

# The Rotherham Play Strategy 2007 - 2012

Play is ... 'what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way and for their own reasons'.

*Getting Serious About Play*

## What is Play?

“Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals, and as members of the community”. ‘Best Play – what play provision should do for children’. *Bob Hughes and Frank King.*

“Play is a time where you enjoy yourself” – *Sarah*

“Play is what I do, anywhere, with anyone and it can be anything” – *Molly*

“Play means to do something that is fun and interesting to me” – *Amelia*

“Play is the freedom to do what I wish” – *Tess*

“Playing is when you are having fun” – *Tammy*

*Comments from 42<sup>nd</sup> Rotherham Guide Unit*

“We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing”.

*George Bernard Shaw*

## The Right to Play

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in December 1991, recognises the importance of play for the child. This definition includes young people up to the age of 19. Article 31 of the Convention states that:

1. Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

*Article 31 Convention on the Rights of the Child*

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## Welcome

I welcome this first Play Strategy and believe that it will form the beginning of a new coordinated approach to play for all children and young people in Rotherham.

Play is all about having fun. It is what children and young people choose to do with their time when they are not being directed in other activities. It's how they learn. Through play they make sense of themselves, their abilities and the world and people around them. Play also contributes positively to personal health. In recognition of the importance of play, the Government has made £155 million of National Lottery money available to improve play opportunities in England.

Through consultation, Rotherham's children and young people have told us that play is very important to them. They want a range of play opportunities which are both accessible and in safe locations where they can have fun and hang out with their friends. It is important that we make it easier for all to access play opportunities and there needs to be an emphasis on the inclusive play. We must also be aware of barriers to play for example bullying and recognise that issues like this must be addressed to make play truly accessible.

Councillor Iain St John

Councillor Iain St John is the elected member of Rotherham MB Council and Cabinet Member for Life Long Learning, Culture and Leisure and is the play champion for Rotherham.

## Introduction

This strategy aims to address the different elements that are needed to make up effective and co-ordinated play provision within Rotherham\*. [*\*Where 'Rotherham' is mentioned, this means 'Rotherham Borough'.*] It recognises the value of play in its own right and in relation to wider agendas such as health, social inclusion and community safety whilst reflecting local diversity and character. It considers where children and young people play for example indoors, in parks, open spaces, streets and the wider built environment, and their ability to access play in their neighbourhoods. It recommends local standards for play provision (as relevant), identifies links with strategic documents and interprets the 'local situation' in the context of relevant regional and national legislation, policy and strategy. The assessment of current provision is based on an audit and analysis of existing facilities and services and extensive consultation with stakeholders, children and young people.

Our Vision:

**We see Rotherham as a place where all children and young people have equal access to high quality, challenging play opportunities which are close to where they live and either free of charge or affordable.**

It is recognised that not all provision can be free of charge, though the intention is that the great majority of play facilities will be free. Affordability and opportunities to introduce incentive schemes must therefore be considered when providing play opportunities. All

children and young people have a right to play and access to opportunities to play, regardless of their background or abilities. The aim of this strategy is therefore:

**To improve and extend opportunities to play for all children and young people in Rotherham Borough.**

To achieve this aim, the following priorities have been agreed:

1. To raise awareness of the value and significance of play for children and young people and to promote better understanding of the role of play in their personal development.
2. To provide a targeted range of challenging and exciting outdoor play spaces for children and young people.
3. To support and maintain a strong and effective play partnership representing all sectors of the community which will co-ordinate and enable good quality, sustainable play.
4. To recognise and value the range of workers who deliver play opportunities across all sectors, to share good practice and to increase the number of qualified playworkers in Rotherham.
5. To involve children and young people in the planning, design, delivery and feedback on the management of future play facilities.
6. To identify and remove barriers preventing children and young people from accessing play opportunities.

In the delivery of this programme, the principles of value for money and sustainability will guide activity.

## Why We Need a Strategy

Access to rich, stimulating environments - There is a poverty of play opportunities in the general environment, and it is the responsibility of the community to ensure that all children have access to rich, stimulating environments that are free from unacceptable risk, and thereby offer children the opportunity to explore both themselves and the world, through their freely chosen play.

*Best Play: What play provision should do for children (2000)*

Play is a central part of the lives of children and young people. It is fundamental to their health and well being, to their relationships, development and learning. Through exploration and experimentation play provides children and young people with a way to learn how to

live in and experience the world. If children and young people, are to benefit from the variety of play opportunities, there must be a more strategic approach to provision, led by a cohesive national and local policy offering coordinated guidance, standards and direction linked with clear local strategic direction. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) identifies their right to engage in play and recreational activities, rest and leisure as appropriate to their age and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Children and young people, their parents/carers and communities, social commentators and elected members all regard play provision as important. Currently however, play provision fails to be co-ordinated successfully for a number of reasons. Responsibility falls between many different providers and is as a result fragmented. There has been no single activity co-ordinator and the profile of play is not as high as it should be. These different threads need to be drawn together and coordinated. A lasting partnership ensuring that play is placed high on the agenda of providers and stakeholders is required. This strategy identifies actions over a five year period from 2007 to 2012. Regular monitoring and review will correct deviations and inform future direction. There will also be a full review and appraisal every five years.

In order to identify the barriers to play and the needs of children and young people in terms of play provision, a range of consultation has been carried out. Actions are directly identified within the enclosed action plan. Consultation to confirm direction will continue throughout the implementation phase. The ongoing results of this consultation with children and young people will inform the play partnership. This large partnership of play providers has directly contributed to the identification of key issues and this also informs the document. In order to build up an impression of current provision, a full audit of play in Rotherham has been carried out, and this enables gaps to be identified and issues of quality to be addressed.

The Big Lottery Fund has allocated a sum of money (£655,841.14) to Rotherham for the development of play activity. The priorities in this document identify how this funding should be targeted.

### Scope

'Inclusive provision is open and accessible to all, and takes positive action in removing disabling barriers so that disabled and non-disabled children can participate'.

*Alison John for Kidsactive and Better Play*

The Rotherham Children and Young People's Play Strategy addresses the play needs of children and young people in Rotherham up to 19 years of age. While the needs of young people are different from those of children, they are no less important. It aims to be inclusive and covers:

- fixed play facilities (playgrounds, outdoor youth facilities, wheeled sports facilities and covering their sustainable development and use, from all aspects of their design, specification, installation and subsequent management and maintenance, through to

their eventual removal and replacement –facilities are owned / managed by the local authority, parish / town councils and others)

- other spaces (green spaces, playing pitches, woodlands, river corridors, lakes etc)
- staffed services (supervised play facilities, out of school clubs, junior youth clubs, uniformed groups, play schemes, ranger assisted activities etc.)

We recognise that children and young people's play occurs spontaneously across the borough and particularly in the range of open and green spaces irrespective of the presence of play equipment. These sites are highly important in delivering play value though this value may not initially be apparent. Examples may include copses and woods, mounds and other landscape features, paths and steps, bridges and boulders. Therefore in designing and undertaking changes to any open space area, consideration of the play value of these elements will be taken into account.

### Rotherham Play Partnership

The Play Partnership was established to promote play in its broadest sense in Rotherham. It has sought to involve all stakeholders who deliver play throughout the Borough. The partnership is therefore comprised of representative groups, both statutory and non statutory, from the public, voluntary and private sectors. It is led by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

## Defining Play

"Playing is when you are having fun"

*Tammy - 42<sup>nd</sup> Rotherham Guide Unit*

The definition of play can be interpreted in many different ways dependant upon the field of practice it is delivered in; however in Rotherham, for the purposes of this document, we have agreed the following definition:

**Play is freely chosen, personally directed behaviour, motivated from within.**

*Freely chosen* means that children themselves choose when, how and what to play. As such it is not part of a set programme and does not have any steps that need to be completed.

*Personally directed* means children themselves decide the rules and roles they take within their play.

Play includes activities such as running, jumping, climbing, laughing, shouting, singing, skipping, hiding, hopping, crawling, walking, dancing, play acting, pretence and imagination. It can have the effect of strengthening friendships and generating happiness.

Rotherham believes that play is central to the lives of children and young people. Play is the primary way that they make sense of themselves, their abilities and the world and people around them.

For very young children and their families play includes a lot of adult interaction and this is delivered by a range of providers, for example the library service with clubs such as the Pattercake Club and the Chatterbox Group. Play is therefore very important, even from a very early age, as it gives the opportunity for children and young people to experiment and take calculated risks, which will enable them to develop important social and life skills. Play can be challenging, exciting, stimulating, serious, fun and even scary at times, but it is widely recognised as the method that children and young people use to learn and develop autonomously as individuals and members of the community. Given the right play opportunities, children and young people will have a happier and healthier life. The 'Play Place Grid' from Play England (below) gives examples of the types of facility and space which can offer children and young people the best opportunities for play and informal recreation and which should form the basis of provision where children and young people can play and meet their friends in their own neighbourhoods.

