

Survey report - Refurbishment of Mint Garth Play Area, Knaresborough

North Yorkshire Council is working with Knaresborough Town Council on a project to improve the quality of the Mint Garth Play Area in Knaresborough. The play area currently lacks a good range of play equipment for a wide age range of users. There is a lot of unused space on the play area site which we feel would benefit from some up-to-date play equipment.

This consultation report will be used to create a wish list for the design brief and will influence the final decision and help create the most suitable design for the play area.

The money (£50,000) for this project would come from the S106 money (Committed Sums). This is money paid to North Yorkshire Council by property developers when providing residential properties within the council area.

Developer Contributions (S106 and CIL) play a fundamental role in helping to ensure that the impacts of development are appropriately mitigated and that the right infrastructure is in place to support it. Section 106 agreements (after Section 106 of the Planning act) are legal agreements which are drawn up between the development and the council to secure financial and non-financial contributions towards affordable housing, education, health, open space, village halls to provide infrastructure to support development and mitigate the impact of development. In other words it mitigates for the increased population that will be using existing facilities to ensure that there is sufficient infrastructure to meet the needs of the existing and new population.

The use of S106 contributions is governed by legislation and the use of them have to meet a number of strict legal tests to ensure that they are necessary and that the level of contribution is related in scale to the proposed development to ensure that the developer cannot 'buy' a permission. For each type of S106 agreement (open space, education etc) the council has a specific planning policy that lays out the particular criteria and process for calculating the actual amount to ensure that there is consistency across all applications and the financial amount requested is appropriate to the level of development proposed.

The online survey was open from Friday 19 January 2024 until Sunday 3 March 2024, available on North Yorkshire Council's consultations web page. Posters were put up locally and details of the survey were sent to local schools, community centres and posted on various local Facebook pages. Knaresborough Town Council also shared the information and delivered leaflets to properties on the Mint Garth estate.

Headline results

- 68 respondents in total
- the majority of respondents were aged between 31 and 60 and were female
- climbing, exploring, sliding and swinging appear to be the favourite activities
- the majority of respondents would like to see bright colours such as reds and yellows used in the play area
- most respondents would like the equipment to be suitable for children up to 13 years but there is also a desire to provide activities for teenage children
- the most popular items of inclusive play equipment listed were climbing frames with ramps, supportive swings and wheelchair accessible roundabouts
- benches, seating, picnic and activity tables are particularly important for respondents
- climbing frames/mini climbing walls/boulders, swings and slides are most popular with respondents
- respondents would prefer individual items of play equipment rather than one large piece of equipment
- 33 respondents would like to see a themed play area, 31 would prefer not to have a theme and 4 didn't respond

Other comments

Some feel that Mint Garth Play area should be kept for younger children and families as there is already a play area for older children on the estate. Others feel that there needs to be something to engage teenagers in more outdoor activity.

Other suggested activities include trampoline, monkey bars, swing bridges, tree house, table tennis, petanque, boules, pull up bars, agility/balance trail, rope swing, trim trail, gymnastics type equipment rotating spring seesaw, wobbly bridge and a stage for performing.

