

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Capital Programme Committee
DATE	01 December 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	ELC Programme Progress Report
REPORT NUMBER	RES/22/020
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 1140 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 Council Capital Programme.
- 2.2 Note the significant progress made with the overall delivery of projects, despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that all works have now been completed.

3. BACKGROUND

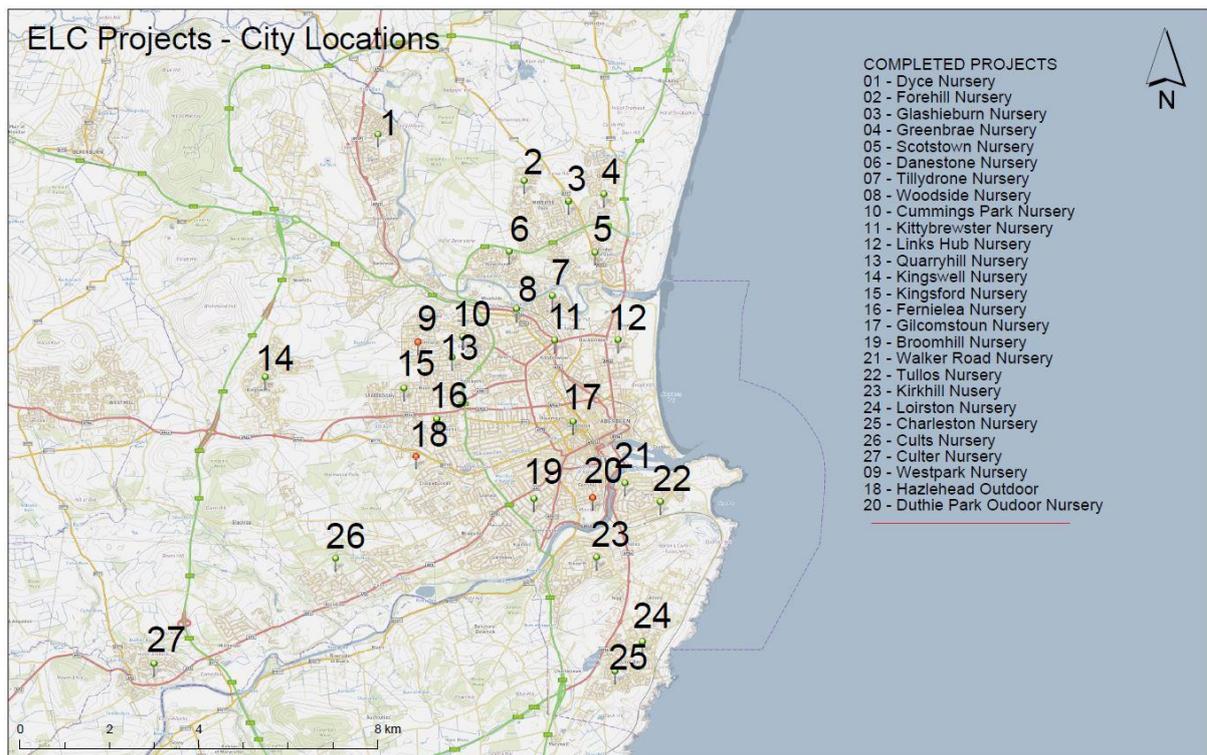
- 3.1 The Council is committed to expanding the provision of funded early learning and childcare from 600 hours to 1140 hours. The timeline for delivery was originally in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic has since been extended to August 2021. The expansion should prioritise a high-quality experience 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.
- 3.2 Aberdeen City Council's internal design team and appointed consultants were commissioned to produce a series of feasibility reports covering each site under consideration for expansion works. These studies were based on a design

brief developed in collaboration with the Early Years Team, Design Team as well as Operational and Facilities Teams across the Council. This enabled a uniform approach to be taken across the education estate when reflecting on existing facilities and new operational priorities moving forward under any new expansion.

- 3.3 To ensure a consistent approach across the city existing nursery facilities were reviewed to ensure the quality of their facilities were comparable to that of a new build. This is to ensure that for parental choice and staff retention the quality of the facilities is uniform across the city, and help deliver the best outcomes for the ELC Programme.

The accessibility of services was analysed. Careful analysis of ‘uptake of services’ evidenced that some families chose not to access their entitlement as they didn’t perceive provision to be accessible. As part of the design process considerable consideration was given to travel light and bright open spaces was the approach to adopt. Spaces were to be welcoming and practical with the learners the main focus for the design. Investigation was undertaken regarding the materials to be used both internally and externally and a palette of materials and finishes were chosen by the client to be used across all the projects.

This has resulted in a varied design solution at each location, however the overall approach has been maintained across the city.



Progress Summary

- 3.4 At the start of the new term beginning on 17 August 2021, we welcomed children and families into our new Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) facilities. The capital programme comprises of work to 27 ELC settings.

Robust contingency arrangements are in place and no child is at risk of not receiving their 1140 hours entitlement.

The capital programme is comprised of 27 projects, this includes two outdoor nurseries run and managed by Aberdeen City Council in urban park locations that are open all year round.

- 8 are new standalone facilities,
- 2 are extensions and significant refurbishments of a standalone nursery,
- 1 is an extension to a school to form a new nursery,
- 2 are significant refurbishments within an existing school nursery,
- 1 is a significant refurbishment of a non-operational building to convert it into a new nursery,
- 1 is a significant refurbishment and extension to non-operational building to convert it into a new nursery, and
- 12 are minor work refurbishments of existing nursery settings.

