

To: EDUCATION COMMITTEE	Subject: PROGRESS REPORT AND NEXT STEPS ON EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROVISION IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
From: ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION, YOUTH & COMMUNITIES	
Date: 23 January 2017   Ref: IB/GMcL/AR	

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress of the Education, Youth and Communities service in implementing the requirements of the Children and Young People Act 2014 in relation to Early Learning and Childcare.
- 1.2 In particular the report focuses on the introduction of 600 hours for eligible 2 years old and 3 and 4 year old children as well as the expansion of entitlement to 1140 hours for 3 and 4 years old by 2020.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 Parts 6, 7 and 8 of the Children and Young People (Scotland ) Act 2014 is to improve and integrate the role of Early Years support in children and families' lives by increasing the amount and flexibility of Early Learning and Childcare.
- 2.2 Our vision for Early Learning and Childcare in North Lanarkshire Council is to provide children and families with accessible, affordable, flexible and high quality early learning and childcare experiences delivered in partnership by a skilled workforce in stimulating and nurturing environments fit for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- 2.3 This will require transformational change in the workforce, significant investment in infrastructure, as well as new, creative and innovative models of delivery.

**3 Progress**

- 3.1 There has been a substantial increase in the entitlement to free Early Learning and Childcare since 2007 when the entitlement was increased from 412.5 hours to 475 hours per year, and then through the 2014 Act there was a further increase in the annual entitlement to 600 hours for three and four year olds and for eligible two year olds.
- 3.2 In North Lanarkshire Council a range of Early Learning and Childcare provision has been developed over the years offering choice to meet parental demand. The table below details the range of provision available across the age ranges;-

Age Range	Provision/Providers	Numbers
3-4 years olds	Nursery Classes in Primary School	74
	Family Learning Centres	16
	Partner Nurseries	31
2 years olds	Childminders	93
	Partner nurseries	23
	Family Learning Centres	5
	Nursery Classes in Primary Schools	7*
	Out of School Care Provider	1
	Family Association Centre	1

\* Of the seven classes 5 are operational and 2 will be by the end of February 2017

- 3.3 The Scottish Government Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland (No. 7:2016 Edition) published 13 December 2016 reports that the uptake in North Lanarkshire Council for eligible 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds is higher than the national average.
- 3.4 At the census (19-23 December 2016) North Lanarkshire Council reported a 100% uptake in registrations for 3 and 4 year olds with 6,453 children in Local Authority and Partner Nursery provision. The Scottish average at that date was 99%
- 3.5 Nationally the uptake with regards to eligible 2 year old provision has been slower than expected. This has been recognised by Scottish Government who are currently consulting with stakeholders, providers and local authority in this regard. At the census date the national average was 9% with North Lanarkshire reporting an uptake of 10%. This is expected to increase now that the local authority nursery class provision for eligible 2 year olds, is operational, and a further marketing campaign is underway.
- 3.6 A key principle of the Scottish Government's vision for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare is not just about increasing the hours of entitlement but ensuring that there is a workforce of skilled practitioners who can deliver high quality services that will make demonstrable progress in closing the attainment gap and address child poverty.
- 3.7 In the period April 2015 – March 2016 27 North Lanarkshire Council managed Early Learning and Childcare settings. These were inspected by the Care Inspectorate and inspection grades indicated that 100% of the settings were evaluated either good to excellent. This will provide a firm baseline to meet the future challenges of providing quality services at a time of expansion. **Appendix A** provides further detail of the Care Inspectorate visits during this period.

#### **4. Next Steps**

- 4.1 Scottish Government produced a consultation document 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland' which the Education, Youth and Community service responded to in detail. The outcome of the consultation is due in March 2017 and will provide the basis for the service to finalise its vision for how the expansion programme will be delivered in North Lanarkshire Council.
- 4.2 Members will be aware that a new build Family Learning Centre was approved for the Forgewood area replacing the existing Family Learning Centre which is located across two sites. Design briefs for the new Centre are currently being drawn. In addition, we are taking account of the requirements of the expansion programme.
- 4.3 Developing and expanding the current provision will be necessary to ensure that there is a range of services to enable children to access Early Learning and Childcare for 1140 hours per year. Senior officers are currently engaged in feasibility studies which assess current infrastructure demands, innovative models of delivery within each of the localities and the requirements to enhance the workforce accordingly.
- 4.4 Consideration is being given to refurbish Mossend Senior Citizen Club to create a full day nursery provision, where children have the opportunity to spend the majority of time engaged in creative outdoor learning. The building would be refurbished both internally and externally, ensuring that the facilities created would enable the authority to creatively offer enhance learning opportunities for preschool children and deliver the entitlement of 1140 hours in 2020. A bid has been submitted to 2017/18 Scottish Government Early Learning and childcare capital project for the refurbishment costs. A decision is expected at the end of January 2017.

