

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

16 APRIL 2019

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

#### WELSH GOVERNMENT CHILDCARE OFFER

#### 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to:

- participate in and deliver the Welsh Government Childcare Offer from 29 April 2019;
- work with RCT to deliver the Childcare Offer in Bridgend County Borough; and
- delegate authority to the Corporate Director Education and Family Support in consultation with the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services to negotiate and settle the final terms of the Joint Working Agreement with RCT and thereafter authorise the Head of Legal and Regulatory Services to enter into the said Joint Working Agreement and any associated documentation.

#### 2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 The report links to the following improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan:

- **Supporting a successful economy** - we will take steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
- **Helping people to be more self-reliant** - we will take early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
- **Smarter use of resources** - ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

#### 3. Background

3.1 Welsh Government has indicated that it is committed to providing 30 hours of free early education and childcare for 48 weeks a year for the working parents of 3 and 4 year-olds and has therefore introduced the Childcare Offer.

- 3.2 Each local authority has a duty to ensure that the Childcare Offer is fully implemented by 2020.
- 3.3 The Childcare Offer will build on children's existing early education entitlement during term time and 9 weeks of the school holiday period. One requirement for eligibility is that parents must earn on average the weekly minimum equivalent of 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage.
- 3.4 Since September 2017, the Childcare Offer has been rolled out across many local authorities in Wales as part of a pilot programme. Officers from BCBC's Childcare Team have been working closely with a number of these local authorities to understand what has worked well during their implementation periods.
- 3.5 BCBC is one of the final local authorities to implement the offer in preparation for full delivery in 2020. Welsh Government decided that Bridgend would not be an early adopter due to the nature of our existing nursery provision.

#### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 Welsh Government has invited BCBC to deliver the Childcare Offer across the whole of the County Borough from April 2019.
- 4.2 The local authority will work in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) who will act as the delivery authority for the Childcare Offer for BCBC. This will involve, amongst other responsibilities, RCT being responsible for the management of the online information technology (IT) system. Parents will use this system to check eligibility and complete their applications. This will also include requests for childcare for children with special educational needs.
- 4.3 The IT system will also be available to childcare providers, enabling them to submit registers and payment details. BCBC's Childcare Team will work closely with colleagues in RCT to ensure a smooth delivery for both parents and childcare providers.
- 4.5 As a condition of the grant available to support the administration of the Childcare Offer, RCT and BCBC shall enter into a contract to support the arrangements around the delivery process.
- 4.6 Engagement with providers and promotion of the Childcare Offer has been ongoing for the last 6 months and subject to Cabinet approval, it is the intention that applications to parents shall be opened and, with childcare being funded from 29 April 2019, the start of summer term 2019.

#### **5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

- 5.1 This has no effect on the council's policy framework and procedure rules.

#### **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report. The decision to pilot the Childcare Offer across the whole of the County Borough was made by Welsh Government to ensure equality across the local authority.

6.2 The Childcare Offer is open to all eligible parents, including those requiring childcare in the medium of Welsh and children with additional learning needs.

## **7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment**

7.1 A Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment has been completed and is detailed at Appendix A. A summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is as follows:

Long-term	In the longer term, the Childcare Offer will support families out of poverty and offer children the opportunity to access high quality childcare.
Prevention	The Childcare Offer will assist the childcare sector, including Welsh-medium provision and support the anti-poverty agenda.
Integration	The scheme will support all eligible parents with childcare costs, including those children with additional learning needs.
Collaboration	Collaboration with partners will be key to the successful delivery of the scheme.
Involvement	A range of stakeholders including parents, childcare providers and other partners are involved in the roll out of the Childcare Offer.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 The cost of the Childcare Offer will be fully funded by Welsh Government. The childcare providers will submit their childcare claims to RCT, who in turn will claim the costs from the Welsh Government via an established online system. No childcare costs will directly be funded by BCBC.

8.2 In 2018-2019, BCBC received a Childcare Offer engagement grant of £30k which enabled the Childcare Team to appoint a Childcare Offer Co-ordinator, purchase promotional materials and hold engagement events. This grant is available again in 2019-2020 (and has increased to £39,375) to maintain the post and support promotional and engagement work to ensure that all eligible parents are aware of the scheme and how to access it.

