

Agenda Item	17.
Report No	PEO 18/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: People Committee

Date: 23 August 2017

Report Title: Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress towards the development of the Delivery Plan for the further expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) required by the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 The Scottish Government has made a commitment to extend the entitlement of funded ELC to all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds from 600 to 1140 hours a year by 2020. The background to this policy is that evidence suggests that universal and high quality early learning and childcare provides children with the confidence to integrate well in to school, thereby ensuring that all children get the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- 1.3 The Delivery Plan will be completed and returned to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017 and will form the basis of the vision for Highland. It is to be viewed as an evolving plan which will change over time as the needs of children, parents and communities is garnered.

Recommendations

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- 2.1 Members are asked to:
 - Consider the development of the Delivery Plan and make comment (**Appendix 1**)
 - Note the complexities of the planning required for the expansion.
 - Note that further work is still to be undertaken over the next month to finalise the Delivery Plan.
 - Agree to delegate power to the Director of Care and Learning, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chairs of the People Committee, to approve the final Delivery Plan for submission to the Scottish Government by 29 September 2017.

3. Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Draft Delivery Plan

- 3.1 The Scottish Government published '*A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland – 2017/18 Action Plan*', in March 2017.
- 3.2 Local Authorities have been tasked to deliver on this programme, which is complex in its development and far reaching in its delivery. The Government requires that all Local Authorities prepare their initial Delivery Plan and submit this by 29 September 2017.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government has so far indicated that £400m capital funding will be available up until 2020. £1.65m has been provided to Highland Council in 2017/18.
- 3.4 Government has yet to confirm how much revenue funding will be available, but has stated that the expansion will be fully funded, and has provided an additional £1m in 2017/18.
- 3.5 Accordingly, the Delivery Plans from all authorities are critical to detailing current provision and future progress, and will inform the allocation of both capital and revenue funding as we move forward.
- 3.6 Much has already been undertaken in Highland to achieve the progress towards the expansion, and this has been reported to previous Committees. The next stage of this process is to offer reassurance to the Scottish Government that local plans are in place and progressing.
- 3.7 The expansion plan needs to be based on data, and a detailed mapping exercise has been progressing across the Areas taking account of the optimum organisation of local provision including the capital requirements. There is still much work to be done on this plan before its submission, due to the sheer scale of provision and the geography of Highland. The key principles of the ELC expansion will underpin this Delivery Plan:
- 3.8 **Quality** is the key driving principle for the delivery of ELC. The early years provides the foundations for children's future health and wellbeing, promoting secure attachment, social and learning behaviours with long-term impact on improved outcomes for children. If we continue to focus on the early years by promoting child development and nurture through our curriculum, pedagogy and working closely with parents and carers, this will help to close the attainment gap and enable transitions to the next stage of the learning journey.
- 3.9 **Flexibility** for parents to enable them to work, study or train, is a key driver for change. Delivery of this should meet the needs of children, parents and communities as provision will become more flexible and responsive to parental demand. Additional hours will be phased in over the next three years to meet the target of the offer of full provision in August 2020. Expansion plans must therefore consider the impact of any flexible offer on the experience of the child and their family. This offer must also be operationally sustainable. Mapping of provision is highlighting areas where we will require to address that need.
- 3.10 **Accessibility** may be a challenge in some of our more remote and rural areas where populations are low and scattered. Constraints of current service delivery will be removed wherever possible. This includes specific existing issues around capacity in particular locations and ensuring access for children with additional support needs.

3.11 **Affordability.** Reducing the cost of accessing ELC for parents is a significant driver in the ambition to extend the ELC entitlement. This must be set alongside the redesign of ELC services in a manner that is also affordable for Local Authorities and The Scottish Government. It is important to deliver long-term value for money, to create a financially sustainable service model which makes most effective use of public funds. This will include a new service model that must be 'provider neutral', involving investment in Local Authority, private and third sector services, including implementation of the living wage for childcare staff.

4. Implications

4.1 Resources

4.1.1 The Scottish Government has stated that the expansion of early learning and childcare will be fully funded, but also that the Delivery Plans will be critical to determining how this funding will be allocated.

4.1.2 The cost of the revised staffing structure will be met through additional income, and the additional revenue available to the Council in relation to the expansion. There will also be some cost savings through the overall package of proposals.

4.1.3 The scoping work is presently confirming both the capital requirements and the revenue requirements through unit costing. This will be key information in the final version of the plan.

4.2 Legal

4.2.1 These actions will fulfil the Council's statutory obligations.

4.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

4.3.1 The expansion of flexible ELC provides parents with an opportunity to access education, training or employment. It will also offer opportunities to be employed in the sector. This will have an impact on reducing household poverty and also the poverty related attainment gap by ensuring all children have the best start in life.

4.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

4.4.1 It is possible that there may be reduced travel time for some parents.

4.5 Risk

4.5.1 This is a significant and high profile development, taking place in a very short timescale, and therefore involving significant risk. The Delivery Plan will need to help address that risk.

4.6 Gaelic

4.6.1 There are opportunities to expand Gaelic provision for our youngest children.

Designation Director of Care and Learning

Date 14 August 2017

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**Early Learning and Childcare Delivery Plan
Highland Council**

DRAFT

August 2017

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Section One: Introduction and Executive Summary

Our vision in Highland is that all of Highland's children have the best possible start in life, enjoy being young and are supported to develop as confident, capable and resilient young people in order to fully maximise their potential. This vision forms the guiding principle within Highland Council where services to children and young people are delivered through the integrated Care and Learning Service, working in partnership with NHS Highland and the Third Sector. This vision is shared in our communities through community planning structures and partnerships and is fundamental in planning services across the four areas that make up our unique Geography.

We share the Scottish Government commitment to ensure that the expansion of early learning and childcare (ELC) is delivered to all of our children in order to enrich their lives and provide them with the skills to develop into confident and capable young adults and set the trajectory for the rest of their lives. We want to be able to demonstrate to their parents and carers that services we provide in Highland are of the highest quality to ensure their confidence in the provision. We need those services to be flexible in order to best meet the needs of children and parents, and accessible so that all children are able to take up their entitlement.

This plan for Highland will help to shape the evolving journey of early years social policy that will develop over the next 15 – 20 years in Scotland. We have detailed the steps we have taken to expand provision so far and our vision to take this expansion forward into 2020. This plan will offer the Scottish Government assurance that we are fully committed to expanding the current 600 hours of funded early learning and childcare for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds, to 1140 hours by 2020. We will work with parents, partners, communities and other key stakeholders to ensure that this happens and we are committed to delivering high quality ELC that is child centred and meets their needs, the needs of their parents and the needs of communities.

Section Two: Philosophy for ELC in Highland

Our philosophy recognises that the foundation for future health and wellbeing of our children is established at the earliest stages of life. We know that the care and nurture a child receives from pre-birth onwards sets that trajectory and our services are built around the Highland Practice Model that has a focus on early support, early assessment and early intervention to ensure all of our children get the best possible start in life. We will do this by ensuring that we focus on:

- Children's rights to experience unconditional love and secure attachments in their daily lives to equip them with the building blocks they require to enable them to grow and flourish in life.
- Supporting the role of parents and carers as the primary and most important adults in a child's life and we will do all we can to support parents to undertake their role.
- Building on family nurture models of engagement, particularly with those who may struggle due to health and social inequalities.
- Providing an environment where children are enabled to actively construct their own learning
- Working in partnership with parents to ensure that all Highland's children have the best possible start in life and are ready to succeed.

The principles for early learning and childcare must be focused on high quality provision, which is flexible, accessible and affordable. It must also be needs led.