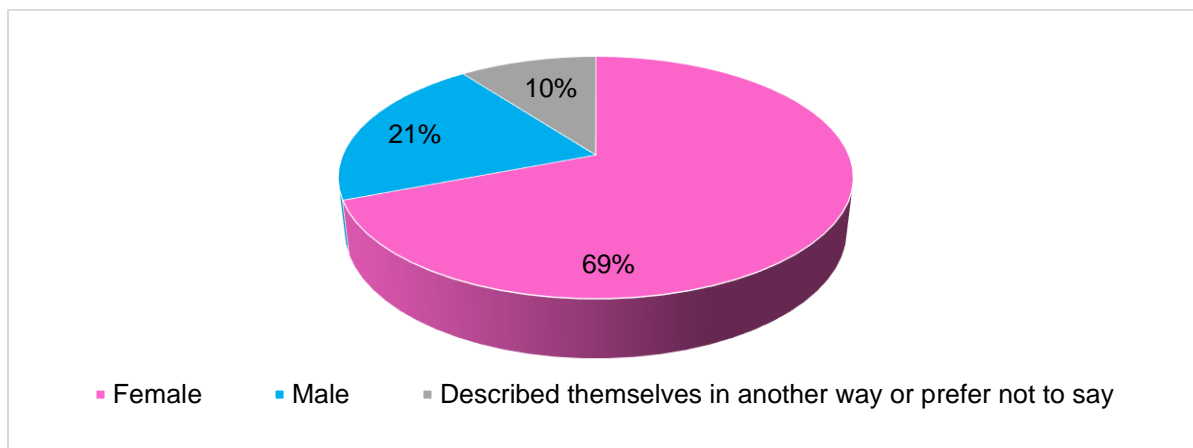
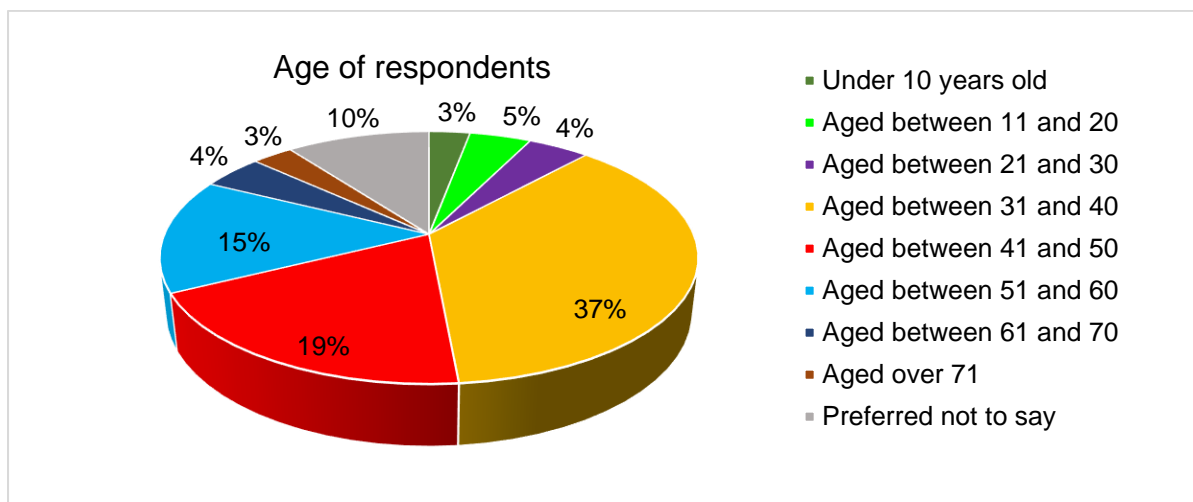
Some would like a more natural and earthy area making the playground enjoyable for young children as well as those who look out onto it. Also, to include nature and adventure to reflect its location and in keeping with surrounding trees. Other suggestions were to include a wildlife spotter guide, willow tepee/tunnels, and something for shade such as trees.

Requests also stated the need for access paths to be suitable for all users. One mentioned that the large tarmac area is not necessarily wasted space but actually provides a good area of hard surface space to play and learn new skills such as roller skating and learning to ride a bike in a safe off road space.

There are some concerns that upgrading the play area may encourage further traffic jams and possible vandalism. One request was not to include any structures that can be used for older kids to hang out on and potentially vandalise.

