

Community Planning Board

Thursday, 23 May 2024
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

The undernoted reports have been added to the agenda for the meeting of the **Community Planning Board** to be held at **Meeting room, Elgin Fire Station**, on **Thursday, 23 May 2024** at **14:00**.

BUSINESS

5a. School Age ChildCare Working Group **3 - 18**

Report by Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)

Any person attending the meeting who requires access assistance should contact customer services on 01343 563217 in advance of the meeting.

THE MORAY COUNCIL
Community Planning Board

SEDERUNT

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Councillor Kathleen Robertson (Depute Chair)

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Councillor Bridget Mustard (Member)
Mr Andrew Anderson (Member)
Mr Roddy Burns (Member)
Councillor Tracy Colyer (Outside Body Appointee)
Councillor Amber Dunbar (Outside Body Appointee)
Mr David Hendry (Outside Body Appointee)

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REPORT TO: COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD 23 MAY 2024

SUBJECT: SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE WORKING GROUP AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1. To provide the Community Planning Board (CPB) with an overview of the work of the short-life Childcare Working Group initiated by Moray Economic Partnership. The Working Group have conducted research, built an evidence base, and developed proposals which explore options for alleviating the pressures of deficient School Age Childcare provision throughout Moray.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1. It is recommended that CPB:-

- i) Consider and note the progress to date in building an evidence base which demonstrates the scale of challenges associated with School Age Childcare (SAC) provision including the activity coordinated via the HIREP Childcare Working Group which Moray Council has chaired;
- ii) Consider and note the future changes to the childcare landscape as a result of the Scottish Government’s School Age Childcare Delivery Framework;
- iii) Consider and note the new staffing resources in place via the Local Employability Partnership (LEP), the work which relevant LEP officers will be progressing on SAC over the coming year and that an update will be provided when that work has progressed further; and
- iv) Note that pending that update, there is no additional resource earmarked internally from which to progress actions relative to SAC beyond those highlighted at paragraph 15.1 of the report.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The issue of childcare availability has become an ever increasing barrier and concern for local families. Specifically, a lack of available or affordable wraparound childcare, also referred to as School Age Childcare (SAC), is preventing many parents from reaching their full economic potential. In turn this is leading to increased unemployment and underemployment among people who are willing and able to work, with the effects predominantly being experienced by women, thus exacerbating existing gender pay inequalities.
- 3.2 Broadly speaking, SAC consists of the childcare which occurs outwith the statutory funded provision occurring within the nursery or school day, including before and after school, as well as during the holidays. SAC provision includes a wide-ranging mix of offerings, made up of regulated providers, registered childminders, breakfast clubs, after school/nursery activities, and youth work provision. In addition, many families rely on informal childcare provided via friends and family, often structuring their employment around what is locally available, to accommodate their family's circumstances.
- 3.3 A Childcare Problem Statement (available as a confidential background paper) was drafted in an attempt to qualify the extent of these challenges and reported to Moray Economic Partnership (MEP) on 7 December 2022 (paragraph 4 of the minute refers). The report outlined the growing challenge of childcare provision and the importance of childcare to a productive economy. The paper highlighted the scale and impact of the challenges being faced by some of Moray's key employers, including evidence of military personnel turning down postings to RAF Lossiemouth due to the lack of available childcare. For people who have recently relocated to the area often without a familial support network, insufficient availability of childcare is preventing many military spouses and partners from entering the local labour market. The majority of whom are women.
- 3.3.1 The CPB are asked to note the undernoted amendment to the Childcare Problem Statement as reported to MEP on 7 December 2022:
- To support the needs of serving families with primary school aged children, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) now provide a reclaimable allowance of up to 20 hours funding of £4 per hour for children of military parents to cover costs of out of school care (breakfast club / after school clubs). To be eligible, all parents in the household must be eligible for the Tax Free Childcare scheme and the allowance can only be used at registered care providers. Informal childcare, sports clubs etc are excluded from use.*

3.4 The Problem Statement outlined the range of factors putting pressure upon existing childcare infrastructure, which included:

- Declining interest among young people in pursuing a career in childcare, resulting in fewer students applying for childcare courses with UHI Moray;
- Reduction in the number of registered childminders in Moray, which has fallen from over 100 prior to the pandemic to just 86;
- Lack of financial viability for new wraparound childcare services, especially those which are newly launched;
- Limited access to suitable premises for delivering childcare services.

