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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19 January 2021</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/12/21/RB</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Ruth Binks</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712748</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Education and Communities Committee: Expedited Business, Relevant Updates and Operational Log</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider expedited business, relevant updates and the operational log for the Education and Communities Committee.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 4 January 2021 the First Minister set out new guidance expected to be in place until at least 1 February. This guidance is due to an emerging new variant of the COVID-19 virus.
- 2.2 The Policy and Resources Committee met on Thursday 7 January 2021 to consider the decision-making arrangements for the Council during the current status of the pandemic. The decision of the Policy and Resources Committee was that the current cycle of Committee meetings continue on the basis of expedited business only and that it be delegated to relevant officers to take and implement critical decisions in situations of operational urgency to plan for and to maintain, where possible, essential public services and to maintain an Operational Log of these decisions for scrutiny by the relevant Service Committee at every meeting.
- 2.3 This report considers the following expedited business and relevant updates:
- Performance management for revenue and capital budgets
  - Solution for the increase in demand at Craigmarnock School
  - Arrangements for the reopening of schools January 2021
  - Places for childcare / in-school learning for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils.
  - Remote learning
  - SQA qualifications
  - Transport and arrangements for school lunches
  - Implications of new lockdown on culture and leisure organisations
  - Impact on leisure facilities operated by Inverclyde Leisure
  - The Operational Log for delegated decision making

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities & Organisational Development**

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The First Minister made an announcement on 19 December about the levels all local authorities would be placed in following the Christmas break. This was due to the new variant of COVID-19 and the emerging enhanced risk. On 4 January 2021 the First Minister set out further guidance expected to be in place until at 1 February. This guidance is to ensure sufficient time to reduce community transmission and to assess the implication of the new strain of the virus.
- 4.2 The Policy and Resources Committee met on Thursday 7 January 2021 to consider the decision-making arrangements for the Council during the current status of the pandemic. The decision of the Policy and Resources Committee was that the current cycle of Committee meetings continue on the basis of expedited business only and that it be delegated to relevant officers to take and implement critical decisions in situations of operational urgency to plan for and to maintain, where possible, essential public services and to maintain an Operational Log of these decisions for scrutiny by the relevant Service Committee at every meeting.
- 4.3 This report considers the expedited business, relevant updates and the operational log relevant to the Education and Communities Committee.

## **5.0 PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

### **5.1 Communities 2020/21 Revenue Budget – Period 7 to 31 October 2020**

- 5.1.1 The Communities Revenue Budget for 2020/21 latest projection is an overspend of £960,000. Included within this projection are costs of £1,035,000 relating to the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which will be fully funded by the approved COVID-19 budget. Excluding these costs, there is a projected underspend of £75,000 which is an increase in expenditure of £54,000 since the last Committee.
- 5.1.2 Earmarked Reserves for 2020/21 total £159,000, of which £106,000 is projected to be spent in the current Financial Year. To date there has been no expenditure. Spend to date per profiling was expected to be £3,000 resulting in slippage to date of £3,000 or 100%.

### **5.2 Communities Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/21 - Progress**

- 5.2.1 Overall, the Committee is projecting to contain the costs of the 2020-2023 Capital Programme within available budgets. Expenditure at 9 December 2020 is 33.79% of the restated 2020/21 approved budget. Net advancement of £316K (72.6%) is being reported in connection with the revised pitches asset management plan and progression of the lifecycle works to the Parklea Community Facility as previously reported.

### **5.3 Education 2020/21 Revenue Budget – Period 7 to 31 October 2020**

- 5.3.1 The latest projection for the Education Budget is an overspend of £3.178 million. Included within this projection are costs of £3.291million relating to the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which will be fully funded by the approved COVID-19 budget. A further £546,000 of COVID-19 related costs are funded from the Early Years 1140 Hours Earmarked Reserve and £414,000 from Attainment Challenge / Pupil Equity Fund. The net projection excluding the COVID-19 costs is an underspend of £113,000, a decrease in expenditure of £151,000 since the last Committee.
- 5.3.2 Earmarked Reserves for 2020/21, excluding those for Asset Plans and Strategic Funds, total £2.399 million of which £2.218 million is projected to be spent in the current Financial Year. To date expenditure of £508,000 (22.9%) has been incurred. Spend to date per profiling was expected to be £944,000, therefore slippage to date is £436,000 or 46.2% and relates to the Early Years 1140 Hours earmarked reserve.

