

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

CABINET

Agenda Item No.

DATE: 9 JULY 2007

REPORT OF: CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

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LEAD OFFICER: HEAD OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF PLAY POLICY, PLAY STRATEGY AND APPLICATION TO BIG LOTTERY PLAY PROGRAMME

WARDS: ALL

KEY DECISION?: YES

IF YES, IN FORWARD PLAN?: YES

For general release

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The report recommends Cabinet approval of the attached Borough-wide Play Strategy and Play Policy documents. Cabinet is also requested to delegate authority to the Director of Environment in consultation with Councillor Elengorn and Councillor McLeod, (Play Champion), to approve the detailed submission to the BIG Lottery Children's Play Programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.2 The Head of Parks and Open Spaces has been leading the development of a comprehensive Borough-wide Play Strategy for children from 0 to 19 years. To date a Play Partnership has been set up and Councillor Macleod nominated as 'Play Champion'. Consultation has taken place with children, carers and key stakeholders and a Play Policy developed. The Play Policy and Play Strategy are attached at **Appendices 1 and 2** respectively for approval.

1.3 The Partnership is currently working on an application to the BIG Lottery Children's Play Programme to release the Borough's pre allocated sum of £295,477. Release of this funding over three years depends on BIG's approval of the Partnership's application which is based on a portfolio of projects in support of the Play Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Play Policy, attached at Appendix 1, be approved.**
- 2.2 That the Play Strategy, attached at Appendix 2, be approved.**
- 2.3 That authority be delegated to the Director of Environment, in consultation with Councillor Elengorn and Councillor McLeod as Play Champion, to approve the detailed submission of a bid to BIG Lottery Children's Play Programme to release the pre-allocated Richmond sum of £295,477,25.**
- 2.4 That Councillor McLeod be appointed formally as Play Champion.**

3. DETAIL

3.1 The Council's Head of Parks and Open Spaces has co-ordinated the development of the Play Strategy. To date the following has taken place:

- Formation of a Play Partnership made up of Council members and officers from Children's Services, including Education, Art, Sports, Youth Services, Police and Community Safety representatives, community representatives via the Council for Voluntary Services, voluntary sector organisations including play providers and special advisors. 1st met in July 2006.
- Audit of current provision, including mapping and identification of gaps in provision for 0 to 19 year olds.
- Assessment of issues and priorities for improvement.
- Appointment of a Play Champion – Councillor McLeod, to provide leadership and unite support for play in the Borough.
- Consultation, through various means including questionnaires, discussion groups, and a series of workshops led by an external facilitator Bernard Spiegel from Playlink Ltd
- Development of a Borough-wide Play Policy – See Appendix 1
- Development of a Borough-Wide Play Strategy – See Appendix 2

3.2 Following consultation with the Play Partnership and with key stakeholders, particularly the children themselves, the following priorities emerged:

- Improving provision of/access to free play (relatively open access with 'light' supervision) for 8 to 15 year olds.
- Tackling barriers which prevent access to free play opportunities caused by fear of crime/disability/low disposable income.

These priorities are addressed through the attached Play Strategy. Priority projects which are eligible will be taken forward as part of the application for BIG Lottery Children's Play funding. Details of the funding application are currently being developed in consultation with the Play Partnership and will be finalised and approved by the Director for Environment in consultation with Councillor Elengorn and Councillor McLeod, the Play Champion.

The Play Strategy and Policy will be published, as a final edited version with suitable illustrations on the Council's website and made available to the Play Partnership and other interested parties. Final edits will be approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place in a number of ways in order to develop the Play Policy and Strategy, including questionnaires, focus groups and meetings. The methods and results of the consultations are set out in detail and the results summarised in the Play Strategy.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To date, expenditure on the development of the Play Strategy has been minimal (£1200 for consultancy support plus officer time and refreshments) which has been met from within existing budgets.

The Council, if successful in its application to BIG Lottery Play Programme should be allocated £295,477.25. This will be released over 3 years on presentation of monitoring reports. The sum includes an allocation of up to 10% for managing the portfolio of projects which will help to deliver the Outputs set out in the Play Strategy. The allocation can only be used for approved portfolio projects but can be either revenue or capital based.

Other funds may be allocated to take forward the priorities within the Play Strategy including: Parks Improvement Programme funding set aside for young people; youth opportunities and youth capital funding; young people funding and other funding from external sources.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Play Strategy once delivered will support a number of priority policy areas.
- The Every Child Matters outcomes framework.
 - Children and Young People's plan. Play is a key element of child development and has social, environmental and educational benefits.
 - Health – encouraging active play leads to the development of an active, healthier life habit.
 - Tackling inequalities – particularly focusing on improving provision for disabled children, those on low incomes and children living in areas of relative deprivation.
 - Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour by encouraging activities and positive behaviour.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

There is a small risk that the Council's application for Play Programme funding will be rejected or will require additional work. If the application is not submitted by 10th September, the allocation will not be released to the Council/Partnership.

Choice of the projects within the portfolio and management of the portfolio will need to be carefully considered to ensure that the projects are achievable and monitoring information can be readily collected.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT/CONSIDERATIONS

Part of the focus of the Play Strategy will be on addressing target groups identified in the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy:

- Disabled children
- Those with low disposable income

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding from the BIG Play Programme will be based on an application, which once agreed will form part of a contract to deliver the agreed outputs in return for the funding.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Notes of Play Partnership meetings.

Mayor of London 'Guide to Preparing Play Strategies' April 2005

Children's Play Council March 2006 'Planning for Play – Guidance on the development and implementation of a local play strategy'

11. CONTACTS

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