Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee

Wednesday, 07 June 2023

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Meeting of the **Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee** is to be held at **Council Chambers**, **Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX** on **Wednesday, 07 June 2023** at **09:30.**

BUSINESS

18. **Question Time *****

Consider any oral question on matters delegated to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration.

Only items marked * can be considered and determined by all members of the Committee

Summary of Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee

To exercise all the functions of the Council as Education Authority within the terms of relevant legislation with regard to school education, nurseries and child care, Gaelic, children's services, leisure, libraries and museums, sport and the arts, CLD, life long learning, youth justice and child protection.

Information Reports - Not for Discussion at this Meeting

Any member wishing to call in a noting or information report from one meeting shall give notice to Committee Services at least 48 hours before the meeting for which the report is published. The Notice shall be countersigned by one other elected member and shall explain the reason for call in including any action sought.

Information Report - Children's Services Plan 2023-26   185 - 256

Report by the Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Moray

*   **Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests -** The Chair of the meeting shall seek declarations from any individual or political group at the beginning of a meeting whether any prior decision has been reached on how the individual or members of the group will vote on any item(s) of business on the Agenda, and if so on which item(s). A prior decision shall be one that the individual or the group deems to be mandatory on the individual or the group members such that the individual or the group members will be subject to sanctions should they not vote in accordance with the prior decision. Any such prior decisions will be recorded in the Minute of the meeting.

**   **Written Questions** - Any Member can put one written question about any relevant and competent business within the specified remits not already on the agenda, to the Chair provided it is received by the Proper Officer or Committee Services by 12 noon two working days prior to the day of the meeting. A copy of any written answer provided by the Chair will be tabled at the start of the relevant section of the meeting. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than 10 minutes after the Council has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he or she can submit it in writing to the Proper Officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within 7 working days.

***   **Question Time -** At each ordinary meeting of the Committee ten minutes will be allowed for Members questions when any Member of the Committee can put a question to the Chair on any business within the remit of that Section of the Committee. The Member who has put the question may, after the answer has been given, ask one supplementary question directly related to the subject matter, but no discussion will be allowed.

No supplementary question can be put or answered more than ten minutes after the Committee has started on the relevant item of business, except with the consent of the Chair. If a Member does not have the opportunity to put a supplementary question because no time remains, then he/she can submit it in writing to the proper officer who will arrange for a written answer to be provided within seven working days.

THE MORAY COUNCIL

Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee

<u>SEDERUNT</u>

Councillor Kathleen Robertson (Chair)
Councillor Bridget Mustard (Depute Chair)

Councillor James Allan (Member)
Councillor Tracy Colyer (Member)
Councillor John Cowe (Member)
Councillor Juli Harris (Member)
Councillor Sandy Keith (Member)
Councillor Scott Lawrence (Member)
Councillor Graham Leadbitter (Member)
Councillor Marc Macrae (Member)
Councillor Paul McBain (Member)
Councillor Shona Morrison (Member)
Councillor Derek Ross (Member)
Councillor Sonya Warren (Member)
Councillor Ben Williams (Member)

Mrs Sheila Brumby (Non-Voting Member)
Mrs Anne Currie (Non-Voting Member)
Mr Alfie Harper (Non-Voting Member)
Reverend Tembu Rongong (Non-Voting Member)
Mrs Susan Slater (Non-Voting Member)
Ms Angela Stuart (Non-Voting Member)
Mrs Emma Tunnard (Non-Voting Member)

Clerk Name:	Tracey Sutherland
Clerk Telephone:	07971 879268
Clerk Email:	committee.services@moray.gov.uk

MORAY COUNCIL

Item 3.

Minute of Meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee

Wednesday, 19 April 2023

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor John Cowe, Mrs Anne Currie, Mr Alfie Harper, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Mrs Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Mrs Sheila Brumby, Reverend Tembu Rongong, Ms Angela Stuart

IN ATTENDANCE

Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Head of Education, Head of Education Resources and Communities, Head of Service (Moray Integration Joint Board), Head of Governance Strategy and Performance, Early Years Service Manager, Business Support Team Manager, Sport and Culture Service Manager, Quality Improvement Manager, Head of Instrumental Instruction, Communities Service Manager, Service Manager (Health and Social Care Moray), Interim Service Manager (Health and Social Care Moray), Mr Hall, Senior Project Manager and Mrs Rowan, Committee Services Officer, as Clerk to the Meeting.

1. Chair

Councillor Robertson, being Chair of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Order 21 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from Group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda.

Councillor Warren declared an interest in Item 13 "Education Scotland Inspection of St Peters Nursery, Buckie" as her daughter works at the Nursery and stated that she would leave the chamber during discussion of this item.

In relation to Item 21 "Youth Music Initiative Programme", both Councillor Robertson and Councillor Mustard declared an interest in this item as Councillor Robertson is the Chair of Moray Pipes and Drums Tuition Scheme and Councillor

Mustard has a previous personal connection with the Youth Music Initiative Programme. Both Councillors stated that they would leave the chamber during discussion of this item. Also in relation to Item 21, Councillor Morrison stated that she had been a previous member of Moray Feis Board however as this was a previous involvement, stated that she would be able to fairly consider this item.

In relation to Items on the agenda concerning the NHS and IJB, Councillor Colyer stated, for transparency, that she is Depute Chair of the Moray Integration Joint Board and also a Member of the NHS Grampian Board however would take part in the consideration of these items.

There were no further declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. 2023 Examinations

The Committee joined the Chair in wishing all students who are sitting examinations in the coming weeks the best of luck and thanked all teaching and support staff for their efforts in preparing the young people of Moray for their exams.

4. Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting for Items 20-22 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the relevant Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Para Number of the minute	Para Number of Schedule 7a
23	Para 1 Information relating to staffing matters
24	Para 1 Information relating to staffing matters
25	Para 1 Information relating to staffing matters

5. Minute of Meeting dated 25 January 2023

Under reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 25 January 2023, Councillor Warren stated that there was a typo in the 11th paragraph where the word "basis" should be replaced with "bases".

Thereafter, the Minute of the meeting of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee dated 25 January 2023 was submitted and approved subject to the amendment of the word "basis" to "bases".

6. Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

7.   Notice of Motion - Scottish Parliament Motion PE1979

The Chair stated that the seconder had withdrawn their second for this motion and, as there was no other seconder, then this motion had fallen.

8.   Update Report - Inspection of Fostering, Adoption and Adult Placements March 2022

Under reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the special meeting of this Committee dated 14 December 2022, a report by the Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray) provided an update report in advance of the move to the Integrated Joint Board regarding the progress of the Service Improvement Plan.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the outcome of the improvement work following the inspection of fostering, adoption and adult placements in March 2022.

9.   Children and Families Social Work Services Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2022

A report by the Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray) informed the Committee of the budget position for Children and Families Social Work Services as at 31 December 2022.

During discussion in relation to the overspend in Self Directed Support (SDS), Officers advised that this increase was as a result of increased need. It was noted that this need is expected to increase further and that a number of constituents had raised concern at the lack of flexibility within SDS care packages, therefore it was asked that a further report be brought to both the Moray Integrated Joint Board (MIJB) and this Committee in relation to the overspend and flexibility concerns within Self Directed Support.

In response, the Head of Service (MIJB) agreed to bring a further report to both the MIJB and this Committee in relation to the overspend and flexibility concerns within Self Directed Support.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the budget position at 31 December 2022; and

(ii) that a further report be brought to the Moray Integrated Joint Board and this Committee in relation to the overspend and flexibility concerns within Self Directed Support.

10.   Education Resources and Communities Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the budget position for Education Resources and Communities as at 31 December 2022.

During discussion in relation to the suspension of the Speech and Language Therapy contract (supporting children with severe and complex additional support needs), concern was raised in relation to the impact this would have on the children of Moray and it was asked that a further report be brought to this Committee in relation to this matter.

The Head of Education Resources and Communities explained that the Speech and Language Therapy contract is for a specific service to school Enhanced Provisions, which is different to the provision of speech and language therapy services across the population of Moray. The suspension of the Speech and Language Therapy contract was due to resourcing issues within NHS Grampian and assured the Committee that this affected a small number of pupils with complex needs and that the separate universal NHS provision remains in place. She also assured the Committee that there were alternative supports in place for these pupils and that work was underway with the NHS and other providers to rectify this issue however agreed to bring a further report to this Committee in relation to the impact the suspension of the Speech and Language Therapy contract is having on children.

The Head of Education further advised that training had been provided to staff to enable support in early years settings.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the budget position at 31 December 2022; and

(ii) that a further report be brought to this Committee in relation to the impact the suspension of the Speech and Language Therapy contract is having on children.

11.   Education Revenue Budget Monitoring to 31 December 2022

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the budget position for Education as at 31 December 2022.

During discussion surrounding the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) reassurance was sought in relation to the work Quality Improvement Manager and Education Scotland are doing to ensure robust planning and monitoring of the fund and it was asked that a further report be brought to this Committee in relation to the planning and monitoring of the Pupil Equity Fund.

In response, the Head of Education advised that a 5 year report and the triennial report on PEF spending had been brought to this Committee previously and agreed to bring the next scheduled such report to this Committee in relation to the planning and monitoring of the Pupil Equity Fund.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the budget position at 31 December 2022; and

(ii) that the next scheduled report be brought to this Committee in relation to the planning and monitoring of the Pupil Equity Fund.

12. **Analysis of Secondary School Leaver Attainment 2021-2022**

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of this meeting of this Committee dated 2 November 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the SQA leaver attainment across the secondary schools in Moray and asked that this information to be scrutinised and noted as part of the improving outcomes and raising attainment focus.

The Chair, having previously considered the report, moved the recommendations as printed and opened the floor to debate.

During discussion, surrounding the percentage of children leaving school and going into employment, Councillor Keith noted that this has increased however queried what kind of employment young people are moving in to. He stated that in 2013 there were 46,000 Scottish people on zero hour contracts and that this had increased to 94,000 in 2022 with one in ten young Scottish People on zero hour contracts. He noted that, under current Scottish Governement guidance, a young person leaving school and taking up a zero hour contract would be seen as a positive destination and moved, as an amendment, that the Committee agree the recommendations as printed in the report with the addition of a further recommendation as follows:

Committee record its disappointment that, under current Scottish Government Guidance, precarious and often exploitative work such as zero hours contracts are considered positive destinations for our young people and that the Chair of this Committee write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education asking the Scottish Government to reassess its criteria for positive destinations.

Following lengthy discussion and a short adjournment for political groups to consider Councillor Keith's amendment it was stated that whether or not a young person finds themselves on a positive destination after leaving school depends on individual circumstances, for example, attending university could result in student debt and apprenticeships are not guaranteed to end with the provision of a permanent job.

Councillor Morrison agreed with Councillor Keith's amendment however was of the view that the Chair should also write to the UK Government raising the Committee's concerns in relation to the exploitation of zero hour contracts. Councillor Warren further added that Councillor Keith's amendment also include that the Council not procure to businesses who employ people on zero hour contracts.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance reminded the Committee of its remit and the motion which was in relation to the Scottish Government's policy on positive destinations for young people and that Members had the opportunity to put forward a Notice of Motion on wider issues in relation to zero hour contracts to the appropriate Service Committee.
After considering Councillor Keith's motion to add a further recommendation, the Chair agreed to amend her motion to include Councillor Keith's further recommendation.

There being no-one otherwise minded, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the Senior Phase Leaver Attainment across our Secondary Schools in Moray for session 2021/2022 with specific regard to the National Measures for leavers published on Insight in February 2023;

(ii) to acknowledge identified improvements in performance evidenced through key measures outlined within this paper;

(iii) to note identified actions for improvement arising from 2021/2022 attainment and performance as outlined in initial analysis of secondary school attainment paper previously presented to committee on 2 November 2022; and

(iv) to record its disappointment that, under current Scottish Government Guidance, precarious and often exploitative work such as zero hours contracts are considered positive destinations for our young people and that the Chair of this Committee write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education asking the Scottish Government to reassess its criteria for positive destinations.

13.   Education Scotland Inspection of St Peters RC Primary School

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the outcomes of the recently published report on a Moray school following inspection by Education Scotland.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note:

(i) the contents of this report and findings of Education Scotland following their inspection visit;

(ii) that a clear action plan is in place to respond to the areas for improvement identified and that regular monitoring visits will take place by the QI team with support and challenge provided to aid improvement further; and

(iii) that following future revisit from Education Scotland (anticipated February 2024), a further paper will be brought to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee in order to provide an update on school progress with improvements.

14.   Education Scotland Inspection of St Peters Nursery, Buckie

Councillor Warren, having declared an interest in this item, left the meeting at this juncture and took no part in the debate.

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) invited the Committee to scrutinise and note the outcomes of the recently published report on a Moray Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting following inspection by Education Scotland.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

Councillor Warren re-joined the meeting at this juncture.

15.   Education Resources, Communities and Education Capital Budget

Under reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of the meeting of Moray Council dated 1 March 2023, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the capital budget position for Education Resources, Communities and Education as at 31 December 2022 and advised of proposed capital budget allocations for 2023/24.

During her introduction, the Head of Education Resources and Communities advised that, since the report had been written, confirmation had been received that the Scottish Government had approved a formal replacement of the Findrassie Primary School project with the Elgin High School Permanent Extension project. This was noted.

The Chair, having previously considered the report, moved the recommendations as printed.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

(i)   note the capital budget position for Education Resources, Communities and Education Services at 31 December 2022; and

(ii) approve the proposed capital budget allocations (essential maintenance and design work) for 2023/24; and

(iii) note that the Scottish Government had approved a formal replacement of the Findrassie Primary School project with the Elgin High School Permanent Extension project.

16.   Review of Additional Support Needs Service (Action Plan 2023-24)

Under reference to paragraph 17 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 14 December 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the prioritised Additional Support Needs (ASN) Services Action Plan (2023-24) to take forward the outcomes of the Review of ASN Services over the next 12-18 months as part of the Council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme.

During discussion, Councillor Mustard raised concern that she and other Members of the Committee were not clear in the direction of the ASN service. It was acknowledged that the ASN service was significant in terms of the Council's financial position and also in relation to how it affects the wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers and teaching staff in Moray and that the Committee needed to have a better understanding of the long term strategic direction of the ASN service. Councillor Mustard therefore moved that the Committee agree recommendation i) in the report and add a further recommendation as follows:

Committee agree to establish a short life working group to consider the ongoing concerns and issues within the ASN service and consider the strategic direction for ASN in Moray particularly in light of the development of the alternative provision as stated in the action plan.

This was seconded by Councillor Ross.

The Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that Officers had not been aware that this was the view of Members and that she had concerns as the review of the ASN service is a long standing review which is part of the approved Improvement and Modernisation Programme agreed by Council. She advised that a business case had been completed and that this particular project had been referred to in the Best Value Audit for failure to progress. She further advised that actions had been reported regularly to the Committee and various resources had been previously agreed and that finding additional resource to support the working group would be challenging. She advised that there was a clear strategic direction for the ASN service and that agreeing Councillor Mustard's motion would cause a delay in progress. This was noted.

Further clarification was sought into the political make up of the Working Group and it was suggested that this be made up of 2 members from the Administration, 2 members from SNP, one Labour member, one Independent member and one external member from the ECLS Committee.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously agreed:

(i) to note the prioritised ASN Services Action Plan (2023-24);

(ii) to establish a short life working group to consider the ongoing concerns and issues within the ASN service and consider the strategic direction for ASN in Moray particularly in light of the development of the alternative provision as stated in the action plan; and

(iii) that the political make up of the short life working group be 2 members from the Administration, 2 members from SNP, one Labour member, one Independent member and one external member from the ECLS Committee.

17. Learning Estate - Closure of Inveravon Primary School Statutory Consultation Report

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 19 April 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided an update on the statutory consultation on the closure of Inveravon Primary School and sought agreement for the next steps.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:

(i) note the formal consultation report regarding the closure of Inveravon Primary School as set out at Appendix 1 of the report; and

(ii) make a recommendation to Moray Council to consider the closure of Inveravon Primary School and reassign its catchment area to Knockando, Aberlour and Glenlivet primary schools.

18. Moray's Dandelion Project

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of funding that had been secured following a bid to the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note that funding of £370K has been received from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund for the Dandelion Project which aims to ensure that all forces children have the right conditions and environment in their school setting to thrive whatever challenges their serving parent's military commitments may generate and agrees to implement the project arrangements of the funding bid as set out in the report.

19.   Partnership Community Learning and Development Plan Update

Under reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of this Committee dated 6 October 2021, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the work done so far to deliver on the statutory Moray Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Community Learning Development (CLD) Plan and on emerging priorities for the final 18 months of the plan.

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the work of all involved in progressing the Community Learning and Development Plan and thereafter, agreed to note the:

(i)   positive impact of partnership working in delivering on the Moray Community Planning Partnership CLD Plan (2021-24);

(ii) allocation of £745,218 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for partnership delivery of the 'Multiply' programme to support adult numeracy; and

(iii) emerging priorities which have been identified prior to discussion with the Community Planning Board and incorporation into a refreshed work plan.

20.   Information Report - Singleton Inspections of Early Learning and Childcare Centres - Published Reports June 22-March 23

Under reference to Standing Order 38, Councillor Harris seconded by Councillor Cameron called in the Information Report - Singleton Inspections of Early Learning and Childcare Centres - Published Reports June 22-March 23 to discuss what improvements had been made to improve the grading, especially with reference to improving children's experience in their setting.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the Singleton Inspections of Early Learning and Childcare Centres - Published Reports June 22-March 23.

21.   Question Time

Under reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of this Committee dated 25 January 2023, Councillor Macrae sought an update on his request for the Chair to write to the Secretary for Education to request information on the effects of class sizes on attainment that the Scottish Parliament Information Centre may hold.

In response, the Chair stated that she had written to the Secretary for Education as requested however had not received a reply as yet.

Under reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of this Committee dated 25 January 2023, Councillor Warren sought an update on whether any further consultation had taken place with communities as some schools in Buckie ASG were keen to find a means to communicate their concerns in relation to the school estate.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities advised that the delay in LEIP 3 funding is having an impact however consultation would still be carried out and a meeting was scheduled to take place with the Chair and Depute Chair of this Committee in the coming week with a view to taking this forward.

Under reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of this Committee dated 25 January 2023, Councillor Warren noted the large sum of money contributed to Moray Leisure Centre and sought an update on when the Service Level Agreement (SLA) would be available.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities advised that the SLA and Lease agreement are part of a larger piece of work underway with regard to Moray Leisure Centre which would be brought for consideration by the Council in the next few months.

The Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance further assured the Committee that there is a current funding agreement in place for Moray Leisure Centre.

Councillor Macrae, being a Board Member on Moray Leisure Centre, further stated that this had been raised at a recent board meeting and that the SLA is with Officers who are working through it at present.

Councillor Mustard queried when the report on business administration would be brought to the Committee for consideration.

In response the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that consultation was underway in this regard however no date for a report to come to committee was set at present.

With reference to the Information Report - Primary 1 Deferral and Early Learning and Childcare Eligibility, Councillor Keith stated that he had contacted the Early Years Services Manager asking whether this would have an impact to the Council's budget and had been advised that this information would be shared at the meeting of the Committee.

The Chair highlighted that issues such as this should have followed the procedure set out for calling in Information Reports for discussion however allowed the question to be asked as part of Question Time.

The Early Years Services Manager advised that school deferrals are recorded in a number of ways and that the number varies from year to year. She further advised that, as it is a parents right to seek a deferral for their child to start school, this additional cost to the Council is absorbed and that as there are currently 37 requests to defer school entry, the estimated cost to the Council is between £280,000-£300,000.

Councillor Warren sought clarification as to when questions could be raised in relation to Information Reports.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that any member could ask a question on a matter within the Committee's remit at Question Time however if a member wanted to discuss an Information Report as a Committee then this would have to be called in 48 hours prior to the Committee as per the agreed procedure.

Councillor Warren further queried whether, in future, if she had a question on an information report, could this be asked at Question Time.

In response, the Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance advised that, in theory this was correct, however if every member did this then this would undermine the procedure for considering information reports which was brought in to manage the committee's time efficiently.

Councillor Warrren asked for an update on Fit-Life membership and when the price increase was implemented.

In response, the Head of Education Resources and Communities advised that she did not have this information at present and that she would provide this information to all members of the Committee following the meeting.

