



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: 26 March 2019
Submitted By: Director of Children’s Services

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides the Education Executive with:

- an update on Children’s Services ELC Expansion Plans and progress; and
- details of new proposals that support the ELC Expansion and Implementation Plans.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Education Executive is asked to:

- (i) note the overall content of the updated progress report;
- (ii) agree to the proposals detailed in Section 4.3 to accelerate a further 3 projects;
- (iii) agree to the proposals in Section 4.4 (ii) to accelerate and support the implementation of 1140 hours across our Partner Provider Nurseries;
- (iv) agree to the proposals detailed in Section 4.5 to review and consider options around meal provision in our ELC establishments;
- (v) note the provision of additional funding as detailed in Section 4.8 and request that the Director of Children’s Services provide details on the funding bid at the next meeting;
- (vi) agree to the proposals to recruit additional staff as detailed in Section 4.8; and
- (vii) note the updated financial information showing new commitments in Section 6.

3. Background

3.1 Following agreement by the Education Executive on 29 January 2019, significant work has taken place to develop designs and access ELC options for Kinglass Social Work Office, Callendar Business Park Nursery, Inchlair Nursery School, Woodburn Day Nursery and Victoria Primary School.

- 3.2 In addition, and also as reported previously, discussions have been held with our Private Nursery Partners around supporting them with accelerated and phased implementation of 1140 hours.
- 3.3 This report provides the Education Executive with updates on these 2 workstreams.

4. Considerations

4.1 Major Projects – Update

(i) Hallglen ELC Centre (Ward 7)

- The Design Team has undertaken significant work to finalise the project plan for this new establishment.
- The project cost is estimated to be c.£2.3m, which includes c.£0.3m to provide an on-site production kitchen that will also provide meals for several other establishments in the area.
- Work is expected to start on site by May 2019 with a current completion target date of December 2019 expected.

(ii) Kinnaird ELC Campus (Ward 4)

- Work is progressing well on site and the Early Years Campus is expected to open in August 2019.

(iii) Inchlair Amalgamated Site (Ward 4)

- The Design Team is currently working on the design specifications for the new amalgamated Early Learning Centre.

(iv) Callendar Business Park Nursery (Ward 7)

- Officers are currently liaising with the Asset Management Team to finalise taking on the lease for this establishment and to progress the plans for the internal layout.
- It is planned that this establishment will provide capacity for approximately 40 x 3-5 year olds and will be available from August 2019.
- The capacity for the outdoor (satellite) site has still to be determined by The Care Inspectorate.

(v) Woodburn ELC Centre (Ward 6)

- The Design Team are currently working on the design and specification options for the EL Centre on-site.

(vi) Victoria (Ward 5)

- Plans to increase the capacity from 30:30 to 64 are being considered.
- Internal refurbishment work is planned for summer 2019 along with the provision of an outdoor shelter and storage unit.
- The new facility will provide a model 1A from August 2019.

(vii) Kinglass Social Work Office (Ward 1)

- Work is progressing with both the Asset Management Team and the Design Team to ensure that the project specification addresses the matters raised during both the consultation exercise and at the Education Executive on 29 January 2019.

- Details of these plans will be reported to the next Education Executive.

4.2 Update on Current Agreed Projects

The undernoted information provides an update on the projects that were reported to and agreed by the Education Executive on 29 January 2019.

- (i) February 19 – April 19 Projects (5) – Phase 2
Delivered or 'on-track' for April 2019 opening.
- (ii) August 19 – April 20 Projects (8) – Phase 3
All currently 'on-track' for delivery as planned.

4.3 Proposals to Accelerate the Delivery of Further Projects (3) – Phase 4

- Officers have assessed the undernoted projects and have considered it is possible, within the resources available, to accelerate and bring them 'on-stream' earlier than was previously planned:

Project/ Establishment	Proposed Delivery Date	Model	Capacity	Work Required To Be Undertaken
Camelon ELC Centre	Jan/Feb 20	3	40 x E2's 48 x 3-5's	Internal Works
Denny ELC Centre	Jan/Feb 20	3	40 x E2's 56 x 3-5's	Internal Works
Wallacestone PS	Jan/Feb 20	1A	80	Internal Works
Total Proposed Accelerated Capacity			80 x E2's 184 x 3-5's	

- If approved, it would mean that plans are in place to have 26 projects completed by February 2020, which would provide 1140 hour capacity for 1,486 places (100 x E2's and 1,386 x 3-5's).

