

THE FIFE COUNCIL - EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

23 May 2023

10.00 am – 1.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Kathleen Leslie (Convener), Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, Ian Cameron, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Linda Erskine, Brian Goodall (substituting for Councillor Wilson), Alycia Hayes, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Sam Steele (substituting for Councillor Kennedy-Dalby), and Jonny Tepp (substituting for Councillor Caffrey); and Alastair Crockett, Religious Adviser.

ATTENDING: 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, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Murray McBain, Policy Co-ordinator, Emily Laranja, Teacher, Lynburn Primary School, Louise McIlhatton, Headteacher, Lynburn Primary School, Angela Robertson, Headteacher, Queen Anne High School; and Diane Barnet, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Jane McKeown, Trade Union Representative (for Para. 42. – Education Service Staff Wellbeing Strategy - Update).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors John Caffrey, Louise Kennedy-Dalby and Daniel Wilson.

Prior to the start of business, Councillor Leslie, Convener, on behalf of the Committee, expressed her appreciation of the contribution to and the support given by Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services, to the work of this Committee and its predecessor Education Committees. The Committee congratulated Carrie on her imminent retirement and wished her good luck in any future endeavours – after 36 years of service.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

41. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of the Education Scrutiny Committee of 21 March 2023.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

42. EDUCATION SERVICE STAFF WELLBEING STRATEGY - UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Services providing a progress report on the development of the Staff Wellbeing Strategy, as requested by the Education Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15 November 2022 (Minute Para. Ref. 16 (4) and (5) of 2022.ES.8).

The Headteachers of Queen Anne High School and Lynburn Primary School also gave an overview of some of the staff wellbeing initiatives at their respective schools.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the approaches being implemented within schools;
- (2) thanked the Headteachers for their presentations; and
- (3) acknowledged the priorities outlined in the Staff Wellbeing Strategy.

Councillor Mowatt left the meeting during consideration of the above item and Councillor Davidson left the meeting temporarily during consideration of the above item.

43. DESTINATIONS OF SCHOOL LEAVERS

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on the destinations of all school leavers from Fife schools in session 2021/22.

The report also provided an overview of the range of strategies being developed to support Education Services' key priority to improve the rates of positive and sustained destinations.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted progress and next steps of this workstream;
- (2) acknowledged the scale of uncertainties and complexities in relation to the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic; and
- (3) agreed that all Fife Councillors be encouraged to visit secondary schools in their areas and to speak to the Headteacher about positive destinations.

The Committee adjourned at 12 noon and re-convened at 12.10 pm.

44. INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT: SENIOR PHASE PROJECTED STAGE - BASED OUTCOMES

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on current progress in improving attainment for learners in the senior phase. This was an update on the stage-based outcomes report presented to this Committee on 15 November 2022 - 'Senior Phase Stage-Based Outcomes' (Minute Para. Ref. 17. (4) of 2022.ES.8 refers).

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the projected progress in S4 for literacy and numeracy at SCQF levels 3, 4 and 5 for session 2022/23 in relation to the final attainment for session 2021/22 as described in the previous report on 15 November 2022;
- (2) requested a report to a future meeting of this Committee, or elected member briefing, as appropriate, providing information on support for learning specifically for immigrant and refugee young people who may also have a language barrier with English as an additional language;
- (3) requested a report to a future meeting of this Committee providing information on Stage-Based Outcomes specific to the tracking and monitoring information available to schools relating to Armed Forces learners;
- (4) noted that a report on the outcomes for national qualifications and a reference to the Senior Phase Analytical Toolkit (SPAT), including a comparison for literacy and numeracy outcomes detailed in this report, would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at its meeting on 14 November 2023; and
- (5) agreed that ward members should be encouraged to visit their Secondary schools to discuss stretch targets, action planning and anticipated progress directly with the Headteacher.

45. DIGITAL DEVICES APPROACH FOR FIFE LEARNERS

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing information on the conclusions reached through Digital Device Pilots that took place across schools during 2021 and 2022. The report set out a proposed framework for sustaining and further developing digital device access for Fife learners, pending investment from the Scottish Government.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the findings and conclusions of the 1-1 device pilots and the proposed roll-out model for providing access to 1-1 digital devices for children and young people in Fife, as funding became available; and

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- (2) agreed that the Convener, on behalf of the Education Scrutiny Committee, welcomed the SNP election manifesto promise of 2021 to allocate funding to local authorities to provide digital devices for learners. The Convener would write to the Scottish Government requesting details on timescale and level of funding for Fife in order to facilitate the Committee's scrutiny of digital devices for learners.

Councillor Dempsey left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

46. DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-26

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Education and Children's Services providing an update on the development of the Education Service Improvement Plan 2023-26 – which would form part of the Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26 – and seeking feedback on the draft improvement priorities for the Education Service for the next three years, as part of an ongoing consultation with key stakeholders in relation to those improvement priorities.

Decision

The Committee noted the Education and Children's Services Directorate's draft improvement priorities for 2023-26.

47. EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) agreed to review the workplan with a view to putting forward suggestions for areas of scrutiny - any suggestions were to be submitted to the Convener, Lead Officer and Committee Officer for consideration;
- (2) as referenced at Para. 44 (2) above – Senior Phase Projected Stage-Based Outcomes - agreed to consider a report, as appropriate, on support for learning for immigrant and refugee young people at a future meeting of this Committee on a date to be advised;
- (3) as referenced at Para. 44 (3) above - Senior Phase Projected Stage-Based Outcomes relating to Armed Forces learners at a future meeting of this Committee on a date to be advised;
- (4) as referenced at Para. 44 (4) above –Senior Phase Projected Stage-Based Outcomes - a report on the outcomes for national qualifications, a reference to the Senior Phase Analytical Toolkit (SPAT) and a comparison of literacy and numeracy outcomes would be presented for the Committee's consideration at its meeting on 14 November 2023; and
- (5) noted that the progress report on implementation of the Neurodevelopmental Pathway detailed on the workplan for the meeting on 22 August, 2023, would be delayed.