

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 21 May 2024

Chair:

Councillor Lynsey Hamilton

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Maureen Devlin (*substitute for Councillor Mo Razzaq*), Councillor Mary Donnelly (*substitute for Councillor Grant Ferguson*), Councillor Elise Frame, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Gavin Keatt (Depute), Councillor Susan Kerr, Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Lesley McDonald (*substitute for Councillor Graham Scott*), Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor David Watson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Mark McGeever, John Mulligan, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Graham Scott

External Members Present:

Jennifer Gaffney, Joan Lennon

External Members' Apologies:

Naomi Baxter, Gillian Coulter, Christine Hall

Attending:

Education Resources

C McKenzie, Executive Director; A Donaldson, Head of Education (Inclusion); S March, Principal Psychologist; S Nicolson, Head of Education (Senior Phase); J Wallace, Head of Education (Primary and Early Years)

Finance and Corporate Resources

J Davitt, Public Relations Team Leader; L Harvey, Finance Manager (Resources); A McKay, Finance Adviser; E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer; K McLeod, Administration Assistant E McPake, Human Resources Business Partner; L O'Hagan, Finance Manager (Strategy); M M Wilson, Legal Services 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 5 March 2024 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 25 April 2024 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April 2023 to 23 February 2024 for Education Resources and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2024.

The Resource position as at 23 February 2024 was an overspend of £0.170 million. Detailed variance explanations, together with proposed virements to realign budgets across budget categories and with other Resources, were detailed in Appendix A.

Following the probable outturn exercise, the Resource was reporting an overspend of £0.295 million, which was the net effect of underspends in Early Years' core budget offset by overspends relating to:-

- ◆ mainstream transport costs
- ◆ school placements
- ◆ teacher costs

There were no proposed transfers to reserves, however, an anticipated Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) underspend of £0.400 million would now be transferred to reserves.

The Executive Director (Education Resources) responded to members' questions in relation to overspends on school transport costs and the secondary school transport consultation.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the forecast to 31 March 2024 of an overspend of £0.295 million, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted;
- (2) that an overspend of £0.170 million as at 23 February 2024, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 March 2024 (Paragraph 3)]

Councillor Devlin joined the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

4 Education Resources - Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/2024

A joint report dated 29 April 2024 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing information on the progress of the Capital Programme for Education Resources for the period 1 April to 23 February 2024.

The revised Capital Programme for 2023/2024 amounted to £14.337 million. This reflected the budget of £14.268 million reported to the last meeting of the Committee which had been adjusted to reflect an increase of £0.069 million which had been approved by the Executive Committee on 8 May 2024. The increase was in relation to the late distribution of 2023/2024 funding made available for Free School Meals and was detailed in Appendix A to the report.

As at 23 February 2024, expenditure was £11.771 million, which was £0.144 million ahead of programme, mainly reflecting the timing of payments on a number of projects. The projected outturn for the financial year was £14.3 million. The year-end position was currently being finalised and would be reported to the Executive Committee on 26 June 2024.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Education Resources' capital programme of £14.337 million, and expenditure to date of £11.771 million, be noted; and
- (2) that the projected outturn of £14.3 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 March 2024 (Paragraph 4) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 8 May 2024 (Paragraph 4)]

5 Education Resources - Workforce Monitoring – January to March 2024

A joint report dated 11 April 2024 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period January to March 2024:-

- ◆ 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 March 2024

The Executive Director (Education Resources) responded to a member's question in relation to verbal and physical assaults in schools.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 March 2024 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Health and Wellbeing Census

A report dated 30 April 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted:-

- ◆ providing an update on the background in relation to the national Health and Wellbeing Census for children and young people
- ◆ requesting approval to conduct a large-scale health and wellbeing survey of P6 to S6 pupils in South Lanarkshire schools on a cyclical basis

The mental health and wellbeing of children was a national and local priority. The focus on the health and wellbeing of children and young people was a key Public Health Priority and was also emphasised in the National Improvement Framework (NIF) which stated that one of its key priorities was "improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people". Detailed background information on the national and local context was provided at section 3 of the report.

The original proposal for introducing a Scotland-wide Health and Wellbeing Census dated back to 2015. The rationale for the survey noted that, although relevant national and locally commissioned surveys had been set up by local authorities and health boards, those collections reportedly did not provide sufficient, consistent or timely data to support:-

- ◆ annual reporting at local authority level to meet current and future obligations
- ◆ exploration of inequalities within and across local areas
- ◆ service improvement activities at a very local level
- ◆ national level information

Smaller scale surveys, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report, had provided useful insights, including the ability to consider possible trends, however, those had extremely limited sample sizes.

Delivering the Health and Wellbeing Census had been identified as potentially having benefits at school level, authority level and national level. The benefits of each of those 3 levels were detailed at paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The Scottish Government stated that the Health and Wellbeing Census would be local authority data. The prime aim was to give local authorities and their local partners evidence for informing and monitoring improvement activity and meeting commitments and goals, as set out in the National Improvement Framework. The Scottish Government would ask the local authority to share its data with them. Local authorities could decide whether or not to undertake their own census and define those questions to be included in the Health and Wellbeing Census. Importantly, the local authority could add or remove questions.

The Health and Wellbeing Census had been delivered in Scotland between October 2021 and June 2022, with the aim of asking children and young people from P5 to S6 a range of questions on topics as detailed at paragraph 4.4 of the report. South Lanarkshire Council did not participate at this time. Detailed background information of the Census was provided at section 4 of the report.

Since the 2021/2022 Health and Wellbeing Census, other local authorities had continued to develop their own approaches to gathering large-scale data in this area and many had robust arrangements in place, as detailed at paragraph 4.8 of the report.

It was considered that the Health and Wellbeing Census could potentially generate essential information to support strategic planning to meet needs for schools, Education Resources and the Children's Service Planning Partnership. It was recommended that the Council engage in a large-scale survey of health and wellbeing to gather high quality, whole system information on health and wellbeing. The proposed survey would:-

- ◆ reflect the local context and stakeholders' views
- ◆ broadly align with the national Health and Wellbeing Census
- ◆ not include some of the more invasive questions relating to sexual health and relationships

Key implementation points were set out at section 7 of the report and the approach to consultation was set out at section 8 of the report. An effective communication strategy regarding the health and wellbeing survey would be vital to ensure that information in the public domain was accurate and objective, and that South Lanarkshire's considered approach to delivering a Health and Wellbeing Census was fully understood.

The Principal Psychologist responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the background relating to the national Health and Wellbeing Census for children and young people be noted;
- (2) that South Lanarkshire engage in a large-scale survey of children and young people's health and wellbeing for pupils P6 to S6;
- (3) that, in order to provide ongoing evidence of progress in this area, this survey would be repeated on approximately a 3 to 4 yearly cycle; and
- (4) that, if possible, the survey be linked to any future extension of the national Health and Wellbeing Census, and that core content be established.

7 Education Resource Plan 2024/2025

A report dated 28 April 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Education Resource Plan 2024/2025.

Details were provided on the Resource Plan for 2024/2025, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, which outlined the:-

- ◆ key areas of focus for the year ahead
- ◆ Resource outcomes
- ◆ measures and actions
- ◆ resourcing of the Plan

Following approval at individual Resource Committees, the Resource Plans for 2024/2025 would be submitted as a pack to the meeting of the Executive Committee to be held on 26 June 2024 for noting.

The Resource had established a number of outcomes to support the delivery of the Council Plan, Connect, in 2024/2025. To support those outcomes, the Resource had developed performance measures in an action plan, detailed in Section 4 of the Resource Plan. Key or strategic measures would be included in the Council Plan progress reports 2024/2025, with the remaining measures being monitored and reported at Resource level.

In line with the Council's performance management arrangements, a mid-year progress report on measures identified in the 2024/2025 Education Resource Plan and an end of year report respectively, would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee.

Once approved, the Resource Plan would be made available on the Council's website.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Resource Plan 2024/2025, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (2) that the Resource Plan 2024/2025 be uploaded onto the Council's website;
- (3) that it be noted that following Committee approval, all Resource Plans would be presented to the Executive Committee on 26 June 2024 for noting; and
- (4) that it be noted that Progress Reports on the Resource Plan 2024/2025 would be submitted at Quarter 2 and Quarter 4 to future meetings of this Committee.

[Reference: Minutes of 2 May 2023 (Paragraph 6)]

8 2024/2025 Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Sustainable Rate Price Review

A report dated 2 May 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on work undertaken to set the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) sustainable rate for funded providers for implementation from 1 April 2024.

At its meeting on 27 June 2023, the Committee approved an hourly rate of £5.88 for 3 to 5 year olds and an hourly rate of £6.53 for 2 year olds, plus £0.50 per hour for lunch. The hourly rate to funded providers for statutory 1,140 ELC provision was in addition to the funded programme of Milk and Healthy Snack Scheme Scotland Regulations 2021, the Council's investment to support Early Access for 3 year olds and the zero based support for training and development and quality assurance.

The Council's Procured Service Agreement (PSA), introduced in June 2019 for ELC for the delivery of 1,140 for all funded providers, required a review of the rate annually.

The Scottish Government announced as part of its 2024/2025 budget, that it would provide local authorities with an additional £16 million in 2024/2025 to fully fund the estimated costs associated with enabling ELC workers in private and third sector services to be paid at least £12 per hour (the new real Living Wage rate) from April 2024. South Lanarkshire's allocation from the additional £16 million was £994,000.

On 8 March 2024, the Scottish Government and COSLA published 'Guidance for setting sustainable rates for the delivery of funded early learning and childcare (ELC) in 2024/2025'. The guidance confirmed the agreed approach for passing on the additional funding to providers as part of the 2024/2025 sustainable rates setting process, as detailed at paragraph 4.2 of the report.

Having considered the guidance and its application to the Council funded provider rate, the proposed change to the hourly rate for funded providers was an increase of 7.6% on 2023/2024 rates, as detailed at paragraph 5.2 of the report. The proposed rate changes for 3 to 5 year olds recommended an hourly rate of £6.33. Having applied the same increase for 2 year olds, the proposed revised hourly rate was £7.03. The £0.50 per hour lunch rate would remain.

A protocol for consultation on the sustainable rate had been established over the last few years with funded providers and this was detailed in section 6 of the report. It was anticipated that the revised rate would be implemented from 1 April 2024, in line with the terms and conditions of the Procured Service Agreement for ELC. Based on the requirement of the PSA and change control process, an implementation timeline was set out at section 7 of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the content of the report and the outcome of the sustainable rate review be noted;
- (2) that the recommendation for the proposed sustainable rate, as detailed in section 5.2 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) that the requirements of the Procured Service Agreement (PSA) for ELC to secure funded providers' agreement be progressed in line with the framework terms.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 June 2023 (Paragraph 8)]

9 2022/2023 Secondary Leavers' Update

A report dated 3 May 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on outcomes achieved by pupils leaving school following session 2022/2023, as reported in the March 2024 national 'Insight' update.

In March 2024, the Scottish Government released leavers' cohort data for session 2022/2023 through the 'Insight' benchmarking tool for senior phase. 'Insight' provided schools with a school level statistical summary of attainment. The update provided the opportunity to explore how well young people who had left school in the 5 years to 2023 had achieved. The data supported schools and local authorities in planning for improvement and allowed for focussed discussion in relation to next steps. Education Resources, working collaboratively with schools, had established a self-evaluation strategy to build upon areas of strength and to develop areas for improvement in relation to outcomes for leavers.

The period covered by the statistics included data that related to the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of the report, care would need to be taken in making comparisons over time. The pandemic continued to affect the destination choices made by, and opportunities available to, school leavers in 2022/2023.

The overall outcomes achieved by young people leaving school in South Lanarkshire were strong in comparison to their peers in the West Partnership and nationally. There was, however, no room for complacency and there was a shared ambition for improving outcomes for all.

'Insight' provided data relating to the following 4 National Benchmarking Measures:-

- ◆ attainment in literacy and numeracy
- ◆ attainment for all (upper 20%, middle 60%, lower 20%)
- ◆ attainment versus deprivation (closing the gap)
- ◆ post school participation

Detailed information was provided on the 4 National Benchmarking Measures at section 4 of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the outcomes detailed in section 4 of the report be noted; and
- (2) that the support and challenge provided to secondary schools, and the continuing commitment to improving outcomes for all children and young people, be noted.

10 Award of Grant: Clore Duffield Foundation

A report dated 9 April 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the award of grant funding of up to £96,000 to St Columbkille's Primary School, Rutherglen for the purpose of enhancing and enriching pupil experiences within expressive arts.

The Foundation was established by Sir Charles Clore in 1964 and in 2000 merged with the Vivien Duffield Foundation to become the Clore Duffield Foundation. It was chaired by Sir Charles Clore's daughter, Dame Vivien Duffield. The main activities were to develop programmes and partnerships to create opportunities for people through art, culture and heritage in the UK.

A successful application for a grant award from the Clore Duffield Foundation of up to £96,000 was made by St Columbkille's Primary School, Rutherglen, in December 2023 following a thorough assessment process, with the purpose of giving every pupil in the school an experience of:-

- ◆ being taught each of the expressive arts by a highly experienced professional from that sector
- ◆ consolidating their learning by attending a live performance in each of the expressive arts
- ◆ being exposed to a range of culturally rich experiences

The project overview was detailed at section 4 of the report.

The Committee decided:

that the award of grant funding from the Clore Duffield Foundation of up to £96,000 to St Columbkille's Primary School, Rutherglen for the purpose of enhancing and enriching pupil experiences within expressive arts be noted.

11 Curriculum Strategy 2023 to 2026 (Primary)

A report dated 1 May 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing:-

- ◆ an overview on Curriculum Quality and Improvement Service's (CQIS) updated curriculum strategy for primary schools
- ◆ a briefing on work designed to support curriculum, learner pathways and curriculum design

Since 2019, there had been a series of reports which focussed on strengths and areas of development in Scottish Education and those were detailed in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3 of the report.

Session 2022/2023 had afforded schools the opportunity to deliver education without restrictions following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it was recognised that the curriculum would have to reflect a new age of learning post pandemic, reflecting the accelerated digital learning that took place and the move towards building pupils' skills for jobs of the future in an uncertain world. Progression pathways needed to be strengthened and the primary curriculum design revisited to reflect the Council's aspirations for children and young people.

Detailed information was provided at section 4 of the report on curriculum development in South Lanarkshire which included:-

- ◆ the production of a Framework for the Curriculum by Education Resources which had been updated and relaunched to headteachers in January 2023
- ◆ a CQIS survey which was carried out in December 2022 to assess individual primary schools' position regarding their curriculum. A further real-time survey had been conducted in October 2023
- ◆ specific professional learning in key areas of literacy and numeracy which had been provided to primary schools
- ◆ the SLC Skills Framework: Supporting Skills Development which was launched in February 2023 and introduced to Headteachers and establishments
- ◆ raising awareness and empowering young people to become active participants in work around climate change and sustainability

In light of the refreshed curriculum narrative, there was a need to update the Curriculum Strategy for primary schools. The refreshed Curriculum Strategy renewed the Council's commitment to providing a rich and stimulating curriculum. The Strategy would go beyond a commitment to only literacy and numeracy and would set out to support the development of wider curriculum design and pathways for all subject areas of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

The work undertaken to support and develop the Curriculum Strategy was outlined at section 5 of the report and The South Lanarkshire Council Curriculum Strategy 3 Year Plan 2023 to 2026 was provided at Appendix 1 to the report. It was recognised that curriculum building was a team effort and the curriculum would be owned, created and lived by all. The curriculum would continue to be supported by the CQIS Primary Team with a focus on literacy, numeracy, science and sustainability, skills and play.

The year on year planned outcomes were detailed at section 6 of the report, with additional detail for the planned outcomes for year one, 2023/2024, provided at Appendix 2 to the report. The next steps were outlined at section 7 of the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the plan outlined for the curriculum be noted; and

(2) that the work outlined to support the curriculum strategy be noted.

12 South Lanarkshire Council - Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in Education

A report dated 30 April 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing guidance on the emerging technology known as Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) and the work undertaken to date within the Service to address the implications for learners and staff working in education.

GenAI referred to a type of artificial intelligence that was designed to generate new, original content autonomously, including (but not exclusive to) the generation of text, images, music, video, conversations and computing code.

GenAI tools such as ChatGPT, which launched at the end of 2022, posed opportunities and challenges for learners and educators alike. Given those tools were widely available and in everyday use, it was important that their use in education be considered. To address this, information and guidance would be provided to schools so that teachers and learners were informed about the appropriate use.

Education Resources had engaged with a range of stakeholders and partners to support and gather information and the current position was set out at section 4 of the report.

The next steps were outlined at section 5 of the report. Following consultation and engagement, a draft local authority guidance document for schools had been produced and this was provided at the appendix to the report.

The Head of Education (Senior Phase) responded to a member's questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that it be noted that Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Guidance would be issued to all South Lanarkshire Council Education establishments.

13 Consultations

A report dated 2 May 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing information on a number of responses made by Education Resources as part of ongoing consultation processes at both local and national levels.

Education Resources was required to respond to a number of consultations across the year which encompassed a wide range of topics from areas such as curriculum, school improvement and school infrastructure.

The following completed consultations were detailed in appendices 1 to 5 to the report:-

- ◆ Child Friendly Complaints Handling Principles
- ◆ Consultation on Parts 2 and 3 of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act
- ◆ Independent Review of Community Learning and Development
- ◆ Launch of the public consultation – Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill
- ◆ Review of Memorandum on Entry Requirements to Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland: Consultation

The Committee decided: that the consultation responses made by Education Resources be noted.

14 Notification of Contracts Awarded - 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

A report dated 25 April 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on contracts awarded by Education Resources during the period 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024.

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.

[Reference: Minutes of 5 December 2023 (Paragraph 12)]

15 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.