



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Cabinet Board

20th September 2022

Report of the Head of Early Years, Inclusion & Partnerships – Hayley Lervy

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Play Sufficiency Assessment 2022

Purpose of the Report:

To seek Members' approval for the implementation of an action plan developed from the Neath Port Talbot Play Sufficiency Assessment 2022.

Executive Summary:

Local authorities in Wales have a duty to assess for and secure opportunities for children's play, and to submit their assessment and action plan to Welsh Government on a three year cycle. This report seeks Member's approval for the action plan drawn from the 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment to be implemented.

Good progress has been made on the recommendations from the 2019 assessment, however, Covid and funding constraints has hindered new developments.

The appointment of a Play Development Officer and two play workers has helped to ensure that actions from the assessment were driven forward.

Background:

The Children & Families (Wales) Measure places a duty on local authorities in Wales to assess for and secure sufficient play opportunities for children and young people in their area.

As part of this, authorities are required to conduct a Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) on a three year cycle, to be submitted to Welsh Government (WG). Annual action plans and monitoring reports are required to be sent to WG between assessments.

An independent consultant was appointed to undertake the assessment and to develop an action plan in conjunction with the Play Strategy Implementation Group and other stakeholders. Funding was received from WG for this purpose.

The assessment considers a number of matters affecting children's play, as identified in the Statutory Guidance, Regulations and supporting toolkit, namely:

- 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 agendas

Whilst Welsh Government does not provide confirmed annual funding for children’s play, in-year funding has been made available most years since the introduction of the duty. The funding is often received late into the financial year thereby limiting the impact that can be made, particularly with revenue funding that does not continue into the following year. However, a number of projects have been funded each year that would otherwise not have been possible.

Significantly more funding was made available by WG during 2021/22 for Summer of Fun, Winter of Wellbeing and a capital grant. It has helped to support many projects across Neath Port Talbot, including enhancing schools and local playgrounds to improve children’s play. The funding has helped to make progress on some Matters and priority areas from the 2019 assessment.

Funding was also awarded in 2021/22 for Playworks Holiday provision, which has also been awarded for 22/23 and 23/24, to the value of £46,813 per year. The purpose of the funding is to enable the authority to meet some of the actions from its Play Sufficiency Assessment action plan relating to staffed play provision. The funding for 2022/23 has yet to be fully utilised and the PSA findings will be used to identify priority areas for project delivery.

Table below outlines the funding received from WG since the assessment in 2019.

Year	Value	No. Projects Supported
2019/20	£5,000	4

2020/21	£172,978	23
2021/22	£522,184 Rev £235,000 Cap	81 25

Progress on 2019-2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment:

As part of the Covid pandemic response and recovery, funding such as Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing were awarded to support the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of children and young people. The programmes focussed on providing a range of free activities for children and young people, and local groups and organisations were invited to apply for the funding. Many projects were successful in securing funding to deliver projects, which helped meet some actions from the 2019 assessment. It also helped to sustain existing projects, improving quality or extending provision.

The pandemic has hindered progress in some areas, however, the funding and changes in restrictions as part of Covid recovery has enabled some progress to be made:

Matter B – Providing for diverse needs

- Inclusive play sessions offered to encourage play for children with disabilities.
- More accessible playground equipment has been funded within the last assessment period.

Matter C – Spaces available for children to play

- Assessments of play spaces undertaken on an annual basis to understand the ‘value’ of opportunities offered to children. The assessment findings inform consultation responses in relation to planning applications.
- Through use of grant funding, improvements have been made at a number of playgrounds as well as maintenance at other sites, helping to avoid removal of equipment.

Matter D – Supervised play

- The Winter of Wellbeing and Summer of Fun, alongside Playworks Holiday funding has provided children and young people with a wealth of opportunity for supervised play opportunities, which are free at the point of access

Matter G – Securing and supporting the play workforce

- Playwork qualifications and training were included as part of an assessment of need for the play workforce.
- Play training was included as part of the Early Years and Childcare team training programme for childcare providers, including Outdoor Provision – developing quality outdoor provision for health, well-being, play and learning opportunities; and Water Play – exploring its potential and engaging children in valuable play and learning opportunities.

Matter H – Community engagement and participation

- Plans for a Participation Champion project were started to help primary school children have a say in decisions affecting them, including decisions about play.
- Family Information Service Outreach worker has been working with local communities to promote areas to play and activities on offer.
- Engagement sessions were undertaken with children and young people as part of Neath Port Talbot's Let's Talk Campaign, and the need for good quality play and leisure was highlighted.

Matter I – Play within all relevant policy and implementation agendas

- The Play Strategy Implementation Group has representation from a number of departments and agencies whose work impacts on or influences children's play.
- The Council's Corporate Plan recognises children's play as a priority.
- Funding was secured through WG's Child Development Fund and Early Years Integration Transformation Programme to

provide play based family support services and also provision for children with additional learning needs.

