

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 2 December 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Young People Directorate

SUBJECT: Play Builder Project- Year 3 Proposals

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the revised proposals for Year 3 Playbuilder Projects in the light of the reduced but now confirmed capital allocation to be spent by the 31.03.11.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board agree the revised proposals for Year 3 Playbuilder Projects in Halton, detailed in the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 8 April 2010 the Executive Board considered and agreed proposals for the 9 play projects to be delivered with Playbuilder Capital in 2010/11 (see attached Playbuilder sites 2010/11, Appendix 1).
- 3.2 On the 15 July 2010 Halton received correspondence from the Department for Education to - "***with immediate effect and until further notice, all local authorities should avoid incurring any new contracted liabilities in relation to their play capital grants***"

At this point Halton had incurred costs of £7804 (See Appendix 2 – Letter from the Department of Education)

- 3.3 On the 20 October 2010 Halton received further correspondence saying – “I am writing to inform you that the exercise to identify savings to the 2010/11 play capital budget has been completed and I can now inform you of your local authority’s revised allocation for this financial year” (see Appendix 3- Letter from Michael Gove).

Halton’s revised allocation is £273,610 (less £7804 already spent) (Appendix 3 – Annex A).

- 3.4 Prior to the moratorium on spend imposed on the 15 July a significant amount of work had been completed or was underway on a number of these projects, in particular match funding was being sought from a number of sources to maximise the investment in new or improved play facilities a further £276,000 has been secured.
- 3.5 The reduced capital allocation (from £437,885 to £273,610) and the significantly reduced time frame in which to deliver projects (all spend must

still be achieved by 31 March 2011) inevitably leads to a re-consideration of the original project plan

3.6 In reaching the revised proposals, the Playbuilder project team has taken into account the following factors:-

Deliverability : can the project be delivered within the time frame

Cost Implications : any 'new' sites would result in increasing future revenue costs

Match Funding : to maximise the capital spend and investments – have projects attracted match funding

Playbuilder	£273,610
Match	<u>£276,000</u>
Total	<u>£549,000</u> (+ AHDC)

Needs Analysis :

- resources in target or adjacent wards
- 5 – 16 population
- geographic balance across the Borough of Playbuilder investment (Appendix 4)
- demographic information (deprivation)

3.7 Taking into account the above factors, the Playbuilder Project Team identified the following four (4) sites to progress

Site	Deliverability	Needs Analysis	Match Funding	Resource Implications
1) Upton Green	HBC Landscape Team produced preliminary designs Project achievable within time frame	Flagship project. Halton Housing Trust tenants survey highlighted need for play facilities, confirmed by consultation undertaken by HBC community development. Area of need. Large population of 5– 16 year olds	YES Playbuilder £10,000 *WREN (£50k) Halton Housing Trust (£40k) Other £96k) Total £286,000	YES Agreed at Executive Board April 2010
2) Crow Wood Park	As above	Only facility of its kind to East of Ashley Way – serves large catchment area. Some work completed 2008/09 but consultation by HBC community development identified need for facilities for older age group	Playbuilder £60,000 Under consideration + **AHDC Total £60,000+	N/A existing playground maintenance budget
3) Runcorn Hill	As above	Popular (Runcorn) 'destination' park for families. Consultation by HBC Community Development and survey	YES Playbuilder £60,000 *WREN (£50k)	As above The Play Area at Runcorn Hill

		by Parks & Countryside identified overwhelming support for improved facilities	+ ** AHDC Total £110,000+	is coming to the end of its serviceable life and would need replacement/ refurbishment in the short term
4) The Knoll	Riverside Housing lead on design & build & some preliminary designs produced. Project achievable within time frame	Currently no existing provision on Palace Fields estate. High proportion of 5-16 year olds. Consultation by Four Estates and through area forum identified strong support for project	YES Playbuilder £50,000 Riverside Housing (£40k) Total £90,000	Riverside Housing will bear the cost of ongoing maintenance. It is likely this will be achieved by contracting HBC landscape to carry out the work (as with their year 1 project at Halton Brook)

