

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer****Educational Services Committee: 15 June 2022**

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**Subject: Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement in West Dunbartonshire**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update the Educational Services Committee on changes to the Scottish Attainment Challenge programme; and to report on progress with implementing Educational Service's improvement priorities for attainment and equity.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** The Educational Services Committee is asked to:
- 1) note the progress made in the past three months with two key priorities: The Scottish Attainment Challenge and West Dunbartonshire Council's Education Improvement Framework; and
  - 2) agree the continuation of aspects of the Covid Education Recovery Plan.
- 2.2** The Committee will be provided with regular update reports advising of progress.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** In line with the Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement the Committee receives a regular report outlining progress against this strategic priority.
- 3.2** In November 2021, Scottish Government launched a refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge with a mission to 'use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap'.
- 3.3** The Scottish Attainment Challenge was launched by Scottish Government in 2015 and set out to accelerate the pace in which Scotland closes the poverty related attainment gap. West Dunbartonshire was one of 9 Challenge Authorities receiving Attainment Scotland Funding since 2015. As a Challenge Authority West Dunbartonshire delivered a successful strategy to raise attainment and narrow the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.4** Scottish Government has confirmed Attainment Scotland Fund allocations over the next four financial years to start in financial year 2022/23. West Dunbartonshire receives:

- Strategic Equity Funding (SEF): £43 million shared by 32 local authorities to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Prior to 2022 this funding was shared between 9 Challenge Authorities.
  - Pupil Equity Funding: additional funding allocated to schools based on Free Meal Entitlement
  - Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding: targeted resource provided to local authorities to support care experienced children from birth to the age of 26 ( funding allocation to be confirmed ) .
- 3.5** The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge mission and associated funding model sets out expectations for an acceleration of progress to tackle the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.6** In March 2022, Scottish Government published a suite of new national guidance and support documents for the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme. Local authorities are required to set measures of success and stretch aims for outcomes to tackle the poverty related attainment gap. These will be monitored locally and nationally. Officers will work in collaboration with national agencies and West Dunbartonshire schools to set and review progress against stretch aims
- 3.7** Governance boards chaired by the Chief Education Officer and/or Senior Education Officers will monitor progress with Strategic Equity Fund, Pupil Equity Fund and Care Experienced and Young Person's Fund. Regular reports will be submitted to Education Committee to provide updates on progress with workstreams and performance measures. Progress will be monitored and reported to Scottish Government through the Service Annual Standards and Quality Report.
- 3.8** Officers are currently working with headteachers and schools to support the development of plans to align with the new national guidance and expectations. A consultation exercise with stakeholders is underway to inform decisions about projects and interventions and use of funding streams.
- 3.9** West Dunbartonshire is well placed to accelerate progress building on the success of the authority Strategy to Raise Attainment and Achievement launched in 2015. The next phase of the Strategy 2022- 2027 will be launched in the new academic session 2022/23.
- 3.10** Service workstreams for the Scottish Attainment Challenge in the academic session 2022/23 are being developed around key objectives to deliver local and national expectations.
- tackle the poverty related attainment gap;
  - develop high quality leadership, learning, teaching and assessment;
  - increase levels of family engagement ensuring meaningful engagement with key stakeholders; and
  - provide an integrated service with other our youth and community services.

## 4.0 Main Issues

### 4.1 The Scottish Attainment Challenge

- 4.1.1** The change from Challenge Authority Funding to Strategic Equity Funding in 2022 has reduced the annual income to West Dunbartonshire Council. The Attainment Challenge allocation to the Council prior to 2022 was £2,043,815 in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. The allocation in 2022/23 is £1,745,797 with further annual reductions in each financial year up to 2025/26. The Attainment Scotland Fund allocations to West Dunbartonshire are detailed in the table below:

Table 1:

Strategic Equity Funding			
2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£1,745,797	£1,447,779	£1,149,761	£851,743
Pupil Equity Funding			
2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£3,380,835 each year			
CECYP Fund			
2022/23			
Allocation not yet confirmed			

- 4.1.2** West Dunbartonshire schools receive a larger proportion of the Attainment Scotland Funding compared to the local authority. For example, in 2021 the local authority will receive £ 1,745,797 Strategic Equity Funding; and West Dunbartonshire schools will receive £3,380,835 Pupil Equity Funding.
- 4.1.3** The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge sets increased accountability on local authorities and schools to achieve stretch aims and outcomes set to narrow the poverty related attainment gap.

### 4.2 Improvement Framework

- 4.2.1** The local authority has a statutory duty for the quality provision in schools and requires sufficient central resource to provide support and challenge to schools as they implement the increased expectations of the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge. The Service Improvement Framework has been developed to monitor quality and build capacity for improvement through collaboration between the central officers and schools.

- 4.2.2** As reported to Committee in March 2022, officers have conducted Performance Reviews in all schools as one major focus of the Improvement Framework for session 2021/22. This approach was developed as part of the education recovery and renewal agenda in response to the context of the pandemic. As a next phase of this work officers have been conducting Focus Attention visits working collaboratively with headteachers to develop action plans to accelerate progress with attainment outcomes in the Broad General Education. Early indications suggest that this work will support an increase in the percentage of children in West Dunbartonshire who achieve A Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) for their age and stage in P1, P4, P7 and S3 in June 2022.
- 4.2.3** Since 2016 the Scottish Government has conducted an annual census to survey attainment in Curriculum for Excellence Levels for children at P1, P4, P7 and S3. Subsequently, the Service has provided an annual progress report on attainment in the Broad General Education to Committee in September of each year with the exception of September 2020 due to the pandemic. Scottish Government will collect Achievement of a Level (ACEL) Data in June 2022. This data will provide information on the attainment of all P1, P4, P7 and S3 on this date. A report will be submitted to a future Education Committee on West Dunbartonshire Literacy and Numeracy Attainment.

### **4.3    Education Recovery and Renewal**

- 4.3.1** Throughout the session, schools and early learning and childcare centres have constantly had to adapt quickly to regularly revised and updated Scottish Government Covid 19 guidance. The most recent guidance set out that a small number of routine protective measures require to be retained. While many protective measures have been removed schools will continue with good health and safety practices to help reduce transmission where appropriate. The Test and Protect Transition Plan means that the schools and ELCC's twice weekly asymptomatic LFD testing stopped on 18 April 2022. Operational challenges are ever present with staff and pupil Covid related absences. The challenges faced by our schools and ELCC's cannot be underestimated and they have responded positively and with huge commitment to maintaining the best possible learning provision for children and young people.
- 4.3.2** The service recovery plan launched in August 2021 has provided additional resources to support the attainment and achievement of our children and young people affected by COVID. The plan is structured around the provision of additional hours of learning before and after school; additional teaching and support staff to work with individuals and small groups; and provide enhanced well being supports for example, providing intensive individual support to young people finding it difficult to attend school. Due to the extended periods of COVID related absence in terms 2 and 3, aspects of the Education Recovery Plan submitted to Council in May 2021 will continue into academic session 2022/23; to provide additional supports for children to attain and overcome any gaps in their learning due to COVID (Appendix 1).

**4.3.3** Additional resources have been allocated to support West Dunbartonshire schools to deliver bespoke interventions to support a tackling of the poverty related attainment gap. To support literacy attainment in primary schools a pilot project was offered in Clydebank during the Easter holidays; and in secondary schools a comprehensive supported study package has been offered.

**4.3.4 West Dunbartonshire Literacy Attainment Camp:** During the Easter holidays a literacy enrichment opportunity was offered to twenty primary 4 pupils from Linnvale and Our Holy Redeemer Primary Schools. This unique literacy programme engaged a team of teachers, youth workers and education support officers who worked together to offer a package of individual support to learners to help them develop confidence in their reading and writing. The children took part in creative writing workshops, reading out-loud, traditional storytelling, story-writing, music and dance experiences using literature around the theme of Scottish mythical beasts. The children experienced workshops that encouraged children to read, write, tell and explore stories. The programme concluded with a story telling campfire event with our young writers coming together to share their stories.

