

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
DATE: THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2013
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING
SUBJECT: FLINTSHIRE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT &
ACTION PLAN

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite comments from members of the Committee on the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan.

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01 Play is critical to children's physical and emotional well-being and is central to a healthy child's life. Children develop problem-solving skills and find creative approaches to new situations. Ultimately, play influences a child's ability to be adaptable and to cope with stressful events. It enables them to develop resilience and therefore support their own well-being. Play is the essence of childhood, and anything other than access to the broadest range of opportunities for freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated play will have a detrimental impact on the healthy development of the child.
- 2.02 The Welsh Government's (WG) vision for play for children in Wales is set out in its Play Policy (2002) and Play Policy Implementation Plan (2006). WG recognises that to achieve the aim of creating a play friendly Wales and to provide excellent play opportunities for children it is necessary for Local Authorities, their partners and other stakeholders to work collectively towards this purpose. A section on play opportunities was included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure which received royal assent in 2010.
- 2.03 WG issued regulations in October 2012 requiring all Welsh local authorities to undertake Play Sufficiency Assessments and develop action plans to address identified shortcomings and deficiencies. The regulations place a duty on local authorities to assess and then subsequently secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 2.04 The scope of the measure is not confined to fixed and staffed play provision. The measure is more about the time, space and ultimately the freedom children have to play. It is envisaged that the subsequent securing of play sufficiency will be about how the Council and its

partners, strategically plan to remove the barriers that prevent children accessing their right to play.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The draft Play Sufficiency Assessment and subsequent Action Plan has been completed. The 358 page document, which is deposited in the Members Library, assesses performance against 111 criteria provided by WG. An Executive Summary is provided at Appendix 1.
- 3.02 Following this consultation with Scrutiny and previous stakeholder consultations described in section 11, the document will be submitted to Cabinet for approval and forwarded to WG as this Council's formal response.
- 3.03 WG require the provision of an action plan alongside the assessment, to identify the actions to be undertaken to address shortcomings. The actions presented within the main body of the report (Matters A-I) have been assessed individually and allocated to one of three action plan schedules on the basis of resource availability, time, and project programming for the wide range of service areas involved.

Schedule 1: This is the draft Flintshire 2013-2014 PSA Action Plan

Schedule 2: Lists draft actions which could be delivered beyond 2014 with the provision of additional staff resources.

Schedule 3: Lists draft actions which could be delivered beyond 2014 with the provision of additional staff and financial resources.

- 3.04 WG requires the Action Plan to identify 'no-cost' actions which can be delivered during the next 12 months within existing budgets and using existing officer time. Schedule 1 of the Action Plan identifies what is possible within the next 12 months.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 Members are recommended to consider the content of the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan and are invited to make suggestions for consideration in the production of the final version to be presented to Cabinet in April 2013.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 WG is providing £22,700 to fund the production of the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan.
- 5.02 The cumulative resource implications of the actions within Schedules 2 & 3 would require the provision of dedicated officer time to initiate

and co-ordinate actions. As a result there are financial implications within Schedules 2 and 3 which will be assessed and reported via the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning and budget setting process.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 The Play Sufficiency Assessment seeks to provide all children with opportunities to access play provision. A section on play opportunities was included in the Children and Families (Wales) Measure which received royal assent in 2010.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 The Play Sufficiency Action Plan seeks to improve the environmental quality of open space through improvements in management and integrated approaches across key service areas.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 The Play Sufficiency Assessment aims to promote inclusion and improve access to play opportunities for marginalised, segregated and disabled children. It is recognised, that if given the opportunity all children will play, irrespective of their age, ability, ethnicity, disability, sexual-orientation, social-standing, religion or gender.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01 Following the final approval of the Play Sufficiency Assessment there is a duty for the Council to ensure that key documents are shared with the public via the FCC Website. The Council will need to continue to engage with parents, carers and children and young people in the implementation of the Action Plan.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 11.01 The Play Sufficiency Assessment process has been promoted within Flintshire via public consultation and engagement with a number of existing forums and networks:

- Flintshire County Council website and intranet
- CYPP Website and Weekly Circulars
- Health Social Care and Wellbeing Circulars
- Flintshire Local Voluntary Council Circulars
- Local Media
- Questionnaires for adults and children via the FCC website

- Targeting of specific communities of need e.g. Children with disabilities and their families, Polish speaking children and families and Barnardos Young Carers
- Family Information Services Website
- Flintshire County Council Forum (Town and Community Councils)

11.02 In addition on the 31st January 2013, Flintshire County Council hosted a multi-agency, stakeholder work-shop, as part of the consultation and engagement, in undertaking the Play Sufficiency Assessment for the County. The event was attended, by representatives from a number of organisations and community groups, including:

Barnardo's Cymru, Children and Young People's Partnership, Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids Clubs, Flintshire County Council –Elected Members, Flintshire County Council – Officers representing services, Forest Schools – Plas Derw Trust, Menter Iaith, North East Wales Community Play Project, Play Wales, Saltney Ferry Tenants and Residents Association, Flintshire Town and Community Councils

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01
1. Executive Summary of Play Sufficiency Assessment
 2. Summary draft Play Sufficiency Action Plan (Schedule 1)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. Welsh Government, Creating a Play Friendly Wales – LA Statutory Guidance 2012
2. Welsh Government, Children and Young Peoples, Wales – The Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations Wales 2012
3. Welsh Government, Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit 2012
4. Flintshire County Council, Draft Play Sufficiency Assessment & Action Plan 1st March 2013 (In Members Library and available in electronic format)

Contact Officer: Lawrence Rawsthorne
Head of Culture and Leisure
Telephone: 01352 704400
Email: lawrence.rawsthorne@flintshire.gov.uk