

**Joint Report of Director of Environment and Housing and the  
Director of Children's Services**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

**Subject: Leeds Children's Mayor Have Fun, Play Safe**



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. This report looks at the ideas set out by Amy Eckworth-Jones in her deputation to the Council in the winning manifesto for the Leeds Children's Mayor.
2. 'I would create a social club or a safe area where kids could play games and hang out with their friends instead of being in danger on the road with the cars', and 'teenagers wouldn't want to do the same activities as young people'. In response, the Council will develop safe areas to play away from traffic and provide facilities for children of all ages and abilities to play games and hang out with their friends.
3. 'There would be a secret supervisor that made sure that the park is kept under control' and 'we could ... maybe buy a canopy and do some art and creative projects'. In response the Council will encourage events in parks and green spaces that provide positive activities for families and young people.
4. 'Every two months there would be a fundraiser where people donate ... the money that we raise will go towards equipment and things that will make the club better'. Following Amy's speech the Council will look to develop innovative ways to raise additional funding to invest in parks and facilities for children and young people.
5. 'There will be a meeting every two weeks for the children to discuss how things are doing. In addition to the children coming ... the parents of the children can come'. As a result of Amy's speech the Council will ensure that young people are consulted in the development of all play facilities in parks.

## **Recommendations**

6. That Executive Board thank Amy Eckworth-Jones for her excellent ideas and in particular to note that the Council:

- Will develop safe areas to play away from traffic and provide facilities for children of all ages and abilities to play games and hang out with their friends.
- Will encourage events in parks and green spaces that provide positive activities for families and young people.
- Will look to develop innovative ways to raise additional funding to invest in parks and facilities for children and young people.
- Will ensure that young people are consulted in the development of all play facilities in parks.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report looks at the ideas set out by Amy Eckworth-Jones in her deputation to the Council in the winning manifesto for the Leeds Children's Mayor. It highlights what is available for children and young people in Leeds along with some activities and events that take place. In particular it takes up the suggestion to look at having more people to keep an eye on making sure play areas are safe and finding ways to raise more money to improve facilities in parks.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds has around 4,000 hectares of parks and green spaces including 7 major parks (like Roundhay Park and Temple Newsam), 62 community parks and 95 recreation grounds in addition to around 155 hectares of local green space. There are 150 playgrounds, 24 skate parks, 36 ball park areas and 13 teen zones located in parks and green spaces throughout the city.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 Amy's speech looks at the following ideas:

- Safe areas for children and young people to play or spend time with their friends
- People around to observe and help organise activities and events
- Raising money to improve parks and play activities
- Involving children and young people in carrying out improvements

### **3.2 Safe areas for children and young people to play or spend time with their friends**

- 3.2.1 Amy states 'I would create a social club or a safe area where kids could play games and hang out with their friends instead of being in danger on the road with the cars'. Parks and green spaces provide safe areas to play away from the dangers of traffic. To facilitate play there are 150 playgrounds, 24 skate parks, 36 ball park areas and 13 teen zones located in parks and green spaces throughout the city. New playgrounds provide opportunities for children and young people with a range of abilities and ages to play together e.g. wheelchair accessible roundabouts at Deepdale, Boston Spa and the play panels for autistic children at Farsley Park. Where climbing frames are incorporated into the design they have accessible ramps and ladders for children with mobility issues. New playgrounds also now often incorporate elements into the design such as landscape features, rocks, logs, mounds and trees to encourage natural creative play, for example at the Bumps (Roundhay), and Middleton Park.
- 3.2.2 Amy also mentions that 'teenagers wouldn't want to do the same activities as young people'. In recent years an increase in the provision of facilities for older children has taken place. This includes ball parks on hard surfaces with basketball hoops and goals, BMX facilities, and skate parks. These are important

in providing somewhere for young people to go as well as something to do as well as ensuring that younger children can access playgrounds designed with their needs in mind. The Council also has byelaws for parks which mean that older children cannot use playgrounds intended for younger children.

- 3.2.3 When possible play facilities are upgraded and improved, and for example £90,000 was spent last year to replace old play equipment currently at Barley Hill Recreation Ground in Garforth with a modern area for children to enjoy, and features new swings, a bigger multi-unit climbing frame and roundabout.



Figure 1: Barley Hill Playground

- 3.2.4 Another example of a playground recently completed is at Queens Park, Pudsey and this is discussed later in this report.
- 3.2.5 In response to the points raised by Amy the Council will develop safe areas to play away from traffic and provide facilities for children of all ages and abilities to play games and hang out with their friends.

