



Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

**Playability Audit of existing Fixed Play
Provision and Review of Supply/Demand for
Play**

**Presented by PlayBoard NI
December 2015**

CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Executive Summary	2
1.0 Introduction	6
2.0 The Importance of Play	7
- Play Approaches	8
- Playability	10
- Play Types	11
3.0 The Strategic Context for Play	13
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,	13
- NI Children and Young Peoples Strategy	14
- NI Executive Play and Leisure Policy and Implementation Plan, Community Planning, OFMDFM Child Poverty Strategy	15
- DHSSP Fitter Future for All, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Planning Policy Statements (7 & 8)	16
- Sport Matters	17
4.0 Methodology	18
- Playability Quality Audit	18
- Location of and Demographic Demand for Fixed Play	20
5.0 Demographic Overview and Demand for Fixed Play	21
- Location of Fixed Play Areas	24
- Local Areas for Play (LAPS)	26
- Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPS)	27
- Neighbourhood Areas for Play (NEAPS)	28
- Accessibility Standards (ABS) Radial Coverage	29
- ABS Coverage and Children aged 0 to 14 Years	30
- Potentially Unmet Fixed Play Need (Wider LCCC Area)	31
- Potentially Unmet Fixed Play Need (Lisburn Urban Area)	48
6.0 Playability Assessments	55
- Fixed Play Area Rankings	57
7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations	59
- Strategic Recommendations	61
- Operational Recommendations	62

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Play is central to the lives of children and young people. It provides a natural, instinctive and interactive means of developing skills and abilities that are critical to supporting healthy growth and development; enhancing social connections; improving wellbeing; and enhancing learning.

In addition play is important for wider communities, supporting the development of social connections between parents/carers and grandparents and enabling children to become a visible and valuable part of the community in which they live. Most importantly, in addition to its many wider benefits play is fun.

This report provides an overview of the findings of a comprehensive audit carried out by PlayBoard NI of all 47 fixed play areas which fall under the management of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. The aim of the audit was to assess the play value of each fixed play area and review the level of demographic need for fixed play provision across the newly established council area.

In conducting the audit PlayBoard applied its Playability Quality Assessment audit tool which focused on both the play value associated with each of the fixed play areas and the level/variety of play opportunities afforded by each. The audit was carried out by PlayBoard's Play Development Officers with a subsequent overview report being produced for each of the 47 fixed play areas.

Following assessment each fixed play area was assigned a playability score and ranked accordingly. The resultant rank table provides a comprehensive overview of the current playability value of fixed play areas across LCCC, highlighting those which are exemplars of good practice and those which require upgrading or redevelopment.

In addition to the playability assessment, demographic analysis and geo-mapping of population trends was undertaken to assess the degree to which the 47 fixed play areas are meeting play need; and to identify any gap areas which may require further play development (either fixed or non-fixed).

Key Observations

- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council are to be commended for recognising the importance of play to the lives of children, young people and communities. By undertaking this piece of work the council have shown a commitment to meeting play needs and PlayBoard would encourage the council to proceed to the development of an agreed play strategy for the area;
- From a demographic perspective, children and young people (0 to 19 years) represent a significant proportion of the LCCC population base accounting for just over one quarter of the population (25.6%);
- Based on demographic patterns, fixed play development would appear historically to have been well targeted by both legacy councils in order to

meet underlying population demands with no significant examples of development within areas with little or no underlying population demand;

- The population of the LCCC area is a combination of both urban (city and town) and rural based (village, small settlement and isolated rural);
- Lisburn, Carryduff and Castlereagh urban areas have been subject to residential growth over recent years with indications that development is likely to continue over the coming years. This has and will continue to lead to new potential gaps in play provision which may require future fixed play development;
- A number of potential gaps in fixed play provision have been identified across the LCCC area and these will require further consideration as to the most appropriate method of meeting that play need (whether fixed or non-fixed play);
- At present the majority of fixed play sites across the LCCC area cater primarily for children aged 0 up to 12 years with a lack of provision for older children and teenagers (e.g. youth shelters, congregation areas etc.).

Overarching Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations made for each of the 47 play areas (contained within individual Playability Overview reports), a number of overarching recommendations are made for consideration by the Council:

Strategic

- Community Planning Process – Children and young people represent one of the key priority groups for both the council and the wider community. Recognising the council's central role in developing community planning mechanisms under the revised local government structure, it is recommended that council recognise and incorporate consideration of play within its community planning structure;
- Participation of Children and Young People – Following from the point above, it is recommended that council seek to establish a mechanism for engaging with children and young people on an ongoing basis in order to allow them to actively participate in decision relating to, or impacting upon their play experience (whether fixed or non-fixed);
- Risk/Benefit Approach to Play – Traditionally, across local government health and safety considerations have led to the creation of play areas which offer minimal challenge and risk in play. Whilst consideration of risk remains important, it is now recognised at a UK level that there is a need to create play areas that offer challenge in order to nurture health, wellbeing and essential skills. This has resulted in a shift towards a risk/benefit approach which focuses on a weighing up of both risk and benefits as a means of introducing more challenge in play.

As a relatively new approach neither legacy council applied a risk/benefit approach to fixed play area design. It is recommended that the council should work towards the adoption of the risk/benefit approach for use in all future fixed play development;

- Alternative Approaches to meeting play need – Whilst fixed play offers an economically viable approach to meeting play need within built up residential areas they do not provide a means of addressing play need within all rural areas. As such, it is recommended that council consider the development of alternative approaches to meeting play need to go alongside fixed play provision.

Approaches could include establishment of a mobile play worker team within council whose role would be to bring play opportunities to rural communities; commissioning of an external play provider to deliver community play projects; council provision/loaning of play pods to communities in rural areas to support creation of environments for play; supporting the development of a pool of play volunteers to enhance play delivery at community level etc.

- Potential Play Gaps - A number of potential gap areas have been identified within this report and it is recommended that council review each gap area as outlined with a view to meeting play need as identified within the report. It is further recommended that in seeking to meet play need Council remain mindful of the full range of option available – both fixed and non-fixed;
- Youth Provision – There is a general lack of fixed play provision that caters for older children and teenagers across the area. It is acknowledged that not all fixed play areas are suitable for, nor indeed require dedicated youth provision; however it is recommended that council should consult with young people, or engage in active partnership with youth providers in order to determine the degree to which their needs are being met;
- Residential Planning - Given potential new residential development within urban areas (Lisburn, Castlereagh and Carryduff) it is recommended that council seek to ensure that developers are required to incorporate suitable fixed play provision/natural green spaces within developments under Planning Policy Statements.

Operational

- Upgrading of Play Areas - 9 fixed play areas have been identified as requiring immediate to short term upgrading in order to enhance their play value, namely:
 1. Hill Street
 2. Hill Hall
 3. Kilmakee
 4. Ballyoran
 5. Nettlehill Road
 6. Riverbank

7. Coronation Gardens
8. Dungoyne
9. Drumlough

It should be noted that there is a question mark over the level of demographic demand for 1 of these play areas (Drumlough) with a recommendation for further localised surveying to ascertain need prior to any further investment. For the remaining 8 play areas, Council should seek to prioritise investment in the short term within these locations with a view to enhancing their playability;

- Fixed Play Materials - It is recommended that the council should seek to use fixed play equipment which is constructed of natural materials as opposed to metal construction where feasible. This not only enhances the aesthetic quality of fixed play areas but also provides an opportunity for children and young people to connect with natural materials through play;
- Green Spaces – Where green space adjoins fixed play areas council should seek to maximise playability by enhancing the space through minor landscaping, planting, incorporation of natural materials and features etc.). This would create additional natural play space for children and young people; would complement the fixed play area and would provide an alternative free play experience.

It is acknowledged that in a number of cases the adjoining land is owned and maintained by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive reducing councils capacity to act directly. It is suggested that Community Planning may provide an appropriate vehicle for exploring joint partnership approaches to enhancing green space areas.

- Independent Travel - Council should seek to include cycle stand provision across fixed play areas as standard (where traffic crossings permit) in order to facilitate independent travel to and from sites by children wishing to travel independently on bicycle and families wishing to use active travel.
- Fencing – PlayBoard recognise that fencing around play areas can be a contentious issue with communities often preferring high fencing. PlayBoard would however recommend the removal of, or minimization of fencing around fixed play areas in order to make them welcoming for children and enhance their appearance and playability.

As an alternative, council may wish to consider the use of natural planting to create green barriers or fencing made from natural materials which is both aesthetically pleasing and welcoming.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2015 Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council appointed PlayBoard NI to complete the first phase of a strategic process aimed at developing an overarching play strategy for the newly established council area. The first phase of the process was focused on 3 key areas:

1. Completion of Playability audits for all 47 fixed play areas currently under the ownership of the council and their immediate environment;
2. Completion of a council wide review of population demographics as a means of identifying potential gaps in current fixed play provision; and
3. Completion of a focused review of population demographics for each of the current 47 fixed play areas providing an overview of current and future potential levels of supply and demand.

1.2 In keeping with the requirements of the contract, this report provides:

- An overview of the importance of play to children, young people and communities;
- An outline of the overarching policy context for play in Northern Ireland;
- An overview of the underlying methodology applied by PlayBoard;
- An assessment of play need mapped against play provision at council level identifying potential gaps in provision alongside potential areas of oversupply;
- An overall assessment of playability levels for each of the 47 fixed play areas; and
- An individual assessment of play need and demand for each of the 47 fixed play areas.

It should be noted that play and recreational provision for 15 to 19's year olds (Multi Use Games Areas etc.) does not fall directly within the scope of this study. Demographic data for this group has however been included for completeness of dataset and to highlight that further separate consideration of need is required for this group.

2.0 THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

- 2.1 Play is central to the lives of children and young people providing a natural, instinctive and interactive way of developing essential skills and abilities that support children as they grow and develop towards adulthood.
- 2.2 Through play children are able to explore the physical and social environment in which they live; test out ideas and concepts and learn how to deal with challenge and risk. Importantly for children play is fun.
- 2.3 The importance of play has been highlighted through a growing body of research which has shown its positive impact in:
- Supporting positive physical and mental health development¹ and maintaining healthier lifestyles;
 - Supporting the development of brain capacity² in early years enhancing learning capacity and educational achievement;
 - Supporting a connection between the child and the natural environment³;
 - Supporting broad holistic development incorporating areas such as physical literacy, cognitive skills and creativity⁴; and
 - Enabling children and young people to assess and manage risk for themselves⁵
- 2.4 In addition play supports children and young people to develop social skills; develop and maintain friendships; grow and develop self-confidence; and increase their understanding of the world around them. Play has also been shown to contribute to active citizenship; the development of community cohesion and can be a vehicle for increasing cross-community and cross-generational sharing and understanding.
- 2.5 It is important to recognise that play is not restricted to young children but remains a key part of young people's lives right through into their late teenage years. Research by PlayBoard NI carried out under the 'Young Life and Times Survey'⁶ showed that a majority of 16 year olds still equate what they do in their recreation and leisure time as being play, albeit that the activities have changed over time. Play development must therefore take into

¹ Hughes, B. (2001) *Evolutionary Playwork and Reflective Analytic Practice*, London; Routledge

² Prout, A. (2005) *The Future of Childhood*, Abingdon: Routledge Falmer

³ Physical – Children's Play Council (2004) *Children's exercise and play A Children's Play Council Briefing March 2004* London; Children's Play Council Mental –

Winnicott, D.W. (1971) *Playing and Reality*, Harmondsworth:Penguin

⁴ Abbott, L. & Langston, A. (2005) *Birth to Three Matters*. O.U.P. Berkshire.

⁵ Drummond, M.J. (2002) *Assessing Children's Learning*. David Fulton. London.

⁶ O'Loughlin, J., Stevenson, B. and Schubotz, D. (2011) *Playscapes at 16 Young Life and Times Survey ARK Research Update, 74*, pp 1-4, Belfast

account the changing play needs of children and young people as they mature.

2.6 Despite the benefits associated with play, many children and young people face a wide range of barriers which restrict their ability to play in a way that best meets their needs. These include:

- Heavy traffic within residential areas restricting or negating street and community play opportunities;
- A loss of accessible public open spaces which are available for children's play;
- A lack of tolerance and respect for children and young people at play from adults within the community;
- For parents of children, the conflicting time pressures and constraints associated with modern living reducing the time available for play with their children;
- An increasingly risk averse society reducing opportunities for more challenging play and restricting the play movement of children; and
- Limited opportunities for the inclusion and integration of children with disabilities or additional needs.

2.7 *Play Approaches*

In seeking to meet the play needs of children and young people a variety of potential approaches are available. These range from formal to informal approaches including:

- Fixed Play Areas: Fixed play areas are a type of formalised play provision based around the installation of fixed play equipment within a designated play area.

Typical examples of fixed play equipment range from more traditional equipment such as swings, roundabouts, climbing frames etc. to more extensive play structures such as fort style installations and activity panels.

Fixed play areas can be tailored towards the needs of specific age groups, for example for younger children and toddlers (rockers, sand play, low level climbing frames, slides etc.) through to more challenging play equipment for older children e.g. witches hats, zip lines etc.

Fixed play areas are typically fenced off for both safety and security purposes and can be closed at set times of the day limiting access opportunities to set times.

The Fields in Trust 'Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Play' (also known as the Six Acre Standards) have become the recognised tool for determining the geographical catchment served by a fixed play area. The Accessibility Benchmark Standards (ABS) are based around 3 identified types of play area:

- Local Areas for Play (LAP's)
- Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP's)
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP's)

The ABS establishes a set of distance thresholds which set the catchment area for each type of play space and help to establish the optimum location for a play area based on the target age range.

TYPE OF PLAY	DISTANCE CRITERIA (METRES)	
	WALKING DISTANCE	STRAIGHT LINE DISTANCE
Local Areas for Play (LAPs) are specifically designated and laid out for very young children (<5 years) with the express purpose of providing somewhere to play close to where they live.	100	60
Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) are areas of open space designated and laid out with features and equipment for children who are beginning to go out and play independently (5 to 12 years) close to where they live.	400	240
Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP) are areas of open space specifically designated, laid out and equipped mainly for older children (including 12+) but with play opportunities for younger children as well.	1000	600

- Natural Play: Natural play approaches revolve around the use of natural landscaping and natural materials in order to create a play environment which stimulates children and young people.

Natural play opportunities may – and often do - occur without direct human intervention, for example a wooded area with bushes, trees and other vegetation can lend itself to den building, tree climbing etc.; whilst natural green spaces can provide play opportunities with minimal or no outside influence enabling children to run, jump, play with balls, play chasing etc.

Increasingly natural play constructions are being integrated into fixed play

areas which, whilst man-made are constructed from natural materials such as wood and may include natural materials such as boulders, tree logs etc. which enhance the playability of the area.

- Street Play: Street play takes place within the immediate environs of the home and is for many children the first real opportunity to explore the community in which they live through play.

Whilst street play opportunities have reduced in recent years due to increased levels of traffic and parental safety concerns, a number of approaches have been adopted which aim to bring street play back into the lives of children.

In 2012 PlayBoard delivered a street play scheme in the Torrens area of North Belfast. Through the use of community volunteers and working with a range of partners streets were closed to traffic at set times each week enabling the children to play outdoors within their own community, often for the first time.

- Public Realm Play: It is important to recognise that for children play is not something that takes place only in a designated play area – children will naturally seek play opportunities at all times regardless of where they are.

Public realm play approaches are focused on creating public environments e.g. within town centres, shopping areas etc. which are playable and encourage children to play.

- Youth shelters: Acknowledging that play remains relevant to young people into their teenage years, youth shelters represent a play approach which is focused on meeting the social and less formalised play needs of teenagers.

2.8 *Playability*

The playability of fixed play areas is central to the tender brief. Playability, sometimes referred to as play affordance, relates to the inherent qualities of a location (either man-made or natural) which lend themselves to supporting and encouraging the child at play.

Playability does not simply refer to the designed function of a site or piece of play equipment. By way of example, from an adult design perspective the primary playability attribute associated with a swing is the ability for a child to sit on the seat and swing back and forth. From a child's perspective the playability value may be much greater i.e. the swing presents an opportunity to climb the frame, swing from the top bar using their arms etc. For older children the swings primary playability purpose may simply be somewhere to sit on whilst conversing socially with peers. In both cases the playability of the equipment can lead to other concerns for play providers including concerns regarding risk, health and safety and perceived anti-social behaviour.

From a location perspective, children view the environment around them in its entirety as a potential play place; therefore a playability assessment cannot be confined to the play equipment which is present within a location or the designed play purpose. By way of example, trees and bushes within a play area can provide a stimulus for imaginative and creative play or an opportunity to gain privacy in play. A raised platform or mound may suggest to the child at play a stage or a platform for performance.

Functional items when located within a play area (or indeed the wider environment) can also have a playability value, for example a seat within a play area may be viewed by children as another play item to be climbed on, stood on, jumped off etc. Whilst the primary purpose of a fence around a play area is to regulate entry, in reality it can provide children with an additional challenging play experience, for example climbing over the top and down the other side.

It is critical in assessing the playability of a fixed play area or play location that consideration is given to the play needs of children with disabilities and differing ability levels. Children with disabilities have the same right to play as all other children, therefore it is important that an assessment of playability focuses on play opportunities/equipment directly provided for children with disabilities, whilst considering the accessibility of play in the wider environment.

2.9 *Play Types*

Access to a range of play types is critical for children and young people if they are to meet their natural play drive. There are 16 acknowledged play types which were devised by Bob Hughes in 2002⁷. Each play type provides the child or young person with an opportunity to, by way of example explore new experiences; develop and learn new skills and abilities; engage socially with other children, young people and adults and stimulate their imagination and creativity.

Play Type	Description
Rough and Tumble	Close encounter play which is less to do with fighting and more to do with touching, gauging strength etc.
Socio-dramatic	Acting out real and potential experiences of a personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.
Social	Play, during which the rules and criteria for social engagement/interaction can be revealed, explored and amended.
Creative	Play with an element of surprise e.g. the transformation of information, making of new connections etc..
Communication	Play using words or gestures for example, mime, jokes, play acting, singing, debate, poetry.
Dramatic	Play which dramatizes events in which the child is not a

⁷ Bob Hughes, published in full in 'A playworker's Taxonomy of Play Types' (PLAYLINK, second edition 2002).

	direct participation.
Symbolic	Play which allows control, exploration and increased understanding without a risk of being out of one's depth.
Deep	Play which allows the child to encounter risky experiences, to assess risk, develop survival skills and conquer fear.
Exploratory	Play which involves manipulative behaviours e.g. handling, throwing, banging objects etc.
Fantasy	Play which rearranges the world in the child's way, a way which is unlikely to occur.
Imaginative	Play where the conventional rules, which govern the physical world, do not apply.
Loco motor	Movement in any or every direction for its own sake.
Mastery Play	Control of the physical and affective ingredients of the environments. For example digging holes, changing the course of streams, constructing shelters, building fires
Object Play	Play which uses infinite and interesting sequences of hand-eye manipulations and movements.
Role Play	Play exploring ways of being, although not normally of an intense personal, social, domestic or interpersonal nature.
Recapitulative Play	Exploration of history, rituals, stories, fire etc. enabling access to play of earlier human evolutionary stages.

3.0 THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR PLAY

3.1 Increasing recognition of the importance of play to the health, wellbeing, learning, development and growth of children and young people has led to a number of significant strategic drivers at local and international levels. By way of establishing the wider context for play, this section of the report provides a brief overview of those strategic drivers that are most relevant to both the current and future development of play within the LCCC area.

- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights.

The UNCRC was ratified by the UK government in 1991, committing all branches of government within the UK to ensuring that children are afforded the rights and protections contained within its articles. The child's Right to Play is specifically highlighted in Article 31 which states:

- a. "That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- b. "That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity"

In addition to Article 31, a number of interrelated UNCRC articles are of direct relevance to play, namely:

- Article 24: 'The child's right to enjoy the highest level of health possible';
 - Article 15: 'The right of children to meet with others or to join or set up associations, unless doing so violates the rights of others'; and
 - Article 12: 'The right to have an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously'.
- *UNCRC General Comment 17 on Article 31*
In 2013 the UNCRC published General Comment 17 highlighting the committees concern at the lack of progress being made towards realisation of the right to play. The general comment affirms the importance of the right to play, highlighting that play is:

"...essential to the health and well-being of children and young people; the development of creativity, imagination, self-confidence, self-efficacy and physical, social cognitive and emotional strength and skills."

The general comment further affirms the critical role of play in the development of life skills:

"Through their involvement in play and recreation, children learn by doing, explore and experience the world around them, experiment with new ideas, roles and experiences, and in so doing, learn to understand and construct their social position within the world".

In summing up, general comment 17 highlights a number of key areas requiring focused attention across all branches of government, namely:

- A general lack of awareness and recognition of the importance of play to the health and development of children and young people;
 - The impact of poor and hazardous environments in restricting children and young people's play and recreation experience;
 - The negative impact of community resistance to the use of public spaces for play and negative stereotyping by government agencies;
 - An overemphasis on risk prevention in play and recreation as opposed to a balanced appraisal of risk-v-benefit; and
 - A lack of access to natural, free play opportunities.
- *The NI Children and Young People's Strategy (2006 – 2016)*
Launched in 2006, 'Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge' is based around 6 key outcomes areas which if achieved will ensure that children and young people thrive and look forward with confidence to the future:
 - Healthy
 - Enjoying, learning and achieving
 - Living in safety and with stability
 - Experiencing economic and environmental well-being
 - Contributing positively to community and society
 - Living in a society which respects their rights.

The strategy recognizes the importance of play and adequate provision for play as a means of supporting healthy growth and development highlighting a range of benefits including improved physical health and mental wellbeing; enhanced emotional resilience; improved educational capacity; and the wider community benefits which come from children and young people being visible and active through outdoor play. It is worth noting that the department have commenced development of a new 10 year strategy to run from 2016 with indications that play and leisure will be one of the seven key outcome areas.

- *NI Executive Play and Leisure Policy & Implementation Plan (2011)*
In 2009 the NI Executive published its Play and Leisure Policy Statement, highlighting its commitment to delivering against the play and leisure needs of children and young people. This was followed in March 2011 by the Executive's endorsement of the 'Play and Leisure Policy' and an associated implementation plan.

The policy was the culmination of an inclusive, collaborative process which brought together stakeholders from across government departments, councils, the community sector and children and young people.

At the heart of the policy is a recognition that play is not only critical to the individual child in terms of their health and wellbeing; but also that play has a key role in creating cohesive communities and tackling a range of issues including anti-social behaviour, inter-generational issues and the legacy of community division left over by the troubles. The policy recognises and highlights the importance of risk in play to allow children to explore boundaries and test abilities in such cases where it can be shown that the benefits to the child outweigh the potential risks.

- *Community Planning*
Community Planning is a new responsibility for Councils in Northern Ireland which was introduced in the wake of local government reform in April 2015. The introduction of community planning brings local authorities in Northern Ireland into line with their counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales.

Community Planning will provide a framework for councils, government departments and other public bodies to engage with local communities and the voluntary community with a view to developing and implementing a shared vision for the area.

In order to be fully representative it will be essential that children and young people have an opportunity to feed directly into the community planning process, influencing decision on matters that impact on their lives including play.

- *OFMDFM Child Poverty Strategy (2011)*
The aim of the Executive's Child Poverty Strategy is to "Provide the opportunity for all of our children and young people to thrive and to address the cause and consequences of disadvantage".

The strategy recognises that addressing child poverty is a long-term issue and sets out a number of key action areas which impact on the issue of children and young people's play, namely:

- To promote affordable, accessible play and leisure provision for all children and young people

- To provide different learning environments through youth services which complement formal learning and are focused on the personal and social development of children and young people
 - To improve opportunities for low income families to participate in arts, cultural, sporting and leisure activities.
- *DHSSPS Fitter Future for All Framework (2011)*
The overarching aim of 'Fitter Future for All' is to support people to make healthy choices, reducing overall levels of obesity and improving health and wellbeing amongst the general population.

The Strategy recognises the critical role of play in reducing childhood obesity levels and highlights the importance of rural and natural landscapes as well as urban design and planning in delivering playable, green infrastructure (which encourages outdoor activity levels), accessible play areas and play activities, and active travel routes.

- *Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership*
The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) brings together a range of agencies, including voluntary and community sector organisations, that aim to improve the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

Operating at a locality level across Northern Ireland, the CYPSP aims to plan and provide services for children and young people more efficiently by making joint decisions about the services needed, and funding these services together.

- *Planning Policy Statements*
Planning Policy Statements (PPS) form a key part of the planning system, setting out the main considerations taken into account during the assessment of development proposals.

Of particular relevance to play are PPS 7 (Quality Residential Environments) and PPS 8 (Open Space and Outdoor recreation).

- *PP7 (Quality Residential Environments)*
PPS 7 highlights the need for developers to consider the play needs of the future residents within new development plans outlining that:
 - a. Play facilities should be seen as part of local neighbourhood facilities and (where required) should be incorporated into the design and layout of the development;
 - b. It is reasonable to expect developers to contribute to the cost of provision or set land aside for use by the local community; and

c. Regard should be given to integrating children's play-spaces as an intrinsic element to meet the needs generated by the development.

- *PPS 8, (Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation)*

PPS 8 deals with the issues of open space, sport and recreation and states that:

"For residential development of 100 units or more, or for development sites of 5 hectares or more, an equipped children's play area will be required as an integral part of the development. The Department will consider an exception to this requirement where an equipped children's play area exists within reasonable walking distance (generally around 400 metres) of the majority of the units within the development scheme."

- *Sport Matters: NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-2019*
The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation sets out a new shared sporting vision of "a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport", as well as identifying the key strategic priorities for sport and physical recreation. Further, the strategy outlines 3 underpinning areas to guide and informs the direction of future investment – Participation, Performance and Places.

Using this strategic framework the NI Executive will:-

- Promote the value, importance and priority of sport and physical recreation;
- Promote increased participation in sport and physical recreation among underrepresented groups;
- Promote community cohesion through sport and physical recreation.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The methodology employed for each component part of the tender was based upon PlayBoard’s extensive experience in the completion of playability audits and the analysis of demographic patterns in order to support the identification of the level of supply and demand for play opportunities. The methodology applied for each element has been outlined below.

4.2 *Playability Quality Audit*

In completing the playability assessment component of the contract PlayBoard used its Playability Quality Audit tool (PQA). Play Development Officers visited each of the 47 play areas, completing a 2 part on-site audit focused on providing a comprehensive assessment of a range of factors all of which have been shown to impact upon playability value.

Part 1 of the PQA focused on an assessment of the wider play environment:

Overall Area to be Assessed	Key Elements to be Assessed
<i>Locational factors</i>	Attractiveness of overall play setting; presence of signage welcoming/restricting play; degree of community oversight; level of vandalism; cleanliness of site (e.g. dog mess, rubbish, hazards such as broken glass etc.); fencing etc.
<i>Accessibility</i>	Proximity of the play area to public transport links; condition of pathway surfaces; condition of play surfaces (appearance and safety); road safety provision on route; entrance and layout accessibility in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act etc.
<i>Features</i>	Assessment of overall condition, cleanliness and maintenance of the play area; provision of seating for adults/children; litter bin provision; signage relating to dog mess, littering is appropriate; presence of otherwise of bicycle stands; condition of fencing/gates if present.
<i>Environmental Factors</i>	Presence or not of natural vegetation e.g. trees, bushes, shrubs etc.; grassing levels i.e. all short, short and long etc.; presence of sunny, shaded and sheltered areas (or not); undulating or flat ground; presence or not of rocks, boulders etc.; sensory play opportunities; water play opportunities; noise levels (from traffic etc.).
<i>Challenge and Risk</i>	Level of challenging play afforded within the play area through play items that offer exciting, daring play experiences; approach to risk adopted by the council i.e. risk/benefit or health and safety and completion of relevant assessments by provider.
<i>Demographic Applicability</i>	Assessment of the play area against the underlying demographics of the local community. This includes an indication of how relevant the play area and the play

	equipment contained therein are to the demands of the community based on a range of factors including age range.
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Part 2 of the PQA focused on the wider assessment of play opportunities afforded by the play area including:

Overall Area to be Assessed	Key Elements to be Assessed
<i>Physical Play</i>	Review of play opportunities afforded by the play area and play equipment with assessment including opportunities for running, skipping, hopping etc.; swinging; climbing; jumping; balancing; rocking; rotating or spinning; gliding; cycling/skating; inclusive physical play opportunities for children with a variety of physical abilities.
<i>Creative Play</i>	Presence of sand, soil or mud play; water play opportunities; presence of loose/manipulative play parts; artistic play (e.g. provision for chalking, drawing or painting); sound making items; opportunities for pretend play (e.g. natural spaces and places that stimulate the imagination, materials which can be manipulated etc.); performance area; opportunities to change or transform the environment for play purposes; inclusive creative play opportunities for a range of differing abilities.
<i>Social Play</i>	Presence of quiet places to sit/chat/think; places to hide; opportunities to interact with a children of different ages and abilities; focused recognition of the social aspect of play for older children e.g. teen shelter.
<i>Play Equipment</i>	Catalogue of all play equipment contained within the play area including photograph; indication of current appearance/age/maintenance standard; assessment of the playability value of the piece (by age range and ability level).
<i>Play Types</i>	Overarching review of play types present or capable of being followed within play area.

Through an agreed assessment process each play area was afforded a points score across a number of key areas which, when combined provided an overall playability score for each. As a result, the 47 play areas can be ranked according to their playability value highlighting those with excellent, adequate or poor play value.

4.3 *Location of and Demographic Demand for Fixed Play*

The review of play demand was undertaken through the mapping of census data onto a Geographical Information System (GIS) and the overlay mapping of the location of the 47 play areas.

Demographic data was collated from the 2011 census and mapped at small area level in order to provide the lowest possible geographical level of analysis.

Demographic data was mapped across 4 age groups:

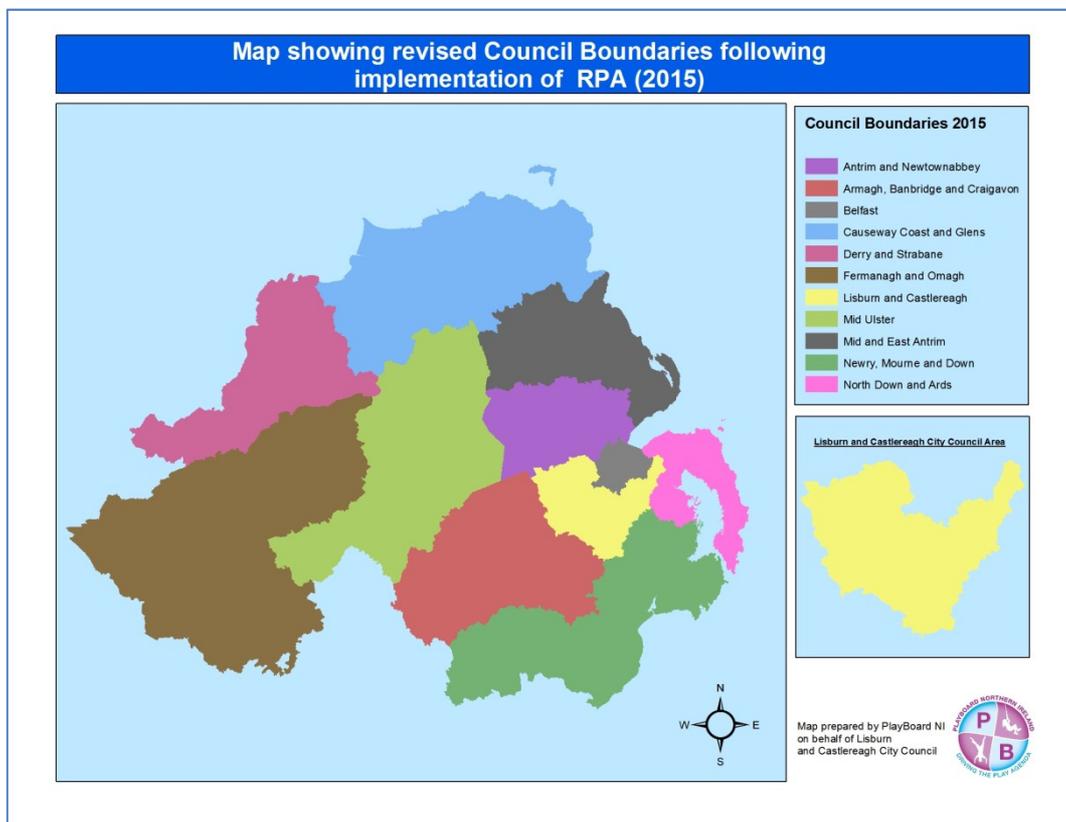
- 0 to four years;
- Five to nine years;
- Ten to fourteen years; and
- Fifteen to nineteen years.

Mapping took place at 2 distinct levels:

1. *Overarching LCCC Level:* Analysis of population trends across the LCCC area against mapped play area locations enabling a high level, council wide assessment of current provision versus demand for play.
2. *Focused Play Area Level:* Analysis of demographics at play area level, enabling a more focused analysis of demand for play at a local level utilising the Six Acre Standard distance band.

5.0 DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW AND DEMAND FOR FIXED PLAY

- 5.1 Using the most recent demographic data (taken from the NI Census 2011), this section of the report provides an overview of population demography as it relates to children and young people within the LCCC area. Furthermore this section, by mapping the location of existing fixed play areas and overlaying same onto the demographic data provides an assessment of the degree to which current fixed play provision is meeting demographic need and identifies areas of potential future demand.
- 5.2 In April 2015 the legacy councils of Lisburn City and Castlereagh Borough came together to create Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (see map 1 below). Based on demographic data released by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) the population for the newly configured council area is 134,841.



Map 1: Revised Local Government Boundaries following Review of Public Administration

- 5.3 Table 1 (overleaf) shows the breakdown of the population within the LCCC area for those aged 19 years or under. Based on the 2011 census figures there were a total of 34,625 children or young people aged 19 years or under equating to just over one quarter (25.6%) of the overall LCCC population.
- 5.4 Given that the focus for this report is on the location and playability value of fixed play areas the primary age group of focus is the 14 and under age group (i.e. the group most likely to make use of fixed play areas). Based on the 2011 census, 25,679 children fall into this age band equating to 18.9% of

the overall LCCC population.

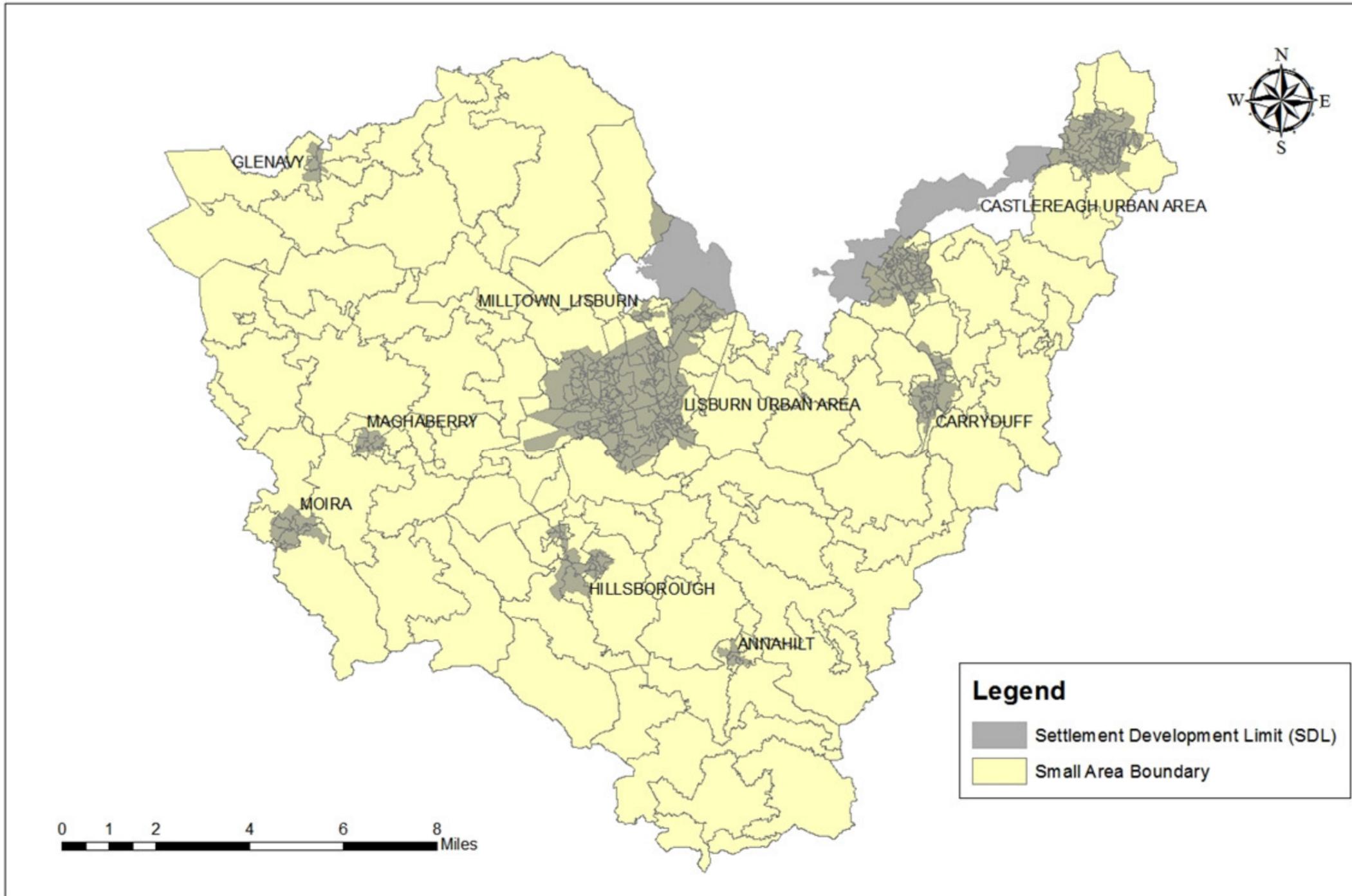
Age Group	Number	%
Overall Population	134,841	100
0 to 4	9,083	6.7
5 to 9	7,994	5.9
10 to 14	8,602	6.3
15 to 19	8,946	6.6

Table 1: Breakdown of Population with LCCC area aged 19 years or below

- 5.5 Assessing the degree to which existing fixed play provision is meeting demand requires a spatial assessment of population demography on a geographical basis. In order to facilitate such an assessment a series of maps were produced using GIS software showing the geographical spread of the relevant age groups mapped by small area boundaries – small areas having replaced Census Output Areas. The location of fixed play areas was then overlaid onto the demographic data allowing for the assessment to take place.
- 5.6 Map 2 overleaf shows the current LCCC area with designated settlement areas based on the agreed Settlement Development Limit (SDL) classification - a statistical delineation of settlements in Northern Ireland defined by the Planning Service.
- 5.7 Based on the designated SDL classification, the LCCC area is a combination of rural and urban areas with the population located across a range of residential classifications including rural settlement based, dispersed rural living and urban residential. Urban centres identified within the SDL include:

Settlement Name	SDL Designation
Carryduff	Belfast Metropolitan Area
Castlereagh Urban	Belfast Metropolitan Area
Milltown Lisburn	Belfast Metropolitan Area
Lisburn Urban	Belfast Metropolitan Area
Hillsborough	Intermediate Settlement
Moira	Intermediate Settlement
Annahilt	Village
Glenavy	Village
Maghaberry	Village

Map 2: LCCC Area showing Settlement Development Limits (SDL's) and Small Area Boundaries



Map Prepared by PlayBoard NI on behalf of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council



5.8 *Location of Fixed Play Areas*

The amalgamation of the two legacy councils in April 2015 brought with it an existing portfolio of outdoor, fixed equipment play areas which range in size from:

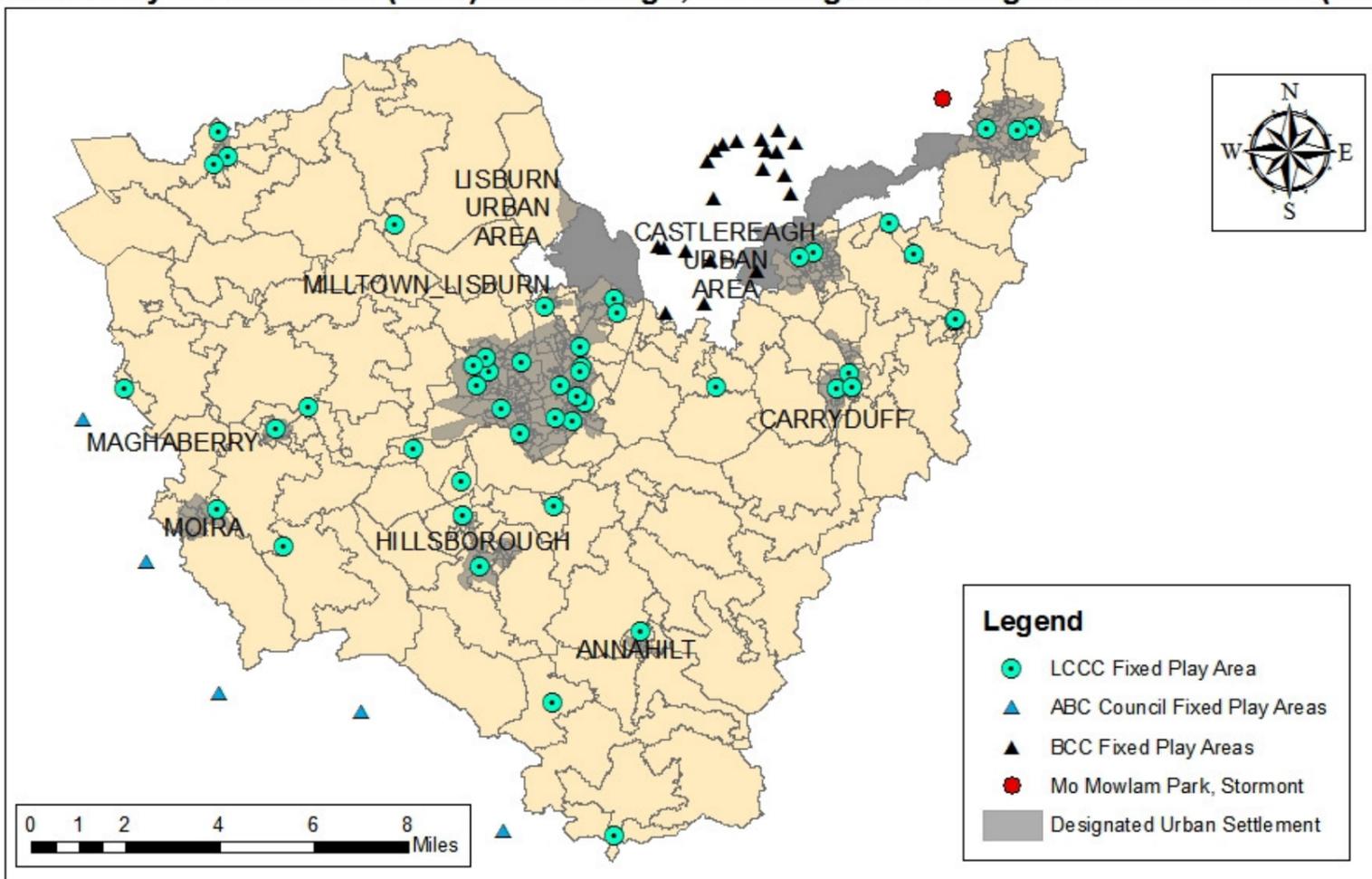
- Local Areas for Play (LAP's): LAP's are typically small fixed play parks aimed at toddlers and younger children. LAP's generally cater for a specific, defined residential catchment area of no more than 100m and consist of a small number of pieces of fixed play equipment;
- Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP's): LEAP's are fixed play areas which are often located within larger scale residential locations and housing estates. LEAP's typically provide fixed play for a wider age range and have a larger catchment area of around 400m;
- Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP's): NEAP's are the largest type of fixed play installation and cater for a children and young people up to and including teenagers. Typically NEAP's have a catchment area of around 1,000m and will include a variety of play and leisure options including natural play options.

