

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 15 AUGUST 2019

EARLY YEARS EXPANSION PROGRAMME – REVENUE GRANTS TO PROVIDERS

REPORT BY PAULINE STEPHEN, DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report seeks approval for the payment of grants to all early learning and childcare (ELC) providers in Angus in academic year 2019/20, to support preparation for the expansion from 600 hours to 1140 hours in August 2020.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) notes the background information in sections 3 and 4;
- (ii) approves the allocation of revenue grants to all ELC providers in Angus in line with the process outlined in section 5; and
- (iii) delegates authority to the Director of Schools and Learning, following consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to:
 - 1) agree the terms and conditions of the individual grants, and upon agreement, sign the grant agreements on behalf of the council; and
 - 2) pay out the individual grants in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions.

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 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 A key part of Scottish Government's national early years expansion strategy is the implementation of a 'provider neutral' approach, aimed at ensuring children accessing funded ELC can expect to receive the same quality of service regardless of whether the provision is in a local authority, private, voluntary or childminder setting.
- 4.2 As part of the Angus allocation of revenue grant from Scottish Government, provision has been made for the allocation of grants to ELC settings across all sectors to support preparation for the implementation of the expanded ELC entitlement in August 2020. These grants will be aimed at supporting ELC providers to ensure they are sufficiently prepared for

increased capacities and longer hours of provision and can be used to buy consumables, technology, or any other resources required to support expansion.

- 4.3 The national expansion applies only to funded ELC however it is recognised that as part of a strategic procurement exercise, currently being developed and which will be the subject of a future report to Committee, the council has a responsibility to ensure fair treatment of all economic operators. Private ELC providers who are not currently contracted, but who may be contracted for funded ELC in future, must therefore also be considered.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 To note the background information in sections 3 and 4.
- 5.2 To approve the allocation of revenue grants to all ELC providers in Angus. The value of each grant will be determined using the following calculations, based on the number of children accessing ELC within the setting in May 2019:

Funded local authority, private, voluntary and childminder settings

£150 per funded child, with a minimum grant of £300

Private nursery settings (not currently funded)

£25 per child, up to maximum registered three and four year old capacity

New childminders contracted up to and including June 2020

£300 start-up grant

- 5.3 To delegate authority to the Director of Schools and Learning, following consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to:
- 1) agree the terms and conditions of the individual grants, and upon agreement, sign the grant agreements on behalf of the council, and;
 - 2) pay out the individual grants in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The total cost of the initial grants will be no more than £375,000, with further grants of £300 being awarded to any childminders commencing funded ELC provision prior to the implementation of the expansion in August 2020. The total budget for the grants will not exceed £385,000.
- 6.2 The multi-year revenue grant allocation from Scottish Government includes funding for these grants. There is therefore no expected impact on council budgets as a result of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

8. CONSULTATION

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

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