



## **EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**

### **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE – EXPANSION PLAN UPDATE**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (LEARNING, POLICY AND RESOURCES)**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Education Executive of the progress of the approved Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Plan to deliver 1140 free annual hours of ELC within West Lothian for August 2020.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Executive notes the progress made to date and agrees the following proposals:

1. To provide additional free hours (up to 1000 hours) of ELC in establishments which currently offer flexibility from August 2019 and ;
2. To provide additional free hours (up to 760 hours) of ELC in establishments which do not currently offer flexibility from August 2019, and;
3. To offer additional free hours (up to 1000 hours) of ELC in private partner provider settings August 2019, and;
4. To undertake a pilot scheme to offer additional free hours (up to 1140 hours) of ELC with a child minder from August 2019 for eligible 2 year olds and three and four year olds, and:
5. To increase the hourly rate paid to partner providers to £5.00 from April 2019.
6. To note the requirement to provide free school meals to all eligible ELC children from August 2020.
7. To note the publication of the Funding Follows the Child guidance and National Quality Standard on 18 December 2018.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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| <b>I Council Values</b>   | Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership |
| <b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk</b> | The Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Plan has been written in response to the Scottish Government policy to expand provision of early learning and childcare from 600 to 1140       |

<b>Assessment)</b>	<p>hours by 2020, as set out in its Planning Guidance for Local Authorities.</p> <p>Local Authorities will retain the statutory responsibility for ensuring that early learning and childcare is available to all eligible children in the area.</p> <p>Statutory Guidance has been issued in relation to early learning and childcare duties under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.</p> <p>No environmental, health or risk issues have been identified.</p> <p>An equality relevance assessment has been undertaken.</p>
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	<p>Scottish Government to report in March 2018 on the operational details of the 'Funding Follows the Child' model. Planning assumption that the plan is fully funded in revenue terms and sufficient capital to allow physical expansion of Council capacity.</p> <p>£6,114,000 revenue funding in 2019/20 to expand the early learning and childcare workforce and additional free hours.</p> <p>A Workforce Plan will be developed in consultation with Trade Unions.</p>
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	None
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	<p>Parents/carers have been consulted on increased flexibility and choice in early learning and childcare. Additional consultations have been undertaken in relation to the expansion to 1140 hours.</p> <p>A third round of consultations with parents/carers and private partner providers took place in September/October 2018.</p> <p>Discussions have taken place with the Scottish Childminders association (SCMA).</p> <p>Initial consultation with ELC staff was undertaken between November 2017 and June 2018.</p>

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D1 Introduction**

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Plans were submitted by each local authority to Scottish Government to inform the national ELC Expansion Programme in Autumn 2017.

Local authority ELC expansion plans are working documents which have and will continue to evolve over time. It is accepted the planning process is iterative and initial plans will be subject to change as further information and funding decisions emerge.

Local authorities are required to address capacity challenges by making best use of existing assets, buying where possible, through supporting a wide range of partners including childminders and third sector partners and building where needed. Local authorities are also now expected to provide an increase to free hours of ELC before 2020 using funding provided by the Scottish Government.

### **D2 Progress to date**

At present, thirty of the sixty-one council run ELC settings with West Lothian now provide up to 760 hours free ELC for parents/carers with effect from August 2018.

Ten new management posts have been created and appointed in order to support the Head teacher and staff in each setting based on a geographic area. These posts will provide support to staff out with the school day (8am – 6pm) and throughout the year with staff taking up post in January 2019.

### **D3 Phase 2 - August 2019**

In the next phase of the ELC expansion for August 2019, it is proposed to offer two full days (8am – 6pm) over 50 weeks per year in the following settings thus offering parents/carers up to 1000 hours free ELC per annum. These locations currently offer two full days during term time, traditional wraparound and provide up to 760 hours free ELC:

- Armadale PS NC
- Southdale PS NC
- Bathgate West NS
- Kirkhill NS
- St Nicholas PS NC
- Winchburgh PS NC
- Letham PS NC
- East Calder PS NC
- Kirknewton PS NC
- Mid Calder PS NC
- Fallahill PS NC
- Fauldhouse NC
- Polbeth NS
- Addiewell EYC

- Bonnytoun NS
- Knightsridge EYC
- Glenvue NS
- Ladywell NS
- Inveralmond EYC
- Williamston PS NC
- Croftmalloch PS NC
- Polkemmet PS NC
- Whitdale EYC
- Hopefield NS
- Murrayfield PS NC

In addition, it is proposed to offer two full days (8am – 6pm) in all other settings to offer up to 760 hours free ELC from August 2019 except for those locations which will move to offer 1140 hours as listed below:

- Deans North Nursery – open 50 weeks
- Boghall PS NC – open 50 weeks
- Westfield PS NC – open 38 weeks 8am – 4 pm
- Torphichen PS NC – open 38 weeks 8am – 4pm
- Dechmont PS NC – open 38 weeks 8am – 4pm
- Beatlie School NC – open 38 weeks 8.15am – 3.45pm for ELC pupils with profound, severe and complex needs that require medical support.

