

**CHILDREN'S PLAY BIG LOTTERY BRIEFING 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2006**

**Executive Summary**

- 1.0 This report briefs the Committee on the necessary actions which will have to be undertaken if Wirral is to maximise the opportunities to be made available by the Play Lottery bid. The Committee is asked to note the report.

**Background**

- 2.0 In 1991, Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council produced a Children's Play, five- year strategic development plan as part of Wirral's Leisure Strategy. The plan focused on fourteen policy objectives achieved through a number of annually set targets. The plan was aimed at children aged 0-16, with particular emphasis on the 5-16 age group. The plan was produced by an inter-departmental working group with representation from the voluntary sector including Wirral Play Council. The Children's Play working group monitored the implementation of the development plan.
- 2.1 The Children's Play Strategy has now time – expired, although there are still many valid and relevant points, it is Wirral's desire to produce a new play strategy which meets the current needs of local children and young people who have participated in its design and delivery.

**Strategic Play Objectives**

- 2.2 Initial discussions with Play providers have highlighted a number of points to be considered in the development of a Play strategy for Wirral.
- Every child has access to localised quality play opportunities
  - Raising the awareness of the importance of play in children's development.
  - Inclusion and disability – access to provision.
  - To enable children to access outdoor unsupervised public play spaces.
  - Full use of existing play provision, improving existing play facilities and identify gaps in provision.
  - Voluntary, statutory and private partnership work and link to other strategies.
  - To develop children's awareness of their environment through play.
  - To contribute to the health of Wirral children ensuring that there are sufficient play opportunities to engage in free play and physical activity
  - To promote and develop diverse play provision appropriate to the needs of children and their local communities.

- Professionalism of Playwork, training and qualifications.
- To develop mechanisms to enable children and young people to express their views and opinions in the planning and delivering of the service.
- Enriched play environments, incorporating, challenge, risk, and play with the elements.

### **The Big Lottery Fund**

3.0 *The BIG Lottery Fund's £155 million Children's Play initiative is based on the recommendations of the 2004 play review Getting Serious About Play, which defines children's play as:*

'What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way, and for their own reasons'

### **Programme Aims**

3.1 This programme will support activities that are self-directed, creative and fun.

- To create, improve and develop children and young people's free local play spaces
- To ensure that good inclusive, accessible and sustainable children's play services and facilities are provided locally
- To support innovation and new ways of providing for children's play
- To create a support and development infrastructure to ensure local agencies have the resources and skills
- To ensure that local authorities work with other local stakeholders to develop children's play strategies and plans

### **Lottery Fund for Children's Play Initiative £155 Million**

- 3.2
- 1) Children's Play – £124Million – to be divided between all local authorities
  - 2) Playful Ideas - £16Million – to innovative practice in planning, design and delivery
  - 3) Regional support and development infrastructure - £15 Million (Play England Project)

Wirral's allocation is £881,208.66 for 3 years and will take the lead role in applying for the funds.

We are required to work with local partners in the play sector to develop a portfolio of projects that focus on areas of greatest need, forming the basis of the play strategy.

### **What can be Funded?**

#### 3.3 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

#### 3.4 BIG funding must be distinct from other government and other public funding and must add value.

### **Developing your play strategy and compiling your portfolio of projects.**

#### **Summary - What we need to do.**

#### 4.0 The Local Authority will take lead role in developing a children's play strategy and to be endorsed by local authority and relevant stakeholders. Wirral will have to:

- i. Facilitate a series of meetings/seminars with relevant stakeholders to develop a set of values, aims and objectives and agree a long-term vision for play to be adopted by a cross-cutting group of voluntary and statutory partners.
- ii. Establish a Play Partnership to be set up to support the development of the strategy.
- iii. Identify a Play Champion
- iv. 'Gathering the evidence' – Map existing play provision, analyse, prioritise and identify gaps, conduct a play audit of the Wirral, which involves children and young people in discussions about their play needs and preferences. We need to gain children and young people's views on local priorities for investment.
- v. Making a positive contribution – involving children and young people in local play audits and discussions about their play and free time needs. Also need to involve parents and local residents groups, to minimise any future conflict when play and youth facilities are being planned.
- vi. Identify individual projects that together will address the needs and help meet the programme outcomes.
- vii. Explain how each individual project will contribute to the overall strategy, including delivery plans, budgets and most appropriate organisations to do the work.

- vii. Inclusive consultation with children and young people, parents, local residents and relevant partners on the development of a draft play strategy, employing a variety of appropriate methods of engagement.
- ix. Produce a Wirral Play Strategy with a five-year action plan.

**(Please see Annex 1 which is the timeline for this Project).**

### **Financial and Staffing Implications**

- 5.0 Officer time will have to be identified to co-ordinate development and production of play strategy.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 6.0 The development of Play Strategy will be an inclusive process which promotes equal opportunities.

### **Human Rights Implications**

- 7.0 There are none arising from this report.

### **Local Agenda 21 Implications**

- 8.0 There are none arising from this report.

### **Community Safety Implications**

- 9.0 There are none arising from this report.

### **Planning Implications**

- 10.0 There are none arising from this report.

### **Local Member Support Implications**

- 11.0 There are none arising from this report.

### **Background Papers**

- 12.0 Children's Play Council Planning for Play – guidance on the development and implementation of a local strategy  
BIG Lottery Fund – Children's Play Programme guidance notes for local authorities

### **Recommendation**

- 13.0. The Committee is asked to note the report.

Howard Cooper  
Director of Children's Services

## ANNEX 1

### **Play Strategy and BIG Lottery Timeline**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
Identify Lead Officer within Wirral Local Authority	
Identify Play Champion	
Allocate officer time to prepare and implement a play strategy	
Establish time scale to complete Play Strategy (Draft January 2007, Final draft February 2007) and complete BIG Lottery application (March 2007)	
Identify key partners in Play Partnership	
Planning for Play – North West Region seminar	June 2006
Identify initial Play Consultant support	July 2006
Report Wirral's lottery allocation to YSAC	July 2006
To facilitate a series of meetings/seminars with relevant stakeholders to develop a set of values, aims and objectives and agree a long term vision for play to be adopted by a cross-cutting group of voluntary and statutory partners.	August/September 06
Gathering the evidence' – facilitate a play audit of the Wirral, which involve children and young people in discussions about their play needs and preferences	September/October 2006
Identify gaps in play provision	
Write draft Play Strategy and action plan	Beginning of November 2006
Agree portfolio of projects	January 2007
Agree Play Strategy and action plan	February 2007
Present to members for ratification and adoption	February 2007
Submit completed application for BIG Lottery Children's Play Fund allocation (£881,208.66)	March 2007
BIG decision on application	June 2007