

TITLE:	Derwentside Play Strategy
TO/ON:	Executive 9th July 2007
BY:	Director of Corporate Admin. & Policy
PORTFOLIO:	Strong Communities
STATUS:	Report

STRATEGIC FACTOR CHECKLIST

The Council's Corporate Management Team has confirmed that the Strategic Factor Checklist has been applied to the development of this report, and there are no key issues, over and above those set out in the body of the report, which need to be brought to Members' attention.

1. SUBJECT MATTER AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report presents to Executive Members the Derwentside Play Strategy for their approval.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that, as part of the Big Lottery Fund's £155m Children's Play initiative, each Local Authority has been allocated funding for play based on population, levels of deprivation and size.

2.2 In order to access this funding, we must submit a newly revised and much expanded Play Strategy following the guidance issued in "Planning for Play". Failure to do so will lead to the Council being unable to access the Big Lottery allocation.

2.3 Due to the significant similarities between the consultation and auditing of existing facilities and research needed for both the new Play Strategy and for the "Open Spaces & Recreational Needs Assessment", the Leisure and Development Control Departments worked together last November to develop a consultant's brief for the preparation of both documents. Following a competitive tendering process, Knight Kavanagh Page (KKP) was appointed to carry out the work.

3. RELEVANT MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS / OPTIONS

- 3.1 Firstly, it should be noted that, with the transfer of the Leisure Team to Leisureworks, the responsibility for overseeing the development of the new Play Strategy has, with CMT approval, been passed on to the Corporate Policy Unit.
- 3.2 This was for two main reasons. One related to the Unit's Positive Youth Engagement work and the opportunity to directly link children and young people with the development of the Play Strategy. The other related to the Unit's role in the county-wide Every Child Matters agenda. As part of this, the Unit leads the local Children and Young People's Planning Group (soon to evolve into a Local Children's Board), which in the near future will be responsible for commissioning and performance management of children services in our locality (including play).
- 3.3 The development of the Play Strategy by KKP has been undertaken in two phases:

Phase 1 (January to July 2007) - Development of the Play Strategy

Phase 2 (June to September 2007) – Portfolio submission of the Lottery Bid

3.4 Current progress with Phase 1

Everything has gone as planned and Phase 1 is almost complete. The consultation process on the Draft Play Strategy is finalised and it has been presented to the Community Safety & Strong Communities Scrutiny Panel. Seeking approval from Executive is the last stage of Phase 1.

The Play Partnership

An important development in this process has been the setting up of a Play Partnership for Derwentside, one of the requirements in order to access the Lottery funding. The Play Partnership was set up in March 2007 as a sub-group of the Derwentside Children and Young People's Planning Group. *Please note, this is referred to as the LCB (Local Children's Board) throughout the rest of this document.*

In this initial stage, the Derwentside Play Partnership was set up as a loosely formed partnership comprising representatives of the LCB, as well as other stakeholders who have an important role in play locally (the interim list of partners can be found in Appendix 5 of the attached Play Strategy).

During the period July to September 2007, the Play Partnership will develop further and adopt formal Terms of Reference and membership. This will allow it to evolve from its current "consultative" nature to a formally set-up sub-group of the LCB, set within the accountability framework of the LSP.

The Play Partnership is already performing well and to date its meetings have been really well attended. The representative of the Play England North East Office, who attends all Play Partnership meetings in the region, has been very complimentary of our Play Partnership and the way things have progressed in Derwentside.

The Play Strategy

The final draft of the Play Strategy can be found in Appendix 1 of this report. The draft was put together by KKP on the basis of extensive consultation undertaken to date (e.g. SPICE survey, Youth Strategy consultation involving over 2,000 young people, community appraisals). This was supplemented by new consultation undertaken during the first months of 2007 with parents and toddlers groups, the Young People's Forum and children who participated in the Easter Holiday Activity Programmes.

The Play Strategy was presented to the Play Partnership as a draft on the 22nd May and the partnership approved its final draft on 26th June. The Play Strategy has been viewed very positively, especially in terms of outlining the main strategic priorities for children and young people. It is accompanied by an action plan, which needs to be examined closely as part of the future work of the Play Partnership, to establish the best ways towards its implementation. As part of Phase 2, KKP will prepare an initial Implementation Plan for the strategy, which will outline how the Big Lottery funding allocation should be spent to kick-start the strategy.

The Play Strategy has also undergone consultation with the LSP, its sub-partnerships, local youth organisations and groups, ward partnerships, community groups and Parish Councils. The main comments from this consultation process related to some existing provision not reflected in the strategy and the need for some of the strategy actions to be more specific. These comments have now been incorporated into the strategy.

The Play Strategy was presented to the Community Safety and Strong Communities Scrutiny Panel on 26th June and was well received. The only comments related to the projects to be submitted to the Lottery – the projects are explained in the Phase 2 section.

3.5 Phase 2

KKP has started Phase 2 and, subject to Executive approval, it will produce a costed portfolio of projects to the sum of £221,543, which should be directly linked to the Play Strategy developed in Phase 1 of this project. There is no requirement for match funding.

The allocation is for both capital and revenue projects and can be spent over a three year period. Each proposed project in the portfolio should normally

be of a minimum value of £50,000 and not exceed £200,000. This funding cannot be allocated for a Play Partnership Officer post.

KKP has concluded that two priority projects have emerged from the consultation process:

- **Appointment of a Play Ranger (c. £132k for three years)**

Under this initiative, the whole of the district will benefit from an individual resource, qualified in play development. This person will work with partner agencies, community groups and young people themselves to develop play opportunities around the district, promote the value of “traditional play” and support the development of existing community resources and equipment, so that they can be used for children and young people’s play opportunities. This project was the top priority identified by young people, which at the same time directly accords with Play England and Big Lottery principles around raising awareness of and developing opportunities for play, to include families and carers. Overall, this initiative will ensure that there will be additional supervised play opportunities across the whole of the district for 3 years; it will also support the development of new play activities through volunteering or best use of existing resources.

- **Natural Play team (c. £89k for three years)**

This initiative will ensure that a team of 6-8 sessional workers will be recruited for three years, to cover school holidays and undertake supervised natural play around Derwentside. The district provides plenty of natural resources which are ideal for natural/adventure type of play. The scheme will not only provide additional supervised play opportunities but will also raise awareness of natural play, thus benefiting the future of play in Derwentside and supporting the principles of Play England.

Both projects were suggested to the Play Partnership on 26th June and were wholeheartedly supported.

The projects were also presented to the Community Safety and Strong Communities Scrutiny Panel on 26th June 2007. Members made a number of comments which can be found in Appendix 3 of this report, together with officer / consultant responses.

The portfolio submission date for the Big Lottery Fund is 10th September 2007.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that Executive Members approve the Play Strategy, subject to any amendments.
- 4.2 It is recommended that Executive Members approve the proposed Play Strategy projects, to become part of the portfolio application to the Big Lottery Fund.

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

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APPENDIX 1

Draft Derwentside Play Strategy