

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Capital Programme Committee
DATE	26 May 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	ELC Programme Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	RES/21/126
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	John Wilson
REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Kemp
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the progress of ELC Capital Projects. These projects will help meet Aberdeen City Council's Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan objectives by working with the Education Operations teams to help meet the Council's commitment to expand funded early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1,140 hours. The timeline for delivery was originally in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic has since been extended to August 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Note that the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme of works forms part of the overall Aberdeen City Council Capital Plan.
- 2.2 Note the progress made with the overall delivery of projects in lieu of the Covid-19 pandemic impact.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is committed to expanding the provision of funded early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1140 hours. The timeline for delivery was originally in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic has since been extended to August 2021. The expansion should prioritise a high-quality experience for the child to capitalise on the significant contribution that Early Learning and Childcare can make to a child's development and to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Revised Timeline: ELC Joint Delivery Board Recommendation

- 3.2 The implementation of ELC expansion is overseen by the ELC Joint Delivery Board. The ELC Joint Delivery Board met on 4 December 2020 to consider a

report on the revised date for full implementation of the expansion to 1140 hours. The Joint Delivery Board recommended to Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders that August 2021 should be the date to reinstate the 1140 hours duty. On 14 December 2020, this recommendation was agreed by Scottish Ministers and COSLA Leaders.

Further recommendations by the ELC Joint Delivery Board are the following:

- Agree that where there is potential to deliver expanded hours ahead of that date, this will be delivered to families;
- Agree the end goal of the expansion is “That all eligible children whose families wish to access up to 1140 hours should be able to do so, in a way which meets the national standard and the principles of funding follows the child”;
- Agree that from August 2021 the eligibility for the 2-year-old ELC offer is extended to include children with a parent with care experience. Legislation for this commitment will be developed by the Scottish Government in due course.

Programme

- 3.3 Since Aberdeen City Council moved into the COVID-19 pandemic Tier 4 restrictions in December 2020, works onsite have continued following a review of health and safety measures and in compliance with Scottish Government guidance. Scotland moved back into Tier 3 restrictions on 26 April 2021.
- 3.4 The design team and main contractor continue to evaluate the impact on the programme with regard to Scottish Government guidance and the requirement to comply with physical distancing measures.
- 3.5 Since the last update to this committee on 15 March 2021 two further projects have been handed over in addition to the current 5 projects already completed. There are another 5 projects nearing completion. Appendix 2 summarises the current projected programme dates of all 27 projects, these are subject to Scottish Government exercising their statutory authority and understanding that there could be further lockdowns or restrictions. Appendix 3 contains progress photographs of the various projects.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme of works forms part of the Aberdeen City Councils Capital Programme.
- 4.2 All staffing and other support costs associated with the ELC Delivery Plan are being funded from the Early Learning and Childcare revenue grant funding allocation.

- 4.3 The introduction of, and the requirement to comply with, Government guidance and statutes has added significant additional costs to both legally committed and future projects. The impact on these were reviewed by the design team and main contractor in June 2020 and a report was submitted to the ELC Project Board at the end of June 2020.

The report highlighted the potential financial impact and made recommendations to keep the overall programme within the approved budget. The recommendations re-profiled the individual projects and suggested potential savings that did not require projects to be cancelled and maintain the additional capacity requested by Education.

- 4.4 Since the update to this committee on 15 March 2021 an additional eight projects have been accepted and 4 projects are in the process of being market tested and cost checked. Appendix 1 has a breakdown of the latest project allocations and current estimated final account figure. The current estimated costs reflect ongoing design development and discussions with the design teams and main contractor to reduce the COVID-19 impact costs and potential delays while maintaining the quality of the finished designs.

- 4.5 The current budget spend is as follows;

Gross Budget	Spend to date
£23.04m	£ 17.79m

Contingency Planning

- 4.6 There are ongoing discussions with the Early Learning, Corporate Landlord and Capital teams to have contingency arrangements in place to ensure the 1140 hour entitlement is available in the event a project is delayed.

