

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
DATE	1ST JUNE 2017
REPORT TITLE	EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2017-18
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/17/033
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with the Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2017-18

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Committee notes the content of the Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2017-18

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Delivering the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Strategic Business Plan

Aberdeen City Council is a leading and statutory partner of the City's Community Planning Partnership, called "Community Planning Aberdeen". In 2016 the Council endorsed Community Planning Aberdeen's "Local Outcome Improvement Plan" (LOIP). LOIPs are a statutory requirement for all Community Planning Partnership. The LOIP has been developed as a shared, city-wide plan for improvement, setting out collaborative actions to tackle the challenges facing the City and deliver better outcomes for citizens and communities. The specific improvement priorities and targets set out in the LOIP have been collectively agreed by all partners including NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service as well as voluntary, community, higher and further education and business sector representatives.

The LOIP is structured around improved outcomes under the following themes:-

- Prosperous Economy
- Prosperous People
- Prosperous Place
- Enabling Technology

It is fundamental to realising the Partnership's vision for the City and achieving improved outcomes that all partners align their plans and resources to the delivery of the LOIP. In February 2017 the Council agreed a refreshed Strategic Business Plan (SBP) which explicitly does this.

These Service Improvement Plans have been developed, and continue to be refined, to align our Services' specific actions and resources, in a further degree of detail, to the delivery of the outcomes collectively agreed through the LOIP and SBP.

3.2 The Approach to Improvement

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced a duty of Best Value on Scottish Local Authorities. Within the Act "Best Value" is defined as "*to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance*". This means that the Council has a statutory duty to manage and deliver improvement.

During 2016 and continuing in 2017, priority has been given to strengthening a consistent approach to managing improvement across all Services. In part, this responds to commentary from Audit Scotland in their 2015 "Audit of Best Value". A corporate "Model for Improvement" has been adopted, which is in line with the methodology of Community Planning Aberdeen, and significant focus has been given to awareness raising and training officers in applying the model.

In simple terms, the "Model" is founded on making and testing changes, which are driven by data, evidence and a continuous analysis of the impact of those changes.

The Service Improvement Plans for 2017/18 have been structured to support this approach to managing improvement by setting out explicitly:-

- The improvements we aim to achieve
- What changes we can make that we believe will result in that improvement
- How we will know that the change has delivered improvement

Testing change in this model is a cyclical process and further changes will be proposed and tried on a continuous basis. However, the outcomes and targets set out within the LOIP and the SBP will remain constant until amended by Community Planning Aberdeen and the Council respectively.

3.3 Development of the 2017-18 Directorate Business Plan has been framed within the context of the above "Model For Improvement", driven and overseen by the Directorate Leadership Team.

The focus of this work has been to ensure that business planning, at a directorate level, clearly reflects change activity which is designed to positively influence the widest range of Improvement Objectives contained in the City's Local Outcome Improvement and Council's Strategic Business Plans under the main themes of People, Place and Economy, with Technology as a fourth enabling theme.

3.3 Through an open internal consultation process, involving officers across Directorates, the Plan identifies four key organisers (or sub-themes) where integrated working within and across the Council is critical to success and that have a substantive impact against an extensive range of strategic Improvement Objectives.

- Expansion of Early Years Provision
- Closing the Attainment Gap
- Supporting Communities Experiencing Socio-Economic Disadvantage
- Developing the Young Workforce

These organisers are not intended to limit the scope of improvement or role of the Directorate in delivering or facilitating change activity against the wider range of Aberdeen City Council's Strategic Priorities but allow the Directorate to align resource to areas of greatest potential local influence whilst meeting both national and statutory requirements placed on its Services.

