

**For General Release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 30 June 2014</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Play streets</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Negrini, Executive Director of Development and Environment</b>  <b>Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director of Children, Families &amp; Learning</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Cllr Kathy Bee, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment</b>  <b>Cllr Alisa Flemming, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning.</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:</b> Children and Families Plan, Child Poverty strategy, Healthy Weight strategy	
<b>FINANCIAL IMPACT:</b> To enable the creation of up to 10 play street schemes in 2014/15 funding of £23K will be required from ear marked reserves. The funding for future years will need to be reviewed as part of the 2015/16 corporate budget setting process.	
<b>FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:</b> this is not a key decision	



The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet agrees that:

- ◆ the scheme detailed in this report to support the setting up of play streets in Croydon and that the scheme be reviewed in March 2015;
- ◆ the Director of Environment be authorised to issue the necessary public notices and, subject to receiving no material objections, proceed to make the necessary traffic management orders to implement play streets.
- ◆ Any formal material objections received be considered through the Traffic Management Cabinet Advisory Committee



## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Play streets are a cost-effective way that the Council can support both increased physical activity among children, strengthen communities and support communities doing things for themselves.

2.2 Recent developments across London mean that there is now a regulatory framework which can be used to support the setting up of play streets in Croydon.

2.3 Local community groups have already expressed an interest in setting up play streets.

2.4 This report proposes a scheme to support the setting up of play streets and that the scheme should be reviewed in March 2015.

### **3 Play streets: background**

3.1 A play street is created by the regular closing of a residential street to through traffic for specified periods, so that children and families can make use of the street space to play in.

3.2 Although play streets do not replace the need for green spaces, they have the advantage of:

- ◆ allowing children to play near home while remaining the responsibility of their parents;
- ◆ giving children the space to play energetically;
- ◆ increasing the sense of community by bringing neighbours together both in setting up and managing the play street but also in taking part when the play street is in operation.

3.3 Play streets were pioneered in the UK in Bristol and have been established in Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Sutton. The photograph below shows a play street in operation in Hackney (courtesy of Hackney Council).

3.4 In Hackney, a part-time “playing out coordinator” has been funded for a year to oversee play streets and advise community groups on setting up new streets. The development of a new play street is led by the local community, which takes responsibility for consulting neighbours on the proposal and then organises the necessary stewards for the play street to take place.

3.5 Hackney Council have been running a pilot since November 2012 and from July there will be 24 active play streets in the borough. Hackney councillors have confirmed the commitment to extending the play streets initiative. Hackney has a part time Playing out co-ordinator who has the following functions:

- ◆ runs information sessions in schools and community centres for parents who might be interested in starting play streets;
- ◆ offers ongoing support to organisers;
- ◆ provides the council funded equipment including road signs, high visibility tops and whistles;
- ◆ attends the first play streets sessions and helps with stewarding issues.

### **Local strategic context and interest in Croydon**

3.6 Play streets contribute to the delivery of the following outcomes:

- ◆ reducing obesity;
- ◆ promoting stronger communities;
- ◆ building stronger neighbourhoods;
- ◆ promoting the role of families;
- ◆ strengthening community capacity to organise and have a greater voice;
- ◆ building resilient and integrated communities.

3.7 In July 2013 the Crystal Palace Transition Town Group (the Group) approached one of the ward members for South Norwood, now the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, to express an interest in starting one or more play streets in the area. The Group carried out a consultation with residents with guidance from council officers and, based on the outcome of that consultation, the Group are considering whether to try and progress particular play streets.

### **Regulations and costs**

3.8 The Department for Transport advise that London Boroughs may use section 29 and 31 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to set up play streets. These provisions give local authorities the power to make an order prohibiting traffic on roads to be used as playgrounds either generally or on particular days or during particular hours ('Play Streets'), specify exceptions and conditions as to occasional use, and make bylaws regarding safety, use and management of the road as a playground, . This regulation requires the notice of the intention to be advertised twice in the local press at an estimated cost of £1600 for up to ten play street notices advertised at the same time.

3.9 The estimated administrative resource needing for risk assessment, street maintenance inspection and putting in place the regulation for each play street application is estimated at maximum £2000.

3.10 Costs of providing signage and road barriers is estimated at maximum £1750 for ten play streets.

3.11 The cost of developing a guidance web page and leaflet advising groups on steps to take and the council's role is estimated at a cost of approximately £100 which could be delivered by refocusing the Children and Family Partnership communication budget at no additional cost.

3.12 An additional resource would be needed to co-ordinate play street activity. It is recommended that this is identified by refocusing an existing role where there is already a function relating to supporting the delivery of the Children and Families Plan priorities and strengthening the role of the community and voluntary sector, to include the role of play street co-ordinator. This would give the capacity to support up to ten play streets being set up in the first year and these could be delivered at no additional cost.

3.13 The resourcing to support the setting up of play streets in future financial years will need to be reviewed as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process.

