

# EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 5 March 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 Margaret B Walker*), Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Elise Frame, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Gavin Keatt (Depute), Councillor Susan Kerr, Councillor Ross Lambie, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor David Watson

## **Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Joe Fagan (ex officio), Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Margaret B Walker

## **External Members Present:**

Naomi Baxter, Jennifer Gaffney, Christine Hall

## **External Members' Apologies:**

Gillian Coulter, Joan Lennon, John Mulligan

## **Attending:**

### **Education Resources**

C McKenzie, Executive Director; D Dickson, Operations Manager; A Donaldson, Head of Education (Inclusion); S Nicolson, Head of Education (Senior Phase); L Sherry, Head of Education (Support Service and School Estate); J Wallace, Head of Education (Primary and Early Years)

### **Finance and Corporate Resources**

J Davitt, Public Relations Team Leader; 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

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## **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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## **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Education Resources Committee held on 5 December 2023 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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## **3 Education Resources - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/2024**

A joint report dated 22 January 2024 by the Head of Finance (Strategy) and the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the actual expenditure measured against the revenue budget for the period 1 April to 28 December 2023 for Education Resources and providing a forecast for the year to 31 March 2024.

As at 28 December 2023, there was an overspend of £0.188 million, as detailed in Appendix A of the report. Costs incurred were provided in the report.

Following the Council's Probable Outturn exercise, the Resource had reported an estimated 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

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

It was confirmed that withheld grant of £2.934 million in respect of the maintenance of teacher numbers had now been received.

Officers:-

- ◆ responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report
- ◆ undertook to provide further, detailed information to members in relation to overspends, particularly in respect of school transport and transfers from reserves for teachers

**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 £0.188 million as at 28 December 2023, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

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#### **4 Education Resources - Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/2024**

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A joint report dated 15 February 2024 by the Head of Finance (Strategy) and the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing information on the progress of the capital programme for Education Resources for the period 1 April to 28 December 2023.

The revised 2023/2024 capital programme for Education Resources amounted to £14.268 million. This reflected the budget of £19.333 million reported to the meeting of the Committee held on 5 December 2023, adjusted in light of a change totalling a decrease of £5.065 million, approved by the Executive Committee at its meeting held on 24 January 2024. The financial position for Education Resources was outlined in Appendix A of the report.

Anticipated spend to date was £9.977 million and spend to 28 December 2023 amounted to £9.810 million, resulting in spend being behind programme by £0.167 million, reflecting timing issues only. This related, in the main, to the new Wooddean Early Learning Centre, Bothwell. Underspends had been offset by adaptation works at Uddingston Grammar School, for which funding had originally been anticipated in 2024/2025.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Education Resources' capital programme of £14.268 million, and expenditure to date of £9.810 million, be noted; and

(2) that the projected outturn of £14.3 million be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 24 January 2024 (Paragraph 4)]*

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## **5 Education Resources - Workforce Monitoring - October to December 2023**

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A joint report dated 1 February 2024 by the Chief Executive and the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period October to December 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 December 2023

**The Committee decided:** that the report be noted.

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

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## **6 Cost of the School Day Guidance for Schools and Early Years' Establishments**

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A report dated 12 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the work of Education Resources to support the Cost of the School Day (CoSD) across South Lanarkshire schools and Early Years' establishments.

The Council had, for some years, been working to reduce the CoSD, regardless of families' economic status. This had included:-

- ◆ making training on the CoSD available to schools
- ◆ reviewing implications of the costs of overseas and residential excursions in light of the CoSD and affordability
- ◆ working with Money Matters and the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund through supports offered by Family Support Hubs

A CoSD Working Party had been established in 2022 to produce Guidance to support schools in moving from a CoSD position statement to policy. The draft Guidance was attached as Appendix 1 to the report and contained 10 proposals to reduce the CoSD in all South Lanarkshire Council's schools and early years' establishments, together with advice on communicating with families. The 10 proposals were detailed in the report.

