

Highland Community Guidance

Developing Inspiring and
Sustainable Community
Spaces for Play



Introduction/background

Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and it also has a significant impact on the developing brain (Hughes, 2011). Children should have opportunities to be involved in undirected, innovative play as part of their development and wherever possible this should be outdoors in inspiring play spaces that enable children to use their imagination. It should also focus on fun!

The Play Strategy for Scotland vision is 'We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities'. The Highland Play Strategy 'Play Matters' translates this vision into local strategy and action around 4 key strands:

1. Involvement
2. Communication
3. Access
4. Child Centered Play

The For Highland's Children Play Improvement Group/Play Highland has translated this into an Improvement Plan to:

- Develop a Public Awareness campaign – increase awareness and share good practice to improve societal:
 - acceptance of appropriate risk taking;
 - expectation of being outside in different weather conditions;
 - recognition of the importance of self-directed free play for children and young people of all ages; and
 - challenges gender stereotyping in play;
- Improve Access and quality of existing and new spaces for play and increase the number of quality spaces for play; and
- Involve children, young people, parents and professionals meaningfully in decision making and planning.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (the Act) requires us to empower community bodies through ownership or control of land or buildings through either participation requests or asset transfer requests.

As part of the Improvement Plan Action to 'Improve Access and quality of existing and new spaces for play and increase the number of quality spaces for play', and assist communities who may wish to make a participation or asset transfer request under the Act, this Guidance aims to assist communities who wish to either be involved in the management of Council play areas, or transfer Council play areas into their ownership.



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Involving your community

Why Involve Communities?

How well any space is used by and meets the needs of a community will be impacted by the quality of engagement with members of that community in the process of designing and commissioning it. All interested parties should be involved in the planning at an early stage so that the needs of different groups can be understood. Fundamentally community engagement is the difference between doing something 'to' or doing something 'with' the community.

Community Engagement Standards:

The Scottish Centre for Community Development (SCDC) have revised the Scottish National Standards for Community Engagement. These standards provide guidance on how a community engagement process should be undertaken. Within the standards document they highlight that quality engagement is:

- Effective, meeting the needs and expectations of people involved;
- Efficient, by being well informed and properly planned; and
- Fair, by giving people who may face additional barriers to getting involved an equal opportunity to participate.

There are six underpinning principles within the engagement standards:

- Inclusion;
- Support;
- Planning;
- Working together;
- Methods; and
- Communication

Details of how each of these can and should be applied in the process are contained within the document, which can be downloaded from the National Standards for Community Engagement website (www.voicescotland.org.uk/media/resources/NSfCE%20online_October.pdf). It is important to think about the process as a cycle rather than a check list to be worked through.

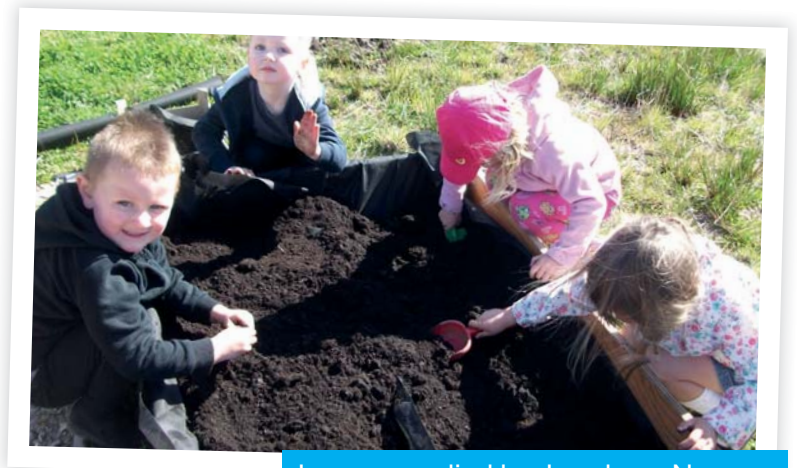


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Creativity in your engagement:

To ensure the engagement of all stakeholders, including children and young people, creative means of engagement should be used, to get a dynamic and creative response engagement methods should reflect that.

Here are some ideas, which are in no way exhaustive:

Thinking in pictures and images: Photos or short pieces of film about how people see or use local space can be easily captured on mobile phones. Equally street chalk pictures of the immediate area can literally give people a chance to walk around their community in a few steps. If you are a coastal town, like many in Highland, why not to use the beach and the sand? It is both a huge canvas to draw on and a great material to build ideas with.

On Site debates or visioning: Consider having discussions or visualisations at the location being considered for development. Take time to see how the space is currently used to see what if anything needs to be taken account of in your development proposals. Having families come onsite will help them envisage how the space could be better used and improve your response.

Play events: Why not host a play event within the community, possibly onsite but it doesn't have to be. Get people engaged with one another; collect their ideas while at the same time having fun. The more people participate in the process or get excited by it the more likely you are to have the support you need to realise your ambition.

There is a really good example of planning for play spaces in a case study prepared for Ayr Adventure in St Ives, which illustrates some of the ideas above:

www.edenproject.com/sites/default/files/ayr-adventure-eden-project-community-engagement.pdf

Inclusion

Play spaces, which are not prescriptive and include multi-functional fixed and moveable equipment, enable children and young people across the age and ability range to play together or alongside one another.

Inclusion is not just about wheelchair access, but about engaging with children, young people and adults to develop a range of play opportunities that are attractive, adaptable and accessible to different people, ensuring no one is excluded.

e.g. equipment such as nest swings can be played with in different ways by children across the need and age groups.

Design for play

Principles for designing play spaces:

There are some helpful guiding principles for the design of play spaces, as found on the Design For Play, Play England website (www.playengland.org.uk/media/70684/design-for-play.pdf). These explain that we should consider play spaces to be:

- Bespoke: to the area and the needs of the community
- Well located: for access, safety and environment among others
- Able to make use of natural elements (possibly reflect the local natural heritage)
- Able to provide a wide range of play experiences
- Accessible to children with and without a disability
- Designed to meet the communities needs
- Able to allow children of different ages to play together
- Able to offer opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- Sustainable and appropriately maintained
- Able to change and evolve.

Existing assets: how to make other spaces more playable

Multi-generational spaces, community open spaces, Home Zones can all offer opportunities for shared use of public spaces making them 'playable'. The key point is that children and young people feel welcome and are not restricted unnecessarily from participating in play activities, therefore 'no ball game' signs and restrictions on activities such as skateboarding should only be there if there is a strong safety reason.

Seating that can also be used as a climbing frame or slide could be considered

Resources such as woodlands could be adapted as downhill or BMX tracks for older young people.

To make spaces 'playable' for everyone, consultation and involvement is essential to ensure that each group understands the needs of others.

A Risk/Benefit Assessment is essential to minimize risks whilst maximising the opportunities for play and can go some way to reassuring those concerned that use of the space is being used appropriately and safely.



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Planning issues

Scottish Planning Policy (2014) (www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00453827.pdf) outlines national policy for green infrastructure and recognises that open space can help to build stronger, healthier communities. Paragraph 232 states that green infrastructure should be well integrated in the overall design and layout and be multi-functional, and that the arrangements for long-term management and maintenance should be incorporated into any planning permission.

SPP is supported by Planning Advice Note 65 (www.gov.scot/Publications/2008/05/30100623/0): Planning and Open Space which contains more detailed guidance on the delivery of open space, and provides examples of good practice.

The Council's planning policies, set out mainly in the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (2012) (www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/download/302/open_space_supplementary_guidance-latest), aim to protect and enhance play spaces and emphasise the importance of high quality, accessible and fit for purpose spaces and facilities which improve quality of life.

Proposals for the refurbishment and improvement of existing play space or equipment are less likely to require planning permission. For new development, open space (including play facilities) often has to be designed and delivered by the developer as part of a requirement of planning permission. The Council's Supplementary Guidance on Open Space in New



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Residential Developments guides the provision of open space in new development, assessed in relation to the size and type of development proposed, including the quantity and design specification of play facilities.

The Council encourages early discussion with the planning department prior to the submission of planning application to ensure all spaces and facilities meet the standard conditions and are managed and maintained to satisfy current and likely future demand.

The Council has started a review of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan (www.highland.gov.uk/hwldp) which proposes that play space will be covered under the broader policy topic of Green Infrastructure within a policy on Open Space. The proposed version of this plan will be subject to public consultation later in 2016 following consideration by the Council's Planning, Development & Infrastructure Committee.

Specification requirements

If you are installing fixed equipment these are the standards you should meet:

Play Equipment and surfacing must meet EN1176 and EN1177, however in addition:

Equipment should be well designed in a suitable location and layout, with consideration taken into account of what happens with inappropriate use of equipment.

Equipment should be suitably installed and a post installation inspection undertaken by a suitably qualified person.



Suitable equipment should be provided appropriate for the age of the intended users.

Maintenance

Where there is fixed equipment as described in 'Specification requirements':

Appropriate maintenance procedures should be put in place as per EN1176 part 7 including routine visual, structural and annual inspections and as per suppliers instructions and site risk assessment.

Insurance and liabilities

Where there is fixed equipment as described in 'Specification requirements':

Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance should be in place for the play area and the inspectors.

Funding

Here you'll find information on some of the key funding sources that may consider funding play park and green space projects in Scotland. These constantly change so we have also included information on a number of 'funder finder' sites which you may find useful.

Remember that you may need to apply to a number of funders and undertake fund raising activity yourselves to get the money together for your project.

The fund raising environment today is extremely competitive and ever moving. It is therefore vital that you have a clearly defined fund raising strategy and know your potential funders needs. The more planning and homework you do the better chance of success.

Don't be put off - funders are often very helpful and will help guide you through an application process. Your local Council of Voluntary Service (CVS) office can offer useful guidance on setting up a community group and applying for funding too. CVS offices within the Highland Council area are listed at the end of this section.

Key Funding Sources

Big Lottery Fund – awards for all Scotland programme. A quick and easy way to apply for small grants of between £300 and £10,000.

