

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING**

SUBJECT: **FLINTSHIRE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
AND ACTION PLAN**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To seek Cabinet's approval and resolution to adopt the Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan (see Flintshire County Council, Draft Play Sufficiency Assessment & Action Plan available in the Members Library, Appendices 1 & 2).

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. 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 (see Flintshire County Council, Draft Play Sufficiency Assessment & Action Plan available in the Members Library, Appendices 1 & 2). An Executive Summary is provided at Appendix 1.

- 3.02 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: The 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.

- 3.03 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.
- 3.04 Schedule 1 of the proposed Action Plan is considered deliverable within the next 12 months utilising existing budgets and staff resources. The Action Plan will be monitored by Culture and Leisure Services, specifically by the Flintshire Strategic Play Forum, and following the first 12 months it is anticipated that a formal report will be provided to LLL Overview and Scrutiny to advise with progress in achieving the actions in Schedule 1.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 It is recommended that Members approve the Play Sufficiency Assessment and accompanying Action Plan. Following approval, reports will be submitted to Welsh Government as being formally approved and Appendix 1 and 2 will be made available on the Flintshire County Council Website in accordance with WG requirements.
- 4.02 It is recommended that the Council continues to work with the WG to identify strategies for them to fund expectations under the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan from 2014 onwards.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 WG is providing £22,700 to fund the production of the 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 actions if WG confirm regulations for 2014 onwards, within Schedules 2 and 3, which would require a bid for WG funding.

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

- 9.01 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

11.03 The Play Sufficiency Assessment was considered by Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14th March 2013.

12.00 APPENDICES

- 12.01 1. Executive Summary of Play Sufficiency Assessment
2. Summary 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