

BRIEFING PAPER

A NEW DELIVERY MODEL FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY

PAPER BY DIRECTOR OF CITY OPERATIONS

PORTFOLIO: Community Services, Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

Reason for this Briefing

1. To agree a new operating model for Children's Play in Cardiff which enables a greater emphasis on partnership, community ownership of the Play agenda and a clear pathway allowing a targeted response to those in need based on clear evidence providing integration with existing Council provision for young people.

Background

2. The City of Cardiff Council currently provides "Open Access" play opportunities for children through the operation of seven children's play centres, playgrounds in parks and on school sites and through the provision of leisure centres (some with soft play provision) and parks and green spaces (some with skateboard and BMX facilities).
3. Play is defined for the purposes of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 as including "any recreational activity" (Section 11(6) Measure). The definition of play includes but is not limited to "any recreational activity". This recognises that children enjoy and benefit from taking part in a wide range of activities that are, in the main, organised by adults for children. These can include junior and youth clubs; leisure centre and sporting activities; cultural and arts activities; indoor play centres, play buses and events organised for children and their families. These recreational activities may offer a combination of adult led organised activities, and opportunities for freely chosen and child led play. In any of these situations children should have the choice of taking part and a voice in what opportunities are offered and how they are organised. (for a list of opportunities, please see appendix "a")
4. The *provision of play services* is not a statutory function of local authorities. However, 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 through the undertaking of a Play Sufficiency Assessment.
5. The main purpose of the Play Sufficiency Assessment is to assess the relative sufficiency of play opportunities within a local authority's area and address any shortfalls or gaps in provision. The Assessment also needs to demonstrate consideration for a range of factors that affect children's opportunities for play; these include demographic profile, open space

assessment of existing and potential play space, dedicated play provision and recreational provision. The first Play Sufficiency Assessment was undertaken in 2013 and a revised Assessment is due for submission to Welsh Government by end of March 2016.

6. In addition to the need to produce a Play Sufficiency Assessment, the second part of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 was commenced in 2014 and places a duty on local authorities to *secure* sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their assessments. The duty also requires local authorities to publish and keep up to date information about play opportunities for children in their areas.
7. In performing its duties under Section 11 of the Measure a local authority must have regard (among other things) to:
 - The needs of children who are disabled persons (within the meaning of section 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (c. 50)).
 - The needs of children of different ages.
8. Whilst local authorities have statutory requirements in relation to the completion of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and in securing play opportunities, the Welsh Government statutory guidance “Wales – A Play Friendly Country” recognises that *“To achieve a play friendly society that offers a wide range of play and recreational opportunities it is necessary for all partners within the community to work together for this purpose”*.
9. From 1st April 2016 the age range for registration of childcare in Wales will be extended from 8 to 12 years. For childcare providers these changes will mean that if they provide, or are planning to provide, care for children over eight years of age they would be required to register to provide the service. This would include the registration of Play Services including the provision of Open Access Play and will result in additional staffing required under the new regulations. For Open Access Play provision the minimum staffing ratio is 1:13 children aged five to sixteen years.
10. Other changes to the regulations proposed in the Welsh Government’s consultation “Changes to the registration of childcare provision in Wales” that will impact on Children Play include complying with National Minimum Standards in relation to Manager’s experience of working in a regulated child care setting and levels of qualifications recognised on the Care Council for Wales’ current list of Accepted Qualifications for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce in Wales or Skills Active’s Integrated Qualification Framework for Playwork. Both these factors will impact on the ability for any new delivery models to recruit and retain suitably qualified staff and which the Council and its partners can help support in terms of providing appropriate training.

