

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

### **Cabinet Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2018**

#### **Report of the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture**

#### **Welsh Government 30 Hour Childcare Offer: Working in Partnership with Newport Council**

##### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the Vale of Glamorgan's position in respect of a request from Welsh Government for a different delivery arrangement to rollout the Welsh Government's 30 Hour Childcare Offer for 3 and 4 year olds in the Vale of Glamorgan and new partnership working arrangements with Newport Council.

##### **Recommendations**

1. To seek Cabinet approval for the Vale of Glamorgan Council to commence preparation for the implementation of the County wide 30 hour childcare offer from January 2019, with a view to enable qualifying parents to receive provision from April 2019.
2. To seek Cabinet approval for Newport County Council to act as the Delivery Authority and the Vale of Glamorgan Council as the "Engagement Authority" as per Welsh Government's guidance.
3. To authorise entry into a contract with Newport County Council to act as the delivery authority on behalf of the Vale of Glamorgan in respect of the 30 hour Childcare Offer.
4. That the Head of Achievement for All, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Learning in Culture, be authorised to enter into appropriate contractual arrangements with delivery partners and employ personnel to deliver the 30 hour Childcare Offer.

##### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

1. To implement Welsh Government's 30 Hour Childcare Offer to support families in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. To progress Welsh Government's request to work with Newport Council to implement the rollout of the Childcare Offer in the Vale of Glamorgan in January 2019.
3. To gain Cabinet approval for entry into a Service Level Agreement to support the proposed arrangements between Newport County Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

4. To ensure appropriate contractual agreements are in place with delivery partners and to make Cabinet aware of employment implications.

## **Background**

2. The Welsh Government's 2016-2021 Programme for Government, 'Taking Wales Forward', identifies the "Free Childcare Offer" as one of its main pledges.
3. The free Childcare Offer has been implemented within and across local authorities on a phased basis. Since the initial early implementation of the offer in September 2017, most authorities in Wales will now be rolling it out across their County. Welsh Government intends to achieve full coverage across all local authority areas by the end of the Assembly term (2020-2021).
4. The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to "secure as far as is practically reasonable, sufficient childcare for working parents in their area". Local Authorities are required to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every 5 years with an annual update on the action plan and any significant changes.
5. The Childcare Offer provides eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds with 30 hours of funded early years education (Foundation Phase Nursery - FPN) and childcare per week, for up to 48 weeks a year. In the Vale of Glamorgan this will consist of 12.5 hours of Foundation Phase Nursery Education and 17.5 hours of childcare per week during term time, and 30 hours of free childcare (9 weeks) non-term time.
6. Welsh Government's primary policy aims of the offer are to:
  - enable more parents, particularly mothers to return to work;
  - increase the disposable income of those in work and help counteract poverty for those in low-paid jobs; and
  - increase child development and school readiness.
7. Parental eligibility during the early implementation stages is defined by:
  - employment and income;
  - beneficiaries must be employed or self-employed and permanently reside in Wales;
  - both parents must be working in a two parent family, or the sole parent in a lone parent family; and
  - earn a weekly minimum equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage (NMW) or national living wage (NLW) and be able to prove they are working via their earnings.
8. Only childcare providers registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) who agree to the terms and conditions of the offer are able to provide childcare places.
9. The funding level, paid directly to participating childcare providers, is set nationally at £4.50 per child per hour.
10. The Welsh Government rate enables participating childcare providers flexibility to charge parents for additional services such as transportation, food and trips. Providers cannot charge additional fees to increase their hourly rate.

