

Wiltshire Council

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15

CABINET

22nd September 2009

WILTSHIRE PLAYBUILDER PROGRAMME

Executive Summary

The Playbuilder investment is available over 2 years 2009-11 and is provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Wiltshire has been awarded £1.124 million to work with children, young people and their communities to develop 22 innovative play spaces. The investment programme will provide challenging, exciting and innovative equipment and spaces using appropriate natural landforms and materials which are inclusive and accessible for all. The initiative will demonstrate strong evidence of cross council partnership working and engagement with key agencies and communities across the County with a robust commitment to embed play development and improvements across local authority planning.

It is proposed that other match funding elements from a range of different funding sources be utilised to make up the overall Playbuilder Programme, these could include Big Lottery, Wessex Water, Landfill Tax Credits and Section 106 Agreements.

Timescales are extremely challenging and a final Playbuilder Project Plan had to be submitted to the DCSF by 31st March 2009 (See Appendix A), however, this plan made it clear that the Council's proposals are subject to Cabinet approval at this meeting. Work is required to start as early as possible after Cabinet approval as there is no allowance for under spend or late starts of projects and no carry over of the budget is permitted. Playbuilder Project Board will be required to work in close partnership with the Community Area Boards to ensure the needs of the identified community are being addressed. There are a number of risks associated with this type of capital delivery programme (see risk assessment on pg 6) which are increased further due to fixed year 2 delivery timescales.

There is no allocation in the Playbuilder funding for the future maintenance of new and improved play spaces. This play investment is only sustainable if the necessary maintenance money for each site is secured by an increase in the capital maintenance budget of the Council.

Appendices A, B, C, D and F are available on the website with hard copies available in the members room. Appendix E is attached.

Proposal

1. Cabinet accepts the terms and conditions of the DCSF Playbuilder Capital and Revenue Grant Offer of £1.124m.
2. Cabinet approve the proposed allocations of Playbuilder capital expenditure of £1.124 million capital and £44,937 revenue on the Playbuilder Projects identified to develop at least 22 play spaces in Wiltshire.
3. Cabinet approves the allocation and prioritisation methodology and site selection process used to identify the sites for Year 1 and 2 projects.
4. Cabinet approves the current sites identified for Year 1 and 2.
5. Cabinet considers the Playbuilder maintenance budget as part of the overall budget setting process taking account of all pressures/priorities.
6. Cabinet approves the use of Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Pro V play framework contract for procurement using the design and build process.
7. Cabinet is asked to delegate appointment of companies for each of the Playbuilder schemes in the programme to the Service Director for Transport, Environment and Leisure and Service Director for Schools and Learning.
8. Wiltshire Playbuilder Project Board be authorised to approve additional Playbuilder Projects in the County.
9. Cabinet affirms its support for children's play as an integral part of the Children and Young People's plan and adopts the National Charter for Children's Play.

Reason for Proposal

Wiltshire Council has been awarded 'Playbuilder' status by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). This means that Wiltshire Council has been allocated £1.124 million over two years to fund the capital costs of developing at least 22 children's play areas, together with £44,937 revenue funding over a 2 year period. This will make a step change in the Council's ambitions for a better life for children and young people develop more resilient communities and improve the Council's parks and open spaces. This will significantly improve the quality of outdoor play experiences for children and young people in Wiltshire.

Carolyn Godfrey - Director of Children and Education

CABINET

22 September 2009

WILTSHIRE PLAYBUILDER PROGRAMME

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the use of 'Playbuilder' Funding from the Department for Children, Families and Schools (DCSF) to improve the provision of outdoor play opportunities for children aged 8-13yrs in Wiltshire.
2. To give Cabinet an overview of the purpose and requirements of the DCSF Playbuilder grant.
3. To seek approval for the expenditure of £1.124 million capital and £44,937 revenue Playbuilder grant over the two year period 2009-2011.
4. To seek approval for the sites identified in Year 1 and Year 2.
5. To seek approval of the prioritisation methodology for the identified sites.
6. To seek approval of the use of Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO Pro V) as the play framework contract for procurement. (See Appendix B)
7. To approve the delegation of appointment of contractors for each of the identified sites to the Service Director for Amenities and Leisure and Service Director for Schools and Learning.
8. To adopt the National Charter for Children's Play.