The full Plan documents are available online through the hyper-link below to the Directorate's Zone page

[Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2017-18](#)

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All costs associated with delivery of the Plan are addressed within the context of existing 2017-18 budgetary provision.
- 4.2 The Plan makes particular reference to the financial challenges that face the Directorate, and those it supports, in terms of welfare reform, the present economic downturn in specific service sectors and the local cost of living which are all seen as having the potential to impact directly on the delivery of service.
- 4.3 At the same time, through collaborative working across Directorates, the Plan highlights how these issues can be mitigated. It also outlines the actions being undertaken directly by Services within the Education and Children's Services Directorate to address these threats, for example, by extending digital access to services and enhancing recruitment and retention capability.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 5.2 Within the content of the Plan, those direct legal and legislative implications that encompass the work of the Directorate are fully expressed. Most significant of these, in terms of driving the priority change activity of the Directorate, are the current and future requirements outlined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, and the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

On-going change activity is also being delivered in the context of enhanced requirements placed on the Directorate under wider legislation such as the Equality Act 2010, and Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 The management of risk, as it impacts on the Plan, is defined within the document itself and is aligned with the Directorate's current Operational Risk Register

This is also informed by the approach to risk taken within the Council's Strategic Business Plan and the City's Integrated Children's Services Plan 2017-2020 which recognises that risk mitigation and oversight is also delivered in the context of work undertaken by the Directorate in partnership with a variety of external organisations.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 The content and delivery framework of the Directorate Improvement Plan is directly aligned with the strategic themes of Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen, as set out in the [Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#) and the [Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan](#).

7.2 Economy

The Directorate takes cognisance of the positive impact that effective delivery of services can impart to the Council and the Community in terms of transforming its provision and facilitating greater access to the benefits of economic stability for those the Directorate supports.

In these terms, and as expressed by the Plan drivers, the Directorate aims to be a significant influence in particular areas of the economy such as tourism, science and innovation and the skills infrastructure by offering an inclusive and collaborative approach to engagement within the Council and with external partners.

7.3 People

The Directorate is committed to improving the key life outcomes of all people in Aberdeen, with a specific focus on our children and young people, taking full cognisance of the importance of promoting equality and diversity as a foundation for improvement planning.

Within the Plan, this is recognised in terms of the Directorate's key Improvement organisers, the impact of which are designed to reduce inequality and disadvantage by:

- (a) increasing access to, and opportunity within, childcare and education settings, providing our children with the best start in life.
- (b) improving the employment outcomes for our young people.
- (c) providing enhanced and sustained support of children, young people and families from communities experiencing socio-economic disadvantage through locality planning collaboration.

In terms of enhancing staff experience, the Plan outlines change activity which is designed to improve the knowledge, understanding and capability of employees through increased training provision and data sharing whilst releasing capacity through the streamlining of process and further digitisation of information and transactional activity to the public.

There are no direct EHRIA implications arising from the recommendation contained within this Report although, as expressed above, the Plan contains a range of change activity which is intended to positively impact on the life opportunities

provided to those at recognised disadvantage, including those citizens with protected characteristics or experiencing poverty.

Full implementation of the 2017-18 Improvement Plan will be concurrent with completion, and publication, of a Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment, designed to help support the Directorate in meeting its duties under Part 1 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the '2014 Act', and in relation to the Articles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.

7.4 Place

The Improvement Plan has identified particular change activities which contribute to an improved sense of place by improving understanding of, and reducing, potentially negative behaviours, protecting individuals and the community from harm.

Alongside this direct 'intervention and education' role, the Plan acknowledges that the Directorate can influence the extent to which the availability of, and engagement with quality infrastructure, such as schools and recreational facilities, improves the experience of the City's residents and visitors.

7.5 Technology

The Directorate, through the Improvement Plan, recognises that technology is central to innovative, integrated and transformed public services.

In this context, it is noted that the Directorate has a direct role to play in not only in the application of technology but also in terms of developing the future skills infrastructure necessary to engage with and support use of technology in both the workplace, and as a means of increasing access to services

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26](#)
[Aberdeen City Council Strategic Business Plan 2017-18 Refresh](#)
[Integrated Children's Services Plan 2017-2020](#)

9. APPENDICES

[Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2017-18](#)
[Education and Children's Services Directorate Draft 2017-18 Health and Safety Improvement Plan](#)

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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