

Following public comments heard by the Town Improvements Committee at its meeting on 11th January 2021, the committee chairman, Cllr Andy Hodge, made the following reply:

“Thank you for your input this evening.

We have listened carefully to your concerns.

We are grateful for your comments tonight, those received by email and letter, as well as in the local press, that pledge your general support for the children’s play project.

We appear to be aligned in our understanding that the chosen location for the play area is already used by families enjoying improvised recreational activities, which is why the installation of a play area at this location is permitted development.

The play area has been designed to be inclusive and aimed at young children of varying abilities. We believe this facility will be especially important post the COVID pandemic as it will aid children’s physical recovery and mental well-being.

For your information, we anticipate that the younger zone will be attractive to children up to the age of 6 years old and the older zone is aimed at children up to around 12 years old. The design does not target older teenagers and does not include big dynamic pieces of equipment.

This project was borne out of the Burnham Evolution Business Plan and has been well documented since 2018. The proposed location of the play area has been no secret, with detailed explanations and photographs of the location.

The lawned areas are designated green space and stand out against a large expanse of tarmac. You are right in that they might at some future point be made a little prettier.

The full business plan continues to be available on the council’s website, and its projects have featured in the local media.

The aims of the Business Plan mirror the goals of the Burnham-on-Sea Economic Plan and include:

- vii) To encourage physical activity; adapting landscape and public realm assets to ensure access for all and building in appropriate recreation facilities.*
- viii) To be brave: Burnham-on-Sea will be a town that encourages residents to try new things.*

The Burnham Evolution Business Plan was informed by its own public consultation and by the Economic Plan and Neighbourhood Plan, both of which were the subject of local community and stakeholder consultation.

The public were given a choice as to whether they engaged with the process; the council can only work with the responses it receives.

As a town council we must take into consideration the wider needs of the entire parish and make decisions based on those wider needs. This includes consideration of all residents, visitors, and the future economy.

Once again, I thank you for presenting your point of view.”