

Colyton new play area

Survey report

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1. Summary

East Devon District Council carried out a public survey to gather community views on a proposed new play area to be delivered by Wainhomes as part of their development in Colyton. The survey invited residents and stakeholders to put forward suggestions on what should be included in the play area and to provide comments on potential play equipment options. The survey opened on the 31 October and closed at 5pm on 28 November and received 97 contributions, indicating a good level of engagement with the survey process. The survey formed an early stage in the project and was designed to ensure that local views could be considered before proposals are developed further. Feedback collected through the survey will be used to inform the next stages of design and decision-making for the play area.

2. Survey goals and methodology

The purpose of the survey was to gather community input to help inform the development of a new play area to be delivered by Wainhomes as part of their Colyton development. The survey aimed to provide residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to suggest what features should be included in the play area and to comment on potential play equipment options.

The survey was delivered by East Devon District Council using an online survey platform. It was open from 31 October closing at 5pm on 28 November, and was accessible to residents, families and other interested parties.

The survey collected both structured responses and free-text comments, allowing participants to provide specific preferences as well as more detailed suggestions. All responses were recorded digitally and collated for review to support the next stages of project development.

3. Survey process

The survey was hosted on the online Commonplace platform and promoted through a range of communication channels to maximise participation. These included a direct email issued via Commonplace to subscribers on the mailing list, posts across the Council's social media platforms, and promotion through the community engagement and residents' newsletter.

Following the close of the survey, all submissions were collated and reviewed to support analysis and reporting, enabling the identification of recurring issues and areas raised by respondents.

4. Data analysis

The survey received 97 contributions from the public over the survey period.

