

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 24 August 2017

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Plan

1. Summary

- 1.1. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced an increase in the entitlement of free early learning and childcare, from 475 to 600 hours per annum, for children aged 3 and 4 and some 2 year olds. Renfrewshire Council has fulfilled this duty. The Scottish Government is commitment to increasing the entitlement to free early learning and childcare from the present level to 1140 hours per annum by 2020.
 - 1.2. Local authorities will be responsible for ensuring that the 1140 hours commitment is delivered through their own provision, working with providers from the independent and voluntary sector, including child minders.
 - 1.3. The Scottish Government has indicated that local authorities should explore opportunities for expansion on a phased basis over the next three years rather than waiting until 2020 to deliver. Local authorities are required to present an expansion plan on how they will achieve the delivery of the increased entitlement to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017.
 - 1.4. The Scottish Government recognises that there are some challenges in developing the plans particularly in relation to funding, infrastructure and the availability of a workforce to deliver the policy.
 - 1.5. The Early Years Team has been working with other services to develop the Renfrewshire Expansion Plan. An 1140 hours governance board has been established and is chaired by the Head of Early Years and Inclusion. The governance board has representation from services across the council and is supported by a project manager and the Services Planning and Policy Development Manager (Children's Services).
-

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to approve:
- (i) that the Head of Early Years and Inclusion submits a draft Renfrewshire Expansion Plan to the Scottish Government by 29 September and for the plan to be homologated by the board at its meeting in November 2017;
 - (ii) the admissions criteria for allocating 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to children attending establishments involved in the phasing of the entitlement, as outlined in paragraph 4.8 of this report,
 - (iii) the change of job title for early years staff as detailed in paragraph 5.6 of the report, and
 - (iv) the change of name of Pre-Five Centres to Early Learning and Childcare Centres and classes as detailed in paragraph 5.6.
-

3. Background

- 3.1. Renfrewshire delivers the present entitlement to 600 hours of free early learning and childcare for 3950 children aged 3 and 4. 638 children aged 2 are accessing their entitlement to free early learning and childcare.
- 3.2. Parents in Renfrewshire can choose to have their child's entitlement provided either in a local authority provision or from one of the providers on the Renfrewshire Early Years Framework arrangement. Parents indicate that they choose to access a service from partnership providers because those services are viewed as more flexible than local authority provision.
- 3.3. Parents can access their child's entitlement from the following services:
- 12 local authority pre-five centres
 - 22 nursery classes
 - 33 partner providers in the independent or voluntary sector.
- 3.4. The local authority provides 2790 early learning and childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds and 568 places for 2 year olds. 1160 places are commissioned for 3 and 4 year olds from providers and 70 places are commissioned for 2 year olds.
- 3.5. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) requires local authorities to deliver the entitlement to early learning and childcare on a flexible basis to meet the needs of parents and children. Renfrewshire Council has made significant progress in achieving this. Parents in Renfrewshire apply for their preferred nursery and pattern of service indicating their first three preferences. Attempts to deliver the preferred options are managed across 10 geographical areas (localities).

- 3.6. In preparation for delivering the increased entitlement of early learning and childcare Children's Services has established an 1140 hours governance board which is chaired by the Head of Early Years and Inclusion. The governance board has representation from services across the Council and is supported by a project manager, the Services Planning and Policy Development Manager (Children's Services) and by senior officers in Human Resources and Organisational Development
- 3.7. Three work stream groups have been established to support the planning and delivery of the expansion plan:
- Workforce
 - Infrastructure
 - Policy.
- 3.8. Each of the workstreams requires to give attention to the following key principles identified by the Scottish Government:-
- Quality
 - Accessibility
 - Flexibility
 - Affordability.
- 3.9. The Scottish Government indicates that policy objectives to be delivered by the increase entitlement of free early learning and childcare is to give children the best start in life, close attainment and inequality gaps, offer parents a choice of settings and delivery options and reduce the cost of childcare for parents.
- 3.10. The delivery of early learning and childcare is underpinned by the following four key principles:
- **Quality** as the driving principle of the early learning and childcare expansion programme. Early Years provides the foundation for promoting secure attachment, better health, social and learning behaviours with long term impact on improved outcomes for children.
 - **Accessibility** - The overall capacity with the current system can be redesigned to more fully meet the ambition to extend entitlement. Renfrewshire's expansion plans will require to evidence that best use will be made of existing services and assets within the Local Authority, private and 3rd sector. Any remaining gaps will be addressed through creation of new services.
 - **Flexibility** - Current early learning and childcare delivery models, particularly within local authorities must become more flexible and responsive to parental demand. This should include more settings offering all year round provision and for longer opening hours thus enhancing flexibility and choice for families.

