



Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS) - THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2025

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item
No.**

- 4. PLAY SUFFICIENCY**(Pages 3 - 170)
The Panel is invited to comment on the Play Sufficiency Report.

Executive Councillor: J Kerr

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Public
Key Decision - Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: A Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire

Meeting/Date: Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environment, Communities and Partnerships) – 6th November 2025

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene

Report by: Head of Leisure, Health and Environment

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Recommendation:

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is invited to comment on the Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on 18th November 2025.

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Public
Key Decision – Yes

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	A Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny Panel - (Environment, Communities & Partnerships) – 6 th November 2025 Cabinet – 18 th November 2025
Executive Portfolio:	Councillor Julie Kerr – Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene
Report by:	Gregg Holland – Head of Leisure, Health & Environment
Ward(s) affected:	All Ward/s

Executive Summary:

This report presents a comprehensive framework for the sustainable delivery of outdoor play across Huntingdonshire, designed to meet the evolving needs of children, families, and communities while aligning with the Council's strategic priorities. The Sustainable Play Framework sets out a tiered model of provision as detailed in the HDC Final Report (**Appendix 1**) that prioritises investment in high-impact areas, enhances flagship sites, and reviews the entirety of our play assets to ensure long-term financial, environmental, and social sustainability.

The framework is underpinned by extensive consultation, evidence-based analysis, and national best practice, including guidance from Fields in Trust and Design for Play. It responds to the findings of the 2025 Geographic Gap Analysis (**Appendix 3**) and the Thematic Gap Analysis (**Appendix 4**), which identified significant disparities in accessibility, quality, and inclusivity across the District's play network.

Key features of the framework include:

- **Strategic Investment:** A phased programme of capital investment totalling £730,000 over four years, embedded within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to ensure delivery and financial resilience.
- **Commercial Sustainability:** Development of income-generating flagship sites to support reinvestment in the wider play network and reduce long-term maintenance liabilities.

- **Inclusive Design:** Commitment to accessible, imaginative, and inclusive play spaces that meet the needs of all age groups, including children with additional needs and teenagers.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Integration of sustainable design principles, biodiversity-friendly landscaping, and climate-resilient infrastructure to support the Council's Climate Strategy.
- **Community Engagement:** A co-design approach involving children, young people, and local stakeholders to ensure play provision reflects community aspirations and fosters local stewardship.

The framework supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, particularly Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing and Priority 3: Doing our core work well, by positioning play as essential infrastructure for preventative health, social cohesion, and climate resilience. It also supports the Council's Place Strategy by working in partnership with Town and Parish Councils to deliver improvements which help to develop pride of place and support a good quality of life for our residents and improved physical activity, health and well-being in young people. The framework strengthens the Council's ability to secure external funding and developer contributions by demonstrating a clear, strategic approach to delivering high-quality, multi-functional green spaces.

Through this framework, Huntingdonshire District Council aims to become a national exemplar in delivering sustainable, inclusive, and impactful play provision that improves lives, supports communities, and protects the environment for future generations.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

- a) to adopt the Sustainable Play Framework as the strategic approach for play provision across Huntingdonshire, ensuring alignment with the Corporate Plan, Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Climate Strategy;
- b) to approve the tiered play provision model as detailed in the HDC Final Report (**Appendix 1**) and phased implementation plan (2025–2030) as outlined in the HDC Final Report (**Appendix 1**) and supported by the HDC Implementation Guide (**Appendix 2**), including audit and prioritisation, pilot projects, and District-wide rollout, to deliver inclusive, high-quality play spaces;
- c) to commit to securing multi-year funding through the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to lock in the indicative £730,000 capital investment and enable delivery of the framework;

- d) to delegate authority to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene to identify and co-ordinate the development of income-generating flagship sites to create a commercially sustainable model that reinvests revenue into the wider play network; and
- e) to delegate authority to the Head of Leisure, Health & Environment in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Parks and Countryside, Waste and Street Scene to develop community engagement initiatives and co-design to ensure inclusivity, local ownership, and alignment with the needs of children, young people, and families.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present a strategic framework for the sustainable delivery of outdoor play across Huntingdonshire, ensuring inclusive, high-quality provision that meets the needs of current and future generations. The framework aims to prioritise investment in areas of greatest impact, enhance flagship sites capable of generating income, and to review the entirety of our play assets to ensure long-term financial sustainability.
- 1.2 This approach aligns with the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Place Strategy, Corporate Plan priorities—particularly Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing and Priority 3: Doing our core work well—and the Climate Strategy, by embedding inclusive design, environmental stewardship, and commercial viability into the future of play provision. It also supports the Council's ambition to reduce inequalities, promote preventative health, and deliver resilient community infrastructure.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Access to high-quality play is essential for public health, child development, and community resilience. Evidence from Public Health England and the Raising the Nation Play Commission highlights that play supports physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social development. Risk-based play builds resilience and problem-solving skills, helping to reduce long-term pressures on health and social care services.
- 2.2 National standards from Fields in Trust emphasise that every child should have access to quality green and play space. Their research estimates that UK parks and green spaces deliver £34 billion in health and wellbeing benefits annually, saving the NHS over £111 million each year. These spaces are vital infrastructure for health, social cohesion, and climate resilience.
- 2.3 The Design for Play guidance, endorsed by Play England and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, stresses that play spaces must be inclusive, imaginative, and integrated into the wider public realm. Good design is a strategic investment that ensures long-term use, community value, and sustainability.
- 2.4 Huntingdonshire District Council currently manages a diverse portfolio of play areas, many of which have been adopted through housing developments or inherited from previous local government stock. To develop a cohesive and evidence-based investment strategy, the Council commissioned the Play Sufficiency Report which identified key disparities in accessibility, quality, and usage.
- 2.5 Many estate-based sites are underused and lack inclusivity, while flagship sites require investment to meet accessibility and quality standards. Provision for teenagers remains limited. Without a clear strategy, inefficiencies and maintenance costs will escalate, and health inequalities may widen.

- 2.6 This framework provides a commercially sustainable approach which: reviews the entirety of our play assets, prioritising investment for maximum impact, and enhancing flagship destinations capable of generating income to reinvest in the wider network.
- 2.7 It aligns with the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020), the Council's Place Strategy and Corporate Plan priorities — particularly Priority 1: Improving wellbeing and Priority 3: Doing our core work well—and supports the ambition to keep people well and out of crisis. The framework also enables multi-year funding, partnership opportunities, and the delivery of an inclusive, financially resilient, and environmentally responsible play network.
- 2.8 The Council currently manages 47 play areas across the district, including 2 skate parks which are inspected weekly by the Council's dedicated Play Area Inspector to ensure safety and usability. An annual Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) inspection is carried out by the Council's insurers, Zurich. A full list of the 47 play areas that the Council manage on a weekly basis can be seen at **(Appendix 5)**.
- 2.9 Our current approach is focused on maintaining existing provision to a safe and accessible standard, within the limits of available resources. Urgent repairs are addressed immediately, while non-urgent repairs are assessed and prioritised based on risk, usage, and budget. At present, our strategy is maintenance-led rather than expansion-focused, with emphasis on routine safety inspections, responsive repairs, asset management and prioritisation and community engagement where possible.
- 2.10 To implement the current approach outlined in 2.9, the Head of Leisure, Health and Environment has identified a need to increase the revenue budget for play and has put in a capital bid in the 2026/27 MTFS to increase it from £35,000 to £60,000 for the next 5 years. This is in addition to a request for investment in the form of a capital bid totalling £730,000 over the next 4 years to enable delivery of the framework detailed in this report.
- 2.11 While this report focusses on the Council's 47 play areas, it is recognised that play provision across the District is also delivered by Town and Parish Councils and private developers. These areas are not inspected or maintained by the Council. The Council aims to complement existing provision and focus investment in the district where it will have the greatest impact and meet identified gaps in access.

3. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

- 3.1 Demographic analysis highlights several factors that are directly relevant to the strategic planning of play provision across Huntingdonshire. The district has seen a 6.7% population increase since 2011, with nearly 30,000 children aged 0–14 expected by 2026. While the population remains predominantly White (92.4%), there is a gradual rise in ethnic diversity, particularly among younger age groups. This evolving profile reinforces the need for culturally inclusive play spaces that reflect the lived

experiences of all families. Additionally, Cambridgeshire's above-average Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) rate (5.7%) signals a significant cohort of children with SEND, further underscoring the importance of accessible, sensory-rich, and inclusive design across the play estate.

- 3.2 Economically, Huntingdonshire performs well overall, but pockets of deprivation — particularly in Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and The Stukeley's — highlight areas where financial barriers may limit access to play. These insights are critical to the report's recommendations, as they provide a clear rationale for prioritising investment in areas of greatest need. Aligning future provision with demographic data ensures that play spaces are not only safe and engaging, but also equitable and responsive to the communities they serve. This evidence base supports a shift toward inclusive, place-based planning that delivers long-term social value.

4. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Option1: Do Nothing

Choosing to take no action would mean continuing with the current approach without introducing a strategic framework for play provision. This recognises that play provision is discretionary. While this option requires no immediate planned investment there will be cyclical replacement works carried out. This option does not position the Council to respond to changing community needs, address accessibility requirements, or deliver on the ambitions of the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and Corporate Plan. It would also limit opportunities to create a financially sustainable model for play and to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits that high-quality play spaces can deliver.

4.2 Option 2: Do Something

This option involves making selective improvements to existing play areas without adopting a comprehensive strategy. While this would provide some visible enhancements, it would not deliver the systemic change required to ensure long-term sustainability, inclusivity, and financial resilience. Investment would be reactive rather than planned, reducing the ability to prioritise resources where they will have the greatest impact. This approach would achieve incremental progress but would not fully realise the potential benefits of a coordinated, evidence-based framework.

4.3 Option 3: Do Everything (Recommended)

Adopting the Sustainable Play Framework offers a proactive and strategic solution. This approach focuses on creating a tiered model of provision that prioritises investment in high-impact locations, enhances flagship and hub sites to deliver inclusive and engaging play experiences, and ensures compliance with national standards such as those set by Fields in Trust. It also incorporates the principles of Design for Play, ensuring that spaces are imaginative, accessible, and integrated into the wider public realm. By aligning with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and Corporate Plan priorities, this option supports improved health and wellbeing, strengthens core service delivery, and contributes to environmental sustainability. It also establishes a commercially viable model by developing income-generating flagship sites, enabling reinvestment

across the network, and securing long-term financial resilience. It also positions the Council in a positive way when applying for external funding and working with partners to deliver improvements.

5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 5.1 The comments of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be included in this section prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

6. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 6.1 Following the drafting of a desk top assessment, extensive community engagement was undertaken in March and June 2025 to test the finding and formalise the priorities for the proposed investment framework and align them with Strategic objectives.

- 6.2 The engagement programme combined quantitative and qualitative methods to capture a broad range of views, to include.

- District-wide online surveys promoted through the Council's website, social media channels, and local networks.
- Targeted focus groups with parents, carers, and young people, including underrepresented groups identified in the Gap Analysis.
- Stakeholder workshops with schools, health partners, Parish Councils, and community organisations.
- Site-based engagement sessions at flagship parks and local play areas to gather feedback from users on-site.

- 6.3 The engagement findings provide a clear mandate for a strategic, tiered approach to play provision that prioritises inclusivity, quality, and sustainability while aligning with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and Corporate Plan priorities. A number of key findings were initially identified by the engagement and are highlighted below.

- Strong support for investment in flagship and hub sites to provide high-quality, inclusive play experiences with supporting facilities such as toilets and seating.
- Demand for inclusive and accessible play to meet the needs of children with additional needs and to provide opportunities for all age groups, particularly teenagers.
- Preference for natural and imaginative play features that encourage creativity, social interaction, and connection with nature, in line with Design for Play principles.
- Recognition of the need for sustainability, with respondents supporting a model that focuses resources where they deliver the greatest benefit and ensures long-term viability.

- Community willingness to engage in stewardship of local play areas, highlighting opportunities for partnership working and co-design.

6.4 To support this feedback, the table below summarises the comparative strengths of flagship and neighbourhood play sites, based on observed usage, play value and accessibility. This evidence reinforces the case for prioritising investment in high-performing, multi-functional sites that deliver the greatest community benefit.

Site Type	Indicative Locations	Play Types Offered	Accessibility	Strategic Value
Flagship Sites - High footfall, multi-age engagement	• Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, • Riverside Park (St Neots), • Priory Park	Physical, sensory, imaginative, cooperative	Generally good, some fully accessible	High community impact, suitable for investment
Neighbourhood Sites - Low to moderate usage, often single-age focus	• Crocus Way (Yaxley), • Moorhouse Drive (Huntingdon), • Stokes Drive (Godmanchester)	Mostly physical, limited sensory or imaginative	Often limited, few inclusive features	Potential for change or redesign

7. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 7.1 Implementing the Sustainable Play Framework will deliver significant benefits for health, wellbeing, and community cohesion, but it also involves managing a set of strategic risks.
- 7.2 While the provision of play facilities is a discretionary service, once installed, we have a duty to ensure they are appropriately managed and maintained. This includes undertaking regular inspections, risk assessments, and necessary repairs to mitigate potential hazards and ensure the safety and wellbeing of users. Our commitment to responsible stewardship ensures that play areas remain safe, inclusive, and sustainable for the communities they serve.
- 7.3 The primary risk relates to community perception and engagement. Reviewing play provision and prioritising investment in high-impact sites may lead to concerns from residents about changes to local facilities. This will be mitigated through transparent communication, early engagement, and clear articulation of the benefits for health, inclusivity, and long-term sustainability.
- 7.4 Financial risk is another consideration. The framework requires upfront investment and a commitment to multi-year funding. However, this risk is offset by the creation of a commercially sustainable model that leverages income from flagship sites and reduces long-term maintenance liabilities.

There is also a recognition that provision of high-quality play can have unquantified financial benefits to the Council; particularly around pride in place, reduction in anti-social behaviour, improving physical activity, and wider public sector benefits such as healthy lifestyles.

- 7.5 There is also a reputational risk if the Council is perceived as failing to act on the evidence gathered through consultation and the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020). Conversely, adopting the framework positions the Council as proactive, evidence-led, and committed to improving community wellbeing, which strengthens public trust and supports delivery of Corporate Plan priorities.
- 7.6 The sole focus of this report is to set out the proposed strategy of a sustainable play framework for Huntingdonshire which subject to full approval will underpin how the council should invest across the district in its play infrastructure over the coming years to support children and young people.
- 7.7 This report is separate to the [“Transfer of Public Open Spaces Policy” that was approved by Cabinet in November 2023](#). This report focussed on the process and policy around the Council transferring public open space from another stakeholder to meet the requirements of the Corporate Plan or the transfer of Council land to a partner organisation and the process that should be undertaken.
- 7.8 Whilst there are similarities between the two reports, this report (A Sustainable Framework for Play in Huntingdonshire) as stated above seeks to confirm the council's approach to investment over the coming years and the report set out and approved in November 2023 by Cabinet clearly indicates the process that should be undertaken for acquiring or transferring public open spaces between the council and its partners.
- 7.9 If in the future, an opportunity presented itself to transfer or acquire public open space then as per the “Transfer of Public Open Spaces Policy” Officer's would develop and present a business case for approval.
- 7.10 Finally, there is a delivery risk associated with the scale and complexity of the programme. This will be managed through phased implementation, robust governance, and partnership working to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery.

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Community Perception	Concerns about reviewing play provision and making changes to local play areas	Medium	High	Transparent communication, early engagement, clear articulation of benefits

Risk	Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Financial Risk	Upfront investment and multi-year funding commitment	Medium	Medium	Embed in MTFS, develop income-generating flagship sites to offset costs
Reputational Risk	Perception of inaction or failure to deliver on consultation and strategy	Low	Medium	Adopt evidence-led framework, communicate progress, align with Corporate Plan
Delivery Risk	Complexity and scale of programme implementation	Medium	Medium	Phased delivery, robust governance, partnership working

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 8.1 Subject to financial approval, the intention would be to commence the main works in the 2026/27 financial year, albeit some preparatory work will be undertaken at the end of the 2025/26 financial year. The delivery of the Sustainable Play Framework will follow a phased programme designed to ensure strategic prioritisation, financial sustainability, and measurable outcomes. Each phase builds on the previous stage, moving from evidence-based planning to pilot delivery and then to district-wide implementation. This structured approach ensures that improvements are inclusive, future-proofed, and aligned with the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020), Corporate Plan priorities, and national best practice standards. The programme also embeds continuous monitoring and community engagement to maintain quality and relevance over time.
- 8.2 The phased approach will deliver a modern, inclusive, and financially sustainable play network across the district. Outcomes include full compliance with safety and accessibility standards, improved health and wellbeing through increased physical activity and social interaction, and the creation of flagship sites that set a benchmark for quality and inclusivity. The framework will also establish a lifecycle renewal model, ensure long-term asset resilience, and embed community engagement to foster local stewardship and continuous improvement. Collectively, these outcomes will position Huntingdonshire as a leader in delivering high-quality, sustainable play provision aligned with national best practice and the Council's strategic priorities.
- 8.3 A summary of Activities and Outcomes can be found in the following table.

Phase	Timeline	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Phase 1: Audit and Prioritisation	Q3–Q4 2025/26	- Documentation audit; - Digital asset register; - Capital Prioritisation Matrix; - Inclusive Design Standards; - Youth Co-Design Programme	Full EN1176 compliance; Reduced legal risk; Equity-based investment framework; Youth-informed strategy
Phase 2: Pilot Projects	2026/7	- Safety remediation; - Inclusive upgrades; - Youth provision; - Yaxley feasibility;	Safer, inclusive parks; Increased youth engagement; Community-led designs; Improved accessibility
Phase 3: District-Wide Rollout	2027–2030	- Retrofit inclusive equipment; - Natural play pilot; - Lifecycle renewal fund	Broader reach of inclusive play; Sustainable asset management; Innovative play models piloted
Ongoing: Maintenance & Feedback	Annual	- Annual H&S audits; - Community surveys; - Observational studies; - Friends of the Park groups	Continuous improvement; Community stewardship; Evidence-based planning

9. LINK TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 The Sustainable Play Framework is a key enabler for delivering the ambitions set out in the Council's Place Strategy and the Corporate Plan. It directly supports Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing by creating inclusive, high-quality play environments that encourage physical activity, social interaction, and mental resilience. It also underpins Priority 3: Doing our core work well by introducing a structured, evidence-based approach that ensures resources are targeted where they deliver the greatest impact and long-term value.
- 9.2 The framework aligns with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Place Strategy and integrates the Green Space principles established in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which recognise open space and play as essential infrastructure for sustainable communities. These principles emphasise the role of green infrastructure in promoting health, biodiversity, and climate resilience, and they set clear expectations for quality, accessibility, and long-term stewardship. By embedding these principles, the framework ensures that play provision is not only functional but also contributes to the wider environmental and social objectives of the district.
- 9.3 This approach positions play as a critical component of community infrastructure, supporting preventative health measures, reducing future demand on services, and enhancing the district's reputation as a forward-

thinking authority. It also strengthens the Council's ability to secure external investment and developer contributions by demonstrating a clear, strategic plan for delivering high-value, multi-functional green spaces.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that public spaces, including play areas, are accessible and inclusive. This requires taking all reasonable steps to remove barriers and provide equal opportunities for children and carers with disabilities, while balancing safety considerations for all users. The emphasis is on inclusion and ensuring that play spaces enable children of all abilities to participate and interact wherever practicable.
- 10.2 In addition, the Council has obligations under the Occupiers' Liability Acts 1957 and 1984 to take reasonable care to ensure that visitors are safe when using its facilities. This includes maintaining play areas to an appropriate standard, carrying out regular inspections, and managing foreseeable risks without eliminating the inherent benefits of play, such as managed risk-taking that supports child development.
- 10.3 Failure to meet these duties could expose the Council to legal challenge and reputational risk. Conversely, adopting the Sustainable Play Framework demonstrates compliance with statutory requirements, supports best practice in inclusive design, and reinforces the Council's commitment to equality, safety, and community wellbeing.

11. ACCESSIBILITY COMMITMENT

- 11.1 Ensuring inclusive access to play is a core principle of the Sustainable Play Framework. The Council recognises that many estate-based play areas are underused and lack features that support accessibility, particularly for children with disabilities and teenagers. Flagship sites, while popular, require investment to meet modern standards of inclusivity and quality.
- 11.2 The framework commits to embedding inclusive design principles across all tiers of provision, guided by national standards such as Fields in Trust and Design for Play. This includes the installation of accessible equipment, imaginative features that support neurodiverse engagement, and supporting infrastructure such as seating, shade, and accessible pathways.
- 11.3 Provision for teenagers will be addressed through targeted upgrades and co-design programmes that reflect their needs and preferences. By prioritising investment in high-impact sites and reviewing the entirety of our play assets, the framework ensures that resources are directed where they deliver the greatest benefit—creating a play network that is equitable, welcoming, and future-proofed.
- 11.4 This approach supports the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and contributes to wider

goals around health equity, community cohesion, and preventative wellbeing.

12. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Delivery of the Sustainable Play Framework will require phased capital investment supported by robust financial planning to ensure long-term sustainability. The indicative investment plan below outlines the proposed allocation of resources across key locations and activities over the next four financial years. This approach prioritises early wins to address safety and accessibility, feasibility work for future flagship projects, and targeted investment in high-impact sites. It also incorporates district-wide initiatives for inclusive play and lifecycle renewal, ensuring compliance with national standards and alignment with the Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) and the Council's Place Strategy.

12.2 To secure these investments, the programme will be embedded within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and annual budget-setting process. This will ensure that funding commitments are locked in, enabling multi-year delivery and reducing the risk of delays or underfunding. By aligning with the MTFS, the framework supports financial resilience and provides a clear basis for leveraging external funding and developer contributions.

12.3 The total indicative investment across the district is £730,000, representing a strategic commitment to creating an inclusive, resilient, and commercially sustainable play network. This indicative sum will be subject to review in terms of the location for development and value based on evidence, constraints at the time of the investment.

12.4 Indicative Investment Plan for the Sustainable Play Framework; -

Financial Year	Location of investment	Value	Total
26/27	Remedial quick wins District Wide	£20, 000	£165,000
	Feasibility	£25,000	
	Ramsey	£120,000	
27/28	Huntingdon	£100,000	£160,000
	Godmanchester	£60,000	
28/27	St Ives	£50,000	£150,000
	St Neots	£100,000	
27/28	Sawtry	£100,000	£175,000

	Inclusive Play District Wide	£75,000	
28/29	St Neots Destination Play	£80,000	£80,000
Total Indicative Investment across District			£730, 000

- 12.5 To deliver more substantial improvements to play areas, the Council will seek to layer funding from multiple sources. This may include internal budgets, external grants, developer contributions (Section 106), and partnership funding. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can be used to support the overarching capital funding as outlined in this report to mitigate the impact of growth or respond to future development needs. Where appropriate, this report and associated evidence can be used to support CIL funding bids — for example, in areas where population growth is placing increased pressure on existing infrastructure. By aligning investment with strategic growth and working collaboratively with stakeholders, the Council can ensure that play provision remains responsive, inclusive, and sustainable.

13. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 Improved access to high-quality, inclusive play spaces delivers significant health and wellbeing benefits for children, families, and communities. The Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020) identifies play as a critical intervention for tackling social isolation, improving mental health, and promoting physical activity from an early age. Well-designed play environments encourage active lifestyles, support emotional resilience, and provide opportunities for social interaction, which are essential for reducing loneliness and building stronger communities.
- 13.2 These outcomes align directly with the Corporate Plan priorities, particularly Priority 1: Improving health and wellbeing, and contribute to the Council's overarching ambition to keep people well and out of crisis. By embedding inclusive design and co-creation principles, the Sustainable Play Framework ensures that play provision is equitable, accessible, and capable of delivering long-term preventative health benefits across the district. The outcomes also contribute to the delivery of the Council's Place Strategy to support a good quality of life for all people at all stages of life.
- 13.3 The following evidence-based benefits highlight why investment in play is a strategic health priority:
- Improved Physical Health: Regular active play reduces the risk of childhood obesity and supports healthy growth and development.
 - Enhanced Mental Wellbeing: Play reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, and builds emotional resilience in children and young people.
 - Social Development: Inclusive play spaces foster social interaction, cooperation, and communication skills, reducing isolation and loneliness.

- Cognitive and Creative Growth: Risk-based and imaginative play supports problem-solving, creativity, and decision-making skills.
- Preventative Health Impact: Increased physical activity and social engagement contribute to long-term health, reducing future demand on health and social care services.
- Community Cohesion: Accessible, well-designed play areas create safe, welcoming spaces that strengthen community ties and intergenerational interaction.

14. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The Sustainable Play Framework supports the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy by embedding sustainable design principles into all stages of play provision. This includes the use of natural and low-carbon materials, biodiversity-friendly landscaping, and sustainable drainage solutions to manage surface water and reduce flood risk.
- 14.2 By concentrating investment on strategic sites, the framework creates opportunities to integrate play into green infrastructure, enhancing habitats and contributing to the district's climate resilience objectives. These measures align with the Climate Strategy outcomes of reducing carbon emissions, increasing biodiversity, and promoting sustainable land use. In addition, the framework encourages children and young people to engage with nature, fostering environmental awareness and building a lifelong connection to the natural world—supporting both climate goals and community wellbeing.

15. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The Sustainable Play Framework reinforces the Council's commitment to equality, accessibility, and community cohesion. By embedding inclusive design principles and aligning with national standards such as Fields in Trust and Design for Play, the framework ensures that play provision meets the needs of all residents, including those with disabilities and underrepresented groups. It also supports the Council's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and contributes to wider policy objectives on health, wellbeing, and climate resilience. Beyond compliance, the framework strengthens social value by creating spaces that foster intergenerational interaction, encourage community stewardship, and enhance the quality of life across the district. This approach positions the Council as a proactive, evidence-led authority delivering long-term benefits for residents and the environment.
- 15.2 As the Council moves through the process of Local Government Reorganisation, the Sustainable Play Framework offers a timely opportunity to embed lasting principles that will shape future service delivery. By investing in inclusive, high-quality play spaces now, the Council can leave a positive legacy that reflects its commitment to community wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and social equity. This proactive approach ensures that play provision remains a priority during

the transition and provides a strong foundation to build upon with significant benefits to the community, particularly for children and young people.

16. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 16.1 The Sustainable Play Framework provides a strategic, evidence-led approach to improving outdoor play provision across Huntingdonshire. It responds directly to consultation findings, national best practice, and the Council's Healthy Open Spaces Strategy (2020), ensuring that play spaces are inclusive, imaginative, and accessible to all. By prioritising investment in high-impact areas and enhancing flagship sites, the framework supports improved health and wellbeing, community cohesion, and environmental resilience—delivering on Corporate Plan priorities and statutory duties.
- 16.2 The recommended decisions also enable the Council to establish a financially and commercially sustainable model for play. Through the identification of underused sites and development of income-generating destinations, the framework allows the Council to direct resource appropriately and create opportunities for reinvestment. Embedding the programme within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy ensures delivery is achievable and resilient. Collectively, these measures position Huntingdonshire as a forward-thinking authority committed to delivering high-quality infrastructure that improves lives and supports thriving communities.

17. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – HDC Final Report. Premier Advisory Group (2025).
Appendix 2 – HDC Implementation Guide. Premier Advisory Group (2025).
Appendix 3 - HDC Geographic Gap Analysis. Premier Advisory Group.
Appendix 4 - HDC Thematic Gap Analysis. Premier Advisory Group.
Appendix 5 – List of 47 HDC play areas.

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- HDC Summary Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Equality Addendum. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Sustainability Strategy. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Observation Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Consultation Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)

- HDC Annexes for Community Engagement and Consultation Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Community Profile. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- HDC Demographic Data Report. Premier Advisory Group. (2025)
- [Everything to Play For: A Plan to Ensure Every Child in England Can Play \(2025\). Raising the Nation Play Commission.](#)
- [HDC. Corporate Plan](#)
- [HDC. Healthy Open Spaces Strategy and 10 Year Action Plan](#)
- Huntingdonshire District Council - Transfer of Public Open Spaces Policy – November 2023

CONTACT OFFICER

Name/Job Title: Gregg Holland – Head of Leisure, Health & Environment
Tel No: 01480 388157
Email: gregg.holland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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Huntingdonshire District Council

Final Report

Private & Confidential

September 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment, providing a district-wide evaluation of access, quality, safety, and inclusivity of children's play spaces. It draws on extensive consultation, data analysis, and benchmarking to present an evidence-based assessment of current service provision and future opportunities. The findings demonstrate clear areas of strength to consolidate, as well as pressing issues that demand targeted action.

This evidence points to a dual imperative: to build on Huntingdonshire District Council's strong legacy of play provision while identifying practical pathways for continuous improvement. The recommended actions form part of a cohesive strategy to support sustainable development, enhance resident wellbeing, and ensure value for money in the stewardship of public spaces.

1.1 Key Findings and Strategic Implications

- **Safety and Quality:** Health and Safety inspections carried out by Handsam identified a small number of sites where surfacing, signage, or individual equipment components may require attention. In most cases, remedial works are already underway or planned as part of ongoing maintenance schedules. These reports should be consulted alongside the council's internal H&S reports before being actioned. Where continued investment is not feasible due to low usage or recurring vandalism, alternative options (such as rationalisation or redesign) may be appropriate.
- **Patterns of Use:** While many sites were well-used, a number of smaller or less accessible locations were observed with limited or no users at the time of assessment. Usage patterns often reflect factors such as visibility, proximity to housing, and site features, rather than quality alone. The Current Provision Report provides a detailed breakdown.
- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** Some sites offer inclusive play features. Many older sites were designed before contemporary accessibility standards were introduced, and retrofitting is not always straightforward. Nonetheless, there is a clear opportunity to prioritise accessible, multi-generational design in future upgrades and new developments.
- **Equity Across Localities:** There are natural variations in provision across a large and predominantly rural district. Some communities, particularly in growth areas or historic estates, rely on older sites that may benefit from targeted improvement. Addressing these

imbalances is key to ensuring all residents enjoy safe, inclusive, and engaging places to play.

- **Provision for Older Children:** While some traditional youth facilities such as multi-use games areas were underused during assessment visits, consultation suggests demand for more adventurous, flexible, and socially oriented spaces. This presents an opportunity to reimagine provision in partnership with young people.

1.2 Action Planning

This report proposes a phased five-year capital delivery programme that balances current needs with long-term aspirations.

- Phase 1 focuses on immediate safety works and high-need sites, such as a full site reviews at Yaxley and youth provision in Ramsey.
- Phase 2 targets inclusive upgrades in Amber-rated areas such as Godmanchester and St Ives (where appropriate).
- Phase 3 consolidates earlier gains through retrofitting and innovation pilots.

These projects are supported by four cross-cutting reforms:

- A governance and compliance review
- The integration of inclusive design standards
- Youth-led co-design processes
- An equity-based investment framework

2. Introduction

This report provides Huntingdonshire District Council with an independent assessment of local play needs, challenges, and opportunities. Drawing on data, stakeholder feedback, and benchmarking, it offers a rounded view of current provision and future potential. The analysis recognises both the Council's achievements and the constraints of managing a large, diverse portfolio across a rural and historic district. The purpose is to establish a clear, evidence-based baseline to guide strategic, proportionate, and sustainable decision-making. Rather than suggesting uniform solutions, the report highlights tailored approaches aligned to local context, community priorities, and available resources.

As part of the consultation, respondents referenced a number of play areas not managed by HDC. These have been retained to give a holistic view of the wider play landscape, but are identified below:

- Judith's Field
- Butcher Drive
- Millfields Park
- Warboys Park
- Roman's Edge
- Alconbury
- Crescent
- Dunnock Way

The maintenance and planning of these parks does not fall within the remit of Huntingdonshire District Council. However, they should be considered within council-wide strategic planning through collaboration with the relevant authorities where possible, in order to provide the best possible landscape of play provision for the communities served by HDC.

3. Community Profile

This section provides a comprehensive analysis of demographic and economic data across the Huntingdonshire District, contributing to a wider assessment of outdoor play opportunities in the region. Understanding the district's population characteristics is essential for the evaluation of current and future demand for play opportunities across open spaces and ensuring inclusive, accessible provision for all children and young people.

The intention is to build further upon the previous engagement work delivered by HDC through the development of their 'Healthy Open Spaces Strategy'¹. This strategy involved a community questionnaire as part of the consultation process in which barriers to outdoor play were explored. Through additional consultation Premier Advisory Group has explored the trends identified by the District Council.

This report explores key demographic indicators, including population size, growth trends, and population projections, offering insight into how Huntingdonshire's community is evolving. Birth rates are examined to anticipate future needs, while economic activity levels provide context on employment patterns and household incomes, which all influence access to play and recreational facilities. The report investigates ethnic diversity within the district to support culturally inclusive play strategies and assesses data on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to ensure play provision meets the requirements of children with additional needs.

Where available, the analysis utilises Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) and ward-level data to provide a detailed local perspective. This is complemented by district-level data and, where necessary, local authority-held statistics. Any relevant internal council data sources will be reviewed to ensure a comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of play opportunities across Huntingdonshire.

3.1 Population and Birth Rates

According to the 2021 Census data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Huntingdonshire's population increased by 6.7%, adding approximately 11,300 new residents since 2011, bringing the total to around 180,800 in 2021. This growth is slightly higher than the overall increase for England,

¹ Huntingdonshire District Council (2020) *HDC Healthy Open Spaces Strategy*. Available at: <https://democracy.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s111005/Appendix%202%20-%20HDC%20Healthy%20Open%20Spaces%20Strategy%20and%2010%20Year%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

which was 6.6% during the same period. In terms of total population ranking among local authorities, Huntingdonshire maintained its position, ranking 150th out of 309 areas in England, consistent with it standing a decade ago.

Surrounding areas experienced varying rates of population growth between 2011 and 2021:

- Bedford: 17.7% increase
- Peterborough: 17.5% increase
- Fenland: 7.6% increase
- East Cambridgeshire: 4.6% increase

Regarding specific age groups, Huntingdonshire saw a 4.4% decrease in children aged under 5 years, equating to approximately 440 fewer children. Additionally, there was a 12.5% reduction in individuals aged 15 to 24 years, a decline of about 2,470 people. Conversely, the population aged 65 and over increased, reflecting national trends of an ageing population.

3.1.1 Population of children aged 0 -14

Table 1a outlines the estimated number of children to be resident in Huntingdonshire, as per ONS estimates for 2022, aligned with the following age groups:

- Under 2 years
- 2 years
- 3-4 years

Table 1b outlines the estimated number of children to be resident in Huntingdonshire, as per ONS estimates for 2022, aligned with the following age groups:

- 5-7 years
- 8-11 years
- 12-14 years

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/wardlevelmidyearpopulationestimatesexperimental>

Table 1a - Approximate number of children aged 0 – 4 years resident in Huntingdonshire as of mid-2022 (source: ONS September 2023)

Ward	0–1-year-olds	2-year-olds	3–4-year-olds
Alconbury	47	33	69
Brampton	250	137	260
Buckden	59	31	59
Fenstanton	92	38	84
Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	262	117	266
Great Paxton	51	28	61
Great Staughton	45	24	63
Hemingford Grey & Houghton	154	82	140
Holywell-cum-Needlingworth	118	74	150
Huntingdon East	93	50	131
Huntingdon North	270	147	343
Kimbolton	48	27	53
Ramsey	240	108	270
St Ives East	160	95	129
St Ives South	130	64	150
St Ives West	53	29	54
St Neots East	124	93	164
St Neots Eatons	193	107	200
St Neots Eynesbury	265	120	239
St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	188	111	215
Sawtry	127	69	140
Somersham	76	34	70
Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	86	35	143
The Stukeleys	234	112	197
Warboys	187	97	194
Yaxley	224	120	297
Totals	3776	1982	4141

The table above presents the population of children aged 0-4 years across the wards in Huntingdonshire. The data shows that 3–4-year-olds form the largest group, with a total of 4,141 children, followed by 0-1-year-olds with 3,776 children, and finally, 2-year-olds with 1,982 children.

Certain wards may require additional childcare provision for 0–1-year-olds. Huntingdon North has the highest number in this age group, with 270 children, followed closely by St Neots Eynesbury (265 children) and Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots (262 children).

The statistics suggest that 2-year-olds may require increased childcare provision. The ward with the lowest number of 2-year-olds is Great Staughton, with 24 children, while the highest is in Huntingdon

North, with 147 children. This indicates that 3–4-year-olds may already have more available childcare provision compared to the 2-year-old population. However, Yaxley and The Stukeleys also show a significant need for additional childcare services in this age group. Other wards with relatively low numbers of 2-year-olds include Kimbolton (27 children) and Buckden (31 children).

For 3–4-year-olds, Huntingdon North again has the largest population, with 343 children, followed by Yaxley (297 children) and Ramsey (270 children). In contrast, the wards with the smallest number of 3-4-year-olds include Kimbolton (53 children) and Buckden (59 children).

These figures highlight varying levels of demand for play provision across Huntingdonshire. Areas such as Huntingdon North, St Neots Eynesbury, and Yaxley may result in less participation, particularly for 0–1-year-olds and 2-year-olds, while demand remains high for 3–4-year-olds in several other wards.

Table 1b - Approximate number of children aged 5 – 14 years resident in Huntingdonshire as of mid-2022 (source: ONS September 2023)

Ward	5–7-year-olds	8–11-year-olds	12–14-year-olds
Alconbury	99	136	114
Brampton	402	539	383
Buckden	120	135	113
Fenstanton	160	212	156
Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots	356	537	353
Great Paxton	100	136	116
Great Staughton	89	135	95
Hemingford Grey & Houghton	225	329	214
Holywell-cum-Needlingworth	202	256	230
Huntingdon East	209	311	240
Huntingdon North	485	683	513
Kimbolton	85	131	138
Ramsey	366	542	363
St Ives East	207	341	244
St Ives South	226	336	285
St Ives West	85	141	101
St Neots East	269	367	233
St Neots Eatons	360	492	363
St Neots Eynesbury	441	481	349
St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton	336	539	433
Sawtry	216	341	231

Somersham	116	168	104
Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley	184	280	217
The Stukeleys	295	335	220
Warboys	243	337	227
Yaxley	450	536	409
Totals	6326	8776	6444

The table above presents the population of children aged 5–14 years across Huntingdonshire. The largest group is 8–11-year-olds (8,776 children), followed by 12–14-year-olds (6,444 children) and 5–7-year-olds (6,326 children).

Certain wards, particularly Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton, have significantly higher numbers of children across all three age groups, indicating a greater need for educational and childcare resources. In contrast, smaller wards such as Great Staughton, St Ives West, and Kimbolton have lower child populations, potentially requiring fewer services.

The distribution of children across age groups suggests a continued demand for primary and secondary education, as well as youth and recreational services, particularly in high-population areas. Strategic planning will be essential to ensure adequate provision of resources to meet the needs of children and families across Huntingdonshire.

3.1.2 Population Projections and Migration

Table 2 below shows a five-year population projection for children aged 0-14.

Source: [Population projections for local authorities: Table 2 - Office for National Statistics](#)

Table 2 – Population projections in Huntingdonshire between 2026-2030 (Source ONS Via Nomis 2023)

Age	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
0-4	9,237	9,217	9,192	9,171	9,155
5-9	9,854	9,732	9,615	9,575	9,527
10-14	10,764	10,541	10,372	10,189	10,034
Total	29,855	29,491	29,179	28,936	28,715

The 5-9-year-old age group is forecasted to decline steadily from 9,854 in 2026 to 9,527 in 2030—a reduction of 327 children. The 10-14-year-old age group will also see a gradual decrease, dropping from 10,764 in 2026 to 10,034 in 2030, a loss of 730 young residents.

The 0-4 age group is expected to remain relatively stable, with only a modest decline of 82 children between 2026 and 2030. However, the decreasing numbers of primary and lower secondary-aged children could impact future demand for play provision.

Overall, the data suggests that while early years childcare demand will likely stay consistent, the need for services catering to older children (5-14 years) may decrease in the coming years.

Table 3 below shows the number of observations made of people who moved to Huntingdonshire when arriving in the UK.

Source: [Year of arrival in UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

Table 3 – Arrival of residents in Huntingdonshire

Time arrived in the UK	Number of observations
Arrived 2011 to 2013	2161
Arrived 2014 to 2016	2735
Arrived 2017 to 2019	3355
Arrived 2020 to 2021	1328

The latest ONS Census data shows the number of new arrivals in Huntingdonshire between 2011 and 2021. Over this period, a total of 9,579 residents moved to the district from outside the UK.

- Between 2011 and 2013, 2,161 people arrived.
- From 2014 to 2016, arrivals increased to 2,735.
- The highest number of arrivals occurred between 2017 and 2019, with 3,355 new residents.
- During 2020 and 2021, arrivals declined to 1,328, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions on international movement.

This data highlights fluctuating migration trends, with a peak in arrivals before 2020, followed by a decline during the pandemic. Future monitoring will be essential to determine whether migration levels return to pre-pandemic trends or continue to shift due to economic and policy factors.

3.1.3 Birth Rates

Table 4 demonstrates the number of live birth rates recorded across Huntingdonshire over the past 5 years.

Source: [Nomis - Query Tool - Live births in England and Wales : birth rates down to local authority areas](#)

Table 4 - Birth rates in Huntingdonshire between 2019-2023 (Source: ONS via Nomis 2023)

Date	Live Births
2019	1,867
2020	1,783
2021	1,890
2022	1,707
2023	1,714

Huntingdonshire's population dynamics reveal notable trends among children and young people. As of the 2021 Census, the district experienced a 6.7% population increase since 2011, reaching approximately 180,800 residents. Despite this overall growth, certain age groups have seen declines. Notably, the number of residents aged 15 to 24 years decreased by 12.5% (approximately 2,470 individuals), and children under 5 years old saw a 4.4% reduction (about 440 children). These shifts suggest a trend where younger populations are either relocating or fewer young families are settling in the area. Looking ahead, Huntingdonshire's population is projected to grow by 9.9% by 2031, adding approximately 17,945 individuals. However, forecasts suggest a 3.5% decrease (around 725 individuals) in the 5-14 age group during this period

The above table shows how birth rates have been declining since 2019, however, It is important to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Huntingdonshire's live birth rates. During the pandemic, birth rates across the UK declined to levels last seen in 2003, reflecting significant social and economic disruptions. The sharp decline in 2020 and 2021 may have been influenced by uncertainties surrounding employment, healthcare, and financial stability, discouraging some families from having children.

Table 5 - Residents in Huntingdonshire who moved to Enfield from inside or outside the UK in 2021

Migrant indicator	Observation
Does not apply	1752
Address one year ago is the same as the address of enumeration	160514
Address one year ago is student term-time or boarding school address in the UK	376
Migrant from within the UK: Address one year ago was in the UK	16926
Migrant from outside the UK: Address one year ago was outside the UK	1264

As of 2021, there were approximately 16,926 residents who had moved into Huntingdonshire from other areas in the UK within the past year, and 1,264 residents who had migrated from outside the UK.

When comparing this information to previous ONS data for 2017-2019, which showed 3,355 international arrivals, the data suggests a significant decline of 2,091 migrants between 2019 and 2021. This represents the largest decrease observed in recent years, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit, both of which contributed to restrictions on international movement and economic uncertainty. Conversely, internal migration trends show 16,926 people relocated to Huntingdonshire from other parts of the UK in the past year. While internal migration had remained relatively stable in previous years, this suggests a potential increase in domestic relocation, possibly driven by changing housing preferences post-pandemic.

It is important to note that the latest 2021 data does not specify outflows, meaning the number of people who moved out of Huntingdonshire during this period remains unknown. As a result, net migration figures may be slightly overstated, and further monitoring will be required to assess long-term migration trends in the district.

3.1.4 Ethnicity

The below tables show ethnic breakdown of the population from the 2021 census.

Table 6: Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total per person	Percentage
White	167,116	92.4%
Asian	5,745	3.2%
Mixed	4,057	2.2%
Black	2,646	1.5%
Other	1,268	0.7%

According to the latest census, the population in Huntingdonshire is predominantly white (92.4%), with non-white minorities representing the remaining 7.6% of the population. Asian people were the largest minority group in Huntingdonshire accounting for 3.2% of the population.

In 2021, the ethnic composition was predominantly White at 92.4%, a slight decrease from 94.8% in 2011. The "Mixed or Multiple" ethnic groups category saw an increase from 1.5% to 2.2% over the

same period. The "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" group rose from 2.5% to 3.2%, and the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" group increased from 1.0% to 1.5%.

The following uses the latest census to provide a breakdown of ethnicity by age group in Huntingdonshire. In UK census data, CC stands for "confidentiality controlled" meaning the actual number is very small (typically fewer than 3-5 people) and is hidden to protect individual privacy. It is not missing, just redacted on purpose.

Ethnicity	Age 0-4	Age 5-11	Age 12-16	Age 17-18
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	CC	CC	CC	CC
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	CC	CC	CC	CC
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	125	195	85	CC
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	85	180	140	30
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	65	115	90	35
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	130	175	125	35
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	CC	CC	CC	CC

Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other	CC	CC	CC	CC
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	205	275	140	55
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	130	185	CC	25
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	130	200	125	35
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	185	210	115	35
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	7,625	12,040	8,385	3,080
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	CC	CC	CC	CC
White: Irish	CC	CC	CC	CC
White: Roma	CC	CC	CC	CC
White: Other White	720	910	545	165
Other ethnic group: Arab	CC	CC	CC	CC

Any other	90	CC	CC	CC
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3.2

Economic Activity

3.2.1 Employment

Table 7 shows the frequency of adults who were 'economically active' (which implies they are in employment) last year.

Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157208/report.aspx#defs>

Table 7 – Incidence of employment and unemployment in Huntingdonshire (NOMIS 2025 using ONS data from October 2023-September 2024).

Area	Economically Active	In Employment	Employees	Self Employed	Unemployed
Huntingdonshire (numbers)	97,900	94,300	82,000	12,300	2,800
Huntingdonshire (%)	86.7%	83.6%	73.6%	10.0%	2.8%
East of England (%)	79.3%	76.7%	66.8%	9.8%	3.2%
Great Britain (%)	78.4%	75.5%	66.0%	9.2%	3.7%

Compared to the broader region, Huntingdonshire's high employment rate suggests a generally prosperous economy with strong job availability. The lower unemployment rate could mean that more families have stable income sources, but the cost of living and work schedules may still influence the accessibility of play opportunities.

3.2.2 Families living in low-income households

Table 8 shows the number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income in Huntingdonshire, East of England, and the United Kingdom over the past eight years.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2023>

Table 8 - The number and Percentage of Children (aged under 16) living in Relative low income (DWP using ONS data from 2016-2023)

Area	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
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Huntingdons hire Number	3,608	3,522	3,920	3,902	4,095	3,694	3,724	3,477
Huntingdons hire (%)	11.1%	10.8%	12.1%	12.1%	12.8%	11.4%	11.4%	10.4%
East of England Number	161,406	163,658	181,027	181,375	186,542	168,581	170,404	166,146
East of England (%)	14.0%	14.1%	15.4%	15.4%	15.7%	14.2%	14.4%	13.8%
United Kingdom Number	1,985,890	2,099,684	2,248,520	2,293,551	2,455,064	2,384,106	2,473,462	2,480,507
United Kingdom %	16.2%	16.9%	18.0%	18.2%	19.3%	18.7%	20.1%	20.1%

Huntingdonshire has consistently maintained a lower percentage of children in low-income households compared to both regional and national figures, indicating a relatively better economic standing. However, there was a peak in 2020, likely linked to economic pressures from the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a decline in recent years.

Despite its relatively lower rates, Huntingdonshire still has pockets of deprivation, particularly in areas such as Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and The Stukeleys, where a higher proportion of families face financial hardship. These areas may require targeted interventions to support access to affordable or free play provisions.

Lower-income households may struggle with financial barriers to accessing play, particularly in areas with fewer free recreational facilities. Families with limited resources may face challenges in affording transport, entry fees, or equipment necessary for participation in structured play activities. Ensuring sufficient free and inclusive play opportunities in deprived areas is essential to prevent economic disparities from limiting children's access to play.

3.2.3 English Indices of Deprivation 2019

See Appendix A for the full table list of Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) rank and decile.

The centre of Huntingdonshire is the most deprived. LSOAs Huntingdonshire 008A & 008B (Huntingdon North) have the most deprivation present in the district in the local IMD deciles. The most deprived wards are Yaxley, The Stukeleys, and Warboys. 10 out of 106 of the LSOAs in

Huntingdonshire are in the 3 most deprived deciles for IDACI. There are 11 LSOAs that are particularly deprived in the IDACI domain.

