

THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING

28th September, 2022

2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Kathleen Leslie (Convener), Naz Anis-Miah, Aude Boubaker-Calder, John Caffrey, Ian Cameron, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Linda Erskine, Alycia Hayes, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Sam Steele (substituting for Cllr Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw), Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott (substituting for Cllr Patrick Browne) and Mr. Brian Blanchflower, Religious Representative, Church of Scotland.

ATTENDING: Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education and Children's Services; Maria Lloyd, Head of Education & Children's Services - Secondary Schools & Specialist Support; Angela Logue, Head of Education & Children's Services - Primary Schools & Improvement Support; Shelagh McLean, Head of Education & Children's Services - Early Years and Directorate Support; Stuart Booker, Quality Improvement Officer, Education & Children's Services; William Penrice, Research Manager, Communities & Corporate Services; Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner, Finance, Lesley Robb, Lead Officer - Committee Services and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services, Finance & Corporate Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw and Patrick Browne.

INTRODUCTION

Councilor Leslie, Convener, welcomed all members to this meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee, acknowledging the newly elected Fife Council members, the substitute members for this meeting and Mr. Brian Blanchflower, religious representative, Church of Scotland.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 7.1.

6. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 21st June, 2022.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

7. SCRUTINY AT FIFE COUNCIL

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services summarising the scrutiny framework at Fife Council. It provided information about the purpose of scrutiny activity and the approaches that could be adopted when carrying out scrutiny. It built on introductory training which had been held for chairpersons and members of the scrutiny committees.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

8. SERVICE PROFILES – EDUCATION SERVICE

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing information on the roles and functions of the Council services that were most relevant to the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the information provided on the aims and functions of these services and considered the key challenges listed as part of its scrutiny role; and
- (2) requested a member workshop on the Additional Support with Learning (ASL) strategy in meeting the needs of learners.

9. DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022-23

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an updated Education and Children's Services (ECS) Directorate Plan for 2022-23, setting the plan in the context of other key strategic plans for children and families in Fife and advising how progress on the Directorate's Improvement Priorities would be reported to relevant Council Committees over the coming year.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the updated Directorate Improvement Plan (attached as Appendix 1 to the report), which outlined improvement activity for the year ahead;
- (2) approved the proposed timetable for reporting to Committee, as a basis for further scrutiny of the Directorate Improvement Plan over the coming year; and
- (3) requested a member workshop on the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC), including a cost-benefit analysis since Fife Council became a member and the effect of the collaboration on improving schools, early learning settings and other services for children and young people in Fife.

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF) PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Communities providing context for the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF), compiled by the Improvement Service, which was a key element of service performance reporting.

Decision

The Committee noted the context provided and the intention to use the Local Government Benchmarking Framework in future performance arrangements.

Councillor Caffrey joined the meeting prior to consideration of the following item.

11. ATTAINMENT - BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION (BGE)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Services providing an update on current progress in improving attainment in the broad general education and closing the attainment gap – a current priority within the Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan. The broad general education begins in early learning and childcare and continues to the end of S3. The report provided details of the key activities underway to ensure sustained education recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, through increased universal or targeted support for our children and young people.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted current progress in improving attainment in the broad general education and the planned next steps to support education recovery in Fife and close the attainment gap; and
- (2) requested a member workshop on the broad general education, including progress through the Attainment Reform Strategy and the Children and Young People's Improvement Collaborative in improving attainment and closing the attainment gap.

Councillor Caffrey left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

The Committee adjourned at 3.35 p.m. and reconvened at 3.45 p.m..

12. EDUCATION SERVICE REVENUE BUDGET 2022-23 PROJECTED OUTTURN

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the forecast financial position for the 2022-23 financial year, for the areas in scope of the Education Scrutiny Committee.

Decision/

Decision

The Committee noted:-

- (1) the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report; and
- (2) the projected outturn position and the relevant areas of projected over and under spend within the Service.

13. EDUCATION SERVICE CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN 2022-23: PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information on the overall progress of the Education Service capital programme, for the current financial year, 2022-23, as well as informing of progress on major projects.

Decision

The Committee noted:-

- (1) the financial position as detailed in the report, and
- (2) that the budget had been revised to reflect the outcome of the Capital Plan review undertaken in February, 2021 and the subsequent re-phasing exercise carried out in May, 2022.

14. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Education Scrutiny Committee draft Forward Work Programme 2022/23.

Decision

The Committee noted the Education Scrutiny Committee draft Forward Work Programme 2022/23 which would be updated as required.
