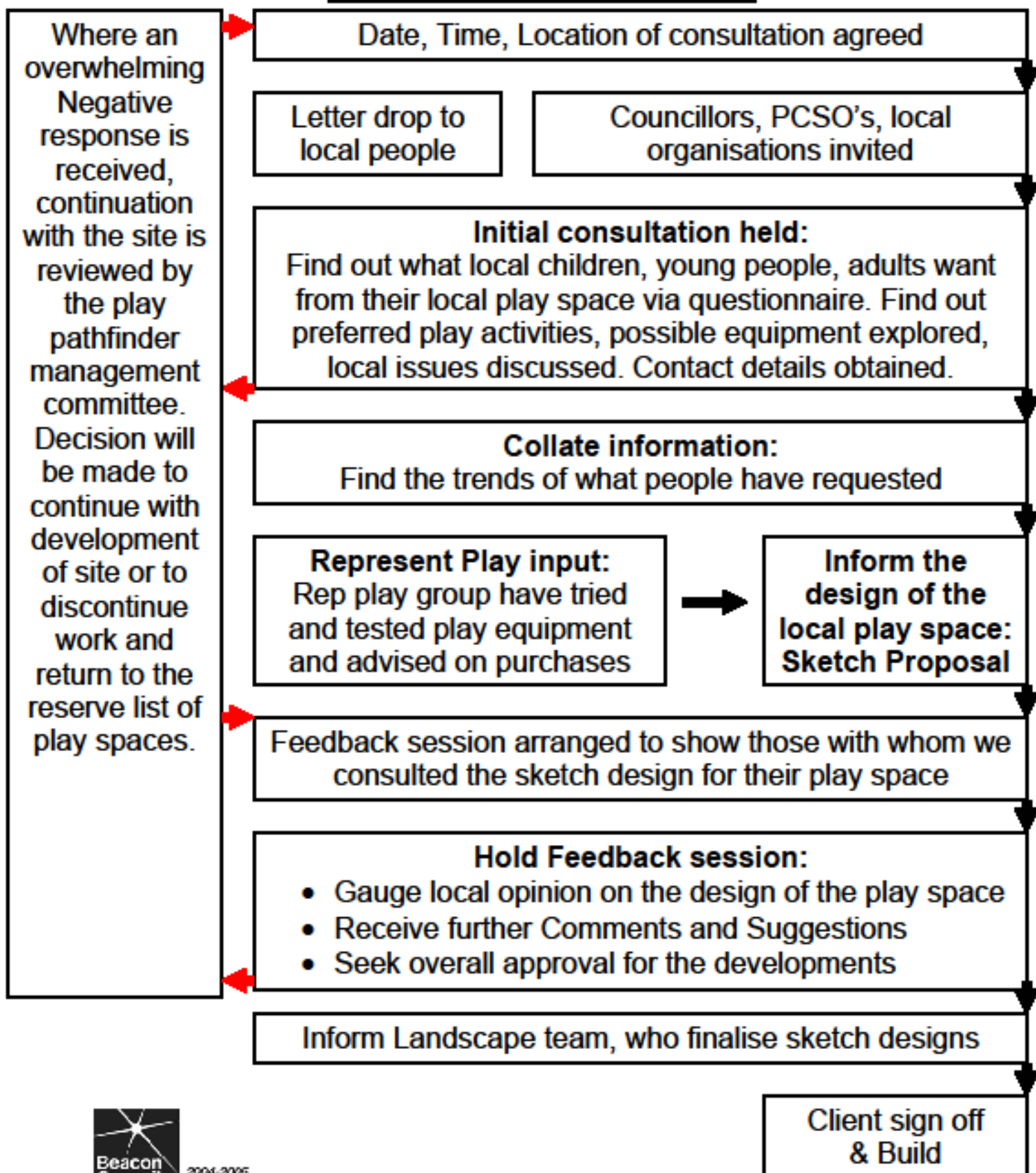


Consultation Process:



Description of consultation: Dudley Council have developed a consultation process which heavily engages local communities in the development of their local play spaces. Targeted consultations were held initially to ensure that hard to reach group's views and opinions were included in the design of play spaces in Dudley. We consulted with disabled children, (KIDS Orchard, me2 award panel) looked after children, (Kingswinford LAC group), foster carers (Kingswinford LAC group), parents and carers of profoundly disabled children and young people (Old Park School Event and me2 award short break parent and carer forum) and traveller Gypsy, Roma children (Oak Lane Traveller Site). Targeted consultations have reached out to **over 100 people**.

A children and young people decision making panel was formed building on the subgroup of DDMK (Dudley Decision Making Kids) who in year 1 were involved in the selection of play spaces to be developed during the play pathfinder programme. Dudley Council increased this decision making group to include; me2 panel members (disabled children and young people), KIDS Orchard members (disabled children and young people), Chat back group (looked after children) and Sycamore Green children (children who live in the location of the adventure playground facility). They have named themselves "D2; Design 2gether" and are the key young person decision making group for the play pathfinder programme and beyond. D2; design 2gether are integral to all decision making processes in the play pathfinder programme.

Localised public consultations then took place in all of the wave 2 play areas to gauge local children and residents views, ideas and opinions on the design of their new play area. Local people were given the opportunity to see examples of other play spaces, see play equipment possibilities, draw / design their local play area, express any of their concerns and make requests or suggestions. The play service team then consolidated this information and found the trends of what local people were asking for. This information was shared with the landscape architect for the site and as such feeds into the design process.

D2: Design 2gether were then involved in the selection of equipment for the site having tried and tested play equipment at the Play Fair event at Stoney Park in Coventry (creating a top ten list of play equipment which offers great inclusive play value). At this point, the landscape team developed their initial sketch proposals. D2; design 2gether were then given the opportunity to scrutinise these sketch designs and suggest alterations or changes. The landscape architects then finalised their sketch design and follow up visits were held at each play site, showing the sketch designs to local people for approval.

The consultation schedule: The following table outlines the consultations held at each wave 2 play pathfinder play spaces site and the total amount of people consulted with:

Play Space	Number of letters dropped	Date of initial consultation	Number of people present aged 0–20	Number of people present Aged 21+	Date and location of feedback session	Number of people present aged 0–20	Number of people present aged 0 – 21+	Total people consulted with per site	Total people informed
Hope Street - Halesowen	250	26/05/09	6	12	09/07/09	10	6	34	284
Heathbrook Farm Play Area – Wall Heath	300	27/05/09	15	7	14/07/09	5	7	34	334

Hawbush Road Play area – Brierley Hill	250	02/06/09	18	4	15/07/09	10	1	33	283
Valley Road – Upper Gornal	300	3/06/09	30	4	22/07/09	33	1	68	368
Tanhouse Lane - Halesowen	300	Initial consultation not held due to size of development. A combined consultation event was held instead to get feedback on proposals.			07/07/09	11	9	20	320
Homer Hill Park Play Area - Cradley	250	An initial consultation was not held as we had a clear brief from the local friends group who had engaged with children.			27/06/09	37	31	68	318
Scott's Road Playing Fields - Stourbridge	300	Initial consultation not held due to size of development. A combined consultation event was held instead to get feedback on proposals.			19/07/09	25	22	47	347
Lapwood Avenue - Kingswinford	300	17/06/09		2	A feedback session was not held due to limited response initially.			2	302
Gauden Road - Stourbridge	Scheme cancelled due to closure of site by Green care.								
Sedgley Hall Farm Park - Sedgley	350	11/06/09	30	6	27/07/09	20	8	64	414
Beeches View Avenue - Halesowen	650	Initial consultation not held due to restrictions on use of land. A combined consultation event was held instead to get ideas for developments and local approval.			13/07/09	17	7	24	674
Kinver Street Play Area - Wordsley	250	04/06/09	27	6	28/07/09	34	5	72	322
Dewberry Road Play Area - Wordsley	250	09/06/09	2	9	Scheme cancelled and as such no requirement for feedback session due to opposition encountered on initial consultation.			11	261
Hamilton Avenue / Cloister Drive - Halesowen	250	12/06/09	3	8	23/07/09	12	8	31	281
Albion Road Play Area – Wall Heath	300	10/06/09	35	4	29/07/09	8	5	52	350
Spring Meadow Road -	350	Combined consultation held as several sketch proposals were available and a voting opportunity			01/07/09	47	19	66	369

Netherton		was combined with local approval.						
	Total Amount of letters dropped	Total number of people present aged 0–20 at initial consultations	Total Number of people present Aged 21+ at initial consultations		Number of people present aged 0–20 at feedback sessions	Number of people present aged 0 – 21+ at feedback sessions	Total consulted with at all sites across both sessions	Total informed about the development through letter drop or consultation
Total:	4,900	166	59		328	129	682	5,582

Over 100 people were also engaged via the targeted consultations. All of this information has provided a brief for the Landscape Team and as such, the play pathfinder programme has seen an estimated **800 people** involved in the development of play spaces in Dudley MBC.

Conclusion: By and large the consultation process has been positive. However, on two sites Dudley play service encountered considerable opposition to developments taking place. When council officers arrived at Dewberry Road play area they were quickly surrounded by angry residents who were opposed to any such developments taking place. The residents reported arson attacks, anti social behaviour, adults using the site inappropriately at night and sustained vandalism. The response here was so negative that the decision was made to move to a site from the reserve list and cancel any developments at Dewberry road play area.

Similarly, at Heathbrook Farm Park, council officers encountered opposition to developments taking place. However, on this occasion, opposition was out-weighted by parents, children and young people who were in favour of developments. The consultation process did mean that council officers were able to work closely with those who were opposed to developments, listen to their concerns and incorporate these in the design process. A sketch proposal was developed which actually met the needs of all that were consulted with, as it moved play developments further away from local resident's houses, utilising areas of the park which had no play features, as well as providing new and exciting play opportunities for children and young people in the area. The end result was that those who were initially opposed to developments approved the plans once changes had been made in response to their concerns.

In conclusion, this method has meant that local people are able to feel engaged in the development and can see how their comments and suggestions have been incorporated into the development of their local play space. This level of engagement should give local people greater ownership of local play sites and as such we hope levels of vandalism and anti social behaviour which presently plagues many play spaces in the Borough will reduce.

