

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 25 March 2014

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Partnership Arrangements with Pre-school Providers

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the decision taken by Cabinet, on the 11 March 2014, to approve guidance on how East Lothian Council chooses to enter into partnership with any new private pre-school education providers and to provide clarity on funding for existing pre-school providers.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:
- i. The Council will only approve new requests for partnerships with new providers when all local authority nurseries in East Lothian have a projection of at least of at least 95% places filled by the academic year end.
 - ii. The Partnership Pre-School Provider Contracts entered into between East Lothian Council and the private or voluntary pre-school education providers will stipulate the number of children that the Council will fund in each partnership centre, from August 2014. Funding will only be released to Partner Providers when children access their provision.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There are currently 16 partnership centres in East Lothian. Places at these Centres supplement the provision offered by East Lothian Council's own pre-school nurseries. Current contracts for partnership providers stipulate that funding for pre-school places will only be provided if there is a minimum of six eligible children attending that centre. There is currently no maximum limit to the number of children that could receive funding in a partnership centre.
- 3.2 Two new private nursery providers in the North Berwick cluster approached the Council to request partnership status for pre-school

education. The local authority nursery in North Berwick was under capacity and the Council had no plans to enter into any additional partnerships, at that time.

3.3 Fenton Barns Nursery submitted a petition which the Petitions Committee agreed was valid and should be reviewed.

3.4 To ensure that East Lothian Council can continue to provide adequate and efficient pre-school education and sustainably manage its pre-school budget it was requested that clear guidance was provided on how new requests from private nurseries and existing partner provider nursery places could be managed.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This guidance complies with legislation and current Scottish Government guidance.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 It is acknowledged that this may mean that a very small number of individual families may not be able to be accommodated at their first choice provider, but there are a number of alternative options for all families.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – This will ensure better control of the pre-school budget for future years.

6.2 Personnel – None.

6.3 Other – None.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Report agreed by Cabinet on 11 March 2014:
<http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/5375/cabinet>

AUTHOR'S NAME	Fiona Brown
DESIGNATION	Principal Officer, Education Business Unit
CONTACT INFO	Tel:- 01629 827415 Email:- fbrown@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	14 March 2014