

# EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 2 May 2023

## Chair:

Councillor Lynsey Hamilton

## Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Mary Donnelly (*substitute for Councillor Alistair Fulton*), Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Elise Frame, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Gavin Keatt (Depute), Councillor Susan Kerr, Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Mo Razaq, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor David Watson

## Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor John Bradley, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray

## External Members Present:

Jennifer Gaffney, Dr Nagy Iskander

## External Members' Apologies:

Gillian Coulter, Christine Hall, Hilary Kirby, Joan Lennon, John Mulligan

## Attending:

### Education Resources

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

### Finance and Corporate Resources

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); M M Wilson, Legal Services Manager

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## 1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

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## 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Resources Committee held on 14 February 2023 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 2022/2023

A joint report dated 28 March 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted providing information on the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April 2022 to 24 February 2023 for Education Resources together with the forecast for the year to 31 March 2023.

At 24 February 2023, there was a breakeven position against phased budget, after approved transfers to reserves. Detailed variance explanations, together with information on virements proposed to realign budgets across budget categories and with other Resources, were provided in Appendix A of the report.

Following the Council's Probable Outturn exercise, the Resource had reported an estimated breakeven position, after approved transfers to reserves of £1.5 million, as detailed in Appendix A of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the forecast to 31 March 2023 of a breakeven position, after approved transfers to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted;
- (2) that a breakeven position as at 24 February 2023, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, after approved transfers to reserves, be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of 14 February 2023 (Paragraph 3)]*

*Councillors Frame and Lambie joined the meeting during consideration of the above item of business*

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#### **4 Education Resources - Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/2023**

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A joint report dated 12 April 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted:-

- ◆ advising of progress of the capital programme for Education Resources for the period 1 April 2022 to 24 February 2023
- ◆ providing a predicted outturn position for the year to 31 March 2023

A report to this Committee on 14 February 2023 showed that the Education Resources' capital programme for the financial year 2022/2023 amounted to £13.918 million, as detailed in Appendix A of the report. There had been no change to the budget since the last report to Committee. Current estimates suggested an outturn of £14.5 million. This represented a net overspend of £0.582 million.

Spend to 24 February 2023 amounted to £10.017 million, a position of £0.323 million ahead of profile, mainly reflecting the timing of payments on a number of projects.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Education Resources' capital programme of £13.918 million and expenditure to date of £10.017 million, be noted; and
- (2) that the projected outturn of £14.5 million be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 14 February 2023 (Paragraph 4)]*

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## **5 Education Resources – Workforce Monitoring – December 2022 to February 2023**

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A joint report dated 30 March 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period December 2022 to February 2023:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ disciplinary hearings, grievances and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ staffing watch as at 10 December 2022

Officers responded to a member's question on the report.

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 14 February 2023 (Paragraph 5)]*

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## **6 Education Resource Plan 2023/2024**

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A report dated 17 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Education Resource Plan 2023/2024.

Details were provided on the Resource Plan for 2023/2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, which outlined the:-

- ◆ key areas of focus for the year ahead
- ◆ Resource outcomes
- ◆ measures and actions
- ◆ resourcing of the Plan

Following approval at individual Resource Committees, the Resource Plans for 2023/2024 would be submitted, as a pack, to the meeting of the Executive Committee to be held on 21 June 2023 for noting.

The Resource had established a number of outcomes to support the delivery of the Council Plan, Connect, in 2023/2024. To support those outcomes, the Resource had developed performance measures in an action plan detailed in Section 4 of the Resource Plan. Key or strategic measures would be included in the Council Plan progress reports 2023/2024, with the remaining measures being monitored and reported at Resource level.

In line with the Council's performance management arrangements, a mid-year progress report on measures identified in the 2023/2024 Education Resource Plan and an end of year report respectively would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

Once approved, the Resource Plan would be made available on the Council's website.

Officers responded to a member's question on the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Resource Plan 2023/2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) that the Resource Plan 2023/2024 be uploaded to the Council's website;

- (3) that it be noted that, following Committee approval, all Resource Plans would be submitted to the Executive Committee on 21 June 2023 for noting; and
- (4) that it be noted that Progress Reports on the Resource Plan 2023/2024 would be submitted, at Quarter 2 and Quarter 4, to future meetings of this Committee.

*[Reference: Minutes of 6 September 2022 (Paragraph 9)]*

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## **7 Review of Admissions Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Establishments 2023**

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A report dated 6 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a review of the policy for the admission of children into Early Learning and Childcare establishments in South Lanarkshire.

Since 1996, the Council's Admissions Policy for Early Years' Establishments had been regularly reviewed to reflect changes in legislation and national policy development.

The last review of the Admissions Policy had been presented to the Education Resources Committee on 19 January 2021.

The Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 committed to delivering 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare per year to eligible children aged 2 to 5 years from August 2020. However, in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government revoked this legislation and the statutory duty was subsequently reinstated in August 2021. The Scottish Government had also advised of a plan to introduce legislation to expand full implementation of revised deferral eligibility in 2023.

The Council approved 'early access for 3 year olds' in March 2019 and this had been fully implemented since August 2019. Across the Council area, children could commence free early learning and childcare provision from the Monday following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Lead Locality Officers had responsibility for direct contact on any admissions enquiries as part of a strategy to support effective communications.

In March 2023, a consultation exercise was undertaken with a range of stakeholders on the current Admissions Policy. The main points which had emerged from the consultation process were outlined in the report and the proposed revised Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, had taken account of a number of those points. If approved, the admissions policy would be used for the allocation of all early learning and childcare places.

Details were provided on:-

- ◆ proposed priorities for allocation of additional hours
- ◆ options available in respect of delivering 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare
- ◆ deferred entry to primary school

In response to a member's question on nursery provision, officers undertook to investigate the matter further.

### **The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:**

- (1) that the priorities for admission to all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) establishments, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and

- (2) that the Admissions Policy and process for the allocation of places to all Early Learning and Childcare Establishments be implemented from August 2023.

*[References: Minutes of 19 January 2021 (Paragraph 7) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 10 February 2021 (Paragraph 9)]*

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## 8 Numeracy and Mathematics - Progress Update

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A report dated 4 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Strategy for improvement in Numeracy and Mathematics.

In 2019, the Scottish Government published its Thematic Review of Numeracy and Mathematics, 'Multiplying skills, adding value'. This review built on the findings of the Making Maths Count Report. The National Response to Improving Mathematics (NRIM) Partnership Board had been established with the aim of realising the ambitions of those 2 reports.

In terms of current performance in numeracy:-

- ◆ attainment by young people leaving South Lanarkshire schools was broadly in line with all comparators
- ◆ the attainment gap for school leavers had narrowed between 2017 and 2022
- ◆ achievement of S3 third level in numeracy in South Lanarkshire Council was 92% which was above the national average of 89.1%
- ◆ the combined attainment in numeracy (P1/4/7) for session 2021/2022 was 78%, an improvement of 1% on session 2020/2021

The Council's Strategy for improvement in Numeracy and Mathematics detailed the roll-out of a programme called Maths Recovery which prepared teachers to approach mathematics in a new way and emphasised:-

- ◆ ongoing assessment
- ◆ careful observation
- ◆ gauging students' current knowledge and strategies
- ◆ increasing students' knowledge, ability and self confidence in mathematics

There was evidence that schools which had embedded the pedagogy of Maths Recovery across all stages had seen the greatest improvements in attainment.

**The Committee decided:** that the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) Numeracy and Mathematics Progress Update 2022/2023 be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 February 2022 (Paragraph 12)]*

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## 9 Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service Literacy Improvement Plan 2022/2023

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A report dated 4 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) Literacy Improvement Strategy 2022/2023.

Literacy was a key priority both within the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework and within South Lanarkshire Council.

In terms of current performance in literacy:-

- ◆ attainment in literacy at levels 3 and 4 by young people leaving South Lanarkshire schools was at a consistently high level and broadly in line with the virtual comparator
- ◆ the literacy gap at S3 third level had widened to 9% in 2021/2022 from 8% in 2018/2019
- ◆ achievement of S3 fourth level in literacy in South Lanarkshire Council was, at 59%, above the national average
- ◆ the attainment of primary literacy levels at (P1/4/7) for session 2021/2022 was 71.3%, slightly above the national average of 70.5%
- ◆ the literacy attainment gap (P1/P4/P7) had reduced in 2021/2022 by 9.2%

The Strategy incorporated programmes and initiatives including the following, details of which were provided in the report:-

- ◆ talk for writing
- ◆ reading for pleasure
- ◆ active literacy
- ◆ Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)
- ◆ writing unwrapped
- ◆ foundational literacy in Primary 1
- ◆ tools for writing: early level-second level

Three secondary schools had been identified to receive targeted support to develop strategies to improve third and fourth level Curriculum for Excellence literacy. In those schools, third and fourth level predictions for 2022/2023 showed improvement.

Education Resources would continue to take forward its priority to raise standards in literacy and would also continue to provide support for schools to continue to raise attainment in literacy through the work of the CQIS.

**The Committee decided:** that the CQIS Literacy Improvement Plan 2022/2023 be noted.

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## **10 Pilot Hybrid Learning Programme 2023/2024**

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A report dated 4 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the pilot hybrid learning programme to widen access to Advanced Highers for session 2023/2024.

Currently, consortium arrangements were in place across the Council's secondary schools for learners who wished to study Advanced Highers which were not on offer in their own school. While those arrangements had been successful to date, attending another school had implications for:-

- ◆ learners' other subjects
- ◆ sustainability and the environmental impact of travel
- ◆ cost of travel
- ◆ accessibility for rural schools

Following the progression of the digital skills of staff as a result of the pandemic and the availability of appropriate technologies, a digital solution to widening access to learning had been developed. A pilot hybrid learning programme would be implemented in the school session 2023/2024 and would follow the existing principles and practices for Advanced Higher consortium arrangements. It would, however, enable learners to participate in lessons through remote access from their own school buildings and from home.

Each of the Council's 17 mainstream secondary schools would be provided with the necessary IT equipment to facilitate learning to be delivered from schools to learners in South Lanarkshire.

Details were given on the aims and expected outcomes of the hybrid learning programme. The range and type of courses and programmes offered were detailed in Appendix 1 of the report. Procurement and installation of the required equipment, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, was currently underway.

Officers responded to members' questions on the report.

**The Committee decided:** that the Education Resources' proposal to widen access to courses and learning via the pilot hybrid learning programme for 2023/2024 be noted.

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## 11 Youth Strategy 2022 to 2025

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A report dated 11 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the South Lanarkshire Youth Strategy 2022 to 2025.

The Youth Strategy for South Lanarkshire, covering the period 2022 to 2025, had been developed through consultation with young people across South Lanarkshire and highlighted key issue areas that young people had identified. The Strategy, which was attached as Appendix 1 to the report, provided direction and priorities for the work of the Youth Partnership and represented the conclusion of engagement with over 1,000 young people since 2019.

Details were given on the previous Youth Strategy Key Priorities, together with achievements in delivering those priorities.

Following a number of sessions convened by South Lanarkshire Youth Council members, discussion had led to a realignment of priorities and the creation of a new priority to properly reflect the challenges highlighted as important by young people in South Lanarkshire. Details were given on the updated priorities together with key issues associated with each priority.

Details were also given on:-

- ♦ the measures for monitoring and evaluating progress in implementing the Youth Strategy and in reporting progress
- ♦ opportunities to increase and widen engagement and strengthen the voice of all young people

Officers responded to a member's question on the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the overarching ambitions of the Youth Strategy 2022 to 2025 be noted;
- (2) that the key issues set out to secure improvement in the quality of life for the people of South Lanarkshire be noted;
- (3) that the governance arrangements for annual planning and reporting be noted;
- (4) that the alignment of the Strategy with the planned developments to increase and widen engagement and strengthen the voice of all young people be noted; and
- (5) that the continued commitment to communities by South Lanarkshire and its partners through the work of the Youth Partnership be noted.

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## 12 School Leaver Destinations 2021/2022

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A report dated 5 April 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the 2021/2022 School Leaver Initial Destination survey results produced by Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

The Council had invested significant resources from a variety of sources to provide a range of learning opportunities and support to assist young people in the senior phase to progress in their learning and achieve a positive leaver destination. This included targeted one to one employability support for school leavers through the Aspire and AspireWorks programmes and work based learning opportunities through GradU8 and Foundation Apprenticeship programmes.

The report highlighted that, in South Lanarkshire:-

- ◆ the positive destination rate was 96.2% compared to a national rate of 95.7%
- ◆ 3443 young people had left school in 2021/2022, an increase from 3312 in the previous year
- ◆ the unemployed (seeking) rate was 2.3%, which was in line with the national rate
- ◆ the unemployed (not seeking) rate was 1%, which was below the national rate of 1.5%
- ◆ South Lanarkshire had the 11<sup>th</sup> highest positive destination rate of the 32 local authorities

Details were given on:-

- ◆ leaver destinations
- ◆ positive destination rates by school
- ◆ positive destinations for young people residing in the most and least deprived data zones
- ◆ positive destinations for care experienced young people

In response to a member's question, officers undertook to provide further information on the destination gap in relation to care experienced young people and those residing in the most deprived data zones.

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2023 (Paragraph 11)]*

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## 13 Urgent Business

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There were no items of urgent business.

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## Chair's Closing Remarks

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The Chair referred to Tony McDaid's resignation from his post as Executive Director (Education Resources) with the Council, expressed regret at the loss of his expertise, thanked him for his service to the Council in various roles over the past 27 years and wished him all the very best in the future. Councillor Loudon, on behalf of the SNP Group, thanked him for his service and professionalism and extended good wishes to him in his future venture. Councillor Razzaq also recorded his thanks and best wishes for the future to Mr McDaid.

Mr McDaid responded in suitable terms.