8.3 While all additional expenditure is covered by Welsh Government, there is a large amount of Childcare Team officer time spent on all aspects of the Childcare Offer. This additional work is being met within existing local authority resources.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- approves BCBC participating in and delivering the Childcare Offer in Bridgend County Borough;

- approves BCBC working with RCT to deliver the Childcare Offer in Bridgend County Borough with BCBC acting as an 'engagement authority' and RCT acting as 'delivery authority'; and
- delegates authority to the Corporate Director Education and Family Support in consultation with the Interim Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services to negotiate and settle the final terms of the Joint Working Agreement with RCT and, thereafter, authorise the Head of Legal and Regulatory Services to enter into the said Joint Working Agreement and any associated documentation.

**Lindsay Harvey**  
**Corporate Director (Education and Family Support)**

**Contact officer:** Bethan Davies/Amy Castle (Childcare Team Manager)  
**Telephone:** (01656) 642649  
**E-mail:** [Bethan.Davies@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Bethan.Davies@bridgend.gov.uk) / [Amy.Castle@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Amy.Castle@bridgend.gov.uk)  
**Postal address:** Education and Family Support Directorate  
Bridgend County Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Angel Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 4WB

#### **Background documents**

None

**Appendix A**  
**WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015 ASSESSMENT**

<b>Project Description (key aims): Welsh Government's Childcare Offer</b>	
Providing 30 hours of free early education and childcare for 48 weeks a year for the working parents of 3 and 4 year-olds	
<b>Section 1 Complete the table below to assess how well you have applied the 5 ways of working.</b>	
<b>Long-term</b>	<b>1. How does your project / activity balance short-term need with the long-term and planning for the future?</b>
(The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs)	This scheme will meet the short-term need of families accessing the offer, while the long-term strategic implications intend to support families out of poverty and offer children the opportunity to access high quality childcare. In addition, childcare providers will benefit from this scheme on a long-term basis as the increased numbers will support sustainability within the sector. Sustainable childcare, along with developing new childcare places to meet the demand of the Childcare Offer, will, in the long term, help the local authority its statutory duty of providing sufficient childcare across the county borough for working parents and those parents training with the intention of returning to work.
<b>Prevention</b>	<b>2. How does your project / activity put resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse?</b>
(How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives)	The delivery of this scheme will support the development of childcare in the county borough and support the local authority in meeting its statutory duty of providing sufficient childcare for working parents. This scheme also supports the development of Welsh-medium places which will offer more choice to parents wishing to access Welsh-medium provision. It is the intention of the childcare team to ensure improved transition to Welsh-medium education and this scheme will go some way to increasing these numbers. Additional funding for those children with additional learning needs will also improve the accessibility of childcare for these children, particularly where funding has been an obstacle.

**Integration**

(Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies)

**3. How does your project / activity deliver economic, social, environmental & cultural outcomes together?**

**Economic**

The Childcare Offer provides support to working parents and focuses on encouraging parents back into work, therefore potentially reducing the numbers of children in poverty.

**Social**

This Childcare Offer will provide children the opportunity to access childcare provision that may have been out of reach to them and their families prior to programme delivery. This opportunity may offer these children social environments that may not have otherwise been available. Some families who could not return to work due to childcare costs may now find this far more achievable, offering parents the opportunity to thrive in employment.

**Environmental**

Offering childcare provision locally, or close to a workplace, will help support the environment by reducing the carbon footprint of families travelling additional miles to a childcare provision. The focus of the local authority is to try and secure such childcare for every eligible family in the county who are seeking it. However it is acknowledged that many families will need to access provision in other geographical areas.

**Cultural**

The Childcare Offer has placed a focus on ensuring sufficient childcare places for those who wish to access provision in the medium of Welsh. The delivery of this scheme will allow these families a more accessible route into Welsh-medium childcare.

<p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>(Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body meet its well-being objectives)</p>	<p><b>4. How does your project / activity involve working together with partners (internal and external) to deliver well-being objectives?</b></p> <p>The project development and planning phase is being supported by a steering group where stakeholders, both internal and external, are advising the childcare team. The childcare team works effectively with external partners, particularly the childcare umbrella organisations, and this be built upon during the implementation of the Childcare Offer.</p>
<p><b>Involvement</b></p> <p>(The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves)</p>	<p><b>5. How does your project / activity involve stakeholders with an interest in achieving the well-being goals? How do those stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area?</b></p> <p>The stakeholders involved in the steering group include childcare providers and organisations, including those who support families with children who have additional learning needs, and Welsh language organisations.</p> <p>Wellbeing of the target audience/users is a strong focus, where the journey of the child is of the utmost importance to childcare team. However, it is the choice of the parents as to what part of the offer they access, and when. The well-being of the parents is also a focus of this scheme, ensuring that childcare costs are not a barrier to returning to work.</p>

