

Report to: **Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability**

Date: **7 October 2019**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Title of report: **East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2019/20**

Purpose of report: **To approve the publication of the latest update to the East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2019/20**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve the publication of the East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2019/20

1. Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient childcare, so far as is reasonably practicable, across the county for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children from birth to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).

1.2 The Council, through the Childcare Act, 2006, has a role in shaping the childcare market. The Council seeks to achieve this by working in partnership with key stakeholders including schools and providers from the private, voluntary and independent sectors (PVI) to create a sustainable and diverse childcare market that meets the needs of families and supports children's learning.

1.3 In support of our statutory obligation, the Council publishes a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the purpose of which is to understand the current and projected supply and demand for early education and childcare places, including the affordability, accessibility and quality of available places. The assessment will also identify any gaps in provision and describe how these gaps will be addressed.

1.4 Until now the sufficiency of early years places has been covered in the Education Commissioning Plan covering. In future it is proposed that this is covered in a separate, annual, Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, the first of which covers the period 2019/20. The report has been produced using the most recent sets of data which take account of the latest information on births and population trends, the childcare provider market, housing developments and parental take-up of funded places. The draft report can be viewed in **Appendix 1**.

2. East Sussex context

2.1 As of April 2019 East Sussex had 408 early years' education and childcare providers across all sectors; maintained, PVI and childminders.

2.2 In line with the falling birth rate in the county, current early years forecasts indicate that across the county there is sufficient capacity within the sector to meet demand. Forecasts show there is no imminent shortfalls in our major towns, although by the middle of the next decade places in Hailsham and Bexhill could be tight due to the volumes of new housing development in these areas. Wivelsfield Parish, with increased volumes of new housing is also showing a potential shortfall, but as new housing is on the fringes of Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill families may look for early years provision in these West Sussex towns. The situation in each area will be updated in subsequent versions of the report.

2.3 The quality of early education in East Sussex is high. At the end of December 2018, 98.9% of early years providers were judged to be Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. This compares favourably with the national average of 95.2%

3. Conclusions and reasons for recommendation

3.1 In conclusion, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient early education and childcare places to meet present and future demand across the county. The updated Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for the period 2019/2020 clearly sets out the projected demand for places in the

future and where we think we will need to support the sector to provide additional places in the right locations to meet parental demand.

3.2 Accordingly, the Lead Member is recommended to approve the publication of the East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Assessment for 2019/20.

STUART GALLIMORE
Director of Children's Services

Contact Officer: Jane Spice, Early Years Funding Manager
Tel. No. 01323 747423
Email: jane.spice@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – East Sussex Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2019/20