

# Play Strategy



Cheshire West  
and Chester

## Locality Play Improvement Framework:

### Ellesmere Port

**2016-2030**

Tier 2 (Part 2 of 2)

Report produced on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council by Ethos Environmental Planning and Leisure and the Environment.

**ethos**  
Environmental Planning

**Leisure**  
and the  
**Environment**  
play • recreation • community

# CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4-8</b>
1.1	Prioritisation Framework	
1.2	Geographical area	
1.3	Population	
1.4	Overview of area	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Existing provision of play space</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Analysis of existing quantity of play space</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Analysis of existing access to play space</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Quality assessment</b>	<b>11-16</b>
5.1	Audit methodology	
5.2	Summary of quality audit results	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>17-18</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Prioritisation of play space methodology</b>	<b>19-23</b>
7.1	Priority factors/criteria	
7.2	Scoring play areas	
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Results of prioritisation process</b>	<b>24-39</b>
8.1	High priority sites	
8.2	Medium Priority sites	
8.3	Low Priority sites	
8.4	Sites with potential for alternative open space use	
8.5	Potential for new provision	
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Requirements from new development</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Key issues, challenges and aspirations</b>	<b>40-41</b>

## Overview and key points of Locality Play Improvement Frameworks

Each of the four Locality Play Improvement Frameworks provide an evidence base that can be used by all partners/stakeholders with an interest in play and youth facilities. It is called a **framework** document rather than a plan because it does not aim to produce a prescriptive play area delivery plan that partners must follow; rather it provides evidence that partners can use in reviewing, developing and implementing their own individual delivery plans.

It is important to note that the frameworks are 'live' documents which will be the subject of continuing updates and review. There is need for the Play Strategy to be managed by a partnership/monitoring structure, and one of the key recommendations from the initial stakeholder workshop in December 2015 was to set up a 'Play Partnership', which is being pursued by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) as a priority.

The Play Strategy framework documents cover all publicly accessible outdoor children's play spaces and youth facilities, and provide a strategic play profile for each Locality. They include recommendations for prioritising sites for improvements, sites with potential for alternative open space use, and areas where new provision would reduce gaps in accessing these facilities.

These recommendations (for improvements, alternative open space use, or areas for new provision) have been based on a clear process of prioritisation that has been consistently applied to all sites. The factors used in prioritisation of sites for improvement were agreed by the Play Strategy Steering Group following a number of stakeholder workshop sessions, and are based on: the current quality of sites and their potential for improvement; proximity to other play spaces and schools; child population; child health (excess weight); levels of child/youth deprivation and geographical barriers to services (ie. rurality).

A number of play spaces have been recommended to have potential for alternative open space use (because they have poor play value/are of poor quality and their removal would **not** result in a gap in access). It is important to recognise that these spaces are only considered to have **potential** for alternative open space use – it is not the final recommendation of the report that alternative open space use is sought, but rather that further investigation and/or public consultation is required. It should also be noted that if any play spaces recommended for alternative open space use have funds secured for improvements e.g. S106 funds or parish council funding, then they would **not** be considered suitable for alternative open space use.

Scope for the provision of new play space has also been considered where this would reduce gaps in access (and shortfalls in provision). It should be emphasised that the decision to install a new children's or youth play space on a site will depend on the availability of funding (the council do not currently have funding for the installation and maintenance of new play areas) and the needs of the local community. It is important to note that open spaces listed are those with **potential** for new provision – it is not the final recommendation of this framework that they are implemented, but that they could be pursued further if and when new funding becomes available.

It should be noted that any site assessments undertaken to formulate this framework take account of site conditions at that particular time and understandably sites may be subject to additional improvements/review taking account of site aspirations and the availability of funding.

# Locality Play Improvement Framework: Ellesmere Port

## 1.0 Introduction

The Cheshire West and Chester Play Strategy is a two tier strategy and is presented in two parts. Tier 1 (part 1 of 2) sets out relevant policy, standards and good practice guidance around design, risk and challenge, inclusion and sustainability. Tier 2 (part 2 of 2) comprises four Locality Framework Plans which provide localised information, applying the tier 1 policy and strategy and identifying priorities, issues, challenges and aspirations.

Cheshire West and Chester Council provide many local community services within a Locality Area framework. The four Locality Areas are Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich & Winsford, and Rural Communities.

The Locality Frameworks should be read in conjunction with the main Play Strategy report (tier 1 - part 1 of 1). Each Locality Framework includes the following information:

- A description of the area
- Maps showing the provision of play areas and youth provision
- Quantitative analysis of current provision of play space (children and youth)
- Analysis of access to children's play areas and youth provision
- Summary of quality issues (Ethos Audit)
- Summary of consultation undertaken
- Prioritisation methodology
- Results of prioritisation process (play spaces with high, medium and low potential for improvement, and those sites with potential for alternative use if appropriate, and open spaces with potential for new play space provision)
- Key issues, challenges, aspirations and priorities

The Framework documents provide a valuable evidence based resource that can be used by all partners with an interest in play and youth facilities. The Frameworks list all designated play spaces and youth facilities within the locality ie. those managed by the borough council, town and parish councils, housing associations, recreation trusts etc. In addition, they provide a strategic play profile for the locality; and a guide to making prioritising choices in relation to potential improvement works.

### Prioritisation Framework

'Planning for Play' suggests that prioritisation for play space improvements should be based on an objective assessment to determine where improvements are most needed. The strategy follows this guidance by applying needs criteria to all sites (the criteria were developed following consultation via four locality area play workshops)<sup>1</sup>.

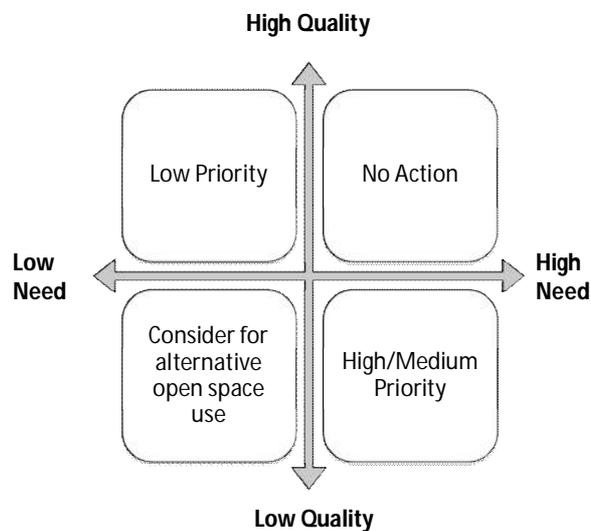
---

<sup>1</sup> Full details of the criteria and the rationale for their selection can be found in Appendix 5 of the tier 1 report and outlined in section 7 of this report.

The criteria are based on:

- Current quality of sites and their potential for improvement
- Proximity/access to other play areas; and proximity to community facilities
- Demographics eg. numbers of children and young people in the area/catchment
- Child health and wellbeing
- Levels of child/youth deprivation
- Geographical barriers to play – rurality

The principal behind the prioritisation approach is illustrated by the diagram below.



As a result of this process the Framework categorises all sites in the locality under four broad headings:

- High priority for improvement
- Medium priority for improvement
- Low priority – no significant improvement action needed

- Consider alternative open space use
- 

It is important to understand that in the latter option refers to the specific designation as a play area meaning that the space could be considered for other uses or be adapted as unequipped playable space where it may well provide useful "doorstep" type provision.

### **Why a Framework?**

It is called a **framework** document rather than a plan because it does not aim to produce a prescriptive play area delivery plan that partners must follow; rather it provides evidence that partners can use in reviewing, developing and implementing their own individual delivery plans.