## **Proposed risk management strategy**

- 3.14 Not all play street applications will be accepted. There are some roads where a play street would not be appropriate due to:
- ◆ The traffic carrying function of the road,
  - ◆ There is an existing play street very close by;
  - ◆ Consultation with those affected shows that there is significant opposition to the siting of the play street which cannot be resolved.
- 3.15 In relation to traffic carrying function, a risk assessment will be carried out for each application by the Highways team based on traffic flows to evaluate any requests for play streets. This assessment will also take account of where diverted traffic is expected to go, so as to avoid any increased traffic or road safety risks elsewhere on the highway network.
- 3.16 Protocols will be developed in relation to emergency services requiring access and emergency access by residents during the times of operation of a play street and shared with play street organisers.
- 3.17 Additional maintenance inspections may be required for each play street application estimated as an hour for each of the 10 playstreets at £50 ph.
- 3.18 The organisers will be strongly advised but not required to take up public liability insurance.
- 3.19 The community groups will be responsible for providing stewards. The play street coordinator will attend the first of each play street and advise on stewarding. Pairs of stewards will be sited at either end of the street and residents will be allowed stewarded access driving behind a walking steward at approximately 5 mph. Street champions will be offered road safety training for stewards and participants to assist in the safe operation of play streets, provided through the Council's Road Safety team. This would focus on clarifying the differences between play streets and other neighbouring roads to young children who may become confused over where they should and shouldn't play. The Council's Road Safety team can also provide advice on how to take care when walking on the roads to and from play streets.
- 3.20 Parents will be made aware by community groups that they remain entirely responsible for their own children during the play street sessions.
- 3.21 Once implemented, the play streets will be evaluated and feedback collected by the play streets coordinator and shared with the Highways team.
- 3.22 This approach is based on the approach to risk management used in Hackney.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 Community groups wishing to set up play streets would be expected to consult with all residents in the proposed road and share the results of the consultation with the play streets coordinator. Where there is significant opposition to the siting of the play street and this cannot be resolved, then the play street application would not be progressed. .

## 5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The direct revenue consequences resulting from accepting the recommendations of this report are as follows:

### 1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

	Current year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast £000's		
	£000's 2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
<b>Revenue Budget available</b>				
Expenditure	23	0	0	0
Income				
<b>Effect of decision from report</b>				
Expenditure	23	0	0	0
Income				
<b>Remaining budget</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

### 2 The effect of the decision

The estimated cost of setting up ten play street schemes in 2014/15 is £23K made up as follows:

- ◆ Compulsory adverts in the local press £1.6K
- ◆ Administration, including risk assessments and maintenance inspections £20K
- ◆ Signs and Road Barriers £1.7K

It is proposed that these costs are funded from earmarked reserves this financial year and reviewed for future years as part of the corporate budget setting process.

### 3 Risks

Not applicable.

#### **4 Options**

Not to take forward the programme.

#### **5 Future savings/efficiencies**

Not applicable.

6 (Approved by: *Lisa Taylor, Head of Finance and Deputy S151 Officer*)

### **6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

6.1 The Council Solicitor comments that the making of the necessary Traffic Management Orders will be subject to the usual public notice requirements and consideration of any representations made before any order is confirmed.

6.2 Approved by: Gabriel MacGregor, Head of Corporate Law on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer.

### **7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

7.1 This scheme would require support from a refresh of the objectives of the Partnership team in the Department for Children, Families and Learning but this can be resourced from the current team and would have no impact on job descriptions. Therefore, it is not envisaged that this report will directly raise considerations of staffing levels, restructuring/regarding or TUPE implications.

7.2 Approved by Debbie Calliste, HR Business Partner on behalf of the Director of Workforce.

### **8. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.1 An Initial Equality Analysis has been completed on the proposal to set up a play street scheme in the borough. The findings from this analysis indicate that the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on access to outdoor play streets for groups that share protected characteristics. The introduction of play streets is likely to contribute to the delivery of outcomes in relation to reducing obesity, promoting stronger communities, building stronger neighbourhoods, promoting the role of families, strengthening community capacity to organise and have a greater voice and building resilient and integrated communities. Play streets is also likely to benefit children from low income families (entitled to free school meals) who are more at risk of poor outcomes, including: lower achievement levels, higher persistent absence and poor health outcomes.

8.2.1 The equality analysis has also highlighted the need to consider the specific parking needs of blue badge holders. This will be addressed by ensuring that stewarding arrangements are put in place when the scheme is implemented.

8.2.2 The initial equality analysis has identified the need to collect monitoring data on

the usage of play streets by groups that share a “protected characteristic”. It is proposed that the play streets co-ordinator will collect this data. A full equality analysis of the play street scheme that will be completed at the end of the first year of the implementation. This will help the Council identify the positive impact of the scheme for groups that share a “protected characteristic” and also define mitigating actions to address any possible adverse impact

8.2.3 The equality analysis will enable the Council to ensure that it meets the statutory obligation in the exercise of its functions to address the Public Sector equality duty (PSED). This requires public bodies to ensure due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity; foster good relations between people who share a “protected characteristic” and those who do not and take action to eliminate the potential of discrimination in the provision of services.”

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

9.1 There are not anticipated impacts on crime and disorder but this will be monitored as play streets are implemented.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

10.1 Setting up of play streets in Croydon would support a number of Community strategy priorities.

## **11. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not applicable

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**CONTACT OFFICER: Amanda Tuke, head of partnerships and children’s integrated commissioning, Children, Families and Learning; Tony Brooks, director of environment, Development and Environment.**

**Background documents:** Not applicable