

Copeland Play Strategy Update

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Deputy Leader Councillor George Clements
Portfolio Holder Councillors Hugh Branney
LEAD OFFICER: Keith Parker, Head of Leisure and Environmental
Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Toni Magean, Open Spaces Manager

Summary and Recommendation:

This report advises executive of proposals for the evolving Copeland Play Strategy Update to support the Big Lottery Application provisionally allocated to Copeland and identifies play policies to be considered as part of the strategy development.

That the Executive Board

1. Acknowledge the process being undertaken to develop the Copeland Play Strategy Update
2. That the key play policies identified are accepted as key priorities for consideration within the strategy and accepted for circulation to wider partners as part of the wider consultation.
3. Note that the final draft document will be presented to the Executive on the 4th September for their approval close to the deadline submission date of 7th September 2007. In order to comply with the Big Lottery requirements it is recommended that the submission be made in advance of the Executive meeting with the proviso that if not approved on the 4th September the Big Lottery application will be withdrawn.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents outline proposals for updating the current “Children’s Outdoor Play Area & Teen Space Strategy for Copeland” in order for it to comply with requirements to support a Big Lottery application for Copeland. A final draft will be presented to the Executive in September for full agreement.
- 1.2 It provides the context for a revised updated strategy and the process proposed to ensure Children’s aspirations are supported for free play within the Borough

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 In 2002, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills commissioned a review of children's play in England. The result was the report 'Getting Serious About Play' and this made a number of recommendations for the improvement of children's play opportunities. In March 2006 the Big Lottery Fund launched its Children's Play Initiative, which Local Authorities were charged with taking the lead in planning for play across their area and Copeland was provisionally allocated £200,000.
- 2.2 The proposal to update the current Copeland Strategy is to review the current strategy and to review all baseline data to enable a mapping of current services and play provisions within the borough. This will then present a formal identification of resources to support play and will also identify key gaps. Alongside this mapping exercise consultation has commenced with children and young people most recently engagement was undertaken with the Youth Council on 17th July 2007 to obtain their views on the evolving priorities. This consultation will continue to be undertaken with local children and stakeholders over the coming month through Summer Events and through local focus groups to obtain their views on the current issues affecting their communities.
- 2.3 The results of this initial consultation and mapping exercise will produce data, which will inform and direct the evolving strategy. Priority Issues identified for Free Play have already been identified through national analysis and have been further clarified through local engagement processes such as the Parish Plan process and through wider engagement with key stakeholders. This has led to the formation of some key priorities, which are seen as key to address within the evolving Copeland Play Strategy Update.
- 2.4 It is a requirement of the Big Lottery that any Strategy needs to obtain endorsement from key stakeholders in the form of a 'Play Partnership'. It is the intention of officers to approach the Local Planning Group for the West, which represents Children and Young People in West Cumbria to act as this vehicle.
- 2.5 Consultation is as taken place with the youth council at their first meeting in July, and will take place again in September. In addition to this the schools around the borough are been consulted on the draft strategy and a questionnaire is been distributed during the summer activity programme to obtain children and young peoples views on play within the Borough. Youth groups in Millom, Egremont and Cleator Moor have also been approached for their views on the emerging strategy.

3. OPTION TO BE CONSIDERED

3.1 Through initial local consultation and engagement, it has been established that there are already a wide range of play activities for children across the Borough. However, several issues have been identified initially that either prevent children playing or lessen the quality of their play experience, which are directing the formation of the strategy these are detailed within the Play Policies within Appendix 1 and are to form the basis of ongoing consultation with stakeholders. The issues are not particular to Copeland as they mirror those found nationally.

3.2 Initial consultation and results from Parish plans have identified the following key issues which young people felt needed to be addressed.

- There are not enough safe spaces in which to play and hang out, or enough services
- A need to provide a stronger voice for young people through the Youth Council
- Provision of teen space and services is inadequate
- There is insufficient holiday activities for young people
- Existing facilities are not being used fully, greater effort should be made to utilise the facilities more and improve on what already exists
- For teenagers there is a requirement for more challenging play areas and informal sports development
- Future provision of play services should support sports and informal youth club provision
- A requirement to make play facilities and schemes accessible and welcoming for children with disabilities; and for special provision as needed

3.4 In direct response to the gaps that are emerging the Copeland Play Strategy Update will aim to increase the quality and quantity of play opportunities for all children and young people in the Borough.

3.5 The objectives of the emerging strategy are summarized in a range of Play Policies which are:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| • Play Policy 1 | - | Provide a Strategic Approach to Play Provision |
| • Play Policy 2 | - | Provide Safe Play for All |
| • Play Policy 3 | - | Provide play needs according to age and gender |
| • Play Policy 4 | - | Provide inclusive play provision |
| • Play Policy 5 | - | Maximise funding opportunities |

- Play Policy 6 - Provide venues for play in appropriate locations/communities

3.6 A vital part of the strategy is engagement with children and young people and the wider community in the process. This has been achieved to date through the following ways:

- A series of visits, recorded interviews and formal discussions with various community groups and individuals
- Telephone and email consultation
- Surveys with young children and young people (ongoing during August 2007)
- Face to Face interviews
- Analysis of previous consultation and data gathered including parish plans and local neighborhoods

3.7 The key risk to the Council is that the strategy is, to some extent, dependant on the successful award from the Big Lottery final bidding round (deadline 10th September 2007). Should this be unsuccessful, the strategy could still go ahead but would be limited to developments that are part of other priorities for the Council and other partners such as Extended Schools. The strategy sets out clear criteria for future planning of open spaces and, therefore is relevant, even without big lottery funding.

4. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

4.1 Financial implications for production of the Copeland Play Strategy update are resourced through an approved financial carry over from 2006/7 to the value of £10,000. Consultants White Young Green have been appointed to undertake this work and to support the Big Lottery submission. Officer time is also being utilised to prepare the final documents.

4.2 Schemes identified within the final Action Plan will be funded through the Big Lottery allocation of £200,000. The Council are eligible to claim 10% of the allocation for management/monitoring of the programmed projects (20K). This will be used to support robust financial management and project management for the implementation and successful delivery of the BIG programme. Details will be provided in a more detailed report to the executive on September the 4th.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Copeland Play Strategy Update is being prepared and finalised for submission in September 2007 in accordance with the final bidding period for the Big Lottery.
- 5.2 This report sets the context of the strategy development and the process for finalisation, the final strategy and action plan will be presented for consideration at the next Executive meeting for approval in advance of the formal submission deadline 10th September 2007.

6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 5.1 The Copeland Play Strategy Update links directly to the following Corporate Plan activities/actions:
- Regenerating Copeland
 - Equality of opportunity
 - Safer Copeland
 - Leisure and Culture
 - Improving Health
 - 2.2.7 Maximising external funding
 - 2.4.5 Support development of Children and Young People Strategy
 - 3.2.6 Support diversionary activity for young people
 - 3.6.5 Support removal of barriers
 - 3.7.3 Support active lifestyles for young people

List of background documents:

Big Lottery Guidance – Local Authorities

List of Consultees:

Councillor George Clements
Councillor Hugh Branney
Corporate Team

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Promotes activities for young people
Impact on Sustainability	Approved schemes need to

	demonstrate sustainability
Impact on Rural Proofing	Supports young people activities in rural areas
Health and Safety Implications	None
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	Paragraph 2.1
Human Rights Act Implications	None

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision NO