3.5 The lack of statutory requirements for providing SAC places the burden of identifying solutions to the current childcare situation on the market to provide. It is recognised that the challenges are complex and there is a need to develop adaptable and varied solutions which may involve provision of funding, skills development, sourcing of suitable premises, transportation, and recognition that levels of demand and provision will vary across each area of Moray and may require unique area based solutions.

3.6 MEP agreed that a short-life working group be created to research and develop a detailed business case setting out the scale of the issue, the economic consequences and clear evidence of demand and capacity issues. The MEP Childcare Working Group began meeting in January 2023. The group consists of Council officers from Strategic Planning and Development, Schools and Curriculum, Economic Growth and Regeneration, Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport, and Learning Estate. These officers have worked alongside representatives from local partners including Moray Chamber of Commerce, RAF Lossiemouth, UHI Moray, and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), as well as representatives of Scottish Government.

4. REGIONAL ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP CHILDCARE WORKING GROUP

4.1 The Highlands and Islands Regional Economic Partnership (HIREP) has also set up a working group to explore challenges associated with SAC provision at a regional level. The group is being chaired by officers from Moray Council who are working alongside officers responsible for SAC within Highland Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council, Argyll and Bute Council, and North Ayrshire Council. Representatives of HIE, Care and Learning Alliance, Scottish Childminding Association, Scottish Out of School Care Network, and Scottish Government are also feeding into this group.

- 4.2 The HIREP Childcare Working Group are exploring the extent to which availability and accessibility of SAC in rural areas poses a barrier to economic growth across the region. Reliance on family and friends to provide informal childcare is significant. However, this presents a barrier to attracting labour to the area with no existing family support network. The lack of SAC provision is therefore exacerbating the existing population challenges facing the region and the availability of a sufficient and active labour market.
- 4.3 In order to address the labour shortage in the sector innovative solutions are required. A Single Care Model for adult and child care in rural and remote communities is currently being developed by the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA). The intention is to develop provision across the age spectrum within a rural community where there have been difficulties with recruitment of staff within adult care as well as childcare. This service would not necessarily be intergenerational but could ensure the viability of child and adult care in rural communities where there is limited demand. It would also offer opportunity for staff to be employed on a full-time basis, which may boost staffing numbers, with staff providing care to different groups throughout the working day. This is being discussed and explored by the HIREP working group.
- 4.4 The HIREP working group is currently seeking to lobby Government on critical issues around funding and viability of child care in rural areas and also the Care Inspectorate where the current rules and inflexible approach can make it extremely difficult to achieve viable child care models.

5. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DEFICIENT CHILDCARE

- 5.1 Childcare can play a role in alleviating the pressures of child poverty, as it can help ensure parents are able to maximise income, offering a potential to boost family finances. At present, too many parents are unable to access the labour market due to structural barriers such as childcare availability or affordability. In Moray, the proportion of children who live in poverty after housing costs have been taken into account is 21.35%, which is above the national average of 20.86%.
- 5.2 Improving access to childcare could have a major impact in closing the gender pay gap, as it prevents parents (most often women) from being forced into part time roles, or into leaving work altogether. In a report published in 2022, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) estimated that if female employees worked as much in full time roles as their male counterparts, the gender pay gap would reduce by a third. Addressing the gender pay gap matters for fairness between genders. But it has other consequences. As many families depend on a woman's income, lower wages for female workers places them and their children at a greater disadvantage and puts them at further risk of poverty.

