

SUBJECT:	PLAY ACTION PLAN AND PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	1 May 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To approve the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan for 19/20 as submitted in draft to Welsh Government by the statutory deadline of 31 March 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the 2019 Play Sufficiency Assessment and the Action Plan for 2019/20
- 2.2 To mandate the Creating an Active and Healthy Monmouthshire Partnership, Young People Sub Group (the Play Strategy Group) to seek to progress the key actions identified in the Action Plan

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

- 3.1 Statutory Play Sufficiency Assessments (PSA) were undertaken in 2013 & 2016. The duty on local authorities is to undertake a full review of the PSA every three years. The new PSA had to be submitted to Welsh Government by 31 March 2019, having either been approved by cabinet or in a final version timetabled to be so approved. The PSA and action plan were submitted as a final draft subject to cabinet approval, which is now sought.
- 3.2 **“Wales: A Play Friendly Country”** is statutory guidance to local authorities on assessing and securing sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas. It gives detail to the duty under Section 11 of the Play Opportunities, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010.
- 3.3 In summary, the statutory requirements are that a local authority
- must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area; and
 - must secure sufficient play opportunities in its area for children, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to its assessment.
- 3.4 In addition to undertaking a full review every three years, local authorities are required to produce a progress report and update the Play Action Plan on an annual basis.
- 3.5 The guidance provides the following internationally recognised definition of play:

“Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. It is performed for no external goal or reward, and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development – not only for individual children, but also for the society in which they live”.

3.6 Play is defined for the purposes of the measure as including (but not limited to) “any recreational activity”. This recognises that children enjoy and benefit from taking part in a wide range of activities that are, in the main, organised by adults for children. These can include junior and youth clubs; leisure centre and sporting activities; cultural and arts activities; indoor play centres and events organised for children and their families. These recreational activities may offer a combination of adult led organised activities, and opportunities for freely chosen and child led play.

3.7 Welsh Government sees the range of play opportunities for children covered under the measure as being:

- Freely chosen play – with or without adult supervision/facilitation.
- Structured recreational activities – in the main led by adults, with predefined rules.

These opportunities can be available in a range of spaces and settings and any setting may afford both opportunities for freely chosen play and structured recreational activities.

3.8 The matters to be taken into account in the PSA, each of which is assessed against fixed criteria set out in the guidance (in total 102 criteria), are broad in their scope impacting widely across the authority’s activities:

Matter A: Population

Matter B: Providing for diverse needs

Matter C: Space Available for Children to Play (open spaces; outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces)

Matter D: Supervised provision (play work provision; structured recreational activities)

Matter E: Charges for play provision

Matter F: Access to space/provision & Information; publicity and events

Matter G: Securing & Developing the Play Workforce

Matter H: Community engagement and participation

Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas (education/schools; town & country planning; traffic & transport; early years plans; family policy & initiatives; inter-generational policy and initiatives; health and safety)

The play sufficiency assessment against the criteria is appended (Appendix 2)

Value of Play

3.9 Cabinet has previously recognises the importance of play in children’s lives, for both its recreational value and for the important part that it plays in children’s physical and emotional health and well-being and in their personal development. Play provides a platform for children to learn, to have fun and to develop friendships with other children in a variety of settings from the school playground to formal open spaces and the wider physical environment. Play is a common denominator that should be capable of being

enjoyed by all children irrespective of their social or cultural background or the ability of their parents to pay for the opportunity to participate.

- 3.10 Accessible play opportunities contribute to children's lives and to the well-being of their families and communities, thereby contributing to the well-being objective to provide children and young people with the best possible start in life, and helps deliver the social justice strategy to address inequalities in our county by contributing to developing child friendly communities.

Proposed action areas

- 3.11 Based on a review of the 2013 Play Sufficiency Assessment and advice shared across the Regional Play Sufficiency Assessment Network, supported by Play Wales, the approach adopted for the 2016 Play Sufficiency Assessment was to identify fewer, better-focused and more integrated themes/actions to sustain over the three-year period to the next assessment. This approach, founded on a view that a strategic approach was more likely to support partnership progress, has proved sound and so the 2019 review takes the same approach, to refine and reflect progress and ambition against the core actions set in 2016 rather than fundamentally change direction. Overall, the intent is that the Play Action Plan should continue to prioritise freely chosen play rather than attempt to duplicate wider leisure and recreational planning processes.
- 3.12 The proposed action areas for the next three-year Play Sufficiency Assessment period are:
- **Space for Play** – including improvement of fixed play provision, enabling street play and community action, links to local environmental quality action and co-ordination with recreational and sport provision
 - **Supervised Provision** – building on the open access community play model seeking to widen its delivery, piloting bilingual and food provision
 - **Providing for Diverse Need** – inclusivity of supervised and fixed play provision and seeking to address specific needs of children with greater needs
 - **Young People's Voices in Play** – developing and rolling out the Young People's Voices in Play toolkit and supporting young people's engagement
 - **Information & Promotion** – coordinating as part of the wider youth offer and family information service
 - **Partnership** – maintaining partnerships, including with Town and Community Councils

The full Play Action Plan, (from page 57 onwards in Appendix 2) includes a short summary of progress to date, the proposed actions and the required action plan against the measures for 2019/20.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The statutory matters mean that the PSA includes an assessment of the extent that play opportunities are inclusive and recognises the positive impact that securing sufficient and

accessible play opportunities can have on children, families and communities. The provision of free open access play contributes to the Social Justice Strategy. The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation is appended (Appendix 1).

- 4.2 The safeguarding responsibilities of the Authority and partners for children and young people are fully integrated into the identification of appropriate actions and reflected in the PSA and guidance.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Comments
Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of direction and vision in delivery No access to play opportunity grant Loss of existing relationships / partnerships 	Not fulfilling statutory requirements to have a Play Sufficiency Assessment and a Play Action Plan
Review Play Sufficiency Assessment and prepare new action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direction and vision in delivery Allows access to play opportunity grant Supports existing relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of buy in from partners 	Meets statutory requirements to have a Play Sufficiency Assessment and a Play Action Plan

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Assessment criteria for the PSA measures are set out in Statutory Guidance / the PSA Toolkit prepared by Play Wales on behalf of Welsh Government and the requirement to undertake an annual review.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 “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.
- 7.2 The provision of sufficient play opportunities for children contributes to wellbeing objectives and the corporate plan: Providing children and young people with the best possible start in life – enabling children to be active and participate in play, particularly outside is important, not just to obesity but also for broader child development

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 There is no dedicated play budget so provision depends on partnership working. The substantial financial support from Town and Community Councils, from the Welsh Government Families First Fund and when available Play Opportunity Grant, with support from voluntary sources, has enabled the successful delivery of the summer play schemes. Play Opportunities Grant has been made available on occasions by Welsh Government but not consistently and usually as underspend towards the year end. Whilst the grant is welcome and has been well used to improve play opportunities its timing and uncertainty mitigates against fully strategic spend.
- 8.2 There are no other direct resource implications associated with the PSA. Having an up to date PSA and Action Plan is a pre-requisite for accessing any Play Opportunities Grant, and positions the authority and its partners to seek external funding for specific initiatives / actions in the plan.

9. CONSULTEES:

SLT, Cabinet, Enterprise DMT; Chief Officer, Children and Young People; Community and Partnership Development Manager

No further comments received.

Children and Young Peoples Select Committee considered the Play Action Plan and PSA on 29 November 2018 and 21 February 2019:

Committee conclusions 29 November 2018:

The Chair highlighted the importance of developing a co-ordinated approach between the authority and MonLife going forward regarding the statutory duty to undertake play assessments and agreed that this point should be reported to Cabinet.

It was agreed that a letter should be written to the Welsh Government:

- a. to request that the Play Opportunity Grant is embedded into a formal grant programme so that it can be used in a more planned and strategic way over the course of the year, rather than rushed over a 6 week period, which makes it very difficult to spend in a sustainable way; and
- b. the scheme currently administered by Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to provide food for children attending play schemes is continued.

The Committee supported giving the Monmouthshire Play Scheme a separate identity from Torfaen schemes, in terms of branding.

The Committee also supported the idea of extending bilingual provision.

Officers were requested to report the results of the play sufficiency assessment at the meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee to be held on 21st February 2019.

On behalf of the Select Committee, the Chair thanked those who provide the valued service and the officers for their contribution.

for better planning; this point already brought to the attention of Welsh Government.

The officers were thanked for their attendance

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: Future Generations Evaluation

Appendix 2: Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan

11. AUTHORS & CONTACT DETAILS:

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