

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE TO 600 HOURS PER ANNUM
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 3 FEBRUARY 2015
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Education Executive and seek further approvals in regard to the implementation of the expansion of early learning and childcare provision to 600 hours for:

- **Phase 1** - 3 and 4 year olds
- **Phase 2** - 2 year olds whose parents are in receipt of certain benefits.

This provision is being introduced to fulfill our statutory obligations under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

2. PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE (3 and 4 year olds)

2.1 Further to the update provided on 9 September 2014, Education Executive is asked to note:

- a. **Additional Early Years Campuses** - Resources have been allocated to establish additional Early Years Campuses in 3 Wards to meet the strategic aim of providing extended places in all Wards by the end of school session 2015-16.

Table 1 Establish additional early years campuses		
Ward	School	Estimated Completion Date
Ward 1 Bo'ness & Blackness	Kinneil Primary School	June 2015
Ward 8 Lower Braes	St Margaret's Primary School	June 2015
Ward 5 Bonnybridge & Larbert	Bonnybridge Primary School	Easter 2016

The estimated completion dates for Kinneil Primary School and St Margaret's Primary School have been extended due to the prioritisation and delivery of other educational projects but they will still be available before the end of this academic year.

- b. **Increase Places in Existing Early Years Centres** - Capital and revenue funding has been allocated to increase baby, toddler and 3 and 4 year old provision during session 2015-16 in:
- i. **Ward 4 (Carse/Kinnaird/Tryst)** - Although initial proposals planned to do this on-site at Larbert Day Nursery, professional and technical advice received regarding the site suitability has led us to consider an alternative location. We will provide a further update to Education Executive on our findings, including costs.
 - ii. **Ward 6 (Falkirk North)** - Our next priority will be to review the options around ensuring adequate provision is available in this Ward. This will involve considering provision at the Woodburn Nursery and Queen Street Nursery School sites.
- c. **Increase Capacity in Existing Nursery Classes in Primary Schools**
- i. **Ward 5 (Bonnybridge & Larbert)** - As part of the planned extension to St Joseph's Primary School a new nursery wing is being provided. This wing will allow the school to increase current capacity from 30:30 to 40:40. A contribution towards this, using available Phase 1 capital funding is being considered.

2.2 **Outdoor Learning and Play** - Daily access to quality outdoor spaces which provide challenge, promote creativity and facilitate opportunities to connect with nature are essential. Given we have increased the internal capacity of many of our early years establishments we are currently assessing the quality of the outdoor spaces. This ensures all of our children can fully appreciate the benefits of outdoor learning and play, examples of how we could invest resources would be:

- Enlarging current play area
- Fencing alterations and security
- Storage facilities
- New play equipment
- Outdoor clothing provision
- Curriculum resources

2.3 **Admissions Policy** - The current Early Years Admissions Policy prioritises places in nursery classes for catchment children while retaining scope for children living outwith the catchment area to be accommodated where capacity is available.

Places cannot currently be reserved to accommodate children who move into the catchment during the session. At present if no nursery spaces are available then these children are allocated a place in an early years setting outwith their catchment school.

It is proposed therefore to review the Early Years Admissions Policy to consider if we can increase the availability of nursery places for children from the local catchment area by:

- Introducing a reserved place policy (similar to that for primary and secondary schools).
- Setting appropriate tolerance levels for when we would increase the nursery class capacity to meet increased catchment area demand.

- 2.4 **Provision for 2 year olds** - The Act includes for the provision of 600 hours early learning and childcare for 2 year old children who are either looked after or the subject of a Kinship Care Order.

Social Work Services are responsible for providing support to these families. Education Services have made places available for Social Work to accommodate the needs of these children.

- 2.5 **Review of Current Provision:** As approved by Education Executive on 4 February 2014, Education Services will ascertain parents' views and experiences of the new provision for 3 and 4 year olds (Phase 1). This informal consultation will be undertaken by Easter and the findings will be reported back to Education Executive in due course.

