

Report To: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 18th April 2013

Lead Member/Officer: Lead Member for Tourism, Leisure and Youth/
Head of Communication, Marketing and Leisure

Report Author: Active Lifestyles Manager

Title: Denbighshire Play Sufficiency Assessment

1. What is the report about?

This report is to highlight to Members the recently submitted draft Play Sufficiency Assessment and action plan. The Action Plan (Appendix 1) sets out how we plan to provide Play opportunities for the children of Denbighshire. Should you require a copy of the 100 page assessment document then please contact the Council's Sport and Physical Activity Manager on 01824 712710.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The reason for this report is to provide information regarding the Denbighshire Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their area.

The Welsh Government (WG) issued regulations in October 2012 requiring all Welsh local authorities to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment and develop action plans to address identified gaps in provision.

The deadline for submission of the assessment to WG was 31 March 2013 and a draft assessment from Denbighshire County Council has been sent to ensure compliance with the deadline.

The final version will be sent after the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Local Authority must complete a Play Sufficiency Assessment every 3 years following the first assessment.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members note and provide observations on the content of the report and action plan, and support the commitment to Play Development in Denbighshire.

4. Report details.

A review of Play in Denbighshire was commissioned by the Corporate Director in 2011 to establish an overall vision and identify where responsibility for the strategic development of Play sits within the authority.

The recommendations of the review suggested that the strategic home of Play should be within the Communications, Marketing and Leisure Service. This Service also houses the Active Young People Team, Youth Services, the Family Information Service (FIS) and the Integrated Children's Centres (ICCs). The housing of play within this service would provide a seamless link to the joint delivery of services which work collectively towards the development of children and young people.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment is therefore timely in the development of play within the Authority and will be used as a tool to strategically plan and co-ordinate future provision.

The scope of the Measure is not confined to fixed and staffed play provision but is also about the time, space and ultimately the freedom children have to play.

The tool kit provided by WG requested that local authorities assessed the following areas individually.

Matter A – Population

Matter B – Providing for diverse needs

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 and participation

Matter I – Play within all relevant policy and implementation

In order to do this effectively a substantial amount of information has been required from other services and partner organisations. Extensive consultation took place with the following internal and external partners.

Internal

Children and Young People's Partnership, Leisure Services, Family Information Service, Integrated Children's Centres, Children's Services, Planning, Transport, Countryside Services, Housing, Education, Youth Services, Environment, Arts and Culture and the Lead Member for Communication, Marketing and Leisure.

External

North East Wales Play, Rhyl Adventure Playground Association, Communities First and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council, Barnardo's, VIVA, Tegan Toy Library, Local Schools, Day Nurseries, URDD, Menter Iaith, Autism Initiatives, Welfare Rights Team, Older People's Development Officer, Public Health Wales, Young Farmers Clubs, Ruthin Craft Centre, Marsh Tracks, Bodelwyddan Castle and Wrexham County Borough Council

A Working Group was also established consisting of a range of internal and external stakeholders and partners. The Group met on a monthly basis between November and March 2013.

Information was gathered via

- questionnaires (staff, parents, and children)
- focus groups
- observations of play activity at structured sessions and fixed play areas
- desk top audit of information
- information received from other Services within the Council
- meetings with officers/organisations

Updates on progress were provided to the Early Entitlement Group, Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Group and Communications, Marketing & Leisure Lead Officer Group

Key themes/priorities emerging from the assessment to be addressed in year 1 have been included in the action plan template provided by Welsh Government and are summarised below:

- Further assessment of open space provision and community engagement in play initiatives
- Promotion and marketing of the benefits of play and the accessibility to play
- Ensure open access play provision in Denbighshire becomes regulated provision and adheres to standards within CSSIW.
- Develop a training programme across statutory and non-statutory agencies to ensure a comprehensive range of training is available to enhance skills within the play workforce.
- Through a partnership approach embed the statutory responsibilities of play within the corporate priorities and The BIG Plan.

Key themes/priorities emerging from the assessment to be addressed in 2014 and beyond have also been included in the action plan template and are summarised below:

- Expand provision of open access play across Denbighshire including rural areas
- To ensure all play provision is accessible and provides inclusive practices for children with additional needs
- To establish a play workforce development team (subject to external funding) which will build on current opportunities for children to play within Denbighshire.

Performance management

The progress against the action plan will be monitored initially by the Play Working Group and reported through the Creating An Active Denbighshire Group and the Communication, Marketing and Leisure Business Plan. The first review of progress will be taking place in July 2013.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Vulnerable People are protected and are able to live as independently as possible;- The Welsh Government believes that high quality play opportunities for all children may contribute to mitigating the negative effects of poverty on children's lives and help to build their resilience.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The WG provided £20,000 to fund the assessment process and the production of the Action Plan.

The WG requires Schedule 1 of the Action Plan to identify 'no-cost' actions which can be delivered during the next 12 months within existing budgets and using existing officer time.

In order to further develop play opportunities within Denbighshire beyond 2014, more dedicated resources may be required and WG have requested that identified additional budget costs for the long term development of play are submitted as part of the assessment.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the Welsh Government Play Sufficiency Assessment. The Play Sufficiency Assessment aims to promote inclusion and improve access to play opportunities for marginalised, segregated and disabled children.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

A copy of the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment has been sent to the Working Group and all the departments listed above in section 4 (Heads of Service and relevant Officers)

Chief Finance Officer Statement

The costs of completing the Year 1 actions will be contained within existing budgets. Future years can only be delivered if appropriate grant is forthcoming.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

There are no risks to the current level of play opportunities within Denbighshire and these will continue to be developed through current service provision.

10. Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3.2 of the Council's Constitution

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