

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

9 November 2010

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Culture)

Playbuilder Project – next steps

Summary

1. Under the previous Government's Playbuilder Initiative, City of York Council was allocated £1,120,345 for the development of 22 play areas across the city within a two-year period. The grant stipulated that eleven play areas must be built or refurbished each year with the whole scheme completed by 31 March 2011.
2. Following the General Election in May 2010 the revenue grant was cancelled and the ring fencing of the capital grant was lifted. This gave the Council the ability to use the funds as it sees fit to meet the needs of the locality. On 15 July the Department for Education wrote to the authority suspending any further expenditure on the project pending a review of the available funding. On 20 October notice was received from the Secretary of State for Education, which lifted the suspension and confirmed a revised allocation of £371,012.50. Further clarification was received from the Department for Education on 26 October setting a deadline for the use of the grant.
3. This report is being brought as an urgent item as a condition of the revised allocation is that it has to be used by 31 March 2011. A decision is therefore required in order to deliver the chosen projects or uses within this time frame.
4. The Executive Member is asked to agree what the revised allocation is to be spent on.

Background

5. A work plan to deliver the Playbuilder initiative was agreed at the Executive Member Decision Meeting 9 June 2009; Annex 1 contains details of the planned and provisional locations for investment. The following schemes were completed in 2009/10:

	Ward	Location	Managed by	New / Existing
1	Wheldrake	Elvington, sports field	Elvington Parish Council	New
2	Wheldrake	Naburn, Vicarage Lane	Naburn Parish Council	New
3	Bishopthorpe	Keble Park	Bishopthorpe Parish Council	New
4	Skelton, Rawcliffe and Clifton Without	Brecksfield, Skelton	Skelton Parish Council	Existing
5	Huntington and New Earswick	Orchard Park, Huntington	Huntington Parish Council	Existing
6	Holgate	Balfour Street (Back Park)	City of York Council	New
7	Acomb	Viking Road	City of York Council	Existing
8	Clifton	Ashton Avenue	City of York Council	Existing
9	Westfield	Chesney's Field, off Foxwood Lane	City of York Council	Existing
10	Heworth	Barfield Road	City of York Council	Existing
11	Holgate	Sowerby Road	City of York Council	Existing

6. In order to meet the annual requirement for 11 sites per year, 2 schemes were brought forward into 2009/10 Barfield Road and Sowerby Road and 2 schemes slipped into 2011/12 Copmanthorpe and Haxby.
7. Prior to the notice to suspend Playbuilder work was progressing to deliver a further 11 schemes in 2010/11. The two schemes being delivered by Copmanthorpe Parish Council and Haxby Town Council were subject to a contact agreement to ensure that the funds were used for the correct purposes.
8. Of the remaining 9 schemes a number had been through extensive public and member consultation, some have tender documents ready to be issued, others were about to proceed to public consultation, and some had been dropped and alternative locations were being sought. With the notice to suspend the scheme all further work stopped in July and the part-time project officer deployed to other duties.

Latest situation

9. On 20 October notice was received from the Secretary of State for Education, which lifted the suspension and confirmed a revised allocation of £371,012.50. On 26 October a further letter was received from the Department for Education, an extract of which states,

“In working through this savings exercise, we have been able to ensure that all local authorities will receive almost two-thirds of their original play capital allocation and that no local authority will have to break any of the contractual commitments which they notified us of via the financial information you all provided in July, and re-confirmed later in August.

We have also been able to provide local authorities who had not yet entered into contractual commitments with an amount of capital funding in order that they can support play projects valued locally.

*As you will recall from previous notifications, the ring-fence attached to this grant has been removed in order to provide you with more flexibility to manage your own local budgets. From the point of view of the play capital programme the removal of the ring-fence means that we no longer set expectations about how many play areas each authority must deliver with their revised 2010-11 capital allocations, nor will we require any monitoring or reporting information from you. **However, it is important for you to note that this funding has to be used for capital purposes by 31 March 2011.***

A new Grant Determination Letter for these revised allocations will follow shortly, which will include details of when authorities will receive funding. “

Options

10. To comply with the contractual agreement between the City Council and Copmanthorpe Parish Council and Haxby Town Council it is recommended that they each receive £47k.
11. In order to deliver the remainder of the scheme the Playbuilder Project Officer salary costs of £15k need to continue to be funded from the allocation.
12. This leaves a further £262k available and the following options are available.

Option A

13. Divide the allocation equally between 5 schemes; that are in the original wards, have an agreed location or have a location which can be agreed very quickly each would receive approximately £52.4k each, compared to the originally agreed allocation in June 2009 of £53.9k. The following schemes are proposed:
 - Westfield – Grange Lane
 - Hull Road – Hull Road Park (replaces Badger Hill)
 - Heworth – Bell Farm Adventure Playground

- Heworth Without – new location (replaces Monk Stray)
- Strensall – Parish location

14. The above sites have been selected as they are situated in a ward which has not has any previous investment (Hull Road, Heworth Without and Strensall), serve a different a community within a ward (Westfield – Grange Lane) or are unique community managed projects (Bell Farm). Under this option the original sites at Guildhall, Holgate – Garnet Terrace, Derwent and Woodthorpe are all excluded. The Guildhall site is excluded as no public consultation has taken place about a suitable site and there are doubts about meeting the timetable given that planning permission would almost certainly be required. Holgate - Garnet Terrace is excluded, as there has been investment into the nearby Back Park site. Investment in the Derwent Ward has been superseded by the lottery supported investment at Intake Lane play area in Dunnington and Woodthorpe is excluded as no suitable area has been identified.