The Play Place grid	Supervised and semi-supervised - for example	No formal supervision - for example
Dedicated places for play and informal recreation*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adventure playgrounds</li> <li>• Open access play centres</li> <li>• Play ranger and outreach play projects</li> <li>• Mobile play facilities</li> <li>• School playgrounds and premises (open out of schools hours)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playgrounds / play areas</li> <li>• Bike, skate and skateboard facilities</li> <li>• Ball courts</li> <li>• Multi Use Games Areas</li> <li>• Hangout / youth shelters</li> </ul>
Other provision where play takes place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School playgrounds and premises during the school day</li> <li>• Extended school and childcare provision</li> <li>• Children's Centres</li> </ul>	
Non-dedicated places for play and informal recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks with rangers and gardeners</li> <li>• Streets with wardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residential streets</li> <li>• Neighbourhood open spaces</li> <li>• Parks and green spaces</li> <li>• Beaches, rivers and lakes</li> <li>• Woodlands and natural open spaces</li> <li>• Safe routes to school and play areas</li> <li>• Playing fields and recreation grounds</li> </ul>

\* Places for children and young people, where they are free to come and go and free to choose what they do whilst there and which they can use free of charge. (There may be some exceptions to the 'free to come and go' criteria for young children and for children who have specific needs which make independent mobility impossible for them.)

Source: Play England

Other more specialist forms of play include play therapy which helps children understand muddled feelings and upsetting events that they haven't the chance or skills to sort out properly. Rather than having to explain what is troubling them, as

adult therapy usually expects, children use play to communicate at their own level and at their own pace, without feeling interrogated or threatened. This type of activity is acknowledged but is beyond the focus of this strategy.

### Risk

'Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risk of death or serious injury.'

*Managing Risk in Play Provision Statement (2002) Play Safety Forum*

It is recognised that perceptions of 'risk' have been a limiting factor in the quality of some play provision and that over 40% of the funding for play grounds is spent on measures to mitigate against risk. This level of spend is not a requirement of the Health and Safety Executive. Managing risk is about keeping the risk as low as practicable; it is not about its total removal. Play without risk removes enjoyment and challenge and results in play provision which is less stimulating and consequently may be avoided. Safety surfacing is an example which doubles the cost of a play ground without evidence that it significantly reduces serious injury. Whilst this is out of proportion to the level of risk involved, in the short term it is difficult to reduce the level of treatment. Nationally however there is pressure growing to recognise that too much is being targeted towards safety provision in play grounds.

## The Benefits of Play

Play is to a child what work is to an adult: It is what they do. Play is fun and importantly it provides the mechanism for children to explore the world around them and the medium through which skills are developed and practised. Through play children learn about their world and the things in it. It is an essential part of every child's life and vital to the process of human development. Play allows them the chance to explore their environment, to learn how it works and how they relate to it. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, good health, intellectual and educational development, and acquiring social and behavioural skills. Children can express feelings and emotions through various types of play activities (play, art, stories, etc.) far earlier than they can express them in words. For older children, play may be the outlet through which they convey emotions that they are either unwilling to share verbally or do not have the sufficient vocabulary to express. Through play children can be anyone, at anyplace, at anytime.

### Health

Engagement in play activities contributes positively towards the health of children and young people. Play is crucial to children and young people's health and development and has an important role in addressing concerns about increases in obesity and mental health. National evidence (Children's Play Council) suggests one of the best ways for children to get exercise is through outdoor play. The British Heart Foundation says a third of Under 7s fail to reach minimum recommended activity levels and by the age of 15, two-thirds of girls

are classified as inactive. Two-thirds of 9 - 11 years olds in the UK are dissatisfied with the quality of outdoor play facilities where they live. This is even higher for 15 – 16 year olds (81%), which is higher than any other European country. In making recommendations to combat obesity, the Department for Health recommends that children and young people achieve at least sixty minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each day (Department for Health 2004). However, research shows that only a third of boys and girls aged 2-11 achieve the recommended level of activity to benefit their health. Research has shown that outdoor play is one of the best forms of exercise for children. Regular participation in active recreation has proven health benefits including in later life the reduced risk of coronary heart disease, strokes and osteoporosis, as well as obesity reduction and weight management, and psychological benefits including increased self-esteem and a feeling of well-being.

'Play in young children may have a critical role in the enlargement of brain capacity.'

*Best Play*

Positive sport and leisure activities in communities comprise one of the resilience factors for promoting children and young people's mental health listed in the report *'Bright Futures- Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health'* (1999) *the Mental Health Foundation*.

### **Communities**

As well as the health and well-being benefits that play can bring to individuals, play can also make a significant contribution to wider community cohesion and social inclusion agendas, which are being taken forward by partners in Rotherham.

The Council's Social Inclusion Framework aims to ensure that all of Rotherham's communities and individuals are encouraged and enabled to participate effectively in and benefit from all aspects of life; while Rotherham's Community Cohesion Partnership Strategic Framework for Action sets out actions to ensure that Rotherham is a place of:

- Belonging - where all people feel they can belong and have a part to play.
- Safety - where all people are safe and treated with dignity.
- Equity - where equality of opportunity is the norm.
- Understanding - where differences between people are understood and valued.
- Celebration - where the richness of our diversity and commonality is enjoyed.

Play provides informal opportunities for children and young people from diverse communities to come together, build cross-community friendships and a sense of belonging, as well as gaining an understanding of each other's backgrounds.

As part of the wider neighbourhoods' agenda, it is important, therefore, that children and young people are provided with safe areas to play. New housing developments and regeneration schemes need to consider the play needs of children and young people. Consideration also needs to be given to the potential for anti-social behaviour that can be linked to some types of play, or play in inappropriate places.

However, it needs to be recognised that play can act as a diversion from anti-social behaviour, while an absence of play facilities can underpin the concerns that residents express about 'gangs hanging around the streets' (as identified in the Quality of Life survey 2006).

## The Strategic Context

The following policy and guidance at the national and local level, impacts directly on play in Rotherham.

### The National Context

Play has gradually risen up the political agenda over the last five years. When the current government came to power there was a commitment of £200,000,000 to go towards children's play but it was not determined at that time how this would be made available. In 2004 the government published 'Getting Serious About Play' which made recommendations about how local authorities should be thinking about play. More recently the Big Lottery Fund announced a programme of funding which included an allocation of £155,000,000 to local authorities in England for play. Of this fund Rotherham has been allocated £655,841.14.

The following policy and guidance influences the Play Strategy:

The **Children Act 2004** provides the legal underpinning for the **Every Child Matters: Change for Children** programme which is aimed at transforming children's services. It states that enjoying recreation should be one of the outcomes that children's services aim to bring about. The Every Child Matters agenda aims to give every child the opportunity to achieve their full potential regardless of their background or circumstances. Services from across local authorities, health agencies, schools, police and voluntary groups all play a vital role. The outcomes framework recognises how important the enjoyment of time and space for play are for children and young people.

The Play Strategy contributes to each of the five outcomes for children and young people that form the core of Every Child Matters, namely:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well-being

The play strategy will therefore make a significant contribution to the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. In Rotherham this agenda is led by the Children And Young People's Service.

**Getting Serious About Play** is a government policy document, published in 2004 by Frank Dobson MP announcing significant new investment in play, later confirmed to be the

national allocation discussed above. The key recommendations were that local authorities should have the following in place:

- A play strategy and plan
- A governance structure
- A local play champion

**Best Play: What play provision should do for children (2000)** is the result of a partnership between the National Playing Fields Association, PLAYLINK and the Children's Play Council and was funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It addresses how children benefit from play opportunities and how play services and spaces can provide these benefits. It applies research to the field of public play provision, both supervised and unsupervised and is based on values and principles about children and play developed by the playwork profession.

**Cleaner Safer Greener** is the Government's vision to create cleaner, safer, greener communities for all. It has been shown that safe, well-maintained and attractive public spaces create pride in the places where people live which is essential to building community cohesion and successful communities. An aspect of the creating sustainable communities agenda targets improving the quality of planning, design, management and maintenance of public spaces and the built environment. High quality and inclusive design should create public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation.

The Play Strategy clearly contributes to this process directly through provision of quality play spaces. The Green Spaces Strategy which is currently being developed also has clear links with both this vision and the Play Strategy.

**National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP)** includes the following aims:

- to support children and young people in developing healthy behaviours;
- to help to reduce health inequalities; and
- to help promote social inclusion.