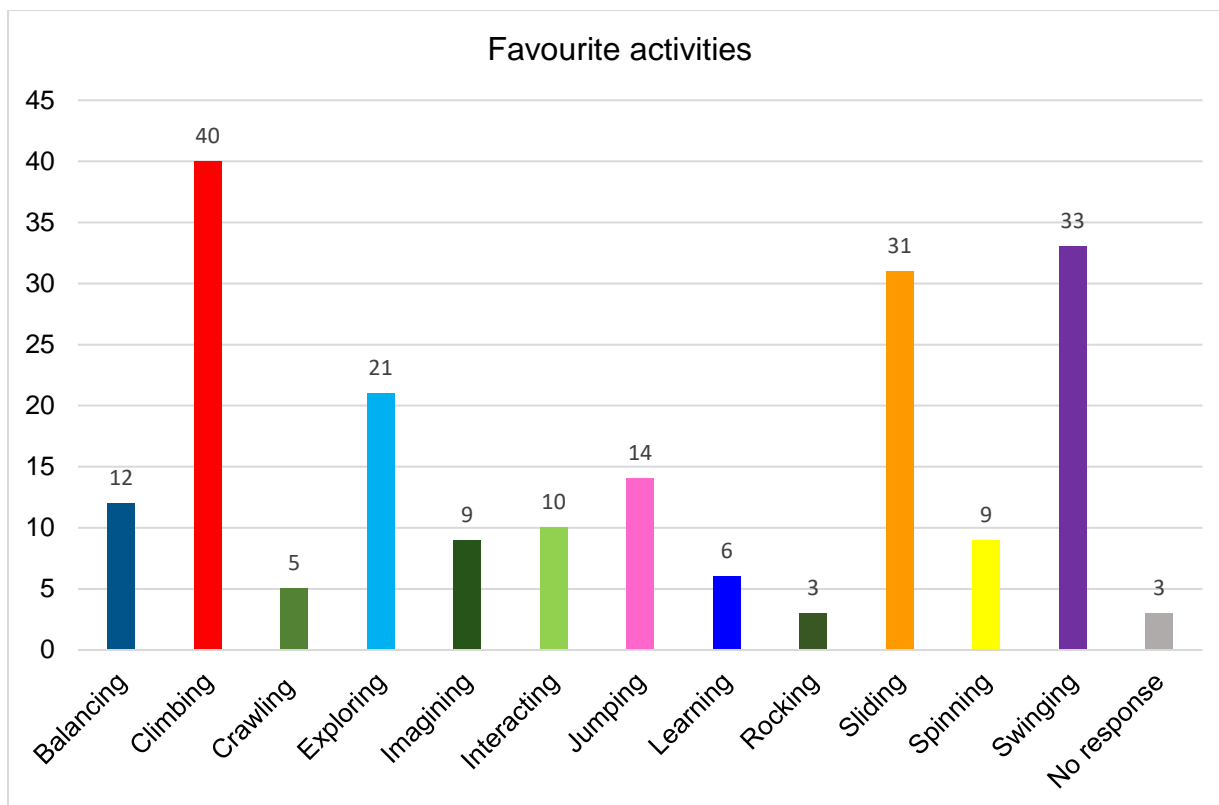
About the respondents

There were 68 respondents in total. 71% of respondents were aged between 31 and 60 (more likely to have children/grandchildren of the age using play facilities). 47 respondents were female, 14 male and seven described themselves in another way or prefer not to say. Five respondents consider themselves to be a disabled person or have a long term, limiting condition.



What activities do you like best? (select up to three)

Climbing, exploring, sliding and swinging appear to be the favourite activities.



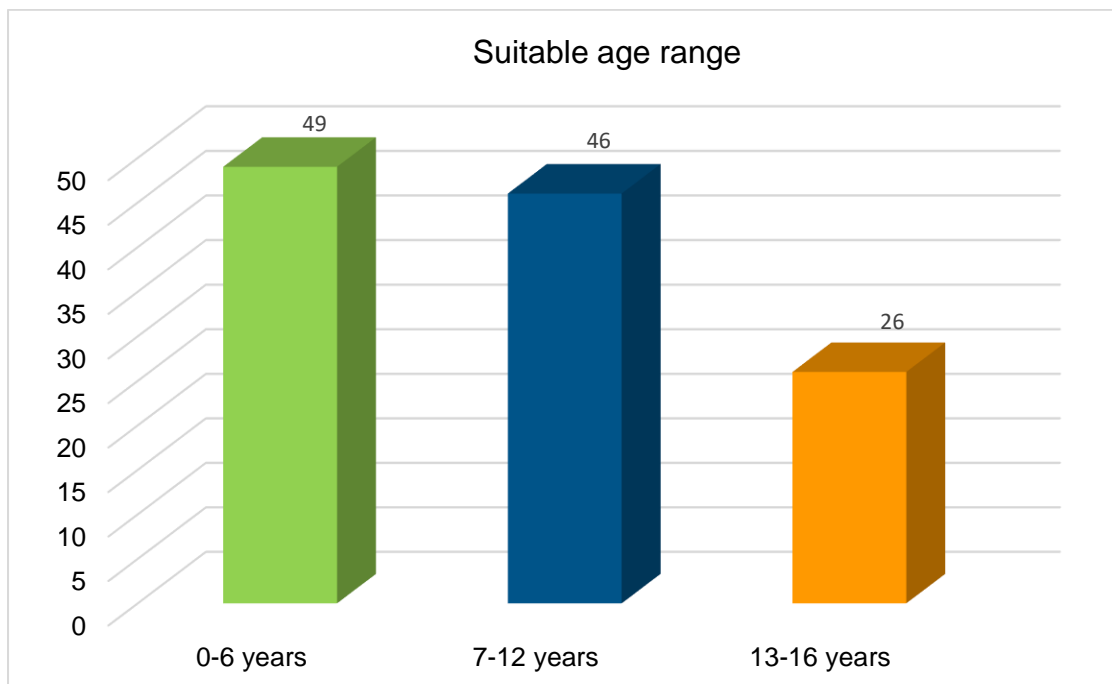
What colour do you think the play area should be?

47% of respondents would like to see bright colours such as red and yellow in the play area. 27% would like natural colours such as green and brown and 22% prefer watery colours such as green and blue and 3% didn't respond.



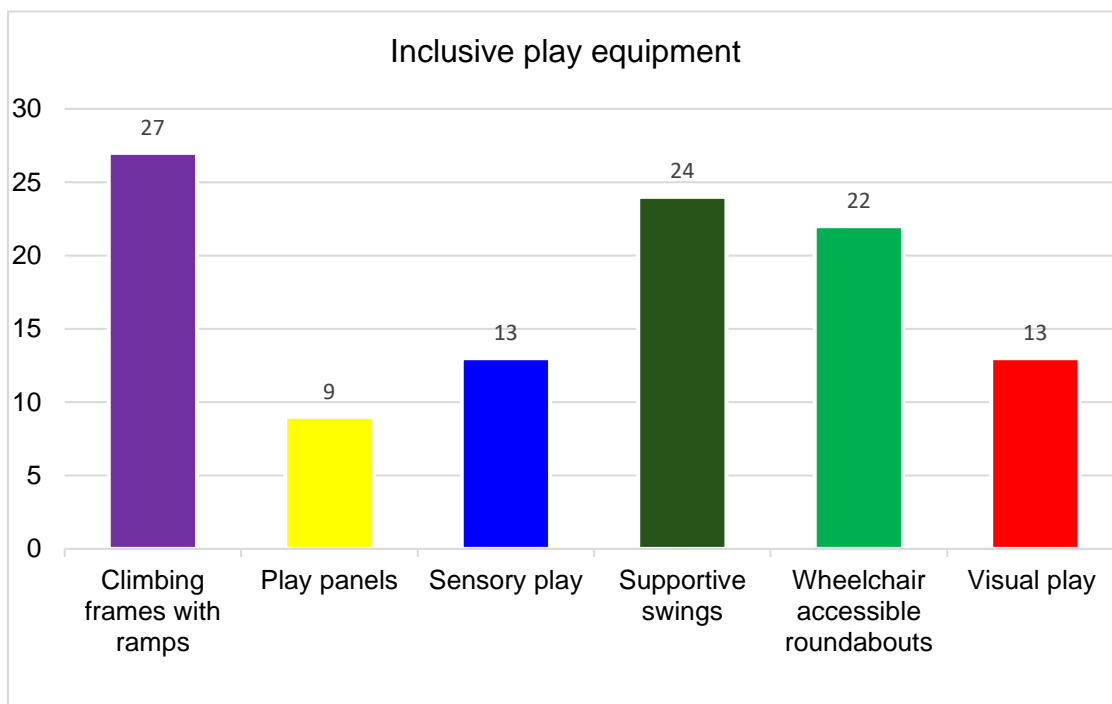
What age range do you think the equipment should be suitable for? (select all that apply)

49 respondents would like equipment suitable for children between 0 - 6 years, 46 respondents said between 7 -12 but there is also a desire (26 respondents) to provide activities for teenage children too.



We are keen to make our play areas inclusive to all. What inclusive play equipment would you like in the play area? (select up to two)

The most popular items of inclusive play equipment listed were climbing frames with ramps (27), supportive swings (24) and wheelchair accessible roundabouts (22), followed by sensory play (13), visual play (13) and play panels (9).

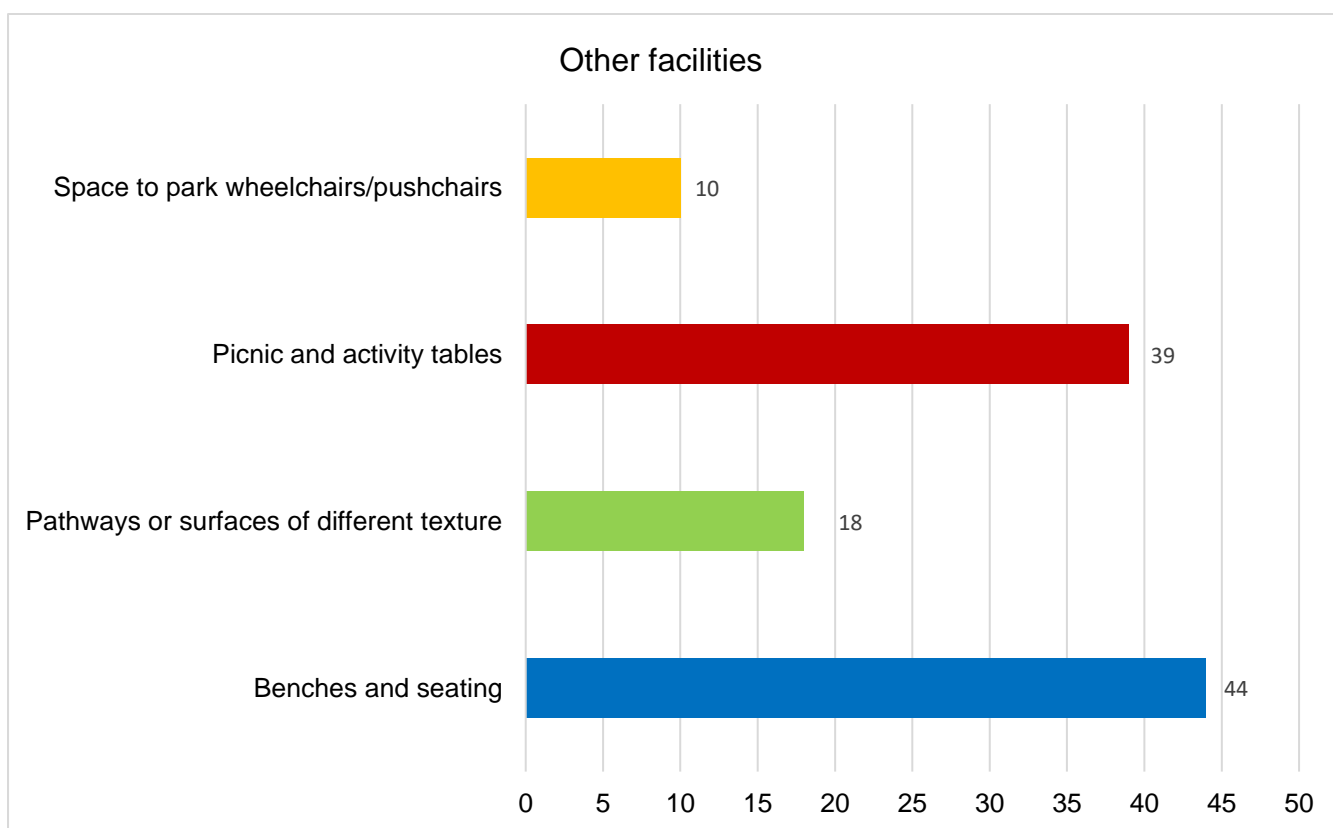


Other suggestions were...

Play equipment that is truly inclusive to all anyway - like a slide with a ramp
Trampoline
Monkey bars swing bridges tree house trampoline
Outdoor table tennis tables
Petanque / Boules pitch
A set of pull up bars similar to Starbeck park as I have to cycle daily up to Starbeck to use pull up bars as the Knaresborough House ones are too dated and don't work properly

Would you like us to include any other facilities in the play area? (select up to two)

Benches and seating (44), picnic and activity tables (39) are particularly important for respondents, followed by pathways or surfaces of different texture (18) and space to park wheelchairs/pushchairs (10).

