EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
CABINET – 14 JANUARY 2015

ACTIVE SCHOOLS

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update members on the success of Active Schools in East Ayrshire and to seek agreement for the continued Council investment in the programme until 2019.

BACKGROUND

2. The Active Schools Programme was first introduced in East Ayrshire in 2005 with the aim of offering children and young people the opportunities and motivation to adopt active, healthy lifestyles, now and into adulthood.

3. The service is recognised as a major driver to fulfil the Scottish Government vision to make Scotland more active, a goal which is being achieved in East Ayrshire by facilitating the development of sustainable school-based sport and physical activity across schools and developing pathways between school and community.

4. The National Strategy for Sport, “Reaching Higher”, highlights Active Schools as one of the key successes of Sport 21, the previous National Strategy. Going forward, the Active Schools network in East Ayrshire has a critical role to play in realising the vision set out within Scotland’s new sport strategy for children and young people: “Giving children and young people a sporting chance”.

5. In 2013, Active Schools was identified as one of the key services forming part of Vibrant Communities and as such is now integral to the delivery of important early intervention and prevention work across East Ayrshire.

6. Active Schools makes a significant contribution to the Council’s strategic aims and objectives, outlined in the Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan.

7. As a result of the continued success of Active Schools in East Ayrshire and across Scotland, sportscotland has confirmed a further four year investment in the programme from 2015 to 2019.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS – KEY PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS

8. Active Schools is making a real difference to the lives of our children and young people by improving health and wellbeing, increasing participation, unlocking leadership potential and developing employability. The undernoted sets out a summary of key achievements. A copy of the national evaluation is available on the Members Portal.

Participation – Early Intervention and Prevention

9. Universal provision ensures that children and young people, including those in special schools and with additional support needs in mainstream schools, have a wide range of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity programmes that support fun,
enjoyment and achievement. These opportunities are also crucial to supporting optimum levels of activity to improve wellbeing and help prevent illness in later life.

10. The service coordinates and promotes activities for all schools, special schools and early childhood centres before, during and after the school day as well as a wide range of school sport competitions and events.

Key achievements include:

- 100% of schools have participated in 5 or more competitions and events with over 4,000 primary aged, over 2,000 secondary aged and over 200 young people with additional support needs participating;

- Provision of sustainable sporting opportunities through promotion of school to club links and support of sport partnerships with 60 school to club links established;

- Over 20 clubs delivering established school sport programmes;

- Delivery of dedicated school holiday activity programmes with over 700 attendances at our spring and summer Commonwealth themed sports and physical activity programme in partnership with EA Leisure;

- 100% of our P5 pupils participated in the Club Golf Programme in partnership with EA Junior Golf Development Group

11. The team also facilitate targeted programmes to involve minority groups in sport, physical activity and leadership including YDance, Girls Football, and Ayrshire Sportsability. Active Schools also develops and supports important early intervention activities which can have a positive impact on our most vulnerable children and young people. These activities include support for nurture classes, Activity Agreements and the development of bespoke participation and leadership activities.

In partnership with Kilmarnock Football Club the team coordinate and support the delivery of targeted football programmes including the Tesco Bank programme for our Primary 2 aged pupils, Food Standards programme for our Primary 4 & 5 pupils and Match Fit for our secondary aged pupils.

Volunteer Recruitment and Employability

12. Significant progress has been made in developing a sustainable approach to local recruitment, training and support of volunteers. Active Schools Coordinators recruit, develop and deploy volunteers to enhance the quantity and quality of school sport and physical activity provision which includes over 300 managed volunteers.

13. Leadership opportunities are provided including Sports Leaders, Dance Leaders and Young Ambassadors of which over 100 volunteers are young people from our schools who in turn inspire and motivate their younger peers. The young volunteers are exceptional and the team includes 18 Young Ambassadors who have been trained and mentored to enable them to promote and deliver sports in schools and communities. At a recent Residential Leadership Event 36 volunteer young leaders participated in an inspirational weekend of team building and skills development. The investment in young people is also exemplified in two female senior pupils being selected recently for sportscotland’s National Sports Panel.
14. The service also promotes work experience and employability which connects naturally to our leadership programmes. 5 young people took part in school work experience in academic year 2013-14. The service also recently took on two 26 week paid work experience placements and a full time modern apprentice.

