

Meeting of the Executive Member for Leisure,
Culture and Social Inclusion

9 June 2009

Report of the Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning and Culture)

Playbuilder Project

Summary

1. City of York Council has been allocated £1,165,391 from the Government Playbuilder Project, for the development of 22 play areas across the city. Eleven sites must be built or refurbished each year and the whole scheme completed by 31 March 2011.
2. The purpose of this report is to agree the proposed sites for investment in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Background

3. The Playbuilder programme is investing £235 million nationally as part of the Government's commitment to the play agenda, along with the launch of the recent national Play Strategy and Children's Plan. City of York Council has been allocated £1,165,391 for the development of 22 play areas across the city. This consists of £1,120,453 capital and £44,938 revenue.
4. This initiative is intended to develop public, open access, outdoor play spaces close to where children live that are safe, exciting, stimulating and accessible to all, as well as promoting active, imaginative and adventurous play and targeting predominately the 8 - 13 year age range. This will directly link into York's play strategy 'Taking Play Forward', and assist in our aim to raise the local standard of play provision.
5. Funding became available from 1 April 2009 and is for a two-year period. Each area has to be developed in consultation and in participation with local children and young people, families, communities and representatives as appropriate. The scheme was added to the Council's capital programme at the meeting of the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services and Advisory Panel on the 12 March 2009.
6. The grant comes with a stringent monitoring regime from the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to be managed by the regional office of Play England. The Council has produced a project plan and this has been very favourably received. Further updates have are to be produced for Play England on a monthly basis, and as part of the ongoing reporting process, a formal adoption of the short listed sites for improvement / development is required. To

date Play England have been very satisfied with the approach and progress made by this Council in delivering Playbuilder.

Consultation

7. The availability of the Playbuilder grant has been widely circulated to Members, community groups, Parish and Town Councils. A press release was issued on 11 February which resulted in a significant article featuring the Executive Member for Children's Services in the York Press that day. Suggestions for suitable sites to use the money were received through the YorOK web site, and direct to the Head of Parks and Open Spaces and to the Play Manager. In total 12 Local Councils, 9 City of York Councillors and 5 members of the public / community groups responded. These responses have been taken into account when drawing up the list of proposed sites for investment. As described earlier this grant enables delivery on elements of our existing play strategy which had been subject of earlier consultation.

Options

8. The following criteria have been used to identify the recommended priority areas for investment:
 - a) those areas of the city where there is no or under provision for 8 - 13 year olds
 - b) those sites which score lower in quality
 - c) community support being available to help design and possibly deliver the scheme
 - d) the availability of a suitable site to deliver the scheme within the DCSF timetable
9. The primary tool for assessing sites against the first two criteria has been PPG17 Planning for Open Spaces, Sport and Recreation audit, undertaken as part of the Local Development Framework process. This study identified where equipped play areas and facilities for teenagers exist in the city and then identified the gaps in provision. Where facilities exist these were assessed looking at both quality and accessibility issues.
10. The PPG17 audit has been supported by feedback from consultation recently carried out in preparation for the new Children and Young People's Plan, local representation and information from Ward Committees.

Analysis

11. The selection criteria have been used to identify 11 new play areas, and 11 refurbished or expanded play areas. The recommended sites for investment are named below.

Proposed Sites for 2009/10

	Ward	Location	Managed by	New / Existing
1	Bishopthorpe	Keble Park	Parish Council	New
2	Skelton	Brecksfield	Parish Council	Existing
3	Naburn	Vicarage Lane - Village Hall	Parish Council	New
4	Elvington	Sports field	Parish Council	New
5	Haxby	Mancroft	Town Council	New
6	Holgate	Balfour Street – Back Park	City of York Council	New
7	Huntington	Orchard Park	Parish Council	Existing
8	Copmanthorpe	Recreation ground	Parish Council	Existing
9	Acomb	Viking Road	City of York Council	Existing
10	Clifton	Ashton Avenue	City of York Council	Existing
11	Westfield	Chesney's Field / Gale Lane	City of York Council	Existing / new

Proposed Sites for 2010/11

	Ward	Location	Managed by	New / Existing
1	Heworth / Heworth Without	Monk / Heworth Stray	City of York Council	New
2	Holgate	Garnett Terrace	City of York Council	Existing
3	Hull Road	Badger Hill	City of York Council	Existing
4	Bell Farm	Byland Avenue area	City of York Council	Existing / new
5	Heworth	Barfield Road	City of York Council	Existing
6	Strensall	Exact location to be confirmed	Unknown	New
7	Guildhall	Exact location to be confirmed	City of York Council	New
8	Derwent	Exact location to be confirmed	Probably Parish Council	New
9	Holgate	Sowerby Road	City of York Council	Existing
10	Westfield	Chapelfields area	City of York Council	New
11	Woodthorpe	Exact location to be confirmed	City of York Council	New

12. The exact location of a number of sites has yet to be identified and this will take place later this year through public consultation. Work is ongoing with a number of community groups to see if their aspirations match those of the DCSF and if not funding will not be awarded to them. Where this is the case reserve sites will be identified and reported to the Executive member through

the capital-monitoring regime. It may also be necessary to move schemes between years in order to meet the DCSF spending regulations, e.g. where a scheme is running late and there is a risk of losing funding. Alternatively, another scheme may be brought forward to replace it.

13. Sites in year 1 have been provisionally allocated £47,000 and sites in Year 2 £53,000. The difference is a reflection of the amount of funding given by the government over the two years.

Corporate Objectives

14. The scheme contributes to the following Corporate Objectives:
 - Sustainable City – by creating or improving local places to play
 - Inclusive City – by involving children, young people and their community in the design of their spaces
 - Healthy City – by improving the outdoor places for children and young people to enjoy healthy and active lifestyles

Implications

15. **Financial:** The Playbuilder grant has been allocated as follows:

	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Capital	526,725	593,728	1,120,453
Revenue	26,963	17,975	44,938

A minimum of 11 play areas must be delivered in each year; the average capital grant available to spend on each area is £47,884 in 2009/10 and £53,975 in 2010/11. It should be noted that the 2010/11 figure is indicative; the final figure will be confirmed in March 2010.

16. There will be an increased demand on the Council's playground maintenance budget with the creation of new playgrounds on Council land. The effect of this may be felt in the medium to longer term as equipment wears out and needs replacing or due to increased damage or vandalism. The playground maintenance budget was overspent by £16k in 2008/09. No additional ongoing revenue funding is being provided by the DCSF to fund this.
17. There may also be an increase in the double taxation claims from those Parish areas which have new play areas resulting from the Playbuilder project.
18. **Human Resources:** No implications.
19. **Equalities:** Equality considerations are part of the location, design and equipment to be installed in new and expanded or refurbished sites. Specialist advice will be sort from the Equalities Officer as appropriate.
20. **Legal:** Legal advice / action may be required e.g. updates or new documentation for use of privately owned sites.

21. **Crime and Disorder:** The Safer York Architectural Liaison Officer is part of the steering group overseeing the location, design and equipment to be installed in new and expanded or refurbished sites
22. **Information Technology:** No implications.
23. **Property:** Ownership and possible future land use issues are being considered with Property Services colleagues to ensure that any new or redeveloped sites have a long term future.
24. Highways Colleagues from Transport and Safety within City Strategy are part of the steering group and are looking at ways to improve pedestrian and cyclist access to Playbuilder sites.

Risk Management

25. The main risk to the scheme is not delivering all 22 play areas within the allotted time, i.e. by 31 March 2011. DCSF have stated that if the money is not spent within the time available it cannot be carried over and the opportunity will be lost. To mitigate this risk a start has already been made by visiting all of the proposed areas for 2010/11 and meetings have taken place with some of the Parish Council who want to host a Playbuilder site. Play England require that a detailed project plan is drawn up for each site and will be monitoring progress on a month-by-month basis.

Recommendations

26. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - approve the proposed sites named in paragraph 11
 - delegate to officers authority to bring forward substitute schemes if necessary, selecting such schemes using the criteria set out in paragraph 8, and reporting them to the Executive Member through the capital monitoring process

Reason: To progress schemes using the Playbuilder funding in 2010/11 and 2011/12 that satisfy the conditions of the funding.

Contact Details

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**Report
Approved**



Date 26 May, 2009

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Project file held by Mary Bailey, Play Manager