Play Sufficiency Action Plan 2022-25:

The 2022 Play Sufficiency Assessment has been completed and reflects feedback from children and young people, parents and stakeholders. It draws together their views with information collated through the WG toolkit to provide an overview of the current position in NPT. A SWOT analysis has been produced outlining the strengths and weaknesses against each Matter and the opportunities for improving these.

The action plan has a focus on improving the quality of play provision on offer – that of existing provision and of future developments – and on encouraging children, young people and families to utilise what is available to them. Some actions had also been identified in earlier assessments, however, the uncertainty around funding and the nature of some issues, for example parental perceptions, make these difficult to achieve.

Successful implementation of the action plan will require support and co-operation from all directorates. The implementation will be co-ordinated and monitored by the Play Strategy Implementation Group, which currently has representation from key directorates and from Third Sector partners. The need to strengthen the strategic profile of children's play has come out strongly from the assessment, in order that we can protect children's opportunities to play and so that these are not unintentionally impacted upon by others' work.

Financial Impacts:

The action plan identifies whether recommendations can be achieved within existing resources or whether new finances would need to be in place in order to progress these. Actions requiring new finance would not be progressed without additional funding sources being in place.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

The Play Sufficiency Assessment meets WG's requirement that a local authorities in Wales assess for and secure sufficiency of play opportunities for children aged 0-17 years.

Based on the above assessment, a full impact assessment is not required as the initiative has low or no impact on the majority of factors indicated. In the few cases where impact has been identified this is positive, improving opportunities for children and young people's development and wellbeing.

Consultation and engagement with children, young people, parents, and stakeholders was undertaken as part of the assessment and their views are reflected within the action plan.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The assessment has identified actions in relation to play in rural areas so implementation of the action plan should have positive impacts for valley communities.

Workforce Impacts:

No implications.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item

Recommendations:

It is proposed that the Play Sufficiency Assessment action plan be approved to outline priorities for the delivery and development of play in Neath Port Talbot.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

1. Undertaking a Play Sufficiency Assessment and developing an accompanying action plan is a statutory duty for all local authorities in Wales.
2. The action plan has been developed to help ensure that we maximise the available resources for play to improve the quality of the provision offered across the county.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation immediately after consultation with the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Appendix 2 - Play Sufficiency Assessment

List of Background Papers:

First Stage Integrated Impact Assessment – PSA 2022

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Appendix 1

Proposed Action Plan

Actions to be taken to address the issues / shortcomings recorded in the Play Sufficiency Assessment

Proposed actions for the period of 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025

(Funding source: funding from Local Authority own budgets and to be included in the Single Integrated Plan).