- 5.3 The gender pay gap in Moray is higher than the national average. The analysis of gender pay considers the total pay gap between male and female workers across the population, it is not an analysis of equal pay for male and female workers doing the same or similar work. When considering median data by place of residence, in 2022 average female pay was 14.4% below male pay. The Scottish average was significantly below this at 11.6%. While provisional data for 2023 shows that the gap is closing in Moray, with it reducing to 12.2%, the national average has fallen further to just 8.3%. However, the prevalence of any gap in earnings between genders remains a driver of economic and social inequality.

6. RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

- 6.1 As referenced above, the lack of available childcare is placing acute pressures upon military families and is hindering the ability of RAF Lossiemouth to attract suitably qualified and experienced personnel to the base. The Head of Communications and Engagement at RAF Lossiemouth, Sarah Riley-Evans, has provided a voice for military parents on the local Childcare Working Group.
- 6.2 An assessment of the situation by RAF Lossiemouth indicates that there is a 40% shortfall in required childcare provision as a result of growth of the Station since 2003. This has been exacerbated by the capability insertion as part of the Lossiemouth Development Programme, without corresponding expansion of childcare facilities.
- 6.3 Community Needs Analyses from the past 20 years have consistently indicated that, to meet the Station's demand, childcare provision should be scaled for 11% of the base's establishment. With the projected growth of RAF Lossiemouth due to rise to c.2,900 by 2025, the requirement would amount to c.315 places needed, which is 135 places (in excess of 40%) short of available capacity at the RAF Lossiemouth Childcare Centre.
- 6.4 Childcare provision for 0-2's and SAC are particular pinch points, which is now at a tipping point between personal friction/frustration for serving personnel and their families and direct impact on operational output. Growth of RAF Lossiemouth consists of both increased numbers of personnel and operational tempo. Current operational tempo is characterised by increased frequency of deployments and a return to routine 24/7 homeplate operations.
- 6.5 It has been suggested that RAF Lossiemouth personnel do not benefit equally from the stated offer in the Armed Forces Families Strategy 2022-2032, which aims to "offer choice and flexibility to allow personnel to serve their nation and raise a family at the same time." This poses a risk that a negative preference for posting to RAF Lossiemouth develops, especially at vital middle-management level (who typically have young children), and an additional "push" factor to leave the Service. RAF Lossiemouth are investigating local options which might mitigate the risks set out for them.

7. **CARE INSPECTORATE**

- 7.1 In order to operate a regulated childcare service in Scotland, by law it must be registered with the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate regulates and inspects childcare (and all other care) services to make sure they meet sufficient and acceptable standards of care and supports providers to help them improve their service. For families to be able to use the Tax-Free Childcare allowance provided by the UK Government, the recipient childcare provider must be Care Inspectorate registered. Similarly, funding for childcare provision available for military families through the Ministry of Defence can only be used with registered providers. This excludes many options, such as sports activities and after school clubs, for families looking to maximise the existing financial support available.
- 7.2 Care Inspectorate require registration for childminders if the offer extends beyond 2 hours a day, the childminder is caring for children 16 years' old or younger, and the childcare is taking place in a private home. This also applies to childcare services which provide care for children on non-domestic premises for a total of more than two hours per day and on at least six days per year. This includes nursery classes, crèches, after school clubs and playgroups and can be run on a public, private or voluntary basis. However, it does not include services which are part of school activities, or where care is not provided such as sports clubs or Scouts or Guides.
- 7.3 HIE via an officer with responsibility for childcare infrastructure across the region, has been assisting with the working groups at both a local and national level. HIE provided a Regional Childcare Update Paper (available as a background paper upon request) for the HIREP, which was shared at the end of August with Neil Gray, Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture. The paper highlighted that care inspectorate legislation is in some circumstances actually inhibiting rather than facilitating the development of SAC solutions across the Highlands & Islands region. Some of the proposals outlined in the paper include:
- Childminders being provided with salaried posts or block grants to enable financial sustainability and the attractiveness of the role. This would enable a childminder to establish a service where there is need but not full capacity to ensure a viable business model;
 - Payment for childminders to care for their own children, as the exclusion of this is a major barrier in rural/island communities where there is a limited labour availability;
 - Reducing the paperwork and bureaucracy associated with Care Inspectorate registration, or at very least providing more support to guide childminders and providers through the process.
- 7.4 Many local providers have also highlighted challenges with the registration process as well as what are seen to be unrealistic expectations. One local provider offered some insight into the barriers they have faced in securing

