

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**Minute of meeting held at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 25 August 2022.**

**Present:**

Councillor Andrew Anderson (Chair)  
Councillor Tony Buchanan  
Councillor Kate Campbell  
Councillor Colm Merrick\*  
Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)

Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Gordon Wallace  
Dr Frank Angell\*  
Ms Dorothy Graham  
Mr Des Morris

Councillor Anderson in the Chair

(\*) indicates remote attendance

**Attending:**

Mark Ratter, Director of Education; Janice Collins, Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement); Joe McCaig, Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision); Siobhan McColgan, Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity); Tracy Morton, Education Senior Manager (Developing People); Graeme Hay, Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change); Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

David Gordon, Quality Improvement Officer (\*); Elise Kelly, Include Me 2 (\*); and Kayla Rocks, Cross Arthurlie Primary School Pupil (\*).

**Apology:**

Ms Fiona Gilchrist.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**91.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**SUMMER 2022**

**92.** The Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) reported that funding of £118,000 had been provided to support a programme of activities for 5-14 year olds from low income families to access activities, child care and food during the summer months. The

programme included culture and leisure camps at Barrhead and Eastwood High Schools and a summer camp organised by Include Me 2 Club. A range of activities were also provided outwith the Summer 2022 funding by a number of partners including Social Work, Police Scotland, Community Learning and Development, and the Carers Centre, to improve the health and well-being of children throughout East Renfrewshire. She welcomed Kayla Rocks and Elise Kelly to the meeting to share their experiences as a participant and supporter of the Summer 2022 programme.

Kayla reported on the activities she had taken part in during the summer programme including art, drama and sport. She explained that she had been nervous prior to attending but had particularly liked the football activities and lunches which were provided, and enjoyed her experience at camp. Elise, a former St. Luke's High School pupil, advised that she became involved with Include Me 2 Club when she was at high school and now held a position on the board of trustees. She was currently on a work placement at Include Me 2 Club carrying out administrative tasks and working at a range of sessions with children and young people. She hoped that this experience and qualifications gained would help her to access a Business Enterprise course at Strathclyde University. She reported that 114 children with additional support needs and from low income families took part in the programme, with flexibility and choice being key to the programme's development. Participants were provided with breakfast, lunch and snacks throughout the day and feedback from parents had been extremely positive.

A short video was shown providing feedback from some of the participants and supporters about their experiences of the summer programme, and detailing some of the activities which had been provided, including art, games, outdoor play, and sports.

In response to a question from Councillor Wallace regarding reduction of the extended school year at Isobel Mair School and any impact that this may have had on pupils during the summer months, the Head of Education Services (Equality and Equity) advised that a number of Isobel Mair pupils had participated in the Summer Programme, and other available programmes, which had been prepared with inclusiveness in mind to allow children with additional support needs to take part. Referring to changes to the extended school year at Isobel Mair School, the Director of Education advised that the Education Department had sought to maximise use of the funding which had been released and meetings had taken place to consider the wider resources which could be provided by the Education Department, other council departments, and partners, to provide support to Isobel Mair pupils in future. Councillor O'Donnell requested further information on the exact number of Isobel Mair pupils who had attended the summer programme and other programmes available over the summer holidays and, referring to a commitment which had been given to Isobel Mair parents, requested an update on plans for an extended school day for this and future terms, and sought clarification on summer arrangements for 2023, as parents required a significant amount of advance notice to make plans for next year.

Councillor Anderson, supported by other members, thanked Kayla and Elise for attending the committee to give feedback on the summer programme, commended the valuable experience gained by all of the participants, and thanked all those who had provided support.

The Committee agreed:-

- (a) with reference to Isobel Mair School, that further information be provided on the number of pupils involved in the various summer programmes; arrangements for an extended school day for this and future terms; and clarification on arrangements for summer 2023; and
- (b) otherwise, to note the presentation and associated comments.

## **SQA EXAMINATION RESULTS 2022**

**93.** Councillor Anderson invited the Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision), to give an overview of results in East Renfrewshire schools from the SQA examination diet 2022. The Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) clarified that the oral update given at this meeting would be followed by a more detailed analysis at the November meeting of the committee.

