

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Lifelong Learning Committee

25 August 2021

EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No. 21/134)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Lifelong Learning Committee with an update on progress to date in terms of the requirement to deliver 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from August 2021 within Perth and Kinross.

This report outlines the phasing of 1140 hours of ELC and an update on progress made since May 2020 towards full implementation from February 2021.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 In October 2016, the Scottish Government published '[A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland – 2017-2018 action plan](#)' setting out the vision to expand the entitlement of funded ELC. These hours increased from 600 hours to 1140 hours per year for all three and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds from August 2020 with an aim to provide high quality, flexible ELC which is accessible and affordable for all families.
- 1.2 On 22 September 2017, Lifelong Learning Committee approved the Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) ELC expansion proposals ([Report No. 17/314 refers](#)) and this was submitted to the Scottish Government on 29 September 2017.
- 1.3 Further reports providing an update on progress towards the expansion plan were presented to Lifelong Learning Committee on 16 May 2018 ([Report No. 18/156 refers](#)), 22 May 2019 ([Report No. 19/155 refers](#)), and 26 August 2020 ([Report No. 20/139 refers](#)).
- 1.4 On Monday 30 March 2020, the Scottish Government, under The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Revocation Order 2020, advised that Councils no longer had a statutory duty to provide extended ELC provision from August 2020 due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in line with the Coronavirus Act (Scotland) 2020. The national commitment to provide 1140 hours of funded childcare remains in place, and the Scottish Government has now reinstated this duty to come into force from 1 August 2021.

2. PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL ELC EXPANSION PLAN

Current Position

- 2.1 Education and Children's Services (ECS) has made very good progress towards full implementation of the expansion of ELC. The following information describes our progress to date and current position. Delivery of 1140 funded hours of ELC is now implemented in Perth and Kinross, ahead of the legal requirement date of 1 August 2021.

Perth and Kinross Council is currently meeting the requirement to provide the full 1140 entitlement to all eligible children. Only one infrastructure project remains outstanding from the initial phasing plan due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, but this is not preventing full implementation of funded ELC. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the key achievements of ELC in Perth and Kinross, since August 2020.

ELC Communities

- 2.2 Perth and Kinross has developed 11 ELC communities with each offering a range of ELC options including local authority, partner provider and childminder settings. These settings offer high quality learning experiences and flexible hours that better suit families' needs. The offer within each community is clearly listed in the [Nursery Locality and Attendance Patterns](#) document which is available on the PKC website for parents to access.

Childminders

- 2.3 There are now 19 childminders who are in partnership with PKC, an increase of 17 since 2016. These childminders are from a range of localities across the local authority and are providing funded ELC places to 36 eligible children and families.

Partner Providers

- 2.4 Thirty-five private and not for profit nurseries deliver 1140 funded hours. Funded provider settings provide parents and carers with flexibility and the ability to purchase additional hours based on availability. Each ELC Community has at least one funded provider and currently provide places for approximately 1000 children.

Local Authority Provision

- 2.5 There are 51 local authority ELC settings: 5 offering a 50-week model and 17 offering a 45-week model, with the rest offering term time only. Local authority settings are also based in each community with a variety of attendance patterns for parents and carers to choose from.

Each ELC community has at least one local authority setting offering an extended year option. To date, 1909 children are accessing 1140 funded hours in local authority settings.

- 2.6 The three different intake periods throughout the year in August, January and April drives the number of children accessing ELC settings higher as the year progresses. Over the course of the year, the number of children accessing funded places within nursery settings in Perth and Kinross increases to an approximate total of 3000.

