

**THE EXPANSION OF FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN
SCOTLAND– ARGYLL AND BUTE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE
DRAFT DELIVERY PLAN**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for members on the progress being made by the Education Service in preparing for the proposed expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and the implementation of 1140 hours of funded ELC in Argyll and Bute per year by 2020.

1.2 Specifically the report provides information on:

- The Scottish Government review of ELC Delivery Plans and Financial Templates, including details of future engagement and support for submission of revised ELC Delivery Plans and Financial Templates;
- Phasing of Funded ELC hours across Argyll and Bute;
- Scottish Government Funded Trials of 1140 hours Funded ELC on Tiree and at Tobermory;
- Partners engagement in developing the National Quality Standard for Providers of Funded ELC, and
- ELC Workforce Development in Argyll and Bute.

1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- Note the Early Years' Service will be supported by the National ELC Improvement Service to review the Delivery Plan and Financial Template for re submission by 2nd March 2018;
- Note the progress of the 1140 hours Trials on Tiree and Tobermory;
- Note the Phasing of Funded ELC which commenced in January 2018;
- Note the positive engagement of Argyll and Bute ELC Partners as part of National consultation to shape National Quality Standards;
- Endorse the positive steps the Service has taken in implementing the early stages of the Argyll and Bute ELC Delivery Plan, and
- Request that the Executive Director, Community Services bring forward progress updates in relation to the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to future meetings of Community Services Committee.

THE EXPANSION OF FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE IN SCOTLAND – ARGYLL AND BUTE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE DRAFT DELIVERY PLAN

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update for members on the progress being made by the Education Service in preparing for the proposed expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and the implementation of 1140 hours of funded ELC in Argyll and Bute per year by 2020. This paper provides a further update of progress since presentation to Committee in December 2017.

2.2 Specifically the report provides information on:

- The Scottish Government review of ELC Delivery Plans and Financial Templates, including details of future engagement and support for submission of revised ELC Delivery Plans and Financial Templates;
- Phasing of Funded ELC hours across Argyll and Bute;
- Scottish Government Funded Trials of 1140 hours Funded ELC on Tiree and at Tobermory;
- Partners engagement in developing the National Quality Standard for Providers of Funded ELC, and
- ELC Workforce Development in Argyll and Bute.

2.3 The Argyll and Bute ELC Delivery Plan has been framed around a delivery based model and robust mapping exercise which has resulted in a clear outline of the opportunities and challenges around ELC delivery within each of the localities of Argyll and Bute.

2.4 As progress is made within the implementation of the Delivery Plan, the following factors will continue to inform future developments of the service delivery:

- Consultation and engagement of parents, partners, practitioners and wider community members;
- Continued support of and investment in our Partner Providers;
- The expansion of the Early Years Workforce;
- Ongoing ELC capital programme, and
- Allocation of ELC capital and revenue funding from the Scottish Government to deliver key aspects of the Plan.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- Note the Early Years' Service will be supported by the National ELC Improvement Service to review the Delivery Plan and Financial Template for re submission by 2nd March 2018;
- Note the progress of the 1140 hours Trials on Tiree and Tobermory;
- Note the Phasing of Funded ELC which commenced in January 2018;
- Note the positive engagement of Argyll and Bute ELC Partners as part of National consultation to shape National Quality Standards;
- Endorse the positive steps the Service has taken in implementing the early stages of the Argyll and Bute ELC Delivery Plan, and
- Request that the Executive Director, Community Services bring forward progress updates in relation to the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to future meetings of Community Services Committee.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 As highlighted in previous Committee papers The Scottish Government is committed to expanding the provision of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds, from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020. In preparation for expansion, all Local authorities have been tasked with producing an ELC Delivery Plan.

The Argyll and Bute ELC Delivery Plan has been framed around a delivery based model and robust mapping exercise which has resulted in a clear outline of the opportunities and challenges around ELC delivery within each of the localities of Argyll and Bute.

