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| <h1>BRIEFING</h1> | <b>TO:</b>           | Schools Forum                                                       |
|                   | <b>DATE:</b>         | 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2023                                       |
|                   | <b>LEAD OFFICER:</b> | Aileen Chambers<br>Head of Service Early Years and<br>Childcare     |
|                   | <b>TITLE:</b>        | Early Years Expansion and Early<br>Education and Childcare Strategy |

## 1. Background

**1.1** This purpose of this briefing is to provide an overview of the range of developments currently taking place within early years including: The DfE Early Years Expansion; The DfE Wraparound Childcare Programme; the development of a Rotherham Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy; the funding availability and the actions needed locally to meet requirements.

**1.2** **Early Years Expansion:** In the Spring Budget 2023 the Chancellor announced an expansion to the current early years entitlements – 30 hours childcare for every child over the age of 9 months with working parents by September 2025. The government are focused on giving children the best start in life and supporting parents to access affordable, high quality childcare and this expansion of funded childcare is the largest ever and will remove barriers to work for nearly half a million parents with a child under 3 in England. To enable childcare providers to prepare to deliver such a major expansion, it will be rolled out in phases to ensure there are enough places and staff ready to meet increased demand, and the funding paid to childcare providers to deliver these offers will be increased. The expansion delivery phases are:

| Age of child                          | Number of funded hours per week | Date of implementation |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Term after 2 <sup>nd</sup> birthday   | 15 hours per week               | April 2024             |
| Term after child is 9 months old      | 15 hours per week               | September 2024         |
| From term after child is 9 months old | 30 hours per week               | September 2025         |

Childcare Sufficiency analysis in Rotherham indicates that most areas will have sufficient capacity to meet the projected demand in April 2024.

In September 2024 there is likely to be a shortfall in Whiston, Canklow, Thurcroft and Brampton/West Melton South/West and possibly Aughton/Aston, Catcliffe/Treeton and Kimberworth/Kimberworth Park if the take-up levels are higher.

By September 2025 we are likely to have an under supply of 2 year old places in Aughton/Aston, Broom/Moorgate, Catcliffe/Treeton, Thorpe Hesley and Bramley/Wickersley. Depending on the take-up levels for children under 1 year old, additional places could be required across 70% of the brough based on the current market.

The DfE have announced a £100 million allocation for local areas to use to make sure childcare settings in their areas have enough physical space, anticipated to add thousands of new places across the country. Confirmation on allocation amounts to local authorities and accompanying guidance are awaited.

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|                   | <p>Increased capacity will be required within the Early Years team to manage the increased parental enquiries, distribution of funding to childcare providers and support for the sector to increase capacity and maintain high quality of delivery.</p> <p>LA's are able to retain a percentage of the Early Years DSG to cover central delivery. It is anticipated that the central retention will increase by approx. £380k in 2024-25. This funding currently covers the majority of the Early Years and Childcare Service delivery. A review of the structure of the Early Years and Childcare Service is underway with proposals being developed to ensure there is sufficient capacity and skills within the team to support the increased entitlement implementation.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>1.3</b></p> | <p>The DfE consulted on the increased early years entitlements between July – September 23. The proposals included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extending early years pupil premium to all ages (currently only 3 / 4 year olds)</li> <li>• Extending Disability Access Fund to all ages (currently only 3 / 4 year olds)</li> <li>• Enabling LA's to retain up to 5% of all EY Block funding streams in 2024/25 (currently on 3 / 4 year old funding stream)</li> <li>• Reducing the LA central retention to 3% across all EY Block funding streams with the roll out of the new entitlements</li> <li>• Requiring a mandatory deprivation supplement across all funding rates (currently only applies to 3 / 4 year olds)</li> </ul> <p>The outcome of the consultation is still awaited. These details as well as the funding rates for 2024/25 are required before the local funding formula can be developed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>1.4</b></p> | <p><b>Wraparound Childcare Programme:</b> The government is investing £289 million over 2 years to support the expansion of wraparound childcare for primary school-aged pupils. The government's ambition is for all parents of primary school children who need it, to be able to access childcare in their local area from 8am-6pm. This will help to ensure that parents have enough childcare to work full time, more hours and with flexible hours. The wraparound programme aims to remove barriers to setting up new provision or expanding current provision, including removing the financial risk of setting up new provision when demand is not yet guaranteed. Parents should expect to see an expansion in the availability of wraparound care from September 2024, with the programme ambition being that every parent who needs to will be able to access term-time wraparound childcare by September 2026.</p> <p>The programme is designed to fund the initial setup or expansion of wraparound provision where there is clear demand and remove the financial risk of setting up or expanding wraparound provision where sufficient demand is not guaranteed to sustain provision from the start (but where sufficient demand may be built over time as parents are assured of the supply of places). The aim for the programme is for the substantial majority of new/expanded provision to be self-sustaining from the end of the planned programme (i.e. 2026 onwards).</p> <p>The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to make sure that there are enough childcare places within its locality for working parents or for parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0 to 14 (or up to 18 for disabled children).<sup>2</sup> This programme's specific focus on children in reception to year 6 fits within this age range.</p> <p>Funding to support this programme will include:</p> |

