

Dear Ms Jones/Killearn Community Council

Thank you for your enquiry regarding nursery provision in Killearn.

The Scottish Government places a statutory duty on local authorities to provide the funded entitlement of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare per year for all children aged 3-5 and some eligible 2-year-olds. In the village of Killearn these fully funded hours are accessed in either Killearn Primary School Nursery, Heron House Nursery or in Mulberry Bush Montessori Nursery.

In Killearn Nursery this entitlement is offered in 5 x 5 hour sessions over 25 hours per week, 45.6 weeks of the year. Killearn Nursery is open between the hours of 8am-6pm, amounting to 50 operational hours per week. Within this model, a capacity of 24 children at one time allows 48 children to access their full funded entitlement of 25 hours per week. Currently there are 33 children on the Killearn Nursery role.

Some families request additional nursery sessions over and above the statutory entitlement. These additional sessions need to be funded by families. To ensure a fair and equitable process which allows all eligible children to access their funded entitlement, places are allocated through a nursery admissions process annually. Due to levels of uptake, some local authority nurseries across the council area are able to solely offer the funded entitlement or, where there is capacity, some nurseries can sell additional hours to families who request to purchase sessions over and above the statutory entitlement.

Places are allocated according to a priority system within our Nursery Admissions and Charging Policy and all local authority nurseries, partner provider nurseries in the private, voluntary, and independent sector (PVI), and partner childminders participate in the nursery admissions process for the allocation of funded hours. We ask that all settings offer the funded statutory entitlement of 25 hours per week to eligible children first before releasing any additional non-funded sessions for purchase. When applying for a nursery place, we ask that families indicate a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice of nursery. We ask for this information as we are not able to guarantee that we can offer sessions to meet all families' individual childcare requirements in their first choice of nursery, particularly where additional non-statutory sessions above the funded entitlement are requested.

Over recent years, all services across Stirling Council have been asked to propose budget saving options which would contribute to a financially sustainable Council budget. A number of early years options have been proposed and approved by elected members through the Council's budget setting process, which reduce or remove non-statutory provision. One of these options was to reduce additional nursery capacity in settings located in learning communities where there are a range of early learning and childcare options available.

The proposal to reduce the capacity within Killearn Nursery was based on the following factors:

- Ample capacity with the 3 nurseries in the village to offer the funded entitlement with additional capacity to sell unfunded hours.
- Health data showing a falling school roll in Killearn Primary school from academic years 2025-26 to 2029-30 as detailed:

Academic year	Primary One projected intake
2024-25	23
2025-26	21
2026-27	19
2027-28	18
2028-29	11

In addition, average projections for the number of nursery age children in a build project of 89 houses were also considered. This would equate to approximately 12 children in total and following the 4 year build plan proposed by Cala this would be:

Build Year	Estimated no. of nursery age children
2024-25	2
2025-26	4
2026-27	3
2027-28	3

The budget proposal for Killearn Nursery was approved by elected members at a previous Council budget setting meeting, and savings related to this proposal have been progressed.

We are not able to influence the fee costs for unfunded hours with private provider nurseries, but we would be happy to meet with providers in the Killearn area to assess if a review would be possible regarding split places.

I hope this response helps to explain the current level of nursery provision in Killearn. It may also be helpful to note that Stirling Council is one of a limited number of local authorities that offers extended day and extended year provision in nursery classes attached to a primary school. In many local authorities across Scotland this type of provision is only available in local authority standalone nurseries or with private partner nurseries and childminders.

Kind regards

**Bryony Monaghan, Head of Education & Chief Education Officer**