* WREN – Waste Recycling Environmental

**AHDC – Aiming High for Disabled Children (to be confirmed)

3.8 The following five sites from the original proposal were considered but did not meet one or more of the four key determining factors

Site	Deliverability	Needs Analysis	Match Funding	Resource Implications
The Glen	Feasibility study complete but would be difficult to complete in time frame	Whilst an attractive project it is one of two projects serving the same ward, the other, The Knoll, is recommended to progress	Match funding sought but not all secured. It may be possible to fund this project from external sources in future	New build – maintenance (revenue) implications

Lambstickle Lane	Small project so could possibly be delivered in time frame	Existing facility (which needs) refurbishment). Small catchment area (Weston Village). Subject to availability of future funding could be refurbished in future years	No match funding	Existing area, no increased revenue implications
Tedder Square, Ditton	Unlikely to be deliverable in time as outcome of consultation (by Halton Housing Association) not yet available	Demand for play facilities identified and provided by Ditton West community Association. High population of 5-6 years. Two play areas within 800 mtrs (one of which was a new build Year 2 project – Milton Avenue)	Sought but not confirmed	New build but Halton Housing committed to take on maintenance of new play area NB It may be possible for DWCA to progress scheme over the next 18 months with support from Halton Housing and external funding
Hough Green Park/ Caldwell Road	With Crow Wood a refurbishment/improvement of existing facilities given short time frame (4 ½ months/reduced) funding it would not be possible to do all three	Existing well maintained provision to local children and young people will still have access to play opportunities	No matched funding	Existing play areas no resource implications

3.9 The four sites proposed complement the work of Year 1 and Year 2 Playbuilder project and lead to (as far as has been practically possible) a balanced geographical enhancement of access to high quality, stimulating, play facilities over the 3 years of the project

The proposal to recommend 4 projects to develop has been governed by :

- capacity : our ability to deliver these projects to deadline in the foreshortened delivery period of 4 1/2 months

- impact : dividing the resources as recommended (with the addition of matched funding) will afford the opportunity to deliver a quality impactful resource to these communities

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 To embed play in local policy. The successful delivery of the Playbuilder project will make a significant contribution to this process, in particular to National Indicator N199 (Satisfaction with outdoor play facilities).

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial Implications

The Playbuilder funding is a capital grant only and the investment of £961,171 million in new playspaces will have a long-term revenue implication in ensuring the necessary and appropriate maintenance and management regime of this investment

- 5.2 The revenue implications for the year 3 proposals have been considered. Of the 4 sites proposed, 2 are existing sites with management/maintenance budgets in place; 1 is a partnership project with Social Housing provider; 1 site Upton will be new site. The revenue cost of which will be covered initially by the 5 year revenue injection from the PCT

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

Meeting the five outcomes

Play is a fundamental part of a healthy and happy childhood and its enjoyment is recognised by government as equally important to other outcomes for children. Because it is so fundamental it also contributes to each of the five outcomes for children specified in Every Child Matters

Enjoying and achieving

The essence of play is enjoyment. When playing, children define their own goals and interests, decide what is success or failure and pursue those goals in their own way. Children's enjoyment through play is linked to the control and choice they are able to exercise. Giving children the chance for free, uninhibited play allows them a psychologically safe space in which to try out new roles and experiences and enhances their enjoyment of life

- 6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

The continuous quality improvement of play workers and opportunities for development of skills across play and youth qualifications will be explored fully through Halton's Workforce Development Plan

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Play is crucial to health and development throughout childhood, contributing to social, physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional and psychological development. The physical activity involved in energetic play provides children and young people with a significant amount of their regular exercise and is a key element in tackling obesity

6.4 A Safer Halton

One of the main reasons children give for not playing outdoors more is that they and their parents are afraid for their safety. Fear of strangers, traffic and bullying by other children combine to keep children in their own homes. Good play provision protects children through reducing unacceptable levels of danger, while allowing them the opportunity to challenge themselves and use their initiative. At the same time, play enables children to take risks, to think through decisions and gain increased self-confidence and greater resilience

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Halton Play Builder proposals will be consistent with Halton's Policies for Urban Renewal and are designed to enhance current play provision

6.6 National Indicator Set

In addition to its direct contribution to N199, Play can, and does, contribute to a range of other indicators

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Play Builder programme is a three-year capital build programme with single year capital allocations/spend targets. Individual project 'risk analysis' will be carried out by project deliverer for each individual project

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 A major criteria of the Play Builder programme is the requirement to 'ensure' that access and Inclusivity are a key consideration at the design stage

The Playbuilder project is working in partnership with the Authorities Aiming High for Disabled Children project to ensure sites are fully accessible

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Play Pathfinder/Builder Application	Children & Young People Directorate	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager
Fair Play, DCFS/DCMS	Children & Young People Directorate	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager
Halton Play Plan 2007-2011	Children & Young People Directorate	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager

PLAY BUILDER SITES FOR 2010/11

APPENDIX 1

Site			Delivery Agent	Site Ownership Confirmed	Revenue Support in place	Design capacity assured	Needs analysis undertaken	Consultation started	PB Funds allocated	Match funding
The Glen	R	N	HBC	*	*	*	*	*	48250	40 – 50k
The Knoll	R	N	SHP	*	*	*	*	*	48250	50k
Heath Park	R	T	HBC	*	*	*	*	*	48250	Applied for
Lambsickle Lane	R	N	HBC	*	*	*	*	*	18250	-----
Upton	W	N	P/S	*	*	*	*	*	100000	1000000 to Date
Tedder Square	W	N	SHP	*	*	*	*	*	0	Applied for
Hough Green Pk	W	T	HBC	*	*	*	*	*	48250	Applied for
Crow Wood Park	W	A	HBC	*	*	*	*	*	48250	-----
Caldwell Road	W	T	HBC	*	*	*	*	*	20735	-----
									48250	-----

KEY R – Runcorn
W – Widnes
N – New
T – Transport
A Additional

HBC – In house
SHP – Social Housing Provider
P/S – Partnership between HBC &
Social Housing Provider

Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

15 July 2010

Dear Play Lead

Government is clear that play is an important part of childhood and child development, and good for families and communities more broadly. We are committed to supporting local people to have an active role in shaping the play opportunities that they care so much about.

However, due to the need to tackle the deficit, the Secretary of State for Education announced on 5 July that the Department for Education needs to identify savings from a number of capital budgets in 2010-11 where commitments are no longer affordable.

These savings will reduce the Department's End Year Flexibility (EYF) requirements by £1bn to help ensure no additional borrowing is required this year. The Secretary of State sent a letter to all 152 top-tier local authority Chief Executives and Directors of Children's Services (or equivalent) on 14 July providing detail of which capital budgets would be affected by this. The play capital grant, which is supported by EYF, is one of those budgets which has been identified as having to make savings during 2010-11.

Play Capital Grant

In order to determine how the play capital grant will contribute to the necessary savings, and the level of capital grant payments that can therefore be made this year to each local authority, we need to ask for information from the 10 Wave 2 Pathfinders and all 122 Playbuilders (*see attached template at Annex A*).

With immediate effect and until further notice, all of these local authorities should avoid incurring any new contractual liabilities in relation to their play capital grants.

The Department will cover the cost of expenditure already incurred for completed sites and sites where groundworks / construction has already commenced.

However, we will need to review contractual commitments already entered into in relation to sites where groundworks / construction have not yet commenced. We hope to allow authorities to progress these projects, although this will be conditional on our ability to make the required savings from projects that are not yet contracted. In the event that we are unable to make the necessary savings, we may have to request further information on your contractual commitments. On this basis

authorities should not progress these projects in any way that would prejudice their ability to exit the associated contracts as per the current stated terms. **Groundworks / construction work should not commence on these sites until further notice.**

Any capital grant that is not yet spent or where there is considered to not be a strong case to continue the commitments entered into, may be retained by the Department. We will be looking to achieve the most equitable distribution of reductions possible, in the context of the savings we need to make.

