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**FLYING START EXPANSION (PHASE ONE) 2022-23**

**SOCIAL SERVICES (COUNCILLOR ASH LISTER/NORMA  
MACKIE)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 17**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To seek cabinet approval for the proposed approach to prioritising the areas for expanding the reach of the Cardiff Flying Start Programme, in line with Welsh Government guidance.

**Background**

2. Flying Start is the Welsh Government's flagship early years programme for children aged under four and their families. It was first introduced in Wales in 2006, initially as a pilot based on the original Sure Start programme. It has now been in place for sixteen years.
3. The programme is underpinned by the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child and aims to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children under 4yrs in the areas in which it runs. It seeks to improve a range of children's well-being and lifelong learning outcomes.

| <b>Childrens' Outcomes</b> | <b>Long Term</b>                       |
|----------------------------|--|
| Social/Emotional skills    | Reduction - poor skills                |
| Cognitive skills           | Reduction – family breakdown           |
| Language & communication   | Reduction – poor child/maternal health |
| Physical health            |  |
| Early identification       |  |

4. The Flying Start offer to eligible families consists of the following:
  - Enhanced Health Visiting  
1:110 Health Visitor to children ratio
  - Funded High Quality Childcare for 2-3 yr olds  
2.5 hrs a day x 5 days x 42 weeks  
Level 3 minimum qualification for practitioners & Level 5 for leaders  
Qualified teacher oversight

- Parenting Support  
Evidence based /Psychology led  
Parenting Programmes  
Parenting Groups  
Bespoke 1:1 support in the home
  - Speech, Language & Communication Support
  - Early identification of children with ALN or emerging needs
  - An Outreach offer, for targeted vulnerable children in their first one thousand days, including children in homeless hostels; gypsy travellers, children of young parents, refugees, and asylum seekers.
5. Flying Start is nationally defined as a geographically targeted programme. In 2006, the Welsh Government required Local Authorities to target the pilot programme at a small number of Primary School Catchment areas with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.
  6. In 2012-13 the programme was expanded and the Welsh Government guidance for targeting the programme changed. Local Authorities were requested to continue to target the selected school catchment areas, but for the expansion, they were requested to use income benefit data, as a proxy indicator for poverty, to target the areas with the highest proportion of children aged 0-3 in income benefit households.
  7. Since 2012-13, Flying Start areas have been identified using the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), data supplied by the Welsh Government. Data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and HM Revenue and Customs is fed into the WIMD data and is used and broken down by areas known as Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA's).
  8. In accordance with the Welsh Government guidance for Flying Start, Cardiff Council has used this data to identify the LSOA's to benefit from the programme, prioritising the LSOA's ranked as highest on the WIMD data set.
  9. In addition to the requirement to use the WIMD data set, the Council is capped by the Welsh Government on the number of 0–3-year-old children that can benefit from the programme. For Cardiff, this is currently 4901 children under 4 years of age.
  10. Only families with children under four living in households within the identified LSOA's can benefit from the programme, unless they are vulnerable children identified by their health visitor for the Flying Start Outreach Offer.
  11. The Welsh Government provides the Council with a grant to deliver the four core elements of the programme to targeted families, based on a value of £2,400 per head, up to the capped number.
  12. Within the grant there is an expectation that at least 75% of the grant is used to deliver the programme within the targeted LSOA's and up to 25%

of the grant can be used to offer outreach to vulnerable children not resident in these areas, but who meet the outreach criteria.

13. In 2021, the Welsh Government, in their updated programme for government, made a commitment to continue its support for Flying Start as Wales's flagship early years programme.

## Issues

14. In December 2021, the Welsh Government entered into a cooperation agreement with Plaid Cymru, setting out how they will work together over the next three years where there is a common interest. As part of this agreement there was an extended commitment to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision.
15. Flying Start has been determined as the most suitable vehicle to deliver this commitment in a phased way.
16. Local Authorities have received new guidance and indicative funding for the phased expansion of Flying Start, with a view to commencing the expansion from September 2022. The expansion is to include all four key elements of the programme (*Enhanced health visiting; funded childcare; parenting support language and communication support*).
17. The expansion programme for Cardiff requires a growth in the programme to reach an additional 338 children aged 0–3-year-olds.
18. As well as this expanded number, there is room to expand the existing scheme, within the existing LSOA's, where these have changed.
19. The reach of the current programme is 4285 children (May 2022) and there is capacity to extend the existing scheme to 4901 children. This is without the additional 338 expansion target. The programme is currently below the maximum number of children, due to several factors:
  - a. a falling birth rate within the targeted LSOA's
  - b. changes in LSOA's since 2012/13. Some LSOA's have been divided due to an increase in size resulting from new housing developments, leading to the addition of new post codes or in other cases, where buildings have been demolished or where they have changed from business use to residential.
20. To achieve the desired reach of 4901, a review of current Flying Start eligible LSOA post codes is underway. This is with a view to include any new postcodes that have been added to the existing LSOA's since 2012/13 to those that are eligible.
21. To expand the programme further to reach the additional 338 children, the Welsh Government guidance is clear that Local Authorities should use the WIMD data to identify the areas for expansion.

22. This work has been completed and the next highest ranking LSOA's with children aged under 4 in income deprived households are listed below.
- a) Cathays 8
  - b) Pentwyn 2
  - c) Grangetown 4
  - d) Splott 5
  - e) Fairwater (Cardiff) 7
  - f) Pentwyn 5
  - g) Adamsdown 5

Expanding into these areas would enable a further 409 children to benefit from the programme. Whilst this is slightly over the required expansion number of 338 children, this can be delivered within the funds available.

23. It should be noted that Flying Start is targeted at areas rather than individual families, other than a limited outreach programme for vulnerable children. A piece of work has been conducted to understand whether there is a correlation between beneficiaries in the Flying Start areas and those in receipt of Universal Credit (UC). A review of this shows that in the existing Flying Start LSOA's, 47.6% of those eligible, are in receipt of UC. Once the new LSOA's are added in, this will rise to 50.7%.
24. The Welsh Government has set Local Authorities the following timescales for the expansion:
- a. A business plan setting out how the expansion will be delivered, was due for submission 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022.
  - b. Local Authorities and Health Boards are expected to be offering Flying Start services to newly eligible families from September 2022.
25. The Welsh Government has made available to Cardiff Council £642,479 for 2022-23 and £980,806 for 2023-24, respectively, through the Childrens and Communities Grant, to deliver the phase 1 expansion. No further guidance has been received for expansion plans beyond the first phase.
26. There may be some issues with recruiting sufficiently qualified staff by September 2022, across the health visiting, parenting, speech and language and childcare sectors, to deliver all four elements of the programme in accordance with the guidance.
27. Delivering sufficient childcare places for all newly eligible 2-year-olds will be dependent on there being
- a. Capacity for places within local childcare providers, in the proposed LSOA's
  - b. Sufficient Welsh Medium childcare providers within the proposed LSOA's
  - c. The timescales for procuring childcare places with newly identified childcare providers

## **Local Members**

28. Ward Members for the areas of expansion have been informed of the proposals.

## **Reason for Recommendations**

29. To seek Cabinet approval for the proposed approach to prioritising the areas for expanding the reach of the Cardiff Flying Start Programme, in line with Welsh Government Guidance.

## **Financial Implications**

30. The Flying Start Expansion outlined in this report is to be funded from an additional grant award to the existing Flying Start allocation within the WG Children & Communities Grant for 2022/23 and for the subsequent financial year.
31. The additional grant award has been confirmed by Welsh Government, but the variation letter confirming the expansion funding from September 2022 has not yet been received.
32. The grant allocations beyond 2023/24 have not yet been confirmed and therefore there is a risk, that should the grant funding levels for 2024/25 be reduced, that there may not be sufficient funding to meet the financial requirements in respect of this expansion delivery from April 2024. In the event that this scenario materialises, either an alternative funding source would need to be identified or the expansion delivery would need to be able to be terminated.

