

CLYDE VALLEY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 22 February 2021

Convener:

Councillor Katy Loudon, South Lanarkshire Council

Councillors Present:

East Renfrewshire Council:	Colm Merrick
Glasgow City Council:	Rhiannon Spear
Inverclyde Council:	Martin Brennan
North Lanarkshire Council:	Angela Campbell
Renfrewshire Council:	Andy Steel

Attending:

Clerk's Office

Stuart McLeod, Administration Officer, South Lanarkshire Council

Treasurer's Office

Amanda Murray, Finance Adviser, South Lanarkshire Council

Project Steering Group

Pauline Cameron, East Renfrewshire Council
Tony Mackie, Glasgow City Council
Alex Hughes, Inverclyde Council
Pauline McCafferty, North Lanarkshire Council
Simon Hall and Lenore Robson, Renfrewshire Council
Gill Bhatti (Chair), South Lanarkshire Council

Also Attending:

Audit Scotland

Dave Richardson, Senior Audit Manager; Sanya Ahmed, Trainee Auditor

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 7 September 2020 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

3 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020/2021 – Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee

A report dated 28 January 2021 by the Treasurer to the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 1 January 2021 against budgeted expenditure for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee's revenue budget.

The Joint Committee decided: that the breakeven position on the revenue budget, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted.

[Reference: Note of 8 June 2020 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Update on Membership and Funding for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project for 2021/2022

A report dated 12 February 2021 by the Chair of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group was submitted providing an update on the membership and funding position for the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project for the financial year 2021/2022.

At its meeting on 11 June 2018, the Joint Committee had approved a proposal to restructure the membership of the Project by creating 3 categories of membership which would be open to all full member and associate member councils.

Each member council would be required to pay a tariff based on its category of membership and a sliding scale linked to the number of persons it employed. Details of the membership categories and associated tariffs were provided in the report.

It had also been agreed that, as a minimum, 5 full member councils and a level of funding of £61,000 per annum (including audit fee) would be required to maintain the viability of the Project.

At the time of writing the report, 6 full member and 6 current participating member councils had confirmed their intention to continue their membership of the Project in 2021/2022. In addition, Dumfries and Galloway Council, which had been a procurement member council in 2019/2020, had also confirmed participating membership for 2021/2022, resulting in fees totalling £72,000. East Dunbartonshire Council had since confirmed that it would remain a participating member, resulting in fees totalling £75,000.

The Project Manager would continue to liaise with current member councils who had yet to reach a decision regarding their continued membership.

There was a real commitment from member councils to sustain the work of the Project and to continue to realise the benefits of participation. On the basis that the current membership fees continued to provide the Project with funding beyond the previously agreed minimum level of £61,000 (including audit fee), it was proposed that the existing level of membership fees be retained. It was further proposed that the minimum level of funding remain at the previously agreed level.

The Joint Committee decided:

- (1) that it be noted that the model of membership and funding for the Project was now established and viable;
- (2) that the previously agreed categories and level of membership fees, as detailed in the report, be retained for 2021/2022;
- (3) that the minimum level of funding to allow the continuation of the Project for 2021/2022 remain at the previously agreed level of £61,000 (including audit fee);
- (4) that it be noted that 6 full member councils had confirmed their continued participation in the Project, exceeding the minimum target of 5 full member councils; and

- (5) that it be noted that the current confirmed funding of £75,000, exceeded the recommended minimum level of funding by £14,000.

[Reference: Minutes of 9 December 2019 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Meeting Arrangements – 2021/2022

A report dated 1 February 2021 by the Clerk to the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee was submitted on arrangements for meetings of the Joint Committee for the financial year 2021/2022.

At its meeting held on 30 November 2015, the Joint Committee had agreed that its meetings should be held 3 times in a financial year.

The Joint Committee decided: that meetings of the Joint Committee for the financial year 2021/2022 be held via Microsoft Teams at 2.00pm on the following dates:-

- ◆ Monday 14 June 2021
- ◆ Monday 13 September 2021
- ◆ Monday 21 February 2022

[Reference: Minutes of 9 December 2019 (Paragraph 6)]

6 Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project – e-Learning Developments During the COVID-19 Pandemic

A report dated 27 January 2021 by the Chair of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group was submitted on work that had been undertaken in relation to e-Learning for local government employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The membership of the e-Learning Sub-group had been reconfigured to reflect changes to the overall structure of the Project and a new workplan had been developed and approved by the Project Steering Group which had focused the Sub-group's work.

Due to the national lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions, the majority of local authority employees had been working from home and, in some cases, undertaking new roles in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other than a few exceptions, classroom-based training had more or less ceased across all councils and e-learning had played a critical role in ensuring the continued delivery of training to employees. Individual member councils, and the e-Learning Sub-group in particular, had been instrumental in supporting colleagues within their own councils in the following key ways:-

- ◆ assisting new learners who had no previous experience of accessing e-learning
- ◆ assisting employees to access e-learning from a range of different devices and settings
- ◆ assisting service managers to quickly develop "e" content to enable new and existing employees to undertake new roles in response to the pandemic
- ◆ assisting learning and development colleagues and service managers to transform classroom-based course content into "e" content quickly without any loss of quality
- ◆ working with IT colleagues to problem solve technical issues
- ◆ working closely with Brightwave to remove barriers to provision caused by spikes in demand

With distance learning becoming the new normal due to the COVID-19 restrictions, e-learning (online courses, live webinars/recorded presentations) had become the preferred mode of learning. This had led to a surge in demand which had peaked between February and July 2020, however, demand had remained higher than in previous years and continued to experience a further peak which commenced in December 2020. Details of the increase in demand for e-learning were provided in the report and statistical information in relation to traffic via the member councils' Learning Management Systems (LMS) was provided in Appendix 1 to the report.

The increase in demand had been met by re-purposing traditional classroom learning to make it suitable for online delivery. This process was ongoing and learning and development employees had been upskilled to ensure that the increased demand for e-learning could be met.

Furthermore, some member councils had temporarily increased the limits for their LMS contracts to meet demand and the use of Microsoft Teams and other live platforms had also increased, not only for communicating with colleagues and teams, but also to meet learning demands via live webinars.

The increased use of e-learning in response to the COVID-19 restrictions had highlighted the true potential and benefits of online learning and had resulted in employees becoming accustomed to receiving learning via online means.

The Joint Committee decided:

- (1) that the work carried out by the e-Learning Sub-group during the pandemic to ensure e-learning content was accessible to employees of all member councils who were working from home be noted; and
- (2) that the significant progress achieved in delivering e-learning for the benefit of learners from all member councils be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 10 June 2019 (Paragraph 10)]

7 Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB) – Development and Delivery Update

A joint report dated 4 February 2021 by the Service Manager, Learning and Development/Health and Safety, Social Work Services/Health and Social Care Partnership, Glasgow City Council and the Chair of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group was submitted providing an update on the development and delivery of Promoting Positive Behaviour (PPB) training during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PPB training programme addressed minimising and managing challenging behaviours across member councils' services. An important element of the course curriculum involved the demonstration and practice of a range of physical interventions and the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions had presented significant challenges in terms of the continued delivery of PPB training.

Guidance had been developed by the Clyde Valley Social Care Group and issued via the PPB Strategic Governance Group in May 2020 which had included the following recommendations:-

- ◆ decisions relating to the delivery of PPB training were governance matters and, therefore, appropriate advice should be provided by local Governance Groups
- ◆ any decision to proceed with PPB training (including physical interventions) should be consistent with each member council's risk assessments and contingency plans in relation to COVID-19

- ◆ in line with many regulatory bodies such as the Scottish Social Services Council, Health and Safety Executive and The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, the 18-month upper limit timescale for refresh training could be temporarily relaxed
- ◆ the relaxation of the 18-month timescale should be reviewed on a month-to-month basis and, once the position improved and the risks diminished, the 18-month refresh cycle should be reinstated
- ◆ the relaxation only applied to learners/trainers whose refresh deadline fell within the contingency period

Whilst the guidance had supported each member council when considering PPB training delivery, the Principal Trainers had been exploring alternative methods of training provision. As a result, on-line refresher training had been created for both Adult and Children's Services, which offered flexibility in the delivery of the theoretical component of PPB training.

In addition and where it was viable, the physical element of PPB training could be refreshed in individual workplaces by resident PPB trainers. Where this was not viable, theory-only refresh training could be provided. Certificates of participation were issued to participants once refresh training was completed and a theory-only certificate would be issued where the opportunity to refresh the physical elements of the course could not be provided.

Shared development of on-line options across the member councils was continuing with efforts, in the first instance, focused on developing refresh opportunities for PPB Trainers and maximising attendance at on-line courses.

In response to a point raised by Councillor Spear, the Service Manager advised that physical intervention would always be a last resort when employees were interacting with service users and that the emphasis of the PPB training was on developing understanding and teaching de-escalation skills.

The Joint Committee decided:

- (1) that the additional guidance issued to member councils regarding the delivery of Promoting Positive Behaviour training be noted; and
- (2) that the ongoing development of on-line learning opportunities to support the provision of Promoting Positive Behaviour refresher training be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 9 December 2019 (Paragraph 8)]

8 Item of Urgent Business – Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee Audit Plan 2020/2021

The Joint Committee considered the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee Audit Plan for 2020/2021, dated February 2021, submitted by the Joint Committee's External Auditors, Audit Scotland. The Plan set out the audit work necessary to allow Audit Scotland to provide an independent auditor's report and meet the wider scope requirements of public sector audit.

The Plan was structured around the following areas:-

- ◆ risks and planned work
- ◆ audit scope and timing

Details were given on key aspects of those areas. The Annual Accounts timetable would be subject to review if further issues in terms of COVID-19 impacted on the Joint Committee or the audit team.

The Joint Committee decided: that the report be noted.