The needs of children

- Children should be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active respected and responsible and included
- Children must be recognised as capable and competent individuals
- Children's learning will be dynamic and holistic
- Children will be supported to utilise their capacity and right to initiate and lead their learning, and be active participants and decision makers in matters that affect them

The needs of parents

- Parents should be enabled to choose accessible ELC settings that are of the highest quality for their children
- Parents should expect flexibility in the provision that meets the needs of their family life and enable them to work, train or study
- Parents should have access to affordable ELC, particularly those parents who find it difficult to make ends meet

The needs of communities

- Communities should expect that the expansion of ELC will impact positively on the health, social and economic circumstances of families living in Highland by enabling employability through providing parents with greater flexibility and affordability
- Communities should recognise opportunities within ELC as a route to employment and gaining qualifications
- Communities will support partnerships between local authority, health and third sector grow to ensure that the uniqueness of Highlands urban, remote, rural and island localities work together to seek solutions to support the expansion of ELC

In Highland we acknowledge the increasing evidence that supports the argument that the highest rate of social and economic return is through investment in the earliest years of life. We have already committed to that philosophy through our integrated children's service model – however, the expansion of ELC will take us further as we work more closely with parents

Section Three: Current Provision of ELC

Overview

There are approximately 2200 babies born annually in Highland Council with 17.4% of our population aged 0-15 years. Our geography consists of a mix of urban rural, remote and island communities spread across an area that measures 26,484 square km. This accounts for a third of the land mass of Scotland.

The delivery of funded ELC for 3 and 4 year olds in Highland is distributed across 130 local authority nurseries and 58 partner providers. The partner providers are a mix of private businesses and voluntary and third sector run groups. Parents in Highland can choose which provider they want to use for the funded hours and there is no restriction placed by the Local Authority on how many places are available, this is purely down to provider capacity. Parents can also choose to split their child's placement across two providers, in a blended model.

In the majority of cases provision for eligible 2 year olds in Highland does not sit within Local Authority nurseries and most of our eligible 2 year olds will take up their place at a partner provider or childminder. However, the exception to this is one local authority provision at the Family Centre in Merkinch, Inverness which is situated in an area of deprivation and provides places for up to forty 2 year olds. There are also a small number of eligible 2's in Local Authority nurseries where local provision in very remote and rural areas has meant that the school is the only provider.

We have endeavoured to encourage childminders to provide places for eligible 2 year olds and have offered them a monetary incentive to do this. We are working closely with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) to try to address the reluctance of some parents in Highland who are not choosing to use childminders, preferring the group provision.

The numbers of families, who take up the eligible 2 year old entitlement which is based on families receiving certain benefits, is still low and we are working hard to ensure the messages are being delivered to parents. This includes using the revised health visitor universal pathway contact at 13 – 15 months to inform parents, increasing the use of media and sharing the information with family team staff and third sector partners who provide services to families including CAB and CALA.

It is however worthy of note that within small rural communities there is often reluctance from parents to take up entitlements related to benefits due to a notion of stigma and everyone knowing, and we see the same reticence in take up of free school meals in our schools. However we are now in a better position to ensure families are aware of the entitlement and are making an informed decision on whether they take this up or not. We also offer some discretionary funded places to 2 year olds whose needs require a Child's Plan to ensure their health and wellbeing outcomes are being met. We recognise that a child's needs are not just based on

family income but may be impacted on by parental illness, family breakdown or other factors.

In Highland children with additional support needs account for approx. 6-7% of the population. The provision of Gaelic medium in respect of ELC must take account of the immersion in the language until P4.

Registrations in Highland for 2017

Table 1 details the registrations for this coming year. The majority of children take up their place in local authority provision and we are encouraging settings to move away from traditional models of 3 hours 10 minutes to a more flexible service.

Table 1

May 2017	2 year olds	3 year olds (ante-pre)	4 year olds (pre-school)	5 year olds (Deferred)	Total
Local authority settings	25	1529	1886	245	3685
Partner provider settings	88	656	536	62	1342
Childminding services	8				8
Total	118	2185	2422	307	5035

We can currently accommodate all 3 and 4 year olds across settings where parents request it. We know that some parents will chose not to send their children for the full 600 hours provision, particularly the parents of 3 year olds. Most parents whose 4 year olds attend take up their full entitlement, as do the parents of eligible 2 year olds.

Local Authority Provision

Since 2007 Highland Council has offered a limited childcare service operating from 8am – 6pm term time only, in any new school being built. When the plans to expand to 600 hours of ELC were instigated in 2014, a decision was made to pilot increased flexibility in two of our local authority settings and also to move away from the traditional nursery session plus wraparound care. We have taken the learning from those initial pilots to influence and improve as we move forward.

In 2016/17 we have expanded our ELC provision and currently 53 of our local authority nurseries are now offering more than 600 hours to parents. Any additional hours over entitlement which parents wish to purchase are charged for. In this respect we are phasing in the capacity to deliver additional hours but are charging parents to subsidise the additional revenue that is incurred. The exception to charging is when a Childs Plan is in place and the Family Team who is supporting the child may fund the additional hours.

We continue to encourage those settings who have not yet done so, to promote the offer of flexibility to parents, for example move towards an initial 4 hours delivered over 4 days. To enable us to offer more flexibility in our larger nurseries we have employed to date, 13 childcare managers who are crucial to the operational development and delivery of extended childcare services for 3 – 12 year olds, which includes the offer of Out of School Care (OSC).

Early Level Learning

As Highland has such a diverse geography with a mixture of densely populated towns and very sparsely populated small communities, innovative approaches are often required in order to deliver services. 58% of our schools have less than 70 pupils. Because of this and to ensure ELC is delivered to children in our remote and rural communities, early level learning has been developed. Last session this was provided in seven local authority schools in rural areas which saw nursery children and P1s together in an early level class (see Table 2).

Table 2 Early level classes

School	Early Level Classes – session 16/17				
	N3	N4	P1	Total	P2 - 7
Lairg	6	13	7	26	40
Cannich Bridge	2	10	6	18	44
Farr - Inverness	5	11	10	26	32
Strathdearn	7	9	5	21	38
Teanassie	6	7	10	21	37
Kingussie	6	9	11	26	78
Milton	7	9	12	28	58

Whilst it is our aim to keep class sizes as small as possible, due to the collective number of children across nursery and P1 the stated number may exceed 25 and this has been discussed at length. To put this into context, these numbers do not reflect when a 3 year old may have taken up their place which may well not have

been until January or April. The reality is also that young children rarely have 100% attendance either due to parental choice or childhood illness.

Forming an early level class provides an additional teacher for the children and stabilises staffing. Therefore, early level learning has been an attractive option for headteachers in these rural schools where composite class arrangements have been difficult due to a spike in numbers at a particular stage, especially if it is in P1 or P2, with smaller intake of P1s coming in behind. Moreover as overall school numbers are falling in these areas of Highland, so too does the teacher entitlement and therefore the addition of a teacher for early level learning stabilises the staffing arrangements. The workload is also shared between the teacher and the early years practitioner (EYP). Furthermore, due to accommodation pressures the use of any nursery accommodation for an early level class makes better use of the available resources.

The most important benefit of early level learning has been to the children. The educational value for the P1's being in a less formal structured environment than they would necessarily be in a composite class with older children in a two or three teacher school has been recognised. Staff have reported that spending time with the younger children with a focus on free, unstructured play and greater access to the outdoor learning environment has meant that the P1's are more able to settle and focus on numeracy and literacy with the teacher when the younger children move into sessions with the EYP, or go home.

The nursery children are also able to benefit from taking part in more school activities and being mentored by the older children, which increases their confidence and a desire to learn. This will minimise the transition needed into P1 given the sharing of resources, staff and environments. We therefore feel that this is a good model for areas of Highland.

Partner Centre Provision

ELC for eligible children in Highland is also provided through funding our third sector and private partners. There are currently 58 partner providers across Highland and 28 of these provide a full day care service from 8am – 6pm. Parents will pay the provider fees for additional hours on top of their 600 hours free entitlement and this is popular as many of the providers operate throughout the year.

Funding to third sector partners is managed differently to that of private providers. Private centres receive a per capita payment only; whereas third sector centres are subsidised with a block grant in order for them to remain viable where their numbers are low. We move to per capita payments when the numbers of children attending are over 20.

When ELC was initially established in Highland the priority at that time was to get services up and running quickly to meet parental eligibility requirements. This has

meant that there is now some duplication within Areas, with both Local Authority and partner providers doubling on provision, and where 3 and 4 year olds from the same family can attend different providers. Over the years we have continued to rationalise provision of services whilst taking account of local needs and this has meant that as Local Authority flexible provision has grown, the number of partners that we fund has reduced.

