

Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee –
15 June 2018

Completion Report on the Implementation of the 30 hrs Early Years Capital Projects

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Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson
Division and Local Member: All members

1. Summary

- 1.1.** The Committee was presented with an update on 16 June 2017 of the 6 funded capital projects that Somerset County Council had been successful in securing from the Department for Education. These projects were implemented as part of securing sufficiency duties for the introduction of the extended entitlement (30 hours) funding for eligible working families in the county.

This report provides a summary of the completed capital projects that were approved by the EFSA to support sufficiency of places for the 30 hours agenda. This report also aims to inform members of how the extended entitlement has been implemented in the county, and the numbers of families benefitting from the new entitlement.

- 1.2.** Capital funding and support strategies to the early years sector aims to help create sufficient childcare places for the 30 hours extended entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds in Somerset and supports the Somerset's Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19 (CYPP) seven improvement programmes including "Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life".

The CYPP links to the Education target in the County Plan 2016 -2020. Sufficiency of early year's places for 3 and 4 year olds is also a statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 and 2016.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the participation of early years providers to the extended entitlement (30 hours) scheme, and the number of Somerset families benefitting from the offer.
- 2.2.** The Committee is asked to consider and comment on each of the 5 capital projects that have been completed and are contributing to the extended entitlement (30 hours) for three and four year olds in Somerset.

3. Background

3.1. 30 Hours places for 3 and 4 year olds

The Childcare Act 2016 discharged a duty on local authorities to secure

sufficient places for the extended entitlement of 30 hours childcare for eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds.

The offer began on the 1st of September 2017, and is open to working families of children aged 3 and 4 years old. Parents must meet the criteria for eligibility and apply for the additional hours. This is not via the LA, but direct to the government via www.childcarechoices.gov.uk .

The SCC website has its own page for 30 hours for both parents and providers. The Parents page for Somerset available at www.somerset.gov.uk/eye30 . The Providers page for Somerset available at www.somerset.gov.uk/eye30provider

3.2. Take up of the extended entitlement offer

As of 21st May 2018, 467 providers out of 506 that accept the entitlement have registered as offering the 30 hours spaces (92%). Offering spaces is not mandatory and providers voluntarily opt in to the scheme.

Eligibility:

As of 25th of May 2018, there were a total of 4359 valid checked and unchecked codes in Somerset, which is our available measure of eligibility in the county.

Take up:

As of 25th May 2018, there were 3805 validated codes in the county; 96 codes are not yet old enough to take up the offer, 3681 under reception age, 28 of reception age (most likely are taking up in an independent school) and 3 of compulsory school age. This is the best indicator of take up as a code must be validated by a provider to access the hours.

The data indicates that the approximate take up in the county (for children who are the right age to access the offer) is 93%

As of 25th of May 2018, there were 551 codes in their grace period. If parents do not reconfirm every 3 months they will no longer be eligible for the extended hours after their term's grace period.

As of 25th of May 2018, 541 codes had expired, which indicates that these families were no longer eligible for the offer. This could be due to change in circumstances or not successfully reconfirming their eligibility.

3.3. Capital Bids

Somerset submitted six projects for consideration by the Education Funding Agency on 31 August 2016 using a standard application form designed by the EFA. These were all approved in December 2016, and the total capital funding awarded to Somerset was £1,515,027.31.

4. Progress of Capital Projects

4.1. 1. Rockets, Rockwell Green Primary School, Wellington

Relocation of Modular building from Brock House; 20 new places

LA/ PRIVATE	Original project cost submitted	EFA grant awarded	Funding from the LA	Final Project Cost
LA	226,143	169,143	166,157	335,300

Status: Completed

The Brock House Modular unit was moved on the 22nd of March 2017. The school have reported that they are thrilled with the new building and it working very well.

4.2. 2. Brockvale, Pen Elm, Taunton - now The Brambles Day Nursery

Refurbish unit on garden centre site to create a new nursery; 40 new places

LA/ PRIVATE	Original project cost submitted	EFA grant awarded	Funding from the LA	Final Project Cost
Private	374,699	259,699	40,091	374,699

Status: Completed

This project was led by the Royal Marines charity, Go Commando who has formed a partnership to establish the new nursery on the Wyevale garden centre site at Pen Elm in Taunton. The Brambles day nursery opened in March 2018 and offers places for children aged 0-5 years.

4.3. 3. Paddocks day nursery, Wiveliscombe

Internal remodelling of Children's Centre to expand early years; 40 new places

LA/ PRIVATE	Original project cost submitted	EFA grant awarded	Funding from the LA	Final Project Cost
LA	247,703	185,777	68,710	254,487

Status: Completed

Feedback from the nursery:

'For the nursery having these building alterations to accommodate additional children regards to the 30 hours, it has made a big different to the whole nursery. We now have a separate room for 0-2yrs 8 month called the Caterpillar room, this allows those children moving through to the Butterfly room more time to flourish in those there social skills and less disruption to the older children who are very busy in their own play and learning or if there are focus times going on most of the children are engaged in the activity.

With the building alterations and having more availability we have had to recruit additional bank staff and we have taken on another apprentice to support the needs to the families who use us. We also increased our after school numbers last September and we are looking at increasing them further this coming September'

The nursery are hosting an 'Open day' on Saturday 23rd June to mark out 10 year anniversary 10-12.30pm

4.4. 4. Chuggers day nursery, Taunton

Convert first and second storey from domestic to nursery use; 34 new places

LA/ PRIVATE	Original project cost submitted	EFA grant awarded	Funding from the LA	Final Project Cost
Private	551,372	413,500	107,872	551,372

Status: Completed

The project has been completed, and has made considerable changes to the layout and physical appearance of the building. The improvements have been noted by parents, and the new exterior cladding gives a smart and modern appearance to this part of the street.

4.5. Salmon Parade, Bridgwater

Convert former wing of former hospital at Salmon Parade to nursery- new provision; 32 new places.

Status: Not going ahead

After careful consideration, the provider decided not to purchase the property and continue with the project. The funds will be returned to the DFE.

4.6. 6. Neroche Primary School, Broadway, Neroche

New nursery provision in a modular building at front of school site, and

retaining provision at village hall premises; 30 new places

LA/ PRIVATE	Original project cost submitted	EFA grant awarded	Funding from the LA	Final Project Cost
LA	362,123	271,123	88,934	360,057

Status: Completed

The Pre-school has opened and has been named 'First Friends'. The school have reported that they are 'over the moon' with the building.

5. Implications

5.1. Financial:

The total investment from the DFE totalled £1,299,242. This is a considerable saving for the LA.

The capital projects commitment from the local authority totalled £471, 764. This had been covered by the early year's capital investment budget as the EFSA were clear in the terms and conditions that any additional costs were the LA's responsibility.

Legal costs have also been incurred to the Local Authority due to the need for contracts and grant agreements to be created for private providers. This has provided an opportunity to draft a permanent grant agreement if the LA wished to contribute to future private third party projects.

5.2. Statutory duty:

It is not mandatory for providers to offer the 30 hours spaces, therefore the Local Authority must use supportive strategies with the sector to achieve sufficiency. There is then, a risk that there will not be sufficient places for families to access 30 hours as providers voluntarily register with the Local Authority as offering the extended entitlement.

As of May 2018, the Local Authority has not received any complaints about parents not being able to find a place in the county.

6. Background papers

- 6.1.** Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee – 09 December 2016 'Early Years Bid for Capital Funding to the EFA for projects to secure 30 hours funded places for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds'
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s2353/2016%20Dec%209%20-%20Item%207%20-EFA%20report.pdf>

- 6.2.** Somerset Early Years 30 hours strategy 2016-17. Contact Charlotte Wilson, Service Manager Early Years Commissioning cwilson@somerset.gov.uk 01823 357386.

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author