

## **ECYE29. Early Learning Childcare – 1140 Expansion Plan Update**

The Education, Children and Young People Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided an update on progress with the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Plans; details of proposed changes to the Early Years Admissions Policy; and updated information on the overall financial position.

Focussed work would continue to ensure that 4 of the remaining projects could open within the next month. In addition, and as previously planned, officers would also be assessing actual demand across all ELC settings to ensure that operating capacity levels were optimised to ensure that staff resources were effectively and efficiently deployed across the ELCC Sector.

The Scottish Government had widened the eligibility criteria for the provision of targeted Childcare for 2-year-olds to include parents who were care experienced. The expanded eligibility criteria, together with an increasing number of families meeting the qualifying threshold for statutory provision for eligible 2-year-olds had resulted in a high demand locally for 2-year-old places. In order to support this it was proposed that some capacity for under 2s would need to be “ring fenced” within one ELCC in each of the east, west and central areas of Falkirk.

The current Early Years Admissions Policy for 3 and 4-year-olds had been reviewed to ensure it remained fit for purpose. The following amendments were proposed:-

- Adopt a more efficient and strategically aligned approach across all settings;
- Children with a sibling already attending their preferred nursery would be prioritised for a place in the same establishment;
- Children with ASN or affected by ASN would also be considered a priority;
- All ELCCs had 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 was included, and
- Greater clarification on split placement arrangements.

The revised Admissions Policy would be used for the allocation of places for 3 and 4-year-olds from session August 2022.

### **Decision**

**The Education, Children and Young People Executive:-**

**(1) noted the updates provided on the remaining infrastructure projects as detailed in appendix 1 to the report;**

- (2) agreed to the proposal to ring fence some capacity for under 2's as detailed in section 4.2 of the report;**
- (3) agreed to adopt the revised Admissions Policy;**
- (4) agreed to the options and choices for the delivery of statutory provision within ELC Centres as outlined in section 4.4 of the report;**
- (5) noted the detailed financial position provided in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the report.**