

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 06 November 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme Update 2025-28
Purpose of Report:	To request permission from Cabinet to submit individual Business Justification Cases to Welsh Government in respect of their commitment to support and strengthen the childcare sector and delegate specific powers to named officers and relevant Portfolio holder relating to the local delivery of the projects
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language / Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Learning and Skills
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Operational Manager - Accountancy Operational Manager – Strategy and Resources Head of Service, Children and Young People Service, Social Services Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources Operational Manager Partnerships and Community Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet.

Executive Summary:

- The Early Years and Childcare Capital programme is part of Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to maintain and improve the existing childcare and Flying Start infrastructure initially in 2022-25 and recently extended in 2025 - 28. The main objectives for the capital programme are to ensure that the childcare sector in Wales is strengthened and supports the Programme for Government's commitments to:
 - Fund childcare for more families where parents are in education and training or on the edge of work.
 - Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision, to include all 2 year olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision.
 - Continue to support the flagship Flying Start Programme.
- The purpose of this report is to request permission from Cabinet to submit a Business Justification Case to Welsh Government which highlights the necessity to develop new childcare provision along with supporting the expansion and / or improvements to existing childcare provision in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Should approval be given, the business case will be submitted to Welsh Government and will follow a rigorous assessment prior to a decision being made.
- As funding is only confirmed once the Capital programme has been agreed by Welsh Government, the report recommends delegating specified powers to named officers and the relevant Portfolio holder relating to the local delivery of the projects specified.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet provides permission to submit individual Business Justification Cases to Welsh Government which highlights the necessity to develop new childcare provision along with supporting the expansion and / or improvements to existing childcare provision in the Vale of Glamorgan.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Learning and Skills (in consultation with the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh language, Chief Executive, Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services) to approve the use of the Capital Programme Fund allocation for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
3. That the Director of Learning and Skills (in consultation with the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services) be authorised to negotiate terms and conditions for the appointment of third-party suppliers/providers for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
4. That the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services (in consultation with the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer) be authorised to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation to enable third-party suppliers/providers to be appointed for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
5. That delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation with third parties.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To progress a Business Justification Case process with Welsh Government.
2. To obtain authority to approve the use of the Early Years and Childcare Capital programme funding for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
3. To obtain authority to appoint third-party suppliers/providers to be appointed for Early Years and Childcare led projects where required.
4. To obtain authority to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation to enable third-party suppliers/providers to be appointed for Early Years and Childcare led projects where required.
5. To obtain authority to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation with third parties.

1. Background

Overview of the Programme

- 1.1 The Early Years and Childcare Capital Programme forms part of the Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to enhance and sustain the existing

childcare and Flying Start infrastructure. The programme's core aims are to strengthen the childcare sector in Wales and support key Programme for Government priorities, including:

- Providing funded childcare for more families, particularly those with parents in education, training, or transitioning into employment.
- Implementing a phased expansion of early years services to include all two-year-olds, with a strong focus on increasing Welsh-medium provision.
- Continuing investment in the flagship Flying Start Programme.

Collaborative Delivery

- 1.2** This initiative is being delivered collaboratively across the Learning and Skills and Social Services Directorates, with substantial contributions from teams in property management, building and architecture, and the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

Project Submissions

- 1.3** Local Authorities are invited to submit individual Business Justification Cases outlining proposals that meet the funding criteria. These should be prioritised based on the feasibility of completion by 31st March 2028. Submissions may include both pre-scoped projects and new proposals identified through Childcare Sufficiency Assessments, Flying Start expansion plans and Welsh-medium development strategies.
- 1.4** Projects will be evaluated against the following criteria:
- Promotion and development of Welsh-medium childcare provision.
 - Co-location of services, such as childcare facilities situated on school campuses or within community or health hubs.
 - Expansion of the Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start, or Foundation Learning within childcare settings.
 - Increase in childcare places to support greater capacity and accessibility.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

Strategic Context

- 2.1** To support the Welsh Government's objectives for enhancing childcare and Flying Start infrastructure, six capital projects have been identified. These include four projects carried over from the 2022–2025 funding term. The selection process utilised a combination of data sources, including:
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) to target the highest-need Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)
 - PARIS (NHS database) for current child age demographics
 - The 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

