

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2584
TITLE:	Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2013	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2013		

### 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Childcare Act 2006 requires local authorities to carry out and publish a sufficiency assessment of childcare in their area at least every 3 years.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees:

2.1 To note the report.

2.2 The recommendations and action plan set out in section 6 of the report, within the resources available following publication of the 2013 assessment.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council has a duty to assess the “reasonability” of any request identifying a shortfall in childcare provision. It is not expected that the Council will be a provider of the childcare but it should act as a market facilitator as and when required. Where the request is deemed to be reasonable this may involve provision of an incentive to stimulate the market either in the form of provision of premises for example or by way of direct financial support.
- 3.2 Specific initiatives, for example the statutory Early Years Entitlement for a specific cohort of 2 year old children, have been provided with funding by the Department for Education to fund both the places and places development. There is, however, an expectation that the funding is passed to the provider and not used by the Council to support the development work required to deliver this mandatory initiative.
- 3.3 Demand for Early Years Entitlement provision for 2, 3 and 4 year old children is measured annually by the Department for Education’s Early Years Census. The Council is then funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant specifically for this purpose and there is no cost to the Council. Indeed the higher the take up of the entitlement, the more funding the Council receives to pass on to the sector for the benefit of the children.
- 3.4 Production of the report allows the Council to identify potential childcare shortages resulting from housing expansion. The report can be used to evidence the need for Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) capital payments in order to expand existing or create new provision to address the childcare shortfall that may arise from the development.

### **4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

Reporting on childcare sufficiency enables the vision “Bath & North East Somerset - the place to live, work and visit” by supporting the achievement of the following Council objectives.

- **Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone**
  - The people most in need are supported to live full active lives.
  - Children and young people enjoy their childhood and are prepared for adult life.
  - Schools develop and extend their role in the local community.
  - There are activities and opportunities to help young people to make a positive difference to their lives and communities
- **Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live**
  - Reduced inequality between communities across Bath & NE Somerset
- **Building a stronger economy**
  - With a broad range of job and employment opportunities that recognises the different needs of rural, town and city communities.

## **5 THE REPORT**

- 5.1 The report build on findings in both the 2008 report (compiled 2007/8) and 2011 report compiled 2010/11). Those reports were compiled in far more detail as required by statute at that time. This report contains the key facts about supply side data as outlined in the previous two reports and also updated on a 6 monthly basis, in order for the Council to monitor its statutory duties as outlined in the Childcare Act (2006) in ensure sufficiency of childcare where reasonably practicable.
- 5.2 Section 6 of the report outlines the key actions that the Council may wish to undertake, subject to resources being available, in order to address the findings of the report. Certain actions will be statutory duties, for example from September 2013 a cohort of eligible 2 year olds will be able to access Early Years Entitlement funded provision in the same way as all 3 and 4 year old children. In this case the Department for Education has supported this development by making resources available. Other actions will need to be considered in light of the resources available and what it may considered for the Council to “reasonably” consider when meeting its Childcare Sufficiency duty.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

- 7.1 Equality issues were considered within the guidance the Council has been given to prepare the report. There are no issues that members need to be made aware of within the content of the report.
- 7.2 Due regard to equality issues will be fully considered and EqIAs will be completed where necessary should any recommendations be taken forward into actions (see section 3.)

## **8 RATIONALE**

- 8.1 The Childcare Act 2006 places a statutory duty on the Council to report on and then act where “reasonable”, in addressing Childcare Sufficiency.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 None.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 Cabinet members; Staff working in Childcare and Early Years; Section 151; Equalities; Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer
- 10.2 A steering group of relevant staff has overseen the development and inputted into drafts of the report. Members and other officers have seen the paperwork at the relevant points in taking the report to Cabinet.

## 11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People.

## 12 ADVICE SOUGHT

The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

<b>Contact person</b>	Philip Frankland 01225 394330
<b>Sponsoring Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Dine Romero
<b>Background papers</b>	Childcare Act 2006
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	