Having summarised the background to the alternative certification models used in 2019/20 and 2020/2021, the Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) explained that a full examination diet had taken place in 2022 and thereafter presented some of the highlights from the examination results, which had been issued on 9 August 2022.

At National 5 level, 77% of S4 pupils had attained 5 or more awards which broadly equated to the performance levels in 2019. In particular, at Eastwood High School, the proportion of S4 pupils attaining 5 or more awards at National 5 was the highest ever recorded at the school and the highest across East Renfrewshire in 2022 at 85%. Barrhead and Woodfarm High Schools performed strongly in this measure with St. Luke's High School recording significant improvement from 2019 figures.

At Higher level, performance at S5 level was strong with significant improvement on attainment from 2019 and the third highest level of recorded attainment in these measures. Almost half of all S5 pupils attained 5 or more awards at Higher while 69% attained 3 or more awards. 84% of S5 pupils attained at least 1 Higher and the proportion of S5 pupils attaining 5 or more A awards was the highest ever recorded since 2019 at over 17%. Several schools in East Renfrewshire recorded their highest ever performance for S5 pupils with Barrhead and Woodfarm High Schools attaining their best ever performance for 1 or more and 5 or more awards.

At Advanced Higher level, the proportion of pupils who attained 1 or more awards increased by 4% compared to the 2019 figures, and several schools recorded significant increases.

The Head of Education Services (Performance and Provision) reported that Scottish Education was going through a significant time of change. He advised that an independent review of national qualifications and assessments had been undertaken and an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Review (OECD) review of Curriculum for Excellence had been widened to include recommendations on how to transform Scotland's approach to assessment and qualifications. The OECD had recommended a review of the approaches to national qualifications and a replacement of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). Following publication of these reviews, the Scottish Government had confirmed that new qualifications would be developed, and a reference group had been appointed to seek the views of stakeholders and to make recommendations in due course.

The Head of Education (Performance and Provision) added that, although schools had remained open during the 2021/22 academic year, pupils and staff had continued to face disruption due to the ongoing impact of COVID. He then thanked all pupils, parents and staff for their vital contributions throughout another challenging year and congratulated them on their achievements,

Having heard Councillor Anderson, supported by members of the committee, congratulate staff, pupils and parents for their excellent achievements, the committee agreed to note the report and comments made.

## **IMPROVING OUTCOMES – A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF 1140 HOURS**

**94.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education advising of the West Partnership’s planned evaluation of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC).

The report referred to the Scottish Government’s transformation agenda for Early Learning and Childcare, published in March 2017, which proposed to almost double the entitlement of free ELC from 600 hours to 1140 hours by 2020 for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. It was reported that the Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaborative, known as the West Partnership, which comprised 8 local authorities across the West of Scotland, was keen to explore how this increased ELC offered improved outcomes for children and families by undertaking an evaluation over an extended period of time.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) provided further information on the evaluation and on changes to deferral rules which would take effect from August 2023. She advised that the evaluation proposal would complement the collaborative work being undertaken to ensure the early level curriculum continued to meet the needs of learners as they potentially had 3 years of learning prior to beginning primary school. An advisory group had been established to provide regular updates on the evaluation to the Early Years Network and the West Partnership Governance Board.

In response to questions, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) advised that the deferral legislation would have an impact on all local authorities and a pilot programme was currently underway to assess uptake, costs and reasons for deferral. As uptake in East Renfrewshire was expected to be high, officers were currently looking at provision needs, resources and the wider ELC estate to assess how this change may impact current models of delivery, in advance of the pilot outcomes being provided by the Scottish Government. In addition, an employability study in relation to ELC was also being carried out by the Scottish Government. Referring to a shortfall in Scottish Government capital funding for ELC during 2021/22, she explained that this gap had been bridged by the Education Department’s budget and a decision on future Scottish Government funding for ELC was awaited.

