

Play Sufficiency Assessment Report: How Children and Young People View Play Provision in Fife

ScrapAntics CIC on behalf of Fife Council 2023



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Executive Summary

ScrapAntics Community Interest Company were engaged by Fife Council to collect the ideas, opinions, and suggestions of children and young people living in various parts of the region, to support the delivery of a Play Sufficiency Assessment. From May to July 2023, ScrapAntics consulted with over 150 young people across three age groups (0-5 years, 5-12 years and 12-18 years). The purpose of the consultation was to find out:

- The differences in how children and young people play according to age
- What barriers may exist to play and how these may be reduced for children and young people
- What children and young people need in relation to play provision

The consultation was facilitated by experienced play workers and involved a minimum of ten in-person sessions based in outdoor locations. These were a mix of community and school based sessions. One session enabled play workers to obtain feedback from young people with disabilities or additional support needs.

The locations were chosen following guidance from Fife Council who wished to ensure a geographic spread covering urban, rural and more disadvantaged areas. They were also interested in hearing the views of girls and young women about play provision, as much previous consultation has focused on the needs of boys.

The consultation was delivered using Loose Parts Play (LPP), which involves young people building, sharing and expressing themselves through recycled materials such as pallets, barrels, tubing, tyres, planks and many other resources. The play workers role was to encourage young people to create their "ideal play space" with the materials, although this was not a prescriptive approach. While playing it was possible to record young people's responses using audio and written means with questions agreed in advance. Play Workers are skilled in reacting to the concerns and particular needs of young people, ensuring an inclusive and adaptable environment for effective consultation.

The following report provides a comprehensive representation of young people's feedback, and where possible their own words have been included. A number of key themes were identified primarily focused on how, when and why young people play, the types of facilities they would like to see and barriers to play.

Fife Council are considering different ways to ensure the voice of children and young people continues to be heard with regard to play provision and wider concerns affecting their area. With this in mind, an approach to support sustained engagement in representative structures has also been suggested.

A toolkit documenting the consultation process and how children and young people can be effectively engaged will also be developed. This will enable organisations to be aware of what needs to be considered, potential challenges and successful approaches. The toolkit will provide opportunities for reflection on the unexpected outcomes and possible barriers which can influence delivery of this type of consultation. It is always helpful to identify areas for improvement alongside positive results.

The play workers supporting this consultation process reported a genuine joy and excitement from children and young people in being asked for their ideas and opinions. Young people were active participants in discussing what their area needs and clearly valued this play based, creative, imaginative approach to consultation.

Different age groups were adept at finding less traditional play spaces such as abandoned buildings or graveyards in which to hang out and play, because they could be isolated and away from adult supervision or control. Even more organised play spaces such as skate parks were not always used as intended, often being seen as a general “hang out” space which sometimes excluded young people due to a lack of confidence or skills. The role of the adult within play was an often raised and potentially contradictory concern: at times young people want to be visible and reassured that they are safe, while also valuing privacy. Young people would like opportunities to learn certain skills in order to engage with play spaces, a responsibility which may be more suited to youth and community workers rather than parents or authority figures.

Friends and peers were important in choosing which play spaces to use. Certain ways of playing were identified as commonplace and much more enjoyable if others were present, such as hide and seek in supermarkets and shopping centres. This reinforces the innate importance of play in encouraging the development of intimacy, social and relationship skills. These peer bonds are also a challenge for young people with additional support needs or disabilities, who reported fears about friends “falling out with them” and leaving while outdoors as a barrier preventing them from engaging in play. For these young people many play spaces were simply inaccessible. Bullying and fighting also limited access to play and this was a more obvious concern for neurodivergent young people.

The consultation also sought to identify the particular needs of girls in relation to play. Within the 5-12 age group parks and green spaces were popular places for play, however although they did use the equipment this was more for the opportunities it presented for interaction. As an example, girls talked about how they enjoyed making videos for social media while playing on the equipment or just being with friends. This age group discussed how they would like more options for imaginative or creative play such as den making.



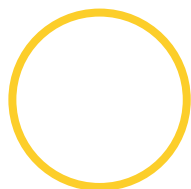
Older girls were vocal in sharing their desire for seating and covered shelters. They wanted spaces where they could “chill out” and relax with friends without necessarily feeling the need to participate in activities. This was a contrast to feedback from boys, who also requested shelters but spoke more frequently about finding fulfilment through active play. In recent years, there has been more research into how the design of our public spaces can exclude different groups because particular needs have not been considered. In urban environments such as towns or cities planners are being encouraged to reflect a greater range of experiences when developing design projects.

Natural environments were still valued venues for play with children reporting climbing trees, exploring forests and building sandcastles however this was very dependent on locality and the age of young people. For the very youngest children, parents saw clear benefits in events and activities being delivered close to home. Older children often wanted to travel for play opportunities and this could be both a shorter or longer distance. A significant barrier for young people in more rural locations was the long delay in receiving their free bus passes. It was an issue raised by CLD workers based in the smaller villages of NE Fife and limited access to play and recreation in larger towns. Travel was needed because often facilities nearby did not meet their needs or interests.

Children did have concerns about safety however these were often different in focus to those of parents. Young people knew the places to avoid because they felt unsafe due to older people drinking or using illicit substances, while adults had a general reluctance to place trust in their children to take appropriate risks. Studies have acknowledged the benefits to children’s neurological, emotional and social development through being able to assess and manage risk. The Scottish Government have noted that: “we have a responsibility to ensure that practitioners, parents and even the children themselves know the benefits that play and risk can bring to their education and wellbeing- we all have a part to play in promoting risk management rather than risk aversion” (Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation guide, (2010), Play Scotland).

Children and young people were very aware of some play facilities not being well maintained and the related impact of vandalism. They expressed frustration if facilities were removed or changed without prior warning and also at the absence of basic resources such as benches or covered shelters to just “sit and be”. A lack of engagement with young people about play provision also led to facilities being rejected. Although venues for play may be available in their area, young people sometimes compare these unfavourably with similar facilities elsewhere. An AstroTurf surface for football or other sports was frequently requested during the consultation.

Finally, play workers acknowledged that there was a definite similarity across the age groups when imagining their “ideal play space”. It contained certain features such as shelter, gym equipment (requested particularly by girls), the opportunity to make fires, food and an option to adapt to different needs. It would be supported in some way by adults so young people could learn skills. Other facilities such as skate parks could be nearby.



1. Aim

This consultation was focused on engagement with children and young people living in Fife to understand their views and needs around existing play provision. Children and young people aged from 0-18 years were invited to participate, with parents or guardians of those in pre-school also contributing their thoughts. The purpose was to record children's opportunities to play in open spaces, identify any barriers to play and how these may be addressed. Obtaining this direct feedback from children and young people is an essential requirement of the Play Sufficiency Assessment, providing material evidence for the Local Development Plan.

1.1 Objectives

- To record and assess the sufficiency of play in open spaces for children and young people (where do they play?, how do they play?, when do they play?)
- To ensure a geographic spread for the consultation covering west, mid and east Fife
- To arrange dates for the consultation with schools and community groups, in order to deliver sessions within large towns/small cities, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation neighbourhoods and rural villages
- To identify potential barriers to play for children and young people
- To involve a range of age groups in the consultation
- To engage under-represented groups in the consultation, for example ensuring that the voices of girls are heard and children or young people with additional support needs or disabilities
- To use appropriate consultation techniques within an open, encouraging, welcoming and non-judgemental setting in order to achieve meaningful responses from children and young people
- To give children and young people an understanding of why their views are important and how their priorities can influence future decision-making
- To produce a report which details how children and young people play, which takes account of other relevant feedback and which can contribute to the Local Development Plan
- To develop a toolkit which establishes a framework for actively engaging children and young people in decision making around play and enables them to influence choices made in their local area. The toolkit can be used by other organisations as appropriate.

1.2 Outputs

- Delivery of a minimum 10 consultation sessions involving 0-5 years, 5-12 years and 12-18 years.
- 9 of these sessions to be geographic with a further consultation engaging children and young people with additional support needs and/or disabilities
- Each consultation to be delivered by skilled, experienced Youth and Play Workers
- Involving a minimum of 10 children or young people in each consultation, unless a specific group with fewer participants was identified
- Delivery of 5 community- based consultations in community settings and 5 in more formal education settings (nursery or school). These numbers may alter depending on responses.
- The 5 community- based consultations to involve 3 within towns and 2 in rural areas, or vice versa depending on responses.
- All 10 consultations to prioritise SIMD neighbourhoods
- Delivery of final report and toolkit

2. Pre Consultation Research

2.1 Policy Background

Fife Council have a legal duty to ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard when preparing the area's Local Development Plan and Local Place Plans. A related requirement is for planning authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children, again through appropriate consultation.

Enabling children and young people to have a voice in decisions which affect them and their community has been recognised within consultation by the Scottish Government:

(...) We believe meaningful engagement must be integral to the process of carrying out play sufficiency assessments. We do not intend to specify how the engagement should take place or what methodology must be used, only to emphasise that we expect engagement to take place as part of the assessment process. In our discussions so far, many stakeholders agreed that children themselves know best where they play and what types of play opportunities suit them best, and so should be engaged in ways so that they can properly and meaningfully participate." (Source: Play Sufficiency Assessments - Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments Regulations: consultation - gov.scot (www.gov.scot))

Active engagement by children and young people is necessary to be fully compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Article 31 states that every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities
- Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children
- Article 12 Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously

A successful Play Sufficiency Assessment must recognise:

- a) The different play opportunities which exist in an region or area, including those spaces not specifically designed and managed for play
- b) The need to identify play opportunities for all ages of children, including equipment or space design suitable for certain age groups
- c) Quality, in particular to what extent children enjoy using a play space and does it support their social and developmental needs. Does the space or equipment add value to a place and is there regular maintenance to a sufficient standard?
- d) Quantity, in relation to the number and variety of available play opportunities in an area and whether these respond to community needs
- e) Accessibility and Inclusion, including how far children travel for play and how spaces can be effectively used by children with diverse needs. (Scottish Government, *ibid*)

In addition Councils and similar bodies can source more detailed demographic data including a breakdown by sex and appropriate protected characteristics. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation information may be included as relevant.

