



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
OSMB Meeting
Cabinet

18TH SEPTEMBER 2008
1ST OCTOBER 2008

Leicester Play Strategy 2007 - 2012

Report of the Interim Corporate Director, Children & Young People's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report requests Cabinet and the OSMB to approve and adopt the Leicester Play Strategy.
- 1.2 This report should be considered in conjunction with the Leicester Play Strategy document. The play strategy is an interactive document and will be revised on an annual basis.

2. Summary

- 2.1. In November 2005 Leicester City Council was informed by the Big Lottery Fund of a new £155 million Children's Play Initiative that would be launched in March 2006.
- 2.2 Local authorities were requested to work in partnership with voluntary and community sector partners to develop a play strategy in order to access the funding allocated by the Big Lottery Fund.
- 2.3 The Leicester Play Strategy 2007 – 2012 was therefore developed and submitted as part of the grant bidding process to the Big Lottery Fund, and the document has more recently been instrumental in accessing a 'Playbuilder' grant of around £1.2m for play in Leicester from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).
- 2.4 'One Leicester' - the Play Strategy supports 5 of the 7 'One Leicester' priorities:
- Investing in our children - the development of play and facilities in Leicester over the next 3 years.
 - Planning for people not cars - the consideration of safe networks for children and young people within our planning process for play.
 - Creating safer communities – by working with communities to develop play in local neighbourhoods.
 - Improving well being and health – play keeps children healthy and active, and promotes their development, learning, creativity and independence.

- Talking up Leicester – the play strategy promotes the value of play and will raise the awareness of its importance and benefits to children in Leicester.

2.5 In December 2007, Leicester City Council were informed by the Big Lottery Fund that their bid for £882,414. under the Children’s Play Programme was successful.

2.6 An additional condition of the grant is subject to the organisation providing to the Big Lottery Fund, evidence that the organisation’s play strategy has been signed off by its Cabinet, Chief Executive, Director or equivalent.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet and the OSMB :

- a) Approve and adopt the Leicester Play Strategy 2007-2012.
- b) Note that members will be kept informed and involved in consultation in the development of the Big Lottery Play projects and also be involved in the city wide consultation process for the DCSF ‘Playbuilder’ programme over the next 3 years.

4. Report

4.1 In November 2005 Leicester City Council was informed by the Big Lottery fund that a new £155 million Children’s Play Initiative was being launched in March 2006. The Big Lottery committed £124 million to develop play provision enabling all local authorities to develop local play spaces.

4.2 Local authorities were required to take the lead role in applying for funds, and working with local play partners in the play sector. In order to access the funding, local authorities needed to work in partnership with voluntary and community sector partners in developing a play strategy, and to submit a portfolio of projects which must be identified as part of the development of that strategy.

4.3 Leicester City did not have a play strategy. Therefore, a citywide play partnership was formed in December 2005 in order to consider the way forward to develop such a strategy. This partnership also led the process for developing projects for submission to the Big Lottery in order to access the allocated funding under the children’s play programme. This group is made up of council officers and also members from the voluntary and community sector who are involved in play.

4.4 It was decided by the partnership that, due to the amount of work involved in developing a play strategy and the tight timescales set by the big lottery for applications for funding under the children’s play programme, that a consultant be commissioned to develop the strategy. A small project team was therefore formed from the partnership in order to carry out the necessary work in developing a consultants brief and to help develop the 5 year strategy.

4.5 The consultants brief was put out to tender to suitably qualified play consultants and ‘INSPIRE’ were commissioned to carry out the work accordingly. Extensive consultation was carried out as part of the strategy and priorities for play in Leicester were informed

by the feedback. It should be noted that children and young people have been involved throughout the process in developing the strategy.

- 4.6 There are 8 objectives that have been developed through the analysis of the consultation findings and the audit of provision.

The objectives are:

- Increase support for play in Leicester.
- Establish a sustainable infrastructure for the delivery of high quality play opportunities for children and young people.
- Promote the value of play.
- Increase the quality and use of outdoor play areas.
- Support children to experience risk-taking in their play, free from hazards.
- Consult and engage children, young people and community members in the development and design of play in Leicester.
- Increase the quality of children's play experiences.
- Ensure all children have access to good quality play opportunities.

The play strategy will be delivered through partnership working within the city. This will involve the Children's Play Strategy Project Manager in Children and Young People's Services working in partnership with: extended services, early years, the play partnership, parks, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

- 4.7 This strategy plays a major part in creating change for children in Leicester, together with making a significant improvement in the City becoming a more child friendly place. The main driver for developing the play strategy was the allocation of funding from the Big Lottery Fund which has raised the profile of play nationally. The play strategy is one of the most important developments for the future of play provision within Leicester, and will play a major part in the vision for 'One Leicester' and its priorities for action. Planning and provision of opportunities for children's play is a cross cutting issue and as such will be supported by other key strategies, including: Leicester's Cultural Strategy, Strategy for Learning and Development, Parks and Open Spaces Strategy to name but a few. The play strategy is also integral to delivering outcomes related to all five themes of 'Every Child Matters'.
- 4.8 The portfolio of projects meeting the criteria of the Big Lottery Fund together with the Leicester City Play Strategy were submitted in September 2007. In December 2007 the City Council were informed by the Big Lottery fund that they have agreed to offer a grant of £882,414. under the Children's Play Programme.
- 4.9 The grant offer is subject to the City Council accepting the terms and conditions of the grant from the Big Lottery Fund with an additional condition that the grant is subject to the organisation providing to the Fund evidence that the organisation's play strategy has been signed off by its Cabinet, Chief Executive, Director or equivalent.

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

"In setting out a five year vision for the development of play in Leicester, the Strategy includes a range of initiatives and actions that in some cases can be funded from within existing resources and which in other cases would require additional funding. Some of this may be sourced by bidding for external funding, whilst the Council may wish to consider allocating funds in future budgets to progress particular actions. Implementation of the Strategy will progress in line with the funding and staff resources available and externally driven changes such as Government initiatives. Funding of £2.1m to develop and improve play facilities across the City has already been secured through the BIG Lottery subject to Cabinet approval of the play strategy, and the Government's Play Builder programme. - Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance and Efficiency, CYPS, ext. 29 7750"

5.2 Legal Implications

"There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. The strategy accords with the outcomes for children specified at Section 2(3) Children Act 2004 which reflect the outcomes identified in the Government agenda as set out in 'Every Child Matters' referred to at page 18 of the strategy document 'Leicester City Play Strategy 2007-12' and also the duty on local authorities to work in partnership with other agencies to work towards achieving those outcomes"

Cathy Healy, Team Leader Community Services Law x 6712

6. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph Within Supporting information	References
Equal Opportunities	Yes	4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6.	
Policy	Yes	4.7, 4.9.	
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	4.2, 4.6.	
Crime and Disorder	No		
Human Rights Act	No		
Elderly/People on Low Income	No		

7. Risk Assessment Matrix

Delete if not required and renumber paragraphs.

This only needs to be included if appropriate with regard to the Council's Risk Management Strategy

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
1 Funding from Big Lottery Fund of £882,414 will cease and be reclaimed if Strategy not adopted.	L	L	Play Strategy to be signed off by Cabinet.
2 Negative publicity for City Council.	L	L	
3 Play area developments not proceeding as planned.	L	L	

8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Leicester Play Strategy 2007-2012

9. Consultations

Councillor Vi Dempster (Cabinet Lead C&YPS)

Extensive consultations have been carried out in the formulation of the strategy, including local communities and children and young people.

10. Report Author

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Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Significant in its effects on communities in one or more wards
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)