

TOWN.

HARTREE

Child-Friendly Design Strategy



Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to embed child-friendly placemaking into the core of the proposals for Hartree to ensure children and young people are considered at a strategic level.

This will mark a transition from the conventional provision of designated, segregated play space to embracing a holistic, site-wide perspective that views children as equal stakeholders and important users of Hartree. By being an exemplary development for children, Hartree will attract and retain families and by extension be a more inclusive and accessible place for all users.

This strategy will serve as a foundational framework that informs both the outline design and the detailed design phases of the Hartree development. It provides clear guidance and rules for ensuring that child-friendly design principles are embedded at every stage of the design process, from master planning to the delivery of individual plots. It establishes key themes, objectives, and measurable criteria that will guide the design, ensuring that spaces are safe, inclusive, and engaging for children of all ages. The strategy will act as a reference tool for future decisions, supporting the design team, developers, and planners in creating an exemplary environment for children and young people.

The Child-Friendly Design Strategy has been informed by Hartree's overarching vision and values, which have been applied to the context of children and young people. This ensures that the principles of health, inclusivity, sustainability, and integration with nature are reflected in the development's commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for children and families.

Methodology

The themes of this strategy have been identified and informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative, and a thorough review of relevant literature related to child-friendly urban planning and design.

The strategy has been developed through an iterative process; tested, informed and supported by:

- Engagement with children and young people
- Testing by the Hartree design team
- Engagement and masterplan feedback from Make Space for Girls, a charity which campaigns for parks and public spaces to be designed with teenage girls in mind

Terminology

In general, this strategy uses the term "children" to cover children aged from 0 to 18, consistent with the UN Convention. At points the terms "children and young people" or "children of all ages" are used, for emphasis or to improve readability.



TOWN.

This Child Friendly Design Strategy has been prepared by TOWN with Tim Gill to accompany an outline planning application for the redevelopment of the Site known as Hartree, North East Cambridge. The Application is submitted on behalf of U+I (Cambridge) Limited and Cambridge4LLP.

Structure of the strategy

The strategy is predominantly set out in the Child-Friendly Design Strategy Matrix. See Table 1.

The strategy sets out five key themes that must be considered to ensure that Hartree provides a safe, welcoming and enjoyable environment for children. The themes have been identified through research on Child-Friendly developments and parts of, or whole, cities.

The five themes and their key objectives are:

1. Play: children of all ages must have space to play, meet friends and enjoy themselves.
2. Safety: the development must be a secure and clean urban environment that is socially safe and free from serious hazards.
3. Inclusivity: Hartree must be open to all, providing spaces and facilities for all children regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability or socioeconomic status.
4. Active mobility: children must be able to independently move through and enjoy the public realm.
5. Access to nature: children must have access to green spaces for exercise, play, relaxation and interaction with wildlife.

The strategy applies these five themes across three key spatial components of the Hartree masterplan. These are:

1. Streets and routes: the routes that children, young people and their families use to move between their homes and key destinations within their neighbourhood.
2. Public space: the spaces between buildings, including formal and informal play spaces that children and young people will use on a daily basis.
3. Housing: where children and young people live and visit.

For each theme, a central objective is set under each spatial component. These are broken down further into a set of Key Performance Indicators which are detailed in the Child-Friendly Design Checklist, see Appendix 1.

Table 1.
Child Friendly Design Matrix showing themes, spatial components and key objectives.

Themes	Spatial Components		
	Streets & Routes	Public Space	Housing
Play	Streets and routes should serve as interactive landscapes that provide opportunities for children to explore, play and socialise, beyond their functional role as transport routes.	Public spaces should provide vibrant and inclusive environments for play and socialising, with a wide variety of offers and spaces across the site.	Homes should prioritise proximity to spaces suitable for play and foster an environment where play is integrated into the fabric of daily lives.
Safety	Safety in streets should be approached by prioritising the well-being of children and young people, considering vehicle flows, parking, signage, opportunity to test lighting, and pedestrian areas.	Public spaces should aim for a high standard of safety and cleanliness, creating environments where children and young people feel secure while having the opportunity to test themselves and take measured risks.	Housing should have good oversight of adjacent public spaces, and clear, safe routes from front doors.
Inclusivity	Inclusivity in streets requires a design strategy that serves children and young people of diverse backgrounds and abilities, ensuring that the streetscape accommodates their varying needs.	Public spaces should be developed with inclusivity as a core principle, so that every child can feel safe, welcome and able to enjoy the space - and so can their caregivers.	Thresholds and routes from front doors and building entrances should be accessible and suitable for children of all ages, with and without caregivers.
Active Mobility	Active mobility in streets should be facilitated by creating routes between key destinations in the neighbourhood that are safe and accessible.	Public spaces should be designed to support the active mobility of children, whether they are alone or accompanied, providing a safe and welcoming environment for exploration.	Homes should be planned within a '5-minute neighbourhood' concept, allowing children to safely access local amenities and destinations on their own.
Access to Nature	Streets should enable and encourage a connection with nature, through inclusion of street trees and planting and through their spatial relationship with green spaces.	Public spaces should include natural features and landscapes, offering opportunities for children to spend time in nature.	Homes should be strategically located close to natural spaces, or incorporate elements of the environment.

Strategy foundations and best practices

The Hartree child-friendly design strategy draws upon several key sources, from global frameworks to local, project-specific studies. These inform the overarching themes of inclusivity, mobility, play, safety, and access to nature.

These are:

1. **Human Rights and Child-Friendly Urbanism:** Grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF's Child Friendly City Model.
2. **Best Practices in Child-Friendly Development:** Insights from Tim Gill's book *Urban Playground* and feedback from Make Space for Girls.
3. **Children and Young People in Planning Policy:** Gaps in existing national planning frameworks and policies related to children's needs.
4. **Local and Project-Specific Studies:** Examples from North West Cambridge, Chingford Mount, and Child-Friendly Rotterdam.
5. **Influence of Planning and Design on Children's Preferences:** How urban design can enhance children's outdoor play and mobility.

1. Human Rights and Child-Friendly Urbanism

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) sets out 42 rights for all people below the age of 18 and is ratified in every country in the world, apart from the USA.

To devise a set of key themes for the strategy, we are paying close attention to the following:

- Article 3 – The right to have their best interests prioritised in all decisions and actions that may affect them
- Article 12 – The right to be heard and taken seriously in all matters affecting them.
- Article 15 – The right to gather and use public space
- Article 31 – The right to play, rest, leisure and access cultural life

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), championed by UNICEF

This model sets out children's human rights in the context of the city. In this context, the UNICEF CFCI defines a child-friendly city as a city where children:

- Are protected from exploitation, violence and abuse.
- Have a good start in life and grow up healthy and cared for.
- Have access to quality social services.
- Experience quality, inclusive and participatory education and skills development.
- Express their opinions and influence decisions that affect them.
- Participate in family, cultural, city, community and social life.
- Live in a clean, unpolluted and safe environment with access to green spaces;
- Meet friends and have places to play and enjoy themselves;
- Have a fair chance at life regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability.

2. Best Practices in Child-Friendly Development

Urban Playground: How Child-Friendly Planning and Design Can Save Cities

Author and advocate for Child Friendly cities, Tim Gill sets out ten strategic indicators for a child friendly neighbourhood, in his book *Urban Playground: How Child-Friendly Planning and Design Can Save Cities*. The indicators are written in the form of simple statements made from the point of view of a child. These include:

- I walk to school/shops without an adult (from age X)*
- I cycle to school/shops without an adult (from age X)*
- I go outside and play within sight of my home (up to age X)*
- I feel welcome and safe outside, during the day and after dark
- I have access to natural green space in my neighbourhood
- I have access to an outdoor place in my neighbourhood that is peaceful and quiet
- My neighbourhood has lots of trees
- I have access to a choice of outdoor places in my neighbourhood where I can meet and spend time with friends and there are fun things for us to do, including places where I can test myself and take some risks
- I have access to an outdoor place in my neighbourhood where my extended family and friends can have a picnic
- I travel from my own neighbourhood to downtown areas on foot, by bike or by public transport (from age X)*

*(age may differ in different cultural/national contexts)

Make Space for Girls – 2022 Hartree masterplan review

Feedback on the Hartree masterplan in 2022 from Make Space for Girls focuses on designing inclusive public spaces for teenage girls, who are often overlooked in design and planning. It highlights six key principles:

1. **Play for all ages:** Play is a right for all children under 18, but public spaces often neglect teenagers, especially girls.
2. **Public realm is essential:** Many teenagers, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds, rely on public spaces as autonomous areas to socialise, due to limited access to commercial or private spaces.
3. **Sport is not play:** While sports facilities are valuable, they do not address the need for informal, social play spaces.
4. **Rethinking teenage provision:** Current provisions like skate parks and MUGAs are dominated by boys, making girls feel unwelcome.
5. **Designing for inclusivity:** Safety, lighting, social seating, and flexible spaces are critical in making public spaces more welcoming to teenage girls.
6. **Engagement is key:** Consulting teenage girls in the design process is essential, as their needs can vary significantly based on cultural and social backgrounds.

Growing Up in Hackney – Child-Friendly Places SPD

Hackney's Child-Friendly Places SPD provides a strong example of how child-friendly planning can be embedded into local policy. It highlights the importance of accessible, safe play spaces and integrating child-friendly principles into public infrastructure.

The SPD's emphasis on creating streets and public spaces that encourage play and active mobility for all children is directly applicable to Hartree's vision of an integrated child-friendly community.

Good Growth by Design (GLA)

This design framework by the Greater London Authority emphasises the need for urban environments to support children's development, including ensuring access to play, education, and safe public spaces.

The GLA framework aligns with Hartree's goal of fostering inclusive environments through thoughtful design that prioritises children's wellbeing in urban settings.

3. Children and Young People in Planning Policy

In current planning frameworks, the needs of children and young people are often addressed as secondary considerations, typically limited to the provision of playgrounds or educational facilities.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises creating healthy, inclusive communities. The Government is consulting on revisions to the NPPF. However, the current version does not explicitly prioritise children's needs in urban design. As a result, developments often lack critical child-friendly features such as safe routes for independent mobility and adequate public spaces for play.

Other Government policies and guidance aim to improve access to green spaces and support sustainable development but rarely position children as key stakeholders. This omission can lead to urban environments that are not well-suited to children's holistic needs for safety, social interaction, and access to nature.

4. Local and Project Specific Studies

North West Cambridge Strategy for Youth Facilities and Children's Play

This strategy provides guidance on how large developments can successfully integrate both formal and informal play spaces into the public realm, ensuring accessibility for all age groups and creating green, multifunctional spaces.

North West Cambridge serves as a valuable blueprint for Hartree's own strategy, particularly its focus on embedding play into everyday life.

Chingford Mount Child-Friendly Research and Feasibility Study

This study explored the feasibility of implementing child-friendly design principles in an urban area, emphasising the importance of active mobility, accessible green spaces, and ongoing engagement with local children and families.

