

Playground Strategy

2025-2035





Vision Statement

To create inclusive, engaging, and sustainable play environments that foster creativity, community connection, and lifelong well-being for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

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Foreword

Play is not just fun. Children learn about the world, themselves, and other people through play. Active play is vital for physical health and learning as well as for social development - it's fundamental in helping children to start well, live well and establish active lifestyles which will last them a lifetime. I'm proud that one of the Council's roles is to provide safe, inclusive, accessible places where our children and young people can enjoy themselves and develop freely through active play.

'Playing out' isn't something all children do independently any more. Many families find it difficult to put the screens down and get outside, so playgrounds are more important than ever - 'let's go to the park' - they offer a focus and a safe place where children can play and adults can have a break, everyone able to socialise - maybe develop relationships with neighbours, or explore how to relate to a child you haven't met before, how to get along in a group.

We already have many excellent play areas in Westmorland and Furness, and we aim to maintain and develop these facilities, ensuring we continue to work with our communities and partners. We need to ensure that playgrounds provide the most beneficial outcomes for our children and young people, both now and into the future, and local voices are needed to get the right facilities for that community and that place.

Our recent community consultation has strengthened our view that we need to continue to invest in our play areas to ensure they are kept up-to-date and in good condition. Our residents have told us that they would like a greater range of well-maintained equipment which is accessible to all. Cabinet - and probably all councillors - recognise the importance of playgrounds for their residents and support continuing investment in them.

This Playground Strategy looks at how we can deliver engaging, exciting and inclusive play areas, and it sets out alignments with Westmorland and Furness Council's other key aims and objectives.

To achieve the best playgrounds we can for our children, we will work collaboratively alongside other partners, organisations and our local communities in line with our **Community Power** values. We will, additionally, incorporate the ambitions of our **Cultural Framework, Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan**.

The **Cultural Framework** aims to enable accessible and inclusive arts, culture and heritage; it recognises that supporting and enabling people to be more physically active and make social connections is a key part of supporting a happy and healthy life.

Our **Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2034** highlights five key themes, all of which can be supported through people staying active and moving more. We need to ensure our play areas are sustainable in line with our **Climate Change Action Plan**.

Westmorland and Furness Council's Council Plan articulates our vision to work together with our partners and with our communities so that everyone is happier and healthier, with better long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

Great play provision within Westmorland and Furness is a key part of achieving this vision and the Playground Strategy in this document outlines how that ambition can be realised.



Councillor Virginia Taylor

Cabinet Member for Sustainable Communities and Localities

Playground Strategy

Our young people are our greatest resource and the early years of life set the pattern for children's future development. This strategy sets out our ambitions for all Westmorland and Furness playgrounds, giving a focus to the needs of children and young people to enable them to develop through play and physical exercise. We understand the importance of play for children's development, learning and health and we are committed to providing a safe and exciting play provision for all.

This strategy also highlights our commitment to taking a co-production approach to the development and improvement of our playgrounds, engaging with and involving local stakeholders at the very beginning of any redevelopment or new project and putting the voice of the community at the heart of decision making.

For the purpose of this strategy, the term 'playground' encompasses play equipment and features directly related to the playground, including safety surfacing. Playgrounds are designed primarily to cater for children between the ages of six months to fourteen years.

Playgrounds are more than an area to play, they are a key community asset and enable children to learn new motor skills, develop social skills, improve their mental and physical health, wellbeing. Playgrounds create vital spaces where communities meet, socialise and develop new networks and of course have fun! We also recognise that playgrounds are more than just play spaces; they are vital social hubs where communities come together, strengthening social ties and improving overall health and wellbeing.

Children develop and learn in a variety of ways; it can vary from interactive and physical activities to more subtle ways through imagination and inventive play. National studies have shown that quality play provision encourages children and young people to use natural spaces more often.

While the strategy is focussed on play provision and the importance in young people's wellbeing, it is also important that a playground provides a vital social space in which communities gather and socialise.

Across Westmorland and Furness, we manage and inspect 120 playgrounds, 11 skate parks, 16 Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), one Pump Track and one small BMX track. Alongside this, our town and parish councils, Community trusts provide many additional playgrounds interspersed throughout Westmorland and Furness. As part of this strategy, we aim to support these organisations through sharing our knowledge and expertise to enable them to improve and enhance the play equipment in their own community and develop a safe, enjoyable and inclusive play offer to all our residents and visitors.

Working closely with our town and parish councils, we aim to understand where the play offer is not available or limited. Working alongside our Planning team, we will encourage housing developers to provide inclusive and sustainable playgrounds which meet our standards on new housing developments which meet the needs of the community.

There will be a larger future focus around teen facilities within the wider Parks & Open Spaces Strategy, where more emphasis will be given to the demand for and any further development of Skate Parks, Pump Tracks, Outdoor Gyms and MUGAs. We are also aware we need to make spaces that everyone will enjoy and feel they can play freely and confidently.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Our ambition is to reduce inequalities and discrimination within Westmorland and Furness. We want to be a council that understands and takes account of the varying needs and experiences of the different groups in our communities and our visitors, working hard to ensure they are supported and celebrated for who they are.

An Equality Impact Screening has been undertaken to understand the potential impacts of this strategy on people with protected characteristics. This screening has shown that no negative impacts were found for anyone with a protected characteristic. In addition, the screening has highlighted several positive impacts that could be realised for the four protected characteristics identified. More detailed equality and diversity impact assessments will be undertaken as part of the work to deliver key actions in support of the strategy.

Please see **Appendix 1** for the Full Equality Impact Assessment.

Mill Beck



Our Vision

We want to create inclusive, engaging, and sustainable play environments that foster creativity, community connection, and lifelong well-being for residents and visitors of all ages, interests and abilities.

Putting the voice of the community at the heart of decision making, we will engage with local communities to co-create successful playground redevelopments, supporting Friends Groups and partnering with Resident Associations, Community groups or town and parish councils to ensure playgrounds are available for children to develop and enjoy creative play.

