



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6TH DECEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform members of the Welsh Government statutory duty requiring Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children through a Play Sufficiency Assessment every three years.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 This report provides a brief overview of the requirement of the duty and updates members of the sufficiency of play opportunities and the priorities identified in the attached assessment submitted to Welsh Government in June 2022

2.2 The legislation came into effect in July 2014 with the publication of "Wales, a Play Friendly Country". The duty requires Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities, so far as reasonably practicable.

2.3 There are many examples of how improved play opportunities have resulted from excellent partnership work, however, the biggest challenge remains the heavy reliance on external sources of funding to deliver many aspects of play provision.

2.4 The Play Sufficiency Assessment is a statutory requirement of Local Authorities and is required every three years.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are asked to note the requirements of the statutory duty requiring Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children, as far as reasonably practicable and the content of the latest Play Sufficiency Assessment.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 So that Members are aware of the Authority's Statutory duty as outlined in recommendations 3.1 above.
- 4.2 To inform Members of the outcome of the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In 2012 Welsh Government produced "Creating a Play Friendly Wales", the statutory guidance to Local Authorities on assessing sufficient play opportunities. The play sufficiency assessments were produced through a multi partnership approach and were submitted to Welsh Government for approval.
- 5.2 The second part of the legislation came into effect in July 2014 with the publication of "Wales: A Play Friendly Country", which is statutory guidance to local authorities on securing sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas. The duty also required Local Authorities to publish and keep up-to-date information about play opportunities for children.
- 5.3 There were no precedents for this work as Wales was the first Country in the world to establish such a duty within its legislative framework. While this approach is to be applauded and there is positive partner engagement, the duty needs to be delivered within existing or indeed reduced resources. However, the duty does include the caveat that opportunities should be secured "so far as reasonably practicable" and that sufficiency should be "determined locally".
- 5.4 Representations from all relevant stakeholder groups, both from within Caerphilly County Borough Council and partner organisations play an active role in a working group that developed the initial sufficiency assessment and are now contributing towards the delivery of the priorities within the action plan.
- 5.5 The accountability of delivering the actions in the plan are not the responsibility of any one service area and are very reliant on effective partnership working. Many aspects are also reliant on external sources of grant funding (if secured) that are short term in nature and may impact on the sustainability of some of the actions. Caerphilly has not had a Play Development Officer to this point, but the Council agreed budgetary growth for 2022/23 onwards and the service area is in the process of recruiting a play sufficiency officer who can then support this area of work going forward.
- 5.6 As part of the duty it is a requirement to submit a full Play Sufficiency Assessment every three years (2022 attached at Appendix 1) and review, update and submit Action plans annually to Welsh Government for assessment. The attached Assessment has been submitted and the Authority is awaiting feedback from Welsh Government.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 There are no assumptions within this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An IIA is not necessary for this Information Only Report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Some of the actions in the plan are dependent on successfully securing external sources of funding; the remainder of the actions will need to be delivered through existing Authority resources, improved co-ordination and partnership working.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 No personnel implications.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report. This report reflects the views of the listed consultees and the working group.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Local Government Act 2000, Play Opportunities, Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

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Consultees: Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces
Councillor D.T Davies, Chair of Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Adrian Hussey, Vice Chair of Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer
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Benjamin Jones, Assistant Planner
Gareth Davies, Area Officer parks and outdoor facilities
Fiona Santos, Childcare Co-ordinator
Tina McMahon, Community Regeneration Manager
Ruth Lee, Family Information Services
Paul O'Neil, Senior Youth Service Manager
Natalie Thomas, Sport Caerphilly Team Leader
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Appendices: The document attached is a Welsh Government document and is not fully accessible. Welsh Government advise that they are reviewing the Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit. For further information please contact the report author.