

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

27 AUGUST 2015

Report by Director of Education

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE SCOTLAND AWARD

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to advise committee of the outcome of the most recent Investors in People Scotland assessment for the Education Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The recommendations are that Elected Members:
- note the significance of this award in recognition of the department's high quality services; and
 - approve this approach to ensuring the department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

BACKGROUND

3. The previous Investors in People Assessment took place in July 2012, with the award of the Gold Standard. It was agreed at that time that East Renfrewshire Education Department would adopt an Annual Review approach with the aim of maintaining Gold Status by May 2015.

REPORT

4. In May 2015, the assessor spent the three day visit interviewing a wide range of staff across the service areas. The outcome of the assessment was the confirmation that East Renfrewshire Education Department continued to meet the Investors in People Standard and that the number of evidence requirements deemed to be met equated to the award of Gold Status.

5. The Education Department is committed to providing education of the highest quality and places the highest value upon its staff. This is recognised throughout the Investors in People Scotland Consolidation Report. The executive summary is attached as an annex to this report. The assessor highlighted that:

"You have a number of examples of good practice which I have outlined below:

- Education being a key focus of the Authority
- Involving people in the creation of the purpose and vision
- The Improvement Plan currently being re-written - being more succinct and fit for purpose

- The on-going commitment to learning and development despite budgetary challenges
- A focus on absence management
- Creativity introduced in terms of recruitment and selection such as job fairs
- Key characteristics of leadership being developed – 5 capabilities and the Middle Manager leadership programme and the Leadership Plus Group and people taking on specialist roles within the Council such as Digital remits
- An ethos of openness and support
- Developing more modern working practices
- The commitment of the people within Education to deliver the ethos of excellence
- More of a can do attitude coming through
- Health and wellbeing of people being taken into consideration such as through the staff choir, walking group and samba band
- Data and impact measures are a key feature of the way that you operate
- Partnership models developing such as with Universities and other Authorities
- Social responsibility is part of the culture of the Education Department such as you now have modern apprentices in the team, people also spoke about the support to the Malawi project and offering a range of musical concerts within the communities you operate and throughout Scotland”

6. The assessor also reported that several people spoken to had raised the scale and pace of change, particularly in relation to the setting up of the Culture & Leisure Trust. The department will be further enhancing leaders’ change management competencies as part of its leadership development programme. Since the assessment took place in May the transfer of services to East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure has taken place. Early, informal feedback suggests that staff are adjusting well to the new setting and starting to see benefits emerging.

7. Given the extent of change taking place within the Education department, in Culture and Sport and other sectors, retaining Gold accreditation is a considerable achievement.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

8. Costs for the annual assessment are met within the Education Department’s revenue budget.

CONCLUSION

9. The Consolidation Report and the award of the Investors in People Gold Status recognise the Education Department’s sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The recommendations are that Elected Members:

- note the significance of this award in recognition of the department’s high quality services; and
- approve this approach to ensuring the department’s sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

Mhairi Shaw

Director of Education
August 2015

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Investors in People Scotland Consolidation Report, executive summary - East Renfrewshire Council
– Education Department

Key Words

Investors in People Scotland, East Renfrewshire Education Department, assessment, external validation,
continuous improvement

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Your Investors in People Assessment took place in July 2012 – whereby following a ‘Top Up’ Activity you achieved Gold Status. You have confirmed your long term commitment to continuing to use the Investors in People Framework to support the on-going continuous improvement journey.

Following a meeting on the 8 November 2012 it was agreed that you would adopt an ‘Annual Review’ approach. The purpose of the on-going Review process was to use Investors in People as a review and feedback mechanism, using both the core Investors in People Standard and the broader Investors in People Framework as appropriate and in line with your priorities.

1.2 Context

Following a range of meetings and discussions it was agreed to use the overall Priorities (taken from your Local Improvement Plan (2014 – 2017) and use the Investors in People Framework to support you in achieving these. The focus of this intervention was around:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It has been a pleasure to work with the Education Department once again. You are clearly a high performing Authority and set high standards. However, as with my recent activity in Sports Services there is uncertainty as certain parts of the Service move into the Culture and Leisure Trust. Some see this as a great opportunity and are excited others are filled with trepidation. *“Feels like we are in a state of flux”, “Limbo land”, “Loyalty being eroded”, “It feels great we will be freed from the Council bureaucracy”.*

Overall I received very mixed messages throughout the on-site activity in terms of how people are feeling – this ranged from quite positive to suggestions being made that morale is currently very low. This low morale is because of the Council wide challenges – budget cuts and resourcing but also because people are feeling frazzled. *“Lots of plates to spin, “Lots of big projects undertaken in the last two years – Sports Re-design, Foundry, Library transformations and P1-P3 free School meals”*. At some stage you may need to consider what you can stop doing. *“Cuts happening but nothing is changing in terms of our delivery”*.

Since my last Assessment activity Mhairi has taken over the role of Director of Education and people spoke of her as being an inspirational leader *“She is a people person with a leadership style that is participative and empowering”* as well as bringing Education into being a more Corporate player within the Council.

My aim in this report is 1) to highlight your areas of good practice and to give you credit for these and to encourage you to continue with these good practices 2) to focus on improvement actions and to offer recommendations of what you could possibly be doing better and differently in the future.

2.1 Impacts - Areas of Good Practice

You have a number of examples of good practice which I have outlined below:

- Education being a key focus of the Authority
- Involving people in the creation of the purpose and vision
- The Improvement Plan currently being re-written - being more succinct and fit for purpose
- The on-going commitment to learning and development despite budgetary challenges
- A focus on absence management
- Creativity introduced in terms of recruitment and selection such as job fairs
- Key characteristics of leadership being developed – 5 capabilities and the Middle Manager leadership programme and the Leadership Plus Group and people taking on specialist roles within the Council such as Digital remits
- An ethos of openness and support
- Developing more modern working practices
- The commitment of the people within Education to deliver the ethos of excellence

- More of a can do attitude coming through
- Health and wellbeing of people being taken into consideration such as through the staff choir, walking group and samba band.
- Data and impact measures are a key feature of the way that you operate
- Partnership models developing such as with Universities and other Authorities
- Social responsibility is part of the culture of the Education Department such as you now have modern apprentices in the team, people also spoke about the support to the Malawi project and offering a range of musical concerts within the communities you operate and throughout Scotland

2.2 Outcome

Having carried out this assessment process in accordance with the guidelines provided by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) I am pleased to confirm that East Renfrewshire Council – Education Department continues to meet the Investors in People Standard.

I am also delighted to confirm that the number of evidence requirements which are deemed to be met equates to 168 which means that you have just maintained Gold status. This is a fantastic achievement and I would like to congratulate you on this. Very well done