

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Education Officer

Education Services Committee: 11 March 2020

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 In the final months before August 2020, progress across the key objectives of our Implementation Plan remains on track with target dates set for delivery of each project as agreed with the Early Years Implementation Board. Our contingency plan will also be used; if it is required to mitigate risk.
- 4.2 The hourly rate set for Funded Private Providers to continue to offer a high quality service has been agreed for 2020/2021. Input by WDC Finance Section to the regular Partner Provider Forum has helped providers understand the cost of providing ELC for individual children in our Council ELC establishments. Funded providers will use the example of costs, provided by our Finance Section to work out costs at their individual businesses.
- 4.3 As previously reported to meet the National Standard, Care Inspection evaluations must be evaluated at good or better by August 2020. Resources are being targeted at those ELC with grades below good to ensure that all providers have evaluations of good or better. The Care inspectorate have agreed to make return visits before August 2020 to re evaluate ELC at risk of not making the standard of good or better. We are providing intensive support for those settings to achieve good or better before August 2020. The Care

inspectorate will also provide an Early Learning and Childcare Improvement Programme. The aim of the programme is to support services and providers not currently meeting the quality criteria of the National Standard to improve future evaluations. This is designed to drive forward quality improvements across the country within the early learning and childcare sector to increase the numbers of providers meeting the National Standard. There are area learning events with a commitment to four workshops which commence in March 2020 spanning an 18-month period. The events will compliment the work we are doing in our targeted work with our ELC settings.

- 4.4** A planned programme of professional learning designed to improve quality and close the poverty related attainment gap has been provided for our ELC practitioners and leaders including, Froebel and Childhood Practice (University of Edinburgh), leadership courses (Early Years Scotland), learning through play, and early years pedagogy. The range of learning has promoted practitioner enquiry, reflective practice, professional dialogue and collaboration to improve outcomes for children and leadership of change. Our Equity and Excellence Leads working in our ELC with the greatest numbers of children in SIMD 1 and 2, provide additional support for children at risk of missing out. Our Early Stages Teachers along with the Excellence and Equity Leads use data to identify and plan for children's progress. Our Collaborative Action Research programme focusses on improving outcomes in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The impact of this has shown increased staff confidence in use of data to plan for improvements. The West Partnership (Regional Improvement Collaborative) will adopt the WDC model for their senior leaders.

5. Phasing of 1140 Hours

- 5.1** Since the last update to Educational Services Committee two new settings have opened: St. Ronan's ELCC and Whitecrook Primary School ELCC, providing a further 64 places for three and four year olds. Kilbowie ELCC and Lennox ELCC have phased in 32 places. Our eleven Funded Partner Providers have phased in a further 5 places - 55 places, providing a total of 283 places for three and four year olds this school session. Currently a total of 1146 places for 3 and 4 year olds has been phased in which is just above our prediction for March 2020 of 1101 places. From April 2020 we will phase a further 166 places for eligible three and four year olds at our local authority ELC. Our Funded Partner Providers will have fully phased the entitlement for all three and four year olds by April 2020. Our local authority ELC will provide a further 580 places by August 2020 which will guarantee the entitlement for all three and four year olds in West Dunbartonshire.
- 5.2** Our contingency plan previously agreed by Committee to ensure that we have alternative capacity, has been revised to take account of additional work required for registration by the Care Inspectorate at Meadowview ELCC and Gavinburn ELCCs. The Care Inspectorate has also agreed our contingency for the final ELC on our plan. The final project plans have also been agreed by the Care Inspectorate. See Appendix 1, Early Learning & Childcare Phasing Plan 2018 - 2020.
- 5.3** Numbers of parents requesting the blended model from childminders remains low, currently nine 3-5 year old children have opted for this model. As a

contingency we will use the service of childminders and our partner private providers if we cannot provide sufficient places for eligible two year olds in our ELC by August 2020.

6. People Implications

- 6.1 There are significant implications for people in WDC. Advertising and recruitment processes are underway to meet target opening dates for the final projects in our plan. The impact of the ELC Expansion has benefited our communities and provided employment for a range of staff beyond the qualified early learning and childcare workers. We have recruited the equivalent of 12.67 FTE facilities workers, all female. In real terms this is an offer of mainly part time work which fits very well with other family commitments that people have. The breakdown for the figure of 12.67 FTE workers for facilities staff equates to: 19 part time catering assistants, 1 full-time facilities assistant and 7 part time cleaners. As well as this, 15 existing staff employed as cleaners and catering assistants have benefited from additional hours to their current contracts. The Early Years Assistant post has also attracted facilities staff, allowing them to combined hours with this part time post at several of our ELC. There is an increase of 9.75 FTE staff recruited since our report in December. See table 2 for a detailed update 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	0	6
Learning Assistants	4.3	0	4.3
Early Years Assistants	8.20	0	8.20
Early Learning and Childcare Workers	52	1	51
Senior Early learning and childcare workers	4	0	4
Lead Officers	6	1	5
Excellence & Equity Leads	9	0	9
Principal Officers	1	0	1
Principal Teachers	2.4	0	2.4
Facilities Staff (catering assistants, cleaners, facilities assistants)	12.67	0	12.67
TOTAL	107.57	2	105.57

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 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 revisions to ensure that we deliver 1140 hours on time. The changes were as a result of Care Inspection registrations which impacted staffing models and our decision to increase the number of 1140 places at our Funded Providers. This necessitated changes to

our revenue funding plan which is reflected in the revised financial phasing plan. See Appendix 2, The Early Learning & Childcare Financial Phasing Plan 2018 - 2022.

- 7.2** 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; figures are cumulative. 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

- 7.3** There are no new financial implications with this update report, officers continue to review the Early Years Expansion programme to ensure that plans for years two and three align with multi-year funding. We are on track with our expansion plan and financial spend for each project.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1** The key risks to the project:

- delays in delivery of infrastructure expansion, specifically the final projects on our plan
- 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

As previously reported 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 are 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. Targeted support will ensure that we can meet the criteria for the National Standard for ELC, with evaluations below good.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 9.1** 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.

10. Consultation

- 10.1** 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.
- 10.2** Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

11. Strategic Assessment

- 11.1** 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

