

**Meeting date:** 26 September 2018  
**Report to:** Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children,  
Education and Skills  
**Subject/report title:** Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Plan  
**Report from:** Director of Children's Services and Skills  
**Report author/lead contact officer:** Ann Pearson



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**Wards affected:**

All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  
 Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  
 Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith's Wood |  St Alphege

**Public/private report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue of paragraph:** N/A

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**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update the Cabinet Member on the provision of Early Years and Childcare Places in Solihull and seek approval for the Sufficiency Plan 2018.

**2. Decision(s) recommended**

2.1 Approve the Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Plan 2017.

**3. What is the issue?**

3.1 The statutory guidance for Early Years and Childcare, places a duty with Local Authorities to secure sufficient childcare places in its area. In order to do this Authorities are required by legislation to:

*Secure sufficient childcare places, so far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 – 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).*

3.2 To secure sufficient childcare places, local authorities should take into account what is reasonably practicable when assessing what sufficient childcare means in their area and:

- The state of the local childcare market, including the demand for specific types of providers in a particular locality and the amount and type of supply that currently exists;
  - The state of the labour market;
  - The quality and capacity of childcare providers and childminders registered with a childminder agency, including their funding, staff premises, experience and expertise;
  - Encourage schools in their area to offer out of hours childcare from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm;
  - Encourage existing providers to expand their provision and new providers to enter the local childcare market.
- 3.3 Local authorities are required to report annually to elected members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare, and make this report available and accessible to parents.
- 3.4 Attached at Appendix A is the draft Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Report 2018, which pulls together the baseline data for maintained and Private, Voluntary and Independent providers of Early Years and Childcare within Solihull.
- 3.5 The Plan identifies the demography for the Borough by Ward, the childcare provision available and the level of funded places for 2, 3 & 4 year olds.
- 3.6 From September 2017, local authorities were required by legislation to secure an additional 570 funded hours a year over no fewer than 38 weeks (30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year) of the year for qualifying children in their area for the term following a child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.
- 3.7 In the Summer Term 2018, 1,823 30 hour extended offer places were offered by providers in Solihull. Of these 1,450 were for families resident in Solihull and 373 (20%) were for places offered to families living outside of the Borough. 66% of places were offered by private providers and 28% by schools.
- 3.8 The data shows that the take up of places has been higher than expected across the Borough but more work is required to map by ward to enhance the forecasting model for future years.
- 3.9 In addition the data is showing a significant shift in parental preference from school nursery provision to places offered by the PVI sector. This appears to reflect the need, by parents, for a more flexible early years offer to meet their working needs. Vacancies in school nurseries are increasing year on year, so a review is being undertaken, in partnership with schools, to look at the options for schools to operate early years provision more inline with the PVI sector.
- 3.10 The sufficiency plan identifies possible gaps in the childcare market that will need further analysis and identifies the need to continue to work with and support childcare providers to deliver high quality sustainable provision.

3.11 If approved, the plan will be shared with providers and parents in the Borough, through the Family Information Service and a parent childcare survey is planned.

#### **4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**

4.1 The evaluation of options will be considered when determining how and where additional places and provisions will be located.

#### **5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

5.1 If approved the Plan will be used as a basis for working with providers and parents to identify the most appropriate way to increase the level of provision available.

#### **6. Implications and Considerations**

6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the key themes in the Council Plan? *(select which themes apply and briefly state how the options / proposals in this report contribute to their delivery):*

Improve Health and Wellbeing -

Managed Growth -

Build Stronger Communities -

Deliver Value -

6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

6.2.1 A parent survey is planned for this academic years to identify particular gaps in Early Years and Childcare provision across the Borough.

6.2.2 Additional places will be commissioned in areas of most need to ensure that parents have access to high quality childcare to support their working needs.

6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.3.1 The Early Years and Childcares Sufficiency Plan is published and advertised on the Council Local Offer. Comments and views are sought from providers and parents on the information contained in the Plan which is used to review and manage provision across the Borough.

6.3.2 No report has been considered by Scrutiny.

6.4 Financial implications:

6.4.1 There are no financial implications as a direct consequence of this report.

6.4.2 There are currently no new specific capital grants from the government for the Council to use to meet identified gaps in sufficiency. Increases in hours of provision are entirely funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (Early Years).

6.5 Legal implications:

6.5.1 The Local Authority has a legal duty to secure sufficient childcare places in its area.

6.6 Risk implications:

6.6.1 The key risk is that additional places can not be added in time to growth in demand from Solihull residents, in particular around the new extended offer for 30 hours childcare.

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.7.1 None as a result of this report.

## **7. List of appendices referred to**

7.1 Appendix A – Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Plan 2018

## **8. Background papers used to compile this report**

8.1 None

## **9. List of other relevant documents**

9.1 None