
EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE – EXPANSION TO 1140 HOURS

Report by Service Director Children and Young People

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

21 March 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes to update and gain approval from the Executive Committee on the proposed strategic approach to the delivery of 1140 hours funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds in communities across the Scottish Borders by 2020. In addition, this report shares information on the trial of extended flexible ELC currently underway at Philiphaugh Community School Nursery, funded by the Scottish Government.**
- 1.2 Nationally by 2020 all three and four years, and around 27% of two year olds, will be entitled to 1140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare provision – almost double current levels of entitlement.
- 1.3 The current entitlement of 600 hours ELC is provided with varying levels of flexibility by 46 school nurseries, commissioning arrangements with 28 partner providers and 2 childminders (who are part of a pilot project until June 2017) for three and four year olds. Two year old provision is delivered through 7 school nurseries, 13 partner providers and 5 childminders.
- 1.4 The majority of school nurseries deliver the entitled hours as morning or afternoon session of 3 hours 10 minutes, five days per week, 38 weeks of the year (term time only). 9 school nurseries offer extended opportunities through lunchtime 'wraparound' and 'top up' sessions which parents pay for.
- 1.5 The focus over the forthcoming financial years will be the strategic development of our school nursery provision encompassing both capital and revenue investment. This will include property, the workforce, demographics and the needs of our most vulnerable families.
- 1.6 These will be underpinned by both national and local principles and priorities to ensure we take a strategic approach whilst delivering:
 - (a) Improved outcomes for all children, especially those who will benefit most.
 - (b) Support the wider programme of work to close the attainment gap as set out in Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: A Delivery Plan for Scotland.
 - (c) Increased flexibility of provision to support parents to work, train or study, especially those who need routes into sustainable

employment.

- (d) High quality ELC learning environments which contribute to closing the attainment gap.
- (e) A key contribution to our ambition to reduce child poverty.
- (f) An ELC estate best placed to deliver across Scottish Borders Council's statutory duties.
- (g) A future-proofed ELC estate which is both sustainable and flexible in meeting current and future needs.
- (h) Affordable and accessible services within the capacity of the estate.
- (i) A scaling up of the ELC workforce with a focus on creating Modern Apprenticeships and through supporting people transitioning into the ELC workforce within Scottish Borders Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Agree to the proposed strategic approach.**
- (b) Note the update provided on the trial and agree continuation.**
- (c) Agree the allocation of the Early Years capital budget to the build of a new ELC provision in St Boswells Primary School.**
- (d) Give permission to proceed with a full options appraisal regarding the identification of priorities for early learning and childcare building investment and bring recommendations to a future meeting.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Legislation

- 3.1.1 Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ('the Act') introduced a new concept of early learning and childcare (ELC). This term is seen as helping to remove an artificial divide between pre-school for 3 and 4 year olds; and, childcare for 0 – 3 year olds; or, pre-school and wraparound for 3 and 4 year olds; whereby pre-school is the educational element delivered in short blocks tied to a certain number of hours in a day; topped up by childcare or wraparound which can be seen as less important to learning.
- 3.1.2 Early Learning and Childcare is defined in Section 46 of the Act as a service consisting of education and care, of a kind which is suitable in the ordinary case for children who are under school age, regard being had to the importance of interactions and other experiences which support learning and development in a caring and nurturing setting. This will enable more holistic and integrated provision which supports learning and development in caring and nurturing environments for all young children; and which can encompass any further expansion across all young children.
- 3.1.3 Part 6 of the Act requires Local Authorities to ensure flexible ELC services are available to allow parental choice in accessing services.

3.2 National and Local Vision and Priorities

- 3.2.1 *"Make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families across Scotland to ensure that **all children have the best start in life** and are ready to succeed"* (Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).
- 3.2.2 Develop high quality, flexible early learning and childcare (ELC) which is affordable and accessible for all.
- 3.2.3 Extended flexible ELC means:
- (a) Extending the number of hours available from 600 to 1140 a year.
 - (b) Offering more flexibility and choice across a cluster area.
 - (c) Moving away from traditional 3 hour 10 minute morning or afternoon session over 38 weeks term time to more flexible options to meet a variety of needs across a cluster area including up to 50 weeks in a year.
 - (d) Continuing to operate within a framework to ensure a manageable and affordable service.
- 3.2.4 Scottish Borders Council sets out, within the context of national and local policies, what it is aiming to achieve in terms of raising levels of achievement and attainment and improving educational outcomes for all children and young people in the key priorities set out in our Business Plan and our Integrated Children and Young People's Services Plan.
- 3.2.5 As part of a multi-agency partnership, we have identified the following priorities within our Integrated Children and Young People's Plan:

- (a) Raising attainment and achievement for all and closing the attainment gap between the lowest and highest achievers.
- (b) Promoting the health and wellbeing of all children and young people and reducing health inequalities.
- (c) Keeping children and young people safe.
- (d) Improving the wellbeing and life chances of our most vulnerable children and young people.