The Guidance also included:-

- ◆ Departmental Guidance for secondary schools
- ◆ suggestions for grants/funding available to support CoSD activity in establishments
- ◆ advice on zero cost curricular trips
- ◆ a guide to help increase the uptake of Free School Meals
- ◆ an exemplar of a CoSD Policy with an example of a parent Friendly Policy
- ◆ examples of good practice from 4 of the Council's schools

It was intended that the Council's educational establishments would:-

- ◆ deliver CoSD messages at the start of each school year
- ◆ appoint a CoSD Lead in each establishment
- ◆ keep an annual record of monies requested from families and work to reduce this figure year on year
- ◆ follow the best practice examples under each of the 10 Proposals, wherever possible

The new CoSD Guidance and supporting materials would be presented to Head Teachers at a CoSD Conference to be held in March 2024.

There followed a discussion during which officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the work undertaken by Education Resources on the Cost of the School Day be noted; and
- (2) that the proposals contained in South Lanarkshire Council's Cost of the School Day Guidance for schools and Early Years' establishments, as detailed in section 5.2 and Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

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

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## **7 Education Digital Futures; ICT Supply and Support from October 2025**

A report dated 13 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Supply and Support following the conclusion of the current ICT Managed Service Contract with RM Education, known as 'Education Digital Futures'.

The current ICT Managed Service contract was due to end on 30 September 2025 and a Project Board had been established to consider the provision of digital services for Education from October 2025. Following consultation with stakeholders, an options appraisal was undertaken which considered a range of delivery models and the implications of the available budget on the level of provision for schools and on the approach to procurement. Details were provided in Appendix 2 to the report.

Having considered the options, the view had been taken that:-

- ◆ the Council would proceed with the procurement of a managed service for the provision of digital services for education from October 2025
- ◆ the contract would be for an initial period of 7 years
- ◆ the core revenue budget provided would be around the same as was provided for the current contract extension period, however, capital funding was subject to capital budget approvals and could reduce, given overall Council grant levels. Additional one-off funding provided for the current extension period would also not be replaced and, therefore, the overall contract value would be reduced
- ◆ given the financial pressures, an alternative procurement method would be employed to allow for negotiation with applicants, acknowledging that it was unlikely that the new contract would be able to match the provisions of the existing contract

Given the limited budget and the firm deadline for the end of the current contract, there was a risk that there would not be a contract in place for 1 October 2025 either through failure to secure a bid that would meet service/budget requirements or failure to have sufficient time/resources to allow for transition to a new contract.

To mitigate the financial risk, and following receipt of legal advice on the procurement options, it was proposed that the Council consider the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation (CPN), rather than an Open or Restricted Procurement, as the preferred route to market. The procurement exercise was currently underway on that basis and a further report would be submitted on the outcome of this exercise.

Details were provided on:-

- ◆ the current role of ICT in Education Resources
- ◆ provisions in the existing Managed Service Contract
- ◆ project governance

In response to a member's question regarding the Scottish Government's commitment in respect of funding for individual devices for pupils, together with internet provision and technical support, officers advised that there had been no further information from the Scottish Government on this matter. It was proposed that the Executive Director (Education Resources), on behalf of the Committee, write to the Scottish Government to establish progress on its commitment to the provision of access to ICT equipment and internet connectivity for all pupils. This was accepted by the Committee.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that it be noted that digital learning and inclusion was a priority for schools and services to deliver the curriculum, develop young people's skills and improve the outcomes for learners;
- (2) that the Council's commitment to provide schools and services with a Managed Service model of ICT supply and support and the benefits which had accrued from this investment by the Council, as highlighted in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Executive Director's report, be noted;
- (3) that the steps taken to proceed with the procurement of a Managed Service for the provision of digital services and ICT supply for schools and services from October 2025, following the conclusion of the current Managed Service Contract with RM Education on 30 September 2025, be noted;
- (4) that the risk factors, as detailed in paragraph 3.8 of the report and the mitigation, as detailed in paragraph 3.9, together with the budget that had been set and the potential implications for the service and for the procurement process, be noted; and
- (5) that the Executive Director (Education Resources), on behalf of the Committee, write to the Scottish Government to establish progress on its commitment in relation to the provision of access to ICT equipment and internet connectivity for all pupils

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 13 February 2013 (Paragraph 25)]*

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## 8 Strategic Equity Fund (SEF)

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A report 12 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an:-

- ◆ update on South Lanarkshire Council's Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) Plan for 2022/2023
- ◆ overview of the SEF Plan for 2023/2024
- ◆ update around work designed to close the poverty related attainment gap

