

Accessible and Flexible Early Learning and Childcare – Update noted – Instruction to Executive Director of Education Services.

3 With reference to the minutes of 3rd June 2021 (Print 2, page 111) instructing the Executive Director of Education Services to continue to submit updated reports on the expansion of early learning and childcare (ELC) delivery, there was submitted a report by the Executive Director of Education Services providing an update on the delivery of accessible and flexible early learning and childcare provision for children aged 0-5 years, advising that

- (1) the expansion programme offered upto 1140 hours of funded ELC to all eligible children which was 1 of Scotland's biggest public sector national transformational change programmes and had been set out in a Blueprint for 2020 which focused on 4 cornerstones for delivery – Quality, Accessibility, Flexibility, Affordability and of Glasgow's plan to redesign ELC services aligning to those principles;
- (2) the major redesign in the operating model for Glasgow had been a shift from a traditional, predominantly (over 60%) term-time, short day (8.30am to 4.30pm) nursery model in 2017, towards a predominantly full year, long day (8am to 6pm) model, with over 70% of Council operated nurseries that are now open full year, 8am to 6pm which was in response to parent consultation exercises carried out between 2015 and 2022, all of which showed consistently that the highest demand from Glasgow parents was for full year, extended day services, similar to those provided by private sector nurseries;
- (3) at the same time as changing the operating model, the ELC service moved to recruit only 52 week staff going forward which was to support the extended opening hours, allowed greater flexibility in deployment as parent demand shifted, and by creating a larger envelope for service delivery allowed either that children attended for longer hours, essential when increasing the entitlement to 1140 hours or that more children could access the service as it was open for longer hours, over more weeks of the year;
- (4) both statutory ELC and additional hours of childcare for children under 5 was being delivered in a mixed model across 110 Council operated nurseries, 117 Funded Providers in the private, voluntary and independent school sector and via 34 Registered Childminders who are part of the Council's ELC offer to families and a different form of funded provider;
- (5) of the process of accessing places in Council nurseries, the National Guidance that supported flexible childcare by requiring that ELC services for eligible children had been made available using the "Funding Follows the Child" framework, commissioned by the Council from interested nursery providers and Registered Childminders using a "provider neutral approach" and of the flexible models and places to meet the key needs of families, as detailed in the report; and
- (6) of the uptake of the statutory hours, additional hours over 2024/25 that had been purchased by parents/carers to support their working needs and of the

national developments to expand funded childcare to cover children from the age of 9 months old through to the end of primary school, as part of its broader childcare strategy.

After consideration, the committee

- (a) noted the current position and potential developments around accessible, flexible early learning and childcare; and
- (b) instructed the Executive Director of Education Services to continue to submit updated reports to this committee.