Finance

- 2.7 Following an announcement from the Deputy First Minister, any uncommitted ELC Expansion budget was authorised to support the local authority response to COVID-19. For financial year 2020/21, this totalled £2.25m. Costs covered included the Children's Activity Centres that operated from March to July 2020, additional PPE spend, support for partners to reopen, supply staff payments and the arrangements put in place for vulnerable children and young people.
- 2.8 Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing priority and funding is supporting the response. Approximately 50 Early Childhood Practitioners (ECPs) will support the transition into Primary 1. These staff will work to support the wellbeing of the children, encourage the continuation of learning through play and focus on communication and language development. It will allow children to receive focussed, developmentally appropriate support that will mitigate the long-term effects on their progress.
- 2.9 For Financial year 2020/21, an additional underspend of £1.18m was generated. This funding has been carried forward alongside the existing ELC revenue reserve of £2.963m. This total funding of £4.143m will be utilised in improving settings, where required, in areas such as: increasing staff numbers to support COVID-19 recovery in primary 1 and supporting inclusion through the development of sensory areas and adaptations to the environment, as had been planned.
- 2.10 The funding is also financing a merger of 4 local authority settings into 2: Goodlyburn Nursery and City of Perth Early Childhood Centre (COPECC) as an interim solution after the COPECC building experienced severe flood damage in 2020; and North Muirton and Balhousie in preparation for the new school in North Muirton. All works have been completed for August 2021.
- 2.11 Additional building work has been identified at St Dominic's, Auchtergaven, Viewlands and Stanley nurseries, which is either on site or planned, to allow children to benefit from upgraded learning environments and resources, as well as direct access to outdoor spaces to enhance learning opportunities.
- 2.12 The sustainable rate paid to partners agreed in 2018 as £5.05 per hour for 3–5-year-olds is currently under review. ECS committed to review the rate and has undertaken a local version of the Ipsos Mori technical report '[Costs of Early Learning and Childcare in Partner Provider Settings](#)', which was completed at the national level in 2016.

The return rate from partners was 52% and a decision to increase the rate has taken place. It has been agreed that an increase will be implemented; the details of which are under consideration, pending further analysis.

Quality

- 2.13 The expansion plan is underpinned by [‘Funding follows the child and the national standard for early learning and childcare providers: principles and practice’](#) set out by the Scottish Government, which all funded providers are required to meet to deliver 1140 funded hours of ELC.
- 2.14 A contract management process has been developed to ensure funded providers achieve, and continue to meet, the criteria outlined in the National Standard. All funded providers are required to achieve a Care Inspectorate (CI) inspection quality grading of 4 (good) or above. This assures that there is high quality in each funded setting to provide a positive impact on the children’s experiences and outcomes.
- 2.15 Settings whose gradings do not meet the quality criteria are working with ECS to make improvements. An improvement plan is in place for each establishment, with clear area of focus and timescales to ensure progress is made. A new Self-Evaluation Toolkit (Appendix 2) has been created to further support quality improvement. Currently, 87 out of 98 settings have received gradings of at least 4 (good), and 11 hold at least one or more CI evaluation of 6 (Excellent). 7 settings are awaiting initial inspection from CI following new registration.
- 2.16 To maintain high quality ELC provision in Perth and Kinross, all providers receive support from the central Early Years team. Professional discussion, training days, and workshops are provided to enhance practice and maintain a robust cycle of evaluation and improvement. This process encourages settings to interpret their impact on children and families and base improvements on the needs of those in their community.
- 2.17 Recent CI inspections have taken place in 6 local authority and partner provider nurseries with a focus on Key Question 5 (Operating an ELC setting during COVID-19). This is a temporary addition to the Care Inspectorate Framework to consider settings’ mitigation of risk from infection caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In an ELC COVID-19 update letter, Director for Early Learning and Childcare, has stated that:

“evaluations on Key Question 5 are not included within the National Standard for funded ELC providers and evaluations on this theme alone will not be used to influence decisions about the funded status of settings.”

Two settings are currently graded less than good for Key Question 5. Action Plans are in place to support improvement.

Supporting Inclusive Practice

- 2.18 The ELC service and Early Years Inclusion Team have worked closely to develop settings’ ability to meet the National Standard for Inclusion.

24 pupil support assistants (PSAs) are targeted to support settings to ensure they can meet the needs of all children in their care. Close collaboration with Allied Health Professional and Health Visitor colleagues is in place to ensure

children with additional support needs have access into ELC with the necessary planning and support in place.

