



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## *Committee Report*

**Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 19TH JULY 2007

**Title:** DRAFT PLAY POLICY & STRATEGY

**Report of:** DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

**Report reference:** CS48/07

### **Summary:**

The Executive Committee at its meeting on 2nd July referred the attached report regarding the draft Play Strategy and Policy to this meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for discussion and comment

### **Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:**

Members are requested to discuss and comment on the detail in the draft Policy and Strategy

### **Recommendations:**

Members are recommended to consider the detail and implications of the draft Policy and Strategy before referring it back to the Executive Committee for final approval

**Contact Officer:** Rob Burns

**Ext:** 7352

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: Community Engagement

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Date of Meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2007

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Public

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Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

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Inside Policy Framework

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Title: A PLAY POLICY AND STRATEGY FOR CARLISLE

Report of: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report reference: CS31/07

### Summary:

The report presents a background to the development of a Play Policy and Strategy for Carlisle and seeks comments on and approval for the principles outlined in the draft documents presented.

### Recommendations:

Members are recommended

- a) to consider the draft policy and refer it to the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> July and then to be considered by the Executive Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> July for final approval.
- b) To comment on the draft strategy prior to this also being considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- c) to approve, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and the Member Champion for Children and Young People, the preparation and submission of a bid to the Big Lottery Fund along the lines outlined in Section 4 of this report.

Contact Officer: Rob Burns

Ext: 7352

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In early 2006, Carlisle City Council, together with every other District Council in England, was invited to submit a bid to the Big Lottery Fund for projects which would enhance children's play provision in the area.
- 1.2 Each District was allocated a maximum grant for which to apply, based on a variety of social indicators and Carlisle was offered up to £220,000, which there is no requirement to match fund.
- 1.3 In order to obtain the grant, a bid has to be prepared and submitted before the final deadline of September 10th 2007.
- 1.4 However, the criteria for bids is fairly rigid and applicants must have in place a Play Policy, a Play Strategy and a local Play Partnership and projects must meet the directive of the 'three frees' ie free of charge, freedom to come and go (open access) and freedom to choose (from a range of options).
- 1.5 To date, a number of Authorities have applied, but not all have been successful, some have chosen not to apply because they cannot meet the criteria, but most have selected to try to meet the September '07 deadline.

### **2.0 CARLISLE'S POSITION**

- 2.1 Although Carlisle City Council has an enviable record for punching above it's weight, both in terms of play activities and playground provision for children and young people, it has mostly been done without the context of a formal Play Policy or Strategy and also, although almost all the provision for play activities is provided in association with other partners, no formal Play Partnership exists.
- 2.2 Consequently, in order to meet the criteria for submitting a bid, a considerable effort had to be made to bring these issues together and the documents referred for discussion with this report are the results of those efforts to date, which have involved several key partners and much local consultation, as well as the input of a key Consultant who fortunately, had previous experience of preparing a successful Strategy and bid for another District Council.

- 2.3 The Strategy has the approval of all 27 Member organisations of the fledgling Carlisle Play Partnership and Play England, the national support and mentoring body for children's play, have been involved and continue at this stage, to give advice.

### 3.0 **THE POLICY and STRATEGY**

- 3.1 From the outset of the development of the Policy and Strategy, all the partners were agreed that the process should not just be an exercise to satisfy the bidding process, but that it should be a worthwhile and genuine effort to develop a plan which would enhance provision for play opportunities across the City and that it should be a 'working document' whose actions all partners could buy into and work towards achieving.
- 3.2 That is why for instance, one of the actions in the Action Plan is for the Strategy eventually to be owned, managed and monitored by the Play Partnership and the reason that that is still an aspiration rather than a reality, is that the timescale for completing the documents and developing the Partnership has been such that it has not been possible to develop the Partnership to a state where it can yet own the actions or progress the bid.
- 3.3 As the key provider of children's activities in the City, it is appropriate for the Council to take the lead role in developing the Strategy and the Partnership and this is reflected in the content and in the references to the Council's key objectives and the relationship between the Play Partnership and the LSP Children and Young People's Group.
- 3.4 The Strategy is not intended to replace the Council's Play Areas Strategy, but does make references to it and complements it and much of the work done on it's development will also contribute to the emerging Green Spaces Strategy.
- 3.5 It should also be noted that whilst the Policy and Strategy as presented are complete documents, they are not yet the definitive documents and will be treated very much as works in progress and they are designed to be flexible enough to accommodate change and to remain relevant, particularly in the rapidly changing world of childrens' services.
- 3.6 The process is very much in line with the recommendations of the Safer Stronger Communities White Paper and will build on the Council's internal review aimed at

re-shaping the delivery of Community Development services and improving neighbourhood working.

