



# London Borough of Sutton

## Children & Young People's Partnership

### Playbuilder Consultation Document

Playbuilder is funded by



## **1 Summary**

- 1.1 The London Borough of Sutton has been awarded 1.1 million pounds in capital funding in order to, by 2011, either build new, or completely or substantial replace, twenty two open access play environments, which will be primarily targeted at children aged eight to thirteen years old.
- 1.2 This national programme, known as Playbuilder, forms part of the Department for Children, Schools & Families' Play Strategy, which sets out the Government's aspiration of ensuring all children have access to a range of supervised and unsupervised play opportunities free of charge.

## **2 The Sutton context**

- 2.1 Play is integral to our vision for children and young people. We believe that it is crucial to their learning, development and overall well-being and that it creates a pathway through which they can better understand the world they live in. More importantly, however, we know that play is important to children in Sutton, as they have told us so. As a result, our vision for play is to ensure that its importance, and the associated benefits, are recognised, provided for and supported by the Council, its partners and the wider community.
- 2.2 Playbuilder provides us with a unique opportunity to accelerate the delivery of the actions set out in the Sutton Play Strategy and to make a significant investment in our play infrastructure. In doing so, we will be able to improve further the play opportunities for all – particularly children from disadvantaged communities, those with disabilities, girls aged 8-13 years and children from black and minority ethnic groups (specifically traveller communities). In addition, by investing in play as a preventative measure, we will be able to do more to tackle some of the health inequalities in the borough (such as childhood obesity) and the concerns children in Sutton have consistency expressed about their own safety whilst in open spaces.
- 2.3 In recent years, we have successfully undertaken a number of consultation exercises with children and young people. They have consistently placed opportunities to have fun, feel valued and be with their friends as priorities. They have also told us that they would like more play opportunities that are local, affordable, stimulating, safe and physically challenging.

## **3 Sutton Playbuilder programme**

- 3.1 Children have told us that they most enjoy outdoor activities; therefore, securing increased and better quality outdoor play provision in parks is an important strand of our Playbuilder project. We know that our parks provide a rich resource for all children, young people and their families and contribute to a range of cross-cutting issues, such as improving health and well being, social inclusion, regeneration and environmental sustainability.

- 3.3 As a result, during 2009/2010 (which is the first year of this two year programme) we are proposing to concentrate the majority of this capital investment in parks. We will then focus on non park sites during 2010/2011.
- 3.4 In order to identify the first twelve sites for redevelopment, the following data was taken into consideration:
- the results of recent consultation exercises in Sutton with children, young people and their families;
  - an analysis of the current gaps in the availability of open access play opportunities for children and young people; and
  - the results of a mapping exercise of recent and planned investment in play equipment in parks.
- 3.5 As a result of this exercise, during 2009/2010 we are proposing to renovate the play environments at the following sites (please see the map for further details):

1. Stanley Park
2. Rosehill Park
3. Corrigan (Clockhouse)
4. Mellows Park
5. Cuddington Park
6. Benhill Recreation Ground
7. Sutton Common Recreational Ground
8. Belmont Park
9. Overton Park
10. Cheam Park
11. Poulters Park
12. The Grange (Beddington Park)

## 4 Designing the sites

The 10 principles for designing successful play spaces

### **Successful play spaces:**

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution.

Design for Play, 2008

- 4.1 We have set ourselves the challenge of ensuring our Playbuilder sites are underpinned by the principles of accessibility, imagination and challenge, deliverability and value for money.

### Accessibility

- We are aware that some of our current dedicated play areas could be better located within parks. As a result, we will make an assessment of whether the sites we wish to redevelop are in the right locations – if not we will relocate them as a part of the capital works.
- We are also aware that not all of our sites are accessible to children with disabilities. As a result, we will be investing in making all our new play environments accessible to disabled children. As we develop our designs, we shall draw on 'Developing Accessible Play Space – a good practice guide' (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2003) for further guidance.

### Imagination and challenge

- We believe that all our play environments should be imaginative, well designed and of a high quality, so that they are attractive to children, young people and their families. As a result, we will be challenging children and young people and the construction companies we engage to consider ways in which the new Playbuilder sites can break away from the metal play equipment common in many of our parks (please see 'Design for Play' <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/design-for-play.pdf> for further information); thereby offering children and young people a more varied choice of play experiences across the borough.

- It is our view that benefits can be gained from allowing children to engage in play activities that include an appropriate and acceptable level of risk and challenge. Indeed, we know from our own consultation that without risk and challenge children can become bored and disengaged with play provision. As a result, providing children with more challenge and risk will be an important part of the Playbuilder.

### Deliverability

- Given the very challenging timescales afforded to this programme, we have selected a range of play areas that we are confident of delivering in the first year. (The year two projects will require further consultation and consideration before they are approved.)
- Given that there is no revenue attached to the Playbuilder project for maintenance, we have been careful in selecting the sites to ensure any new developments or renovations can be contained within the existing maintenance budget.

### Value for money

- As a Council, we are committed to delivering services that are customer-focused, well managed and sustainable, within a robust and prudent financial framework. To provide customer-focused services which are good value for money, we will establish consistent and systematic approaches across the projects.

## **5 Consulting, involving and engaging children and young people**

5.1 We believe that the success of our Playbuilder programme will be determined by the level of involvement and engagement of children and young people in the borough. As a result, we have set out on a six month programme of work which will include:

- Engaging artists/designers to attend consultation events. At these events, children and young people will be given the opportunity to work with artists and designers to have their ideas interpreted diagrammatically. These diagrams will then form the basis of the specifications given to the construction companies we engage.
- Developing targeted focus groups of children and young people (for example girls, children and young people from Traveller communities and children with disabilities and Special Educational Needs) who can then be involved in selecting the final designs.
- Holding a consultation session at our National Payday event on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009, where children and young people will be given the opportunity to vote for their favourite designs.

- 5.2 We have commissioned Sutton Centre for the Voluntary Sector (SCVS), Jigsaw4u and Sutton Racial Equality Council (SREC) to support us in undertaking this detailed consultation programme. For example, SCVS will carry out consultation with the following key groups:
- Children and young people (through Play on the Move, Sutton Play Network, schools, out of school providers and other appropriate settings e.g. libraries, Summer Uni)
  - Parents (through Play on the Move, schools, out of school providers etc)
  - Residents (through resident and tenants' associations, community groups and appropriate local businesses)
- 5.3 Jigsaw4u has been commissioned to undertake a range of targeted consultation with children and young people with disabilities and Special Educational Needs. Their consultation programme will include, for example, taking disabled children to visit specialist parks (outside the borough) in order that children and young people can compare and contrast these play environments with activities and equipment available in local open play spaces in Sutton.
- 5.4 SREC's consultation programme will target users of the Refugee Network, the Impact Minority Network, the five organisations currently providing the consortium of Mother Tongue, supplementary classes and the participants of the holiday football schemes run by SREC.
- 5.6 In addition, as a part of the consultation process our Local Committees, made up of local councillors and other local representatives, are being informed and engaged in the Playbuilder projects in their local areas.

If you have any comments or feedback on our proposals, please contact Nicholas Taylor, by 10<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

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