

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 12 December 2017

## Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare from 600 – 1140 hours by 2020

Item number	7.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	All
Wards	
Council Commitments	

### Executive Summary

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This report provides an update on our approach to delivering 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare to all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds by August 2020. Our expansion plan will continue to be reviewed and adapted where necessary as we work with the Scottish Government in terms of funding allocations.

## Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare from 600 – 1140 hours by 2020

### 1. Recommendations

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It is recommended that the committee

- 1.1 Approve increasing the number of local authority early years settings providing early learning and childcare over 50 weeks and open between 8.00am and 6.00pm
- 1.2 Approve the appendix to the early years admissions policy which outlines the criteria for phasing in 1140 before full implementation in 2020.
- 1.3 Note the intention to return a report on the finalised plan to Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2018 when the multi-year revenue and capital funding has been agreed by the Scottish Government.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council's Early Years Service currently provides 600 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare to all 3-4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. This is approximately 11,000 children.
- 2.2 Edinburgh has 216 settings providing funded Early Learning and Childcare. This is made up of 98 local authority and 118 partner provider settings. 17 local authority settings are open all year round and the rest are open term time only. Almost all partner providers are open all year round.
- 2.3 In October 2016, The Scottish Government launched 'A Blueprint for 2020 Consultation' which set out a vision for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Scotland which is underpinned by four clear guiding principles: Quality, Flexibility, Accessibility and Affordability.
- 2.4 The Scottish Government published 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland – Action Plan' in March 2017. This plan sets out the policy framework that will underpin the expansion. The Framework focuses on quality of provision, structures and capacity.
- 2.5 The Scottish Government allocated £1.7 million revenue and £2.5 million capital funding to Edinburgh to support the phased implementation of the expanded hours from August 2017. Twenty six Local Authority settings now deliver 1140 hours ELC to families across the city.

- 2.6 The Scottish Government requested that all Local Authorities submit an Expansion Plan for 2020 by the end of September 2017 and this was reviewed throughout October and November 2017.
- 2.7 The review of the plan in line with key policy principles is continuing and we are awaiting confirmation of the multi-year revenue and capital funding before finalising the plan for committee approval.

### **3. Main report**

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#### **Flexible, Accessible and Affordable Early Learning and Childcare**

- 3.1 Our plan for the expansion of early learning and childcare proposes that each locality within Edinburgh will provide a range of delivery models for parents to choose from e.g. term time only, all year round, the availability of additional hours for parents to purchase and blended models with split placements between two different types of provision.
- 3.2 The introduction of Forest Kindergarten and Childminder provision in each locality will provide parents with more options for flexible, accessible and affordable early learning and childcare.
- 3.3 We plan to increase the number of local authority settings open all year round and where possible for these settings to extend opening hours. This will enable parents to purchase additional hours beyond their funded entitlement and provide increased access to affordable early learning and childcare.

#### **High Quality Early Learning and Childcare**

- 3.4 High quality early learning and childcare is at the heart of our expansion plan. We will continue to use national guidance, “How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare” and “Building the Ambition” to review practice and evaluate the impact of the expansion on improving outcomes for children and families.
- 3.5 We will support the fifteen actions identified in the Scottish Government Quality Action Plan published in October 2017.

#### **People**

- 3.6 As well as providing training for Modern Apprentice and Trainee Early Years Practitioners, Edinburgh’s Early Learning and Childcare Academy (EELCA) will provide a range training programmes to support and build the skills of the existing workforce as they move towards delivering extended hours.
- 3.7 One hundred and eighteen private nurseries work in partnership with the local authority to deliver early learning and childcare to children and families in Edinburgh. We are building on this by piloting opportunities to work in partnership with childminders across the city.

### **Practice**

- 3.8 We will continue to prioritise improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and a focus on pedagogy and high quality play experiences will be central to our strategic plan.
- 3.9 We will set up Early Learning Improvement Partnerships within each locality to support and develop smaller learning networks involving local authority and funded providers which encourages collaboration and self-improvement.
- 3.10 The Scottish Government has launched a new standard of best practice for childminders. We will allocate an Early Years Strategic Development Officer to provide support and challenge for childminders working in partnership with the local authority.

### **Place**

- 3.11 Settings new to delivering 1140 hours will be supported to ensure the environment continues to promote active learning, curiosity, inquiry and creativity whilst also meeting the care needs of the children e.g. appropriate lunch experiences and rest areas.

### **Phasing in 1140 hours**

- 3.12 The introduction of the increase in hours from 600 to 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare by 2020 will be a gradual process. Our plan outlines a year on year increase in the number of local authority settings delivering 1140 hours depending on funding.
- 3.13 We have proposed an approach to phasing in the expansion within each locality, which takes account of local authority, partner provider, childminder and forest kindergarten provision.
- 3.14 We recognise many parents will be keen to access the increase in funded hours as soon as they become available. This may increase demand in settings where there has previously been a low uptake in places and/or lead parents to move their child from one setting to another to access the additional hours. Therefore, the following criteria for phasing in will help reduce any unintended consequences of introducing the increased hours before 2020.