5.9 In total 46 fixed play areas transferred into the new LCCC area on April 1st 2015 with an additional play area opened in the autumn of 2015 at Killynure Park, Carryduff.

Classification	No. of Play Areas in LCCC
Local Area for Play (LAP)	12
Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	33
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	2
TOTAL	47

5.10 Maps 3 to 6 on the following pages of the report show the location of each of the 47 play areas collectively and within their individual classification (i.e. LAP, LEAP or NEAP).

Map 3: Map showing location of Fixed Play Areas within LCCC area alongside Fixed Play Areas in Belfast City Council Area (BCC) and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council Area (ABC)



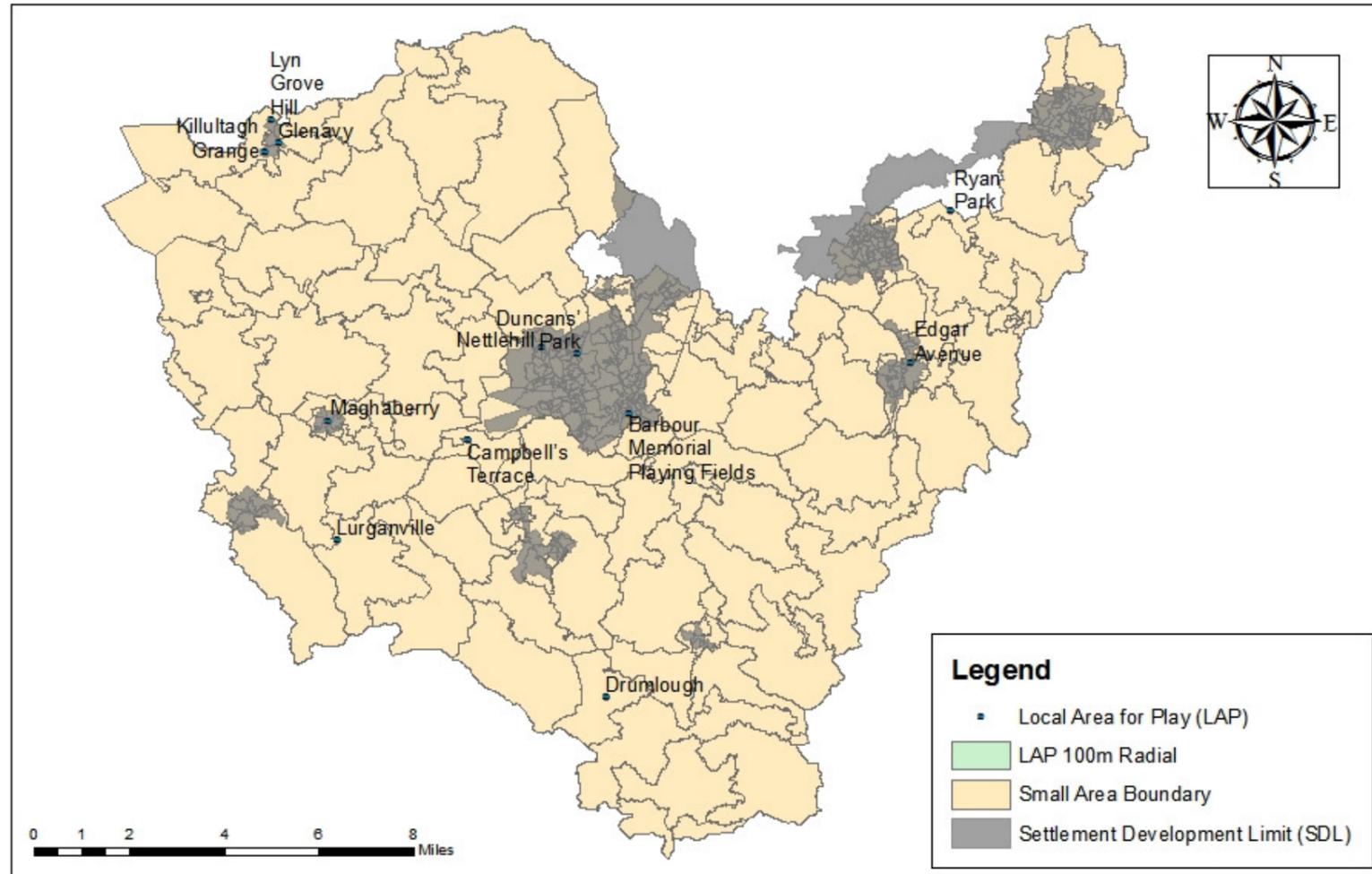
Map 3 shows the location of the 47 fixed play areas currently managed and maintained by LCCC. In addition fixed play areas falling within the adjoining Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (ABC) and Belfast City Council (BCC) areas have been added to provide a more complete overview of potential accessible fixed play for LCCC residents.

Given the semi-permanent nature of fixed play provision, installation and ongoing maintenance costs, fixed play areas are more ideally suited to locations which are shown to have a high level of consistent residential demand.

Analysis of fixed play placement within LCCC is in line with expectations i.e. the majority of current provision is located within built up urban areas (e.g. Lisburn, Castlereagh) and within village and other residential conurbations (e.g. Hillsborough, Moira, Glenavy etc.).

Whilst fixed play areas are generally found in more built up areas, where a level of demand can be established within more rural locations fixed play provision can help to meet the needs of children and young people. Within LCCC there are a number of examples of rural based fixed play development e.g. Drumlough and Lurganville.

Map 4: Location of Local Areas for Play (LAP's) within LCCC Area

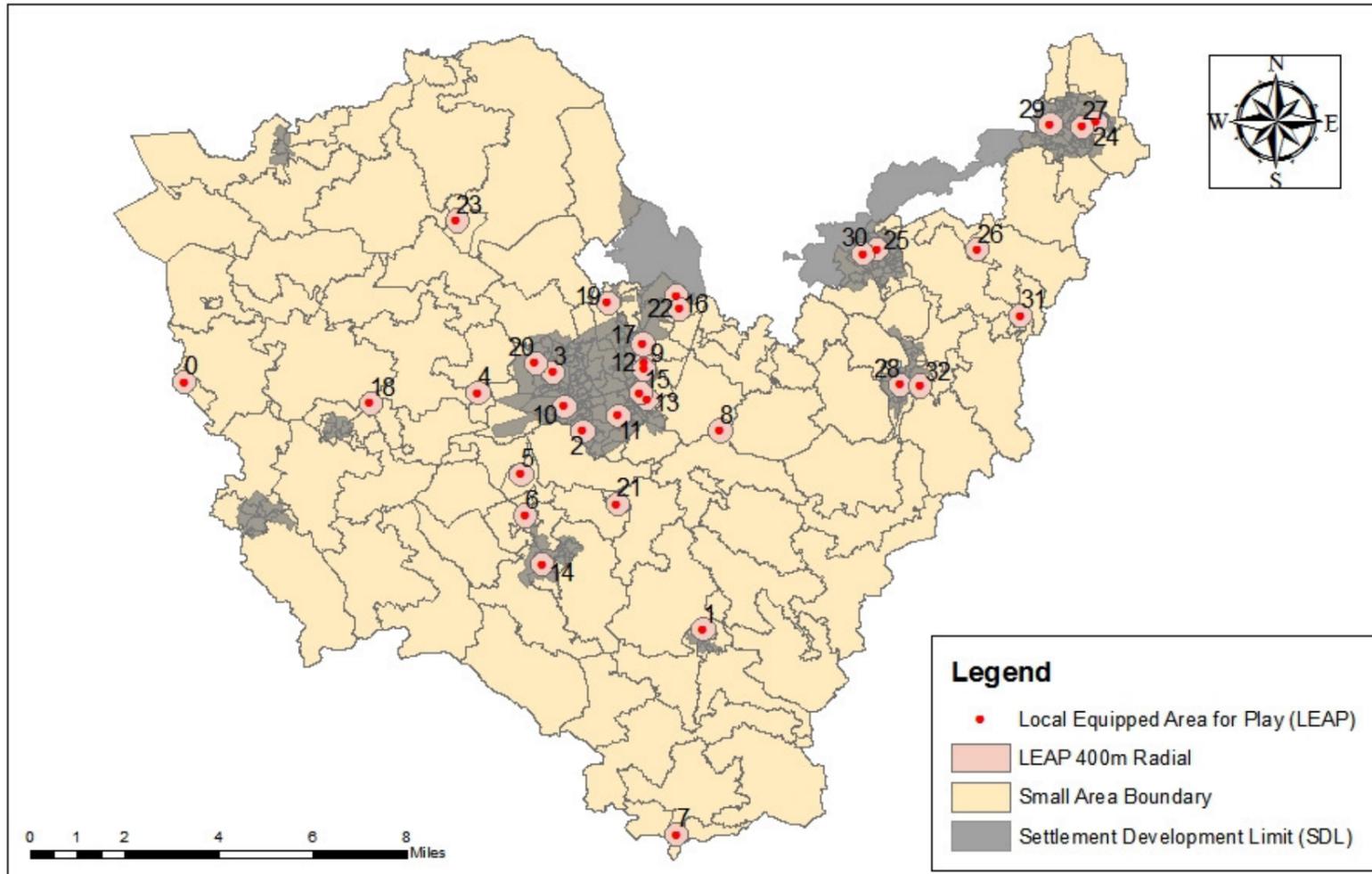


Map 4 shows the location of those fixed play areas classified as being Local Areas for Play (LAP's).

Typically the LAP's within the council are located either within relatively new housing developments in urban area (for example Lyn Grove Hill and Killultagh Grange in Glenavy) or within rural areas where they often serve the play needs of a small housing development e.g. Drumlough which is located to the rear of a row of houses.

LAP's tend to consist of small scale provision and are specifically tailored to meet the play needs of those who live within the immediate vicinity of the play area (within 100m walking distance).

Map 5: Location of Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP's) within LCCC Area with 400m Radial applied



KEY No.	Name
0	Aghalee
1	Annahilt
2	Avonmore
3	Ballymacoss Hill
4	Ballymacoss Playing Fields
5	Coronation Gardens
6	Culcavy
7	Dromara
8	Drumbo
9	Glenmore
10	Grove
11	Hill Street
12	Hilden
13	Hillhall
14	Hillsborough
15	Huguenot
16	Kilmakee, Seymourhill
17	Lambeg
18	Maghaberry Community Centre
19	Milltown
20	Rathvarna
21	Ravernet
22	Riverside, Seymourhill
23	Stoneyford
24	Ballyoran
25	Colby
26	Crossnacreevy
27	Dungoyne
28	Lough Moss
29	Moat Park
30	Breda
31	Moneyreagh Community Centre
32	Killynure

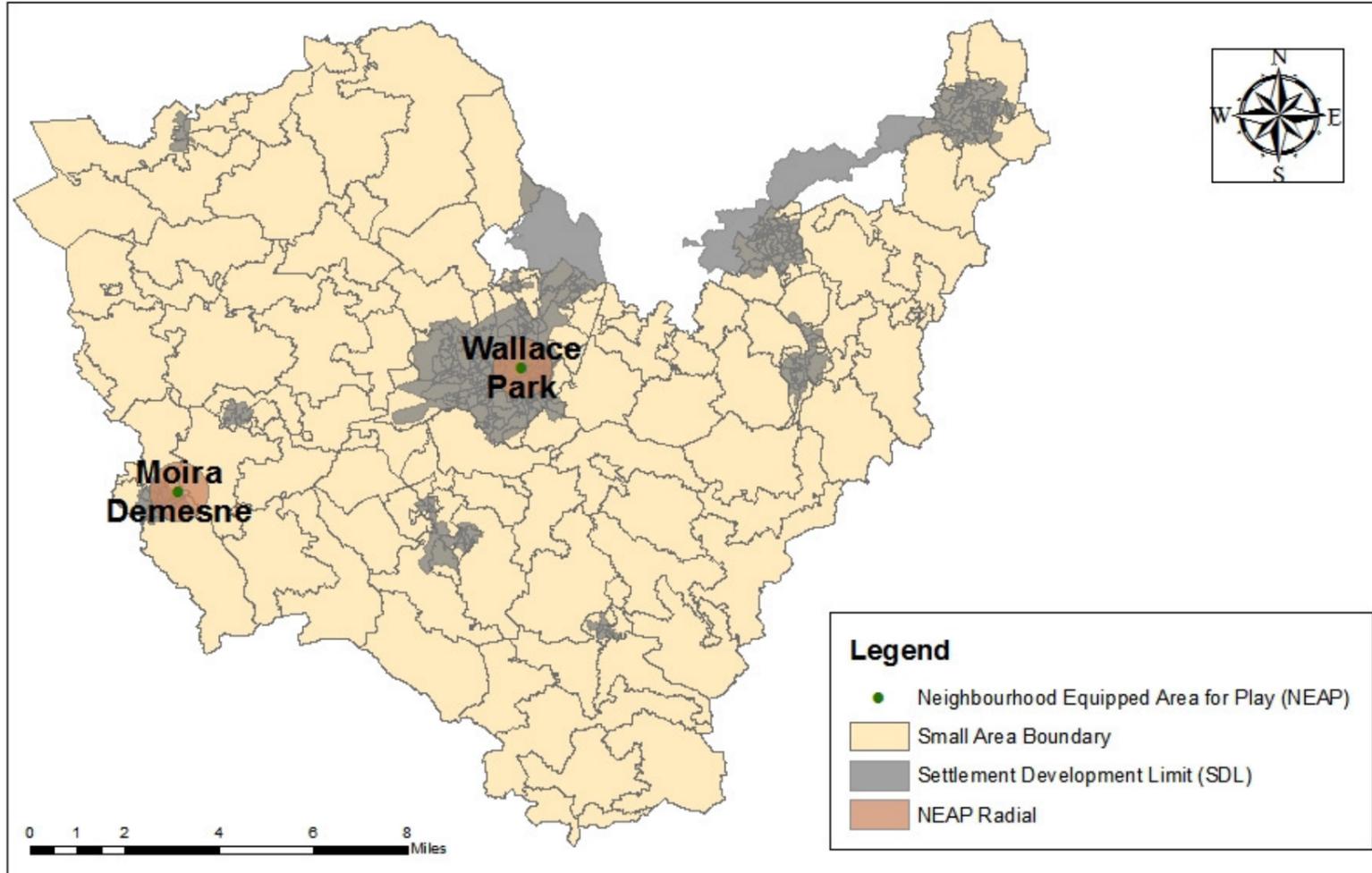
Map 5 shows the location of those fixed play areas classified as being Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP's).

LEAP's make up the majority of play provision within the council and are primarily located within the more built up urban areas and more highly populated residential settlements located within rural areas. LEAP's cater for a wider age range than LAP's, offer more choice in terms of the number of pieces of fixed play equipment and often incorporate or have adjacent a green space area which can be used for natural/free play, ball games etc.

LEAP's are aimed at a wider catchment population catering for those living within 400m walking distance.

*Note: Total no. of LEAP's = 33
(list begins at 0 due to GIS System)*

**Map 6: Location of Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP's)
within LCCC Area with 1000m Radial applied**

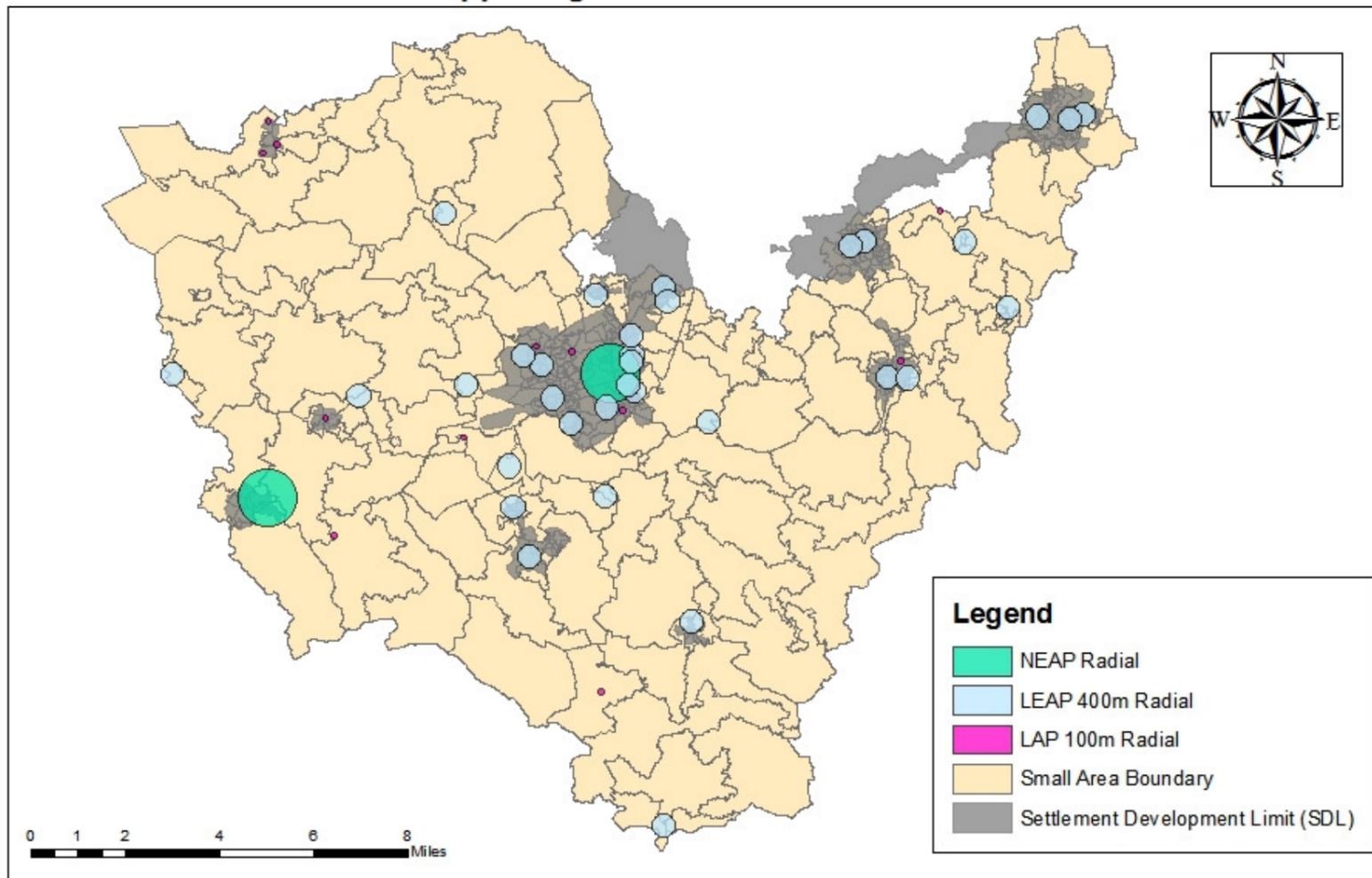


Map 6 shows the location of those fixed play areas classified as being Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAP's).

