

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

7 MARCH 2013

**REPORT OF CHILDREN &
YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

Children & Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Ann McCoy

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF QUALITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF CHILDCARE

1. Summary

The attached report presents the Children & Young People Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Quality and Sufficiency of Childcare.

Childcare plays a crucial role in the lives of most families, enabling parents to go out to work to contribute to a decent family income when they have very young children. The review examined the Ofsted framework and work to engage with providers to improve quality, the view of providers in Stockton borough, and the changes to free childcare entitlement. The Committee's recommendations aim to tackle the barriers to engagement by using peer support and networking, as well as improving the information available to parents and supporting the officer project teams work in overseeing the introduction of the two year old offer.

2. Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

1. the information available to parents when choosing childcare be expanded to provide information about whether providers are engaging with SBC Journey to Outstanding as well as information about OFSTED ratings;
2. in order to foster closer working between settings, childminders and schools, locality based networks (possibly based around Children's Centres) be considered; the purpose of the networks would be to:
 - a. share good practice
 - b. provide peer support
 - c. ease transitions between settings/schools
 - d. embed a single approach to EYFS profiles
 - e. demonstrate partnership working
 - f. foster early intervention
 - g. provide a consultation platform
3. a model of commissioned peer support be considered utilising good quality childminders from within the network in a mentoring role;

4. the Admissions Booklet and other information provided to parents be revised to clarify that attendance at a nursery will not give automatic entitlement to attend a school;
5. the Officer Project Board continue to oversee work on the introduction of the two year old offer and engage with the network of providers on delivery, subject to detailed analysis of the Government's recent announcement on childcare provision;
6. officers continue to work towards finding solutions to meet gaps in provision where they are identified in order to provide sufficient childcare places across the Borough.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

In Stockton there has been an improvement in the percentage of childminders and childcare settings achieving good or outstanding at their inspection over the last year. However, there are still some improvements to be made if the Borough is to match the ratings achieved both in the North East and England as a whole. In addition, in October 2010, the Government announced that it would extend the free entitlement of 15 hours per week childcare available to every three and four year old to all disadvantaged two year olds.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code).

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

7 MARCH 2013

**REPORT OF CHILDREN &
YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF QUALITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF CHILDCARE

SUMMARY

The attached report presents the Children & Young People Select Committee findings following the Scrutiny Review of Quality and Sufficiency of Childcare. The review examined the Ofsted framework and work to engage with providers to improve quality, the view of providers in Stockton borough, and the changes to free childcare entitlement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommend that:

1. the information available to parents when choosing childcare be expanded to provide information about whether providers are engaging with SBC Journey to Outstanding as well as information about OFSTED ratings;
2. in order to foster closer working between settings, childminders and schools, locality based networks (possibly based around Children's Centres) be considered; the purpose of the networks would be to:
 - a. share good practice
 - b. provide peer support
 - c. ease transitions between settings/schools
 - d. embed a single approach to EYFS profiles
 - e. demonstrate partnership working
 - f. foster early intervention
 - g. provide a consultation platform
3. a model of commissioned peer support be considered utilising good quality childminders from within the network in a mentoring role;
4. the Admissions Booklet and other information provided to parents be revised to clarify that attendance at a nursery will not give automatic entitlement to attend a school;
5. the Officer Project Board continue to oversee work on the introduction of the two year old offer and engage with the network of providers on delivery, subject to detailed analysis of the Government's recent announcement on childcare provision;
6. officers continue to work towards finding solutions to meet gaps in provision where they are identified in order to provide sufficient childcare places across the Borough.

DETAIL

1. The attached report presents Cabinet with the outcomes of the Scrutiny review of Quality and Sufficiency of Childcare.
2. The topic was identified for review at Scrutiny Liaison Forum and included in the 2012/13 Work Programme by Executive Scrutiny Committee. The review examined the Ofsted framework and work to engage with providers to improve quality, the view of providers in Stockton borough, and the changes to free childcare entitlement. There is a growing body of evidence which shows that good pre-school childcare gives children a flying start and leads to better outcomes as they move through school. The overall aim of the review was to improve the quality of childcare in the Borough and ensure there are sufficient places for 2 year olds.
3. Following consideration by Cabinet an action plan will be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how approved recommendations will be implemented detailing officers responsible for action and timescales.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5. None

RISK ASSESSMENT

6. This Scrutiny Report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

7. Children and Young People – narrow the attainment gap
Children and Young People – improve targeted early intervention service

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and been given a score of 76 (Positive impact).

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

9. The proposals in this report have been developed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the Corporate Director of Children, Education & Social Care. The Committee received evidence from several providers via site visits, round table discussion and attendance at a childminder network meeting. The 2011 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was also submitted as evidence which summarised responses to a large consultation process carried out with providers, parents, and children.

Name of Contact Officer: Judith Trainer
Post Title: Team Leader Scrutiny and electoral
Telephone No. 01642 528158
Email Address: judith.trainer@stockton.gov.uk

Education related? Yes

Background Papers

None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors

The proposals as a whole are not ward specific.

Property

None