Background

9. The government's ambition is that all children should enjoy playing in a safe environment and live in communities where play is welcomed. This is a principle outlined in the recently published Children's Plan and in Section 2.7 of the recently published White Paper '21st Century Schools'. The government values play for its own sake as part of a happy childhood and this is also reflected in Article 31 UN Conventions on the Rights of a Child and the 'Every Child Matters' Outcomes. The Charter for Children's Play (Appendix C) outlines the vision for play and is a guide and framework for directing local authority work. Wiltshire Council adopted the County Play Strategy 'Everything to Play For' in May 2007.
10. The government review 'Getting Serious about Play: A Review of Children's Play (2004)' was commissioned by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) resulted in the establishment of the Big Lottery's Children's Play

Programme. This led to all four District Councils in Wiltshire being allocated funding (totalling £1.1million) over a 3 year period 2007-2010. The Government is further investing in the play sector allocating (£235 million) in children's play as part of a 3 year programme from 2008-2011.

11. The Playbuilder grant is issued to local authorities to be used within the meaning of Section 14 (2) (j) of the Education Act 2002 for the purpose of promoting the welfare of children and their parents. This funding is subject to a number of requirements.

- Play areas must be inclusive, so that disabled children can play alongside all other children in their community and be aimed at 8-13 year olds.
- Children must be able to gain access to the play space safely.
- Play areas must be new or substantial refurbishments of an existing play area, with an average cost of circa £50,000.
- Play areas must be of high quality and properly maintained after completion.
- Playbuilder sites are also expected to be more than just sites for fixed play equipment. It is expected that the development of each play area should involve children and the community in its design and upkeep.
- Play spaces need to be imaginative, exciting and include natural elements such as planting and landscaping. In addition, the play spaces themselves must also lend themselves to organised play activities, such as National Play Day.

12. The specific conditions of the grant are that 11 play spaces are open by 31 March 2010 and a further 11 play spaces open by 31 March 2011 using the monies available from DCSF to support the refurbishment and redevelopment of such spaces.

13. All Wiltshire Council owned sites have been prioritised using the prioritisation criteria identified in Appendix D and a list of sites has been drawn up using the scoring matrix based on audit results, needs analysis, consultation evidence and comprehensive site assessments. This methodology incorporates the DCSF criteria.

14. Children's satisfaction with parks and playgrounds for 8-13 years olds in Wiltshire is currently 40.7% (Tell Us Survey 3) and this is in the lowest national quartile performance. Our target is to improve the satisfaction rating to reach the top quartile by 2012 (49.6% at 90% confidence level) and this programme will be critical to achieving this ambition.

15. The delivery of the Playbuilder sites will also contribute to achieving the Local Area Agreement targets, improve performance against the National Indicators and contribute to the delivery of targets within the Council's policy framework:

Main Considerations for the Council

16. Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations have been invited to submit proposals for funding; projects were recommended for approval by the Playbuilder Project Board, subject to Cabinet approval. To ensure equality of

access a further opportunity for VCS organisations to submit proposals is being made available for investment in Year 2.

17. An indicative amount has been allocated to each project (See Appendix E) based on the following criteria:

- Number of beneficiaries
- Rurality
- Flagship Development
- Capacity of sites

A contingency amount will be allocated to each year and the complete expenditure on the sites will be finalised once design briefs have been produced.

18. Design and Build procurement will encourage innovation and requires specialist skills and experience which can be sourced via the ESPO Pro V play framework.

19. Playbuilder play spaces are located in all 20 Community Areas and the Playbuilder Project Board will be required to work in close partnership with the Community Area Boards. Regular reports and updates will also be provided to the Community Area Boards from the Playbuilder Project Board to ensure that all local relevant parties are informed about developments.

20. The grant is time limited and the Cabinet is asked to accept this as an urgent item to enable all officers involved to undertake the Playbuilder programme as soon as possible.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

21. The provision of opportunities for constructive activity within communities enhances social cohesion, social inclusion and individual and collective quality of life. It also impacts positively upon the creation of sustainable communities within which people feel valued, safe and healthy. Consideration will be given to design and materials that are appropriate to the local context; appropriately designed and located play opportunities for children and young people provide constructive alternatives to anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. Play equipment and other materials that are chosen will be high quality with durability in mind to assist in the reduction of future maintenance costs. A key element of this project is its innovative use of the naturalistic spaces and features and will support environmental sustainability, biodiversity and habitat management through low ecological impact design. The project will look to use local suppliers where possible and also will encourage sustainability through the use of materials from sustainable sources wherever possible. The play improvements programme will also be important as an educational resource and will be increasingly used by local schools to support environmental education.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

22. An Equalities Impact Needs Assessment has been completed.

23. The programme is aimed at encouraging participation by girls, ethnic minority

groups and individuals with difficulties and disabilities. By targeting areas that have lower than acceptable opportunities for play this will increase opportunities for these children, young people and their families where previously they were play deprived and benefit children in the most disadvantaged communities, contributing towards community cohesion. Any new play spaces will comply with all the requirements of appropriate legislation, including the DDA 1995 and with recommended European Safety Standards. The partnership will explore links between the Play Strategy and Aiming High for Disabled Children, the national strategies for Play and Disabled Children respectively

Risk Assessment

24. Risk register identified below.

RISK	Contingency Plans
Timescale and slippage	Timescales for this project are extremely tight. Therefore, identify sites that allow for slippage i.e. those that may have consultation and plans ready to go.
Reputational risk attached to lack of focus/ resources to deliver year one of project –	Appoint team with correct skills to deliver programme.
Health and safety	Health and safety will be considered from the design stage and all play spaces will be risk assessed prior to opening
Failure to secure planning permission for schemes	Engage development control in the Project Board and community engagement in design to ensure that all concerns are addressed pre-planning
Community not engaged	Ensure good communication and honest open discussion about the value of play from the start
Damage/vandalism to play equipment during installation	Have on site security and relevant park perimeter security, play providers required to provide contractual commitments on security and insurance.
Damage/vandalism to new play areas subsequent to launch	Community involvement and collective responsibility, projects predicated on good design and quality. High quality material used in equipment and design.
Failure to adhere to project budget or project management procedures and schedules	Contracts in place, regular Project board meetings and reporting mechanisms in place. Rigorous contract management procedures in place.

25. Consequences of any of these risks occurring would mean that Wiltshire is unable to meet project milestones. Repayment of the grant to DCSF would occur should projects not be delivered on time by the end of March each year. Each individual play project will undergo an initial risk assessment and have its own risk log.

Financial Implications

26. In total Wiltshire has been allocated £1.124million between 2009/10 and 2010/11 for the provision of high quality and safe places to play (Appendix F for Grant Conditions). The schemes listed in (Appendix E) will therefore satisfy the funding requirements.

27. Playbuilder Funding budget is devolved from DCSF and is a fixed sum. To ensure the sustainability of over £2m of capital investment (Playbuilder and BIG Lottery Funded Projects) on at least 22 sites across the County there may need to be an increase in the annual maintenance and replacement budget considered by the Cabinet during the budget setting process, taking into account all pressures and priorities. Sites will be classified as high, medium or low risk with replacement of a 10%, 5% and 2% of the capital costs being allowed respectively for these sites on an annual basis. Some of the sites will only be equipped with natural play features and will only require low levels of replacement this has been established at 1% of capital costs per year. Year 1 sites would require circa £8,000 additional funding and Year 2 sites circa £25,000 for all maintenance and replacement appertaining to the identified sites. A strategy will also be developed to meet these additional costs which will include an application to the Capital Fund, use of s106 funding and the use of external funding. Maintenance of Parish and Town Council projects or other external party sites will be their responsibility following project completion. The Wiltshire Council managed sites are already scheduled to be inspected therefore there will be no added inspection costs.

