

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children & Young People's Services

**SUBJECT:** Halton Play Plan and Lottery Fund Application

**WARDS:** Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide members with the 'final draft Play Plan' and information concerning Halton's bid for Play Projects to be funded through Big Lottery Fund – Play Initiative.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) Approval is given to the Play Plan
- (2) Endorse the application for the Big Lottery Fund, Play Initiative Bid

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The need to improve the provision that is made for children to play is acknowledged in a range of national policy areas: from planning, open spaces and transport to health, education and childcare. Local authorities in England have a statutory duty, under the Children Act (2004), to co-operate in their provision for the enjoyment of play and recreation as part of the five key outcomes for all children.
- 3.2 Not only is it recognised that Play can make a positive contribution to the new 0-19 agenda, providing as it does the continuum between the 0-5 Early Years provision and the 13-19 Youth Service provision. Play is increasingly being included in the processes by which local authorities are assessed e.g. CPA, JAR.
- 3.3 Ed Balls, Secretary of State for DCSF recently announced projects to support the well being of children with a focus on Play, which enables children to lead healthy, safe and happy lives, and that the department would be taking on dual responsibility for play with the department for Culture, Media and Sport to develop fun, safe and effective children's play.
- 3.4 The total cost of the proposed projects is £535,830 which includes £50,000 grant for wheeled sports facility at Runcorn Town Hall and a further £100,000 levered funding through WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental's , landfill tax community fund).

Project Costs	Big Lottery Fund	WREN	HBC Capital Programme	Total
Project 1	66,600	50,000		
Project 2	73,400	25,000	50,000	
Project 3	107,500	25,000		
Project 4	100,000			
HBC Management Cost	38,330			
Total	385,830	100,000	50,000	535,830

Project 1	Improve play facilities for disabled children within existing larger play areas
Project 2	Runcorn Town Hall improved play facilities
Project 3	New play area at Spike Island
Project 4	Open Access Play project for 5 – 12 year olds to be delivered through children’s centres in Grange, Mersey, Halton View, Kingsway, Ditton wards

- 3.5 A key element of the Big Lottery Fund application process is that applicants have a clear and robust sustainability strategy. This is in place; for the Capital projects revenue budgets are available through existing playground maintenance budgets (Landscape Services have been a key partner in the development of the projects); the revenue projects, will during the 3 year life of the project be included in a review of priorities and service delivery of both the play service and children’s centres/extended schools services to which it is directly linked.
- 3.6 On a National basis the Government, as a result of the ‘Planning for Play’ exercise in 2005 and the renewed focus on play, has through the Big Lottery Funded/Play England ‘Children’s Play Initiative’ provided both guidance and financial support to further this objective. As part of this initiative Halton has the opportunity to bid for £385.830 for play projects (appendix 2 Portfolio of Projects).
- 3.7 The timetable for the Big Lottery Fund Application is
- Application to be submitted by 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007
  - Outcome of bid to be known by December 07/January 08
  - Projects to be delivered within 3 years of approval date
- 3.8 A requirement of the bidding criteria is for authorities to develop and adopt a ‘local’ Play Plan (appendix 1, The Halton Play Plan).
- 3.9 The Play Plan has been developed by the Play Partnership (see p4 Final Draft Plan for membership) under the leadership of Cllr Wright who agreed to take on the role of Play Champion.

3.10 Guidance from the Department for Education and Skills identifies that the play plan should link to the Children and Young People Plan, helping to meet the requirements of Joint Area Review of Ofsted Children's Services Inspection framework, which includes the following key judgements;

- Parents and carers receive support in helping their children to enjoy and achieve.
- All children and young people can access a range of recreational activities, including play and voluntary learning provision.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The development of the 'Play Strategy' has both highlighted and confirmed the role that play can have in contributing to other Authority Policies (e.g. Open Space, CYP Plan etc).

4.2 Section 5 of the Play Plan fully considers how Play can/already does contribute to other strategic plans and initiatives.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None at this stage.

#### **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.

### **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 Plan and proposed projects are consistent with Halton's Policies for Urban Renewal and are designed to enhance current play provision.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

The Play Strategy and Project proposals must be submitted to Big Lottery by 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007 or the funding opportunity is lost.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

A major focus of the Play Strategy will be aimed at including vulnerable children. The project proposals include a specific capital project to enhance existing facilities to promote, the Play Plan also includes the adoption of the Inclusion Charter.

## **9.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION**

The endorsement of the Play Plan is a criteria of Big Lottery Fund for authorities submitting funding applications to the Big Lottery Fund Play Initiative.

## **10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not to submit an application to Big Lottery Fund Play England Initiative.

Rejected on basis of lost opportunity to access external funding.

## **11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

10<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

## **12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Children Act 2006 CYP Plan Planning for Play	Play Resource Centre 10 Mersey Road Runcorn, WA7 1DF	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager