
EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE: EXPANSION TO 1140 HOURS

Report by Service Director, Children and Young People
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7 November 2017

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks to gain approval from the Executive Committee of the Service Delivery and Implementation Plan (SDP) relating to the proposed expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for all three and four years and eligible two year olds from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year to communities across the Scottish Borders by the end of the parliamentary session 2020 (financial year 2020/21).**
- 1.2 Following Scottish Government guidance, the Council's approach is Provider Neutral and will be in support of a Funding Follows the Child rationale, prioritising settings that are best placed to deliver quality outcomes for children and supporting the Council's ambition to close the poverty related attainment gap and support parents into employment, training or study. Parents will be able choose locally from a range of ELC settings and providers where they wish their child to access their funded hours from within the context of a best value approach.
- 1.3 Specifically this report provides information on the rationale of the SDP and its contents; taking account of the key principles as outlined in 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland' and is underpinned by clear guiding principles of Quality, Flexibility, Affordability and Accessibility.
- 1.4 The SDP builds upon the recommendations in a previous report submitted and approved by Council on 21 March 2017, relating to earlier phases of the ELC expansion of hours, the strategic approach to delivery and the identified communities now offering an 1140 ELC entitlement. Learning from the initial phases of the ELC expansion of hours is invaluable.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:

- (a) Approves the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Service Delivery and Implementation Plan, associated project work and financial commitments at this stage;**
- (b) Notes the complexities and associated risks of planning for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare;**
- (c) Notes that the draft Early Learning and Childcare Service Delivery and Implementation Plan has been submitted to the Scottish Government, subject to Council approval, a one-to-one officer session with the Scottish Government Delivery Team will be held with the Local Authority in November 2017, to which any specific points can be raised.**
- (d) Agrees that an update on the progress of the SDP is brought back to the Executive in January 2018, including specific detail of what the ELC expansion will look like in communities in school session 2018/2019, including detail of capital projects.**

3 LEGISLATION AND THE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SDP)

- 3.1 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) in Scotland ELC Expansion Planning Guidance for Local Authorities' issued in March 2017, set out the requirement for Local Authority responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the expanded entitlement of 1140 hours ELC in their local communities. The vision for expansion is underpinned by the principles of Quality, Flexibility, Accessibility and Affordability.
- 3.2 There are a number of relevant pieces of guidance (Appendix 1) which are essential to this expansion of hours still outstanding from the Scottish Government, which will further support and influence the SDP and it is accepted that planning around the delivery of the full 1140 hours entitlement for all families will continue to evolve and be presented to the Executive Committee.
- 3.3 A Service Development and Implementation Plan (SDP) (Appendix 2) was submitted in draft form, subject to Council approval, to the Scottish Government's ELC Expansion Programme Board on 11 October 2017. The SDP was completed following the attendance of officers at many varied and wide ranging national ELC planning meetings with partners, including specific workshops with the Scottish Government's Programme Board. The results of the Council's consultation with parent/carers, partner providers and childminders (Appendix 3a,b,c) has also been invaluable in the completion of the SDP.
- 3.4 The contents of the SDP covers key sets of information relevant to the planning and implementation of the expanded ELC hours:
- (a) **Principles of expansion:** the strategic approach is set out and the importance of the principles of the expansion are outlined, i.e. that the Council will uphold the guiding principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability as plans for the expansion from 600 to 1140 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds by 2020 are progressed and delivered;
 - (b) **Current Provision:** the delivery context of the Scottish Borders and the details relating to what existing ELC provision looks like is set out so that there is a clear understanding of existing delivery and how the Council and its partners can possibly expand from current delivery arrangements;
 - (c) **Community Engagement and Consultation:** a summary report and feedback from the stakeholder consultation carried out in August 2017; the level of response from each group of stakeholders (parents/carers, funded partner providers and childminders) and feedback on key aspects of ELC expansion, including the sharing of ideas and concerns. The Council also notes a response to the stakeholders on key issues, e.g. the Council clearly states a commitment to blended ELC provision based upon parental choice and agreement of a provider neutral approach, ie that parents/carers will be able to select their ELC service from local nurseries, partner providers and childminders with their local area;
 - (d) **Future Provision:** delivery models and patterns of funded hours are set out;

