

STATEMENT 6

STATEMENT TO THE DOWNS COMMITTEE REGARDING A NEW CHILDRENS PLAYGROUND

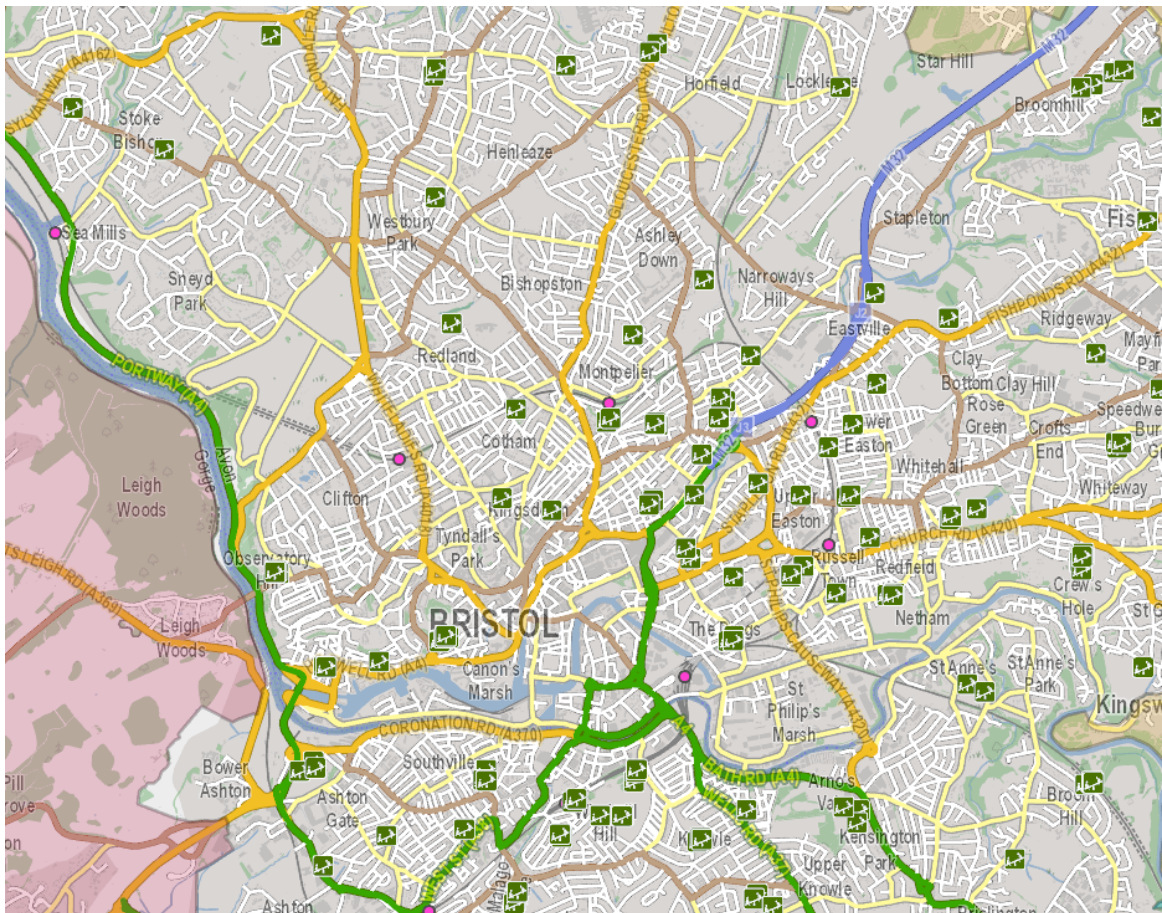
Meeting of 21st September 2020

This statement supports Cllr Carla Denyer's proposal for the construction of a New Playground on the Downs.

Why Here?

The Downs is a treasure. Never more so than in these COVID times where outside activities have been, and will continue to be, so important to the wellbeing of Bristolians. The Downs allows people to walk, relax and play sports. Near the suspension bridge the Knickbocker breaker slide provides thrills for all ages and the well-constructed wooden playground in the dell behind is always well used. A new playground near the café/water tower will only enhance the provision.

The image below shows the Pinpoint Map of childrens play equipment and play areas in the city and highlights how badly the residents around the Downs are served by them. Bristol City Council needs to address this lack.