22.   Resumption of Meeting

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Neil Cameron, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor John Cowe, Mrs Anne Currie, Mr Alfie Harper, Councillor Juli Harris, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Paul McBain, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Mrs Susan Slater, Ms Angela Stuart, Mrs Emma Tunnard, Councillor Sonya Warren, Councillor Ben Williams

APOLOGIES

Mrs Sheila Brumby and Reverend Tembu Rongong

23.   Early Learning and Childcare - External Consultation Update [Para 1]

Mr Harper left the meeting during discussion of this item.

Under reference to paragraph 20 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 14 December 2022, a report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the full external consultancy review results of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and project plans established to reduce costs bases on recommendations from the external consultant report.

During discussion several queries were raised in relation to the funding of the ELC Service which could not be answered as the relevant Officer from the Finance service was not present at the meeting therefore Councillor Ross moved that the

Committee defer consideration of the report until the financial queries had been addressed.

Councillor Warren agreed with Councillor Ross in that the financial queries needed to be answered however was of the view that this could be addressed at a Members Briefing therefore moved, as an amendment, that the Committee agree the recommendations as printed with an additional recommendation to provide a Members Briefing to address the queries the Committee had in relation to funding of the ELC Service. This was seconded by Councillor Laurence.

After considering Councillor Warren's motion, Councillor Ross agreed to withdraw his motion to defer the report.

Councillor Keith raised concern in relation to reports that had been made in relation to an unsatisfactory Trade Union consultation and moved as an amendment that the report be deferred until further consultation had taken place with the Trade Unions. This was seconded by Councillor Williams.

After considering Councillor Keith's amendment, Councillor Warren suggested that the Trade Unions be invited to attend the Members Briefing.

In response, the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) advised that there are formal processes that should be followed to consult with the work force and Trade Unions and that attendance at a Members Briefing would not be advised.

Following a short adjournment, Councillor Keith agreed to withdraw his amendment and asked if Councillor Warren would consider including a further recommendation to her motion to ask that Officers work with Trade Unions to resolve any outstanding issues. Both Councillors Warren and Laurence, as seconder, agreed to this request.

There being no-one otherwise minded, the Committee agreed:

(i) to note the findings of the external consultant as outlined in the final report;

(ii) to note progress against the strategic plan which:

- takes a phased project style format;
- will be complimented by the staffing change management plan;
- incorporates key aspects of the final report in support of reducing ELC budget pressures;

(iii) that a Briefing be arranged for Members in relation to funding of the Early Learning and Childcare Service; and

(iv) that Officers work with trade unions to resolve any outstanding issues.

24. Youth Music Initiative Programme [Para 1]

Councillors Mustard and Robertson, having declared an interest in this item, left the meeting at this juncture and took no part in the debate.

Councillor Macrae took over the role of Chair for this item.

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) informed the Committee of the current situation with the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Programme and sought direction regarding the future provision for Moray.

The Committee noted the 3 options for consideration within the report in relation to future provision of the YMI in Moray.

Councillor Warren, having considered the report and the options available moved that the Committee agree Option 1 including a recommendation to Corporate Committee on 25 April, that Councillors consider setting aside 10% of the 'Ward Budget' - detailed in Item 6 of the agenda of the Corporate Committee dated 25 April 2023, to maintain the Youth Music Initiative Programme in Moray at current levels and avoid redundancy risk for music instruction staff. This was seconded by Councillor Laurence.

Councillor Macrae moved as an amendment to Councillor Warren's motion, that the Committee agree the recommendations as printed within the report and proceed with Option 3. This was seconded by Councillor McBain.

Councillor Keith put forward a further amendment to Councillor Warren's motion, and moved that the Committee agree Option 2 as detailed within the report. This was seconded by Councillor Ross.

There being a motion and 2 amendments and in accordance with Standing Order 65c), the Clerk explained that the 2 amendments would be voted on with the amendment receiving the most votes then considered against the motion.

It was noted that, as Councillor Morrison was joining the meeting via telephone, that she would not be able to take part in the electronic vote and that her voted would be voiced to the Clerk.

Vote 1 – Councillor Macrae's Motion against Councillor Keith's Amendment.

On a division there voted:

For the Motion (3):	Councillors Macrae, McBain and Colyer
For the Amendment (5):	Councillors Keith, Ross, Allan, Cowe and Williams
Abstentions (5):	Councillors Cameron, Harris, Lawrence, Morrison and Warren

Accordingly the Amendment became the finding of the Committee and this was then taken against the original Motion moved by Councillor Warren.

Vote 2 – Councillor Warren's Motion against Councillor Keith's Amendment.

On a division there voted:

For the Motion (5):	Councillors Warren, Laurence, Cameron, Harris and Morrison
For the Amendment (6):	Councillors Keith, Ross, Allan, Cowe, McBain and Williams
Abstentions (2):	Councillors Colyer and Macrae

Accordingly, the Amendment became the finding of the Committee where it was agreed to:

(i) note the current situation in regards to the Youth Music Initiative Programme in Moray; and

(ii) progress with Option 2 as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

Councillors Mustard and Robertson re-joined the Committee at this juncture.

25. Scottish Child Interview Model - Social Work Staff [Para1]

Mrs Slater and Ms Stuart left the meeting at this juncture and Councillor Allan left the meeting during discussion of the item.

A report by the Chief Officer (Moray Health and Social Care) asked the Committee to support a request to take a report to Moray Council to support the permanent establishment of the Scottish Child Interview Model in Moray.

During discussion it was noted that the Model had been established in 2022 and concern was raised at the length of time taken to bring this report to Committee for approval. It was noted that this increase to the core budget for children's services social work would be a budget pressure which the Committee could not support and that the decision should be taken by Moray Council.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed that the report requesting a permanent annual increase of £143,101.91 to the core budget for children's services social work to establish the Scottish Child Interview Model in Moray (SCIM) be considered at Moray Council.

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
             COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: EDUCATION AND EDUCATION RESOURCES AND
             COMMUNITIES SERVICE PLANS 2023-24

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

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To invite the Committee to consider the Education and Education Resources
      and Communities Service Plans for 2023-24.

1.2   This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (B) (50) of the
      Council's Administrative Scheme relating to ensuring that the organisation,
      administrative and management processes of the Council are designed to
      make the most effective contribution to achieving the Council's objectives and
      to keep these procedures under review.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

**2.1   It is recommended that Committee consider and approve the Service
      Plans for services within Education and Education Resources and
      Communities.**

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   Service planning is a key aspect of the Council's Performance Management
      Framework and is undertaken annually to set out the strategic direction for
      services over the coming months.

3.2   The service planning process focuses on forward planning for medium-term
      activities supporting delivery of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (Loip)
      and Corporate Plan. The Council planning process also includes Team Plans
      that focus on short term tactical and operational activities supporting delivery
      of the service plan and strategies and Employee Review and Development
      Plans (ERDP) provide individual planning for employees' activities and
      development.

3.3 As well as identifying service developments and improvements, the Service Plan Framework requires an assessment of the output and outcome requirements for services based on the Council's priorities, statutory and regulatory requirements and other relevant factors and matching of resources to these priorities. Priority outcomes are those included in the Council's Corporate Plan that directly relate to the service or are influenced by the service and should be clearly identified.

3.4 Setting clear measurable outcomes and defining key indicators by which progress will be assessed is a recognised area for development within the Council and these Service Plans are part of the improvement journey to implement the Performance Management Framework. For some actions it can be difficult to identify a measurable outcome (e.g. a change in legislation that must be implemented, or updating a policy framework). It can also be challenging where there is currently no clear baseline or benchmarking from which informed targets and reasonable steps towards these can be developed. Therefore, as far as possible, efforts have been made to set measurable outcomes for service plan actions but in some cases outputs have been used so that it is still possible to measure whether the action has been progressed as intended. In other areas, further work will be required to refine outcomes in future.

3.5 A summary of progress is given below based on the annual reviews carried out for each of the service areas.

3.6 Reference is also made to the report to the Council on 2 February 2023 on the progress of work to revise the Corporate Plan following the local government elections in May 2022 and to take account of the issues from the Covid pandemic that will influence future service requirements and the Scottish Government programme for government. The Council agreed that Service Plans be prepared as normal and that they be further reviewed as required as part of the normal 6 monthly performance reporting framework to take account of any revisions and change in direction in the new Corporate Plan (para 15 of the minute refers). The updated draft of the Corporate Plan is developing and has had input from Heads of Service which is consistent with the content of these Service Plans and so it is not anticipated that further review would be required, subject to any amendments to the final Corporate Plan that is approved by the Council. These plans focus on the period up to June 2024.

4. **2022/23 UPDATES**

Education
Progress on planned work (success)

4.1 The key successes of the service are:

- The successful completion of the Insight Strategy as part of our Impact Moray approach to all practitioners becoming more data literate.
- The roll out of Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) ambassador programme across all secondary schools with success at Bronze and Silver levels to date.

- Improvements in key attainment measures as reported to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee, particularly leaver attainment in literacy, numeracy and positive leaver destinations.
- The roll out of support and training for child-centred approaches across Early Years.
- The development of the Supporting All Learners Strategy which is being rolled out including an across Moray approach to nurture.
- The review and update of the Professional Leadership and Learning strategy with its associated toolkit of support.
- The development of the Moray Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy.
- The development of Moray curricular progressions across the 8 curricular areas.
- The development of support materials for the Curriculum and training.
- The increase in Quality Assurance and Moderation Officers (QAMSOs) locally to support approaches to moderation including networking events and focus at in-service.
- The continued support to partnership working across Children's Services and developing the young workforce.
- The introduction of the Secondary Improvement model as an approach to supporting school improvement.
- The development of the Cost of the School Day Guidance.

Progress on planned work (areas for development/not delivered)

4.2   Planned work where progress has been slower than planned, due to staff absence and staff redeployed to support the wider system included:

- Review of professional leadership and learning framework including delivery of management and leadership programmes.
- Support to practitioners to meet the updated standards for teaching.
- Support materials for learning and teaching and professional learning communities.

