

Agenda Item	10.
Report No	EDU/05/20

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Education Committee

**Date:** 27 February 2020

**Report Title:** Early Years Update

**Report By:** Chief Executive

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on early years. It highlights the progress of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) expansion programme, the key risk areas associated with the programme, and the mitigating actions being taken.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the update provided in relation to Early Years and ELC expansion
  - ii. Note the status of ELC capital projects and the risk management actions being taken

### 3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource – ELC provision is funded from a baseline Highland Council budget, pre-dating Scottish Government expansion, supplemented by SG funding to deliver expansion to 1140 hours. Resource monitoring is through the ELC Programme Board and revenue monitoring reports to Committee.
- 3.2 Legal – no legal implications to highlight.
- 3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island) – the expansion of ELC will provide the opportunity to positively support many of these areas including supporting families into work and education.
- 3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever – capital investment projects will consider appropriate solutions to mitigate carbon impact and energy efficiency.
- 3.5 Risk – as highlighted within this report, there are a number of key risks related to a change programme of this size. A comprehensive risk management approach is in place

through programme governance, with risk also being considered through both Service Risk Registers and Corporate Risk Registers. A number of mitigating actions are in place, which are reflected within this report.

3.6 Gaelic – expansion will include provision within Gaelic settings.

#### 4. ELC Expansion Programme Update

- 4.1 As reported in previous committee papers the ELC expansion of hours represents a significant change programme. This change has a number of key components, with particular challenges in the number of new workforce required and the physical changes and additions to buildings. This report provides an update on progress towards delivering expansion, highlights risks and implications, and the management action being taken to ensure delivery and mitigating risk.
- 4.2 As reported to previous committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 the relatively late approval of the final programme in June 2019, and the significant number of ELC capital projects to be delivered (84 settings), meant that there was a significant risk around delivery of aspects of that investment for August 2020. Previous reports have also highlighted those ELC settings and projects which were deemed higher priority. As a result mitigating actions are being taken to manage risk around late delivery of capital, including identification of contingency plans, and where necessary early decisions being made around these.
- 4.3 Recognising the scale of the ELC programme, since the last committee report in December 2019, there has been a number of key staff appointments to support delivery. These include new posts of ELC Programme Manager, ELC Programme Manager (capital) and Project Co-ordinator Workforce development. The vacant post of ELC project manager has also been filled.
- 4.4 ELC expansion has been on a phased basis, and as of January 2020, out of 245 ELC settings in Highland, over 50% are now delivering 1140 hours. The next key phase is 100% completion by August 2020, with the Council and Partner Provider planning in relation to staffing, capital and any other changes required, focused on delivery by this timescale, and any mitigating actions necessary.
- 4.5 The Highland operating models for delivery of ELC are as set out on **Appendix 1** and have been developed with input from the Improvement Service, and other partners, and engagement at a local level. These operating models have also been developed in parallel with assessment of capital investment requirements. It is however recognised that a review of models post August 2020 will be necessary.
- 4.6 The impact of choice within some of the Highland Council's contingency plans, may require parents to split their entitlement with another provision. However, it was always the case that in some ELC settings in Highland the operating models may have required parents to consider a split placement. To this end, the Highland Council need to ensure that they are making best use of partner settings to promote the provider neutral values. Communicating this to parents, schools, partners, and commissioned childminders will increase everyone's understanding of quality, flexibility and choice within the differing providers within their area.
- 4.7 Enrolment data will also provide a more accurate picture of the number of children who will be using their funded entitlement, as well as any implications on capacity and the number of full-time equivalent staff that are required for August 2020. The level of

additional staffing is significant, and represents both a major employment and career opportunity within the Highlands, as well as a major transformational challenge.

- 4.8 The whole recruitment drive across Scotland is about building and shaping a career in Early Years, to ensure the delivery of quality ELC. Highland Council is keen to ensure that the recruitment strategy for ELC provides us with the staff we need not only to deliver the expanded hours, but provide children with quality experiences in ELC, in settings that are reaching more than the National Standard of 'Good'. Each month we review the Care Inspectorate ratings of our settings. A clear plan to ensure immediate and long-term actions for improvement across ELC settings in Highland has been developed.