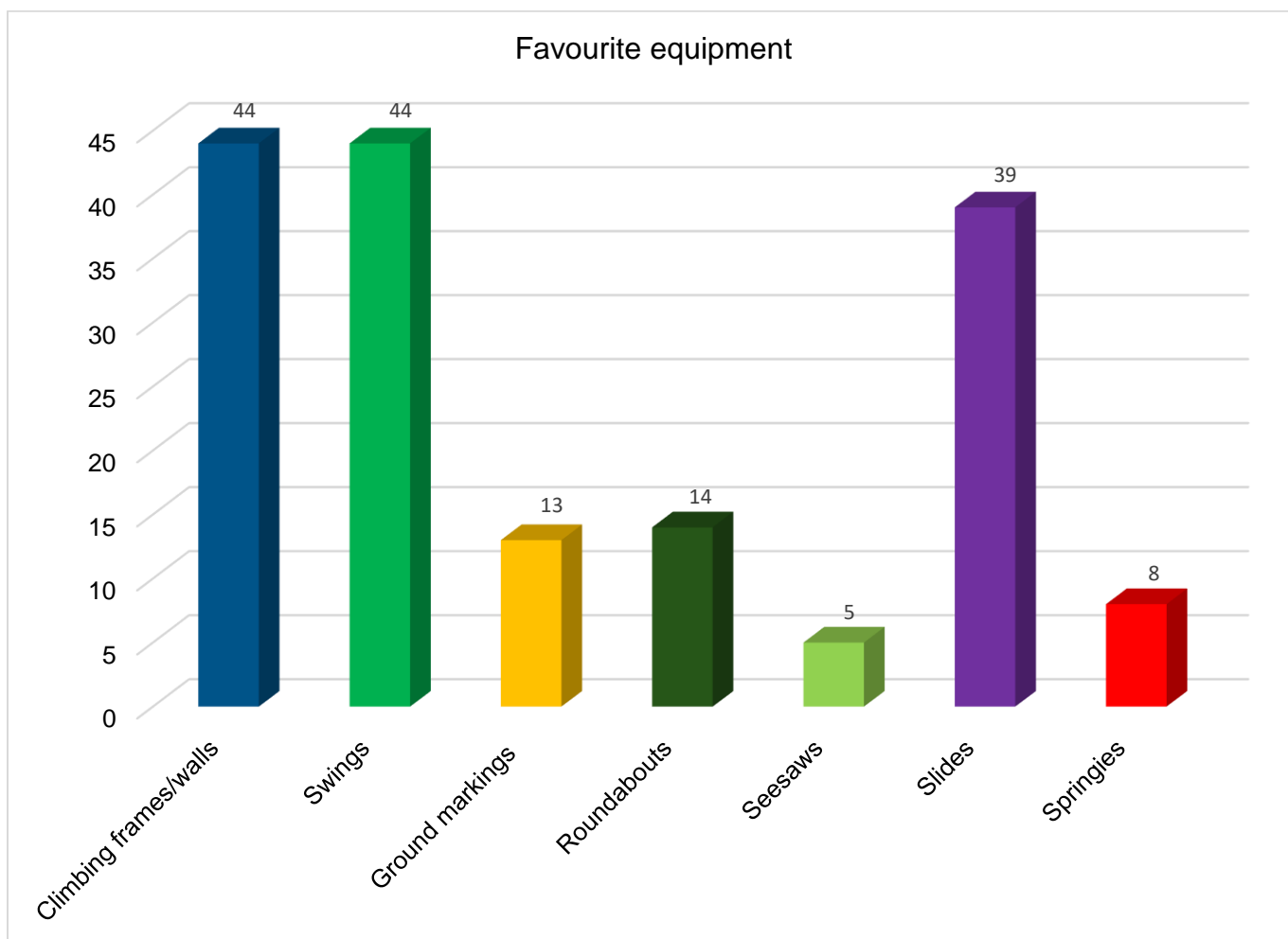


Other suggestions were...

Agility/balance trail that incorporates a rope swing (like at Harlow Carr Gardens), table tennis table, stage for performing, something for shade (could be trees)
Climbing wall
Willow teepee and willow tunnels,
Wildlife spotter guides/notices (for example, birds, flowers, trees)

What equipment do you like best? (select up to three)

Climbing frames/mini climbing walls/boulders (44), swings (44) and slides (39) are most popular with respondents, followed by roundabouts (14), ground markings (13), springies (8) and seesaws (5).

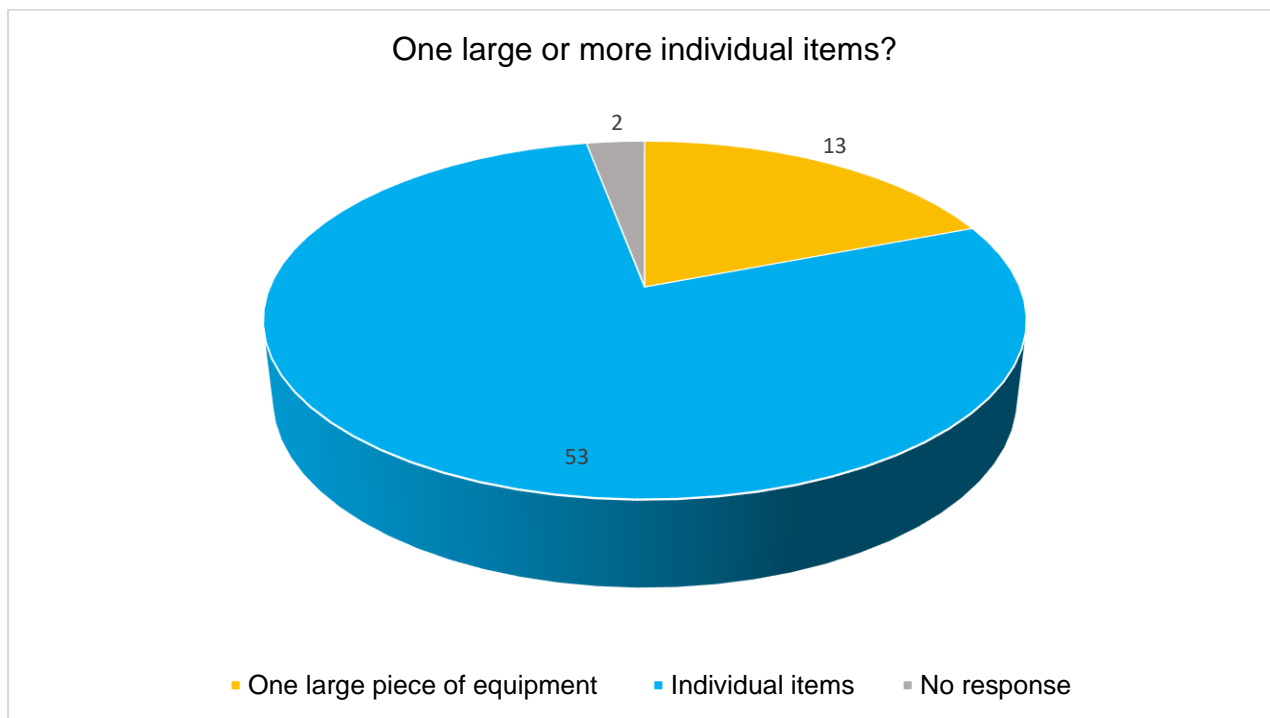


Other suggestions were...

