

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 19 APRIL 2018

EARLY YEARS EXPANSION PROGRAMME

REPORT BY MARK ARMSTRONG, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

This report provides committee with details of local plans to implement the Scottish Government's commitment to expand the provision of early learning and childcare (ELC) to 1140 hours per child per year by August 2020.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) approves the content of this report;
- (ii) approves the appended delivery plan – the Angus Council Early Learning & Childcare Blueprint for Expansion to 1140 Hours.
- (iii) notes that the proposals contained within this report and Appendix 1 are subject to confirmation of the Angus allocation of Scottish Government funding;
- (iv) notes that a number of the proposals, such as capital projects, will be the subject of additional reports to Committee over the life of the expansion programme.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE 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
Attractive employment opportunities
A skilled and adaptable workforce
More opportunities for people to achieve success

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report refers to Committee Report No 188/17, considered by the Children and Learning Committee on 13 June 2017, requesting Committee approval for the Early Years Strategy 2017-2020.
- 3.2 Reference is made to Committee Report No 315/17, Schedule 4, considered by the Children and Learning Committee on 19 September 2017, which provided information to the Committee on local progress with the proposed expansion of ELC.
- 3.3 Reference is made to Committee Report No 67/18, considered by the Children and Learning Committee on 20 February 2018, which provided the Committee with an update on local plans for the expansion of ELC and requested approval of external provider rates.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 ELC in Angus is currently provided at 49 council nurseries and through contractual arrangements with 31 external providers. Parents may also have private arrangements, either directly with external providers or directly with registered childminders.

- 4.2 Children aged three and four, and some eligible two year olds, are currently entitled to 600 hours of funded ELC per year. Entitlement can be accessed either at a council nursery or through a contracted external provider.
- 4.3 In 2014 the Scottish Government announced its intention to increase the funded ELC entitlement from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year by August 2020. The announcement also included a commitment to put quality at the heart of ELC provision and to make ELC more flexible, accessible and affordable for parents. The Early Years Expansion Programme has been set up within Angus to co-ordinate all of the activities required to deliver these commitments.
- 4.4 In September 2017 the council submitted its initial proposal to Scottish Government, which for the purposes of the national expansion is acting through its infrastructure delivery company, Scottish Futures Trust (SFT). The initial proposal detailed the capital and revenue funding requirements for delivering the programme in Angus.
- 4.5 Local authorities across Scotland were invited to meet with SFT and subsequently asked to revise their proposals in line with additional advice and guidance. Following a comprehensive review of both the capital plans and proposed revenue costs, a revised Angus proposal was submitted to SFT on 2 March 2018. The proposal outlines the significant capital investment required for physical expansion, as well as the revenue funding required to achieve the expansion and development of the workforce and to improve the sustainability of the external provider market.
- 4.6 The funding allocation for Angus is not expected to be confirmed until May 2018. A temporary project manager has been appointed and work has started on planning the programme needed. It has been important to start the work now because of the complexity of the change and the long lead-in times required for any procurement of capital works and potential workforce changes.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The programme for delivery has been divided into 3 main workstreams:
- 5.2 **Workstream 1 – Capital Expansion**
Deals with the physical space element of expanding ELC provision. Proposals are being developed for new ELC centres in Carnoustie and Forfar. Development and refurbishment work will be undertaken at more than half of the existing Council primary schools between 2018 and 2021 to accommodate the increased number of spaces required and to improve the quality of the environment.
- 5.3 **Workstream 2 – Workforce Expansion & Development**
Addresses the need to increase the number of staff available to deliver the expanding ELC provision across Angus, as well as developing and ensuring the quality of provision in both council and external provider settings. A comprehensive training and recruitment programme will be undertaken, as well as consultation with existing ELC staff regarding proposed changes to working patterns.
- 5.4 **Workstream 3 – Childminder Market Development**
Acknowledges the crucial role that registered childminders will play in achieving the objectives of the programme, aiming to develop partnership relationships with existing registered childminders and to expand the market where possible, adding to the flexibility of ELC provision available to parents from August 2020.
- 5.5 All of the activities to be undertaken within the workstreams are subject to confirmation of the funding available to deliver expansion. Further details of the proposals, along with associated projections are contained within the delivery plan at Appendix 1.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposal submitted to Scottish Futures Trust on 2 March 2018 detailed the funding required to deliver the national commitment in Angus. It is anticipated that the expansion programme will be fully funded by Scottish Government.
- 6.2 If there is a shortfall in the funding made available for the programme, a review of the implications for local plans will be needed.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of the Early Years Expansion Programme is linked to the wider school investment strategy. The lead officer for Schools For The Future has been appointed as a board member for the expansion programme and is consulting on all proposed capital works.

8. CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, the Head of Finance and Legal and the Head of Schools and Learning have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Children and Learning Committee; report number 188/17; (item 10 of the minute of the meeting of 13 June 2017.)
- Children and Learning Committee; report number 315/17, Schedule 4; (item 5 of the minute of the meeting of 19 September 2017.)
- Children and Learning Committee; report number 67/18; (item 5 of the minute of the meeting of 20 February 2018.)

REPORT AUTHOR: Victoria Smith, Acting Service Manager (Early Years)

EMAIL DETAILS: people@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Angus Council Early Learning & Childcare Blueprint for Expansion to 1140 Hours