



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 24 AUGUST 2022**

SUBJECT: SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update on the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) which is supported by funding through the Attainment Scotland Fund, the aims of which are to address the challenges of the poverty-related attainment gap. The report also provides information regarding planned spend for the coming session.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- i) consider and note the update on 2022 Scottish Government Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), and planned expenditure, based on the Education service self-evaluation gathered across the year, for Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) and Care Experienced Young People Funding (CEYPF), working with Social Work colleagues;**
- ii) note the strategic guidance at Scottish Government and local Authority levels to support the implementation of the funding;**
- iii) note the forthcoming requirement to set stretch aims linked to key baseline data (including attainment) as required by the Scottish Attainment Challenge;**
- iv) note the planned use of SEF for session 2022/23;**
- v) note the early plans for CEYPF; and**

vi) instruct officers to provide further updates in line with Scottish Government reporting requirements to be presented at future Committee meetings.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Attainment Scotland Fund is made up of a number of funding streams totalling £1 billion. This targeted funding includes the SEF, PEF and CEYPF which Moray receives and is the focus of this paper.
- 3.2 This paper will include an overview of the 2022-23 PEF funding allocations for Moray Schools eligible to receive PEF funding (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.3 The refreshed SAC, launched in March 2022 does not introduce a new policy but rather builds on the existing policy that has been in place since 2015. The main aim of the policy is to provide a framework to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- 3.4 The policy's aim is to 'use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty related attainment gap'. It is well known that education cannot do this alone with the adage of 'it takes a village to raise a child'. Therefore schools and central officers plan use of the funding which includes working with partners and key stakeholders in order to support children and families.
- 3.5 A new requirement by the Scottish Government as part of SAC is that all local authorities set out 'stretch aims' as detailed in the guidance Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress. This includes 5 'core' aims and additional 'plus' aims. This paper will detail the process the Education service has taken in developing these stretch aims and the current draft stretch aims for Moray. Stretch aims have to be agreed by September each year working closely with the Senior Regional Advisor for the Northern Education Scotland Team, our Attainment Advisor and the National Improvement Framework Officer.
- 3.6 This paper provides Committee with updated information on the continued intention of the Scottish Government, as part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, to disperse £1.48m in PEF, £170k in SEF funding and £158k in CEYPF for Moray for the 2022-23 session. In addition, national funding for Community Learning and Development has been announced but as yet there is no indication of the local breakdown - this funding will be overseen by Education Resources and Communities.

4. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 4.1 The first five years of the SAC saw progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap across Scotland. With the disruption to learning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen an impact on attainment of children, with those affected by poverty impacted at disproportionately higher levels.

4.2 The Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework) aims to:

- Mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes by tackling the poverty-related attainment gap;
- Set high expectations through annual, locally identified stretch aims to ensure progress in recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Build on the investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to make a greater difference, more quickly for children and young people;
- Build consistency on processes used across the country to build a more accurate national picture;
- Drive improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty;
- Ensure elements of local planning and decision making while driving strategic direction.

4.3 The aim of the framework is to contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people recognising the importance of attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing. The 'core plus' model of stretch aims reflects this.

4.4 All local authorities are expected to set stretch aims for the following five measures and report on these annually to Scottish Government. Officers await further guidance from the Scottish Government in order to finalise the Stretch aims which have to be submitted to Education Scotland by the end of September. In addition further work needs to take place between the Education Service and Education Scotland after the Scottish Government Insight Benchmarking Tool update in September. Furthermore, local quality assurance of Achievement of curriculum for Excellence levels is underway and will also support the finalisation of the stretch aims. These will be reported to Committee at a future date and are subject to review as this is the first year of introduction. Based on current guidance these will focus on:

- Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (literacy combined and numeracy combined);
- The proportion of school leavers attaining one or more pass at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 5 based on the "summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations" publication
- The proportion of school leavers attaining one or more pass at SCQF level 6 based on the "summary statistics for attainment and initial leaver destinations" publication
- The proportion of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment or training based on the Annual Participation Measure produced by Skills Development Scotland (SDS); and
- A locally identified aim for health and wellbeing, to be measured using local datasets

4.5 In setting the Moray 'core' stretch aims collaborative work has been undertaken with Education Scotland colleagues. This included examining trends, considering targets within the Moray Raising Attainment Strategy and reviewing the impact of the pandemic on learners locally. Working with school

leaders in secondary schools and partners, an Insight Strategy has been devised to improve data literacy as well as a key improvement focus on improving opportunities for accreditation across the senior phase.

- 4.6 This work along with further planned development of our senior phase curriculum strategy offer working with the Education Scotland Curriculum Innovation Team, SQA and SCQF partnership will have a focus on curriculum redesign, accreditation, consortia arrangements, virtual delivery, moderation, tracking and monitoring across both the Broad General Education and Senior phase providing a clear local strategic framework for improvement. This will also be reported to Committee at a future date.
- 4.7 Whilst considering the Moray draft stretch aims, a number of weighting factors were identified which have either a positive or negative impact on pupil's achievements which include

Positive contributors	Risks to be mitigated against
Curriculum change/models	Pandemic disruption and effects
Local strategies, associated plans and leadership opportunities	Increase in Additional Support Needs, Mental health and wellbeing needs and behavioural needs
Consortia and college options	Alternative certification model impact
Interventions/additional funding	Budget pressures and cessation of Covid additional posts

- 4.8 As the SAC is related to the Poverty related attainment gap, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data was used where the Scottish Government take the 10 indicators and round to 5 quintiles where quintile 1 (SIMD1/2) hosts children in the most deprived areas of Moray to quintile 5 (SIMD9/10) which hosts children in the least deprived areas of Moray. The majority of Moray's children are in quintiles 3 and 4 however there is an increasing number in quintile 1 and a proportion in quintile 2. Due to the number in quintile 2, draft stretch aims have been set to look at quintiles 1 and 2 in comparison with attainment levels at quintile 5.
- 4.9 On examining performance data trends across the Broad General Education, key gaps appear in writing at quintile 2 in P1, P4 and P1/4/7 combined. In additional there are gaps in quintile 2 for numeracy in P1, 4, 7 and P1/4/7 combined.
- 4.10 Additional 'plus' aims are included in this model with local authorities charged with choosing an aim specific to their own context and datasets. Work is ongoing to ascertain this through our data intelligence.
- 4.11 Schools eligible, continue to benefit from PEF funding as committed by the Scottish Government for the remainder of the parliamentary term. School level allocations are shown in **Appendix 1**. All schools in Moray are eligible except one, Dallas Primary.
- 4.12 PEF funding is allocated directly to schools to be used to provide targeted support and interventions to children, and families if appropriate, affected by

poverty. School leaders plan for this funding in tandem with existing School Improvement Planning processes with a separate template, where funding is significant to show outcomes and measures. National operating guidance is provided for PEF funding and in addition local Moray guidance is updated annually working collaboratively with the Attainment Advisor. Published annual school Standards and Quality Reports evidence the impact of the use of PEF within the school to meet the needs of targeted groups.

- 4.13 The initial tranche of SAC monies included Challenge Authorities and Schools and a Universal programme with Moray in the latter. This has been replaced by Strategic Equity Funding and sees all 32 local authorities receiving a proportion of SEF funding. Moray previously had no children in SIMD1 however Elgin South is now classified as having areas in this decile. Moray received £170,500 through SEF funding for session 2022-23. This will grow year on year as follows:

Moray SEF allocations 2022/23 – 2025/26

Local Authorities	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Moray	£170,500	£338,950	£507,400	£675,851

- 4.14 Planning for the spend of SEF funding for the first year’s allocation includes a pilot project in Elgin High School to build on the work started with Covid recovery posts, now deleted, to target a number of young people on part-time timetables with an alternative curricula to improve accreditation routes and a transition project in the Buckie High School Associated Schools group. Both projects will be evaluated and reported on with a view to disseminating progress and impact for consideration in future years. As Dallas Primary has not been allocated PEF, SEF funding will be used to provide the minimum allocation to the school which is in line with good practice in other Local Authorities and taking in to consideration current cost of living and challenges facing families
- 4.14 In addition to PEF and SEF, we also receive CECYPF which we jointly plan for with colleagues from Children’s Social Work. Funding is provided annually and for this session, at a figure of £1,200 per looked after child aged 5-15 as outlined in the Children’s Social Work Statistics Scotland 2020-21. Funding is provided to local authorities in order to improve educational outcomes for CECYP supported by the strategic goals of the Promise and Scottish Attainment Challenge. All CECYP aged from 0-26 are eligible for support and Local Authorities as Corporate Parents should determine the best ways that funding can improve attainment of their CECYP.
- 4.15 In Moray the plan is to continue work so far in mentoring CEYP as they prepare to leave school and enter a positive sustained post school destination. Part of the funding will support the Mentoring Young Talent initiative which has proved successful. The remainder of the funding will be used to employ a virtual Head Teacher who will oversee CECYP working closely with Social Work partners. This new post has been successful in other Authorities and will bring value to our CECYP and their families as well

as closely monitoring and supporting projects to raise their attainment and wellbeing.

- 4.16 Progress with funding will be evidenced via our annual National Improvement Framework return which is reported to Committee annually and also supported by our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 A consultation will be undertaken with the head teacher consultative group regarding our local approaches to setting the stretch aims. We await the national Guidance to support these conversations and further engagement with Education Scotland. Further consultation with the system including professional associations will also take place. A head teacher briefing will give further opportunity for comment prior to final discussions with Education Scotland prior to stretch aims being submitted in September as per statutory requirement.
- 5.2 Reporting requirements are clear and will be quarterly with further reports back to this Committee on progress and impact. Stretch Aims will form a key basis of our scrutiny and support work with our schools moving forwards, with planned revision to our Performance Management framework underway.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

This report was informed by the priorities within the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan and in particular to Our People, Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal

Attainment Scotland Funding through the Scottish Attainment Challenge supports the central purpose of the Scottish Government to accelerate recovery and progress in the delivery of national outcomes. The Council requires to meet their statutory duties in terms of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc, Act 2000.

(c) Financial Implications

Pupil Equity funding is allocated across the financial year however can be spent across the school session. Head Teachers hold plans for PEF as part of their school improvement planning. Strategic Equity and other funding is allocated on a similar basis with Moray's allocation noted above. As previously stated this will fund two projects with impact reports coming back to Committee There are current underspends in PEF and CECYP which are under review and planned expenditure has been identified.

(d) Risk Implications

Officer capacity to plan for SEF and CEYFP will mean a delay in projects starting and posts being filled in the first year of funding. Recruitment may not be successful in the first round leading to delays in work

commencing, progress made and impact being evident. Lack of progression in recruiting additional Research and Information Officer to support Education's plan to explore Power BI to improve data access, and reporting has the potential risk that officers may not have capacity to analyse data required for quarterly reporting requirements. Potential risk that even with the planned work, the Council does not close the poverty related attainment gap due to multiple factors including, interventions may not work and a review and replan to take place, difficulty in recruitment, training required for new staff etc. In addition, some short term interventions will not realise sustainability or improvement for a number of years.

(e) Staffing Implications

Potential implications due to the time limited nature of the funding and inability to offer staff permanent posts as a result.

(f) Property

There are no property issues arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

The Scottish Attainment Challenge is aimed at reducing inequalities and SEF funding targets key protected characteristic groups.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None

(i) Consultations

The Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Head of Financial Services, Head of HR, ICT and OD, Quality Improvement Manager, the Business Support Team Manager, and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer, have been consulted on this report and agree with the sections of the report relating to their areas of responsibility.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge and associated funding streams focuses on and accelerates targeted improvement activity to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. Through planned and targeted interventions and approaches in line with the Scottish Government Scottish Attainment Challenge guidance for PEF, CECYP and SEF as outlined in the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress, ongoing monitoring will be undertaken against Stretch Aims agreed with Education Scotland. Supported by our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor, this will determine impact and direction of interventions and future funding.**

Author of Report:

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Background Papers:

[Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress.](#)

Ref: