

Leeds Play Sufficiency

Date: 13th December 2023

Report of: Director of City Development & Director of Children and Families

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report provides an overview of the first Leeds Play Sufficiency Assessment and its future development proposals. It provides an overview of the extensive and robust research undertaken in six neighbourhoods within the city's priority wards to understand children's opportunities to play in their homes, neighbourhoods, and schools.

Play Sufficiency is a powerful organising principle of community development. By using an evidence-based approach and looking at communities through the lens of a child it has the potential to bridge policy and unite cross-service departments to improve children's lives through developing communities that work for all age groups and by getting this right contributing to the Best City's Ambitions to build a healthier, fairer and greener Leeds.

This research has allowed us to identify factors that constrain opportunities for play and assets that serve to support or encourage opportunities for play. This has led to nine strategic play priorities for children living in priority wards, which are now the focus for action planning across professional domains and council services.

Recommendations

- a) For Executive Board to support and endorse the Play Sufficiency priorities, which directly link to Child Friendly Leeds Wish 2, the new play priority in the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan and the Physical Activity Ambition.
- b) To approve the appointment of the Executive Member for Children's Social Care and Health Partnerships as a Play Champion to raise awareness of Play Sufficiency and to support the work of Play Sufficiency across all directorates of Leeds City Council.
- c) For the Play Champion to help drive the development of the Play Sufficiency Action plan and provide annual oversight of progress to the Executive Board.
- d) For the Executive Board to support embedding the Play Sufficiency principles and recommendations within the Priority Neighbourhood Partnership Plans
- e) Note the contents of this report and the responsible officers: Chief Officer of Children and Families and Chief Officer Operations and Active Leeds.

What is this report about?

What is play and why does it matter?

- 1 *“Play is a very misused adult word. To a child it is a way of life. To an adult it often means unimportant recreational things we do when we are not working”*
(Jean-Jaques Rousseau)
- 2 Play encompasses children’s behaviour which is self-directed. They have the freedom to choose how and when they play, without agenda, set goals or reward. Play is the way children interact with (and make sense of) the world: it is an innate desire to explore, socialise and have fun and involves a process of observing, testing, imitating, and enjoying the environment they are in and people they are with.
- 3 Children have a right to play- Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) creates a specific right for all children to have rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to their age and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
- 4 Out of the 2007 Play Strategy came the [Leeds Commitment to Play](#), which outlined aims to increase opportunity for children to play; create time and space to play; ensure the recognition and understanding of children’s play. Within this, was a call for a citywide Play Partnership. Play Sufficiency is responding to these recommendations and supports the aims previously agreed by the Executive Board in 2019.
- 5 Research at a national and global level has proven that play is fundamental to the healthy development of a child. It is the framework through which they learn and strengthens children’s mental health. Through play, children become able to:
 - build and sustain relationships with people and place
 - challenge the limits of their physical selves and environments
 - problem solve effectively

Most importantly, having sufficient opportunities for play is a key indicator of a happy child: play is pleasure – it contributes to quality of life and sense of well-being.

Table 1: Play sufficiency, a population health priority: benefits and consequences of play

Benefits of playing:	Consequences of not playing:
+ Pleasure & enjoyment + Peer & place attachments + Physical activity + Emotion regulation + Coping mechanisms + Motivation + Self esteem + Growth mindset + Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Depression ○ Isolation & detachment ○ Inactivity ○ Frustration / anger ○ Inability to cope (anxiety) ○ Lack of motivation ○ Low self esteem ○ Fixed mindset ○ Dependency
= Resilience & Wellbeing	= Vulnerability & Poor Health

(Ludicology, 2023)

Principles of Play Sufficiency

- 6 Play Sufficiency is about securing sufficient opportunities for children's play and involves far more than simply looking at designated provision. Securing sufficient opportunities for play is about cultivating the time, space and attitudes needed for children's play to flourish, in their homes, doorsteps, streets, community places, adult institutions and across local authority policy and practice.
- 7 Children will play wherever and whenever they can, however their ability to do so is dependent on a wide range of variables. By taking a Play Sufficiency approach and looking at spaces through the lens of a child and that of parents and carers, we can better understand how to create more favourable conditions which invite play within a variety of spaces important to children (and parents/carers) beyond a playground. This moves us beyond the provision of play equipment alone to considering how any space may be perceived for play.
- 8 Play Sufficiency is an ongoing process of research and action to assess, improve and protect children's opportunities for play. The assessment stage explores what is working for who, where and why at a neighbourhood and organisational and/or local authority level. This helps establish the factors that constrain opportunities for play and the assets that serve to support or encourage opportunities for play. The detail of the assessment findings is then used to develop evidence-based, specific and targeted responses.

Play Sufficiency in Leeds

- 9 17.8% of the Leeds population are aged <15 years of age (from the 2021 census). Leeds Children and Families Health Needs Assessment 2022 highlighted the Leeds child population is growing faster in the localities considered most deprived. In 2022 33% of Leeds school-aged pupils (43,210) children and young people lived in the most 10% deprived areas of Leeds. 13% of all pupils were reported as having Special Educational Needs support (2021). For more in-depth information on the research and findings please see Appendix 1 of this report.
- 10 Leeds Play Sufficiency is a partnership approach led by Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds and initially funded by Get Set Leeds Local (an Active Leeds project funded by Sport England). The Leeds Play Sufficiency Implementation Team (consisting of Active Leeds, Child Friendly Leeds and LS14 Trust) are the drivers behind this work. Responsibilities include: making day-to-day decisions on the project; awareness-raising and forming partnerships; conducting the research and analysing findings.
- 11 A new Community of Play will be developed, which will be made up of play partners in the city such as Playful Anywhere, LS14 Trust, The Tetley, SCRAP, with some council representation from culture, libraries, Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds. Engaging with play partners as part of the Play Sufficiency process has highlighted a desire across the city to connect with others who are working specifically to improve opportunities for play. At this point in the process, it is crucial to bring these key play partners together in order to create a strong narrative that tells the story of Leeds as a playful city; that considers how playful organisations can work to their strengths to mobilise collective action and how fundraising together can bring in essential resource for play in the city.
- 12 The project is supported by a strategic board: the Play Sufficiency Partnership. The Play Sufficiency Partnership acts as a 'think tank' in addressing identified barriers to children accessing time and space for play. It brings together individuals from Leeds City Council and its partners from a range of professional domains to support work associated with the Play Sufficiency assessment and subsequent action plan implementation.

- 13 Leeds is the first Local Authority in England to implement a full Play Sufficiency assessment. Play consultants, Ludicology, have mentored the Play Sufficiency implementation team leading to a detailed and comprehensive assessment, which will enable a well-informed action plan.
- 14 The Play Sufficiency assessment allows an understanding of the city-wide landscape for play, with a focus on the most deprived communities within the Leeds 6 priority neighbourhoods:
- Stratford Street, Beverleys in the Hunslet and Riverside ward (Beeston Hill)
 - Crosby Street, Recreations, Bartons in the Beeston & Holbeck Ward (Holbeck)
 - New Wortley in the Armley Ward (New Wortley)
 - Boggart Hill and the Wykebeck Valley in the Seacroft & Killingbeck ward (Seacroft)
 - Lincoln Green in the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward
 - Nowells in the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward
- 15 Children and young people have been highlighted across all neighbourhoods as a key target population group, who form an important focus for work within communities. At the heart of Play Sufficiency is the voice of the child “Children are citizens in their own right who experience cities and neighbourhoods differently from adults.” (Gill, 2021). Through gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of children’s everyday lives within the six neighbourhoods, we can better understand the things around them that impact on their time, permissions and space to play.

What impact will this proposal have?

Our Approach

- 16 The Play Sufficiency research recognises that the play agenda is cross-cutting and requires cross-service directorate and cross-agency collaboration and connectedness to make impact. Play Sufficiency focuses on embedding consideration of children’s right to play within the organisational systems and developing an organisational culture best suited to supporting children’s play.
- 17 The initial assessment provides a thorough account of the ways in which spaces, services, practices and policies currently work across Leeds to support or constrain children’s opportunities for play. It also provides an opportunity to identify ways in which adult run organisations can improve their responsibilities towards children and their play. This will in turn inform the development of a strategic action plan aimed at cultivating more favourable conditions for children’s play.
- 18 The Play Sufficiency assessment and subsequent action plan will explore and influence work across a wide range of departments, including those associated with policy development and strategic partnerships, the built and natural environment, and community and children’s services.

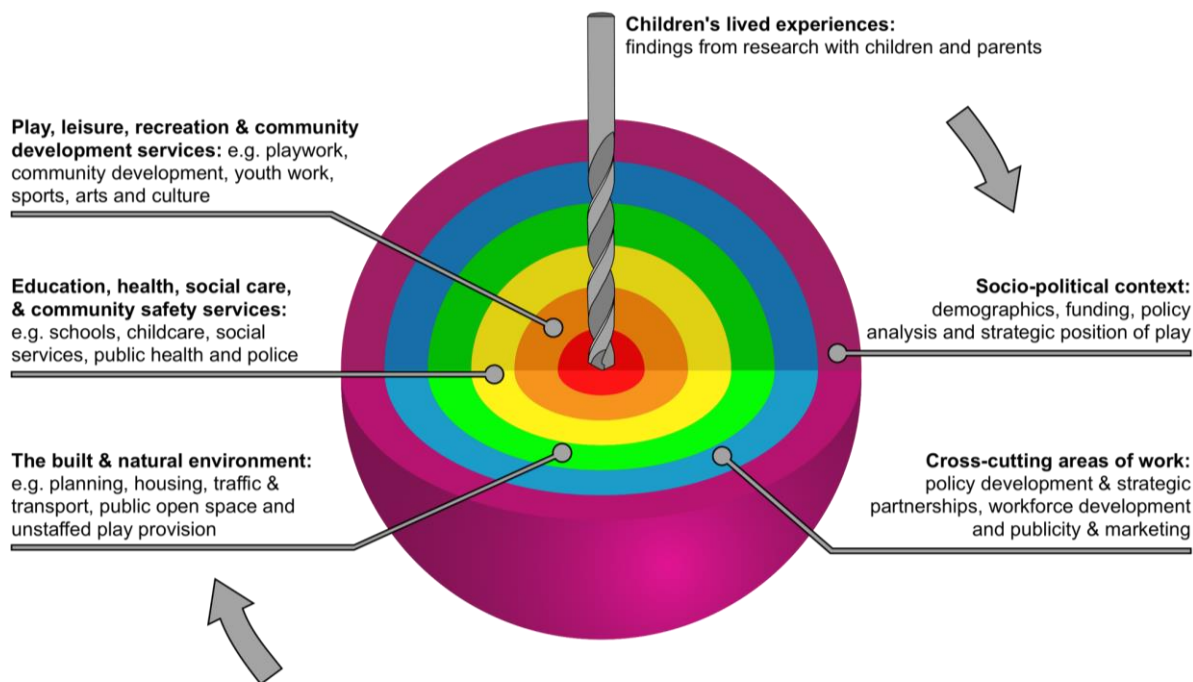


Figure 1: Play Sufficiency Process Domains (Ludicology, 2023)

19 Two Play Sufficiency events were held in October 2022 which brought together 50 colleagues from across Leeds City Council and partner organisations, including elected members. These events shared key insights and identified a wide spectrum of stakeholders with a strong interest in this work. In early 2023 Cross Directorate Council colleagues contributed further to the Play Sufficiency Assessment via focus groups which brought together area leads from:

- The built and natural environment
- Policy & strategic context
- Education, health, social care & community safety
- Play, leisure, recreation & community development
- Cross cutting areas e.g. workforce development, publicity

20 The focus groups highlighted key opportunities to improve responsibilities towards play, as well as existing barriers to creating change. Conversations allowed officers from a range of services and directorates to note the ways in which their work impacted upon children's opportunities to play and also how this work connects and overlaps with the work of multiple teams, projects and city strategies. Officers voiced the desire to focus on play as part of their workstream: there was a clear sense that a focus on play joined up ways of working, provided opportunity for collective action and enhanced and streamlined approaches. However, not everyone felt that they could justify their time spent on play. Officers outlined that they did not always feel that there was a 'strategic direction' that allowed permission for time spent on play.

21 In September 2023, 50 attendees from across the council supported a 3rd Play Sufficiency event which aimed to:

- further share the research
- check and challenge the priorities and their wording
- start to action plan against these priorities

22 The endorsement and championing of Play Sufficiency from Executive Board will be essential in progressing work on the priorities and taking forward recommendations from the Play Sufficiency Action Plan. Support from Executive Board members legitimises play as an outcome and gives

permission for the time spent on play. There are already many officers championing Play Sufficiency. It is important that this work is encouraged and is supported as a sustainable part of our approach as a council. With Executive Board members playing a key part in the awareness-raising and championing of Play Sufficiency, there will be a strong driver in place for the strategic focus on play in Leeds.

