



Neuadd y Sir  
Y Rhadyr  
Brynbuga  
NP15 1GA

Dydd Llun, 30 Tachwedd 2020

# Hysbysiad o Adroddiadau a Dderbyniwyd yn dilyn Cyhoeddi'r Agenda

## Pwyllgor Craffu Plant a Phobl Ifanc

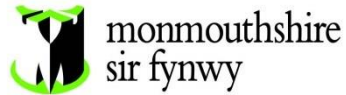
Dydd Mawrth, 8fed Rhagfyr, 2020 at 10.00 am,  
Remote Meeting

Ynghlwm adroddiadau y bydd y pwyllgor yn ystyried fel rhan o'r agenda gwreiddiol ond cawsant eu cyflwyno i wasanaethau democrataidd yn dilyn cyhoeddi'r rhaglen.

| Eitem<br>Ddim | Eitem   | Tudallennau |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| 4.            | Adolygiad o Ddarpariaeth Chwarae: Ystyried canfyddiadau asesiad o ardaloedd chwarae yn Sir Fynwy ac ystyried y ffordd ymlaen. | 1 - 12      |

**Paul Matthews**  
Prif Weithredwr

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|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>               | <b>Fixed Play Area Assessments and Future Action</b> |
| <b>MEETING:</b>               | <b>Children and Young People's Select Committee</b>  |
| <b>DATE TO BE CONSIDERED:</b> | <b>8<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b>                  |
| <b>WARDS AFFECTED:</b>        | <b>All Wards</b>                                     |

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present members with the outcome of the play value assessment of fixed play provision in the county;
- 1.2 To propose a way forward for future fixed play provision in Monmouthshire.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION that members

- 2.1 receive and note the outcome of the play value assessments;
- 2.2 scrutinise the proposals set out in this report as a future “blueprint” for fixed play provision in the county, in particular the suggestion of a pilot project in the town of Monmouth.

## 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The council has a large stock of fixed play areas across the county, which consists of a mix of older play areas - many inherited from predecessor authorities - and newer play areas provided via Section 106 Agreements drawn up and agreed as part of the granting of planning permission for new residential developments. For these newer play areas, the council receives commuted sum payments from developers to cover the estimated costs of maintenance for the first ten to twenty years – but there isn't, and never really has been, a dedicated budget for maintaining the older play area stock.
- 3.2 The classification of play areas in the county is based on the Fields in Trust (formerly National Playing Fields Association) Six Acre Standard and comprises three types of play area as follows:
  1. NEAPS (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play) – a larger play area with a wide range of equipment and designed to serve a wider age group;
  2. LEAPS (Local Equipped Areas for Play) – a smaller or mid-size play area designed for the primary school age group;
  3. LAPS (Local Areas for Play) – a small “estate-type” play area with a small amount of equipment and designed for the pre-school age group.
- 3.3 Last year the council, funded by a Welsh Government Play Opportunities Grant, carried out a play value assessment of all its play areas and some play

areas owned and/or managed by town and community councils. In total, some 110 play areas were assessed by an independent consultant using the assessment form attached to this report at **Appendix A**.

- 3.4 These assessments were undertaken in line with the actions identified in the Council's play action plan and in the knowledge from previous research that fixed play is not the only contribution to play opportunities. In addition to the supervised SHEP and open access play provisions delivered in the school summer holidays there are a number of other opportunities for children's play that can be delivered through green infrastructure initiatives, wild play sessions and creating child-centred settings that encourage children to experiment in their natural environment.
- 3.5 The action areas outlined in the Play Action Plan include
1. Local environment quality and a wider green infrastructure approach
  2. Community development – supporting and enabling community action
  3. Street play – community training, street closures and play value
  4. Exploring the potential for the use of school grounds to facilitate play
  5. Fixed play
    - a) play value, inclusivity and natural play potential
    - b) rationalisation/improvement of fixed play, based on assessment
    - c) planning guidance (links to LDP), review of play standards
    - d) progress delivery of new enhanced play area at Chippenham
    - e) supporting and enabling community driven play proposals
    - f) consideration of play opportunities in rural areas
- 3.6 The outcome of the play area assessments is that only three fixed play areas were ranked as "good" (56-84), ten were ranked as "adequate" (29-55) and the rest ranked as "poor" (0-28). The lowest ranking score was 1/84 and the highest was 69/84. The three "top rated" sites in terms of play value were the Usk Playpark, the Bailey Park Play Area and the play area at King George V Playing Field in Caldicot (town council-owned), in that order. A copy of the full list of assessments and individual site reports are available upon request.
- 3.7 It should be stressed that the assessments carried out relate to play value considerations only. The councils fixed play areas are inspected on a regular basis (in most cases weekly) and all of them are safe to use – but they offer little in terms of play value and most if not all are constructed mainly of steel or metal equipment designed for longevity and relative ease of maintenance. Also, a number of the smaller new play areas will have registered a lower score, as they are specifically designed for a younger age group.

