

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 5 December 2023

Chair:

Councillor Lynsey Hamilton

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Maureen Devlin (*substitute for Councillor Margaret Cowie*), Councillor Mary Donnelly (*substitute for Councillor Mark Horsham*), Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, 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 Razzaq, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Bert Thomson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Elise Frame, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor David Watson

External Members Present:

Naomi Baxter, Jennifer Gaffney, John Mulligan

External Members' Apologies:

Gillian Coulter, Christine Hall, Joan Lennon

Attending:

Education Resources

C McKenzie, Executive Director; D Dickson, Operations Manager; A Donaldson, Head of Education (Inclusion); D Hinshelwood, Support Services Manager; S Nicolson, Head of Education (Senior Phase)

Finance and Corporate Resources

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 Manager

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 26 September 2023 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 2023/2024

A joint report dated 27 October 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted on the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April to 6 October 2023 for Education Resources.

As at 6 October 2023, there was a breakeven position against phased budget. However, areas of financial risk had been identified in respect of Education Resources' budget as follows:-

- ◆ cost of transport
- ◆ Scottish Government funding in respect of the maintenance of teacher numbers

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breakeven position on Education Resources' revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

4 Education Resources – Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/2024

A joint report dated 16 November 2023 by the Executive Directors (Finance and Corporate Resources) and (Education Resources) was submitted providing information on the progress of the capital programme for Education Resources for the period 1 April to 6 October 2023.

The 2023/2024 capital programme for Education Resources amounted to £19.333 million. There had been no change to the budget since the last report to Committee. The financial position for Education Resources was outlined in Appendix A of the report.

Anticipated spend to date was £7.718 million and spend to 6 October 2023 amounted to £7.674 million, resulting in spend being behind programme by £0.044 million. This related, in the main, to the new Wooddean Early Learning Centre, Bothwell.

The Committee decided: that the Education Resources' capital programme of £19.333 million, and expenditure to date of £7.674 million, be noted.

5 Education Resources – Workforce Monitoring – August and September 2023

A joint report dated 26 October 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 August and September 2023:-

- ◆ attendance statistics
- ◆ occupational health statistics
- ◆ accident/incident statistics
- ◆ discipline, grievance and Dignity at Work cases
- ◆ analysis of leavers and exit interviews
- ◆ staffing watch as at 9 September 2023

Officers responded to members' questions on:-

- ◆ accident/incident statistics, specifically incidents of a violent nature
- ◆ provision of staffing watch figures on a "year on year" basis

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 26 September 2023 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Provision of LGBT+ Inclusive Education in South Lanarkshire Schools

A report dated 14 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted:-

- ◆ informing members of the detail of the provision of LGBT+ Inclusive Education in South Lanarkshire schools
- ◆ seeking support for the next steps proposed to ensure LGBT+ Inclusive Education was embedded across schools in South Lanarkshire

Education in South Lanarkshire was based on an inclusive ethos which ensured that all learners experienced learning environments where diversity was valued, where all learners were treated fairly, had equality of opportunity and experienced a sense of belonging. A range of legislative and policy frameworks supported the equality and diversity agenda in relation to LGBT+ issues across education contexts. Overall, the current equalities legislation in Scotland addressed the inclusion of LGBT+ individuals in the education system by providing legal protection against discrimination, prompting inclusive policies and procedures and offering guidance for schools to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for all learners.

Details were given on the provisions of the following:-

- ◆ The Equality Act 2010
- ◆ The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- ◆ The Equally Safe Strategy
- ◆ Supporting Transgender Young People: Guidance for Schools in Scotland

Details were also given on national developments in advancing LGBT+ Inclusive Education in all schools, together with a wide range of local developments. Those included:-

- ◆ training delivered by the charity, Time for Inclusive Education (TIE), on behalf of the Scottish Government, to support school staff in delivering an LGBT+ Inclusive curriculum
- ◆ the establishment of a working group with membership from Education Resources which would include representation from schools, the Educational Psychology Service and the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service to examine the actions to be taken to further support schools to embed LGBT+ Inclusive Education in their practice. The working group would consider a broad range of issues arising from the showcase event presented by TIE, including consultation with pupils, parents and carers

Through promotion and provision of continuous professional development opportunities which focussed on equity, equality and diversity, the Council would continue to develop education environments where difference was celebrated and staff were well-equipped to make this a proactive part of the curriculum.

There followed a full discussion during which officers:-

- ◆ responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report
- ◆ gave assurances on the provision of updates to the Committee on work in relation to equalities and protected characteristics

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the range of activities in place to support the delivery of LGBT+ Inclusive Education across South Lanarkshire schools be noted; and
- (2) that the action proposed to further embed LGBT+ Inclusive Education across South Lanarkshire schools be approved.

In terms of Standing Order No 14, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 11.00am for a 5 minute period. The meeting reconvened at 11.05am without the attendance of Councillors Logan and Razzaq

7 Primary Raising Attainment and Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) Data

A report dated 18 October 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an:-

- ◆ overview on the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service's (CQIS) updated Raising Attainment strategy for primary schools
- ◆ update on the provisional Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels for South Lanarkshire Council for 2022/2023

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) data published for session 2021/2022 evidenced a national attainment dip at Primary 4 (P4) in both literacy and numeracy. Nationally, attainment in writing remained the lowest of all literacy and numeracy organisers for P1, P4 and P7. The Council's data mirrored the national position and, taking account of this, there was a need to refresh the attainment strategy for primary schools with a view to further upskilling them to collect and manage robust data and enable a continued, collective effort to improve outcomes and raise attainment.

Details were given on initiatives in place to raise attainment in South Lanarkshire schools during the 2022/2023 session including:-

- ◆ improvement projects such as Maths Recovery, Nuffield Early Language Intervention, Talk 4 Writing, Foundations of Literacy in Primary 1 Programme (FLIPP) and Play Pedagogy
- ◆ developing pedagogy to advance the robustness of data and teacher professional judgement (TPJ)
- ◆ teacher participation in the Improving Our Classrooms professional learning programme, focusing on the use of data and targeted interventions
- ◆ provision of additional staffing, as part of COVID-19 recovery, which enabled schools to provide targeted support to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy as well as supporting health and wellbeing

The refreshed strategy renewed the Council's commitment to achieving the highest outcomes for all as well as taking account of the national picture and current thinking.

Additionally, it was proposed to:-

- ◆ develop capacity and skill in all schools and, as such, a Lead Officer with a specific remit for raising attainment across the primary sector had been appointed
- ◆ build on the existing use of SEEMIS, Focus, Headteacher Data Portal, the BGE Tracking and Monitoring Tool and the new Standards and Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP) to promote a consistent approach to data interrogation at all levels
- ◆ ask schools to track progress towards achievement of a level for all learners in P1/P4/P7 3 times per year through SEEMIS Progress and Achievement

- ♦ use data collection and analysis to inform improved dialogue around excellence and equity at school and local authority level

Raising attainment required a focus on both excellence and equity and data would be interrogated to increase the pace of change in closing the poverty related attainment gap. Provisional data for Primary Literacy and Numeracy demonstrated that the attainment gap had, between 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, improved by 2.1% and 1% points respectively but was not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. It was anticipated that the gap would continue to close in session 2023/2024.

The data for Curriculum for Excellence level of achievement in South Lanarkshire showed continued recovery from the pandemic, with positive progress being made across all indicators and school stages. Education Resources would maintain support for schools to allow them to continue to raise attainment.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the plan outlined for raising attainment be noted; and
- (2) that the internal achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for 2022/2023, based on teacher professional judgement, be noted.

8 Secondary Raising Attainment Strategy

A report dated 20 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing:-

- ♦ an overview of the secondary school raising attainment strategy
- ♦ a high-level overview of September 2023 Senior Phase attainment

Raising attainment was an ongoing priority for Education Resources with a number of initiatives in place to support secondary schools. The following 6 key areas supported raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap:-

- ♦ high quality learning, teaching and assessment
- ♦ learner pathways and wide range of accreditation opportunities, qualifications and courses
- ♦ curriculum design and offer
- ♦ performance improvement
- ♦ leadership
- ♦ professional development and career long professional learning

Details were given on initiatives to support those identified key areas.

Schools would continue to be supported to pursue excellence and equality through interventions offered at local authority level through existing Strategic Equity Fund projects continuing from session 2022/2023. Education Resources and schools would continue to focus on and interrogate data to increase the pace of change in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

3 local benchmarking measures which related to secondary school attainment were:-

- ♦ improving attainment in literacy and numeracy
- ♦ improving attainment for all
- ♦ tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers

Information on the performance of stage based cohorts, S4, S5 and S6, at September 2023, was provided in the report and in appendices 2, 3 and 4 to the report respectively.

Areas of key strength included:-

- ◆ schools increasingly adding value as young people progressed through the Senior Phase
- ◆ increased focus on data for improvement resulting in more robust school and local authority level improvement planning
- ◆ closing of the attainment gap in almost all measures
- ◆ significant improvement in outcomes for Q1 learners in most areas
- ◆ reduced impact of COVID-19 on Q1 learners in South Lanarkshire compared to other areas in Scotland

Areas for ongoing consideration included:-

- ◆ focus in all schools on reduction in numbers of young people leaving school after S4 and in Christmas of S5
- ◆ increasing the range of qualifications on offer to young people outwith the core National Qualifications
- ◆ enhanced mentoring work to support young people in making more informed decisions around course and career choices

The poverty related attainment gap remained a challenge across Scotland, however, early indications suggested that the Council's data compared favourably to national data. Education Resources would maintain support for schools to allow them to continue to raise attainment.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the overview of the secondary school raising attainment strategy be noted; and
- (2) that the high-level overview of September 2023 Senior Phase attainment be noted.

