

North Lanarkshire Council

Report

Policy and Strategy Committee

approval noting

Ref DB/AG

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1140 Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme Update

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Executive Summary

This report provides the Policy and Strategy Committee with an updated position on the 1140 hours Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) expansion programme.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Policy and Strategy Committee note the 1140 Hours Expansion progress to date.

Supporting Documents

Council business plan to 2020 The Early Learning & Childcare Expansion (ELC) Programme supports the delivery of the following Business Plan Priorities and Outcomes:-

- Supporting Children to realise their full potential
 - Scottish Government: A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning & Childcare in Scotland
 - Scottish Government: A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning & Childcare in Scotland, Quality Action Plan
 - Scottish Government: A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning & Childcare in Scotland, Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers: Principles and Practice
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1. Background

- 1.1 Members will be aware, in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Scottish Government committed to increasing the annual entitlement to free early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1140 hours by August 2020.
- 1.2 The implementation of an enhanced entitlement for early learning and childcare provision is a significant challenge both for Council staff, key stakeholders and partners. A dedicated team has been established by the Service and a detailed implementation plan is in place to underpin and monitor activity through to August 2020. The vision for early learning and childcare in the Council has remained consistent through this period and is as follows:-

'Deliver in partnership, by a skilled workforce, in stimulating and nurturing environments, high quality and flexible early learning and childcare which is affordable and accessible for all.'

2. Infrastructure

- 2.1 The strategy for introducing the 1140 hours ELC expansion in North Lanarkshire was developed initially with a view that there would be a 'one place one child' model. The intention was to adapt or extend current facilities, or in places build new provision (taking account of independent and voluntary sector capacities) to ensure that every child in North Lanarkshire could be allocated a place at their local nursery, which would be staffed to appropriate operational capacity.

Following our initial bid, Scottish Government confirmed that there was insufficient funding available for that model. Updated modelling to meet with the budget envelope has been undertaken to ensure that the Council maintains the infrastructure strategy of prioritising SIMD 1 -4 children within 1 km of their home.

The result of this re-mapping exercise means a greater quantity of full time provision (i.e. two children taking one place e.g. one child Monday to Friday am and one child Monday to Friday pm) and a smaller amount of term time provision to ensure children in SIMD 1-4 addresses can be allocated a place within walking distance from their homes. This is to fit with the Council's priorities to tackle poverty and disadvantage.

2.1.1 New build Nurseries delivered by HUB South West

Project Name	Location	Provision (FTE)
Carbrain	Wallbrae Road, Cumbernauld	48
Petersburn	Petersburn Road, Airdrie	72
Chapelhall	Castle Street, Chapelhall	40
Wishawhill	Heathery Road, Wishaw	48
Cumbernauld Village	Glasgow Road, Cumbernauld	32
Coltness	Innerleithen Drive, Wishaw	72
Bonkle	Abernethyn Road, Wishaw	87 (72 3-5Yrs + 15 2-3Yrs)
Netherton	Carbarns, Wishaw	40
Forgewood	Kinloch Drive, Motherwell	92 (72 3-5Yrs + 20 2-3Yrs)

There are nine proposed new build facilities across North Lanarkshire. Each site will accommodate a stand-alone Family Learning Centre. Each of these sites is unique and will provide new, readily accessible access to early years childcare facilities within localities. The proposed design for ELC in North Lanarkshire is to allow for the application of the same 'model concept' across each of the nine sites. This concept allows the building to enlarge and contract in size to suit the facility requirement on each site. In doing so this will not only lend itself to standardisation of construction elements but also maximise off-site manufacture opportunities, helping to demonstrate best value.

2.1.2 The 1140 Project Board recently approved the Hub South West Stage 1 submission. Three exemplar building models for 48, 72 and 92 FTE children were developed as this reflects the majority of settings. The floor plans were developed in conjunction with the 1140 hours team and Norr Architects. Similarly three exemplar sites (Forgewood, Netherton and Wishawhill) were developed as part of the Stage 1 process. With minor exceptions, which will be resolved in the next stage of the procurement process, the proposals met with North Lanarkshire requirements and will provide high quality learning environments for children and comfortable working environment to meet the indoor/outdoor nursery philosophy. In order to construct the new ELC projects at Castle Street and Innerlethan, land title transfers have to take place and the subsequent land valuation costs transferred from 1140 capital budget to HRA budget.

