

EE51. Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) 1140 Hour Expansion Plan Update

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided: an update on progress with the ELC expansion plans; information on ongoing key infrastructure projects; details of the financial position of major projects, and details regarding agreement of a "sustainable rate" for private partner nurseries.

The ELC expansion plans were largely on track to be delivered by August 2020 prior to the impact of lockdown. Children's and Development Services had been liaising with contractors regarding all elements of the remaining workstreams.

The standalone ELC Centre at Maddiston Primary School was an integral element of the overall £4.016m capital project to extend capacity at the school. The lowest tender was around £0.3m higher than initially estimated. To address the gap it was proposed to fund this by borrowing the additional £0.3m capital required from current ELC revenue resources.

At Denny Primary School the former Community Learning Development (CLD) property was being extended to provide a nursery class. The initial tender for the overall project was c£0.9m above the construction budget of c£2.7m. Following some design reengineering the new tender for the revised project plan had been received for c£3.3m. The ELC element was £1.3m, with an original allocation of c£0.8m. It was proposed that the gap was funded by borrowing an additional £0.5m capital funded from current ELC revenue resources.

Discussions had taken place with partner providers over the summer regarding the assessment and agreement of a "sustainable rate". To enable new contracts to be issued for 2020/21 the Director of Children's Services approved, under delegated authority, to set the rate at £6.05 per hour. The rate included £0.35 for meal/snack provision and a temporary £0.15 in respect of addressing additional COVID related costs on a short term basis. The new rate had been paid from Wednesday 12 August 2020.

The Service was completing the final recruitment phase to deliver a total core ELC workforce of c540 FTE posts to deliver 1140 expansion plans. In addition to those core posts extra staffing resources had also been provided across cleaning, catering, caretaking and central service areas.

Decision

The Emergency Executive:-

- (1) agreed the proposals to allocate additional funding to the ELC projects as detailed in Sections 4.1 (i) and (ii) of the report;**
- (2) endorsed the decision made by the Director of Children's Services, under delegated authority, as detailed in Section 4.2 of the report;**

- (3) agreed to increase the Central Support Team by 2 FTE as detailed in Section 4.7 of the report, and**
- (4) noted the financial position summarised in Sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the report.**