

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 21 APRIL 2010**

### **2010/11 BUDGET PROPOSALS: EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE**

#### **Report by Executive Director of Educational & Social Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Members of Cabinet for the reduction in budgets in relation to early education for financial year 2010/11 onwards.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** As part of the budget setting exercise for 2010/11 two options were put forward for budget consultation which impact on the provision of early education.
- 2.2** The two budget proposals were to review Partner Provider provision where there was sufficient local authority provision to provide a place for all three and four year olds where a parent wishes one, and secondly to review the management arrangements in nursery schools adjacent to primary schools. These were set out as item numbers 58 and 59 respectively in the General Services Revenue Estimates 2010/11 Efficiencies – Consultation Options: Working Paper Supplementary Information.
- 2.3** A paper was presented to Cabinet on 24 March 2010 which set out budget savings in respect of Early Education and Childcare. A decision was taken at Cabinet to continue this item for further consideration of the issues raised, particularly in respect of the proposals regarding Partner Providers.

#### **3. UPDATE**

- 3.1** Since Cabinet on 24 March 2010 26 individuals (either representing themselves or on behalf of a Management Committee) have contacted the Council by e-mail or letter regarding the proposals. Twenty four of these have related to Burns Bairns Under 5's Group and 2 have related to Jacaranda Nursery. Some individuals submitted more than one comment. Appendix 1 to this report is a specific set of questions which were raised by Burns Bairns Under 5's Group Management Committee, but reflect the range of issues broadly presented.
- 3.2** Elected Members and Council Officers have attended two meetings organised by the Management Committee with parents and one public meeting held in Mauchline Community Centre.

- 3.3** Without a doubt, the sense of belonging which Burns Bairns Under 5's Group has within the local community is very substantial. It has been in the community for approximately thirty years as both a Mother and Toddler Group and initially as a playgroup and now as Burns Bairns Under 5's Group. It is only the ante or pre-school service which is purchased. The issue of quality has never been in question.
- 3.4** One of the key issues raised by the Management Committee of Burns Bairns Under 5's Group is the fact that children who are three years of age can access 5 morning sessions. Based on the current registrations for both Burns Bairns Under 5's Group and Mauchline Nursery Class, all children who are 3 years of age will receive, 3 sessions per week which may either be morning or afternoon. All children who would attend Jacaranda Nursery would get 5 sessions in Drongan Nursery. It should be noted that some parents with 3 year old children only chose to access 2 or 3 sessions, and in both Jacaranda Nursery and Burns Bairns Under 5's Group a number of children have had 2 or 3 sessions in previous years. This is within the national guidance which indicates that all 4 year old children are entitled to 5 sessions per week, and all 3 year old children are entitled to a place.
- 3.5** In respect of Jacaranda Nursery, both Care Commission reports and HMIE reports are positive. The particular impact in respect of Jacaranda Nursery will potentially be parents who combine their early education and childcare arrangements.

## **4. PROPOSALS**

### **4.1 Partner Providers**

**4.1.1** The Council is currently in partnership with ten Partner Providers of ante and pre-school education. These are:

- Beechwood Nursery, Kilmarnock (Private)
- Burns Bairns Under 5's Group, Mauchline (Voluntary)
- Dean Park Nursery, Kilmarnock (Private)
- Fenwick Pre-5's, Fenwick (Voluntary)
- Hurlford & Crookedholm Play Group, Hurlford (Voluntary)
- Jacaranda Nursery, Coalhall (Private)
- Newmilns Nursery, Newmilns (Voluntary)
- Puddleducks Nursery, Kilmarnock (Voluntary)
- St Columba's Nursery, Stewarton (Private)
- Woodlands Nursery, Kilmarnock (Voluntary)

**4.1.2** The undernoted sets out information in respect of the Partner Providers and associated nearest local authority provider of ante and pre-school education.

