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**RELEASE OF PLAYBUILDER CAPITAL GRANT 2009-2011**

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**Children and Young People's Portfolio**  
**Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children's Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To request the release of external funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families to develop 22 Playbuilder sites over the next 2 years

**Summary**

2. Having access to better and safer opportunities for play is a priority for both children and parents across England. The Department for Children, Schools and Families has invested significant funding in play as part of a three-year programme from 2008-09 to 2010-11. By the end of this period around 3,500 play areas will have been developed nationally through this programme.
3. The Council was successful in its application to Playbuilders and received a grant from the Department for Children, Schools and Families of £1,128,558. This funding has been allocated over two years for 2009/10, £530,535 and for 2010/11, £598,023. Eleven sites per year must be developed and the emphasis on these projects will be around natural play, using the landscape as an integral part of the play experience and designing in an appropriate level of risk for children and young people.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Members approve the release of £1,128,558 for the improvement and development of the 22 Playbuilder sites across the Borough.

**Reasons**

5. The recommendation is supported to enable the improvement and development of 22 Playbuilder sites across the Borough.

**Murray Rose – Director of Children's Services**

**Background Papers**

None

author :Lynne Henderson Extension 2820

S17 Crime and Disorder	Improving play provision across the Borough will provide opportunities for young people to explore and enjoy creative play thereby having a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	Providing appropriate play opportunities for young people allows them to explore, take risks and develop their health and well being in a controlled environment.
Sustainability	Wherever possible, a sustainable approach to the provision of Playbuilder sites will be adopted.
Diversity	The new Playbuilder sites will be accessible to all residents to experience and enjoy.
Wards Affected	The majority of the Wards in the Borough will receive improvements to play provision.
Groups Affected	The main focus of the Playbuilder sites is for the 8-13 year olds.
Budget and Policy Framework	It is not considered that this report has any impact on the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	It is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	It is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The development and improvement of 22 play sites across the Borough has a positive impact on a number of themes within the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Efficiency	The majority of Playbuilder sites are either replacement or improvement to existing locations therefore maintenance of sites will be contained within existing budgets.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. In the last two to three years there have been a number of improvements carried out to play areas as a result of Local Area Agreement funding and other contributions from external services and Section 106 monies.
7. The Council was also successful in its application to Playbuilders and has received a grant from the Department for Children, Schools and Families of £1,128,558. This funding has been allocated over two years for 2009/10, £530,535 and for 2010/11, £598,023. Eleven sites per year must be developed and the emphasis in these projects will be around natural play, using the landscapes as an integral part of the play experience and designing in an appropriate level of risk for children and young people.
8. As well as the capital funding, there is also a revenue allocation of £45,618. The first year, 2009/10, £27,371 and the second year, 2010/11, £18,247. The revenue funding is to enable extensive consultation activity regarding the sites. The Council has gone through a tendering exercise, awarding the Contract to Groundwork to deliver the Community engagement, design and project management for the range of Playbuilder projects.
9. The sites were identified through previous work undertaken for the Local Area Agreement and the Open Spaces Strategy and the Year 1 sites are:
  - (a) West Park
  - (b) Albert Hill
  - (c) Eastbourne Park
  - (d) Lascelles
  - (e) Eastbourne Sports Complex
  - (f) North Park
  - (g) Cocker Beck
  - (h) Bensham Park
  - (i) Bushel Hill Park
  - (j) Green Park
  - (k) Red Hall
10. Some work has already taken place on developing and designing the Year 1 sites with work commencing on the majority of sites early in the New Year.
11. The following are Year 2 sites:
  - (a) North Lodge Park
  - (b) Alderman Crooks Park
  - (c) Darrowby Hall Drive
  - (d) Springfield, Green Lane
  - (e) Skerne Restoration, Springfield area – site location to be identified
  - (f) Auckland Oval
  - (g) Fryers Crescent
  - (h) Beech Wood
  - (i) South Park

- (j) Hurworth
- (k) Middleton St George

12. Consultation will commence early in 2010 to ensure these sites are designed and implemented prior to March 2011.
13. In the majority of cases, Playbuilder funding will be utilised to enhance/improve existing facilities alongside other recent improvements or as part of a bigger programme of improvements for the individual sites. As part of the programme, two new sites will be developed at West Park and the Skerne Restoration/Springfield area. These additional sites are consistent with the agreed aims and objectives within the Open Space Strategy and the Play and Free Time Strategy.
14. The Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of 21 of these sites with Middleton St George Parish Council taking responsibility for the maintenance of the improvements to their existing play area. As the majority of the sites that the Council take responsibility for are replacement or improvement to existing sites, it is estimated that the maintenance costs of £10,000 per annum can be contained within existing budgets.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

15. Full consultation in each individual site has taken place with children and young people, relevant groups, Friends of Parks, Darlington Association and Disability, Ward members and local residents.