

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE	<b>21 November 2013</b>
DIRECTOR	<b>Gayle Gorman</b>
TITLE OF REPORT	<b>Increase to 600 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/13/067</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to set out how Aberdeen City Council plans to implement the increase in free early learning and childcare provision from 475 to 600 hours every year in accordance with The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill (April 2013).

The Bill is currently progressing through Scottish Parliament and planned implementation is for August 2014, resulting in changes to the statutory provision of free early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year old children and the introduction of free early learning and childcare for Looked After 2 year old children.

In Aberdeen City we will need to increase children's time in local authority nursery classes for three and four year olds, and increase payment for children's time in Partner Provider settings accordingly to comply with statutory obligations. In addition we will make 600 hours a year of free early learning and childcare available for Looked After 2 year olds.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Consultation has taken place with parents, staff and other stakeholders. Parents were consulted on 7 possible options of early learning and child care and as a result of the consultation it is recommended that committee agrees the following;

1. To increase free early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year old children from 2 hours 30 minutes a session to 3 hours 10 minutes a session during school term time from August 2014 (Appendix 1 Table 1 Option 1).
2. To make provision of 600 hours of free early learning and child care for all Looked After 2 year olds from August 2014.

3. To increase the payments made to Partner Providers to support the statutory increase in free early learning and childcare hours from August 2014.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Scottish Government has increased the funding to Local Authorities to support the implementation Children and Young People Bill (April 2013). Additional funding will be provided for the next 2 years to meet the cost of early learning and childcare section of the Bill. For Scotland this includes £50.8 million revenue and £30 million capital in 2014; and £75.1 million revenue and £30 million capital in 2015–16.

The funding for Aberdeen City in 2014-15 is based on the GAE share is £1.762 million with an additional £71k to support the provision for Looked after 2 year old children. The total additional revenue allocation will be £1.833 million for part year implementation in 2014-15.

The full year allocation in 2015-16 from the Scottish Government will cover full year costs of option 1.

Aberdeen City Council has also been allocated £1.088 million for capital projects associated with the policy.

The costs have been identified as a growth area in the service budget plan and are included as a part year growth for 2014-15.

There will be an increase in staffing in schools. The different models of hours for children have been costed and these are in Appendix 1.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 As a result of the change of hours, the Care Inspectorate (the regulatory body who inspect pre-school provision) will need to review each establishment's registration. Some building modifications may be required for current accessibility regulations.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that it will be necessary to expand provision in a number of settings to meet the increased demand both for Looked After 2 year olds and for three and four year olds.

### **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

- 5.1 **Historical Background**  
For over 70 years young children in Aberdeen City have received nursery education from the local authority, the voluntary sector or the private sector. Funding for this came from the local authority, the voluntary sector or from the parents themselves.

The Nursery Voucher Scheme was introduced in 1996 and the entitlement to free provision of 12.5 hours of nursery education during the school terms (38 weeks, 475 hours per year) has been available to all children, whose parents wish it since 1998. Nursery education, which has almost entirely been part-time provision for 3 to 5 year old children, has historically formed one distinct strand of public provision for children below the age of compulsory education, and since the Schools (Scotland) Code (1956) there has been a ratio of one teacher to twenty children in nursery classes in Aberdeen City.

The other important strand of provision has been the private sector offering part time or full time care to children aged 0 to 5, often for 50 weeks a year; this has provided much needed childcare for working parents.

Since 1995 the local authority has been in partnership with a wide range of partner providers in the private and voluntary sector. The partnership involves Aberdeen City Council and the provider in a partnership agreement where the partner provides funded quality pre-school provision and receives payment for each child's place. In addition the partner benefits from the ongoing support and challenge of Quality Improvement from the Aberdeen City Council Early Years Pre-School Officer team on a regular basis and in addition access to the extensive Early Years Training Programme.

## 5.2 Current Situation

In Aberdeen City primary schools 2938 three and four year old children attend nursery for 12.5 hours a week, for 38 weeks in the year totaling 475 hours over the course of an academic year. Children attend for a morning or an afternoon session of 2.5 hours daily.