- Definition of Play Spaces

The Scottish Government draft guidance on play sufficiency refers to where children play and what types of play opportunities suit them best but does not include private gardens, indoor play centres, places where there is an entry fee, streets, school grounds, or golf courses, for example. It does include free to use outdoor areas, such as play parks, parks, urban greenspace, woods, and beaches.

For the purposes of this consultation children and young people were asked about outdoor, public access spaces in their area.

- Types of Play Opportunities

Play is about the physical, social and imaginative benefits and a sense of place: equipped play parks, local green space and grassed areas. For young people opportunities have, to date, focused almost exclusively on the needs of boys: e.g. skate parks, multi-use sports areas (ball courts); girls' needs have been overlooked in the main. New research shows children and young people have different needs – they need spaces more akin to public parks with seating areas, climbing objects and toilets, lights, performance spaces. It should also be recognised that in speaking to children and listening to them, we should not rule out any type of space they use for play and recreation even if it does not fit with government or local authority formal typologies – for example, in some locations, cemeteries and public street space may not be actively promoted (indeed, they may be actively discouraged) as play space but children will use these areas which can inform local authorities of the type of spaces and experiences children want to use.

- Fife Context

The Scottish Government have stated that the Play Sufficiency Assessment must be a written report and ScrapAntics were commissioned by Fife Council to carry out the relevant consultation, to identify:

- how, where and when children and young people play, and differences according to age,
- what are the potential barriers to play and how can these be addressed
- whether there is a need to develop alternative play spaces which meet particular needs.

Alongside the report, a toolkit documenting the consultation process will be created which can be shared with other Councils and organisations looking to deliver similar outcomes.

The initial focus is on play sufficiency (what is required in relation to play in Fife) however the Council are keen to offer an ongoing platform for young people to influence decisions about their area.

Evidence highlighting an increased need for suitable play provision has already been forthcoming. Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) facilitated previous consultation with an older 16-25 years age group to understand their priorities and engage them in planning and placemaking. The findings will contribute to the Local Development Plan. Respondents identified the quality, quantity and accessibility of play provision as an issue:

“The most frequently mentioned issue was play and recreation provision for people of all ages. Young people identified a lack of well-maintained facilities for outdoor play, such as play parks... Through data analysis, a correlation emerged between the lack of recreation and entertainment provision for young people and a perceived rise in antisocial behaviour amongst that age group.” In their conclusion, PAS recommended: “the Council consider that every neighbourhood should have an option for play” (Focus on Fife Local Development Plan Youth Engagement Report, (2022), Planning Aid Scotland)

2.2 Evidencing the Value of Play

Play has long been recognised as essential to support and encourage children and young people in their physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive development. It can be critical in building brain structure and enables them to understand how to form attachments, negotiate, take risks and solve problems. Play supports improved communication, language, literacy, creativity and an increased confidence in physical activity as well as stronger, healthier bodies. Children who have opportunities to play are more likely to be proficient in motor skills and able to build resilience to cope with stress and challenges. Play supports children to build their sense of identity and discover their place in the world. The Children's Play Policy Forum noted in 2019 that: "Children need time, permission and space to play...Play is a powerful builder of happy, healthy, capable children. In short, play builds children". Play Scotland recognised in their review of expert opinion and research that:

"Play is one of the most powerful and important elements in children's enjoyment of their childhood, wellbeing, health and development" (Getting it Right for Play, The Power of Play: an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland.)

At a national level recent years have seen an increased understanding and acceptance of the benefits of free play. In 2013 the Scottish Government published their National Play Strategy for Scotland which recognised play as essential to healthy development from birth to adulthood. Scotland's former Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Harry Burns asserted that: "investing in children's play is one of the most important things we can do to improve children's health and wellbeing". Play Scotland themselves had noted the need for this change in approach: "there are many people in positions of power and influence across Scotland who do not consider the provision of play opportunities to be as important as other services, especially at this time of competing demands on relatively scarce resources" (ibid).

Play Sufficiency Assessments are therefore a vital response which ensures the voices and needs of children and young people can be heard. They support the view that

"children must be able to play freely and safely while learning to manage risks. Children should be able to make choices about where, how and when they play according to their age, ability and preference" (Playful Schools: The Power of Loose Parts Play, (2020), Play Scotland).

In their summary of published evidence Play Scotland referenced: "the value of play and play provision to children, their families and communities", at a time when there has been increasing fragmentation of experience within local areas. Changes in how we live our lives and external pressures can lead to a loss of community cohesion. For this reason, the report highlights "in particular, the value of outdoor play and the importance of providing local neighbourhood spaces where children can feel safe and confident to spend time outdoors playing and socialising with their friends" (Getting it Right for Play: The Power of Play: an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland). Outdoor play has wider benefits, with adults also able: "to form new friendships and social networks" while observing their children's play. Outdoor spaces can provide many more opportunities to experiment and be stimulated both physically and mentally. Lester and Russell, (2008, p 13), make this observation citing Kyla (2004): "Where children can range independently, their environment becomes a field of "free action" in which they can follow their own desires and create situations of wonder and uncertainty. An appreciation of the relationship between the nature of play and an environmental field of free action is crucial in designing play friendly neighbourhoods". (Play for a change: play, policy and practice: a review of contemporary perspectives: Summary report, Play England, London)

Other countries have recognised the value of outdoor play and have fully integrated this principle into urban design. In Rotterdam, this ensures; "that all public space is a potential play area and that all new and renovated developments should allow a clearly defined amount of safe, easily accessible, attractive space for children to play" (Getting it Right for Play: The Power of Play; an evidence base, p33). This need for positive play opportunities has arguably never been greater than at present. The Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for so many people, however for children the impact of restrictions and subsequent limited opportunities for interaction has exacerbated concerns about their personal and social development at a crucial stage of their lives. The necessity of children having access to high quality play opportunities and the associated benefits in mitigating the effects of Covid-19 are fully documented in the Play Scotland report ("Playful Schools: The Power of Loose Parts Play, (2020)).

3 Partner Profile

3.1 Who are ScrapAntics?

ScrapAntics assists in facilitating Scotland's circular economy through recycling industry and business waste into valuable tools to stimulate the creative imagination. They have transformed over 100 tonnes of waste from landfill or incinerator into arts and play resources for the Dundee community. A central belief is that creativity is core to rethinking our approach to living in and learning about the world. The organisation's values are community, art, recycling and education, with all profits invested back into work with local people. ScrapAntics provide education in sustainability, social justice, inequalities and alternative economies and have long term partnerships with organisations from all sectors including those providing refugee support.

They deliver creative learning through workshops in both formal and informal education settings. A significant focus for the work is promoting outdoor play which engages children and young people lacking in such opportunities. For the past 3 years Loose Parts Play (LPP) has featured within 35 primary and 2 secondary schools in Dundee. Play workers collaborate with school staff and pupils in using recycled materials to explore learning related to curriculum outcomes.

In 2022, LPP was successfully delivered in 15 schools, reaching 743 pupils through 384 Play sessions. Dundee City Council Education are an important partner, through their continued support of primary and secondary school delivery. LPP is recognised by the Council, teachers and support staff to be a positive tool in improving both curricular attainment and the mental and emotional wellbeing of young people within mainstream education and with complex needs.

The Playful Communities supported project involves engagement with children and families within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 1) areas of Dundee, including consultation to identify the potential barriers to participation and in what ways play is valued. During 2021-22 ScrapAntics delivered 145 hours of community play, totalling 83 sessions and reaching 691 children. These sessions take place in parks and green spaces familiar to local people.

ScrapAntics have previously supported consultation with children as part of the National Planning Framework 4 Consultation and Play Sufficiency Assessment Response. This involved creative exploration of how children viewed their area, and was commissioned by Play Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government to contribute to national planning policy.

More information about the work of ScrapAntics can be found here: www.scrapantics.co.uk



3.2 What is Loose Parts Play?

ScrapAntics are passionate about play and its importance to the development of effective life-skills learning and community cohesion. The organisation's work focuses on how therapeutic play improves the emotional wellbeing and resilience for children and young people across both school and community settings. Loose Parts Play (LPP) involves recycled resources that can be played with, built and broken in a multitude of ways. These include: tyres, plastic tubes, guttering, ropes, cable reels, wheels, wooden pallets, barrels, wooden blocks and planks and an assortment of other objects.

Children and young people use the materials to promote positive interaction and real world learning. Participants are supported to play out lived experiences and to explore different outcomes and solutions. Within school settings teachers consolidate ways to relate these experiences to curriculum subjects. Young people involved in sessions improve transferable problem solving and conflict resolution skills, recognised as essential to successful educational progression and future employment.

Playing with loose parts requires imagination, making it an inherently creative activity. The term 'loose parts' first emerged during the 1970s after the publication of Nicholson's (1971) article 'The Theory of Loose Parts: How Not to Cheat Children'. Nicholson argued that we are all born creative but that formal education and cultural norms restrict the natural urge to invent, explore and discover. In contrast, loose parts or the 'variables' in life such as materials, shapes, smells, fluids, sounds, motions, fire and plants, enable children to 'play, experiment, discover, invent and have fun.' (cited in Playful Schools: The Power of Loose Parts Play, (2020), Play Scotland).

Participants in both school and community settings are encouraged to use the materials to be imaginative in their play, building creative skills by turning often neglected objects into valuable tools for learning and discovery. Casey and Robertson (2019), in their "Loose Parts Play Toolkit" note that LPP is an activity that creates a richer environment for children, allowing them to do what they need to do, to follow their interests and go where their curiosity takes them (ibid). LPP is promoted and enabled as a vital form of health and wellbeing support in parallel to the school curriculum, through the supply of resources, play sessions and training. The work of ScrapAntics, supported by Dundee City Council, has explored the many different positive outcomes of LPP for children and young people. These include improved confidence, teamwork, communication, social skills, educational attainment, curricular engagement and transferable skills.

