

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 21 May 2013

Co-operative Childcare and Education

Item number	7.8
Report number	
Wards	All

Links

Coalition pledges	P5 , P6
Council outcomes	CO1 , CO2 , CO6
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3

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Executive summary

Co-operative Childcare and Education

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the progress that has been made in developing co-operative childcare and co-operative education and learning in Edinburgh. The Capital Coalition has pledged to establish city-wide childcare co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents.

Children and Families has established a Service Level Agreement with Lothian Association of Youth Clubs to provide a range of support and advice to the Out of School Care sector, including identifying and helping those which wish to make the transition to co-operative status. A further option to be explored is to establish this overarching support structure as a co-operative. To date, five childcare providers have expressed an interest in the option to become co-operatives.

Additionally, Children and Families is successfully developing co-operative education and learning in the Broughton Cluster. The outcomes will be evaluated and shared across the school estate.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

1. Note progress to date;
2. Request a further progress report in October 2013;
3. Note the conference to be organised by LAYC and the workshop to be organised by Public Service Mutuels, and the half-day Co-operative Learning and Education event.

Measures of success

At least one provider of childcare is working as, or towards being, a co-operative by August 2013.

Childcare providers which wish to develop co-operative status and/or develop more co-operative working practices are supported and enabled to do so.

Parent-led Out of School Care is supported and enhanced throughout the city.

Co-operative education and learning is established as a valued way of working within schools.

Financial impact

The cost of the Service Level Agreement to support the Out of School Care sector is £23,000 per annum. This cost is budgeted for.

Equalities impact

All work within this area seeks to address inequalities in terms of impact on outcomes for children and their families. There are no negative impacts arising from this work.

Sustainability impact

There are no adverse impacts arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

Extensive consultation has taken place and this will be ongoing throughout the development period.

Background reading / external references

Co-operative Childcare and Education

1. Background

- 1.1 The City of Edinburgh Council, as one of its Capital Coalition Pledges, will establish city-wide childcare co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents. The aim is that, by August 2013, one provider of childcare in Edinburgh will be working as, or towards becoming, a co-operative. Thereafter, the intention is to develop a network of childcare provision operating on a co-operative basis across the city, including pre-school and after school/holiday clubs.
- 1.2 In addition, Children and Families is developing co-operative education and learning, with the support and advice of Co-operative Education Trust Scotland. It has chosen to pilot this development across the Broughton Cluster, involving Broughton High School and its feeder primary schools.

2. Main report

Co-operative Childcare

- 2.1 Work to develop the Council's priority to establish Childcare Co-operatives in the city is well underway. There are two main strands of activity:
- 2.2 The first has been to identify and work with current childcare providers who are interested in developing co-operative status for their organisations. It is anticipated that the majority of those organisations who will benefit from becoming co-operatives are parent-led organisations, which often face the greatest challenges in terms of sustainability owing to regular turn-over of management committee members. However, all childcare providers who wish to pursue this option will be encouraged and supported to do so.
- 2.3 Meetings at the beginning of the year were attended by representatives from the Co-operative Enterprise Hub, Business Gateway and childcare providers to initiate this process. A survey carried out in partnership with Economic Development highlighted the challenges that some childcare organisations experience, including those related to sustaining parent-led management committees. Representatives from the Co-operative Enterprise Hub and Business Gateway provided information about the support and advice they can offer, with particular emphasis on the benefits of the co-operative model of delivery.

- 2.4 Oxfams After School Club and two parent-led out of school care providers expressed interest in developing, or investigating further, co-operative status for their organisations. In order to pursue and support this interest, the second strand of activity is to develop an overarching support mechanism or umbrella organisation for childcare providers who become, or wish to become, co-operatives. Recent research by Children and Families and Economic Development into Out of School Care Provision and Costs in Edinburgh identified the areas of support requested by Out of School Care Providers, two thirds of which in Edinburgh are parent-led providers. When asked to identify their main priority for the sector, 28% of respondents chose access to professional support for their parent-led committee as a main priority. In addition, 44% identified support with staff development and training, and 22% with finance and budgeting as key priorities.
- 2.5 In addition to Out of School Care clubs, providers in other childcare sectors have expressed an interest in exploring the option to become co-operatives. Nari Kallyan Shango (NKS), an organisation supporting South Asian women, is keen to look at a co-operative option for its childcare provision. Similarly, a community group in North Edinburgh is interested in developing a community crèche organised along co-operative lines. Both of these are being actively pursued.
- 2.6 The umbrella organisation will provide support and assistance designed to improve a number of areas for the Out of School Care sector. This function will be provided by Lothian Association of Youth Clubs (LAYC). A Service Level Agreement has been drawn up to provide additional support to community-based Out of School Care clubs in order to increase their sustainability, quality and mutual co-operation, and provide tailored support to those which desire to operate as co-operatives. It is intended that this will enhance: the relationship between community Out of School Care providers and The City of Edinburgh Council; the confidence of, and value in, community-based Out of School Care provision; staff skills, understanding and motivation; educational and social outcomes; and, the quality of activity and programmes. It will also seek to maintain the current number of community-based Out of School Care providers and create new provision where local conditions are favourable. This will involve exploring the options to identify where new capacity is required, and looking at how the Children and Families estate can be used more flexibly. Legal and professional support will be available for clubs wishing to adopt more favourable governance arrangements, and an extended programme of Out of School Care training will be developed. LAYC will also establish a pool of experienced Out of School Care managers who can provide dedicated support and input as required. Professional support with establishing and running a successful co-operative will also be provided, with specialists on hand to provide a range of advice and expertise.
- 2.7 LAYC will also organise and deliver a major Out of School Care conference to celebrate, promote and enhance the value of co-operative provision.

