

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 21 MAY 2019**

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

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

**ABSTRACT**

This report advises committee of the results of the grant application scheme administered as part of the early years expansion programme.

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the results of the grant application scheme as detailed in section 4.

**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**

Reference is made to Committee Report No 335/18, approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 6 November 2018, regarding the proposed opening of a grant application scheme for partner early learning and childcare (ELC) providers as part of the expansion of early years.

**4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 As part of the Angus allocation of the multi-year funding agreement for the expansion of early years, provision was made for a grant application scheme to allow partner ELC providers to apply for capital grants to support their own expansion plans. The grant application scheme was opened on 8 November 2018 and closed on 29 March 2019.
- 4.2 There were 13 indications of interest in the grant scheme with a total of 10 grant applications received from private and voluntary providers. A summary of all the applications received is included as Appendix 1.
- 4.3 The applications received from Playspaces and Smallworld will create sufficient capacity to negate the need for significant local authority expansion in Brechin. The proposed expansion of the nursery at Maisondieu Primary School has therefore been cancelled, with the budget for this project used to increase the funds available for the grant scheme.
- 4.4 On 25 April 2019, a panel was convened to review the applications. The purpose of the panel was to review each proposal to ensure compatibility with the objectives of the expansion programme, and to ensure that the proposals reflected appropriate standards and practice in both ELC and construction. The panel was comprised of the Service Leader (Early Years and Early Intervention), the expansion Programme Manager and representation from the council's Estates service. The panel agreed to approve all of the applications.

- 4.5 Four applications were received from playgroups who operate within council buildings – Ferryden Playgroup, Inverbrothock Playgroup, Ladybird Playgroup and Muirfield Playgroup. Rather than being awarded grants, these projects will be undertaken by the council’s Estates service as part of phase two of the capital expansion workstream, for completion by August 2020. The projected costs of the proposals submitted by these four providers may therefore be subject to change as the proposals are jointly refined and more accurate costs are obtained by the council’s Estates service.
- 4.6 Depending on the value of the grant awarded, grantees will be asked to sign one of a range of bespoke agreements developed in collaboration with the council’s legal service. Grantees will commit to continuing to provide ELC services for agreed periods, otherwise payback arrangements may apply. Security will be taken over assets in some cases to ensure public funds are protected in the event of a funded asset being sold by private owners. A summary of the agreements to be used is as follows:

Value of Grant	Agreement Type	Repayment Expectations
£0 - £49,999	Monitoring agreement	100% repayment if services are withdrawn within three years
£50,000 - £99,999	Grant agreement, without security	100% repayment if services are withdrawn in first three years, 80% in next three years, and so on up to 15 years
£100,000+	Grant agreement, with security	

- 4.7 A professional adviser has been appointed under contract by the council to act in an independent quality assurance role, reviewing expenditure on each project and ensuring completed works comply with appropriate standards and represent value for money.

## 5. PROPOSALS

There are no additional proposals.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A number of the proposals are subject to further refinement in partnership with the grantees. The proposals from playgroups based in council buildings will be undertaken by the council’s Estates service as part of phase two of the existing capital expansion workstream in 2019 and 2020, and are also subject to further detailed costing. The total funding required for the scheme is therefore subject to final confirmation, but is projected to be approximately £1,000,000.
- 6.2 The multi-year funding package allocated to Angus for the early years expansion includes capital funding for the grant application scheme. Any additional funding which may require to be released from elsewhere within the council’s capital expansion programme for early years is also funded in full by Scottish Government. There is therefore no expected impact on council budgets.
- 6.3 Funding for the professional advisory service outlined at paragraph 4.6 will be met from within the revenue allocation of the Angus grant.

## 7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

## 8. CONSULTATION

The Director of Finance, the Director of Infrastructure Services and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

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List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Summary of Grant Applications

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Organisation	Location	Proposal Description	Outcome
Busy Bees	Monifieth	Internal reconfiguration to increase capacity	Successful
Ferryden Playgroup	Montrose	Internal works to improve quality of environment	Successful
Helping Hands	Arbroath	Extension for dining area to maintain current capacity	Successful
Inverbrothock Playgroup	Arbroath	Outdoor classroom to allow expansion to all-day provision	Successful
Ladybird Playgroup	Arbroath	Internal works and outdoor classroom to maintain current capacity	Successful
Letham Playgroup	Letham	Demolition and replacement of current accommodation to improve quality of environment	Successful
Muirfield Playgroup	Arbroath	External storage shed	Successful
Playspaces	Brechin	Purchase of adjacent building for significant expansion	Successful
Rompers	Montrose	Outdoor classroom to increase capacity	Successful
Smallworld	Brechin	Purchase of adjacent building for significant expansion	Successful