National Healthy School status requires that schools meet criteria outlined in four core themes which cover a range of educational, health and environmental issues that can be effectively addressed through the whole school community. Two of the four core themes are:

- Physical Activity
- Emotional Health and Well Being (including Bullying)

**Youth Matters (2005)** outlines the government's plans for transforming services to young people in their teenage years. The paper outlines the need to provide comprehensive and join-up services around:

- Positive Activities
- Targeted Support

- Information, Advice and Guidance

Central to the development of services to the teenage years will be a local Youth Offer which will inform children and young people of the opportunities available to them. Play opportunities will be an important part of the Offer, providing recreational and social experiences in a safe and enjoyable place.

The Play Strategy will clearly contribute to this agenda by helping to build a range of positive play experiences, both generic and targeted.

### The Local Context

Rotherham's Play Strategy is part of a wider set of policies and strategies, which provide a vision that promotes social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the Borough.

The most important of these is Rotherham's **Community Strategy**, which sets out a long-term strategy for the Borough, and acts as a focus for all other plans and strategies.

To ensure that the Play Strategy adds value to and complements the Community Strategy, the Action Plan has been aligned to the five Priority Themes contained in the Community Strategy. These are:

- Achieving
- Alive
- Learning
- Proud
- Safe

There are also two cross cutting themes, which underpin the actions in the Action Plan:

- Sustainable Development
- Fairness

The Play Strategy contributes to all of the key Community Strategy priorities, but particularly:

- Alive – healthy children and young people
- Achieving – play enhances the motivation of children and young people
- Learning – children and young people learn by experience and interaction with others

The Play Strategy also contributes to the delivery of Rotherham's **Local Area Agreement (LAA)**. The LAA is a three year agreement that partner agencies in Rotherham agreed with Central Government in March 2006. The aim of the LAA is to improve partnership working in Rotherham and improve services. It complements the Community Strategy, and is based on five blocks. Each of the LAA blocks makes a contribution to one or more themes in our Community Strategy:

- The Economic Development and Enterprise Block helps deliver our Achieving and Learning themes
- The Children and Young People's Block is makes a contribution to all themes, but particularly Achieving, Learning and Alive
- The Safer and Stronger Communities Block contributes to our Safe theme
- The Healthy Communities and Older People's Block is making a contribution to deliver our Alive theme
- The Cross Cutting Block contribute to the Proud theme and cross-cutting themes of Fairness and Sustainable Development

The LAA provides for new opportunities for partnerships focussed on delivery. Many of the objectives in the LAA promote health, but a key health objective is to reduce health inequalities in target areas and communities of interest, and identity and promote positive health and wellbeing for all residents. The Play Strategy makes a contribution to the key LAA priorities, such as:

- The children and young people block through achieving, learning and alive

Rotherham's **Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS)** is integral to the delivery of the Community Strategy and the LAA. It sets Rotherham Partnership's commitment to tackling the inequalities that exist between those communities that experience most deprivation and the rest in the Borough, as well as a commitment to improve the quality of life in all of Rotherham's neighbourhoods.

The key objectives of the NRS are to:

- Deliver the Community Strategy vision for Rotherham by addressing inequalities, through specific actions with communities of place and interest in most need and building preventative strategies that will deliver longer-term solutions rather than simply tackling current problems
- Address the root causes of deprivation by ensuring actions in target communities help us make progress across all the Community Strategy Priority Themes
- Ensure our resources and service delivery are aligned with community needs across target communities by:
  1. Driving forward service integration at neighbourhood level through the development and rollout of a neighbourhood management approach.
  2. Prioritising the active involvement and influence of communities and putting community needs and aspirations at the heart of neighbourhood renewal.
  3. Ensuring effective mainstreaming of neighbourhood renewal in the plans and programmes of partner organisations.
  4. Maximising the use of external resources, and aligning these resources to the mainstream, to support the transformation of deprived areas.
  5. Improve our information by improving both data sharing and listening more to communities

The NRS targets the top 25% most deprived areas, as well as four communities of interest. Importantly, in terms of the Play Strategy, the communities of interest include Deprived

Children and Young People. Analysis shows that this community is especially disadvantaged in terms of attainment and skills levels, income, health, housing and crime.

Other cross cutting strategies that are relevant to the Play Strategy include:

- **RMBC's Voice and Influence Strategy** which sets out how the voice of children and young people will be central to the life of the borough and how they will have real influence over decisions which affect their lives.
- **RMBC's Rural Strategy**, which addresses service delivery in the rural half of the Borough
- the **Social Inclusion Framework & Action Plan**, which aims to promote a joined up, effective approach to social inclusion across partners, and address gaps in service provision
- the **Children & Young People's Plan and Well-Being Strategy 2006-2009** makes clear links with the above strategies and covers services for children and young people 0-19, those aged 20 or over who are leaving care and those up to 25 who have learning difficulties. Rotherham has adopted a number of core principals including championing children and young people's rights and responsibilities and recognising and celebrating equality and diversity.
- the **Community Safety Strategy for 2005 – 2008** is a joint strategy to address crime, disorder and drug problems. The Strategy also contributes to targets in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2004 – 2010. Community Cohesion is a cross-cutting theme.
- **Future Perfect: Rotherham's Cultural Strategy 2003 – 2007** identifies the Council's support for cultural activity as contributing to the quality of life, providing a path into employment and as an economic regenerator.
- The (forthcoming) **Green Spaces Strategy** is being developed to ensure that limited resources can be targeted so that the people of Rotherham can enjoy the best possible accessible green spaces, regardless of ownership, across the Borough. It will follow an approach set out in Planning Policy Guidance PPG17. Both an audit of publicly accessible green space and a survey of current usage and user / non-user views has been completed. It will lead to new accessibility and quality standards for green spaces and will prioritise sites for improvement to maximise health, cultural and environmental benefits, it will also set out recommendations for community involvement.
- The **Playing Pitch Strategy** (to be completed in 2007) identifies how existing and future demand for community access to football, rugby, cricket and hockey pitches can best be met, and where improvements are needed to allow teams to progress to reach their full potential. It will aim to give good accessibility to high quality sites across the Borough.

and:

- Rotherham Early Education, Childcare and Extended Services Strategy 2006 – 2008
- Rotherham Sport and Recreation Plan
- Rotherham PE and School Sport Strategy - Building Active Futures (2005 - 2008)
- PCT Physical Activity (2003) and Obesity Strategies (2004)
- Youth Matters

- Children's Fund
- Local Transport Plan
- The Healthy Schools Scheme

### **The Local Development Framework**

Because the Local Development Framework (LDF) which will supersede the Unitary Development Plan will take a number of years to complete, work on its development will be prioritised. Significant issues will therefore be summarised in a core strategy as a temporary measure. A Local Heritage section will cover Green Space Networks and these will in turn encompass fixed play provision. The Council in partnership with national agencies and local stakeholders will ensure the safeguarding and enhancement of the special quality and character of the Borough's natural, historic and cultural heritage by promoting initiatives and requiring development that protect and, where appropriate, enhance and manage green spaces, buildings, habitats, species or other assets of acknowledged heritage importance. This will be commensurate with their statutory status and their relative national, regional, sub-regional or local value. Appropriate mitigation measures will be required to combat any potential direct and/or indirect adverse impacts of development recognising that there may be limits to the potential for particular heritage assets to accept further development without causing irreversible damage. PPG17 Sport and Recreation which informs this framework provides guidance on the role of the planning system in assessing opportunities and needs for sport and recreation provision and safeguarding open space which has recreational value.

## **Evidence of Need**

This section looks at the evidence of need for play in Rotherham. It takes into account statistical information, audit findings and consultation results.

### **Rotherham Borough**

About half of Rotherham is urban, with most of the population of 252,000 living in urban areas, either in small towns such as Wath and Dinnington, or in the urban centre of Rotherham. Historically Rotherham's two main industries were steel making and coal mining. The restructuring of these core industries and reductions in levels of economic activity during the last thirty years resulted in high levels of unemployment. Recently significant European and Government grants have targeted the economic and social issues within the sub region for a number of years. However play (which can be classed as an aspect of recreation) has failed to attract core funding.

### **Deprivation**

Today 33% of Rotherham's population live in areas which are amongst the 20% most deprived nationally. 25% of Rotherham's population aged between 0 and 15 years live in very low waged households or in households receiving workless benefits according to the 2004 Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (Indices of Deprivation 2004). The Index also showed that in the most deprived neighbourhoods of Rotherham more than 50% of children were living in low-income households (on means tested benefits or very low waged) and 25% of all dependent children live in Lone Parent households. In 2005 there

were 64,000 children and young people aged 0 to 19 living in the Borough (Mid Year Population Estimates 2005, Office for National Statistics). Clearly therefore there is a great variation in the life experiences of children and young people across Rotherham. It is for this reason that the emphasis of the play strategy will be on free play provision.

