

## **NORTH AREA COMMITTEE**

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

**5 JUNE 2008**

#### **ROKER PARK PLAY AREA**

##### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Area Committee Members with regard to the application to the Big Lottery Playful Ideas Programme, in respect of the potential refurbishment of the Roker Park Play Area

##### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 Roker Park is a significant city park and the play provision serves both the local community, the wider city population and visitors to the coast. The Roker Park Play Area was identified in the city's Play and Urban Games Strategy (2007-2012), as a high priority for refurbishment, as the current equipment is of poor quality and low play value. In addition, the Green Flag inspections for the Park have highlighted the Play Area as an area for improvement. 'The Friends of Roker Park' had also identified the Play Area as an area of concern and had made contact with the Community and Cultural Services Directorate with a view to how improvements might be made to the area.

2.2 Community and Cultural Services (CCS) are currently supporting 'The Friends of Roker Park' to submit a Big Lottery funding application to the Playful Ideas Programme to redevelop the existing Play Area. The Playful Ideas Programme support projects that focus on innovation and new ways of providing for children's play. Projects seeking funding from this programme must display a creative and novel approach to addressing an identified need within the field of children's play. The programme is open to voluntary and community groups, the social enterprise sector, town and parish councils.

2.3 The Friends Group has been successful in their Stage 1 application and have now been invited to submit the more detailed Stage 2 application by 30 June 2008. CCS are continuing to support the group to prepare for the Stage 2 application.

##### **3.0 CONSULTATION**

3.1 Through a process of consultation ideas for the development of the Play Area were gathered by;

- Visits to Dame Dorothy Primary School, Fulwell Junior School and St Benet's RC Primary School by both representatives of the Friends and CCS to work with local children
- A questionnaire distributed by the Friends Group to Park users in October 2007
- Workshops with a subgroup of the Friends, representatives of CCS and Development & Regeneration.
- New ideas from national research

3.2 The outcome from this work was developed to produce a project brief which included;

- The creation of a stimulating and exciting play environment through the development of a play trail linking an extensive play area within the park to the beach. The play environment will use maritime heritage and coastal geology as the theme.
- A play trail of geological features which children will be able to use for climbing, jumping, hiding and create an interest in the natural world. The play environment will be interactive with sand and water play; an opportunity to build dams, dig holes, squirt water or just get wet and messy!
- Large play structures based on 'Spotty the Pirate' (local legend) and shipbuilding to create places for imaginative play with opportunities to climb high with ropes, planks and ladders.
- Supported play activities will encourage play both in the park and on the beach and inspire natural play.

3.3 Since the success of the Stage 1 application the brief has been used to develop the draft designs, copies attached. The second stage of wider consultation is being undertaken during April 2008, in order to refine these designs. This will include;

- Return visits to the local schools
- Wider consultation with older Young People through youth providers
- Direct contact with residents who overlook Roker Park
- Information displayed on the Park noticeboards and an opportunity for Park users to feedback their comments
- Consultation with elected members

The outcomes will influence the final designs, which will be submitted as part of the Stage 2 application. The unique and innovative play opportunities identified within the project will further extend Sunderland's creative play offer in line with the Play and Urban Games Strategy.

#### **4.0 FUNDING**

4.1 The application to the Big Lottery Fund will be for capital of £200,000 and £50,000 revenue. There is a small amount of developer 106 contributions allocated to Roker Park of £31,694 towards the project. The Stage 2 application will be developed during May when more accurate cost estimates of the final design can be calculated.

4.2 It is important that the risk of an unsuccessful funding application is acknowledged. This Lottery programme is very competitive unlike the pre-allocated children play fund for which the city was successful in accessing in December 2007.

4.3 In the event that funding is not secured, consideration needs to be given to a phased approach to the refurbishment and the identification of alternative funding opportunities.

#### **5.0 CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Area Committee is requested to note the content of this report.

#### **6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 Briefing paper for the cabinet member with portfolio for culture and leisure, 8 October 2007, Play and Urban games: area updates