### **3.3 People around to observe and help organise activities and events**

- 3.3.1 Amy states 'there would be a secret supervisor that made sure that the park is kept under control'. There are currently 39 gardeners who work at specific sites for the majority of time, and these parks contain play facilities along with events and activities that these staff help support. The idea to have staff in parks is an excellent one as they are able to keep the park looking well maintained as well as to be there to sort out problems that can arise. Managers and staff in Parks and Countryside have also been trained on safeguarding as it is recognised that parks can be environments where there is access to vulnerable adults or children. In particular staff are made aware of the potential risks and to notify their manager or emergency services if appropriate, as well as recording what they saw or heard.
- 3.3.2 Where it is possible, gardeners are based in parks, but this can be difficult due to the amount of parks and green space that has to be maintained. The Council has created 10 community committees based on geographical areas of the city and North West Outer, West Outer, South Outer have agreed to provide funding for an additional 6 gardeners based in identified parks. Green spaces are also patrolled by 'Parkswatch' patrols, who are uniformed staff on motorbikes, and in many localities there are police community support officers who patrol green spaces. In addition, where possible play facilities are located in community parks or green

spaces that are overlooked by nearby housing or areas of footfall to help encourage children and young people to feel safe.

- 3.3.3 Staff in parks are also responsible for supervising volunteers and work placements (around 29,000 volunteer days each year), as well as supervising the safe running of over 720 events each year in liaison with event organisers. Staff that manage volunteer activities are trained to undertake this role and included in this training is a particular emphasis on paying due regard to safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Members of the Parks and Green Spaces Forum were recently briefed on safeguarding issues by the corporate safeguarding team and all volunteer induction includes a section on these issues. Volunteers are important as they help do practical work in parks as well as having someone around to report any problems. The following table provides a summary of volunteer activity by each area of the city.

Community Committee	Volunteer Days					
	Supervised	Friends of Groups	Work Placements	In Bloom	Corporate	Grand Total
East Inner	293	40	1,417	0	109	<b>1,859</b>
East Outer	1,760	84	462	2,090	183	<b>4,579</b>
North East Inner	186	337	304	240	34	<b>1,101</b>
North East Outer	1,344	80	0	6,200	92	<b>7,716</b>
North West Inner	309	216	253	600	27	<b>1,405</b>
North West Outer	1,561	614	133	1,520	76	<b>3,904</b>
South Inner	415	40	13	1,719	90	<b>2,277</b>
South Outer	541	942	0	2,472	188	<b>4,143</b>
West Inner	230	38	13	280	76	<b>637</b>
West Outer	177	0	0	640	57	<b>874</b>
Cross Cutting	0	22	0	0	0	<b>22</b>
	<b>6,816</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>2,595</b>	<b>15,761</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>28,515</b>

- 3.3.4 Amy states 'we could ... maybe buy a canopy and do some art and creative projects'. There are over 720 events held in parks each year including large events like the West Indian Carnival and bonfire night, to sporting, charitable events and those organised by the community. These include galas aimed at the whole family at Beeston Festival, Bramley Carnival, Garforth Gala, Holbeck Gala, Horsforth Gala, Hunslet Gala, Kirkstall Festival, Pudsey Carnival, Rothwell Carnival, Unity Day, and Yeadon Carnival. All of these galas are free to attend and organised by volunteers from within the community, supported by staff in Parks and Countryside. Each event has various activities such as live music, dog shows, majorettes, stunt shows and stalls selling food and drink.



Figure 2: Garforth Gala

3.3.5 There is also 'Breeze on Tour' organised by the Council that has a range of activities for young people aged up to 19 years held at Temple Newsam, Roundhay Park, Kirkstall Abbey in 2014. All inflatables and all tent activities are free, and there is also a fairground zone and refreshment stalls.

3.3.6 There is also 'mini-breeze' held at Farnley Hall Park, Adwalton Moor, Springhead Park, Bramley Park, Middleton Park, Scatcherd Park, Weston Drive Recreation Ground, Nunroyd Park, East Ardsley Recreation Ground, Cardinal Square Recreation Ground, Cragstone Recreation Ground, Swinnow Moor, Farnley Hall Park, Hainsworth Park, Grove Road Recreation Ground, Seacroft Village Green, Yeadon Tarn, Armley Park and Ley Lane,



Figure 3: Mini-Breeze at Farnley Park

3.3.7 Some events and activities are carried out by Parks and Countryside staff, partner organisations such as the RSPB, or local 'friends' groups. These are published in the 'Out and About' leaflet with the 'child friendly Leeds' thumbs up symbol where they are suitable for children. In the last year for example there are 132 activities that have been identified in this way.



3.3.8 In response to Amy's ideas the Council will continue to encourage events in parks and green spaces that provide positive activities for families and young people.

### 3.4 Raising money to improve parks and play activities

3.4.9 Amy states 'every two months there would be a fundraiser where people donate ... the money that we raise will go towards equipment and things that will make the club better'. There are many different ways that can be used to raise money to improve parks and these include sponsorship and something new prompted as part of Amy's speech.

#### 3.4.10 Using sponsorship to raise funds

3.4.11 There is already an active roundabout sponsorship programme that enables local businesses to support enhancements to these features, as well as help support over 50 'in bloom' groups throughout the city.

3.4.12 The Council has been looking at other ways to raise funds to improve parks and have recently been able to get some local businesses to sponsor Calverley park and Pudsey park.

3.4.13 Also, at Roundhay park, local businesses have started sponsoring flowerbeds. The money have generated by doing this goes straight back into the park, for example, at Calverley Park the money was spent on improving a basketball area which was something local people had been asking for.

3.4.14 These partnership arrangements are being extended and discussions are taking place with local businesses to look at sponsoring playgrounds. The following image shows how sponsorship of a playground could look like.



Figure 5: Example of play area sponsorship

#### 3.4.15 Charitable giving

3.4.16 Something else the Council is looking at is setting up a means by which people can make charitable donations to parks in Leeds. The proposal is to set up a 'green places fund' so people can give money to improve their favourite park if

they wish and they will be able to 'gift aid' their donation which means that charity will be able to get a refund of income tax. People could give in lots of different ways including leaving money in a will or choosing to give like they would for any charity. The income generated can then be spent on all sorts of different things to improve parks, including facilities for children and young people.

- 3.4.17 Following Amy's speech the Council will look to develop innovative ways to raise additional funding to invest in parks and facilities for children and young people. This will be done in partnership with children and young people – working with the Voice and Influence team in Children's Services to explore opportunities.

### **3.5 Involving children and young people in carrying out improvements**

- 3.5.1 Amy states 'there will be a meeting every two weeks for the children to discuss how things are doing. In addition to the children coming ... the parents of the children can come'. A play area at Queen's Park, Pudsey has recently been completed and before deciding what to do a consultation exercise was devised with the Pudsey ward members to engage with local residents and schools to determine what improvements should take place in the park.
- 3.5.2 Over 200 letters were distributed through letter boxes of nearby properties asking for comments on the proposals. This exercise generated feedback which was taken into consideration when creating the final project plan. In addition, the proposals were placed in Pudsey Sports Centre and Pudsey Library for final comment. Colleagues in Children's Services were consulted and assisted on evaluating consultation feedback and creating a project design brief. The scheme was also included on Talking Point Leeds, a facility for community engagement on the Council website.
- 3.5.3 A consultation event was also held at the local primary school to discuss ideas and to encourage people to fill in a questionnaire stating their preferences. In total 159 children and young people completed the questionnaire along with 12 adults. The questionnaire asked people what type of play experience people would like to see with examples and opportunity to tick a box next to each one, as illustrated below.