4.4 Proposals to Accelerate Implementation of 1140 hours within Partner Provider Nurseries

- (i) Following meetings with Partner Providers and the Scottish Government's Early Years Team, Children's Services are proposing that support should be provided to allow and support Partner Providers with:
 - phasing in the implementation of 1140 hours;
 - the provision of some additional capacity to support them progressing their plans for delivering 1140 hours to ensure that their staff and their premises meet the requirements. This may include staff training, assessing how meals will be delivered or how external space could be configured and registered to increase their capacity; and
 - offering increased packages that will provide additional flexibility to parents.

(ii) Children's Services are therefore proposing the following:

- that all existing Private Partner Nurseries (13) can increase their existing funding place offer from 600 hours to 940 hours from the start of the new term in August 2019;
- that the current hourly rate paid to them be increased from £3.75 hour to £5 hour, also with effect from April 2019; and
- that the sum of £65,000 is allocated to support them with any training, support or transitional work that may be required to meet the aims of Falkirk's overall ELC 1140 Expansion Plans.

(iii) All of the above proposals can be met from the 2019/20 financial resources available and are costed in Section 6.2.

4.5 Proposals to Develop New Method of Meal Provision and Delivery for Early Years Establishments

(i) With the implementation of 1140 hours, children can now be in ELC settings for up to 10 hours per day. This poses a challenge around providing a meal at lunchtime, as this may on its own, not meet the needs of many children, who currently are used to a more "snack/pick-n-mix" based provision over a longer period of the day.

(ii) Some Early Years and Catering Staff within our ELC establishments already offering 1140 hours, have looked at the challenges that a "formalised" setting and meal delivery service present for many of our "wee people". They have come-up with a number of interesting and exciting alternative delivery options under the banner "Marvellous Mealtimes in Falkirk".

(iii) Children's Services are therefore proposing that a Senior Cook is seconded for a period of up to 23 months to work with staff, parents and our "wee people" in our Early Years establishments to consider how best to review new and innovative approaches around:

- portion sizes;
- meal/menu choices;
- nutritional content;
- a 3-tiered delivery model (meals, pick-n-mix and snacks);
- provision and serving food in ELC rooms; and
- suitable furniture and equipment for our "wee people" to use.

(iv) In addition, Children's Services are also proposing that from August 2019, all existing charges for nursery snacks cease. Instead, Children's Services will develop an alternative model that will provide schools and all our Early Years establishments with funding for this, without the need to charge parents.

This supports the Council's Poverty Strategy and eliminates the bureaucracy associated with cash collection and the stigma attached to dealing with non-payment.

It is estimated that this change will cost c.£125,000 per annum. The existing revenue funding will cover this cost.

4.6 Early Learning and Childcare Workforce Development Strategy

Workforce development is a key driver of the 1140 hours expansion in Falkirk. An impressively high number of Modern Apprentices were recruited in 2017/18 and 2018/19 with the aim of being fully qualified by the August 2020 implementation date. This has proven to be a highly effective strategy with 29 MA's already being appointed to posts to support the early implementation of 1140 hours. It is anticipated that a further 16 MAs will be ready to qualify for the final implementation date of August 2020.

The further plans to expand the workforce to include ELC Assistants provides Officers with exciting opportunities to review the Workforce Development Strategy. This work is a key driver to "professionalising" our early years workforce and some of the aims are:

- To create a diverse workforce
- To proactively address the gender and age imbalance
- To provide opportunities for an accredited programme of "on the job" training.

Children's Services estimate that between now and August 2019, a further 75fte posts will be recruited.