11. The budget approved by Council on 26th February 2015 agreed that an alternative operational model be put in place for play services that included funding to enable the engagement of three Community Development Officers to help develop and support the transition to alternative operational arrangements related to the completion of the transfer of buildings into community use with a target date of 31st March 2016. The Development Officers are hosted by the Communities First Teams. In addition, the budget also approved that all Play Centres to remain open and staffed for children's play for five evenings per week until the alternative arrangements are put in place.
12. This report sets out a proposed delivery model which would enable enhanced targeted provision and improved outcomes in communities of most need; provide a more flexible service in a greater number of community venues; maximise opportunities for securing additional grant funding; align provision with Flying Start and Youth Services to enable an improved transition from 0-25 years whilst fulfilling statutory requirements.

Current Provision

13. Currently, the City of Cardiff Council Children's Play Service manages seven play centres in Adamsdown, Ely, Grangetown, Llanedeyrn, Llanrumney, Splott and Riverside. The Centres are staffed and managed by the Council, admission is free and there is primarily 'free play' in that young people are able to determine what and how they play. The Centres operate on an "Open Access" policy whereby children are free to turn up or leave as and when they wish. The Centres have some organised programmes for young people who wish to engage in them in activities such as sport and arts. All play areas provide a small hall with toilets and a kitchen area, along with an outdoor area often with fixed play equipment outside.
14. The Play Centres are operational from 3.15pm to 7.00pm Monday to Friday term times and also offer holiday schemes. There are Parent volunteers at most centres which assist with trips off site and a number of Centres have Friends Groups which support the operation of the Centres.
15. The City of Cardiff Council's current net budget for Children's Play is £1,068,000. The Play Centres have a net cost of between £60,000 and £110,000 per annum for each Centre with approximately 80% of the costs being in staffing. Monthly attendances* range from 721 in Llanedeyrn (term time) to 4,481 in Riverside holiday provision. An overview of attendance and figures and costs can be seen in the table below:

	Monthly Attendance*		Facility Budgets			
	Holiday (Aug 2014)	Term-time (Nov 2014)	Building	Service	Staff	Total
Adamsdown	879	788	£13,130	£2,970	£87,000	£103,100
Ely	2,465	2,993	£5,640	£7,810	£99,000	£112,450
Grangetown	1,865	924	£13,230	£5,350	£51,000	£69,580
Llanedeyrn	1,184	721	£8,770	£2,970	£65,000	£76,740
Llanrumney	1,203	950	£4,930	£2,380	£25,000	£32,310
Riverside	4,481**	856	£16,940	£2,970	£27,000	£46,910
Splott	2,410	2,962	£8,910	£6,050	£52,000	£66,960
Healthy Living	-	-	-	£6,280	£42,170	£48,450
Central	-	-	-	£22,060	£231,830	£253,890
Total	14,487	10,194	£71,550	£58,840	£680,000	£810,390

* Please note that where attendance figures are given, these relate to the number of visits per site, not the number of children.

** Centre closed alternative parks play scheme in place

16. In addition to “Open Access” play provided at Play Centres, the City of Cardiff Council commissions provision through the medium of Welsh, which is delivered at a number of locations via Menter Caerdydd; and disability play provision such as Ty Gwyn Special School and The Hollies Special School. This budget is currently £258,000 in 2015/16. It should be noted that the Play Sufficiency Assessment will guide an changes to the current provision which could require a realignment of funding.
17. External funding is also secured for specific programmes through the Families First, Child and Youth Engagement and Healthy Lifestyles package which amounts to £162k.
16. Alongside open access play provision provided by the Council there is a host of opportunities for children and young people across Cardiff, particularly in relation to supporting the family. For example, within the Early Years Programme, Flying Start offers language and play courses, childcare opportunities and ‘Stay and Play’ sessions. Stay and Play sessions provide the opportunity for parents to have a fun time playing with their child in a safe and friendly setting within the Flying Start area.

Provision in Neighbouring Local Authorities

17. In neighbouring local authorities, the level of play provision varies greatly. Following changes made by Welsh Government in 2011/12 to the previous Cymorth Grant Programme as part of the transition to the existing Families First Programme, the emphasis moved away from specific play schemes to a more ‘whole family’ approach in improving

outcomes for young people. As a result many authorities were adversely affected and funding targeted at play was significantly reduced. Core funding for children's play in neighbouring authorities is therefore limited and relies heavily on third sector partnerships.

18. For example, the Vale of Glamorgan Council has a budget of £25,000 for play schemes and events (which covers areas such as agency play scheme staff, training, venue hire, resources etc) and, with the exception of opportunities through Big Lottery and staffed "Open Access" play provision in Vale of Glamorgan is no longer provided across the year on a regular basis. However, some additional core Council budget also covers some of the Play Development Officer post.
19. Alongside the Council's funding, additional Welsh Government Families First grant funding of £50,000 is available for the inclusion of disabled children into Play Schemes and provides a contribution towards the Play Development Officer post; agency staff costs for playworkers; pre-scheme administrative support to link in disabled children; specialist equipment, specialist training where required, 1:1 support; and transport where appropriate. The Vale of Glamorgan Council is also able to deliver additional projects if further funding is secured, enabling for example linking with the Out of School Grants funding to run an after school club in a school within Barry, and running the 'Pick n Mix' project in identified schools to encourage parents to undertake play activities with their children.
20. Newport City Council operates a range of Children's Play opportunities within its Leisure Services. These include free Play Areas in Parks, Holiday Play Schemes and Play Clubs within a community setting. Approximately £50k is allocated from core budget and supplemented by external funding.
21. Torfaen Borough Council operates Children's Play through Education and Learning and offers Play Clubs within community facilities, After School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes. Budget information unavailable at present.
22. From current research, no other local authority in Wales operates "Open Access" play sessions from purpose built facilities. All schemes are operated by a small Play Development Team in local community facilities and in partnership with local stakeholders including schools, youth centres and community groups. Cardiff appears to be exceptional in that it provides a wider range of provision in this discretionary area.

The New Delivery Model for Play Services

23. The new delivery model for play services is based on the premise of the City of Cardiff Council working with partners and the community to develop a dynamic service approach which is both accessible and responsive to the needs of children and young people. To achieve this vision, the model will be developed on the following principles:

- a. Community Play provision will be targeted at 5-14 year olds to enable a transition between Flying Start services (0-4 years) and Youth Service Provision (15-25)
- b. There will be a move away from delivery in traditional play centres to a flexible model of community outreach in accessible venues across each of the city's six neighbourhoods.
- c. *There will be a targeted approach to provision based on needs of communities, deprivation and the evidence prepared as part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment to be completed by 31st March 2016.*

i. Buildings

- 24. The Council is currently working closely with Communities First across Cardiff to develop business plans in relation to potential asset transfers of the existing Play Centres and it is intended that all Play Centres will be transferred/operate under licence by 31st March 2016. Proposals have been developed for taking responsibility for the buildings and offering community activities and events in six of the seven Play Centres and further discussions are continuing in relation to options for provision in Llanrumney.

ii. Existing Play Provision Model - April 2016 Onwards

- 25. As the statutory Cardiff 'What Matters Strategy (2011) outlined, *"the variation in outcomes and opportunities across Cardiff shows that partners must address different issues in different parts of the city. Similarly organisations must be agile enough to target intervention and geographically tailor responses to meet local need. Addressing inequality is dependent on partners being able to direct resources to the people and areas who need it most. Only by focusing our efforts on the areas of distinct disadvantage can we break the pattern that has come to characterise need in the city"*.
- 26. As part of the delivery of existing service provision and whilst the transfer of buildings are progressed, for a period of no longer than 12 months the existing Play Team will be relocated to Youth Centres based in the 6 Neighbourhood Partnership areas. From these centres they will continue to deliver existing core play provision through outreach work in various community settings, after school and holiday club opportunities from a range of community based facilities within Neighbourhood Partnership Areas. This will reflect and compliment the new Youth Services Delivery Model to enable transition of young people between the different age groups.
- 27. Operating with a budget of £492,000 this 'Peripatetic Team' will consist of up to 9 X Grade 4 Play Organisers and 3 X Grade 6 Senior Play Organisers. This method of Play Delivery not based around or from the existing Play Centres will be for one year only while the buildings

themselves are transferred to community use and resources will be allocated according to the findings of the new Play Sufficiency Assessment due in March 2016. The centres where the play service will be delivered from in each neighbourhood area will include:

