

ITEM No ...4.....

REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES COMMITTEE –
30 OCTOBER 2017

REPORT ON: RAISING ATTAINMENT – INCLUDER PROJECT

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 349-2017

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Dundee and Includer Raising Attainment Project operable within all 8 secondary schools of the city.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Children and Families Services Committee is asked to:

- i note the contents of this report; and
- ii request a further update report on the project from the Executive Director of Children and Families Service in September 2018.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Robertson Trust is funding £587,500 for the delivery of the Project by Includer over the initial duration of the project from January 2017 to June 2019. This funding is being matched by Dundee City Council via the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund. An expectation of the Robertson Trust funding is that on conclusion of the project in June 2019 and following consideration of the independent evaluation report and outcomes achieved, Dundee City Council will give due consideration to sustaining the project interventions provided by the third sector component via mainstream funding. Such consideration will take place within the Scottish Government's evolving vision for a school and teacher-led education system as articulated within the Scottish Governments 'Education Governance: Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education. At the heart of such proposals lie increasing direct devolution of funding to schools as recently exemplified in the operation of the Pupil Equity Fund.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

Reference is made to Article III of the Minute of the Meeting of the Education Committee of 22 April 2013 (report no 177-2013 refers) where approval was sought by the Director of Education for the introduction of a research project aimed at supporting young people experiencing difficulties in engaging positively with mainstream secondary education. The project was funded by the Robertson Trust. The Inclusion Plus project was formally launched in October 2013 involving 4 secondary schools and staff from Apex Scotland, Skillforce and Includer. The identified project schools were: Baldragon Academy, Braeview Academy, Craigie High School and St Paul's RC Academy The tripartite project aimed through collective effort to:

- provide an alternative to exclusion from mainstream education for at risk/vulnerable young people
- work in a proactive manner to promote pupils' attendance and engagement in school and reduce exclusions
- promote young people's wellbeing, aspirations, confidence, self-esteem and positive behaviour
- promote social inclusion and improved life chances, choices and outcomes for targeted at risk young people
- ultimately raise pupils' attainment and achievements and opportunity to secure a positive destination on leaving school.

4.2 The Inclusion Plus Project was based upon three different but interlinked approaches with:

- Apex working primarily with pupils in S1 and S2 providing alternative in-school interventions and support for pupils on the cusp of exclusion;
- Skillforce (former military personnel) working with pupils in S3 and S4 through personal and social development programmes including outdoor education activities; and
- Includem providing a wraparound service (24/7) out with school hours to a subset of S1 – S4 pupils and their families.

4.3 Following conclusion of the project in June 2016, the Executive Director of Children and Families Service outlined a number of next steps in continuing to support young people who experience difficulties in engaging positively with mainstream education (Children and Families Service Committee of 28 November 2016 refers). The next steps were informed by consideration of key evaluation findings of the Inclusion Plus project conducted by evaluators from Glasgow University and the project's achieved outcomes. In determining the next steps, due cognisance was also given to a number of national and local developments occurring within the life span of the project. Such developments included the introduction of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, the commencement of revised arrangements for the provision of Offsite Education Services in Dundee and the devolution and deployment of School Community Support staff directly to secondary schools.

4.4 Whilst the project evaluation noted significant reductions in pupils' exclusion from school coupled with positive changes in pupils' behaviour and disposition, no clear specific gains were identified as a result of the combination and integration of the three service providers. Significantly, the intensive wrap-around support and interventions offered by Includem to young people and their families was recognised as a highly positive feature of the Inclusion Plus Project and worthy of continuation.

5.0 THE DUNDEE AND INCLUDEM PROJECT

5.1 Building on the Inclusion Plus Project (2013-2016) and jointly funded by the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the Roberson Trust, the Dundee and Includem project aims, through the provision of intensive support services by Includem workers to vulnerable young people and their families, to ultimately raise the attainment of identified young people through their improved wellbeing and engagement with school. The project commenced in January 2017 and will run initially until June 2019. Consistent with early intervention principles, the project is intended principally for S1 and S2 pupils.

5.2 Throughout the lifespan of the project Includem will engage up to 100 young people per year. On a weekly basis 329 hours of intervention are distributed across all 8 secondary schools. On a weekly basis Includem can successfully engage with up to 47 young people. Key to the success of the project is the integration of the Includem workers within existing school pupil support mechanisms, principally Team Around The Child Procedures, and the quality of partnership working between Includem staff and school personnel.