We are committed to providing a diverse range of play experiences, ensuring that each playground has its own unique identity. We aim to maintain consistent safety standards across all facilities with our goal to create play environments that offer varied and engaging activities for all users. We aim to support town and parish councils and community partners who operate their own playgrounds through sharing our knowledge and expertise to enable them to improve and enhance the play equipment in their own community and develop a safe, enjoyable and inclusive play offer to all our residents and visitors.

The provision of play areas contributes directly to the Council's Health and Wellbeing Ambition, as stated in our 2024/25 Council Plan delivery Framework 'No matter where you are born or where you live, there is equal opportunity for everyone to live an active, happy, healthy life, and to be able to and confident to choose the best ways in which this is achieved for each individual and for every community'.

We aim to ensure that our play equipment includes items for children with additional needs and will allow for all children to play together. It is vital that equipment should offer meaningful play opportunities for children with a wide range of abilities. Children want to take risks and an acceptable level is great for development and creative play.

Inclusivity and Accessibility are a fundamental part of Westmorland and Furness play area design; we aim for all children to explore their capabilities while playing together. This includes providing access to equipment which extends the development of physical, sensory and social connections. The UK government's **Disability Action Plan 2023-2024** emphasises improving accessibility in playgrounds as part of its broader goals to support disabled individuals. This action plan aims to assist local authorities in designing or refurbishing playgrounds to meet accessibility standards effectively through developing an online hub on GOV.UK to consolidate guidance for creating accessible playgrounds.

New designs should meet the following criteria:

- Sensory Play
- Physical Play
- Imaginative Play
- Rest and recharging

National companies specialising in play equipment all provide valuable design guides, checklists, and accreditation programs, such as Plan Inclusive Play Areas (PiPA), to support the creation of inclusive and accessible outdoor play environments. These are developed in collaboration with child development and accessibility experts, these resources emphasise features like accessibility for mobility devices, sensory-rich elements, opportunities for social interaction, and adherence to safety standards. Accreditation programs assess and certify inclusivity, signalling a commitment to diverse play experiences. Inclusive design benefits from community input, thoughtful zoning, and durable, low-maintenance equipment, ensuring spaces are welcoming and engaging for children of all abilities.

Making our vision real

Where we are now

We are evaluating the play provision across our diverse communities with a long-term vision to enhance playgrounds over the next 10 years, ensuring they provide engaging play opportunities for all ages, interests and abilities.

Playground conditions across our area vary significantly; while some spaces offer excellent opportunities for safe, challenging, and exciting play, we recognise others require upgrades.

We are prioritising safety while recognising the importance of offering stimulating play environments.

We eliminate hazards while preserving opportunities for developmentally appropriate risk. If any equipment falls below safety standards, we will act immediately to restrict access until it is fit for use.

As part of this commitment, we will be mapping all 120 playgrounds that Westmorland and Furness Council operate, alongside those operated by town and parish councils and community partners. This assessment will consider the proximity of neighbouring playgrounds by mapping the distance between playgrounds and consider safe access routes, existing local amenities, the unique needs of each community, and the lifespan of current equipment. This project will evolve continuously and inform our redevelopment strategy over the next 10 years.

Visit our [website](#) to find your local play facility. To see a full list of Westmorland and Furness Council's playgrounds, please refer to Appendix 2.

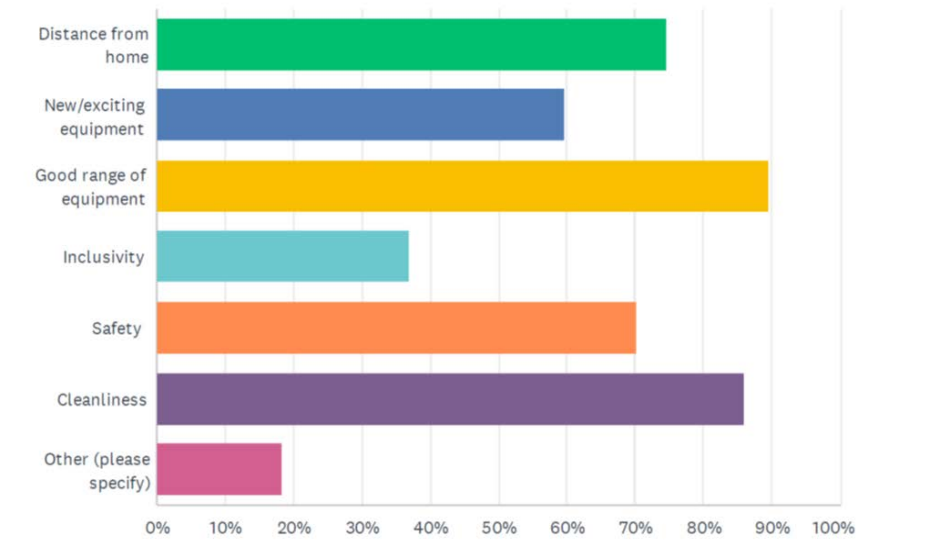
Engagement

We are dedicated to understanding the needs of our residents, communities, and visitors. To gather valuable insights, we have engaged with community groups, town and parish councils, residents and councillors, and we have encouraged feedback through an online survey and community drop-in sessions. This engagement has highlighted key priorities for playground users:

- A wide range of equipment
- Cleanliness
- Distance from home
- Safety
- New and exciting equipment
- Inclusivity



Bampton



Playground users also stated they enjoy playgrounds in larger park settings where there are other activities and access to toilet facilities and refreshments was also important.

"Hayclose Road, Grasmere, Millerground –There is equipment and resources for all ages of children, lots of sensory equipment like musical instruments. Opportunity for role play or imaginative play. Plenty for under 5's. These playgrounds are safe and clean and I don't worry about my child falling/ hurting themselves on equipment that is too hard for him to access."

"Walney near the ferry park is lovely as the park for toddlers is fenced off. Has a wide variety of equipment to play on such as trampoline, climbing frame and a bridge for balancing."

