

## Cabinet

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Report Subject	Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2025- 2028
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary purpose of the Welsh Government funded 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 national Prosperity for All commitment.

The completion of these projects will help to further the Welsh Government's (WG) 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.

The commitment and completion of these projects, supports the statutory duty under the Childcare Act for providing sufficient quality childcare places within Flintshire, and that Flintshire County Council (FCC) are continuing to consider the future needs of children and families.

The Welsh Government Childcare and Early Years Capital team have indicated that 2025-2028 capital grants will be available to local authorities for the purposes of providing seamless childcare provision to children in the early years, supported through several Welsh Government programmes including Flying Start, the 3–4-year-old Childcare Offer and early learning. The new potential areas of development are required to be identified through gaps and need identified within the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA).

The 3–4-year-old Childcare Offer is a Welsh Government funded childcare 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 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 registered childcare provider and/or school. Eligible children are entitled to three holiday weeks per term for 30 hours of funded childcare each week.

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 is to ensure the continuous expansion of 2-year-olds part-time government funded childcare and meet the demand of childcare places in Flintshire, in accordance with Flying Start Phase 2 Plan and Phase 3 Expansion Plan (the Business Case is pending Welsh Government approval).

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.

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 areas that are the most in need and most viable.

The scoring system also includes the Welsh Government funding criteria for capital projects:

- Welsh medium
- bilingual
- co-location of sites
- number of childcare places that will be created
- the scheme expands the Flying Start programme
- the setting supports the Childcare Offer
- the setting aligns with Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

RECO	RECOMMENDATIONS						
1	To seek approval and endorsement for the identified capital sites in Flintshire for the purpose of securing the WG Childcare and Early Years Capital Grant 2025-2028 (phase 3).						
2	Approve the early screening, pre-construction work and the submission of Business Justification Cases to Welsh Government for the proposed sites.						

## **REPORT DETAILS**

1.00	PREVIOUS AND CURRENT CAPITAL PROJECTS – FLINTSHIRE
1.01	Following the completion of the Phase 1 (2019-2022) Capital Projects, FCC have been able to increase the childcare provision significantly for eligible children through the government funded childcare programmes e.g. Flying Start childcare and Childcare Offer. Having access to quality childcare helps children with their development and school readiness.
	By increasing the reach of the government funded childcare programmes, more families now have access to quality childcare across Flintshire, which enables parents/carers to seek employment, increase their work hours or access training that would eventually lead them into employment.
1.02	Phase 1 Childcare and Early Years Capital 2019-2022
	Phase 1 of the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2019-2022, Flintshire delivered nine new modular buildings and one renovation of an existing school classroom. One capital project completion was extended into 2023-2024 with Welsh Government approval.
	Completed projects:
	<ol> <li>Ysgol Bro Carmel, Holywell</li> <li>Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton</li> <li>Ysgol Sychdyn</li> <li>Ysgol Caerwys</li> <li>Ysgol Maes Y Felin, Holywell</li> <li>Ysgol Derwen, Higher Kinnerton</li> <li>Westwood CP School, Buckley</li> <li>Ysgol Y Llan, Whitford (completed 15 March 2024)</li> <li>Aston Family Centre (Early Years Family Centre)</li> <li>Ysgol Merllyn, Bagillt (renovation)</li> </ol>
	The completion of these projects has added great benefits to the childcare providers and the children in their local areas as they now have custom built childcare buildings and facilities. These buildings were designed with the needs of the children at the heart, with greatly improved environments that attracts both parents and children to settings and creates seamless pathways for children from childcare to early education. All capital projects support the local authority's objectives e.g. WESP, CSA and supporting early learning.
	For example: Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton - who received a new modular building on their site, have seen an increase in uptake of childcare. The childcare provider reported that it has been so successful since moving into the new building and they now have a waiting list of families who would like their children to attend the Welsh Medium provision.