Having met the target to deliver 600 hours in August 2014 the planning and implementation of expansion to an entitlement of 1140 hours by 2020 has resulted in us focusing even further on rationalising services. There has been a reduction in this year's core budget, whilst the additional funding from the Scottish Government to increase flexibility and implement 1140 hours gives us a clear steer to continue to map local provision, consider long term requirements, promote flexibility and reduce duplication, whilst achieving best value.

However, high quality ELC must be at the heart of any rationalisation of provision. As we move forward into 2020 and beyond this will be the basis of any decisions we make around funding, together with flexibility, accessibility and affordability. Local Authority nurseries and partner providers must be able to meet the needs of children, parents and communities as we phase in and expand flexibility and increase hours.

Childminders

There are currently 265 childminders registered in Highland. To date, we have two commissioned to deliver the 3 and 4 year old provision; other childminders are used by parents for any additional non funded hours. Consultation with parents in the past has demonstrated that they have a preference for settings rather than childminders for the 3 and 4 year old provision. We continue to monitor this and further consultation with parents will help us to plan local service delivery as we move forward. We want more childminders to be part of the service delivery in future provision and are working with them to support more to become commissioned to meet expansion requirements.

There are a small number of childminders who we fund to provide a service to eligible 2 year olds and all childminders who obtain a grade 3 mean score or over with the Care Inspectorate can apply to take 2 year olds. Despite continued focus on supporting childminders from our family resource co-ordinators, there are very few taking up the option. We continue to address the provision required for eligible 2 year olds including working with additional partners and the use of other assets.

Quality Assurance

Ensuring a high quality provision is at the heart of our expansion plans and we endeavour to make sure this is being delivered to children. We support all of our early years workforce across settings to provide a service that meets the requirement to become qualified practitioners and we offer continuous professional development (CPD) to all providers including childminders.

Structure of the Early Years Services

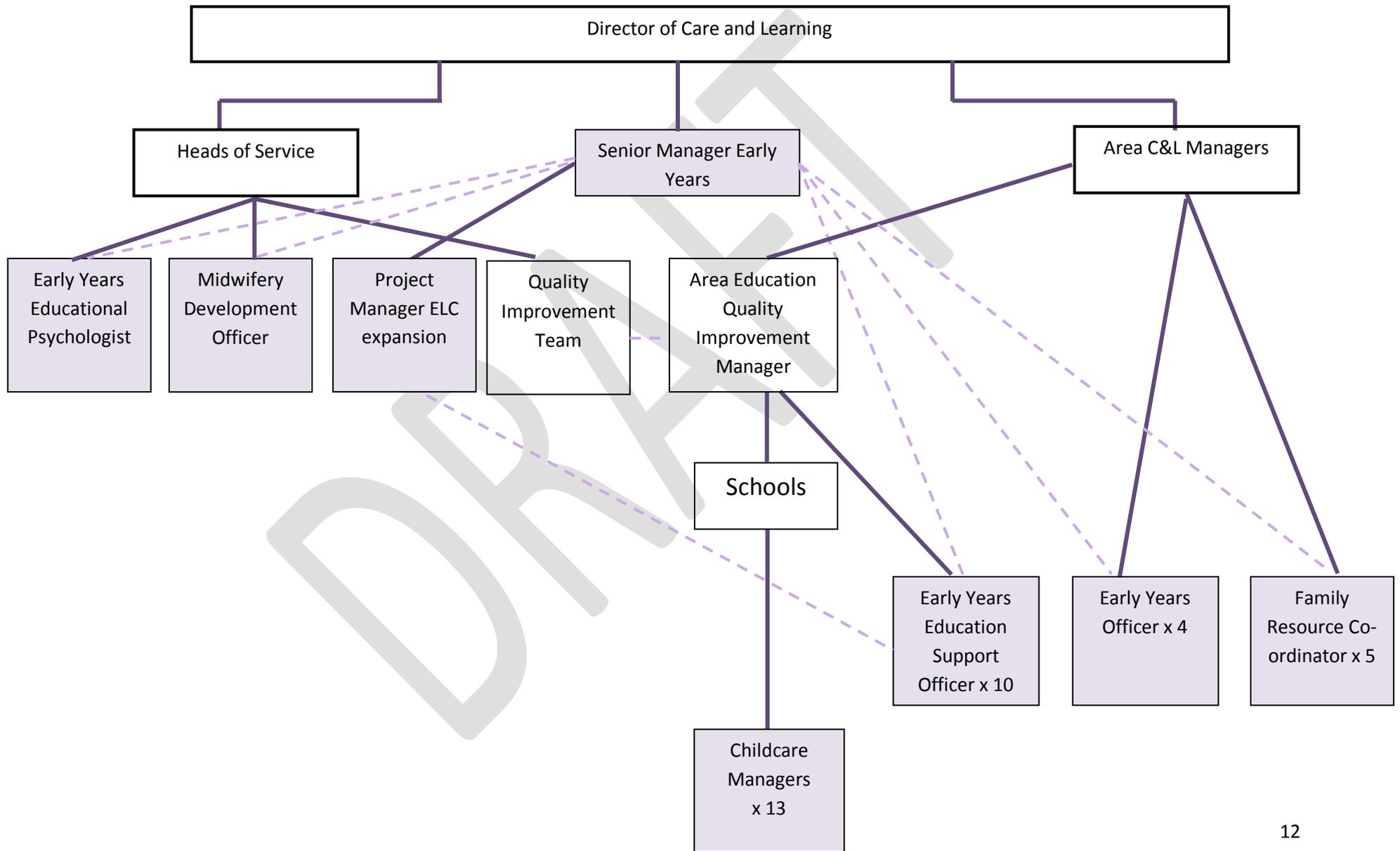
The strategic direction for early years is centrally led but operationally managed within the four Areas in Highland. The structure has been in place for just over a year with the project manager for the ELC expansion being a recent addition.

The structure has enabled us to ensure that the relationships across teams who have a role in supporting early years is strengthened, it is reducing silo thinking, challenging historical processes and helping shape the future provision of early years.

Furthermore, the Area Care and Learning managers have a full understanding of all early years provision within their area and actively engage with not only the developments and challenges within local authority nurseries but also partners. Peer support within groupings of staff is encouraged and has enabled practitioners to come together on a regular basis as knowledge experts to support and develop the service they provide. This is essential in Highland due to our vast geography and the ever changing landscape of early years.

As we increase our services to manage the expansion of ELC our structure may need to expand and change. We will need to consider the impact that the continuous growth and development of the service will have on our ever increasing workforce in terms of provision, training, CPD, quality and maintenance of standards.

Early Years Structure



Quality of settings

In order to achieve and build on quality standards, we have a team of Early Years Education Support Officers (EYESOs) who work across Highland, managed within the Area team by the Quality Improvement Manager (QIM). Their priorities and values are based on the Highland Practice model that seeks to ensure that all children get the best start in life and are ready to succeed, and that the curriculum is delivered to support each individual child. The foundations for this are built on *How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC)*, *Building the Ambition* and the *Care Inspectorate standards*.

Our settings must gain grade 3 or above in all areas from the Care Inspectorate and equivalent from Education Scotland and where this doesn't occur we work with our Inspection Authorities to put in place action plans to address any areas of concern.

We ask that all partner providers complete annual improvement plans which the EYESO team evaluate to ensure the principles required for quality ELC are clearly demonstrated and evidenced. Any discrepancies are highlighted with the manager of the setting and support from the EYESOs is provided. Where there may be implications around quality within a nursery then the EYESO will work closely with the area Quality Improvement Officers (QIOs) to develop the action plan.

This year the EYESOs have focused on providing more support to our partner providers to ensure the teacher input is delivered and relationships developed. This has helped to develop an Area wide perspective on the ELC providers and how they are placed to deliver and expand as we move towards 2020.

Quality support visits to all providers are a key part of the EYESO role as is the content and delivery of CPD that takes account of evidence based best practice.

Quality of the workforce

CPD is seen as an important element of providing a quality service and all ELC staff have access to the annual CPD calendar. Training is delivered around a core suite of competencies and additional areas of knowledge and skills that we expect staff to be competent in.

We continually review and map current learning and development opportunities, highlighting areas of good practice and any gaps which we need to provide and support staff with. We know for example that we need to develop more focus on the requirements of eligible 2 year olds and ensuring staff understand their development pathway.

