

ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL

**The Orkney
Play Area Strategy**

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Aims and Objectives.....	3
3. Background	4
3.1. Balancing Recreational use with Biodiversity	4
3.2. Financial Sustainability	4
3.3. Environmental Sustainability.....	4
3.4. Connectivity	4
3.5. Impact of New Development.....	5
3.6. Partnership Working	5
3.7. Consistency and Individuality	5
3.8. Balancing Quality with Quantity.....	5
4. Principles for play area development.....	5
5. Local Context.....	6
5.1. Current provision	6
6. Management and Maintenance	10
6.1. Play Area Quality.....	10
6.2. Review of Play Areas.....	12
7. Future Play Area Provision	12
7.1. Destination Play Areas (DPA).....	12
7.2. Local Community Play Areas (LCPA).....	13
7.3. Developer Contributions	13
7.4. Housing Growth.....	13
8. Outcomes and Priorities	13
Priorities for this Strategy	13
9. Recommendations.....	14
10. Conclusion.....	18

1. Introduction

The provision of free outdoor play and sport opportunities is seen as a vital ingredient in ensuring the all-round, healthy development of children and young people in an era of declining levels of physical activity and social interaction. Stimulating and challenging play and sport activity will enable young people to develop their physical, mental and social skills, find out more about themselves and their local environment.

In June 2013 the Scottish Government launched Scotland's first national Play Strategy, which aims to ensure that all children and young people can access play opportunities in a range of settings which offer variety, adventure and challenge. There are key messages within the strategy which aim to set out practical steps towards realising the vision of "We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up". A nation which values play as a life-enriching daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools and communities. In summary the Strategy identifies outcomes and actions set out in four domains, which are; In the house, at nursery and school, in the community and positive support for play.

Scotland's Play Strategy sets out the background and basis from which Orkney Islands Council's Play Strategy was developed.

Orkney's Play Strategy aims to raise awareness of the benefits and nature of play across Orkney and to highlight good practice and play examples by;

- promoting open-ended creative play opportunities and experiences;
- increasing opportunities to experience risk and challenge;
- encouraging the engagement of communities in play;
- promoting emotional and physical health and well-being to develop healthy children and adults; and
- developing a common, shared understanding across sectors and services.

Both of the strategies mentioned above, as well as a number of other documents, such as the Early Years Framework (2009), have assisted in shaping the Orkney Play Area Strategy (OPAS) document and associated action plans for the future provision and maintenance of equipped play areas in Orkney. This will form the basis on which future play provision will be provided across Orkney to ensure all children and young people are enabled to access freely available informal play facilities. These facilities will offer the opportunity for children and young people to fully explore and play in their outside environments, in doing so complementing the work of partners in the more formal sectors of health, community and education.

2. Aims and Objectives

The principal aim of this document is to provide evidence to support the provision of facilities which ensure that the residents of Orkney have access to sufficient, well located and good quality play areas, both now and with the predicted growth in households in future years.

The Orkney Play Area Strategy aims to ensure future play provision covers the needs of local communities. The issues the strategy will focus on are:

- The volume of play provision for all age groups across the county to identify those areas of under and over provision;
- Raising the overall quality and standard of play areas within the county;
- Consider the financial position of providing play areas with currently available resources and
- Choosing a standard of provision to take forward, along with setting key objectives.

This strategy is linked to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan, strategic priority theme of Quality of Life.

3. Background

There are a number of overlapping issues which relate to all open spaces/ play areas. Many of these relate to the management rather than the provision of sites, however, they remain important considerations in the provision of play areas. The key issues can be summarised as follows:

3.1. Balancing Recreational use with Biodiversity

Spaces should be designed to be multi-functional to maximise the benefits that they bring to local residents and to the wider environment. This would include appropriate design to promote nature conservation and biodiversity and implementation of sensitive management practices.

3.2. Financial Sustainability

Economic pressures relating to the management and maintenance of Orkney's play areas are viewed as a central focus of this strategy, and as a result, there is a need to ensure that play areas are designed and managed in a sustainable way which facilitates ongoing and continuous improvement. The sustainability of sites provided as part of new development, including their long term maintenance to ensure maximum community value, should also be considered.

3.3. Environmental Sustainability

It is essential that both changes to existing play areas and the creation of new play areas embrace the concept of environmental sustainability in terms of their design, management and maintenance. This may include the reduced use of pesticides as well as the implementation of sensitive grass cutting regimes.

3.4. Connectivity

The connectivity of play areas and open space is as important as the provision of local play areas, and there is a clear need to develop linked networks of open space and play areas, for example through the inclusion of walk/ cycle ways. As a result, future play areas should be designed and located with connectivity in mind.

3.5. Impact of New Development

Clear policies relating to the design, maintenance and the long term future of play areas and open space are viewed as essential and that new play areas should enhance the overall stock of provision and not dilute the quality of other play areas through an additional maintenance burden.

3.6. Partnership Working

There are many examples of strong partnership working throughout Orkney and some of the most recent play area developments would not have been possible without the commitment of partners including Orkney Islands Council, Community Councils and local community groups. There is a need to build on Orkney's partnership working to ensure that its future play area developments can be replicated and that interested parties from within and beyond Orkney can learn from them.

3.7. Consistency and Individuality

It is important that there is a desire to strive for a consistently high quality of play area across Orkney in terms of maintenance and types of play area provided whilst maintaining the unique characters of the different areas and the historic and heritage values of specific sites. In order that communities understood the options available to them when investigating the potential development of a play area.

3.8. Balancing Quality with Quantity

While access to sufficient play areas is important, the quality of the play area and the opportunities it offers should be viewed as more important.

4. Principles for play area development

Consultation with schools, community groups and the wider community revealed that the following principles should be embraced in the development of new and improved play areas, as well as their management:

- Detailed and timely community engagement.
- The provision of functional play areas.
- The provision of play areas that are of a consistent standard but maintain individuality and character.
- The creation of a network of play areas that balances the appropriate quantities of provision with the aspiration for high quality play areas.
- The provision of multi-functional play areas that balance recreation with biodiversity.
- The management of a network of play areas that appeals to people who don't currently use play areas as well as those who do.

The above principles are considered central to the management, maintenance and delivery of all types of play area.

5. Local Context

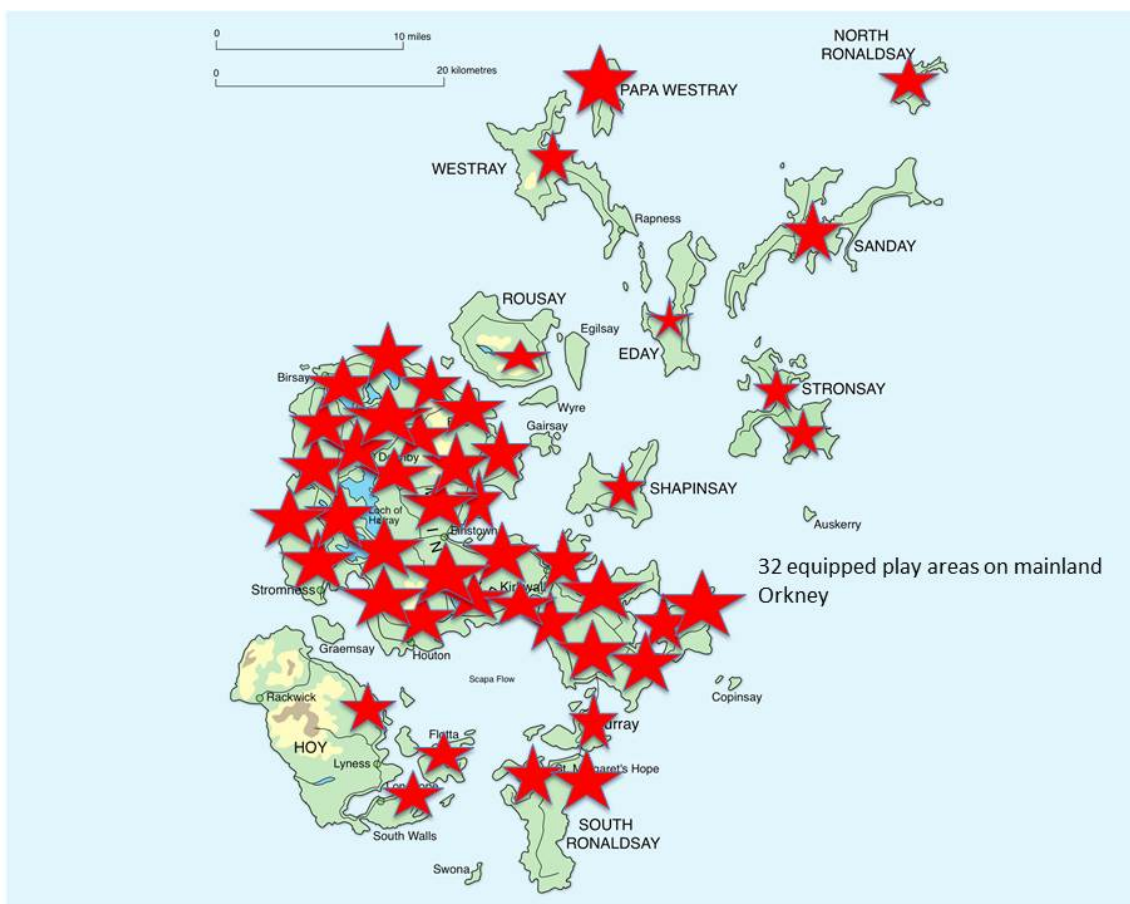
While this strategy focuses only upon play areas, it should be noted that Orkney is an exceptionally green county with a large amount of open space, all of which is part of a wider green infrastructure which is documented in Orkney's Open Space Strategy and associated Open Space Audit. Orkney's location means that there is a very high level of salt from the sea in the air which, coupled with the strong winds, makes for a very corrosive mix which has a significant impact on the life of its play equipment.

5.1. Current provision

There are 47 play areas across Orkney, 32 of which are located on the mainland, a large number of which have very limited play value owing to aging equipment coming to the end of life and as a result having to be removed.

Figure 1 indicates the number and location of all of the play areas the Council is responsible for.

