

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 18 MAY 2021

EARLY YEARS EXPANSION PROGRAMME UPDATE

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report provides Committee with a final update on progress in the expansion of the early learning and childcare (ELC) entitlement in Angus, from 600 hours to 1140 hours per annum.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the content of this report;
- (ii) Notes that as the most significant elements of the programme are now complete, this will be the final annual update on the early years expansion in Angus.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) 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 [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.
- 3.2 Reference is made to Committee Report [243/19](#), approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 15 August 2019, which sought approval for the payment of revenue grants to all ELC providers in Angus to support preparation for the expansion.
- 3.3 Reference is made to Committee Report [354/19](#), approved by the Children and Learning Committee on 5 November 2019, which was a procurement authority report outlining the procurement strategy for the provision of funded ELC in non-local authority settings from August 2020, and seeking approval from Committee to implement the strategy through a major procurement exercise.
- 3.4 Reference is made to Committee Report [129/20](#), considered by the Special Education Committee on 23 April 2020, which provided Committee with an update on progress on the Angus implementation of the expansion of ELC and confirmed the council's intention to proceed with the implementation of the new entitlement from August 2020.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Scottish Government confirmed in 2020 that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the legislative requirement on local authorities to offer up to 1140 hours of funded ELC to all eligible children by August 2020 had been temporarily withdrawn.
- 4.2 Following a review of the status of the expansion programme across Angus, it was agreed that Angus Council would offer the new funded entitlement to all eligible children as planned.

This commitment was fulfilled in August 2020, one year before the new national implementation date of August 2021.

Workstream 1 – Capital Expansion

- 4.3 Construction of two new-build ELC centres in Carnoustie and Forfar began in October 2019. Due to COVID-19 restrictions on construction work, the completion and opening of the centres was delayed for several months. During this time, temporary alternative accommodation was offered to applicants in Carnoustie, while initial demand in Forfar was met from within the council's existing range of provision in our schools and the expanded framework of partner providers. Both projects are now complete, and Forfar ELCC opened to children in January 2021 while Carnoustie ELCC opened to children in February 2021.
- 4.4 The programme has also extended or refurbished a number of existing nurseries within primary schools around Angus. 17 projects have been completed (Auchterhouse, Birkhill, Eassie, Edzell, Friockheim, Inverbrothock, Inverkeilor, Letham, Liff, Mattocks, Monikie, Newtyle, Northmuir, Rosemount, Southesk, Southmuir and Tannadice), while a further six projects (Andover, Ferryden, Grange, Lochside, Seaview and St Margaret's) will be completed during the school summer holiday in 2021.
- 4.5 Of the six outstanding projects, only Grange will result in an increased capacity which is required for the expansion, while the rest are improvement works. The Grange expansion was commissioned in response to the permanent closure of a private provider in the area in February 2021.

Workstream 2 – Workforce Expansion & Development

- 4.6 45 council staff undertook a retraining programme enabling them to gain the necessary experience and qualification to work in early years. All were then invited to apply for new posts in March 2020.
- 4.7 A total of 266 appointments were made into the posts created by the expansion, some of whom were existing staff who obtained promoted posts. Aligned with a comprehensive review and reconfiguration of the existing workforce, which had been undertaken in consultation with staff and trade unions, the new and expanded early years workforce commenced their new roles in schools and ELCCs in August 2020.

Workstream 3 – Childminder Market Development

- 4.8 Proactive engagement took place with a wide range of registered childminders across Angus throughout 2018 and 2019, with a view to refining processes and developing relationships ahead of the integration of childminders into funded ELC provision from August 2020. 30 childminders now work in partnership with the council, delivering funded ELC to a total of 78 children as of March 2021.

Workstream 4 – Meals & Snacks Provision

- 4.9 A nutritious meal and snack per funded session has been provided free of charge for all children accessing funded ELC in Angus since August 2020.

Workstream 5 – Management Information & SEEMiS EY Implementation

- 4.10 A national project is underway to replace the current Nursery Application Management System (NAMS). The replacement system, SEEMiS Early Years, is scheduled for release in the summer of 2021. Angus Council Early Years and Early Intervention team have developed a temporary system to track all funded ELC placements and to manage the information required to pay contracted partners until the new system is ready.

Capital Grants

- 4.11 Report 129/20 provided Committee with an update on the capital grant application scheme, which awarded grants to ten partner providers to expand or improve the quality of their ELC environment. The providers are Busy Bees Monifieth; Helping Hands, Inverbrothock Playgroup, Ladybird Playgroup and Muirfield Playgroup (Arbroath); Letham Playgroup; Ferryden Playgroup and Rompers (Montrose), and Playspaces and Smallworld (Brechin).

- 4.12 The project at Letham Playgroup, wherein the council will fund the construction of a new building to accommodate up to 32 children, is currently the subject of a planning application.
- 4.13 The project at Busy Bees Monifieth was cancelled after the provider gave notice to terminate their contract with the council in February 2021. The grant has since been repaid.
- 4.14 The project at Ferryden Playgroup was delayed by COVID-19 restrictions and will be carried out during the summer holidays in 2021.
- 4.15 All other grant projects have been completed.

Revenue Grants

- 4.16 Further to report 243/19, arrangements were made to pay grants to all ELC providers in Angus, to support preparations for the expansion including minor adaptations to classrooms and outdoor areas and the purchasing of additional furniture, technology, learning and play resources and consumables. The grants were paid out to all partner providers in December 2019, with further payments made to ELC providers not currently working in partnership with the council in March 2020.

Procurement of Funded ELC

- 4.17 Further to report 354/19, a procurement exercise was undertaken to establish a framework agreement for all non-local authority funded ELC provision in Angus from August 2020. A total of 63 applicants were awarded contracts commencing on 1 August 2020. Contracts will last for an initial three years, with an option to extend by agreement for up to a further two years.
- 4.18 The framework remains open to prospective new providers throughout its duration. This ensures that providers not already under contract with the council at August 2020, or who commence operation in Angus after this date, are able to apply to join the framework and deliver funded ELC to children and families who wish to use their service.

Engagement with Scottish Government, Scottish Futures Trust and other Local Authorities

- 4.19 The Angus programme is nationally considered to be using innovative practice in different areas of the expansion, and the team has been asked to present the Angus approach to other local authorities at a number of national events including:
- Early Years Partnership Summit, September 2019
 - Scottish Futures Trust Capital Programme Contingency Planning Workshop, October 2019
 - Scottish Government Workforce Contingency Planning, February 2020
 - Scotland Policy Conference, Keynote Seminar, March 2020

5. PROPOSALS

There are no additional proposals.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The multi-year funding package allocated to Angus includes funding for all of the revenue and capital elements of the expansion programme, therefore there is no expected impact on council budgets.
- 6.2 The costs associated with capital projects have, in the main, been significantly higher than the figures reported to Committee in the original programme report 128/18, however the programme has been able to maintain a position of having no impact on council budgets through the following measures:
- Continuous refinement of the capital programme to ensure the most effective use of the capital grant and the targeting of funds in response to changing local requirements, and;
 - The use of Capital From Current Revenue (CFCR) transfer, using strategically unspent revenue grant from Scottish Government to ensure the capital programme can be completed to a high standard without any impact on local budgets.

6.3 Updates on financial activity within the programme in financial year 2020/21 are appended to this report.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

8. CONSULTATION

The Director of Infrastructure and the Director of Finance 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:

- Report [128/18](#) Early Years Expansion Programme, Angus Council Children and Learning Committee 18 April 2018
- Report [243/19](#) Early Years Expansion Programme – Revenue Grants to Providers, Angus Council Children and Learning Committee 15 August 2019
- Report [354/19](#) Procurement Authority Report – Open Framework for Funded Early Learning and Childcare, Angus Council Children and Learning Committee 5 November 2019
- Report [129/20](#) Early Years Expansion Programme Update, Angus Council Special Education Committee 23 April 2020

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 Early Years Expansion Programme – Revenue Expenditure

Appendix 2 Early Years Expansion Programme – Capital Expenditure

Early Years Expansion Programme – Revenue Expenditure

Full Early Years Expenditure

Revenue	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Funding:-	£	£	£	£
Scottish Government		1,557,000	5,254,000	8,980,000
Carry Forward		450,000	1,908,000	4,960,000
Angus Council	7,550,000	7,991,000	7,736,000	8,290,000
Total Funding	7,550,000	9,998,000	14,898,000	22,230,000
Projected Costs:-				
On-going	7,460,000	8,090,000	9,938,000	19,270,000
Total Costs	7,460,000	8,090,000	9,938,000	19,270,000
Variance	90,000	1,908,000	4,960,000	2,960,000

Expansion Funding only

Revenue	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Funding:-	£	£	£	£
Scottish Government	450,000	1,557,000	5,235,000	8,980,000
Carry Forward		450,000	1,908,000	5,500,000
Angus Council				
Total Funding	450,000	2,007,000	7,143,000	14,480,000
Actual / Projected Costs:-				
One-off CFCR			0	4,570,000
Ongoing:-				
Employee costs			1,495,000	2,160,000
Snack provision		99,000	148,000	350,000
P&Vs				3,000,000
Covid related Exp				900,000
Total Costs		99,000	1,643,000	10,980,000
Variance	450,000	1,908,000	5,500,000	3,500,000

Early Years Expansion Programme – Capital Expenditure

Capital Funding	To 2018/19 (£)	2019/20 (£)	2020/21 (£)	2021/22 (£)	Total (£)
Scottish Government	3,340,000	3,200,000	2,200,000	-	8,740,000
Carry Forward	-	2,977,000	264,000	-	
Total Funding	3,340,000	6,177,000	2,464,000	-	
Actual / Projected Costs					
Actual Expenditure	513,000	5,913,000	-	-	6,426,000
Projected Expenditure	-	-	7,034,000	1,424,000	8,458,000
Transfer from Revenue	(150,000)	0	(4,570,000)	(1,424,000)	(6,144,000)
Total Expenditure	363,000	5,913,000	2,464,000	0	8,740,000
Funding carried forward	2,977,000	264,000	0	-	-

Projects Summary	Updated Estimate Cost (£)
Carnoustie ELCC	4,160,000
Forfar ELCC	3,640,000
Birkhill PS - Extension	375,000
Inverbrothock PS – Extension for Playgroup	500,000
Letham PS - Extension	300,000
Lochside PS – Extension for School and Playgroup	630,000
Northmuir PS - Extension	428,000
Rosemount PS – Extension/Outdoor Classroom	516,000
Southesk PS – Refurbishment of Existing Space	420,000
Grant Scheme	879,000
Catering Adaptions	400,000
Monifieth Cluster	500,000
Environmental Health Works	400,000
Minor Works	
Andover, Arbroath Academy, Auchterhouse, Eassie, Edzell, Ferryden, Friockheim, Inverkeilor, Liff, Mattocks, Monikie, Muirfield, Murroes, Newtyle, Panmure Centre, Southmuir, St Margaret's, Tannadice	1,736,000
Projected Spend (before Revenue transfers)	14,884,000