



County Hall  
Hertford, SG13 8DF

Peter Brooker  
Director of Community and Environmental  
Services  
Three Rivers District Council  
Three Rivers House  
Northway, Rickmansworth  
Herts WD3 1RL

**Tel:** 01992 555701  
**Fax:** 01992 555719  
**E Mail:**  
Helen.ashdown@hertsc.gov.uk  
**Postal Point:** CHO126  
**My ref:** HA/ PB 003  
**Your ref:**  
**Date:** 3rd August 2010

Dear Mr Brooker

Thank you for your letter detailing the progress that you have made to date on the Playbuilder project in Three Rivers. The information you have provided demonstrates very clearly the commitment and dedication of a vast number of local people and officers in your organisation, to secure better play opportunities and outcomes for children in South Oxhey and Carpenders Park communities.

Hertfordshire County Council received a letter from the Department for Education (DfE) dated 15 July 2010 advising us that in order to tackle the national deficit, savings are needed from a number of capital budgets, including the Playbuilder programme. The DfE have frozen all the play projects where groundwork/construction has not yet started, and they will review the programme nationally to identify where savings can be made.

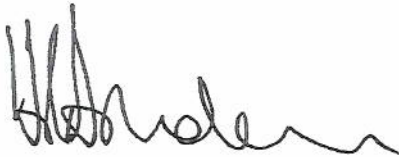
The Government have indicated that if enough money can be found from projects that have not started or incurred significant cost to date, then any remaining monies may be shared equally across England. We expect to hear the revised allocation for Hertfordshire by the end of August, when we will be able to review each of the 12 projects individually and identify which contracts could potentially be taken forward. Hertfordshire County Council is however in a position where, if the Government decides to cut back on programmes which are delivered by local government, we have no option but to reduce or cease those programmes accordingly.

Hertfordshire County Council is seeking to work collaboratively with district and borough councils to establish the fairest rationale for moving forward with the Playbuilder programme, based upon the potential options made available to us by the Government. You will shortly be receiving correspondence about a proposed meeting to move this work forward. It is unfortunately not possible to meet directly with a representative from the DfE as they are working around the clock to make difficult decisions based on the information they have requested from us.

We are also aware that some district may have already committed the £1675 revenue contribution for consultation and design costs that has now been clawed back by the Government and so we are looking at ways to reimburse districts for this expenditure. The details of this process will be outlined in the letter referred to above.

Hertfordshire County Council is grateful for your co operation during this difficult time and we hope we can continue to work with you while challenging decisions are being made.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Ashdown', with a stylized, flowing script.

**Helen Ashdown**  
**Head of Childhood Support Services**