A trail that is a mix of the above and allows imaginative play (Trim Trail?)
Gymnastics type equipment that the children can spin over. Rest their tummy's on and flip over.
Rotating Spring Seesaw & Wobbly bridge
Trampoline
Please for once do something for teenagers. They need engaging. There's already more than enough for younger ones. Build a basketball court or something like that
Trampoline
There is equipment catering for young children with swings etc. there is no sports equipment for adults and teenagers. Outdoor table tennis tables, muga (multi use games area)
Pull up bar

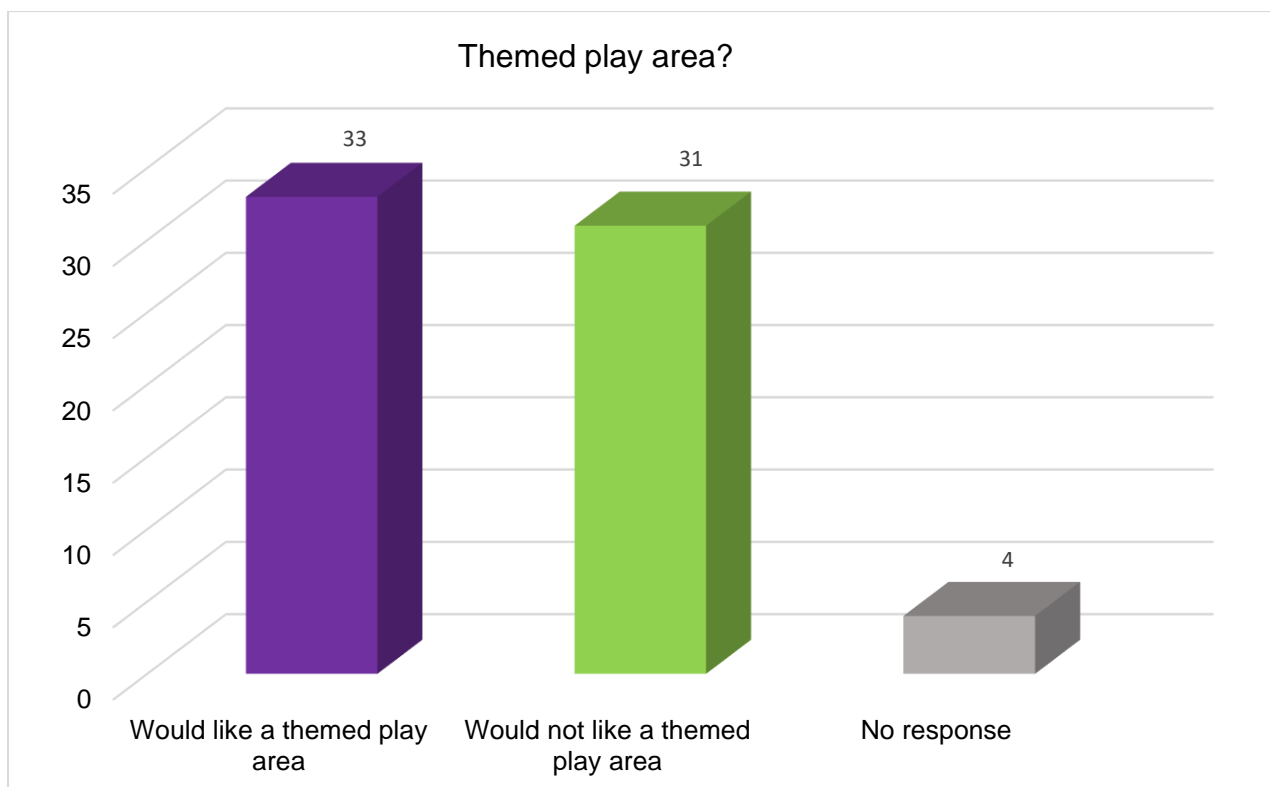
Would you prefer one large piece of equipment or more individual items of play equipment?

78% of respondents would prefer individual items of play equipment. 19% would like one large piece of equipment and 3% didn't respond.



