

Title of Report:	Playbuilder
Report to be considered by:	Stronger Communities Select Committee
Date of Meeting:	21 st October 2010

Purpose of Report: To update the Stronger Communities Select Committee on Progress with the Playbuilder Scheme

Recommended Action: To note the information.

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority(ies):

- CPP1 – Support our communities through the economic downturn** – to alleviate the impact on different communities and individuals who find themselves out of work and/or disadvantaged
- CPP2 – Raise levels of educational achievement** – improving school performance levels
- CPP3 – Reduce crime and the fear of crime**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Theme(s):

- CPT1 - Better Roads and Transport**
- CPT2 - Thriving Town Centres**
- CPT3 - Affordable Housing**
- CPT4 - High Quality Planning**
- CPT5 - Cleaner and Greener**
- CPT6 - Vibrant Villages**
- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
- CPT8 - A Healthier Life**
- CPT9 - Successful Schools and Learning**
- CPT10 - Promoting Independence**
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
- CPT12 - Including Everyone**
- CPT13 - Value for Money**
- CPT14 - Effective People**
- CPT15 - Putting Customers First**
- CPT16 - Excellent Performance Management**

Portfolio Member Details

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Executive Report

1. Background

- 1.1 West Berkshire was awarded a Playbuilder Grant of £1,112,808 capital and £44,268 revenue in 2009 with the expectation of building new play facilities or refurbishing existing dilapidated play facilities. We were required to complete at least 11 individual projects in year 1 (financial year 2009/2010) and a further 11 projects in year 2 (financial year 2010/2011).

2. Progress – Year 1

- 2.1 A Playbuilder Steering Group was established to oversee the project (membership provided at Appendix 1).
- 2.2 The revenue grant was used to fund a Project Manager post 2 days per week to coordinate arrangements and assist local partners in planning and implementing their projects in line with the Playbuilder requirements.
- 2.3 Bids were invited from District Councillors, Town/Parish Councils and the voluntary sector.
- 2.4 In year 1, 12 projects were identified and successfully completed within the year at a total cost of £553,448. These completed projects have greatly improved access to play in the local areas and have attracted much positive feedback from local communities (a list of year 1 completed projects is provided at Appendix 2).

3. Current situation – Year 2

- 3.1 In good time for the expected year 2 completion schedule, briefing events were held, bids invited and a further 12 projects agreed for funding (a list is provided at Appendix 3).
- 3.2 On 14th July Michael Gove announced a suspension of the grant, required that an immediate stop be put on any new work and required each local authority to provide details of the progress to date with individual projects. This was so that the DfE could complete a review and decide which projects if any would have their funding honoured. A decision on this was scheduled for the end of August. However, no decision has yet been announced by the 8th October and no response has been given to requests for clarification of the revised timescale for a decision. The announcement on the 14th July also withdrew the revenue grant which had been expected to be paid to the Council partway through the year. This meant that the excellent Project Manager had to be made redundant at short notice. No response has yet been received to a request to the DfE to cover the in-year revenue funding already incurred prior to announcement of suspension of the grant.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This project was highly successful in year 1 in engaging local communities, children and young people and local partners in improving access to high quality play experience. The proposed and potential withdrawal of funding in year 2 has caused great disappointment, frustration and uncertainty in the 12 local

communities who were in the process of implementing their projects. While awaiting a decision the optimum summer months for such building work have passed. Some local projects are now exploring alternative sources of funding pending a Playbuilder decision by the DfE.

Appendices

Appendix A – Membership of the Playbuilder Steering Group

Appendix B – Playbuilder Year 1 Projects completed

Appendix C – Playbuilder Year 2 Projects

Appendix A

Membership of the Playbuilder Steering Group

Barbara Alexander, Councillor
Irene Neill, Councillor
Alan Macro, Councillor
David Hogg, Head of Youth Service & Commissioning, WBC
Andrew Cooch, Sovereign Housing
Deborah Wyatt, Project Manager, WBC
Marcus Franks, Sovereign Housing
June Graves, Head of Housing & Performance, WBC
Janet Scott, Education, WBC
Steward Souden, Countryside and Environment, WBC
Mark Vernon, Youth Service, WBC

Minutes only:

Angela Turton, Education, WBC
April Peberdy, Berkshire NHS
Davy Pearson, YOT, WBC
Elaine Walker, Equalities, WBC
Gary Lugg, WBC
Shelly Hambrecht, CAWB
Jim Holah, Sovereign
Jane Seymour, Education, WBC
Mark Edwards, WBC
Rachel Palin, WBC
Robin Rickard, Thames Valley Police
Sarah Ward, CAWB
Jeremy Speed, Berkshire NHS
Susan Powell, Safer Communities Partnership, WBC

Appendix B

Playbuilder Year 1 Projects completed

Playbuilder Contribution

Boxford Play Area	£50,000
Donnington Recreation Ground Play Area	£50,000
Pangbourne Playground Redevelopment	£49,448
Speen Recreation Ground	£50,000
Bulpit Lane Skatepark, Hungerford	£50,000
Bodin Gardens, Greenham	£50,000
Christie Heights, Greenham	£50,000
Digby Road, Speen	£45,000
Lister Close, Purley	£50,000
Pigeons Farm, Greenham	£50,000
Fred Dawson Memorial, Upper Bucklebury	£9,000
Greyberry Copse, Greenham	£50,000
Year 1 Total	£553,448

Appendix C

Playbuilder Year 2 Projects

	Proposed Playbuilder Contribution
Almond Avenue	£55,000.00
Chieveley Skate Park	£14,000.00
Cromwell Road, Newbury	£27,000.00
Fairground, Stratfield Mortimer	£50,000.00
Fifth Road, Newbury	£50,000.00
Great Shefford Recreation Ground	£50,000.00
Hampstead Norreys Playground	£50,000.00
Siegecross Play Area	£50,000.00
Skatepark at Holybrook	£50,000.00
Stockcross Recreation Ground	£50,000.00
Turnham's Farm Rec	£60,000.00
Victoria Skatepark	£50,000.00
Total Year 2 Planned Spend (Currently on hold pending DfE review of the scheme)	£556,000.00