A full SEF Plan had been written for 2022/2023 which aligned with Scottish Government Guidance and centred around the following 5 workstreams:-

- ◆ pedagogy
- ◆ learner engagement
- ◆ strengthening relationships
- ◆ curriculum
- ◆ learner pathways

A full SEF Plan had now been written for Year 2 of the Plan and was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The Plan for 2023/2024 continued to be centred around the same key workstreams and details of the Year 2 projects to support each workstream were provided in Appendix 1.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ funding streams in place prior to 2022/2023 to help tackle the poverty related attainment gap, namely the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) Schools' Programme and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)
- ◆ funding from April 2022 which saw the replacement of the SAC Schools' Programme by the SEF, together with information on the Council's SEF funding to 2025/2026
- ◆ planning and reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability to both internal and external stakeholders
- ◆ project planning to ensure the best use of funding to help close the poverty related attainment gap
- ◆ progress against stretch aims set for 2022/2023 as part of the Year 1 SEF Plan
- ◆ SEF stretch aims for 2023/2024
- ◆ PEF allocation for South Lanarkshire Council schools and measures to ensure that those funds had a direct impact on pupils affected by poverty
- ◆ Cost of the School Day and Poverty Awareness measures to help remove cost barriers to engagement and participation

### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the progress made during 2022/2023 on the use of the Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) to reduce the poverty related attainment gap, be noted; and
- (2) that the plan outlined for Year 2, 2023/2024, on the use of the SEF to enable schools and services to continue to take forward the challenge of reducing the poverty related attainment gap experienced by some pupils, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 15 November 2022 (Paragraph 10)]*

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## **9 Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist and Decolonised Curriculum**

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A report dated 15 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on Education Resources' commitment to Anti-Racism in Education and on the new 'Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist and Decolonised Curriculum' resource, launched to schools on 18 January 2024.

Education Resources were committed to placing inclusion and equality at the heart of strategic planning for the Council. To lead work in this area, the Inclusion Education Service (IES) was working in partnership with the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) to navigate 6 areas where inequality could cause greatest impacts. One of those areas was racism.

The systemic commitment against racism by the Scottish Government formed the basis for Education Resources' focus on anti-racism in the curriculum, recognising the need to produce guidance to support schools to develop a context specific anti-racist culture and ethos.

Using evidence based research as a foundation, Education Resources developed a framework to provide schools with some background, together with support and guidance, around the implementation of Anti-Racism Curriculum Principles and, more generally, the development of anti-racist education.

The 'Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist and Decolonised Curriculum', attached as Appendix 1 to the report, set out what anti-racist education was and what decolonising the curriculum meant. The Framework had been supplemented by a week long series of professional learning presentations/workshops during Race Equality Week which took place from 5 to 11 February 2024. Further staff sessions would be provided later in the year as a follow up to Race Equality Week.

Further supports around the anti-racist curriculum in the Council's education establishments included:-

- ◆ creation of an Anti-Racist section within the Resource's digital learning platform
- ◆ establishment of Pupil Equality groups within schools
- ◆ provision of updated guidance to schools on the recording and monitoring of bullying incidents to ensure all incidents were recorded on the Seemis Bullying and Equalities module which allowed prejudiced based bullying to be monitored

IES and CQIS would continue to develop guidance and resources to support schools to include equalities in 2024/2025 Improvement Plans. New anti-bullying guidance was expected later in 2024 with a more robust focus on racism and the recording of racist incidents.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the new 'Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist and Decolonised Curriculum' resource, launched to schools on 18 January 2024, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the 'Framework for Developing an Anti-Racist and Decolonised Curriculum' be recognised as a further commitment by Education Resources in taking forward anti-racist education across schools and services in South Lanarkshire.

*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 Councillor Anderson and Jennifer Gaffney*

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## **10 Scottish Youth Parliament Elections 2023**

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A report dated 7 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the 2023 Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) elections.

The Scottish Youth Parliament was established to act as the voice of young people in Scotland. It offered young people between the ages of 14 and 25 the opportunity to become involved in the decision-making processes in Scotland and the UK. Young people, aged 14 to 25 years, were selected every 2 years from across Scotland to stand as candidates to become Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYP). Members of South Lanarkshire Youth Council (SLYC) and Youth, Family and Community Learning Service staff, in partnership with secondary schools, colleges, universities, local youth groups and uniformed organisations, organised and delivered council wide elections to democratically elect 9 South Lanarkshire MSYPs.

