

Play Area Working Group – Meeting Notes

Location: Pinetrees Community Centre

Date: 11th February 2026

Time: 12:00 – 12:30

Purpose of Meeting

To review draft concept designs and cost proposals for the refurbishment of:

- **Barnum Court Play Area**
- **Alanbrooke Crescent Play Area**

and agree feedback for Wicksteed prior to progressing designs.

Alanbrooke Crescent

Overall Layout

- Layout broadly mirrors the existing footprint, retaining fencing to lower costs.
- Scheme includes swings, multiplay slide, spinning nest/bowl, rocker replacement, youth shelter, bench, and bins.

Inclusivity

- Feedback highlighted limited wheelchair transfer opportunities and minimal features for children with visual impairments.
- Consideration should be given to incorporating:
 - Sensory play elements
 - Musical or tactile panels
 - Additional inclusive equipment where feasible

Equipment Feedback

Positive:

- Strong range of swings — likely to attract SEND families.
- Spinning bowl considered okay, if large.
- Seesaw offers easier side access than traditional designs (but no back rest)

Concerns / Suggestions:

- Lack of backrest may reduce usability for some children.
- Surfboard-style rocker requires clarification on usability and pivot design.
- Check dimensions of Youth shelter to support wheelchair access.

Potential Design Change

- Strong support for exploring a wheelchair accessible roundabout in place of the spinning bowl, subject to:
 - Space constraints
 - Installation requirements
 - Additional cost

Ward allowance and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be explored.

Budget Context

- Original programme estimate approx. £100k across both sites.
- Remaining capital funding is expected to support the projects.
- Ward Allowance EMR in place for both:
 - Barnum Court: £4,500k
 - Alanbrooke - £5,305k

Barnum Court – Key Discussion

Site Constraints

- Very small, irregular site embedded within housing, means expansion isn't feasible.
- Proposal effectively maximises play value within limitations.
- Tree root surfacing issues will be addressed within project costs.

Equipment Feedback

Positive:

- Multiplay unit viewed as one of the best accessible options without a wheelchair ramp.
- Good range of play experiences for a neighbourhood park.
- Appropriate for younger children.

Questions Raised:

- Does the train unit allow wheelchair approach?
- Are there interactive elements (moving wheels, sensory features) accessible from ground level?
- Is there a platform restricting access?

Positioning

- Parks recognised as a local estate play areas, not destination parks.

Terminology – Inclusive vs Accessible

The group discussed expectations around language when promoting park refurbishment.

The Council needs to manage expectations, as wording such as 'inclusive' & 'accessible' can be interpreted differently by everyone.

Next Steps

- AB to return feedback to Wicksteed and request revisions, particularly for Alanbrooke.
- Updated designs to be circulated electronically for comment.
- Local resident consultation to be undertaken before committee decision.
- Aim to secure approvals and contracts before the end of the Financial year.