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**To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board**

**On: 31 October 2019**

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**Report by: Director of Children's Services**

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**Heading: Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Phasing Update**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Children aged 3 and 4 and eligible 2 year olds are presently entitled to 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare. The Scottish Government has indicated that the hours of funded early learning and childcare will increase from the present 600 hours per annum to 1140 hours by August 2020. There is an expectation that the increase in entitlement is phased in the lead up to school session 2020/21.
  - 1.2 The Scottish Government Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, published in 2017, set out the Government's policy objective that an increase in the hours of free early learning and childcare would give children the best start in life and support closing the poverty related attainment gap. The expansion of early learning and childcare is to be underpinned by the following four key principles - quality, accessibility, flexibility and affordability.
  - 1.3 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board approved the early learning and childcare expansion plan for Renfrewshire at a meeting on 15 March 2018. The 1140 expansion plan for Renfrewshire reflects the principles which are outlined in the Scottish Government Blueprint for 2020. The detail of the expansion plan for Renfrewshire was reported to the same policy board in August 2018, with a further report presented in January 2019 to advise of the infrastructure developments to support the expansion.
  - 1.4 This report provides an update on the progress of the 1140 expansion of early learning and childcare in Renfrewshire for this current school session.
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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
- (i) note the progress made to date in 1140 expansion of early learning and childcare; and
  - (ii) approve engagement with approved providers for options to allocate additional funding to support them in the transition towards 1140 expansion.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Currently, under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, children aged 3 and 4 years and eligible 2 year olds are entitled to 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare per annum. Renfrewshire Council has fulfilled this duty. The Scottish Government is committed to increasing the level of entitlement from the current level to 1140 hours per annum by 2020.
- 3.2 A report presented to the board on 15 March 2018 sought approval on Renfrewshire's draft early learning and childcare expansion plan which was submitted, via a financial template, to the Scottish Government in March 2018. A further report was presented to the Policy Board in August 2018 detailing Renfrewshire's allocation of Scottish Government funding, for capital and revenue, to support the expansion and provided the detail of the expansion plan for Renfrewshire.
- 3.3 Renfrewshire's plan has been developed in line with the revenue and capital funding allocation to enable the expansion between 2018 and 2020/21. The plan has also been developed in line with Government advice to 'use what you have' in terms of the workforce, infrastructure and by securing places with the independent and third sector partner providers.
- 3.4 A report detailing the infrastructure developments to support the expansion of early learning and childcare in Renfrewshire was presented to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 17 January 2019. The planned infrastructure developments to support the expansion includes 16 refurbishments, 6 extensions and 4 new builds.
- 3.5 In the 17 January 2019 report to the Education and Children's Services Policy Board approval was given to allow senior officers from Children's Services to agree options for allocating additional funding to support funded providers in the private and third sectors in the transition towards the 1140 expansion of early learning and childcare. This was in response to additional funding being allocated by the Scottish Government, with guidance that it should be used to support funded providers in the transition towards the 1140 expansion.
- 3.6 Renfrewshire's plan continues to ensure a mix of provision which includes local authority, providers from the independent and third sector, including child minders, across geographical areas.

- 3.7 An interim framework arrangement has been agreed and is in place for the period August 2019 to August 2020, with the option of a further year, enabling approved providers in the independent and third sector to continue as partners in the delivery of funded early learning and childcare. Discussions are ongoing in relation to future commissioning arrangements to reflect recent guidance from Scotland Excel and the Scottish Government model of the 'funding follows the child', a key aspect of which will be a National Standard that all providers wishing to deliver the funded entitlement will have to meet.
- 3.8 A phasing plan for delivering 1140 hours of early learning and childcare from 2018 to 2020/21 was presented at board on the 23 August 2018. This plan and data relating to the expected population within each geographical area continues to be reviewed and refined in order to achieve the required places to enable 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to be fully implemented from August 2020.
- 3.9 Until the start of the school session in August 2020 the Council has a duty to ensure that the legislative requirement to provide children with 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare is maintained.
- 3.10 In terms of the phasing of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare, places are allocated in line with children and families living in low SIMD areas given priority. This approach is in line with Scottish Government guidance and was agreed by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 24 August 2017.
- 3.11 There continues to be a number of risks in achieving the expansion within the timescale set that require to be proactively managed by the council during the expansion period, including: ensuring the infrastructure developments are in place by 2020; securing sufficient qualified staff; and future sustainability of the independent and third sector providers. Officers will continue to progress the implementation of the 1140 expansion whilst remaining alert to and proactively managing the identified key risks.
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## **4 Progress in Implementing Renfrewshire Council's 1140 Expansion Plan**

### **Staffing Development and Recruitment**

- 4.1 Council officers are working to ensure that there are enough staff to deliver the expansion of early learning and childcare. The work includes recruitment events, leadership and staff development opportunities and engagement with existing staff to voluntarily increase their patterns of work, such as term time staff moving to 52 week per year contracts or part time staff moving to full time positions.
- 4.2 During school sessions 2018/19 and 2019/20 the Council has successfully recruited around 200 early years staff to work in its early learning and childcare establishments to support the 1140 expansion and ensure all early learning and childcare establishments have the required staff. This includes additional graduates who have been employed to work in identified Council and partner establishments operating in low SIMD areas. The latter is in line with the guidance set by the Scottish Government.