The feasibility study offers insights into how Hartree can ensure that its child-friendly spaces are fully integrated into the urban landscape.

Child-Friendly Planning in the UK: A Review

This comprehensive review consolidates best practices from across the UK, providing recommendations for local authorities and developers on incorporating children's needs into their planning processes.

This study reinforces the need for Hartree's strategy, ensuring that children's needs are central to planning and development decisions.

Child-Friendly Rotterdam

Rotterdam's child-friendly urban policies have successfully integrated children's needs into the city's infrastructure. Through careful planning, they have prioritised children's safety, mobility, and access to public spaces.

Rotterdam serves as an international example for how urban environments can successfully accommodate children's needs, and its principles will guide similar strategies at Hartree.

5. How Planning and Design Influences Children's Views, Preferences and Experiences

Children consistently say that they value a choice and variety of places to play and meet friends, green spaces, walkable and cyclable neighbourhoods, and a clean local environment. Observational studies show that the neighbourhoods that most strongly support children's outdoor play and mobility have low traffic levels and generous green spaces that can be easily accessed directly from homes and that have good walking links to other spaces and key destinations.

When it comes to the design of parks and playable spaces, studies show that the following features are linked with longer dwell times, more visits, and/or higher levels of physical activity:

- Innovative designs (i.e. designs that move away from conventional 'post and platform' playground structures)
- Variety of surfacing
- Trees, shrubs and planted areas
- Open ended play structures
- Sand and other loose/moveable parts for construction play
- Picnic areas
- Hillocks, ditches and boulders
- Water play
- Swings, towers and climbers

Engagement

Since the project launch in Spring 2021, the Hartree team has actively engaged with children and young people from north Cambridge to ensure that their voices are integral to the development process.

This engagement has been conducted in partnership with Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination (CC&I), a local arts charity, and has involved consultations at various stages of the design programme. Through workshops and collaborative tasks, children and young people have played a pivotal role in shaping and assessing the key themes and objectives of the strategy.



October 2023 - Strategy Definition Workshop

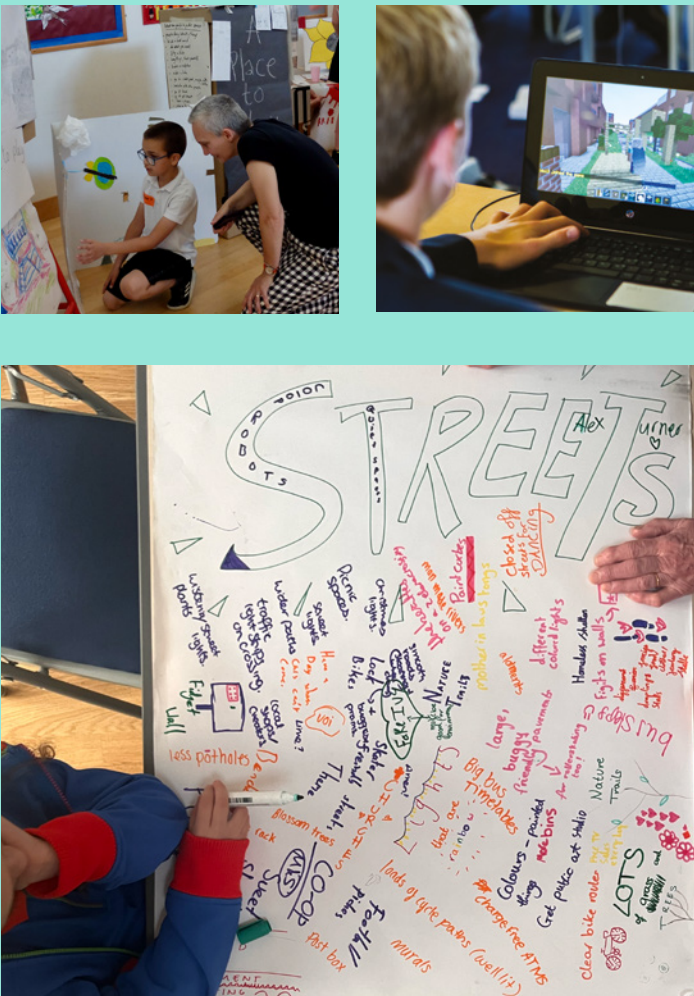
A workshop was held at the Guildhall in Cambridge, organised by CC&I. Twenty-four young people attended, including 15 aged 11–15 and nine young adults aged 16+. During the workshop, participants worked with members of the Hartree project team to explore and define the emerging themes of the strategy. Each group produced a series of ‘manifestos’ representing their vision for themes such as play, safety, inclusivity, and mobility. The insights gathered were later analysed and used to refine the development of the strategy matrix.



April 2024 - Engagement with University of Cambridge Students

TOWN collaborated with 10 master’s students from the University of Cambridge’s Department of Architecture to further develop the strategy. The session began with an overview presentation on the masterplan and Children and Young People’s Strategy, highlighting the integration of UN rights and the UNICEF Child-Friendly City model. Students were then divided into groups, each tasked with exploring a different theme—Play, Safety and Inclusivity, or Access to Nature and Active Mobility. They engaged with the master objectives and distilled measurable targets, providing valuable insights from the perspective of young adults and reflecting on their own childhood experiences.

The session also included discussions on how these targets could be applied during different planning stages, from outline planning to detailed design, ensuring that the strategy could be both measurable and adaptable as the project progresses.