Figure 1: Play areas across Orkney

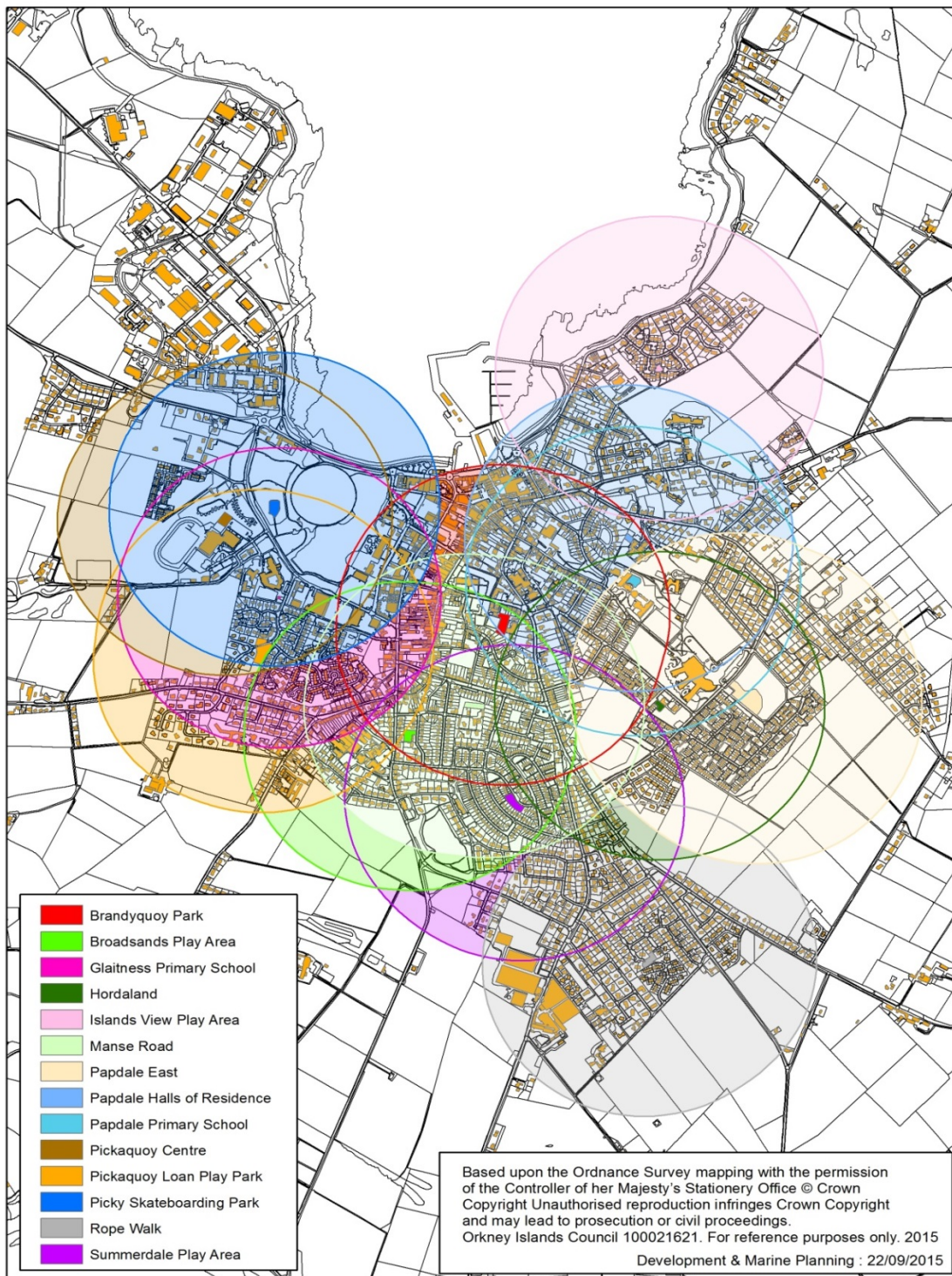


The largest proportion of Council play areas are located within Kirkwall where there are 15 play areas, and 7 in Stromness. The locations of these are shown on in Figures 2 and 3 with each play area being colour coded with a ring (buffer zone) surrounding them. Each buffer zone represents five hundred meters from each of the play areas. As shown in Figures 2 and 3, there is significant overlap of the buffer zones, which indicates an over provision of play areas.

Kirkwall

Kirkwall is Orkney's biggest town and has a population of 7045 (2011 census). Within Kirkwall there are currently 14 play areas as shown in Figure 2 below.

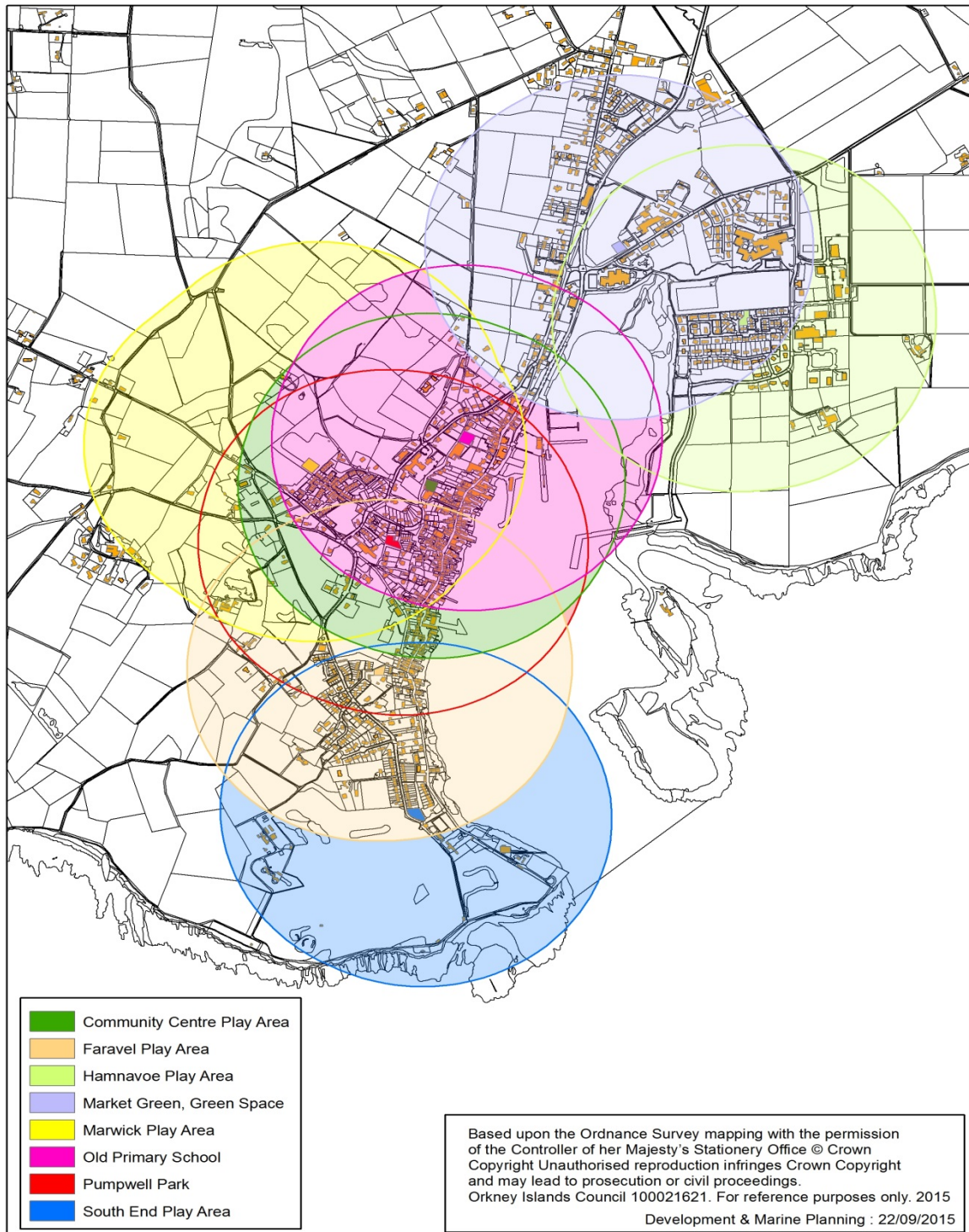
Figure 2: Play areas currently located in Kirkwall



Stromness

Stromness is the second most populated town in Orkney with an estimated population of 1758 (2011 census). Within Stromness there are currently 8 play areas, as shown in Figure 3, with the Market Green being an open green space.

Figure 3: Current Play areas located in Stromness



During the last five years a number of play areas have benefited from investment through local community groups accessing external funding.

Supported by both national and local best practice regarding children and young people's play, Orkney Islands Council developed its first destination play area at Summerdale Drive in Kirkwall.



6. Management and Maintenance

There is a legal responsibility to ensure that facilities for both children and young people are safe and fit for purpose. Weekly inspections look at the basic condition of all items of equipment in play areas, and identifying any faults from vandalism, breakages and cleanliness of the area. Annual inspections are carried out by an independent external specialist. Essentially this inspection is to check vandalism, wear and tear, long term structural problems and compliance with approved standards. Each play area is risk assessed and appropriate measures are taken to remedy high risk defects. Other criteria such as DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) compliance and play value assessments are included in these inspections. These inspections cover the overall safety of each play area and full documentation is received from the external inspector.

Information provided by inspectors informs future improvements particularly with regard to equipment use and its suitability. Ensuring that the right equipment is located at the right site will enable efficient use of resources and help reduce maintenance costs.

6.1. Play Area Quality

Play areas across Orkney are inspected on a weekly basis by Council staff, and annually by Zurich and the Play Inspection Company which assess the quality (play value) of each play area and give recommendations as to whether a play area should be retained or be reviewed. The play values given to the play areas in Stromness and Kirkwall following the 2019 annual inspections are shown in Figures 4 and 5 below.

The play value of a site is not solely based on the equipment in it, but includes other factors such as site access and location in relation to housing.

Figure 4.

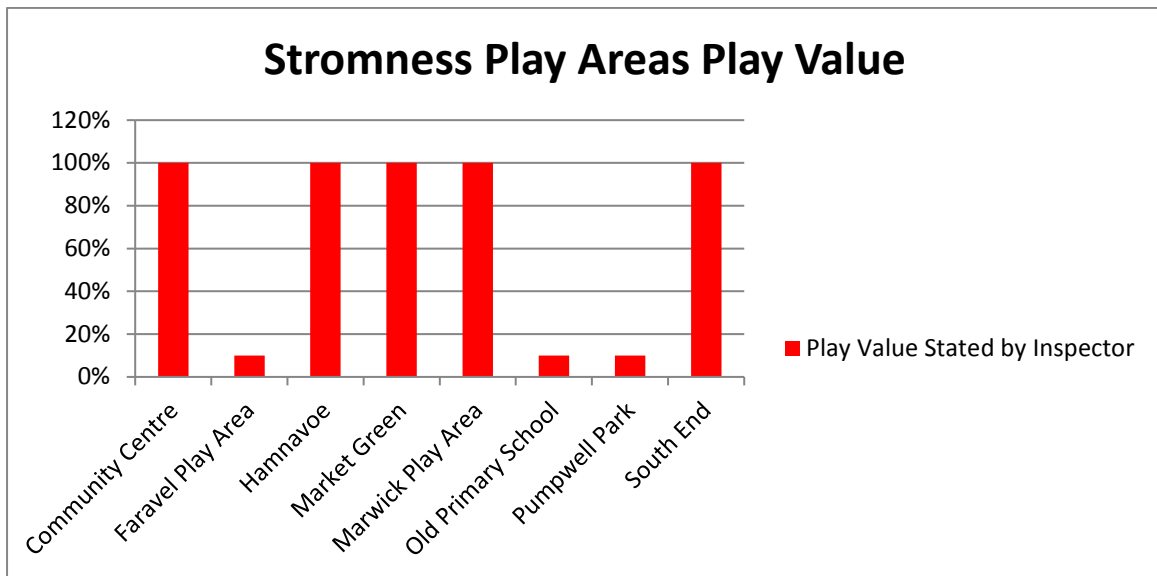


Figure 5.

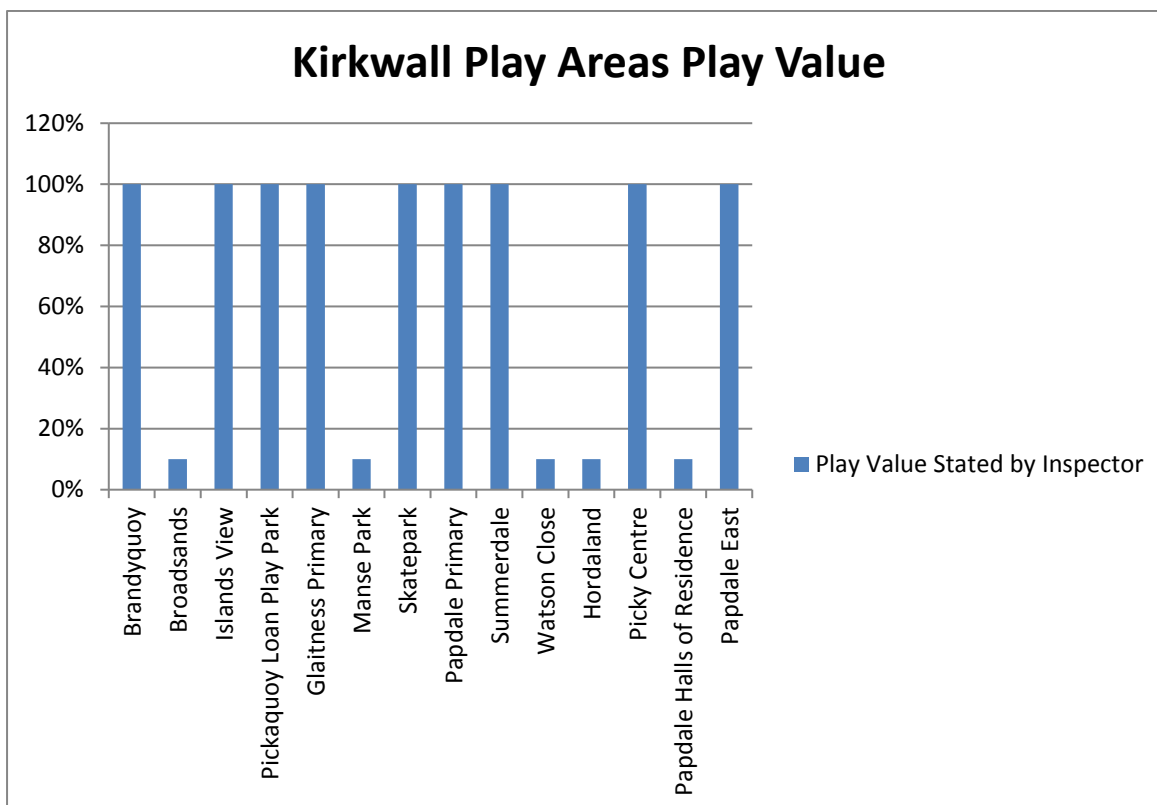
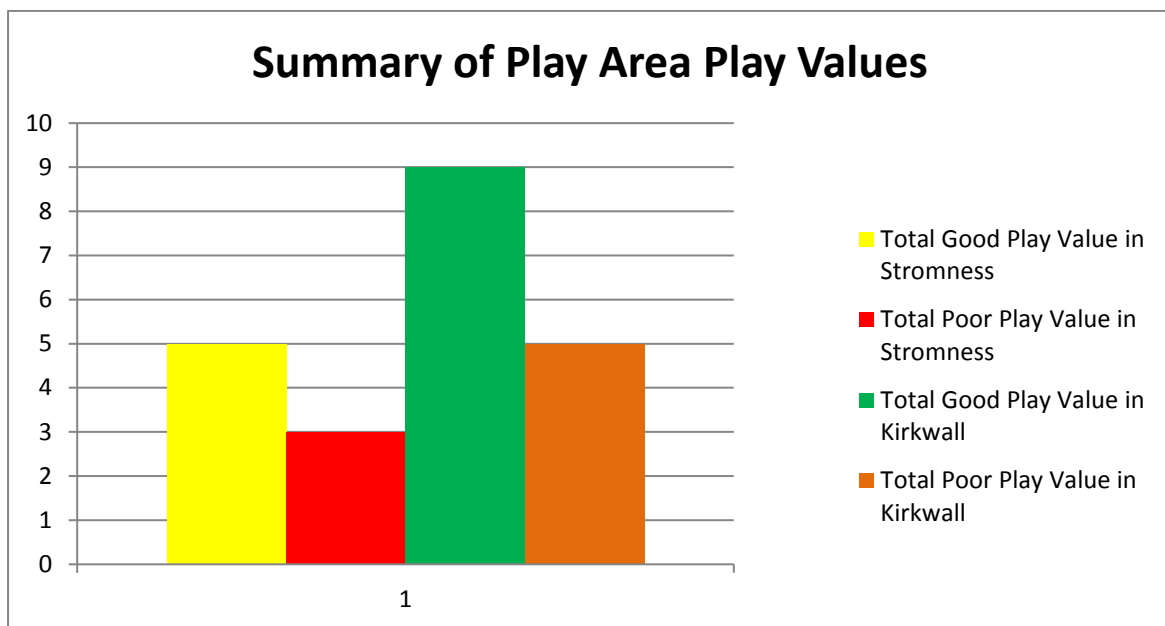


Figure 6.



6.2. Review of Play Areas

The review of play areas has taken account of changes in children’s play as highlighted in both the local and national play strategies, as well as priority areas from Orkney’s Physical Activity and Sport Strategy. Community consultation has also taken place to establish the views of local communities.

The following proposals are made in order to reflect good practice from national and local strategies and the views of local residents, and to ensure that new standards will inform future play and young people’s provision through the planning process.

7. Future Play Area Provision

In defining the scope and reach of Orkney’s play areas it is important to understand the context within which play areas provide opportunities for local communities to explore parks and open space further. It is proposed that Orkney Islands Council’s play areas are defined by the following two categories.

7.1. Destination Play Areas

These play areas are visited not only by the local community but by other users from outside a specific local area. Destination play areas provide a much wider range of play activities to engage children, young people and the wider community and should be located in heavily used open spaces. Destination play areas should be identified as areas where a wide range of activities including family days out, community events and barbeques can take place, and be supported by good walking/ cycle routes. Destination play areas should also feature a strong community volunteering network to act as a working group to assist with the upkeep of the site and to work in partnership with the Council regarding any future additions to the site. Summerdale play area is classified as a destination play area.

7.2. Local Community Play Areas

These play areas are used by the immediate local community. They should feature a limited range of dynamic play equipment such as slides, swings and climbing frames.

7.3. Developer Contributions

There is potential for the Council's Open Space Strategy and Planning for Open Space supplementary guidance to formally recognise DPAs, thereby allowing developer contributions toward their upkeep to be taken from a much wider catchment area where families would be reasonably expected to travel for the higher-quality experience, especially where local provision already exists to serve the development site, something that is detailed within the Council's Developer Contributions and Good Neighbour Agreements supplementary guidance 2013.

7.4. Housing Growth

Over the next 21 years it is forecasted that Orkney will see a growth of 1310 households. In planning for this growth Orkney Islands Council must ensure that its strategy for play areas seeks to provide a range of good quality accessible play areas which support its residents in leading healthy, active lives.

New housing development generates additional population which in turn increases demand for play areas. It has been identified that many of the existing play areas in Orkney, but predominantly Kirkwall and Stromness, are of poor quality and / or are unable to cope with current and future demand.

The provision of certain developer contributions towards onsite provision of open space may not be sought for some forms of development, instead, contributions may be sought to improve existing facilities that serve the development site.

Where appropriate, the provision of new facilities should be prioritised to provide facilities to areas with no existing provision.

