

## Halton Play Plan 2007 – 2012

*“Play is what I do when everyone else has stopped telling me what to do.”*

Girl, aged 9

# Halton Play Plan Vision and Aim

The **vision** for the Halton Play Plan is:

*To achieve and maintain quality inclusive play and free time activity for all children and young people in Halton.*

The **aim** is:

For the authority, agencies, organisations, residents, children and young people in the Halton area to work effectively together to ensure that all play and free time activities in Halton contribute to the Children's Act 2004 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well being; and contribute to quality of life improvements for the community, particularly children and young people.

The **objectives** are:

- Partnership and co-ordination
- Promote and raise the profile of play
- Access, equality and inclusion
- Maintain, sustain and develop play
- Play training and education
- Managing risk in play

## Foreword

Local authorities can and do have more influence on children & young people's play and free time activities than any other organisation. The daily decisions and actions of the local authority departments, in particular planning, transport, highways, education, leisure, parks, housing, community safety, regeneration and environmental protection, have a major impact on where and how local children and young people are able to play.

Providing positive, well-managed and stimulating places for children to play has always been an important element of Halton's commitment to its children. The Local Authority has always played a leading role in the development of Play. Current provision includes exciting parks and playground provision with a wide range of stimulating and well maintained equipment; the direct delivery of play opportunities through Play Centres; the delivery of the Splash activity scheme in school holidays; supporting the voluntary sector to deliver Holiday Playschemes and operate the Play Resource and Training Centre; and through Early Years and Children's Centres supporting play groups and parent and children sessions,

All children benefit from opportunities to play, but for disadvantaged children it is particularly important. In Halton, ranked 21 out of 354 in the most recent index of deprivation, PLAY can play a vital role in addressing many of the issues that children experience. Access to good play provision benefits children, families and communities and can provide a vital and powerful platform for reducing inequalities and helping young people to reach their potential.

That's why it is so important that opportunities for children to play are a key aspect of the local authorities strategic planning.



The Play Plan will form an important and valuable element of the Children and Young People Plan, contributing significantly to the Every Child Matters agenda.

**Cllr. M. Wright, Executive Board Member (Community), Halton Borough Council**

## Acknowledgements

A large number of people were involved in the development of the *Halton Play Plan* and the Halton Play Partnership would like to thank all who contributed.

Most importantly, the Halton Play Partnership would like to express its thanks to the children, young people and parents, as well as teachers and community workers, at the following schools, youth groups and organisations:

- Halton Youth Parliament
- Halton Youth Bank
- Halton Strategic Partnership
- Children and Young People Alliance Board
- Halton Youth Service
- Stakeholders
- Halton Voluntary Action
- Halton Together
- East Runcorn Open Access Play Centre
- Castlefields Open Access Play Centre
- Norton South Wards Open Access Play Centre
- West Runcorn Open Access Play Centre
- Beechwood Open Access Play Centre
- Chesnut Lodge Special School
- Halton Lodge Children's Centre

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## Summary

- o The **vision** for the Halton Play Plan is:

*To achieve and maintain quality inclusive play and free time activity for all children and young people in Halton.*

- o Welcome to Halton's new Play Plan, the area's first comprehensive review of play. This important document has been created by the Halton Play Partnership, a new body committed to improving play and free time activities for children and young people.
- o The Play Plan is based on an independent assessment of what play and free time activities currently exist in Halton and what facilities and services are likely to be required in the future (see 'Path to Play' diagram on page 7). Most importantly, its development involved over 2000 local children, young people, parents, community members and organisations. The main play and free time issues identified as the top priorities are detailed below:
  - To further develop quality, accessible, value for money play facilities and opportunities in Halton.
  - For the authority to recognise and adopt article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of a child
  - To adopt and support 'The Play Charter' see appendix 5
  - To work to ensure that all current and future provision includes the "Inclusion as a Right" principle and adheres to the statements within 'The Inclusion Charter' see appendix 6

- o The overall **aim** of the Play Plan is...

*To achieve and maintain quality, inclusive play and free time activity for all children and young people in Halton.*

- o This strategy significantly contributes to the all five outcomes in the government's *Every Child Matters* agenda, particularly 'Enjoying and Achieving' by supporting exciting, challenging and safe (though not completely risk-free) play and free time opportunities for children and young people so that within reason, they can do what they want, when they want and where they want.
- o So why is play so important? Play has been shown by experts to be as important to the mental, physical and social development of children and young people as formal education. Improving play and free time opportunities can also help other organisations in Halton fulfil their aims: health professionals have a target to reduce obesity, the police have a target to reduce anti-social behaviour. A robust play plan can contribute to meeting these targets.
- o In one sense it is sad that Halton needs a 'Play Plan'. Surely children and young people when left to their own devices are happy playing and (when older) hanging out, just like their parents, grandparents or carers did when they were young... aren't they? Research shows that what children and young people want is much the same as it was ten, twenty or thirty years ago. But like the country as a whole, increases in traffic, building, negative attitudes towards young people hanging out in public spaces (mostly unfounded) and parents' /carers'

fears for children's safety (also greatly exaggerated), have drastically limited play and free time opportunities.

o However, despite these many challenges, this strategy offers an excellent opportunity to provide a more joined up approach to developing play, which will be further enhanced by an additional £385,828 awarded by the Big Lottery. Below are the **objectives** that the Play Partnership will be working towards over the next few years. These are outlined in more detail in the Action Plan.

- Partnership and co-ordination
- Promote and raise the profile of play
- Access, equality and inclusion
- Maintain, sustain and develop play
- Play training and education
- Managing risk in play

o In order to fulfil these objectives the Play Partnership will be supporting the following play projects:

- An open access play project to be delivered in the 5 children's centres across Halton
- An inclusive project to update existing playground in Victoria Park – Widnes
- A new play area in Town Hall park – Runcorn
- A new play area on Spike Island

o From councillors to parents, chief executives to pensioners, we must remember that quality play and free time is a right, not a luxury. By producing this document, Halton's Play Partnership has created a clear path to develop play and its legacy will be to improve the quality of life for the whole community.

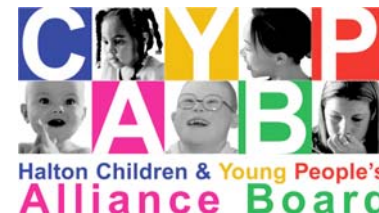


Figure 1: The Path to Play planning process





# 1 What is a 'Play Plan'?

This document sets out what organisations in the Borough will do between 2007 and 2012 to improve the quality of play opportunities<sup>1</sup> for the Borough's children and young people.<sup>2</sup>

Through the approach shown in the 'Path to Play' diagram, particularly the engagement of partners, parents and, most importantly, children and young people, the Halton Play Partnership has developed this Play Plan to work towards improved play across the Borough.

## 1.1 Why does Halton need a Play Plan?

There are a number of important reasons why a Play Plan will benefit the children and young people of Halton, as well as their parents or carers, communities and the many organisations that are trying to improve play opportunities in Halton.



- o The strategy provides a co-ordinated and joined up approach to developing play through prioritised actions based on evidence of need;
- o Because *all* the issues around play for children and young people are properly considered, it means that a more inclusive approach can be adopted rather than just meeting the needs of those who 'shout loudest';
- o By demonstrating that issues of play have been properly considered, it means that agencies such as the council and the voluntary sector can make clear

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<sup>1</sup> The strategy uses the term 'play opportunities' to denote all ways that children and young people play. From this point in the document, play is referred to alongside 'free-time' activities (i.e. those for older children and young people, aged 12 to 19).

<sup>2</sup> In line with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the term child is mainly used in this strategy to refer to anyone under the age of eighteen. However, the meaning of the phrase young people will be evident by its context.

allocations of finances or staff to make the actions happen;

- o Fourthly, this hard evidence approach provides the basis for bids to organisations such as the Big Lottery, trusts and charities for further funding;
- o Fifthly, a Play Plan is essential in helping deliver many of the government's *Every Child Matters* targets while raising the value and importance of play locally, and
- o Finally, under planning legislation, the evidence of 'play need' gathered for the Play Plan can be used to negotiate with property developers to provide improved play spaces when they are granted planning permission for developments such as housing estates, town centre regeneration etc..
- o A play strategy will either strengthen or inform the links to other Borough plans e.g. economic development, health, education, transport.

## 2 Who is responsible for the Play Plan?

### 2.1 Background

The *Halton Play Plan* has been developed in consultation with children, young people, partners and carers within the wider community, by a range of organisations that together form the Halton Play Partnership. The Play Partnership will remain after the plan is launched although there will be a core membership, new colleagues will be co-opted as necessary. The Play Partnership will take forward the Play Plan.

The sections below highlight the role of the Play Partnership and its responsibilities.

### 2.2 The Play Partnership

The Play Partnership is made up of statutory, voluntary and other organisations that have active involvement in children and young people's play and free time. The Partnership's membership will be reviewed during the delivery of the *Halton Play Plan*. Appendix 1 details the founding membership of the Partnership and exactly how the Partnership will operate (including Terms of Reference).

The Play Partnership members must have a working knowledge and understanding of children and young people's play / free time activities and be committed to ensuring that best play needs are met.

### 2.3 The Play Partnership Commitment:

To deliver the Play Plan, the Halton Play Partnership will:

- Recognise play as playing a key role in the outcomes of the **Every Child Matters** agenda;
- Ensure that play significantly contributes to the healthy of development of all our children; **Socially, Physically, Intellectually, Culturally and Emotionally**;
- Recognise play as an equal partner in the family of local authority services; and
- Further develop quality, accessible, value for money play facilities and opportunities in Halton.

In addition to the Vision, Aims and Objectives of this strategy, the Play Partnership have agreed to adopt the Play Charter (see Appendix 5) and the Inclusion Charter (see Appendix 6)

## 2.4 Quality: Monitoring and evaluation

The Play Partnership are committed to develop, monitor, review and evaluate the Play Plan and associated action plan, ensuring delivery of targets.

The success of the Play Partnership and its plan will be measured by consulting with children and young people, parents, community sector groups and partners. The surveys carried out as part of the consultation for this strategy will be carried out at regular intervals over the life of the strategy to demonstrate progress.

Performance will be monitored through existing Council and Partners' Performance Monitoring Systems.

All projects carried out as part of the strategy will include evaluation and demonstration of impact.

## 2.5 Managing risk in play provision

The need for risk in play is essential to ensure that young people experience play value and grow their physical and social skills. There has been much debate on providing risk in play due to fears of litigation. The Health and Safety Executive has provided the following position statement to be followed by play providers, including the council:

"We consider Managing Risks in Play Provision to be an important document that will contribute to the debate on the provision of children's play. It articulates the balance between the benefit and the need for children to play against the duty of play providers to provide safe play. We must not lose sight of the important developmental role of play for

children in the pursuit of the unachievable goal of absolute safety. It makes clear that safety must be considered at all stages of play provision but that, inevitably, there will be risk of injury when children play, as there is risk of injury in life generally. The important message is though that there must be freedom from unacceptable risk of life-threatening or permanently disabling injury in play."

Health and Safety Executive

## 2.6 Safeguarding: The role and responsibilities of the Play Partnership

Halton Safeguarding Children Board is a statutory body consisting of agencies and professionals responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people across the Borough.

The agencies include Health, Social care, Education, the Police, Probation, Connexions, the NSPCC, Youth Offending Service, CAF/CASS, Community Services and voluntary or independent organisations that work with children and young people. A parent representative also sits on the board.

Safeguarding children and young people is not the sole responsibility of the Safeguarding Children Board, or the professionals who care for children. Safeguarding children is **everyone's** business.

The Halton Play Plan and Play Partnership will work with the Safeguarding Board to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people across the Borough.

### 3 What is play and what are the benefits of play?

#### 3.1 What is play?

*[Every child has the right] 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.<sup>3</sup>*

The right to play is considered so important to the development of children and young people that the United Nations included the previous statement in its *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

The leading UK body on play, the Children's Play Council, defines play as...

*What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way and for their own reasons.<sup>4</sup>*

The Joint National Committee on Training for Playwork describes play as follows:

*Play is an innate drive and is essential for human development. It is manifested as behavior that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. The value of play derives from the play process itself, not from any extrinsic goal, reward or end product. Play is often spontaneous and*

*unpredictable. Through play children experience their world and their relationship with it.<sup>5</sup>*

It is this self directed 'free-play' that the action plan seeks to facilitate in Halton.

Definitions of play do not normally include organised sport. However, play activities (e.g. kicking a ball about on local open space) may lead into positive outcomes offered by formalised sport activities.

Play is also important because it allows those children and young people who are not sporting or innately competitive to gain exercise and develop physically and socially.

Often, play is thought of as something for younger children, perhaps for 'toddlers' aged between 0 and 5 year to 'juniors' aged 6 to 10. However, play is for all, and the *Halton Play Plan* focuses on 0-19 year olds:

*Children and young people of all ages play. As they get older the words they use to describe their activities change and they tend to use terms, which describe specific activities rather than the generic term 'play'. The term 'play' is used to include the free-time activities of children and young people.<sup>6</sup>*

For older children or 'seniors' between 11 and 14 or 'young people' aged 15 to 19,<sup>7</sup> 'play' is not something they necessarily think of or want to be associated with. Play is 'uncool', something that 'younger kids

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations 1971 *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Department of Culture, Media and Sport 2004 *Getting Serious About Play?*

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<sup>5</sup> Joint National Committee on Training for Playwork 2003 *Charter for Playwork Education and Qualification*

<sup>6</sup> Cole-Hamilton I & Gill T 2002 *Making the Case for Play*

<sup>7</sup> There is considerable debate over what age children might naturally fall into specific types of play activities. These age bands are used solely for guidance, and are not definitive.

do', often with their parents. However, seniors and young people have their own types of play, including hanging out, skating and watching bands (i.e. 'free-time').

Play is also often thought of in terms of 'fixed play equipment' such as swings and roundabouts. But important though these are, play is, and can be so much more than this. It can be skateboarding (which is considered a sport by Sport England but is often seen as play by skaters), climbing trees, attending a play scheme or messing about in the park.

It is important that this strategy broadens community and support agencies' views of what is *valid* play. The research for this Play Plan (See Section 6) showed that the range of play and free-time activities and their value was not understood by many parents and agencies and the action plan at the rear of this strategy seeks to address this (see section 8).

## 3.2 Play Types

Having outlined the wide-ranging approach to play that the Halton Play Partnership wishes to take, the following section provides the definitions of the different play types that were integral to the development of the Play Plan and will guide its implementation.

There are acknowledged to be 16 play types that provide people working in the field of play a common language for describing play. The full list can be found in Appendix 3. The types of play described here are the key definitions used by the Play Partnership.

### 3.2.1 Play 'opportunities' and 'provision'

Play *opportunities* refer to situations and environments where children and young people *choose* to play. This can include places or locations intended (see play 'provision' below) or *not* intended for play and which may be safe or unsafe. An example of play *opportunities* outside of official play *provision* includes skateboarding near a shopping centre (probably moderate risk, but often not accepted by shoppers or the centre owners).

Play *provision* refers to play opportunities that take place in settings, which have been specifically designated or planned by adults (and hopefully increasingly in conjunction with children and young people) for this purpose. In recent years this provision has often been in response to an erosion of 'natural' play opportunities due to fear, a risk adverse society and the dominance of traffic.<sup>8</sup> Play *provision* can be indoor or outdoor, staffed or un-staffed, with or without equipment, static or mobile and free or charging.

### 3.2.2 Play 'spaces' and play 'schemes'

For the purposes of understanding what play exists in Halton and what is needed, play *opportunities* are divided into two types - play *schemes* and play *spaces*. *Schemes* are play *provision* that are time bound and organised in some way, such as after school clubs or holiday splash schemes. Play *spaces* are any locations which are used by children or young

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<sup>8</sup> Worpole K 2002 *No Particular Place to Go*

people to play regardless of whether it is designed to be a 'play' space, e.g. this could be a neighbourhood play area for toddlers, or it could be a bus shelter that teenagers hang out in after school.

### 3.2.3 'Structured' and 'unstructured' play

Play *provision* may be *structured* or *unstructured*.

**Structured** play are those practices that are guided by rules or conventions, or where children and young people are led through a 'play' or 'free-time' activity by an adult. *Structured* play is usually supervised.

Some play experts argue that there is too much *structured* play (often due to parents' concerns about safety or achievement) and not enough **unstructured** free play, which develop different social and physical skills. This Play Plan supports free play actions when possible, but also addresses the popularity of structured play with children and young people, their parents, the wider community and agencies of Halton.

*Unstructured* play is, by definition, where there are no rules or conventions e.g. tree climbing. This is usually unsupervised, but not always, e.g. an after school club with a play worker may still be unstructured because there are a large number of 'free play' activities (e.g. playing with building bricks) and a child can choose from a number of activities without leadership from the play worker running the activity.

### 3.2.4 'Supervised' and 'unsupervised' play

Play can be *supervised* or *unsupervised*.

**Unsupervised** is self-explanatory. **Supervised** play may take a number of forms. This could include an after-school club where the supervision is mainly about the safety provided by an adult's presence. It

may also refer to 'grey' areas of play provision such as a workshop where an arts development worker guides children to create a finished product, e.g. a sculpture. Some play specialists would argue that this type of activity, like structured play noted above, is not true 'free play' e.g. freely chosen by the child or young person (see below).

### 3.2.5 'Free to play' and 'pay to play'

This strategy concentrates on play / free-time opportunities that are '**freely chosen**', '**free to access**' and '**free to come and go**' (what is often known as the 'three frees'). This is in line with the thinking from play professionals, funding bodies such as the Big Lottery and government policy. That is, if play provision is to be inclusive, then a sufficient amount of it, which should be of ever increasing quality, must be provided free of charge. However, the strategy does not exclude 'pay to play' provision because at present, virtually all play *schemes* in the Borough have a (subsidised) entry fee. Likewise, there may be opportunities to work with those owners of 'pay to play' play schemes and spaces to provide free or substantially reduced cost provision, perhaps providing this through extended schools.

## 3.3 The benefits of play

This Play Plan will demonstrate that it should be enough to justify investing in play, simply because children and young people enjoy it, even though it does not produce easily 'measurable' outputs.

There is a very strong case to be made for the social, cultural and economic value of play / free time. It can help other aspects of children and young people's development, such as their mental and physical health, formal learning and their ability to relate to other children, young people and adults.

By communicating these benefits to partner organisations, these partners can better understand how play / free time helps them achieve their own organisational goals (e.g. tackling crime, reducing obesity etc.). Equally for the authority the contribution that play makes to meeting the Every Child Matters five outcomes is of significant value. See appendix 4. Therefore development of the Play Partnership will be key to the long-term sustainability of improving play in the Borough (see Action Point 1).

Below are some of the major benefits that children and young people, as well as society as a whole, can receive from investing in play and free-time activities. These assertions are taken from academic studies and can be used in the *Halton Play Promotion Plan* referred to in the action.

- Play and free time develops informed risk-taking behaviour and creativity which serves children well in later life;
- *Play and free time improves mental and physical health*, and can play a notable part in addressing issues of obesity;
- *Play and free time fosters social inclusion* by allowing children and young people of different backgrounds to interact as equals;

- *Play and free time gives children and young people the chance to 'let off steam'*, reducing pressure on schools and family situations;
- *Play and free time can reduce crime and vandalism* by channeling children and young people's energies into positive activities, and
- *Play and free time benefits families and community*, through the creation of social networks and a sense of community.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.4 Summary

Parents often want supervised indoor play for their children, but while this is important, more must be done to communicate the importance of free play in streets, parks and public spaces.

Generally, the evidence suggests that less structured and supervised play / free time opportunities offer equally (if not more) important physical, social and mental benefits to children and young people to structured activities. This 'free play' approach is reinforced throughout this Play Plan and action plan. Actions are particularly sought that allow children and young people to 'play' in their own ways, rather than in ways that adults think they might want. There is a strong emphasis on improving the free play value of existing spaces where children and young people play or would like to play e.g. parks, school playgrounds

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<sup>9</sup> For further details of the original research, see the reference list in the separate Appendices document.

etc. rather than providing more supervised or highly structured play.

Draft 1



## 4 How does the Play Plan fit with other plans?

Having established how important play is, and how the benefits of play can improve the lives of children, young people and the wider community, it is clear that the play agenda is relevant to many different policy areas within local and national strategies and plans. In our objectives we have highlighted partnership and co-ordination as a priority for this strategy and action plan, and therefore it is important to look for the links between the Play Plan and other plans that can bring partnership working and mutual benefit. The following section outlines how key policies and strategies link to the Play Plan, highlighting opportunities for partnership in order to avoid duplication of effort and to maximise the best use of resources for play.

### 4.1 Every Child Matters in Halton

Halton's vision is;

*'A community committed to realising high aspirations, where all children, young people and families are valued and respected and where inclusion and diversity are promoted'.*

**'The ECM: Change for Children** is a national programme underpinned by **The Children Act 2004**. Improving outcomes for children and young people – their health, welfare, education, employment and leisure opportunities for example, and taking into account their wishes and aspirations, can only be achieved by all agencies and organisations working

together valuing diversity and promoting citizenship'. Halton Children & Young People's Plan 2006-2009.

In Halton there are a wide range of agencies providing services for children, young people and their families, and up to now all agencies have produced their own separate plans, which can make it difficult to ensure seamless services with no gaps or duplications. **The Halton Children & Young People's Plan** (2006-2008) is an overarching plan which aims to bring together all agencies and services within Halton changing the way planning and delivery has been done in the past.

The Halton Children & Young People's Plan (2006-2008) under the broad headings of the ECM outcomes sets out a framework for the improvements it intends to make so that children in Halton have a better life.

Existing and improved play spaces and play and free time opportunities can contribute to all five of the ECM outcomes. Plays' contribution to these outcomes is considered more fully in Appendix 6.

Consultation carried out in 2005 for the Children and Young People's Plan highlighted two priorities that the residents of Halton want, and the Play Plan can deliver. These are:

- Improved services for young people and better co-ordination of services
- Better access to services and facilities for disabled children and young people

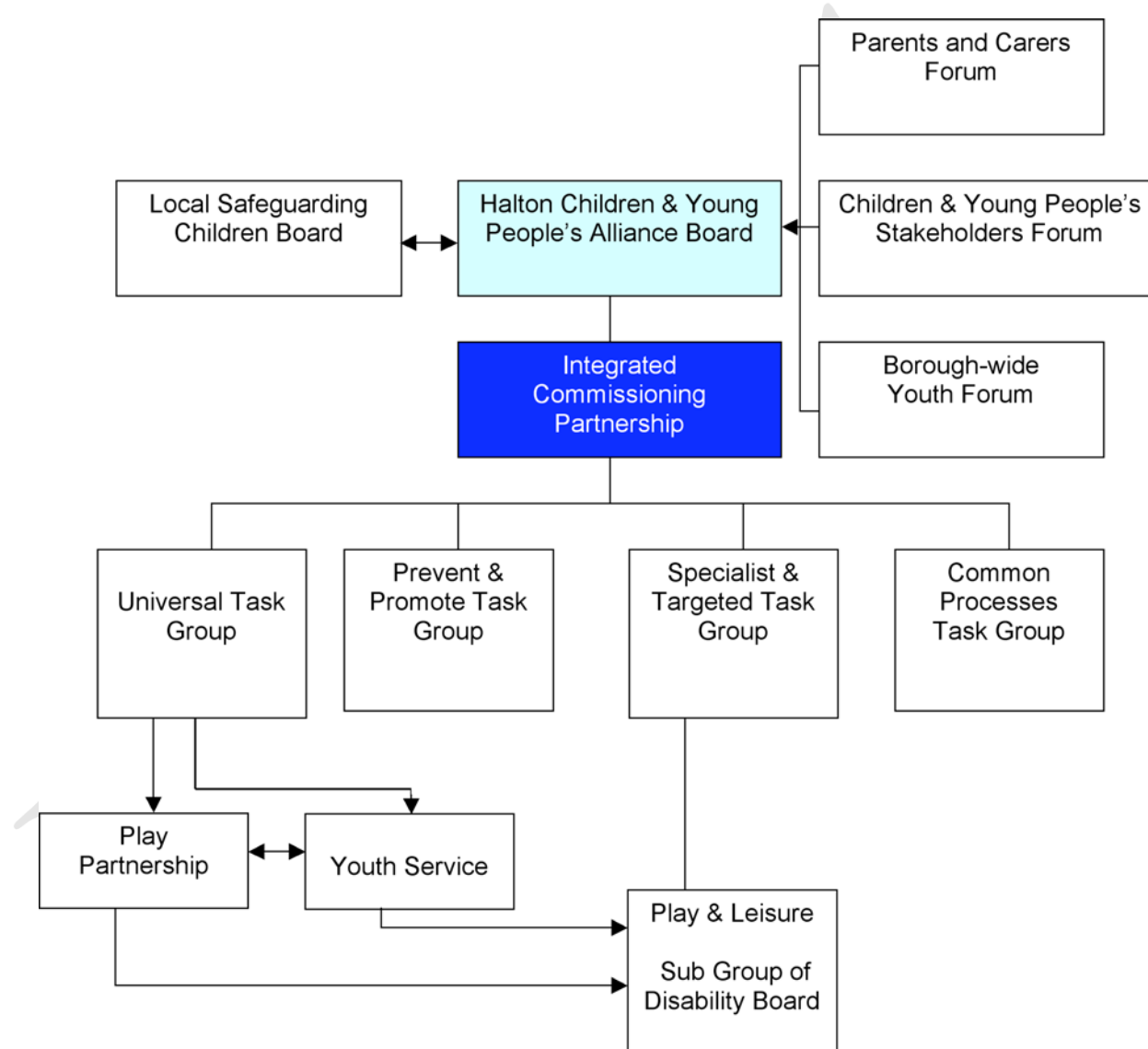
These findings are consistent with the consultation carried out in developing the Play Plan.

The responsibility for overseeing the various action plans lies with the Task Groups of the Children &

Young People's Alliance Board; the Play Plan is a key element of the Universal Task Group (see CYPSPS) plan.

Draft 1

The Alliance Board Structure can be illustrated as:



## 4.2 Children's Centres and Extended Schools

Children's centres and extended schools are major government initiatives, which share complimentary objectives with the Play Plan. The aims and activities of the Play Plan contribute to the children's centres and extended schools agenda and vice versa.

Halton has committed to delivering services for children and young people aged 0 – 19 through the Borough's network of children's centres.

Children's centres and extended schools in Halton are co-ordinated through 5 area networks covering the Borough. Each of these networks already employ a 'Play Development Officer' primarily working with the 0 – 5 age group, and are developing links with Connexions to deliver 'youth service activities'.

The Play Plan will work with the area networks to identify need and opportunities for play. In particular the strategy will seek to promote delivery of activities/opportunities with the 5–13 year age group ensuring a continuation of services. See Objective 1 in the Action Plan.

## 4.3 Community Strategy

The Community Strategy is the overarching strategy for Halton. It sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. In particular, it identifies the need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes:

- A Healthy Halton - To create a healthier community and work to promote well-being - a positive experience of life with good health.
- Halton's Urban Renewal - To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible Borough.
- Halton's Children and Young People - To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy.
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton - To create an economically prosperous Borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth.
- A Safer Halton - To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from facts and figures about conditions in Halton. They underpin the overall vision for Halton, which is:

*Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.*

The Community Strategy is key, and provides a framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of all the partners can contribute.

### **4.3.1 Local Area Agreement**

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement, based on our Community Strategy that sets out the priorities for Halton agreed between Central Government and the Halton Strategic Partnership. It provides the framework for improving service delivery in Halton. LAAs relax central government constraints and allow better decision-making at local level. Greater freedoms provide the opportunity to think innovatively and develop new solutions to local priorities.

It provides a tool for the Halton Strategic Partnership to develop its strategic leadership role and to tackle some of the big crosscutting challenges that Halton faces.

The LAA provides a mechanism by which key elements of the strategy can be delivered over the next three years. It can do this by helping to refocus current activity and drive concerted actions on key challenges, neighbourhoods and target beneficiaries. In particular it specifically highlights a focus on four intractable issues – anti-social behaviour, alcohol harm, skills and liveability – and on the three neighbourhood management areas.

### **4.3.2 Local Development Framework / Local Plan**

The Halton Unitary Development Plan recognises the value of amenity and play space. It includes a number of commitments on enhancing facilities to help children develop. The emerging Local Development Framework recognises the need for quality spaces required for children and young people. The core strategy is currently being drafted and follows the

spirit of the new Planning and Policy Guidance that places are for people and that people make places. This is already set out in the supplementary planning document on open spaces in Halton.

### **4.3.3 Section 106**

The planning obligation Section 106 is the means by which a developer can contribute towards the provision of infrastructure and services associated with a proposed housing development. The Halton Play Partnership will work to ensure that Section 106 monies are fully utilised to develop appropriate play provision within new housing developments in the future. See Objective 4 Action Point 6

### **4.3.4 Partnerships & Engagement**

In Halton the most significant partnership is the Halton Strategic Partnership. This brings together the key public sector bodies alongside the community, voluntary and business sectors. The Partnership exists to tackle issues that matter most to local people such as crime, jobs, education, health and housing. Five thematic operational partnerships and a performance management group support the overall strategic board. A small number of more specialised partnerships underpin this. The whole governance structure has been rationalised, reviewed and refreshed in a major change process decided by partners. At all levels of the partnership the voluntary and community sector play an important role. Through the Council for Voluntary services (Halton Voluntary Action) and the Community Empowerment Network (Halton Together) there is significant input into the

development and implementation of policies, programmes and processes.

Our priority is to ensure that we constantly maintain the relationships both internally and externally which help us target the needs of local people and that we deploy and use them to the best effect.

Children & Young People - The multi-agency Children and Young People's Alliance Board functions as the Children's Trust Board. It holds responsibility for developing joint measures and local performance indicators for improving outcomes for children and young people, delivering against the Children and Young People's Plan, driving the development of children's mini-trusts and the joint commissioning of services from pooled and aligned budgets. The Alliance Board is supported by four task groups, plus the Safeguarding Children Board and the Children and Young People's Commissioning Partnership.

#### **4.3.5 How Play helps to deliver the Halton Strategic Themes and vice versa**

As part of the formal Children and Young People's Alliance Boards reporting structure, the Play Partnership and play can make a contribution to Halton's five strategic themes.

Play activity and opportunities make a positive contribution to the health of our children and young people (see appendix 3) not just physical health, but their emotional and mental health.

Play facilities and the opportunities they offer contribute to the Authority providing a pleasant and safe environment where children and young people can enjoy their childhood.

The development of play facilities and opportunities can support urban renewal and good play facilities are a key element of new or regenerated residential developments. E.g. the positive impact that the Phoenix Park has had on the regeneration of Castlefields.

**Play facilities and opportunities have a role to play if achieving the authority's Five Strategic Themes and can help to bring about real improvements for the lives of our children and young people**

#### **4.4 Summary**

For the Play Plan to make an impact in Halton it is crucial that there is a strategic fit between the objectives and actions within the Plan and the priorities for Halton as set out in the other strategies such as the Community Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan. Clearly the Play Plan has a lot to give to the whole community and can contribute to many of the local and national agendas. Now that we have discussed the strategic background to the Play Plan, it is important to look at the local context, the people of Halton and what the children and young people of Halton want for play and free time in the future.

## 5 The local context: Children in Halton.

### 5.1 Background

Understanding where children and young people are in the Borough and what their social background is, is essential to inform how to make the best use of resources.

Halton Borough Council was formed in 1974 following a major re-organisation of Local Government throughout the UK, and combined Widnes from Lancashire, Runcorn from Cheshire and four surrounding villages together for the first time. It is located astride the banks of the River Mersey some ten miles upriver from Liverpool, with a population of 118,400.

From modest settlements either side of the Mersey Runcorn and Widnes developed rapidly during the industrial revolution with growth of the chemical industry on both North and South banks of the Mersey.

Runcorn was designated in New Town in 1964 and development over the next twenty years contributed significantly to population growth, large numbers of people relocating to Runcorn from Liverpool.

Following the decline and need for less labour in the chemical industry and other large employers such as Fords at Halewood on the Borough boundary resulted in unemployment in Halton being above the national average. Over the past 10 years Halton has seen significant regeneration with redevelopment of retail centres and the creation of many new employment areas. Halton's location in the middle of the North

West motorway network makes it an attractive location particularly for companies in the service and distribution sectors.

The quality of life of Halton's residents has improved. In the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Halton had dropped from 16th to 21st most deprived Local Authority District. Through a range of targeted initiatives, levels of health have improved, fear of crime has decreased, the poor environment has been tackled and new opportunities created for children, young people and adults. Although deprivation is widespread across Halton, there is significant variation across wards. Half of Halton's population lives in the top quartile (20%) of Super Output Areas nationally – that is 39 out of the 79 SOA's in Halton. The highest ranking SOA in Halton for overall deprivation is the southern part of Kingsway ward (ranked 193<sup>rd</sup> nationally). The remaining top 5 SOA's are in Runcorn, 2 within Windmill Hill making it the highest-ranking ward for deprivation. Altogether there are 6 SOA's in Halton that are ranked in the top 1000 SOA's in England and 10 in the top 4% nationally.

Factors influencing the level of deprivation include child poverty, high child and lone parent populations, high health deprivation and teenage conception rates, high levels of recorded crime, domestic violence, alcohol abuse and drug incidences. The 2004 domain with the highest deprivation is health. Compared to many other Boroughs, Halton has high levels of health deprivation, prevalence of mental health needs and levels of dependent children under 18 in lone parent families. Demand for family support services to support these vulnerable groups and communities is

high particularly in areas where a combination of actors have contributed to high levels of deprivation.

32,215 people living in Halton were under 19 years (2001). However, the children's population of Halton (aged 0-19) is projected to decrease by 15% over the next 10 years. Although unemployment has fallen by 60% since 1997, youth unemployment (16-24) accounts for one third the unemployed within Halton.

More children under 16 years live in Runcorn than in Widnes although there are 5 cross boundary areas where concentration is high:

- North of Norton Ward
- Brookvale, Palacefields and the south of Murdishaw ward
- South of Heath ward
- South of Halton Brook ward and east of Grange ward
- North of riverside, south of Kingsway and west of Broadheath wards

In 2001 there was a total of 1251 children with disabilities living in Halton. In addition, 439 children up to the age of 16 years were referred to Halton Tier 3 CAMH service in 2001.

The proportion of people in Halton coming from an ethnic minority group is relatively low compared with most other local authorities (1.21% of the total population see appendix X for full breakdown)\*

Over the past years this population has been gradually increasing particularly in the past two years with a growing Polish population.

Throughout the development of the Play Plan, children, young people and parents of all backgrounds as well as non-disabled and disabled have been involved. During its implementation this will continue to be the case. See Objective 1 Action Point 1.





## **6 Current play provision and future need**

### **6.1 Introduction**

It is important to acknowledge that while the *Halton Play Plan* must seek to improve play depth and quality for all children and young people in the Borough, it is unrealistic that this can all be done at the same time. Therefore, to ensure financial and organisational resources are directed at the geographical areas and social groups most in need of play improvement, a 'needs analysis' was undertaken.

This included identifying what existing research and consultation was available to avoid duplication and then filling any gaps with new research. Because little research into play needs existed previously in Halton, a comprehensive consultation programme was undertaken.

Children, parents, young people as well as Play Partnership members were all asked what play / free-time opportunities currently existed, what was needed and what were the barriers to making change happen. It draws on an audit and mapping of existing play provision including parks, play spaces, play schemes, play centres, play groups and other key settings. Informal play space forms an important element in most children's play provision and the mapping of this will be key priority in the Children's Play Plan. Together these will give a full picture of the play situation in Halton and will inform both the Play Plan and any future developments.

The results of the audit of play facilities and the consultation were analysed and presented back to the Play Partnership for members, firstly to prioritise what they thought the greatest needs were and secondly to generate 'play project ideas' that could be used in the action.

These project ideas were then 'reality checked' with all stakeholders consulted to make sure they matched the identified needs and aspirations, the feasibility and sustainability of the proposals were also checked with relevant parties.

As well as helping the Play Partnership to develop project ideas, the results of the audit and consultation were used to produce the vision, aim and objectives for the Play Plan, which means that the needs of the public are met strategically as well as practically through the projects. The action plan was formed as a direct response to the needs identified in the audit and consultation.

The following sections outline the main findings of the audit of current provision, and the consultation.

### **6.2 Current Provision**

Halton Play Partnership gave careful consideration as to the remit of the Audit of Play it was to carry out. It concluded that the Audits brief should be to include resources/opportunities, which would meet;

- The Big Lottery definition of Play
- Local parents and children's definition of play facilities

- Accessible play for children 0-16

Halton has a proud tradition of providing for the children and young people in the Borough as a direct provider, in partnership with the voluntary sector or through providing funding and resources to the voluntary sector.

Because of the history of Halton, and the nationally recognised excellent standard of the local authority, provision for children and young people in the Borough is of an exceptionally high standard. Halton Borough Council and its partners in the voluntary sector are very proud of its achievements. The results of the audit showed that play provision is comprehensive, high quality, well used and valued by the community. However, there are always some gaps and areas of need that should become priorities to ensure that resources are targeted in a way that ensures that every child and young person in Halton can benefit from this excellent provision.

### 6.2.1 Play success stories:

- A wealth of parks and open spaces pro-actively maintained to a high quality, most recently recognised by being awarded the coveted 'Green Flag' standard. All wards have access to modern well-equipped and maintained local playgrounds. The Playgrounds and play equipment within the parks has benefited over the past 5 years from an annual capital programme of £65,000 pa and this programme is due to continue until 2010. Additional capital funding has been secured to compliment this investment from, SRB, NRF, ERDF, Sure Start, WREN and Heritage Lottery Fund grants to restore/upgrade Victoria and Hale

parks. This is epitomised by the recently developed 'Phoenix Park' in Castlefields (one of the Boroughs most deprived wards).

'Phoenix Park' provides an extensive high quality 'playground', multi-use games area, skateboard park, climbing boulder and youth pod. The site is overseen managed through both the Landscape Division and the Park Ranger Service who's base is an integral element of the park

- A dynamic Culture and Leisure department who make a significant contribution through; Park Ranger Service (who whilst having a broad job description, regularly act as 'Play Rangers' by nature of the opportunities they offer); Arts and Sports Development Teams offering a broad range of activities directed at Children and Young People e.g. Drama, Music, Sports Activities/Coaching etc; Libraries who regularly organise a range of activities for children and young people (particularly in the school holidays).

Of particular note and relevance to the Audit is the 'Splash' scheme which provides both; a wide range of free activity opportunities Borough wide throughout school holidays and free use of all the authority's parks (tennis, putting, bowling etc) and free swimming



sessions at all the local leisure centres.

- For 0-5 year olds there is excellent provision; in the form of a large number of playgroups located throughout the Borough; developing provision through the Boroughs 9 new and 3 developing children's centres; most of which have newly constructed outdoor play areas for children 0-5, offering come & play activities, parent & child groups, toy libraries etc.
- For 5-12 year olds the Play Section operates 3 purpose built Playcentres offering open access play (however this service is not offered Borough wide) opportunities year round. The Play Section also works in partnership with Halton Play Council (Voluntary Sector). The Play Council operates a play resource centre, a multi-functional centre offering a retail side selling bulk bought and scrounged play resources, equipment hire, and a toy library. The Play Council is a 'CACHE' registered training centre delivering 'Take 5 for Play' and Level 2/Level 3 CACHE Play awards it also organises or directly delivers a range of other training opportunities to the play and childcare sector. The Play Council in partnership with the Borough organise Holiday Playschemes throughout the Borough during school holidays. A number of these schemes include as partners Barnados and a local Special School enabling the availability of access for all children regardless of their needs. The Play Council also deliver a range of commissioned services or projects including currently a 'Out of School' Project for children and young people with additional needs.

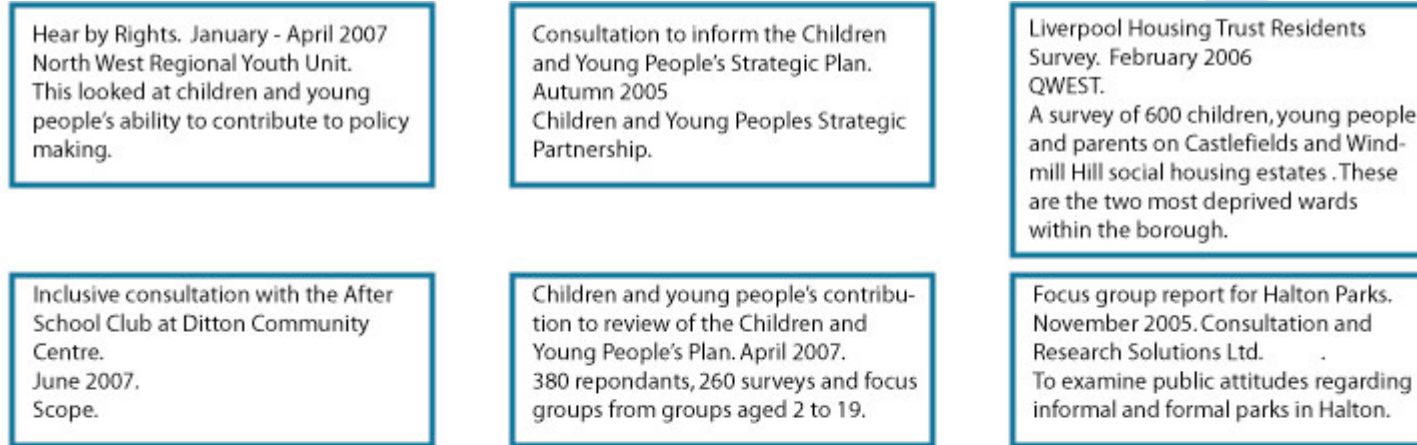
- For 13-19 year olds there is the Youth Service offering universal provision throughout the Borough with a youth facility within a maximum of 1 mile of every young persons home as well as targeted groups for young people who are disabled, homeless, Lesbian Y Gay, young carers, vulnerable young women amongst others. This is often delivered in creative ways e.g. one of the Boroughs more Rural communities is served by funding a Youth Service from a Canal Barge belonging to the local 'Canal Boat Adventure Project'.
- The Youth Service has an excellent record of engaging and consulting with young people, affording Halton's young people the opportunity to contribute to the development of Children and Young People's services within the authority and on issues that concern them throughout the Borough. The development of the Youth VOICE! Where 6300 11 to 18 year olds voted for their Youth Cabinet and Member of Youth Parliament is one of their notable achievements.
- Halton is fortunate in having a vibrant voluntary sector providing services to children and young people including, uniformed youth organisations, sports groups (youth football, rugby, hockey, gymnastics, basketball, trampoline, swimming clubs etc) arts groups (music, drama, dance etc). whilst not considered as part of the audit they none the less make a significant and invaluable contribution to the 'free time' leisure opportunities of the Boroughs children and young people.

Having such a wealth of resources is of no value if people cannot access them. A new initiative to

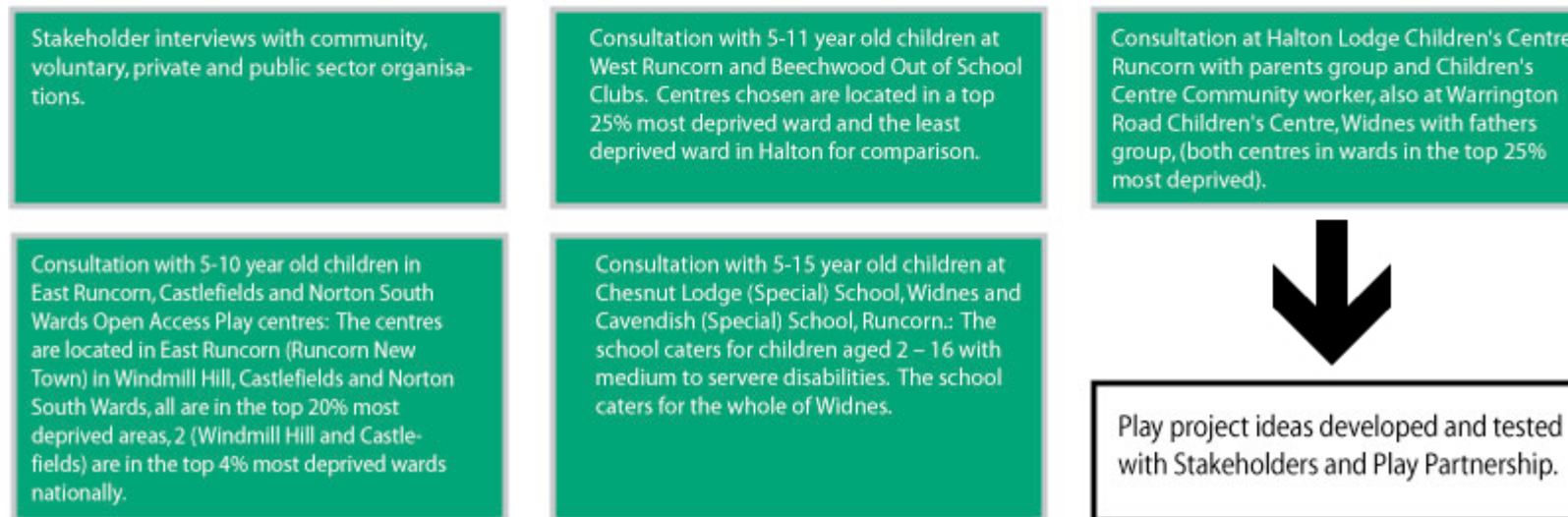
address this is the introduction of the Halton Explorer a fully accessible coach operated by Halton Community Transport with subsidised fares e.g. £3.00 per day will take a family to all the major parks and attractions in Halton or 50p a day for children and young people. It operates Sundays and Bank Holiday through the summer months.

Draft 1

### 6.3 How did we find the need:



The existing consultation above was analysed, gaps identified and further consultation carried out.



**Figure 2: Halton Borough Council Consultation Diagram**

## **6.4 Consultation undertaken for the Halton Play Plan 2007 – 2012: Priorities and areas of need**

Full details of the consultation above can be found in Appendix 6.

### **6.4.1 Somewhere to go, something to do for the 5 to 12 age group.**

The audit of existing services (see maps 7 and 8) demonstrates that there is universal provision for children 0 – 5 and for young people aged 13 and above.

The Halton Early Years Audit demonstrated that there was a pre-school or early education place for every 3 – 4 year old in Halton. Whilst the Youth Service is achieving its target of a Youth Activity Centre within 1 mile of all Young People in the Borough.

(Open Access) supervised play activities for 5-013 year (map 9) demonstrates that whilst there is reasonable universal provision in school holidays (although only for 3-4 year olds in the summer) there is no universal provision year round. What provision there is, is for historical reasons, (New Town Development) located in East Runcorn.

Demand for such provision is demonstrated by the take up of such opportunities when and where they are available.

The consultation process highlighted this lack of provision 'a safe, supervised place to go' for children in this age group was a key output from the interviews with parents groups and stakeholders.

### **6.4.2 Ensure that inclusion is a key element for existing and future play provision.**

Activities organised by Halton Borough Council aim to include the widest range of children and young people, whether they are disabled or non-disabled.

Inclusive play is about making sure disabled children and young people have, wherever possible, the same chances to enjoy play.

This is why talking to children and young people with disabilities as well as their parents and carers is vital. Many parents explained that each type of disability had very specific needs from one to one contact at all times or little supervision during any 'play activity'.

Parents and carers of disabled children mentioned that educating providers of play / free time about the issues and barriers to play that disabled children and young people face on a day to day basis should be addressed.

The Halton Play Partnership will adopt 'The Inclusion Charter' as part of its core principles. See Appendix 6 See Objective 3 Action Point 1

### **6.4.3 To overcome the perceived and real barriers to play and free time activity.**

To overcome the perceived and real barriers to play and free time activity.

The consultation process highlighted a number of real and perceived barriers to children playing.

Children were discouraged from using existing facilities because of their own concerns for their safety from traffic, bullying, strangers (consultation with 5-

10 yr olds). They were also prevented from going to play areas/parks by similar fears from their parents.

Parents interviewed and in the survey of Halton Parks expressed perceived fears for their children's well being whilst they were out playing again bullying and strangers being highlighted, parents also expressed concerns about children coming into contact with drug usage.

Parents and Children expressed more confidence in sites where there was an element of supervision of the Playground e.g. Victoria Park and through parent and children interviews and the halton Parks Survey this concept of supervision/overseeing was a constant theme.

#### **6.4.4 Supervised play must play an essential part in play and free time activity.**

There is overwhelming demand for supervised play defined as supporting play rather than directing or controlling it.

This was highlighted<sup>10</sup> where 61% of residents felt there was a lack of safe child play areas near their homes and more supervision in the parks and open spaces was asked for, highlighting that this would encourage more frequent use of the parks.

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<sup>10</sup> Liverpool Housing Trust Residents Survey and Focus group report, February 2006 and Halton Parks, November 2005

#### **6.4.5 To ensure that play and free time is valued by all.**

Play and free time activity needs the profile raised and addressed in the Children and Young People's Plan in the future.<sup>11</sup>

#### **6.4.6 Communicating the play provision available**

Despite the findings that Halton already has good play provision, there is a significant ignorance of existing play facilities.<sup>12</sup> Currently activities, events and provision are promoted through leaflets, web sites and advertisements, however there is no joined up approach to this. To remedy this situation the Play Partnership will develop a cohesive plan for the communication of play provision. See Objective 1 Action Point 3

#### **6.4.7 Facilities that our children, young people and youth really want**

Through the definition of play it is important that we listen to our young people and give them what they want. One of their clearly expressed wishes is to have more sports activities, after school clubs and fun youth activities<sup>13</sup>.

In July 2006 the Children and Young People's Alliance agreed a Participation Strategy and piloted the 'Hear by Right' Standards with 8 organisations working with 0 – 19 year olds. The launch of Child VOICE! On 2<sup>nd</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Children and young people's contribution to the review of the Children and Young Peoples Plan

<sup>12</sup> Liverpool Housing Trust Residents Survey

May 2007 for the under 11's, followed by the secondment of an under 11's worker to the 0-19 Participation Team in August 2007, will enable PLAY organisations and partners roll out the involvement of the children and young people in decision making within their services and organisations and ensure we are giving children what they need and want in order to play creatively and safely.

Similarly for adults one survey showed that, 9 out of 10 residents wanted more activities for young people, the most popular being somewhere for young people to hang out and 68% of residents felt that there was a lack of leisure facilities near to home. 14

- Events for children and young people in the parks for pre-school and school age.

See Objective 4 in the Action Plan

#### **6.4.8 Care for existing facilities**

With regard to existing parks facilities, consultation<sup>13</sup> identified that people want the local authority to:

- Maintain and develop a range of facilities from play grounds to bowling greens to cater for all ages;
- To keep them clean and tidy;
- Improve access through parking and better public transport;
- Enhance facilities to public toilets;
- Improve inclusive access to footpaths, services and public toilets;
- Involve the park rangers in the use of the parks;
- Promote ownership of parks through schools; and

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<sup>13</sup> Focus group report – Halton Parks, November 2005



## 6.5 Summary

Table 1 below summarises how the development of the Play Plan (The demographics, the 'play audit' and consultation) has influenced and informed both section 8 The Action Plan and the portfolio of projects.

NEEDS	HOW IDENTIFIED	OBJECTIVE	ACTION POINT	Projects
Somewhere to go something to do for the 5-12 age group	Hear by Right Consultation LHT Resident Survey Stakeholder Interviews Parents Interviews Consultation with young people Audit of existing provision	4. Maintain, sustain and develop play	4.2 Review Play Service 4.3 Develop Training 4.3 Develop Projects	Project 4 Open access play project for 5 –12 year olds Projects 2 + 3
Ensure that inclusion is a key element for existing and future play provision	Stakeholder Interviews Play Audit Consultation; Chesnut Lodge, Cavendish, Ditton After School Club	3. Access, equality and inclusion	3.1 Adopt Play Charter 3.2 Play Partnership to link to Play & Leisure Sub-Group 3.3 Capital Project	1 to improve Play Facilities for children with additional needs
To overcome the perceived and real barriers to play and free time activity, and	Consulting with 5 – 10 year olds	1. Partnership and co-ordination	1.2 1.3	All

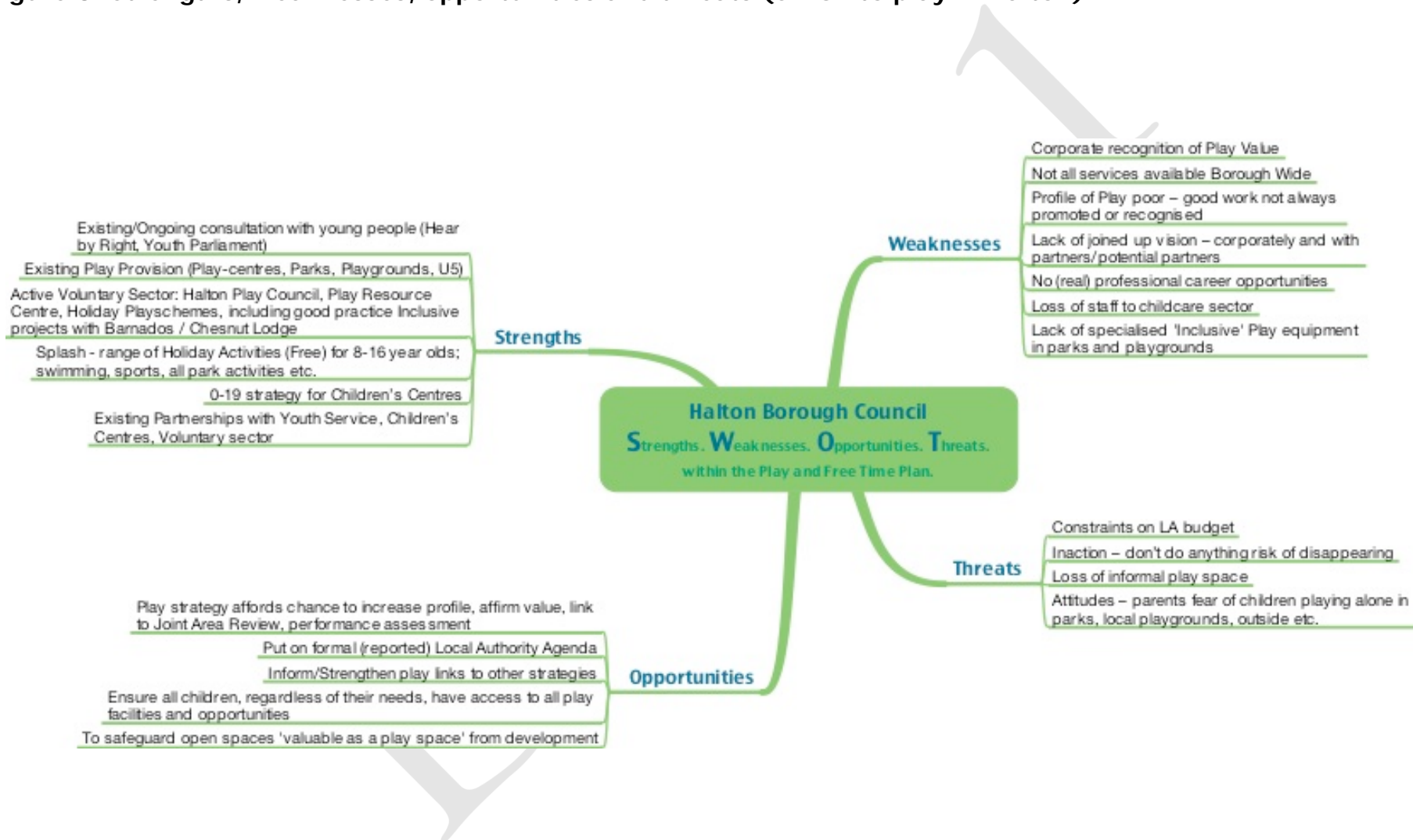
to effectively communicate and promote provision	Halton Parks Survey Parent Survey		6.1	
Supervised play must play an essential part in play and free time activity	Stakeholder Interviews Parent & Children interviews LHT residents survey	4. Maintain, sustain and develop play	4.2 4.3	Project 4 revenue Project 2 + 3
To ensure that play and free time is valued by all	Stakeholder interviews Consultation with Children Consultation to inform Children and Young People Plan	2. Promote and raise the profile of play 1. Partnership and co-ordination	AP2.1 links to Children & Young People alliance Board AP2.2 UN Article 31 AP2.3 Performance Framework AP1.2 Improve co-ordination AP1.3 Promotion	All

## 7 What are the play and free-time priorities?

In order to link the findings of all the previous sections to the action plan, a SWOT analysis was undertaken. The SWOT (see Figure 3) shows in a snapshot, what the strengths of current play and free-time activities in Halton are (and so these can be maintained or expanded); what weaknesses

characterise current provision (so, where possible they can be addressed in the action plan); the opportunities, which can be seized by the Play Partnership partners and the wider community (e.g. to put in funding bids, to change the way we do things now) and the threats, which the action plan must (and does) address if the Play Plan is to be sustainable. Some findings appear in more than one category and these are shown in unique colours.

**Figure 3: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT to play in Halton)**



## 8 Halton Action Plan for Play

The Halton Action Plan for Play has been developed to deliver the Halton Play Plan Vision i.e.

*'To achieve and maintain quality inclusive play and free time activity for all children and young people in Halton'.*

The action plan has further been developed to encompass realistic, achievable, manageable aims taking into account funding and time constraints. The plan has been informed and driven by the following **objectives** identified through the audit and consultation process;

### 8.1 Partnership & co-ordination

The aims of the Play Plan are too broad to be achieved by any one individual agency alone. Furthermore authority good practice requires the fullest participation by partner agencies and service users in developing services, in particular participation by children and young people. The strategy for Play is also linked to a range of other local plans and strategies (see section 4).

For those reasons to successfully realise the aims of the Strategy for Play, strong, effective partnership and co-ordination are essential. The Play Partnership will have direct reporting lines to the Halton Children & Young People's Alliance Board (see diagram P17).

The Play Partnership will under the leadership of the PLAY CHAMPION bring together the key monitor and evaluate action plans and to ensure that the voices of children and young people are listened to.

The Play Plan will develop and co-ordinate the strategy to promotion of the Play Plan, play facilities and play opportunities.

### 8.2 Promote and raise the profile of play

The consultation undertaken to inform the plan highlighted the need (stakeholder interviews) to ensure that the role, value and contribution that play makes is recognised and promoted.

The Play Plan aims to; strengthen and formalise the existing links to the Children and Young Peoples Plan and other key Council Priorities; promote play and children's rights to play through the Authority signing up to United Nations, Article 31, The Right of the Child to Play; by further developing the Halton Performance Management Framework to evidence plays contribution to the Every Child Matters five outcomes.

### 8.3 Access, equality and inclusion

A cornerstone of the Play Plan will be the aim to ensure ALL children have access to a range and variety of play facilities and opportunities; key to this will be the adoption of the Inclusion Charter (appendix) as part of the Play Plan. The portfolio of projects submitted to the Big Lottery Fund includes a specific project to enhance accessibility/inclusion at existing facilities.

### 8.4 Maintain, sustain and develop play

Maintaining sustaining is a key objective of the plan whose aims are; to develop new initiatives including those within the Big Lottery Fund project portfolio; to work in partnership with others to attract other

funding; to identify and preserve (where possible) current informal play space; and to review the authorities existing play service to meet the needs of the Play Plan and emerging linked plans.