North: (Llanedeyrn Play Centre catchment)

Staff based at Llanedeyrn Youth Centre (Powerhouse)

Using possible venues for outreach play sessions: Llanishen Leisure Centre, Glen Wood Church Centre, Rhiwbina Church Hall, Boxing Club

East: (Llanrumey Play Centre catchment)

Staff based at St Mellons Youth/Education Centre

Using possible venues for outreach play sessions: Rumney Hub, Trowbridge Community Centre, John Reynolds Centre, Beacon Centre, Llanrumney hall.

South East: (Splott & Adamsdown Play Centre catchment)

Staff based at East Moors Youth Centre

Using possible venues for outreach play sessions: Willows High School, Plasnewydd Community Centre, St Germans Church Hall, Belmont Church Hall.

City & South: (Grangetown Play Centre catchment)

Staff based at Channel View Leisure Centre

Using possible venues for outreach play sessions: Channel View Leisure Centre, Yemeni Centre, Boys & Girls Club.

South West: (Ely & Riverside Play Centre catchment)

Staff based at North Ely Youth Centre

Using possible venues for outreach play sessions: Western Leisure Centre, Trelai Youth Centre, Ely & Caerau Family Centre, Riverside Warehouse, Kitchener Road School, Canton Community Hall, Severn Road Primary School.

West:

Staff based at Gabalfa Youth Centre

Using possible venues for outreach play sessions: Venues in Whitchurch area Community Centre, Peter Lee Primary School.

iii. Play Grant Commissioning Model – April 2017 onwards

28. The New Delivery Model will primarily be an evidence based approach delivered through a play grant commissioning process in order to assist and support community organisations in the delivery of community play schemes based on the new Youth Service Grant Commission process and allocated according to the needs identified in the Play Sufficiency Assessment 2015.
29. The new Youth Services Grant Commissioning process aims to increase the input of services for young people from the Voluntary and Community sectors. In addition to the current Youth Service provision to be delivered in the 6 neighbourhood partnership areas, funding has been allocated for services to be commissioned from the Third Sector/Voluntary/Community organisations and from young people accessing youth activities in

community based venues. This funding amounts to £234,000 in total for 2015/16 and is allocated on a neighbourhood basis. To date, ten Youth Commissioning Grants have been allocated with a second round of five under consideration.

30. The new Play Grant Commissioning process will be based upon the principles of the Youth Services Grant Commissioning model as outlined above. The allocation of grants will be targeted against the needs and demands identified in the Play Sufficiency Assessment and delivered in partnership with other Council services in order to ensure that there is a clear pathway on offer to young people. This new model will promote community and partner delivery of play services in Cardiff in response to the needs of children and young people. It will also provide for additional funding opportunities to be pursued by the respective groups/organisations that will further enhance the provision.
31. The new Programme will be aimed at addressing the differing needs of communities and responding to the priorities highlighted following the completion of the city-wide Play Sufficiency Assessment. This assessment requires an audit of Demographic profile of the area; open space and potential play space; dedicated play provision; recreational provision and other factors that promote play opportunities including planning, traffic, transport, information, publicity and workforce development. This assessment will provide the evidence needed to identify gaps in provision and support the development of action plans to address these gaps. Also, it will provide firm evidence of achievement against the agreed outcomes.
32. The new Play Grant Commissioning budget for 17/18 will be established on a similar basis to that of the Youth Services ensuring an equal and proportional allocation of resources according to the needs identified in this assessment but will seek to identify further efficiencies and opportunities for partnership funding from additional sources.
33. The Council will play an active role in signposting parents and young people to the wide range of play and youth provision which exists across Cardiff through the Family Information Service utilising community networks.
34. The Council will work with its partners to support a Workforce Development Programme to encourage the professional development, recruitment of community volunteers to deliver high quality provision and ensure minimum standards are met.

Reason for Briefing

35. The report offers a way forward for play provision within the City for the foreseeable future while allowing Centres to be retained for community use.

Financial Overview

36. The report outlines the proposed new operating model for Children's Play in Cardiff. The current net budget totals £1,068 million and includes the building and staff costs of operating seven play centres across the City together with specific funding for the commissioning of play provision through the medium of Welsh and to support disability play provision in Cardiff. The new operating model assumes that all play centres will transfer to community use or be operated under licence by 31st March 2016. A restructure of the staff establishment will be undertaken in order to realign the current structure and to create a Peripatetic Play Team for a period of up to twelve months. This will be reviewed for 2017/18 and a new play grant commissioning budget established. No changes are anticipated in relation to the existing funding arrangements for the commissioning of play provision through the medium of Welsh or in relation to disability play provision. Overall, a budget saving of £270,000 is currently anticipated as a result of these changes in 2016/17.

Legal Overview (including Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate)

37. The relevant statutory consideration is referred to in the body of the report.
38. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief

As such decisions have to be made in the context of the Council's equality act public sector duties.

39. The decision maker should take due account of any equality impact in making its decision.
40. The Council has a legal obligation to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable from its land disposals in accordance with section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. Pursuant to the General Disposal Consent (Wales) Order 2003 the Council has power to dispose

of land at undervalue of up to two million pounds if it considers that the the disposal is in the interests of the economic social or environmental well being of its area, taking account of its Community Strategy. The well being power is contained in section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 and must be exercised having to the Council's Community Strategy comprised in the 'What Matters' Strategy.

HR Overview

41. There are significant HR implications to this approach. There have been initial consultations with the Trade Unions and employees affected by the proposals within this report. With regards to the Community Asset Transfers it will be necessary for the business cases to be provided to HR in order for advice to be made available to the service area as to whether there are implications regarding Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) for any of the proposals which are coming forward from the community. If TUPE does apply then the Council will abide by its legal obligations in these matters.
42. In order to restructure to the non-play centre based approach, the service area will ensure that there is full consultation with Trade Unions and employees and will utilise the corporately agreed processes for this restructure. However, as, based on the figures within the report, there will need to be a reduction of 2 Grade 4 Play Organisers and 2.6 Grade 6 Senior Play Organisers, there will be resultant need to either try to find redeployment opportunities for those displaced or voluntary redundancy.

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24th November 2015

The following appendices are attached:

Appendix 1- Current play provision in Cardiff

The following background papers have been taken into account in producing this briefing paper:-

“Wales: A Play Friendly Country” – Welsh Government Statutory Guidance, July 2014

“Creating a Play Friendly Wales” – Welsh Government Statutory Guidance 2012

“Play Sufficiency in Wales” – Play Wales October 2015

“Youth Engagement and progression Framework” Welsh Government

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Appendix 1

Current Play provision in Cardiff

Organised Sport Provision

Football (eg grass pitches and 3g pitches such as Gol and Leisure Leagues)
Rugby
Hockey
Tennis
Cricket
Baseball
Netball
Gymnastics
Swimming Pools

Open Space Provision

Parks
Playgrounds
Multi use Games Areas (MUGA)
Skate Parks
BMX pump tracks

Purpose Built Provision

Adventure Play Centres (eg Y Parc, Ants in your Pants etc)
Boulders
Jump
Infinity
Rebounders
Somersault
Funky Little Chickens

Other

After School Clubs
Scouting and Girl Guiding
Playgroups
Dance groups
Arts Centres (eg Chapter and Llanover Hall)
Drama Groups (Stagecoach etc)
Playgroups (schools/churches)

Leisure Centres

Soft Play
Junior sports programme
Learn to Swim
Holiday Clubs

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