



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

13 January 2022

Report of the Director - Schools & Learning

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021 - 2022

(Cabinet Member for Education)

1. Divisions Affected

- 1.1 Information is provided at a district level which covers all electoral divisions

2. Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision. The report is for information only.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The report meets the statutory requirement for local authorities to report to elected council members annually on the outcome of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment as required by the Childcare Act 2006 and the Department for Education (DfE) 'Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'(June 2018).
- 3.2 Members to approve the report for publication as required by the statutory duty.

4. Information and Analysis

- 4.1 The Childcare Act 2006 was introduced to give every child the best start in life and parents/carers a greater opportunity to balance work and family life. The Act placed a duty on the local authorities to improve

outcomes for young children and reduce inequalities giving local authorities a key role in shaping the childcare market for their area.

- 4.2 Sections 6(1) and 6(3) of the Childcare Act 2006 places a statutory requirement for local authorities to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare to allow parents to work, access training or study.
- 4.3 In addition to the quantity of places, the local authority also takes into account the quality of provision to ensure there are 'outstanding' or 'good' Ofsted graded places available for as many children as possible and the affordability of provision to help ensure the places are accessible to parents.
- 4.4 The Early Years Service undertakes ongoing monitoring of the childcare market in Derbyshire to ensure there are sufficient high quality early years and childcare places available.
- 4.5 Whilst the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the childcare market is not yet fully evident the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021 - 2022 has undertaken analysis of the current childcare sufficiency picture in Derbyshire.
- 4.6 The main focus of the 2021-2022 assessment is the provision of the early years funded entitlements for two, three and four year olds.
- 4.7 In addition to the number of places, the local authority also considers affordability of provision and the Ofsted inspection outcome, in order to ensure there are sufficient 'outstanding' or 'good' places available for as many children as possible.
- 4.8 The following information and data has been gathered relating to:
 - Baseline socio-economic information including population profiles.
 - Analysis of childcare places within Derbyshire through data collection and weekly DfE provider surveys.
 - Demand for childcare services across Derbyshire evidenced through statistical data.

5. Consultation

Not Applicable

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Option A – Do not produce the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This would mean the Local Authority would fail to meet its statutory duty to publish annually following member approval.
- 6.2 Option B – Outsource the production of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment to an external organisation. This would have significant additional cost implications.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Childcare Act 2006
- 8.2 The DfE Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, June 2018.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications
- 9.2 Appendix 2 – Draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021 -2022.

10. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) Approve the draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021 – 2022 for publication.

11. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 11.1 To meet the local authority's statutory duty to report to elected members annually on how the duty to secure sufficient childcare is being met in Derbyshire.

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

- 12.1 No

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and sufficiency duty is not anticipated to incur any additional financial costs. Where a need to create new places or expand existing provision is identified, officer support is available from the Early Years Sufficiency Team for a range of business issues.

Legal

- 2.1 Pursuant to sections 6(1) and (3) of the Childcare Act 2006 and the DfE's 'Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities'(June 2018) local authorities are required to report annually to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents. Failure to report would result in the local authority breaching legislation and statutory guidance and would give rise to the risk of legal challenges against the authority.

Human Resources

- 3.1 In preparing this report the relevance of the above factor was considered but no implications were identified.

Information Technology

- 4.1 In preparing this report the relevance of the above factor was considered but no implications were identified.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 In preparing this report the relevance of the above factor was considered but no implications were identified.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment supports the council priorities of A Prosperous and Green Derbyshire as set out in the current council Plan.
- 6.2 A high quality early years education can help empower children and maximise their potential by giving them the best start.

6.3 Ensuring there is sufficient childcare across the county to support parents to work, train or study can improve social mobility by access to opportunities and enable families to have a better life.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1 In preparing this report the relevance of the above factors were considered but no implication identified or action required.