

Lifelong Learning Committee

25 August 2021

SERVICE RECOVERY UPDATE

**Report by Executive Director (Education and Children's Services)
(Report No. 21/132)**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides the Lifelong Learning Committee with an update on Service Recovery and the expenditure incurred during 2020/21 and the expenditure plans for the academic year 2021/22.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 Education & Children's Services (ECS) has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with various interventions dependant on the circumstances in place at the time. This report provides details on the areas of expenditure, the sources of funding and the financial plans for academic year 2021/22.
- 1.2 Within financial year 2020/21, ECS received Scottish Government grants amounting to £6.2m to support areas of additional expenditure as a result of COVID-19. £1.3m was pre-paid by the Scottish Government in 2020/21 for 2021/22. A total of £5.3m has been carried forward into 2021/22 to fund ongoing expenditure pressures. Further Scottish Government funding has been received for 2021/22 amounting to £2.2m. Details of all funding for 2021/22 (£7.5m) is shown in Appendix 1. In addition, the Scottish Government have relaxed the conditions on the following grants to allow greater flexibility to meet the demand/pressures on the service from the pandemic:
 - Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) 1140 hours;
 - Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC); and
 - Pupil Equity Funding.
- 1.3 Perth and Kinross Council has also added the following budgets when setting the 2021/22 Revenue Budget to support recovery within the service:
 - Support for Education Recovery £98,000 for 2021/22 and 2022/23 for the provision of targeted Community Link Worker support for those children and young people who have been most disadvantaged from learning during periods of lockdown/remote learning;
 - Live Life Well £90,000 for 2021/22 and 2022/23 to work with schools and communities to develop and implement a new model of family support linked to securing the implementation of The Promise;

- Virtual Campus £136,000 (recurring) for enhanced learning opportunities for senior pupils through the additional funding of 0.2 full time equivalent (FTE) teacher for each of the 11 secondary schools to assist in the development and roll-out of the Digital Learning Strategy and to expand the academic choice available virtually; and
- Expansion of Courses £136,000 for 2021/22 and 2022/23 to increase access to national qualifications and foundation apprenticeships through the additional funding of 0.2 FTE teacher for each of the 11 secondary schools.

1.4 Details of the expenditure for 2020/21, and the planned expenditure for 2021/22, is discussed further within this report.

2. FUNDING FOR 2020/2021

2.1 ECS received a total of £1.284m from the Scottish Government to support staffing in schools and services for 2020/21.

This funding was used to engage teaching staff and pupil support assistants to provide support in the following ways:

- Recovery work with targeted groups of pupils;
- Staff who were shielding and unable to work;
- Health and safety measures, including additional supervision and management of bubbles; and
- COVID-19 related absence.

2.2 Feedback, received from schools, found that where additional staff had been allocated to a school, these teachers and pupil support assistants mainly carried out targeted work with small groups or individual pupils. This work addressed the emotional wellbeing of pupils, eg to support re-engagement with school for those who were most anxious about doing so. Another focus for the work of these staff was reinforcing and revisiting key learning in literacy and numeracy with identified pupils. Work was carried out with targeted groups and with whole classes. Additional staff either worked directly with identified groups or released permanent school staff to provide this targeted support.

Additional staff also provided support in ensuring that schools were able to comply with all COVID-19 health and safety measures.

There is a carry forward of £316k from this funding which has been used for session 2021/22.

3. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

3.1 To make best use of the funding, ECS has engaged with Headteacher representatives and senior officers to develop a strategic plan for its use. Consideration was given to all necessary expenditure, other funding streams

which impact on support for schools and services, and contingency planning in case of future outbreaks. A total of four sessions took place to consider options.

- 3.2 In addition, the Depute Principal Education Psychologist and the Attainment Advisor led a workshop with Quality Improvement Officers and the Education Psychology Service teams to bring together a range of data and evidence from Early Years to Senior Phase, to agree the range and type of interventions which will be promoted in ECS to address areas of need identified.
- 3.3 A survey was carried out by Education Services and a report produced on benefits and issues that Headteachers found in using the additional funding in academic year 2020-2021.
- 3.4 This survey found that the additional funding provided support which had a positive impact on learning, relationships, wellbeing and operational matters. For example, a number of Headteachers reported that they were able to carry out targeted interventions for children identified through monitoring of engagement during lockdowns and teacher assessments/identification of gaps.
- 3.5 Within primary schools, this allowed a specific focus on numeracy and literacy skills, whilst in secondary schools this enabled support from subject-specific specialists. The need to support pupils in their re-engagement with school was highlighted by many respondents, with ongoing concerns around emotional and mental wellbeing, and anxiety upon returning to school given as reasons for needing this additional support.
- 3.6 The importance of play and development of social skills, particularly with younger children, has been identified, with opportunities for outdoor learning and playground activities described.

4. EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

- 4.1 Perth and Kinross Council, at its meeting of 30 September 2020, approved utilising £2.250m of ELC 1140 hours funding towards COVID-19 costs ([Report No. 20/173 refers](#)).
- 4.2 Payments in 2020/21 to Partner Providers and Childminders for essential workers, vulnerable young people £577k and Children's Activity Centres £89k from April 2020 to August 2020 were paid from the ELC 1140 hours funding above.
- 4.3 **ELC - Identified key areas of focus for 2021/22 are:**
 - Language and communication needs;
 - Social, emotional, and behavioural needs; and
 - Family support.

- 4.4 The Scottish Government asked that funding be put towards Early Childcare Practitioners in Primary 1. ECS already do this, funded from the Early Years and Childcare 1140 hours fund, and so this will continue.
- 4.5 Learning from the effective work done through the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding elsewhere to improve language and communication skills in young children through partnership with the NHS Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), has been used to develop a similar approach in nurseries in PKC. This will provide support and training for staff and to pilot a model of support which may be included in any new Service Level Agreement we develop with NHS SALT.
- 4.6 Play and appropriate social interaction for all ages has been identified as a need through self-evaluation to support children's social and emotional development. Play workers will provide a range of services for all ages, in playgrounds, working with key staff and in other settings, to develop a sustainable model of ensuring meaningful play and activity can be sustained by core staff.
- 4.7 Total funding from the Scottish Government grant is £180k and 1140 hours funding of £1.1m, giving a total of £1.280m spent on staff costs within this area of focus.

5. PRIMARY EDUCATION

5.1 Primary Education - Identified key areas of focus for 2021/22 are:

- Learning in literacy and numeracy;
- Emotional wellbeing; and
- Support for families.

5.2 A locality model has been created which addresses these needs in a focussed and targeted manner. This will include 11 small teams based in Local Management Groups (LMGs).

5.3 Each LMG will have a team of staff comprising teachers, pupil support assistants (PSAs) and family support workers. Staff are line managed centrally and allocated along a similar model currently in place for Area Support Teachers, ie agreed at LMG level and based on need.

5.4 The allocation of teaching and PSA staff will be based on a percentage of Perth and Kinross pupil population within each LMG. This model will provide up to:

- 20 FTE teaching staff;
- 24 FTE PSA staff; and
- 10 family support workers/community link worker assistants.

The overall estimated cost for this model is £1.7m.

5.5 These staff will also be available in exceptional circumstances to undertake COVID-19 staffing cover. Staff will be expected to deliver targeted interventions and support to identified pupils and groups of pupils or to release school-based staff to carry out this work.

6. SECONDARY EDUCATION

6.1 Secondary Education - Identified as key areas of focus for 2021/22 are:

- Improvement in Attendance;
- Improvement in Literacy and Numeracy at Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase; and
- Emotional Wellbeing.

6.2 Staff allocations will allow schools to release identified literacy and numeracy leads for high quality training in a limited range of high-impact interventions to support literacy and numeracy attainment. This will also create capacity for interventions to ensure that young people leave school with the best possible attainment in literacy and numeracy. Our targets are explicit in the [ECS Raising Attainment Strategy 2020 - 2023](#).

6.3 The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) have created a revised Attendance Framework and Guidelines for implementation with schools in session 2021/22. Additional Pupil Care and Welfare Officers and Support Teachers will ensure enhanced contact with, and support for families, and develop curricular adaptations as required.

6.4 Emotional Wellbeing will be supported through a limited range of high-impact interventions developed by EPS. Additional staffing will be used to release school staff to implement these interventions. Staff will develop a tracking system to monitor impact on an ongoing basis and create further interventions as required.

This model provides up to:

- 20.3 Teaching staff;
- 3 Probationers;
- 11 Pupil Care and Welfare Officers; and
- 11 Pupil Support Assistants.

6.5 All staff will be devolved to secondary schools but monitored from the centre to provide targeted support to improve attendance, for improved literacy and numeracy at BGE and at levels 4 and 5 and to reduce exclusions. Each school will receive the staff on a one-year fixed term basis.

The overall estimated cost for this model is £1.3m.

7. DIGITAL SUPPORT

- 7.1 Digital support was provided to young people experiencing digital exclusion. They have been provided with appropriate digital devices and internet connectivity to ensure that they can continue to connect with their schools, teachers, and learning. The Scottish Government provided a capital grant (£614k) and revenue grant (£397k) to fund this initiative. About 1,500 young people, who would have otherwise been unable to access learning in Perth and Kinross, have been able to access learning during the period of lockdown as a result of this funding. The funding has also supported young people in learning during periods of enforced isolation from school as a result of COVID-19. As a result of this funding, all children, and young people in Perth & Kinross have access to a device. Sixty families were also given Internet connectivity.

8. ADDITIONAL CENTRAL SUPPORT STAFFING

- 8.1 Funding has been allocated to primary and secondary schools to cover the capacity and additional workload pressures from COVID-19 testing and track and trace processes. Business Resources Services, Human Resources and Psychology Services are also receiving support to cover the additional workload of grants, payments for Free School Meals, Summer and Winter payments and refunds to parents/carers for 167 school trips totalling £737,000. Overall cost is estimated as £233k.

9. MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING SUPPORT

- 9.1 ECS received £310k from the Scottish Government to support young people and their families with mental health and emotional wellbeing support. This is in addition to the Community Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing for Young People grant. A Project Officer and community link workers, along with commissioning services from the voluntary sector and third-party providers, will provide this support during 2021/22.
- 9.2 The Scottish Government provided £397k for the targeted provision of summer activities for those who most experienced disadvantage during the past year. The summer funding was included with the food insecurity funding to produce a programme of targeted and universal activities. This was made easier due to the partnership approach and existing relationships with the Third Sector. The programme ([Get into Summer](#)) uses existing services such as Live Active Leisure, youth partners, community partners and outdoor activities. The targeted support focuses on families who are subject to child protection registration, looked after and care experienced. Children and young people who are carers or who have a disability are also catered for by specialist programmes.

10. FREE SCHOOL MEALS

- 10.1 ECS has provided Free School Meal (FSM) payments in place of meals during school closures, holiday periods and pupils self-isolating for 2020/21 to those families entitled to FSM due to benefits. This amounted to £1.1m and

offset by Scottish Government grants of £900k. For 2021/22, FSM payments are being made for holiday periods and to young people who are required to self-isolate. A Scottish Government grant of £307k has been received to fund holiday FSM payments.

11. SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE

11.1 The Scottish Government provided a grant of £350k for 'Winter Plan for Social Protection for vulnerable young people' which was made available to support any issues within three specific areas:

- Residential placements to ensure adequate staffing arrangements which will mitigate the spread of the virus and ensure continuity of care;
- To support the additional workload involved in additional Children's Hearings activity as part of the Children's Hearings Recovery Plan; and
- To address the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the most disadvantaged children and young people.

The funding has been used in the following ways within PKC:

- Residential allocation of the funding was, and is being used, mainly to support for staff absence because of self-isolation or positive COVID-19 tests.
- Additional staff were also employed on a sessional basis to add to the staff compliment during periods of lockdown.
- Additional staff were also employed to support our Child Protection and Duty Team who have experienced a large volume of calls and referrals. This support is continuing.
- The vulnerable family's allocation allowed for the purchase of clothing, bedding and other household essentials that allowed for lockdown to be easier.
- Families also experienced some financial hardship and this fund allowed for the repayment of rent arrears, increased fuel costs and activity packs for families.
- The fund created a project which allowed for the purchasing of kitchen equipment, recipe cards and ingredients that gave families the opportunity to cook together as well as making a low-cost nutritional meal. This type of skill will carry on and has proved popular.

11.2 Scottish Government funding for Family Support of £230k has been received and additional staff have been employed to support the ELC service increase access to parenting and family learning support as well as play in communities during term time and school holidays.

12. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICE

- 12.1 The Criminal Justice Service received Scottish Government funding of up to £15,000 to support clearing the backlog of unpaid work as part of Community Payback Orders in 2020/21 and for 2021/22, an additional Scottish Government grant of £56,000 to support COVID-19 recovery work.

13. COVID-19 MITIGATION MEASURES ACROSS THE SERVICE

- 13.1 Funding for additional day cleaning of schools and offices, personal protective equipment (PPE), and additional hygiene costs of home to school transport, was received in 2020/21 amounting to £2.7m. £2.1m has been carried forward to 2021/22 to fund these mitigations for the 2021/22 academic year.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 Education and Children's Services will continue to closely monitor COVID-19 expenditure and maximise all external funding to support the recovery of Education and Children's Services and provide additional support to the most vulnerable young people and families within Perth and Kinross.

15. RECOMMENDATION

- 15.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- (i) Notes the extent of the funding received and the measures taken to deploy resources to meet the needs of children, young people and families within this report.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes/None
Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life.
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens.
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy.
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (i).

Corporate Plan

1.2 This section sets out how the proposals relate to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Objectives.

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

This report relates to Objective No. (i).

1.3 The report also links to the Education & Children's Services Vision, Values and Priorities in respect of the following key Priority area:

- Health and Wellbeing

2. Resource Implications

Financial

2.1 Staff working in Social Work within ECS have been paid £500 from the Scottish Government based upon their entitlement criteria. Teachers working on SQA assessments will be paid £400 from the Scottish Government. There are no other direct financial implications arising from this report other than those reported within the body of the main report.

Workforce

2.2 This report highlights the range of workforce supporting the recovery of the service and the continuing issues around recruitment of key staff in certain areas.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 N/A

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

(i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA
Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

This section reflects that the proposals have been considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

3.3 N/A

Legal and Governance

3.4 N/A

3.5 N/A

Risk

3.6 N/A

4. Consultation

Internal

4.1 Headteachers have been consulted in the production of spending plans for teachers and support staff in schools. Young people have been consulted in the summer activities. Children's services staff were consulted also in expenditure plans for vulnerable young people.

External

4.2 Consultation has taken place with our third sector partners in regard to Summer Activities.

5. Communication

5.1 N/A.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

2.1 No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1 – Education & Children's Services - COVID-19 Funding for 2021/22