NEAP's represent the largest scale of fixed play area offering a wide range of play opportunities (fixed and non-fixed) for a broad age range from toddler through to teenager and indeed into adulthood. Given their size and scale the defined catchment area for a NEAP is 1,000m with recognition that as a destination play area users are likely to travel from a greater distance.

Within LCCC, 2 play areas have been identified as NEAP's – Wallace Park in Lisburn and Moira Demesne.

Map 7: Map showing Fixed Play Area Radial Coverage (all classifications) mapped against Census Small Areas

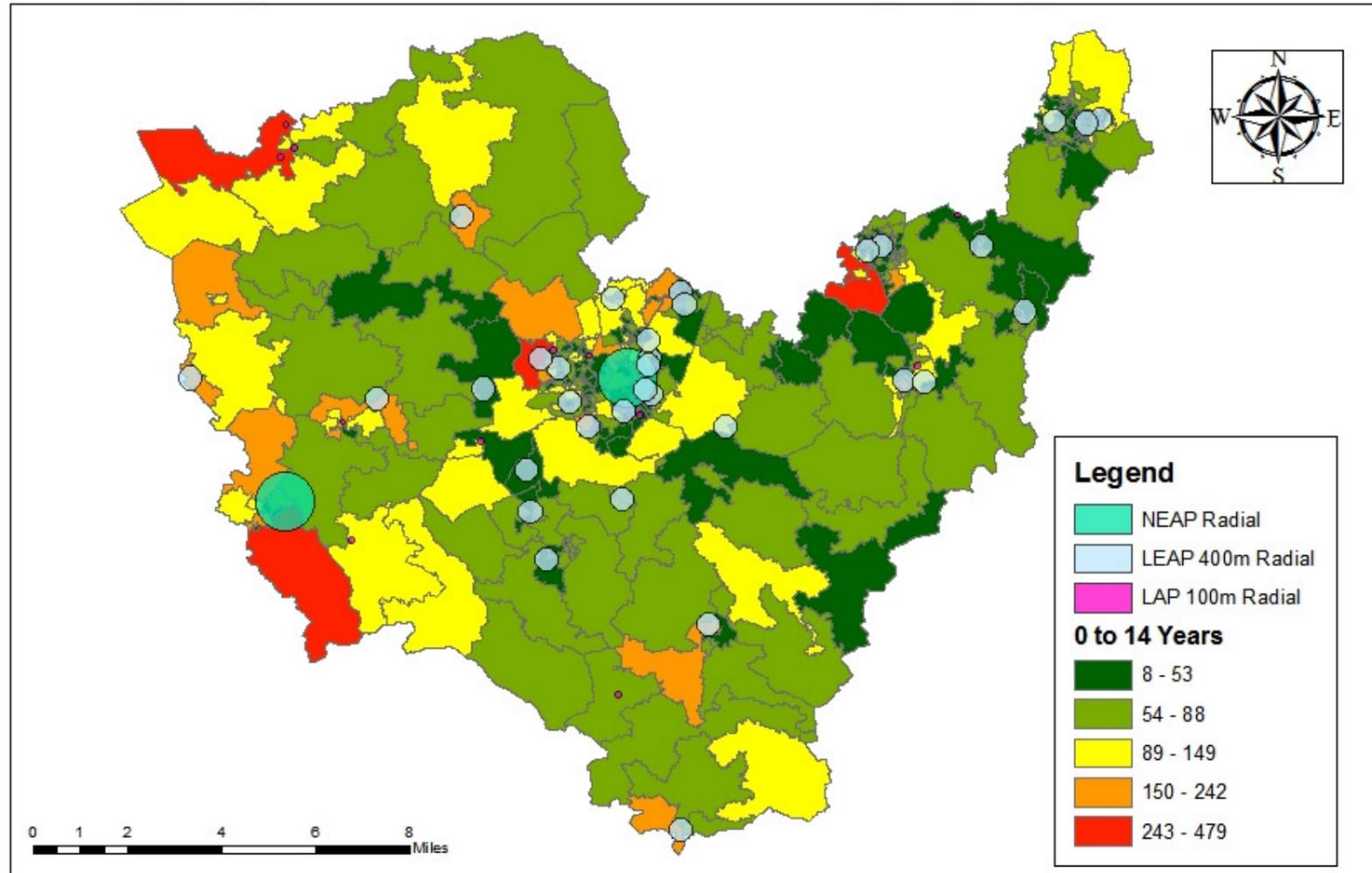


Map 7 shows the location of all play areas within LCCC with their catchment radial applied. In addition Census Small Area boundaries have been introduced – these small areas provide the basis for overlaying demographic data.

Before applying demographic data to the map it is important to highlight that effectively any area which falls outside of the radial buffer zone can be said to have a lack of fixed play provision. It is however also important to recognise that a lack of fixed play provision within an area does not necessarily equate to play deprivation or under-provision for children and young people.

Depending on the nature of the location there may well be legitimate reasons as to why no fixed play development has taken place, for example the primary usage of land may be industrial, retail or agricultural in nature, hence there is a correspondingly low level of 'local' demand for fixed play.

**Map 8: Map showing Play Area Radial Coverage (all classifications)
mapped against the number of Children and Young People aged 0 to 14 Years**

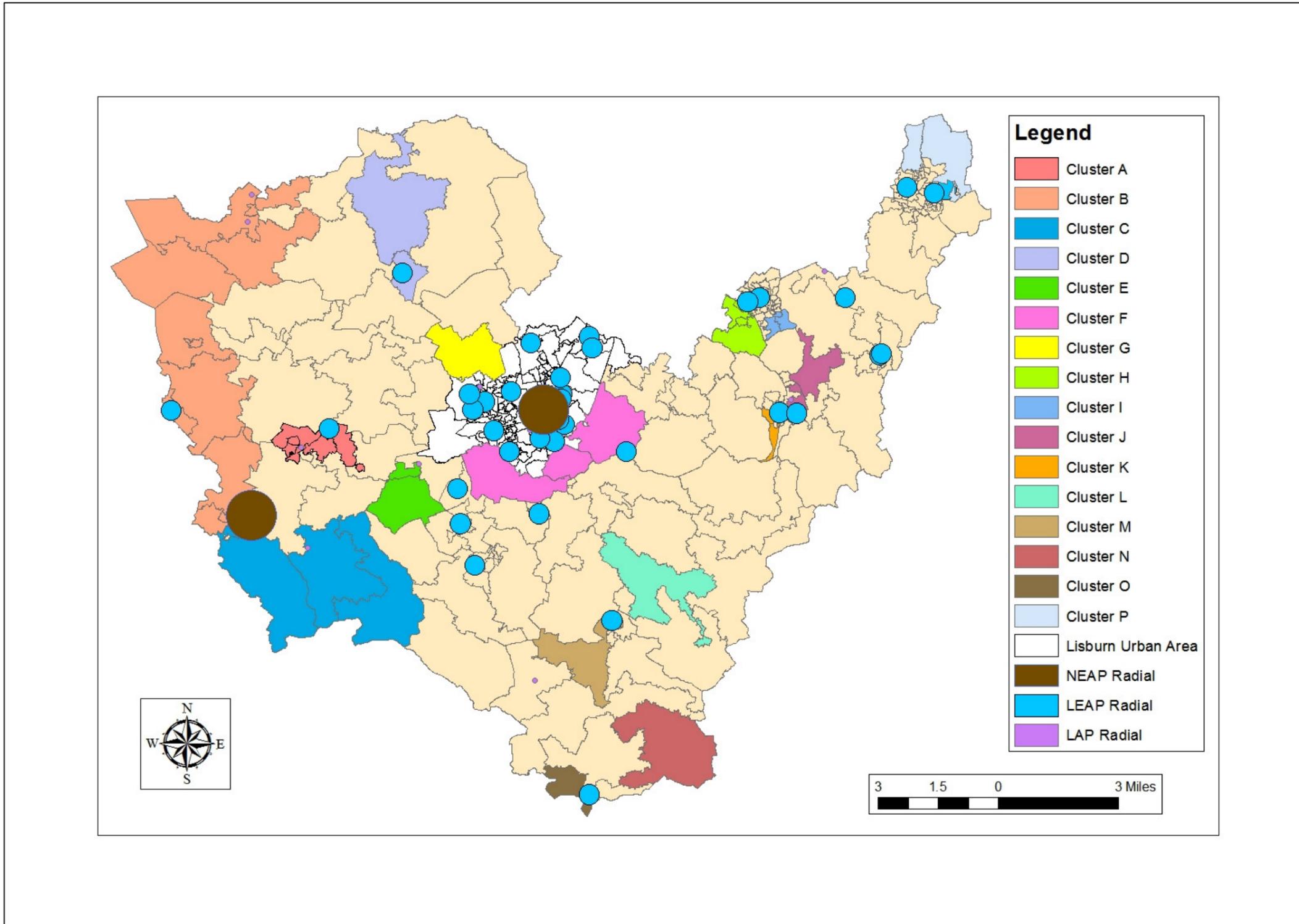


Map 8 shows the location of the 47 fixed play areas and their appropriate radial catchment mapped against demographic data collected during the 2011 census for those aged 0 to 14 years. The 0 to 14 age group are the group for whom fixed play provision is most appropriate providing a range of activities which support physical, skills and social development.

Analysis of the demographic pattern highlights the rural nature of the council area with a significant number of small areas having less than 88 children aged 14 or under (the dark and light green mapped areas).

For these predominately rural small areas fixed play does not represent a viable and cost-effective means of meeting play need. The dispersed population base means that identifying a single location point for the development of fixed play provision that met need would be extremely challenging. In addition the capital and revenue costs associated with the installation and ongoing maintenance of fixed play within areas of dispersed population make it economically unviable.

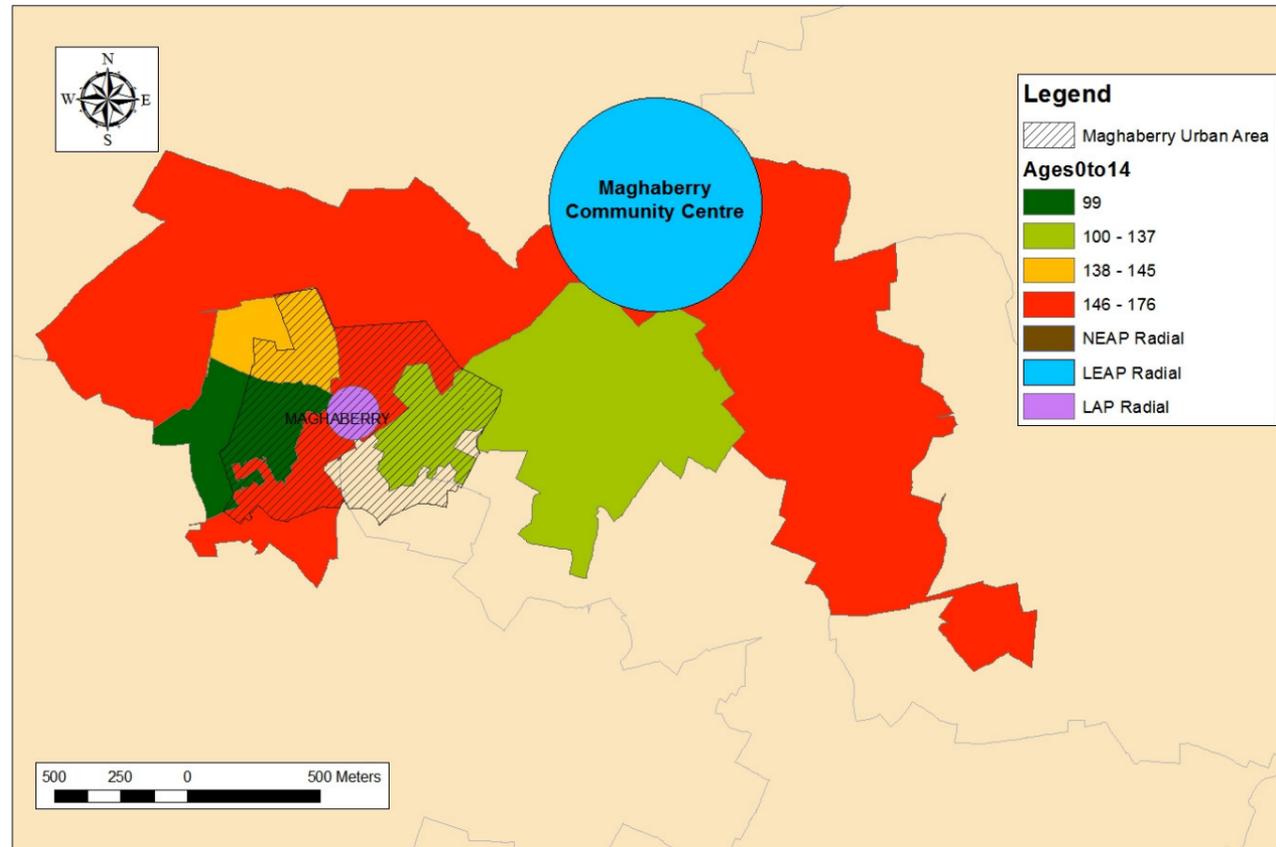
Having discounted the low population areas, the focus shifts to those remaining areas coloured in yellow, orange and red which have a potential unmet need for play provision.



Map 11 shows the location of small areas which, based on demographic data have been identified as potentially having unmet fixed play need across the wider LCCC area. Given the size and scale small areas have been clustered together into groups for analysis (denoted by letters of the alphabet).

Over the following section of the report each cluster area will be assessed according to demography and predominant land use characteristics to identify whether additional fixed play provision would meet identified need.

Cluster Area A



Area Review

Cluster area A is based at Maghaberry village which currently has fixed play provision at 2 locations:

- LEAP Fixed Play Area at Maghaberry Community Centre
- LAP play provision at Maghaberry Village Green

The population data for those living within the identified small areas (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 2,255

0 to 14 Years: 557

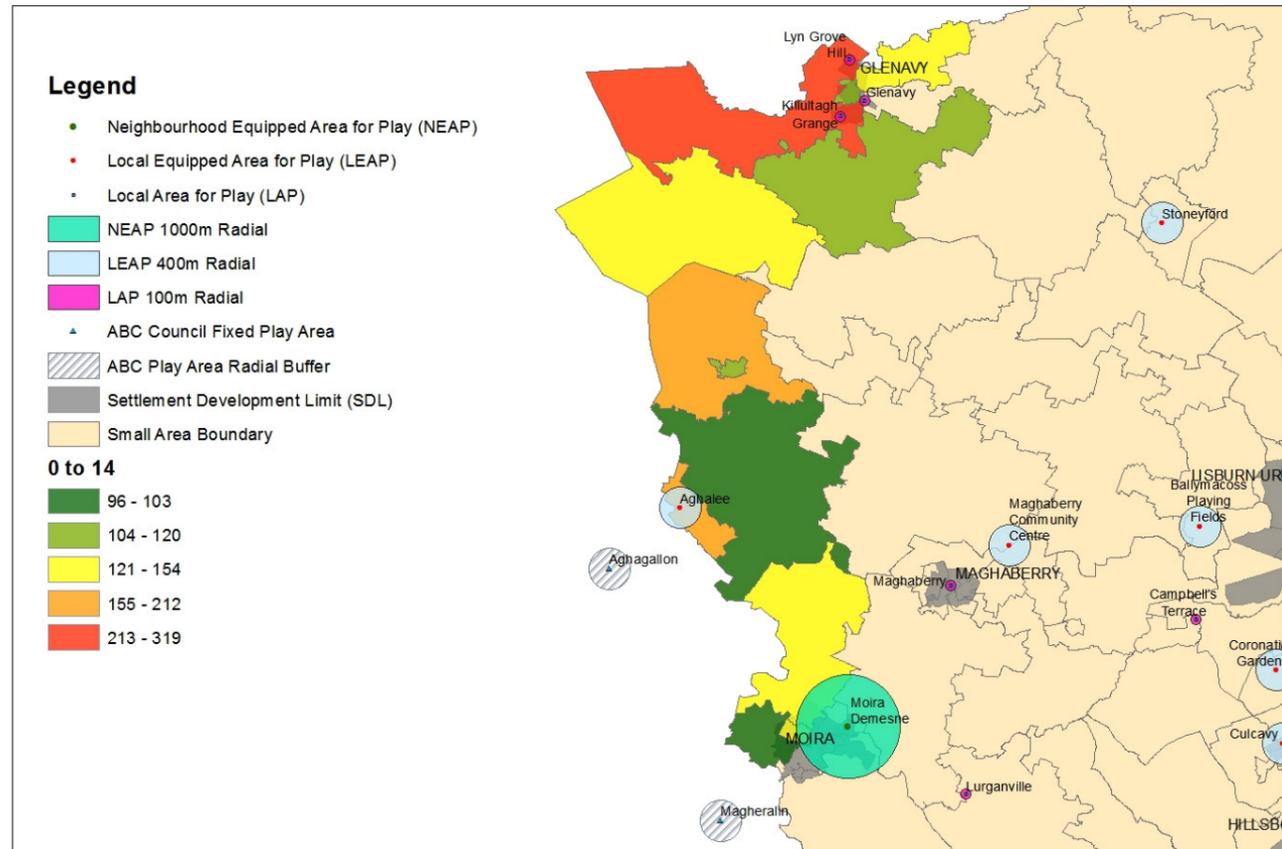
15 to 19 Years: 135

Demographic data suggests a high level of potential need for play within the area, in particular within the residential clusters located off the main road (which runs in a straight line between the 2 play areas).

Recognising that there does exist a sizable level of play demand which outstrips current provision it is suggested that the most cost-effective and potentially impactful solution would be to enhance the LAP play area at the village green bringing it up to LEAP status by adding in additional equipment which would broaden its appeal to older age groups and add additional challenge. Such an approach would broaden the catchment of play delivery in turn meeting the need of the population.

RECOMMENDATION: Enhance Maghaberry Village Green Fixed Play Area to LEAP status

Cluster Area B



Area Review

Cluster area B is located along the western edge of the LCCC area with a population base located in a combination of rural villages/settlements and within rural dispersed locations. Fixed play provision within or adjacent to the cluster area is located at:

- NEAP Fixed Play Area at Moira Demense
- LEAP Fixed Play Area at Aghalee
- LAP Fixed Play Area at Johnston Park
- LAP Fixed Play Area at Lyn Grove Hill
- LAP Fixed Play Area at Killtultagh Grange.

In addition 2 fixed play areas are located in close proximity within ABC Council at Aghagallon and Magheralin, both of which are potentially helping to meet play need within the wider area including residents of LCCC.

The population data for those living within the identified small areas (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 6,312

0 to 14 Years: 1,556

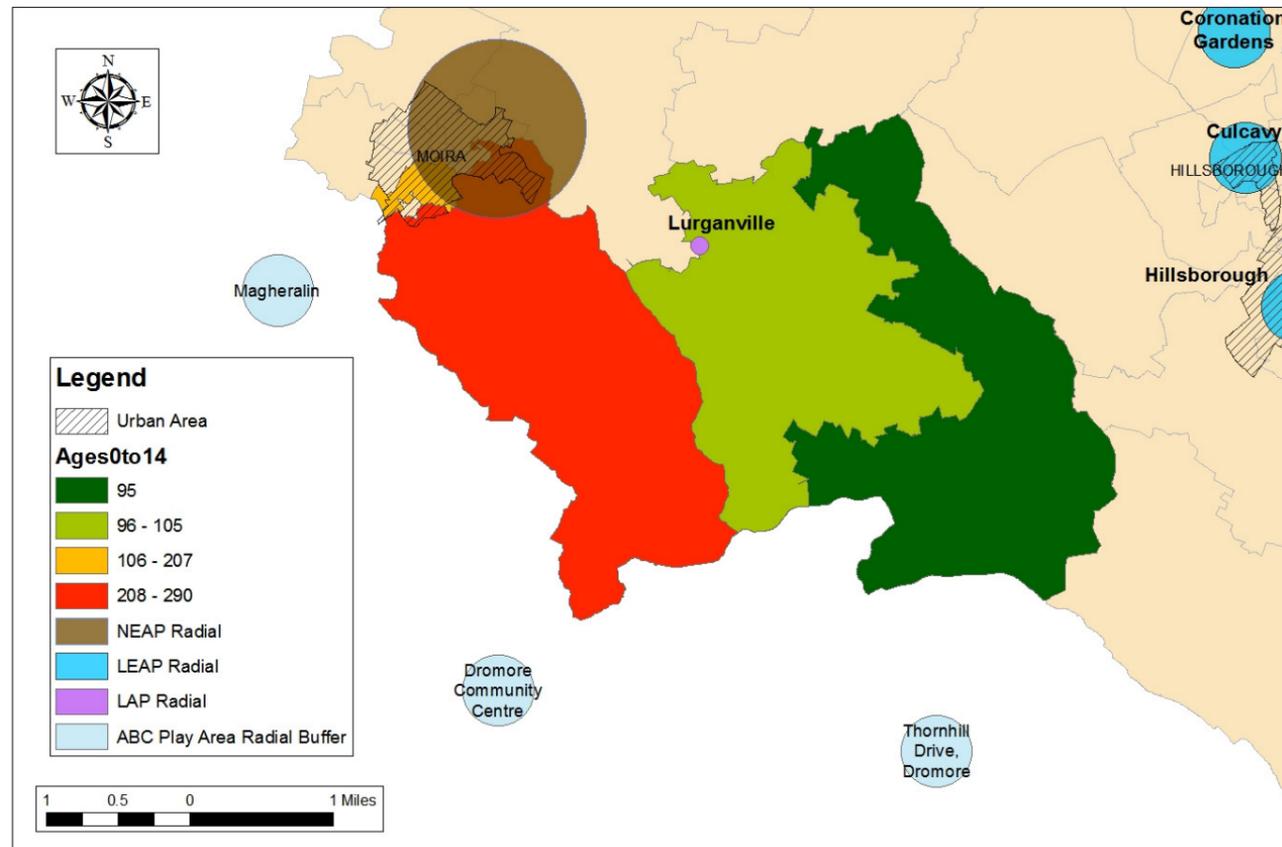
15 to 19 Years: 450

Despite the high population numbers within the overall cluster area, analysis of population distribution against settlement patterns indicates that the majority are located within key settlements at Moira and Aghalee (approx. 80%), both of which are well catered for in terms of fixed play. The dispersed rural nature of the bulk of the remaining cluster area does not lend itself to fixed play development due to the lack of settlement clusters which would justify capital spend and long-term maintenance of fixed play equipment. Such areas may be more suited to alternative approaches to meeting play need e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

The area to the north of the cluster (denoted in red) is an area of increased residential development which has led to a relatively high level of play demand. Whilst developers have installed LAP play areas these provide only localised play opportunities and as such do not lend themselves to meeting wider need in the area. One potential solution to meeting wider play need would be the introduction of additional equipment to 1 of the existing LAP's which would broaden its appeal to older age groups and add additional challenge. Such an approach would broaden the catchment of play delivery in turn meeting the needs of the wider population.

