



## **Children & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

29 March 2011

### **Report from the Director of Children and Families**

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

### **Report Title: Update on Implementing the New Policy for Allocation of Early Years Full Time Places**

#### **1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 Current allocation and funding basis – historically Brent nursery schools and primary schools with nursery classes have offered full time (FT) places for 3 & 4 year olds based on head teacher decisions and locally developed school policy
- 1.2 Through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) the council only receives funding for part time early years places (up to 15 hours) from central government, The extra cost of FT places of around £2m is absorbed within the overall DSG and effectively means there is less funding to distribute to schools through the schools funding formula. . It should be noted that all 3&4 years olds are eligible for up to 15 hours of free early years education, 38 weeks of the year. This is known as the universal early years offer.
- 1.3 However, a decision was made by Executive in February 2010 to implement a new policy for the allocation of early years full time places based on need from September 2011. The new policy would offer FT places to children based on need and economic disadvantage rather than on a 'first come' basis as it is now. Executive also agreed to consult with parents on the impact of the new policy.
- 1.4 Officers subsequently took the opportunity to update a previous assessment of the likely demand for and supply of full time places before commencing the consultation process. This was an important first step, the outcomes of which would influence how the council would consult parents. It was also crucial too ascertain whether under the new policy the number of children eligible for a full time place would exceed number of full time places available in the borough.
- 1.5 The admissions process for September 2011 intake would have needed to commence in September 2010, prior to the parental or provider assessment and consultation was completed. Therefore the implementation of the new policy could not be implemented until September 2012.

1.6 The context in terms of the rising number of 3 and 4 year olds in Brent is summarised below

- The latest 'refresh' of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment shows 8,061 3 & 4 year olds in the borough.
- The January 2010 EY census identified 4,298 children in an EY place within the maintained and PVI sectors as follows:

**Schools**

- 1,170 Full Time
- 1,373 Part Time

**PVIs**

- 1,755 Part Time

The 1,170 children occupying a FT place are in;

- Nursery Schools 226
- Primary Schools 944

1.7 In addition early years providers were asked without commitment if they would be willing to offer FT places under the new policy.

1.8 52 schools and 85 PVIs were surveyed. From the number of replies it was difficult to extrapolate a robust planning figure for the supply of full time places. However, based on responses there might be a total of **750 to 800** places on offer.

1.9 Potential demand was assessed by using the council's Revenues and Benefits and Social Services data to identify how many EY children known to Brent are in households who might be eligible for a FT place under the new criteria.

1.10 The Revs and Bens data identified **1811** eligible children, thus highlighting the fact that demand is likely to exceed availability of full time places.

1.11 A further demand on early years places is imminent. Brent is currently participating in a government pilot and offers 2 year old funded early years places to 175 2 year olds. Government is expanding the number of places for all disadvantaged 2 year olds by 2013. Brent has recently bid for an additional 100 funded places during 2011/12.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 The numbers of 2, 3 and 4 year olds in Brent is on the increase. The borough will be required to provide up to 15 hours early years education for a greater number of children than it has quality early years places capacity. Therefore it may be necessary to reconsider the implementation of the proposed new policy. It may be deemed more beneficial of offer all eligible children part time places (up to 15 hours a week) rather than offer some children full time places and therefore fewer children having access to any early years experience.

2.2 A report will be presented to the Schools Forum (SF) in the near future for consideration once further thought has been given to how the borough can capacity build good quality early years provision in the borough.

### **3.0 Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the current financial year, however the additional staff implications to implement and manage full time applications would have to be considered as part of the 2012/13 schools budget process that allocates the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to schools and sets the centrally retained element.

### **4.0 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The Authority has a statutory duty in accordance with Section 7 Childcare Act 2006 to secure free early years provision (up to 15 hours per week) for each 3 & 4 year old in its area.

### **5.0 Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 There are no diversity implications contained within this report

### **6.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

- 6.1 There are no staffing or accommodation implications contained within this report.

### **Background Papers**

- a) 15 February Executive Report – Introduction of Early Years Single Funding Formula and Changes to the Allocation and Funding of Early years Full Time Places.

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