Planned focus in new plan (reflecting above and challenges to come)

4.3   The key priorities within the service for 2023/24 as we progress to our goal for the Curriculum in Moray 2030 are:

- We will maximise the achievements of all children and young people in Moray through development and delivery of a high quality curriculum; satisfying their desires, talents and the future needs of the world that will surround them by:

  o   Reviewing our transition approaches from nursery to Primary 1;
  o   Reviewing our transition approaches from primary 7 to secondary 1;
  o   Develop a literacy strategy;
  o   Develop a numeracy strategy;
  o   Explore and extend learner pathways from Broad General Education to senior phase;
  o   Develop guidance and support materials to consider skills framework, skills progression and profiling;
  o   Explore and develop collaborative timetabling approaches in Secondary;

- o Review the existing Broad General Education in Primary including timetabling, progression and interdisciplinary learning;
- o Review the existing Broad General Education in Secondary;
- o Review and develop the use of subject and or curricular groupings to support curriculum development.

- We will improve the quality of learning and teaching by:
  - o Using the book Power Up Your Pedagogy as a stimulus and core reference text to support professional learning networks across schools;
  - o Further embed child centred approaches across Early level.

- We will support empowered leadership by:
  - o Supporting system wide empowerment at all levels;
  - o Continue to extend the system support for professional standards;
  - o Continue to develop a framework for professional development/career pathways.

Education Resources and Communities

Progress on planned work (success)

4.4   The key successes of the service included:

- Developing strategic approaches to capital investment across our learning and sport & culture estate (Learning Estate Strategy 2022-2032 approved, Sport and Leisure Capital Investment Plan developed).
- Development of Priority Action Plan (2023-24) to support delivery of Additional Support Needs (ASN) Review outcomes.
- Development of Change Management Plan for phase 1 of School Business Administration Review.
- Completed public consultation on the future of Inveravon School.
- Continuing to implement the Sport and Leisure Business Plan (2021-24).
- Communtiy Learning and Development (CLD) Strategic Partnership, supported by our Communities Team, completed year 1 self-evaluation and showcased as a good practice example case study by Education Scotland.
- Communities Team successfully supporting priority communities in Buckie, New Elgin, Lossiemouth, Forres and Keith; including accessing external funding to support the development of local community priorities.

Progress on planned work (areas for development/not delivered)

4.5   Planned work where progress has been slower than planned included:

- Developing approaches to enable more consistent and equitable involvement across our communities in planning for future public sector service delivery within their local area.
- Engagement with our local communities on the future of the learning estate.
- Supporting the development of Participatory Budgeting exercises (reliant on other services recommending suitable budgets).

Planned focus in new plan (reflecting above and challenges to come)

4.6   The key priorities within the Service Plan for 2023/24 include:

- More Moray residents have influence over key areas of service that impact on their lives through locality engagement focussed on Council priorities.
- Progressing the Learning Estate Strategy through the delivery of priority projects, and incorporating effective stakeholder engagement.
- Progressing the priority actions identified to support the delivery of outcomes within the Review of ASN Services.
- Implementation of the phase 1 Change Management Plan for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and Primary School administration, and development of Phase 2 (secondary school administration) Change Management Plan.
- Progressing the Capital Investment Strategy for Sport and Leisure facilities, and incorporating the libraries capital investment approach to ensure all Sport and Culture facilities are included.
- Ensuring our planning for Moray Sport and Leisure facilities and programmes is led by the Sport and Leisure Strategic Group and includes all relevant sport and leisure stakeholders.

Service Plans for 2023/24

4.7 Given the pressures across all services and the need to prioritise resources to the Council's priorities, services are focussing on essential service delivery and developments and taking account of the planned review of the Corporate Plan when undertaking service planning. The two Service Plans are attached to this report as follows:

Appendix 1: Education
Appendix 2: Education Resources and Communities

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)**
The Service Plans were informed by the Loip and the Council's Corporate Plan.

(b) **Policy and Legal**
Statutory requirements and Council policies are considered by managers when preparing service plans for the year ahead.

(c) **Financial implications**
No additional financial resources are required to support the Service Plans.

(d) **Risk Implications**
Up to date risk registers and maintained and considered as part of the service planning process.

(e) **Staffing Implications**
Service Plans are integral to good management practice including workforce planning and assisting with communication about work plans for staff, identifying priorities and matching staff time to the Council's priorities.

(f)   Property
There are no property implications arising from this report.

(g)   Equalities
Managers consider equalities issues for staff and service users when assessing current service delivery arrangements and future requirements.

(h)   Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
There are no climate change and biodiversity impacts from this report.

(i)   Consultations
Heads of Service have worked with their management teams to prepare the Services Plans attached as appendices and have contributed to the updates in this report.

6.   CONCLUSION

6.1   Service Plans have been prepared identifying the improvements targeted for the period up to June 2024. In preparing the plans managers have taken account of risk, performance data (including inspections and Best Value), the Loip, the Corporate Plan and other relevant factors such as audit and inspection outcomes. Consideration has also been given to the longer term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and action that is required to respond to them. The service Plans identify the resources allocated to each service and how these will be utilised to deliver core service requirements and improvements.

Author of Report:	Denise Whitworth, Vivienne Cross, Joanna Shirriffs
Background Papers:	Report to Council on 19 January: Corporate Plan Preparation
	Report to ECLS on 09 March 2022: - Service Plans 2022/23
	Report to Council on 02 February: Corporate Plan
Ref:	SPMAN-1108985784-855 / SPMAN-1108985784-872/ SPMAN-1108985784-871

APPENDIX 1

1. **Service Definition:**	Delivering Education across Early Learning and Childcare, Primary, Secondary Education and support and challenge via a small central team of Officers
2. **Service Resources**:	Service Resources: FTE across schools and central team (FTE to be included) Budget: DSM; Revenue Central Budget Early Years and Education (figures to be included)

3. **What have we identified for improvement in {Financial Year}?**	**What evidence did we use to identify this improvement?** **Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.**
Curriculum	Service self-evaluation including school and ELC settings self-evaluation School and ELC visit evidence
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Inspection evidence ACEL and other attainment data
Empowered Leadership	Collaborative improvement visit evidence Feedback from service managers

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold?)
(L) Building a better future for our children & young people. (CP) Our People: Opportunity for people to be the best they can be	Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy	Improved attainment at both the Broad General and Senior Phase identified through ACEL and LGBF measures	Progress towards meeting the Scottish Government stretch aims for literacy and numeracy at P1, P4, P7 and S3			
			Consistent improvement across N5 children achieving expected developmental milestones in line with CfE using ELC progressions to track development in numeracy, literacy and wellbeing	June 2024	HS	1
			Stretch aims once agreed	June 2024	VC/SMcL	1

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
Curriculum	To review and improve transition from nursery to P1	Improve learner progress to achieve early level	• % children achieving Literacy at early level • % children achieving numeracy at early level	June 2024	HS	2
	To review and improve transition from P7 to S1	Improve curricular transitions	•	March 2024	RW	2
	To develop a Moray literacy strategy	Moray literacy strategy in place	• Improvements in ACEL Literacy achievements	June 2024	SMcL	1
	To develop a Moray numeracy strategy	Numeracy strategy in place	• Improvements in ACEL numeracy achievements	June 2024	SMc	1
	To explore and extend learning pathways from BGE to senior phase	Maximise achievement for leavers in Moray	• Increase in overall tariff points for leavers	February 2024	SMcL	1
	To develop guidance for skills , progression and profiling	Guidance in place and shared with establishments	• No of schools with framework in place	March 2024	RW	2
	To explore maximisation of 33 period week	Increase collaborative and consortia approaches within the senior phase	• Increase in no of consortia arrangements • Increase in subject offer across Moray	March 2024	SMcL	2
	To review BGE Curriculum content approaches in Primary	Improved BGE curriculum structure/approaches in line with emerging national reform/advice	• Improved timetabling, progression and approaches to Primary BGE curriculum, with revised Curriculum Rational guidance	March 2024	RW	2
	To review BGE Curriculum in Secondary	Improved BGE curriculum structure/approaches in line with emerging national reform/advice	• Improved S1-S3 BGE curriculum structures across schools in line with revised Curriculum Rationale guidance, partnership working	March 2024	SMcL	2
	To empower middle leaders in secondary to lead across curricular groups	Improved collaboration and networking across schools, sectors and with wider partners (e.g. College HoCs)	• Self-supporting network structure in place with collaboration leading to resource development, regular meetings across groups and	March 2024	SMcL	2
Learning, Teaching and Assessment	To use Power up your Pedagogy as a stimulus and core reference text to improve the consistency of learning and teaching across Moray	To support a professional learning networks To improve the quality of learning and teaching	• % of schools with a good or better grading for HGIOS4 QI 2.3 •	March 2024	RW	1

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
	To further embed child centred learning approaches across Early Level	To further improve learning experiences across early level	• % of ELC settings with a grading of good or better for HGIOELC QI 2.3 • % of ELC settings with a Care Inspectorate national Standard grading of 4 or above	March 2024	HS	2
Leadership	To support system wide empowerment at all levels	Increased opportunities to lead at all levels within the system	• % of ELC settings with a good or better for HGIOELC QI 1.3 • % of ELC settings with a good or better for key question 3 • % of schools with good or better HGIOS4 QI 1.3 grading	March 2024	WS	1
	Continue to extend the system support for the implementation of the new GTCS Professional Standards	Practitioners understand the expectations in the standards	• % NQTs who achieve full standard for registration • % of NQTs who stay in Moray • No of staff promoted to middle leadership post • No of staff promoted to DHT post • No of Staff promoted to HT Post	March 2024	WS	2

	Continue to develop a framework for professional development/career pathways	Programme in place to support professional learning at all levels including career progression	• Baseline of professional learning offer locally
			• Baseline of attendees on all programmes locally and nationally
			• Increase in no of people with
			  ○ Into Headship
			  ○ Standard for Headship
			  ○ Excellence in Headship
			• Increase in the no of ELC staff completing BA ELC award
				March 2024	WS	2

1. Service Definition:	**EDUCATION RESOURCES & COMMUNITIES** A. Services supporting children & young people with additional support needs, their families and the educational settings they attend: Educational Psychology, SEBN team, ASN Quality Improvement Officer and Education Support Officer, Sensory Education Service, English as an Additional Language, Autism Service B. Sport & Culture services, including Sport & Leisure facilities, Active Schools, Community Sports programmes, Music Instruction and Performance Service, Library and Heritage services. C. Business Support services for schools (including school administration) and central Education and Education Resources & Communities D. Community Learning & Development functions, including the Community Support Unit, Youth Work and Adult and Family Learning E. Learning Estate Team
2. Service Resources:	Revenue Budget: £30,289,666 Capital Budget: £9,515,000 FTE: 271.91 (central staff) and 322.55 in schools (ASN staff)

3. What have we identified for improvement in {Financial Year}?	What evidence did we use to identify this improvement? Please add benchmark information wherever available and relevant to the improvement.
Developing our Assets – taking a strategic approach to developing our learning estate, including sport & culture assets	Condition & Suitability data Learning Estate Strategy 2022-2032 Best Value Audit Report Learning Estate Programme Definition Document Moray Council Climate Change Strategy 2020-23 Sport & Leisure Capital Investment Plan
Service transformation and Improvement – reviewing service delivery to ensure we are meeting service user needs in a sustainable way: • ASN Services • Sport & Leisure Services • Business Support model • Libraries • Music Instruction	Improvement and Modernisation Programme Significant increase in the number of children and young people identified as having additional support needs, including an increase in the complexity of needs. Morgan Report on Additional Support for Learning (June 2020) Sport & Leisure Business Plan Introduction of digital methods of service delivery – ensuring benefits are fully realised Staff and customer surveys
Communities and Place – supporting our communities to build capacity and influence decision-making that impacts on them and their local area	Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Corporate Plan Moray Partnership CLD Plan (2021-24)
Working in Partnership to achieve positive outcomes - for children and young people, families and the wider community	Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) Children's Services Plan Sport & Leisure Business Plan Moray Partnership CLD Plan (2021-24)

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
(L) Empowering & connecting communities. (CP) Our Place: Empower and support communities to build capacity	Capacity Building support for community led groups and organisations.	Groups are supported to develop and deliver projects and initiatives to address identified needs in their communities Community led partnerships are supported and encouraged to play a full role in the Community Planning Partnership.	**Progress Monitoring** Number of Community Support Agreements in place. Number of Community Support Agreements reviewed. Number of Community Asset Transfer assessments completed Increased levels of community representatives on CPP Community Engagement Group. **Outcome Measures** 1. 90% of all Support Agreements have met at least one objective. 2. Increase in no of active Area Forums 3. Sustain engagement in Federation of Community Halls and Associations. 4. Sustain number of active Community Councils	March 2025 (to be measured quarterly)	Communities Manager	4
(L) Empowering & connecting communities. (CP) Our Place: Empower and support communities to build capacity	Work with Council Services to deliver Participatory Budgeting (PB) exercises **Open Spaces** Mannachie Tomnavoulin Netherha **Developer Obs** Forres **PEF** Keith Primary Seafield Primary **Youth Facilities** Buckie Forres **Active Travel** Buckie Keith	Communities and Services are supported to allocate agreed budgets through a PB process. More people in Moray are involved in local decision making around identifying and funding local priorities through inclusive PB.	**Progress Monitoring** Number of PB exercises delivered Number of people engaged through PB process **Outcome Measures** % of Council budget allocated through PB and reported to Scottish Govt annually	March 2024 (to be measured quarterly)	Communities Manager	4

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
(L) Empowering & connecting communities. (CP) Our Place: Empower and support communities to build capacity	The CLD Strategic Partnership monitors the delivery of the Partnership CLD Plan	Working together to make the biggest difference to the outcomes for people in Moray	**Progress Monitoring** Mid-term review of plan to be completed with national KPI information and approved by ECSL Committee and CPP Board.	April / May 2023	Head of Service/Communities Manager	2
	Lead on the delivery of the Moray Multiply programme.	Learners are able to access learning opportunities that improve their confidence with numbers in everyday life and within their workplace.	**Outcome Measures** % increase in number of Multiply learners recorded in the Management Information System (Hanlon). % of learners achieving a numeracy qualification. At least 90% of Multiply learners report increased confidence in relation to numeracy.	Quarterly to March 2025	Communities Manager	2
(CP) Improve our understanding of the issues in our communities based on the experience of local people	Locality Planning supported in New Elgin and Buckie	More New Elgin and Buckie East residents have influence over the decisions and services that impact on their lives through progression of priorities and actions they have identified in locality and community plans	**Progress Monitoring** Number of individual residents and stakeholder groups involved in locality planning activities Report on activity prepared and tabled at CLD Strategic Group in July 23 with recommendations agreed and subsequently reported up to CPOG and CPP Board **Outcome Measures** Sustain level of community engagement in Buckie. Increase levels of	March 2024 (measured quarterly) July 2023(LOIP quarterly reporting)	Communities Manager	1
(CP) Improve our understanding of the issues in our communities based on the experience of local people	Community Action Plans developed in partnership with anchor organisations in Lossiemouth, Forres and Keith	Communities have influence over the decisions and services that impact on their lives through progression of priorities and actions they have identified in locality and community plans	**Progress Monitoring** Evidence of progress in taking forward action plan (by community anchor organisation)		Communities Team	2

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
			-Lossiemouth – follow up work to pick up outstanding actions from consultation work completed and monitoring system in place	July 2023		
			Forres – plan published and monitoring system in place	July 2023		
			Keith – prioritisation completed, plan written and new Development Worker in place to deliver and monitor progress.	June 2023		
(CP) Improve our understanding of the issues in our communities based on the experience of local people	(CP) Develop engagement with the public on the future of council services	(CP) More of our activities, services and plans are influenced by the communities they serve	**Progress Monitoring** Supporting service engagement with residents on Council priorities linked to Corporate Plan and budgets.		Communities Team	1
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	(CP) Tackle the affordability and standard of our schools and the buildings they operate from, deal with changing demographics and demands.	(CP)Transforming Education: To have high performing schools that are fit for the future and financially sustainable Children and young people in Moray are learning in the best learning environments Learning environments service the wider community and where appropriate are integrated with the delivery of other public services	**Progress Monitoring** Review resource requirement against updated Programme Definition Document Learning Estate Asset Management Plan developed Programme Definition Document (Learning Estate Strategic Plan) is updated and approved at Programme Board (Estate Sustainability) Inveravon School – Future of School agreed (Estate Sustainability) Crossroads – Mothballing Review) (Design and Construction) Review Findrassie Primary School New Build (Design and Construction) Elgin High School Extension Build (Design and Construction)	August 2023 November 2023 August 2023 July 2023 June 2023 6 monthly (next December 2023) June 2026 December 2027	Learning Estate Programme Manager	1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
			Future Forres Academy operational (Design and Construction) Future Buckie HS operational (Engagement and Consultation) ASG Level Options Development (long term investment strategy) Learning Estate Annual Report to Committee Effective stakeholder engagement on Learning Estate sustainability options **Outcome Measures** % of schools at Condition B % of schools at Suitability B % reduction in spare building capacity % schools with approved asset management plans % ASG options reviews completed Monitoring and reporting progress of capital projects to time and cost	December 2027 Measured annually and reported in learning estate annual report November 2023 Effectiveness measured after each ASG engagement		
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Transform our Sport & Leisure, Libraries, Learning Centres & Heritage, Music Instruction & Performance service provision to ensure a sustainable council for the future	Alternative delivery options: Create a sustainable future for our services	**Progress Monitoring** Evidence of projects, programmes and overall teams operating within agreed budgets Evidence of engagement outcomes embedded in team plans	March 2025 (reviewed quarterly)	Sport & Culture Manager	1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	Priority Rating (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
			Number of partnerships developed			
			Number of improved digital management systems and processes established			
			Outcome Measures % increase in income generated connected to Sport & Leisure facilities			
			% increase of people engaged and supported by the Libraries team			
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	(CP) Review of approach to supporting children & young people with additional support needs (ASN)	(CP) Transformation of Children's Services: services are focussed on planned, early work with families to support better outcomes for children in their local communities Children and young people with additional support needs are ambitious, confident, skilled and achieving. Moray's children and young people with severe and complex additional support needs are educated in Moray ASN services are efficient, sustainable and appropriately prioritised and targeted	**Progress Monitoring** Alternative Curriculum – location and staffing structure agreed Alternative Curriculum – external provider procurement framework in place Resource Allocation agreed for 2023-24. Staged Intervention training programme developed ASN Central Teams Change Management Plan developed **Outcome Measures** % Increase in attendance rates of pupils with ASN % Reduction in exclusion rates of pupils with ASN % Reduction in number of violence and aggression incidents % Increase in number of children and young people with ASN educated in their local communities	June 2023 August 2023 August 2023 August 2023 August 2023	Head of Service	1

4. Strategic Outcome or Priority	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome measures	Completion target	Lead	**Priority Rating** (1 high 3 low and 4 for ongoing, 5 for on hold)
			Extent to which service needs can be met from within budget - % variation on annual basis			

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Development and Implementation of School Business Admin Review	The benefits of digital administration approaches in schools are fully realised. Increased consistency in administrative processes across ELC and school settings	**Progress Monitoring** Change Management Plan developed (Phase 1 – ELC settings and schools) and consultation completed Phase 1 implementation Change Management Plan developed (Phase 2 – secondary schools) and consultation completed **Outcome Measures** Reduction in baseline service costs % increase in uptake of digital solutions to support efficiency	June 2023 December 2023 June 2025	Business Support Team Manager	1
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	Further develop and implement the Sport and Leisure Capital Investment Plan	Facilities are fit for purpose and aligned to customer needs	**Outcome Measures** % of Sport & Leisure facilities at Condition B % of Sport & Leisure facilities at Suitability B % of Sport & Leisure facilities with approved asset management plans	March 2026 (reviewed annually)	Sport & Culture Manager	2
(L) Improving Wellbeing of our population (CP) Our People: Provide opportunities for people to be the best they can be	Embed the Changing Lives approach across relevant sport & culture workstreams	Improved health, wellbeing and resilience in our communities	**Progress Monitoring** Number of workstreams developed using the Changing Lives toolkit and processes **Outcome Measures** % Increase in number of participants in Changing Lives programmes	March 2025 (measured quarterly)	Sport & Culture Manager	3