2.2.2 Morgan Sindall, the tier 1 Design & Build contractor will now progress the new build programme on to Stage 2, during which detailed design and market testing of each scheme will be carried out providing opportunities to local SMEs wherever possible. At this stage, we anticipate that the stage 2 submissions will be around May this year, commencing on site in the summer of 2019.

2.2.3 Extensions/Alterations delivered by NLC Asset & Procurement Solutions

The Committee has been previously advised of the strategy for altering and adapting existing assets which consisted of the repurposing of two existing Council assets and adapting/extending seven existing schools.

Project Name	Location	Provision (FTE)
St Gerard's, Adaptations	St Gerard's PS, Bellshill	64
St Serf's, Adaptations	St Serfs PS, Airdrie	56
Hope Street, Re-purpose	Hope St, Mossend	32
Townhead, Adaptations	Townhead PS, Coatbridge	40
St Augustine's, Adaptations	St Augustine's PS, Coatbridge	48
Shawhead Extension	Shawhead PS, Coatbridge	24
Whitelees Extension	Whitelees PS, Cumbernauld	40
Stane PS, Modular Unit Relocation	Stane PS, Shotts	48
Merrystone House (see Section 2.3)	TBC	55 (40 3-5Yrs + 15 2-3Yrs)

This programme of work is on schedule to be completed ahead of August 2020 when statutory entitlement of 1140 hours comes in to effect. The works associated with the ELC provision at St Gerard's Primary School are now complete. Following completion of works to the school roof, the nursery children will be transferred from the temporary classrooms in to their new facility. Works to the repurposing of the existing facility at Hope St, Mossend (which will be aligned to Mossend Primary School) are also almost complete. In the coming months work on the remaining facilities will be undertaken.

2.3 Capital Budget

Overall, the Capital budget shortfall of £6.411m that was highlighted in the September 2018 Education committee report has reduced to £3.486m. The service has in place a route map aimed at targeting further savings which will be explored over the next period. This will include an alternative solution to the repurposing of Merrystone House as it is currently £1.0m over the original Scottish Government bid allocation of £554k, therefore Merrystone is no longer a viable option for the 1140 programme. The alternative now is to explore the availability of the private sector to provide additional capacity within this area.

2.4 Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with ELC Providers (independent and voluntary sector, funded and non-funded) is ongoing with regular bi-monthly meetings scheduled to June 2019 and 1:1 meetings as requested by the private sector. This ongoing engagement enables ELC Providers the opportunity to consult and influence the implementation strategy of 1140 hours.

2.4.1 The Education Committee on the 18 December 2018 approved the rate of £5.55 per child per hour for three – five year olds and £5.80 per child per hour for eligible two year olds from August 2019 for the delivery of 1140 hours. Members were further requested to note the development of a one year interim procurement framework and the allocation of resources totalling £370,964 to Funded Providers (independent and voluntary sector) who are currently delivering statutory entitlement to eligible two year olds and three – five year olds.

2.4.2 Children in receipt of 1140 provision will be entitled to a free meal each day from August 2020 and Committee approved that the Funded Providers will receive an additional payment of £3.00 per child each day to provide a meal.

2.4.3 Following engagement with ELC Providers (independent and voluntary sector) over the last period, a further paper was approved at the Education & Families Committee on the 26 February 2019. This included:

- An Interim Procurement Framework for the delivery of 1140 hours from August 2019 This strategy will maximise parental choice and ensure that the independent, private and voluntary sector is not disadvantaged during the phased implementation of 1140 hours.
- The allocation of resources totalling £370,694 to Funded Providers (independent and voluntary sector only) in the form of a grant during financial year 2018/19 to support the implementation of 1140 hours. This is to enable and support the private sector including childminders, to plan for capacity building for August 2020. Private sector providers are expected to deliver

23% of the overall anticipated demand for 1140 Hours within the authority (circa 1950 funded places).

- 2.4.4 Grant application forms will be issued to Funded Providers (independent and voluntary sector) with a return date of the 22 March 2019 to ensure that the funding can be allocated prior to the financial year-end.
- 2.4.5 Following requests from Funded Providers, a cross sector 1140 hours working group has been formed with the initial group meeting scheduled to take place towards the end of March 2019. The aim of the group is to raise the quality standards of Early Learning and Childcare across North Lanarkshire.
- 2.4.6 The new National Standard between Care Inspectorate (CI), Scottish Government (SG) and COSLA was launched in December 2018 and will take effect in August 2020. This document sets out the approach, and the national standard, which all Funded Providers (including those managed by the local authority) wishing to deliver the funded entitlement of Early Learning and Childcare will have to meet.

