

CYC Play Policy & Update on York's Playbuilder Programme

Summary

1. This report asks for Members views on City of York Council's next edition of York's play policy 'Taking Play Forward', before it is finalised, and provides an update on York's Playbuilder Programme following the recent change in Government for Members information.

Background

2. CYC Play Policy
In October 2009, Members agreed to carry out a scrutiny review of casual play opportunities based on the following remit:

Remit

To participate in the consultation on the revisions to CYC's Play Policy, and carry out a comparison of the play opportunities for 5-13yr olds, within a number of residential areas/wards (one city centre, one suburban and one village).

Objectives

- i. to understand the different types of provision suitable for each type of area
 - ii. to assess the potential space within the identified areas/wards that could be utilised for play
 - iii. to recommend a strategy for the provision of suitable play opportunities within the identified areas
 - iv. To be consulted on the revisions to the Council's play policy and if appropriate, the Local Development Framework (LDF)
3. At the time the review was ongoing, officers were working on revisions to the council's Play Policy. However following the general election and resulting change in Government, CYC officers took the decision to wait for information before finalising their work on the policy, to ensure it properly reflected any forthcoming changes to national policy to be introduced by the new government. This affected the scrutiny committee's review as it delayed their work on objective (iv) i.e. consultation on the revised policy.

4. The Committee took the view that the delay in releasing the draft did not affect their ability to proceed with making recommendations on their scrutiny review, but requested they still be consulted once the draft was released in the new municipal year.
5. The revisions to the play policy have now been completed, and the committee are asked to provide feedback on the revised Play Policy attached at Annex A, in order to fulfil the requirements of the final objective of the Casual Play Scrutiny Review.
6. Playbuilder
In November 2009, in support of the suggested scrutiny review of Casual Play Opportunities the committee received a presentation on the Government's Playbuilder Programme. As part of their commitment to the play agenda, the Government invested £235 million nationally to develop public, open access, to outdoor play spaces close to where children live that were safe, exciting, stimulating and accessible to all, as well as promoting active, imaginative and adventurous play targeting predominately the 8 - 13 year age range. This directly linked into York's play strategy and assisted in raising the standard of play provision across the city.
6. York was allocated £1,165,391 from the Government Playbuilder Project, consisting of £1,120,453 capital and £44,938 revenue. The plan for York, was to build 22 new and upgraded play sites across the city over a two year period, each to be developed in consultation, and with the participation of local children and young people, families, communities and representatives as appropriate.
7. However, following the general election and resulting change in Government, the Department of Education wrote to all Local Authorities announcing their need to identify savings from a number of capital budgets in 2010-11 where commitments are no longer affordable – see copy of letter at Annex B.
8. In the case of York, this led to the Department of Education reviewing the planned spend on Playbuilder scheduled for the second-year of the project. Council were told to expect notification of changes in the allocation of funding by the end of August 2010, but as yet this information has not been provided.

Consultation

9. As part of a public consultation exercise, the revised play policy was circulated to individual members of this committee to enable them to take part in the consultation process.
10. Your views as a whole Committee are now being sought (in line with the fourth objective of the scrutiny review of Casual Play Opportunities), to enable any final amendments to be made before it is presented to the Executive for their approval in late October / early November 2010.

Options

11. Members may choose to suggest further changes to the council revised Play Policy before it is finalised.

Corporate Strategy

12. The work of this overview & Scrutiny Committee is inline with the Council's corporate strategy to make York the most active city in the country by providing high quality cultural and sporting activities for all.

Implications

13. There are no known Financial, HR, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, IT, Property or Other implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Risk Management

14. There are no known risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

Recommendations

15. Members are asked to:
 - agree any further suggested changes to the revised Play Policy, if required
 - note the content of the letter from the Department of Education in relation to the Playbuilder Programme

Reason: to progress the work of this Overview & Scrutiny Committee in line with its agreed workplan.

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Final Report Approved**Date**

26 August 2010

Wards Affected:**All****Background Papers:** N/A

Annexes:

Annex A – Revised Play Policy

(Due to its size, this document will be published online only and only Members of the Committee will receive a hard copy. If anybody else requires a hard copy, please contact the Democracy Officer)

Annex B – Letter from Department of Education