Other statistics of interest; the 2001 Census learned that 407 young people aged 16-17 in Rotherham were parents (3.4%) and of those, 228 or 1.9% were lone parents. Rotherham's under 18 conception rate in 2004 was 51.5 per thousand of females aged 15 to 17 (equivalent to 257 pregnancies in 2004) this compares to a national rate of 41.5 per thousand. Just under half of all teenage parents in the Borough have no qualifications. In terms of educational deprivation the percentage rate of young people in Rotherham leaving school without any qualifications is high in comparison to the national average as is the percentage rate of young people not achieving 5 Grade A\*-C GCSEs. These figures are even starker for Looked after Children in the Borough. In Rotherham, we know that less than half of all Looked after Children achieve 1 GCSE or equivalent. In September 2006, there were a total of 333 Looked after Children in the Borough. Analysis shows that this community is especially disadvantaged in terms of attainment and skills levels, income, health, housing and crime.

### **Disability**

"Impairment is what we have. Disability is what we experience."

*International Year of Disabled People (1981)*

Around 770,000 (7%) of children in the UK are disabled. Of Rotherham's total population of children and young people, 5.16% or 3,300 are classed as being disabled under the 2001 Census definition of limiting long term illness. Disabled children and young people currently face multiple barriers which make it more difficult for them to achieve their potential, to achieve the outcomes their peers expect. They also experience discrimination on the grounds of their impairment(s). These barriers and discriminative practices will often appear in the built environment and institutionalised systems, thus making it difficult, or sometimes impossible, for disabled children and young people to participate. One of the strategy's priorities is therefore to take positive action by removing barriers to ensure inclusive opportunities. The Rotherham Disability Equality Scheme demonstrates how the council, PCT and hospital trust will address this issue in a three year Action Plan. This strategy will contribute to the plan.

### **Barriers to Play**

Our consultation with children and young people has indicated a number of factors which act as barriers to play. Some of these are physical while others are linked with accessibility and fear, either of the children and young people, or of their parents. Bullying and 'bad people' have been cited as have public transport, the condition of local green spaces and the quality of equipment. A national survey, carried out for the Anti-Bullying Alliance (2006), found that 56 per cent of 7-18-year-olds had seen another young person being bullied in the past year. Because of the various fears of parents and carers children are often kept in or close to their homes and often 'play' on their computer or watch the television instead. Perhaps the greatest single impact on children and young people's freedom to play has been the rise of the car, there are now 32 million of them. In the past the street had been a place for play. There is little connection now between the home and the street.

The partnership will aim to provide inclusive play provision that is open and accessible to all and take positive action in removing disabling barriers so that disabled children and non disabled children from all backgrounds and communities can participate in play.

### **Equality and Inclusion**

“What do we mean by inclusion? The concept attracts anxiety, fears about ‘incompetence’, anxiety about risk taking. But inclusion is not a single structure. It is a process by which we acknowledge the rights of all children to be a part of their local communities.”

*Micheline Mason from Parents for Inclusion*

The Play Partnership and Rotherham Council are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for young people. They recognise that elements within society hold negative attitudes, stereotypes and myths about young people and that these can lead to them being socially and economically disadvantaged, excluded and marginalised. The play partnership fully supports the principles of equality and inclusion establishing the black minority ethnic (BME) and hard to reach sub-groups to address these issues and in particular racist attitudes. Rotherham has a majority white British population with fewer in minority ethnic groups than the national average. Based on a 2003 estimate, 5.2% of the population belong to minority ethnic groups, with 4.1% being non-white. The largest minority ethnic group is Pakistani in origin with 2% of the total population, compared to an average of 1.5% across England. Other groups include Chinese, Indian, Irish, Yemeni, Black African and Dual Heritage. Minority ethnic residents tend to live around Rotherham town centre, in areas such as Eastwood, Masbrough and Wellgate. Whilst the White British and Irish Populations are fairly static, other ethnic groups are growing in number. Through work with representative groups such as Rotherham Ethnic Minorities Association, opportunities will be taken to address local needs through targeted consultation to ensure inclusion and appropriately targeted provision. The work of the hard to reach sub-group specifically addressed the needs of asylum seeker / refugee and migrant worker communities. A number of voluntary organisations in particular address the needs of these groups and are key to identifying solutions to the particular problems that they face.

The partnership therefore recognises the special requirements of those areas and groups with the poorest access to good play opportunities, with an emphasis on the inclusion of disabled children and young people, and those who currently have less access (for example, girls, children and young people from ethnic or religious minorities, children in care, children of refugees, travellers and homeless families and those living in rural areas).

### **Public Perceptions of Young People**

66% of respondents to the Rotherham Quality of Life Survey 2006 (Ipsos MORI North) say that teenagers hanging around on the streets are either a very or fairly big problem.

In recent years there has been criticism of young people (teenage children) in respect of their (perceived) anti-social behaviour. Young people generally suffer from a lack of both indoor and outdoor facilities in Rotherham. Results from the Lifestyle Survey 2005 show

that young people are bored, have no facilities and nowhere to hang out. Green spaces which are the obvious place to make such provisions are often ruled out by local householders. There needs to be community recognition of the role of green spaces in providing recreational opportunities for all. Young people are as entitled as any other section of the community to consideration when providing recreational facilities. The results of preliminary consultation suggests that what they are most in need of are places to 'hang out' in the form of seating and sheltered seating, skateboard parks, multi use games areas, bmx facilities etc. It shows that both sexes want somewhere to meet their friends. Street corners and shopping frontages are often the only places where they can go. But in these locations young people can be considered to be threatening and intimidating. The reality is that young people have their own fears about personal safety. The findings of our consultation again showed that young people are concerned about bullying and worried by other groups of young people.

Some young people feel disengaged from society. Often they come from families which are not supportive and where parents may also have had similar experiences. Such disengagement can be generational and breaking the downwards spiral is challenging. These factors may lead to reinforced behaviour with young people hanging around with others in a similar situation. In recognising this problem positive action will be taken to address the under provision of facilities and support needed by young people.

## Play Facilities and Play Service Providers

A broad audit of play has been carried out. This will continue to be updated as further information becomes available. The findings of preliminary consultation established that children and young people play in a range of locations in Rotherham which cannot be easily categorised. It also learned that whilst some of these locations can be considered to be safe, others are distinctly hazardous. For example some children and young people said that they play on railway property and on building sites – clearly places where there is danger. Other more popular places for play include at home or at a friends house, streams and rivers, waste land, local roads, beer gardens, car parks etc. Whilst the relevance of these locations for play is recognised, this audit cannot provide a full record of every location where children and young people engage in play. The places where young people meet regularly change – they do not always meet in the same places but rather move around different localities.

### Fixed Play Provision

An audit (both quantitative and qualitative) of existing fixed play provision across Rotherham has been carried out. This will continue to provide updated information over the life of the strategy. It has identified current fixed provision in terms of ownership, quantity, distribution, and in the case of playgrounds, the play value and quality of equipment. It has also taken into account other public places where children and young people play. These include formal parks and playgrounds, green space (playing fields / sports pitches, amenity areas, cemeteries, woodland and natural areas), community halls, schools, youth centres and childcare schemes with an element of play e.g. pre & after school clubs, day nurseries, holiday clubs, playgroups, etc. Fixed play provision in the absence of better

standards, should work toward those of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) where they are felt to be appropriate. However in some cases, the specification may not be considered to be appropriate because for example a play area may not need to be fenced, whereas the standard demands it. These standards cover Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs). Both have nationally approved catchments areas. Using these catchments along with qualitative data, it has been possible to identify the main gaps in provision of play equipment for under 12 year olds. Multi use games areas and covered seating or youth shelters for young people do not have qualitative assessments as each type of provisions provides a similar equipment specification. So long as this is well maintained it is the distribution of equipment that is the main concern. Skateboard parks and BMX facilities are graded in terms of their play value against their maintenance condition. There is only a small strategic provision of these facilities within Rotherham. All of these facilities are plotted on the play maps in this document. Consultation results clearly ask for more play opportunities ranging from equipment provision to a requirement for more local parks. Swimming pools are also high on the list – Rotherham is currently designing and building four new pools. As shown, affordability is an issue in Rotherham and opportunities to enable children and young people to gain access to charged for facilities will be examined with an aim to make access free or accessible at a low access charge. Young people are desperate for places to hang out, and this message comes up time and time again. Accessibility has been assessed using guidance by John Hicks in "Accessible and Inclusive Playspace" (appendix 2) to calculate the access scores for all the play areas in Rotherham.

Much of the funding allocated for new play areas is for risk management in the form of safety surfacing, fencing to exclude dogs (the emphasis on creating equipped play compounds is not always appropriate) and other items such as footpaths as well as general provisions including seats, bins and signs that add little to play value (though some do attract points on the NPFA scoring system). Consequently the sum available for play equipment is significantly diminished. Funding driven cycles often allow insufficient time to design conventional play equipment-based schemes, and experience suggests that many play companies have limited capability to design stimulating environments or to take due regard of site practicalities. Consequently at times schemes have only been adequate instead of exceptional.

