

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 6 NOVEMBER 2018**

**EARLY YEARS EXPANSION PROGRAMME – GRANT APPLICATION SCHEME**

**REPORT BY PAULINE STEPHEN, HEAD OF SCHOOLS AND LEARNING**

**ABSTRACT**

This report provides committee with details of a proposed grant application scheme for partner early learning and childcare (ELC) providers, and seeks approval to open the scheme for applications as part of the early years expansion programme.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the background information and proposals for the implementation of a grant application scheme for private and voluntary ELC providers;
- (ii) approves the implementation of the scheme;
- (iii) notes that a summary of the grant awards made under the scheme will be the subject of a future information report to the Committee.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:

The best start in life for children  
Improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing  
More opportunities for people to achieve success

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Reference is made to Committee Report No 128/18, approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 19 April 2018, which provided committee with details of local plans to implement the Scottish Government's commitment to expand the provision of ELC to 1140 hours per child per year by August 2020.

**4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 On 1 May 2018, Scottish Government confirmed details of the multi-year funding package allocated to Angus for the expansion of ELC. The funding package was based on finance templates submitted by local authorities in March.
- 4.2 As part of the Angus finance template, provision was made for the funding of a grant application scheme to allow the council's contracted partners to access financial support for their own expansion plans.

**5. PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 The grant application scheme will be open to all 31 contracted ELC partners in Angus, with a proposed closing date of 31 March 2019.
- 5.2 Applicants will be encouraged to consider alternative, complementary sources of funding to support their applications. The council's economic development service will support partners to pursue this option on request. Applicants will be required to submit evidence to support their proposals, such as project plans and quotes from third party contractors.

- 5.3 In April 2019, a panel will be convened to evaluate the applications and allocate the grant awards. The panel will be comprised of appropriate officers from within the council's early years, estates and economic development services.
- 5.4 Applications will be considered and, if necessary, prioritised against three main criteria:

#### **Local Supply and Demand**

Statistics show that there are some areas of Angus where ELC settings are regularly near capacity, and in some cases there are waiting lists in operation. As a primary concern, priority may be given to applications from localities where supply is struggling to cope with demand and where an increase in places would therefore be most beneficial.

#### **Local SIMD Rank**

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying areas of deprivation in Scotland. Evidence shows that an attainment gap exists between children who live in areas with a high SIMD rank and children who come from more advantaged backgrounds. As a secondary concern, priority may therefore be given to applications from localities with a higher SIMD rank.

#### **Additional Local & Regional Considerations**

Any individual expansion project is taking place within the wider context of a programme which must ensure expanded ELC is available across the whole of Angus, in a way that is flexible and accessible for parents and is inclusive in meeting the needs of children in the community. The council's own infrastructure expansion is being regularly refined as new information comes to light regarding demand for places and the viability of proposed projects. The evaluation panel may therefore make decisions based on the most up to date local and Angus-wide information in April 2019, to ensure limited funds are targeted in the right places.

- 5.5 An explanation of the panel decision will be provided to all applicants in writing, and debrief meetings will be offered to unsuccessful applicants to provide further advice and support.
- 5.6 Grantees will be asked to sign a formal grant acceptance agreement, committing to the agreed use of the funds and to reporting to the council at an agreed date to show evidence of the completion of the project and of the benefits achieved. Terms and conditions to secure repayment of the grant where, for example, a grantee ceases trading or sells the business or assets within an agreed timescale, will be agreed with the Service Leader (Legal & Democratic). The agreed timescale will be dependent on the value of the grant, and the council will reserve the right to review title deeds and to take a standard security over land or property belonging to the grantee.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The multi-year funding package allocated to Angus includes funding for this scheme. The value of the overall funding package to be made available to these projects is flexible dependent on an evaluation of the impact of each project, however officers will initially work to a budget of £500,000. There is therefore no expected impact on council budgets.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is appended to this report.

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List of Appendices:  
Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment