

## SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
<b>Report Subject</b>	Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2022-2025
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Social Services)
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Welsh Government's (WG) Childcare and Early Years (phase 1) Capital Programme was completed at the end of March 2024. Planning for the next phase of the WG Childcare and Early Years Capital programme investment has already commenced and the projects feasibility studies are coming to an end.

£70 million capital funding is available to Authorities across Wales for the Childcare and Early Years Capital (phase 2) Programme 2022 to 2025. The capital build programme is 100% funded by Welsh Government.

This report outlines two proposed projects for phase 2 of the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2022-2025 and the potential building locations that have been identified. The projects within the programme have been selected using Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, and Welsh Government funding criteria.

The projects, if approved, will deliver new Childcare facilities, and increase childcare provision across Flintshire in various locations. The focus is on early years, however, the buildings can be used for childcare wrap-around, after school and holiday provision.

The first project is Cornist Park Flint and, subject to Cabinet approval, the Flintshire Childcare and Early Years Capital Team would like to progress this project onto the next stage of a 'design and build' request to Welsh Government.

The second project is at Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn. Feasibility options have been identified for this site and further work is required with partners to finalise the preferred scheme before seeking approval to proceed with a 'design and build' request to Welsh Government .

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee supports the submission to the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2022-2025 for the Cornist Park Flint, scheme to proceed from the 'starting a project' stage and to request agreement to the 'design and build' phase of the programme from Welsh Government.
2	That the Committee supports a Direct Award process to appoint an experienced contractor to meet the WG deadline of 31 March 2025. The award will be through the existing Pagoba framework.
3	That the Committee notes the identification of the Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn as a potential second project, subject to further work with partners. If options are viable within the timescales prescribed by Welsh Government approval will be sought from Cabinet to proceed based on the timelines, costings and partnership agreement.

## REPORT DETAIL

<b>1.00</b>	<b>BACKGROUND</b>
1.01	Welsh Government (WG) have made available capital grants to councils for the purposes of providing seamless childcare provision to children in the early years, supported through several WG programmes including Flying Start childcare for 2–3-year-olds, the 3–4-year-old Childcare Offer and early learning. A key policy driver is that the early learning, Flying Start and Childcare Offer is as clear and easy as possible for children to access and there is a seamless pathway into early education.
1.02	The 3–4-year-old Childcare Offer is a WG funded programme which provides up to 30 hours of funded childcare and early learning for up to 48 weeks of the year to 3–4-year-olds of eligible working and training parents. During term time the 30 hours is made up of 10 hours of early education (Early Entitlement) and up to 20 hours of childcare or 12.5 hours of nursery education and 17.5 hours of childcare with a CIW registered childcare provider and/or school.
1.03	The Flying Start programme helps progress children under 4 years of age, who live in the more disadvantaged areas of Flintshire. The aim is to ensure all children are healthy and thriving, that their families are capable and coping and finally that these children are reaching their full potential. The primary focus will be to ensure all 2–4-year-olds have access to quality part-time childcare, with the phased roll-out of the 2-year-old funded childcare for all children.
1.04	Feedback from parents, gathered through the most recent Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA), revealed that parents want to be able to drop their children off and pick them up from the same site, with a seamless transition from childcare to education or vice versa.

	For some parents, wrap around provision between schools and non-maintained childcare providers continues to be an important part of their childcare needs.
1.05	<p>The CSA also identified areas in Flintshire that are most in need of further childcare provisions, and this has been included within the scoring system to ensure that the expansion of childcare services is being placed in the priority areas. Other criteria included in the scoring system, based on WG funding criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welsh medium</li> <li>• bilingual</li> <li>• co-location of sites</li> <li>• number of childcare places that will be created</li> <li>• the project expands the Flying Start programme</li> <li>• the setting supports the Childcare Offer</li> <li>• the setting aligns with WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan).</li> </ul>
1.06	The primary purpose of the education capital programme is to facilitate and support the co-location of the Curriculum for Wales and childcare provision wherever possible. This is in line with the Prosperity for All commitment to “introduce a new model of Community Learning Centres, providing extended services with childcare, parenting support, family learning and community access to facilities built around the school day”.
1.07	The completion of the proposed phase 2 projects will help to further the Council’s and WG’s commitment to create a more equal Wales through the Well-Being of Future Generations Act (2015) by ensuring all children, regardless of socio-economic background, have access to high quality childcare that meets their needs to ensure that they are given every opportunity to reach their full potential. It also supports parents with training and work opportunities and commitments.
1.08	The commitment to and completion of these Childcare and Early Years projects, supports the statutory duty for providing sufficient childcare places within Flintshire, and to consider the future needs of children and their families.
1.09	The legal framework will include commissioning for building the schemes, and a management agreement with respective school Governing Bodies to ensure that the settings continue to remain operational for a minimum 10-year period or if this is no longer feasible due to a change in circumstances to comply with the arrangements set out in the Agreement, as required by WG.
1.10	Following the completion of the Phase 1 Capital Projects, the Council has been able to expand the number of quality childcare places available for children eligible for childcare through the Flying Start Programme and/or the Childcare Offer. By expanding the reach of these programmes more families now have access to more government funded accessible childcare, which enables parents/carers the additional time to either re-enter the workforce or to seek additional training that would eventually lead them into employment. For many children this has meant they have