Care Inspectorate registration for developing new SAC services, which are outlined below:

- There is a lengthy application process to secure registration which can take up to 6 months, despite the provider already holding registration for two other sites in Moray;
- Requirement to register for each new service or site, whether or not you have existing registration;
- The need for staff to be qualified, or seek qualifications whilst in post, which excludes a huge section of the labour market and further diminishes an already shrinking talent pool;
- Disproportionate application of regulations, such as a local authority providing wraparound care within a school building not requiring separate care inspectorate registration, while a private/third sector provider does.

8. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT: SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

- 8.1 The 2023-24 Programme for Government announced a set of proposals to expand the funded childcare offering, particularly for low-income families. This included a commitment to building a system of school age childcare provision.
- 8.2 In October the Scottish Government published the [School Age Childcare Delivery Framework](#) alongside the [National Children's Charter for School Age Childcare in Scotland](#). The Scottish Government recognise that funded childcare is critical to address child poverty at a national level, through reducing inequalities for school age children and allowing parents and carers to enter employment or increase their hours at work.
- 8.3 The School Age Childcare Delivery Framework sets out key action areas for building a new system of SAC provision which will be funded for those families who need it most alongside information on community participation in developing and designing the approach.
- 8.4 As previously referenced, officers from within the Scottish Government's School Age Childcare Division have participated in the two childcare working groups. This has enabled Council officers to provide input to the division on current local activity and raise awareness about the unique challenges facing communities in Moray which is hindering the development of new SAC solutions.
- 8.5 The School Age Childcare Division are currently researching and considering a range of factors to underpin and grow a new SAC system. These include:
- Delivery mechanism
 - Workforce and qualifications
 - Regulation and quality
 - Legislation

- Funding and eligibility
- Communications

8.6 The Scottish Government has also been working with [Caerus](#) to develop a new online platform to serve as a childcare management system. This would make childcare more accessible to parents and families, highlighting providers within a locality who have availability. The service will be free to all providers, who are registered with the Care Inspectorate to ensure that unmet demand can be recognised and supported. Parents will be required to register and provide minimal information about their childcare requirements in order to access provider details. Further information is expected to be made available ahead of launch, with no date yet set for this.

9. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT: EARLY ADOPTER COMMUNITIES

9.1 To support the creation a new system of SAC, the Scottish Government have supported six Early Adopter Communities, with a view to developing and testing models of delivery. These six communities consist of Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Inverclyde, Glasgow, Fife, and Shetland. The intention is to link these community projects to wider initiatives, including employability, family support, tackling population decline, and community regeneration.

9.2 The Early Adopter Communities will be testing the delivery of services and their impacts in different communities to inform the development of a national SAC approach. The Early Adopter Communities are testing:

- Specialist Services
- Food Provision
- Year round capability and demand
- Targeted funding
- Rural provision

9.3 Shetland Islands Council will advise via the HIREP Childcare Working Group on the development of their early adopter programme. This will commence in early 2024 with the recruitment of a Project Manager, funded by Scottish Government, ahead of developing the first phase of a new SAC system in Shetland.

