
Meeting of Executive Members and Children's Services Advisory Panel

22 January 2007

Report of the Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning and Culture)

Big Lottery Fund: Play

Summary

1. This paper sets out how the Council may apply for Children's Play, Big Lottery Funding. It seeks:
 - Endorsement of the process followed to identify projects
 - Approval to work up the identified projects for inclusion in the portfolio to be presented to the Big Lottery Fund
 - Approval for the reserve projects
 - Approval for use of the Council's top-sliced funding

Background

2. The Big Lottery has allocated a total of £155 million nationally for play in order to provide three things:
 - An infrastructure to support the national development of play including Play England, a body responsible for supporting local authorities,
 - A further funding stream for the voluntary sector called 'Playful Ideas', which focuses on innovation, and
 - An allocation to each local authority under the "Children's Play Initiative".
3. In November 2005 the Council received confirmation from the Big Lottery Fund that York's allocation under the Children's Play Initiative will be £328,264.87 for the 3 years 2007 – 2010. This funding must be used to develop play provision by creating, improving and developing local play space.
4. To generate proposals for how the allocation should be spent, the authority is required to consult with and involve local play partners in the City in working up a portfolio of projects that:
 - Focus on areas of greatest need
 - Fit with York's local play strategy, and

- Meet the Big Lottery’s “3 frees” criteria: Free of cost, freely chosen and freely accessed
5. This portfolio must be submitted to the Big Lottery for their approval.
 6. As the lead body, the authority is able to top slice 10% of the total allocation for project management costs.

Timescales and Process

7. Officers have followed a process designed to build in robust consultation and to ensure that the needs of children and young people are properly taken into consideration before the authority submits its portfolio in March 2007:

Summer 2006	Updating of the Taking Play Forward Policy through consultation with children, young people, play and project providers, parent/carers, national organisations, local authority - transport, planning, housing, etc.
October 2006	First draft of the revised Taking Play Forward Policy produced highlighting local need
October 2006	3 local conferences held to discuss the revised policy and invite expressions of interest for the Big Lottery funding against the policy and lottery criteria
November 2006	Closing date for expressions of interest
December 2006	A shortlisting event held with a range of representatives to select projects for consideration
December 2006	Consultation with shortlisted projects to develop the portfolio.
December - February	Feedback from the consultation consolidated and a final revised version of the Play Policy produced
March 2007	Present portfolio to the lottery funding
April 2007	Bring final version of <i>Taking Play Forward</i> to EMAP
June 2007	Receive confirmation from Lottery of the success of application - Within 3 months of the closing date

Consultation

8. In 2002 the authority formally launched the *Taking Play Forward*, play policy, a collective vision for Play for the City actively consulting with many interested groups, organisations and individuals to ensure that the dreams and aspirations were realised for the play sector. The document covers policy objectives, legislative background, training, funding, resources and measures for play.

9. It is a requirement of the Big Lottery that the local authority has a play strategy in place and *Taking Play Forward* places us in a strong position. The recent establishment of a designated Play Team within the Early Years and Extended Schools Service well placed to consult and develop links with the Play sector, adds to this strength.
10. In developing this process, however, it was recognised that the policy was in need of updating to take account of a number of key legislative changes that have come in since the policy's launch.
11. The first draft revision *Taking Play Forward* makes clear links to other strategic documents including the Children and Young People's plan. It also covers how play impacts on other sectors, internal and external to the council, including the voluntary sector, sport, arts, libraries and parks. Through the Children's Trust involvement strategy, the revised policy draws from consultations that have taken place with children and young people to ensure that their needs are placed at the very heart of the document. The document is currently posted on the council website for comment. It will be brought back to EMAP in March.

Options

12. The Play Team received 24 applications from York's play sector totalling just over £2 million. Support from the newly formed Play England was sought to sift applications and identify potential projects. All projects were then presented to a panel which included officers from the Youth Service, Parks and Open Spaces, Children's Fund, Neighbourhood Pride Unit, Early Years and Extended Schools Partnership, CVS, and Finance, together with the Executive Member for Children's Services and 2 Play Officers. Supporting information was provided to the panel including feedback from children and young people and the revised policy to assist with the shortlisting process.
13. After much discussion the panel produced the following:
 - A list of 7 projects which meet the criteria and which, subject to further clarification / investigation of feasibility, will be pursued as potential projects to form the final portfolio (Details in Annex 1)
 - A number of reserve projects which demonstrated some fit with the criteria and have potential to be worked up in order to meet all the criteria. These were not scored by the panel as being priorities to put forward. These schemes are not therefore rejected at this stage and should a number of the 7 projects prove incapable of being developed to meet the requirements they could be re-examined. (Details in Annex 2)
 - A list of projects that fail to meet the Big Lottery criteria and play strategy (Details in Annex 3)
14. The panel was also consulted on the authority's proposed use of its available 10% top slice to extend an existing post already established in

the Play Team which focuses on supporting the play sector in working towards the Taking Play Forward policy and monitoring of play grants. This role, the Play Policy Development Worker is currently a 0.2 post. It is estimated that the capacity of this post would be increased by an additional 0.4, subject to a bench marking exercise by HR including confirmation of grade through the job evaluation process. The post will be presented to DMT in January for approval under the Director's delegated authority.

