

**GLASGOW CITY REGION EDUCATION COMMITTEE.**

Minutes of meeting held on 25th May 2021 by video conference.

**Present:** Councillor Jim Paterson (Chair), Renfrewshire Council; Councillor Jim Goodall, East Dunbartonshire Council; Councillor Chris Cunningham, Glasgow City Council; Councillor Jim Clocherty, Inverclyde Council; and Councillor Katy Loudon, South Lanarkshire Council.

**Attending:** Tony O'Neill (Clerk); Greg Bremner, East Dunbartonshire Council (substitute for Jacqueline MacDonald); Sharon Hayward and Mark Ratter, East Renfrewshire Council; Maureen McKenna and David McClelland, Glasgow City Council; Ruth Binks, Inverclyde Council; Derek Brown, North Lanarkshire Council; Steven Quinn, Renfrewshire Council; Tony McDaid, South Lanarkshire Council; Laura Mason, West Dunbartonshire Council; Alan Taylor, Head Teacher co-opted representative; and Pamela Di Nardo, Education Scotland.

**Minutes of previous meeting approved.**

- 1 There was submitted and approved the minutes of 2nd March 2021.

**West Partnership – Highlight report noted etc.**

2 There was submitted a report by the Director of Children's Services, Renfrewshire Council, summarising the key workstream activities from the West Partnership highlight report, which was detailed in appendix 1 of the paper and covered the reporting period from February to April 2021, advising that

- (1) this session, a number of new colleagues had been welcomed to support the partnership, with the Lead Officer for Curriculum Learning Networks returning to their substantive post and some priorities from this workstream had been continued by the Data and Information Officer as an interim arrangement;
- (2) the template that was currently used to report to the board, this committee and other stakeholders such as the Scottish Government, was being revised and would be more aligned to workstream outcomes and strategic evaluation, with a learning session being hosted in May in collaboration with the Robert Owen Centre, focussing on developing strong outcomes in order to drive forward and evidence improvement;
- (3) the communication plan continued to interest existing followers and attract new members on social media, with the workstream impact campaign generating interest in the partnership activities, increasing awareness and participation, and the website was regularly updated;
- (4) the report included a section focused on the partnership's response to recovery and the difference the interim plan had made, with the West Online

School and the Virtual Learning Networks being just two examples that had been very well received and continued to provide a wide range of responsive support and resources to practitioners, children and young people;

- (5) all workstreams were making very good progress in taking forward revised plans and positive feedback had been received from practitioners who had engaged in Partnership activity, all as detailed throughout the report;
- (6) there remained programme challenges, risks and slippage, and further discussion was required particularly in relation to the recruitment of new Lead Officers in order to maintain the momentum of partnership activity, as detailed in the report; and
- (7) the Annual improvement planning would shortly begin which would include stakeholder engagement and review of the workstream impact campaign.

After consideration and having heard Steven Quinn, Director of Children's Services, Renfrewshire Council, the committee

- (a) noted the report; and
- (b) agreed that the Regional Lead Officer submit a report to the next meeting of the committee in August 2021 on the current governance arrangements of the West Partnership and whether these required to be reviewed, with any comments being welcomed from members of the committee in this respect.

### **The work of the West Partnership's Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment workstream – Presentation noted etc.**

**3** There was submitted a report by the Senior Partnership Officer providing an update on the West Partnership's Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment workstream, advising

- (1) that the West Partnership Improvement Plan, spanning from 2020-23, set out the driving vision for Equity, Excellence and Empowerment across all eight partner authorities, and in January 2021, an Interim Action Plan had been drawn up to address the challenges of the immediate education landscape and which also recognised the need to prioritise and accelerate certain aspects of West Partnership's Plan;
- (2) that in light of the significant challenges that schools and establishments had faced over the past year, it had been anticipated that this would affect face to face and online attendance at planned activities, direct interaction with planned programmes, completion of both online/offline tasks and engagement with tutorial support;
- (3) that within the Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment workstream, the two key aspects of focus were, the development of the West Online School and support for practitioners through curriculum networks, with

additional activity being maintained in a number of areas, with sponsor agreement, as detailed in the report;