5. Service Level Outcomes or Priorities	Action	Planned Outcome	Outcome Measures	Completion Target	Lead	Priority rating
(L) Building a better future for our children & young people. (CP) Our People: Opportunity for people to be the best they can be	YW deliver targeted work in each secondary supporting employability skills and a positive transition from secondary school into college, work or training for identified young people	Working together to make the biggest difference to the outcomes for people in Moray Young people are more ready to enter employment, training or college	**Progress Monitoring** Pathway groups are developed in secondary schools where a need has been identified. **Outcome Measures** Most participants(70% as initial benchmark) gain accreditation - full awards (JASS) or sectional certificates (DofE)	May 2023 (reviewed quarterly) Annually	Communities Manager	3
(CP) A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities (L) Improving Wellbeing of our population (CP) Our People: Provide opportuinities for people to be the best they can be	Review, update and implement the Sport & Leisure Business Plan with the support of the Sport & Leisure Strategic Group	Working in partnership to deliver the benefits of sport to all across Moray, with a focus on equality and inclusion	**Outcome Measures** New Sport & Leisure Business Plan (or alternative) agreed % progress of Sport & Leisure Business Plan (or rebranded strategic document)	March 2024 March 2026 (reviewed quarterly)	Sport & Culture Manager	2
Workforce Development to meet demands and deliver priorities	The service improves the ERDP experience and holds accurate records, including staff continuous professional development (CPD) - from mandatory training through to service and job specific learning.	Staff and volunteers are safe and competent in their roles as a result of taking part in regular and appropriate continuous professional development opportunities, including digital and customer skills Our volunteers have the confidence and skills to support our communities	**Progress Monitoring** Evidence that all staff have undertaken mandatory training relevant to their role **Outcome Measures** % Increase in volunteer recruitment	March 2024 (and reviewed annually) March 2024 (measured quarterly)	Head of Service	1

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT: MILLBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the outcomes of the recently published report on a Moray school following scrutiny activity by Education Scotland.

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) **scrutinise and note the contents of this report and Education Scotland continuing engagement findings following local authority reporting;**

(ii) **note that following review of evidence, Education Scotland will publish no further reports in relation to the October 2018 inspection of Millbank Primary School, where HM Inspectors are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve; and**

(iii) **commend senior leaders and staff for positive improvements secured over time for learners and the wider school community including during the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a very favourable end inspection outcome with considerable progress noted by HM Inspectors**

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   When a school is inspected by Education Scotland or where continuing engagement visits are subsequently undertaken by Education Scotland, a report is published which gives commentary on the school's performance. Education Scotland provide such reports in the form of a parent/carer letter published on their website. Reports on Education Scotland activities are reported regularly to Committee, where possible at the first available opportunity following publication.

3.2   Millbank Primary School was first inspected by Education Scotland HMIE in October 2018 using How Good Is Our School? version 4 Quality Indicator framework, with letter to parents published in February 2019. At that time, the school received the following evaluations against Education Scotland six-point scale:

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change	Satisfactory
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Weak
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Weak

3.3   During this visit and in the parent letter following, a number of key strengths were highlighted:

- Relationships between staff and children resulting in children who are happy, well-behaved and polite. They have pride in their school, are willing to learn and ready to take on more responsibility;
- The work of the headteacher in consulting children, families and staff to develop the school's values, vision and aims. This has led to the headteacher and staff creating a positive school culture.

3.4   Following discussion with staff and The Moray Council, the following areas for improvement were also agreed at that time:

- Develop more strategic leadership at all levels within the school and in doing so strengthen the use of self-evaluation processes which leads to an increased rate of change and improved outcomes for all children;
- Staff should work collaboratively to ensure children experience consistently high quality learning, teaching and assessment which provides an appropriate level of pace and challenge in children's learning. Children should be given opportunities to lead their own learning and be more involved in evaluating their own progress and next steps;
- Raise attainment for all children. Approaches to raising attainment should include making effective use of relevant data and more robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in learning and achievement;
- Implement revised approaches to health and wellbeing and inclusion to better support children's wellbeing and progress. In doing so, ensure all

staff and children know, understand and use the wellbeing indicators as an integral feature of school life;

- Develop progressive curriculum pathways for all curriculum areas which are relevant to the school's context, and which offer children opportunities to develop appropriate knowledge and skills.

3.5 Continuing engagement visits followed in February 2020 (parent letter published: July 2020) and November 2021 (parent letter published: February 2022), highlighting strengths and progress made against areas outlined in para 3.4 as well as areas for further development. A Moray Council Quality Improvement Manager joined the Education Scotland HMI team in November 2021 as part of the scrutiny visit.

3.6 In February 2022, Education Scotland noted from the November 2021 inspection that the school had understandably been responding to the challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst these had a significant impact on the work of the school, there had been notable improvements under the direction of the current leadership team. Senior leaders and staff had implemented well-considered plans to support recovery. They had also increased the pace of change in taking forward areas for improvement from the original inspection.

3.7 While notable progress had been made, Education Scotland also recognised that as a result of the pandemic, the school needed more time to realise fully the impact of recently implemented strategies on children's achievement and attainment. As a result, Education Scotland requested that Moray Education provided them with further information about the school's progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children within one year of the publication of their February 2022 letter. Education Scotland continued to work together with local authority officers to agree what would happen next.

3.8 On the request of the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), a local authority scrutiny and review visit leading to production of a local authority report was undertaken in mid-December 2022 as requested by Education Scotland HM Inspectors in their February 2022 letter, where further information in relation to the school's progress in continuing to raise attainment for all children was requested by Education Scotland HMI as noted in para 3.7.

3.9 Following local authority report visit to Millbank Primary School in December 2022 it was noted that good progress continued to be made following the original inspection in 2018 and subsequent continuing engagement visits in 2019 and 2021.

3.10 Response to Covid-19 and return to school following both periods of lockdown ensured learners were supported to engage and participate in learning – both Remote Learning and subsequent in-school learning – where strong wellbeing supports have been enacted in an equitable manner for all children and families. Positive change has resulted to school ethos, quality of learner's experiences, leadership at all levels, learning and teaching.

3.11 Senior leaders, working with staff and a range of partners are well placed to plan, analyse and track interventions. The school have improved mechanisms in order to identify attainment gaps with planned interventions in place and under development in order to address these gaps. Clear actions for improvement have been acted upon with next steps identified for further improvements over time.

3.12 Following December 2022 local authority report visit, officers reported confidence that Millbank Primary School has capacity for continued improvement with ongoing support and challenge from the local authority. This would continue to be managed at pace under the leadership of the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher and in collaboration with all staff.

3.13 In March 2023, Education Scotland Head of Scrutiny met with local authority officers in order to review local authority report findings and evidence. Following review, Education Scotland are now confident Millbank Primary School has the capacity to continue to improve and they will publish no further reports in relation to the 2019 Education Scotland inspection report.

3.14 Moray Education will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its normal arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service and continue to work with the school in order to ensure progress continues.

3.15 The Education Scotland HM Inspectors progress report letter published in May 2023 following local authority visit in December 2022 and Education Scotland scrutiny meeting in March 2023 is contained within **Appendix 1**.

4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

   a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
   Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan with particular regard to (3) provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence and (4) day to day service delivery in line with council values of ambitious, improving and responsive. With regards to the 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan LOIP), (2) building a better future for our children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across our schools; supporting ambitious and confident children, able to reach their full potential.

   b) **Policy and Legal**
   It is the duty of the council to secure improvement and the quality of school education which is provided in schools managed by Head Teachers and to raise standards of education (Section 8 of Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).

   This report relates to Section 66 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which concerns the inspection of educational establishments.

c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

f) Property

None.

g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on school performance following external scrutiny/validation activity.

h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been determined due to the scrutiny based nature of activities reported and no findings related to such implications contained herein.

i) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

5. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

5.1 **Committee is invited to scrutinise and note the contents of this report, including very positive progress made by Millbank Primary School since initial inspection in October 2018. HM inspectors through continuing engagement visits following in February 2019 and November 2021 noted considerable progress underway during the Covid-19 pandemic including two extended periods of national lockdown, with subsequent local authority report visit in December 2022 reporting further progress and positive impact of school improvement activities.**

5.2 **Millbank Primary School staff are committed to working in support of all of their children and families, in partnership across their wider school community in order to lead and implement changes required for maximising pupil successes and achievements. Committee is further invited to commend the work of the Senior Leadership Team and staff across the school in work undertaken to date, leading to confidence by HM Inspectors and Moray Education in their capacity to improve, as they continue on their school improvement journey.**

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager
Background Papers: [Millbank Primary School Progress Report – May 2023](#)
                                  [Millbank Primary School Local Authority Report](#)
                                  [How good is our school? 4th edition](#)
                                  [Education Scotland six-point scale](#)
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-409 / SPMAN-1315769894-408

2 May 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Millbank Primary School
Moray Council

In February 2019 Education Scotland published a letter on your child's school. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement, which we agreed with the school and Moray Council. We published a further letter in February 2022.

As requested, Moray Council has now provided us with a report on the school's progress. The progress report is available at http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file148050.pdf

After reviewing the evidence, we are now confident Millbank Primary School has the capacity to continue to improve and we will publish no further reports in relation to the 2019 Education Scotland inspection report.

Officers from Moray Council will continue to work with the school to ensure progress continues.

HM Inspectors

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND INSPECTION OF FORRES ACADEMY

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the outcomes of the recently published report on a Moray school following inspection by Education Scotland.

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) scrutinise and note the contents of this report and findings of Education Scotland following their inspection visit; and

(ii) note that following a future revisit from Education Scotland (anticipated April 2024), a further paper will be brought to Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee in order to provide update on school progress with improvements required.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 When a school is inspected by Education Scotland and/or the Care Inspectorate a report is published which gives commentary on the school's performance. These reports are presented regularly to Committee, where possible at the first available opportunity after publication.

3.2   In January 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Forres Academy. During their visit, Education Scotland inspectors talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, teaching and wider support staff. Forres Academy was subject to a full inspection model visit spanning over five days in total.

3.3   The Education Scotland Inspection team use selected Quality Indicators (QIs) from "How good is our school? 4th edition" (HGIOS4), rated using Education Scotland's six-point scale.

3.4   Education Scotland focus QIs for the Secondary school (full inspection model inspection) are:

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change
QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment
QI 3.2 Raising Attainment and Achievement
QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

3.5   Inspectors make evaluations of these QIs using the six-point scale. The first three of these QIs feed directly into the evidence base for the National Improvement Framework.

3.6   Full establishment inspections also include focus on Safeguarding and themes from other QIs to ensure Inspectors continue to capture the evidence needed to promote improvement and provide evidence to inform national policy development. These are not assigned a rating and are:

QI 2.2 Curriculum   (Learning Pathways theme)
QI 2.7 Partnerships (Partnerships in evaluating the impact of parental engagement)

3.7   Following ongoing dialogue between Education Scotland and the local authority, Education Scotland published Forres Academy's Inspection Report on 25 April 2023 with the following gradings:

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change   Weak
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment   Satisfactory
QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion   Weak
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement   Weak

3.8   The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- The members of staff, who are working in a way that helps young people to feel included and valued;
- The clubs and activities on offer to young people, which help them to develop a range of skills. The provision at the local college, which helps young people to achieve positive outcomes and skills for life and work.

3.9 The inspection team agreed the following areas for improvement with the Headteacher and Moray Education:

- Improve the strategic leadership of change and improvement across all areas of the school. Leadership at all levels needs to be focussed on improving outcomes for learners;
- Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should focus on meeting the needs of individual learners. Class lessons need to be more engaging and young people should be involved in leading their learning;
- Improve approaches to supporting young people's learning and wellbeing. This includes the planning and review of supports for learning. Young people and their parents should be fully involved in decisions that affect them;
- Improve attainment for young people from S1 to S6. Teachers should track progress at all stages and make sure learner's progress is understood by young people and their parents.

3.10 The Education Scotland Inspection report and summary of inspection findings for the school can be viewed at the links noted. This is the information that is provided to parents and the school showing the findings of Education Scotland:

- [Inspection Report](#) (the brief letter to parents/carers of the school, outlining the key strengths, areas for improvement and evaluation of key QIs using Education Scotland's six-point scale, following inspection visit);
- [Summarised Inspection Findings](#) (an extended summary report providing more detailed evaluative findings on each QI following inspection visit, further to the Inspection Report, used to guide improvement activities);
- [Additional Inspection Evidence](#) (containing pre-inspection questionnaire summary results for questionnaires issued to key stakeholders).

3.11 Following inspection, Education Scotland have advised that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Education Scotland will liaise with Moray Council regarding the school's capacity to improve.

3.12 Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of the inspection letter (anticipated on or around April 2024). Education Scotland will discuss with Moray Council the details of this inspection and when they return to inspect the school they will once again write to parents/carers informing them of the progress the school has made.

3.13 As a result of inspection outcomes, an action plan was developed in order to frame key actions for improvement and structure reporting on progress and impact of changes now required. This was initiated following review of the inspection findings.

3.14 Interim supports were also put in place in order to support initial improvements and add capacity in support of leadership of change required. This included support from a Quality Improvement Officer in order to release senior leaders to work on initial improvement work, on-site support from the Education Support Officer (ASN) due to absence of the Principal Teachers of Support for Learning/Additional Support Needs and additional consultancy support from a senior leader in another Moray secondary school, in relation to wellbeing and pupil support developments.

3.15 An experienced Head Teacher from a neighbouring local authority is providing additional support as a critical friend for school improvement activities, ensuring key actions for improvement are identified and will lead to specific and measurable outcomes. The school has appointed an additional Acting Depute Head Teacher (long term temporary) using devolved budget in order to support identified areas for improvement now required and in order to add further senior leadership team capacity.

3.16 Following HM Inspectors visit to Forres Academy, the Head Teacher accepts the major challenge ahead with a number of identified priorities and is committed to the extensive improvement agenda working with her leadership team, the school community and officers. A rigorous Improvement Plan has been developed to address areas for improvement and will be monitored closely. Since the inspection, the school has posted the strongest School Leaver destinations over a 5 year trend, above Moray and National comparators. There has also been appointment of a number of new staff to start in August, providing a real sense of opportunity for the session ahead. Positive work with targeted groups recognised by HM Inspectors continues, including additional support for pupils from armed forces backgrounds.

3.17 The Quality Improvement Manager linked with the school will continue to provide support and monitor improvements underway, with further oversight from the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer). Where required, further actions will be taken in order to ensure the school achieves key milestones identified as it progresses on its improvement journey.

3.18 The Education Scotland HMIE visit letter published in April 2023 following the visit in January 2023 is contained within **Appendix 1**.

4   SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan with particular regard to (3) provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence and (4) day to day service delivery in line with council values of ambitious, improving and responsive. With regards to the 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan LOIP), (2) building a better future for our children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across our schools; supporting ambitious and confident children, able to reach their full potential.

b) Policy and Legal

It is the duty of the Council to secure improvement and the quality of school education which is provided in schools managed by Head Teachers and to raise standards of education (Section 8 of Standard in Scotland Schools Act 2000).

This report relates to Section 66 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, which concerns the inspection of educational establishments.

c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Financial implications may arise in the event further supports are required over time in order to secure key improvements required over time.

d) Risk Implications

There are no direct risk implications arising directly from this report.

e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

f) Property

None.

g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on school performance following external scrutiny/validation activity.

h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

No climate change or biodiversity implications have been determined due to the scrutiny based nature of activities reported and no findings related to such implications contained herein.

i) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Committee is invited to scrutinise and note the contents of this report, further noting that an action plan is in place with key improvement priorities underway in relation to the January 2023 inspection of Forres Academy. Local authority support and challenge of school improvement activities is ongoing, with revisit by HM Inspectors anticipated in April 2024 and further report to committee on school progress and outcomes to follow thereafter.

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager
Background Papers: Inspection Report
                           Summarised Inspection Findings
                           Additional Inspection Evidence
                           How good is our school? 4th edition
                           Education Scotland six-point scale
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-410 / SPMAN-1315769894-411

25 April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In January 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Forres Academy. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The members of staff, who are working in a way that helps young people to feel included and valued.

- The clubs and activities on offer to young people, which help them to develop a range of skills. The provision at the local college, which helps young people to achieve positive outcomes and skills for life and work.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Moray Council.

- Improve the strategic leadership of change and improvement across all areas of the school. Leadership at all levels needs to be focussed on improving outcomes for learners.

- Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should focus on meeting the needs of individual learners. Class lessons need to be more engaging and young people should be involved in leading their learning.

- Improve approaches to supporting young people's learning and wellbeing. This includes the planning and review of supports for learning. Young people and their parents should be fully involved in decisions that affect them.

- Improve attainment for young people from S1 to S6. Teachers should track progress at all stages and make sure learner's progress is understood by young people and their parents.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? (4th edition)](). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Forres Academy

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	**weak**
Learning, teaching and assessment	**satisfactory**
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	**weak**
Raising attainment and achievement	**weak**
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:
[Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland]()

What happens next?

As a result of our inspection findings we think that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. We will liaise with Moray Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Moray Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Ann Floyd
HM Inspector

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REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To seek Committee approval to review the current policy and adopt this for
future vacancies across Primary schools.

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 considers and agrees the following
options:**

**i) that a full review of the policy to be taken back to a future meeting of
this Committee;**

**ii) a Federation model for Newmill, Botriphnie and Rothiemay Primary
Schools; and**

**iii) to consider a paired headship when a class-committed Head Teacher
post becomes vacant from August 2023**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As part of a review of Leadership and Management arrangements in Primary
Schools in 2016, the Federation Headteacher Policy for Primary Schools was
adopted by the Children and Young People's Services Committee on 22 June
2016 (para 14 of the minute refers).

3.2 As a result of the adoption of this policy and in line with section 2.2, where
there was a vacancy in a schools with fewer than 145 pupils the post of Head
Teacher was advertised as a single post initially and where there was difficulty

in filling the post, a paired headship was considered. Five pairings were put in place across 10 primary schools:

Newmill and Botriphnie (Keith Associated Schools Group)
Rothiemay and Crossroads (Keith Associated Schools Group)
Glenlivet and Tomintoul (Speyside Associated Schools Group)
Knockando and Inveravon (Speyside Associated Schools Group)
Portgordon and Portnockie (Buckie Associated Schools Group)

3.3   Of the 5 pairings, Crossroads primary has been mothballed as well as Inveravon which was considered for closure, with Council approval agreed at the meeting on 24 May 2023 (para 14 of the draft minute refers). The post of paired head teacher has become a normality across Scotland and a viable career path for Head Teachers who have a passion for leading small schools in particular. Research has been undertaken by Aberdeen University at the request of the Northern Alliance and provides evidence of the success of this leadership post within Education (see background papers).

3.4   Appointments to Head Teacher posts in Moray have been historically problematic with many posts being re-advertised multiple times. The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCs) also requires Head Teachers to hold the Standard for Headship by undertaking appropriate qualifications including Into Headship. Appointment on a permanent basis to a Head Teacher post is conditional with candidates requiring to hold a necessary Scottish or equivalent qualification.

3.5   Looking back over this session, 8 Acting HT posts have been advertised 3 of which have been re-advertised with 2 of these still being vacant. Officers had to initiate exigencies of the service for one post with a Depute Head Teacher (DHT) from another school in the Associated Schools Group (ASG) providing support until the post is filled on a permanent basis. Since August 2022, 6 permanent HT posts have been advertised with 3 being re-advertised. Two posts remain unfilled and are currently re-advertised on a permanent basis.

3.6   The currently policy (**Appendix 1**) is in need of review and officers will undertake this and bring full amendments back to a future meeting of this Committee.

3.7   In the meantime, Committee is requested to consider a Federation Headship model in Moray. There is currently a vacancy at Rothiemay Primary School with a roll of 58, which has been advertised on an Acting Head Teacher basis as a secondment opportunity. The current policy requires a post to be advertised permanently prior to moving to a potential joint model. However, in this case, approval is sought for a federation model to be considered for Newmill, Botriphnie and Rothiemay Primary Schools to secure leadership and management across all 3 schools. This would require a new management structure however until this is brought to Committee, an interim position would be to have:

- Head Teacher
- Retain Principal Teachers (PTs) at Rothiemay, Newmill and Botriphnie

3.8 In addition, there are several Head Teacher posts which could become vacant in session 2023/24 and approval is sought from Committee to amend the policy whereby when a school with a roll of 145 pupils or below has a vacancy, a pairing with another school in the ASG is considered initially rather than go ahead to advertise. This is in consideration that 4 Head Teacher posts within primary schools are currently vacant and have been advertised several times with no successful appointment made.