8. Outcomes and Priorities

Orkney Islands Council's, Council Delivery Plan 2018 to 2023 identifies five targets. The Orkney Play Area Strategy is under the Quality of Life target which has an outcome that Orkney has a flourishing population, with people of all ages choosing to stay, return or relocate here for a better quality of life. Priority 5.16 is to Facilitate the development of Orkney's Play Areas through the implementation of the Play Area Strategy.

Priorities for this Strategy

Priority one – To seek and provide an appropriate number of play areas throughout Orkney.

Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

- A network of strategically important play areas will be developed based on meeting the needs of local communities.

- Working alongside planning colleagues the principles of a network of play areas will be embedded into new development plans and associated guidance documents, this will in turn determine the scope of on-site and off-site contribution requests.
- Play areas identified as needing to be reviewed will be returned to open green space, or an alternative community or recreational use that is supported by the community.

Priority two – improving the quality of play facilities for all age groups.

Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

- When an area is being renewed or refurbished, where possible, equipment aimed at all age groups is included in the design.
- Users and local residents will be included to promote positive community participation in local projects.
- We will support Community Councils and Community Associations in their endeavours to improve play areas.

Priority three – maximising funding opportunities available

Outcomes – what we plan to achieve

- Identify those play areas that require improvement and focus on funding those areas.
- Determine the capital receipts available to support the improvement programme proposed to improve standards and quality.
- Off-site developer contributions will be recommended for the improvements of existing play areas, the enhancement of the green network, or outdoor access and taking into account the Council's Core Path Plan where appropriate.
- All procurement options will be explored to obtain Best Value.

These priorities and outcomes are viewed as important to Orkney Islands Council as they support Priority 1, target 1.3 within the Council Plan, by planning to maximise the play areas offered and as a result enhance the quality of life for residents, whilst attracting visitors and new residents.

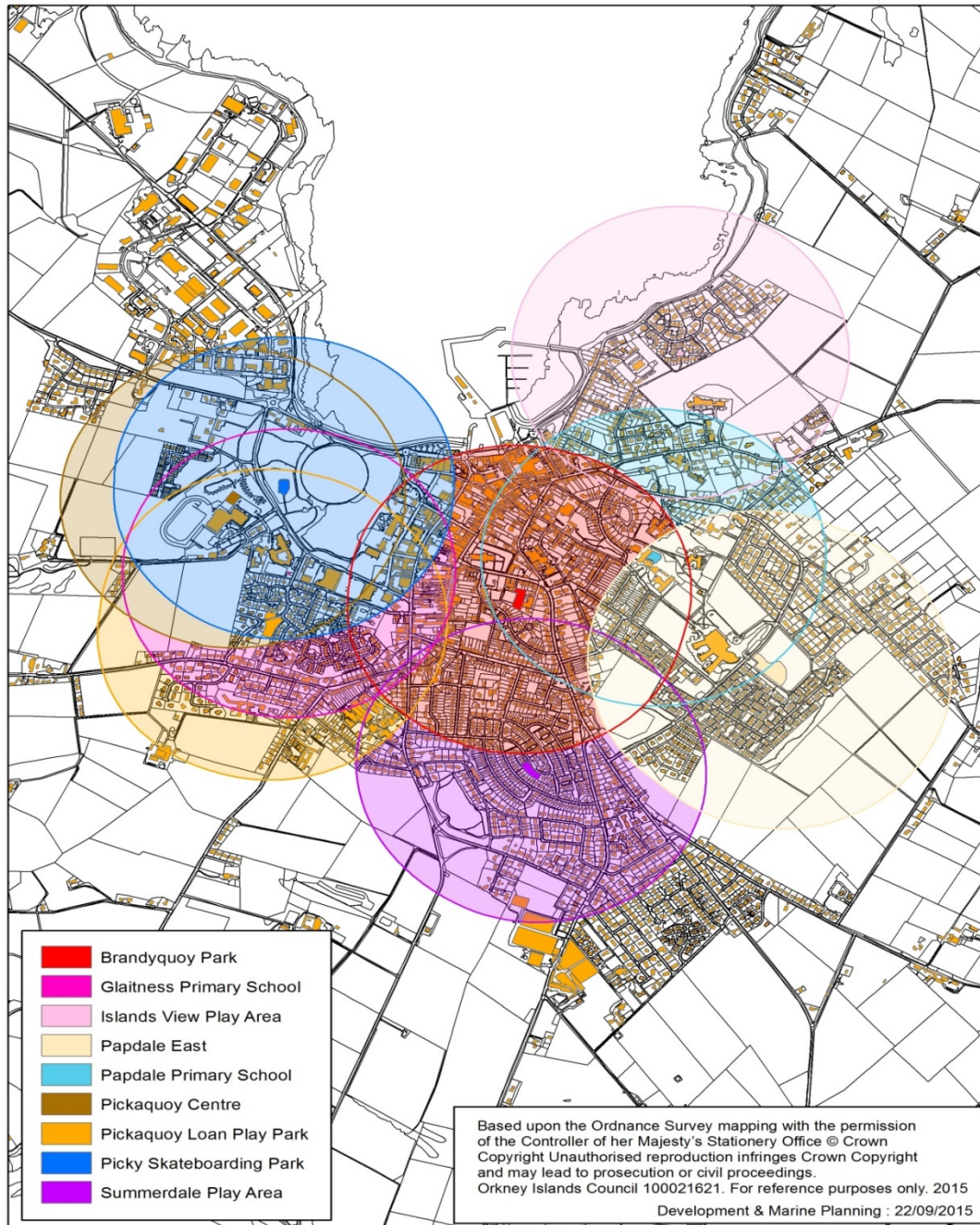
9. Recommendations

It is recommended that the number of play areas in both Stromness and Kirkwall be reduced, and the quality of the remaining play areas be enhanced. The sites that are not recommended for development, but for decommission over time in Stromness are Faravel, former Stromness Primary School, and Pumpwell Park. Within Kirkwall the play areas not to be developed, but decommissioned over time are Broadsands, Hordaland, Manse Road and Rope Walk. All sites recommended for decommissioning will continue to be maintained and insured by the Council, however, any equipment that requires to be replaced in future will not be replaced but removed, leaving the sites as green spaces.

