

Executive Board 20th June 2016

Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2016

Purpose: To complete the second Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2016

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To comment on the summary of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and accompanying Action Plan prior to submission to Welsh Government

Reasons:

Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on Local Authorities to assess, secure and publish information on sufficient play opportunities for children in their area. The Play Sufficiency Duty comes as part of the Welsh Government anti-poverty agenda which recognises that children can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration, and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds across Wales.

A draft copy of the assessment form and action plan has been submitted to Welsh Government on 31st March 2016 and final documents will be submitted upon Executive Board approval

Relevant scrutiny committee consulted YES - Education and Children Scrutiny Committee on 23rd May 2016

Scrutiny Committee recommendations / comments:

The Committee UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Plan Sufficiency Assessment and accompanying Action Plan be endorsed for consideration by the Executive Board.

Exec Board Decision Required YES

Council Decision NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr. Gareth Jones, Executive Board Member for Education and Children

Directorate
Education and Children

Name of Head of Service:

Stefan Smith

Report Author:
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Designations:

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE BOARD
20TH JUNE 2016**

Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 2016

Welsh Government placed a Statutory Duty on all Local Authorities across Wales to complete and submit a Play Sufficiency Assessment and accompanying Action Plan every three years. Where the assessment identifies an insufficiency in play opportunities for children in the Local Authority area, the Action Plan must set out what steps need to be taken to improve the opportunities for children.

This assessment makes the following recommendations to address the gaps identified across the Local Authority:

- To adhere to the Statutory Duty and Guidance for assessing, securing and publishing information on Play Opportunities within Carmarthenshire
- To ensure that up to date demographic information is available when planning for the development of play opportunities
- To address the play needs of children and young people living in rural areas
- To offer play opportunities that are inclusive
- To ensure that the play needs of the gypsy traveller children and young people are met
- The play requirements of Young Carers and LGBT children and young people are met
- Local Authority to recognise the importance of open spaces in contributing to children's play needs within the community and the negative effects that selling these spaces has on children and young people
- Local Authority to assess play spaces for play value and accessibility
- Unsupervised play spaces to be clean and healthy spaces for children and their families to experience
- Children are encouraged to play within their communities
- High quality rich play environments are provided and monitored for quality
- To consider the effects of charges for play provision on the accessibility of provision for children and their families
- Children and young people are able to access play opportunities safely and where appropriate independently from adults
- Ensure the play workforce is supported in achieving the qualifications required
- Children, families and communities are consulted with in relation to their views on play and recreational activities

Policies and agendas across the Local Authority Departments to reference play opportunities to enhance children's play opportunities

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?	YES - Carmarthenshire County Council Play Sufficiency Assessment 2016 Summary Document Briefing Paper: Why Play is Important? Briefing Paper: Play Sufficiency Duty
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: **Stefan Smith** **Head of Children's Services**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	YES

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Play Sufficiency Assessment has highlighted the positive contribution that freely chosen play and recreational activities has in contributing to both children's and their family's physical, mental and social health. The Carmarthenshire Play Sufficiency Assessment is seen as the platform for promoting the benefits of play in contributing to children's health and wellbeing. Increasing children's opportunities for play will positively impact on their social, emotional and physical development.

The Assessment has highlighted that some of the barriers to accessing play opportunities are associated with not feeling safe due to factors such as traffic, fear of other people and dog fouling. The assessment identifies that closer partnership working is needed with communities in addressing these barriers.

The recommendations within the assessment focus on addressing the diverse needs of children living within the county. Particular focus is being given to increasing play opportunities for children with disabilities, and for children living within the most rural areas of the county. Furthermore, the assessment encourages the development of inclusive provision for children from economically deprived areas, and for children regardless of their ethnicity, cultural background and sexuality. The assessment also acknowledges the amount of Welsh Language that is spoken within the county and the need for children to be able to access play opportunities through the medium of Welsh.

2. Finance

In addressing the gaps identified within the assessment Local Authorities are required to produce an Action Plan. Within the guidance documents supplied by Welsh Government it is advised that Local Authorities develop a low cost/no cost Action Plan.

The main barrier to addressing the play needs of children and young people as identified within the assessment is the absence of any allocated funding stream for Play Sufficiency. Where departments are providing play opportunities, it is through very limited financial capacity and are struggling to maintain the existing provision let alone developing new play opportunities.

At present, due to budget cuts and financial constraints, the main priority at present will be to maintain existing provision provided by the Local Authority and to support communities in taking over responsibility for their play opportunities.

6. Physical Assets

The Welsh Government Play Sufficiency Guidelines clearly state that the Local Authority should recognise the importance of playing fields as areas of community use for organised sporting activities and for play and informal recreational use. The Local Authority needs to recognise the importance of these playing fields to children's opportunities to play and include children, young people and their families in any consultations on such decisions. Furthermore, Local Authority green spaces and open spaces are valuable play spaces for children and sometimes are the only available pieces of land for playing within a community, and therefore the impact of any disposal of green/open space on children's play and communities should be fully considered and alternative solutions explored so as to not impact negatively.

Consultations with children and young people have shown that the most popular areas for playing/hanging out are fixed play equipment areas, local grassy areas, sports fields/pitches. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to this in light of the Asset Transfer process.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Stefan Smith

Head of Children's Services

1. Scrutiny Committee

Education & Children Scrutiny Committee was consulted on 23rd May 2016

Recommendations / Comments: The Committee UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Plan Sufficiency Assessment and accompanying Action Plan be endorsed for consideration by the Executive Board.

2. Local Member(s)

N/A

3. Community / Town Council

Town and Community Councils were sent consultation questionnaires with regards to the Play Sufficiency Assessment, the returned questionnaire have been used to inform the final assessment form.

4. Relevant Partners

A Play Sufficiency Stakeholder Group has been developed and membership consists of representatives from Local Authority Departments who are required to feed into the Play Sufficiency Assessment. These stakeholders have been consulted on throughout the assessment process with regards to the content of the assessment and action plans.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THERE ARE NONE