2.5 Quality

2.5.1 The Scottish Government has recently issued its new National Standard, which includes requirements and specifications in areas such as:

- Quality - the expansion will ensure a high quality experience for all children, which complements other early years and educational activity to close the attainment gap, and recognises the value of those we entrust to give our children the best start in life.
- Affordability - the expansion will increase access to affordable ELC which will help to reduce barriers to participating in the labour market which parents and carers face.
- Accessibility - ELC capacity is sufficient and is as conveniently geographically located as possible – particularly in areas of higher deprivation and in rural communities – to support families and enable parents and carers to work, train and study, while also appropriately meeting the needs of children who require additional support and parents who request ELC through the medium of Gaelic.
- Flexibility - the expansion will support more parents and carers in work, training or study, through greater choice of provider and patterns of provision that are better aligned with working patterns whilst delivering this in a way that ensures a high quality experience for the child.

2.5.2 Quality is at the heart of ELC provision, as is providing the flexibility parents need to work, train or study.

Following feedback from our initial Single Status staff engagement during January 2019 and taking on board the concerns raised, including the provision of meals to children and staff development, we have taken the opportunity to revisit the staffing models to ensure employee concerns are addressed and that our staffing models are deliverable in terms of the budget constraints. The Council's preferred 1140 hours delivery models are as follows:

- Nursery classes operating term time (equivalent to school term time) 9am-3pm model.

- Nursery classes operating full time (48 weeks)
Part time: morning or afternoon sessions
- Family Learning Centres full time (48weeks)
Part time: morning or afternoon sessions

These models also include the provision of a meal which is therefore a means to deliver on our fairness commission outcomes.

The new National Standard between Care Inspectorate (CI), Scottish Government (SG) and COSLA was launched in December 2018 and will take effect in August 2020. This document sets out the approach, and the national standard, which all Funded Providers (including those managed by the local authority) wishing to deliver the funded entitlement of Early Learning and Childcare will have to meet.

- 2.5.3 Discussions to date have highlighted that local authorities will have a responsibility in ensuring the National Standard is adopted in every setting within their area, including private sector providers.

2.6 Workforce (North Lanarkshire Council)

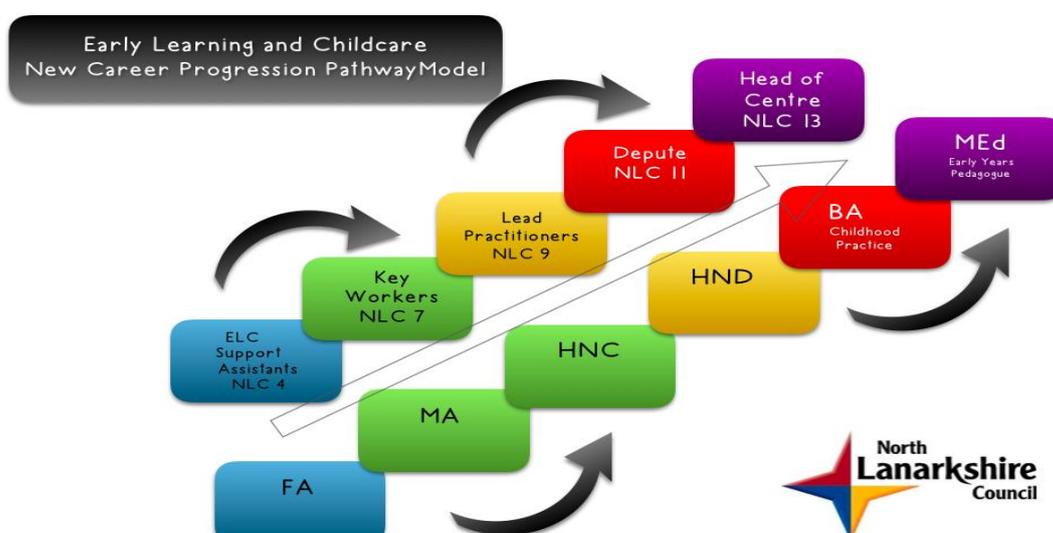
- 2.6.1 A workforce structure model has been developed taking cognisance of Quality, Affordability, Accessibility and Flexibility.
- 2.6.2 Our Corporate Communications team is developing a communications strategy around the implementation of 1140 Hours Expansion across the Council. Communications at this stage are focused on raising awareness of the 1140 Hours introduction by August 2020 among stakeholders. This strategy also addresses the important issues involved in careers and recruitment within the Early Learning and Childcare sector, as part of the expansion, in recognition of the considerable growth in staffing that the programme will create.