28. The use of the ESPO Pro V framework enables efficiencies to be realised in the procurement process and maximises funds available to the projects. Central Procurement Unit will be providing advice and guidance to ensure compliance and successful delivery. The ESPO Pro V framework agreement sets out the terms and conditions under which the Council's proposed contracts will be let. The Contractors on this framework will have already been through a procurement process to both ensure their technical competence and to deliver value for money.

29. The local authority is responsible for spend, reporting on spend and is also required to keep appropriate records. The grant profile is as follows:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	Total
Capital	£528,461	£595,684	£1.124.145
Revenue	£26,962	£17,975	£44,937
Total	£555,423	£613,659	

30. In addition to the capital grant, a revenue grant of £44,937 is available to support interim additional maintenance costs, supervisory costs, additional

design costs, project management staffing costs and support for community action. The details will be agreed by the Playbuilder Project Board. The Council will have to submit regular reports to the DCSF to show the progress being made. The grant will be terminated on one month's notice if the grant conditions are not observed and/or there is poor performance on the Council's part. Projects that are carried out by the Council will be fully VAT recoverable.

Legal Implications

31. Advice has been sought from Legal Services to ensure proper agreements are drawn up for both approved Contractors and successful Town and Parish Council Projects. Wiltshire County Legal Services have been consulted and will continue to advise on the correct procedures for allocating Playbuilder Funding. Tendering of all 11 sites together (through Option B below) in each year will secure value for money and time savings as the framework has been fully market tested.

Options Considered

32. Not accept the Playbuilder grant – this would contradict the agreed strategic priorities for play as set out in the Council's Play Strategy in May 2007.

33. To use other criteria for the identification of sites – the proposed methodology incorporates the DCSF criteria and in addition builds on recent local audit work. It is robust, based on need and is therefore acceptable to the DCSF.

34. There are two procurement methods available for Playbuilder project delivery:

- A) Outsource programme management and project delivery to an external partner.
- B) Procure design and build basis through an existing play framework.

35. Not adopt the Children's Charter for Play.

Conclusions

36. Cabinet accepts the terms and conditions of the DCSF Playbuilder Capital and Revenue Grant Offer of £1.124m.

37. Cabinet approve the proposed allocations of Playbuilder capital expenditure of £1.124 million capital and £44,937 revenue on the Playbuilder Projects identified to develop at least 22 play spaces in Wiltshire.

38. Cabinet approves the allocation and prioritisation methodology and site selection process used to identify the sites for Year 1 and 2 projects.

39. Cabinet approves the current sites identified for Year 1 and 2.

40. Cabinet considers the Playbuilder maintenance budget as part of the overall budget setting process taking account of all pressures/priorities.

41. Cabinet approves the use of Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Pro V play framework contract for procurement using the design and build process.

42. Cabinet is asked to delegate appointment of companies for each of the Playbuilder schemes in the programme to the Service Director for Transport, Environment and Leisure and Service Director for Schools and Learning.

43. Wiltshire Playbuilder Project Board be authorised to approve additional Playbuilder Projects in the County.

44. Cabinet affirms its support for children's play as an integral part of the Children and Young People's plan and adopts the National Charter for Children's Play.

Report Author: Annika Palmer

Name, title and contact details Integrated Services Manager – 01225 785684

Date of report 1 September 2009

Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Wiltshire Council Playbuilder Project Plan 2009-2011

Appendices

Appendix A Wiltshire Council Playbuilder Project Plan 2009-2011

Appendix B ESPO Pro V Play Procurement Framework

Appendix C Charter for Children's Play

Appendix D Minutes of Playbuilder Project Board -detailing site selection criteria

Appendix E Identified Sites and Financial Allocations

Appendix F Memorandum of Grant and Guidance - DCSF
