

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of Meeting held at 11.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 28 September 2017.**

**Present:**

Councillor Paul O’Kane (Chair)	Councillor Charlie Gilbert
Councillor Colm Merrick (Vice Chair)	Councillor Jim Swift
Councillor Paul Aitken	Dr Frank Angell
Councillor Caroline Bamforth	Ms Mary McIntyre
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)	Mr Des Morris

Councillor O’Kane in the Chair

**Attending:**

Mhairi Shaw, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Mark Ratter, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager and Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer.

**Apologies:**

Councillors Danny Devlin and Alan Lafferty; and Ms Dorothy Graham.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**151.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE EXPANSION PLAN**

**152.** Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 21 June 2017 (Page 33, Item 25 refers), when the next steps to allow the Council to meet the duties placed on them by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Scottish Government publication *A Blueprint for 2020: the Expansion of the Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland 2017-2018 Action Plan* were approved, amongst other things, the Committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the proposed implementation plan for the expansion of early learning and childcare to 1140 hours by 2020. A copy of the early learning and childcare expansion and implementation plan accompanied the report.

It was reported that the Scottish Government had published *A Blueprint for 2020: the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland 2017-2018 Action Plan* in March 2017 and guidance was thereafter issued to all local authorities to support the development

of local implementation plans for submission to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017. An Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Board was created to take strategic responsibility for the transformational change required, membership of which consisted of senior officers from various departments throughout the Council and included members from partner providers, local childminders and higher education establishments. An analysis of need and demand had been undertaken and it was proposed that a phased approach be taken to the expansion working to increase accessibility and flexibility beyond the deadline of August 2020. As a result the Council would meet its duties to offer 1,140 hours by 2020 but would continue to increase provision beyond that date. Phase 1 would introduce 1140 hours with very limited flexibility and accessibility by August 2020; Phase 2 would provide increased flexibility and accessibility; and Phase 3 would involve a full expansion of establishments offering greater flexibility and accessibility by August 2024.

It was explained that a consultation exercise had been carried out in July 2017 to ascertain the views of parents on accessing 1,140 hours of free early learning and childcare, consulting on models that would give parents both flexibility and choice in accessing this additional provision. Following the consultation it was proposed that parents could choose core provision; extended day provision; stretched provision; blended provision; or funded provider provision. From August 2020 it was proposed that core provision, extended day provision and blended provision would be available within nursery classes and stretched provision and blended provision would be available within family centres.

Information was provided on the current capacity/supply for 3 and 4 year olds and the planned capacity/supply for 2020, based on the existing capital programme within East Renfrewshire Council. This included the creation of a nursery class at St Cadoc's Primary; a new non-denominational primary school with nursery provision in Newton Mearns (Maidenhill); enhanced capacity as a result of registration of outdoor space (Braidbar and Carolside); a new build Arthurlie Family Centre; and an extension to Busby nursery class. Information was also provided on current demand, anticipated demand in 2020, and current occupancy based on 600 hours entitlement. It was clarified that early years provision was organised into four communities, Barrhead/Neilston; Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham; Giffnock/Thornliebank; and Newton Mearns and further information on phasing and prioritisation within each community was provided. In order to deliver 1,140 hours for all children in East Renfrewshire by 2020, four new establishments would be required, one within each early learning community.

Further information was provided on the early learning workforce advising that the impact of the expansion programme on the workforce would be significant and reporting that the department had already begun to develop models to grow their own workforce through training and increased modern apprenticeships, and in negotiation with partners from further education establishments.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) and the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) were heard further regarding the report advising that using existing assets would allow limited scope for additional hours, that there was scope to work with local childminders as no partnership agreements with childminders were currently in place, and that expected house building in the area from 2020 onwards would increase demand within nurseries and family centres throughout East Renfrewshire. It was reported that increased provision within existing resources would be challenging as East Renfrewshire nurseries were already open from 8.00am until 6.00pm throughout the calendar year and, following consultation with parents, 57% of parents across the four early learning communities had expressed a need to purchase additional hours for their children. Further information was provided on each of the proposed models of delivery, highlighting that core provision was the least efficient of all the models proposed.

It was reported that the Scottish Government had allocated additional capital and revenue funding for 2017/18 to support the expansion programme and funding for both capital and revenue costs from 2018 onwards was expected to be provided by the Scottish Government, subject to approval of the submitted implementation plan. In the likelihood of insufficient funds being made available, the plan would be reviewed and amended appropriately. In conclusion it was highlighted that although 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare must be introduced from August 2020, this could not be delivered in East Renfrewshire without further capital investment which would be subject to funding and planning processes.

In response to questions the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) advised that the plan included proposals to build three new family centres in Newton Mearns between 2020 and 2025 and that various sites for these were currently being scoped near to Fairweather Hall, Crookfur Pavilion and Rouken Glen Park. These sites had been chosen to take advantage of outdoor areas. The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement and Performance) advised that the process would be reviewed on a regular basis to take account of finance and planning processes and would be adapted as required.

The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) provided further information on proposed training for existing education staff to increase the early years workforce. She added that the proposed new family centre for Busby/Clarkston was expected to be located near Overlee Pavilion.

Members commended the work which had gone into the plan and hoped that the Scottish Government would support the plan by providing sufficient funding. Having heard the Director of Education commend the work which had been undertaken by officers within her own department and throughout the Council, including staff from the Environment Department, in producing such a comprehensive plan, the Committee agreed to:-

- (a) approve the proposed early learning and childcare implementation plan; and
- (b) instruct the Director of Education to bring regular reports to the Education Committee on the progress and impact of its implementation.

CHAIR

