

EDUCATION RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 16 March 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 Martin Grant Hose, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Ian McAllan, 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

Councillor's Apology:

Councillor John Ross (ex officio)

External Members Present:

Christine Hall, Andy Harvey, Hilary Kirby, John Mulligan

External Members' Apologies:

Gillian Coulter, Ann Marie Hobson, Dr Nagy Iskander

Attending:

Community and Enterprise Resources

G Donachie, Facilities Service Manager

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)

Finance and Corporate Resources

M M Cairns, Legal Services Manager; 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)

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 19 January 2021 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 2020/2021

A joint report dated 11 February 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted comparing actual expenditure at 29 January 2021 against budgeted expenditure for 2020/2021 for Education Resources together with a forecast for the year to 31 March 2021

Following the Council's probable outturn exercise, there was an overspend of £12.751 million, after approved transfer to reserves, on the Education Resources' revenue budget. This included projected net costs of COVID to 31 March 2021 of £12.443 million.

As at 29 January 2021, there was an overspend of £6.108 million, after approved transfers.

The main factors contributing to the overspend on the Education Resources' revenue budget and proposed budget virements were detailed in the report.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the forecast to 31 March 2021 of an overspend of £12.751 million, after approved transfers to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) that an overspend of £6.108 million as at 29 January 2021, after approved transfers to reserves, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the proposed budget virements be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2021 (Paragraph 3) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 10 February 2021 (Paragraph 4)]

4 Education Resources – Capital Budget Monitoring 2020/2021

A joint report dated 25 February 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted:-

- ◆ advising of progress of the capital programme for Education Resources for the period 1 April 2020 to 29 January 2021
- ◆ providing a predicted outturn position for the year to 31 March 2021

A report to this Committee on 19 January 2021 showed that the Education Resources' capital programme for the financial year 2020/2021 amounted to £23.153 million. On 10 February 2021, the Executive Committee approved budget adjustments to the Education Resources' Capital Programme totalling an increase of £1.327 million, resulting in a revised capital programme for Education Resources of £24.480 million. Spend to 29 January 2021 amounted to £17.093 million.

Current estimates suggested an outturn of £22.200 million. This represented an underspend of £2.280 million and primarily reflected the anticipated timing of spend on a number of projects, resulting in the budget being required in 2021/2022 rather than 2020/2021.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Education Resources' capital programme of £24.480 million and expenditure to date of £17.093 million be noted; and
- (2) that the projected outturn of £22.200 million be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2021 (Paragraph 4) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 10 February 2021 (Paragraph 3)]

5 Education Resources - Workforce Monitoring- November and December 2020

A joint report dated 9 February 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the following employee information for Education Resources for the period November and December 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 12 December 2020

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2021 (Paragraph 5)]

6 Youth, Family and Community Learning Service: Kick Start Scheme Placements

A joint report dated 21 February 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ job placements within the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service (YFCLS) as part of the Council's participation in the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme
- ◆ approval for the establishment of a YFCL Officer (Team Leader), on a fixed term basis, in the Education Resources' establishment

As a result of the Council's successful application to the Kickstart Scheme, 6 job opportunities would be available within the Youth, Family and Community Learning Service. The job opportunities would give young people the chance to build their skills in the workplace and to gain experience to improve their chances of finding long-term work.

The placements were on a fixed term basis for 26 weeks and would provide an opportunity for young people who took up those posts to apply for jobs within the Council and to develop their knowledge and skills in the future. The Council would fund a 26 week extension which would mean a 52 week job placement for the young people.

It was proposed that a post of YFCL Officer (Team Leader) at Grade 3, Level 2 be established, on a fixed term basis, from April 2021 for the duration of the placements. The Team Leader would manage and mentor the trainees and would have responsibility for ensuring that they were supervised, had an appropriate level of training, support, direction, and received ongoing development within YFCL.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that a post of YFCL Officer (Team Leader) be established at Grade 3, Level 2, SCP63-74, (£32,994 to £40,995) on a fixed term basis, as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report, in the Education Resources' establishment; and
- (2) that the intended impact and outcomes for participants be noted.

