



Letter to Chief Planning Officers and to Directors of Transport

CHILD-FRIENDLY PUBLIC SPACE AND TRANSPORT

The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to the first national **Play Strategy for England** which has been published today, and to set out the role Government would like you to take in supporting its local delivery in the context of Planning Policy Guidance 17; Planning Policy Statements 1, 3 and 12; the Child Road Safety Strategy; PSA12 - to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people; and PSA13 - to improve children and young people's safety.

See www.dcsf.gov.uk/play. Chapter 5: 'Playing Safely' and Chapter 6: 'Child-friendly Communities' of the Play Strategy will be of particular interest to Chief Planning Officers and Directors of Transport.

Extensive consultation over the summer has told us that better and safer opportunities for children's active, outdoor play and recreation in public space are a priority for local people. New evidence demonstrates not only the range of benefits for children's health and wellbeing these can bring, but also the wider beneficial impact that more child-friendly built environments and transport can have on public health, residents' satisfaction with their local area as a place to live, social capital and cohesion, and sustainable community development.

The Play Strategy recognises that planning and wider local place shaping is of fundamental importance to the quality of space available for children to play, and to the ability of children to access that space safely by foot and bike. We have consulted widely with planners, highways officers and professional bodies in the development of the Strategy. Whilst local play strategies will be led by Children's Trusts, this will need to involve close working with the wider Local Strategic Partnership and be effectively joined up with District Councils in two tier authorities.

The Play Strategy also highlights a new indicator for the National Indicator Set (NI199) which will come into effect from April 2009, subject to final technical consultation. This indicator measures children's satisfaction with local parks and play areas.

Current planning and highways policies set out how children's needs should be considered in the development of open space strategies, residential housing, road safety, street design and traffic management. We are asking you to ensure that the spatial needs and road safety of children playing and travelling to play areas are fully reflected in the decision-making of your

departments, and would like to highlight how we can support you in your efforts.

Planning support and guidance

Funding for every top-tier local authority – a new investment package of £235m underpins the Play Strategy over the period 2008-11. Every top-tier local authority will receive at least £1m to help build and refurbish public play sites where children need them most, with safe access routes which encourage active and healthy journeys, as part of a strategic approach to improving play offers locally. This should complement, rather than substitute for, the investment that local authorities and private developers make.

Play England, Government's national delivery partner for the investment programme, will be able to advise you on when your authority will be receiving funding and who the project leads are. Regional Play England contacts can be found at [Annex A](#).

Practice Guidance under PPG17 and PPS3 – Communities and Local Government and the Department for Children, Schools and Families will work with planning and highways officers, the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Department of Health and other stakeholders to provide web-based guidance in support of the policies in PPG17 and PPS3. The guidance, which will be launched in early 2009, will aim to help local authorities to develop effective local strategies for play space and will bring together various standards and good practice on child-friendly place making.

Professional Training – The Play Strategy also announces a programme of cross-professional training. Play England, SkillsActive and Playwork Partnerships are developing a programme to help a range of local professionals, especially those working outside of children's services, to understand the relevance and importance of children's play and how they can support improved play opportunities and safe, active travel for children.

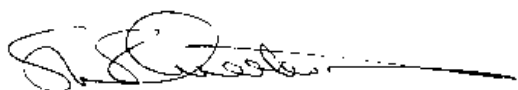
Free training will be rolled out across every local authority by 2011, and will be developed in close co-operation with the professional bodies and Sector Skills Councils. Our intention is to integrate training with current Continuous Professional Development arrangements. The training will be developed and tested between now and April 2009 in our first 20 Pathfinder authorities, which are listed at [Annex A](#). Play England regional offices can advise on how you can get involved (see Annex A for contact details).

Road safety – The Child Road Safety Strategy published by the Department for Transport (2007) looks at measures to improve child road safety. Any measures taken by your local authority to improve road safety have the potential to improve access to play at the same time. For example, educational and training initiatives, such as the Kerbcraft child pedestrian training scheme and Bikeability cycle training, will help to make children and young people safer and improve their confidence in making journeys.

Manual for Streets is DfT guidance for the planning, design, provision and approval of new residential streets and modifications to existing ones. It aims to increase the quality of life through good design, which can also support more outdoor play. Engineering measures that can be used to help make play safer include, where appropriate, 20 mph zones, as well as smaller scale measures such as improved crossing facilities and junction improvements. Home Zones in urban areas and Quiet Lanes in rural areas, which encourage mixed use of roads with low traffic volumes, can also help to create an environment that encourages children to play outdoors.

Sustrans' Active Play and Travel: Tackling Obesity (APT TO) programme has provided guidance to all play pathfinder and play builder authorities on how to ensure children and young people can enjoy independent and active access to play provision. This short checklist can be downloaded from www.sustrans.org.uk/play. Further guidance examining practical ways of delivering safe routes to play will be published by Sustrans early in 2009.

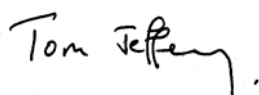
Many thanks in advance for your support on this important agenda for Government.



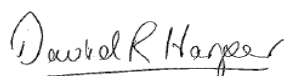
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For further information on Play England, or general advice and guidance on play: www.playengland.org.uk

20 Local Authority Play Pathfinders: testing cross-professional training

Bath & North East Somerset	Knowsley
Blackburn with Darwen	Hackney
Bristol	Nottingham City
Cambridgeshire	North Tyneside
Camden	Portsmouth
Dudley	Rochdale
East Riding	Rotherham
East Sussex	Sunderland
Enfield	Tower Hamlets
Kensington & Chelsea	Wolverhampton