4.7 Early Learning and Childcare – Realising Change Funding

- The Scottish Government confirmed by letter (16th January 2019), that they had made a total of £4m of additional funding available nationally over 2 financial years, 2018-19 and 2019-20 with the aim:
 - to procure additional change and programme management capacity to deliver the expansion of funded ELC by August 2020 and realise the vision of the Funding Follows the Child service model;
 - to provide backfill to release existing staff to provide change and programme management capacity to deliver the expansion of funded ELC by August 2020 and to realise the vision of the Funding Follows the Child service model; and
 - to enable smooth transition to the Funding Follows the Child service model by August 2020, including ensuring that parents understand the changes and are enabled to make informed decisions about accessing their child's ELC entitlement and supporting partners to build or maintain capacity to deliver the expanded entitlement.
- Falkirk's share of this funding is £123,840.
- Officers are currently working on an outline plan for the use of these funds which is due to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 29 March 2019.

4.8 Central ELC Team

- To support the quality delivery and the additional workload being generated from the requirement to monitor the new National Standards delivery model across all of our ELC provision, Children's Services propose to recruit the following posts:
 - 1 x Quality Improvement Officer (ELC)
 - 1 x Team Leader (ELC)

- The posts were included in the final agreed funding submission made in 2017 and are fully funded from the revenue funding.

4.9 Parental Information and Communication

- The Early Years Team is continually working with Headteachers/Heads of Centres to communicate the changes being introduced in our ELC delivery provision to parents.
- The Early Years Team is also currently holding information evenings for parents of the new establishments that will be brought “on-stream” in the next phase of expansion.
- It is important that Officers continually review and consider a range of different and innovative ways to communicate and deliver the key messages surrounding the expansion plans.

4.10 Review of Current Admissions Policy

- Officers will also shortly be undertaking work to review our existing Admissions Policy ahead of the 2020/21 implementation date to ensure it is aligned to meet the requirements of both catchment areas and ward provision.
- Full details of these changes will be brought to a future meeting of the Education Executive.

5. **Consultation**

- 5.1 Officers will continue to consult with appropriate stakeholders as required as the Expansion Plans continue to evolve, develop, progress and are implemented.

6. **Implications**

Financial / Resources

6.1 Capital Funding

- As many of our larger projects will start during 2019/20, it is expected that significant capital expenditure will be incurred in this year.
- Officers from Children’s, Development and Finance Services will continue to monitor this expenditure against the available resources.

6.2 Revenue Funding

If the proposals contained in this report are agreed, then the following revenue commitments will be made:

	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
(i) <u>Private Partner Providers</u>		
• Increase hourly rate to £5 from April 19)	£431,000	£218,500
• Increase funded hours to 940 from August 19)		
• Funding support for 1140 expansion	£ 65,000	£ -

(ii)	<u>Development of School Meals</u>		
	• Senior Cook Secondment (23 months)	£ 25,000	£ 25,000
	• Removal of snack charges in nurseries	£ 80,000	£ 45,000
(iii)	<u>Central Support</u>		
	• Recruitment of 1 x QIO (ELC)	£ 54,000	£ 33,000
	• Recruitment of 1 x Team Leader (ELC)	£ 49,000	£ 29,000
	TOTAL COMMITMENTS	£704,000	£350,500

Note: All of the above commitments can be funded from the funding that has been provided by the Scottish Government.

Legal

- 6.3 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

- 6.4 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; and
 - potential disruption to the supply chain as a result of price inflation or non-availability of materials linked to Brexit.

Equalities

- 6.5 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 improving outcomes in a targeted manner.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 If the proposals outlined in Section 4.5 are agreed, it is hoped that this will lead to a reduction in food wastage within our ELC settings.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This report highlights the significant and positive work that has been undertaken by both the Early Years and Design Teams to progress Falkirk's ELC Expansion Plans and also updates on a number of challenging but exciting major projects and additional workstreams that are also in progress.
- 7.2 Overall, it provides a level of confidence and assurance that Falkirk remains 'on-track' to meet the delivery of this ambitious national programme.

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Appendices: None

List of Background Papers: None