

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	6 September 2018
REPORT TITLE	The ACC National Improvement Framework Plan
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/18/083
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
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TERMS OF REFERENCE	1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with an evaluative summary of progress towards realising the outcomes set out in the ACC National Improvement Framework Plan of 2017/2018, and to seek approval to implement the refreshed NIF plan for 2018/2019 following submission of both documents to The Scottish Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 2.1 approve the Evaluation Report highlighting the impact of Aberdeen City work on the ACC National Improvement Framework Plan 2017/2018 in Appendix B;
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Operating Officer to submit the Evaluation Report to The Scottish Government as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 2.3 approve the proposed ACC National Improvement Framework Plan for 2019/19 in Appendix D;
- 2.4 instruct the Chief Operating Officer to submit the proposed ACC National Improvement Framework Plan for 2018/2019 to The Scottish Government as soon as reasonably practicable.
- 2.5 instruct the Chief Operating Officer to implement the proposed ACC National Improvement Framework Plan for 2018/2019 as soon as reasonably practicable; and
- 2.6 instruct the Chief Operating Officer to provide an overview of progress towards realising the outcomes detailed in the ACC National Improvement Framework Plan through a service update in January 2019 and formally report on progress in September 2019.

3.1 BACKGROUND

3.1.1 The National Improvement Framework

The National Improvement Framework (NIF) for Scottish Education was launched by the First Minister in January 2016.

3.1.2 The National Improvement Framework identifies 4 key priorities for action:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

3.1.3 The Framework is underpinned by a series of planning and reporting duties designed to support transparency, accountability and inform service delivery.

3.2 LEGISLATION

3.2.1 The Standards In Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000

As the Education Authority, the Local Authority has a duty to:

- enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result 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; and
- 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.

3.2.2 The 2017/2018 The Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan was approved by the Education and Children's Services Committee in June 2017. This first National Improvement Framework Plan was submitted in keeping with national timescales but prior to the final guidance on measures being published and year end data being available. Publication of this guidance and receipt of year end data resulted in a review of the KPIs being used to ensure that the Council had a sustainable approach. These refreshed KPIs were presented to and endorsed by the Education Operational Delivery Committee on 19th April 2018.

3.2.3 The Education Bill

The Scottish Government has decided to pursue an approach to reform based on consensus building and collaboration rather than legislation for the time being. The Education (Scotland) Bill will therefore not be introduced to Parliament at this time although this decision may be revisited if insufficient progress is made in implementing the anticipated reform.

- 3.2.4** The Scottish Government's 2017 consultation 'Empowering Schools: A consultation on the provisions of the Education (Scotland) Bill' set out clear aims and objectives in relation to the then proposed Education Bill: improving the education and life chances of our children and young people, closing the unacceptable gap in attainment between the least and most disadvantaged children and raising attainment for all. The policy intention is to create a school and teacher led education system, with children at the centre.
- 3.2.5** The consultation emphasised the need for a collaborative effort in order to achieve the overall aims, starting with teachers and leader in schools and complemented by Local Authorities and new Regional Improvement Collaboratives.
- 3.2.6** Local government representative organisations responded to the consultation indicating broad agreement with the overall aims and objectives. However, concerns were expressed about whether legislation was required to deliver on the agreed aims. The consultation responses from COSLA, SOLACE and ADES indicated a desire to work with the Scottish Government to ensure that shared aims can be achieved within a framework that supports both improvement in Scottish education and wider integrated children's services.
- 3.2.7** Further discussions will be held to explore if agreement can be reached on how to implement changes, such as the introduction of the Head Teachers Charter without legislation. If sufficient agreement and progress is made the provisions of the proposed Education Bill may not be legislated for. The Scottish Government reserve the right to introduce legislation if sufficient progress is not made.
- 3.2.8** A series of actions have been agreed with COSLA in order to move the agenda forward. A summary of the joint agreement and resulting actions are contained in Appendix A. Actions are reflected in the proposed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2018/2019.
- 3.3** **Developing the 2017/2018 ACC National Improvement Framework Plan**
The Local Authority Business Plan, Directorate Service Plan and National Improvement Framework Plan were aligned to ensure that Officers and colleagues in schools worked to one Plan. This approach ensured that colleagues in Community Learning and Development and all Education Services, including schools, worked to a shared agenda.
- 3.3.1** Coordinating improvement activity ensured that colleagues across the education system focussed on the key improvements, enabled closer collaboration across teams and maximised the use of available resource. This approach also importantly resulted in shared ownership of the Plan.
- 3.3.2** The ACC National Improvement Framework Plan of 2017/2018 was ambitious and good progress was made in realising the stipulated outcomes despite changes in the central team.

3.3.3 Although the approach to the development and implementation of the Plan was positive, Officers are keen to foster stronger collaboration with colleagues from Children's Social Work and those from the Early Intervention and Community Empowerment Function as we move forward.

3.3.4 It is recognised that reducing the number of priorities for action would enable teams to target resource to support and maximise improvement in a more focussed way requiring stronger governance arrangements. These are currently being considered as the central team is redesigned to focus on the priorities identified for 2018/2019. The number of improvements in the proposed 2018/2019 NIF Plan has been reduced to enable this.

3.4 ACC National Improvement Framework 2017/2018 Evaluation

Paragraphs 3.4.1 to 3.4.10 provide a high level evaluative summary of improvement over the last year and next steps. A more detailed evaluation is contained in Appendix B.

3.4.1 Although 2017/18 CfE levels are still in draft and yet to be validated, initial results show that for almost all stages and components, the city has achieved its target of an improvement of 1% or greater. Across all Primary 1 Literacy measures, provisional data suggests that we have realised a 3% increase in the number of children reaching expected levels of Early level literacy although this data will require further analysis and quality assurance. Despite gains across the Broad General Education (BGE) there is a need to continue to sharpen pedagogy in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

3.4.2 Initial analysis of SQA results in the 2018 diet indicate that:

- Entries were the lowest in the last five years which reflects the S4-6 cohort size which is also the lowest in last five years;
- There were very few entries at National 2;
- Pass rates at N3 were slightly below the national average
- Pass rates at N4 were in line with the national average
- Pass rates in courses at N5, Higher and Advanced Higher were all at or above the National average.

The publication of Insight data will give us a further breakdown of our performance against virtual comparators. Insight data is published in September and this data will trigger a need to ensure that the plan reflects performance information.

3.4.3 Work over session 2017/2018 has realised an average of 2% decrease in 'The Gap' across all Curriculum for Excellence levels when comparing the percentage of pupils attaining a level over the past 2 years, children from more deprived backgrounds have been improving more than those in less deprivation.

3.4.4 It is important that the Council builds on the gains of 2017/2018 and shares practice from schools who have reported the greatest impact from planned interventions in 17/18. This will be done by working in collaboration with the Educational Psychologist Service to develop a strategic approach to measuring the impact of interventions.

- 3.4.5** Raw exclusion data suggests a 14.7% decrease in exclusions in primary schools with a 6% decrease across secondary. This equates to an 8.8% decrease in all exclusions. The Council achieved a reduction in the number of LAC excluded of only 0.8%. The gap between those in SIMD 1 and 5 has been reduced this year.
- 3.4.6** Officers had identified a need to focus work to reduce the number of exclusions following transitions and retain a focus on vulnerable groups.
- 3.4.7** There is a need to look more closely at exclusion data in order to understand why secondary exclusion rates have not dropped in line with primary school rates. There is also a need to better understand LAC exclusions as there is a need to accelerate progress in this area and it is thought that a focus on attachment-based practice over 2018/2019 will support this work.
- 3.4.8** Over the last three years the Council has consistently performed below our virtual comparator. Whilst there have been improvements there is still considerable work to be done and in preparation for this focus in 2018/2019 a strategic group of relevant stakeholders has been established. The group intend to collaborate with Head Teachers early in Term 1 in 2018/2019.
- 3.4.9** Progress within this area has not been as rapid as it should have been due to changes in the central team. This area will be a key priority for session 18/19

3.4.10 Summary of Progress

Considerable progress has been made with realising the ambitions of the ACC NIF Plan. A lack of defined measures hindered the robust measurement of progress in the early stages of delivery but this has been addressed over the session to reflect national best practice guidance. The refinement of some measures, particularly around the measurement of progress in young people's health and wellbeing, is likely to continue as national tools are developed and put in place.

- 3.4.11** Reducing the number of priorities and strengthening governance arrangements will enable accelerated progress and these arrangements will be agreed with head teachers in the new term. On-going monitoring of progress towards realising the ambitions will be necessary and steps are being taken to establish controls to enable timely reporting of progress against the Key Performance Indicators (See appendix C) already agreed by Committee.
- 3.4.12** Collaboration across services has significantly improved and will continue to be developed as this ensures that the Council makes best use of available resource. It will be important to capitalise upon services across the new directorates moving forward.

3.5 Key Considerations in Developing the ACC National Improvement Framework Plan 2018/2019

3.5.1 Analysis of the data has identified some key areas of work to be prioritised over 2018/2019. These include:

- Supporting practitioners to better understand metacognition to accelerate pace, challenge and the creative delivery of the curriculum
- Improve leadership at all levels
- Reshape services to support children with mental health needs
- Make effective use of improvement methodology to measure the impact of interventions and inform city wide practice
- A particularly focus on the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) agenda to reflect the need to broaden the range of learner pathways

3.5.2 These priorities have been used to shape the Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan for 2018/2019.

3.5.3 Updated National Guidance Guiding Development of Plans

Scottish Ministers utilised their right to review the National Improvement Framework (NIF) in January 2018 in light of national data and Local Authority NIF plans. There is no change to the four key priorities but the national document now guides inclusion of the need to:

- provide greater professional development and collaboration, both in terms of supporting school leaders to lead the raising attainment agenda and in the development of shared approaches to assessment and moderation;
- poverty proof improvement activities to ensure engagement and participation of all children and young people;
- improve data literacy to support more effective planning to achieve improvements in learner outcomes and ensuring the substantive resources being made available through the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) are used effectively to close the attainment gap;
- provide access to mental health and wellbeing support and advice in schools for those at risk and who most need it;
- expand outreach services to increase support for children and young people with additional support needs at the point of need; and
- focus on delivery of Developing the Young Workforce as a key element of the curriculum to increase the number of young people reaching a positive and sustained destination

3.5.4 Target Operating Model

It is important that the clear benefits of collaboration across Council Functions are realised as well as the benefits of collaborating with partners across the wider Community Planning Partnership.

3.5.5 The Priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan

Education Services have an important part to play in realising the improvements detailed in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). The proposed NIF plan has been informed by the LOIP to maximise gains.

3.5.6 Consideration of the Data

The National Improvement Framework Plan must support improvement and therefore careful scrutiny and on-going monitoring of data is important to help prioritise areas for improvement.

3.5.7 School Improvement Plans

The Local Authority NIF Plan must reflect the key priorities identified in the school improvement planning process. School leaders worked with the central team to identify common themes for inclusion in School Improvement Plans and the National Improvement Framework Plan and these are reflected in the grid below.

3.5.8 Regional Improvement Plans

Support from Education Scotland will be largely through the Regional Improvement Collaborative. It is important that the proposed National Improvement Framework Plan of 2018/2019 takes account of the support available through the Northern Alliance.

3.5.9 Consultation

The Local Authority NIF Plan must be formed following extensive consultation with all key partners. This consultation has taken many forms suited to the audience. Consultation has been undertaken with:

- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Colleagues across Aberdeen City Council
- The wider partnership

3.6 The Proposed ACC National Improvement Framework Plan for 2018/2019.

The Plan contained in Appendix D takes account of the many influences on planning including the national priorities, the local priorities based on data, the intelligence gathered from a range of partners and from the planned work of the Regional Improvement Collaborative. The Plan is more refined compared to the Plan of last year, it is thought that this will enable colleagues to maximise improvement in key areas and will guide the work of all teams across Integrated Children and Family Services and beyond.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of all improvement actions will be undertaken within existing budgets and with support from funding allocated through either Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)-£636,000 or Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) funding- £2,845,000. Please note there was a carry forward of £1,600,00 from 18/ 19 pupil equity funds.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Authority has many legal duties (listed in section 3.2.1) which have been considered as this refreshed Plan has been developed. The work

undertaken to date and the proposed National Improvement Framework Plan satisfy these legal duties.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource to realise the improvements outlined in the plan.	L	Coordinate all work around the NIF Plan to make best use of available resource.
Legal	Failure to deliver on legal duties detailed in 3.2.1	L	Implementation of the Plan will satisfy these legal duties
Employee	Risk of employees feeling overwhelmed by the many changes in education.	L	Coordinate all changes in the NIF Plan to focus improvement activity.
Customer	Minimal impact on children and young people	L	Promotion of data literacy to support colleagues to effectively identify and address 'the gap'
Reputational	Risk of not effectively utilising PEF and SAC finance to address the equity and excellence agenda	M	Closely monitor and quality assure progress to take action where necessary

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	The Plan will ensure that children and young people are fully accessing education and more likely to contribute to the economy.
Prosperous People	The Plan will impact positively on all children and young people, but particularly those who are adversely affected by poverty.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	The Plan promotes an understanding of the circumstances of individual children and young people to ensure that personalised support is available to them.
Organisational Design	The Plan ensures the best use of resource in the system.
Governance	The impact of the Plan is overseen by Chief Officers and by the Education Operations Committee.
Workforce	The Policy ensures that colleagues in schools have clarity around their roles and responsibilities.
Process Design	Monitoring arrangements ensure that any vulnerabilities in the system are quickly addressed.
Partnerships and Alliances	The Policy makes use of wider partnership support when appropriate.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	<i>Required</i>
Privacy Impact Assessment	<i>Required</i>
<u>Children's Rights Impact Assessment/Duty of Due Regard</u>	<i>Applicable</i>

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A – The Education Bill

Appendix B – Evaluation of ACC National Improvement Plan for 2017/2018

Appendix B – Proposed ACC National Improvement Plan for 2018/2019

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