

CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Subject Heading:

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
2011/14 – Annual Review

CMT Lead:

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Policy context:

Section 11 Childcare Act 2006 requires Local Authorities to produce a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) on a 3 year basis. The last Assessment was published on 1 April 2011.

9 May 2013

SUMMARY

Local authorities have a duty to ensure there is sufficient childcare in their area, so far as is reasonably practicable. The findings from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) published on 1 April 2011 enabled the Local Authority to draw up an Action Plan aiming to narrow the gaps in childcare provision as highlighted.

This report provides an update on the Local Authority's actions in meeting those recommendations and provides additional information on the delivery of Free Early Education for 3 and 4 year olds and on securing sufficient childcare across the Borough. It also provides an opportunity to update Members on progress in meeting the targeted Early Education Offer for Two Year Olds, which becomes statutory with effect from 1 September 2013.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Members are asked to note the progress of the Local Authority in meeting the recommendations of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment; and
- 2) To note progress towards delivering the targeted Early Education Offer for Two Year Olds.

REPORT DETAIL

1 Background

1.1 The 2011-14 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is a lengthy document. The key findings from the report to note and consider are:

- 1) That on the whole, the Local Authority is maintaining its commitment to high quality services and its local vision of “Havering: a place where every child and young person matters”.
- 2) The quality of childcare available continues to be higher than the national average in relation to Ofsted inspection outcomes.
- 3) The Local Authority is meeting its sufficiency duty as the availability of childcare on a Borough wide basis continues to outstrip the number of 3 and 4 year olds in Havering.
- 4) The Local Authority has made available a variety of funding opportunities to provisions to ensure that all children have access suitable childcare within a demographic area.
- 5) The Accredited Family Information Service provides an impartial and consistent quality service to local families and childcare.

2 Action Plan

2.1 Once the report is published the Local Authority is duty bound to produce an Action Plan based on recommendations following consultation. The recommendations of the 2011 CSA are detailed as follows:

2.2 That:

- The Local Authority continues to support provisions in offering more flexible places.
- The Local Authority continues to pro-actively support the development of holiday provision and promote its availability to parents in the borough.
- The Local Authority continues to promote Early Education Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, the pilot scheme providing funded places for 2 year olds and other help available to support childcare costs to eligible families. Eligibility is classified by the DfE as the term after which the children attains the required age e.g. 2, 3 or 4.

- The Local Authority continues supporting childcare providers to access training, including training on caring for children with disabilities and special educational needs, in line with the Local Authority's budget.
- The Local Authority continues to support new and existing childcare providers with achieving and maintaining the delivery of quality childcare.

2.3 An update of the Actions Taken and Planned in support of these recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.

3 The Free Early Education Offer for Two Year Olds

3.1 From 1 September 2013 the Local Authority will have a statutory duty to provide free early education to qualifying (free school meals, looked after by the Local Authority) two year olds from the term after their second birthday. The entitlement For qualifying children is 570 hours in any year and for no fewer than 38 weeks.

3.2 The latest estimate from the Department for Education (DfE) of qualifying Two Year olds in Havering from September 2013 is 506. The Local Authority is increasing the number of providers who can offer 2 year old education by assisting childminders in achieving NVQ3 and achieving Quality Assurance. This allows for childminders offering Early Education Entitlement (EEE) creating additional flexibility for families accessing childcare.

3.3 During 2012/13 a total of 280 children have been placed. Based on these calculations the Local Authority is confident it will be able to meet the target of 506 in 2013/14. The number of Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) and Childminder settings able to deliver this offer is now 63 (47%). Additional Settings and Childminders are being supported to qualify to deliver the offer. The current support programme will increase the number to 93 (69%).

3.4 The Local Authority is also working with schools to deliver the offer. Clockhouse Primary School is providing for 2 year olds and a further 6 are actively considering what adaptations need to be made in order to deliver during 2013/14.

3.5 From 1 September 2014 the offer is being extended to 40% of two year olds nationally. The current estimate of qualifying two year olds in Havering as notified by the DfE is 1,100. The qualifications for the extended offer are expected to include children with special educational needs or disabilities and those who have left care but are unable to return home. This increase will present a challenge but the Trajectory Funding will be used to continue to build up the numbers of places available and offered and to continue to encourage further Providers to offer these places.

3.6 The Local Authority has been allocated Capital and Revenue Grant to support the growth of the offer:

- Statutory Place Funding - £1,522,235.
Revenue through the Early Years Single Funding Formula.
- Trajectory Building - £597,588.
Revenue to create places in preparation for the expanded offer (2014).
- Capital - £422,197
To support capital investment. The allocation is not time-bound, so there are no deadlines by which this needs to be spent. However, this capital is not ring-fenced and can be spent on any capital purpose.

4 Children and Families Bill

- 4.1 The Children and Families Bill, currently before Parliament, contains a provision to repeal the duty of Local Authorities to assess the sufficiency of childcare provision. The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent by April 2014.
- 4.2 However, the Bill details the expectations on Local Authority's to report annually to elected Council Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make this report available and accessible to parents. Local Authorities would be responsible for determining the appropriate level of detail in their report, geographical division and the date of publication.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

5 Financial implications and risks:

Caroline May – Corporate Finance

- 5.1 The recommendations implemented to date have been funded from within existing Learning and Achievement resources.
- 5.2 The changes as a result of the Education Act 2011 will bring new responsibilities that do carry financial implications. From Sept 2013 there will be a need to realign Learning and Achievement budgets to support the new responsibilities, so some re-modelling of resources will be necessary. The service is planning for this and further scoping will take place in the period to Sept 2013. It is currently forecast that the implications can be contained within Learning and Achievement resources. This will be monitored on an ongoing basis, and risks around budget realignment considered in a timely manner.

6 Legal implications and risks:

Stephen Doye – Legal Services

- 6.1 The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2012/2488 will make it compulsory from 1 September 2013 to make free early years provision for eligible two year olds i.e. looked after children and those entitled to free school meals.
- 6.2 There are no legal implications arising from noting the content of this report.

7. Human Resources implications and risks:

Eve Anderson – HR Business Partner

- 7.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from the any of the recommendations made in this report.

8 Equalities implications and risks:

- 8.1 The Childcare Sufficiency consultation process was carefully considered to allow access and participation from all communities to ensure full representation. An Equality Impact Assessment was drafted and approved and is attached at Appendix 3.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Supporting Families in the Foundation Stage consultation Document
Supporting Families in the Foundation Years: joint policy document from the DfE and DoH.
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011
Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on the Delivery of Free Early Education for Three and Four Year Olds and Securing Sufficient Childcare (September 2012)
The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2012.