Awards and Achievement

15. In this, exciting year for sport, Active Schools have significant achievements in support of the Commonwealth Games Legacy. Over and above our success in increasing participation in Sport, the service was the only Active Schools Team in Scotland to register all educational establishments to the 2014 Game On educational programme. Fifteen young people were selected as Queen’s Baton Bearers and two senior pupils were involved in the Opening Ceremony of the Commonwealth Games. A member of the team was also seconded to develop 2014 legacy across our schools and led on a number of Queens Baton events including major 2nd team events at Crosshouse and Dalmellington.

16. The work of the team in supporting volunteering was recently recognised by Ayrshire College by way of an Ambassador Award in recognition of providing over 50 student placements organised within our schools and communities.

17. During National Volunteer Week in June a “Celebration of Volunteer” event was organised with over 50 of our volunteers nominated for awards.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS – FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT

18. As a result of the success of Active Schools in East Ayrshire and across Scotland, sportscotland – the national agency for sport, have confirmed continued investment in the programme from April 2015 for a further four years.

19. The Partnership Agreement will set out the national objectives of the Active Schools Network for 2015-2019 and importantly detail how these objectives will be implemented to meet local need in East Ayrshire.

20. It is likely that the partnership agreement will focus on the three key priorities outlined below, allowing Active Schools in East Ayrshire to continue to build on existing successes:

- Develop sustainable sporting opportunities with a focus on early intervention programmes to increase participation amongst underrepresented groups;
- Further strengthen our excellent volunteer workforce; and
- Embed the work of Active Schools within our local communities

21. Active Schools also support the Council’s wider sports development programmes as they relate to schools, including support to schools of football, and connecting club sport to school facilities. At Council on 11 December 2014 it was announced that a Sports Legacy Fund of £250,000 will be established in 2015. £150,000 has also been made available to recruit sports mentors from our pool of talented athletes. In addition, in partnership with the Scottish Rugby Union, Schools of Rugby will be expanded from two to four and will now be delivered at Grange, Loudoun, Cumnock and Auchinleck Academies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

22. East Ayrshire Council invests £127,000 per annum to the Active School’s Programme.
23. Significant financial support has been provided for the Active Schools Programme from sportscotland over the last nine years. Sportscotland have confirmed that they will continue to invest £338,580 per annum to the Active School’s Programme for the period 2015-2019. This includes an operational budget in East Ayrshire of £13,500.

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

24. The investment from Sportscotland comes with specific requirements around staffing. The model for Active Schools nationally requires that each school cluster or learning community has a dedicated coordinator to support development of an infrastructure which recruits, supports and sustains a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who in turn deliver physical activity and sport before, during and after school and in the wider community. In East Ayrshire we have been able to make slight variations to this model with Sportscotland’s agreement in order to deploy a specific coordinator for special schools which has made a major positive impact on school based disability sport.

25. The investment by Sportscotland will enable the Council to continue to deliver the required posts:

- 10 FTE Active School Coordinators
- 1 FTE Active School Manager

COMMUNITY PLANNING/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

26. Active Schools supports the increasing participation of young people in sport and physical activity, in learning and active citizenship and as such contributes to the community planning themes of Wellbeing and Economy and Skills.

27. The work of Active Schools is also central to achievement of key aims within the Children and Young People’s Service Plan and Legacy Plan, as well as making a significant contribution to the Ayrshire Healthy Weight Strategy.

EQUALITIES

28. The work of Active Schools makes a significant impact on the equalities agenda including the development and implementation of programmes specifically designed to engage underrepresented groups in sport and physical activity.

RISK MANAGEMENT

29. There are no significant risks associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

30. It is recommended that Cabinet:

i) recognise the significant success of the Active Schools programme in East Ayrshire;

ii) agree to the continued allocation of £127,000 per annum; and

iii) otherwise note the content of this paper.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Active Schools National Evaluation Report (Members Portal)
2. Giving Children and Young People a Sporting Chance (Scottish Government)

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service: Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or Cheryl Brady, Active Schools Manager, Tel: (01563) 576337.

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