The role of the play worker in all LPP sessions is to create an environment which offers different types of play experience, enabling children to choose how they play while ensuring expression is located within an atmosphere of safety, tolerance and mutual respect. The Playwork Principles (see appendix) are critical in providing a framework for practice. Through regular participation, it is possible to observe play evolving for children as they follow three defined but complementary stages in their development: familiarity and trust, ownership and independence, achievement and gratification. These are known as the "Foundations of Free Play" ("Playful Schools: The Power of Loose Parts Play, (2020), Play Scotland).

Loose Parts Play increases the choice for children by enabling them to use everyday objects as possibilities within play. Each child will interpret how an object may be used in their own way, for each child is unique. The value we place on an object, or the importance a child affords it has been recognised by psychologist James J. Gibson in his study: "Affordance Theory (1979) (cited in; "Playful Schools: The Power of Loose Parts Play, (2020), Play Scotland). Gibson suggested that an object will have different values and meanings depending on who perceives it. This interpretation is at the heart of Loose Parts Play as children are given the freedom to build according to their own desires, for example a car tyre can be a wheel, part of an obstacle course, something to roll upon or perhaps the foundation of a building.

For these reasons, LPP is especially suitable as a methodology for consultation with children and young people. It enables children to quickly build trust and promotes accessibility; for example by minimising challenges around different languages as participants use the materials to express themselves. For the purposes of this consultation children were able to use the Loose Parts resources to design their "ideal play space". This was not a prescriptive approach as LPP is based on the principle of free play, that which is "spontaneous and unpredictable...for no external goal or reward... something that the child chooses to engage with for no motivation other than the enjoyment of play" (Playful Schools; The Power of Loose Parts Play, (2020)). However, Play Workers understood that for many children building a den or shelter is an instinctive reaction to being presented with LPP resources. This offered an opportunity to introduce the consultation questions in a way which ensured ownership remained with the child.

4 Engagement

It was an important requirement of this consultation for engagement with children and young people to take place in-person. Fife Council had responsibility for delivering an online consultation with children to complement this report. They also accessed open space data and audited the quality of play spaces as supporting evidence for the Play Sufficiency Assessment. This feedback can be requested through Fife Council.

An initial challenge soon presented itself in relation to making contact with schools and community groups across Fife. Sessions needed to be representative of the range of rural, urban and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas within the region. ScrapAntics are established as an organisation using play based approaches in Dundee, however we are less familiar within Fife.

Although a number of sessions were booked quickly, the process became more challenging as time passed. It became apparent that some of the suggested school or community contacts (primarily Head Teachers or Community Learning and Development Workers) were very busy and failed to respond to email and phone requests. Progress was made following the intervention of a local Councillor and our partners at Fife Council.

Within the project proposal it was suggested that delivery would constitute an even spread across the age groups (for example 3 sessions each with 0-5 years, 5-12 years and 12-18 years). There was a recognition that this was likely to change depending on the logistics of facilitation and responses from schools and community organisations.

ScrapAntics were able to deliver eleven consultation sessions in total with different age groups (0-5, 5-12 and 12-18 years) and within both school and community settings. An inclusive session was facilitated involving children with additional support needs or disabilities. Unfortunately, despite arrangements being made with a local school for a girls only consultation, this did not take place due to unforeseen staffing issues. Attempts were made to deliver this session with an alternative school or community group however this proved impossible given the timescale for consultation and report delivery.

While it was disappointing not to be able to facilitate this session we are confident that the voice of girls and young women is adequately represented in the final report. We would recommend that further efforts are made to organise a girls only session. As previously stated, consultation has too often focused on boys needs in relation to play and it is important to enable equality of access to such opportunities.

Engagement in the consultation totalled approximately 151 children and young people across 11 sessions. 6 families also participated in a session with the 0-5 years age group. This provides an average of 13.7 (14) participants per session. This exceeds the agreed target of reaching a minimum ten participants for each consultation and enables us to be confident that the views expressed are representative of young people's needs and concerns.

It should be noted that by definition the consultation engaged children and young people already accessing some kind of recognised provision, whether attending a community group or at school, although a group of young people not regularly attending mainstream education (often called "school refusers") were involved. There may be some different responses from children and young people who do not regularly access organised activities. It was accepted that this kind of engagement was not possible within the limited timeline and expectations for the consultation. It is possible that these voices were captured through the online consultation facilitated through Fife Council.

4.1 Engagement Methods

- 4.1.1 Loose Parts Play Workshops

Play Workers facilitated a total of eleven consultation sessions which were attended by approximately 151 children and young people and 6 families. The final consultation at Buckhaven Community Education Centre involved engagement across the three age groups (0-5, 5-12 and 12-18 years) although the lively nature of this session made it difficult to record numbers. Sessions were delivered in outdoor settings, either using green spaces within the community or school grounds. On occasion delivery moved indoors due to poor weather and one consultation took place inside a community venue. The various locations for this consultation were identified by an Admin Worker with ScrapAntics who contacted schools and outdoor community venues to organise sessions. Local networks are an important resource and ScrapAntics engaged with Fife Council who suggested relevant contacts. The Admin role also included promotion and co-ordination of the project, with a template poster created to be easily adapted and shared with participating schools and community groups (please see appendix for an example).

The chosen locations were decided in consultation with Fife Council to reflect the size and geographic spread of the region, with implementation in west, mid and east Fife. The sessions were delivered in both large towns/small cities and rural villages. There was an emphasis for both school and community consultation on prioritising neighbourhoods recognised as disadvantaged within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Play Workers did take some time to become familiar with play facilities in each consultation area, however the relatively short timescale for project delivery did mean that those workers who already had some knowledge of the Fife region were important in this regard. There were variations in the length of each session depending on the location. Loose Parts Play delivery with schools most frequently takes place for 45 minutes to an hour, reflecting a typical school period. This model was followed for the consultation. Within community based settings play workers had more flexibility and sessions could last for an hour to an hour and a half. When LPP sessions are not open, in other words the same group of children are participating for the whole time, an hour and a half is sufficient time to obtain feedback.

There was no obligation for children to participate in the consultation. It was made clear to staff and parents/guardians that children were able to withdraw from the session at any point and did not have to contribute to the consultation. LPP is child led and it is therefore important that they feel in control of their choices. Nearly all of the children did participate and many expressed sadness when the sessions ended.

There was a similarity in the numbers of children involved per consultation session. Numbers ranged from 17 participants at Cupar Youth Café to 28 pupils at three of the school locations. The exception to this standard was the session at Woodmill High School which involved young people not attending mainstream education provision. It was considered important to obtain information from these young people who may otherwise not have participated in the consultation. The Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations specify the need to consult with children by agreed age groups and this approach was followed in the delivery.

Each consultation was facilitated by a number of play workers with defined roles. A session plan was prepared on all occasions although this was adapted as required. It was decided that one play worker would introduce each session, often using a game to engage the interest of children. An example of this would be the "This or That" game, in which children were able to run to a corner representing a play area or provision in their locality. This enabled play workers to receive some immediate feedback on where children like to play. Two other play workers led the LPP session with children given the freedom to become familiar with the resources in the first instance. A description of the LPP resources has been provided earlier in this report and included larger items such as drainpipes, barrels and pallets, smaller items such as steering wheels or golf balls, and items useful for imaginative and creative play, such as telephones, tarpaulin and chairs. Softer items such as fabric and carpet squares were also available. A full Loose Parts Play resource list can be found in: ("Playful Schools: a toolkit for delivering Loose Parts Play in Covid-19" (2020), Play Scotland)

Play Workers were provided with a set of questions designed to be open and encourage different responses from the children (these consultation questions can be found in the appendix). Play Workers were aware that the questions offered them a framework for the consultation however, sessions should be delivered more informally as is normal for LPP. One play worker took responsibility for leading the consultation, while another ensured there was an audio recording of the entire session. This audio was later transcribed by the Admin Worker as information for the report. A play worker also made note of numbers, emerging themes and challenges or positives associated with the delivery. This approach was deliberately designed to ensure consultation responses could be effectively captured within a busy play session. As has been noted, LPP offers a rich environment for children to explore the creative imagination and many chose to use the materials in building their “ideal play space” or a representation of an area where they enjoyed playing.

The final consultation at Buckhaven Community Education Centre was delivered differently. This was an indoor space with a number of other activities taking place at the venue. ScrapAntics also use the arts as a tool for engagement and we are fortunate that our play team includes a number of creative practitioners able to facilitate small group or 1:1 support with children and young people. For the Buckhaven consultation children under 5 years and of primary age were able to use creative materials to illustrate the spaces where they play and design their own play area, with a number of ideas emerging. The older age groups also participated in this process. There was a lot of noise in the venue which made intensive consultation more difficult however, the images of potential play spaces provide positive documentation of the session.



Play Workers Feedback on the Consultation Process

- At each venue there was a welcoming, kind and positive reaction from both staff and young people. Children did not appear suspicious of the play workers and were very open to discussion and engagement
- It may have been helpful to have more time to become familiar with play spaces in the various locations, although there was an understanding that play workers with local knowledge could assist in this regard
- The majority of young people had not previously been aware of Loose Parts Play and very much enjoyed getting to know the materials and possible uses.
- The excitement at having the materials to play with did make it more challenging to obtain feedback from the younger age group. They really just wanted to be creative in their play. Play Workers adapted session plans to reflect this need.
- Many of the school and community venues were very happy to see children engaged in an interactive activity like LPP. There is a definite need for more similar activities in the region.
- For the early years and P1-P3 age groups the creative approach using arts materials was possibly more successful. Play Workers were able to consult with parents/ guardians of the 0-5 years group however the children enjoyed drawing or making a play space as a literal representation. Many children aged up to P3 children found it challenging to consider and respond to questions, even when adapted for the situation.
- The community based sessions were naturally more informal which enabled feedback to be gathered more easily
- Those sessions with fewer or no teaching or CLD staff involved were more successful in supporting children to share their opinions.
- Sometimes, staff felt the need to intervene or children may have been more reluctant to speak honestly with adults present. The role of the play worker and other adult staff is crucial within play environments. More information about how adult intervention can impact on a child's ownership and independence of play can be found in the earlier referenced report; "Playful Schools: The power of Loose Parts Play, (2020), Play Scotland"
- Play Workers noted that the ideal play spaces suggested by children were limited by the scope of their imagination and strongly influenced by lived experiences. Many children either designed a space which expanded on current resources or was most likely unobtainable, such as a rollercoaster or zoo. Dens, shelters and covered areas were popular and this is of course valuable feedback. The familiarity of the structures built was perhaps to be expected and there is recognition that children require more opportunities for free play following recent major events such as Covid-19 (see "Playful Schools: The power of Loose Parts Play", (2020), Play Scotland" for examples of the creative benefits of play).
- Play Workers observed that many children appeared to play so little in an "unstructured way". Research has indicated that Covid-19 and the lockdowns may be partly responsible for this. There are also sometimes limited play resources in an area. A possibly related fact is that children didn't seem to be passionate or animated about any of the play parks, suggesting a need for more ownership of play by young people
- None of the young people were aware of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which informs PSA. This was true even for young people belonging to a Freedom of Rights group

