
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

23 March 2021

Cabinet

Title: Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme

Purpose: To provide an update on developments in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), specifically in relation to:

- The delivery of early learning and childcare (ELC) in North Ayrshire from August 2020 taking account of the constraints imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic.
- Plans for full implementation of the statutory entitlement to 1140 hours of ELC for all eligible children from August 2021.
- The current position in relation to the ELC capital programme which is delivering high-quality learning environments in North Ayrshire.
- The plans to include the Council's ELC establishments in the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme to align budget management approaches within Education.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet notes:

- The plan for full delivery of 1140 hours of ELC in NAC and funded provider establishments in North Ayrshire.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In May 2018 Cabinet approved the plan for the rollout of early learning and childcare in North Ayrshire. In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, the Scottish Government took the decision to remove the statutory duty to increase the entitlement to ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours from August 2020. As a result of this, and due to the ongoing uncertainty around a post-lockdown scenario, the overall 1140 implementation programme was paused, while continuing to make progress where plans were already close to implementation.
- 1.2 From August 2020, the amended ELC delivery model maintained pre-Covid-19 ELC provision and, where possible, slightly increased the number of hours of ELC provision available for children and families. At all times, the aim has been to minimise interim changes to the working arrangements for staff as we work towards the fully developed statutory model of provision.
- 1.3 To deliver the statutory entitlement to 1140 hours of ELC from August 2021, and to meet the needs of families and carers in North Ayrshire, there will be three models of

delivery available in North Ayrshire Council ELC establishments. These have been developed to ensure diversity of choice, particularly for working parents, and to provide the option for parents to use more than one provider.

- 1.4 The costs of full implementation of 1140 hours will be met from within currently available ELC budgets. This includes the funding of the capital programme, which, although delayed by Covid-19, is projected to be delivered within the revised timescale of August 2021 and within budget.
- 1.5 As the Council moves towards full implementation of 1140 hours of ELC, aspects of budgetary control will be aligned with other Education budgetary approaches, including the introduction of DSM.

2. Background

- 2.1 In May 2018 Cabinet approved the plan for the rollout of early learning and childcare in North Ayrshire. On 01 April 2020, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act Revocation Order 2020 was approved by Scottish Parliament. The order revoked the change to the 2014 Children and Young People's Act that required education authorities to secure 1140 hours of ELC provision for all eligible children from August 2020 (an increase from 600 hours).
- 2.2 On 14 December 2020, Scottish Government's ELC Joint Delivery Board recommended that the statutory duty to deliver 1140 hours should be reinstated with effect from August 2021.
- 2.3 The Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme (ELCEP) Board is chaired by the Head of Service (Inclusion), and meets monthly to provide governance and oversight of the programme of works required to deliver full implementation of 1140 hours across all ELC provision in North Ayrshire from August 2021.

Current position

- 2.4 The ELC delivery model being delivered in NAC establishments from August 2020 – August 2021 is summarised as follows:
 - Eleven NAC establishments have continued to deliver 1140 hours, open from 8am – 6pm over the full year.
 - Two NAC establishments have continued to open from 8am – 6pm during term time.
 - Twenty-four NAC establishments have increased ELC delivery hours from 600 to 665, open from 8.45am – 5.00pm during term time.
 - Two NAC establishments in rural settings offer 1140 hours, open from 9.00am – 3.00pm during term time.
 - One establishment has continued with mornings only delivery of 600 hours. This is because of the restriction of space within the school building during the infrastructure works.
- 2.5 Scottish Government capital funding of £11.44m was secured to invest in early learning and childcare environments to meet the requirements of providing 1140 hours

of early years education for each eligible child. North Ayrshire Council's ELC capital programme comprises of 42 projects, including 27 refurbishments, 14 extensions, and 1 new build provision. The Council plans to create additional capacity at 41 facilities through the indoor/outdoor model. To date, 19 of these projects have been completed and 23 further projects are on site or planned for the near future. These projects follow a standard "North Ayrshire" design brief to ensure high quality learning environments are accessible both indoors and out across the whole ELC estate. The Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) have been complimentary on the approach to capacity expansion which this Council has adopted, with far greater emphasis being placed on the need to expand capacity from within the existing estate which promotes equity across all localities. The Council has been invited by the SFT to contribute to case studies which highlight the positive impact that the improved infrastructure has brought.