Some parents make the choice for their child to attend a Partner Provider. Aberdeen City Council supports placements at these Partner Provider settings for 475 hours of pre-school education and parents often supplement this to allow for their child to attend different or longer hours. Aberdeen City has a partnership with 103 partner settings and through the partnership funds 12.5 hours weekly of pre-school education places for 1,181 three and four year olds within the private and voluntary sectors.

## 5.3 Overview of Bill

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill (April 2013) represents one of the biggest changes to children's legislation for over a decade impacting on children, pre-school education and childcare. The Bill combines pre-school education and childcare by using the term 'early learning and childcare'. This is to make it explicit that all provision should support parents and carers in accessing work and education as well as providing learning for the child. The increase in hours will also support all children and provide increased early intervention to some of the most vulnerable children in the city whilst ensuring high quality provision. The Bill also makes it clear that consultation with parents is required before implementing any model of provision.

Under section 47, in The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill (April 2013), local authorities must deliver the mandatory amount of 600 hours within a minimum framework of sessions which are no less than 2.5 hours and no more than 8 hours in duration. This must be over a minimum of 38 weeks which need not be confined to term time.

#### 5.4 Consultation with Parents

In Aberdeen City parents with children aged from 1 – 4 years have been consulted on a range of different options. A variety of communication methods have been used to engage with the harder to reach parents. An online survey was issued with paper copies available if parents requested this. In total there were 860 parental responses.

Through this consultation we have offered a range of pattern of hours of early learning and childcare which allow a degree of choice for parents to support work and training patterns. In offering this, the necessity to ensure a high quality universal education system based on Curriculum for Excellence, which starts at 3 years of age, has been central.

Options offered to parents in consultation	Parents' 1st choice preference
3 hours 10 mins for 5 days for 38 weeks	34.7%
3 hours for 5 day week for 40 weeks – 2 set weeks in the school holiday period	23.5%
4 hours for 4 days for 38 weeks	14.5%
3 days for 6 hours 20 mins one week and 2 days for 6hours 20 next week (lunch would be included) for 38 weeks	9.4%
2 hours 30 mins for 5 days for 48 weeks	9.0%
2 ½ days per week for 6 hours and 20 minutes(lunch would be included) for 38 weeks (Mon – Wed)	5.8%
2 ½ days per week for 6 hours and 20 minutes(lunch would be included) for 38 weeks (Wed – Friday)	3.1%

#### 5.5 Consultation with Staff

All staff have had the opportunity to participate in an online survey. In total there were 180 staff responses.

The strong view of staff (70%) was that option 1 (3 hours and 10 minutes per session) was the best model for children as the daily contact was seen to be valuable for developing learning and sustaining relationships between adults and children.

As the hours are greater than the primary school day, schools will endeavour to ensure timings of session coincide to assist parents in collecting their children. (e.g. 8.40am – 11.50am or 12.20pm – 3.30pm)

- 5.6 The Care Inspectorate clearly define the adult / child ratios in nursery classes and this has been factored in all the financial costings
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|-----------------|---|
| 3 / 4 year olds | 1 adult :10 children (if less than 4 hours) |
| 3 / 4 year olds | 1 adult : 8 children (if 4 hours or more)   |
| 2 year olds     | 1 adult : 5 children                        |
- 5.7 The Care Inspectorate registers every establishment and has specific criteria regarding amount of floor space for each child. All the settings in Aberdeen City will require a re-registration from the Care Inspectorate due to the lengthening of the sessions.

They also require appropriate arrangements for rest periods if any 3 or 4 year old children are present in the nursery for a period of 4 hours or more.

## 6. **IMPACT**

The EHRIA assessment has been carried out.

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill (April 2013) clearly aims to improve to children's experiences and the increase in hours for pre-school children will benefit all our children's educational and social and emotional needs.

Aberdeen – the Smarter City states

'We will help every citizen to improve their knowledge and skills together contributing to our success as a learning city. The increase in pre-school hours will give young children the opportunity to achieve their potential.'

Within the Five Year Business Plan 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Smarter people – 'Focusing on education including lifelong learning and nurturing a city of learning with a city wide workforce which can grow.'

The increase in nursery hours will allow all pre-school children the opportunity to access a wider range of early learning experiences. Children will have the time to spend longer in activities allowing the breadth and progression to be explored in early play. Greater challenge can be offered and children will have the time to achieve depth in their understanding.