The consultation sessions were delivered with the following schools and community groups from May to July 2023:

Benarty Community Centre, Lochore

1 x session (8-12yrs), 7 girls, 10 boys
1 x session (12-13yrs), 4 girls, 3 boys
24 participants

Tulliallan Primary, Kincardine

1 x session (nursery), 6 families
1 x session (P1/2),
19 participants

Cupar Youth Cafe

1 x session (12-18yrs), 9 girls, 8 boys
17 participants

Bell Baxter High School, Cupar

1 x session (12-16yrs) (Learners from Department of Additional Support, including wheelchair users)
1 x session (12-16yrs) (Learners with Additional Support Needs)
28 participants

Anstruther Primary School

1 x session (P6), 1 6 girls, 12 boys
28 participants

Woodmill High School, Dunfermline

1 x session (12-16yrs) (school refusers), 2 girls, 5 boys
7 participants

St Agatha's RC Primary School, Leven

1 x session (P4), 15 girls, 13 boys
28 participants

Buckhaven Community Education Centre

1 x session (mixed ages 0-5, 5-12, 12-18 years)
(4 x community based, 7 x schools based)

A consultation session was also arranged with a girls only group at a school in the Kirkcaldy area, however as previously noted this did not take place as a consequence of staffing challenges.

- 4.1.2 Online Consultation with Children

Fife Council also carried out an online consultation to complement the written report. Evidence from this consultation can be found as a separate document available through the Council.

- 4.1.3 Respondents

The total number of people who engaged in the workshops was approximately 151 with the youngest participant being 2 years and the oldest 16 years. This does not include family members participation or numbers for the Buckhaven consultation. The age of the individual participants was gauged through communication with the Project Coordinator or Community Learning and Development Workers in each organisation or contact with Head Teachers within schools. The breakdown of in-person respondents by place, SIMD area, location (urban or rural) and numbers is represented in the table below.

School/Com Group	*SIMD Rating	Area	Participants
Benarty	SIMD1	Rural	24
Tulliallan	SIMD4	Rural	19
Cupar Youth Cafe	SIMD7	Urban	17
Bell Baxter	SIMD8	Urban	28
Anstruther	not SIMD rated	Rural	28
Woodmill	SIMD2	Urban	7
St Agatha's	SIMD4	Urban	28
Buckhaven	SIMD1	Rural	Unspecified

*SIMD1 identified as highest levels of deprivation.

5. Analysis of Consultation Feedback

The questions for the consultation were open and designed to elicit a range of qualitative responses. The format of these questions gave due consideration to the needs of Fife Council as the initiators of this consultation with the key themes as identified with the contract requirements:

Where do children and young people go to play, hang out or take part in physical activity?

Do they use public land or are there other more unexpected locations for play?

How often are public spaces used?

Are there barriers to being outside and how can these be addressed?

Although the consultation aimed to capture the individual voices of children and young people with regard to play, the consultation process and report was also designed to reflect the views of wider communities of place. Documenting ideas and approaches which can bring local people into their play spaces will offer children more access to play, positively impacting the individual and local community through increased social interaction and cohesion.

5.1 Where Do Children and Young People Play?

- Shops and Retail Centres

Some common themes emerged from children and young people regarding favoured spaces to play. Shops and retail centres were often discussed as popular but less typical play spaces due to the possibilities they provided for different types of creative play: 10 of the 17 respondents at Benarty spoke about how the town centre was bigger, with more to explore.

Young people enjoyed playing manhunt, British bulldog and hide and seek within shopping centres.

They could pick out a security guard to hide from and encourage them to chase. Another activity involved getting in and out of every shop, finishing at "Pets At Home" in order to pet the rabbits! This type of play was representative for both age groups at Benarty and in general young people aged 8 years and older from all sessions were often involved. At Cupar Youth Café a third of the young people also volunteered information about playing in supermarkets because it was "entertaining to go and we don't know what else to do". They "liked to hide there" and told lots of stories about hiding in different shops, and "getting stuck". The majority of respondents at Woodmill High School (the boys) spoke about "being kicked out by security" after playing hide and seek in supermarkets. At St Agatha's RC Primary School, 20 of 28 children had played hide and seek, also in supermarkets.

There were some less constructive elements to play in shops and similar outlets. In Cupar a third of respondents (5 from 17) talked about climbing on to the roof of Poundstretcher to "smash and break things without adults seeing them". This theme of relationships between children and adults is something to be returned to later in the report.

- Private Play Spaces

For the young people at different locations it was about finding a private, isolated space with adults largely absent:

"ghost hunting at the graveyard- you can read all the gravestones it's like history. We ken some of the folk. I like that a wee bit reading. Get peace cause it's quiet" (boys and girls aged 12 plus, Benarty).

Abandoned buildings, graveyards and hidden spaces were a recurring theme. At Cupar Youth Café the young people spoke about frequently hanging out at the graveyard; "for 8 hours easily with no Wi Fi no mobiles just having a good time together".

They also used an abandoned children's hospital for play. These places offered opportunities for adventurous play and an element of risk. .At Bell Baxter High School the young people also played in spaces which were "off limits" such as an abandoned house and shed beside a car park. Respondents at Cupar Youth Café spoke about playing on the train tracks, with a greater concern being caught by the police than being hit by a train or electrocuted. Similarly, graveyards were regularly discussed because they provided a space with no adults, safety from older children and additional benefits such as water taps.

Research has recognised that children use play as a way to learn about and manage risk: "it is argued that experiencing the unexpected during play offers children the chance to challenge their physical, emotional and social boundaries...Adult restrictions on children's play can create situations where children will look elsewhere, often to seriously dangerous situations, to get the excitement they might otherwise find through play" (Getting it Right for Play: The Power of Play: an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland)



- Traditional Play Spaces

More traditional play spaces were often mentioned and young people did use these facilities if they were appropriate and the surrounding area was attractive. 15 from 17 young people at Cupar Youth Café spoke about playing in their local park because it has a river, lots of green space and a specific playpark area. The same number used Duffus Park which has no play equipment at all but they weren't concerned about this. As research has indicated, : "Natural environments change over time, offering opportunities for imaginative, creative, dynamic, social and decision-making play" (Getting it Right for Play, The Power of Play :an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland).

At Woodmill High School all 7 participants regularly accessed entry fee provision. They thought the new swimming pool was "really good" as it is Olympic sized and very deep. The school version compared unfavourably and was referred to as "the puddle". At Tulliallan Primary there was a large, grassy area beside the school featuring a skate park which was well used because of the location. The space was easily visible from many of the houses which meant that children were comfortable there and adults felt it was safe for them to use. Children at Tulliallan enjoyed time in nature, with nearly all of the class using the beach and forest to find shells, build sandcastles and climb trees. Both the 0-5 age group and the P1-P2 class said they preferred playing in the forest because "they like climbing trees".

It has been evidenced that the way in which children relate to each other can change depending on whether natural environmental features are present. Equipped play areas can develop a social hierarchy with physically active children dominating, while more creative, imaginative children are visible in nature (ibid, p 26). The skate park was used by all ages for different activities; skateboards, scooters, heeies. Younger children felt safe there even if older children were present.

Skate parks are often considered a popular play space for children and young people. The consultation feedback found a mixed response to play in these venues. At Benarty the facility was well used (15 of the 17 young people chose this as a place they would rather play) with reservations. The younger age group enjoyed it however 12 from 13 young people aged 12-13 years didn't use it:

"too embarrassed and don't know what to do (at skate park), it would be better if we got taught something".

The girls in this age range said they "got a minter (red face) using the equipment cause it's babyish. If we had an adult showing us it would be more official like". At Cupar Youth Café the skate park was used by the majority as "a general hang out space". They would like another one. At St Agatha's RC Primary 15 of the 28 children did use the skate park with skateboards, scooters, bikes and hoverboards.

The use of parks and green spaces often depended on location, resources and accessibility. Lochore Meadows (known by the young people as "the meedies") was used for play by 11 of the 17 participants at Benarty. The reasons given were: safety, more fun, the ability to make a den and stay overnight, the option to play in the middle of the night and go with family in a caravan. A number of the young people aged 12-13 also built a representation of Lochore Meadows as their "perfect play space". They enjoyed "having a muck about in the big play park". They said: "the water sports are good but boring when it's cold" and requested "a harder bike track with dirt jumps". The older 12-13 years age group at Benarty (7 young people) spoke about "going to Lochore Meadows to push each other down slides". The older girls aged 15 wanted more freedom to choose how they used the space, including bringing resources to reduce cost; "we do kinda like it but see what? They have built in BBQ's and you have to buy their own charcoal (that which is provided) (and) no allowed to bring your own that's cheaper". They said:

"I'd feel safer lighting BBQ's and wee fires if somebody older was helping".

The girls in this older age group said that when they do use the play park it is to make Tik Tok videos, dance and push each other down slides. The 8-12 age group spoke about Lochore Meadows "being close but still too far away for them to go to. Although "it's full of loads of activities" they didn't want to hang out there because it's "too cold near the water".

At Tulliallan Primary parents of children attending nursery talked about how the local area had “some parks and woods, not much else to do”. They would “like to see more stuff in the parks, the stuff that is there is boring”, meaning they have to drive to other areas for better parks.

Activities and events were rarely laid on at the local park and only in the summer, so families needed to travel by car to other towns for things to do.

They pointed out that there were practical reasons for families not using the park, such as a lack of toilet facilities. More play resources that didn't require an adult to help would be preferable (the need to push swings or put children on roundabouts).

