

**Body:** CABINET

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007

**Subject:** PLAY STRATEGY 2007 - 2010

**Report Of:** DIRECTOR OF HOUSING, HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Ward(s)** All

**Purpose** To seek Cabinet approval for the draft Play Strategy 2007 – 2010 and to seek agreement for the proposed portfolio of projects to be included in an application to the Big Lottery Fund.

**Decision Type:** Key Decision

**Recommendation:**

1. That Cabinet approve the contents of the Play Strategy prior to circulation for further consultation with our partners.
2. That Cabinet approve the action plan contained within the Play Strategy.
3. That Cabinet approve the portfolio of projects to be included in the application to the Big Lottery Fund.

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## 1.0 Background

1.1 In June 2001 Government announced a £200 million boost for children's play funded through the Big Lottery Fund, Eastbourne has been allocated £205,000 from this fund specifically to improve play opportunities for children and young people aged 0 – 18.

The application to the Big Lottery Fund has to be submitted prior to the deadline of 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007. We will be notified of their decision early in 2008

1.2 In order to draw down the funding Local Authorities have to demonstrate their commitment to play by producing a play strategy for the town. In September 2006 Cabinet authorised Officers to develop a play strategy in partnership with local play providers, voluntary/community/statutory agencies and children and young people.

1.3 As part of the application to the Big Lottery Fund we have to identify a portfolio of projects on which we intend to spend the money. This has been

achieved through the development of the play strategy.

- 1.4 A Play Forum has been established to assist with the development of the play strategy and to monitor the progress made on the action plan, the forum consists of :
- Eastbourne Borough Council Officers (Sport & Leisure, Community Development & Parks & Gardens)
  - East Sussex County Council Officers (Youth Development Services and Children's Services)
  - Local Play/Leisure providers
  - Sussex Downs College
  - Sussex Police
- 1.5 A Scrutiny review of our playgrounds is currently being carried out by Eastbourne Borough Council's Parks and Gardens Manager. The results of this review will inform the future development of the action plan contained within the play strategy.
- 1.6 A Scrutiny review on 'Play' and developer contributions relating to the sale of the Wartling Road Coach/Lorry park is currently underway and the results of the review will be fed in to the action plan contained within the play strategy.
- 1.7 Planning Officers are currently reviewing Eastbourne Borough Council's policy on S106 and developer contributions.

## **2.0 Scope of Strategy**

- 2.1 The play strategies main aims are to raise the profile of play and to identify future development of play facilities and opportunities for all children and young people living and visiting Eastbourne.
- 2.2 In line with the guidance notes for the Big Lottery's funding stream for play the strategy concentrates on developing 'free' play opportunities for children and young people living or visiting Eastbourne.

The three frees :

- Free of charge
- Free to choose
- Free to come and go

- 2.3 Although outside the scope of this strategy it is important to note that there is a wide range of excellent play opportunities available to children and young people in Eastbourne that have a cost attached. These include school holiday playschemes, visiting the swimming pool, ten pin bowling, karting, Fort Fun, Treasure Island. These activities help make Eastbourne what it is and their importance should not be overlooked.
- 2.4 The strategy identifies Eastbourne's current free play provision in terms of built facilities such as playgrounds, skate parks and multi-sport areas as well as recognising facilities offered at a cost either by Eastbourne Borough

Council or through the private sector.

### **3.0 Importance of Play**

3.1 Article 31 of the United Nations Conventions Act on the Rights of a Child state that:

“Every Child has a right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and participate freely in cultural life and the arts”.

3.2 The ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda has five outcomes for children and young people:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well being

Eastbourne’s play strategy will demonstrate how quality play provision will contribute towards each of these outcomes.

3.3 The need for play is also recognised in Planning Guidance. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17) which aims to safeguard open spaces and playing fields. As part of a ‘needs assessment’ undertaken by Eastbourne Borough Council Officers in 2004 a survey was carried with local residents and some of the results of this consultation are quoted within the strategy.

3.4 Children’s play can be seen as a ‘cross cutting’ activity in relation to Eastbourne’s Community Strategy Themes:

- **Crime and Disorder** – Play can address issues around anti-social behaviour and fear of crime
- **Health & Social Care** – Regular play will improve the health of children and young people
- **Inclusive Community** – Children and young people, through play, will access natural greenspace, cultural and recreational facilities in a way that is suitable to them.
- **Environment** – Play will be encouraged in both the natural and built environment.

3.5 The 2001 Census shows that there are over 18,000 children and young people aged under the age of 18 living in Eastbourne, over 20% of the population.

### **4.0 The Action Plan**

4.1 An action plan has been drawn up through the development of the Play Strategy and contains five key themes:

#### **Consultation**

Eastbourne must ensure that robust consultation systems are put in place to ensure that children and young people are involved in the development of our play facilities and programmes. The Youth Forum co-ordinated by staff within the Community Services Department was seen as one important element of this along with the development of a 'Youth' section within Eastbourne Borough Council's Web site. We will form closer links with all local primary and secondary schools and working closer with other local voluntary/community/statutory partners currently working with children and young people.