Findings from consultation with children, young people and others suggest that there needs to be a shift in emphasis towards stimulating environments that provide opportunities for play that may include some fixed equipment but also offer other opportunities for physical and sensory experiences, learning and interaction. There are issues to consider and risks to manage, but these should be done in a far more positive way. If we are to consider this we will need to consider whether scoring systems such that of the NPFA are adequately suited to assessing play value and quality for none-equipment based schemes or elements. Similarly previous delivery timescales have often precluded real consultation or involvement with children and young people, and where this is carried out, the manner in which this is done has room for improvement. The drive to have projects led by community and friends groups has in some cases created problems in delivering schemes, or in their siting. Better partnerships from the outset will help avoid some of the problems between these groups and those professionals with the skills or experience to provide advice and help deliver a

successful scheme. It is clear therefore that unless we change public perceptions, methods of working or the requirements of funding bodies, it will be difficult to affect the significant improvements that could otherwise be possible.

### **Playwork**

Playwork in Rotherham covers a wide range of workers who facilitate children and young people's play opportunities outside the educational curriculum. Playworkers range from park based rangers, gardeners and neighbourhood wardens through to play rangers, outreach play projects and youth workers. Playwork takes place where adults support children's play in settings such as after-school clubs, libraries and museums, holiday playschemes, adventure playgrounds, parks, playbuses, youth clubs and projects and neighbourhoods. Many of these settings will be subject to care standards and regulations and/or Ofsted inspection.

The provision of play opportunities in communities across Rotherham is crucial in ensuring all children have equal access to play environments regardless of their background and circumstances. Playwork supports children in creating and determining their own goals and outcomes through play. Playwork principles establish the professional and ethical framework for playwork. They describe what is unique about play and playwork and provide the playwork perspective for working with children and young people. Although playwork as a profession has increased over the last five years there is a shortage of qualified playworkers both locally and nationally.

### **Access to Play**

Consultation with children and young people has highlighted the difficulties that they experience in accessing play opportunities. Public transport runs infrequently and is often too expensive for them to use. Play England believes that a good childhood involves all children and young people being able to find places, near their homes, where they can play and meet their friends free of charge. Where a charge is necessary, efforts will be made to reduce this to a minimum wherever possible and incentivised schemes promoted. Issues coming forward from the most hard to reach groups including those in refuge accommodation, travellers, children and young people with disabilities, drug users etc highlighted fear of bullying, poor funding, lack of income, lack of awareness, and levels of staffing as key issues to be confronted.

### **Conclusions**

It is clear that with over a quarter of Rotherham's children and young people aged between 0 and 15 living in very low waged households or in households receiving workless benefits that play provision needs to be easily accessible to children and young people of all abilities, ethnic origins and circumstances. Where there are gaps in provision in areas with significant populations of children and young people, these must be addressed as a priority. Accessibility to facilities for all must be considered for existing facilities and for the placement of future facilities. Quality of provision should be maintained and improved where necessary to meet standards.

The priorities of this strategy are identified in the following action plan and are summarised in the introduction to this document. The actions or targets stemming from these priorities follow under each priority heading.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

It is crucial that the play strategy and action plan remains a 'live' document. The implementation of this strategy will be monitored and evaluated with reference to the evidence base. The monitoring baseline is set-out in the following action plan tables. The action plan will be regularly monitored to ensure that it is delivering targets to plan and that they are having their intended impact. The individual targets establish both responsibility and delivery dates and show clear links with the community strategy. The Partnership Steering Group will meet quarterly to review progress against each of the six priorities. The strategy will undergo an in-depth review on an annual basis to ensure that it continues to provide an effective response to local needs and circumstances. We will continue to engage with children and young people, users and non-users, residents, partners and visitors alike, in the monitoring and review of the strategy.

The Partnership Steering Group will develop an evaluation methodology to measure the long-term benefits to children through play as a direct outcome of this strategy.

# Play Strategy Action Plan

Aim: To improve opportunities to play for all children and young people in Rotherham Borough.

1 Raise awareness of the value and significance of play for children and young people and to promote better understanding of the role of play in their personal development					
	<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Who has lead responsibility</i>	<i>When we will do it</i>	<i>How we will measure our success</i>	<i>How this contributes to the Rotherham vision</i>
1.1	Create the role of Play Co-ordinator for Rotherham to co-ordinate activity and service the play partnership (which comprises those involved in delivering play in Rotherham)	Culture and Leisure	2007/8	Play Co-ordinator reports strategy outputs no less than 4 times per annum	Learning - people will be informed and enabled
1.2	Raise awareness of play provision available for all and benefiting disabled, black / ethnic / minority and hard to reach children	Culture and Leisure	2007/8 Ongoing	The increase in participation from children and young people including target groups measured by surveys (annual Lifestyle Survey)	Proud - equality of opportunity and choice Fairness
1.3	Ensure that play is included in each of the seven neighbourhood charters	Neighbourhoods	2007/8	Play forms a key element of each Neighbourhood Charter	Achieving - Inequalities will be minimised.
1.4	Assist organisations offering play opportunities to promote their service to potential and existing users	Children and Young People's Services / Partnership	2007/8 Ongoing	Satisfaction survey to participating organisations	Learning - Rotherham people will be informed
1.5	Maintain links with the database of play providers and regularly circulate information on new developments and training	Children and Young People's Services	2007/8 Ongoing	Database maintained & information circulated no less than 4 times per annum	Learning - Rotherham people will be informed
1.6	Deliver workshops on the importance of play to carers	Children and Young People's Services / Rotherham Voluntary Consortium	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Number of carers attending workshops per annum	Learning - people will be informed and enabled
1.7	Raise awareness of the importance of play and the role of the strategy with key funding partners and other organisations	Culture and Leisure / Children and Young People's Services	2007/8	Partner awareness survey at year end – year one	Rotherham Proud - Rotherham will have a positive external image
1.8	Actively promote the importance of play and an active lifestyle as a method of supporting	Rotherham PCT / Partnership	2008/9 Ongoing	Number of activities delivered Number of publicity leaflets	Alive - where people are healthy, active &

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	the reduction of childhood obesity			produced	enjoy life to the full
1.9	Through the Play Partnership, Rotherham will participate annually in National Play Day	Children and Young People's Services	Annually	Number of Play Day events delivered annually and attendance numbers	Proud - achievement and diversity will be celebrated
1.10	To organise an annual celebration event to raise awareness of successful play projects	Culture and Leisure	Annual target	Number of celebration events delivered	Proud - achievement and diversity will be celebrated
<b>2</b>	<b>Provide a targeted range of challenging and exciting play spaces for children and young people</b>				
	<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Who has lead responsibility</i>	<i>When we will do it</i>	<i>How we will measure our success</i>	<i>How this contributes to the Rotherham vision</i>
2.1	Provide opportunities for risk and challenge in play provision	Culture and Leisure	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Number of new provisions with opportunities for risk and challenge in play provision	Alive - where people are healthy, active & enjoy life to the full
2.2	Using the results from the play audit, ensure that play provision is strategically targeted and appropriately prioritised across the Borough	Culture and Leisure	Early targeting during 2007/8 then Ongoing	Number of strategically targeted new facilities for children and young people	Achieving - Inequalities will be minimised
2.3	Develop innovative approaches to provide children and young people with access to new play experiences	Culture and Leisure	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Number of innovative new play experiences created	Achieving - known for the high quality design of public spaces
2.4	Develop coordinated external funding programmes to ensure appropriate and effectively targeted play provision for children and young people across Rotherham	Culture and Leisure	Initial BIG bid then Ongoing	Level of funding generated to fund new play provision for children and young people across Rotherham	Achieving - known for the high quality design of public spaces
2.5	Actively pursue agreements with developers through Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the appropriate funding towards the development of play through the planning system	Planning and Transportation	Ongoing throughout the life of the strategy	Number of Section 106 agreements entered into over the lifetime of the strategy (2006 – 2012)	Achieving - known for the high quality design of public spaces
2.6	Seek opportunities to promote the benefits of quiet streets (through Home Zones / 20 mph zones / quiet lanes and the planning system)	Planning and Transportation	Ongoing as opportunities allow	Number of new zones created over the lifetime of the strategy (2006 – 2012)	Safe - safe, clean, green and well maintained, & well-designed
2.7	Provide facilities for young people giving them a sense of ownership.	Culture and Leisure	Ongoing throughout the life of the strategy	Number of facilities provided that match identified need	Proud - strong, sustainable and cohesive communities

