

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 31 August 2021

Chair:

Councillor Katy Loudon

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Peter Craig (Depute), Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Isobel Dorman, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Martin Grant Hose, Councillor Richard Lockhart (*substitute for Councillor Ian Harrow*), Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Gladys Miller, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor Carol Nugent, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Bert Thomson (*substitute for Councillor Margaret B Walker*), Councillor Jared Wark, Councillor David Watson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Fiona Dryburgh, Councillor Ian Harrow, Councillor John Ross (ex officio), Councillor Margaret B Walker

External Members Present:

Gillian Coulter, Christine Hall, Andy Harvey, Hilary Kirby

External Members' Apologies:

Ann Marie Hobson, Dr Nagy Iskander, John Mulligan

Attending:

Education Resources

T McDaid, Executive Director; D Dickson, Operations Manager; A Donaldson, Head of Education (Inclusion); S Nicolson, Head of Education (Senior Phase); L Sherry, Head of Education (Support Service and School Estate)

Finance and Corporate Resources

M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; J Davitt, Public Relations Team Leader; L Harvey, Finance Manager (Resources); P MacRae, Administration Adviser; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; E McPake, Human Resources Business Partner; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy)

Order of Business

The Committee decided:	that the items of business be dealt with in the order minuted below.
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1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Resources Committee held on 1 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided:	that the minutes be approved as a correct record.
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3 Education Resources - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021

A joint report dated 20 July 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 against budgeted expenditure for 2020/2021 for Education Resources.

As at 31 March 2021, there was an underspend of £9.475 million before transfer to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and an overspend of £3.928 million after transfer to reserves.

The main factors contributing to the underspend on the Education Resources' revenue budget and proposed budget virements were detailed in the report.

The Resource position in relation to COVID-19 costs was detailed in Appendix B to the report

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Education Resources' outturn position as at 31 March 2021 of an overspend of £3.928 million after approved transfers to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted, and that it be noted that this was COVID related and was funded corporately as part of the overall Council COVID position; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

Councillor Lockhart joined the meeting during this item of business

4 Education Resources - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/2022

A joint report dated 4 August 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 16 July 2021 against budgeted expenditure for 2021/2022 for Education Resources.

As at 16 July 2021, there was an overspend of £0.174 million, as detailed in Appendix A to the report. Costs incurred in relation to the Resource's COVID-19 response were outlined in Appendix B to the report.

Virements were proposed to realign budgets across budget categories and with other Resources and those were detailed in appendices A and B to the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that an overspend of £0.174 million, as at 16 July 2021, on Education Resources' revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Education Resources - Capital Budget Monitoring 2020/2021

A joint report dated 11 August 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted advising of progress on the Education Resources' capital programme for 2020/2021 and summarising the expenditure position at 31 March 2021.

The total capital programme for 2020/2021 was £24.480 million. Expenditure to 31 March 2021 was £22.641 million. The final expenditure position of £22.641 million was slightly higher than the projected outturn of £22.561 million reported to the Committee on 1 June 2021.

The progression of a number of projects had been impacted by the ongoing lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any underspend on those projects, together with the funding, would be carried forward into the next financial year, as required.

Accounting adjustments were required following a review of the Council's revenue and capital spend. As a result, for the purposes of publishing the Annual Accounts only, capital spend amounted to £23.105 million

The Committee decided: that the Education Resources' capital programme for 2020/2021 of £24.480 million, and expenditure for the year of £22.641 million, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

6 Education Resources - Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/2022

A joint report dated 12 August 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted advising of progress on the Education Resources' capital programme for 2021/2022 and summarising the expenditure position at 16 July 2021.

The Education Resources' capital programme amounted to £20.400 million and expenditure as at 16 July 2021 was £3.119 million. This represented a position of £0.209 million behind profile and, in the main, reflected the timing of payments.

The Committee decided: that the Education Resources' capital programme for 2021/2022 of £20.400 million, and expenditure at 16 July 2021 of £3.119 million, be noted.

Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

7 Education Resources – Workforce Monitoring – April to June 2021

A joint report dated 12 July 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period April to June 2021:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ discipline, grievance and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ staffing watch as at 13 March 2021

In response to a member's question regarding the number of violent physical incidents, officers undertook to provide members with the relevant figures for 2019 for comparison purposes.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 5)]

8 Pathfinders Initiative: Care Experienced Children and Children on the Edges of Care

A joint report dated 12 May 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on a proposed extension to the Pathfinders Initiative to support care experienced young people and children on the edge of care.

The Pathfinders pilot project was established in the Cambuslang and Rutherglen locality in April 2019 and aimed to deliver support, across 52 weeks, targeting critical periods where disengagement from school could become a significant issue for certain children and their families. Support was provided holistically across the settings of school, community and home.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ initial staffing for the Initiative
- ◆ support offered
- ◆ training for staff
- ◆ group work programmes offered

Extensive independent research had been carried out to analyse the impacts and benefits of the project to young people and their families. The research findings, which showed a positive evidence base for the contribution of the Pathfinders team in the 3 pilot schools, were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Attendees at locality meetings for Head Teachers, held in June 2021, were invited to express an interest in taking the programme forward within their own schools. £0.380 million of central funding would be provided for this programme and schools would also use Pupil Equity Fund and Scottish Attainment Challenge monies to augment provision.

It was proposed that:-

- ◆ the Pathfinders Initiative continue to be governed by a multi agency steering group, chaired by the allocated Youth, Family and Community Learning (YFCL) Locality Manager who would continue to provide strategic support and direction
- ◆ a further 10 Pathfinders (YFCL Officers), be recruited, either by secondment or on a temporary 23 month basis, to meet expressed demand
- ◆ an additional YFCL Co-ordinator be appointed from current staffing to support the extension of the programme
- ◆ YFCL would meet additional costs to backfill such a post through a 23 month secondment
- ◆ day to day line management would be carried out by the Head Teacher

The continuation of the programme would be funded from Learning Recovery funds and Care Experienced Attainment Allocation. Learning Recovery funding would be allocated to the Initiative from October 2021 to August 2023 in line with staffing requirements.

The Committee decided:

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) that the extension to the Initiative be approved and the posts, as detailed in section 6 of the report, be added to the Education Resources' establishment, on a fixed term basis, for 23 months; and
- (3) that the research findings showing the impact and benefit of the Pathfinders Initiative, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

9 Acquisition of Nursery Modular Units at St John the Baptist Primary School, Uddingston

A joint report dated 3 August 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the proposed acquisition of the nursery modular units at St John the Baptist Primary School, Uddingston.

As a result of a large growth in nursery applications in the Uddingston area, a permanent nursery class was opened at St John the Baptist Primary School in August 2016, using a modular nursery building for which the Council had entered into an annually renewable lease with Portakabin Limited in 2013. The Council had sought to acquire the modular units, however, Portakabin had advised, at that time, that it was not in a position to sell the units. Portakabin had now confirmed that the units were available for purchase.

If the units were in the Council's ownership, they could be upgraded to the same specification as the project recently undertaken to the nursery modular units at St Bride's Primary School, Bothwell which had included:-

- ◆ erection of a roof and brick façade
- ◆ better insulation standards
- ◆ internal alterations

An options appraisal exercise had been undertaken in respect of the following actions open to the Council:-

- ◆ allow the existing contract to end in June 2022 and find alternative arrangements for nursery provision
- ◆ renew the lease agreement
- ◆ purchase the modular units

It was considered that the option to purchase the units would be the most viable option in terms of best value and in ensuring continuity of early years' provision for families. It was, therefore, proposed that the Council acquire the modular units from Portakabin Limited at a purchase price of £125,000, excluding VAT.

Purchase of the units would result in an annual revenue saving of £18,192 for rental of the units. The purchase and upgrade of the nursery units could be met from funds available within the current capital programme.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1)** that the Council purchase and acquire the modular accommodation at St John the Baptist Primary School Nursery, Uddingston on the terms and conditions outlined in Section 5 of the report and take forward the proposed alterations highlighted in the report from the existing capital funding budget for early years; and
- (2)** that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, if appropriate, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the acquisition and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council.

10 SQA Awards 2021 - Alternative Certification Model (ACM)

A report dated 4 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the national Alternative Certification Model (ACM) in relation to the preparation of provisional awards for SQA candidates following the cancellation of the 2021 SQA examination diet.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the examination diet for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications had been cancelled and an alternative means of qualification known as the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) had been developed. An underpinning principle of the ACM was that awards would be based on demonstrated attainment supported by robust evidence.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ the provisional awards process, which included establishing individual provisional results using the teacher's professional judgement of pupil attainment based on assessment evidence undertaken in controlled exam conditions and moderated at a number of levels
- ◆ HMIE review of the local authority ACM through scrutiny of local authority approaches to the SQA ACM
- ◆ parent/learner communication

Overall pass rates had increased and potential reasons for the improvement were detailed in the report. Learners could appeal their results directly with the SQA.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the Alternative Certification process for SQA awards for candidates presented in session 2020/2021 be noted.

In terms of Standing Order No 13, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11.00am for a 5 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 11.05am

11 Sensational Summer Sessions Provision and Scottish Government Funded Enhanced Summer Programme 2021 – Interim Update Report

A report dated 9 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an interim update on the delivery of the Council's Sensational Summer Sessions provision and the Scottish Government funded Enhanced Summer Programme in South Lanarkshire.

During summer 2021, the Council had operated its Sensational Summer Sessions programme together with the provision of additional enhanced experiences in line with the Scottish Government's Get into Summer funding. The aim was to help improve the wellbeing of children, young people and their families over the summer period. It was targeted at those who had been disproportionately affected during the pandemic and who otherwise might not have had access to activities and wider support during the school holidays, allowing them to socialise, play and reconnect with their local communities. The enhanced provision allowed for the Sensational Summer Sessions programme to involve young people aged 12 to 17 and their families, with the additional support of the voluntary sector partners located in local communities as well as the wider Youth, Family and Community Learning Service (Universal Connections), over 6 days per week, including evenings and weekends.

A full evaluation of the summer provision would commence at the beginning of September and a report to a future meeting of the Committee would provide a more detailed impact on the overall summer provision within the Council, in line with the timescales set by the Scottish Government.

Details were given on

- ◆ target groups for enrolment in the clubs
- ◆ voluntary sector partners actively engaged in delivering the programme
- ◆ the range of themed activities on offer
- ◆ resources and equipment available
- ◆ free personal support available, such as passes to leisure services

As part of a fuller evaluation, all participants and parents would receive a Google form to complete. Information on actual spend for the programme would be included in the further report to the Committee.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breadth and scale of delivery through the 2021 enhanced summer programme be noted;
- (2) that delivery of this programme, with a variety of Third Sector partners and organisations, be noted; and
- (3) that it be noted that a comprehensive report would be submitted to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 9 November 2021 providing a detailed evaluation of the impact of the South Lanarkshire Enhanced Summer Provision Fund 2021 on children, young people, families and communities.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 10)]

12 Attachment Strategy for Education Resources – Update Report

A report dated 6 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the implementation of the Education Resources' Attachment Strategy.

Attachment theory supported both the understanding of early childhood trauma and the impact of loss. The Education Resources' Attachment Strategy supported the Scottish Government's ambition of a trauma informed and responsive workforce where staff understood the impact of trauma on people's lives and how they could respond appropriately.

The Education Resources' Attachment Strategy, launched in June 2020, aimed to promote an understanding of attachment theory and support the implementation of attachment informed practice within education services and establishments across South Lanarkshire by:-

- ◆ developing a range of information resources to be used within education services and establishments
- ◆ providing training to all Education Resources' staff
- ◆ establishing a network of support for Education Resources' staff, with opportunities for further training, discussion and sharing of good practice
- ◆ working with the Education Resources' leadership team to embed attachment informed practice

Details were given on training delivered and materials disseminated in the year since the Strategy was launched. An evaluation report for Attachment Strategy training had been produced and circulated following the training and this was attached as an appendix to the report. Action proposed to further embed attachment informed practice was also detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that it be noted that progress on the implementation of the Attachment Strategy for Education Resources was in line with expectations, despite the challenges presented as a result of the pandemic; and
- (2) that the next steps to further embed attachment informed practice across the Council be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 November 2018 (Paragraph 7)]

13 Counselling Through Schools – Update Report

A report dated 6 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the delivery of counselling through primary, secondary and special schools and on the further guidance developed for schools.

Following on from the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce and as part of its Mental Health Strategy, the Scottish Government had made funding available for the provision of access to counsellors, through schools, to be delivered to pupils aged 10 and over from 2019/2020. Details of the agreed principles underpinning the delivery of the Counselling through Schools service were provided in the report.

Currently, there were 40 counsellors, across 10 counselling providers, supporting 452 young people in 43 schools throughout South Lanarkshire. Regular communication with providers took place to ensure consistency across the service. Operational support and guidance on key aspects for school staff continued to be provided to support the delivery of the service and all schools now had operational guidance, support and funding to access the Counselling through Schools service, if appropriate. Guidance detailed within the Council's Framework for Counselling through Schools highlighted how schools should raise awareness of the service within their establishments.

An evaluation of the service took place during May and June 2021. Referrals were analysed and questionnaires were issued to children and young people, parents, carers and referrers. Findings from an initial analysis of the questionnaires were detailed in the report. Findings included:-

- ♦ the main reasons identified by young people for accessing counselling were anxiety, family issues, emotional/behavioural difficulties, relationships and friendships, body image, bereavement and self harm
- ♦ the numbers of referrals were highest within S4 (19%) and S5 year groups (17%) followed by S2 (16%) then S3 (15%)
- ♦ 89% of referrals were school referrals, 8% of young people self-referred and 3% were parent/other agency referrals

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that progress on the provision of counselling through primary, secondary and special schools be noted; and
- (2) that the further guidance documents be noted.

14 Curriculum for Excellence Review 2020/2021

A report dated 8 July 2021 was submitted providing an update on the independent review of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The Scottish Government had commissioned the OECD to conduct an independent review of the CfE, encompassing both Broad General Education (BGE), previously reviewed in 2015, and the Senior Phase curriculum. This allowed for an evaluation of progress in implementing CfE at all levels in the system and provided an opportunity to consider the Curriculum for Excellence over the next 10 years.

The aims of the review were to:-

- ◆ better understand how the curriculum was being implemented in schools, local authorities and delivery partners, in terms of design and implementation
- ◆ identify what was working well and where progress was being made and, where possible, how progress could be strengthened and accelerated
- ◆ identify particular areas and issues to be focused on for development to ensure that the curriculum contributed as effectively as possible to the education of all young people in Scotland

The review provided an independent perspective to assist in moving forward on key issues including:-

- ◆ curriculum design
- ◆ local flexibility versus increased prescription
- ◆ depth and breadth of learning in the Senior Phase
- ◆ transition from BGE to the Senior Phase
- ◆ vocational and academic learning and awards
- ◆ roles and responsibilities

Details were given on the following aspects of the review:-

- ◆ approach and methodology
- ◆ deliverables and timeframes

Key findings of the review were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Education Secretary had announced that the review's recommendations would be accepted in full, including recommendations on curriculum, assessment and qualifications which would see the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) replaced and Education Scotland substantially reformed.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

Councillor Donnelly left the meeting during this item of business

15 Enabling Youth Voice

A report dated 17 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on action to engage with young people across South Lanarkshire to empower and enable them to have a "voice" and to help inform and influence the democratic process.

An outcome of a range of focus groups to consult with young people on youth voice was the adoption of a visually appealing, accessible and easy to navigate participation tool which would provide a platform to engage and consult digitally with young people on a range of issues. This would also expand the opportunity to encourage and enable young people to take part in the democratic process and influence change. A new development within Young Scot had presented a viable solution to the development of a digital tool, (an app) for use at local level. The potential linkage to the Council's own Digital Service developments was currently being explored.

Focus groups had overwhelmingly indicated that the project should be youth led and it was proposed to employ and train up to 6 people to take the process forward under the umbrella of Youth, Family and Community Learning (YFCL) Services and to enable a Modern Apprenticeship (MA) in Youth Work. The Modern Apprentices would:-

- ◆ engage with young people, through digital technology as well as a range of other engagement mediums
- ◆ work in a locality area as well as working as a whole team, as appropriate
- ◆ be supported through YFCL to become skilled in all aspects of Youth Work
- ◆ aspire to capture good practice to inform the development of the digital participation tool
- ◆ be in a position to take a lead in Community Planning consultation
- ◆ be supported to become adaptable, flexible, resilient, peripatetic and creative and in a position to be an advocate for young people

Details of the expected outcomes resulting from the new model of engagement were provided in the report. A report on the planned progression of the voice of young people and the methods of engagement to support this would be submitted to a future meeting of the Community Planning Partnership.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

16 COVID-19 Update for Schools and Educational Settings (August 2021)

A report dated 12 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the impact of updated national guidance, developed by the Scottish Government, and based on current scientific advice designed to support a safe return to school for children, young people and staff in August 2021.

The Scottish Government Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues had advised, in August 2021, that local authorities should adopt a precautionary, staged approach to the removal of mitigations. The Council would continue to take preventative measures to mitigate against the spread of coronavirus. However, there was some relaxation of the measures for schools and educational settings and those had been implemented from the start of the new term.

Details were given on the current position with regard to:-

- ◆ testing
- ◆ physical distancing/bubbles
- ◆ self-isolation rules
- ◆ face coverings for adults, pupils and on school transport
- ◆ ventilation
- ◆ vaccinations

The Scottish Government would review the position towards the end of September 2021.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Scottish Government guidance to support a safe return to school for children, young people and staff be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that, in terms of self-isolation rules, in normal circumstances, whole classes or groupings of pupils were no longer required to self-isolate as close contacts;
- (3) that the guidance provided to schools, staff, parents and carers prior to the start of the new term be noted; and
- (4) that the efforts of staff in schools and educational settings to adapt to the changing guidance and in being agile in responding to those changes, while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff, be noted.

17 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.