- (4) of a number of workstream progress highlights, including:-
- (a) the appointment of a new officer to take forward the area of Assessment and Moderation;
  - (b) over twenty curricular networks which had met throughout the last year with a specific focus on senior phase assessment, which was particularly useful in subjects with limited networks in place within the local authority, e.g. philosophy;
  - (c) the establishment of a network for Senior Phase Assessment central officers to support the implementation of the Alternative Certification Model;
  - (d) a series of twelve webinars developed by Education Scotland to support practitioners across the West Partnership as part of the workstream plan, which had identified four themes, namely, equity, children's rights, inclusion and pedagogy; and
  - (e) sessions that had been delivered by Professor Mark Priestley and Valerie Drew, University of Stirling, to support secondary senior leaders in the design and development of their curricula.

After consideration and having heard a presentation by Sharon Hayward, Senior Partnership Officer, the committee noted the progress of the Curriculum, Learning, Teaching and Assessment workstream.

**West Partnership – Financial outturn August 2020 to March 2021 and funding award budget proposal April 2021 to March 2022 – Position noted.**

**4** There was submitted a report by the Head of Resources, Education Services, Glasgow City Council, providing a financial update of the West Partnership, advising

- (1) that on 18th November 2020, the Scottish Government had awarded a part year grant funding of £1,025,592 to support the West Partnership's programme of work for the period from 1st August 2020 to 31st March 2021, which had reflected the bid submitted by the Partnership totalling £1,030,192 offset by the ADES Professional Development Officer contribution of £4,600 which was paid centrally by Scottish Government;
- (2) that in accordance with the grant conditions, an interim claim had been submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2020 and a final claim on 15th March 2021, incorporating spend to date and remaining commitments for the financial year;

- (3) of the budget, spend and 2020/21 outturn across each workstream, all as detailed in the report;
- (4) that the Finance Sub-Group continued to meet and the 2020/21 spend had totalled £930,637, resulting in an underspend of £94,955 which was attributed to delays in recruitment, vacancies and lower event costs than originally envisaged;
- (5) that the Scottish Government had advised that £6m of funding had been made available nationally to support the work of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) for financial year 2021/22, with RICs being asked to submit their budget proposals and plans by 26th March 2021, and assuming that the same distribution of resource as last year but on a full year basis, the budget bid for the Partnership totalled £1,526,500, as detailed in the report; and
- (6) that the Scottish Government had advised that the budget bid for 2021/22 had been approved, with the formal award of grant funding having been received on 6th May 2021, and that in the interim, existing spend commitments in staffing and development activity had been progressing in support of the planned workstreams.

After consideration and having heard David McClelland, Head of Resources, Glasgow City Council, the committee noted the financial outturn for the period from 1st August 2020 to 31st March 2021 and the funding award budget proposal for the financial year 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

### **Consultation process on the West Partnership Improvement Plan Priorities 2021/22 – Position noted etc.**

**5** There was submitted a report by the Regional Lead Officer providing an outline of the consultation process for updating the West Partnership Improvement Plan, advising

- (1) of the background to the West Partnership Improvement Plan 2020-23, which also took due account of the ongoing challenges resulting from COVID-19, together with details of the Interim Action Plan that had been drawn up in January 2021, all as detailed in the report;
- (2) that in light of the significant challenges that schools and establishments had faced over the past year, it was appropriate that the strategic direction of the partnership and the improvement planning priorities be reviewed, with some initial discussions having already taken place with all Local Authority Senior Leadership Teams, as well as the Education Scotland West Improvement Team on the work of the West Partnership;
- (3) that it was essential that a wide range of key stakeholders were involved in the identification of the priorities of the West Partnership and a number of

groups had already been established, as detailed in the report, to capture the views of participants to ensure a level of ongoing consultation;

- (4) that these groups would be used as part of the consultation process in developing this year's improvement plan, and whilst it was consistent with the three-yearly planning cycles currently used by the partnership to ensure that the views of all stakeholders were reflected in the development of the regional Improvement Plan, an alternative engagement model was required;
- (5) that the recent report by the Robert Owen Centre for Education Change had highlighted a number of areas that would help inform discussions with key stakeholders;
- (6) that the Evaluating and Reporting workstream continued to be crucial to the work of the West Partnership, supporting the partnership to evaluate activities and use evidence to identify future priorities, with evaluation reports including updates on the progress of each workstream as well as more holistic evaluations being developed and used to help identify the Partnership's priorities; and
- (7) of the timeline for the consultation and identification of improvement priorities, which had included an expectation that the final plan would be submitted to this committee for consideration in August 2021, as detailed in the report.

After consideration and having heard Tony McDaid, Regional Lead Officer, the committee noted the timeline of actions for updating the West Partnership Improvement Plan, including evaluation on the impact of the current plan and consultation with key stakeholders.

#### **Recruitment update for the seconded posts of Workstream Lead Officer noted.**

**6** There was submitted and noted a report by the Senior Partnership Officer providing an update on the recruitment process for Workstream Lead Officer (WLO) seconded posts, advising

- (1) that a small team carry out a number of operationally focused roles across the West Partnership, principally made up of seconded staff from within the 8 local authorities, and due to the need to employ staff on a seconded basis, the management of staff turnover required workforce planning;
- (2) that while there could be some drawbacks to secondments, it was also noted that these could provide staff an opportunity to develop professionally and, when managed appropriately, staff could bring a new impetus and direction to the work of the West Partnership;
- (3) that currently there were 3 seconded WLO who played a pivotal role in taking forward and delivering on the priorities of the Partnership, and who were seen as key to driving development and providing effective support and advice;

- (4) of the current workstreams, as detailed in the report, and that there remained scope to amend WLO remits based on any amendments identified throughout the improvement planning process;
- (5) that WLO secondments were due to come to an end during the forthcoming summer term, and following discussions with Directors, it had been agreed that the current model of secondment continue and consequently, to ensure that operational activity within the Partnership continued, it had been necessary to undertake a recruitment and selection process for WLO;
- (6) that the changes to WLO over a relatively short period of time had resulted in a planning exercise being undertaken to outline how work could continue during the change-over period, with a Handover Reporting Template also being developed in order to support a smooth handover, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (7) that, in view of the above, planned transition conversations would take place between the WLO, Senior Partnership Officer and relevant team members to ensure that all aspects of strategic and operational activity was allocated as an area of responsibility to a remaining officer until new WLO were appointed; and
- (8) of the proposed timeline for the recruitment process which was being overseen by the Senior Partnership Officer with the support of East Renfrewshire Council, as detailed in the report.

#### **Dates of future meetings agreed.**

**7** The committee, having previously noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday, 24th August 2021 at 1030 hours, further agreed the undernoted committee dates to May 2022:-

Tuesday, 23rd November 2021 at 1030 hours;  
Tuesday, 1st March 2022 at 1030 hours; and  
Tuesday, 24th May 2022 at 1030 hours.

#### **Chair's remarks.**

**8** Having heard the Chair advise that

- (1) Jacqueline MacDonald would shortly be retiring from her post of Chief Education Officer, East Dunbartonshire Council, and that Greg Bremner, East Dunbartonshire Council had been appointed as Interim Chief Education Officer; and
- (2) Councillor Paul O'Kane had been elected as a Member of the Scottish Parliament for Renfrewshire and Inverclyde following the Scottish Parliamentary Elections held on 6th May 2021,

the committee thanked Jacqueline for her commitment and contribution to the work of this committee, congratulated Councillor O’Kane on his appointment and wished them both well for the future.