Why Play and why Playgrounds?

Play for children is a fundamental part of their development. So much so that their right to play is enshrined in Article 31 of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Research focuses on 4 main aspects of development which play provides: Social skills (communication, cooperation, collaboration), Emotional Skills (self-esteem and self-confidence, learning from failure and succeeding), Cognitive skills (problem solving and decision making), Physical Development. Opportunities to climb, use overhead equipment and swings have particular value (see Additional Information below).

A new playground should consider Inclusivity from the outset thereby maximising the opportunity it offers to all children. Emphasis for challenging activities for the 9-14 age range could also be considered as nowadays this age group has little opportunity to continue developing the skills they acquired in playground settings when they were younger.

Conclusion

A playground on the Downs near the water tower / cafe that offers opportunities for children to engage in active outdoor play would greatly enhance the wellbeing of countless Bristol residents, but especially those young people living near the Downs who have no nearby playgrounds. I hope the Committee will support Cllr Carla Denyer's proposal.

Merche Clark

CDCA Committee Member and resident of Clifton Down Ward

16/9/20

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NHS Guidelines for Physical Activity suggest:

Toddlers (aged 1 to 2) - physically active every day for at least 180 minutes (3 hours). The more the better. This should be spread throughout the day, including playing outdoors... Active play, such as using a climbing frame, riding a bike, playing in water, chasing games and ball games, is the best way for this age group to get moving.

Pre-schoolers (aged 3 to 4)- should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) a day doing a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. ... The 180 minutes should include at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.

Children and young people aged 5 to 18 should aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day across the week and take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscles and bones. Research suggests that

Well designed playgrounds are fundamental to helping children's development.

Here are why some of the key pieces of equipment are so important:

"Climbing has long been established as a developmentally beneficial activity for children. In order to climb a play structure children must use cognitive skills such as memory, problem solving, and imagery and visualization (Frost, Brown and Sutterby). A child must also combat the feelings of fear and stress, possibly from the height of the equipment, which promotes the proper management of emotions. Children also love climbing because it gives them the power to change their perspective, fostering their natural curiosity (Thornton and Frost)."⁽¹⁾

“Overhead equipment, such as monkey bars, hanging rings, and gliders, are a main component of playgrounds that are essential for children’s learning and development (Thornton and Frost). It presents an entirely different skill set for children, not found in other playground equipment. The motion of holding on and swinging from one arm to another is called brachiation (Frost and Therrell). Brachiation develops upper body strength and endurance, hand-eye coordination, visual perception of distance, and balanced locomotor patterns (Frost and Therrell). Most babies naturally develop sufficient grip and upper body strength to support their own body weight by the time they are two years old (Stoddard), but if this skill is not further practiced and developed, the necessary strength can be lost as their body weight increases. This is why overhead equipment and the act of swinging from one bar to the next are critical to a child’s development).”⁽¹⁾

“Swings are one of the most common and exciting pieces of equipment on a playground. Children can use swings in many different ways and for many different purposes. An over stimulated child might simply relax on a swing by gently rocking back and forth, while an under stimulated child might push to go higher and higher to get a feeling of excitement (Strickland). The act of swinging can be quite challenging to children just starting out. It requires rhythm, leg and arm strength, grasping, and balance (Kerniva). All parts of the body must be working and pumping together in perfect coordination to make the swing go higher. Once children become comfortable they may even start to jump out of the swing, requiring coordination, balance, landing strength, and timing (Kerniva).”⁽¹⁾

(1) Designing and Evaluating Playground Equipment for Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Honors Thesis Leigha R. Brisco
Department: Civil and Environment Engineering Advisor: Dr. Kimberly E. Bigelow, Ph.D. April 2014

10 Principles of Playground Design

https://playgroundideas.org/10-principles-of-playground-design/?gclid=CjwKCAjwzIH7BRAbEiwAoDxxTnG7k9uguniAWaAFmz3H8Cj7WCtr2dpoFB3CJEF0kDnPvzS-PHCe9RoCts4QAvD_BwE

Just for the fun of it: making playgrounds accessible to all children

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/04419057.2012.759144?casa_token=y6xvY1WuSMEAAAAA%3AnCiQC80JFCd76mlUV2-XwiYMzoYZvKUh1LKifvBu79umwVG6HpFWdK6ns61dgSpxSHy8l0d-Ov4