- 2.8 In addition to working with groups who have expressed an interest in becoming co-operatives, work will be ongoing to raise the profile of co-operatives and co-operative working, and identify further clubs or groups that could benefit. To this end, LAYC will begin a programme of engagement and support in May. Additionally, it will facilitate a forum of existing providers that enables them to come together to share practice and expertise
- 2.9 We are working with Public Service Mutuals to explore, with the Council and LAYC, options for the umbrella organisation to become a co-operative. This would create an Out of School Care Co-operative led by LAYC. Community-based parent-led childcare providers would be eligible to become members of the co-operative, which could offer a range of benefits and economies of scale. It would adhere to, and also promote, the principles of co-operatives amongst the childcare sector: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; co-operation among co-operatives; and concern for community. A workshop, led by Public Service Mutuals, will be organised with LAYC, the Council and potential member groups and other key stakeholders to explore the purpose and principles of this organisation, and identify the next steps.
- 2.10 Moreover, Children and Families will investigate setting up a similar overarching support structure for the Playgroup sector. This sector faces many of the same issues faced by the Out of School Sector (sustainability, high turnover of staff, staff qualifications) and these could be addressed successfully through a more co-ordinated and co-operative approach. Children and Families will consult the sector to examine how this can be developed.
- 2.11 A Lead Officer from within Children and Families is identified to lead the development of the work with the Playgroup and Early Years childcare sectors, and to liaise with LAYC. A work plan is currently being finalised and this will detail agreed targets and timescales.
- 2.12 Work is being undertaken by Economic Development to look at affordability of childcare in Edinburgh. A review of childcare funding is underway. This will aim to ensure a consistent approach and accessibility for disadvantaged parents/carers to 'job focused childcare support'. It will also ensure subsidised childcare benefits those who have the greatest need in terms of household income and poverty. Additionally, it will demonstrate value for money, and align with the Early Years strategies in the development of affordable care for vulnerable families. A comprehensive report that connects the several strands of activity concerning childcare will be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

Co-operative Education and Learning

- 2.13 The Broughton Cluster (Broughton High School and its feeder primary schools) was chosen as the pilot area for developing co-operative education and learning.

The cluster welcomed the opportunity and accepted the values and principles which underpin any co-operative organisation.

- 2.14 The current cluster progress to date has been on information-sharing and gaining a common understanding of co-operative education. The Co-operative Education Trust Scotland (CETS) has been working closely with the schools and gathering information. Schools have engaged well with CETS, which recognises that there is a great deal of good work going on in these schools and which require only a few further adjustments for their working practices to become fully co-operative. It is also the first time CETS has been involved in working with a cluster.
- 2.15 The overall outcome the cluster would like to achieve are: to develop co-operative approaches in partnership with CETS and the cluster in enhancing cluster values, ethos and transitions for children and young people.
- 2.16 The cluster has developed an action plan. This focuses on developing co-operative working to support school improvement planning, values training including the involvement of pupils, staff and parents, further CPD on working co-operatively, identifying a co-operative co-ordinator, and training on co-operative meetings. It will also cover transition for Nursery to P1, and P7 to Secondary using pupils' feedback on transition and involving them in planning transition activities. CETS will work with schools to further develop links to work co-operatively with the business community. Pupils in each school will be involved with CETS on developing shared values leading to the development of cluster values. Democracy Days will be developed in the cluster schools, there will be a calendar of transition events, and SQA accreditation for co-operative work will be introduced as appropriate.
- 2.17 A half day event with senior officials and elected members to look at opportunities and options for co-operative approaches in schools will be arranged based on the evaluation of the work developed in the Broughton cluster.

3. Recommendations

Committee is asked to:

- 3.1 Note progress to date;
- 3.2 Request a further progress report in October 2013;
- 3.3 Note the conference to be organised by LAYC and the workshop to be organised by Public Service Mutuals, and the half-day Co-operative Learning and Education event.

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Director of Children and Families

Links

Coalition pledges	P5. Seek to ensure the smooth introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence and that management structures within our schools support the new curriculum P6. Establish city-wide co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents
Council outcomes	CO1. Our children have the best start in life, are able to make and sustain relationships and are ready to succeed CO2. Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities CO6. Our children's and young people's outcomes are not undermined by poverty and inequality
Single Outcome Agreement	SO3. Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
Appendices	None