

# Finance & Resources Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 8 September 2022

## Education and Children's Services Waiver Extension

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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Notes the authorisation awarded to extend the waiver for Gold and Gray Soccer Academy by £120,000, as an urgent decision in accordance with section 4.1 of the Council's Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions by the Director of Education and Children's Services, in consultation with the Convenor of Finance and Resources.

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## Education and Children's Services Waiver Extension

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report sets out the current Education commissioning activity and how this is expected to impact on contractual arrangements including the requirement to waive the Contract Standing Orders to allow continuity of the services in the best interest of the children and young people.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 In line with the Promise, the strategic plan and direction from the Edinburgh Children's Partnership, Education and Children's Services Directorate was actively procuring a range of services supporting education, early intervention and prevention when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. This impacted both on the ability of the Service to progress the procurement activity according to initial timescales and the scope for providers to provide services in line with service specifications.
- 3.2 Ongoing Commissioning projects have been heavily impacted by the realignment of services to better respond to emerging needs in the community and education settings. Previously commissioned services could not be delivered as planned, whilst additional services, although required, could not be commissioned. Partnership working with the voluntary sector, through a relationship – based approach, has supported the delivery of services during the pandemic. The work carried out with our partners will inform the co-production and market engagement for future procurement activities.
- 3.3 As services slowly resume safely, in the spirit of mutual sustainability, and in the best interest of the children and the young people in our community, Committee approval is being sought to waive the Council's Contract Standing Orders and extend the current waiver for Gold & Gray Soccer Academy to ensure continuity of support in light of post Covid-19 circumstances and emerging needs of children and young people.
- 3.4 Urgency powers to authorise the departure from Contract Standing Orders to award a contract to Gold & Gray Soccer Academy were sought and granted by the Convenor of this Committee on 24 August 2022. The urgency procedure under 4.1 of the Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions states that '*If a decision*

*which would normally be made by a Committee requires to be made urgently between meetings of the Committee, the Chief Executive or appropriate Director, in consultation with the Convener or Vice-Convener, may take action, subject to the matter being reported to the next Committee’.*

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 Education Senior Leadership Team, in partnership with the Planning and Commissioning Team and Commercial and Procurement Services, are currently redesigning services to more closely align with place-based approaches to improve outcomes for children and their families and to provide opportunities to deliver best value.
- 4.2 Learning Communities and the Teams Around the Learning Communities will be 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.
- 4.3 This is a radically different approach for schools: up until this point they rarely pooled resources, thus often duplicating services and missing economies of scale. In addition, the cluttered landscape of waivers rendered the organisation vulnerable to breaching Contract Standing Orders.
- 4.4 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 accumulative 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.
- 4.5 The new approach will consider the resources required to address the priority of non-contracted spend and identify needs for appropriate frameworks such as sports and physical activities, counselling, specific training and online resources.
- 4.6 It is estimated that the first phase of this project will take approximately nine months, to allow a full co-production exercise involving Head Teachers, Voluntary and Community Sector Providers and Service Users. 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
- 4.7 In the transition to the new framework agreements, approval was sought to waive Contract Standing Orders for 22/23 academic year and award a contract to Gold & Gray Soccer Academy to a maximum value of £120,000 to continue the delivery of the following

- 4.7.1 Group football sessions during school holidays and after school as part of the Active Schools offer supporting physical wellbeing
- 4.7.2 Group football sessions during term time as part of the focus on mental health and wellbeing including alternative education
- 4.7.3 Short term (max 6 weeks) 1:1 football sessions as part of a highly targeted intervention with the aim to reintegrate in groups
- 4.8 Given the significant difficulties in the past and the complex landscape, careful consideration should be 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. Consideration, however, should also be given to how Education can work with wider local services, such as Community Learning and Development, Social Work or Family Services, and with community or third sector partners to support the health and wellbeing, attainment and outcomes of children and young people impacted by poverty.
- 4.9 Gold & Gray Soccer Academy has delivered football sessions and camps in Edinburgh schools for nearly three years, offering 1:1 coaching, group play, club sessions, development sessions and holiday camps. The Academy also supports parts of Edinburgh's Active Schools programme working with several schools across Edinburgh's east at both primary and secondary level.
- 4.10 During the Covid-19 pandemic many children in primary, secondary, special schools and children's homes have taken part in these football sessions, adapted to their physical ability for added confidence, and benefitted significantly from being socially connected through groups and outdoor activities. The sessions promote health and wellbeing and provide continuity of support via a trusted key adult who is available to meet regularly and is able to reflect on their physical and social development.
- 4.11 The learners have engaged well in these sessions, building confidence and self-esteem. Trusted relationships have also encouraged perseverance, goal setting and a growth mindset which the Council wants to preserve and prioritise in the young people's recovery from Covid-19.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 Extension to the arrangements with the current provider will ensure continuity of the services.
- 5.2 Each School will be responsible for their own payments with additional support being provided through a joint contract management approach which will inform the new framework agreements.
- 5.3 Education Senior Leadership Team, in partnership with the Planning and Commissioning Team and Commercial and Procurement Services, will explore the possibility to build on a model of partnership working and include the consideration of resources required to identify needs for appropriate contracts for the below themes.

The themes are known as ‘the Edinburgh Imperatives’:

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

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The estimated waiver value is £120,000, based on the spend for 21/22 academic year. All proposed arrangements are within existing budgetary provision levels.
- 6.2 A number of waivers for Gold & Gray Soccer Academy has been approved within Delegated Authority limits, however the estimated spend for 22/23 academic year will take the value above, hence the need for Committee approval.
- 6.3 The requested waiver extension secures 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**

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- 7.1 A short life working group is being formed to consider and take forward the revised way of working with the aim to co-produce an innovative and compliant framework of commissioned services for Schools and Lifelong Learning.
- 7.2 Market engagement and coproduction with providers, voluntary sector, partner agencies and service users will be progressed according to the set timescales for each requirement.
- 7.3 Where co-production has not been possible due to the pandemic, projects have been placed on hold until an accurate assessment of the requirement and an enhanced level of engagement can be progressed.

## **8. Background/External Reading**

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## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Case studies and achievements

## **Appendix 1**

### **Case Study 1**

P1 Readiness to Learn Group at risk of Part time. Last session welcomed in three P1 classes. It became obvious early on that there was significant need in the cohort, and many were simply not yet ready for formal learning. They lacked social and listening skills to successfully access the learning in a play based P1 environment. Each morning a small group from P1 had active time in the gym hall with the Gold & Gray coaches. The focus was on ball games which involved turn taking and being in a team. This active morning session was important for these children as it helped to set the scene for the rest of their day and helped to develop the crucial listening and social skills required to access the curriculum. It gave them a chance to burn off some excess energy and channel it in a positive way. Only one of the ten P1 pupils in this group was on a part time timetable by the end of the session.

### **Case Study 2**

P7 disengaged Boys Group at risk of exclusion. Last session we had a small group of P7 boys who had come become disengaged in school and learning. They loved to play football and loved working with the Gold & Gray coaches. It seemed like they could relate to the coaches. Time with the Gold & Gray coaches was built into their timetable twice a week. This was used as a reward for the boys for following their timetables. As the relationships developed the boys naturally opened up about things going on for them and gave them a safe place to talk about stuff going on for them from friendship fall out to a grandparent dying. Just the same as a PSA who are not trained in counselling the coaches were simply a kind empathetic ear. At our P7 leavers assembly our pupils are asked to pick a member of staff to speak about them and their journey through school. These boys all picked the coaches. One boy has shared he would like to be a Gold & Gray coach when he grows up. Relationships work. There were no exclusions last session.

### **Case Study 3**

Engaged in additional P7 – S1 Transition activities (32 pupils) using football and other physical activity to reduce anxiety of transition to high school, developed self-confidence and independence, brought together young people from a variety of schools to make positive social connections. Particularly those pupils who had additional support needs (SEBN) from out of catchment who through the programme were able to make positive connections for starting high school.

### **Case Study 4**

16+ positive destination – a young person on a Flexible Timetable/GIRFEC plan at risk of not achieving a positive destination and now upskilled and put through relevant coaching awards and now taken on as an apprentice – he started engaging with Gold

& Gray when he was part of a group of disengaged pupils in the Wellbeing Hub who have social, emotional and behavioural needs. It supported his HWB and attainment.

#### Case Study 5

Rainbow Inclusion Group. In our mainstream school there is a growing need to support inclusion for all. There is a national/city agenda for inclusion. This is a very challenging task. At our school our staff are well trained and skilled in using ASL inclusion supports such ensuring there is routine and consistency. The visual support project, providing a nurturing environment and support planning such as SCERTs and GIRFEC. Even with all this in place it sometimes is still not enough. We have created our own Enhanced Support Bases and at times our Gold & Gray coaches are timetabled to these sessions to provide an outdoor learning active alternative for pupils. The Gold & Gray coaches take direction from the Inclusion support teaching staff. The children in the groups need to complete individual focused tasks with the teacher. The environment can feel and be busy. The Gold & Gray coach is able to offer an outdoor fun alternative such a football or sporting activity to enable pupils to then engage with L&T with teaching and support staff. Our work in our Enhanced Support Bases was commended by the Principle Educational Psychologist in June.

#### Case Study 6

Pathways. We welcome the concept that there is straightforward path through school. Not everyone will take the 'normal' path through school. Not everyone will achieve the same as others, but everyone should have a chance to achieve. We have used our Gold & Gray coaches to support the achievement and attainment of learners by supporting some to achieve a Hi5 SCQF Level 2 Award. The Gold & Gray Coaches support the learners to plan and deliver football skills session to younger pupils. This builds self-esteem for pupils, and they can achieve a recognised award.

#### Case Study 7

Enhanced Support Base (8 pupils) engaged young people with severe complexed learning needs – ASD – provided opportunities for them to:

- Engage in additional physical activity through adapted programmes to support their health and wellbeing. They were able to join in physical activity, learn about sport and nutrition through a small supported group, specifically tailored to their needs as they were not able to do through mainstream classes. This also built up their Flexible timetables allowing a fully enriched and enhanced curriculum for our most vulnerable young people.
- Developed their social interactions and achievement through Gold & Gray who allowed a support space to celebrate success of working collaboratively with other pupils and staff whom which they would not have had the opportunity to do so in mainstream education.

## Case Study 8

Wellbeing Hub – (15 pupils) engaged young people with social emotional and behavioural needs re-engage back into education, increased attendance, support more positive social interactions with peers, enhanced their behaviour within the school and wider community – engaged them in positive activities in school to help support reduce the risk of exclusion through their Flexible timetables.