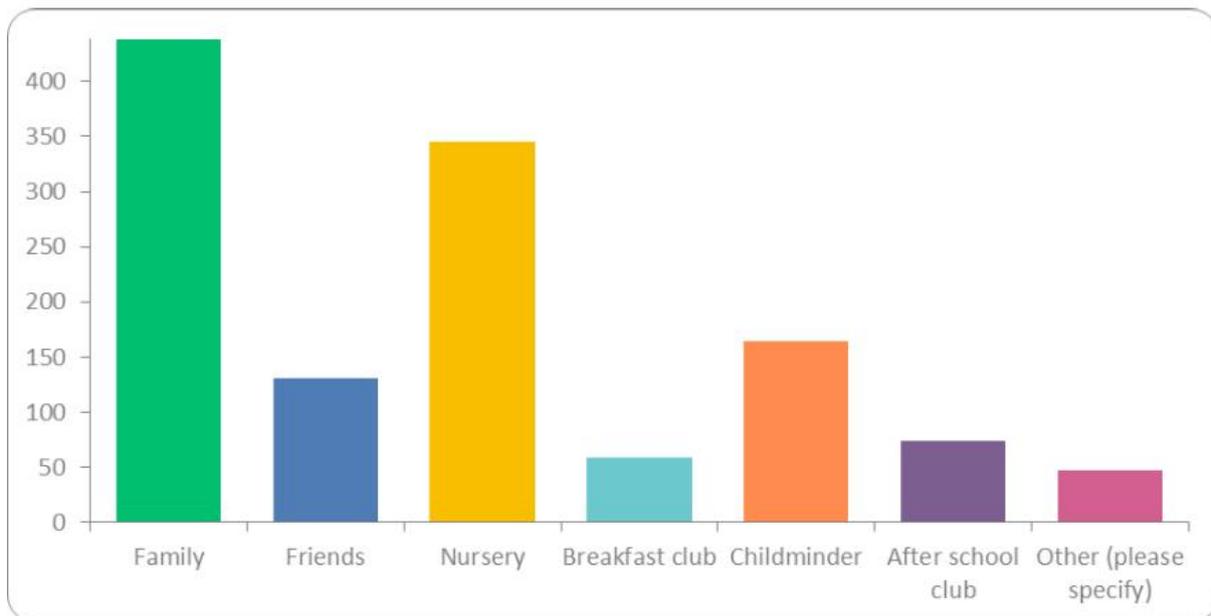
10. SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CARERS

10.1 To gather evidence on the scale of need and demand at a local level, the Childcare Working Group published a childcare survey, which sought to capture the views of parents and carers living or working in Moray. The survey was focussed on childcare outwith the normal funded provision occurring during the school and nursery day. A total of 1,417 responses were received via the survey, with a positive level of response from parents and carers across each of the eight ASG localities.

10.2 The results and responses received highlighted the scale of challenge currently faced in Moray ([as outlined in the **Childcare Parent and Carer Survey Analysis**, which is available as a background paper upon request](#)). A total of 424 respondents advised their current childcare provision does not meet their needs, which represented 56% of those currently accessing childcare. Further highlighting the deficiencies of current SAC provision in Moray, of the 775 respondents currently accessing childcare in some form:

- 438 are having to rely on family (57%)
- 131 are relying on friends (17%)

This is demonstrated in the graph below (respondents were asked to select all that apply so percentages do not sum):



10.3 Lack of childcare is influencing our demographics and exacerbating existing challenges with Moray's ageing population. 45% of respondents confirmed that the availability of childcare has influenced their decision on whether or when to have more children. Additionally, 123 people advised that they were unable to have the size of family they wished as they couldn't afford the cost of childcare. The census results published earlier in this year highlighted that the number of 0-4 year old children in Moray had declined by over 1,000 between 2011 and 2022, representing almost 20% of the population in that age bracket. While far too simplistic to suggest that childcare availability is the only factor driving this decline, it is certainly having an influence.

