

## EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PROGRESS UPDATE

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### 1. 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 by 2020.

1.2 Specifically the report provides information on:

- 1140 hours provision currently in place
- 1140 hours provision to be in place by August 2019
- ELC workforce development to support 1140 hours, and
- The secondment of an Argyll and Bute Education Officer to the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative (NARIC) to share expertise and provide quality support across the 8 Local Authorities.

1.3 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the progress of implementation to date and the areas and settings to be phased in by August 2019;
- b) Endorse the positive steps the Service has taken in implementing the Argyll and Bute Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan;
- c) Supports the progress on developing Early Years as an attractive area of employment with a growing workforce within Argyll and Bute, and
- d) Request that the Executive Director of Customer Services bring forward progress updates in relation to the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to future meetings of Community Services Committee.

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### 2. 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 expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and the implementation of 1140 hours of funded ELC in Argyll and Bute by 2020. This paper provides a further update of progress since presentation to Committee in March 2018.

2.2 Specifically the report provides information on:

- 1140 hours provision currently in place;
- 1140 hours provision to be in place by August 2019
- ELC workforce development to support 1140 hours, and
- The secondment of an Argyll and Bute Education Officer to the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative (NARIC) to share expertise and provide quality support across the 8 Local Authorities.

2.3 The Argyll and Bute 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 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 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. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that Community Services Committee:

- a) Note the progress of implementation to date and the areas and settings to be phased in by August 2019;
- b) Endorse the positive steps the Service has taken in implementing the Argyll and Bute Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan;
- c) Supports the progress on developing Early Years as an attractive area of employment with a growing workforce within Argyll and Bute, and
- d) Request that the Executive Director of Customer Services bring forward progress updates in relation to the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to future meetings of Community Services Committee.

### **4. DETAIL**

#### **4.1 PHASING OF FUNDED ELC HOURS ACROSS ARGYLL AND BUTE**

Within Argyll and Bute Local Authority 27 ELC Services are now providing Parents/Carers with the option to access 1140 hours of funded ELC. This is a very positive position for Argyll and Bute Council and very good progress is being made with the implementation of 1140 hours. Current provision includes (See Appendix 1 –Phasing Plan):

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

Over 95% 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.

4.2 Preparations are underway for phasing all ELC Local Authority, Partner Providers and Child Minding services in Helensburgh and Lomond, Mid Argyll and Campbeltown to provide 1140 hours of funded ELC in August 2019. This includes support to funded partners and consultations with, staff and providers. These include (See Appendix 1 –Phasing Plan):

- 8 Child Minding Services;
- 13 Local Authority Services, and
- 12 Partner Providers.

#### **4.3 ELC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN ARGYLL AND BUTE**

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). Six young people started this qualification in August 2018 with a further 12 anticipated to start in August 2019. This qualification is timetabled into students' choices for S5 and S6, year 1 comprises 5 units towards the national progression award and year 2 includes nursery placements for 1 day each week.

A bid to SDS to deliver 6 Modern Apprenticeships in SVQ3 (SSCYP) was successful and recruitment was made to these posts in November 2018. The successful candidates started their Modern Apprenticeships in January 2019, this is a two year apprenticeship where students are supernumerary and paid a salary as they work towards their Practitioner qualification within Local Authority nurseries.

Scottish Government provided funding for three Graduate Practitioner posts. The purpose of these is to support practitioners to enhance literacy, numeracy and outdoor learning. These posts are known as Cluster Leads and support a number of settings in Dunoon, Helensburgh and Campbeltown.

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.

Further Scottish Government funding was provided to assist with the administration and data collection for 1140 hours. An Early Years Data Analyst was appointed in January 2019 within Argyll and Bute.

- 4.4 The 8 Northern Alliance Local Authorities are being supported to deliver 1140 hours ELC by the appointment of an Improvement Manager and Officer. Their remit is to support consistency, quality improvement and sharing best practice across the Northern Alliance. The Education Officer is seconded from Argyll and Bute Council, this recognises our strong commitment to improvement.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 This paper outlines the positive progress made by Council and Education Services of the ELC draft delivery plan.

## **6. IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy - 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 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018.

- 6.2 Financial – Funding from Scottish Government is adequate at this time in allowing Argyll and Bute Council to enable delivery of the plan.
- 6.3 Legal – The ELC Delivery Plan is assisting the Education Service to implement the relevant sections contained within the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014.
- 6.4 HR – Workforce development and recruitment is required to continue to deliver the expectations set out in the Delivery Plan.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – There are no potential issues around this.
  - 6.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics  
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.
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – 1140 hours must be free at the point of entry there. By August 2020 all children in ELC will receive a free healthy and nutritious meal.
  - 6.5.3 Islands – Almost all of our islands are already delivering 1140 hours.
- 6.6 Risk A number of risks exist with workforce recruitment and development, provision of a free meal by 2020 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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**APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Phasing Plan