1. Please rank the types of play that are most important to you / your child?

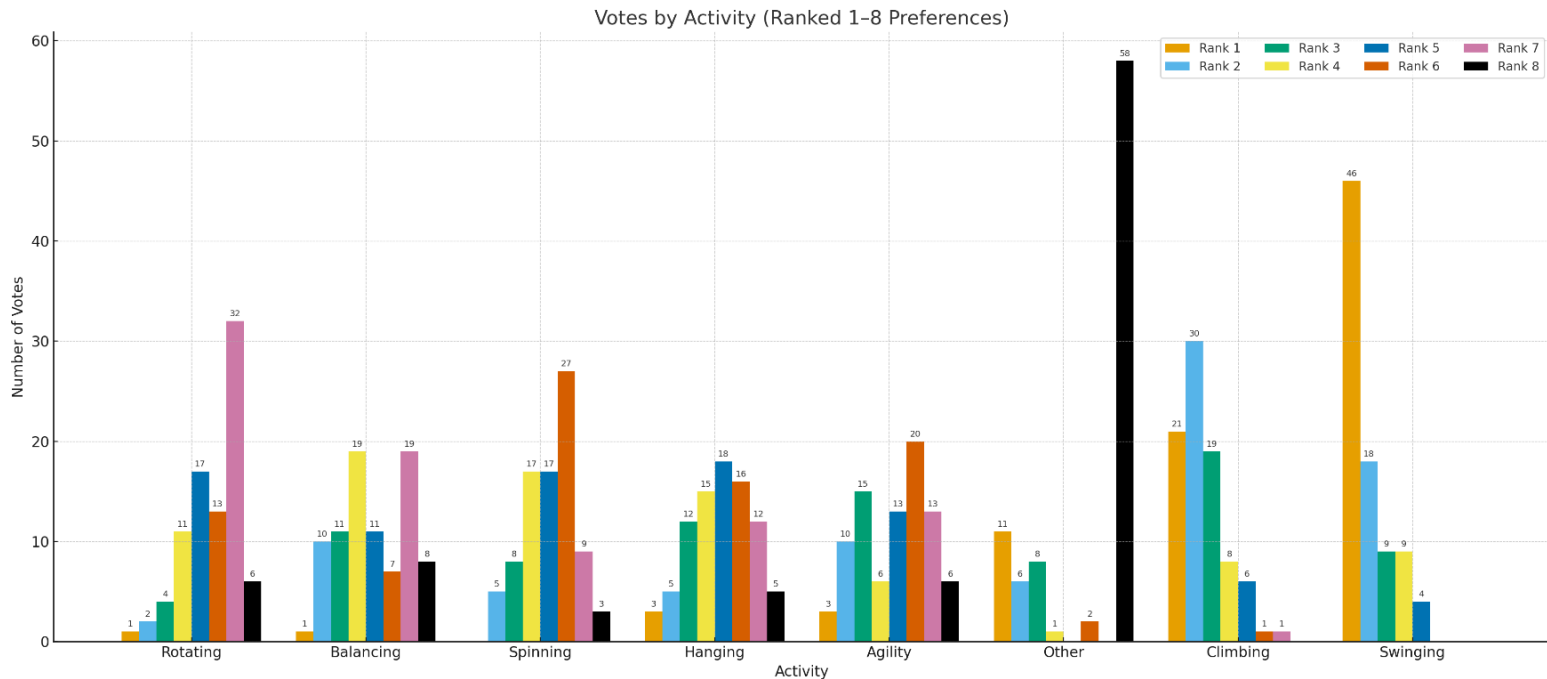


Figure 1: Public opinion on what type of play they or their child most want to be included in the upgraded play area.

We received 86 contributions to this question.

Swinging was the highest priority play type. It received 46 Rank 1 votes (47.4%), the largest of any activity, and continued to score strongly at Rank 2 with 18 votes (18.6%), indicating clear and widespread support.

Climbing was also strongly supported across the higher rankings, receiving 21 Rank 1 votes (21.6%), 30 Rank 2 votes (30.9%), and 19 Rank 3 votes (19.6%). This demonstrates consistent prioritisation even where it was not selected as the top choice.

Agility and hanging activities were most commonly placed in the middle rankings. Agility received 15 Rank 3 votes (15.5%) and 20 Rank 6 votes (20.6%), while hanging received 18 Rank 5 votes (18.6%) and 16 Rank 6 votes (16.5%), suggesting these are valued supporting features rather than primary equipment.

Spinning and balancing also tended to sit within the mid-range rankings. Spinning received 27 Rank 6 votes (27.8%), while balancing was most frequently ranked at Rank 4 and Rank 7, each with 19 votes (19.6%), indicating moderate importance.

The 'Other' category was predominantly ranked lowest, with 58 Rank 8 votes (59.8%), showing that alternative or unspecified play types were generally considered a low priority.

Overall, the results show a clear hierarchy of preferences, with swinging and climbing emerging as the dominant priorities, supported by a range of secondary play activities that add variety to the play area.

