

### Appendix 1 Strategic Priorities

Aspect	Strategic Strength	Strategic Weakness
Resources	Dedicated small Families Information Service (FIS) team supporting parents in finding childcare and distributing funding payments to childcare providers and schools.	<p>Lack of capacity within the FIS Team to support the childcare expansion.</p> <p>Transfer to a new system in 23/24 – 24/25 will create additional work for the team including training on the system, supporting the sector in its use and updating current processes.</p> <p>Decision required on the lead for the expansion to wraparound care for schools. Currently being co-ordinated by Manager, Sufficiency early years and childcare and CIOC</p>
Early Years Workforce	Dedicated workforce, skilled workforce	<p>Recruitment and retention issue across the sector will be exacerbated with the expansion to childcare.</p> <p>More staffing will be required for the younger age group 9mths to under 2yrs as staff to child ratios are higher 1:3.</p> <p>Low pay across the sector is a barrier to recruiting new entrants, with rates determined by funding received from the council.</p> <p>More work required on engaging with local colleges to promote working in early years, courses available and the need to highlight what it is like working in the sector i.e., working to the early years foundation stage regulations</p>
Early Years Entitlements	95% of funding the council receive is passported to providers, as per funding guidance. This will increase to 97% sometime in the future.	<p>The average passported amount nationally is currently 97%</p> <p>Pressure on the sector to deliver more funded places limits their income as funding for some providers is less than what they charge. They are already incurring additional costs due to the cost of living crisis and other cost increases.</p>
Childcare sector	Currently there are sufficient high quality flexible childcare places in Stockton to meet the needs of parents	<p>Could be a lack of places for younger children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providers may limit funded places,</li> <li>• some do not deliver to young children,</li> <li>• premises may need adapting to cater for younger children, equipment, and resources etc.</li> <li>• there may not be enough places for children with SEND due to higher staff to child ratios.</li> </ul> <p>Demand is difficult to predict, data on those working parents already accessing a place exists but non-working, may choose to take up employment when funded childcare is available, is reliant on parent surveys and</p>

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		estimating demand based on the previous implementation of 30-hour free childcare
Wraparound care	<p>Information gathered by FIS team from schools, annually, on their wraparound care offer provide a good basis of where provision needs to be developed to meet government aims.</p> <p>40% of schools already offer a full wraparound service.</p> <p>The childcare sector is already offering wraparound care to support working parents.</p>	<p>Parental demand for wraparound care is not known and would require schools to survey parents of children attending the school to assess demand to determine whether developing a provision would be sustainable.</p> <p>Not all schools have a full understanding of the wraparound care offered by the childcare sector.</p>
Marketing and Promotion	<p>FIS Team produces an annual plan for promotion of childcare entitlements, linking in with the Corporate Marketing Team</p> <p>Communication pack produced by DfE for all the funded childcare offers</p>	<p>Lack of capacity in current team limits outreach work that can be undertaken attending engagement events to promote childcare benefits and the expansion to childcare.</p> <p>Marketing materials need developing for the expansion of childcare for Stockton families</p>

### Strategic priorities

#### Resources

Recruit additional capacity to the FIS Team or tap into other available resources within the council. Decision to be made on who will lead on the wraparound care development work.

#### Early Years Workforce

Engage with colleges, training providers and childcare providers to develop a recruitment strategy.

#### Early Years Entitlements

Ensure the council can passport the maximum funding to the sector.

Agree with finance funding available from DSG to fund increased capacity within teams.

#### Childcare sector

Consult further with the sector on their ability to meet increased demand, taking into account the younger age group and children with SEND.

#### Wraparound Care

Produce assessment of current provision available for each school.

Produce a standard survey which schools can use to start to assess demand.

#### Marketing and Promotion

Produce a plan of activity to promote the new childcare expansion to parents and employers and produce marketing materials to use at engagement events.