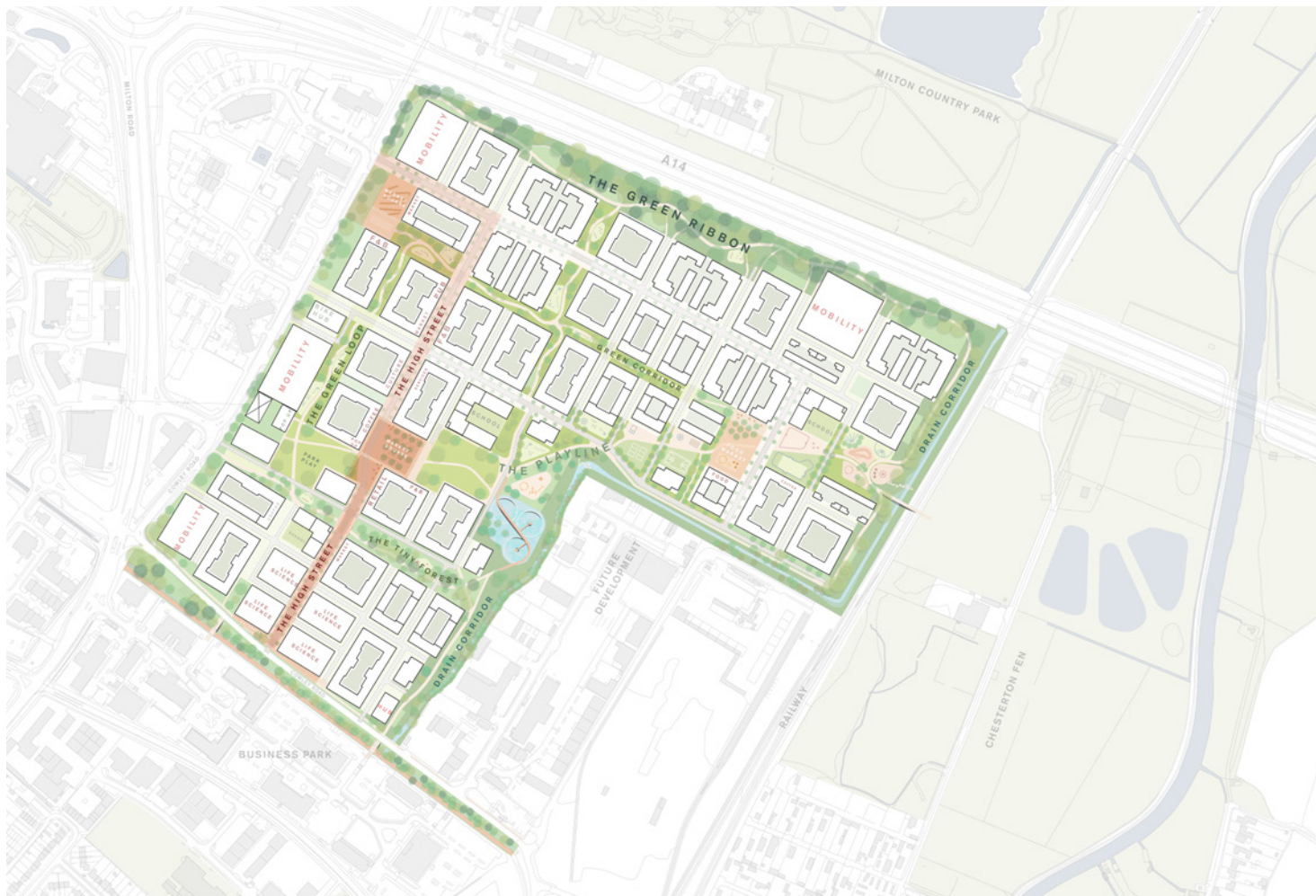


May 2024 – Engagement with Cambridge Girl Guides

TOWN conducted another workshop with 12 members of the Cambridge Girl Guides, aged 7–14, at Mill Road Community Centre. The girls were introduced to the project through a short presentation and then participated in exercises focusing on different spatial components of the masterplan, such as streets, homes, and public spaces. They were encouraged to think about how these areas could foster play, independent mobility, and access to nature. Their feedback was cross-referenced with the strategy to ensure that their suggestions were incorporated into the overall design.

Ongoing Engagement and Accountability

This strategy establishes an ongoing commitment to child-led engagement throughout the lifetime of the Hartree project. A Child and Youth Forum will be set up to regularly review progress, provide feedback on new developments, and suggest further improvements. This forum will meet bi-annually, ensuring children and young people remain at the heart of decision-making during Hartree’s development and post-occupancy.



Masterplan assessment

The aim of this strategy is that the design team use it to inform and shape the masterplan, using transparent, easy-to-use criteria to evaluate the extent to which the development takes into account the child-friendly principles outlined in the strategy.

Hartree's masterplanners, Kjellander Sjoberg, in collaboration with landscape architects LOLA, have evaluated the masterplan against the Child-Friendly Design Strategy at two critical stages in the design and planning process. The first assessment took place in January 2024, before the scheme was finalised, allowing time for adjustments to be made. An evaluation of the final illustrative was conducted prior to the submission of the application in November 2024.

The team developed the masterplan alongside the Child-Friendly Design Checklist as it evolved, and also fed into revisions of the Checklist (see Appendix 1 for final version).



Future delivery

To ensure the successful delivery of Hartree’s child-friendly principles, this strategy sets out clear and measurable mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement. These measures will hold future plot developers and stakeholders accountable throughout the design and construction phases, ensuring that the commitments made are fully realised.

Assessment against the Child-Friendly Design Checklist

The Child-Friendly Design Checklist (see Appendix 1) will be a critical tool for assessing each phase of the development. The design will undergo testing by the design team to ensure it is fit for purpose, and adjustments will be made as necessary.