2. What equipment would you like to see in the play area?

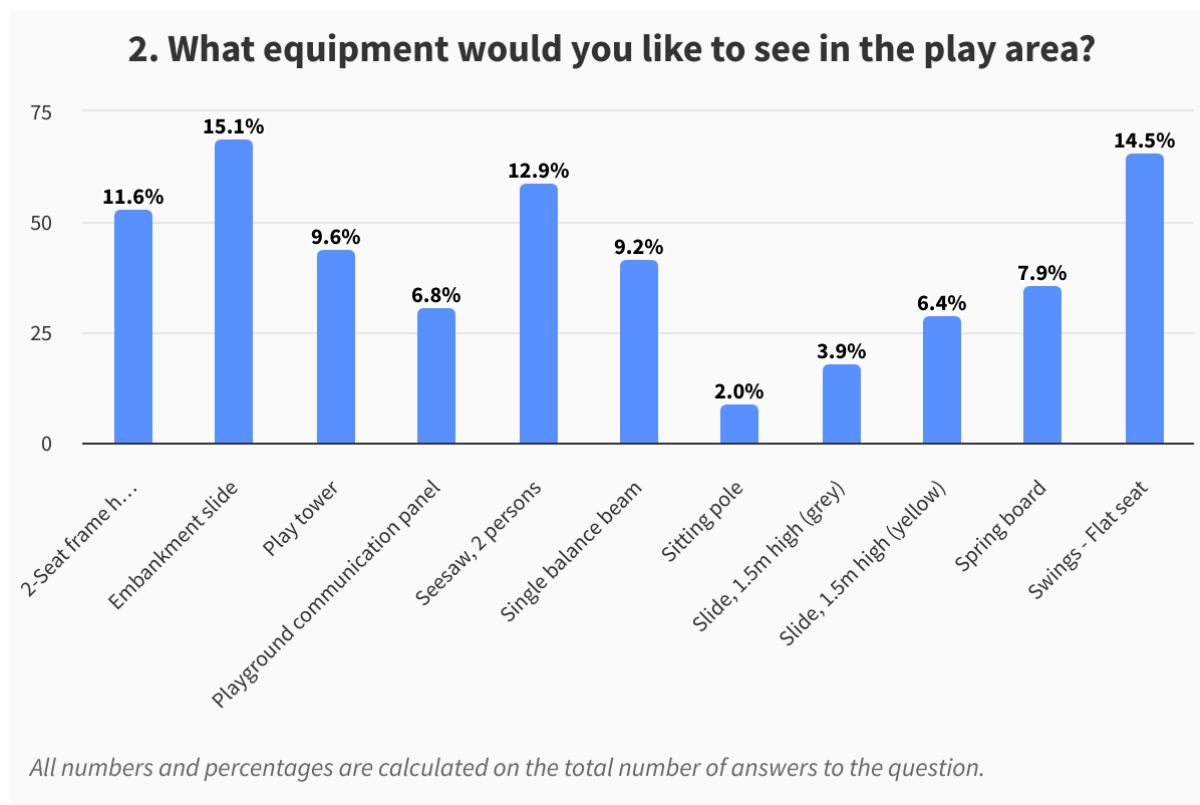


Figure two: Public opinion on what type of play is most important to them or their child.

The embankment slide were the most frequently selected item, accounting for 15.1% of all responses, reinforcing the strong demand for traditional swinging equipment. Swings – flat seat was also highly requested, receiving 14.5% of responses, making it the single most selected individual item. This indicates a clear preference for larger, more dynamic slide features.

Seesaw (two-person) equipment attracted 12.9% of responses, highlighting interest in equipment that supports shared and social play. Two-seat frame swings were selected by 11.6% of respondents, further demonstrating the importance placed on swing provision within the play area.

Mid-range preferences included the play tower (9.6%), single balance beam (9.2%), and spring board (7.9%), suggesting these items are valued as complementary features that add variety and challenge.

Lower levels of support were recorded for the playground communication panel (6.8%), 1.5m high slide (yellow) (6.4%), and 1.5m high slide (grey) (3.9%). The sitting pole received the lowest level of support, with 2.0% of responses, indicating it was a lower priority compared to more active play equipment.

Overall, the responses show a clear preference for swings, slides, and shared play equipment, supported by a mix of secondary features that enhance balance, coordination and play variety.