Outdoor Learning

- 2.19 The vision of ECS of providing routine, daily access to a stimulating outdoor environment for all young children in Perth and Kinross continues to be supported through training, grants, and practical support from the central team.
- 2.20 The Outdoor Learning Grants offered to funded providers to improve their outdoor provision have been spent on resources that have engaged children in a wide variety of experiences.

Recruitment

- 2.21 The requirement to recruit and develop a fully staffed workforce with the skills, flexibility and expertise needed to facilitate high quality ELC has been met. It is expected that all local authority settings will have their full staffing complement in August 2021.

Family Learning Practitioners

- 2.22 To provide high-quality support to families and give every child the best start in life, 20 full time equivalent (FTE) Family Learning Practitioner positions were created across the 11 ELC communities. This new team of staff will support all ELC settings to engage families and deliver family learning activities to enhance children's home learning environments.
- 2.23 The Family Learning Practitioner will work directly with parents and carers to support them to help their children grow up healthy, happy, attaining, and achieving. Family learning activities can be specifically designed to meet the needs of individual families and children as required. Experiencing a positive home learning environment in the early years is the single most important predictor in children's outcomes throughout childhood and these positions will provide key support to giving the children in Perth and Kinross the best start.

Early Years Teachers

- 2.24 To address equity and ensure that the ELC workforce is organised to best target children who face barriers to achievement and learning, Early Years Teachers will be allocated to nursery classes based on the number of children and the percentage of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) the school receives.

Professional Learning and Development

- 2.25 As part of the National Standard, PKC have committed to providing all funded provider staff with training. The ECS Learning HUB offers a range of Early Years training for practitioners. These programmes have been adapted to be delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic with pre-recorded virtual sessions being created prior to a virtual professional discussion taking place. Since August 2020, 61 courses have been delivered to staff across ELC within Perth

and Kinross. 98% of participants rated these opportunities as good and very good.

- 2.26 Training materials and resources have been made available through the new GLOW ELC SharePoint. The resources are designed to enhance practice and provision within ELC with a focus on creating high-quality learning environments, supporting outdoor learning, stimulating professional curiosity, and enriching relational interactions. There were 11,196 visits to the GLOW site between February and May 2021. A video, '[Early Learning and Childcare: Using the Glow SharePoint](#)', gives an example of the comprehensive tools, resources, links and documents that are offered in support to all ELC settings.
- 2.27 A new ELC staff induction resource has been created this year to support delivery of the expansion to 1140 hours. The resource is enhanced by the provision of group induction sessions supported by members of the Early Years Team. Feedback from the sessions have been positive with 91-100% of participants agreeing that each specified outcome was met.

ELC Leadership and Development Programme

- 2.28 Twelve participants were enrolled in the new ELC Leadership Programme. All were given opportunities to share ideas, participate in self-reflection, and consider how to use their learning in practice. These programmes will now run annually. Feedback was positive with participants rating the sessions as good or excellent.

Development Sessions

- 2.29 Childminders, the local authority and partner provider nurseries were engaged in development sessions held by the central Early Years Team to support the writing of their improvement plans in May and June 2021. In addition, a series of workshop sessions were provided in areas such as Language and Communication; Outdoor Learning; Wellbeing and Observation, Planning and Assessment. These sessions support providers to continue to provide a high-quality offer to children who will benefit from best practice.
- 2.30 A wide range of learning and development opportunities are now offered to allow practitioners to develop the setting. Feedback from these sessions indicate that the themes studied this year have raised creativity levels amongst staff and encouraged them to use resources mindfully to fully engage the children and give them the opportunity to explore freely.
- 2.31 In partnership with the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI), ECS delivered Kindergarten Forest School training in April and June 2021 to 37 professionals from ELC. A further 60 staff will be given the opportunity to complete this training by June 2022 and attain the internationally recognised Forest Kindergarten qualification. This award allows practitioners to develop their knowledge, understanding, and skills and lead outdoor learning opportunities both within the setting and in outdoor woodland and green spaces, complementing the promotion of outdoor provision within the expansion of ELC.