"Lots of green space, safe and clean"

"New facilities and good standard, good age range"

"Like the whole Park something for everyone"

Quotes taken from the Playground Strategy Online consultation August 2024.



Balmoral Gardens



Barrowmoor

What we want to achieve

- To ensure all our playgrounds meet or exceed the standard as set out below where physically possible, remaining accessible and enjoyable for both local residents and visitors year-round. As playground design and equipment evolves, we are committed to collaborating with suppliers to create innovative and engaging play experiences that inspire and challenge users of all ages.
- To provide guidance and expert input to help elevate the quality of community spaces managed by town and parish councils, Community Groups, and other Trusts. While we may not always be able to offer financial support, our Community Development Officers are available to advise on potential funding sources and grants.
- To provide free, accessible play opportunities within reach of families who need them. We recognise that many families in our community are on low incomes and are in need of free activities for children for health and social benefits.
- To develop spaces that encourage visitors to return while also addressing the needs of local children, who may have limited access to other recreational options due to cost or availability. Many of our playgrounds are in popular tourist areas, making it essential that these spaces are fully accessible and located near key amenities such as public toilets, parking, food and beverage options, and public transport.
- To enhance the quality and inclusivity of our playgrounds, creating spaces that truly serve and inspire our community and visitors alike by exploring the continuous advancements in play equipment—focused on inclusivity, challenge, and sustainability.
- Although this strategy primarily focuses on children aged 6 months to 14 years, it also recognises the importance of incorporating recreational facilities for teenagers and young adults, such as skate parks, BMX tracks, multi-use games areas (MUGAs). Typically, these teenage recreational facilities are co-located with playgrounds to accommodate the evolving nature of children's play as they mature. Co-location fosters interaction between different age groups and allows older siblings to engage in stimulating activities while supervising younger ones.

Playgrounds for All

This strategy and the ambitions for our playgrounds have been created using the design principles in Westmorland and Furness Council's target operating model.

Our operating model helps us plan and deliver activities, projects and programmes that will support the Council's priorities.

The Westmorland and Furness operating model has been designed with a focus on early intervention, health and wellbeing and improving the customer experience.

Community focus



We will focus on early intervention and prevention, working with individuals, community groups, parish and town councils, the voluntary sector and partners to reduce need for our services and improve health and wellbeing.

Easy access



Services will be user friendly, caring and accessible through multiple channels. Wherever possible services will be available and delivered digitally, reducing demand for phone and in-person interaction so those resources can be focused on those most in need.

Effective services



Services are outcome focused and maximise use of technology to drive efficiency and effectiveness. Service delivery is citizen-centred and seamless between services and partner organisations

Enabling processes



Internal processes and functions are supported by key enabling functions including Human Resources, Project Management Office, Legal, Commissioning and Procurement working closely with service delivery teams.

Supporting technology



'Fit for purpose' technology across the council that supports the delivery of services, promotes digital ways of working, and enables organisational efficiency.

To support the development of playgrounds, we will establish a minimum standard for all new playgrounds to ensure they are accessible and usable year-round by everyone.

This standard will require all equipment to comply with European Standard BS EN 1176, and all surfacing to meet BS EN 1177. Additional relevant standards include:

- **BS EN 15312** for free access multi-sports equipment (MUGAs)
- **BS EN 14974** for roller sports facilities (skate parks)
- **BS EN 16630** for outdoor fitness equipment

The standards for new play space provision will include the following recommendations:

- A hard surface path connecting gates and all play equipment
- Safety surfacing made of wet pour rubber or grass mats
- Clearly zoned areas for toddlers, juniors, and seniors
- Coloured metal bow-top fencing with two contrasting yellow self-closing gates, where appropriate
- Seating with backrests
- Playgrounds positioned in highly visible locations, ideally at the front of houses for natural surveillance, without obstruction by trees or vegetation
- Minimum size requirements
- An accessible and inclusive layout, with equipment designed for universal use
- A design that is suitable for the specific location
- Provision of a litter bin
- Avoidance of timber equipment unless it is installed in metal sockets to prevent rot, with all equipment covered by a 15–20-year guarantee, and metal slides preferred.

We follow guidance set by RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) ensuring the safety and accessibility of play areas, emphasising good design, regular inspections, and appropriate surfacing to minimise injuries and improve inclusivity.

Our play inspectors are all qualified Operational Inspectors - Register of Play Inspectors International (RPiI) accredited and we will ensure that training is consistently reviewed and is in line with all Health & Safety regulations. The Inspectors will provide practical support and guidance to town and parish councils and Community trusts to ensure playgrounds are safe for communities to use.



Making space

To make playgrounds more inclusive for all, we will design spaces that promote diverse types of play, safety, and social interaction. This will include:

1. **Inclusive Design:** Offer varied equipment that encourages both physical and creative play, such as swings, balance beams, and sensory features, moving beyond competitive-focused areas.
2. **Flexible Spaces:** Create zones for different activities—physical, imaginative, and social—allowing for multi-use and open-ended play that appeals to a broader group.
3. **Social Spaces:** Include seating, shaded areas, and intimate spaces for socialising, as children often seek areas for group interaction and quieter play.
4. **Safety and Visibility:** Position playgrounds in well-lit, visible locations to enhance safety and comfort for all users.
5. **Consultation:** Engage our communities in the design process through school consultations or community input to ensure their needs are met.
6. **Challenging Stereotypes:** Avoid gendered equipment and encourage all children to explore a full range of activities, promoting active play and inclusivity.

Broadgate Meadow





These approaches ensure that playgrounds are welcoming, safe, and engaging for everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and active participation.

How we will get there

Our goal is to create playgrounds that reflect the unique needs and interests of its community, establishing it as a cherished and valuable local resource. To achieve this, we will:

Collaborate with our Communities

We are committed to fostering a community power approach at the very beginning of any redevelopment or new project, putting the voice of the community at the heart of decision making.

