

To: Education and Children's Services Policy Board

On: 29 October 2020

Report by: Director of Children's Services

Heading: Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Scottish Government set a transformational agenda for early learning and childcare (ELC) by 2020. The vision was to increase the entitlement to free ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by August 2020 for all children aged 3 and 4 year and eligible 2 year olds.
 - 1.2 On the 30 March 2020 the Scottish Government announced that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the statutory duty to deliver 1140 hours of ELC by August 2020 had been removed, with no date set for this being reinstated.
 - 1.3 Renfrewshire Council's expansion plan was first approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 15 March 2018. The 1140 expansion has been phased in Renfrewshire in the lead up to school session 2020 and continues to be implemented where possible during this school session.
 - 1.4 This report provides an update on the current status of the 1140 expansion in Renfrewshire in relation to implementation, workforce and the infrastructure programme. Renfrewshire is continuing to make positive progress in implementing the 1140 expansion.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Policy Board is asked to:
 - (i) note the current position in implementing the 1140 expansion of ELC, as outlined in section 4.1 of the report; and

- (ii) note the revised timeline for the infrastructure programme, which was delayed due to Covid-19, as detailed in section 4.3 of this report.
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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.
- 3.2 The 1140 expansion programme has transformative potential to raise the attainment of all children with a focus on giving children the best start in life and in narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. The expansion of ELC is to be underpinned by the following four key principles - quality, accessibility, flexibility and affordability.
- 3.3 Renfrewshire Council's ELC expansion plan was first approved by the Education and Children's Services Policy Board on 15 March 2018. Further papers relating to the expansion were presented to the same policy board in August 2018, January and October 2019 and 12 March 2020. The most recent report noted that the overall assessment of Renfrewshire's progress in expanding ELC provision was positive and in line with the progress being made across Scotland.
- 3.4 Renfrewshire Council is committed to ensuring high quality early learning provision across Renfrewshire. A range of training and development opportunities continues to be provided to support the development of new and existing staff (practitioners and leaders) in Council and funded partner settings.
- 3.5 The planned infrastructure developments to support the expansion included 16 refurbishments, 6 extensions and 4 new builds. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic 9 of these projects were completed.
- 3.6 The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the infrastructure programme in Renfrewshire, resulting in a delay to the delivery timeline and shortage of places in some establishments and geographical areas in Renfrewshire, therefore preventing universal allocation of 1140 hours from August 2020.
- 3.7 Early learning and childcare places continue to be offered via a mix of Council and funded partner settings, including childminders, with 69% being delivered within Council establishments and 31% in funded provider services.
- 3.8 Members will recall that the Council's expansion offers parents a range of options for accessing their child's free ELC entitlement across each geographical area. In each area parents will be able to choose from a range of providers and options, including term time and 52 weeks per year, full day and part-time places.
- 3.9 During school session 2019/20 42.5% (1,829) of eligible children received 1140 hours of ELC, with 1095 in the local authority sector and 734 in funded provider settings.
- 3.10 As the legal duty to deliver 1140 hours of ELC by August 2020 was removed by the Government the legal entitlement to ELC for school session 2020/21 remains at 600 hours. Currently there is no date set of when the statutory duty for 1140 will be reinstated.
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4 Progress in Implementing Renfrewshire Council's 1140 Expansion Plan – Session 2020/21

4.1 Implementation

4.1.1 Renfrewshire Council has continued to progress with the implementation of 1140 hours of ELC where there is space to do so, with restrictions limited to establishments / geographical areas that have outstanding building work as part of the infrastructure programme.

4.1.2 Currently the Council has offered ELC places to an increasing number of children with around 88% (3246) of eligible children allocated an 1140 placement. The remaining 12% (441) are in receipt of at least 600 hours of ELC (the statutory entitlement). As the infrastructure programme progresses and work completed more children will be allocated an 1140 hours placement.

4.1.3 The breakdown of the delivery of the 1140 hours of ELC is as follows:

- 80% (1740) in Council establishments; and
- 99% (1506) in funded provider services, including childminders, with the remaining 1% scheduled to be offered 1140 when the planned infrastructure work is completed.

4.1.4 The Council is committed to delivering 1140 hours in all funded provider settings, including childminders, where they have the space and capacity to do so. Funded providers had put in place arrangements in preparation for delivering 1140 hours of ELC from August 2020. To maximise the delivery of 1140 hours from August and to support the sustainability of these settings, the Council is committed to the expanded hours being delivered, despite the delay in the statutory obligation. 31% of the overall ELC places in Renfrewshire are delivered in funded provider settings.

4.1.5 In areas with outstanding infrastructure works establishments have offered an increased number of morning and afternoon places to enable them to deliver more 1140 places.

4.1.6 Members should be aware that not all families are choosing to take up the full 1140 hours of ELC. Some parents are also choosing to have a blended placement for their child, this is where a child is receiving the entitlement across more than one setting.

