



Agenda Item 8

**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: 9th November 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;
- details of proposed changes to the Early Years Admissions Policy; and
- updates information on the overall 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 infrastructure projects as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (iii) agree to the proposal to ring fence some capacity for under 2's as detailed in Section 4.2;
- (iv) agree to the adoption of the revised Admissions Policy (attached as Appendix 2), for the reasons outlined in Section 4.3;
- (v) agree to proposals for the options and choices for the delivery of statutory provision within ELC Centres as outlined in Section 4.4 and detailed in Appendix 3.
- (vi) note the updates provided in Sections 4.5 to 4.7 on other aspects of the project; and
- (vii) note the detailed financial position provided in Sections 6.1 and 6.2

3. Background

- All families in the Falkirk area can have access to 1140 hours of provision either via our own establishments, via our private partner nurseries or via our partner childminders.
- The challenges reported previously around Covid and procurement and availability of materials remain for those infrastructure projects that have still to be completed.

- Officers from both Children’s Services and Development Services continue to liaise with contractors/sub-contractors and the Care Inspectorate to ensure that any challenges are quickly identified and any options or solutions to resolve and progress projects are assessed.

4. Considerations

4.1 Remaining Infrastructure Projects

As both the Borrowstoun ELCC and Carron PS ELC establishments are now open, there are presently **6** projects that remain in progress, with **4** of these due to be completed within the next month. Details of these are contained in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Early Intervention Approaches - Targeted Childcare for 2 Year Olds

- The Scottish Government has widened the eligibility criteria for the provision of targeted Childcare for 2-year-olds to include parents who are care experienced.
- Falkirk has already actioned this change well ahead of the national implementation timescale and a bureaucracy-light approach has been adopted, based primarily on parental self-referrals.
- This expanded eligibility criteria, together with an increasing number of families now meeting the qualifying threshold for statutory provision for eligible 2-year-olds has resulted in a high demand locally for 2-year-old places.
- Whilst additional 2-year-old place capacity was provided at Borrowstoun ELCC (Ward 1) and at Langless ELCC (Ward 6), a further 10 places have also now been provided at Nethermain ELCC (Ward 3).
- In order to meet our obligations, further work is underway to redistribute physical and staffing capacity across the Early Years estate from non-statutory provision to enable capacity for targeted childcare for eligible 2-year-olds to be maximised.
- The Childcare Allocation, Review and Evaluation Group (CARE Group) continues to triage referrals from Education, Health and Social Work Teams in respect of children under 3 with additional support needs (ASN) or vulnerability.
- In order to support such referrals, it is proposed that some capacity for under 2s (babies) will need to be “ring fenced” within one ELCC in each of the east, west and central areas of Falkirk.

4.3 Proposed Changes to the Early Years Admissions Policy

- As Falkirk has delivered on the 1140-hour commitment, Officers have been reviewing the current Early Years Admissions Policy for 3 and 4-year-olds and reflecting on and considering the issues that have arisen over the past year in order to ensure fitness for purpose.

- The following amendments are therefore proposed:
 - Adopting a more efficiently and strategically aligned approach across all settings given that they are now delivering 1140 hours within the previously approved models.
 - Children with a sibling already attending their preferred nursery will now be prioritised for a place in the same establishment.
 - Children with ASN or affected by ASN will also be considered a priority.
 - All ELCCs have been aligned with local primary schools within their Wards to allow a priority to be given to children who would have been within the catchment of the nursery class prior to these becoming ELC centres.
 - A timeline showing the application and allocation processes has been included.
 - Greater clarification has been provided relating to split placement arrangements.
- If approved, the revised Admissions Policy (**Appendix 2**), will be used for the allocation of places for 3 and 4-year-olds from session August 2022.

4.4 **Review of 1140 Hour Statutory Entitlement Models within ELCCs**

- Officers have been assessing current demand levels against current capacity and delivery models with a view to optimising occupancy and throughput levels.
- The new proposals for options and choices for providing the statutory 1140 hours of ELC are outlined in Appendix 3.
- These proposals aim to ensure that staffing resources are more efficiently aligned to the statutory entitlement provision options that are made available to parents across our ELCC's within the agreed national staffing ratios. This also allows occupancy levels to be optimised within the available capacities and will provide some additional flexibility to cover staff absence which reduces the risk of service disruption.
- As the new admissions process for August 2022 term intake is due to start shortly it is proposed that these changes are introduced now for all new 3-year-old applications for the 2022-23 term.
- It is further proposed that any parents children that will return to ELCCs in August 2022 can if they wish, maintain their existing 1140 hours delivery pattern. This will ensure no existing families are impacted by these proposed changes.
- Discussions have been held with a small focus group of parents to explain these new proposed delivery models.

