

# **BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **REPORT TO CABINET**

**10 MAY 2016**

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

#### **STATUTORY 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 requirements of the play sufficiency statutory duty in Wales and the approach that has been taken in Bridgend in response to the requirements;
- 1.2 To seek approval of the proposed action plan in response to the play sufficiency assessment.

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

- 2.1 This report links with the following priorities in the Corporate Plan:
  - Helping people to be more self-reliant;
  - Smarter use of resources;
  - Supporting a successful economy.
- 2.2 In addition, the play sufficiency 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.

##### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The play sufficiency duty comes as part of the Welsh Governments anti-poverty agenda and recognises that children and young people can have a poverty of experience, opportunity and aspiration and that this kind of poverty can affect children from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds.
- 3.2 Each local authority in Wales is required to assess for play sufficiency every three years and create an action plan under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010. This has been identified through the Play Sufficiency Assessment (Wales) Regulations 2012 and the associated Statutory Guidance, 'Wales a Play Friendly Country'.
- 3.3 A second stage of the duty has been introduced in 2014 requiring local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play with a second full assessment being required to be submitted to Welsh Government by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. This report provides an update on the previous report provided to Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

#### 4. Current Situation/Proposal

##### The Assessment Process

- 4.1 Bridgend County Borough Council recognises that to achieve its aim of creating a play friendly county and to provide excellent opportunities for our children and young people, it will be necessary to work with partners and other stakeholders towards this purpose. The Welsh Government's core aims for children and young people recognises that this duty may mitigate the negative effects of poverty, build resilience, and support the development of physical, social, mental, emotional and creative skills. It recognises the benefits of experiential learning, physical activity and in some contexts therapy.
- 4.2 The regulations include a range of matters to be considered in any assessment, review and publication.
- 4.3 It is a requirement that the information gathered in relation to play sufficiency is published and kept up to date.
- 4.4 There is an emphasis on meeting the diverse needs of children including those who are disabled and children of differing ages up to and including 17 years. There is recognition of the impact of poverty and isolation on access to play and recreation.
- 4.5 The scope of activity is broad and includes any recreational activity including junior and youth clubs, leisure centre and sporting activities, cultural and arts activities, in addition to specific concepts of play and playwork. The scope includes both structured and unstructured activity in both indoor and outdoor locations, places and spaces.
- 4.6 The Play Sufficiency assessment (attached at **Appendix 1**) should contribute to the overall needs assessment being conducted by the Public Service Board and the action plan for securing sufficient play opportunities should be linked to the Single Integrated Plan.
- 4.7 Bridgend County Borough Council has been required to complete the second phase of assessment and a draft copy of the assessment has been provided to Welsh Government together with an action plan based on the resources available to the local authority.
- 4.8 'Sufficient' in relation to play opportunities means sufficient having regard to both quantity and quality. The objective should be such that any child should be able to play freely and take part in a range of recreational activities in their communities. This will include access to play spaces and activities that meet their needs.
- 4.9 The issues/matters to be taken into account in undertaking the Play Sufficiency Assessment 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, brownfield sites etc. The assessment includes a review of distance, accessibility and future potential. This section also includes playgrounds, fields, youth facilities and other locations 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 in leisure facilities, clubs and youth groups. The quality focus in this section includes national standards where they are applicable;
- Structured recreational activities – inclusive of youth support services and youth services. There is a focus on sport, leisure and cultural opportunities and cross-referencing to ‘Creating an Active Wales’ and Local Authority Partnership Agreements;
- 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 management structures, structure and size of workforce, training and competence, voluntary sector development, volunteering and parental involvement;
- Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas – inclusive of education and schools, planning, traffic and transport, health and wellbeing, child poverty, early years and family policy and initiatives, inter-generational policy, community development and community safety;
- Information – publicity and events that enhance public awareness via website and other publicity methodology and including events in public spaces supported by information that promotes a positive culture around play and opportunities for young people.

#### Partnership

- 4.10 Welsh Government identifies the importance of working with all partners in the community including Town and Community Councils, third sector, community groups, private sector, children and families. There are opportunities for cross-border collaboration and sharing of good practice.
- 4.11 The Statutory Guidance identifies that the Public Service Boards should ensure that Play Sufficiency assessment forms part of the local needs assessment and resultant action plans.
- 4.12 The collaboration of partners to provide and maximise resources including reprioritisation is a key theme.

- 4.13 Consultation with young people, families and stakeholders is imperative to inform future planning.
- 4.14 The Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate of the Council will take the lead for this piece of work but the scope will clearly involve a multi-directorate, multi-agency and partner based commitment.

#### Action Plan

- 4.15 The assessment has identified a number of issues to be addressed within the action plan (attached at **Appendix 2**):-
- Sharing available population data to support partners to plan and potentially secure investment for play whilst building on identified data gaps;
  - Recognising diversity of need and developing sustainable opportunities for targeted population groups (eg disability);
  - Supporting partners to deliver supervised play and be compliant with emerging standards;
  - Maintaining and enhancing sport, leisure, recreational and cultural opportunities for young people;
  - Working in partnership with the third sector to develop youth provision;
  - Recognising cost as a barrier to participation and developing with partners a range of low cost and no cost opportunities particularly in deprived areas;
  - Developing skills and confidence amongst volunteers to deliver activities and meet competency standards;
  - Continued engagement and consultation with children and young people, households and wider communities on play sufficiency;
  - Supporting schools to develop play rich environments and to sustain an extended range of extra-curricular programmes;
  - Increasing awareness of play sufficiency across all areas of policy and championing play during policy change considerations.

#### Conclusions

- 4.16 Bridgend County Borough Council has conducted the second phase of play sufficiency assessment as required by Welsh Government.
- 4.17 The themes that are related to the play sufficiency action plan have been identified and these will be linked to milestones and resources to support future reviews of progress.
- 4.18 The links to the Single Integrated Plan and actions relating to play sufficiency have been identified.

## **5. Effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There is a positive impact on equalities groups based on the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment and a core objective of further reducing inequalities.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There is no additional funding identified by Welsh Government to support play sufficiency and the Council will need to make smarter use of its existing resources by working together as one Council and with key external partners and funding providers to secure a sufficient quantity and quality of play opportunities.

## **8. Recommendation**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Note the responsibilities of Bridgend County Borough Council to assess and secure a sufficient quantity and quality of play for children and young people;
- Approve the action plan attached as Appendix 2 in response to the play sufficiency assessment
- Note that progress of the action plan will be periodically reported to Cabinet during the three year cycle of the plan.

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## **10. Background documents**

None