We also need to ensure all ELC staff have the appropriate skills to effectively engage parents and be able to assist them with any support they may require to promote secure attachments and family nurture models of engagement. Enabling parents to be the best that they can be will be hugely advantageous when working

with more vulnerable and disadvantaged families who may feel disempowered. The core suite of parenting support and interventions developed through the Supporting Parents Improvement Group is helping to ensure families are able to access a range of differing approaches to parenting that best meet their needs.

Workforce

For August 2014 we increased our staffing from 350 to 500 early years practitioners (EYP) whilst standardising most contracts to 23 hours a week. This included 16 hours contact time and 7 hours planning and preparation. This allowed us the potential to increase contracts for staff who wish to, up to a maximum of 35 hours a week. For August 2016, there were approximately 50 staff that increased their contractual hours to accommodate the expansion of flexibility.

In February 2017, the total number of EYPs had increased to 559 and this continues to grow as we increase flexibility. When children are in a setting for more than 4 hours the ratio of staff to children changes from 1:10, to 1:8 therefore the workforce is continuously expanding.

Area	Number of EYPs February 2017	Total hours for Feb	Number of EYPs July 2017	Total hours for July
West	115	2684.92	awaited	awaited
North	89	2099	94	2166.25
South	246	6450.75	263	6724.25
Mid	109	2154	111	2604.75
Totals	559	13388.67		

Approximately 80% of the EYP workforce is qualified to meet the SSSC requirements. Those that are not qualified are supported to undertake the SVQ 3 qualification within the specified timeframe in order that we meet the quality standards expected.

In April 2016 we recruited 10 new posts of childcare manager in schools that were leading on the expansion of ELC. These postholders are part of the school senior management team and responsible for the day to day management of the ELC provision, including out of school care (OSC).

The childcare manager is the line manager for the nursery staff in their base school, and has also been providing support to other schools that are offering flexibility but do not qualify for a childcare manager. The support has been provided to the clerical staff that are managing the systems for billing. Schools have required additional clerical hours to support the expansion and schools without a childcare manager but

operating flexibility have also been allocated negotiated additional management time to the head teacher, depending on the level of flexibility being delivered.

Without the childcare manager posts, it would not have been possible to prepare for expansion. In session 17/18 there will be 13 in post with no current plans to create more posts this year, to allow time to consolidate existing posts and systems. However this will change with more posts established in the larger nurseries where an increase in flexible delivery over the extended school year will be established. A requirement of the post is to extend the provision over the year in an ASG and also develop OSC for all primary age children.

As flexibility increases so do the growing challenges of managing and leading the increasing workforce of early years staff, and a need to refine current thinking around the workforce. As we move forward with the expansion of ELC and more nurseries are offering an extended day, our need to increase the workforce grows incrementally. We have also created an annual transfer window where EYPs have an opportunity to move settings if a vacancy exists.

As we continue to increase the number of staff hours a nursery has it has become apparent through speaking with head teachers that a move from a flat structure of EYPs is necessary.

In nurseries that do not have a childcare manager there is a need to have a senior post that can support the head teacher with the responsibility of managing a growing early years workforce before 1140 hours becomes available for all nursery children. Also, many of the nurseries in Highland are small and rural with less than 10 children, so although two members of staff are required to maintain the ratio of staff to children, it is not a second EYP that is needed. It is often general assistance with lunch, snack and toileting that is required.

Furthermore, in the larger settings currently offering flexibility, and in all nurseries in 2020 when children will be attending for more hours in the day then assistance with lunches, nappy changing and general welfare needs will increase, not necessarily duties that would require an EYP.

Two new posts have therefore been developed for 2017/18 to address the requirements of the growing workforce and the increasing hours and flexibility that are to be delivered. The first is senior EYP who will provide leadership and management to a growing workforce and will be employed in settings that are unlikely to be delivering a full day care service for all ages in the future, and therefore will not be eligible for a childcare manager. The senior EYP will be full time (35 hours) to enable them to fulfil the leadership and management role required, and will also be a key member of the nursery team. They will still have 16 hours of contact time and key worker duties however; they would also have a lead role in terms of planning, staff rotas and day to day supervision.

The second post is an ELC support worker who will be introduced in settings where there are at least 12 children accessing school lunches on a daily basis as part of their flexible day. They will attend to the duties that are not necessarily those of an EYP and will therefore be cost effective. We are not seeing a slump in uptake of hours over lunchtime in most settings offering flexibility in fact the opposite is occurring as we move away from sessions.

The support worker will require Social Services (children and young people) SCQF level 6 (previous SVQ 2) qualification for SSSC registration and this is important for them to be seen as a valued member of the early years workforce. Having a post at this level will also enable those staff who are anxious about studying at SVQ3 but who work well with children, an opportunity to gain experience and a qualification, which may then lead them onto further study and an EYP role.

LA ELC Staffing Structure 2017

Title	Basic Hours/week	HC Pay Grade	Contracted Weeks/year	Required Qualification	SSSC registration
Childcare Manager	35	9	52	BA Childhood Practice	Manager
Senior Early Years Practitioner	35	Tbc after job evaluation	40 + holidays	Social Service (C&YP) SCQF 7(previous SVQ 3) Leadership training	Practitioner
Early Years Practitioner	23	5 - qualified 4 – unqualified	40 + holidays	Social Service (C&YP) SCQF 7	Practitioner
Out of School Care Practitioner	20	5 - qualified 4 – unqualified	40 + holidays	Social Service (C&YP) SCQF 7	Practitioner
Early Learning and Childcare Support Worker	Various	3	39 + holidays	Social Services (C&YP) SCQF 6	Support Worker
Modern Apprentice	23	Scottish Living Wage	40 + holidays	Social Services (C&YP) SCQF 7 in post training and mentoring	Practitioner

Processes and IT Systems

The introduction of a flexible provision with the ability to offer additional chargeable hours to children and families has provided us with many challenges. Not least of these has been the billing process required to ensure that parents who wish to purchase additional ELC are accurately charged. Providing an extended day for nursery children has also enabled the growth of out of school care offered to all primary children within the school and generated an additional income for the authority.

However, to enable this we have had to invest in additional manpower and resources as there was no national system that could accurately capture the fully flexible service we were offering. We explored the use of SEEMIs and NAMs which did not allow for the flexible billing we required and we also consulted with IT companies in England who were looking to charge substantial amounts to procure their services.

This has therefore meant considerable, additional input from business support staff where a manual system was in place, and a move to the procurement of an IT consultant to develop the software we require for a flexible system. Additional to this was a huge requirement from our own Care and Learning IT team, focused work and support from the Corporate Improvement team and also the Revenues and Benefits teams. Without all of this support we would not now be in a position where we can move forward with a streamlined billing process, an agreement to Direct Debit payments and vouchers and a move away from invoicing which was causing so much additional work and inaccurate charges to parents.

It would have been unsustainable to continue the previous processes we had in place which were not equipped to deal with flexible charging now, or as we move forward. We are extremely grateful to them all.

Phase 1 - developing the database through numerous discussions with the childcare managers, gathering all of the relevant information required and rigorous testing

Phase 2 - further development of the software

Phase 3 - will include partner centre details to capture any split placements and follow the child

Phase 4 - enable a facility to have a handheld tablet to enter daily register which can be uploaded into the database

Funding of ELC

Highland Councils expenditure on the early years' service is £15 million.

Average Unit cost in Highland takes account of the remote and rural geography and in that respect provision is expensive ... unit costs still being mapped

Highland Council allocates funding to partners based on either a per capita or block grant payment. The per capita payment is paid to providers with larger numbers of funded children (21 or over) and the block grant for smaller numbers, in order to provide sustainability in some of our remote and rural communities. However, all private providers receive per capita payments even where they have fewer than 20 children.

There had been no increase in rates for commissioned partner centres in 2016/17 with Highland Council paying £3.80/hour to private providers, and £3.75 to third sector providers for the 3 and 4 year old funded provision. All partners receive additional benefits from the Council regarding CPD and quality assurance support, with some receiving support with management of their settings from Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) through an Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Highland Council.

For 2017/18 we have increased the per capita rate we pay to partners for 3 and 4 year olds by 5% on the basis that this is the increase agreed within the Council for the cost to parents of in-house services. It is further proposed that this is implemented at £4.00/hour for all providers, as there is no longer a basis for a differential rate across the sectors.

