

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>11 SEPTEMBER 2019</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE PLAY TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ROWLAND</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>HEALTH WELL BEING AND SPORT CULTURE, HERITAGE AND RECREATION</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES / CULTURE</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 This report sets out the actions to date of the Accessible Play Task and Finish Group.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

2.1 That the Forum note the progress made

## Accessible Play Task and Finish Group Report to the Access Forum 11 September 2019

### Actions completed

1. A terms of reference for the group has been drawn up (Appendix 1).
2. Information about groups to consult has been circulated between members of the group (Appendix 2).
3. The group has met twice, on 27 and 29 August. Presentations on the research into, manufacturer philosophy behind, and products available for accessible play were made by five playground companies to the group. Notes on each presentation were made by Helen Bryant (Appendix 3). Comments are also expected from Cllr Rowland and from parents who attended the presentations. These will inform proposals for future investment that will be considered by the Task and Finish Group.
4. George Baptiste has completed an evaluation of current sites based on their accessibility. This needs to be treated as a working document, and can be amended as progress is made (Appendix 4).

### Next steps

- Mapping exercise
- Collation of comments on manufacturer presentation in order to create a 'guidelines for investment' document
- Consideration of proposals for investment in play in Palmer Park; budget £100K

These will be considered at the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group, which will be arranged for the second half of September.

## Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for the Accessible Play Task and Finish Group

An “Accessible Play Task and Finish Group” is to be established following a focus workshop held on 26 June 2019 of the Access and Disabilities Working Group. This group will be formulated of parents/carers of disabled children and disabled parents/carers of children who wish to use children’s play areas in Reading. Meetings will be co-chaired by the Lead Member for Culture, Heritage and Recreation and the Chair of the Access and Disabilities Working Group, and will be attended by one or more Council Officers charged with play provision in the Borough. Meetings will be held when at least three parents/carers are able to attend. The group will be tasked with advising the Council during the three-year investment period planned for play improvements in Reading.

The remit of the group will be:

- to ensure the highest possible quality of play provision for children of all abilities;
- to advise the Council on the suitability of accessible play equipment for all ages;
- to work with local charities and community groups who can raise additional funding for specific disabled play resources by making applications for community-led grant funding for which local authorities are not eligible to apply, and to liaise with these groups and RBC on the best way to spend any funds raised in this way;
- to assist with public consultation on play provision.

The remit does not include decisions relating to the spending of public funds, i.e., Council budgets.

The group will work with the Council by assisting with a constructive review of play provision from several angles:

1. A spatial review of play provision for disabled children across the Borough  
This should include a review of where disabled access provision is currently located; if that provision is evenly and fairly distributed throughout the town; and whether it is easy to access. The assessment should also include the possible establishment or retention or improvements of one or more wholly accessible sites within the Borough (e.g. the current ERAPA site in Palmer Park).
2. A list of desirable equipment  
This should include recommendations as to what levels and types of equipment are needed at sites throughout the Borough, including appropriate safety surfacing. This will amount to a list of accessible play equipment that can be consulted by Council officers for inclusion when considering investment in new or existing play areas.
3. A list of exemplar sites in the locality that can be visited
4. Proposals for an appropriate - and practicable - consultation methodology for the accessible needs community

In completing these tasks, a variety of approaches will be used. These may include the following activities/projects:

- Meetings with current play equipment providers to review and discuss the positives and negatives of their accessible equipment designs and to make suggestions for improvements.
- A mapping exercise, noting where accessible equipment and site layouts are across the Borough, and a suggested allocation of where accessible provision might be introduced, improved or expanded within the Borough as a whole. This study will keep in mind the available budgets for such provisions. The completion of this task should form a document of recommendations.
- Actual on-site reviews by children and carers with accessible needs of sites, noting positives and where improvements could be made. A report of these reviews should be fed back to the Task Group.
- Feedback following the installation of any new equipment to ensure continuous learning about what works and does not work.

The group will report on progress to the Disabled Access Working Group at its next meeting in September and at all subsequent meetings until the Group is satisfied that the goals listed above have been maintained.

## Appendix 2: Contacts identified by the Accessible Play Task and Finish Group

Organisation
Reading Family Forum
Peapods
Sensory consortium
Berkshire Autistic Society
Mencap
Parenting Special Children
Dingley
Reading Deaf Centre
Berkshire Vision
Disability community centre

## Appendix 3: Playground Equipment Suppliers - Notes by Helen Bryant

### 1. Wicksteed - Dafydd and Stu

They quoted £75-80K for an inclusive site. (Stormont, I believe). This looked like a really good park.

They mentioned that reach was very important, especially for children using wheelchairs and those who were not very tall.

Tactility was also very important.

There needed to be a wow factor in the park, but not the first thing you came to.

Inclusivity seemed to be covered very well; I hadn't thought about taste being part of a play experience.

They understood that some children needed solitude.

They also understood about transitions between surfaces. I THINK they talked about changes of surface to wheel and walk on, including rumble strips

They had a double wheelchair swing.

They mentioned that the equipment had side panels to add extra interest as you went through your journey.

They pointed out that their equipment lasted a long time.

They said that if you wanted to ensure that toddlers didn't get hurt you had to make sure that they couldn't get on things they shouldn't in the first place.

They had high fences which were not climbable.

I think that this was my joint favourite.

## 2. HAGS - Jilly and Simon

Understood the social model of disability and had equipment that children with certain conditions might benefit from; there was a lot of cross-over with conditions and equipment.

The need for calm play for some children was understood.

Equality did not mean treating everyone the same, and all children were unique.

Both Jilly and Simon had early-years experience, and Simon had a child on the Autistic Spectrum.

There was ongoing training.

They showed that they could provide wide and visible gates.

They showed that they understood that kids need to be cool.

A Mirage Seat might be useful to ensure safety and support, although it would not do for all children.

They held community training events; how to use equipment.

They quoted £200-270K for a 400 sqm park.

### 3. Proludic - Oscar and Danny

They had an understanding of the need for some children to retreat.

They used the term “compensate for disability” which was interesting.

There was an Australian initiative called “Get There, Play, Stay” which should be self-explanatory, but it did show the need for good infrastructure in terms of being able to get there in the first place (roads, pavements etc), play when you’re there with good equipment and stay for as long as you need; including good seating, toilets, etc.

They realised that families with disabled children probably wouldn’t have much money.

They understood that integration was key, but that wheelchair swings would have to be fenced off and locked up with a RADAR key.

I really liked the pirate ship at one park they showed, it was accessible and inclusive. I also liked the sandpit and the seesaw.



#### 4. SutcliffePlay - Andy and Martin

Understood the concept of risk for children - I know of a concept called the dignity of risk - allowing people to do risky things to allow them to learn and develop. Obviously, this concept is not suitable for all children, but as a child who grew up in the 70s using normal play equipment on tarmac it is something that I happen to understand and respect.

The UN Convention did not mention disability, only age.

Inclusivity should be invisible to as to not exclude or single out disabled children. They did not believe in tokenism.

There were no compromises on the challenges that the equipment presented.

There should be a lot of consultation with the children themselves. What do they want and need?

All abilities must be catered for.

Shade is important on very hot days.

They took account of the need for nearby parking and toilets.

Different surfaces are important -and children love sand.

There was a ramp to get close to the sandpit and an accessible deck to take you to the sand. There is also the element of height (this was mentioned in a couple of the presentations and is very important, especially for wheelchair users).

They had a drag ramp - the only company that made one. The chute slide cradled the child so that they felt safe.

Children needed to be encouraged to come out of their wheelchairs if possible.

There should be a playful means of getting off the equipment, if this is possible for the child.

There was a consultation tool - [www.myplayarea.co.uk](http://www.myplayarea.co.uk)

I think this was my second favourite.

Kompan - Alan and Stephen

They had a good knowledge of legislation

There was a research part of the company - the Play Institute that worked with universities.

Children tested the equipment themselves.

They understood the concept of true inclusion.

They did not encourage the use of special equipment such as wheelchair swings.

They described some parts of the equipment as “thrilling play” which is very positive.

They had a good understanding of different textures and other sensory stimulation.

They also had a good understanding of the accessibility of a playground - how to get there, routes, Changing Places facilities etc.

Gates were easily opened from a seated position.

If you were playing on the equipment you had a choice of route.

I really liked the long slide in the Australian play area and the area in Chelmsford.

The Octanet was accessible via a ramp.

Some of the equipment catered for adults too, even adults using power chairs.

Meadowbank in Dorking was a possible place for a site visit.

They introduced some of us to PiPA - Plan Inclusive Play Areas - which was a very thorough checklist. At least one of the playgrounds equipped by them has won a gold award from PiPA and at least one has a bronze.

I think this was my joint favourite.