#### Criteria for identifying settings to phase in 1140 hours

1. Capacity to expand within the existing local authority early years setting.
2. Children residing in areas of deprivation SIMD 1&2

The criteria for allocating 1140 hour places within settings involved in the phasing in programme until 2020 will be

3. Children living in households where the parent/carer is in receipt of one or more of the benefits listed in appendix 1.
4. The criteria within the Early Years Admissions policy.

### **Infrastructure**

- 3.15 The approach to developing the infrastructure to meet the demand of delivering the expansion has been based on the principles of '*Use what we have*', '*Use what we purchase*' and '*Create what we need*'.
- 3.16 *Use what we have* - The suitability of existing assets across the Council has been assessed to identify potential assets in each locality that may be used for the purpose of delivering early learning and childcare. An audit of the local authority estate including early years provision and other buildings e.g. community centres was carried out during session 2016/17 to assess the potential for expansion within the existing estate.
- 3.17 The potential to develop buildings not originally designed for the provision of early learning and childcare is restricted due to legislative requirements outlined in national guidance.
- 3.18 *Use what we purchase* – Approximately forty percent of Edinburgh's children access their entitlement to early learning and childcare through a partner provider setting. It is assumed this will continue as the entitlement to increased hours is delivered by 2020.
- 3.19 *Create what we need* – The projected demand for early learning and childcare identifies a significant shortfall of places available across the city. Therefore, an increase in the early years estate will be necessary.
- 3.20 The expansion plan outlines a proposed programme of refurbishment over the next two years to increase capacity at Brunstane Primary, Dean Park Primary, Prestonfield Primary, Craigentenny Primary and Early Years Centre, Fort Early Years Centre and Queensferry Primary and Early Years Centre.
- 3.21 A programme of sixteen local authority extensions and new builds is proposed to begin at the start of session 2019-2020 and will be completed by the end of session 2020-2021. Full details of the proposed extensions and new builds are on pages 43-45 of the expansion plan.

### **Continuing Community Engagement**

- 3.22 In November over sixty staff from local authority settings attended a consultation event to share their views on the design of refurbished and new build settings created to deliver 1140 hours.
- 3.23 The twenty six settings involved in phase 1 of the expansion plan met in November to evaluate the implementation of 1140 hours since August. Overall feedback was

positive with key learning to support the next steps for phase 1 and plans for phase 2 of the expansion.

- 3.24 An online consultation with parents on the implementation of the nursery expansion was undertaken in September. 2,209 responses were received and the responses indicate that 70% of parents would like to be able to access early learning and childcare all year round. Over 80% of respondents would prefer longer opening hours between 8.00am and 6.00pm and 38% would like to be able to purchase additional hours over and above the entitlement to 1140 hours.
- 3.25 The consultation provided information on the type of provision parents would prefer to access. As well as local authority or partner provider settings, 23% of parents said they would use a Forest Kindergarten provision and 14% would use a childminder to access the 1140 hours.
- 3.26 A Partners Monitoring Group has been established to represent the wider partner providers on matters relating to the expansion as well as other early years issues. This group meets monthly with council representatives to explore opportunities and for the expansion within partner provider settings.
- 3.27 Consultation with all partner providers took place between April and September to gather views on existing capacities and opportunities to increase the number of children able to attend e.g. through extensions to premises. Views were also gathered on running costs of partners and staffing.
- 3.28 Non-partner voluntary providers were consulted in October to gather information on the number of children accessing non-funded childcare within their setting. Sixteen of the twenty five settings expressed interest in coming into partnership with the council and plans are being made to explore this opportunity to increase funded provision in the city.
- 3.29 Progress towards full implementation of the early years expansion is shared termly through email updates to all early years staff. Four locality events for senior leaders in early years settings were held in September and two events were held in October for early years staff.
- 3.30 We are now in the process of preparing a survey to consult with individual staff to gather views on staff development needs and changes to the existing terms and conditions of contracts.

### **Workforce**

- 3.31 Approximately 650 staff work in local authority early years settings. To support the delivery of the expansion plan we predict we will require approximately 800 additional staff. The plan outlines our proposals to address the significant challenge of recruiting and training a high quality workforce.
- 3.32 Increasing the number of settings open 50 weeks per year and with longer opening hours will create opportunities to recruit new staff. This will also offer existing staff

the opportunity to consider different working patterns and locations and we will work closely with Human Resources and the Trade Unions to support this.