- Family Information Service data on parental childcare enquiries

Overview of Proposed Projects

2.2 The six proposed capital projects are as follows:

Project	Location	Description	Status
1. Cadoxton Primary School Site	Barry	Renovation of an existing building to increase childcare places supporting Flying Start, the 2-year-old offer, and Childcare Offer for Wales (ages 3–4).	Funding awarded (April 2025); construction began May 2025; completion expected Nov 2025.
2. Bumblebees Extension at Colcot Primary School	Barry	Extension of existing provision to expand childcare capacity aligned with Flying Start and early years offers.	Funding awarded (April 2025); construction starts Aug 2025; completion expected Oct 2025.
3. Welsh Medium Childcare at Pen-Y-Garth	Penarth	Relocation and expansion of Welsh-medium childcare from Dinas Powys to Pen-Y-Garth, enhancing indoor/outdoor space and increasing capacity.	Initial application declined (Feb 2024) due to limited funding within Welsh Government; revised application submitted (July 2025); awaiting WG response.
4. Rebuild of Cylch Meithrin Y Bontfaen	Cowbridge	Full rebuild to expand Welsh-medium childcare, including a new baby area to support early development and transition.	Proposal under development.
5. Flying Start Family Centre Refurbishment	Barry	Reconfiguration and refurbishment to optimise space for childcare and integrated Flying Start services.	Proposal under development.
6. Welsh Medium Provision near Ysgol Sant Baruc	Barry	Development of a new Welsh-medium childcare setting to support Flying Start and Childcare Offer expansion.	Proposal under development.

Project	Location	Description	Status
7. Palmerston Childcare Unit (on site of Palmerston Adult Learning Centre)	Barry	Initial discussions are taking place to explore the opportunity of developing a childcare unit to support the LSOA areas around Palmerston area to support the expansion of Flying Start 2-year-old offer and provide childcare for children under the Childcare Offer for Wales.	Initial discussions and site visit held. Proposal to be discussed with OM Mark Davies and Head of Service, Trevor Baker.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

Embedding the Five Ways of Working

3.1 The Early Years and Childcare Capital Programme is fully aligned with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, demonstrating a clear commitment to the Five Ways of Working:

- **Involvement**

The programme is shaped through continuous engagement with key stakeholders, including third sector partners, childcare providers, and families. Feedback and progress are shared via Family Information Service bulletins, Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership meetings, and integrated into the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan to ensure transparency and responsiveness.

- **Collaboration**

Delivery of the programme is underpinned by strong collaborative working across Council Directorates, including Learning and Skills, Social Services, and Property Services, as well as with external partners such as third sector organisations and childcare providers. This joint approach ensures shared ownership and maximises collective expertise.

- **Integration**

The programme supports integrated working across Council teams to deliver Welsh Government priorities, including the expansion of Flying Start, the introduction of the 2-year-old offer, and the enhancement of the Childcare Offer for Wales. It also contributes to broader strategic objectives such as tackling poverty, promoting Welsh language development, and improving educational outcomes.

- **Prevention**

Investment in high-quality, accessible childcare infrastructure helps prevent future inequalities by providing children with a strong foundation in their early years. Research consistently shows that early intervention and access to quality childcare lead to improved long-term outcomes for children and families.

- **Long Term**

The programme contributes to a sustainable, long-term vision for childcare provision in the Vale of Glamorgan. It supports Welsh Government's commitment to increase access to childcare for parents in education, training, or employment, and ensures the continued delivery and expansion of the Flying Start programme and universal early years service.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** In December 2020, the Climate Change Committee published its progress report "Reducing Carbon Emissions in Wales". This is the first report on Wales' progress towards meeting its emission reduction targets, as required under Article 45 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 4.2** The progress report and advice recognise the actions taken in Wales to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - including achieving some of the highest national recycling rates in the world, taking a proactive role in supporting the large-scale deployment of renewable energy generation, and integrating responses to the climate and nature emergency throughout its priorities for the reconstruction of the economy.
- 4.3** The implications of the proposed development will encourage those who use the facility to commute via active travel being a local childcare provision for local people. The facility will engage with staff, parents and care givers to use alternative modes of transport, to reduce the environmental impact of the new facility.
- 4.4** Reducing the carbon footprint of the proposed childcare developments, will incorporate using sustainable building materials - using low carbon, locally sourced and recycled materials; opting for low-energy appliances and lighting, energy efficient design including the installation of solar panels. Children will be actively involved in eco-friendly activities such as gardening including use of allotments where available, recycling and nature-based learning.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** In May 2024, the Welsh Government invited Local Authorities to submit Expressions of Interest (EOIs) outlining proposed projects and anticipated capital

spend for the 2025–2028 programme term. In response, the Council submitted a total EOI of approximately £2,835,000, covering four new projects – project numbers 3, 4, 5 and 6. These figures represent indicative costs and are subject to refinement pending the development of formal plans and detailed costings.

5.2 In addition to the new proposals, two previously approved projects total **£1,120,000** – projects 1 and 2 originally funded in February 2025 — have been carried forward into the new capital programme and are also included in the submission.

5.3 A summary of the projects and estimated costs is provided in the table below. One further project, Project 7 is currently being discussed so no further information is available on this as yet.

Vale of Glamorgan Capital Funding request (2025 – 2028)

5.4 The following table outlines the Vale of Glamorgan Council's capital funding request submitted to Welsh Government for the 2025/26, 2026/27 to 2027/28 programme term.

Project	2025/26 (£)	2026/27(£)	2027/28 (£)	Total (£)	Status
1. Renovation on Cadoxton Primary School Site	£735,000	£0	£0	£735,000	Confirmed
2. Extension – Bumblebees at Colcot Primary School	£385,000	£0	£0	£385,000	Confirmed
3. New Build – Childcare Unit at Ysgol Pen Y Garth	£885,000	-	–	£885,000	Verbal notification agreed, awaiting formal approval
4. New Build – Cylch Meithrin Y Bont-faen	-	Approx. £900,000	–	Approx. £900,000	Pending
5. Reconfiguration – Flying Start Family Centre	Approx. £250,000	-	–	Approx. £250,000	Pending
6. New Build – Childcare Unit near Ysgol Sant Baruc	-	Approx. £800,000	-	Approx. £800,000	Pending
7. New Build – Palmerston Childcare unit on Palmerston Adult Learning Centre.	-	-	-	Awaiting further discussion	Awaiting further discussion

Employment

Programme Coordination and Delivery Support

- 5.5** Funding has been secured for a dedicated Early Years and Childcare Capital Projects Co-ordinator role for the 2025–2026 financial year. This role is integral to the successful delivery of the Capital Programme and will provide focused support across both existing and emerging projects.
- 5.6** The Co-ordinator will be responsible for:
- Overseeing the implementation of planned capital projects
 - Supporting the development of new initiatives identified through Childcare Sufficiency Assessments and service reviews
 - Facilitating projects linked to the expansion of Flying Start childcare provision
 - Ensuring improvements to premises that enhance the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of childcare services across the Vale of Glamorgan
- 5.7** This strategic role will help maintain momentum, ensure alignment with Welsh Government priorities, and strengthen the infrastructure supporting early years provision.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.8** The Council will be required to accept the award by agreeing to the terms and conditions of the grant, the purpose of the grant and statement of expenditure.
- 5.9** The Council will be required to enter into contracts and lease Agreements with childcare providers to deliver childcare services under the common seal.
- 5.10** Under the Council's Constitutional requirements separate and specific legal advice will be sought in relation to procurement, building regulations and financial implications on a case-by-case basis.

6. Background Papers

[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022](#)

[Childcare sufficiency Assessment Executive Summary 2022](#)

[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan 2022](#)

Flying Start Management Board Terms and Conditions (Annex 1)

Flying Start Management Board (FSMB)

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the FSMB

1.1 To ensure that developments within the Flying Start Programme:

- Are complementary with co-ordinated services, seamless at the point of delivery.
- Meet the identified needs of children, young people and families.
- Comply with relevant Welsh Government guidance.
- Support the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.
- Support and progress the principles and goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.
- Contribute to the delivery of the Public Services Board's Well-being objectives as detailed in the well-being plan.

1.2 In order to fulfil the functions the FSMB will:

- Oversee the development of the Flying Start (FS) Delivery Plan.
- Scrutinise before endorsing recommendations in relation to the grant and the commissioning requirements, ensuring there is a transparent rationale based upon the evidence of local need, avoiding duplication and maximising value for money and timely allocation and spend.
- Have oversight and approve budgets for the programme.
- Ensure that developments meet Welsh Government guidance.
- Ensure that developments are responsive to identified needs and meet agency priorities, policies and plans.
- Act as the forum to approve changes within Flying Start.
- Ensure that developments meet the terms of relevant funding bodies.
- Align FS with other poverty programmes.
- Ensure the programme considers Equalities and Welsh Language in all its developments.

2.0 Purpose of the Flying Start Programme

- Flying Start is part of our early years programme for families with children under 4 years of age living in disadvantaged areas of Wales.
- Flying Start is one of our top priorities in our Tackling Poverty agenda.

2.1 There are 4 key elements of Flying Start:

Quality, part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds

- Flying Start provides quality childcare which is offered to parents of all eligible 2-3 year olds for 2 and a half hours a day, 5 days a week for 39 weeks. In addition, there should be at least 15 sessions of provision for the family during the school holidays.
- This should be linked to foundation phase entry into schools to ensure a seamless transition between the 2 offers with no gaps in provision.

An enhanced health visiting service

- Key to programme delivery is the requirement that there must be one full time equivalent health visitor per 110 children aged under 4 in the target areas. This is to ensure delivery of intensive support to Flying Start children and their families.
- The primary function of the Flying Start health visitor is to support the family in the home, assessing both the child and the family (in terms of high, medium and low risk). Flying Start health visitors should continually assess those families identified as medium and high risk, and make appropriate referrals.

Access to parenting programmes

- Every family with a Flying Start child must be offered formal parenting support at least on an annual basis. This can be in groups or one to one in the home with a mix of formal and informal support depending on need.
- The parenting offer should be based on the following 3 themes:
 - Perinatal and support in the early years.
 - Early intervention approaches to supporting vulnerable parents.
 - Programmes to support parents in positive parenting.

Speech, language and communication

- Every family in a Flying Start area should have ongoing access to an appropriate language and play group. From this, a more targeted approach based on assessment and referral can be taken where there is evidence of additional need. In some local authorities, speech and language therapists are employed as part of the core Flying Start team.

Flying Start Management Board
Terms of Reference – Updated July 2018

- Evidence shows that speech, language and communication ability is an important predictor of later progress in literacy and has an impact on social skills as well as behavior of children.

Outreach

- In addition to the 4 core elements, an element of outreach work should be included in plans for the expansion of the Flying Start programme.
- Outreach allows local authorities to deliver all elements of Flying Start to a small percentage of their population who live outside of designated Flying Start areas.

3.0 Membership:

Details of the membership of the FSMB and roles and responsibilities are set out below:

3.1 Sitting membership:

- Vale of Glamorgan Learning and Skills – Head of Achievement for All (Chair).
- Cardiff and the Vale Health Board – Head of Operations & Delivery, Community Child Health Directorate
- Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People Services –Head of Children and Young People Services (Vice Chair)
- Vale Centre for Glamorgan Voluntary Services – Executive Director

3.1.1 Invited participants:

- Flying Start Manager (Vale of Glamorgan Council).

3.2 All Board members will be expected to:

- Regard each member as an equal partner.
- Attend meetings regularly.
- Champion partnership working.
- Progress and support the work of the Board and ensure their organisation is appropriately represented at Board meetings.
- Take responsibility for ensuring that their organisation meets commitments made to the Board.
- Communicate and endorse the Flying Start Programme and the key messages of the partnership within their individual organisations and different sectors.
- Ensure that recommendations arising from the FSMB are endorsed and signed off within their respective organisations and partnerships.
- Implement/facilitate change within their respective organisations.

4.0 Decision-making:

- Decisions will be taken by consensus wherever possible. If this is not possible, decisions will be taken either by voting (each member of the Board will have one vote, the Chair will not have a casting vote) or referred to the Lead Director for Children and Young People.
- 4.2 At least three members must be present at a meeting to make it quorate for the decisions made during that meeting to be considered valid.

5.0 Secretariat:

- The Flying Start Business Support team will provide administrative, communication and coordination support to the Board.

6.0 Reporting:

The Board will report as required to:

- Public Services Board.
- Welsh Government.
- Vale of Glamorgan Council nominated Scrutiny Committees.

7.0 Reviewing of Terms of Reference:

- The Board can review and agree to amend the terms of reference at any time which they deem appropriate.
- Terms of Reference will be reviewed at each meeting following any review of the FS guidance.