Planning to 2024/25 and beyond – Position noted etc.

6 There was submitted a report by Sharon Hayward, Senior Partnership Officer, West Partnership (WP) regarding the self-evaluation activity underpinning the proposed WP improvement plan for 2024/25 and beyond, advising

(1) that the parliamentary announcement on 7th November 2023 of the Scottish Government's plans to taper funding to the Regional Improvement Collaboratives in 2024/25 and to stop funding thereafter had initiated an internal review of the structure and work of the WP;

(2) that 3 assumptions underpinned the review process, namely

(a) that the aspiration to build a networked learning system remained a shared priority across the WP, thereby adding value to the work of individual Local Authorities;

(b) that there was continued buy-in to maintain a strong collective focus on pedagogy; and

(c) that there was support and scope for a flexible approach, to enable the participation of teachers, middle and senior leaders to shape and drive the work of the WP more directly;

(3) that by building on these assumptions, all the current activity had been reviewed and options explored as to how the existing workstream activity (including programmes, enquiry activity and networks) could be reshaped to prepare the WP system for the forthcoming funding withdrawal;

(4) that WP officers had considered each programme, collaborative enquiry activity, professional learning activity and network to establish which had the most significant impact and reach and where WP activity was different from other local and national offers, and that given the considerable strengths and impact of the WP work, directors were committed to continuing key aspects of the work;

(5) that a suggested WP Collaborative Framework, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, had been developed to show how the system might maintain some of the most impactful activity of the WP and develop new work collaboratively, and the framework, when established and embedded, would be practitioner-driven and impact directly on children and young people and would rely on increased ownership of the WP activity by central officers and practitioners, as the key resource;

(6) of the 4 strategic themes that had been identified as a structure to organise current and future activity, with each one being led by a Strategic Group, sponsored by a Director of Education (as detailed below), and supported by Operational Groups who would take forward the activity, evaluation and reporting on impact;

(a) RIC Lead – Mark Ratter, East Renfrewshire Council;

(b) Early Level – Laura Mason, West Dunbartonshire Council;

(c) Emerging Issues – Janie O'Neill, Renfrewshire Council/Carol McKenzie, South Lanarkshire Council;

(d) Leadership of Learning – Greg Bremner, East Dunbartonshire Council/Gerard McLaughlin, North Lanarkshire Council; and

(e) Inclusion – Ruth Binks, Inverclyde Council/Douglas Hutchison, Glasgow City Council;

(7) that a Headteacher Reference Group would meet with the RIC Lead Officer twice per year to assist in guiding the improvement priorities and a representative from this group would also serve on the Overview Group, as detailed in the report;

(8) that a new evaluation framework model, when agreed, would need to build on the existing framework and ensure a robust evidence base continued to shape and direct the work;

(9) that the WP Core Team would work to deliver on all agreed Improvement Plan priorities for 2024/25, with significantly reduced staffing and funding, and in addition, would seek to ready the system across the partnership for the transition to the new framework, with reduced activity and resource, however, the impact of collaboration across the partnership over the period of the Regional Improvement Collaborative was such that Directors were exploring a range of scenarios to allow the retention of a key 'Collaboration Officer' to lead on that work beyond the 2024/25 session.

After consideration, the committee

(a) noted

(i) the self-evaluation process undertaken across the partnership in light of the Scottish Government tapered funding for 2024/25; and

(ii) the emerging themes for the 2024/25 improvement plan; and

(b) agreed the proposed collaborative framework for 2024/25 and beyond following the withdrawal of Scottish Government funding.

Dates of future meetings noted.

7 The committee noted the following future meeting dates:-

Tuesday, 17th September 2024 at 1100 hours;
Tuesday, 26th November 2024 at 1100 hours; and

Tuesday, 4th March 2025 at 1100 hours.