We fund partners £5.00 per hour for eligible 2 year olds and this payment has been judged as fair through discussions with partners. We also pay an incentive to new childminders to provide a service to eligible 2's. Where 2 year olds have ASN the funding to provide support for them is at the rate of £8.50 on top of the £5.00 set rate, therefore £13.50 per child per hour. Block grant payments are also currently being adjusted for next session to take account of the 5% increase.

The current partner centre rates are calculated to take account of staff salaries required to run the provision and include rent, insurance, resources, consumables, snack and manager costs. We have in place partner centre agreements which are reviewed and issued annually and partners are required to complete these and return with a financial statement before payments are issued. These have been revised this year to ensure the focus on quality and flexibility is clearly stated.

Within local authority nurseries we offer parents additional hours which they can purchase on top of their free allocation. The charges for 2017/18 are:

- £4.00 hourly rate
- £2.30 lunch
- £4.00 breakfast club
- £4.00 late collection
- OSC from 3 – 6 pm £10.10 per session

We are currently testing the feasibility of hourly payments for OSC in a few centres and are charging £4 an hour for this. If successful we plan to roll this out next year.

We ensure that the funding we pay partners is sufficient for them to pass on this to employees in order that they are paid the living wage. This is usually the case in our private centres but may not be the same for some of our voluntary settings. We will continue to work with partners in order to address how we can support this and welcome the Scottish Governments guidance around fair work packages to assist with this. The partner centre agreements are reviewed annually.

Consultation and engagement

Local parent and community consultations

In late 2014, Highland Council began a consultation process as required in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Opinion was sought across the authority, gathering information from within our ASG's through the use of paper questionnaires supported with offers of evening sessions, and face to face meetings with Highland Council officers.

We wanted to determine if the system at that time met families' needs, or if they would prefer to use their 600 hours in a more flexible way for example accessing fewer but longer sessions. We were also interested to know if families would want to purchase additional hours to add to their entitlement.

The views of parents in 2014 stated that the majority were happy with the current arrangements of half day sessions. However, about a quarter of all respondents, held the alternative view that the current arrangements did not meet their childcare needs. Additional comments highlighted the fact that at that time, the 600 hours did not meet the parents' work commitments.

Amongst families who expressed an interest in the possibility of accessing fewer, but longer days of ELC, the most popular choice for parents was to access two or three full days of provision. This was concluded that it may have reflected the desire of some parents to work part time.

The current service delivery model grew from there with the anticipation that further provision would be available. Since then we have encouraged providers to continue to ask parents about the provision they require and this takes place through annual

consultation at enrolment and throughout the year at parent meetings. Partner centres also consult regularly with their families and so we have been able to build a picture over time of what parents may want.

We have moved the provision and expertise of early learning and childcare from a central hub to an Area focussed service where each Area is responsible for provision, mapped out to gain a profile of providers and parental needs. Local childcare partnerships are also important for sharing best practice and discussing local needs and these are organised in each Area by the Family Resource Coordinators (FRCs) and chaired by local community members.

FRCs are not only responsible for mapping of provision across the areas but also of undertaking further parental consultations.

Recent survey monkey results March 2017

- Parents stated what was important to them in choosing the ELC provision. Ranked in order were: reputation, affordability, flexibility, social and emotional opportunities for the children
- Parents were asked why they use the funded hours. Ranked in order were: it allows me to work, my child is entitled to 600 hours, it is good for my child's development
- When parents were asked if they would use the 1140 hours, 60% said they would use the full 1140 hours
- 50% of parents said they would use a school nursery for the 1140 hours
- 25% of parents favoured a split placement between 2 settings for the 1140 hours
- 50% of parents would like full year provision
- 40% asked for term time only
- 10% of parents asked for holiday cover only.

Wider local consultations and knowledge sharing

Further consultation is being undertaken with parents by childcare managers in settings where flexible provision is already being offered and that feedback is enabling us have a fuller picture. Head teachers too are speaking to parents about greater flexibility and choice.

Community discussions are taking place in the childcare partnerships which are run in every area in Highland where members of the partnership discuss local issues, and they offer an opportunity to have the dialogue around ELC expansion to inform planning.

We have established an ELC Strategic Group chaired by the Director of Care and Learning and this has multiagency membership to help shape the plan for delivery

into 2020. ELC expansion is also a standing item on our Early Years Improvement Group where an improvement methodology approach to introduce tests of change will help deliver the expansion.

Head teacher workshops have been delivered twice a year in order to keep them abreast of the expansion. The focus has been to provide information on national and local developments, gain their views on how the expansion may be delivered in their setting and the impact this may have. The key principles of quality, flexibility, affordability and accessibility have been highlighted and discussed. The workshops have also included our early years educational psychologist who plays a key role in supporting all settings. This year the invitation to these events was extended to partner centre managers and their staff to ensure the same messages were being delivered across settings, provide group discussion and interaction and develop relationships. Transitions between providers are important for children and having an open dialogue and sharing best practice enables this to be managed more effectively.

The team of EYESOs have also developed newsletters and blogs to share best practice and developments. We are also working with our maternity services to discuss how best we inform parents of the future whose children will be entitled to 1140 hours in 2020 to consider the offer and how they would plan to use the entitlements

Section Four: Operational Guidance - the journey, what have we learned...

Every day's a learning day in early years

Preparations for the expansion of ELC began several years ago in Highland and this has enabled us to incrementally expand the workforce, grow the service, plan the structure and face the challenges.

Quality

A change in systems, culture and practice can have an impact on quality of provision and whilst undertaking the initial expansion of flexibility in pilot nurseries there was a perceived reduction in quality felt by the nursery staff and head teachers in the pilot schools. As the understanding and impact of change at such a rate of pace has developed, so too has the realisation that to ensure the efficient running of the school and the quality of the provision, we must effectively support head teachers to manage this. The biggest impact was largely based around head teacher management input into nursery and clerical administration.

This necessitated the need for allocation of management time to schools with double session nurseries, and also the larger single session nurseries were allocated additional time from August 2016. It was agreed that it would require a degree of flexibility in determining this allocation. If it was purely based on the number of nursery children enrolled, it would not reflect the situation for a teaching head as opposed to a cluster head teacher or an Early Level class.

It was therefore proposed to allocate additional management time as follows:

- Schools with Childcare Managers – no allocation
- Schools with double session nurseries providing additional hours of ELC and therefore generating additional income

A formula for management time was negotiated by taking account of the level of service being offered, but at a minimum was 0.1 FTE. The rationale remained the same for August 2017 however, to ensure quality of delivery whilst increasing flexibility then settings with a childcare manager were also allocated 0.1 FTE management time for the early level teaching lead in the school to work with the ELC staff to ensure the curriculum is being delivered effectively.

Therefore for August 2017 this means:

Schools with childcare managers	0.1FTE
Single head teacher schools only providing 16 hours for each pupil	0.1 FTE
Cluster Schools	0.1FTE for the whole cluster
Early Level classes	no management time allocation (as there will be a fulltime teacher)
Schools providing flexibility and additional chargeable hours	Varying allocations depending on nursery roll, estimated additional hours to be provided, any provision of childcare for school age children i.e. breakfast club or Out of School Care.

The varying allocations in 17/18 were largely intuitive but the aim was to devise a formula to allow more transparency and better budgeting and costing criteria for the future expansion.

Flexibility

As previously stated, the route to flexibility in Highland began several years ago and we are now in a position to offer some degree of flexibility in how parents access their funded hours in 53 of our local authority settings. Our private partners and a few voluntary ones offer full day care which has meant that parents have been able to choose the provider that best meets their needs.

Many parents attending the local authority nurseries that are open 8 am – 6 pm can now choose the hours that suit them whether that be full day or part day, with no set blocks which they must choose from. In this respect we are now offering a fully flexible provision in these larger settings. This has been based on consulting with parents and listening to their needs which has moved us on down the path of flexibility. This will continue to shape local provision as head teachers and childcare managers continue to have direct conversations with parents.

The main issues around increasing flexibility have been around funding for children with ASN, billing parents and provision over lunchtime.

We are seeing parents of children with ASN taking up the offer of non-funded flexible provision and whilst this is encouraged it does mean that the additional costs for this need to be absorbed by the service. To charge extra to cover any additional needs would be in breach of inequalities legislation. We need to consider investment and spend on ASN and examine how we have managed this to date, particularly in clusters where there appears to be a higher than average percentage.

We feel the billing and invoicing issues will be resolved as we move to our new database and payment arrangements which should reduce administration of this part of the service and allow that resource to be managed more effectively to undertake other ELC related tasks.

In the larger settings offering the flexibility that parents have asked for we have not seen a slump in provision over the lunch period that has been suggested we may encounter. Feedback from our childcare managers has indicated that lunch is often their busiest time and as we encourage nursery children to take school lunches this would indicate that as we move to longer day provision this will increase.

Free school meals for nursery have been met by the early years funding. However, we do see an ongoing challenge and find it difficult to equate the health and social inequalities of having our younger children being charged for lunches when older siblings in P1-3s continue to be funded. We have raised all of these issues with the Government as the main challenges that we are having to manage at a local authority level.

As we progress over the next 3 years we need to ensure continuing dialogue with our partner providers to ensure they are able to deliver the hours that are required by parents. The learning we have taken from growing the expansion incrementally has enabled us to identify potential processes that have needed to change or develop to access flexibility.

Accessibility

To enable easier processes for parents accessing nursery provision for 2017/18 we moved to on-line enrolment through the Highland Council website for parents wishing a place in a local authority school or nursery. We continued to offer the option of parents attending the school in person during enrolment week but this has eased the pressure of dealing with lots of paper.

On submission of the on-line enrolment, the form goes directly to the generic school email box as a PDF which is then manually inputted to SEEMis by school office staff. Future development might lead to a facility to speak directly to SEEMis. Parents of nursery aged children who choose on-line enrolment still need to have the conversation with the school at some stage before the end of the academic year to discuss the requirements for flexibility and any non-funded hours required.

On-line enrolment has proved popular with parents and has eased pressure for the schools and we anticipate that this new system will grow into the future.

We have also had to change other systems to enable a more improved process to record flexibility and ensure parents are issued with the correct bills. Billing and invoicing of a fully flexible choice has caused many problems, with parents being

issued with incorrect bills. This was due to the manual input involved at each stage of the process from enrolment to the issuing of invoices.

From August 2017 we have moved to payment by Direct Debit or childcare voucher only for parents who choose local authority provision. This will also include a choice of tax free childcare once the scheme is functioning.

We currently offer 3 million funded hours to 3 and 4 year olds, with the addition of the eligible 2 year olds that equates to 3.3 million funded hours in Highland. In 2020 that will increase to 5.7 million funded hours, and up to 6.27 million if all eligible 2 year olds take up a place. This together with the addition of parents able to purchase additional non funded hours, including OSC would have been impossible to manage if we had continued with the manual systems we had.

As well as additional clerical hours to meet the demands of the system, guidance has been developed to support school clericals through the processes and training delivered to them prior to the roll out of the database. Another aspect of accessibility is that around the provision of Gaelic medium education and the impact that this will have on costs and developing services is still to be mapped.

Affordability

The decision to move to direct debit payment for parents accessing local authority nurseries has meant that they will now be able to spread their payments over the year which will allow them some ability to manage their finances more effectively.

The cost of local authority provision to parents is relatively low however, for parents living with disadvantage and on low income it may still be too high a price to pay for them to be able to consider it to access training, study or work. This is something we need to consider as we move forward and look for ways to make this affordable for those already struggling.

In terms of our partners, we have increased our payments to them to deliver funded ELC by 5% for 2017/18 and we will continue to review this as we move forward. We need to carefully consider the provider neutral approach in this respect and ensure we deliver the expectations of the Blueprint.

Phasing

Phasing in of the additional hours required by August 2020 must begin now and we are looking at options around how we phase in across Highland. *The detail of this is still being developed and requires wider discussion and planning across areas before the plan is submitted in September.*

However, we are clear that we would prefer to look at phasing incrementally across the whole of Highland, rather than selecting certain settings for the whole funding.

The thinking behind this is twofold. Firstly, if we chose to focus on expanding to full provision in areas of deprivation only, as is one suggestion, the target settings we have identified would be unable to deliver the 1140 hours to all children due to capacity within the setting in terms of space. The other reason is that to increase everywhere incrementally up until 2020 would mean that no area would be excluded. This would however require the capital expansion to consider how the settings would then be prioritised.

We also need to have more detailed discussion with our partners as part of the local area mapping, and their ability to deliver the 1140 hours. The focus on how we move forward is on provision that is of the highest quality for children, and flexible to meet family needs.

Workforce

As described in Section Three, we made the decision to move from the flat structure of the ELC workforce to introduce Senior EYP and ELC support worker role after listening to the feedback from head teachers and childcare managers and staff.

The criterion for having a post of Senior EYP will not be based on the number of staff, many who may be working only 23 hours, but on the fulltime equivalent required to meet the flexible delivery. Therefore, if there is the equivalent of 4 x 35 hours per week EYPs in a centre or more (140 hours per week) then a senior post would be appropriate. A centre that has a childcare manager would not at this stage qualify for a Senior EYP.

The post will also create career opportunities for existing EYPs to apply for a senior role and further progression into a childcare manager role into the future if desired.

In terms of the ELC support worker role it is not the intention to immediately change the existing arrangements in any settings where there are currently two EYPs for less than 10 children. However, in the event of any future changes in staffing, a review will be undertaken to ascertain if the current nursery rolls are to remain below 10 in the longer term, and if so this new structure will be implemented when recruiting new staff. There are currently 55 local authority nurseries with less than 10 children enrolled for the next session, which equates to more than a third of all the local authority provision.

Looking to the future and the required workforce expansion, we are developing early year's modern apprenticeship (MA) roles in Highland. We have not until now had any early year's MAs in Highland Council and this role will help create greater opportunities for employment in the early years sector and in the required expanded

workforce for the future. This is particularly important in rural areas where we will have the ability to 'grow our own staff'.

Discussions are underway, both in-house through the local authority MA Project and with training providers on how best to take this forward. Highland Council is looking to increase the number of MA Frameworks and there is great opportunity within the developing early year's workforce to offer this to young school leavers or others who are interested in working in early years.

Due to the number of available mentors we will employ 4 MAs for next session, increasing to 10 the following year. There will also be opportunities for our EYPs to undertake training to become MA assessors and verifiers which will enable us to employ more into the future.

In order to support the expansion of ELC in an area the size of Highland where there are so many providers, capital programmes and a widely dispersed workforce it became crucial for us to introduce a project manager role to develop the necessary resources and infrastructure that is required now and into the future. The continuous process of ongoing engagement and consultation with the ELC national project and delivery steering groups requires a project manager to coordinate.

This co-ordinating role will include the development of local delivery programmes, monitor and feedback around progress both to national partners and local teams to ensure the expansion plans stay on track time and budget wise. Furthermore, it will ensure that there is a consistent approach to development and expansion across all four areas of the vast geography of Highland.

Service Model

We are aware that the model on which we base our provision will need to change from term time only to all year provision in some settings. However, this must be based on parental need and demand and for Highland this approach would neither be required nor affordable for all settings. We are therefore considering offering some degree of full year provision in each ASG but that must be considered within the context of the mapping that is being undertaken, where we have full day care partner providers operating a service which we would not want to put at risk.

We need to be clear how much provision we will buy from partners and how much capacity they will have available. We must also understand that purchasing from high quality partner providers may be more cost effective than building new provision.

For some rural areas a hub and spoke model may be the best option. ELC is not compulsory and we need to ensure that although we plan to provide for all children

that we do not over provide or we will have settings that remain empty, even after the demand lag has passed.

Outdoor nurseries

Although we have many nurseries that make the best use of the outdoors, and some children regularly spend time in the forests and woodlands around Highland, we currently have one partner centre nursery that provides a full outdoor experience.

We are also supporting another that has just asked that they be considered to move forward with offering this provision. They are already providing outdoor activities to children in Highland, so this is currently being explored.

As we move forward we will need to consider the workforce required to provide outdoor ELC as there will be training and recruitment elements that will need to be addressed to create the appropriate workforce.

