

## Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee

Due to Scottish Government guidance relating to COVID-19, this meeting will be held remotely.



Tuesday, 9th November, 2021 - 10.00 a.m.

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### AGENDA

#### Page Nos.

- |    |   |         |
|----|---|---------|
| 1. | <b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  |         |
| 2. | <b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct, members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage. |         |
| 3. | <b>MINUTE</b> – Minute of Meeting of Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee of 7th September, 2021.  | 3 – 9   |
| 4. | <b>MINUTES</b> – Minutes of Education Appointment Committee of: 24th, 29th, 30th September and 4th October, 2021.   | 10 – 13 |
| 5. | <b>REVIEW OF THE MOTHBALLING OF MILTON OF BALGONIE PRIMARY SCHOOL</b> – Report by the Executive Director - Education & Children's Services.   | 14 – 18 |
| 6. | <b>EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE – ADMISSIONS</b> – Report by the Executive Director - Education & Children's Services.  | 19 – 66 |
| 7. | <b>EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME.</b>  | 67 – 69 |

<p><b>Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.</b></p>
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2nd November, 2021

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**THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE –  
REMOTE MEETING**

**7th September, 2021**

**10.00 a.m. – 1.50 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Craig Walker (Convener), Bobby Clelland, Dave Dempsey, Linda Erskine, Ian Ferguson, Derek Glen (substituting for Councillor Julie Ford), Gary Guichan, Helen Law, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Jane Ann Liston (substituting for Councillor James Calder), Ross Paterson, Fay Sinclair, Alistair Suttie and Mr. Alastair Crockett and Mr. George Haggarty.

**ATTENDING:** Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Kathy Henwood, Head of Education & Children's Services; Maria Lloyd, Head of Education & Children's Services; Angela Logue, Head of Education & Children's Services; Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services; Alan Cumming, Education Manager, Deborah Davidson, Education Manager, Sarah Else, Education Manager, Lynn Porter, Education Manager; Avril Graham, Sustainable Estate Officer, Education; Lesley Henderson, Quality Improvement Officer, Stuart Booker, Improvement Officer, Sandy McIntosh, Rector, Zoe Thomson, Depute Rector, Education & Children's Services; Lynn Gillies, Service Manager, Children & Families and Criminal Justice Services; Alan Paul, Senior Manager (Property Services), Louise Playford, Service Manager (School Estate), Property Services, Assets Transportation & Environment; Chris Campbell, Team Manager, Social Work Resources Service; Alison Binnie, Business Partner, Finance; Margaret McFadden, Solicitor, Legal & Democratic Services; and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services, Finance & Corporate Services.

**APOLOGY FOR  
ABSENCE:** Mr. William Imlay.

Prior to the start of business, the Convener, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, welcomed Councillor Heer to the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee, having replaced Councillor Nolan. The Sub-Committee acknowledged Councillor Nolan's contribution during the period of his membership.

The Convener also welcomed Councillors Glen and Liston to the meeting, substituting for Councillors Ford and Calder respectively on this occasion.

**218. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 7.1.

**219. MINUTE**

The Sub-Committee considered the minute of the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee of 11th May, 2021.

**Decision/**

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee agreed to approve the minute, subject to an amendment to reflect that Councillor Nolan had declared an interest in Para. 216 - 'Support for Voluntary Organisations' - as he was a Council appointed member of an organisation from whom Families First, St Andrews had received funding.

**220. MINUTES OF EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE**

The Sub-Committee considered the minutes of meetings of the Education Appointment Committee of 4th, 14th, 17th, 21st, 25th, 27th and 31st May, 2021; and 1st, 2nd, 8th, 9th, 15th and 21st June, 2021.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee noted the minutes.

**221. MINUTES OF EAST FIFE EDUCATION TRUST COMMITTEE AND WEST FIFE EDUCATION TRUST COMMITTEE**

The Sub-Committee considered the minutes of the East Fife Education Trust Committee and the West Fife Education Trust Committee of 2nd June, 2021.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee noted the minutes.

**222. STATUTORY CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE ST COLUMBA'S RC AND WOODMILL HIGH SCHOOLS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services presenting the statutory Consultation Report, in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, in respect of the proposal to relocate St Columba's RC High School from the existing school site of Woodmill Road, Dunfermline, and to relocate Woodmill High School from the existing school site of Shields Road, Dunfermline to a new single site south of Calaiswood Crescent, adjacent to Roe Deer Place, Dunfermline (former Shepherd Offshore site), a site which would also encompass a new Fife College (Dunfermline) campus, for full consideration by members. The report also sought approval to proceed with the recommendations contained within the Consultation Report.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee agreed to approve the proposal to relocate St Columba's RC High School from the existing school site of Woodmill Road, Dunfermline, and to relocate Woodmill High School from the existing school site of Shields Road, Dunfermline, to a new single site, south of Calaiswood Crescent, adjacent to Roe Deer Place, Dunfermline (former Shepherd Offshore site), a site which would also encompass a new Fife College Campus.

*Councillor Clelland joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

**223./**

**223. DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-23**

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on the publication of the Education and Children's Services (ECS) Directorate Plan 2021-23, setting the plan in the context of other key strategic plans for children and families in Fife, and presenting a draft reporting timetable to Committee covering progress against those statutory plans.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the ECS Directorate's draft reporting timetable for reporting on delivery of the Directorate Plan; and
- (2) agreed to continue to support the work across other key strategic plans for children, young people and families.

**224. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & LEADERSHIP STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on the Education and Children's Services Professional Learning and Leadership Strategy for education staff.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress made with the Professional Learning and Leadership Strategy since the report approved by the Education, Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee in January, 2016; and
- (2) noted the leadership models as agreed in the Professional Learning and Leadership Strategy (2016) which had been progressed successfully over the last five years and the intention to continue with the development and implementation of Leadership Model 2 - School grouping model of leadership; and Model 3 - Learning journey model of leadership - to best meet the needs of schools and local communities.

The meeting adjourned at 11.45 a.m.

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The meeting re-convened at 11.55 a.m.

**225. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on the re-modelling of Children and Families Commissioned Services and recommendations for funding for 2021-22.

**Decision/**

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress that had been achieved relating to commissioning arrangements;
- (2) approved the predicted overspend of £127,614 in the current financial year - this being accommodated within the projected underspend for Children and Families Service;
- (3) noted that this overspend was one off and non-recurring; and
- (4) noted the required activity to bring service briefs 2A and 6 in line with the available budget by the end of March, 2022.

*Mr. Crockett left the meeting during consideration of the above item.*

**226. SQA RESULTS OF 10TH AUGUST, 2021**

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services including:

- (1) the background to the awarding of SQA qualifications 2021;
- (2) the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) for awarding SQA qualifications 2021;
- (3) Fife guidance and approaches to supporting the ACM via quality assurance;
- (4) attainment outcomes for young people 2021 including analyses by SIMD; and
- (5) conclusions and next steps for session 2021-22.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) congratulated Senior Leaders in schools, teachers and students on their hard work and results awarded, which generally showed trends in line with national trends;
- (2) endorsed the next steps identified for Session 2021-22; and
- (3) requested an update report on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Review Recommendation (Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future) - the OECD's working paper, due to be published in September, which would outline possible options to enhance qualifications and assessment moving forward.

**227. ATTAINMENT SCOTLAND FUND 2020/2021**

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services outlining the progress of the Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF), which encompassed the Schools Fund and Pupil Equity Fund, through updating members/

members on the work of schools in their practice to address the challenge of Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap. The report presented an overview of the rationale, implementation and impact, to date, of the Attainment Scotland Fund across Fife school establishments.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the contents of the report;
- (2) agreed to continue to seek updates on the impact of these interventions on improving educational outcomes for our children, at a Fife wide level through this Sub-Committee and locally through Local Area Committees; and
- (3) noted the work of schools in developing their practice to address the challenge of Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap.

**228. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE REVENUE BUDGET 2020-21 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services advising on the provisional outturn for the 2020-21 Education and Children's Services Directorate Revenue Budget, for the areas in scope of the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the provisional outturn position (subject to audit) for 2020-21, as detailed in the report and the reasons given for the main variances;
- (2) noted the impact of the Education and Children's Services Directorate's Children and Families Strategy in reducing the reliance on purchased care placements and increasing the number of children who could be looked after safely at home, or in kinship care;
- (3) noted the position regarding the costs and funding of the impact of Covid-19 across the Directorate; and
- (4) otherwise noted the contents of the report.

**229. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2020-2021: PROVISIONAL OUTTURN REPORT**

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing a summary of the financial position of Education and Children's Services Directorate's capital programme for the current financial year 2020-21, including progress on major projects.

**Decision/**

**Decision**

The Committee noted:-

- (1) the provisional outturn position for the 2020-21 Capital investment Plan, the figures being provisional and subject to audit; and
- (2) the reported spend of £44.851m represents 86% of the approved capital programme for 2020-21.

**230. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE REVENUE BUDGET 2021-22 PROJECTED OUTTURN**

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the forecast financial position for the 2021-22 financial year, for the areas in scope of the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) considered and noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report;
- (2) noted that the Education and Children's Services Directorate's implementation of the Children and Families Strategy had reduced the reliance on purchased care placements and increased the number of children who could be looked after safely at home or in kinship care; and
- (3) noted the estimated costs and related funding in relation to the continuing impact of Covid-19 on the Directorate.

**231. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2021-2022: PROGRESS REPORT**

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information on the overall progress of the Education and Children's Services Directorate's capital programme for the current financial year 2021-22, including progress on major projects.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee noted:-

- (1) the financial position as detailed in the report; and
- (2) that the budget had been revised to reflect the outcome of the Capital Plan review undertaken in February, 2021 and the subsequent re-phasing exercise carried out in July, 2021.

**232./**

**232. EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD  
WORK PROGRAMME**

The Sub-Committee considered the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22.

**Decision**

The Sub-Committee noted the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme 2021/22, subject to amendment as necessary.

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**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

**24 September 2021**

**11.30am – .14.00pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Jonny Tepp, Andy Heer, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Martin Hunter, Chair, Parent Council, Anouska Sim, Parent Council.

**141. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Decision**

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**142. HEADTEACHER –ST LEONARDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee interviewed 2 applicants on the short list for this post.

**Decision**

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Kirsty Muir, currently Depute Headteacher at Lynburn Primary School, Dunfermline.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

**29 September 2021**

**9.00am – 10.30am**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alistair Suttie, Helen Law, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Nicola Smith, Chair, Parent Council, Lynn McPhillips, Parent Council.

**143. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Decision**

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**144. HEADTEACHER –SALINE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

**Decision**

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Alexis Perkins, currently Acting Headteacher at Saline Primary School, Dunfermline.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

**30 September 2021**

**13.00pm – 14.30pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Jonny Tepp, Andy Heer, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Deborah Wood, Parent Council, Denise Kane, Parent Council.

**145. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Decision**

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**146. HEADTEACHER – BELLYEOMAN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

**Decision**

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Ashley Brown, currently Acting Headteacher at Bellyeoman Primary School, Dunfermline.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

**4 October 2021**

**13.15pm – 14.40pm**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alistair Suttie, Lesley Backhouse, Angela Logue,  
Head of Service, Sarah Else, Education Manager, Nicola  
SmithJennifer Inness Chair, Parent Council, Ayshea Morris,  
Parent Council.

**147. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Decision**

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**148. HEADTEACHER – PARKHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

**Decision**

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Jill McEwan, currently  
Depute Headteacher at Castlehill Primary School, Cupar.

9 November 2021  
Agenda Item No. 5

## Review of the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School

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Report by: Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director (Education & Children's Services)

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Wards Affected: Ward 14

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### Purpose

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The purpose of this report is to provide the outcome of the formal review of the mothballing of Milton of Balgonie Primary School.

### Recommendation

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The Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee is asked to:

- (a) agree to continue with the existing mothballing arrangements for Milton of Balgonie Primary School
- (b) agree that during the mothballing period any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School will continue to be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they meet the distance criteria.
- (c) agree that a further review takes place in June 2022, by the Education Service, reporting the outcomes to the earliest available, future Committee of the Council thereafter.

### Resource Implications

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There are no resource implications relating to finance, people or assets.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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The consideration and determination of this report is by the Council acting as Education Authority. There are no risks associated with this paper, however as noted previously there will be a requirement for statutory consultation on any future proposal to formally close this school, which would be carried out in accordance with the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

As requested by Fife Council's Risk Management Team, the building is being emptied of resources and furniture to comply with the Building Insurance Policy and to reduce risk to the Council of vandalism and fire.

### Impact Assessment

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An EqlA (Equalities Impact Assessment) was not required in the preparation of this report. Full impact assessments would be carried out as part of any future statutory consultation process.

A new Headteacher was appointed to Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, a post which covers Coaltown of Balgonie and Star Primary Schools, from August 2021. As Milton of Balgonie Primary School is currently mothballed, there is no current requirement for the Headteacher also to manage the operation of this school. Discussion has taken place, with the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School Headteacher, over the latest position with Milton of Balgonie Primary School. Parents of pupils living in the catchment area of Milton of Balgonie PS were notified of the outcome of the review and this updated report, on 1 November 2021, including the recommendation of the Education Service to continue with the current mothballing arrangements.

## 1.0 Background

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1.1 Milton of Balgonie Primary School last operated during session 2018/19, when the school roll was 14 pupils. The school is a small rural school with capacity for 75 pupils (3 classes). Milton of Balgonie Primary School is located 1.9 miles from the nearest primary school, Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School.

1.2 Historic school rolls for Milton of Balgonie are shown below. There have been no pupils enrolled for sessions 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Year	School Roll
2013	27
2014	24
2015	26
2016	26
2017	23
2018	14
2019	0
2020	0
2021	0

1.3 On 26 January 2021, the Education & Children's Service Sub-Committee approved the recommendations by the Education Service and agreed:

- (a) with the proposal to mothball Milton of Balgonie Primary School with immediate effect.
- (b) that, during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School will be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they meet the distance criteria,
- (c) that the resources and furniture within the school be offered to surrounding schools; and
- (d) that a further report reviewing this decision be considered by this Sub-Committee in September 2021.

1.4 Early indications show, from the non-validated Pupil Census, that the pupils living within the catchment area for Milton of Balgonie Primary School, who commenced P1 in August 2021, are attending Coaltown of Balgonie. The number of pupils is less than 5.

- 1.5 The former Headteacher, following the completion of Primary One enrolment, advised that no pupils had sought to enrol at Milton of Balgonie Primary School for August 2021 and that places had been offered at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School. Therefore, Milton of Balgonie Primary School has no pupils for a third academic session. It is expected that any nursery pupils due to start Primary One in August 2022 will attend Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or will choose to attend another primary school as a result of a placing request. Free transport continues to be provided for any catchment pupil now attending Coaltown of Balgonie who meets the distance entitlement.
- 1.6 The latest publication of the Housing Land Audit (i.e. 2020) has been shared with the Education Service in order that it can establish whether there is likely to be substantial housing growth in this community. There is a planned site (Balfour Place/Main Street) for 63 units in the Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area, to commence post 2025. This site has been included as a greenfield site for development since the 2015 report of the Housing Land Audit. In the 2019 version of this report, the site was expected to commence post 2024.
- 1.7 The Education Service, as part of any review, continues to monitor the school roll of Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School, in relation to house building and the continued ability to manage pupils from the Milton of Balgonie catchment area and any placing requests from other catchment schools.
- 1.8 There have been 2 pre-planning application requests for sites that were previously included in the Housing Land Audit, however, these have been removed due to marketing restrictions. One site, at Pytree Road North, is contained within the Coaltown of Balgonie Primary school roll projections and is expected to commence in 2024-2025. A full application has not been received to date.
- 1.9 Future pupil projections for Milton of Balgonie Primary School catchment area (using data provided by NHS Fife – up to end February 2021), indicate that pupil numbers will remain fewer than 5 per year over the next 4 years.
- 1.10 Although the school is not in operation, the school is still being checked regularly and maintained by staff within Janitorial and Property Services.
- 1.11 As agreed by Committee in January, and following a specific request by the Council's Risk Management Team to empty the building of all furniture and resources, to ensure full compliance with the Building Insurance Policy, the building is now empty. The primary schools in the Glenrothes area were invited to choose resources/furniture for their schools. The building was fully emptied by the end of the October school holidays. As with any vacant empty property, business rates relief has also been applied for.
- 1.12 Local elected members were advised in March 2021 that Orbis, a vacant property management company instructed by Property Services, would be overseeing the management of the building to limit the Council's liabilities.

## **2.0 Mothballing**

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- 2.1 As outlined in the paper approved by Committee on 26 January 2021, the Scottish Government issued statutory guidance under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, published May 2015, in relation to consideration of mothballing of schools.

- 2.2 The term ‘mothballing’ is used to refer to a temporary decision to close a school where the roll has fallen to zero. Mothballing, rather than closing a school, gives the opportunity for it to reopen should circumstances change. However, there is no legal process for mothballing.
- 2.3 Paragraphs 63 to 65 of the Guidance, deals with the issue of mothballing:
- 63.** In considering alternatives to closure, authorities may choose to consider “mothballing” a school (or a stage of education or a nursery class at a school). This is a temporary closure which does not lead to a consultation under the 2010 Act. It is only appropriate in very restricted circumstances. When a school roll falls very low, the authority and/or community may consider that the school is not presently viable but do not wish to close it immediately because there is a reasonable prospect that the number of pupils in the area will increase such that it should be re-opened in the future.
- 64.** It is vital that this flexibility to close a school for a temporary period is not used to undermine the requirements under the 2010 Act to consult on all school closure proposals. Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school (or stage of education). The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.
- 65.** A school can be mothballed where the school roll has fallen to zero and continues to be zero. It *may* also be appropriate where the roll or potential roll is very low and the authority considers the only other option to be closure. However, in circumstances where a school is mothballed rather than closed and some children and young people remain in the catchment area, this decision should be taken in consultation with the parents involved, and the possibility should be raised as early as possible, in order to ensure that families can understand the options open to them. Mothballing should not be a way of denying parents’ access to the statutory consultation process required under the 2010 Act and if the majority of parents oppose mothballing, it would be appropriate to move to statutory consultation on closure as soon as possible.
- 2.4 The primary school has now been mothballed since 26 January 2021. The reason for a continued period of mothballing is that further analysis is required on proposed housebuilding and births in the catchment area and, in light of that, consideration will be given as to whether to proceed to a statutory consultation on closure. Any proposal should consider the timing of a statutory consultation, as required by the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

## 3.0 Parental Consultation

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- 3.1 As outlined previously, the Education Service has kept in touch with parents/carers, in June 2019, January 2020 and January 2021, to advise of the current position for Milton of Balgonie Primary School. We have received one letter from a resident who was keen to use the school for a playgroup, as their existing facilities were not suitable to manage the group within existing covid restrictions. This request was not approved due to insurance liability and as a result of the school being mothballed.

- 3.2 Following on from the decision of the Committee in January 2021, the Education Service has not received any feedback from parents/carers in the catchment area requesting that it be considered whether there are sufficient pupils wishing to attend the school, allowing the school to reopen.

## 4.0 Conclusion

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- 4.1 This is the third academic session that the school roll at Milton of Balgonie Primary has had 0 pupils on the roll. All parents living in the catchment area have either chosen to place their children in Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School or have made placing requests to other schools.
- 4.2 The building has been emptied of resources as per the requirements of the Risk Management Service and has been handed over to Orbis to monitor the school on a regular basis.
- 4.3 This report includes recommendations: to continue with the existing mothballing arrangements of Milton of Balgonie Primary School; to agree that during the mothballing period, any children wishing to enrol at Milton of Balgonie continue to be offered a place at Coaltown of Balgonie Primary School and provided with free transport if they meet the distance criteria; and to agree that a further review of the situation is undertaken in June 2022, by the Education Service, reporting the outcomes to a future Committee of the Council thereafter.

### List of Appendices

n/a

### Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

<https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477028.pdf>

Proposed Mothballing of Milton of Balgonie PS

[https://www.fife.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/180486/Agenda-and-Papers-for-Meeting-of-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-of-26-January-2021.pdf](https://www.fife.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/180486/Agenda-and-Papers-for-Meeting-of-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-of-26-January-2021.pdf)

Decision of Committee 26 January 2021

[https://www.fife.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/180485/Minute-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-26th-January,-2021-subject-to-approval-at-their-next-meeting.pdf](https://www.fife.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/180485/Minute-Education-and-Childrens-Services-Sub-Committee-26th-January,-2021-subject-to-approval-at-their-next-meeting.pdf)

### Report Contacts

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9 November 2021

Agenda Item No. 6

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## Early Learning and Childcare – Admissions

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**Report by:** Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education and Children's Services

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**Wards Affected:** All

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### Purpose

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To provide members with the results of the 2020/21 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Consultation and an update with regards to future consultation in relation to amending the priority criteria within the ELC Admissions Policy; to provide further detail with regards to the decision that the Education Service agrees discretionary deferrals delivered through a partner provider and to detail the deferral process - from the initial application through to decision.

### Recommendation(s)

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It is recommended that members:

- (1) note the outcomes of the ELC Consultation, detailed in Appendix 1, and that these will be reflected in the ELC offer and Admissions process for 2022/23
- (2) agrees that use of the biennial ELC Consultation is the most appropriate mechanism to consult with parents/carers regarding any change to application priority levels within the ELC Admissions Policy.
- (3) notes the action taken in response to the Scottish Government invite for notes of interest in the P1 Deferral Pilot and agrees that officers progress with the work required to deliver the pilot, as Fife Council has now been invited to become a funded pilot authority for 2022-23.
- (4) notes the P1 deferral process, from the initial application through to decision.

### Resource Implications

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The Scottish Government allocated a multiyear funding package, covering both capital and revenue expenditure, to the Early Learning and Childcare expansion programme. This multiyear funding package does not include funding for children granted a discretionary deferral.

### Legal & Risk Implications

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Fife Council is legally required to ensure there are sufficient ELC placements available across the whole of Fife to meet the number of applications received. Catchment areas do not exist for ELC settings, so these placements do not need to be offered in specific settings.

## Impact Assessment

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An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary because this report does not propose a change to existing policies.

## Consultation

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Working Group established following Policy and Coordination Committee. Other local authorities on current admissions policy. Continued engagement with National Bodies.

## 1.0 Background

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- 1.1 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, on 30th March 2020, Ministers removed the legal obligation on Councils to deliver the expansion to 1,140 hours of funded ELC by August 2020. A revised deadline of August 2021 was agreed to reinstate this legal obligation, as approved by the Scottish Parliament on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.
- 1.2 Fife Council remained committed to delivering 1140 hours of funded ELC, where possible, for session 2020/21 and most settings were able to offer this, in line with the anticipated models of delivery.
- 1.3 Following on from the paper presented at the Policy & Coordination Committee of 16 July 2020, which provided an update on the progress with the admissions process for funded Early Learning and Childcare places within Fife Council settings, for eligible children, from August 2020, a working group was established to review the current Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy and to identify whether any amendments to this policy should be investigated.
- 1.4 The four points identified for investigation by this working group were:
  - A means for reviewing the operating models for settings and amending where possible.
  - The impact of returning children having to reapply for their placement for the following session, 2020/21.
  - Giving priority for places to children where their siblings attend the primary school based in the same location as the nursery they are applying to.
  - The deferral policy, to bring it in line with the principle of 'funding following the child,' enabling children to access an additional year of funded ELC at a provider of their choice.
- 1.5 The working group agreed that these points would be investigated based on the admissions data for 2021/22, that the impact of any change would be assessed and that this would be reported to the Education and Children's Sub-Committee for consideration.
- 1.6 The results of this investigation were considered by the Sub-Committee, of 7 May 2021, and, subject to the amendment of recommendations (4) and (5) of the report and including an additional recommendation members:-
  - (1) acknowledged the outcomes of the work undertaken to investigate areas of concern and the impact of any proposed amendments to the Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy, as identified by the working group.

- (2) in the context of the statutory requirement for a biennial review, agreed that the Education Service also undertook an annual review to consider the applications received during the previous admissions process and to determine whether any changes in capacity and/or operating model should be explored to better reflect demand.
- (3) agreed, in the future, should there be a need for a fundamental revision of the models of delivery of ELC across Fife, as happened for session 2020/21, at that point note would be taken of the issues highlighted regarding eligible children returning for their second year of funded ELC and options would be investigated to mitigate any impact on children already allocated placements having to reapply.
- (4) delegated to officers to progress with formal consultation regarding amending the priority criteria within the ELC Admissions Policy to consider whether there should be priority for siblings of children within a primary school where there was a nursery class (or classes).
- (5) agreed, from August 2022, that funding should be allocated to allow the Education Service to agree a discretionary deferral where it was agreed this was in the best interests of the child and was funded with a partner provider, where requested; and
- (6) requested a report to this Sub-Committee, within 6 months, detailing the deferral process - from the initial application through to decision.

## 2.0 ELC Consultation

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- 2.1 Under section 50(1)(a) of the 2014 Children and Young People Act, Education Authorities must consult with persons who appear to be representative of parents and carers of children under school age in their area, about how they should make early learning and childcare available. This consultation must be carried out at least once every 2 years.
- 2.2 Our last consultation took place in academic session 2018/19, so consultation took place with Fife families again, about our ELC provision, and this consultation was open to the public from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- 2.3 Alongside this public consultation, we sought professional views from our own senior leadership teams (SLT) within schools to ascertain their opinions about the expansion of ELC within their local area. This broader consultation has provided a more comprehensive picture of provision for children, particularly around flexibility and integration of ELC services.
- 2.4 Under Section 50(1)(b) of the 2014 Act Education Authorities must have regard to the views expressed in the consultation and they should prepare a plan setting out how they intend to make early learning and childcare available. The outcomes detailed in Appendix 1 will inform how we do this.
- 2.5 It remains our aim to consider all the information garnered from this process when undertaking the annual review of the models of delivery and availability of models within local nursery areas to determine whether any changes in capacity and/or operating model should be explored to better reflect demand.
- 2.6 The wider outcomes of this public consultation will be reflected in the ELC offer and Admissions process for 2022/23.

## 3.0 Changes to Sibling Eligibility for Nursery Admissions

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- 3.1 As detailed previously, the current Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy has a number of allocation priority levels, where children within a higher category will be offered a placement first. The current categories for 3–4-year-old children applying for term time or full year provision are as follows:

### **Priority 1**

Children deferring entry from Primary 1 and staying at nursery, where an additional year of funding has been agreed by Fife Council.

### **Priority 2**

Children whose application form is supported by the appropriate inter-agency documentation, including children on the child protection register and those with additional support needs.

### **Priority 3**

Children who have siblings already allocated a place at the nursery and who will continue their nursery placement in the following academic year.

### **Priority 4**

Children from the local nursery area.

### **Priority 5**

Children from out-with the local nursery area.

### **Priority 6**

Children residing out-with the Fife Council area.

- 3.2 Priority levels for children applying for the 46-week model are slightly different as there are only 7 of these services across Fife, one in each Local Committee area. These priorities are:

### **Priority 1**

Children who have siblings already allocated a place at the nursery and who will continue their nursery placement in the following academic year.

### **Priority 2**

Children from the defined Fife Council local committee area.

### **Priority 3**

Children from out-with the defined Fife Council local committee area.

### **Priority 4**

Children residing out-with the Fife Council area.

- 3.3 The Working Group asked that consideration be given to siblings in Primary School being included as an allocation priority level in the ELC Admissions Policy.

- 3.4 As outlined in the report, considered by Sub Committee on 7 May 2021, the data, based on the analysis of the admissions data for 2021/22, indicated that there would have been a reduction in the number of 1<sup>st</sup> choice placements allocated if siblings in Primary School were included as a priority level above Priority Level 4 or Level 3, respectively, in the ELC Admissions Policy. There would also be an increase in the number of children not allocated a placement through the allocation panels, based on their choices.

- 3.5 Having considered this data Sub Committee delegated to officers to progress with formal consultation regarding amending the priority criteria within the ELC Admissions Policy to consider whether there should be priority for siblings of children within a primary school where there was a nursery class (or classes).
- 3.6 As a result, advice has been sought, through Legal Services, with regards to the requirements relating to such a consultation.
- 3.7 The issue of statutory consultation under the 2010 Act is not clear in this regard and changes to the Act in 2017 were key to the advice provided. The advice is that a consultation under the 2010 Act probably couldn't be justified when there is another means of doing it (namely in terms of the biennial consultation also required by legislation).
- 3.8 The advice also indicated that the main issue would not be the means of consultation but the unfairness of the policy that would be being proposed and the subsequent vulnerability of that policy to judicial review.
- 3.9 Although being able to drop a nursery child and a primary child off in one place does support parental choice, that choice must be within the context of a reasonable policy across Fife. In providing this advice it is accepted that it may be possible for other authorities to use this criterion in a reasonable way based on their provision (e.g. all primary schools having a nursery attached/where they apply a radius to the criteria), however, when applied to the Fife context, it could be viewed that is that this would be so differentiating as to be unreasonable.
- 3.10 Based on this advice, officers consider use of the biennial consultation the most appropriate mechanism and will, therefore, determine how best to develop the priority levels and seek parental views through the consultation that will be carried out in session 2022/23.

## **4.0 P1 Deferral Policy - Funding**

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- 4.1 In October 2020 the Scottish Government committed to introducing legislation to ensure that all children who are not yet five on the first day of school are able to receive funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) if parents choose to defer entry into Primary 1. This legislation is planned to be implemented for academic session 2023-24 and a funding package associated with this change has still to be agreed.
- 4.2 In May, Sub Committee agreed, from August 2022, that funding should be allocated to allow the Education Service to agree a discretionary deferral where it was agreed this was in the best interests of the child and was funded with a partner provider, where requested. The Service will need ensure that this is be funded from within the existing budget.
- 4.3 Subsequently, Scottish Government wrote to Directors of Education, in September, inviting volunteers, Local Authorities, for the Second Year ELC Deferral Pilots 2022-23. If accepted, this will be a funded pilot.
- 4.4 A Fife Council note of interest in piloting the ELC Deferral process in academic session 2022/23 was submitted.

