

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services Committee
<b>DATE</b>	17 September 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	F&C/24/266
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Shona Milne
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Shona Milne
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2024/25 following submission of the Self-Evaluation and Plan to the Scottish Government.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the content of the service Self-Evaluation and Plan contained in Appendix A;
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 24/25;
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Officer – Education and Lifelong Learning to maintain a review of the 24/25 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative or policy provisions through the education reform agendas and advise Committee of any required changes in due course.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 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. The document brings together an analysis of a range of data sets and resultant areas for improvement in keeping with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc.2000 legislation and guidance. The documentation attached reflects updated Statutory Guidance.
- 3.2 Current national guidance on the management of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has once again led to the inclusion of amended Stretch Aims

in the Plan. These stretch aims and the proposed priorities for improvement have been scrutinised by Education Scotland who endorsed the direction of travel. Officers propose to continue to keep members of the Education and Children's Services Committee sighted on progress through the now well established tracking appendix linked to Performance Reports.

- 3.3 Staff from across the Education Service have collectively considered data trends to conclude a high level analysis in order to determine next steps. This analysis is informed by and informs school improvement priorities and the Children's Services Plan. The Strategy Board plays a role in reviewing the draft documentation prior to it being presented to Committee for approval. This approach ensures that the interconnection of Council business is reflected in the final Plan presented for Committee approval.
- 3.4 There is considerable evidence that the Quality Improvement Framework is improving central oversight of the quality of provision and clarifying expectations. There is a need to continue to review arrangements, and the consistent application of arrangements, on a yearly basis.
- 3.5 There is evidence that some middle leaders seeking headships have not fully developed their skills in improvement planning and this area needs to be addressed. In general, the quality of improvement planning is improving. There are examples of middle leaders lacking the confidence to lead a school when there is a vacant head teacher post. This significantly diminishes the capacity of the central team. This will be addressed through our Middle Leadership programme over 2024/25.
- 3.6 There is evidence that most school leaders make effective use of data dashboards and most staff have increased confidence in identifying the gap at class, faculty and school level. Professional learning in this area will continue in session 24/25. Data across ACEL (Achievement in Curriculum for Excellence Levels) is generally improving, attainment at the senior phase will be further reviewed when Insight is published in September given the broader range of courses available to young people in our schools.
- 3.7 We set ambitious stretch aims in 2022/23 but did not envisage the increase in school roll. The increase in roll has resulted in an increase in staff new to the authority and in the majority of cases these are newly qualified staff. There are some challenges recruiting to some secondary specialisms. We continue to be one of the authorities with the lowest average age of staff (37). We are not currently meeting all of our stretch aims however improved tracking, moderation, more stable school population and understanding of data should lead to a further uplift in data for session 24/25.
- 3.8 It is encouraging to see that mental health outcomes are in line with or above national in most measures and that our young people's health is improving. The development of the Family Support Model, and implementation of our agreed Behaviour Plan should bring increased readiness for learning in some.
- 3.9 Our professional learning offer is well received. Although there is evidence that the offer from a range of internal and external partners is becoming more

aligned, there is still work to do to help better understand the elements that make the greatest difference. This will be developed further over 2024/25.

- 3.10 Across the local authority there is an inclusive learning culture. Almost all young people have access to a curriculum which meets their needs and are supported well in order to achieve. A small number of young people are currently on a flexible pathway. The widening curriculum on offer at both school and through ABZ Campus is supporting all young people to access appropriate pathways in order to secure positive destinations on leaving school. There may be a need to undertake a thematic review of the provision of flexible pathways following work being undertaken by the Education Psychology Service to understand the effectiveness of arrangements for those with additional support needs.
- 3.11 There is a need to continue to review arrangements, and the consistent application of arrangements, on a yearly basis. The Thematic Review being undertaken by HMle on arrangements to improve quality in schools may identify further areas for consideration.
- 3.12 Members will note that officers have tried to streamline the number of areas for improvement and development over session 2024/25. This is in recognition of the need to focus on the variation across our ELC settings and schools and deliver against the already approved Behaviour Plan.
- 3.13 Coming together as a new cluster (with the Library and Information Service and Community Learning and Development) has provided the opportunity to create a refreshed vision and values to support cross service working and establish shared working practices. Following extensive consultation with all staff our vision of Inspiring communities to learn and grow together has been established with the values of Equality Ambition, Respect and Nurture. All the services we offer will be evaluating using these shared values to ensure a level of consistency across all services. Young people will be consulted on how the vision and values are presented.



- 3.14 It is proposed that this vision be used to help shape the 2025/26 evaluation and plan more fully.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets and grants

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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 National Improvement Framework.
  - Undertake annual planning and reporting and annual school improvement planning to address the four priorities of the National Improvement Framework
  - 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.
- 5.2 The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") places further duties on local authorities and other bodies to more actively collaborate and take action to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Only positive environmental impacts have been identified. On-going promotion of pupil voice and their participation in decision making will help develop citizens who consider environmental implications in later life.

## 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	Risk of not improving outcomes for learners	Changes to our provision and service delivery will enable primary prevention and early intervention thereby reducing potential risk.	L	Yes
<b>Compliance</b>	Non-compliance with legislation, financial	Mitigated by services being	L	Yes

	claims, and legal challenge (tribunals).	realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.		
<b>Operational</b>	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the educational and well-being needs of young people.	Mitigated by staff engagement on the draft National Improvement Framework and the ongoing commitment to delivering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under the relevant Acts.	L	Yes
<b>Financial</b>	Risk of not having sufficient resource.	Mitigated by realigning service delivery and resource through the National Improvement Framework to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and make best use of Officer time.	L	yes
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council	Data scrutiny and reporting enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability	L	Yes

<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Risk of lack of awareness of environmental/climate issues.	Mitigated by breadth and scope of Curriculum for Excellence.	L	Yes
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## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</b></u>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p>Our partnership aims to ensure that every young person in our city is provided with educational opportunities and support that will give them the best possible start in life.</p>	<p>The education service self-evaluation and improvement plan is well positioned to support a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.</p>
<u><b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b></u>	
<p>Prosperous People</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies</b></p> <p>Children's Services Plan</p> <p>National Improvement Framework Plan</p>	<p>The universal provision of education is fully aligned to the Prevention Strategy and a key partner to the Children's Services Plan.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required
<b>Other</b>	NA

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A–Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Evaluation and Plan

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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