## **Relevant Issues and Options**

11. Subsequent to the Cabinet Report submitted in July 2018, Welsh Government has requested that the Vale of Glamorgan undertake full rollout of the offer across the whole County from January 2019, this is instead of only 'testing' selected wards as was previously detailed.
12. Welsh Government's approach includes regional working, suggesting one local authority taking on the administrative role, and the other taking on the engagement responsibility.
13. Welsh Government has proposed that the Vale of Glamorgan Council operate as the Engagement Authority having responsibility for promoting the offer to parents and childcare providers and training their Family Information Service (FIS) to deal with enquiries.
14. Welsh Government now propose that Newport Council be the Delivery Authority for the Vale of Glamorgan rather than Cardiff as stated previously. This will involve processing all applications from parents, determining eligibility and informing parents of the outcome on behalf of the Vale. The Vale of Glamorgan Council will provide any information they require to process applications and administer the offer.
15. Welsh Government have taken this decision because it is not felt that Cardiff Council are currently in a position to carry out this role whereas Newport Council are already the "Delivery Authority" for Monmouthshire County Council. Further discussions will be required with Newport to progress this arrangement.

## **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

16. Welsh Government is currently preparing advice to the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care, regarding funding arrangements for 'Engagement' authorities. It is envisaged that both existing staff within Children & Young People's Partnership team and recruiting an additional staff member to the Family Information Service will support the offer utilising the funding being made available by Welsh Government. Funding of £30k per year for 2018-19 and 2019-20 is being made to Engagement Authorities to support the delivery of the offer. For 2018-19, the Vale Council will look to employ personnel to deliver the offer and purchase necessary resources to support the role. For 2019-20, funding will support the continuation of the role.
17. Newport Council will take on the administration role for the Vale of Glamorgan and will be responsible for processing applications from parents, determining eligibility and informing them of the outcome. They will also process and make payments to childcare providers for delivering the offer; Newport's costs will be confirmed by Welsh Government to undertake this role. Newport County Council will administer funding directly to childcare providers in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

18. In addition to its contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan, the Childcare Offer will evidence work towards the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Act outlines seven national well-being goals for Wales, one of these being 'A More Equal Wales', ensuring that we enable all people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. The Vale Public Services Board has recently published a Well-being Plan which includes a well-being objective 'give children a

good start in life'. The Childcare Offer will also contribute to the delivery of this objective.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

19. The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to secure as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare for working parents in their area. In addition the Education Regulations 2005 place a duty for local authorities to provide a free part time, good quality education place the term following a child's third birthday. This initiative will assist in meeting this duty.
20. The Council must also consider its legal obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.
21. The Council is required to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent legislation relating to processing data including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
22. The Vale of Glamorgan Council will enter into contractual arrangements with Newport County Council who will act as the delivery authority on behalf of the Vale.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

23. The funding would support a range of childcare places which would have a positive impact on early development factors influencing crime and disorder.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

24. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties and obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
25. In accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language standards, the Council also has to consider the impact upon the Welsh language of any decision that it makes and in accordance with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, the Council must consider how it can promote Welsh medium education.

### **Corporate/Service Objectives**

26. This report supports the Council's Wellbeing Objective 3: Give children the best start in life. By developing a strategic and innovative approach to improve the way in which children have the best start in life, it is hoped that the 30 hour childcare offer will enable parents to obtain employment or extend their current working hours to reach their full potential. Thus, promoting the well-being of parents and for children to attend good quality childcare, in order to reduce inequalities and support the prevention of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

### **Policy Framework and Budget**

27. This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet.

### **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

28. No consultation has taken place, the offer will be delivered across the Vale of Glamorgan from January 2019.

## **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

29. Learning and Culture

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Contact Officer**

Debbie Maule, Children's Partnership Co-ordinator

### **Officers Consulted**

Mark Davies, Prevention and Partnerships Manager  
Rachel Evans, Head of Children and Young People Services (views)  
David Davies, Head of Achievement for All  
Carolyn Michael, Operational Manager, Accountancy  
Mike Walsh, Lawyer, Legal Services  
Corporate Management Team  
Nicola Hale, Performance and Information Manager  
Lisa Lewis, Operational Manager Strategy and Resources

### **Responsible Officer:**

Paula Ham, Director Learning and Skills