

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Executive Board

Date: 14th October 2009

Subject: Playbuilder Initiative Update

<p>Electoral Wards Affected: Beeston and Holbeck ward Killingbeck and Seacroft ward Weetwood ward Cross Gates and Whinmoor ward Kirkstall ward Horsforth ward</p> <p>Ward Members consulted (referred to in report) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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Eligible for Call In |

Not Eligible for Call In
 (Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

In June 2009 the Playbuilder report was approved by Executive Board. £1,145,914, was injected into the Capital Programme (cap scheme no:15390) to build or significantly refurbish twenty two playgrounds or informal play spaces across Leeds by March 2011 against tight criteria and fully funded by grant from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Authority to spend on sixteen identified play sites was given and a process for the identification of the remaining six sites was approved.

This update report seeks Executive Board approval for the preferred location of the remaining six play area sites and authority to incur expenditure to develop the sites.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- seek approval for the proposed location of the six remaining playbuilder sites as recommended by the Strategic Play Partnership.
- seek authority to progress and incur expenditure on the 6 sites identified by the Strategic Play Partnership.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Playbuilder report, approved by Executive Board in June 2009, provided details of, and criteria for, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Playbuilder Project and the allocation of £1,145,914 capital and £45,871 revenue to Leeds to build or significantly refurbish twenty two playgrounds or informal play spaces across the city by March 2011 with a focus on provision for children aged 8 -13.

- 2.2 Executive Board gave approval to inject the £1,145,914 allocation into the Children's Services Capital Programme (cap scheme no: 15390) and authority to spend on the refurbishment and development of the first sixteen sites identified in the report.
- 2.3 This report identifies the preferred options for the remaining six playbuilder sites and seeks Executive Board approval for the location of these sites and authority to spend from capital scheme no: 15930 on their development

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The Playbuilder Executive Board report of June 2009 clearly identified gaps in play provision available to children and young people in the city that were less easily provided through the Parks and Countryside Service. These 'play poor' areas are the priority for developing the remaining six playbuilder sites in:
- North West Leeds : West Park/Ireland Wood and Tinshill/Cookridge (Adel and Wharfedale and Weetwood Wards)
 - East Leeds : Beechwood/Seacroft (Seacroft and Killingbeck ward)
 - South Leeds: Beeston (Beeston and Holbeck ward)
- 3.2 The report approved in June 2009 considered it appropriate to work with other partners within the council and Play Partnership in order to meet the criteria laid down and the conditions of the Playbuilder grant in these localities as part of a parallel process of working with Parks and Countryside. An indicative project plan submitted to DCSF in March 09 proposed that further work would be undertaken, and expressions of interest sought, across the Play Partnership for the development of play spaces in the six localities where there may not be sufficient opportunities to develop or significantly refurbish sites currently under the management of Parks and Countryside.
- 3.3 Expressions of Interest (Eoi) to develop the six remaining sites were sought from partners who were keen to develop Playbuilder areas. All expressions of interest scored above the agreed threshold for approval and demonstrated the applicants' commitment to maintain the sites and meet the health and safety requirements for developing the public play areas as advised by Parks and Countryside. The identified sites all fit within the criteria of the Playbuilder funding and have been considered carefully by a panel from the Strategic Play Partnership.
- 3.4 The following six sites are proposed for development as part of the Playbuilder programme:

Proposed site	Play Poor Area	Agency Delivering	Playbuilder Funding
Cross Flatts Park	Beeston (South)	Parks and Countryside	£55k
Seacroft Gardens	Seacroft (East)	Parks and Countryside	£55k
Horsforth Hall Park	Borders on West Park	Parks and Countryside	£40k
Naburn Close Park, Naburn Close	Whinmoor, Cross Gates and Whinmoor Ward bordering with Seacroft (East)	Parks and Countryside	£55k
Tinshill Garth	Weetwood Tinshill	Groundworks Leeds and WNW Homes	£50k
Butcher Hill Area	Weetwood Kirkstall	Area Management/Area Committee with partners	£55k

- 3.5 These sites are all within and neighbouring the 'play-poorest' wards highlighted in the June Report to Executive Board and their development would significantly improve access to play spaces for children in those localities.
- 3.6 All ward members for these areas have been informed, consulted and briefed on request. A number of ward members have been involved with officers to develop some of the sites over a period of time.
- 3.7 At a full meeting of the Strategic Play Partnership the Expressions of Interest were discussed at length, and after consideration the Strategic Play Partnership agreed unanimously to ratify the decision of the panel.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1 Timescales are very tight to deliver the twenty two sites by March 2011 and all sites must be completed by that time and all budget spent. The current programme of works shows that this is achievable including the additional six new sites.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 The Grant confirmation agreement has been agreed and signed to deliver this initiative from April 2009 – March 2011.
- 5.2 Maintenance and Inspection
- 5.2.1 It is a condition of Playbuilder funding that arrangements are put in place for the long term maintenance and inspection of all Playbuilder funded sites. This has been communicated clearly as part of the process to invite Expressions of Interest. Four proposed schemes in Cross Flatts Park, Seacroft Gardens, Naburn Close Park and Horsforth HIPPO were submitted by Parks & Countryside, who are already maintaining these play areas. This arrangement will continue from existing revenue budget allocations.
- 5.2.2 The Tinshill Garth scheme was submitted by Groundwork Leeds and West North West Homes. Initial consultation has been carried out for this proposal and the results indicated Ward members and local residents support. Health and Safety and maintenance arrangements are being considered and are dependant upon final designs of the play space. It is conditional of the grant that long term maintenance and inspection funding is secure ensuring sustainability of the project.
- 5.2.3 The EoI for Butcher Hill was submitted by Area Management on behalf of the Area Committee. Initial consultation indicates support for the project from local residents groups and ward members for an informal play space. The full consultation will include looking at a number of green spaces in the Butcher Hill Area. It is required that revenue funding to enable a long term maintenance and inspection contract for the site will be identified before formal agreement to proceed is reached, as a condition of the Playbuilder funding. This is to be discussed by members of the Area Committee as a matter of urgency at their next meeting in September.

All projects are conditional on community support for the projects and sites appropriate to the community served. In-depth consultation with elected members, local residents, children and young people will be carried out as the next stage, establishing the level of support and taking into account local issues. Residents' views and input from children and young people will inform the design of all the proposed sites if residents are in support.

- 5.3 Capital Funding and cash flow

£330k was available for allocation to remaining 6 schemes
£310k was allocated over 6 expressions of interest recommended to Board

£20k remains unallocated. It is recommended that this be added to the Contingency Fund which is 10% of the overall capital fund. In the second year of the programme plans will be drawn up for any remaining contingency funds to be spent on the play areas, providing an opportunity for additional equipment or facilities, if funding allows. This ensures the funding is maximised and no funding has to be returned having been unspent.

5.4 Revenue Effects

The sustainability of these developments is a resource pressure. The delivery partners are aware that it is essential that the deliverers of this initiative must maintain the play areas that are built or refurbished as a result of the Playbuilder funding.

5.5 Programme of works

5.5.1 The programme of works for the 6 remaining play area sites will be delivered by: Parks and Countryside (4); NW Area Management with partners (1); Groundwork Leeds with West North West Homes (1).

5.5.2 Individual design and cost reports will request funding from the parent scheme as detailed plans for each site are finalised. As a condition of the grant all year 1 schemes need to be completed by 31st March 2010, the remainder need to be completed by 31st March 2011. Any unspent funds will be reclaimed by DCSF.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The Playbuilder Initiative is a new and exciting initiative, with a large amount of work to be carried out in a short period of time. The identified partners can deliver the six sites meeting the criteria identified by the DCSF. This report seeks authority to proceed to develop these sites.

7.0 Recommendations

Executive Board is asked to:

- approve the proposed six sites as recommended by the Strategic Play Partnership.
- give authority to spend on Cross Flatts, Seacroft Gardens, Horsforth HIPPO and Naburn Close Park.
- give authority to proceed with Tinshill Garth and Butcher Hill subject to agreement on long term maintenance and inspection being secured.

Background papers:

- The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures – published by DCSF December 07 – www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan
- The Play Strategy: published by DCSF December 08 – www.dcsf.gov.uk/play
- Design For Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces: published by DCSF April 08 – www.dcsf.gov.uk/play
- Report of Director of Planning & Environment and Director of Leisure Services, report to Executive Board – Children's Playgrounds – 11 September 2002