

Subject: Play Strategy

Status: For Publication

Report to: Policy Scrutiny Committee
The Cabinet

Date: 21 February 2007
21 March 2007

Report of: Head of Street Scene and Liveability

Portfolio

Holder: Street Scene and Liveability

Key Decision:

Yes

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform members of the recent produced Draft play strategy detailing some of the key findings, priorities and future directions.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:

- *Delivering quality services to customers (Customers, Improvement)*
- *Keeping our Borough clean and green (Environment)*
- *Improving health and well being across the Borough (Health, Housing)*

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendations in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Members should recognise that failure to deliver the strategy will lead to poor customer perception and limited improvement of play areas
- Members should recognise the financial implications of developing children's play and the investment that will be required from the council and external partners to reach the strategies 2020 goal is in the £ millions, and that current level of investment is very low; and
- Failure to obtain the Big Lottery funding allocation of c£200,000 will seriously affect our ability to deliver in the coming years.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Council, in 2005 were allocated £200,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to invest in children's play. A number of dates were allocated for application of this grant of which two dates, March and September 2007 remain for Rossendale BC to make their application. In addition to this the Council has also provided a capital improvement program of £250,000 over 5 years starting fiscal year 2006/07 giving enough finance to improve approximately 5 out of the 45 sites the Council owns.
- 4.2 Due to insufficient budgets the Council has identified a need to seek partners and external funding opportunities to make up the shortfall. In order to achieve this, a Play Strategy has been developed showing clear aims and objectives for the Council's role in play provision and the areas in which funding may be sought, e.g. s106 developer contributions. In addition, the need to strategically develop play and play opportunities within the borough contributes to the Council's commitment to delivering on the Local Area Agreement by providing improved positive social participation by Children and delivering on the Every Child Matters Agenda by providing safe opportunities for play.
- 4.3 Groundwork Rossendale were appointed the task of developing the strategy and also submission of the Big lottery Fund application due to their high success ratio.
- 4.4 In addition to obtaining partners and external funding for improving play, developing this strategy also allows the council agree the direction (based on consultation and priorities) where the £200,000 Big Lottery Fund grant offer and the Council's Capital program should be invested.
- 4.5 It also will be crucial to:
- Identify and gain support from local partners and create a 'Play Partnership' whose role will be to:-
 - Contribute to and endorse the strategy and strategic vision
 - Agree policy statements
 - Ensure that the Play Partnership is representative of the community and relevant agencies
 - Oversee the Play Strategy action plan
 - Evaluate the projects that have
 - Identify and put in place a 'Play Champion' whose role will be to drive the strategy forward and make sure that the strategy is adhered to and used in the appropriate way.
 - Map all the main areas associated with play within Rossendale.
 - Highlight the 'top five' means of play within each Super Output Area (SOA).
 - Highlight the 'top five' means of play within each ward area.

- Highlight the ‘top five’ means of play within Rossendale.
- Highlight the priorities and sites for improvement and investment at Super Output Area (SOA) level, Ward level and Borough level, which have been summarised as follows:
 - **High Priority.**
 - Worsley
 - Longholme
 - Cribden
 - **Medium Priority.**
 - Irwell
 - Hareholme
 - Stacksteads
 - Greenfield
 - Helmshore
 - Goodshaw.
 - **Lowest Priority**
 - Whitewell
 - Greensclough
 - Healy and Whitworth
 - Facit and Shawforth
 - Eden

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 5.1 The report highlights the Councils current commitment to playgrounds over a five year programme together with additional resources from the Big Lottery. Given the funding gap identified in resources. Officers should continue to ensure that, where opportunities exist, Councils resources are used to maximise to the full funding from third parties.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 6.1 No legal implications.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

- 7.1 No Human Resource Implications.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The success of this strategy will not only help deliver various themes and actions within Rossendale Borough Council's core strategy but it will encourage children and young to exercise and interact with their peers in places they want to be. It will also unlock funding and maximize the opportunity for improving play provision where it is most needed.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Draft Strategy be approved as a way forward for improving children's play.
- 9.2 That Officers be requested to produce a delivery plan in line with programme management techniques.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 10.1 Consultations are currently taking place.

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Draft Play Strategy.	Online.
Open Space Audit	Online.