introduction of an indicative 400m radial indicates 47 households within Glenns Villas, below the required 100 households for a rural location. A further 25 households are located outside to the radial to the Northeast, however even with their inclusion the area fails to meet the criteria for fixed play development.</p>	<p>Glenns Villas does not currently meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>

5.2 Downpatrick DEA – Demographic, Household and Fixed Play Analysis

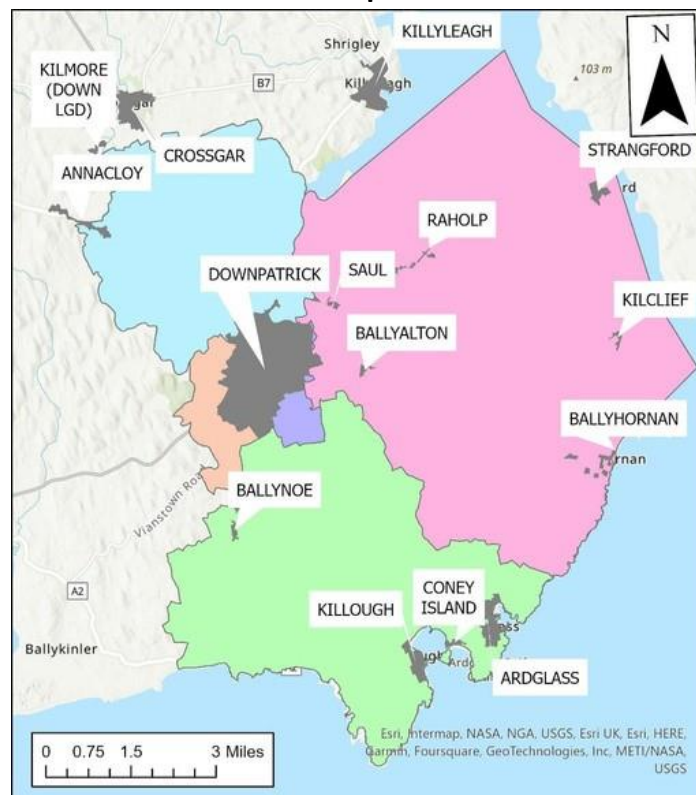
Downpatrick District Electoral Area (DEA) is located to the West of Newry Mourne and Down District Council area and comprises 5 wards – Cathedral, Knocknashinna, Lecale, Quoile and Strangford.



Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Annacloy
- Ardglass
- Ballyalton
- Ballynoe
- Ballyhornan
- Coney Island
- Downpatrick
- Kilclief
- Killough
- Raholp
- Saul
- Strangford

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and in order to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and

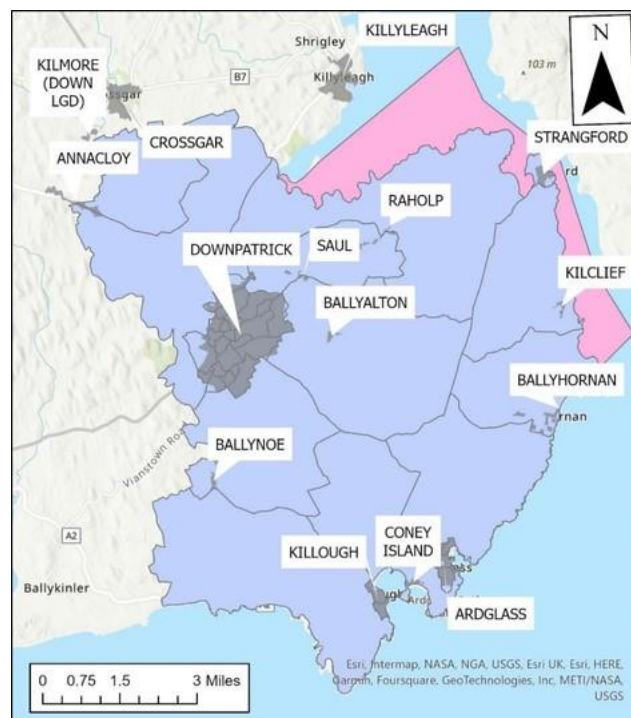
- Household location data
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA.

By combining data sources an assessment can be undertaken of the level of potential demand for fixed play within a location based on population and household spread.

Data Zones

Data zones have been introduced by NISRA to support the analysis of demographic population statistics emerging from the 2021 census. Data zones represent the most localised level of data available, with 3,780 Data Zones nesting within 850 Super Data Zones which in turn nest within DEA areas and overarching local government districts.

A map showing the Data Zone classification areas for the DEA can be viewed below.



Demographic Overview

The map below shows population statistics (mapped by data zone) for children aged 0 to 12 years (the primary focus group for fixed play parks), resident on the day of the 2021 census of the population. The map also shows the household distribution pattern for the DEA.

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the Fields in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS). There are at present 19 fixed play parks located across the DEA, all designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS).

Play Value Assessment

This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review. Of the 19 fixed play areas located within the DEA:

- Ten are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- Four play parks deliver a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- Five play parks fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).

High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Teconnaght (New Play Park)	-	159	-			
Kildief (New Play Park)	-	155	-			
Killough Harbour (New Play Park)	-	149	-			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Meadowlands (New Play Park)	-	149	-			
Green Road	129	125	-4			
Ballymote Centre	127	124	-3			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Marian Park	-	123	-			
Ballyhoran Bay	-	123	-			
Knocknashina	130	118	-12			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Saul GAC	116	118	+2			

Mid Play Value (88 to 105)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Quay Street	113	105	-8			
The Links	105	99	-6			
Ardmore Avenue	105	99	-6			

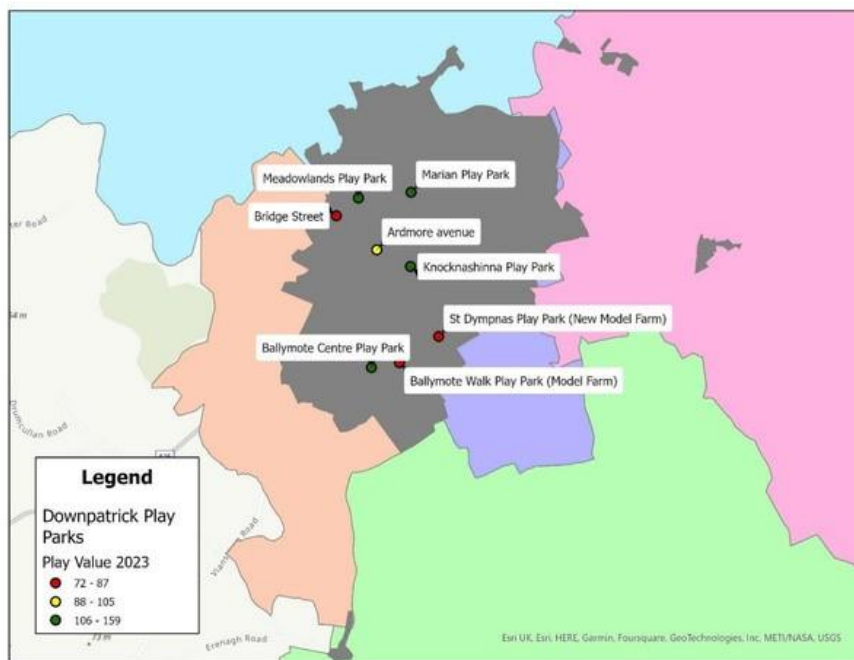
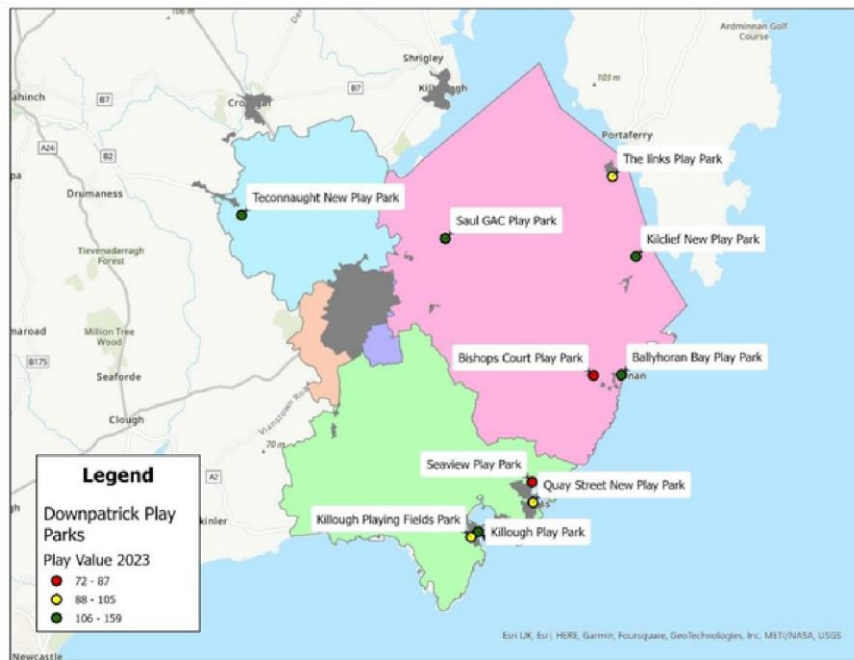
Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Killough Playing Fields	93	90	-3			

Low Play Value (scoring below 87).

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Bishops Court	96	83	-13			
Bridge Street	88	80	-8			
Seaview	86	79	-7			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
St Dymphnas	83	79	-4			
Ballymote Walk	76	72	-4			

The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below, the first showing play parks located outside of Downpatrick urban area and the second those play parks located in Downpatrick urban area.

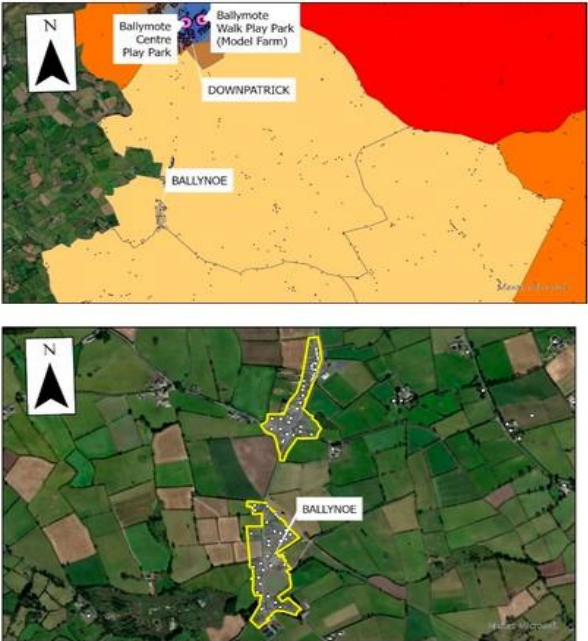


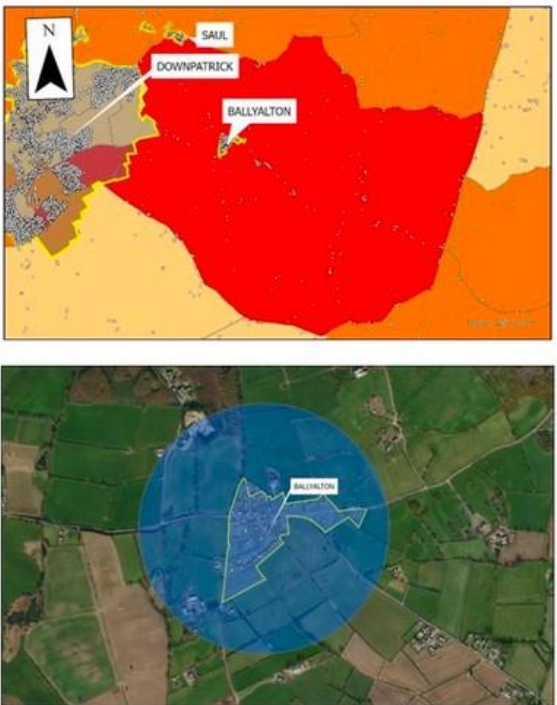
Needs Analysis



Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, a number of locations were identified for further analysis:


- Ballynoe (Bright)
- Ballyalton


- St Dympna's and Ballymote Walk (Model Farm) Play Parks
- Bridge Street
- Bishops Court
- Seaview