7 Early Learning and Childcare

A joint report dated 19 February 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on:-

- ◆ progress made in the expansion towards the delivery of 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic
- ◆ the recent confirmation on the Scottish Government's decision to reinstate the statutory duty on education authorities to make 1,140 hours of ELC available to each eligible child from August 2021

On 31 March 2020, the Scottish Government advised all councils of its decision, in light of the implications of the coronavirus pandemic, to pause the rollout of the ELC expansion and removed the statutory duty on local authorities to deliver the expansion from August 2020.

In South Lanarkshire, since August 2020, the majority of eligible children had been receiving 1,140 hours of free Early Learning and Childcare.

On 14 December 2020, a joint letter was issued from the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) confirming that evidence considered by the ELC Joint Delivery Board recommended that the statutory duty to deliver 1,140 hours of funded ELC should be reinstated with effect from August 2021. This recommendation had subsequently been agreed by Scottish Ministers and COSLA.

Details were given on progress in relation to:-

- ◆ admissions/allocation of places which indicated that 1,140 hours of funded ELC were being delivered to 86% of all eligible 2 to 5 year olds
- ◆ the new building programme, attached as Appendix 1 to the report
- ◆ funded providers which indicated that 111 funded providers had been added to the Procured Service Agreement

In line with the procurement for funded providers, there was a commitment to review the sustainable funding hourly rate on an annual basis. The current hourly rates were based on the Scottish Government's Financial Review and the IPSOS Mori review of hourly rates undertaken across the West Partnership ELC. In principle, it had been considered that steps would be taken to move to an hourly rate across the West Partnership ELC 8 authorities. This would be achieved over a period of time.

It was proposed that:

- ◆ for session 2021/2022, an hourly rate for 2 to 3 year olds would be £6.40 which included 50p per hour per funded session in line with the child's pattern of attendance
- ◆ the hourly rate for 3 to 5 year olds would be £5.81 which included 50p per hour per funded session in line with the child's pattern of attendance

There would be a requirement to monitor and report on the 'free' meal provision and the process for this would be agreed with funded providers.

The Council was currently reviewing its implementation plan for the delivery of 1,140 hours early learning and childcare in terms of the actions that required to be taken for August 2021 as follows:-

- ◆ preparation for the allocation of ELC places for sessions 2021/2022 - (March 2021)
- ◆ preparation for the allocation for funded providers for session 2021/2022 – (March 2021)
- ◆ new build nursery and adaptations to existing nursery accommodation

- ◆ working with the Care Inspectorate regarding inspections and variations
- ◆ ensuring workforce recruitment was completed for staff
- ◆ preparation for communication and engagement with parents and families
- ◆ ensuring strategies were confirmed to meet the requirements within the National Standard
- ◆ ensuring the delivery of a funded lunch provision
- ◆ preparation process for annual review of funded providers in line with procurement guidelines

Details of the staffing requirement for the provision of ELC final phase expansion from August 2021 were contained within the report.

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

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the content of the report be noted;
- (2) that the sustainable rate for funded providers 2021/2022, as detailed in paragraph 5.2 of the report, be approved; and
- (3) that the establishment increase within Education Resources, as outlined in paragraphs 7.4 to 7.9 of the report and as detailed below, be approved.

Post	Proposed Number of Posts (FTE) Permanent	Grade	SCP Range	Annual Salary
Early Years Practitioner Final phase - 52 week	50	Grade 2, Level 3	SCP46-48	£27,105 to £27,935
Early Years Practitioner Final phase – 38 week	10	Grade 2, Level 3	SCP46-48	£24,137 to £24,876
School Support Assistant 35 hour posts - 52 week	9	Grade 1, Level 4	SCP30-31	£20,293 to £20,603
School Support Assistant - Term time	0.58	Grade 1, Level 4	SCP30-31	£18,071 to £18,347
Early Years Support Assistant Phase 5 - 52 week	8	Grade 1, Level 1 to Level 3	SCP20-27	£18,520 to £20,526
Early Years Support Assistant Phase 5 – Term time	34.77	Grade 1, Level 1 to Level 3	SCP20-27	£18,520 to £20,526

Post	Proposed Number of Posts (FTE) Temporary	Grade	Post Approval	SCP Range	Annual Salary
Early Years Practitioner Supply Cover - 52 week for 6 months	40	Grade 2, Level 3	Temporary until 30 September 2021	SCP46–48	£27,105 to £27,935
ELC Quality Officers	4	Grade 4, Level 2	Temporary until 31 March 2022	SCP82–83	£43,652 to £44,345
NAMS/SEEMIS Co-ordinator	1	Grade 2, Level 4	Temporary until 31 March 2022	SCP55–57	£29,253 to £30,147
Personnel Assistant	1	Grade 2, Level 3	Temporary until 31 March 2022	SCP46-48	£25,640 to £26,425
Clerical Assistant (Personnel)	2.5	Grade 1, Level 1 to Level 3	Temporary until 31 March 2022	SCP20–27	£17,519 to £19,417
Clerical Assistant (Support Services)	2	Grade 1, Level 1 to Level 3	Permanent	SCP20–27	£17,519 to £19,417

[References: Minutes of 6 August 2019 (Paragraph 9)] and Note of Delegated Decisions taken by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Group Leaders, on items of business relating to Education Resources Committee of 19 May 2020 (Paragraph 9)]

8 Education Resources – Response to Remote Learning

A report dated 24 February 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Education Resources' response to the requirements to deliver Remote Learning, specifically from the period 11 January 2021 onwards.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, school buildings were closed to the majority of children and young people from March to June 2020 and, with some exceptions, schools were asked to move to a Remote Learning model for this period.

During this period, Education Resources had worked to support schools in providing high-quality remote learning. A key priority was to ensure that appropriate devices were issued to those who needed them. Currently, 5,719 devices had been deployed to learners in South Lanarkshire Council schools.

During the period August to December 2020, the Curriculum and Quality Improvement Service (CQIS) commenced planning in the event that the country entered another period of lockdown where the majority of children and young people were asked to learn from home. As a result of this work, by December 2020 schools were in a strong position to review and improve their Remote Learning offers.

On 4 January 2021, the First Minister announced that all children (unless otherwise eligible through keyworker status or because of other reasons) would move to a model of full time Remote Learning from 11 January 2021. Immediately following this announcement, Education Resources produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for schools to follow and this was issued in conjunction with national guidelines published by Education Scotland.

The guidelines set out guiding principles for each school's remote learning offer and each school was asked to write a summary plan indicating the delivery of children's learning which would be high quality, consistent, engaging and reflect the need of all learners. The summary plans were submitted to Council Headquarters and, where required, schools were offered support. Summary plans were also discussed with parents, carers and young people to ensure that expectations were clear from the outset.

As part of the Central Monitoring and Quality Assurance process, Education Resources asked each school to complete a baseline audit of their provision following the first full week of Remote Learning. This audit was analysed and any issues followed up on. At the beginning of February 2021, schools were asked to complete the audit for the second time. Progress in almost all areas was significant. Using the evidence from the audit and evidence from schools and stakeholders, Education Resources compiled a full report of its response to Remote Learning, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which would also be published to the South Lanarkshire Council website as part of the Council's commitment to providing accountability and assurance to stakeholders.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report. In terms of assessing the needs of learners following remote learning, the Executive Director advised that a needs analysis would be undertaken and a report on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the Education Resources' response to the requirements around delivering a Remote Learning offer, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the content of the "Remote Learning Audit", as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

9 Supporting the Alternative Model for SQA Certification in 2021

A report dated 4 March 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted providing an update on current and future SQA/Moderation activities to support the national qualifications of senior phase pupils.

