
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	21 May 2024
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/20/24/RB
Contact Officer:	Ruth Binks	Contact No:	Internal
Subject:	Update on West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 To inform the Committee of the plans for the West Partnership Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) following the national review of RICs undertaken by the Scottish Government and the associated reduction in funding for 2024-25 onwards.
- 1.3 In a statement to Parliament in November 2023 the Cabinet Secretary indicated that it had been decided, in light of the most recent national review of RICs, that the funding for RICs would be tapered repurposing this funding to better support teachers in classrooms. RICs will be provided with 50% of the 2023-24 funding. For the West Partnership this amounts to around £750,000.
- 1.4 Directors have been meeting to collaborate on the West Partnership Improvement Plan for next year and an update on the priorities, governance and staffing model will be presented at the next Glasgow City Region Education Committee at the end of May 2024 and thereafter an update will be provided to this Committee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Regional Improvement Collaboratives were established in 2017 as a national initiative to bring about improvement for all schools in Scotland. They are intended to bring together local authorities and Education Scotland, facilitate collaborative working and provide educational support to practitioners. The Glasgow City Region Education Improvement Collaboration, known as the West Partnership, brings together authorities from across the Glasgow City Region; East Renfrewshire is a member of the West Partnership.
- 3.2 The Education Committee noted the progress of the West Partnership in 2022-23 and approved the contents of its Improvement Plan for 2023-24 in November 2023.
- 3.3 At the end of June 2023, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills announced a rapid review of the impact that RICs have had on supporting pupils and practitioners. It was commissioned as part of the current education reforms, to inform future decisions on RIC support and further consideration of the future relationships between our new national bodies and local government in the area(s) of educational improvement. This was the third review of RICs, with previous reports published in 2019 and 2021.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The Scottish Government review was published in January 2024; the Executive Summary set out six key themes:
- RIC engagement with, and support to, pupils and practitioners across early years, primary, special and secondary settings has continued to expand and deepen since the last evaluation of the RICs;
 - Evaluation of RIC supports by practitioners who are directly engaged with RICs are consistently strong;
 - While, as with other parts of a complex system, the collective impact of RIC supports on improved outcomes for children and young people cannot be quantified, a wide and increasing range of practitioner and pupil programmes are clearly evidenced;
 - While the number of staff engaged in regional activities at any time remains a minority, support has continued to increase with evidence suggesting that approximately 30% of schools engaged in some form of RIC activity across a school year, whether directly or through supports provided to school leaders and practitioners;
 - The use of research, data and evidence to focus and shape RIC supports, including evaluation from practitioners and others, is evidenced strongly; and,
 - RICs have continued to strengthen collaboration across and between local authorities, between RICs and with other partners.
- 4.2 The review noted that across Scotland RICs were engaging with approximately 30% of schools whilst accounting for 0.1% of education spending in Scotland.
- 4.3 Locally, the latest evidence demonstrates that during 2023-24 the West Partnership is reaching approximately 25% of staff across the region and has engaged with 87% of primary, secondary and special schools. In addition, qualitative evidence from the three workstreams continues to demonstrate how we have provided opportunities for collaboration and knowledge/confidence enhancement. (More detail is available in [West Partnership Interim Evaluation Report – January 2024](#)).
- 4.4 In a statement to Parliament in November 2023 the Cabinet Secretary indicated that it had been decided, in light of the review, that the funding for RICs would be tapered repurposing this funding to better support teachers in classrooms. Part of this change would include the setting up of the Centre for Teaching Excellence.

- 4.5 Funding for 2024-25 was clarified by the Scottish Government on 30 January 2024; RICs will be provided with 50% of the 2023-24 funding. For the West Partnership this amounts to around £750,000. Following confirmation of the funding the WP team have begun to finalise scenario planning to ensure the continuation of the highly effective programmes and networks on the 50% funding for the coming year.
- 4.6 Discussions with Directors and Chief Education Officers have highlighted the need for the West Partnership to continue to add value to the work of individual LAs and to continue the focus on:
- The aspiration to build a networked learning system across the West Partnership, thereby adding value to the work of individual Local Authorities;
 - Continued buy-in to maintain a strong collective focus on pedagogy; and
 - Support and scope for a flexible approach, to enable the participation of teachers, middle and senior leaders to shape and drive the work of the West Partnership more directly.
- 4.7 In planning for 2024-25 West Partnership officers are considering each programme, collaborative enquiry activity, professional learning activity and network against a set of criteria to establish which have the most significant impact and reach and where West Partnership activity is different from other local and national offers. As a RIC we are currently in the process of developing more detailed plans setting out the themes that we will continue to collaborate on and how these will be supported strategically and operationally in 2024-25 and then beyond. Part of these plans will be setting out the required staffing in terms of the West Partnership Core Team for 2024-25 and what this might look like in 2025-26 and beyond.
- 4.8 The analysis and evidence will be used to inform the West Partnership Improvement Plan for next year. This will be the subject of a future paper to Committee. Given the reduction in funding and staff team, discussion is taking place nationally about the expectations in relation to planning and reporting. An update on the priorities, governance and staffing model will be presented at the next Glasgow City Region Education Committee at the end of May 2024.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		✓
Legal/Risk		✓
Human Resources		✓
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		✓
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		✓
Environmental & Sustainability		✓
Data Protection		✓

5.2 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					

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A.

5.4 Human Resources

N/A.

5.5 Strategic

N/A.

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(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.
✓	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.
✓	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty.

(c) 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.
✓	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.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
✓	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.

5.8 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.
✓	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.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A.