

GreenSpace South East Forum

Open letter regarding Playbuilder funding

5th August 2010

To Amanda Barrett and Anne Jackson,

RE: Playbuilder Funding Review

On behalf of our regional members GreenSpace South East would like to respond to the current review of the Playbuilder programme.

The programme has achieved the renewal and improvement of a significant number of play facilities across the region. Without this capital funding programme many play areas would continue to fall short of meeting the needs of the communities they serve. Our communities have benefited from new play equipment, quality of landscaping and general improvements that permeate from the sites. The latter includes reduction of anti-social behaviour and better opportunities for involvement, for example through planting for wildlife involving children and adults.

This year's funding programme was continuing to offer capital spend in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods across the south east. Our members were looking forward to completing projects, with communities and children already widely consulted about developments for this year and anticipating their delivery over winter and into the spring. The failure to deliver these projects will be demoralising for these communities and their willingness to remain involved in the management and delivery of play services may be seriously eroded. There is a significant likelihood that the abandonment of these projects after so much time, energy and commitment from residents and council officers will be perceived as wasteful rather than judicious.

We request that the spending review carefully considers the savings made against the loss of benefits to our communities. Play provision of a high quality will deliver long-term benefits for our residents, through improvements in learning, health and social cohesion.

The continuation of the Playbuilder funding for the final year will deliver these benefits; the schemes have the capacity to make a real difference to the quality of life experience of children and their perceptions about the place where they live. We suggest that no other form of intervention could deliver comparable impacts and benefits; we believe that these schemes represent remarkable value for money and that any cost benefit evaluation would confirm this.

GreenSpace South East supports the completion of the Playbuilder programme.

Yours faithfully,

**Michelle Parker (for and on behalf of)
GreenSpace South East Forum**

Regional Manager
GreenSpace South East
T: 07898 870859
W: www.gs-se.org.uk