- 2.32 Solihull Approach training continues to be cascaded throughout Perth and Kinross to support families across all 11 communities. The [Solihull Approach](#) is a framework which provides a practical way of working with and supporting families. It aims to increase the emotional health and wellbeing of children and their families, ensuring children have a good emotional start in life whilst supporting parents in a creative and consistent approach. There are currently 20 Solihull Trainers within PKC able to deliver to staff virtually, and 152 ELC staff currently fully trained in the Solihull Approach. The benefits of this training are evident in the deeper understanding practitioners develop in how to best support families and provide a nurturing, holistic approach to reducing the impact of negative experiences and trauma.
- 2.33 Feedback from all the training opportunities was positive, with participants rating all the sessions as good or excellent.

Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC)

- 2.34 Work has continued with Angus and Dundee City Councils to maintain strong links with the colleges and universities and allow for a continued shared vision on purpose and roles across the sector. This is building on the improvement of quality with a focus on collaborative leadership. Leaders across the authorities have received guidance and mentorship throughout the year, with an enhanced focus on recovery, from February 2021.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE AND IMPACT

Key Achievements since March 2020

COVID-19 Recovery

- 3.1 Children's Activity Centres were set up from 26 March to 4 August 2020 to support the families of key workers and vulnerable children. A total of approximately 20,000 individual sessions had an average daily attendance of 200 children. Parents surveyed told us they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service in the following areas: 96% location and timings, 92% quality of staff, 89% communication and 88% activities.
- 3.2 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the second lockdown from December 2020 to February 2021, all aspects of the expansion of ELC have been considered and a recovery plan is in place.

Funded Places in Partner Provider and Childminder Settings

- 3.3 During the second lockdown from December 2020/January 2021, Partner Providers and Childminders in Perth and Kinross continued to be paid for the 1140 funded places that were provided even if settings remained closed or open only to key worker and vulnerable children.
- 3.4 Twenty-four Partner Provider nurseries remained open to support key workers and vulnerable families during this lockdown. Five childminders also did so, ensuring that the families who needed childcare in this difficult time were able to access it.

Temporary Restrictions Fund

- 3.5 Following on from the Transitional Support Grants that ELC businesses could access in 2020, the Scottish Government offered access to grants from a Temporary Restrictions Fund set up for private and voluntary ELC settings affected by the second lockdown imposed in December 2020.
- 3.6 Eligible settings could apply for up to three rounds of the fund and Perth and Kinross approved a total of 70 applications. This helped to ease the financial challenges experienced by 37 settings with a total of £164k being paid to applicants. This positively impacted settings' ability to remain open for vulnerable and keyworker children during the latest restrictions period or reopen in February and March 2021 to continue providing 1140 hours of ELC.

Remote Learning

- 3.7 In the second lockdown, settings felt better prepared to engage with families virtually and provide high-quality and recurrent learning experiences to minimise the impact of the restrictions on movement. Engagement with families was high throughout this period and effort was made to maintain a connection with families recognised as harder to reach. This helped to mitigate some of the negative effects of the lockdown for the most vulnerable children in Perth and Kinross. Appendix 3 contains the infographic 'Connecting with Families', which highlights the multifaceted approach taken by ELC settings to ensure a robust and consistent response to supporting children and families through the second lockdown.
- 3.8 Settings were given a high level of support from the central Early Years Team to help recover from the impact of the pandemic. This included continuous dialogue, virtual and in-person support, and encouragement to focus on the health and wellbeing of children, families, and staff. This resulted in a smooth transition for children and staff when they returned to settings in February 2021. ['The impact of the pandemic on children from disadvantaged backgrounds'](#), as identified by the ['Equity Audit'](#), is key to this recovery and settings are being encouraged to include the mitigations as part of their improvement plans, or as a topic for ongoing professional discussion.

