

**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 7 March 2024

**BY:** Executive Director for Education and Children's Services

**SUBJECT:** Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To report on the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (EL&CC) to 1140 hours in East Lothian.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note:
- i. the successful full implementation of the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in East Lothian
  - ii. the ongoing work to plan and deliver high quality, efficient early learning services, to improve communication and working relations with Funded Providers and develop a common vision for EL&CC in East Lothian
  - iii. that the service will undertake regular consultation with families across East Lothian to inform future need and delivery of their funded entitlement

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Since August 2021, along with other local authorities in Scotland, East Lothian Council has had a statutory duty to provide 1140 hours of funded EL&CC places for all eligible children from the school term following their third birthday until they are ready to start school and for two-year-old children whose families meet the criteria for eligibility.
- 3.2 The expansion of EL&CC entitlement aims to deliver three main benefits

for children and families;

- children's development improves and the poverty related attainment gap narrows
- more parents will have the opportunity to be in work, training or study; and
- increased family resilience through improved health and wellbeing of parents and children

3.3 The new legislation introduced in August 2021 places a statutory duty on local authorities to have a role as the primary guarantor of quality and to provide options for flexibility and choice to the families who use the service.

3.4 East Lothian Council provides a range of options for families through offering a variety of models within our local authority settings (see Appendix A), through private early learning and childcare settings and childminders who are in partnership with us. We are required by legislation to ensure our approach is 'provider neutral' and therefore does not favour any one type of setting. We are also required to ensure settings meet the National Standard alongside other relevant legislation. This also includes those settings who wish to become a funded provider, regardless of whether they are public or private.

3.5 East Lothian Council is required by legislation to provide sufficient places for all eligible three and four-year-olds. There are no 'catchment areas' for EL&CC and therefore our statutory duty does not require us to provide places within a specific locality. Where possible we try to give families their chosen placement; however, it is not always possible as demand can be greater than places available. We continue to consider funded providers, who meet and exceed the National Standard, to apply to become a partner with East Lothian Council to meet the changing demand for places in different areas of the authority. We are currently developing robust systems to accurately track the uptake of entitlement across all settings, focusing on uptake of entitlement during school holiday periods and collection times.

We engage regularly with the Improvement Service to review our supply of EL&CC places and the demand. This ensures that our models are as efficient as possible and can mean changes to the model as the profile and numbers of eligible children change. Funding from the Scottish Government for EL&CC has reduced since 2021 which means that we must ensure that we make best use of the available funds by not providing places where they are not required. This will become part of the General Revenue Grant and not a specific grant allocation from financial year 2024/2025.

3.6 East Lothian Council is required to consult with parents and carers every two years, to support the delivery of EL&CC.

### **3.7 Update**

- 3.7.1 As a guarantor of quality, East Lothian Council has a responsibility to ensure that all settings, including funded providers, meet and maintain the National Standard. Quality assurance and improvement continues to be a key focus. The Early Years Team has a rigorous quality improvement process for both local authority settings as well as funded providers, and all settings are subject to Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland inspection processes as appropriate. 80% of settings overall are exceeding the National Standard for QI 2 How Good is Our Setting. We have a key focus this session on QI 3 How Good is Our Leadership, with a range of professional learning activities underway for all settings.
- 3.7.2 A strong professional Early Years network is in place to share EL&CC developments and practice with our neighbouring colleagues in Midlothian, Edinburgh, Fife, and Scottish Borders.
- 3.7.3 The Improvement Service supports Councils to understand and improve their expanded EL&CC services. Our collaborative work with the Improvement Service involves understanding:
- future demand, service model redesign, assessing and improving flexibility.
  - measuring and improving uptake amongst eligible children.
  - support and advice on workforce planning.
  - support to understand how best to engage with our Funded Providers to truly support the delivery of a provider neutral model that best serves East Lothian families.
- 3.7.4 A consultation took place from November to December 2023 for children accessing EL&CC in East Lothian. A further consultation was live from January to February 2024 for families with children aged 0-2 who will access their entitlement in the future. The data gathered from this most recent consultation is currently being analysed and will be published on our website. It will inform future EL&CC planning. We will continue to monitor and review supply and demand data across the county. Any changes to service delivery must be met within budget and available local authority estates. Information on 1140 hours capital projects is detailed in Appendix B.
- 3.7.5 Through consultation and data collection, changes to delivery models to offer increased flexibility for families and increased uptake of funded entitlement have taken place in Longniddry Primary School, Preston Tower Primary School, Sanderson's Wynd Primary School, Whitecraig Primary School and Yester Primary School from August 2023.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