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Ballynoe (Bright)</p>		<p>Ballynoe (Bright) is located to the West of the DEA. In terms of demographics, the wider data zone within which the hamlet sits shows 59 children aged 0 to 12, albeit spread over a substantial rural area and not specifically within Ballynoe (Bright).</p> <p>There are currently 64 residential households located within the settlement boundary, below the minimum criteria of 100 households.</p>	<p>At present, Ballynoe (Bright) does not meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Ballyalton</p>		<p>Ballyalton is a hamlet located to the East of Downpatrick town. The wider data zone within which the hamlet sits shows 159 resident children aged 0 to 12 years. It is however noted that these are spread over a substantial rural area and not specifically within Ballyalton.</p> <p>There are currently 87 residential households located within the settlement radial, below the minimum criteria of 100 households.</p>	<p>At present, Ballyalton does not meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>St Dymphnas and Ballymote Walk</p>		<p>Recommended for consolidation within the original strategy, both play parks have again been assessed to determine the most appropriate action for council to take in order to enhance access to high value play.</p> <p>Underlying demographics indicates a continued need for fixed play provision within the area as does a review of residential household numbers. There is however significant duplication of radial coverage between the play park at Ballymote Centre (play value 124) and the play park at Ballymote Walk (Model Farm) which has a low play value of 71. The play park at St. Dymphna's also has a low play value of 79 indicating it no longer provides a quality play experience for children.</p>	<p>Given the continued demand for play in the area, it is recommended that council should proceed with consolidation and upgrade of fixed play at one location, either St. Dymphna's or Ballymote Walk.</p> <p>Acknowledging the significant radial duplication between the play parks at Ballymote Centre and Ballymote Walk (Model Farm), it is suggested that St. Dymphna's would appear to be the most appropriate site, however community consultation should be undertaken to assess local views on siting.</p>
<p>Bridge Street</p>		<p>Located to the Northwest of Downpatrick town, Bridge Street play park has a low play value of 80, falling from 88 in 2017. From a demographic perspective, the wider area shows a continued demand for play with over 150 resident children aged 0 to 12 years.</p> <p>It is noted that there is significant radial duplication with a high play value park at Meadowlands (PV = 149) and a mid-level play value park at Ardmore Avenue (PV = 99). Bridge Street was identified in the original play strategy for transformation to a recreation site due to its high level of duplication and low play value.</p>	<p>It is recommended that council proceed to transformation of the play park at Bridge Street in line with previous transformations undertaken as part of the play strategy.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Bishops Court		<p>Located at Ballyhornan, Bishops Court play park has a current play value of 83, having fallen from 96 in 2017.</p> <p>From a demographic perspective, the wider data zone area shows a continued demand for play with 115 resident children aged 0 to 12 years, albeit not all located within Bishops Court. There are at present 103 households within the radial catchment area, above the criteria set within the strategy.</p>	<p>It is recommended that council proceed with the upgrade of the play park at Bishops Court.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Seaview/ Ardglass		<p>Seaview play park is located in Ardglass and currently has a low play value of 79, falling from 86 in 20217.</p> <p>From a demographic perspective, the wider data zone area shows a continued demand for play with 200 resident children aged 0 to 12 years resident within the immediate data zones.</p> <p>There are at present 198 households within the radial catchment area, above the criteria set within the strategy.</p>	<p>It is recommended that council proceed with the upgrade of the play park at Seaview.</p>

5.3 Mournes DEA – Demographic, Household and Fixed Play Analysis

Mournes District Electoral Area (DEA) is located to the South of Newry Mourne and Down District Council area and comprises 7 wards – Annalong, Binnian, Donard, Kilkeel, Lisnacree, Murlough and Tollymore.



Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Attical
- Ballymaderphy
- Ballymartin
- Bryansford

- Burrenbridge
- Dunaval/Ballyardle
- Glasdrumman/Millartown
- Kilcoo
- Kilkeel
- Killowen
- Longstone

Newcastle

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and in order to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and
- Household location data
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA.

By combining data sources an assessment can be undertaken of the level of potential demand for fixed play within a location based on population and household spread.

Data Zones

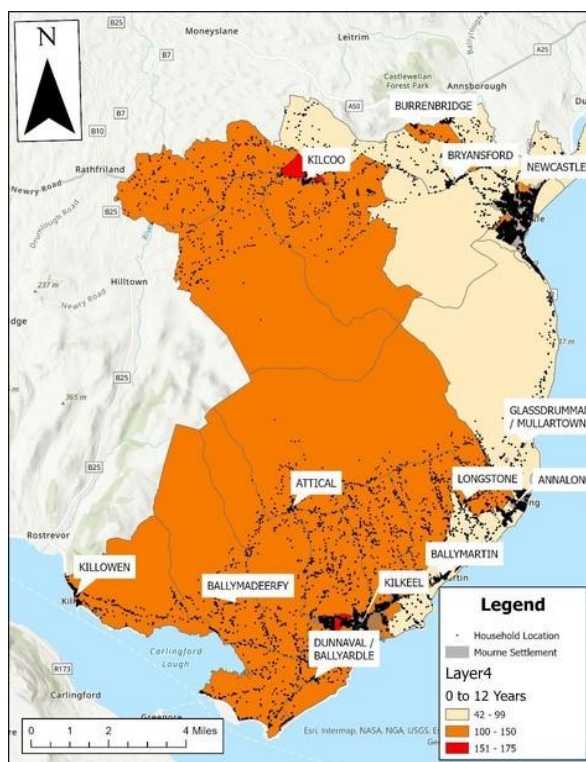
Data zones have been introduced by NISRA to support the analysis of demographic population statistics emerging from the 2021 census. Data zones represent the most localised level of data available, with 3,780 Data Zones nesting within 850 Super Data Zones which in turn nest within DEA areas and overarching local government districts.

A map showing the Data Zone classification areas for the DEA can be viewed below.



Demographic Overview

The map below shows population statistics (mapped by data zone) for children aged 0 to 12 years (the primary focus group for fixed play parks), resident on the day of the 2021 census of the population. The map also shows the household distribution pattern for the DEA.



As a largely rural area, household distribution within the DEA tends to be centred around key settlements or along main roadways: outside of settlement areas, household distribution tends to be of a dispersed nature. Under the agreed criteria, to be eligible for consideration for new fixed play development or upgrade the number of resident children and young people (0 to 12) within an urban defined area should be 150 or more. In the case of rural areas, in recognition of lower population density levels and household spread this has been reduced to 100 children or young people.

Current Play Position

Play Parks are designated according to the Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (often known as the ABS). The ABS classifies play parks according to the level of play provision offered by the site and establishes a radial catchment area to identify the resident population whose needs are served by a play park based on its designation:

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the field in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS). There are at present 16 fixed play parks located across the DEA, all designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS).

Play Value Assessment

This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review. Of the 16 fixed play areas located within the DEA:

- Ten are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- Two play parks deliver a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- Four play parks fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).

High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Downs Road Newcastle	-	162	-			
Marine Park Annalong	-	160	-			
Backfield Newcastle	63	150	+87			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Mourne Esplanade	127	139	+12			
Kittys Road	85	142	+57			
Ballymartin New Park	-	140	-			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Hillside Drive Kilkeel	85	132	+47			
Tollymore Forest Park	-	130	-			
Burren Bridge	124	120	-4			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Kilcoo GAC	117	115	-2			

Mid Play Value (88 to 105)

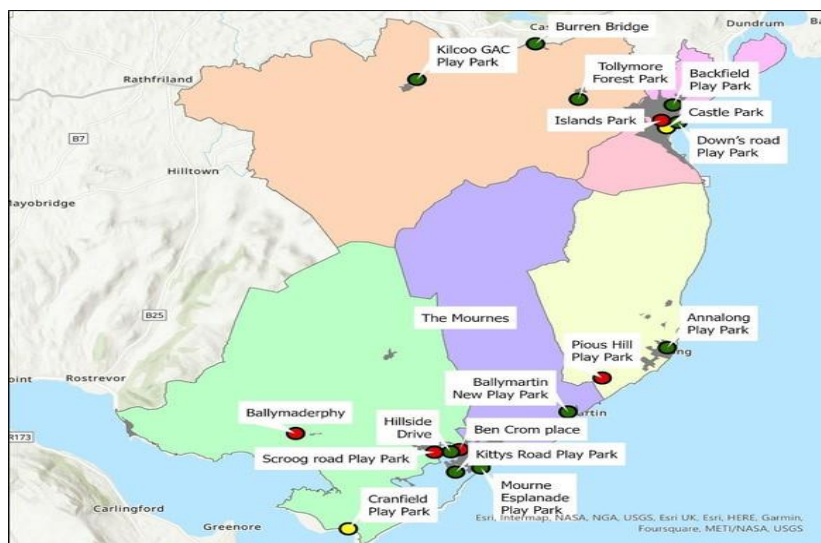
Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Cranfield Amenity Site	118	105	-13			
Castle Park	105	100	-5			

Low Play Value (scoring below 87).

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Islands Park	107	85	-22			
Bencrom	97	85	-12			
Rooney Park	85	85	-2			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Scrogg Park	98	84	-14			

The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below.

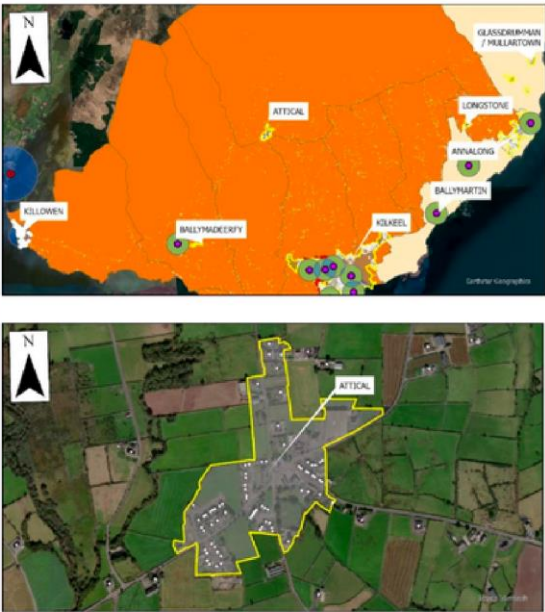


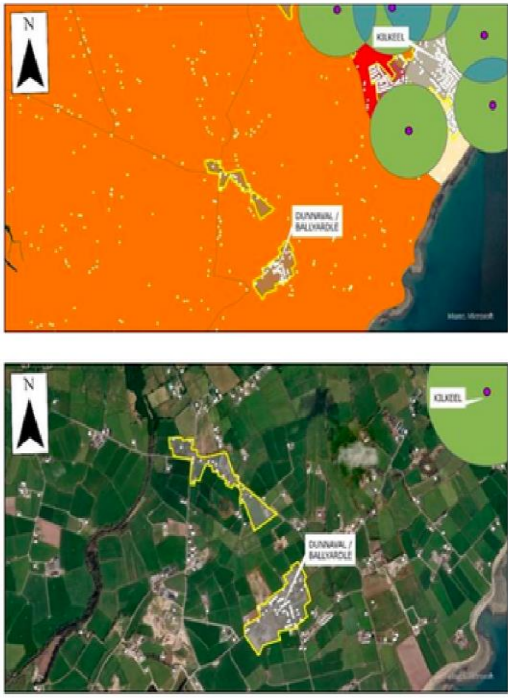
Needs Analysis


Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, nine locations were identified for further analysis:

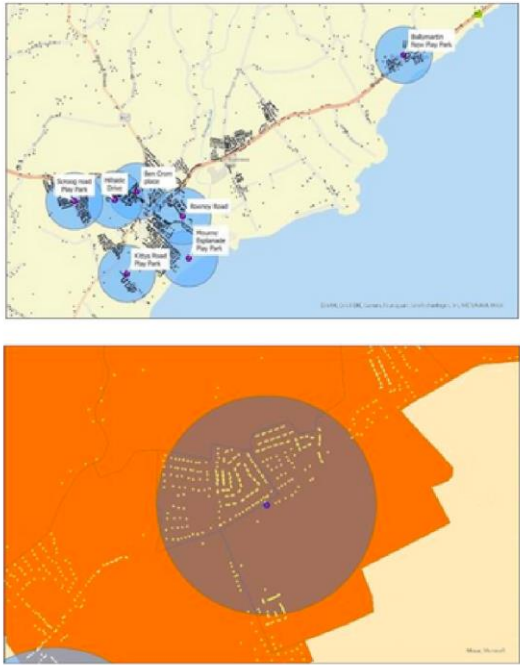
- Attical
- Dunaval/Ballyardle
- Killowen
- Newcastle Road, Kilkeel
- Islands Park
- Scrogg Road
- Rooney Road
- Ben Crom
- Pious Hill

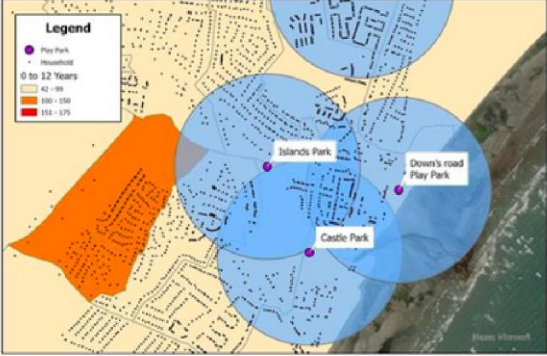
The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below.