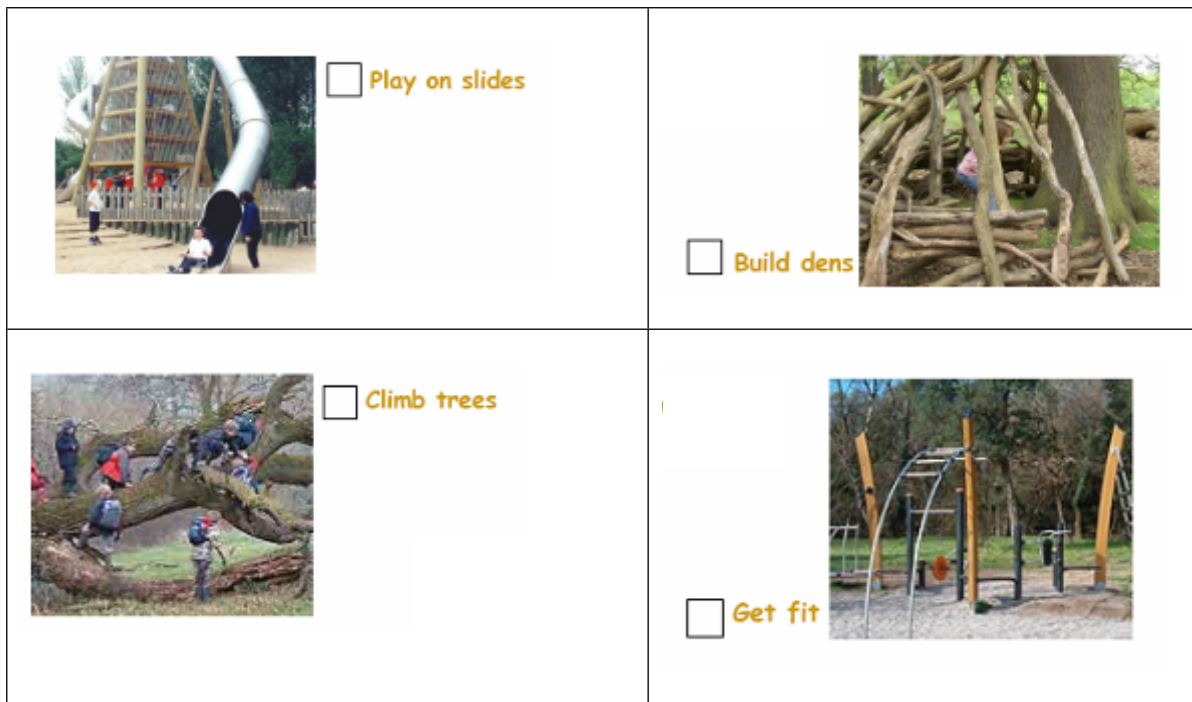


Figure 6: Example of consultation options

3.5.4 The full list of options to select is as follows:

- Meeting up
- Dance / Sound Play
- Climb
- Play on Slides
- Climb Trees
- Make up own games
- Play with sand
- Play with water
- Natural Play
- Skate
- Play on Swings
- Run
- Roll down slopes
- Build dens
- Listen to / make music
- Get fit

3.5.5 From the example at Queen's Park, Pudsey, the following in order of priority were identified as the most popular choice: 1. Slides, 2. Climbing, 3. Get fit, 4. Swings, 5. Den building, 6. Climbing trees, 7. Spaces to run, 8. Water and 9. Slopes for rolling and running up and down.

3.5.6 A design brief was then put together based on these priorities and in line with available funding. As the deputation highlights, funding is a very important aspect of developing any scheme. There are many different sources of funding available, but most schemes are funded through section 106 developer contributions as part of the planning process, when for example new houses are built. In the example of Queen's Park, Pudsey, £172,000 funding was identified. Clearly, the more funding available the more priorities can be included in the final scheme.