3. How do you / your child feel about the equipment selection?

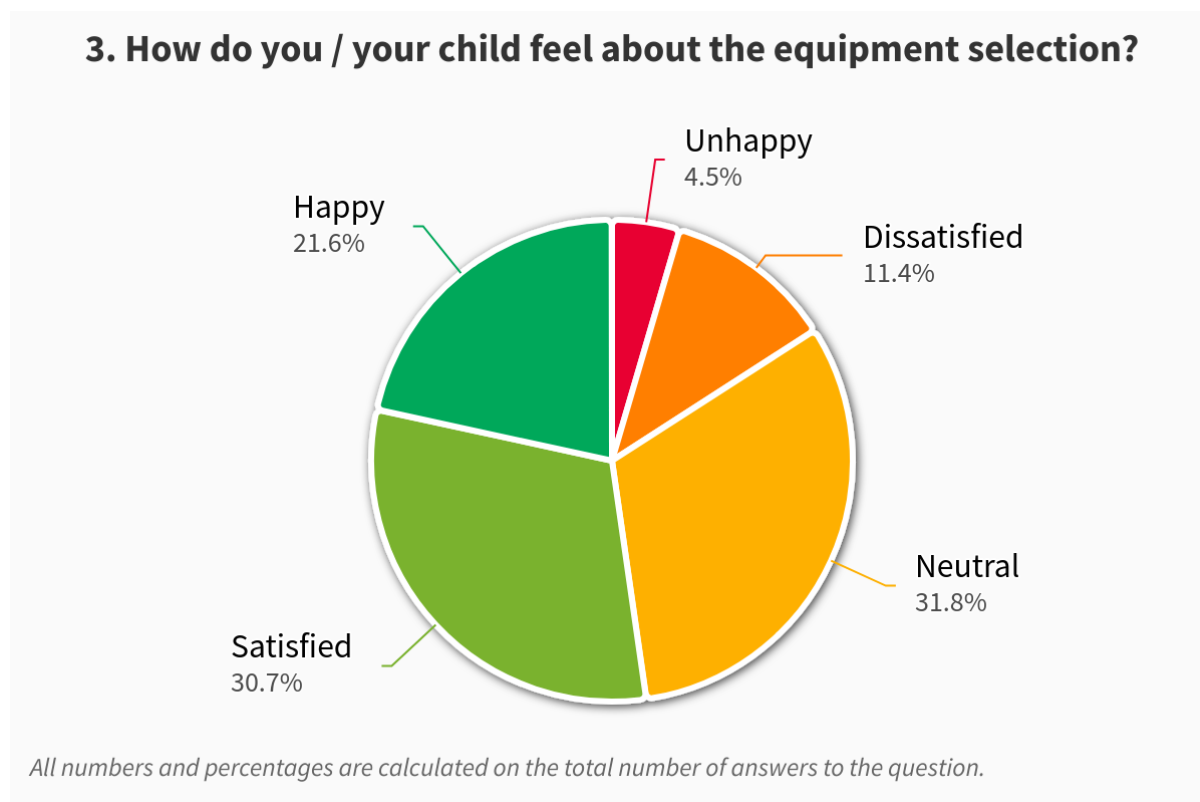


Figure three: Public opinion on the equipment being offered to be installed in the park

There were 88 contributions to this question.

Overall feedback shows a broadly positive or neutral response to the proposed equipment selection. A combined 52.3% of respondents expressed positive views, with 30.7% stating they were satisfied and 21.6% reporting they were happy. A further 31.8% selected neutral, indicating neither a positive nor negative view and suggesting potential scope for refinement or reassurance as the project progresses. Negative responses were less common, with 11.4% indicating they were dissatisfied and 4.5% unhappy, meaning 15.9% expressed some level of dissatisfaction overall.

4. Please suggest any other types of equipment you would like to see in the park?

The free-text responses demonstrate clear and repeated priorities for the type of equipment residents would like to see included in the play area. Many respondents suggested multiple items within a single response.

Most frequently mentioned items

- Zip wire / zip line – mentioned 16 times, making it one of the most commonly requested features. Comments frequently highlighted its popularity with older children and its ability to extend the appeal of the play area beyond early years.

- Trampolines (including in-ground trampolines) – mentioned 12 times, often alongside zip wires and climbing equipment, suggesting strong demand for high-energy, active play features.
- Swings (including baby, toddler and group swings) – mentioned 15 times, with repeated requests for baby seat swings, toddler-friendly options and larger shared swing designs.
- Climbing equipment (frames, towers, nets, walls) – mentioned 12 times, including requests for higher or more challenging climbing opportunities and rope-based structures.
- Monkey bars / hanging equipment – mentioned 10 times, with several comments noting limited provision locally and the need for equipment that supports strength and coordination.

Provision for older children

There was a strong and consistent theme around the need for facilities suitable for older children and teenagers:

- Skate Park / skateboarding provision – mentioned 6 times
- BMX pump track – mentioned once
- Numerous comments explicitly stated concern that simpler equipment would be quickly outgrown and that provision for ages 6–16 is needed.

Sports and fitness facilities

- Basketball hoops / nets / hardstanding – mentioned 5 times, with several respondents stating that Colyton specifically lacks basketball provision.
- Outdoor gym equipment mentioned 5 times, including requests for all-age fitness facilities.
- Goal posts (football/cricket) mentioned 2 times.

Inclusive, imaginative and supporting features

- Baby and toddler-specific equipment (baby swings, toddler climbing frames) – mentioned multiple times within swing and climbing responses.
- Inclusive equipment (wheelchair-accessible roundabouts, disabled swings) – mentioned 2 times.
- Imaginative play features (play houses, boats, castles, talking tubes, themed ground games) – mentioned 6 times.

- Seating, benches and supporting infrastructure (including benches, bins, cycle parking, water points) – mentioned 5 times.
- Sandpits and spinning equipment (roundabouts, spin chairs) – mentioned 6 times combined.

Summary

The free-text feedback shows strong and repeated demand for zip wires, trampolines, swings, climbing equipment and monkey bars, alongside a clear call for older-child and teenage provision, including skate facilities and sports features. Respondents consistently emphasised the importance of creating a play area that is challenging, inclusive and suitable for a wide age range, supported by seating and other practical amenities to encourage longer use by families.

5. Any additional requirements you would like included in the new design?

1. Provision for older children and active use

A strong and consistent theme was the need for facilities that cater for older children and young people, rather than focusing solely on early years play. Respondents repeatedly called for more challenging, exciting and distinctive features, with particular emphasis on skate park provision, basketball facilities and equipment that encourages physical activity and longer engagement. Several comments noted that simpler or “off-the-shelf” play equipment would be quickly outgrown and would not represent good long-term value.

2. Supporting facilities for families and wider use

Many responses highlighted the importance of complementary infrastructure to support longer visits and wider community use. This included adequate seating and picnic areas for parents and grandparents, sheltered spaces, recycling facilities, and practical features such as drinking water points, taps to wash wellies and safe surfacing. There was also interest in facilities that allow adults to be active, such as outdoor gym equipment, alongside children’s play.

3. Accessibility, inclusion and sensory play

Accessibility and inclusive design featured prominently, with respondents calling for equipment that can be used by disabled children, including wheelchair-accessible features. Sensory play elements were also highlighted, alongside requests for secure layouts and clear access routes. The overall emphasis was on creating a play area that is welcoming, safe and usable for children of different ages, abilities and needs.

Overall message

The feedback strongly supports the creation of a high-quality, inclusive and age-diverse play space that goes beyond basic play provision. Respondents want a distinctive facility that balances adventurous play for older children with accessibility, sensory value and the practical needs of families and carers.

5. Key findings

- There is a clear hierarchy of play preferences, with swinging and climbing consistently identified as the most important types of play to be included in the new play area.
- Respondents showed a strong preference for traditional and shared play equipment, particularly swings, slides and seesaws, supported by complementary features that encourage balance, agility and coordination.
- Overall views on the proposed equipment selection were broadly positive or neutral, indicating general acceptance of the proposals, alongside an expectation that the final design could be refined further.
- Free-text feedback highlighted strong demand for more adventurous and physically challenging equipment, particularly zip wires, trampolines, climbing structures and monkey bars, to extend the play value of the site.
- There was a consistent call for the play area to better cater for older children and teenagers, with requests for facilities such as skate provision, sports features and higher or more challenging equipment.
- Respondents emphasised the importance of inclusive and accessible design, including provision for disabled children and equipment suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities.
- Supporting features such as seating, bins, water points and cycle parking were seen as important to encourage longer visits and make the space more usable for families and carers.

6. Recommendations

Provide a balanced range of core play equipment

The play area should prioritise the inclusion of swinging and climbing equipment, reflecting their consistent identification as the most important play types. These elements should form the core of the design, supported by complementary features that encourage balance, agility and coordination.

Include challenging features for older children

To ensure the play area meets the needs of a wider age range, the design should incorporate more adventurous and physically challenging equipment suitable for older children and teenagers. Features such as zip wires, trampolines, higher climbing structures and, where feasible, skate or sports-related provision should be considered to prevent the space being quickly outgrown.

Ensure inclusive and accessible design

Accessibility should be embedded throughout the design process, with consideration given to inclusive equipment that can be used by children of different abilities. This includes wheelchair-accessible features, clear access routes and a layout that supports safe and inclusive play for all users.

Support social and shared play

The inclusion of equipment that encourages social interaction and shared play, such as group swings, seesaws and imaginative play structures, should be prioritised to promote cooperative play and longer engagement. Incorporate supporting infrastructure The final design should include appropriate supporting features such as seating, picnic areas, bins, cycle parking and water points. These elements will help create a comfortable and practical environment for families, carers and visitors, encouraging longer visits and wider community use.

Allow flexibility for design refinement

Given the broadly positive but partly neutral response to the proposed equipment selection, there is an opportunity to refine and enhance the design as it progresses. Community feedback should continue to inform decisions to ensure the final play area reflects local priorities and delivers a high-quality, long-lasting facility.

7. Next steps

The developer will review the feedback received and take it into account when confirming the final proposals. In particular, they will consider the community's expressed preferences and the options that attracted the highest levels of support through the survey. To reflect the survey findings, the developer has been advised to proceed with the option that incorporates all of the most popular items identified by respondents. This approach best aligns the proposed scheme with community priorities and provides a clear response to the key themes emerging from the survey.