

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

16 APRIL 2019

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

#### A REPORT ON THE DUTY TO SECURE SUFFICIENT PLAY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the statutory duty under s.11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 on all councils to secure a sufficient quantity and quality of opportunities for leisure, play and culture for children and young people, up until the age of 18 years, based on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1.2 To note the statutory responsibilities created by s.11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the statutory guidance by Welsh Government in 'Wales, A Play Friendly Country' (July 2014) meaning local authorities are now required to secure sufficient opportunities based on assessments that they undertake.
- 1.3 To seek approval of the assessment conducted during 2018-19 (attached at **Appendix 1**) and the proposed action plan for 2019-20 (attached at **Appendix 2**), which is required by Welsh Government, noting that any further amendments requested by Welsh Government are reported back to Cabinet.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority/priorities:-
  1. **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
  2. **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 The statutory duty is expected to impact on all local authority policy agendas including education, planning, transportation, health and wellbeing, poverty, childcare, intergenerational, community development, community safety and health and safety and also to be recognised and integrated within the wellbeing planning of the Public Service Board (PSB).
- 3.2 The statutory duty under s.11 (1) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 which requires Local Authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities

within its area was introduced on 1 November 2012 pursuant to the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 (Commencement No 5) Order 2012. The statutory duty was further detailed by the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 which were subsequently published in 2012. The Regulations set out the matters to be contained in the assessment; the consultation; the necessity for an Action Plan; the timing of the Assessment and its Publication.

- 3.2 In compliance with the statutory duty, Bridgend County Borough Council produced its first play sufficiency assessment in March 2013. This assessment covered the matters required under the statutory duty including population, providing for diverse needs, space available for children to play, supervised provision, charges for play provision, access to space/provision, information, securing and developing the play workforce, community engagement and play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas. A second assessment was produced in March 2016. The 2018-19 assessment is the third full assessment exercise to be progressed and identifies areas where progress has been made since the initial assessment was done and also includes areas for future attention.
- 3.3 The information gathered via the assessment process is used to highlight the priorities that can be identified for the forthcoming three year period (with annual action plans) and this information has traditionally been reported to Cabinet and now also shared with Public Service Board in accordance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. It is notable that the Local Authority is required to “secure” rather than “deliver” play sufficiency by working collaboratively and innovatively with partners and communities. The action plans are initially intended to focus on the core resources of the Local Authority although Welsh Government have in recent years provided funding support for identified priorities.
- 3.4 The statutory definition of ‘play’ at s.11 (6) includes ‘any recreational activity’ inclusive of after school activities and clubs, junior and youth clubs, leisure and sporting activities, cultural and arts activities, events, freely chosen play and structured recreational activity. There is an emphasis on the removal or reduction of barriers to participation and engagement in relation to targeted population groups (e.g. disability, rural communities).

#### **4. Current situation / proposal**

- 4.1 The issues/matters that have been considered in the development of the assessment and action plan follow the template set out in the Welsh Government framework and are as follows:
  - Population – population data at ward and lower super output areas inclusive of age, disability, welsh language and other cultural factors;
  - Providing for diverse needs – recognition of how opportunities support diversity particularly geographical, disability and language. There is a strong emphasis on disabled children;
  - Space available for children to play-inclusive of open space, streets, school grounds etc. The section includes a focus on playgrounds, fields, skate-parks and more under the heading of outdoor unstaffed maintained play spaces

- Supervised provision-inclusive of supervised play provision such as holiday schemes, out of school childcare, peripatetic programmes, free programmes or low cost programmes in leisure facilities, clubs and youth groups. The quality focus on this section relates to national standards.
- Structured recreational activities-inclusive of youth support services and focus on structured sport, leisure and culture with cross-referencing to “Prosperity for All” (Welsh Government) and the “Getting Bridgend Moving” plan.
- Access to space/provision-inclusive of 20mph zones, traffic calming, safer streets, safe walking and cycling routes and planning of public transport.
- Securing and developing the play workforce-inclusive of cross cutting approaches within the single integrated plan, structure and size of the workforce, training and competence, voluntary sector development, volunteering and parental involvement.
- Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas.
- Information-publicity/events enhancing public awareness via website and other publicity methodology. Information that promotes a positive culture around play and opportunities for young people.

### **Reporting Requirements**

- 4.2 Following the completion of the assessment required under s.11(1) there are a number of reporting requirements that apply to Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 4.3 In order to respond to Welsh Government’s deadline, on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 Bridgend County Borough Council provided Welsh Government with Bridgend’s third full assessment against the play sufficiency matters stating that this was subject to Cabinet approval. Welsh Government may come back with recommendations.
- 4.4 By 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019 Bridgend County Borough Council is required to provide Welsh Government with a progress report on the 2018-19 play sufficiency action plan.
- 4.5 When finalised, the Council will be required under s.11 (4) to publicise the executive summary of the 2019/2020 play sufficiency assessment and priorities for action via the Council’s web platform which will replace the current assessment.