RECOMMENDATION: Enhance either of LAP fixed play areas at Lyn Grove Hill or Killtultagh Grange to LEAP status.

Cluster Area C



Area Review

Cluster area C is located along the south west edge of the LCCC area with a population base located in a combination of rural villages/settlements and rural dispersed locations. Fixed play provision within or adjacent to the cluster area is located at:

- NEAP Fixed Play Area at Moira Demense
- LAP Fixed Play Area at Lurganville

In addition 3 fixed play areas are located with within ABC Council at Magheralin, Dromore Community Centre and Thornhill Drive, Dromore. These are potentially helping to meet play need within the wider area including residents of LCCC.

The population data for those living within the identified small areas (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 2,531

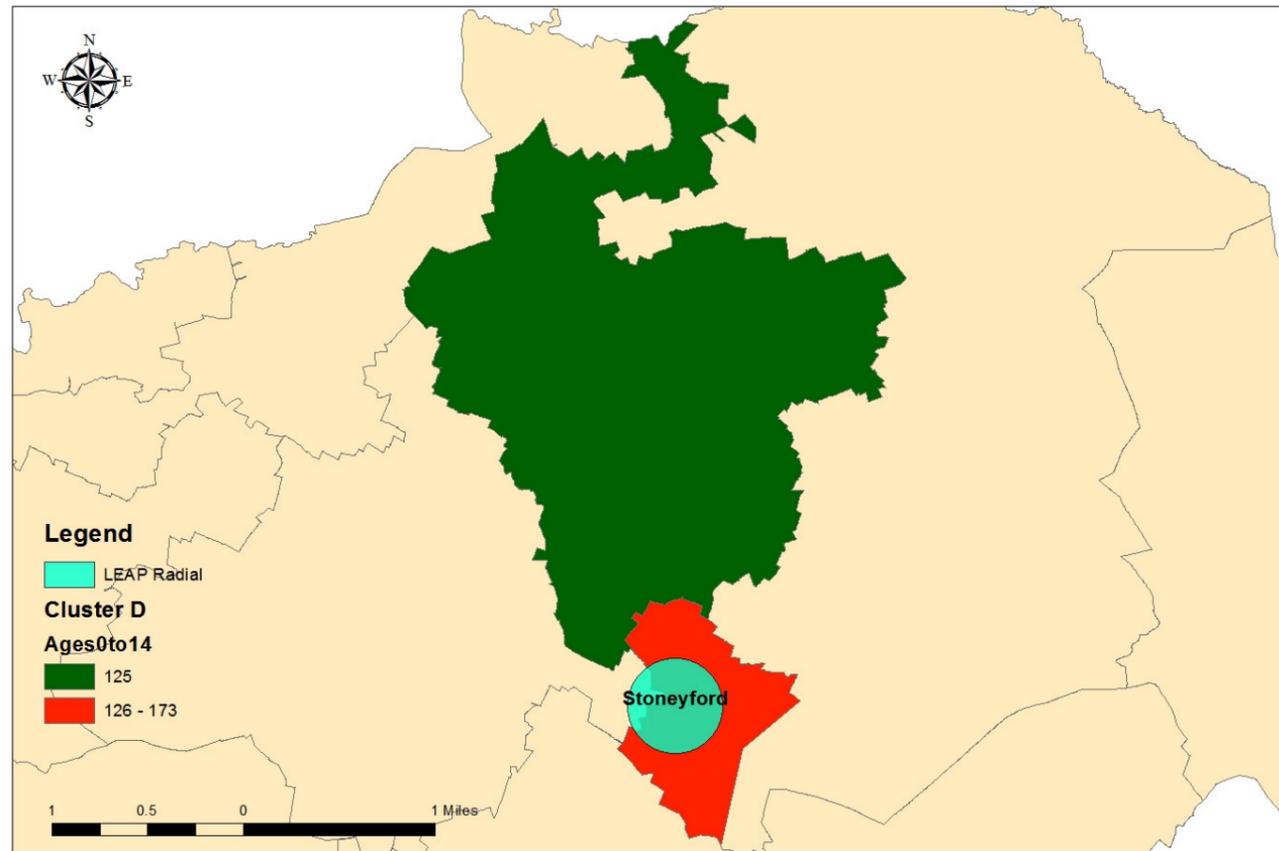
0 to 14 Years: 602

15 to 19 Years: 150

Despite the high population numbers within the overall cluster area, analysis of population distribution against settlement patterns indicates that the majority are located within the key settlement of Moira (approx. 70%) which is well catered for in terms of fixed play. The dispersed rural nature of the remaining cluster area does not lend itself to fixed play development due to the lack of settlement clusters which would justify capital spend and long-term maintenance of fixed play equipment. Such areas may be more suited to alternative approaches to meeting play need e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area D



Area Review

Cluster area D is located to the north of the LCCC area with a population base located in a combination of rural villages/settlements and in rural dispersed locations. Fixed play provision within or adjacent to the cluster area is located at:

- LEAP Fixed Play Area at Stoneyford

The population data for those living within the identified small areas (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 1,126

0 to 14 Years: 298

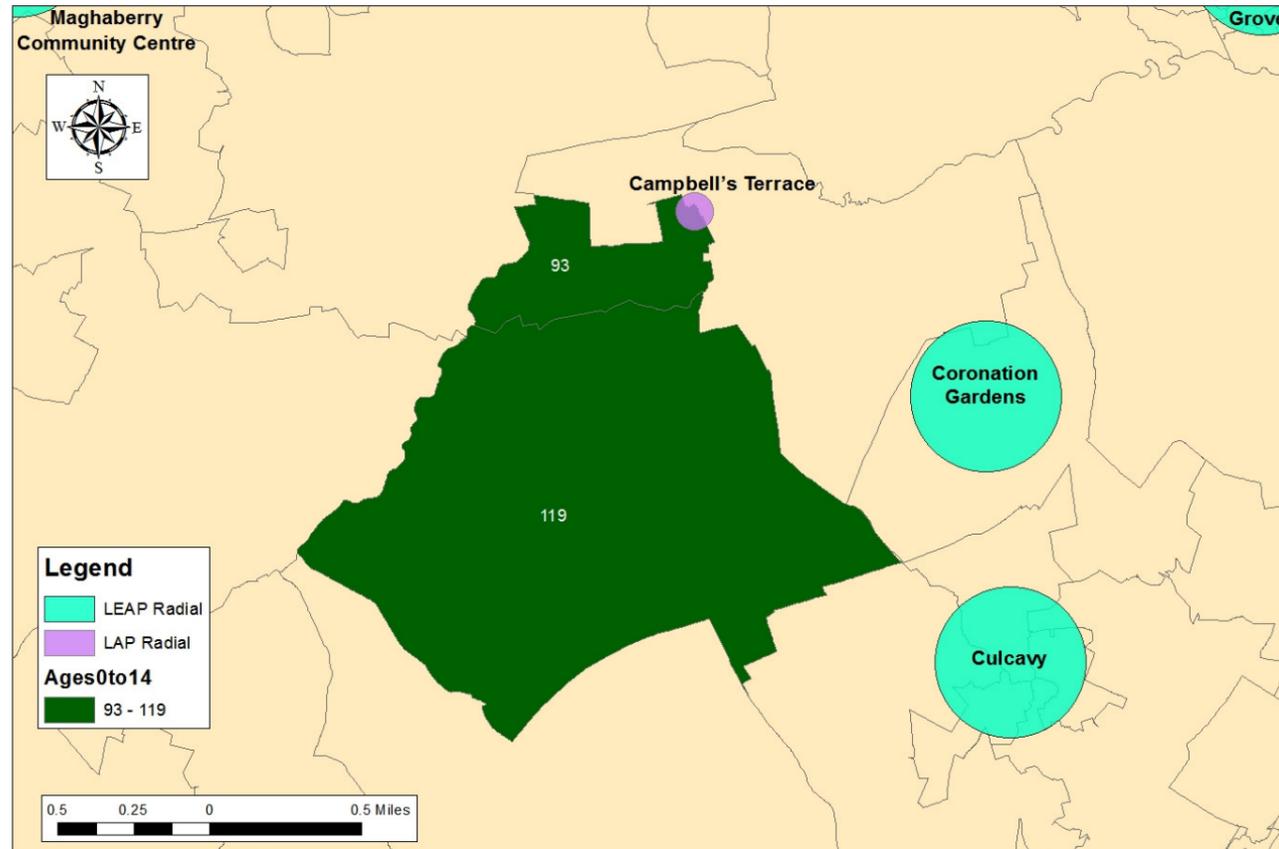
15 to 19 Years: 86

Despite relatively high population numbers within the overall cluster area, analysis of distribution shows that the population are primarily rurally dispersed outside of the main village of Stoneyford which is well catered for in terms of fixed play.

The dispersed rural nature of the remaining cluster area does not lend itself to fixed play development due to the lack of settlement clusters which would justify capital spend and long-term maintenance of fixed play equipment. Such areas may be more suited to alternative approaches to meeting play need e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area E



Area Review

Cluster area E is defined as having a rurally dispersed population with the only play provision to the north east corner of the area at Campbell's Terrace (LAP designated). There are 2 play areas close by, both LEAP designated at Coronation Gardens and Culcavy.

The population data for those living within the identified small areas (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 864

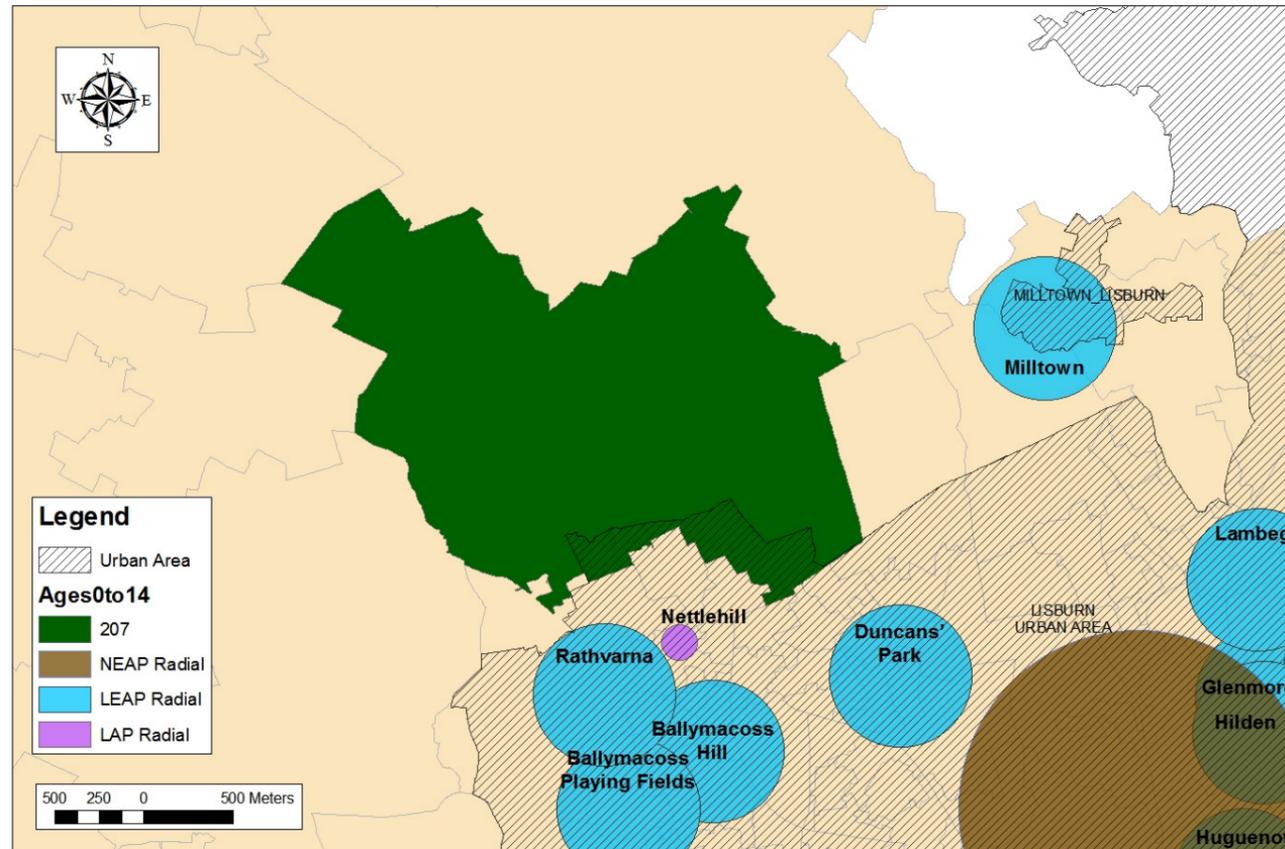
0 to 14 Years: 212

15 to 19 Years: 47

The dispersed rural nature of the cluster area does not lend itself to fixed play development due to the lack of settlement clusters which would justify capital spend and long-term maintenance of fixed play equipment. Such areas may be more suited to alternative approaches to meeting play need e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area G



Area Review

Cluster area G is located to the north of the Lisburn Urban Area and is characterised by a mix of population based within fringe urban area estates and rural dispersed locations. There is currently no fixed play provision within the cluster area.

The population data for those living within the identified small area (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 895

0 to 14 Years: 207

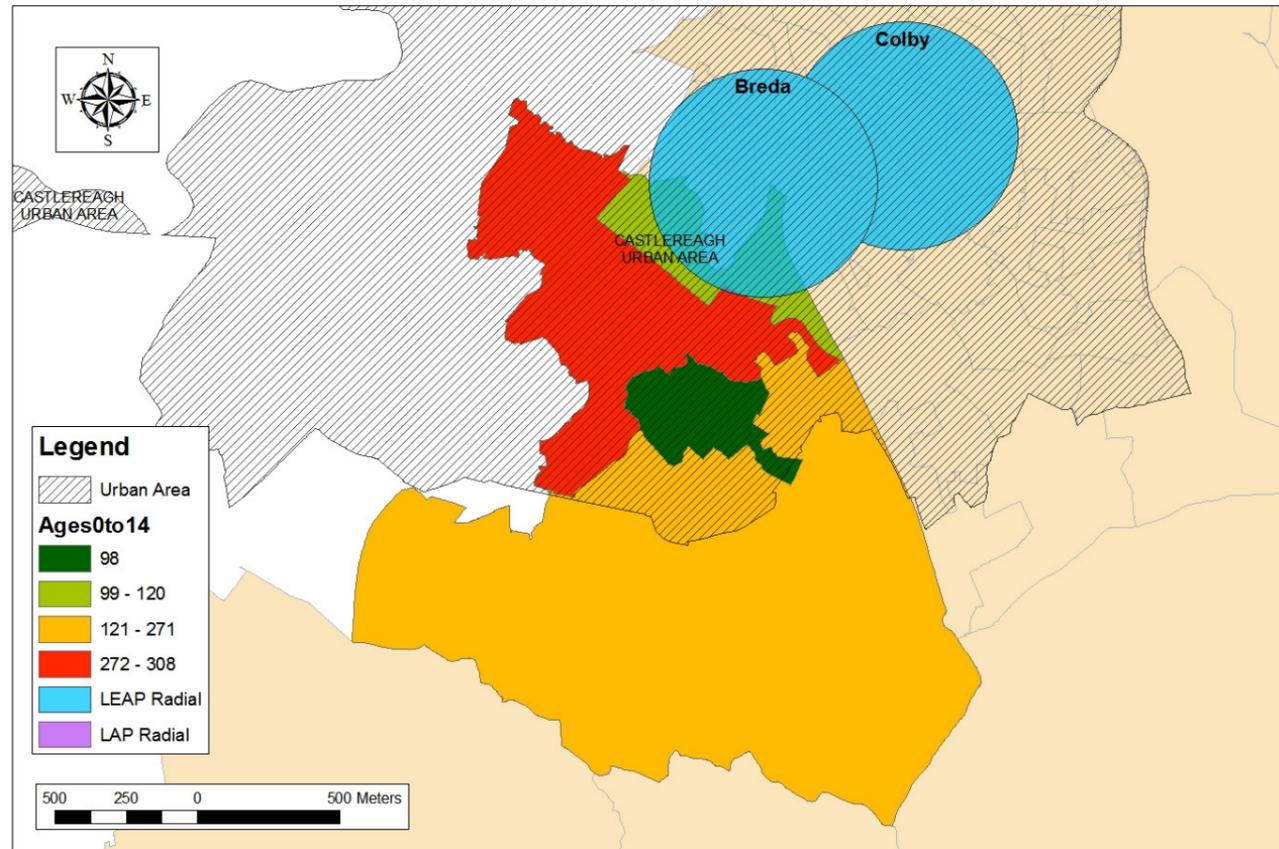
15 to 19 Years: 48

Within the cluster area, analysis of distribution shows that the population are primarily located on the fringes of the urban area with the remainder rurally dispersed.

The dispersed rural nature of the cluster area does not lend itself to fixed play development due to the lack of settlement clusters which would justify capital spend and long-term maintenance of fixed play equipment. Such areas may be more suited to alternative approaches to meeting play need e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area H



Area Review

Cluster area H is located at Newtownbreda and is characterised by a mix of both urban based and rural dispersed population.

At present the cluster area is partially covered to the north east by the catchment of Breda fixed play area with Colby falling just outside the cluster zone but conceivably meeting a level of play need. In addition Belvoir Drive fixed play area, which lies within Belfast City Council area is within 500m travelling distance from parts of the cluster area and is therefore conceivably meeting a level of play need.

