

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
THURSDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2007

Play Strategy – Big Lottery Fund

COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	Greater Learning and Participation
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enhancing Cultural Life
CORPORATE PLAN KEY PRIORITY:	Leisure and Recreation
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nathan Desmond
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Head of Cultural, Leisure & Commercial Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kay Higman – 01562 732902
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Worcestershire County Play Strategy Appendix 2 – Executive Summary <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (See front cover for contact details.)</i>
OPEN	

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To recommend that the Council adopts the Worcestershire Play Strategy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE -

2.1 To endorse the Worcestershire Play Strategy.

2.2 To give delegated authority to the Head of Cultural, Leisure & Commercial Services to produce action plans for the District and submit an application to Big Lottery Fund for £207,799 in March 2007.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The 2004 report by Frank Dobson *Getting Serious About Play*, concluded that a dedicated children's play programme was crucial for delivering better opportunities.

3.2 As a result The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has made a £155 million commitment to supporting Children's play in England. The initiatives incorporate three key elements – the Playful Ideas programme, the Children's Play programme and the Play England project. The overall aim of the initiative is to create, improve and develop children and young people's free local play spaces and opportunities throughout England.

3.3 The three elements of the initiative are as follows:-

- i) **Children's Play (£124m):** In November 2005, BIG wrote to all local authorities, informing them of the amount of money that would be made available to their area. It is now the responsibility of each local authority (LA) to devise a play strategy which identifies areas of greatest need. This will need to include consultation with local stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector.
- ii) **Playful Ideas (£16m):** This will fund innovative projects, showing creative and novel approaches to addressing need. Under this programme, registered charities, voluntary or community groups, charitable or not-for-profit companies, social enterprises and town and parish councils can apply. Grants of between £10k and £250k will be available to cover direct revenue and capital costs. Outline proposals must reach BIG before December 2007. All application proposals should show links to the Play Strategy.
- iii) **Play England (£15m):** The Children's Play Council (CPC), part of the National Children's Bureau, has been awarded a £15m grant over five years to deliver the project which aims to help local agencies in planning for play by setting up a national support and development infrastructure across the regions. CPC will be working with LA's to develop their local play strategies enabling them to apply to spend their allocation from the Children's Play programme.

3.4 Wyre Forest District Council has been allocated £207,799 from the Children's Play Programme. The allocation was based on the number of children in the district and weighted by the level of poverty.

3.5 For Wyre Forest a Big Lottery Fund group has been established comprising the District Council, The Community Housing Group, Play England, Early Years and the Youth Service to work through the processes involved for the strategy/funding.

3.6 This group is working with the Youth Activities Task and Finish Group of the Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel chaired by Cllr R Wheway.

3.7 A Cabinet report in October 2006 endorsed development of a County strategy and the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services or their authorised representative was nominated as 'Play Champion' for Wyre Forest.

4.0 COUNTYWIDE PLAY STRATEGY

4.1 Worcestershire has been allocated upwards of £1.2 million from the Children's Play programme, across its District Councils. However, local play strategies are required by the BIG Lottery to support applications to its programme.

4.2 A multi-agency group of District Councils and the County Council (Play Partnership) has developed a Countywide Play Strategy.

4.3 This strategy is appended to this report (Appendix 1 & 2).

- 4.4 The Children & Young People Strategic Board endorsed the development of a Countywide Play Strategy and has approved the attached strategy.
- 4.5 Wyre Forest District will have its own Action Plans aligned to the strategic document which will be submitted to the Big Lottery Fund.
- 4.6 Locally the Big Lottery Fund Wyre Forest Group organised a consultation evening with young people and play providers in December.
- 4.7 The themes for the Action Plans have come from the consultation already carried out and will be based on the 'Play Ranger' and Adventure Play concept. These are play development workers who will work in areas of need including rural locations.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The external funding of approximately £207,000 will be revenue funding allocated to the Council from the Big Lottery Fund.
- 5.2 There will be no Council financial contribution to secure this funding and there are no ongoing financial implications for the Council.
- 5.3 No charges will be made for any services provided as part of the Big Lottery Fund application and therefore there will be no VAT implications.

6.0 LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal or policy implications.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There would be potential for loss of approximately £207,000 of external funding if the Council did not proceed as proposed.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 There are a number of clear advantages in a countywide approach, not least that the Children Act 2005 duty of children's services to co-operate towards outcomes that include informal play can be best discharged by strategic planning for these activities.
- 8.2 This approach would provide a way of ensuring that clear policies on informal play are embedded within the Community Plan and so form a critical part of Local Area Agreements.

CONSULTEES

Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Head of Financial Services
Head of Planning, Health & Environment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet report – 26th October 2006

Cabinet 22/02/07