

EASTSUFFOLK
C O U N C I L

Play and Sport Funding

Improving play and sport provision in
East Suffolk – a helpful guide

Play and Sport Funding

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Play and Sport Funding

Introduction

There are unspent funds for play and sports projects across East Suffolk and this document is designed to help you unlock those funds.

Before the [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) was introduced, the Outdoor Playing Space Scheme existed. It allocated funds as planning mission for new housing was issued. The Outdoor Playing Space Scheme determined the amount of play space required by each planning application for new homes. Where children’s play and sport facilities could not be provided on the development, the applicant could provide something on land nearby or make a financial contribution towards improvements to local facilities.

These contributions were grouped together to fund new or enhanced facilities, benefiting the residents of the local area.

There are examples across East Suffolk of this funding being used to develop play and sport provision. While this is the case, there are still unspent funds ready to be utilised. They can either pay in full for the improvements or as part of a wider funding package.

Aim

This document aims to support local Parish/Town Councils and other eligible organisations to utilise the funds available to them. This is done by sharing best practice and experience from previous projects.

It should act as a starting point when planning projects within organisations. It will act as a prompt, raising questions to consider all aspects of the project. As each project is unique, the suggestions in this document are not exhaustive.

Starting point - Play and Sport Funding

Many parishes and towns across East Suffolk have funding available to them through the Play and Sport Fund. Funding is separated in to Play and Sport ‘pots’, protecting it from being spent on other items or projects. Play and Sport funding can be spent on the same project if both Play and Sport provision is included in it. Communities Team staff can advise. Below is an example.

	Play - cleared	Play - uncleared	Sport - cleared	Sport – uncleared
Newtown	£4,874	£6,280	£2,577	£3,323

Each ‘pot’ is filtered in to two groups – cleared and uncleared. Cleared funds are currently available for allocation and spending. Uncleared funds are not currently available but will be once the relevant development is complete.

In the example above, Newtown currently have £4,874 available for Play provision and £2,577 for Sport provision. In the future this may increase to the uncleared amounts. Uncleared funding relies on developments reaching completion. Therefore, we cannot provide details about that funding and its availability.

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Recommendation – base your planned expenditure only on the cleared funds. Uncleared funds may not appear for some time, if at all.

Requesting Play and Sport Funding

Play and Sport funding is held by East Suffolk Council and distributed upon submission and approval of an application form - [Outdoor Playing Space Scheme - East Suffolk Council](#)

Funding will not be transferred to an organisation until clear plans have been created for the project and East Suffolk Council are satisfied that the project is ready to commence. Keeping the Communities Team informed of plans from an early stage will ensure that potential funding is 'held' in expectation of a future application.

Recommendation – Ensure the Communities Team are made aware of discussions and planning from an early stage. This can be done via communities@eastsoffolk.gov.uk.

Asset mapping

It is important to understand the current provision of play/sport facilities in the area before planning new additions. It may be appropriate to refurbish existing assets rather than replace them. This information should inform the spending of further funding.

Asset mapping can be done through taking notes, photographs and discussions with those that use facilities. This data can also support any further funding applications from other sources.

Recommendation – share the findings of your asset mapping with designers and facility providers at the beginning of discussions.

Community Engagement

Understanding the needs of the local community is vital. If you require additional funding from other sources to complete your plans, they will require evidence that the needs of residents have been heard and included in the design brief. If your budget is expected to cover the costs of your plans, ensuring the community have contributed to the plans will increase the likelihood of it being well used, cared for and maintained in the long term.

Various organisations and groups may need to be considered. For example, Parent Teacher Associations may have more capacity to engage than the local school. Appendix A can be used to better understand who should be involved.

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Design and expenditure should be linked to the findings of your community engagement. There are lots of ways to involve the community in your project. What options are most appropriate should be decided based on local factors. Below are some examples of ways to ensure that your engagement is fit for purpose and makes the best use of your resources.

It is worth considering that engagement should continue throughout the entire process and not be ‘front loaded’.

Recommendation – keep local residents informed of key achievements/events during the entire project using an appropriate method.

The following are examples of community engagement you may wish to consider. It is the responsibility of your group to consider the options and use those which are most appropriate to your local circumstances.

Surveys

Can be done online using free websites such as Survey Monkey or on paper format. Surveys may target parents/carers, family members and local residents that may be affected by the changes. Advertising for the online version of a survey should include ways to access paper versions for those without internet provision.

Style of writing is important with surveys. Questions should be very clear and any additional notes must be easy to understand. The [Hemingway Editor \(hemingwayapp.com\)](http://hemingwayapp.com) is a free website that will ‘score’ your writing and suggests ways to improve its clarity and structure. Question templates are also available online.

Surveys can also be used to gather information from children/young people. These versions will need to be created in a way that is easy to read and encourages a broad range of ideas rather than yes/no answers. Open text questions can enable expression of ideas however they can be challenging to analyse.

It is important to note that many online survey websites will have a limit on the number of responses you can see without paying a fee. For example, Survey Monkey will only allow you to see the first 100 responses without requiring payment. East Suffolk Council may be able to support with this if required.

Recommendation – set a deadline for responses to be collated and fed back to local residents, preferably a reasonably short time after the survey closes.

Face to face events

An excellent opportunity for interactive methods of consultation, face to face events can encourage further creative thinking. Allowing people to draw their ideas on paper, add sticky note comments to other ideas and discuss the plans in person will make people feel more involved in the process.

Follow up correspondence is important following face to face events. It is also an opportunity for people to volunteer their time, skills and expertise to the project if you require it.

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It may be possible to invite providers to display their designs at a later stage in the process. Some residents may find it easier to comment on proposals than 'start from scratch'. This consultation can help the practical considerations of a design – for example the use of 'desire lines' between the equipment and other local knowledge and experience.

Consideration to timings and locations is important. Both these factors will influence the levels of engagement, along with the time of year and subsequent weather. For example, holding events on site may lead to greater insight from consultees.

Coronavirus continues to be a concern for many in the general population. This will affect peoples engagement levels in some cases. Considering how you will make people feel safe at your events is a priority. Engagement can be increased by announcing these safety measures in advance. The Communities Team can make suggestions about how you can do this.

Recommendation – deliver a minimum of two face to face events at differing times and days of the week.

Advertising

Each area will have different ways of advertising and promoting projects. These may include local newsletters, Parish Council minutes, noticeboards and social media pages.

If you'd like to create a consistent identity to your advertising, there are websites offering free design software. Canva.com is a good example of free software that is designed to be simple to use and able to produce documents for different media. Please note there is a premium subscription for Canva that requires a fee. However, the free version has lots of resources available.

The 'Five P's of marketing' may be considered when structuring any advertising or project promotion – product, price, promotion, place and people. Further information can be found online via a search engine.

Ensuring the message is consistent across all platforms will improve understanding of the project.

Share the results

You will probably not be able to use everyone's suggestions in the final design of your project. However, ensuring that peoples views have been heard and acknowledged is just as important.

Most of the community engagement will happen at the beginning of the project. It is worth considering at which key points during the process that messages should be shared with local residents.

You may wish to consider how you will respond to requests that are unachievable or unrealistic. Being able to justify the decisions made in the project design will keep local residents supportive.

Recommendation – use the same methods to share your results as you did to promote the consultation in the first place, taking in to account the demographics of the people you wish to reach.

Schools

Schools are extremely busy and receive lots of requests for support, communication, etc on a range of topics. You may wish to consider how your project can benefit the school and its students – perhaps being used as a topic for use in the curriculum depending on the age range you are aiming to engage.

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Most schools have a Parent and Teacher Association/Friends Of... arrangement. These are typically run by the parents of students with the support of the school. They may be willing to support the projects engagement. They may also have access to willing volunteers that could be of benefit to your project.

You may wish to take the draft designs to a vote by the children. Gathering evidence of this support will be beneficial in regards to any large scale funding applications.

Recommendation – consider contacting both the local school and its Parent/Teacher Association.

Design your own competition

An excellent way of improving engagement across a wide age and ability range, children are encouraged to draw their ideal play area or equipment. A competition can be held, not for the ‘best’ design but so every applicant has the same chance of winning (for example drawing a name ‘out of the hat’). If a prize is awarded it is recommended that it has some form of educational or environmental value and not considered a ‘throwaway’ gift.

Any designs received will need to be ‘interpreted’ by those involved in the design. It won’t be possible to replicate a design, however the themes and suggestions similar to the real-life options should be considered and included in the design brief where possible. Most manufacturers are used to receiving this type of feedback and informing their design with its use.

Design Considerations

By this point you should have a good understanding of what local residents would like to see in their new equipment and which assets you already have. It will give you a good outline for the design brief, but will require some consideration of the finer detail from the organising group. It is worth considering these points as your equipment will typically last a minimum of 20 years and once installed won't be easily adjusted.

The following are some suggestions to consider during the design process. Cross them off once they have been discussed and actions agreed where appropriate.

Considerations	Comments	
Longevity	Different materials will have different life expectancies. Metal tends to last longer than wood, although some designs allow for wood to be raised off the ground with steel feet, extending its lifespan.	
Local residents	How are you engaging local residents that would be directly affected by changes to the site? Residents that have property alongside the site may wish to have their views considered.	
Age separation	Creating a design that keeps equipment designed for younger children away from older children may increase usage. It is possible for equipment to ‘flow’ from pre-school range to teenager.	
Playability	Does the design encourage long term repeated use, or will certain equipment be a ‘one hit wonder’?	
Imagination	Does the equipment encourage children to use their imagination? Can it be many things to many different people?	
Accessibility	How do your plans allow those with disabilities, sensory issues or reduced mobility to engage with the new provision? What adaptations and considerations need to be made throughout the entire design?	

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Landscape	Is there to be landscaping included in the design – for example small rolling hills, flower/herb beds, etc? If so, who will take care of them and will there be a cost implication?	
Parents/carers	Children are the primary audience but it's also important that it meets parents' needs and becomes a place they're happy to go to. What is important to the local parents and what do they need?	
Seating	Is there already seating available or should this be included? Which materials are best suited for use? Does its placement ensure clear sight lines across the equipment?	
Anti-Social Behaviour	Are there existing issues with ASB? Will new equipment lead to increased ASB? Is there any evidence available to support the claims? Can these risks be eliminated or minimised by working with the Design Out Crime Officer at Suffolk Police?	
Maintenance	Is there going to be an increased maintenance cost attached to the improvements? Is the budget substantial enough to cover this?	
Fencing	Does the site require fencing around it? If so, which materials are most appropriate (eg. If there's a history of ASB, metal fencing might be more appropriate).	
Litter	What provision is in place to reduce litter? Does there need to be some further investment, and where would it be best placed?	
Noise	Play equipment generates noise from children. Is there likely to be an increase in noise because of the improvements and how is this proven? What can be done to mitigate this?	
Surfacing options	Surfacing underneath equipment can be a significant cost depending on the type recommended. Have you considered all the suitable options?	
Refurbishment options	Some current provision may already be well used and appreciated by local residents. Is there an option to refurbish some of the equipment rather than replace it?	

Fundraising

In many cases the funding available from your Play and Sport budget will not be sufficient for your plans. There are various other funding sources that are available for these sorts of projects and it is important that all options have been considered. Many funding organisations prefer to see a level of 'match funding' – where a project is funded by a range of supporters.

The following suggestions should be considered when applying for funding. The list is not exhaustive, and many funds appear occasionally. If you require support our funding team may be able to offer a funding search to meet your needs. Many play/sport equipment manufacturers will also be able to guide you towards funding.

It is worth noting that many grant schemes are undersubscribed or can be flexible with their criteria.

Recommendation – speak to potential grant funders directly before submitting any applications.

National options

- [The National Lottery Community Fund](#)
- [Tesco Community Grants](#)
- [Viridor Credits](#)

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- [Sport England](#)

Local authorities/councils

- [Enabling Communities Budgets - East Suffolk Council](#)
- [Councillor's Locality Budget - Suffolk County Council](#)
- [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\) - East Suffolk Council](#)

Local suggestions

- Events – quizzes, fetes, etc
- Local private donors

Launch and post-installation care

It is common for new equipment to have a launch or formal opening, inviting the community and other stakeholders along to celebrate the achievements. The usual considerations such as time, weather and availability would be required.

Snagging checks will be required post installation. This may delay the opening of the equipment whilst remedial action is taken. Consider how you will advise the public of this whilst the equipment appears open to them.

In the build up to the reopening, consider how social media and other communication methods can work to build excitement and interest in the launch. This may include regular summaries of the new equipment, 'introductions' to the key stakeholders, or asking open questions to actively engage local residents. Social media is a good platform to do this work – accessed by a range of people, easy to do and shareable with others in the area that aren't accessing it at this time.

Some equipment, particularly matting or landscaping may take some time to 'settle'. Many groups make an effort to check the equipment on a frequent basis in the weeks following its completion. This will reduce the risk of any snagging becoming a more significant issue and will see it rectified early.

Summary

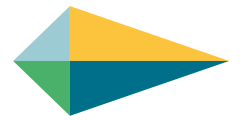
There are lots of things to consider when developing a play or sport funding project. However, the outcomes will have a minimum 20 year lifespan so it is vital that enough consideration is given throughout the process.

This document aims to be a starting point for your project. Our Communities team are also here to support you throughout and can be contacted via communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk if you have any questions.

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Appendix A – Asset Mapping Review

Asset description	Condition	Popularity – how well are they used?	Any associated issues (litter, noise, wear and tear, etc)?	Age range suitability	Remove, refurbish, replace, retain?	Accessible for all?
<i>Roundabout</i>	<i>Structurally sound, but does not spin smoothly – possibly due to wear and tear on bearings?</i>	<i>Lack of smoothness leads to less use. Previously popular.</i>	<i>Significant wear of safety surface around edge of equipment.</i>	<i>All ages</i>	<i>Refurbish – fresh paint and replace bearings</i>	<i>No – step up on to equipment.</i>



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Key contacts – who, role, current engagement, etc.

Condition of safety surfaces, fencing and other elements –

Summary