

Report of	Meeting	Date
Jamie Carson Corporate Director (People)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21/05/09

## GET UP AND PLAY RANGERS

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have recently requested an update on the Play Ranger scheme to date. As staff have recently reviewed the scheme, it was considered timely to incorporate this into the report.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the report be noted.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	3	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	3
Involving people in their communities		Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

### BACKGROUND

4. Funding was secured through the Big Lottery Play Portfolio to appoint and develop a team of four play rangers, each working 15 flexible hours a week, on average, covering many venues across the borough of Chorley. The scheme will address such issues as safety, bullying, intimidation, inclusion, better use of parks and open spaces, education, improving information about play and will involve young people and children in decision making.
5. The play rangers will support and encourage play and free-time activities for children and young people of all ages ensuring that children can play safely outdoors, which many are unable to do usually due to increasing traffic and fears about strangers. The scheme will help stimulate healthy and sustainable activity within the community and create the opportunity to signpost children and young people to further develop their interests and skills.
6. The Rangers will not only use well-established, designated areas of play, but also informal open spaces; educating the community about making the most out of their local neighbourhood and highlighting the opportunity for maintaining activity, making best use of the locality in which they live.



## RECRUITMENT

7. Play Ranger posts were advertised in March 2008 attracting 7 applicants of which 5 were shortlisted. Three withdrew prior to interview; the two remaining applicants were suitable for the role and appointed with a start date of 27 May 2008.
8. The posts were readvertised attracting 13 applicants, shortlisted into 6. Two further Play Rangers were appointed with a start date of 6 October 2008.
9. Difficulty with recruitment was attributed to the work being predominatly during evenings and weekends. Attracting staff has been a problem in other areas of the country where play ranger programmes are being developed.

## WORK PROGRAMME

### 10. June – July

During the first two months following their appointment, the intial two play rangers (Chris Hammond and Neal Hopkins) spent time getting to know the area, travelling around the borough, familiarising themselves with potential venues and promoting the service with local young people, parents, community groups, police, and other partner agencies. Throughout this time they engaged with young people, building up good relationships in many areas.

### 11. August

Throughout the summer a detailed programme of activity was created throughout the borough. 63 sessions where delivered across 19 different venues. Weather conditions affected a number of sessions but overall a large number of children attended. At least three visits were made to each site listed below.

Venue	No of young people
Drapers Avenue, Ecclestone Youth Club	3
Wymott Park, Ulnes Walton	0
Wheelton Village Hall	4
Brinscall Ball Court, Railway Road	11
King Georges, Adlington	40
Jubilee Playing Field, Park Road, Adlington	36
Springfield Play Park, Springfield Road	48
Tansley Avenue, Coppull	20
Yarrow Valley Country Park	30+
Eaves Green Community Centre	5
Rangletts Recreation Ground, Duke St	28
Clayton Brook Ball Court, Great Greens Lane	22
Primrose Hill Play Area, (next to school)	1
Buttermere Green Play Park	10
Coronation Recreation Ground, Devonshire Road	35
Harpers Lane Recreation Ground	25
Tatton Recreation Ground	6
Abbey Village Play Area	0
Astley Park	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>334</b>

## **12. September – October**

A programme of 6 sessions per week was delivered in different venues during the evening and on Saturdays. Venues were Harpers Lane Recreation Ground, Springfield Play Park, Jubilee Playing Fields, Clayton Brook Ball Court, Drapers Avenue and Coronation Recreation Ground. October proved a difficult month with the darker nights and numbers attending the evening sessions reduced.

## **13. November – March**

A programme of indoor sessions to combat the winter months was devised in the evenings with sessions at Albany Science College, Astley Community Centre and Clayton Brook Village Hall. Saturdays remained outdoors at Buttermere and Coppull. The rangers worked on Saturday morning with Chorley Wildcats implementing play sessions with children with a range of learning and physical disabilities.

14. Clayton Brook has been a success with regard to numbers, attracting 25 young people on average every week. Problems with behaviour has been of concern but we have implemented a young people's behaviour contract and had PCSOs in attendance which helped improve the situation. The Astley Village session was not well attended and a decision was made to cancel this after the Christmas break. Albany was slow to begin but has picked up and is going well with about 10 – 15 young people attending each week. Weather and darker nights has been an issue to young people attending.

15. A programme for 3 to 4 year olds at Duke Street Nursery has taken place every Tuesday since January. A Play Ranger has led sessions around physical activity through story and play. This programme may be expanded in other children's centres initially, then possibly other nursery providers. It is a great way to raise the importance of play at an early age with parents and other agencies working with young people.

## **PROMOTION AND MARKETING**

16. Once the Play Rangers were in post at the end of May, an article explaining the programme was published in the local paper. A section on the Chorley Council website was produced which highlighted what the programme was about and where the Play Rangers would be, with opportunities for the public to comment and suggest ideas. In the first few months the Rangers visited as many local organisations as they could, including schools, youth clubs, PACT meetings, sports events etc. The summer programme was included in the Summer Holiday booklet. 3000 copies of this is produced which is available throughout the borough from key pick up points.

17. For the Winter Play Ranger programme running November to March a leaflet was produced detailing all sessions. These were sent to key groups working with young people and to various locations around the borough, including local schools close to the venues where activities would be taking place. These were designed and printed in-house.

## **FUNDING**

18. No money was allocated in the original funding for indoor venue hire. £3000 was secured from the Community Safety Partnership to fund these facilities based around identified hot spot areas in Chorley.

## **TRAINING**

19. A 3 day play training course will be organised in June 2009 which will also target other local volunteers and staff working in play environments.

## **EQUIPMENT**

20. Basic sports and arts equipment has been used from existing resources. The rangers have requested feedback from young people over the last few weeks with regard to compiling a wish list of equipment.

## **FUTURE AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

21. A programme of outdoor sessions is presently being implemented and it is hoped to provide a programme of play within children's centres throughout the day. We are investigating opportunities to attract funding to pilot a community play ranger scheme. This will provide parents in communities some basic training and equipment to lead sessions in their local area with assistance from the play rangers.
22. We are currently in contact with Lancaster Council Play Ranger Programme. Hopefully the rangers will visit Lancaster sessions to share any good practice. We will also investigate the possibility of creating a Lancashire Play Ranger Network as other areas of Lancashire are keen to develop similar programmes.

JAMIE CARSON  
CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PEOPLE)

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Bernie Heggarty	5818	20 April 2009	