The plan is clear that underpinning the priorities are the objectives to improve attainment and achievement for all our learners and to close the gaps in learning, health, participation and employment outcomes that exist within the city. The increase in pre-school provision will support this aim.

For Aberdeen's Children, The Integrated Children's Services Plan – 2011–15 reinforces the commitments to improving outcomes for children, young people and their families and closing the gap between children in need and their peers. It focuses on improving outcomes for children in their early years, and children who are looked after. This plan recognises the crucial role played by parents, carers, families and volunteers in improving outcomes for children and young people; that all

children and young people need to have a sense of belonging and to be enabled to make a positive contribution to their communities.

#### Single Outcome Agreement

National Outcome 2 - We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people. The increase in pre-school provision will give parents greater opportunity to access the employment as the daily sessions will be longer.

National Outcome 3 - We are better educated, more skilled and more successful.

National Outcome 4 - Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

National Outcome 5 - Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. The increase in daily sessions will give all children the opportunity to develop their skills and learning through experiencing a wider range of opportunities at nursery.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

The risk to Aberdeen City Council is high as failure to implement would leave us exposed to legal challenges. As all children will be entitled to receive 600 hours of free early learning and childcare Aberdeen City Council will have the statutory duty to implement the increase in provision. The likelihood of negative publicity from the press would also be high. There would also be a high likelihood of increased scrutiny from both Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate during inspections.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill 2013  
For Aberdeen's Children – Integrated Children's Services Plan 2011-15  
Aberdeen City Council Five year Business Plan  
Aberdeen – the Smarter City  
Single Outcome Agreement

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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## Financial Information

1.1 The financial implications of the different models offered to parents are stated below. Based on previous decisions by Education, Culture and Sport Committee the costing model is based on a teacher being present for the duration of the extended session.

This will result in a 20/20 nursery class being staffed with 1.4fte (full time equivalent) teacher over the week as teachers are contracted to have class contact for 22.5 hours a week. This is a national agreement.

**Table 1**

	Options offered to parents in consultation	Additional full year costs with Teacher covering additional hours £'000	Additional full year Cost to Partner Providers £'000	Total additional full year cost £'000	Total additional part year cost £'000
1	3 hours 10 mins for 5 days for 38 weeks	1,162	1,015	2,177	1,412
2	3 hours for 5 day week for 40 weeks – 2 set weeks in the school holiday period	1,206	1,015	2,221	1,481
3	4 hours for 4 days for 38 weeks	3,343	1,015	4,358	2,905
4	3 days for 6 hours 20 mins one week and 2 days for 6hours 20 next week (lunch would be included) for 38 weeks	3,493	1,015	4,508	3,005
5	2 hours 30 mins for 5 days for 48 weeks	1,008 All holiday hours will be provided by nursery nurses	1,015	2,023	1,349
6	2 ½ days per week for 6 hours and 20 minutes(lunch would be included) for 38 weeks (Mon – Wed)	3,098 All additional hours will be provided by nursery nurses teacher present for 22.5 hours	1,015	4,113	2,742
7	2 ½ days per week for 6 hours and 20 minutes(lunch would be included) for 38 weeks (Wed – Friday)	3,098 All additional hours will be provided by nursery nurses teacher present for 22.5 hours	1,015	4,113	2,742

1.2 For options 4, 6 and 7 a lunch has been included in the total costs. £1,200,000 has been included in the overall total for school meals.

- 1.3 Increase in school administration and cleaning has also been accounted for in the overall total of option 3, 6, and 7.
- 1.4 If options 2 or 5 are considered then additional costs will need to be added as there are currently no administrative staff working for 2 weeks in the summer holiday period. There would also be the need to appoint a manager as there is no contractual obligation for a Head Teacher to work over the holiday period.
- 1.5 The costs to cater for Looked After and Accommodated Children (LAC) 2 year old children in Aberdeen City are yet to be determined. At the census date in September 2013 there were 21 LAC 1 year olds (these children will be 2 for August 2014) in Aberdeen City. There are also a number of children who are in kinship care who should be included in receiving pre-school provision as a result of the new legislation.