

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 19 January 2021

Chair:

Councillor Katy Loudon

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Peter Craig (Depute), Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Fiona Dryburgh, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Ian Harrow, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Ian McAllan, Councillor Kenny McCreary (*substitute for Councillor Martin Grant Hose*), Councillor Gladys Miller, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor Carol Nugent, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor Jared Wark, Councillor David Watson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Martin Grant Hose, Councillor John Ross (ex officio)

External Members Present:

Gillian Coulter, Christine Hall, Andy Harvey, Hilary Kirby, John Mulligan

External Members' Apologies:

Ann Marie Hobson, Dr Nagy Iskander

Attending:

Education Resources

T McDaid, Executive Director; D Dickson, Operations Manager; A Donaldson, Head of Education (Inclusion); C McKenzie, Head of Education (Broad General Education); S Nicolson, Head of Education (Senior Phase); L Sherry, Head of Education (Support Service and School Estate); V Sinclair, Partnership Development Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; 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)

Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair extended thanks to officers, school staff, parents and carers for their efforts during the current restrictions affecting schools as a result of measures recently imposed in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 27 October 2020 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

A joint report dated 14 December 2020 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 6 November 2020 against budgeted expenditure for 2020/2021 for Education Resources.

As at 6 November 2020, there was an overspend of £4.008 million, as detailed in Appendix A to the report. Costs incurred in relation to the Resources' COVID-19 response were outlined in Appendix B to the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the overspend of £4.008 million at 6 November 2020 be noted;
- (2) that the expenditure incurred in relation to the Resources' COVID-19 response be noted; and
- (3) that the budget virements, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2020 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Education Resources – Capital Budget Monitoring

A joint report dated 21 December 2020 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted advising of progress on the Education Resources' capital programme for 2020/2021 and summarising the expenditure position at 6 November 2020.

The Education Resources' capital programme amounted to £23.153 million and expenditure as at 6 November 2020 was £10.490 million. On 23 September 2020, the Executive Committee approved a revised General Services capital programme based on deliverability which could be achieved in the current year. The revised base programme for Education Resources was £21.453 million. Budget adjustments of £1.700 million had resulted in a revised capital programme for Education Resources of £23.153 million.

The Committee decided: that the 2020/2021 revised capital programme of £23.153 million, and expenditure to date of £10.490 million, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2020 (Paragraph 4) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 16 December 2020 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Education Resources – Workforce Monitoring – September and October 2020

A joint report dated 8 December 2020 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period September and October 2020:-

- ◆ 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 14 September 2020

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2020 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Acquisition of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School

A report dated 17 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a proposal to acquire the accommodation at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School Building, East Kilbride.

At its meeting on 27 October 2020, the Committee agreed that consideration of a report on the proposed acquisition of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School be deferred to allow for further information to be provided detailing costs in respect of all options in relation to the school building. Appendix 1 to the report provided additional information on estimated costs of:-

- ◆ required capital investment in the existing building
- ◆ additional accommodation due to population growth
- ◆ a new build

On the basis that the purchase of the property would deliver control to the Council to decide when and how it wished to invest in the building, provisional negotiations had resulted in terms being offered, as outlined in section 5 of the report. Consideration had been given to all the property options and it was considered that the acquisition of the accommodation at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, East Kilbride represented best value for money.

The total cost to take ownership of the building was £0.627 million. It was proposed that the Council borrow to fund the purchase, with the repayments being made annually from the available Education Resources' lease budget of £0.059 million. Education Resources had the annual revenue budget to pay for the acquisition over a period of time, however, the matter required to be referred to the Executive Committee which had the authority to borrow the initial funding and agree a capital programme.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Council acquire the accommodation at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, East Kilbride on the main terms and conditions as detailed in Section 5 of the report;
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Services), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, if appropriate, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the acquisition and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which were in the best interests of the Council; and
- (3) that it be noted that Education Resources would use its annual review budget to repay the borrowing costs.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee: that approval be given to add the project in respect of Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School into the capital programme and to initiate the borrowing of funds.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2020 (Paragraph 6)]

7 Review of Admissions Policy for Early Learning and Childcare Establishments

A report dated 23 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on a review of the policy for the admission of children into Early Learning and Childcare establishments in South Lanarkshire.

Since 1996, the Council's Admissions Policy for Early Years' Establishments had been regularly reviewed to reflect changes in legislation and national policy development.

The last review of the Admissions Policy had been presented to the Education Resources Committee on 10 December 2019.

The Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014 committed to delivering 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare per year to eligible children aged 2 to 5 years from August 2020. However, in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government revoked this legislation and a date of August 2021 had been recommended for the statutory duty to be reinstated.