Engaging the local community is essential to the successful redevelopment of a playground. For example, collaborating with community groups, forming a Friends Group, and partnering with Resident Associations or town and parish councils can significantly enhance a project's impact. Working in partnership develops new relationships and opportunities to explore new funding streams. Many grants are available to communities that local authorities cannot access but are available to formally constituted community groups. By working together, we will support communities to maximise our fundraising potential and ensure the project's long-term success.

Community engagement is central to this process, especially with residents and potential users nearby. Using various outreach methods, such as social media, printed leaflets, and on-site meetings, helps us reach a broad and inclusive audience. We will seek to work with local community groups, charities, youth groups and local schools. By creating mechanisms for open communication and actively seeking and valuing the perspectives of children promotes a sense of ownership, fostering pride in the playground and encouraging long-term care.

Collaborate with our Locality Boards

We will work closely with our Locality Boards to shape and influence developing playgrounds. Locality boards have a deep understanding of their communities' needs and pressures. Through this approach we can ensure that local needs, aspirations and knowledge is embedded in our playground design. We will keep our communities informed through regular activity, challenges and opportunities. As we look to invest in play areas and activity, Officers will work closely with Locality Boards, to seek their guidance and help prioritise to ensure that the service continues to support our communities.

Deliver playgrounds that meet the needs of communities

Playgrounds are classified on their design, intended purpose and the type of play they encourage. We are classifying our playgrounds as:

Local Playgrounds are located within housing estates and villages are in walking distance from homes. Will be designed for shorter visits with families who live locally. Play equipment encouraging active, imaginative, and social play.

Neighbourhood Playgrounds will have a wide range of equipment and may include a MUGA, Skate Park or Pump Track. Includes seating, open play spaces, and potential for organized activities.

Destination Playgrounds will be designed to present a range of challenges and are aimed at attracting families and groups for a longer visit. They will be larger than Neighbourhood sites and may have additional facilities such as toilets, parking, additional attractions and refreshments available nearby.

When designing or refurbishing playgrounds we will consider the following needs:

Inclusive - both in design and use, developing an equitable play provision, as such we look for our communities and Locality boards to co-produce innovative and accessible design. We will use the criteria suggested by organisations such as (PiPA) This will influence our minimum design principles.

Sustainable - environmental awareness is a key priority and as such we look to Play suppliers and providers to develop new and innovative equipment which is sustainable in manufacture and hardwearing to stand up to the rigours of well used equipment as well as environmental impacts such as weather and temperature changes.

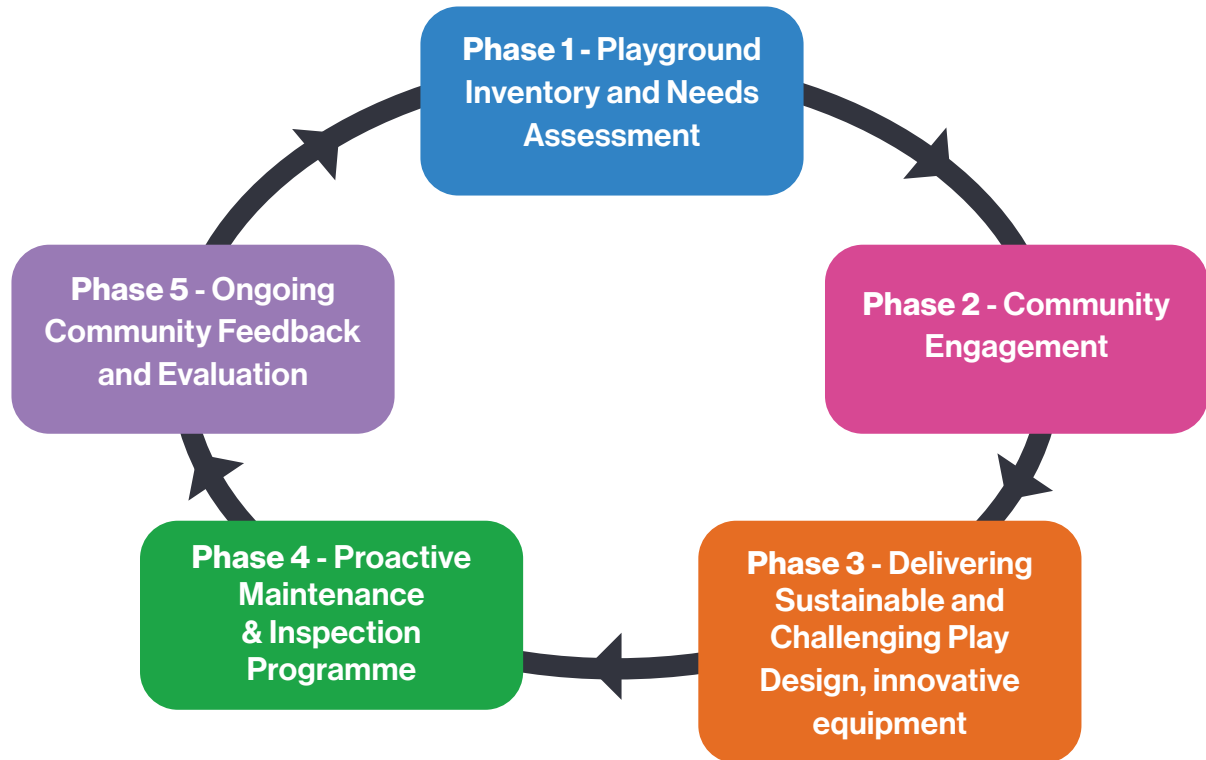
Financially sustainable - it is important to enable our community assets to be financially sustainable, whether that is through council delivery or by working with our town and parish councils or local groups to secure funding to improve the local facility. We will look to explore the approach to maintain and care for some sites through community assets transfer where this is suitable, which will be done with careful consideration.

Collaborative - in build, design and approach – through working with our communities our aim is to build a network of play areas which are well maintained and an integral part of the community, enabling meeting spaces for communities to develop and thrive.

