

Bradford's "All to Play For" Programme

Executive Summary of Evaluation - October 2010

Background

This report summarises the findings of the independent evaluation undertaken on the All to Play For Programme in Bradford. A copy of the full report is available on request.

The programme was funded through the Big Lottery's Children Play Initiative, which nationally offered for £123,093,923. Through the Play Partnership and support from Learning Services a successful bid was developed that successfully secured £1,438,542 for Bradford, to support a diverse programme of play activities and capital projects to build new play facilities and purchase equipment. £230,000 of match funding from other sources was also secured.

The Programme

The programme's development was greatly assisted by the existence of the Play Partnership. It gave a good platform for bringing bids together, supporting their development and selecting the final portfolio of projects to go forward in the bid. Bradford's programme consisted of 15 individual projects;

Play Provision for Disabled Children - provided play equipment specifically designed for use by disabled children

Bradford Holiday Play and Activity schemes - A programme for children and young people that is fun and supports personal development, social cohesion and active citizenship.

St Ives Estate - Adventure Play Area install a children's adventure play area in a 500 acre wooded country park in Bingley

Play Local - this project was to enable disadvantaged young people to engage in free unstructured play in safe supervised indoor & outdoor environments.

Play Provision for Children & Young People in Hospital - provide opportunities for inclusive free play to children, either resident in hospital or outpatients plus family and friends.

Cullingworth Play Area - This project provided a new children's equipped play area on Cullingworth Recreation Ground. Previous provision was in a dilapidated state.

Eccleshill Adventure Playground - This project aimed to enable the playground to open for a minimum 5 evening sessions per week and 2 sessions per day during the week in school holidays.

Mobile Skate Park - Is a mobile resource and can be assembled in any free open space across the district, wherever there is demand, enabling more children to access good quality play.

Skateparks - The project provided new Skateparks/BMX/Rollerblade facilities in three locations across the Bradford district.

Play in Children's Centres - This project aimed to develop outdoor play provision at 4 of Bradford's children centres

Mobile Climbing Wall - The mobile climbing wall was used on a district-wide basis, bringing new adventure play opportunities into neighbourhoods.

Oxenhope Multi Activity Community Area (MACA) - The project aimed to provide a brand new Multi Activity Community Area (MACA) on an existing recreation ground in Oxenhope

Schools Playground Development Project - The aim of this project was to install fixed play equipment on 5 primary school sites across Bradford District

Deficient Play Spaces, Holmewood - The project has provided an innovative approach to children's play through the use of natural features in a designed landscape.

Scholemoor Open Space - The project developed part of "The Ashy" site at Scholemoor as an adventure play space.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was undertaken by an independent organisation and looked at the programme from the initial stages of development to the end of the implementation. It drew from extensive documentation along with feedback from stakeholders involved in the programme. The findings of the evaluation included:

- Having a Play Partnership and Play Strategy in place prior to the BIG initiative was launched had major benefits as was their commitment to support the programme.
- The initial needs analysis work undertaken was a good guide to what was required in the programme and supported the bid development and decision making processes.
- The intensive support given in the process of developing the projects had major benefits in respect of the relatively smooth delivery and monitoring of work undertaken.
- Having the Play Programme Monitoring Officer was a factor in the programme's overall success and supported quality detailed monitoring.
- The introduction of an evaluation toolkit at an early stage had significant benefits.
- The programme developed was varied and well balanced.
- The programme delivery went largely according to plan.
- The performance in respect of reaching output targets was good, with all five specific programme outcomes being exceeded, some by a very significant margin.
- The programme achieved a spend of 99.4% of the funding allocated.
- The legacy left, especially in respect of facilities and organisational capacity, is significant.
- Stakeholders had a very positive view of the programme and its achievements.
- Some minor issues were encountered in delivering the capital projects, which is normal.
- Some disruption was caused by changing staff and management structures.
- Overall the programme was delivered within the agreed timeframe.
- The programme was well administered, with good record keeping and information storage.
- Secondary benefits from the programme were considerable.

It is rare that any evaluation comes out as positively as this one. The people and organisations involved in the planning and implementation of the programme should be proud of their achievements and their part in making the programme such a success.

Recommendations

Given the overwhelmingly positive nature of this evaluation, my key recommendation is that this approach in the development of a programme of work should be used as a model of good practice.

The key factors that vary from some other approaches are:

- The high level of support given to organisations during the planning process.
- The emphasis on detailed project planning prior to implementation.
- The amount of thought and consideration given to issues, ensuring that strategies are in place before opportunities arise, so that the response is not purely reactive. Developing strategic partnerships around key social and economic issues is central to being prepared in this way.

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