## 5. ELC Capital Investment Update

- 5.1 **Appendix 2** provides an updated analysis of the 84 ELC capital projects, and the risk rating applied to each. The risk ratings are based on the following methodology:

Blue Work completed

Green Work underway onsite

Yellow Project progressing and on schedule

Amber Possible risk of delay and mitigating action being taken

Red Probable risk of delay and mitigating action being taken

Purple Part of a major project – August 2021 completion

- 5.2 There are 21 projects which were deemed 'higher priority' in relation to the risk around project delivery, and contingency requirements. As set out on Appendix 2, at the date of this report there are 16 projects categorised as 'Red'. A contingency planning approach has been taken in relation to managing risk around these projects, and to date there are 11 settings where an early pro-active decision has been made to implement those contingency plans. This early decision has been made in recognition of work that can then be taken forward to implement that contingency, and ensuring parents are aware of any implications at enrolment. In relation to the remaining projects, further review of contingency arrangements is underway, as well as mitigating action in relation to the capital project delivery, and any further decisions to implement the contingency will be taken at the appropriate time. The types of contingencies that are being implemented for the 11 projects noted include; temporary premises until the build is completed, management of session hours and working flexibly with primary school and/or partner providers. Contingency arrangements will ensure delivery of 1140 hours by August 2020, and briefings will be provided to members at a local level to understand progress with capital investment delivery, and contingency arrangements.

- 5.3 Some of the key developments in relation to ELC projects are as follows:

**Bun-Sgoil Ghaidhlig Inbhir Nis:** Opening of the annexe adjacent to the school at the start of the new term in January. The building comprises two nursery classrooms, two primary classrooms, a production kitchen, dining area, offices and other facilities. It will provide the nursery accommodation required to deliver the increased provision from August 2020 as well increasing the capacity of the primary school to address the roll pressures there. The kitchen will also supply meals to other nurseries in the Inverness area.

**Ullapool Primary School:** The nursery extension was handed over in November. This comprises two nursery rooms (one English and one Gaelic Medium) with ancillary accommodation linked to the main building to replace a dilapidated nursery unit.

**Portree Primary School:** The conversion of areas vacated following the move of Gaelic provision to the new Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh has been completed and the nursery will be occupied in February.

Progress on site with the following projects, all of which are due to be operational before the end of the current session.

**Deshar Primary School:** New nursery unit. This is a successful joint initiative with a community fund-raising group that have contributed £80,000 towards the project.

**Keiss Primary School:** New nursery unit.

**Tomnacross Primary School:** Extension/refurbishment of the former school house.

**Tongue Primary School:** New nursery unit.

- 5.4 As part of ongoing communication planning, regular update reports will continue to be taken to this Committee. Local updates will also be provided to elected members at a local level through ward level briefings and Area Committee updates where required. These will be part of a broader communication plan to all key stakeholders.

## **6. ELC Good Practice Update**

- 6.1 An ELC quality action plan has been agreed which describes a systematic model of ELC improvement, based on rigorous self-evaluation. Approach to self evaluation is formative, based on area and authority data to support overall planning and support for settings. An audit was conducted with Highland Council Head Teachers and Partner setting Managers around the National Standard, which all settings must meet from August 2020. This identified strengths and weaknesses linked to the National Standard and established next steps for improvement planning. Clear communication strategies are key to quality improvement and guidelines around targeted support will be shared with local areas.
- 6.2 A detailed CPD plan is currently being drafted with a menu of bespoke training to address needs as identified from the National Standard audit. The planned CPD will be reviewed regularly in light of the data gathered through various quality improvement activities. Several models of CPD are on offer, drawing on existing knowledge and skills within the current workforce. Various mediums are being utilised, for example; the ELC Blog, VScene, Webinars and Video Conferencing. In addition to, setting visits and workshops. These will increase accessibility to CPD opportunities for all ELC staff. Looking outwards we continue to access CPD and support from Northern Alliance and Scottish Government Advisors.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 18 February 2020

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Background Papers:

Appendix 1: Highland Operating Models

Appendix 2: Capital Projects – Risk Categorisation

## Appendix 1 - Highland Operating Model

The Highland Council offers three different operating models that include term time school hours, extended hours and whole year provision to allow demands on provision to be met. However, due to geographical challenges in the Highlands, the flexibility that can be offered depends on your area. Nonetheless in most cases a blended provision between partners, childminders or local authority nurseries will make extended (8am – 6pm) coverage possible. Ongoing work is being undertaken to ensure there is equity of what is offered across Highland and that within each ASG a mixture of models is offered wherever possible.

<b>Option 1</b>	<b>In accordance with school opening times during <u>school term time</u></b>  Settings are open for 30 hours a week over 38 weeks.	Allowing up to 30 funded hours per week in accordance with school opening times. In most cases this will be over 5 days (9am - 3pm) however some schools operate an asymmetric week with early closing on a Friday.
<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Opening hours (8am - 6pm) during <u>school term time</u></b>  Settings are open for 50 hours a week over 38 weeks.	Allowing up to 30 funded hours per week with the opportunity to purchase additional hours, subject to availability.
<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Opening hours (8am – 6pm) <u>all year</u></b>  Settings are open for 50 hours a week over 49 weeks.	Receiving funded hours in discussion with the setting and the opportunity to purchase additional hours, subject to availability. Where capacity allows <b>Option 2</b> will also be available.

**APPENDIX 2 - CRITICAL PROJECTS/RISK CATEGORISATION - PAGE 1**

	School Name	Critical Y/N?	Rating	Type
1	Acharacle Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
2	Ardersier Primary School		Yellow	Extension
3	Ardgour Primary School		Red	Extension
4	Arisaig Primary School	Yes	Red	Extension
5	Auchtertyre Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
6	Auldearn Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Modular
7	Avoch Primary School	Yes	Red	Extension
8	Balloch Primary School		Yellow	Minor Refub
9	Beauly Primary School		Purple	Major Project
10	Ben Wyvis Primary School		Red	Extension
11	Bonar Bridge Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
12	Bridgend Primary School		Yellow	Modular
13	Broadford Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
14	Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis		Blue	Modular
15	Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh		Blue	Major Project
16	Bun-Sgoil Shlèite	Yes	Red	Modular
17	Cauldeen Primary School		Blue	Major Project
18	Central Primary School		Yellow	Minor Refub
19	Coulhill Primary School		Yellow	Modular
20	Cromarty Primary School		Yellow	Minor Refub
21	Crown Primary School	Yes	Red	Minor Refub

	School Name	Critical Y/N?	Rating	Type
22	Croy Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
23	Dalneigh Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
24	Deshar Primary School		Green	Minor Refub
25	Dingwall Primary School		Red	Modular
26	Dornoch Primary School		Blue	Extension
27	Drakies Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
28	Dunbeath Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
29	Duncan Forbes Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Modular
30	Dunvegan Primary School		Purple	Major Project
31	Durness Primary School		Green	Minor Refub
32	Farr Primary School (Bettyhill)		Blue	Major Project
33	Gairloch Primary School	Yes	Amber	Extension
34	Glenurquhart Primary School		Yellow	Modular
35	Golspie Primary School		Amber	Minor Refub
36	Grantown Primary School		Red	Extension
37	Hill of Fearn Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
38	Hilton of Cadboll Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
39	Hilton Primary School		Red	Modular
40	Invergarry Primary School		Yellow	Extension
41	Inverlochry Primary School		Blue	Minor Refub
42	Keiss Primary School		Green	Extension

**APPENDIX 2 - CRITICAL PROJECTS/RISK CATEGORISATION - PAGE 2**

School Name	Critical Y/N?	Rating	Type	
43	Kilchoan Primary School	Yellow	Minor Refub	
44	Kiltearn Primary School	Purple	Major Project	
45	Kinmylies Primary School	Red	Modular	
46	Kirkhill Primary School	Yellow	Extension	
47	Kyle Primary School	Yes	Red	Modular
48	Lairg Primary School	Yellow	Minor Refub	
49	Lochaline Primary School	Amber	Minor Refub	
50	Lochcarron Primary School	Yes	Amber	Modular
51	Lybster Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
52	Mallaig Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Minor Refub
53	Marybank Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
54	Melvich Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
55	Merkinch Primary School	Green	Major Project	
56	Millbank Primary School	Red	Modular	
57	Miller Academy Primary School	Yes	Red	Extension
58	Milton of Leys Primary School	Red	Extension	
59	Mount Pleasant Primary School	Yellow	Minor Refub	
60	Muirtown Primary School	Yellow	Modular	
61	Mulbuie Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Modular
62	Ness Castle	Purple	Major Project	
63	Newton Park Primary School	Yes	Amber	Minor Refub

School Name	Critical Y/N?	Rating	Type	
64	Newtonmore Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Extension
65	North Kessock Primary School	Yes	Red	Extension
66	Noss Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
67	Obsdale Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Modular
68	Pennyland Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Minor Refub
69	Portree Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
70	Raigmore Primary School	Yes	Red	Extension
71	Reay Primary School	Yes	Amber	Extension
72	Rosebank Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Minor Refub
73	Scoraig Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
74	Shieldaig Primary School	Amber	Minor Refub	
75	Smithton Primary School	Blue	Major Project	
76	South Lodge Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
77	St Joseph's RC Primary School	Yellow	Minor Refub	
78	Strathconon Primary School	Purple	Major Project	
79	Stratherrick Primary School	Blue	Minor Refub	
80	Strathpeffer Primary School	Yes	Yellow	Minor Refub
81	Tarradale Primary School	Blue	Modular	
82	Tomnacross Primary School	Green	Minor Refub	
83	Tongue Primary School	Green	Extension	
84	Ullapool Primary School	Blue	Extension	