Details were given on:-

- ◆ the process for the elections, which opened on 6 November and concluded on 19 November 2023
- ◆ the voting figures for each ward
- ◆ the candidates elected in each ward

The work of the outgoing MSYPs in representing their constituencies was commended and details of the initiatives in which they had led and participated to progress the youth agenda in South Lanarkshire were detailed in the report.

In South Lanarkshire, the format of the 2023 election process had been a paper ballot to reflect current processes for local and national elections. However, nationally, the voting process had been delayed due to an issue with the online process, with some local authorities hoping to conclude the process by the end of March 2024.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

### **The Committee decided:**

- (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 of Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) in local issues be noted;
- (3) that the success of the outgoing MSYPs be recognised; and
- (4) that the successful candidates, as detailed in paragraph 4.9 of the report, be welcomed to their positions serving their communities for their 2-year term.

*[Reference: Minutes of 1 June 2021 (Paragraph 12)]*

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## **11 Underage Use of e-Cigarettes and Vaping**

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A report dated 12 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on work being undertaken by Education Resources and partner agencies to raise awareness among children and young people of the potential risk to their health through vaping and the environmental damage caused due to irresponsible discarding of those products.

At its meeting on 24 May 2023, the Council considered a motion regarding the health and environmental harm caused by the increasing use, particularly by young people, of Disposable Nicotine Vapour Products (vapes). In supporting the motion, in addition to calling for a ban on single use vapes due to their health and environmental harm, the Council agreed that a report on the matter be submitted to a future meeting of the appropriate Committee.

A report submitted to this Committee on 26 September 2023 highlighted that:-

- ◆ public health information showed there was increasing e-cigarette use amongst young people across Scotland
- ◆ in South Lanarkshire, it was reported that there had been an 18-fold rise in the use of disposable vapes amongst vape users from January 2021 to April 2022
- ◆ the National Health and Wellbeing Census showed one in ten 15-year-olds regularly vaped, a rate which had tripled in the last five years
- ◆ discarded vapes presented a risk of the leak of toxic chemicals which were deemed to be harmful to children, pets, wildlife, and water systems
- ◆ refillable vape kits, which were recyclable, did not have the same environmental impact, but were marketed differently and were less likely to be an impulse purchase made by children and young people
- ◆ disposable vapes, originally introduced to help curtail tobacco and nicotine use, were now being seen as having a higher than proportionate use amongst children and young people

Details were given on:-

- ◆ actions taken forward by Education Resources, in partnership with NHSL Public Health, to reduce the impact of vaping amongst children and young people
- ◆ initiatives promoted by the Scottish Government regarding the dangers of vaping together with actions to be taken to create a tobacco free generation by 2034
- ◆ curriculum based activities on which Education Resources would take the lead
- ◆ preventative measures explored by Education Resources to prevent the use of vaping products in and around the school environment
- ◆ proposals and actions for the Council and partner agencies regarding the use and sale of e-cigarettes and vaping products to children and young people in local communities

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the steps being taken by Education Resources, in partnership with NHSL Public Health and other partners, to raise awareness amongst children and young people of the effects of vaping be noted;
- (2) that the proposed actions put forward by the Scottish Government as part of a national UK campaign be noted; and
- (3) that the proposals and actions for the Council and partner agencies, as detailed in section 7 of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 26 September 2023 (Paragraph 7)]*

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## **12 Celebrating Success**

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A report dated 14 February 2024 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a range of recent achievements and success of children and young people, together with staff in schools and services throughout South Lanarkshire.

Section 4 of the report highlighted a range of achievements which captured the essence of education in South Lanarkshire, which was to inspire learners, transform learning and strengthen communities.

**The Committee decided:**                      that the report be noted.

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## **13 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.

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## **Chair's Closing Remarks**

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The Chair advised that this would be the last meeting of the Committee that Des Dickson, Operations Manager would attend as he was retiring. The Chair, together with members of the Committee, thanked Mr Dickson for his hard work, commended his achievements during his time with the Council and wished him a long and happy retirement. Mr Dickson responded in suitable terms.