

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 17 th January 2017
Report Subject	Play Areas, Play Schemes and Strategic Play Forum Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Organisational Change)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has made a commitment to the sustaining of play activity in the County through:

- Continuation of the revenue match funding for play areas (£0.105m per annum);
- Provisional allocation of capital funding through the capital programme to refurbish play areas (£0.887m over three years subject to Council decision in February);
- To continue to maintain all play areas during 2017/18;
- One year of transition funding to enable play schemes to continue during 2016 after the cessation of Welsh Government Grant from Families First;
- The agreement to re-invigorate the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum to co-ordinate play activity across Flintshire.

This report provides a progress update against these issues including recommending approval of the match funding schemes for play areas detailed at appendix 1, and the allocation of a one off sum of £0.040m to support play schemes in 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	<p>To adopt the approach outlined in this report to continue to sustain play activity in Flintshire including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement of the play area match funding schemes detailed at Appendix 1; • The allocation of a one off fund of £0.040m to support a Flintshire play scheme programme for 2017.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND INFORMATION
1.01	<p>The Council operates a revenue match funding scheme aimed at maintaining play areas that requires a match fund from Town and Community Councils. Detailed at Appendix A are the list of schemes put forward by Town and Community Councils. The total list adds up to £0.123m which is £0.018m over the budget available this year. It is proposed to roll the revenue funding for 2015/16 and 2016/17 into one fund to deliver all these schemes which would leave £0.087m available for match funding schemes in 2017/18. If agreed it is proposed to communicate to Town and Community Councils these decisions early in the New Year.</p>
1.02	<p>The Council has provisionally allocated £0.887m of capital funding to refurbish play areas over the next three financial years (subject to agreement of the capital programme in February). It is proposed based on need and sustainability to bring a programme of proposed projects to Cabinet early in 2017.</p>
1.03	<p>This year the Council provided one off funding of £0.080m to continue the level of play scheme provision provided in previous years (see Appendix B). These schemes are funded partly by the County Council and partly by Town and Community Councils. The Council has made it clear to communities that this funding would not continue in 2017/18 and has been working to enable sustainability of provision without funding. The result is that the Council is proposing to provide a three week offer to all areas apart from Connahs Quay (which has been a much larger scheme) that Town and Community Councils would buy back from the Council. Town and Community Councils have been verbally notified of these changes including the costs for their specific schemes. Some have indicated that they put funding aside for next year, others have said that they have put part of this funding away and that they would need to reduce provision in line with funding. Based on this feedback this report proposes that the Council allocate a one off fund of £0.040m to enable the costs for Town and Community Councils to be reduced by an average of 50%. For example this would mean in areas with one play scheme that Town and Community Councils paid on average £900 last year and the increase for this years scheme, after taking into account the proposed Flintshire Council contribution, will be £409 making a total cost of £1309 for the Town and Community Council. Without this contribution the increase in costs in this example would have been £818.</p>
1.04	<p>Given the requirement of the national Play Sufficiency Assessment and the challenges of providing these type of services in the current climate it was agreed to re-establish the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum to co-ordinate work across the County. An initial seminar was held in November 2016. An event to 'kick-start' this process was held on November 2nd at Deeside Leisure Centre, facilitated by Play Wales and Doctor Stuart Lester with an invitation extended to all community members and officers. The next steps will be to identify in late January/Early February, a new Chair/Vice chair</p>

	for the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum, and the arrangement of training for members after May 2017.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resource implications for the play area proposals contained at Appendix 1 can be managed within revenue budgets for 2016/17 and 2017/18. The proposal for a one off allocation of £0.040m to support play schemes would require a one off allocation from Council reserves.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Ongoing updates to the County Forum and individual discussions with Town and Community Councils.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The lack of sustainability of play schemes – An offer has been developed based on discussions with town and community councils and following their formal responses this programme will be adapted to best meet needs and funding available.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Play Area Match Funding Proposals 2016/17 Appendix 2 – Play Schemes 2016 Appendix 3 – Play Sufficiency Seminar Report November 2016

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) - A duty under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010