- 2.6 In responding to the delay in the statutory entitlement to 1140 hours, a site by site review of ELC delivery was carried out, taking account of the staffing requirements and existing delivery patterns. One of the outcomes of this review highlighted early years capacity issues in the Irvine area where some establishments are already operating at peak capacity, particularly in the Lawthorn and Stanecastle/Annick areas.
- 2.7 Three new COVID-19 related factors have emerged that has increased the pressure on ELC capacity, particularly within the area of Irvine. These are:
- A sustained increase in the number of 2-year olds who are eligible for statutory ELC provision and are taking up their early years entitlement;
 - An increase in the number of referrals for ELC support from Health Visitors; and
 - An anticipated increase in the number of deferred entries to primary education as a result of forthcoming new Scottish Government legislation.
- 2.8 In October 2020, SFT, on behalf of Scottish Government, invited bids for funding to develop innovative educational and community facilities as part of their Phase 2 Learning Estate Investment Programme.
- 2.9 North Ayrshire Council submitted a bid to obtain a 50% funding contribution for the proposed new primary school at the Montgomerie Park area in Irvine, inclusive of early learning and childcare provision to accommodate 32 three to five-year olds and 15 two-year olds. This sought to relieve the pressure on ELC Capacity in the Annick and Lawthorn areas.
- 2.10 An announcement made by the Depute First Minister on 18 December 2020, included North Ayrshire Council as one of the successful bids. This follows the success of securing funding for the new Ardrossan Community Campus in Phase 1 of the Learning Estate Investment Programme in September 2019.
- 2.11 The Council currently also contracts with 16 Funded Provider nurseries and since August 2020 all of these providers have been delivering 1140 hours to all funded children who attend these nurseries. In addition, the Council also contracts with 81 childminders, and since August 2020 they have been delivering funded hours.
- 2.12 Funded Providers have continued to be supported during the pandemic and this has included access to the Scottish Transitional Support Fund which was accessed by all Funded Provider nurseries and provided grants which ranged from £3500 to £8000.

The Council has also supported Childminders through the distribution of additional PPE equipment supplied by the Council. Childminders are now able to apply for a Scottish Government Childminding Sustainability Grant of up to £750.

- 2.13 All Funded Providers have made a significant contribution during the pandemic in continuing to provide flexible childcare for children and families.
- 2.14 The resourcing exercise to plan and provide staffing to meet the requirements of the expansion has been underway since November 2020.
- 2.15 Detailed analysis of the staffing exercise is currently underway. It is anticipated that there will be in the region of 28 new employment opportunities created by the expansion. Recruitment will take place over April and May 2021.
- 2.16 The registration of children commencing 1140 hours ELC in the session Aug 2021-2022 took place online from 1 -10 February 2021. It is planned that by 26 March 2021 all parents who registered at this time will be notified of their child's place and attendance pattern at an ELC establishment.

Expanded ELC Delivery Model: August 2021

- 2.17 In considering the 1140 delivery model from August 2021, the following principles have been established:
 - Children's entitlement to 1140 hours of ELC will commence from the term after their 3rd birthday. Where children have been referred to an ELC provision by the Named Person Service because they or their family have an identified need, then ELC provision will be made available to them regardless of their date of birth.
 - All NAC ELC establishments will be staffed to the statutory staffing ratios set by the Care Inspectorate: 1 staff member: 8 children aged 3-5 years and 1 staff member: 5 children aged 2-3 years.
 - ELC establishments will be staffed according to the agreed capacity from the start of the academic year.
 - The expansion programme makes provision for parents to blend their ELC entitlement across providers, e.g. to take some of their entitlement in a Council-run establishment and the remainder with a funded provider (see Model 2 below).
 - All children entitled to 1140 hours will receive a free lunch. Children who attend an ELC establishment from 8.30am - 6.00pm or 8.00am -5.30pm will also receive a light tea in the afternoon. These children will therefore return home having had two meals, a provision that has been particularly welcomed by working parents and those on low income. In addition, children who attend an afternoon session from 1.15pm -6.00pm will receive a light tea rather than a lunch.
- 2.18 To meet the needs of families and carers, there will be three models of delivery available in North Ayrshire Council ELC establishments. This aims to ensure diversity of choice and the option for parents to use more than one provider. The three models are:

Model 1 (this model is similar to the existing 1140 delivery model)

- These settings will be open from 8am – 6.00pm for 48 weeks per year.

