



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

Thursday, 12 January 2023

Report of the Director - Schools & Learning

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 -2023
(Cabinet Member for Education)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 County-wide

2. Key Decision

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

3. Purpose

- 3.1 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), and to obtain elected members approval of the publication of report to parents and carers.
- 3.2 The statutory guidance specifies that the local authority must include a specific reference to how local authorities are ensuring there is sufficient childcare available to meet the needs of:
- children with special educational needs and disabilities
 - 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
- details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed

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 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) 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/carers to work, access training or study.
- 4.3 The report addresses the requirements stated within the statutory guidance detailing how the local authority meets the needs of the groups listed in paragraph 3.2 above.
- 4.4 In fulfilling the statutory requirement and as part of the childcare sufficiency assessment the following actions are undertaken:
- 4.5 The Early Years' Service undertakes ongoing monitoring of the childcare market in Derbyshire to ensure there are sufficient early years and childcare places available.
- 4.6 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 for as many children as possible and the affordability of provision to help ensure the places are accessible.
- 4.7 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2023 provides an analysis of the current childcare sufficiency picture in Derbyshire taking these factors into account
- 4.8 The focus of the of the 2022 -2023 assessment is the provision of the early years funded entitlements for two-, three- and four-year-olds

4.9 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
- Demand for childcare services across Derbyshire evidenced through statistical data
- Provider Questionnaire Feedback

5. Consultation

5.1 The legislation does not require the local authority to undertake consultation on the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 - 2023

6. Alternative Options Considered

6.1 Option A – Do not produce the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report. This would mean the Local Authority would fail to meet its statutory duty to publish annually following member approval.

There are no further options.

7. Implications

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

8. Background Papers

Childcare Act 2006

The DfE Early Education and Childcare, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, (June 2018)

9. Appendices

9.1 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

9.2 Appendix 2 - Draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022 – 2023.

10. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) To consider the outcome of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and to approve its 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 in being met in Derbyshire.

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

No

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Appendix 1

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, office support is available from the Early Years Team for a range of business issues.

Legal

- 2.1 Pursuant to sections 6 (1) 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 members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents and carers.

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 As the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-2023 is a report for information only and does not involve changing council policy, services or function it was deemed that an equality impact assessment was not required.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment supports the following council priorities as set out in the current Council Plan 2022 - 2025:
- a strong, diverse and clean economy which makes the most of Derbyshire's rich assets and provides meaningful opportunities for local people to achieve their full potential.
 - great places to live, work and visit with high performing schools, diverse cultural opportunities, transport connections that keep things moving, and a healthy and sustainable environment for all.
- 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/carers 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 factor was considered but no implications were identified