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
Geographical Gaps					
Addressing the perceived gap of provision in rural areas.	Raise awareness of existing provision in rural communities.	Focused outreach in rural areas. Collaborative working with Youth Services, Parks and other key departments.	Partner with FIS meeting asap. To promote Summer of fun provision etc, ONGOING	Play Development Officer and Family Information Service Manager	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Encourage families to use green and open spaces for play.	Working with Countryside and Biodiveristy Team, Natural Resources Wales, Town and Community Councils, Local Area Coordinators and others to help families understand the spaces and places they can use for play.	Extend PSA launch invitation to partner groups. July 22 Identify cross over projects with Biodiversity team. Aug 22 Invite selected groups to become PSIG member. Meeting Sept 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
5 wards have no supervised play provision: Blaengwrach, Coedffranc North, Dyffryn, Lower Brynamman and Onllwyn.	Liaise with Early Years and Childcare and Youth Service to understand gaps in provision. Work with Local Area Coordinators and other community-based organisations to explore opportunities and share details on existing provision.	Connecting rural communities with the play provision they need and want. Learn from successful approaches for example Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme.	Summer of Fun provision July-Sept 22 feedback Invite EYC and Youth service to PSA launch meeting July 22 Invite above to join PSIG meeting Sept 22	Play Development Officer PSIG partners	Existing funding/Staff hours
Working with schools to address gaps in provision.	Concerns about Health and Safety prevent schools from opening their site out of hours for play. Explore ways in which these barriers could be overcome, for example Town and Community Council partnerships.	Identify schools in areas with low levels of play provision. Initial engagement with school. Wider partnership working with key Council Departments and Town & Community Councils.	PDO to identify schools. Aug 22 Arrange meetings with schools Oct 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Diverse Needs Gaps					
Using data to understand need.	Population data, including the 2021 Census release, is used to understand need and inform decisions about play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and funding are focused on responding to need. 	Use PSA and QGIS mapping tools Etc. to inform of areas of need. Ongoing	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
Supervised play provision for children and young people with disabilities is not meeting demand.	Co-design project with parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities to respond to gaps in provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Interplay and Neath Port Talbot Special Need Support Group to listen to parents and carers. Identify funding that could be used to address gaps. Co-design provision with parents and carers. 	Create links with user groups. Meet with groups to agree their priorities. Aug 22	Play Development Officer	New Funding to be sourced
	Explore opportunities to use Section 106 and other funding to invest in increasing the availability of inclusive play provision equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with Planning and other Council Officers to ensure the strategic use of Section 106 funding. Explore other funding opportunities. 	Meet with PSIG Parks subgroup July 22	Play Development Officer Parks Dept Project Development and Funding Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Welsh Medium Play Provision	Support Early Years and Childcare Unit to pilot Welsh in Childcare Award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase provision of childcare (including play provision) in the Welsh Medium. 	Confirm Early Years membership of PSIG and agree attendee July 22	Play/Early Years	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Enable playworkers to participate in training to learn Welsh.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More playworkers with Welsh language ability 	Work with Early Years to create these opportunities. Ongoing	Play/Early Years	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Make it easier for families to find play that is provided in the Welsh language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Family Information Service and Dewis to showcase provision in the Welsh Language 	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action Sept 22	Play/FIS	
	Help parent and carers to choose Welsh language provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Clwb Cwtsh, Cymraeg I Blant and other programmes that enable parents and carers to try Welsh. Partnership working with Menter Iaith. Working with Welsh Language schools to understand and showcase what support is available for families 	Meet with FIS to work towards this action using early year's group members to support. Ongoing	Play/FIS/Early Years and Childcare Group	Existing funding/Staff hours
Traveller Play Provision	Work with Traveller Education Officer to engage with the community to see if they want play provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letting the community inform decisions about play that affect them. 	Meet with Traveller Education Officer to assess Oct 2022	Play/Traveller Education Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Supporting Young People with Diverse Needs	Collaborate with Youth Services to engage with young people including the LGBTQ community, young carers and those with additional learning needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The play wants and needs of children and young people with diverse needs are understood. Young people play a role in shaping the provision that for them. 	Meet with Families First Youth Coordinator Aug 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Access Gaps					
60% of parents say road traffic is a barrier to play.	Learn from the Cilfrew Village 20mph speed limit pilot. How does this impact on play within the village?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working with Road Safety Team. Listening to the community in Cilfrew Village. Working with Cilffriw Primary School 	Agenda item for PSIG group Sept 22 Update from Road Safety team ongoing PDO meet with Primary School and attend	Road Safety Officers/Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
			Community group meeting. Oct 22		
25% of young people said access to transport and 24% said safer routes would enable them to play more.	<p>Feasibility Study: Wheels to Play</p> <p>Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a scheme be created to help children and young people access play? For example, a programme where activities such as litter picking or volunteering can be traded for a cycle hire, bus vouchers and / or railcard.</p> <p>Could a scheme be created to help children and young people access play? For example, a programme where activities such as litter picking or volunteering can be traded for a cycle hire, bus vouchers and / or railcard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify potential partners. Explore funding options. Feasibility study Pilot scheme if viable 	Take to PSIG To identify a working group Sept 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
86 play areas were assessed to have issues that impact their accessibility.	Share findings of Play Space Assessments with Parks Team and collaborate on a strategy to address accessibility barriers.	Play spaces assessment process is used to inform investment in play space for the benefit of children, young people and families.	Meet with Parks sub group to develop action Oct 22	Play Development Officer/Parks	Existing funding/Staff hours
Families are not sure where to find out information about play.	A communications and outreach strategy for the Family Information Service to include Children's Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear strategy for the promotion of play provision. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of outreach. Collaborative working with play providers and partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased awareness of the Family Information Service. 	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action Sept 22	Play Development Officer Family Information Service Manager	Existing funding/Staff hours
	All play settings / activities are listed on the Dewis database. Starting with all provision being provided by the Local Authority being on Dewis within the first 3 months of the action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a "one stop shop" to find information on play opportunities in Neath Port Talbot. Family Information Service and Dewis have clear, concise up to date and relevant information on play. 	Meeting with FIS to start Summer of Fun promotion asap Include FIS promotion as part of SoF contract June 22 Ongoing	Play Development Officer Family Information Service Manager	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Come and Play Events – Stakeholders at the Play Sufficiency Assessment workshop asked if a come and play events programme could be explored. This would involve working with Local Area Coordinators, Friends Groups and other community groups to deliver come and play events to bring people together in their local park or greenspace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are re-connected with the provision in their area. 	Invite/meet with partners to look at holding said events at PSA launch July 22	Play Development Officer and partners	New funding to be sourced
Children and young people do not feel safe in some outdoor play spaces.	Work with the Community Service Partnership, Parks Team, and other partners to identify a strategy for addressing the perception that outdoor play spaces are anti-social behaviour hot spots and therefore unsafe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing parks and play areas that are perceived to be anti-social behaviour hot spots. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with partners to address concerns. 	Invite PCSO rep to PSIG Sept 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Promote existing provision in partnership with Youth Services, PASS, Schools and other partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people know the play opportunities that are available to them. 	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action	Play Development Officer and PSIG partners	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
There is a shortfall in provision for children and young people aged 13 years and over.	Partnership project with the Youth Council to co-design a play opportunity, for example park enhancements or a session, with young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people inform the play provision that is provided for them. 	Identify youth council partners August 22 Invite to PSIG to inform actions Sept 22 or meet separately	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Prioritise Future funding from WG to address play needs of diverse and older children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified funding would be used to address this need 	Ongoing PIG meeting agenda item to action as opportunity arises.	PSIG and Play Development Officer	New to be sourced
Type Gaps					
Address identified gaps in types of provision.	Work with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to address gaps identified through Childcare and Play Sufficiency Assessment processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative working to address gaps and ensure effective use of available funding and capacity. 	Meet with Early years and Youth Service Invite to PSIG meeting Ongoing	Play Development Officer Early Years Manager Youth Service	Existing funding/Staff hours
	PSIG to collaborate on Open Spaces Assessment and other work to support the Local Development Plan refresh.		Create links with plan development officers Aug 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Families would like to see the value of outdoor designated play spaces to be improved.	Use the Play Space Assessment process to inform investment in play spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of outdoor play provision is improved through collaborative working and strategic investment of funding. 	Continue Park fund subgroup July 22 and ongoing	Play Development Officer Parks Dept. Project Development and Funding Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Natural Play	Identify existing natural play toolkits and develop if necessary to explore and encourage the creation of natural play spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural play provision is seen as sustainable and suitable option for play in Neath Port Talbot. Promote natural play to decision makers. 	Meet with NPT Biodiversity team invite to attend PSA launch July 22 Invite Biodiversity team to become members of PSIG asap	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Workforce Gaps					
Play workforce audit.	Collaborate with Early Years and Childcare Unit and Youth Service to undertake a full workforce audit. Co-design a training plan in response to this audit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More childcare staff with qualifications in play. More childcare staff with qualifications in play. Awareness of training and its benefits increased in the sector. 	Meet with EYC to ensure play qualifications are included in any audit they undertake. July 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
40% of schools said play training for staff could help them to deliver more play in school.	Enable schools to participate in training provided through existing training programs e.g. Early Years and Childcare Unit training programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools are able to participate in the training they want and need. 	Source and identify play training available to schools Oct 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Review and revise existing Play training school module with schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding analysis. Training programme. 	Review OCN Unit Nov 22 Identify Schools wanting to participate Nov 22	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours

Gap	Actions	Priorities	Milestones	Responsibility	Funding
Quality Assurance Framework	Play Strategy Implementation Group to explore the feasibility of a Quality Assurance Framework for Play in Neath Port Talbot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality assurance framework. The quality of play is improved. 	PSIG Group meeting Ongoing action/agenda item	PSIG Group	Existing funding/Staff hours
Policy Gaps					
Policy and Strategy	Play Strategy Implementation Group to participate in the process to develop the Neath Port Talbot Culture and Leisure Strategy, Local Development Plan Refresh and other key policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play is on the agenda. 	Ensure PSIG membership includes strategy and policy members or their nominated staff Ongoing	Play Development Officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
Play Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG)	Refresh and reinvigorate the PSIG – agree on a vision for Play In Neath Port Talbot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broaden the membership. Update Governance and Terms of Reference. Quarterly meeting schedule with identified priorities. 	Invite additional members as listed above. Have a PSA 22 launch meeting July 22. Schedule PSIG Sept/Jan/March 22	Play development officer	Existing funding/Staff hours
COVID Gaps					
Children and young people are unsure about returning to play post the Pandemic.	Collaborate with schools, youth services and other partners to create a programme of events and activities to reconnect children and young people with play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of Summer of Fun Funding and other capacity. Collaborative working. 	Summer of Fun July-Sept 22 Work with partner agencies via FIS/Dewis	Play Development Officer FIS	Existing funding/Staff hours
	Family Information Service to share resources and information to address this barrier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassure families and children post pandemic. Highlight events and activities. 	Invite FIS to join PSIG and work in partnership towards action July 22	Play Development Officer FIS	Existing funding/Staff hours
Celebrating play and what it can do for children, young people, families, and communities.	Family Information Service to share resources and information to address this barrier.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Family Information Service. Strategic use of Summer of Fun and other funding. Raised awareness of play opportunities. 	Invite FIS to PSIG and work in partnership towards action July 22 Meet with CVS to increase partner projects Nov 22	Play Development Officer FIS	Existing funding/Staff hours