

WARDS AFFECTED:
ALL

ITEM No

COMMITTEE

DATE 15TH NOVEMBER 2006

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, - SPORT LEISURE AND PARKS
LEISURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT.**

**NATIONAL LOTTERY – BIG LOTTERY FUND. CHILDRENS PLAY PROGRAMME.
PLAY STRATEGY UPDATE.**

1 SUMMARY

Nottingham City Council has been awarded £894,135 for play over a maximum of 3 years as a result of the National Lottery's Children's Play Programme. The lead Department delivering on this is Leisure and Community Services – Parks and Open Spaces Team.

In order to release this funding, the City Council needs to produce a Play Strategy.

The Play Strategy is currently being written by staff within Leisure Services, Integrated Children's Service and representatives from the Voluntary / Community sectors, under the umbrella of PAN (Play Action Network) and NPF (Nottingham Play Forum).

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED that –

- a) The Area Committee note the requirements and process as outlined, in order to develop a play strategy for the City.
- b) The Area Committee agree to enable local groups to participate with consultation, to help the development of the Play Strategy Action Plan.

3 BACKGROUND

The National Lottery Children's Play Programme of funding came about following recommendations made by the Frank Dobson MP Report 'Getting Serious About Play'. £155 million has been allocated to children's play over the course of the next 3 years. £15 million has been awarded to the Children's Play Council to create and develop infrastructure and support for local agencies.

£16 million has been allocated to a 'Playful Ideas' programme, whereby individual projects that are innovative and display a novel approach to addressing need can receive funding of between £10,000 and £250,000.

The remaining £124 million have been awarded to Local Authorities, subject to Authorities developing 'Play Strategies' for their areas.

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4 PROPOSALS

As part of the development of the Play Strategy consultation has been carried out with groups and individuals across the City and is still ongoing via the work being undertaken by play workers.

The steering group, working on developing the Play Strategy, are keen to hear the views of local communities and individuals about the state of play within their areas, and also to get groups / individuals thinking about projects that could be put forward for inclusion.

For example:

Where do local children play and why?

Is there enough provision for teenagers / over 12's?

Are people happy about the level of organised play provision provided either by the Council, voluntary or private sector.

Are open spaces (including play areas) suitable for the local communities needs and are they well looked after.

What would people like to see changed to improve the provision for play in their area (i.e better play areas, more play workers, after school clubs etc)

This information will help both with the consultation phase of the strategy, and assist in the production of the action plan for the Strategy, by helping to highlighting areas of 'need' within the City.

Once this information has been collated we will then be working with local communities to help produce schemes that the Lottery money will fund directly to improve play within the City. The Strategy will also be looking at longer term actions to make the most of other funding opportunities that present themselves.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

7 OBSERVATIONS OF OTHER OFFICERS

Mark Andrews.

Head of Play, Youth and engagement Services.

Children's Services.

The Lottery money and the initiatives it brings is only one aspect of a partnership strategy that will address the issues surrounding the development of good quality play opportunities.

If this strategy is to be really effective it must bring together all the agencies and bodies whose decisions have an impact on the quality and quantity of Children's play and must form a part of other key strategies.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Any developments that take place as a result of the Play Strategy will conform fully to Nottingham City Council's Equal Opportunity Policy, and any consultations carried out will be as representative as possible.

9 CONSULTATIONS

The Play Strategy is being developed in partnership with PAN (Play Action Nottingham) which is an umbrella group that represents the voluntary sector providing play opportunities within the City. The Strategy is being developed as a response to the requirement of the National Lottery, but also to help bring together previous policies on play.

Various consultation works have already been undertaken, relating to both the process involved in drawing up the strategy and more importantly the outcomes.

This report forms part of the ongoing consultation works that are being carried out. It forms the basis of informing the public about the process that will be undertaken and giving them an option to provide ideas and feedback that can be incorporated into an Action Plan.

10 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Play Strategy will contribute to a number of the City Council's key Priorities.

Choose Nottingham – Creating a network of quality open spaces, and other provisions for play should help strengthen the 'Nottingham Offer'.

Respect For Nottingham - Developing local facilities for local people, improved safety and maintenance on sites and improving community cohesion (working with locals to develop sites)

Transforming Neighbourhoods – Improving the physical fabric of open spaces and other play facilities, to ensure access to high quality play facilities.

Support for Nottingham People – Improving facilities for young people and helping children / families be more active. Also enables decisions to be taken at local areas.

Serving Nottingham – Providing customer focus by delivering the aspirations of the local community – to deliver play facilities the City can be proud of.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS

The Play Strategy, though not directly relating to crime, should have an impact in helping to reduce criminal activities in certain areas. For example the better usage of parks and open spaces, for example, could reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour. Better quality play facilities may also help create diversionary opportunities for children and teenagers away from crime.

12 VALUE FOR MONEY

Any projects that are linked to the Play Strategy will be subject to the requirements not only of the City Council to meet financial obligations, but also of the National Lottery and / or other external funding bodies.

13 List of background papers other than published works or those disclosing confidential or exempt information

None.

14 Published documents referred to in compiling this report

None

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