

Report for: Cabinet Member Signing – 18 March 2022

Title: Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report

Report authorised by: Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director for Commissioning

Lead Officer: Christine Yianni, Childcare Commissioning Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key Decision

1 Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 The Childcare Act 2006, and Early Education and Childcare statutory guidance, gives local authorities a duty to secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, childcare provision for children aged 0-14 and up to 18 for disabled children. The provision should be sufficient to meet the requirements of parents/carers to enable them to work or undertake education or training leading to work, and for their child to access their free entitlement place.
- 1.2 Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 and statutory guidance states that there should be an annual report ‘to elected council members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and make this report available and accessible to parents’ . We have prepared the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report to support this duty.
- 1.3 The report outlines childcare supply and demand progress since 2020, identifies key findings relating to childcare sufficiency during 2021 and provides key challenges and improvement actions for 2022.

2 Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 Not applicable

3 Recommendations

The Cabinet Member is asked:

- 3.1 To approve the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report 2020-2021, as set out in Appendix 1, and to agree to its publication on the Council’s website.

4 Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The reason for the recommendation is that a decision to approve the proposed Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report 2020 (Appendix 1), will ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory duty, under the Childcare Act 2006

4.2 In addition, the Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report will provide an updated representation of Haringey's childcare market, enabling the Council to develop childcare plans to support the market and maximise childcare participation in the future.

5 Alternative options considered

5.1 The requirement to complete an Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report is part of the statutory requirement placed on the Council by the Childcare Act 2006.

6 Background information

6.1 Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to ensure there is sufficient childcare to meet the needs of parents who require childcare for them to work or undertake education or training to obtain work. The Council's role, under the Act is to retain an overview of the market and facilitate the childcare market in Haringey to:

- Deliver childcare that is available, accessible, and affordable so that parents have the opportunity to use childcare in their area.
- Deliver good quality childcare, that is beneficial to children.
- Offer choice to parents so they can access childcare that best meets their needs.

6.2 In Haringey families have access to high quality early years provision, 99% of childcare providers are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

6.3 There are currently 413 childcare settings, comprising 170 Childminders, 133 day nurseries, 11 preschools and 99 breakfast/afterschool and holiday clubs.

6.4 There are 4,891 childcare places available for children aged 0-5 years in Haringey.

6.5 The take up of funded early education places remains a priority to improve outcomes for all children – making sure gaps in attainment, access, and outcomes for the most disadvantaged groups of children are minimised.

6.6 Due to the ongoing pandemic providers in Haringey have seen a decrease in demand. This reduction in demand appeared to generally be due to families needing less childcare as they temporarily or permanently stopped working. Also evident was an impact from parents and carers working from home, reduced working hours and income, as well as a reluctance to use childcare because of the risk of the spread of the virus.

6.7 The overall decline in the demand for places and consequent vacant places has presented a challenge to childcare providers. The Council is monitoring the supply of childcare, engaging with providers, parents and carers, and gaining regular feedback to assist the Council to maintain a picture of the demand for childcare and support childcare businesses.

- 6.8 Between November 2020 and November 2021, a total of 2 settings closed depleting 42 childcare places and two opened, creating 89 childcare places.
- 6.9 The Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report notes changes in the childcare market which has presented challenges to all types of providers and the various factors influencing the childcare market are explored throughout the report.

7 Contribution to strategic outcomes

The Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report contributes to the delivery of the Haringey Borough Plan (2019-23) and notably Priority 2, 'a Haringey where strong families, strong networks and strong communities nurture all residents to live well and achieve their potential' and where three identified outcomes are:

- **Outcome 4**
Best Start in Life: the first few years of every child's life will give them the long-term foundations to thrive
- **Outcome 5**
Happy Childhood: all children across the borough will be happy and healthy as they grow up, feeling safe and secure in their family and in our community
- **Outcome 6**
Every young person, whatever their background, has a pathway to success for the future

8 Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

8.1 Finance

- 8.1.1 This report is for noting by Cabinet and does not contain any financial implications

8.2 Procurement

- 8.2.1 The contents of the report are noted. Strategic Procurement will support commissioning with market development and tender activities when appropriate.

8.3 Legal

- 8.3.1 Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 (**Duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents**) the Council is under a duty to secure sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 (or up to 18 for disabled children). In determining whether the provision of childcare is sufficient to meet these requirements, the Council – (a) must have regard to the needs of parents in their area for – (i) the provision of childcare in respect of which the child care element of working tax credit is payable, (ii) the provision of childcare in respect of which an amount in respect of childcare costs may be included under section 12 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 in the calculation of

an award of universal credit, and (iii) the provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children, and (b) may have regard to any childcare which they expect to be available outside their area.

8.3.2 The Department for Education has issued statutory guidance to local authorities titled 'Early Education and Childcare' (June 2018) which the Council is obliged to have regard to. The guidance provides a list of matters that local authorities should take into account to secure sufficient child care places.

They include the following:

- a) 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;
- b) the state of the local labour market including the sufficiency of the local childcare workforce;
- c) the quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff, premises, experience and expertise;
- d) should encourage schools in their area to offer childcare from 8.00am until 6.00pm and in school holidays;
- e) should encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market if needed.
- f) should encourage providers to take a sustainable business approach to planning and signpost providers to resources to support them.

8.3.3 The guidance further provides for annual report to elected members on how the duty to secure sufficient childcare is being met. The report should include:

- a) a specific reference to how they 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;
- b) 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
- c) details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

8.4 Equality

8.4.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not

- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.4.2 The three parts of the duty applies to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

8.4.3 This paper asks Cabinet to note the 2021 Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report. The requirement to complete an Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report is part of the statutory requirement placed on the Council by the Childcare Act 2006.

8.4.7 The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to make sure that there are enough childcare places within its locality for working parents or for parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for children with disabilities and/or additional needs). It will support the Council to meet its equalities duties and address any gaps in provision through the Childcare Sufficiency Action plan.

8.4.8 Providing good quality childcare is an important part of the Council's equalities agenda, with positive implications for children and young people, parents, especially single mothers, and children and young people with disabilities. The Annual Report describes the existing provision across Haringey, and through the action plan sets out how the Council will seek to improve access and uptake of childcare provision. Due regard has been shown to equalities issues through the report, notably the advancement of equality of opportunity.

9 Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Annual Childcare Sufficiency Report 2021

10 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.