

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) – Capital Expenditure

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the Capital Funding Plan to support the delivery of Halton's short break programme to meet the requirements of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) The Executive Board note the contents of the report**
- ii) The Executive Board recommends to Council that the draft spending plan outlined in 3.7 be approved.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme is a national initiative to enable more disabled young people to engage in social activities within their local community. The programme also aims to provide their parent/carers with a break from their caring responsibilities. In 2008/09 Halton made a successful bid for Pathfinder status, and were one of 20 nationally and 2 in the North West. During 2008/09 a number of measures were put in place to test out some new activities for children and to build partnerships with local and national providers of short break services.

3.2 There has been significant grant funding made available to local authorities by the Department of Children, Schools and Families to improve short break services for disabled children and their families. The funding stream includes revenue and capital grants. This report relates only to the capital element of the funding outlined in Section 3.7 of this report. Revenue funding is subject to a separate commissioning process.

- 3.3 Consultation with disabled children and young people and their families has been a major focus in the development of planning for short break services, including the capital spending plan. The views of disabled young people and their families were sought through the “Powerful Voices” Conference along with a consultation leaflet that was sent out to all families with a child with additional needs. The consultation established the types of activities and practical support families would want to use.
- 3.4 Families of disabled children have told us that they want more support after school, at weekends and in school holiday times, so that they can have a break when they are under the greatest amount of stress.
- 3.5 Disabled young people have told us that they want to do the same things that other young people do. They want to participate in sporting activities, primarily for pleasure but also to join in local and national competitions. For those with potential, they want to be able to compete in Paralympic events. The children also want to have somewhere where they can meet with friends that is a safe, adapted and ‘home-like’ space that is available during school holidays, evenings and weekends.
- 3.6 The Capital Funding attached to the programme has been made available to Local Authorities to support the delivery of the short break programme in recognition of the need for specialist provision over and above that required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Capital Funding spending plan has been developed following consultation with children and young people and their families and in accordance with the DCSF guidelines. The proposed spending plan for Halton’s allocation of Capital finding is outlined in 3.7.

3.7 **Halton AHDC Capital Allocation**

2008/09 £85,600
2009/10 £199,600

Draft Spending Plan	2008/09	2009/10
Inglefield Outreach Centre adaptations	£85,600	£5,000
Outreach Centre (Widnes to be identified)		£120,000
Sporting wheelchairs		£20,000
Enhanced Toileting Resources		£15,000
Play Builder Resources		£39,600
Total	£85,600	£199,600

- 3.8 The creation of two resource bases, one in Runcorn (Inglefield Short Break Unit at Castlefields) and one in Widnes (at a location to be identified) will provide bases with the specialist equipment required, particularly for those young people with very complex needs. The bases will be available for use by individuals and groups in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. It is envisaged that the resource could be used for overnight stays by some young people with their personal assistants. Whilst the base in Runcorn has been identified, the options for possible locations in Widnes are currently being scoped.
- 3.9 Funds will be used to purchase 10 specialist sports wheelchairs to enable young people to participate in sporting activities throughout the Borough. Some of the wheelchairs will be based in the Tennis Centre and Leisure Centres, with others available at Chesnut Lodge School to be transported to a range of venues locally and nationally to support young people who may be involved in competition events. This initiative is being developed together with Halton Sports Partnership
- 3.10 Funds will also be used to provide enhanced disabled toileting facilities and play equipment in the new play parks being developed as part of the Play Builder Programme. This will enable more disabled children to use the facilities in their local parks, together with their siblings and peers.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These proposals will enhance compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and enhance the Council's approach to the inclusion of Disabled Children.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Aiming High for Disabled Children Capital Fund is additional funding provided by the Government specifically to support the delivery of the short breaks programme. The funds allocated for 2008/09 have been carried forward to 2009/10 with agreement from DCSF. The funds for 2009/10 must be used in this financial year and cannot be used for other projects. Any remaining funds will be reclaimed by The Treasury.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

This programme will enable more disabled children to access social and leisure opportunities similar to those of their non-disabled peers. It will support them to achieve better outcomes particularly for their health and wellbeing, enjoyment and achievement, and their

participation in local communities.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Young disabled people experience significant barriers to accessing employment and further education as their confidence, self esteem and social skills may be affected by limited opportunities for socialisation with their peers. These measures will provide them with more opportunities to enhance these skills outside of the school environment.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The provision of more play, sports and social activities will have a positive impact upon both the physical and emotional health of young disabled people in Halton. The provision of regular breaks from their caring responsibilities will support the health of their main carers and siblings.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The proposed developments will provide environments and resources for young people to extend their personal experiences in a safe and supportive manner.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The additional adaptations to the Playbuilder Programme will further enhance the Urban Renewal of the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The proposals for the spending plan for the AHDC Capital funding will enable more disabled young people to access more social and leisure opportunities in Halton. This will enhance the quality of life for both them and their families.

7.2 The funding is time limited and cannot be used for other projects. The plans are in place to ensure that the projects can be delivered within the time and spending limits.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The measures outlined in this report will support the inclusion of disabled young people in community sports, play and leisure activities throughout Halton.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

To gain the formal approval of the Council for the Capital spend.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

This is a Government initiative, with Halton as a Pathfinder. It must be the programme's objectives.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Financial Year 2009/2010.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Aiming High for Disabled Children	Woodview CDC	Margaret Chaplin

13.0 **JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING THE ITEM IN PART II**

13.1 **Which Paragraphs apply?**

N/A

13.2 **Public Interest Test**

N/A

13.3 **Conclusion**

N/A