

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Education Officer****Education Services Committee: 4 December 2019**

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

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

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that committee:

- (i) Notes the contents of Appendix 1, Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018 - 2020.
- (ii) Notes the contents of Appendix 2, The Early Learning & Childcare Financial Phasing Plan 2018 - 2022.

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 for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds from August 2020.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Progress across the key objectives of our Implementation Plan remains on track with target dates set for delivery of each project; agreed with the Implementation Board.
- 4.2** Setting a sustainable rate to pay the real living wage remains the main issue for Funded Private Providers to continue to offer a high quality service. As the guarantor of quality WDC has a specific role in ensuring business sustainability. We have updated our systems and processes to monitor Funded Partner Providers' compliance with the criteria for the National Standard. Relevant documentation and new systems for applications, contractual agreements, communication, monitoring procedures and evaluation of fair work practices have been set up. Private Funded Providers have agreed to provide evidence of fair work practices in line with the National Standard Criteria. Including: A fair and equal pay policy across their setting, including commitment to payment of the living wage; promoting equality of opportunity and developing a workforce which reflects the population of Scotland in terms of characteristics such as age, gender, religion or belief, race, sexual orientation and disability; security of employment and hours of work avoiding exploitative employment and practices such as zero hours contracts, or pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

- 4.3** A key focus of the Criteria for the National Standard is inspection evaluations. As previously reported the National Standard Criteria sets a minimum quality threshold for providers delivering the funded hours of 'good'. The Council may enter into an Improvement Period of 12 months with any Funded Provider; local authority or private provider who does not meet the National Standard Criteria. The Council will enter into an Improvement Period with the provider if the Council believes that the Provider has the capacity to improve its Care Inspection evaluations by the end of the 12 month service improvement period. There are funded providers including WDC settings who still have grades below good. We are providing intensive support for those settings to achieve good or better before August 2020.
- 4.4** Our Early Learning & Childcare Expansion plan (Appendix 1, Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018-2020) will guarantee the entitlement of 1140 hours for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds by August 2020. We have phased in 1140 hours at fifteen early learning and childcare centres and at all of our Funded Partner Providers. Our phasing model will provide places for all 3 and 4 year olds by August 2020 in our WDC settings. Currently 839 places for 3 and 4 year olds have been phased in at our Council ELCC; 49.9 % of our required capacity. By March 2020 we project that the number of children receiving 1140 hours will increase to 1101; approximately 65.5% of our required capacity. We will be at full capacity in all WDC settings by August 2020. We require approximately 460 places at our Funded Partner Providers by August 2020. We have phased in 1140 hours for 210 children at our Funded Partner Providers, approximately 46% of the capacity that we need. From April 2020 we will phase a further 165 places for eligible three and four year olds; 82% of the capacity we need. Our final phasing for 1140 hours for all three and four year olds at our Funded Partner Providers will be fully phased in by August 2020.
- 4.5** The families who are in receipt of 1140 hours including grandparents, have taken time to feedback and comment positively on the impact of the new funded hours on family life, children's progress and wellbeing.

A few comments they have made:

'My grandson attends the new nursery at Levenvale primary school. I cannot express strongly enough what a fantastic learning experience my grandson is getting here'.

'Play experiences help my daughter learn and progress through nursery life have been rewarding as I see a massive difference in her in all aspects, emotionally, socially and cognitively thanks to her nursery life being different everyday!'

- 4.6** The final stage building projects for August 2020 and refurbishments for expansion, commenced from November 2019; planned completion is summer 2020 for some projects. A contingency plan has been developed for those projects planned for completion by the summer of 2020 and will be subject to agreement by the Care Inspectorate. This will mitigate delay and risk of not delivering the entitlement on time. This contingency plan is built on the advice of the Scottish Government, at minimal cost to the expansion budget and disruption to schools and ELC involved. The contingency models recommended for

Councils are to adapt service models, register alternative space, hire additional community space, register outdoor space and provide modular accommodation. See Appendix 1, Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018 – 2020 for our contingency plan. Our contingency plan may not be necessary if projects are delivered on time. However, it will ensure that children and families are guaranteed their entitlement to 1140 hours. The number of children at risk of not having their entitlement at August 2020 is 230. See table 1

Table 1

ELCC	Number of places at risk: August 2020
Carleith PS ELCC	50
OLOL PS ELCC	60
Dalreoch PS ELCC	80
Gavinburn PS ELCC	40

- 4.7** There is a small increase in the number of parents requesting the blended model from childminders for entitled three and four year olds. Childminders and private providers are also willing to deliver early learning and childcare for eligible two year olds. As a contingency we will use the service of childminders if we cannot provide sufficient places for eligible two year olds in our ELC by August 2020.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are significant implications for people in WDC. Our recruitment programme for the settings delivering 1140 from September 2019 until 1140 hours is complete. For the final phasing of our plan; recruitment is underway to meet target opening dates. The impact of the ELC Expansion has benefited our communities and provided employment for a range of staff not only for qualified early learning and childcare workers. See table 2 for details of our recruitment to date. The figures are full time equivalent (FTE).

Table 2

Workers/Designation	Numbers Recruited (FTE)	Male	Female
Clerical	2	0	2
Modern Apprentices	6	1	5
Learning Assistants	3.5	0	3.5
Early Years Assistants	8.27	0	8.27
Early Learning and Childcare Workers	53.5	1	52.5
Senior Early learning and childcare workers	4	0	4
Lead Officers	6	1	5
Principal Officers	1	0	1
Principal Teachers	2.2	0	2.2
Facilities Staff (catering assistants, cleaners, facilities assistants)	11.35	0	11.35
TOTAL	97.82	3	94.82

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 There is no change to the multi-year funding of the expansion plan which 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. Our model of delivery has had several revisions to ensure that we deliver 1140 hours on time. This has necessitated a change to our capital and revenue funding plan which is reflected in the revised phasing. See Appendix 2, The Early Learning & Childcare Financial Phasing Plan 2018 - 2022.

6.2 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	2.380
2020/21	8.717	4.480
2021/22	9.723	5.880

6.3 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. We are on track with our expansion plan and financial spend for each project.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The key risks to the project:

- delays in delivery of infrastructure expansion
- delays in delivering the entitlement to all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds by August 2020
- recruiting and developing a skilled and committed workforce
- ensuring that all ELC settings meet the criteria for the national standard

Plans are in place to mitigate risks to the plan. The infrastructure plan and dates for delivery of our nursery classes and refurbished ELCC have been revised for delivery by August 2020. Contingency plans and funding of £200k is in place to ensure that if there are delays to the building programme, this will not impact the guaranteed entitlement for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. Our recruitment plan, training and individual pathways are in place for the workforce. Leadership training for leads, principals and head teachers will ensure that we can meet the criteria for the national standard. Intensive support is also being provided for ELC, with evaluations below good.

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 and carers, ELC staff, Unions, Council partners in the project and partner ELC providers continues through the various WDC 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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Appendices Appendix 1 - Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018 - 2020.
Appendix 2 - The Early Learning & Childcare Financial Phasing Plan 2018 - 2022.

Background Papers:

Wards Affected: All