3.3 Early Years Action Plan 2016-17 – 2017-18

Highlights the intention to support the quality, accessibility and affordability of childcare and review support currently available through:

- 3.3.1 Developing a workforce plan as we move towards 1140 hrs (by 2020).
- 3.3.2 Updating staffing roles to reflect current and modern Early Years practice nationally and the roles and responsibilities document.
- 3.3.3 Continue provision for eligible 2 year olds.
- 3.3.4 Planning for extending ELC provision from 600 to 1140hrs by 2020.
- 3.3.5 Aiming for a service provision which is flexible in supporting families into sustainable employment and out of poverty by linking with welfare benefits, Job Centre and CLD.

4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

- 4.1 Develop high quality, flexible ELC which is affordable and accessible for all; taking into account social, demographic and geographic needs of children and families and also ensuring that the delivery of 1140 hours is manageable and affordable within its resources. Providing an effective and sustainable structure within available resources (people, revenue and capital) enabling maximum efficiency and service delivery ensuring statutory obligations continue to be met.
- 4.2 This will be a five year phased approach, with the current session as Phase 1.
- 4.3 Phase 2 will be implemented from August 2017. The provision of extended hours will be located in our identified areas of disadvantage and rurality in support of the needs of our most vulnerable children, families and communities. Hours will be flexible to meet the needs of families ; section 5.5.3 of this report outlines the range of flexible hours families will be able to access. The following areas in 2016 statistics have the highest levels of deprivation and will offer extended flexible hours from August 2017: Burnfoot, Langlee, Philiphaugh, Eyemouth, Greenlaw, Coldstream and Kirkhope.
 - 4.3.1 Burnfoot (FSM 45%)
Langlee (FSM 35%)
Eyemouth (FSM 26%)
Philiphaugh (Phase 1: 37%)
 - 4.3.2 Greenlaw (Remote Rural FSM 13%)
Coldstream (Accessible Rural FSM 27%)
Kirkhope (Accessible Rural FSM 18%)
- 4.4 The phased approach will utilise learning and data gathering to inform planning for future phases/development of our Service Delivery Plan (SDP)

required by Scottish Government.

- 4.5 Re-allocation of Capital spend for 2017-18 will provide a new ELC provision in St Boswells Primary School (our largest Primary currently without ELC) and no sustainable ELC partner provider
- 4.6 There are 10 schools without ELC provision: Swinton, Ayton, Heriot, St Margaret's Hawick, St Margaret's Gala, Ancrum, Yetholm, St Joseph's, Yarrow and Eddleston owing to the size of the pupil roll ie all are under 50 pupils. Families can currently access ELC in nearby partner or neighbouring schools. As plans are progressed each of these schools will be assessed to see if there are any viable options For ELC.
- 4.7 The Council currently has commissioning arrangements with partner providers and childminders as detailed in section 1.3 of this report. As part of the assessment and planning process for 2020 delivery of the 1140 ELC hours entitlement, work will be carried out with these partners to consider future partnership and commissioning arrangements which fulfil the aims set out in section 1 of this report.

5 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 To develop a cluster approach to provision of 1140 hours. Each (high school) cluster will have an Early Learning and Childcare Hub which will offer full day care, 50 weeks per year. Other school nurseries within the cluster will offer extended hours over 38 weeks per year, with the option to extend/access hours at the ELC Hub during holiday periods. There will also be the opportunity for parents to access affordable additional hours beyond the 1140 entitlement should this be required. Schools with no current provision will be considered.
- 5.2 The 'hub' approach will bring a new concept of provision which would allow different patterns of delivery through extending the length of day, number of days in the week and number of weeks in the year required, allowing for a responsive and flexible delivery of ELC to meet the needs of families from across Scottish Borders. A 'hub' initially will be an existing school/early years centre. However, in the future it could develop as a new stand-alone provision or through the utilisation of under used space in an existing property.
- 5.3 As nursery admissions are not catchment area based, this approach offers equity in choice, accessibility and affordability for parents.

An options appraisal of all provision needs to be undertaken to identify locations for each level of provision as described in the guiding principles (5.5).

5.5 Guiding Principles for Development of ELC

The aim of this strategy is to deliver on the vision and the outcomes set out in 1.5 above. In addition, the following principles will guide us in identifying the areas of phased development as we move towards full statutory implementation of 1140 hours by 2020.

- 5.5.1 **We will continue to prioritise the investment in our school nursery provision.** Through asset management planning, prioritisation criteria will be developed for capital and revenue investment ensuring resources are targeted to the highest priority areas.
- 5.5.2 **We will promote sustainability in the school nursery provision.** This includes effective implementation and monitoring of the nursery admissions process and associated capacity

arrangements; efficient deployment of the ELC workforce; energy efficient measures and renewable technologies in the design of new, extension or repair works for nursery buildings.

5.5.3 We will introduce flexibility across the cluster:

- (a) ELC Hubs – one in each cluster area which will offer full day care, 50 weeks of the year.
- (b) Asymmetric - school nurseries will extend hours to offer the asymmetric week pattern 38 weeks of the year (term time).
- (c) Asymmetric plus - offers the asymmetric pattern with further flexible options/extension of hours, where there is more than one town in the cluster and a need is identified.
- (d) Asymmetric and asymmetric plus will have the option to extend/access hours at the ELC Hub during holiday periods.
- (e) This will enable access to 1140 hours or any part thereof for those parents not wishing to access the full entitlement.

5.5.4 We will monitor and review the overall quality of provision and delivery to ensure it remains effective, efficient and affordable. A programme of facility reviews is planned, with the aim of improving the effective use of school nursery provision in the cluster areas.

5.5.5 We will actively pursue the development the workforce. A review of the current ELC resource against anticipated growth to meet expansion and identify workforce gap and plan to address this with a focus on creating Modern Apprenticeships and through supporting people transitioning into the ELC workforce within Scottish Borders Council.

5.5.6 We will engage with users on an ongoing basis to ensure that provision meets local needs and in line with statutory requirements (currently every two-three years).

5.5.7 We will future proof the school nursery estate to enable a flexible and adaptable environment taking into account planning consents, future opportunities and roll projections. In addition to any new government guidance on good design for new and existing ELC provision.

5.6 Phase 1: Trialling Extended Flexible ELC – Philiphaugh Nursery

5.6.1 In January 2016 the First Minister announced that a series of trials would be run to test a variety of models for delivering the ELC expansion to 1140 hours, stating that "By trialling different methods with Local Authorities and child care providers, we will be better able to understand what parents and children need and want, and what is actually working. This will be crucial as we move forward with our transformational expansion of childcare."

5.6.2 An expression of interest submitted by the Early Years' Service was successful in being chosen. The trial at Philiphaugh Community School Nursery started on 9 January 2017. This is an expansion of an existing approach with an increase in the number of hours of ELC provided Monday to Friday during term time and ELC provision during the holiday periods to meet parent demand. The Council

operates an out of school club in the school and there is an Early Years Centre in the school.

5.6.3 What the Trial is testing:

Models of delivery which are scalable and sustainable, can be replicated in a variety of provision types; offer quality, choice, flexibility, accessibility, affordability across the Scottish Borders:

- (a) Widening opportunities for economic and social wellbeing for families.
- (b) Prospects of flexible work patterns and for ELC workforce.
- (c) New and extended learning and development opportunities for children.
- (d) Versatility of infrastructure (systems and processes) to support flexibility of provision e.g. NAMs, SEEMiS, Parent Pay.

5.6.4 What we might learn:

- (a) Identification of issues, strengths and benefits, barriers and solutions encountered in the transition from 600 to 1140 hours.
- (b) Impact on parents, children, workforce, premises, processes and system.
- (c) Cost effectiveness and viability of flexible models.
- (d) Potential and sustainable options for holistic service delivery.
- (e) Best practice models of delivery of enriched learning experiences for children within flexible models.
- (f) Ways in which learning environments can be adapted and flexible to meet ELC Needs.

5.6.5 Learning to date:

- (a) Parents, children and workforce are positive about the change.
- (b) Services have worked together to deliver a positive implementation.
- (c) Flexible options are possible within a school nursery environment.
- (d) Enables a good foundation for transition to Primary 1.
- (e) Implications for system upgrades/changes required nationally to be able to cope with mixed options of extended flexibility.
- (f) Implications for school meal options regarding differing nutritional needs of Under Fives.

