

Scrutiny – 12th February 2009

PLAY ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

Report of Head of Landscape & Leisure

Statutory Powers: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act 76)
Children's Act 2004

Financial Implications: None directly from this report however the council is investing significant capital funding and officer time in this area of activity. Projects detailed in the report are already funded either through Big Lottery or the Council's Capital Programme.

Purpose

This report was requested by members to inform them of progress in delivery of two main funding streams affecting play provision for children notably the Big Lottery Play Grant and the Council's approved £1 million Capital Programme towards play facility improvements.

This Programme will contribute directly to CP3, Maintaining the District's Distinctive Environment whilst Enabling Access and Sensitive Development. It will also support management of Council land whilst contributing to the cross-cutting themes of healthy communities and young people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Scrutiny note the progress of the BIG Lottery Children's Play programme and the close links to delivery of the Play Improvements in the Council's Public Space Capital Programme.

Background

1. The Council has traditionally been very strong on delivering for children and young people through the provision of play facilities. The Council provides more play areas than peer authorities and continues to maintain them both on its own land and on behalf of partners. It has also run and supported a wide range of play activities over the years.
2. In 2007 The Big Lottery confirmed an award of £200,000 to the District Council to support capital and revenue projects relating to play and young people. The agreed programme of works runs through until summer 2010.
3. In addition the Council has also agreed a capital programme towards play and youth facilities to be incorporated within the council's overall capital programme currently running through to March 2010. It has been requested that a report be brought to Scrutiny to report on how the Capital Programme is delivering effectively alongside the £200,000 Big Lottery activities programme.

BIG Lottery

4. The Big Lottery £200,000 is identified for 5 different projects as shown in table 1. This programme of works was based on the adopted South Hams Play Strategy and following detailed consultation with partners and young people.

Table 1

Theme	Delivery Partner	Current Progress
The Family Play Bus	Barnardo's	Outreach activities being delivered across the South Hams
Play Rangers	Tone Leisure	Full programme of parks based events. Summer events commence in April
Playschemes	SPARC	Annual programme of local holiday playschemes running in villages across the South Hams
Skateparks	Devon Youth Service	Works completed in Totnes and Dartmouth
Playing Out There	Currently SHDC led	Large scale play days with environmental themes

5. The delivery of the Big Lottery Programme is being monitored regularly by SHAPES (the South Hams Play Forum) with quarterly reports being submitted by officers to Big Lottery. The funding includes an allocation to support additional officer time to manage the programme and current delivery is in accordance with the timescales and outcomes agreed with Big Lottery.

Public Space Capital Programme; Play and Youth Facilities

6. Running alongside the Big Lottery activities the Council has now confirmed a £1million Capital Programme towards the improvement of play and youth outdoor facilities across the South Hams. This detailed programme of works has been drawn together over the past 12 months by the Public Space Working Group with the programme having been considered by CPDG, Executive and approved by Council.
7. The programme of improvement works follows through the principles and actions set out in the adopted South Hams Public Space Strategy and is based upon a detailed assessment of the condition and play value of the 103 play areas currently owned or managed by the District Council.

Co-ordination between the Big Lottery and Capital Programme

8. Management of both strands of work lies with the Landscape and Recreation Manager and is being delivered in tandem by officers within the Landscape and Recreation Team. Officers are acutely aware of the need to achieve strong play outcomes and best value from two work strands and this is achieved through the following:-
- Involvement of the Children's and Young Peoples Officer in both programmes with identified time allocated to both programmes.
 - Contractors working on the Capital Programme required to support and participate in local consultation exercises which can be dovetailed to the Big Lottery activity programme.

- Big Lottery events and activities programme planned to co-ordinate with, and support consultation for, Capital Programme play improvements.

Additional Opportunities

9. In delivering both the Big Lottery and Capital Programme officers are mindful of the need to identify potential additional funding sources. In delivering the Capital Programme the Council is writing to town and parish councils and other key groups identifying the funding that has been allocated to projects locally and seeking co-operation in the delivery of these and in drawing in any additional funding that might be available.
10. Big Lottery has recently announced that Devon has been identified for a Play Builder Award of £1million. This is initially identified to deliver improvements in 22 play areas across Devon. Officers are in discussion with Devon County Council to seek to secure an appropriate allocation to sites in the South Hams. Officers are also continually looking for other opportunities to maximise the capacity of both programmes through additional partnerships or funding.

Risk Assessment

Opportunity	Issues	Benefits
To ensure that the Big Lottery Programme and the Council's Capital Programme are delivered in tandem to achieve greatest benefit	Co-ordinated project management, work programmes and financial management required	Maximised play value and financial best value
To ensure that the two programmes deliver against community expectations	Programmes and projects need to be based on the existing Play Strategy and Public Space Strategy and fine tuned locally through appropriate consultation	Projects which meet community needs
Securing additional funding	Need to assist those who can access third party funding in securing funds	Maximise capacity of the programmes

Conclusion

The Council is in a fortunate position of having a play activities programme running alongside a play facilities improvement programme through to summer 2010. The co-ordination and management of these two programmes rests within the Landscape and Recreation Team with the same officers involved in ensuring that the overall programme delivers maximum benefits.

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Scrutiny
 12th February 009

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Background Papers

Devon Children and Young People's Plan
 Public Space Strategy