
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	2 November 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/48/21/LW
Contact Officer:	Linda Wilkie	Contact No:	01475 712812
Subject:	Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Update on 1140 Hours Expansion Programme		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This report provides details of the underspend in the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) revenue budget as requested at Committee on 31 August 2021. It also provides an evaluation of the implementation of the first year of the expansion programme.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Scottish Government has increased the entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare from 600 hours to 1140 hours. Inverclyde Council has received specific revenue grant funding from Scottish Government to implement this entitlement.

2.2 Over the past 2 financial years there has been a significant underspend in the revenue budget. This has now been combined into one earmarked reserve. This report provides detail of how the funding is being used to support recovery in ELC and Primary 1 as approved by Scottish Government.

2.3 The expansion programme was fully implemented in Inverclyde in August 2020 despite Scottish Government removing the legislative requirement due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The expansion has been successfully implemented and well received by families.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that Committee note:

- The details of the utilisation of ELC revenue budget Earmarked Reserve of £2,522,000 as approved through Emergency Powers.
- The successful implementation of the expansion programme.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Scottish Government increased the entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) from 600 hours to 1140 hours. The original implementation date was August 2020 however this was deferred to August 2021 due to COVID-19.
- 4.2 Inverclyde Council has received specific revenue grant funding from Scottish Government since 2018 to implement the increased entitlement. This funding has increased incrementally since 2018 and is ring fenced to support the roll-out of the 1140 hours expansion. Over the past 2 years there has been a significant underspend in this budget.
- 4.3 Inverclyde Council was in a position to fully implement the expansion programme in August 2020 across all establishments. This was successful with many benefits to children and families. The programme is continually under review and will be amended as required.

5.0 USE OF ELC UNDERSPEND

- 5.1 The reasons for the underspend are in relation to changes to delivery models, impact of COVID-19, delays in infrastructure projects, delays in recruitment and a reduction in the number of places required.
- 5.2 Inverclyde Council has approval from Scottish Government to carry forward and utilise the earmarked reserve. The funding can be used to support the implementation of the expansion programme and for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic for children in ELC and Primary 1.
- 5.3 The underspends from 2019/20 and 2020/21 have been combined to create an earmarked reserve of £2,522,000.
- 5.4 Inverclyde Council has approval from Scottish Government to carry forward and utilise the earmarked reserve. The funding can be used to support the implementation of the expansion programme and for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic for children in ELC and Primary 1.
- 5.5 Cosla and the Scottish Government are currently reviewing the distribution of ELC funding to take effect from 2022/23. Clarity on the impact is expected as part of the Budget Announcement. Early indications suggest that there will be a reduction in the allocation to Inverclyde Council. £1,377,000 of the 2021/22 budget is being carried forward into 2022/2023 and beyond to smooth the potential reduction in ELC funding.
- 5.6 In line with the Emergency Powers and Scottish Government approval a range of interventions are planned to make use of the earmarked reserve. These can be grouped into COVID-19 Recovery Interventions, Health and Wellbeing Interventions, Play Pedagogy (Early Level), Infrastructure Developments and ICT Developments.
- 5.7 Details of the interventions are provided in the table below:

COVID-19 Recovery Interventions		Total Cost £1,270,000
Intervention	Detail	
Staffing	Teachers, ELC practitioners and support staff to support children and close the attainment gap.	
Resources	Additional resources to support recovery and curriculum developments.	
Family support work in local authority settings	Family Support Workers to support families within ELC settings and in the home and community.	
Family support work in 3 rd sector	Intensive family support work delivered by a 3 rd sector provider.	
Financial support to funded providers	Grants to 9 ELC settings and 13 childminders to support recovery of children attending their setting.	

Health and Wellbeing Interventions		Total Cost £156,000
Intervention	Detail	
Music	A staff training programme and direct delivery of a therapeutic music programme.	
Emotional Literacy	Development work, training and implementation of an emotional literacy programme to support the emotional wellbeing and recovery of children and families.	
Communication and Language	Protect and enhance existing level of service from Speech and Language Therapy. Joint project between Speech and Language therapy and Education Service to close gap in children's development which is evidenced in the findings of the 27 – 30 month health review.	

Play Pedagogy (Early Level)		Total Cost £332,000
Intervention	Detail	
Staffing	A range of 1 year secondments for leaders and practitioners to support the implementation of the entitlement to Play Pedagogy across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (ELC and Primary 1)	
Funding allocation	An allocation of funding to all Primary Schools for training, cover and learning and teaching resources.	