We will work in collaboration with our Planning team as a consultee to all Section 106 planning agreements to encourage housing developers are equipping new estates with a range of play equipment which meets the needs of the new community, and the standards set out in this strategy.

Playground Development Action Cycle

We believe that the Playground Development Cycle is an ongoing, ever evolving sequence which will ensure that as a Council we are continuously improving, working collaboratively with our communities and are responding to need, development and change where necessary.



Phase 1 - Playground Inventory and Needs Assessment

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of all existing playgrounds in Westmorland and Furness and identify areas needing improvement, working alongside town and parish councils and Community partners.
- Catalogue and evaluate each playground's condition, accessibility, and equipment lifespan.
- Prioritise sites for redevelopment based on community needs, usage levels, and safety assessments.
- Have a clear action plan for phased improvements, starting with the highest-need locations.

Phase 2 - Community Engagement

- Foster community ownership by incorporating local input and ideas.
- Conduct consultations through surveys, public meetings, and school engagement sessions.
- Engage with local SEND schools and organisations for advice on creating an inclusive environment
- Work with Friends Groups, collaborate with town and parish councils and community groups to enable them to access funding and grants.
- Increased sense of ownership, greater alignment with community needs, and access to broader funding opportunities.

Phase 3 - Delivering Sustainable and Challenging Play Design, innovative equipment

- Deliver creative, engaging play experiences that adapt to modern needs and inclusivity standards.
- Ensure playgrounds are both sustainable and safe, balancing adventure with security.
- Set and enforce design standards focused on accessibility, durability, and environmental sustainability.
- Evaluate new playground concepts and equipment to keep spaces relevant and stimulating.
- Collaborate with equipment suppliers on innovative designs that support sensory play, physical activity, and social interaction.
- Enhanced play value that meets evolving community interests and encourages repeat use.

Phase 4 - Proactive Maintenance & Inspection Programme

- Conduct regular safety inspections, with immediate action on any equipment that fails safety standards.
- Categorise repairs based on urgency, addressing safety-critical issues immediately while planning less urgent repairs to minimise disruption.
- Maintain a robust, trained workforce which is kept up to date with the latest safety standards, maintenance techniques and reporting protocols.
- Monitor trends in equipment usage to identify heavily used areas or components prone to wear, consider these findings when designing new schemes.
- Creating Financial Sustainability through monitoring and being proactive

Phase 5 - Ongoing Community Feedback and Evaluation

- Measure and monitor playground success, continuously improving the play experience.
- Conduct regular community satisfaction surveys, gather testimonials, and monitor visitor numbers and demographic reach.
- Review and adapt strategy based on feedback, usage patterns, and safety data.
- Play provision that evolves with the community's changing needs and preferences.



What Success looks like

We need to know that our Playground Strategy is realising our vision, so it is important that we measure and evaluate our success. There are several ways in which we will monitor and measure how we are doing.

Our measures, together with our priorities, will need to be reviewed and may need to be adapted and developed on an annual basis to ensure we are measuring our achievements in the best way we can.

Key Indicators in playground redevelopment can be measured by:

1. Community Satisfaction: Regular surveys and testimonials indicating user satisfaction has increased and with a greater sense of local ownership.
2. Usage and Engagement: Increased visitor numbers, event participation, and collaboration with town and parish councils and community groups.
3. Accessibility and Inclusivity: Improved compliance with accessibility standards and broad demographic reach.
4. Maintenance and Safety: High safety compliance rates and a proactive maintenance schedule maintained.
5. Financial Performance and Partnerships: Increased level of grants and funding acquired through community partnerships, maximising the impact of available resources.

This Playground Strategy aims to create and maintain vibrant, accessible play spaces that reflect the diverse needs and interests of our community. Through community collaboration, innovative design, and a commitment to safety and sustainability, we will develop playgrounds that not only meet but inspire our residents and visitors for years to come.

The ambitions detailed in this strategy will be delivered over 10 years by the Outdoor and Leisure Team within the Community Infrastructure Directorate, who will establish a bi-annual delivery plan setting out key activities.

If you have any questions or feedback about our Playground Strategy, please contact us at:
customer.services2@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Proforma

An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.

In addition, this EqIA process includes; care experience, rurality, socio-economic status and the armed forces community.

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.
- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Playground Strategy

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

The strategy is looking at our vision to make playgrounds accessible and inclusive for all. This advice highlights how we will do this.

3) Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with engagement sessions on playgrounds with users and an on-line survey.

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Yes/No	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Yes/No
Age	Yes	Playgrounds can provide age-appropriate spaces for different developmental stages, promoting physical, social, and cognitive development.	Ensure playgrounds are inclusive for all age groups, provide safe low climbing equipment for toddlers and challenging equipment for older children with zoned areas for focused play. Add appropriate seating and accessible paths for parents and carers.	Yes
Disability	Yes	Inclusive playgrounds can offer opportunities for children with disabilities to engage in play, socialize, and develop skills.	Design playgrounds with ramps, wide pathways, make equipment such as swings roundabouts as inclusive as possible and consider sensory friendly features and quiet areas. Use colours, textures, and interactive features that stimulate without overwhelming.	Yes
Gender reassignment	No	-	-	-
Marriage or civil partnership	No	-	-	-
Pregnancy or maternity	No	-	-	-
Race	No	-	-	-
Religion or belief	No	-	-	-
Sex	No	-	-	-
Sexual orientation	No	-	-	-
Care Experience	No	-	-	-
People in rural areas	Yes	Playgrounds can serve as a vital community hub, promoting social interaction and physical activity in areas with fewer recreational facilities. Enhances children's well-being in areas with limited structured activities.	Place playgrounds centrally within rural communities to maximize accessibility. Consider transport connections and walking/cycling pathways to ensure access for families without vehicles.	Yes
Socio-economic status	Yes	Free public playgrounds provide access to recreation and social interaction for families who may not afford other leisure activities. Playgrounds can improve quality of life in economically disadvantaged areas by promoting physical and mental well-being.	Prioritize investment in playgrounds for underserved and low-income areas. Ensure they are free to use without hidden costs such as parking. Engage residents during the planning stages to understand needs and empower groups to take ownership.	Yes
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	No	-	-	-
General (other considerations)	No	-	-	-

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?