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2.8	Develop a dialogue between the partnership and children and young people on the development and use of facilities provided for their benefit	Culture and Leisure	Ongoing throughout the life of the strategy	Number of children and young people involved in commenting on the creation of new facilities	Learning - being informed, innovative and constructively challenging
2.9	Encourage creative play stimulated by a range of media from stories and engagement in literacy based activities to drama and the arts etc	Children and Young People's Services / Culture and Leisure	2007/8 Ongoing	Monitor the number and type of activities delivered for children through library site plans and other cultural providers. Targets will be set for the number of activities to be run at key points in the year e.g. during the summer holidays.	Learning - being informed, innovative and constructively challenging
	Identify those areas where access to play areas needs to be improved for safety reasons.	Planning and Transportation	2007/8 & Ongoing	Number of road safety and access schemes implemented	Achieving - neighbourhoods are safe, clean, green, well maintained & designed
<b>3</b>	<b>To support and maintain a strong and effective play partnership representing all sectors of the community which will co-ordinate and enable good quality, sustainable play.</b>				
	<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Who has lead responsibility</i>	<i>When we will do it</i>	<i>How we will measure our success</i>	<i>How this contributes to the Rotherham vision</i>
3.1	Support and chair meetings of the partnership	Play Co-ordinator – Leisure and Green Spaces	Commencing 2007/8 Ongoing	Numbers attending meetings / number of meetings per annum	Learning - a sense of purpose
3.2	Monitor & evaluate the play strategy and act upon recommendations	Play Co-ordinator – Leisure and Green Spaces	Annually	Play Strategy annually monitored and evaluated	Learning - being informed, innovative and constructively challenging
3.3	Keep the partnership informed and up to date with national, regional and international best practice	Play Co-ordinator – Leisure and Green Spaces	Quarterly	Frequency of information updates to the play partnership	Learning - being informed, innovative and constructively challenging
<b>4</b>	<b>Recognise and value the range of workers who deliver play opportunities across all sectors, to share good practice and to increase the number of qualified playworkers in Rotherham</b>				
	<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Who has lead responsibility</i>	<i>When we will do it</i>	<i>How we will measure our success</i>	<i>How this contributes to the Rotherham vision</i>
4.1	Encourage under represented groups to train in playwork	Children and Young People's Services /	Annually	Number of people from VRG assessed / achieved playwork	Learning - learning / development

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		Play Co-ordinator		training	opportunity available & accessible to all
4.2	Identify minimum standards of training for workers who deliver play and benchmark where possible	Children and Young People's Services / Play Co-ordinator	Annually	Minimum standards identified / benchmarking system in place	Learning - learning / development opportunity available & accessible to all
4.3	Evaluate and improve the range of training options for all workers who deliver play in Rotherham	Children and Young People's Services / Play Co-ordinator	2007/8	Both monitoring process and a system to record training accessed by workers who deliver play in place	Learning - learning / development opportunity available & accessible to all
4.4	Increase the number of qualified playworkers in Rotherham	Children and Young People's Services	Annually	Number of people who have accessed / achieved NVQ2 or NVQ3 in playwork	Learning - learning / development opportunity available & accessible to all
4.5	Maintain a register of playworks	Children and Young People's Services	Ongoing	Register updated quarterly	Learning - learning / development opportunity available & accessible to all
4.6	Set quality standards for park rangers delivering play	Culture and Leisure	March 2008	Quality standards in place by March 2008 (or earlier)	Learning - self-confident and have a sense of purpose
5	<b>Involve children and young people in the planning, design, delivery and feedback on the management of future play facilities.</b>				
	<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Who has lead responsibility</i>	<i>When we will do it</i>	<i>How we will measure our success</i>	<i>How this contributes to the Rotherham vision</i>
5.1	Ensure that all children and young people's views are included in decisions that affect them	Children and Young People's Services	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Monitor all schemes delivered in terms of input from children and young people	Proud - Achievement and diversity will be celebrated
5.2	Ensure that all children and young people have a greater sense of involvement and ownership in the planning of new or refurbished fixed play provision	Culture and Leisure / Children and Young People's Services	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Number of children and young people involved in commenting and involvement in new and refurbished play provision	Learning - develop and achieve their full potential
6	<b>Identify and remove barriers preventing children and young people from accessing play opportunities</b>				
	<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Who has lead responsibility</i>	<i>When we will do it</i>	<i>How we will measure our success</i>	<i>How this contributes to the Rotherham vision</i>
6.1	To enable people to recognise and define the	Rotherham Healthy	Ongoing for	• Decline in number of reported	Safe - free from

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	different types of bullying, understand their role in stopping bullying and develop strategies and tactics for dealing with bullying	Schools Scheme, Emotional Health & Well Being Task Group, Anti- Bullying Steering Group & Schools	the life of the strategy	incidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results determined by Healthy Schools Monitoring visits undertaken bi-annually</li> </ul>	crime and the fear of crime
6.2	Investigate opportunities to improve the accessibility of key sites through cheaper public transport (links with Rothercard), and more accessible transport (links with community transport)	SYPTTE / Planning and Transportation	Ongoing for the life of the strategy	Number of sites with improved accessibility annually	Proud - strong, sustainable and cohesive communities
6.3	Provide inclusive play provision that is open and accessible to all and take positive action in removing perceived disabling barriers so that disabled children and non disabled children from all backgrounds and communities can participate in play	Partnership members	Bi-annually Annually	Evaluate / monitor play provision Number of people attending <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive play practice training</li> <li>• Awareness raising sessions of inclusive play</li> </ul>	Proud - strong, sustainable and cohesive communities
6.4	Ensure that general play related facilities; pools, pitches etc are either free or affordable through a range of measures from discount schemes to the use of the Rothercard	Culture and Leisure	2007/8 Ongoing	Increased use of Leisure facilities and pitches over the life of the strategy Reductions in levels of obesity over the life of the strategy	Proud - strong, sustainable and cohesive communities

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Definitions

There are other key areas of “play” and we use the following definitions for the purposes of this document:

**Playwork** is what adults do to help provide play-centred opportunities for play. This involves the creation, operation and change of many physical and human environments that maximise opportunities for children to access a wide variety of play experiences. Such experiences include, developing social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional skills of the child and enables them to experiment by taking risks. Playwork will always, by its nature, aim to be inclusive of children of different abilities, ethnic background and circumstances.

**Playworkers** are people who work within services that aim to provide for children's play. They are able to build good relationships with children and young people, listening to, socialising with, and understanding their needs. They should enable children and young people to recognise, create, develop and explore play experiences.

**Play Activity** is what children and young people do. It is how they use a play space, the environment, materials or equipment for the purposes of playing in a specific way.

**Play Provision** is the setting or materials that are provided to create play opportunities. This can be indoor, outdoor, supervised or unsupervised. It may be structured or unstructured.

**Play Care** is services that care for children whilst parents and carers are elsewhere and offer play opportunities and play activities for children. This may include out of school clubs (before school / after school / holiday provision), pre-schools, day nurseries, childminders and crèches.

**Play Space** is an area that can be used for children to play in. This includes general community spaces such as streets and woods. It is important to remember that any space can be used as a play space (theory of play frames), children see no boundaries.

**Play Opportunity** is the potential for children to use a play space, the environment, materials or equipment for the purposes of playing in a freely chosen and child directed way with a child motivated outcome.

## Appendix 2

### The Play Partnership, Audit and Consultation

The two key elements to producing a personalised and relevant play strategy for Rotherham were:

- The development of a committed and effective Play Partnership and
- Undertaking a thorough and effective audit of current provision and a broad programme of consultation

#### Rotherham Play Partnership

The Play Partnership was established to promote play in its broadest sense in Rotherham. It has sought to involve all stakeholders who deliver play throughout the Borough. The partnership is therefore comprised of representative groups, both statutory and non statutory, from the public, voluntary and private sectors. It is led by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Partnership meetings have been a regular feature of the development of this strategy. A series of sub groups were established to examine specific areas in more detail. These included the following:

- Audit Sub-group
- BME Sub-group
- Hard to Reach Sub-group
- Consultation Sub-group
- Strategy Sub-group

For this strategy to be effective, all members of the play partnership who are involved in delivering play in its various aspects in Rotherham must have a sense of ownership.

#### Audit of Play Facilities and Play Service Providers

##### Introduction

A quantitative and qualitative audit of current play provision across the borough has been carried out. It takes into account both fixed equipment and play opportunities led by playworkers. It assesses the current fixed provision in terms of ownership, quantity, quality, distribution, and in the case of playgrounds, inclusiveness and the play value of equipment. It takes into account other public places where children and young people play. This includes formal parks and playgrounds, green space (playing fields/sports pitches, amenity areas, cemeteries, woodland and natural areas), community halls, schools, youth centres and childcare schemes with an element of play e.g. pre & after school clubs, day nurseries, holiday clubs, playgroups, etc.