4.2 REVIEW OF THE ARGYLL AND BUTE DRAFT DELIVERY PLAN AND FINANCIAL TEMPLATE

4.2.1 Following submission of delivery plans in September 2017, the Scottish Government provided one to one feedback to all Local Authorities throughout November 2017 on their delivery plans and financial templates. The following points were highlighted to all local authorities to inform next steps:

- Local Authorities are encouraged to work with the Delivery Support Team to follow up on workshop discussions, focusing particularly on locality planning;
- Capacity challenges should be addressed by making best use of what Local Authorities have through supporting a wide range of partners including childminders and third sector partners, and building where needed;
- Local Authorities are encouraged to offer a mix of providers and service models combined to provide a holistically flexible and sustainable service offer which balances choice and affordability;
- Greater utilisation of the opportunities to deliver a quality provision outlined in Space to Grow and My World Outdoors across all

providers, and

- The importance of demonstrating how Local Authorities will phase and implement whilst maintaining and enhancing the quality of ELC service.

4.2.2 The National ELC Delivery Team plan to circulate a report summarising learning from the expansion plan preparation and review processes. To make this report as rich as possible it is their intention to capture a series of case studies which have been identified as part of the review process as examples of good practice. They have identified the following example from the Argyll and Bute Delivery Plan as an area to highlight in the report:

- A good Quality Action Plan which integrates well to the broader Expansion Plan.

4.3 FUTURE ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR SUBMISSION OF REVISED DELIVERY PLANS AND FINANCIAL TEMPLATES

4.3.1 As a result of initial feedback from the ELC Delivery Team as outlined above, revised delivery plans and financial templates require to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 2nd March 2018.

4.3.2 The Northern Alliance Local Authorities will be supported with this work by an Improvement Officer who will work to support consistency across the Northern Alliance.

4.3.3 The Scottish Government had hoped to inform local authorities of details of the multi-year funding package along with the output from the review process, but it has been decided that more time is required for all partners to assure themselves of the robustness of cost estimates and to develop initial estimates.

4.3.4 Scottish Ministers have accepted a proposal from COSLA Leaders for a one-year revenue and capital funding package for ELC for 2018-19 and work towards reaching consensus on funding requirements for 2019-20 and to 2021-22 as early as possible in 2018.

4.3.5 Implementation of the Argyll and Bute ELC delivery plan for 2018-19 and for 2019-22 will be dependent on sufficient capital and revenue funding packages from the Government allocation.

4.4 PHASING OF FUNDED ELC HOURS ACROSS ARGYLL AND BUTE

4.4.1 As outlined within the Argyll and Bute delivery plan, 11 ELC Services are now providing Parents/ Carers with the option to access 1140 hours of funded ELC from 15th January 2018. These include:

- 3 Childminding Services;
- 5 Local Authority Services, and
- 3 Partner Providers.

- 4.4.2 Over 90% of registered children within these services are now receiving 1140 hours of funded ELC, with some accessing their additional hours from one provider and others through 'blended' models of provision.
- 4.4.3 Preparations are underway for phasing additional services to provide 1140 hours of funded ELC in August 2018. This includes consultations with parents, staff and providers.

4.5 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FUNDED TRIALS OF 1140 HOURS ELC IN TIREE AND TOBERMORY

- 4.5.1 To inform the National delivery of 1140 hours per year of funded ELC by 2020, the Scottish Government is funding trials in 14 Local Authorities across Scotland to test out different ways in which the 1140 hours can be delivered. An important aim of the programme is to share learning of what is and isn't working well in delivering 1140 hours of free ELC. This information will help shape the wider roll-out of the 1140 hours across Scotland.
- 4.5.2 Argyll and Bute were successful in a bid to take forward two trials on the Isle of Tiree and Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. This also included supporting the Mull and Iona Community Trust in their aim to establish a registered daycare service, as lack of childcare had been identified by the group as a barrier to economic development on the island. Both trials began in August 2017.
- 4.5.3 Ongoing evaluation and reporting back to the Scottish Government continues to ensure that the children who are utilising increased hours in both trials have access to quality, flexible, affordable and accessible ELC as detailed within the Scottish Government Blueprint for the Expansion of ELC.
- 4.5.4 The Education Service continues to support the Mull and Iona Community Trust to establish a registered provision to support funded ELC and childcare on the island. The Local Authority and the Mull and Iona Community Trust also shared learning arising from the ELC trials to date at the Scottish Learning Festival. An evaluation of the Argyll and Bute trials will be included as part of the National report due to be published in April 2018.

