

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 26 February 2020

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Instrumental Music Instruction Service Update

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the Instrumental Music Instruction (IMI) service, including the introduction of charging for the service in August 2018.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Committee is asked to note the content of this report and ongoing review of the IMI service.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the meeting of Cabinet on 12 June 2018, a decision was taken to approve the introduction of charging a contribution towards the provision of music instruction to pupils in our primary and secondary schools from August 2018.
- 3.2 IMI is a discretionary service provided by the Council and is separate to the entitlement to a music curriculum taught within the classroom as set out within the Expressive Arts experiences and outcomes. In Primary schools the music curriculum is delivered by classroom teachers and visiting music specialists; in Secondary schools delivery is through qualified music teachers in departments/faculties.
- 3.3 The Instruction service is currently provided to pupils from P4 to S6 in the following range of instruments: Upper and Lower Strings; Woodwind; Brass; Percussion; Piano; Guitar; and Pipes.
- 3.4 The total number of pupils receiving instrumental tuition in the year prior to charging being introduced (academic session 2017/18) was 1212, the split being 547 Primary pupils and 665 Secondary pupils.

- 3.5 The following is a breakdown of the number of pupils registered and receiving tuition in the first year of charging (2018/19) and the numbers registered and receiving tuition this academic session (as at 12 February 2020):

Academic year 2018/19

Primary	539 pupils
Secondary	611 pupils
Total	1150 pupils

Academic year 2019/20*

Primary	501 pupils
Secondary	516 pupils
Total	1017 pupils

*as at 12 February 2020

- 3.6 The numbers for the current academic session fluctuate as pupils start and discontinue tuition throughout the session.
- 3.7 A contributory charge towards tuition was introduced at the start of academic session 2018/19 with the fee being set at a level designed to support the delivery of the budgetary target, which represented 50% of the current cost of delivering the service.
- 3.8 The fee set at £280.00 per annum is based on offering the national average of 30 group lessons per annum, fully utilising instructor capacity and making available the following concessions:
- A concessionary rate of £240.00 for any sibling of a full fee paying pupil.
 - Free tuition for pupils using their tutored instrument in IMI towards a full SQA qualification in secondary years S4-S6.
 - Free tuition for pupils who are Looked After Children within the East Lothian Council's Social Care system.
 - Free tuition for pupils who are in receipt of Free School Meals and/or Clothing Grant.
- 3.9 As part of the East Lothian Council budget, approved in February 2018, £357K was assigned as savings across financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20 through the introduction of charges for Instrumental Music Instruction (IMI); the income received is as follows:

Income received in 2018/19	Income received in 2019/20 (to 31.1.20)
Primary £52,087	Primary £76,734
Secondary £43,652	Secondary £63,506
Total £95,739	Total £140,250

3.10 The anticipated income for the full financial year 2019/20 is:

Primary £100,296
Secondary £69,524
Total £169,820

3.11 It should be noted that charging commenced in August 2018, four months into the financial year. Charging occurs over an academic year, August – June, with payments options of one full fee payment, three termly payments or 10 monthly instalments over an academic year.

3.12 Whilst the savings offset by the income for charging have not yet achieved the target set, the income received has increased in 2019/20 and is more representative of a full year potential income than 2018/19 which was a part year income.

3.13 With selection still being undertaken in some schools up to December 2018, the income from a proportion of those paying was reduced accordingly. This was based on achieving a maximum of 20 lessons commencing in January 2019 up to the end of the academic session.

3.14 The absence of Instructors has also impacted on the first year of charging. This is due to a lack of supply instructors available to backfill absences. As a result we have adjusted the fee payment at the end of the year taking account of missed lessons, resulting in some reduction in income.

3.15 Through the review of registration and payment systems at the end of the school session 2018/19, a number of outstanding payments were identified. This has been followed up by the Education service and outstanding payments requested of parents/carers which has resulted in £8331.74 income being received.

Development of Systems and Procedures

3.16 A number of challenges have been encountered in the establishment of systems and processes to enable pupils to register to play an instrument that allowed parents/carers to make fee payments and ensured Instructors had robust registers that recorded attendance and could be cross-referenced to registrants. The setting up of a dedicated Instrumental Music Service communications mailbox was introduced to ensure the flow of communications between customers and the service was as efficient as possible.

- 3.17 As systems and procedures are embedded, work continues with a focus on monitoring, refining and exploration of more efficient ways of delivering the service, including exploring the use of digital technology for service delivery and improved customer experience.

Investment and Improvements

- 3.18 The Education service has been successful in securing investment in new instruments for new pupils through a grant from the East Lothian Education Trust.
- 3.19 Investment in IT through the issue of laptops for Instructors has been a key driver to improving communication flow, allowing pupil registers to be kept up-to-date on a daily basis and improving access to systems and processes to ensure improved and efficient service delivery.
- 3.20 The IMI Review Group was established in session 2018/19 and continues to meet to take forward the review and improvement of the service. The following areas have been addressed and consultation has taken place with Head Teachers, school staff, pupils, parents and instructors. Work has included improved information provision and communication; revised handbook for parents/pupils/instructors; selection procedures for new pupils has been revised to ensure greater opportunities through a focus on equity of access and provision of instruction in schools where there has been less engagement in the past. A review of school accommodation has been undertaken to ensure appropriate space is provided for instruction. Ongoing work will focus on quality assurance procedures, reporting to parents/carers, partnership working and growing the service and its profile. Cognisance is also being taken of the annual Improvement Service benchmarking review that is undertaken across all Local Authority Instrument Music Services in order to identify areas for improvement in our IMI service.
- 3.21 We have addressed the issue of instructor absence and continuation of instruction through the establishment of a supply register of instructors who can be called on at short notice to ensure continuation of provision. This supply register has been initially in piano, percussion and woodwind and we are looking to appoint brass and strings supply staff in the near future.
- 3.22 To avoid debts accruing, regular monitoring of Schoolpay accounts is in place for 2019/20 payments and automatic payments via Schoolpay are to be introduced from April 2020 to assist parents with the convenience of choosing a date for regular monthly instalments to avoid any arrears building up.
- 3.23 In order to promote the positive impact the service is having on our pupils, an additional Showcase Concert will be delivered in the East of the county in March 2020 resulting in a further opportunity for not only pupils to showcase their talents but also for parents/carers to take advantage of attending and enjoying the various bands and orchestra in action.
- 3.24 Following the retiral of the IMI Co-ordinator, a new post has been created of Team Manager and the new appointee will take up post in early May

2020. This appointment will strengthen the management of the service and ensure that there is a dedicated focus on further developing and raising its overall profile.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The introduction of an Instrumental Music Tuition Charge is consistent with the specific proposal included within the revenue budget approved by Council in February 2018. No additional policy documents have been developed but improved customer-focused information and guidance has been produced.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – achieving budgetary income targets in year one proved challenging but it is anticipated that this will improve as the service grows.
- 6.2 Personnel – no additional staffing has been put in place to develop the required administration system or to administer the introduction of charging and associated tasks.
- 6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Cabinet report dated 12 June 2018 entitled “Introduction of New Charges”

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