Whilst the audit sought to identify the main publicly available places where children and young people play, it is recognised that they also play in a range of locations which cannot be easily categorised or identified, some safe and some distinctly hazardous. The consultation results found that some children and young people play on railway property

and in building sites – clearly places where they are in danger. Other places include at home or at a friends house, streams and rivers, waste land, roads, beer gardens, car parks etc. This audit acknowledges these and recognises their relevance in the overall provision in Rotherham, although these places are beyond the scope of this audit which concentrates on formal and other public sites. Similarly there are other places which welcome play though which are not provided specifically for that purpose for example libraries, museums and galleries.

### Play Provision

Children’s playgrounds are an invaluable, and in most cases, free local facility. In Rotherham, there are currently 104 equipped play areas, 36 of which are on land owned by Parish Councils. The calculated quality (as determined by the NPFA) of a playground is based on its play value and the age and condition of the play equipment. For the purpose of this strategy, play areas with a play value of between 0 and 14 can only be classed as low quality. Play areas with a play value of between 15 and 25 cannot be higher than medium quality, and only those play areas with a play value in excess of 25 can be classed as high quality. Using this method, Rotherham has 37 play areas of low quality, 42 of medium quality and 25 of high quality.

All children regardless of ability are entitled to a range of play opportunities. New play space in Rotherham is designed to be accessible for all and wherever possible existing provision is gradually being improved to modern day standards. All playgrounds maintained and managed by the Council have been assessed to establish the degree that a site and /or equipment is accessible and inclusive (within the meaning of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

Accessibility has been assessed using guidance by John Hicks in "Accessible and Inclusive Playspace" to calculate the access scores for all the play areas in Rotherham. The guidance enables a score to be generated of between 1 (Very High - Accessible) to 5 (Very Low - Inaccessible). The following table shows the results in Rotherham grouped by Area Assembly.

	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low	Total
Rother Valley South	0	1	8	8	3	20
Rother Valley West	1	1	5	9	2	18
Rotherham North	2	4	3	4	3	16
Rotherham South	0	6	2	3	1	12
Wentworth North	0	4	4	5	2	15
Wentworth South	0	2	5	3	1	11
Wentworth Valley	0	4	3	3	1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>103</b>

The table below identifies the percentage of facilities in Rotherham that fall into each category.

Playgrounds with Access Level 1	3%
Playgrounds with Access Level 2	22%
Playgrounds with Access Level 3	29%
Playgrounds with Access Level 4	34%
Playgrounds with Access Level 5	13%

The need for regular inspections of play areas and their equipment, followed by effective maintenance and repair when it is needed, is self evident. This has also been increasingly reinforced in recent years as courts of law have demanded proof of regular inspection and maintenance when litigation for play injuries is being heard. Proof can consist of written logs recording playground inspections, maintenance and repairs, amendments, new equipment installation dates, and accident records.

The hierarchy of inspections should be as follows:

- Routine Visual Inspections
- Quarterly Maintenance, Repair and Safety Checks
- Annual Risk Assessment
- Annual Independent Inspections

In line with recognised guidance from the HSE and NPFA, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council carries out a risk assessment of each play area annually. The methodology assesses the likely severity of an injury should an accident occur and the probability of that accident occurring. Both severity and probability are marked from 1 to 5 with 1 - Very Low; 2 - Slight; 3 - Moderate; 4 - High; 5 Very High. The risk value is then the product of the two components.

Young people up to the age of 19yrs also need recreational and play facilities, clearly these will differ from those required by younger children. Currently the most popular and asked for facilities from this age group are multi use games areas (MUGA's), skate parks and (sheltered) meeting places. There are currently 15 MUGA's in Rotherham, with a further 14 with either single or double end panels but no side panels, 8 areas with skateboard facilities, and 16 areas with teenage seating.

Fixed play provision in Rotherham is delivered through a number of providers. These include:

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Parish Councils
- Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO)
- Schools
- Private and Voluntary Organisations

Each of the individual providers of play services can be defined in the following way:

### **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council:**

The main provider and maintainer of public parks, playgrounds, playing fields / sports pitches, green space, woodlands and areas of open water across Rotherham Borough.

The authority provides 11 urban parks with a range of facilities and 68 playgrounds based either within the parks or standing alone. Records of distribution, quality, data and maintenance of its play areas are stored and updated on a weekly basis. The authority also owns and manages large areas of green space including woodlands, country parks, sports pitches (doubling up as playing fields), and housing greens. A comprehensive Green Space Audit and Playing / Sports Pitch Audit have been carried out within the last 18 months and contribute to this audit.

Many Council buildings, including community halls, host childcare services with elements of play included in the care scheme. Other provisions include the newly refurbished Clifton Park Museum, a free resource, open six days a week, that provides a safe, bright and stimulating space within which visitors have the freedom to engage in a range of self-directed learning activities. Primarily, it aims to facilitate learning through play and does this through hands-on and interactive exhibits (including computer interactives), quizzes and trails. It offers a range of organised activities which encourage imaginative play through making things, object-handling or role-play including monthly Family Fun Days and School Holiday Programmes. Above all, it's something fun to do that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and from all walks of life.

### **Schools:**

Schools are a major play provider with facilities ranging from small playgrounds with floor markings and shaded areas, to large sports halls and a full size synthetic turf pitch. Some are only in use during the school day, and therefore are not audited in this Strategy. The facilities mainly benefit young people attending school although the local management of schools has meant that some schools make their facilities available to the local community for hire, while others do not. The latter can result in significant resources within some local communities not being available for young people and adults, out of school hours. However this should improve over the lifetime of the Strategy as Rotherham embraces the Government's agenda for all schools to become extended schools by 2010. Schools also provide space for services such as pre / after school clubs and holiday clubs. All schools in the Rotherham area were sent an audit questionnaire for completion and return.

### **Parish Councils:**

Rotherham's 29 Parish Councils are another major provider of play facilities. Serving mainly the rural and semi rural areas of Rotherham, Parish Councils own 36 playgrounds and a number of playing fields / sports pitches and village halls. The fields and pitches are maintained by the council. All Rotherham Parish Councils have been sent a postal questionnaire for completion and return and some have participated on the partnership steering group.

**CISWO:**

The Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation is a national charity which focuses on the delivery of community and personal welfare services within mining and former mining communities. The facilities managed by CISWO include play facilities, playing pitches and halls available for the local community to hire for various purposes.

**Private/Voluntary Organisations:**

These are generally land owners, small businesses or voluntary organisations which hire, lease or own their property within the local community. Play provision in this category tends to be a part of a mix of activities provided within a particular service e.g. private play area within a country park, day nursery, playgroup, cub scouts, etc. Comprehensive information of all organisations providing services for young people is available from the Children’s Information Service.

Some private landowners both directly and indirectly provide children’s play areas in the form of pub gardens, and dedicated facilities, established woodland, plantations, fields, reservoirs, lakes and ‘hidden corners’ where children will spend hours climbing trees, exploring, making dens, etc. There are also a range of play opportunities provided through local businesses which include purpose built themed soft play facilities in pub and restaurant buildings as well as the less well play facilities in pub beer gardens etc.

Information on the following tables was correct at 27. 11. 2006

**Equipped Playgrounds**

Table 1: Playground Provision in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough (excludes school playgrounds)

Playground Provider	No of Sites
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council - Culture and Leisure Service	49
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council - Neighbourhoods	17
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council - Environment and Development Services	1
Parish Council	36
Community	1
<b>Total Provision Identified</b>	<b>104</b>

**Urban Parks**

Table 2: Urban Parks Provision in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough

Urban Park Provider	No of Sites
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council - Culture and Leisure	11

Total Provision Identified	11
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### Playing/Sports Pitches

Table 3: Playing/Sports Pitch Provision in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough

Provider	No of Sites	No of Pitches
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	35	81
Education Sites	95	185
Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs	20	35
Trust	2	2
CISWO	7	24
Parish	34	57
Total Provision Identified	193	384

Table 4: Playing Pitch Provision with No Secured Community Use in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough

Pitch Provider	No of Sites	No of Pitches
Education Sites	73	124
Private/Voluntary Sports Clubs	1	2
Total Provision Identified	74	126

### Green Space

Table 5: Green Space Provision in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough

Typology	No of Sites
Amenity Green Space	187
Outdoor Sports Space	44
Parks	56
Cemeteries	40
Natural Areas	100
Total Provision Identified	427

### Schools

Table 6: Schools in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough

Typology	No of Sites
Primary	107
Special	7
Secondary	16
Colleges of Further Education	3
Total Provision Identified*	133

\*The play facilities provided by schools are primarily for children's use during the school day. However some schools offer community use of facilities after school.

