

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	16 January 2020
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Empowering the System
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/20/004
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Gael Ross
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	4 and 5

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an update in relation to the direction of travel, self-evaluation and future planning which will ensure that the Aberdeen City Council Education Service continues to work towards an Empowered System.
- 1.2 The report seeks Committee approval to submit the Aberdeen City self-evaluation (Improving School Empowerment through self-evaluation: A Framework for Local Authorities) when requested and continue to develop working practices in response to these findings.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 approve the draft Self-Evaluation based on the document 'Improving School Empowerment through self-evaluation: A Framework for Local Authorities' as contained in Appendix A; in preparation for submission to Education Scotland; and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to submit the Self-Evaluation document when requested to do so by Education Scotland and make this available to Members through the circulation of a Service Update.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 National Direction of Travel**

- 3.1.1 In 2018 The Education Reform Joint Agreement between Scottish Government and Local Government made a commitment to develop guidance, without the requirement for legislation, on the context of empowerment and how the headteachers' charter was to be supported. This Agreement was founded on the understanding that everyone involved in the education system would require to work together to create a system which promotes collaboration and professional judgement at school level and beyond.
- 3.1.2 A Joint Agreement Steering Group was developed to oversee the delivery, in partnership with Local Government and the education sector, of the empowerment reforms. Key work streams involving a range of partners were also established to lead on the co-production of the Headteachers' Charter and associated guidance on school empowerment; on developing a Local Government self-evaluation framework for measuring and promoting school empowerment; and on formulating a strategy to measure the extent and impact of school empowerment across the system.
- 3.1.3 A self-evaluation resource was designed for local authority staff to use to engage in an evidence-based analysis of what is working well in relation to school empowerment and what needs to improve to have greater positive impact on outcomes for learners. It is anticipated that Education Scotland will in the future, request an update in relation to this.
- 3.1.4 As part of the developing suite of advice in support of empowerment are the new Devolved School Management Guidelines which were published in June 2019. The guidelines promote transparency, consistency and equity in funding for schools. The Education Service anticipates that these will be presented to Committee in May 2020.

#### **3.2 WHAT IS EMPOWERMENT?**

In an empowered system, head teachers are able to:

- 3.2.1 Lead collaborative, evidence-based decision-making while recognising that they are part of a wider Integrated Children and Family Service and open to constructive support and challenge by the Local Authority and their colleagues.
- 3.2.2 Lead learning communities to determine the most appropriate approach to leading change and improvement, making decisions in partnership with their learning community about the improvement priorities and plan for their school, reflecting and informing the local improvement plan and the National Improvement Framework.
- 3.2.3 Actively participate in the wider corporate work of the Local Authority, consistent with their role as leaders of learning and contribute to the Regional

Improvement Collaborative – accessing support and working collaboratively to lead improvement.

- 3.2.4 Empower staff to continually improve practice, encouraging professional dialogue, supporting career-long professional learning and collaborative enquiry, and the use of research and evidence-informed practice. Head teachers should model a commitment to lifelong learning through their own practice.
- 3.2.5 Play an active role in designing and reviewing recruitment and staffing approaches, both for their own school/s and for the wider Authority.
- 3.2.6 Design a staffing structure which best supports the school's curriculum and leadership requirements, working within their delegated staffing budget and supported by their Local Authority and SNCT/LNCT in terms of agreements and guidance.
- 3.2.7 Play an integral part in the appointment of staff in accordance with the best interests of children and young people and work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure good practice in recruitment and appointment, in line with SNCT/LNCT agreements and guidance.
- 3.2.8 Work within the Local Authority structure, within clearly defined roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, to ensure a highly professional school team is built and sustained to meet the needs of the school's learning community.

### **3.3 THE ABERDEEN CITY RESPONSE**

- 3.3.1 The new Education Service structure has been designed to enable and support empowerment. There are early signs that this has impacted positively on the development of a more collaborative culture between the central team and school Leadership Teams.
- 3.3.2 The Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan was developed in collaboration with Head Teachers with a key focus on addressing barriers to empowerment. The Plan is structured around the 4 National Improvement Framework Priorities and an additional Leadership of Change priority to ensure the Local Authority proactively works towards an empowered system.
- 3.3.3 Considerable work has been undertaken to address the levels of vacancy in schools as the need for school senior leaders to cover classes impacts on how effectively school Senior leaders can work towards an empowered system. This work is continuing.
- 3.3.4 All Leadership Groups who oversee the delivery of the Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan, including The Leadership of Change Group, are predominantly comprised of Senior Leaders from schools. The remit of the groups is to drive forward the areas for improvement detailed in the National Improvement Framework Plan on behalf of the Service. This approach

is maximising the impact of our collective resource and ensuring that we move to more collaborative decision making.

- 3.3.5 The Headteachers' Charter raised expectations of Senior Leaders and The Leadership of Change Group are considering how we can better support the leadership development of school senior leaders in an Empowered system.
- 3.3.6 A considerable barrier to empowerment is the overly complex improvement planning formats used in schools. The Leadership of Change Group is currently liaising with head teacher colleagues on a refreshed and simplified format for the next improvement planning cycle.
- 3.3.7 Unnecessary and hampering bureaucracy can severely impact on the time available for school staff to drive improvement and as a result, a range of actions are being taken to address this. Work to date includes the development of a draft education service digital strategy.
- 3.3.8 Ineffective communication hampers empowerment. The Service have developed a SharePoint site for the education service. The site acts as a single point of contact for all communications from the central team, for agreed policy and guidance and offers an opportunity to utilise Microsoft TEAMS, part of the Office 365 package to support collaborative working practices. The Sharepoint site is currently being rolled out and initial feedback is positive.
- 3.3.9 Shared standards and expectations are crucial within an empowered system and the refreshed approach to Quality Improvement and current development of a Learning and Teaching Standard will impact positively. It is anticipated that this standard will be agreed by the Raising Attainment Leadership Group early in 2020 and will help clarify standards in the classroom and develop more consistent approaches to tracking and monitoring.
- 3.3.10 Professional Learning to support a shared standard helps to drive both empowerment and improvement. The first of three professional learning events for practitioners was held in November. Evaluations have been extremely positive. After the two further events in February, 900 practitioners will have accessed high quality professional learning supporting them to use feedback to drive improvement in the classroom.
- 3.3.11 A working group including Head Teachers is currently reviewing Aberdeen's Devolved School Management Scheme in line with national guidance and will ensure ongoing collaboration with school representatives continue as this develops.
- 3.3.12 The empowerment agenda relies on senior leaders having the skills to enable others. In order to build capacity, 2 Improvement Events led by GTCS have taken place to support Senior Leaders in developing their knowledge and skill within a coaching role. A coaching culture ensures we empower staff to reflect on their own practice and develop professionally.
- 3.3.13 Building an empowered system requires a relentless focus on self-evaluation for improvement. The new approach to quality improvement requests more

frequent self-evaluation practices from schools and the central team are keen to model this approach by agreeing key learning with senior leaders at a range of points over the year. This will ensure that we work together and build a self-improving system.

3.3.14 The Leadership of Change Group has drafted the self-evaluation contained in Appendix A. The self-evaluation is based on the national guidance *Improving School Empowerment through Self-evaluation: A Framework for Local Authorities*. The group intend to keep the self-evaluation under constant review so that we continue to drive empowerment.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

#### 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Financial</b>	Increase in financial responsibility for Head Teachers	Medium	Procedures will be drafted to support Devolved School Management Scheme
<b>Legal</b>	N/A		
<b>Employee</b>	Employees feeling overwhelmed with additional responsibility and decision making powers	Low	Clear Devolved School Management Scheme is being developed to support clarity of expectation
<b>Customer</b>	N/A		
<b>Environment</b>	N/A		
<b>Technology</b>	N/A		
<b>Reputational</b>	N/A		

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Prosperous Economy</b> 10% increase in employment across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026.</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of all Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 1 in the LOIP.</p> <p>The paper seeks approval the ongoing self evaluation and actions related to this in response to Improving School Empowerment through self-evaluation: A Framework for Local Authorities will support a number of the improvement projects within the LOIP including to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people employed in growth sectors (digital/ creative; food and drink; life sciences; tourism; social care and health and construction) by 5% by 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prosperous People</b> 95% of children (0-5years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026.</p> <p>90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026.</p> <p>95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>Child Friendly City which supports all children to prosper and engage actively with their communities by 2026. 8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of all Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 3 to 7 in the LOIP.</p> <p>These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the confidence of school-based staff to recognise and respond to children who require support and directing them to the school Nursing Service to 90% by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase the confidence of parents and young people to recognise and seek support in response to deteriorating mental wellbeing by 2022.</li> <li>• Reduce number of requests for specialist support because demand has been diverted from children’s social work in partnership forums by 5% by 2020.</li> <li>• Reduce number of requests for specialist support because demand has been diverted from children’s social work in partnership forums by 5% by 2020.</li> <li>• Increase the number of young people who effectively transition from primary school to secondary school by 2021</li> <li>• Increase the range and number of accredited courses being provided by schools &amp; partners by 25% by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase the number of young people taking up foundation apprenticeships to 142 by 2021.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 98% 2021</li> <li>• Increase the number of young people living in Quintiles 1,2 and 3 who achieve a sustained positive destination by working with communities to 90% 2022.</li> <li>• Increase the number of curricular offerings shaped by school communities by 20%, by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase the number of opportunities for parents and carers to gain an insight into how to meaningfully contribute to the educational progress of their children and young people by 30% by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase the number of opportunities to discuss and record skills for life, learning and work from S1 by 20%, by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase children, young people and families' awareness and understanding of future skill requirements by June 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prosperous Place</b></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 11- Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p> <p>These include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people with autism who are supported to be in education, employment or training by 2021.</li> <li>• Increase number of people in local communities promoting wellbeing and good health choices by 2021.</li> <li>• 100% of schools have a progressive, cohesive and relevant substance misuse curriculum by 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b></p>	
	<p><b>Impact of Report</b></p>
<p><b>Customer Service Design</b></p>	<p>This report promotes the development of an Empowered System and understanding of the opportunities and impact this will have on our service.</p>
<p><b>Organisational Design</b></p>	<p>An Empowered System ensures the best use of resource in the system and will be developed based on</p>

	data analysis and demand management information at a local level.
<b>Governance</b>	The impact of an Empowered System is overseen by Chief Officers and by the Education Operational Delivery Committee. Decision making processes will include all stakeholders through the provision of Quality Improvement Teams led by Quality Improvement Managers.
<b>Workforce</b>	An Empowered System ensures that colleagues in schools and the central teams have clarity around their roles and responsibilities and feel empowered to support developments within local contexts and plan the appropriate workforce in relation to the local demand.
<b>Process Design</b>	An Empowered System provides schools with flexibility to plan staffing, lead collaborative work to co-design and develop the curriculum and learner pathways, including transitions, which best meet the needs of all children and young people within their local context
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	An Empowered System will promote engagement with partners and stakeholders and allows us to work towards a common goal in relation to local schools and community needs.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not applicable
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	Not applicable

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Improving School Empowerment through self-evaluation: A Framework for Local Authorities](#)

## 10. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Aberdeen City Council Empowerment Self-Evaluation

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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