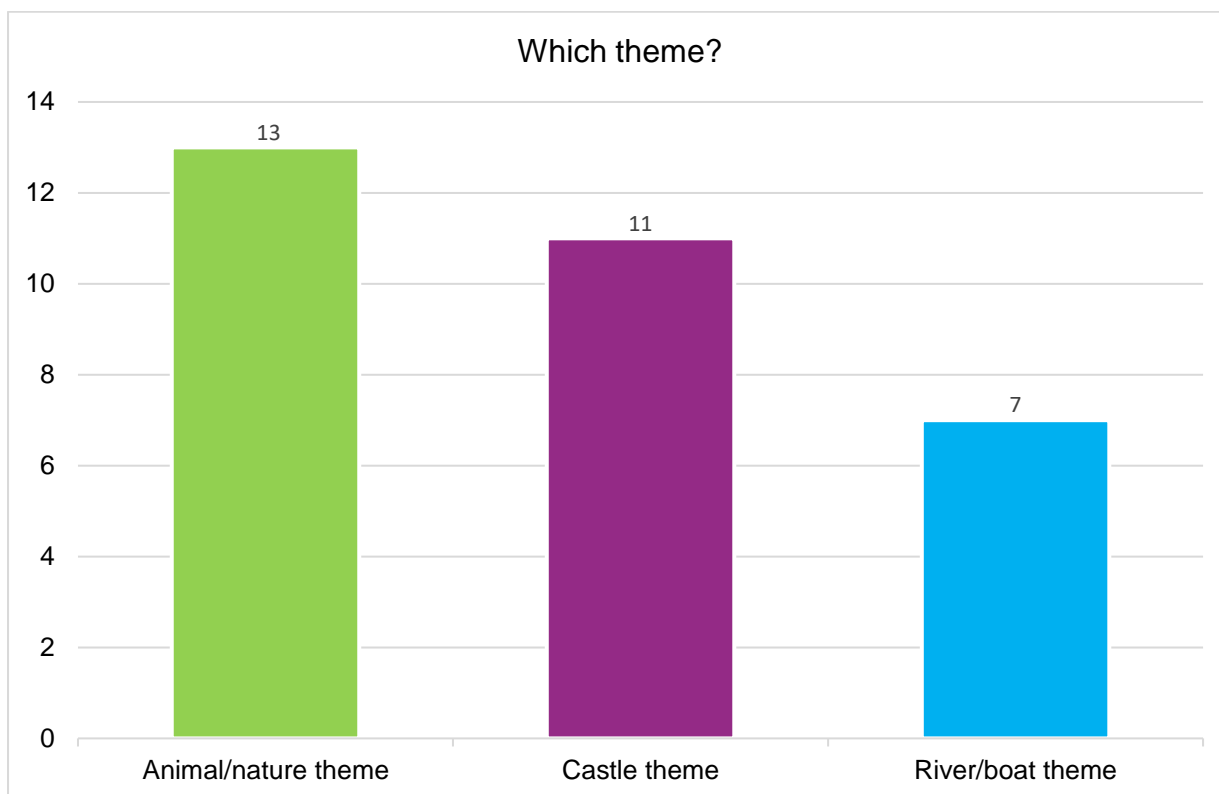
Would you like to see more of a themed play area?

33 respondents would like to see a themed play area, 31 would prefer not to have a theme and four didn't respond.



If you ticked 'Yes' to the above, which theme would you prefer?

13 respondents would like to see animal/nature theme, 11 castle theme and seven river/boat theme. There was also another suggestion of a 'Grand Canyon' theme.



Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for the play area?

I struggled to answer Q7 & Q8 as I wanted to tick both boxes - a trim trail is a large piece that is also a series of smaller pieces of equipment, and I think a 'Shipwreck' themed play area would put off older children and is possibly a bit dated in approach, however a play area themed by natural materials and colour might be very appealing but still considered a theme - sorry
A litterbin should be provided next to railings so it can be used with or without entering the children's area. A bench should be provided nearby for people not using the play area.
Zones suitable for different ages
Small enough for little ones to climb themselves with assistance and safe fencing on the climbing frame (no gaps to fall through)
Pavement hard areas resurfaced, plenty of bins for rubbish, plenty of soft areas for children under age of 3, plenty of things for children to do, recycle bin for can and glass to prevent glass being smashed
The large tarmac area is not necessarily wasted space but actually provides a good area of hard surface space to play and learn new skills. By way of example roller skating and learning to ride a bike in a safe off road space. It would be a shame to lose it.
Access paths suitable for all users
There is already a play area for older children on the estate, so it would be nice to keep the Mint Garth play area for the younger children and their families and include nature and adventure to reflect its location. Perhaps a new fence as well because some big kids broke it. I would like to request that they don't include any structures that can be used for older kids to hang out on and potentially vandalise. I live opposite and enjoy seeing the many local families enjoying the park.
CCTV as deterrent to vandalism? Or fine notices if caught defacing equipment?
It would be good to have something to tempt older kids (as in late primary early secondary aged) away from electronics, so it would be good to have something for them - like what there is in the Valley Gardens

Would like a defibrillator machine
We do not need anymore equipment on this site. It will encourage further traffic jams. I see it as a back-door way for the developers to be given further planning permission. Therefore, I completely reject the proposal for extra funding. This money should be sent straight back to the building developers. Please do not ignore this facet of attempted bribery.
Natural and in keeping with surrounding trees
Natural and earthy vibes making the playground enjoyable for young children as well as those who look out onto it
I am dismayed that the council has accepted this money. I see it as a bribe to ensure future planning applications are accepted!
Include bins for litter
An area of adults and teens to use to keep fit for example, pull up bar so easy accessible for new estates such as Haya Stockwell and others being built