GLASGOW CITY REGION EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

Item 1
21st November 2023

Minutes of meeting held on 12th September 2023 by video conference.

Present: Councillor Angela Campbell (Chair), North Lanarkshire Council; Councillor Lynda Williamson, East Dunbartonshire Council; Councillor Katie Pragnell, East Renfrewshire Council (substitute for Councillor Andrew Anderson); Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, South Lanarkshire Council; and Councillor Clare Steel, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Anderson, East Renfrewshire Council; Councillor Emma Rodden, Renfrewshire Council; Greg Bremner, East Dunbartonshire Council; Ruth Binks, Inverclyde Council; Carole McKenzie, South Lanarkshire Council; Alan Taylor, Head Teacher co-opted representative; and Pamela Di Nardo, Education Scotland.

Attending: Tony O'Neill (Clerk); Sharon Hayward and Mark Ratter, East Renfrewshire Council; Douglas Hutchison, Glasgow City Council; Michael Roach, Inverclyde Council (substitute for Ruth Binks); Janie O'Neill, North Lanarkshire Council; Julie Calder, Renfrewshire Council; and Laura Mason, West Dunbartonshire Council.

Minutes of previous meeting approved.

1 There was submitted and approved the minutes of 30th May 2023.

West Partnership Annual Evaluation Report 2022/23 – Progress noted.

2 There was submitted a report by the Senior Partnership Officer providing an update on progress made over the academic year 2022/23 towards achieving each of the associated target outcomes and expected impacts, as detailed in the West Partnership Improvement Plan and all as outlined in the West Partnership Evaluation Report 2022/23 which was appended to the report, advising that

(1) each year, the growing benefit of working collaboratively and systematically across the West Partnership area, and the difference this was making to staff, children and young people was clearly evident and the report captured the very good progress made within the West Partnership across the 3 main workstreams, namely, Wellbeing for Learning; Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement; and Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment, which was testament to the dedication and commitment of all staff who had worked to support our children and young people;

(2) throughout the report, there were very strong examples of how the Partnership was improving attainment and achievement for all (excellence) while closing aspects of the poverty related attainment gap (equity), shifting the ownership of change and enabling staff to take collective action to deliver on this (empowerment);

(3) included within the report was an overview of the strengthened evaluation model including the 3 drivers of improvement, showcasing progress in enhancing collaboration, improving knowledge and confidence and changing practice;

(4) 3 main illustrations which demonstrated impact in those 3 improvement areas had been included along with an overview of the work that had been completed in each workstream and critical indicators had been updated demonstrating progress across the region, with the West Partnership continuing to compare favourably against national figures across most measures;

(5) work had also been carried out to make a stronger link between the critical indicators and the values of excellence, equity and empowerment and furthermore, some critical indicators had been added in recognition of the commitment to closing the poverty related attainment gap; and

(6) progress had been further recognised externally through research carried out by the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, Glasgow University (ROC), with the ROC findings complementing that of the internal evaluation providing strong triangulation to internal evaluations, as detailed in the report.

After consideration and having heard Sharon Hayward, Senior Partnership Officer, the committee noted the report.

West Partnership draft Regional Improvement Plan 2023/24 approved etc.

3 There was submitted a report by the Regional Lead Officer regarding the West Partnership's draft Regional Improvement Plan 2023/24 (RIP) and seeking the committee's endorsement of the draft improvement plan, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, advising

(1) that since the committee had approved the submission of the West Partnership's RIP to Education Scotland in August 2019, as required by statute, an updated RIP had been prepared outlining future proposed activity based on the revised governance and operational structure previously approved by committee;

(2) that over the past session, a comprehensive range of engagements with stakeholders had taken place, complementing the ongoing evaluation activity, giving a clearer set of qualitative and quantitative data to ensure the Improvement Plan met the needs of practitioners and officers across the West Partnership and that there was a clear consensus that existing programmes and activity were broadly meeting the needs of those officer and practitioners across the West Partnership;

(3) that the feedback gathered from the stakeholder engagements, recommendations from the Robert Owen Centre evaluation and consensus

building conversations with workstream sponsors, workstream members, programme participants and Education Scotland, had all contributed to the Improvement Plan 2023/24;

(4) that taking account of all consultation to date, it was suggested that most programmes continued, following review and in some cases, augmentation;

(5) that discussion at the West Partnership Board meeting on 9th June 2023 had also identified activity in the areas of Supporting Improvement, to be developed with the Leadership, Empowerment and Improvement workstream, and Artificial Intelligence, to be developed with the West OS Team, with proposals for both being further developed and taken to the relevant workstream meetings in September 2023;

