

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	10 February 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Education Resources Sustainability Activity
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the committee on current and future sustainability activity within Education Resources.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s) :-

- 1) that the progress made within all establishments across Education Resources be noted; and
- 2) that the planned activity on sustainability going forward, including the opportunity for a temporary post within Education Resources, be noted,

3. Background

- 3.1. Within Education Resources, our establishments have always been involved in a wide range of activities to engage the active learning of children and young people and promote and develop Learning for Sustainability. This has included working in partnership with other Council Resources and external agencies to take advantage of and contribute towards the promotion of environmentally sustainable initiatives. Some examples are listed below.
- 3.2. Eco schools - There are 68 South Lanarkshire establishments currently registered as having Green Flag Status on the Eco-Schools Scotland programme. These establishments have continued their commitment to Green Flag status despite the current circumstances. The Green Flag status demonstrates a school's commitment to Learning for Sustainability.
- 3.3. School Eco Committees - Most schools have a learner led Eco Committee. These committees allow our children and young people to learn of, co-ordinate and lead the response to climate change and sustainability within their establishments. They can also bring influence and input of time and resources which can lead to positive change within the local community too.
- 3.4. Reduction of single use plastics - We have had a number of schools who have engaged with pupils to reduce single use plastic. Examples of this include introducing reusable water bottles to be filled at water fountains, where pupils have designed the bottle worked in partnership with local employers for funding.

- 3.5. Energy Audits - We have conducted energy audits within our schools utilising information from Housing and Technical Resources and working in partnership with pupils and janitorial staff in order to reduce the amount of energy being used in our establishments. This included highlighting and correcting issues such as lights continually being left on in a room when not occupied, printers/projectors/computer monitors/ICT air conditioning systems being left switched on, rooms being too warm resulting in windows being opened rather than steps being taken to turn the heating off/down, heating left on in unoccupied spaces and light sensors not working in corridors/stairs/classrooms resulting in some lights on constantly.
- 3.6. Beat the Street - Beat the Street projects have taken place in the three air quality management areas within South Lanarkshire, namely East Kilbride, Lanark and Rutherglen. Schools within these areas fully participated in this initiative which saw the surrounding streets to schools transformed into a giant game. The aim of the game was to gather points by walking, cycling, wheeling or rolling around the local town, leaving the car behind whilst gaining points for their school. The longer term aim of the project was to increase awareness of the walking and cycling routes and paths within the local area as well as promoting the benefits of choosing more active and sustainable ways to travel.
- 3.7. Walk to school week - This is a national initiative where we ask all pupils to walk to school one week per year to promote sustainable travel and improve the health and wellbeing of all pupils. The impact of this includes pupils and families continuing to walk or cycle to school and leave the car at home.
- 3.8. Air quality workshops - A number of primary schools have participated in Air Quality and Active Travel Workshops. This focuses on raising awareness of air quality issues whilst promoting active and sustainable travel options, with a particular emphasis on the school commute. The workshops were delivered to primary four, five and six students in a number of schools with a smaller cohort of schools participating in 'All School Action Days'. These action days provided comprehensive information to pupils with supporting activities and homework included. Walk to school weeks together with school and homework activities promoted the importance of air quality and the positive impacts active that sustainable travel can have.
- 3.9. Tree Planting/Gardens - Schools have been involved in tree planning both inside school grounds and as part of wider community projects. A small number of schools are creating orchards where space allows. Schools have also been involved in the design, fund raising and creation of gardens on site.
- 3.10. Food Growing Strategy - A host of primary schools are growing their own fruit and vegetables, creating gardening clubs, working with parents to create a small growing garden as well as working with the wider school community to promote healthy eating. The work being done in schools is supported by Community and Enterprise Resources' Landscape Support Officer. This food can also be used in school cafes or in practical cooking classes. Over time this may naturally lead to a change in eating habits that may further result in lower meat consumption.
- 3.11. 'Eat Them to Defeat Them' Initiative - A host of primary schools are working in collaboration with the Council's Food Policy Officer to support and encourage our children and young people, with the help of **VegPower** who is organising the campaign, to make healthy food choices and help to ensure that through a balanced, healthy diet, they are living a healthy lifestyle. This also has the potential to change eating habits and over time reduce the consumption of meat.

4. Planned Sustainability Activity

- 4.1. Under the climate change duties, local authorities are key to driving behavioural change to reduce carbon emissions within Scotland and to meet national targets. Education Resources recognises the significant part it plays in the education of issues around climate emergency, and the importance of both collective and individual actions which will create a sustainable environment.
- 4.2. As we move forward, we will return our focus to re-invigorating our plans to commit to increasing awareness through learning for sustainability and introducing initiatives that have the potential to actively bring about behavioural change. The next paragraphs in this section of the report describe proposed actions.
- 4.3. Curriculum Improvement - We are currently working with Education Scotland to support a network of Learning for Sustainability practitioners in preparation for COP26 and to further develop Curriculum for Excellence to enhance provision in the curriculum, including Outdoor Learning.
- 4.4. New Post - Officers have been working in collaboration with Education Scotland to develop the remit of a new post, based within Education Resources, to lead on STEM and sustainability. This post will straddle services within the Resource to align work on sustainability initiatives and to build capacity within the school curriculum. The funding of this post is to be supported by a 70% grant from the Wood Foundation, a Scottish based organisation which supports programmes to develop the next generation of contributors to the social and economic fabric of Scotland and the wider world.
- 4.5. Shared Practice - While the sharing of good practice already takes place across schools, this will be an area of particular focus. We will be asking all schools to complete a termly return of all sustainability projects and define what impact they have had. This will lead to a compilation of best practice projects and the wider sharing of such information with contact details. This will allow every establishment to be able to build on the best practice other schools have implemented.
- 4.6. COP26 - In partnership with the University of Glasgow, a team of South Lanarkshire Council learners will have the opportunity to take part in reporting activities live from COP26 in November. The collaboration between our learning organisations will create a Newsroom for the young people of Scotland and beyond, led by the learners of South Lanarkshire. Learners will create videos, podcasts and articles about the conference and the environmental issues and solutions faced by their generation. These learners, having had access to the national event and drawing on their own personal experiences, will help shape lead a South Lanarkshire version of COP 26.
- 4.7. Carbon Footprint Calculator - Procure a carbon footprint calculator that can be tailored for all sectors of education and would allow every school to determine what their actual carbon footprint is. Once this has been calculated, it would allow each establishment to agree an action plan to reduce their carbon footprint further, measure the impact of the agreed actions and share any areas of good practice.
- 4.8. Education Scotland's 'How Good is our School' (HGIOS) - Sustainability is a key feature of school self-evaluation practices as outlined in How Good is Our School 4, the framework that schools are inspected on. As such schools are asked to make a commitment to ensuring social justice, children's rights, learning for sustainability

and equality at the heart of all of the schools' work. As 2021 progresses, as a service we will renew our commitment to these values.

- 4.9. West Partnership – We have links to a member of The West Partnership who has 'learning about sustainability' within their remit. This will allow us to access information to help benchmark and share best practice between local authorities.
- 4.10. Young People Engaged in Planning and Decision Making - Young people are at the centre of the climate change agenda nationally and internationally and to reflect this, Education Resources is currently investigating the possibility of creating a young person's forum for sustainability which can be configured in a number of ways. With representation from across our schools, the intention is that this group will play a crucial role in helping to drive the sustainability and climate change agenda and influence the decision-making process moving forward.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. In respect of the new temporary appointment within Education Resources as described in 4.4, discussions with Education Scotland and the Wood Foundation as to the exact nature of the post and the package of funding available are nearing conclusion.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. It is anticipated that the funding for the new post will be secured for 2 years starting in April 2021. 70% of the funding will come from the Wood Foundation, with the remaining 30% (between £18k - £24k per annum) being managed from within Education Resources existing budget.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. It is envisaged that our first round of planned activities described above will begin to bring about increased awareness, a sense of enhanced collective responsibility and ultimately a change in behaviours which will result in future reduced carbon outputs.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. Failure to collectively work together on initiatives will reduce to the opportunity to fulfil the objectives of the Council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. Consultation and engagement will take place with our children and young people.

Tony McDaid
Executive Director (Education Resources)

25 January 2021

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities.

Previous References

- ♦ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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