

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

18 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2021 - 2022

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and seek approval of the Gaps Analysis and Action Plan for submission to Welsh Government as part of the CSA 2021 - 2022.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
 - **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report provides information derived from Bridgend County Borough Council's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) and fulfils the statutory duty in accordance with the Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016 made under Section 26 of The Childcare Act 2006 requiring local authorities to prepare assessments of the sufficiency of childcare provision (CSA) in their area every five years and to keep these under review. The Regulations require a full CSA and Action Plan to be submitted to Welsh Government five years after the first.
- 3.2 Section 22 of the Act requires local authorities to secure, as far as reasonably practicable the provision of childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in their area to enable them to:

- take up, or remain, in work; or
- undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.'

3.3 The gaps analysis (Appendix 1) summarises the key results of the CSA and identifies gaps in provision across the county borough. The gaps analysis informs the five-year action plan (Appendix 2).

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 Bridgend County Borough Council is meeting its statutory duty of providing sufficient childcare to working families. The CSA has, however, identified gaps in childcare provision and the availability of information. These gaps align with those identified by the local authority's Childcare Team, whose operational knowledge and expertise of the childcare sector is extremely well-informed.

4.2 As part of the statutory duty, the gaps analysis informs the five-year action plan. The plan will inform the priorities set out by the local authority's Early Years and Childcare Team, ensuring the local authority continues to meet its statutory duty. The action plan is reviewed annually.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 This work sits within the statutory duties specified above as identified and supported by the Childcare Act 2006. There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

Long-term: as part of the statutory duty, the local authority must produce a five-year action plan. This is a relatively short-term and targeted plan but the long-term benefits for the families of Bridgend County Borough are at the centre of each action point and outcome.

Prevention: The action points will focus working priorities and pool resources to support the development and sustainability of childcare provision across the county borough.

Integration: The work that will be undertaken as a result of the CSA will support the well-being goals and objectives. The benefits outlined in the action plan illustrate the importance of sufficient childcare for all across the county borough.

Collaboration: The Early Years and Childcare Team works in partnership with many internal departments and external partners. These well-established partnerships support service delivery and the well-being goals of Bridgend County Borough Council.

Involvement: The successful completion of the CSA is reliant upon consultation with stakeholders. These include members of the public, such as families, children and childcare providers across all areas of the county borough.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 Currently, the Childcare Team has a core revenue budget totaling £133,830. A proportion of this is allocated to grants in order to support new developments and sustain existing childcare provision. The Childcare Team manages the Childcare and Play Grant totaling £88,135. A proportion of this grant is ring-fenced to support childcare provisions to remain sustainable and support the development of new provisions in areas of identified need.
- 8.2 The two funding streams identified at paragraph 8.1 fund Childcare Team officers and the childcare sector training programme. This funding must continue at the same level in order to meet the targets identified in the Action Plan.
- 8.3 £70 million has been identified by Welsh Government to support the capital provision of funded two-year-old childcare over the next 2.5 years. Bridgend County Borough Council's allocation has not yet been confirmed, but once confirmed, will be reviewed to identify how it can support the gaps identified in the CSA.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve the gaps analysis and action plan (attached as appendices 1 and 2) for submission to Welsh Government as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2021 - 2022.

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Background documents: None