

Agenda Item No: **Report No:**
Report Title: **Lewes District Play Strategy**
Report To: **Cabinet** **Date:** **23 July 2007**
Lead Councillor: **Councillor David Gray**
Ward(s) Affected: **All**
Report By: **Director of Finance and Community Services**
Contact Officer(s): **Andy Frost, Parks Manager**

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the Children's Play Programme and to approve and adopt the Lewes District Play Strategy.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 1 To approve and adopt the Lewes District Play Strategy.
 - 2 To note the progress made in developing a bid for funding through the Big Lottery Children's Play Programme.
 - 3 To approve the submission of a bid to the Big Lottery Fund in September 2007, based on projects to be selected by the Lewes Play Partnership.
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Reasons for Recommendations

- 1 The Big Lottery Fund has allocated funding to create "Children's Play Opportunities" across the Lewes District. To secure this funding, a district-wide play strategy is required, to be submitted with the funding application. Cabinet approved the process for preparing the play strategy at its meeting on 13 September 2006.
- 2 **Information**
 - 2.1 In 2004, the Government published a report about children's play entitled "Getting Serious About Play – a Review of Children's Play in England".
 - 2.2 This report recommended that National Lottery funding be used to "Improve Children's Play Opportunities" in England. This led to the Children's Play Initiative being developed. The Children's Play Council received funding to set up Play England – a 5-year project to help local agencies in planning for play across their area through the setting up of a national support and development infrastructure across the regions.

- 2.3 The Big Lottery has allocated funding to all single tier and District Councils across England. The Lewes District area has been allocated £200,000.
- 2.4 In order to develop the Lewes District Play Strategy, wide-ranging consultation has taken place. Key stakeholders have attended seminars on children's play, organised by the Council, and many have assisted in further consultation within their specific areas.
- 2.5 Examples of the key stakeholders consulted include:
- All Parish and Town Councils
 - Sure Start
 - Nippers
 - ESCC Youth Development
 - LDC Tenant Groups
 - Schools and Colleges
 - Playgroups
 - Play Councils
 - NCDA
 - Action in Rural Sussex
 - YMCA
 - East Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust
- 2.6 A detailed survey was also sent out in the latest edition of the District Link, and to all schools in the district.
- 2.7 The first draft of the Play Strategy has been widely distributed for consultation, and has been advertised in local newspapers and the Council's website.
- 2.8 A "Play Partnership" has been set up as a result of the initial consultation. There are 7 representatives on the group from local playgroups, Town & Parish Councils, Action in Rural Sussex, an officer and the Lead Councillor for Community Services. The partnership has taken the lead in developing the Strategy and will also help formulate the eventual bid.
- 2.9 'Expression of Interest' forms were sent out to a wide range of organisations following widespread publicity. The closing date for the receipt of the forms was the 17th May 2007. As of that date 15 forms had been returned. The partnership is now in the process of selecting a number of projects to take forward for inclusion in the final Portfolio which will be submitted to the Big Lottery in September this year.

- 2.10 The Play Partnership is taking the lead in selecting those projects that meet the criteria for the funding, and deciding which projects should go through to the final bidding process.
- 2.11 The criteria laid down by the Big Lottery states that all projects must be free for children to use, free for children to come and go as they wish, and free for children to decide what they do whilst at the project. Projects must not be exclusive to any particular group of children.

Possible projects may include:

- Play areas
- Skate parks
- Play buses
- Adventure Play Grounds
- Holiday and After School Play activities
- Play workers, etc.

- 2.12 The Play Strategy forms a vital part of this bidding process. It includes a number of aims and an Action Plan for the district.

3 Financial Appraisal

- 3.1 A budget of £9,000 was allocated by Cabinet to procure the preparation of the Play Strategy and undertake consultation and meetings with interested organisations.
- 3.2 The Play Partnership will select those projects that will benefit from the £200,000 in accordance with criteria provided by the Big Lottery Fund.
- 3.3 Particular consideration will be given to ensuring projects selected are sustainable in the long term with clearly identified sources of ongoing financial support.

4 Environmental Implications

- 4.1 I have completed the Environmental Implications Questionnaire and there are no significant effects as a result of these recommendations.

5 Risk Management Implications

- 5.1 I have completed a risk assessment in accordance with the Council's Risk Assessment methodology. Without the adoption of a Play Strategy for the Lewes District, the Council will not be able to secure the allocated funding from the Big Lottery Children's Play Initiative fund.

6 Background Papers

Planning for Play document – The Big Lottery Fund.

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Lewes District Play Strategy.