### **Responsibilities**

- 4.6 The key responsibilities that apply to Bridgend County Borough Council are as follows.
- To secure sufficient play opportunities in the County for children, so far as is reasonably practicable, having regard to its assessment and action plans.
  - To publish information about play opportunities for children and keep the information published up to date.

- To have regard to the needs of children who are disabled persons and to the needs of children of different ages up to the age of 18.
- To make a firm commitment to work within Bridgend County Borough Council structures, with partner organisations, with children and their families and communities to ensure that children have access to the play opportunities that they want and have a right to expect.
- To operate a play sufficiency monitoring approach that supports the Lead Corporate Director, the Lead Member for Children and Young People's services and the designated lead for the managerial and delivery functions.
- To ensure that the play sufficiency assessments form part of the local needs assessment linked to the Bridgend Wellbeing Plan coordinated by the Public Service Board and to be integrated throughout the planning cycle.
- To ensure that children and young people participate in the planning for play and the monitoring of play provision as part of developing citizen engagement and scrutiny procedures.
- To review budgets of relevant policy areas that affect children's play opportunities and maximise their benefit for play and contribution to the single integrated plan.
- To utilise all practical means available to maintain provision and services and to increase and improve opportunities for all children in the county.
- To consult with parents, the local community and any other interested stakeholder on the development of play opportunities and developing child and play friendly communities.
- To develop and implement an annual play action plan showing continuous improvement in securing opportunities contributing to high level Local Authority plans.
- The duty covers the following broad areas population information, Providing for Diverse needs, Space available for children to play, Supervised Provision, Charges for Play provision, Securing and developing the workforce, Community engagement and participation and Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas.

## **Implications**

4.7 The application of the statutory duty to the securing of play opportunities identifies a number of areas where progress is being made and also a number of challenges for Bridgend County Borough Council that will need to be addressed. Below is a list of the identified progress and challenges and this has led to the production of the action plan.

- since the original assessment was undertaken there have been many areas of progress including the integration of the Play Sufficiency duty into other policy documents

- Highlights of the progress include:-
  - Provision of training resources to strategic partners and locations including play pods and training provided at schools around the County Borough
  - Collaborative working through engagement of partners and internal BCBC departments
  - Green space and play value assessments have been undertaken at numerous locations
  - Improved publicity including development of the Lets go website- publicising ideas and activities
  - Integrated training provision for those providing childcare and community based opportunities
  - Free holiday activity programmes provided in partnership with Town and Community Councils and Halo Leisure
  - National Standards cycle training delivery to year 6 pupils in partnership with Road Safety team
  - Inclusive fixed play installation has been progressed and Discovery Days continue to provide respite after school and during holiday periods for children with disabilities.
  
- Challenges:-
  - Many of the areas addressed in the action plan are shared with the other strategic plans and cross cutting work can be challenging.
  - Focus of action plans is around core resources available to the local authority to allow identified priorities to be addressed
  - Successful completion of the identified priorities relies on a high level of cooperation and sharing of appropriate available resources
  - The importance of the play sufficiency duty and the benefits to children, young people and communities is not universally understood.

## **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1 There is no impact upon policy framework and procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 An initial EIA screening was undertaken and it concluded that there is a positive impact on equalities group based on the findings of the equality impact assessment. The play sufficiency framework is developed by Welsh Government to target the reduction in inequalities.

## **7.0 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications**

- 7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) (SSWBA) 2014, in turn, supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their circumstances, the wellbeing goals of a Healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.
- 7.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The play sufficiency duty requires local authorities to recognise the importance and value of a sufficient quantity and quality of play opportunities to support the long term development needs of children, young people and families.
- 7.3 The play sufficiency duty is cross cutting and across all areas of Council policy and impacts on all directorates. Play sufficiency is part of section 12 of the Children and Families Measure (2010) and the framework for play sufficiency assessment provided by Welsh Government has been recognised throughout the development of the Bridgend Wellbeing Plan by the Public Service Board.
- 7.4 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 identifies that public service boards, when preparing their assessments must take into account the most recent assessment of the sufficiency of play opportunities in the local authority area carried out under section 11(1) of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure (2010)

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The financial implications will apply across directorates and it is uncertain as to how much can be met from within core revenue budgets. There is no confirmation of Welsh Government investment to support the implementation of the statutory duty although there has been investment to support progress in recent years.
- 8.2 The resourcing of sufficient services in terms of quality and quantity will need to be considered as part of the medium term financial strategy based on the statutory duty whilst recognising the financial pressures that apply alongside other statutory requirements.

## **9. Recommendation**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 9.1 Note the statutory duty under s.11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 on all councils to secure a sufficient quantity and quality of opportunities for leisure, play and culture for children and young people, up until the age of 18 years, based on Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 9.2 Note the statutory responsibilities created by s.11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the statutory guidance by Welsh Government in 'Wales, A Play Friendly Country' (July 2014).

- 9.3 Approve the assessment conducted during 2018-19 (attached at **Appendix 1**) and the proposed action plan for 2019-20 (attached at **Appendix 2**), which is required by Welsh Government noting that any further amendments requested by Welsh Government are reported back to Cabinet.

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**11 Background documents**

Report to Cabinet dated 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016