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**REPORT FOR: CABINET**

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**Date of Meeting:**

21 February 2019

**Subject:**

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018

**Key Decision:**

No

**Responsible Officer:**

Paul Hewitt, Corporate Director People Services

**Portfolio Holder:**

Christine Robson, Portfolio Holder for Young People and Schools

**Exempt:**

No

**Decision subject to Call-in:**

No

**Wards affected:**

All Wards

**Enclosures:**

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report sets out the current sufficiency of childcare in Harrow as of September 2018 and identifies any gaps in childcare and key findings. The information in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) feeds into the wider Early Years Strategy in securing sufficient childcare.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet is asked to note the report and to seek further information or clarification as required.

**Reason: (For recommendations)**

The Local Authority has a duty to secure that sufficient childcare is provided in accordance with Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006 and statutory guidance states that there should be an annual 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*' (DfE 2018). We have prepared the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report in order to support this duty.

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **1. Introductory paragraph**

In the CSA, Harrow Local Authority (LA) has made an assessment of sufficiency using data on the need for childcare and the amount of childcare available, and feedback from local parents on how easy or difficult it has been for them to find suitable childcare. We use information about childcare sufficiency to plan our work supporting the local childcare economy. We have given a particular focus to the introduction of the additional funded 15 hours for 3 and 4 year olds, and the provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

#### 1.1 Options considered:

The CSA is required every three years as set out by the Department for Education. There is an annual update which updates the key findings and assesses if there is any change needed in the strategy.

### **2. Current situation**

- 2.1 As of September 2018 there is sufficient childcare provision in the London Borough of Harrow. This applies to all children from birth to age 14, including for children with disabilities.
- 2.2 Overall, sufficiency appears to be meeting demand in terms of the numbers of children requiring funded childcare.
- 2.3 Harrow is a high performing borough in relation to national benchmarks for educational outcomes and inspection outcomes. This is reflected across the early years. The quality of childcare in Harrow has improved year on year since the previous sufficiency assessment and the vast majority of 2, 3 and 4 year olds access their funding entitlements in 'good' or 'outstanding' provision
- 2.4 The take-up of funded early education for 2 year olds in Harrow remains low compared to national averages but comparable to the London average despite efforts to increase capacity within the childcare market.

- 2.5 The take up of universal funded early education for 3 and 4 year olds has remained consistent over the past three years and is on par with or slightly higher than regional comparators.
- 2.6 The structure of the childcare market has changed since the previous sufficiency assessment. The number of early years childcare providers has decreased yet the number of places available has increased, mainly due to the growth in day nursery provision.
- 2.7 The early year's population is expected to remain stable for the foreseeable future so as long as the current levels of childcare provision are maintained, overall demand for early year's childcare should be met.
- 2.8 The growth wards of Greenhill and Marlborough already have some of the largest supply of childcare places in the borough. They also have the highest early year's cohorts and projected growth, some of the highest levels of deprivation, and are the focus of major regeneration and housing projects in Harrow. With already high levels of existing demand, these combined economic and demographic factors will likely lead to even further growth in demand for childcare in and around these wards in central Harrow. A particular focus on ensuring future sufficiency in these areas is required.
- 2.9 The majority of parent feedback indicated satisfaction in childcare arrangements meeting all their needs and that sufficient childcare is available locally for their children. However, most parents indicate that childcare costs are not affordable.
- 2.10 Childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities is available in Harrow. Clearer guidance on SEND support and funding could be improved between the Local Authority and childcare providers, and communication between providers and parents could also be clearer.
- 2.11 The number of early year's children with SEND in Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings and school nurseries is increasing. The number increases further in school reception classes. The primary need for the majority of children requiring SEND support is speech and language and communication and interaction.
- 2.12 No gaps in childcare places for disabled children have been identified in Harrow. Childcare providers are in a position to offer childcare places for children with SEND as they are supported by the Local Authority via designated grants and support provided by the area SENCO (Early Years Team). Providers must be inclusive and have a SENCO co-ordinator within each setting. Harrow offers an inclusion fund for 3 and 4 year olds with emerging or low-level SEND attending early years childcare providers and school nurseries. Providers can claim inclusion funding on a termly basis for funded 3 and 4 year olds identified as requiring SEND support and that are on their SEND

register. Those children requiring SEND support are identified via information gathering from progress checks, assessments and observation in conjunction with parental information. The fund is delivered in order for these children to make progress with any or all of the following areas; communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development.

### **3. Risk Management Implications**

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

There is a risk if Harrow does not have sufficient childcare places to cope with demand. At this time there are only two Wards in which considerable growth is indicated (Greenhill and Marlborough) because of housing developments in these areas. Currently these Wards already have some of the largest supply of childcare places in the borough. This demand led pressure will be kept under review and inform the strategy. The annual review will be used to indicate any additional demand for places.

### **4. Procurement Implications**

There are no procurement implications.

### **5. Legal Implications**

The Childcare Act 2006 sets out legal duties for local authorities in relation to early years provision and support. Section 6 states that the local authority must secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare (whether or not by them) is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area who require childcare in order to enable them to (1) take up or remain in work, (2) undertake education or training to assist in obtaining work. The local authority must have regard to the needs of local parents in relation to provision of childcare covered by relevant benefits and provision of childcare which is suitable for disabled children. Local authorities may take account of childcare available outside their area.

Statutory guidance has been published by the Department for Education – Early education and childcare – September 2018. This states there should be an annual report to elected members on how the local authority is meeting its duty and this should be available to parents. The report should cover:

- a specific reference to how they are ensuring there is sufficient

childcare available to meet the needs of: children with special educational needs and disabilities; children from families in receipt of the childcare element of Working Tax Credit or Universal Credit; children with parents who work irregular hours; children aged two, three and four taking up free places; school age children; and children needing holiday care;

- information about the current and projected supply and demand of childcare for particular age ranges of children, and the affordability, accessibility and quality of provision; and
- details of how any gaps in childcare provision will be addressed.

## 6. Financial Implications

Early Years provision is funded from the Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. This supports:

- the early years entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds – paid to providers at a fixed hourly rate determined by the Government
- the early years universal entitlement for three and four year olds – paid to providers via a local funding formula including a fixed hourly base rate and supplementary factors (subject to eligibility)
- the early years additional entitlement for three and four year old children of eligible working parents - paid to providers via a local funding formula including a fixed hourly base rate and supplementary factors (subject to eligibility)
- the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) – paid to providers at a fixed hourly rate, subject to eligibility, determined by the Government
- the Disability Access Fund (DAF) – paid to providers at a fixed annual rate, subject to eligibility, determined by the Government.
- The total Early Years budget in 2018-19 is £17.498m.

## 7. Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

- 7.1 Harrow has a very diverse ethnic profile, with many different ethnic backgrounds, languages spoken and religions. The ethnic profile of early years' children in Harrow helps inform planning around additional needs and resources that may be required to provide the best outcomes for children of all communities, and to provide childcare provision that is sensitive to religious, cultural and language needs.
- 7.2 An overview of funded children within PVI settings with SEND or an EHC plan and children within school nurseries can provide an indication of the level of need and support required within the early

years age group in the borough. A similar overview of SEND children within school reception classes can help provide an indication of the level of need and likely developing needs as children transition to school age.

## 8. Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

### **Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow**

Please identify how the report incorporates the administration's priorities.

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for local businesses
- Making a difference for families

Build a Better Harrow, Be More Business Like and Business Friendly and Protect the Most Vulnerable and Support Families.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018 supports these priorities and strategic themes by:

- Ensuring Harrow Council fulfils its statutory duties to provide sufficient childcare places in its area.
- Providing families and children with high quality local Early Years' provision in schools and PVI's close to where they live.
- Early support for children with special educational needs and disabilities through high quality early years settings.
- Seeking to secure further investment in early years' provision in Harrow for the benefit of its residents.
- Enabling the Harrow workforce to contribute further to the local and regional economy.
- Ensure that all communities within Harrow have high quality Early Years provision available to them.
- Targeting communities which are disadvantaged, and those with low take up of funded childcare.

## **Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Jo Frost

on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 23 January 2019

Name: Sarah Wilson

on behalf of the  
Monitoring Officer

Date: 23 January 2019

### **Section 3 - Procurement Officer Clearance**

Name: Nimesh Mehta

Head of Procurement

Date: 23 January 2019

**Ward Councillors notified:**

**NO as it impacts on all  
Wards**

**EqIA carried out:**

**NO**

**EqIA cleared by:**

An EqIA is not required  
as Cabinet is not asked  
to take a decision that  
impacts on services.

### **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:**

Brian Netto, Lead Officer Early Years

02084209497

[brian.netto@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:brian.netto@harrow.gov.uk)

**Background Papers:**

[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018](#)

**Call-In Waived by the  
Chair of Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee**

**NOT APPLICABLE**  
(report for information only)