9 Summer Holiday Provision 2023 - Update

A report dated 14 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the successful delivery of the Council's provision during summer 2023 for children, young people and their families.

The Scottish Government announced in June 2023 that funding of £4 million, a reduction from the previous allocation of £10 million, would be distributed to local authorities to target provision of a summer 2023 holiday programme offering co-ordinated access to activities, childcare and food for children aged 5 to 14 years from low income families. This funding was added to existing Council funding and enabled continuation, on a reduced basis, of the Council's 'Sensational Summer Sessions' provision.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ target groups for inclusion in the programme
- ◆ voluntary sector partners actively engaged in delivering the programme
- ◆ the range of activities on offer
- ◆ resources and equipment available

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the breadth and scale of delivery through the 2023 funded summer programme be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that the Council had delivered this programme with the support of a variety of Third Sector Partners and organisations.

10 Pathfinders Initiative Care Experienced Children and Children on the Edges of Care

A report dated 14 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the ongoing work of the Pathfinders Initiative to support care experienced young people and children on the edge of care.

The Pathfinders pilot project was established in the Cambuslang and Rutherglen locality in April 2019 and aimed to deliver support, across 52 weeks, targeting critical periods where disengagement from school could become a significant issue for certain children and their families. Support was provided holistically across the settings of school, community and home. The project had since been extended and, currently, Pathfinders were deployed in 7 schools within South Lanarkshire, funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF), Pupil Equity Funding and Learning Recovery monies.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ engagement with young people and their families
- ◆ support offered
- ◆ impacts and benefits recorded

Support through individual and group support, home visits and parental engagement were key elements of the role. Pathfinder staff were well connected to key partners in the wider community to ensure appropriate referrals into and out of the provision and those were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

A 4-year research report was commissioned by Education Resources and Social Work Resources and findings were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report. The focus of the research was Youth, Family and Community Learning (YFCL) Pathfinder Initiative and the work with young people, families, schools and partners. Details of the key findings of the research were outlined in the report.

Since November 2021, the Pathfinder team had:-

- ◆ participated in a collaborative enquiry in relation to youth work's contribution to reducing the attainment gap
- ◆ hosted a visit from representatives of Northern Ireland Youth Services and Education team
- ◆ contributed positively to the Stonelaw High School HMIE inspection
- ◆ distributed £40,500 of Whole Family Wellbeing funding directly to families who were experiencing hardship
- ◆ successfully secured £92,300 from UNCRC Innovation fund to develop a youth led consultation process that would support the further development of youth voice in relation to developing appropriate interventions and support

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the content of the Longitudinal Research report, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be noted;

- (2) that the research findings showing the impact and benefit of the Pathfinder Initiative, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the ongoing development of the Initiative be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 31 August 2021 (Paragraph 9)]

11 Update of the Education Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control Plan

A report dated 17 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Education Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control actions.

Education Resources had followed Council guidance in developing, monitoring and updating its Risk Control Register on an ongoing basis. The Register had been developed to ensure that the Resource:-

- ♦ was fully aware of the top risks
- ♦ was able to prioritise those risks
- ♦ had controls in place to eliminate or minimise the impact of the risk

The risks were scored in accordance with the Council's scoring mechanism based on likelihood and impact of risk. This resulted in risks being scored between 1 to 25 (low to very high). Risks were scored on their inherent risk (risk if nothing was done) and their residual risk (risk after applying controls). The Risk Register for the Resource had been developed and was monitored on an ongoing basis by the Resource Risk Management Group to add new risks and to review the score of existing risks. The main changes to the Risk Register were summarised in the report.

Information on the risk scoring matrix together with definitions for likelihood and impact was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Details of all risks which had scored very high and high were provided in Appendix 2 to the report. Risks evaluated as being medium or low risk would be monitored to ensure that they continued to be adequately managed.

Appendix 3 to the report provided a comparison of risk scores for 2022 and 2023 and detailed changes in risk descriptions.

Outstanding actions to mitigate risks within the Risk Control Plan would be progressed by the relevant officers.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the contents of the Resource Risk Register be noted; and
- (2) that it be noted that the outstanding Risk Control Actions would be progressed by relevant officers.

[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2022 (Paragraph 14)]

12 Education Resources - Notification of Contracts Awarded 1 April to 30 September 2023

A report dated 6 November 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Education Resources during the period 1 April to 30 September 2023. 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.

13 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.