The Council approved 'early access for 3 year olds' in March 2019 and this had been fully implemented since August 2019. Across the Council area, children could commence free early learning and childcare provision from the Monday following their 3rd birthday.

The Early Years Manager and ELC Lead Locality Officers now had responsibility for direct contact on any admissions enquiries as part of a strategy to support effective communications.

A consultation exercise had been undertaken with a range of stakeholders, in the period October and November 2020, on the current Admissions Policy and the proposed amendments. The main priorities which had emerged from the consultation process were outlined in the report and the proposed revised Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, had taken account of those priorities. If approved, the admissions policy would be used for the allocation of all early learning and childcare places.

Details were provided on:-

- ◆ proposed priorities for allocation of additional hours
- ◆ options available in respect of delivering 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare
- ◆ deferred entry to primary school

The Committee recommended to the Executive Committee:

- (1) that the priorities for admission to all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) establishments, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved; and
- (2) that the admissions policy and process for the allocation of places to all Early Learning and Childcare Establishments be implemented from March 2021.

[References: Minutes of 10 December 2009 (Paragraph 7) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 29 January 2020 (Paragraph 9)]

8 Education Resource Plan 2020/2021 - Quarter 2 Progress Report

A report dated 11 January 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Education Resource Plan 2020/2021 in relation to the actions and measures within the Resource.

Details were provided on progress made at the end of quarter 2, covering the period 1 April to 30 September 2020, in implementing the actions and measures identified in the Resource Plan.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 10 December 2019 (Paragraph 6)]

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

A report dated 15 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on Education Resources' Risk Register and Risk Control Actions.

The Resource 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 main 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 which scored risks based on likelihood and impact of risk. This resulted in risks being scored between 1 to 25 (low to 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 to add new risks and to review the score of existing risks. The Register was reviewed and updated by the Resource Risk Management Group.

Details of all risks which had scored very high and high were provided in Appendix 2 to the report.

The Committee decided: that the systems and controls in place to monitor risks within Education Resources be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 10 December 2019 (Paragraph 8)]

10 Standards and Quality Report 2019/2020

A report dated 17 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on the Education Resources' Standards and Quality Report for 2019/2020.

The Standards and Quality Report aimed to provide high level information on the successes and achievements of Education Resources. Specifically, it had been designed to provide information on how Education Resources performed as a service, the type of activities delivered and examples of the impact that those had on children, young people and families.

The Report made specific links to the priorities of Education Resources and the National Improvement Framework priorities, including raising attainment for all and closing the poverty related achievement gap. The 'Statutory Guidance Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000', placed a statutory duty on schools and local authorities to report on progress towards achieving the above priorities.

The Report for 2019/2020 was shorter than in previous years as the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent response of Education Resources meant that priorities were realigned in light of the pandemic and the work to ensure full opening of schools and educational settings from August 2020.

In addition, the data available for 2019/2020 was limited as Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) data was not gathered due to the impact of COVID-19 and arrangements for National Qualifications were based on teachers' professional judgment rather than the usual exam diet.

The Report also made specific reference to the response of Education Resources to the COVID-19 situation and detailed support for schools. Priorities for 2020/2021, which linked directly to the annual Education Resources plan, were contained within the Report.

The Report had been forwarded to the Scottish Government and would be published on the Council's website.

The Committee decided: that the Education Resources' Standards and Quality Report for session 2019/2020, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 1 October 2019 (Paragraph 7)]

11 COVID-19 – Education Resources' Update

A report dated 11 January 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Education Resources' response to the COVID-19 pandemic by schools and educational settings and on the Scottish Government guidance announced on 19 December 2020 and the supplementary guidance published on 6 January 2021.

Schools and educational settings across South Lanarkshire re-opened to all learners on 12 August 2020. Staff in schools and nurseries had worked to ensure adherence to safe systems of work, infection control measures, personal hygiene arrangements, maintenance of physical distancing measures, PPE and the cleaning regimes in place to keep staff and all learners safe. Recognition had also been given to the significant challenges that occurred each day for school and educational settings in complying with COVID-19 safe practices and of their involvement in the assessment process of positive cases with NHS Lanarkshire Public Health specialists.

All positive cases which impacted on a school or educational setting and involved a member of staff or young person had been subject to a rigorous self-assessment by NHS Lanarkshire Public Health.

NHS Lanarkshire Public Health had deemed, based on the evidence presented at the daily assessment meetings, that almost all positive cases had been community-based transmissions.