1.03	Phase 2 Childcare and Early Years Capital 2022-2025
	<b>Cornist Park, Flint</b> – This project will provide up to 40 additional childcare places to the Cornist area that currently has no available childcare provision on the school site, or the Cornist area, and the wider Flint area having large demands and gaps with sufficient childcare places. This project will bring the co-location of childcare and early education and will expand the Flying Start programme to an additional 18 children in the local area.
	<b>Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn</b> – This project has been moved from the Phase 2 list to the Phase 3 Expression of Interest List. Design options are in discussion, however, agreement could not be reached in time to meet the Welsh Government timeline for Phase 2 funding.
1.04	Phase 3 Childcare and Early Years Capital 2025-2028
	Flintshire's Early Years and Family Support Service Capital Team work closely with education, the design and building team, finance, legal and other council departments in the stage of Starting Up a Project in line with Prince 2's project management methodology. At this stage Flintshire's potential capital sites have been identified.
	WG has advised that all local authorities are to provide their potential capital site's list in priority order.
	Flintshire proposed sites are in priority order below:
	<ol> <li>Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn</li> <li>Ysgol Caer Nant, Connah's Quay</li> <li>Greenfield, Holywell (modular or renovation of an existing asset)</li> <li>Flint Family Hub (early years element)</li> <li>Garden City centre (renovation)</li> <li>Ysgol Bryn Pennant, Mostyn</li> <li>Flint – Diocese campus - collaboration with Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant (SCfL)</li> <li>Saltney area primary school - collaboration with Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant</li> </ol>
	Further site information is provided in section 1.05.
	The potential areas below could be considered if any of the above sites become unfeasible.
	<ul> <li>Buckley area – Welsh Medium seadling school/cylch meithrin</li> <li>Sealand CP School</li> <li>Ewloe Green CP School</li> <li>Hawarden area</li> </ul>
	Further site information is provided in section 1.06.
1.05	
	Priority 1

Project Name:	Ysgol Terrig	Ysgol Terrig/Ysgol Parc Y Llan, Treuddyn				
Brief Description of Project:	An Early Years childcare setting would be of signification benefit to the area, enhancing the childcare provises for both the English and Welsh childcare providers. Currently the Cylch Meithrin Terrig is based in a classroom in Ysgol Terrig. The childcare and pupil numbers are increasing, and the school needs the space/room for educational purposes. This is also case for Treuddyn Under 5s, who also operate out classroom in Ysgol Parc Y Llan. This project is in accordance with council's WESP.					
Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion of places/ Provision		
	ther information on the seven priority sites.					
Further informatior	on the seve	n priority sites.				
Further informatior Priority 2	n on the seve	n priority sites.				
	on the seve					

Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion of places/ Provision
	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$		$\boxtimes$

Project Name:	Greenfield, Holywell				
Brief Description of Project:	Possible new modular building on the Ysgol Maes Glas site or the renovation of the Greenfield Youth Centre. The options will be discussed and agreed with Flintshire's Education Team.				
	Currently, Greenfield Playgroup is based at the Greenfield Youth Centre and they are providing crucial childcare support to families in local area. Without one of the above options being achieved, the childcare provider will be left without a premises or maybe forced to close their doors.				
	Greenfield has been identified as an area of social deprivation and needs investment to improve the local area for the families that live there.				
Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion o places/ Provision	

Brief Description of Project:	the childcar premises du			Flint Early Years Centre (early years team and childcare)				
	Current location of the Flintshire Flying Start team and the childcare setting in Flint are at risk of loss of premises due to being on a school site as the school numbers are increasing. Flint has been identified as an area of social deprivation and needs investment to improve the local area for the families that live there, therefore, Flying Start team support is crucial at this location. Flint has a growing population that demands sufficient childcare provision. The site options will be discussed and agreed with							
		Education Tea	•	eed with				
Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion places/ Provision				
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Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion of places/ Provision
	$\boxtimes$	$\boxtimes$		

Project Name:	Ysgol Bryn	Ysgol Bryn Pennant, Mostyn					
Brief Description of Project:	Flintshire County Council would look to construct a new modular structural insulated panels (SIP) building on the site of Ysgol Bryn Pennant as there is currently no childcare facilities available, except for a small number of childminders with limited capacity. The completion of this build would see the number of available places increase to 30/40, depending on available external space. This is a Flying Start expansion area. Mostyn has been identified as an area of social deprivation and needs investment to improve the local area for the families that live there.						
Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion c places/ Provision			

Priority 7							
Project Name:		Flint – Diocese campus - collaboration with Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant (SCfL)					
Brief Description of Project:	process of e	FCC's Education department are currently in the process of evaluating a potential diocese campus for 3–18-year-olds.					
	If this project is feasible then FCC's Early Years and Family Support Service Capital Team would look to build a new childcare facility on site as Flint has been identified through the CSA as an area of deprivation with sizeable gaps in the childcare provisions that are available within the local area.						
Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co- Location	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion of places/ Provision			
Priority 8							
Project Name:	-	•	ool - collaboration for Learning G				
Brief Description of Project:	the feasibili Saltney are FCC's Early Team would to ensure th built on the	Sustainable Communities for Learning Grant (SCfL FCC's Education department are currently looking into the feasibility of a new school building within the Saltney area. If this project should proceed ahead then FCC's Early Years and Family Support Service Capital Team would work in collaboration with Education Team to ensure that a new childcare modular building was built on the site. This area has been identified through our CSA as an area of deprivation and in need of additional childcare provisions.					

	Initiatives that the project will cover?	Co	- ation	Flying Start/ Childcare Offer/ Foundation Learning	Welsh Language/ Bilingual	Expansion of places/ Provision	
		X		$\boxtimes$			
1.06	Further information the eight priority sit				could be consi	dered if any of	
	Site		Rationa	al			
	Buckley area – Welsh Medium seadling school/Cylch Meithrin		A further childcare modular building will be considered in line with future developments in the area to accommodate a Cylch Meithrin to provide wraparound Welsh medium childcare.				
	Sealand CP School		A childcare modular building will be considered on the Sealand CP school site. The building will have capacity of up-to 40 children which will increase the available childcare by a further 20 places. If this project is achieved, then the Garden City Childcare will move into the new building.				
			Sealand has also been identified as an area of deprivation in our CSA and is in need of investment to improve the living conditions for the residents there.				
	School futu are dev hou incl FC			Ewloe Green has been identified as a potential future area of growth within Flintshire due to the area being selected for a large housing development. Following the completion of this housing development, it is predicted there will an increase in demand for childcare provisions and FCC would seek to increase our capacity within that local area.			
	Hawarden area		Hawarden has been identified as a potential future area of growth within Flintshire due to the area being selected for a large housing development Following the completion of this housing development, it is predicted there will an increase				

	in demand for childcare provisions and FCC would seek to increase our capacity within that local area.
1.07	Flintshire's priority list could change due to a number of different factors e.g. availability of the WG Childcare and Early Years Capital grant, the success of each Business Justification Cases (BJC), and the early screening work.
	The early screening work (checking flood risks, land ownerships and other land related issues, increase of traffic, consultations with planning) for these sites is still underway and if any significant risks are identified during this time, then the Early Years and Family Support Service Capital Team will need to respond accordingly, which may mean that a site needs to be removed from consideration.
1.08	Welsh Government have asked the Council to submit a completed Business Justification Cases in-order to secure funding for the potential projects. Collaboration and consultation with the Education Team and Design and Build Consultancy Team have resulted in a robust project foundation and site intelligence, thus leading to a greater understanding about the viability of the projects, clarity on roles and responsibilities and how the programme will be commissioned, resourced, and managed.
1.09	Programme Management
	The implementation of these projects will also follow these steps to ensure a smooth process:
	<ol> <li>Bid writing and stakeholder meetings – all identified sites will be required to have a Business Justification Case (BJC) to ensure that the completion of the project is both feasible and sustainable. Completed BJCs will be submitted to WG for their bidding process. Meetings will be held with the governing bodies of the sites to establish both what they should expect to receive on the completion of the project and what their responsibilities will be once it has been completed.</li> </ol>
	<ol> <li>Design process – regular meetings will take place between the Early Years and Family Support Service Capital Team, Design and Building Team, and all other involved parties. These parties will include Streetscene, Valuation and Estates, FCC's Legal Team, FCC's Flood Risk Team, FCC's Education Team, School Governing Body, Contractors and the other identified stakeholders.</li> </ol>
	3. Construction process – once the design process is completed then the project will move into the construction phase. During this period regular meetings and site visits will be carried out with the construction company to ensure that the work packages are completed within the timeline and comply with the required policies and guidance. Any issues and problems identified will be resolved by the Flintshire Early Years Capital Task and Finish Group. Regular meetings with stakeholders will also continue during this period so that all parties are kept up to date on the progress of the project and

