

## Summary of key findings for each Matter from draft Play Sufficiency Assessment

### **Matter A: Population**

At the time of the preparation of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (January 2013) only partial data from the 2011 Census has been released. The number of children within the 5 year age bands 0-4, 5-9, 10-14 and 15-19 has been recorded on a ward level. Census data on a number of children within certain ethnic groups, those with a disability and those who speak Welsh or another first language is not available at ward level or by age group and therefore will need to be taken in account in future reviews of the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Alternative data sources have been identified, although these datasets have limitations as they are not available at the same geographical level. A 5 year ward based population has been determined based on forecast dwelling completions, although this does not identify additional numbers of children, and data is available to determine the number of children living in areas of disadvantage and in rural areas.

### **Matter B: Providing for Diverse Needs**

The Local Authority's approach to play is to promote inclusivity for all and therefore those with a specific need by virtue of a disability, culture, language, sexual orientation or any other reason will be supported to participate within existing play settings as much as possible, rather than being segregated through different provision. Training and support is available to achieve this through Families First Family Play Project.

However, it is recognised that specific groups may have particular requirements for which specific provision is needed. The Assessment has therefore considered the location of provision specifically for disabled children and it is evident that, whilst provision is available, the geographical coverage of provision is varied. Community transport is, however, available to assist.

Through the Open Space Audit undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) evidence base, the LA has a clear indication of the open spaces available to those living in rural areas and through child survey the barriers facing children in these areas have been identified, although there it would be beneficial to undertake further survey work in some communities. There are few areas that would be classified as 'isolated.'

There are small numbers of specific ethnic groups in the County Borough, although further Census data is awaited to establish a more accurate picture. No specific demand has been identified for culturally specific play provision and the lack of culturally specific provision has not been identified as a barrier to play.

With regards to Welsh language, an assessment of provision across the County Borough clearly indicates that there is only a limited supervised provision in certain areas for certain age groups, and much of this provision is linked to Welsh Medium schools (breakfast and after school clubs). However, it has been the case, particularly in the north of the County Borough, that Welsh Medium childcare provision has been found to be unsustainable and therefore it is important that any future Welsh medium play provision is based on demand. The Local Authority will therefore continue to work with Welsh language groups such as Menter Iaith and Mudiad Meithrin to determine through further consultation with children and parents where there would be a demand for increased facilities and to encourage the provision of these facilities where appropriate.

## **Matter C: Space available for children to play: Open Spaces and Outdoor unstaffed designated play spaces**

A comprehensive Open Space Assessment has been carried out have been undertaken in accordance with the typologies of Open Space set out within Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note (TAN) 16: Sport, Recreation and Open Space:, although no specific assessment has been undertaken in respect of those typologies included within the Play Sufficiency Statutory Guidance that are additional to those included in TAN 16, namely brownfield sites and residential streets. This data has been used, in accordance with local standards for open space provision, to identify which areas may have an insufficient overall amount of open space that is useable for play when assessed against these local standards. The results of this assessment have indicated that there are a small number of wards that fall below the children's play space standards. However, where there are apparent deficiencies purely in quantitative terms, consideration has also been given to other factors, including play space provision in adjoining wards.

The quantity of playgrounds and of all designated play spaces have been calculated and assessed against local standards based on both the area of facilities (Fields In Trust (FIT) standard per 1000 population) and the actual number of facilities per child population, as well as considering against known future provision e.g. through Section 106 agreements and provision in neighbouring wards. A few wards have been identified as having insufficient provision.

The assessment also takes into account the usability of the space as well as accessibility based on the minimum distances to travel standards by age group, its recreational and visual amenity and its condition. Areas that fall below minimum distance standards have been identified.

Whilst this provides a baseline of the value of each open space and designated space, a full play value assessment has not been carried out and there would be benefit in undertaking a more detailed assessment of play value, specifically in relation to designated spaces to inform future reviews of the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

## **Matter D: Supervised provision**

The LA keeps an up to date record of all supervised play provisions that occur within the County Borough. The majority of these are published on the Council's various websites and through partner websites. However, this data does not include information on the capacity or general size of groups, nor if there is a waiting list. This is an area that needs to be developed further.

Analysis of current provision indicates that there is a good distribution of supervised play across the County Borough with at least one type of play provision for children of every age in most ward. Many of these facilities are free to attend, particularly in areas of deprivation, which meets the needs of the population in these areas. However, a demand for more Welsh medium provision has been identified, particularly for older children where current provision is limited, and the LA will look at opportunities to meet this need through further work with parents and children.

As no formal quality standards have been recorded throughout all play schemes (over and above the CSSIW accreditation and Caerphilly Quality Standard), there would be benefit in setting determining a quality standard to assess the extent to which all provision is delivering a rich play environment. However, quality assessments would not be mandatory and it is likely that the type of organisations that are willing to participate will be those already participating in the Caerphilly Quality Standard.

Structured provision has also been considered and it is evident that free provision through free swimming, and school based initiatives through the 5x60 and Dragon Sports initiatives are providing a wide number of structured recreation opportunities for children with a range of provision linked to primary schools across the County Borough.

## **Matter E: Charges for play provision**

There is a good provision of free and low cost provisions for children within most wards in the County Borough. Younger children benefit from Families first funding and all wards have a provision of free play sessions for young children to attend. Older children benefit from Communities First funding that helps to run youth clubs. This means that those areas where there are more low income families are able to receive free play provisions.

In addition, free holiday schemes and adventure play run by GAVO and Tri County are also available in locations that have previously been identified as having poor provision. However, the location of these provisions may mean that young children have to use public transport to gain access to free provisions. Currently, public transport costs are around half price for a child, however this is not a subsidized fare but that set by the various transport operators. Availability of further subsidized travel may lead to an increase in the uptake of play events, but resources are unlikely to support this.

## **Matter F: Access to space/provision**

The Local Authority has invested in a large number of traffic calming schemes, and 20 mph zones and limits have ensured that the County Borough's roads are safer for children, particularly around schools. Whilst the parent and child surveys do indicate that the public perceive that more could be done, it is evident that the Local Authority has made significant progress in improving road safety already and through the Speed Management Strategy, people can nominate roads that should have speed reduction measures put in place, which provides an opportunity to tackle the barriers to play in respect of road safety where appropriate. There is also an extensive road safety education programme in place.

Whilst information is available on the Council website in respect of temporary road closures, this is aimed at special events. Whilst anyone can apply for a temporary road closure, there has been no uptake of this scheme for play purposes – potentially as the website has been targeted to deal with large scale street parties. Improvements to information on the website to identify how the public can apply for temporary road closures for other reasons such as play would be beneficial.

### ***Information, publicity, events***

Information about play facilities and groups is readily available on websites of the council and its play partners. The websites have all been designed for ease of use, and to allow children and parents to see what provisions are available to them.

Physical signposting is also being used to identify 'please play here' areas, within limited success and the education of local residents on the benefits of local spaces for play may go some way towards alleviating any tensions within the community.

## **Matter G: Securing and developing the play workforce**

The promotion of Play and Playwork careers is adequately addressed and included within Caerphilly Childcare, Early Years and Play workforce development. Within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, the ability and needs of the workforce need to be examined – Appendix 5 of the Childcare Sufficiency assessment details in depth the various skills, opportunities, threats and issues that face the workforce.

The play training network led by GAVO is an important part of identifying training opportunities to help develop the play workforce and it is evident that a number of good courses are currently available.

## **Matter H: Community engagement and participation**

Through the various schemes and programmes run by the Local Authority, a number of consultations take place regularly to help gauge how successful various schemes have been, or if there are any gaps in provision. Children and young people are actively encouraged to engaged in opportunities to promote play and there are a number of good practice examples across the County Borough of where this is succeeding.

## **Matter I: Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas**

It is recognised that play is a cross cutting policy agenda that can be influenced by a number of policy areas and an assessment of the many policies and strategies produced by the Council indicates that whilst play is often not directly referenced, the overall aims of many strategies e.g. traffic reduction, increased number of childcare providers adhering to local standards, community safety etc will all indirectly improve play provision in Caerphilly.

There is evidence of good practice in schools with regards to play opportunities, but there is scope to expand the existing programmes that are successfully being implemented as well as looking to increase the use of playgrounds out of school hours as these are valuable play spaces.

The development of the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) has provided an opportunity to integrated the Play Sufficiency Assessment within a wider policy framework. Whilst the preparation of both documents following similar timescales has made it difficult for the Play Sufficiency Assessment to fully inform the SIP local needs assessment, the consultation draft of the SIP does highlight the importance of play and identifies the key initial findings of the play sufficiency assessment.

The protection of valuable areas of open space and delivery of new open space and fixed facilities where new development generates a demand are both important elements of the LDP and the shared evidence base on Open Spaces between the Play Sufficiency Assessment and the LDP is critical in ensuring that the information remains up to date.