

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services

Educational Services Committee: 20 February 2013

Subject: Employability Skills Review

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report informs members of the continued development of the Employability Skills element of Curriculum for Excellence. It details how this important aspect of pupil education is being progressed in West Dunbartonshire and seeks members endorsement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the committee:
- note the contents of this report and acknowledge the changes made to the process as part of planned development;
 - to note that the Action Plan referred to in 4.7 is presented to a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1** In 2008 it was noted that there was a change in school leaver data showing a move away from young people leaving school at the end of S4. Both National and Local reviews of work experience identified that the one week for all in S4 was no longer meeting the needs of the young people and a refocus was planned.
- 3.2** A challenging economy and a need to support positive sustained destinations added to the decision to implement a more appropriate Employability Skills Programme. The aim of the programme was to develop pupils' employability skills and vocational awareness through a placement which was flexible, focused, and relevant to the pupils' experience and aspirations. The programme was developed using a very successful model previously implemented with the More Choices More Chances (MCMC) cohort.
- 3.3** The programme was initiated in session 2009 – 10 and has been rolled out over three academic sessions. The programme is delivered in partnership with WDC Skillseekers, Skills Development Scotland, coordinators and pupil support staff within the schools, and an Education Support Officer and Quality Improvement Officer within the Education Department.

- 3.4** It was important that each pupil's work placement built on skills and experiences both from within the curriculum and from the pupil's wider experience, and was part of a coherent process and not an add on. It was imperative that development linked West Dunbartonshire Schools Skills for Work Programme, Enterprise and Employability and wider achievement within the future planning for Curriculum for Excellence.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Building the Curriculum 4 states in the key messages that all children and young people are entitled to opportunities for developing skills for learning, life and work. The skills are relevant from the early years right through to the senior phase of learning and beyond. The skills agenda is in the process of being further developed with emphasis on the importance of implementation across all ages 3-18.
- 4.2** Building the Curriculum 3 and Building the Curriculum 4 both emphasise the importance of working in partnership when planning and delivering a coherent curriculum which meets the needs of individual children and young people. Senior Phase Working groups have been set up. Partnership working and employer engagement is one area within their action plan.
- 4.3** The Employability Placement Programme has been streamlined to bring MCMC and mainstream together and is managed within the education department. This leads to a coherent planning process, making the best use of resources and informed planning for employability within the curriculum. There are two officers who are based within schools strengthening the links with staff and pupils. Monitoring and evaluation of the programme is ongoing.
- 4.4** There will be further work undertaken within the construction of the consortia arrangements to ensure planned development of skills for learning, life and work both within subject departments in schools and across the authority
- 4.5** New wider achievement awards are being developed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. These awards will be considered and implemented as appropriate. One of the Senior Phase working groups has facilitated the identification of staff within the authority to assist with development of materials and implementation of courses.
- 4.6** Accrediting and recording wider achievement is a priority and is part of the senior phase planning. Working with Community Learning and Development and other partners is essential in this process
- 4.7** An Action Plan to address issues emerging from the Review will be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Educational Services Committee.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** This report has no implications for personnel.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 This report has no financial implications.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 Improved development of employability skills reduces the risk of school leavers failing to gain employment.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out and found that the results of the review support the Council's general duty in promoting greater opportunities for a broader range of school leavers in accessing Employability Skills Placements.

9. Consultation

9.1 Legal Services and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to improve life chances for children and young people which is one of the strategic priorities for 2012 - 2017

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Employability Skills Review 2012
Appendix 2 - EIA Screening

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All Wards