

Title:	Play Strategy
Portfolio Holders:	Cllr Wiltshire - Leisure
Reporting Officers:	Lucy Murray Brown, Leisure Manager
Key Decision:	No

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek the support of Cabinet to adopt the Play Strategy, 'Everything to Play For', to enable a ringfenced lottery application to proceed. **Background papers can be found in Members Room.**

Background

In 2004 central government allocated £155m to the lottery which was to be used to fund an improvement in play opportunities for children and young people across the country. A ringfenced sum of £237,000 was allocated to West Wiltshire District Council.

In order to access the funding the Council has had to produce a play strategy which explains the present position on how play is catered for and how the Council intends on improving provision over the next five years. The strategy is to be submitted alongside the lottery bid on the 10th September 2007.

Work on assessing the play and recreation needs of children and young people has been undertaken through a consultation and provision audit. This audit has informed the development of a portfolio of projects that will be funded through the lottery application.

Key Issues

The play strategy action plan addresses each of the key findings from the consultation and provision audits:

- a lack of good quality equipped play provision for younger children
- deficiencies in the provision of facilities for teenagers across the district
- the need to improve the quality of multi-functional greenspaces
- the need to involve children and young people in the planning and development of play opportunities

A key aim of the strategy is to inform the production of a future supplementary planning document (SPD). The SPD will contain a new local hierarchy of provision that will apply in new housing developments. It is proposed to use the lottery funding to develop play areas that offer play experiences that meet the objectives in the strategy.

The strategy includes an action plan that ensures the needs identified are met and progress can be monitored.

The strategy continues to support the Council's role in providing and facilitating fixed play provision, but the quality of the provision will improve.

The portfolio of projects that form the lottery application include the development of 'active play environments' in each of the five towns.

The Council must adopt the strategy to enable the lottery application to proceed.

Effect on Strategies and Codes

The production of the play strategy is a key task contained within the spotlight area "Better access to recreation" of the Council's corporate plan 2006-2010. The play strategy is also a key task from both the leisure and recreation needs assessment action plan and the leisure and recreation development plan document.

The strategy was subject to a public consultation between 29th March and 29th June 2007 which complies with the council's obligations under the 'compact'.

Risk Management Implications

There is a risk that the lottery application will not be successful. This risk has been minimised by ensuring that the strategy has been subject to a consultation process and has been produced using guidelines from the Lottery and other relevant bodies.

Should the lottery application be unsuccessful then the strategy will remain in place and the action plan carried out with the exception of the play project portfolio.

Financial Implications

The preparation of this strategy has been completed within existing resources. If the lottery bid is successful then the strategy will attract £237,000 funding which unusually does not need to be match-funded.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

No legal or human rights implications.

Next Steps

- September 2007: Strategy and lottery application to be submitted
- December 2007: Lottery determine outcome of application
- January 2008: Strategy action plan to be implemented, with or without the lottery funded projects

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to consider the report and to:

- adopt the Play Strategy; and
- support the application to the Lottery

Background Papers

File Ref: Play Strategy – ‘Everything to Play For’
File Location: Leisure Services / Members room