

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool:

<b>Title of proposal</b>	Play Association Grants
<b>Name of division/service</b>	Social Care and Education
<b>Name of lead officer completing this assessment</b>	Laurence Jones
<b>Date EIA assessment commenced</b>	10/01/2025
<b>Date EIA assessment completed (<i>prior to decision being taken as the EIA may still be reviewed following a decision to monitor any changes</i>)</b>	25/02/2025
<b>Decision maker</b>	City Mayor
<b>Date decision taken</b>	

<b>EIA sign off on completion:</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Lead officer</b>	Laurence Jones	20 February 2025
<b>Equalities officer (has been consulted)</b>	S. Singh / S Biring	18 February 2025
<b>Divisional director</b>	Damian Elcock	20 February 2025

## **Please ensure the following:**

- a) That the document is **understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents** and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete and based in evidence.
- b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.
- d) That the equality impact assessment is started at an early stage in the decision-making process, so that it can be used to inform the consultation, engagement and the decision. It should not be a tick-box exercise. Equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process. It can be used to assess several different options.
- e) Decision makers must be aware of their duty to pay ‘due regard’ to the Public Sector Equality Duty (see below) and ‘due regard’ must be paid before and at the time a decision is taken. Please see the Brown Principles on the equality intranet pages, for information on how to undertake a lawful decision-making process, from an equalities perspective. Please append the draft EIA and the final EIA to papers for decision makers (including leadership team meetings, lead member briefings, scrutiny meetings and executive meetings) and draw out the key points for their consideration. The Equalities Team provide equalities comments on reports.

## **1. Setting the context**

Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will the needs of those who are currently using the service continue to be met?

Leicester City Council has provided an annual grant to nine play associations across the city for a number of years. These play associations are independent registered charities and their core activity is the delivery of a play offer for primary school aged children predominantly through an “open play” offer delivered on Council land.

The Council recognises the challenges for Play Associations in establishing regular income so that they can be self-sustaining and provides the land for the play associations to operate on free of charge and has agreed licenses for the Play Associations to continue to occupy the sites from April 2025- March 2030 on the basis of a number of conditions, the central one being the continued delivery of regular open access play.

Whilst professionally supervised play is not a statutory service and most local authorities across the country ceased funding these activities some years ago Leicester has continued to recognise the role play has in child development and the popularity of such provision with local communities. Unfortunately, the medium-term financial outlook for the Council is the most severe we have known, in all our years as a unitary authority. This is a common position across the local authority sector compounded by recent budget pressures, particularly in respect of children's social care and accommodating homeless people. The

The City Council's Executive, through the office of the directly elected City Mayor, are to approve the making of two final grant payments in 2025/26 to each of the Play Associations. The grant will be paid in two instalments in April 2025 and October 2025, each totalling half of the 2024-25 grant level. Grants will be made on the condition that they will be used to deliver regular open access play and support activities that will make the Play Associations financially sustainable for future years. The grants will then cease.

There continues to be a range of play opportunities across the city through local parks, which include play equipment and outdoor gyms, and leisure centres which are free or offer some free access. There are also commercial play opportunities through the likes of trampolining, climbing, outdoor pursuits and soft play centres. There is also an increasing offer of "wrap round child care" delivered through schools with central government funding.

The removal of these grants does not necessarily bring these services to a close and they can apply for alternative grant funding or raise funds as independent charities or could become part of the wraparound offer for schools. The local authority is not the sole funder for many of the lay Associations and they access grants, raise charitable funds and undertake commercial activities or activities under commission. This includes commissioned activity for the local authority including Short Breaks for Disabled Children and the Holiday and Activities Fund scheme. The funding and contracts for these are not directly affected.

## 2. Equality implications/obligations

Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.

### a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- How does the proposal/service aim to remove barriers or disproportionate impacts for anyone with a particular protected characteristics compared with someone who does not share the same protected characteristics?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

Children, particularly those of primary school age, who use the current services provided by the play associations will be most at risk of losing access to current supervised play provision should the associations not be able to find alternative funding streams. However, alternative parent / carer supervised play opportunities still exist across the city for this age group. Whilst there is no evidence that disabled children will be negatively impacted there is “Short breaks for Disabled Children” funding available for children with disabilities to access leisure activities and funding for this will be increased in the coming 12 months.

### b. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- Does the proposal/service advance equality of opportunity for people?
- Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

The primary impact of the change will be on children of primary school age many of whom will have inequalities as a result of living in areas of deprivation. Whilst this is relevant there are, as highlighted in the document, other opportunities for play outside of that provided by the Play Associations.

### c. Foster good relations between different groups

- Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives?
- How does it achieve this aim?
- Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?

There is no identified likely impact that the service has in relation to this aim, and consequently the change is unlikely to have any impact in this regard.

### 3. Who is affected?

Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include people who currently use the service and those who could benefit from, but do not currently access the service. Where possible include data to support this.

Children, predominantly of primary school age could be affected by the change if this provision is reduced or ceases as their opportunity for supervised play may reduce. From the information available slightly more boys use the provision than the percentage of the city population and significantly more white children use the provision.

The Play Association in their latest return give the number of children registered as follows.

Braunstone 963, 20% of whom have “additional needs”

Goldhill 782

Highfields 983

Mowmacre 400, 5-15% of whom have “additional needs”

New Parks 702

Northfields 135

St Andrews 300

What Cabin 196

Woodgate 286

### 4. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

- What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used?
- Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you

- Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this? E.g. proxy data, national trends, equality monitoring etc.

The Play Associations are asked to make information returns as a part of contractual monitoring which provide some demographic information on age, ethnicity and gender of the children using their services. In many cases these are of variable detail and often incomplete even though they are asked to monitor attendance by a number of protective characteristics as part of their grants conditions. As Play Associations operate in different areas of the city with different ethnic and religious make ups the partial returns could skew the information, although we cannot make assumptions about who uses the play grounds with evidence. The information is based upon the available data. We are unaware of any other local authority grant funded Adventure Playgrounds despite research so it has not been possible to benchmark or compare data.

## **5. Consultation**

Have you undertaken consultation about the proposal with people who use the service or people affected, people who may potentially use the service and other stakeholders? What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs? How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

There has been indirect consultation via the Play Associations through face-to-face meetings and other information put forward through petitions and representations to Scrutiny Committee, Council during 2024-25. None have raised particular issues around protected characteristics being unequally impacted by changes other than age. There have been petitions put forward to Full Council, again nothing has been raised in these in terms of specific impact on people with protected characteristics other than age.

## 6. Potential Equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on people who use the service and those who could potentially use the service and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts. This could include indirect impacts, as well as direct impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant groups that may be affected, along with the likely impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

### Protected characteristics

#### Impact of proposal:

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. Why is this protected characteristic relevant to the proposal? How does the protected characteristic determine/shape the potential impact of the proposal? This may also include **positive impacts** which support the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

#### Risk of disproportionate negative impact:

How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be disproportionately negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

#### Mitigating actions:

For disproportionate negative impacts on protected characteristic/s, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove the impact? You may also wish to include actions which support the positive aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations. All actions identified here should also be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.

## **a) Age**

Indicate which age group/s is/ are most affected, either specify general age group (children, young people, working aged people or older people) or specific age bands.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on age?**

This impacts directly on children, mainly of primary age.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on age?**

It will remove a provision for children in terms of supervised play. 60% of schools are making wrap around provision so there could be a lack or provision in some areas which could impact on children and their parents if they are using the Play Associations as childcare providers. This could impact in parents work or leisure time if they are using the Play Associations to provide child care whilst they undertake such activities.

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Other play activities are available as detailed above, some of which are open access such as playgrounds and green spaces and some of which will be provision related to the children as pupils of a school. Summer playschemes operate on a commercial basis in the city and the Council promotes a range of play and leisure activities during school holidays.

## **b) Disability**

A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. If specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form – physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness, or health condition.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on disability?**

There is no information to suggest children with disabilities are impacted by the change from the data and intelligence available although the children present could have some disabilities or neurodivergence which is or is not evident. One Play Association provides Short Breaks for Disabled Children through a separate funding stream and under commission from the local authority.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on disability?**

None identified



**What are the mitigating actions?**

Specific short breaks provision, which includes play activities, is available for children with disabilities. All providers of services for children need to make reasonable adjustments so that provision is accessible and this includes schools, communities and commercial providers.

**c) Gender reassignment**

Indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected. A trans person is someone who proposes to, starts, or has completed a process to change his or her gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected.

**What is the impact of the proposal on gender reassignment?**

No impact has been identified. As those directly affected are primary age children even those who may present with issues in terms of gender identity will not be starting a process to change their gender.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on gender reassignment?**

No impact

**What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

**d) Marriage and civil partnership**

Please note that the under the Public Sector Equality Duty this protected characteristic applies to the first general duty of the Act, eliminating unlawful discrimination, only. The focus within this is eliminating discrimination against people that are married or in a civil partnership with regard specifically to employment.

**What is the impact of the proposal on marriage and civil partnership?**

No impact has been identified.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on marriage and civil partnership?**

No impact

**What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

**e) Pregnancy and maternity**

Does the proposal treat someone unfairly because they're pregnant, breastfeeding or because they've recently given birth.

**What is the impact of the proposal on pregnancy and maternity?**

No impact has been identified.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on pregnancy and maternity?**

No impact

**What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

**f) Race**

Race refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. A racial group can be made up of two or more distinct racial groups, for example Black Britons, British Asians, British Sikhs, British Jews, Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers.

**What is the impact of the proposal on race?**

On the data available white children make more use of the services than the percentage in the population but it is acknowledged that the information is incomplete as the majority of Play Associations have not returned the requested information.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on race?**

Yes, in that more white children make use of the provision based on the data available.

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Other play opportunities exist as detailed above.

## **g) Religion or belief**

Religion refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition. This must be a belief and not just an opinion or viewpoint based on the present state of information available and;

- be about a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour
- attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion, and importance, and
- be worthy of respect in a democratic society, not incompatible with human dignity and not in conflict with fundamental rights of others. For example, Holocaust denial, or the belief in racial superiority are not protected.

Are your services sensitive to different religious requirements e.g., times a customer may want to access a service, religious days and festivals and dietary requirements

### **What is the impact of the proposal on religion or belief?**

No impact based on the information available

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on religion or belief?**

No impact

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

## **h) Sex**

Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females.

### **What is the impact of the proposal on sex?**

Slightly more boys use the provision than in the local child population based on the information that is available.

### **What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sex?**

Yes, in that more boys make use of the provision.

**What are the mitigating actions?**

Other play activities are available as detailed above.

**i) Sexual orientation**

Indicate if there is a potential impact on people based on their sexual orientation. The Act protects heterosexual, gay, lesbian or bisexual people.

**What is the impact of the proposal on sexual orientation?**

No impact – as the majority of children are of primary school age this will not be a significant issue.

**What is the risk of disproportionate negative impact on sexual orientation?**

No impact

**What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

**7. Summary of protected characteristics**

**a. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?**

On the available information there are more boys than girls using the provision and these are predominantly from a white background. Most children are of primary school age. They are not directly relevant to the proposal and all users will experience the same risk of using current provision should the Play Associations not find alternative funding.

**b. Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal?**

They are not directly relevant to the proposal and all users will experience the same risk of using current provision should the Play Associations not find alternative funding.

## 8. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to 'have due regard' to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.