All play areas outwith Kirkwall and Stromness will continue to be maintained/ insured and reviewed when their play value is reduced or their location is such that it no longer meets the needs of the children and young people living in the area.

The sites recommended to be kept are shown in Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 7: Play areas within Kirkwall to be kept and developed where necessary



Kirkwall

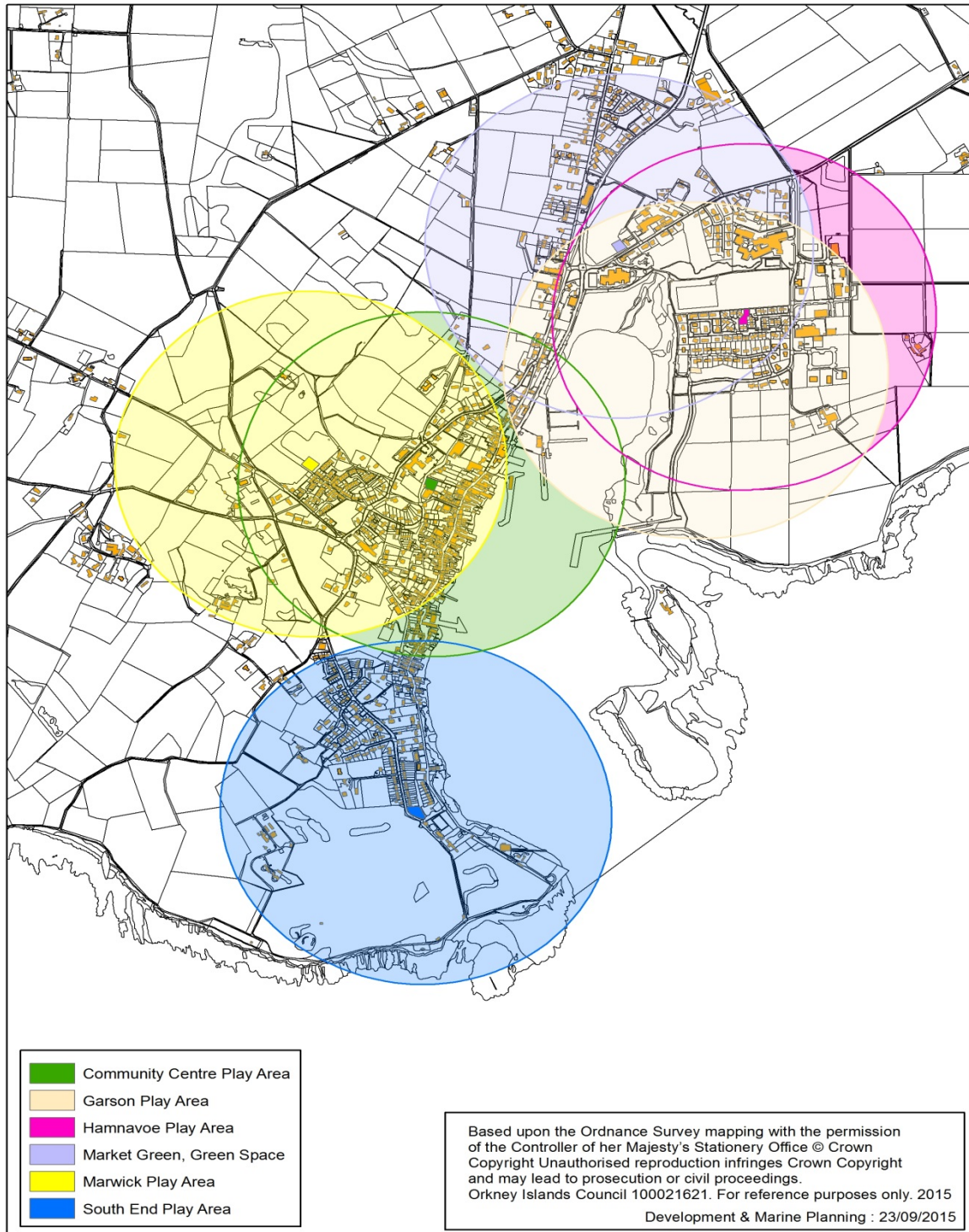
Play area	Classification	Priority
Brandyquoy	Local Community Play Areas	1
Glaitness School	Local Community Play Areas	3
Islands View	Local Community Play Areas	2
Papdale East	Destination Play Areas	1
Papdale Primary School	Local Community Play Areas	3
Pickaquoy Centre	Local Community Play Areas	2
Pickaquoy Loan	Local Community Play Areas	1
Pickaquoy Skateboard park	Local Community Play Areas	2
Summerdale	Destination Play Areas	3

Priority 1 – in need of immediate development

Priority 2 – in need for ongoing maintenance, replacement parts with some major maintenance required within 1 or 2 years

Priority 3 – good condition/ recently developed, will require small scale repairs and ongoing maintenance.

Figure 8: Play Areas within Stromness to be kept and developed where necessary



Stromness

Play Area	Classification	Priority
Community centre	Local Community Play Areas	2
Garson	Local Community Play Areas	
Hamnavoe	Local Community Play Areas	1
Marwick	Destination Play Areas	1
Southend	Local Community Play Areas	3

10. Conclusion

This Play Area Strategy recognises that there are deficiencies in some areas with regard to play area provision, but equally has identified specific areas for development and improvement. It is believed that delivery of play area development as mentioned in Figures 7 and 8, as well as an ongoing review of play areas outwith Kirkwall and Stromness, will significantly improve play provision for a large number of Orkney's children and young people, and will definitely result in increased play participation and the health and wellbeing of Orkney's children, young people and local communities.