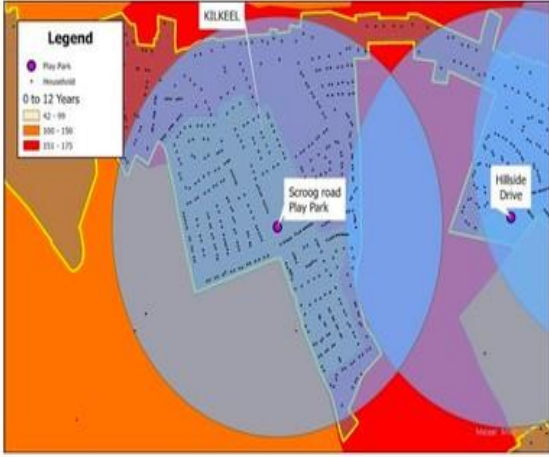
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Attical		<p>Attical is a hamlet located at the centre of the DEA.</p> <p>The location fails to meet the household criteria with 74.</p> <p>In terms of demographics, whilst the wider data zone within which the hamlet sits shows 140 children aged 0 to 12, they area spread over a substantial rural area and not specifically within the settlement.</p>	<p>Attical does not meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>

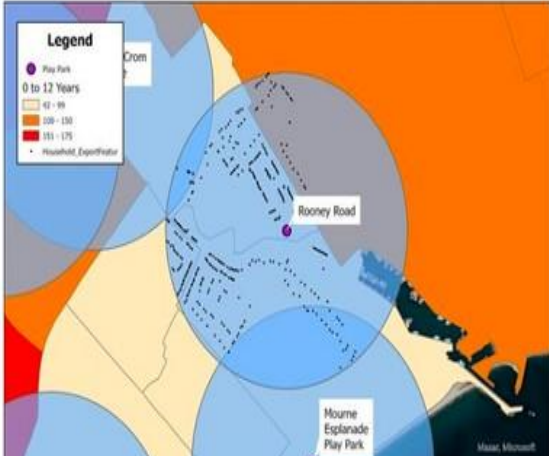
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Dunaval/ Ballyardle</p>		<p>Dunaval/Ballyardle is located to the Southwest of Killeel.</p> <p>A split settlement comprising 2 residential areas, the location fails to meet the household criteria with radial analysis showing 76 households within the catchment.</p> <p>Demographically, whilst the wider data zone shows 113 children aged 0 to 12, they are spread over a substantial rural area and not specific to the settlement.</p>	<p>Does not meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>

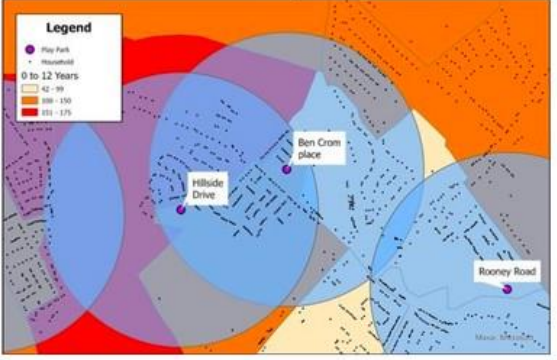
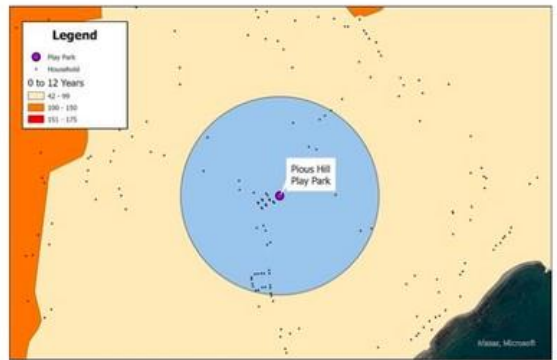
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Killowen</p>		<p>Killowen is a village located to the Southwest of the DEA.</p> <p>The wider data zone within which the village sits shows 108 resident children aged 0 to 12 years. It is however noted that these are spread over a substantial rural area and not specifically within Killowen.</p> <p>There are currently 97 residential households located within the settlement radial, marginally below the minimum criteria of 100 households.</p>	<p>Killowen currently falls marginally below the household criteria for new play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Newcastle Road Kilkeel</p>		<p>Approximately 1 mile from Kilkeel, the location identified is primarily private residential in nature.</p> <p>The data zone within which the area sits shows 246 resident children aged 0 to 12 years. Given the smaller data zone scale and size within the area, this is broadly representative of need.</p> <p>There are currently 318 residential households located within the catchment radial.</p>	<p>Based on both households and demographics, the area meets the criteria for fixed play development.</p> <p>The private residential nature of development within the area means that availability of land for play development is scarce. It is recommended that for any future residential developments within the area, PPS 7 and PPS 8 be enforced as part of the planning process to ensure that play need is met.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Island Park, Newcastle</p>		<p>Play value for the existing play park has declined from 107 in 2017 to 85 – a substantial drop which places the site in the lowest play value category.</p> <p>Demographics analysis indicates a continued need for play provision. There is some radial duplication with higher value sites at Downs Road (PV = 162) and Castle Park (PV=100).</p> <p>There are currently 566 residential households located within the catchment radial.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value, continued demographic need and high number of households, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park</p>

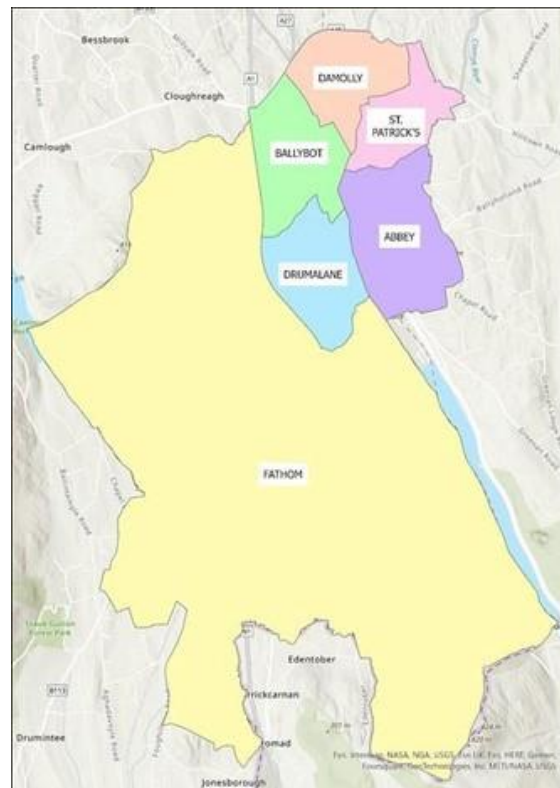
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Scrogg Road, Kilkeel</p>	 <p>The map shows the location of Scrogg Road Play Park in Kilkeel. A legend indicates household density for children aged 0 to 12 years, with categories: 42-99 (lightest), 100-150 (medium), and 151-175 (darkest). The map also shows the radial catchment area for the park and its proximity to Hillside Drive.</p>	<p>Located in Kilkeel, the play value of the existing play park has declined from 98 in 2017 to 84, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There is minor boundary duplication with Hillside Drive Play Park, albeit within minimal influence.</p> <p>There are 504 households within the radial catchment area.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value, continued demographic need and high number of households, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Rooney Road, Kilkeel</p>	 <p>The map shows the location of Rooney Road Play Park in Kilkeel. A legend indicates household density for children aged 0 to 12 years, with categories: 42-99 (lightest), 100-150 (medium), and 151-175 (darkest). The map also shows the radial catchment area for the park and its proximity to Mourne Esplanade Play Park.</p>	<p>Located in Kilkeel, the play value of the existing play park has declined from 87 in 2017 to 85, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There is minor boundary duplication with Mourne Esplanade Play Park, however it's influence in minimal.</p> <p>There are currently 381 households within the radial catchment area.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value, continued demographic need and high number of households, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Ben Crom, Kilkeel</p>		<p>The play value of the existing play park has declined from 97 in 2017 to 85, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area, however it is noted that there is substantial radial duplication with high value play park located at Hillside Drive (PV=132).</p> <p>There are currently 560 households within the radial catchment area.</p>	<p>Given the significant level of radial duplication with high value play at Hillside Drive and the low play value of the site, it is recommended that the play park should be considered for transformation into a broader community recreation space.</p>
<p>Pious Hill</p>		<p>The play value of the existing play park has declined from 82 in 2017 to 81, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows 95 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area. It is however noted that these are spread over a substantial rural area and not specifically within Pious Hill.</p> <p>There are currently 51 households within the radial catchment area.</p> <p>The play park was recommended for transformation into a broader community recreation space in the 2017 play strategy.</p>	<p>It is recommended that, in line with the 2017 recommendation, council proceed to transformation of the site into a broader community recreation space.</p>

5.4 Newry DEA – Demographic, Household and Fixed Play Analysis

Newry District Electoral Area (DEA) comprises 6 wards – Abbey, Ballybot, Damolly, Drumalane, Fathom and St. Patricks.

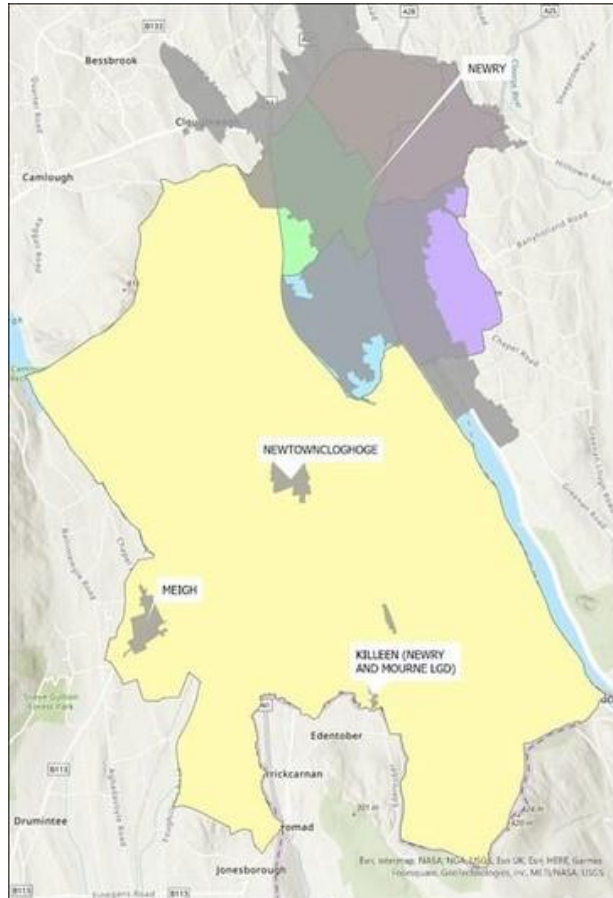


Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Killeen

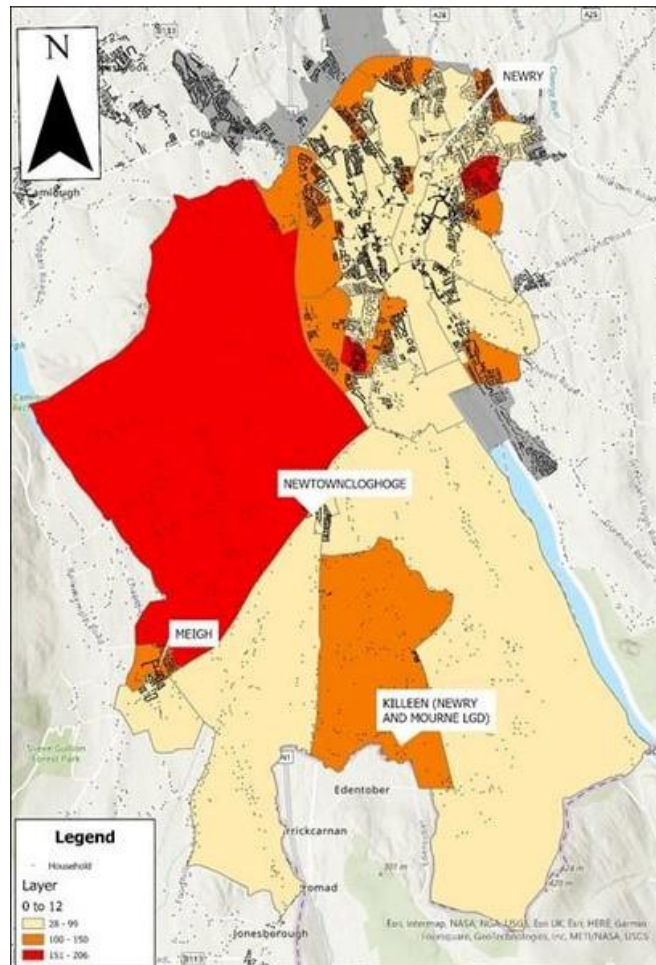
- Meigh
- Newtowncloghoge
- Newry City

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and in order to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and
- Household location data
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA.



Outside of Newry City, the DEA is largely rural in nature with household distribution of a dispersed nature. Under the agreed criteria, to be eligible for consideration for new fixed play development or upgrade the number of residents children and young people (0 to 12) within an urban defined area should be 150 or more. In the case of rural areas, in recognition of lower population density levels and household spread this has been reduced to 100 children or young people.

Current Play Provision

Play Parks are designated according to the Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (often known as the ABS). The ABS classifies play parks according to the level of play provision offered by the site and establishes a radial catchment area to identify the resident population whose needs are served by a play park based on its designation:

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the Fields in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS). There are at present 15 fixed play parks located across the DEA, all designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS).

Play Value Assessment

This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review. Of the 15 fixed play areas located within the DEA










:

- Nine are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- One play park delivers a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- Five play parks fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).



High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Carlingford	-	156	-			
Carrievemadone	80	151	+71			
Loanda Crescent New Play Park	-	145	-			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Newtown-doghoge	87	144	+57			
Shandon Park	89	141	+52			
Meigh	76	134	+58			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Windmill Road	92	92	+36			
Lisdrumgullion	110	108	-2			
Martins Lane	103	103	-			

Medium Play Value (scoring between 88 to 105)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Heather Park	96	95	-1			

Low Play Value (scoring below 87).

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Mourneview	86	86	-			
Emmett Street	89	85	-4			
Derrybeg	103	85	-18			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Springhill Drive	85	85	-			
Barley Lane/Peter McParland Park	99	84	-15			

The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below.

