

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education, Skills & Culture Cabinet Board

26th July 2018

Report of the Head of Participation – Chris Millis

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Implementation and Delivery of the Childcare Offer Wales

Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for the Childcare Offer Wales to be piloted in 14 wards across Neath Port Talbot from September 2018.

Executive Summary

Neath Port Talbot has been invited to pilot the childcare offer from September 2018.

The childcare offer will provide working parents with 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education for 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks of the year.

Using data on the availability of childcare and number of eligible children, fourteen wards have been identified to be part of the pilot with the intention to roll out further on agreement from Welsh Government.

Background

The Welsh Government's (WG) "Taking Wales Forward" Programme identified free childcare as one of its main pledges to remove barriers to parents taking up employment.

The childcare offer will provide working parents with 30 hours of government-funded childcare and early education for 3 and 4 year olds for up to 48 weeks of the year.

The new childcare offer will combine Foundation Phase provision during term times, with additional childcare up to a total of 30 hours. During the weeks of the year when the Foundation Phase is not provided, qualifying children will receive 30 hours of childcare, supporting working families with the costs of holiday care.

The government-funded childcare will be available:

- from the term following the child's third birthday and will continue until the child starts reception class in his/her primary school the September after their fourth birthday.
- if all parents in the household meet the eligibility requirements for income from wages or identified benefits.

In 2017, Welsh Government began a pilot of the offer with six local authorities. Neath Port Talbot has been invited to be part of the next phase, from September 2018.

All childcare providers registered with Care Inspectorate Wales will be able to sign up to be part of the offer and parents will choose provision to meet their needs. Parents will be able to use their childcare hours outside of Neath Port Talbot so relationships will need to develop with providers in neighbouring authorities to ensure that parents have access to suitable provision.

An engagement event was held with Neath Port Talbot childcare providers in June to provide an update on the offer and to encourage sign up.

Proposed Pilot Areas and Future Roll Out

In identifying areas for the pilot offer, an analysis of available data has been undertaken, including estimated eligible children and the location of registered childcare.

Fourteen wards have been identified, based predominantly on the basis that sufficient childcare places are available locally to accommodate the anticipated demand (based on a 50% take up from eligible families). A small number of neighbouring Wards have been included creating 'clusters' to avoiding postcode exclusions in some areas. The proposed pilot wards are:

- Aberavon
- Baglan
- Blaengwarch
- Bryncoch North and South
- Cymmer
- Glyncoirwg
- Gwaun Cae Gurwen
- Gwynfi
- Lower Brynamman
- Onllwyn
- Pontardawe
- Resolven
- Taibach

The wards represent a good geographical spread across the county, including within each valley area. A map of the pilot wards is included as Appendix 1.

It is proposed that future roll out follow the above rationale with the aim of rolling out across the county as soon as possible. The data indicates that some areas of Neath Port Talbot have a shortfall in provision which may restrict parental choice while new provision is developed.

Where the need for new provision or additional registered places has been identified, opportunities for expansion with existing childcare

providers will be explored to mitigate against the impact that new provision may have on the sector.

A further report will be presented to Members for approval of further roll out and to update on the initial pilot stage.

Funding

The childcare offer will be fully funded by Welsh Government.

The childcare element of the offer will be claimed based on claims from childcare providers.

NPTCBC will receive funding to co-ordinate and deliver the offer, with additional start up payment 2018/19 to develop the necessary systems and to undertake engagement with parents and providers.

Funding will be available to provide support for children with special educational needs with applications being made to Welsh Government for individual children.

Approx. £60m capital funding is available across Wales to support development or expansion of childcare to meet the increased demand created by the offer. An expression of interest has been submitted to Welsh Government to ensure that funding is available in Neath Port Talbot to develop provision, particularly in those areas where a significant shortfall has been identified.

Financial Impact

The childcare offer will be fully funded by Welsh Government. Funding of £166,939 has been confirmed for 2018/19 including a one-off start up payment of £67,250.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. After completing the initial screening assessment it has been determined that this proposal does not require an Equality Impact Assessment.

Workforce Impacts

Two new, fully funded posts will be created to support delivery of the offer. The posts will be advertised for prior consideration and internal applications before external recruitment is considered.

Legal Impacts

There are no legal issues associated with this report.

Risk Management

There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is recommended, that:

- (1) Approval is given for the Childcare Offer to be piloted in the 14 proposed Wards.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

To ensure that delivery of the pilot childcare offer for Wales in Neath Port Talbot can commence without delay, with families accessing childcare from September 2018.

Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of pilot Wards

List of Background Papers

None

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Appendix 1 – Map of Pilot Wards