4.5 **Deferred Entry Processes**

- Falkirk continues to participate in the Scottish Government's Deferred Entry Pilot programme for deferring entry to primary school.

- Following feedback from Falkirk’s Deferred Entry Reference Group, information provided to parents and establishments as to the arrangements and timelines for allocating deferred entry places has been refreshed and improved:
 - Parents of children who are able to defer are required to notify Children’s Services of their decision by the end of February to allow nursery places to be allocated.
 - Applications received after that date will be dealt with in the later allocation window in May.
- The Central ELC Team will continue to offer support and advice to parents on this matter and information for parents will also be shared via the Council’s website and other social media platforms.

4.6 Early Learning and Childcare in Ward 1 (Bo’ness and Blackness)

- As Borrowstoun ELCC has now opened and provides sufficient capacity in Ward 1 for children 0-5 years whose parents wish to use extended day and/or full year provision. As a result of this establishment opening the temporary arrangements that were in place at the Kinneil ELC will from August 2022 cease, and this establishment will revert back to a Model 1a nursery class, in line with the ELC1140 Expansion Plan.

4.7 Submission of Progress Reporting to Improvement Service (IS)

- The Early Years Team recently completed and submitted progress report information to the IS in September 2021.
- Some of the key information provided was:
 - Estimated Eligible Cohorts:

	<u>Aug21</u>	<u>Jan22</u>	<u>Apr22</u>
• 2-year-olds	411	411	411
• 3-year-olds	794	1,317	1,587
• 4-year-olds	1,612	1,612	1,612
• 5-year-olds	285	285	285
• TOTALS	3,102	3,625	3,895

- Current Placement Analysis (Aug21):

	<u>LA Settings</u>		<u>PVI</u>	<u>CM</u>	<u>Totals</u>
• 2-year olds	100	45		20	165
• 3/4-year olds	1,990	125		75	2,190
• 5-year olds	215	5		0	220
• TOTALS	2,305	175	175	95	2,575

Note: The numbers of 3-year-old children will increase each month as children turn 3.

- Workforce (FTE)
 - Aug 21: Actual 658.3fte
 - Apr 22: Projected 674.7fte

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 Financial Position – Revenue 2021/22

Core Budget 2021-22	Expenditure Projection to 31/3/22	Projected Underspend at 31/3/22
£18.520m	£18.220m	(£0.300m)

6.2 Summary of Current Financial Position – Capital 2021/22

	Current Budget		£ 7.648m
Add:	Planned CFCR Adjustment	£ 1.000m	8.648m
Less:	Current Expenditure (ledger) at 12/10/21	(£ 3.441m)	5.207m
Less:	Estimated Expenditure for Current Projects	(£ 0.390m)	4.817m
	• Woodlands, Borrowstoun, Carron PS, Head of Muir		
	• Inchlair, Woodburn, Carronshore	(£ 2.813m)	2.004m
	• Denny & Glendevon	(£ 1.071m)	0.933m
Less:	Internal Fees	(£ 0.309m)	0.624m
Less:	Provision for Additional Costs	(£ 0.325m)	
	BALANCE FOR CONTINGENCY		£ 0.299m

Notes:

- 1/ All of the above funding is “ring-fenced” and within the overall quantum, monies can be moved from one source to another.
- 2/ It is expected that the Revenue position for 2021/22 will improve significantly, once Covid and deferred place related costs have been negated from existing expenditure. This will allow for the further planned CFCR adjustment.

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;
 - disruption to the material supply chain being experienced currently within the construction sector overall;
 - increased material prices being experienced by the construction sector overall;
 - 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.

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 equipment, heating/lighting systems and buildings.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Officers from Children's and Development Services remain focussed on work to ensure that 4 of the remaining projects can open within the next month. In addition, and as previously planned, Officer will also be assessing actual demand across all ELC settings to ensure that operating capacity levels are optimised to ensure that staff resources are effectively and efficiently deployed across the ELCC Sector.