**4.3.5 Our Lady and St Patricks High School:** a comprehensive system of masterclass provision has been offered to all senior students to support with preparations for the 2022 SQA examinations. Our schedule commenced before the Easter holidays with several sessions taking place during lunchtime and also after school. Several sessions took place over the Easter holidays with weekend tutorials taking place typically the weekend before exams take place. During the exam period we will offer masterclasses during the school day providing opportunity for our pupils to attend school and complete their final aspects of revision. The masterclass programme has proven to be very successful in the past and provides some security for the students just as they are about to complete their examinations. We anticipate almost perfect attendance for these.

**Clydebank High School:** Throughout the session we ran a Study Café for all senior phase pupils after school on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Teachers from each subject area were available at the Study Café to support our pupils with their learning. We also offered a more formal supported study programme in each subject area both after school and at lunchtimes. Our Easter school programme ran throughout the 2 week holiday. Pupils were asked to sign up in advance for classes. The attendance for all most all classes was very good. We are also inviting young people in to school to do an intense revision session the day before the actual SQA exam.

**Vale of Leven Academy:** an Easter Revision programme was offered to our young people during the holiday period. The programme offered 45 individual sessions across 9 days with 34 individual teaches in attendance to offer bespoke support around assignments and exams. Sessions were separated into two blocks and therefore, students had the opportunity to attend 90 sessions depending on their curriculum pathway.

**Dumbarton Academy:** we offered a range of support classes throughout the 2021-22 session. Additional supports have been offered prior to the Interim assessment period in January, and prior to the start of the current SQA diet. We have tried to spread the timing of supports to maximise possible pupil access, as such some class were run before the start of the formal school day, some at lunchtime with others running at the at the end of the day. During the Easter holidays we offered a programme across 9 days. Support was offered across a wide spread of the curriculum and at a range of presentation levels. In addition we offered the school library as a general study area open to all pupils requiring access to a quiet study area outside of their home environment. The timetable of Spring Break supports was posted on the school website, promotional assemblies were held and parents were sent links via text to the programme.

**St Peter the Apostle:** our young people benefited from a targeted Supported Study Programme this session which included subject specialist classes delivered: after the school day; on Saturday mornings; twilight sessions and online. During the holidays our Easter Revision Programme ran consecutively over the course of the first 5 days of the holidays, with 3 different sessions each day. Senior pupils had access to an array of subject specialist supported study classes in over 20 differing subjects at N5, Higher and Advanced Higher Levels. We are delighted to report that there was excellent uptake amongst young people. On day one of our extensive programme over 170 pupils attended a variety of sessions in Chemistry, Maths, Music, History, Modern Studies and Dance. This level of variety and attendance was sustained throughout the whole week. We are also extremely pleased to share that during the summer term our Recovery: Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion group are supporting our young people by providing before and after exams areas for quiet study reflection and an Exam Breakfast Club. We feel that these measures are vital to supporting the health and wellbeing of our young people as they strive to achieve success.

#### **4.4 Education Development**

**4.4.1 Improving Our Curriculum:** in academic session 2021/22 officers have worked with staff and pupils to develop an exciting range of inter disciplinary learning projects. The projects aim to develop skills for learning, life and work. Almost 200 West Dunbartonshire teachers and early years staff have collaborated to produce high quality project lessons and resources shared on Campus@WDC.

**4.4.2 Creative and Cultural Learning Experiences:** to provide equitable access to cultural experiences for children and young people in West Dunbartonshire the service has commissioned Scottish Ballet, Theatre in Schools Scotland, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Opera to provide a programme of high quality theatre, dance and music workshops in schools and early learning centres. Pupils in Edinbarnet are working on the Disney Musicals for Schools' programme delivered by Scottish Opera. The work will culminate in a performance in school and at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow. In addition, the children will perform a song on the set of the Lion King Show at the Edinburgh Playhouse in June, 2022.

**4.4.3 Learning Technologies:** The provision of computer devices for our children and young people continues to increase each year. Since October 2021 we have increased the number of devices from 9,754 to 10,198. Information about the device numbers in West Dunbartonshire is listed in the table below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Purchased</b>	<b>Cumulative Total</b>
August 2015 - 16	2153	2153
August 2016 - 17	857	3010
August 2017 - 18	1423	4433
August 2018 - 19	1158	5591
August 2019 - 20	322	5913
August 2020 - 21	3441	9354
August 2021-May 2022	844	10,198

A rolling replacement programme is underway to support the replacement of 'aging' pupil computer devices. The first phase being to replace devices purchased in 2015-16.

**4.4.4 Languages1 / 2:** We are committed to enabling every child to start learning a second language from at least Primary 1, and a third language from Primary 5 at the latest. In June 2022, West Dunbartonshire schools will complete a survey, as part of a service audit of the provision of language learning in the Broad General Education. Information from the survey will feed into the next phase of both local and national strategy

#### **4.5 Water Safety Programme**

**4.5.1** Officers have been working closely with partners to ensure our children and young people have the knowledge and awareness of how to be safe around water. The Service is working with Water Safety Scotland to support the production of a new education resource aimed at young people aged 11-15 to be delivered in all West Dunbartonshire secondary schools. Learning resources produced by the RNLI will be delivered in all West Dunbartonshire primary schools during the summer term prior to the summer holidays. A promotional campaign is also being developed supported by the Council's Communications Team to be shared on social media platforms in the lead up to and during the summer holidays.

### **5. People Implications**

**5.1** As reported to Council in February 2022 the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding enabled the provision of additional temporary (seconded) funded posts within the education service, partner council services and external providers. The main areas supported through this additionality are: early intervention in learning, welfare advice and poverty support, nurturing mental well being, community safety, school and learning community collaboration to improve quality, professional learning and personalised learning pathways. The decreased funding will reduce the number of staff available to

deliver in these areas with the seconded staff returning to their substantive posts, and any backfill element will cease.

- 5.2** As reported to Council in February 2022 in session 2021/22 the local authority Scottish Attainment Challenge funded 41.5 posts. The new funding model will reduce this number of posts by 42% from 41.5 to 24.07 posts by 2025/2026. In session 2022/23 the Scottish Equity Fund will fund 39.0 posts.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** Since its inception in 2015/16 to March 2022 the Council will have received £12,642,432 in funding. Attainment Challenge allocations to the Council have been £2,043,815 in both 2020/21 and 2021/22. Funding in 2022/23 has been confirmed to be £1,745,797 which is a reduction of £298,018 in 2022/23.
- 6.2** The Education Recovery Plan at Appendix 1 will be funded from Education's Budget related to COVID flexibilities.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** The reduced funding model coupled with the current context of the pandemic increases risk of a negative impact on priorities to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for all learners in our communities.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1** A full Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and has identified the decrease in funding will limit ELA's strategic ability to deliver and progress a range of functions within the raising attainment agenda. These include, but are not limited to scrutiny and challenge teams, resources to support out of hours and holiday learning as well as access to wellbeing support for parents. Scope exists to mitigate the adverse impact on pupils, however this requires adaptations across key service areas through the modification of plans to reflect the reduction in Scottish Government Funding.

## **9. Consultation**

- a. Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.
- b. In response to the revised funding model consultation will be conducted with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government, local Trade Unions and Heads of Establishments to produce West Dunbartonshire's Scottish Attainment Challenge plan for 2022-2026.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**



**10.1** This reports reflects the Council's 2017-2022 overarching priority to reduce inequalities for the people of West Dunbartonshire which supports improved outcomes for all learners in our community.

Laura Mason  
Chief Education Officer  
June 2022

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**Person to Contact:** Julie McGrogan, Senior Education Officer, Department of Education, Learning and Attainment, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL  
Telephone No: 01389 737316  
Email: [julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:julie.mcgrogan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendix:**

1. Education Recovery Plan
2. Equalities Impact Assessment Screening

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All wards