The Framework simply provides an overview of all sites in the locality area and applies objective needs based criteria to all those sites - to arrive at the strategically determined site categorisation classifications.

### **How can it be used?**

Some examples are provided below:

- As a reference in relation to developing or reviewing individual partners' delivery plans.
- Reference to the Framework can help partners to decide which of many potential improvement projects could be most effectively targeted in relation to need and external funding bids.
- Where sites are identified as priorities in the Framework this identification, along with providing details of the objective means by which they were highlighted, will add significant weight to any potential funding bids.
- It can help partners to decide which projects to focus resources on in terms of further investigation and in relation to providing advice and guidance to local community play space initiatives.
- If there are a high number of small poor quality sites in an urban area, say, the Framework's identification of potential sites for alternative open space use can help in deciding options for the future e.g. to consider the viability of some sites and consider the option of providing a smaller number of accessible higher quality sites.
- By reference to the External Funding Appendix 2 to check if this includes potential external funding sources that could be applied for.

The Play Strategy recognises that in terms of the different partners' own delivery plans there are key additional practical factors that need to be considered, most notably in relation to the availability of capital funding and management/maintenance sustainability<sup>2</sup>.

In practice this may mean that in certain circumstances the strategic priority classification will take second place to practical achievability. To illustrate by way of some examples:

- A site that is identified as a medium strategic priority may in practice have attracted capital or S106 funding and demonstrable sustainability that makes it's improvement achievable. This project is therefore included in the partner's delivery plan.
- A strategically identified high priority site is able to secure capital/S106 funding but cannot demonstrate ongoing sustainability. This project is not included in the partner's delivery plan (until the sustainability issue is overcome).
- A site that is identified as a medium priority has strong active community support including a commitment to raise capital funds and to demonstrate long-term sustainability. This project is added to the partner's delivery plan.

## 1.2 Geographical area

The Ellesmere Port Locality Area consists of the wards of Ellesmere Port Town, Whitby, Strawberry, Sutton, St Paul's, Grange, Ledsham and Manor, Netherpool and Rossmore.

## 1.3 Population

Table 1 Ward population statistics

Ward	Total Population (2011 Census)	Child Population (Age 0-19) (ONS mid-year 2014 estimates)
Ellesmere Port Town	9,103	2,437
Grange	4,649	1,265
Ledsham and Manor	7,796	1,606
Netherpool	3,287	812
Rossmore	3,808	1,137
St. Paul's	9,256	2,157
Strawberry	5,086	1,087
Sutton	9,176	2,020
Whitby	8,102	1,679
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,263</b>	<b>14,200</b>

<sup>2</sup> This relates primarily to the need to be able to show that there is sufficient capital funding to implement the scheme; and that there is also a clear and robust plan to demonstrate how the play area will be maintained in the future e.g. is there confirmed revenue funding sufficient to maintain the site long term; a long term commuted sum from a developer ongoing community commitment to manage the site etc.

## **1.4 Overview of the area**

The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies sets out the profile of Ellesmere Port as follows:

Ellesmere Port is the second largest settlement with over 60,000 residents and the most industrialised part of the borough and was a major centre for manufacturing. The town has suffered a sharp decline in employment and there has been a 50 percent reduction in manufacturing employment leaving a legacy of derelict brownfield sites and some contamination issues. The industrial legacy and the presence of the M53 motorway cutting through the town has led to image and perception problems.

However, the area provides a major employment land resource for the borough and has become increasingly successful in attracting new employment opportunities. Wages are higher than in the rest of the borough, albeit workers rather than residents are the beneficiaries reflecting the presence of high value manufacturing in automotives and chemicals. There are pockets of high deprivation particularly in northern parts of the town. The presence of the Manchester Ship Canal, ease of access to the national motorway network and availability of land provides considerable opportunities for improving the economy of the town and the borough as a whole.

Ellesmere Port town centre serves as a local shopping centre and provides access to wider facilities and services.

## 2.0 Existing provision of play space

The play spaces have been grouped into three categories of priorities for improvement (high, medium and low), based on the prioritisation process/scoring criteria set out within section 7.

(Large scale maps and a GIS database of sites have been provided as an electronic database to the council).

There are a total of 23 children's play areas and 16 youth facilities (excluding teen shelters) within the Locality Area.

The breakdown for youth facilities is as follows:

Type of youth facility	Number
Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)	9
BMX	1
Basketball	5
Parkour	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

There are no children's or youth play space in the wards of Ledsham and Manor and Strawberry.

The section below provides an analysis of the existing quantity of play space within the Ellesmere Port Locality Area.

## 3.0 Analysis of existing quantity of play space

Table 2 shows the existing provision of play space across the Locality. The second column 'Existing Provision Ha' shows the total amount of play space for each typology in hectares. The third column 'Existing Provision Ha/1000' shows hectares of play space per 1000 of the population (using 2011 census data).

Table 2 Existing provision of play space across the Ellesmere Port Locality Area

Typology	Existing provision (ha)	Existing provision (ha/1000)
Play Space (Children)	2.0	0.03
Play Space (Youth)	0.75	0.01

This section provides an analysis of the existing quantity of play space within the Ellesmere Port Locality Area. It uses the quantity standards for play space from the Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study, and summarised in table 3.

Table 3 Quantity standards for play space (from Cheshire west and Chester Open Space Study)

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)
Play Space (Children)	0.05
Play Space (Youth)	0.03

The following tables show the existing supply of play space within the locality area. Figures are given for the overall locality area, and for individual wards. Where there is insufficient supply of play space, the minus number is highlighted red to make this stand out.

Table 4 Existing Supply of children's and youth play space across the Ellesmere Port Area

Typology	Existing Provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)	Required Provision (Ha)	Required provision (Ha/1000)	Supply (Ha)	Supply (Ha/1000)	Overall Supply
Play Space (Children)	2.00	0.03	3.01	0.05	-1.01	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY
Play Space (Youth)	0.75	0.01	1.81	0.03	-1.06	-0.02	UNDER SUPPLY

Table 5 Supply of children's and youth play space (hectares) by ward

WARD	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Ellesmere Port Town Ward	-0.15	0.02
Grange Ward	-0.09	-0.07
Ledsham and Manor Ward	-0.39	-0.23
Netherpool Ward	0.12	-0.07
Rossmore Ward	-0.09	-0.07
St Pauls Ward	0.02	-0.15
Strawberry Ward	-0.25	-0.15
Sutton Ward	-0.15	-0.23
Whitby Ward	-0.03	-0.09

As can be seen from Table 4, there is an under supply of both children's play space and youth play space across the Ellesmere Port Locality Area. Table 5 shows how the provision varies within individual wards. Only Netherpool and St Paul's meet the quantity standard for children's play space, and only a single ward (Ellesmere Port Town) meets the standard for youth play space.

## 4.0 Analysis of existing access to play space

Access to children's play space and youth play space across the Chester Locality Area was analysed using the CWAC access standards developed as part of the Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study (as summarised in table 6).

Table 6 Access Standards for children and youth play space

Typology	Access standard
Play Space (Children)	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

The main gaps in access to children's play space are in the wards of Ledsham and Manor, Strawberry and Whitby, with smaller gaps in Ellesmere Port Town and Sutton.

The provision of youth play space is more sporadic, with gaps in access across all wards, with the whole of Strawberry ward with no access to youth play space within 600m. Other wards with large access gaps are Whitby, Ledsham and Manor, St Paul's and Netherpool. Wards with the best access are Grange, Sutton and Ellesmere Port Town.

## 5.0 Quality Assessment

This section provides a summary of the quality audit for play areas that was undertaken as part of the Open Space Study/Play Strategy. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit. Audits were undertaken in September/October 2015.