Following the closure of schools in Scotland from 20 March 2020, as part of the national lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, schools reopened to all pupils on 11 August 2020. On 7 October 2020, it was announced that National 5 examinations would be cancelled and replaced by awards based on teachers' judgements of candidate evidence supported by an alternative certification quality assurance model. It was further announced, on 8 December 2020, that the Higher and Advanced Higher examination diet would also be cancelled and awards would be made using the same alternative certification model being developed for National 5.

Pupil awards would be made using grades submitted by teachers to the SQA based on evidence of demonstrated attainment from high predictive value assessments completed under controlled conditions in school.

Two significant changes had been introduced to the model, to address issues with the process implemented in the previous year, as follows:-

- ◆ there would be no adjustment for inferred attainment
- ◆ there would be no 'algorithm' applied to pupil grades

As a result, pupil grades would be based solely on demonstrated attainment. A multi-stage model for quality assurance had been developed by the SQA in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including teacher unions, directors of education, regional improvement collaboratives, colleges, independent schools, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.

The stages were:-

Stage 1 (November 2020 to April 2021)

- ◆ support for teachers in 'understanding standards' and local approaches to moderation
- ◆ moderation of pupil evidence in schools and at subject level across the local authority or Regional Improvement Collaborative

Stage 2 (April to May 2021)

- ◆ moderation of pupil evidence in schools and at subject level across the local authority or Regional Improvement Collaborative continued
- ◆ during May, SQA would request, review and provide feedback on samples of assessment evidence from each centre

Stage 3 (end of May to 25 June 2021)

- ◆ finalisation of assessments in schools, and engagement at school and local authority level to ascertain consistency of approach and to reassess any unexpected outcomes based on the evidence presented by the school

Stage 4 (25 June 2021)

- ◆ final submission of results

Stage 5

- ◆ appeals process

Moderation was the process by which teacher judgements relating to pupil assessments and evidence were shared and discussed to ensure that SQA standards were consistently applied. Details were provided on arrangements to ensure:-

- ◆ support for moderation at Stages 1 and 2
- ◆ quality assurance at Stage 3
- ◆ engagement with senior learners to enable them to share their experiences of undertaking SQA qualifications in the current circumstances

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the planned local Quality Assurance and Moderation activity in schools to support the national qualifications of learners in the senior phase be noted, and
- (2) that the ongoing support being provided to secondary establishments across Education Resources be noted.

10 Covid-19 Education Resources' Update

A report dated 4 March 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Education Resources' response to the COVID-19 pandemic by schools and educational settings, including the phased return of children to nursery and school.

Schools and educational settings across South Lanarkshire re-opened, on a phased basis, on 22 February 2021. This included the return of all children in early years, P1 to P3 children, some senior pupils (S4 to S6) for essential practical work and a limited increase in the provision for vulnerable children. 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.

On 23 February 2021, the First Minister announced that, as part of the Strategic Framework for recovery, priority would be given to the return of other groups of pupils to school, which would be predicated on the suppression of the virus. The indications were that, based on the medical and health guidance, it was expected that the following children would return to school from Monday 15 March 2021:-

- ◆ P4 to P7 children in primary school
- ◆ an increased phased return for some senior phase pupils (S4 to S6)

On 2 March 2021, the First Minister announced the return of all primary pupils full-time and all secondary pupils part-time to schools from 15 March 2021. Education Resources would develop plans with schools and nurseries on the continued phased return of children and further details would be provided to staff, parents and carers.