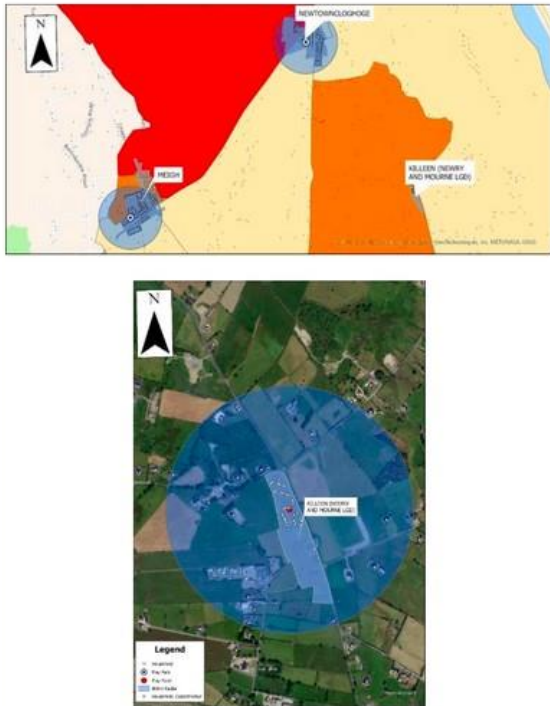
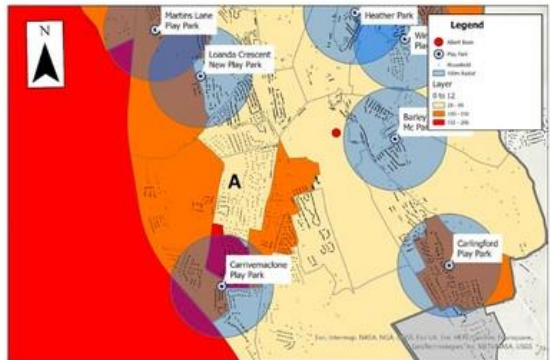


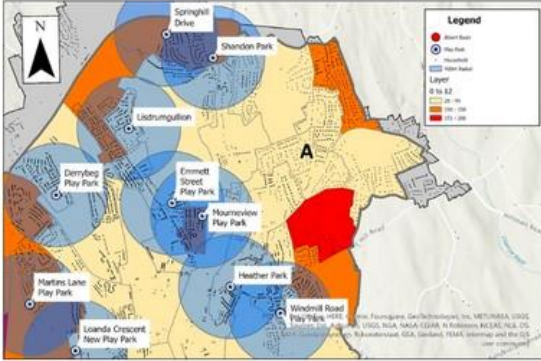
Needs Analysis

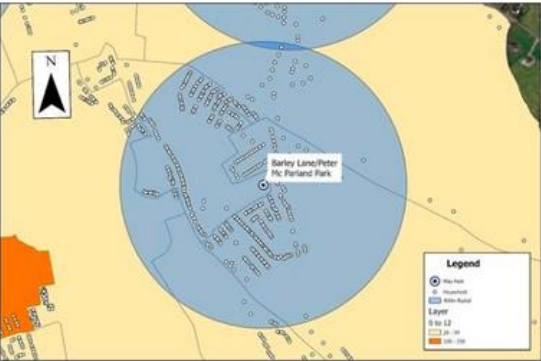
Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, seven locations were identified for further analysis:


- Killeen
- Newry City Southwest


- Newry City Northeast
- Peter McParland Park
- Derrybeg
- Emmet Street and Mourne Park
- Springhill Drive


Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Killeen</p>	 <p>The top map shows settlement boundaries for Killeen (Newry and Mourne LEO) in orange, with surrounding areas in red and yellow. A circular catchment area is overlaid on the settlement. The bottom map is an aerial view with a blue circular catchment area centered on the settlement. A legend in the bottom map identifies symbols for settlement, play park, and catchment area.</p>	<p>Killeen is a hamlet located to the South of the DEA.</p> <p>The location fails to meet the household criteria with 33 households currently falling within the settlement boundary, expanding to 51 within the catchment radial.</p> <p>In terms of demographics, whilst the wider data zone within which the hamlet sits shows 109 children aged 0 to 12, they are spread over a substantial rural area and not specifically within the settlement.</p>	<p>Killeen does not currently meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>
<p>Newry City Southwest</p>	 <p>The map shows settlement boundaries in red and orange. A specific area labeled 'A' is highlighted in orange. Several play parks are marked with blue circles and labeled: Martins Lane, Lissada Crescent, Heather Park, Barley Mc Park, Carrmacshane, and Carringford. A legend in the top right corner defines symbols for settlement, play park, household, and catchment area, and includes a demographic layer for children aged 0 to 12.</p>	<p>The identified area is located to the Southwest of Newry City (denoted A on the map).</p> <p>The area qualifies for fixed play development on both the demographic and household criteria. It is however noted that a lack of land availability is likely to impede any future development.</p> <p>The planned development of a destination play park at the Albert Basin site will partially meet need within the area.</p>	<p>Development of the Albert Basin destination play park will help to address delivery of fixed play within the identified area.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Newry City Northeast</p>		<p>The identified area is located to the Northeast of Newry City (denoted A on the map).</p> <p>The area qualifies for fixed play development on both the demographic and household criteria. It is however noted that the area is predominantly private residential in nature with a lack of land availability likely to impede any future development.</p>	<p>Given the lack of land, council should ensure that future planning requests for residential development incorporate play and recreation space in order to assist in meeting identified need.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Peter McParland Park</p>		<p>The play value of the existing play park has declined from 99 in 2017 to 84, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There are currently 438 households within the radial catchment area.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value, continued demographic need and high number of households, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Derrybeg</p>		<p>The play value of the existing play park has declined from 103 in 2017 to 85, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There are currently 788 households within the radial catchment area.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value, continued demographic need and high number of households, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Emmett Street and Mourne Park</p>		<p>The play value of the existing play park at Emmett Street has declined from 89 in 2017 to 85, whilst Mourneview has remained static at 86, placing both within the lowest category.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There are currently 675 households within the radial catchment area.</p> <p>There is significant radial duplication between both parks – the 2017 play strategy recommended consolidation of the two onto one high play value site.</p>	<p>Based on low play value and radial duplication, council should undertake community consultation towards consolidation onto one site with transformation of the other for wider community recreation purposes.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Springhill Drive</p>		<p>The play value of the existing play park at Springhill Drive has remained static at 85 since 2017, placing it within the lowest category.</p> <p>There is significant radial duplication with the high play value site at Shandon Park (PV=141).</p> <p>The 2017 play strategy recommended consolidation of the two play parks onto one high play value site (with Shandon upgraded in the first phase of the play strategy).</p> <p>It should be noted that the site at Springhill Drive is under the ownership of the NI Housing Executive.</p>	<p>Given level of radial duplication, remove and close Springhill Drive with return of the site to NIHE.</p>

5.4 Rowallane DEA – Demographic, Household and Fixed Play Analysis

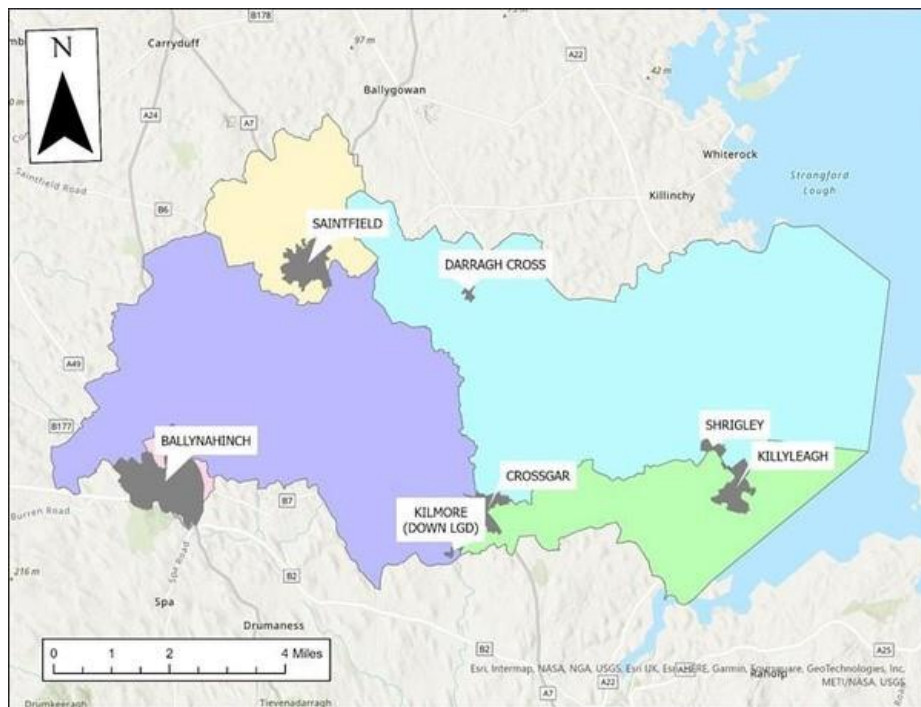
Rowallane District Electoral Area (DEA) comprises 5 wards – Ballynahinch, Crossgar and Killyleagh, Derryboy, Kilmore and Saintfield.



Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Ballynahinch
- Crossgar
- Darragh Cross
- Killyleagh
- Saintfield
- Shrigley

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and in order to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

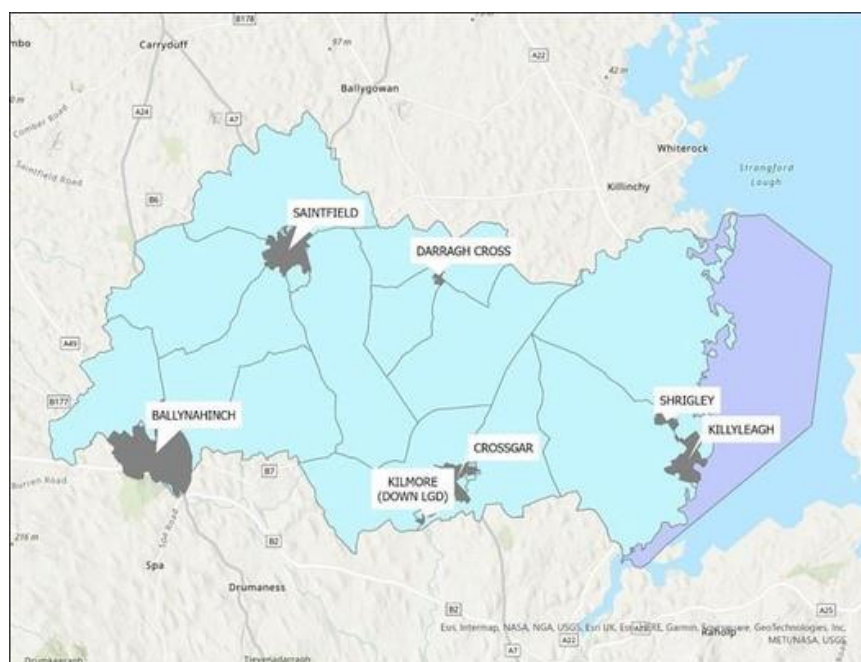
- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and
- Household location data
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA.

By combining data sources an assessment can be undertaken of the level of potential demand for fixed play within a location based on population and household spread.

Data Zones

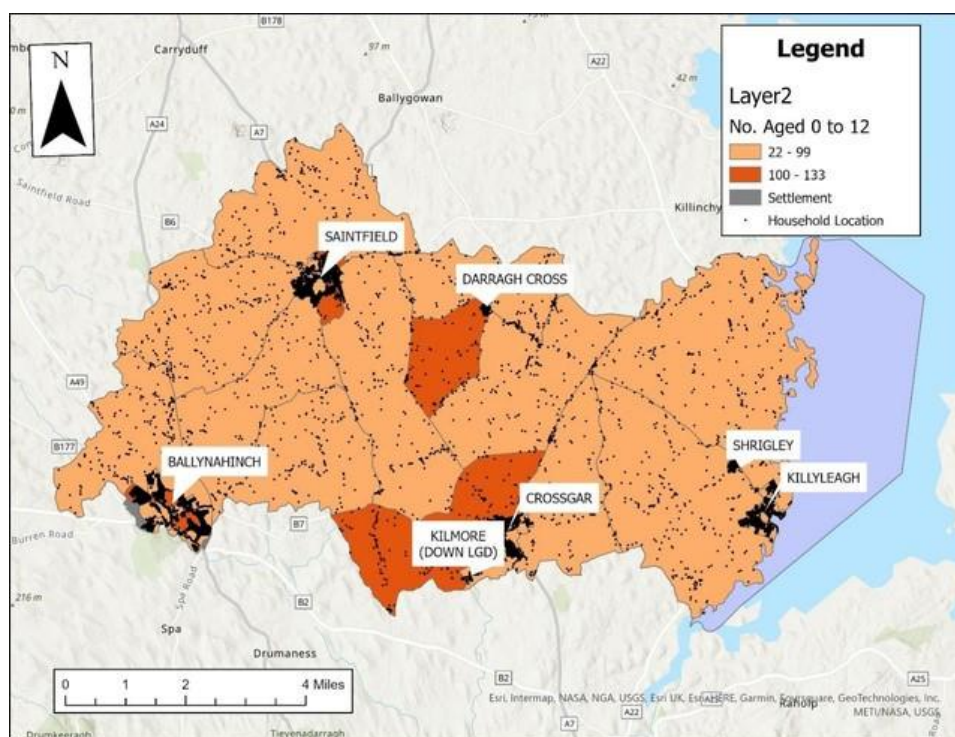
Data zones have been introduced by NISRA to support the analysis of demographic population statistics emerging from the 2021 census. Data zones represent the most localised level of data available, with 3,780 Data Zones nesting within 850 Super Data Zones which in turn nest within DEA areas and overarching local government districts.

A map showing the Data Zone classification areas for the DEA can be viewed below.



Demographic Overview

The map overleaf shows population statistics (mapped by data zone) for children aged 0 to 12 years (the primary focus group for fixed play parks), resident on the day of the 2021 census of the population. The map also shows the household distribution pattern for the DEA.



As a largely rural area, household distribution within the DEA tends to be centred around key settlements or along main roadways; outside of settlement areas, household distribution tends to be of a dispersed nature. Under the agreed criteria, to be eligible for consideration for new fixed play development or upgrade the number of resident children and young people (0 to 12) within an urban defined area should be 150 or more. In the case of rural areas, in recognition of lower population density levels and household spread this has been reduced to 100 children or young people.

Current Play Provision

Play Parks are designated according to the Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (often known as the ABS). The ABS classifies play parks according to the level of play provision offered by the site and establishes a radial catchment area to identify the resident population whose needs are served by a play park based on its designation:

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the Fields in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS). There are at present 12 fixed play parks located across the DEA, all designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS).

Play Value Assessment







This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review. Of the 12 fixed play areas located within the DEA:

- Eight are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- Three play parks deliver a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- One play park fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).

High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Bridge Centre	74	157	+83			
St Mocha GAC, Darraghs Cross	-	150	-			
Hillfoot Junior	88	146	+58			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Lislane, Saintfield	70	146	+76			
Westland, Crossgar	76	145	+69			
Delamont Country Park	-	142	-			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Anika Rice, Ballynahinch	122	120	-2			
Lislea Drive, Crossgar	132	120	-12			

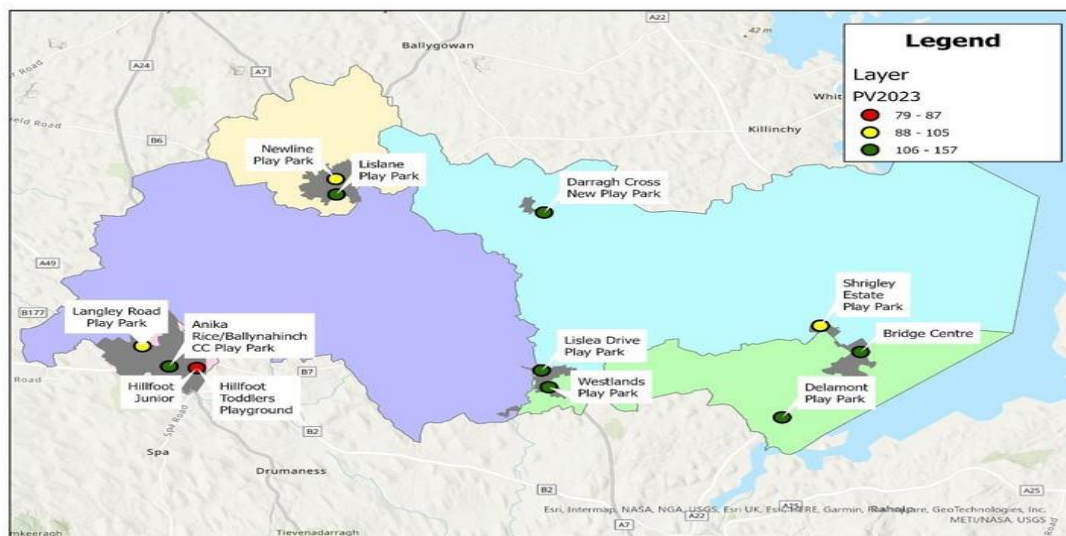
Medium Play Value (scoring between 88 to 105)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Shrigley	117	105	-12			
Newline, Saintfield	86	102	+16			
Langley Road, Ballynahinch	107	99	-8			

Low Play Value (scoring below 87.5)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Hillfoot Toddler	80	79	-1			

The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below.





Needs Analysis

Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, three locations were identified for further analysis:

- Hillfoot Toddler
- Shrigley
- Langley Road

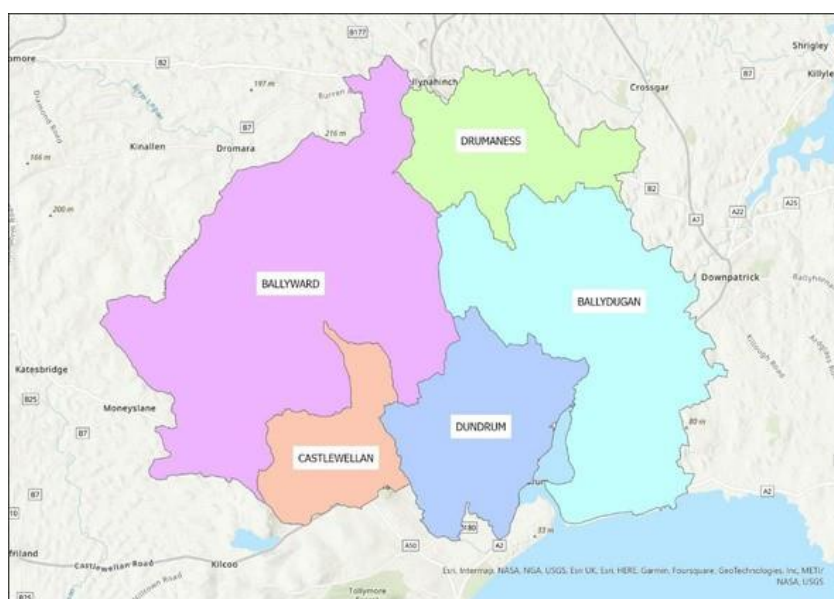
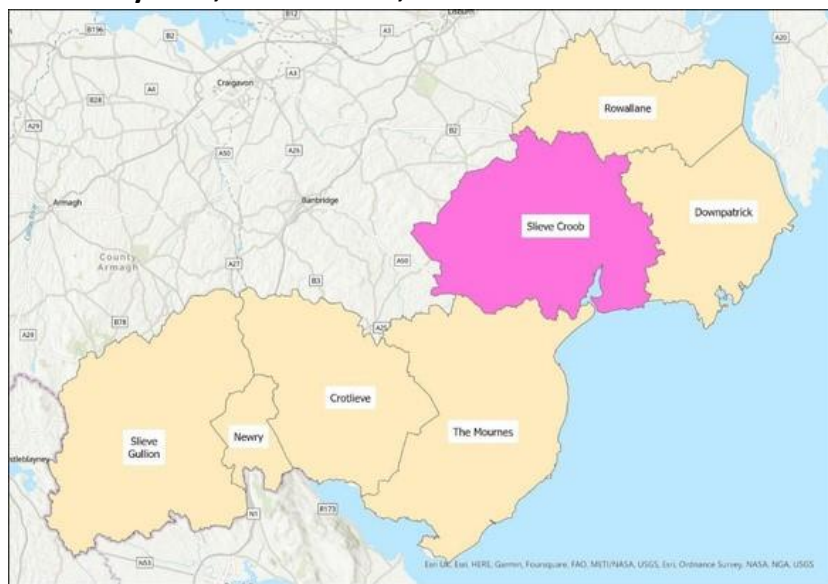
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Hillfoot Toddler		<p>During delivery of the Play Strategy (2017-2022), the adjoining Hillfoot Junior play park (which sits on the same site) was upgraded to high play value (PVA=146) as part of planned consolidation of play.</p>	<p>Given Hillfoot Toddlers low level of play value (PVA=79) and completion of the upgrade to Hillfoot Junior, the process of removing the remaining equipment at Hillfoot Toddler should progress in line with the original strategy proposal.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Shrigley		<p>Shrigley Play Park scored 105 on Play Value assessment indicating it offers a fair level of play value and does not currently require upgrade.</p> <p>Local concerns have however been raised at maintenance of the site including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overgrown pathways • Dangerous tree roots • Inadequate cleaning and clearing of waste area • General upkeep (painting etc.) 	<p>Council should undertake a site review to identify outstanding maintenance issues and resolve.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Langley Road		<p>The current Langley Road Play Park has a play value of 99 (falling from 107 in 2017), placing it in the mid-play value category.</p> <p>The site was reviewed to determine if the capacity of existing play park is sufficient to meet local need.</p> <p>The current 400m radial contains 512 Households with mix of high and low demographic need, indicating a continued need for play provision.</p> <p>New housing development to West of Play Park has added 231 houses, increasing demand for play.</p>	<p>At present the play value of the existing play park is above the threshold for upgrade.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that significant demand for play in the area has been created through private residential development.</p> <p>Council should ensure that future planning requests for residential development in the area stipulate need for fixed play provision to meet developing need.</p> <p>Council should continue to review play value of the existing play park to monitor further reduction over time.</p>

5.4 Slieve Croob DEA – Demographic, Household and Fixed Play Analysis

Slieve Croob District Electoral Area (DEA) comprises 5 wards – Ballydugan, Ballyward, Castlewellan, Dundrum and Drumaness.

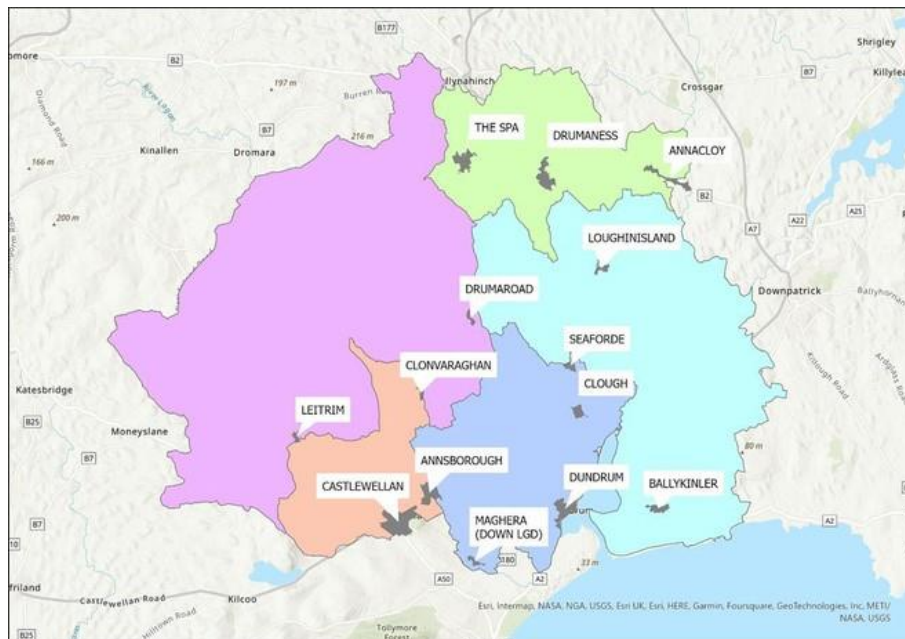


Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Annacloy
- Annesborough
- Ballykinler
- Castlewellan
- Clough
- Clonvaraghan

- Drumaroad
- Drumaness
- Dundrum
- Leitrim
- Loughinisland
- Seaforde
The Spa

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and in order to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and
- Household location data
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA.

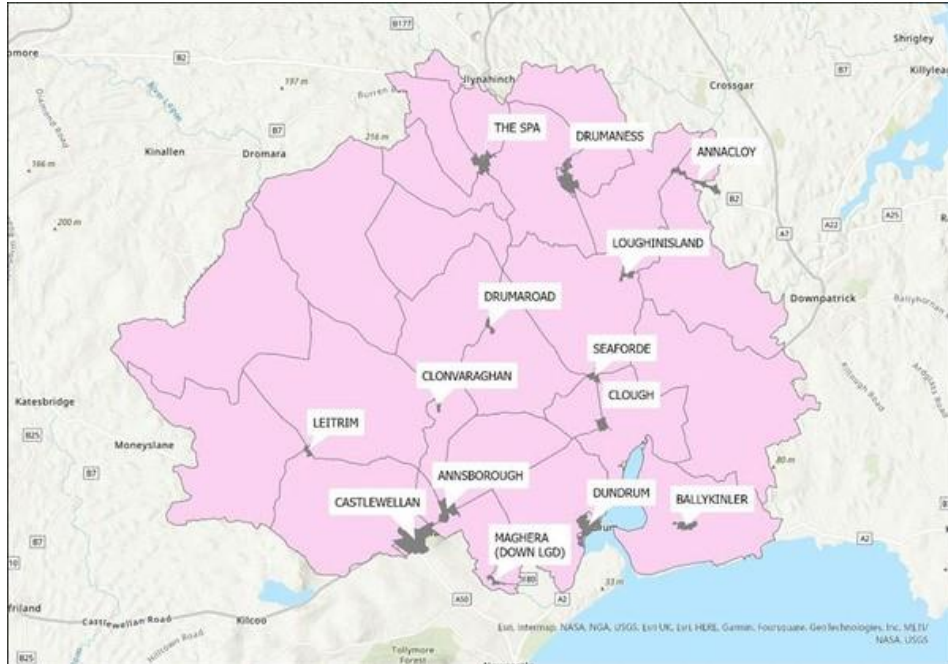
By combining data sources an assessment can be undertaken of the level of potential demand for fixed play within a location based on population and household spread.