On 7 October 2020, the Scottish Government announced that the national 5 exams would not take place in 2020/2021 and on 8 December 2020, the Scottish Government announced that both Higher and Advanced Higher examinations would not take place in 2021. Regular dialogue had taken place with secondary school Head Teachers, staff, the professional associations, the trade unions and the SQA on the impact of this decision for pupils, families and staff. South Lanarkshire Education Resources was developing moderation procedures to support schools with making predicated judgements.

Following the Scottish Government's announcement, on 19 December 2020, of changes to the opening of schools and educational settings from January 2021 and on the new restrictions associated with Level 4 over the Christmas and the New Year period, a special meeting with all Head Teachers had been convened on Monday 21 December 2020, in advance of the school holiday.

Details were given on arrangements for:-

- ◆ children of designated key workers.
- ◆ free school meal payments for families
- ◆ support for school staff
- ◆ remote learning

A timeline from August 2020, including the new guidance for January 2021 and beyond and the impact on schools, educational settings, children and young people, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

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

The Committee decided: that Education Resources' response, in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire Public Health, to COVID-19 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2020 (Paragraph 10)]

12 Supporting Learners and Families - Digital Inclusion

A report dated 5 January 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the progress made in progressing the Scottish Government's Digital Inclusion Agenda.

The Scottish Government announced in June 2020 that it would make funds available to support Digital Inclusion and invited Education departments to bid for this funding to support families in accessing appropriate devices and connectivity for learning at home. In August 2020, the Council's first 2 parts of the bid were accepted for devices and connectivity with the third part of the bid being accepted at a later date.

The Council's bid gave consideration to the following 3 areas:-

- ◆ priority access
- ◆ widening access
- ◆ supporting access

Details of each area of the bid process were contained in the report.

The Council was able to access a grant of up to £1.460 million to support the digital inclusion agenda. Progress with the digital inclusion agenda in South Lanarkshire had included:-

- ◆ procurement of around 5,500 Chromebooks for distribution to pupils
- ◆ provision of Mifi connectivity devices, resulting in 700 families having internet access

The effectiveness of the roll-out of Chromebooks would be subject to ongoing monitoring.

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

The Committee decided: that the action taken by the Council, through Education Resources, to meet the needs of families regarding digital inclusion to support learning at home, be noted.

13 Youth, Family and Community Learning Service Delivery Update

A report dated 22 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the delivery of Youth, Family and Community Learning Service provision for vulnerable children and families since August 2020.

The range of engagement, impact and service delivered to communities by the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service included:-

- ◆ promoting youth engagement and voice, involving members of South Lanarkshire Youth Council and the Scottish Youth Parliament

- ◆ increased engagement, using digital technologies, with the aim of maintaining contact with young people
- ◆ expanding the delivery model of the youth participation network to the digital sphere
- ◆ securing funding for KEAR, Active All Ages and the Youth, Family and Community Learning STEM Programme through the Youth Work Education Recovery Fund
- ◆ work on the long term sustainability of awards, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award by training and supporting new leaders
- ◆ supporting Pathfinder Programme Activity
- ◆ providing a range of supports and programmes for learners and families in areas such as health and wellbeing, achievement, improving relationships and removing barriers to learning
- ◆ supporting adult learning
- ◆ participation in the Connecting Scotland Programme
- ◆ workforce development
- ◆ celebration of the 50th anniversary of Universal Connections at the Key Youth Centre as the first, purpose built youth facility in Scotland

The Committee decided: that the update on Youth, Family and Community Learning Service provision for vulnerable children and families, since August 2020, be noted.

14 Additional Support for Learning Review - Support for Learning: All Our Children, All Their Potential

A report dated 23 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the outcome of the review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) in schools and the action plan published by the Scottish Government in October 2020 in response to the review.

A review of the implementation of additional support for learning in schools was announced by the Deputy First Minister in January 2019. The review was implemented between October and December 2019 and considered:-

- ◆ the way in which Additional Support for Learning (ASL) legislation worked in practice across all educational settings
- ◆ the quality of learning and support, including overall achievement and positive destinations achieved post school
- ◆ the different approaches to planning and assessment to meet the needs of children and young people
- ◆ the roles and responsibilities of support staff, teaching staff, leadership role, education authorities and national agencies
- ◆ the areas of practice that could be further enhanced through better use of current resources to support practice, staffing or other aspects of provision

The findings and recommendations of the report were divided into the following 9 themes, details of which were provided in the report:-

- ◆ vision and visibility
- ◆ mainstreaming and inclusion
- ◆ maintaining focus, but overcoming fragmentation
- ◆ resources
- ◆ workforce development and support
- ◆ relationships between schools and parents/carers

- ◆ relationships and behaviour
- ◆ understanding rights
- ◆ assurance mechanism and inspection

The main recommendation of the review was that children and young people required to be involved in all decision-making relating to additional support for learning.

The Scottish Government had produced an action plan which responded to each of the themes and this would be overseen by the Additional Support for Learning Implementation Group. Progress would be reported by October 2021.

The Committee decided: that the outcome of the review of the implementation of additional support for learning (ASL) and the action plan published by the Scottish Government in October 2020 be noted.

15 Overview: Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Domestic Law in Scotland

A report dated 22 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Domestic Law in Scotland and the Council's response, on behalf of South Lanarkshire Council's Children's Services Partnership, to the Scottish Government's consultation on the proposal.

On 1 September 2020, the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament and was considered to be one of the most significant pieces of legislation to be introduced since devolution. A consultation on the Bill commenced on 7 September and closed on 16 October 2020.

The UNCRC set out specific rights of all children to help them fulfil their potential and included rights relating to:-

- ◆ health and education
- ◆ leisure and play
- ◆ fair and equal treatment
- ◆ protection from exploitation
- ◆ the right to be heard

Scotland was preparing to become one of the first countries in the world to directly incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law.

The main elements of the Bill were that it would:-

- ◆ directly incorporate the UNCRC as far as possible within the powers of the Scottish Parliament
- ◆ make it unlawful for public authorities to act incompatibly with the incorporated UNCRC requirements
- ◆ give power to the Children's Commissioner to take legal action in relation to children's rights
- ◆ require Ministers to produce a Children's Rights Scheme setting out how they complied with children's rights and to report annually
- ◆ require listed public authorities to report every 3 years on how they complied with children's rights

The Bill also allowed for incorporation of the articles of the UNCRC currently beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament, should those change in the future.

The Scottish Government had undertaken a range of activities linked to developing the rights of children and young people which were detailed in the report. Those included a response to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's 11 recommendations on taking a children's rights approach to responding to COVID-19, which was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

A response to the consultation on the Bill had been submitted on behalf of South Lanarkshire Children's Services Partnership and this was attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

Following enactment of the legislation, further steps would require to be undertaken to audit and identify any potential gaps in training, policy formulation and procedures at establishment, Resource and Council level to support the implementation of the legislation.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the main elements of the Bill and the response to the consultation on incorporation of the UNCRC into domestic law in Scotland be noted; and
- (2) that the analysis of the Scottish Government's response to the UN Committee's 11 recommendations in taking a children's rights approach to responding to COVID-19 be noted.

16 Youth Employability and Work Based Learning

A report dated 23 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the progress of the Youth Employability Service's targeted employability and senior-phase work-based learning programmes and in meeting the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Youth Employability Service supported young people at school in the senior phase and post-school up to age 19 (26 if care experienced) to develop and achieve the skills, experience, and qualifications to progress to positive and sustained post-school destinations. The Service comprised the following 3 key programmes:-

- ◆ ASPIRE
- ◆ GRADU8
- ◆ Foundation Apprenticeships

The COVID-19 pandemic had presented a significant challenge for the delivery of the Youth Employability programmes for 2020/2021. The Youth Employability Service had aimed to ensure that vulnerable young people, who were likely to be significantly disadvantaged as a result of the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, were supported. This had been possible due to the positive partnership relations between the service, schools and partners, including local colleges and Skills Development Scotland.

Details were given on the following in relation to the Service's 3 key programmes:-

- ◆ support offered to young people
- ◆ impact of COVID-19

Case studies of young people involved in each of the programmes were attached as Appendices 1 to 3 of the report.

It was anticipated that the demand for youth employability programmes would continue to increase in 2021/2022 due to the unique challenges predicted to be faced by young people and the subsequent economic challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee decided: that the progress of the Youth Employability Services' targeted employability and senior-phase work-based learning programmes and the Services' efforts in meeting the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic be noted.

17 Response to Call for Views on the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill

A report dated 22 December 2020 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the Council's response to the call for views on the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill.

The Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill was a Member's Bill introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 30 September 2020. The call for views opened on 16 November 2020 and closed on 11 January 2021.

Details of the aims of the Bill in improving opportunities for disabled children and young people were provided in the report.

The Council had established a Working Group to discuss and compile a response to the call for views and the Group's response was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Due to the Scottish Parliament Elections in spring 2021, there was a possibility that there would be insufficient time for the Bill to complete all the necessary stages through the Scottish Parliament. Education Resources would monitor the progress of the Bill to ensure readiness if it was enacted.

The Committee decided: that the Council's response to the call for views on the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill and the main elements of the Bill be noted.

18 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.