

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	24 January 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Education Reform
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/23/009
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Eleanor Sheppard
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report aims to ensure Members are fully sighted on the progress being made on education reform.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the update on education reform: and
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Education Officer to update Committee on further developments within one calendar year or earlier if on-going education reform triggers a change in the current operating model.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In September 2021, Members noted the content of report OPE/21/187 which gave an overview of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Organisation (OECD) report on Scottish Education. The OECD report has been the catalyst for work designed to reform Scottish Education and Appendix A maps the OECD recommendations against the Scottish Government commitment and progress to date.

Putting Learners at the Centre; Towards a Vision for Scottish Education

- 3.2 Acting on the recommendations of the OECD report, Professor Ken Muir CBE led extensive consultation to consider how best to replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) with a new specialist agency for both curriculum & assessment and the reform of Education Scotland. Professor Muir published his findings in '*Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education.*'

3.3 [Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education](#) was published in September 2021. In the report Professor Muir recommended that:

- The Scottish Government should initiate a **national discussion** to establish a compelling and consensual vision for the future of Scottish education which takes full account of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- That a **new qualifications and assessment body** be established. This new body should be an executive Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) and take on board SQA's current awarding functions.
- There should be a **national agency for Scottish education**. This should be an executive agency of the Scottish Government comprising the current support and improvement functions of Education Scotland, SQA's Accreditation/Regulation Directorate, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Partnership, elements of Scottish Government's Curriculum, Qualifications and Gaelic Division as well as the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Standards Council.
- The proposed national agency for Scottish education should create and sustain a **forum for ongoing and proactive discussion about curriculum**, assessment, learning and teaching and professional learning and leadership.
- A **new Inspectorate body should be established** with its independence enshrined in legislation. Critical roles of the independent Inspectorate will be to support improvement, evaluate major changes in the education system and report annually and over longer periods, on the performance of Scottish education.
- As a matter of urgency the new independent Inspectorate should re-engage with the Care Inspectorate to agree a **shared inspection framework** designed to reduce the burden on early learning and childcare (ELC) practitioners and centres.
- The new independent Inspectorate should undertake **an inspection on the effectiveness of the new, proposed arrangements**. This should be completed within two years of the new Inspectorate coming into operation.
- **Scottish Government and other national bodies should collaborate more effectively** to ensure that policies align well with each other and with any revised vision for Scottish education. Arrangements should be put in place that allow for the active monitoring of the volume of policy expectations on local authorities, schools and senior leaders to ensure that these are realistic, manageable and well understood.
- Scottish Government should **establish a transitions programme team** to oversee the changes and reforms envisaged.

3.4 Professor Muir's report has been well received with many of the recommendations reflecting points made by the Education Service during the consultation process.

National Discussion; Let's Talk Education

3.5 Scottish Government and CoSLA launched a **National Discussion** on the vision for education in Scotland: "Let's Talk Scottish Education" on 21st September 2022. The National Discussion aims to create a compelling and consensual vision for the future of Scottish education.

- 3.6 Professor Carol Campbell and Professor Alma Harris acted as independent facilitators of the national discussion which aimed to provide an opportunity for children, young people and all those who support them to have their voices heard. A range of resources were made available to help facilitate conversation with children, young people, families and wider communities.
- 3.7 All school communities across the city have engaged with the materials available. In addition to this school level engagement, Head Teacher colleagues appreciated the opportunity to engage directly with Professor Campbell at a face to face Head Teacher meeting on 10th November. In addition the service offered an opportunity for Committee members and wider stakeholders to explore the materials. All feedback received has been used to inform the Aberdeen City Council response to the consultation which was submitted prior to the deadline of 5th December. Professor Campbell and Professor Harris aim to report to Scottish Government in Spring 2023.

The Hayward Review

- 3.8 The Scottish Government has launched the Hayward Review to reform qualifications and approaches to assessment. Phase one of the review focussed on developing a shared vision and set of principles.
- 3.9 The draft vision has been agreed as, '***Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland should reflect what matters in the curriculum, recognise every learner's achievements, and provide evidence to inspire the next steps in their learning journey***'.
- 3.10 Draft summary principles have also been developed. These are that Scotland's qualifications system should:
- reflect the aspirations of the curriculum.
 - recognise the achievements of every learner.
 - be clear, coherent and understood by all as part of a lifelong learning journey.
 - be inclusive both in design, development and delivery.
 - support flexible approaches to assessment.
 - be responsive to the fast-changing needs of individual learners and Scotland in an increasingly complex and globalised society
 - qualifications and Assessment in Scotland should reflect what matters in the curriculum, recognise every learner's achievements, and provide evidence to inspire the next steps in their learning journey.
- 3.11 The output of Phase 1 was shared with school communities in November 2022 along with information on how schools could contribute to Phase 2 from November to 16th December. Phase 2 of the Hayward Review will generate ideas about what the Vision and Principles might look like in practice and the Education Service encouraged widespread engagement with the materials in keeping with the approach taken for the national discussion given the significance of this consultation. A response to the consultation was submitted prior to the deadline of 13th January 2023.