- 4.5 The information submitted (see Appendix 2) details:
- Uptake figures/approval rates from previous years
  - Expected uptake in 2022-23 and beyond
  - Confirmation that Fife expects to have sufficient ELC capacity to absorb additional children in 2022-23
  - Confirmation of readiness to deliver, as communication and application processes will not require significant amendment
  - Agreement to participate fully in the evaluation process and in the Deferral Working Group, including related learning events
  - Additional, relevant local information
- 4.6. Fife indicated we meet the criteria and that we can support the Scottish Government aim to increase the diversity of pilot authorities involved in the evaluation process to support widening the evidence base in advance of 2023-24 implementation.
- 4.7 The outcome of this submission was received on 22 October 2021, inviting Fife Council to become a funded pilot authority for 2022-23.

## 5.0 P1 Deferral Process

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- 5.1 Currently, if a child's birthday is in January or February, parent(s)/carer(s) can ask for another year of funded nursery education at a local authority or a partner provider nursery. As these placements are funded by the Scottish Government, they can be facilitated in any ELC funded provider.
- 5.2 The guidance also indicates that a child who is five after the start of the term in August and before the end of December does not need to be enrolled in school, but they will require to be assessed in order to receive a funded place in nursery for an extra year. Parents/carers are advised that if their child turns five after the start of the new school session but before the 31 December, they can request a discretionary additional year in nursery for their child but requests are not always approved.
- 5.3 In this situation, if school deferral is approved, existing resources are used to accommodate the additional year within a Fife Council nursery. As detailed in paragraph 4.2 above, from August 2022, deferrals of this kind will also be accommodated in an ELC funded provider, where requested.
- 5.4 For a child whose fifth birthday is after the start of the academic year and up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, then a discretionary deferral can be agreed under the current Fife Council Deferral Policy if it is deemed in the best interest of the child.
- 5.5 The principles of the ADES (Association of Directors of Education Scotland) guidance on Deferrals to Primary School Education, published in November 2001, remain in place and this guidance states that 'where children have birth dates from September – December, local authorities should have discretion over whether to secure additional pre-school education where their entry into primary school is deferred'.
- 5.6 The guidance details the key steps as:
- ongoing assessment of children during their pre-school experience and the dialogue with parents to discuss this
  - provision of clear and detailed information to parents about how deferrals decisions will be made within the local authority
  - the process of application for deferral and the mechanisms for managing these

- establishment of a mechanism to manage disputed applications where early years staff and parents do not agree on a decision.
- 5.7 Our guidance, which has been updated over this time, follows this, stating that parents should inform the school and nursery that they are considering deferring their child's entry to school, to allow both the situation to be considered by all concerned and a decision to be reached that meets the needs of the child.
  - 5.8 Parents are asked to organise a visit to the primary school their child will be attending and to complete the Deferred Entry Request Form. This should normally be done at about the same time as the child would normally be required to enrol for school.
  - 5.9 A meeting is arranged to discuss the case, normally at the nursery a child attends and parents/carers will be invited, along with the Health Visitor and/or any other relevant professional. The Educational Psychologist will be consulted but need not be present at the meeting.
  - 5.10 The local Education Manager will make the final decision as to whether a child will be granted a further year of funded nursery education. The Education Manager will take this decision based on information provided to them, including assessment by the Headteacher and staff of the nursery, and at times the link educational psychologist. In taking these decisions, account is also taken of the fact that deferred entry has significant implications for any child and these decisions are not taken lightly. There needs to be careful consideration of how a child's needs can be best met, with full knowledge of the support that can be provided within a nursery setting, a mainstream primary school or a more specialist provision.
  - 5.11 Once this decision has been made to defer, it is irreversible. Children cannot be "moved back up" later. This will mean that it is possible for a child to leave school at the age of 16 without having had the opportunity to be presented for any formal qualifications.
  - 5.12 Where there is a dispute between the nursery staff and parents/carers the Education Manager will review all information to determine whether a funded place is approved.
  - 5.13 This process is clear and is followed regularly by our schools and nurseries.

## 6.0 Conclusions

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- 6.1 The ELC consultation was open to the public from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The outcomes, detailed in Appendix 1, will be reflected in the ELC offer and Admissions process for 2022/23.
- 6.2 Based on advice, officers consider use of the biennial consultation the most appropriate mechanism and will determine how best to develop a proposal for amending the priority levels, seeking parental views through the consultation that will be carried out in session 2022/23.
- 6.3 Fife Council submitted a note of interest in piloting the ELC Deferral process in academic session 2022/23, the outcome of which is that Fife Council has been invited to become a funded pilot authority for 2022-23. This invite has been accepted.
- 6.4 The P1 deferral process is outlined and is followed by our schools and nurseries.

### List of Appendices

1. Early Learning and Childcare Consultation 2021 – Consultation Report
2. Fife Council Submission - Second Year ELC Deferral Pilots 2022-23

## Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973: -

- [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/111/contents)
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents)
- [Early Learning & Childcare Admissions Policy \(September 2019\)](#)

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Early Years in Fife

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## **Early Learning and Childcare Consultation 2021**

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*Consultation Report*

*June 2021*



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## **ELC CONSULTATION - SESSION 2020/21**

### **1.1 Background**

Under section 50(1)(a) of the 2014 Children and Young People Act, Education Authorities must consult with persons who appear to be representative of parents and carers of children under school age in their area, about how they should make early learning and childcare available. This consultation must be carried out at least once every 2 years. Fife Council's last consultation took place in academic session 2018/19.

Under Section 50(1)(b) of the 2014 Act Education Authorities must have regard to the views expressed in the consultation and, in moving forward, they should indicate how they intend to make early learning and childcare available. The outcome of this consultation will inform how we do this.

The public consultation was open for an eight-week period from Monday 15th March 2021 to Monday 26th April 2021. Participants were able to participate in the consultation through an online survey. Online ELC focus groups were also held in each of the seven Fife localities.

Alongside the public consultation, we asked the professional views from our own senior leadership teams (SLT) within ELC settings to ascertain their opinions about ELC within their local area. This broader consultation provided a more comprehensive picture of provision for children, particularly around flexibility and integration of ELC services.

The consultation was widely promoted by ELC settings and schools in Fife, through their parent newsletters, social media, and direct contact with families. It was also promoted through partner organisations and Fife Council's own social media activities which helped to ensure widespread knowledge for parents/carers to have a say.

We express our sincerest thanks to all those who responded to the consultation and to the people and partnership organisations who made a significant contribution to promoting the opportunity for carers to express their views.

## **2 PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY**

### **2.1 Characteristics of respondents**

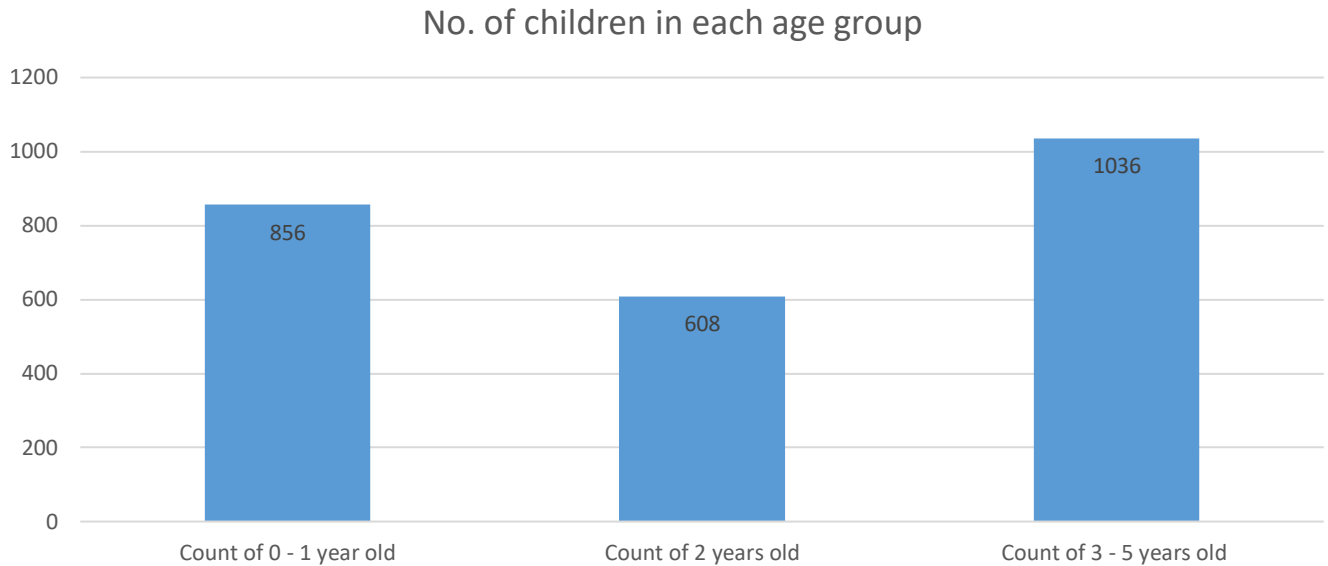
There were 1 198 responses to the online survey by the closing date of the public online consultation.

Not all respondents answered all questions. For the purposes of analysis, those who did not response to a question have been excluded from the count and analysis for that question only.

- Respondents were from all areas of Fife, with all postcode areas covered.
- Almost all respondents (95%) were aged between 25 and 49 years. 37 respondents were below the age of 25 years, with only one being in the age bracket 16 – 19 years old. 15 respondents were over 50 years old, with 2 over retirement age.
- 75% of respondent were currently in full time, part time or self-employment.
- A minority considered their child who is accessing or would be accessing ELC to have a disability (3%). With 10% of respondents stating that they considered someone in their household to have a disability.



- 94.5% of respondent cited their ethnicity as White and 4.5% as other than this.
- Respondents were asked to note the number of children they are parents/carers for in each age group from 0 – 5 years.



## 2.2 Context

Considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government advised in April 2020 that local authorities were no longer legally obliged to deliver 1140 hours of funded ELC from August 2020. Instead, the full implementation of delivering 1140 hours of funded ELC was delayed until August 2021.

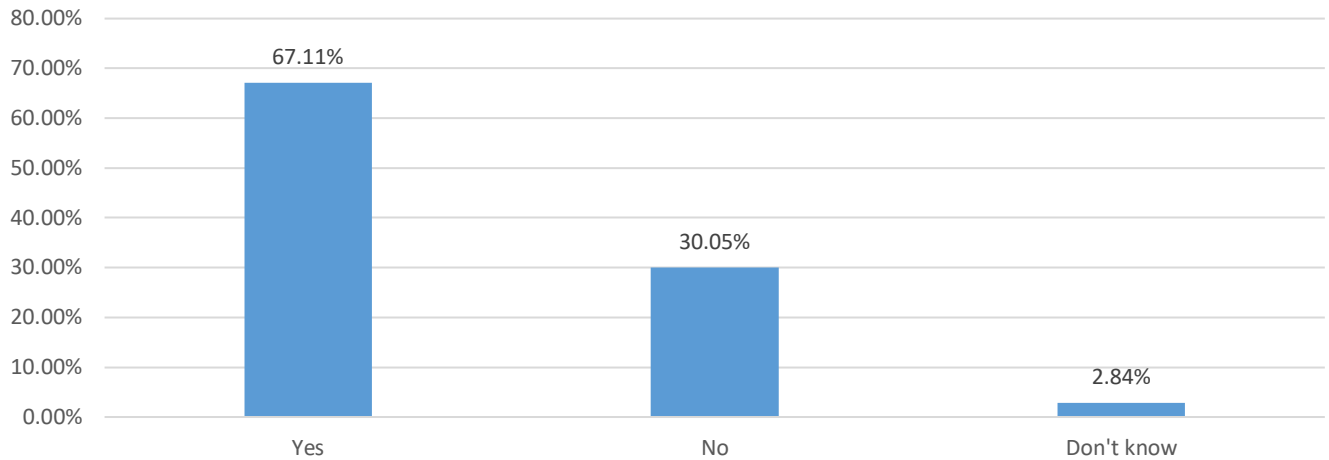
The public online consultation contained 3 main parts. We asked respondents to provide feedback about what current ELC services they are using followed by preference options for future accessing of ELC services. The last section pertained to basic details about their family.

## 2.3 Headline Responses - Current Early Learning and Childcare Delivery

- Over two thirds (67%) stated that they were currently accessing eligible funded hours of ELC.

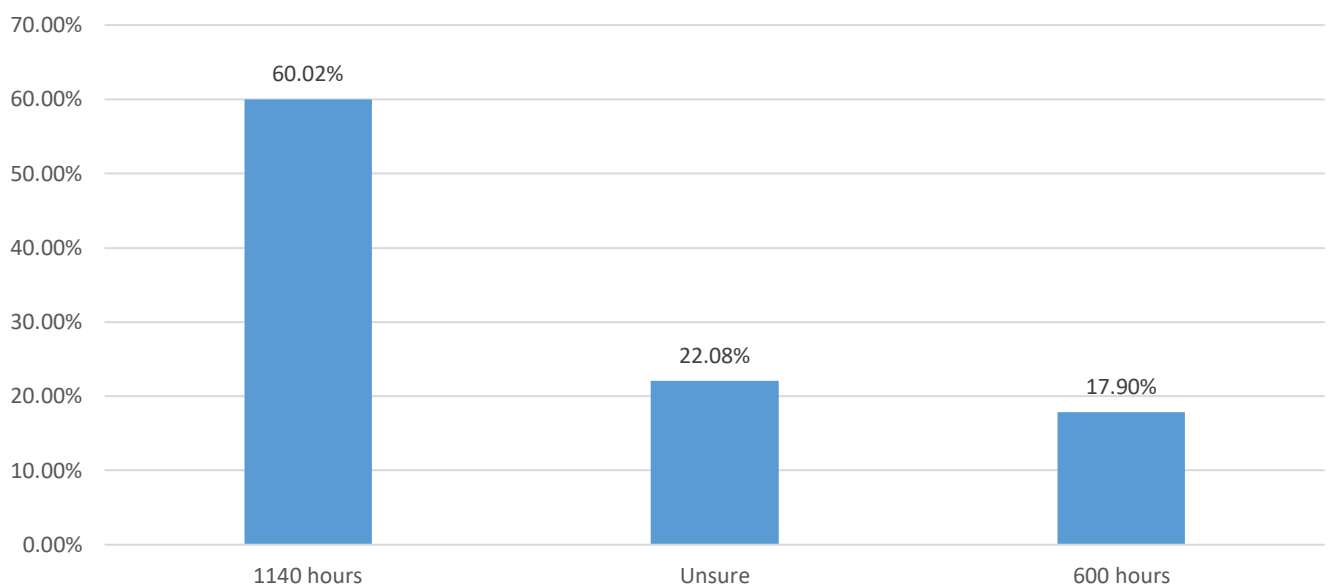


### Are you currently accessing any eligible funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare?



- At the time of this consultation all 3- and 4-year olds along with eligible 2-year olds were entitled to 600 hours of funded ELC. However, from August 2020 over 80% of three and four-year-old children attending local authority provision could access 1140 hours of funded ELC, with all settings working towards offering the full entitlement of 1140 hours by August 2021. 60.02% out of the 838 respondents who answered this question, confirmed that they were currently benefitting from 1140 hours of funded ELC. 22.08% indicated that they were unsure about how many hours they were currently receiving, with 17.9% stating that they were receiving 600 hours only.

### How many hours of funded ELC are you currently accessing?



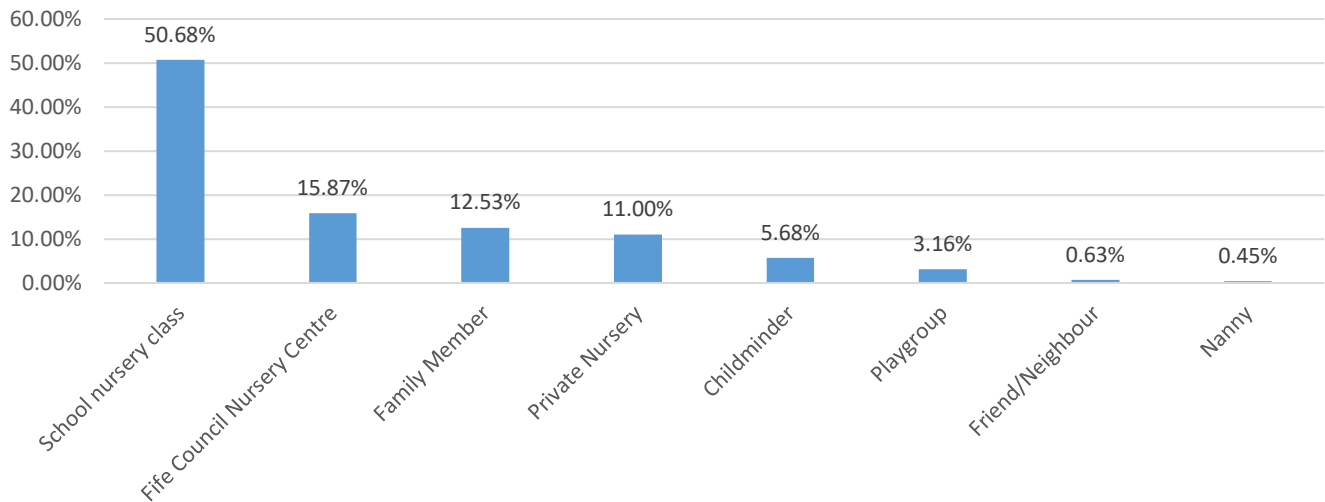
- Respondents who were currently accessing funded ELC, were asked if they were using more than one ELC provider. 14.5% cited that they were using two or more ELC provider at present. This figure is perhaps lower than anticipated. As the Scottish Government continue to review COVID-19 guidance, limitations



around the use of blended placements may ease and this figure could significantly rise in future.

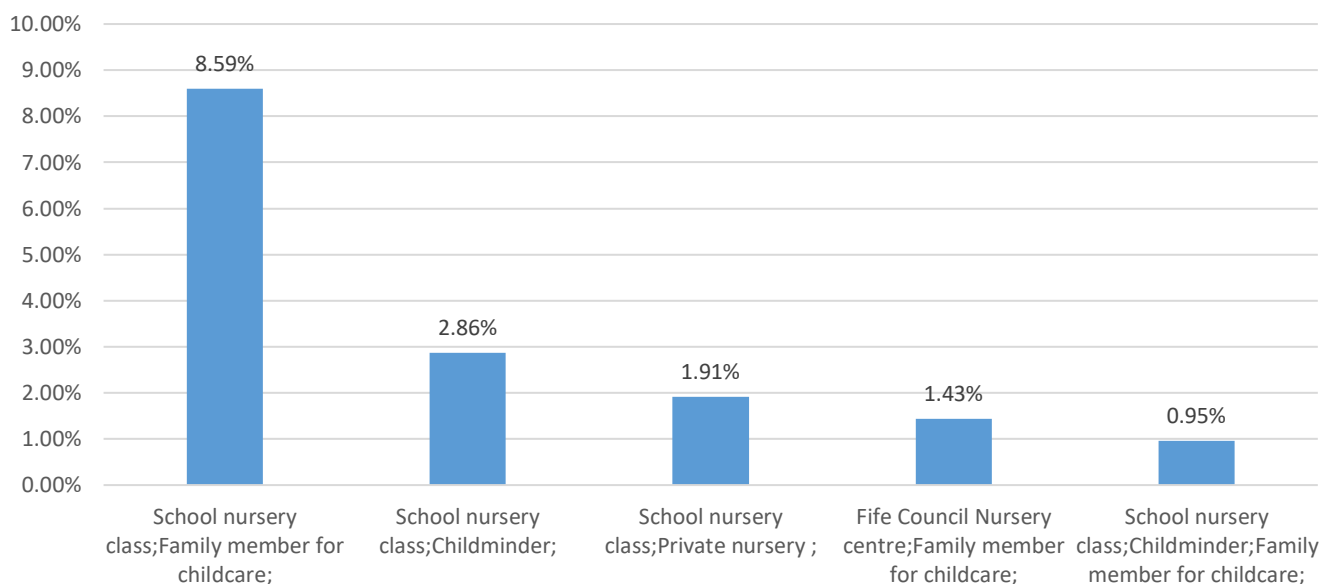
- Over two thirds of families (67%) who responded are currently accessing Fife Council ELC provisions for all or part of their funded ELC services, with 19.84% accessing a private nursery, playgroup or childminder for aspects ELC.

Overall Types of ELC Services Used



- The most popular combination of ELC services used was a School Nursery class with family members for childcare (8.59%). The second and third most popular ELC combination was school nursery either with a childminder or a private nursery.

Top 5 Combinations of ELC Used



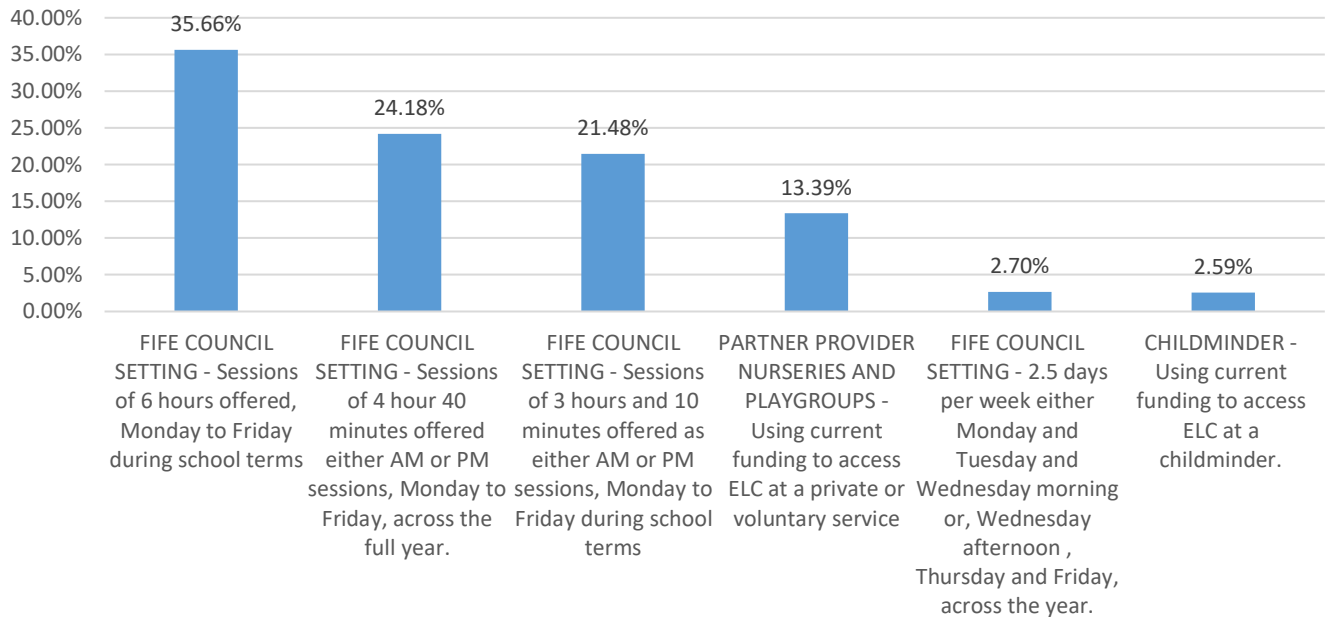
- Families can choose from four different types of ELC delivery when accessing a Fife Council setting. These can be used in combination and with other private and voluntary services in partnership with Fife Council. In those respondents currently accessing 1140 hours of funded ELC, over one third (35.6%) of



respondents indicated that they are currently accessing this from a Fife Council setting, using a Monday to Friday, 9 am – 3 pm term time model. Over one quarter (26.8%) of families are accessing ELC using a Fife Council 52-week full year model.

- 15.9% of respondents cited that they are utilising private, voluntary or independent services in partnership with Fife Council to access all or part ELC funded hours.

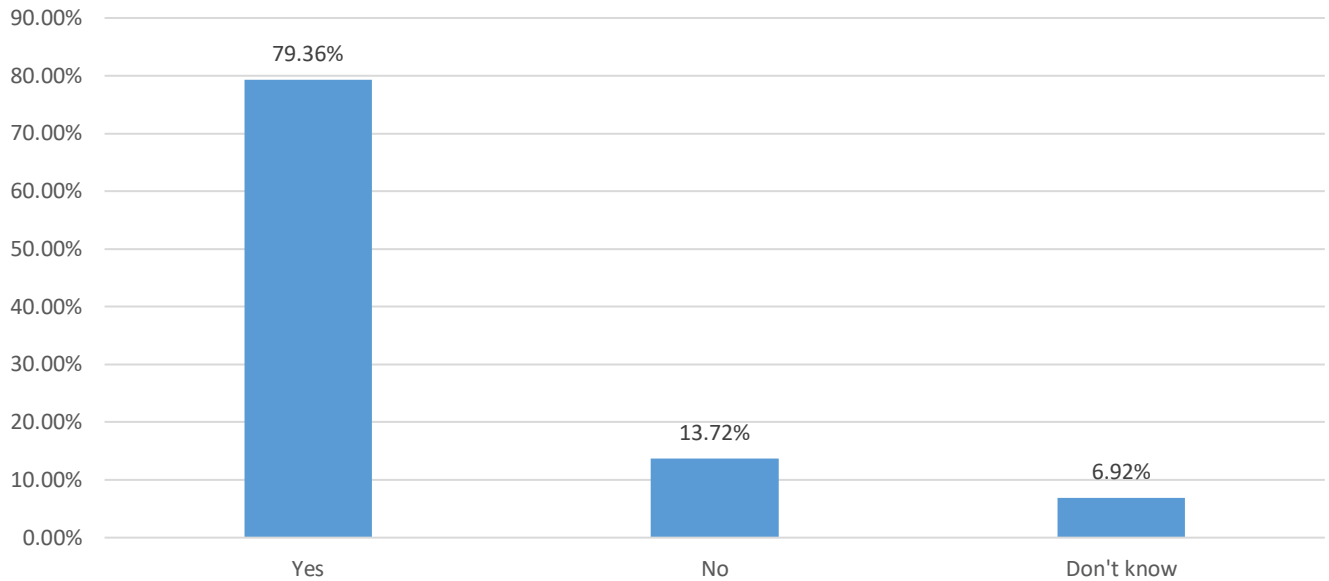
### ELC Models and Provisions



- Most respondents (80%) are currently using the maximum amount of funded ELC that is available at the setting which the child attends. As mentioned before, the minimum entitlement offered to families for session 2020/21 was 600 hours of funded ELC. However, over 80% of three and four-year-old children attending local authority provision have been able to access 1140 hours of funded ELC during session 2020/21.

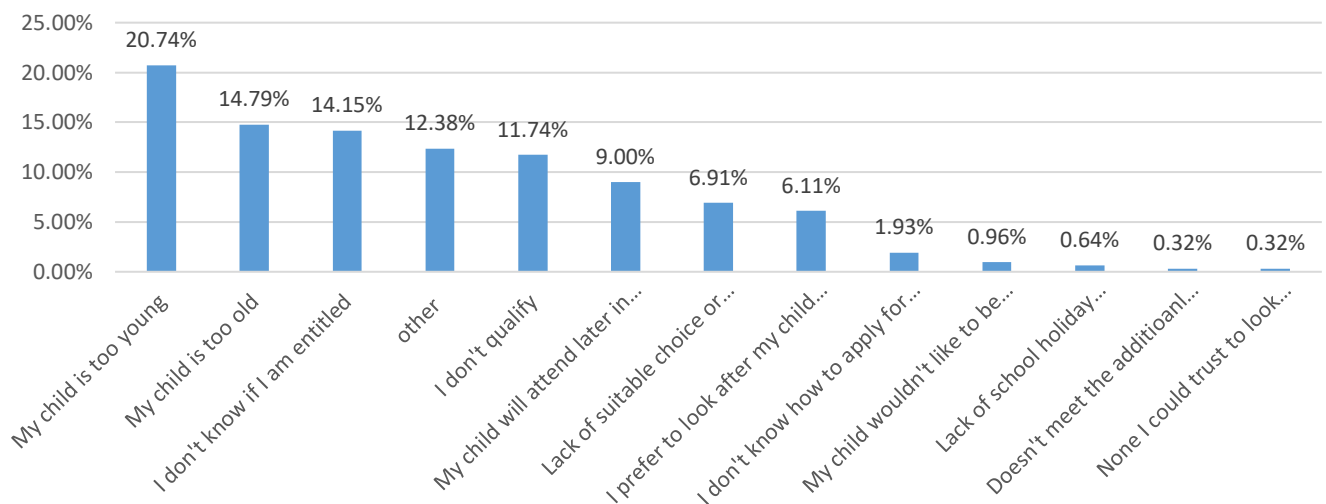


### Do you currently use all of your ELC funded entitlement?



- Respondents who answered the consultation were asked to provide reasons for not accessing all or part of their ELC entitlement. Over one third (35.53%) indicated that either their child was too young or too old to access ELC. 14.15% (88 respondents), were unsure of what they were entitled to with regards to funded ELC.

### Reasons for not using all of ELC funded entitlement.

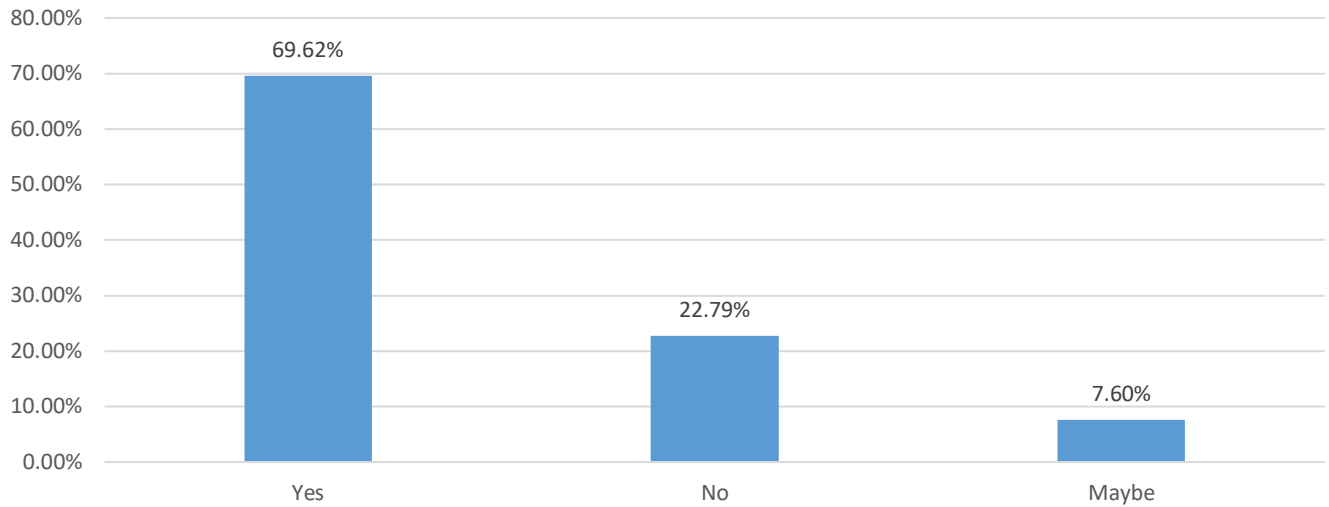


## 2.4 Headline Responses – Future Models of Early Learning and Childcare Delivery

- Most respondents taking part in the consultation indicated that they would plan to use funded ELC in the future.

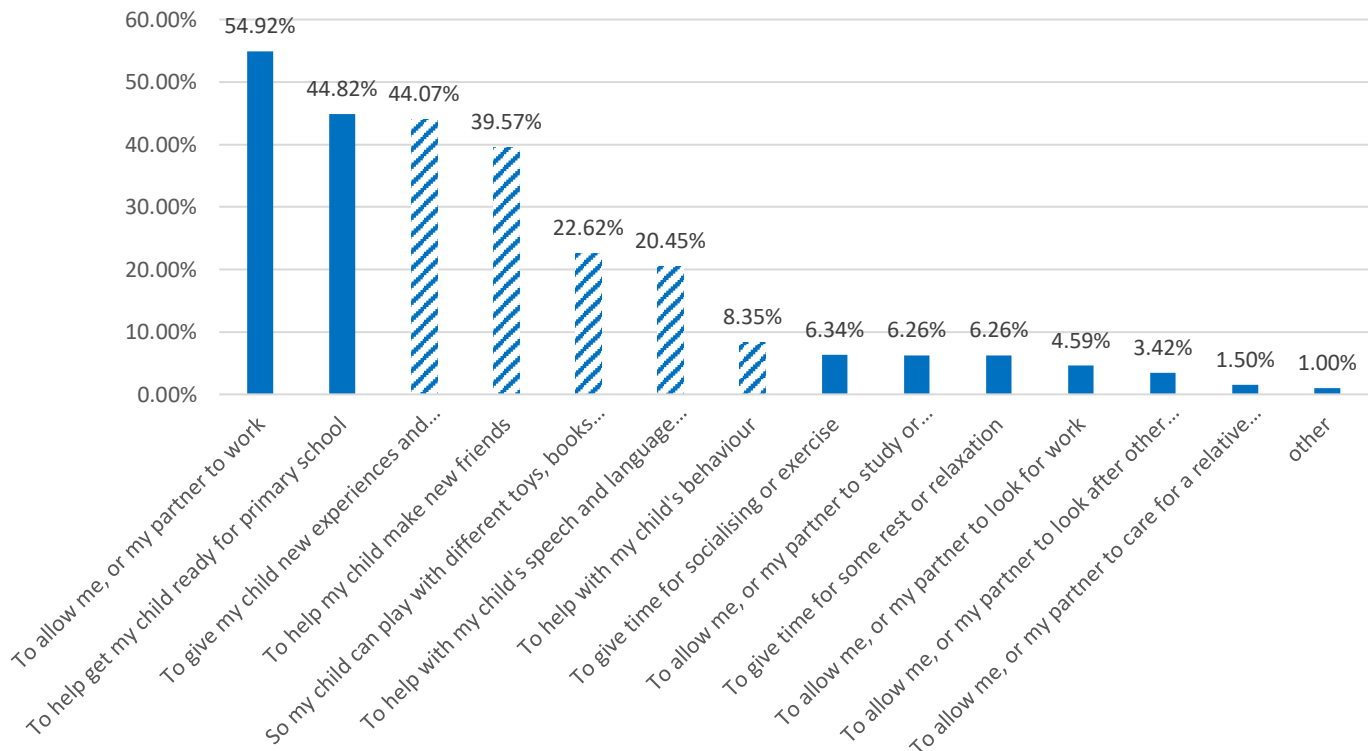


### Do you plan to use funded ELC in the future?



- When asked what the main reasons for using funded ELC, over half (54.92%) of respondents cited it was to support childcare arrangements while family members were at work. Just under half (44.82%) suggest that the main reason for using ELC was to support their child get ready to attend primary school. A significant number of respondents, (see patterned columns 3 – 7 below) saw funded ELC as supporting their child's development and extending the range of experiences and opportunities for learning.

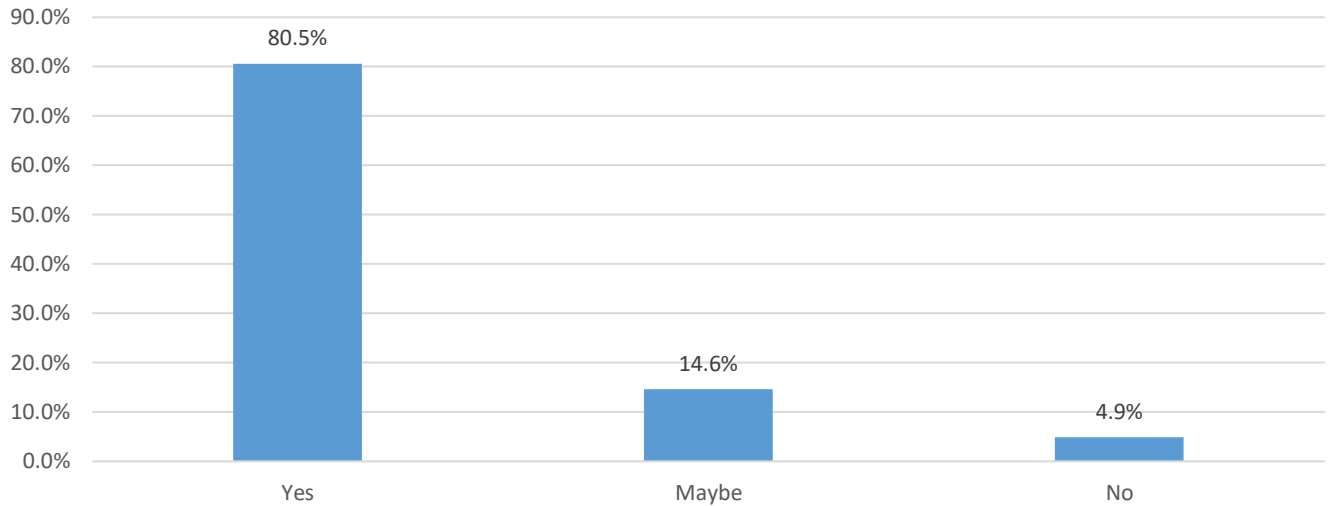
### Main reasons for using future funded ELC





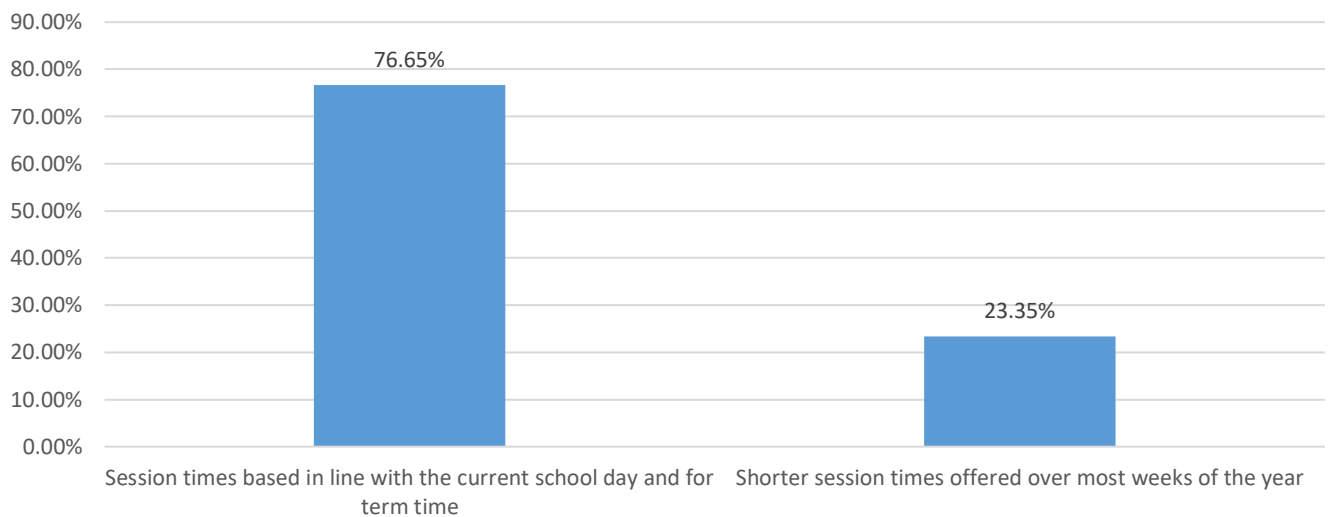
- Most people planned to use the full 1140 hours in the future, with less than 5% of respondents indicating that they would not use the full 1140 of funded ELC when available.

Will you plan to use the full 1440 hours when available?



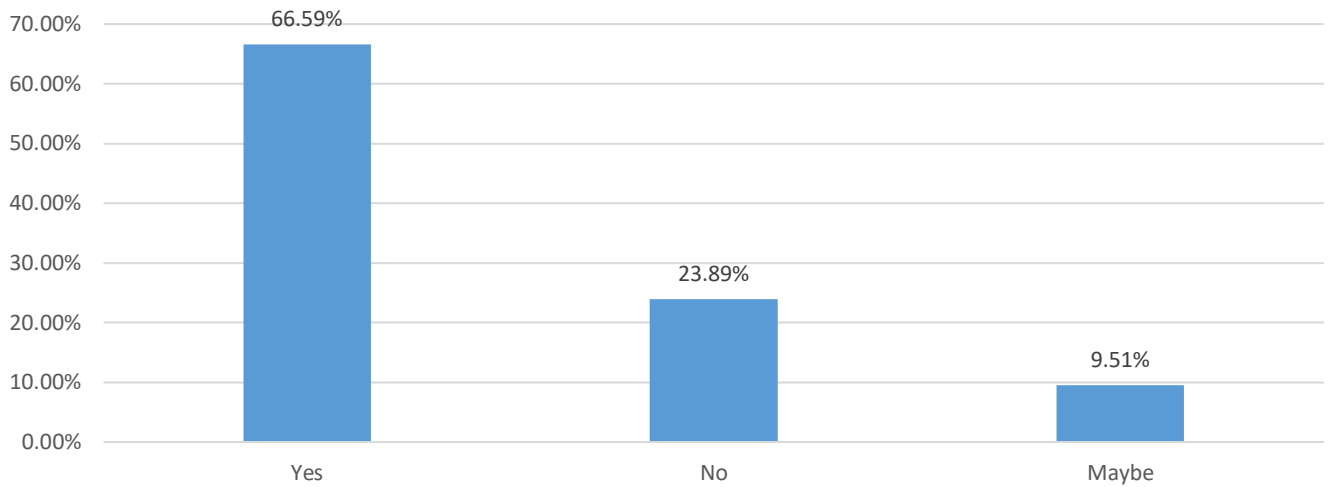
- Three quarters (76%) of families suggesting they would use ELC hours in the future, indicated that they would plan to use a term time model of funded ELC, with the majority (66%) understanding that they may need to look out of their local area to access a different type of service provision that would best meet their needs.

Which models of ELC would you best consider using?



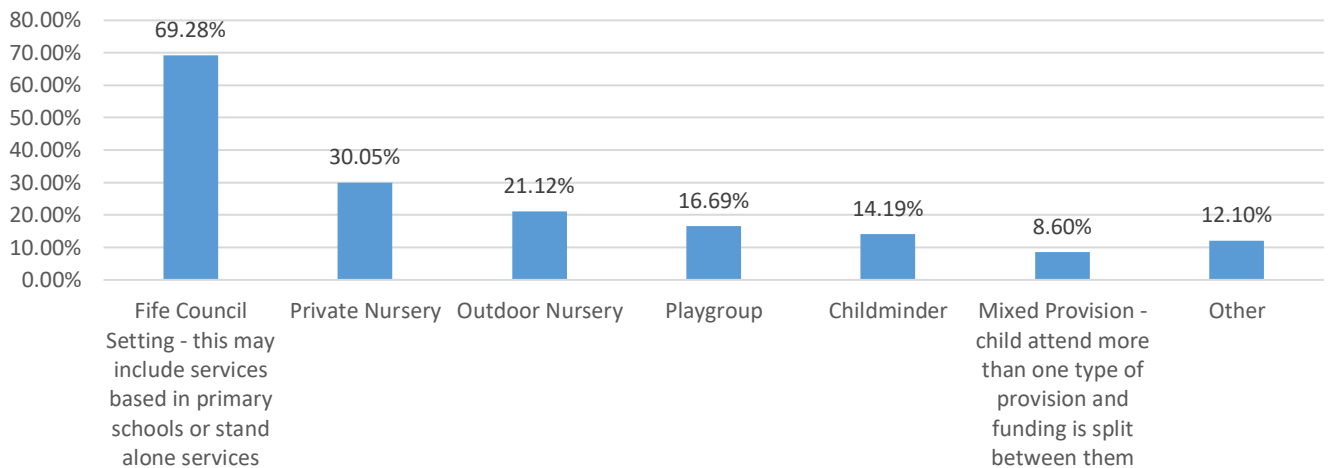


Are you aware that you may need to look out of your local area to access a different type of service / session length that meets your needs better?



- When asked to provide multiple choices to all types of ELC services that respondents would consider using, the majority chose (69.28%) a Fife Council setting. 30.05% would consider using Private nursery, with 14.19% selecting the consideration of using a childminder. 8.06% envisaged that using a blended placement would meet their family ELC needs.

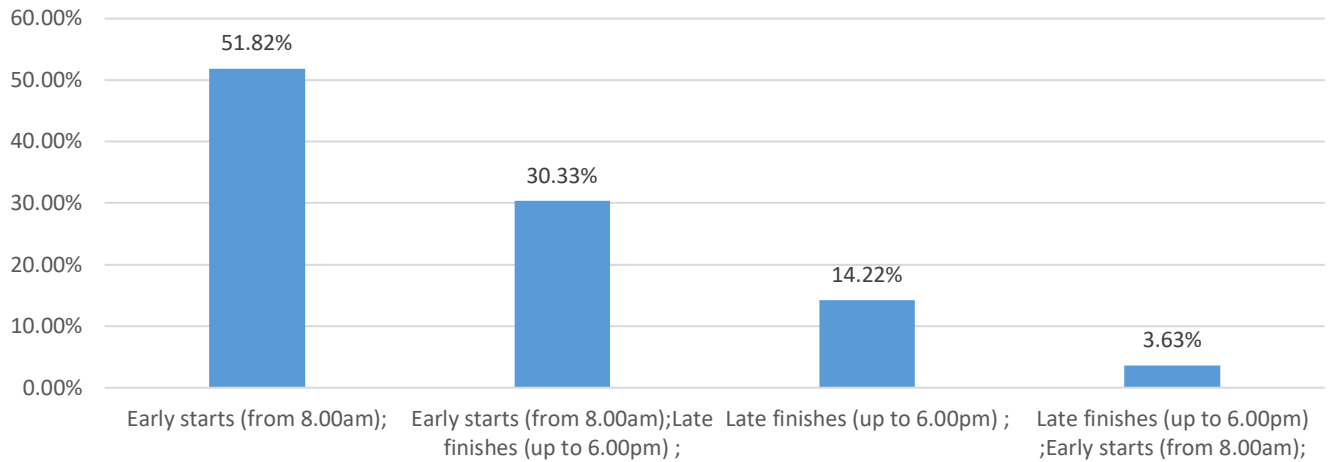
Which of the following ELC services would you consider accessing?  
(select all that apply)



- Over half of respondents indicated that their family would benefit from extended days in ELC settings to support childcare arrangements. This would include early starts from 8.00am and later finished to 6.00pm.



### Would your family benefit from any of the following childcare arrangements?



## 2.5 Respondent responses to open questions

To support our understanding of the needs of parents and carers in providing accessible and flexible ELC, we asked respondents to provide additional information to help us gain a rich understanding of their ELC experience and wishes.

Two questions were asked to invite fully open responses. In one question respondents were asked to indicate if there were any other options of ELC that would better suit the needs of the family, and in another question, they were asked to comment overall about the delivery of funded ELC hours.

### 2.5.1 Is there another option which would better suit the needs of your family?

Upon review there were 126 comments submitted which answered this question. Overall comments covered a wide range of themes. Many respondents noted comments covering multiple suggestions about what would be the ideal solution for their childcare arrangements.

It was clear from the analysis that the needs of families, to appropriately cover childcare arrangement is a personal, and multiple faceted matter. Work patterns, availability of family support, the size of families and age range of siblings contributed to a set of complex issues that were considered by respondents when suggesting optimum childcare requirements. This maximum amount of flexibility and choice to be able to access funded ELC was especially important to families as exemplified by this comment below:

*“Perhaps if the parents were given a set amount of hours to use per week and a window to use the hours in. The pick-up times are very restricting.”*



Comments which centred around the daily and yearly time patterns of funded ELC stood out as important. Opinion was divided in the provision of daily hours. 22 respondents made specific reference to preferring ELC funded options which covered school hours and term times, whereas 20 respondents specifically referred to wishing longer hours, such as early starts and later finishes to support covering a full-time working day.

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*“Longer sessions over fewer days would be better in general, so for example 4 days of 8am-3.30pm or even 3 days of 8am-6pm would be far more suitable than a 9-3 day 5 days a week.”*

---

9 out of the total 1198 respondents, specifically referenced their desire for their childcare arrangements to be based in the same facility as the establishment which older siblings would be attending. 10 out of the total 1198 respondents explicitly cited that attending an ELC attached to their local primary school was important, mostly for allowing their child to form peer friendships for future attendance at primary school.

#### 2.5.2 Do you have any other comments about the delivery of funded ELC hours?

Almost a quarter (298) of all respondents chose to input an overall comment about the delivery of ELC. The range of comments was highly diverse and reflected the personal circumstances of individual family need for childcare. However, themes came through in the overall analysis of comments.

48 comments could clearly be classified as overall positive statements about the suitability of ELC provision which aligned to the specific needs of families. In this category was the resounding appreciation of funded childcare as exemplified by these comments below:

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*“Getting funded hours is wonderful! Great they can be used at a variety of settings.”*

*“It is wonderful and allows me to work”*

*“Thank you. It has helped my family significantly after previously paying around £1000 a month for childcare, for the privilege of going to work. “*

---

Nevertheless, 49 respondents made some reference regarding funded ELC options not being suitably flexible enough to meet the specific childcare needs of their individual family. The overriding factor for this was that need for parents/carers to be able to choose specific times that fitted in with specific working hours and shift patterns.

To a lesser extent 15 respondents explained dissatisfaction that their child had continued to receive 600 hours of funded ELC, rather than 1140 hours that was being



offered at over 80% of Fife Council ELC settings for three- and four-years olds in academic session 2020/21.

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*"I think all nurseries should provide the same hours. It is very unfair that some nurseries provide 1140h and some 600h."*

---

16 respondents, (1.3% of the total sample) particularly referred to their children attending an ELC settings within a primary school that older siblings attended. To a lesser extent 8 respondents, (0.66% of the total sample), felt that ELC setting times should be specifically made available in line with a school/term time model. Alongside this theme, 12 respondents (1% of the total sample) suggested that ELC settings within primary schools should provide priority admissions from the local school catchment area.

15 respondents specifically referenced dissatisfaction in either the admissions process or in not receiving their preferred choice of ELC provision.

The next highest proportion of respondents with 11 comments out of 1198 respondents, suggested that funded ELC should be made available to all children from age 1 or 2 years old to support parents to return fully to the workplace as early as possible.

### 3 SENIOR LEADERSHIP ONLINE SURVEY

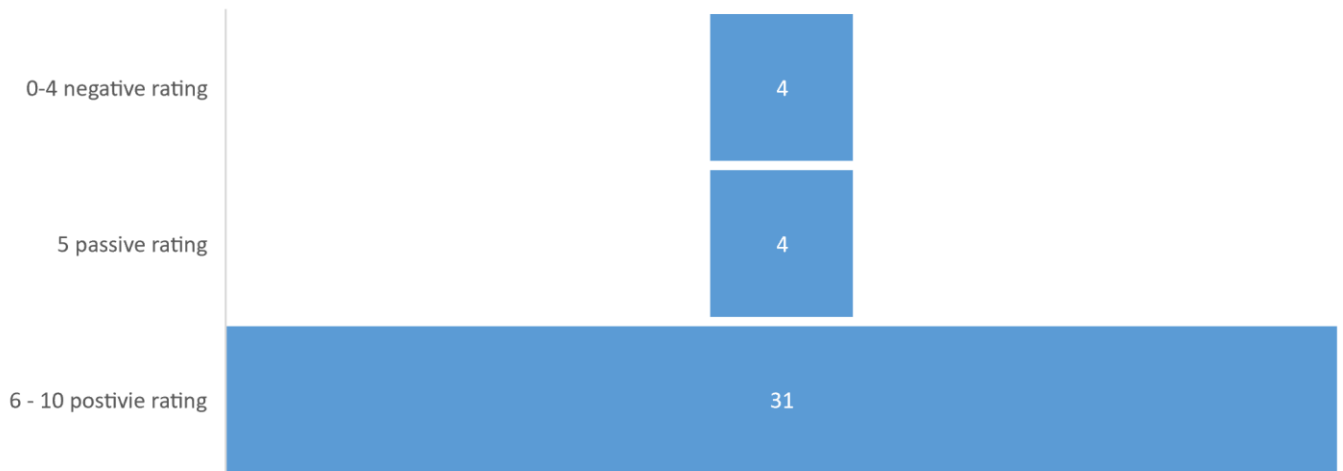
Senior leaders (Headteachers, Depute Headteachers, Principal Teachers) from all seven localities across Fife contributed towards this online survey. Only 39 responses were received in total, so caution must be exerted when interpreting these results.

#### 3.1 Headline Responses

- 74% of senior leaders indicated that they had been able to fully implement 1140 hours of funded ELC in their establishment in session 2020/21, ahead of full implementation in August 2021. A further 3% cited that they had been able to offer a combination of 600 hours leading into a full provision of 1140 within session 2020/21
- 20 respondents indicated that they had managed to offer a place to all ELC applications with 19 indicating that they had not.
- Respondents were asked to rate the range of ELC delivery models within their local nursery area using a rating scale of 1 (not at all suitable) to 1- (extremely suitable) 31 respondents gave a positive score of 6 or more, with 8 out of 10 being the most popular score (16)



How would you rate the range of ELC delivery models within your local nursery area? (scale 1 - 10)



- When asked to qualify their rating score for the suitability of models across the local nursery area, most cited that a good range of models were available for families to access across the nursery local area as stated in this comment:

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*"I feel there is a good balance between the different models available our local area. "*

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- Some indicated that there was a preference from families to access a term time model of provision, exemplified by this comment:

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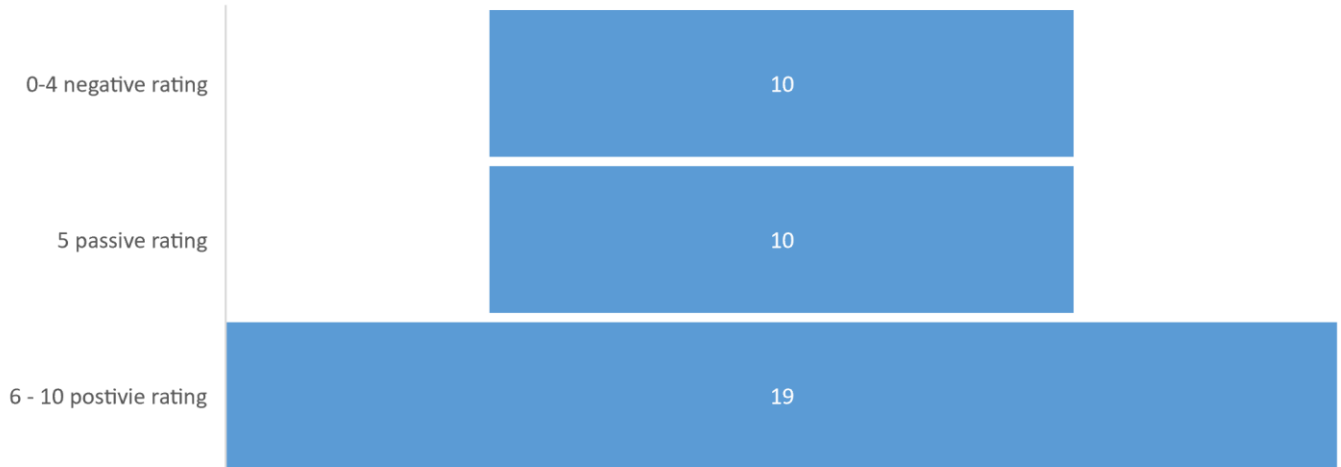
*"Session times offer variety to suit most parents but there is more demand for the term time sessions and the 2.5-day Monday-Wednesday sessions."*

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- All respondents indicated that they had managed to facilitate a few blended placements this session. However due to COVID-19 mitigations this is probably not representative of parent/carer choice.



In your opinion how aware are parents/carers of the potential for using blended placements for funded ELC in your local area? (scale 1 - 10)



- When asked, if parents/carers were aware of the potential for using blended placements, more than 50% SLT respondents felt that parents/carers were less aware of this as an option. This was also confirmed by almost half (46%) of respondents indicating that an increase of blended placements had neither been helpful or unhelpful in their local nursery area.
- Senior leaders indicated positively that having a choice of 52-week models in the local area (56.4%), along with earlier starts and later finishes (69.2%) had been beneficial in the delivery of funded ELC in the local area.
- Overall, senior leadership team members (76.9%) indicated that an increase in choice of ELC models within the local area had brought a positive impact to the local community.

	Very Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Somewhat Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful
Increased use of blended placements	15.40%	35.90%	46.20%	2.60%	0%
Increase of 52-week models to provide more ELC during school holidays	12.80%	43.60%	25.60%	15.40%	2.60%
Additional opportunities for early starts (8.00am) or late finishes (6.00pm)	15.40%	53.80%	23.10%	5.10%	2.60%
More choice of ELC models	35.90%	41%	15.40%	7.70%	0%



within your local area.					
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- 27 out of 39 senior leadership respondents provided additional comments about the delivery, availability or integration of funded ELC within their local nursery area.
- Most of these comments pertained to operational matters such as recruitment, access to supply staff or managing several shift patterns. One comment illustrated this feeling most clearly:

*"I think the main difficulty for the delivery of all the models and hours, is staffing and the availability of people."*

- A few respondents cited examples of difficulties for a few parents/families to access all models across a local area due to rurality and access to transport.
- The ability for parents to have their child attend their local catchment primary school nursery or where older siblings were attending was highlighted by 5 out of the 39 respondents. This is exemplified by the following comment:

*"More opportunities for parental consultation where siblings are split between nurseries and primary schools. This can then impact on transition and be tricky logistically for parents/carers of children who do not attend nursery if placed in a different nursery/area."*

- Overall, it was felt that the implementation towards 1140 hours had been welcomed by communities and was working well for families.

*"All seems to have gone well in the first-year of 1140 hours with happy children and parents."*

## 4 ELC FOCUS GROUPS

During the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021, seven focus group were held online, one from each Fife locality area. A structured discussion was used as the method of gathering parents/carers views about the delivery and availability of ELC within their local area. Online focus group attendance was low ranging from 2 to 6 participants at each planned event.

### 4.1 Headline Responses

- Almost all participants were confident in explaining their knowledge about the expansion of ELC in Scotland and in their local area. There was a general understanding that funded ELC hours had almost doubled and that families could select to use funded hours from a range of providers.
- All participants were currently accessing all funded hours available to them. Some indicated a particular preference for a 52-week provision explaining that this supported childcare during holiday periods, while others preferred a term time model of provision to fit in with other siblings in full time education.



- A few respondents commented that for a fully funded ELC system to support a family with general working hours of 9am – 5pm, across a year, more than 1140 hours of funded hours would be required. This was followed up by some stating that rather than choosing from an allocated model, a more bespoke package for families might be more beneficial.
- Although most participants agreed that they knew about their entitlement, some felt there was additional scope in the communication of what was available in local areas, and a few felt that the application form for a Fife Council nursery could be clearer when indicating preferences.



## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND KEY THEMES OF THE CONSULTATION

Overall, the public consultation achieved a very high response rate, both in general and to each individual question posed. A wide range of respondents contributed, including all areas of Fife, those currently experiencing funded ELC and those planning to use funded ELC in the future.

Before the consultation we had some understanding of what matters to families regarding Early Learning and Childcare through discussions with our senior leaders in Fife Council settings and with representatives from our funded providers through our reference group. This consultation has supported our continued understanding of what is important to families when making Early Learning and Childcare available across Fife.

This ELC consultation has helped to identify the support and activities which will lead to an improvement in making ELC available to Fife families. There is already a wide availability of ELC provision types and models established in Fife for families to choose from, with many already providing 1140 hours of funded ELC ahead of the Scottish Government's full implementation date of August 2021.

## 6 ACTION PLAN

Completion of the consultation has raised subjects with some clear themes and trends emerging for future development.

The actions below will build on the flexibility and choice of ELC for families, and support families to access high quality ELC, ensuring their child has the best possible start in life.

- To improve the narrative about what "Funding Follows the Child" means, and to provide more clear and accessible information about what is available to parents from local authority and private partner ELC providers.
- To promote and support the delivery of high quality and easy to access ELC is important to parent/carers in supporting their child's development as well as supporting family childcare arrangements.
- To continue to offer as wide a choice of models of ELC delivery across a local geographic area to allow families flexibility to access provision which is suitable to their needs.
- To reflect on the benefits of current admissions procedures to ensure that access to funded ELC in local authority settings is as equitable as possible.
- To maintain the exceptionally high success rate for first choice preference of ELC for all Fife Council applications received on time.



- To review each year to balance the number of ELC placements available across Fife Council settings in line with the number of applications received.



## 7 APPENDICES

### 7.1 PUBLIC ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY (1198 Total Responses)

#### Question 1

**Are you currently accessing any eligible funded hours of Early Learning and Childcare?**

	No. of Reponses	% of Responses
Yes	804	67.11%
No	360	30.05%
Don't know	34	2.84%

#### Question 2

**How many hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare are you currently accessing?**

	No. of Reponses	% of Responses
1140 hours	503	60.02%
Unsure	185	22.08%
600 hours	150	17.90%

#### Question 3

**Do you currently use more than one Early Learning and Childcare provider?**

	No. of Reponses	% of Responses
No	716	5.44%
Yes	122	14.56%

#### Question 4

**Which services do you currently use for Early Learning and Childcare? (select all that apply)**

Total responses for types of services used	No. of Reponses	% of Responses
School nursery class	562	50.68%
Fife Council Nursery Centre	176	15.87%
Family Member	139	12.53%
Private Nursery	122	11.00%
Childminder	63	5.68%
Playgroup	35	3.16%
Friend/Neighbour	7	0.63%
Nanny	5	0.45%

#### Question 5



**Children can currently access funded ELC in a number of different ways from different providers. Please select all options that you are currently using.**

Total responses for types/models of ELC accessed	No. of Responses	% of Responses
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - Sessions of 6 hours offered, Monday to Friday during school terms	317	35.66%
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - Sessions of 4 hour 40 minutes offered either AM or PM sessions, Monday to Friday, across the full year.	215	24.18%
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - Sessions of 3 hours and 10 minutes offered as either AM or PM sessions, Monday to Friday during school terms	191	21.48%
PARTNER PROVIDER NURSERIES AND PLAYGROUPS - Using current funding to access ELC at a private or voluntary service	119	13.39%
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - 2.5 days per week either Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday morning or, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday, across the year.	24	2.70%
CHILDMINDER - Using current funding to access ELC at a childminder.	23	2.59%

### Question 7

**Do you currently use all your ELC funded entitlement?**

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	665	79.36%
No	115	13.72%
Don't know	58	6.92%

### Question 8

**What are the reasons you are not using all or part of your Early Learning and Childcare entitlement?**

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
My child is too young	129	20.74%
My child is too old	92	14.79%
I don't know if I am entitled	88	14.15%
other	77	12.38%
I don't qualify	73	11.74%
My child will attend later in the year	56	9.00%
Lack of suitable choice or hours near me	43	6.91%
I prefer to look after my child myself	38	6.11%
I don't know how to apply for a place	12	1.93%
My child wouldn't like to be away from me	6	0.96%
Lack of school holiday provision	4	0.64%
Doesn't meet the additional support needs of my child	2	0.32%



None I could trust to look after my child	2	0.32%
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### Question 9

**Do you plan to use funded Early Learning and Childcare in the future?**

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	834	69.62%
No	273	22.79%
Maybe	91	7.60%

### Question 10

**What would be the main reason for using funded Early Learning and Childcare?**

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
To allow me, or my partner to work	658	54.92%
To help get my child ready for primary school	537	44.82%
To give my child new experiences and opportunities	528	44.07%
To help my child make new friends	474	39.57%
So my child can play with different toys, books and resources	271	22.62%
To help with my child's speech and language development	245	20.45%
To help with my child's behaviour	100	8.35%
To give time for socialising or exercise	76	6.34%
To allow me, or my partner to study or complete training	75	6.26%
To give time for some rest or relaxation	75	6.26%
To allow me, or my partner to look for work	55	4.59%
To allow me, or my partner to look after other children	41	3.42%
To allow me, or my partner to care for a relative or friend	18	1.50%
other	12	1.00%

### Question 11

**Would you plan to use the full 1140 hours when they are available?**

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	745	80.54%
Maybe	135	14.59%
No	45	4.86%

### Question 12



There are a number of different ways 1140 hours can be offered and we are keen to hear your views about what option you would best consider using:

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Session times based in line with the current school day and for term time	709	76.65%
Shorter session times offered over most weeks of the year	216	23.35%

### Question 13

Are you aware that you may need to look out of your local area to access a different type of service / session length that meets your needs better?

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	616	66.59%
No	221	23.89%
Maybe	88	9.51%

### Question 14

Which of the following types of Early Learning and Childcare services would you consider accessing? (select all that apply)

Total responses for types/models of ELC being considered:	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Fife Council Setting - this may include services based in primary schools or stand-alone services	830	40.27%
Private Nursery	360	17.47%
Outdoor Nursery	253	12.28%
Playgroup	200	9.70%
Childminder	170	8.25%
Mixed Provision - child attend more than one type of provision and funding is split between them	103	5.00%
Other	145	7.04%

### Question 15

Is there another option which would better suit the needs of your family? Please give further details below:

Open ended question with main themes discussed in main report.

### Question 16

Would your family benefit from any of the following childcare arrangements?

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
Early starts (from 8.00am)	328	51.82%
Early starts (from 8.00am); Late finishes (up to 6.00pm)	192	30.33%



Late finishes (up to 6.00pm)	90	14.22%
Late finishes (up to 6.00pm); Early starts (from 8.00am)	23	3.63%

### Question 17

#### Do you have any other comments about the delivery of funded ELC hours?

Open ended question with main themes discussed in main report.

### Question 18

#### What is your postcode?

Postcode Area	Area Description	Count of Responses
KY11	Dalgety Bay, Inverkeithing, Rosyth, North Queensferry	282
KY8	Levenmouth, Lundin Links, Kennoway	131
KY12	Dunfermline North, Saline, Culross	98
KY15	Cupar, Howe of Fife	70
KY16	Leuchars, St Andrews, Balmullo	61
KY10	St Monans, Crail, Arncroach	60
KY5	Cardenden, Lochgelly, Kinglassie	55
KY4	Cowdenbeath, Crossgates, Kelty	54
KY1	KDY East, Thornton, Wemyss	51
KY2	KDY North, Cluny & Auchtertool	48
KY6	Glenrothes West, Leslie	43
KY3	Aberdour, Burntisland, Kinghorn	38
DD6	Taybridgehead	37
KY7	Glenrothes East and Central, Markinch, Balgonie	34
KY14	Auchtermuchty, Newburgh, Strathmiglo	22
KY9	Colinsburgh, Largoward, Elie	7
FK10	Kincardine	3
KY13	Kinross	1
AVG	Average responses per postcode area	60.8

### Question 19

#### What age are you?

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
16 - 19	1	0.08%
20 - 24	36	3.02%
25 - 34	487	40.82%
35 - 49	647	54.23%
50 - Retirement age	15	1.26%
I prefer not to say	5	0.42%
Over retirement age	2	0.17%



## Question 20

**Are you currently:**

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
employed part time	435	36.46%
employed full time	373	31.27%
looking after home or family	159	13.33%
self employed	81	6.79%
unemployed and seeking work	59	4.95%
in further or higher education	35	2.93%
permanently unable to work due to illness/disability	14	1.17%
unable to work due to short term injury/illness	12	1.01%
retired	3	0.25%
Employed by Fife council part time but on a carer break.	1	0.08%
Carer	1	0.08%
Currently on maternity leave from a part time job	1	0.08%
Career	1	0.08%
Maternity leave	1	0.08%
Career break hoping to return to work when child is in nursery	1	0.08%
in a government work or training scheme	1	0.08%
Employed part time and in full time education	1	0.08%
In part time employment and attending University part time.	1	0.08%
Employed part time and in full time university education	1	0.08%
Maternity	1	0.08%
PT student and PT employed	1	0.08%
Employed as self-employed and look after my other children	1	0.08%
Carer for my disabled children & due to my own health I'm deemed unfit for work	1	0.08%
Currently on a career break	1	0.08%
Unemployed and 26 weeks pregnant	1	0.08%
Student	1	0.08%
Both employed part time and self employed	1	0.08%
Caring for my disabled son	1	0.08%
Full time Mum hoping to return to study when child old enough	1	0.08%
Employed part time and studying too.	1	0.08%
Full time carer	1	0.08%

## Question 21

**Do you consider anyone in your household to have a disability?**



	No. of Responses	% of Responses
No	1051	87.88%
Yes	119	9.95%
Prefer not to say	26	2.17%

### Question 22

Please list the number of children you have in each age group

	Total
0 – 1-year olds	856
2-year-olds	608
3 – 5-year-olds	1036

### Question 23

Do you consider your child who is accessing or would be accessing ELC to have a disability?

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
No	1134	95.78%
Yes	35	2.96%
Prefer not to say	15	1.27%

### Question 24

How would you describe your cultural/ethnic background?

	No. of Responses	% of Responses
White	1120	95%
Mixed background	25	2%
Asian / Asian Scottish / Asian British	18	2%
Black / Black Scottish / Black British	6	1%
Other	16	1%



## 7.2 SENIOR LEADERSHIP ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY (39 total responses)

### Question 1

Please provide your name and position

### Question 2

Please provide the name of your ELC setting

### Question 3

Please select your local nursery area

	No. of Reponses	% of Responses
Cowdenbeath 1 - Ballingry to Kelty	1	2.56%
Cowdenbeath 2 - Lochgelly	2	5.13%
Cowdenbeath 3 - Cowdenbeath	4	10.26%
Dunfermline 1 - North and West	1	2.56%
Dunfermline 2 - Central	3	7.69%
Dunfermline 3 - East	2	5.13%
Glenrothes 1 - North and East	1	2.56%
Glenrothes 2 - South	2	5.13%
Glenrothes 3 - Central and West	6	15.38%
Kirkcaldy 1 - South	2	5.13%
Levenmouth 1 - Central	1	2.56%
Levenmouth 2 - South	1	2.56%
North East 1 - East Neuk	1	2.56%
North East 3 - Tay Bridgehead	2	5.13%
North East 4 - Howe of Fife	1	2.56%
North East 5 - Cupar	3	7.69%
South West 1 - Dalgety Bay and Inverkeithing	4	10.26%
South West 3 - West Fife Villages	2	5.13%

## Current Service Delivery

### Question 4

In session 202/21 how many hours of ELC were you able to implement?

	No. of Reponses	% of Responses
1140	29	74.36%
600	1	2.56%
Combination of 600 / 1140	9	23.08%

### Question 5



**In session 202/21, which models of ELC did you deliver? (select all that apply)**

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - Sessions of 3 hours and 10 minutes offered as either AM or PM sessions, Monday to Friday during school terms.	10	26%
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - 2.5 days per week either Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday morning or, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday, across the year.	2	5%
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - Sessions of 4 hour 40 minutes offered either AM or PM sessions, Monday to Friday, across the full year	17	44%
FIFE COUNCIL SETTING - Sessions of 6 hours offered, Monday to Friday during school terms.	26	67%

**Question 6**

**In session 2020/21, were you able to offer a place to all ELC applications?**

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
No	19	48.72%
Yes	20	51.28%

**ELC Delivery Integration**

**Question 7**

**How would you rate the range of ELC delivery models within your local nursery area? (1 – not at all suitable, 10 – extremely suitable)**

Rating Scale	No of Responses	% of Responses
0	0	0.00%
1	0	0.00%
2	1	2.56%
3	1	2.56%
4	2	5.13%
5	4	10.26%
6	2	5.13%
7	8	20.51%
8	16	41.03%
9	1	2.56%
10	4	10.26%



### Question 8

Please provide an explanation for your rating for question 7.

Open ended question with main themes discussed in main report.

### Question 9

How many children have attended your settings on blended placements this session?

Rating Scale	No of Responses	% of Responses
0 to 3	29	74%
4 to 6	5	13%
7 or more	5	13%

### Question 10

In your opinion how area are parents/carers of the potential for using blended placements for funded ELC in your local area?

Rating Scale	No of Responses	% of Responses
1	2	5.13%
2	2	5.13%
3	3	7.69%
4	3	7.69%
5	10	25.64%
6	4	10.26%
7	4	10.26%
8	8	20.51%
9	2	5.13%
10	1	2.56%

### Question 11

Thinking about the delivery and integration of ELC across your local area, please rate these statements.

	Very Helpful	Somewhat helpful	Neither Helpful nor Unhelpful	Somewhat Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful
Increased use of blended placements	15.40%	35.90%	46.20%	2.60%	0%
Increase of 52-week models to provide more ELC during school holidays	12.80%	43.60%	25.60%	15.40%	2.60%



Additional opportunities for early starts (8.00am) or late finishes (6.00pm)	15.40%	53.80%	23.10%	5.10%	2.60%
More choice of ELC models within your local area.	35.90%	41%	15.40%	7.70%	0%

### Question 12

**Do you have any other comments about the delivery, availability or integration of funded ELC hours within your local nursery area?**

Open ended question with main themes discussed in main report.



### 7.3 ELC FOCUS GROUPS

ELC Online Focus Groups were promoted in each of the seven Fife locality area through Family Nurture Centres.

Structured discussion used for online focus groups.

1. What information do you already know about the expansion of ELC in Scotland and in your local area?
2. Are you aware of what you are entitled to and what is available in your local area?
3. Do you currently access all ELC hours available to you? If not, what prevents you from doing this?
4. Will you take up 1140 hours of funded ELC from August 2021?
5. Is what is being offered to you the best solution for your family?
6. What could make the expansion of ELC even better for your family?

Invitation for Volunteers: Local Authorities for Second Year ELC Deferral Pilots 2022-23

1.1 Overview of Fife

The urban-rural population mix of Fife is broadly similar to that of Scotland as a whole, as measured by the urban-rural classification. This is unusual for a local authority, as typically these tend to be predominantly more urban or more rural. Although the remote areas of Fife are more accessible, and less remote in nature than those of Scotland as a whole, we find that most parents wish to access Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) provision locally and are not willing to travel to access alternative provision.

	Urban	Small towns	Rural
Fife	67.1	15.4	17.5
Scotland	70.8	12.0	17.2

- % of population living in urban areas, small towns or rural areas
- Taken from 2018 population data based on the 2016 urban-rural classification

When looking at SIMD data the population of Fife is broadly similar to that of Scotland as a whole, as measured by SIMD, with approximately 20% of the Fife population living in each SIMD Quintile. Again, this is unusual for a local authority, as typically these tend to be predominantly more deprived or more affluent in nature.

Based on other measures of deprivation/poverty, Fife's child poverty rates follow a similar pattern to Scotland overall, but Fife's rate has remained consistently higher than Scotland for at least the last decade. Across a range of other (non-SIMD) measures of child poverty or disadvantage, Fife ranks 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived of Scotland's 32 local authorities. Children growing up in poverty are not restricted to workless households but include many low-income working households. In recent years, the gap between Fife and Scotland's child poverty rates has started to widen, and this gap is projected to increase over the next few years.

Early Learning and Childcare in Fife is currently provided across a number of different settings and provider types:

- 107 Local Authority nurseries (94 Based in schools and 13 Stand-alone settings)
- 40 Private Nurseries in partnership
- 12 Playgroups and Other Voluntary organisations in partnership
- 106 Childminders in partnership

As a result of the demographics across the area, Fife would be able to provide relevant information on uptake for phase 2 of the pilot to many Local Authorities to match the context of their own council area. This could be achieved by breaking down the data by SIMD along with Urban-Rural classifications when reporting back on uptake, along with breakdown per provider type. This would meet the requirement to widen the evidence base for the project in phase 2.

1.2 Admissions Policy

Fife Council currently prioritises applications from all deferred children in our admissions policy, so that they are allocated a placement for the following academic year before allocating placements to other eligible children.

For discretionary deferrals, the policy currently states that:

*Parents of children who are 5 after the start date of any new school session, and on or before the 31 December of that school session, are not entitled to, but can request, a discretionary additional year in a Fife Council nursery for their child. Requests are not always approved. Decisions on deferred entry requests are made by the central education management team based on information provided, including assessment by the Headteacher and staff of the nursery, and at times the link Educational Psychologist.*

As a result, we would not be required to update the current Early Learning and Childcare Admissions Policy to take part in phase 2 of the trial to offer deferred places to children who are not 5 by the start of the school year, as we would be able to utilise the discretionary element listed for the Central Education management team to agree more deferrals to proceed.

In accordance with our normal arrangements, we will start to promote the nursery application process in December 2021, for admissions for 2022/23. Parents will be asked to apply for a Fife Council nursery place in January 2022, for session 2022/23. This promotion is done through social media, information circulated through schools and information circulated by other organisations such as the NHS and other voluntary sectors that work with families with young children. Our timeline means that work will start in October to develop the updated promotional material for this and to update the application form accordingly. Our partner settings will accept applications for 2022/23 in line with their own admissions policies.

Discussions will also start to take place in Fife Council nurseries during the October to December 2021 term, between professionals and parents/carers, to identify children who would benefit from an additional year in nursery and we also ask partner organisations delivering funded ELC to start discussions with parents over this period too. This is done to ensure parents have the relevant information to decide whether deferral is the best option for their child in plenty of time to submit an application.

We have 28 Equality and Excellence Leads allocated across 35 settings in Fife, in our most deprived areas, and these members of staff will target specific areas to ensure we are reaching those parents and carers least likely to engage with ELC services.

### **1.3 Expected Uptake**

Fife Council has been tracking deferral information over several years, separating this data out by automatic and discretionary deferrals. There has been an upward trend in the number of automatic deferrals over this period, with the percentage of eligible children accessing an additional year of funded ELC increasing from 24.85% in session 2013/14 to 43.24% in session 2021/22. Discretionary deferrals have also increased over that period but by a much smaller amount, from 2.99% in session 2013/14 to 4.08% in session 2021/22. This is shown in Appendix 1.

Using this information, we have projected the number of automatic deferrals for 2022/23 to be 45% of eligible children and 47.57% for session 2023/24. We would expect the number of deferrals from the current discretionary group to increase too, but by a smaller level than that predicted for children with January and February birthdays.

For 2022/23 discretionary deferrals have been projected to be 4.30% uptake, with 4.44% in 2023/24, if the criteria were to remain the same. If /when the criteria are changed, to allow automatic deferrals for all children under 5, then it would be reasonable to expect an increase on this figure, but we would not expect it to reach the same levels as the current automatic deferral level immediately.

Based on this we have calculated 3 levels of projections, with expectations that the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of calculations would be the most likely outcome. These are:

1. deferrals remaining as is, with no change to policy
2. discretionary deferrals calculated as a proportion of current automatic levels, increasing over time (25% for 2022/23 and 35% for 2023/24) and
3. discretionary deferrals calculated at the same levels as current automatic deferrals (45% for 2022/23 and 47.57% for 2023/24)

We have mapped this against expected capacity within each of the local nursery areas across Fife. Appendix 2 shows the projections on this basis for academic years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

This demonstrates that even at the maximum number of projected deferrals we would have sufficient capacity in all but 2 of our local nursery areas and with only very small numbers over in those (9 children in total). We are already investigating ways to increase provision in these 2 areas to ensure we have sufficient choice for parents, whether this is increasing partnership with external providers, additional Fife Council provision through alternative delivery models or by creating additional capacity by utilising unused space elsewhere in the school estate. All other areas would have sufficient capacity.

#### **1.4 Staffing Levels**

We have our own highly successful Apprenticeship Programme for Early Years Officers in Fife. Apprentices are given up to 2 years to complete their SVQ Level 3 qualification, but we find that many achieve this earlier than expected. They then have the option to remain on the apprenticeship programme for the full 2-year contract or apply for fully qualified EYO positions within the service. We have 22 employees who started the apprenticeship programme in January 2021 and are due to complete this in January 2023, but we expect most of these staff to be available for EYO contracts in August 2022. We are also starting a new cohort of 21 Apprentices in October 2021 and it is likely that some of these staff will also have completed their qualification by August 2022.

In addition, Fife College has taken on approximately 130 HNC students for session 2021/22 who would be due to graduate in time for posts starting in August 2022.

Appendix 3 shows the estimated additional staffing required for projections 2 and 3 (Projection 1 is already accounted for in our expected staffing levels for 2022/23 and

2023/24). It also shows the estimated additional costs involved for 2022/23 based on each projection.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

Fife Council has identified that we would be able to adjust our planning to ensure that sufficient placements, and the consequential expected staffing supply, to meet the requirement to extend the option of an automatic deferral to children under the age of 5 by the start of the school year in August 2022/23, based on the projections submitted.

We would commit to fully participating in the evaluation of phase 2 of the pilot scheme, if chosen to deliver this, and we believe we would be able to provide extensive data (due to the demographics across Fife) to many other Local Authorities for planning their own expansion.

**APPENDIX 1 – DEFERRAL DATA**

ACADEMIC YEAR	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>TOTAL P1 Eligible Intake</b>	<b>4371</b>	<b>4343</b>	<b>4325</b>	<b>4270</b>	<b>4127</b>	<b>4091</b>	<b>4063</b>	<b>4083</b>	<b>3982</b>
<b>Automatic Deferrals</b>	181	163	177	190	213	253	236	267	287
<b>Discretionary Deferrals</b>	49	50	58	58	55	57	59	64	61
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>348</b>
 % of eligible for Automatic Deferrals	24.85%	22.52%	24.55%	26.70%	30.97%	37.11%	34.85%	39.24%	43.24%
% of Discretionary Deferrals (under 5)	2.99%	3.07%	3.58%	3.62%	3.55%	3.72%	3.87%	4.18%	4.08%

# APPENDIX 2 – FUTURE PROJECTIONS

Local Nursery Areas	No of placement s available (2022/23)	3-4 yo projecte d totals 2022/23	Remainin g Places available	Option 1 Deferral s @ Current projecte d 2022/23 levels	Places remainin g	Option 2 Deferrals based on 25% of eligible children for 2022/23	Places Remainin g	Option 3 Deferral s based on 45% of eligible children for 2022/23	Places Remainin g
SW1	370	258	112	13	99	19	93	35	78
SW2	486	377	109	20	89	29	80	52	57
SW3	379	273	106	14	92	20	86	36	70
D1	425	276	149	14	135	20	129	36	113
D2	573	342	231	17	213	25	206	45	186
D3	865	677	188	32	156	46	142	83	106
C1	364	279	85	14	71	20	64	37	48
C2	364	252	112	14	98	20	92	36	76
C3	444	365	79	17	62	24	55	44	35
G1	426	378	48	17	31	24	24	44	4
G2	364	293	71	14	57	20	51	36	35
G3	464	366	98	19	80	27	71	49	49
K1	397	348	49	19	30	28	21	50	-1
K2	580	438	142	23	119	33	109	60	82
K3	535	424	111	22	89	32	80	57	54
L1	514	396	118	19	99	27	91	48	70
L2	450	410	40	18	21	27	13	48	-8
NE1	317	167	150	8	142	12	138	21	129
NE2	453	296	157	13	143	19	137	35	122
NE3	271	184	87	11	76	15	71	28	59
NE4	274	138	136	7	129	10	126	18	118
NE5	406	283	123	14	109	20	103	36	87
TOTALS	9721	7219	2502	359		518		933	

				Deferrals @ Current projected 2023/24 levels		Deferrals based on 35% of eligible children for 2023/24		Deferrals based on current trend with new criteria applied 2023/24	
	No of placements available (2023/24)	3-4 yo projected totals 2023/24	Remaining Places available		Places remaining				Places Remaining
SW1	370	253	117	12	105	23	94	31	86
SW2	486	354	132	21	111	40	92	54	78
SW3	379	263	116	14	102	27	89	37	80
D1	425	263	162	14	148	26	136	35	127
D2	573	339	234	22	212	41	192	56	178
D3	865	663	202	37	165	70	131	96	106
C1	364	273	91	15	75	29	62	39	51
C2	364	256	108	13	95	24	84	33	75
C3	444	339	105	18	87	34	71	47	58
G1	426	349	77	20	57	37	40	51	27
G2	364	293	71	13	58	25	46	34	37
G3	464	347	117	20	97	38	79	51	66
K1	397	344	53	19	33	37	16	50	3
K2	580	421	159	25	134	47	112	64	95
K3	535	418	117	21	95	41	76	55	61
L1	514	364	150	20	130	38	112	52	98
L2	450	383	67	23	44	44	23	60	7
NE1	317	164	153	8	144	16	137	22	131
NE2	453	283	170	16	154	31	139	41	128
NE3	271	189	82	10	72	19	63	26	57
NE4	274	134	140	7	132	13	126	18	121
NE5	406	262	144	16	128	31	113	42	102
TOTALS	9721	6956	2765	386		731		994	

KEY,

	Remaining places 15% or more of expected numbers
	Remaining places between 10 and 14.99% of expected numbers
	Remaining places between 5 and 9.99% of expected numbers
	Remaining places between 0 and 4.99% of expected numbers
	Insufficient Placements available based on expected numbers

**APPENDIX 3 – ADDITIONAL STAFFING LEVELS REQUIRED**

Academic Year	Projection 2		Projection 3	
	- no of additional placements	Additional FTE Staff	- no of additional placements	Additional FTE Staff
2022/23	160	27	574	96
2023/24	186	31	34	6
TOTAL		<b>58</b>		<b>101</b>

Additional Costs 2022/23 (based on 2021/22 rates)	Projection 2	Projection 3
Staffing	£962,224	£3,461,481
Meals	£117,315	£422,027
Resources	£4,788	£17,226
Estimated additional management/operational costs	£50,000	£50,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,134,328</b>	<b>£3,950,733</b>

Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee of 1 March 2022			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Childcare Services and Play Practice Development	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean, Gary Peattie	ECS 03.11.20. Decision called-in to Scrutiny, 09.02.21 (Ref Para 36 of 2021.ECHSC.18/19); deferred to FC 25.02.21 (Ref Para 214 of 2021.FC.248/249). Referred back to Sub-Committee for further reports, including full business plan. Deferred from 09.11.21 meeting - Elected Member workshop(s) to be arranged in the interim (Shelagh).
Secondary School Staffwise Survey Update	Education and Children's Services	Neil Finnie, Murray Mcbain	Update since E&CS 11.02.20 - Minute Ref. Para. 168 of 2020.ECS.63. Results from May 2021 survey.
Children's Services Inspection Update	Education and Children's Services	Kathy Henwood, Christine Moir	
Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report	Education and Children's Services	Kathy Henwood	Deferred from 09.11.21 meeting to 01.03.22 meeting.
Our Minds Matter Update	Education and Children's Services	Rona Weir	Reference to be made to Community Mental Health.
Positive Destinations Outcomes	Education and Children's Services	Maria Lloyd	
Inspection Outcomes	Education and Children's Services	Angela Logue, Jackie Funnell	
Education & Children's Services Directorate Revenue Budget 2021-22 - Update	Education and Children's Services, Finance and Corporate Services	Alison Binnie	
Education & Children's Services Directorate Capital Investment Plan 2021-22: Progress Report	Education and Children's Services, Finance and Corporate Services	Alison Binnie	

Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee of 1 March 2022			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Building Fife's Future	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean	
Devolved School Management	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean, Kevin Funnell-Ed	
Swimming - Fife Council Motion	Education and Children's Services	Maria Lloyd	
Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme			

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Dunfermline North Catchment Review	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean	Para. 88 of 2018.EChSC.52 refers - to carry out a catchment review in Dunfermline North.
Establishing the Walked Routes to Schools - Assessment	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean, Neil Finnie, Murray McBain	E&CS 19.03.19, 2019 Para 116 - update one year from implementation in Aug '21, now Aug '23.
Workforce Planning	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean	
Fife Corporate Parenting Board - 6-Monthly Update/Analysis	Education and Children's Services	Kathy Henwood	Para. 206 (4) of 2021.ECS.85 (16.03.21) refers. Mtg 18.08.21 to discuss proposed restructure. Unable to meet timescale for 09.11.21 meeting - Service to issue as a briefing note meantime. Consider at March meeting - tbc.
Review of ASL Strategy - Update	Education and Children's Services	Maria Lloyd, Deborah Davidson, Vivienne Sutherland	Possibly March, 2022.

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Positive Destination Outcomes	Education and Children's Services	Maria Lloyd, Stuart Booker	Outline work in this area including reform area work.
Digital Strategy	Education and Children's Services		