



department for
children, schools and families

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SELECTION OF WAVE 2 PLAY PATHFINDERS

Dear Wave 1 Playbuilder

I am pleased to be able to outline for you the selection process for becoming one of the 10 Wave 2 play pathfinders, which will receive topped up funding from April 2009 through to March 2011. This letter, and attached annex, gives the timescales/stages involved and an initial indication of the requirement for becoming a Wave 2 pathfinder.

You will know that we already have 20 pathfinder authorities working towards delivering their commitments by the end of March 2010. This second wave selection process will identify for us our final 10 pathfinders. Quality of bids permitting, we will seek to identify a regional spread of new pathfinders.

As a current playbuilder we are offering you the opportunity to be 'passported' through to the final bidding stage of the Wave 2 selection process, by-passing the initial expression of interest stage that the 87 non-pathfinder/playbuilder authorities have to complete. The expression of interest stage will provide us with 10 authorities who will be invited to submit a pathfinder bid along with yourselves.

The selection of the final 10 Wave 2 pathfinders will be undertaken by a central panel, involving DCSF/DCMS and Play England, as a result of evaluation of pathfinder bids received from the 10 authorities shortlisted from the expression of interest stage and those year 1 playbuilders who chose to submit a bid.

If you should chose not to be passported through to bidding to become a Wave 2 pathfinder, you will continue to deliver against the wave 1 playbuilder commitments you signed up to of developing 20 – 25 play areas by March 2011, and the wider deliverables set out in your project plans.

Partnership working

We would encourage you to continue to develop/strengthen partnerships between yourselves and other local authority colleagues on environment, leisure, planning, transport and housing. Learning from our current Wave 1 pathfinders tells us, these will be vital in delivering on the commitments you would sign up to as a new pathfinder. This need for strong partnership working extends into two-tier authorities, where current Wave 1 pathfinders have found that developing strong joint-working between Top-Tier and District/parish/town councils, whilst not always easy, is crucial given the very local nature of play provision.

We already know that, from discussions with you and feedback from Play England, a good deal of partnership working is already happening through the development of play audits and strategies for BIG Lottery funding, led by local Play Partnerships at unitary and district levels. We would like our pathfinder investment to reinforce these Partnerships at the top tier level in every local authority.

Working with children, young people, parents and local communities

As you will know from your recent dealings with us and Play England, we want local communities to be at the heart of delivery, through the involvement of community and voluntary groups and through consultation with children, young people and parents. We expect local MPs and elected members to be fully involved. This is a stance that we remain fully committed to and will expect to see this carrying a high profile in your pathfinder bids when they are submitted to us.

Next steps

1) You will need to e-mail my colleagues, Bhupinder Bhoday and Amanda Barrett (Bhupinder.bhoday@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk and Amanda.barrett@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk), no later than **12noon on Friday 19th September** to inform us whether you wish to be 'passported' through to the invitation to bid stage of the Wave 2 pathfinder selection process.

We need a response from every single one of our current 43 playbuilder authorities and so request that you e-mail to inform us where you are or whether you are not choosing not to be 'passported' to the invitation to bid stage.

2) On **Wednesday 1st October** those of our current playbuilders who have informed us that they wish to be included in the final bidding stage will be sent full invitation to bid documentation which will give explicit detail of what your pathfinder bids should include and the criteria that will be used for evaluation.

Play England will be available to provide a degree of support for playbuilders as they write their bid document, and we would encourage you to discuss with them any learning from the Wave 1 selection process you were part of earlier this year.

For now, information on our expectations of the Wave 2 pathfinders can be found at Annex A and an initial outline of requirements can be found at Annex B to allow playbuilders to do some initial planning.

3) The final date for the submission of full pathfinder bids is **12noon on Friday 24th October.**

Yours sincerely,

Bhupinder Bhoday

Expectations of Wave 2 play pathfinders

Wave 2 pathfinders will receive approximately £2m capital funding and £1m revenue funding (those Wave 1 playbuilders who become Wave 2 pathfinders will have their current funding allocations amended accordingly)

Specific expectations in relation to Capital funding:

- By the end of March 2011 each Wave 2 pathfinder will be expected to have developed 28 public play areas with the capital funding received. 'Development' taken to mean the complete or substantial replacing of old equipment for new or the building of a completely new play area.
- We would particularly like to see sites that are innovative and which encourage and enable physically active play; which are attractive to 8-13 year olds; which are inclusive for disabled children and minority groups and which can be reached safely (safe routes to and from). Sites should be open-access, with children generally free to independently come and go as they please; and access to sites should be free of charge.
- Play pathfinder capital funding is not intended to fund development of school sites, though we want to explore how schools can support local play offers in our pathfinder work.
- Pathfinders will also each be expected to deliver at least one large adventure playground or play park, costing around £800k. Sites should be open-access, with children generally free to come and go as they please and free of charge.

Many of you will have seen our have recently produced guide "Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces" which aims to underpin the development of new and enhanced play spaces using sound design principles. This guide provides an indication of the types of play areas that we are anticipating the capital funding being used to develop. Copies of the Design for Play guide can be requested by contacting DCSF Publications on 0845 60 222 60.

Specific expectations in relation to Revenue funding:

The revenue funding for Pathfinders is expected to cover:

- generating learning on a number of innovative approaches to improving local play offers: for example looking beyond designated play areas and making broader public space more playable and accessible for children; and exploring how schools can support local play offers;
- start-up staffing costs over the 2009-11 period to cover the adventure playground and provide appropriate supervisory support to other sites;

- delivering play work training for a range of public sector workers (including police officers, leisure staff, extended schools coordinators and teachers) and volunteers to provide appropriate supervision of children in public space;
- appointing a senior project manager with a strategic link to high-level decision-making; and any other required infrastructure to oversee the Pathfinder programme;
- working with evaluators and assisting them in data capture to show the impact of improvements to local play offers, for example looking at increased usage, parental satisfaction, etc.

Initial outline of requirements for Wave 2 pathfinder bids

Bids are to be submitted by 12noon on Friday 24th October. Fuller details of required content will be sent out on 1st October. This is an early overview for those who wish to start thinking now.

Submitted bids should be no longer than **3,000** words, and should set out how your authority would deliver the adventure playground/playpark and the development of your public play areas within the context of your wider strategy to improve the play offer locally.

We will expect all authorities to show in their bids how they will embed their play investment programme into a broad top-tier strategic approach to planning and commissioning for play, aligned with spatial planning and transport frameworks. We would expect this to draw on existing unitary and district play strategies and to feed into your Children and Young People's Plan.

The over-arching themes that will be used as a basis for evaluating the bids when they are submitted are as follows:

- needs analysis and demonstrating clear need for the additional funding that pathfinder status brings;
- embedding play in local authority planning;
- community engagement;
- access/inclusivity;
- safety; and
- creativity.

In considering bids from current playbuilders, we will also draw upon our knowledge of how effectively they have begun taking forward their playbuilder projects.

Please feel free to include other local features and proposals in your bid that you think would improve the case for investment, and impact of that investment, in your area.

Please include visual examples of the refurbishments and new projects you envisage.

You must include a schedule of projected capital works, linked to your needs analyses, as part of your submitted bid.