Other areas with moderate deprivation, such as Huntingdonshire 008E, 022C, and 022D, fall within IMD deciles 3 and 4, indicating slightly improved economic conditions but still higher-than-average levels of deprivation. These areas, while better off than the most deprived parts of the district, may still struggle with access to well-maintained and safe play facilities, particularly for children from lower-income households.

Conversely, some parts of Huntingdonshire rank among the least deprived areas in the country, with LSOAs such as Huntingdonshire 020D, 007A, and 006D ranking within the top 10% nationally in both IMD and IDACI. These areas are characterised by higher incomes, better infrastructure, and increased access to recreational spaces, ensuring more opportunities for children to engage in play.

The disparities in deprivation levels across Huntingdonshire directly influence access to play opportunities. In highly deprived areas, limited financial resources, higher unemployment, and lack of safe, free play spaces can restrict children's ability to engage in play, impacting their physical, social, and cognitive development. Additionally, families in these areas may lack the means to travel to well-equipped play facilities located in more affluent parts of the district.

In contrast, children in wealthier areas benefit from a greater availability of safe, high-quality play spaces, with better access to structured recreational activities, clubs, and sports facilities. These inequalities underscore the need for targeted investment in deprived areas to ensure all children, regardless of economic background, can access play opportunities. Efforts to bridge these gaps could include expanding free play areas, investing in community play programmes, and ensuring transport accessibility to existing recreational facilities. Addressing these disparities is essential for promoting inclusive play and supporting children's overall well-being.

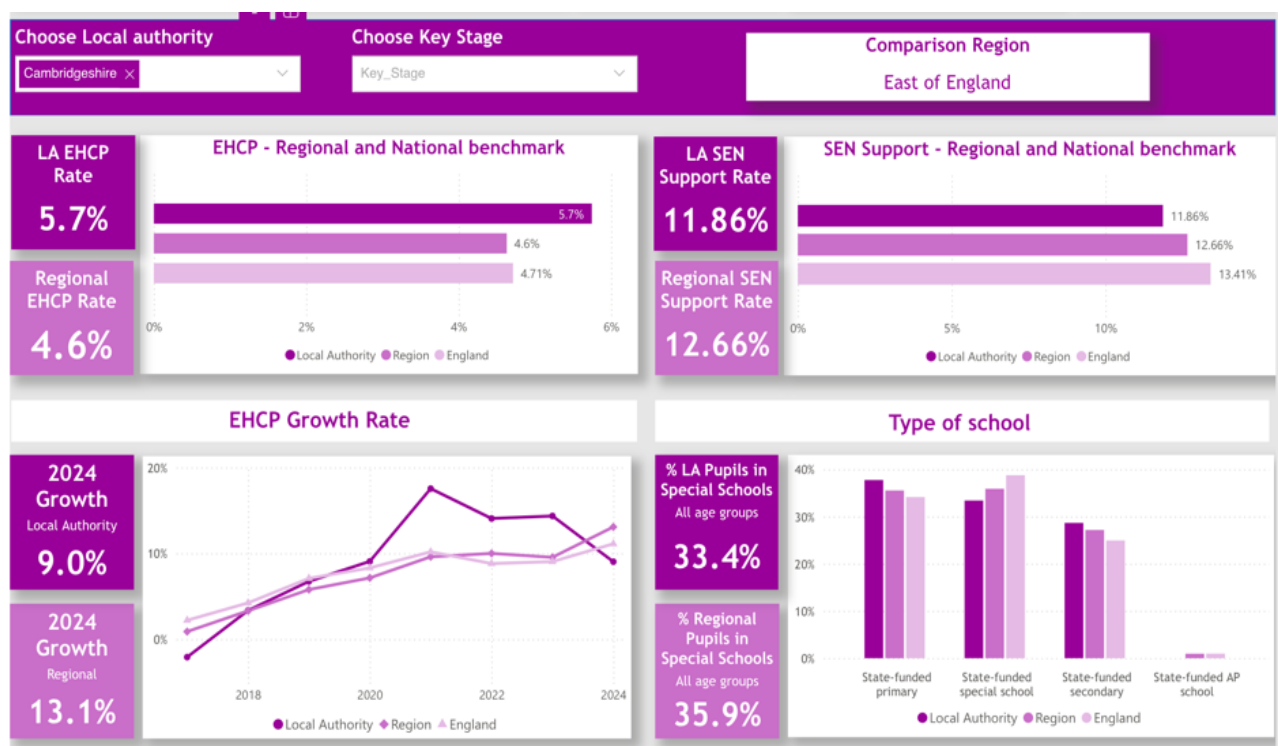
3.3 SEND Designation and ECHP Rates

In 2024, the EHCP rate in Cambridgeshire was 5.7%. This rate is higher than the English average and regional rate of 4.71% and 4.6% respectively. This high EHCP rate represents a potential area of challenge. The EHCP rate for state-funded secondary schools was 1.6%, higher than the regional average (1.3%) and equal to the national average.

Cambridgeshire's SEN Support Rate (11.86%) ranks lower than the regional (12.66%) and national (13.41%) rates. In state-funded secondary schools, the SEN support rate was 4.07%, considerably lower than the national average of 18.32% and slightly below the regional rate of 5.22%. This large gap may indicate significant under-identification, meaning students are struggling without proper support. Alternatively, this may result from strong mainstream education and effective early support. Further investigation is required to see whether lower SEN support rate is due to better early intervention strategies or if students with needs are not being recognised or supported adequately.

The top primary needs in Cambridgeshire at Autistic Spectrum Order, Social Emotional and Mental Health, and Speech, Language and Communication needs.

Image 1: Data from Public Alchemy



4. Consultation

The purpose of the consultation was to understand how current play provision meets the needs of children and families in Huntingdonshire, and to identify areas where improvements or further development may be required.

To build a comprehensive and inclusive picture, input was sought from a wide cross-section of the community. Surveys were carried out with children under the age of five, and with pupils across Key Stages 1 to 4. The views of parents and carers were gathered alongside those of childcare providers, local stakeholders, and representatives from town and parish councils. In addition to the survey responses, focus groups with parents and interviews with childcare providers offered further qualitative insight into local needs and experiences.

On behalf of HDC, PAG conducted a comprehensive data collection exercise between 2nd April and 16th June 2025. The primary objective was to gather views from a wide range of stakeholders to inform the development of local policy and service planning.

4.1 Surveys

This section highlights the key responses from each survey, for the detailed breakdown of responses to each survey, please see the consultation report and supporting annexes.

4.1.1 Under 5s

Responses from parents, carers, and childcare professionals on behalf of children under the age of five indicate that this age group engages in play across a broad range of environments. Indoor spaces, gardens, playgrounds, and grassy open areas were most frequently cited, with woodland and nature-based settings also proving popular. Levels of happiness with outdoor play opportunities were generally high, with the majority of respondents describing their children as either “happy” or “very happy” when playing outside. Parks such as Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Priory Park, Judith’s Field (not run by HDC), and Butcher Drive (not run by HDC) were most commonly identified as favourites, valued both for their variety of equipment and their proximity to home.

Safety was generally perceived positively, though a minority raised concerns about certain sites. Satisfaction with playground quality was mixed: while some families praised facilities as “great,” others rated them “okay” or “not very good,” highlighting issues of maintenance and suitability.

Swings and slides were the most consistently popular equipment, with additional interest in climbing frames and sensory play items. Conversely, large climbing structures and spinner equipment were considered inappropriate or unsafe for very young children. Parents and carers expressed a clear desire for more toddler-friendly and inclusive play facilities, improved cleanliness, and greater provision of supporting amenities such as toilets, bins, and seating.

4.1.2 Key Stage 1

The Key Stage 1 survey, with the largest response rate across cohorts, revealed a strong preference for structured play environments such as playgrounds with equipment, complemented by use of gardens, grassy areas, and community or leisure spaces. Frequency of park use tended to be concentrated at weekends, with relatively few children visiting on a daily basis. Popular sites included the “Pirate Park” in Ramsey (an HDC site), alongside other parks such as Millfields Park, Warboys Park, Judith’s Field, and new estate play areas in Romans’ Edge and Alconbury, which fall outside HDC’s direct management.

Accessibility was generally high, with most children able to reach parks on foot or by bicycle. Safety perceptions were also largely positive, though a small number of respondents raised concerns around antisocial behaviour and the presence of older youths. Children’s enjoyment was strongly associated with the variety and quality of equipment, open spaces for informal games, and opportunities for social interaction. Swings, climbing frames, and slides were most frequently highlighted, though many children expressed a desire for more adventurous or age-appropriate features. Dissatisfaction tended to centre on outdated equipment, overcrowding, or poorly maintained sites. Suggestions for improvement included the installation of larger climbing frames, splash or paddling pools, and facilities catering specifically for older children, supported by better upkeep and proximity to residential areas.

4.1.3 Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 respondents reported a strong reliance on homes and gardens for daily play, with playgrounds, grassy areas, and school grounds also regularly used. Park visits were less frequent after school, with many children indicating that they rarely used parks during the week. Favourite sites included the “Pirate Park” in Ramsey (HDC), alongside others such as Godley Green, Judith’s Field, Millfields Park, and Warboys Park, which are managed by other organisations. Accessibility remained a critical determinant of use; while most children could walk or cycle to local parks, a significant

minority relied on adult transport, limiting independent play. Safety was perceived positively overall, though some children reported feeling unsafe due to dogs, vandalism, or antisocial behaviour. Swings, climbing frames, zip lines, trampolines, and sports-oriented equipment were valued most highly. Improvement suggestions centred on greater provision for older children, more adventurous and varied equipment, and investment in neglected or outdated sites. These responses highlight both the continued importance of well-maintained facilities and the need for greater age-appropriate variety across the district.

4.1.4 Key Stage 3 and 4

Responses from older children and young people demonstrated a noticeable decline in the use of formal play spaces. Most reported preferring to spend time at home, at friends' houses, in grassy areas, or in nearby streets, although some still used traditional playgrounds. Parks were generally not visited on a daily basis, with the majority attending only a few times a week, if at all. Favourite sites included Millfields, Priory Park, Riverside Park, and Henbrook Park (not HDC), although some respondents indicated that no suitable or safe facilities were available in their area.

Access was feasible for most via walking or cycling, though reliance on adult transport remained a barrier for some. The features that appealed most to this age group were open spaces for social interaction, youth shelters, and exercise facilities, with swings, zip wires, monkey bars, and obstacle courses also mentioned. The overall perception of local provision was that it remained designed primarily for younger children, with limited age-appropriate features. KS3/4 respondents consistently highlighted a need for more modern, inclusive, and stimulating equipment, alongside improvements in cleanliness, lighting, and maintenance. Dissatisfaction with the lack of facilities for teenagers emerged as a strong and consistent theme.

4.1.5 Town and Parish Councils

45 councils identified themselves on the survey, outlining 93 play areas. However, many did not complete the survey so only 57 parks or play areas were represented. The majority of provision was aimed at younger children, particularly those aged 4–7, with very limited equipment for teenagers. Swings, slides, and climbing frames were the most common features, while specialist provision, such as BMX tracks or accessible equipment, was rare.

Usage was reported as generally high, with most parks being used daily or several times a week. However, concerns were raised regarding maintenance, with many councils identifying ageing or

broken equipment and the significant financial burden of repairs and replacements. Only 14 per cent of councils reported having accessible or inclusive facilities for children with additional needs. While some councils have plans for upgrades or expansion over the next five years, funding constraints were identified as the principal barrier to improvement. Councils consistently called for greater support in developing inclusive provision, particularly for teenagers and children with disabilities, alongside recognition of the broader social role of play areas within community life.

4.1.6 Stakeholders

Although the stakeholder survey achieved only six responses, it nonetheless provides valuable perspectives from local professionals and community representatives. Respondents included play providers, education staff, and community workers. Several noted slight increases in park usage in recent years, likely linked to post-pandemic behavioural shifts.

Stakeholders advocated for greater variety in play provision, including equipment for older children and teenagers, sensory features, and facilities such as outdoor gyms or table tennis. Coneygeare Park and Godmanchester's Riverside Park were identified as particularly popular, though the latter was viewed as limited in its offer for older children. While most expressed general satisfaction with current provision, the need for more inclusive, multigenerational, and geographically well-distributed facilities was highlighted as an ongoing priority.

4.1.7 Childcare Providers

Eight childcare providers contributed to the survey, supplemented by three follow-up interviews. Respondents comprised primarily childminders, with additional representation from nursery staff. While some felt that provision was broadly adequate, others highlighted clear disparities across the district, with certain areas significantly underserved.

Providers emphasised concerns about accessibility for children with special educational needs and disabilities, describing some play areas as unsuitable or inaccessible. Maintenance issues, including broken or outdated equipment, were reported, with climbing frames, seesaws, and roundabouts often singled out. Popular features remained swings, slides, and climbing equipment, with some emphasis on sensory play. Specific parks, including Priory Park, Stukeley Meadows, and Slepe Park, were criticised for this, while Hinchingsbrooke Park was praised for its inclusivity.

Childcare providers advocated for improvements including inclusive swings, in-ground trampolines, shaded areas, and clearer maintenance responsibilities. The need for age-appropriate provision, particularly to separate younger children from older groups congregating inappropriately, was also underlined.

4.1.8 Parents and Carers

Despite extensive engagement efforts, only eight parents and carers responded to the survey, making this the least represented group. Those who did respond reported relatively frequent use of parks, with several families visiting multiple times each week. Safety was generally viewed positively, though concerns were raised regarding poor lighting, antisocial behaviour, and the presence of dogs.

Parents valued swings, slides, climbing frames, and imaginative structures, though small or ineffective equipment such as bouncy rides and spinning seats were often criticised. Levels of satisfaction with local provision were moderate, with most describing themselves as “satisfied” rather than enthusiastic. Common barriers to more frequent use included the absence of toilets and changing facilities, maintenance, and a lack of suitable equipment for mid-age children (particularly around seven years old).

Suggested improvements focused on the introduction of toilets, cafés or refreshment options, more varied and challenging equipment for older children, and better promotion of underutilised play areas. Parents consistently stressed the importance of inclusive design, improved facilities, and safer environments. Notably, six of the eight respondents expressed a willingness to participate in further consultation, demonstrating an appetite for continued dialogue.

4.2 Focus groups

In order to gather detailed findings relating to parental views of local play opportunities, PAG organised 7 focus group sessions. These sessions were planned to target a range of parents geographically across Huntingdonshire. Efforts to raise engagement and target parents who may be willing to contribute included Facebook group marketing, direct emails to local parent organisations, local charities, community groups and contact with schools.

Despite email reminders before the session (2 days before, 2 hours before and 10 minutes before) turnout was minimal. Across the events, only 2 of the 9 parents who signed up showed up to discuss outdoor play. The attended sessions were the evening session and the Huntingdon targeted session.

Attendees were enthusiastic to contribute and intended topics were covered, despite low turnout. The conversations which took place with these parents were also further supported by the parent/carers survey, as outlined in the previous section. Key themes were identified throughout discussion; these are summarised below.

- Limited provision for older children and teenagers – both sessions highlighted a gap in play opportunities for older children, 10+ and teenagers.
- Insufficient facilities – toilets, seating, shade and refreshments were consistently flagged throughout both sessions.
- Safety and accessibility – poor lighting at specific parks was an area of concern through both sessions.
- Quality and maintenance – generally, parks were described as well-maintained, however both sessions identified equipment could be seen as uninteresting for older children.
- Frequently mentioned parks:
 - Hinchbrook Park – described as well-maintained and seemingly a popular choice for parents.
 - Hill Rise Park – identified as an area which does not always feel safe due to lighting.
 - Somersham Park – well-maintained but lacks facilities such as toilets and refreshments.
 - Coneygar Park – a popular choice for young children however does not feel safe later in the day due to lighting.
 - Great High Ground – popular for young children; however, lacks sufficient seating to cater for the number of users.
 - Riverside Parks, St Neots – equipment often soiled by birds, the rocket park was identified as poorly lit.

4.3 Interviews

Three childcare provider interviews were scheduled to provide further insight into play opportunities in Huntingdonshire. These interviews supported the survey responses from childminders, allowing interviewees to expand further on their previous contributions and share deeper insights from their experiences.

Questions were open and allowed interviewees to discuss topics they felt were particularly poignant.

4.3.1 Contextual questions

Through the initial questions, PAG ensured awareness of the location of the childcare providers, to ensure understanding of relevant parks. The interviewees were based across the district, specifically the following areas:

- Huntingdon: supporting children across Huntingdon, St Ives, Ramsey and Godmanchester
- St Neots: supporting the St Neots area
- St Ives: supporting St Ives and surrounding villages.

All the childminders interviewed cater to under 5s, with one also supporting a range from 5 to 8. Two of the providers access the outdoor play areas every day, with one making use of them on a weekly basis.

4.3.2 Local landscape of play

Given the geographical spread of the childminders, as expected a range of parks were identified as regularly used. Some of the named parks which are regularly used and maintained by HDC included:

- Hinchbrooke park
- Priory Park
- Riverside Park
- Loves Farm play areas
- Coneygeare park.

For the most part, these parks were preferred due to their geographical location. Given the challenge of supporting multiple children at once, the location is especially critical for the childminders. For example, the childminder based in St Ives expressed that whilst Hinchbrooke is a lovely park, the challenge to get there using public transport means they cannot visit often. One of the interviews also expressed a preference for the above parks because of the open spaces and the amount of greenery.

The interviews covered specific features which interviewees found particularly interesting for the children they care for. Examples included:

- Wooden materials for equipment over metal

- Swings
- Climbing frames
- Large green spaces
- Equipment which allows for multiple activities at once
- Spinning toys.

When asked about safety, specific parks were referred to as potential concerns. The examples provided by the community and the reasoning are included below:

- Priory Park: described as not suitable for the smaller age groups.
- Hill Rise Park: some stakeholders stated that they think the equipment is often vandalised or unsafe, and had concerns that uneven surfaces and broken glass in the forestry can present a risk to young children.
- Coneygeare Park: play equipment is not enclosed which presents a risk for childminders caring for multiple children. There is also uneven flooring which is difficult for small children.
- Hinchingsbrooke Park: stakeholders stated that they feel risks are present due to proximity to dog training classes. There is a concern that this information is not publicised which means shared spaces are sometimes avoided due to uncertainty.

Through the interviews, childminders outlined their experiences with local outdoor play areas and the age range they cater for. There was some reference here to older children being ‘bored’ as a result of the tailoring of equipment at play spaces to young children. In particular, one childminder raised that this had led to older children using spaces intended for young children. Whilst acknowledging this is through no fault of their own, this can present some safety risks. One childminder shared their experience of verbal abuse from older children when using play spaces for young children.

4.3.3 Accessibility and barriers

Regarding accessibility, all of those interviewed raised concerns. Whilst there was praise regarding clear, safe pathways to access the majority of parks, the parks themselves were described as inaccessible to children with SEND. Those interviewed expressed unhappiness with what was available, with no play equipment allowing these children to play independently. Concerns of this nature were rooted in children with SEND expected to observe other children play, rather than being able to engage in play themselves. Where wheelchair equipment was present, one interviewee said

this was not enclosed, therefore restricting their ability to use this due to supporting multiple children at one time. In contrast, Hinchingsbrooke Park was praised for the opportunity for inclusive play. Comments on the roundabouts demonstrated some opportunity for children of varying abilities to engage in shared play.

Barriers to accessing parks were highlighted as safety, as well as difficulty travelling and parking to certain parks. Whilst one childminder outlined that they are able to travel with their van, they were aware that this was a privilege that others would not have access to. Travel restrictions were said to require rigorous planning to navigate public transport. Safety concerns were largely due to a lack of fencing surrounding play areas and uneven flooring. Coneygeare was used as an example of a play area with particularly challenging flooring, whereas Riverside Park was described as the ideal flooring type for safe play.

Speaking from their experiences at the play areas as childminders, unique challenges were identified. These included a lack of shade and benches, as well as limited pieces of equipment which is challenging for those attending the park with more than one child.

4.3.4 Quality and suitability

Feedback on the quality of outdoor play areas was positive. One interviewee commented that the parks they attend are maintained quite well, often engaging directly with maintenance staff when at the parks. They also reported broken equipment had been replaced quickly. The challenges relating to grounding, which is outdated were shared by multiple interviewees, with one childminder expressing concern around the lack of risk assessment.

Use of the parks was reported to be enjoyable for the children. Some responses confirmed that they are able to engage with a range of play types with the children they support, including imaginative and physical play. Great High Ground (the “pirate boat park”) was named as an excellent example of this. Childminders reported high use of the open spaces to encourage a range of play, as opposed to select pieces of equipment.

When asked about the facilities available at parks across Huntingdonshire, the providers expressed concerns regarding the lack of toilets and benches. These issues were consistently discussed in all three interviews. One interviewee identified that whilst there are toilets at Riverside Park, they have experienced repeated issues accessing these due to the doors being locked.

4.3.5 Improvements and aspirations

Specific equipment was suggested by interviewees when asked which features or designs, they would welcome. This included:

- Flat roundabouts – wide enough for wheelchair users
- In-ground trampolines
- Additional climbing activities for younger children.

Aspirations to improve the play spaces for childminders specifically included various recommendations relating to safety and facilities. Regarding safety, suggestions included a focus on using wooden equipment instead of metal as this cannot be used when weather conditions vary. Fencing in of equipment and even, grass surfaces were reinforced as important to interviewees, as well as facilities to eat such as benches.

Further suggestions related to communication and signage, as outlined below.

- Reports of uncertainty as to who was responsible for maintaining certain parks due to some lack of signage means that some respondents were unsure where to report damaged or dangerous equipment.
- Communication relating to the use of shared spaces was requested, for example Hinchbrook Park's dog training classes to ensure young children can use the space when these are not taking place. Furthermore, information relating to pond dipping activities was requested.

5. Current Provision Assessment

To assess the quality and perception of current provision across Huntingdonshire, PAG employed the following approach:

- Use of consultation methods – surveys, focus groups and interviews – to understand local perception (this is outlined in the previous section)
- Geographic mapping to identify the location of existing parks and where provision is dispersed²
- In person observations of mapped parks to understand the level of use and accessibility.

This section outlined the relevant findings, as well as a thematic Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of provision maintained by HDC. The findings below are organised by village, with key findings from observation assessments outlined.

5.1 Godmanchester

Observations across three local parks revealed generally low levels of use, with no children present at Stokes Drive and Roman Way, and only light to moderate use at Wigmore Farm (1–9 children). This may have been influenced by factors such as weather or time of day. While all sites were walkable from nearby homes and accessible via pedestrian routes, none offered a fully inclusive play experience. Wigmore Farm was the most accessible, with some inclusive features in the infant zone and good manoeuvrability, though overall provision remained limited. Roman Way included fixed sensory and imaginative elements, but these were not practically usable for children with mobility impairments.

The sites were clean, well maintained, and fully fenced with secure gates, supporting supervision and safeguarding. However, no intergenerational or adult-oriented fitness features were present. Shade and shelter were limited, with only natural tree cover at Stokes Drive and Wigmore Farm offering partial protection. Overall, while the parks were safe and in good condition, improvements in inclusivity, variety, and family-friendly amenities would better support community use.

5.1.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

²[HDC PSA - RAG - Google My Maps](#)

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Wigmore Farm	Good internal surfacing, wide age range, some inclusive features	Junior zone lacks accessible equipment, no formal shelter or shade
Roman Way	Clean site, sensory play attempts, secure fencing	No seating, no bin, heavy ladder-based access limits inclusive play
Stokes Drive	Compact, tidy, good fencing	Woodchip surfacing and no accessible play equipment, no defined play zones, or diversity

Across all three sites, there was a noticeable shortfall in inclusive provision. While physical entry and internal movement were often possible, equipment design did not support equitable play for disabled children. Creative, sensory, and fantasy play were notably underrepresented across the sites. While some equipment encouraged physical engagement and solitary activity, there was limited provision for children with varied cognitive or social development needs.

5.1.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Wigmore Farm	Two-tiered layout with age zoning; wide range of challenge; ample internal space and surfacing	No structured sensory provision; limited accessible equipment in junior zone; no shade or shelter
Roman Way	Secure fencing, sensory elements (e.g. themed climbing frame), clean environment	No seating, inaccessible to children with mobility issues, sensory play unreachable without ladder access
Stokes Drive	Compact layout, group swing, shade from trees, soft surfacing	No accessible equipment, woodchip limits mobility, minimal equipment variety, no sensory or imaginative play

Across the three Godmanchester play areas (Stokes Drive, Roman Way, Wigmore Farm), observed family engagement was low at the time of visits. No families were seen using the sites for shared activities, although weather and time of day may have influenced this. That said, key design elements to support intergenerational or family play were generally absent.