Director of Children's Services

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Date: 14 October 2010

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Remaining Infrastructure Projects to be Completed.
- Appendix 2 - Revised ELC Admissions Policy - 3 & 4 Year Olds
- Appendix 3 - Core 1140 Hours in Falkirk Council Establishments

List of Background Papers:

Education, Children and Young People Executive – Previous ELC1140 Update Reports.

Section 1 – Remaining Infrastructure Projects to be Completed (6)

WARD	ESTABLISHMENT / PROJECT	UPDATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATES	CAPACITY	EST. PROJECT COST	CONTINGENCY PLANS
3	Denny PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract awarded Some preliminary work has started on site with main works due to start end Oct 21. 	Easter 22	56 - 3-5yr olds	c£1.0m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40 children will be accommodated at Denny PS and 16 children currently being accommodated at Nethermain PS.
4	Inchlair Amalgamated Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular Units have been installed to provide 3-5 yr-old provision initially. Construction delays experienced on-site and with Utility Providers. 	January 22	80 - 3-5yr olds 40 - 2yr olds 12 - Babies	c£1.0m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1140 will continue to be delivered at Larbert Day ELCC until new build is ready.
4	Carronshore PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular units have been installed. Construction delays experienced on-site and with Utility Providers. Onsite works nearing completion. 	December 21	56 - 3-5yr olds	c£0.75m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will be accommodated in existing nursery class.
6	Woodburn ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modular units have been installed. Construction delays experienced. On-site works nearing completion. 	December 21	48 - 3-5yr olds 20 - 2yr olds	c£1.0m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1140 will continue to be provided at Queen Street ELCC until new building is complete.
6	Woodlands ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On site work nearing completion Construction delays experienced on-site and with Utility Providers. 	November 21	40 – 3-5yr olds	c£0.5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A – new provision
9	Glendevon ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction & material delays experienced. On site work nearing completion. 	December 21	96 - 3-5yr olds	c£2.5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1140 will continue to be provided in Maddiston PS Nursery Class until new building is complete.
	SECTION 2	FUTURE WORK PROJECTS (1)				
8	Westquarter PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion on site is limited. The school is due to have its primary capacity extended (Capital Programme) so early years capacity expansion will be considered as an integral part of that overall school foot-print re-design work. 	TBC	48 - 3-5yr olds	TBC	



Falkirk Council

Children's Services

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ADMISSIONS POLICY – 3 and 4 YEAR OLDS

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1 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that early learning and childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds are allocated fairly and equitably in accordance with legislation and national policy, supporting the values of:

- flexibility
- accessibility
- quality
- affordability
- best value

1.2 The local approach in Falkirk takes account of the following:

- All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 1140 hours per annum (pro-rata).
- All ELC provision is non-denominational.
- Adult:Child ratios are nationally regulated.
- The various demographics and geographical spread within the council area.

1.3 Across the Falkirk Council area, Early Learning and Childcare is delivered through a mixed economy of provision types:

- ELC Classes
- ELC Centre
- Private Partner Providers
- Partner Childminders
- Third Sector Partners

A full list of Falkirk Council's ELC provision is contained in Appendix 1.

2 DEFINING ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, all 3 and 4 year olds are defined as eligible to receive 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare per annum (pro-rata); and, become eligible for funded early learning and childcare from the beginning of the first term after their third birthday.
- 2.2 Children's birth month determines the date upon which early learning and childcare will commence:
- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Child's birth date | 1 st March to 31 st August |
| Eligible from | August (autumn term) occurring in that year |
| Child's birth date | 1 st September to 31 st December |
| Eligible from | January (Spring term) following their birthday |
| Child's birth date | 1 st January to last day February |
| Eligible from | March/April (summer term) following their birthday |
- 2.3 In Falkirk Council, by local arrangement, children who turn three years old in August to February commence funded early learning and childcare one calendar month after the child's 3rd birthday.
- 2.4 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 also defines some 2 year olds who would be eligible for 1140 hours (pro-rata) of targeted childcare. Falkirk Council's arrangements for placement of these eligible children are detailed separately.

3 ALLOCATING PLACES

- 3.1 All funded early learning and childcare places are allocated according to priority groups; and, in date of birth order.

Priority 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children who are looked after, either temporarily or long term, as specified in the Children (Scotland) Act 1995; Children with or affected by additional support needs (see Appendix 2).
Priority 2	Resident within the Primary School Catchment; or ELC Centre Catchment (see Appendix 3)
	a Children who have applied for an additional pre-school year (deferred year), where the intention is for them to remain within their existing establishment.
	b Children who are in their pre-school year.
	c Children who are in their ante pre-school year who have a sibling in the same ELC setting
	d Children who are in their ante pre-school year.
Priority 3	Resident with the ward boundary
	a Children who have applied for an additional pre-school year (deferred year), where the intention is for them to remain within their existing establishment.
	b Children who are in their pre-school year.
	c Children who are in their ante pre-school year who have a sibling in the same ELC setting
	d Children who are in their ante pre-school year.
Priority 4	Resident within Falkirk Council area
	a Children who have applied for an additional pre-school year (deferred year), where the intention is for them to remain within their existing establishment.
	b Children who are in their pre-school year.
	c Children who are in their ante pre-school year who have a sibling in the same ELC setting
	d Children who are in their ante pre-school year.
Priority 5	Resident out with Falkirk
	a Children who have applied for an additional pre-school year (deferred year), where the intention is for them to remain within their existing establishment.
	b Children who are in their pre-school year.
	c Children who are in their ante pre-school year who have a sibling in the same ELC setting
	d Children who are in their ante pre-school year.

- 3.2 When applying, parents are invited to identify first, second and third preferences of setting. Every effort will be made to meet parental first choice. This cannot be guaranteed and is dependent on the number of places available and the priority given to applications.

3.3 Allocation Timeline

(a) Parents/Carers Responsibility

1 st December to last day in February	Application window for all new applications for 3 year olds & Deferred Entry
30 th April	Parents deadline for advising of rejections/changes to notified allocations

(b) Allocation Timeline – Local Authority Responsibility

1 November – 30 November	Allocation of returning children
No later than 15 th April	Parents are notified of their allocated 1140 place
1 May – 31 May	Consideration and allocation of late applications and change requests from parents.
From 1 st June to end of term	ELC Settings will contact parents to arrange induction sessions, start date and any additional childcare requests (where applicable)

3.4 Arrangements for the allocation of split placements

Split placements will be considered only where:

- (i) There are no more than two settings; and,
- (ii) Where each setting offers a unique model of delivery, that is:
 - Any nursery Class and Council ELC Centre.
 - Any nursery Class / Council ELC Centre and a partner childminder.
 - Any nursery Class and a private partner nursery.
 - Any partner childminder and a private partner nursery.

In line with the priority categories in 3.1 above, split placements will be considered as follows:

Stage 1

- Applications for 1140 hours in one setting will be allocated first. This is to support efficient staffing resources and maximise occupancy levels.

Stage 2

- Requests for split placements will be considered where capacity allows, following Stage 1 allocations.

4 OTHER CHILDCARE OPTIONS

Funded early learning and childcare options in a non Falkirk Council setting

- 4.1 Falkirk Council works in partnership with local private providers and childminders for the provision of funded early learning and childcare.
- 4.2 Applications are made directly to the provider and funding is arranged for a maximum of 1140 hours per annum. Any additional childcare beyond 1140 hours is by private arrangement between parent/carers and the childcare provider.

Non-funded early learning and childcare options

- 4.3 In ELC Centres, where capacity allows and following the allocation of the core entitlement of 1140 hours to all eligible children, it may be possible for parent/carers to purchase additional childcare. This is by arrangement with ELC Centres directly.
- 4.4 Additional childcare is charged at the current Falkirk Council's hourly rate.
- 4.5 Parents are required to give a minimum of 4 weeks' notice for requests to change additional childcare pattern of attendance. This is to enable amendments to charges and contracts. This is by arrangement with ELC Centres directly.

