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## **Executive Member Decision Session for Children and Young People**

**11 January 2011**

Report of the Director of Adults, Children and Education

### **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011-2014 update and proposals for action planning**

#### **Summary**

1. York is currently part way through completing its second full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA). This paper and its annex provide initial findings to date and will be accompanied by a more detailed presentation delivered at the decision session itself.
2. The Executive Member is asked for a decision and feedback on options for developing the CSA into the final assessment document alongside developing a robust and achievable action plan for addressing any identified gaps in childcare provision.

#### **Background**

3. The Childcare Act (2006) requires Local Authorities to carry out an assessment of the sufficiency of childcare in their area. Sufficient childcare is defined as 'sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the local authority area who require childcare in order to enable them:
  - a. to take up, or remain in, work
  - b. or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work"
4. As well as the overall availability of places in childcare attention should also be paid to assessing if the childcare is flexible, good quality, affordable and inclusive in a way that meets local families' needs.
5. A full Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) involves gathering data around the supply of childcare and also consulting families and a wide range of partners to judge levels of demand. A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is carried out in full once every three years with lighter refreshes on an annual basis.
6. In 2010-2011 York is carrying out its second full CSA that will cover 2011-2014. This assessment will be accompanied by an action plan highlighting key

steps to be taken locally to address identified gaps in childcare provision. A summary of the timeline for the assessment and action planning is shown below.

- a. November 2009 – February 2010: Establishing the project approach and consultation materials.
  - b. March 2010 – May 2010: Produce consultation materials and set up data systems.
  - c. June 2010 – August 2010: Public consultation
  - d. September 2010 – December 2010: Childcare providers audited and consulted. Data analysis work carried out on public consultation responses initially to identify any groups that may be under-represented.
  - e. December 2010 – January 2011: Draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment produced. Any groups not fully picked up as part of the consultation exercise engaged for feedback.
  - f. January - February 2011: Consultation on draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and action planning.
  - g. February – March 2011: Final Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and action plan produced.
  - h. 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011: Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan published.
7. Due to the required timings for submitting this report the full draft assessment has not yet been completed. However the full draft assessment and proposed next steps will be presented and discussed at the decision session itself. Initial headline messages from the consultation exercise have been provided as annex A. **It is very important to note though that these figures only represent the responses to the written consultation.** Far more information from face to face work and consultation with other groups will be drawn together to form the final sufficiency assessment.

## Consultation

8. Effective consultation is a core element of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. To ensure an open and inclusive consultation a variety of different channels have been used to gather responses. The methods used for each of the target consultation groups is shown below
9. **Children and Young People** – The consultation with children and young people focussed on the experiences of using childcare and accessing positive activities rather than other aspects of sufficiency. Consultation has taken place with children and young people through a number of key channels.
  - a. Through York Youth Council

- b. Through the York Youth Festival held in 2010
  - c. Through the YorOK website
10. **Parents and representatives** - Consultation channels used with parents, carers and representatives were:
- a. Online
  - b. Face to face through the Family Information Service (FIS) outreach work
  - c. Consultation form sent home through schools to years 6, 8 and 10.
  - d. Through key partners (Children's Centres, Libraries, Jobcentre Plus, Family Learning, Future Prospects etc)
  - e. Direct mailing to those registered on the Family Information Scheme and the TalkAbout panel.
11. There were 618 families that took part in the written part of the consultation exercise providing information on the childcare needs of 1,038 children. Given the number of households with children and young people we can be confident to within 3.9% of our results.
12. Now that the written element of the consultation has been completed, additional sessions will be held to gather views from groups that are under represented in the sample. These will be groups that may be more marginalised, which could include groups such as young parents, traveller groups but also specific geographical areas. So far the CANDI group for parents of disabled children has been the first to be consulted in this way.
13. **Childcare Providers and representatives** have been consulted through the annual Early Years Audit/Census and the Places and Sufficiency Group<sup>1</sup>. It is proposed that a forum be held in February to discuss the findings of the draft CSA and to allow for partnership action planning to address identified issues.
14. **Employers and representatives** have been consulted online and through a telephone survey of the Economic Development Units' panel of top local employers.
15. **Jobcentre Plus and the Local Safeguarding Board** are being consulted on a one to one basis through existing channels.
16. There is naturally an expectation to work closely with **Neighbouring Local Authorities and representatives** to ensure cross boundary issues can be addressed. This has previously been facilitated by the now defunct Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber. However a sub regional partnership of FISs will continue to provide a forum to ensure this work can

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<sup>1</sup> The Places and Sufficiency Group was originally a sub-group of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership but has continued to discuss how to address issues relating to childcare sufficiency.

continue. Local authorities also agreed to ask a set of key questions as part of the parental consultation to allow direct comparison across the region.

## **Options**

17. The options below present a range of choices over how to progress to a final assessment of childcare sufficiency and develop a robust and achievable action plan.
  - a. Hold an extended Places and Sufficiency Subgroup in February.
  - b. Send a one-off email to the YorOK newsletter subscribers.
  - c. Writing to all registered childcare provision.
  - d. Feedback walls for parents or carers in children's centres and key community hubs.
  - e. Make information and opportunities for feedback available through the YorOK website.
  - f. Linking action planning to the review of the Children and Young People's Plan and the Anti-Poverty strategy.

## **Analysis**

18. All of the options detailed above are considered to be positive steps that could be taken to encourage a dialogue around the sufficiency of childcare and how a partnership approach could address identified gaps.
19. The disadvantages of each approach purely focus on the officer time and resources required to carry them out effectively. A wider issue is the backdrop of reductions in overall levels of funding and uncertainty over national policy direction and expectations. These could all impact on the possible actions that can be taken to address identified gaps in childcare provision.

## **Corporate Objectives**

20. The assessing and ensuring of sufficient childcare relate to a number of corporate priorities and objectives. Having sufficient, high quality childcare so that families can work, train or study supports the themes of;
  - a. Thriving City
  - b. Learning City
  - c. Inclusive City
  - d. City of Culture
  - e. And Effective organisation

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

21. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this paper. However the ability to shape the local childcare market will be influenced by overall budget discussions.

### **Equalities**

22. This paper does not have any direct implications in relation to equalities but the overall process of assessing and ensuring the sufficiency of childcare does. An Equality Impact Assessment has been produced covering the assessment process to ensure it is as representative and inclusive as possible.

### **Other Implications**

23. There are no HR, legal, crime and disorder, IT or property implications.

### **Risk Management**

24. The options and recommendations detailed in this paper do not present any significant risks. A broader risk associated with the assessing and ensuring of childcare sufficiency is the impact this has on families' abilities to work and the wider local economy. The risks relating to the assessment of sufficiency have been managed through a risk log as part of the project management and delivery.

### **Recommendations**

25. The Executive Member is asked to comment upon the contents of this report and the more detailed presentation of findings that will be available at the briefing.
26. It is recommended that the options of a to e are taken to ensure there is an open discussion of key messages from the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and that action planning on a partnership basis is commenced to address identified gaps.

Reason: to meet a statutory requirement of the local authority

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**Report Approved** **Date** 22.12.10**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** n/a**Wards Affected:****All** 

For further information please contact the author of the report

## Background Papers

Childcare sufficiency assessments guidance

[\(http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00274-2010&\)](http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00274-2010&)

## Annexes

Annex A – Initial findings from parental consultation exercise.