



Agenda Item 6

**Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) –
1140 Expansion Plan Update**

Falkirk Council

Title: Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) – 1140 Expansion Plan Update
Meeting: Education, Children and Young People Executive
Date: 1 June 2021
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Education, Children and Young People Executive (ECYP) with:
- an update on progress with the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Plans;
 - updated information on the Scottish Governments Temporary Restrictions Fund (TRF), the Deferred Places Pilot, ELC Capacity and Progress Reports;
 - updated information on further proposals to enhance early intervention approaches; and
 - an overview of the current financial position.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Education, Children and Young People Executive is asked to:

- (i) note the overall content of this update report;
- (ii) note the updates provided on the remaining projects as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (iii) agree to the proposals outlined in Sections 4.2 and 4.6 regarding additional recruitment to support both the Deferred Places Pilot and the administration of the new Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme;
- (iv) agree to the proposals outlined in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 regarding progressing with Phases 5 and 6 of the Early Intervention Strategies;
- (v) agree the name of the new ELCC Centre as proposed in Section 4.9;
- (vi) note the proposals outlined in Sections 4.7, 4.8 and 4.10 and request further information on these is brought to the EC&YP Executive at a later date; and
- (vii) note the current 2021/22 financial position as detailed in Section 6.1.

3. Background

3.1 National Context

The Scottish Government's associated Working Groups are now focussing on the final months of the infrastructure expansion plans. The Scottish Future Trust (SFT) will be in regular communication with all councils to seek updates and offer advice and support on all remaining projects. It is accepted that due to Covid factors, a number of infrastructure projects currently in place will not be completed until after August 2021, so it is important that short-term contingency arrangements are in place to mitigate this.

3.2 Local Context

The focus for Officers from Children's Services and Development Services is now completely on liaising with contractors, sub-contractors, utility companies and Planning/Building Control Teams to deal with any on-site matters and to ensure that all remaining projects are completed as quickly as possible. Officers have also ensured that appropriate contingency plans are in place for the projects that are known to have a completion date beyond August 2021 and reference to these are contained in the detailed project update in **Appendix 1**.

4. Considerations

4.1 Remaining Projects – Update

There are currently **12** larger work and **3** minor work projects that remain in progress. Updated details of these and the estimated completion dates are contained in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Deferred Places Pilot

At present, there are **c230** children that have been registered for a deferred place in ELC establishments from August 2021. As the number of deferrals has increased from that of previous years it is proposed that the Central ELC Team is increased by **2.0fte** on a temporary basis for 1 year to oversee and develop the play pedagogy and learning provision that is offered to 5 year olds, ensuring also that our qualified ELC staff are trained and supported to deliver this across all establishments. This will also ensure that those children are well placed to transition to Primary 1. It is proposed that £65k, from the £0.8m of additional funding that the Scottish Government has provided to support this pilot project, is earmarked for this in the current financial year.

4.3 Developments to Support Early Intervention Strategies

To further progress and support vital early intervention approaches, Phases 5 and 6 of the strategy outline proposals to expand community childminders and Educational Psychology provision:

4.3.1 Phase 5 - Community Childminders

- Learning from phased implementation of 1140 hours since 2018 has identified the need to consider a range of options for children who reach the age of being entitled to 1140 hours and who either:
 - have known additional support needs; or
 - require intensive nurture support due to their development stage.
- It is commonly recognised that for some children, placement in a setting for the full 1140 on its' own is not sufficient to meet their needs.
- It is proposed that a cohort of Community Childminders are employed to provide care and support to children who would benefit most from a blended support model where they can access both types of settings/provision. This would form part of a staged enhanced transition approach that would support children in building-up to maintaining a full-time placement in a setting.
- Following up from previous discussions at EC&YP Executive statistics showing the number of partner childminders across Falkirk and uptake per ward are:

Council Ward	Number of Partner Childminder	Number of Childminders providing funded ELC	Availability
Ward 1	4	3	+1
Ward 2	13	6	+7
Ward 3	21	15	+6
Ward 4	11	8	+3
Ward 5	14	9	+5
Ward 6	4	4	0
Ward 7	2	1	+1
Ward 8	15	13	+2
Ward 9	2	1	+1
TOTAL	87	60	+27

- It is proposed that an additional **10** partner Childminders are recruited to augment availability in Wards 1, 6, 7, 8 & 9. The Service will continue to work with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) for this purpose.
- The estimated annual cost of this is c**£60k** and can be met from existing funding.