The following principles formed guidance for local authorities and schools in planning their provision for learning:-

- ◆ schools were best placed to decide on timetable arrangements based on their detailed local knowledge of learners, their choices within courses, accommodation availability and school transport
- ◆ schools should communicate the rationale for in-school and remote learning to parents, carers and learners. Communication should also include detailing the COVID-19 mitigations to be followed and how the new requirement for 2 metre physical distancing would work
- ◆ within the blended learning arrangements, schools should prioritise in-school learning for Senior Phase learners to ensure that they had a secure foundation and course coverage prior to any formal assessment for a range of qualifications taking place in the later stages of the 2020/2021 academic session
- ◆ schools should prioritise subject areas and cohorts of learners where there was greatest need as identified by the school

Education Resources would continue to support schools with their preparations and plans in providing clear communication through schools for staff, learners, parents and carers.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the efforts of staff in schools and educational settings in continuing to adapt to the changing guidance and in responding to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that the partnership arrangements and protocols in place with NHS Public Health Lanarkshire, who led on the incident management of cases, continued to operate on a daily basis to ensure the wellbeing of individuals was at the core of the assessment process for each case;

- (3) that the arrangements for welcoming children and young people back to nursery and school from 22 February 2021 be noted; and
- (4) that the First Minister's announcement on 2 March 2021 on the return of all primary pupils full-time and all secondary pupils part-time to schools from 15 March 2021 be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 19 January 2021 (Paragraph 11)]

11 Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020

A joint report dated 23 February 2021 by the Executive Directors (Education Resources) and (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted providing an update on the implementation of the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020.

The Scottish Government had reviewed the Regulations governing the food and drinks currently provided in schools. This review was conducted by a Technical Working Group (TWG), which consulted the public on its proposals in summer 2018. The outcome of the consultation and the proposed changes to the current food and drink standards were published by the Scottish Government in June 2019, with an implementation date of autumn 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this had been extended to 8 April 2021.

The work undertaken by the TWG and the associated consultation exercise focused on the Government's manifesto commitment to align school food regulations with the National Dietary Goals. In the report by the Scottish Government's TWG, the focus was on reducing sugar, increasing fibre and reducing red meat.

The nutritional standards aimed to align to those goals and included:-

- ◆ providing more fruit and vegetables with all meals, while reducing or removing fruit juice drinks
- ◆ significantly restricting the amount of red and red processed meats being offered as part of the weekly menu
- ◆ aiming to increase fibre through further restricting baked goods while setting higher fibre levels for menu items
- ◆ further restriction of chocolate, crisps, cakes, drinks and snack options, which were already restricted at lunch time, to all times, for example breakfast clubs, interval and after school settings

The current nutritional standards were calculated on a weekly basis using sophisticated software and analysis of the average weekly menu. Those were also aligned to food standards guidance which restricted products such as confectionary, fried goods and drinks. This would change to a daily analysis of menus.

The standards for food and drinks within schools were contained within Appendix 1 to the report. Information was also provided on action taken to implement the new standards including:-

- ◆ producing compliant menus
- ◆ purchasing nutritional analysis software
- ◆ support for staff in implementation
- ◆ evaluation of impact on school food provision
- ◆ timescales
- ◆ communications and engagement strategy

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

The Committee decided: that the update on the implementation of the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 be noted.

12 West Partnership Improvement Collaborative: Interim Action Plan - January 2021

A report dated 23 February 2021 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on the West Partnership's Draft Interim Action Plan.

The West Partnership Improvement Plan 2020 to 2023 set out the key areas for collaborative action to enable improvement across the partnership region. The Improvement Plan captured those areas where collaboration between partners would be beneficial.

The Plan was organised under the following 3 key areas, each led by 2 Directors of Education/Chief Education Officers:-

- ◆ collaborative learning networks
- ◆ curriculum, learning and teaching
- ◆ leadership, empowerment and improvement

A fourth workstream, evaluation and reporting, was also led by 2 Directors of Education.

In January 2021, an Interim Action Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, had been prepared at the request of Directors to address current and immediately foreseeable challenges in delivering education provision while most children and young people were unable to attend school. The Interim Action Plan, based on the existing plan for 2020 to 2023, identified priority projects, each of which had a specific relevance during the period when COVID-19 restrictions were in place, including:-

- ◆ important and heavily subscribed leadership activities
- ◆ supporting learners with additional needs
- ◆ tracking learners' wellbeing

The Committee decided: that the West Partnership's Interim Action Plan be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 27 October 2020 (Paragraph 12)]

13 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.