

Appendices 1

Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment

Executive Summary

March 2013

1.0 Introduction

The Rights of the Child

- 1.1 Flintshire County Council through its Flintshire Play Strategy 2011-2014 acknowledges and promotes the fundamental right of children to play, as recognised by the United Nations and the Welsh Government.

Play Sufficiency

- 1.2 The Children and Families (Wales) Measure received royal assent in 2010. The measure is not just about fixed and staffed play provision. The measure is more about the time, space and ultimately the freedom children have to play. Core to the approach is to assess whether children have access to sufficient play opportunities within their local community.
- 1.3 The Measure required that local authorities undertake an assessment of play provision to identify whether sufficient play opportunities exist. In assessing play provision it is important to consider what barriers need to be removed to improve play provision for children exercising their right to play. This Play Sufficiency Assessment is Flintshire County Council's statutory response to the WG requirement for an assessment of play sufficiency.

2.0 Flintshire Approach

- 2.1 The approach taken by Flintshire County Council in undertaking the Play Sufficiency Assessment is shown in detail in the project timetable below.

2.2 Play Sufficiency Assessment Project Timetable

November 2012 Welsh Government Regulations take affect

December 2012 Leisure form PSA Working Group

December 2012 Planning and preparation for delivery of Project

December 2012 Issue Public Questionnaires (Snap System)

- Dec - Feb 2013 Evidence Gathering with FCC Services & Public
- Dec – Feb 2013 Various Stakeholder Engagement eg Schools & Third Sector
- 31st Jan 2013 Key Stakeholder Engagement Event
- 1st March 2013 Submission of 1st Draft of Play Sufficiency Assessment to Welsh Government
- 14th March 2013 Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – Presentation of Report – PSA Audit, Assessment and Action Plan for consideration and comment
- 23rd April 2013 Cabinet Meeting – Presentation of Report PSA Audit, Assessment and Action Plan for approval and adoption

2.3 The PSA process has involved considerable effort to engage and consult with key stakeholders, internal and external to the Council and with the general public. As follows:

1. Promotion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process
2. Engagement with Flintshire County Council Directorates and Strategic Partnerships
3. Development of Online Questionnaire (Snap System)
4. Engagement with Schools
5. Engagement with Third Sector including Flintshire Local Voluntary Council.
6. The Flintshire PSA Stakeholder Workshop / Event

2.4 It is anticipated that the submission of the Draft PSA Report and Action Plan to Welsh Government on 1st March 2013 will be followed by two key meetings – Overview and Scrutiny on 14th March 2013 and FCC Cabinet on 23rd April 2013. It will only be following these meetings and a resolution by Members to approve the PSA Report and Action Plan that the report can be publicly released.

3.0 Main Report

3.1 To set the context for the assessment of play sufficiency the Welsh Government provided a toolkit containing 111 key criteria to be assessed. These 111 criteria have been used to frame the Council's response. Each criterion has been assessed within a RAG system (Red, Amber & Green) on the basis of performance in the last 12 months. The RAG system used is as follows:

Red – Criterion not met
Amber – Criterion partially met
Green – Criterion fully met

3.2 Supplementing the RAG assessment system a series of arrows have been used to provide indication of how the matter is expected to change in the foreseeable future, as follows:

Arrow Up - Improvements are likely in the next 12 months.
Arrow Across – The situation is expected to remain static in the next 12 months.
Arrow Down - The matter is expected to deteriorate in the next 12 months

3.3 The process has identified a wide variety of results where matters may have been identified Red, Green or more commonly as Amber but with an indication of likely future improvement / deterioration.

3.4 The 111 criteria are framed within Matters A-I. Matters A-I are as follows:

Matter A Population
Matter B Providing for Diverse Need
Matter C Space Available for Children to Play
Matter D Supervised Provision
Matter E Charges for Play Provision
Matter F Access to Space Provision
Matter G Securing and Developing the Play Workforce
Matter H Community Engagement & Participation

Matter I Play within all relevant Policy & Implementation Agenda's

4.0 The PSA Action Plan

4.1 The PSA process has identified that there are many actions which could be taken by FCC to improve play opportunities for children and young people. These actions have been presented within the main body of the report (Matters A-I) and have been assessed individually and allocated to one of three Action Plan Schedules as follows:

Schedule 1: This is FCC's 2013-2014 PSA Action Plan

Schedule 2: These are actions which could be delivered beyond 2014 with the provision of additional Staff Resources

Schedule 3: These are actions which could be delivered beyond 2014 with the provision of additional Staff &/or Financial Resources

4.2 The Action Plan has been developed through a process of impartial assessment to identify 'low-cost' and 'no-cost' actions which can be delivered over the next 12 months within existing budgets and using existing officer time. In this respect Schedule 1 of the Action Plan are considered to be "Quick Wins".

4.3 Schedule 2 consists of 57 individual actions which have been assessed and found that they cannot be delivered within the next 12 months. If these actions are to be delivered in the period beyond 2014 then there will be need for additional resources.

4.4 The matters in Schedule 2 will require additional staff provision within the Play Unit to co-ordinate this work across the Authority. The total estimated costs based on an outline desktop assessment are £154,000 of new funding.

- 4.5 Schedule 3 consists of 37 individual actions which have been assessed and found that they cannot be delivered within the next 12 months. If these actions are to be delivered in the period beyond 2014 then it will be necessary for additional staff and/or financial resources.
- 4.6 It is necessary to state that the additional funding required to fund all of the actions in Schedule 3 has not been identified within the time available. This matter should be the subject of future discussion between Flintshire County Council and Welsh Government.

5.0 The Next Steps

- 5.1 The Play Sufficiency Assessment has provided Flintshire County Council with the opportunity to review its current approach to providing play opportunities for children and young people.
- 5.2 The findings of this review are presented in considerable detail within the main report. There are known limitations to the findings within the report and it is anticipated that this undertaking will provide the basis for future reviews which, given more time, can improve and develop on this first baseline audit.
- 5.3 The Actions presented in Schedule One represent the Action Plan for the Period 2013-2014. The actions contained within further Schedules (2&3) are highly unlikely to be implemented without the provision of sufficient resources being made available.
- 5.4 Once approved the Play Sufficiency Assessment report will be made available to the general public and any feedback will be used to inform the implementation of actions in the period 2013-2014. This is an ongoing process which will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the actions seek to address identified community needs.