|                                     | <p><b>Capacity funding:</b> Funding for local authorities to use to build their internal capacity to deliver. This could include paying for a designated wraparound lead if one does not already exist.</p> <p><b>Programme funding:</b> Funding for local authorities to deliver programme objectives, including to distribute to providers to set up new provision or expand existing provision.</p> <p><b>Capital funding:</b> Funding for local authorities to support new / extended wraparound provision, including distribution to childcare providers. For capital projects only</p> <p>Guidance for schools will be published in early 2024.</p> <p>In Rotherham 81% of primary schools have an out of school childcare offer (either delivered by the school or by childminders). 18 schools have no out of school childcare offer.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
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| 1.6                                 | <p><b>Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy:</b> following awareness raising by the LGA, Cllr Cusworth requested that a Rotherham Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy was developed. The draft strategy is attached. Consultation with the sector has been undertaken to inform the strategy. It will be reviewed at an Improving Lives Workshop on 27<sup>th</sup> November and is due to be taken to Cabinet for approval in February 2024.</p> <p>The main aims of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents can access affordable, sufficient, high quality and fully inclusive childcare places that support early learning and working parents</li> <li>• Children’s early learning and development is expertly supported by a strong, skilled, and knowledgeable early years and childcare workforce</li> <li>• Children who may be at risk of poor outcomes are prioritised for high quality targeted support</li> <li>• All children have a positive journey through their early years and are well supported to transition to Foundation 2 (Reception)</li> </ul> |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| <b>2. Funding</b>                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| 2.1                                 | <b>EY Delivery Support funding allocations:</b> have been awarded for 2023/24 (£60,884) RMBC Grant Approval received                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| 2.2                                 | <p><b>Wraparound Childcare Programme funding:</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FY 23-24</th> <th>FY 24-25</th> <th>FY 25-26</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£23,022.63</td> <td>£1,606,680.34</td> <td>£745,641.26</td> <td>£2,375,344.23</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>RMBC Grant Approval has been requested.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | FY 23-24    | FY 24-25      | FY 25-26 | TOTAL | £23,022.63 | £1,606,680.34 | £745,641.26 | £2,375,344.23 |
| FY 23-24                            | FY 24-25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | FY 25-26    | TOTAL         |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| £23,022.63                          | £1,606,680.34                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | £745,641.26 | £2,375,344.23 |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| 2.3                                 | <b>Early Education Funding:</b> The DfE have indicated that the EY Block allocations and early education rates for 2024/25 will be released by the end of November.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| 2.4                                 | <b>Capital Funding:</b> The DfE have indicated that capital funding will be allocated for both the EY Entitlement expansion and the Wraparound Childcare Programme. Further details are awaited.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| <b>3. Key Actions and Timelines</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
| 3.1                                 | 17.11.21 Deadline to submit MoU for National Wraparound Childcare Programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
|                                     | 24.11.23 Deadline to return LA Readiness self-assessments for both the EY Entitlements and Wraparound                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
|                                     | 21.11.23 Improving Lives Workshop – Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |
|                                     | Dec 23: On receipt of EY Block funding for 24/25 – develop local funding formula proposal and submit options to DLT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |             |               |          |       |            |               |             |               |

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|  | Dec / Jan: Recruit an additional EY Technical Support Officer to ensure readiness to meet the increased processing of early education funding. |
|  | Dec 23: Review the structure of the Early Years and Childcare team, identify additional capacity requirements and timescales to implement.     |
|  | Dec 23: Recruit a Wraparound Lead and establish a Wraparound Programme Working Group                                                           |
|  | Jan / Feb 24: Consult on Early Education Local Funding Formula proposals                                                                       |
|  | Feb 24: Finalise Early Education Local Funding Formula and present to Schools Forum                                                            |
|  | Feb 24: Early Years Education and Childcare Strategy to Cabinet                                                                                |
|  | Feb 24: Submit Wraparound Childcare Programme Delivery Plan for use of LA capacity funding                                                     |
|  | June 24: Local authorities to submit Wraparound Childcare Programme Delivery Plan for programme funding                                        |

#### **4. Recommendations**

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|------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>4.1</b> | Note and approve the content of the report |
|------------|--------------------------------------------|