- 3.8.1 East Lothian Council has successfully delivered the expansion of EL&CC to 1140 hours as required by Scottish Government. We

continue to reflect and evaluate our service delivery through our work with the Improvement Service and consultation with families to ensure we meet our legislative duty. We are also committed to delivering best value and therefore our approach will continue to be reviewed to ensure that it is as efficient as possible and can be afforded within the budget allocated by the Scottish Government.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

#### **5. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial – The delivery of current EL&CC models and future developments, must be delivered within budget. This will become part of the General Revenue Grant and not a specific grant allocation from financial year 2024/2025.

6.2 Personnel – None

6.3 Other – None.

#### **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Appendix A – ELC ELCC Models

7.2 Appendix B – Early Years Capital Projects

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<b>DATE</b>	7 March 2024

We have 31 Early Learning and Childcare settings operating within our primary schools. The funding models they offer for 3-5 year olds are shown in the table below:

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Funding Model Available for 3-5 Year Olds</b>
Athelstaneford Primary School Campie Primary School Cockenzie Primary School Elphinstone Primary School Innerwick Primary School Loretto Primary School Macmerry Primary School Musselburgh Burgh Primary School Pencaitland Primary School Saltoun Primary School St Gabriels Primary School St Martins Primary School West Barns Primary School	<b>School Year (38 weeks)</b> Children attend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.5 days - Monday to Thursday (6.5 hours) and Friday mornings (4 hours)</li> </ul>
Aberlady Primary School Dunbar Primary School East Linton Primary School Gullane Primary School Haddington Primary School Law Primary School Letham Mains Primary School Ormiston Primary School St Marys Primary School Stoneyhill Primary School Wallyford Primary School Windygoul Primary School	<b>Full Year (48 weeks)</b> Children attend either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 days - Monday and Tuesday (9.5 hours)</li> <li>or</li> <li>• 2 days - Wednesday and Thursday (9.5 hours)</li> </ul> Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocated Fridays</li> </ul>
Longniddry Primary School Pinkie St Peters Primary School Preston Tower Primary School* Sanderson's Wynd Primary School Whitecraig Primary School Yester Primary School	<b>Full Year (48 weeks)</b> Children attend either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 days – Monday and Tuesday (8 hours 15mins) and Wednesday (7 hours 45mins)</li> <li>• 3 days – Wednesday to Friday (7 hours 45mins)</li> <li>• 4 days – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (6 hours)</li> <li>• *PRESTON TOWER ONLY* 4 days – Monday to Thursday (5 hours 55mins)</li> </ul>

We have 2 Early Learning and Childcare settings operating within our primary schools and 2 settings within our secondary schools offering funded hours to our Eligible 2 year olds. The funding models they offer for are shown in the table below:

<b>Setting</b>	<b>Funding Model Available for Eligible 2 Year Olds</b>
Knox Academy Musselburgh Grammar School	<b>School Year (38 weeks)</b> Children attend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 days - Monday to Thursday (6.5 hours)</li> </ul>
Preston Tower Primary School Sandersons Wynd Primary School	<b>Full Year (48 weeks)</b> Children attend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 days – Monday to Thursday (5 hours 55mins)</li> </ul>

<b>1140 Capital Projects</b>	
<b>Completed</b>	<b>Planned</b>
Gullane Primary - extension including Early Learning and 1140	Blindwells Primary - New School
Letham Primary - New School	Craighall Primary - New School
Pinkie St Peter's Primary - extension including Early Learning and 1140	Law Primary - extension including Early Learning and 1140
Rosehill High School - Tots and Teens provision	Whitecraig Primary - new school including Early Learning and 1140
St Gabriel's Primary - extension including Early Learning and 1140	Windygoul Primary - Early learning and 1140 extension
Wallyford Primary - New School	
West Barns Primary - extension including Early Learning and 1140	