At Bell Baxter High School there were 19 feeder schools for the one class, so young people all came from different areas. This was also a factor at St Agatha's RC Primary School and in both instances it meant that there was no common local play space. At Bell Baxter, some boys from Freuchie spoke about going to the mountains (the Lomond Hills). The majority used swings and roundabouts at the local park, when it was accessible for them. Children at St Agatha's RC Primary School attended from different parts of Leven, with some having parks nearby and others less so. If they did have a park nearby the children used it to play football (fitness was mentioned by many of the class) and to see friends. Almost all of the young people at Cupar Youth Café did use their local park however 16 of 17 hated the sand and wanted it removed. It was important to them that the swing had been changed and they much preferred the old swing. The slide was “very shaky” and although they wouldn't report this to anyone they were aware of it.

Participants at Anstruther Primary spoke about using Bankie Park a lot. When building their “ideal play space” four of the girls created the tyre swing from the park. The children liked that the park had swings, a flying fox and a roundabout.

The class were very happy with the park and unable to suggest ways in which it could be improved. Four other girls built a picnic area and said they picnic a lot at the park, woods and beach, sometimes with friends but usually with family. It was particularly noticeable at Anstruther that the children attended many organised activities, including horse riding and stock car racing at Cowdenbeath Oval. The majority said they: “were really busy as they went to organised activities, we don't really go out just to hang out”. 13 of 28 said they usually just play at their friends' houses rather than going out.

Five boys said:

*“we don't really hang out together after school because we are inside on our PlayStations.
There are lots of small parks around with swings etc but we are not interested in them”*

The majority of the children in the class at St Agatha's Primary used “the Broom Park” to play. This was also called “Sandy Park” because of a sanded area. As was the case in the feedback from Cupar Youth Café the sand was not welcomed by all: around half of the class of 28 would prefer it to be removed. Generally, the park was enjoyed because it has a tyre swing, slide and climbing frame. Most of the class regularly visited Letham Glen which is about a 15 minute walk from the school. This is a much larger space with a climbing wall and gym section. They visit with their parents.

The consultation at Buckhaven Community Education Centre was indoors. The play workers observed that the local park had very simple play resources and was targeted more at younger children. Nobody was using the space before or after the consultation. The staff within the centre said that they felt embarrassed as it was not well used and funding wasn't available for holiday activities. The skate park four miles away at Leven is always very busy and in a good location on the beach.



- Technology and Play

Technology and access to Wi Fi was a less significant issue than perhaps may have been expected. Both age groups at Benarty said that Wi Fi was not that important for their play space, with some not being able to afford to buy phones or access Wi Fi. Phones were used by parents to track the movements of half of the young people at Cupar Youth Café. Some of the boys at Cupar said it wasn't important to have Wi Fi or a phone as; "they don't want to be contacted unless they choose to be". Similarly, the majority of young people (5 from 7) at Woodmill High School said they were;

"happy to go somewhere without phone service".

Access to a phone was however important for young people at Bell Baxter High School as technology offered a feeling of security for those with limited mobility when outside.

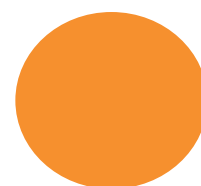
Children at Anstruther Primary School did use their phones, and spoke about "making silly Tik Tok videos of falling off the flying fox or playing on swings (at Bankie Park)". It was noticeable that phone use was much more frequent for the younger age groups. This was possibly unexpected as there is a common perception that older children are the regular phone users. At St Agatha's RC Primary School 20 of the 28 children had phones and took them outside while playing. The majority also appeared to be much more interested in gaming than in playing outdoors. 12 of the children said they were tracked in some way by their parents while outside. Tracking by parents was mentioned by both younger and older children at various sessions, with a general if sometimes reluctant acceptance of the situation. For younger children it was very much related to parental concerns about safety while older children were tracked if they had broken trust in some way.

There is an increasing use of technology to "monitor" where young people are at all times, and research has explored the subsequent impact on family dynamics and opportunities for children to play freely. In the UK, a 2019 survey of 4,000 parents and guardians found that 40% used real-time GPS location tracking on a daily basis for their children (childcare.co.uk). The decision to track children is not always consensual. Sonia Livingstone is a professor of social psychology at the London School of Economics and has written extensively on children's rights in our digital age (Parenting for a digital future: how parents' hopes and fears about technology shape children's lives, (2020), New York: Oxford University Press). She has commented about how little we understand the effects of tracking:

"Children have always had times in which they were unobserved and playing outside and generally at risk and coping. We have a crisis in mental health, so it may all be linked that they're not developing those everyday habits of resilience... we have no idea really what it is to grow up when you are constantly observed (through parental tracking)"

(Honey, let's track the kids: the rise of parental surveillance, 1 May 2022, The Guardian)

She argues that while it is understandable that parents are concerned for the safety of their children, relationships may become damaged and autonomy threatened. Tracking apps may "lead children to make riskier choices or get clever about evading detection" (The parents who track their children, 8 Nov 2021, bbc.com). It is possible that given the growing importance of technology within our everyday lives, how children and young people play may change significantly in the future.



- Play in Other Towns

The need or desire to travel for play opportunities was significant for the older age groups. The 12-13 age group at Benarty used bus passes to travel to Dunfermline, the nearest large town. They spoke about spending approximately 6 hours in Dunfermline city centre and this was arranged through social media. It was also 10 minutes on a bus to travel to Lochgelly. As previously mentioned, travelling short distances into town to play or hang out at the shops was common for the older age groups at Cupar Youth Café and Woodmill High School. Young people from Woodmill High School sometimes travelled in a group for swimming at Carnegie Leisure Centre in Dunfermline or to the beach at Leven. It was remarked that if a number of young people were going to the swimming "they will hold us outside before letting us in, they check us and make us wait due to behaviour". For the young people at Cupar Youth Café there was an issue with access to bus passes which restricted travel out with the town. There appears to be a backlog preventing young people in NE Fife from receiving passes.

A CLD worker supporting the group noted that the free bus pass scheme doesn't seem to be delivered as effectively in smaller communities, where they probably need it more.

For younger children there was a need for play facilities to be closer to hand as they were more reliant on parents to take them places. More of this younger age group accessed organised activities and were more likely to play indoors, sometimes as a result of parental concern.

It was noticeable that the children from rural locations were more likely to attend organised play provision.

This may be related to the background and social status of families and is discussed in previous research: "one study showed that children living in a disadvantaged housing estate spent much of their time playing outside with their friends in the local neighbourhood", as opposed to peers from other social groups. (Getting it Right for Play: an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland).



5.2 What Play Facilities Would Children and Young People Like in their Area?

- Popular Choice: Seating/Covered Areas

Everyone in the 8-12 age group at Benarty built a den with the LPP materials. They were very aware of the lack of benches and asked for somewhere to just "sit and be". The older girls said:

"see if they had picnic benches we could just sit and chill no fags or drink. We could be seen from home, my maw would feel better knowing she'd see us all and the drinking belters can hide in the woods"

There was a recognition that a lack of covered or sheltered areas was an issue for all ages. At Cupar Youth Café young people built a really good sitting area for relaxing. Interestingly, they preferred circular areas for seating rather than facing each other. Some were uncomfortable with direct eye contact. Covered structures were also built by the majority of young people at Bell Baxter High School, "so we can play out when it is raining". It is possible to make a correlation between the desire to play or hang out in abandoned buildings (popular with many of the participants in this consultation) and the shelter such spaces provide.

MANY OPTIONS

QUIET SPACE

FOOD AVAILABLE

SKATE PARK/FOOTBALL PITCH ALONGSIDE

SOMEWHERE COVERED/SHELTERED TO SIT

GYM EQUIPMENT

WELL MAINTAINED

ART SPACE

NO SAND

CONNECTION TO ANIMALS

PLACE FOR FIRE MAKING/BBQ

SUPPORTED BY ADULTS WHEN NEEDED

CHANGEABLE/ADAPTABLE

BENARTY, (12-13):

- ASTROTURF
- BASKET SWING
- MULTI USE PITCH FOR FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL ETC
- GYMNASTIC EQUIPMENT (GIRLS)
- OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOL (WITH SOLAR COVER TO HEAT)

BENARTY, (ALL AGES):

- MORE FOOTBALL PITCHES
- CAMPING AREAS
- COVERED SHELTERS

BENARTY (8-12:)

- PICNIC BENCHES
- PLACES TO SIT

TULLIALLAN:

- VERY HAPPY WITH FACILITIES JUST IMPROVE THEM. DEVELOP ONE REALLY GOOD PARK WITH LOTS OF FACILITIES

TULLIALLAN, (PARENTS:)

- MORE ORGANISED ACTIVITIES
- EVENTS / IMPROVED FACILITIES (TOILETS, PLAY RESOURCES THAT DON'T REQUIRE AN ADULT)

CUPAR YOUTH CAFÉ:

- PLACES TO SIT
- CIRCULAR SEATING
- ANOTHER SKATE PARK
- RESOLVE TRAVEL ISSUE WITH BUS PASSES

BELL BAXTER HIGH SCHOOL

- COVERED SHELTERS
- SPACE WHERE NOISE CAN BE DEADENED
- SUPPORT TO ACCESS PLAY SPACES

ANSTRUTHER PRIMARY SCHOOL:

- GO-KART TRACK
- GIANT SLIDE
- OUTDOOR POOL (HEATED)
- ELECTRIC SCOOTERS WE COULD RENT (GIRLS)
- TRAMPOLINE PARK

WOODMILL HIGH SCHOOL:

- PARKS EASIER TO ACCESS BY WALKING
- MORE ABANDONED OR EMPTY PLACES TO EXPLORE (ADVENTURE)
- EASIER ACCESS TO ASTROTURF IN SCHOOL GROUNDS

ST AGATHA'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

- FOOTBALL PITCH (CURRENT PITCHES ARE QUITE RUN DOWN)
- ROPES TO MAKE TREE SWINGS
- ZOO (ANIMALS USED TO BE IN SOME PARKS)
- LOOSE PARTS PLAY EQUIPMENT IN ONE OF THE PARKS
- BIG FLOOR TRAMPOLINE
- IMPROVED PLAY FACILITIES WITH MONKEY BARS AND A HAMMOCK

