

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	3 June 2021
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Education Improvement Journey Tracker and National Improvement Framework Plan 2021/22
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CUS/21/130
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Andy Macdonald and Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Martin Murchie and Eleanor Sheppard
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Reyna Stewart and Gael Simpson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.3

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### **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 latest data release through Insight, and to (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 the Appendices outlining the post review outcomes from the 2020 SQA examination diet, and the 2021 Self Evaluation Report;
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to submit the Self Evaluation Report and the Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2021/2022 to the Scottish Government as soon as reasonably practicable; and
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Education Officer to implement the proposed Aberdeen City Council Improvement Framework Plan for 2021/22.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Insight Attainment and Achievement Data**

- 3.1.2 As Members will know, the methodology used to determine SQA awards 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 2020, with limited exceptions, is not directly comparable with that of previous years.

- 3.1.3 On this basis, whilst comparative data from prior years is retained to maintain the integrity of reporting, a focus has been placed on comparing City outcomes with those at a national level and against the Virtual Comparator for 2020.
- 3.1.4 Appendix B outlines the 'standardised' National Benchmark Measure outcomes from the 2020 examination diet covering the datasets which have been latterly published through Insight, retaining as much granularity as is possible to provide from this publication.
- 3.1.5 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.
- 3.1.6 Given some of the limitations above, data from Insight, which is the primary benchmarking tool, is being combined with that available from an extended range of education attainment and achievement publications by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the Scottish Government, to enhance understanding of progression and trends.

## **3.2 Key Insight Messages**

### Literacy and Numeracy

- 3.2.1 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.
- 3.2.2 In both instances, 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

- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 The improvement in the Middle 60% is less significant and would be judged as being a static position. This is similar to the pattern of the Lower 20% which has marginally declined in step with both the Virtual Comparator and National Figure but at a slower rate than either.

### Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

Literacy and Numeracy by SIMD Quintile

- 3.2.5 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.
- 3.2.6 In relation with the Virtual Comparator, outcomes across each Quintile were below that recorded for the Comparator with the exception of Quintile 3, but with an accelerated closing of the SIMD attainment gap being noticeable particularly at Quintiles 1 and 3.
- 3.2.7 At Level 5, some gains are evident across all Quintiles and whilst there is a shortfall against the Virtual Comparator for the majority of Quintiles, there is, again, evidence of the attainment gap narrowing.
- 3.2.8 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

- 3.2.9 Across each Quintile and by Attainment Cohort (Lowest 20%, Middle 60%, Highest 20%), there has been almost universal levels of improvement.
- 3.2.10 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.
- 3.2.11 Consequently, there is statistically significant narrowing of the attainment gap to SIMD 5 outcomes against both of these Quintiles with a lesser impact being recorded against the attainment gap at Quintiles 2 and 4.
- 3.2.12 Additional detailed analysis of this data is currently being led by the Analytics and Insight team

#### Positive Destinations by SIMD Quintile

- 3.2.13 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.
- 3.2.14 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.
- 3.2.15 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

- 3.2.16 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.
- 3.2.17 The significant loss of employment opportunities, in particular, 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 and furloughed staff being unable to support trainees.
- 3.2.18 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.
- 3.2.19 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 impending 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.

## Care Experienced Children and Young People

- 3.2.20 There is a very small cohort of Care Experienced Young People captured within the Insight dataset (fewer than 16 individuals in some cohorts), which is considerably smaller than in most previous years, so whilst limited data, subject to data suppression requirements, is captured in the Appendix, considerable care requires to be exercised around extrapolating data trends or deriving intelligence from this information.
- 3.2.21 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.

## **3.3 Broad General Education Data Landscape 2021**

- 3.3.1 Pupil assessments, over the course of 2020, along with data collation and submissions by local education authorities around the Achievement of Curriculum Excellence (ACE) were suspended by the Scottish Government in response to the initial phase of the COVID-19 emergency.
- 3.3.2 These assessments have re-commenced in the course of 2021 and are pending completion prior to conclusion of the current term, which will further inform the Service's National Improvement Framework and offer extended tracking data.

3.3.3 At the same time, the Scottish Government advised on the 12<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **3.4. Education Service Self Evaluation**

3.4.1 Whilst scrutiny of the data above has contributed, in part, to the Self-Evaluation and design of the 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.

3.4.2 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 National Improvement Framework Plan 2020/2021 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 in order to 'build back better'.

### **3.5 Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan 2020/21**

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

3.5.2 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.

3.5.3 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 draft Aberdeen City Council Plan for 2021/22.

3.5.4 Each proposed Action within the Plan will be driven and coordinated by Improvement Groups comprising school and central staff with progress being monitored on a monthly basis 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.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

#### 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 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 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
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	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.
<b>Compliance</b>	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.
<b>Operational</b>	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale	L	Mitigated by widespread staff engagement on draft NIF production and offering

	as staff feel unable to meet the educational and well-being needs of young people.		high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under the relevant Acts.
<b>Financial</b>	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.
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners.	L	Data scrutiny and reporting enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability.
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	Risk of lack of awareness of environmental/climate issues.	L	Mitigated by breadth and scope of Curriculum for Excellence.

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b><u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u></b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	<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>
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
<b>Prosperous Economy</b> 10% increase in employment	The information within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes in the LOIP, and informs many of the

<p>across priority and volume growth sectors by 2026.</p>	<p>improvement projects within the LOIP, including to 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</p>
<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.</p> <p>25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of each of the Children &amp; Young People Stretch Outcomes 3 to 7 in the LOIP. This includes the following projects:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Increase the confidence of parents and young people to recognise and seek support in response to deteriorating mental wellbeing by 2022.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people who effectively transition from primary school to secondary school by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the range and number of accredited courses being provided by schools &amp; partners by 25% by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the number of young people taking up foundation apprenticeships to 142 by 2021. Reduce the number of winter leavers with no positive destination by 50% by 2021.</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 98% 2021.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Increase the number of curricular offerings shaped by school communities by 20%, by 2021.</p> <p>Increase the number of opportunities to discuss and record skills for life, learning and work from S1 by 20%, by 2021.</p>



	Increase children, young people, and families' awareness and understanding of future skill requirements by June 2021.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The data in this report also impacts on LOIP Stretch Outcome 11- Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026.</p> <p>Respectively, this informs delivery of the following improvement projects:</p> <p>Increase the number of people with autism who are supported to be in education, employment or training by 2021.</p> <p>Increase number of people in local communities promoting wellbeing and good health choices by 2021.</p> <p>100% of schools have a progressive, cohesive and relevant substance misuse curriculum by 2021.</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	The report reflects outcomes aligned to the Scottish Government's National Improvement Framework for education.
<b>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</b>	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
<b>Impact Assessment</b>	The recommendations arising from this report do not require a full Impact Assessment to be completed.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required.

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

OPE.20.222 Senior Phase, Education Operational Delivery Committee, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020

National Improvement Framework Plan 2020/21

**10. APPENDICES**

Appendix A Aberdeen City Council Education Service Evaluation Report, 2021

Appendix B Insight Achievement and Attainment Data

Appendix C Aberdeen City Council, National Improvement Framework Plan

**11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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