## **Legal Implications**

33. The purpose of this report is largely to provide an overview of the expansion of the Flying Start programme. It is to authorise the proposed phased approach to the commissioning and recommissioning of grant funded services and arrangements under the Flying Start Programme. Specific legal advice on implications arising from the expansion is expected to be provided in further reports as those issues arise during the further development of the programme.
34. Legal Services has not specifically advised on this matter to date. It is expected that the matter will comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and all aspects of procurement law. Likewise, all matters should be decided in a fair, equitable and transparent manner.
35. It is noted that the Directorate will put in place a myriad of different and complex arrangements including for example the extended provision of finding provision of sufficient Welsh Medium childcare providers within the proposed LSOA's and procuring services from external providers.
36. Legal Services note that some of the proposed longer-term arrangements are still being developed and that could range from joint working

arrangements, delegations of functions and letting contracts for services. Legal advice should be sought at the appropriate time to ensure that any such proposed arrangements are in compliance with all relevant legislation.

37. To the extent that any number of the proposed arrangements are grant-funded then prior to concluding any such arrangements the terms and conditions attaching to such grants should be checked to ensure compliance with the same.
38. Detailed advice should be sought as to whether the proposals give rise to any employment law issues (TUPE).

### **Equality Duty.**

39. In considering this matter, the Council must have regard to its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). This means the Council must give due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are: age, gender reassignment, sex, race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or belief – including lack of belief.
40. When taking strategic decisions, the Council also has a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage ('the Socio-Economic Duty' imposed under section 1 of the Equality Act 2010). In considering this, the Council must take into account the statutory guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers (WG42004 A More Equal Wales The Socio-economic Duty Equality Act 2010 (gov.wales) and must be able to demonstrate how it has discharged its duty.
41. An Equalities Impact Assessment aims to identify the equalities implications of the proposed decision, including inequalities arising from socio-economic disadvantage, and due regard should be given to the outcomes of the Equalities Impact Assessment (Appendix xx).

### **Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

42. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible.
43. In discharging its duties under the Act, the Council has set and published well being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the national well being goals. The well being objectives are set out in Cardiff's Corporate Plan 2022-25. When exercising its functions, the Council is required to take all reasonable steps to meet its well being

objectives. This means that the decision makers should consider how the proposed decision will contribute towards meeting the well being objectives and must be satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to meet those objectives.

44. The well being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with a 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Put simply, this means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must:

- Look to the long term
- Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
- Deliver an integrated approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
- Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions
- Involve people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them

45. The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposed decision accords with the principles above; and due regard must be given to the Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, which is accessible using the link below: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/statutory-guidance/?lang=en>

### **General**

46. The decision maker should be satisfied that the procurement is in accordance within the financial and budgetary policy and represents value for money for the council.

47. The decision maker should also have regard to, when making its decision, to the Council's wider obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

### **HR Implications**

48. Additional resources will be required. Corporate processes and policies will be followed to recruit the resources. The trade unions and affected staff have been consulted on this expansion.

### **Property Implications**

49. There are no direct property implications for this report

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to approve the approach for prioritising and identifying the new LSOA's to benefit from the Flying Start Programme.

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b> | Jane Thomas,<br>Director, Adults, Housing and<br>Communities |
|                                   | 8 July 2022  |

*The following appendix is attached:*

Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment

*The following background papers have been taken into account*

- *Appendix A – Welsh Government Expansion of Early Years Provision: Guidance for Phase One*
- *Flying Start Expansion Data for 2018 by Flying Start Coverage – Cardiff*
- *Planning Template – Expansion of EY provision and WL – Phase 1 – Cardiff*