Thereafter, the Director of Education provided clarification on the West Partnership; East Renfrewshire’s role within the partnership; and provided examples of collaborative working which benefited all participants, and the wider education community across Scotland. He advised that two update reports on the West Partnership would be submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

The committee noted:-

- (a) that reports on the West Partnership would be submitted to a future meeting for consideration; and
- (b) otherwise, the report and comments made.

## **IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE FUNDING**

**95.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education seeking approval for the proposed Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) Plan 2022-2026

The report provided background information on the department’s vision statement, the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and subsequent refresh, and highlighted the documents which had been referred to when drafting the Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) Plan 2022-26, including the National Improvement Framework; East Renfrewshire Community Planning

Partnership Community Plan; the Fairer East Ren Plan and Locality plans; the department's contributions to the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) 2022-2025; and the department's Local Improvement Plan 2022-2025.

The Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) reported that three key themes had been identified to tackle the poverty related attainment gap and the four-year strategic plan detailed activities that would be undertaken to achieve the intended outcomes. Ongoing analysis of performance data would take place allowing support, challenge and resource to be targeted at specific establishments, and ambitious individual targets would be set in collaboration with targeted schools. She advised that a one year action plan would be developed detailing supports and interventions in each year of funding and local stretch aims (targets) would be set. Progress in meeting the stretch aims would be reported through the Council's Outcome Delivery Plan; Fairer East Ren Plan; and the departmental Standards and Quality Report. The departmental Standards and Quality Report would also be submitted annually to the Education Committee and wider stakeholders, with regular reports being provided to Education Scotland and Scottish Government.

Further information was provided on the consultation process, and financial and efficiency implications, in the course of which it was reported that Scottish Attainment Challenge funds would support East Renfrewshire's continued focus on improving outcomes for all children and young people. Pupil Equity Funding would remain in place and further information was provided on the amounts received by each school for 2022-23.

In response to questions, the Head of Education Services (Quality Improvement) advised that the attainment of children with Additional Support Needs was an important priority for the Education Service and this would be included within the plan. She further advised that the data required for the stretch aims had not yet been received and would not be submitted for consideration to the Education Committee prior to the final plan being submitted to the Scottish Government due to tight deadlines. Having heard the Director of Education clarify that target setting was devolved to officers and did not require approval by the committee, he confirmed that a report outlining the target data would be submitted to the Education Committee in November for review.

The committee agreed:-

- (a) to approve the proposed SEF plan;
- (b) that the Director of Education bring regular reports to Education Committee on the progress and impact of its implementation; and
- (c) that a report including the SEF plan targets be submitted to the Education Committee in November 2022.

## **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT END YEAR REPORT 2021/22**

**96.** The committee considered a report by the Director of Education informing members of the year end performance of the Education Department for 2021/2022. The report was based on performance indicators and activities in the Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-2024 (ODP), approved by Council in June 2021.

The Education Senior Manager (Leading Business Change) explained that due to differences in reporting cycles, the majority of data regarding school performance and attainment related to the previous academic session. He further reported that given the challenges posed by

COVID-19 and the extended period of school closure, no targets had been set for 2020/21. The performance measures for 2020/21 would be used as baselines for the development of future targets which remained under review and targets (stretch aims) for 2022/23 would be shared at a future meeting.

The information presented in the report showed a very positive picture overall with key highlights including, amongst others, completion of the department's ASN review; a strong focus on all learners and their families again receiving an outstanding Customer Service Excellence report, with 31 compliance plus points for the second successive year; successful rollout of Parentsportal across all primary and secondary schools; and the Healthier Minds service which continued to provide health and wellbeing advice to pupils, staff and families, recognising the impact the pandemic continued to have on wider wellbeing.

Priorities for the next year included, promotion of a universal approach to improving outcomes, with a clear intent on raising the bar for all learners across establishments; supporting schools and nurseries with the implementation of the findings of the ASN review; continued support for children and young people to recover from the impacts of the pandemic; improvement to customer journeys and departmental efficiencies through the ongoing development of the department's change programme in conjunction with the Digital Transformation Programme; and continued investment in staff wellbeing across all levels.

Having heard Councillor Anderson and other members of the committee commend the report, the committee approved the Education Department's End Year report for 2021/2022.

CHAIR