

SUBJECT:	PLAY OPPORTUNITIES REVIEW
MEETING:	Children and Young People Select
DATE:	12 November 2015
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider a future delivery model for staffed play provision; to consider the Play Sufficiency Action Plan for 15/16 and to inform members of the proposed timetable for the review of the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To receive and scrutinise the future delivery model for staffed play provision and the Play Sufficiency Action Plan for 15/16 prior to its consideration by cabinet;
- 2.2 To note the proposed timetable for the review of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and the intention to report the draft results of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan for 16/17 to a future meeting of this committee.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Review of delivery models for staffed play provision

- 3.1.1 The LSB commissioned a review of our current managed play provision (the summer play scheme) based on concerns that the current provision is unsustainable on several grounds:

- The changes in the regulatory framework from Welsh Government and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), including more rigorous staff qualifications and training requirements and changes to the National Minimum Standards (especially for 8 - 12 year olds)
- The equality challenge of the differing treatment of children with disabilities in the current model
- The pressures in place as a result of reduced delivery capacity, including the financial pressures to meet income targets at leisure centres.

- 3.1.2 The review report (Appendix 1) by Torfaen Play Service has considered the potential benefits and risks associated with the current and alternative delivery models and the potential to deliver jointly on all or some aspects of the scheme. The current model of providing closed access play is regulated childcare and as such subject to CSSIW

inspection and legislative restrictions – MCC is unusual in continuing to provide a closed access scheme. In light of the current delivery challenges, the future legislative changes and the equality challenge the review report proposes a shift to community based “open access” play provision utilising a model successfully deployed in other authorities and potentially allowing wider geographical provision across the County – option 4 in the attached report / appendix.

- 3.1.3 To address the current inequality of provision the proposed delivery model would ensure all summer play sessions are inclusive to all and relevant support is provided linked to individual needs. Children with complex and challenging needs would be accommodated in a suitable inclusive venue(s).
- 3.1.4 The model proposed would rely on a mixed workforce of paid and volunteer workers, empowering and training young people (16 -18 yr. olds) and contributing to meeting Welsh Baccalaureate targets.
- 3.1.5 Whilst the purpose of staffed play provision is to offer play opportunities in a safe environment without parental supervision to enable children to play, learn and develop and mix with their peers, rather than provide child care, in practice many parents have relied on the current model to provide inexpensive childcare. So the new delivery model would result in a potential reduction in childcare as community sites would provide half day provision. To mitigate this impact the model would allow leisure services to offer a wider provision based on sports camps in the leisure centres. This would allow leisure services to play to their strengths and offer a wider and inclusive choice to children and young people.
- 3.1.6 Delivery of the new model would depend on the result of current consultations with partners, most notably Town and Community Councils due to the reliance on their funding and potential future partners. This makes it difficult to scope at this stage the full potential of new provision. As noted equality issues are at the centre of these considerations and once it is possible to gauge the scale of likely provision specific consultations will be carried out with current users, including the parents of children with disabilities to inform the detailed options.

3.2 Play Sufficiency Action Plan for 15/16

- 3.2.1 The Draft Play Sufficiency Action Plan for 15/16 is appended (Appendix 2). An Action Plan needs to be prepared and reviewed annually to record progress. Given the review of the delivery models for staffed play provision and the requirement to complete a new Play Sufficiency Assessment by March 2016 this action plan essentially covers a period of re-assessment and review, through which a fuller and more specific action plan will result for 16/17. Approval of the 15/16 plan will position the authority to access any further Play Opportunities Grant should that become available.

3.3 Review of the Play Sufficiency Assessment

3.3.1 The first statutory Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) was undertaken in 2013 and requires review after three years. The new PSA must be undertaken by 31 March 2016, having either been approved by cabinet or in a final version timetabled to be so approved. Welsh Government and Play Wales have recently issued a revised toolkit for its preparation. It is intended that the Play Strategy Group take a lead in the PSA's review involving other specialist officers as required to consider the wider measures including open spaces and access around communities. The proposed timescale is scrutiny of the draft PSA and the 16/17 Action Plan during March 2016 prior to its submission to Welsh Government and cabinet consideration, which is programmed for April 2016.

4. **REASONS:**

4.1 "Wales: A Play Friendly Country" is Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on assessing for and securing, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient play opportunities for children in their area by addressing the defined measures set out in legislation.

4.2 The provision of sufficient play opportunities for children contributes to the Single Integrated Plan themes that People are Confident, Capable and Involved and Our County Thrives; supporting families to benefit from positive environments to nurture their children to grow, develop and prosper; and access to flexible and appropriate play opportunities.

4.3 The 2013 -16 Outcome Agreement with Welsh Government Theme 1: Improving school attainment includes "To ensure children and young people have access to flexible and appropriate play opportunities" and Theme 5: Improving early years' experiences - including access to physical activity and play for children and young people; to complete a Monmouthshire Play sufficiency audit and address areas of improvement identified.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 There is currently no dedicated budget for play. Existing staffed play provision (excluding the Bulwark scheme which is funded by Chepstow Town Council) is funded via contributions from ten Town and Community Councils (in 15/16 contributing £30K), income from charges (in 15/16, £52K), and Families First access grant money (in 15/16, £20K) to enable children with disabilities to access mainstream play schemes. However despite this funding and income generation the current provision has an unfunded element (in 15/16 of circa £40K), principally staffing costs, which is being absorbed by leisure services and impacting negatively on their trading position.

5.2 Given the reliance on Town and Community Council funding it is not possible at this stage to present a budget for the future delivery model but the clear principle will be that the unfunded element is not sustainable and that the community based staffed play element will need to be self-supporting. Additional external grant aid is also being investigated.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

The significant equality impacts identified in the Future Generations evaluation (Appendix 3) are summarised below for members' consideration:

- The positive impact that securing sufficient and accessible play opportunities can have on children, families and communities.
- The positive impact in providing equality of the number of sessions available to children with disabilities.
- The challenges of accommodating children with the highest tier of complex and challenging needs which will require consultation with the parents of disabled children to inform the detailed options.
- The negative impact that changes to staffed play provision could impact on those parents using the current play provision as childcare, but potentially mitigated by the changes allowing the offer of a wider summer sports camp provision in the leisure centres.

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed annually and criteria for monitoring and review will include:

The impact of the delivered services to children and communities to ensure there is equality of access and opportunities in line with the assessed needs from the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Critical Assessment and the presented options reflect the safeguarding requirements for staffed play provision, the legislative and regulatory requirements and the national minimum operating standards.

8. CONSULTEES:

The review carried out by Torfaen Play Services has involved extensive internal and external consultation – see page 3 of Appendix 1

Finance

Play Strategy Group

Consultations with Town and Community Councils on the staffed play scheme options are underway

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Appendix 1: Monmouthshire Play Review – A Critical Assessment of Staffed Play Provision, Torfaen Play Service October 2015](#)

[Appendix 2: Draft Play Sufficiency Action Plan 15/16](#)

[Appendix 3: Future Generations Evaluation](#)

[Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit, Welsh Government and Play Wales 2016](#)

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