3. PHASE 2 IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE (2 year olds)

- 3.1 **Implementation Strategy** - Consistent with the Phase 1 Implementation Strategy, Education Executive approved that provision for these 2 year olds is made available in each Ward by:

- Extending our current infrastructure.
- Increasing staffing to meet the increased capacity.
- Purchasing places from voluntary sector placing.

- 3.2 **Provision** - The current position in regard to provision in each Ward is as follows:

Table 2 **2 year old provision in each Ward**

Ward	Provided by:	Available from	Projected demand 2014-15
Ward 1 Bo'ness & Blackness	Purchased places from Barnardos	In place now	18
Ward 2 Grangemouth	Rannoch Nursery (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	31
Ward 3 Denny/Banknock	Denny Nursery (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	22
Ward 4 Carse/Kinnaird/Tryst	Inchlair Nursery School (internal modifications)	In place now	17
Ward 5 Bonnybridge & Larbert	Bonnybridge Primary School (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	15
Ward 6 Falkirk North	Purchased places from Creche Matters & Aberlour	In place now	39
Ward 7 Falkirk South	Camelon Nursery (install modular accommodation)	Easter 2015	26
Ward 8 Lower Braes	Laurieston Primary School (internal modifications)	January 2015	14
Ward 9 Upper Braes	Purchased places from One Parent Families Scotland	In place now	14
TOTAL			196

3.3 Currently Education Services have received around **60** enquiries from families who are seeking this provision. We are working with these families to help both confirm their eligibility and to establish where the most suitable placement would be.

3.4 Education Executive is asked to note and approve the following change of locations:

- **Ward 2** - Provision will now be at Rannoch Nursery rather than Beancross Primary School.
- **Ward 3** - Provision will now be at Denny Nursery rather than Denny Primary School.

Note: Reason for Change

In both cases the reason for this is to reduce the risk of us not having enough space within the school grounds to allow us to accommodate future capacity expansion needs at these schools.

3.5 The estimated completion dates for installation of the modular accommodation in Wards 2, 3, 5 and 7 will now be Easter 2015, to take account of design, procurement and installation needs. In the meantime short-term places will be offered as required utilising the voluntary sector or other available capacity elsewhere.

3.6 **Staffing** - The 12 additional staff have now been recruited.

4. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 **Additional Revenue and Capital Funding Received** - All of the proposed changes within this paper will be funded from the additional revenue and capital funding that has been provided:

Table 3		Additional Funding £000	
		Revenue	Capital
• Phase 1 (3 & 4 year olds)	2014-15	1,559	918
	2015-16	2,265	901
• Phase 2 (2 year olds)	2014-15	478	1,149
	2015-16	1,404	1,093

4.2 The Scottish Government has now confirmed additional capital funding of £1.093m (2 year olds) for 2015/16.

5. EQUALITIES AND POVERTY ASSESSMENT

5.1 There is no change to the previously reported assessment.

6. NEXT STEPS/WAY FORWARD

6.1 To support the ongoing implementation of Phases 1 and 2 we will require to:

3 and 4 year olds - (Phase 1)

- Establish 3 additional early years campuses, in Wards 1 and 8 before the end of this session and in Ward 5 during school session 2015-16 (section 2.1a).

- Develop further proposals for increasing capacity within Ward 4 (section 2.1b(i)).
- Reassess the need to improve our outdoor play and learning infrastructure (section 2.2).
- Review the Early Years Admission Policy (section 2.3).
- Progress a follow up consultation (section 2.5)

2 year olds - (Phase 2)

- Complete the installation of modular accommodation in Wards 2, 3, 5 and 7 by Easter 2015 (section 3.4).
- Offer alternative short-term places where needed in the meantime either through the voluntary sector or utilising available capacity from elsewhere within our early years provision (section 3.4).
- Confirm how the additional 2015-16 capital funding (section 4.2) will be utilised.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Education Executive are asked to note the:

- (i) implementation position as detailed in Sections 2 and 3; and
- (ii) financial position as detailed in Section 4.

7.2 Education Executive are asked to agree the:

- (i) review of the Early Years Admission Policy as set out in section 2.3;
- (ii) change of locations as detailed in section 3.3; and
- (iii) next steps/way forward set out in Section 6.

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Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 20 January 2015

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil