
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	9 May 2023
Report By:	Ruth Binks, Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/30/23/TM
Contact Officer:	Tony McEwan, Head of Culture, Communities and Educational Resources	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	Communities Update Report – Overview of Local and National Initiatives		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting

1.2 The purpose of this report is to update the Education and Communities Committee with developments in relation to the Communities part of the Committee.

1.3 Updates are provided on:

- Review of School Catering;
- Successful funding bids made by the Libraries Service;
- Meliora 2023;
- Warm Hand of Friendship Grants; and
- Inverclyde Leisure's Strategic Plan 2023 - 2026

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education and Communities Committee notes the updates contained in this report.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 UPDATES

3.1 Review of school catering

The review of school catering service began at the beginning of 2022 following the identification of a projected overspend due to under-recovery of income.

The review identified a number of key factors for the increase costs and lower uptake of school meals, including the impact of Covid-19; price increases for key ingredients; more ethical sourcing of food; the impact of the nutritional guidelines; and the availability of 'fast-food' outlets near some secondary schools.

The service has also undertaken consultation with young people and schools and has already begun to implement improvements to the service with very good progress being made in implementing the action plan. The key actions for improvement include:

- the development of new menus to give more choice in early years settings; more variety in primary and much more modern choices in secondary schools which reflect the changing tastes of young people, such as introducing grab'n'go, meal deals and a more appealing variety of foods;
- the introduction of new kitchen practices and training schedules to better improve efficiency, meeting the needs of our customers and most importantly delivering nutritious, high quality, value for money school meals to all Inverclyde pupils;
- continuing to implement more restricted buying lists with suppliers to ensure all kitchens continue to comply with the national Nutritional Guidelines. We continue to issue catering managers with recipes to follow to ensure consistency, particularly in secondary schools;
- continue to meet regularly with our suppliers to ensure we are receiving best value and quality products;
- regular quality assurance visits being scheduled to ensure compliance with nutritional guidelines and more importantly, to support kitchens to improve the overall dining experience for pupils;
- plans to introduce a pre-ordering system in secondary schools to reduce queuing times and ensure pupils receive their choice of meal, reducing waste and lead to more accurate ordering of ingredients; and
- closer working between school and FM staff to address some of the issues highlighted by pupils: namely overcrowded dining areas, a reduction in the use of disposable containers and single use plastic; introducing more sittings to ensure pupils are given sufficient time to enjoy their meal; and reducing the noise levels.

It is anticipated that these changes will encourage more pupils to take a school meal and the service will continue to monitor uptake.

3.2 Inverclyde Libraries Update

Inverclyde Libraries Service was awarded £3.5k from the National Lottery Community Fund for a Summer of Science programme which will include activities and facilitate outreach visits from the Glasgow Science Centre.

Bookbug's Library Challenge will conclude on 10 May 2023 with participation rates already higher than last year, with over 400 young people taking part.

At South West Library, the service has worked in partnership with RIG arts to provide an Easter programme in the Drying Green Garden which was attended by 72 children and 46 adults. The programme of workshops were funded by a successful Public Library Improvement Fund Project 'Play Together'. Also in the community garden, a Spring Fair took place in partnership with the Inverclyde Community Food Network. The Libraries Service, in partnership with West College Scotland is also delivering a certificated level 4 horticulture course which is now fully subscribed.

This course will develop attendees' skills in allotment gardening, including growing and harvesting a range of fruit and vegetables.

3.3 Cultural Services

Within the Watt Institution, several exhibitions have now been launched including: 'Clydebuilt' which runs through 2023, and in the Art Gallery: 'Language of Dreams' and 'Visions of Venice – the photography of Carlo Naya. The Greenock Art Show also opened in the main gallery and runs until 27 May 2023. Work is also ongoing with partners for the 2nd Inverclyde Heritage Day on 20 May 2023.

3.4 Meliora 2023

Meliora events for spring / summer 2023 are already being planned for. The service is working in partnership with The Beacon, the libraries service, cultural services and the marketing and events team to deliver a number of events over the summer 2023 under the Meliora branding. An update on the events will be brought to the next meeting of the Education and Communities Committee in August 2023.

3.5 Warm Hand of Friendship Grants

A more comprehensive report will be taken to Policy and Resources Committee as part of the Anti-Poverty update. Out of the 33 initial projects, 19 have submitted evaluations and over 437 sessions have taken place. The link to the volunteering strategy has emerged as a key strength of the project with three quarters of the submissions highlighting the role of volunteers and stating how rewarding they found the experience.

3.6 Inverclyde Leisure's Strategic Plan

A link to Inverclyde Leisure's Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 is provided here: <https://www.inverclydeleisure.com/media/1605/il-strategic-plan-2023-26-master.pdf> and will be subject to an elected member briefing by Inverclyde Leisure.

The strategic plan sets out what IL hopes to achieve over the next three years and provides a wealth of information in relation to its priorities, the context in which it is operating and the challenges and opportunities ahead.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		X	
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X		
Environmental & Sustainability		X	
Data Protection		X	

4.2 Finance

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					

4.3 **Legal/Risk**

None

4.4 **Human Resources**

None

4.5 **Strategic**

Initiatives such as improving the school meal offer, Meliora and Warm Hand of Friendship aim to improve the wellbeing of our communities – a key strand of both the LOIP and Council Plan.

4.6 **Equalities and Fairer Scotland Duty**

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

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 – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

4.7 **Children and Young People**

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
x	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children’s rights.

4.8 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
x	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

4.9 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.
x	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 N/A.

6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 N/A.