	gained quality childcare to support their development needs and prepare them for school.								
1.11	<p><b><u>Phase 1 Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme</u></b></p> <p>Phase 1 of the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme ran between 2019-2022 and saw the delivery of nine new modular buildings and the refurbishment of an existing building. One capital project was extended into 2024, with Welsh Government approval. Phase 1 projects were completed within the allocated budget of £7,209,253 excluding VAT.</p> <p>The sites that were completed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ysgol Bro Carmel</li> <li>• Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton</li> <li>• Ysgol Sychdyn</li> <li>• Ysgol Caerwys</li> <li>• Ysgol Maes Y Felin</li> <li>• Ysgol Merllyn</li> <li>• Ysgol Derwen</li> <li>• Ysgol Y Llan, Whitford</li> <li>• Westwood School, Buckley</li> <li>• Aston Family Centre (Flying Start modular building)</li> </ul>								
1.12	The completion of the above projects has enhanced childcare provision in these areas. The settings have custom built buildings that have been designed with the needs of the children at the heart, improving facilities for childcare, which in turn attracts both parents and children to the setting/school and creates seamless pathways for children from childcare to early education.								
1.13	The completion of the phase 1 Childcare and Early Years programme has seen 163 childcare spaces, in a modernised and purpose-built building, become available within the County.								
1.14	<p><b><u>Proposed Phase 2 Childcare and Early Years Capital</u></b></p> <p>The following projects have been prioritised based on FCC's, CSA and the Welsh Government funding criteria and have been submitted to the WG for approval. The WG have agreed to explore the options for both the Flint and Treuddyn areas for a capital project and have provided FCC with development grants to complete the required feasibility studies.</p>								
1.15	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Priority</th> <th>Setting</th> <th>Description</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Cornist Park, Flint</td> <td>This project will provide 40 additional childcare places in a location that does not have any available childcare provision on site. Furthermore, the Flint area in general is lacking in childcare provision as a whole and needs investment to provide sufficient childcare. Cornist Park will be a bilingual setting, co-located setting and will expand the</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Priority	Setting	Description	1	Cornist Park, Flint	This project will provide 40 additional childcare places in a location that does not have any available childcare provision on site. Furthermore, the Flint area in general is lacking in childcare provision as a whole and needs investment to provide sufficient childcare. Cornist Park will be a bilingual setting, co-located setting and will expand the
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			Flying Start programme to an additional 18 children in the area.
	2	Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn	This project is on a shared site between Ysgol Terrig (Welsh Medium) and Ysgol Parc Y Llan (English Medium). The original scope for this project was Ysgol Terrig, however, due to site constraints, the scope for this project has had WG approval to extend to include Ysgol Parc Y Llan to provide more workable options. Both schools are in a need of early years childcare provision, and a seamless pathway between childcare and education.
1.16	The feasibility studies have been completed and informed options for both sites. The site at Flint is ready to proceed from the 'starting a project' stage to the 'design and build' stage. The associated options are set out below. Further work is required with partners for the Treuddyn site to ensure that the most appropriate option is identified to balance a range of needs and factors relating to the site.		
1.17	<p><b><u>Scheme - Flint – Costing</u></b> <b><u>Cornist CP</u></b></p> <p>Option 1 – The construction cost for this option would be £787,858.83. However, this option has a major drawback as it is located in a zone that Education would seek to use for a school expansion should the need ever arise.</p> <p>Option 2 – The construction cost for this option would be £811,730.08. This is the school and Education's preferred choice as whilst there is additional cost, due to having to relocate a playing field, it is removed from the main school buildings and would not affect any further expansion plans.</p>		
1.18	Subject to approval, the Childcare and Early Years Capital Team would progress the Programme from the 'starting a project' stage to the 'design and construction' stage of the programme. The projects are fully funded by Welsh Government.		
1.19	Given the very tight deadlines for the work to completed by 31 March 2025 we are seeking approval for a Direct Award process to appoint an experienced contractor. It is proposed that the award is made through the existing Pagoba framework which provides an appropriate route to bring the experience that is required within the time constraints placed.		

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The funding for the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme will be agreed by Welsh Government and is funded by the Welsh Government on approval.
2.02	The programme can be managed within existing Council staffing resource.
2.03	There are no revenue impacts on the Council.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>								
3.01	The timelines set by Welsh Government of completion by 31 March 2025 are very ambitious and tight. There is a risk that schemes may not be delivered within requisite timelines, particularly for the Treuddyn project where further work is required. We will continue to work with Welsh Government to ensure they are sighted on any challenges with project timelines and our associated risk management and mitigation plans. As with any funding application there is a risk that the projects do not secure Welsh Government approval.								
3.01	<p>All projects are managed using a risk register. Financial risks are managed through a project contingency, with regular meetings with the Capital Finance Team to ensure compliance with the WG capital grant award and that all costs are allocated to the correct scheme.</p> <p>Any high-level risk which cannot be managed with the projects/programme will be incorporated into the risk register for the Project Team to consider. Governance arrangements are in place for this process.</p>								
3.02	<p>Well-being Principle Impacts</p> <p>Under the five delivery principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act this report will have the following impacts:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ways of Working Principle</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive – ensures that high quality and affordable childcare will be available to communities with demand.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive – will improve parents employment opportunities due to available and affordable childcare. It will provide positive transitions for children from childcare to education as the settings will be built on the school's grounds.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive – the new childcare settings will integrate children from varying social backgrounds and</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ways of Working Principle	Impact	Long-term	Positive – ensures that high quality and affordable childcare will be available to communities with demand.	Prevention	Positive – will improve parents employment opportunities due to available and affordable childcare. It will provide positive transitions for children from childcare to education as the settings will be built on the school's grounds.	Integration	Positive – the new childcare settings will integrate children from varying social backgrounds and
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Integration	Positive – the new childcare settings will integrate children from varying social backgrounds and								

		allow them to develop friendship groups in their early years, in-line with the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015).
	Collaboration	Positive – partnership arrangements in-house and with external parties including school governing bodies through Project Plan and Communication Strategy.
	Involvement	Positive - The proposed projects will help promote greater community integration/use/involvement and many parents have reported improvement in friendships both for themselves and their children.
3.03	Against the seven well-being goals of the Act, the potential impact of the report and its recommendations would be evaluated as follows:	
	<b>Well-being Principle</b>	<b>Impact</b>
	Prosperous Wales	Positive impact - Capital investment directly benefits local supply chain/economy as a percentage of local expenditure is a requirement of the grant funding. The completion of projects will lead to an increase in employment opportunities for those seeking to enter construction, childcare, cleaning services and maintenance.
	Resilient Wales	Positive impact - Use of sustainable and recycled materials during construction, more energy efficient, potential reduction in carbon emissions.
	Healthier Wales	Positive impact – modular buildings will have both indoor and outdoor play areas for children to play and staff will work with healthy pre-school colleagues in line with governmental schemes to promote and impart wisdom on what a healthy diet consists of. As well as early years advisory teachers/officers to support play and a healthy and thriving childhood.
	More Equal Wales	Positive impact – completion of modular buildings will help to ensure suitable childcare is available across all of Flintshire, including areas of need (as identified through the CSA) that

		have been given priority due to the lack of childcare provision available in those areas.
	Cohesive Wales	Positive Impact – quality childcare provides further opportunities.
	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Positive impact – childcare settings will offer opportunities to promote the Welsh Language and culture through the use of Welsh phrases, songs and storytelling, introducing children early.
	Globally Responsible Wales	Positive - Capital investment, delivers a more sustainable product, local spend and added benefits for apprenticeships and work experience in construction. The settings are encouraged to recycle all waste that occurs from the day to day running of the settings and to engage the children in the importance of recycling waste for a more sustainable future.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Consultation has been undertaken with colleagues within Education's School Modernisation Team and the umbrella childcare organisation CWLWM.
4.02	Consultation will be undertaken through the planning application process for each individual project.
4.03	Consultation has been undertaken with the Headteacher, Governing Bodies and childcare providers for each individual project. Further work is required to ensure a collaborative and partnership agreement for the preferred scheme in Treuddyn.
4.04	Consultation has taken place between the project team and FCC's financial team.
4.05	Consultation has taken place with colleagues from FCC's Design and Build Team.
4.06	Consultation has taken place with colleagues from FCC's Legal Team.



<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – EY2 Cornist Option 1 Indicative Outline Cost Plan Appendix 1 – EY2 Cornist Option 2 Indicative Outline Cost Plan

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2022-2025 - Cabinet Paper, 17 October 2023.
6.02	Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2022-2025 - Capital and Assets Programme Board, 08 August 2023.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officers:</b>  Gail Bennett, Early Years and Family Support Service Manager  Byra Foulkes, Early Years Support Manager  Joseph Penlington, Capital and Projects Officer</p> <p>Telephone:  01352 703953 (Gail Bennett)  01352 703934 (Byra Foulkes)  01352 703551 (Joseph Penlington)</p> <p>E-mail:  <a href="mailto:gail.bennett@flintshire.gov.uk">gail.bennett@flintshire.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:byra.foulkes@flintshire.gov.uk">byra.foulkes@flintshire.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:joseph.penlington@flintshire.gov.uk">joseph.penlington@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)</b> - The CSA is a questionnaire that was sent out to families living in the Flintshire area that enquired about what improvements they would like to see made to the childcare provisions that are offered in the Flintshire area.</p> <p><b>Risk Register</b> - A logbook that is kept of all the risks that could impact on the completion of a project.</p> <p><b>Capital Funding</b> - Capital funding is usually linked to acquiring or improving a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings.</p> <p><b>Revenue Funding</b> - Is linked to items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment. Routine repairs are revenue expenditures and can include significant repairs that do not extend the life of the asset or do not improve the asset (the repairs merely return the asset to its previous condition).</p>