## Children's Services / Play

Table 7: Children's Service/Play Provision within the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough

Typology	No of Sites
After School Clubs	14
Before and After School Clubs	17
Breakfast Clubs	13
Day Nurseries	27
Holiday Clubs	16
Parent and Toddler Groups	68
Pre School/Playgroups	34
Youth Centres	27
Outdoor Education Centres	3
Specialist Service	8
<b>Total Provision Identified*</b>	<b>227</b>

\*Some organisations provide more than one service

## Playwork

### Extended Schools

Schools will provide community access to their facilities, including playgrounds, sports fields, and specialised play areas, where there is a demand. Another of the core offers will be a varied menu of activities. Schools will be required to provide access to a range of activities for children and young people, though these need not be on a school site or directly provided by the school. Because these will be accessible outside the school's core hours, extended schools potentially provide a valuable community resource for children and young people to participate in play activities.

### Children's Centres

There are 12 phase one Children's Centres in Rotherham which provide good quality childcare for children aged 0 – 5 years old. Children are able to experience a range of activities to enable them to learn through play. Some of the Children's Centres are also providing out of school care for older children and young people. A further 8 children's centres are to be build in phase 2 by 2008.

### Childcare

Childcare in Rotherham is growing rapidly. There is a range of providers that care for children from birth to 14 (16 for children with impairments). These include childminders, day nurseries, playgroups and out of school clubs (before, after and during school holidays). All providers provide a safe, stimulating environment, whilst giving children and young people the opportunity to experiment through play.

### **Uniformed Groups**

In Rotherham there are several uniformed organisations including Sea Cadets, Boy's Brigade, Cubs and Brownies, etc. These have been included as examples of play provision but are border-line in terms of the definition of play and the charges made. The following are examples:

Girl Guiding UK is a national organisation also known as Guiding. Through Guiding girls and young women have the opportunity to develop independence, self esteem, self confidence and self management skills. The aim of Guiding is to help them develop emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually, so that they can make a positive contribution to their community and the wider world. Most of this is achieved through play and having the opportunity to experiment with the natural elements, earth, air, fire and water.

Another organisation is the Scout Association which provides adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for children and young people aged 6-25. Personal development means promoting the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being of the individual, helping them achieve their full potential. It also provides opportunities to explore their own values and personal attitudes. Scouting is about being with friends, as part of a team, participating fully in the adventure and opportunities of life.

### **Maintenance**

Weekly visual inspections backed up by quarterly maintenance / safety inspections of play areas and equipment are carried out followed by effective maintenance and repair by a dedicated green space operative under the guidance of the Play Development Officer, as required. Weekly report forms are completed and these are backed up by infrequent reports from members of the public. A budget is provided specifically for the maintenance and repair of equipment. Equipment is selected that provides a balance of play value, challenge and fitness for purpose. It must be resilient in the face of vandalism. Maintenance records are kept on a database.

The hierarchy of inspections is as follows:

- Weekly Visual Inspections
- Quarterly Maintenance Repair and Safety Checks
- Annual Risk Assessment
- Annual Independent Inspections

### **Sustainability**

Every Child Matters: Change for Children, places a duty on local authorities to ensure that there are opportunities for recreation which includes play for children and young people. The Council and the Play Partnership fully recognises the value of play to a child's development and are committed to the sustainability of provision for play.

The majority of funding for children's play is likely in the future to come from central and local government funds, though the partnership will work with the council and with funding

bodies, voluntary and charitable organisations to access new resources for developing play services.

### Consultation - 2006

Consultation to date has taken a range of forms and will be ongoing in Rotherham for the life of the strategy. Children and young people were at the heart of initial consultation and this was backed up with consultation with parents and carers. There was also targeted consultation with BME and hard to reach groups including young people with anti-social behaviour contracts, families at the Rotherham Women's Refuge, a hard to reach group. Also taken into account are certain relevant results from the Rotherham lifestyle survey.

Much of the consultation was carried out at the Rotherham Show during the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2006 where 359 children and young people and 96 parents and carers participated.

The strategy contains a five year vision which indicates where we hope to be in five years time in Rotherham. In summary the views of Children, Young people and their parent/carers were sought through a number of methods:

- Examination of existing pieces of work, e.g. the Lifestyle Survey and the Visioning exercise
- Use of the 'play map', both at a large event and with specific groups of children and young people
- A 'snakes and ladders' game
- A parent/carer survey questionnaire

### Some of the key issues raised were:

- A need for more play and leisure facilities across the borough
- Consideration of age appropriate play space
- Safety issues, including bullying, litter, vandalism etc.
- Accessibility of play spaces. Consultation with children and young people identified that poor accessibility can be a significant barrier to accessing play opportunities. Bus patronage locally has declined significantly since bus deregulation in 1986, although the rate of decline has slowed. To minimise the effects of traffic growth Modal shift is required to assist in ensuring that people use public transport instead of the car. This will result in an increase in passenger numbers which is essential if the bus network is to expand to help improve social inclusion and sustainable access. A part of the South Yorkshire Second Local Transport Plan's strategy is therefore to offer better and new opportunities for people to access facilities and services by public transport.
- Increasing the involvement of children and young people in decision making
- Improving adult awareness of children and young people's play

## Appendix 3

### Map: Areas of Deprivation in Rotherham

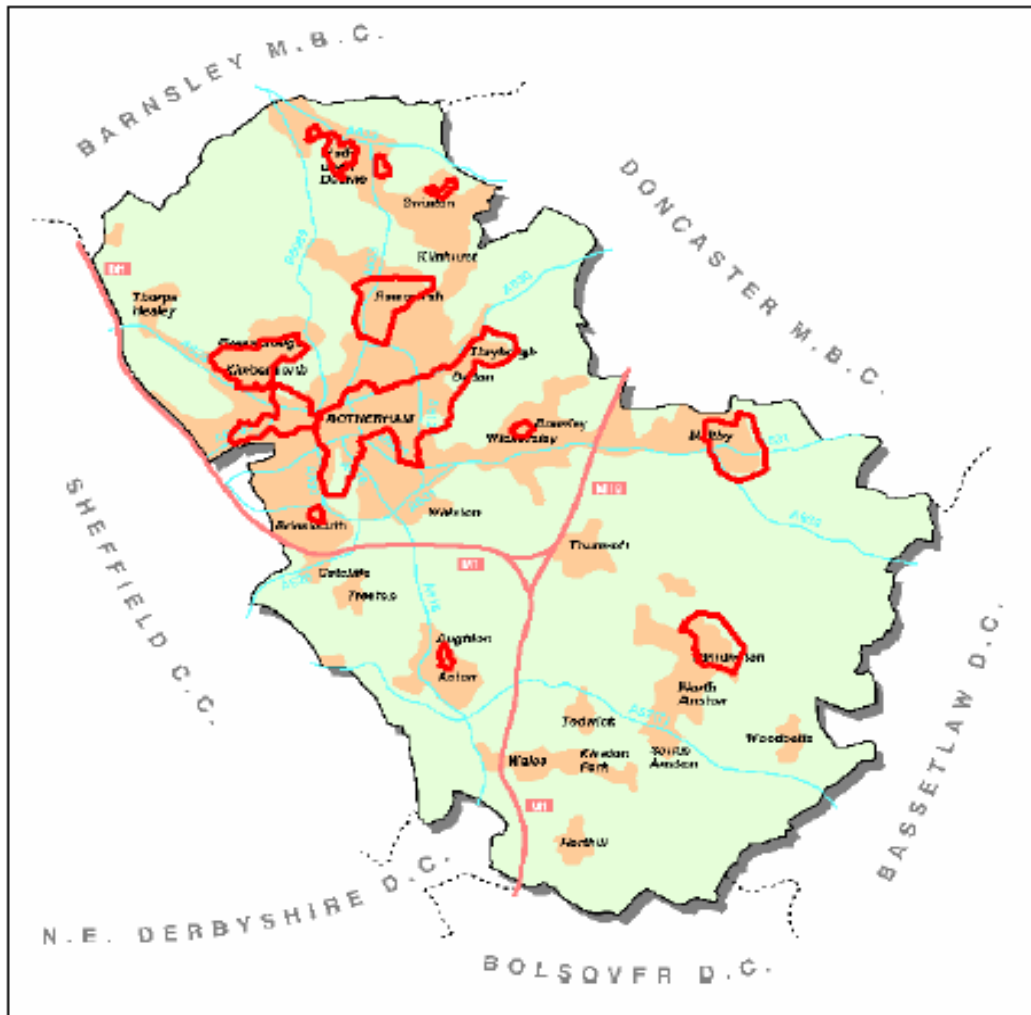


Figure 1. Map of key geographic target areas

## Appendix 4

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## Appendix 5

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