4.6 PARTNER ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD FOR PROVIDERS OF FUNDED ELC

- 4.6.1 All Registered Providers of Daycare Services who currently deliver funded ELC and Childminders who may wish to provide funded ELC in the future were invited to contribute to a Scottish Government consultation event in Inverness. Partner Providers from Local Authorities within the Northern Alliance also attended.

- 4.6.2 One Partner Provider from Argyll and Bute attended the event in Inverness, with 7 partners and 6 childminders linking into the event through video conferencing from Oban. The consultation event was regarded as being successful, with Argyll and Bute Partners highlighting the positive relationship they had with the Local Authority.
- 4.6.3 Discussions arising from the event will contribute to shaping ELC delivery in Argyll and Bute, as well as support the development of a National Quality Standard for use by for all providers of Funded ELC including Local Authority Services, Childminders and Daycare Services in the Private and Voluntary Sector.

4.7 ELC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

- 4.7.1 The Service is currently working in partnership with Argyll and Bute's Learning and Development Team, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and secondary schools across the local authority to deliver a Foundation Apprenticeship in Social Services Children and Young People (SSCYP). There will be 10 places available initially, starting in August 2018. Timetabled into students' choices for S5 and S6, year 1 will comprise 5 units towards the national progression award and year 2 will include nursery placements for 1 day each week.
- 4.7.2 A bid has also been submitted to SDS to deliver 6 Modern Apprenticeships in SVQ3 (SSCYP). Commencing in August 2018, this will be offered as a two year apprenticeship where students are supernumerary and paid a salary as they work towards their Practitioner qualification within Local Authority nurseries. In future years, if a student successfully completes the Foundation Apprenticeship in S5 and S6, he or she could subsequently complete the Modern Apprenticeship in one year. The Early Years Service will also be working with Argyll College and the Council's Lead Officer 16+ to raise the profile and attractiveness of the sector and actively increase diversity.
- 4.7.3 It is anticipated that these developments will contribute to the recruitment of a suitably skilled and well qualified additional workforce required to meet the needs of extended ELC entitlement.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This paper outlines the positive progress made by Council and Education Services within the initial stages of the ELC draft delivery plan.
- 5.2 Following analysis of delivery plans issued in September 2017, the Scottish Government requires a re-submission of ELC financial templates on 2nd March 2018. An Improvement Officer will provide support to all Local Authorities within the Northern Alliance.
- 5.3 The work of the Funded Trials, both locally and nationally, will provide learning which will be taken forward as the phasing of 1140 hours progresses in preparation for August 2018.

5.4 Capital and Revenue funding packages for 2018/19 are expected to be announced by the Scottish Government in early 2018.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy The ELC Draft Delivery Plan will assist the Education Service to implement and develop practice in line with 'Our Children, Their Future: The Education Vision and Strategy', Argyll and Bute Council's Education Annual Plan and contributes to the ELC Blueprint for 2020.
- 6.2 Financial Expansion is dependent on capital and revenue funding from the Scottish Government and its protection from GAE allocations. At this stage the full details of the settlement are unknown. Full funding from Scottish Government is required for Argyll and Bute Council to enable delivery of the plan.
- 6.3 Legal The ELC Delivery Plan will assist the Education Service to implement the relevant sections contained within the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014. The Council is required to submit the ELC revised Delivery Plan to Scottish Government by the 2nd March 2018.
- 6.4 HR Considerable workforce development and recruitment will be required to deliver the expectations set out in the Delivery Plan.
- 6.5 Equalities The Delivery Plan aims to respond to the challenge of reducing inequality and improving outcomes for children and their families within the diverse geographical and social context of Argyll and Bute.
- 6.6 Risk A number of risks exist at this stage including, as yet, no confirmed financial allocations beyond 2017-18, workforce recruitment and development and, as yet unknown levels of uptake within communities.
- 6.7 Customer Service Our youngest children and eligible 2 year olds will benefit most from the expansion of ELC. There are significant benefits for families with parents/carers able to use the extended hours to enable them to return to employment, reduce childcare costs and access training.

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SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland' -
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/10/1665>

Early Learning and Childcare Trials –
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/early-years/ELCTrials/ELCTrials>

Additional Graduate Commitment –
<http://news.gov.scot/news/early-years-workforce-expansion>

'Space to Grow' – ELC Design Guidance -
<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/549001/space-to-grow.pdf>