

**REPORT TO:** Children and Young People – Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 2 June 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director - Children and Young People

**SUBJECT:** Play Builder Status

**WARDS:**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To inform members of the successful bid for Halton to be awarded 'Play Builder Status', and to consider proposals for the delivery of the Play Builder Programme.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) The awarding of 'Play Builder Status' be noted
- (2) The proposal to 'manage' the delivery of the Play Builder programme through Halton Play Partnership is approved
- (3) An appropriate model for the consultation, commissioning and management of play area development proposals is established

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In February 2008 Halton was 1 of 85 local authorities to be selected to apply for Play Pathfinder/Play Builder Status. Bids were to be submitted to the Department for Children, Schools & Families by 17 March 2008. Halton was informed on the 31 March 2008 that it had been successful in its application and awarded 'Play Builder Status'.
- 3.2 Play Builder status is a capital programme to transform or build new play areas in Halton. The Play Builder programme is a high profile driver of the Government's 'Play Strategy', and is a key element of the Government's commitment to a national drive for increased play opportunities as part of the 'Children's Plan'.
- 3.3 From June 2008, Halton's priorities will be set out in its Local Area Agreement. The LAA will replace the existing national performance frameworks. The Government has made it clear to local authorities that play is now a national priority by building it into this new performance

framework, using children's views as the driver for local delivery, and from April 2009 an indicator will be included on what children think about the parks and play areas in their local area.

3.4 As a result of the awarding of 'Play Builder Status', Halton will receive:

Capital Funding of:

- £300,000 in 2008-2009
- £400,000 in 2009-2010
- £400,000 in 2010-2011

Revenue funding of:

- £15,000 per annum for three years, 2008 – 2011 to:
- Refurbish or improve existing play areas or where appropriate build new play areas up to a total of 20 – 25 areas.

3.5 On 8 September 2007 the Executive Board approved the adoption of the Halton Play Plan and the successful Big Lottery Fund application for £385,000. The Play Plan endorsed the formation of the 'Halton Play Partnership' with a remit to deliver the Play Plan and monitor the implementation of the Big Lottery Fund Projects.

3.6 The Halton Play Partnership currently reports directly to the Universal Task Group and through that group to the Integrated Commissioning Partnership and Children & Young Peoples Alliance Board.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 To successfully implement the Play Builder programme it will be necessary to have in place:

- i. An affective process and criteria for the consultation and commissioning of capital/play area proposals
- ii. An effective project team to manage the programme and projects

4.2 It is proposed that these processes are managed through the Halton Play Partnership, and that the Play Partnership be asked to put forward proposals for the above consequent upon its next meeting of 9 July 2008.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Concurrent with these developments, a review of the Play Service which will put forward recommendations for radical change for the service, to become a dynamic delivery agent of community focussed Play across all areas of Halton, is underway.
- 5.2 The report and recommendations following this review will be submitted as a separate report item.

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

### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The Play Builder programme is a three year capital build programme with single year capital allocations/spend targets. The final offer letter has not yet been received so clarification is awaited on whether capital must be spent or committed by end of each financial year. The spend programme is therefore time sensitive.

### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Play impinges on all aspects of the Council's wider policies on social inclusion and equality and diversity.

### **9.0 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>
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