4.1.7 ELC places are allocated in line with the Council's early years admissions policy to ensure fairness and consistency in the allocation process. The majority of parents usually apply for an ELC place within the area they reside in. Parental preference of establishment is considered by panel members during the allocation process. In terms of prioritising the allocation of 1140 hours the following criteria was applied:

- Children previously allocated 1140 hours during academic session 2019/20 have continued to receive 1140 hours this session;
- Priority allocation was given to children categorised as a priority in line with the admissions policy criteria, with priority 1 and then priority 2 considered at the greatest priority; and
- Criteria priority 3 refers to children entitled to ELC were considered in priority order as follows:
 - (i) Early learning and childcare entitlement for eligible two-year olds;
 - (ii) Early learning and childcare entitlement for 3 to 5 year olds – within this age group allocations were made in the following priority order:

- Children in a deferred year
- Children transferring from English reception class
- Children in their pre-school year residing within the admission panel area
- Children in their ante pre-school year (3 year olds) residing within the admissions panel area
- Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the admission panel area
- Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the admission panel area

Within each of the above categories further priority is given to families in training or employment / in receipt of benefits and their SIMD status. A copy of the admissions policy criteria is attached as appendix 1 to this paper.

4.2 Workforce

- 4.2.1 Securing the required workforce to support the ELC expansion continues to be a key priority for the Council. A number of recruitment exercises, voluntary contractual changes for existing employees and a programme to 'grow our own' staff has enabled the Council to make positive progress towards having the staffing resource in place to support the expansion. Despite a delay in the recruitment process due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the Council has secured around 90% of the required workforce.
- 4.2.2 The approximate number of posts remaining to be filled is 35. The remaining posts will be advertised and filled in line with the completion dates for outstanding infrastructure projects.
- 4.2.3 At this stage the Council has secured all management positions required to support the expansion. These posts had been recruited to prior to lockdown and the subsequent delay in the infrastructure programme.
- 4.2.4 The Council's 'Grow Your Own' workforce development plan is continuing to be progressed, including the recruitment and training of Modern Apprentices (MA) and training of Early Learning Support Workers (ELSW) to achieve the required qualification to work as Early Learning and Childcare Officers (ELCO). The foundation apprenticeship and vocational training route for senior pupils in schools and colleges also continues to be promoted.
- 4.2.5 To date 5 ELSW have achieved the required qualification, with 4 already secured an ELCO position. A further 7 ELSW are expected to qualify in early 2021. In addition, 4 MAs are scheduled to complete their qualification by the end of the year and a further 5 by the Spring break in 2021. These staff will be considered for the remaining vacancies. An additional 10 MAs are at the very early stages of the qualification and a recruitment exercise is currently underway for a further 6 MAs.
- 4.2.6 To support the Council's commitment to ensure high quality ELC provision across Renfrewshire, Children's Services is continuing to ensure professional learning opportunities for staff. Remote and online learning opportunities have been developed and planned for new and existing staff (practitioners and leaders) in Council and funded partner establishments, including:

- a range of professional learning seminars, leadership induction and courses for existing heads, deputies and senior staff; and
- funded support for leaders and practitioners to access certificated training to enable them to meet Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) registration requirements.

4.2.7 Children’s Services quality improvement framework and programme of support continues to be provided to Council and funded partner settings to support them to ensure and maintain quality provision.

4.3 Infrastructure

4.3.1 The early years infrastructure expansion programme is expected to create circa 600 additional early years spaces and the COVID-19 lockdown has affected the availability of circa 350 of these spaces.

4.3.2 In March 2020 the infrastructure programme status governance report advised that:

- 9 projects were complete;
- 13 projects were on track for delivery by August 2020; and
- 4 projects were to open in November 2020.

4.3.3 The expectation at that time was that the Council could provide sufficient spaces for all entitled children by August 2020. This was achieved through an interim distribution plan, which was based on admissions data from across all panel areas (as at March 2020).

4.3.4 Further to the COVID-19 lockdown all construction work at all sites ceased as of 23 March 2020 with the 2 principal contractors returning to site at the end of June 2020.

4.3.5 At that time a review of the impact of lockdown restrictions on all project delivery dates was undertaken and a delay of 13 weeks was applied to all projects. Additional time for previously acknowledged delays and time required to remobilise sites varies between 2 and 21 weeks and this is recorded as “programme adjustment” in the table below.

4.3.6 At September 2020 the infrastructure programme status is:

- 11 projects are complete;
- 7 projects are on track for completion by December 2020;
- 5 projects are projected for completion by April 2021; and
- 3 projects are projected for completion by August 2021.

