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**REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL ON 2 FEBRUARY 2023**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS - STAFFING**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To ask the Council to approve the recommendation from the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee regarding the continuation of temporary staffing of the Additional Support Needs Service while the review of the service is ongoing.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of Section A(2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to consideration of Capital and Revenue budgets and long term financial planning.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Council approves the recommendation from the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee to extend the temporary post of Education Support Officer (ASN) for a further period of two years at a cost of up to £140,566 from earmarked reserves for Council priorities.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Special Meeting of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee on 14 December 2022 considered a report providing an update on the review and transformation of the Additional Support Needs (ASN) service. The report provided information on the Additional Support Needs teams within the Education Resources and Communities Service, the background to the review of ASN services, progress to date, and resourcing requirements (para 17 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 Moray is an inclusive local authority; we model and promote the Scottish Government's Presumption of Mainstreaming – [Presumption to provide education in a mainstream setting: guidance – gov.scot](#). We have no special schools but we do offer enhanced provisions in seven of our secondary schools, and 10 of our primary schools. Responsibility for meeting the needs

of children with additional support needs in our ELC settings and schools rests with the Nursery Managers and Head Teachers.

- 3.3 The Education Resources and Communities Service provides support to Head Teachers and Nursery Managers to meet the needs of children and young people with additional support needs in a number of ways as detailed in the report to ECLS Committee.

### **Background to ASN Review and links to wider Education Transformation**

- 3.7 On 11 August 2021, the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee approved a Business Case and Action Plan to take forward the Review of Additional Support Needs Services (para 9 of the minute refers). The Business Case set out the challenges impacting on the effective delivery of ASN Services, and the scale of change required. The report to the ECLS Committee provides a summary of the focus of the review, the risks of not moving forward with the review and progress to date.

## **4. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 4.1 The ECLS report explained that the ASN Review implementation is a long-term, complex and multi-faceted programme of change. Progress has been challenging due to the scale of the task, the capacity of staff to engage with the Review during the pandemic, and the increasingly challenging operational environment.

- 4.2 Nevertheless the operational challenges underline the importance of moving forward with the Review to secure a stable platform for the future. In order to continue to move forward and achieve our goals, while still providing support within a live and changing operational environment, it was noted that activities need to be prioritised and the priorities were identified for 2022-2023 that both support the current system and lay the foundations for improvement and modernisation of the service in the future:

- Review of ASN Policies and Processes
- Additional Support Allocations
- Models of Service Delivery (Enhanced Provision/Alternative Provision)
- Organisational Design and Structure
- Workforce Development
- Tests of Change (Forres ASG)
- Associated School Group (ASG) ASN Plans

## **5. RESOURCING**

- 5.1 On 18 November 2020 Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee received a report outlining the challenges of delivering a major change programme across a service where critical posts

within the service structure had been removed during previous budget reduction discussions. It was agreed at the time to reinstate an Education Support Officer (ESO) (ASN) post for an initial period of two years to support schools during the pandemic and to help provide a secure platform from which change could be driven (para 25 of the minute refers). As noted above the challenges of service delivery remain, as does the need to protect officer time to focus on the implementation of the ASN Review. It is therefore proposed to extend the previously agreed ESO (ASN) post for a further two years to ensure there is consistent and equitable provision of ASN outreach support to schools during this period of change.

## **6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

This report supports the LOIP outcomes:

Building a better future for children and young people in Moray:

- A place where children and young people thrive;
- A place where they have a voice, have opportunities to learn and can get around;
- A place where they are able to reach their full potential

And the Aims of the Corporate Plan to:

- Provide opportunities where young people can achieve the potential to be the best they can be.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

There are no policy or legal implications arising directly from this report. The Council has a statutory duty to make adequate and efficient provision for the additional support required by each child or young person for whose school education it has responsibility for, in terms of the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004. The ASN Review implementation is proceeding within the context of this legislation.

### **(c) Financial implications**

*When the Council approved the budget for 2022/23 on 22 February 2022 (paragraph 3 of the Minute refers) it balanced only by using reserves and one-off financial flexibilities. The indicative 3 year budget showed a likely requirement to continue to make savings in the order of £20 million in the next two years. All financial decisions must be made in this context and only essential additional expenditure should be agreed in the course of the year. In making this determination the committee should consider whether the financial risk to the Council of incurring additional expenditure outweighs the risk to the Council of not incurring that expenditure, as set out in the risk section below and whether a decision on funding could reasonably be deferred until the budget for future years is approved.*

To support the implementation of the ASN Review it is proposed to continue the previous reinstatement of the Education Support Officer

(ASN) post for a further two years at a cost of £140,566 funded from earmarked reserves for council priorities .

**(d) Risk Implications**

There is a risk that we are unable to meet our statutory requirements under Additional Support for Learning legislation if we cannot provide meaningful and effective support for our children and young people with additional support needs. In some cases this can lead to legal challenge.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

It is proposed to extend a previously agreed temporary Education Support Officer (ASN) post for a further two year period. This post is currently filled.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising directly from this report, however there may be property and capital investment implications as we move forward with our implementation plans.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

The implementation of the ASN Review will help ensure we can effectively meet the needs of all our children and young people with additional support needs in our schools and early year's settings both now and into the future.

**(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**

There are no climate change or biodiversity issues arising directly from this report.

**(i) Consultations**

The Chief Financial Officer, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 This report asks the Council to consider the recommendation from the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee to extend the temporary Education Support Officer (ASN) resource for a period of up to 2 years in order to help provide much needed support to schools, and ensure there is capacity within the ASN teams to drive forward improvement and modernisation at the desired pace.**

Author of Report: Jo Shirriffs, Head of Education Resources and Communities

Background Papers:

Ref: SPMAN-9425411-152