- (e) **Approach to phasing:** Phase 1 and 2 (already implemented) are set out and Phases 3 to 5 are outlined; this will be subject to Council approval, discussions with the Scottish Government’s ELC Programme Board and be affected by the phasing of funding;
- (f) **Workforce Planning and Development:** this area is highlighted and associated tasks set out in the implementation timeline;
- (g) **Capital and Revenue Funding:** a Financial Plan has been submitted for Capital costs of £8.753m and an additional £18.278m of predicted revenue funding to fully implement the ELC 1140 hours entitlement by 2020 (Appendix 4 provides a financial summary and breakdown of cost areas). The Capital costs are in close alignment with the Council’s share of the announced investment detailed in a letter from the Scottish Government (Appendix5a) and the predicted revenue costs indicate a gap of approximately £1.5m when compared to the Council’s share of the revenue funding detailed in a letter from the Scottish Government (Appendix 5b). A number of costs are accurate at this moment in time, but there are also a number of costs that are estimates. The Council will now work in partnership with the Scottish Government to arrive at more accurate and agreed costs. The Council will also engage further with all stakeholders to support progress in finalising the funds required, as details such as parental preference re hours, i.e. 1140 hours over 38 weeks or 50 weeks, and level of uptake of the additional ELC hours, are key factors in determining the funds required; the analysis submitted to the ELC Programme Board is subject to change and could result in greater costs, e.g. if more HUBs (an ELC centre where partners and a range of family services work together) are required because more parents/carers choose 50 week provision or reduced costs if, e.g. entitlement uptake is very low.
- (h) **Implementation plan** – an outline of key tasks has been set out and will be pulled into a project plan, to ensure the Council meets key milestones and delivers the full entitlement in a successfully managed approach involving stakeholders. The progress of implementation will be reported back to the Executive Committee at regular intervals. It is important to note that this plan will have to be agile and responsive to parent/carer choice and the application of the principles of delivery: affordability, accessibility, quality and flexibility.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 (a) **The Service Development Implementation Plan** provides a basis for moving forward in planning Phase 3 of the implementation of 1140 hours. Parents in the school catchment communities in Phase 2: Eyemouth, Burnfoot, Coldstream, Greenlaw, Langlee, Kirkhope and Philiphaugh, will be offered term time fixed, term time flexible, all year flexible plus extra hours within settings in their local area, i.e. school nurseries, partner provider nurseries or childminder settings within these localities will collectively offer this range of provision. This will include the opportunity for split or blended placements across providers. **Planning will begin following the Executive with an expected delivery of August 2018;** this will involve scoping of the provision that will be available and direct

engagement with parents in these communities to seek their preferences regarding how they would like their hours and where they would like their hours for their child in August 2018. The final offers of provision will need to meet the key principle of affordability and best value and will be subject to the scrutiny of the Scottish Government's Programme Board and the approval of the Executive Committee in 2018.

- (b) Phase 4 will also be planned for August 2018 implementation and discussed with the Scottish Government's Programme Delivery Board as it will be funding dependent. The next set of catchment communities to receive the 1140 hours entitlement, including the opportunity of the full range of delivery models and providers, will be taken from the priority list (Appendix 6). This list represents an analysis of Scottish Borders Communities by inequality indicators. Once the Council receives an indication of the funding allocation from the Scottish Government for 2018/2019 financial year, then the extent of how communities can benefit from Phase 4 will be brought back to Executive for approval and full engagement and planning with parents and providers in these communities will begin.

