

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUNTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	29 JUNE 2026
Report Title:	PLAY SUFFICIENCY
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	SOPHIE MOORE GROUP MANAGER PREVENTION AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>The Play Sufficiency Duty, established under Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, requires local authorities to assess and secure sufficient opportunities for children to play.</p> <p>The 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) attached as Appendix 1 has provided Bridgend County Borough Council with an opportunity to review current provision, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and establish priorities for the next three years. The assessment identified significant strengths including strong strategic alignment with wellbeing, planning, education and active travel agendas, continued investment in designated play areas, and effective partnership working across leisure, culture, youth and community services.</p> <p>The assessment also identified opportunities to strengthen governance arrangements, improve engagement with children and families, enhance understanding of children's lived experiences of play, and embed play sufficiency more consistently across Council services.</p> <p>An accompanying Action Plan attached as Appendix 2 has been developed to address identified priorities and support delivery of the Play Sufficiency Duty between 2025 and 2028. Members are requested to note the findings of the assessment and proposed actions.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2025 and accompanying Play Sufficiency Action Plan submitted to Welsh Government.
- 1.2 The report seeks to update Members on the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 and the actions being undertaken to improve opportunities for children and young people to play across Bridgend County Borough.

2. Background

- 2.1 Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a duty on local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area.
- 2.2 Welsh Government requires local authorities to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment every three years and prepare an Action Plan identifying how shortcomings will be addressed.
- 2.3 The 2025 Play Sufficiency Assessment was completed in June 2025 and submitted to Welsh Government. The assessment was undertaken as a strategic review of policies, services, partnerships and delivery arrangements that contribute to children's opportunities for play.
- 2.4 The assessment considered the statutory matters relating to population, diverse needs, spaces for play, supervised provision, access, workforce development, community engagement and the integration of play within wider policy and strategic planning

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The Play Sufficiency Assessment attached as **Appendix 1** identified a number of strengths across Bridgend County Borough including:
 - Strong alignment between play sufficiency and wider wellbeing, planning, education and active travel agendas.
 - Significant investment in designated play areas through local authority capital investment and external funding.
 - Targeted provision supporting disabled children, young carers, care experienced children and children living in areas of deprivation.
 - Strong partnership working with Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust, schools, community organisations and third sector partners.
 - Delivery of programmes such as Active 4 Life, Discovery Days, We our Valued Days, Youth Hub provision and holiday activities.
- 3.2 The assessment also identified a number of challenges and opportunities for improvement including:
 - Limited direct engagement with children and families during the assessment period.
 - A lack of a shared performance and monitoring framework for play sufficiency.

- Limited understanding of the lived experiences of some groups of children including ethnic minority communities, LGBTQ+ children, Gypsy Roma Traveller communities and children living in temporary accommodation.
- Delays in implementing governance arrangements including the Play Sufficiency Steering Group and Play Champions.
- Limited dedicated capacity to coordinate and oversee delivery of the Play Sufficiency Duty across the Council.

3.3 The assessment identified a number of strategic priorities for the next three years including:

- Strengthening evidence and engagement with children and families.
- Developing neighbourhood-based approaches to planning for play.
- Continuing investment in inclusive play infrastructure.
- Supporting schools to improve children's play experiences.
- Embedding play sufficiency within commissioning and service planning.
- Strengthening governance, accountability and cross-departmental ownership.
- Raising awareness of the importance of play amongst professionals and communities

3.4 A Play Sufficiency Action Plan attached as **Appendix 2** has been developed to address the priorities identified through the assessment. Key actions include:

- Continued investment in inclusive and targeted provision.
- Ongoing capital investment in play areas.
- Promotion of Play Wales good practice guidance.
- Development of Play Streets initiatives.
- Embedding play sufficiency objectives across commissioned services.
- Establishment of a Play Sufficiency Steering Group and Play Champions.
- Workforce development and awareness raising activities

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The Play Sufficiency Assessment and associated Action Plan support the Council's obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and demonstrate the application of the five ways of working.

Long Term

The Play Sufficiency Assessment takes a strategic, long-term approach to improving children's opportunities for play across Bridgend County Borough. By identifying strengths, gaps and future priorities, the assessment provides a framework for embedding play within planning, education, community development, active travel, leisure and wellbeing agendas. The actions identified seek to create sustainable improvements that will positively impact future generations of children and young people, whilst ensuring play opportunities continue to evolve in response to changing communities, population growth and emerging needs. Future investment in play spaces, community infrastructure and neighbourhood-based approaches to play will contribute to healthier, more resilient communities over the long term.

Prevention

Play is widely recognised as a preventative intervention that contributes to children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, social development, resilience and independence. The assessment highlights the role of play in helping to reduce health inequalities, improve mental wellbeing, strengthen social connections and encourage active lifestyles. Through targeted provision for children who may experience barriers to play, including disabled children, young carers, care experienced children and children living in areas of deprivation, the Action Plan supports early intervention and helps prevent the escalation of social, health and wellbeing issues later in life.

Integration

The assessment demonstrates how play contributes to a wide range of strategic priorities across the Council and partner organisations. Play sufficiency aligns with objectives relating to health and wellbeing, education, active travel, climate resilience, community safety, poverty reduction, inclusion and placemaking. The Action Plan promotes a whole-system approach by embedding play considerations within policy development, commissioning arrangements, service planning and capital investment programmes. This integrated approach ensures that opportunities for play are considered as part of wider decisions affecting children, families and communities.

Collaboration

The Play Sufficiency Assessment has been developed through engagement with a broad range of internal departments and external partners, including Education, Communities, Social Services and Wellbeing, Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust, schools, health partners, third sector organisations and community groups. Delivery of the Action Plan will continue to rely on strong partnership working to maximise resources, share expertise and improve outcomes for children and young people. The proposed Play Sufficiency Steering Group will further strengthen cross-departmental collaboration and support a coordinated approach to meeting the Play Sufficiency Duty.

Involvement

Whilst the 2025 assessment primarily focused on a strategic review of current arrangements, it identified the need to strengthen direct engagement with children, young people, families and communities. A key priority within the Action Plan is the development of more robust mechanisms to capture children's lived experiences of play, including borough-wide surveys, targeted engagement with underrepresented groups and neighbourhood-level participation activities. This will ensure that future planning and decision-making is increasingly informed by the voices of children and those communities most affected by play sufficiency.

5.2 The Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan contribute directly to the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Well-being Objective One – A Prosperous Place with Thriving Communities

The assessment supports the development of vibrant, resilient and connected communities by ensuring children and young people have access to safe, inclusive and welcoming opportunities for play. Investment in play spaces, community assets and neighbourhood-based provision helps create attractive places where people want to live, work and spend time. By supporting community cohesion, social interaction and active lifestyles, the Play Sufficiency Action Plan contributes to stronger and more sustainable communities across the county borough.

Well-being Objective Two – Creating Modern, Seamless Public Services

The Action Plan promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to planning for play across Council services and partner organisations. The establishment of improved governance arrangements, cross-departmental working and stronger partnership structures will help ensure play sufficiency is embedded within wider service planning and delivery. By aligning resources and priorities across education, wellbeing, leisure, planning and community services, the Council can deliver more effective and responsive services for children and families.

Well-being Objective Three – Enabling People to Meet Their Potential

Play is fundamental to children's development, learning, creativity, confidence and wellbeing. Providing sufficient opportunities for play supports children and young people to develop essential life skills, build relationships, improve physical and emotional health and achieve positive outcomes throughout childhood and adolescence. The assessment identifies opportunities to improve access to play for all children, enabling them to reach their full potential regardless of background or circumstance.

Well-being Objective Four – Supporting Our Most Vulnerable

The assessment places significant emphasis on understanding and addressing the barriers faced by children who may experience inequality or disadvantage. Through targeted provision, inclusive design, improved engagement and partnership working, the Action Plan seeks to improve opportunities for disabled children, children with additional learning needs, young carers, care experienced children, children living in poverty and other vulnerable groups. This approach supports the Council's commitment to reducing inequalities and ensuring that those who need

the greatest support have access to meaningful opportunities for play, recreation and social connection.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 The assessment recognises the importance of accessible green space, active travel routes and outdoor environments in supporting children's opportunities to play.
- 6.2 Future investment in play spaces will continue to promote sustainable, inclusive and environmentally responsible approaches to design and development.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 Play opportunities contribute significantly to children's wellbeing, resilience and social development.
- 7.2 The assessment recognises the importance of ensuring care experienced children, young carers and vulnerable children have access to appropriate play and recreational opportunities.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Delivery of the Action Plan will be supported through existing resources, partnership arrangements and external funding opportunities.
- 8.2 Continued investment in play infrastructure will be considered through the existing allocations in the Council's capital programme, Section 106

9. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the findings of the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2025;
- 2. Note the Play Sufficiency Action Plan 2025-2028 and the actions being undertaken to address identified areas for improvement;
- 3. Support the development of strengthened governance arrangements, including the establishment of a Play Sufficiency Steering Group and Play Champions;
- 4. Note that a progress update on delivery of the Action Plan will be provided to the Committee within 12 months.

Background Documents

None