### 5.1 Audit methodology

Sites were visited and a photographic record made of key features, along with a description of the site and recommendations for improvements. An assessment of the quality of the site was undertaken using the following criteria:

- Play Value
- Management and maintenance
- Accessibility
- Safety

For each of the criteria a score of 1 -5 is given, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good. These scores are added together to provide an overall existing score for the site. Using these scores, each site is then ranked for its existing quality and its potential to improve, as follows:

### Existing score/rank

A rank from A – D has been given for the average existing total score as follows:

- The existing quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average total score;
- The scores are ranked from A – D, where sites with rank 'A' are within the top 25% of quality, and sites with rank 'D' are in the bottom 25% of quality – **i.e. sites with rank 'A' have the best existing quality, and sites with rank 'D' have the poorest quality.**

### Potential score/rank

A rank from A – D has been given for the average gap/potential score as follows:

- The potential quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average potential score;
- The scores are ranked from A – D, where sites with rank 'A' are within the top 25% of potential improvement and sites with rank 'D' are in the bottom 25% of potential improvement – **i.e. sites with rank 'A' have the most potential to be improved, and sites with rank 'D' have the poorest potential to improve.**

## 5.2 Summary of quality audit results

The details of the quality audit are held within the quality database provided to the council as part of the Open Space Study. A summary of the play areas included within the quality audit for the Ellesmere Port Locality Area is shown in Table 7 and 8 below. Audits were undertaken in September/October 2015.

Table 7 Ethos quality audit of children's play spaces within Ellesmere Port Locality Area

NAME	Ward	Description	Existing Rank	Potential Rank	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement
Cambridge Road Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	Play space with climbing frames, swings and a rope apparatus, benches and bins, perimeter fence, no issues.	C	C	Dated equipment, surfacing poor
Thornton Road Playing Field Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	Modern play space for toddlers to teens, fenced with open entrances (dogs could get in) benches, bins and bike rails. Good path network leading to play area	A	D	No priorities
Wolverham Road Play	Ellesmere Port Town	Fenced children's play area with climb and slide,	B	D	Maintenance could be improved, no

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Existing Rank</b>	<b>Potential Rank</b>	<b>Ideal Recommendations for Improvement</b>
Area		seesaw, roundabout and benches.			other priorities
Wolverham Road Play Area (unfenced)	Ellesmere Port Town	Unfenced play area designed for children aged 6-12. Modern Climbing equipment and roundabout.	B	D	No issues.
School Road Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	Small play space with different equipment and MUGA. Play space doesn't have signs on all entrances. Play space has some damage equipment and some apparatus is dated.	C	B	Improve maintenance and update some equipment.
Somerville Crescent Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	Small LAP, fenced, swings and rocker, bin, bench	C	B	Opportunity to extend play area and provide additional facilities, currently poor play value.
Trinity Road Play Space	Ellesmere Port town	Small fenced LAP with spring and toddler climb/slide	C	B	Opportunity to extend play area and provide additional facilities, currently poor play value.
Festival Park Play Area	Grange	Wooden play space with climbing frame and slide, swing removed, just structure left, damage to sign, some graffiti and litter.	C	B	Poor play space, swings need replacing, new sign and some signs of vandalism throughout site.
Luton Road Play Area	Grange	Play space next to school fields. Site has basket hoop MUGA and children's play. Play space basic with dated equipment.	C	C	Some equipment needs updating
Blackstairs Road Play Area	Netherpool	Play space with 2 climbing frames, swings and rope apparatus, suitable for toddlers, unsure about piece of equipment, can't tell if it's damaged.	B	D	Good play space, no issues
Hillside Drive Play Area	Netherpool	Poor, unmanaged play space with little to no opportunity for play equipment present is dated and damaged.	D	A	Needs fully upgrading

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Existing Rank</b>	<b>Potential Rank</b>	<b>Ideal Recommendations for Improvement</b>
Naylor Green Play Area	Netherpool	Play space in housing estate. dated apparatus which could be improved.	C	C	Update equipment
Westminster Park Play Area	Rossmore	Play space with range of equipment. Most was modern and well maintained.	B	D	Some equipment could be updated
Wharf Lane Play Area	Rossmore	Good play area with new wooden climbing apparatus and wood chipped impact flooring.	B	D	No Issues
Delamere Drive Play Area	St Paul's	Play space with rope and wooden climbing frames, swing has been removed, not maintained, weeds growing around the play space.	D	C	improve maintenance, weeds killed, swings need replacing
Heath Grove Play Area	St Paul's	Dated play space with old equipment.	C	B	Equipment needs updating
Truman's Lane Play Area	St Paul's	Small play space with dated apparatus. No path leading to play space.	C	C	Equipment needs updating
Wheatstone Hey Play Area	St Paul's	Average play space with modern climbing frame and swing set.	C	B	One piece of apparatus appears to have been removed. site needs more equipment.
Parkland View Play Area	St Paul's	Poor children's play area with 2 swings, rockers, grass area, fencing, bin, bench.	D	A	Needs fully restoration and replacement
Bebbington Road Play Area	Sutton	Play space which is outdated, contains swings, rocking horse and other apparatus, inaccessible, needs updating fully.	D	B	Needs replacing fully, not accessible
Wenlock Lane Play Area	Sutton	Play space in amenity green space. Basic apparatus which are dated and do not encourage play.	C	C	Update equipment
Seacombe Park Play Area	Sutton	Good play space with wide range of equipment. Most equipment is modern with a few exceptions. There is no sign on entrance.	B	D	Sign installed on entrance.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Existing Rank</b>	<b>Potential Rank</b>	<b>Ideal Recommendations for Improvement</b>
Whitby Park Play Area	Whitby	Large play space with a variety of equipment but some of which is dated and worn.	B	C	Some equipment needs updating

Table 8 Ethos quality audit of youth play spaces/facilities within Ellesmere Port Locality Area

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Existing Rank</b>	<b>Potential Rank</b>	<b>Ideal Recommendations for Improvement</b>
Wellington Road MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	MUGA with a damaged basketball hoop and graffiti, otherwise no issues	C	D	Basketball hoop needs replacing
Oasis Club, Coronation Road	Ellesmere Port Town	MUGA with basketball hoops, grass growing out of the ground	C	D	Weeds killed, possible resurface
School Road MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	MUGA is average with no obvious signs of damage.	C	B	Improve maintenance and update some equipment.
Thornton Road MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	Old dated Half MUGA with basketball hoop and goal mouth.	D	C	Poor MUGA with dated apparatus. site could be renovated and improved with full MUGA and better floor markings.
Wolverham Park MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	Modern MUGA with low side panels.	B	D	Good MUGA with no recommendations.
Luton Road MUGA	Grange	MUGA and teen shelters in good condition.	C	C	Some equipment needs updating
Luton Road Basketball	Grange	Single basketball hoop on a hard surface.	C	C	Could be upgraded to a Half MUGA.
Poole Hall Lane Basketball	Netherpool	Single basketball hoop with hard surface.	C	C	Could be converted to a MUGA to improve usability.
Lime Street Basketball Ring	Rossmore	Single basketball hoop, hard surface.	B	C	surface needs improving and/or enlarging to increase usability. somewhat outdated.
Westminster Park Teen Shelter and MUGA	Rossmore	MUGA with no perimeter fencing and teen shelter.	B	D	Average facilities. site could be improved with some side panels to prevent the games spilling out onto the rest of the site.