Criteria

To evaluate progress, we have developed a set of mandatory and aspirational criteria.

Each indicator/objective in the Child-Friendly Design Checklist has at least one criterion, and sometimes more. The importance or weight of each criterion is shown by the use of the words ‘MUST’, ‘SHOULD’, or ‘MAY’.

- ‘MUST’ implies the criterion must be met in full, with little or no scope for alternative approaches.
- ‘SHOULD’ implies an expectation that the criterion will be met, although there is some scope for alternative approaches.
- ‘MAY’ implies an aspiration: these criteria can be seen as stretch targets.

Most criteria state urban planning and design topics or benchmarks. These are relevant to any plot and stage of development. Some indicators inherently apply to the site as a whole; these are noted as ‘Masterplan criteria’. In addition, some indicators would benefit from input during the design process (for example, the involvement of children and young people); the criteria for these are noted as ‘Process criteria’.

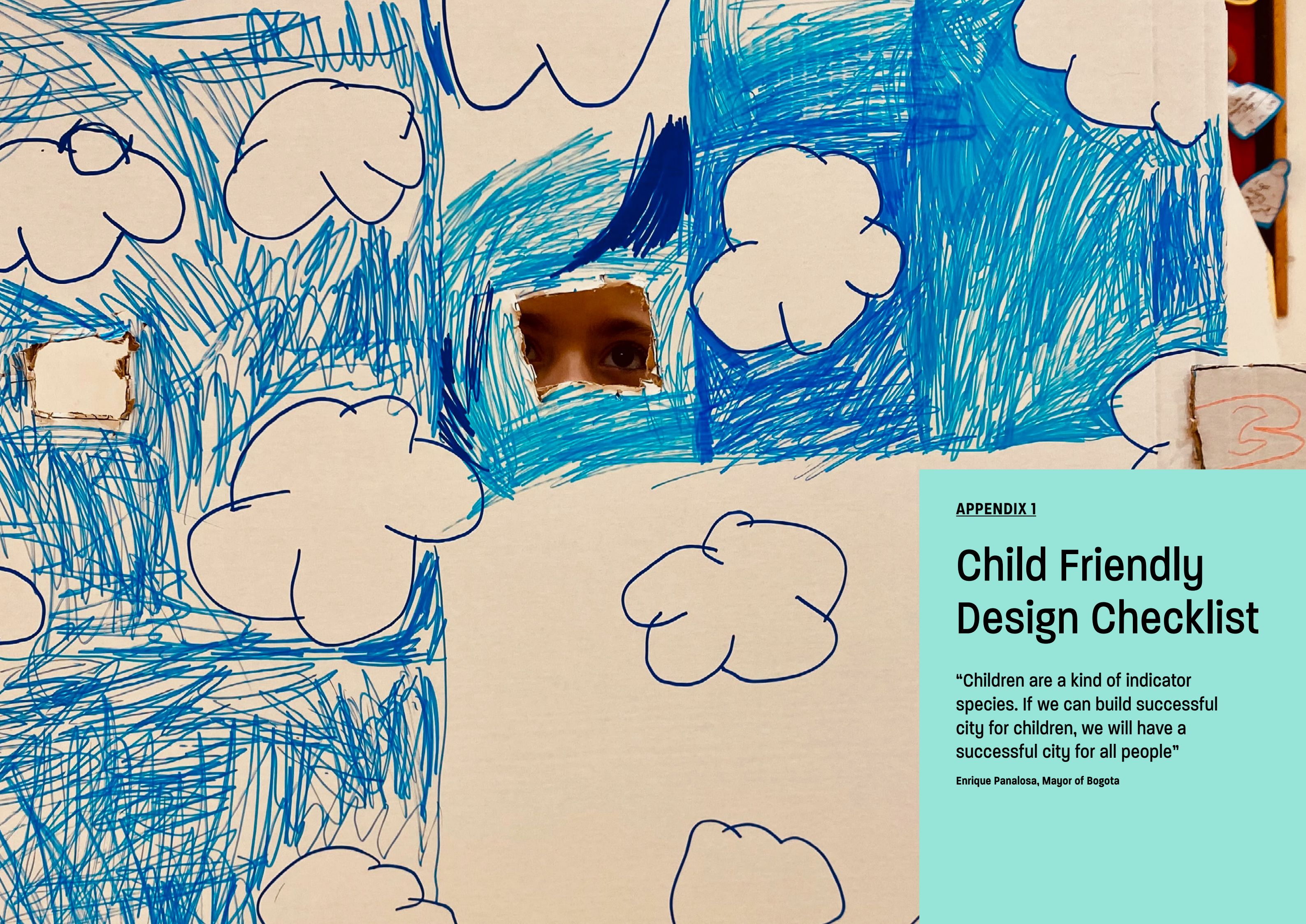
Overall, a reasonable benchmark for Hartree’s child-friendly credentials is that it meets all the ‘MUST’ criteria, as well as a good proportion of the ‘SHOULD’ criteria. Meeting all (or almost all) of the ‘SHOULD’ criteria, plus a good proportion of the ‘MAY’ criteria, would show exceptional levels of child-friendly planning and design.

Conclusion

The Hartree Children and Young People’s Strategy was born out of a recognition that children and young people are often overlooked in traditional planning policies. In many developments, children’s needs are secondary considerations, leading to environments that do not fully support their growth, mobility, or engagement with their surroundings. This strategy aims to shift that dynamic, positioning children as key stakeholders whose needs are central to creating a more inclusive and successful new urban quarter.