2.7 Workforce Development

- 2.7.1 The 1140 expansion has created opportunities for the existing Council workforce to progress their learning journey utilising a new career pathway model, which is being established as part of the implementation programme. This approach ensures that we are building the requisite skills and qualifications for our Early Learning and Childcare sector as whole, focusing on the needs of the children who will experience Early Learning and Childcare, as well as those of current and future staff.
- 2.7.2 This is a key aspect of our drive to highlight North Lanarkshire Council as a sector leader in the development of sustainable career pathways, by offering current staff pathways to new qualifications and to develop further skills.

NLC Staff Data

Qualifications	2018-2019 Intake
PDA Education assistant	22
HNC in Childcare	40
BA in Childhood Practice	31
MSc in Early years Pedagogue	16



Foundation & Modern Apprenticeship Data

Apprenticeship	2018-2019 Intake	2019-2020 Intake
Foundation	17	Interviews ongoing to recruit circa 30 apprentices
Modern	40	Interviews ongoing to recruit circa 60 apprentices

2.8 Equality & Diversity

- 2.8.1 The 1140 team are working with Routes to Work and the Department for Work and Pensions and this has been particularly valuable in terms of promoting diversity. Further promotions are anticipated throughout the lifetime of the 1140 programme.
- 2.8.2 The 1140 team has also delivered presentations to the Council's Equality Forums, and B.M.E. 'Promoting Pathways' Summits to encourage and support ethnic diversity within the early years sector.

- 2.8.3 The 1140 team will continue to work with our Supported Enterprise Service and are passionate about ensuring that people with disabilities are actively encouraged to apply for current and future vacancies. So far we have met with individuals to give one to one information, and have provided information and advice on how to apply for posts in early years.
- 2.8.4 We also have a particular focus on Gaelic provision in early years. This has involved work by our Foundation and Modern Apprenticeship teams. As part of this, these teams have engaged with Greenfaulds High School to offer early years' opportunities to interested S5 & S6 pupils. In addition, the 1140 team have convened a small working group, focussed on increasing our Gaelic speaking workforce with a view to upskilling current staff and creating new opportunities and positive destinations for our Gaelic speaking young people.
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3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

The strategy of NLC, as approved by the Education Committee in November 2017, is to prioritise families who live in SIMD 1–4 to ensure they have access to an ELC place within one kilometre of their home. Consideration has also been given to ensure there is a mix of services within localities.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

This is a universal statutory entitlement for all 3–5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds from August 2020.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

At this stage, there remains a shortfall on both the revenue and capital 1140 Expansion budgets. In terms of the capital budget, the following items have been identified for further savings:

- a. Alternative procurement solution to Merrystone House – potential capital saving.
- b. Re-allocation of internal funding for Forgewood Family Learning Centre - net £1.0m budget transfer
- c. Re-allocation of internal funding for land transfer payments - £400k
- d. Continued cost savings from the extensions/adaptions programme of work

A workforce structure model has been developed taking cognisance of Quality, Affordability, Accessibility and Flexibility. The service is continually reviewing the 1140 Hours staffing models to ensure that we work within the constraints of the revenue budget.

4.2 **HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

The expansion is driven by legislation ensuring the provision of 1140 hours early learning and childcare as a statutory requirement from August 2020 for all three – five year olds and eligible two year old's.

4.3 **Environmental Impact**

Access to local childcare services will provide environmental benefits through the use of local community based networks and facilities.

4.4 **Risk Impact**

Without the workforce and infrastructure in place by August 2020, the Council may be at risk of failing in their statutory duty to provide 1140 hours nursery provision to all three - five year old's and eligible two's, resulting in limited parental choice within North Lanarkshire

5. **Measures of success**

5.1 Delivery of the expansion within the required timescale, ensuring full access to 1140 hours early learning and childcare provision by August 2020.

5.2 Children have access to funded entitlement of 1140 hours from August 2019.



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