

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEMBER SIGNING
MONDAY, 15 AUGUST 2011**

Present: Councillor Lorna Reith (Cabinet Member for Children)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
1.	<p>CHILDREN'S CENTRE CHILDCARE FEES (Report of the Director of the Children's Services - Agenda Item 3):</p> <p>It was noted that at their meeting on 8 February 2011 the Cabinet had approved in principle the introduction of a new fee structure for children's centres from September 2011 and had asked officers to explore the introduction of differential fee rates in 2012-13 based on an ability to pay. The final decision on these matters was to be taken following consideration of the results of any consultation and with due regard to the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>It was also noted that at a Cabinet Member signing on 18 May 2011 it had been agreed that a full Equalities Impact Assessment of proposed changes to fee rates be carried out.</p> <p>The report now submitted proposed the introduction of changes to the current fee structure for childcare in Haringey in two stages over a two year period spanning 2011-12 and 2012-13. The first stage from September 2011 would see the introduction of new fee rates for childcare based on the age of the child. The second stage would be to introduce a sliding scale that applied income bands to determine the fee rate payable by parents. The potential income bands would be determined following a review of the impact of the stage one fee increases, the wider impact of changes in Haringey's employment levels over the coming year and any relevant changes to the benefits and tax credit system.</p> <p>The proposed increases were based on the outcomes of a fee review and information about the typical childcare rates across Haringey. Consideration had also been given to the fees charged in neighbouring boroughs and statistical neighbours.</p> <p>The Equalities Impact Assessment carried out suggested that where there was to be an increase in fees this would have a disproportionate impact on ethnic minority families and women. As part of the mitigation plan it would be ensured that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children would be able to access high quality, early education through the continued provision of free childcare places for children in need, children with a disability or special educational need (SEN) and vulnerable two year olds. Close partnership working with the Council's partners in health and social care would also be maintained to ensure the early identification of children who might benefit from such provision.</p> <p>Arising from consideration of the view expressed by the majority of the respondents to the public consultation against an increase in fees on the grounds of affordability officers were asked to investigate in consultation with the Children's Centres alternative methods of payment including on-line payment, debit cards and pay pals.</p>	DCS