5.7 Increasing Physical ELC Building Capacity to deliver 1140 hours- a planned approach

5.7.1 There are a range of solutions to being able to provide additional capacity for those families who will take up the entitlement of 1140 hours as we progress towards 2020. The following range of opportunities will be explored to ensure Scottish Borders Council can provide the physical learning space for every entitled child to experience 1140 hours of ELC. The physical space required will be determined by:

- (a) Families wishing the 1140 hours within the school term year either in an extended ELC day or in the regular school week
- (b) Families wishing the 1140 hours across the whole calendar year in an extended ELC day or in a regular school week

5.7.2 The choices made by families will impact upon what the Council will have to do in delivering appropriate physical learning spaces. There are a range of options available to the Council which will impact upon the physical environment and build programme:

- (a) Provide extended hours in the existing ELC footprint for same number of children – no build or alterations required e.g. Kirkhope, Gordon
- (b) Provide extended hours in the existing school footprint for more children – with minor changes to the organisation of the existing learning spaces within the school ; alterations such as relocation of P1 class or change of registered ELC area – i.e. physical space is available within the whole building foot print e.g. Earlston
- (c) Expand the building footprint through minor build works to accommodate more children within current school physical capacity e.g. Morebattle
- (d) Share provision in existing building or community ELC learning space – e.g. Duns Primary share space with an out of school club
- (e) Add extensive additional physical capacity ie new wing including some primary 1 provision to provide extensive additional ELC learning space within the cluster where there will be significant pressure upon space due to limitations in local provisions e.g. Priorsford
- (f) Projects underway or in planning and taking account of 1140 requirements : Langlee, Broomlands , St Boswells
- (g) Idea of hub model for 1140+ delivery – create a new ELC provision which may serve a range of families and communities e.g. possibility of making links to the use of the railway and create a standalone facility at Tweedbank and Stow

- 5.7.3 The Council is currently in the process of assessing every school building and analysing the range of possibilities in order to create a programme of change which details the minor works and capital investment which will enable the Council to deliver an 1140 hours ELC programme by 2020 enabling families to take up their entitlement locally .
- 5.7.4 The Council is fully involved in liaison and partnership activity with Scottish Government ELC programme officers in drafting up a programme which will deliver the 1140 hours and meet the criteria for investment in the capital monies being allocated to the Council by the Scottish Government.
- 5.7.5 In 2017 £ 1.5 M is currently identified in the capital plan. St Boswells has been identified as a priority for ELC investment because it is the only large school without an ELC provision or sustainable local ELC partner provider .The Council has been notified that an additional £600 k will be received for ELC capital investment for 2017/2018.Details of how this will be allocated will be forthcoming once the full building assessment process has been completed (expected April 2017) and lessons learned from the Philiphaugh trial regarding possible parent preferences.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

In 2017 the Early Years revenue budget is £6.435M. A saving of £100k has been identified. An additional revenue grant of £400 k has been intimated in a notification from the Scottish Government to support the expansion of ELC hours. These monies will enable the Council to expand provision as detailed in section 4 of this report.

In 2017 there is 1.5M already allocated to the Early Years capital budget. This paper has prioritised that £ 750 k of this fund will be allocated to provide an ELC extension at St Boswell's Primary School. The remaining monies and the additional £600 k intimated in a notification from the Scottish Government for ELC expansion will be prioritised following the completion of the ELC building expansion assessment (currently being carried out).Further details of the remaining spend will be included in a further report.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

A strategic approach to delivery of the 1140 hours in School Nursery is required to ensure there is a long term approach to provision which offers improves outcomes for children and ensures quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.

6.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the ELC 1140 hours Implementation plan to mitigate against any adverse equality implications.

6.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no significant impacts on the economy, community or environment arising from the proposed engagement with families and communities as proposed within this report. However, any capital development will be in line with the School Estate Strategy to ensure sustainability, which will be considered as proposals come forward.

6.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report. However, any capital development will be in line with the School Estate Strategy and will seek to promote environmental responsibility and effective carbon management as part of any proposals that come forward within this review of the School Estate.

6.6 **Rural Proofing**

Particular regard will be paid to the issue of rurality and rural nursery provision as it is a key component of ELC development in Scottish Borders Council.

6.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of this report.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received will be reported at the Executive Committee Meeting.

Approved by

Donna Manson

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Signature

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Background papers: N/A

Previous Minute Reference: N/A

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