- 3.7 The actions outlined in the Action Plan in the Strategy will contribute significantly to the achievement of the Council's key objectives of creating a cleaner, greener and safer community and to developing the ethos and culture of a Learning City

#### **4. THE BID**

- 4.1 The bid to the Big Lottery Fund will reflect some of the needs expressed by children and young people in the variety of consultations which have been carried out and which will be available as a Background report to go with the Policy and Strategy.
- 4.2 Those background papers are not presented with this report but are available from the Community Support office and copies will be placed in the Group offices, should members require sight of them.
- 4.3 They will form part of the completed package that eventually is sent with the Big Lottery Fund application.
- 4.4 The criteria for applications states that the minimum amount for any particular project should be £50,000 and that bids should be for new innovations, not to subsidise or replace existing provision and that projects should be sustainable.
- 4.5 With this in mind, the Play Partnership has agreed that the best use of the grant, which is most likely to achieve the projected outcomes for play provision in the City, will be the recruitment of two Play Rangers for a period of three years.
- 4.6 They would be employed by the City Council and would work with the existing staff who have a remit to work with children and young people, eg Play Workers, Youth Workers, Countryside staff, Sports Development staff and would develop new ways of engaging and working with the target group, particularly on environmental and 'natural play' projects such as Forest Schools. (note on Forest Schools concept attached)
- 4.7 The team would use the face2face mobile resource, which has recently been replaced having been destroyed in the floods and would work in urban and rural areas of the City.
- 4.8 It is envisaged that over the next three years, there will be a re-definition of the way services to children and young people are currently delivered, so that when the period is over, there will be a seamless continuation of the service, with the Council's own staff working in a more co-ordinated and cross cutting way.
- 4.9 This will mean also, a closer integration and co-operation between not only the Council's own staff, but other partners who deliver similar services.

- 4.10 The full detail of the initiative has still to be articulated, but the concept is one which has received favour during discussions with Play England, because it does not particularly seek to achieve the short term benefit of a quick fix capital project, but is essentially about creating a secure future for play services.
- 4.11 It is anticipated that the project will take approx £170,000 of the grant, which will include all costs associated with employment on fixed term contracts. The remaining £50,000 will be used to develop a Play Trail, initially from Bitts Park through the City Centre to the Railway Station, although the concept can be developed over a longer period to go from one end of the City boundary to the other.
- 4.12 This will involve a series of inter active structures, sculptures and other features which children and young people and indeed anybody, can 'play' with. The idea can be integrated into some of the Renaissance proposals and has emerged from the various consultations carried out with children and young people, who have been vigorous in their criticism of the lack of interesting features for them in the City Centre area.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Consultation to date has been extensive and included all relevant internal departments of the City Council, the County Council and members of the Play Partnership, as well as consultation with children and young people themselves.
- 5.2 A comprehensive summary of the consultation undertaken so far is included in the Background Reports section of the Strategy, which is available in the Group Offices or from the Community Support Office.
- 5.3 The consultation process will be on going and a major exercise will be carried out between now and the end of this year to ensure that every organisation or individual with an interest in the development of children's play in the City, will have the opportunity to comment on and potentially influence the continuing development of the Strategy.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are recommended

- a) to consider the draft policy and refer it to the meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> July and then to be considered by the Executive Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> July for final approval.

- b) To comment on the draft strategy prior to this also being considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- c) to approve, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and the Member Champion for Children and Young People, the preparation and submission of a bid to the Big Lottery Fund along the lines outlined in Section 4 of this report.

## **7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Policy and Strategy are required as part of a proposed bid to the Big Lottery Fund which has a deadline date of 10th September 2007.

In order to meet that deadline, the Bid will need to be prepared for distribution and agreement by all the Play Partnership members by the middle of August and consequently, there will be little time for further discussion and amendment following the meeting at the end of July if approval, even conditional, is not granted.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – The Strategy and bid can be implemented from existing staffing resources
- Financial – If the bid is successful, the Council will receive a grant of £220,000. The projects in the bid will be managed by relevant staff in the Community Support Team in line with the Council's financial procedures and principles.
- Legal – Comments included in body of report
- Corporate – The Policy and Strategy make recommendations which ensure that provision for children will be considered at all levels and consequently, all Directorates of the Council may from time to time be required to discuss implications on service delivery. This can be addressed through the Children and Young People's internal working group
- Risk Management – The Policy and Strategy will lead to a better co-ordination between providers of opportunities and will enhance the management of risk in provision of services for children and young people

- Equality Issues – The Policy and Strategy recognises the necessity to consider and address issues of equality and diversity in the provision of opportunities for childrens play
- Environmental – N/A
- Crime and Disorder – There are no direct implications arising from the Policy and Strategy but there is recognition that improved provision and activities for children and young people will offer diversions from other less sociable activities
- Impact on Customers – The Policy and Strategy and a successful outcome for the Big Lottery Fund bid, will lead to the development of significantly improved facilities and activities for children and young people

M Battersby  
Head of Community Services  
12<sup>th</sup> June 2007



## **Appendix**

### **Consultation Partners**

#### **Carlisle City Council**

- Planning Services
- Green Spaces Team
- Sport Development
- Children's & Young People Development Team
- Environmental service
- John Egan – Children's Champion
- Policy & Performance
- Development Services
- Talkin Tarn
- Learning Access Officer
- Community Centres

#### **Carlisle Housing Association**

#### **Parish Council Association**

#### **PSLA**

#### **Cumbria Council Council – Children's Services**

#### **Cumbria Council Council Library Services**

#### **Cumbria Council County – Neighbourhood Development**

#### **Connexions Cumbria**

#### **Cumbria Cerebral Palsy**

#### **Equality & Diversity Partnership**

#### **St Aidan's School**

#### **Children's Centre Longtown**

#### **Sure Start Carlisle South**

#### **CVS**

#### **Play Raffles**

#### **Carlisle LSP – Children & Young People's Group**

#### **Cumbria Police**

# **PLAY FOR TODAY PLAY FOR TOMORROW**

**“A Play Policy and Strategy for the Children and Young People  
of Carlisle and District”**

**2007 - 2012**



**Draft**

## **SECTION TWO**

### **The Policy**

# PLAY FOR TODAY PLAY FOR TOMORROW

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**"Working in partnership, and reflecting the diversity of communities, both urban and rural, Carlisle City Council aims to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality play opportunities, activities and environments."**

# INTRODUCTION

**“Play For Today, Play For Tomorrow”** is a play policy and strategy for the children and young people of Carlisle and District that has been endorsed by Carlisle City Council.

The policy and strategy is the result of a collaboration involving over fifty participants from across Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council departments, voluntary sector organisations and other agencies committed to enhancing the quality of children and young people’s lives.

**“Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow”** supports the following statement made by the Children’s Play Council in 2004 *“ Local authorities have more influence on children and young people’s play and free time activities than any other organisation. The daily decisions and actions of many local authority departments, in particular planning, transport, highways, education, leisure, parks, housing, community, safety, regeneration and environmental protection, have a major impact on where and how local children and young people are able to play.”*

**“Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow”** has been shaped by the views of the children and young people of Carlisle and District and presents not only aspirations for the future but also a framework for action!

**“Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow”** is presented in three sections:

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Section one serves to reflect on the history of Carlisle City Council’s commitment to the play sector, to illustrate the ‘state of play’ in Carlisle and District, to consider the current national context for play and to demonstrate the consultation and partnership which has served to inform both the policy and strategy.

## PLAY POLICY

Section two identifies an agreed set of principles and definitions about play and its value in terms of children’s well being and development. It aims to encourage the wide range of individuals and organisations whose services impact (either directly or indirectly) on children and young people’s play opportunities to adopt the policy, and to take it into account when reviewing existing, and developing new services.

## PLAY STRATEGY

Section three has been based on the audit and summary of consultations contained within the **Background Information**. These combined with the agreed vision, values and principles outlined in the **Play Policy** have contributed to the emergence of five strategic outcomes which have secured the foundations for the **Play Strategy**.

# THE PLAY POLICY

Whether it is fun or serious, polite or mischievous, children and young people love to play. It's how they connect with the world around them and how they learn to value themselves and others. Play is most often activity for its own sake, but it is also a vital preparation for the future.

**"Play For Today, Play For Tomorrow"** combines the ideas, experiences, and energy of many different types of play provision across the Carlisle and District. Through dialogue with the Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council directorates as well as voluntary agencies, local communities, and the children and young people of Carlisle themselves, we have produced an exciting blueprint for the future of play.

**"Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow"** aims to ensure that quality, accessible and inclusive local play spaces, services and facilities are created, improved and developed to meet the needs of all children and young people in Carlisle and District.

**"Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow"** is based on the following vision statement and definitions:

## Vision Statement

"Working in partnership, and reflecting the diversity of communities, both urban and rural, Carlisle City Council aims to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality play opportunities, activities and environments."

## Definition of Play

*"Play means what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons."*

**Getting Serious About Play; DCMS 2004**

## Definition of Play Provision

" .....a space, some facilities or equipment or a set of activities intended to give children the opportunity to play as defined above. At its most successful, it offers children and young people as much choice, control and freedom as possible within reasonable boundaries. This is often best achieved with adult support or supervision. The children and young people may themselves choose play involving certain rules or, in some cases, informal sport."

**Getting Serious About Play: DCMS 2004**

## Age Ranges

**"Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow"** does not prescribe age ranges. It recognises the fact that children and young people of all ages want and need to play, and that although young people would not necessarily identify with play, they still need the same time, space and freedom to follow their own ideas and interests, in their own way and for their own reasons.

## Play - children and young people's rights

**"Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow"** endorses Articles 12, 23 and 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which was ratified by the UK government in 1991:

- **Article 12**  
'State Parties shall assure the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.'
- **Article 23**  
'State Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate active participation in the community.'
- **Article 31**  
'State Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.'

## Why do we need a play policy?

Adults control children and young people's time and space to play, adults are also responsible for creating the many barriers which restrict children and young people's play opportunities, and reduce the availability of play spaces - as adults we have a duty to protect and preserve those opportunities and spaces and to create, develop and safeguard them for the future.

Carlisle City Council's Play Policy is the first step towards protecting, preserving, creating, developing and safeguarding children and young people's play environments and spaces.

We need a play policy to ensure that the following key principles and values are taken into account and reflected in the Strategy:

**A consistent approach to play:**

The play policy agrees a set of principles and definitions about play and its value for children and young people's well being and development.

**Children and young people's needs:**

A play policy provides the context in which the focus can be shifted from existing institutions and practice to the needs of children and young people, creating the possibility of change, innovation, and long term development.

**To clarify and raise the awareness of the value of play provision:**

To all individuals, agencies and bodies whose decisions impact (directly/indirectly) on the quality and quantity of children and young people's play opportunities.

**Community involvement:**

The process of creating a policy unlocks local interest and energy and creates commitment to services; children and young people, parents, carers and local communities get involved.

**Ensuring quality:**

To ensure indicators are built into service objectives to ensure that children and young people benefit from quality play opportunities and environments.

**Managing hazard and risk through safer practice:**

Children and young people need to take risks when they play. To ensure safe practice, indicators and risk assessments must be built into service objectives to establish a link between service and practice and the needs of children and young people.

**Allocation of resources:**

A play policy provides the rationale for an allocation of resources which can be explained and justified both in relation to competing claims from other services and to the public. Children and young people benefit from expenditure being more accurately targeted to their needs and wishes.

**Consistency between training and practice:**

The commitment to the principles specified in the play policy provides the link between local service objectives and practice and the national standards for play and youth work education and training to ensure the professional development of staff and volunteers.

## **Play & Every Child Matters - value of play**

Carlisle City Council believes that play has a crucial role to play in terms of contributing to Every Child Matters: Change for Children five outcomes which embody the Government's overarching approach to ensure the well being of all children and young people.

### **Play & being healthy:**

Play is crucial to health contributing to social, physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional and psychological development.

Play provides opportunities to experience a range of emotions in a 'safe' way, promoting resilience and self esteem.

### **Play & staying safe:**

Good play provision protects children and young people, reducing unacceptable levels of danger while allowing the opportunity for challenges and using their own initiative.

Enables children and young people to take risks, to think through decisions, gain increased self confidence & greater resilience.

### **Play & enjoying and achieving:**

The essence of play is enjoyment, giving children and young people the chance for free, uninhibited play is essential to their enjoyment of life. Play also promotes a sense of achievement. When playing, children and young people define their own goals and interests, decide what is success or failure and pursue those goals in their own way. Free play allows children and young people a psychologically safe space in which to explore boundaries, try out new roles and experiences, and be fully absorbed in what they are doing and to learn and grow as individuals and as members of a community.

Play allows for the development of problem-solving, language and literacy skills as children and young people develop their social skills and express their emotions. Play is also vital to the development of children's imaginations and creative interests and abilities.

### **Play & making a positive contribution:**

Good play provision should be "child and young person led" and enable children and young people to make decisions about their opportunities and environments. Individuals and organisations are encouraged to involve children and young people in play audits and discussions about their play and free-time needs. Opportunities to make a positive contribution result in more appropriate



provision, and allow children and young people to develop skills and knowledge, and ensure they are valued in the community.

### **Play & achieving economic well-being:**

Good play opportunities encourage children and young people to develop social & intellectual skills, which help them do better at school and can ultimately lead to greater employment opportunities.

Good play provision enables parents to work or train thus bringing economic benefits to the family as a whole.

## **Play & risk**

While the safety of children and young people at play is a vital consideration, Carlisle City Council believes it should not limit their experience.

Carlisle City Council believes that when children and young people are allowed to take acceptable risks in their play activities they are less likely to search out unacceptable challenges and risks elsewhere. By giving them the opportunity to assess risks for themselves in a variety of settings and situations they can start to develop skills needed to distinguish between levels of risk in the wider world.

