

Landscape architects in play areas challenge

A FALMOUTH-based firm of landscape architects is hoping to challenge people's perceptions of what makes good children's play spaces.

Under the Big Lottery Fund's initiative, Playful Ideas, district councils in Cornwall have been allocated a total of £1,238,885 to develop and renovate the county's play areas.

Mor, based in Quarry Hill, has highlighted ideas of how money from a Lottery scheme could be better spent.

"There seems to be an assumption that a playground just consists of swings and slides," said Mor's Phil Wyatt.

By HELEN DALE

hdale@c-dm.co.uk

"Each district council will be getting around £200,000 which will not go far when using the more standardised play equipment.

"However, there are other ways of developing public spaces that don't rely on standard equipment and that's what we would like to explore."

One project Mor had already played an active role in was the creation of the Penhaligon Star at Pencalenick School in Truro.

"As a company, we showed

that we were able to work with the children and staff of Pencalenick School to create innovative play spaces," said Mr Wyatt.

He believes that developing ideas with the community results in creating areas that people feel they own and have contributed towards, as well as developing a local identity and uniqueness within their own public spaces.

Breaking down social barriers should be one of the key aims within any improvements to public parks," added Mr Wyatt.

"We've already begun work on a project called 'social catalyst'

which is aimed at removing rules that cause controversy between different user groups within parks and get people to socially interact in their public spaces.

"By using ambiguous forms for open spaces, it is interesting to see how people chose to use and view it.

"It is spaces like these that we would like to create, working alongside local communities and district councils.

"We have a great wealth of craft skills in Cornwall and it is important that we utilise them as they are more than capable of delivering these projects."