NAME	Ward	Description	Existing Rank	Potential Rank	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement
Parklands MUGA	St Paul's	Average MUGA with good signage.	C	C	Some signs of vandalism with scorch marks on the surface. litter was also prominent around site.
Heath Grove Basketball Hoop	St Paul's	Single basketball hoop and hard standing area.	C	D	Could have markings put down, or could be turned into a MUGA.
Little Sutton Library Basketball	St Paul's	Single basketball hoop in library grounds.	B	C	Outdated, needs replacing or removing.
Seacombe Park (Lupus Way) MUGA	Sutton	MUGA with perimeter fencing, football goals and basketball hoops.	B	D	In ok condition but has potential for future improvements.
Whitby Park MUGA	Whitby	Average MUGA	B	D	Average facilities that should be better considering the status of Whitby Park. MUGA Could be improved with more sturdy and modern fencing.
Whitby Park Wheeled Sports Park and New Parkour Free Running Facility	Whitby	Average concrete skate park with multiple jumps. Excellent new Parkour facility.	B	D	Average skate park with wide variety. Some signs of vandalism on the ramps and damage on the flooring.

As can be seen from tables 7 and 8, there is a large variation in the quality of play space within Ellesmere Port Locality. Sites with the lowest existing quality scores (scoring C or D), and with the most potential to be improved (scoring A or B) are:

- School Road Play Area and MUGA
- Festival Park Play Area
- Hillside Drive Play Area
- Delamere Drive Play Area
- Heath Grove Play Area
- Wheatstone Hey Play Area
- Parkland View Play Area
- Bebbington Road Play Area
- Somerville Road Play Area
- Trinity Road Play Area

## 6.0 Consultation

As part of the Cheshire West and Chester Open Space Study, consultation was undertaken during 2015 which included surveys of households, local groups and organisations (including play and youth organisations) and town and parish councils. This is detailed within the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (Appendix 1 of the Open Space Study).

The key headline findings regarding children’s play space and youth play space are as follows:

- Significant numbers of stakeholders highlighted facilities for teenagers including multi-use games areas as being of poor quality
- The majority of respondents would not expect to travel more than 10 minutes on foot to access children’s play areas. Respondents would be prepared to travel further if safe access to sites was improved, and the facilities were more interesting/varied
- A majority of respondents suggest a need for more facilities for teenagers, however for children’s play areas, the majority of respondents suggest that that are enough play areas, and the priority is for improvements to existing play areas

Further consultation was also undertaken to inform the Play Strategy including a stakeholder workshop, four locality area workshops and further consultation with town and parish councils (details are included in section 6 and Appendix 5 of the Tier 1 report).

Ellesmere Port does not have Parish/Town Councils. Therefore, to provide a local input on known play and youth facility issues, locality managers were contacted to provide an overview. The Ellesmere Port Locality Managers comments (verbatim) are included in table 9 below.

Table 9 Locality Managers’ comments regarding Ellesmere Port

Facility/Aspect	Issues/comment/observations
Children’s play areas	<p><b>Naylor Green:</b> Part of new Rivacre Village development. Concerns over entry point due to proximity of two lane roundabout. Possible safety barrier needed between pavement and road.</p> <p><b>Blackstairs Road:</b> Part of new Rivacre Village development. Large round swing removed after play area opened due to ASB. Unfortunately, it was located in an inappropriate position and was far too close to a property. Also had problems with children kicking balls against fence lines. Additional signage and planting to help manage issue which seems to be working.</p> <p><b>Rivacre Village:</b> There will be additional informal greenspaces within this development though none are listed as having play facilities. The original plans indicate installation of a MUGA next to Wharf Lane play area though concerns that this will be too close to properties if it goes ahead.</p> <p><b>Plantation Drive<sup>3</sup>:</b> This Play Area is in an unacceptable state and concerns have been raised about the site on numerous occasions over the last few years. The</p>

<sup>3</sup> This has been mapped as Hillside Drive within the Ethos audit, and has come out of the Framework as a high priority site (See table 14).

	<p>facility is located in an area of predominantly older people but is the only play area on this side of two busy main roads (Rossmore Road West and Rivacre Road/Netherpool Road)</p> <p><b>Festival Road Park:</b> This park includes a football pitch, play area and large green areas used by dog walkers. The park is a shortcut and therefore has a large footfall on a daily basis. It is subject to regular fires, litter issues and fly tipping on the Festival Road side of the park. The large round swing has been burnt on 2 occasions and has not been replaced. Play equipment is of a wooden design (less for slide) with a sand base. This remains unpopular due to lack of regular swings and play equipment.</p> <p><b>Luton Road Park:</b> This park has a MUGA, Basket Ball Hoop, 2 Youth PODS, fenced in Children's Play Area and open green space used for dog walking. This park is subject to some ASB and youth nuisance issues. Some equipment was recently lost due to fire.</p> <p><b>Heath Lane:</b> Nice small park and play area that is locked at night by local residents. This has helped reduce incidents of ASB.</p> <p><b>Whitby Park:</b> Contains a large children's play area which is well used. Whilst this play park has managed to avoid being vandalised, offensive graffiti is reported from time to time.</p> <p><b>Elm Grove:</b> This park contains no play equipment. Two consultations have been held with residents regarding the installation of play equipment but there is no support for this.</p> <p><b>Seacombe Drive:</b> The park has recently been refurbished and improvements made.</p> <p><b>Bebbington Road Play Park:</b> The park is accessed via a pathway between two properties and is kept reasonably well. No reports of vandalism or complaints about its upkeep.</p> <p><b>Wenlock Lane:</b> The park contains a few items of play equipment. The park has suffered from severe flooding in the past and is not well used due to the proximity of Seacombe Park.</p> <p><b>Parkour Zone:</b> a new Parkour facility has been provided in Whitby park.</p> <p><b>General Comment:</b> Most play areas in Ellesmere Port are subject to complaints regarding general maintenance and vandalism. Residents would also like a mix of equipment for all ages in all areas.</p>
<p>Teenage facilities (e.g. skate parks)</p>	<p>The town has a well-used BMX track and Skate Park and is about to have a purpose built Parkour facility. However, more activities and teenage targeted facilities are always requested.</p> <p>The Skate Park has had some vandalism (mostly small fires) and the bending of the safety barriers.</p>
<p>Multi-Use Games Areas</p>	<p>Whitby Park has a well-used MUGA.</p> <p>Seacombe Park has a well-used MUGA which has had fire damage to the surface in the past (now repaired).</p> <p>General Comment: The key issues and complaints regarding MUGAs relate to improper use, litter and noise.</p>
<p>General</p>	<p>It was also noted that most complaints regarding play areas fall into three areas: general maintenance (grass cutting/bins emptied/dog fouling); graffiti; and poor/dated equipment and upkeep. Most complaints regarding green space relate to the up keep and maintenance of areas.</p>

## 7.0 Prioritisation of play space methodology

### 7.1 Priority Factors/Criteria

Following a series of four Locality Area Workshops with key stakeholders, eight criteria for prioritising play areas were agreed by the steering group. These are set out within table 10 below.

Table 10 Priority factors and how they have been measured

Priority Factor	Statistics used/ how measured
1. Demographics (% of 0-19 year olds within each ward)	Office for National Statistics (ONS) Population of 0-19 year olds at ward level (mid-year 2014 estimates)
2. Child excess weight (overweight and obese combined)	Excess weight in reception and year six children - 2013/14 to 2014/15 pooled by ward and compared to England levels (Cheshire West and Chester JSNA)
3. Proximity to schools	Mapping
4. Proximity to other play areas	Mapping
5. Child/youth deprivation	Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) – Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) (2015)
6. Rural deprivation to services	Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - Geographical Barriers (subset of the Barriers to Services domain) by LSOA (2015)
7. Existing Quality	Ethos quality audit rank scores (from Open Space Study/Play Strategy)
8. Potential Quality	Ethos quality audit rank scores (from Open Space Study/Play Strategy)

#### 7.1.2 Demographics

Table 11 below shows the child population within each ward (split by age group and then totalled) compared to the total ward population, and for the locality area as a whole. The last column shows the percentage of the population within each ward (and the total for the Ellesmere Port Locality Area) that is between age 0-19 (i.e. the child population).