- 3.8 It is not considered viable to continue to support 110+ play areas due to the ongoing and increasing costs of maintenance and reducing budgets, so the following action is proposed:
1. Rationalise the number of fixed play areas in the county and re-provision those that are recommended for closure – the opportunities for rationalisation are more likely to occur in the four main settlements;
  2. Move away from the current Fields in Trust (FiT) classification in favour of a two tier classification of Neighbourhood and Doorstep Play Areas and use this to rationalise the number of urban-based play areas in the four main towns;
  3. Use the revised classification when assessing layout plans for new residential developments in the county;
  4. Carry out a rationalisation of fixed play provision in the town of Monmouth as an initial pilot, which can then be rolled out to the other three main towns.
  5. In future the council to move towards the provision of play equipment constructed of more natural materials such as sustainable hardwoods (e.g. robinia), with a high level of accessible equipment.
- 3.9 It is not proposed to impose a rigid approach to this new classification and no changes will be made without prior consultation with the relevant local members, town councils, friends groups and local residents.
- 3.10 The re-provisioning of play areas could include alternative uses such as community food growing areas (e.g. fruit trees, mini allotments or veg beds), local provenance tree nurseries/mini forests, wildlife nature areas, re-wilded mini meadows that can double up as wild play areas and pollinator planting.
- 3.11 Consultation with the local community on proposed re-provisioning would take place under the banner of the Local Nature Partnership, working with partners such as town councils, the Gwent Wildlife Trust, Natural Resources Wales, local transition and climate change groups, social landlords and local schools. If the process is successful in Monmouth and is rolled out subsequently to other areas then the local stakeholders in each area may be different.

#### **4.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

The options available are to:

1. take no action and continue with the current arrangements;
2. proceed with the proposals outlined in paragraph 3.6 of this report, which follow the actions outlined in the Play Action Plan approved by members;
3. take some other action to address the outcome of the play value assessments

## **5.0 REASONS**

- 5.1 To implement the actions approved by Cabinet in the adopted play action plan
- 5.2 To address the play value shortcomings in the council's stock of fixed play provision, identified in the assessments undertaken in 2019;
- 5.2 To ensure that the council's fixed play areas are placed on a more sustainable footing for the future and to enable better prioritisation of the scarce resources available as and when these arise.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The current funding for maintaining play areas (other than those maintained from commuted sum payments provided by developers for the newer sites) comes from the grounds maintenance budget, which is currently under pressure due to the need for savings against a background of ever growing demands and community expectations.
- 6.2 Unless action is taken to address the current situation the council could well find itself with a large stock of deteriorating assets, with items of play equipment having to be removed and not replaced.
- 6.3 If there is an agreed rationalisation programme, with priority sites identified for investment when funding does become available (e.g. through S106 Agreements, external funding opportunities, etc.) then investment decisions can be made on an informed basis.
- 6.4 It is worth noting that there is currently approximately £400,000 worth of S106 funding reserved for investment in a number of play areas across the county. This includes a sum of £100,000 reserved for the relocated/new play area at Chippenham village green in Monmouth and £130,000 for investment in the community council owned play area at Mardy Playing Field.

## **7.0 WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)**

See attached at **Appendix B**.

## **8.0 CONSULTEES**

Cabinet Members

CYP Select Committee

S106 Working Group

Senior Leadership Team

Section151 Officer

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. MCC Play Action Plan approved by Cabinet
2. Play Value Assessment Report – Sport and Leisure Consulting Ltd
3. Detailed list (and results) of the sites included in the assessments