Data Zones

Data zones have been introduced by NISRA to support the analysis of demographic population statistics emerging from the 2021 census. Data zones represent the most

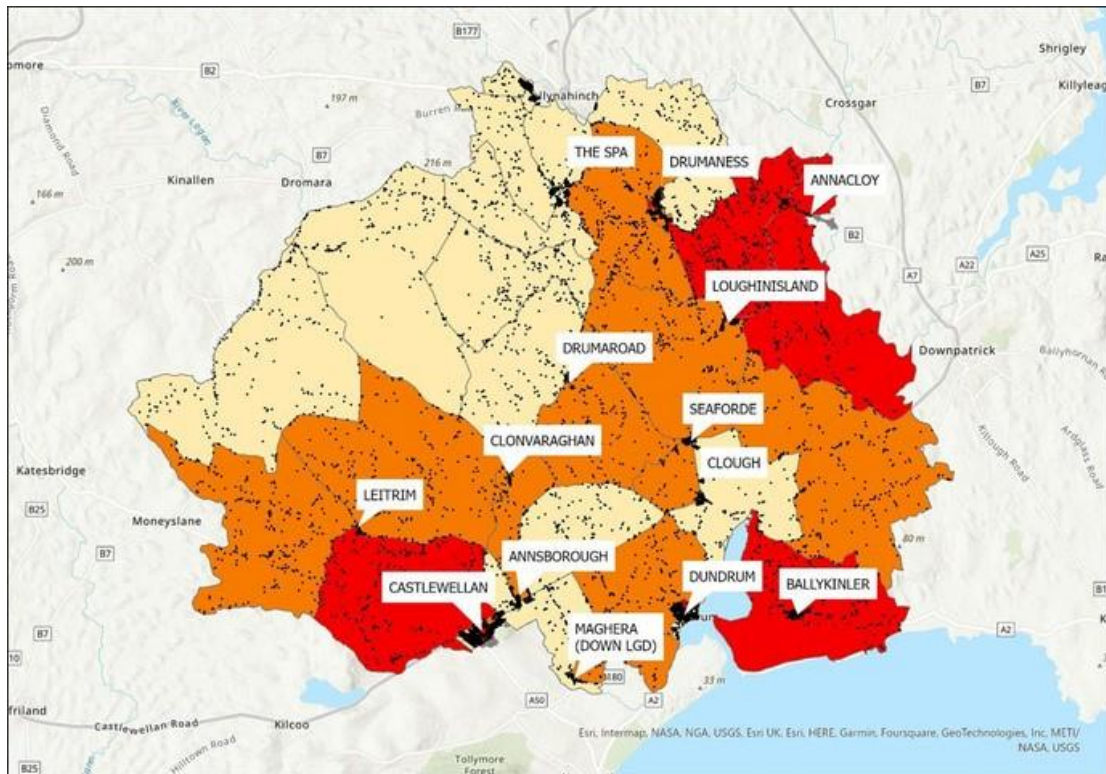
localised level of data available, with 3,780 Data Zones nesting within 850 Super Data Zones which in turn nest within DEA areas and overarching local government districts.

A map showing the Data Zone classification areas for the DEA can be viewed below.



Demographic Overview

The map overleaf shows population statistics (mapped by data zone) for children aged 0 to 12 years (the primary focus group for fixed play parks), resident on the day of the 2021 census of the population. The map also shows the household distribution pattern for the DEA.



As a largely rural area, household distribution within the DEA tends to be centred around key settlements or along main roadways; outside of settlement areas, household distribution tends to be of a dispersed nature. Under the agreed criteria, to be eligible for consideration for new fixed play development or upgrade the number of resident children and young people (0 to 12) within an urban defined area should be 150 or more. In the case of rural areas, in recognition of lower population density levels and household spread this has been reduced to 100 children or young people.

Current Play Provision

Play Parks are designated according to the Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (often known as the ABS). The ABS classifies play parks according to the level of play provision offered by the site and establishes a radial catchment area to identify the resident population whose needs are served by a play park based on its designation:

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the Fields in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS).

There are at present 15 fixed play parks located across the DEA, all designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS).

Play Value Assessment

This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review. Of the 15 fixed play areas located within the DEA:

- Twelve are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- Two play parks deliver a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- One play park fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).

High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Mourne Gardens, Castlewellan	78	148	+70			
Cumber Road, Drumaness	83	144	+61			
Bunkers Hill Play Park	-	137	-			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Castlewellan Forest Park	-	126	-			
Hillside Park, Spa	-	124	-			
Leitrim	128	124	-4			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Dan Rice Park, Drumaness	123	119	+4			
Annsborough	119	118	-1			
St Donard Walk, Dundrum	116	116	-			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Clough	118	116	-2			
St Malachys Crescent, Castlewellan	116	114	-2			
Inner Bay, Dundrum	116	112	-4			

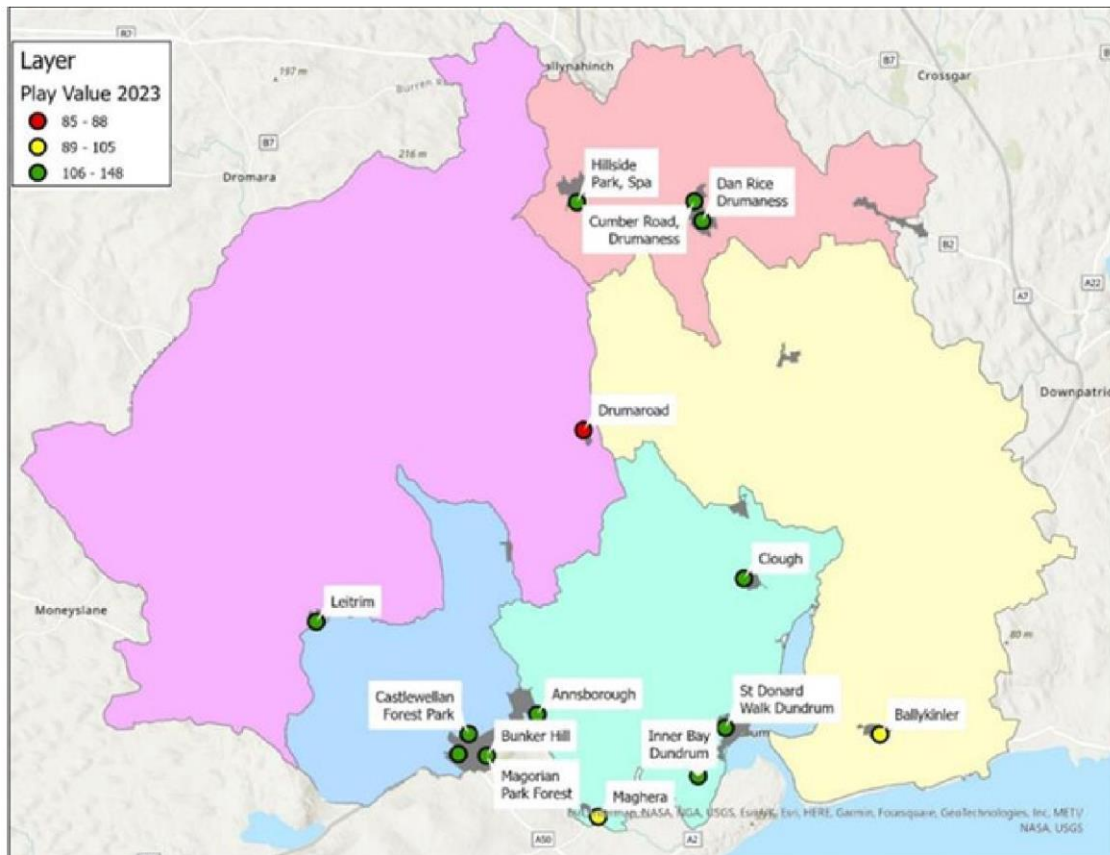
Medium Play Value (scoring between 88 to 105)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Ballykinler	111	105	-6			
Maghera	103	98	-5			

Low Play Value (scoring below 87.5)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Drumaroad	88	85	-3			


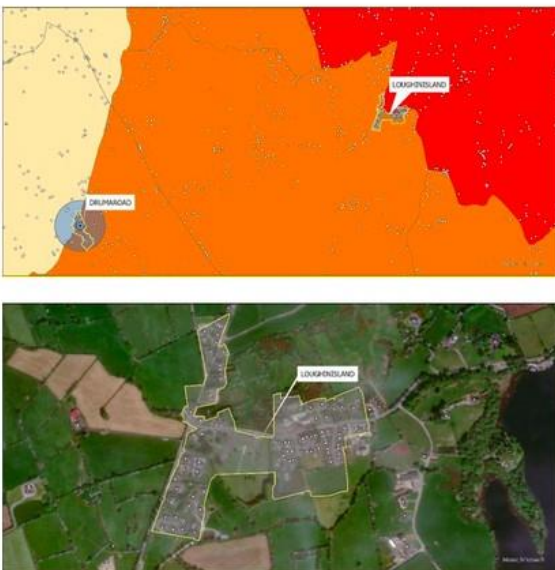
The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below.




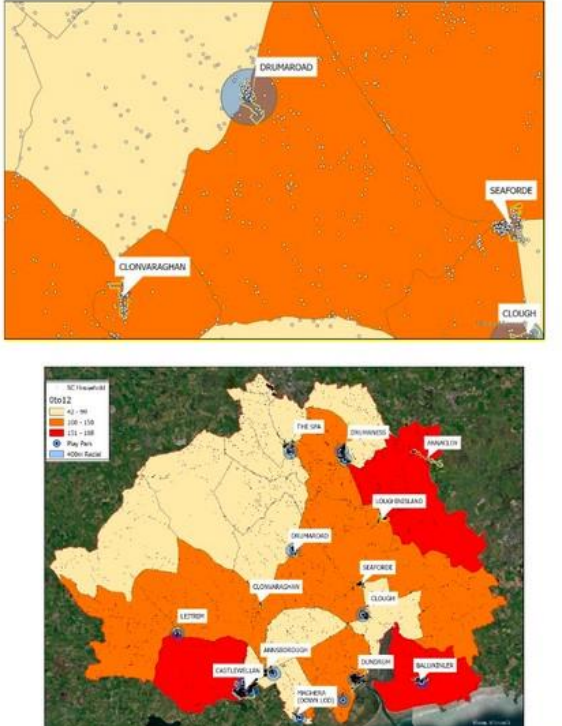
Needs Analysis


Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, five locations were identified for further analysis:

- Seaforde
- Loughinisland
- Clonvaraghan
- Drumaroad
- Leitrim

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Seaforde</p>		<p>Seaforde is a hamlet located at the centre of the DEA.</p> <p>The settlement contains 192 households, placing it above the minimum criteria. Demographic analysis shows 104 children aged 0 to 12 within the relevant data zone however it is noted that the data zone extends beyond the settlement and is not fully reflective of need within Seaforde.</p> <p>It is noted that council currently do not own land within the settlement and that household demand has been due to private residential development.</p>	<p>Whilst the area meets the household criteria, demographics suggest the current population demand is below the established minimum criteria.</p> <p>Given the lack of land available and past residential development that has increased demand, future private residential developments should be required to provide play provision as part of the planning process.</p>
<p>Loughinisland</p>		<p>Loughinisland is a hamlet located to the East of the DEA.</p> <p>The hamlet contains 76 households, placing it below the established criteria for new fixed play development.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows 119 children aged 0 to 12 within the relevant data zone however it is noted that the data zone extends beyond the settlement and is not fully reflective of need within Loughinisland.</p>	<p>Loughinisland does not currently meet the criteria for new fixed play development.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Clonvaraghan		<p>Clonvaraghan is a hamlet located to the South of the DEA.</p> <p>The hamlet contains 69 households, placing it below the established criteria for new fixed play development.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows 110 children aged 0 to 12 within the relevant data zone however it is noted that the data zone extends beyond the settlement and is not fully reflective of need within Clonvaraghan.</p>	<p>Clonvaraghan does not currently meet the criteria for new fixed play development.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Drumacree		<p>The existing play park at Drumacree scored a play value rating of 85, falling from 88 in 2017.</p> <p>The hamlet contains 70 households, placing it below the established criteria for play park upgrade.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows 111 children aged 0 to 12 within the relevant data zone however it is noted that the data zone extends beyond the settlement and is not fully reflective of need within Drumacree.</p>	<p>The play park at Drumacree is of low play value, however does not currently meet the established criteria for upgrade.</p> <p>In considering wider area play need, it is noted that council access to land is restrictive with no availability in the hamlets of Clonvaraghan, Loughinisland and Seaford, all of which are in relatively close travel distance to Drumacree by car.</p> <p>Council own the play park at Drumacree and should therefore consider upgrading Drumacree Play Park (albeit outside the established criteria) as a means of meeting wider area play need within an area of low land availability.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Leitrim		<p>Leitrim play park was inherited from Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council in 2015.</p> <p>The play park scored 124 in the most recent play value assessment, a slight reduction from 128 in 2017.</p> <p>Whilst play value remains high, the site is prone to flooding.</p>	<p>Council should liaise with Rivers Agency re: flooding issues related to adjacent river.</p> <p>Council should review surfacing and drainage options onsite to alleviate impacts of flooding.</p>

5.4 Slieve Gullion DEA – Demographic, Household and Fixed Play Analysis

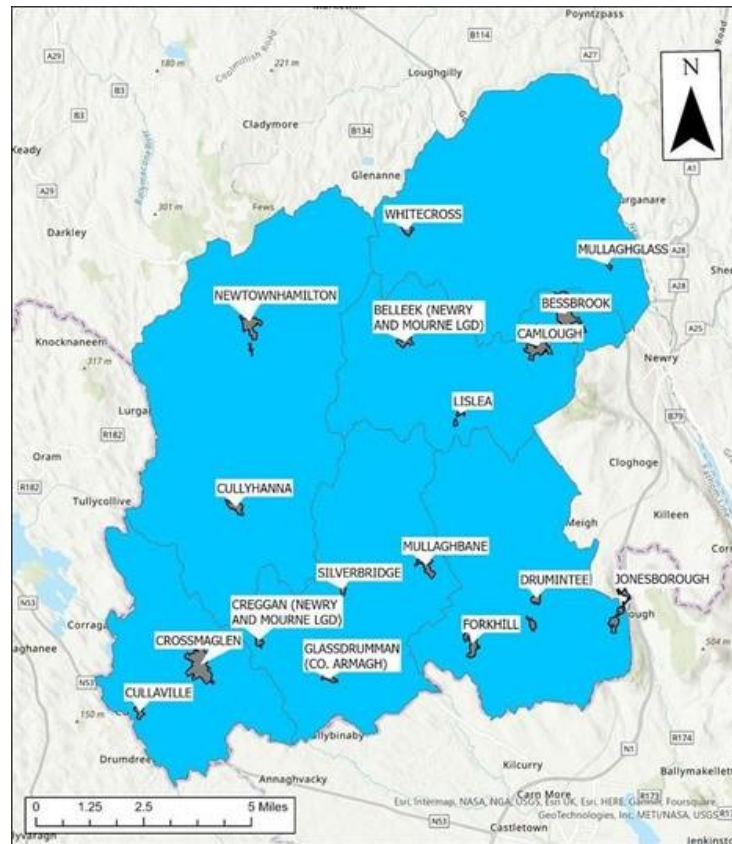
Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area (DEA) comprises 7 wards – Bessbrook, Camlough, Crossmaglen, Forkhill, Mullaghbane, Newtownhamilton and Whitecross.



Recognised settlements within the DEA include:

- Belleek
- Bessbrook
- Camlough
- Cullyhanna
- Creggan
- Crossmaglen
- Cullaville
- Cullyhanna
- Drumintine
- Forkhill
- Glassdrumman
- Lislea
- Mullaghglass
- Newtownhamilton Whitecross

A settlement location map can be viewed below.



In assessing the level of coverage afforded by existing fixed play areas, and in order to identify potential areas of need for new fixed play provision three key pieces of data have been analysed:

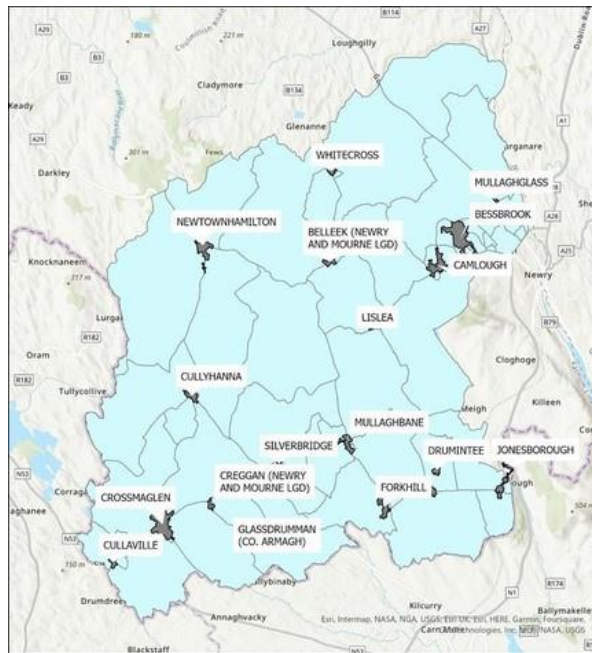
- Population data from the 2021 census data highlighting the number of 0- to 12-year-olds resident within NISRA defined data zone areas; and
- Household location data
- The current location of fixed play areas across the DEA.

By combining data sources an assessment can be undertaken of the level of potential demand for fixed play within a location based on population and household spread.

Data Zones

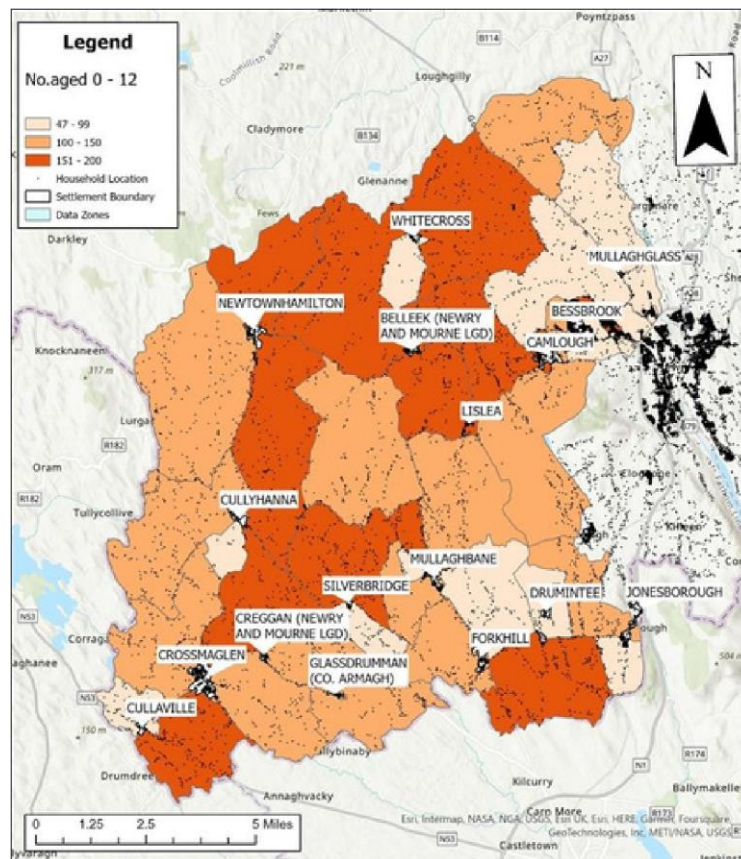
Data zones have been introduced by NISRA to support the analysis of demographic population statistics emerging from the 2021 census. Data zones represent the most localised level of data available, with 3,780 Data Zones nesting within 850 Super Data Zones which in turn nest within DEA areas and overarching local government districts.

A map showing the Data Zone classification areas for the DEA can be viewed below.



Demographic Overview

The map overleaf shows population statistics (mapped by data zone) for children aged 0 to 12 years (the primary focus group for fixed play parks), resident on the day of the 2021 census of the population. The map also shows the household distribution pattern for the DEA.



As a largely rural area, household distribution within the DEA tends to be centred around key settlements or along main roadways: outside of settlement areas, household distribution tends to be of a dispersed nature. Under the agreed criteria, to be eligible for consideration for new fixed play development or upgrade the number of residents children and young people (0 to 12) within an urban defined area should be 150 or more. In the case of rural areas, in recognition of lower population density levels and household spread this has been reduced to 100 children or young people.

Current Play Provision

Play Parks are designated according to the Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (often known as the ABS). The ABS classifies play parks according to the level of play provision offered by the site and establishes a radial catchment area to identify the resident population whose needs are served by a play park based on its designation:

Designation of Play Park	Walking Distance
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000

In addition, in order to be eligible for fixed play consideration, an area must have a minimum of 100 households within a defined radial catchment in line with the Fields in Trust Accessibility Standards (ABS).

There are at present 21 fixed play parks located across the DEA, all designated Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS).




Play Value Assessment

This section of the report provides an overview of the play value scores associated with each play park in the DEA. For the purposes of the report, play value assessments and scoring was undertaken by Play Services Ireland and provided to Playboard NI for incorporation into the overall review. Of the 21 fixed play areas located within the DEA:

- Eleven are rated as delivering a high level of play value (defined as scoring between 106 and 175)
- Two play parks deliver a mid-level of play value (88 to 105)
- Eight play parks fell within the lowest play value category (scoring below 87).

High Play Value (106 to 175)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Forkhill Greenspaces	-	159	-			
Jonesborough	85	153	+68			
Dromintee	88	149	+61			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Derrymore House	-	148	-			
Cullaville	93	148	+55			
Oliver Plunkett	86	147	+61			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Jim Steen Park	-	142	-			
Pond Field	79	141	+62			
Cullyhanna	94	141	+47			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Slieve Gullion Park	156	136	-20			
Whitecross	106	106	-			

Medium Play Value (scoring between 88 to 105)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Creggan	101	101	--			
Altnamackin	115	90	-25			

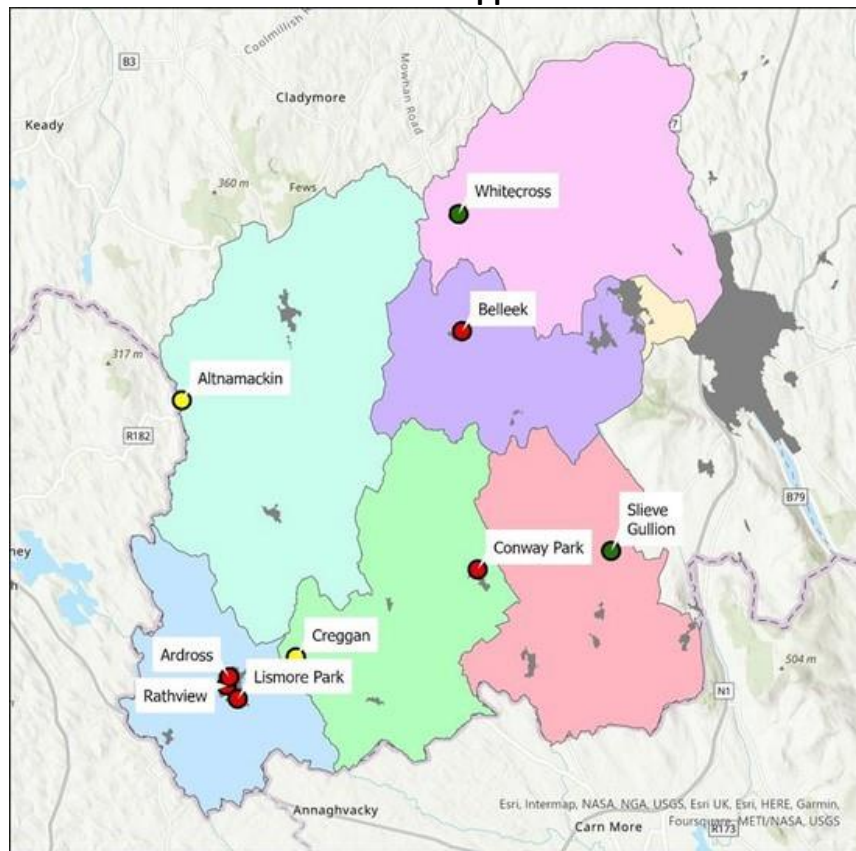
Low Play Value (scoring below 87.5)

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Belleek	105	85	-20			
Lismore Park	99	85	-14			
Rathview	113	85	-28			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
College Square	89	84	-5			
Ardcross	110	84	-26			
Conway Park	98	82	-16			

Play Park	Play Value (2017)	Play Value (2023)	+/-	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
Father Cullen	84	80	-4			
Charlemont Square	65	65	-			

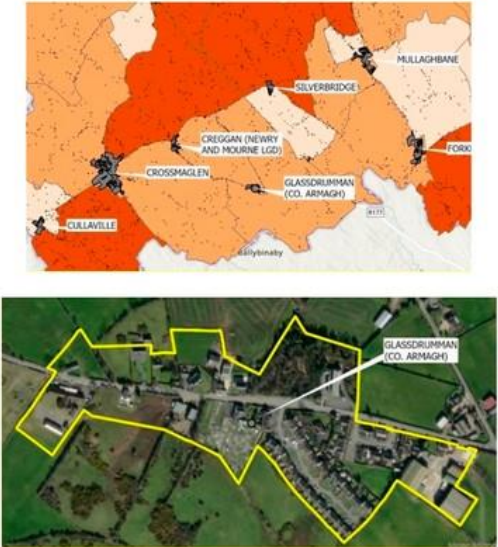
The play value categories for each play park within the DEA have been mapped below.

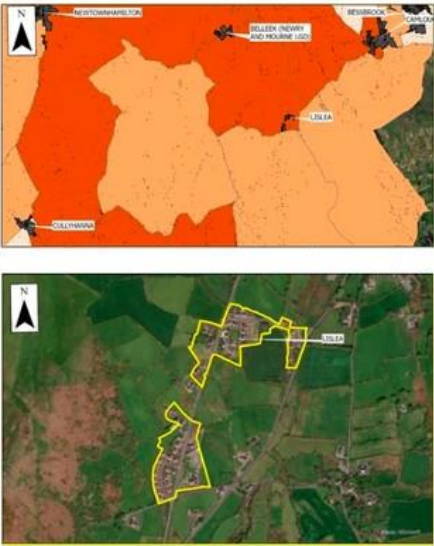


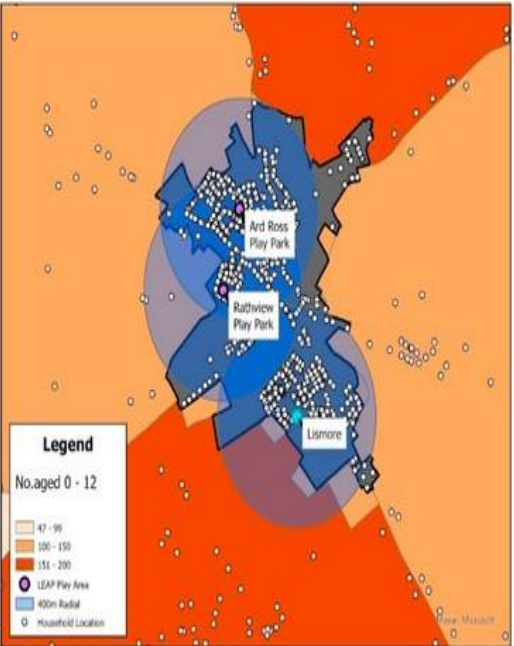
Needs Analysis


Following an analysis of demographics, household density, existing play park locations, play value scores and radial coverage areas, seven locations were identified for further analysis:

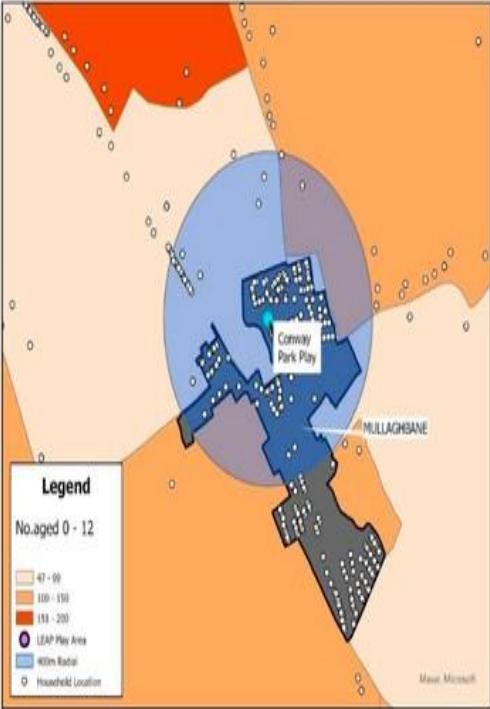
- Glasdrumman
- Lislea
- Crossmaglen (3 Play Parks: Lismore, Rathview, Ardross)
- Belleek
- Mullaghbawn (Conway Pk)
- Whitecross (based on local identified need)
- Lissummon.

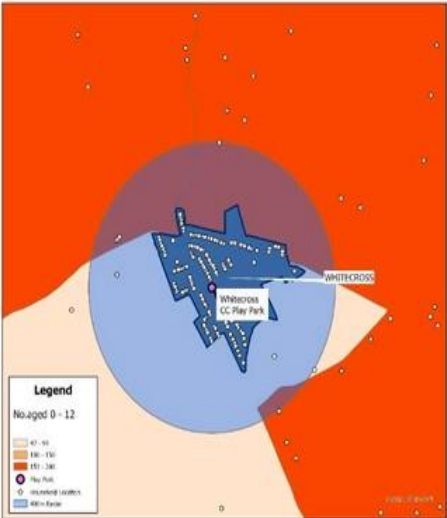
Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Glasdrumman		<p>Glasdrumman is a hamlet located to the South of the DEA.</p> <p>The settlement contains 62 households, placing it below the minimum threshold criteria established within the strategy.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows between 100 to 150 children aged 0 to 12 within immediate data zones, however it is noted that the data zones extend beyond the settlement and the figures are not therefore reflective of actual demand</p>	<p>Glasdrumman does not currently meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>It is recommended that council continue to monitor residential growth and development within the area.</p>


Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Lislea		<p>Lislea is a village located centrally within the DEA. There is currently a community owned playground within the area.</p> <p>The settlement contains 71 households, placing it below the minimum threshold criteria established within the strategy.</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows above 150 children aged 0 to 12 within the wider data zone, however it is noted that the data zone extends beyond the settlement and the figures are not therefore reflective of actual demand</p>	<p>Lislea does not currently meet the criteria established within the strategy for new fixed play development.</p> <p>The current community owned fixed play park currently provides a means of meeting the existing level of play need with the village.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Crossmaglen (3 Play parks: Lismore Rathview Ard Ross</p>		<p>The play value of the identified play parks has shown significant decline since 2017 placing all within the lowest category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lismore - 99 to 85 • Rathview – 113 to 85 • Ard Ross – 110 to 84 <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There are currently 709 households served by the radial catchments emanating from the three play parks.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value, continued demographic need and high number of households, council should proceed to upgrade of the three play parks in order to meet identified need.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
<p>Belleek</p>		<p>The play value of the Belleek play park has shown significant decline since 105 in 2017 to 85, placing it within the lowest category:</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 150 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There are currently 129 households served by the radial catchment.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value and continued level of need, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Mullaghbawn (Conway Park)		<p>The play value of the play park located at Conway Park, Mullaghbawn has shown significant decline since 98 in 2017 to 82, placing it within the lowest category:</p> <p>Demographic analysis shows in excess of 100 children aged 0 to 12 years within the radial coverage area.</p> <p>There are currently 180 households served by the radial catchment.</p>	<p>Based on its low play value and continued level of need, council should proceed to upgrade of the play park.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Whitecross		<p>The play value of the play park located at Whitecross is 106, placing it within the mid-range of play value.</p> <p>Whilst the PV score indicates that immediate enhancement is not required, the play park does not currently offer any inclusive play opportunities.</p> <p>Members of the local community have identified a need for inclusive play provision in order to meet the needs of local children with disabilities (including wheelchair users).</p>	<p>It is recommended that, given identified need for inclusive play, council should introduce inclusive fixed play equipment to the play park to enhance the space and better meet local need.</p> <p>Dependent on space provision, this may require a review and redesign of the play park in order to facilitate inclusive play.</p>

Location	Map	Location Review	Recommendation
Lissummon		<p>The rural area of Lissummon is located to the North-East of the DEA and is characterised by a dispersed household pattern.</p> <p>In order to review potential household demand, a 400m radial was introduced emanating from a central point (Lissummon GFC).</p> <p>A total of 15 households falls within the radial, the area does not therefore meet the criteria for new play park development.</p>	<p>The area does not at present meet the criteria for new play park development.</p> <p>Council should continue to monitor household development as part of future play strategy review.</p>

6.0 Recommendations

In 2017 Newry, Mourne and Down District Council established a play strategy that aimed to enhance the quality of fixed play parks across the district, whilst improving access to non-fixed play activities.

6.1 Fixed Play Parks

In seeking to achieve this council targeted a significant level of capital investment, circa £3.3 million, achieving a significant shift in the level of play value associated with its fixed play park portfolio.

Review of play value (2023) against baseline scores taken in 2017 indicate that council has achieved a 23% increase in the number of play parks securing a high play value score, resulting in over half (55%) of council play parks delivering a quality play experience. Alongside the increase in high quality, council has reduced the number of mid play value (from 27% to 15%) and low play value sites (from 41% to 30%). The rise within the high play value category is due primarily to the focus council has placed on embedding quality design principles and ensuring that play park designs remain in step with developing good practice and play industry standards. In improving the overall standard of play value, council has increased access to accessible and inclusive play opportunities by placing a focus on ensuring, where feasible that inclusive play equipment is incorporated within new and upgraded play park designs.

This has included the installation of a range of inclusive equipment pieces as standard including:

- Inclusive Wheelchair accessible roundabouts

- Inclusive Seesaws
- Inclusive supported swing seats
- Basket swings, and
- Accessible play panels.

In view of local research undertaken by Playboard NI and the Mae Murray Foundation, Council should continue to focus on improving access to inclusive play opportunities, particularly at District Park level where a focus should be placed on support services including Changing Places Toilets. Council should embed the forthcoming Playboard NI and Mae Murray Foundation guidance and toolkit into the design process to ensure that future District Parks achieve inclusive play status. Given the level of improvement achieved, it is recommended that council focuses capital investment for a further 5-year period in order to enhance those play parks with a low play value score. A review of current levels of play alongside the assessment of current play value levels has identified a number of key actions across each DEA which, if taken will ensure that council continues to build on the progress to date. As outlined in the table below, one new play area is required alongside 16 upgrades, 2 consolidations and 3 transformations. Two sites have been identified for closure (Hillfoot Junior and Springhill Drive which has been earmarked for return to the sites landlord, the NI Housing Executive).

Action to be Taken	Number of Sites
Capital Upgrade (under Play Strategy)	15
Addition of Inclusive Play Equipment	1
Capital Upgrade (under Tourism Strategy)	1
Consolidation	2
Transformation	3
Closure	2

A breakdown of recommended actions by DEA has been provided in the table below.

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Recommendation
Crotlieve	Granite View Play Park	65	Upgrade
	Clonallen	78	Upgrade (in conjunction with planned Health and Wellbeing Hub development)
	Kilbroney Forest Park	120	Capital Upgrade (outside of Play Strategy – consideration under Enterprise, Regeneration and Tourism).
Downpatrick	St. Dympna's Model Farm	79	Consolidation
	Bridge Street	71	
	Bishops Court	80	Transformation
	Seaview	83	Upgrade
Mournes	Island Park	79	Upgrade
	Scrogg Road	85	Upgrade
	Rooney Road	84	Upgrade
	Ben Crom, Kilkeel	85	Transformation
	Pious Hill	81	Transformation

DEA	Location	Play Value (2023)	Recommendation
Newry	Peter McParland Park	84	Upgrade
	Derrybeg	85	Upgrade
	Emmett Street	85	Consolidation
	Mourne Park	86	
Springhill Drive	Springhill Drive	85	Closure with return of land to landlord (NIHE)
Rowallane	Hillfoot Junior	79	Closure and removal of remaining equipment
Slieve Croob	Drumaroad	85	Upgrade
Slieve Gullion	Lismore	85	Upgrade
	Rathview	85	Upgrade
	Ard Ross	84	Upgrade
	Belleek	85	Upgrade
	Conway Park (Mullaghbawn)	82	Upgrade
	Whitecross	106	Enhancement of site to include inclusive fixed play equipment in line with local need.

6.2 Community Consultation

One of the key strengths identified in the roll-out of the play strategy was councils' commitment to ensuring that children, young people, families, and communities had an opportunity to shape the design process for both new play parks and upgrades.

The comprehensive three-stage consultation approach developed and applied by council in all cases of capital play development, has ensured that play parks best reflect the underlying needs of the community for which they were developed. The consultative approach has helped to create a sense of community involvement and engagement within the design process, with the focus on direct engagement with children and young people being particularly welcome, as well as being in line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In progressing with the recommended capital works as outlined in section 6.1, council should ensure that the three-stage consultation process remains a core part of the design process, maintaining community involvement and giving children and young people an opportunity to shape play in their area.

6.2 Maintenance

Given the level of capital investment (£3.3 million) made to date under the play strategy and the enhanced level of play value delivered through new play park development and upgrades, it is critical that council provide a sufficient level of ongoing maintenance in order to retain quality standards.

In order to maximise the impact of capital investment in play parks and to ensure they are maintained to a high standard; it is recommended that council review the annual maintenance budget allocation to ensure it is adequate for maintaining play value levels across the capital estate.

6.3 Residential Development

The play strategy (2017) noted a specific recommendation regarding continued population growth and residential development within the council area.

The recommendation focused on ensuring that private developers incorporate suitable play/appropriate recreational space allocations capable of supporting outdoor play within residential plans, in line with the appropriate planning policy statements.

It is noted that between 2017 and 2023, no planning provisions were specifically placed specifically on private developers regarding the allocation of such appropriate play space. Given anticipated population growth and the likely development of new housing to meet that need, council should work to ensure that residential developments incorporate consideration of play/recreational need in line with the appropriate planning policy. This will help to alleviate the growth and development of future gaps in play provision which ultimately council will be asked to fill through capital investment.

6.4 Community Owned Play Parks

Several play parks have been developed within the area by local community organisations, the ongoing maintenance and inspection of which falls outside the scope of the strategy, remaining with the community group.

Such play parks, whilst not sitting directly within the council's Play Strategy deliver a valuable function in supporting enhanced access to fixed play opportunities across the area.

Section 8.2 of the play strategy (2017) highlighted that in such cases council should seek to provide support for community-based play providers through the conducting of annual maintenance inspections and future play value audits.

Council should therefore ensure that community owned play parks are included within the future annual maintenance and play value audit schedule.

6.5 Non-Fixed Play

In addition to an extensive capital works programme, through the play strategy council placed an additional focus on supporting the development of non-fixed play through the roll-out of an annual programme of community play sessions.

Evaluation of impact has shown the value of these programmes at local community level, expanding play experiences for children and young people whilst also opening up existing green/communal spaces for community-based outdoor free play. Given the success of the approach to date, it is recommended that council should continue the roll-out of non-fixed community play sessions, supporting children, young people, and families to engage in accessible play-based activities at local community level. Running alongside the community-based play sessions, council has become a visible supporter of playday, running events, highlighting the importance of play in the run-up to Play Day and guiding and supporting local communities to recognise the importance of play. Council should continue to promote positive play messaging, using Play Day as an opportunity to highlight the core benefits of play for individuals and communities.

