

Partner Commissioning Arrangements – Proposals agreed.

2 Councillor Cannon, City Convener for Education and Early Years, presented a report regarding the proposed rate for funded providers within Early Learning and Childcare from April 2026, advising

- (1) that the Scottish Government's Funding Follows the Child Guidance and National Standard set out the principles and practice for funded early years providers seeking to enter or maintain partnership status with a local authority;
- (2) that the guidance for setting sustainable rates for the delivery of funded early learning and childcare in 2026/27 had been issued in March 2026 and outlined the criteria which councils should follow in setting a sustainable rate, as detailed in the report;
- (3) that national guidance also highlighted that from a local authority perspective the rate must be sustainable for authorities in terms of the budgets available and of various other matters that were important to consider when setting a sustainable rate, as detailed in the report;
- (4) that Education Services had proposed a commissioning rate of £7.05 per hour for each funded child aged 3-5 years and £8.35 for each funded child aged 2-3 years, which would be payable from April 2026 for a period of 1 year and represented an uplift of 5.2% on the unit cost;
- (5) that in addition to the rate per hour, all funded children were also entitled to a free meal each day the child attended as part of their statutory entitlement, which was payable daily over and above the hourly rate per child and was currently £3.00 per child per day;
- (6) that there was no proposal to change either the meal rate of £3.00 or the Scottish Government funded snack rate of 58.2p; and
- (7) of the financial impact of the proposed cost uplift for 2026/27 and of the funded provider support package.

After consideration, the committee approved an increase to the commissioning rate from 1st April 2026 of

- (a) £0.35 to £7.05 per child per hour for 3–5 year olds; and
- (b) £0.41 to £8.35 per child per hour for 2 year olds.