Further consultation with Headteachers and staff in each setting will be undertaken in the new year, if these proposals are approved.

In order to make the full transition to providing two full days by August 2020, those children entering their ante-pre school year from August 2019 will only be able to choose the two full day option.

#### **D4 Partner Providers**

To provide flexibility and choice for parents/carers, it is proposed that the seven private partner providers will also offer up to 1000 hours free ELC from August 2019.

Following consultation with the current partner providers and the completion of a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities. It is proposed to increase the hourly rate paid to all providers including private partners, playgroups, childminders etc. to £5.00 per hour with effect from 1 April 2019. This increase will enable partner providers to make incremental adjustments to wage rates in 2019 so they can pay the 'real' living wage (£9 per hour in 2018/19) required by August 2020. The hourly rate paid to partner providers will require to be reviewed again to consider increases to the 'real' living wage and indexation for 2020.

Parents/carers will also be offered up to 1140 hours with a registered childminder for a funded placement for three and four year olds. With a pilot scheme being drawn up in partnership with the Scottish Childminder Association (SCMA) for August 2019.

Consideration will be given by the ELC Expansion Board on how to enable non partner providers to offer funded hours, if they meet the National Standard in 2019/20.

- D5** The Scottish Government published 'Funding Follows the Child' and the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare Providers: Principles and Practice" on 18 December 2018. This joint publication with COSLA sets out the final version of the Funding Follows the Child approach and the National Standard that underpins it.

The National Standard sets out the clear and consistent criteria that all providers who wish to deliver the funded entitlement will have to meet from 2020. This will provide reassurance to parents and carers that any provider offering the funded hours can offer their child a high quality ELC experience.

Funding Follows the Child places choice in parents' and carers' hands, enabling them to access their child's funded entitlement from any provider that meets the new National Standard, has a place available and is willing to enter into a contract with their local authority.

This new approach is designed to be 'provider neutral'. All providers will require to meet the National Standard and have a contractual relationship and quality assurance relationship with a local authority. Scotland Excel has been engaged by Scottish Government to report on possible procurement arrangements with new guidance expected to be published in March 2019.

## **D6 Survey Results**

A further survey of parents/carers was undertaken in August/September 2018 and was issued to 2483 parents/carers who have/will have eligible children. There was a 20.6% response rate (511 respondents) which showed a preference of providers for the increased hours as follows:

Local authority nursery – 82%,

Private nursery – 26.9%,

Child minder – 10.4%

Playgroup – 13.7%,

Other – 1.4%.

Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

Current uptake for funded ELC funded hours in West Lothian for children aged three and four is split 94.4% council setting and 6.6% partner provider nursery with no option to attend a child minder at present. There are a small number of vulnerable and/or eligible two year old children placed with a child minder or playgroups.

From the survey results 49.7% wished provision to extend over the school holidays.

## **D7 Free School Meals**

In addition to the requirement to provide 1140 hours free ELC from August 2020, all eligible children will be entitled to a free school meal. This will mean that an additional 4000 meals will require to be prepared per day, Monday – Thursday throughout the year.

Work is ongoing with schools and Operational Services to identify requirements in relation to additional staffing, equipment and accommodation in order to fulfil this entitlement.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

It is proposed that the phasing of additional free hours of ELC is progressed in the locations outlined within this report.

The proposals will be funded by the additional revenue provided for 2019/20 by Scottish Government for the ELC Expansion.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland: ELC Expansion Planning Guidance for Local Authorities. Scottish Government, 23 March 2017.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-2020-expansion-early-learning-childcare-scotland-elc-expansion-planning/>

Funding follows the child and the national standard for early learning and childcare providers: operating guidance. Scottish Government 18 December 2018

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/funding-follows-child-national-standard-early-learning-childcare-providers-operating-guidance/>

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 - Parent/carer survey results September 2018

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***James Cameron, Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources)***

Date of meeting: 15 January 2019