

THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

19 November 2024

10.00 am – 12.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Kathleen Leslie (Convener), Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, John Caffrey, Ian Cameron, Rod Cavanagh, Eugene Clarke, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Linda Erskine, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, James Leslie, Jane Ann Liston (substituting for Councillor Boubaker-Calder), Lynn Mowatt, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner (substituting for Councillor Barrera) and Daniel Wilson; Mr Ian Macaulay, Church of Scotland.

ATTENDING: Donnie MacLeod, Executive Director, Education, Maria Lloyd, Head of Education, Secondary Schools and Specialist Support, Angela Logue, Head of Education, Shelagh McLean, Head of Education, Early Years and Directorate Support, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Sarah Else, Education Manager, Alan Cumming, Education Manager, Stuart Booker, Quality Improvement Officer and Scott Duncan, Headteacher, Waid Academy, Education Service; Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner, Finance Service; and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Aude Boubaker-Calder and Auxil Barrera; and Mr Alastair Crockett, Cupar Baptist Church.

104. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Decision

The committee noted that Councillor Barrera had replaced Councillor Ford and Councillor Cavanagh had replaced Councillor Hayes as members of this committee.

105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

106. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of meeting of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 17 September 2024.

Decision

The committee approved the minute.

Councillor James Leslie entered the meeting prior to consideration of the following item.

107. SENIOR PHASE STAGE - BASED OUTCOMES

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education Services providing an update following the appeals process on the senior phase of secondary schooling (stages S4 – S6). The report provided an overview and brief commentary on the senior phase outcomes for Fife for 2024 for cohorts of learners and for specific groups of learners at this current time for SQA, following the appeal process.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) scrutinised and commented on the senior phase outcomes for session 2023/2024 in the context of Fife data and national attainment trends;
- (2) scrutinised and commented on the sustained positive destinations for session 2022/2023 in the context of Fife data and national trends;
- (3) endorsed the next steps identified for Session 2024-25;
- (4) agreed that all elected members be encouraged to meet with their area's secondary school headteachers to discuss their individual school's 2023/2024 outcomes for senior pupils and their approaches to improving attainment; and
- (5) agreed that the service prepare and issue a briefing to elected members detailing course choices and options offered by schools and colleges and progress with partnership working to strengthen the curriculum toward raising attainment and reducing the attainment gap.

During consideration of the following item, Councillor Mowatt left the meeting at 11.34 am and returned at 11.37 am.

108. ATTAINMENT IN THE BROAD GENERAL EDUCATION

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education Services providing an update on current progress in improving attainment in the broad general education and closing the attainment gap across Fife's schools. This was a key priority within the Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) scrutinised and commented on current progress in improving attainment in the broad general education, and the planned next steps to continue to support education recovery in Fife and close the attainment gap;
- (2) scrutinised and commented on the progress made by Fife's schools and teams in the use of the Attainment Scotland Fund to positively impact on

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the educational outcomes of children and young people and planned next steps for 2024/25;

- (3) agreed to seek updates on the impact of approaches and interventions on improving educational outcomes for our children and young people locally, through individual schools and via area committee reports or workshops; and
- (4) agreed that the service prepare and issue a briefing to elected members providing information on the reduced attendance strategy and timetable.

109. 2024/25 REVENUE MONITORING PROJECTED OUTTURN – EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the projected outturn financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Directorate as at 31 August 2024.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

110. 2024-25 CAPITAL MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT – EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

The committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Education Services and the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the Capital Investment Plan and advising on the projected financial position for the 2024-25 financial year for the Education Services Directorate.

Decision

The committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

111. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services relating to the workplan for future meetings of the committee.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the workplan and suggestions were invited from members of the committee for future areas of scrutiny; and
- (2) agreed to add an update report on local nursery areas, including: how well they were working; current needs; consultation; prioritising provision; and any other relevant information – Education Service to advise timescale.