

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Education Officer****Committee: Educational Services Committee: 6 March 2019**

Subject: Early Years Implementation Update**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report details an update of the plan for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee:

(i) Agrees that a further update be provided to committee at the next meeting in June 2019.

3. Background

- 3.1** Members have previously been advised through regular reports to committee that the WDC Early Learning & Childcare Expansion Plan has developed a service model for delivery of 1140 hours of high quality early learning and childcare to be phased in by August 2020. The service model for our expansion of ELC complies with the guidance documentation issued by the Scottish Government in December 2018: A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare: Operating Guidance, Principles and Practice and Frequently Asked Questions. This new documentation sets out the details of the new service model; the criteria for the National Standard which will ensure high quality in settings for parents and families. A Funding Follows the Child approach will be introduced in August 2020 alongside the statutory roll out of the expanded entitlement for three and four years olds and eligible two year olds.
- 3.2** The service models in our expansion plan will play a vital role in helping to narrow the poverty related attainment gap. The criteria in the National Standard focus on what children and their families should expect from their ELC experience, regardless of where they access their funded entitlement. The National Standard applies to all settings offering the funded early learning and childcare entitlement. This will include all settings in the public, private, third sector and childminders offering the blended model.
- 3.3** West Dunbartonshire Council will retain the statutory responsibility for ensuring that the funded entitlement is available for all eligible children in the area, and will be the primary guarantors of quality and key enablers of flexibility and choice. Our service model has a range of options for families in each geographical area.

- 3.4** The expansion plan for years two and three as noted at Committee on 5 December 2018 has been revised to ensure that we comply with the new guidance 'Funding Follows the Child – Operating Guidance'. Funding Follows the Child guarantees 1140 hours from the relevant start date from August 2020. Relevant start date means the date that all three and four year olds and some children aged two can access their funded entitlement; this is dependent on their birthdate. Our current admissions policy will not require adjustment to meet eligibility for relevant start date. This revision to the plan means that settings that do not require building work, will offer 1140 hours sooner than expected. The model in those settings will be over term time and fifty weeks. When new nursery classes open in school session 2020/2021 the models will be revised to ensure that parents have greater flexibility and choice. This revision to the plan has also taken account of the capacity of stand-alone centres to deliver the free meal entitlement. To take account of this the year two and three expansion service plan has been reviewed, to ensure that all three and four year old children are guaranteed their entitlement to 1140 hours from the relevant start date from school session 2020/2021.
- 3.5** Five childminders have agreed to trial a blended model to deliver the entitlement of 1140 hours ELC for three and four year olds in their care. Parents will be consulted about the blended model to deliver their child's entitlement. This service model includes the children's current ELC entitlement at their local nursery setting.
- 3.6** We continue to support and consult our funded partner private provider nurseries through the monthly Partners Forum. This is helping them understand the delivery model that they could provide by 2020; in order to deliver the entitlement of high quality ELC of 1140 hours for three and four year olds. In order to meet the criteria for the National Standard all funded providers must pay the living wage to staff delivering the entitlement for three and four year olds and eligible two year olds. Engagement with partners regarding their delivery model for 2020 at monthly meetings has focussed on their business model, and geographical phasing for 2020. One to one meetings with officers to discuss their business model has also been offered.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The driving force of the WDC expansion plan is high quality ELC. As the Council is the guarantor of quality our service model is designed to deliver high quality experiences and outcomes for all children regardless of where their funded entitlement is taken. We are working with all funded providers to meet Criteria 1 of the National Standard which states that Care Inspection evaluations of quality are good or better on themes relating to quality of staffing, management and leadership.
- 4.2** Private funded providers continue to contend the current hourly rate WDC pays and the rate set for delivery of the expanded hours. The hourly rate paid was increased last year, with a further rise planned for next session. The hourly rate payable to deliver the entitlement has been set on advice from the Scottish Government. The main issue facing the private providers is meeting the criteria to pay the living wage to all staff providing the entitlement for three

and four year olds by August 2020. The rate set by the Scottish Government is based on private providers' ability to pay the living wage and should enable them to do so. In the West Partnership almost all local authorities will pay the hourly rate recommended by the Scottish Government of £5.31. Monthly meetings to explore service requirements for 2020 will continue.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are significant implications for people in WDC. As previously reported workforce planning is underway to increase the workforce to support the expansion plans and will continue to evolve as the plan is implemented. Planning with West College Scotland is underway to increase the numbers trained to the appropriate level to deliver the key criteria of the National Standard. The workforce plan targets adult returners, career changers as well as school leavers. The apprenticeship programme will provide training on the job, for workers who do not have the relevant entrance qualifications for the HNC in Childhood Practice. Childminders are encouraged and being supported to increase the number of units that they have to comply with the qualification level required. They have five years to do this; this does not apply to all childminders as some have the relevant qualifications.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** As previously reported multi year funding of the expansion plan has been confirmed and will be fully funded by the SG. This guarantees our delivery of 'Funding Follows the Child' for the entitlement to 1140 hours of ELC for all three and four year olds by their eligible date in school session 2020/2021.
- 6.2** Funding for the second phase of the expansion in year two, school session 2019/2020 will enable full implementation of phase two of the expansion plan for 1140 hours in Vale of Leven, Alexandria, Dumbarton and Clydebank areas. We have adhered to guidance from Scottish Government delivery group to develop our model of delivery, ensuring that capital and revenue funding is available.
- 6.3** As previously reported the financial template submitted to Scottish Government in February 2018 has been reviewed and used in deciding the multi-year funding allocation to this authority. Each year's funding is included in the previous year's figures. The multi-year allocations were announced in May 2018 and are as follows for West Dunbartonshire:

| Financial Year | Revenue £m | Capital £m |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2018/19 | 1.410 | 0.580 |
| 2019/20 | 5.268 | 1.800 |
| 2020/21 | 8.717 | 2.100 |
| 2021/22 | 9.723 | 1.400 |

- 6.4** There are no new financial implications with this update report, officers continue to review the Early Years Expansion programme to ensure that plans for year two and three align with multi-year funding. The revenue funds detailed are cumulative; the capital funds are granted annually.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The key risks to the project are:

- delays in delivery of infrastructure expansion
- recruiting and developing a skilled and committed workforce
- ensuring all ELC settings meet the criteria for the National Standard as stated in the new guidance issued in December 2018.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An EIA for the Expansion Plan was undertaken previously. There was no requirement to undertake another EIA for the purposes of this report as it is providing an update to Committee on the expansion.

9. Consultation

9.1 Regular consultation with stakeholders including parents, ELC staff, Unions, Council partners in the project and partner ELC providers continues through various forums and regular meetings.

9.2 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to have a strong local economy, improved employment opportunities and efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents. These are strategic priorities for 2017-2022.

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March 2019

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Background Papers: WDC Early Learning & Childcare Expansion Plan

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland 2017-18 Action Plan

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare: Operating Guidance

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare: Operating Guidance and Principles and Practice Principles and Practice

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare: Frequently Asked Questions

Educational Services Committee Report December 2018 – Early Years Implementation Update

Wards Affected:

All

