

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	12 September 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Accessibility Plan
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/23/263
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Mhairi Shewan
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek approval for the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

2.1 approves the Aberdeen City Accessibility Plan (Appendix 1);

2.2 instructs the Chief Education Officer to review the impact of the Plan in 2026 in accordance with legislation; and

2.3 instructs the Chief Education Officer to present an updated Accessibility Plan to the Education and Children's Services Committee within 3 calendar years.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 The Accessibility Plan ensures that long-term strategic planning meets the requirements of sections 1 to 3 of the Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) Act 2002.

3.2 In keeping with legislation, this Plan will ensure we continue to:

- enable and support disabled pupils to access the curriculum
- improve the accessibility of our school buildings
- improve communication with children and young people and parents and carers in a variety of appropriate formats.

3.3 A range of data sets were reviewed to support the development of this Plan. These included evaluation of the 2020-23 plan, information gleaned from Quality Improvement Visits, online surveys conducted over the last school term with children, young people, parents and carers and information held on the range of needs and disabilities evident in our children and young people.

- 3.4 Qualitative data was sought to complement this process, mainly gathered through consultation with learners, children's services staff, voluntary organisations and a range of Council functions.
- 3.5 Consideration of all available data has helped identify a set of clear next steps for inclusion in the proposed refreshed Plan.

Progress and next steps

- 3.6 We have made significant progress regarding the availability and diversity of professional learning opportunities. There has been a reduction in exclusions of learners with disabilities, improvements to understanding of universal and targeted supports and an increase in the number of learners who are declared as disabled. Consultation responses from parents and carers suggest we need to ensure a greater consistency of understanding including of reasonable adjustments and of the need for Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs).
- 3.7 There have been rapid improvements in our use of accessible technologies and availability across our settings. Quality improvement visits have shown that, where used correctly, these can enable learners to lead their own learning and be as independent as possible. We are committed to building further confidence in our staff through provision of ongoing professional learning opportunities and the sharing of effective practice.
- 3.8 Despite the broad range of training that has been made available, consultation responses from parents and carers suggest that there is still work to be done regarding use of effective planning processes. Work on planning formats will be progressed to ensure that they are accessible.
- 3.9 We are proud of the wider opportunities that our learners are experiencing, however consultation responses from learners, parents and carers suggest that more could be done. Extracurricular activities will continue to be a focus in the new plan.
- 3.10 There is a need to maintain focus on the active participation of our children and young people in decision making as we work to give them the skills and confidence to do so.
- 3.11 Effective transition planning impacts positively on our learners and families. Our evaluation shows an ongoing requirement to ensure that our supports continue to be responsive to changing needs.
- 3.12 Improved data collation is clarifying the needs of learners, this, alongside professional learning, has enabled a clearer understanding of how a curriculum can be personalised. We have seen an increase in some of our attainment data but acknowledge that the attendance of learners is essential.
- 3.13 External expertise has been commissioned and a specialist consultant has been appointed to carry out site surveys at a cross section of school buildings to inform next steps around school signage.

- 3.14 Design work on new school buildings has included a range of partners and specialists. The proposed model for school buildings has been validated by a pupil survey across the city. Access to the physical environment has been enhanced through understanding the universal supports that can be put in place. For learners with Autistic Spectrum Condition or sensory needs, this is particularly important as we move to flexible learning areas.
- 3.15 The key aspects from this evaluation have been built into a proposed Version 2 of our Accessibility Plan which is available in Appendix 1.

Implementation and monitoring

- 3.16 Overall progress will be monitored and reported through the regular National Improvement Framework updates to the Education and Children's Services Committee.
- 3.17 In accordance with legislation, the Accessibility Plan should be reviewed formally within three years and a report presented to the committee on progress.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Recommendations in the plan will make use of existing budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Local Authority has many legal duties including those of:

- Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) Act 2002
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004
- The Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

- 5.2 The approach being taken to develop the actions outlined in this Report will assist the Council to fulfil these duties more effectively, and secure necessary and appropriate education and additional support for our disabled children and young people and their parents and carers.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

7. MANAGEMENT OF 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?
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource	Mitigated by realigning services to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City.	L	Yes
Compliance	Non-compliance with legislation, financial claims and legal challenge (reference to ASN tribunal, Disability Discrimination)	Mitigated by services developing understanding to better meet the needs of our young people in Aberdeen City working in partnership with learners and families.	M	Yes
Operational	Staff are overwhelmed which leads to low morale as staff feel unable to meet the needs of disabled children and young people and those with additional support needs.	Mitigated by offering high quality professional learning for staff to ensure that they meet their statutory duties under The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and Equality Act (2010)	L	Yes
Financial	Risk of not having sufficient resource	Mitigated by realigning services to better meet the needs of our young	L	Yes

		people in Aberdeen City.		
Reputational	Risk of not effectively meeting the needs of all learners and communication needs of their parents and carers	Monitoring of plan to ensure shared planning and understanding.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified		L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement and Council Delivery Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As a Council, it is a key priority that we invest in our children's futures, to ensure that they achieve positive destinations and are given the best opportunities in life.</i> • <i>Ensuring that children and young people receive accessible information and opportunities to engage and participate in decision making.</i> • <i>Improve pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including disability, ASN, term time leavers and those from priority neighbourhoods)</i>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 7 Improving pathways to education, employment and training for our children with ASN/disabilities and Stretch Outcome 9: ensuring our children with ASN/disabilities and their families receive the support they need.
Regional and City Strategies Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the Children's services plan, and the National Improvement Framework Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	<i>Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.</i>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

Aberdeen City Council Accessibility Plan 2023-2026

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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