## Appendix 4: Access and accessibility in Reading's children's play areas

	Site	Can We Get There	Can We Get Around	Is There Anything For Us To Do When We Get There		LAP/LEAP/NEAP
1	125 Basingstoke Road	Bus route & RBC sheltered housing parking	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	LAP
2	Albert Road	Nearby bus route & within walking distance. Car parking facility	Raised retaining boards housing loose fill surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
3	Ambrook Road and MUGA	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users with limited abilities	G	NEAP
4	Amersham Road CPG + MUGA	Bus Route & within walking distance	Level surfacing but site restricted by external knee rail	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
5	Arthur Newberry	Long sloping walk and steep access points Looss fill surfacing	Loose Fill surfacing surfacing	Ramp access to upper sections with limited play abilities for all	R	LEAP
6	Aveley Walk	Walking distance for residents	Level sloping surface	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
7	Avon Place	Walking distance for residents	Level sloping surface	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP
8	Ayrton Senna	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing but with restricted entrance point	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP
9	Beresford Road and MUGA	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Sloping ground to level surfacing	Except for MUGA, not suitable for users with disabilities	R	NEAP
10	Blagrove Road	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Raised retaining boards housing loose fill surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
11	Caleta Close	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	LAP
12	Childrey Way	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	LAP
13	Christchurch Meadows	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Partly level	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
14	Cintra Park CPG MUGA/Outdoor Gym	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Sloping ground to level play area only	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	NEAP
15	Clayfield Skate	Nearby bus route	(level surfacing) ramped activity	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	SKATE
16	Coley Park + Muga + Gym	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Open space perimeter fencing restrict access	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	NEAP
17	Courage Park & MUGA	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Play area not suitable for users with disabilities	R	NEAP
18	Dover Street	Walking distance for residents	Sloping ground to level play area	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP

19	Emmer Green & MUGA	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
20	Hardwick Road	Nearby bus route/small car parking & within walking distance	Raised retaining boards housing loose fill surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
21	Hexham Road	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
22	Hills Meadow Skate	Nearby bus route / paid for parking	(level surfacing)ramped activity	Not suitable for users with disabilities	A	SKATE
23	Ivydene Road (?)	Walking distance for residents	Sloping ground to level play area	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
24	Jimmy Green Court	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	LAP
25	John Rabson	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
26	Katesgrove School	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities (restrictions on times of use)	A	LEAP
27	Kensington Road CPG + Gym + MUGA	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	NEAP
28	Kings Meadows	Chargeable Car Parking	Undefined level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
29	Long Barn Lane CPG + MUGA + Gym	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing with undefined areas	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
30	Lorenzo Quelch	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
31	Lowfield Road	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	LEAP
32	Lyon Square CPG + MUGA	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing from estate	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
33	Mapledurham	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	!
34	The Meadway CPG, Skate and MUGA	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	G	LEAP
35	Midwinter Close	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Suitable for users with disabilities	G	MUGA
36	Milestone Centre	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Loose Fill surfacing with no retaining boards	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
37	Moriston Close	Walking distance for residents	Loose Fill surfacing with no retaining boards	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP
38	Oxford Road CPG + MUGA + Skate	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Loose Fill surfacing with no retaining boards	Play area not suitable for users with disabilities	R	NEAP

39	Palmer Park Wok' rd	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Raised retaining boards housing loose fill surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	NEAP
40	Palmer Park ERAPA	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Raised retaining boards housing loose fill surfacing with some level surfacing	Facility designed for users of all abilities	G	LEAP
41	Portman Road CPG + MUGA	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	NEAP
42	Prospect Park CPG + MUGA+ Skate	Nearby bus route/car parking & within walking distance	Raised retaining boards housing loose fill surfacing	Play area not suitable for users with disabilities	R	NEAP
43	Randolph Mews	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LAP
44	Rivermead & MUGA	Chargeable Car Parking	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
45	Robert Hewett	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Sloping ground to level play area	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
46	Rufus Isaacs	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP
47	Shinfield Road CPG + Natural Play	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level Surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
48	South Whitley CPG + MUGA	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Open space perimeter fencing restrict access	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
49	Southcote Farm	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
50	St Giles	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP
51	St Johns School CPG + MUGA	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
52	The Tank & MUGA	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Sloping ground to level play area	Not suitable for users with disabilities due to steep access slope	R	LEAP
53	Victoria Rec (George Street)	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LEAP
54	Virginia Way CPG + Gym	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
55	Waterloo Meadows CPG + MUGA + BMX	Walking distance for residents	Open space perimeter fencing restrict access	Partly suitable for users with disabilities when centre is opened	A	NEAP
56	Wensley Road CPG + MUGA + BMX	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	NEAP
57	Westfield Road	Nearby bus route & within walking distance	Level surfacing	Partly suitable for users with disabilities	A	LEAP
58	Winterberry Way	Walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Not suitable for users with disabilities	R	LAP
59	Battle Square	Nearby bus route/parking and within walking distance fo residents	Level surfacing	Suitable for users with disabilities	G	NEAP

60	Kenavon Place (Kennet Walk)	nearby bus route & walking distance for residents	Level surfacing	Suitable for users with disabilities	G	LEAP
61	Kennet Island (Puffin )	nearby bus route & walking distance for residents	level undefined surfacing surfacing	Suitable for users with disabilities	G	LEAP
62	Kennet Island (Rushley Way)	nearby bus route & walking distance for residents	level undefined surfacing surfacing	Suitable for users with disabilities	G	LEAP
63	Laud Court	Walking distance for residents	level undefined surfacing surfacing	Suitable for users with disabilities	G	LAP