When Leicester City Council exercises a relevant function, within the fields of healthcare, education, and housing services it must have due regard to the aims set out below:

**a. The unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces**

These include danger; geographical mobility; separation; Service law and rights; unfamiliarity with civilian life; hours of work; and stress.

**b. The principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces**

A disadvantage is when the level of access a member of the Armed Forces Community has to goods and services, or the support they receive, is comparatively lower than that of someone in a similar position who is not a member of the Armed Forces Community, and this difference arises from one (or more) of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life.

**c. The principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces**

Special provision is the taking of actions that go beyond the support provided to reduce or remove disadvantage. Special provision may be justified by the effects of the unique obligations and sacrifices of Service life, especially for those that have sacrificed the most, such as the bereaved and the injured (whether that injury is physical or mental).

Does the service/issue under consideration fall within the scope of a function covered by the Duty (healthcare, education, housing)? Which aims of the Duty are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes. Are members of the Armed Forces specifically disadvantaged or further disadvantaged by the proposal/service? Identify any mitigations including where appropriate possible special provision.

No impact identified

## 9. Other groups

### Other groups

#### **Impact of proposal:**

Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we may consider to be vulnerable, for example people who misuse substances, care leavers, people living in poverty, care experienced young people, carers, those who are digitally excluded. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet their needs/address inequalities they face?

#### **Risk of disproportionate negative impact:**

How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?

#### **Mitigating actions:**

For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA. You may also wish to use this section to identify opportunities for positive impacts.

### **a. Care Experienced People**

This is someone who was looked after by children's services for a period of 13 weeks after the age of 14', but without any limit on age, recognising older people may still be impacted from care experience into later life.

#### **What is the impact of the proposal on Care Experienced People?**

No impact identified. If children are in care and their foster carers identify specific needs these will be addressed by the social worker.

#### **What is the risk of negative impact on Care Experienced People?**

No impact

#### **What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

## **b. Children in poverty**

### **What is the impact of the proposal on children in poverty?**

The location of the play grounds are in less affluent areas of the city. It may be that alternative low-cost supervised play is not available in a local area. This could impact on the immediate opportunities for children in poverty to play in a supervised environment.

### **What is the risk of negative impact on children in poverty?**

There are fewer opportunities for them to engage in professionally supervised play.

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

Free or low cost options for play are available across the city as detailed above.

## **c. Other (describe)**

### **What is the impact of the proposal on any other groups?**

No impact

### **What is the risk of negative impact on any other groups?**

No impact

### **What are the mitigating actions?**

None identified as being needed

## 10. Other sources of potential negative impacts

Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include:

- other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users;
- Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents;
- external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.

None identified

## 11. Human rights implications

Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered and addressed (please see the list at the end of the template), if so, please outline the implications and how they will be addressed below:

None

## 12. Monitoring impact

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

If you want to undertake equality monitoring, please refer to our [equality monitoring guidance and templates](#).

Click or tap here to enter text.



### 13. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Children regardless of protected characteristics have opportunities to play	Promote play opportunities across the city so parents are aware of what options exist.	Andrew Shilliam (communications), Sean Atterbury (Parks)	Ongoing
Have more accurate data around who uses the provisions.	Reiterate the importance of providing data returns from providers	x	x

## **Human rights articles:**

### **Part 1: The convention rights and freedoms**

**Article 2:** Right to Life

**Article 3:** Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way

**Article 4:** Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour

**Article 5:** Right to liberty and security

**Article 6:** Right to a fair trial

**Article 7:** No punishment without law

**Article 8:** Right to respect for private and family life

**Article 9:** Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

**Article 10:** Right to freedom of expression

**Article 11:** Right to freedom of assembly and association

**Article 12:** Right to marry

**Article 14:** Right not to be discriminated against

### **Part 2: First protocol**

**Article 1:** Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment

**Article 2:** Right to education

**Article 3:** Right to free elections