5.2 Huntingdon

Observations across 22 sites showed uneven levels of use. Thirteen sites, including small estate parks such as Sapley Fields, Meadow Gardens, and Garner Court, as well as more adult-oriented or ambiguous spaces like the Wetland Area and MUGA Sallowbush, had no children present at the time of visit. In contrast, Hinchingsbrooke Play Area, Oxmoor Lane, and Woodland Play Area demonstrated clear community uptake, with 10–29 children observed. These higher-use sites tended to cater for a wider age range, supporting both younger children and teens, whereas many others were limited to KS1/KS2 provision and lacked opportunities for intergenerational play.

Inclusivity could be improved in these parks, with no park offering a fully inclusive experience. Fourteen had no accessible equipment, and where inclusive features existed, they were sometimes limited or unusable. For example, Hinchingsbrooke Sensory Park included a wheelchair swing that was locked at the time of the visit – although the key for this is available on request, there was no observed instructions on where the key could be obtained, suggestion to advertise this more explicitly, Thames Road had damaged sensory boards, and Oxmoor Lane offered step-free circulation but no dedicated inclusive pieces. Seating was generally available but often restricted to a single bench. Overall, while some sites demonstrated strong community engagement, the majority showed low to no use, and provision for inclusivity and broad age ranges was limited

5.2.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Oxmoor Lane	Best all-round accessibility and surfacing	No specialist inclusive equipment
Devoke Close	Good surfacing and cleanliness	Graffiti, limited shade, only partial equipment access

Hinchingbrooke Play Area	High usage and broad age appeal	Insecure gates, poor path infrastructure
Hinchingbrooke Sensory	Wheelchair swing exists	Locked and unusable; no fencing
Sapley Fields	Large open space	No paths to equipment, vandalism, inaccessibility
Meadow Gardens	Local use evident	No pathways or inclusive play options
Stukeley Meadows	Generally tidy, some seating	Dangerous flooring condition, trip hazards
Mayfield Crescent	Soft surface present	Equipment and layout unsuitable for SEND access
Riverside Park	Good site condition	No inclusive play options despite good access

Across the observed sites, physical play was almost universally supported, with most parks offering equipment such as swings, slides, and climbing frames. In contrast, opportunities for fantasy and imaginative play were limited and tended to appear only in themed locations such as Whaddons and Thames Road. Creative or sensory-focused play was often tokenistic, with features either underdeveloped or entirely absent.

Thames Road stood out as an outlier, providing a stronger mix of play types through fantasy elements, cooperative play structures, and toddler-friendly design, though these benefits were offset by notable access limitations.

5.2.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
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Oxmoor Lane	Strong layout, group swing, age variety, partial sensory access	Incomplete pathway paving, “coolest” feature (floor trampoline) is inaccessible
Thames Road	Sensory boards, themed, group play options, suitable challenge	No path access to play area, limited for older children
Hinchingbrooke Play Area	High use, wide age appeal	Rope-secured gate, inaccessible slide, poor layout
Hinchingbrooke Sensory Park	Themed, well-designed for early years	Locked inclusive swing, no fencing, aging equipment
Devoke Close	Good surface, climbing frame with cubbyholes	Graffiti, no true inclusive value
Woodland Play Area	Distinct zones, sensory and climbing	No fencing, steep play features
Riverside Park	Themed (train/nautical), interactive features	Excludes children with disabilities
Bevan Close	Local use, partial surfacing	Only three pieces of non-inclusive equipment, no bins
Garner Court	Sheltered bench, internal bins	Littering, inaccessible equipment
Sapley Fields	Large space, soft surfacing	Equipment unclear in purpose, vandalised, poor access

Across the observed sites, family engagement varied significantly:

- High family use and visible interaction were noted at Hinchingbrooke Play Area, Riverside Park, and Devoke Close. At these locations, parents were seen actively supporting

children's play, supervising use of higher-risk equipment (e.g., zip lines, large climbing frames), and engaging in shared experiences like picnics or group games.

- Moderate engagement was present in sites such as Oxmoor Lane and Thames Road, though these lacked designated family zones or picnic tables, limiting potential for prolonged stays.
- Very low engagement was observed in smaller estate parks (e.g., Bevan Close, Meadow Gardens, The Whaddons) where the play offer was minimal or narrowly age focused.

Children were most visibly engaged at Hinchingsbrooke, Riverside, Oxmoor Lane, and Thames Road, where a balance of moderate challenge, social equipment such as group swings and climbing frames, and visually stimulating environments encouraged active play. Memorable features included the floor trampoline and spinning seats at Oxmoor Lane, insect-themed sensory play and roundabout at Hinchingsbrooke Sensory Park, nautical and train-themed structures at Riverside Park, and the distinctive climbing “dog” sculpture at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.

However, there is scope to improve the quality and inclusivity of provision. This includes addressing inaccessible or broken access routes (e.g., Mayfield Crescent, Sapley, the Hinchingsbrooke slide), locked inclusive equipment such as the ramp swing at Hinchingsbrooke Sensory Park, and surface degradation, notably cracking at Stukeley Meadows and muddy or worn approaches at other sites. Vandalism was also observed at locations including Sapley Fields and Devoke Close. Additionally, safety concerns arose at sites with unfenced proximity to water or roads, such as the Wetlands and Hinchingsbrooke Play Area.

5.3 Ramsey

At the time of observation, Between 1–9 children were observed. While not heavily populated, the site showed signs of regular engagement across multiple pieces of equipment. While the park in Ramsey offered relatively good space and manoeuvrability, most equipment did not provide equitable access for children with more complex mobility or sensory needs.

The park was clean and well-maintained, with no evidence of litter or vandalism at the time of visit. A single bench was provided, which may be sufficient given the park's size, but no structured shade or shelter was available.

5.3.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Signal Road	Clean, well-maintained, wide age appeal up to KS2, good fencing	Limited accessible equipment, no shade or family seating, partial path access

One key sensory opportunity was observed: the pirate ship includes interactive sensory components such as tactile toys or auditory panels.

Despite the park's compact size, play zones were implicitly grouped by activity type — e.g., climbing, swinging, and imaginative play each had a defined area. This supported a logical and functional flow. The pirate ship supports cooperative play, with space for group interaction and shared use — this was the strongest feature in terms of social engagement. Other equipment such as group swings and a seesaw offer further opportunity for parallel and cooperative play, though solitary play was also prevalent.

5.3.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Signal Road	Inclusive pirate ship with ramp and sensory play; logical layout; wide range of challenge	Only one accessible feature; limited sensory play overall; three pieces of equipment lack path access

Observed family presence at Signal Road Play Area was moderate, with 1–9 children using the site during the visit. Children were seen interacting actively with the play equipment — particularly the pirate ship — suggesting high engagement, although formal support for family play and supervision was limited. Children were observed engaging with a wide range of equipment, especially the pirate ship. Swings, the seesaw, and climbing items were also in use, suggesting broad appeal.

5.4 Sawtry

At the time of observation, the park saw moderate use, with 1–9 children present. Some children engaged with equipment such as the zip wire, while others played independently on grassy areas, indicating partial utilisation of the formal play offer. Young people aged 11+ were present but used the space informally rather than through targeted features.

Accessibility was limited by uneven grassy paths that did not lead directly to equipment, hilly terrain, and natural surfacing that is neither level nor DDA-compliant, creating barriers for mobility aids or pushchairs. Some equipment, like the group swing, could support children with limited mobility if accompanied, but there were no continuous accessible pathways linking features. The park is centrally located and easy to access on foot or by car, though the absence of formal entrances, signage, or accessible surfacing reduces usability for visitors unfamiliar with the site.

Inclusive play is minimal, with little sensory provision. The hilly terrain creates exclusionary zones and elevates risk from falls, while elevated equipment and slope gradients limit independent access. Maintenance was positive: the site was litter-free, bins were provided, and no vandalism was observed.

5.4.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Rowel I Way	Wide age coverage; group swing and zip wire support engagement across multiple age groups	No formal fencing or shelter; limited accessible paths; safety risks due to uneven surfaces and hill placement; inadequate seating for families

While some equipment (e.g. group swing) may be accessible with assistance, there are no direct paths or accessible surfaces linking the play items — especially those placed on sloped terrain. The park includes equipment theoretically usable by children with disabilities, but lack of level access and uneven surfacing severely limits usability.

Some sensory equipment was observed (likely touch-based or themed components). Equipment was varied in function (swings, slide, zip wire), but not formally zoned. Play types were dispersed across a natural slope, affecting flow and accessibility. The play area offered a wide challenge spectrum, from toddler-appropriate swings to a high zip wire — suitable for KS2 and older users.

Creative, sensory, and imaginative play were all underrepresented, limiting the site's alignment with broad developmental and inclusive standards.

5.4.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Rowell Way	Wide age appeal; group swing and zip wire in use; open green setting; informal sensory elements	No structured shade, shelter, or seating; steep terrain limits accessibility; sensory play is minimal and not inclusive; paths do not connect to equipment

Observed family engagement at Rowell Way was moderate, with a small number of children (1–9) using the play area at the time of the visit. However, the site’s overall design does not actively support intergenerational play or sustained family use.

There was no dedicated space for shared family activity. While the park’s grassy layout theoretically allows for picnics or informal gatherings, this potential was not supported by features such as picnic tables, shaded zones, or clustered seating. Only one bench was available — which could be insufficient given the scale and catchment of the site.

The zip wire appeared to be the most popular and distinctive element.

5.5 St Ives

Hill Rise Play Area saw moderate use (1–9 children), while Hill Rise Skate Park had high use (10–19 children). Crescent and Dunnock Way (not HDC) were unoccupied during observation, suggesting potential issues with appeal or suitability. Hill Rise Play Area served toddlers through KS2, and Hill Rise Skate Park accommodated KS1 through young adults. Crescent and Dunnock Way focused on younger children, with limited older-child or inclusive provision.

Only Hill Rise Skate Park attracted teenagers and young adults, though it was not designed for inclusive youth or family use. Internal surfacing was generally smooth at Hill Rise Play Area and Crescent, but external access was limited. Dunnock Way’s stairs-only entry restricted access, while the Skate Park had ramped access but limited shade and some graffiti.

Hill Rise Play Area had one partially accessible item and open space for manoeuvrability. Surfaces were mostly soft, but Crescent and Dunnock Way had inconsistencies limiting accessibility.

5.5.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Hill Rise Play Area	Moderate use, some spatial inclusivity	No inclusive equipment; no shade or dedicated seating
Hill Rise Skate Park	Highest use observed; appeals to teenagers; shaded bench available	No fencing; limited suitability for younger users; minor maintenance issues
Crescent (not HDC)	Secure fencing; internal soft surfacing	No accessible entry path; no seating; no inclusive equipment; cleanliness issues
Dunnock Way (not HDC)	Bench provision; residentially located	No proper fencing; access via stairs; inaccessible layout; no inclusive features

Hill Rise Skate Park featured a low ramp that may be more accessible to younger or less mobile children. While some movement space was available, meaningful engagement for disabled children was minimal, limiting alignment with Equality Act 2010 and PSA duties.

5.5.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Hill Rise Play Area	Open space; some sensory equipment; good internal surfacing	Limited inclusive equipment; no shelter; only minimal social play encouragement
Hill Rise Skate Park	High usage across age groups; accessible low ramp; shaded shelter present	No fencing; informal layout; not inclusive for non-skating children or disabled users

Crescent	Soft surfacing internally; secure fencing; tidy layout	No inclusive features; no seating; no sensory or imaginative elements; poor external access
Dunnock Way	Distinct zones for different age groups; benches available	Below-street entry; no accessible pathways; no shelter; no accessible equipment

- Observed family engagement varied by site:
 - Hill Rise Play Area showed moderate engagement (1–9 children observed), but family interaction was largely supervisory rather than interactive. The adjacent open space provided some informal potential for shared activity.
 - Hill Rise Skate Park had the highest observed use (10–19 children and young people). It functioned more as a youth space than a family play area, with limited appropriateness for younger children or co-play.
 - Crescent and Dunnock Way had no children present during observation. Both sites lacked features to attract or support family-based use.
- Hill Rise Skate Park stood out as the most dynamic space, supporting extended engagement for older children and teens. However, its value for younger children and family groups was limited.

5.6 St Neots

Observations across the district revealed a wide range of usage patterns. Riverside Park, both adjacent to the car park and café and along River Road, experienced high use, with 20–29 children present, reflecting strong community engagement. Moderate use was seen at sites such as Henbrook Linear Park, Great High Ground, and the BMX/skate park, particularly among older children. In contrast, many local estate parks, including Weston Court, Maule Close, Furrowfields, and Top Birches, had no children present during observation, likely reflecting limited equipment or hyperlocal design.

Larger central parks, such as Riverside, Priory Park, and Great High Ground, catered to a broad age range from early years to KS4 and beyond, while smaller neighbourhood sites typically served only toddlers and KS1, restricting their wider appeal. Most sites lacked equipment specifically designed for disabled users, with only occasional features, such as bucket swings or wide entry climbing zones, present; these were sometimes unsupported by inclusive layouts or continuous surfacing. The

majority of parks were located within residential areas and easily walkable. Overall maintenance was generally good, with minimal litter or vandalism observed, though shading and seating were inconsistently available across sites.

5.6.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Riverside Park (car park side)	High engagement; varied age use; location near café supports family use	No inclusive pathways; limited accessible equipment
Hennrook Linear Park	Spatially accessible; includes partial inclusive features	No designated sensory/fantasy play
Great High Ground	Broad challenge range; inclusive social seating zone	Surface (sand) may impact full accessibility
BMX/Skate Park	Strong youth use; tiered ramps; shaded seating	Not designed for children with disabilities or very young children
Priory Park Spinney	Naturalistic location and spatial interest	Steep access, uneven surfaces, and no clear pathways – inaccessible for many users
Weston Court / Maule Close	Safe, clean, hyperlocal provision	No shade/shelter or inclusive features; usage extremely low or absent

Social play design across the observed sites was inconsistent. Larger parks, such as Great High Ground, Riverside Park, and Woodridge, facilitated group play through shared equipment like large boats, swings, and sand features. Skate and MUGA facilities, including BMX parks and Kester Way, also supported social interaction for older users, though these spaces were neither fully inclusive nor accessible to all.

In contrast, smaller estate parks offered little intentional support for social play. Equipment was typically single-user, and no sites included structured games or communication boards to encourage interaction across different abilities. Opportunities for creative and imaginative play were similarly limited, with notable exceptions at Top Birches, which used a train theme to stimulate imaginative engagement, and Woodridge, where zip lines and fantasy-inspired climbing units provided potential for creative play.

5.6.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Riverside Park (River Road)	Broad age range, large user numbers, grouped play zones	Elevated features: adult support needed; no sensory elements
Great High Ground	High challenge range, group swing, shelter, inclusive layout	Sand and surface transitions may limit access for some; no dedicated inclusive equipment
Hennrook Linear Park	Safe surfacing, swings with bordered seating, clean	No sensory zones; limited shade; basic equipment only
Bowlins Loves Farm	Painted games on ground, inclusive open layout, central location	No equipment; minimal challenge or sensory play
Top Birches – Loves Farm	Train-themed play, accessible to some children with disabilities	No clear surfacing or structured pathways; minimal shade or challenge
Woodridge – Loves Farm	Range of equipment, group swing, some social zones	Woodchip surfacing, limited accessible play equipment, no clear inclusivity

Maule Close / Hull Way / Furrowfields	Basic safety; hyperlocal provision	No sensory, inclusive, or imaginative equipment; limited challenge or appeal beyond toddlers
Kester Way MUGA	Youth provision, social shelter	No inclusive gym or basketball design; low play value for younger or disabled users
Priory Spinney	Natural environment, age-spanning layout	Steep, inaccessible terrain; no surfacing; wooden-only equipment not suited to disabled users

5.7 Yaxley

Observations at Crocus Way and Shackleton Way showed these sites catered to a broad age range, from toddlers through KS3, with a mix of play equipment to support varied play experiences. In contrast, Scott Drive focused exclusively on early years, primarily serving babies and toddlers. Across all three sites, there was little evidence of intergenerational or teenage-oriented design, and no youth or adult fitness elements were present. No children were present at the time of observation across all three sites. While this could reflect temporary conditions (e.g., time of day, weather), it may also indicate limited community uptake, particularly for smaller or estate-based parks.

None of the parks met expectations for inclusive design, with equipment lacking sensory or physical accessibility features. Scott Drive did provide spacing between equipment that would allow movement with assistive devices, but offered no meaningful play opportunities for children with disabilities. All three sites were clean and litter-free at the time of visit, reflecting positively on local maintenance and potentially supporting family confidence in using these spaces.

5.7.1 Key Outliers and Strategic Observations

Site	Positive Outliers	Issues / Gaps
Scott Drive	High-quality surfacing, clear design for toddlers	No inclusive play features, no shelter

Crocus Way	Clean site, secure fencing	No path from road, inaccessible to wheelchairs, no seating
Shackleton Way	Wide age range catered for, good internal space	No inclusive equipment, informal-only shade, no sensory features

Across all three sites, inclusive design was a significant gap. Children using mobility aids could enter some of the spaces but had no meaningful opportunities to engage in play.

5.7.2 Site-Specific Observations (Condensed Highlights)

Site	Strengths	Gaps
Shackleton Way	Spacious, clear zoning by equipment type, some scope for social interaction via swing/climb	No inclusive equipment, limited sensory value, “coolest” feature (zip wire) inaccessible
Scott Drive	Clean, soft surface, compact design for younger children, small interactive feature (noughts and crosses)	No shelter, minimal sensory or inclusive provision, limited range of play types
Crocus Way	Soft surfacing within play zone, tidy site	No direct access path, missing swings, no inclusive or sensory features, no seating or shade

Across the three Yaxley sites observed (Crocus Way, Scott Drive, Shackleton Way), family engagement was consistently low at the time of visit. No families were observed using the spaces for shared activities, and equipment design generally did not encourage family-based interaction.

5.8 SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
87% of sites feature safe surfacing; most are clean and well-maintained (92%).	Over 50% of sites lack accessible pathways; many still rely on grass-only or uneven surfaces.

Several large flagship sites (e.g. Riverside, Hinchingsbrook) successfully attract broad age ranges.	Inclusive equipment is rare – only 17 sites fully accessible; sensory elements present at just 9 sites.
Provision for toddlers and KS1 is strong and widespread.	Limited provision for older children/teenagers; family-friendly features (shade, seating) often absent.
Many sites encourage social play through design (group swings, climbing).	Inconsistent inclusivity across villages, with rural/estate-based sites underused or inaccessible.
Opportunities	Threats
Target investment in under-served villages (e.g. Yaxley, Sawtry, Crescent, Dunnock Way) to address accessibility gaps.	Risk of long-term underuse of inaccessible or poorly equipped sites, leading to wasted assets.
Expand inclusive design (ramps, sensory zones, universally accessible equipment) to meet Equality Act and PSA standards.	Over-reliance on a handful of popular parks could create overcrowding and uneven community provision.
Develop intergenerational and youth-focused features (e.g. fitness zones, shaded family areas).	Disengagement of older children may push them into spaces designed for younger children, reducing safety and appeal.
Engage communities to co-design improvements, building ownership and better alignment with needs.	Ongoing maintenance or safety concerns (e.g. vandalism, broken equipment) risk undermining trust in provision.

6. Gap Analysis

This Gap Analysis Report forms part of HDC's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to identify where play provision across the district falls short in terms of access, quality, safety, inclusivity, and overall sufficiency. The findings draw on site audits, community engagement, and geospatial analysis to support evidence-led planning and future investment.

A total of 38 sites were assessed through professional Health and Safety audits, and additional sites were explored through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with children, parents, carers, and stakeholders. It should be noted that these Health and Safety audits were carried out by Handsam, an education and play compliance firm, whose standards and frameworks differ to those used by HDC's current auditors. The results of this additional check should be understood as an additional, independent, and supplementary analysis, and not as an overwrite of internal health and safety checks.

According to this external analysis, while many parks are well-used and well-loved, the analysis reveals various challenges and opportunities across the district.

Key findings include:

- **Uneven Access in Specific Areas:** Some communities, particularly in rural villages and recently developed housing areas, experience limited access to walkable, local play provision. In many cases, this reflects historical development patterns or local preferences regarding maintenance responsibilities.
- **Maintenance and Equipment Condition:** Audit observations identified a small number of sites where issues such as worn surfacing, missing signage, or ageing equipment were noted. These issues are already known to the Council and are being managed through routine inspection schedules and planned upgrades. In some lower-use areas, alternative approaches such as consolidation may represent better long-term value.
- **Inclusive Play Opportunities:** While many play areas were designed before current inclusive design standards, there is an opportunity to improve access and usability over time. Just under a third of assessed sites currently include features specifically designed for children with disabilities, and HDC continues to incorporate accessible elements where feasible as part of wider refurbishment efforts.

- **Provision for Older Children:** Equipment for teenagers is comparatively limited in many parks, where early years provision has historically been prioritised. Feedback from young people points to a growing demand for more adventurous, sociable, and age-appropriate play opportunities.
- **Supporting Amenities:** The lack of toilets, benches, lighting, and shaded areas at some sites can limit dwell time, particularly for families with very young children, disabled users, or intergenerational groups. Addressing these supporting features could help broaden appeal and accessibility at key strategic sites.
- **Community Feedback and High-Use Sites:** Comments were received on sites such as Hill Rise Park, Priory Park, and Riverside Park. These are among the district's busiest locations, and feedback largely reflects the impact of high footfall and ageing infrastructure. These sites are already prioritised for investment and form part of ongoing improvement planning.

Complete findings are presented in a comprehensive Gap Analysis Table, including RAG ratings, one based on audit results. These feed directly into the Strategic Improvement Plan, which sets out prioritised actions to address sufficiency gaps and raise the overall quality and equity of play in Huntingdonshire.

6.1 Consultation and stakeholder engagement

6.1.1 Surveys

Overall, the survey findings underscore a pattern of uneven distribution, age-based drop-off in engagement, and accessibility barriers that contribute to play insufficiency in specific localities. The strong preferences for certain types of equipment and natural spaces, alongside reports of disrepair or lack of inclusion, present clear areas for strategic investment.

Survey insights have been cross-referenced with geographic data, focus group findings, and health and safety evaluations to prioritise areas and populations for intervention. The resulting Gap Analysis Table will highlight where need is greatest and inform a pipeline of strategic investments.

6.1.2 Interviews

Interviews confirm and deepen findings from other data sources, particularly in areas such as inclusivity, age-appropriateness, infrastructure quality, and geographic equity. The lived experience

shared by childminders reflects significant systemic gaps, even in well-used spaces, and shows that a park's presence alone is insufficient without functionality, safety, and design that serves all users.

6.1.3 Focus groups

The parent and carer focus groups reinforce many of the issues identified in other data strands while offering unique insight into lived experience. They make clear that sufficiency cannot be measured solely by proximity or quantity of parks. Instead, play spaces must be designed and maintained with specific attention to infrastructure, inclusivity, age range, gender, and daily usability. Their reflections will be integrated into the overall gap analysis synthesis and used to inform the strategic improvement plan, ensuring that the voices of those most involved in children's daily lives are central to the shaping of future provision.

6.2 Health and safety evaluations

As part of the broader assessment of play sufficiency across Huntingdonshire, independent Health and Safety (H&S) audits have been undertaken for a representative sample of play areas by Handsam Ltd. These detailed site inspections evaluate compliance against EN 1176 playground safety standards and general best practice, identifying potential hazards, infrastructure deterioration, and recommended actions for improvement.

The audits provide a crucial technical layer of data that complements the observational, qualitative, and usage data gathered through community engagement and mapping. Each audited site receives a physical condition score and itemised action plan, prioritising necessary repairs, refurbishments, and site management improvements.

6.3 Park Gap Analysis Table

Each park entry includes location, audit score (where available), a summary of current physical condition, insights gathered from surveys, interviews, and focus groups (where applicable), identified issues from the H&S audit, recommended actions, and a rating based on the audit score and the nature of issues identified in the Handsam site assessments. This provides an objective technical safety and compliance rating. The RAG ratings are:

- **Green** — high-performing site with full or near-full compliance. No significant safety or maintenance issues. Score of or above 93% according to Handsam.

- **Amber** — generally compliant but with minor to moderate issues (e.g. wear, missing signage, surface wear). Score of 85-92.99% according to Handsam.
- **Red** — Site has significant safety concerns or multiple compliance failures. Urgent action needed. Score below 85% according to Handsam.