5 CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: elc@falkirk.gov.uk

List of Falkirk Council Early Learning & Childcare Establishments

	ELC Centres	ELC Classes
Ward 1 – Bo'ness	Borrowstoun	Bo'ness Public Deanburn Grange Kinneil St Mary's
Ward 2 – Grangemouth	Abbotsgrange Rannoch	Beancross Bowhouse Sacred Heart
Ward 3 – Denny	Myot View	Bankier Denny Dunipace Nethermains St Patrick's
Ward 4 – Carse, Kinnaird & Tryst	Kinnaird Waters Larbert	Airth Carron Carronshore Larbert St Bernadette's Stenhousemuir
Ward 5 - Bonnybridge & Larbert	Bonnypark	Antonine Ladeside Larbert Village St Joseph's
Ward 6 – Falkirk North	Camelon Langlees Woodburn	Bainsford St Francis Xavier Victoria
Ward 7 – Falkirk South	Glenburn Woodlands	Bantaskin Carmuir Comely Park Easter Carmuir St Andrew's
Ward 8 – Lower Braes	Parkhill	Laurieston Westquarter
Ward 9 – Upper Braes	Glendevon	Avonbridge California Shieldhill Slamannan Wallacestone Whitecross

Additional Support Needs Criteria

- (i) Children with additional support needs will be given priority if:
- They are disabled.
 - They have been referred by the Psychological Service or Health Service advising of additional support needs. This will be supported by the appropriate documentation outlining the child's needs for support in nursery.
 - They are referred by Social Work Services, that is to say any child who has been specifically referred by Social Work Services, this may include children in the Child Protection Register.
- (ii) Children who are adversely impacted by:
- Family disability;
 - Long term parental hospitalisation and/or chronic ill-health.

Early Learning and Childcare Centre – Alignment with Ward Primary Schools

Ward	Council Ward	ELC Centre	Catchment Areas – Primary Schools	
1	Bo'ness and Blackness	Borrowstoun	Bo'ness Public Deanburn Grange	Kinneil St Mary's
2	Grangemouth	Abbotsgrange	Moray	
2	Grangemouth	Rannoch	Beancross Bowhouse Sacred Heart	
3	Denny and Banknock	Myot View	Bankier Denny Dunipace	Head of Muir Nethermains St Patrick's
4	Carse, Kinnaird & Tryst	Larbert/Inchclair	Airth Carron Carronshore	St Bernadette's Stenhousemuir
4	Carse, Kinnaird & Tryst	Kinnaird Waters	Kinnaird	
5	Bonnybridge & Larbert	Bonnypark	Antonine Bonnybridge Ladeside	Larbert Village St Joseph's
6	Falkirk North	Camelon	Bainsford Carmuir Easter Carmuir	St Francis Victoria
6	Falkirk North	Langlees	Langlees	
6	Falkirk North	Woodburn	Bainsford Carmuir Easter Carmuir	St Francis Victoria
7	Falkirk South	Glenburn	Hallglen	
7	Falkirk South	Woodlands	Bantaskin Comely Park St Andrew's	
8	Lower Braes	Parkhill	Laurieston St Margaret's Westquarter	
9	Upper Braes	Glendevon	Avonbridge California Shieldhill	Slamannan Wallacestone Whitecross

Core 1140 Hours Entitlement Choices – ELC Centres

ELC Settings (1)	Model 2	1140 Hr Entitlement Choices
Langlees ELC Centre	Model 2 (45.6 weeks)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monday to Friday 8am to 1pm 2. Monday to Friday 1pm to 6pm 3. Any 2 days 8am to 6pm PLUS 1 day 8am to 1pm 4. Any 2 days 8am to 6pm PLUS 1 day 1pm to 6pm
ELC Settings (13)	Model 3	1140 Hr Entitlement Choices
Borrowstoun ELC Centre Abbotsgrange ELC Centre Rannoch ELC Centre Myot View ELC Centre Kinnaird Waters ELC Centre Larbert/Inchlair ELC Centre Bonnypark ELC Centre Camelon ELC Centre Woodburn ELC Centre Glenburn ELC Centre Woodlands ELC Centre Parkhill ELC Centre Glendevon ELC Centre	Model 3 Term Time (38 wks)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm 2. Any 3 full days 8am to 6pm
	Model 3 Full Year (48.8 wks)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any 2 days 8am to 6pm PLUS 1 day 8am to 11.30am 2. Any 2 days 8am to 6pm PLUS 1 day 2.30pm to 6pm 3. Monday to Friday 8.30am to 1.10pm 4. Monday to Friday 1.20pm to 6.00pm