- Each session lasts 4.75 hours: 8.00am – 12.45 or 1.15pm – 6.00pm
- Full day sessions last 9.5 hours: 8.30 -6.00pm or 8.00am – 5.30pm
- Parents who choose to have full year delivery (48 weeks) will choose 5 sessions per week.
- Parents who choose to have part year delivery (40 weeks) will choose 6 sessions per week
- There will also be a limited number of places within this model for children to attend from 9am – 3.00pm over term time (38 weeks).

Model 2

- These settings will be open from 8.30am – 4.30pm over term time only (38 weeks)
- Children will attend for either a morning session (8.30am – 12.00pm) or an afternoon session (1.00pm – 4.30pm).
- Parents choosing this model will then have the option to have an additional 12.5 funded hours per week of ELC with a funded provider or childminder of their choice.
- This model places the opportunity for more ELC business with childminders (and funded provider nurseries) and so supports the Council's Community Wealth Building strategy.

Model 3

- These settings will be open for children from 9.00am – to 3.00pm over term time only (38 weeks).

2.19 The links below provide information on all NAC ELC establishments as well as the locations of our ELC Funded Provider partners. This information is also available at Appendix 1.

NAC Establishment Map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1V5SSLjP7eMSIQ1tWjrQ2Nk-qTBHM9zDX&ll=55.76108666291833%2C-4.857835934160077&z=9>

Funded Provider Establishment Map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1V5SSLjP7eMSIQ1tWjrQ2Nk-qTBHM9zDX&ll=55.76108666291833%2C-4.857835934160077&z=9>

Financial Management

2.20 As the final phase of the 1140 hours implementation is concluded, plans to include the ELC sector in the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme to align budget management approaches within Education are scheduled to take effect from 1 April 2021. Head Teachers and Heads of Centres will be empowered to support local decision making in alignment with current approaches to managing budgets for primary and secondary schools.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet notes:

- The plan for full delivery of 1140 hours of ELC in NAC and funded provider establishments in North Ayrshire.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 Capital Funding

Scottish Government capital funding of £11.44m was secured to invest in early learning and childcare environments to meet the requirements of providing 1140 hours of early years education for each eligible child. All projects will be delivered within the overall funding grant of £11.44m.

Revenue Funding

As the final phase of the 1140 hours implementation is concluded, plans to include the ELC sector in the Devolved School Management (DSM) scheme to align budget management approaches within Education are scheduled to take effect from 1 April 2021.

Human Resources

4.2 The proposals outlined in this report have ensured the minimum disruption for staff delivering early learning and childcare during session 20/21 and provide the best possible opportunity of offering a fair and equitable deployment and recruitment process for all staff as we move towards fully implementing our agreed 1140 hours delivery model. Recruitment of a further 28 ELC posts is scheduled for April – May 2021. Throughout the programme we have had the support of our Trade Unions who have made a significant and valued contribution to our planning for workforce transformation and expansion.

Legal

4.3 This paper responds to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act Revocation Order 2020, passed by Scottish Government on 01 April 2020.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) places a duty on local authorities and schools to ensure the wellbeing of children and young people is safeguarded, supported and promoted.

The response to the delay in implementing the 1140 ELC expansion programme has included consideration of the impact of the COVID crisis and re-evaluation of the consequences of the local economic and societal changes on our most vulnerable families.

Early years is a time of significant developmental change and opportunities to meet the needs of all pupils to learn alongside peers in a nurturing, supported environment is crucial. The design of ELC is based on Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) which is based on children's rights and its principles reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The impact of poverty and deprivation can also impact on the early life chances of children which can lead to poor outcomes and it is therefore important that children are nurtured within their local early years settings. Providing opportunities for children to attend local early years provision can impact positively on the social capital experienced by families.

The delivery of 1140 hours within North Ayrshire addresses a number of socio-economic outcomes. In developing the models of delivery, the needs of parents and families were fully considered. Whilst most working parents benefit from full year, 8am-6pm delivery model there was a significant number of parents who required delivery to be aligned to the school day, for example those in the island communities. The 1140 offer is further enhanced through the provision of our Funded Providers who offer a range of other options outwith the Council's ELC delivery. The 1140 offer includes funded hot meals for all entitled early years children and this has a positive impact on working families on low income.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 North Ayrshire Council's Early Years expansion programme is one of the few across the whole of Scotland that has maximised the use of existing space within schools, and only created extensions where necessary. These have been modest in scale and we are not constructing any new-build centres. This approach is both less resource intensive and less energy intensive.

Existing school plant is providing heating and hot water with no additional boilers required, meaning existing boilers are running at optimal efficiency. Where possible, alterations include the installation of a heating zone to allow the early years only to be heated for the duration of the 1140 hours rather than the full school which would typically be closed over holiday periods and after around 3pm.

Where appropriate, the building fabric has been designed to meet or exceed technical standards; sustainable / high recycled content materials have been used; heat recovery and water saving devices have been fitted, and new lighting is low energy.

Key Priorities

4.6 By expanding our early learning and childcare provision to make sure all eligible children are able to access 1140 hours of free learning and childcare each year, we will support the following key priorities:

- North Ayrshire children and young people have the best start in life.
- Active and strong communities.
- Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 The full implementation of 1140 hours of ELC in North Ayrshire makes a significant contribution to Community Wealth Building. Benefits include the procurement of local private and voluntary ELC businesses and childminders as funded providers as well as providing childcare support and provision to enable parents and carers to gain learning, training and employment opportunities.

5. Consultation

5.1 Throughout the 1140 expansion programme there has been regular consultation with ELC leaders, parents and carers, staff and Trade Unions. Most recently this has included engagement with staff for the implementation for the new staffing structures for 2020/21 and public consultation for the proposed new Montgomery Park Primary and Early Years Class.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director

For further information please contact **Caroline Amos, Head of Service**, on **01294 324416**.

Background Papers

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North Ayrshire Council Run Establishments

	Establishment	Address
1.	Abbey Primary Early Years	Claremont Crescent, KILWINNING, KA13 7HG
2.	Ardeer Primary Early Years,	Clark Crescent, STEVENSTON, KA20 3LZ
3.	Beith Primary Early Years	Glebe Road, BEITH, KA15 1EZ
4.	Blacklands Primary Early Years	David's Crescent, KILWINNING, KA13 6JJ
5.	Caledonia Primary Early Years	Campbell Avenue, SALTCOATS, KA21 5AF
6.	Castlepark Early Years Centre	Carron Place, Castlepark, IRVINE, KA12 9LQ
7.	Corrie Primary Early Years	Corrie, BRODICK, Isle of Arran, KA27 8JP
8.	Corsehill Primary Early Years	Fergushill Road, KILWINNING, KA13 7LW
9.	Cumbrae Primary Early Years	Bute Terrace, MILLPORT, KA28 0BB
10.	Dalry Early Years Centre	Sharon Street, DALRY, KA24 5DR
11.	Dreghorn Primary Early Years	Dundonald Road, DREGHORN KA11 4AP
12.	Elderbank Primary Early Years	St Kilda Bank, Broomlands, IRVINE KA11 1LA
13.	Fairlie Primary Early Years	Morton Way, FAIRLIE, KA290BW
15.	Garnock Community Campus Primary Early Years	Beith Road, GLENGARNOCK, KA14 3BF
16.	Gateside Primary Early Years	Main Road, GATESIDE, KA152LF
17.	Glencairn Primary Early Years	New Street, STEVENSTON, KA20 3HQ
18.	Hayocks Primary Early Years	Lumsden Place, STEVENSTON, KA20 4HG

19.	Kilmory Primary Early Years	Kilmory, BRODICK, Isle of Arran, KA27 8PQ
20.	Kilwinning Early Years Centre	c/o Pennyburn PS, Sundrum Place, KILWINNING, KA13 6SE
21.	Lamlash Primary Early Years	MacKelvie Road, LAMLASH, Isle of Arran, KA27 8NP
22.	Largs Early Years Centre	Alexander Avenue, LARGS, KA30 9DR
23.	Lawthorn Primary Early Years	Lochlibo Road, Lawthorn, IRVINE, KA11 2AY
24.	Loudoun-Montgomery Primary Early Years	Ayr Road, IRVINE, KA12 8DF
25.	Mayfield Primary Early Years	Kenilworth Drive, SALTCOATS, KA21 6HS
26.	Moorpark Primary Early Years	Milton Road, KILBIRNIE, KA25 7EP
27.	Pirnmill Primary Early Years	Pirnmill, BRODICK, Isle of Arran, KA27 8HP
28.	Shiskine Primary Early Years	Shiskine, BRODICK, Isle of Arran, KA27 8EP
29.	Skelmorlie Primary Early Years	Innes Park Road, SKELMORLIE, PA17 5BA
30.	Springside Primary Early Years	Station Road, Springside, IRVINE, KA11 3AZ
31.	Springvale Early Years Centre	Sannox Drive, SALTCOATS, KA21 6JD
32.	Stanley Primary Early Years	Stanley Road, ARDROSSAN, KA22 7DH
33.	St Bridget's Primary Early Years,	Hagthorn Avenue, KILBIRNIE, KA25 6EJ
34.	St John Ogilvie Primary Early Years	13 Towerlands Farm Road, IRVINE, KA11 1PZ
35.	St John's Primary Early Years	Morrison Avenue, STEVENSTON, KA20 4HH
36.	St Luke's Primary Early Years	Pennyburn Road, KILWINNING, KA13 6LF
37.	St Mark's Primary Early Years	Clark Drive, IRVINE, KA12 0NS

38.	St Peter's Primary Early Years	South Isle Road, ARDROSSAN, KA22 7PX
39.	West Kilbride Primary Early Years,	Hunterston Road, WEST KILBRIDE, KA23 9EX
40.	Winton Primary Early Years	Anderson Terrace, ARDROSSAN, KA22 8JP
41.	Woodlands Primary Early Years	Woodlands Avenue, IRVINE, KA12 0PU

Funded Provider ELC Establishments

	Establishments	Address
1.	Bradshaw Nursery Ltd	22 Bradshaw Street, SALTCOATS, KA21 5HR
2.	Bright Beginnings Nursery	Guide Hall, Muir Drive, IRVINE, KA12 0NR
3.	Brodick Nursery	Brodick Public Hall, Brodick, Isle of Arran, KA27 8DL
4.	Burnside House Nursery	Burnside House, 24 Kilwinning Road, IRVINE, KA12 8RU
5.	Busy Bees Nursery	The James Moffat Centre, 187 Glasgow Street, ARDROSSAN, KA22 8JY
6.	Douglas Park Nursery	Cathcart Road, LARGS, KA30 8JB
7.	First Steps Nursery	216 Bank Street, IRVINE, KA12 0YD
8.	Owl and Pussycat Too Nursery	1 Montgomery Lane, Harbourside, Irvine, KA12 8PS
9.	Playtime Early Years	Dalry Community Centre, St Margaret Avenue, DALRY KA24 4BA
10.	Rainbow Childcare	19 Howgate, KILWINNINGY, KA13 6EN
11.	Summerlea House Nursery	9 Union Street, Largs, KA30 8DG
12.	The Yellow Brick Road Early Years Centre	St Columba's Church Hall, 13 Glasgow Street, KILBIRNIE, KA25 7AP
13.	Treetops Nursery	83 Anderson Drive, IRVINE, KA12 9HY
14.	Treetops Too Private Nursery	Ailsa Road, SALTCOATS, KA21 6LR
15.	West Kilbride Early Years Centre	Community Centre, Corse Street, West Kilbride, KA23 9AX
16.	Whitehirst Park Private Nursery	West Doura Farm, Whitehirst Park, Kilwinning, KA13 6NQ

Early Years Estate

Kilwinning Early Years Centre



Springvale Early Years Centre



Glencairn Outdoors



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Focus. Passion. Inspiration.

Early Years Estate

Loudoun-Montgomery Early Years Class



St John's Early Years Class



St Mark's Early Years Class



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Early Years Estate

Annick Early Years Class



Annick Early Years Class



Annick Early Years Class



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Early Years Estate

Springside Early Years Class



Springside Early Years Class



Springside Early Years Class



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Early Years Estate

St Peter's Early Years Class



St Peter's Early Years Class



St Peter's Early Years Class



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