## **10.0 AUTHOR**

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**APPENDIX A**

| Play Assessment Project for Monmouthshire County Council |                                      |                       |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Report By:</b>  | <b>Site Name:</b>                    | <b>Date of Visit:</b> |
|  | <b>Type: (LAP/Local/Destination)</b> |                       |
| <b>Contact and Visit By:</b>                             | <b>Site Address:</b>                 |                       |

| Age Group: 0-6 Years                      | Score       | Age Group: 7-12 Years                     | Score       |
|---|-------------|---|-------------|
| <b>Traditional Play Values</b>            |             | <b>Traditional Play Values</b>            |             |
| Swinging                                  | 0           | Swinging                                  | 0           |
| Sliding                                   | 0           | Sliding                                   | 0           |
| Rocking                                   | 0           | Hanging                                   | 0           |
| Climbing                                  | 0           | Climbing                                  | 0           |
| Balance                                   | 0           | Balance                                   | 0           |
| Rotating / Spinning                       | 0           | Rotating / Spinning                       | 0           |
| Inclusive / Less-abled                    | 0           | Inclusive / Less-abled                    | 0           |
| <b>Development Play Values</b>            |             | <b>Development Play Values</b>            |             |
| Social Play                               | 0           | Social Play                               | 0           |
| Physical and Personal Development         | 0           | Physical and Personal Development         | 0           |
| Imagination                               | 0           | Imagination                               | 0           |
| Sensory                                   | 0           | Sensory                                   | 0           |
| Problem Solving / Educational             | 0           | Problem Solving / Educational             | 0           |
| Natural Play                              | 0           | Natural Play                              | 0           |
| <i>Additional (e.g. Bounce, Zip Wire)</i> | 0           | <i>Additional (e.g. Bounce, Zip Wire)</i> | 0           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>0/42</b> | <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>0/42</b> |
| <b>SCORING RESULT: 0/84</b>               |             |   |             |
| <i>Poor</i>                               |             | <i>Adequate</i>                           |             |
|   |             | <i>Good</i>                               |             |

| Other Considerations                   | General Comments & Observations |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Seating Available                      |                                 |
| Surfacing                              |                                 |
| Access and Location                    |                                 |
| Distance to Local/Destination playpark |                                 |

| Individual Value Result | Score | Total Playground Result | Score   |
|-------------------------|-------|-------------------------|---------|
| Non-existent            | 0     | Poor                    | 0 – 28  |
| Low                     | 1     | Adequate                | 29 – 55 |
| Medium                  | 2     | Good                    | 55 - 84 |
| High                    | 3     |                         |         |





|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Name of the Officer</b><br/>Mike Moran<br/><b>Tel: 07894 573834</b><br/><b>Email: <a href="mailto:mikemoran@mmonmouthshire.gov.uk">mikemoran@mmonmouthshire.gov.uk</a></b></p> | <p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p><b>Fixed Play Value Assessments and Future Action</b></p> <p>To advise members of the outcome of play value assessments carried out on 110 fixed play sites in the county in 2019 and to propose a way forward for a more sustainable model of fixed play provision in the county for the future.</p> |
| <p><b>Name of Service area</b></p> <p><b>MonLife</b></p>   | <p><b>Date 27 November 2020</b></p>  |

Page 7

**Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

| Protected Characteristics | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic                              | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic                   | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| Age                       | The proposals in this report will be of benefit mainly to children in the 0-12 age range and their families  | Some smaller play areas may be closed as a result of the proposal                                 | Any play areas that are closed will be re-provisioned as local places for nature                      |
| Disability                | The proposed changes will increase significantly the amount and range of accessible play equipment available | This will give a greater choice of sites for children with disabilities and other mobility issues |   |
| Gender reassignment       | Neutral  |   |   |





| Protected Characteristics     | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic  | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Marriage or civil partnership | Neutral  |   |   |
| Pregnancy or maternity        | Neutral  |   |   |
| Race                          | Neutral  |   |   |
| Religion or Belief            | Neutral  |   |   |
| Sex                           | Neutral  |   |   |
| Sexual Orientation            | Neutral  |   |   |
| Welsh Language                | The sites improved will enhance Welsh Language provision through signage and interpretation                                    |   |   |
| Poverty                       | Most of the sites will benefit children from low income families, as funding will be prioritised in more income-deprived LSOAs |   |   |


**2. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

| Well Being Goal  | Does the proposal contribute to this goal?<br>Describe the positive and negative impacts.  | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|--|--|---|
| <b>A prosperous Wales</b><br>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs | Positive – the limited resources available will be directed at a smaller number of sites to ensure a more sustainable maintenance programme and will | Consultation with a range of stakeholders and the local community.  |