3.5 Capacity

A total of 579 additional physical indoor spaces have been created as part of the ELC Expansion capital programme with no family asked to travel outwith their local area for ELC provision unless requested by them. This confirms that the capital projects have met the policy intentions outlined in the ELC Delivery Plan of 2017.

Project Name	Physical Capacity Prior to Works	Physical Indoor Capacity Post Works	Operating capacity based on current models applied for 21/22	Maximum operating capacity if 8am-6pm model applied to all capital projects
Greenbrae School	40	48	96	96
Walker Road	60	65	130	130
Quarryhill School	40	48	96	96
Tulloch School	40	48	96	96
Links Nursery	0	90	135	180
Kingsford School	40	64	96	96
Tillydrone	0	56	112	112
Northfield/Cummings Park	0	80	160	160
Woodside School	55	80	120	160
Broomhill School	40	56	112	112
Gilcomstoun School	40	81	162	162
Culter School	40	48	96	96
Charleston School	30	40	80	80
Cults School	40	64	128	128
Danestone School	20	56	84	112
Duthie Park	0	20	40	40
Dyce School	60	60	80	120
Fernielea School	40	40	60	80

Forehill School	30	48	96	96
Glashieburn School	30	60	60	120
Hazlehead Park	0	40	40	80
Kingswells School	40	40	80	80
Kirkhill School	40	64	96	128
Kittybrewster School	30	30	60	60
Loirston School	60	60	120	120
Scotstown School	40	40	40	80
Westpark School	40	48	96	96
Total Spaces	895	1474	2571	2916

Programme

- 3.6 Works onsite from have continued since June 2020, health and safety measures are reviewed to ensure compliance with Scottish Government guidance.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 The programme impacted by supply chain issues, material shortages and staff having to self-isolate however as of work week ending 31 January 2022, all 27 projects have been completed and handed over to the Education service.

Facilities in Use

- 3.9 The ELC programme has sought to provide a local flexible early learning and childcare offer that is accessible, affordable and of high quality to families. The programme also sought to build on the provision already in place to develop that localised and flexible offer to families. This approach mitigates against geography and distance being a barrier to families accessing their ELC entitlement. An ELC project has been undertaken in every Associated School Group (ASG) to ensure that we are delivering high quality facilities to support child development and learning across the city.
- 3.10 An evaluation report of the expansion of the Early Learning and Childcare was prepared for the 26th January 2022 Educational Operational Delivery Committee, the Key achievements noted in the report are
- All eligible children were able to access 1140 hours from August 2021;
 - There is evidence of highly effective Programme governance;
 - There is evidence of an increase in the quality of provision;
 - The ELC workforce was expanded from 224.16 FTE to 460.31 FTE (inclusive of amended contracts; support workers / Modern Apprenticeships / 63 trainee EYPs)

- The successful delivery of 27 capital projects;
- 82.9% of parents and carers who responded to a recent survey are satisfied or very satisfied with the location of their ELC provision; and
- 82.4% of parents and carers who responded to a recent survey are satisfied or very satisfied with their child’s experience of expanded ELC to date

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Aberdeen City Council Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme of works forms part of the Council’s Capital Programme following a successful bid to the Scottish Government for early learning and childcare funding.

4.2 As detailed in previous reports to Capital Programme Committee, the pandemic has impacted on the delivery of various projects in the Capital programme and resulted in extended timelines for delivery. With regards to the ELC programme, officers have kept these challenges under review, and also the procurement routes available for delivery as the various projects involved have developed and been taken to market.

4.3 For transparency, it has been determined that all infrastructure requirements of the ELC programme should be consolidated within the Capital programme. This also now aligns with the procurement route for the supply, delivery and installation of the new furniture being arranged through the main contractor for the ELC construction works.

4.4 The financial envelope for the ELC Capital programme can therefore be updated to be:

	£m
Original ELC Capital programme budget	23.040
* Other infrastructure funded through ELC revenue grant	2.908
Spend to date	£25.831

*** Figures being discussed with finance with regard to spend to date and re-setting the original Capital Budget to include Revenue funding contributions.**

4.5 As the programme of works nears completion, we are in a better position to estimate the monetary impact of COVID. Extracting the costs across the whole programme of works, as of the end of August 2021, the estimated cost is circa £1.1m.

4.6 As a result of the covid impact on internal and external staff resources across the full ELC Programme, at the present time it is impossible to predict the actual final costs of each project. This task is on-going and the project team are working with their appointed cost advisors and the appointed contractor to close out each project’s final costs.

4.7 In the meantime, the ELC Programme Board are continuing to monitor and to adjust resource allocations.

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	<p>Late delivery will impact on the level of learning provision 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>	L	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.
Compliance	Not meeting the statutory date for delivery.	L	All teams are working towards delivering the projects as soon as possible taking cognisance of work restrictions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.
Operational	Covid-19 pandemic restrictions impacting on work practices.	L	All teams are working towards delivering the projects as soon as possible taking cognisance of work restrictions regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.
Financial	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.	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</p>

	Government exercising their statutory powers to manage their Covid-19 health response including future lock downs		additional costs associated with compliance with current Government guidance. Value 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 2021.	L	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	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.
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 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 and the new date is August 2021.

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 Milestones

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 2 – Sample of the Completed Projects

Hazlehead Outdoor Nursery



Duthie Park Outdoor Nursery



Kirkhill Nursery



Gilcomstoun Nursery



Northfield Nursery



Broomhill Nursery



Tillydrone Nursery



Cults Nursery



Culter Nursey



Dansetone Nursery