#### **5 Corporate Considerations**

- 5.1 Achieving the Scottish Government's key policy driver of doubling the entitlement of free Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours by 2020 in the fourth largest local authority in Scotland will require a corporate approach to utilising the expertise of appropriate officers across the organisation.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The extent of the financial investment required to deliver the expansion programme is as yet unknown. This will be dependent on the final outcome of deliberations between Scottish Government and Scottish Futures Trust.
- 6.2 Indicatively it is estimated that the new build for Forgewood Family Learning Centre will cost in the region of £3 million, providing an indication of the significant costs that will be required across the Early Learning and Childcare sector.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

The Education Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the progress made with regard to the expansion programme for Early Learning and Childcare entitlement of 600 hours for eligible two year olds.
- (ii) take account of the significant challenges the expansion programme will have on North Lanarkshire Council.
- (iii) note the progress made to date with regard to preparing for the 1140 hours expansion by 2020.

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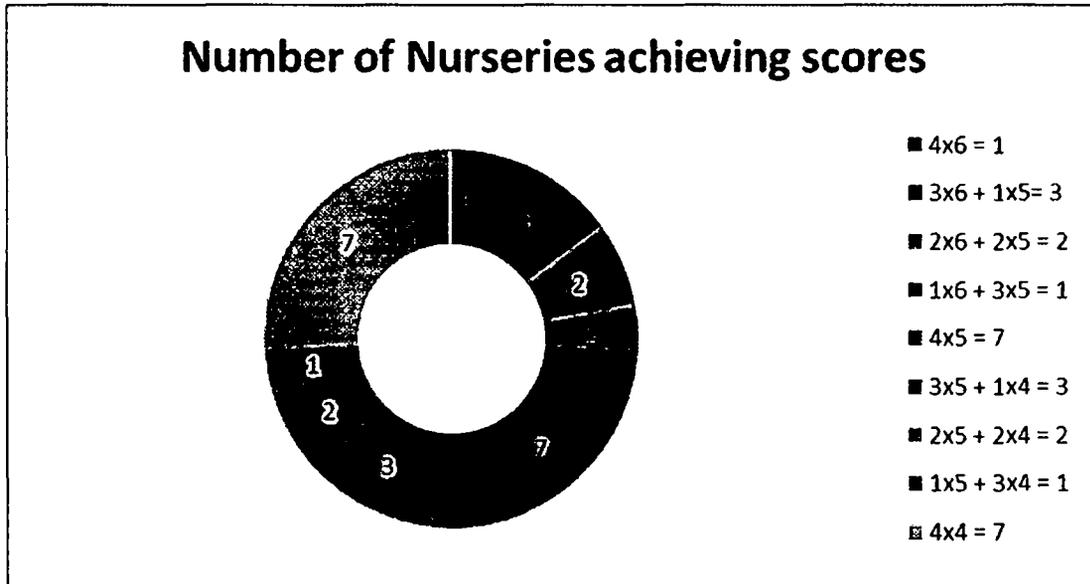
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Local Government Access to Information Act: For further information please contact:  
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**Local Authority Establishments – Care Inspectorate Visits**

**April 2015-March 2016**

- Overall 27 Local Authority establishments had Care Inspectorate visits completed during the above period, receiving a score of good to excellent.
- Our Lady of Good Aid Cathedral PSNC received the highest score with 4 x 6's; rated as excellent.
- Six nurseries (22%) received a mix of 5's and 6's; rated as excellent and very good.
- Seven nurseries (26%) received a score of all 5's; rated as very good.
- Six nurseries (22%) received a mix of 5's and 4's; rated as very good and good.
- Seven nurseries (26%) achieved the lowest score of 4 x 4's; rated as good.
- During this period there were 4 requirements and 29 recommendations.
- Trends have continued throughout 2016 with Nurseries achieving scores of 4-6 with the exception of Craigneuk FLC who received a 3 for Quality of Environment.



Scores	4x6 = 1	3x6 + 1x5 = 3	2x6 + 2x5 = 2	1x6 + 3x5 = 1	4x5 = 7	3x5 + 1x4 = 3	2x5 + 2x4 = 2	1x5 + 3x4 = 1	4x4 = 7
<b>Number of Nurseries achieving scores</b>	1	3	2	1	7	3	2	1	7
<b>Nurseries</b>	Our Lady Of Good Aid Cathedral Nursery	Dunbeth FLC	Kildrm FLC	Newmains FLC	Condorrat PSNC	Our Lady & St Joseph's PSNC	Muirhouse PSNC	St Gerard's PSNC	Forgewood FLC
		Richard Stewart FLC	Holy Cross PSNC		St Brendan's PSNC	Sacred Heart PSNC	St Patrick's FLC		St Andrew's PSNC
		Laburnum FLC			Westfield PSNC	ST Dominic's PSNC			St Mary's Cumbernauld PSNC
					Glengowan PSNC				Cambusnethan PSNC
					Greengairs PSNC				Rochsolloch PSNC
					St Bartholomew's PSNC				Woodlands PSNC
					St Timothy's PSNC				Chapelgreen PSNC