| Well Being Goal   | Does the proposal contribute to this goal?<br>Describe the positive and negative impacts.  | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?                                |
|---|--|--|
|   | also provide opportunities for education through landscapes for learning   |  |
| <b>A resilient Wales</b><br>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)                                      | Positive – the proposals will provide a link between play and improvements to the natural environment to improve biodiversity, ecology and pollinators   | Consultation with/involvement of local communities in the ongoing management of any areas that are re-provisioned as local spaces for nature   |
| <b>A healthier Wales</b><br>People’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood   | Positive – the proposals will provide a wider range of outdoor activities. The health & well-being benefits of spending time in the outdoors is well-documented  | A key feature of the proposals is the involvement of a range of stakeholders and the local community in the local nature improvements proposed |
| <b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b><br>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected   | Positive – the proposals include the designation of both neighbourhood and doorstep fixed play areas, all of which will be designed to meet UK and European safety standards                           | Consultation with local communities to encourage family participation in the landscape proposals to supplement the doorstep play opportunities |
| <b>A globally responsible Wales</b><br>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing                                | Positive – the proposal is to use a greater proportion of natural materials such as sustainable hardwoods which over time will allow disused items to be recycled rather than disposed of via landfill | The use of natural materials will in future be the “first choice” option when selecting new items of play equipment                            |
| <b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b><br>Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation | Positive – the proposals for fixed play are intended to encourage participation in outdoor recreation  | Involvement of children in schools and in the annual playmaker conferences held in each town for all year 5 pupils                             |
| <b>A more equal Wales</b><br>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances   | Positive – the proposals are intended in part to address the current inequity of access to quality fixed play opportunities  | Consultation with local families and other stakeholders  |

**3. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?**

| Sustainable Development Principle  | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.   | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?  |
|--|---|--|
|  <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>     | <p>The proposals are intended to plan for the longer term by addressing the current lack of capital and revenue resources to invest in fixed play provision across the county - and to provide a more sustainable long term model that will address the identified shortfalls.</p>  | <p>Establish a sustainable model through an initial pilot exercise that can then be rolled out to other locations in the county.</p>   |
|  <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>           | <p>The proposal is to involve a number of key stakeholders in mapping out the fixed play landscape and suggesting informed choices on future action – these include the town council, social landlords, action on climate change (ACE), the Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW and local schools.</p>  | <p>Widen the scope of the stakeholder group to include more partners and agencies</p>  |
|  <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>               | <p>The proposal is to involve the local community and site-specific households in those areas where there are suggestions for change so that local people can contribute to positive outcomes in their locality</p>   | <p>The details of the enhancement scheme will be the subject of community consultation</p>   |
|  <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> | <p>There are limited opportunities to attract capital and ongoing revenue investment for fixed play. By adopting the planned approach recommended in this report it provides a blueprint that can be used for future investments through Welsh Government AWPOG grants and Section 106 funding from new developments in the county.</p> | <p>Identify priorities for investment and work with local “friends groups” on schemes to attract investment through sources such as the national lottery and other funding programmes.</p> |

| Sustainable Development Principle   | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.   | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> | <p>The fixed play improvements and the proposal to link play with local spaces for nature will encourage children and families to spend more time in the outdoors and should have a positive impact on the health and well-being of local communities</p> |   |

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

|                     | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has  | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has | What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------|--|---|--|
| Social Justice      | Promotes better standards of provision for fixed play in more income-deprived LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) |   | Involve local families in the proposals. In the pilot area proposed 23% of families are income-deprived    |
| Safeguarding        | N/A  |   |  |
| Corporate Parenting | N/A  |   |  |

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

- Fixed Play Area Assessments carried out at 110 sites in Monmouthshire in 2019
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation
- Discussion with Welsh Government Play Division

**6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

The proposals are intended to respond to significant play value shortfalls in fixed play provision in the county, identified in the independent assessments carried out in 2019 and to establish a more sustainable model for future fixed play provision in the county. These proposals also help to respond to actions identified in the council's play sufficiency action plan for 2020/21. In the short term it is intended to initiate a pilot project in Monmouth which will then be evaluated and if necessary refined, before it is rolled out to other communities across the county in the longer term. In Monmouth external grant funding has been accessed to look at the link between play and local nature improvements that should benefit the local community, the local environment and provision for wider community recreation opportunities.

**7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.**

| What are you going to do   | When are you going to do it? | Who is responsible                   |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Report to cabinet to secure agreement on this approach to fixed play provision | Cabinet 20 January 2021      | Community Infrastructure Coordinator |
| Completion of physical improvement works – some by March 2021, some later      | March 2022                   | Community Infrastructure Coordinator |
| Liaison with Welsh Government Play Division and other stakeholders             | Ongoing                      | Community Infrastructure Coordinator |

**8. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

| Version No. | Decision making stage                       | Date considered               | Brief description of any amendments made following consideration |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| 1.          | Children and Young Peoples Select Committee | 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020 | To be determined through discussion at the meeting               |
| 2.          | Cabinet                                     | 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2021 | To adopt the proposal for a new model of fixed play provision    |
|             |   |                               |  |