Carlisle City Council welcomes and endorses the Play Safety Forum's Position Statement on Managing Risk in Play Provision:

*"Children need and want to take risks when they play. Play provision aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, play provision aims to manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury."*

## **Play & equality & diversity**

Carlisle City Council believes that quality play opportunities, activities and environments should be accessible to everyone irrespective of age, gender, economic or social circumstances, ethnic, cultural background or origin or individual abilities and will not be discriminated against in line with Carlisle City Council's Equalities Policy.

## Play & inclusion

*"Inclusion means everyone having the right to choose to take part in all local services - and being equally welcomed to do so."*

**It Doesn't just Happen**

KIDS Associate Philip Douch

Carlisle City Council believes quality play provision should operate within an inclusive framework, and will work in partnership towards ensuring accessibility and opportunities for all children and young people.

## Play & the voluntary sector

Carlisle City Council recognises and values the vital contribution the voluntary sector makes in providing for children and young people's play. Carlisle City Council is committed to working in partnership with local communities to develop quality, accessible and inclusive local play spaces, services and facilities to meet the needs of all children and young people, and to work towards sustainability.

## Play - consultation & participation

Carlisle City Council upholds Article 12 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children and young people have the right to express their views and to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Carlisle City Council recognises and works within the national standards for the active involvement of children and young people - 'Hear by Right'.

Carlisle City Council values children and young people as citizens in their own right, recognises that they are the best authorities on their own lives and actively encourages their involvement and participation in the decision-making processes that affect them directly

*"Children and young people's views will be sought and taken into account when making decisions about their play opportunities. They have expert knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their local area for play."*

Guide to Preparing Play Strategies  
Ken Livingstone 2005

## Play & formal education

Play and formal education should be complementary. Through play, children and young people learn by experience what cannot be taught. They develop a sense of themselves and their freedom and ability to make choices, they learn to work with others, to solve problems, overcome anxieties and much more.

Carlisle City Council ranks play alongside formal education in terms of its fundamental role in enabling children and young people to engage positively with the complexities of the world around them. They endorse the view expressed by Tessa Jowell Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport in 2005:

*"Both my department and the Department for Education and Skills believe that play, recreation and leisure outcomes sit equally alongside the others that authorities and their partners need to consider when making decisions about the provision of co-ordinated children and young people's services."*

## Play & culture

Through play, children and young people have the opportunity to learn how values, beliefs and traditions transform into the ways of life they see around them. This is the kind of understanding that simply cannot be taught by formal education.

*"The culture of childhood has play at its heart. By recognising this, and fully incorporating play provision into Local Cultural Strategies, local authorities will be extending the enhanced quality of life that the strategies are designed to achieve to children, whose voices too often go unheard in the planning and development of local services but who represent all our futures".*

Rt Hon Richard Caborn MP / Minister for Sport DCMS  
Play as Culture 2002

Carlisle City Council will ensure that play forms a key part of future cultural developments in Carlisle.

## Play & shared public space

Carlisle City Council believes that children and young people should be able to play safely in a wide range of public spaces, including those near their homes. Planning, design and architecture, along with sensitive approaches to

overseeing public space should be able to create sociable environments that values children and young people as part of the wider community.

*"Children being able to have fun in public spaces is one of the hallmarks of a vital and vibrant city ..... All children and young people should be able to play within their local neighbourhoods."*

Guide to Preparing Play Strategies  
Ken Livingstone 2005

## Seven 'Best Play' objectives

Carlisle City Council has adopted the seven 'Best Play' objectives outlined below which have been developed by the Children's Play Council.

The objectives are broad statements that are intended to set out how the definition of play and the underpinning values and principles should be put into practice. They form the basis against which play provision for children and young people will be evaluated.

### **Objective one:**

The provision extends the choice and control that children and young people have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.

### **Objective two:**

The provision recognises that children and young people need to test boundaries and respond positively to that need.

### **Objective three:**

The provision manages the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children and young people safe from harm.

### **Objective four:**

The provision maximises the range of play opportunities.

### **Objective five:**

The provision fosters independence and self-esteem.

### **Objective six:**

The provision fosters children and young people's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction.

**Objective seven:**

The provision fosters children and young people's well-being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

## **Carlisle City Council's commitment to the value of play**

Carlisle City Council's belief in the value of play provision for children and young people is informed by the following values and principles highlighted in The Assembly Government's Play Policy Implementation Plan, Play in Wales:

- We respect all children and young people for their own unique combination of qualities and capabilities;
- Children and young people play an active role in determining their own cultural lives and have views that must be heard and taken into account;
- We will listen to the opinions of children and young people and take into account their views on health, safety, and respect for the needs of others;
- Children and young people have a right to play in secure environments free from unacceptable levels of risk, and with complete trust for the adults involved;
- When they take control of their own play activity, children and young people can enrich their experience and enhance their development. We will aim to empower them and help them to increase their choices;
- For children and young people, play is all about fun. There needn't be a goal or end product, although children and young people have the freedom to decide; and
- As adults we must have consistency and clarity in our values. Children and young people must see a direct connection between what we say and what actually happens. They need to feel part of a community of trust and co-operation.