## **5.4 Education Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/21 - Progress**

- 5.4.1 Overall, the Committee is projecting to contain the costs of the 2020/23 Capital Programme within available budgets. Expenditure at 30 September 2020 is 63.76% of the 2020/21 restated approved budget (41.76% of revised projection), there is net advancement of £1.701m (52.68%) being reported as detailed within 10.1. This is an increase in net advancement of £1.387m (42.96%) from that reported to the last Committee.
- 5.4.2 The Committee is requested to note the current over-expenditure of £44,000 on the recently completed St Mary's Primary School Refurbishment & Extension project and that a more detailed report will be brought back to a future Committee upon agreement of the final account for the project. The future years lifecycle fund will be utilised to contain within existing model resources pending a review of overall model allowances.
- 5.4.3 The Committee is requested to note the issue of tenders for the completion works for the Gourock Primary School Extension project and that acceptance of the most economically advantageous tender will be progressed through the use of emergency powers when the cost and funding position is clarified upon tender return and evaluation.

## **6.0 RELEVANT UPDATES**

- 6.1 Solution to accommodate the increase in demand at Craigmarnock School:

Work was carried out during the academic session 2019/20 as part of the 1140 hours expansion proposals to scope out options to accommodate a larger Nursery / P1 cohort from August 2020. The solution created two early years composite classes incorporating nursery and P1. Minor alterations to the two classrooms were completed during the 2020 summer holiday period and this meant that no further alterations to the building were required for academic year 2020/21. The early years arrangement will remain in place for future years.

The projected pupil numbers for the S1 intake at Craigmarnock for August 2021 are such that additional space will be required to accommodate the projected numbers. The school has the capacity to accommodate the transition of its existing P7 cohort as they move into S1 however there are a number of pupils currently attending mainstream schools in P7 both within Inverclyde and some who are moving into the local area for S1, that will take the cohort number over what the school can manage within its current accommodation.

Property Services have reviewed the existing Craigmarnock accommodation in consultation with the Head Teacher and have identified the best area of the building where alterations to a non-teaching space could be taken forward to create an additional classroom / learning space.

The best option is to merge community office and meeting room accommodation to form 43m<sup>2</sup> teaching space. It should be noted that this will result in a loss of the spaces noted and further consultation is required with current users (NHS partners) prior to confirming how the services currently delivered would be accommodated.

Further consultation is required to assess the feasibility of the option outlined above. Property Services also require to progress a budget cost estimate for this option and undertake more detailed investigations into the structural building alterations required. It should be noted that the progression of this option over the summer 2021 holiday period will require an early decision on approval to proceed to allow sufficient time for the necessary design, statutory approval and construction processes with funding proposed to be made available from the existing 2021/22 education lifecycle fund.

## **6.2 Arrangements for the reopening of schools January 2021**

- 6.2.1 The latest government guidance for the re-opening of schools and early years settings can be found at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-re-opening-arrangements-for-january-2021/>

This guidance has been followed up by the Education Continuity (No7) Direction which gives a legal basis for the implications of the guidance until 1 February 2021.

The guidance states that childcare will be offered for vulnerable children, or children of key workers for the first week of the school term. This meant that the school holiday period was effectively extended for all other children who did not meet the definitions of vulnerable children, or children of key workers until Monday 11 January.

For the period from Monday 11 January to Friday 29 January, vulnerable children and the children of key workers will continue to attend school in-person. Schools will switch from offering childcare and wellbeing support to learning and teaching on 11 January for these groups (attendance in schools should be restricted to all necessary staff, vulnerable children and children of key workers).

### **6.2.2 Places for childcare or in-school learning for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils.**

Education Services requested an exceptional closure day for Wednesday 6 January to give schools and early years establishments time to plan for remote learning and consider how learning, teaching and childcare would be delivered during the coming weeks. Each school and early years establishment operated by Inverclyde Council will be open in January. This is not the same as in the spring when hubs were used for childcare.

Applications for places for key workers were considered by each school and early years establishment on 6 January. An appeals process was set up if any parent disputed the decision of their school or establishment. 925 applications were received for key workers: 894 were offered places, 28 were declined places and 3 applications are pending approval.

Education Services worked with Social Work colleagues to ensure the most vulnerable young people and those on the child-protection register are offered places at school. The list of those affected was updated in the week before Christmas and will be constantly kept under review.

Schools will also work with families to offer places to those who will require additional support to access learning. Craigmarloch School has contacted every pupil to ensure that an effective individual package of support for learning is in place for each child and meets the requirements of the family.