Infrastructure Developments		Total Cost £170,000
Intervention	Detail	
Direct Access	Development of direct access to outdoor learning as per Care Inspectorate legislation in one establishment and to improve practice in others.	
Shelters / canopies	To ensure children and staff are appropriately protected in the outdoor environment.	
Environmental Improvements	To improve the outdoor environment in line with best practice advice from Care Inspectorate.	
Resources	An allocation of funding for outdoor equipment, loose parts and waterproof clothing.	

ICT Developments		Total Cost £84,000
Intervention	Detail	
Kit	A grant to ELC settings to purchase learning, teaching and assessment resources and ICT kit as advised by Education Scotland.	
Wifi	An upgrade to WiFi capacity in some settings.	

Other		Total Cost £510,000
Intervention	Detail	
Cleaning	A transfer to Facilities Management to fund COVID-19 enhanced cleaning in ELC settings	
Wraparound Income	Reduction in wraparound income due to increased entitlement.	
Contingency	Projects still to be confirmed	

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF 1140 HOURS EXPANSION PROGRAMME

- 6.1 The expansion programme was implemented in Inverclyde in August 2020 despite Scottish Government removing the legislative requirement due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6.2 All pre-school and ante pre-school children are now entitled to 1140 hours of ELC. Almost all children in Inverclyde are accessing their full entitlement. Parents can choose to use their entitlement in a setting of their choice as detailed below:

	Local Authority Setting	Funder Provider Setting	Blended Placement (childminder and nursery)	Childminder
3 & 4 year olds	869	193	20	3
Deferred Entry	40	5	0	0

6.3 2 year old entitlement

There is no universal entitlement for 2 year olds; however families who meet the following criteria are entitled to a place:

- parents who are in receipt of qualifying benefits;
- parents who are care experienced;
- children who are “looked after” or subject to a Kinship Care order.

Currently 111 children meet this criteria and have been allocated placements.

6.4 Inverclyde Council provides places in addition to the Scottish Government entitlements. This includes children aged 0 - 2 years and children aged 2 - 3 years who are vulnerable but do not meet the criteria outlined in section 6.3.

Age Group	No. of Children
0 – 2 years	51
2 – 3 years	36

6.5 Inverclyde Council also provides wraparound places for parents in employment, education and training.

Age Group	No. of Children
0 – 2 years	19
2 – 3 years	63
3 – 5 years	28

6.6 The first year of full implementation of the 1140 expansion programme has been a success with almost 1500 children benefitting from the expanded offer. Information from settings and feedback from parents identifies a significant range of benefits including the positive impact on children’s learning and development; improved attendance and the benefits of a free lunch and snack. Parents have also reported increased opportunities to gain employment and the financial benefits of the increased hours and the free lunch.

6.7 There have been significant opportunities for local residents and modern apprentices to gain permanent employment and for existing staff to move to full-time employment or promoted posts. Staffing models continue to be monitored closely and adapted to ensure that appropriate staffing numbers are maintained across the day / year and that these are matched to capacity of establishments.

6.8 The infrastructure developments have met the demands for additional places in all localities. The new and refurbished buildings are contributing to the overall quality of the ELC experience. Outdoor learning environments provide additional capacity and significantly enhance the quality of the outdoor learning experience.

6.9 As predicted and previously reported to committee there continues to be challenges in ELC admissions process:

1. The demand for placements of 30 hours per week term-time model exceeds capacity. This means parents receive another pattern of attendance which is not their preferred option.
2. The second challenge is around defined area for ELC places. Many parents request an ELC setting outwith their defined area. Places are allocated as per

Inverclyde Council's admission policy which prioritises children living in the nursery's defined area.

Officers will continue to monitor admissions to ensure that as many parents as possible receive their preferred option.

- 6.10 A formal survey of parental views is planned for November 2021 which will allow the service to formally evaluate current provision and plan future delivery.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 7.1 One off Costs
Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
Early Years	EMR		£2,522,000		

Legal

- 7.2 N/A

Human Resources

- 7.3 Some additional, short-term posts were required to support the implementation of these interventions related to the underspend

Equalities

- 7.4 Equalities

- (a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

- (b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
x	NO

7.5 **Repopulation**

N/A