

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

EDUCATION RECOVERY – USE OF COVID-19 STAFFING MONIES

REPORT BY KELLY MCINTOSH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This report provides Committee with an update on the expenditure of Covid-19 'recovery' funding for additional education staffing resource, which has been delegated to the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate. [Report 143/21](#) refers.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Children and Learning Committee:

- (i) Notes the use of the education recovery funding as outlined in section 4.
- (ii) Requests that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning includes an evaluation of each of the funded initiatives in the session 2021-22 Annual Education Report.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN 2017-30 / COUNCIL PLAN / TAY PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within:

The **Angus Community Plan 2017-30**:

- The best start in life for children
- Improved physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing
- More opportunities for people to achieve success

The **Council Plan 2019-2024**:

- We want to maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities

The **Tayside Plan** for Children, Young People and Families 2021-23

- Our children having the best start in life in a nurturing environment
- Our children and young people being meaningfully engaged with high quality learning experiences to extend their potential
- Our children growing up healthy, confident and resilient with improving physical and mental health and strengthened emotional wellbeing

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Reference is made to [Report 143/21](#), considered by the Children and Learning Committee on 18 May 2021. The report described the allocation to Angus Council of £1,258,000 of Education Recovery grant funding. Under the terms of the grant, this funding was to be ring-fenced for expenditure on additional staffing. The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning was granted delegated authority to plan the expenditure of these monies and it was agreed a further report would be brought to the Committee outlining the plans.

3.2 The conditions for expenditure of the grant funding were set out by Scottish Government and confirmed to local authorities on 06 May 2021. In summary, the funding may be used to:

- Employ a variety of school staff to meet the needs of children and young people in their local areas and ensure that levels of teaching and support staff in schools can be maintained in the 2021-22 academic year. This may include, for example, teachers, classroom support staff, facilities management staff, staff to support any wider rollout of testing initiatives to promote safety in school (if necessary and applicable), and administrative staff to relieve burdens on senior management teams.
- Employ early years practitioners to support the transition from ELC to primary school by, for example, embedding play-based pedagogy in early primary, supporting information sharing and organising transition activities.

- 3.3 Section 4, below, will set out the latest updates in relation to this funding and any associated recruitment exercises. Section 6, below, sets out the latest financial position.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Annual Education Plan 2020-21 listed recovery in literacy, especially reading, as a priority. Work to support literacy included a test of change using Sound Reading System (SRS), a carefully constructed linguistic phonic programme which supports teachers to fully understand the structure of the writing system. All of the children involved in the test of change made progress in the skills required for reading and spelling. Specifically, SRS ensures that learners develop the skills (advanced blending, segmenting, sound processing and alphabet code knowledge) required to read and spell competently. Importantly, learners are able to recognise and articulate their successes and progress in literacy.

Based on the success of the test of change, Covid recovery funding is being used to expand SRS across schools. Doing so will build capacity to overcome barriers to learning in literacy and to develop good language and communication skills by making the link with speech and language processes clearer.

The aim of the Angus Science of Language and Reading (SOLAR) Project is to significantly and sustainably increase teacher agency and close the attainment gap by ensuring equality in literacy practice for all pupils.

- 4.2 Within Early Learning and Childcare 12 additional Early Years Practitioners (EYPs) are being employed on a temporary contract across 12 identified schools for the 2021-22 session. The EYPs will support successful transitions between the nursery setting and Primary 1, along with providing targeted support for children and further embedding play-based approaches. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered to measure the impact of the targeted interventions that are undertaken. The EYPs will be placed within Andover Primary, Burnside Primary, Carlogie Primary, Grange Primary, Hayshead Primary, Inverbrothock Primary, Ladyloan Primary, Langlands Primary, Lochside Primary, Seaview Primary, Southmuir Primary and Strathmore Primary.
- 4.3 Each of our school clusters has a unique context. All 8 have met to agree an initiative specific to their context and will progress actions to achieve this during session 2021-22. Funding of £75,000 has been allocated to each cluster. Initial cluster plans are outlined in appendix 1. Central ELL staff will work with clusters throughout the year to support the improvement activity and the use of data to measure improvement.

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Children and Learning Committee notes the use of the education recovery funding as outlined in section 4.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the Children and Learning Committee requests that the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning includes an evaluation of each of the funded initiatives in the session 2021-22 Annual Education Report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The following table sets out the current projected costs associated with delivery of the projects detailed in Section 4:

Project	Projected Cost
Extension of Sound Reading System	£140,000
12 x Early Years Practitioners	£350,000
8 x cluster projects	£600,000
TOTAL	£1,090,000

6.2 Current projections indicate expenditure of £1,090,000. The total allocation available to the Directorate is £1,258,000. The balance of the remaining funding will be deployed throughout the system to augment the identified projects as required.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 The Director of Children, Families and Justice and all Angus Council head teachers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- [Report 143/21](#)

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List of Appendices: Appendix 1: Summary of Cluster Proposals

Appendix 1 Summary of Cluster Proposals

Cluster	Proposal Summary
<p>Arbroath North</p>	<p>There will be 3 workstreams for the Arbroath North Cluster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HWB – improved engagement in physical activity and sport An Active Schools Support Worker will be employed for 12 months. All schools will work with the Active Schools Team to improve and increase engagement with identified focus groups at P7/S1. Participation levels will be monitored and tracked, and further data will be gathered to evidence whether this has improved engagement in other aspects of learning. • Increased opportunities to engage in out of school/community projects Working with a local church (St Andrews Parish Church, Arbroath), Head Teachers and Minister will seek to increase opportunities to engage in community projects and youth groups which have been restricted due to recent lockdowns. This would take into consideration opportunities for learners in both burgh and rural locations, to reduce social isolation which may have resulted for many over the last 18 months. Focus groups will be identified, participation in activities tracked and monitored and the Leuven Scale will be used to evidence improved engagement • Individual school specific projects Each school will identify specific projects to support any gaps or deficits which have been identified as part of their own individual self-evaluation. This will be integral to their recovery planning.
<p>Arbroath West</p>	<p>The Arbroath West Cluster will increase the Cluster Support team both in terms of role and remit to support all schools in the cluster. The work of the Cluster Support Team will be to support families, provide pastoral support and increase learner resilience, resulting in more positive engagement in learning, increased attendance for learners, and more positive relationships with identified families. Specific data will be gathered to track and monitor progress and improvement e.g. attendance, Wellbeing Web, referrals for interventions. Cluster level support planning meetings will oversee referrals and targeted interventions, and by June 2022 80% of identified pupils will have successfully engaged with the Cluster Support team.</p>
<p>Brechin</p>	<p>The Brechin Cluster plans to establish an Early Intervention team targeting children who are just below the moderated standard in reading within First Level. The rationale for this proposal is based on attainment data from across the cluster in reading. Previous experience of Early Intervention has demonstrated a positive impact on reducing attainment gaps and improving wellbeing. The aim is to reduce the reading attainment gap in targeted groups within First Level by June 2022.</p>
<p>Carnoustie</p>	<p>The Carnoustie Cluster plans to use the funding to increase the School and Pupil Support Assistant (SPSAs) allocation. The additional SPSA hours will target children and young people whose mental health concerns are impacting negatively on their ability to cope with social interaction and motivation to learn. The schools have identified learners who would benefit from additional support, particularly regarding self-regulation strategies. The SPSAs will work with this target group across the Cluster – ensuring a consistency of approach. The intended impact of this intervention is improved confidence and engagement in learning.</p>
<p>Forfar</p>	<p>The Forfar cluster plans to work together across all schools and sectors on joint planning on two curricular areas to ensure a more progressive, seamless and coherent 3-15 curriculum in the areas chosen, working towards a shared and consistent understanding of achievement of levels through moderation activity and how we track individual pupils to ensure a progressive level of challenge across key transition points. The work will identify any gaps and curricular interventions designed and put in place to address those gaps. The funding will be used to release staff to work across the cluster on areas such as joint planning of the curriculum, moderation activities, cross cluster classroom visits and cross cluster team teaching.</p>
<p>Kirriemuir</p>	<p>The Kirriemuir Cluster plans to improve outcomes in writing through a cluster focus on moderation of writing (2nd into 3rd level) using the theme of Learning for Sustainability. This will be facilitated by the appointment of a teacher who will work with both primary and secondary staff with a focus on moderation. The teacher will identify opportunities for professional collaboration and joint professional learning activities to create appropriate resources and assessments and support joint practice development. The intervention will take the form of a small-scale research study and baseline data will be collected to identify appropriate impact measures which will be reviewed on a regular basis.</p>

Monifieth	<p>Monifieth High School Cluster plans to recruit an additional School and Pupil Support Assistant (SPSA) to join their team to support individuals and groups as part of their HEART (Healthy, Engaging, Achieving, Relating, Thriving) provision. The remainder of the funding will be utilised by the Primary schools in the Cluster to work closely with Angus Alive in providing both whole class and small group provision within each primary school to promote outdoor learning with a focus on emotional and social development. This would also promote participation and achievement. Working with Angus Alive in the primary schools will upskill both teachers and SPSA's in effective learning, teaching, and promoting well-being using the outdoors. It will also provide the children with opportunities to benefit from the outdoors and learn transferable skills. The individual unique school contexts will be the location for the outdoor learning experiences, and this will support staff confidence in using these resources effectively.</p>
Montrose	<p>The Montrose Cluster plans to recruit two transition teachers to work with all schools in the Montrose Cluster – Literacy focus 1.0fte, Numeracy focus 0.4fte. Teachers to facilitate CLPL across the Cluster to build capacity in teaching and learning, share pedagogy and evaluate the use of learning resources. They will develop and share progression pathways which take account of what is learned in primary schools and how this can effectively articulate into the Maths/English curriculum and expectations in the secondary school.</p> <p>Montrose will also recruit a family link worker. The role of the family link worker will be to help families support their children, improve attendance, access to services, and build relationships within their schools. This will promote collaborative working within the Montrose cluster and promote partnerships with outside agencies. Parents/Carers are essential members of the learning experience for all learners. The Family Link Worker will work to engage every family in the Montrose cluster so that no family misses out.</p>