

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016-17**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
COMMITTEE**

DATE 8th November 2016

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,
COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Agenda Item No.5

Play Sufficiency Assessment and
Action Plan
Scrutiny Committee Report
November 2016

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Following the presentation of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) and Action Plan at September meeting of Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed that an update report be prepared and submitted to Scrutiny Committee in the November meeting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members consider the additional information provided.

3. BACKGROUND

The Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) and Action Plan were presented to Scrutiny Committee at the September meeting and a request was made for further information to be presented at the next meeting on the following:

1. Provide a [PSA] Report in a more detailed format.
2. Provide Members with the Play Strategy, Play Vision Overview
3. Update Members with information in respect of the provisions for Play Sufficiency Structure for Disabled Children.
4. Keep Members updated on the Outcome of the Play Sufficiency Assessment that was presented to Welsh Government.

3.1 PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN

In November 2012 the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 placed a statutory duty on all local authorities to assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area in accordance with regulations. There was also a requirement on all local authorities to complete a tri-annual PSA and a annual update in the intervening years.

The PSA Report and Action Plan is conducted and completed in a format stipulated by the Welsh Government and contains information about play opportunities from across a number of Council Departments, namely: Leisure, Culture, Sport, Play, Parks.

The PSA carried out for the financial year 2015-16 was brought to Scrutiny Committee in September 2016. A draft PSA had been submitted to Welsh Government by their stipulated deadline of 31 March 2016. The same document was presented to the next available Cabinet in June 2016, formally signed off and then submitted to Welsh Government as the final version.

3.2 FROM ASSESSMENT TO ACTION PLAN

All areas considered in the PSA were required to be ranked using a 'red / amber / green' status (RAG status), as detailed below. All of the areas identified as red were then copied over into the Action Plan and therefore the Action Plan is made up of areas where 'criteria is not met'.

Extract from PSA

Criteria	RAG Status	Evidence to support strengths	Shortfalls	Identified Actions for action Plan
There is data broken down by Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)	GREEN	This information has been mapped from the WIMD 2011 http://www.wales.gov.uk/statistics		To maintain status, ongoing validation is required.

The criteria highlighted as red and requiring greatest focus in the Action plan are:

1. Training and funding for staff providing one to one support for disabled children to access play and childcare provision.
2. Consulting with children on the recreational opportunities they would like to access.
3. Ring fenced funding from the Out of School Childcare Grant (OSCCG) for Open Access Play, the Holiday Fun Time (HFT) Scheme and Play Work Training.
4. Set timeframe to enable current play providers to either become registered with Childcare and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) or face decommissioning.
5. Steamline the commissioning and evaluating of play provision across all service areas, i.e. Play Services, Communities First and Families First.
6. Recorded number of children accessing holiday provision.
7. Access to mandatory training for staff to ensure they meet CSSIW requirements.

Across the PSA, there were: 17 red areas, (that were aggregated to link themes, to form 13 areas in the action plan); 65 amber areas; and 116 green areas. The red, priority areas, were the main focus of investment in the action plan. Agreement was made that should any other investment be forthcoming (e.g. ad hoc funding from Welsh Government) areas identified as amber would then be actioned.

4. PLAY STRATEGY AND VISION FOR PLAY

The 'Vision for Play' for Rhondda Cynon Taf is highlighted on page 3 of the PSA under the heading of 'Principle Statement'. Welsh Government asks each local authority to articulate how they acknowledge the value and importance of play in the lives of children:

"Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most universally recognised human rights treaty and recognises that every child has the right to play. This right has been recognised and promoted for many years in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Council and within the many organisations working in partnership with the Council.

Our vision is that all children and young people should be able to: have fun; enjoy their childhood and youth; pursue learning; and pursue the development of life skills through access and opportunities to participate in high quality, wide ranging play, leisure, sporting and cultural opportunities, which celebrate diversity of interest and need. The Council will achieve this by focussing on the quantity and quality of play opportunities available through both Welsh and English.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the demand for play for disabled children throughout the school holidays via the Council's Holiday Fun Time Programme. The Programme aims to provide play and family engagement opportunities as part of the early intervention and prevention programme.. The Programme will continue to be delivered in partnership with the Play Service, Disabled Children's Social Services Team, the Families First grant and third and private sector organisations.

By March 2017 the County Borough Council will have made a capital investment of over £1.5m in children's play over a two year period. This capital investment programme will see improvements to 50 playgrounds which is over a quarter the CBC's play facilities.

The investment will have been used in a number of different ways; In some facilities it will be used to add new and interesting equipment that better meets the play needs of users, where as in other areas the investment will be used to target maintenance or safety issues with the focus being on improving access. This will include the provision of tarmac footpaths to the play areas; improvements to the entrance ways, or creating and renewing surfaces within the play area to link the play equipment.

Whilst the focus of the investment is on improving opportunities for all children, greater consideration has been given to the general principles of inclusivity, by ensuring that as many children and

young people as possible have the opportunity to meet and play in a safe well maintained environment.

The Council is also very proud of its recently completed flagship facility in the heart of Pontypridd, which is the largest play area in RCT, providing many bespoke play opportunities for children of all ages and ability. Whilst it has the usual rotating, climbing, rocking and swinging activities, the play experience is further enhanced by its provision of sensory features, which include audiovisual play and tactile play. The facility also caters well for children with mobility issues and wheel chair users as well as has having the Councils only wheelchair accessible swing.

The provision of play, culture, leisure and sporting opportunities cannot be considered in isolation from formal childcare services, provided throughout the County. A range of CSSIW registered holiday care schemes provide supervised full time play and leisure opportunities for the children of working parents and have been given due regard in the PSA

The Council will strive to develop and deliver efficient, effective and high quality play, cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities for children and young people and ensure that the Council and its partner organisations continue to build on the strong foundations that already exist and continue to work collaboratively in the future to plan, co-ordinate and deliver local services effectively.

5. WELSH GOVERNMENT FEEDBACK ON THE PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Welsh Government has requested that lead PSA officers attend a workshop on the 30th of November 2016 to receive feedback from the Play Wales review of the PSAs from across Wales.

6. ACHIEVING THE ACTION PLAN

- 1 Training and funding for staff providing one to one support for disabled children to access play and childcare provision.*
- 3 Ring fenced funding from the Out of School Childcare Grant (OSCCG) for Open Access Play, the Holiday Fun Time (HFT) Scheme and Play Work Training.*
- 7 Access to mandatory training for staff to ensure they meet CSSIW requirements.*

In April 2016 confirmation was received from WG that the proposals submitted by RCTCBC for the spend of the OSCCG had been agreed. This allowed for £40,000 to be allocated to Open Access Play and £30,000 to the HFT Scheme, £14,000 to be allocated for a Level 3 training course and £500 for a Managing play scheme Course.

As part of the PSA, a separate workforce audit was carried out on the training needs of the sector. The outcome of the audit highlighted that in order for staff to

become compliant with the CSSIW National Minimum Standards for registration, there would need to be investment in 2016-17 the delivery of Play work qualifications and mandatory training. Therefore, working in partnership with colleagues from early Years and Family Support, Education, SNAP Cymru, YMCA Colleague Wales, Play Wales a comprehensive list of training has been made available to staff across play, leisure, culture and sport at a low or no cost price.

2 Consulting with children on the recreational opportunities they would like to access.

To ensure the views of children have been represented throughout the PSA, a number of consultation sessions were carried out in English and Welsh medium schools and at a number of play schemes across the borough. In total 332 children aged between 5 and 11 years were consulted. The consultations focused on 'what, where and who' the children liked to play with.

The top 3 things that mattered most to the children were;

- Playing in their neighborhood, where they could do all their favorite things (54%).
- Playing in their house or their friends' houses (52%)
- Going outside and playing on their own (52%)

In addition to this all RCT commissioned play schemes are using a Play Outcomes Tool Kit (POTK) has which gathers information about: what children like to play with or play at; whether parents feel that through attending the play scheme sessions it has made a difference to their child's holistic development. It also contains feedback and a self assessment from play providers so that they can also focus on what went well, what did not go well, how can things be improved etc. This tool also supports the Council to review the quality of play provision which informs the commissioning process.

4. Set timeframe to enable current play providers to either become registered with Childcare and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) or face decommissioning.

For the past 7 years much work has been done to encourage commissioned play providers to become registered with CSSIW. Within the PSA Action Plan, recommendations have been made for commissioners to decommission any play provision not registered with CSSIW by December 2017. However due to the recent changes in registration, there now being a requirement for provision to be registered to provide care for children up to the age of 12, rather than 8, the number of play sessions that have been commissioned in 2016/17 has decreased.

5. Steamline the commissioning and evaluating of play provision across all service areas, i.e. Play Services, Communities First and Families First.

Work is currently being undertaken to realign funding from the various grants and changes in their focus being considered as part of this. This is an on going

process and will evolve when further guidance is received from Welsh Government.

6 *Recorded number of children accessing holiday provision.*

As part of the OSCCG, the Council has to ensure that it provides statistical information to WG to evidence that spend is in line with agreed project delivery.

A: Open Access Play Attendances

Measure	2015/16	2016/17 (on-going)
Number of approved suppliers.	13	12
Number of spaces commissioned	72,238	42,224
Number of attendances	35,548 (49%)	16,615

B: Holiday Fun Time Scheme Attendances

Measures	2015/16	2016/17 (on-going)
Number of referrals received	857	344
Number of children placed	785	263
Number of sessions allocated	3,202	1,841
Number of sessions attended	2,609 (81%)	1,795

7. CONCLUSION

Members are asked to:

- review and respond to the information in this report and
- to give direction on how often and in what format they would wish to receive a PSA update, in addition to the annual PSA review and tri-annual 'full' PSA and Action Plan.