# THE PLAY STRATEGY - THE OUTCOMES

Carlisle City Council in collaboration with Carlisle Play Partnership, and informed by the results of consultation with children and young people have developed and ratified the following outcomes which form the basis of the Play Strategy:

1. To develop supervised play provision for all children and young people to meet and play safely, in a range of inspiring, stimulating and challenging environments, both natural and artificial.
2. To develop unsupervised play provision for all children and young people to meet and play safely, in a range of inspiring, stimulating and challenging environments, both natural and artificial.
3. To seek the views of all children and young people, to encourage them to participate and become actively involved in the decision making processes that affect them.
4. To provide an infrastructure of support to ensure the development of partnerships to affirm the benefits of play and to build capacity within key stakeholders including local communities.
5. To develop a skilled, motivated and sustainable workforce to work with children, young people and communities.

## FIND OUT MORE!

### **Rob Burns**

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# **PLAY FOR TODAY PLAY FOR TOMORROW**

**“A Play Policy and Strategy for the Children and Young  
People of Carlisle District”**

**2007 – 2012**

**Draft**

## **SECTION THREE**

### **The Strategy**

**CARLISLE  
CITY COUNCIL**



**[www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)**



# **PLAY FOR TODAY PLAY FOR TOMORROW**

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**“Working in partnership, and reflecting the diversity of communities, both urban and rural, Carlisle City Council aims to ensure that all children and young people have access to quality play opportunities, activities and environments.”**

# INTRODUCTION

**“Play For Today, Play For Tomorrow”** is a play policy and strategy for the children and young people of Carlisle and District that has been endorsed by Carlisle City Council.

The policy and strategy is the result of a collaboration involving over fifty participants from across Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council departments, voluntary sector organisations and other agencies committed to enhancing the quality of children and young people’s lives.

**“Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow”** supports the following statement made by the Children's Play Council in 2004 *“ Local authorities have more influence on children and young people's play and free time activities than any other organisation. The daily decisions and actions of many local authority departments, in particular planning, transport, highways, education, leisure, parks, housing, community, safety, regeneration and environmental protection, have a major impact on where and how local children and young people are able to play.”*

**“Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow”** has been shaped by the views of the children and young people of Carlisle and District and presents not only aspirations for the future but also a framework for action!

**“Play for Today, Play for Tomorrow”** is presented in three sections:

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Section one serves to reflect on the history of Carlisle City Council's commitment to the play sector, to illustrate the 'state of play' in Carlisle and District, to consider the current national context for play and to demonstrate the consultation and partnership which has served to inform both the policy and strategy.

## PLAY POLICY

Section two identifies an agreed set of principles and definitions about play and its value in terms of children’s well being and development. It aims to encourage the wide range of individuals and organisations whose services impact (either directly or indirectly) on children and young people’s play opportunities to adopt the policy, and to take it into account when reviewing existing, and developing new services.

## PLAY STRATEGY

Section three has been based on the audit and summary of consultations contained within the **Background Information**. These combined with the agreed vision, values and principles outlined in the

**Play Policy** have contributed to the emergence of five strategic outcomes which have secured the foundations for the **Play Strategy**.

## Carlisle Play Partnership

Carlisle City Council has established a multi agency Play Partnership to oversee and drive the Play Policy and Strategy forward.

Representation on the Play Partnership is growing and currently includes membership from the following organisations:

Youth Work in Cumbria Partnership

PCT

Community Safety

Cumbria Youth Service

Diocesan representative

Carlisle City Council

- Planning Services
- Green Spaces Team
- Sport Development
- Children's & Young People Development Team
- Environmental service
- John Egan – Children's Champion
- Policy & Performance
- Development Services
- Talkin Tarn
- Learning Access Officer
- Community Centres
- Tullie House

Carlisle Housing Association

Parish Council Association

PSLA

Cumbria Council Council – Children's Services

Cumbria Council Council Library Services

Cumbria Council County – Neighbourhood Development

Connexions Cumbria

Cumbria Cerebral Palsy

Equality & Diversity Partnership

St Aidan's School

Children's Centre Longtown

Sure Start Carlisle South

CVS

Play Raffles

## **Monitoring the Play Strategy**

The Strategy will be monitored by the Play Partnership, which will be facilitated by Carlisle City Council.

# ACTION PLAN

## OBJECTIVE ONE

To develop supervised play provision for all children and young people to meet and play safely, in a range of inspiring, stimulating and challenging environments, both natural and artificial.

Policy	Action	Lead	Partners	Performance Measure/ Milestone	Resource Implications	Time – frame
	To develop natural outdoor play environments e.g Forest Schools in both urban and rural areas	CSU	Green Spaces Team ECCP Newton Rigg College Local Schools County Council	One forest school project set up by ---	Training Funding Staff time Other agencies/schools Materials/equipment	S,M,L
	To improve and develop all year round play opportunities in local communities	CSU			Funding Training Staff time	ongoing
	To encourage and create opportunities to promote inclusive play provision	CSU	Community Support Sure Start Children's Services		Other agencies Funding Staff time	S,M
	To encourage the development of exciting, challenging play environments which offer the opportunity to take risks	Green Spaces Team				

## OBJECTIVE TWO

To develop unsupervised play provision for all children and young people to meet and play safely, in a range of inspiring, stimulating and challenging environments, both natural and artificial.

Policy	ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	Performance Measure/ Milestone	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Time – Frame
	Following the DDA audit, provide facilities for children with disabilities in order for them to use and enjoy existing play facilities.		Community Services Disability Forum		Funding	S
	To use the Play Area Strategy draft document, including an assessment of fixed equipment play areas on a basis for sustainable management of the play areas, including geographic locations.		Community Services		City Council capital programme (50K per year, 07-08, 08-09, 09-10)	M, L
	To define and adopt standards of Play Provision and opportunities based on the Carlisle and District Local Plan (draft) and PPG17 (open spaces, sport and recreation).		Community Services Planning Services		Officer time	L
	Seek to provide innovation in play opportunities through adoption of best practice in		Community Services, Planning Services, Private Sector		Officer time, 3 <sup>rd</sup> party funding	S,M,L

	design, natural play and working with partners in developing good play space, and including section 106 agreements with developers.					
	To increase the opportunities for unsupervised natural play by redesigning existing open spaces and amenity areas.		Community Services		Green Spaces development budget	M
	To ensure that safe routes are created and managed by inclusion in traffic and transport strategy.		Highways, Planning Services		Officer time	S
	In consultation with children and young people to use Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) in developing longer-term improvements in the equipped play areas across the Carlisle District.		Community Services, Planning Services		Staff Time	S,M

### OBJECTIVE THREE

To seek the views of all children and young people, to encourage them to participate and become actively involved in the decision making processes that affect them.

Policy	ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	Performance Measure/ Milestone	RESOURCE iMPPLICATIONS	Time – frame
	To ensure that children and young people are involved in the creation, development and improvement of quality play provision		Community Services Children & young people Play Partnership			
	To ensure that any decisions made by Carlisle City Council take into account the views of children and young people where appropriate		Carlisle City Council			



## OBJECTIVE FOUR

To provide an infrastructure of support to ensure the development of partnerships to affirm the benefits of play and to build capacity within key stakeholders including local communities.

Policy	ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	Performance Measure/ Milestone	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Time – frame
	To continue to support Carlisle Play Partnership		Community Support		Staff time	Ongoing
	To maximise the potential for accessing funding to create, improve and develop sustainable play provision in communities		Play Partnership		Other agencies; Parent / volunteers; Staff Time	S
	To encourage and influence key stakeholders to ensure appropriate allocation of resources					
	To advise public, private, voluntary and community sector partners on the application of quality standards		Planning Services Community Support Green Spaces Team		Staff time	ongoing
	To develop a promotional plan to raise awareness of the strategy and importance of play		Community Support		Staff time; Funding	S

	To ensure play needs are identified at a local level and fed into key strategic plans and initiatives.		Community Support Rural Officer Parish Councils Green Spaces Team		Staff Time Funding C&R	ongoing
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## OBJECTIVE FIVE

To secure a skilled and motivated workforce that is diverse and reflects the community, within play in Carlisle and District

Policy	ACTION	LEAD	PARTNERS	Performance Measure/ Milestone	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Time – Frame
	To seek and enhance the training of existing staff employed in play provision		Community Support Green Spaces Team		Funding; Training; Staff time	ongoing
	To seek funding for employing further playworkers in particular Community Play Workers		Community Support Green Spaces Team ECCP		Funding; Training; Staff time	S,M,L
	To ensure a regular comprehensive practical and accredited play training programme is developed		Carlisle College Learning City Objective Community support		Training; Staff time	ongoing
	To offer play training and information to play workers		Community Support Community Centres		Funding; Training; Staff time	ongoing

## FIND OUT MORE!

To find out more, contact  
Rob Burns, Community Support Manager on: -  
Phone: 01228 817000  
Email: [robb@carlisle.gov.uk](mailto:robb@carlisle.gov.uk)

Phil Gray, Greenspaces Manager on:-  
Phone: 01228 817000  
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Website: [www.carlisle.gov.uk](http://www.carlisle.gov.uk)

Additional physical, social and health benefits for children, young people & adults who are leading increasingly indoor lives, helping them to enjoy physical activity outdoors and mitigate obesity.

Unlike other forms of outdoor education which generally concentrate on team building, challenging activities or competitiveness, the Forest School embraces an entirely different approach through the nurturing, support and development of the self-esteem of participants.

Children and young people become more confident in they're own natural and made environments, and acquire a deeper understanding about environmental issues locally and globally. Parents, particularly fathers, are more likely to involve themselves in projects of this sort, and become engaged in their children's education.

**A typical forest school programme involves:**

The Forest School leader talking to the parents/carers, about the programme.

Finding and ensuring the safety of an appropriate local woodland site.

A qualified leader, to ensure the site is safe for the children and adults to visit carries out a risk assessment.

The Forest School leaders get to know the participants and gain their confidence before taking them to the woodland site.

The group visit the same local woodland site on a regular basis (ideally throughout the year, except in extreme conditions).



It develops

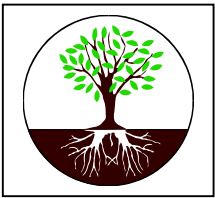
- Independence
- Self-discovery
- Confidence
- Communication skills
- Raised self-esteem

Each session is learner-led, based on the skills and needs of that group.

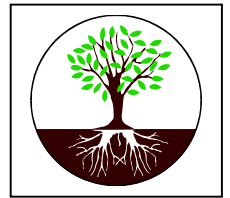
Games are played and small achievable tasks are set, such as building shelters, learning how to use appropriate tools, lighting fires, cooking.

The participants learn basic woodland skills as a method to try and boost their self-confidence and raise their self-esteem.

The participants learn to use natural materials and develop practical and intellectual skills. The Forest School model is suited to people of all ages and abilities.



## **Developing Forest School Programme in Carlisle and District**



### **1) Training for staff**

Staff need to attend training (50hrs) at Newton Rigg to gain qualification Certificate in Developing Forest Schools. Course aimed at playworkers, youth workers and teachers, and will be delivered over 50 hours in three two day blocks in October, February and May. Course is designed to build upon students existing knowledge of children and young people, and give them the confidence, skills and knowledge to deliver a forest school programme in their areas of expertise.

### **2) What does it involve?**

It involves working in an outdoor context, using learning and supporting strategies, which raise self-esteem, develop confidence, independence and language and communication skills. A typical forest school programme involves:

- The Forest School leader talking to the parents/carers, about the programme.
- Finding and ensuring the safety of an appropriate local woodland site. A risk assessment is carried out by a qualified leader, to ensure the site is safe for the children and adults to visit.
- The Forest School leaders get to know the participants and gain their confidence before taking them to the woodland
- The group visit the same local woodland site on a regular basis (ideally throughout the year, except in extreme conditions).
- Each session is learner-led, based on the skills and needs of that group.
- Games are played and small achievable tasks are set, such as hide and seek, building shelters, learning how to use appropriate tools, lighting fires, cooking.
- The participants learn basic woodland skills as a method to try and boost their self-confidence and raise their self-esteem.
- The participants learn to use natural materials and develop practical and intellectual skills.
- The Forest School model is suited to people of all ages

### **3) Benefits to children and young people**

- Successful in developing self-esteem and confidence, motivating children and young people whom, for a range of reasons, may struggle in a traditional classroom/youth club environment.
- Additional physical, social and health benefits for children and young people who are leading increasingly indoor lives, helping them to enjoy physical activity outdoors and mitigate obesity.
- Children and young people become more confident in they're own natural and made environments, and acquire a deeper understanding about environmental issues locally and globally.
- Parents, particularly fathers, are more likely to involve themselves in projects of this sort, and become engaged in their children's education.
- Improved behaviour and motivation go back into the usual learning environment with the children and young people, and have an impact on achievement.

### **4) How will this fit in with the programme of children and young people's section?**

- Use Forest School programmes within play activity clubs for children aged 5- 12 years, to enable them to get an appreciation of their local environment.
- It could be delivered as part of environmental play sessions within the summer playschemes programme e.g. in rural areas.
- It could be used as a tool for working with young people, particularly those who are not attracted to traditional youth provision. Workers could use it in detached youth work settings or existing projects to encourage team-building skills and raise individuals self esteem.
- The Renaissance consultation and the TAG group raised the issues of the environment as being important to young people. Therefore an environmental project could be planned into next year's work and would allow us to work more closely with colleagues in Environmental Services and other organisations e.g. BTCV, Groundwork Trust.

### **5) How will it achieve the Corporate Objectives?**

- It could potentially provide clear outcomes for both of the corporate objectives, "Cleaner, Green, Safer" and "Learning City".

### **6) Cost?**

- The cost is £350 per person. There are bursaries available from FEI and Surestart (college is investigating this on our behalf), there is also the potential to make three split payments.