## **8.5 Play training and education**

The objectives of sustaining and developing play opportunities and raising the profile of play will be underpinned by the aim to 'develop a local workforce with the appropriate and necessary skills to work with children and young people of all ages and abilities in high quality inclusive play provision.

The Plan will seek to deliver such training not just to those who primarily work in the 'Play Sector' but to a much broader audience e.g. voluntary sector, schools ancillary staff etc with a view to increasing the opportunities for children and young people to enjoy a positive play opportunity.

## **8.6 Managing risk in play**

The Play Plan recognises that within any stimulating and challenging play environment that there is an element of risk involved. Developing an effective policy for managing risk in play, that enables children and young people to take appropriate levels of risk without being in danger, underpins and ensures the ability to provide such an environment.

Obj. 1	PARTICIPATION, CO-ORDINATION, PROMOTION						
	Objective	Action	Who	By When	Outcomes	Links	Resources
AP1	To ensure the fullest participation by all groups working towards the objectives of the Play Plan	Ensure Play Plan is fully representative and includes all sectors and stakeholders including children & young people in its make up	Children & Young People Alliance Board Play Champion Play Services Manager	December 2007	Play development, monitoring and evaluating process will involve all stakeholders	Children & Young People Alliance plans Play Plan Youth Service Plan	Play Resource Centre for Partnership meetings.  Expenses support to ensure young people can attend
AP2	See above	Ensure that all agencies delivering play activities/opportunities co-ordinate their actions with a view to achieving Best Value and maximising benefit to children and young people	Play Partnership Halton Play Council Halton Borough Council Connexions Housing Associations	April 2008	Improved co-ordination Partnership working Maximise resources Joint funding opportunities	Children & Young Peoples Plan Play Plan Youth Services Plan Children's Centre & Extended Schools Plan	Existing – Joint bidding for funding opportunities

AP3	See above	To identify means to promote; the authority's commitment to play; the wealth of play opportunities currently available; any new resources and opportunities provided as a result of the Play Plan	Play Partnership Halton Play Council Halton Borough Council Connexions Direct Link Families Information Service	September 07  Announce Play Plan  Ongoing from October 07	Raised awareness of play and play opportunities  Increased usage of facilities/take up of activities  Better (co-ordinated) information for parents & carers	Play Plan Children & Young Peoples Plan  Corporate Communities Strategy	Existing opportunity for pooled funding  Big Lottery Fund
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<b>Obj. 2 RAISE THE PROFILE OF PLAY</b>							
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Links</b>	<b>Resources</b>
AP1	To ensure that the role, value and contribution that play makes is recognised and promoted	The Play Partnership links to the Children & Young People Alliance Board be formalised	Halton Borough Council	October 2008	The Play Plan will inform and become a key component of the Children & Young Peoples Plan	Children & Young Peoples Plan  Play Plan	Existing

AP2	See above	For Halton Borough Council to consider formally signing up to United Nations Article 31 The right of the Child to Play	Halton Borough Council	December 2008	Confirmation of Halton's commitment to Play & Recreational provision for its Children & Young People	Children & Young Peoples Plan	Existing
AP3	See above	To develop the Halton Performance Management Framework 'Halton Ziggurat' to evidence play's contribution to Every Child Matters 5 outcomes (see appendix)	Play Partnership Play Services Manager	April 2008	A robust process for monitoring, evaluating and recording the contribution to the 5 outcomes will be established.  Develop a data-base of outputs to inform future plans and targets	Play Plan  Children & Young Peoples Plan  Play Plan	Existing

<b>Obj. 3 ACCESS, EQUALITY &amp; INCLUSION</b>							
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Links</b>	<b>Resources</b>
AP1	To ensure ALL children have access to a range and variety of play facilities and opportunities	For the Inclusion Charter to be approved by the Council as a key component of it's Play Plan	Halton Borough Council	September 2007	Access, Quality & Inclusion become a cornerstone of the Play Plan  Play Partnership will monitor with (see below)	Children & Young Peoples Plan  Play Plan	Existing



AP2	See above	For the Play Partnership to be represented on the Play & Leisure Sub-Group of the Disability Board and vice versa	Halton Borough Council  Play Partnership  Play & Leisure Sub-Group	October 2007	Improved co-ordination of activities  Joint monitoring (of play activity) arrangements  Shared expertise/resources	Children & Young Peoples Plan  Play Plan	Existing
AP3	See Above	The portfolio of projects to be submitted to Big Lottery Fund will include a capital project in response to identified need, designed to ensure inclusion of all children in existing facilities	Play Partnership	October 2009 if funding bid successful	Increased opportunity for all children to enjoy inclusive play	Children & Young Peoples Plan  Play Plan	Big Lottery Fund  + Levered external funding

<b>Obj. 4</b>	<b>MAINTAIN/SUSTAIN/DEVELOP</b>						
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Links</b>	<b>Resources</b>

AP1	To continuously review play provision and opportunities for children and young people with a view to; maintaining existing provision to a high standard; sustaining play opportunities; developing new provision (as resources permit) to meet identified need	To continue with the current 'high quality' maintenance plan for existing infrastructure	Halton Borough Council  Housing Associations	Ongoing	Existing provision is safeguarded	Children & Young Peoples Plan  Play Plan	Existing
AP2	See above	To undertake a review of the Council's existing play service in line with the Play Plan and existing and emerging agendas	Project Team to include members of Play Partnership	December 07	The Council's play section structure and delivery mechanisms reflect the need of the Play Plan and other agendas	Play Plan  Children & Young People Plan  Children's Centres & Extended Schools Plan  Government Initiative	Existing + explored funding opportunities

AP3	See above	The portfolio of projects to be submitted to the Big Lottery Fund Play England Programme to include capital and revenue projects which have been identified as a result of the Play Audit/Consultation element of the Plan	Halton Borough Council  Play Partnership  Halton Play Council	September 09	Increased play opportunities for children and young people	Big Lottery Fund  Play Initiatives  And other extended funding	
AP4	See above	The Play Partnership to work with the voluntary sector to identify possible projects which would form the basis of a funding application to Big Lottery Fund, Playful Ideas	Play Partnership  Halton Play Council  Voluntary Sector	December 07	Possible funding bid to Playful Ideas	Play Plan  Big Lottery Fund  Playful Ideas  External Funding Team  Friends of Crow Wood Park  Friends of Town Hall Park	External funding  Playful Ideas

AP5	See above	To ensure that the Play Partnership explores all other potential funding opportunities to develop new or existing play opportunities e.g. Aiming High for young people a ten year strategy for positive activities announced in July 2007	Play Partnership	Ongoing	Increased opportunities for children's play	Play Plan External Funding Team	External funding
AP6	See above	To identify and map (on the open space plan) all 'informal play space' with a view to considering management and safeguarding of	Play Partnership  Halton Borough Council	August 2008	Improved knowledge about use of open space.  Ability to proactively manage or project such space for the benefit of young people	Play Plan  Open Spaces Strategy  Development Plan	Existing  See 106

<b>Obj. 5 PLAY TRAINING &amp; EDUCATION</b>							
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Links</b>	<b>Resources</b>
AP1	To develop a local workforce with the appropriate and necessary skills to work with children and young people of all ages and abilities in high quality	To develop a programme for all existing and future staff to be able to take advantage of play training and education opportunities	Halton Borough Council  Halton Play Council  Riverside	August 2008	Improved access to training for local people interested in working in play.  A skilled workforce who are regularly offered opportunities	Play Plan  Learning & Skills Council  Riverside	Existing pooled resources  Access external funding opportunities

	inclusive play provision		College		of professional development	College	
AP2	See above	To identify opportunities to offer 'play' training opportunities to other sectors who may contribute to improving play outcomes for children and young people	Halton Borough Council Schools C & YPAN Voluntary Sector Youth Service	April 2009	The increased number of local people with skills in delivering play activities.  Increased opportunity for children and young people to enjoy positive play opportunities	Play Plan Community Safety Workforce development	Existing pooled external funding  Commissioned

<b>Obj. 6 MANAGING RISK IN PLAY</b>							
	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Links</b>	<b>Resources</b>
AP1	To recognise that within any stimulating and challenging play environment that there is an element of risk involved, and to develop an	Develop an effective policy for risk in play that enables children and young people to take appropriate levels of risk with out being in danger	Halton Borough Council	December 2008	Stimulating, challenging environments for children's play can be offered within acceptable boundaries of risk	Play Safety Forum  Play Plan	Existing

	effective policy to manage such risk						
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## **9 Who is the Play Plan contact?**

Stuart Duncan

Play Development Officer

Halton Borough Council

Play Resource Centre

10 Mersey Road

Runcorn

WA7 1DE

01928 589534

stuart.duncan@Halton.gov.uk

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