

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education Operational Delivery Committee
DATE	8 September 2022
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan
REPORT NUMBER	OPE/22/166
DIRECTOR	Rob Polkinghorne
CHIEF OFFICER	Eleanor Sheppard
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to implement the refreshed Aberdeen City Council National Improvement Framework Plan for 2022/23 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 Appendices A and B;
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to implement the proposed Aberdeen City National Improvement Framework Plan 22/23; and
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Education Officer to maintain a review of the 22/23 Plan in light of any impacting national legislative or policy provisions such as the Scottish Government response to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Report 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 Schools etc.2000 legislation.
- 3.2 The service self-evaluation process begins in February and concludes when draft School Improvement Plans and updated Scottish Qualifications Authority data is available for review. In real terms, Officers keep the Plan under constant review as new data sets are released and available for review and analysis.

- 3.3 Staff from across the Education Service collectively consider data trends in order to conclude a high level analysis in order to determine next steps. This analysis is informed by and informs school improvement priorities and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The Council Performance Board and Strategy Board both play 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 Refreshed national guidance on the management of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding has led to the inclusion of Stretch Aims in the Plan for the first time. These stretch aims and the proposed priorities for improvement have been scrutinised by Education Scotland who noted the comprehensive analysis undertaken, endorsed the direction of travel but asked that consideration be given to the impact of high numbers of children attending school in Scotland for the first time and this feedback has been taken into account. Education Scotland will engage with the service thrice yearly to help scrutinise the progress being made against the Plan.

Key themes within the Plan

- 3.5 The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on many of the data sets we usually use and has also brought some challenges, our Early Learning and Childcare settings and schools have been impacted by staffing shortages due to self-isolation rules. This has meant that children and young people have faced unfamiliar adults at times over the 21/22 school year and that some of the supports that would usually have been provided have been less available as school leaders and central staff have been working directly with children and young people. The movement of staff across and between teams and schools has enabled all of our schools to remain open to all children and young people but we recognise that it has been far from ideal.
- 3.6 Despite the challenges of the last year, the education service has successfully:
- delivered the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare and subsequent evaluation;
 - delivered a Easter of Play and Summer in the City programme
 - delivered study support over the year and an Easter Study offer for some;
 - sent 32,500 free school meal vouchers to eligible families;
 - expanded the provision of free school lunches;
 - successfully restructured Additional Support Needs Outreach services under a single head teacher and established a Parent Forum to shape the service;
 - maintained communication with parents and carers through our digital newsletter;
 - prepared for delivering a full exam diet again following implementation of the Alternative Certification Model;
 - reviewed City Campus provision and started shaping the development of ABZ Campus;

- removed costs of the school day for parents and carers;
 - updated education child protection guidance and training materials in keeping with updated national guidance;
 - successfully bid to develop a neurodevelopmental pathway with partners;
 - commissioned Mental Health Aberdeen to offer a year round counselling offer for our children and young people;
 - further developed school profiles to support our data analysis; and
 - worked in partnership with the Integrated Joint Board to develop a model of multi-agency support in the Links Hub.
- 3.7 Attendance levels have been positive compared to our virtual comparator and levels of exclusion continue to drop. These positive trends will continue to be closely monitored. Health and wellbeing has been a considerable focus in all of our schools and across the service. We now need to take stock to determine next steps in health and wellbeing (OPE/22/159). This will be a major focus over the coming year with a Mental Health Summit being proposed for September 2022. We also need to continue to work closely with partners to develop a model of Family Support (OPE/22/178) to ensure that the right supports are available to families at the right time to help us Keep the Promise.
- 3.8 Primary tracking data for session 20/21 highlights a number of gaps (particularly in literacy) which emerged over the two periods of school closure. Live tracking data for session 21/22 suggests that attainment is returning to pre-pandemic levels. Our scrutiny of data will be maintained and enhanced through refined tracking and reporting arrangements over session 22/23 to help raise attainment further.
- 3.9 The pandemic has led to a significant increase in the number of young people choosing to stay on at school. Attainment data suggests that there is an improvement in the quality of grades at the senior phase but a need to offer a broader range of learner pathways for all of the young people in our secondary schools. Secondary School leaders are collaborating to develop an improved ABZ Campus offer which is better aligned with the local economy and provides a greater range of opportunities. Phase 1 of this programme will be operational in June 2023 and provide 20 additional courses for young people across the city. Initial destinations for 2021/22 are the highest ever recorded in the city in 21/22 and we will continue to build on this.
- 3.10 Education Recovery funding has been used to increase the provision of Youth Work, Family Learning and Money Advisors in schools. There is a growing body of evidence around the positive impact of this resource and it will be maintained over session 22/23 as we work to close the gap. Data around impact will be gathered over the year to inform next steps.
- 3.11 Our data suggests that children who are Looked After have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and there is a need to prioritise work and resource to understand and address the needs of this group and those at risk of becoming accommodated better. This will be progressed by

establishing two pilots (OPE/22/156) for 22/23 to ensure that we continue to be well placed to Keep the Promise.