**Section 2 Assess how well your project/activity will result in multiple benefits for our communities and contribute to the national well-being goals**

Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there any way to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b>            An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>The Childcare Offer is a scheme to support parents in employment and those wishing to return to employment to meet the costs of childcare, which can often be seen as a barrier. It is hoped that offering this financial support will remove this barrier and allow parents to take advantage of the additional financial benefit and/or return to work.</p>	<p>The engagement and promotion of the Childcare Offer is vital to ensure those parents who are eligible are accessing the support, if they so wish. This is currently being undertaken by the Childcare Offer Coordinator, alongside the corporate communications and marketing team.</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b>            A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>Children and families benefiting from the Childcare Offer will be well placed to support this wellbeing goal based on the activities delivered by childcare providers.</p>	<p>Promotion of the Childcare Offer across the County Borough will assist in maximizing the benefits of the natural environment based on the activities delivered by childcare providers.</p>

<p><b>A healthier Wales</b> A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p>	<p>Providing parents (working or unemployed) who are living in poverty the opportunity to receive financial support for their current childcare costs or remove the financial barriers to returning to work can, in many cases, benefit the health and well-being of the household, both mentally and physically. Children that may not have accessed childcare provision before may discover environments that they have not had experience of before, broadening their horizons and benefitting their well-being.</p>	<p>The engagement and promotion of the childcare offer is vital to ensure those parents who are eligible are accessing the support, if they so wish. This is currently being undertaken by the Childcare Offer - coordinator, alongside the corporate communications and marketing team. Evaluation of the scheme will be undertaken by the Welsh Government to measure the impact that this has had on families.</p>
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b> A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>The Childcare Offer is a scheme that supports working parents. The background of families is not relevant to eligibility. It allows parents to meet their potential by removing the financial constraints of childcare whilst at work, empowering them to remain or return to the workplace.</p>	<p>Only those children who are in a household of working parent(s) will be able to access the Childcare Offer. (If the household consists of two parents, both must work. If the household consists of a single parent, they must be in work.) There are a variety of other grants managed by the local authority's childcare team that may be able to support some children in ineligible families to access childcare, minimising any negative impact this may have on certain families and/or communities.</p>

<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>Childcare provision is often at the centre of a community, particularly if it is attached, or in close vicinity to, a school building. Communities with a range of childcare provisions are often thriving and childcare development will be a focus of the Childcare Offer.</p>	<p>Sufficient childcare is a statutory duty of the local authority. The local authority ensures this duty is met by focusing childcare development in areas of need and identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA). The childcare team is well established and has staff with experience and expertise in this area, allowing the required development to be supported effectively.</p>
<p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>	<p>The Childcare Offer must meet the demands of those parents who wish to access provision in the medium of Welsh. It is a priority of the Childcare Team to ensure that enough places are secured to meet this demand. This includes the development of 4 Welsh-medium childcare provisions strategically placed across the county. These will ensure that parents will be able to access the childcare in the Welsh language and encourage those who have not yet made a decision.</p>	<p>Promotion and engagement is underway regarding the Welsh-medium buildings, ensuring that communities have an input into the additional services on offer in the Welsh language.</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>This scheme will offer positive outcomes to the people of Bridgend and Wales. Having a thriving, successful and resourceful Bridgend and Wales will make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>Promotion and maximising take-up of the childcare offer will improve economic social environmental and cultural well-being.</p>

**Section 3 Will your project / activity affect people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Explain what will be done to maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impacts**

Protected characteristics	Will your project / activity have any positive impacts on those with a protected characteristic?	Will your project / activity have any negative impacts on those with a protected characteristic?	Is there any way to maximise any positive impacts or minimise any negative impacts?
Age:	Yes	Potentially - due to Welsh Government eligibility criteria	Ongoing promotion and engagement
Gender reassignment:	No		
Marriage or civil partnership:	No		
Pregnancy or maternity:	No		
Race:	No		
Religion or Belief:	No		
Race:	No		
Sex:	No		
Welsh Language:	Yes		

**Section 4 Identify decision meeting for Project/activity e.g. Cabinet, Council or delegated decision taken by Executive Members and/or Chief Officers**

Cabinet	
<b>Compiling Officers Name:</b>	Bethan Davies
<b>Compiling Officers Job Title:</b>	Childcare Team Manager
<b>Date completed:</b>	5 March 2019