

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL
FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

12 June 2024

**REQUEST TO DRAW DOWN EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE RESERVE
FOR SUPPORT IN PRIMARY 1**

**Contact Officer: Sheena Devlin, Strategic Lead – Education and Learning
(Report No. 24/185)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides details of the increased support required in Primary 1 and outlines the purpose of drawing down funding from the Early Learning and Childcare reserve to meet this level of need.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to:

- A. note the contents of the report.
- B. approve the draw down of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) reserves of £393,000 in financial year 2024/25 and £243,000 in financial year 2025/26 to provide additional support in P1 For session 2024/25

3. STRUCTURE

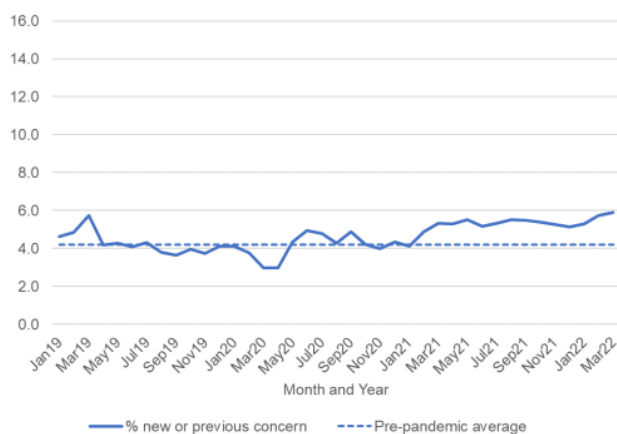
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4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In the previous three school sessions, additional support has been given to primary one classes to assist teachers to meet the needs of young children following the impact on expected development as a result of the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to embed different approaches to learning and teaching within the classroom provision. Funding from the ELC Reserves Fund was approved previously to cover the costs of this additional support but was not required to be drawn down due to underspends in year. However, a different enhanced support package is now required to meet the increasing challenges of supporting more children with more complex additional support needs as well as children living in communities with the highest levels of deprivation (who we know were most negatively impacted by the pandemic).

4.2 The following graphs provide data gathered by Public Health Scotland from all health boards which shows the percentage of 13-15 month and 27–30 month child health reviews with recorded Speech, Language and Communication developmental concerns by month of review, January 2019 to March 2022.

Figure 1a: Percentage of 13–15-month child health reviews with recorded SLC developmental concerns by month of review, January 2019 to March 2022¹



Source: PHS COVID-19 wider impacts dashboard.

Figure 1b: Percentage of 27–30-month child health reviews with recorded SLC developmental concerns by month of review, January 2019 to March 2022¹



Source: PHS COVID-19 wider impacts dashboard.

5. MAIN CONTENT

- 5.1 School placement applications concluded at the end of April and of the cohort due to enter primary one (1,293) in August 2024/25, 36% (476) are categorised as Acorn 4 (financially stretched) and Acorn 5 (urban adversity). It is estimated that almost 200 children are entering school disadvantaged in terms of their development and progress towards expected levels of achievement across Early Level in Curriculum for Excellence terms.
- 5.2 Within Perth and Kinross Council ELC settings and schools, the numbers of children and young people with additional support needs have increased over recent years. At the time of the 2023 Pupil Census, almost 35% of all children and young people in schools had an additional support need, and ongoing monitoring over the course of the 2023/24 session indicates that this may be increasing. Between 2016 and 2023 there were significant increases in the number of children/young people with autism (21 to 31 children per 1000 pupils), communication support (7 to 22 children per 1000 pupils), mental health concerns (16 to 20 children per 1000 pupils) and family issues (33 to 42 children per 1000 pupils). Social, emotional or behavioural needs remains the most frequently recorded reason for support, (103 children per 1000 pupils).
- 5.3 There has also been a noticeable increase in the number of children with more complex additional support needs (ASN) accessing their 1140 hours of funded ELC within local authority settings and transitioning into mainstream primary one classes. To support primary one teachers to meet the increased needs in session 2023/2024, Education & Learning's Inclusion Team funded

the additionality of one Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) in schools with a higher identified level of need, and in addition there was some support from provided from the Outreach Team.

- 5.4 For session 2024/25, 44 children with more complex ASN were referred to the Perth and Kinross Council Education & Learning Transition Panel for consideration for placement in a special education setting or additional, specific support in a mainstream setting. Of these referrals, 19 have been allocated a place in an intensive support provision; 21 children will access their primary one education within mainstream primary school classes with specific additional support and 4 will be staying on in ELC for an additional year. The 13 schools which will provide education and support to these (21) children with a significant level of need have been identified and their current staffing within primary one assessed.
- 5.5 The Strategic Lead for Education & Learning, in discussion with the Service Managers of Early Years and Childcare, Primary Education, and Inclusion within Perth and Kinross Council have given consideration as to how to best support these primary one class teachers to meet the diverse range of needs in session 2024/25 to support all children entering into primary one appropriately. These discussions were enhanced and informed by feedback from staff in schools where the previous model of additional support in primary one has been in place during the current school session. A range of data was also reviewed to evaluate the efficacy of the model that was put in place. Exclusions and incidences of distressed, challenging, violent and aggressive behaviour remained as causes of concern despite the additional support.
- 5.6 The approach which has been developed is a multi-disciplinary one which will include the primary one teacher, a qualified Early Years Practitioner (ECP), and a full day Play Assistant. This team approach will be allocated to provide enhanced support each day. It is expected that the benefits of this approach will allow the team to:
- meet the diverse range of needs of all the children in the class.
 - provide some flexibility to support children with complex ASNs in a way that meets their individual context.
 - work in ratios that are aligned to children accessing ELC which allows for further targeting of support approaches.
 - provide experiences and spaces that support inclusion through a robust learning-through play approach well supported by a qualified ECP.
 - provide an enhanced offer that goes beyond providing some additionality as in previous years and which supports high quality experiences and learning for all children.
- 5.7 The staff working within this “team around the class” will also access specific training opportunities which will support them in their role. Additional support remains available through the core and exceptional allocation of PSA time to schools in accordance with identified additional support needs across the school.

- 5.8 This different model of support will be developed by temporary extension of existing contracts and redirecting current temporary provision. No additional permanent posts will be created.
- 5.9 Since 2017, the Scottish Government has provided funding through a ringfenced grant for the expansion of ELC hours from 600 hours to 1,140 hours per academic session. The Scottish Government have allowed for flexibility in using the funding to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on children. The primary one intake for August 2024 is the last cohort of children who are most likely to have significant developmental issues as a result of limited opportunities of interaction with wider groups of children, young people and adults caused by the restrictions of the pandemic.
- 5.10 As of March 2024, the ELC reserve is £6.169m. The monies in this reserve can only be used for their stated purpose i.e. to support children and young people in the context of early learning and childcare. This reserve includes monies that could contribute to the costs of any replacement/alternative for City of Perth Early Childhood Centre (COPECC) should that be considered as required as part of the future Corporate Estate. Options for this will be worked up for consideration and a decision by members in due course.
- 5.11 Funding required for full academic year 2024/25 is outlined in table below.

	No of Posts	Fte	Funding
Deprivation allocation	19	11.25	£383,000
Enhanced Support	14	9.58	£253,000
Total	33	20.83	£636,000

The above additional FTE equates to 750 hours of additional support.

Details of posts are contained in Appendix 1.

ACTION: The Committee is asked to approve the transfer of **£393,000** from ELC reserve to Education and Learning in financial year 2024/25 and **£243,000** in financial year 25/26.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This funding is required to meet our PKC vision that children and young people grow up safe, respected, well-educated and confident in their ability to realise their full potential and will support our priorities in relation to enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential and protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people. The impact of this additional support will be closely monitored and evaluated throughout the session 2024/2025 using pupil progress records, staff and parental feedback as well as all data collected as part of Education and Learning ongoing processes such as levels of Distressed, Challenging, Violence and Aggression (DCVA) and levels of exclusion.

6.2 It is not anticipated that the same level of need will manifest in the following year and such do not consider that the same approach will be required at that time.

Children known to Early Years Inclusion Services	Expected P1 entry date	
104	2024	83
	2025	21

6.3 However, it is anticipated that some additional support will be required for next year's primary one classes as they move in primary two but that cannot be quantified at this stage. This support will be met from existing budgets within Education and Learning Services.

APPROVED

Name	Designation	Date
Sheena Devlin	Strategic Lead – Education & Learning	27.05.24

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	None
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Corporate Plan

1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 lays out seven outcome focussed strategic objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. They are as follows:

- Tackling poverty
- Enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential
- Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people

1.2 This report relates to the following these objectives.

- Enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential
- 10. Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no direct asset management implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) and has been assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Sustainability

- 3.5 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council must discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.6 The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Senior Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.