(6) that to assist in the Scottish Government's (SG) Regional Improvement Collaborative Peer Review process and strengthen approaches to self-evaluation, senior colleagues from across the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) had worked over the course of the year to establish a draft self-evaluation framework, a version of which would be used as part of the evidence considered by the SG in its review of RICs; and

(7) of the next steps, which included,

(a) members reporting back to their own authorities through appropriate individual local governance arrangements for approval in order to ensure local democratic accountability; and

(b) confirming that, in seeking to ensure that the West Partnership could continue to contribute to the wider work of the Glasgow City Regional Economic Strategy, a report would be prepared, including the endorsed RIP, and presented to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet by the Regional Lead Officer or Convener of this committee, as appropriate.

After consideration and having heard a presentation by Mark Ratter, Regional Lead Officer, the committee

(i) agreed

(A) to endorse the draft Regional Improvement Plan 2023/24; and

(B) to submit the draft RIP to the Glasgow City Region Cabinet for its consideration; and

(ii) noted that each individual authority would report on the RIP to their appropriate committee for approval, maintaining local democratic oversight.

Robert Owen Centre Evaluation – Verbal update noted.

4 The committee noted a verbal update by Sharon Hayward, Senior Partnership Officer regarding progress that the Robert Owen Centre (ROC) staff had made since the previous update to this committee, highlighting:

(1) that the reseracher who had taken forward the external evaluation had been working full-time and that before the summer break was able to provide the West Partnership (WP) Board with an interim report based on a table-top exercise looking at previous reviews, evaluations and highlight reports, both externally from the Scottish Government and ROC, as well as internally from the WP;

(2) the 5 key findings which had been fed into the evaluation for last year and the Improvement Plan for next year;

(3) that the Researcher had also undertaken some triangulation conversations with focus groups, teachers, school leaders and local authority staff over the summer and Professor Chapman had advised that a report would be ready for the next WP Board meeting to present the final findings for this session, and would also be submitted to the next meeting of this committee; and

(4) that the ROC was meeting the agreed timeline and planned activity and was very much aligning with the WP evaluation processes.

Scottish Government Review of Regional Improvement Collaboratives – Verbal update noted.

5 The committee noted a verbal update by Mark Ratter, Regional Lead Officer regarding the Scottish Government (SG) Review of Regional Improvement Collaboratives, highlighting

(1) that the review had been announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills on 29th June 2023, as a rapid review of the impact that Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) had had on supporting pupils and practitioners;

(2) that it had been commissioned as part of the current education reforms, to inform future decisions on RIC support and further consideration of the future relationships between our new national bodies and local government in the area of educational improvement;

(3) the 4 main elements to the review, which would include:

(a) a desktop review, undertaken by SG Learning Analysis officials, pulling together key findings from previous RIC Reviews and published materials;

(b) evidence from each RIC based on an evaluative statement against 4 improvement themes set by the SG, along with supporting evidence to demonstrate the impact of RIC activities;

(c) a review of evidence, returns and existing materials, by the SG to identify key themes and any areas requiring clarification, etc; and

(d) validation and clarification discussions with each RIC area, supported by a small number of focus groups, based around the key improvement themes, impacts and relationships;

(4) that following this, the SG would submit a review report to the Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills and to the COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People (CYP), to be delivered in October 2023;

(5) that the Cabinet Secretary would consider the findings of the review and discuss the next steps with the COSLA CYP Spokesperson which would take place following delivery and consideration of the review report;

(6) that the West Partnership had been working closely with other RICs to influence the SG methodology to ensure that the reviews took full account of evidence of impact across the 8 local authorities;

(7) that the West Partnership was also keen that the review would take account of the evidence gathered nationally by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development peer learning event which had taken place in May 2023 and had included interviews with key stakeholders at different levels across Scotland and had been well represented by the West Partnership, together with colleagues from Education Scotland;

(8) the latest findings from the Robert Owen Centre which had previously been shared with this committee on 30th May 2023;

(9) that a co-ordinating group, which included representatives from all key partners, had been established by the SG to oversee and support the review, and to discuss key aspects; and

(10) that an update on the review would be provided to the next meeting of this committee on 21st November 2023.

Schedule of future meeting dates noted.

6 The committee noted the schedule of future meeting dates as undernoted

Tuesday, 21st November 2023 at 1030 hours;

Tuesday, 5th March 2024 at 1030 hours; and

Tuesday, 28th May 2024 at 1030 hours.