

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 26 JULY 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

BIG LOTTERY CHILDREN'S PLAY PROGRAMME REPORT

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents to the Cabinet the outline proposals for Wirral Council's bid for BIG Lottery Children's Play Initiative funding. The Cabinet is asked to approve the proposals as Wirral's portfolio of projects to be submitted to the BIG Lottery before the final deadline 10 September 2007. Please see proposals as outlined in Appendix A.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the end of 2005, Government announced £155 million would be made available by the *Big Lottery Children's Play Fund* in England. It stated that successful access to this new money is dependent on local authorities demonstrating a strategic approach and partnership working, and that in terms of play services this should be demonstrated with the adoption of a local Play Strategy and the development of a cross-cutting action plan (see Appendix B). The completion of a Play Strategy for Wirral, therefore, is key to the local authority receiving its fair share of available Big Lottery funding for children's play.
- 2.2 Wirral's allocation of Big Lottery Children's Play funding is eight hundred and eighty one thousand, two hundred and eight pounds, and sixty-six (£881,208.66) over 3 years.
- 2.3 The BIG Lottery Fund's Children's Play initiative is based on the recommendations of the 2004 national play review *Getting Serious About Play*, which defines children's play as:
- “What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons”.
- 2.4 BIG Lottery Fund's Children's Play programme will fund portfolios that achieve three or more of the following programme outcomes:

- More children will take part in a wider range of good inclusive and accessible play experiences.
- Children will have more choice and control over their play.
- Children will develop greater well-being through play (including healthy growth, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn).
- Children will achieve greater independence and self-esteem through play.
- Children will acquire greater social skills and respect for others through play.
- Children will test boundaries, be challenged and take risks through play, while kept safe from harm.
- More children experiencing barriers to free play will be included in mainstream play provision.
- Local communities, especially children, will have a greater involvement in designing, planning and running play projects.

2.5 What can be funded

- Capital and revenue grants lasting up to 3 years.
- Projects which benefit children and young people up to 16 years
- Projects providing new or better play provision for children to play in safety with formal or informal adult supervision i.e. playworkers.
- Accessible to children and pass the 3 frees test – Free of charge, children free to come and go and free to choose what play activities they do.

For example: adventure playgrounds, skateboard parks, holiday and after school activities, small playgrounds, mobile play team, creating a localised play area.

2.6 BIG Lottery funding must be distinct from other government and public funding and must add value.

2.7 A play consultant was appointed in October 2006, in order to audit current play provision, consult with stakeholders, children and young people and support the development of the Play Strategy. The period of consultation ran from January to April 2007.

2.8 The Wirral Play Strategy has developed from consultation with children and young people, stakeholders representing the statutory

and voluntary sector, a schools audit , and six focused neighbourhood studies and twenty play area audits. Children were consulted to find out where they played, ascertain their knowledge and geography of local play facilities, barriers to play and how often they played out. The study was undertaken at the following schools: Portland Primary, Millfields Primary, West Kirby Primary, New Brighton Primary, Barnston Primary and Bebington High School. The consultation and audit process was a required as part of the application to the BIG Lottery Children's Play Initiative.

- 2.9 The Wirral Play Partnership has been established and has met five times since November. The terms of reference have been agreed and composition of the partnership includes representation from the statutory, voluntary and community sector.
- 2.10 Recommendations for the Play Strategy were presented at the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 23 May 2007. The committee supported the recommendations. Similarly, the recommendations were also presented to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board on 5 June 2007.
Please see appendix C for a list of the recommendations. It was also recommended that the Play Strategy Implementation Plan should be referred to the Youth Service Advisory Committee (YSAC). Please see appendix B for the Play Strategy Implementation Plan which is attached.
- 2.11 The Play Strategy Implementation Plan, Recommendations and BIG Lottery proposals were presented and endorsed at the Youth Service Advisory Committee (YSAC) on 9 July 2007.
- 2.12 The Play Strategy Implementation Plan group, a sub-group of the Wirral Play Partnership met to formulate the Play Strategy Implementation Plan and develop the portfolio of projects. This will form part of the required documentation towards Wirral's bid in September to the BIG Children's Lottery programme.
- 2.13 Wirral Council will be the lead applicant as required by the BIG Lottery and must demonstrate how they have fully consulted and developed the portfolio through the Play partnership.
- 2.14 Wirral Council will involve a range of organisations to deliver the portfolio of projects.

3.0 Financial and Staffing Implications

- 3.1 A number of the activities in the Play Strategy Implementation Plan do not have financial implications. Those activities that do have financial and staffing implications will be funded through the Big Lottery Children's Play allocation (see Appendix A). These projects will be commissioned and time-limited for up to three years. When funding for the projects expires, alternative funding sources (not Wirral Council) will have to be identified.
- 3.2 Any staff appointed to work on the commissioned projects will not be employed by Wirral Council. Any additional management costs to evaluate and monitor the projects will be funded through 10% of total allocation awarded by the BIG Lottery Children's Play Initiative Fund (see summary of costs).
- 3.3 The Cabinet needs to note that the funding of the play portfolio is subject to final approval by the Big Lottery Fund.

Summary of Costs	£
Play Ranger Service	270,000
Play Practitioners	153,000
New and enhanced play areas	200,088
Quality Play Training	50,000
Local Play Partnerships	120,000
Management Costs (10% of total)	88,120.66
Total	881,208.66

4.0 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 4.1 Wirral's BIG Lottery Children's Play portfolio reflects inclusiveness and promotes equal opportunities and access.

5.0 Community Safety Implications

- 5.1 There are none arising from this report.

6.0 Local Agenda 21 Implications

6.1 There are none arising from this report

7.0 Planning Implications

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 Anti - poverty Implications

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

7.0 Social inclusion Implications

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8.0 Local Member Support Implications

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9.0 Background papers

9.1 BIG Lottery Children's Play Proposals (Appendix A)
Play Strategy Implementation Plan (Appendix B)
Summary of the Play Strategy recommendations (Appendix C)

10.0 Recommendations

That

(1) the report be noted and recommended proposals be accepted as Wirral's portfolio of projects to be submitted to the BIG Lottery before the final deadline 10 September 2007; and

(2) the title of Youth Service Advisory Committee (YSAC) be amended to Youth and Play Service Advisory Committee (YAPSAC)and that it receive regular progress reports on the implementation of the Play Strategy.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services