The child population within Ellesmere Port is 14,200 which is 23.56% of the total population of 60,263. This is higher than the level for Cheshire West and Chester as a whole (22.46%). Some wards have a significantly higher percentage of children, notably Rossmore (29.86%), Grange (27.21%) and Ellesmere Port Town (26.77%). Play space within these wards with the highest percentages of child population (25-30%) have scored more highly compared to play space in other wards, as there is likely to be more demand for play space in these areas (see table 13 for detailed scoring and weighting).

Table 11 Population of 0-19 year olds at ward level (ONS mid-year 2014 estimates)

Area		Age 0-4	Age 5-9	Age 9-14	Age 15-19	Total Children (Age 0-19)	Total ward	% Population (Age 0-19)
Ellesmere Port Locality Area		3,670	3,548	3,342	3,640	14,200	60,263	23.56%
Ward Name	Locality							
Ellesmere Port Town	Ellesmere Port	741	624	519	553	2,437	9,103	26.77%
Grange	Ellesmere Port	322	339	296	308	1,265	4,649	27.21%
Ledsham and Manor	Ellesmere Port	302	392	425	487	1,606	7,796	20.60%
Netherpool	Ellesmere Port	239	211	177	185	812	3,287	24.70%
Rossmore	Ellesmere Port	389	269	260	219	1,137	3,808	29.86%
St. Paul's	Ellesmere Port	576	563	479	539	2,157	9,256	23.30%
Strawberry	Ellesmere Port	256	272	243	316	1,087	5,086	21.37%
Sutton	Ellesmere Port	485	496	476	563	2,020	9,176	22.01%
Whitby	Ellesmere Port	360	382	467	470	1,679	8,102	20.72%

### 7.1.3 Excess Weight in reception and year 6 children

Play areas that are within wards with significantly higher levels of excess weight in reception and year six children (compared to England) score highly, as good quality and engaging play facilities that meet local needs within these areas will be important in encouraging children to play outdoors, leading more active and healthy lifestyles. Reducing childhood obesity is a key target for public health in Cheshire West and Chester.

Table 12 below shows that Ellesmere Port Locality Area has significantly higher levels of excess weight in both reception and year 6 children compared to England.

Table 12 also shows the breakdown by ward. The majority of wards are significantly higher in child excess weight compared to England, with the exception of Ledsham and Manor, Strawberry and Whitby wards. Sutton ward is significantly higher than England for excess weight in reception children, but has no significant difference to England in year six children.

Table 12 Excess weight rates in reception children and year six children (Cheshire West and Chester JSNA 2013/14 to 2014/15 pooled by ward)

Code	Name	Reception				Year six			
		Overweight & Obese Prevalence	Lower 95	Upper 95	Statistical significance	Overweight & Obese Prevalence	Lower 95	Upper 95	Statistical significance
ENGLAND		22.21%	22.13%	22.28%		33.38%	33.29%	33.47%	
NORTH WEST		23.24%	23.04%	23.45%	Significantly higher than England	34.12%	33.88%	34.37%	Significantly higher than England
Cheshire West and Chester UA		23.81%	22.84%	24.81%	Significantly higher than England	33.01%	31.86%	34.18%	No significant difference to England
Ward Locality	Chester	24.18%	22.16%	26.33%	No significant difference to England	31.64%	29.19%	34.20%	No significant difference to England
	Ellesmere Port	30.83%	28.50%	33.27%	Significantly higher than England	41.23%	38.60%	43.92%	Significantly higher than England
	Northwich and Winsford	20.96%	19.36%	22.64%	No significant difference to England	30.37%	28.37%	32.45%	Significantly lower than England
	Rural Communities	21.52%	19.57%	23.60%	No significant difference to England	30.51%	28.31%	32.81%	Significantly lower than England
Ellesmere Port	Ellesmere Port Town Ward	31.16%	25.99%	36.85%	Significantly higher than England	45.26%	38.98%	51.69%	Significantly higher than England
	Grange Ward	33.55%	26.53%	41.38%	Significantly higher than England	44.07%	35.44%	53.07%	Significantly higher than England
	Ledsham and Manor Ward	23.81%	16.68%	32.79%	No significant difference to England	35.48%	28.39%	43.28%	No significant difference to England
	Netherpool Ward	37.08%	27.77%	47.45%	Significantly higher than England	50.00%	38.10%	61.90%	Significantly higher than England
	Rossmore Ward	33.80%	26.54%	41.92%	Significantly higher than England	44.07%	35.44%	53.07%	Significantly higher than England
	St. Paul's Ward	29.91%	24.41%	36.07%	Significantly higher than England	45.21%	38.27%	52.35%	Significantly higher than England
	Strawberry Ward	26.85%	19.39%	35.90%	No significant difference to England	33.33%	24.03%	44.15%	No significant difference to England
	Sutton Ward	31.79%	25.66%	38.63%	Significantly higher than England	37.99%	31.20%	45.28%	No significant difference to England
	Whitby Ward	28.78%	21.90%	36.79%	No significant difference to England	36.72%	29.97%	44.04%	No significant difference to England

### 7.1.4 Proximity to schools

This was measured using ArcView GIS, using the education sites data collected as part of the CWAC Open Space Study. Distances vary from 9m to 1422m and are detailed in the database provided to the council. The closer a play area is to a school, the higher it scores.

### 7.1.5 Proximity to other play areas

This was measured using ArcView GIS. Distances vary from 27m to 2781m and are detailed in the database provided to the council. The further away a play area is to another play area, the higher it scores.

### 7.1.6 Child/youth deprivation (IDACI)

The income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) is an index of deprivation used in the United Kingdom. It measures in a local area (called a lower super output area (LSOA), which is a small fixed geographic area encompassing a population of approximately 1,000 people) the proportion of children under the age of 16 that live in families that are income deprived i.e. in receipt of income support, income based jobseeker's allowance or pension credit, or those not in receipt of these benefits but in receipt of Child Tax Credit with an equivalised income (excluding housing benefits) below 60% of the national median before housing costs. The LSOA with a rank of 1 is the most deprived. Play space within the areas with the lowest ranks i.e. the most deprived areas (with a rank of between 1 and 3) are given the highest score.

The wards with the highest levels of child/youth deprivation are Netherpool, Ellesmere Port Town, Rossmore, Grange (entire ward), St Paul's and Sutton. Strawberry, Ledsham and Manor and Whitby wards are less deprived.

### 7.1.7 Rural deprivation to services - geographical barriers

Geographical Barriers to Services is a sub-domain of the Barriers to Housing and Services domain, which is one of the domains that make up the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). It measures physical proximity to essential services and assigns each local area (LSOA) a deprivation score based on the road distance to a GP, shop, primary school and post office. The lower super output area (LSOA) with a rank of 1 is the most deprived.

The most deprived wards are Netherpool, Rossmore, Strawberry, Ledsham and Manor and Whitby (with a small area around the northern fringes of St Paul's).

### 7.1.8 Existing quality and potential quality

The methodology for the Ethos quality audit which ranks play spaces for their existing quality and potential to improve is explained under section 5. A summary of the play areas included within the Ellesmere Port Locality quality audit, with their rank scores is provided in tables 7 and 8.

## 7.2 Scoring play areas

For each of these criteria/priority factors listed in table 10, a scoring and weighted rank has been applied as set out in table 13 below, in order to prioritise each play area.

