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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

10 September 2019

### Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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**Title:** Early Learning and Childcare Update

**Purpose:** To provide the committee with an update on progress with the expansion Early Learning and Childcare

**Recommendation:** That the Audit and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare to 1140 hours will become operational in a further six North Ayrshire sites as well as in a further six funded provider establishments. This will be alongside the completion of a number of infrastructure projects to enhance existing provision in North Ayrshire establishments.
- 1.2 New working arrangements for Early Learning and Childcare staff are being implemented.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 At the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2019, a request was made for an update on the Early Learning and Childcare expansion programme in North Ayrshire, based on the key areas of focus for the next six months identified in the Education and Youth Employment Quarter 4 Performance Report.
- 2.2 **Key Area of focus 1:** *“Continuing further roll out of 1140 Early Years Expansion. This will include a further 6 sites becoming operational with 3 partner providers also delivering 1140 hours. Eight infrastructure projects will be completed as part of this project.”*
- 2.3 **Update 1:**
  - The six new NAC sites are now scheduled to go live with the delivery of 1140 hours from 20 October 2019. This is a slight delay from the original plan to implement from August 2019 due to finalising negotiations with Trade Unions on staff working arrangements. A further 6 partner providers (now referred as Funded Providers) commenced delivery of 1140 hours from August 2019.

In addition, one further Funded Provider in Dalry has worked closely with the Care Inspectorate to gain registration to commence 1140 hours provision in August 2019.

- As at August 2019, a total of eleven early years infrastructure projects have been completed, enhancing existing learning spaces for Early Learning and Childcare provision within the North Ayrshire education estate.

2.4 **Key Area of Focus 2:** *“Implementing new working arrangements for Early Learning and Childcare staff.”*

2.5 **Update 2:**

- Following extensive discussions with Trade Union colleagues, the expanded ELC delivery model and staff working arrangements have been agreed and noted by Cabinet on 11 June 2019. Implementation of the agreed staffing arrangements and delivery model are now underway. Some accommodation has been made to resolve individual issues and circumstances resulting from staff who were impacted by the change to the pilot operating model.
- The new working arrangements have resulted in a greater number of part time vacancies being available.
- Officers are now stabilising the contractual framework for the ELC workforce with permanent contracts being put in place.
- The amended delivery model has been embraced by parents with further flexibility being built into the provision they are receiving.

### 3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that the Audit and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of this report.

### 4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

#### **Financial**

4.1 None arising directly from this update.

#### **Human Resources**

4.2 None arising directly from this update.

#### **Legal**

4.3 None arising directly from this update.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 The expansion of Early Learning and Childcare will have a positive impact on children and families across North Ayrshire.

## **Environmental and Sustainability**

4.5 None arising directly from this update.

## **Key Priorities**

4.6 Aspiring Communities priority: “Children and young people experience the best start in life”.

## **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 Provision of extended early learning and childcare hours could enable more parents and carers to go into training, education or employment.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 Extensive consultation with trade unions took place to reach agreement on new staffing arrangements for the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare.

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For further information please contact **Caroline Amos, Head of Service (Education)**, on **01294 324416**.

## **Background Papers**

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