

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	25 January 2018
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen City Play Policy and Strategy 2018
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/18/003
DIRECTOR	(Interim) Bernadette Oxley and Helen Shanks
REPORT AUTHOR	Louise Beaton

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

To seek approval of a new Aberdeen City Play Policy and Strategy to be launched in 2018 as part of the Year of Young People celebrations in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) To note the contents of the report and the achievements since 2013;
- b) To approve the new Aberdeen City Play Policy and Strategy 2018; and
- c) To instruct officers to work with Aberdeen Play Forum and key stakeholders to launch the Aberdeen Play Policy and Strategy at an event in Spring 2018 as part of the Year of Young People celebrations in the city.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES / OTHER HEADINGS AS APPROPRIATE

- 3.1 There is a long history and tradition for supporting play in Aberdeen. Children's right to play is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18.
- 3.2 The previous Aberdeen City Play Policy was adopted in 2013. Since then much has been achieved in Aberdeen:
 - Play Awards have been won by Aberdeen Play Forum for Play Rangers and NHS Grampian for play services at Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital;
 - Aberdeen was commended as a 'City of Play' by the Care Inspectorate in 2015;
 - Universal and targeted high quality play opportunities have been developed and delivered across the city, in partnership with communities and schools;

- Thousands of children and families have attended events delivered by Aberdeen Play Forum on National Play Day and Play on the Longest Day;
- Aberdeen City Council has spent £3.3 million on the refurbishment and redevelopment of 101 play areas across the city since 2013;
- The removal of 300+ “No Ball Games” signs and “Boo to Poo” initiatives have ensured that children have more access to safer environments within their own communities;
- Since 2014, annual Woodland Playschemes have been delivered during the summer holidays for children with additional support needs and their siblings;
- Valuable learning opportunities are delivered weekly for children living at the Clinterty Traveller Site;
- Schools and out of school clubs have actively engaged with loose parts and play training sessions;
- The Cycling Scotland Play on Pedals initiative is being delivered with pre-school children in 7 schools in the Bridge of Don area, with plans to roll out to other areas of the city in the next school session 2018-19;
- Information has been provided to planners and developers so that play is considered during community planning;
- 120 children and young people have engaged in an Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan workshop to explore their ideas for making the city a more welcoming place for people of their age; and
- The importance of play and outdoor play is enshrined in training programmes to ensure that the benefits of play are widely encouraged and promoted.

- 3.3 The new Aberdeen City Play Policy and Strategy 2018 will replace the Policy adopted in 2013.
- 3.4 Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Play Forum recognises that play is central to the health and wellbeing of our children and to the enjoyment in their lives. Access to high quality play opportunities leads to the development of confident young people who are better able to lead their own learning, fully participate in their own communities and make a full and active contribution to society.
- 3.5 The Play Policy and Strategy 2018 updates and replaces the Play Policy launched in 2013. It makes a commitment to *all* children and young people in Aberdeen to support their right to play regardless of their needs, background or abilities. It acknowledges the significance of children’s rights in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which was approved by the UK Government in December 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City in 1996.
- 3.6 Aberdeen’s should be a city where *all* children and young people are empowered to play; are encouraged to direct and define their own play spaces and have access to high quality play opportunities at home, in early learning, childcare and school and in their local community.
- 3.7 The purpose of the Play Policy and Strategy is:
- To reaffirm our commitment to play in the city;
 - To celebrate our achievements since 2013;

- To set out our priorities for continuing to improve the quality of current and future play opportunities in Aberdeen; and
 - To highlight the links between play and other local and national policies and strategies for improving outcomes for our children and young people.
- 3.8 Aberdeen's Play Policy and Strategy follows the four themes used in the National Play Strategy for Scotland. Each theme describes what we are aiming to achieve along with our priorities for action. The four themes are:
1. Play in the Home
 2. Play in Early Learning and Childcare and School
 3. Play in the Community
 4. Positive Support for Play
- 3.9 The Play Policy and Strategy shows the value of freedom to play in the lives of our children. It is our responsibility to ensure the freedom to play is a right upheld in Aberdeen and we are committed to this as part of our aspiration to become a UNICEF accredited Child Friendly City.
- 3.10 The Play Policy and Strategy contributes to the Community Planning Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Children's Services Plan priorities to ensure that "*children have the best start in life*".
- 3.11 Partnership working has gone from strength to strength in recent years with Aberdeen being commended as a City of Play in the Report of a joint Inspection: Services for Children and Young People in Aberdeen City, published by the Care Inspectorate in March 2015. A key feature of this Play Policy and Strategy is to work together with our existing and future partners to best meet the needs of children, families and communities.
- 3.12 It is timely to celebrate our achievements and to update our Play Policy to reaffirm our commitment to play in the city and to set out our priorities for continuing to improve the quality of current and future play opportunities in Aberdeen in line with local and national priorities.
- 3.13 The process of developing the new Aberdeen City Play Policy commenced at the AGM of the Aberdeen Play Forum in February 2017. A short-life working group from Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeen Play Forum and partners have met throughout 2017 to develop the new Policy and Strategy.
- 3.14 Consultation has been carried out with children, young people, families and professionals who work with children at each stage of the process.
- 3.15 A new logo and branding for Aberdeen: City of Play has been produced, following a short-listing process of design options and voting by children and key stakeholders. Children have contributed to the quotations, drawings and images which will be seen throughout the final version of the Play Policy and Strategy 2018.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Financial – Approval of the Play Policy and Strategy 2018 reaffirms the commitment of Aberdeen City Council to play in the city and the priorities for continuing to improve the quality of current and future play opportunities in Aberdeen. Since 2013, £3.3 million has been spent refurbishing and redeveloping 101 city play areas and supporting communities to improve play spaces. The Play Policy and Strategy enables Aberdeen City Council and its partners to prioritise its resources accordingly in line with local priorities and it can also help to lever in resources from external sources in order to fulfil the ambition of Aberdeen as a City of Play.

6.2 Employee - considered and no risk has been identified

6.3 Customer / citizen - Children’s right to play is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC) and applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18. The Play Policy and Strategy ensures access to high quality play opportunities for all children regardless of need, background or ability. Section 2 of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires Local Authorities to publish a report of what steps it has taken in a 3 year period to secure better or further effect within its areas of responsibility of the UNCRC requirements. This includes play. The UNCRC was approved by the UK Government in 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City Council in 1996.

6.4 Environmental – 101 Play areas have been refurbished and redeveloped across the city since 2013, enabling thousands of children to play outside in appropriate, safe environments, within their communities. Furthermore, the “Removal of No Ball Games” and “Boo to Poo” initiatives have also ensured that children have more access to safer environments. Approval of the Play Policy and Strategy ensures that Play in the Community remains a key priority for our children in Aberdeen.

6.5 Technological - considered and no risk has been identified

6.6 Legal - Children’s right to play is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC) and applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18. The Play Policy and Strategy ensures access to high quality play opportunities for all children regardless of need, background or ability. Section 2 of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires Local Authorities to publish a report of what steps it has taken in a 3 year period to secure better or further effect within its areas of responsibility of the UNCRC requirements. This includes play. The UNCRC was approved by the UK Government in 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City Council in 1996.

- 6.7 Reputational - Aberdeen was commended as a City of Play in the Report of a joint Inspection: Services for Children and Young People in Aberdeen City, published by the Care Inspectorate in March 2015. Approval of the new Play Policy and Strategy enables Aberdeen to embrace and build on this positive reputation as a City of Play and this will indeed further enhance and support Aberdeen's bid to become the first UNICEF Child Friendly City in Scotland.

7. IMPACT SECTION

- 7.1 The Play Policy and Strategy contributes to the Community Planning Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Children's Services Plan priorities to ensure that "*children have the best start in life*".
- 7.2 Children's right to play is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC) and applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18. The Play Policy and Strategy ensures access to high quality play opportunities for all children regardless of need, background or ability. Section 2 of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) requires Local Authorities to publish a report of what steps it has taken in a 3 year period to secure better or further effect within its areas of responsibility of the UNCRC requirements. This includes play. The UNCRC was approved by the UK Government in 1991 and adopted by Aberdeen City Council in 1996.
- 7.3 Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen Play Forum recognises that play is central to the health and wellbeing of our children and to the enjoyment in their lives. Access to high quality play opportunities leads to the development of confident young people who are better able to lead their own learning, fully participate in their own communities and make a full and active contribution to society. Play is a key feature of the new Health and Social Care Standards (2017).
- 7.4 Aberdeen was commended as a City of Play by the Care Inspectorate in 2015 and we are keen to continue and build on this accolade as we work towards becoming the first UNICEF Child Friendly city in Scotland.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

- 9.1 Aberdeen City Play Policy and Strategy 2018 (draft)
9.2 Infographic of Play achievements in the city since 2013

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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