Table 13 Desktop assessment criteria for prioritising sites

Priority Factor	Scoring	Weighted Ranking
1. Demographics	14-20% of ward population is between 0-19 years old: <b>score 1</b> 20-25% of ward population is between 0-19 years old: <b>score 2</b> 25-30% of ward population is between 0-19 years old: <b>score 3</b>	4
2. Child excess weight	Significantly higher than England: <b>score 2</b> No significant difference to England: <b>score 1</b> Significantly lower than England: <b>score 0</b>	1
3. Proximity to schools	<100 metres: <b>score 3</b> 100-300 metres: <b>score 2</b> 300-500 metres: <b>score 1</b> >500 metres: <b>score 0</b>	3
4. Proximity to other play areas	<b>Children's play space:</b> <80 metres: <b>score 0</b> 80-280 metres: <b>score 1</b>	3

	280-480 metres: <b>score 2</b> >480 metres: <b>score 3</b> <b>Youth play space</b> <200 metres: <b>score 0</b> 200-400 metres: <b>score 1</b> 400-600 metres: <b>score 2</b> >600 metres: <b>score 3</b>	
5. Child/youth deprivation (Rank 1 = most deprived 10% and Rank 10 = least deprived)	Ranked between 1-3: <b>score 3</b> Ranked between 4-6: <b>score 2</b> Ranked between 7-9: <b>score 1</b> Ranked 10: <b>score 0</b>	2
6. Rural Deprivation to services (Rank 1= highest barriers/most deprived and Rank 10= least deprived)	Ranked between 1-3: <b>score 3</b> Ranked between 4-6: <b>score 2</b> Ranked between 7-9: <b>score 1</b> Ranked 10: <b>score 0</b>	2
7. Existing Quality	Rank A (excellent quality site): <b>score 0</b> Rank B: <b>score 1</b> Rank C: <b>score 2</b> Rank D (Poor quality site): <b>score 3</b>	5
8. Potential Quality	Rank A (high potential to improve): <b>score 3</b> Rank B: <b>score 2</b> Rank C: <b>score 1</b> Rank D (no/limited potential to improve): <b>score 0</b>	5

### 7.2.1 Priority scores

The total score for each play area is calculated by multiplying the score by the weighted ranking and then adding the weighted rankings for each of the criteria/priority factors to give an overall score. The range of total scores (from 19 to 65) for each site has been used to group the play areas into three priority categories, as follows:

- **Total score between 19 and 34: Low priority for improvement**
- **Total score between 35 and 50: Medium priority for improvement**
- **Total score between 51 and 65: High priority for improvement.**

Sites have also been considered for alternative open space use, where their removal would not result in any gaps in access (ie. there is a cluster of sites in close proximity). This is explored in detail in section 8.4 below.

## **8.0 Results of prioritisation process**

This section sets out the results of the prioritisation process explained in section 7.

### **8.1 High priority sites**

There are 13 play spaces that have been identified as a high priority for improvement within the Ellesmere Port Locality Area (i.e. those sites which scored between 51 and 65) – ten children’s play spaces and three youth facilities, as shown in table 14 below.

The ‘Ideal Recommendations for Improvement’ column shows the recommendations from the Ethos quality audit.

Table 14 Play areas that are a high priority for improvement

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
Cambridge Road Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	C	Replace dated equipment and poor surfacing.		623	55
School Road Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	C	Improve maintenance and update some equipment.		583	58

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
Somerville Road Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	C	Opportunity to extend play area and provide additional facilities, currently poor play value		177	54
Trinity Road Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	C	Opportunity to extend play area and provide additional facilities, currently poor play value		233	52

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
Festival Park Play Area	Grange	C	Poor play space, swings need replacing, new sign and some signs of vandalism throughout site.		908	57
Luton Road Play Area	Grange	C	Some equipment needs updating		477	52
Hillside Drive	Netherpool	C	Needs fully upgrading		367	65

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
						
Truman's Lane Play Area	St Paul's	C	Equipment needs updating		448	51

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
Parkland View Play Area	St Paul's	C	Needs fully restoration and replacement		1532 (size of equipped area is approx 374)	100
Bebbington Road Play Area	Sutton	C	Needs replacing fully, not accessible		1230 (size of equipped area is approx. 200m2)	55

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
School Road MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	Y	Improve maintenance and update some equipment.		428	55
Thornton Road MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	Y	Poor MUGA with dated apparatus. site could be renovated and improved with full MUGA and better floor markings.		532	53

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	Photo	Size of Play Space (m2)	TOTAL SCORE
Parklands MUGA	St Paul's	Y	Some signs of vandalism with scorch marks on the surface. litter was also prominent around site.		439	53

## 8.2 Medium priority sites

There are 16 play spaces that have been identified as a medium priority for improvement within the Ellesmere Port Locality Area (i.e. those sites which scored between 35 and 50) – nine children’s play spaces and seven youth facilities, as shown in table 15 below.

The ‘Ideal Recommendations for Improvement’ column shows the recommendations from the Ethos quality audit. The ‘Existing Rank’ and ‘Potential Rank’ columns are also derived from the quality audit (see section 5).

Table 15 Play areas that are a medium priority for improvement

NAME	Ward	Child (C) or Youth (Y)	Existing Rank	Potential Rank	Ideal Recommendations for Improvement	TOTAL SCORE
Thornton Road Playing Field Play Area	Ellesmere Port Town	C	A	D	No priorities	36
Naylor Green	Netherpool	C	C	C	Update equipment	43
Westminster Park Play Area	Rossmore	C	B	D	Some equipment could be updated	44
Wharf Lane Play Area	Rossmore	C	B	D	No Issues	37
Delamere Drive Play Area	St Paul's	C	D	C	improve maintenance, weeds killed, swings need replacing	50
Heath Grove Play Area	St Paul's	C	C	B	Equipment needs updating	46
Wheatstone Hey	St Paul's	C	C	B	One piece of apparatus appears to have been removed. site needs more equipment.	43
Wenlock Lane Play Area	Sutton	C	C	C	Update equipment	42
Whitby Park Play Area	Whitby	C	B	C	Some equipment needs updating	39
Wellington Road MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	Y	C	D	Basketball hoop needs replacing	47
Oasis Club, Coronation Road	Ellesmere Port Town	Y	C	D	Weeds killed, possible resurface	43
Wolverham Park MUGA	Ellesmere Port Town	Y	B	D	Good MUGA with no recommendations.	42

Luton Road MUGA	Grange	Y	C	C	Some equipment needs updating	43
Lime Street Basketball Ring	Rossmore	Y	B	C	surface needs improving and/or enlarging to increase usability. somewhat outdated.	38
Westminster Park Teen Shelter and MUGA	Rossmore	Y	B	D	Average facilities. site could be improved with some side panels to prevent the games spilling out onto the rest of the site.	38
Seacombe Park (Lupus Way) MUGA	Sutton	Y	B	D	In ok condition but has potential for future improvements.	35

### 8.3 Low priority sites

The low priority play areas (those that scored between 19 and 34) are as follows:

- Wolverham Road Play Area
- Blackstairs Road Play Area
- Seacombe Park Play Area
- Luton Road Basketball
- Poole Hall Lane Basketball
- Heath Grove Basketball
- Little Sutton Library Basketball
- Whitby Park MUGA, wheeled sports and parkour

A number of these sites are good quality and providing facilities in an area where there would otherwise be a gap in access e.g. Whitby Park youth facilities and Seacombe Park Play Area and therefore, no action is recommended.

A number of these low priority facilities are basketball hoops. While not coming out of the Framework as a priority (possibly because they were not scored as having a high priority for improvement within the quality audit), the value of these for play and their condition is questioned.

