

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 5 June 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 the current phasing of the Early Learning & Childcare Expansion (Appendix 1 – Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018 - 2020)
- (ii) Agrees that a further update be provided to committee at the next meeting in September 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 which will be phased in by school session 2020 - 2021. The service model for our expansion of ELC complies with the guidance documentation issued by the Scottish Government 'Funding follows the child and the national standard for early learning and childcare providers' (the National Standard) published in December 2018 to be introduced by 2020.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Progress across the key objectives of our Implementation Plan including workforce planning, delivering high quality ELC and working with funded partner providers and childminders, remains on track, with target dates set for delivery of each project; agreed with the Implementation Board.
- 4.2** Scotland Excel has been commissioned by the Scottish Government, on behalf of the Service Models Working Group, to develop a suite of supporting technical guidance and information that supports local authorities and providers to implement the new approach; Funding Follows the Child. The technical guidance documents cover: (1) establishing sustainable rates; (2) business sustainability; and (3) transition options on contracting. This documentation outlines options for local authorities to consider when developing their processes to contract with Early Learning and Childcare

(ELC) providers, for the delivery of the funded hours. In particular, a key aspect of the Funding Follows the Child approach is a commitment to simplifying the process for, and reducing the burden on, providers to deliver the funded entitlement. The guidance takes cognisance of the new policy requirements and highlights current best practice which exists in the private sector.

4.3 We continue to support and consult our funded partner private provider nurseries through the monthly Partners Forum. 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. The Scotland Excel technical guidance is being used to work closely with funded private providers to communicate clearly and with transparency during the transition period to 2020. As the guarantor of quality WDC has a specific role in ensuring business sustainability. This new approach requires updated systems and processes to monitor compliance. People implications are for training and capacity building to ensure that our systems are in place to carry out this role. This will involve intensive work with ELC officers, our finance business partner and partner providers. This technical guidance will be used to ensure that the Council's approach is built on partnership with all funded providers to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the cost of delivering the funded entitlement to set a local sustainable rate.
- To ensure that the living wage is paid to those staff delivering the entitlement.
- Prepare relevant documentation and new systems for applications, contracts, communication, procurement, monitoring procedures and evaluation of fair work practices.
- Review cross boundary processes and agreements with other local authorities.
- Revise quality assurance systems for ELC to ensure that providers meet the criteria for the National Standard.

4.4 The expansion plan for years two and three has as noted at Committee on 5 March been revised to ensure that we comply with the new guidance 'Funding Follows the Child – Operating Guidance'. This revision ensures 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. This will ensure that we deliver 1140 hours in all of our ELCs 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.

4.5 Our plan has been devised to ensure that we deliver high quality ELC with all of our funded providers. We work closely with ELCs to ensure that we fulfil our statutory responsibility for ensuring that the funded entitlement is available, in high quality early learning and childcare centres and to narrow the poverty related attainment gap. ELC providers must also meet the criteria in the

National Standard. Our service model has a range of options for families in each geographical area. See Appendix 1.

- 4.6** Our phasing plan ensures that the entitlement for every three and four year old, across the three geographical areas of Clydebank/Dumbarton/Vale of Leven will be in place by school session 2020/21 (Appendix 1). The population of entitled 3-5 year olds is currently 2,000 children, approximately. From August 2019, fifty percent approx. of 1140 hours nursery places, required for entitled three and four year olds, will be in place. By August 2019, we will have created 1110 places for entitled three and four year olds. We will require a further 1000 places approx. for entitled three and four year olds which we are on target to achieve by 2020/21. Eligible two year olds are also part of our expansion plan. We will create an additional 25, 1140 places for eligible two year olds at Meadowview and Ferryfield ELCCs.

See Table 1 for settings delivering 1140 hours by August 2019.

Table 1

Establishment	1140 hours
St. Mary's ELCC Alexandria	Apr-18
Linnvale ELCC	Aug-18
Ferryfield ELCC	Oct-18
Funded Partner Providers (165 places)	Aug-19
Andrew B Cameron ELCC	June-19
Levenvale PS ELCC	June-19
Kilpatrick Early Years Service	As required
Dalmonach ELCC	Aug-19
Balloch ELCC	Aug-19
Gartocharn ELCC	Aug-19
Meadowview/Braehead ELCC	Sept-19
Bellsmyre ELCC	Aug-19
St. Eunan's ELCC	Aug-19
Riverside ELCC	Aug-19
Clydebank ELCC	Aug-19
Whitcrook ELCC	Aug-19
Whitcrook PS ELCC	Aug-19

- 4.7** A further 2 childminders, in addition to the 5 reported to committee in March 2019, have agreed to trial a blended model to deliver the 1140 hours ELC entitlement. Six families are interested in the blended model for seven, three and four year olds. Officers have met with individual childminders to agree contracts. Childminders are also interested in delivering early learning and childcare for eligible two year olds. In partnership with health we are developing a system that identifies eligible two year olds, with the option of childminder care. The website has been updated to provide information about childminding and the service childminders can offer in partnership with WDC.

4.8 We are continuing to support 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. This work is crucial to the delivery of high quality ELC and would hamper our ability to deliver 1140 hours for all three and four year olds.

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; this continues to evolve as the plan is implemented. Our recruitment programme is well underway to meet our target opening dates however we compete with other councils to recruit suitably qualified staff. In order to develop our local workforce we are working with West College Scotland to increase the numbers trained to the appropriate level to deliver the key criteria of the National Standard. We have targeted adult returners, career changers as well as school leavers through a series of information sessions jointly provided by EY, HR and West College Scotland. The apprenticeship programme will continue to provide training on the job, for workers who do not have the relevant entrance qualifications for the HNC in Childhood Practice. Childminders have five years to increase the number of units that they have to comply with the qualification level required. Fifteen childminders have signed up to complete a combination of SVQ2 and 3 training to get them to the required level; some are already at the required level. Partnership with the Scottish Child Minding Association (SCMA) has resulted in a bespoke training plan and membership of the SCMA for the childminders we are working with, approx.40.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 The multi-year funding of the expansion plan 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. We have adhered to guidance from Scottish Government delivery group to develop our model of delivery, ensuring that capital and revenue funding is available. See Appendix 1.

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 remain:

- delays in delivery of infrastructure expansion
- recruiting and developing a skilled and committed workforce
- ensuring that 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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June 2019

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Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018-2020

Scotland Excel Technical Guidance documents:
Establishing Sustainable Rates; Business Sustainability;
and Transition Options on Contracting.

Wards Affected: All