This table should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Improvement Plan in the following section, which translates these findings into recommended actions, proposed timescales, and resource planning. The parks identified as Red represent high-priority cases where safety, usability, or sufficiency are significantly compromised. Amber sites require investment to prevent further deterioration or to enhance underperforming but valued spaces. Green sites are broadly compliant but may still benefit from routine enhancements or inclusive design upgrades.

It should be noted that this table is based on the observations and H&S reports made during the project. Some of these issues have been addressed at the time of project completion. Where relevant, this has been noted. The original RAG and H&S scores are still presented to give an accurate representation on the data collected.

Park Name	Location	Audit Score (%)	Condition Summary	Community Insight	Identified Issues from H&S	Recommended Actions	H&S RAG
Bawlins	St Neots	95.81%	Structurally sound; limited safety concerns		Missing installation certificate; gate closure too slow; raised manhole cover	Obtain installation certificate; adjust gate closure mechanism; cordon off area around raised manhole	Amber
Bevan Close	Huntingdon	73.44%	Poor overall condition; multiple areas fenced off. It should be noted that this park has since been improved.		Equipment fenced off; missing installation certificate; trip hazards from ongoing works; no warning signs at substation; missing D bolt load indicators. It should be noted that	Repair or remove out-of-use equipment; provide certificate; install Chapter 8 barriers; add substation signage; mark D bolts. It should be noted that this	Red

					this park has since been improved.	park has since been improved.	
Crocus Way	Yaxley	61.58%	The full site needs a full refurbishment		Missing installation certificate; missing manufacturer's plates on equipment	Obtain installation certificate; affix manufacturer's plates	Red
Furrowfields	St Neots	90.17%	Generally good condition with no major hazards		Missing installation certificate; wooden borders need maintenance; flaking paint; missing manufacturer's plates	Provide installation certificate; maintain wooden posts; repaint surfaces; affix missing ID plates	Amber
Grassland Area	Huntingdon	96.53%	Very good condition; minor		BBQs showing signs of age	Consider replacing BBQ units	Amber

			aesthetic concern noted				
Great High Ground	St Neots	94.16%	Good condition; no physical issues noted		Missing installation certificate	Obtain original installation certificate	Green
Henbrook Linear Park	St Neots	90.79%	Generally functional; minor safety concerns		No installation certificate; damaged seesaw spring; worn rocker handles; worn swing seats; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; repair or replace damaged equipment; monitor surfacing	Amber
Hill Rise Park	St Ives	86.12%	Functioning but with multiple safety issues	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Broken fencing; loose gate stop; missing fixings; uneven surfacing; equipment	Replace fencing; fix gate and surface; add plates; monitor and repair	Amber

					wear; missing documentation	damaged elements	
Hill Rise Skate Park	St Ives	72.93%	Generally compliant; minor wear and structural issues	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Missing installation certificate; movement in grind rail; worn surfaces; graffiti; trip hazard from edge	Provide documentation; address loose fittings; resurface entry/exit; remove graffiti	Red
Hinchingbrook e Park Main Playground	Huntingdon	86.22%	Satisfactory condition with several significant remedials	Regular visits; children enjoy it; site of recent injury due to uneven surfacing; safety hazard near large slide and café area	Missing installation certificate; damaged see saw; illegible ID plate; unsafe gates (finger traps); splintering wooden fence; unclear D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; replace see saw; make pivot safe in interim; replace gates and wooden fence; mark load-bearing D bolts clearly	Red

Hinchingbrook e Park Old Playground	Huntingdon	74.26%	Unsatisfactory condition; ageing infrastructure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; deteriorating wooden elements; no fencing or gates	Provide certificate and signage; monitor and plan to replace decaying timber; consider secure enclosure for safety	Red
Hinchingbrook e Park Outdoor Gym Equipment	Huntingdon	95.95%	Very good condition; minor equipment issues		Missing installation certificate; two missing equipment units; trip hazard from base plates	Provide installation certificate; replace missing gym items; address trip hazard from plate edges	Green

Hinchingbrook e Park Sensory Play Area	Huntingdon	89.58%	Satisfactory condition; key item currently quarantined	Occasionally visited; valued for nature and considered safe; large site and limited access split groups; not buggy- friendly	Missing installation certificate and signage; main swing padlocked and out of use;	Repair swing and reinstate safely; provide installation certificate; install safety signage including contact details; affix manufacturer ID plates	Amber
Hinchingbrook e Park Woodland Play Area	Huntingdon	92.17%	Well- maintained with minor documentatio n and signage issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage;	Provide original installation certificate; install safety signage with name and contact number; affix manufacturer ID plates	Amber

Hull Way (24 & 25)	St Neots	94.46%	High standard; minimal non-compliance noted		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide missing certificate and install safety signage	Green
Kester Way (MUGA)	St Neots	94.81%	Good condition; structurally sound with minimal issues		Missing installation certificate; area not secure out of hours	Obtain installation certificate; consider out-of-hours security options	Amber
Maryland Avenue	Huntingdon	90.74%	Good overall condition with multiple minor issues		Missing installation certificate; incomplete fencing; gates fail to close; trip hazards from soft pour; worn slide; unsuitable surface under climbing frame	Provide certificate; repair fencing and gates; fix surface and fall zones; monitor and maintain slide condition	Amber

Maule Close	St Neots	92.90%	Well-maintained; generally safe		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer plates; gate lacks auto closer; undulating surface near equipment	Obtain certificate; fix gate auto closer; install ID plates; repair surfacing to address trip hazard	Amber
Mayfield Crescent	Huntingdon	87.62%	Satisfactory overall; minor damage and surfacing issues		Missing installation certificate; trip hazards from undulating surface; missing D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; address surface hazards; clearly mark load-bearing bolts	Amber
Oxmoor Lane	Huntingdon	93.08%	Satisfactory overall with minor remedials required		Missing installation certificate; surface degradation causing trip hazard; unclear D bolt load indicators	Provide certificate; repair soft pour surface; label load-bearing D bolts	Amber

Priory Park St Neots	St Neots	86.56%	Generally satisfactory; localised damage	Popular for natural play; supports demand for outdoor; no inclusive features; not safe for toddlers	Missing zip wire sleeves; missing installation certificate; loose gate; damaged surfacing	Replace sleeves; fix gate; install ID plates; resurface to remove trip hazards	Amber
Riverside Park	Huntingdon	90.48%	Good condition; minor compliance and surface issues		Missing installation certificate; gate not lockable; unclear D bolt markings; surface shrinkage causing trip hazards	Provide certificate; fix gate locking mechanism; label D bolts; repair surface to remove trip risks	Amber
Riverside Park (Indoor Bowls Club)	St Neots	85.94%	Mixed condition; multiple		Missing installation certificate; tree overgrowth; fast-closing gate; surface shrinkage; paint/rust issues;	Provide installation certificate; conduct tree survey; adjust gate	Amber

			remedial needs		missing load-bearing indicators	timing; resurface shrunk areas; repair paint/rust; ensure bolts meet standards	
Riverside Park Coneygeare	St Neots	56.84%	Poor condition: safety issues identified. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Popular for younger children; limited inclusivity and enclosure. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Missing installation certificate; no ID plates; damaged see saw and swings; surface trip hazards. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Obtain certificate; affix plates; repair or remove unsafe equipment; resurface key areas. It should be noted that many repairs have since been made.	Red
Riverside Park St Neots	St Neots	80.68%	Mixed condition; several areas need repair	Highly favoured; varied accessibility, low for wheelchair	Missing installation certificate; worn surfacing; loose swing	Tighten bars; refill surfaces; replace swing parts; install	Red

				users; toilets far away	roller; missing bolts and ID plates	plates; monitor wear	
Rowell Way	Sawtry	63.99%	Well-maintained; issues with documentation and fixings		Missing installation certificate; manufacturer's plates not visible; surface fixings exposed	Provide certificate; affix ID plates; repair surface bolts	Red
Sapley Fields	Huntingdon	94.73%	Well-maintained with minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; exposed metal drain; missing load-bearing indicators on bolts	Provide certificate; repair/cap exposed drain; ensure D bolts are clearly marked	Amber
Scott Drive	Yaxley	98.14%	Fully compliant; recently		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer's plates on equipment	Provide installation certificate; affix	Green

			installed equipment			manufacturer's plates	
Shackleton Way	Yaxley	87.08%	Functional but aging; moderate repair needs		Missing installation certificate; overgrown foliage; gate not auto-closing; damaged surfaces; trip hazard	Address gate timing; clear foliage; repair surfacing; ensure smooth travel run; install ID plates	Amber
Signal Road	Ramsey	90.31%	High compliance with minor maintenance needs		Missing installation certificate and manufacturer's plates; weeds; surface wear	Provide documentation; remove weeds; monitor surfacing condition	Amber
Stokes Drive	Godmanchester	86.32%	Satisfactory overall; some surfacing and		Missing installation certificate; overgrown bushes; insufficient bark	Provide certificate; trim vegetation; top up bark to 100mm;	Amber

			compliance issues		surfacing; unclear D bolt markings	label load-bearing D bolts	
Stukeley Meadows	Huntingdon	90.59%	Structurally sound with multiple minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; gate finger trap risk; surface gaps; missing steel caps; exposed bolts; cable wear	Provide certificate; correct gate stopper; infill surface; replace caps; protect bolts; monitor cables	Amber
The Whaddons	Huntingdon	84.07%	Satisfactory condition but impacted by cleanliness and wear		Missing installation certificate; no signage; loose bolts; trip hazards; rotting seating; surface damage; litter and sharp waste	Provide certificate and signage; tighten bolts; repair surface and seating; increase inspection frequency to manage waste	Red

Top Birches	St Neots	77.90%	Very good condition; compliant structure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide required documentation and install signage	Red
Weston Court	St Neots	92.88%	Generally good condition with minor hazards		Missing installation certificate	Provide original installation certificate; replace or repair broken fence panels at rear; remove leaf mulch under swings to eliminate slip hazard	Amber
Wigmore Farm Infant	Godmanchester	95.31%	Good condition with limited minor issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; unclear D bolt markings	Provide certificate; install appropriate signage; clearly	Amber

						mark load-bearing D bolts	
Wigmore Farm Junior	Godmanchester	92.48%	Good condition with minor compliance concerns		Missing installation certificate; slow-closing gates; unclear D bolt markings; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; service gates for 4–8s closure; label D bolts; repair soft pour trip hazard	Amber
Woodridge	St Neots	Not listed	Functionally compliant with moderate risks		Surface damage; missing certificate; no safety signage; fencing damage; missing plates	Repair surfacing; install ID plates; replace fencing; provide certificate and signage	Red

6.4 Geographic

This Geographic Gap Analysis forms a key component of HDC's Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to assess the alignment between current play provision and community need across the district, with a particular focus on geographic equity, accessibility, and strategic sufficiency. Drawing on a village-by-village synthesis of Health and Safety audits, observational usage data, and demographic profiling, the report delivers a place-based evaluation of play access and quality. Each locality has been assigned a strategic Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating to guide future planning, investment, and policy development.

The findings are defined by three core themes:

6.4.1 A Diverse Estate of Play Provision

Observation and engagement data point to a diverse pattern of use across the district. A small number of large, well-equipped "destination" parks, such as Hinchbrook Country Park in Huntingdon and Riverside Park in St Neots, consistently attract families from a wide catchment area and are widely appreciated as key community assets.

In contrast, a broader range of smaller, neighbourhood-level sites are used more variably. During assessment visits, around 40% of sites had no users present at the time of observation, while over half recorded fewer than ten users. This does not necessarily reflect disuse or disinterest; usage levels often depend on time of day, weather, and surrounding context, but it does suggest an opportunity to better understand local preferences and to tailor provision accordingly.

6.4.2 Gaps and Opportunities in the Current Offer

The analysis highlights three areas where targeted improvement could enhance sufficiency and inclusivity across the district's play estate:

- **Inclusive Play Opportunities:** Of the 52 assessed sites, 17 featured equipment accessible to children with physical disabilities. A smaller number offered integrated features that actively support play between children with differing needs. This reflects the fact that many sites were designed prior to the introduction of inclusive design standards. HDC continues to improve

accessibility where possible, but full retrofits can be challenging within current budgets and site layouts.

- **Provision for Older Children and Teenagers:** Engagement with young people indicates that existing equipment such as MUGAs and fitness stations is often underused, with a preference instead for adventurous, social, and self-directed features such as pump tracks, zip lines, and shelters. These preferences offer a clear direction for future design and investment, especially in areas of high youth population.
- **Site Documentation and Compliance:** During audits, several sites were found to have missing documentation such as installation certificates or manufacturer plates. This does not necessarily indicate safety concerns, as routine inspections and remedial works are regularly carried out. However, improved documentation processes could help streamline compliance and future maintenance planning.

6.4.3 Targeted Investment to Support Equity

Play provision across Huntingdonshire reflects the district's complex geography, diverse settlement patterns, and historical development context. However, some areas, particularly those with higher levels of deprivation and larger child populations, tend to rely on older or less well-equipped sites. These patterns are often the legacy of past planning frameworks or resource constraints, rather than present neglect.

Addressing these imbalances through thoughtful, community-led investment can help ensure that all children have access to high-quality, inclusive play. Targeting resources to the areas of greatest need offers an opportunity to strengthen cohesion, promote wellbeing, and reduce barriers to participation in outdoor recreation.

The table below summarises sufficiency across the district's seven key localities, based on a triangulated assessment of need, quantity, and quality. These locality-level ratings feed directly into the Strategic Improvement Plan and should be read in conjunction with site-specific findings set out in the Gap Analysis Table.

Village/Town	Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating	Justification
Godmanchester	Amber	Local provision is well-used and generally safe, but demand from a growing child population is outpacing the variety and quantity of existing play equipment. Inclusive features are limited, reflecting legacy design, though improvements could be prioritised in future upgrades.
Huntingdon	Amber	Provision is mixed. While some parks are strategic assets and receive regular use, certain neighbourhood sites would benefit from modernisation and improved accessibility. Areas of higher deprivation may require targeted investment to reduce localised inequalities.
Ramsey	Amber	One centrally located park serves much of the town, and while well-maintained, it lacks dedicated youth provision. There is an opportunity to expand or diversify the offer for older children and teenagers through co-designed enhancements.
Sawtry	Green/Amber	The main park is centrally located, visible, and offers a wide range of equipment for different age groups. Although some natural features were flagged in earlier assessments, feedback from families is positive and the site remains well-used. Pathways and landscaping could be improved further over time.
St Neots	Amber	The town benefits from several well-used parks, but some sites are ageing and may require scheduled improvements. The scale of the town and child population creates higher baseline expectations; planned investment will help sustain quality and accessibility.

Yaxley	Red	Provision is currently limited in both quantity and inclusivity. The largest site suffers from repeated vandalism, and while safe at the time of inspection, is not well-used. There is clear justification for a comprehensive review or redesign.
St Ives	Amber	HDC operates only a small number of play assets here, such as Hill Rise Park and Skate Park. Other local parks are under the remit of St Ives Town Council. Strategic collaboration may support more consistent quality and accessibility across the town.

7. Proposed Strategic Plan

Play provision across Huntingdonshire reflects a varied landscape of assets shaped by historic development, demographic growth, and evolving community expectations. While flagship parks such as Hinchbrook and Riverside continue to attract high levels of use and appreciation, many smaller neighbourhood sites experience more variable usage. This reflects a range of factors, including location, design age, and surrounding infrastructure, rather than quality alone.

Routine Health and Safety audits have identified a number of sites where surfacing, equipment condition, or signage may require attention. These issues are already being addressed through scheduled maintenance or targeted investment. In some locations, lower levels of use, observed at over 40% of sites during visits, suggest opportunities to consolidate provision, realign with current demand, or reimagine underutilised spaces in collaboration with local communities.

Accessibility is another area with clear potential for improvement. Of the 52 sites assessed, 17 include at least one item of inclusive equipment. Given Huntingdonshire's EHCP rate of 5.7%, enhancing inclusive features offers a meaningful opportunity to improve experiences for children with additional needs and their families. It is important to note, however, that most sites were installed before current design standards and full retrofits may not be feasible in every case.

In response to these dynamics, the proposed strategy outlines a shift from reactive maintenance to a planned, equity-informed investment model. This approach positions play as essential community infrastructure, integral to child development, family wellbeing, and inclusive public space.

7.1.1 A Vision for Inclusive and High-Quality Play

This strategy proposes a shift in both ethos and delivery: from reactive maintenance and patchwork upgrades to a proactive, place-based investment programme that builds a network of high-quality, inclusive, and resilient play spaces.

The long-term vision is for play to be positioned as a pillar of Huntingdonshire's social infrastructure, on par with transport, housing, and education, as a public good that delivers measurable returns in child development, public health, and social cohesion. To support this, the Council will embed clear quality standards into all future planning and investment decisions.

Investment in high-quality play provision produces benefits that extend far beyond the park boundary. Well-designed public spaces are linked to improved physical and mental health, reduced pressure on NHS services, enhanced social connection, and increased civic pride. For children and families, they offer a safe and stimulating environment to learn, socialise, and thrive. For the Council, this represents a strategic opportunity to deliver lasting value in both financial and social terms.

7.1.2 Delivering on Priorities

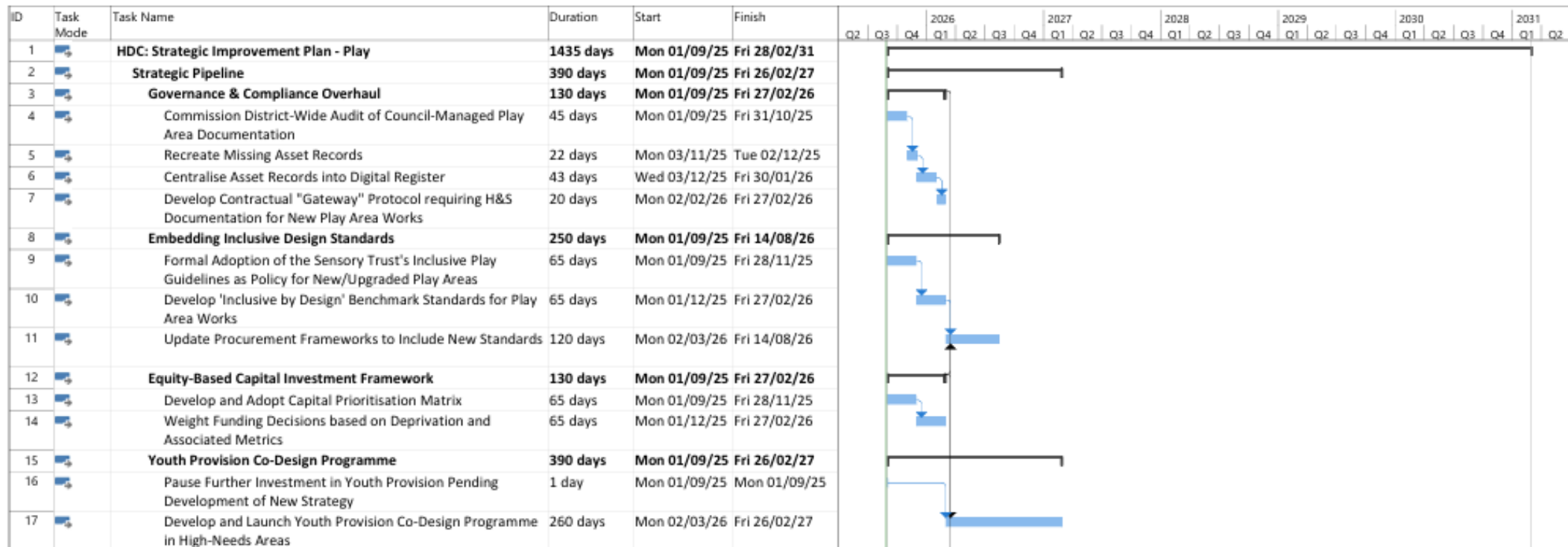
This strategic plan aligns directly with the ambitions set out in HDC's Corporate Plan and wider health and wellbeing priorities. The Council has committed to building "a better Huntingdonshire," with a strong emphasis on community health, active lifestyles, and place-based equity. High-quality play provision is a visible and impactful way to deliver on these commitments.

In addressing known safety risks, the strategy supports the Council's priority to create safer, healthier communities. By embedding inclusivity, it promotes equal access to public services and helps close health and opportunity gaps. And by adopting an equity-led investment model, the strategy ensures that resources are directed towards areas of greatest need, particularly where child poverty, social exclusion, or deprivation limit access to safe, enriching environments.

The successful delivery of this plan will provide clear evidence of progress against corporate priorities, reinforce the Council's leadership in place-based planning, and strengthen public confidence in its role as a steward of community assets.

7.2 Strategic Pipeline: Gantt Chart

To shift from a reactive to a planned, equitable, and risk-managed approach, HDC must first address the systemic barriers that currently undermine its play estate. The four foundational projects outlined below are not capital works in themselves, but rather programmes that establish the governance, compliance, equity, and engagement mechanisms needed to ensure all future investment is effective, inclusive, and legally sound. These initiatives are interdependent and must be prioritised before wider refurbishment and new build activity commences. The Gantt Chart is presented on the following page and has been submitted as a pdf document alongside this final report.



Project: HDC Strategic Improvement Plan - Play Date: Thu 28/08/25	Task		Project Summary		Manual Task		Start-only		Deadline	
	Split		Inactive Task		Duration-only		Finish-only		Progress	
	Milestone		Inactive Milestone		Manual Summary Rollup		External Tasks		Manual Progress	
	Summary		Inactive Summary		Manual Summary		External Milestone			

7.2.1 Governance and Compliance Overhaul

7.2.1.1 Purpose

To de-risk the play estate by establishing a baseline of documentation and safety compliance across all sites, enabling transparent asset management and audit readiness.

7.2.1.2 Rationale

Some sites lack installation certificates and manufacturer ID plates; key documentation required to evidence compliance with EN1176 safety standards.

7.2.1.3 Key Actions

- Commission a district-wide documentation audit across all council-managed play areas. Where documentation is missing, recreate asset records and upload them into a centralised digital register.
- Embed a new contractual “Gateway” protocol: final contractor payments for new works or refurbishments will be contingent upon receipt and verification of all Health and Safety documentation, including EN1176 certification.

Timescale: 0–6 months

Estimated Budget: £15,000–£20,000

Expected Outcomes

- Full EN1176 documentation coverage across the estate
- Reduced legal and insurance risk
- A reliable data foundation for lifecycle costing, budgeting, and capital planning

7.2.2 Embedding Inclusive Design Standards

7.2.2.1 Purpose

Overcome any barriers to play for disabled children by adopting inclusive design as a default standard across all new and refurbished provision.

7.2.2.2 Rationale

At the time of inspection, 17 of the 52 audited sites currently include any accessible play equipment.

7.2.2.3 Key Actions

- Formally adopt the Sensory Trust's inclusive play guidelines as policy for all new and upgraded play spaces.
- Update procurement frameworks to require all new installations to meet a defined 'Inclusive by Design' benchmark. This could include continuous soft-pour surfacing, step-free paths, integrated equipment, and sensory features that promote social play.

Timescale: Policy adoption within 3 months; ongoing integration into project delivery

Estimated Budget: Officer time only for policy development; capital implications integrated into individual refurbishment budgets

Expected Outcomes

- Clear compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- Improved accessibility and increased usage by disabled children and families
- Strengthened community inclusion and equity

7.2.3 Youth Provision Co-Design Programme

7.2.3.1 Purpose

To reimagine adolescent provision by engaging young people directly in the design and development of public play and recreation spaces.

7.2.3.2 Rationale

Consultation has shown that older children seek social and dynamic spaces like pump tracks, zip lines, and shaded seating. A youth-led co-design process is more likely to produce spaces that are relevant, well-used, and socially valuable.

7.2.3.3 Key Actions

- Pause further investment in traditional youth provision pending the development of a new strategy

- Launch a co-design programme in partnership with schools and youth groups in high-need areas (e.g. Huntingdon, St Neots, Yaxley), giving young people a central role in shaping design outcomes

Timescale: 6–12 months

Estimated Budget: £10,000–£15,000 (covering facilitation, materials, and youth honorariums)

Expected Outcomes

- A youth-endorsed strategy that reflects current needs and aspirations
- Higher engagement and positive use of public spaces by adolescents
- Long-term public health and community safety benefits through improved provision

7.2.4 Equity-Based Capital Investment Framework

7.2.4.1 Purpose

To ensure that future investment in play is targeted to areas of highest need, based on transparent, data-driven prioritisation criteria.