- 4.3 In addition, 9 modern apprentices have been employed to work whilst undertaking training in early years and childcare. A further recruitment exercise is currently being progressed to appoint an additional 11 modern apprentices. This will include appointments within the 24+ age group.
- 4.4 Other activities to achieve the required workforce (both at a practitioner and leadership level) have been undertaken by the Council. These are as follows:
- Working with schools and colleges to promote and encourage senior pupils to consider undertaking foundation apprenticeship and vocational training in early years, with approximately 30 pupils currently engaging in these qualifications.
  - 9 early learning support workers are currently undertaking an SVQ Level 7 qualification with a view to achieving the award by August 2020, enabling these staff to move into an early learning and childcare officer post. A further programme is being planned to enable an additional 20 early learning support workers to undertake the qualification. This programme of development will continue as we progress towards August 2020 and beyond.
  - The provision of a range of professional learning seminars and leadership courses and conferences for existing leaders (heads and deputies) and middle managers (seniors) to develop leadership skills and capacity across the local authority and partner establishments.
  - Funded support to staff to participate and access a range of certificated training to meet Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements. This is both at practitioner and leader levels and across local authority and partner establishments.
  - Development centres to assess and identify strengths and development needs have been offered to existing deputies and senior staff working within the local authority sector. Following participation in a development centre, individual plans and professional learning opportunities are provided to support staff to develop leadership skills required to enable them to access promoted positions and become future leaders within establishments. 21 staff have attended the development centres to date and a future training and development programme is now being planned to support their skills and development.
- 4.5 Recruitment activity is underway to employ around 40 additional early learning and childcare officers and support workers to enable more 1140 places to be provided during school session 2019/20. A further recruitment programme is planned for early 2020 to meet the predicted workforce requirements from August 2020.
- 4.6 Council officers are continuing to work with providers to identify ways to support them to address recruitment issues. To date providers have been included in the council recruitment event to give them an opportunity to promote their services; the range of leadership and professional learning courses and conferences as outlined in paragraph 4.4 and supported with training costs to enable their unqualified staff to access certificated training to meet SSSC registration requirements.
- 4.7 Children's Services officers have also been working with colleagues in Environmental & Infrastructure and Customer & Business Services regarding recruitment to ensure delivery of those aspects of expansion which fall under their areas of responsibility.

## **Phasing of the 1140 Hours of Early Learning and Childcare**

- 4.8 Renfrewshire Council's plan offers parents a range of options for accessing their child's free early learning and childcare entitlement across each geographical area. In each area, parents will be able to choose from a range of providers and options, as follows:
- a service which opens between 8 am to 6 pm provision over the school year, 46 or 50 weeks;
  - specific options of 6 hours per day over 38 weeks (school day model);
  - an option of 8am to 6pm over 2.5 days for 50 weeks; or
  - 8 am to 1 pm or 1 pm to 6 pm over 45.6 weeks.
- 4.9 The 1140 phasing plan is continuing to be progressed with places allocated in local authority establishments where there is current capacity, sufficient staffing (early years and environmental staff) and infrastructure, which includes dining to enable this. A set number of places have been planned and budgeted for to enable the phasing of the increased hours to children and families attending funded provider establishments. The allocation of the increased hours is in line with the agreed criteria.
- 4.10 During school sessions 2018/19 around 600 children aged 3 and 4 year and eligible 2 year olds received 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. This number has increased to just under 1,600 children during the school session 2019/20. This includes children attending both local authority and funded provider settings. Through the work being described, it is anticipated that this number will continue to rise.
- 4.11 In addition to the infrastructure programme, we continue to work with all centres to ensure they have the appropriate resources required to meet increasing demands of the expansion. In recognition of some of the same challenges being faced by funded providers in the private and third sectors, including childminders, we will make funding available this year to support them in these areas.

## **Infrastructure Programme Update**

- 4.12 The initial planned infrastructure developments to support the expansion programme comprised of 17 refurbishments, 6 extensions and 4 new builds. Through continued planning and analysis of need there is now a plan to refurbish 16 establishments as well as the planned work on the extensions and new builds.
- 4.13 With reference to the table below, 14 of the infrastructure projects are at the design and development stage, 3 are in construction and 9 projects have been completed. Work is ongoing to deliver the refurbished early learning and childcare classes and centre projects. Those projects currently at the design and development stage are currently on track for completion by August 2020. However with all building programmes, risks remain and these will be continually monitored.

- 4.14 In terms of the extension work a tender process to outsource the work is being undertaken for 4 of the extension projects. The remaining 2 extensions will be undertaken by the council's facilities management section via a fixed term contract. All of these projects are on target for an August 2020 completion date.
- 4.15 A tender process is currently underway to secure external contractors to deliver the new build projects. On award of the contract, construction is scheduled to commence in January 2020 with a completion date of August 2020 for all projects.
- 4.16 The following provides the current status for each of the establishments included in the infrastructure programme:

<b>Projects</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>On track</b>
<b>Refurbishments</b>		
East Fulton ELCC	√	
Glenfield ELCC	√	
Paisley ELCC	√	
Ralston ELCC	√	
Hollybush ELCC		√
Glenburn ELCC		√
Gallowhill ELCC		√
West Johnstone ELCC	√	
Auchenlodment ELCC	√	
Mossvale ELCC		√
Todholm ELCC	√	
Heriot ELCC	√	
Lochwinnoch ELCC		√
Bridge of Weir ELCC	√	
St Anne's ELCC		√
Ferguslie ELCC		√
<b>Extensions</b>		
Glendee ELCC		√
Williamsburgh ELCC		√
St Catherine's ELCC		√
Inchinnan Community Nursery		√
St Margaret's ELCC		√
Kilbarchan Community Nursery		√
<b>New builds</b>		
Dargarvel ELCC		√
Houston ELCC		√
Kirklandneuk ELCC		√
Lochfield ELCC		√

- 4.17 For all major refurbishment and new build projects work has been done to identify a contingency plan to ensure that all children can be placed in alternative provision for a temporary period should any of these projects not be delivered on time.

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## Implications of this report

### 1. Financial

Renfrewshire Council's delivery of the expansion plan will require to be in line within the Government funding throughout the phasing period, culminating in the additional £22,528,000 revenue in 2021/22 and total capital funding of £14,013,000.

## **2. HR and Organisational Development**

As outlined in the report presented to the education and children's services policy board in August 2018.

Additional early years staff and managers will be required to deliver the expansion. A workforce group has been established and is leading on recruitment and training options to help ensure that there are sufficient staff available to allow the delivery of the increased entitlement to funded hours of early learning and childcare.

## **3. Community/Council Planning**

Our Renfrewshire is thriving	- Ensuring the best start in life for children and young people.
Our Renfrewshire is well	- Early intervention will lead to healthier outcomes for children and young people.
Our Renfrewshire is safe	- Local services will benefit children, young people and members of the community.
Building strong, safe and resilient communities	- The quality of community life is enhanced by supporting parents, children and young people.
Tackling inequality, ensuring opportunities for all	- Effective governance arrangements ensure that the organisations receiving funding comply with legislative requirements.
Creating a sustainable Renfrewshire for all to enjoy	- Support to families and flexible childcare placements will support parents into and sustain employment, training or enter education.

## **4. Legal**

The Council will require to comply with any change to support for early learning and childcare in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

## **5. Property/Assets**

The development of individual infrastructure projects is informed, as appropriate, by officers from children's services; finance and resources; communities, housing and planning services; and environment and infrastructure services.

## **6. Information Technology**

Information and technology will be required to be set up for new services.

**7. Equality and Human Rights**

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**

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**

The Renfrewshire Expansion Plan will consider the way in which providers are contracted to deliver early learning and childcare services for entitled children. Future procurement arrangements will reflect the Scottish Government procurement guidance for engaging independent providers or third sector in delivering early learning and childcare.

**10. Risk**

Given the expansion across Scotland there will be a demand on the construction industry which could result in insufficient providers being available to build and deliver the adaptations required.

Given the scale of expansion across Scotland, Children's Services may be unable to recruit sufficient staff to deliver the expansion of funded early learning and childcare.

Providers in the independent and third sector will face challenges in retaining and recruiting sufficient staff, posing a risk on the number of places available.

There is a risk around independent and third sector sustainability due to their concerns about retaining their workforce, living wage implications receiving a sustainable rate for early learning and childcare and sustainable around non-funded hours part of other businesses. These concerns have been raised across Scotland, as well as in Renfrewshire.

**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 has been involved in the negotiations with the Scottish Government regarding the expansion of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare. The Renfrewshire plan reflects the COSLA position.

**13. Climate Risk**

None



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## List of Background Papers

- (a) Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement Expansion Plan, Education and Children's Services Policy Board, 24 August 2017.
- (b) A blueprint of 2020: the expansion of early learning and childcare in Scotland – early learning and childcare service model for 2020 consultation paper, The Scottish Government 2018.
- (c) Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement – 1140 Expansion Plan, Education and Children's Services Policy Board, 15/03/18
- (d) Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement – 1140 Expansion Plan, Education and Children's Services Policy Board, 23/08/18
- (e) Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement – 1140 Expansion Plan, Education and Children's Services Policy Board, 17/01/19

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.

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