15. The 7 shortlisted schemes will be further investigated by officers to consider their feasibility. The proposed value of these schemes totals over £650k compared to our allocation after top slicing of £295k. This gap will be addressed by:
 - The likelihood that one or two projects will prove not to be feasible and will be withdrawn
 - Taking out some elements of the bids that do not meet the criteria
 - Challenging the projects to revisit their costings and to consider whether they can deliver the outcomes for less
16. From this process we will be left with a number of projects meeting the £295k allocation who are signed up to delivering their project on budget and in the timescale. These will go forward to the Big Lottery in the authority's portfolio for their final decision. The portfolio will profile the spend over the 3 year period.

The Future

17. Organisations which receive an award will enter into a service level agreement with the Council. This will enable the authority to monitor the delivery of the project against the Big Lottery criteria and the *Taking Play Forward* strategy.
18. This is 3 year project involving one-off awards. There is no obligation on the authority with regard to any ongoing support or further commitment at the end of the 3 year period. However, the Play Team will continue to work alongside those projects who will be running services as a result of the awards in order to assist and advise on future sustainability and to examine new funding sources.

Analysis

19. Accessing the Lottery Fund will enable the authority to respond in a positive way to needs highlighted through the redevelopment of the city Play Policy. It will also further enhance and build upon the work that the Play Team and partners have achieved for the sector.

Corporate Priorities

20. The Big Lottery funding would directly contribute to *Improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young*

people and families in the city. The updating of the Play policy will link with all corporate policies relating to play.

Implications

Financial

21. City of York has been allocated £328k to be spent over three years. £32.8k (10%) will be retained to finance the management of the grant and the approved projects. The balance of £295.2k will be distributed to the approved projects within the portfolio.
22. The proposed extension of the existing Play Policy Development Worker to 0.6FTE from 0.2FTE (over 3 years) would use £30.4k of the £32.8k top slice. The balance would be used to provide support to each of the approved projects.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
	£	£	£	£
Existing 0.2FTE	4,500	4,700	4,800	14,000
Proposed 0.6 FTE	14,300	14,800	15,300	44,400
Difference	9,800	10,100	10,500	30,400
Additional Support	1,000	900	500	2,400
Total Retained funding (10% of total grant)	10,800	11,000	11,000	32,800

23. There are seven projects to be taken forward. They currently have a total bid value of £672.8k. This exceeds the available allocation by £377.6k. As part of the clarification work, officers will be looking at bringing the bids within the allocation available.
24. The projects that are being held on the reserve list total £399,515.
25. The Lottery have stated that projects must stand alone through the funding provided by them. There is no requirement for match funding from the authority. As part of this process the Play Team must consider the sustainability of projects and put in place an exit strategy for when the funding stream finishes.
26. Awards can be for either capital or revenue purposes. There is no defined split in the authority's allocation.
27. Any assets purchased as part of this initiative and are then owned by the City of York Council will be maintained from within the existing maintenance budgets after the three years have finished.

Human Resources (HR)

28. The job description of the current Play Policy Development Worker will be bench marked in consultation with the department's HR Advisers (subject to job evaluation). A proposal for an adjusted post with increased hours will be made to the Director for approval under delegated powers. More specific HR advice can be provided on approval of this paper.

Equalities

29. A thorough, transparent and comprehensive process has been established to ensure that projects that meet the criteria have been selected for consideration for the portfolio.

Legal

30. The Big Lottery funding will be paid to the authority which is therefore responsible for ensuring that it is spent correctly and that the projects deliver on the agreed outcomes. The authority will enter into service level Agreements to ensure that the projects remain on track.

Crime and Disorder

31. There are no implications at this stage.

Information Technology (IT)

32. There are no implications at this stage.

Property

33. There are no implications at this stage.

Other

34. There are no implications at this stage.

Risk Management

35. We have publicised the availability of this money. There is therefore a reputational risk if the portfolio is not accepted by the Big Lottery.
36. There is a risk that funded projects run by external organisations will not deliver and that grant could have to be repaid by the Council to the Big Lottery. This risk will be mitigated by revenue funding be paid out in quarterly instalments and close monitoring being undertaken by the Development Worker through the service level agreement process to spot any problems at an early stage.
37. All schemes will be thoroughly risk assessed against corporate guidelines with regard to their health and safety considerations for users. All organisations will be required to have appropriate insurance cover.

Recommendations

38. The Executive Member is recommended to:

- Endorse the process followed to identify projects
- Give approval for officers to work up the identified projects for inclusion in the portfolio to be presented to the Big Lottery Fund
- Approve the list of reserve projects
- Approve the approach set out for use of the Council's top-sliced funding

Reason: To ensure that York delivers a successful portfolio to the Big Lottery to enable our play sector to benefit from the funding on offer.

Contact Details

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Report Approved **Date** 9.1.07

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1	Shortlisted Schemes
Annex 2	Reserve Schemes
Annex 3	Rejected Projects