

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE31 MARCH 2022Report by Director of EducationIMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE FUNDING**PURPOSE**

1. To update Education Committee on the allocation of additional funds in the form of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. Education Committee is asked to:

- a) note the additional resource available to the department;
- b) ask the Director of Education to regularly share implementation plans and impact and progress reports.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Education Department's vision statement "*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*" reflects the commitment and expectation that all learners will be supported to realise their potential.

4. Members will be aware of the Local Improvement Plan 2022-2025, which outlines high level areas for improvement for all services and schools. In line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, the plan sets out how we will address the inequalities of outcomes that exist for different equity groups and how we will achieve the priorities associated with the [Education - Achieving Excellence and Equity: national improvement framework and improvement plan 2022](#).

5. Previous Local Improvement Plans contained similar objectives, which have been reported on through the annual Standards and Quality Report and reports on the use of Pupil Equity Funding and progress with the priorities associated with the National Improvement Framework.

6. Elected members will also be aware that the Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-24 includes, as in previous years, specific indicators and targets relating to 'closing the gap' for all children and young people.

7. From school session 2011-12, thanks to the commitment of additional resources by Council, the Education Department has worked with schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to support raising attainment of the lowest performing 20%. In addition to Head Teachers seeking to target their devolved resources, funding provided to maintain teacher numbers has also been allocated to engage additional staff to support an improvement in the attainment of children and young people from key equity groups.

8. Additional resources from the Scottish Government to support recovery from the pandemic have also been made available to ELC settings and schools during session 2021 – 2022.

9. The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by the First Minister in February 2015. This included establishing the £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund. The Scottish Attainment Challenge is about achieving equity in education; specifically by ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

10. Underpinned by The National Improvement Framework, Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child, the Scottish Attainment Challenge initially identified 7, later extended to 9 local authorities, to become ‘Challenge Authorities’. Challenge authorities received additional resources to support the closing of the poverty related attainment gap.

11. The Cabinet Secretary set out in Parliament on 23 November 2021 the Scottish Government’s plans for the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, (herein known as *SAC Refresh*), developed in consultation with local government and agreed by COSLA Leaders.

12. The announcement, as expected, confirmed that the current funding within the Scottish Attainment Challenge will now be redistributed between all 32 local authorities, with an aim of supporting recovery from the pandemic and accelerating progress in closing the gap. East Renfrewshire’s allocation for 2022 to 2026 is detailed in table 1 below.

*Table 1*

<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
<b>East Renfrewshire</b>	£134,591	£267,565	£400,538	£533,512

13. Alongside *SAC Refresh* and also announced on 23 November 2021, schools’ Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) will remain in place.

14. The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) was initially made available from April 2017. For, each child in a publicly funded primary or secondary who is eligible and registered for free school meals, schools are allocated £1,200. For session 2022 – 2023, East Renfrewshire schools were allocated £1,471,430; Appendix 1 provides a summary of the allocation by school.

15. We await further guidance and information regarding the use of *SAC Refresh* and PEF monies from the Scottish Government.

## **REPORT**

16. It is pleasing that the department’s vision and work already reflects many of the features of the National Improvement Framework and Getting it Right for Every Child. With our relentless focus on improving outcomes for all East Renfrewshire’s children and young

people, we see no need to make a step change in the systems which have served our children and young people so well in the past. Rather, we need to build on our strengths, making changes only where and when it is right to do so, and to ensure we achieve with greater consistency the highest possible educational standards in all our schools and services. To support and challenge us to do so, SAC Stretch Aims will be published by the Scottish Government.

17. Education Committee will be well aware of the stark inequalities that exist between the most advantaged and disadvantaged residents in East Renfrewshire. The thrust of our approach is to tackle inequity and inequalities in educational outcomes. There are three main themes, which are centred on UNCRC Article 28, (Right to an Education) and align to the broader achievements of our children and young people. These themes are inter-related but each deserving its separate emphasis:

- Children and Young People's Wellbeing
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Learning and Teaching

18. In addition, leadership, parental engagement and the use of research and data will permeate across all themes.

19. The funding is short-term therefore it is vital that any improvements have a focus on both sustainability and an 'exit strategy' throughout its existence.

20. The department intends to continue to take a universal approach to improving outcomes, with clear intent in raising the bar for all. However targeted approaches will be employed to support specific equity groups and schools with larger proportion of children and young people living in poverty.

21. A plan will be devised detailing the supports and interventions in place across the 4 years of funding. This plan will be shared with Education Committee prior to implementation and progress and impact reported through both the annual Standards and Quality Report and separate Education Committee reports.

## **CONSULTATION**

22. The department has carried out extensive engagement on the priorities identified within the Local Improvement Plan 2022 – 2025. In addition a range of stakeholders have been consulted in response to the introduction of *SAC Refresh*. Their views have helped inform the key themes identified in paragraph 17. Further consultation is planned to support the finalisation of the department's SAC plan.

## **FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS**

23. Scottish Attainment Challenge funds will support East Renfrewshire's continued focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. *SAC Refresh* monies for Year 1, £134,591 will be used to support any improvement priorities.

24. Schools will continue to benefit from Pupil Equity Funding, appendix 1 details the amount received by each school for session 2022 – 2023.

25. Although the Council's allocation of funds to support the lowest performing 20% of pupils has decreased, schools will still benefit from a reduced number of additional teaching staff.

## CONCLUSION

26. Education in East Renfrewshire has for a significant period of time been very successful, achieving outstanding attainment and achievements for almost all of its learners.

27. We have evidence to show that we are raising the bar for all, yet there continues to be a persistent and significant gap in attainment between the most advantaged and disadvantaged young people.

28. The introduction of *SAC Refresh*, will help the department resource already identified areas for improvement, linked to the poverty related attainment gap and recovery from the pandemic, and help to reduce inequalities of outcomes and raise the attainment bar for all the children and young people of East Renfrewshire

## RECOMMENDATION

29. Education Committee is asked to:

- a) note the additional resource available to the department;
- b) ask the Director of Education to regularly share implementation plans and impact and progress reports.

Mark Ratter  
Director of Education  
31 March 2022

### **Convener Contact Details**

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### **Background Papers**

1. [Education - Achieving Excellence and Equity: national improvement framework and improvement plan 2022](#)