

Agenda Item	6
Report No	SR/8/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Isle of Skye and Raasay Committee

Date: 3rd June 2019

Report Title: **Early Learning and Childcare Update**

Report By: Area Care and Learning Manager (West)

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides members with information on the key updates and progress in relation to the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the current national and local position

3. Introduction

- 3.1 The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) will raise the current funded entitlement of 600 hours for 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds to 1140 hours by August 2020
- 3.2 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 commits us to this current requirement and the Act will be reviewed to ensure the 1140 hours is enacted before August 2020.
- 3.3 The programme aim is to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and ensure all children get the best start in life through the provision of high quality early learning and childcare. By providing an extension to the funded hours of ELC, parents will be able to access further education, training or employment.
- 3.4 Parents and carers should understand their entitlement to ELC for their children and be supported to consider their options around available provision. They should also know this is a choice and that they do not have to take up the full 1140 hours. They should consider what is in the best interests of their children and their family when they make their decisions.

4. National ELC Programme

- 4.1 Simon Mair is a new appointment to the national team and he has taken up post as the Head of Delivery Assurance, having previously worked for East Dunbartonshire Council as the School Improvement and Planning Manager. He will work with local authorities to provide assurance to the ELC Joint Delivery Board, that each authority is making progress in delivering the expanded entitlement.
- 4.2 The Joint Delivery Board are due to meet again in June to consider authorities progress data from the quarterly reporting, on the information supplied to the Improvement Service from authorities around staffing, capacity, uptake, quality and infrastructure. The Early Years Manager is presently compiling this.
- 4.3 Quarterly data is also provided by authorities to the Scottish Futures Trust (SFT) around progress on the capital expansion programme and this together with discussions around the Scottish Study of ELC focus on outcomes for children, will feature at the Joint Delivery Board.
- 4.4 SFT recently attended an ELC Programme Board and shared the National and Highland picture around capital progress. This shows that overall capital progress is slower than had been anticipated but that Highland is largely in line with the National picture. However, it was highlighted that in respect to Highland this relies on all of the required works being completed on time with a huge reliance on anticipated work taking place over the summer before August 2020. A concern was that any delay in this schedule will significantly impact on expansion plans.

Contingency plans must be in place that will include interim measures such as longer opening hours in some settings.

- 4.5 Scotland Excel has been developing a suite of operating guidance to support local authorities in the implementation of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard.

The guidance documents were published on 30th April.

- Transition options
- Setting a sustainable rate from 2020
- Business sustainability criteria.

The guidance will have important implications for authorities and partner providers as we develop our shared commitment plans to deliver 1140 hours whilst complying with the new model next year.

- 4.6 In relation to responsibilities within the operating guidance, local authorities will remain the guarantor of quality with some of the main focus being on business sustainability and the payment of the Living Wage to all employees delivering ELC.

We will consult with our colleagues in legal and procurement to ensure that moving towards 2020 our contract and procurement processes meet the requirements set out in the guidance and comply with the new ELC National Standard.

5. Local ELC Programme

- 5.1 The local ELC Board (West) meets fortnightly and has strategic decision making for the expansion.
- 5.2 Important local developments around opportunities available in ELC include the deployment of PSAs for August 2019 where the need for additional practitioners to deliver the proposed 1140 hours will be required. It can offer an important career structure for staff that have the caring and nurturing skills required to ensure a high quality ELC experience for all children, including Gaelic Medium settings.

6. 1140 hours implementation 2019/20 update

- 6.1 The ELC Area Board continues to offer the operational advice around suitability for expansion and this has largely been in line with minimal requirements from an estates perspective across a whole ASG in order to ensure there will be no impact on any partner provision in a locality. Deprivation criteria has been addressed within this where possible but with the extent of provision required, complexities around sustainability of communities/schools and the ability to deliver all of the requirements including workforce and capital are also factors that have been considered.
- 6.2 Appendix 3 shows the expansion rollout for the Portree Associated School Group.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Resource – The Scottish Government has awarded full capital and revenue funding for this Programme
- 7.2 Legal – There is a legal requirement to provide 600 hours entitlement to all eligible children and this will increase to 1140 hours by August 2020, detailed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- 7.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – 1140 hours will impact positively in communities by enabling parents to work or study through the provision of additional funded hours. It will also provide additional employment in the sector.