We have also invested heavily in clerical hours and management time for schools to support flexibility and all of this together with the workforce expansion has been the main revenue spend. As we move forward we will need to continue with this investment to support the infrastructure required.

Capacity versus Demand by Area

Nursery roll forecasts – ready over next few weeks.

Implementation Plan will detail the capital requirements for each area, with priorities for 17/18

The phasing of any capital investment will have to be carefully considered, in particular with regard to the availability of internal Council resources, the capacity within the construction industry and prevailing market conditions. The investment will comprise a range of solutions, including being part of new build school projects, stand-alone new build nursery projects, modular units, extensions and refurbishments. Some projects will also be combined with works to address other issues in schools, where it would be best value to address these at the same time as the nursery works where possible.

Section Five: Future Provision and Priorities

The key guiding principles of **quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability** are at the forefront of the rationalisation of services as we move forward with expansion of early learning and childcare.

We are already well placed to build on the provision we have developed so far and further decisions around where and how we prioritise is important to get right. There is no doubt however that this expansion is large scale service redesign and decisions made over the next month will be crucial to obtain clarity around revenue and capital plans to expand the workforce, systems and infrastructure required.

We are mindful of making best use of assets and the sequential decision making process advised by the Scottish Government whether that be capital spend on refurbishments, extensions or new builds.

We will therefore:

- **Use what we have** within the local authority including workforce, natural environment, infrastructure and buildings
- **Use what we purchase** enhancing the use of partner assets, developing existing partnership models to provide a mixed economy, strengthening provision including blended models and childminders
- **Create what we need** where full use of existing local authority services and assets plus enhanced commissioned services still leaves a gap, create or build new capacity including outdoor nursery

As we move forward to 2020 we need to clearly demonstrate what the demand versus capacity will be and continue to consult with parents to help shape this. However, we have to base future demand on assumptions - assumptions that all parents will take up places, and therefore we will expect to see a degree of a demand lag until they do.

Asking parents who currently use the service does not capture the needs of future parents who may view the provision very differently. We therefore need to articulate this future entitlement to parents whose children are only now being born as they are the families who will be eligible in 2020.

Mapping and consultation across areas, Associated School Groups (ASGs) and settings will help to build the profile of all available provision. There are 130 local authority nursery providers and we will need to look at some form of modification (refurbishment, extension or new build) in approximately 80 of these.

Many are Victorian buildings which can provide challenges around expansion. This has been established through capital discussions across the areas and with our estates team. We are looking at each ASG carefully to gather a list of priorities for

17/18 and beyond, also consider what will be required to enable full use of existing assets. This could require moving the current space where nursery children are, extending, refurbishing, using demountables or (lastly) new builds.

We are also looking at the use of other public assets outside school buildings that may be available in the local area and whether it would be more feasible, affordable and accessible to expand partner provision. The use of the natural environment and the establishment of more outdoor provision is also a priority and we are looking at opportunities to use any available land or woodland that could provide this learning experience.

Therefore we continue to look to our local communities and mapping provision across all sectors so that we can be confident that we are able to prioritise efficiently and effectively. The four guiding principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability will also influence those local decisions, for example looking to the school nursery where a partner can only offer morning sessions into 2020 or supporting a partner provider with capital expansion or premises where they can offer flexibility and high quality.

We continue to consult with families and communities as we plan the requirements to deliver into 2020, not just for the here and now. Any new primary school plans need to include provision of 1140 hours as do local discussions around new housing plans and employment opportunities emerge.

Expanding provision with partners and new providers

We continue to work with our partners who are able to work alongside us to deliver a high quality flexible accessible and affordable early learning and childcare experience. We need to review how we fund partner centres, to ensure that they are sustainable, as we will rely on them to deliver the provision into in 2020. We must continue to include partners in any discussions and developments to ensure we have listened and taken on their views.

We will continue to review our commissioning rates we will look to continue to increase payments but will be asking for reassurance from partners that the funding we provide will cover the costs of the living wage. This will be considered in future agreements.

We also need to formalise the arrangements for eligible 2 year olds and continue to make headway with destigmatising the take up of this provision by families. We want families to see it as an option for them to be enabled to take up study, training or employment and we want to develop more stay and play and family based learning.

Low uptake of 2 year old provision remains a challenge for us and we need to examine use of other assets in local communities as there is low provision by

childminders. We are currently working with CALA to support progression of further work around provision for eligible 2's in areas across Highland where provision is low. We are discussing CPD training needs of staff around the 2 year old needs. Another element of the work with CALA is having a pilot site or test of change using a vacant janitors house on school grounds in an area of need where no provision available. A second test is looking at a similar service for 2's by sharing premises with the primary school.

CALA are also being supported and part funded by Highland Council to deliver a programme around developing the young workforce, with an emphasis on working in the childcare sector which we will continue to monitor.

We have begun discussions with partners in High Life Highland around our use of assets outside of school buildings, to map provisions that are owned by Highland Council but managed by them. Some buildings are currently empty with opportunities to offer provision or space for expansion. We will work with them to explore how we can use these for LA expansion for 2, 3 and 4 year olds and also services that we could support their own staff to deliver. There are particular gaps in certain areas in the South and this is being progressed.

We are aware of the significance of intergenerational work and the current notion of developing nursery type provision within care home settings. In one rural area the care home is experiencing recruitment issues which appear to be linked to lack of local childcare provision. We are currently in discussion with our NHS Highland partners around possible localised solutions and this is being factored into our ELC project plan.

Workforce

Due to the changes in the workforce in 2014 we have been well placed to increase our staffing incrementally. As flexibility in a setting has increased, the number of hours required to meet the 1:8 ratio has also increased. All new EYPs are recruited on a 23 hour contract but if more hours are required in the settings these are offered to the existing members of staff. If staff do not want to take on additional hours up to full time of 35 hours, then these are advertised internally to Highland Council staff which allows existing employees in other nurseries the opportunity to move to a post with more hours.

We are aware of our predominantly female workforce and an opportunity to have more male role models is important in early years, particularly where children may not have a consistent male in their lives. The development of outdoor provision may be a way to increase the male ratio.

The single tier structure that was developed in 2014 was to ensure equity in terms of job descriptions and pay however; it is now clear that a refinement to that is required for the reasons stated in the report to Committee (June 2017)

The introduction of the Senior EYP post based on the formula for number of hours being delivered and amount of flexibility, would equate to the establishment of 16 senior posts across Highland at an approximate cost for the full year of £221K. There will be the opportunity to generate additional income from the provision of additional ELC to offset some of this additional cost, but these posts can also be afforded on the basis of additional revenue from 2017/18.

The placement of new EY support worker posts will be introduced incrementally and also based on a formula. We will support them to undertake their SCQF qualification

We are in the process of building a bank of non-teaching staff to ensure that we are able to supply staff to cover unexpected absences. We currently ask CALA to undertake this for us through a Service Level Agreement and will continue to explore how this may be more effective across ASGs to ensure we are able to offer reassurance of availability and some continuity.

Supporting and mentoring new staff and providing minimum hours of CPD available to all providers is a focus as we expand provision.

We have plans to expand our offer of early years modern apprentices over the coming years so costs to employ them will expand annually.

The Scottish Government allocation of additional graduates to work directly with children in areas of deprivation is being considered. There are 6 posts allocated to Highland and the initial discussions around where they will be placed are currently underway. We will need to submit a separate plan that describes the rationale for the along with the Delivery Plan

Quality and Flexibility

Database /quality service for parents

Our future position is to continue to promote high quality and flexible service. We are planning to expand flexibility with a significant change and move away from traditional sessions. We have up until now allowed local authority nurseries to set their own pace of change and next session 53 of them will be offering additional paid for childcare. Our private partners already offer this.

We are now expecting that from August 2018 all providers will offer 4 hours over 4/5 days. This has been communicated through the current workshops being delivered to Headteachers and the messages around the need to phase in the hours over the next 3 years are being delivered. There may be opportunities through the trails that

are happening across Scotland around the expansion to secure some additional funding for this, which may initially be as a test of change.

We continue to work closely with our partners and support those offering full day care or sole providers in an Area to deliver the 1140 hours. Some already offer full day care and will be able to continue to do so. We are also asking all providers to consider the blended model approach of split placements between partner, local authority or childminder.