4.3.7 The revised delivery programme for projects affected by COVID-19 restrictions is detailed in the table below:

ELC Class / Centre	Add Spaces	Original Delivery Date	Lockdown	Programme Adjustment	Total Add Weeks	Revised Delivery Date
Houston	20	August 2020	13 weeks	8 weeks	21 weeks	January 2021
Kirklandneuk	56	August 2020	13 weeks	6 weeks	19 weeks	January 2021
Lochfield	48	November 2020	13 weeks	6 weeks	19 weeks	March 2021
Dargavel	40	November 2020	13 weeks	21 weeks	34 weeks	July 2021
Inchinnan	20	August 2020	13 weeks	8 weeks	21 weeks	January 2021

St Margaret's	12	August 2020	13 weeks	2 weeks	15 weeks	November 2020
Kilbarchan	16	August 2020	13 weeks	2 weeks	15 weeks	November 2020
Glendee	4	May 2020	13 weeks	2 weeks	15 weeks	November 2020
Williamsburgh	4	August 2020	13 weeks	2 weeks	15 weeks	November 2020
Glenburn	16	July 2020	13 weeks	11 weeks	24 weeks	December 2020
St Anne's	2	August 2020	No opportunity to build during summer 2020 therefore project delayed 1 year.			August 2021
Gallowhill	0	April 2020	13 weeks	2 weeks	15 weeks	November 2020
Ferguslie	24	August 2020				Complete
Ralston*	0	August 2020	13 weeks	6 weeks	19 weeks	December 2020
Glenfield Satellite (Hollybush)	40	April 2020				Complete
Lochwinnoch	13	November 2020	13 weeks	8 weeks	21 weeks	January 2021
St Catherine's	34	November 2020	No opportunity to build during summer 2020 therefore project delayed 1 year.			August 2021
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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.

2. HR and Organisational Development

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

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.

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| 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, amended Act 2019

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 current Framework for ELC Places with funded providers runs out at the end of this school session therefore a further procurement process will be undertaken during this session for session 2021 onwards. The new Framework arrangements will reflect the Scottish Government procurement guidance for engaging independent providers or third sector in delivering early learning and childcare.

10. Risk

The infrastructure timeline could be subject to change as a result of unknown covid implications.

There is a risk around independent and third sector sustainability due to the impact of Covid-19. Also, in relation to the retention of their workforce; implications of paying the living wage; issues around the sustainable rate for an ELC; and the impact the increased hours of ELC has on the non-funded

hours part of their 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

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
- (f) Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Phasing Update, Education and Children's Services Policy Board, 31/10/19
- (g) Early Learning and Childcare Entitlement - 1140 Expansion Phasing Update, Education and Children's Services Policy Board, 12/3/20

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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23/09/2020

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Early Learning and Childcare Admission Policy - Policy Criteria

Priority One – allocate in priority order		
(A)	Any child considered in need of protection	Children on the child protection register or identified through child protection procedures.
(B)	Request for assistance from social work where a child is deemed to be in need	Request for assistance from Social Work where either: The placement would help the child remain within the family environment rather than be looked after by the local authority; The child is currently or has been subject to a statutory order, looked after, under a kinship care order or with a parent appointed guardian; The placement would support the child's return to the family; Children born to parents under 16 years of age or in formal full-time education to allow the parents to return to education.
Priority Two – allocate in priority order		
(A)	Request for assistance from social work or health professionals for children with complex or multiple needs	Children who require substantial direct and continuing intervention from at least one other agency out with education and whose additional support needs are putting the child at an educational and social disadvantage, including children born pre-term below 30 weeks.
(B)	Request for assistance where it has been identified that a high level of family support is required	Children and families who have been identified as requiring substantial support through an integrated assessment, or other multi-agency approaches.
(C)	Request for assistance for children and families experiencing acute stress and/or requiring high levels of support	Children and families experiencing acute stress, and/or requiring high levels of support: - Children of asylum seekers; Refugees; Children living in bed and breakfast, transient or who have a pattern of homelessness; Military families; and Children of parents who have been looked after and accommodated.
(D)	Request for assistance from other professionals for children with less significant additional support needs or where there are concerns about the circumstances of the child, parents or family	Children who require support because of circumstances which are placing the child, parent or family at an educational, social or health disadvantage. This includes children who are adversely affected by the disability of any other person in the family or where there is a high level of support required for English as an additional language. This priority refers to children of parents who have previously been looked after by the local authority and are in employment education or training.

		The professionals who would request assistance within this priority includes to are: education establishments; health agencies; social work services; voluntary sector agencies
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Priority Three - allocate in priority order

(A)	Early learning and childcare entitlement for eligible two-year olds.	Eligible two-year olds whose parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits stated within section 1.10 of the policy guidance.
(B)	Early learning and childcare entitlement for 3 to 5 year olds	(a) Children born in January or February with an entitlement to an additional year or where a deferred year has been approved for children born between September and December.
		(b) Children transferring from English reception class.
		(c) Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the admission panel designated area.
		(d) Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire within the admission panel designated area.
		(e) Children in their pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from outwith the admission panel designated area.
		(f) Children in their ante pre-school year residing in Renfrewshire from out with the admission panel designated area.

Priority Three - priority is given to children whose parents or carers are: in employment and in receipt of income support, income-based job seekers allowance, working tax credits or universal credit; or in employment, education or training.

Priority Four – allocate in priority order

Children aged 0-3 years residing in Renfrewshire.

Priority Four - priority is given to children whose parents or carers are: in employment and in receipt of income support, income-based job seekers allowance, working tax credits or universal credit; or in employment, education or training.

Priority Five

Children aged 0-5 years residing out with the Renfrewshire area.