

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACRE CASE STUDY

Delivering the Play Agenda

A great deal of research has been carried out which highlights the need for children to have access to innovative and challenging play facilities. Good play opportunities can help improve quality of life, tackle childhood obesity, promote the well being of children, support development and build community cohesion. Appropriate and accessible play facilities can lead to a reduction in levels of social exclusion, crime and anti-social behaviour. A key issue is that the facilities must engage and excite children and for this reason there is an increased emphasis on consulting with children and young people in the community to ensure that their opinions and ideas are integral to any play space design.

This case study illustrates the Cambridgeshire ACRE's involvement in delivering the play agenda. We are delighted to be delivering two different play projects aimed at improving play provision across the County:

Cambridgeshire Play Pathfinder

Cambridgeshire ACRE has been contracted by Cambridgeshire County Council to facilitate the delivery of 13 new or refurbished play spaces. Cambridgeshire ACRE is working with the owners of the chosen sites to undertake in-depth consultation with local children, young people and their families so that appropriate designs reflecting their views can be drawn up. All thirteen sites will be built and open for play on or before 31 March 2009.



Parents and children taking part in a play consultation event

Better Equipment – Better Play

This two-year project is being delivered on behalf of Fenland District Council with funding from the Big Lottery's Children's Play programme. Funding of between £1,000 and £25,000 has been allocated to seven sites in the six most 'play-deprived' areas of Fenland to improve their play provision. 'Play-deprived' means that there are either no play facilities or that the existing equipment is poor quality or considered to be inadequate.

Philip Peacock, Cambridgeshire ACRE's Community Facilities Advisor, is working with the communities in Guyhirn, Newton, Gorefield, Wisbech St Mary, Doddington and Waterlees to decide how best to spend this funding. Community consultation is key to ensuring the money is spent on play equipment that the children and young people in these communities will enjoy using.

Designing successful play spaces

There are ten design principles that should be followed to ensure the creation of a successful play space. Successful play spaces...

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution