

Report

Report to:	Education Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 March 2024
Report by:	Executive Director (Education Resources)

Subject:	Scottish Youth Parliament Elections 2023
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to: -

- ◆ provide an update on the outcome of the South Lanarkshire Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) elections 2023

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Education Resources Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s): -

- (1) that the commitment and contribution of South Lanarkshire Youth Council (SLYC) to the youth agenda be noted;
- (2) that the continued contribution and participation in local planning issues be noted;
- (3) that the success of the outgoing Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament be recognised; and
- (4) that the successful candidates, as highlighted in paragraph 4.9, be welcomed to their positions serving their communities for their 2-year term.

3. Background

3.1. Members of South Lanarkshire Youth Council and Youth, Family and Community Learning staff, in partnership with secondary schools, colleges, universities, and local youth groups, organised and delivered council wide elections to democratically elect nine South Lanarkshire members of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

3.2. Attached as Appendix 1 is the election process that was undertaken to promote and elect to the nine positions.

4. Scottish Youth Parliament Elections 2023

4.1. The elections opened on 6 November 2023 and concluded on 19 November 2023.

4.2. During this time, young people from across South Lanarkshire were encouraged to participate in a paper ballot election process to elect nine MSYPs from a total of 19 candidates.

4.3. Establishments were offered support from staff to discuss how to effectively engage young people in the process of voting and how to create that process within their establishment.

- 4.4. For those young people who were out of the school age range or were not attending mainstream school for specific reasons, the opportunity to vote was presented by visiting their local Universal Connections facility.
- 4.5. The elections for 2021 saw approximately 8,000 votes cast, with the elections for 2019 seeing 7,700 votes cast. The elections for 2023 saw approximately 7,500 votes cast, however, there was no contest for the Rutherglen Constituency which previously returned over 2,000 votes. Taking account of this, an estimated turnout of over 9,500 voters could have been expected, demonstrating a continued increase in voter turnout each election.
- 4.6. Nationally, the voting process was delayed due to an issue with the online voting system. This issue is still affecting some local authorities with some elections expected to conclude as late as March 2024.
- 4.7. Volunteers from St Andrew's and St Bride's High School were supported by staff to conduct the official count that was expertly run under the diligence of South Lanarkshire Council's Electoral Office. The whole process was conducted in 3 hours which included several recounts.
- 4.8. Attached as Appendix 2 is a breakdown of the voting figures for each ward and below is the outcome of the election:
- 4.9. For the Clydesdale Constituency, the following candidates were duly elected:-

- ◆ Joseph MacMillan Seed
- ◆ Louise Smith

For the Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse Constituency, the following candidates were duly elected:-

- ◆ Namatai Chakona
- ◆ Peter Durkin

For the East Kilbride Constituency, the following candidates were duly elected:-

- ◆ Connor MacLeod
- ◆ Nandika Sunny

For the Uddingston and Bellshill Constituency, the following candidate was duly elected:-

- ◆ Olivia Simpson

For the Rutherglen Constituency, the following candidates were duly elected:-

- ◆ Marianna Medina
- ◆ Ava Hamilton

- 4.10. None of the 9 MSYP elects has been an MSYP previously. They will officially take office at the first sitting at the end of March 2024. Crisantos Bonaba Ike will continue in his position, as he is the Convenor of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, until the AGM in March 2024.