Summer Provision

- 3.9 Local authority settings providing the extended models of provision are open throughout most school and occasional holidays. This offer allows flexibility for families and supports parents in work.
- 3.10 Children can also be recommended by relevant professionals to receive additional ELC hours throughout the summer holidays at one of the open settings. The 'Support for Children and Families' procedure was created to address equity and provide targeted support to the most vulnerable children in Perth and Kinross. This initiative will continue for other holidays throughout the year to go beyond the Scottish Government's offer of 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare to provide the best start for the children who will benefit the most from a nurturing and high-quality, stimulating, early learning environment.

- 3.11 In June 2021, a health visitor engagement session took place to provide an opportunity for these community partners to gain information, ask questions, and embed the process of recommending children for extra provision. Communications were also implemented to other relevant professionals. These professional partnerships are key to identifying the needs of families across Perth and Kinross and ensuring that our most vulnerable families receive the targeted support needed to meet their individual needs, mitigate the social inequities that exist, and close the attainment gap that persists.

Infrastructure

- 3.12 All infrastructure works planned for completion since August 2020, with the exception of Rattray Primary School Nursery, which is on site, are now finished despite delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a new standalone nursery at Inchtute Primary School in December 2020 which created 61 registered places for children in the community and building work at Oakbank where 44 additional registered places were created. Work in Longforgan Nursery was also completed in January 2021, with a new capacity of 32 registered spaces available.

Communications, consultation, and engagement

- 3.13 The communications plan for 1140 Hours has continued to be implemented and maintained. Changes to planned activity were necessary to take into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the decisions taken at a national level to delay the requirement for full implementation.
- 3.14 Social media activity has been ongoing around a range of different aspects of ELC, including:
- Registration for 2021-2022 places;
 - Highlighting of infrastructure projects undertaken as part of the implementation of 1140 Hours;
 - Biannual statutory consultation on early education and care provision in Perth and Kinross; and
 - Introduction of the Scottish Milk & Healthy Snack Scheme – this work is currently ongoing to highlight the new Scottish Government initiative and encourage Care Inspectorate-registered ELC providers to sign up.
- 3.15 In addition, news releases were issued to local media regarding progress on the rollout of 1140 Hours, 2021-2022 registration and statutory ELC consultation.
- 3.16 Throughout this year, funded providers in Perth and Kinross received a monthly information newsletter rounding up relevant guidance, training and learning opportunities, grants and funding provision, and good practice in local settings.

The Early Learning and Childcare Consultation 2021

- 3.17 The [‘Early Learning and Childcare Consultation \(2021\)’](#) was open from March to April 2021 with 677 respondents geographically distributed across the area. Almost all respondents said they were aware of their 1140 hours entitlement with 89% of parents of 0–3-year-olds saying they would be likely to take up their full entitlement. Parents report that they are most likely to choose a particular funded provider based on availability of places and hours in their chosen area, location, and their child’s existing social interactions. 66% of parents of 0–3-year-olds indicated a likelihood of choosing a local authority nursery, 51% independent nursery and 8% for childminders (entitlement to 1140 hours can be accessed in more than one way). For those expecting to use a local authority nursery, 41% of parents stated they are most likely to choose the term time option to prepare their child for attending school and when they have other children in the family attending school. 31% stated they would choose 45/50-week models to fit in with work patterns. For parents of older children (aged 3-5) already using or about to use ELC, there is a slightly stronger preference for a term-time model (51%).
- 3.18 Two-thirds of the parents of 3–5-year-olds who responded indicated they use the full 1140 hours entitlement. Of those who did, almost 20% use some of this as a blended arrangement across two providers. For those not using the 1140 hours, having other arrangements or personal choice for their child are the most important influencers. Fewer than 1 in 5 cite availability or hours in their area as a factor. ECS will use the report to guide future work in ELC to further support children and families. Further consultation will also take place through focus groups of parents/carers.

ELC Focus Groups

- 3.19 A funded Childminder Focus group was established in March 2021. This group will act as the voice of the wider funded childminder forum and will enable PKC to keep all funded childminders up to date with local and national policy and practice related to the delivery of high quality ELC.
- 3.20 A focus group consisting of representatives from partner provider nurseries across every ELC community meets regularly. During the pandemic, the frequency of these meetings was increased to allow for augmented support to the settings. The aims of these sessions are as follows:
- To promote close co-operation and communication between local authority and funded providers;
 - To promote equality and fairness; and
 - To engage in activities which support and advance the education of children attending the early learning and childcare settings.
- 3.21 Regular headteacher and Principal/Senior ECPs meetings take place to work in collaboration for the shared vision of ELC in Perth and Kinross. At these meetings, staff are supported in continuing the work of the local authority, updated on any policy and procedure, and engaged in professional dialogue

regarding the National Standards and other items of focus within early learning.

Provision of Meals and Snacks

- 3.22 All children receive one meal and one snack as part of their 1140 hours provision. The family style meal experience will continue with full rollout from August 2021, after this initiative was positively evaluated in trials. Benefits of this mealtime experience include nurturing interactions, opportunities to try new foods and the promotion of life-long healthy habits.
- 3.23 From August 2021, the Scottish Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme will fund the daily provision of a portion of milk and a snack consisting of fruits or vegetables to every child accessing an early learning or childcare setting, to support the health and wellbeing of young children and embed the habit of regular consumption of high-quality dairy produce and fruit and vegetables from a young age. Each child aged 5 and below will receive a serving of milk and a healthy snack. Implementation has been smooth, with the first round of registrations complete and first payment released.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Education and Children's Services have implemented the key elements of the expansion and phasing plans and 1140 hours of ELC is now being delivered to all eligible children in Perth and Kinross. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a delay in one infrastructure project, but this has not affected the ability of ECS to deliver on their duty of providing 1140 hours of ELC. Key milestones of the next period will be as follows:

- Complete the required infrastructure works;
- Continue to deliver a quality framework;
- Consultation and engagement with stakeholders on continued flexibility;
- Progress with the Community Childminding Model;
- Further expansion of Outdoor Learning;
- Further develop Family Learning;
- Implement the Contract Framework; and
- Review sustainable rates for funded providers.

Infrastructure

- 4.2 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the extension planned for Rattray Primary School was delayed. The planning stage is completed, and work commenced on site in June 2021. The expected date of completion is May 2022.

Quality

- 4.3 Quality and a continuation of COVID-19 recovery will remain a priority for ECS now that the expansion of ELC has been completed. The Early Years Team will continue to respond to the findings of the Equity Audit and support the response within all settings across PKC. Focus on the wellbeing of children, staff, and families is grounded within many of the settings' Improvement Plans

for next year with robust evaluative measures in place to measure impact and quality assurance.

- 4.4 Children transitioning into Primary 1 will receive support from approximately 50 ECPs across the 11 ELC communities ensuring that they receive a smooth transition to mitigate the negative effects the pandemic may have had. Practitioners will also ensure that learning through-play allows the children to meet developmental and learning milestones in an organic, comfortable, and familiar way.

Community Childminding

- 4.5 The community childminding model will resume after it was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative will provide support to children and families who would benefit most from a home learning experience. This initiative will provide extra support for families and children where a need is identified by professionals such as social workers and family support workers.

Outdoor Learning

- 4.6 Early discussions are taking place to extend the vision of Outdoor Learning in ELC with stimulating and consistent daily outdoor learning opportunities for every child in PKC implemented in all settings. Two further cohorts of Kindergarten Forest Schools training are due to take place to support professional learning in this area.
- 4.7 The feasibility of opening a fully outdoor setting within Perth City is currently under consideration. This would provide valuable outdoor learning opportunities for children living within the city who are less likely to live close to wooded areas and large natural spaces where they can explore freely, experience risk, and access the rich natural resources that support learning and wellbeing. We will draw on the expertise of the three funded provider settings who currently deliver full outdoor learning within the authority to inform our approach to this.

Family Learning

- 4.8 The new Family Learning Practitioners will begin work from August 2021 to support settings to engage families and provide family learning opportunities. Each practitioner will receive training in family learning programmes and 1 to 1 coaching to meet the needs of individual families and support children's learning and development. Robust evaluation practices will be implemented to measure the impact of these new positions on learning outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 This report provides Lifelong Learning Committee with a summary of work which has been carried out in respect of the expansion of ELC since May 2020 and the contingencies in place following the COVID-19 response phase of the pandemic.

