



Glasgow City Council

**Economy, Housing, Transport and Regeneration
City Policy Committee**

**Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods,
Regeneration and Sustainability**

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Item 7

23rd April 2024

PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Report:

To update Committee on the work that has been ongoing to produce the Council's first Play Sufficiency Assessment.

Recommendations:

The committee considers

- the PSA process that has been co-produced with our young people and children
- that the 1st Glasgow PSA be reported to City Administration Committee for final approval and thereafter submission to Scottish Ministers as part of Glasgow City Council's documentation for the City Development Plan 2 Gatecheck process.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

1 Background

- 1.1 With an increasing demand on open space for other purposes such as passive recreation, formal sport, biodiversity and strategic urban drainage initiatives, the importance of providing good quality, accessible play parks is more important than ever. Children need the social and play opportunities purpose-built play areas can offer and the benefits they provide in physical and mental health, social cohesion, and overall wellbeing. They also require access to good quality open space that allows for imaginative and informal play and meeting up with friends.

2. Scottish Government – Legislation

The Scottish Government's Play Strategy for Scotland sets out the following vision:

“We want Scotland to be the best place to grow up. A nation which values play as a life-enhancing daily experience for all our children and young people; in their homes, nurseries, schools, and communities.”

[Source: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan>]

- 2.1 Children's play is crucial to Scotland's wellbeing: socially, economically, and environmentally. Our people are our greatest resource and the early years of life set the pattern for children's future development. 'The experiences children have in early life – and the environments in which they have them – shape their developing brain architecture and strongly affect whether they grow up to be healthy, productive members of society' (Harvard University, 2007).
- 2.2 Play is an essential part of a happy, healthy childhood and 'when children play their brains do two things: they grow and they become organised and usable' (Hughes, 2013). By investing in all our children and young people now we can strengthen their ability to achieve their full potential.
- 2.3 Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- [Source: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/play-strategy-scotland-action-plan>]

3. National planning policy context

- 3.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), adopted in 2023, states in Policy 21: Play, recreation and sport, that local development plans (LDPs) should identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages, and support development proposals that protect, enhance or improve children's access to play.
- 3.2 NPF4 recognises that many people, including children and young people, need better places to support their lifelong health and wellbeing and build their future

resilience. It seeks to improve the quality of life of people across Scotland through facilitating places that enable local living, including providing access to playgrounds and green or blue spaces where there are opportunities for relaxation and informal play.

3.3 Ensuring all children have access to good quality play opportunities will deliver the policy objectives contained in NPF4 and help local authorities to uphold the rights of children.

[Source: Scottish Government Planning Guidance: Play Sufficiency Assessment, para.12-14, Page 4, 2023]

3.4 It is also important to note that everything we do as a Local Authority, happens in the context of a place, and planning balances the social, economic, and environmental needs of our city.

3.5 [The Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) inserted a new section 16D Play Sufficiency Assessment into the [Town and Country Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#) ("the Act") with regard to local development plans. Section 16D sets out that a planning authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities for children in its area in preparing an evidence report.

3.6 The preparation of a PSA forms part of the Stage 1 processes as part of early engagement and data collection for the development plan. It is intended to help ensure there is a good understanding of the sufficiency of both formal and informal play spaces for children across planning authority areas. The evidence gathered in the PSA should be used to inform provisions for play in the preparation of LDPs.

3.7 It is noted the regulations specifically ask us to do the following:

- The PSA is to be presented in the form of a written report, incorporating maps as required by the Regulations.
- The PSA report must contain the following:
 - Information on formal play spaces in the planning authority area, both by locality and in the totality of the planning authority area. The locations of formal play spaces must be shown on a map.
 - Information on informal play spaces in the planning authority area, which have been identified as relevant by the planning authority or by children. The locations of informal play spaces do not require to be mapped.
 - Statements setting out the assessment of the sufficiency of play opportunities with regard to quality, quantity, and accessibility, both by locality and in the totality of the planning authority area.

There is flexibility for planning authorities to include information that is meaningful locally and for the PSA report to align with other relevant areas of

work such as the open space audit and/or open space strategy, play parks strategy, etc., if the planning authority sees these as appropriate.

3,8 The following sections of this report describe how the component parts of the Play Sufficiency Assessment are being brought together.

4. Engagement with Young People

4.1 ***Childrens and young people's voices are often overlooked or lost when decisions are being made about change in Our City.***

The Scottish Government introduced, as part of the National Planning Framework 4 (2023) the need for children and young people to be actively involved in the Development Plan process in Scotland. Consulting on housing, transport, retail, economic growth, etc. understandably would not appeal to children and young people. Play Sufficiency Assessments have become a mandatory requirement for all local authorities and Glasgow is working towards meeting the criteria set out by the Scottish Government.

4.2 Children experience a range of health wellbeing and educational benefits from outdoor play, and learning in, and connecting to nature. Planning staff have been collaborating with the Centre for Civic Innovation, and Education Services, to pilot a collaborative engagement approach with young people in Glasgow for the Play Sufficiency Assessment.

4.3 Staff at the Centre for Civic Innovation have been working with young people (12-16/17) at St Paul's High School to co-design an engagement model which will gather information as well as let young people tell their stories about what it is like to live, learn and play in Glasgow. This has been a rewarding pilot and we are now rolling this exemplary engagement model for our play sufficiency assessment to 10 secondary schools across the city, with further planned rollouts to ensure all secondary school pupils can participate and tell their stories.

4.4 Over 400 pupils at St Paul's High School, Pollok have not only helped to design this engagement model but told their stories. The next 10 schools to participate, potentially involving over 4,000 young people, will tell us where they go and what they do, and contribute to changing the face of play in Glasgow. These are due to report back at the end of March 2024 and will be included in the finalised PSA report for Glasgow which will be reported to a meeting of the City Administration Committee for consideration and approval before the summer recess.

4.5 Education services have also been collecting information from children aged 3-8 across 12 schools in Glasgow and asking them about where and how they play and what they do in our outdoor spaces. So far over 300 pupils have told us their play stories and we are adding to that number every day. A more detailed summary of the work towards a PSA can be found in [Appendix One](#) and the pilot Play Sufficiency Assessment for Pollok can be found in [Appendix Two](#). [Appendix Three](#) shows the methodology used with the 3 – 8 year olds.

4.6 In addition, a general survey for adults, to meet the requirement of the Regulations to consult with the **public, parents and carers and community councils**, has been running on the Council's consultation hub asking them where the children they know play, how they play and the places that they like to play. This survey is due to close in mid-April.

5.0 Quality Assessment of Community Spaces and Play Area Renewal

5.1 The committee are referred to a report on Play area renewal to the Environment and Liveable Neighbourhoods committee on [22nd August 2023](#) where it was noted that:

- The Council currently has 287 equipped play areas. Although the provision of play areas themselves is not a statutory duty their routine inspection and maintenance is a statutory requirement.
- Our inspection regime generated 375 instructions for repair across the play area estate from 1st April 2023 to 31 June 2023. These range from minor faults such as damaged swings to major repairs such as full surface repairs being required, and the volume of repairs demonstrates the high level of usage these play areas receive.
- Stakeholder and community involvement will inform the replacement/refurbishment of play areas

5.2 Committee are also referred to the [Open Space Strategy](#) which notes that:

- Open Space Quantity – the OSS also sets out standards for ensuring a sufficient quantity of open space within each ward in the City. This is expressed as a quantity of open space per 1000 population, and there are different standards for the relatively densely populated inner urban area and the less densely populated outer urban area of the City. Whether a ward is deficient in open space, or has a potential surplus, will help inform current/future need.
- Ensuring good quality Community Spaces through use of the open space standards will help deliver access to play facilities, but there will be other opportunities to encourage play that should be taken into account in establishing need. The role of open space in facilitating environmental education and outdoor learning and the potential for the education estate to contribute towards open space objectives also need to be assessed.

6. Next steps

6.1 The Play Sufficient Assessment will be produced by combining the following data:

- Community Spaces Quality audit (completed)
- [Play area renewal](#) (ongoing – see report to committee)
- Secondary age collaborative PSA - 11 schools across Glasgow (due for completion March 2024)

- Primary Age collaborative PSA – 12 schools across Glasgow (completed)
- Community survey of Adults (e.g the city’s parents, guardians and carers, Community Councils) asking where children play (Due to complete April 2024)
- [Open Space Strategy](#) and [Open Space Map data](#) (Open space strategy adopted 2020)

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: As noted in the [Play area renewal report](#) Current and future play area investment will be met from the £6.179M Scottish Government funding, Developer Contributions where available and any other grants or funding secured.

Legal: An up to date Play Sufficiency Assessment is a new legislative requirement as per Town and Country Planning (Play Sufficiency Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 and come into force on 19 May 2023 and 16D Play Sufficiency Assessment into the [Town and Country Planning \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#)

Personnel: Updating of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and delivery on any investment needs identified will be managed via existing staff resources

Procurement: Existing Glasgow City Council and Scotland Excel frameworks will be utilised.

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge 4 Mission : Create safe, clean and thriving neighbourhoods. Develop, secure funding for and implement local infrastructure changes in line with a Liveable Neighbourhoods approach for every single community by 2030 so that our local streets are safe and pleasant for everyone to walk, wheel, cycle, play and spend time in.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

It is envisaged that this investment could contribute towards Outcome 6, by providing spaces which better support children, young people and families to meet outdoors, and contribute towards Outcome 14 by providing spaces which better support outdoor learning for disabled children and young people. (no significant impact, positive impact or negative impact)

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?

Potential positive impacts from spaces which better support children, young people and families to meet outdoors and which better support outdoor learning for disabled children and young people.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.

Investment is targeted towards areas with the lowest 15% datazones per the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:

The proposal delivers towards action 48 by working with partner organisations to fund acceleration of the Open Space Strategy Delivery Plan, and contributes to Action 51 by supporting the livable neighbourhoods plan

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?

Potential positive impacts by supporting active travel and livable neighbourhoods

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?

Potential positive impacts by supporting active travel and livable neighbourhoods

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

No

If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

8. Recommendations:

The committee considers :

- the PSA process that has been co-produced with our young people and children.
- that the 1st Glasgow PSA be reported to City Administration Committee for final approval and thereafter submission to Scottish Ministers as part of Glasgow City Council's documentation for the City Development Plan 2 Gatecheck process..