	so that they also have the opportunity to put forward any solutions that they may have for any issues that could potentially occur.
4.	Handover process – following the completion of the construction phase the modular buildings will then be handed over to the school governing bodies. During this period the Capital Project Coordinator will remain available to the governing bodies to provide support and guidance.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The funding for the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme 2025- 2028 will be awarded and 100% funded by Welsh Government. Regular capital account management meetings will be held with Welsh Government and quarterly progress reports will be sent to WG from Flintshire.
2.02	Maintenance cost of the new modular buildings will be funded through the hiring charges from the childcare settings and the other booked community groups. School Governing Bodies will have a hiring agreement in place for the building users to ensure the health and safety of the building and also that the condition of the building is being maintained. Childcare settings must comply with CIW Standards.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<ul> <li>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 Welsh Government Grant award and that all costs are allocated to the correct sites.</li> </ul>
	• Any high-level risk which cannot be managed with the projects/programme will be incorporated into the risk register for the Flintshire Early Years Capital Task and Finish Group to consider. This includes regular meetings which will be held by the group to try and mitigate any issues that may occur around the availability of resources. The risks around resource acquirement could stem from several issues, such as:
	<ul> <li>Brexit causing delays at borders for any materials that may need to be imported.</li> <li>Rising inflation rates that could make the cost of building materials too expensive.</li> <li>Deficiencies in the supply chain, either locally or globally, that will make the procurement of certain materials a more challenging task.</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>A feasibility study may incur a financial risk to the Authority should Welsh Government decide to make a reclaim of funding, when a</li> </ul>

3.02	the FCC Capital Feasibility ensuring early checks/scree request from Welsh Govern land registry checks, flood i Partners are on board and Partnership Agreement to b	ceed. This may need to be covered from Funding. The risk will be mitigated by ening are completed prior to any funding ment. This will include liaison with legal, risks, and drainage checks etc. And that made aware of the risk. Stage 0 be considered.
	Act this report will have the followi	
	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 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 goal	s of the Act, the potential impact of the
	report and its recommendations w	ould be evaluated as follows:
	Well-being Principle Prosperous Wales	ImpactPositive 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
Resilient Wales	maintenance. 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.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Consultations with Flintshire County Council Design Team have been conducted to ascertain any problems that may occur and confirm arrangements for the procurement stage.
4.02	Consultations with the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Manager, will take place to determine any issues with flood risks or drainage.
4.03	Consultations with school head teachers and governing bodies are being arranged to explain the schemes, rational, benefits, proposal, planning and agreements, roles and responsibilities.
4.04	Consultations with FCC's legal team will take place so that they can begin the necessary work on land ownership, legal boundaries and all other legal issues that may have an impact.
4.05	Consultations and planning with FCC's Education department are being held monthly to ensure that all project information is shared amongst both teams and that both teams have the opportunity to raise any concerns or areas that may be problematic and to drive forward the project plan.
4.06	Consultations are taking place with the Flintshire Streetscene team to ensure that all impacts on traffic in the area of the settings are considered and to ascertain if there is an opportunity to improve traffic flow in the area through specific design aspects of the projects (i.e., increased parking spaces or improved footpaths).

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officers:
	Byra Foulkes – Early Years Childcare, Capital and Partnerships Team Manager Telephone: 01352 703934 / 07795122267 E-mail: <u>byra.foulkes@flintshire.gov.uk</u>
	Joseph Penlington – Early Years Capital Projects Coordinator Telephone:01352 703551 / 07979177681 E-mail: joseph.penlington@flintshire.gov.uk

Gail Be	ennett – Early Years and Family Service Manager
Email:	gail.bennett@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<b>Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA)</b> – This is a statutory requirement for FCC to assess and provide sufficient quality childcare places within their local authority and to identify any areas for improvement that needs to be made for the childcare provision. The CSA questionnaire was sent out to families and childcare providers in the Flintshire area that enquired about what improvements they would like to see made to the childcare provisions that are offered in Flintshire.
	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP): Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Working together to achieve Cymraeg 2050 objectives of a million Welsh Speakers, implementing the WESP action plan into educational strategic plans.
	<b>Capital Funding</b> – The funding is provided by the WG Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme. Capital funding is usually linked to acquiring or improving a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings.
	<b>Risk Register</b> - A logbook that is kept of all the risks that could impact on the completion of a project.
	<b>Management Agreement</b> - A legal contract that is set-up between FCC and the School Governing Body of the selected school sites that outlines each parties' responsibilities and accountabilities during the life cycle of the project and after the handover of the modular building.
	<b>CWLWM</b> - brings together the five leading childcare organisations in Wales to deliver a bilingual integrated service that will ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families across Wales. CWLWM supports the Welsh Government to ensure that families across Wales can access affordable, quality childcare providing innovative solutions to create flexible childcare and play opportunities to meet the needs of parents and their families.
	<b>Early Years Capital Task and Finish Group</b> – This group closely monitors and delivers the Early Years capital projects. The members of this group consist of lead officers from the following teams: Early Years Childcare, Capital and Partnership Team, Education School Modernisation Team, Design and Building Consultancy Team, Finance Capital Team and appointed contractors.