5.2 Phasing to date has progressed well and the overarching target set forth by the Scottish Government for the expansion has been met and all families in Perth and Kinross can now access their 1140-hour entitlement.

5.3 ECS are on track to continue this delivery to all families from August 2021. Continuous monitoring, support and improvement will continue to ensure quality remains high and the staffing levels are appropriate.

5.4 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes progress to date; and
- (ii) Requests the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) to provide future updates on progress through the Business Management Improvement Plan (BMIP) reporting procedures.

Author

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes/None
Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	No
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life.
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible, and informed citizens.
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable economy.
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy, and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No (i).

Corporate Plan

1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life.
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible, and informed citizens.
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable economy.
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy, and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No (i).

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key Priority area:

- Best Start

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 The Head of Finance has been consulted in the preparation of this update report. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

2.2 The Corporate Human Resource Manager has been consulted in the preparation of this update report. This is an area of significant expansion for the workforce. Human Resources have membership both on the Workforce Workstream Project Team and Project Board.

2.2.1 Human Resources have assisted with a programme of employee engagement and trade union consultation. Workforce planning measures include delivering new ways of working, reviewing fixed term arrangements, and securing our current supply pool in fixed term or permanent posts.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 The Depute Director (Environment) has been consulted on this update report.

3. Assessments

3.1 Assessed as relevant previously and the following positive outcomes are expected to continue taking account that there is now an obligation to have due regard to remove inequality of outcomes caused by socioeconomic disadvantage as well as to comply with other equalities' legislation: The ongoing implementation of 600 hours ELC will promote social inclusion for all by providing extra time for parents and carers to give them the opportunity to access job opportunities, training opportunities and community opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills and contribute to their local environment. Further expansion of ELC hours will increase extra time for parents/carers for all these opportunities. Parents and carers will be able to access ELC provision regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, religion or belief, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or gender reassignment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. Following a pre-screening assessment using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit, it was determined that the proposal will have no

environmental effects. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this update report.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to 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.

Following the previous assessment using the Integrated Appraisal Toolkit, it has been determined that the ongoing implementation is likely to contribute positively to corporate sustainable development principles: Extended access to ELC will provide extra time for parents and give them the opportunity to use that time to access job opportunities, training opportunities and community opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills and contribute to their local environment. The increased entitlement to ELC is requiring an expanding workforce providing job opportunities at all levels. Children participating in ELC access opportunities to allow them to progress as successful learners, responsible citizens, effective contributors, and confident individuals and provide a strong start for eligible 2-year-olds. Family Learning in schools and nurseries promotes development opportunities for family members. Provision of additional early learning and childcare will promote a healthy lifestyle to the child and will allow children to participate in programmes supporting and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 N/A
- 3.5 N/A

Risk

- 3.6 A detailed risk profile has been developed and risks have been rated in terms of probability and impact and actions to mitigate the risks have been identified and are progressing. The Expansion of ELC 1140 hours Project Team and Project Board have regularly reviewed risk throughout the lifecycle of the project.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs); Early Years and Primary, Secondary and Inclusion, Education and Children's Services Senior Management Team, Expansion of ELC 1140 hours Project Team and Project Board. The Head of Finance and The Head of Legal and Governance Services have also been consulted on this update report.

External

- 4.2 Representation on the Expansion of ELC 1140 hours Project Team – Perth College and Partner Provider Manager.

5. Communication

- 5.1 A Communications Plan has been developed and the Corporate Communications Team has been consulted. A wide range of communication channels will continue to be used to ensure we reach all stakeholders.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 The following document has been relied on in preparing the report, other than the committee report already referenced within the main body of the report:

- [A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland](#)

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – PKC ELC 2020/2021 Infographic
Appendix 2 – Self-Evaluation Toolkit
Appendix 3 – Connecting with Families: Infographic