

## **West Dunbartonshire Council**

### **Report by the Executive Director of Educational Services**

**Education and Lifelong Learning Committee: 14 September 2011**

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

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report outlines to members that there is a need to raise attainment and achievement across West Dunbartonshire's schools. It details how Educational Services will take this forward through a strategy to raise attainment and achievement (appendix 1) and asks for members to agree the draft strategy.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** Each year Scottish Government publishes Standard Tables and Charts (STACS) which give a detailed analysis of the national SQA Examination results.
- 2.2** Close scrutiny of results in West Dunbartonshire from the period 2006 – 2010 indicates that overall we perform below the national average and below our comparator authorities (Clackmannanshire, Inverclyde, Midlothian, North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.) The initial appraisal of the 2011 SQA Exam Diet suggests slight improvement. A full report will be prepared for the next Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on 9 November 2011.
- 2.3** There are of course examples of individual schools and departments in West Dunbartonshire where results are in line with, or above the national average in some measures. There is also a range of outstanding individual and group achievement across the Authority.
- 2.4** Educational Services is of the view that to raise attainment and achievement and to improve the qualifications achieved by each young person, we need to work collaboratively with all our stakeholders: senior managers, staff, young people, parents and partners. A challenging and supportive agenda will be agreed with each of the five secondary schools. This will involve an open and honest two-way approach.

#### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** A group of five teachers will be selected through an interview process and seconded for eight months to focus on raising attainment. The secondment will be two-fold; although the teachers will be based within their own schools they will also come together as a team. This will enable us to share best practice and to find solutions to emerging issues.

It will also serve as an excellent professional development opportunity for the five teachers to develop their skills and to build the capacity for sustainable improvement within each school. (Appendix 2)

- 3.2** STACS meetings take place with each school on an annual basis. This session the format of the meeting will be amended. Targets will be agreed and support requirements discussed. This consistent approach will make it possible to target resources and to plan the required support across the Authority. Follow-up sessions will be planned for each school.
- 3.3** A similar approach will be planned in a rolling programme for primary schools in due course so that the learning and achievement of pupils reaches potential and continues into secondary schools.

#### **4. People Implications**

- 4.1** The revised approach to school improvement will be fully discussed with Head Teachers. There will be a major communication campaign for staff, pupils and parents.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** The costs of the five seconded teachers, for a period of eight months, will be met from the staffing budget. The costs associated with support to raise attainment will be met from the schools' devolved budgets and the Educational Services revenue budget including study support.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** Failure to implement an authority-wide strategy to raise attainment will disadvantage our young people and may become a reputational risk to the Council.

#### **7. Equalities, Health & Humans Rights Impact Assessment**

- 7.1** No issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

#### **8. Strategic Assessment**

- 8.1** The Council has identified four main strategic priorities for 2011/2012, namely Social & Economic Regeneration, Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy; and Fit for Purpose Services.
- 8.2** Raising expectation and aspirations with our young people will ultimately lead to regeneration. Investing in their future is fundamental to the values of our Council. Our staff are our most valuable resource and they have the skills to improve outcomes for young people. Success in improving attainment and achievement will impact positively on Educational Services and West Dunbartonshire Council.

## **9. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**9.1** The Educational Services and Lifelong Learning Committee is recommended to:

- (a) agree the necessity to raise attainment and achievement;
- (b) approve the draft strategy to raise attainment and achievement which will be subject to wider consultation; and
- (c) receive a report on progress with the Strategy to Raise Attainment in May 2012.

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**Appendices:**

- 1. Raising Attainment Strategy
- 2. Role Descriptor for Secondments

**Background Paper:**

**Wards Affected:** All wards