

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 14 February 2023

Chair:

Councillor Gavin Keatt

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Mary Donnelly (*substitute for Councillor Geri Gray*), Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Elise Frame, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Susan Kerr (Depute), Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Julia Marrs (*substitute for Councillor John Bradley*), Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor David Watson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor John Bradley, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Bert Thomson

External Members Present:

Jennifer Gaffney, Christine Hall, Joan Lennon, John Mulligan

External Members' Apologies:

Gillian Coulter, Dr Nagy Iskander, Hilary Kirby

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

L Harvey, Finance Manager (Resources); M C Lunny, Legal Services Adviser; P MacRae, Administration Adviser; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; E McPake, Human Resources Business Partner; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy)

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 15 November 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Education Resources - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/2023

A joint report dated 11 January 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 29 December 2022 against budgeted expenditure for 2022/2023 for Education Resources and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2023.

As at 29 December 2022, there was a breakeven position against phased budget, after proposed transfer to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A of the report.

Following the Council's Probable Outturn exercise, the Resource had reported a breakeven position after proposed transfers to reserves of £1.500 million, approved as part of the overall Council position at the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 1 February 2023.

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

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the forecast to 31 March 2023 of a breakeven position, after proposed transfers to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted;
- (2) that a breakeven position as at 29 December 2022, as detailed in Appendix A, after proposed transfers to reserves, be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2022 (Paragraph 3) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 1 February 2023 (Paragraph 3)]

Councillors Donnelly and Johnston-Dempsey joined the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

4 Education Resources - Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/2023

A joint report dated 18 January 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 to 29 December 2022
- ◆ providing a predicted outturn position for the year to 31 March 2023

A report to this Committee on 15 November 2022 showed that the Education Resources' capital programme for the financial year 2022/2023 amounted to £13.918 million. This reflected the budget of £14.608 million reported at the previous meeting and adjusted to reflect changes, totalling a net decrease of £0.690 million, approved by the Executive Committee on 30 November 2022, as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

Current estimates suggested an outturn of £14.5 million. This represented a net overspend of £0.582 million.

Spend to 29 December 2022 amounted to £7.730 million, a position of £0.298 million behind 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 £7.730 million, be noted; and
- (2) that the projected outturn of £14.5 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2022 (Paragraph 4) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 November 2022 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Education Resources – Workforce Monitoring – September to November 2022

A joint report dated 11 January 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 September to November 2022:-

- ♦ 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 September 2022

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

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Education Resource Plan: Quarter 2 Progress Report 2022/2023

A report dated 18 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Education Resource Plan Quarter 2 Progress Report 2022/2023 for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

The Education Resource Plan 2022/2023 set out the objectives and actions to be managed and delivered by the Resource in the financial year 2022/2023. The Resource Plan measures were rated using a traffic light system of red, amber or green as well as blue (BRAG) which indicated that an action had been completed.

Details were provided on:-

- ♦ progress against all Resource Plan measures, as detailed in the Quarter 2 Progress Report 2022/2023, attached as Appendix 2 of the report
- ♦ key achievements made by the Resource in the period April to September 2022

No measures had been classified as red or categorised as "report later" or "contextual".

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Education Resource Plan Quarter 2 Progress Report 2022/2023, as summarised in paragraph 5.2 and attached as Appendix 2 of the report, be noted;

- (2) that the key achievements made by the Resource to date, as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report, be noted; and
- (3) that it be noted that no areas had been identified as requiring improvement or to be reported later.

[Reference: Minutes of 6 September 2022 (Paragraph 8)]

7 Attachment Strategy for Education Resources – Update Report

A joint report dated 18 January 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted on a proposal to extend the post of Attachment Development Officer within Education Resources from a 12 month to a 23 month secondment period.

On 9 November 2021, the Committee noted progress on the implementation of the Attachment Strategy for Education Resources and agreed that a post of Development Officer, to support the sustained and effective implementation of the Attachment Strategy, be established on a secondment basis for a period of 12 months. To ensure consistency of approach and sustainability following training, a range of initiatives had been introduced to support staff with implementation of the Strategy. Details of the initiatives were provided in the report.