BUCKHAVEN:

- HUMAN SLING
- STATUES
- SWINGS
- OUTDOOR GYM MATS
- TREES
- SAFE PLACE TO BUILD FIRES
- SLIDES AND MONKEY BARS

WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE PLAY:

BENARTY,

8-12:

SKATE PARK	X 15
PLAY PARK	X 12
COUNTRY PARK	X 11
TOWN CENTRE	X 10
GRAVEYARD	X 7
STREET	X 2

BELL BAXTER HIGH SCHOOL:

LOCAL PARK PLAY FACILITIES (SWINGS, ROUNDABOUTS),
GO TO LOMOND HILLS,
AN ABANDONED HOUSE,
SHED BESIDE A CAR PARK

ANSTRUTHER PRIMARY SCHOOL:

LOTS OF SMALL PARKS IN AREA NOT USED BY
CHILDREN,
BANKIE PARK IS WELL USED,
VISIT HARBOUR/BEACH,
CHILDREN OFTEN ATTEND ORGANISED
ACTIVITIES OR PLAY INDOORS

BENARTY,

12-13:

HIDE AND SEEK IN SHOPS
MAKING TIK TOKS IN PARKS (GIRLS),
ASTROTURF IN SCHOOL GROUNDS,
LOCHORE MEADOWS TO PUSH EACH OTHER DOWN SLIDES (GIRLS)

WOODMILL HIGH SCHOOL:

CALAISMUIR WOOD FOR BIKE TRACK,
ABANDONED BUILDINGS/ARMY BARRACKS
FOR HIDE AND SEEK,
SHOPS FOR HIDE AND SEEK,
TRAVEL TO DUNFERMLINE,
LEVEN

TULLIALLAN:

LARGE GRASSY AREA NEAR SCHOOL WITH SKATE PARK,
CLIMBING TREES IN FOREST,
GOING TO BEACH

CUPAR YOUTH CAFÉ:

LOCAL PARKS,
ISOLATED SPACES (GRAVEYARD, ABANDONED BUILDINGS),
TRAIN TRACKS,
HIDE AND SEEK IN SHOPS

ST AGATHA'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL:

HIDE AND SEEK IN SUPERMARKET,
BROOM PARK,
SKATE PARK,
LEVEN POOL,
BEACH,
LETHAM GLEN (WITH PARENTS)

BUCKHAVEN COMMUNITY CENTRE:

LEVEN SKATE PARK

0-5 YEARS:

PARENTS OFTEN TRAVEL FOR ACTIVITIES,

WOULD LIKE MORE PLANNED EVENTS FOR FAMILIES IN
LOCAL PLAY/GREEN SPACES

5-12 YEARS:

PLAY CLOSER TO HOME IF FACILITIES ENGAGE THEIR INTEREST,

MORE LIKELY TO ATTEND ORGANISED ACTIVITIES

12-18 YEARS:

HAPPY TO TRAVEL SHORTER OR LONGER DISTANCES,

MORE LIKELY TO PREFER ISOLATED SPACES

5.3 When Do Children and Young People Play?

As we will see in the following section parental concern about their safety while out playing was mentioned often by children and young people. This had a consequential impact on when they were able to play. 17 of 28 children at St Agatha's RC Primary School did say they were allowed to go out to play by themselves and this was the case during the week and at weekends. They needed to be home by 8.30/9pm. At Woodmill High School there is an Astroturf pitch which the class teacher insisted is always open after school for pupils to use. This was disputed by the young people who said they had to climb over the fence for access. The participants did use this space (as well as travelling into town or hanging out in an abandoned building) and stayed out until between 6 and 8pm in the evening.

The play workers noted that following the consultation at Benarty Community Centre there were very few children or young people visibly playing, other than a small group of three beside some trees near the centre. From the feedback given it is likely the young people were elsewhere however the consensus among participants at Benarty was that 8pm was the latest time to be out, on a school night. They said this often changed during holiday periods, with less pressure to be home at a certain time.

Almost all of the young people attending the consultation sessions said that parents often prevented them from playing or had concerns about them being outside.

At Anstruther Primary School the majority of the children only played outside during the week after school and for a limited time. Weekends were largely for organised activities with pupils saying they were "too busy" to be playing outside. A common response from the children at this session was that parents do not allow them out to play because they think it is unsafe.

It was noticeable from children's feedback at the Tulliallan Primary School session that these worries about safety were largely absent. The only "no go" area was a dam in the woods, however the primary school children were content to find other places to climb trees and play. The presence of a large, communal grass area near to the school seemed to reassure both parents and children. The pupils all felt comfortable walking or using a scooter to school and there were no set time limits on when they could play.



54 Barriers to Play

- Safety; Relationships with Adults

At Cupar Youth Café the young people spoke about their local park and how happy they were with it, but there were also “lots of drunk people” using the space and “they were quite scary”. Half of the respondents at Cupar were tracked by parents on their phones, which limited opportunities to just hang out at certain places. As mentioned previously, this was largely a trust issue; those young people who had not broken their parents trust were not tracked.

The young people were more concerned about adults they didn't know shouting at them or calling the police (for example when playing in the graveyard) than any dangers of the space or possible disrespect for the dead. They want play spaces without adults being present.

Young people at Woodmill High School talked about the local Calaismuir Wood which has a bike track made by some of the people who now use it. The woods are “full of junkies” with a lot of people “on stuff” if you know where to look for it. The young people spoke about some areas feeling unsafe because “there are lots of older people hanging around”. One boy said he only goes to the woods with his older brother and his brother's friends, without them he wouldn't feel safe.

There was also discussion about the woods which are a 15- 30 minute walk from Tulliallan Primary School. These are used in a similar way to those at Benarty and near Woodmill High School, with older children drinking. It was noticeable however, that parents were making the choice about whether their children would be safe in this environment. One father said that he used to go there as a teenager to drink and it is still used in this way, but he wouldn't want his child to play there. All of the parents spoke about how “we can't let them go and do that (play) nowadays”. Safety was very much the concern of the parents rather than the children.

This was a common theme during the consultation sessions. Many of the young people talked about parents not letting them out to play, including almost all 28 children at Anstruther Primary School. The majority of children at the school said they don't go to the beach as they are not allowed; it's not safe so their parents forbid it. The play workers were interested to see how adult perceptions of “safety” sometimes prevented children from play. During some sessions children would speak about a more positive adult role, for example asking about someone who could teach them to light BBQ's or learn how to skate. For adults, there appeared to be a general reluctance for their children to be outside playing because of the imagined dangers.

The adult role within play was complex, with young people also keen to have play spaces without adults present. It may be that the adult role is more that of a youth or community worker who is there for advice and support if needed but is not an “authority figure”.



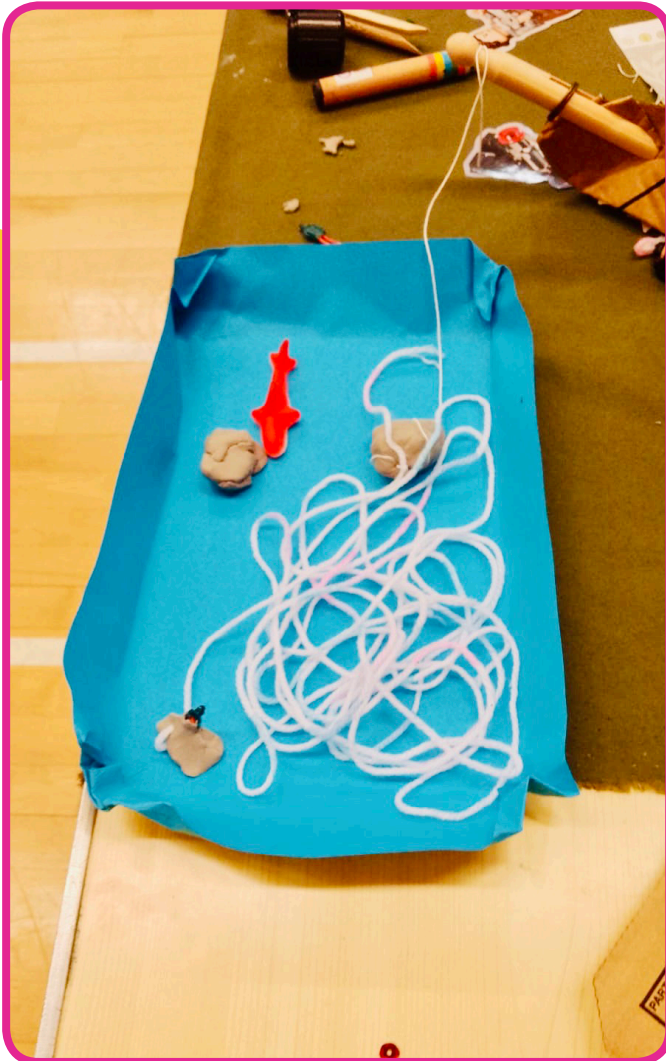
- Safety: Peer Relationships

A recurring theme from a number of the consultation sessions was interactions between older and younger children. 15 of 17 young people at Cupar Youth Café had experienced harassment from their peers, including bullying and fighting. A high proportion were neurodivergent and it was the play workers observation that this type of smaller scale bullying was more commonly experienced by young people in this position.

The young people knew which areas to avoid because they were afraid that fighting may take place.

This was a barrier to accessing certain places to hang out or play: "oh yeah I have been fighting with them, my family has had a lot of trouble with the police" (girl at Cupar Youth Café).

The large grassy area beside the community centre at Benarty was avoided by the young people, despite being liked. There are usually older children on motor/dirt bikes there. Both age groups mentioned drugs, vapes, bullying and fighting as reasons to avoid this space, which is located just out of view of the centre. Similarly, both the older and younger age groups didn't use the woods because older children were smoking, drinking and making fires there; "I suppose we could use the woods but it's a wee bit scary" (older boys and girls at Benarty). In the woods the children could hear things but not see anything, which meant they avoided entering.



- Facilities

The young people at Cupar Youth Café talked about how the football pitch in the local park becomes largely unusable during the winter months. There is often a lot of rain and the middle of the pitch turns very muddy. A local slurry pit was known by half of the young people and this prevented play in a nearby forest because "it smells so bad". At Benarty, girls in the 12-13 age group talked about how they used to use gymnastic equipment in the school grounds, however it was removed for a car park. They were unimpressed by some of the existing play facilities, such as the basketball/football/multi use space. This was made using concrete and gravel and they would prefer Astroturf: "it's a rubbish space and not fit for purpose". They mentioned the larger multi use court with Astroturf at Lochgelly as an example of a positive play space; "If we could just have a bigger one with nets over the top we'd stop losing our ball all the time, older ones will grab our ball and run away" (girls aged 12 at Benarty). The younger 8-12 age group at Benarty said that parents were concerned about safety at Lochore Meadows. A young boy aged 15 had drowned there the previous summer and parents still felt it was unsafe near the water. At Anstruther Primary School it was mentioned that the High School did have an Astroturf area, however this was locked at night. This was a repeated frustration for young people. The children spoke about climbing the fence to access it, as at Woodmill High School. At Anstruther Primary School children spoke about the football pitch at Waid Academy which they would like to use. However, this was also locked at night meaning they had to climb the fence. There is a clear interest in accessing some of these existing play facilities.

The lack of seating or covered shelters was a regularly raised concern: "I look after my maw so I don't get out much. She's pure daft on the shops but it would be nice if we had somewhere to actually sit outside like a wee picnic bench, there's nowhere to just sit and blether. She can watch me play and I'd keep an eye on her, it's pointless in winter cause there's no shelter. She canny walk good so I'd like that" (boy, aged 13 at Benarty). At Bell Baxter High School the majority of the young people built covered areas with the LPP materials so they could play outside when it is raining. The weather was also identified as a reason for not playing outside, with children at Anstruther Primary School speaking about staying inside if it was too hot or because of the wind and rain. Access to a covered shelter would possibly encourage more use of play spaces.

The 8-12 age group at Benarty built a number of dens with LPP materials. One of these was a giant greenhouse inside a park that was closed at night so "it couldn't get trashed". They were very aware that

"people ruin things, stuff gets broken, stuff gets burnt"

They knew that there were no benches or bins in their area because they get burnt. Young people at Woodmill High School talked about Calaismuir Wood (Known locally as "Kellas") being "full of litter all the time". One boy spoke about being in the woods when a bin was set on fire, creating an explosion. Wheelie bins are "always" getting set on fire. They also said that an Astroturf was available in Dunfermline and used by 12-16 year olds, however this was damaged. Ensuring that play spaces and resources are maintained frequently and effectively would possibly improve perceptions and engagement. As stated previously the young people at Cupar Youth Café were very aware when equipment (a swing and a slide) was changed or damaged; "If the environment is not properly cared for it gives children the impression that adults do not care about their play and can contribute to them feeling excluded and marginalised" (Getting it Right for Play, The Power of Play: an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland). Sometimes the design of play resources can improve social cohesion by bringing communities together for a shared purpose:

"It is also suggested that good play provision can reduce anti-social behaviour, vandalism and crime, possibly through offering children alternatives, and play provision can support local economies through providing jobs and volunteering opportunities"

Getting it Right for Play, The Power of Play: an evidence base, (2011) Play Scotland



Parents of children aged 0-5 at Tulliallan Primary School raised other concerns around maintenance and planning. For some the lack of toilet facilities was a barrier to using the park, and they enjoyed organised events and activities in the space but wanted more of them. Previous research has recognised that children often prefer play spaces closer to home and distance was identified as a potential barrier; “we are not allowed to go to Lochore Meadows without an adult” (8-12 age group, Benarty). Some young people found the play areas closer to them lacked challenge, excitement and facilities:

“Sometimes I go to the little park down the street but its not got much to do in it. It’s boring, it’s just like a big empty field”
(boy, Anstruther Primary School)

There has been an absence of significant research into the needs of girls and young women with regard to play provision. It is certainly true that sometimes girls needed encouragement to participate in this consultation, however in different locations feedback did offer evidence of facilities not always meeting their needs. The older group at Benarty spoke about “sneaking into the school grounds to use gymnastic equipment” because this was what they enjoyed and the available provision didn’t interest them. Girls often talked about making Tik Tok videos and dancing while in play parks rather than using the available equipment;

“we go to Bankie Park or each others houses and make Tik Toks” (girls at Anstruther Primary School)

The comments of one 16 year old girl at Woodmill High School were reflective of these different interests: “my social life is at the dance school, that’s where all my friends are...I don’t really go out to hang out”. Older girls also wanted spaces where they could just sit and talk, while feeling safe. Some of these concerns around how urban spaces are often designed and built by men to reflect their own experiences have been discussed by Leslie Kern in her book “Feminist City”.

Kern emphasises how the planning of town and city spaces can exclude various societal groups, however the ideas are transferable to other, rural locations. She outlines how the failure to be inclusive creates interconnected barriers for girls, women and people of marginalised genders (Verso (2016), London and New York). Other research by Bird (2007) has considered the inherent bias within equipped play spaces. (Natural Thinking: Investigating the links between the Natural Environment, Biodiversity and Mental Health, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).

Using traditional play equipment can favour more physically able or active children and potentially boys rather than girls.

This PSA consultation has supported the view that girls often prefer different, more creative approaches to play (which may still involve using play equipment) or simply areas where they can relax. Their approach to play is generally non-competitive and non-hierarchical.



- Accessibility

The young people at Bell Baxter High School had particular barriers due to their physical or mental wellbeing, and were very open about this. They were often reliant on other people to take them to places, or to be with them when outdoors: "sight loss stops me because I need supported",

"being in a wheelchair stops me- play spaces are not accessible"

"mental health- people stress me out". One girl had dyspraxia and was in chronic pain, which made her feel vulnerable. She spoke about her dependence on friends to take her out and her worries that they may "fall out with her" and leave her on her own. The young people found it difficult to form friendships as they all came from different areas, and it was so important in enabling them to play. One girl aged 16 spoke about having to play with younger children.

Many were concerned about dropping, losing or damaging their phone while playing, because they have limited mobility and a working phone is essential in case of emergency.

This returned to the theme of someone needing to support them in order to play outside. This feedback is reflective of other research indicating that "disabled children can be as keen to play outdoors as others, to make choices and to socialise with friends, but many feel they will be unsafe or bullied if they go out in their local neighbourhoods" (Getting it Right for Play: The Power of Play: an evidence base, (2011), Play Scotland). Families of children with disabilities or additional needs may also be poorer, increasing inbuilt inequalities and access to play opportunities.

The young people often had one or more of ADHD, global delay, disability or autism. For these young people loud noises can be very concerning and they were worried about sounds in play spaces:

"(I would like) an underground play space, like a bunker where noises would be deadened" (girl, aged 15)

One girl said she enjoyed going to a forest near her house to climb trees. The forest was usually quiet which is good because she didn't like being in busy places. Some interesting research has been developed in Malmo, Sweden around creating "cultural sound zones", where planners and designers of public spaces consider how sound can be integrated to benefit all members of the community ("Sounding Care in Malmo's Cultural-Industrial Sound Zone, no 2, vol 8, 7 June 2023, Mediapolis). Closer to home, the Welsh Government have produced guidance to reflect on how sound can have different impacts on our communities and how it has a role in placemaking ("Noise and soundscape action plan, 2023-28"). How we make our communities accessible and inclusive for everyone has become increasingly important as noise continues to be seen as a divisive issue.



- Travel/Finance

As previously discussed, there appears to be a significant issue with young people in the NE Fife area receiving their free bus passes. Without these young people were restricted in terms of travel out with the Cupar area. The young people at Cupar Youth Café had an awareness of age discrimination and some had experienced bullying from adults while travelling on the bus. Young people at Woodmill High School talked about the Fife cards (passes) being checked by bus drivers "to make sure it's your own card". Not everyone has one because they were not yet 16 and therefore without a National Insurance number, passport or other ID.

Young people were willing to travel into town centres or other nearby locations by bus.

Popular choices were Dunfermline, Lochgelly and Glenrothes to hang out (Benarty groups) and Dunfermline and Leven (Woodmill High School). The barrier was sometimes a financial one as for the 12 plus age group of young people at Benarty as anything they wanted to do in Dunfermline required money. For younger age groups the choice was with the parents. Children at Anstruther Primary School travelled with parents to Kinneuchar and Cowdenbeath for organised activities, such as horseriding and the Racewall. This could indicate that financial impediments to play were possibly less prevalent in this area of Fife. Letham Glen was a common destination for families of children at St Agatha's RC Primary School. At Tulliallan Primary School the parents spoke about needing a car if they wanted things to do with their children: "it's ok here, but there's not much". The requirement to have access to a car was clearly a potential barrier. At the Buckhaven consultation parents of young children spoke about; "needing cars to get to decent parks", an example given was the space in Leven.



6. Developing Ownership: A Possible Model for Involving Children and Young People in Decision-Making

The consultation feedback reflected the sense of a divide between adults and children regarding access to play. Children and young people often perceived parents to be “preventers”, reducing opportunities for them to be outside and creating barriers, often focused on the issue of “safety”. The adult role was seen as more positive if travel was needed as they could transport children to other play locations or to organised activities.

Young people were very excited to be asked their opinions about play and for their thoughts and ideas to be taken seriously by adults (in this instance the play workers). The consultation offered a chance for new experiences and an alternative to more destructive behaviours: “thank you so much for coming tonight, if you hadn’t been here I would have been out getting into bother” (boy, aged 12-13 years at Benarty).

Participants had many interesting and achievable ideas for developing play spaces which often involved incorporating more challenge in the design of facilities and an increased awareness of local needs and interests. It would be helpful to consider how to effectively harness the enthusiasm displayed by these young people in order that their voice continues to be heard.