- 4.11. The Scottish Youth Parliament support team in South Lanarkshire is grateful to the outgoing MSYPs for the dedication, passion, and hard work they have put in to representing their constituencies.
- 4.12. Over their 2 years between 2021 and 2023, MSYPs led and participated in several initiatives to progress the youth agenda in South Lanarkshire and add weight to the voices of their peers. This included:
- ◆ Let's Connect – Young People's Mental Health Conference February 2023. Taking a lead role in supporting Educational Psychological Service in the planning of the event, SYP members compered and spoke at the event which had inputs from schools, Stigma Free Lanarkshire, Soundsational (connecting through music), and a theatrical piece written and performed for the conference by the junior cast of Regen:FX Youth Trust's 'The Street'
 - ◆ Launch of South Lanarkshire Youth Strategy 2022 to 2025, recognising the efforts of young people and partners, particularly during COVID lockdown, in ensuring services reached young people and that young people were able to explore and set the priorities for partners for 2022 to 2025. SYP and SLYC members presented the Strategy to their peers and partners demonstrating their own time invested in continuing to develop the Strategy online throughout COVID, to ensure that the youth agenda remained public and present during the challenges to services and communities
 - ◆ Presenting to the Education Management Team, SYP members promoted the importance of continued dialogue, in particular, direct dialogue, with young people to understand and progress the challenges and issues that they experience, growing up in South Lanarkshire
 - ◆ Participation in the Anti-racism in Education Reform Subgroup – Crisantos Bonaba attended this national group on behalf of the Scottish Youth Parliament to review curriculum and develop anti-racist resources to support education in schools across Scotland
 - ◆ Attendance at the South Lanarkshire Partnership Board development session on Climate and Nature Loss, October 2023. Along with members of the South Lanarkshire Youth Forum on Climate Change and Sustainability, Bethany Ivison joined the Youth Forum team to highlight sustainability issues with a focus on fashion
- 4.13. MSYP elects took position on 1 February 2024 and are starting their training with the Scottish Youth Parliament to prepare them in their role prior to the March 2024 sitting. This process begins with an online module entitled "SYP Getting Started". This module provides a link to complete the SYP's Skills Builder and gives additional background information they need about SYP.
- 4.14. In addition to this, support staff in South Lanarkshire will be working with MSYP elects to impart knowledge and experience as well as help them develop their personal and social skills to maximise their time and effort as an MSYP. Several unsuccessful candidates have continued engagement within South Lanarkshire Youth Council.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. There are no negative implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained within this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. There are no implications for risk in terms of the information contained in this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. There are no Equality Impact Assessment or consultation arrangement implications associated with this report.
- 9.2. Consultation continues to be carried out with appropriate stakeholders including young people, youth councillors, Scottish Youth Parliament, Youth Learning Services staff and partners.

Carol McKenzie

Executive Director (Education Resources)

7 February 2024

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Education and learning: inspiring learners, transforming learning, strengthening partnerships

Previous References

- ◆ None

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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SYP 2023 elections process

- Every 2 years in November, South Lanarkshire hosts council wide elections for young people aged 12-25 to elect 9 young people to represent them at the Scottish Youth Parliament.
- From July, candidate registration opens online for young people aged 14-25 to stand.
- Candidates are required to complete an online registration and will be automatically sent a confirmation e mail and contact details of the local election co-ordinator.
- The registration process requires candidates to complete a simple online module to ensure they are aware of what the SYP does and the roles and responsibilities of elected MSYPs prior to their registration being accepted.
- From registration opening date, promotion begins. Online posts using appropriate social media sites are uploaded and preparation for visits to schools, youth groups etc., are planned. During this time promotional visits are organised to summer youth groups
- During the new term school visits begin. Promotion includes presentations to school assemblies and classes, break time and lunchtime information stalls and where possible, video presentations for the school TV network.
- Evening visits to identified youth groups throughout South Lanarkshire are arranged to ensure as many young people are informed of this opportunity as possible.
- During these promotional visits, school management and youth group staff are informed the details of the voting process due to take place in March.
- Deadline date for end of registration is flexible but is usually in November. After this date candidates can be registered at our discretion.
- Candidates are then supported to produce a manifesto to help with their campaign for election.
- From the beginning of campaigning until the election voting takes place candidates are grouped into their constituencies and campaign visits are arranged to local schools, colleges and youth groups. These visits are arranged and supported by Youth, Family and Community Learning Service staff.
- Throughout this time discussions are ongoing with partners to arrange the voting process.
- The voting process involves partnership work with South Lanarkshire's election staff to arrange for ballot boxes and polling station resources to be loaned to our service to set up polling stations. Arrangements for South Lanarkshire's printing services are made to print ballot papers for all polling stations, up to 25000 ballot papers can be required.
- Throughout late October the polling station resources, and ballot papers are delivered throughout South Lanarkshire.
- Each polling station is run by local staff in schools, youth facilities and community centres and supported by SLYC members and Youth, Family and Community Learning staff. This requires detailed discussions with partners to identify appropriate people. We encourage young people not involved in the election process to volunteer to help this process and previous years have shown that this encouraged more young people to vote as well as offering a learning opportunity for the volunteers, whose volunteering is recognised and rewarded through Saltire volunteering awards.
- After voting has closed, usually mid-November, the count has to be organised and all ballot boxes are collected and delivered to the count venue.
- The count takes place in East Kilbride Universal Connections games hall, as its large enough to accommodate counting staff and resources.

- The count is organised by South Lanarkshire elections staff and up to 30 young volunteers from a local school. All candidates and their families are invited to observe the process and the final election results. South Lanarkshire's Chief Executive is invited to act as the returning officer.
- Once the results are announced all used ballot papers are stored in a secure place until the next election and all polling station resources are returned to the election staff.
- Throughout December 2023 to February 2024 the new elected MSYPS attend training and workshops on the roles and responsibilities and planning for their first national sitting in March 2024.