The strategy’s vision is to ensure that Hartree is an exemplary place for children and young people—a development where play, safety, inclusivity, active mobility, and access to nature are integrated into all parts of this new place. Underpinned by global frameworks including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities Initiative, as well as national and local best practices and engagement with children and young people, the strategy aims to capture the needs and priorities of this stakeholder group.

Through ongoing governance and assessments against the Child-Friendly Checklist, the intention is that Hartree will continually evolve as a model of child-centric development, setting a new standard for how future developments should incorporate the needs of all age groups.



APPENDIX 1

Child Friendly Design Checklist

“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people”

Enrique Panalosa, Mayor of Bogota

Streets & routes

Key Objective:
Streets and routes should serve as interactive landscapes that provide opportunities for children to explore, play and socialise, beyond their functional role as transport routes.

Objective	Criteria
1.1. Incorporate features at a variety of scales in streets that invite playful interactions (e.g., play elements, public art, water features, window displays, planting).	Every residential street MUST include at least 1 feature every 100m. [Process criterion] designs SHOULD be completed/reviewed by people with relevant expertise/experience.
1.2. Provide accessible and comfortable street furniture for children and young people to rest and socialise.	Walking network MAY include sittable objects at or near key nodes.
1.3. Ensure street and path surfaces incorporate textures, patterns, and markings to encourage children's exploration and play.	Key walking crossings MAY include playful surface markings.
1.4. Design Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to offer informal, natural play opportunities.	SUDs MAY incorporate play elements such as stepped access to water storage areas, decking, stepping stonew crossings. [Process criterion] SUDs SHOULD be designed by teams with expertise/ experience in incorporating playful elements.
1.5. Include natural play elements (e.g. trees, bushes) to encourage imaginative and unstructured play.	All streets SHOULD include street trees or bushes every 10-20 metres.



1.1 St Andrews, Tower Hamlets



1.1 Rijswijk



1.2 Example square, Barcelona



1.3 Kennington Oval Reimagined



1.4 Australia Road, Hammersmith & Fulham

Public Space

Key Objective:
Public spaces should provide vibrant and inclusive environments for play and socialising, with a wide variety of offers and spaces across the site.

Objective	Criteria
1.6. Provide a variety of spaces for play, including natural areas for contemplation, rest, hanging out, and wild spaces for imaginative play.	<p>[Masterplan criterion] The overall quantum of playable space in Hartree MUST be at least 10 sqm per child (based on predicted child yield).</p> <p>[Masterplan criterion] most designated play spaces SHOULD include smaller-scale play elements in a more enclosed space.</p> <p>[Masterplan criterion] some designated play spaces SHOULD include more secluded social seating areas and teen-friendly play features.</p> <p>[Masterplan criterion] there SHOULD be a large sandpit in at least one designated play space.</p> <p>[Masterplan criterion] there SHOULD be a playable water feature in at least one designated play space.</p> <p>[Process criterion] designs SHOULD be developed with input from children and young people, including girls.</p> <p>[Process criterion] designs MUST be completed/ reviewed by people with relevant expertise/ experience.</p> <p>Every designated play space SHOULD use primarily wooden structures, and include playable landform elements, trees and planted areas.</p> <p>Wet-pour safety surfacing SHOULD NOT be used unless other options are unviable.</p>
1.7. Include larger play spaces within a 3-minute walk from homes, accessible by safe routes.	<p>All residential blocks with 2-bed-plus units SHOULD have level entrances.</p> <p>There SHOULD be at least 1 designated play space, greater than 500 sqm in area, within 200m traffic-free walking distance of every residential block with 2-bed-plus units.</p>
1.8. Design green spaces for unstructured play and nature exploration.	<p>All green spaces MUST be suitable for unsupervised play, and include play elements.</p>



1.6 Vauban, Freiburg



1.6 Hammarby Sjostad, Stockholm



1.6 Hammarby Sjostad, Stockholm



Playground, Bredang, Stockholm (source: Make Space for Girls)



1.7 Andover Court, Tower Hamlets



1.7 The Green, Chobham Manor, QEOP

Public Space

Key Objective:
Streets and routes should serve as interactive landscapes that provide opportunities for children to explore, play and socialise, beyond their functional role as transport routes.

Objective	Criteria
1.9. Create a flagship inclusive destination for families (with amenities like cafés, changing facilities).	<p>[Masterplan criterion] there MUST be a centrally located park minimum 5,000 sqm in area, with a variety of play elements that collectively engage children of all ages and abilities, grassy open space, and sociable seating that allows several larger groups to hang out.</p> <p>[Process criterion] the team delivering the flagship park MUST include designers with a track record in destination play facilities.</p> <p>[Process criterion] the design SHOULD be developed with input by children and young people.</p>
1.10. Ensure all designated play spaces have buffer zones separating them from residential dwellings, to reduce the likelihood of disturbance.	<p>Ground floor residential dwellings that are adjacent to designated play space SHOULD have either private outdoor space, or semi-private/ public non-playable soft landscaped areas, extending a minimum of 3m between the property and the designated play space.</p>



1.9 Tumbling Bay, QEOP (design: Erect/LUC)



1.9 Elephant Park, Southwark (design: Gillespies)



1.9 Mayfield Park, Manchester



1.10 Hammarby Sjostad



1.10 Kings Crescent

Housing

Key Objective:
Homes should prioritise proximity to spaces suitable for play and foster an environment where play is integrated into the fabric of daily lives.