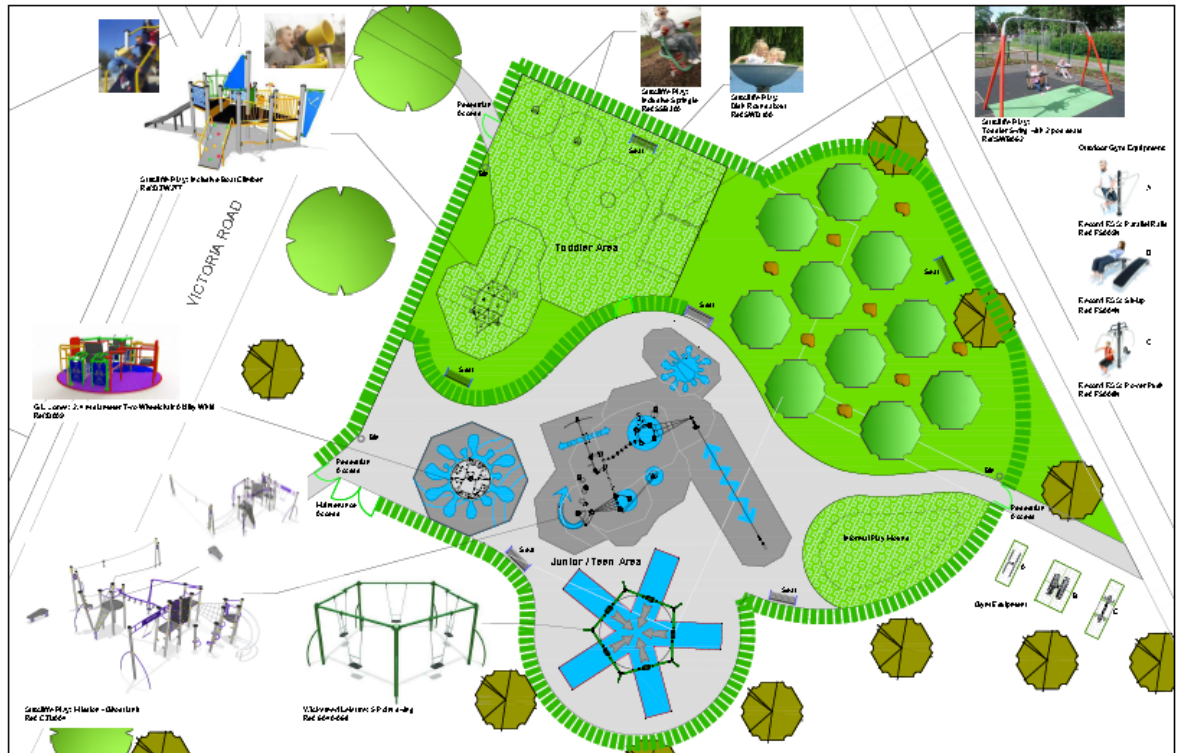


Figure 7: Design drawing

3.5.7 As a result of Amy's speech the Council will ensure that young people are consulted in the development of all play facilities in parks. Working closely with Children's Services Voice and Influence Team, a diverse range of children and young people will be engaged in consulting on play space development. Amy will also be invited to participate as part of her role as children's mayor.

## 4 Corporate Considerations

### 4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 As highlighted in the report, consultation with residents, schools and local ward members is a key aspect in determining priorities and translating these into a design brief in line with available funding, which in turn determines the final scheme outcome. All consultation activity is also included on Talking Point Leeds, a facility for community engagement on the Council website.

4.1.2 The deputation has highlighted an excellent idea and as a result the service will continue to seek opportunities for site based gardeners as well as develop the idea of charitable giving for parks and green space projects.

### 4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An equality and diversity, cohesion and integration screening is carried out on a scheme by scheme basis. From the example given at Queen's Park, Pudsey, consideration was given in the screening document to ensure a wide representation from the local community in planned consultation. In terms of the overall scheme design, care was taken to consider the impact of any proposals on the park as a whole to ensure that there is a sense of 'something for everyone', in

line with the national Green Flag Award criteria. Care was also taken with regard to path design to ensure they cater for two pushchairs or wheelchair access. Increased seating is provided in the scheme to provide opportunities for rest and social interaction. Most equipment provided within the scheme is inclusive, however specific types of play equipment have been included tailored to people with severe physical impairment.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.2 The content of this report relates to the following priorities from the City Priority Plan:

- Best city for children, in particular *ensuring Leeds becomes a child friendly city, where children are active citizens who feel they have voice and influence. It supports the notion that we want children to choose healthy lifestyles and have fun growing up.*
- Best city for business, in particular *get more people involved in the city's cultural opportunities and improve the environment through reduced carbon emissions.*
- Best city for communities, in particular *increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities.*

4.3.1 It also supports the priority in the Council Business Plan *to improve the quality of Leeds' parks.*

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 This report makes reference to sources of funding in developing capital improvement schemes in parks. It also considers potential opportunities for sponsorship in partnership with local businesses and community groups, and the potential to develop opportunities for charitable giving for parks and green space projects.

### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 This report is in response to a deputation to full Council. There are no issues with access to information. The report is subject to call in.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 Amy's speech contains some excellent ideas that are considered in this report. 'I would create a social club or a safe area where kids could play games and hang out with their friends instead of being in danger on the road with the cars', and 'teenagers wouldn't want to do the same activities as young people'. In response to the points raised by Amy the Council will develop safe areas to play away from traffic and provide facilities for children of all ages and abilities to play games and hang out with their friends.

- 5.2 'There would be a secret supervisor that made sure that the park is kept under control' and 'we could ... maybe buy a canopy and do some art and creative projects'. In response to Amy's ideas the Council will encourage events in parks and green spaces that provide positive activities for families and young people.
- 5.3 'Every two months there would be a fundraiser where people donate ... the money that we raise will go towards equipment and things that will make the club better'. Following Amy's speech the Council will look to develop innovative ways to raise additional funding to invest in parks and facilities for children and young people. 'There will be a meeting every two weeks for the children to discuss how things are doing. In addition to the children coming ... the parents of the children can come'. As a result of Amy's speech the Council will ensure that young people are consulted in the development of all play facilities in parks.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 That Executive Board thank Amy Eckworth-Jones for her excellent ideas and in particular to note that the Council:
- Will develop safe areas to play away from traffic and provide facilities for children of all ages and abilities to play games and hang out with their friends.
  - Will encourage events in parks and green spaces that provide positive activities for families and young people.
  - Will look to develop innovative ways to raise additional funding to invest in parks and facilities for children and young people.
  - Will ensure that young people are consulted in the development of all play facilities in parks.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.