Yes

Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/Function being assessed to the PSED	Playground Strategy
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	Interim Strategic Lead for Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries.
Department/service area	Community Infrastructure
Telephone number and email contact	01539 793191 polly.straker@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk
Date of Assessment	21/11/2024
Objectives of decision/policy/service/function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	The Purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that playgrounds are accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for children and families of all abilities, ages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This applies to the design, location, equipment selection, safety measures, and ongoing management of playground facilities.
Key stakeholders and consultees	Primary Users Children, parents and carers Secondary stakeholders: Town and Parish councils, community groups, Schools, and communities.

Section 2: Information Gathering

What **relevant** information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?
Play Strategy engagement sessions held on site in playgrounds and online questionnaire.	-	What's important to the users of the playground?
Demographic Data - Westmorland and Furness Website Young People Statistics	Key Children Young People Statistics: 1 in 100 Children: Westmorland and Furness	The age ranges and abilities of the children using the play grounds so we can use this information to influence designs in the future.
Westmorland and Furness Statistical Summary	Westmorland and Furness Statistical Summary	Where the deprived areas are.

Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive	Adverse	Neutral	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age	Yes	-	-	<p>Playgrounds can provide age-appropriate spaces for different developmental stages, promoting physical, social, and cognitive development.</p> <p>Age group breakdown for Westmorland and Furness</p> <p>0-4 years approximately 4.5% – 5% of total population. 10,000 to 11,250 children.</p> <p>5-10 years approximately 6%-7% of the total population. 13,500 to 15,750 children.</p> <p>11-15 years approximately 5%-6% of the total population. 11,250 to 13,500 children</p>	<p>When designing playgrounds equipment will be chosen to ensure the appropriate age groups are catered for. This may just be for toddlers or may be zoned areas in a larger playground. Play equipment is designed for specific age groups by considering the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development stages typical of each age range. Such as low platforms, enclosed spaces to prevent falls, small low slides, baby swings and easy to grab rails. For pre-school children equipment will be a little higher and encourage imaginative play and interactive panels. As children get older more independent play is encouraged, advanced physical skills, climbing, jumping and strength based activities. Risk and challenge is introduced and social play encouraged. Equipment heights and fall zones and surface materials vary to meet safety guidelines for each age group. Also incorporating features that can be used across multiple age groups (e.g., family swings or sensory elements) ensures inclusivity.</p>
Disability	Yes	-	Yes	<p>Inclusive playgrounds can offer opportunities for children with disabilities to engage in play, socialise, and develop skills. Lack of accessible pathways, play equipment, and sensory-friendly areas may exclude children and caregivers with disabilities.</p> <p>Safety concerns if facilities do not accommodate mobility aids or sensory sensitivities (e.g., uneven surfaces, overcrowding, loud noises).</p> <p>Limited consideration for caregivers with disabilities.</p>	<p>When designing a playground it is essential to consider the needs of all the users and where space allows install ramps, wide pathways and surfaces suitable for mobility aids such as wetpour. Include inclusive swings, roundabouts and climbing structures. Add quiet areas or sensory zones for children with autism or sensory processing challenges. Use colours, textures and interactive features that stimulate without overwhelming. Provide equipment for a variety of abilities such as sensory panels, musical instruments, and wheelchair friendly seesaws. Ensure interactive play areas can be accessed from different heights and mobility levels.</p>

Equality group	Positive	Adverse	Neutral	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Disability (continued)	Yes	-	Yes	-	<p>Design seating areas that can accommodate mobility aids, place good signage and accessible parking nearby.</p> <p>During the planning a stages engage with local SEND schools and organisations for advice on creating an inclusive environment.</p> <p>The proportion of children with disabilities in Westmorland and Furness aligns closely with national trends for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) statistics. Approximately 12.6% of children in the area have special educational needs, based on regional data regarding those with SEND requirements, including Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs). This is slightly above the national average of 11-12% for children with additional needs across the UK</p>
Gender reassignment	-	-	-	-	-
Marriage and civil partnership status	-	-	-	-	-
Pregnancy and maternity	-	-	-	-	-
Race	-	-	-	-	-
Religion and/or belief	-	-	-	-	-
Sex	-	-	-	-	-
Sexual orientation	-	-	-	-	-
Care Experience	-	-	-	-	-

Equality group	Positive	Adverse	Neutral	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
People in rural areas	Yes	-	Yes	A playground will become a community hub and will encourage physical activity and social interaction, this is essential for children who may have limited facilities nearby. Transport links or distances may make it difficult to reach other playgrounds. Remote locations may result in delays to maintenance and low use may result in equipment not been upgraded. Lack of diverse play equipment may fail to meet the needs of children of varying ages, abilities or interests.	<p>Playgrounds in a rural community should be placed in the central location close to other facilities to maximise accessibility. Consider public transport connections and walking or cycle paths to allow access for families without their own transport.</p> <p>Consult with the community to understand the needs and priorities. Incorporate multi-use features such as sport facilities and picnic spots to serve the broader community.</p> <p>Chose durable, robust low maintenance equipment to reduce long term costs.</p> <p>Include diverse, age-appropriate, and accessible play equipment to cater to all children, including those with disabilities.</p> <p>Add features like natural play elements (logs, rocks) that require minimal upkeep and integrate with the rural landscape.</p>
Socio-economic status	Yes	-	Yes	W & F playgrounds are free to use and provide access to recreation and social interaction for families who may not be able to afford other leisure activities. Playgrounds can improve the quality of life in economically disadvantaged areas by promoting physical and mental wellbeing. Playgrounds in low-income areas may be fewer, may suffer from vandalism creating more maintenance issues to keep them safe. Community engagement is more difficult as families on low income may feel they have fewer opportunities to influence playground design. They may have less time or skills to get involved in fund raising activities.	<p>Prioritise investment in playgrounds for underserved and low income areas. Assess areas to identify neighbourhoods which lack sufficient recreational spaces. Ensure playgrounds are free to use with no hidden extras such as parking. Engage the residents in low income areas during planning stages to understand specific need. Empower local groups to take ownership and involve social housing organisations to ensure partnership working.</p> <p>Use robust materials and vandal resistant equipment to ensure longevity. Include natural play elements that are cost effective and engaging.</p> <p>Locate playgrounds near public transport routes or provide safe walking/cycling paths.</p> <p>Partner with schools or community centres to co-locate playgrounds, ensuring broad accessibility.</p>