- **Affordability** -Reducing the cost of early learning and childcare for families is a significant driver in the ambition to extend provision from 600 hours to 1140 hours. This must be set alongside the redesign of early learning and childcare services in a manner that is affordable and sustainable for Local Authorities and Scottish Government and delivers long term value for money.

- 3.11. The Scottish Government has stated that the expansion of early learning and childcare will be fully funded. Funding is expected to be allocated in line with requirements detailed in the Renfrewshire Expansion Plan, which is due for submission to the Government at the end of September 2017. Renfrewshire Council is required to demonstrate that funding for the purpose of delivering the early learning and childcare expansion is based on evidence of need within the local authority area and meets the key policy objectives. The Scottish Government has indicated that funding allocations will be confirmed via the Scottish Budget process later this year.
- 3.12. The Scottish Government has also indicated its commitment to provide all children attending over lunch time with a free meal entitlement. The costs of free meals will be funded by the Scottish Government.
- 3.13. The expansion will require a substantial investment in workforce and infrastructure. The Scottish Government has indicated that funding will be phased from 2017/18 to support the implementation of the increased entitlement to ensure that the capacity to deliver is in place for 2020.
- 3.14. Renfrewshire has received confirmation of £630,000 revenue and £913,000 funding to support the implementation of the increased entitlement for 2017/18.

4. 1140 Expansion - Developments To Date

- 4.1 The Scottish Government issued planning guidance in March 2017 and requires an expansion plan from local authorities by 29 September 2017. Renfrewshire's 1140 hours governance board is leading on the development of the draft expansion plan.
- 4.2 Initial engagement with all local authority and existing provider nurseries has taken place. There has also been initial engagement with providers that are not on the partnership framework but have expressed an interest in supporting the expansion of services in Renfrewshire.
- 4.3 An initial consultation with parents to establish future needs has been concluded and findings have informed the draft expansion plan.
- 4.4 A mapping exercise identifying all early learning and childcare services in Renfrewshire has been completed. The exercise has allowed an analysis of uptake of entitlement, demand, occupancy levels, current and projected population and geographical needs. It has also allowed proposals to consider the infrastructure required to deliver the increased entitlement through a reconfiguration of space within and outwith existing early years buildings, options for refurbishment, extensions and new builds will be required.

- 4.5 Renfrewshire will require to extend the capacity of our present services and also remodel how these services are offered. We will also continue to work with provider nurseries to expand provision. Some new provision will be required from the local authority. The use of child minders is also being considered. Proposals are being developed for each postcode/locality area.
- 4.6 A small number of parents (8%) who responded to the recent survey identified childminding as a preferred option for accessing provision. It is proposed that a small pilot using childminders will be explored to address the need and consider how childminders can offer parents a flexible option for the early learning and childcare entitlement.
- 4.7 A phased approach to delivering the draft expansion plan over the next three years is being developed. Priority will be given to establishments with high numbers of children from the Scottish index for multiple deprivation areas (SIMD) one and two and where there is capacity to deliver additional places. Opportunities to pilot new approaches will also be explored. This approach is in line with Government advice.
- 4.8 An amendment to the admissions criteria is required to ensure equity in the allocation to the increased entitlement to 1140 hours in the identified establishments involved in the phasing programme. The proposed criteria is as follows:

Eligible two year olds:

- (1) To children eligible for a funded place who are categorised as a priority 1 or 2 as outlined in the existing Early Years Admissions Policy. Places to be allocated in priority order.
- (2) To children categorised as a priority 3B as outlined in the existing policy.

Three and four year olds:

- (1) To children categorised as a priority 1 or 2 as outlined in the existing Early Years Admissions Policy. Places to be allocated in priority order.
- (2) To children categorised as a priority 3A of the existing policy. Places to be allocated in the following priority order:
 - (i) Children in their deferred year with a January or February birthday or where it has been approved for children born between September and December;
 - (ii) Children in their pre-school year;
 - (iii) Children in their ante pre-school year.

In **all** categories listed above priority is given to children whose parents or carers are:

- In employment, education or training and in receipt of income support, income based job seekers allowance, working tax credits or universal credit, or
- In employment, education or training.

In line with the admissions guidance places will be balloted for if there are insufficient places to meet demand, all other circumstances being equal.

- 4.9 The proposed criteria has a direct link to the expansion policy objectives in terms of closing the attainment and inequality gaps and in reducing the costs of childcare for parents. The Early Years Admissions Policy is currently under review and will be presented to the policy board later this year.

5. Staffing and Workforce

- 5.1. Early Learning and Childcare is a service regulated by the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate sets the ratio for staff to children in all early years services and the provider of the service is required to meet the required staffing levels. To achieve the expansion a substantial increase in staffing will be required. It is expected that Renfrewshire will require more than 200 additional FTE nursery officers and a number of additional promoted staff, including Seniors, Depute Heads and Heads of Centres. As there will be a significantly increased number of children receiving lunch support workers will be required to assist in supervising children at lunch time.
- 5.2. Work is ongoing to determine the exact staffing numbers, including proposed management structures, required for the new models of delivery, additional places and new services. The expansion plan may require some changes to the existing contracts of employment for staff e.g. change of hours; change from term time to full time. These changes will be negotiated with the relevant trade unions as the expansion plan is developed.
- 5.3. Additional business support and ancillary staff will also be required, including catering, cleaning and janitorial, to respond to the increased number of services, additional children and bigger services.
- 5.4. The additional early years staff will require to be recruited via newly qualified staff from FE colleges and other training providers, Foundation and Modern Apprentices, staff moving from part-time positions to full time and transferring from other organisations.
- 5.5. The Scottish Government is developing a market campaign to meet the workforce needs of the expansion, with the campaign scheduled to go live in autumn 2017. Renfrewshire Council is also developing a recruitment campaign.
- 5.6. A change of title for Renfrewshire Council's early years staff is proposed for all designated posts employed in Pre-five Centres and Nursery Classes. It is recommended that the term 'Pre-five' be removed and replace with 'Early Learning and Childcare'. It is also recommended that Pre-Five Centres be renamed as Early Learning and Childcare Centres and Early Learning and Childcare Classes to modernise and align the service with national developments.
- 5.7. Additional staff may also be required by the independent sectors (partner providers) and additional childminders may require to be recruited. Providers from the independent sector are concerned that they will lose staff to local authorities due to difference in rates of pay. The Government has indicated its commitment to ensuring fair work practices and staff receiving the living wage. It is expected that additional revenue will be available to enable partner providers to pay the living wage to their staff.

- 5.8. The Scottish Government has indicated a commitment to fund additional graduates, either a graduate practitioner with a relevant early years degree or a teacher with early years experience, to early years establishments in the most deprived areas. The funding for this will be available from August 2018. Renfrewshire is to receive funding for 26 graduates. Work is ongoing to identify the establishments and the arrangements for recruiting the staff. The proposal for allocating the graduates to establishments will be incorporated into the plan being submitted to the Scottish Government.