10.4 The survey also offered a useful insight into the extent to which underemployment is influenced by childcare provision, with underemployment in Moray at 9.3% being above the national average which is 8.5%. Underemployment is a measure of the total number of people in an economy who are unwillingly working in low-skill and low-paying jobs or who are working less hours than they would rather choose

to do so. A total of 778 respondents believed that improved or expanded childcare provision would provide opportunity for them to work more hours or change job, suggesting that a lack of SAC is driving underemployment in Moray.

- 10.5 In terms of need and demand the survey offered insight into the types of provision parents and carers currently require. The responses demonstrate the complexity of the problem and that resolving it will require a varied approach:
- 141 stated a need for more hours at their current childcare setting
 - 244 stated a need for holiday provision
 - 181 stated a need for before school provision
 - 239 stated a need for after school provision
 - 83 stated a need for flexible evening or weekend provision
 - 56 stated a need for part-time 0-2 year old provision

11. ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

- 11.1 In addition to the survey of parents and carers, another survey was conducted of childcare providers operating in Moray. The survey gathered input on all types of childcare, but with a particular focus upon SAC and sought to gather views on current capacity, as well as interest among providers in expanding provision or offering new services.
- 11.2 There were 86 responses to the survey but 56 of those were from registered childminders. In terms of capacity the survey highlighted the pressing challenge in accessing childcare for parents with very young children. Over 51% of providers who provide childcare for 0-2s stated their current waiting list is over 1 year, while over 85% stated said their waiting list is over 6 months.
- 11.3 However, the survey demonstrated that providers do have interest in expanding services to meet demand, with this confirmed by 56% of childcare settings. With the strongest interest in expanding services in their current premises to provide additional capacity for existing services. However, a number of providers felt constrained by insufficient room in their current premises to do this and the lack of available capital to invest in infrastructure. Furthermore, 87% of childcare settings confirmed they are currently facing challenges in recruiting suitably qualified or experienced staff and that this was a significant barrier to expansion. There is also a discrepancy between public sector and private/third sector pay which is driving this labour shortage, with 50% of the childcare settings who provided further comments raising concern that they are unable to compete with local authority rates of pay and pension package.
- 11.4 Following the survey a workshop was held with a group of local childcare providers on 18 August 2023, facilitated by council officers. Earthtime for All, VIP Childcare, Lossie 2-3 Group, Action for Children, Stramash, and Care and Learning Alliance attended, alongside a representative of HIE. The providers highlighted a range of issues with Care Inspectorate

regulations which are hindering the development of new services. They also provided insight into the other key challenges they currently face in developing new SAC services, which include:

- Recruitment
- Sourcing suitable premises
- Developing business cases and costing new services
- Ensuring ongoing financial viability. The providers also highlighted a range of issues with Care Inspectorate regulations which are hindering the development of new services.

12. SCOTTISH CHILDMINDING ASSOCIATION

- 12.1 A pilot project was launched by the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) in early 2022 to support the recruitment and training of new childminders, targeted at specific rural communities within ten defined areas of Scotland. These communities had been identified as having an urgent need for more high-quality, flexible childcare. The Moray localities of Buckie, Milnes, and Speyside were included among the initial communities targeted. The project was financed by Scottish Government, Skills Development Scotland, South of Scotland Enterprise and HIE, with local delivery supported by Business Gateway.
- 12.2 The project provided funding to support the set-up cost associated with a new childminding business, guidance and support in completing the registration process, courses in business childminding, child protection and parental involvement, as well as the first year of membership with the SCMA. Despite an extensive recruitment campaign, there was limited local interest with only a handful of childminders completing the training and going on to set up a new childminding business. Across the Highlands and Islands region as a whole, the project had supported 30 new childminders in the region to open new businesses. The SCMA have continued with the campaign during 2023, however none of the target communities in Moray were included as eligible for support in the second year of delivery.

13. PROGRESS FOR PARENTS

- 13.1 The Progress for Parents project aims to support parents in our local communities to access SAC provision. SAC has been identified as a barrier preventing parents from participating in learning, training or employment opportunities. Overall, the aim of this project is to support parents into learning and work, in order to increase household income and ultimately reduce child poverty rates. The Progress for Parents team is funded by Scottish Government and embedded within the Employability team within Economic Growth and Regeneration.
- 13.2 The Progress for Parents team have recently recruited a Project Officer (G8) to lead the Progress for Parents project. The G8 post holder will coordinate the SAC element of the Progress for Parents project and this will be her focus in 2024/25. This is a temporary post funded until the end of the financial year with the possibility that Scottish Government funding

will be extended. The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) are optimistic this will be extended. A description of activity is provided in **Appendix 1**. It should be noted that this project is aimed at only certain categories of parents, as set out in **Appendix 1**. The PO sits under the newly appointed Lead Officer (per earmarked SG funding) for the LEP for the Progress for Parents Project/Child Poverty (G10). Again, again funding is currently for one year with the expectation this can be extended.

13.3 Through the wider Progress for Parents Project, a number of new initiatives are being developed:

- Creation of a grant scheme to be coordinated via Business Gateway to provide funding for new childminders to cover start-up costs;
- Provision of funding for parents getting back into work to cover their initial childcare costs;
- New MERI programme with up to 56 placements available, covering up to £8k of salary costs for each 6 month placement dependent on the number of hours worked;
- Funding available for businesses to cover training / qualifications costs to facilitate upskilling of existing staff who are parents;
- Activities of the new PO, who will provide support for parents and families as well as assisting businesses looking to develop new childcare services.

14. **DEVELOPING FURTHER SOLUTIONS**

14.1 As a number of childcare providers highlighted a lack of confidence or knowledge in preparing robust business plans, which can pose a barrier to accessing external funding to set up new services, so facilitating this support could be transformational. Discussions have taken with Business Gateway, tsIMORAY, and HIE to explore the potential development of childcare sector specific business planning support, with development of this service ongoing.

14.2 To facilitate provision of school estate use for external providers looking to launch new SAC services, the Education and Resources service are working on the development of a costing model. The costing model for hire/use of school estate premises will need to account for and consider:

- Access requirements which allow for security, as any new tenant would effectively become a key-holder
- The cost of cleaning, lighting, heating, and security
- Long term viability based on changing school roll forecasts

14.3 However, one of the aforementioned childcare providers agreed to share a budget and cashflow relating to the development of new SAC provision, to provide insight into the challenge with making the service financially viable. The business plan is based upon a model which would see a single SAC service launched initially, before expanding to six satellites within the space of two years. The aspiration of the provider would be to operate the service predominantly outdoors within the vicinity of the school estate, for

access to bathroom facilities. The business plan demonstrates that it would take two full years before the service become financially sustainable, based upon projections for numbers of children. It is important to highlight that these projections do not allow for any additional cost of premises hire, which would further threaten the financial sustainability of the service. Investigations are ongoing to identify the level of subsidy that might be needed to support a typical service operating within the school estate over that 2 year period until it became viable, based on full cost recovery by the council. As solutions are likely to be heavily place based however, one size will not fit all. The PO will investigate possible solutions to support viability beyond those already possible for some cases via the Progress for Parents funding.

- 14.4 There is an opportunity to take a Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach to facilitating access to public buildings to bring forward new SAC solutions. The Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee (EDIS) approved the CWB Strategy and Action Plan at its meeting on 30 April 2024 (paragraph x of the minute refers). The CWB approach includes a commitment to providing socially just use of land and assets, with the local approach including a commitment to work with key departments within Moray Council and our anchor partners to ensure communities maximise benefit and generate wealth from local land and property.
- 14.5 The Scottish Government's development of a new online childcare management system with Caerus could be transformational for parents looking to access information on local childcare availability. This could be especially useful for people relocating to a new area who won't know who the local providers are. However, on the flipside, it could also have a negative impact in highlighting the lack of provision for people considering moving into Moray, especially for example those who may be getting posted into Moray to work at RAF Lossiemouth or Kinloss Barracks. If the system is to be as effective as possible support for the development of a sufficient and robust local childcare ecosystem will be needed.

15. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- 15.1 So, in summary the following activity is ongoing:
- **Nationally:** School Age Childcare Delivery Framework Activity including Caerus online platform, 6 early adopter communities; SCMA activity
 - **HIREP:** Investigation of Single Childcare Model with CALA; lobbying of Scottish Ministers and Care Commission, reporting by Shetland as early adopter community
 - **Locally:** RAF Lossiemouth investigations relative to their needs; investigation as to subsidy levels for SCA services operating from the school estate; Progress for Parents Project activities looking at SAC from mapping of provision and opportunities to developing

possible models to meet needs and assessing options to address viability challenges.

An update will be provided when the Progress for Parents work has progressed further. Meantime, this along with the other work set out locally, through HIREP and nationally is viewed by officers as supporting the priority accorded to minimising barriers to people working such as those caused by childcare issues, as set out in the new Corporate Plan 2024-2029. As there is no single agency or service with a statutory responsibility to deliver SAC, no further internal resource is currently earmarked to progress this area.

16. CONCLUSION

- 16.1. School age childcare is a major challenge in Moray, and as it does not fall within the statutory responsibilities of any single agency, it has been difficult to gain a clear picture of the challenges and opportunities in this area. This report - a product of partnership working - endeavours to provide this picture, setting out actions ongoing at national, regional and local level to identify and test possible solutions with an invitation to the CPB to request a report back on progress if wished.**

Author of Report: Rhona Gunn
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1108985784-941 /
SPMAN-1108985784-942 /
SPMAN-1108985784-940

Appendix 1



Progress for Parents – School Aged Childcare Project

The Progress for Parents project, which is part of the Moray Pathways Local Employability Partnership, is funded by Scottish Government. This project will support parents in our local communities to access School Aged Childcare (SAC) provision. School aged childcare has been identified as a barrier for parents to participate in learning, training or work opportunities.

Overall, the aim of this project is to support parents into learning and work, increase household income and ultimately reduce child poverty rates.

The families identified as eligible for the purposes of this project are recognised as belonging to one of the below priority groups set out in the [Bright Start, Best Future, Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#).

- Lone parents
- Families with a disabled parent or child
- Families with three or more children
- Minority Ethnic Families
- Families where the youngest child is under 1 year of age
- Families where the parents are under 25

As part of the early stages of this project, our aim is to complete mapping of existing SAC provision across Moray, work in collaboration with all existing SAC providers and link with local employers to build the scope of provision in Moray.

In order to achieve a lot of the work planned, we would like to build connections with all our communities across Moray to ensure we are meeting the diverse needs of our families. In order to do this, we hope that we can build positive connections with all our school communities and ELC providers. We believe that these communities are key stakeholders in the development of SAC provision in Moray.

We aim to contact all Primary Schools in Moray to have discussions around what needs their school community may have in terms of SAC. This will support our mapping of existing provision and where there are gaps in provision. We would be particularly keen to connect with schools who would be interested in exploring options for involvement in piloting SAC provision within their ASG. The approach will be place based.

We have already started the process of connecting with existing providers, some being ELC providers, but would be keen to expand this to connect with all ELC providers to again, assess need for SAC provision and explore options to build the scope of provision.

If you have any questions or would be keen to be an early adopter for this project, please do not hesitate to contact:

***Emma Sharpe, Progress for Parents Project Officer –
emma.sharpe@moray.gov.uk***

Alternatively, please look out for correspondence in the near future and we look forward to building positive connections that will lead to increased SAC provision in all localities across Moray.