

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE21 June 2017Report by Director of EducationEARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE ANNUAL REPORT**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to update members on the approaches taken to develop Early Learning and Childcare services. The report outlines the next steps to improve further the quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability of provision and experiences for young children.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Elected members are asked to note the contents and approve the next steps as outlined in the paper.

BACKGROUND

3. The development of Early Learning and Childcare contributes to SOA1: All children in East Renfrewshire experience a stable and secure start to their lives and are supported to succeed.

4. The Council's 'Parenting Strategy' (2013), 'Early Learning and Childcare Strategy' (2016) and 'Early Years Strategy Update' (2016) outline approaches East Renfrewshire Council takes in delivering the single outcome agreement, whilst at the same time supporting families and young children.

5. The early years continue to be an important focus for national and local government with the publication of 'A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland' in 2016. This blueprint consultation, along with the subsequent report and action plan, outlines the elements required to deliver the planned expansion to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), almost doubling provision from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020. It describes a system of Early Learning and Childcare that is built on the guiding principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability in order to address attainment and inequality gaps across Scotland.

6. The emphasis on quality is reiterated in the Education Department paper 'Advancing Excellence and Equity in Education in East Renfrewshire' (2016). The contribution of high quality Early Learning and Childcare that improves outcomes, reduces or prevents the need for future interventions and is delivered by highly qualified and skilled staff is recognised as fundamental to ensuring the vision of 'Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving, through Excellent Experiences'.

QUALITY

Quality of Provision

7. A key objective of the Early Learning and Childcare Strategy is to ensure that children in East Renfrewshire receive high quality Early Learning and Childcare.

8. The Care Inspectorate visited 8 local authority and 3 partnership nurseries between 1 March 2016 and 31 March 2017. Almost all local authority establishments inspected were awarded evaluations of very good or excellent across the four themes of Care and Support, Environment, Staffing and Management and Leadership, almost all partnership providers received grades of good or very good.

9. Table 1 below illustrates the baseline data against this indicator for the first year of analysis showing an improvement in both local authority and partner provider establishments being awarded grades of very good.

Table 1

	Excellent		Very Good & Excellent		Very Good		Good & Very Good		Good		Other	
	ERC	PP	ERC	PP	ERC	PP	ERC	PP	ERC	PP	ERC	PP
2015/16	1	0	3	0	6	1	6	3	2	5	0	1
2016/17	1	0	5	0	7	1	5	4	1	4	0	1

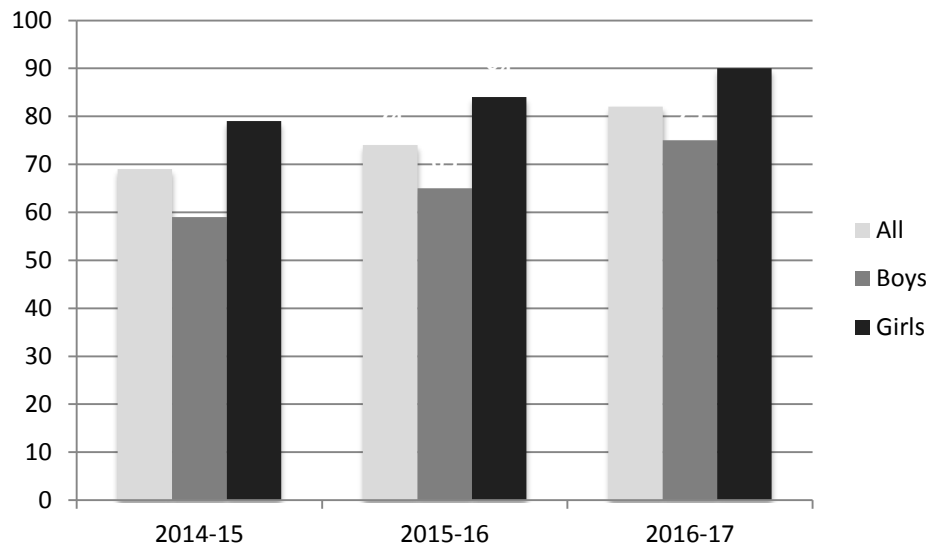
*ERC – Local Authority Establishments, PP – Partner Providers
Other includes Satisfactory, Weak or Unsatisfactory*

10. Two partnership providers were inspected by Education Scotland under the increased expectations set out in How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? Both establishments performed well and were awarded grades of 'Good' for all 4 quality indicators.

11. Since 2013-14 data has been gathered on the percentage of children achieving the expected levels of development on entry to primary 1. The following components are assessed: Attention, Speech, Expressive Language, Receptive Language, Communication, Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills and Behaviour.

12. Over the past three years the percentage of children achieving their developmental milestones across all components has increased from 69% to 82% in 2016-17, with an overall assessment of 93% of children being recorded as having no concerns in relation to their developmental milestones. This is illustrated in the table below.

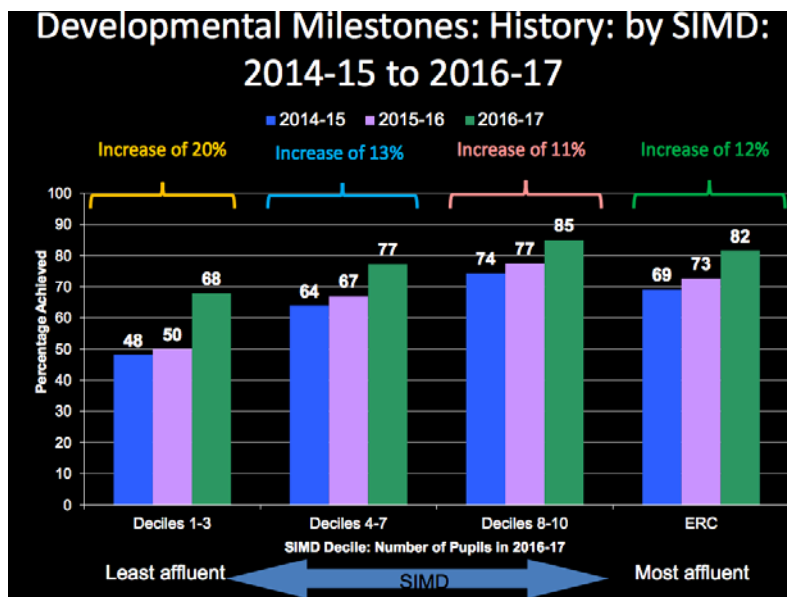
Chart 1 Developmental Milestones History



13. A significant gender gap in the achievement of developmental milestones is evident; 90% of girls and 75% of boys were successful in 2016/17. Encouragingly the gap has decreased from 20% in 2014-15 to 15% in 2016/7; whilst at the same time both genders are improving. This highlights the continuing focus on pedagogy and child-centred learning in our establishments to improve the achievement of boys in relation to their developmental milestones.

14. The Scottish Government refreshed the national stretch aims in 2016, with a new target of at least 85% of children within each SIMD decile having achieved all of their developmental milestones by 2020. In East Renfrewshire, the gap in the achievement of those from the most affluent (SIMD10) and least affluent (SIMD1) residencies has decreased from around 26% in 2014-15 to 17% in 2016-17.

Chart 2 Developmental Milestones History by SIMD.

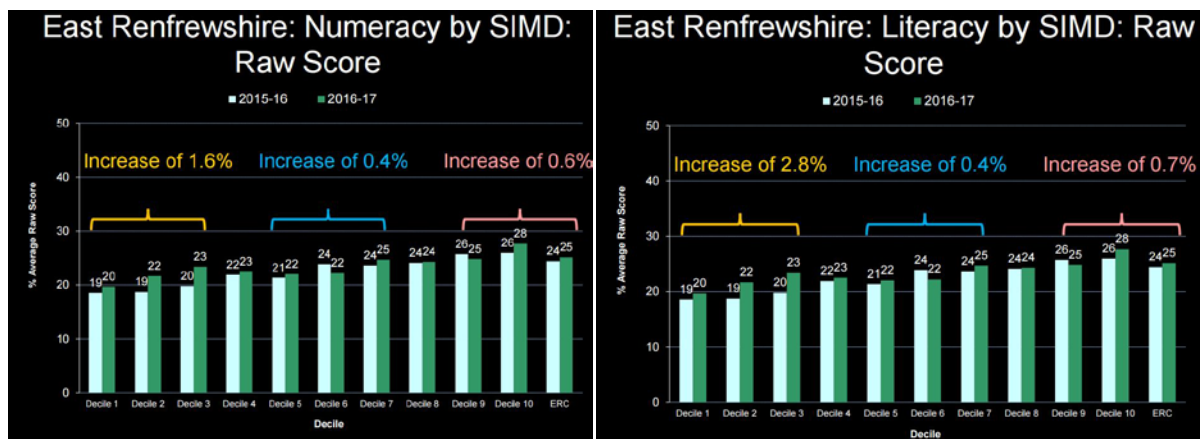


15. The department has developed a Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) programme to support staff to improve outcomes in areas identified as needing development.

16. A Baseline Assessment has been in place since 2005-2006 to assess children's attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry to primary one. In numeracy, performance has increased significantly over this period from 48% correct answers in 2005-6 to 57% in 2016, overtaking the target set in the Outcome Delivery Plan (2014-17). In general there is no significant gender gap when comparing the performance of boys and girls in numeracy. The gap in the achievement of those from the most affluent (SIMD10) and least affluent (SIMD1) residencies in numeracy has decreased from around 20% in 2015-16 to 13% in 2016-17.

17. Performance in literacy has increased from 53% in 2005-6 to 61% in 2016 meeting the target set in the Outcome Delivery Plan (2014-17). The gender gap, with girls outperforming boys has reduced slightly over the past three years. The gap in the achievement of those from the most affluent (SIMD10) and least affluent (SIMD1) residencies in literacy has decreased from around 22% in 2015-16 to 15% in 2016-17.

Chart 3 Baseline Raw Scores by SIMD.



18. Early Years Maths Champions have been successfully introduced in each establishment to support and challenge staff to ensure consistent and effective approaches to developing early numeracy and mathematics skills. In order to raise attainment further, CLPL has been delivered for the Early Years Maths Champions, Child Development Officers and Primary One teachers to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting early numeracy and mathematical thinking in young children.

19. The Education Department has invested in the secondment of one child development officer from each cluster to support and challenge staff in developing children's literacy and English skills using the Council's funded Early Years Pupil Equity Fund. The staff are receiving extensive training from Strathclyde University to enable them to support colleagues across their clusters to improve children's experiences and attainment in literacy.

20. A tracking tool for Early Learning and Childcare establishments is being developed which will allow centres and the Department to gather data on progress and development, target appropriate interventions and support children's transition through their early level learning journey.

21. The Education Department has continued to work in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to pilot a joint initiative to develop the capacity of all early years establishments to promote and nurture the early language and communication skills of all

children. The first 3 ELC establishments undertaking this pilot will be awarded 'Language and Communication Friendly' Status by September 2017.

22. All our ELC establishments continue to offer excellent services for families. 100% of establishments have achieved Family Friendly Status at bronze level, 81% of establishments have now achieved Family Centred Status at silver level and by June 2017, 2 establishments will have tested the new Family Focused quality assurance model for accreditation at gold level.

Quality of the Early Years Workforce

23. East Renfrewshire Council is committed to providing a highly skilled and motivated early years workforce. This session a successful and varied professional learning programme based on current research and practice was planned and delivered to staff working in early years to ensure that the workforce had the specific skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge necessary to deepen and support children's learning and development through effective pedagogy.

24. Attendance at Senior CDO, Depute Head of Centre and Early Level Teacher Forums has increased this session with more than 90% of our early years settings represented at each event. Self-evaluation for self-improvement, approaches to documenting children's learning and the proposed expansion to Early Learning and Childcare have been key themes for professional learning and discussion which have had a positive impact on the development of practice within staff teams. Good practice has been shared to develop approaches to mealtimes, transitions, rest times and outdoor play. This support has ensured that our staff are well placed to meet the full range of children's needs when provision increases from 600 to 1140 hours.

25. Every local authority nursery with 3 and 4 year old children continued to have at least one teacher within their staff team. Twenty seven percent of these teachers hold an early years specialism or are working towards this through Masters Level Study. In addition Carolside and Crookfur received an additional Principal Teacher to address equity in their nursery classes.

26. The number of graduates holding, or working towards a degree level qualification further enhances the early years workforce in East Renfrewshire. Forty six percent of our staff working in early years settings hold, or are working towards a degree level qualification, this compares favourably with the national figure of 19%.

27. Three members of staff successfully completed the BA Childhood Practice in 2017. Three candidates are currently being supported by the department to undertake the BA Childhood Practice qualification, including two staff members from a partner provider. In addition one senior member of staff is being supported to achieve the PDA Plus Childhood Practice Level 9 award.

28. Seven senior staff have been trained as trainers in Experiential Play, this approach to understanding how children learn through play in the early years offers excitement and discovery to children. An extensive training programme for staff from each early years establishment is planned for session 2017/2018.

29. Through inter-authority partnership collaboration (West Partnership Board) and partnership with Edinburgh University we have been able to access extremely high quality professional learning for 5 experienced teachers working in our ELC establishments. They are currently studying for a Certificate in Froebel and Childhood Practice by implementing

experiences for children within their own settings linked to current research, policy and theory underpinned by the principles of Friedrich Froebel, one of the earliest pioneers of early childhood education.

30. A professor from Strathclyde University is working intensively with Primary 1 teachers from almost every school in the authority to develop playful pedagogy and improve continuity and progression for children in their learning as they move from our early years establishments into our primary schools. This has had a positive impact on the learning environments and experiences of young learners and will continue next session.

31. In order to grow our own workforce in preparation for the increased demands of the Early Learning and Childcare expansion to 1140 hours, 20 existing local government staff have been funded by the Education Department to undertake the HNC in Childhood Practice at West College Scotland. On completion of the course these members of staff will be eligible to apply for work as Child Development Officers within the Council.

32. The department has been working closely with our secondary schools as we introduce an Early Learning and Childcare Foundation Apprenticeship programme with Skills Development Scotland from August 2017. Secondary staff have been offered guidance to ensure that they understand the importance of Early Learning and Childcare and can prepare young people for the rigours of the qualifications and day to day challenges in this demanding profession. The department has also increased its recruitment of Modern Apprenticeships for 2017/2018 from 3 to 8.

Next Steps

33. Work in collaboration with the West Partnership Board, Further and Higher Education establishments, Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to develop and introduce an Early Years Leadership programme.

34. Introduce an annual Early Learning and Childcare conference for all staff working across the early years in East Renfrewshire with a focus on 0-6 pedagogy. The first event is planned for Friday 13 October 2017. This day will bring together a large audience to hear key speakers prominent in early years theory, research and practice.

35. Support all establishments to engage with and develop their understanding of the new National Care Standards upon publication (June 2017).

36. Target resources to ensure equity and close the attainment gap with the introduction of an early year's Pupil Equity Fund. In addition to the introduction of Literacy Champions and the development of physical literacy through Learning Landscapes this fund will provide an additional member of staff in the new Arthurlie Family Centre to work with parents of eligible 2 year old children. It will also fund an additional member of staff within the Pre-School Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU) at Carlibar Primary School who will share and model good practice in supporting children with social communication difficulties in their own settings.

37. Train and employ an additional graduate to address equality and equity with funding from the Scottish Government.

38. Support head teachers and managers in self-evaluation using How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? and use this to drive continuous improvement focused on increasing attainment and improving outcomes for children and families.

39. Carry out a thematic review of learning experiences across Curriculum for Excellence Early Level.

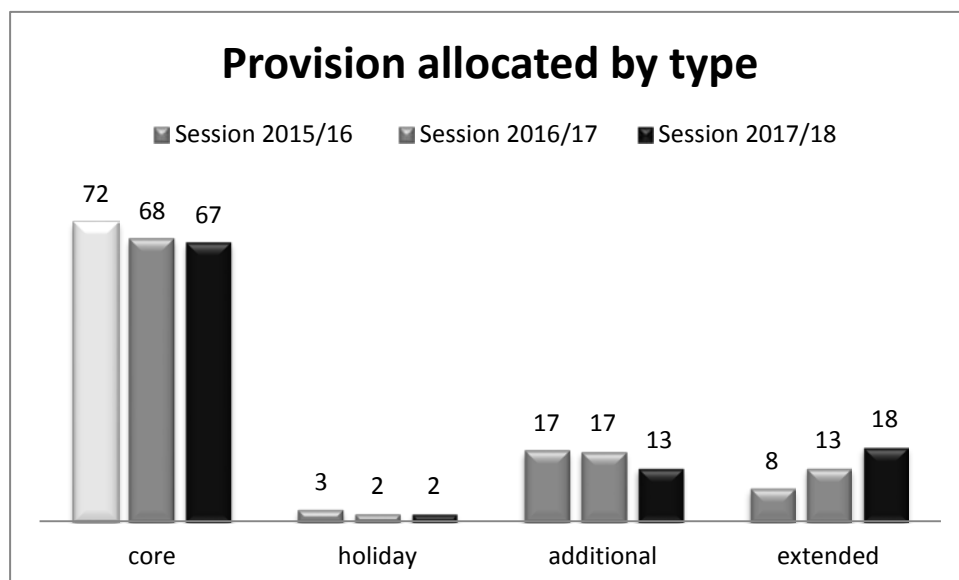
40. Support head teachers and managers to adapt practice within their settings to meet the challenges of expansion to 1140 hours whilst ensuring quality remains at the heart of provision.

FLEXIBILITY

41. Elected members will recall that the Education Department conducted a consultation in 2016 on Early Learning and Childcare which showed that the introduction of flexibility in August 2015 has helped parents to manage their childcare to meet their work commitments. There remained a need for greater flexibility, increased full day provision and holiday cover in certain communities which we have begun to address.

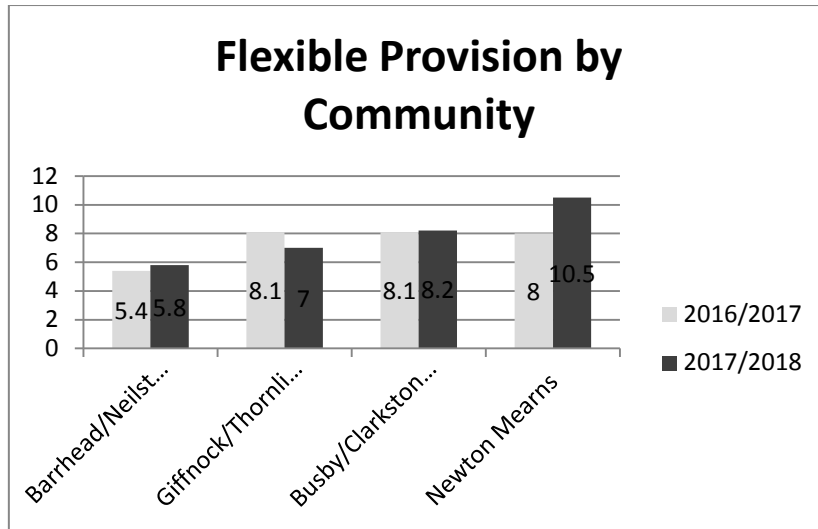
42. The new model to increase flexibility for parents in choosing their Early Learning and Childcare provision was implemented in August 2015. Chart 4 shows the percentage of places allocated for each option using the new system.

Chart 4 Provision Allocated by Type



43. The majority of parents continue to choose the familiar core hours option although this has begun to gradually decrease. The flexibility offered by additional or extended hours has benefitted an increasing number of families in each community by facilitating childcare arrangements that suit their work commitments and lifestyle. As the most flexible option, extended hours (full days), has become more popular as availability has increased.

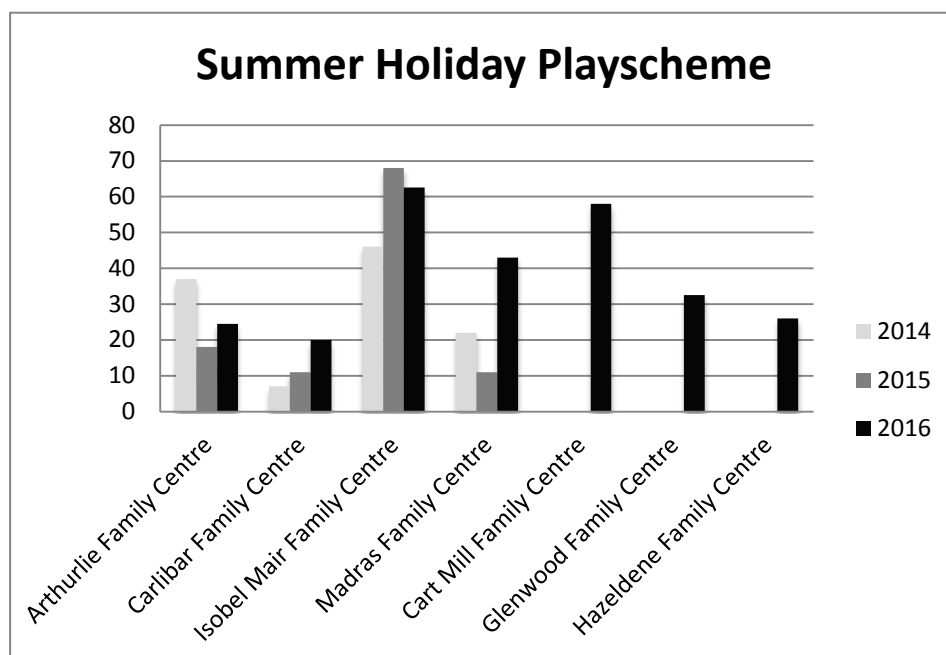
Chart 5 Flexible Provision by Community (additional and extended combined percentage of overall allocation)



44. Extended hours have been offered in Newton Mearns for the first time in Hazeldene Family Centre and the new Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class for session 2017/18. This addresses the need identified by a high number of parents in the 2016 consultation for greater flexibility, including full days, within this community. This option has been extremely popular with 94 families selecting extended hours for the coming session, which accounts for the significant increase in flexible provision seen in Newton Mearns in Chart 5 above. The relocation of Calderwood Lodge also explains the drop in flexible provision in the Giffnock/Thornliebank Community.

45. The uptake of holiday provision, as a continuation of a child's core hours, remains significantly lower than the other options available. Families who wish their children to attend nursery during the school holiday period tend to be working parents who choose extended day provision throughout the year and pay for holiday play scheme to provide the extra childcare they need.

Chart 6 Summer Holiday Playscheme Uptake (no. of children)



46. The 2016 consultation on Early Learning and Childcare showed that the greatest demand for holiday provision came from families living in the Giffnock/Thornliebank and Newton Mearns communities who have benefitted from the increased capacity offered by Hazeldene, Cart Mill and Glenwood Family Centres during school holiday periods.

47. Families have benefitted from increased flexibility due to changes in the way we now pay Partnership Providers. Since session 2015/16 payments have been made for any combination of hours for each child, up to 16 hours in one week, whereas previously parents could only have funding for a maximum of 5 sessions of 3 hours 10 minutes. This demand led approach is in line with the national expectations outlined in the 2020 Blueprint Action Plan and will support our plans as we move towards 1140 hours.

48. A need for more nurseries who work in partnership with the local authority was also highlighted within the 2016 consultation. In 2016/17 the department worked in partnership with 10 local nurseries, in 2017/18 this will increase to 12. This increase in partner providers is a positive step as we move towards the planned expansion to 1140 hours.

Next steps

49. Introduce further flexibility for parents through the trial of Parent Pay for parents to purchase additional hours of ELC on a needs basis.

50. Streamline the process for commissioning Partnership Providers through the consideration of a procurement framework.

51. In preparation of the move to 1140 hours, work with Scottish Childminding Association to explore the use of local childminders in delivery of blended models of Early Learning and Childcare.

ACCESSIBILITY

52. Across the authority Early Learning and Childcare establishments provided 600 hours to all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds with a degree of flexibility as described above.

53. Private and voluntary partners also provided 600 hours of flexible Early Learning and Childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

54. From August 2015, the provision and allocation of nursery places was organised in communities, with a family centre at the heart of each community offering 52 week provision and greater flexibility. Communities were aligned as follows:

Barrhead/Neilston/Uplawmoor
Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham
Giffnock/Thornliebank
Newton Mearns

55. The department increased the number of places for 3 and 4 year olds in the community of Newton Mearns with the expansion of Crookfur Nursery Class. This resolved the issues that many residents in Newton Mearns faced with shortage of places, thus ensuring that no child from that community was displaced to a nursery in another area.

56. With the opening of the new Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class in August 2017, the department has been able to offer increased flexibility to the community of Newton Mearns,

in the form of extended day provision. Parents who require this increased flexibility have been able to choose extended hours in either Hazeldene Family Centre or Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class.

57. We have increased the number of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare places for 3 and 4 year olds in the community of Busby/Clarkston/ Eaglesham with the relocation of Cart Mill Family Centre to its permanent site. This has addressed the shortage of places in Busby/Clarkston/Eaglesham whilst meeting the need for greater availability of extended hour places within this area.

58. The department also increased the number of places in the Barrhead/Neilston community with the extension to Madras Family Centre this session. It now offers 15 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) places for 2 year olds and 80 FTE 3-5 year old places. There will be a further increase of places in the community when Arthurlie Family Centre relocates to the new building at Auchenback late in 2017. There will be an additional 20 FTE 3 & 4 year old places and 35 FTE places for 2 year olds and their families.

59. The department continues to promote the entitlement of 600 hours Early Learning and Childcare for all eligible 2 year olds in partnership with our colleagues in the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative Group as part of the Early Years Strategy. Health Visitors, Family Nurse Partnership, Social Workers and Family First Workers are fully aware of the eligibility criteria and encourage families to apply for places. Places are allocated through a Local Admissions Panel (LAP).

60. For a third consecutive year, the council was able to comfortably meet the demand for places for eligible 2 year olds with 69 children allocated through the LAP. As well as providing Early Learning and Childcare for eligible and vulnerable 2 year olds, where there was capacity to do so we were also able to support working families with the offer to purchase nursery places, with Glen and Madras Family Centres providing this opportunity. A further 21 children in this age group benefitted from this service.

61. Vulnerable children continue to have access to a range of services and resources through the Pre-five Resource Group (PRG). In session 2015/16 118 children were allocated a new or increased nursery placement. Thirty-four children were referred to the Educational Psychology Service for further assessment or intervention and a small number were allocated supports from the Home Visiting Teacher, Family First workers or Outreach from an early years establishment such as play visits in the home.

62. Support within the Pre-school Assessment and Development Unit (PSADU) was allocated to 18 children, and Outreach was offered to a further 5 children. The capacity of the PSADU was increased from August 2016, allowing ante-preschool children (3 year olds) access to this specialist support. This early intervention approach has indicated that children are more likely to have a quicker, successful and sustainable return to their mainstream setting.

63. The introduction of greater choice and flexibility has increased significantly the complexity of the allocation process of nursery places; consequently it has placed a high demand on administration within the department and has led to a review of operational systems and procedures.

64. Detailed in Table 2 below is the capacity for 3 and 4 year olds in each local authority nursery for the current school session and the proposed capacity from August 2017.

Table 2

Establishment	Provision from August 2016	Provision from August 2017
Arthurlie Family Centre	200 (100:100)	200 (100:100)
Busby Nursery Class	100 (50:50)	100 (50:50)
Braidbar Nursery Class	100 (50:50)	100 (50:50)
Calderwood Lodge Nursery Class	80 (40:40)	200 (100:100)
Carlibar Family Centre	180 (90:90)	180 (90:90)
Carolside Nursery Class	160 (80:80)	160 (80:80)
Cart Mill Family Centre	100 (50:50)	180 (90:90)
Crookfur Nursery Class	180 (90:90)	180 (90:90)
Eaglesham Nursery Class	112 (56:56)	112 (56:56)
Giffnock Nursery Class	60 (30:30)	60 (30:30)
Glenwood Family Centre	160 (80:80)	160 (80:80)
Hazeldene Family Centre	200 (100:100)	200 (100:100)
Isobel Mair Family Centre*	80 (40:40)	80 (40:40)
Madras Family Centre	160 (80:80)	160 (80:80)
Mearns Nursery Class	120 (60:60)	120 (60:60)
Netherlee Nursery Class	200 (100:100)	200 (100:100)
Thornliebank Nursery Class	80 (40:40)	80 (40:40)
TOTAL	2272	2472

*Within Isobel Mair Family Centre there is provision for children with Additional Support Needs.

65. To meet demand for 600 hours of entitled Early Learning and Childcare, the Council needs an average of 2300 preschool places for 3 and 4 year old children in any one year; however because of the requirement for flexibility there is a need to work in partnership with private and voluntary providers. This means that the department needs to commission places from the private and voluntary sector for East Renfrewshire children. From August 2017 we will commission 350. This is predominately to support parental choice with flexibility and accessibility.

66. In addition the department has extended its provision for 2 year old children. Table 3 below details the capacity for 2017/2018.

Table 3

Establishment	Capacity
Arthurlie Family Centre (2 year old provision)	20 (10:10)
Cart Mill Family Centre (2 year old provision)	40 (20:20)
Glen Family Centre (0-3 provision)	100 (50:50)
Isobel Mair Family Centre (0-3 provision)*	40 (20:20)
Madras Family Centre (2 year old provision)	30 (15:15)
McCready Family Centre (0-3 provision)	94 (47:47)

*Within Isobel Mair Family Centre there is provision for children with Additional Support Needs.

67. The Statutory Guidance under the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, states that it is the responsibility of the local authority that a child resides in to secure an Early Learning and Childcare place, however many parents are now securing provision for their children in neighbouring authorities to support with working or training arrangements. A temporary reciprocal arrangement for cross boundary funding from August 2016 enabled families to access their entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare in neighbouring

authorities. A formal protocol has been developed within neighbouring authorities to allow this arrangement to continue. Levels of funding are agreed within resident local authority budgets. A copy of this protocol can be found in Appendix 1. This will also allow the department to identify accurately the provision needed for primary school.

68. The annual commissioning exercise was carried out in April 2017 to determine which private and voluntary groups would receive partnership status to provide Early Learning and Childcare in session 2017-2018. Evidence was scrutinised from 14 providers, an increase of 2 from 2016-2017:

Table 4

Provider	Status	2017/18 Successful (✓) Unsuccessful (x)
Belmont Nursery Class	Independent	✓
Broom Nursery	Voluntary	✓
Clarkston Nursery	Voluntary	✓
Elmwood Nursery	Private	✓
Enchanted Forest Nursery	Private	✓
Greenbank Woodland Play	Private	✓
Happy Days Too (Busby)	Private	✓
Happy Days Too (SF)	Private	✓
Innocence Nursery	Private	X
Kirkhillgait Nursery	Private	X
Kirktonholme	Private	✓
Orchardpark Nursery (Thornliebank)	Private	✓
Orchardpark Nursery (Newton Mearns)	Private	✓
Railway Cottage	Private	✓

69. An Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Board has been created to take strategic responsibility for the transformational change required to implement the proposed increase to 1140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare by 2020. This group will address the complexities, reduce the associated risks and ensure the delivery of 1140 hours across the authority. Membership of the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Board is made up of senior officers from Education, Environment, Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, Legal and Procurement and Corporate and Community Services. Partner providers and local childminders are also represented. Further information on the Governance for the Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours by 2020 can be found in Appendix 2.

70. Local authorities will have full responsibility for implementation and delivery of 1140 hours Early Learning and Childcare to their local communities. Planning for the expansion will by necessity evolve over the coming years as we respond to changes in local circumstances and changes in the way parents use our services; however a framework has been provided by the Scottish Government in the first instance to submit an initial plan by 29 September 2017. The Education Department will bring this plan to Education Committee for approval in Autumn 2017 before submission to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017.

Next steps

71. Continue to increase capacity to meet the duties placed on the Council by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland.

72. Work with neighbouring authorities to implement the new agreement on cross boundary funding arrangements.

73. Explore the introduction of the digital NAMS system to allocate nursery places, reducing the workload of administrative staff in early years settings and enabling partnership providers to update records in real time.

AFFORDABILITY

74. Elected members approved at Council in February 2017 to significantly reduce the cost of wraparound care by 50% from £4.50 to £2.25 per hour with effect from August 2017. This decision will make Early Learning and Childcare affordable for residents wishing to purchase additional hours over their 600 hours entitlement.

75. In addition to the increased entitlement to free Early Learning and Childcare, the Scottish Government has also increased the entitlement to free school meals for eligible and vulnerable children. The department took a phased approach to the introduction of free school meals in early years settings, introducing them to establishments with eligible 2 year olds and our most vulnerable children who had been offered lunchtime provision through the Prefive Resource Group.

76. The introduction of free school meals has created an opportunity to enable all children attending nursery over lunchtime to purchase a hot meal. As we move towards 2020 all children attending for full days will be entitled to lunch, the opportunity to test approaches to mealtimes and assess what works with smaller numbers of children will inform our future service delivery.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

77. To support the expansion programme the Scottish Government has allocated additional capital and revenue for 2017/2018. East Renfrewshire Council has received £377,000 revenue and £571,000 capital monies.

78. Any other financial related matters relating to this paper will be met from the department's devolved budget.

RECOMMENDATION

79. Elected members are asked to note the contents and approve the next steps as outlined in the paper.

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

Background Papers

1. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
2. Report to Education Committee: Towards Flexibility in Early Learning and Childcare Provision, November 2014
3. Report to Education Committee: Early Learning and Childcare Strategy, March 2016
4. Report to East Renfrewshire Council: Early Years Strategy Update September 2016.
5. Report to Education Committee: Results of the Consultation on the Implementation of the Entitlement to 600 Hours of Early Learning and Childcare, October 2016.

Inter-Authority Cross Boundary Funding Protocol

April 2017

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For parents/carers that are requesting Cross Boundary Funding for children aged 3-5 years placed in Private and Voluntary Provision

Rationale

“It is recommended that a cross-boundary no charging policy is implemented uniformly by education authorities. However this clearly only works where authorities consistently implement a cross boundary no charging policy. Reciprocal arrangements will work best where there is a balance of children in and out of an education authority area. It is recommended that local authorities meet on a regional or neighbouring basis to identify movement and places across boundaries; and, reach sustainable and mutually beneficial arrangements.

Where there is an imbalance of children, there needs to be a clear agreement on funding and admission policies. On-going work will be required to resolve those issues.

It is important to note that in addition to the benefits that early learning and childcare brings to young children, it is also essential to removing barriers and increasing flexibility for those parents who are working, training or studying. Reciprocal cross boundary arrangements are therefore fundamental to realising the social and economic benefits of early learning and childcare for families and society.”

(Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance, Scottish Government, August 2014)

Purpose of Protocol

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 placed a duty on local authorities to increase the entitlement of all eligible 3 – 5 year old children to 600 hours of early learning and childcare. The Act also asked local authorities to provide an appropriate level of flexibility to allow parents / carers some choice when deciding to access services.

A significant number of parents / carers are opting for this level of flexibility and choice to meet childcare and family requirements; in particular they are requesting early learning and childcare funding from a local authority that they are **not** resident in. For clarity of purpose we will refer to these authorities as **host authorities**.

The duty for providing early learning and childcare lies with the authority where a child lives. These authorities are referred to as **resident authorities**.

While it is clear there is no legislation requirement for local authorities to accept funding requests from non-residents; **Glasgow City Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, Inverclyde Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, North Lanarkshire Council, South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and East Ayrshire** have collaborated to produce clear guidelines and protocol that would support the spirit of the Act and provide **parents/carers** and families with the opportunity to make such a request.

Procedure

1. Parents / carers can ask a Private and Voluntary provider working in partnership with any of the named authorities to make a request on their behalf to the host local authority of a child for early learning and childcare funding. The timing of this request is important to ensure it complies with existing host local authority timelines for allocating funding to partner providers.

2. An **Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel** inclusive of representatives from all participating local authorities will meet in May each year to review funding requests and agree levels of cross boundary funding for the new session commencing August. Funding requests will be granted in the first instance on a reciprocal basis (i.e. the resident authority will match the host authority with funding requests, therefore eliminating the need for payment between local authorities.
3. Where there is an imbalance of number of children placed between host and resident authorities; negotiation will take place to agree the level of cross boundary funding, with payment rates being invoiced at the rate of the host authority.
4. Levels of funding will be agreed within the constraints of resident local authority budgets.
5. To ensure equity and fairness, funding requests will be approved according to the published Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Criteria. Funding will be considered within Banding Criteria 1 – 5, with 1 having the highest priority. **(refer NOTE 1)**
6. Host local authorities will notify their partner providers of the outcome of their request for funding. Thereafter, service providers or local authorities (depending on resident authorities existing protocols) will notify parents/carers of the decision.
7. If requests received exceed the level of funding available, a ballot may be necessary to determine who is successful in receiving funding. Private and Voluntary providers will be supported by host local authorities to carry out the ballots.
8. Parents/carers should be made aware that successful funding requests will commence the term after the child's 3rd birthday, irrespective of the Admission Policy of the named authorities. Cross boundary funding is granted for two years, returning children remaining with a partnership provider are not required to make a further request for funding, however partner providers must ensure that returning children are discussed during the Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel meetings.

Inter Authority Cross Boundary Funding Dates as follows:

Child's 3rd Birthday falls on or between:	Eligible for 600 hours from
1 st March to 31 August 2017	Start of term in August 2017
1 st September to 31st December 2017	January 2018
1st January to 28th February 2018	April 2018
1st March to 31st August 2018	Start of term in August 2018

9. All local authorities are committed to monitoring closely the number of children attending their Private and Voluntary providers to ensure that cross boundary numbers are consistent with those agreed by the Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel. Where there appears to be a discrepancy, then this must be flagged up to the partner provider and parent/carer to ensure they are aware that the funding has not been granted and that neither the resident or host authority will provide funding for the early learning and childcare provision.
10. The **Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel** will meet in **November** each year to review uptake of funding requests and to highlight any discrepancies and imbalances between the previously agreed reciprocal arrangements. Where this is the case, further reciprocal arrangements, or if applicable invoicing may be agreed.

NOTE 1: Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Criteria

1. *Any child in need of protection, Looked After, Kinship Care and ASN (must be supported by either single or multi-agency referral).*
2. *Children granted deferred entry by local authority (excluding parental choice to defer).*
3. *Preschool children returning.*
4. *Preschool and Ante-preschool children (new applicants).*
5. *Other.*

Inter Authority Cross Boundary Process Timeframe

- End of May **Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel**
 - sharing information of funding requests
 - agreeing funding requests

- Beg of June **Parents/carers** informed of outcome funding request

- November **Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel**
 - sharing information of uptake of funding

- Ongoing Communication and Monitoring

- March Invoicing

Quality Assurance

“Where an education authority accepts children from neighbouring authorities, this can impact on funding as well as responsibilities for quality assurance, staff training and CPD in host authorities.”

(Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance, Scottish Government, August 2014)

It is essential that excellence is at the heart of all service delivery and as such we will ensure that all children will receive high quality early learning and childcare. An Inter-Authority Sub-Group has been established to devise clear quality assurance procedures. All Private and Voluntary Providers working in partnership with the named authorities will be routinely involved in ongoing quality assurance activity. Moving forward, these procedures will form part of this Protocol.

In addition, as we move towards 2020 and the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare we are committed to inter-authority partnership working to develop clear pedagogical guidance and to deliver high quality Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) opportunities for the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce.

Financial Implications

This Protocol is written in an attempt to minimise the administrative burden of Inter Authority Cross Boundary Funding whilst maximising parental choice in where a child is placed. Every attempt will be made to have reciprocal arrangements where there is a balance of children in and out of an education authority area. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be an imbalance of funding requests between local authorities. This Protocol is designed to facilitate discussion and agreement and to ensure neither host nor resident authorities are held liable for funding without agreement. It should be noted that this agreement is made within the confines of resident local authority budgets. No additional funding will be charged without this formal agreement and as such **parents/carers** and partnership providers should be made fully aware of this Protocol.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Host authorities will continually monitor the children attending partnership provider establishments, reporting any discrepancies to the resident authority immediately.

Where it is apparent that parents/carers are receiving funded hours in both the resident and host authority, the parent/carer will be liable for any charges incurred by the host authority.

The Inter-Authority Early Learning and Childcare Strategic Group will evaluate this Protocol one year from implementation.

Template for funding request

Session: _____

Local Authority: _____

Nursery	Cost Centre	Surname	Forename	DOB	Admission Start	Admission End	Authority Funded Hours This Week	Address	Priority Banding

*Spreadsheet can be produced from NAMS system.

Appendix 2

Application Process for Cross Boundary Partnership Funding

Parent / Carer contacts the Partnership Nursery directly to enquire if a space is available that can be considered for Cross Boundary Partnership Funding

Partner Process for Cross Boundary Partnership Funding

Partner establishment must communicate directly with the parent: the process and timeline for Cross Boundary Funding

Submission of Cross Boundary Partnership Funding: information to their local authority – (NAMS or resident internal Council process). Submission must include all information on Prioritised banding / Protocol / Agreement.

Local Authority takes Cross Boundary Funding Application to Inter Authority Cross Boundary Admission Panel and informs Partner of the outcome.

Partner communicates the outcome of Cross Boundary Application back to parent/carer.

APPROVED

Place can be allocated and must be in line with the Inter Authority Cross Boundary Funding Protocol.

DECLINED

Partner provides support to parents/carer on how to access a Local Authority place.

All Cross Boundary Funding Applications must be granted at the Inter Authority Cross Boundary Funding Admissions Panel.

If an application is not granted and a child starts at an establishment without being granted – the establishment will not receive funding for this child and parent/carer will be liable for any monies due for service provision.

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XXXX Nursery

Parent / Carer's name and address

Date

Cross Boundary Funding Request: Session

Early Learning and Childcare: Child's Name and Nursery

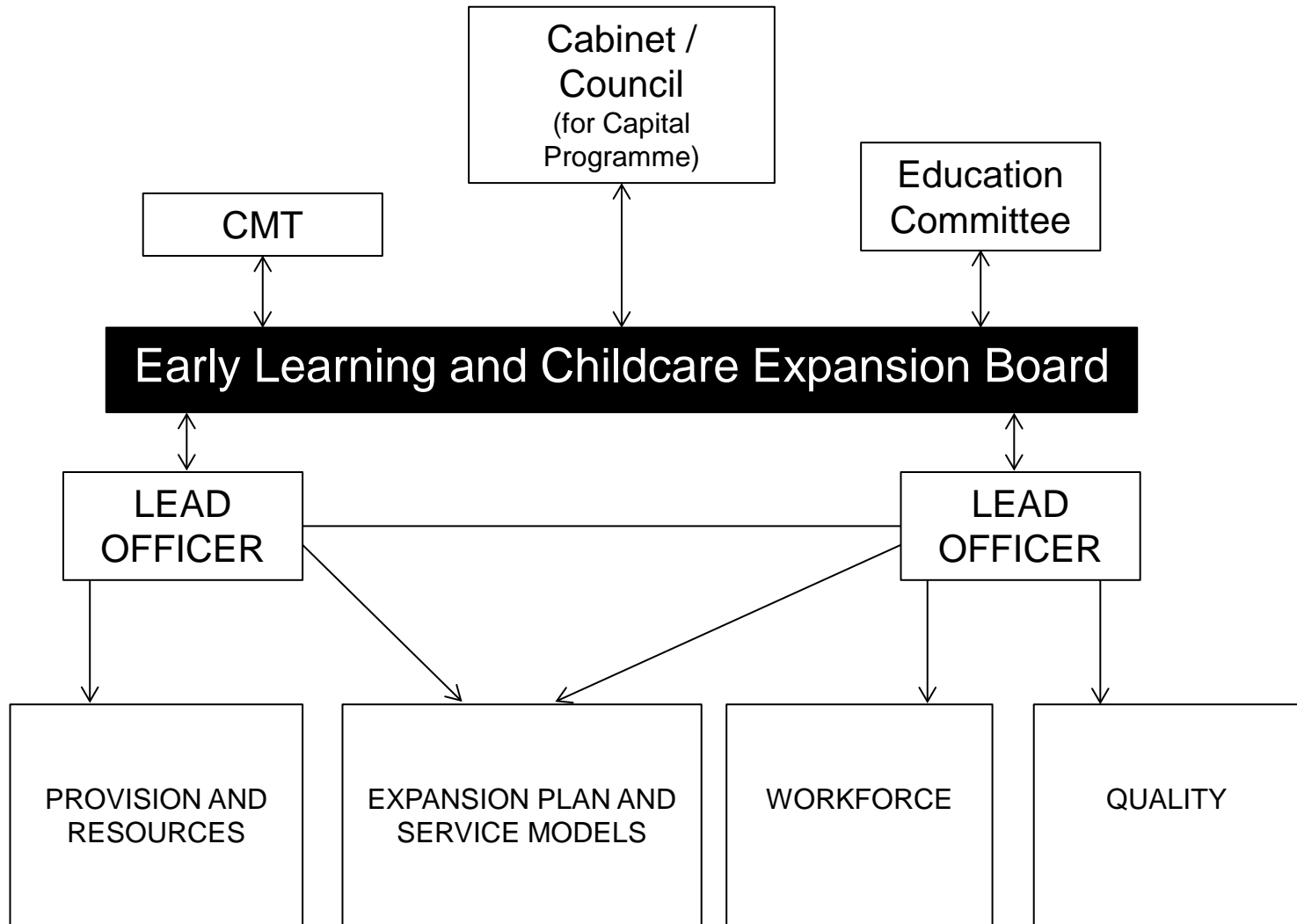
Thank you for your request for Cross Boundary Funding for Session 2017 / 2018. I have passed on your request to XXXXX (insert Local Authority). Your request will be considered in accordance with their Cross Boundary Agreement with XXXXXX (insert Local Authority) and the outcome of your funding request will be communicated to you by 30 June 2017.

Should you have any questions in respect of this request please do not hesitate in contacting me at the nursery.

Yours sincerely

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Governance of ELC Expansion



At all stages of planning and implementation, each work stream will consider key principles:

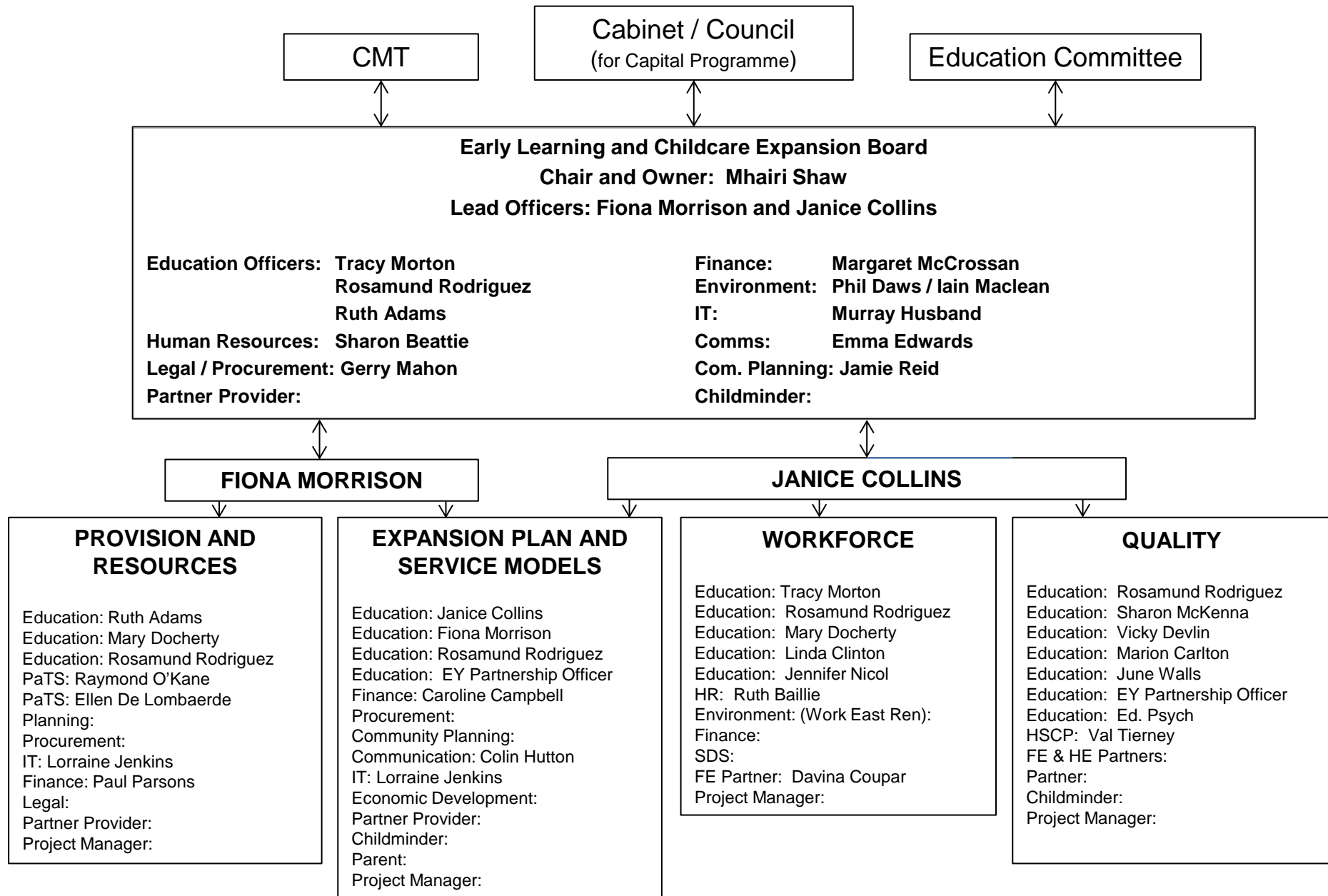
QUALITY

FLEXIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY

AFFORDABILITY

Governance of EL₄ Expansion



* Membership indicated above and any additional representatives may be necessary on an ad hoc basis as determined by work plans.