



Agenda Item 10

**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: 13 September 2022
Submitted By: Director of Children's Services

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report provides the Education, Children and Young People Executive (EC&YP) with:

- an update on progress with final phase of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Plans;
- additional and updated information relating to the associated ELC workstreams; and
- updated 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 and the workstream updates provided in Section 5;
- (ii) note the updates provided on the remaining infrastructure projects as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (iii) note the increased “sustainable rate” to be applied to partner nurseries and childminders from August 2022 as detailed in Section 5.3;
- (iv) agree that the Director of Children's Services reviews the impact that inflationary pressures may have on the overall private sector over the course of 2022-23; and
- (v) note the financial position as outlined in Sections 7.1 and 7.2.

3. Climate Change Implications

3.1 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.

4. Background

4.1 After 5 challenging and exciting years, the main infrastructure expansion plans for the project have been completed, although there are some other areas of work that are still in progress particularly around connectivity, building warrant requirements and snagging.

5. Considerations

5.1 Remaining Infrastructure Projects

At the start of term 3 of our new ELC establishments opened at Carronshore Primary School, Denny Primary School and Glendevon ELCC. Due to some outstanding on-site work remaining at both Inchlair ELCC and Woodburn ELCC returning children at the start of term were being accommodated at both Larbert Day Nursery and Queen Street Nursery respectively.

At the time of writing this report it is hoped that all of the remaining work will be completed at both of these establishments to enable them to be “handed over” at the end of August 2022 and occupied shortly thereafter.

Further details of these remaining projects are provided in **Appendix 1**.

5.2 ELC Budget Realignment Work

- As reported to the EC&YP Executive in June 2022, Officers have progressed and implemented some of the planned changes around revised capacity and corresponding staffing levels at 4 ELC establishments from August 2022, to align with parental demand.
- In addition, work has also been done to realign some existing capacity to meet the growth in demand for funded 2-year-old places, as previously reported.
- Officers are progressing the other changes agreed and further details on that and the overall financial position will be presented in a future update report.

5.3 National Survey of Private Childcare Providers on Sustainable Rates

- As previously advised, the National Independent Survey reported that the average rate across the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) area was **£5.24 per hour**.
- Falkirk’s current rate for 2021-22 for private partner nurseries is **£5.55** per hour.
- As requested by the Scottish Government, a meeting has been held with our RIC local authorities to discuss the survey results and to assess if there is any commonality of approach or agreement on assessing the rate for 2022-23.
- As agreed, the Director of Children’s Services, under delegated powers, set an increased rate for Falkirk for 2022-23 **at £5.70** per hour for private nurseries and **£5.20** per hour for Childminders. The existing meal rates remain unchanged.
- Officers are currently liaising with RIC colleagues to assess the position regarding offering an increased rate for funded 2-year-olds, which reflects the increased staffing ratio that this requires.

6. Consultation

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- Officers will continue to consult with appropriate stakeholders including parents, trade unions and other Services on all aspects of any proposed changes as appropriate.

7. Implications Financial/Resources

7.1 Summary of Current Financial Position – Revenue Budget 2022-23

- Year End Projection at Period 3 (30/6/22): **Break Even**

7.2 Summary of Current Financial Position – Capital Budget 2022-23

- The balance remaining on 1/4/22: **£1.094m.**
- Projected Expenditure Commitments: **£1.000m**
- Projected Balance: **£0.094m**

Legal

- 7.3 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

- 7.4 The key inherent risks associated with this major project were:
- 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
 - ensuring that contingency plans were continually reviewed in liaison with external providers.

Equalities

- 7.5 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

- 7.6 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.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 As the main infrastructure element of this challenging but extremely rewarding project draws to completion, Officers from both Children's and Place Services will be focusing on ensuring that the remaining "snagging" work is completed.
- 8.2 Officers over the coming months will be undertaking a Post Occupancy Review for some of the projects, which will aim to highlight areas of both good practice and areas where improvement can be adopted for future projects.

Director of Children's Services

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Date: 16 August 2022

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Updates on the Remaining Infrastructure Projects.

List of Background Papers:

EC&YP Executive – Previous ELC1140 Update Reports.

Appendix 1

Section 1 – Remaining Infrastructure Projects Update – September 2022

WARD	ESTABLISHMENT/ PROJECT	UPDATE	EST. COMPLETION DATES	CAPACITY	CONTINGENCY PLANS
3	Denny PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opened August 2022.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opened	56 - 3-5yr old's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">N/A
4	Inchlair ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Building warrant requirements, snagging and connectivity work to be completed.Demolition work on old building is being scheduled.Additional connectivity work is also planned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aug/Sept 22	80 - 3-5yr old's 40 - 2yr old's 12 - Babies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1140 is being delivered at Larbert Day ELCC until new build is ready.
4	Carronshore PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opened August 2022.Additional connectivity work is also planned.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opened	56 - 3-5yr old's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">N/A
6	Woodburn ELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Some drainage and fire alarm work is being completed.Additional connectivity work is also planned.Additional flooring work scheduled Oct 22 term holiday.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">August 22	48 - 3-5yr old's 20 - 2yr old's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1140 is being delivered at Queen Street Nursery until the new build is ready.Some additional flooring work will also take place in Oct 22, during which children will be accommodated at Queen Street Nursery.
9	Glendevon ELCC (Maddiston)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opened August 2022.Some additional external work is scheduled for Sep22.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opened	96 - 3-5yr old's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">N/A

Section 2 – Further Early Years Capacity Work

8	Westquarter PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess options to increase on-site ELC capacity at the same time as the design options for extending the school are being considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">	<ul style="list-style-type: none">On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Joint work will be undertaken with Place Services to consider on-site options.
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