6. Delivering the Early Years 1140 Expansion

- 6.1. The government guidance is that authorities should 'use what you have' when planning the expansion.
- 6.2. In developing the expansion plan for Renfrewshire the planning teams have followed government guidance by considering options for increasing places by approximately 1500 through the following:
- Extending the range of options for delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare across a year, including opening hours and flexible attendance pattern across a school calendar year, which includes provision for children with additional support need;
 - Developing, introducing or expanding outdoor nursery provision;
 - Extending provision on the Renfrewshire Early Years Framework Arrangement with present and new providers;
 - Reconfiguring existing facilities;
 - Refurbishments;
 - Extensions;
 - New builds;
 - Establishments using outdoor areas places.
- 6.3. There are a number of risks associated with the expansion plan including the availability and procurement of construction firms to undertake the adaption and new developments required; sufficient qualified workers and the need for the continued support of partnership providers in offering services to Renfrewshire children.
- 6.4. The final plan detailing the expansion proposals will be submitted to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board in October 2017 following the submission of the plan to the Scottish Government on 29 September 2017.

Implications of this report

1. Financial Implications

The cost will be met from the funding provided by the Government for the expansion of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. Revenue and capital funding has been confirmed for this current financial year. Future years funding will be agreed by the Scottish Government following consideration of the Renfrewshire Expansion Plan.

2. HR and Organisational Development Implications

There will be staffing implications to deliver the increased entitlement and maintain the existing level of quality services. Additional early years staff and managers will be required. Management structures will require to be developed in response to the revised models of provision. The expansion will also impact on support staff, including ASNAs, support assistants, business support, catering, cleaning and janitorial. The trade unions will be invited to participate in workstreams and changes to current contracts negotiated.

There will be a change of job title for early years staff.

3. Community Plan/Council Plan Implications

Children and Young People	- ensuring the best start in life for children and young people. Close attainment and inequality gaps
Community Care, Health and Well-being	- Earlier intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for children.
Empowering our Communities	- Local services will benefit children, young people and members of the community.
Jobs and the Economy	- Accessible, affordable and flexible childcare. Increased employment opportunities.
Safer and Stronger	- Services are provided by a highly skilled workforce.

4. Legal Implications

The Council requires to comply with the changes to support for early learning and childcare in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The changes to early learning and childcare entitlement will have a direct impact on the present Framework Arrangements between providers and the Council.

5. Property/Assets Implications

The Renfrewshire Expansion Plan will consider the full needs in terms of infrastructure. The need for remodelling or extending current buildings and new build options are being explored.

6. Information Technology Implications

None.

7. Equality and Human Rights Implications

The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations.

8. Health and Safety Implications

It is integral to the Council's aim of securing the health and wellbeing of employees and those affected by its undertakings and without this continued effective focus, there is a risk that will adversely impact on the Council both financially and in terms of service delivery.

9. Procurement Implications

The Renfrewshire Expansion Plan will consider the way in which providers are contracted to deliver early learning and childcare services for entitled children.

10. Risk Implications

Concern that some new builds may not be delivered in time and prevent the required number of additional places being available by 2020.

Ability to recruit the required number of staff within the required timeframe. There is a level of uncertainty about future partner provision due to concerns about futures rates for procured services and workforce availability.

11. Privacy Impact

Personal information will only be held as required to deliver the service. This will be done in accordance with data protection legislation.

12. Cosla Policy Position

Cosla is involved in negotiations with the Scottish Government regarding the expansion of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare.

List of Background Papers

- (a) A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, The Scottish Government, 2017

The foregoing background papers will be retained within children's services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

The contact officer within the service is Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 0141 618 7196, kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Authors: John Trainer, Head of Early Years and Inclusion, 0141 618 6860 john.trainer@renfrewshire.gcsx.gov.uk and Kathleen McDonagh, Education Manager, 0141 618 7196, kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk