

Finance & Resources Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 10 November 2022

Finance for Equity – Update

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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Notes the update provided in relation to Schools and Lifelong Learning Third Party Spend and Finance for Equity.

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Report

Finance for Equity – Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out:
- 2.1.1 the current Education commissioning activity and how this is expected to identify, review and address gaps in service provision and develop contractual arrangements to allow delivery of services aligned to closing the poverty related attainment gap.
 - 2.1.2 the planning and development of teams around the learning communities to respond to their local context by pooling resources and considering best practice to facilitate collaboration and opportunities for synergies, including poverty prevention, capacity building, empowerment, subsidiarity, sustainability and best value.

3. Background

- 3.1 The City of Edinburgh Council is currently considering the commissioning strategy and the contracts which will replace the PEF Framework, in order to more closely align with place-based approaches to improve outcomes for children and their families and to provide opportunities to deliver best value.
- 3.2 The initial approach, in line with the direction set by the Scottish Government, was to delegate decision making around third-party provisions to Head Teachers who are best placed to assess what is needed in the interest of the children. Most of this spend was compliant, procured via the PEF framework, however the cumulative spend on some of the non-contracted providers has increased over the years, creating more pressure on resources and on our ability to remain compliant.
- 3.3 The new services will be informed by the requirements of schools, children and their families and be commissioned and procured compliantly. Consideration is being given to the model and the resources required to address the priority of non-contracted spend and identify needs for appropriate frameworks such as sports and physical activities, pathways, wellbeing interventions, specific training and online resources that best meet the requirement across the Learning Communities.
- 3.4 A multi-disciplinary Short Life Working Group (SLWG), including school leaders from all sectors, has begun to meet fortnightly, to plan the city-wide “Team Around the Learning Community” approach funded by Strategic Equity Funding and PEF. The

aim is to ensure that resources are directed towards the greatest need. The impact will be measurable in relation to improvements in attendance, attainment, engagement, inclusion or participation for identified children and young people facing poverty-related barriers.

4. Main Report

4.1 Learning Communities and the Teams Around the Learning Communities are required to take a place-based approach to the management of Finance for Equity (for example PEF) to achieve best value and improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap.

4.2 Education Senior Leadership Team, in partnership with the Planning and Commissioning Team and Commercial and Procurement Services, are exploring the possibility to build on a model of partnership working and include the consideration of resources required to identify needs for appropriate contracts supporting the below themes.

The themes are known as ‘the Edinburgh Imperatives’:

- Attendance
- Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap
- Pathways
- Health and wellbeing

4.3 The aim is to co-produce innovative and compliant frameworks of commissioned services to support the health and wellbeing, attainment and outcomes of children and young people. These will meet evolving pressures, needs and support positive destinations for learners across the Learning Communities.

4.4 The priority is to explore how providers can work together to develop continuous improvement in their practices which will maximise the outcomes for Learning Communities and any further synergies to make the best use of resources.

4.5 Engagement with Community and Voluntary Sector networks has started. Outcome service specifications are being written in consultation with key stakeholders and will inform the upcoming providers’ engagement events and feedback.

4.6 Partner Providers are encouraged to support schools to provide a service which ensures pupils receive high quality education which meets their needs, delivers improved educational outcomes, and avoids exclusion. Schools, through engagement with contracted Partner Providers will aim to raise the attainment of the learners in receipt of the support.

4.7 Suppliers’ Engagement Events will be arranged and published on Public Contract Scotland - Tender (PCS-T), following the initial development and consultation with the third sector network.

- 4.8 The Sports and Physical Activities Framework Prior Information Notice is expected to be published on Public Contract Scotland - Tender (PCS-T) shortly after the wider Suppliers' Engagement Event on 2nd November.
- 4.9 The Council wants to facilitate children and young people taking part in sport and physical activities which support social connections, confidence and inclusion. Physical activities promote health and wellbeing, support participation and wider social development. Trusted relationships also encourage perseverance, goal setting and a growth mindset which the Council wants to preserve and prioritise in the children and young people's recovery from Covid-19.
- 4.10 The interim position in relation to non-contracted and non-compliant spend needs to protect curriculum-based interventions, directly delivered to children and young people and the continuity of services in the spirit of mutual sustainability, in light of post Covid-19 circumstances and emerging needs of children and young people.
- 4.11 Given the complex landscape, careful consideration is being given to ensure we balance the need for dedicated bespoke provisions in individual schools with the risk of not being compliant with CSOs and procurement legislation, in the best interest of the children, the young people and their families.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Extension to the current arrangements, where appropriate, will ensure continuity of the services, for which each School will be responsible with additional support being provided through a joint contract management approach. This will inform the new contract monitoring requirements in the framework agreements.
- 5.2 To jointly build our vision with the Partner Providers, and to realign the contracts to the Learning Communities, Education and Children's Services require approximately nine months for the ongoing engagement exercise. A further six months will be required for market engagement and competitive procedures to be progressed where appropriate. This would also allow for the bedding in of the current spend on other funding streams across the Council and the mapping of provisions already commissioned by colleagues within and beyond the Directorate.
- 5.3 A centrally appointed Senior Development Officer for Equity (SDO) has been recruited to work with schools to support planning and the setting of appropriate targets. The SDO will work with the Planning and Commissioning Team to ensure financial and statutory compliance.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Interventions and actions listed within the report include those annually funded by the Scottish Government (Pupil Equity Funding, Strategic Equity Funding, Care Experience Funding), in addition to those funded by the Scottish Government since 2020 as a result of Covid impact.

- 6.2 The Award of the new contracts will be submitted to Finance and Resources Committee for approval.
- 6.3 Any interim extension of current arrangements within budgetary provision will secure Best Value in its ultimate balance between quality and cost, ensuring the best outcomes for the children and the young people in the interest of the Local Authority and its community.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 A Short Life Working Group has been formed to consider and take forward the revised way of working with the aim to co-produce innovative and compliant frameworks of commissioned services for Schools and Lifelong Learning.
- 7.2 Engagement between Education and the Community and Voluntary Sector continues to explore how we can more closely align with Place Based approaches to improve outcomes for children and families (Learning Communities and Teams around the Learning Communities).
- 7.3 Market engagement and co-production with providers, voluntary sector, partner agencies and service users are being progressed according to the set timescales for each requirement.
- 7.4 Suppliers Engagement Events, Feedback Events, Discussions re co-production and collaborative approaches will be published on PCS Public Contract Scotland. Supplier Development Programme (SDP) Scotland offers support, expert training and information to interested SMEs and third sector organisations.
- 7.5 Views and impact continue to be gathered from schools by the Local Authority in relation to the management of resources to support equity, specifically the use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding.
- 7.6 Views of parents/carers, families, and young people continue to be gathered by schools as part of the self-evaluation process around interventions and supports delivered to children and young people experiencing poverty-related barriers.

8. Background/External Reading

- 8.1 Tackling Child Poverty: Delivery Plan (2020) Published for Education, Children and Families Committee 15 December 202
- 8.2 [Pupil Equity Fund National Operational Guidance 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-equity-fund-national-operational-guidance-2022/pages/1-introduction-and-what-is-new-in-2022.aspx)
- 8.3 [Strategic Equity Fund National Operational Guidance 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/strategic-equity-fund-national-operational-guidance-2022/pages/1-introduction-and-what-is-new-in-2022.aspx)
- 8.4 [The Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund National Operational Guidance 2022 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-care-experienced-children-and-young-people-fund-national-operational-guidance-2022/pages/1-introduction-and-what-is-new-in-2022.aspx)
- 8.5 [The Scottish Attainment Challenge Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-scottish-attainment-challenge-framework-for-recovery-and-accelerating-progress/pages/1-introduction-and-what-is-new-in-2022.aspx)
- 8.6 [Pupil Equity Funding: school allocations 2022 to 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-equity-funding-school-allocations-2022-to-2023/pages/1-introduction-and-what-is-new-in-2022.aspx)

9. Appendices

9.1 n/a