Objective	Criteria
1.11. Ensure that every family home has a playable space that is accessible and visible from residential windows.	Every 2-plus-bed unit MUST have at least 1 playable space directly accessible from front entrances, and visible from windows.
1.12. Incorporate designated play spaces that are safely accessible without crossing Primary or Secondary roads.	Every designated play space SHOULD have at least one entrance that has a car-free connection to a residential ground floor front door.
1.13. Minimise the use of security technology to allow independent access for children.	Key fobs and similar electronic devices SHOULD NOT be required for access to semi-private outdoor space.



1.11 Kings Crescent



1.11 Sutherland Road,
Waltham Forest
(design: Levitt Bernstein)



1.12 Gascoigne East,
Barking & Dagenham
(design: Levitt Bernstein)

Streets & routes

Key Objective:
Safety in streets should be approached by prioritising the well-being of children and young people, considering vehicle flows, parking, signage, lighting, and pedestrian areas.

Objective	Criteria
2.1. On primary roads, ensure wide, overlooked footways separated from roads and cycle lanes by planting, to reduce the dominance of vehicles.	Primary roads with pavements MAY be overlooked on at least 1 side, and include pavements at least 2.5m wide that are separated from carriageways/ cycle lanes by planting.
2.2. Minimise vehicle movements and on-street parking, to reduce traffic danger and promote active travel and play throughout Hartree's streets.	<p>[Masterplan criterion] vehicle circulation plans and parking strategy MUST only provide on-street parking for disabled vehicle owners/drivers and servicing and deliveries.</p> <p>[Process criterion] vehicle circulation and parking plans and strategies MUST include input from people with expertise/experience in enhancing walking, cycling and social uses of streets.</p>
2.3. Implement traffic-calming measures such as speed restrictions and signage.	[Process criterion] best practice SHOULD be followed in designing for speeds of 20 mph (primary roads) and 10-15 mph (secondary roads) as set out in Manual for Streets/Active Travel England guidance.
2.4. Ensure safe, accessible crossings and pedestrian desire lines.	[Process criterion] best practice SHOULD be followed in designing street crossings, as set out in Manual for Streets/Active Travel England guidance.
2.5. Provide lighting on pedestrian routes for safe movement during evenings and winter months.	[Process criterion] best practice MUST be followed for pedestrian route lighting schemes, as set out in Manual for Streets/Active Travel England guidance.
2.6. Design streets outside schools to support both active travel and play/ social activities.	Every school entrance MUST have either traffic-free sections or widened pavements with 'no parking or drop off' regulations for at least 50m either side of gate.



2.1 Vancouver segregated cycle lane

2.2 Vauban district map



2.6 Barcelona, Escola Ipsi



2.3 Rijswijk woonerf

Public space

Key Objective:
Public spaces should aim for a high standard of safety and cleanliness, creating environments where children and young people feel secure while having the opportunity to test themselves and take acceptable risks.

Objective	Criteria
2.7. Ensure playable spaces are overlooked for passive surveillance.	Every playable space SHOULD have at least one building, main walking route or street within 15m of its entrance. Playable spaces SHOULD NOT have significant concealed areas when viewed from entrances and walking routes.
2.8. Provide shade, shelter, and adequate lighting, for safety and to enhance use in different weather conditions and at night.	Every designated play space SHOULD have a lighting scheme and either a built shelter, or shade from mature trees.
2.9. Create safe routes for children and young people to access public spaces independently.	[Masterplan criterion] The strategic walking network MUST include routes to all designated play spaces.



2.8 Parque 93, Bogotá

Housing

Key Objective:
Housing should have good oversight of adjacent public spaces, and clear, safe routes from front doors.

Objective	Criteria
2.10. Prioritise family units on the ground floor with step-free access to shared spaces.	In blocks containing 2-plus-bed units, all ground floor residential units SHOULD be 2-plus-bed (i.e. studios or 1-bed units should not be on the ground floor). All such units SHOULD have step-free access to shared playable space.
2.11. Ensure family housing is not located on busy roads.	2-plus-bed units SHOULD NOT have entrances (including communal entrances) that open straight out onto busy roads on the periphery of the site.
2.12. Provide safe, clear routes from front doors to outdoor spaces.	All residential blocks with 2-bed-plus units MUST have traffic-free walking routes to at least 1 playable space.



2.9 'Red Carpet', Brugse Poort, Ghent

Streets & routes

Key Objective:
Inclusivity on streets requires a design strategy that serves children and young people of diverse backgrounds and abilities, ensuring that the streetscape accommodates their varying needs.

Objective	Criteria
3.1. Provide ramps and level access for prams and wheelchair users.	All curb crossings MUST be ramped. All designated play spaces SHOULD have level access at entrances and level paths.



3.2 The Park Circle playground in North Charleston, SC.

Public space

Key Objective:
Public spaces should be developed with inclusivity as a core principle, so that every child can feel safe, welcome and able to enjoy the space - and so can their caregivers.

Objective	Criteria
3.2. Equip designated play spaces with facilities catering for children of all abilities, especially those who are neurodivergent or have physical or sensory disabilities.	[Masterplan criterion] at least one designated public play space MUST have robust physical boundaries. Play elements and planting MUST engage children through touch, smell, sound and vision, engage neurodiverse children and make offers to children with a range of abilities. Sandpits MUST include sittable boundaries/objects and solid surface access to raised tables. [Process criterion] designs SHOULD be developed with input from groups who work with disabled children. [Process criterion] designs SHOULD be completed/ reviewed by people with relevant expertise/experience.
3.3. Ensure amenities like toilets, seating, and shade are inclusive for all users.	'Changing places' toilet facilities and inclusive seating and shelter designs SHOULD be included in flagship destination space [see 1.10 above].