Equality group	Positive	Adverse	Neutral	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Socio-economic status (continued)	Yes	-	Yes	Approximately 5,409 children in Westmorland and Furness live in low-income families. This measure reflects families whose income is below 60% of the median before housing costs. This figure represents about 17.9% of children in the area , which is below the national average of 19.9%. Notably, poverty rates vary across the region, with higher concentrations in certain areas like the Furness wards, where up to 47.9% of children are affected in the most deprived	Playgrounds should provide safe, inclusive spaces for all children and families, regardless of income level.
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements
Deciding on Priorities and funding available	Work with Locality boards and engage with communities	Outdoor and Leisure Team	Staffing, budgets, support from Legal, Procurement and Finance services	Ongoing	Via weekly inspection on the Play App

Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.

☐

Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.

☐

Complete the action plan.

☐

Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.

☐

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment:

March 2026

Who will carry out this review?:

Outdoor and Leisure Team

Appendix 2 - Playgrounds Asset List

Eden

No	Site Name	Location	Postcode	Description
1	Castle Park	Penrith	CA11 7EE	Destination playground in park setting
2	Milton Street	Penrith	CA11 9HY	Small local playground
3	Pategill	Penrith	CA11 8LF	Small local playground
4	Carleton Heights	Penrith	CA11 8TL	Neighbourhood playground including a MUGA
5	Castletown	Penrith	CA11 9BY	Small local playground
6	Scaws	Penrith	CA11 8EA	Neighbourhood playground including a MUGA
7	Wetheriggs	Penrith	CA11 8PP	Small local playground
8	Leisure Centre	Penrith	CA11 8JH	Skate Park
9	Crooklands View	Clifton	CA10 2EG	Small local playground
10	School Field	Kirkby Stephen	CA17 4SH	Small local playground
11	Westgarth	Kirkby Stephen	CA17 4TD	Neighbourhood playground with Basketball court
12	Bowscar	Bowscar	CA11 8RR	Small local playground
13	King George V	Appleby	CA16 6QU	Neighbourhood playground
14	Scattergate	Appleby	CA16 6SL	Small local playground
15	Coronation Park	Appleby	CA16 6UD	Small local playground
16	Barrowmoor	Appleby	CA16 6SA	Small local playground
17	Great Asby	Great Asby	CA16 6HD	Small local playground
18	Headlands Playground	Glenridding	CA11 0QA	Small local playground
19	Station Rd Playground	Threlkeld	CA12 4RX	Small local playground
20	Scaur Playground	Lazonby	CA10 1BX	Swing Set
21	Croft Place	Kirkoswald	CA19 1DL	Small local playground
22	Laithes Head	Laithes	CA11 0AW	Small local playground
23	Bampton	Bampton	CA10 2RS	Small local playground
24	Warcop Village Green	Warcop	CA16 6PF	Small local playground
25	Lancaster House	Newton Reigny	CA11 0AP	Small local playground
26	Village Green Soulby	Soulby	CA17 4PL	Small local playground
27	Crosby Ravensworth	Crosby Ravensworth	CA10 3HY	Small local playground
28	Kirkby Thore	Kirkby Thore	CA10 1XW	Small local playground
29	Brough	Brough	CA17 4BB	Small local playground
30	Bolton	Bolton	CA16 6AR	Small local playground
31	Cliburn	Cliburn	CA10 3AL	Neighbourhood playground with Basketball court
32	Great Salkeld	Great Salkeld	CA11 9NA	Small local playground
33	Tirril	Tirril	CA10 2JT	Small local playground
34	Calthwaite	Calthwaite	CA11 9QN	Small local playground
35	Hackthorpe	Hackthorpe	CA10 2HT	Small local playground

Furness

No	Site Name	Location	Postcode	Description
1	Askam Community	Askam in Furness	LA16 7BD	Neighbourhood playground including skate park
2	Saves Lane	Askam In Furness	LA16 7DY	Small local playground
3	Abbots Vale	Barrow in Furness	LA13 9PA	Neighbourhood playground
4	Balmoral Gardens	Barrow in Furness	LA13 0SZ	Small local playground
5	Barrow Park	Barrow in Furness	LA13 9BB	Destination playground in park setting including skate park and adult gym equipment
6	Church Street	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2JG	Neighbourhood playground
7	Dock Museum	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2PW	Destination Playground
8	Farm Street	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2RX	Neighbourhood playground including MUGA
9	Hawcoat Community Centre	Barrow in Furness	LA14 4SA	Neighbourhood playground
10	Hindpool	Barrow in Furness	LA14 1NR	Neighbourhood playground including MUGA
11	Holbeck Park Avenue	Barrow in Furness	LA13 0RG	Small local playground
12	Lawson Street	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2NJ	Neighbourhood playground with Skate Park.
13	Lodge Green	Barrow in Furness	LA14 4TH	Small local playground
14	Marsh Sidings	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2UT	Small local playground
15	Ormsgill	Barrow in Furness	LA14 4BP	Skate Park and MUGA
16	Rating Lane	Barrow in Furness	LA13 9LG	Neighbourhood playground
17	Roosegate Comm Centre	Barrow in Furness	LA13 0DR	Small local playground
18	Sherbourne Avenue	Barrow in Furness	LA13 0GU	Small local playground
19	Stanley Road	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2PT	Neighbourhood playground including MUGA
20	Vulcan Road	Barrow in Furness	LA14 2BQ	Small local playground
21	Buttermere Drive	Dalton In Furness	LA15 8QW	Small local playground
22	High Bank	Dalton In Furness	LA15 8JD	Small local playground
23	Dalton Leisure Centre	Dalton In Furness	LA15 8DA	Destination playground with MUGA and skate Park
24	Lindal	Lindal	LA12 0LZ	Small local playground
25	Marton	Marton	LA12 0NH	Small local playground
26	Mill Lane	Walney Island	LA14 3XX	Skate Park and MUGA
27	Biggar Bank fenced	Walney Island	LA14 3YF	Neighbourhood playground
28	Biggar Bank Roundhouse	Walney Island	LA14 3YE	Neighbourhood playground
29	Biggar Village	Walney Island	LA14 3YG	Small local playground
30	Vickerstown Park	Walney Island	LA14 3PE	Neighbourhood playground including Skate park
31	Newton	Newton	LA13 0NB	Small local playground

