

**REPORT TO THE AREA COMMITTEE**

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| <b>Date of Meeting</b>       | 4 <sup>th</sup> June 2007   |
| <b>Title of Report</b>       | <b>A Play Strategy for North Wiltshire</b>  |
| Link to Corporate Priorities | To promote vibrant, safe and inclusive communities – healthy lifestyles<br>To put our customers at the heart of everything we do – consultation and communication (listen and talk with young people) |
| Public Report                | Yes   |

**Summary of Report**

This report asks Members to note that a draft Play Strategy developed in partnership with Wiltshire County Council has been agreed by Executive as a working document for district wide consultation. This Strategy may unlock £237,693 of Big Lottery funding for improving play opportunities in North Wiltshire. The draft Strategy is now available for consultation. Comments on the Draft Strategy can be proposed by the Area Committee.

**Officer Recommendations**

**It is recommended that -**

**To note that the draft Play Strategy 2007–2012 is now available as a working document for consultation and that adoption of the Play Strategy and agreement of the project portfolio for the lottery bid has been delegated to Team Leader in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

| Financial Implications | Legal Implications | Community & Environmental Implications | Human Resources Implications | Equality & Diversity Implications |
|------------------------|--------------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| YES                    | NONE               | YES                                    | YES                          | YES                               |

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2006 the Big Lottery and Play England announced that funding was to be made available for local authorities to improve the provision for play in their areas. However, to be eligible for this grant it was necessary to prepare a Play Strategy which would identify how the funding would be used.

## **2. Options and Options Appraisal**

- 2.1 Option 1: To note that the draft Play Strategy 2007–2012 is now available as a working document for wider consultation and that adoption of the Play Strategy and agreement of the project portfolio for the lottery bid has been delegated to Team Leader(s) in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder.

This strategy fits with corporate and wider priorities and objectives and will enable the improvement of play provision within the District. Option 1, therefore, is the preferred option.

- 2.2 Option 2: The Area Committee seeks further amendment to the strategy following the end of the consultation period or referral and return to Executive. Extra work will be involved in making alterations to the project portfolio and may result in missing the deadline for the application to the Big Lottery.

## **3. The Play Strategy 2007- 2012**

- 3.1 At its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2006 the Executive resolved (E.227) to approve the draft Play Strategy as a working document for wide consultation and that adoption of the Play Strategy and agreement of the project portfolio for the lottery bid be delegated to the Asset Design and Regeneration Team Leader in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder.

- 3.2 The concept of a Play Strategy is in response to the availability of £124 million to improve play provision in local authority areas. This fund has become available through the BIG Lottery's Children's Play Initiative and its response to the Government's 2004 play review 'Getting Serious About Play'. Each local authority area has been allocated funds based on the child population and the levels of deprivation. To access this money a Play Strategy is required to set out current and future play provision in the district and an Action Plan to include projects identified for the lottery bid to be put forward in September 2007.

- 3.3 Play provision will be within the remit of the soon to be launched Wiltshire Play Partnership. All four District Councils have been working with the County Council to produce an overarching Strategy and each District has produced a strategy tailored to its own area. This enables a variety of play opportunities to be included beyond traditional fixed play equipment. Indeed, the Strategy takes a much more holistic approach by trying to encourage play in the widest possible sense. Each Strategy is backed up with an Action Plan including projects identified for the Lottery portfolio. Applications to the BIG Lottery will be made separately by each District Council.

- 3.4 A Play Champion has been nominated by each Council.

## **4. Key Components of the Strategy**

4.1 Some of the main components of the Play Strategy are as follows.

### Key Policy Statements

As well as meeting the Council's corporate goal around listening to young people, the Strategy links to the Government's agenda – Every Child Counts, and the Children's Act 2004. These policies have been distilled into the themes of 'Being Healthy', 'Staying Safe', 'Enjoying and Achieving', 'Making a Positive Contribution', and 'Economic Well-being'.

### The Case for Play

This section looks at the benefits of play not just for children but also parents and carers and the community as a whole. It also looks at the barriers to play as well as the changing attitude towards risk associated with play.

### Play Provision

An analysis of the current provision is detailed, along with providers and enabling mechanisms such as the Council's own Community Award grant scheme. Examples of recent initiatives supported from this grant are detailed.

### Analysis

An analysis of the current provision and the results of various public consultations are made which allows the setting of the approach to be taken to improve provision. From this an Action Plan has been drawn up which is aligned to the themes set out under the Key Policy Statements above.

### Consultation

The draft Play Strategy is now available for consultation. This will finish at the end of July in line with consultation guidelines set out in the Wiltshire Compact. The Play Strategy can be downloaded from the District Council's website at [www.northwiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.northwiltshire.gov.uk). Copies are also available from Community and Environment, District Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham.

### Town and Parish Councils

A separate consultation exercise has taken place for Town and Parish Councils. Each was invited to send representatives to a meeting at the District Council offices prior to the start of the district-wide consultation.

### Application to the BIG Lottery

The Strategy will support the application to the BIG Lottery for funding for agreed projects identified in the Action Plan. These projects were identified as part of a mapping and gapping exercise through the Open Space Study and from already available consultation from the Community Strategy and our five Community Area Plans. The District Council will be informed of the outcome of its application within three months of the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007 deadline. If the bid is successful, work must begin on one of projects within 6 months.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- a. If successful the application, supported by the Play Strategy, will release £237,693 from the Big Lottery. (An element of 10% of this can be allocated towards management costs). The BIG Lottery does not expect local authorities to raise partnership funding. However, where further money is required for capital

projects any additional funding required will be identified before the application is submitted.

- b. Over the life of the Strategy, there may be additional resources required to realise its aims. These will be addressed by obtaining external funding, re-prioritising existing resources, or submitting a bid as part of the annual budget process.

## 6. Community and Environment Implications

- 6.1 The Strategy essentially acts as a Workplan which, if followed, will offer significant support for community projects and a subsequent increase in recreation and play opportunities for children and young people across the district. An initial consultation on the draft has been sent for comment and discussed with Town and Parish Councils took place on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

## 7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and no significant issues have been identified. Indeed, the Strategy incorporates inclusive measures that would improve access to play provision for all children and young people in the district.

## 8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 There is no guarantee of success with the Big Lottery but more officer time will be required to see the BIG Lottery application through to the submission stage.

## 9. Risk Analysis

- 9.1 None of the proposed projects would be initiated before confirmation of grant is secured. If successful, then there will be resource implications for the successful delivery of projects.

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| <b>Appendices:</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>None</b></li> </ul>                   |
| <b>Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Big Lottery Guidelines</b></li> </ul> |

### Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

| <b>Report</b>   | <b>Committee &amp; Date</b>                      | <b>Minute Reference</b> |
|---|--|-------------------------|
| Play Facilities Development and Management            | Executive Committee 5 <sup>TH</sup> October 2006 | E.69 (3)                |
| Countryside and Open Space Strategy and Play Strategy | Executive Committee 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2007  | E.227 (2)               |