In order to assess the liabilities already incurred by your authority between 1 April to 14 July 2010, **the template at Annex A needs to be completed, signed by an authorised officer of your local authority and returned, by Friday 23 July 2010.**

Where local authorities have entered into arrangements with district or parish council partners to deliver play sites we will look to the authority accountable to the Department to collate and return the information.

Completed templates should be returned to:

Amanda Barrett, Department for Education, Child Health & Wellbeing Division, Ground Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT.

We intend to seek any further information from you and confirm revised allocations by end of August so that you have as much time as possible to plan budgets for the rest of the financial year and get projects underway.

Play Revenue Funding

In his letter of 16 June to Chief Executives and Directors of Children's Services (or equivalent), the Secretary of State announced a £5m reduction in the Play Revenue budget as part of the £670m contribution this Department is making to the £6.2bn revenue savings announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 24 May.

The letter provided specific detail of how the savings will impact on Pathfinder and Playbuilder programmes this financial year. In summary, Playbuilders will receive no revenue grant this year and Pathfinders will receive 50% of their allocation as set out in the LAC 2502100003, dated 16 March 2010.

The 50% Play Pathfinder revenue funding allocation will retain its ring-fence, and we would like Pathfinder authorities to focus this funding in the first instance on staffing for the adventure playgrounds delivered as part of the play capital programme, given the level of capital investment that has been/is being made in those facilities.

We will be employing a very light touch approach to requests for information on pathfinder revenue spending plans for the remainder of this financial year. We do however need to know what the reduced allocation means for Pathfinders' current 2010-11 Project Plan, and specifically any services to (or involving) the public. Meanwhile, until you have spoken with one of us here in the play team, we encourage Pathfinders to not make immediate decisions on stopping revenue funded projects.

Any issues should be raised by Friday 23 July 2010 with Amanda Barrett, Department for Education, Child Health & Wellbeing Division, Ground Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT (telephone: 0207 340 7355)

Play England Role

You may have seen the announcement from Play England, on 28 June, regarding their proposed reorganisation in light of their reduced contracts with the Department. The remainder of their contract will focus on supporting action by the community in the management and delivery of play provision.

What this will mean for you is that Play England regional teams will no longer contact you to gather data/information in order to monitor the Department's play capital and revenue programme.

We are currently working with Play England to develop a revised programme of support that will be available from August onwards. It will be aimed at increasing the involvement of community & voluntary sector organisations in shaping local play opportunities and future provision, especially in relation to the play areas delivered through the capital programme. It will include a national helpline for all those involved in the play programme. There will be range of guidance available to all via the web and some bespoke support programmes for local areas with staffed adventure playgrounds. As part of the new programme Play England will invite you to be part of practice-sharing networks so you can share your experiences and access advice and support on play.

Play England will be in touch once the revised programme has been finalised. In the meantime, their websites (www.playengland.org.uk, www.playfulcommunities.org.uk, www.playshaper.org.uk) are still available, as are the guidance resources and materials.

Amanda Barrett and colleagues in the Play team are, of course, also on hand to provide advice.

National Evaluation

The Department has significantly reduced its central costs for the national evaluation that SQW/Ipsos MORI are undertaking for us.

We intend to fund a smaller scale, yet still viable, national evaluation which should provide evidence on the impact of the play investment to date which you will be able to use. If we are able to progress this scaled down national evaluation, SQW/Ipsos MORI will be contacting those play pathfinders who were involved in the baseline evaluation activity last year with one final request for data.

Signage

Many of you have enquired about changes to signage requirements for any play areas funded via our capital programme. Given the removal of the capital ring fence and reductions in revenue, there is now much more flexibility.

There are no longer any mandatory signage requirements from the Department for play areas funded, or part-funded, via the Play capital programme.

However a local authority can, if they so wish, add the Department for Education logo to any of their own signage and can reflect whether the play area has been funded or part funded by adding text as per the jpeg file (both graphics files are attached to the covering e-mail).

There remain guidelines about an exclusion zone that should be applied around our departmental logo so as to ensure that it does not become cluttered/lost in amongst other information on signage, and these guidelines can be found on the branding page of our website.

I would like to thank you for your hard work on the play programme. We realise that the reductions in funding outlined above will have an impact on play services in your authority, but would encourage you to continue working with your local communities - and young people - to involve them in decisions that are made about the future of play in your local housing developments, public parks and open spaces; and to help more volunteers support local play opportunities for children.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Jackson
Director, Child Wellbeing Group
Children and Families Directorate
Department for Education



Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 ministers@education.gsi.gov.uk

Chief Executives
Directors of Children's Services

20 October 2010

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to inform you that the exercise to identify savings to the 2010-11 play capital budget has been completed and I can now inform you of your local authority's revised allocation for this financial year (see table at Annex A). This will enable you to make final decisions locally about which play projects should proceed.

I know how important it is that children and families have safe, free local places to play; and the hard work that local authorities are doing to make this a reality. However, the play grant has had to make a contribution to the savings necessary to tackle the budget deficit.

In determining the level of savings, the aim has been to achieve a fair distribution across authorities so that the revised allocations cover expenditure already incurred, contractual commitments and, as affordable, give local authorities headroom to support projects valued locally that are not yet contractually committed.


Based on the information provided by local authorities, I have therefore decided to make a total saving of £20.8m to the original play capital budget of £75m. This means that every local authority will still receive a substantial play capital allocation for 2010-11, whilst ensuring that no contractual commitments have to be broken.

This has been achieved by applying a standard percentage reduction to each local authority's original allocation. The Department is also providing additional funding to cover the value of contractual commitments that local authorities have notified to my officials if these would otherwise exceed the revised allocation.

The Grant Determination Letter for this grant, giving the specific terms and conditions will follow shortly. As you know, the ring-fence attached to this grant has

been removed in order to give you more flexibility to manage your own local budgets.

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for working so diligently with Departmental officials during this exercise.

With every good wish,


MICHAEL GOVE




2010-11 Play capital grant allocations by local authority

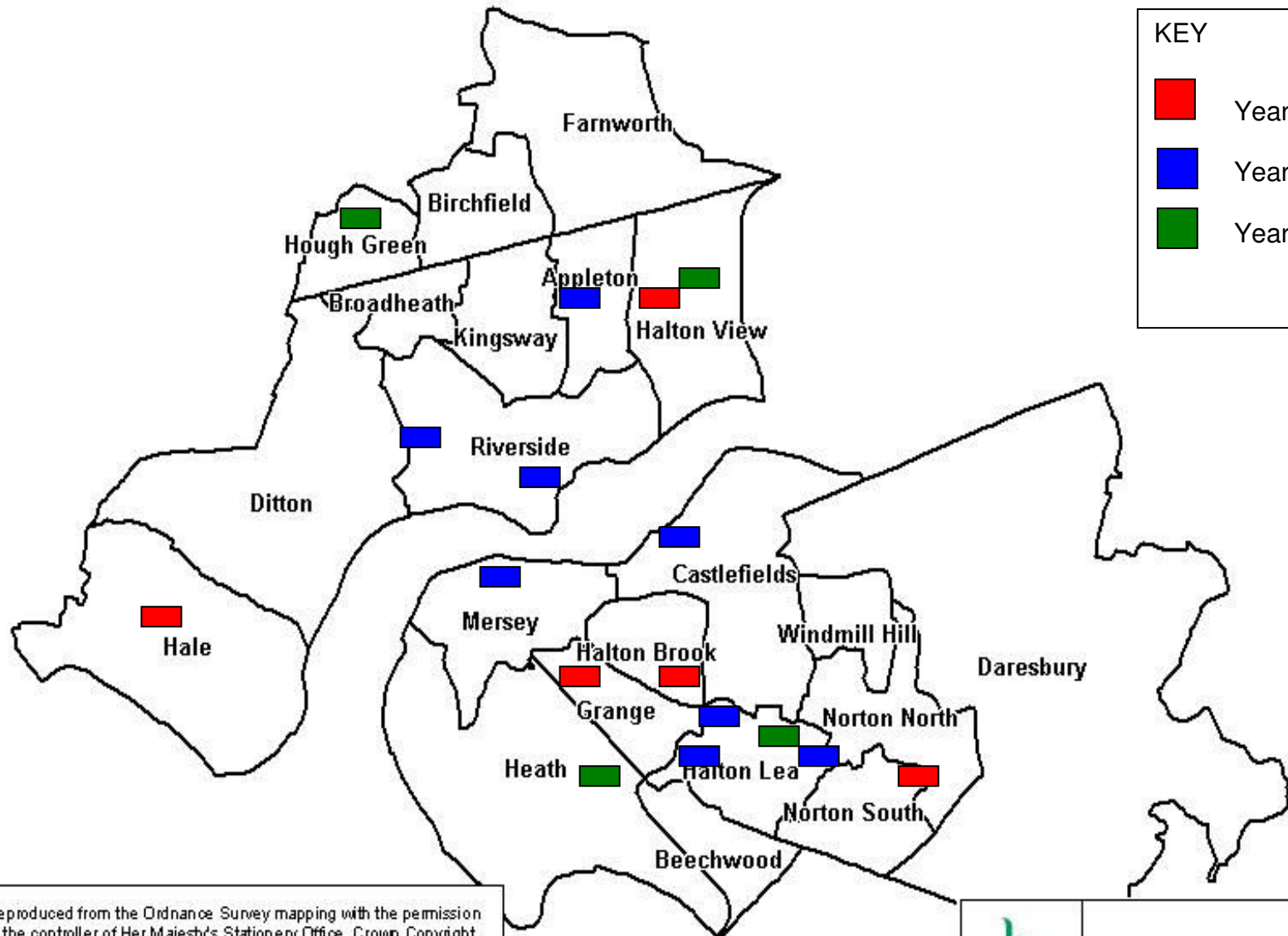
	Authorities to which grant is to be paid	Amount of grant to be paid
Wave 2 play pathfinders	Blackpool	£554,327.50
	Cornwall	£553,618.75
	Kirklees	£554,049.00
	Lambeth	£597,131.00
	Luton	£586,598.00
	Merton	£629,237.50
	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	£556,881.25
	Oxfordshire	£862,258.00
	Sandwell	£650,622.50
	Wigan	£632,049.38
Wave 1 Playbuilders	Bolton	£275,131.88
	Brent	£276,295.63
	Bury	£274,111.25
	Calderdale	£274,357.50
	Coventry	£275,007.50
	Croydon	£275,826.88
	Derby City	£274,118.13
	Gateshead	£274,574.38
	Halton	£273,610.63
	Hampshire	£280,410.00
	Islington	£287,883.75
	Lancashire	£483,597.00
	Leicester City	£283,875.63
	Lewisham	£401,363.00
	Lincolnshire	£413,176.00
	Middlesbrough	£455,464.00
	Northamptonshire	£443,700.00
	Northumberland	£440,982.00
	Nottinghamshire	£276,901.88
	Peterborough	£274,043.75
	Plymouth	£274,204.38
	Reading	£303,657.00
	Redbridge	£440,979.00
	Sefton	£275,041.25
	Slough	£439,010.00
	Solihull	£275,117.50
	Somerset	£276,011.88


Playbuilder Projects Yr 1 – Yr 3 Sites Map


APPENDIX 4

KEY

-  Year 1 Sites
-  Year 2 Sites
-  Year 3 Sites



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