

Urgent Cabinet Report/Delegated Decision Form

Report/Decision Title	Wraparound and Early Years Childcare Expansion Capital funds
Date of request	25/10/2024
Date of meeting/decision	

Urgent – General Exception - Reasons for urgency outlined below

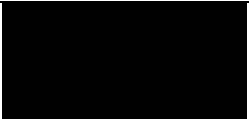
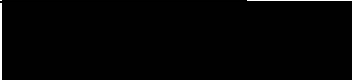
We recognise that whilst this decision ideally would have gone through the standard forward plan registration process, given the timeline for implementation, we cannot afford the usual 28-day wait.



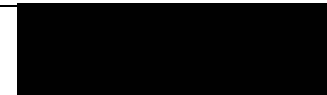
The matter is time-sensitive as it involves allocating funds from the Childcare Reforms grants, which supports essential early years and wraparound provisions. These funds are needed immediately by providers and schools to begin necessary expansions and to meet current demand.

As per Rule 16 on special urgency, this situation meets the criteria for a general exception because:

- The decision is required to be actioned urgently to ensure that government-funded resources are deployed effectively and in a timely manner, avoiding delays that could impact services for families in our communities.*
- Although we initially proceeded with completing the Delegated Powers approval form in error, we have since informed relevant senior officers and the cabinet member, ensuring they are fully aware of the decision.*
- The necessity for swift action is driven by the availability of government funds earmarked for rapid deployment, which cannot wait for the next forward plan cycle.*

With this in mind, we are taking the steps outlined for a General Exception to expedite the decision while maintaining transparency and accountability through proper notification.

I confirm that the relevant chair of Scrutiny and Improvement Committee (or if there is not chair, the whole committee individually) and the Cabinet Member have been informed by notice in writing of the decision to be taken.					
Officer name (Delegated Power Author)	Lisa Noteyoung	Officer Signature		Date	25/10/2024
Assistant Director Name	Clare Mahoney	Assistant Director signature		Date	25/10/24

This urgent report/decision has been seen and agreed by the following:	
Officer / Member	Signature
Managing Director	
Section 151 Officer	
Monitoring Officer	

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Are the details of the decision to be public or confidential?

Public

If the details of the decision are confidential, please select the category for exemption under the Local Government Act 1972

Choose an item.

Reference	CF-24-076
Corporate Plan Priority	Start Life Well
Delegation Title	Childcare Reforms Grant Allocation
Delegated Power Number	184
Date of Exercise	20/11/2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Bill Suthers
Assistant Director	Clare Mahoney

Type of Decision (Key/Executive/Non-Executive)	Key - Executive
FOR KEY DECISIONS ONLY	
Delegated Power Forward Plan Ref	If a key decision has not been published in the forward plan at least 28 days in advance of the decision being taken, then the urgency or special urgency rules must be applied, and relevant forms completed in conjunction with Democratic Services
Date Decision Published in Forward Plan	Click or tap to enter a date. To be completed by Democratic Services
Urgency (For Key Decisions not included in Forward Plan only)	Urgent - General Exception - Forms Attached

Background to decision:

The Childcare Reforms initiative was introduced by the Government to address the increasing demand for flexible and affordable childcare. It supports two primary areas: the expansion of wraparound childcare provision and the Early Years Extended Entitlement. These reforms are part of a national strategy designed to improve the availability of high-quality childcare, better supporting working families. The intended impact is to close gaps in early education and wraparound care, helping families access the support they need to balance work and childcare responsibilities, while increasing participation in early years education.

For the current financial year (2024/25), the Council has been allocated funding to distribute to schools through a competitive bidding process. All bids submitted are reviewed by the Council's

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newly formed Childcare Reforms Grant Panel, ensuring that funds are awarded based on strategic priorities and the capacity to deliver high-quality childcare solutions.

The allocation of funds will be determined by the panel, using a set of evaluation criteria that considers each provider's proposal, its potential to address childcare gaps and its alignment with the national reform goals.

The Wraparound Revenue funds will be awarded to schools for shortfalls termly until the point where the individual schools wraparound childcare programme is self-sustainable and no longer in a short fall or the grant funding has been fully spent.

The Wraparound and Early Years Childcare Expansion Capital funds will be awarded on a discretionary basis favouring areas where the capacity expansion is in high need and on a value for money basis using a price per additional placement formula

Decision Considerations:

Terms and conditions of each grant funding stream.

At this time, there are no other anticipated elements or future plans that would impact this decision, although ongoing monitoring will ensure the effective distribution of funds.

Full details of decision:

Approval is sought to allocate Government funding related to the Childcare Reforms Grant (wraparound and EY extended entitlement) for the current financial year.

The funds will be distributed to schools through a competitive bidding process, as reviewed and approved by the Council's Childcare Reforms Grant Panel. The panel will assess bids based on their potential to address identified gaps in wraparound childcare and early years provision, ensuring alignment with national reform objectives.

Financial detail:

This will be covered by a ring-fenced grant 100%. it is split between Revenue and Capital (Wraparound Revenue/ Wraparound and EY Capital) there will be no overspend and this will have no impact on council finances.

Budget Code

Revenue 11491 G0404

Capital C20465 G0404

Is budget available for full contract/service without causing additional pressure?

YES

Annual Contract Value

Total Contract Value (including optional extension periods)

Not annual amount, set amount of grant allocated to distribute over 24/25 and 25/26

£ 219,873 Capital

£ 892,978.79 Revenue

Delivering Social Value:

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The proposed spend will significantly enhance access to high-quality childcare for families. By providing reliable childcare options, the council is supporting parents to seek and maintain employment, ultimately fostering economic stability within the community.

Reasons for Decision:

This decision should be supported as it aligns with the Government's Childcare Reforms initiative, which addresses the need for flexible and affordable childcare. By expanding wraparound care and enhancing the Early Years Extended Entitlement, we will improve access to high-quality childcare for working families. This initiative also supports the Council's statutory duty to ensure childcare sufficiency in the community.

Details of alternative options considered (if any) and reasons for rejection:

Doing Nothing:
Failure to distribute funding is not an option as it would fail to address the urgent need for flexible and affordable childcare. Inaction would leave working families without adequate support, worsening existing gaps in early education and wraparound care.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Elected Member consulted in relation to the decision:



This must be left blank. Business Support will seek this information from the Cabinet Member.

Details of any dispensation granted in respect of any conflict of interest:

This must be left blank. Business Support will seek this information from the Cabinet Member.

Background Papers:

State where any additional papers may be held, any background information (if applicable)


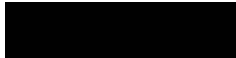
Officer Name (Print)	Lisa Noteyoung	
Officer Signature		
Officer Submission Date	01/10/2024	
Finance Manager Name (Print)	Elaine Laird	
Finance Approval Signature		This must be the electronic signature of the Finance Manager to confirm that budget has been confirmed for the decision
Date of Approval	17/10/24	
Procurement Officer Name (Print)	NA	
Procurement Approval Signature	NA	This must be the electronic signature of the Procurement Officer to confirm the

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		decision complies with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules
Date of Approval	NA	

Reference	CF-24-076
Delegated Power Forward Plan Reference	
Corporate Plan Priority	Start Life Well
Delegation Title	Childcare Reforms Grant Allocation
Delegated Power Number	184
Date of Exercise	20/11/2024
Cabinet Member	Cllr Bill Suthers
Assistant Director	Claire Mahoney

Signatures

CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER 	Date 20/11/2024
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 	Date 14/11/2024

Call-In (Key Decisions Only)

Call-In to be dis-applied due to urgency, reasons as follows:

The Childcare Reforms grant is time-sensitive, with funds that must be allocated promptly to ensure providers and schools can begin expanding early years and wraparound services. If we do not act quickly, we risk losing this grant funding opportunity, which would have a significant impact on our ability to support local families and meet the growing demand for these essential services.

Date Decision will become effective	14 November 2024. To be completed by Democratic Services – date will be not less than expiry of 5 working days from publication unless urgency applies.
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