

CLYDE VALLEY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 13 September 2021

Convener:

Councillor Katy Loudon, South Lanarkshire Council

Councillors Present:

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| East Renfrewshire Council: | Colm Merrick |
| Inverclyde Council: | Martin Brennan |
| North Lanarkshire Council: | Angela Campbell |
| Renfrewshire Council: | Andy Steel |

Councillor's Apology:

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| Glasgow City Council: | Annette Christie |
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Attending:

Clerk's Office

Stuart McLeod, Administration Officer, South Lanarkshire Council

Treasurer's Office

Amanda Murray, Finance Adviser, South Lanarkshire Council

Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project

Gerry Farrell, Project Manager

Project Steering Group

Robert Gibb, North Lanarkshire Council

Christine MacKenzie, Renfrewshire Council

Also Attending:

Audit Scotland

S Ahmed, Auditor; Andrew Kerr, Senior Audit Manager

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee held on 14 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Audit Scotland – Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee – Proposed 2020/2021 Annual Audit Report

A letter dated 13 September 2021, together with the 2020/2021 Annual Audit Report (proposed) dated August 2021 for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee, was submitted by the Joint Committee's External Auditor, Audit Scotland.

The Senior Audit Manager and Auditor gave a verbal overview of the Annual Report to members for the year ended 31 March 2021, which included the following key messages:-

- ◆ an unqualified independent auditor's report had been issued for the 2020/2021 annual accounts
- ◆ that, through the continued support from member authorities, the Joint Committee's financial position was sustainable for the foreseeable future
- ◆ a review of reserves would be undertaken and reported to the Joint Committee in due course
- ◆ governance arrangements were effective in 2020/2021
- ◆ the Joint Committee's annual governance statement was consistent with the financial statements and complied with guidance

The Joint Committee decided: that Audit Scotland's proposed 2020/2021 Annual Audit Report for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee be noted.

4 Audited Annual Accounts 2020/2021

A report dated 19 August 2021 by the Treasurer to the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee was submitted on the:-

- ◆ Joint Committee's Annual Accounts for 2020/2021 which had received a clean audit certificate with no audit actions identified from the External Auditor, Audit Scotland
- ◆ requirement to approve the Annual Accounts for 2020/2021 for signing by the Convener and Treasurer

The Annual Accounts would be available on South Lanarkshire Council's website.

The Joint Committee decided:

- (1) that it be noted that the Annual Accounts for 2020/2021 had received a clean audit certificate with no audit actions identified; and
- (2) that the audited Annual Accounts for 2020/2021, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for signing by the Convener and Treasurer.

[Reference: Minutes of 14 June 2021 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project – Subsidy to Support the Extended Learning Management System (LMS) Contract

A report dated 19 August 2021 by the Chair of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group was submitted on a proposal to utilise Joint Committee funds to subsidise the implementation costs for the extension of the Brightwave Limited Learning Management System (LMS) contract.

At its meeting on 14 June 2021, the Joint Committee had noted that the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group (CVLDG) intended to enter into a non-contractual extension to the Brightwave Limited contract for the provision of an integrated e-learning service for a period of 24 months, effective from 1 August 2021.

In accepting the non-contractual extension, Brightwave Limited had offered member councils a choice between switching to a new technology platform, which offered a modern and more functionally sophisticated LMS, or staying with the older technology platform.

At the time of writing the report, 10 of the member councils had opted to take up the offer to move to the new technology platform (option 1) and 2 had opted to remain on the old technology (option 2), however, 1 of the latter member councils had indicated that it might change its decision and the Project Manager advised members that confirmation had since been received that 11 member councils had opted for the new technology.

Whilst option 1 provided greater functionality and potentially greater savings to member councils, through extending access to online learning to a wider range of council employees, there were one-off implementation costs associated with establishing the new technology. As those costs required to be funded at the outset, the costs in the first year were higher than for the second year of the non-contractual extension.

The member council that had chosen option 2 also faced increased costs in terms of its annual licence fee due to an increase in the costs of maintaining the older technology platform.

The Joint Committee had experienced small underspends over several years which the Joint Committee had agreed could be transferred to the balance sheet and held in a reserve to manage future project activities. In recognition of the additional implementation costs in the first year of the contract extension, it was proposed that the 11 member councils implementing the new technology platform be offered a subsidy of £2,000 and the member council that had opted to remain on the old platform be offered a subsidy of £1,000.

North Lanarkshire Council, which had been a full member council since the inception of the Joint Committee, already had an alternative LMS and it was further proposed that £2,150 be allocated to North Lanarkshire Council to meet the cost of 2 Articulate e-learning authoring software licences for a period of 1 year.

The total cost of the proposals was £25,150, of which £6,000 could be met from the 2021/2022 Joint Committee revenue budget. It was proposed that the balance of £19,150 be drawn down from the £30,451 of reserves carried forward on the balance sheet from previous years.

The Joint Committee decided:

- (1) that £23,000 of project funds be utilised to provide a one-off subsidy to member councils taking up the extension to the Learning Management System contract;
- (2) that £2,150 of project funds be provided to North Lanarkshire Council to meet the cost of 2 Articulate e-learning authoring software licences for a period of 1 year; and
- (3) that £19,150 of funds be drawn down from the carried forward reserves to assist in meeting the total costs of £25,150.

[Reference: Minutes of 14 June 2021 (Paragraph 6)]

6 Proposal to Live Stream Future Meetings

A report dated 20 August 2021 by the Clerk to the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee was submitted on the proposal to live stream future meetings of the Joint Committee.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Joint Committee meetings were currently being held virtually and, in the interests of openness and transparency, it was proposed that the non-restricted element of the Joint Committee's business be live streamed to facilitate public access to meetings. If members approved the proposal, it was also intended that the recordings of meetings would remain on South Lanarkshire Council's YouTube channel to be accessible for public viewing.

The Joint Committee decided: that future meetings of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee be live streamed to the South Lanarkshire Council YouTube channel.

7 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.