

## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2009

### Play Strategy – Briefing Paper

#### 1.0 Purpose of paper

- 1.1 To seek the Board's agreement to the approach to be taken to developing an Integrated Play Strategy for North Yorkshire, and to the arrangements under which the work would be taken forward

#### 2.0 Recommendations

The CYPSPB is asked to;

1. Note the development of an integrated strategic approach to play across North Yorkshire and the formation of the North Yorkshire Play Partnership
2. Agree to the formalised status of the North Yorkshire Play Partnership (NYPP) as a Sub-group of the CYPSPB.
3. In light of DCSF funding deadline requirements, Agree to the NYPP making early recommendations for the commissioning of the first phase of sites (referenced in 5.5) to the Director of Children's Services, as Chair of CYPSP Board, combined with appropriate liaison with each of the relevant lead bodies involved to ensure that there is appropriate agreement to the submissions.

#### 3.0 Some key facts about Play

- The play agenda covers **from birth to 19** (focus is outdoor play for 8 - 13)
- £235m to **develop 3,500 public play spaces** nationally (2008-11)
- **Strategic lead** for play now rests with the primary tier local authority
- Play is much more than just equipped playgrounds
- Various definitions of 'play', but in the words of a child;

***“Play is what I do when other people have stopped telling me what to do”***

## 4.0 The picture so far

4.1 The Government published a comprehensive consultation document, *Fair Play* in April 2008. Following this *The Play Strategy* was launched late last year (10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2008) and can be downloaded at <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/play/downloads/PlayStrategy.pdf> .

4.2 The key aims of The Play Strategy include:

- Correcting the balance of **risk, safety and benefit**
- In every residential area, there are a **variety of places** for play, free of charge, supervised and unsupervised;
- Local neighbourhoods are, and feel like, **safe, interesting places** to play;
- **Routes** to children's play space **are safe** and accessible for all children and young people;
- Parks and open spaces are **attractive and welcoming** to children and young people, and are **well-maintained** and well-used;
- Children and young people have a **clear stake** in public space and their play is accepted by their neighbours;
- Children and young people behave in a way that **respects** other people and property;
- Children, young people and their families take an **active role** in the development of local play spaces; and
- Play places are **accessible** for all local children and young people, including disabled children, children of both genders, and children from minority groups in the community.

4.3 **Play England are key partners** in the development of play as they have close links to the DCSF, acting as their formal advisers and offering support and challenge to Local Authorities.

4.4 The impetus for the development of a North Yorkshire wide play strategy has been increased as the strategic approach to planning and commissioning has to be top-tier led and access to the key funding stream, *Playbuilder*, has changed. Wave three funding submissions due in September 2009 for a 2010/11 spend was the target for North Yorkshire to have established a strategy with commissioning priorities and a needs based process for funds allocation.

4.5 However, due to the desire of Government to accelerate capital spending, we received urgent notice during December of wave three being brought into line with wave two. This now means we have a **significantly reduced timescale** to accommodate. Instead of delivering in 2010/11 we will be required to deliver across 2009/11 and

most challenging; site submissions for next financial year being due by the 20 February 2009

- 4.6 The finance across North Yorkshire will be around £1m capital and £45k revenue with the intention to **develop 22 play spaces**. This may be half in 2009/10 and half in 2010/11, although Play England are working on our behalf suggesting a change to 7 play spaces in the first year and 15 in the second. This would be more achievable and allow more quality to be built into the selection criteria, process and development of the remaining play spaces.
- 4.7 All seven District Councils have developed play strategies (five with local play partnerships) and the recommendation from DCSF and Play England is for the formation of a Countywide **Play Partnership** to head the strategic approach in North Yorkshire.
- 4.8 Initial thoughts around the development of a strategy have been considered by a group of CYPS officers (Ian Marr, Lynette Dodds & Simon Moss), the appropriate lead officers for play from the Districts, Play England (Catherine Ross) and DCSF (Helen Higham). This has been informally chaired by Dave Goodwin from Hambleton DC.

## 5.0 North Yorkshire Integrated Strategy Approach to Play

- 5.1 On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the Children and Young People's Service Leadership Team approved the development of a strategic steering group for play (the NYPP) and recommended it become a sub-group of the CYPSPB. This group would replace the current working group referred to in 3.8. Proposed Membership of the Partnership is attached at Appendix A. The active engagement of children and young people is important in ensuring their views and ideas are captured and while representation on the group is not proposed it will be a critical element in the selection and development criteria.
- 5.2 The vision is for an overarching strategy which takes a broad approach to planning, steering and commissioning play and enables local play partnerships to deliver locally.
- 5.3 There are common links in terms of both agenda and participants with the wider positive activities agenda and it may be appropriate to broaden the aspect of the County and District partnerships into Integrated Positive Activity Development Partnerships.
- 5.4 It is proposed, in line with our other countywide strategies, that the play strategy is developed on the basis on **four levels of need linked to an entitlement** for all children to access appropriate play:

- *Universal:* All children and young people should be able to access appropriate play within (an agreed standard) metres/ minutes. These should be of an (agreed standard) of quality. (Available in all localities)
- *Targeted:* Including additional activities/equipment in targeted areas, or targeted at particular groups of children, e.g. activity based play in areas where obesity is higher than average. (Available in most/all localities)
- *Specialist:* This may include flagship/ super-parks which are accessible within a district area or may have specialist equipment for children with specialist needs.
- *Intensive:* This may include specialist parks which may be just one or two across North Yorkshire.

5.5 A thorough needs assessment is required to map these types of provision across North Yorkshire to identify any gaps or unnecessary duplication of provision. With the radical change in delivery schedule the approach to needs assessment requires a developmental approach. A pragmatic methodology is needed to identify the initial sites using existing needs assessment data, followed by the development of a more unified approach for 2010/11. In both cases a commissioning process will be adopted which identifies suitable sites with the NYPP short-listing those to be commissioned. With the pressing time scales, the sites due for submission in February 2009 will not be brought to CYPSPB for approval, but subsequent recommendations will be.

- 5.6 Over and above the defined Needs Assessment Criteria (Appendix B), the following will need to be considered as part of the feasibility study / short listing process
- Demonstrable and secure standards around accountability, sustainability and additionality
  - The process allows a mixed economy approach
  - Ability to demonstrate that young people have been involved in the development of the design for the facility
  - Funding leverage
  - Number of children and young people who will benefit from this project
  - Impact on anti-social behaviour
  - Strategic linkages – Local play strategy, national play agenda
  - Any other local facilities that could meet the demands
  - Impact on surrounding area, e.g. neighbours
  - Minimum allocated per district area (e.g. at least 1 site per district)

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January 2009

## Appendix A: Proposed Membership of the North Yorkshire Play Partnership

- NYCC Lead for Play (Chair) – Ian Marr
- NYCC Performance and Outcomes
- Voluntary Sector representative
- A representative from either the Local Strategic Partnership or District Council (x 7)
- Play England & GOYH
- Police
- YOT/IYS/4Youth
- Public Health
- Learning Difficulties and Disabilities representative
- Young People's Development Worker
- Primary Head (or representative) (x 2)
- Secondary School representative (x 2)
- Integrated Service Manager
- Children Centre Manager
- Business and Environmental Services representative\*
- Dave Barham (Outdoor Education Consultant)
- Fields in Trust
- School Sports Partnership

There would also need to be engagement with

- Elected Members
- Groundwork North Yorkshire
- NYCC Corporate Policy
- Community Investment Partnerships & Yorkshire Forward
- Community Safety

\* The Business and Environmental Services representative will need to work closely with their colleagues from Planning, Environment and Transport to ensure all these functions are effectively integrated.

## Appendix B

**Play Strategy: Needs Assessment  
Draft Proposal**

**Background**

To assist in the development a North Yorkshire Play Strategy, it is important that a needs assessment is carried out to identify areas of strength and priority areas for improvement in play provision across North Yorkshire.

A comprehensive needs assessment will provide for the first time a County-Wide view of current play provision and should inform the priorities within the emerging Play Strategy. The needs assessment must be a collaborative exercise across partners to bring together necessary information and should include:

1. An assessment of the number and quality of play spaces across North Yorkshire
2. Children and young people's view of play provision
3. Parent and carers views of play provision
4. A review of best practice, national policy and legislative requirements
5. Performance Information

**Needs Assessment**Section 1.number and quality of play spaces

The first step in the Needs Assessment would be to identify if all children and young people can access play provision of acceptable quality. Where there are gaps, it may be considered that these are of high priority for the strategy.

In order to be able to identify priority areas for improvements to, or creation of play spaces, a standard approach to assessment could be used. This would give the added advantage of being able to compare play spaces equally across the County. Each District and Borough Council has locally determined measures for access to play spaces, and differing approaches to measuring quality. To ensure a fair and consistent approach to measuring access and quality it is proposed that for the needs assessment:

- a) the measure of 1000m or 15 minute walk should be the minimum standard to access a play space. This may need to be refined for rural areas.
- b) further investigation on agreed county-wide 'quality standards' should be undertaken, but this may include
  - Play Value, Play England qualitative assessment tool and compliance with EU Standard EN1176

In addition to access and quality, other needs assessment criteria may include:

1. Demographics in relation to play spaces (to identify gaps in access)
2. Areas of anti-social behaviour
3. Areas of higher % of obesity or overweight children
4. Area of multiple deprivation

**Resources:**

This is likely to require:

- Data from district councils (number/ quality assessments/ mapping)

- Mapping of demographics, obesity and anti-social behaviour County-wide
- Officer time - agreed definitions on access and quality

### Section 2 & 3: Consultation/ Feedback

The needs assessment should initially establish the current consultation activity around play spaces from across the County and local areas. Targeted consultation may then need to be sought if there are gaps in information.

Resources:

- Desk based collation of all previous and current consultation activity on play
- Potential resource implication if additional consultation activity is required

### Section 4: A review of best practice, national policy and legislative requirements

This would be a desk based exercise, in collaboration with district and parish councils to determine the 'must do's' regarding play provision and any sustainability requirements.

Resources:

Officer time (County and District)

### Section 5: Performance Information

In order to evidence that the strategy is successful and delivering value for money, it is important to be able to measure 'performance' around the strategy. There is currently one National Indicator which relates to play, NI199 'Children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas'. It may also be worth developing a range of related measures, or record against existing measures which relate to the quality and usage of play spaces, for example:

- Graffiti/ cleanliness
- Sampling of usage
- Adherence to national standards relating to health and safety/ EU standards

### Needs Assessment Outputs:

1. Needs Assessment report on Play in North Yorkshire
2. Agreed set of criteria from which to measure/ assess priority areas for development, and to inform the more detailed feasibility studies of proposed sites
3. Agreed data set for play provision for incorporation within the strategy.

Notes written by Lynette Dodds, on behalf of the Play Needs Assessment Group  
November 2008