### **Facilities**

It is necessary to provide more facilities for young people aged 11 – 18, especially in the western side of town and to ensure that existing facilities for younger children are maintained to a higher standard.

A review of our current play provision is currently underway.

The review should identify the quality of each playground, the level of usage and the current gaps in facility provision around the town. These results will be used to further develop the action plan within the play strategy.

### **Activities**

It is essential that we ensure that children and young people are offered a balance of play opportunities that challenge them physically, imaginatively and creatively.

### **Profile**

We must raise the profile of play within Eastbourne through the recruitment of a Play Ranger. The Play Ranger will deliver workshops to parents, grandparents and carers, facilitate a wide range of new play opportunities across the town, create a data base of quality play opportunities and distribute it to local schools, play groups nurseries etc, will form close links with local play providers and will become a member of the Play Forum who will monitor the delivery of the action plan its self.

### **Open Space**

Eastbourne has a huge range of natural environments all ideal play settings including parks, the beach and the downland. It is necessary to promote access to this space for the purpose of play through the delivery of new play initiatives across our open space.

It is also essential that Planning Officers ensure that provision is made for informal play space within new housing developments through the development of a more robust policy regarding S106 and developer contributions.

## **5.0 Portfolio of Projects**

5.1 Through the development of the play strategy and the associated consultation we have identified three projects to be included in the Big Lottery Fund application.

- Develop a 'teen' facility in the western half of the town (£80,000)
- Employ a part time Play Ranger (£80,000)
- Refurbish 1 or 2 of the existing playgrounds (£45,000)

It was noted that the 2 skate parks and the BMX park within Eastbourne are situated toward the eastern side of the town. A new teen facility is required to serve the western end of Eastbourne, particularly the Old Town area.

In order to improve the play opportunities within Eastbourne it will be necessary to employ a Play Ranger. The Play Ranger will be responsible for ensuring that the action plan is carried out, will service the Play Forum and will be tasked with raising the profile of Play across Eastbourne.

A Scrutiny review of playgrounds within Eastbourne is currently being carried out by the Parks & Gardens Manager. The review will look at local needs as well as the refurbishment requirements for our facilities. Informed by the results of the consultation carried out during the development of the play strategy we have assumed that there will be a number of major refurbishment projects identified within this review.

Following the review the Play Forum will identify one or two significant projects which they feel will make a real difference to the play opportunities available to the children and young people of Eastbourne. The chosen project/s is/are likely to show improved access to and use of the facility by children and young people with disabilities.

## **6.0 Consultation**

- 6.1 The consultation carried out as part of the development of the play strategy was wide ranging and included
- The formation of Eastbourne Play Forum
  - A schools questionnaire (1500 questionnaires delivered to children and young people across the town)
  - Informal discussions with young people from three local secondary schools
  - An internet survey (63 responses)
  - A variety of informal consultation sessions with EBC Officers, EAVS, Local Leisure/Play providers, Sussex Police and Sussex Downs College.
- 6.2 A representative from Play England attended Play Forum meetings and has advised Officers throughout the development of the Play Strategy.
- 6.3 The key themes coming out of the consultation are:
- Many of our children choose sedentary activities (computer games, watching TV etc), but want to be motivated to take part in more active activities.
  - Children & young people want to be more involved in the process of developing new facilities.
  - Eastbourne lacks facilities for teenagers.
  - Young people are not aware of the facilities available in the town.
  - There are no playgrounds for children and young people in wheelchairs.
  - Eastbourne has a huge variety of natural environments ideal for children and young people to play in.
  - Adults need to be educated about the importance of quality play for

- children and young people.
- There is a lack of facilities for children and young people at the Harbour.
- Although Eastbourne seems to have a lot of playgrounds they are not considered to be very good.

## **7.0 Resource Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

The delivery of the action plan is dependent on the success of the application to the Big Lottery Fund. If the application is unsuccessful the portfolio of projects cannot proceed and the strategy will need to be revisited.

### **7.2 Staffing**

If the application to The Big Lottery Fund is successful then a Play Ranger will be employed within the Community Services Department on a three year contract in line with the funding.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

8.1 The play strategy has been written in partnership with a wide range of partners and represents a shared view of how we can improve the play opportunities within Eastbourne. The Play Forum will continue to meet and will monitor the progress made on the action plan.

8.2 The action plan concentrates on a number of key themes:

- **Consultation**
- **Facilities**
- **Activities**
- **Profile**
- **Open Space**

8.3 The Portfolio of Projects included in the application to The Big Lottery Fund will help us achieve the aims of the strategy and deliver the action plan.

**Rick Newman**  
**Sport & Leisure Manager**

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### **Background Papers:**

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

*Cabinet Report 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006 (Youth Involvement & Activity)*

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.

2007 - September.5 - Play Strategy - draft