4.3.2 Phase 6 – Educational Psychology Services

- Across the Early Years' Service, it is important that robust needs-based assessments are undertaken to prioritise and enable support to be provided to children, parents and families where it is required.

- It is proposed that a Childcare Allocation, Review and Evaluation (CARE) Group is formed to support such a system.
- Engagement with other local authorities who use a similar approach identified that the Educational Psychology Services are crucial to this process. This is supported by external evaluations of Educational Psychology Services by HMle.
- To support this CARE Group, it is further proposed that a 1 x fte Senior Educational Psychologist is recruited specifically with a remit for Early Years Early Intervention. Their key responsibility would be to provide strategic leadership of the CARE Group by acting as Chair and to progress decisions on behalf of the Service.
- It is estimated that this will cost c£85k per annum which can be met from existing funding.

4.4 Temporary Restrictions Fund (TRF)

The undernoted funding rounds have now closed and the ELC Team have processed the undernoted funding grants:

Round	Claim Period	No. of Payments	Total payments	Notes
1	4/1/21 – 29/1/21	13	£ 25,763	1
2	1/2/21 – 26/2/21	33	£ 50,043	2
3	1/3/21 – 26/3/21	TBC	TBC	3

Note

1. Round 1 covered core support payments to those Registered Childcare providers that were open.
2. Round 2 covered core grant payments to Registered Childcare providers that remained open. It also provided an additional support grant (£21,280) for all providers whether they were open or closed.
3. Round 3 covers payment to those Registered Childcare establishments that provide for school aged children only.
4. All appropriate financial reconciliations and returns have been submitted to the Scottish Government on time.
5. All payments are fully covered by grant income received.

4.5 Improvement Service (IS) Progress Report Updates

Falkirk have submitted progress reports to the IS as required and covering the following periods:

<u>Progress Update at</u>	<u>Submitted By</u>
W/c 22/2/21	15/3/21
W/c 26/4/21	12/5/21

Our latest return showed that there were **3,728** children in ELC placements:

- 2 year olds 174
- 3&4 year olds 3,339
- 5 year olds 215
- **Total 3,728**

An analysis of the sector placements is shown below:

- Local Authority 3,151 (84%)
- Private Nurseries 441 (12%)
- Childminders 136 (4%)
- **Total 3,728 (100%)**

4.6 Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme

- The Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2021 will introduce a scheme, known as the “Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme” in Scotland to replace the UK Nursery Milk Scheme.
- The Scheme aims to ensure that as many eligible ELC children receive a daily serving of milk and a healthy snack to support the development of healthy eating habits for later life. This supports Falkirk’s approach to snack and mealtimes (Marvellous Mealtimes) in ELC settings as part of the focus on health and wellbeing within the 1140 expansion programme.
- The scheme is open to all ELC settings and Childminders to help provide a daily portion of milk and a healthy snack (fruit or vegetables) for eligible pre-school children who spend 2 hours or more in their settings.
- As part of the Scottish Government’s plans funding will be provided to local authorities to administer the scheme and to make payments directly to eligible childcare providers who meet and comply with the scheme rules.
- It is planned that registration for the new scheme will be completed by 31 May 2021 and that the new scheme will commence from August 2021.
- To support the administration of the scheme and to help oversee and develop the nutritional content of school meal provision as part of the Marvellous Mealtimes project it is proposed that a **1fte** x Administration Officer is recruited. The funding of this necessary post is estimated at **c£45k** per annum and will come directly from the associated administration grant that the Council will receive.

