

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	23 September 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Education Improvement Journey Tracker 2019/20 and National Improvement Framework Plan 2021/22
REPORT NUMBER	CUS.21.212
DIRECTOR	Andy Macdonald and Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Martin Murchie and Eleanor Sheppar
REPORT AUTHOR	Reyna Stewart and Gael Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Elected Members information on (a) data from the 2020 SQA exam diet (post review) derived from the final data release through Insight, the Education Service Self Evaluation process and initial 2021 SQA outcomes and (b) seek approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2021/22 following submission of the Plan and Self-Evaluation to the Scottish Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 notes the content of Appendix A, outlining the post review outcomes from the 2019/2020 Senior Phase, released through the Insight Tool, the Service's 2020 2021 Self Evaluation Report (Appendix B) and initial pre-review outcomes Available from the 2020/2021 SQA examination diet (Appendix D);
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to submit the Self Evaluation Report and the Aberdeen Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2021/2022 (the Plan) to the Scottish Government as soon as reasonably practicable;
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Education Officer to implement the proposed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2021/22 (Appendix C); and
- 2.4 instructs the Chief Education Officer to maintain a review of the content of the 2021/22 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative and policy provisions such as the Scottish Government response to the OECD report, and advise Committee of any required changes in due course.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Currently Available Education Data

- 3.1.1 Education data is released at various points over a school year and through several agencies which requires consideration of each data release separately, and in concert with each other. The most comprehensive picture of attainment, aligning directly with the National Improvement Framework model, is available through the Insight data release to local authorities at the end of September/early October every year. At the point of report completion, the full Insight release for 2020/2021 had yet to be published.
- 3.1.2 This nationally benchmarked Insight data set, along with other data parameters that inform the Council's Education Improvement Journey reporting, brings together the achievements of young people from the full range of awarding bodies providing a holistic picture of performance. This extended picture is invaluable in supporting service self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- 3.1.3 Due to the full data set for 2020/21 being unavailable at this point in time, early Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) data from the August 2021 release is not included in the Appendix A template but will be captured in the 2020/21 Education Improvement Journey report following the release and analysis of this further data.
- 3.1.4 The release of this additional Insight data each year triggers an informal review of the improvement priorities of the Service to ensure that the currently active National Improvement Framework Plan remains appropriate to help drive improvement.
- 3.1.5 The abbreviated pre-review SQA data from 2020/21 which is currently accessible, is however very positive (with a narrow overview of improvement from current data being provided in Appendix D). This information was considered at the Council meeting of 23rd August 2021 as part of the Best Value Assurance Report. Wider reflection on the outcomes from Broad General Education and the Senior Phase, encompassing these SQA outcomes, will be presented in detail through the Education Improvement Journey Report to this Committee in November.

3.2 Insight data 2019/20.

- 3.2.1 As Members will know, the methodology used to determine SQA awards in 2020 was changed in response to queries around the validity of the algorithm being used and estimated grades were subsequently awarded. As a result, the Insight based data for 2019/2020, with limited exceptions, is not directly comparable with that of previous years.
- 3.2.2 On this basis, whilst comparative data from prior years is retained to maintain the integrity of reporting, a focus has been placed on comparing in-year City outcomes with those at a national level and against the Virtual Comparator for 2019/2020.
- 3.2.3 Appendix A outlines the 'standardised' National Benchmark Measure outcomes from the 2020 examination diet covering the post review datasets which have

been latterly published through Insight, retaining as much granularity as is possible to provide from this publication.

- 3.2.4 Members will recall that initial outcomes from the Senior Phase were offered in the report to November 2020. This Insight data offers post-review data which supports the observations from this earlier report.

3.3 Key 2019/20 Insight Summary (Appendix A)

Literacy and Numeracy

- 3.3.1 Literacy and Numeracy attainment at Levels 4 and 5, showed an increase in the proportion of pupil candidates achieving these levels, particularly at Level 5.
- 3.3.2 At both Levels, this was accompanied by a rise in the Virtual Comparator value that could indicate that the City's position relative to this benchmark is either unchanged or marginally improved, but with some closing to the National level.

Attainment for All

- 3.3.3 Year-on-year gains in Average Complementary Tariff Points are evident across both the Middle 60% and Highest 20% of pupil candidates with the latter recording the greater increase and representing the more statistically relevant change.
- 3.3.4 The rate of improvement in the Middle 60% of pupil candidates is less significant than those in the Highest 20% and would be judged as being statistically less significant than the latter, There is a similar movement stasis experienced by the Lower 20% which, although marginally declining in step with both the Virtual Comparator and National Figure, has fallen at a slower rate than either benchmark.

Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

Literacy and Numeracy by SIMD Quintile

- 3.3.5 The most significant gains were made by young people in SIMD 1 and 3 at Level 4 although it should be noted that both cohorts are slightly smaller than those of last year. Performance was maintained in other Quintiles.
- 3.3.6 In relation with the Virtual Comparator, outcomes across each Quintile were below that recorded for the Comparator except for Quintile 3, but with an accelerated closing of the SIMD attainment gap being noticeable particularly at Quintiles 1 and 3.
- 3.3.7 At Level 5, some gains are evident across all Quintiles and whilst there is a shortfall against the Virtual Comparator for most Quintiles, there is, again, evidence of the attainment gap narrowing.
- 3.3.8 Although the number of pupils presented at Level 6 preclude detailed SIMD

based comparison, the outcomes for both SIMD 1 and 2 Quintiles exceeded or matched the Virtual Comparator figure.

Attainment by SIMD Quintile

- 3.3.9 Across each Quintile and by Attainment Cohort (Lowest 20%, Middle 60%, Highest 20%, there has been almost universal levels of improvement.
- 3.3.10 Whilst the greatest absolute increases in Average Complementary Tariff Points are generally recorded in the Highest 20% Cohort, Quintiles 1 and 3 generally, saw the largest proportional Tariff increases across the three cohorts.
- 3.3.11 Consequently, there is statistically significant narrowing of the attainment gap to SIMD 5 outcomes against both Quintiles with a lesser impact being recorded against the attainment gap at Quintiles 2 and 4. This pattern of reducing attainment gap between the Most and Least Deprived Pupil candidates is also noted to an extent within the national breadth and depth measures from the leavers data release, although this falls out with the National Benchmark Measures template.
- 3.3.12 Additional detailed analysis of this latter data has been led by the Analytics and Insight team and been combined with Insight data to offer a wider appreciation of pupil progress to the Service

Positive Destinations by SIMD Quintile

- 3.3.13 All Quintiles have been impacted by the downturn in the local economy although it is evident that those living in areas related to the lower SIMD Quintiles have been most impacted.
- 3.3.14 This is understood to be related to the traditional direct movement from formal education into employment that is more prevalent among leavers from SIMD 1 and 2 areas.
- 3.3.15 The Education Service continues to work with colleagues in the Economic Development Employability team, and partners such as Skills Development Scotland and the Developing the Young Workforce Board to support our young people into a positive and sustained destination.

Positive Destinations

- 3.3.16 The three-year downturn in the local economy which had been seeing signs of reversing in 2019, was exacerbated significantly by COVID-19 and materially impacted city school leavers last year with almost 4% less securing an initial positive destination, with the lower number of school leavers and proportion of leavers whose destination was Unknown also having a lesser influence.
- 3.3.17 The significant loss of employment opportunities, has resulted in an increase in those in the Unemployed and Seeking and in the Unemployed and Not

Seeking categories. There is also evidence that some of the training opportunities young people had secured were unable to progress as planned due to restrictions on businesses activity levels and furloughed staff being unable to support trainees.

- 3.3.18 The number and proportion of young people securing a Higher Education placement has significantly increased but there is a slight reduction in those attending Further Education.
- 3.3.19 The Service continues to work closely with colleges to ensure that the local offer meets the needs of our young people, and is working on a number of initiatives to address the destinations issue, including the recent launch of the Council's ABZ works site and an associated 'Lift Off' event. The Service also continues to work closely with a range of partners to provide personalised support to all young people in the senior phase to help ensure a positive and sustained destination on leaving school.
- 3.3.20 The Senior Phase report being considered at this meeting of Committee provides a detailed summary of actions aligned with this collaborative model, which supports, and calls upon the expertise provided through, the City's LOIP based delivery vehicles, including support of the Developing the Young Workforce agenda.

Care Experienced Children and Young People

- 3.3.21 There is a particularly small cohort of Care Experienced Young People captured within the 2019/20 Insight dataset (fewer than 16 individuals in some cohorts), which is smaller than in most previous years, and as limited information, due to data suppression, is captured in Appendix A, considerable care requires to be exercised around extrapolating data trends or deriving intelligence from this information.
- 3.3.22 Given this, the attainment of Care Experienced Young People, and any variations in attainment, are most effectively measured through individual longitudinal assessment and support which Schools and the Virtual School Head Teacher provide on a personalised planning basis.

3.4 Broad General Education Data Landscape 2020

- 3.4.1 Pupil assessments, over the course of 2020, along with data collation and submissions by local education authorities around the Achievement of Curriculum Excellence (ACEL) were suspended by the Scottish Government in response to the initial, and later, phases of the COVID-19 emergency.
- 3.4.2 These assessments re-commenced over Summer Term 2021 and are pending evaluation by the Scottish Government, which will further inform the Service's National Improvement Framework and offer extended tracking data.
- 3.4.3 At the same time, the Scottish Government advised on the 12th May 2021 that, in response to representations made by its professional associations,

these data submission requirements will not be extended to Senior 3 pupils but that teachers should continue to gather evidence of all children and young people's progress.

3.5 Education Service Self Evaluation Summary

3.5.1 Whilst scrutiny of the data above has contributed, in part, to the Self-Evaluation (Appendix B in this report and Appendix A to the Plan submission) and design of the Council's National Improvement Framework, there is clear recognition that the pandemic has changed the lives of all children, young people, and families across Aberdeen City forever, and beyond the limitations of interpretation of attainment qualifications data.

3.5.2 Given the gravity of our collective experience and the changed outlook for the city and the city's children and families, the Self-Evaluation 2020/2021 extends more widely than a review of the impact of the original National Improvement Framework Plan and:

- takes stock of progress made over the last 3 years;
- reflects on how the service adapted to face the demands of the pandemic and;
- begins to consider areas that require continued acceleration or further improvement activity to 'build back better'.
- The indicative outcomes from SQA data released in August 2021.

3.6 Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan Summary

3.6.1 The Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan is a statutory submission to the Scottish Government that requires to be provided by the end of September each year, which brings together improvement planning against a variety of education themes and Standards in Schools etc. 2000 legislation.

3.6.2 The Plan is aligned with the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans which, through School Improvement Planning, and in concert with ASG partners, assists delivery of the Council's improvement objectives/stretch aims around children's education and well-being at establishment level.

3.6.3 Additionally, it reflects our wider collaborative approach with Community Planning Partners which, as was reported to Council on 26th August 2021, was commended as part of the Council's 2021 Best Value Audit, and will continue to be built upon.

3.6.4 Staff from across the Education Service have come together to agree key priorities for improvement in session 2021/22. The Self-Evaluation Report in Appendix B identifies a number of areas for improvement over the next 12 months which have been highlighted because of this collaborative approach and are incorporated within the Plan.

3.6.5 Resultantly, the Education Service will address a number of crosscutting service improvements including:

- build on the use of live data to diagnose, communicate, and address vulnerability in an agile way.
- continue to improve the use of improvement science and collate all planned improvement activity into one plan to improve live monitoring arrangements.
- further strengthen relationships across the Community Planning Partnership and work in partnership with them to address vulnerabilities identified in this Plan.
- be future focused and work with Community Planning Partners to explore Community Campus models and new educational ways of working.
- work across the Community Planning Partnership to reshape wider children's services to address the changing needs of children, families, and community in keeping with the national review of Additional Support Needs in education.

3.6.4 Details of how the Service intends to address these, and align with key priorities within the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework, are included in the City's Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan for 2021/22. A substantial number of these developments will be undertaken in collaboration with, and the critical input of, Community Planning Partners.

3.6.5 Each proposed Action within the Plan will be driven and coordinated by Improvement Groups comprising school and central staff with progress being monitored monthly by both the central leadership team and head teachers to enable teams to hold each other to account. A comprehensive suite of trend data will provide the Education Service with real time data to monitor improvement in real time.

3.7 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Organisation (OECD) on Curriculum for Excellence Summary

3.7.1 As noted within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Organisation (OECD) on Curriculum for Excellence report being considered at this meeting, the Scottish Government's response to this assessment has been met with agreement against the 12 recommendations arising from the OECD evaluation although detailed next steps will follow in 6 months.

3.7.2 As the Scottish Government's policy response/implementation plan against the OECD document becomes clear, the Service will review the content of the NIF Plan for alignment with this response, particularly in respect of those areas of policy which are directed by, or through national agencies and structures, where local authorities lack discretionary influence over the modelling, delivery and resourcing of activity.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 requires that, as the Education Authority, Aberdeen City Council has a duty to:

- Enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils because of socio-economic disadvantage.
- Endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the NIF.
- Undertake annual planning and reporting and annual school improvement planning to address the four priorities of the NIF.
- Ensure strategic decisions are taken with due regard as to how they will address, or help to address, the disparity of educational outcomes which exist between the most and least disadvantaged and at the same time raise attainment for all.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Risk of not achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.	L	Changes to our provision and service delivery will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims, and legal challenge (tribunals).	M	Mitigated by services being realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the educational and well-being needs of young people.	L	Mitigated by widespread staff engagement on draft NIF production and offering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under the relevant Acts.
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	M	Mitigated by realigning service delivery and resource through the NIF to

			better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.
Reputational	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners.	L	Data scrutiny and reporting enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability.
Environment / Climate	Risk of lack of awareness of environmental/climate issues.	L	Mitigated by breadth and scope of Curriculum for Excellence.

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>The provision of information on pupil performance and the NIF Plan supports scrutiny of progress against the delivery of the following Policy Statements:</p> <p>2 - UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation</p> <p>3 - Work with the Scottish Government to provide flexible and affordable childcare for working families on the lowest incomes.</p> <p>4 - Support the implementation of Developing the Young Workforce, seek to gain the highest level of investors in young people accreditation and ensure there is a focus on supporting pupils excel in STEM subjects.</p> <p>7 - Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners in the city.</p>
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
<p>Prosperous Economy</p> <p>400 unemployed Aberdeen City residents supported into Fair Work by 2026</p> <p>500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p>	<p>The information within this report supports the delivery of Stretch Outcomes 2 and 3 in the LOIP through the following projects:</p> <p>Support 15 care experienced young people progress to employment through public sector funded employability programmes by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of people within Aberdeen City gaining qualifications in ICT and Digital skills at SCQF Levels 7 and above by 10% by 2023</p>

<p>Prosperous People</p> <p>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 their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026.</p> <p>As corporate parents we will ensure that 95% of care experienced children will have the same levels of educational attainment, health and emotional wellbeing and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods will sustain a positive destination by 2026</p> <p>Child Friendly City where all decisions which impact on them are informed by them by 2026.</p> <p>30% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed LOIP. This includes the following projects:</p> <p>Reduce the number of children starting P1 with an identified speech delay by 5% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase to 80%, the number of staff who feel confident about how to directly support, or refer a child for support, and signpost to appropriate services by 2022.</p> <p>100% of schools offer sustainable and equitable access to counselling for those children aged 10 and above who require it by 2022.</p> <p>100% of children and young people have free access to physical activity which improves mental health and wellbeing by 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of vulnerable learners entering a positive and sustained destination by 7% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of SVQ 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 93% by 2023.</p> <p>Achieve UNICEF badges in: - Leadership - Culture - Communication - Place - Child Friendly Services – Participating</p> <p>Increase to 100% of staff working directly and indirectly with children who have received child friendly city training by 2023.</p>
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	Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023.
<p>Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes</p> <p>Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</p> <p>Addressing the nature crisis by protecting/managing 26% of Aberdeen's area for nature by 2026.</p>	<p>The data in this report reflects contributory impacts on LOIP Stretch Outcomes 14 and 15</p> <p>Respectively, this informs delivery of the following improvement projects:</p> <p>Increase % of people who walk (to school/nursery) as one mode of travel by 10% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase % of people who cycle (to school/nursery) as one mode of travel by 2% by 2023.</p> <p>Increase community food growing in schools, communities, and workplaces by 12 by 2023</p>
Regional and City Strategies	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework for education.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework, The Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 as amended, the Education (Scotland) (Act) 2016, Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 as amended (and associated Code of Practice) Equality Act 2010.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	The recommendations arising from this report do not require a full Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment to be completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

OPE.20.222 Senior Phase, Education Operational Delivery Committee, 26th November 2020

Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2020/21

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A Insight Achievement and Attainment Data 2019/20
Appendix B Aberdeen City Council Education Service Evaluation Report, 2021
Appendix C Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 2021-22
Appendix D Initial 2021 SQA Exam Diet Extract - August 2021

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