

Leisure And Recreation Committee

Report Title: Play Area Improvements – Barnum Ct & Alanbrooke Crescent

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1. Purpose of Report

To present initial findings from resident consultation on proposed improvements to 2 play areas and provide Members with an interpreted overview of feedback, including key themes, prior to further design refinement.

Alanbrooke Crescent Play Area



Barnum Court Play Area



2. Background

Draft concept designs for both sites were developed in partnership with Wicksteed and reviewed by the Play Area Working Group.

Public consultation was undertaken via SurveyMonkey to gather resident views on:

- Overall support for proposals
- Suitability of designs
- Accessibility and inclusivity
- Equipment priorities and preferences

3. Survey Response Overview

Site	Responses
Alanbrooke Crescent	10
Barnum Court	6

4. Interpretation of Results

Detailed responses indicate that some residents feel the schemes could go further in terms of overall play provision, particularly at Alanbrooke Crescent. However, this sits alongside very strong levels of support for the proposals overall.

This reflects a common consultation outcome where residents:

- Critique individual design aspects, while
- Supporting the wider investment and improvement proposals

In practical terms, the consultation indicates:

Residents broadly believe both schemes are substantial improvements on the current provision, but there is a desire to maximise play value where feasible.

5. Alanbrooke Crescent – Key Findings

5.1 Local Relevance

- 87.5% of respondents live nearby
- 75% currently use the site regularly or occasionally

This demonstrates strong local relevance and engagement.

5.2 Intended Users

Key user groups identified:

- Children aged 5–10
- Older children (10+)
- Children with additional needs / disabilities

This reinforces the requirement for a broad, inclusive, multi-age play offer.

5.3 Design Feedback

Responses regarding how well the design meets household needs remain mixed:

- 50% indicated the design meets needs “poorly”

However:

- 87.5% stated the proposal is “better” or “much better” than the current play area
- 75% strongly support the proposals overall

This suggests residents support the direction of travel but believe the site has potential for additional or enhanced provision.

5.4 Future Use

- 75% stated they would be likely or very likely to use the improved site

5.5 Feature Priorities

Highest-ranked features:

1. Multiplay unit / slide
2. Swings
3. Accessible spinner

Lower priorities:

- Sensory equipment
- Seating / social space

5.6 Resident Priorities

When asked what should be prioritised:

- 50% requested more equipment overall
- 25% prioritised accessibility / inclusivity
- 25% prioritised better-quality equipment

This demonstrates a strong desire to maximise overall play value.

5.7 Additional Comments

Comments included:

- Requests for provision aimed at older children / teenagers
- Suggestions for additional features such as:
 - Inclusive swings
 - Additional multiplay features
 - Informal sports provision / exercise equipment

5.8 Accessibility & Inclusion Feedback

Additional feedback received from a MOAM was positive regarding the inclusive nature of the design, particularly:

- Wheelchair-accessible features
- Ramped access multiplay equipment
- Accessible seesaw design
- Variety of inclusive play opportunities

The feedback also recognised that larger inclusive items would likely require significant additional cost and space.

6. Barnum Court – Key Findings

6.1 Local Context

- 40% of respondents live nearby
- 60% currently do not use the site

This may indicate opportunity to increase future usage.

6.2 Intended Users

Primary intended users identified:

- Children under 5
- Children aged 5–10

This supports the concept of Barnum Court as a smaller neighbourhood play area primarily focused on younger users.

6.3 Design Feedback

Responses remain generally positive:

- 80% consider the proposals “better” or “much better” than the existing provision
- 80% support the proposals either strongly or with minor changes

Some respondents expressed reservations regarding:

- Overall layout efficiency
- Quantity of provision
- Existing surfacing conditions

6.4 Space Usage

- 60% feel the design makes good use of the limited space
- 40% don’t feel it fully utilises the available area

6.5 Feature Priorities

Highest priority feature:

- Multiplay unit

Lower priorities:

- Springer
- Sensory panels

6.6 Resident Priorities

When asked what should be prioritised:

- 40% requested improved accessibility
- 40% prioritised better-quality equipment

6.7 Qualitative Feedback

Comments included:

- Request to resolve existing surfacing / trip hazards
- One general comment requesting broader overall improvements

6.8 Accessibility & Inclusion Feedback

MOAM feedback on the Barnum Court design was positive, particularly given the constrained size of the site. Comments highlighted:

- Strong use of limited space
- Inclusive design principles
- Potential for wheelchair-accessible adaptation to the roleplay train
- Suitability for younger children and users with mobility needs

7. Key Themes Across Both Sites

Positive Themes

- Strong support for investment in both sites
- Clear recognition that proposals improve current provision
- Strong support for inclusive play opportunities
- High perceived value for money

Areas for Consideration

Alanbrooke Crescent

- Opportunity to increase overall play provision
- Consider additional features aimed at older children
- Review whether additional equipment can be accommodated within budget and space constraints

Barnum Court

- Continue focus on quality, durability and accessibility
- Address existing surfacing concerns as part of wider refurbishment works

8. Procurement, Financial & Delivery Considerations

The Council previously undertook a compliant procurement exercise for inclusive play provision works at Rodbourne Cheney under the Council's Procurement Scope of Works & RFQ.

The procurement documentation stated that:

"The contract is for an initial 6-month term, with an option to extend for up to 2 years and 6 months to deliver other play area projects, should the supplier meet performance expectations."

Wicksteed were successfully appointed through that procurement process and have since demonstrated a strong understanding of the Council's objectives regarding inclusive and accessible play provision.

Officers are therefore satisfied that the Council can lawfully proceed with Wicksteed for both the Alanbrooke Crescent and Barnum Court schemes under the existing contractual arrangement and extension provisions, subject to:

- final scope confirmation,
- agreement of final costs,
- and confirmation of available budget provision.

This approach is considered advantageous as it:

- maintains continuity of supplier and design standards,
- reduces procurement and mobilisation timescales,
- ensures consistency in inclusive play principles,
- and builds upon an established working relationship.

9. Financial Implications

Both projects are intended to be funded through the Council's approved Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing allocation relating to play area improvements and associated community infrastructure investment.

Final quotations have now been received from Wicksteed for both schemes:

Site	Quote	EMR Ward Allowance	Balance from PWLB Play Area Allocation
Barnum Court	£41,000.00	£4,500.00	£36,500.00
Alanbrooke Crescent	£60,500.00	£1,117.33	£59,382.67
Total	£101,500.00	£5,617.33	£95,882.67

The allocated EMR Ward Allowance contributions will be applied to offset the overall project costs. The balance of **£95,882.67** will be funded from the approved PWLB play area improvement allocation within the Council's capital programme.

The schemes align with the original purpose of the PWLB play area proportion, namely the replacement and improvement of ageing play provision and investment in accessible, inclusive community recreation infrastructure.

Allocation to this project will leave a remaining Play Area Capital budget of Circa £65,000

10. Conclusions

The consultation findings demonstrate broad support for investment into both play areas and clear recognition that the proposals represent significant improvements on the existing provision.

Officers consider that:

- the projects are aligned with the Council's wider objectives for accessible and inclusive community infrastructure;
- the consultation process has provided a reasonable and proportionate level of resident and stakeholder engagement;
- the proposed schemes are deliverable within the Council's approved capital funding arrangements;
- and the current procurement arrangement provides an efficient and compliant route to delivery.

12. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the updated consultation findings and resident feedback received to date.
2. Recognise that the consultation demonstrates broad support for both schemes, whilst also identifying areas where minor refinement could be explored.
3. Recommend to Full Council approval of the progression of the Alanbrooke Crescent and Barnum Court play area refurbishment schemes.
4. Recommend to Full Council approval of the use of the allocated Ward Allowance contributions towards the schemes, namely:
 - £4,500 towards Barnum Court; and
 - £1,117.33 towards Alanbrooke Crescent.
5. Recommend to Full Council that the remaining project costs, totalling **£95,882.67**, be funded from the approved PWLB play area allocation within the Council's capital programme.