- 3.33 A key factor in ensuring quality is having staff with the right skills, attitude and expertise. Recruiting suitably qualified staff has been a challenge in recent years and to address this we developed Edinburgh's Early Learning and Childcare Academy (EELCA). As well as providing continuing professional development support for existing early years staff, EELCA provides a training programme of SVQ2 and SVQ3 qualifications for Early Years Assistants and Modern Apprentice/Trainee Early Years Practitioner.
- 3.34 To increase our workforce to the levels required we are working with other training providers, Edinburgh College, West Lothian College and North Edinburgh Childcare to provide more qualification routes to a career in early learning and childcare in Edinburgh. This will be supported by the additional funds allocated by the Scottish Government to colleges to increase the number of training places available.
- 3.35 The Scottish Government has committed to funding an additional graduate in early years settings within areas of high deprivation. Edinburgh has been allocated 20 full time graduates and the expansion plan sets out the timeline for the recruitment and allocation of these posts for the start of session 2018-19.

### **Finance**

- 3.36 Along with submission of our Expansion Plan to the Scottish Government, we submitted a Finance Template outlining the proposed capital and revenue costs of our model for expansion. Our template indicated we would require £50 million capital and an additional £47 million revenue to meet our suggested plan for expansion. This is currently being reviewed by the Scottish Government Delivery Support team and feedback will be provided to the local authority by December.

### **Expansion Programme Management**

- 3.37 The delivery of the expansion plan is overseen by the Schools and Lifelong Learning Manager for Early Years. An officer from the central early years team has the lead role in co-ordinating the different aspects of the expansion and all other officers have a key area of responsibility.
- 3.38 Groups from across the council meet regularly to address the delivery service challenges related to the increased funded hours of early learning and childcare. Staff from Asset Planning, Facilities Management, Finance and Human Resources are working closely with the early years team to support the delivery of the expansion by 2020.

## **Current Progress Towards 1140hours by 2020**

- 3.39 From August 2017, twenty six local authority settings started phasing in the increased hours providing access for 1140 hours for up to 1000 children aged 2-5 years old.
- 3.40 Sixty children are now accessing additional early learning and childcare through a blended model involving their nursery class and a forest kindergarten. Following the success of the forest kindergarten trial from January to June 2017, this session children from Cramond nursery class and Clermiston nursery class are attending the forest kindergarten at Laurieston Castle. The grounds at Cliftonhall are also being used to deliver the forest kindergarten approach and children from Ratho nursery class are attending this in the morning or afternoon.
- 3.41 A pilot involving seven childminders from the north west of the city has been established to explore a blended model of delivery between this service and local authority early years settings.

## **4. Measures of success**

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- 4.1 Overall progress measured using a suite of indicators within the Communities and Families Service Plan to ensure that our children have the best start in life, are able to sustain relationships and are ready to succeed.
- 4.2 Outcomes from Inspections from Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate provide information on quality across the service.
- 4.3 We have achieved the Council's commitments 32 and 33.

## **5. Financial impact**

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- 5.1 In April 2017, The Scottish Government provided £1.752 million revenue and £2.504 million capital spending to support the expansion of Phase 1 of the increased entitlement to free early learning and childcare by 2020.
- 5.2 Future revenue and capital funding will be agreed by the Scottish Government following consideration of Edinburgh's expansion plan.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 Approximately 40% of children entitled to funded early learning and childcare attend our partner provider provision. There is a level of uncertainty about future partner provision due to concern about the hourly rate they are paid to deliver an increase in funded early learning and childcare.
- 6.2 Ability to recruit the number of staff within the required timeframe.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 All work within this area seems to address inequalities, both in terms of provision of resources and impact on outcomes for children and their families. There is no negative impact arising from these proposals.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 There are no impacts on carbon, adaptation to climate or sustainable development arising from this report. These matters will be considered as part of planning, design development and in the implication of each phase of the expansion of the provision.

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 Necessary consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the expansion. This includes an authority wide consultation with parents/carers, local authority and partner provider ELC settings and childminders. Consultation will take place from October 2017 with non partner providers and the business community.
- 9.2 A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Scottish Government Consultation.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
- 10.2 [A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland](#)
- 10.3 [2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education: Achieving Excellence and Equity](#)
- 10.4 [Building the Ambition: National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare](#)

- 10.5 [My World Outdoors: Care Inspectorate](#)
- 10.6 [Report to Education, Children and Families Committee: Early Learning and Childcare Strategy Report August 2017](#)

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## **11. Appendices**

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The following information will be included as an appendix in the early years admissions policy.

Criteria for identifying settings to phase in 1140 hours

1. Capacity to expand within the existing local authority early years setting.
2. Children residing in areas of deprivation SIMD 1&2

The criteria for allocating 1140 hour places within settings involved in the phasing in programme until 2020 will be:

1. Children living in households where the parent/carer is in receipt of one or more of the benefits listed below.
2. The criteria within the Early Years Admissions policy

Priority for allocating additional hours within early learning and childcare settings phasing in 1140 hours will be given to children living in households where the parent/carer is in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income based Employment and Support Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance
- State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit with annual household income below £16,105
- Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit with annual household income below £6,420
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

- Universal Credit with a monthly household earned income of £610 per month or below (Based on equivalent of £7320 per year)

Or if your child is

- Looked after by a local authority
- Under a kinship care order
- Living with a parent-appointed guardian

City of Edinburgh Council Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Plan: 1140 hours by 2020