

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 5 th June 2024	E3539
TITLE:	Approval of Capital Budget to enable expansion of Early Years Entitlement and Childcare place provision	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 In the March 2023 Budget it was announced that there would be a further expansion of the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) offer for working families gradually reducing the eligibility age to 2 in April 2024, then 9 months in September 2024 and increasing the initial starting hours from 15 to 30 from September 2025. The Department for Education (DfE) has increased revenue funding for the funding of eligible children's places and in addition provided a small capital grant budget to help create additional places in areas identified as needing them. In addition, the Council holds some legacy Section 106 funding for early years which can be added to this allocation and help with further place provision in areas where development took place.

Finally in the same 2023 Budget announcement it was announced that all Primary School provision will have access to an 8 until 6 term time only offer of Wraparound Childcare for working families so some of the capital allocation could be put towards that offer if required.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

2.1 Agree to the release of the two capital sums to the Business Services Team (under the Director of Education and Safeguarding) for the creation of additional early years education and childcare spaces in areas identified as requiring

further provision in order to support the expansion of the EYE offer and Wraparound Childcare offer for working families.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council have been awarded a capital sum of £349,260.13 to support the expansion of the EYE and Wraparound Childcare offer for working families. The DfE have indicated that the budget should be split on an 80/20 basis in favour of the EYE offer, but this is entirely at each Council's discretion and dependent on their need for place provision.
- 3.2 The Council holds a legacy budget of £110,617.79 which should be combined with the above sum to help create additional place provision within the areas it was granted for.
- 3.3 The Business Services Team will invite expressions of interest from across the sector, Private, Voluntary, Independent (PVI), childminding and school provision. The expressions of interest helping to address shortfalls in sufficiency of provision, demonstrating good value for money (including additional funding from other sources) and that can proceed and be implemented before September 2025 will be prioritised due to the limited funding available. Those shortlisted will be invited to make a full application and enter into an agreement with the Council to deliver additional places.
- 3.4 The Council is expected to report back to the DfE on the number of places created with the funding available.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Childcare Acts of 2006 and 2016 delegate the responsibility for early years education and childcare sufficiency duties to Council's in England. This then imparts the responsibility for any changes in the requirements such as those announced in the Budget 2023 to Councils via any guidance and/or funding issued by the DfE.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The management of the application for funding, awarding and monitoring process will take up officer time within the constraints of already existing working patterns. This will include colleagues in other teams as part of an evaluation panel.
- 5.2 Delivery will be with Council partners in the PVI, childminding and schools sectors so the property processes will be their responsibility.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) signed by the Director of Children's Services is attached.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 Additional places close to where people live will help to reduce journeys for families, particularly if provision is within a walking and/or pram pushing distance.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 This report has been cleared by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

10.2 The expansion of the EYE and Wraparound Childcare offers have been reviewed by the Early Years Reference Group, School's Forum and the School's Standards Board.

Contact person	Philip Frankland, Business Services Manager Tel: 01225 392330
Background papers	Department for Education – Childcare expansion capital grant funding https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childcare-expansion-capital-grant-funding
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	