

**TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
16 DECEMBER 2019**

**CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
Executive Director of People**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the attached Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) to Schools Forum.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **SCHOOLS FORUM NOTES the contents of the attached CSA, which indicates that there is sufficient childcare in Bracknell Forest to meet demand and the ongoing work to understand the impact of new housing and town centre developments on supply and demand.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities sets out Local Authorities statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare. In order to meet this duty Bracknell Forest Council is required to submit a report to elected council members on how it is meeting its duty and to make this report available to parents.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 No alternative options were considered

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 Section 6 and 7 (as substituted by section 1 of the Education Act 2011) of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on English local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working parents and to secure early years provision free of charge.
- 5.2 Part B of the Statutory guidance for local authorities sets out how Local Authorities should meet this duty, including the requirement to 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.
- 5.3 In making an assessment of the sufficiency of the local childcare market, the CSA draws on data from the Office for National Statistics, labour market statistics from the National Online Manpower Information System (NOMIS) and census data, Health data, local statistical data, information provided by local childcare providers and a survey of parents in Bracknell Forest.
- 5.4 Currently evidence suggests that there is sufficient capacity borough wide, however, there needs to be further analysis to understand the distribution of supply and demand. In particular as housing and business grow in the town centre there may be a corresponding growth in demand
- 5.5 Based on challenges identified in the CSA, a Childcare Strategy is being developed which will set out key priorities for securing sufficient, high quality, inclusive childcare in Bracknell Forest for 2019-23. The actions for meeting these key priorities are set out below:

Unrestricted

- Work with partners to identify potential new locations to develop childcare provision in the key areas (e.g. Bracknell Town Council, schools, local businesses)
 - Work with existing providers to gain a better understanding of capacity and demand (whether funded or unfunded) and/or change business models to meet the needs of parents, e.g. lower age ranges, extending operating hours/weeks
 - Working with and encouraging providers to advertise their childcare more effectively to parents, for example, links for Family Information Service on school and setting websites
 - Improving the visibility and accessibility of information which is currently available e.g. childcare mapping tool on FIS
 - Continue to engage with Bracknell and Wokingham College to encourage childminders to register to deliver the free entitlements.
 - Ensure Job Centre Plus has information on childcare entitlements for working parents and 'how to find childcare'
- 5.6 Following presentation to Schools Forum the CSA will be submitted to the executive member for approval and subsequently published on the BFC website where it will be available and accessible to parents and childcare providers.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal issues are addressed within the report

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The revenue related cost of delivering the CSA will need to be financed from within the Dedicated Schools Grant income. If any capital costs emerge, they will need to be considered by the council through the normal budget setting process.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 Not Required

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 BFC will be at risk of not meeting its statutory duty if it does not submit the CSA to the executive member and publish the report where it is accessible to parents.
- 6.5 If BFC does not complete a sufficiency assessment; development of childcare may not be placed in the correct area, may not meet the needs of working parents and may destabilise the local childcare market.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 In preparing for the CSA, data on current capacity, vacancies and costs were gathered from providers of funded childcare in Bracknell Forest. Parents of children resident in or accessing childcare in Bracknell Forest were consulted on their need for childcare.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Data from providers is collected via the Provider Self Update portal. Parents were consulted via an online survey which was advertised via childcare providers, the BFC website, the Family Information Service website and social media.

Representations Received

7.3 112 parents responded to the consultation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/718179/Early_education_and_childcare-statutory_guidance.pdf

Early education and childcare statutory guidance for local authorities - June 2018

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents>

Childcare Act 2006

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/5/contents/enacted>

Childcare Act 2016

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