

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**DATE 21 JUNE 2018**

**REPORT OF SENIOR  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Ann McCoy**

#### **CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2018**

1. Summary

This report outlines how the Local Authority (LA) is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare and includes information about the supply of and demand for childcare, details on any gaps in provision and an action plan on how they will be addressed

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to approve:

1. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the associated priorities for 2018-19.
2. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan for 2018-19

3. Reasons for the Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – March 2017, requires Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable and within available resources, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

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)

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**CABINET DECISION**

**CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2018**

**SUMMARY**

This report outlines how the Local Authority (LA) is meeting its duty to secure sufficient childcare and includes information about the supply of and demand for childcare, details on any gaps in provision and an action plan on how they will be addressed

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to approve:

1. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and the associated priorities for 2018-2019.
2. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan for 2018-2019.

**DETAIL**

1. The Childcare Act 2006 and 2016 and the associated statutory guidance for local authorities on Early Education and Childcare – March 2017, requires Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Local Authority) to secure sufficient childcare, as far as is reasonably practicable and within available resources, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).
2. To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account:
  - what is ‘reasonably practicable’ when assessing what sufficient childcare means for their area;
  - the state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers, in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
  - the state of the labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce;
  - the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise;
  - should encourage schools in their area to offer out-of-hours childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays;
  - should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market; and
  - should encourage providers to take sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.

3. The Local Authority is responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in the report, geographical division and date of publication. However, the report should include:
  - a specific reference to how we are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of: children with special educational needs and disabilities disabled children; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up free places; school age children; and children needing holiday care.
  - Information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
  - Details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.
4. In addition, the Local Authority is required by legislation to maintain a service that provides information, to parents and prospective parents on the provision of childcare in their area, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Childcare Act 2006 and from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 publish this information electronically on the local authority website and update it at a minimum termly on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> September, ensuring parents are aware of:
  - Early education places for two, three and four year olds;
  - The option to continue to take up their child's 15 hour early education place until their child reaches compulsory school age;
  - How to identify high quality provision in their area.

### **The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Report**

5. The CSA report provides information on how the Local authority will meet its legal duty as detailed earlier in this report.
6. The report provides the following:
  - Background and contextual information about the Borough regarding population and Labour Market Information (LMI).
  - Early years and childcare information including Ofsted registrations, geographical distribution, vacancies charging, open and closing times and quality of provision.
  - Details of identified gaps in childcare provision and key priorities.
  - An action plan with timescales.

### **Summary of key priorities**

7. Stockton-on-Tees has a good range of quality childcare across the borough, however specific gaps have been identified. The following details the key priorities for 2018.
8. **Ensuring sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of disabled children**
  - Ensure that parents have an understanding of the availability of childcare for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN) via the Local Offer and the provision of specific information, advice and assistance through the Families Information Service and the Stockton Information Directory (for Families) including advice on funded childcare.
  - The Families Information Services and SEN & Engagement Team continue to work closely to ensure there are enough places to meet demand.
9. **Ensuring sufficiency for children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit**
  - The Families Information Service will continue to ensure that information remains current and up to date in order to assist parents in making choices, particularly in

relation to the Tax Free Childcare, the childcare element of WTC and the new Universal Credit, which will be rolled out in Stockton in July.

- Information to be available over the telephone by contacting the Families Information Service and on-line through the Stockton Information Directory (for Families).

10. **Children aged two taking up early education**

Continue to:

- maintain at the least the current percentage of eligible 2 year olds accessing a place
- market and promote activities to maximise take up
- raise awareness with parents' on the advantages of taking up a place

11. **Children aged three and four taking up early education places**

- Monitor the demand for 30 hour free places against vacancies on a termly basis to ensure there are enough places to meet demand
- Support the establishment of expanded or new provision which will offer additional places
- Continue the marketing campaign to inform families of the entitlement.
- Work with Children's Social care team to develop a local policy for foster carers to access 30 hours free childcare

12. September saw the roll out of 30 hour free childcare places for 3 and 4 year old children. To ensure there were sufficient places available to meet demand a comprehensive gap analysis was undertaken in summer 2016 from this analysis a bid was submitted to DfE to secure capital funding to build capacity in the following wards, Billingham West, Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree, Fairfield, Norton West and Stainsby Hill wards. These capital builds have now been completed and places are being offered.

13. Prior to the roll out of 30 hours free childcare a significant amount of promotional work took place to ensure parents and childcare providers fully understood the eligibility criteria and how to apply for funding. The Stockton Information Directory has been updated with all relevant information on 30 hours and includes links to relevant websites, such as HMRC, and this has been promoted to parent and childcare providers.

14. Take-up of 30 hours places has been as expected, at the end of the autumn term take-up was 30%, and at the end of spring term this had increased to 45%. Take-up is monitored on a termly basis to ensure that there continues to be sufficient places to meet demand.

15. **Ensuring sufficiency for school age children**

Ensure there continues to be sufficient before and after school places for older children by monitoring places on a termly basis.

16. **Ensuring sufficiency for children needing holiday care**

Ensure there continues to be enough holiday places to meet demand, in particular, for those parents wanting to use part of their 30 hour free childcare entitlement for a stretched offer.

17. **Action Plan**

The action plan sets out the actions that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will take to deliver priorities set out in the above section. The detail of each action will be found in individual implementation plans held by the responsible officer/team. The action plan covers 2018 – 2019 and the implementation plans for the delivery of the specific actions identified can be found within individual team delivery plans.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

### 18. Children and Young People

18.1 Securing sufficient childcare in accordance with Section 6, 7, 9, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006 and section 1 and 2 of the Childcare Act 2016.

18.2 The actions arising from the CSA report contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The report considers accessibility and affordability of childcare for all families and includes consideration of disabled children, families on low incomes and parents working irregular hours. Early years and childcare provision is registered and inspected by Ofsted and they are required to comply with all legislation relating to anti-discrimination, safeguarding, employment and health and safety. The inspection will assess the extent to which the provider complies with all legal duties including those set out in the Equality Act 2010 and will pay particular attention to the educational outcomes for specific groups of children which includes all children with protected characteristics. (Equality Act 2010). The actions identified for the coming year are a continuation of the ongoing work of the Council in promoting equality of opportunity for all parents through the provision of accessible and affordable childcare.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

19. The cost of delivering the priorities within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018 has been included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

20. The council is under a statutory duty to complete an annual childcare sufficiency assessment.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

21. A risk assessment has been carried out and this proposal is categorised as low/medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES**

22. This report impacts on the Policy Principles in the Council Plan relating to Creating Economic Prosperity by enabling parents to work by having sufficient access to a range of high quality childcare.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

23. The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that all 2 year olds who are looked after by the LA or have left care through special guardianship or an adoption or residence order, have access to 570 hours of free early learning and childcare.

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

24. Consultation continues to take place with local childcare providers, schools and parents to determine the demand for childcare places.

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Education related? No

Background Papers Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

This report is applicable to all wards and ward councillors across Stockton.

Property

Additional childcare places were required to meet demand for 30 hour free childcare. The creation of these additional places was considered as part of the Capital Programme. Capital funding was also secured from the Department for Education to create additional places along with a contribution of funding from the council. These new places have been created in three schools, one Family Hub and Fairfield Library.