Annex 1 - Example stages and responsibilities when developing a play area

STAGE 1	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
Stage 1	Proposal to develop a play area	Community
Stage 2	Inform Orkney Islands Council's Sport and Leisure Service of the proposal	Community
Stage 3	Form a Voluntary group or development to be co-ordinated by Community Association.	Community Advice from Area Community Education Worker and Voluntary Action Orkney
Stage 4	If voluntary group to be formed, hold a public meeting, invite Sport and Leisure representative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank account to be opened (2 signatories) • draft constitution • adopt office bearers 	Community Advice from Community Education Workers and Voluntary Action Orkney
Stage 5	Is it an existing Council Play Area that is being proposed for development?	Community to discuss with Orkney Islands Council.
Stage 6	Establish budgets/develop concept/design for play area and discuss with Sport and leisure service. It is important to ensure any designs incorporate concepts/thinking within the Orkney Islands Council Play Strategy/Play Area Strategy and the National Play Strategy.	Community Initial designs can be sketch concepts. Final design depending on what is going on in the play area may require more detailed structural drawings.
Stage 7a	Contact potential funding providers. Do they require any applicants to have responsibility for the land. If yes, submit a formal request to lease the land to the Sport and Leisure Service detailing the area of land and the length of lease being requested.	Community Orkney Islands Council
Stage 7b	If leasing the area, does the group wish Orkney Islands Council to have responsibility for maintenance etc after the developments is completed? If yes, this needs to be detailed in a formal request for a lease letter.	Community/Orkney Islands Council.

	<p>If Orkney Islands Council are to take responsibility for ongoing maintenance there will be a requirement for the group to fund raise annually (amount to be confirmed) in order to contribute to ongoing maintenance costs.</p> <p>If a lease is required by potential funders Orkney Islands Council can issue a letter of comfort until the full funding package has been confirmed. Once this has been confirmed, inform Orkney Islands Council and request to progress with lease arrangements.</p>	
Stage 7C	<p>Does the group wish to take ownership of the area of land and develop the play area through the Community Asset Transfer scheme?</p> <p>If so, a formal request must be submitted to Orkney Islands Council's Sport and Leisure Service.</p> <p>If agreed ongoing responsibility for the land and development would be with the group.</p>	Community/Orkney Islands Council
Stage 8	<p>Detailed plans and costings to be agreed/approved by Orkney Islands Council prior to being submitted to potential funders.</p>	Community/Orkney Islands Council
Stage 8 a	<p>Make applications to various funding bodies</p>	Community
Stage 8 b	<p>Confirm with Orkney Islands that the full funding package is in place.</p> <p>Confirm with Orkney Islands Council that all installation works will be carried out by approved Council contractors.</p>	
Stage 9	<p>Place orders when all confirmations from Orkney Islands Council are received.</p>	Community/Orkney Islands Council
Stage 10	<p>Installation process</p> <p>Contractor to have responsibility for site throughout.</p>	Community/Contractor
Stage 11	<p>When installation is complete inform Orkney Islands Council who will then carry out a post installation inspection.</p>	Community/Orkney Islands Council

Stage 11 a	Following a successful post installation Inspection Orkney Islands Council will send a letter to the group confirming the satisfactory inspection and if previously agreed that it will take responsibility for maintenance.	Orkney Islands Council
Stage 12	Arrange formal opening of the play area, date to be agreed with Orkney Islands Council.	Community/Orkney Islands Council
Stage 13	Weekly inspections to be carried out on all equipment and submitted to Orkney Islands Council if they have responsibility of the site.	Community/Orkney Islands Council
Stage 14	Annual play area inspections carried out by the Play Inspection Company. If a play area is not the responsibility of Orkney Islands Council an inspection can still be arranged on request and the fee will be recharged to the group responsible for the play area.	Community/Orkney Islands Council



Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Orkney Play Area Strategy
Service / service area responsible.	Education Leisure and Housing / Leisure and Lifelong Learning
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Garry Burton garry.burton@orkney.gov.uk Ext 2440
Date of assessment.	October 2019
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	New.

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	A clear plan for the future development as well as decommissioning of specific play areas, under pinned by national guidance regarding play and the views of local people.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	(Strategic plans include major investment plans, new strategic frameworks or plans such as annual budgets, locality plans or corporate plans).
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Within the Play Area Strategy, it is recommended that the following play areas be decommissioned over time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faravel, Stromness • Old Stromness primary school play area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pumpwell Park, Stromness. • Broadsands, Kirkwall. • Hordaland, Kirkwall. • Manse Road, Kirkwall. • Rope Walk, Kirkwall. <p>This would result in the residents' immediately surrounding these areas no longer having an equipped play area, but a green space. However, there would still be a play area within 500 metres.</p>
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?	Further consultation with local communities will be carried out regarding possible designs for the play areas that are to be developed.
Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).	Recent information gathered by Play Scotland regarding inclusive play areas. Play Area that have specific inclusive items of play equipment, toilet and changing facilities, parking etc. This was gathered for the whole of Scotland.
Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.	Access to play areas is for everyone. Each play area stated within the strategy is within 500m of housing population.
Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?	(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).
1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.	No differential impact identified.
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	No differential impact identified.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No differential impact identified.

4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No differential impact identified.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No differential impact identified.
6. Age: people of different ages.	Yes. Children who use the play areas will be affected and therefore there is a differential impact for those within this age group. The large majority of council play areas have equipment that is only suitable for primary school children.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No differential impact identified.
8. Caring responsibilities.	Yes. Parents or carers of children who use the play areas will be affected.
9. Care experienced.	Yes. Children who use the play areas will be affected and therefore there is a differential impact for those within this age group. The large majority of council play areas have equipment that is only suitable for primary school children.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No differential impact identified.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	All play areas provide different levels of accessibility.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Yes due to location of where people live.
13. Isles-proofing.	The revised Play Area Strategy provides guidance for all future play area development.

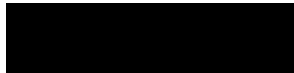
3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes. Children and their parents or carers immediately surrounding the areas to be decommissioned will no longer have these equipped play areas.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	Children and their parents or carers would have a green space and there would still be an equipped play area within 500 metres.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes.

4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	Yes.
What action is to be taken?	If approved a capital project appraisal will have to be undertaken. There will also have to be further consultation with local communities regarding possible designs for the play areas that are to be developed. This equality impact assessment will be updated to take cognisance of the results of the consultation.
Who will undertake it?	Staff within Education, Leisure and Housing and Development and Infrastructure.
When will it be done?	2016.
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	Ongoing meetings with community groups.

Signature:



Date: 18 October 2019

Name: GARRY BURTON

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk