

Report

Report to:	Climate Change and Sustainability Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 February 2024
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Education Resources' Sustainability Report
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ update the committee on activities ongoing within Education Resources since the last report on 10 February 2021

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (1) that the contents of the report relating to the range of activities across Education Resources be noted; and
- (2) that the continued steps for further activity be noted.

3. Background

3.1. Within Education Resources, our establishments have always been involved in a 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 departments and external agencies to contribute towards the promotion of environmentally sustainable initiatives.

3.2. During 2021, a fixed term Primary Science and Sustainability Development Officer post was created in collaboration with Education Scotland. The purpose was to straddle services within the Resource to align work on sustainability initiatives and to build capacity within the school curriculum.

3.3. In 2022, a small number of staff across the Resource undertook corporate approved training to become 'climate literate'. The purpose of this training was to raise wider awareness, create opportunities for staff, children and young people to engage in projects, initiatives or class learning across the curriculum, with the intention of influencing a positive change of behaviours.

3.4. These officers, together with the key role performed by the Primary Science and Sustainability Development Officer, who also has a particular focus on curriculum and Learning for Sustainability, have created a group which meets regularly to consider and progress matters which would help fulfil these aims. In addition, these officers were primarily responsible for creating, and now facilitating and supporting the operation of the Youth Forum on Climate Change and Sustainability.

3.5. Following extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders, including the views of children and young people, in 2022/23, Education Resources committed to

a 5th key priority within its Resource plan, which was to “empower learners to shape and influence actions on climate change and sustainability”.

- 3.6. Below are areas of activity since the last time we reported to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee in February 2021.

4. Empowering young people to use their voice to influence others and shape decision-making

- 4.1. In 2021, a Youth Forum on Climate Change and Sustainability was established with representation from all 19 secondary schools including ASN. Chaired by the young people and supported by education officers, its purpose is to allow young people an arena to -
- ◆ discuss and exchange views on issues which matter to them
 - ◆ enhance the reach of their voice and opinions over time across a wider community partnership
 - ◆ influence change within the council in the way it discharges its responsibilities
 - ◆ influence the wider school community in learning more about climate change and affecting a positive change in behaviours
- 4.2. During COP26, which was held in Glasgow in November 2021, senior members of the youth forum created a news hub in partnership with Glasgow University. Based at the University the hub reported on live events and current affairs connected with the international event. Over the two weeks, a total of 132 articles were published on the Climate Emergency Newsroom (CEN) blog, including dozens of interviews with activists, scientists, and politicians. In total, these generated more than 20,000 views. The impact on social media was huge too, with more than one million views of CEN tweets. The work was acknowledged in a motion to the Scottish Parliament.
- 4.3. At the same time, around 10 schools were involved in ‘The Moment’, an opportunity for school pupils to meet MSPs to discuss matters of importance to them and ask direct questions of politicians prior to COP26. Motivated from such events, the youth forum decided they wanted to focus efforts on running a COP26 style event of their own aimed at children within our primary schools.
- 4.4. In October 2022 (following postponement due to threat of industrial action) the youth forum was supported in the planning and delivery of its own event named COS1 (Conference of Schools 1) for P5, P6 and P7 pupils across all primary schools. The event ran over 3 days, involving 400 pupils from 100 schools and was a great success. There were different speakers, presentations and activities around the theme of ‘TIERS’ (Transport, Influencing, Eating, 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and Shopping), also including bike rides and virtual reality headsets. The children were asked to commit to the suggested pledges from COS1 or go back to school and reinforce the pledges already in existence.
- 4.5. In November 2022, four youth forum representatives presented at the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee to provide an update on the workings of the youth forum, the COP26 newsroom and COS1 event.
- 4.6. This school year, the youth forum has renewed its commitment by increasing the frequency of meetings and has broadened out the initiatives it is either involved in or leading on. Networks and relationships have been formed, not only with education officers but Community and Enterprise officers, Community Planning Partnership officers and local elected members. Other examples of areas of work include:-

- ♦ September 2023 – youth forum members received training in ‘Teach the Teacher’, an initiative that builds confidence in young people to lead a session with teachers where they present information on climate change and then discuss what young people wish to learn about and how teachers can incorporate that into the curriculum within their classes. Two secondary schools have participated in this so far during in-service days and we plan to promote this initiative again by supporting the young people to request staff time during in-service days.
- ♦ October 2023 - working with education staff and facilities staff, a secondary school recycling pilot has started in Trinity High and Larkhall Academy. Contamination is an issue and work continues within the pilot.
- ♦ October 2023 - a Climate and Nature Development Session was held by the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Led by members of the Youth Council and the youth forum, they presented the issues facing young people locally and nationally including Reducing, Reusing and Recycling, Transport, Education and Social Media. Over time, the expected outcome of the workshop is for the CPP Board to have a clearer understanding of the impact young people are making and how best to embed their presence in the planning and delivery of actions, and of evaluating the impact of such actions to affect climate change and nature loss together. Following this event, pupils from Lanark Grammar School went on to present at the wider Council led session on Climate and Nature Loss, attended by various community partners.
- ♦ November 2023 - Chair of the Council’s Climate Change and Sustainability Committee delivered a video message and depute chair attended a youth forum meeting in person.
- ♦ January 2024 - Launch of the youth forum designed programme “Save our World”, accessed via the JUMP app as part of a 6-month pilot across 4 secondary schools. The aim is to encourage pupils and staff to take part in sustainable actions, rewarding pupils through vouchers as well as a chance to make a charitable donation. Pupils will be rewarded for choosing low-carbon meals and methods of travel, as well as recycling and shopping second-hand.
- ♦ February 2024 – hosting a second conference of schools’ event, COS2. This time the young people are working on delivering an event aimed at S1 to S3 pupils across all secondary schools. Invitations are out and plans for the whole day event over 2 days will provide opportunities for interaction and activities around a number of themes under the banner:

A-RESET (Attire, 3Rs, Eating, Shopping, Energy, Transport)



5. Other Work within Education Resources

- 5.1. As a result of COS1, of those primary schools who attended, one third reported they took the pledges set and activities run from the event back to school. Of those who did not use the COS1 pledges, 62% did use the activities from the event as learning projects back in school.
- 5.2. A monthly STEM newsletter and the use of a padlet board allows for the sharing of information on training opportunities, the accessing of useful and often free classroom/project resources and the exchange of good practice on initiatives being undertaken across schools or within the wider community.

5.3. An acknowledgement of some of the range of projects undertaken over the last year or so include:

- ◆ In November 2022, a climate change and sustainability session was delivered to all Head Teachers and Heads of Establishments. This was based on the climate literacy training, the aim being to provide some factual information and hard-hitting messages about the climate emergency the world is facing. It also provided some hope by way of national progress on targets and examples of works the council has already completed or is working towards. The session asked Heads and their staff to consider their part both as employees of the council and educators of children and young people
- ◆ Every school completes an annual school improvement plan. For August 2023, schools were asked to consider the 5th key priority to “empower learners to shape and influence actions on climate change and sustainability” and to incorporate aspects into their strategic planning
- ◆ Keep Scotland Beautiful – 70 primary schools involved in Climate Ready Classrooms teaching upper primary school age pupils about climate change through an accredited course
- ◆ Keep Scotland Beautiful – 54 South Lanarkshire education establishments hold green flag status
- ◆ School Eco Committees - Even without green flag status, 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
- ◆ West Partnership – 37 schools have taken part in live lessons
- ◆ FOLA award - a new ‘Forest Outdoor Learning Award’, achieved by Holy Cross High School pupils gaining knowledge of working in woodlands
- ◆ Global Goals Project with Advanced Clothing Solutions (ACS) and Education Scotland - 5 schools were selected for this project
- ◆ John Muir Awards - 9 schools involved
- ◆ Within the Early Years and Childcare Service, a Biodiversity and Sustainability Event for all early years practitioners was held in November 2023. This provided ideas to support early years establishments when engaging with our youngest learners and included showcasing specific examples of good practice across 4 establishments

5.4. In terms of opportunities to participate in projects in partnership with other colleagues:

- ◆ Beat the Street - Projects have taken place repeatedly in the air quality management areas within South Lanarkshire. Schools within these areas fully participate in this initiative which sees the surrounding streets transformed into a giant game. The aim of the game is 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 is 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
- ◆ Tree Planting/Gardens - Schools are routinely involved in tree planning both inside school grounds and as part of wider community projects. Last year 60 schools applied to the Tree Council for free orchard trees and hedgerows, and the offer is also available this school year. Trees were also planted in honour of the Queen’s Canopy programme and 200 trees are planned for planting at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, donated from RM, the schools’ ICT contractor.

Schools have also been involved in the design, fund raising and creation of several gardens on site

- ♦ Primary School Food Waste Pilot - Around 60 primary schools have taken part in a project to record and influence the level of food waste in schools. Over time this may naturally lead to a change in eating habits and disposal of food waste to appropriate bins. Composting options require further research for smaller schools who do not generate enough waste for uplift

6. Continued Commitment towards Learning for Sustainability

- 6.1. As we move forward, we will continue to re-invigorate our plans to commit to increasing awareness through learning for sustainability and introducing initiatives that have the potential to actively bring about behavioural change.
- 6.2. At a recent Head Teacher event in January 2024, the Executive Director of Education Resources produced an 'ask' of all primary school teachers that each should select a class topic which must link to the climate change and sustainability agenda.
- 6.3. Also discussed with Head Teachers was the document "Target 2030" - A movement for people, planet and prosperity. This is Scotland's Learning for Sustainability renewed Action Plan which was officially launched in December 2023. The plan has 5 main goals:-
 1. All learners should have an entitlement to learning for sustainability.
 2. In line with the new GTC Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate learning for sustainability in their practice.
 3. Every setting should have a whole setting approach to learning for sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated, and supported by leadership at all levels.
 4. All school buildings, grounds and policies should support learning for sustainability.
 5. A strategic national approach to supporting learning for sustainability should be established.
- 6.4. The background to this strengthened plan is that Scotland is now recognised as a leading nation in the way it has promoted a whole setting, school and community approach to Learning for Sustainability, and its ambition to embed Learning for Sustainability as an entitlement within our curriculum for all learners.
- 6.5. Learning for Sustainability seeks to support learners to make informed decisions about their education, fostering their development and empowerment. In the refreshed Action Plan, the significant theme of Learner Voice, Choice, and Action is underscored, emphasising the essential connection between rights and Learning for Sustainability.
- 6.6. As a result of all of the above, renewed focus on Learning for Sustainability is now being taken forward by central officers and will form part of the suite of materials available to schools to support curriculum planning and development across all areas, including sustainability. Education Resources is holding a curriculum conference in April 2024 and Learning for Sustainability is planned to be featured.
- 6.7. We are calling on education establishments to renew and increase their commitment to Learning for Sustainability, and aspire to create our own network of teachers, who are willing to support fellow teachers in delivering Learning for Sustainability. This

could possibly also consist of one or two teachers per learning community and will be progressed as a next step.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. As described in paragraph 3.2, a fixed term Primary Science and Sustainability Development Officer post was created in collaboration with Education Scotland. The purpose was to straddle services within the Resource to align work on sustainability initiatives and to build capacity within the school curriculum.
- 7.2. The post has been instrumental in delivering on our progress to date and is scheduled to end in June 2024 when funding ceases.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The funding for the fixed term Primary Science and Sustainability Development Officer post will end in June 2024, however funding has been identified to allow the post to continue until March 2025.
- 8.2. Other support comes via the giving of time from existing officers within Education Resources, other council departments and school staff.
- 8.3. £50,000 was allocated from the council's Climate Emergency Fund to support the Youth Forum (YF) and considered initiatives. This funding has been used to support the administration of the YF meetings, the newsroom hub (CEN-climate emergency newsroom) during COP26, COS1 and the forthcoming COS2 events, the secondary school waste recycling pilot, primary school food waste project, and the JUMP App recently launched and being piloted in four secondary schools.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. It is envisaged that our continued commitment to bring about increased awareness and learning for sustainability, and a sense of enhanced collective responsibility will ultimately result in a change in behaviours to assist with the climate emergency.

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. There are no other risks or implications as a result of this report.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy, or recommend a change to an existing policy and therefore no impact assessment or consultation arrangements are required.

Carole McKenzie
Executive Director (Education Resources)

8 February 2024

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

Priorities

- ♦ We will work towards a sustainable future in sustainable places.

Outcomes

- ♦ Inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships.

Previous References

- ◆ Climate Change and Sustainability Committee – 10 February 2021

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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