5.3 The above intervention hours are in addition to the established Social Work contract with Includem which has to date provided 85 hours per week to support around 10 young people at risk of requiring secure accommodation. Importantly, as a single Children and Families Service the project, whilst maintaining a clear focus on early intervention within the universal education system, will endeavour to evolve a single integrated approach to referrals through Team Around The Child Procedures.

5.4 Led by an Includem Team manager and supported by established school pupil support mechanisms, 11 Includem Project Workers have been deployed on an identified needs basis across all 8 secondary schools. The workers:

- provide intensive 1:1 structured support and mentoring for vulnerable young people with availability through an on-call system 24/7;
- support pupils' attendance, participation and active engagement in school life and learning;
- develop bespoke pupil support plans and ensure they are delivered effectively;
- liaise and build relationships with families to ensure that they are supported in parenting and supporting their child fulfil their potential;
- provide a rapid response to crisis referrals;
- build and maintain effective working relationships with school colleagues at all levels including integrated referral processes;
- support referral procedures by attending Team Around The Child Pupil Support Team meetings.

Agreed short, medium and long term project outcomes for young people, families, schools and others are outlined within Appendix 1.

5.5 Overall strategic direction and management of the project is provided by the partnership Project Board, which meets biannually, and is comprised as follows:

- Head Of Innovation and Learning, Robertson Trust (Chair)
- Executive Director of Children and Families Service
- Education Manger
- Social Work Manager
- Head of services and Development Includem
- Attainment Advisor for Dundee City Council, Education Scotland

Accountable to the Project Board, operational management and facilitation of the project is supported by an Operational Group. Jointly chaired by Dundee City Council and the Roberston Trust the group meets quarterly and is comprised of:

- A Depute Head Teacher from each of the 8 secondary schools
- DCC Education and Social Work Managers
- DCC Education Officer
- Includem representative
- Attainment Advisor
- Blake Stevenson Evaluation Team representation.

5.6 Independent evaluation of the project was awarded to the Blake Stevenson organisation following a successful tendering process in December 2016. Performance criteria have been developed by Blake Stevenson in partnership with Dundee City Council and Includem to address the evaluation question: To what extent is embedding third sector provision (to deliver family and out of house support) within schools' pupil support teams successful? Measurement of the project against the performance criteria and associated targets will support the Council's decision towards sustaining the Includem intervention within mainstream funding. The performance criteria are participation; outcomes for pupils;

outcomes for families; voice of the pupils, families and schools; and partnership between schools' pupil support teams and Includem.

5.7 As of 21 August 2017 Includem have engaged with 56 different young people, providing 2,891 hours of face to face support and responding to 691 telephone calls for support from young people and families via the Includem 24/7 helpline. Of the 56 young people, 8 young people have exited the programme following interventions spanning 20 to 66 weeks *(NB some young people accessed support under the auspices of the former Inclusion Plus Project).

5.8 An evaluation update report provided by Blake Stevenson in September 2017 following meetings with school leaders and staff during the period 31 May 2017 – 22 June 2017 has identified a number of emerging project strengths and areas for development. Emergent strengths include:

- the willingness of schools to embrace the project intervention within the context of established pupil support mechanisms; and
- the use by schools of Team Around The Child Procedures to ensure an integrated approach to pupil referrals.

Identified areas for development include:

- the need for schools to maintain a focus on early intervention through the referral of S1 and S2 pupils;
- the necessity to maintain accurate pupil data in areas including improved school attendance and engagement;
- challenges associated as a result of young people accessing Includem services who migrate between schools as a result of successful placing requests to a new school or to the Rockwell Learning Centre;
- data sharing arrangements between Includem and the Children & Families Service;
- opportunities to embrace P7 pupils within the service prior to commencing S1 within secondary school.

5.9 A further round of evaluative school visits are scheduled to take place between 23 October and 10 November 2017 resulting in the publication of an interim evaluation report in January 2018. An individual interim evaluation report will be provided for each secondary school. It is envisaged that in addition to commenting upon key facets of the project delivery, sharing stakeholder views and outlining a number of pupil case studies, the interim reports will highlight the outcomes achieved for young people and families being supported and the resultant impact on their lives.

5.10 Following publication of the interim evaluation report and related consideration of interim findings by the Project Board and Operational Group a stakeholder learning event will take place in January 2018 to further inform the strategic direction and delivery of the project.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. A copy of the Impact Assessment is available on the Council's website at www.dundee.gov.uk/ija/reports.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Council's Management Team have been consulted in preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

PAUL CLANCY
Executive Director of Children and Families Service
October 2017

Dundee City Council, Includem & Robertson Trust Raising Attainment Project

13/04/2017