Following a review of nurture practice and provision across South Lanarkshire, a new model of Attachment-Informed Practice was introduced to ensure consistency of approach, with the Attachment Strategy at the centre. An Attachment-Informed Steering group was established in August 2022 to support strategic direction and ensure consistency of practice. The Attachment-Informed Steering Group would continue to oversee and advise on next steps throughout the year.

In recognition of the staffing implications in implementing and co-ordinating the Attachment Strategy, it was proposed to extend the secondment of the Attachment Development Officer from the original 12 month period to a secondment period of up to 23 months. The cost of this proposal could be met from existing resources.

The Committee decided: that the post of Attachment Development Officer be extended from a 12 month secondment to a period of up to 23 months.

[Reference: Minutes of 9 November 2021 (Paragraph 7)]

Councillor Falconer joined the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

8 Scottish Government Consultation – Transfer of the Functions of Education Appeals Committees to the Scottish Tribunals

A joint report dated 24 January 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Scottish Government's consultation in relation to the transfer of the functions of education appeals committees to the Scottish Tribunals.

Education appeals committees were established under the Education (Scotland) 1980 Act. Schedule A1 of the 1980 Act made further provision to the effect that the membership of the appeals committee was to consist of both members of the authority and persons who were not members, including parents of children of school age or persons whom the authority considered to have experience in education or who were acquainted with the educational conditions in the area of the authority. In practice, appeals committees usually consisted of elected councillors and local persons with strong experience in the education sector, such as parents of children of school age.

The Tribunals (Scotland) Act 2014 created a 2-tier structure for devolved tribunals, collectively known as the Scottish Tribunals. The consultation on the Bill for the 2014 Act set out the Scottish Government's intention to create a structure to enable a range of tribunals to move under the umbrella of the Scottish Tribunals, if appropriate, following discussions with interested parties. Subsequently, the 2014 Act included education appeals committees in the list of tribunals whose functions would transfer.

The Scottish Government's proposal was to take forward the transfer of the jurisdiction of appeals committees to the Scottish Tribunals as provided for by the 2014 Act. If approved, this process would require secondary legislation governing the operation of appeals committees to be put in place. This process would be expected to take at least 18 to 24 months from the date a decision was made to progress the transfer.

The consultation on the proposal provided an opportunity for users of appeals committees and those involved in their delivery to provide up to date evidence on the operation of appeals committees and to give views on the future of the education appeals process in Scotland.

Appendix 1 of the report highlighted parts of the consultation presented by the Scottish Government for the proposal on transfer of the functions of education appeals committees to the Scottish Tribunals. The Council's response to the consultation questions was provided in Appendix 2 to the report. The deadline for responses was Monday 6 February 2023, however, as the Education Resources Committee meeting was scheduled to take place following the deadline, the response stated that the Council might wish to provide a supplementary response following consideration of the response by this Committee.

There followed a discussion during which:-

- ◆ officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report
- ◆ members indicated that the Council's response to the first consultation question, indicating that it did not agree that appeals committees should transfer to the Scottish Tribunals, should be augmented to include the reasons for this view

The Chair advised that this aspect of the response would be considered further by officers and that any amendments to the response detailed in Appendix 2 to the report would be circulated to members prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Scottish Government's consultation on the transfer of the functions of education appeals committees to the Scottish Tribunals, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and

- (2) that the Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the transfer of the functions of education appeals committees to the Scottish Tribunals, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report, subject to amendment, be approved and forwarded to the Scottish Government.

Councillor Falconer left the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11.03am for a 5 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 11.08am without the attendance of Councillor Cowie and Joan Lennon, External Representative

9 Achievement of Literacy and Numeracy Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2021/2022

A report dated 25 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy at stages P1, P4, P7 and S3 across all South Lanarkshire schools for the session 2021/2022.

On 13 December 2022, the Scottish Government published the Achievement of CfE Levels for 2021/2022 which were based on teacher professional judgements, as at June of each year. 2021/2022 was the first year in which a full data set had been collected for the four stages P1, P4, P7 and S3 since the COVID-19 pandemic began. An analysis was provided on the results for South Lanarkshire, together with a comparison of the national level for literacy and numeracy. The percentage of children who had achieved the expected CfE level relevant to their stage was reported. In all stages of literacy and numeracy, in 2021/2022, South Lanarkshire Council had performed above the national average.

Information on CfE levels and the expected levels by stage was provided in Appendix 1 to the report. The dataset also included information relating to the poverty related attainment gap between children from the most and least deprived backgrounds, in terms of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Appendix 2 to the report detailed information on SIMD and the attainment gap. The gap remained a challenge across the country, with none of the national data showing a gap which was less than pre pandemic levels. Within South Lanarkshire Council, while there were some measures where the attainment gap was less than in 2018/2019, nevertheless, this remained an area of focus for the Council's schools.

There followed a discussion during which officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy for 2021/2022 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 February 2019 (Paragraph 11)]

10 Supporting Women's Health in Schools and Educational Settings

A report dated 25 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on various approaches used within Education Resources in delivering menstruation supports in schools and the management of this approach in relation to women's health.

The Council was proactive in supporting Women's Health issues and had developed a Menopause Policy to provide educational information and useful links for employees to access further support. The Menopause Policy, which was being reviewed for communication across the Council, was applicable to all employees across all Council Services, including schools and educational establishments.

At its meeting on 28 September 2022, the Council approved a Motion to consider the necessity, feasibility, and implications of implementing a Menstruation Policy in the workplace.

The Council had introduced policies and procedures outlining the implementation of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 across the school estate and, in August 2022, had published a guidance document entitled 'Period Positive South Lanarkshire – Schools Guidance', attached as Appendix 1 to the report. One impact of this guidance was that, in all schools and educational settings, it was easy to collect period products at no cost as and when required.

As part of the de-stigmatisation procedures, schools and establishments ensured pupils were not negatively impacted by any absence due to menstruation. A member of staff, at each school, was responsible for period products and menstruation and they would take the lead on their school's procedures for absence due to menstruation and ensuring pupils affected could access work at home to keep up with their schoolwork.

Information and training on various aspects of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum was planned for teaching staff and delivered each term, improving and upskilling staff to develop confidence in delivery of sexual health topics. Feedback from participants involved was positive and liaison took place with several external providers to further support schools in their provision.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report and undertook to:-

- ◆ discuss with relevant colleagues, the provision of period products to the general public in certain areas where this was considered insufficient
- ◆ review the relevant documentation with a view to adding wording in relation to the discussion of the stigma of menstruation and the provision of relevant support

The Committee decided:

- (1) that it be noted that the Council's menopause policy and guidance review was applicable to employees across all Council Services, including schools, educational establishments and services; and
- (2) that it be noted that Education Resources had in place specific policies, procedures, and guidelines on engaging with children and young people on access to period products, de-stigmatisation and learning through Personal and Social Education (PSE).

[Reference: Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council of 28 September 2022 (Paragraph 6)]

11 Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025

A report dated 25 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the development of Education Resources' updated Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025.

The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 required local authorities to prepare and implement long-term strategies to improve access to education for pupils and prospective pupils with disabilities. Those strategies were also required to ensure that duties under the Equality Act 2010 were met. The Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025 would provide an overall purpose and direction for the work of all establishments and services in relation to inclusion and equality.

A consultation process had been undertaken, inviting views and comments on various aspects of the draft Strategy, and some minor amendments had been incorporated into the revised Strategy.

The finalised Strategy, attached as an appendix to the report, would be distributed to all services and establishments. Arrangements would also be made to publish the Strategy on the Council's website.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Education Resources' Accessibility Strategy 2022 to 2025, attached as an appendix to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the arrangements to publish the Accessibility Strategy on the Council's website be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 10 November 2015 (Paragraph 11)]

Christine Hall, External Member, left the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

12 Celebrating Success

A report dated 24 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a range of recent achievements and success of children and young people, together with staff in schools and services throughout South Lanarkshire.

Section 4 of the report highlighted a range of achievements which captured the essence of education in South Lanarkshire, which was to inspire learners, transform learning and strengthen communities.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

13 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 April to 30 September 2022

A report dated 12 October 2022 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Education Resources during the period 1 April to 30 September 2022. In terms of Standing Order Nos 21.8 and 22.5 of the Council's Standing Orders on Contracts, Resources were required to notify the relevant Committee of contracts awarded above the sum of £50,000.

Details of the contracts awarded by Education Resources were provided in the appendix to the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 8 February 2022 (Paragraph 17)]

14 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.