

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Capital Programme Committee
DATE	18 November 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	ELC Programme Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/208
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 by 2020.

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 by 2020. 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.
- 3.2 Local Authorities' duty to provide 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare for eligible two-year olds and all three and four year olds by August 2020 has been revoked by the Scottish Parliament. However, it is expected that a new implementation date for delivery of 1140 hours will be agreed following further discussion. The indicative date for the decision is early 2021. This project forms part of the ELC Delivery Plan that will help Aberdeen City Council manage the transformational change necessary to deliver expanded services by 2020.

- 3.3 All Local Authorities were asked to develop an Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Delivery Plan to guide expansion plans. The Aberdeen City Plan highlights a focus on the provision of outdoor learning to support wellbeing, on accessibility to increase uptake, on delivery of Family Learning to fully capitalise on the expansion programme and on the provision of a 'localised offer' to meet the needs of families within each community.
- 3.4 In September 2017 the Education & Children's Services Committee endorsed a provisional ELC Delivery Plan which detailed three proposed phases of work.

Committee Approvals

- 3.5 Following the ELC Programme Board approval of the preferred options these were referred to elected members for approval at the following meetings:
- Council Budget Meeting 05 March 2019 (Phase 1 projects)
 - City Growth and Resources Committee 26 September 2019 (Phase 2 Projects)
 - City Growth and Resources Committee 05 December 2019 (Phase 3 Projects)

Consultation

- 3.6 Prior to the reports being prepared for the committee meetings consultations were held with stakeholders, as part of the design development further consultation will be carried out with stakeholders.

Site Assessments

- 3.7 Following approval of the delivery plan a review of capacity and demand across the city was carried out and several properties were identified with the potential to deliver the projects objectives and included in the grant submission for ELC funding.
- 3.8 Following confirmation of the Early Learning and Childcare Capital Grant Allocation to Aberdeen City Council the Capital Cluster were appointed to carry out feasibility studies to determine the options available at each site. On completion these were submitted to the Corporate Landlord and Operations Clusters for consultation.
- 3.9 Following a review of the options, including a further review of demand and capacity, the preferred option was presented to the ELC Programme Board for discussion and approval.

COVID-19 Impact

- 3.10 Following the Prime Minister's lockdown instruction on the 23 March 2020, and the subsequent Scottish Government guidance clearly indicating that all non-essential construction work should cease, the main contractor notified Aberdeen City Council they had taken the decision to stop work and close down all ELC construction sites with immediate effect.

This action, together with the stay at home advice, had a direct impact of the ability of the majority of the external consultants to maintain a continuity of service and their ability to provide a full service supporting the ELC programme of work.

3.11 The Scottish Government wrote to all Local Authorities on the 30 March 2020 advising them the Scottish Parliament had revoked the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Order 2019. This removed the statutory duty to make 1140 hours of early learning and childcare available to all eligible children from the 1 August 2020.

3.12 On the 23 June 2020 the Deputy First Minister made a statement to the Scottish Parliament on re-opening of schools. In that statement he confirmed:

“If we are in a position to ease public health measures in early learning and childcare, particularly small group working, more children and families will be able to benefit from an expand offer in the year ahead. In parallel, we continue to work in partnership with local authorities to agree a new timetable for delivery of the 1140 hours entitlement to all eligible children.”

3.13 The Scottish Government, in discussions with Construction Scotland, adopted a 5-phase construction re-start plan as part of its Covid-19 route map. In line with this plan and the Scottish Governments decision to move to Phase 2 of the Route Map, ELC construction sites were re-opened on the 22 June 2020.

Programme Milestones

3.14 The design team and main contractor have been evaluating the impact on the programme of Government guidance and the requirement to comply with physical distancing measures.

3.15 Since the update to the committee on 23 September two further projects have been completed bringing the total completed to four. Appendix 2 summarises the current projected programme dates of all 27 No. projects, these are subject to Scottish Government exercising their statutory authority and understanding that there could be further lockdowns or restrictions.

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 the committee on 23 September 2020 one project has been accepted and one project has been issued to the contractor for pricing. Appendix 1 has a breakdown of the 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	£ 8.73m

Contingency Planning

- 4.6 There are ongoing discussions with the Early Learning, Corporate Landlord and Capital teams to development options to ensure the 1140 hour entitlement is available in the event a project is delayed or programmed completed beyond any new date the Scottish Government set for Local Authorities to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare.

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		This is being mitigated through early planning, clear

	<p>learning provision which can be provided.</p> <p>The statutory duty for local authorities to provide 1140 hours by August 2020 has been revoked by the Scottish Parliament, however at this time no new date has been provided for the statutory duty to provide 1140 hours. The risk is that the time limit introduced is not met</p>	H	<p>governance arrangements and close working between teams across Aberdeen City Council to ensure that the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare is being planned for across all teams. At the time of writing the Scottish Government have not determined a new target date in lieu of the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
Compliance	<p>Not meeting the statutory date for delivery.</p>	H	<p>At the time of writing the Scottish Government have not determined a new target date in lieu of the Covid-19 pandemic. 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>	H	<p>At the time of writing the Scottish Government have not determined a new target date in lieu of the Covid-19 pandemic. 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>	M	<p>Cost checks will be carried out throughout the design stage to monitored estimates against the allocated budget. These will also be reported monthly to the ELC Programme Board.</p> <p>Costs reviewed and adjusted to cover potential</p>

	Government exercising their statutory powers to manage their Covid-19 health response including future lock downs		costs associated with compliance with current Government guidance. VE engineering exercise carried out to keep costs within the approved budget.
Reputational	The reputational risk of not being in a position to offer sufficient 1140 hours places to meet demand from August 2020.	M	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 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</p> <p>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</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>

education while working with partners across the city;	
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<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 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.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>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.</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>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</p>

	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 Legislation which places a range of statutory duties on the Council, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.	The statutory duty for local authorities to provide 1140 hours by August 2020 has been revoked by the Scottish Parliament, however at this time no new date has been provided for the statutory duty to provide 1140 hours.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Full impact assessment required / not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Required / 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

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	£1.10m	£ 0.39m	£1.04m
Seaton Nursery	£ 2.10m	£1.73m	-£ 0.32m	£1.78m
Tillydrone Nursery	£ 1.25m	£2.35m	£ 1.09m	£2.34m
Northfield Cummings Park Nursery	£ 2.40m	£2.65m	£ 0.20m	£2.60m
Quarryhill Nursery	£0.47m	£0.63m	£ 0.12m	£0.59m
Westpark Nursery	£ 0.50m	£0.25m	-£ 0.25m	£0.25m
Kingsford Nursery	£ 1.75m	£1.95m	£ 0.14m	£1.89m
Woodside Nursery	£ 2.00m	£2.17m	£ 0.17m	£2.22m
Tullos Nursery	£ 0.65m	£0.82m	£0.46m	£1.11m
Culter Nursery	£ 1.40m	£1.73m	£ 0.28m	£1.68m
Cults Nursery	£ 1.82m	£1.85m	-£ 0.01m	£1.81m
Hazlehead Park	£ 0.25m	£0.25m	£ 0.00m	£0.25m
Kingswells Nursery	£ 0.05m	£0.09m	£ 0.03m	£0.08m
Kirkhill Nursery	£ 1.75m	£0.73m	-£ 1.20m	£0.55m
Broomhill Nursery	£ 1.61m	£1.90m	£ 0.16m	£1.77m
Charleston Nursery	£ 0.87m	£0.12m	-£ 0.81m	£0.62m
Gilcomstoun Nursery	£ 2.00m	£2.48m	£ 0.30m	£2.30m
Loirston Nursery	£ 0.13m	£0.16m	£ 0.03m	£0.11m
Danestone Nursery	£ 1.67m	£0.70m	-£ 1.12m	£0.55m
Dyce Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.10m	£ 0.03m	£0.10m
Glashieburn Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.10m	£ 0.03m	£0.10m
Forehill Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.10m	£ 0.03m	£0.10m
Fernilea Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.10m	£ 0.03m	£0.10m
Scotstown Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.10m	£ 0.03m	£0.10m
Kittybrewster Nursery	£ 0.07m	£0.10m	£ 0.03m	£0.10m
Greenbrae Nursery	£5k	£6.4k	£ 1.4k	£6.4k
Walker Road Nursery	£5k	£11.2k	£ 6.2k	£11.2k

Note

1. The above figures includes an allowance for contingencies
2. The above figures do not include £1.1m of revenue grant allocation for staffing and support costs

Appendix – 2 Project Milestones