<b>Partner Provider</b>	<b>No. of Places Commissioned 2009/10</b>	<b>Nearest Local Authority Nursery &amp; Capacity</b>
Beechwood Nursery, Kilmarnock (Private)	40 pre-school 42 ante pre-school <b>Total 82</b>	Gargieston NC - nil
Burns Bairns Under 5's Group, Mauchline (Voluntary)	1 pre-school 23 ante pre-school <b>Total 24</b>	Mauchline NC 10 FTE places (20 x 5 session places or 40 split session places)
Dean Park Nursery, Kilmarnock (Private)	20 pre-school 20 ante pre-school <b>Total 40</b>	Onthank NS - nil
Fenwick Pre-5's, Fenwick (Voluntary)	23 x pre-school 22 x ante pre-school <b>Total 45</b>	Onthank NS – nil Kilmaurs NS - nil
Hurlford & Crookedholm Play Group, Hurlford (Voluntary)	0 pre-school 27 ante pre-school <b>Total 27</b>	Hurlford NC - nil
Jacaranda Nursery, Coalhall (Private)	12 pre-school 21 ante pre-school <b>Total 33</b>	Drongan NS 10 FTE places (20 x 5 session places or 40 split session places)
Newmilns Nursery, Newmilns (Voluntary)	19 pre-school 13 ante pre-school <b>Total 32</b>	Galston NS – nil Darvel NS – 12 sessional places only
Puddleducks Nursery, Kilmarnock (Voluntary)	27 pre-school 21 ante pre-school <b>Total 48</b>	Riccarton NS – nil Shortlees N & FC - nil
St Columba's Nursery, Stewarton (Private)	8 pre-school 16 ante pre-school <b>Total 24</b>	Lainshaw NC - nil
Woodlands Nursery, Kilmarnock (Voluntary)	25 pre-school 15 ante pre-school <b>Total 40</b>	St Andrews NC - nil

**4.1.3** Since presentation to Cabinet on 24 March information is now available in respect of applications for both Burns Bairns Under 5's Group and Jacaranda Nursery. There has been 23 ante pre-school applications for Burns Bairns

Under 5's Group and 26 ante or pre-school applications for Jacaranda Nursery. Three of the applications for Burns Bairns Under 5's Group are duplicates with other nurseries. Eight applications for Jacaranda Nursery are from South Ayrshire residents. An ante pre-school or pre-school educational place is still available in Mauchline Nursery Class and Drongan Nursery School for all children currently attending these Partners, or who are likely to require a place at the start of academic session 2010/11.

- 4.2 Based on the above, it is not proposed to partner Burns Bairns Under 5's Group and Jacaranda Nursery in academic session 2010/11. An ante pre-school or pre-school educational place will be available for all children currently attending these partners, or who are likely to require a place at the start of academic session 2010/11.
- 4.3 It should be noted however, that parents can apply for their child to have a place between now and the start of the academic session.

## 5. **Management Arrangements in Nursery Schools Adjacent to Primary Schools**

- 5.2.1 There was a significant level of comment raised in respect of the proposal to review the management arrangements in nursery schools adjacent to primary schools. The Cabinet paper of 10 February 2010 indicated that given the level of issues raised, it was recommended that the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services examine this, and alternative options proposed which would generate a similar level of saving and return to Cabinet no later than the end of March.
- 5.2.2 The attached sets out recommendations in respect of savings in financial year 2010/11 (including the Partner Provider saving) with a recommendation that the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services return with a full review of ante pre-school and pre-school education provision in Nursery Schools no later than the end of June 2010.
- 5.2.3 Proposed recurring revenue savings to be made in the early education and childcare revenue budget from 2010/11 onwards has been identified from a line by line review of the budget.

The undernoted summarises key aspects of the proposals:

- The Council terminated its partnership with Grasshoppers Nursery part way through academic session 2009/10 due to issues of quality. The consequence of this management action is a resultant £27,000 saving with no impact on service delivery to the Council.
- Wraparound care is no longer available at Nether Robertland Nursery due to the increase in pre-school education numbers. As the adult: child staffing ratio is higher for wraparound care a saving is being made on staffing. In relation to Crosshouse Nursery, numbers of children have

reduced and therefore staffing costs have reduced. An overall saving of £25,000 can therefore be made.

- EA Positive Play is jointly funded by East Ayrshire Council's Leisure Development Services, Early Education and Childcare Service and the Big Lottery Fund and aims to increase physical activity levels, encourage creativity and use play as a medium to build confidence and self esteem of children and adults. The Early Education and Childcare Service committed to provide £10,000 for two years, 2008/09 and 2009/10 to support the implementation of EA Positive Play. Therefore a saving of £10,000 can be made.
- Travel costs and supplies and service costs have been closely monitored and there is scope to reduce these budgets by £7,100. This equates to 4.4% of the central travel costs and supplies budget.
- Funding has been available in the past to voluntary/community groups to support what was known as the Childcare Strategy. Not all the funding was utilised this current financial year. There will be no direct impact on groups. Saving is £15,000. This relates to 4.5% of available budget.
- The service has focussed on delivering training and providing continuing professional development in-house in 2009/10 due to budget pressures. Based on this it is proposed to reduce this budget by £5,835. This relates to 31.7% of available budget.