Option B

15. Divide the allocation equally between 6 schemes that are in the original wards, have an agreed location or have a location which can be agreed very quickly, but at a lower funding level that originally agreed. The allocation per site would drop to approximately £43.6k, against the previously agreed allocation of. £53.9k. The following schemes are proposed:

- Westfield – Grange Lane
- Hull Road – Hull Road Park (replaces Badger Hill)
- Heworth – Bell Farm Adventure Playground
- Heworth Without – new location (replaces Monk Stray)
- Strensall – Parish location
- Holgate – Garnett Terrace or Guildhall

16. Under this option one from either Guildhall or Holgate (Garnet Terrace) is added to option a). This enables more of areas of the city to be covered by 8 - 13 year old provision and / or raises the quality an existing site.

Option C

17. Divide the allocation 50/50 between the City Council and Parish Councils for use smaller scale improvement at play areas, which have not previously received any Playbuilder money. Under this option half of the money would be spent by the City improving older age group provision at Council sites and a similar offer would be made to Parish Councils.

Option D

18. To transfer all of the allocation to other corporate priorities. Under this option no money would be spent on improving play opportunities.

Analysis

Option	Benefit	Risk
a.	<p>⇒ there will be improvement in play provision for 8 - 13 year olds</p> <p>⇒ communities involved in the consultation will see investment in their local area</p>	<p>⇒ the communities not allocated a portion of the revised allocation may be dissatisfied with the decision</p> <p>⇒ communities in certain areas of the city e.g. Guildhall will remain outside of the recommended catchments of play provision set out in the Local Development Framework</p>
b.	<p>⇒ there will be improvement in play provision for 8 - 13 year olds</p> <p>⇒ communities involved in the consultation will see investment in their local area</p>	<p>⇒ communities involved in the consultation programmes may be dissatisfied with this decision</p> <p>⇒ communities in certain areas of the city e.g. Guildhall may remain outside of the recommended catchments of play provision set out in the Local Development Framework</p>
c.	<p>⇒ the general level of provision in play areas across the city would improve</p>	<p>⇒ communities involved in the consultation programmes may be dissatisfied with this decision</p>
d.	<p>⇒ there will be an increase in funds available to corporate finance</p>	<p>⇒ the number of play opportunities for children in the city will not improve beyond the current provision</p> <p>⇒ communities involved in the consultation programmes may be dissatisfied with this decision</p>

19. Option a) or b) is the preferred option.

Corporate Objectives

20. The project 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

21. **Financial:** The Playbuilder grant was allocated as follows:

	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Capital	526,725	593,728	1,120,345
Revenue	26,963	17,975	44,938

The revised situation is:

	2009-10	2010-11	Total
Capital	526,725	371,012	897,737
Revenue	26,963	0	26,963

22. The Government has reclaimed the £18k revenue funding allocation for 2010/11. This was being used to fund the 0.5fte Playbuilder Project Manager post (£15k including on-costs for 2010/11). These costs will now be met from the revised capital allocation.
23. The original capital allocation for 2010/11 has been reduced to £371k, and is no longer ring fenced. The existing contractual commitments together with the project manager post will cost £109k in total, leaving £262k of funding to be allocated.
24. **Human Resources:** The Playbuilder Project Officer is on a fixed term contract until 31st March 2011.
25. **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. An evaluation of 2009/10 schemes from the perspective of inclusion was carried out by KIDS to further improve schemes in 2010/11.
26. **Legal:** Legal advice / action may be required e.g. updates or new documentation for use of privately owned sites.

- 27. **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
- 28. **Information Technology:** No implications.
- 30. **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.
- 31. 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.
- 32. **Risk Management:** The main risk to the scheme is not delivering all of the remaining 10 play areas within the aspirations of the initial scheme.

Recommendations

- 33. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - Agree to allocate Copmanthorpe Parish Council and Haxby Town Council £47k each to pay for a Playbuilder scheme with their area
 - Agree to fund the Playbuilder project officer post from capital reallocation
 - Agree either option a) or b) from Paragraphs 13 to 16 as the proposed approach to deliver the remainder of the Playbuilder Initiative.

Reason: To improve children’s and young peoples play opportunities.

Contact Details

Authors:

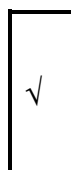
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**Report
 Approved**



Date 1 November 2010

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Katherine Finnie
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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Meeting of the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion - 9 June 2009 : Playbuilder Project

Project file held by Beth Cooper, Project Officer

June 2009 work plan

Proposed Sites for 2009/10

	Ward (or part of)	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 (or part of)	Location	Managed by	New / Existing
12	Heworth / Heworth Without	Monk / Heworth Stray	City of York Council	New
13	Holgate	Garnett Terrace	City of York Council	Existing
14	Hull Road	Badger Hill	City of York Council	Existing
15	Bell Farm	Byland Avenue area	City of York Council	Existing / new
16	Heworth	Barfield Road	City of York Council	Existing
17	Strensall	Exact location to be confirmed	Unknown	New
18	Guildhall	Exact location to be confirmed	City of York Council	New
19	Derwent	Exact location to be confirmed	Probably Parish Council	New
20	Holgate	Sowerby Road	City of York Council	Existing
21	Westfield	Chapelfields area	City of York Council	New
22	Woodthorpe	Exact location to be confirmed	City of York Council	New