



Agenda Item 8

**Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)
– 2020 Expansion Plan Update**

Falkirk Council

Title: Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) – 2020 Expansion Plan Update
Meeting: Education Executive
Date: 6 November 2018
Submitted By: Director of Children’s Services

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides:

- confirmation of the Year 1 projects delivered;
- an update on progress with infrastructure and expansion timeframes and plans for Year 2 (2019);
- information relating to properties, that through the Strategic Property Review, have become available to be considered for Early Years purposes; and
- general updates on other associated ELC workstreams.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education Executive is asked to:

- (i) note the successful delivery of the Year 1 (2018) projects (Section 4.1);
- (ii) note the plans to review and re-assess the delivery timeframes for Year 2 projects (Section 4.2);
- (iii) agree that the Director of Children’s Services can progress consultation with parents and other stakeholders on the plans to consider and utilise alternative properties (Section 4.3); and
- (iv) request that the Director of Children’s Services continues to provide the Education Executive with progress updates on the ELC expansion plans and the feedback from the consultations agreed at 2.1 (iii).

3. Background

3.1 Ten projects have been successfully brought ‘on-stream’ to deliver 1140 hours early years provision across the Falkirk area for 506 young people. An additional 57 front-line staff have also been recruited in time to meet the delivery timeframes. Attention now focuses on delivering the planned Year 2 expansion projects in a pragmatic and phased manner.

3.2 As agreed by Executive on 14 August 2018, the undernoted properties, following work undertaken by the Strategic Property Review, will become vacant in the future and as a result, can be considered as to their suitability for Early Years use.

- Stenhousemuir Social Work Office
- Kinglass Social Work Office, Bo'ness

3.3 In addition to the above properties, the former private nursery at Callendar Business Park is now also available to be considered for potential Early Years use.

4. Considerations

4.1 Year 1 Projects Now Fully Delivered and Operational (10)

<u>Establishment</u>	<u>Capacity 3-5s</u>	<u>Capacity E2s</u>	<u>Head of Centre</u>	<u>PEYO</u>	<u>SEYO</u>	<u>EYO</u>	<u>ELC Asst</u>	<u>Total Staff</u>
Bowhouse	56	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	7.00	3	11.00
Carmuir	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5.00	2	8.00
Easter Carmuir	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5.00	2	8.00
Langlees	64:64	N/A	1	1	2	9.25	3	16.25
Nethermains	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	4.00	2	7.00
St Mary's	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	4.00	2	7.00
St Joseph's	32	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	2.00	2	5.00
St Bernadette's	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	4.00	2	7.00
Slamannan	40	10	N/A	N/A	2	7.00	2	11.00
Whitecross	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	2.00	2	5.00
Overall Totals	496	10	1	1	12	49.25	22	85.25

The above projects reflect the delivery of 8 planned projects and the acceleration of 2 further projects at Nethermains and Whitecross Primary Schools, where earlier opportunities to install outdoor shelters and register outdoor space were successfully realised.

4.2 Year 2 Project Expansion Plans - Update

Having reflected on the delivery timeframes used for the Year 1 projects, Officers are currently assessing the Year 2 planned implementation dates with a view to phasing them in over an appropriate time period, and in a pragmatic manner. Details of these proposed phasing arrangements will be provided in the next report to Education Executive.

4.3 Potential Use of Other Available Properties

In order to fully assess the potential and suitability of the properties referred to in section 3.2 and 3.3, it is proposed that Children's Services undertake consultations with parents and other stakeholders to consider the following options:

- (i) Stenhousemuir Social Work Office
Consult on the option to amalgamate and consolidate existing provision at both Larbert Day and Inclair Nurseries on site at the Stenhousemuir Social Work Office.
- (ii) Kinglass Social Work Office
Consult on the option to use the Kinglass Site for Early Years Provision as an alternative to a planned extension at Kinneil Primary School.
- (iii) Nursery at Callendar Business Park
Consider and consult on the options that would be available if the Callendar Business Park Nursery could be utilised for Early Years Expansion. This would consider if and how existing provision at Queen Street Nursery, Woodburn Nursery, Victoria Primary School and Laurieston Primary School could be better configured to meet early years expansion aspirations.

As the Scottish Government relaxed the requirement to undertake statutory consultations when amalgamating or moving existing early years provision, Children's Services will undertake an 'informal consultation' with the undernoted groups and stakeholders:

- parents and parent Councils (where appropriate);
- staff; and
- Local Elected Members.

4.4 Childminders

Following a successful information session, 19 local childminders applied to becoming ELC Partner Childminders. Following home visits arranged jointly between SCMA and Council Officers to assess suitability, contracts have been issued. As a result, 5 children are now receiving part of their 1140 hours provision via a 'blended approach' between a local authority partner provider and a childminder. Partnership work with the SCMA is already underway to recruit childminders for the next expansion phase.

4.5 Central Early Years Support Team

In order to support both the significant staffing and resources workload, the central support team has recruited an additional Support Officer. This post is funded from the additional revenue resources provided and will also have a key role in identifying the demand for, and the recruitment of supply staff and for tracking and monitoring of resources.

5. **Consultation**

- 5.1 As outlined in section 4.3, it is proposed that consultation exercised are undertaken to assess whether the alternative property options now available, offer best value and meet the suitability and capacity requirements.

If approved, then consultation on these options will be carried out between November 2018 and January 2019. A report on the outcome of these consultations will be presented at a future meeting of the Education Executive.

6. Implications

Financial / Resources

- 6.1 All project expansion plans are assessed and undertaken on the basis that both revenue and capital costs will be within the overall financial resource package provided. Details of the Year 1 actual project costs and Year 2 planned project costings will be provided in the next Education Executive report.

Legal

- 6.2 Current plans have been developed in recognition of the relevant statutory guidance that has been issued in relation to the early years learning and childcare duties within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Risk

- 6.3 The key inherent risks associated with this major project are:

- delivery of infrastructure expansion projects on time;
- ensuring that planned expenditure is kept in line with resources;
- ensuring we have sufficient staff recruited on time.

Equalities

- 6.4 Where it is possible to do so, deprivation rankings (free school meal entitlement) will be used as a basis to prioritise early years expansion plans. This provides a clear and recognised methodology for expansion planning and supports the aim of reducing inequalities and improve outcomes in a targeted manner.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.5 None.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Following the successful delivery of 10 projects as part of the Year 1 plans, Officers are now concentrating on developing and re-appraising plans for the Year 2 projects. Given the volume of planned projects, Officers are assessing implementing them on a phased basis, learning from and utilising the knowledge, experiences and challenges that arose and were gained from implementing the Year 1 projects.
- 7.2 Outcomes from the Strategic Property Review has also provided Officers with the exciting opportunity of considering a number of other properties for potential Early Years use. Such opportunities and development synergies, may provide

better and more cost effective building solutions that can support the challenging early years expansion programme in a way that delivers best value advantages and final outcomes earlier. Further details on the assessment and consultation on these property options will be provided in a later report.

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Date: 16 October 2018

Appendices:

- None

List of Background Papers:

- None