Where appropriate, contingency planning has been included in the current estimated final account.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The legal implications arising out of the recommendations are referred to within the body of the report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Late delivery will impact on the level of learning provision		This is being mitigated through early planning, clear governance arrangements and close working between

	<p>which can be provided.</p> <p>The statutory duty for local authorities to provide 1140 hours is now August 2021.</p> <p>The risk is that the time limit introduced is not met</p>	M	<p>teams across Aberdeen City Council to ensure that the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare is being planned for across all teams.</p>
Compliance	<p>Not meeting the statutory date for delivery.</p>	M	<p>All teams are working towards delivering the projects as soon as possible taking cognisance of work restrictions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
Operational	<p>Covid-19 pandemic restrictions impacting on work practices.</p>	M	<p>All teams are working towards delivering the projects as soon as possible taking cognisance of work restrictions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
Financial	<p>The expansion of funded Early Learning and Childcare will require very careful budget monitoring and financial planning to mitigate the risk of funding being insufficient to realise the expansion.</p> <p>Government exercising their statutory powers to manage their Covid-19 health response including future lock downs</p>	M	<p>Cost checks will be carried out throughout the design stage to monitor estimates against the allocated budget. These will also be reported monthly to the ELC Programme Board.</p> <p>Costs are reviewed and adjusted to cover potential additional costs associated with compliance with current Government guidance. VE engineering exercise carried out to keep costs within the approved budget.</p>
Reputational	<p>The reputational risk of not being in a position to offer sufficient 1140 hours places to meet demand from August 2021.</p>	M	<p>This is being mitigated through early planning, clear governance arrangements and close working between teams across Aberdeen City Council to ensure that the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare is being</p>

			planned for across all teams.
Environment / Climate	Environmental assessments will be considered prior to confirming any sites for expansion or extension and feasibility studies will be undertaken where appropriate	L	This level of scrutiny and by following of Aberdeen City Council's Building Performance Policy will ensure that environmental risks remain low.

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Programmes in the Policy Statement include working with our partners to ensure the city has the required infrastructure; completion of school estate review (P1) and development of estate strategy for next 5-10 years (P2); work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes; commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city;</p>	<p>The projects outlined in this report is part of Aberdeen City Council's Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Programme. The expansion of ELC requires an investment in our Early Years Estate as well as an investment in staffing to ensure we are providing high quality provision that meets the needs of children and families in all localities. To this end, the proposals within the report support the delivery of childcare education learning targets.</p>
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The project outlined in this report is part of Aberdeen City Council's Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Expansion Programme. The expansion of ELC requires an investment in our Early Years Estate as well as an investment in staffing to ensure we are providing high quality provision that meets the needs of children and families in all localities. To this end, the proposals within the report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 1 – 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026. The investment in our estate is</p>

	interlinked with the investment in our workforce. To staff the expanding estate the Early Years team will contribute to the diversification of the local economy by offering flexible pathways into the Early Years Sector and increasing the number of people employed in this growth sector.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposal within this report supports the LOIP Stretch Outcome 3 – 95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026. The project(s) outlined in this report will be designed to support outdoor learning and the free flow of direct access to the outside environment. Outdoor learning, exercise and play benefits pre-school children by encouraging them to be physically active. This will help address many of the health challenges outlined in the LOIP. Children will have daily access to outdoor play and will regularly experience outdoor play in a natural environment as part of their ELC funded offer. Outdoor learning will significantly contribute to a child's development and wellbeing.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 13 – No one in Aberdeen will go without food due to poverty by 2026. To deliver the 1140 funded hours necessitates the building of several new ELC settings and a reconfiguration and extension of current provision. Increasing the accessibility of provision will contribute to transforming the lives of families across Aberdeen City. There are gaps in the provision in our three Priority Areas, which are home to the highest proportion of pre-school children and the highest concentration of families living in poverty. Every child attending a funded early learning and childcare (ELC) session will receive a healthy meal. The accessibility of provision will lead to an increase in the uptake of the ELC funded offer and help ensure that no child in ELC will go hungry.
Regional and City Strategies Strategic Development Plan; Local Development Plan	The proposals in this report will impact on the consideration of future regional and city strategies with respect to education and learning.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The statutory duty for local authorities to provide 1140 hours by August 2020 has been revoked and the new date is August 2021.

Legislation which places a range of statutory duties on the Council, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.	
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8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment not required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Item 10.02 Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan; Education and Children's Services Committee 14th September 2017
- 9.2 Item 4(b) General Fund Revenue Budget - 2.1.3; Council Budget Meeting 5th March 2019

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Project Estimated Final Accounts
Appendix 2 – Project Milestones
Appendix 3 – Progress Photographs

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1 – Project Estimated Final Accounts

Project	Initial Allocation from the Capital Grant	Re-profiled project costs	Budget Variation **	Current Estimated Final Account
Duthie Park	£ 0.65m	£1.51m	-£ 0.13m	£1.38m
Seaton Nursery	£ 2.10m	£1.73m	-£ 0.10m	£1.63m
Tillydrone Nursery	£ 1.25m	£2.35m	-£ 0.06m	£2.29m
Northfield Cummings Park Nursery	£ 2.40m	£2.65m	-£ 0.09m	£2.56m
Quarryhill Nursery	£0.47m	£0.63m	-£ 0.09m	£0.54m
Westpark Nursery	£ 0.50m	£0.03m	£ 0.00m	£0.03m
Kingsford Nursery	£ 1.75m	£1.95m	-£ 0.19m	£1.76m
Woodside Nursery	£ 2.00m	£2.17m	£ 0.12m	£2.29m
Tullos Nursery	£ 0.65m	£0.82m	£ 0.15m	£0.67m
Culter Nursery	£ 1.40m	£1.73m	£ 0.05m	£1.78m
Cults Nursery	£ 1.82m	£1.85m	-£ 0.14m	£1.71m
Hazlehead Park	£ 0.25m	£0.53m	£ 0.05m	£0.48m
Kingswells Nursery	£ 0.05m	£0.06m	-£ 0.03m	£0.03m
Kirkhill Nursery	£ 1.75m	£0.44m	£ 0.04m	£0.40m
Broomhill Nursery	£ 1.61m	£1.85m	-£ 0.04m	£1.81m
Charleston Nursery	£ 0.12m	£0.07m	£ 0.02m	£0.09m
Gilcomstoun Nursery	£ 2.00m	£2.38m	£ 0.00m	£2.38m
Loirston Nursery	£ 0.13m	£0.10m	-£ 0.01m	£0.09m
Danestone Nursery	£ 1.67m	£0.44m	£ 0.04m	£0.40m
Dyce Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.12m	£ 0.01m	£0.11m
Glashieburn Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.08m	-£ 0.03m	£0.05m
Forehill Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.09m	£ 0.00m	£0.09m
Fernilea Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.06m	-£ 0.03m	£0.03m
Scotstown Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.09m	-£ 0.06m	£0.03m
Kittybrewster Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.05m	£ 0.03m	£0.08m
Greenbrae Nursery	£5k	£6.4k	£ 0.00m	£6.4k
Walker Road Nursery	£5k	£11.2k	£ 0.00m	£11.2k

Note

1. The above figures includes an allowance for contingencies
2. The above figures do not include £1.623m of revenue grant allocation for staffing and support costs
3. The Budget variation is the difference between the current estimated final account and the re-profiled project cost

Appendix 3 – Progress Photographs

Kingsford – Completed



Northfield – Completed



Northfield – Completed



Tillydrone – Nearing Completion



Gilcomstoun – Nearing Completion



Gilcomstoun – Nearing Completion



Cults – Nearing Completion



Cults Nearing Completion



Culter – Nearing Completion



Culter – Nearing Completion



Woodside – Nearing Completion



Woodside – Nearing Completion



Broomhill – Progress Picture



Broomhill – Progress Picture



Duthie Park – Progress Picture