Appendix 2 sets out a summary of overall savings.

## **6. PERSONNEL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1** Nil.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** The savings arising from not establishing Service Level Agreements with Jacaranda Nursery and Burns Bairns Under 5's Group was initially £21,869. This increased to £27,065 based on the final census in 2009/10 academic session figures once the cost of 2 Early Years Workers had been taken into account.

**7.2** Based on initial registration data for academic session 2010/11, and the change in policy to offer 3 year old children a place, a month after their third birthday, the full saving will be £43,949 for Jacaranda Nursery and £33,351 for Burns Bairns Under 5's Group. The saving is based on £1,687 per place. The undernoted sets out in tabular form the full effect, once the required additional Early Years Workers are taken into account. Cabinet has not yet received a report setting out payment per place for academic session 2010/11.

	<b>Registrations to date 2010/11</b>	<b>Saving £</b>	<b>Cost of Early Years Worker £</b>	<b>Saving to Council £</b>
<b>Burns Bairns</b>	23	33,351	23,526	9,825
<b>Jacaranda</b>	26	43,949	23,526	20,423

**7.3** The overall saving from the proposals as set out in this paper are £120,183.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** There are no risks associated with the savings identified in the Early Education and Childcare budget for financial year 2010/11. In respect of the proposals regarding Partner Providers, many parents use a private sector nursery as they combine day care and ante or pre-school education. There will therefore be potential childcare issues arising for parents affected by this decision in relation to Jacaranda Nursery.

**8.2** Based on information available, one potential for Burns Bairns Under 5's Group, may be closure of their service to 3 and 4 year olds. It is likely their mother and toddler group can continue.

**8.3** Overall however, there are no risks associated with the proposals set out in this paper in respect of the requirement as laid down by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, whereby local authorities require to provide an ante pre-school or pre-school educational place for every parent who wishes one for their child.

## **9. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** The provision of ante pre-school and pre-school education is set within the context of the Promoting Lifelong Learning Theme of the Community Plan. The provision of childcare for parents in employment, education or training is set within the context of the Community Regeneration Theme of the Community Plan.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10.1** It is recommended that Members of Cabinet:

- (i) approve the proposals in respect of Burns Bairns Under 5's Group subject to Care Commission approval for increase in registration to Mauchline Nursery Class;
- (ii) approve the proposals in respect of Jacaranda Nursery;
- (iii) approve the proposals in respect of the recurring savings in the Early Education and Childcare Budget; and

- (iv) ask the Executive Director of Educational & Social Services to return to Cabinet with the outcome of the review of Nursery Schools in June 2010; and
- (v) otherwise note the content of the report.

Graham R Short  
Executive Director of Educational & Social Services

GRS/KG  
22 February 2010

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Cabinet Paper of 13 January 2010 – Budget Consultation 2010/11 – 2012/13.
2. Cabinet Paper of 10 February 2010 – Revenue Budget 2010/11 – 2012/13.
3. Correspondence from Parents/Carers/Community

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service:  
Community Support, Tel: 01563 576104.

**IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR**

**POINTS OF CONCERN IN REGARD TO  
PROPOSED FUNDING CUTS OF BURNS BAIRNS**

- Nursery staff will need increased at Mauchline Nursery Class.
  - *There will require to be an additional member of staff at Mauchline Nursery Class to ensure that the Council meets its registration standards with the Care Commission. This has been costed as part of the budget saving exercise.*
- Resources will need increased to include bigger choice and accommodate larger number of children.
  - *The range of resources at Mauchline Nursery Class is already extensive and although there may be some one off funding required this will not be extensive.*
- Siblings might get different sessions, i.e. one sibling gets a morning and other an afternoon. Will they get different days and sessions due to lack of spaces?
  - *The Admissions Policy sets out the criteria in respect of sessions. Where any one particular session is required for a child then consideration is given to this at a local level with the Head Teacher as long as it sits within the Admissions Policy.*
- Some children might end up there for 3 years if they are being deferred. We have had children over the last few years who have been with us for two years and then moved on to do another year at nursery or one year with us and then 2 years at Mauchline Nursery. Not ideal for a child to be in the one education setting for 3 years.
  - *There are two reasons why children are deferred, one links to their learning needs and the other links to parental rights in respect of children who have a birthday between September and December or January and February. There is no educational detriment to children being in one educational setting for three years, recognising that children are in primary school for seven years.*
- Other establishments that take in bigger intakes have different rooms to accommodate ante- pre and pre-school children and/or give freedom to move around from room to room.
  - *There is a variety of accommodation across East Ayrshire and some of our larger nurseries do not have different rooms e.g. Galston and Auchinleck. It is good practice to have a mix of ante pre-school and pre- school children at each session.*
- Timetable at school will need to be altered to accommodate more children for gym hall.
  - *There is ample timetabling for all children to have access to the gym hall.*
- Increased time for snack therefore 1 nursery staff member will be occupied all morning preparing and serving snack and will take up most of the 2.5 hour session.