South Lakes

No	Site Name	Location	Postcode	Description
1	Chambers Close	Kendal	LA9 5JE	Small Local playground
2	Abbot Hall	Kendal	LA9 5AL	Destination playground within a Park setting.
3	Vicars Fields	Kendal	LA9 5NB	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA
4	Brockbeck	Kendal	LA9 5LG	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA
5	Maple Drive	Kendal	LA9 5BN	Small local playground
6	Greenwood	Kendal	LA9 5ED	Small local playground
7	Acre Moss	Kendal	LA9 5QE	Neighbourhood playground including MUGA and Adult gym equipment.
8	Hawthorn Gardens	Kendal	LA9 6FG	Small local playground
9	Briarigg	Kendal	LA9 6FA	Small local playground
10	Hall Park 1	Kendal	LA9 6QF	Small local playground
11	Hall Park 2	Kendal	LA9 6QF	Small local playground
12	Hall Park 3	Kendal	LA9 6QF	Small local playground
13	Beezon Fields	Kendal	LA9 6BL	Skate Park
14	Sandylands	Kendal	LA9 6EU	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA and Adult gym equipment and kick about area.
15	Castle Drive	Kendal	LA9 7BJ	Neighbourhood playground with small BMX track.
16	Archers Meadow	Kendal	LA9 7DY	Small local playground
17	Valley Drive	Kendal	LA9 7SE	Small local playground
18	Esthwaite Avenue	Kendal	LA9 7JN	Small local playground, Adult gym equipment nearby
19	Hayclose Road	Kendal	LA9 7NE	Neighbourhood playground
20	Hayclose Crescent	Kendal	LA9 7NT	Small local playground
21	Howe Bank	Kendal	LA9 7NG	Small local playground – toddlers only
22	The Oaks	Kendal	LA9 7NG	Small local playground
23	Rinkfield	Kendal	LA9 7LP	Neighbourhood playground, adult gym equipment
24	Levens Close	Kendal	LA9 7LP	Small local playground
25	Dallam Chase	Milnthorpe	LA7 7RF	Small local playground
26	Chestnut Way	Milnthorpe	LA7 7RB	Small local playground
27	Owlett Ash	Milnthorpe	LA7 7GL	Neighbourhood playground
28	Pear Tree Park	Holme	LA6 1TB	Small local playground
29	Twinter Bank	Holme	LA6 1TB	Small local playground
30	Mayfield Avenue	Holme	LA6 1PT	Small local playground
31	Bolefoot	Oxenholme	LA9 7EX	Neighbourhood playground
32	Maryfell	Sedbergh	LA10 5AR	Neighbourhood playground
33	Dragons Croft	Dent	LA10 5QP	Small local playground

No	Site Name	Location	Postcode	Description
34	Queens Park	Windermere	LA23 2BJ	Destination playground within a park setting, includes a Pump track and skate park.
35	Mill Beck Close	Windermere	LA23 2FE	Small local playground
36	School Knott	Windermere	LA23 2BW	Small local playground
37	Rayrigg Meadow	Windermere	LA23 1EY	Destination Playground – PIPa Bronze award.
38	Troutbeck	Troutbeck	LA23 1PA	Small local playground
39	Rothay Park	Ambleside	LA22 9DH	Destination Playground in park setting
40	Kirkfield Rise	Ambleside	LA22 9DX	Small local playground
41	Greenbank & Castlefield	Ambleside	LA22 9BG	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA
42	Easedale Road	Grasmere	LA22 9QH	Small local playground
43	Broadgate Meadow	Grasmere	LA22 9TA	Destination Playground in Park setting
44	Grange Prom	Grange	LA11 7DH	Destination Playground, Adult gym equipment nearby
45	Fell Close	Grange	LA11 7DH	Small local playground
46	Yewtree Fields	Grange	LA11 7AA	Neighbourhood playground in a park setting.
47	Moorside Flookburgh	Flookburgh	LA11 7LP	Small local playground
48	Cark in Cartmel	Flookburgh	LA11 7NZ	Small local playground
49	Victoria Park	Ulverston	LA12 7TT	Small local playground
50	Mill Dam	Ulverston	LA12 7DU	Small local playground
51	Trinkeld Avenue	Ulverston	LA12 0XB	Small local playground
52	Croftlands	Ulverston	LA12 9LD	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA
53	Lightburn Park	Ulverston	LA12 9BP	Destination playground in a park setting, includes a MUGA and Skate Park
54	Lund Terrace	Ulverston	LA12 9BE	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA
55	Lund Farm	Ulverston	LA12 9SZ	Basketball court
56	Monument Way	Ulverston	LA12 9SY	Small local playground
57	North Lonsdale Road	Ulverston	LA12 9DW	Neighbourhood playground, includes a MUGA





Westmorland
& Furness
Council

Translation Services

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