- 7.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – None except a positive impact as the provision of outdoor ELC will negate the need for building works in some instances.
- 7.5 Risk – The risks for the programme are described within the report. ELC workforce requirements are extensive and remain a risk if any delay to recruitment occurs. This is further impacted on in remote and rural areas where quality provision may also be a risk.
- 7.6 Gaelic – There are challenges around ensuring an adequate workforce of fluent Gaelic speakers, at every level, to ensure immersion in the language.

Designation: Area Care & Learning Manager (West)

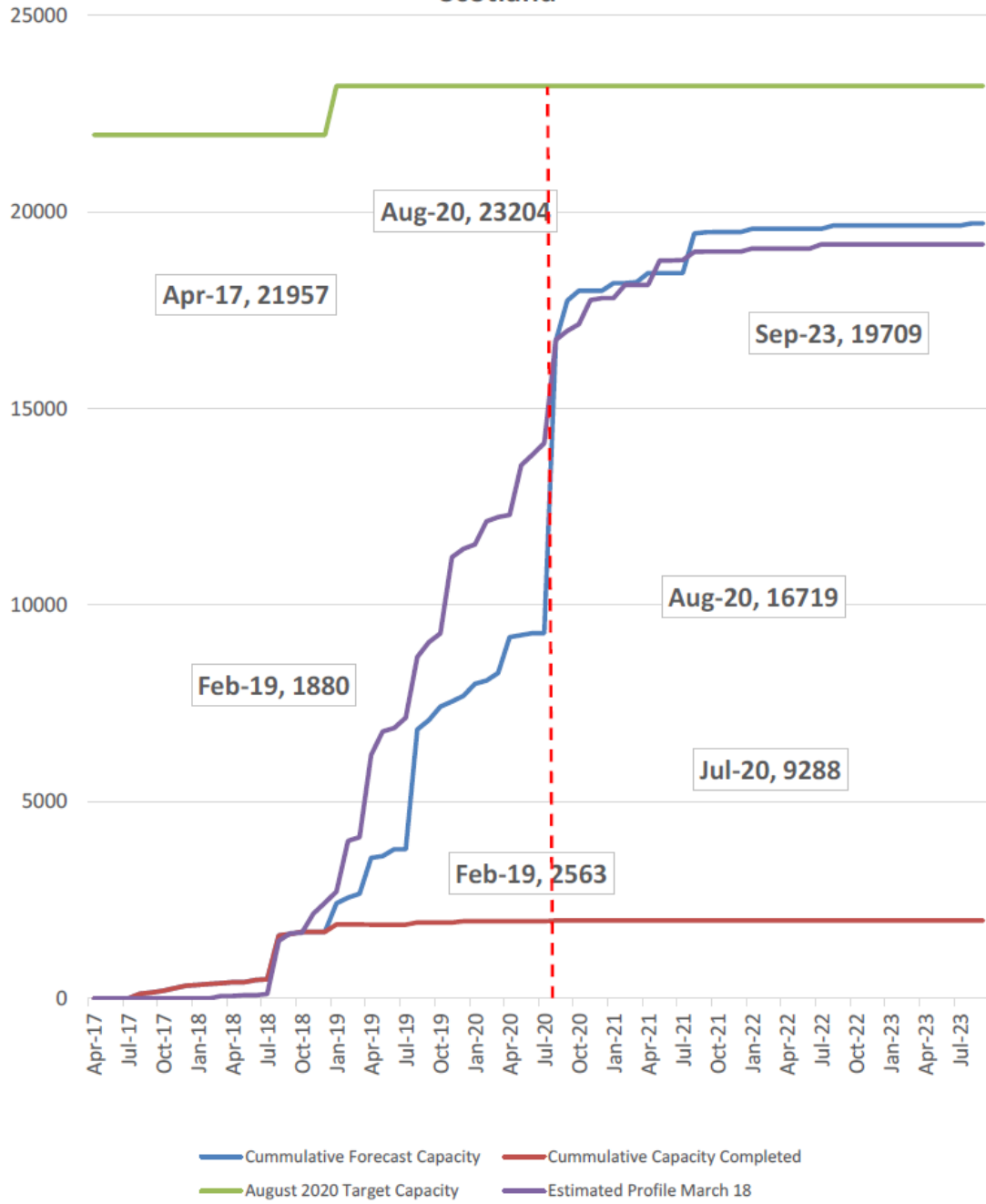
Date: 30th May 2019

Author: Norma Young

Background Papers:

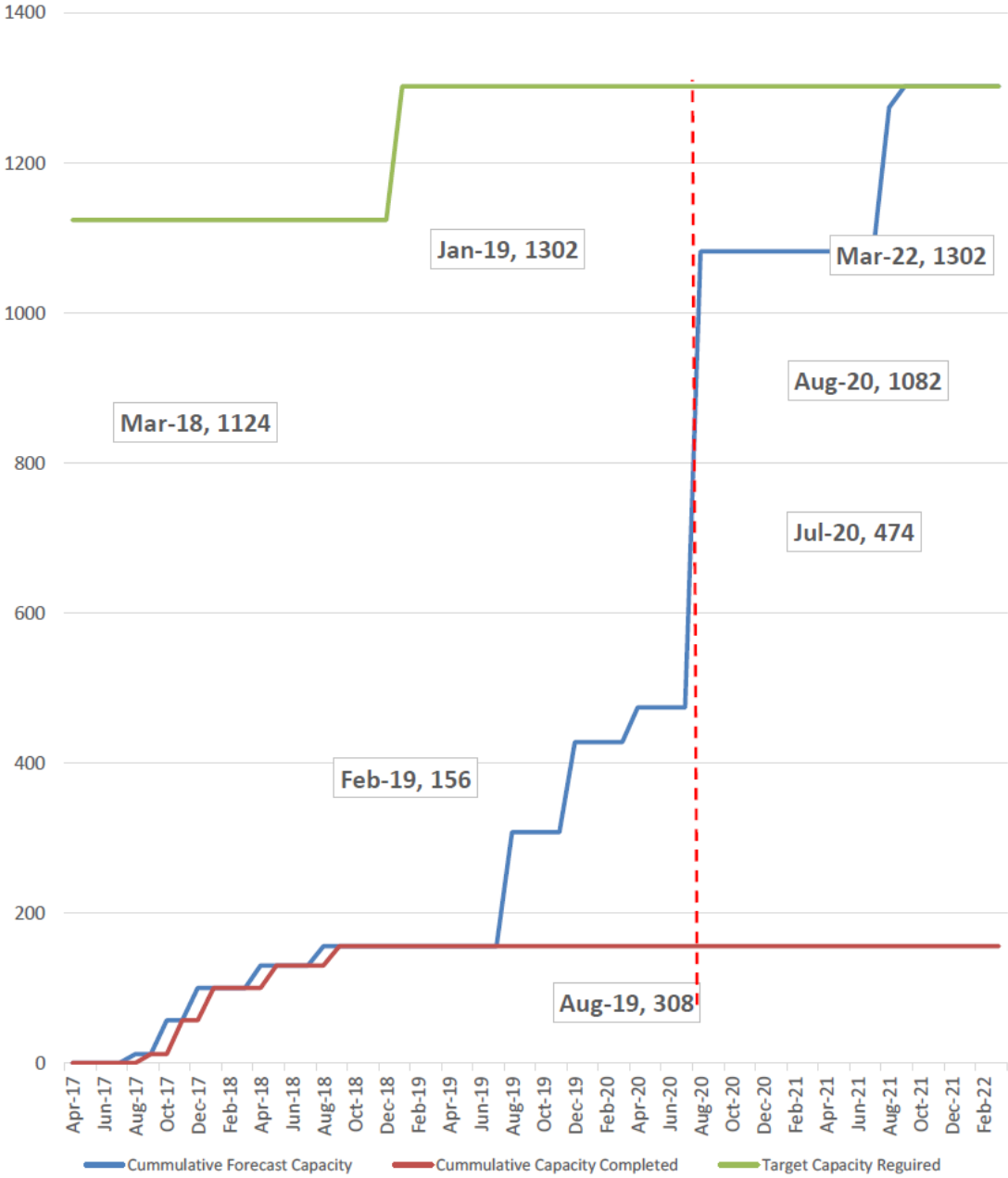
Appendix 1

Local Authority Capacity - Forecast, Open v Target - Scotland



Appendix 2

Local Authority Capacity - Forecast, Open v Target – Highland



Appendix 3

PORTREE ASG	
Broadford EM/GM	Jan-20
Carbost	Jan-20
Dunvegan GM	Jan-20
Edinbane - TBC	Jan-20
Elgol - Inactive	Jan-20
Kilmuir GM	Jan-20
Knockbreck	Jan-20
Macdiarmid	Jan-20
Portree Nursery Ltd	*Oct 2019
Portree GM	Aug-19
Raasay	Jan-20
Sleat EM/GM	Aug-20
Staffin	Jan-20
Struan	Jan-20

	Aug-18	
	Aug-19	
	Jan-20	
	Aug-20	