- ***Snack is built into the routine of all nurseries and therefore the issue of snack time is not one of any concern. It will most certainly not take up most of the 2½ hours session.***
- Lack of toilets – 3 for 40 children is not enough. Especially when taking toilet accommodation into consideration for 40 children’s teeth to brush and hands to wash for snack.
  - ***There are four toilets available. One of these toilets is an accessible toilet and is therefore also suitable for children who may have a disability. This meets Care Commission requirements.***
- Is there a changing area for nappies as there will be a lot of toilet training to start with?
  - ***There is a personal care facility available for changing nappies . In all of our nurseries, staff are more than able to support children who are not yet toilet trained.***
- Burns Bairns have helped to pilot tracking and Transition Profile documents from East Ayrshire Council alongside other Local Authority nurseries.
  - ***Burns Bairns have been involved in piloting the Transition Profile documents alongside local authority nurseries. We use different Partner Providers at different times to pilot different approaches or paperwork.***
- We have never had a bad or negative report from either Care Commission or HMIE.
  - ***That is absolutely correct. The Burns Bairns Care Commission and HMIE reports have always been positive.***
- Staffs attends or have attended various courses to keep training up to date and implement any necessary paperwork.
  - ***We expect all of Partner Providers staff to attend courses in order to keep up their continuing professional development. The Scottish Social Services Council requires staff working in the daycare of children to undertake post registration training and learning.***
- Parental Choice should be paramount. We should have the choice as to where our children begin their education.
  - ***Ideally, the Council would wish to offer greater choice, however, given the difficult financial circumstances then it is not always possible.***
- Burns Bairns is part of the community and people respect and admire work that is done with the children.
  - ***It is fully recognised that Burns Bairns is part of the community and it is indeed a valued partner with the Council.***

- Parents have commented that they like the welcoming friendly, homely atmosphere at Burns Bairns and nursery is a more structured and formal environment.
  - ***All nurseries in East Ayrshire should be welcoming and friendly. There should be no less or more structured or formal environment purely because it's a nursery class.***
- Staff will be unemployed as they will not be moved automatically to other establishments and would have to apply to go on the bank list or supply list not automatically be put on the list.
  - ***Sadly, one of the consequences maybe that staff at Burns Bairns maybe unemployed. However, they will be able to apply for the supply list with the Council.***
- All 6 Staff members have always been committed and dedicated to provide an excellent service within the local area and the best for our children.
  - ***The Council is fully aware of the committed staff within Burns Bairns and have worked in partnership with them over a number of years.***
- Ante pre school children at nursery can take longer to settle in if they are lacking in confidence and this may be further affected due to high numbers.
  - ***All of our staff are very experienced in working with very young children. There is no evidence in any of our other nurseries that higher numbers of children impact on younger children taking time to settle in.***
- Staff will not get to know children (ante pre) and visa versa if they only attend 2 sessions per week, which can also be very unsettling for a child.
  - ***24 out of the 33 local authority nurseries and 9 Partner Providers currently offer split sessions for children of 3 years of age. This has never been an issue and the quality of staff is paramount in ensuring that children are not unsettled.***
- Pre school children are going to be disrupted in education if they are continually interrupted by upset ante pre school children and new starts all the time if they start the month after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.
  - ***There has never been any evidence that this is the case and again as long as there are well qualified staff supporting all children then there will be no interruption to their development.***
- What happens to children whose birthdays fall after September if the spaces are all taken where do they go if Mauchline Nursery Class is full?
  - ***Based on our current information in respect of the population of Mauchline then the nursery class should be able to take all children.***
- What happens if families move into area during term time and they have preschool age children – where do they go for their pre school year as Burns Bairns took a Pre-school child last year who could not be issued a place within Mauchline Nursery Class?

- ***If there are no places in Mauchline Nursery Class they will be offered an alternative in Catrine.***
- 3 year olds will need a more flexible curriculum and planning structure.
  - ***All children require a flexible curriculum in line with a Curriculum for Excellence. Children's learning needs should be met on a personalised basis and there should be no difference to this approach for 3 or 4 year old children.***
- Burns Bairns offer a welcoming supportive introduction to education for both the child and parent/family.
  - ***All Partner Providers are commissioned to deliver ante and pre-school education and are therefore expected to meet the same standards. All establishments should have a welcoming and supported introduction to early education and development.***
- We had more areas classed as very good than the Nursery Class in our last HM Inspection.
  - ***Mauchline Nursery Class had a very positive HMIE/Care Commission inspection in November 2004.***
- Kay Gilmour has assured us that Care Commission will register for 40/40 at Mauchline Nursery Class but Care Commission did not know anything about it until parents began to call them this morning.
  - ***The Head of Service: Community Support indicated that the Care Commission in principle foresaw no issues with registration from Mauchline Nursery Class. This was a confidential discussion with the Care Commission and therefore the Care Commission may not have divulged information to parents.***
- Burns Bairns have always used the funding East Ayrshire Council provides as parents prefer to ease their children into education and naturally use Burns Bairns Toddlers then Playgroup to do so.
  - ***Burns Bairns should be delivering the same curriculum as all other providers regardless of whether they are 3 or 4 years of age.***
- Last year Burns Bairns had 30 applications for the 24 funded spaces available. The committee chose to take oldest children first and the parents of the six children who were not allocated a funded place chose to continue to pay through out the year for their child to remain at Burns Bairns. This shows that parents know Burns Bairns is an excellent organisation and recognize that this is the best start for their children.
  - ***There never has been any doubt that Burns Bairns offer a quality service.***
- Fridge, Microwave and toaster in the kitchen are all Playgroup items bought with playgroup money.
  - ***If these items belong to the Playgroup then they would remain with the Playgroup.***

- Hall lets and Centre income so far from playgroup this year is £4456. This will be a massive cut to the Community Associations income for the upkeep of the hall.
  - ***Income will be reduced, however, the Community Learning & Development Service will work with the Community Association to encourage new lets.***
- East Ayrshire Council have given £12,500 to the Holy Fair and £10,000 to Cumnock Highland Games, which are one day events.
  - ***The Council requires to reflect its range of priorities, to meet the needs of communities.***
- 40/40 at Mauchline Nursery class is unsafe and not providing the best education and environment for the children.
  - ***Provision at Mauchline Nursery Class is registered with the Care Commission and is a very safe environment for children.***
- Traffic is already a concern at Mauchline Primary School and increasing Nursery numbers will only add to the problem at drop off and pick up times.
  - ***Risk assessments are currently being undertaken and colleagues are addressing the issues in respect of drop-off and pick-up times.***
- Burns Bairns is the only voluntary group to have their funding removed and is one of the best partner providers in East Ayrshire.
  - ***The assessment of provision was based very transparently on proximity to available provision in other nursery establishments. The Council doesn't separate out whether organisations are voluntary or private, they are all considered to be Partner Providers.***

Parents on a whole feel East Ayrshire Council are putting money issues before the education and welfare of our children and if budget cuts are to be made Education should not be affected as it is important for all children to get the best start in life regardless of cost.

## EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

## BUDGET SAVINGS 2010/11

AREA OF SAVING	£
Reduction in partner providers x 3 Grasshoppers Nursery Burns Bairns Under 5's Group Jacaranda Nursery	27,000 9825 20,423  Total <b>57,248</b>
No wraparound at Nether Robertland NC due to demand for pre-school education places and reduction in staffing for wraparound at Crosshouse Nursery due to reduction in numbers	<b>25,000</b>
Positive Play (Commitment to match fund ends March 2010)	<b>10,000</b>
Review of travel costs	<b>3,500</b>
Supplies and Services	<b>3,600</b>
Reduction in funding available to voluntary sector	<b>15,000</b>
Reduction in CPD for local authority and Partner Providers	<b>5,835</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£120,183</b>