Applicants should find out if they've been successful within 8 weeks. The programme will fund a wide range of community projects aimed at addressing issues, needs and aspirations of local communities and people.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Big Lottery Fund – community led activities. This funding aims to support communities to improve to the places they live and the wellbeing of those most in need. Grants between £10,000 - £150,000.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Tesco local community scheme – community greenspace grants. The money raised from the 5p bag charge in Tesco stores in England, Wales and Scotland will be used to pay for a large number of local projects to improve green spaces in communities. Projects that will get the green light as a result of the funding will include building new pocket parks, sports facilities, woodland walks and community gardens.

Administration of the local funding will be managed by the community charity, Groundwork.

www.groundwork.org.uk

Morrison's Foundation - The Morrison's Foundation has been set up to make a positive difference to people living in England, Scotland and Wales. They provide match funding for Morrison's colleagues and offer grants to charities undertaking projects that improve people's lives.

www.morrisonfoundation.com

European Social funds - A searchable database of over 800 EU subsidies for projects of all kinds. Funding covers every area of EU support available so not all sources will be relevant but the database is searchable by theme, organisation type and region to enable organisations to find funding related to their area of work.

www.welcomeurope.com/list-european-funds.html

SITA Trust - Funding is available for projects that make physical improvements to community leisure facilities and historic buildings or structures in qualifying areas. Grants of up to £50,000 are available through the primary fund, and grants of up to £20,000 are available through the smaller projects fund.

www.sitatrust.org.uk



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FCC Scottish Action Fund - The FCC Scottish Action Fund offers funding of between £2,000 and £50,000 to projects through the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund in qualifying areas.

www.wren.org.uk/apply/fcc-scottish-action-fund/apply-online

Co-operative Membership Community Fund - A grants scheme which helps local communities throughout the UK. To be successful, a group must: carry out positive work in the community; and a project must: address a community issue; provide a good long-term benefit to the community; support co-operative values and principles; ideally be innovative in its approach.

www.co-operative.coop/membership/local-communities/community-fund/

Foundation Scotland - Foundation Scotland is an independent charity established to strengthen local communities by providing a source of funding to community led projects the length and breadth of Scotland. The foundation administers and distributes funds including monies paid by some companies under community benefit. The website gives further information on the funds available and how to apply.

www.foundationscotland.org.uk

Bank of Scotland Foundation - The Bank of Scotland Foundation is an independent charity supporting people and their local communities across Scotland. They receive an annual donation of £2m from Lloyds Banking Group to fund Grants Programmes and Matched Giving Programme.

www.bankofscotlandfoundation.org

SSE community funds - Communities can access funds which SSE make available near each of their renewable energy developments. Some funds are distributed by community organisations or via SSE directly.

www.sse.com

Useful funding finder sites

Funding Scotland - This free online search engine can be used to find funding for charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations. Funding Scotland lists small and large grants that support big capital projects, communities and projects in Scotland. Users can search by geographical area, main activities and main beneficiaries. Funding opportunities for individuals or businesses are not listed. This website is owned and maintained by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, the umbrella body for Scotland's third sector.

www.fundingscotland.com

Greenspace Scotland - lists various funding sources for the development of green/open/play space.

www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/funding-sources

Grantnet - GRANTnet is a free on-line search tool which uses filters to identify possible funding sources suitable for your project.



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Alternative approaches

Crowd funding - Crowdfunding is a way to raise money, awareness and support for a project, from the people around you. It's a means of funding that allows individuals to make their ideas a reality with the power of the crowd.

Crowdfunding enables people with great ideas to raise the money they need, in return for 'rewards'. The public can back your idea with pledges of money and project owners can 'thank' their backers with rewards that reflect the money contributed. This could be as simple as sponsorship signage etc.

There are a number of online 'crowd funding' websites e.g. www.crowdfunder.co.uk

On-line retailer donation websites - You register your project (good cause) on the site and retailers pay a sum of money for every purchase that has come via the good cause site to the shoppers' nominated good cause. An example site is www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Help with funding applications

A list of Highland CVS offices can be found on the Highland Third Sector Interface website: www.highlandtsi.org.uk/local-tsi-partners.html

Advice Services

Ward Manager contacts can be found in the Useful Play Documents section of the Play Highland website - www.playhighland.co.uk/useful-play-documents/

Community Services amenities contact: Kelley Hall, 01479 812997

Website links

Community asset transfer guidance

[www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning - long term and area policies/726/community asset transfer](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/726/community_asset_transfer)

Play England 'Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces'

www.playengland.org.uk/resources/design-for-play.aspx

Play England 'How to involve children and young people in developing play spaces'

www.playengland.org.uk/resources/how-to-involve-children-and-young-people-in-designing-and-developing-play-spaces.aspx

Playlink website

www.playlink.org

Scottish Play Strategy Action Plan

www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00437132.pdf <http://www.ltl.org.uk/pdf/LTL-Scottish-Good-Playground1386257083.pdf>

Highland Play Strategy

www.playhighland.files.wordpress.com/2016/03/cc16-46-k-play-highland-play-strategy.pdf



Highland
Children's
Forum

