

REPORT

SUBJECT:	Usk Play Project – Lottery Bid
MEETING:	Individual Cabinet Member’s decision
DATE TO BE CONSIDERED:	24th February 2016
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Usk

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform members about a proposed Big Lottery application for capital funding for the replacement of play equipment in the Council owned children’s play area on the Old Cattle Market Field, Usk.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council agrees to make application to Big Lottery for funding for upgraded play equipment and agree to collaborate with Usk Play Project voluntary group on the redevelopment of the play area.
- 2.2 That a capital budget is set up subject to receipt of the external funding.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The play area at the Old Cattle Market Field has been in situ for over thirty years and whilst the equipment is maintained to the relevant standards by the County Council, it is dated, has limited play value and is not fully inclusive/accessible. The area on which it is sited is central in Town and well used as it is adjacent to the Scout Hall and Memorial Hall and Maryport Street (South) car park and is part of the larger recreational area, most of which is protected by Fields in Trust and has Owain Glyndwr status, which prevents sale of development without Fields in Trust permission.
- 3.2 The Council was approached by some interested parents about upgrading the play area as there they felt that there is limited static play provision in Usk and the existing provision does little to stimulate children’s imagination and development and the lack of inclusive equipment for children with disabilities or additional learning needs means parents have to travel to more appropriate play areas in the County. Following a number of exploratory site meetings with parents and officers, the parents formed a charity group titled “Usk Play Project” to fund raise for an upgraded and modern play area on the existing site. The Group is fully constituted and registered with the Charities Commission and was keen to submit a funding bid to Big

Lottery “People and Places Fund” with the support of the Council. The importance of children’s play is well documented and the proposed upgrading work forms part of Monmouthshire’s Play Sufficiency Action Plan and is a high priority as far as fixed play provision is concerned as the Plan aims to have a fully accessible play area in each of the five towns of Monmouthshire and this is the ideal site for that type of provision.

- 3.3 A discussion with the Big Lottery has indicated that the Council has to be the main applicant as it is the land owner but can be supported by the Usk Play Project. The Play Project has undertaken a wide ranging consultation exercise with the community, including an online survey and members of the Group have undertaken a great deal of research into the usage of the existing play area and those in other authorities and the availability of inclusive play equipment and consulted with the Monmouthshire All Ability Group for Inclusive Communities (MAGIC). The Council has drafted a design for the play area based on the results of the consultation exercise and this will be displayed by the Group for the public to view and comment upon and generate interest in fund raising.
- 3.4 The cost of the scheme will be circa £100,000 and the Play Project is continuing to fundraise and aiming to raise in the region of £15,000 towards the overall cost and the Council will look to fund the difference of £85,000 from Big Lottery. If the application is successful then the Council would bid to undertake the improvement works and would continue to insure, inspect and maintain the play area. Attached as **Appendix A** is a Memorandum of Understanding, which is the agreement, formalising the collaborative approach between the Council and the Usk Play Project Group on this project going forward.

4. REASONS

To provide a modern, accessible and inclusive equipped play area for the children of Usk and neighbouring villages and provide for the development needs of the users.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications arising from this report except the cost to insure, inspect and maintain the play area, for which there is an existing revenue provision.

6. FUTURE GENERATIONS AND EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

Attached as **Appendix B**

7. **CONSULTEES**

Cabinet Members
Local Member
Countryside Manager
Leadership Team
Head of Legal Services

RESULTS OF CONSULTATIONS:

Comments from the Head of Finance have been incorporated into the recommendations.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Nil

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