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| Report on | Eco-Schools Programme Support 2023/24 |
| Date of Meeting | 14th February 2023 |
| Reporting Officer | Mark McAdoo, Assistant Director, Environmental Services |
| Contact Officers | Karen Brown, Recycling Education & Data Officer |

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| Is this report restricted for confidential business? | Yes | |
| If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon | No | X |

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report |
| 1.1 | To seek approval to continue providing financial support to the Eco-Schools Programme. |
| 2.0 | Background |
| 2.1 | Eco-Schools is an international award that guides participating schools on their sustainable journey, providing a framework to help embed these principles into the heart of school life. The Eco-Schools programme is an internationally recognised Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) programme now operating in 74 countries worldwide, representing more than 59,000 schools and 20 million pupils. In addition to Eco-Schools, FEE runs Green Key, Young Reporters for the Environment, Blue Flag for Beaches & Marinas and Learning about Forests as well as supporting other initiatives such as Single Use Plastics and Wrigleys Litter Less Campaign. |
| 2.2 | Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland is administered by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) with financial support from DAERA and all 11 local Councils. It is also supported by 10 sponsors and 37 Delivery Partners without whose practical support the programme could not have achieved the success and recognition it has received. |
| 2.3 | The programme encourages and directs young people to think about litter, waste and recycling, climate action, energy saving, water conservation, transport options, biodiversity, marine life, healthy living and the natural environment they are custodians of, and make positive choices for a better future. |
| 3.0 | Main Report |
| 3.1 | On 1 st September 2022, the programme had 1,136 schools and 64 private nurseries or educational centres registered in Northern Ireland, which is 100% of schools. The total number of live Green Flag awards across the province is 344 which represents 30% of schools. This figure has reduced by 2% since the October 2021 report. A drop in figures was expected due to the Covid19 pandemic however many schools have reengaged in the programme this year but |

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| | will not be able to apply for a Green Flag until March 2023 therefore resulting in more lapsed Green Flags currently than would normally be the case |
| 3.2 | In addition to the Eco-Schools Green Flag, schools can also achieve intermediate accreditation by obtaining Bronze and Silver self-assessed award status, with at present 847 schools having achieved a Bronze level and 739 having achieved a Silver level. KNIB awarded 150 schools with Green Flags in Northern Ireland from April 2022 – June 2022. Across the Mid Ulster Council area there are currently 38 schools with live Green Flags (December 2022) which represents 31% of schools, above the NI Average of 22%. |
| 3.3 | Mid Ulster Council's Recycling Officer team support schools wishing to gain Eco-School status as a means of assisting with the delivery of recycling and waste education in schools and the wider environmental message through a range of other topics e.g. litter. |
| 3.4 | Detailed metrics for Eco School activities in Mid Ulster are provided as an appendix. |
| 3.5 | Mid Ulster District Council has financially supported the Eco-Schools programme in Northern Ireland since 2015. KNIB has presented two funding options for continued support in 2023/24; Option One at £10,942 and Option Two at £2,975 for the year. Additional funding is requested to host an Eco-Schools Awards Ceremony for the Mid Ulster Council area with an option of £4,000 to cover the total costs of the ceremony or a further option of £2,000 with Council providing the venue and catering/refreshments. |
| 3.6 | It is proposed that we support Option Two at £2,975 (which equates to an investment of approximately 10 pence per pupil in Mid Ulster) with an additional £2,000 contribution towards an Awards Ceremony with Council providing a venue and catering/refreshments. |
| 4.0 | Other Considerations |
| 4.1 | Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications |
| | Financial: The expenditure of £2,975 plus a further £2,000 can be met from Environmental Services revenue budget (utilising Education Funding payable under Waste/Recycling contracts) |
| | Human: Recycling Officers assist in programme delivery and are trained Eco Schools assessors. |
| | Risk Management: None |

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| 4.2 | Screening & Impact Assessments |
| | Equality & Good Relations Implications: None |
| | Rural Needs Implications: None |
| 5.0 | Recommendation(s) |
| 5.1 | It is recommended that approval is granted to continue providing financial support to KNIB for delivery of the Eco Schools Programme including an annual Awards Ceremony in 2023/24 at a total cost of £4,975. |
| 6.0 | Documents Attached & References |
| 6.1 | Mid Ulster District Council Eco-Schools Metrics (September 2021 – June 2022) |
| 6.2 | Eco Schools Mid Ulster Impact Card 2021/22 |
| 6.3 | Letter from KNIB outlining Eco-Schools Support Request for 2023/24 |