We are really excited about the prospect of developing outdoor learning for our nursery aged children and are exploring how we can expand on this. There are various models that we are considering. The full outdoor experience which requires that we have the right workforce to enable this – it is more a forest ranger type of role that our staff would require. This would require the development of a cohort of staff with specialist roles in outdoor skills in line with 'My world outdoors' recommendations, and as mentioned previously would see this as attracting a number of male practitioners and managers

We are currently in discussion with a setting in the South Area who wants to offer the full outdoor experience which we will support as a test of change for a year and allow full evaluation of the feasibility of rolling this out.

Free flow indoor/outdoor nurseries which allow children access to the outdoors are part of our current provision. However, the recently published Care Inspectorate guidance will support us to include up to 20% of space in our settings to expand outside. This will allow our expansion plans to include outdoor spaces to provide some of the required 1140 hours without the need to build extensions and new builds.

With the offer of additional nursery hours in the larger settings where there are childcare managers we are promoting the increase of out of school care which will be offered to nursery children and all children in primary. This will mean working parents will be able to purchase more provision and we anticipate the demand in communities to have their own provision will grow.

Early level learning has offered a quality and effective alternative to the traditional model of provision in rural areas where there are small numbers of children. Last session there were 7 early level classes and this session we will move forward with 4 who delivered it over 2016/17 with the addition of another 3 new ones.

The Early Level Classes for next session will be: Kingussie, Teanassie, Strathdearn and Milton - with the addition of Kyleakin, Scourie and Ullapool GM

We have developed guidance to assist those schools who are moving forward with early level next session based on the feedback and evaluation of the current classes. There will also be guidance developed for schools who may want to consider this as

an option to best meet the needs of their children and the school for the following year.

Communication Plan

Project Manager will do this - working document for submission in September

Risk Register from Project Manager

To be developed with strategic group

Summary

We will ensure we maintain a stance on ensuring a provider neutral approach and not make any restriction on the number of places our partners are able to offer to parents, it should be down to parental choice and provider availability.

We have developed a strategic EYC group where are exploring workforce and other requirements to move forward with our expansion

Most importantly we need to ensure that the voices of children, families and communities are taken account of in the consideration of any changes to local services – and that people are assured that there will always be a continuing local service.

Implementation Plan Overview – needs further development

Elements and context	Actions
<p>Quality Quality provision must be maintained during the period of change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve data collection to monitor the quality of provision • Further develop the IT system and database to meet required needs of quality and flexibility • Ensure continuous consultation with local parents/carers and communities • EYESOs focusing on partner centre nurseries this year to ensure teacher input and support • EYESOs working closely with QIOs to develop QA activity, action plans • Review arrangement of current approaches to support eligible 2 year olds • Sharing of best practice and learning through newsletters and blogs • Ensuring all practitioners are kept abreast of national and local direction and understand the principles upon which we are to develop and expand that includes workshops etc • Headteachers in local authority settings continue to be responsible for quality provision in their nursery • Ensure Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland grades are maintained and improved • Messages that quality must be maintained through all discussions and consultations • Working closely with all integrated childrens services to ensure wider workforce kept informed of plans • All policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure they reflect the expansion plans and principles of quality, flexibility, accessibility and affordability. • Ensure principles for quality provision underpin quality assurance arrangements • Further review of partner centre agreements to ensure principles provider neutral are captured • CPD arrangements and agreements ensure staff undertake all required elements to enable them to undertake their roles effectively

<p>Phasing 1140 implementation in individual settings can begin as capacity becomes available and be phased through to 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 LA sites now offering flexibility – learning from and sharing best practice • Promoting all LA providers to move away from 3 hours 10 minutes in all settings, and implementation of full hours (e.g. 4 hours over 4 days) • Phasing plan being developed • All settings offer 20 hours from August 2018 • Purchasing of additional hours made easier for parents by introducing and developing the Database • Direct Debit, voucher or tax free childcare payments only. Stopping invoicing and therefore supporting settings to offer flexibility • Support large scale expansion by ensuring information is shared and explained - Headteacher workshops, CPD, Blog, newsletters • All LA nurseries supported by FRCs to increase flexibility (this includes breakfast club and OSC) • Encouraging a model that offers parental choice • Working with childminders and SCMA to support commissioning and split placements • Supporting partners with expansion planning and blended models
<p>Community Engagement Families and communities do not change in a uniform way, especially in a time of change over a comparatively short period. It can be expected that there will be an element of ‘demand lag’ for the new offering that can be understood and managed via community engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools being equipped to offer this advice, provide Headteachers with presentations and information that they can deliver to parents • Child care partnerships will have ELC expansion as standing item on their agendas • Use opportunities within CPPs to inform and discuss • FRCs, childcare managers, schools and partners continue to consult, engage with parents/carers and consider new models • Ensure parents have an informed choice around how they use their hours and future provision • Ensure messages to external stakeholders are clear and robust
<p>Workforce Areas to address to include: leadership, consultation, industrial relations, recruitment plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely with all relevant stakeholders and providers of further education to ensure we are prepared and able to deliver the requirements • Career development opportunities continue – including introduction of new structure (career pathway /workforce paper) • Ensure alignment is with the Developing the Young Workforce agenda • Develop training for operational managers in settings including ‘How to manage a setting’ through the CPD calendar • Keeping unions informed and working closely with HR

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with the Care Inspectorate • Continually reviewing the workforce requirements, employing new staff to meet flex, addressing training needs and ensuring staff are supported to undertake qualifications that are required. This will continue to grow and develop as we move forward with flexibility. • Percentage qualified v unqualified staff is considered. Effectively manage the waiting lists for training and bank staff • Development of EY Modern Apprentices for next session and subsequent years • Develop the role of new graduates funded by SG and ensure knowledge skills and expertise are fully utilised • Continue to support peripatetic manager role with CALA to support voluntary organisations where one manager can support up to five small provisions • Continue to promote a career in ELC as a positive destination for males and females
<p>Funded Providers Considerations of the implications of Living Wage and note of future development of national funded provider and quality standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELC partner agreements reviewed to consider provider neutral, rates reviewed and clarity around expectations of delivery • Improved partnerships and more transparency • Include partners in mapping of services, workshops, consultations, meetings and any developments to help shape expansion
<p>Infrastructure (Physical Estate plan) Extent of refurbishment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 plans will in place for August 2017. These are based on capital discussions in all 4 Areas and knowledge of Estates team • Consider use of partner and community assets for expansion not just schools • Still under consultation/mapping – ready for September. • At this stage approximately £20/25m required to support capital expansion
<p>Financial Projections Includes reporting on 2017/18 funding allocation</p> <p>£1 million revenue 17/18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust data management system required to capture all funding projections • Include posts - early years practitioners, childcare managers, clerical hours, management time, consultant fees to deliver the IT process required in schools, Project manager, SEYP, EY support worker, MAs, EYOs, EYESOs • ASN support for additional childcare • Costs of phasing • Fees to partners • Ready for September

<p>£1.6 million capital 17/18 projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping and consulting – priorities detailed – ready for September
<p>Financial assumptions for 2017-18 expansion activity List financial assumptions</p> <p>Total capital cost of all the projects over expansion period</p> <p>Total revenue costs over expansion period – dependent on workforce planning exercises and mapping, phasing plan in discussion with trials team and support from SG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient funding for revenue and capital available from SG to support delivery plan • Sufficient time for spend – planned and delivered • Include posts - early years practitioners, childcare managers, clerical hours, management time, consultant fees to deliver the IT process required in schools, Project manager, SEYP, EY support worker, MAs, EYOs, EYESOs – any additional • ASN support for additional childcare • Costs of phasing • Fees to partners <p>Full mapping for September</p>
<p>Project management, stakeholder management and change support What project management support will be made available to the change effort, include risks and dependencies in change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project manager early years expansion role developed and now in place • Estates team involvement will increase • Full support from partners in finance • Corporate improvement team input will continue • Continued work with benefits team • Learning and development team undertaking joint working around workforce expansion • Keeping all key stakeholders - practitioners, partners, communities, unions, HR, members, planning partnerships included and involved requires ongoing commitment and change support <p>Risk: the availability of resources to support expansion – planning, estates, manpower and above support</p>