- 4.2 **Engagement with the Scottish Government's ELC Programme Delivery Board** will continue and be ongoing. The Board has received the SDP, subject to Council approval, and has indicated that extensive discussions of the SDP will take place in the month of November so that planning for August 2018 delivery can commence as soon as possible and be reported back to the Executive Committee in January.
- 4.3 **The Strategic Delivery Board** will be established following approval of the SDP and chaired by the Service Director Children and Young People. The Board will oversee the work of Council Officers and the work of the Service Delivery Group. The Board, comprising key Officers from Estates, Early Learning and Childcare Education Officers, Finance, HR, a Communications Officer, the Project Team Officer and, at times, the Link Officer from the Scottish Government's Programme Board, will be involved in the Board through conference call arrangements.
- 4.4 **The Strategic Delivery Group** will be established to ensure representation of all partners in the planning and delivery of the SDP. This will be chaired by the Senior Education Manager from the Children and Young People's Directorate. The Group will comprise the ELC Education Quality Improvement Officer, the Project Lead Officer, Finance and HR representatives, the School Estates Lead Officer, an Officer from Estates, two representatives from the private partner provider and voluntary provider sectors, two representatives from childminders and two parent/carer representatives.
- 4.5 **The Service Director** will lead on a communication plan to all stakeholders through the Strategic Delivery Board.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council, following an extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders, has completed the Service Development and Implementation Plan (SDP) outlining how the expanded Early Learning and Childcare hours will be delivered across providers in the Scottish Borders, meeting the needs of families whilst delivering a high quality early learning and childcare experience to children. This includes an initial assessment of revenue and capital costs.
- 5.2 The Council, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders and with the approval of the Executive Committee, now wishes to move forward with Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the Plan, leading to many more children accessing the 1140 hours entitlement from August 2018 through a provider neutral model.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

The financial implications contained within the report are set out in Section 5 of the SDP (Appendix 2) and in the financial summary set out in Appendix 4. These costs are subject to ongoing engagement with stakeholders and ongoing assessment with the Scottish Government's ELC Programme Delivery Board. The Council has provided the Scottish Government with further, more detailed, cost analysis and information sets. Financial planning, monitoring and reporting is subject to the scrutiny of the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Management Team at regular intervals. The costs are indicative at the moment and will continue to evolve as the expansion programme develops. It is expected that the full costs of the expansion (both revenue and capital) will be met by additional Scottish Government funding announced in Appendix 5.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) A strategic approach to delivery of the 1140 hours is required to ensure there is a long term approach to provision, which offers improved outcomes for children and ensures quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability.
- (b) This is a major service transition, which will require significant capital and revenue expenditure. Failure to begin work on this at an early stage will result in the Council being unable to provide the required additional hours by 2020, to which parents/carers are entitled. The Strategic Delivery Board has been set up to provide governance to the SDP and robust engagement has developed and strong links are now established with the Scottish Government's ELC Programme Board. This includes regular meetings involving the Programme Board lead, the Strategic Delivery Board lead and the Chief Executive. Progress will be reported at regular intervals to Corporate Management Team and the Education Executive.
- (c) From experience, we know that there is a requirement to adopt a Council wide and partnership approach, as the implications go beyond Children and Young People's Directorate. A range of Council Officers and partners are involved in either the Strategic Delivery Board or the Strategic Delivery Group.

6.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been 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, 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 ELC provision, as it is a key component of ELC development in Scottish Borders Council. Accessibility is a key design principle within the expansion project.

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 the proposals contained in this report.

7 Consultation

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

7.2 The corporate management team have been consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Donna Manson

Service Director, Children & Young People

Signature

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Donna Manson	Service Director, Children and Young People

Background Papers: Blueprint document link

Previous Minute Reference:

Appendices:

1. Appendix 1 : List of outstanding Scottish Government Guidance
2. Appendix 2 : The Service Development and Implementation Plan
3. Appendix 3 :
 - 3a – ELC Consultation : Parent Survey Feedback Summary
 - 3b – ELC Consultation: Partner Provider Survey Feedback Summary
 - 3c- ELC Consultation : Childminder Survey Feedback
4. Appendix 4 :
 - 4a- Summary of capital costs
 - 4b-Summary of revenue costs
5. Appendix 5:
 - 5a –Letter from Scottish Government outlining capital investment funds
 - 5b- Letter from Scottish Government outlining revenue investment funds
6. Appendix 6 – List of communities by reducing inequality indicators

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Donna Manson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA, 01835 825069