The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 9,857

0 to 14 Years: 797

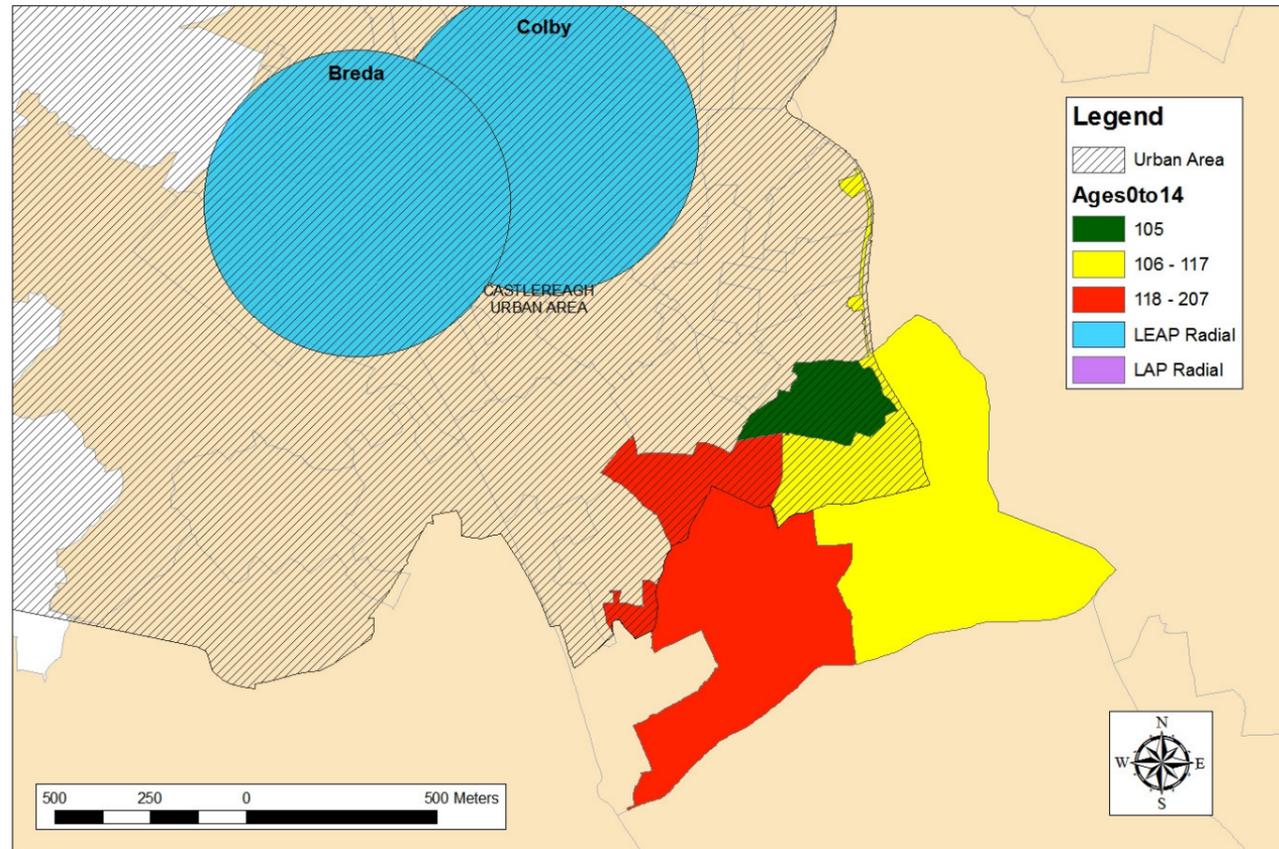
15 to 19 Years: 294

Within the cluster area, the level of demand for play based on demographics is relatively high particularly within the small area denoted in red (308 aged 0 to 14 years and 105 aged 15 to 19 years). Land use analysis highlights that the majority of the residential population are located to the south of the small area with the northern side primarily industrial and commercial in nature. It is suggested council should initiate a local community consultation aimed at assessing the level of demand/support for play and determining the most appropriate method of delivery. This should incorporate consideration of fixed play provision and alternative non-capital approaches including mobile play and community play development.

The small area to the south of the cluster (denoted in orange) whilst showing a sizable demographic demand for play is dispersed rural in nature and does not lend itself to fixed play development.

RECOMMENDATION: LCCC to consider community consultation within small areas to determine demand/support for play to incorporate consideration of fixed play alongside alternative approaches e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area I



Area Review

Cluster area I is located on the southern edge of Newtownbreda and is characterised by a mix of both urban based and rural dispersed population.

At present there is no fixed play provision within the cluster area with the nearest located at Breda and Colby to the north. The population data for those living within the identified small area cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 1,576

0 to 14 Years: 429

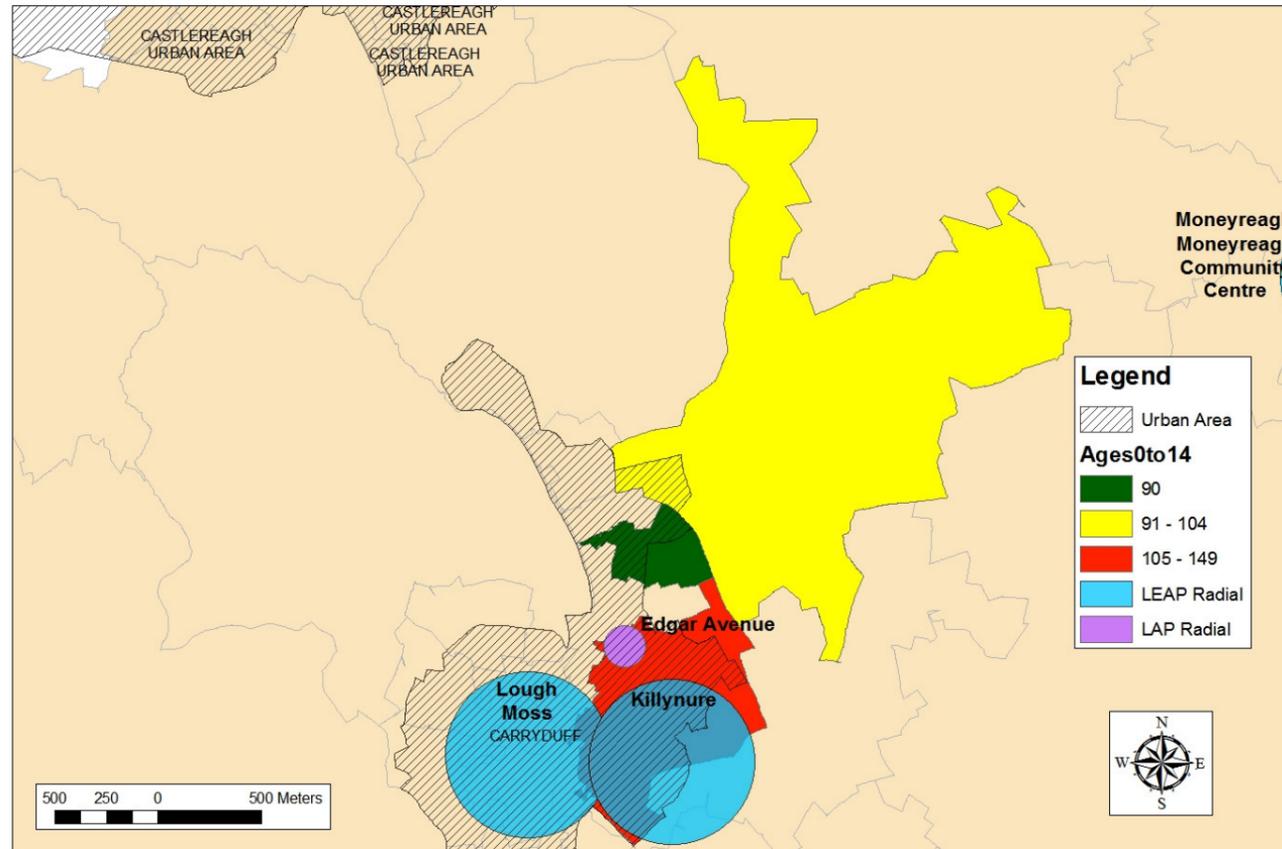
15 to 19 Years: 142

Within the cluster area, the level of demand for play based on demographics is relatively high particularly within the small area denoted in red (207 aged 0 to 14 years and 53 aged 15 to 19 years). Land use analysis highlights that the majority of the residential population are primarily located along the northern edge of the cluster area.

It is suggested council should initiate a local community consultation aimed at assessing the level of demand/support for play and determining the most appropriate method of delivery. This should incorporate consideration of fixed play provision and alternative non-capital approaches including mobile play and community play development.

RECOMMENDATION: LCCC to consider community consultation within small areas to determine demand/support for play to incorporate consideration of fixed play alongside alternative approaches e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area J



Area Review

Cluster area J is located at Carryduff. The cluster area is a combination of urban residential and rural dispersed population.

At present 2 play areas serve the southern portion of the cluster – Lough Moss and Killynure (both LEAP's and Edgar Avenue (LAP)). The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 1,798

0 to 14 Years: 343

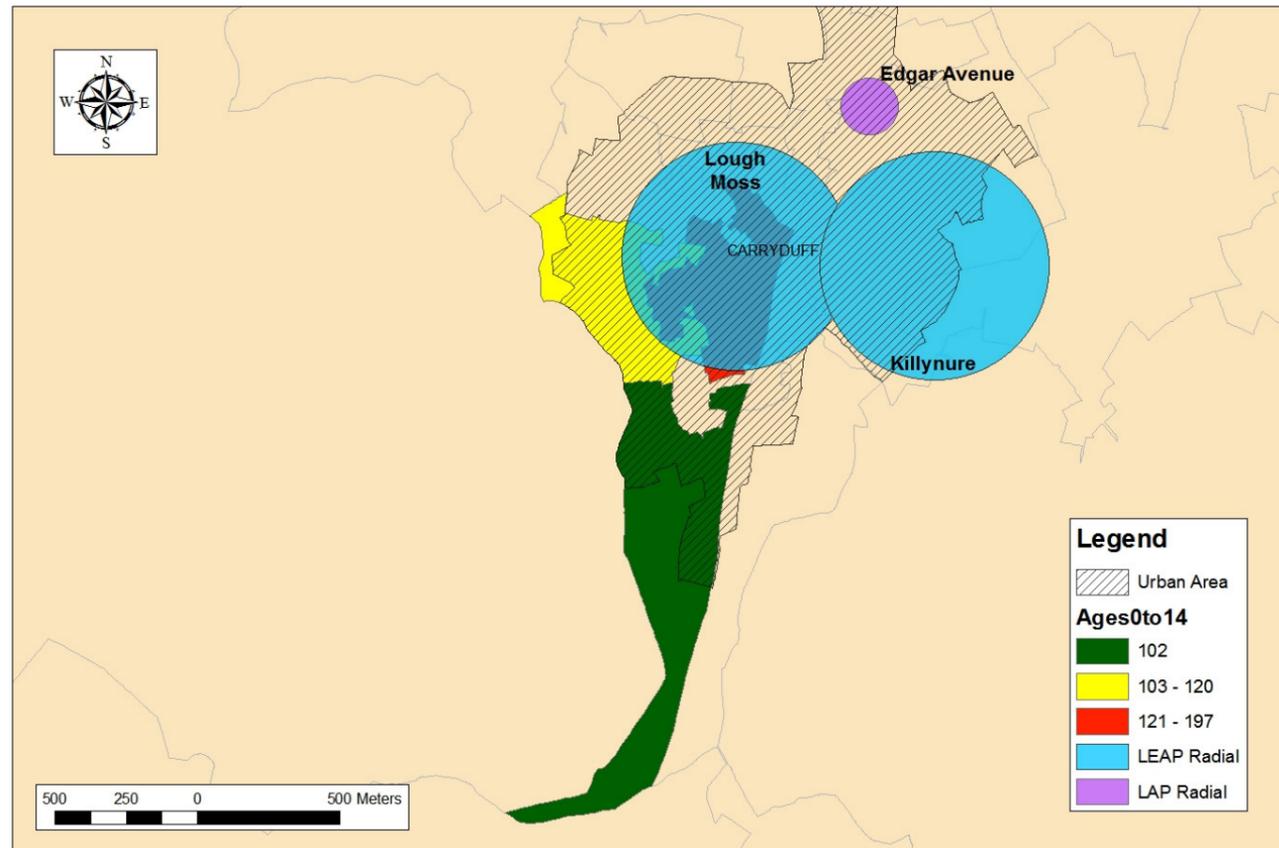
15 to 19 Years: 145

Within the cluster, the small area to the north (denoted in yellow) is primarily rural dispersed and does not lend itself to fixed play provision. The level of demand for play based on demographics and land use analysis is primarily focused on the southern half of the red small area within which play need is almost fully met through 2 existing LEAP's and 1 LAP. No further fixed play provision is required at this stage although council may wish to consider alternative approaches to meeting play need within the rural and outlying areas e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area K

Area Review



Cluster area K is located to the south of Carryduff. The cluster area is a combination of urban residential (on the outskirts of Carryduff) with the remainder rural dispersed.

The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 1,755

0 to 14 Years: 419

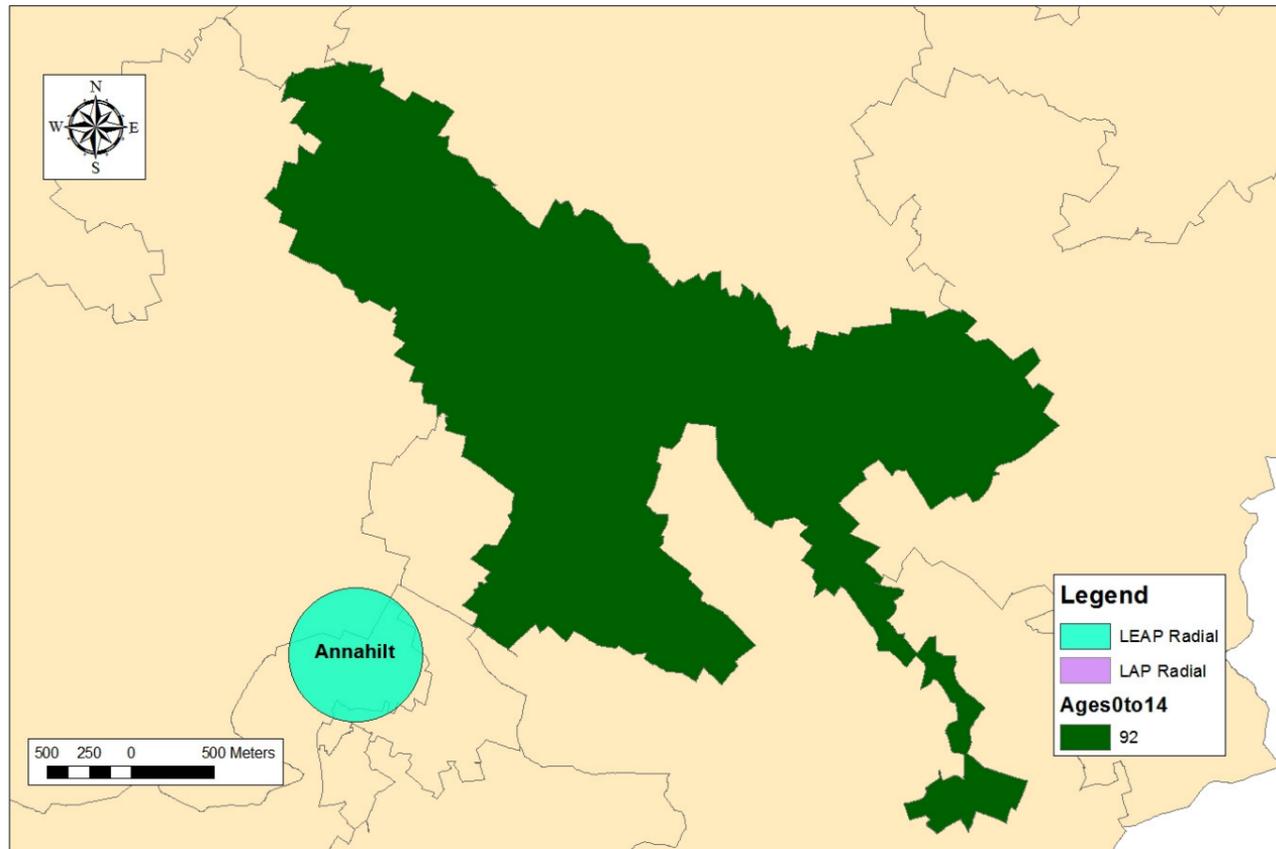
15 to 19 Years: 85

At present the catchment area of Lough Moss fixed play area is meeting the play needs of a substantial number of those residing within most highly populated small areas within the cluster (denoted in red and yellow).

The population living within the small area denoted in green is defined as rural dispersed which does not lend itself to fixed play provision. No further fixed play provision is required at this stage although council may wish to consider alternative approaches to meeting play need within the rural and outlying areas e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area L



Area Review

Cluster area L is a rural area located to the north east of Annahilt. The cluster area is rural dispersed in nature.

The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 417

0 to 14 Years: 92

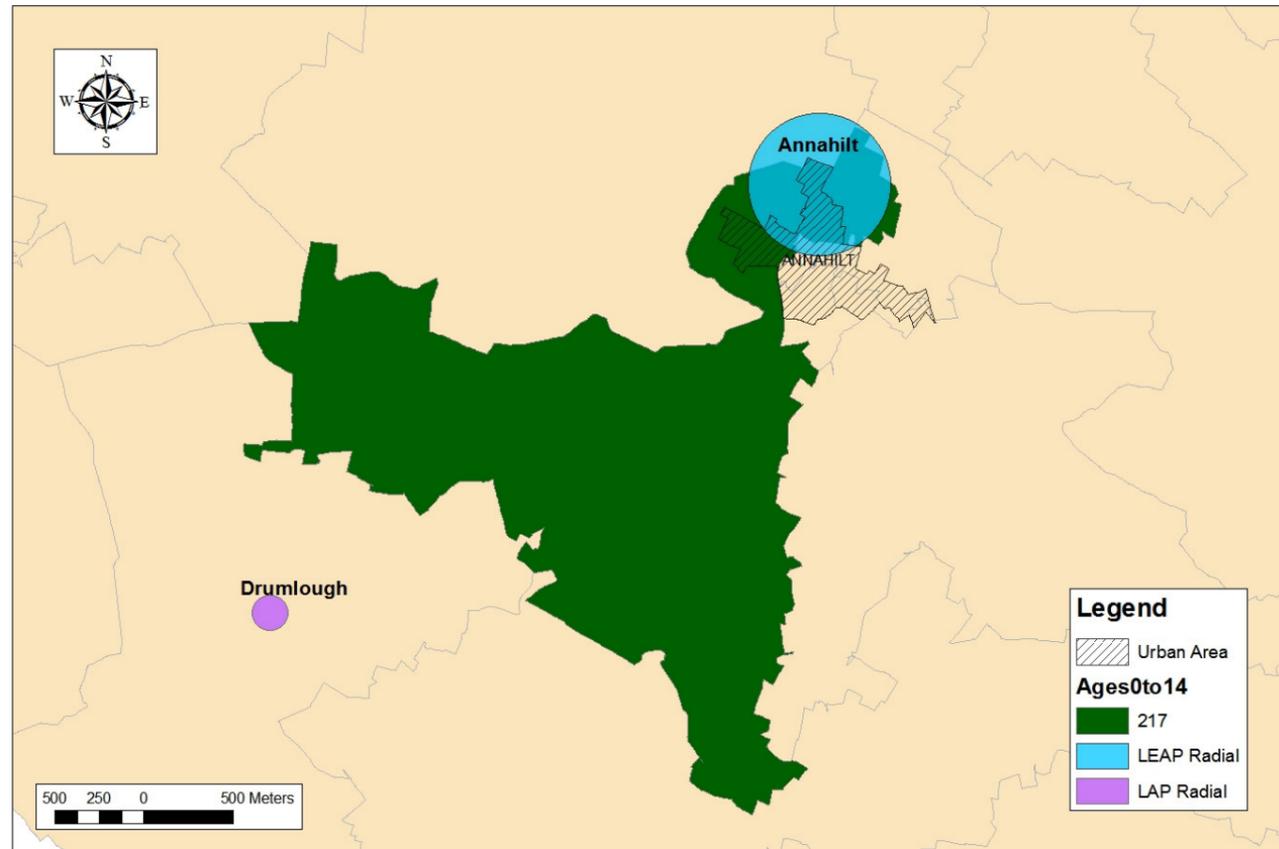
15 to 19 Years: 24

At present there is no fixed play provision within the cluster area.

As highlighted, the population is defined as rural dispersed which does not lend itself to fixed play provision. No further fixed play provision is required at this stage although council may wish to consider alternative approaches to meeting play need within such rural areas e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area M



Area Review

Cluster area M is a rural area located to the south west of Annahilt. The cluster area is rural dispersed in nature.

The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 965

0 to 14 Years: 217

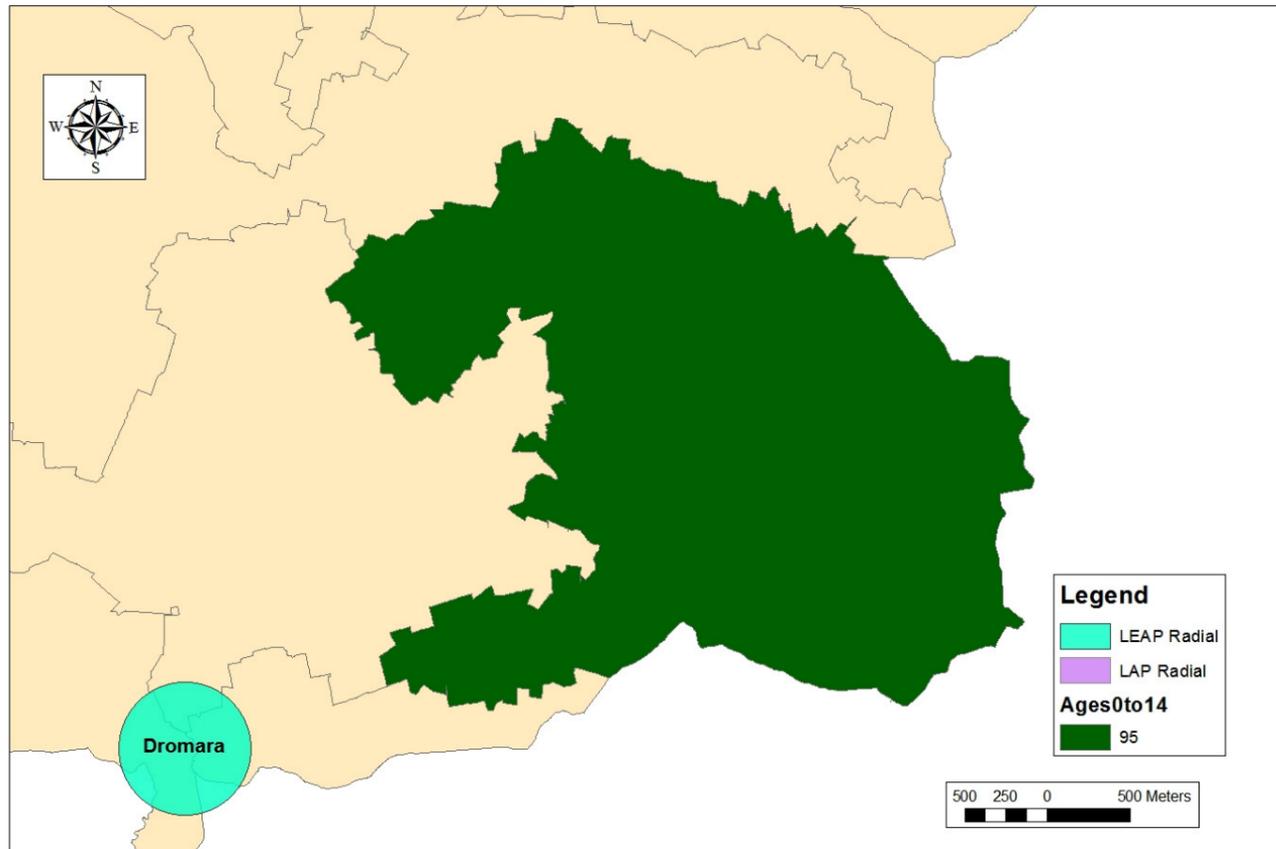
15 to 19 Years: 82

At present there is 1 fixed play area located at Annahilt which meets play need in and around the village.

With regards to the wider small area, as highlighted the population is largely defined as rural dispersed which does not lend itself to fixed play provision. No further fixed play provision is required at this stage although council may wish to consider alternative approaches to meeting play need within such rural areas e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area N



Area Review

Cluster area N is a rural area located to the north east of Dromora. The small area is rural dispersed in nature.

The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 455

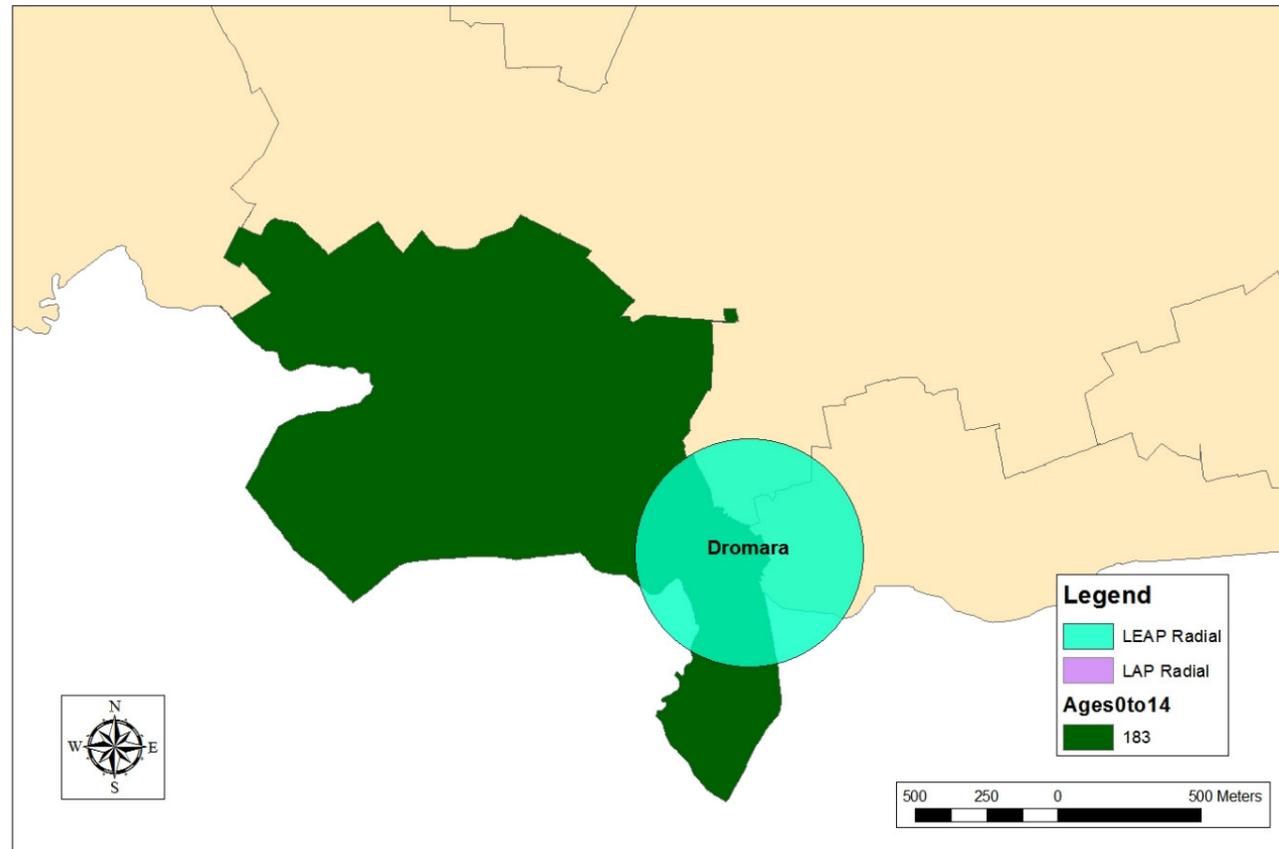
0 to 14 Years: 95

15 to 19 Years: 40

At present there are no fixed play area's located within the small area. As highlighted the population is largely defined as rural dispersed which does not lend itself to fixed play provision. No further fixed play provision is required at this stage although council may wish to consider alternative approaches to meeting play need within such rural areas e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area O



Area Review

Cluster area O is a rural area to the south of the LCCC area which includes Dromara village. The population is a combination of urban residential (in and around Dromara) and rural dispersed.

At present there is 1 fixed play area within the small area which is located at Dromara. The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 661

0 to 14 Years: 183

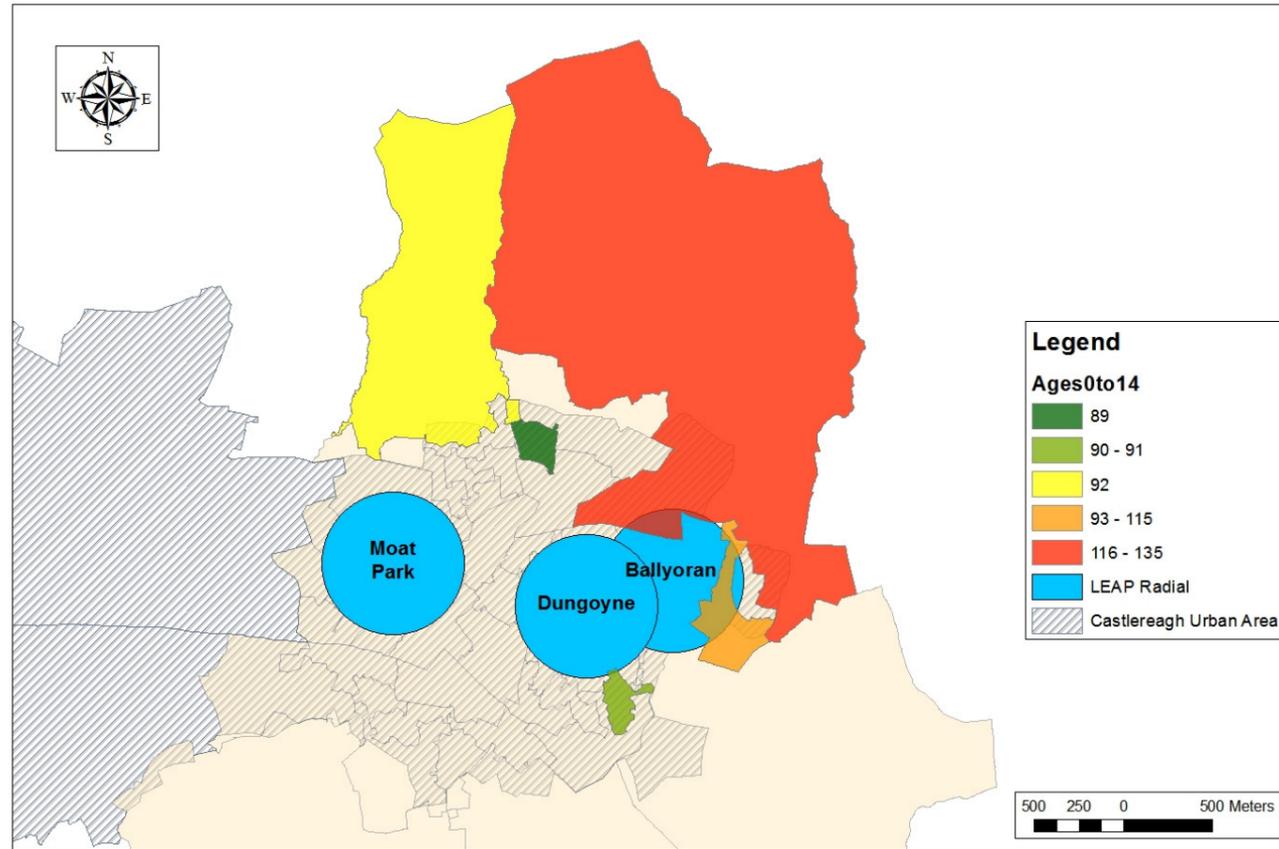
15 to 19 Years: 20

The majority of the population are based in and around Dromara, falling within the catchment for the fixed play area. The remainder of the small area population is of a rural dispersed nature which does not lend itself to fixed play provision. No further fixed play provision is required at this stage although council may wish to consider alternative approaches to meeting play need within such rural areas e.g. mobile play, community volunteer play schemes etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop alternative approaches to fixed play for meeting play need in rural areas e.g. mobile play, community led play schemes etc.

Cluster Area P

Area Review



Cluster area P lies on the periphery of Dundonald urban area. The population is a combination of urban residential (on the fringes of Dundonald urban area) and rural dispersed.

At present the catchment of 1 fixed play area (Ballyoran) partially covers a small part of the cluster whilst Dungoyne play area lies outside the cluster. The population data for those living within the identified small cluster (as per 2011 census) was:

Total Population: 1,804

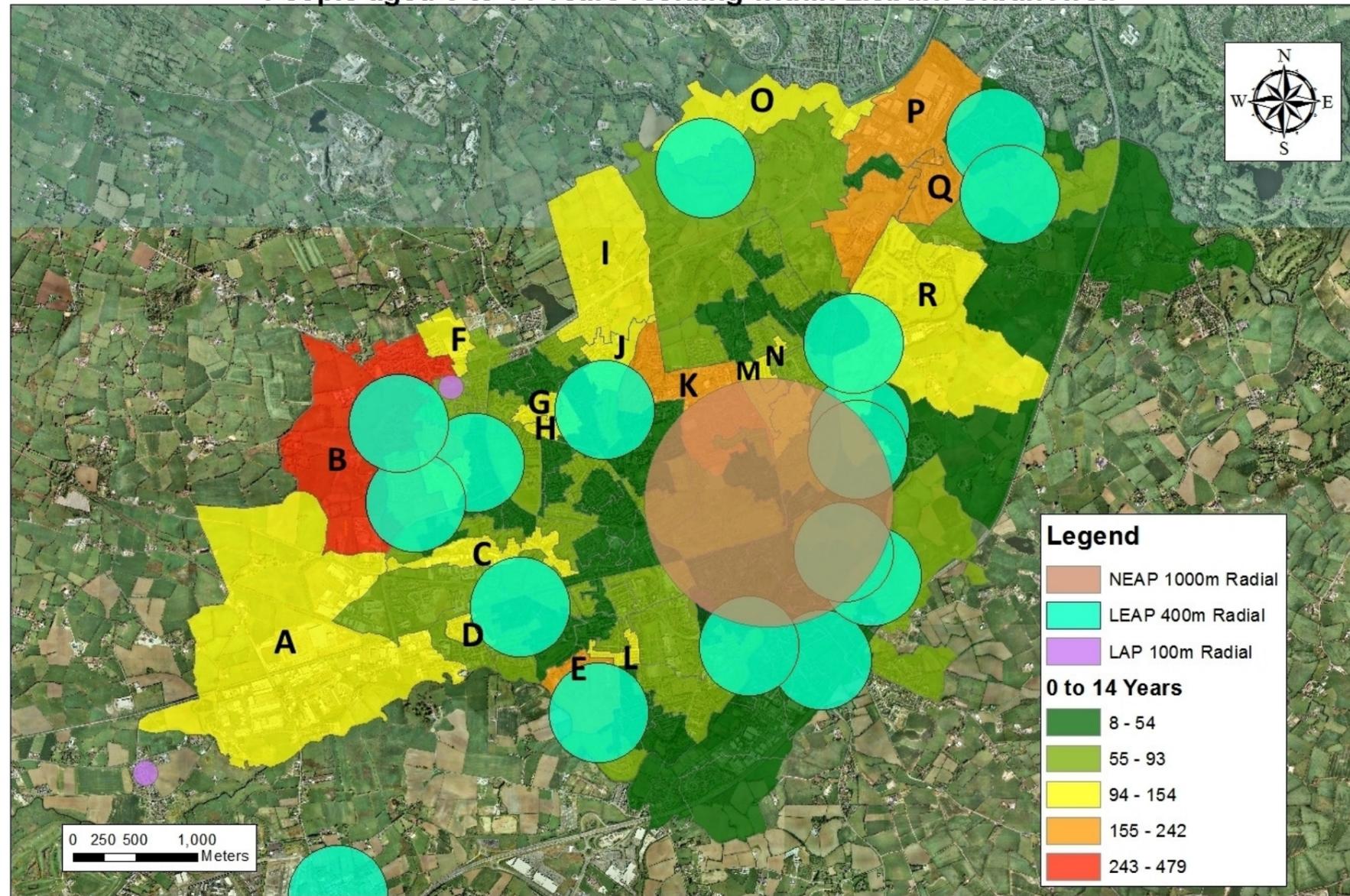
0 to 14 Years: 433

15 to 19 Years: 133

In viewing the demographic data it is important to note that the majority of residents living within the identified small areas live on the outskirts of Castlereagh urban area. The remainder of the small areas population is of a rural dispersed nature which does not lend itself to fixed play provision.

RECOMMENDATION: Given the current spread of population within the area it is not felt that there is a need for additional fixed play provision at this point in time. Council should however monitor residential development and population growth within the area.

Map 10: Map showing Play Area Radial Coverage mapped against the number of Children and Young People aged 0 to 14 Years residing within Lisburn Urban Area



Map Prepared by PlayBoard NI on behalf of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council



Map 10 shows the 'level of play area coverage within Lisburn urban area. Again, any small area falling outside of the radials could be said to be in need of play provision – however that in itself does not mean that fixed play development is required in that area.

Overall the Lisburn urban area can be said to be fairly well catered for in terms of fixed play areas with the majority of the urban based population within a maximum 1,000m from a FIXED play area.

It is also important to note that in an urban area travel to play areas (including independent travel by children and young people using public transport, walking, bicycle etc.) tends to be easier than within rural areas where distances may be prohibitive and/or public transport infrequent.

As previously, those areas showing less than 88 children aged 14 or under (the dark and light green mapped areas) have a low population density which does not lend itself to fixed play provision.

Potential play cold spots i.e. small areas with more than 94 children aged 0 to 14 have been identified alphabetically for further comment overleaf.

Lisburn Urban Area		
Cold Spot Identifier	Demographic Analysis	Additional Fixed Play Required
A	Identified small area A lies to the south west of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Knockmore ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 531 residents of whom 94 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 30 aged between 15 to 19 years. Land use within the area is predominantly commercial/industrial and rural farming with some urbanised residential areas located on the Lisburn Urban Area side.	No - Given the predominant land use type, location of residential areas and the number of fixed play areas within the wider locale it is felt that there is no need for additional fixed play provision at present.
B	Identified small area B lies on the western side of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Ballymacoss ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 2,112 residents of whom 479 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 128 aged between 15 to 19 years.	Yes – The area has been subject to residential development over recent years and therefore does have a demographic need for play. At present the small area is partially covered by fixed play located at Ballymacoss Playing Fields and Rathvarna. This cover is however only partial and it is suggested that consideration should be given to further development of fixed play (LEAP) within the area to meet the needs of the population.
C	Identified small area C lies on the western side of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Knockmore ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 652 residents of whom 136 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 45 aged between 15 to 19 years.	No – whilst there is no dedicated fixed play provision within the small area, 4 play areas are located within easy travelling distance therefore additional fixed play provision

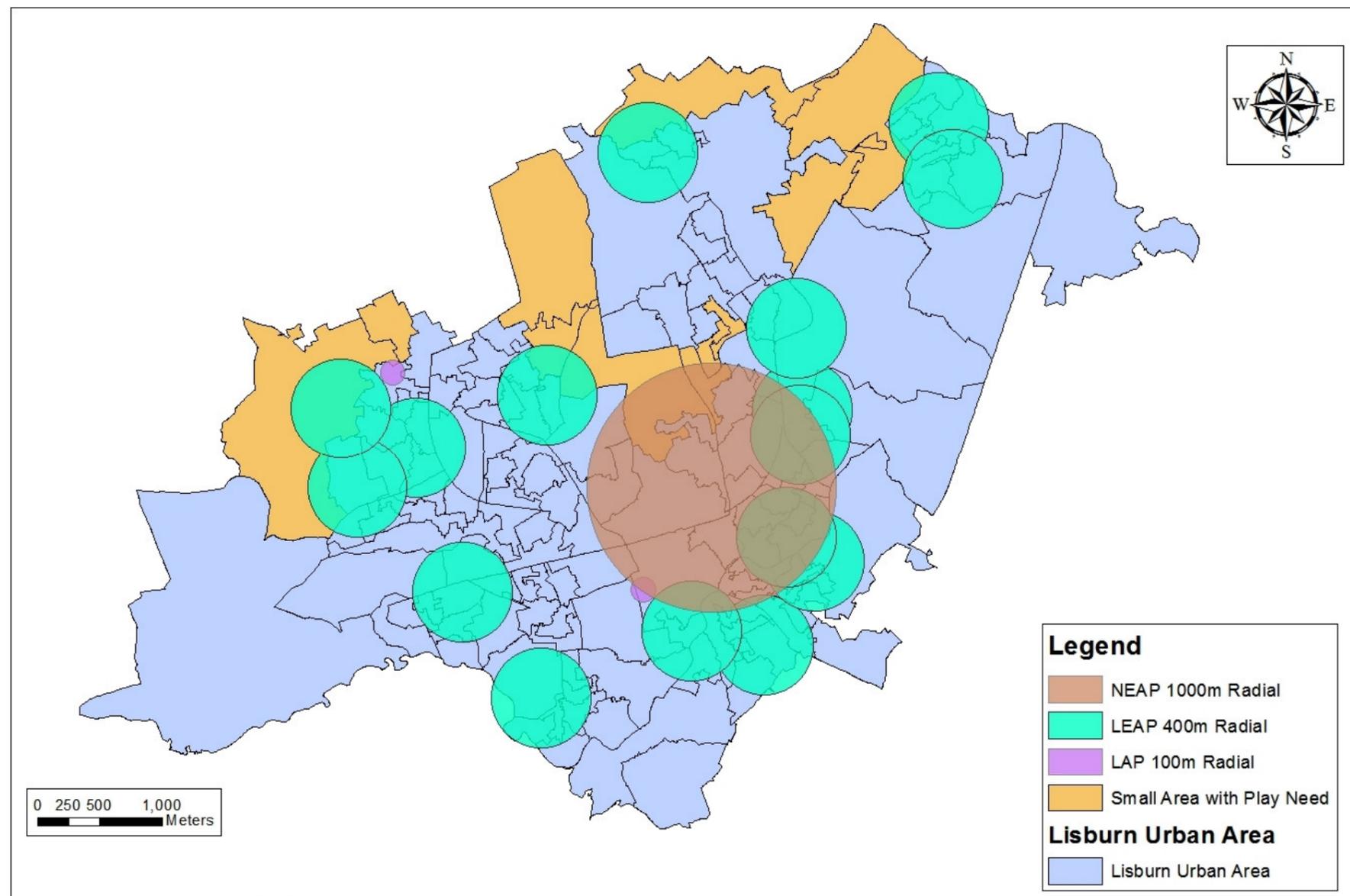
		is not required at present.
D	Identified small area D lies to the south west of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Old Warren ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 355 residents of whom 95 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 29 aged between 15 to 19 years.	No – the small area lies partially within the catchment of Grove fixed play area (designated LEAP) with the remainder in easy travelling distance.
E	Identified small area E lies to the south of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Old Warren ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 704 residents of whom 216 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 49 aged between 15 to 19 years.	No – Whilst the demographic data highlights the need for fixed play, the small area lies almost wholly within the catchment area for Avonmore fixed play area.
F	Identified small area F lies to the north west Lisburn Urban area and is located in Ballymacoss ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 557 residents of whom 105 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 330 aged between 15 to 19 years.	Possible expansion of Nettlehill Road fixed play area to LEAP - The small area lies on the outskirts for Lisburn and has been subject to residential development in recent years. As a result there is a demand for fixed play. The area does lie in close proximity to Nettlehill fixed play area which, if enhanced to LEAP standard could meet this demand.
G	Identified small area G is located centrally within Lisburn Urban area and is located in Ballymacash ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 346 residents of whom 125 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 25 aged between 15 to 19 years.	No – the small area does have a residential need for fixed play however lies in close proximity to Duncans Park and

		Ballymacoss Hill fixed play areas.
H	Identified small area H is located centrally within Lisburn Urban area and is located in Ballymacash ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 354 residents of whom 96 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 32 aged between 15 to 19 years.	No – the small area does have a residential need for fixed play however lies in close proximity to Duncans Park and Ballymacoss Hill fixed play areas.
I and J	<p>Identified small area I lies to the north west of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Ballymacash ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 547 residents of whom 126 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 55 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p> <p>Identified small area J lies to the north west of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Ballymacash ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 456 residents of whom 107 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 61 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p>	<p>Yes – Demographically there is a demand for fixed play. There are no fixed play areas located within or alongside small area I with small area J lying partially within the catchment for Duncan’s Park.</p> <p>Is suggested that consideration be given to fixed play development which could enhance access to fixed play for area for both small areas if located appropriately.</p>
K, M and N	<p>Identified small area K is located centrally within Lisburn Urban area and is located in Wallace Park ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 1,024 residents of whom 236 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 79 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p> <p>Identified small area M lies located centrally within Lisburn Urban area and is located in Harmony Hill ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 706 residents of whom 116 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 45 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p> <p>Identified small area N is located centrally</p>	<p>Yes – Whilst all 3 small areas fall partially within the catchment for Wallace Park and (in the case of area K Duncan’s Park) there is a combined demographic demand for fixed play.</p> <p>Whilst acknowledging that Wallace Park does</p>

	<p>within Lisburn Urban area and is located in Magheralave ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 376 residents of whom 121 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 7 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p>	<p>provide a wide range of play opportunities, It is noted that there is a lack of LEAP provision to the south of the 3 small areas. It is suggested that council give consideration to the development of a LEAP fixed play area with the area which, if located appropriately could meet more localised need for play, in particular for younger children who are less likely to be able to travel independently to Wallace Park.</p>
L	<p>Identified small area L lies to the south of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Tonagh ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 479 residents of whom 97 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 29 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p>	<p>No – The small area has a need for fixed play provision, however given the close proximity of Avonmore and arguably Grove fixed play areas it is not felt that there is a need for further development at this stage.</p>
O, P and Q	<p>Identified small area O lies to the north of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Derryaghy ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 562 residents of whom 133 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 43 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p> <p>Identified small area P lies to the north east of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Derryaghy ward. In the 2011 census the</p>	<p>Yes - The area is a mix of urban and rural and is partially covered by the catchment of Milltown fixed play area. Given the demographic data there is a need for play provision within</p>

	<p>small area had 1,435 residents of whom 180 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 43 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p> <p>Identified small area Q lies to the north east of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Derryaghy ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 777 residents of whom 187 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 49 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p>	<p>the area which, if located appropriately could meet play needs within each of the 3 small areas.</p>
<p>R</p>	<p>Identified small area R is located to the east of Lisburn Urban area and is located in Lambeg ward. In the 2011 census the small area had 728 residents of whom 98 were aged between 0 to 14 years with 49 aged between 15 to 19 years.</p>	<p>No - The small area is a mix of rural and urban residential and is partially served by fixed play areas located at Lambeg, Glenmore and Hilden. At present play demand could be said to be largely in the more rural areas which do not lend themselves to fixed play provision.</p>

Map 10: Map showing Small Areas identified as having Play Need within Lisburn Urban Area



Map Prepared by PlayBoard NI on behalf of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council



Map 9 highlights those small areas identified above as having a need for additional play based on demography and proximity to existing play areas.

It should be noted that whilst these areas have been identified as having a play need, further localised analysis would be required in order to determine:

- The optimum location for play provision in order to meet the needs of those living within each area/group of areas;
- Localised patterns of need based on further analysis of age groups living within each area;
- Availability of appropriate land in order to meet play need in or near to the optimum location.

6.0 PLAYABILITY ASSESSMENTS

- 6.1 The location of a fixed play area within a community is not on its own an indication that plays need is being met. In order to assess the degree to which a play area is meeting play need a playability assessment is essential. As part of the tender, PlayBoard carried out a playability assessment of all 47 fixed play areas across the LCCC area.
- 6.2 This section of the report provides an overview of the overall findings of the playability audit. In addition each of the 47 play areas has its own Fixed Play Area Overview Report which provides a detailed overview of the assessment findings.
- 6.3 The playability assessment was based on a two part audit, the first focused on the play environment created by the play area and the second on the play opportunities supported by the play area. Following completion of the play audit, each play area was allocated a combined score with the maximum possible being 225.
- 6.4 The table below shows the final ranking of the 47 play areas based on their overall playability audit scores.

Rank	Name of Play Area	Playability Score
1	Moira Demesne	202
2	Wallace Park	193
3	Hillsborough	187
4	Crossnacreevy	172
5	Huguenot	171
6	Maghaberry Community Centre	171
7	Milltown	170
8	Lurganville	169
9	Lough Moss	164
10	Moneyreagh	162
11	Breda	150
12	Colby	149
13	Killultagh Grange	149
14	Glenmore (1997)	145
15	Aghalee	141
16	Killynure	141
17	Campbell's Terrace	139
18	Culcavy	139
19	Moat Park	137
20	Rathvarna	135
21	Stoneyford	134
22	Queen Elizabeth Ballymacross Playing Fields	133
23	Barbour Memorial Playing Fields	132
24	Lambeg	132
25	Drumbo	131

Rank	Name of Play Area	Playability Score
26	Grove	129
27	Hilden	127
28	Glenavy	126
29	Ballymacoss Hill	125
30	Avonmore	124
31	Edgar Avenue	123
32	Drumlough	122
33	Annahilt	121
34	Duncan's Park	121
35	Dromora	119
36	Dungoyne	115
37	Coronation Gardens	114
38	Lyn Grove Hill	114
39	Riverbank	114
40	Ryan Park	114
41	Nettlehill	113
42	Ballyoran	111
43	Kilmakee	110
44	Maghaberry Village Green	110
45	Ravernet	103
46	Hillhall	102
47	Hill Street	95

- 6.5 A comprehensive breakdown of the scores achieved by each fixed play area within each category of the audit has been presented across the following pages of the report.

Rank	Play Area Name	Playability Audit Score (Part A) Environment for Play						Playability Audit Score (Part B) Play Opportunities				Combined Playability Score (A + B)	Combined Playability RANK (A + B)	Environment for Play RANK Part A	Play Opportunities RANK Part B
		Locational Factors (Max. 60)	Accessibility Factors (Max. 25)	Features (Max. 40)	Enivronmental Factors (Max. 45)	Risk & Challenge (Max. 10)	Part A (Max. 180)	Physical Play (Max. 10)	Creative Play (Max. 15)	Social Play (Max. 20)	Part B (Max. 45)				
1	Moira Demesne	57	23	39	35	5	159	10	14	19	43	202	1	1 (-)	1(-)
2	Wallace Park	55	24	38	32	5	154	10	11	18	39	193	2	2 (-)	2 (-)
3	Hillsborough	54	25	39	29	5	152	6	12	17	35	187	3	3 (-)	5 (-2)
4	Crossnacreevy	54	23	26	25	5	133	9	14	16	39	172	4	8 (-4)	3 (+1)
5	Huguenot	53	21	26	36	4	140	10	7	14	31	171	5	5 (-)	8 (-3)
6	Maghaberry Community Centre	54	24	35	25	4	142	10	7	12	29	171	6	4 (+2)	10 (-4)
7	Milltown	54	21	27	29	5	136	10	12	12	34	170	7	6 (+1)	6 (+1)
8	Lurganville	58	18	23	27	4	130	10	15	14	39	169	8	10 (-2)	4 (+4)
9	Lough Moss	54	17	33	25	5	134	9	11	10	30	164	9	7 (+2)	9 (-)
10	Moneyreagh	54	21	33	21	4	133	10	9	10	29	162	10	9 (-1)	11 (-1)
11	Breda	55	23	25	18	4	125	7	7	11	25	150	11	11 (-)	20 (-9)
12	Colby	52	20	28	20	3	123	8	9	9	26	149	12	12 (-)	16 (-4)
13	Killultagh Grange	52	18	29	19	5	123	9	8	9	26	149	13	13 (-)	17 (-4)
14	Glenmore	53	21	24	21	3	122	8	8	7	23	145	14	14 (-)	22 (-8)
15	Aghalee	51	18	26	19	4	118	10	8	5	23	141	15	15 (-)	23 (-8)
16	Killynure	49	22	25	18	4	118	5	8	10	23	141	16	16 (-)	24 (-8)
17	Campbell's Terrace	50	12	26	19	4	111	9	10	9	28	139	17	21 (-4)	13 (+4)
18	Culcavy	49	22	25	18	4	118	5	8	8	21	139	18	17 (+1)	25 (-7)
19	Moat Park	50	21	27	16	2	116	7	6	8	21	137	19	18 (+1)	26 (-7)
20	Rathvarna	47	21	24	13	3	108	10	5	12	27	135	20	23 (-3)	14 (+6)
21	Stoneyford	49	20	27	15	2	113	6	8	7	21	134	21	19 (+2)	27 (-6)
22	Queen Elizabeth Ballymacross Playing Fields	48	15	22	18	3	106	9	7	11	27	133	22	25 (-3)	15 (+7)
23	Barbour Memorial Playing Fields	47	15	19	19	3	103	9	8	12	29	132	23	31 (-8)	12 (+11)
24	Lambeg	48	19	21	16	2	106	10	6	10	26	132	24	26 (-2)	18 (+6)
25	Drumbo	48	22	25	10	1	106	10	5	10	25	131	25	27 (-2)	21 (+4)
26	Grove	49	19	25	16	3	112	5	5	7	17	129	26	20 (+6)	40 (-14)
27	Hilden	45	19	32	11	2	109	5	5	8	18	127	27	22 (+5)	35 (-8)
28	Glenavy	52	14	22	17	2	107	7	8	4	19	126	28	24 (+4)	32 (-4)

Rank	Play Area Name	Playability Audit Score (Part A) Environment for Play						Playability Audit Score (Part B) Play Opportunities				Combined Playability Score (A + B)	Combined Playability RANK (A + B)	Environment for Play RANK Part A	Play Opportunities RANK Part B
		Locational Factors (Max. 60)	Accessibility Factors (Max. 25)	Features (Max. 40)	Enivironmental Factors (Max. 45)	Risk & Challenge (Max. 10)	Part A (Max. 180)	Physical Play (Max. 10)	Creative Play (Max. 15)	Social Play (Max. 20)	Part B (Max. 45)				
29	Ballymacoss Hill	47	19	27	10	3	106	6	5	8	19	125	29	28 (+1)	33 (-4)
30	Avonmore	43	23	19	17	2	104	6	5	9	20	124	30	29 (+1)	29 (+1)
31	Edgar Avenue	42	16	22	21	2	103	6	7	7	20	123	31	32 (-1)	30 (+1)
32	Drumlough	48	9	17	19	3	96	8	8	10	26	122	32	38 (-6)	19 (+13)
33	Annahilt	43	21	28	9	1	102	5	6	8	19	121	33	34 (-1)	34 (-1)
34	Duncans' Park	50	11	15	26	2	104	4	6	7	17	121	34	30 (+4)	41 (-7)
35	Dromara	45	22	25	10	1	103	4	5	7	16	119	35	33 (+2)	43 (-8)
36	Dungoyne	45	17	20	15	3	100	6	5	4	15	115	36	36 (-)	44 (-8)
37	Coronation Gardens	46	17	14	17	2	96	7	4	7	18	114	37	39 (-2)	36 (+1)
38	Lyn Grove Hill	47	16	25	13	1	102	4	4	4	12	114	38	35 (+3)	46 (-11)
39	Riverbank	47	12	17	16	1	93	8	5	8	21	114	39	42 (-3)	28 (-11)
40	Ryan Park	47	11	18	17	1	94	8	5	7	20	114	40	41 (-1)	31 (+9)
41	Nettlehill	38	8	16	18	1	81	10	10	12	32	113	41	46 (-5)	7 (+34)
42	Ballyoran	45	17	17	13	1	93	6	6	6	18	111	42	43 (-1)	37 (+5)
43	Kilmakee, Seymourhill	45	13	23	12	2	95	4	6	5	15	110	43	40 (+3)	45 (-2)
44	Maghaberry Village Green	40	19	24	14	1	98	5	3	4	12	110	44	37 (+7)	47 (-3)
45	Ravernet	42	12	13	15	3	85	7	4	7	18	103	45	44 (+1)	38 (+7)
46	Hillhall	41	12	18	11	2	84	5	5	8	18	102	46	45 (-1)	39 (+7)
47	Hill Street	38	8	9	21	2	78	8	4	5	17	95	47	47 (-)	42 (+5)

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 7.1 In conducting a comprehensive review of fixed play provision, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council have shown recognition of the importance of play in the lives of children, young people and communities across the council area. In addition, by focusing not only on the location of fixed play as a barometer of play delivery but also on the level of playability associated with each fixed play area the council have shown an understanding of the need for fixed play to meet the needs of a broad range of ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- 7.2 From a demographic perspective, the 2011 census highlights that children and young people (0 to 19 years) represent a significant proportion of the LCCC population base accounting for just over one quarter of the population (25.6%). Given that play provision is critically important to this group the issue of play, both fixed and non-fixed play will remain a key priority for council over the coming years.
- 7.3 In terms of the existing stock of 47 fixed play areas, based on demographic data fixed play development would appear historically to have been well targeted by both legacy councils in order to meet underlying population demands. No significant examples were identified of fixed play development within areas in which there was little or no underlying population demand. A number of potential gap areas have been identified within this study and council are encouraged to review each gap area with a view to meeting play need as identified within the report.
- 7.4 Of the 47 play areas assessed, 10 were found to be of high play value (colour coded green on previous table) with only minimal suggestion for improvement; 18 were found to have an adequate playability level with (requiring minimal upgrading or enhancement to improve playability) whilst 19 were found to have a lower or restricted play value requiring more significant refurbishment or remedial action.

It should be noted that in some cases (for example Dromara) the fixed play area is in excellent condition; however the geographical limitations of the site restrict its play value through a lack of space to enable free or non-fixed play opportunities. In the absence of additional space becoming available to facilitate non-fixed play it is unlikely that play value could be significantly enhanced on such sites.

- 7.5 In terms of geography, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council is a combination of both urban (city and town) and rural (village, small settlement and isolated rural) based dwellers. This provides a challenge for the council in terms of meeting play need, particularly within rural areas where fixed play development (due to the capital expenditure associated with installation and the ongoing maintenance costs) is not economically viable.
- 7.6 Recognising that a significant proportion of the population is rural based, it is suggested that future council play strategy should pay cognisance to the

potential of alternative play delivery approaches additional to fixed play provision as a means of meeting play need. Such approaches may include by way of example:

- Establishment of a skilled play work team within council tasked with the development and delivery of outreach or mobile play programmes which are capable of delivering non-fixed play opportunities within rural communities;
- Street play projects within urban areas or rural settlements focused on creating safe playable space within communities;
- 'Pop Up Play' within local parks, green spaces and public areas aimed at providing non-fixed play opportunities for a range of age groups;
- Support for the development of community play volunteer initiatives aimed at providing communities with the skills and knowledge required to deliver non-fixed play sessions;
- Establishment of 'Play Pod' loan system wherein communities are able to loan a pod of non-fixed play materials in order to deliver community play sessions, play days etc.

7.7 It is important to note that Lisburn urban area has been subject to significant residential growth over recent years with indications that development is likely to continue over the coming years. This has and will continue to lead to the development of new potential gaps in play provision which may require future fixed play development. Council should continue to monitor residential growth and development with a view to ensuring that adequate provision is made within residential planning to meet the needs of the population.

7.8 At present the majority of fixed play sites across the LCCC area cater primarily for children aged 0 up to 10/12 years with a lack of provision for older children and teenagers (e.g. youth shelters, congregation areas etc.). Youth provision. As council develops its play strategy it is suggested that it should develop a dedicated strand relating to youth provision with the aim of meeting the need amongst older children and teenagers for social and recreational play space.

7.9 In terms of developing a play strategy the Community Planning process represents a significant opportunity for the council to enhance play provision across the council area using a partnership approach with both public sector and voluntary/community partners. By establishing a commitment to play within the community planning mechanism it is suggested that council could build on its work to date, further enhancing play opportunities for all children and young people.

- 7.10 In addition to the recommendations made for each play area within their individual reports, there are a number of general recommendations for council which relate to the meeting of play need and the enhancement of playability.

Strategic

- Community Planning Process – Children and young people represent one of the key priority groups for both the council and the wider community. Recognising the council's central role in developing community planning mechanisms under the revised local government structure, it is recommended that council recognise and incorporate consideration of play within its community planning structure.

Such an approach could open up potential partnership opportunities for the further development of both fixed and non-fixed play (where required). In addition community planning offers opportunities for the development of integrated partnership approaches with, by way of example youth service and youth agencies, in order to meet the play and recreation needs of older young people and teenagers;

- Participation of Children and Young People – Council should seek to ensure the active participation of children and young people in the decisions that impact upon their lives, both within terms of play provision and beyond.

Building on the community planning approach noted above, it is recommended that council should seek to establish a formal mechanism for engaging with children and young people on an ongoing basis in order to allow them to actively participate in decisions relating to, or impacting upon their play experience (whether fixed or non-fixed) and beyond. It is critical that such participative approaches expand beyond consultation on proposals, rather offer children and young people an opportunity to be part of the identification of proposals at the earliest possible stage.

- Risk/Benefit Approach to Play – Traditionally, across local government health and safety considerations have led to the creation of play areas which offer minimal challenge and risk in play. Whilst consideration of risk remains important, it is now recognised at a UK level that there is a need to create play areas that offer challenge in order to nurture health, wellbeing and essential skills. This has resulted in shift towards a risk/benefit approach which focuses on a weighing up of both risk and benefits as a means of introducing more challenge in play.

As a relatively new approach neither legacy council applied a risk/benefit approach to fixed play area design. It is recommended that the council should work towards the adoption of the risk/benefit approach for use in all future fixed play development. Initially this could include accessing training on the risk/benefit approach and

establishing internal processes which focus on a risk/benefit as opposed to a health and safety approach to fixed play;

- Alternative Approaches to meeting play need – Whilst fixed play can offer an economically viable approach to meeting play need within built up residential areas they do not provide a means of addressing play need within all rural and dispersed population areas. As such, it is recommended that council consider the development of alternative approaches to meeting play need to go alongside fixed play provision.

Approaches could include establishment of a mobile play worker team within council whose role would be to bring play opportunities to rural communities; commissioning of an external play provider to deliver community play projects; council provision/loaning of play pods to communities in rural areas to support creation of environments for play; supporting the development of a pool of play volunteers to enhance play delivery at community level etc.

- Potential Play Gaps - A number of potential gap areas have been identified within this study and it is recommended that council review each gap area as outlined with a view to meeting play need as identified within the report. It is recommended that in seeking to meet play need Council remain mindful of the full range of option available – both fixed and non-fixed;
- Youth Provision – There is a general lack of fixed play provision that caters for older children and teenagers across the area. It is acknowledged that not all fixed play areas are suitable for, nor indeed require dedicated youth provision; however it is recommended that council should consult with young people to determine the degree to which their needs re being met.

Operational

- Upgrading of Play Areas – A number of fixed play areas have been identified as requiring immediate to short term upgrading in order to enhance their play value. Council should seek to prioritise investment in the short term within these locations with a view to enhancing their playability;
- Fixed Play Materials - It is recommended that the council should seek to use fixed play equipment which is constructed of natural materials as opposed to metal construction where feasible. This not only enhances the aesthetic quality of fixed play areas but also provides an opportunity for children and young people to connect with natural materials through play;
- Green Spaces – Where green space adjoins fixed play areas council should seek to maximise playability by enhancing the space through

minor landscaping, planting, incorporation of natural materials and features etc.). This would create additional natural play space for children and young people; would complement the fixed play area and would provide an alternative free play experience;

- Independent Travel - Council should seek to include cycle stand provision across fixed play areas as standard (where traffic crossings permit) in order to facilitate independent travel to and from sites by children wishing to travel independently on bicycle and families wishing to use active travel.
- Fencing – PlayBoard recognise that fencing around play areas can be a contentious issue with communities often preferring high fencing. PlayBoard would however recommend the removal of, or minimization of fencing around fixed play areas in order to make them welcoming for children and enhance their appearance and playability.

As an alternative, council may wish to consider the use of natural planting to create green barriers or fencing made from natural materials which is both aesthetically pleasing and welcoming.