There are many different potential models to engage children and young people in decisions about their area and play facilities. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation supported an innovative research project which documented the experiences of five community groups directly involved in the development of local play areas (“Neighbourhood play and community action, (2006), Joseph Rowntree Foundation”). The process led to the creation of a toolkit for improving public play spaces and services for children and young people. It was recognised that finding ways to sustain the participation of both adults and children in the planning and delivery process was essential to project success. Evaluations noted the need to

“be creative in how children are consulted and involved and recognise that children can be at the centre of the consultation process rather than adults”
(Neighbourhood play and community action, (2006), Joseph Rowntree Foundation)



In one area a “children’s play focus group” was initiated using the expertise of an external agency, with participants identified through local schools and families. Young people involved in youth or community work provision could equally participate.

The focus group complimented the adult steering group: “The children talked about things they would like to change in their area to help them play. They also compiled a list of things they wanted the adult steering group to consider in partnership with themselves” (ibid, p28). This collaborative approach reduced potential barriers between age groups and misunderstandings, as well as ensuring decisions were representative of those who actually use play provision. Another project agreed that children themselves would carry out consultations in partnership with adults around new communal play opportunities. The basis for this was again ownership by young people but also; “opportunities for children and adults to work together and create a sense of belonging to the community” (ibid, p28).

There were various original methods employed to support young people to remain actively involved in decision-making structures. The main aim always remained developing play spaces, however environmentally themed activities, fun days in local parks, new after-school clubs, play schemes, mural design projects and trips to other places to find out more about the value of play accompanied this process. The outcomes were positive: “These activities maintained cohesion...interest in the toolkit process and helped build the groups’ confidence because they created a sense of achievement. Some of the activities had a direct impact on the reduction in complaints from adult community members because the children were participating in activities organised by the community members” (ibid, p15).

The inherent value in this type of approach to young people’s engagement is the implicit understanding (evidenced through this consultation) that

Children and young people’s use of public space is often contested, whether by other adults, their peers, parents or sometimes local authorities.

Consensus building is therefore a necessary part of any successful longer term participation by this age group.

A Development Officer post was funded to provide ongoing support to all of the projects. The most successful projects focused on a multi-agency approach with local authorities providing essential support and information to guide progress. This included local councillors as well as planning authorities. It also minimised some of the challenges faced by communities involved in the toolkit projects, which included one local authority deciding to build a new playground without consulting the steering group or young people. Identifying the appropriate person or lead agency to act as a “community champion” was invaluable, they: “paid attention to process as well as outcome, making sure the pilot project steering groups were supported and encouraged” and “would have a clear commitment to implement any actions needed, facilitate the groups and hold the vision” (ibid, p11). A strong champion was able to publicise the project effectively and influence partnership working. The role included enabling the representation of young people in decision-making structures.

There are already Community Learning and Development workers based in different localities who may be suited to this type of role, or at least in supporting engagement by different age groups. Project evaluations highlighted how, in addition to the Development Officer: “it would have been useful to have access to a local development worker who had knowledge of local issues and the local area” (ibid, p12).

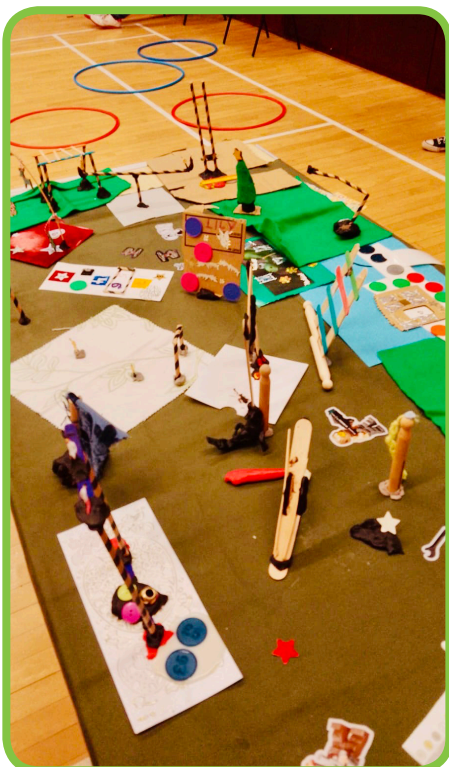
7. Conclusion

The consultation identified several core themes impacting on children's and young people's play. There were concerns around the design of play spaces which too often did not seem to take account of the needs of those who would be using them. This included worries about accessibility but also a lack of challenge in the design, which failed to keep young people stimulated. Young people spoke about enjoying discovering non-traditional play spaces which enabled an element of risk to enter their play. There was a recognition that such spaces will be used and what is important remains ensuring young people remain safe. Although young people do want these more isolated spaces they are also looking for supervised activities which support them to develop skills.

Traditional, more established play spaces such as play parks were still used, although certainly for older children this may not be as originally planned. Young people often found other forms of play in skate parks, play parks and similar equipped spaces. An opportunity exists to engage young people in the process of redesigning these spaces to reconnect more fully with the communities who will use them. There are possibilities to reimagine how we view play in order to create common ownership of spaces. Too often during the consultation young people would speak about feeling that they were excluded from play areas, whether through parental concern, poor design or fears about older adults and children. Well-designed play spaces can support increased social cohesion and improved family dynamics. As evidence for this, some families (adults and children) involved in the consultation talked about valuing their local park space because it was easily accessible and visible from their homes.

Play facilities were sometimes poorly maintained and this had a subsequent impact on how young people perceived them. There was an acceptance that equipment would be damaged and not repaired. If local authorities do not value the facilities enough to look after them why should young people engage?

Finally, there were some practical barriers affecting opportunities for young people to play. Free bus passes were not easily accessible for young people in smaller villages. This should be an issue which is resolvable by local authorities. In these more rural locations it was often necessary to travel for more varied or exciting play opportunities. For many families this meant being able to drive or having access to a car.



7.1 Actionable Recommendations

This is a moment of significant opportunity for children and young people across Fife. They have contributed their thoughts and ideas to a document which will help to inform future planning of play provision by the local authority. Now is the time to be ambitious through involving these young people and others across the region in meaningful engagement around play space design.

Past developments elsewhere aimed at putting communities in control of transforming play provision have recognised the crucial role children and young people have in the process. Many of the suggestions young people have made in this consultation to improve their play experience could be incorporated into locally led projects which have an understanding of community needs. Young people have requested better designed play spaces closer to home, opportunities to learn new skills such as fire making or how to skate, more consideration of the different needs of girls and those with disabilities and better relationships with adults in their area. Each of these actions can be delivered through community led initiatives which bring together adults and children to create collaborative approaches to play space design.

In order for communities to be able to facilitate this type of place based development local authorities will need to offer sustained support as key partners with the experience and contacts required. Maintaining the interest of children and young people will be vital to successful delivery, and could be achieved through youth or community activities, regular family events in spaces, new play opportunities such as play schemes or visits to other places to explore the idea of play. This could include an exploration of successful models in other countries aimed at place based play development.

Continued consultation will be the first step in successfully meeting young people's expectations. If adults and children are included and supported to lead on play provision, there will be notable benefits through improved connectedness, increased social interaction and cohesion and the promotion of positive physical and mental wellbeing for communities.



Appendices

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Playwork Principles

1. All children and young people need to play. The impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

2. Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

3. The prime focus and essence of playwork is to support and facilitate the play process and this should inform the development of play policy, strategy, training and education.

4. For playworkers, the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult led agendas.

5. The role of the playworker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.

6. The playworker's response to children and young people playing is based on a sound up to date knowledge of the play process, and reflective practice.

7. Playworkers recognise their own impact on the play space and also the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker.

8. Playworkers choose an intervention style that enables children and young people to extend their play. All playworker intervention must balance risk with the developmental benefit and wellbeing of children. (Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group, Cardiff 2005. Endorsed by SkillsActive, Sector Skills Council for Playwork, 2005)

Play Sufficiency Project - Questions

5-12 years, 12-18 years and parents/guardians of children aged 0-5 years consulted.

1. Can you give us some examples of where you go to play or hang out?

Follow up: What kind of activities do you like to do when outdoors? Are the activities you enjoy usually indoors or outdoors?

2. Is going outdoors for play or other activities something you do often?

Follow up: Does it change at all during the week or school holidays?

We would like to ask you about play facilities in your area.

These are play parks, grassed areas or spaces such as skate parks where children, young people and families can go to play.

3. Do you think your area has play facilities that you/your friends or families want to use?

If so, what kind of facilities do you enjoy? If not, what would you like to see in your area?

4. Is there anything which can prevent you from going outdoors to play or take part in other activities?

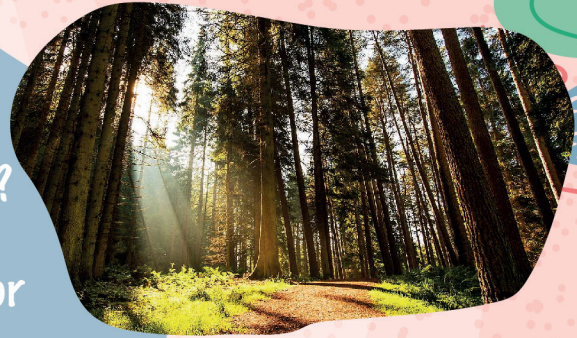
Prompts: Safety at night, facilities too far away/lack of suitable facilities, family concerns, anti-social behaviour etc

5. How do you feel when you are outdoors playing or taking part in activities on your own or with family and friends? Do you prefer to be with other people or by yourself?

(Here responses may indicate how play or activities improve connectedness, increase social interaction and cohesion and promote positive physical and mental wellbeing for children, young people and communities)

Free play session!

- Where does your family play?
- What would you like to see in your area?
- Are there any barriers which stop you or your family from playing outdoors?



ScrapAntics is running a free play session as part of a children's consultation commissioned by Fife Council.

Tulliallan Primary School
Nursery Class

Thursday 8th June

3pm - 4pm

Only limited spaces,
please book through the nursery.
Completely free,
all materials provided.

 ScrapAntics
creative recycling
www.scrapantics.co.uk

Loose Parts
PLAY

 Fife
COUNCIL

A large rectangular area with a teal border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

Play Sufficiency Assessment Report:
**How Children and Young People
View Play Provision in Fife**

ScrapAntics CIC on behalf of Fife Council 2023

To find out more about ScrapAntics and what we do,
please visit our website or get in touch
www.scrapantics.co.uk | info@scrapantics.co.uk