- 23 Essential to the development and influence of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan will be the involvement of policy makers, lead practitioners and strategic partners working within and across professional domains that (directly or indirectly) impact on children's ability to access time and space for play. Play is everyone's business. The success of Play Sufficiency comes from the ability to mobilise strategic leads and harness that support and engagement through collective action: responding to the voice of the child in a way that seeks to solve problems and make the most out of opportunities. Executive Member support with the recommendations from the Play Sufficiency Action Plan ensures that each directorate plays its part in this important process.
- 24 Leeds City Council faces extremely challenging financial pressures. Partner engagement across services and directorates has highlighted the power in raising awareness of Play Sufficiency research and findings. For many officers – that are facing the challenge of smaller teams and greater workload – there has never been the time for consideration of children and young people as part of their line of work. The focus on Play Sufficiency encourages city wide officers to approach their work through the lens of a child, focusing on the impact of their decisions on children's opportunities to play. This seemingly small and simple change in approach is powerful when realised across the council as a whole.
- 25 The nine Play Sufficiency priorities are:
- Priority 1:** Facilitate the cross-service endorsement of Play Sufficiency and embed key principles within Leeds City Council departments.
 - Priority 2:** Celebrate and enable parents and carers permissions, confidences and skills for play.
 - Priority 3:** Grow a play workforce of adults whose work directly and indirectly impacts upon children and their play.
 - Priority 4:** Facilitate sufficient time, space and attitudes towards play in educational settings.
 - Priority 5:** Enable sufficient time, space, design and attitudes to play for children with protected characteristics.
 - Priority 6:** Create streets that are safe, welcoming and encourage children's play.
 - Priority 7:** Improve the variety of spaces available for play for all age groups within close proximity of children's homes (including informal and designated spaces).
 - Priority 8:** Improve access to nature-based play environments.
 - Priority 9:** Improve the perception of teenagers and improving their opportunities to play and hang out.
- 26 Our recommendation for a local response is to embed Play Sufficiency principles, findings and recommendations within the Priority Neighbourhood Partnership Plans in priority wards of the city looking at play at a localised level.
- 27 Furthermore, to support and embed the Play Sufficiency principles at the city-wide level, further discussion will take place as part of the Community Committee review to consider the role that the 10 Community Committees can assist with in terms of the delivery of the play assessment in individual areas. Discussions will take place with the relevant Committee Champions (Children and Young People, Health and Wellbeing), so that they can play a more active role in promoting the benefits of play and ensure that the voice of young people living in the city are heard and play a pivotal role in local decision making.

Next Steps

28 The outputs for 2023/2024 will be:

- A full Play Sufficiency assessment report identifying current levels of satisfaction, strategic priorities, strengths and weaknesses of organisational systems and recommended areas for improvement.
- A strategic and cross-departmental action plan, making best use of the people and financial resources available.
- The continuation of an informed Play Sufficiency Partnership and the development of a governance model for this strategic group.
- The establishment of local Play Sufficiency partnerships at a focused neighbourhood level.
- The development of a Community of Play to celebrate play within the city.
- The capturing and sharing of good practice in Leeds through the partnerships, events and workshops to demonstrate where colleagues, departments and partners have responded to the Play Sufficiency principles.
- The development of a Play webpage, which hosts the Play Sufficiency resources and information (as well as other play-related content for the city) and links directly to the Child Friendly Leeds and Physical Activity Ambition webpages.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

29 The Best City Ambition sets out a mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home. For all children, play is essential to quality of life. The Play Sufficiency research offers rich insight into what is working well in neighbourhoods within priority wards, as well as what is not working well and is therefore limiting children's right to play. By prioritising the issues most important to children and young people, progress can be made to tackle poverty and inequality.

30 The importance of play has been included in the Best City Ambition since its adoption, but in the 2024 update there is an intention to strengthen this further. Play sufficiency is an issue which contributes to priorities across the three pillars of the Ambition but is most likely to be incorporated into the revised Health and Wellbeing pillar, building on the recent publication of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to reflect the benefits for the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people which play can have. The further promotion of Play Sufficiency through the Best City Ambition provides opportunity and support moving forward, helping to ensure it can be embedded into wider strategic planning across the council and city.

31 Play provides a unique opportunity to contribute to the three city strategic pillars of Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing and Zero Carbon. This work also aligns with other key strategies such as Mental Health Strategy, Transport Strategy and developing the Local Plan. Play is now a priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan: Priority number 8: Children and young people have safe spaces to play, hang out and have fun. Play is also a priority within other strategies such as the Leeds Parks and Green Spaces strategy 2023 – 2032 and Child Poverty Strategy 2019 – 2022.

32 The Play Sufficiency Assessment links directly to the Child Friendly Leeds 12 wishes. The voices and views of children and young people are at the heart of making Leeds a child friendly city. 80,000 children and young people fed into a city-wide consultation to explain what they thought would make Leeds a better city for them to play, live and grow up in. Their feedback was grouped together to form the 12 wishes, one of which (wish number 2) focuses specifically on play: Children and young people have safe spaces to play, hang out and have fun. Children and young people have time and opportunities to play, hang out and have fun across the city. They feel safer as there is less crime, vandalism and litter.

33 Play is a workstream as part of the Children and Young People priority within the Physical Activity Ambition Programme. Physical activity is essential to maintaining mental and physical health in children and young people and physical activity behaviours are often established in childhood. The revised vision for physical activity in Leeds is ‘Leeds is a place where everyone moves more every day’. For children, play is an essential method for movement.

Health and Wellbeing

Leeds has a vision to be a healthy and caring city for all ages.

34 Play Sufficiency formed part of the recommendations for the Leeds City Council Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022 (page 75): “Leeds City Council to work with partners to continue to deliver a programme of work to protect and improve children’s physical health. This will focus on: implementing the recommendations from the Play Sufficiency research”

35 Play Sufficiency is cross cutting, with potential to contribute to several of the priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

Priority one: A child friendly city and the best start in life - A child’s opportunity to play is central to this

Priority three: Strong, engaged and well-connected communities – There’s a strong and viable argument that the presence of children playing in public space is an indicator of a healthy urban habitat – a city that is doing well for all its citizens.

Priority four: Housing and the environment enable all people in Leeds to be healthy.

Priority six: Get More People, More Physically Active, More Often’. Many children described play as being synonymous with physical activity. When children were playing they were more active and many associated play with being outdoors and close to nature.

Priority ten: Promote mental and physical health equally - Children shared consistently that play is good for their mental health. It was a way to connect with others, and to feel less lonely. Without play children thought life would be dull and boring. Play gave them time out to reset. They saw it as a way to get rid of unhappiness.

Priority eleven: A valued, well trained and supported workforce.

Inclusive Growth

36 *“Vibrant communities need people of all ages for long-term economic stability”*

(Mildred Warner and Rebecca Baran-Lees, Cornell University)

37 The link between providing the time, space and attitudes for children’s play and the urban economy highlights the need to take the long view. The presence in a city of significant numbers of children and caregivers is an expression of that city’s long-term prospects for employment and economic viability. Neighbourhoods that are designed through the eyes of a child can create attractive and liveable neighbourhoods for children, families and for all members of a community. Communities that work for children, work for everyone.

38 Play Sufficiency positively contributes to several areas of the Inclusive Growth Leeds 2023 – 2030 strategy. In particular, Play Sufficiency links to the following ‘Big Ideas’:

- People: Tackling poverty and inequality to improve people’s lives – ensuring Leeds is the best city for children to grow up in
- Productivity: Stimulating innovation which drives and delivers measurable impact towards a healthier, greener and inclusive future
- Place: Connecting and strengthening our communities
- Place: Investing in our places and transport to create a sustainable economy and greener future

Zero Carbon

- 39 Leeds has a vision to become a city where you don't need a car to get around. At a national and local level, active travel and low traffic initiatives have proven controversial and divisive. Play brings a more human face to arguments around climate change and sustainability.
- 40 Children from across all research areas reported how the dominance of the car impacted their opportunities to play. Where streets were quieter and had adults that supported children's play, conditions for play were good. However, many children and parents/carers reported that there were several constraints that stopped children from playing in the street outside their homes. These were: traffic (busy roads and cars going at high speeds) and parked cars.
- 41 Children said: '[I'm not allowed to play] Down the street because they can't see me. Sometimes we get told off for accidentally hitting a car, but it was not even our fault'; 'Do you meet up and play with friends outside of school? 'No because a lot of cars are parked on my street. I'm not allowed to go 3 streets away because it's not safe because of cars passing by'; 'On my street...it's the drug dealers and idiot drivers the police are chasing. The other day one just sped round the corner, mounting up over the kerb'.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:
Consultation and engagement focused in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Armley• Burmantofts and Richmond Hill• Beeston and Holbeck• Hunslet and Riverside• Killingbeck and Seacroft
Recommendations within the report affect all wards.
Have ward members been consulted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

- 42 The Leeds Play Sufficiency project is an ongoing process of research and action to assess, improve and protect children's opportunities for play.
- 43 The following section highlights the process by which the Play Sufficiency Team have consulted and engaged to understand children's lived experiences of play at a very local level. The assessment stage explores what is working for who, where and why at a neighbourhood and local authority level. Once sufficiency has been assessed, the next phase involves working collaboratively to secure sufficient opportunities to play.

Phase 1 research:

- 44 Quantitative online surveys enabled us to generate a large response rate, enabling a baseline in terms of the general levels of satisfaction to be established, identifying broad factors that influence satisfaction and differences in satisfaction between different groups of children and adults. Parents and carers were also asked to complete an online survey.
- 45 All schools across the six localities were asked to support all children in year 5 and year 9 to complete an online survey regarding their satisfaction with their opportunities for play. Targeting

a single age group of children helped to limit the size of the survey but also enabled data to be compared across communities.

46 Ludicology, the play consultants commissioned to work with us on the Play Sufficiency Assessment in Leeds, argue that it is reasonable to expect that children aged eight/nine years and over should be playing out regularly, without the need for adult accompaniment ([Ludicology: Play sufficiency](#)), which is also supported by the [NSPCC](#). The Year 5 age group (age nine/ten years) has been specifically chosen as the experiences of this age group are a good indicator of children regularly playing out independently of adults.

Phase 2 face to face research:

47 Quantitative data alone does not enable us to understand why things are the way they are or what can be done about it. These insights come from more qualitative research methods, involving more in-depth conversations with children and their carers aimed at exploring what is working for who, where and why. These involved:

- 10 focus groups - for parents/carers and professionals working within neighbourhoods
- 8 x facilitated group work in schools - with year 5 and year 9 pupils (each having 3 x 2hr sessions) including face to face research combining spatial auditing and creative mapping with a focus on time, space and permissions to play.
- Community auditing of neighbourhoods
- Additional facilitated group work with children with protected characteristics.

Phase 3 Involving Partners:

48 Focus groups included leads from a number of different domains, including Leisure and Community Development (Third sector, Active Leeds, Safer stronger communities), Health and Community Safety (public health, police) and the Natural and Built Environment (parks, planning & policy, housing, transport).

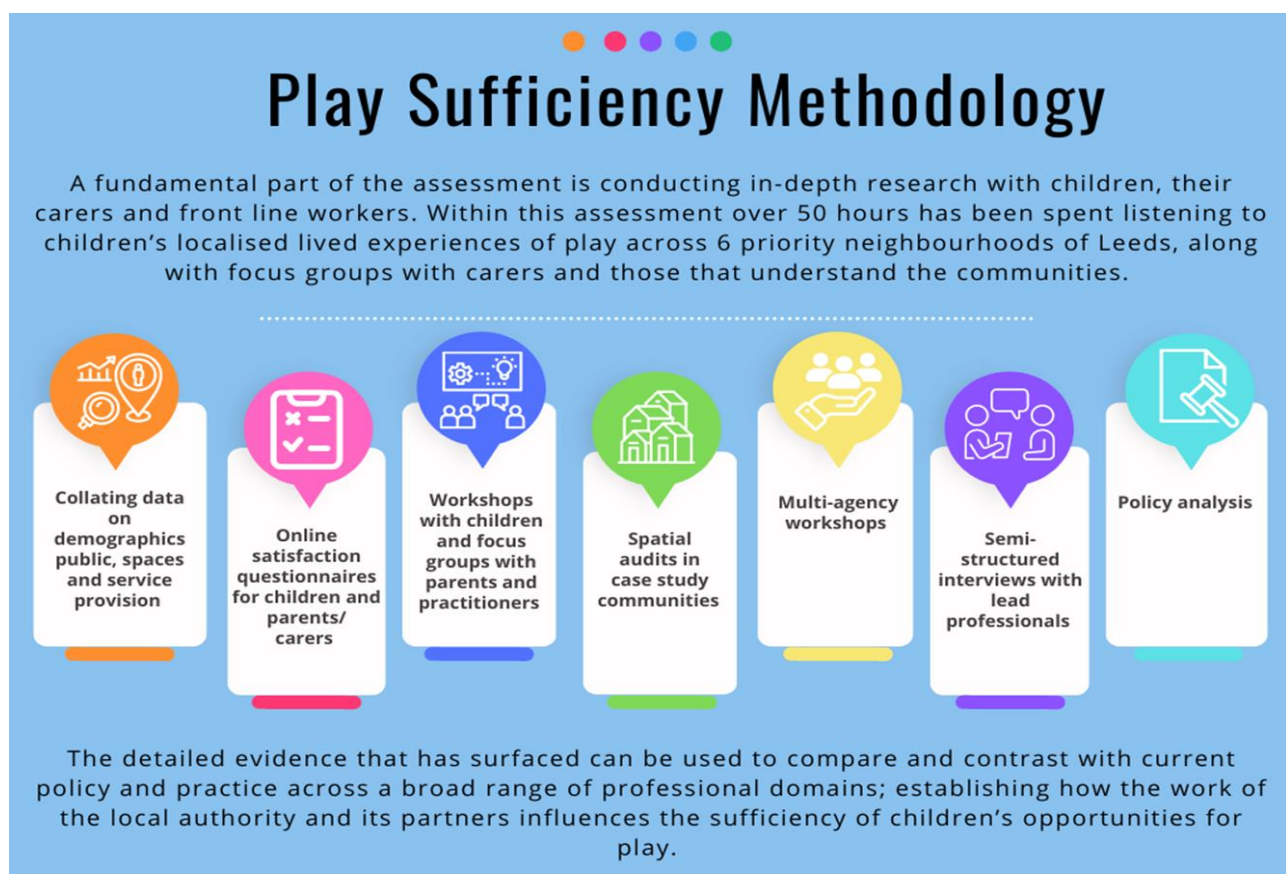


Figure 2: Play Sufficiency Methodology (Leeds City Council, 2023)

What are the resource implications?

- 49 **Financial implications:** The Play Sufficiency Assessment is designed for use at a local authority level and therefore takes into account the severe financial pressures that councils are facing. The landscape of resources will reflect the budget challenges of the council. With much of Play Sufficiency focusing on play in the public realm, it is important to recognise that current resources are likely to shrink. However, many of the recommendations from the research do not require additional funding and instead require a different approach. The first Play Sufficiency Assessment has been supported by play consultants Ludicology which has been externally funded by Sport England.
- 50 **Officer time and resource:** Findings from the first Play Sufficiency Assessment link to many cross-cutting services and so have relevance to many (if not all) departments across the council. For officers working in the priority wards, this is a valuable resource. This is the first time that we have researched – in such an extensive and robust way – about conditions for play in some of our most deprived wards. Play Sufficiency findings can inform future developments (without needing to redo significant consultation work) and can provide a sound basis for funding applications. In addition, using the principles of Play Sufficiency encourages partnership working and bridges many policy and project areas. This is in line with our Team Leeds approach.
- 51 **Further implications:** Play provision is valued, maintained and increased: it's format of delivery re-augmented to suit the actual play needs of children. Play Sufficiency research can encourage local communities to reimagine their neighbourhoods as places for playing and living together. Communities empowered to seize opportunities to act in supporting play because systems exist to support them to do so. For example, via things like street play initiatives, or communal play bins or local agreements with landowners agreeing permission for play.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 52 **Ensuring an inclusive approach:** There is always a danger with such an extensive research project that certain groups are underrepresented. This risk can be managed effectively as the Play Sufficiency Assessment is an ongoing piece of research that is cyclical in nature. Before each new cycle begins, the Play Sufficiency team will look closely at the coverage of the research and identify any gaps where particular groups (particularly protected characteristics) may be underrepresented. This can then be the focus of the following cycle. Each cycle may look slightly different as our approach is adjusted and tweaked to ensure that the voice of all children is at the heart of the process.
- 53 **Full council and cross-directorate support:** There is a risk that full support for the Play Sufficiency Assessment is not prioritised. Without full support, it is much more difficult to justify time spent on play and legitimise play as an outcome. In order for change to be realised children and play needs to be recognised as important and embedded within strategic policies. This risk can be managed by achieving the support and endorsement from the Executive Board.
- 54 **Reputational Risk:** A key part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment is the collective response to children's opinions and suggestions. In doing nothing, Leeds City Council faces the risk of losing the trust of the children, parents, teachers and front-line practitioners that took part in the assessment.

55 **Deepening Inequalities:** By ignoring the barriers and constraints to children's play in priority wards, Leeds City Council runs the risks of conditions for play remaining as they are or worsening. Many children reported that their opportunities to play were not sufficient. As discussed earlier in the report, the consequences of not playing are dire, resulting in poor health and vulnerability. Sufficient opportunities for play are essential to the healthy development and wellbeing of children in Leeds.

What are the legal implications?

56 There are no legal implications arising from this report

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

57 There were no other options considered. However, Play Sufficiency does also work alongside and add value to other significant projects and plans, including the Child Friendly Leeds 12 Wishes, Physical Activity Ambition and the Children Young People's Plan.

58 The only remaining other option is doing nothing. The research and analysis of the data has already taken place and the option of doing nothing would result in ignoring the findings and recommendations that have come from completing the Play Sufficiency process. Please refer to risks above for the impact of this.

How will we know we're having an impact?

59 Success will be measured in the following ways:

- Play Sufficiency is endorsed at a city-wide level. The Play Sufficiency research approach is adopted across services and departments to:
 1. Engage with children and young people effectively
 2. Elevate the voice of the child to impact decision-making processes and influence neighbourhood planning
- Where Play Sufficiency research has already taken place, the findings and recommendations influence the approach taken by all services and directorates in priority wards, influencing the decisions made and actions that are taken
- Progress against the Play Sufficiency Action Plan recommendations
- Leeds City Council policy and practice reflects Play Sufficiency recommendations and play is embedded across our key strategies
- Play is embedded with specific tasks within the Neighbourhood Priority Plans
- For the first time (from September 2024), the My Health My School survey will include a new section on play. This includes questions to determine children's satisfaction with play. Children's rating of their satisfaction will provide a good indication of the progress we are making in securing sufficient opportunities for play, as well as measuring progress around the new priority around play in CYPP 2023-28 and Child Friendly Leeds Wish 2
- Through specific projects that respond to Play Sufficiency recommendations, follow up consultation work can measure whether there is any change in levels of play satisfaction

60 Play Sufficiency is an ongoing process: we do not stop talking to children about their experiences of play. As we continue this cycle of research, we will evaluate against the baseline as well as monitoring the progress made regarding general levels of satisfaction. This can also be compared at the start and end of each cycle.

61 The presence of robust and reliable Play Sufficiency research has already provided opportunities to influence policy at a city-wide strategic level. Planning colleagues are key examples of those

who have embraced the opportunity to enact Play Sufficiency principles, considering how planning policy and practice can impact upon children's opportunities for play. Teams within Strategic Planning recognised the importance of the research and responded with almost immediate effect to ensure the strengthening of opportunities to play.

- 62 Having attended Play Sufficiency workshops and worked closely with Play Sufficiency colleagues, the Leeds Local Plan Update (approved for consultation by the Executive Board in October 2023) makes strong links to Play Sufficiency. Not only this, but Leeds Local Plan 2040 will explore opportunities to further strengthen the focus of Play Sufficiency through specific policies on play and recreation and child friendly cities.
- 63 Play Sufficiency is already demonstrating ways in which it can positively influence and impact upon our ambitions as a city. Two of these successes include:

1. **Department of Transport Active Travel Project:** A great example of cross service and partner working around Play is developing in the Lincoln Green area of the city; building from conversations with the children and parents of Shakespeare Primary School, Officers from services including Housing, Parks, Highways, Urban Design, Communities, Children & Families and Active Leeds have installed a new climbing frame and are now progressing the idea of a play trail. A circular route, that will link into the existing 'Mini Holland' scheme, where all ages can walk, wheel or cycle and along the way can stop off at a play box, play on stepping stones or just sit in a more natural space. This is a really exciting project that demonstrates not only strong joint working but also how through pulling together funding from different sources - Department of Transport, LCC Services and our Community partners, we can potentially achieve more.
2. **Securing external funding:** The Tetley (3rd sector arts organisation) have been successful in securing £150,000 (over three years) of National Lottery Funding to improve opportunities to play in Hunslet and Beeston. The long-term plan responds to the Play Sufficiency research and recommendations and will adopt similar research techniques to evaluate impact as their project progresses. The team at The Tetley have stated that the Play Sufficiency research (and partnership with the Play Sufficiency team) was essential in securing this funding.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 64 In order to have significant impact on play for children across communities in Leeds a long-term commitment is required to support play sufficiency. Play Sufficiency is driven by Active Leeds and Child Friendly Leeds but recognises that impact can only be achieved by cross department working.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Leeds Play Sufficiency Sample of Findings: provides a high-level *sample* of the Play Sufficiency research and findings. A more in-depth research and findings report can be provided upon request
- Appendix 2: Play Sufficiency Leeds New Wortley. The play pamphlet through the lens of the adult
- Appendix 3: Play Sufficiency Leeds New Wortley. The play pamphlet through the lens of the child
- Appendix 4: Play Sufficiency equality diversity cohesion and integration screening (EDCI)

Background papers

None