



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Play Service Development
Date:	13April 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development ext 3459
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	<p>This report comprises two issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To update Members, as previously agreed, in regard to the practical impact of changes to the operation of the Play Service during 2010.2. To bring to the attention of Members, a forthcoming study tour visit by an international delegation and to seek approval for expenditure which is considered beneficial in profiling Belfast and Council's play provision.
1.2	<p>Members will recall their earlier consideration of the implementation of the recommendations of the Play Policy Review. In essence the review suggested that in pursuit of best practice:</p>
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The service is needs led with provision directed by regular (5 year) mapping and needs analysis processes.- Service Delivery should not be dictated over the medium to long term, by the location of the six existing play centres. In response to needs analysis Council should examine the potential for flexible and outreach delivery of the play service making it available in communities where there is limited existing provision for children and young people (up to age 16) and where there are concentrations of children and young people.- Council should focus its play service on the 4-11 year age group and explore options for provision for the 12 to 16 age group.- Council should recognise the fact that demand for its pre-school provision (3-4 year age group) has been reducing consistently over recent years. In addition there are other providers for children in the community sector. Council should aim to promote good play practice with existing providers for pre-school but exit direct provision.

1.4	<p>A comprehensive report of the activities undertaken throughout 2010 is provided as an appendix to this report, but in summary it is clear that through the adoption of new approaches, achievements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The quality of play provision and the experience of the children has been enhanced by the introduction of innovative play methodologies; - An extension to the geographic scope of the service through the utilisation of alternative locations including city parks, urban spaces and streets; - The enhanced accessibility to the service and integration by minority ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and the Travellers community. - The numbers benefiting from the service have increased significantly. - Figures indicate 1640 children continued to receive play opportunities based in the 6 Playcentres through 1342 attending after school services and 298 attending summer schemes. - In addition 2019 children benefited from new service provision through 908 attending new forms of service provision (in venues other than the 6 playcentres), 228 attending new summer scheme services and 883 children receiving play opportunities through support sessions for other schemes. - A further 1648 children benefited through two centrally organised "Playdays". - And 65 children with disabilities participated in the Play for All initiative.
1.5	<p>Members may also recall the commitment to evaluate the success, or otherwise, of the 'Play Clubs' which were introduced on a pilot basis in September last year and will run through to the end of June 2011. At the time of writing, it is anticipated that a report will be brought to Committee in August for consideration. In the interim, the experience to date is summarised in a relevant section of the appendix (page 9).</p>
1.6	<p>In regard to the international delegation, the International Play Association (IPA) is an international non-government organisation with members from over 40 countries. The purpose of IPA is to protect, preserve and promote the child's right to play as a fundamental human right.</p>
1.7	<p>Members come from a variety of professions that promote, support and deliver children's play. The Association is led by an International Board with regional committees. Northern Ireland is part of the EWNI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) branch. Northern Ireland is represented through Belfast City Council's Play Development Officer who serves as treasurer of the Branch. Belfast City Council is also a member of IPA.</p>
1.8	<p>The IPA holds a tri-annual Conference that brings together speakers and participants from across the world to share knowledge and experience. Previous conferences have been held in Hong Kong, Brazil, Germany and Denmark. The bid to host the 2011 Conference was won by PlayWales and will take place 4 - 7 July 2011 in Cardiff. As part of the Conference, there will be an opportunity for participants to visit other European countries to take part in a study tour either before or after the conference.</p>

2.1	Belfast City Council is keen to offer an opportunity for participants to come to Belfast and see play opportunities provided through both Community Services Play Unit and the Parks Section. This will be part of a study tour organised in partnership with Derry City Council and PlayBoardNI. The study tour will involve the participants arriving on 29 June and departing on 2 July. The 30 June will be spent in Belfast visiting different projects and will end with a networking and promotional event in the evening. Elected Members will be invited to meet participants at the event and there will be further presentations on the work that takes place in Belfast. While it is not possible to confirm exact numbers at this point, it is expected to have a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 40 participants. Should less than 15 participants express interest in travelling to Belfast in advance of the conference, it is unlikely that the study tour will take place.
-----	---

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Participants will be responsible for their own transport to and from Northern Ireland and for their accommodation. Costs will be provided by Belfast City Council for transport to projects around the city and the post-tour networking event. This is estimated to cost a maximum of £2,000, which will come from existing resources within the Play Service budget.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	Changes to the Play Service are likely to have made a positive contribution to the principles and practice of Equality and Good Relations through their impact on greater numbers of children from communities experiencing a range of socio-economic disadvantage.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are asked: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To note the report of the Play Service activity throughout 2010; - To note the proposal for the study tour; - To approve anticipated related expenditure up to a maximum amount of £2,000 in regard to hosting the international delegation.

6	Decision Tracking
Time line: July 2011	Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

7	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: Play Development Report 2010.	

8	Key to Abbreviations
IPA - International Play Association	