- 3.12 Phase 3 of the Hayward Review will look at the practical implications for qualifications and assessment. A final report on progress will be presented to the Cabinet Secretary by the end of March 2023.

National agency for Scottish Education and new Inspection body

- 3.13 A new national qualifications body, new national agency for Scottish education and an independent inspectorate body are currently being developed. These will replace SQA and Education Scotland. Operating models are due to be developed by the end of 2022.
- 3.14 There will be a period of shadow operation for the new bodies before they become fully operational, with a view to new organisations becoming operational in 2024. In the case of the qualifications body we expect this to be following the completion of the 2024 exam diet. At these points, SQA and Education Scotland will cease to exist in their current forms

Shared ELC Inspection framework

- 3.15 A consultation on options for inspection of the ELC sector has been undertaken with a commitment to shared inspections (Education Scotland and Care Inspectorate) in the short term. The Local Authority engaged positively with this consultation and await the outcome of the consultation.

Review of the Skills Delivery Landscape

- 3.16 In September 2022, the Minister for Higher Education, Further Education, Youth Employment and Training set out to parliament that he would be initiating an independent review of the skills delivery landscape in Scotland as part of work to ensure that the skills system is fit for purpose for delivering Scotland's national outcomes and meeting future economic challenges including the transition to net zero.
- 3.17 James Withers has been appointed as Advisor to the Review. The [Terms of Reference](#) set out his remit and the Review's scope and purpose to explore how the public body and advisory landscape can be adapted to drive forward the Scottish Government's outcomes and ambitions for skills. Specifically, it will look at the skills functions of Scotland's public bodies and make recommendations on their roles and responsibilities within the future delivery landscape.
- 3.18 A call for evidence has been initiated in order to gather evidence from all interested parties to inform recommendations in relation to the future of the skills delivery public body and advisory landscape, including the future remit and status of Skills Development Scotland. This Review complements the programme of work that is underway to reform Scotland's education landscape. A response was submitted prior to the deadline of 23rd December.

Local response

- 3.19 The Education Service continues to respond positively to consultation opportunities and continues to implement the agreed National Improvement Framework Plan which took account of the national direction of travel.

3.20 Considerable work is being undertaken with multi-agency partners to develop ABZ Campus and implement The Promise. Once the national reforms are clearer, any multi-agency dimension will be progressed alongside multi-agency partners as we develop our multi-agency Target Operating Model for children.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

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 changing our local education system to reflect changes in national policy.	Regular reporting to Committee.	L	Yes
Compliance	Risk of not complying with national guidance	Education Service keeping abreast of developments associated with Education Reform.	L	Yes
Operational	Risk that school staff feel disconnected to national Education Reform	Information shared timeously with colleagues in schools	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified			
Reputational	No risks identified			Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Impact of Report	
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement Delivery of progressive educational policies</p>	<p>The proposals in this report do not directly impact operational practice but do signal some of the changes that may be made to the future shape of the education system.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
<p>Prosperous Economy - 500 Aberdeen City residents upskilled/ reskilled to enable them to move into, within and between economic opportunities as they arise by 2026</p> <p>Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty.</p> <p>Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups.</p>	<p>The review of the national approach to assessment and qualifications is likely to have a positive impact on those who do less well in a traditional exam situation.</p>
<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>As corporate parents we will ensure 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, health and emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026</p>	<p>The review of the national approach to assessment and qualifications is likely to have a positive impact on those who do less well in a traditional exam situation.</p> <p>The review of the vision for Scottish Education is likely to drive more flexible and inclusive approaches to the delivery of education.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies Regional Cultural Strategy</p>	<p>The recommendations in this report do not directly impact any of Regional or City Strategies at this point</p>

Prevention Strategy Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	but are likely to heavily influence longer term planning.
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9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

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

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A, Mapping of OECD recommendations

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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