A weekly return will be made to the Scottish Government about those physically attending school buildings.

### **6.2.3 Remote learning**

The Education Scotland guidance for remote learning can be accessed at <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/supporting-remote-learning/supporting-remote-learning>

In November and December education services received 1,200 laptops with wi-fi access were required to help to support remote and blended learning. Priority was given to those who were eligible for free school meals in secondary schools.

Each school and establishment contacted parents outlining the arrangements for remote learning on either 7 or 8 January. Remote learning can be delivered in a variety of ways. It may include reading, doing, creating and inventing, playing, problem solving, observing and investigating with some of the best learning examples not requiring technology at all, although in the current context, digital and online approaches will be commonly used.

Inverclyde education establishments are well set up to deliver remote learning. The early

adoption of the Clickview platform has meant that teachers can easily upload pre-recorded lessons. This offer is enhanced by the Regional Collaborative West Online School (West OS) and national offers through Education Scotland and eSgoil.

Inverclyde have revised the guidance given to teachers and practitioners about remote and blended learning given the current nature of the pandemic. This revised guidance takes into account best practice, recent research and the guidance issued by Education Scotland through the Covid Emergency Response Group (CERG) on Friday 8 January.

The following list is not exhaustive but outlines the types of activity that has taken place (and continues to take place) to ensure that remote learning is high quality and of a consistent high standard across Inverclyde.

- Drafting of remote learning guidance for all schools, incorporating new guidance from Education Scotland, published 8/1/21
- All Heads of Establishment have met with the Head of Education and Corporate Director where expectations of further developing and improving the quality and consistency of remote learning across the authority have been shared whilst building on the successes of the approaches during the first lockdown
- All schools are drafting their own school policies on their remote learning provision and have communicated their approach to parents by 8 January 2021
- All schools have communicated their remote learning arrangements to families by 08 January 2021
- All Heads of Establishment are meeting with Education Officers from week beginning 11 January 2021 to review their provision for remote learning
- Audit tool created and issued to support schools to ensure they are in line with the guidance from Inverclyde and Education Scotland
- Since June 2020 we have built a substantial bank of recorded content from across Inverclyde and the West Partnership to develop the West Online School. Using ClickView as the host platform, teachers now have access to this
- A team of Attainment Challenge staff are engaged in producing more recorded content for schools to access
- A wide range of training has been offered by the Digital CMO from the Attainment Challenge for all teachers since August 2020
- Signposting to offers beyond Inverclyde e.g. accessing the live teaching input from e-Sgoil

#### 6.2.4 **SQA qualifications**

Previously on 7 October 2020, the Deputy First Minister announced that National 5 results would be based on teacher judgements. Subsequently, on 8 December 2020 this was extended to Highers and Advanced Highers. Moderation processes are being put in place to ensure that awards are offered to the same standard and criteria across the whole of Scotland. Given the recent nature of schools moving to remote learning, local authorities are working with the SQA to consider the implications. Guidance is being revised and reviewed and regular updates to schools are given. All most recent information can be found at:

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95157.html>

#### 6.2.5 **Transport and arrangements for school lunches**

Transport will be provided for those who are entitled and will attend their school. Transport arrangements will constantly be kept under review. Arrangements for payments for those secondary pupils who are entitled to free school meals and live between 1 and 2 miles from the school have been considered through delegated powers.

A lunch service will also be provided at the school or early years establishment for those who attend. Arrangements for payments for those entitled to free school meals have been considered through delegated powers.

## 6.3 Communities

### 6.3.1 Implications of new lockdown on culture and leisure organisations:

Libraries: All library buildings are closed to the public. The library service will also continue to run activities and events for families online, as has been the case since March. The Connect & Collect service will be replaced by "Books on Wheels" as outlined in the operational log.

Watt Institution: Museums are not permitted to open under current legislation and therefore the Watt will be closed until further notice. A virtual enquiry service is available and customers wishing to contact the Watt should email [wattinstitution@inverclyde.gov.uk](mailto:wattinstitution@inverclyde.gov.uk) or message the service via its Facebook page and a member of staff will respond as soon as possible.

Beacon Arts Centre: Remains closed to the public until further notice, as per Government guidance.

### 6.3.2 Impact on leisure facilities operated by Inverclyde Leisure

The latest guidance for all sport and physical activity can be found at the following link:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/>

Following the Scottish Government announcement on Monday 5th January resulting in tougher measures being introduced and effectively a national lockdown of mainland Scotland until the end of January, Inverclyde Leisure is currently operating :

- Whinhill Golf Course for two balls.
- Battery Park for football clubs with professional status.
- Port Glasgow Town Hall – Registrar/Marriage Suite and Citizenship Ceremonies.
- Gamble Halls – Blood Transfusion Service 12/1/2021.

Under 12s bookings are permitted for non-contact activity, however, all local sports clubs have decided to follow the guidance issued by their relevant Governing Body and not resumed training, therefore IL currently have no bookings across their estate.

IL are also working with Inverclyde Council and the HSCP to facilitate roll out COVID Vaccine (KNCC 12/1/2021 & 14/1/2021, Greenock Town Hall 20/1/2021). All other facilities are closed to the public and IL Employees have been furloughed to the same levels as the first lockdown.

IL have provided an update of the estimated increased financial support over the 2020/23 period as requested by officers. This indicated a £2.3 million increase in financial support based on a 2 year recovery period. The matter has been initially considered by the MBWG and decisions on the best funding route for this support will be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee in February.

## 7.0 OPERATIONAL LOG

7.1 The operational log for Education and Communities is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The log considers actions taken in relation to the following:

- Payments for free school meals
- Transport grant for secondary pupils who live between one and two miles from the Secondary School they attend and are entitled to free school meals
- Change of library services from Connect and Collect to Books on Wheels

## 8.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 8.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

**8.2 Legal**

The legal basis for the closure of schools is provided by Education Continuity Directions from the Scottish Government

**8.3 Human Resources**

N/A

**8.4 Equalities**

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
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NO

**8.5 Repopulation**

N/A

**9.0 CONSULTATIONS**

9.1 N/A

**10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 N/A



## **Education and Communities Committee**

### **Operational Decision Log**

**Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development  
RB/LM**

## Education, Communities & Organisational Development – OPERATIONAL LOG 2021

	Service Issue	Action taken	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
	<b><u>EDUCATION SERVICES</u></b>					
1.	Schools are to remain closed to most pupils until the end of January at least. The Council has been paying £25/fortnight to each pupil in receipt of Free School Meals and a Clothing Grant. Currently this approval runs out on the 15 January. The Scottish Government has announced funding to allow Councils to continue to make payments until the end of the month and payments for the period 18 January- 29 January will need to be made by the end of the week.	Continue to make the £25/fortnight payment until schools return using specific Scottish Government Funding plus Scottish Government Hardship/Level 4 grants and, if required, the Anti Poverty Fund to meet the excess costs of the Council's more generous payment scheme.	11.1.21	Yes	11.1.21	Tony Puckrin McEwan/Alan
2.	Currently a grant is paid for all pupils who attend Inverclyde Council secondary schools who live between one and two miles from the school and are entitled to free school meals. This grant is for transportation to get to school and whilst schools are closed will not be needed by the majority of pupils. Currently 252 pupils receive this grant and the amount paid is £7.25 per week.	Not to pay the transport grant for those living between 1 and 2 miles from a secondary school who are entitled to free school meals whilst remote learning is in place. The provision of the grant for school meals will cover any spend as pupils who attend who are eligible for free school meals will be offered a free school meal. The saving will be approximately £1800/week and this will help offset other Covid cost pressures.	11.1.21	Yes	11.1.21	Tony Puckrin McEwan/Alan

	<p>No pupil who receives free school meals and attends school will be out of pocket. If a child who is entitled to free school meals does attend school then they will be given a free school meal in addition to the free school meal grant. This equates to £25 per fortnight. Not having to buy a meal for the days pupils are attending school will more than offset the grant for travel.</p> <p>All pupils who are entitled to transport (because they meet the qualifying distance of 2 miles) will continue to receive free transport to school.</p> <p>There are specific arrangements in place for a bus for St. Columba's High School. Transport will still be provided free of charge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for those pupils who have requested it;</li> <li>• live between one and two miles from the school and;</li> <li>• are entitled to free school meals</li> </ul>					
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<b><u>CULTURE, COMMUNITIES AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES</u></b>						
1.	All Libraries are closed to the public. Connect & Collect service encourages journeys and visits to library buildings to collect books.	Libraries will extend 'Books on Wheels' deliveries (currently for over 75s/shielding) to all library members who request it, until further notice. This means that that books will be delivered rather than collected.	11.1.21		11.1.21	Alana Ward
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<b><u>HR, OD, POLICY &amp; COMMUNICATIONS</u></b>						
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