7.2.4.2 Rationale

In some areas, the poorest communities, often with the highest child populations, have provision in need of review. Key Actions

- Develop and adopt a Capital Prioritisation Matrix, informed by international best practice (e.g. Minneapolis Park Board’s 23-point equity model)
- Weight funding decisions based on deprivation (IDACI), child population density, provision quality (RAG rating), and sufficiency against Fields in Trust benchmarks

Timescale: 6 months

Estimated Budget: Officer time only

Expected Outcomes

- A consistent and defensible model for allocating investment
- Optimised return on capital through targeted interventions

- Demonstrable progress on reducing inequalities in access to quality play

7.2.5 Priority Phase 1 (Years 1–2): Urgent Safety and Strategic Stabilisation

The first phase addresses urgent Health & Safety risks and delivers flagship interventions in the most disadvantaged, under-served areas. The aim is to stabilise the estate and demonstrate the Council's commitment to inclusive, equitable provision.

Project 1.1 – Targeted Safety Remediation

Deliver focused works to address priority items identified through routine Health & Safety audits. This includes repairing surfaces, replacing worn components, and ensuring signage and access meet agreed standards. Most remedial works are minor in nature and will build on the Council's established inspection and repair programme.

Project 1.2 – Yaxley Park Overhaul: Feasibility and Design

Yaxley has a large child population but limited provision. This project will explore options for a mid-scale, inclusive park through feasibility studies and community co-design, ensuring the design reflects local priorities and addresses recurring challenges such as vandalism.

Project 1.3 – Ramsey Youth Provision (Co-Design Output)

Ramsey lacks dedicated teenage provision. This project will deliver the first outcome of a youth co-design process, potentially including a pump track, youth hub, or alternative activity space, shaped by young people's voices.

Project 1.4 – Huntingdon North Equity Refurbishment

Targeted investment in a key neighbourhood site (such as The Whaddons) to deliver a refreshed and inclusive park aligned with new design standards. Where recent investment has already been made (e.g. Bevan Close), resources will focus on complementary improvements.

7.2.6 Priority Phase 2 (Years 2–4): Strategic Enhancement and Expansion

With immediate priorities addressed, Phase 2 focuses on Amber-rated areas, continuing the roll-out of inclusive design and addressing broader gaps in provision and accessibility.

Project 2.1 – Godmanchester Inclusive Upgrade

Upgrades at Wigmore Farm (Junior Zone) will add more physically challenging equipment and improve inclusivity. At Stokes Drive, woodchip surfacing will be replaced with unitary surfacing to improve accessibility and usability.

Project 2.2 – St Ives Accessibility and Play Value

In partnership with St Ives Town Council, targeted improvements at Crescent and Dunnock Way parks will increase accessibility and play value. Works may include ramped access at Dunnock Way and the addition of features for a wider range of users.

Project 2.3 – St Neots Estate Park Renewal

St Neots benefits from well-used destination parks but some smaller neighbourhood sites are under pressure from age and heavy use. One site in an area of higher need will be selected for a full community-led redesign.

Project 2.4 – Sawtry Site Re-engineering

Sawtry's main park is popular but would benefit from improvements to accessibility and landscaping. This project will fund a full redesign to address topographical challenges and incorporate community feedback.

7.2.7 Priority Phase 3 (Years 4–5): Consolidation and Innovation

The final phase focuses on sustaining gains made through the programme, embedding inclusive design more widely, and piloting innovative approaches to broaden the reach and long-term resilience of the play estate.

Project 3.1 – Inclusive Equipment Retrofit Programme

Install inclusive equipment (e.g. wheelchair-accessible roundabouts, sensory panels, flush trampolines) at 5–10 existing sites in good overall condition. This ensures incremental improvement without requiring full-scale redevelopment.

Project 3.2 – Natural and Adventurous Play Pilot

Develop a community co-designed natural play site in a high-population area such as Huntingdon or St Neots. This could incorporate landscaping, water/sand play, and planting, responding to demand for more imaginative and nature-based experiences.

Project 3.3 – Establishing a Lifecycle Renewal Fund

Using asset data generated during Phase 2, prepare a business case for a dedicated lifecycle renewal fund. This will support proactive investment in repairs and upgrades, helping to sustain quality and avoid future cycles of decline.



Huntingdonshire District Council

Play Sufficiency Assessment: Implementation Guidelines

Private & Confidential

August 2025



Premier Advisory Group, 2 Lant Street, London, England, SE1 1QR
+44 (0) 1926 956379 | hello@premieradvisory.co.uk | premieradvisory.co.uk
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1. Executive Summary

To support the recommendations of the 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment, Premier Advisory Group (PAG) has developed an equity-led framework for investment and delivery. The framework ensures resources are allocated transparently, strategically, and in line with the Council's corporate priorities, while recognising the strong track record HDC already has in maintaining a large play estate safely with limited budgets.

Key elements include:

- Capital Prioritisation Matrix – a weighted scorecard combining safety audits, deprivation indices, sufficiency data, and community feedback to help direct investment towards areas of greatest need and potential social impact.
- Principles for Excellence in Play – embedding standards for inclusive, sustainable, and age-appropriate design. This includes accessible surfacing, integrated equipment for children of all abilities, sensory play elements, sustainable materials, climate-resilient features, and provision for older children and teenagers co-designed with young people.
- Robust Execution and Governance – strengthening procurement through a mandatory 'Gateway' handover protocol that withholds final payments until contractors supply safety certifications, warranties, and maintenance schedules. This ensures new assets are safe, auditable, and durable.

This Implementation Guide provides Huntingdonshire District Council with the tools to take the next step in play sufficiency: moving from responsive maintenance towards a sustainable, inclusive, and strategically aligned estate. By targeting investment where it is needed most, and embedding governance safeguards, the Council can continue to deliver high-quality play opportunities that improve child wellbeing, strengthen community cohesion, and enhance Huntingdonshire's reputation as a great place to live.

2. Framework

2.1 Introduction

The Play Sufficiency Assessment highlighted opportunities to improve equity across the district. While flagship parks such as Hinchbrooke and Riverside are well-used and highly valued, some neighbourhood sites – particularly in areas with higher levels of deprivation or population growth – would benefit from further investment in accessibility, inclusivity, or play value.

To address this, PAG recommends that capital investment in play provision be guided by a formal, equity-based framework. This will ensure resources are allocated in a transparent, defensible, and data-driven way, maximising social impact and supporting the Council’s corporate commitment to building a better Huntingdonshire for all residents.

2.2 Capital Prioritisation Matrix

To implement an equity-led approach, every potential capital project should be assessed and ranked using the Capital Prioritisation Matrix. This weighted scorecard provides a consistent methodology for evaluating projects against the Council’s strategic objectives and reflects the dual priorities of safety and community value.

The matrix is designed to blend quantitative data (e.g. Health & Safety ratings, deprivation indices, child population density) with qualitative insights (e.g. community feedback, usage patterns). For example:

- A site rated H&S Amber may still be prioritised if community feedback highlights recurring issues of vandalism or perceived safety concerns.
- A site rated safe may nevertheless warrant investment if it lacks inclusive features in an area with a high population of children with additional needs.

By balancing these inputs, the matrix offers a holistic and defensible way to prioritise projects, ensuring that decisions reflect both technical evidence and community perspectives.

The matrix scores projects against four weighted criteria, set out in Table 1 below.

Criterion	Weighting	Scoring Metric	Rationale
Safety & Risk	40%	Based on the site's most recent independent Health & Safety (H&S) RAG rating. Red = highest score Amber = medium score Green = lowest score	The Council has a duty of care to ensure public safety. This prioritises immediate remediation of sites with significant safety concerns or compliance failures, mitigating legal liabilities and addressing the high number of Red-rated sites.
Equity & Need	30%	Composite score based on: Sufficiency RAG rating of the locality Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) decile of the LSOA served. Projects in the top 30% most deprived areas receive the highest score.	Aligns capital investment with deprivation indicators, ensuring resources are targeted to communities where access to high-quality public space is most vital for child wellbeing.
Sufficiency	20%	Score reflects: Density of child population (ages 0–14) in the catchment area Severity of sufficiency gaps, e.g., lack of facilities or inadequate provision for key demographics.	Ensures investment is proportional to latent demand and addresses critical gaps in scale and type of provision, such as areas with large child populations but limited or unsuitable facilities.
Community & Strategic Alignment	10%	Based on: Volume/severity of negative community feedback (surveys, focus groups, interviews) Alignment with strategic pilots, such as stewardship models or natural play design.	Ensures resident perceptions and lived experience inform decisions, while also enabling investment to pilot innovative models that can be scaled district-wide for greater strategic value.

2.3 Decommissioning Thresholds

While the Council remains committed to maintaining a wide estate of local play areas, there may be instances where continued investment does not represent best value for money. In these cases, decommissioning can serve as a strategic tool for reinvestment rather than cost-cutting, enabling resources to be redirected into better-used, higher-quality, and more inclusive sites.

A site may be formally evaluated for decommissioning if it meets all of the following criteria:

- It is identified through audits as requiring significant investment to bring to modern standards.
- Observations and engagement show consistently low or minimal community use.
- Consultation confirms the site is not valued or needed locally.
- Analysis shows that children and families would be better served through nearby, alternative provision.

This approach ensures that decisions are evidence-led, transparent, and focused on maximising benefit for children and communities.

3. Principles for Excellence in Play

To ensure that every new and refurbished play area becomes a genuine community asset, all projects should adhere to a set of core design principles. These standards translate the Council's strategic goals for inclusivity, sustainability, and age-appropriateness into tangible, non-negotiable specifications for all design and build contracts.

3.1 'Inclusive by Design'

PAG recommends that inclusivity be treated as a fundamental, guiding principle for all provision.

All projects should adhere to the following:

- All designs must demonstrate compliance with a set of inclusive play guidelines, which address physical, sensory, and social accessibility.
- Specific HDC Requirements as per the Gap Analysis
 - Accessible Surfacing: Continuous, step-free accessible surfacing (e.g., poured rubber) is mandatory throughout all primary play zones and on pathways connecting entrances to all equipment.
 - Integrated Equipment: Procurement should focus on equipment that enables children of all abilities to play together. This counters the practice of isolating accessible items, which can reinforce exclusion.
 - Sensory and Imaginative Play: Every new or fully refurbished site should include a variety of sensory and imaginative play features to support neurodivergent children and provide richer play experiences for all.

To ensure consistent implementation, project managers and contractors must complete and sign off the compliance checklist provided in Table 2 at the design and pre-handover stages.

Requirement	Compliance Check (Y/N)	Evidence / Notes
1. Access & Circulation		
1.1 Step-free, accessible pathway from site entrance to all play zones and equipment.		
1.2 Continuous, accessible safety surfacing (e.g., poured rubber) throughout all primary play zones.		

1.3 Sufficient circulation space around equipment for mobility aid users and carers.		
2. Play Equipment & Features		
2.1 At least one piece of equipment enabling integrated group play (e.g., flush roundabout, basket swing).		
2.2 At least one piece of equipment accessible to a wheelchair user (e.g., wheelchair-accessible trampoline, raised sand/water table).		
2.3 Inclusion of a minimum of two distinct sensory play elements (e.g., tactile panels, musical features, aromatic planting).		
2.4 Provision of varied physical challenges catering to different ability levels.		
3. Site Amenities		
3.1 Provision of accessible seating with backrests and armrests, located within play zones.		
3.2 Clear, easy-to-read signage with pictorial symbols.		
4. Policy Compliance		
4.1 Design formally reviewed against Sensory Trust's inclusive play guidelines.		

3.2 'Sustainable by Design'

This standard embeds the principles of the Council's Sustainability Strategy into every project, ensuring that play spaces are durable, cost-effective over their entire lifecycle, and environmentally responsible.

Procurement should prioritise materials with proven longevity and low maintenance requirements. These include:

- Recycled HDPE: Warranted for 30+ years, weather-resistant, and low-maintenance.
- FSC-Certified Hardwoods: Species such as Robinia offer excellent durability without chemical treatments.

- Galvanised or Stainless Steel: The most robust option for high-wear components and structural elements.

Recognising the impacts of climate change, all designs should incorporate:

- Shade Provision: A combination of natural shade from large-canopy deciduous trees and artificial shade structures (e.g., fabric sails) to mitigate heat risks.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): The integration of features such as playable swales, rain gardens, and permeable surfacing to manage stormwater, prevent waterlogging, and enhance play value.

In line with the Environment Act 2021, all new designs should contribute to the Council's 10% BNG target. This will be achieved through features such as wildflower meadows, native species planting, insect hotels, and other habitat creation measures.

3.3 'Age-Appropriate by Design'

This standard is designed to prevent shortfall in engaging provision for older children and teenagers, a gap identified through both observational data and direct feedback from young people.

- Youth Co-Design Mandate: All projects specifically targeting the 11–17 age group should be developed through the formal Youth Co-Design Programme.
- Exploration of New Typologies: The standard encourages the exploration of innovative and dynamic features that young people have expressed a desire for, including pump tracks, parkour and climbing installations, and informal outdoor social hubs with integrated seating, lighting, and device charging points.
- Gender-Aware Design: Drawing on feedback from parent focus groups which highlighted the need for spaces where teenage girls feel safe and comfortable, designs should incorporate principles from campaigns such as "Make Space for Girls". This includes features like circular or social seating arrangements that facilitate conversation, adequate lighting to improve perceived safety after dark, and locating facilities away from enclosed or intimidating areas.

4. Project Execution and Governance

Documented execution protocols are essential to ensure that the Council's strategic design standards are delivered on the ground and that the long-term risks associated with poor contract management are eliminated.

3.1 Procurement Based on Whole-Life Value

Procurement policy should shift from an emphasis on minimising initial capital outlay to a model that prioritises total lifecycle value. Tender evaluations should be weighted to favour bids that demonstrate superior long-term durability, lower maintenance costs, and extended warranties for materials and components. This approach is designed to prevent "false economies", where cheaper, short-lived solutions can result in higher long-term costs and the proliferation of high-risk play areas.

3.2 The Mandatory 'Gateway' Handover Protocol

The council should implement final checks and balances to prevent issues in documentation and certifications. This could take the form of a mandatory 'Gateway' protocol embedded into the payment terms of all future design and build contracts. This protocol would establish a "hard gate" for final payment. The final tranche of the contract value (e.g., 10-15%) will be withheld and will not be released until the contractor has submitted a complete Asset Information Pack to the Council's designated officer for verification and approval.

This pack should include, as a minimum:

- A certificate of compliance with BS EN 1176 standards from an independent, accredited body.
- All original manufacturer installation certificates for every piece of equipment.
- Manufacturer warranties for all equipment and surfacing.
- A full schedule of required maintenance and inspection tasks.

5. Community Partnership and Engagement

Meaningful community involvement is critical to the success and long-term sustainability of play spaces. This charter formalises the Council's commitment to engaging residents at every stage of the project lifecycle, from initial concept design to ongoing stewardship.

5.1 A Spectrum of Engagement

The level of community engagement should be tailored to the scale and context of each project, following a defined spectrum:

- Consultation (Standard for all projects): All projects should involve a baseline level of public consultation. This may include surveys on design preferences, public displays of concept plans, and feedback sessions.
- Co-Design (Mandatory for specific projects): A deeper, more collaborative co-design process should be used for all youth-focused projects (as part of the Youth Co-Design Programme). It is also recommended for major redesigns in areas where community trust has been eroded by historic neglect.
- Stewardship (A pathway for all communities): The Council will actively support communities who wish to take on a long-term stewardship role for their local park post-completion.

5.2 Involving the 'Friends of the Park' Model

To facilitate long-term community stewardship, the Council should support and include local 'Friends of the Park' groups in consultations. These voluntary groups work in partnership with the Council's Parks and Countryside team to enhance and care for their local play space.

The role of a 'Friends of the Park' group should include:

- Acting as local ambassadors and champions for the park.
- Supporting routine monitoring by flagging emerging maintenance issues or instances of vandalism to the Council.
- Organising community events and activities to encourage positive use and foster a sense of local ownership.

- Undertaking appropriate low-level maintenance tasks, such as litter picking, weeding, or bulb planting.



Huntingdonshire District Council

Geographic Gap Analysis of Play Sufficiency

Private & Confidential

September 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This Geographic Gap Analysis forms a key component of Huntingdonshire District Council’s 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to assess the alignment between current play provision and community need across the district, with a particular focus on geographic equity, accessibility, and strategic sufficiency. Drawing on a village-by-village synthesis of Health and Safety audits, observational usage data, and demographic profiling, the report delivers a place-based evaluation of play access and quality. Each locality has been assigned a strategic Red-Amber-Green (RAG) rating to help guide future planning, investment, and policy development.

The findings highlight both the strengths of Huntingdonshire’s play network and opportunities for further improvement. The district benefits from a broad estate of play spaces that are regularly inspected and generally well-maintained, with flagship sites such as Hinchingsbrooke Country Park in Huntingdon and Riverside Park in St Neots attracting high levels of use and positive feedback. At the same time, the analysis identifies a number of areas where provision could be enhanced to ensure that all children and families benefit equally. Three themes emerge:

1.1 A Varied Estate of Play Provision

Observation and consultation data show a contrast between large, high-quality “destination” parks and smaller neighbourhood sites where usage is more variable. More than 40% of observed sites had no users present at the time of assessment, and over half recorded fewer than ten users. This does not necessarily reflect poor quality—usage is often shaped by factors such as weather, location, or visibility—but it does point to opportunities for more tailored design and investment to increase local engagement.

1.2 Opportunities to Strengthen Sufficiency

The analysis highlights three areas where future investment could make the greatest difference:

- **Inclusive play:** Of the 52 assessed sites, 17 currently include equipment accessible to children with physical disabilities, with fewer offering features that actively support co-play between children of all abilities. Many sites were designed before inclusive design standards were introduced, and incremental improvements offer a clear opportunity to broaden access over time.

- **Teenage provision:** Consultation with young people emphasised a desire for adventurous and social spaces. While traditional facilities such as MUGAs and fitness stations are present, they were less well-used. Future provision could respond to this demand with co-designed features such as pump tracks, zip lines, and informal gathering areas.
- **Governance and documentation:** In some cases, installation certificates or manufacturer plates were missing from site records. While this does not indicate unmanaged safety issues—regular inspections and repairs are in place—strengthening documentation processes would support efficient management and public confidence.

1.3 Addressing Geographic Inequity

Provision across Huntingdonshire reflects the district’s rural geography, settlement patterns, and the legacy of past development frameworks. Some areas with higher deprivation or larger child populations are more reliant on older or less inclusive facilities. By targeting investment towards these localities, the Council has an opportunity to ensure equitable access and to align provision more closely with community need.

Village/Town	Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating	Justification
Godmanchester	Amber	Local provision is well-used and generally safe, but demand from a growing child population is outpacing the variety and quantity of existing play equipment. Inclusive features are limited, reflecting legacy design, though improvements could be prioritised in future upgrades.
Huntingdon	Amber	Provision is mixed. While some parks are strategic assets and receive regular use, certain neighbourhood sites would benefit from modernisation and improved accessibility. Areas of higher deprivation may require targeted investment to reduce localised inequalities.
Ramsey	Amber	One centrally located park serves much of the town, and while well-maintained, it lacks dedicated youth provision. There is an opportunity to expand or diversify the offer for older children and teenagers through co-designed enhancements.
Sawtry	Green/Amber	The main park is centrally located, visible, and offers a wide range of equipment for different age groups. Although some natural features were flagged in earlier assessments, feedback from families is positive and the site remains well-used. Pathways and landscaping could be improved further over time.
St Neots	Amber	The town benefits from several well-used parks, but some sites are ageing and may require scheduled improvements. The scale of the town and child population creates higher baseline expectations; planned investment will help sustain quality and accessibility.
Yaxley	Red	Provision is currently limited in both quantity and inclusivity. The largest site suffers from repeated

		vandalism, and while safe at the time of inspection, is not well-used. There is clear justification for a comprehensive review or redesign.
St Ives	Amber	HDC operates only a small number of play assets here, such as Hill Rise Park and Skate Park. Other local parks are under the remit of St Ives Town Council. Strategic collaboration may support more consistent quality and accessibility across the town.

2. District-Wide Perspective on Play Provision

2.1 Current Usage and Community Engagement

Observational data and community consultation highlight an uneven pattern of engagement with play spaces across the district. A “honeypot” effect is evident, with high-profile destination parks such as Hinchingsbrooke Play Area, Riverside Park (St Neots), and Priory Park consistently attracting large numbers of users. These sites were among the most frequently visited and most positively rated in both surveys and interviews, praised for their design, variety, and perceived safety. They serve a broad age range and act as anchor assets within the wider play network.

Neighbourhood-level sites, particularly smaller parks in villages or peripheral estates, tended to show more variable levels of use. During observation visits, around 40% of sites recorded no users and over half had fewer than 10 children present at that moment in time. These figures may reflect external factors such as weather, time of day, or nearby competing attractions, rather than lack of demand alone. Consultation findings suggest that families sometimes bypass local parks in favour of larger sites with a broader play offer, highlighting that geographic proximity does not always equate to sufficiency.

Engagement also provided insight into user preferences. While traditional equipment such as swings and climbing frames remains popular, children and young people expressed a desire for more adventurous and socially oriented features. Younger children identified sensory and imaginative play as important, while older children and teenagers favoured elements such as zip lines, pump tracks, and informal gathering areas. Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and outdoor gym equipment were observed to be less popular, suggesting that current youth provision could be better aligned with user preferences through future co-design.

2.2 Accessibility and Inclusivity Landscape

The majority of sites are broadly walkable and well-connected, with 88% rated as accessible by foot or public transport. However, consultation and audit data indicate that once on site, experiences can vary, particularly for children with additional needs.

- Pathways and surfacing: Approximately 63% of sites rely on grass-only or partially surfaced routes, which can present challenges for users of mobility aids, wheelchairs, or

prams. While 87% of sites offer some soft surfacing, only 23% provide comprehensive coverage, limiting accessibility in some locations.

- **Inclusive equipment:** Of the 52 assessed sites, 17 include equipment designed to support children with physical disabilities. Many older sites were installed before inclusive standards became commonplace, and incremental improvements are already being introduced where feasible.
- **Sensory features:** Just nine sites currently include sensory elements such as tactile panels or musical play, indicating scope to strengthen provision for neurodivergent children.

Consultation highlighted that the presence of inclusive assets does not always guarantee ease of use. For example, at Hinchingsbrook Park's Sensory Play Area, a specialist wheelchair-accessible swing was locked at the time of observation. The Council is working with the manufacturer to resolve design and safety issues, but the example illustrates that practical adjustments (e.g. clearer signage or access protocols) are as important as the equipment itself.

2.3 Demographic and Socio-Economic Context

Huntingdonshire has a high and growing child population, with particularly dense clusters in wards such as Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and St Neots Eynesbury. These areas represent strong latent demand for play facilities.

Overlaying this with socio-economic data highlights areas of vulnerability. According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), ten of Huntingdonshire's 106 Lower Super Output Areas fall within the bottom three deciles for child income deprivation. These are concentrated in Huntingdon North, Yaxley, and The Stukeleys—communities where access to safe, engaging public space is particularly valuable.

The need for inclusive design is further reinforced by local SEND data. Cambridgeshire's EHCP rate stood at 5.7% in 2024, above the national average of 4.71%, indicating a substantial cohort of children who would benefit from accessible and inclusive play environments. Aligning future investment with both demographic growth and inclusivity needs will ensure play provision continues to serve all families equitably.

3. Village-by-Village Analysis

3.1 Godmanchester

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

Godmanchester & Hemingford Abbots is home to 1,891 children aged 0–14, with the largest cohort (537) aged 8–11. Socio-economic indicators suggest relative affluence, with local LSOAs ranking in the least deprived national deciles for both IMD and IDACI. Strategic need here centres on quality, inclusivity, and age-appropriate variety rather than deprivation.

The three District Council-managed play areas (Stokes Drive, Wigmore Farm Infant, and Wigmore Farm Junior) are rated Amber. Wigmore Farm provides a good range and secure fencing, though accessibility is limited and features such as the zip wire are not usable by all. Stokes Drive has more limited equipment and surfacing that restricts mobility access. Observed use was moderate to low, reflecting the neighbourhood scale of these facilities.

Identified Opportunities

- Provision is weighted toward younger children; more challenge for 8–11s could be added.
- Surfacing and equipment could be improved to broaden accessibility.
- Investment could focus on upgrading equipment, expanding capacity, and embedding inclusive design.

3.2 Huntingdon

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

Huntingdon has the district's highest child population (2,171 in Huntingdon North alone) and contains areas of both relative affluence and high deprivation. Its play estate must therefore serve universal needs while addressing more complex social contexts.

The town contains the largest number of sites, with 22 observed and 14 audited. Hinchingsbrooke Country Park acts as a key district-level destination. Other neighbourhood sites, such as The Whaddons, would benefit from further investment in surfacing, furniture, and accessibility. While observational data recorded some sites with no users at the time of visit, others were well used, reflecting variation in location, design, and catchment.

Identified Opportunities

- Prioritise improvements at sites in higher-need areas, ensuring equitable access across Huntingdon.
- Strengthen inclusive design across the estate, including enhancing usability of the sensory park.
- Continue targeted investment to raise standards in neighbourhood parks while maintaining popular flagship sites.

3.3 Ramsey

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

Ramsey has a child population of 1,889 and is more geographically isolated than other towns. While relatively less deprived, limited local infrastructure increases the importance of strong neighbourhood provision.

One main Council-managed site serves most of the community. It is partially accessible and moderately used, though provision for older children is limited. Three of ten play items are placed on grass without accessible surfacing, restricting ease of use.

Identified Opportunities

- Explore options to expand or diversify play for a child population of nearly 1,900.
- Introduce features for older children and teenagers through co-design.
- Improve surfacing and layout to enhance inclusivity.

3.4 Sawtry

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Green/Amber

Sawtry has a moderate child population (1,124 aged 0–14) and is among the district's more affluent areas. Provision remains important to meet local demand.

Rowell Way, the only Council-managed site, shows signs of wear and is affected by the sloped grassy setting. While moderately used, the lack of pathways, fencing, or shelter limits accessibility for disabled users, pushchairs, or toddlers.

Identified Opportunities

- Improve pathways, surfacing, and seating to make the site more accessible.
- Explore options for enhancing play variety and resilience against weather/wear.
- Consider longer-term redesign or additional provision to meet future demand.

3.5 St Ives

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

St Ives has a large and growing child population (2,740 aged 0–14). It is a generally affluent town, with demand driven more by population growth and diversity of age groups than deprivation.

HDC manages a small number of play sites directly (Hill Rise Play Area and Hill Rise Skate Park), while other sites such as Crescent and Dunnock Way are Town Council-managed. The skate park is well used but would benefit from refurbishment. At Dunnock Way, stair-only access limits inclusivity.

Identified Opportunities

- Refurbish Hill Rise Skate Park to maintain its popularity and safety.
- Work with the Town Council to enhance accessibility and inclusivity at secondary sites.
- Introduce inclusive equipment to broaden provision across the town.

3.6 St Neots

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber

St Neots is the district's largest town, with 6,105 children aged 0–14. It includes areas of both affluence and deprivation, creating diverse needs.

The town has the largest portfolio in the district, with 18 observed and 15 audited sites. Destination parks like Riverside and Priory are popular and highly valued. Some neighbourhood sites, such as Riverside Coneygeare and Woodridge, were identified as priorities for improvement, with repairs already in hand.

Identified Opportunities

- Address maintenance and accessibility at selected neighbourhood parks, particularly in higher-need areas.
- Enhance inclusivity across the estate, ensuring large-scale sites reflect the diversity of the population.
- Conduct a town-wide review to balance investment between destination parks and local sites.

3.7 Yaxley

Overall Sufficiency RAG Rating: Amber/Red (Priority for Improvement)

Yaxley is home to 2,036 children aged 0–14, making it the district’s second-largest child population. Moderate deprivation increases the importance of effective local provision.

Three sites were assessed: Crocus Way, Scott Drive, and Shackleton Way. Crocus Way has experienced high levels of vandalism and remains underused. Scott Drive and Shackleton Way provide local provision but would benefit from investment in inclusivity and appeal. Observations recorded low use across all three, though this may be influenced by time of day and other factors.

Identified Opportunities

- Redesign Crocus Way to address vandalism challenges and enhance accessibility.
- Introduce inclusive equipment and pathway improvements at all sites.
- Explore options for a larger, community-led play space to meet the needs of Yaxley’s significant child population.



Huntingdonshire District Council

Thematic Gap Analysis

Private & Confidential

July 2025

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1. Executive Summary

This Gap Analysis Report forms part of Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. Its purpose is to highlight strengths in the current play offer and identify opportunities to further enhance access, quality, inclusivity, and overall sufficiency. The findings draw on site audits, community engagement, and geospatial analysis to inform future planning and investment.

A total of 38 sites were assessed through professional Health and Safety audits carried out by Handsam, complemented by surveys, interviews, and focus groups with children, parents, carers, and stakeholders. The assessment confirms that many parks are well-used, popular, and generally safe, while also pointing to practical areas where targeted improvements could add further value.

Key findings include:

- Many play areas are well maintained and provide valued opportunities for families, with evidence of high levels of local use and satisfaction.
- Some rural villages and new housing developments would benefit from additional accessible, walkable play areas.
- Health and Safety inspections identified issues such as worn surfacing, signage, or ageing equipment at some sites, but urgent risks are managed promptly through established inspection processes.
- There is clear opportunity to increase the consistency of accessible and inclusive play features across the district.
- Facilities for younger children are well established, with scope to grow provision that meets the needs of older children and teenagers.
- Toilets, seating, lighting, and shade are highly valued and could be extended to encourage longer visits and wider use.
- A small number of sites were raised in community feedback as needing improvement, aligning with audit findings and providing clear priorities for action.

All findings are summarised in a comprehensive Gap Analysis Table. These feed directly into the Strategic Improvement Plan, which sets out proportionate, prioritised actions to enhance sufficiency, equity, and long-term sustainability of play in Huntingdonshire.

2. Introduction

This Gap Analysis Report forms a central component of Huntingdonshire District Council's 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment. It identifies where current play provision falls short in meeting the needs, rights, and preferences of children and young people across the district, with a view to informing future planning, investment, and improvement strategies.

Underpinning this analysis is the principle that play is a fundamental aspect of childhood. Access to safe, inclusive, and stimulating play environments contributes directly to children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, social development, and sense of belonging in their communities. The Welsh Government's statutory framework for play sufficiency, while not directly mandated in England, provides a useful model in recognising the need for multidimensional, locally responsive approaches to assessing and improving play opportunities.

In line with this approach, the gap analysis has been designed to evaluate not only the quantity and geographic distribution of play spaces, but also the quality, inclusivity, accessibility, and sufficiency of these spaces from both a technical and experiential perspective. The analysis has been guided by a core question: Do children in Huntingdonshire have access to high-quality, inclusive, and welcoming play opportunities, regardless of where they live, how old they are, or what their needs may be?

As part of the consultation, respondents referenced a number of play areas not managed by HDC. These have been retained to give a holistic view of the wider play landscape, but are identified below:

- Judith's Field
- Butcher Drive
- Millfields Park
- Warboys Park
- Roman's Edge
- Alconbury
- Crescent

- Dunnock Way

The maintenance and planning of these parks does not fall within the remit of Huntingdonshire District Council. However, they should be considered within council-wide strategic planning through collaboration with the relevant authorities where possible, in order to provide the best possible landscape of play provision for the communities served by HDC.

2.1 Methodology Overview

This report draws upon multiple data sources, including:

- Health and Safety (H&S) Audits: Detailed site inspections by Handsam Ltd, assessing physical safety, maintenance, compliance with EN1176 standards, and remedial needs.
- Community Engagement: Surveys with children (Early Years through to KS4), parents, carers, childminders, and key stakeholders, including open-text feedback on park quality and access.
- Qualitative Research: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with parents, carers, and professionals working with children and families.
- Observational Analysis: Onsite observations to assess play distribution, walkability, and proximity to areas of need (e.g., deprivation, rural isolation, new developments).

This mixed-methods approach enables both a granular, site-specific analysis and a high-level synthesis of systemic issues affecting play sufficiency across the district.

2.2 Scope and Limitations

While this analysis includes 38 audited sites and draws upon engagement from hundreds of local respondents, it does not yet include all play spaces within the district. Some areas may not have been captured through engagement or audit due to resource or time constraints. Further, community perception data is richer in urban centres and areas of recent development, while feedback from more rural or isolated communities was more limited.

Despite these constraints, the analysis offers a strong and representative evidence base for identifying strategic priorities and urgent needs. It also lays a clear foundation for future play audits, community engagement, and co-design processes.

3. Findings from Observational and Geographic Analysis

3.1 Overview of Geographic and Demographic Distribution

A separate geographic gap analysis is given in the Geographic Gap Analysis of Play Sufficiency.

3.2 Observed Use Patterns and Spatial Demand

Observations of 52 play areas, conducted between 14–17 April 2025, revealed clear differences in levels of use. Popular destinations such as Hill Rise Skate Park (St Ives), Hinchbrook, and Riverside Park frequently attracted 20–29 users during visits, demonstrating strong community demand and high visibility. Other sites were observed to have lower footfall, with more than 40% showing no children present at the time of the visit. These patterns may reflect local demographics, the timing of observations, or the limited appeal of equipment, and point to opportunities for increasing the relevance and attractiveness of provision in some areas.

The early years cohort (babies to KS1) was consistently the most visible age group, aligning with national trends in play behaviour. Older children, particularly those in KS3 and above, were less frequently observed. Youth-focused features such as MUGAs and fitness areas were often underused, suggesting scope to refresh or co-design spaces that better meet the preferences of teenagers and young people.

3.3 Quality, Accessibility, and Inclusivity of Provision

From the combined observational and dataset analysis, accessibility emerges as an area of both strength and opportunity. Seventeen of the 52 observed sites offered equipment accessible to children with physical disabilities, though provision was inconsistent across the district. Some inclusive features, such as the wheelchair swing at Hinchbrook Sensory Park, illustrate positive practice but were not always fully usable at the time of observation. Surfacing was generally strong, with 87% of sites offering some form of soft surfacing, although only a quarter provided full-coverage surfaces suitable for mobility-impaired users.

Sensory and imaginative play features are available in several locations but remain limited overall. Just nine sites offered intentional sensory elements such as tactile panels or musical features, suggesting scope to enhance provision for neurodivergent children and those with sensory processing needs. In addition, many of the most desirable play features — such as tall slides or zip lines — remain

inaccessible to children with restricted mobility, reinforcing the need for a more consistently inclusive design approach.

4. Findings from Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Survey Responses

The survey responses provide valuable insights into the lived experiences, preferences, and perceived barriers regarding children's play in Huntingdonshire. The breadth of respondents, including children across age groups, early years carers, and stakeholders, enables a rich analysis of play sufficiency from multiple perspectives.

4.1.1 Patterns of Use and Preferred Spaces

Across all age groups, playgrounds with equipment remain the most popular settings for play, with particularly high preference among Key Stage 1 (KS1) and under 5s. Naturalistic spaces such as grassy areas, woodlands, and places with trees also featured prominently, especially among older children (KS3–KS4), indicating a desire for more informal and self-directed outdoor environments. Access to bike/scooter/skate parks and sports pitches was more significant for older children, aligning with their developmental needs for active, independent, and social recreation.

Frequency of park usage varied by age. While many KS1 children reported visiting parks twice a week or more, KS3–KS4 respondents showed reduced frequency, with a substantial proportion only using parks occasionally.

4.1.2 Access and Inclusivity

Survey results revealed strong evidence of geographic and transport-based inequity. While a majority of children in all age groups reported being able to walk or cycle to their preferred parks, a notable number relied on adults for transport – especially under 5s and KS1 children. For a small but important minority, parks were perceived as not being nearby or not safe enough to access independently, raising questions about local distribution and connectivity of provision.

The accessibility of facilities for children with disabilities emerged as a major concern in both the childcare provider and stakeholder surveys. Comments highlighted the lack of inclusive equipment (such as wheelchair-accessible swings), inaccessible surfaces, and limited provision for children with sensory or mobility impairments. Some childcare professionals described having to avoid certain parks entirely due to poor design or maintenance, which limits equitable access.

4.1.3 Quality, Condition, and Safety

A recurring theme in all surveys was the concern over aging or poorly maintained equipment. Specific locations like Stukeley Meadows and Slepe Park were cited multiple times as having damaged or inaccessible play structures, with broken climbing frames and missing pieces noted. These quality concerns were linked not only to safety but also to reduced usage, as children avoid equipment that is boring, broken, or perceived as unsafe.

Survey data also revealed safety perceptions varied by age group. While most younger children and their carers felt safe in parks “most of the time,” responses from older children were more mixed. Some mentioned antisocial behaviour, lack of lighting, or insufficient visibility as contributing to unease – particularly in underused or poorly overlooked spaces.

4.1.4 Equipment Preferences and Unmet Needs

Swings consistently emerged as the most popular equipment type across all age groups, followed by climbing frames, slides, and spinning equipment. Conversely, seesaws and metal climbing frames were frequently mentioned as underused or unsuitable, especially where they were outdated or not age appropriate.

Older children expressed a desire for more adventurous, active, and social spaces, such as trampolines, obstacle courses, outdoor gyms, or shelters. Meanwhile, under 5s and their carers requested more toddler-friendly, sensory, and imaginative equipment. Across several surveys, respondents advocated for age-segregated spaces to avoid conflict and to better meet different developmental needs within the same site.

4.1.5 Stakeholder and Provider Perspectives

Stakeholders reinforced many of these findings, noting limited variety in provision, lack of targeted equipment for older children, and missed opportunities to incorporate inclusive or community-building features like table tennis, musical play items, or nature-based features. Childcare providers highlighted that overcrowding in popular parks – particularly those with limited alternative sites nearby – creates strain and reduces quality of experience for users.

4.2 Data from one-to-one interviews

In-depth interviews with three local childminders provided detailed, place-based insights into the barriers and enablers of play in Huntingdonshire. Their feedback focused heavily on specific parks,

revealing patterns in usage, access, maintenance, inclusivity, and design that speak directly to sufficiency and equity across the district.

4.2.1 High-use Parks with Infrastructure Gaps

Several parks were frequented due to their proximity and basic functionality, yet all presented issues undermining their full potential. Coneygear Park and Burley Hill Park, both used frequently by childminders, were reported to have issues with enclosure, essential amenities like toilets and seating, and surfacing.

4.2.2 Access Barriers and Spatial Inequities

Access constraints emerged as a major theme. Parks such as Pitts Park and Wheatfields Park – despite being within geographic reach – are practically inaccessible due to poor surfacing or lack of pedestrian infrastructure. A park on a new estate was described as too distant and disconnected for regular use, particularly for childminders travelling on foot with pushchairs or multiple children.

4.2.3 Safety and Site Avoidance

Reported safety concerns led to certain parks being entirely avoided. Hill Rise Park was described in distressing terms due to past vandalism, broken equipment, and traumatic associations. Priory Park, while the focus of a local improvement campaign, was deemed inappropriate for younger children due to outdated, unsafe, and high-level metal equipment.

4.2.4 Inclusive Play: Persistent Gaps and Isolated Success

Across all interviews, inclusivity was a prominent concern. Few parks provided any features accessible to children with additional needs. Warner's Park was the only site recalled as once having an accessible swing – now broken. In contrast, Howitts Lane Park stood out as the only park described as truly inclusive, offering positive, multigenerational play for all abilities.

4.2.5 Design Quality and Age Appropriateness

Several parks were appreciated for overall design but still failed in meeting specific age group needs. For example, Loves Farm Parks were praised for aesthetics and material choice but fell short in accessibility for toddlers due to high platforms and poor surfacing transitions. Similarly, Papworth Park's splash pad and large equipment appealed to older children but lacked enclosure and sat adjacent to roads and ditches.

4.2.6 Innovative Models and Cross-boundary Use

Childminders referenced other play spaces outside the immediate HDC area as both aspirational and practically necessary. Parks in Sandy and Abbott's Lee were mentioned, with the latter noted for its enclosure and green setting but described as under-maintained. One childminder drew attention to a New Zealand-based community-funded park, highlighting the potential of co-designed, locally led models that could be replicated within Huntingdonshire to deliver more inclusive and imaginative play environments.

4.3 Findings from focus groups

The focus groups with parents and carers in Huntingdonshire offer rich qualitative insight into how families experience local play provision. These discussions reveal both recurring strengths and persistent challenges, especially when considering the day-to-day realities of accessing and using local parks with children of varying ages and needs.

4.3.1 High-use Parks with Infrastructure Limitations

Several parks, including Riverside Park, Coneygear Park, and the Boat Park in St Neots, were described as central to family routines, benefiting from location, equipment variety, or proximity to social amenities. Riverside Park in particular forms part of what was described as the "holy trifacta" of St. Neots play areas, frequented due to its accessibility and the presence of nearby cafés. However, despite high use, these parks commonly lack essential infrastructure. At Riverside Park, the distance between play zones and toilet facilities was flagged as particularly problematic for families with younger children. Coneygear Park, while appreciated for its recent improvements and play value, was reported to have safety concerns, with lighting and the former condition of key features like the bridge undermining confidence in the site. The "Boat Park", though valued for catering to multiple age groups, was seen as potentially insufficient as children grow older and seek more diverse or challenging experiences.

4.3.2 Age and Gender Inclusivity in Play Design

Parents consistently noted that existing provision tends to meet the needs of children up to about the age of eight or nine, but fails to offer sufficient stimulation or safe social environments for older children. The issue of age-appropriateness was compounded by gendered differences in how children engage with space. Rocket Park, for example, was praised for including a sandpit and swing circle suitable for younger children and older girls. However, concerns were raised about lighting,

cleanliness, and the lack of public toilets, which limit how older children – especially girls – can use the space independently or comfortably. These reflections align with external campaigns such as “Make Space for Girls” and international models from Germany and Sweden, where park design explicitly considers how teenage girls and other less-dominant groups use public space. Participants in both groups articulated a need for more considered, inclusive design features, including circular seating areas, informal hangout zones, and lighting that supports safe, extended use.

4.3.3 Access, Parking, and Site Maintenance

Although parents generally reported good walkability to their nearest parks, often within ten minutes, accessibility was not always equitable or practical. Sites like Hinchbrook Park and Loves Farm were flagged for poor or confusing parking, while others lacked sufficient gates or enclosure to make parents feel secure when supervising younger children. Ackerman Street Park was cited as a site with limited visual appeal and minimal facilities, with some equipment appearing worn or insubstantial. Cleanliness, durability, and the capacity of spaces to accommodate families for more than brief visits were seen as defining features of a quality play environment. Where these were lacking, families reported reduced enjoyment or outright avoidance of those sites.

4.3.4 Sanitation and Toilet Provision

The absence of toilets was a major source of frustration, especially for those with younger children. This was not isolated to rural or low-traffic parks, but was also reported at well-used spaces like Rocket Park and the unnamed “Jeep Park” near the football ground. In some cases, parents noted that toilet blocks were too far from the actual play areas to be usable in urgent situations. In others, the issue was not only distance but also lack of cleanliness or accessibility.

4.3.5 Inclusivity

Participants in both groups commented on the lack of wheelchair-friendly paths, ramps, or equipment. Although some swings and sensory elements existed, these were generally not maintained or visible in the majority of parks discussed. Parents described this as a “*massive gap*,” noting that the district is falling short of offering equitable opportunities for children with disabilities.

4.3.6 Desire for Aesthetic and Imaginative Design

Across both groups, there was a clear appetite for more aesthetically engaging and creatively designed play areas. Parents criticised the uniformity of many local parks, describing them as “*samey*” –

dominated by metal and plastic equipment in primary colours with minimal landscaping or variety. In contrast, external sites such as Burley House and Anglesey Abbey were praised for their natural materials, large wooden structures, and imaginative layouts. These sites were seen as aspirational, offering opportunities for risky play, imaginative engagement, and experiences that evolve as children grow.

5. Findings from Health & Safety Evaluations

As part of the broader assessment of play sufficiency across Huntingdonshire, independent Health and Safety (H&S) audits have been undertaken for a representative sample of play areas by Handsam Ltd. These detailed site inspections evaluate compliance against EN 1176 playground safety standards and general best practice, identifying potential hazards, infrastructure deterioration, and recommended actions for improvement.

The audits provide a technical layer of data that complements the observational, qualitative, and usage data gathered through community engagement and mapping. Each audited site receives a physical condition score and itemised action plan, prioritising necessary repairs, refurbishments, and site management improvements. For example, Priory Park scored 86.56%, with actions including replacement of a damaged zip wire sleeve and repairs to surface trip hazards. Crocus Way scored significantly lower at 61.58%, with key concerns including incomplete signage, deteriorating surfacing, and lack of certification documentation. Hull Way, in contrast, was assessed at 94.46% and deemed safe with only minor remedial suggestions, highlighting its suitability as a model of good practice.

These findings reinforce and validate user-reported concerns about safety, access, and infrastructure quality across the estate. Where qualitative data highlighted feelings of neglect or discomfort at specific sites, the audits often uncovered corresponding material safety risks or deficiencies. These audits should be considered alongside the council's internal health & safety audits before being actioned.

6. Conclusions

This synthesis brings together insights from observational fieldwork, mapping, surveys, interviews, focus groups, and technical audits to highlight district-wide opportunities for strengthening play sufficiency. While many sites are well-used and demonstrate strong practice, the combined evidence also points to recurring themes where targeted action could deliver the greatest impact.

6.1.1 Geographic Disparities and Transport Barriers

Provision is unevenly spread across the district. Families in new housing areas and rural settlements often have fewer local play options, sometimes relying on car travel. In places such as St Ives and Godmanchester, older sites are less walkable for families with prams or multiple children. By contrast, urban centres benefit from higher walkability. Improving connections — through better pedestrian routes and more accessible estate layouts — would extend safe, independent access to play.

6.1.2 Infrastructure Deterioration and Safety Concerns

Health and Safety audits and community feedback highlighted maintenance issues such as surfacing, toilet access, and fencing at some sites. Even well-used parks like Coneygear and Riverside were reported as needing improvements in supporting infrastructure. Concerns raised around sites such as Priory and Hill Rise underline the value of a consistent maintenance plan, which could further enhance community confidence and ensure parks remain welcoming, safe spaces for all users.

6.1.3 Insufficient and Uneven Inclusive Design

Inclusive play is an emerging strength in a small number of parks, such as Howitts Lane, but is not yet consistent across the district. Families of children with disabilities highlighted the need for more accessible surfacing, sensory play features, and equipment that promotes social inclusion across age groups. Addressing these gaps represents a clear opportunity to extend dignity, equity, and enjoyment to more children.

6.1.4 Age Appropriateness and Play Value Gaps

Provision for early years is strong and widely valued, but older children and teenagers have fewer options. MUGAs, skate ramps, and outdoor gyms are sometimes underused, reflecting a need for more engaging, co-designed youth spaces. At the other end of the spectrum, toddlers occasionally

face barriers when equipment is not suitably adapted. Expanding variety and imaginative features across age groups would maximise play value and long-term engagement.

6.1.5 Facilities, Toilets, and Dwell-Time Constraints

Amenities such as toilets, seating, lighting, and shade were consistently highlighted as priorities by families. Even at otherwise popular parks like Riverside and Coneygear, limited facilities shorten visits and reduce accessibility, particularly for carers with multiple children or additional needs. Modest improvements in amenities would significantly enhance comfort, safety, and dwell time, allowing play areas to function as more inclusive community hubs.

6.1.6 Maintenance, Visibility, and Confidence in Provision

Responsive maintenance is a visible marker of quality. Community feedback indicated that broken or ageing equipment, even if not unsafe, can undermine perceptions of care and reduce use. This is most critical in high-deprivation areas where reliance on public play spaces is greatest. Consistent communication and timely repairs can help sustain community trust, ensuring that play areas are not only safe but also perceived as well cared-for and valued.

7. Gap Analysis Table

This section presents a detailed summary of individual play sites audited as part of the Huntingdonshire Play Sufficiency Assessment. It draws together data from Handsam Health and Safety inspections, community and stakeholder engagement activities, and site observations. The table provides a structured, evidence-based comparison of each park's physical condition, compliance with safety standards, and alignment with community expectations and experiences.

Each park entry includes location, audit score (where available), a summary of current physical condition, insights gathered from surveys, interviews, and focus groups (where applicable), identified issues from the H&S audit, recommended actions, and a RAG rating.

7.1.1 Rationale and Structure

The rationale behind this table is to synthesise complex, multi-source data into a clear decision-making tool that supports prioritisation, funding, and strategic improvement planning. While some parks are technically compliant, they may still be failing to meet local needs due to design, age-inappropriateness, lack of amenities, or accessibility gaps. Conversely, parks flagged as high priority may have strong community value but face serious safety or maintenance concerns.

