

KEY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

There are a number of key strategies and policies that guide the provision and location of play within Milton Keynes. For ease of reference we have set these out below.

1. **Internal Policy and strategy**

Local Plan – to be incorporated in to Core strategy

- a) Policy L3 sets out basic standards for types of play area – Local Play area and Neighbourhood Play area and the target age range, catchment area, numbers and types of equipment and buffer distances from roads and properties.
- b) Milton Keynes Play Partnership
 - i) The Play Framework sets out cross organisational aspirations for play in the widest sense across the borough. Little specific detail on play areas per say.

2. **Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for leisure and recreation – due**

Builds on the local plan with additional detail on trigger points for the provision of facilities (based on numbers of dwellings) and the financial contribution.

3. **Residential design guide**

Considers play provision briefly in the context of homes, juxtaposition of passive surveillance vs. noise nuisance

4. **Public Open Space strategy**

- a) A revision of the open space strategy is ongoing and a draft is due to go to consultation over the summer.
- b) The strategy sets out a number of tasks including a review of types of spaces (including play) and citizen satisfaction.

5. **Play area improvement scheme**

Council fund which supports parishes and town councils to improve their play spaces – 2012 -2013 £50,000 MKC to be matched by £50,000 Parish and Town Council.

6. **Planning Policy Guidance 17 – Planning for open space sport and recreation¹**

Replaced by National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) but still includes some of its requirements:

Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments for the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new

¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/ppg17.pdf>

provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required. (Para 73)

7. Department for children, schools and families

Funded the National Playbuilder project – 22 newly refurbished sites across the borough – Key document: *Children and parents experiences of recently improved play areas* (2009)

8. European and British standards for play facilities

- a) Deals with the setting out of equipment in play areas and the standard of equipment (EN1176), safer surfacing (EN1177) and wheeled sport (EN15312).
- b) The standards do not cover the positioning of sites or the types of facility in any depth.
- c) These standards are not a legal requirement or retrospective, however they do form the basis of good practice within the industry.

9. Fields in trust

- a) Previously the National Playing Fields Association whose “*The 6 acre standard*” (2001) formed the basis for many local authorities.
- b) This guidance has now been updated in the *Planning and design for Outdoor Sport and Play*.

10. Play England

Guidance document to promote good play area design, suggested process for design, no specific standards – Key document: *Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces* (2008)

11. Sustains

Principally concerned with sustainable transport but has produced guidance on access by young people to play spaces – Key document: *Routes to play; a guide for local authorities* (2009).

12. Committees and teams

Within Milton Keynes Council a number of teams contribute to the success of the play framework and there are set out below with a general description of the function.

13. Planning

- a) Function has been divided between HCA in the growth areas and MKC in all other Borough areas.
- b) MKC uses Local Plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance etc to form an opinion

- c) Planning obligation (S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) seeks contributions in order to make development viable

14. Milton Keynes Play Partnership

The Play Framework sets out cross organisational aspirations for play in the widest sense across the borough. Little specific detail on play areas per say.

15. JET Joint Environmental Team

The group looks at future plans in the growth area, includes MKC, HCA and Parks Trust officers

16. FIXIT

- a) The Council service which is responsible for the maintenance and inspection of the Councils play area stock
- b) Manages 492 sites and 5288 listed assets
- c) Approximate values of asset £14.15 million
- d) Team of 7 operatives, 7 assistants and one manager – budget of 200k for spares and maintenance – equates to £406 per site on spares parts and replacement equipment - due to age or malfunction.
- e) Sites and maintenance are recorded on a dedicated data base, all sites subject to yearly external inspection.
- f) Present condition of play assets (includes play equipment, safer surfacing, gates, fences, bins and seats)

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|----|---------|------------|-----|
| a. | Poor | 707 items | 17% |
| b. | Average | 2513 items | 61% |
| c. | Good | 456 items | 11% |
| d. | As new | 426 items | |

17. Guidance

KIDS

Charity concentrating on the needs of disabled children and creating accessible and inclusive designs – Key document: Inclusion by design; a guide to creating accessible play and childcare environments (2008)