3.3 Changing Places Toilet sign



Housing

Key Objective:
Thresholds and routes from front doors and building entrances should be accessible and suitable for children of all ages, with and without caregivers.

Objective	Criteria
3.4. Equal access to public spaces for residents of different tenures.	Playable spaces MUST NOT be exclusively accessible to residents of only one tenure type.



3.2 Tom Sawyer Island at Amelia Earhart Park, Florida

Streets & routes

Key Objective:
Active mobility in streets should be facilitated by creating routes between key destinations in the neighbourhood that are safe and accessible.

Objective	Criteria
4.1. Design streets and parking to encourage active mobility and avoid cars dominating the streetscape (e.g. cluster parking, car-free streets).	Every street kerbside MUST have a maximum of 25% of its length allocated for vehicle parking. Streets MUST have either wide pavements (see 2.1 above) or be designed for shared use with design speeds less than 10-15 mph. [Process criterion] street designs and parking plans MUST include input from people with expertise/experience in enhancing walking, cycling and social uses of streets.
4.2. Include cycle parking for child-friendly bike types (e.g., tricycles, cargo bikes).	[Process criterion] best practice SHOULD be followed in cycle storage provision, as set out in Active Travel England materials.
4.3. Implement slow routes and buffered cycle lanes, to better accommodate children who cycle, skate or scoot.	The busiest routes MAY be designed so as to allow separation between faster and slower cyclists
4.4. Ensure streets and crossings are well-signposted and clearly marked.	[Process criterion] best practice MAY be followed in waymarking, as set out in Active Travel England guidance.
4.5. Plan walkable/cyclable routes to local transport hubs and destinations beyond Hartree.	[Masterplan criterion] Hartree SHOULD have walking and cycling networks that connect to Cambridge North station and key external walking/ cycling routes.



4.1 Vauban



4.1 Station Road, Harrow



4.3 Green loop, City of North Vancouver



4.2 Cycle parking for children's bikes

ACTIVE MOBILITY

Public space

Key Objective:
Public spaces should be designed to support the active mobility of children, whether they are alone or accompanied, providing a safe and welcoming environment for exploration.

Objective	Criteria
4.6. Design public spaces to promote active mobility with safe and welcoming environments.	Every playable space SHOULD have at least one building, main walking route or street within 15m of its entrance. Playable spaces SHOULD NOT have significant concealed areas when viewed from entrances and walking routes.
4.7. Create a network of walking and biking routes through larger public spaces.	Routes through public spaces SHOULD link play and other facilities, and connect with the wider Hartree walking and cycling network.
4.8. Provide clear, legible wayfinding and signage.	[Masterplan criterion] the site's wayfinding strategy MUST signpost play spaces, schools and other facilities for children and families.



4.6 Lloyd Park, Waltham Forest



4.6 Hove Beach Plaza

Housing

Key Objective:
Homes should be planned within a '5-minute neighbourhood' concept, allowing children to safely access local amenities and destinations on their own.

Objective	Criteria
4.9. Position homes within a '5-minute neighbourhood' concept, allowing children to safely access local amenities.	All 2-bed-plus units SHOULD be within 5 minutes' walk of a convenience store, a designated play space, a childcare centre and a primary school.
4.10. Ensure storage for pushchairs and bicycles in or near homes.	Cycle/pushchair/scooter storage for family homes SHOULD meet best practice standards as set out in Active Travel England guidance.



4.6 Hackney School Streets

Streets & routes

Key Objective:
Streets should enable and encourage a connection with nature, through inclusion of street trees and planting and through their spatial relationship with green spaces.

Objective	Criteria
5.1. Plan green corridors that link streets to natural spaces.	[Masterplan criterion] all streets and off-street routes that are part of Hartree walking or cycling networks SHOULD be tree-lined or have planting.
5.2. Design routes with planters and growing areas for residents.	Planters/small growing areas for use by residents MAY be included in every delivery phase.



5.2 Kings Crescent



5.2 Residential Street, Amsterdam

Public space

Key Objective:
Public spaces should include natural landscapes, offering opportunities for children to spend time in nature.

Objective	Criteria
5.3. Ensure access to nature throughout the year by considering seasonal variations in design.	All playable spaces MAY include trees and planting that are chosen for their seasonal variation in colour, blossom and fruit/seeds.
5.4. Develop a food-growing strategy that includes community gardens, wild food harvesting, and other opportunities.	[Masterplan criterion] Hartree MAY include a community garden. Fruit-bearing trees and bushes MAY be included in suitable playable spaces.



5.5 Elephant Park, London

Housing

Key Objective:
Homes should be strategically located close to natural spaces, or incorporate elements of nature into the living environment.

Objective	Criteria
5.5. Ensure good access to play space and nature for families moving into early phases of the development.	The construction schedule for all early phases MUST include construction of at least one designated play space, to be completed before the first families move in.



5.4 Partick Community Garden, Glasgow



References and further reading

- Arup (2018) Cities Alive: Designing for Urban Childhoods
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- Tim Gill (2021) Urban Playground: How child-friendly planning and design can save cities
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- Kathrin Hörschelmann and Lorraine van Blerk (2012) Children, Youth and the City
- London Borough of Hackney (2021) Growing Up in Hackney – Child-Friendly Places SPD
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- Publica (2019) Good Growth by Design (GLA)
- Meghan Talarowski (2017) London Study of Playgrounds
- UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative website
- Jenny Wood et al (2019) Child-Friendly Planning in the UK: A Review
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