This format allows the Council to not only identify physical deficits but also understand how these intersect with lived experience, equity of access, and sufficiency outcomes. In doing so, the table supports both reactive (repairs, resurfacing, signage) and proactive (inclusion, co-design, redesign) planning.

7.1.2 RAG Rating System

The H&S RAG rating is based solely on audit score and the nature of issues identified in the Handsam site assessments. This provides an objective technical safety and compliance rating. The RAG ratings are:

- Green — high-performing site with full or near-full compliance. No significant safety or maintenance issues. Score of or above 93% according to Handsam.
- Amber — generally compliant but with minor to moderate issues (e.g. wear, missing signage, surface wear). Score of 85-92.99% according to Handsam.

- Red — Site has significant safety concerns or multiple compliance failures. Urgent action needed. Score below 85% according to Handsam.

7.1.3 Using the Table

This table should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Improvement Plan, which translates these findings into recommended actions, proposed timescales, and resource planning. The parks identified as Red represent high-priority cases where safety, usability, or sufficiency are significantly compromised. Amber sites require investment to prevent further deterioration or to enhance underperforming but valued spaces. Green sites are broadly compliant but may still benefit from routine enhancements or inclusive design upgrades.

Park Gap Analysis Table

Park Name	Location	Audit Score (%)	Condition Summary	Community Insight	Identified Issues from H&S	Recommended Actions	H&S RAG
Bawllins	St Neots	95.81 %	Structurally sound; limited safety concerns		Missing installation certificate; gate closure too slow; raised manhole cover	Obtain installation certificate; adjust gate closure mechanism; cordon off area around raised manhole	Amb er
Bevan Close	Huntingdon	73.44 %	Poor overall condition; multiple areas fenced off		Equipment fenced off; missing installation certificate; trip hazards from ongoing works; no warning signs at substation; missing D bolt load indicators	Repair or remove out-of-use equipment; provide certificate; install Chapter 8 barriers; add substation signage; mark D bolts	Red

Crocus Way	Yaxley	61.58 %	The full site needs a full refurbishment.		Missing installation certificate; missing manufacturer's plates on equipment	Obtain installation certificate; affix manufacturer's plates	Red
Furrowfields	St Neots	90.17 %	Generally good condition with no major hazards		Missing installation certificate; wooden borders need maintenance; flaking paint; missing manufacturer's plates	Provide installation certificate; maintain wooden posts; repaint surfaces; affix missing ID plates	Amb er
Grassland Area	Huntingdon	96.53 %	Very good condition; minor aesthetic concern noted		BBQs showing signs of age	Consider replacing BBQ units	Amb er

Great High Ground	St Neots	94.16 %	Good condition; no physical issues noted		Missing installation certificate	Obtain original installation certificate	Green
Henbrook Linear Park	St Neots	90.79 %	Generally functional; minor safety concerns		No installation certificate; damaged seesaw spring; worn rocker handles; worn swing seats; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; repair or replace damaged equipment; monitor surfacing	Amber
Hill Rise Park	St Ives	86.12 %	Functioning but with multiple safety issues	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Broken fencing; loose gate stop; missing fixings; uneven surfacing; equipment wear; missing documentation	Replace fencing; fix gate and surface; add plates; monitor and repair damaged elements	Amber
Hill Rise Skate Park	St Ives	72.93 %	Generally compliant; minor wear and	Negative reception; concerns on play quality; vandalism; unsafe	Missing installation certificate; movement in grind rail; worn surfaces;	Provide documentation; address loose fittings; resurface entry/exit; remove graffiti	Red

			structural issues		graffiti; trip hazard from edge		
Hinchingbrooke Park Main Playground	Huntingdon	86.22 %	Satisfactory condition with several significant remedials	Regular visits; children enjoy it; site of recent injury due to uneven surfacing; safety hazard near large slide and café area	Missing installation certificate; damaged see saw; illegible ID plate; unsafe gates (finger traps); splintering wooden fence; unclear D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; replace see saw; make pivot safe in interim; replace gates and wooden fence; mark load-bearing D bolts clearly	Red
Hinchingbrooke Park Old Playground	Huntingdon	74.26 %	Unsatisfactory condition; ageing infrastructure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; deteriorating wooden elements; no fencing or gates	Provide certificate and signage; monitor and plan to replace decaying timber; consider secure enclosure for safety	Red
Hinchingbrooke Park Outdoor	Huntingdon	95.95 %	Very good condition; minor		Missing installation certificate; two missing	Provide installation certificate; replace missing gym items;	Green

Gym Equipment			equipment issues		equipment units; trip hazard from base plates	address trip hazard from plate edges	
Hinchingbrook Park Sensory Play Area	Huntingdon	89.58 %	Satisfactory condition; key item currently quarantined	Occasionally visited; valued for nature and considered safe; large site and limited access split groups; not buggy-friendly	Missing installation certificate and signage; main swing padlocked and out of use;	Repair swing and reinstate safely; provide installation certificate; install safety signage including contact details; affix manufacturer ID plates	Amb er
Hinchingbrook Park Woodland Play Area	Huntingdon	92.17 %	Well-maintained with minor documentation and signage issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage;	Provide original installation certificate; install safety signage with name and contact number; affix manufacturer ID plates	Amb er

Hull Way (24 & 25)	St Neots	94.46 %	High standard; minimal non-compliance noted		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide missing certificate and install safety signage	Green
Kester Way (MUGA)	St Neots	94.81 %	Good condition; structurally sound with minimal issues		Missing installation certificate; area not secure out of hours	Obtain installation certificate; consider out-of-hours security options	Ambler
Maryland Avenue	Huntingdon	90.74 %	Good overall condition with multiple minor issues		Missing installation certificate; incomplete fencing; gates fail to close; trip hazards from soft pour; worn slide; unsuitable	Provide certificate; repair fencing and gates; fix surface and fall zones; monitor and maintain slide condition	Ambler

					surface under climbing frame		
Maule Close	St Neots	92.90 %	Well- maintained; generally safe		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer plates; gate lacks auto closer; undulating surface near equipment	Obtain certificate; fix gate auto closer; install ID plates; repair surfacing to address trip hazard	Amb er
Mayfield Crescent	Huntingdon	87.62 %	Satisfactory overall; minor damage and surfacing issues		Missing installation certificate; trip hazards from undulating surface; missing D bolt load markings	Provide certificate; address surface hazards; clearly mark load- bearing bolts	Amb er

Oxmoor Lane	Huntingdon	93.08 %	Satisfactory overall with minor remedials required		Missing installation certificate; surface degradation causing trip hazard; unclear D bolt load indicators	Provide certificate; repair soft pour surface; label load-bearing D bolts	Amb er
Priory Park St Neots	St Neots	86.56 %	Generally satisfactory; localised damage	Popular for natural play; supports demand for outdoor; no inclusive features; not safe for toddlers	Missing zip wire sleeves; missing installation certificate; loose gate; damaged surfacing	Replace sleeves; fix gate; install ID plates; resurface to remove trip hazards	Amb er
Riverside Park	Huntingdon	90.48 %	Good condition; minor compliance and surface issues		Missing installation certificate; gate not lockable; unclear D bolt markings; surface shrinkage causing trip hazards	Provide certificate; fix gate locking mechanism; label D bolts; repair surface to remove trip risks	Amb er

Riverside Park (Indoor Bowls Club)	St Neots	85.94 %	Mixed condition; multiple remedial needs		Missing installation certificate; tree overgrowth; fast-closing gate; surface shrinkage; paint/rust issues; missing load-bearing indicators	Provide installation certificate; conduct tree survey; adjust gate timing; resurface shrunk areas; repair paint/rust; ensure bolts meet standards	Amb er
Riverside Park Coneygeare	St Neots	56.84 %	Poor condition: safety issues identified	Popular for younger children; limited inclusivity and enclosure	Missing installation certificate; no ID plates; damaged see saw and swings; surface trip hazards	Obtain certificate; affix plates; repair or remove unsafe equipment; resurface key areas	Red
Riverside Park St Neots	St Neots	80.68 %	Mixed condition; several areas need repair	Highly favoured; varied accessibility, low for wheelchair users; toilets far away	Missing installation certificate; worn surfacing; loose swing roller; missing bolts and ID plates	Tighten bars; refill surfaces; replace swing parts; install plates; monitor wear	Red

Rowell Way	Sawtry	63.99 %	Well-maintained; issues with documentation and fixings		Missing installation certificate; manufacturer's plates not visible; surface fixings exposed	Provide certificate; affix ID plates; repair surface bolts	Red
Sapley Fields	Huntingdon	94.73 %	Well-maintained with minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; exposed metal drain; missing load-bearing indicators on bolts	Provide certificate; repair/cap exposed drain; ensure D bolts are clearly marked	Amb er
Scott Drive	Yaxley	98.14 %	Fully compliant; recently installed equipment		Missing installation certificate; no manufacturer's plates on equipment	Provide installation certificate; affix manufacturer's plates	Green

Shackleton Way	Yaxley	87.08 %	Functional but aging; moderate repair needs		Missing installation certificate; overgrown foliage; gate not auto-closing; damaged surfaces; trip hazard	Address gate timing; clear foliage; repair surfacing; ensure smooth travel run; install ID plates	Amb er
Signal Road	Ramsey	90.31 %	High compliance with minor maintenance needs		Missing installation certificate and manufacturer's plates; weeds; surface wear	Provide documentation; remove weeds; monitor surfacing condition	Amb er
Stokes Drive	Godmanches ter	86.32 %	Satisfactory overall; some surfacing and compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; overgrown bushes; insufficient bark surfacing; unclear D bolt markings	Provide certificate; trim vegetation; top up bark to 100mm; label load-bearing D bolts	Amb er

Stukeley Meadows	Huntingdon	90.59 %	Structurally sound with multiple minor compliance issues		Missing installation certificate; gate finger trap risk; surface gaps; missing steel caps; exposed bolts; cable wear	Provide certificate; correct gate stopper; infill surface; replace caps; protect bolts; monitor cables	Amb er
The Whaddons	Huntingdon	84.07 %	Satisfactory condition but impacted by cleanliness and wear		Missing installation certificate; no signage; loose bolts; trip hazards; rotting seating; surface damage; litter and sharp waste	Provide certificate and signage; tighten bolts; repair surface and seating; increase inspection frequency to manage waste	Red
Top Birches	St Neots	77.90 %	Very good condition; compliant structure		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage	Provide required documentation and install signage	Red

Weston Court	St Neots	92.88 %	Generally good condition with minor hazards		Missing installation certificate	Provide original installation certificate; replace or repair broken fence panels at rear; remove leaf mulch under swings to eliminate slip hazard	Amb er
Wigmore Farm Infant	Godmanches ter	95.31 %	Good condition with limited minor issues		Missing installation certificate; no safety signage; unclear D bolt markings	Provide certificate; install appropriate signage; clearly mark load-bearing D bolts	Amb er
Wigmore Farm Junior	Godmanches ter	92.48 %	Good condition with minor compliance concerns		Missing installation certificate; slow-closing gates; unclear D bolt markings; minor surfacing damage	Provide certificate; service gates for 4–8s closure; label D bolts; repair soft pour trip hazard	Amb er

Woodridge	St Neots	Not listed	Functionally compliant with moderate risks		Surface damage; missing certificate; no safety signage; fencing damage; missing plates	Repair surfacing; install ID plates; replace fencing; provide certificate and signage	Red
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8. Appendices

Stakeholder Engagement Tables

Table 1 Specific parks mentioned in the surveys

Park Name	Survey Source(s)	Perceived Quality/Use	Geographic Context	Notes
Riverside Park	KS1, KS3–KS4, Under 5s	Highly favoured; wide use; accessible	St Neots	Model site for inclusive, high-quality provision; use as benchmark for urban investment
Priory Park	KS3–KS4	Popular for natural play and open space	Huntingdon area	Supports demand for naturalistic, older-child-friendly play
Hill Rise Park	KS3–KS4	Mentioned negatively; “not very good”	St Ives	Qualitative concerns; potential site for targeted improvement
Coneygear Park	Stakeholder	Popular, especially for younger children	Huntingdon North (high deprivation)	Performs well in deprived area; ensure maintenance and age-range inclusivity

Spider Park	Stakeholder	Strong for younger children; lacks features for older users	Godmanchester	Highlights age-appropriateness gap; potential for youth-oriented retrofit
Millfields Park	KS3–KS4	Positive mention	Ramsey (high need area)	Effective in a deprived area; maintain and monitor for increasing demand
Hen brook Park	KS1, Under 5s	Noted as used	Little Paxton area	Community reliance suggests need for quality monitoring and potential upgrade
Hail Weston (Rocket Park)	KS3–KS4	Cited as used by older children	Hail Weston (rural area)	Indicates rural use pattern; assess for transport/access gaps
Willow Bridge / Brookfields Way	KS1, Under 5s	Mentioned by name; limited data	Possibly smaller estates or local greenspace	Community dependence likely; potential micro-scale investment opportunity
Pocket Park (unspecified)	KS1, KS2	Mentioned positively	General	Suggest local value in smaller spaces; further mapping needed to assess equity

Table 2 Specific parks mentioned in interviews

Park Name	Mentions & Observations	Issues Identified	Notes
Coneygear Park	Closest to home; used frequently due to walkability	Not enclosed (next to road); deteriorating surfacing; unsafe for non-walkers; no toilets or benches	Lacks enclosure, safety and amenities despite high usage; priority for safety and accessibility
Pitts Park	Used due to open space and some sensory equipment	Inaccessible for young children; stone driveway; difficult pushchair access	Accessibility and suitability concerns for younger children and children with additional needs
Hartford School Park	Within walking distance; includes roundabout for sensory play	Uneven surfacing with a large hole; swing removed and misused; unsafe elements	Urgent maintenance and age-appropriate improvements needed
Hill Rise Park	Avoided due to vandalism and unsafe environment	Glass, broken equipment, burnt tree, unsafe nature area	High-priority for safety and restoration; significant deterrent to use

Hill Rise Park (mention 2)	Avoided due to past trauma and lack of amenities	Perceived as unsafe; no toilets; no shade	Poor perception and inadequate facilities may suppress use; requires safety and comfort investment
Hinchingbrooke Park	Valued for nature-based activities (pond dipping, open water)	Shared with dog training classes, no published schedules, safety concerns	Highlight shared space conflict and need for coordinated scheduling and information sharing
Hinchingbrooke Park (mention 2)	Regular visits; children enjoy it; site of recent injury due to uneven surfacing	Grounding is poor; uneven surfaces causing falls; safety hazard by large slide and café area	Safety and maintenance priority; high-use site justifies investment
Hinchingbrooke Park (mention 3)	Occasional visit via two buses; only feasible in holidays	Transport barriers make access difficult with small children	Highlights the need for more localised quality provision in St Ives
Riverside Park	Accessible, enclosed, includes various slide sizes	Not suitable for wheelchair users; inaccessible equipment; locked toilets; allergen exposure risks	Mixed-quality site; accessible for some but fails on inclusivity and amenities

Riverside Park (mention 2)	Frequently used	Not detailed in this interview	Inclusion in triangulated high-use parks; further cross-checking required
Papworth Park	Visited in the past; splash pad and large equipment appealing for older children	Not enclosed; adjacent to road and ditch; uncertain scheduling of splash pad use	Underscores need for better communication, enclosure, and multi-age suitability
Grafham Water	Previously used for bike hire and extended outings	Bike hire discontinued; now inaccessible for full-day activities with younger children	Illustrates loss of valuable infrastructure; potential for reactivation or alternative provision
Burley Hill Park	Most frequently visited; accessible and green; valued for little ones' independent play	Surfacing lifting due to water ingress; trip hazard; limited shade; only one bench; needs more inclusive features	High-usage site with safety and amenity gaps; strong candidate for targeted infrastructure upgrade
Wheatfields Park	Nearby but avoided due to lack of path and outdated features	No access path; must cross muddy field; unsafe equipment (e.g. high climbing frame, worn roundabout)	Accessibility and quality concerns suggest it's failing for target age group

Warner's Park	Previously had accessible swing (now broken)	Lack of maintained inclusive equipment; swing has been broken for a long time	Unmet need for inclusive provision in this area
Unnamed New Estate Park	New estate park visited once; too far with young children on foot	Poor geographic access; inadequate public transport	Illustrates spatial play desert in new developments without supporting infrastructure
Priory Park	Avoided due to disrepair; not friendly for small children; active local efforts to improve via charity	Equipment removed; metal structures too high; unsafe for toddlers; no inclusive features	Significant age-appropriateness and inclusivity gaps; community co-production opportunity
Loves Farm Parks	Praised for wooden equipment and design	Slides hard to access for toddlers; rope climbs too high; poor platform design for early years	Valued spaces but poor design for younger children; refine equipment to support full age range
Howitts Lane Park	"Best park in the area"; inclusive for all ages and abilities	None identified in this interview	Model example of inclusive design; ideal benchmark for future development

Sandy Area Parks	Mentioned as part of wider usage	Not specified	Possible inter-authority usage; check provision coordination if in another district
Abbott's Lee Park	Naturally enclosed grass area noted positively	Described as "looking very old"; unsure if HDC-managed	Suggests a potentially under-maintained site outside HDC's scope; still relevant for rural access
Unnamed New Zealand Park (external)	Cited as inspiring example of community-funded park with engraved fences	Not local; used as an ideal model	Opportunity to pilot community co-designed park model in Huntingdonshire

Table 3 Parks mentioned in focus groups

Park Name	Mentions & Observations	Issues Identified	Notes
Riverside Park	Most frequently used; part of the "holy triffecta" of St Neots play areas;	Toilets located far from some play zones; accessibility for sudden toilet	High-use site with good location but lacks adequate toilet access; importance of closer

	10,min walk; multiple playgrounds; amenities like ambience café nearby	needs is poor; shared use of space by varied age groups	amenities and infrastructure for families with young children
Coneygear Park	Used regularly; seen as a novelty after a gap; has a “spinny thing” liked by children	Previously had broken bridge (long repair time); now fixed; some lighting and safety concerns; perceived as more suited for younger children	Popular, but historically under-maintained; requires consistent investment in infrastructure and lighting for comfort and perceived safety
Hinchingbrooke Park	Occasionally used for forest school; known for dispersed play features (e.g. duck and zip line)	Parking is a major issue during peak times; large site means children split between areas, hard for parents to supervise	Design appreciated but practical constraints hinder usage; highlights value and complexity of larger multi-feature parks
Hinchingbrooke Park (mention 2)	Occasionally visited; valued for nature; considered safe and well-maintained	Not buggy-friendly; limited public transport; large layout splits groups; parking issues at peak times	Valued, but practical access and supervision challenges; highlights need for multi-age design
Boat Park (St Neots)	Regularly visited; next to ambience café and parking; offers variety of equipment for different ages	Only one picnic bench; potential crowding; equipment caters well for	Well-used and centrally located; could benefit from expanded seating and diverse equipment for growing children

		now but may not suffice as children age	
Rocket Park (St Neots)	Known for sandpit and swing circle; good for younger children; older girls like swings	Poor lighting; limited toilets; older equipment and cleanliness issues (bird droppings)	Gender-sensitive design highlighted; sanitation and lighting improvements would improve experience
Ackerman Street Park	Occasionally used; perceived as small and plasticky	Equipment longevity questioned; only one bench; fenced-off parts noted in past	Moderate use with safety and comfort concerns; equipment materials and facilities need reassessment
Loves Farm Park	Occasionally used; includes “big prior chips”	Parking is difficult; design does not reflect inclusive or gender-aware guidance	Access and inclusivity barriers noted; model for revisiting inclusive design standards
Unnamed Park by Football Ground (Jeep Park)	Identified by feature (wobbly jeep); close to Rocket Park	Swings under trees often dirty; old, metal slides perceived as risky; overall feel is “not favourite”	Perceived age and condition suggest need for maintenance and design refresh

Burley House (external)	Praised for scale and wooden equipment; considered imaginative and suitable for a range of ages	None directly noted (external site)	Serves as a benchmark for aspirational design; use of natural materials and adventure play noted
Anglesey Abbey (external)	National Trust park with high-quality wooden play equipment	Not local; referenced positively	Cited as inspiration for layout and material use; encourages consideration of natural aesthetics and risk-based play
Somersham Park	Main park used due to locality; includes skate ramp, exercise equipment, and green space	Basic infrastructure only; perceived as boring for older children; limited seating and no toilets	Lacks age-appropriate provision for 10–18s; limited facilities reduce dwell time and engagement
Hill Rise Park	Used in the past; currently avoided	Repeated sewage issues; antisocial behaviour; no toilets or refreshments; unsafe and unsupervised	High-priority for safety and infrastructure renewal; perception of neglect and disrepair

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	Huntingdonshire District Council's Play and Skate Parks	Postcodes	Age of site
	Huntingdon :-		
1	Garner Court, Huntingdon	PE29 1GE	33 years
2	Sapley Playing Fields, Huntingdon	PE29 1SD	19 years
3	The Whaddons, Huntingdon	PE29 1NN	20 years
4	Riverside Park, Huntingdon (adjacent to car park)	PE29 3RP	27 years
5	Maryland Avenue, Huntingdon	PE29 1PX	30 + years
6	Oxmoor lane, Huntingdon (adjacent to St. Johns school)	PE29 7BB	30 +years
7	Bevan Close, Huntingdon	PE29 1TH	30 +years
8	Outdoor Gym Kit, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (1/6)	PE29 6DB	8 years
9	Grassland Area, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (2/6)	PE29 6DB	3 years
10	Wetland Area, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (3/6)	PE29 6DB	3 years
11	Old Play Area, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (4/6)	PE29 6DB	17 years
12	Sensory Play Area, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (5/6)	PE29 6DB	3 years
13	Woodland Play Area, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park (6/6)	PE29 6DB	3 years
14	Beech Close Embankment, Huntingdon	PE29 7BB	30 +years
15	Mayfield Crescent, Huntingdon	PE29 1UH	30+years
16	Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon (off Rydal Close)	PE29 6UF	30 +years
	St Neots :-		
17	Riverside Park, St Neots (adjacent to car park & Café) (1/4)	PE19 7SD	26 years
18	Riverside Park, River Road, St Neots (adjacent to indoor bowls club) (2/4)	PE19 7AD	27 Years
19	Riverside Park, River Road, St Neots (adjacent to skate park) (3/4)	PE19 7AD	18 years
20	Weston Court, St Neots	PE19 7JX	22 years
21	Riverside Park, Coneygeare Playing Field, St. Neots (4/4)	PE19 2ED	30+ Years
22	Priory Park Trim Trail, St Neots (1/3)	PE19 1DY	26 years
23	Priory Park Spinney, St Neots (2/3)	PE19 1DY	16 years
24	Priory Park, St Neots (3/3)	PE19 1DY	30 + Years
25	Henbrook Linear Park, St. Neots (off duck lane)	PE19 2ED	22 years
26	Great High Ground, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6GL	14 years
27	Hull Way, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6GS	14 years
28	Furrow fields, Loves Farms, St Neots	PE19 6GU	14 years
29	Bawling, Loves Farms, St Neots	PE19 6GD	13 Years
30	Kester Way, Loves Farm, St Neots (MUGA)	PE19 6SL	14 years
31	Woodridge, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6BQ	12 years
32	Top Birches, Loves Farm, St Neots	PE19 6BD	12 years
33	Maule Close, off Barford Road, Eynesbury, St. Neots	PE19 2HJ	20 Years
34	Barford Road, Eynesbury	PE19 6DB	23 years
	St Ives :-		
35	Hill Rise Park, St Ives	PE27 6HR	26 Years
	Godmanchester :-		
36	Wigmore Farm (LAP), Godmanchester	PE29 2AR	12 Years
37	Wigmore Farm (LEAP) Godmanchester	PE29 2AR	12 Years
38	Stokes Drive (LAP), Godmanchester (1/2)	PE29 2UW	15 years
39	Stokes Drive (LEAP), Godmanchester (2/2)	PE29 2UU	15 Years
40	Roman Way, Godmanchester	PE29 2RW	18 Years
	Ramsey:-		
41	Signal Road, Ramsey	PE26 1NG	17 Years

	Yaxley:-		
42	Crocus Way, Yaxley	PE7 3WP	30+
43	Scott Drive, Yaxley	PE7 3AD	8 years
44	Shackleton Way, Yaxley	PE7 3AB	8 years
	Sawtry:-		
45	Rowell Way- Sawtry	PE28 5WA	9 Years
	Skate Parks		
46	St Neots – Riverside Park	PE19 7AD	36
47	St Ives – Hill Rise Park	PE27 6HR	25 +