

ROTHESAY JOINT CAMPUS ELC DELIVERY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details of a planned change to the current Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) delivery model within Rothesay Joint Campus which would allow The Education Service to better meet our statutory 1140 delivery requirements, support working parents of non-eligible 0-3 year olds secure childcare and enable them to return to work whilst generating income.
- 1.2 The closure of a partner provider, Rothesay Playgroup in 2020 led to a shortage of childcare and funded ELC places on Bute. In order to meet our statutory requirements, we increased the floor space and staffing to deliver funded ELC. This has led to issues with how the accommodation is being used and a lack of direct access to outdoor space as required by Care Inspectorate. Scottish Government agreed to allow us to carry forward 1140 capital to address the lack of childcare capacity on Bute. There remains an issue with childcare for non-eligible children on the island and more specifically care for children from the age of 6 weeks to 3 years of age. The Education team will use the capital spend to adapt Rothesay Joint Campus to enable ELC to be delivered to those entitled and also provide a purchasable childcare service to support working parents of non-eligible children from 0-5.
- 1.3 It is recommended that the Bute and Cowal Area Committee notes:
- a) The work of the early years' team in identifying a solution to the childcare issue on Bute;
 - b) The plan to deliver non statutory childcare from within existing revenue.

ROTHESAY JOINT CAMPUS ELC DELIVERY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report provides details of a planned change to the current Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) delivery model within Rothesay Joint Campus which would allow The Education Service to better meet our statutory 1140 delivery requirements, support working parents of non-eligible 0-3 year olds secure childcare and enable them to return to work whilst generating income.
- 2.2 The closure of a partner provider, Rothesay Playgroup in 2020 led to a shortage of childcare and funded ELC places on Bute. In order to meet our statutory requirements, we had to increase the floor space and staffing to deliver funded ELC. This has led to issues with how the accommodation is being used and a lack of direct access to outdoor space as required by Care Inspectorate. Scottish Government agreed to allow us to carry forward 1140 capital to address the lack of childcare capacity on Bute. There remains an issue with childcare for non-eligible children on the island and more specifically care for children from the age of 6 weeks to 3 years of age. The Education team will use the capital spend to adapt Rothesay Joint Campus to enable ELC to be delivered to those entitled and also provide a purchasable childcare service to support working parents of non-eligible children from 0-5.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report provides details of a change to the current ELC delivery model within Rothesay Joint Campus which would allow us to better meet our statutory 1140 delivery requirements, support working parents of non-eligible 0-3 year olds

secure childcare and enable them to return to work (including ELC staff) whilst generating income.

3.2 It is recommended that the Bute and Cowal Area Committee notes:

- a) The work of the early years team in identifying a solution to the childcare issue on Bute;
- b) The plan to deliver non statutory childcare from within existing revenue.

4.0 DETAIL

4.1 The closure of a partner provider, Rothesay Playgroup in 2020, has led to a shortage of childcare and funded ELC places on Bute. In order to meet our statutory requirements, we have had to increase the floor space and staffing to deliver funded ELC. This has led to issues with how the accommodation is being used and a lack of direct access to outdoor space as required by Care Inspectorate.

4.2 Scottish Government agreed to carry forward 1140 capital to address the lack of childcare capacity on Bute. However, there still remains an issue with childcare for non-eligible children on the island and more specifically care for children from the age of 6 weeks to 3 years of age. An eligible child is defined in legislation (the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Provision of Early Learning and Childcare (Specified Children) (Scotland) Order 2014, as amended). This is all 3 and 4 year olds and some children aged 2, from the relevant start date. The date the child can access their funded entitlement depends on their birth date. Eligibility for funded early learning and childcare entitlement for 2 year olds is those who are looked after children, children in kinship care and those with a parent-appointed guardian as well as those whose parents are on qualifying benefits. EY commenced a small scale pilot project to maximise use of the increased staffing by allowing parents to purchase non-statutory ELC for their 2 year old children if space was available. This has been successful in supporting a number of working parents.

4.3 Following the 1140 capital investment at the Campus, the Education Service plan to deliver childcare and 1140 funded entitlement on Bute for children aged 0-5 within Rothesay Joint Campus which would allow us to better meet our statutory 1140 delivery requirements, support working parents of non-eligible 0-3 year olds secure childcare and enable them to return to work (including ELC staff) whilst generating income. The delivery model will allow parents to choose for their child to attend term time (38 weeks per year) or over 46 weeks per year (better suiting working parents) and parents could also purchase additional

'wrap-around hours'. It is not possible to predict with certainty demand for this service, however, through consultation with the only partner provider in the island to ensure this service complements and does not compete with their current delivery models, we do know that they have waiting lists for their 0-3 service on an ongoing basis.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Members should note that Rothesay Joint Campus will undergo adaptations to allow the delivery of ELC funded entitlement and a purchasable childcare service aimed at supporting working parents as a result of the closure of a partner provider on the island.
- 5.2 The adaptations are planned to be concluded, and the purchasable childcare service implemented, from early 2024.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – These adaptations will ensure we can deliver our statutory ELC obligations as outlined within Blueprint for 2020: Expansion of ELC, Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard, Scottish Government, 2018. They will also ensure we can deliver any future legislative entitlements as outlined within Best Start: Strategic ELC and SACC Deliver Plan, Scottish Government, 2022.
- 6.2 Financial - Scottish Government capital funding will deliver the necessary adaptations. The purchasable service may generate income however we are unable to give projections until the service begins. The aim is to be cost neutral year on year, dependent upon birth rates on the island. In the event of the service incurring running costs, we will move back to a funded entitlement only delivery model.
- 6.3 Legal – None.
- 6.4 HR – Contractual negotiations will begin with existing staff to ensure that contracted hours can meet the wrap around requirements of the purchasable childcare service.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None.
 - 6.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics: None.

6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty: None.

6.5.3 Islands - This service will ensure that working parents and families can live and work on Bute as they will have access to vital childcare services.

6.6 Climate Change – None.

6.7 Risk – That the childcare service incurs a cost due to demand for 0-3 care reducing. In this event, we will move to a funded entitlement only delivery model and redeploy excess staff.

6.8 Customer Service – None.

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Tina Sartain, Education Manager
tina.sartain@argyll-bute.gov.uk

24 April 2023