- 3.12 The pandemic has led to a rise in the number of children and young people identified as having additional support needs and higher numbers of children being reported as experiencing delays in communication skills. Some children who are neurodevelopmentally diverse have found the last two years exceptionally challenging. In most cases attainment remains good for this group but the curriculum doesn't appear to be sufficiently adapted for others. This will be an area for development over the coming year and will align with the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan and our work with partners to develop an improved neurodevelopmental pathway. The service will also look to ensure greater consideration of environmental adaptations which can positively support children and young people.
- 3.13 Levels of bullying have decreased over the last two years but the nature of bullying incidents appear to have changed. We plan to review our Anti-bullying policy over 22/23 to ensure that our policy reflects the changes we are seeing.
- 3.14 There is evidence that leadership and learning, teaching and assessment are improving and our focus on these areas will be maintained next year to realise further improvement.
- 3.15 All schools continue to work to increase pupil participation as they embed a rights based approach. Partnership with parents in keeping with the Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan will continue to be prioritised.
- 3.16 A number of key areas for development and improvement are listed in the Plan as well as a number of enabling actions which will support our delivery. The service believes that progressing the Plan will help address the excellence and equity agenda over school session 2022/23.
- 3.17 A parent and carer version of the Plan and an accessible version for children and young people is available in Appendices C and D.

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

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.

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?
Strategic Risk	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
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims, and legal challenge (tribunals).	Mitigated by services being realigned to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City and prevent escalation of need.	L	Yes
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed, which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the educational	Mitigated by staff engagement on the draft National Improvement Framework and	L	Yes

	and well-being needs of young people.	the ongoing commitment to delivering 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.	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
Reputational	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
Environment / Climate	Risk of lack of awareness of environmental/climate issues.	Mitigated by breadth and scope of Curriculum for Excellence.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals within this report support the delivery of Child Friendly City accreditation as independent inspectors will have made judgements on the extent

<p>UNICEF Child Friendly accreditation.</p> <p>Commit to closing the attainment gap in education while working with partners across the city.</p>	<p>to which children’s rights inform the work of our schools.</p> <p>External scrutiny provides helpful assurance that there is sufficient focus on helping young people recover from the pandemic and that the school self-evaluation and improvement plan is well positioned to support a closing of the poverty related attainment gap.</p>
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[Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#)

<p>Prosperous People - 95% of all our children, including those living in our priority neighbourhoods, will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026</p> <p>Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty</p> <p>Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and group</p> <p>Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities</p> <p>90% of Children and young people will report that their experiences of mental health and wellbeing have been listened to by 2026. This is reflected in interactions, activities, supports and services</p> <p>Improving health and reducing inequalities.</p> <p>Increasing children’s knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach.</p>	<p>The detail within this report supports the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 4 to 9 in the refreshed Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This includes the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of children starting P1 with an identified speech delay by 5% by 2023. • 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. • 100% of schools offer sustainable and equitable access to counselling for those children aged 10 and above who require it by 2022. • 100% of children and young people have free access to physical activity which improves mental health and wellbeing by 2022 • Increase the number of care experienced young people accessing a positive and sustained destination by 25% by 2022. • Increase the number of accredited courses directly associated with growth areas by 7% by 2023. • Increase the number of vulnerable learners entering a positive and sustained destination by 7% by 2023. • Increase the number of young people who leave school with a minimum of Scottish Vocational Qualification 3 in literacy and numeracy and 4 other qualifications to 93% by 2023. • Achieve UNICEF badges in: - Leadership - Culture - Communication - Place - Child Friendly Services – • Increase to 100% of staff working directly and indirectly with children who have received child friendly city training by 2023.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of young people who need support in relation to trauma and bereavement having access to such support by 50% by 2023
Regional and City Strategies Regional Cultural Strategy Prevention Strategy Children’s Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The universal provision of education is fully aligned to the Prevention Strategy and a key partner to the Children’s Services Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Evaluation of ACC National Improvement Framework

Appendix B – High Level Plan

Appendix C – Parent and Carer information on the National Improvement Framework Plan

Appendix D - Child and young person information on the National Improvement Framework Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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