

Co-operative Education and Childcare

Education, Children and Families

9 October 2012

Purpose of report

- 1 To inform Committee of the progress to date of the Co-operative Education Working Group, established to examine ways of taking forward childcare co-operatives and co-operative education in the city.

Main report

- 2 2012 is the International Year of the Co-operative. It is therefore fitting that as one of its commitments, the Capital Coalition has pledged to establish city-wide childcare co-operatives for affordable childcare for working parents. The working group established to take this forward is made up of the Convener for Education, Children and Families with representatives from Children and Families, Economic Development and the Director of the Co-operative Education Trust Scotland.
- 3 In addition, the Coalition wants to see the further development of co-operative learning, and consideration of other Children and Families' services that could be delivered on a co-operative basis.
- 4 The working group has met three times since August and agreed a number of actions in relation to the points above.

Childcare co-operatives

- 5 It is recognised that a number of childcare providers already have in place structures that are similar to those of a co-operative. It will therefore research and audit the existing structures in these childcare organisations and parent-led after school clubs with a view to assessing the feasibility of some of these being re-organised as co-operatives. It is anticipated that these will be either worker- or parent-led co-operatives, although potential exists for a hybrid model to be developed. It is intended that co-operative childcare provide direct benefits in terms of affordability, accessibility and sustainability. A leading co-operative retailer will also be approached to investigate its potential support for breakfast clubs, particularly in schools that don't have, but need, them.
- 6 Such co-operatives will also require support. The group is therefore looking at how a secondary, or 'umbrella', support structure could be put in place to provide a range of support services and benefits, thus easing the pressure many small organisations experience in providing these for themselves, and, at the same time, improving their quality and consistency. These would include

Human Resources, Training and Development, and payroll. This function could be carried out by either the City of Edinburgh Council or a voluntary provider.

Co-operative education and learning

- 7 The group is aware that there are already significant co-operative-related activities taking place in many schools, and is determined that a co-operative approach, ethos and activities be further developed, encouraged and supported in all schools.
- 8 Co-operative learning is central to Curriculum for Excellence, and should also promote further development of charity work, eco schools, healthy schools, Fairtrade and links to business. As far as possible, these would be built into existing activities rather than becoming additional features.
- 9 It is also the intention to approach a high school and its cluster primaries, on a pilot basis, to explore how a more in-depth, cross-cluster approach to co-operative education and learning could be taken forward. Moreover, the high school will be encouraged to offer the SQA award in Co-operative Studies.
- 10 This would also be linked with any co-operative work taking place in the nursery/early years sector within the cluster.
- 11 The working group is also looking to learn from examples of good existing practice in other parts of Scotland, in England and Wales, and internationally. Research will identify where excellent practice is taking place and what lessons can be learnt and potentially introduced in schools in Edinburgh. Research to date demonstrates that the values of co-operation need to permeate through all a school's activities in order to bring about transformational change, and co-operative learning has a powerful impact on performance and results. Loudoun Academy, the first Scottish school of co-operation, is a prime example of a comprehensive school that has embedded a co-operative ethos throughout all aspects of school life (including curriculum, learning and teaching, and governance) with excellent results. It is the intention to visit Loudoun and a school in England that has successfully developed co-operative education, with a view to learning from their good practice and forging a close working relationship for the future.
- 12 Similarly, there are several examples of schools deemed to be underperforming that have dramatically transformed their attainment results and levels of achievement through adopting a co-operative ethos and approach, and co-operative teaching and learning. One such example is the Sutherland Enterprise and Business College in a deprived area of Telford, which was judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted and on the verge of being placed in special measures. Through adopting a co-operative ethos across the school and introducing co-operative teaching and learning as the key pedagogical approach, three years later the school has achieved the best exam results in its history and is above the national average for five GCSE's, including English and mathematics. Pupil behaviour has also vastly improved. Ofsted now judges the school to be 'good with outstanding features'. Again, Edinburgh will look to learn from examples of good practice that can be successfully developed within the distinct Scottish education system.
- 13 Further information about co-operative education and learning can be found at <http://www.cets.coop/>

- 14 There is also scope for other services delivered by Children and Families to adopt a stronger co-operative approach. There is potential, for example, for a more co-operative approach with local communities to be explored in relation to Community Access to Schools. The feasibility of a co-operative approach to Parental Engagement will also be examined. The group also recognises that Community Learning and Development could play a significant role in engaging people in, and promoting, co-operative values and principles. Community Centres, in particular, lend themselves well to adopting co-operative structures.
- 15 Moreover, the development of co-operative education will be taken forward within the context of wider co-operative development across the Council. A representative from Children and Families will be a member of the Co-operative Development Unit, and co-operative work that is developed by Children and Families will be consistent and congruent with the aims and purposes of this Unit.

Financial Implications

- 16 There are no financial implications at this stage

Equalities Impact

- 17 There is no equalities impact

Environmental Impact

- 18 There is no environmental impact

Recommendations

- 19
- a) Committee notes the work to date and requests a further report in January 2013

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Appendices	None
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Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 4: Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens Outcome 5: Our children have the best start in life Outcome 8: We have improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk.

Background
Papers

None