### 8.4 Sites with potential for alternative open space use

Some play spaces are limited in the play value that they can offer due to their size/location and/or may be of poor quality. Where these sites are overlapping in access (i.e. if they were removed, would not result in a gap in access), **and do not have funds secured for improvements/replacement**, they may be suitable for alternative open space use (e.g. informal play space), especially where other existing high quality play areas or high potential play areas are located in close proximity. Options to improve the sites' visual amenity and biodiversity value could also be sought eg. by native hedge/tree planting.

The decision if a site is suitable for alternative open space use will of course depend on the needs of the local community (who will be consulted before such a decision is made), and it

is important to note that sites below are those with **potential** for alternative open space use – it is not the final recommendation of this framework that they are secured for alternative open space use, but rather that further investigation is needed.

All of the high priority sites (which all score C or D for existing quality), with the exception of Somerville Road Play Area and School Road MUGA would result in a relatively large gap in access if removed, and are therefore not suitable for alternative open space use. Although the removal of School Road MUGA would not result in a gap in access (and there is sufficient supply of youth play space within the Ellesmere Port Town Ward), the demand for youth facilities (noted by the Locality Manager) and the shortfall across all other wards in the Locality means that this MUGA is unlikely to be suitable for alternative open space use.

All of the medium priority children’s play areas (with the exception of Delamere Drive Play Area) which have an existing quality score of C or D (moderate/poor quality) would result in a relatively large gap in access if removed, and are therefore not suitable for alternative open space use. A number of youth facilities (MUGAs) are in areas that would not result in a gap in access if removed (Wellington Road and Oasis Club), but due to the demand for youth facilities and shortfall across all other wards in the Locality, they are not recommended for alternative open space use.

Luton Road Basketball, Poole Hall Lane Basketball and Heath Grove Basketball all score poorly in the quality audit (C or D) and have a low potential for improvement. Only Luton Road basketball may have potential for alternative open space use (based on sites that have moderate/poor quality) as its removal would not result in a gap in access (due to nearby MUGA), however, it does enhance the play value for youth within the park. The value of stand-alone basketball hoops is questioned, even where their condition/quality has been assessed as good, and further investigation into their usage would be valuable.

Although Blackstairs Road Play Area (low priority for improvement) was given a good existing score (B) in the quality audit, it may have potential for alternative open space use, based on its close proximity to Naylor Green (approx. 120m), and relatively basic equipment (although from the audit photos it is clear that recent work has been undertaken to improve the safety surfacing/equipment, which suggests that play area is well used and therefore may not be suitable for alternative open space use).

In summary, play spaces with potential for alternative open space use are:

#### **8.4.1 Children’s play space**

**Blackstairs Road Play Area** (Netherpool Ward) – This site came out as a low priority for improvement. The site contains basic play equipment, and the scores within the Ethos quality audit were average, with average play value and limited potential for improvement (although the overall quality rank came out as B – good). Due to the close proximity of Naylor Green (which is a larger play space, was identified as having a higher potential for improvement within the quality audit and came out of the prioritisation process as a medium priority site), removal of this play space would not result in a gap in access. There is

also currently sufficient supply of children’s play space in Netherpool Ward. However, the fact that it appears that investment/recent work (see figure 1) has been undertaken to this play area, it may not be considered suitable for alternative open space use.

Figure 1      Photos of Blackstairs Road Play Area (taken as part of Ethos quality audit in 2015)



**Somerville Road Play Area** (Ellesmere Port Town) –The Ethos quality audit identified this site as currently having poor play value, and overall poor quality. Although it has come out of the framework as a high priority for improvement, it is a small play space in close proximity to other good quality play spaces with good play value e.g. Whitby Park and Woolverham Road and its removal would result in only a very small gap in access. However, there is an under supply of children’s play space within the Ellesmere Port Town ward, and if used for alternative open space use, it would require the extension (of the same size as the equipped play to be removed) of another play area in close proximity within the ward e.g. Woolverham Road Play Area.

Figure 2      Photo of Somerville park (taken as part of Ethos quality audit in 2015).



**Delamere Drive** (St Paul's) – this play space has come out of the Framework as medium priority for improvement and CWAC have identified it as a priority site for improvement. However, it is a poor quality site (wooden equipment appeared to suffer from vandalism), and its removal would only result in a very small gap in access – therefore funding to improve existing play space may be better invested elsewhere. There is also currently sufficient supply of children's play space within the ward of St. Pauls.

Figure 3 Photos of Delamere Drive Play Area (taken as part of Ethos quality audit in 2015)



#### 8.4.2 Youth Play Space

There is little opportunity for alternative open space use of youth play space within the Locality Area, with the exception of the small, basic basketball facilities which consist of a basketball hoop and small area of hard standing, in areas where their loss would not result in a gap in access to youth play space.

Luton Road basketball (Grange) is in close proximity to a MUGA (both in Luton Road Park). However, due to the under supply of youth facilities within Grange, the value of this basketball facility may need further consideration. If it were used for alternative open space use, then existing youth facilities in the vicinity would need expanding and improving.

#### 8.5 Potential for new provision

Open spaces where there is currently no provision of children's or youth play space have been considered for their potential to accommodate new provision where they would reduce gaps in access, enabling more areas of the Locality to meet the access standards for play space as set out within the CWAC Open Space Study and section 4 of this Framework. Open spaces with potential for new provision are highlighted **bold** in the table below.

**The decision to install a new children's or youth play space on a site will depend on the availability of funding (the council do not currently have funding for the installation and maintenance of new play areas) and the needs of the local community.**

**It is important to note that the sites below are those with potential for new provision – it is not the final recommendation of this Framework that they are implemented, but that they could be pursued further if and when new funding becomes available.**

Ward	Comments
Ellesmere Port Town	<p>Children’s play space There is a small gap in access in the south of the ward (there is also a large gap in access in the eastern part of the ward – but this area is industrial rather than residential) which could be removed by installing new provision in the western end of <b>Bunbury Green</b> amenity green space. This would also help alleviate the shortfall of children’s play space in Ellesmere Port Town.</p> <p>Youth play space The gap in access to youth play space is also within the same area (although the gap is smaller due to the larger access buffers for youth play space). There is also sufficient supply of youth play space within the ward, and due to the small access gap, improving existing youth facilities is likely to be most beneficial e.g. Thornton Road MUGA has been identified as a high priority for improvement (see table 14).</p>
Grange	<p>Children’s play space There is a very small gap in access in the south of the ward, but very limited potential for new provision in this area. It is therefore recommended that existing play space is extended in order to alleviate the shortfall of children’s play space within this ward e.g. Luton Road Play Area has been identified as a high priority for improvement.</p> <p>Youth play space There is a small gap in access in the west of the ward which could be removed by installing youth provision at <b>Festival Park</b>. This would also reduce access gaps in St Paul’s (and potentially Netherpool although the railway line may be a barrier to access), and reduce the under supply of youth play space in Grange.</p>
Ledsham and Manor	<p>Children’s play space There is currently no provision of children’s play space within Ledsham and Manor, with large gaps in access and an under supply of play space. There is potential for amenity green space to accommodate new provision (although relatively small in size – ranging from 0.2-0.3ha) e.g. <b>Cheviot Close</b> and <b>Thorne Drive</b>.</p> <p>Youth play space There is currently no provision of youth play space in the ward (and therefore poor access and a shortfall of provision). Opportunity for new provision within existing open space is very limited. Little Sutton CE Primary School and Sutton Green Primary school have facilities (MUGA/netball court) that could be opened up to community use which would reduce gaps in access to youth provision.</p>
Netherpool	<p>Children’s play space There is good access across the residential part of this ward (only a very small gap in the south of the ward), and as there is sufficient supply of</p>

	<p>children's play space, no new provision is currently required.</p> <p>Youth play space</p> <p>There is a gap in access across the southern part of the ward, and an under supply. <b>Bailey Avenue</b> amenity green space is approximately 0.7ha in size, and may have potential to accommodate new provision to reduce the access gap and alleviate the shortfall in provision.</p>
Rossmore	<p>Children's play space</p> <p>There is a relatively small gap in access towards the west of the ward. New provision within the western part of <b>New Grosvenor Road Playing Fields</b> or <b>Lime Street open space</b> would largely remove this gap and reduce the under supply.</p> <p>Youth play space</p> <p>There is a gap in access across the western part of the ward. There is very limited open space within the ward that could accommodate new provision and fill the access gap, although new provision at <b>Bailey Avenue</b> amenity green space (Netherpool) would help reduce the access gap in this part of the ward. Existing facilities within the ward e.g. at Westminster Park could be expanded and improved to reduce the shortfall.</p>
St. Paul's	<p>Children's play space</p> <p>There is good access and sufficient supply, therefore no new provision is currently recommended.</p> <p>Youth play space</p> <p>There are gaps in access in the north east and south of the ward, and a shortfall in supply. Sites with potential to accommodate new provision include <b>Seymour Park</b> (in the north east) and <b>Festival Park</b> which falls just outside the ward (in Grange).</p>
Strawberry	<p>Children's play space</p> <p>There is no provision or access within this ward. There are a number of amenity green spaces with some potential e.g. <b>Sycamore Drive</b> and <b>St Asaph Road open space</b>. New provision within <b>Meadow Park</b> amenity green space (Sutton) or <b>Elm Grove Park</b> (Whitby) would also reduce the access gap.</p> <p>Youth play space</p> <p>There is no provision or access within this ward. <b>St Asaph Road</b> or <b>Sycamore Drive</b> (the larger of the amenity green spaces in the ward) may have potential to accommodate youth facilities.</p>
Sutton	<p>Children's play space</p> <p>There are gaps in access within the northern and southern parts of the ward, and an under supply of provision. New provision at <b>Meadow Park</b> amenity green space would remove the access gap in the south (and also reduce the gap in Strawberry Ward). New Provision at <b>Capenhurst Lane Playing Field</b> would also remove the gap in the north of the ward.</p> <p>Youth play space</p> <p>Good access in the centre of the ward, with gaps in access around the fringes. There is very limited potential for new provision, and therefore</p>

	it is recommended that the existing facilities at Seacombe Park (Lupus Way) are improved and extended to alleviate the shortfall.
Whitby	<p>Children's play space There is poor access against the standard across the majority of the ward, although it is noted that the facilities at Whitby park are likely to draw people from a wider area. Potential for new provision at <b>Elm Grove Park</b> to reduce the access gap in the south of the ward (and also in Strawberry Ward). There may also be scope for the installation of natural play in <b>Stanney Woods</b> (although these woods are a Local Nature Reserve) so this would require careful consideration as to the appropriateness.</p> <p>Youth play space Poor access across south of ward but very limited potential for new provision.</p>

## 9.0 Requirements from new development

The Local Plan (Part One) in Section 3.3.1.2 outlines the projected housing growth for the Borough which aims to deliver 22,000 new dwellings with 'the majority of new development to be located within or on the edge of the city of Chester and towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford'.

For Ellesmere Port the projected housing growth is 4,800 new dwellings.

This would result in the following requirements for new play space based on the quantity standards in table 2, and assuming a population increase of 11,040 people (4,800 x 2.3):

Play Space (Children): **0.55ha**

Play Space (Youth): **0.33ha**

If housing development is within wards where there is currently no provision ie. Ledsham and Manor and Strawberry, or in areas where there are gaps in access, then on-site provision of play space would be required. If development takes place in areas where the access standards set out in table 6 are met, then improvements to existing play spaces within the vicinity would be required. The highest priority sites for improvement are set out in table 14, and the medium priority sites in table 15.

## **10.0 Key issues, challenges and aspirations for Ellesmere Port Locality Area**

### **10.1 Quantity**

- There are a total of 23 children's play areas and 16 youth facilities/play areas within the Locality Area
- There is an overall under supply of children and youth play space within the Locality
- There are no children's or youth play space in the wards of Ledsham and Manor and Strawberry
- Only Netherpool and St Paul's meet the quantity standard for children's play space, and only a single ward (Ellesmere Port Town) meets the quantity standard for youth play space
- Consultation with the Ellesmere Port Locality Manager has revealed that more activities and teenage targeted facilities are always requested

### **10.2 Access**

- The main gaps in access to children's play space are in the wards of Ledsham and Manor, Strawberry and Whitby, with smaller gaps in Ellesmere Port Town and Sutton
- For youth play space there are gaps in access across all wards, with the whole of Strawberry ward with no access to youth play space within 600m. Other wards with large access gaps are Whitby, Ledsham and Manor, St Paul's and Netherpool. Wards with the best access are Grange, Sutton and Ellesmere Port Town

### **10.3 Quality**

- There is a large variation in the quality of play space within Ellesmere Port Locality, ranging from good quality sites offering excellent play value e.g. Whitby Park to very poor sites e.g. Bebbington Road Play Area and Hillside Drive
- Consultation with the Ellesmere Port Locality Officer has identified that key issues and complaints regarding MUGAs relate to improper use, litter and noise. most complaints regarding play areas fall into three areas: general maintenance (grass cutting/bins emptied/dog fouling); graffiti; and poor/dated equipment and upkeep
- Considering the quality audit, vandalism appears to be an issue in a number of areas, and this is echoed by the Locality Officer's comments

### **10.4 Priorities for the area**

- There are 13 play spaces that have been identified as a high priority for improvement within the Ellesmere Port Locality Area (i.e. those sites which scored between 51 and 65) – ten children's play spaces and three youth facilities. One of these sites has potential for alternative open space use (see below). See table 14 for high priority sites
- 16 play spaces have been identified as a medium priority for improvement (i.e. those sites which scored between 35 and 50) – nine children's play spaces and seven youth

facilities (as shown in table 15). One of these play areas has potential for alternative open space use - see below.

### **10.5 Sites with potential for alternative open space use**

- Three children's play areas within the Locality have potential for alternative open space use (Blackstairs Road Play Area, Somerville Road Play Area and Delamere Drive Area), although further investigation would be required.
- There is little opportunity for alternative open space use of youth play space, although the numerous basketball hoops (consisting of a single hoop and small area of hard standing - not MUGAs) may require further consideration.

### **10.6 Potential sites for new play provision**

A number of open spaces have been identified as having potential to accommodate new provision of play space (where none currently exists) to reduce gaps in access (subject to funding and community need). These are:

- Bunbury Green (for children's play space in Ellesmere Port Town)
- Festival Park (for youth play space in Grange and St Paul's)
- Cheviot Close and Thorne Drive (for children's play space in Ledsham and Manor)
- Bailey Avenue (for youth play space in Netherpool and Rossmore)
- New Grosvenor Road Playing Fields or Lime Street open space (for children's play space in Rossmore)
- Seymour Park (Lupus Road) (for youth provision in St Paul's)
- Sycamore Drive and St Asaph Road (for children's play space and youth in Strawberry)
- Elm Grove Park (for children's play space in Whitby and Strawberry)
- Meadow Park and Capenhurst Lane Playing Field (for children's play space in Sutton)
- Stanney Woods (for natural play in Whitby).

### **10.7 Requirements from new development**

- The projected housing growth for Ellesmere Port is 4,800 new dwellings which would result in a requirement of 0.55ha of new children's play space and 0.33ha of youth play space within the Locality.
- Housing development within Ledsham and Manor and Strawberry wards (and in areas where there are existing gaps in access) would require on-site provision of play space.

### **10.8 Resources, timetable and monitoring**

- This is covered within part 1 of this report (tier 1).