4.7 Proposed Review to ELC Admission Policy

The current ELC Admissions Policy was revised to support the phased implementation of 1140 hours in 2018. Given the statutory implementation for all entitled children, the policy will be reviewed to include the new operational processes that must be considered as part of the wider Policy for the administration of places. These processes relate to:

- Blended care between provider types.

- Allocation of blended care requests to ensure full entitlement for all eligible children.
- Minimum attendance to maximise occupancy, ensure continuity for children and secure best value.

As part of this review, Officers will also consider those schools where ELC capacity could not be increased and the potential for displacement this has on some catchment children particularly 3 year olds. Further details of these changes will be brought to a future EC&YP Executive Meeting.

4.8 Internal Workforce Review

- The ELC workforce was restructured and developed to support the 1140 expansion and comprises: leader/manager; lead practitioners; practitioners; support staff.
- Considerable investment has also been made in support staff (ELC Assistants and Support for Learning Assistants) to enable Falkirk to 'grow our own' practitioner workforce to support the ambitious expansion programme.
- The level of staff movement from support level to practitioner level provides the opportunity for Officers to review the balance of lead/practitioner level staff and support staff against the size of each establishment.
- It is proposed that Officers undertake this review on a setting by setting basis as it is likely that the capacity for leadership/management in some larger ELC classes may need to be increased to align with similar sized ELCC's.
- Any outcomes would require to be funded from existing funding levels. resources.

4.9 Naming of New Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCCs)

In line with previous practice, Officers have consulted with parents, staff and Local Members on the preferred options for the new names for the undernoted ELCCs and have put forward the undernoted proposed name change(s):

- Denny ELCC – proposed new name is **Myot View ELCC**

4.10 Sustainable Rate Payments to Private Partner Nurseries from August 2021

Officers are currently in the process of liaising locally with private partners and nationally through ADES to assess what uplift should be provided to the current hourly rates. Members are reminded that the current rate is:

- Core hourly rate £ 5.45
- Short term Covid support £ 0.10
- Meal/Snack payment £ 0.35
- Current Total Hourly Rate £ 5.90**

As these discussions are on-going an update will be provided to the EC&YP Executive in September 2021. It is proposed that the Director of Children's Services will make a decision on this under delegated powers, subject to it being within the current 2021-22 available budget resources.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Officers will continue to consult with appropriate stakeholders including parents, trade unions and colleagues working on the Strategic Property Review as required as the Expansion Plans continue to be developed and rolled out.

6. Implications

Financial/Resources

- 6.1 Summary of Current Years Financial Position (2021/22).

Funding Stream	Funding Available 21-22 (£000s)	Notes
Revenue	c£18.5m	-
Capital	c£ 6.0m	2

Note:

1. The above funds are both ring-fenced.
 2. The capital funding includes funds carried over from 2020-21 and CFCR adjustments.
- 6.2 The financial commitments within the proposals outlined in Sections 4.2, 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.6 can all be met from the existing project revenue funds for 2021-22 or from additional grant income specified.

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;

- potential disruption to the supply chain as a result of price inflation or non-availability of materials linked to Brexit;
- the potential impact that any current or future COVID/lockdown decisions may have on all aspects of the overall expansion plans; and
- Officers are considering and reviewing contingency plans in liaison with external providers.

Note: Details of contingency plans, where it is known projects will complete after August 2021 are detailed also in **Appendix 1**.

Equalities

- 6.5 The current plans for early intervention strategies aim to provide more targeted and prioritised support to those children who have additional support needs and strengthen the interface and linkage with vulnerable families.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.6 All project infrastructure work has been developed in a way that supports and enhances the quality of our school estate. Many aspects of this work have also augmented and improved energy efficiency targets and our overall aim to meet national climate change ambitions, this has included the replacement of older buildings.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 In addition to providing updates to the infrastructure projects that are currently in progress, this report also highlights the range and diversity of additional workstreams that are intrinsically aligned to this project. The plans particularly around the Early Intervention Strategies are proactive, creative and exciting. When these are developed and embedded across the various Service areas they will provide specialist additional and valuable interventions to support those children and families who require it.

Director of Children's Services

Author: Gary Greenhorn, Head of Planning and Resources; 01324 506681;
gary.greenhorn@falkirk.gov.uk

Date:

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Details of Outstanding ELC 1140 Infrastructure Projects at 20 Dec 2021.

List of Background Papers:

- Education & Children and Young People Executive – ELC1140 Update Reports

Section 1 – Larger Work Projects to be Completed (12)

WARD	ESTABLISHMENT / PROJECT	UPDATE	ESTIMATED DELIVERY OF 1140	CAPACITY	CURRENT EST. COSTS £000s	CONTINGENCY PLANS
1	Kinglass ELC Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor started on site. Estimated completion date – Summer 2021. 	August'21	40 - 3-5yr olds 10 - 2yr olds 3 - Babies	£500 +	N/A
2	Abbotsgrange ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor started on site. Estimated completion date – June'21. 	August'21	88 - 3-5yr olds	£500 +	N/A
2	Beancross PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remaining building works scheduled for Summer 2021. Estimated completion date – Summer 2021. 	Currently delivering 1140	64 - 3-5yr olds	£50-200k	N/A
3	Head of Muir PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender accepted. Contractor started on site. Estimated completion date – Summer 2021 	August'21	64 - 3-5yr olds	£500 +	N/A
3	Denny PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work due to start 14 June'21. Estimated completion date – December'21 	December'21	56 - 3-5yr olds	£500 +	40 children will be accommodated at Denny PS and 16 children will be accommodated at Nethermain PS until new build is completed.
4	Inchlair Amalgamated Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular units due to be installed June'21. Estimated completion date – October'21 	Est. October'21	80 - 3-5yr olds 40 - 2yr olds 12 - Babies	£500 +	1140 being delivered at Larbert Day ELCC until new build is ready.
4	Carron PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site start scheduled July'21 Estimated completion date – August'21 	August'21	64 - 3-5yr olds	£500 +	N/A
4	Carronshore PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular units on-site works starts May'21. Estimated completion date – August'21. 	August'21	56 - 3-5yr olds	£500 +	N/A
6	Woodburn ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor due on site May'21. Estimated completion date – October'21. 	October'21	48 - 3-5yr olds 20 - 2yr olds	£500 +	1140 being provided at Queen Street ELCC until new building is complete.
6	Callendar Park ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor due on site May'21. Estimated completion date – September'21 	September'21	40 - 3-5yr olds	£500 +	N/A
8	Westquarter PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drawings for internal and external works still to be finalised. Site start date – Summer 2021. 	August'21	48 - 3-5yr olds	£50-250k	N/A

WARD	ESTABLISHMENT / PROJECT	UPDATE	ESTIMATED DELIVERY OF 1140	CAPACITY	CURRENT EST. COSTS £000s	CONTINGENCY PLANS
9	Glendevon ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor started on site. Estimated completion date – October’21. 	Currently delivering 1140	96 - 3-5yr olds	£500+	Children will remain in Maddiston PS ELC Class until new build is complete.

Section 2 – Minor Work Projects to be Completed (3)

WARD	ESTABLISHMENT / PROJECT	UPDATE	ESTIMATED DELIVERY OF 1140	CAPACITY	CURRENT EST. COSTS £000s	Contingency plans
1	Bo’ness PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor kitchen alterations will be undertaken during Summer 2021. 	August’21	32 - 3-5yr olds	£10-50k	N/A
1	Deanburn PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Kitchen and decoration in modular annex. Site start 28 June’21. Estimated completion date – October’21. 	Currently delivering 1140	72 - 3-5yr olds	£10-50k	N/A
7	Glenburn ELCC (Hallglen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New establishment opened on February’20. Some external landscaping work has still to be completed. 	Currently delivering 1140	72 - 3-5yr olds 20 - 2yr olds	£10-50k	<u>CHECK COMPLETE</u>
5	Larbert Village PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor Kitchen alterations will be undertaken Summer 2021. 	August’21	32 - 3-5yr olds	£10-50k	N/A