



Belfast City Council

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Report to: | Development Committee |
| Subject: | Consultation: OFMDFM Play & Leisure Plan |
| Date: | 22 February 2010 |
| Reporting Officer: | John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470 |
| Contact Officer: | Barbary Cook, Policy & Business Development Manager, ext 3620 |

| 1 | Relevant Background Information |
|-----|---|
| 1.1 | <p>The Council have been asked to respond to the Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister's, (OFMDFM) Play & Leisure Implementation Plan. This plan supports the Play and Leisure Policy agreed in 2008. See documents attached, appendices 1-3.</p> <p><u>The Play and Leisure Policy</u> OFMDFM published a Play and Leisure Policy Statement in 2008 following a two-year period of cross-sectoral consultation. As part of that process, Belfast City Council submitted a formal response as agreed at the Community and Recreation (Community and Leisure Services) Sub-Committee meeting on 6th February 2007.</p> <p>The Policy is targeted at all children aged 18 years and under. It is anchored within, and supports, the delivery of the ten year strategy, 2006 – 2016, for children and young people.</p> <p>The Policy Vision for play is: “to recognise, respect and resource play is to recognise, respect and value childhood.”</p> |
| 1.2 | <p><u>Implementation of the Policy</u> To enable the implementation of the Policy and Leisure Statement, the OFMDFM commissioned PlayBoard NI to provide technical expertise and to chair three Implementation sub-groups comprised of representatives from across the sector.</p> |

| | |
|------|---|
| 1.3 | <p>The sub-groups focused on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 0-11 years - 12 – 18 years - cross – cutting themes , for example, cultural and disability issues. |
| 1.4 | <p>Derry/Londonderry and Belfast City Council represented a District Council perspective on the sub-groups. Belfast was represented on the main committee and the 12-18 sub-group by the Community Development Manager and later by the Children & Young People’s Manager. The Play Development Officer sat on the 0-11 sub-group.</p> |
| 1.5 | <p>The work of the sub-groups has been completed with the production of a draft Implementation Plan.</p> |
| 1.6 | <p><u>The Implementation Plan</u> The Plan has been divided into 4 main aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aim 1: Places & Spaces - Aim 2: Championing Play and Leisure - Aim 3: Access to Play and Leisure - Area 4: Workforce Development |
| 1.7 | <p>The Plan considers a number of cross-cutting issues including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous Professional and Workforce development - Meeting the particular needs of groups of children, for example, children with disabilities and children from migrant communities - The risk benefit debate - The active participation of children and young people. |
| 1.8 | <p><u>Play and Leisure Partnerships</u> Learning from experiences within England and Wales, the plan recommends that Play and Leisure Partnerships are established to oversee the delivery of the policy. This is to enable the pooling of resources and coordination of services.</p> <p>It is further recommended that District Councils provide the central coordinating role for the play and leisure partnerships.</p> |
| 1.9 | <p>Limited financial support has been made available to assist Councils to develop the play partnerships and strategic plans. The initial funding deadline has now closed and it is uncertain if further funding will be made available.</p> |
| 1.10 | <p>The main role of the Play and Leisure Partnerships will be to take responsibility for driving the delivery of the implementation plan within each council area.</p> |
| 1.11 | <p>Membership of the Play and Leisure Partnerships within each District Council area will include a range of local statutory, voluntary, community and private sector organizations that have a responsibility for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play services, parks and open spaces - Services for disabled children and young people - Public health - Schools - Service Commissioning - Community relations |

| | |
|------|---|
| 1.12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policing - Children and Youth Service providers - Housing - Transport - Childcare - Planning - Services for ethnic minority groups <p>Children and young people would be represented and supported to ensure that their voices and opinions are incorporated into the work of the partnership. Partnerships will also be required to consult with wider groups of children and young people at key junctures.</p> |
|------|---|

| | |
|----------|---|
| 2 | Key Issues |
| 2.1 | The main issues for Belfast City Council are: |
| 2.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources The plan sets out a range of desirable outcomes but makes available no additional resources, asserting that "These actions cannot be taken forward at departmental level but need to be progressed by Councils". In so doing, the final draft plan fails to reflect the concerns raised throughout the working group process in relation to the absence of additional resources being offered to Councils should they be prepared to assume 'lead responsibility'. In a context of budgetary constraint, it is unlikely that additional financial support will now be forthcoming from central government departments. Council should therefore be very wary of accepting responsibility in the absence of appropriate additional funding being made available. |
| 2.3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Play and Leisure Partnerships - Councils are expected to take the lead role in developing and coordinating the Partnerships. Within Belfast City Council, play and leisure crosses two Departments. Should Council be minded to establish such a partnership, responsibility for leading it would need to lie within one Department and with a designated lead officer. |
| 2.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main focus is on the open space provision for play and leisure. Playwork and staffed play provision has little mention in the plan. |
| 2.5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The original deadline for a response was the 6 February 2011. We have managed to secure an extension until the 15 February. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| 3 | Resource Implications |
| 3.1 | There are no immediate resource costs associated with this consultation response. There are longer term resource implications as discussed in paragraph 2.2 above. These are in respect of the potential new duties expected of Council. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| 4 | Equality and Good Relations Considerations |
| 4.1 | There are no equality and good relations considerations associated with this response. |

| | |
|----------|--|
| 5 | Recommendations |
| | <p>The Committee is asked to :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the attached draft consultation response; and 2. Raise any issues about the draft response that they wish to be included. |

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| | Decision Tracking |
| <p>Further to approval of the draft consultation response:</p> <p>Timeframe: March 2011 Reporting Officer: Barbary Cook</p> | |

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| | Documents Attached |
| <p>OFMDFM "Play and Leisure Plan narrative" OFMDFM "Play and Leisure Plan implementation" "OFMDFM Play and Leisure Implementation Draft Consultation Response"</p> | |