4. **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
There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

(c) Financial implications
The proposed Federation model at Rothiemay will result in:
- Removal of HT at Rothiemay
- Job-sizing of HT for Federation Model
- Introduction of DHT across Federation

Resulting in a net saving across the Federation

However, the detailed work on the costings have not been possible at this stage as the job sizing is not yet completed and so it is not possible to indicate the saving that will be generated. This will be completed as part of the next stage if Committee agrees to proceed with the review of the leadership model.

(d) Risk Implications
The change to policy will reduce the number of Head Teacher posts in Moray however with posts vacant and unfilled the move to federation or additional paired headships will mitigate gaps in leadership and management with existing head teachers providing leadership across more than one school.

(e) Staffing Implications
Removal of HT at Rothiemay and all other staffing the same until updated policy brought back to Committee.

(f) Property
There are no property issues arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
There are no implications arising directly from this report, however, equalities impacts and considerations have been taken into account in the previous deployment of resources to support the Covid impacts and

would be factored into any development of options directed by the committee beyond the budget pressures set out.

(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 Managers, Business Support Team Manager, Head Teachers in the Keith Associated Schools Group 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.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Securing stable and high quality leadership across schools in Moray is a key priority in order to ensure that schools are well led, managed and that the needs of learners are met. With increasing difficulties being experienced in recruiting Head Teachers to small schools, a move to federation models allows opportunities to maintain and continue leadership and management arrangements, whereby posts are hard to fill. This also allows paired Head Teachers a career pathway which does not involve moving to a large primary school.

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross, Head of Education Background
Papers: Northern Alliance Research on Paired Headships
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-404 / SPMAN-1315769894-416

FEDERATION HEADTEACHER POLICY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1   Background and Rationale

In Moray the Senior Management Team in Education and Social Care agrees with the evidence from research that the key to school improvement is the quality of our staff and particularly the development of the skills and talents of our headteachers and teaching staff. In order to allow this development and to ensure it is undertaken in a comprehensive, planned and systematic manner, it is vital that schools have high quality headteachers who are clearly leaders and specifically leaders of learning. We see the paired headteacher, executive or multiple pairing (ie more than 2 school) models as a way of releasing headteachers from an on-going class commitment so that they can lead and focus on their own development and that of their staff, in order to improve the outcomes for children and young people in Moray. Therefore, from a research-based and philosophical standpoint we recommend the federation models. As part of our Schools for the Future Policy, federation models are suggestions when recommending the sustainability of a school for the future.

However, from a pragmatic and practical point of view, we acknowledge that there is a small, but significant, counterweight to the above. As we are a small rural authority with a limited number of staff applying for senior posts, we need to keep options open for those staff who might aspire to senior positions.

As a result of the above we need to be flexible in our approach in order to ensure we have high quality leaders in headteacher posts. Ideally, to strengthen leadership and management in our schools, we aim eventually to have no class-committed headteachers in Moray. The Children and Young People's Services Committee agreed to consider pairings as vacancies arise. Federation models would provide further leadership opportunities with Principal Teacher and Depute Headteacher posts.

When federation models are created the schools will retain their individual identities and operate as single schools where possible. Each will retain its uniqueness with a curriculum, uniform and identity to suit their local context and community. The headteacher may consider and plan opportunities for staff to work together if shared priorities exist across the schools. Joint planning, moderation or assessment practices will provide opportunities for staff to have a stage partner which is not possible within their own school.

It will be at the discretion of the headteacher and in discussion with staff, pupils and each parent council whether joint trips or joint events take place. Each school will retain its own pupil Council and parent Council. These things may evolve as the pairing develops. At the moment each school will retain its own budget. The Schools for the Future Policy recommends one budget across the federation but this will need to be considered when the Devolved School Management Budget is reviewed.

2   Aims and Outcomes

This policy sets out the principles/selection criteria and processes when considering a pairing, executive or multiple pairing model in primary schools under one headteacher.

3   Principles for Federation

A pairing can be considered either when a headteacher post falls vacant or as a result of a recommendation as part of a Schools for the Future Review visit.

Suitability will be determined on the basis of the following:

- A school will only be paired with another school from within its Associated School Group so that the headteacher links with one secondary school.*
- The headteachers in both schools identified for pairing have a class commitment
- The roll projections for both schools identified for pairing are such that the headteachers will remain class-committed for the foreseeable future
- The headteacher in one of the paired schools is non-class committed but the other is class committed and all other schools have already been paired (ie an executive model with a larger school and a smaller school). A separate paper will be required to inform Committee and request authority to proceed or not with the proposal.
- A multiple school model is considered where a pairing already exists in the Associated School group. This would be a federation of up to a maximum of 4 schools. Should this be the case then a separate paper will be required to inform Committee and request authority to proceed or not with the proposal.
- A multiple school model can be considered where 3 or more vacancies exist at one time or there is a vacancy in a paired school and either one or two other schools with headteachers who are either class committed or non class committed
- Where possible the schools considered as a federation model should be relatively close in proximity to each other. This may not be possible in some rural areas.

* The only exception to this would be a denominational school where discussions would include representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.

4   Appointment Processes for Federation Models

4.1   When a vacancy occurs for a class-committed headteacher post, the post should be advertised in the first instance. Should the post not be filled after one advert then possible pairings or executive model will be considered within the Associated Schools Group in the first instance. If a pairing is possible, the initial step will be to offer the remaining substantive headteacher an interview for the paired headteacher post. If the substantive postholder declines the offer of an interview, this will be dealt with under agreed staffing policies of the Council.

Where a substantive headteacher is not successful at interview and not appointed, the post will be subject to appointment via agreed appointment procedures.

4.2   When a vacancy arises for a class-committed headteacher post and a pairing already exists with the Associated Schools Group, consideration should be given to a multiple pairing model with a paper going to Committee with the proposal for agreement.

4.3   If vacancies arise in more than one school in an Associated Schools Group and pairing of these schools meets the selection criteria, this should be advertised as a paired headteacher post.

4.4   Parent participation in appointment processes are dealt with in the Headteacher and Depute appointment policy.

4.5   When a new pairing is created, the Headteacher will liaise with the Business Support Team to advertise and appoint the Principal Teacher posts. This will further enhance leadership capacity across the schools.

4.6   Where an executive model is considered, the Committee paper should outline the leadership arrangements which may include one or 2 DHT posts where appropriate.

5   Consultation Processes for Federation Models

5.1   Once a vacancy arises, the Head of Schools and Curriculum Development, the Business Support Team Manager and Quality Improvement Officer   for the Associated Schools Group should consider federation model arrangements. This should be shared with the Education and Social Care Senior Management Team. If an executive or multiple pairing model is considered, this should result in a paper to Committee providing full information including management structure and requesting approval for this to be considered. If approval is granted by Committee then the following steps would be put into place.

5.2   The Quality Improvement Officer should inform Ward members as well as the Chair and Vice Chair of Children and Young People's Services Committee.

5.3   Where a pairing is considered with a school which has a substantive Headteacher, they will be consulted in the first instance so that they can accept the invitation to interview or decline the opportunity.

5.4   The parent council of each school should be visited by officers so that they can be informed of the proposed pairing or executive model being considered.

5.5   Officers should visit staff in each school to inform them of the pairing and changes to leadership and management arrangements when this goes ahead. Information should be provided about staffing policies and procedures should a Principal Teacher be appointed who is not on the current

staff.

5.6   In order to inform pupils of the new arrangements, children from an existing pairing should visit each school so that they can hear from their peers how the pairing has worked for them. They should be joined by their headteacher.

5.7   Once all consultations have been completed a letter should be sent to all parents/carers/parent council chairs and staff to inform them about the pairing or executive model and when this will take effect.

6   Review Date

This policy will be reviewed as and when required or within five years if no changes have been made by this point.

REPORT TO: **EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023**

SUBJECT: **DEVOLVED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT SCHEME UPDATE**

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

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of progress with the Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme Review, which is part of the Education Reform and School Empowerment agenda.

1.2   This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) 1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   **It is recommended that Committee:**

   i)   **reviews and notes the updated DSM scheme in the context of the revised national guidelines following stakeholder engagement and inter authority peer review; and**

   ii)   **agrees the changes to the funding formulas included in the Moray DSM Scheme.**

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   On 28 August 2019 Children and Young People's Services Committee received a report on Education Reform and School Empowerment (para. 8 of the meeting refers). The Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme enables schools to operate in an empowered framework that allows for the effective management of learning and teaching in a manner that is responsive to local needs, plans and priorities. The Scottish Government (SG) published new guidelines for DSM Schemes in 2019 and Local Authorities were required to comply with the new guidelines, amending their existing schemes where necessary.

3.2   The 2019 guidelines seek to build and improve on the DSM guidelines of 2012 and, critically, reflect and integrate with the Education Reform Programme and priorities emerging from the Scottish Government and

COSLA Education Reform Joint Agreement of June 2018. The guidelines can be found at https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/devolved-schoolmanagement/

4. **SCOPE OF REVIEW IN MORAY**

4.1 The changes in the national guidelines are largely on format and content, seeking a consistent framework and establishing good practice. The detail of individual schemes remains a matter for each authority.

4.2 The guidelines aim to secure consistency of presentation across authorities and establish a common framework and overview of expectations and requirements. This extends to publication, scheme review, training, accounting matters, consultation and engagement, transparency, professional support and staffing.

4.3 A project group consisting of Heads of Service, representatives from primary and secondary schools, central Education teams and the Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) reviewed Moray Council's DSM scheme and found it to be mature in comparison to other local authority schemes, and well embedded since its last update in 2020. There exists a strong culture of trust and respect for the respective needs of schools and the authority, and the current scheme was found to be operating effectively at both school and authority level.

4.4 An updated version of the Moray DSM Scheme has been produced (**Appendix 1**) in line with the updated national guidelines, along with a high level summary of the scheme (**Appendix 2**). Following the change in line management arrangements for early learning and childcare (ELC) settings (now managed by nursery managers), all mentions of nurseries have been removed from the updated DSM Scheme. It should, however, be noted that there may be further implications for the content of the DSM scheme as a result of the ongoing review of business administrative support in schools and as a result of the challenging budget position the council faces for 2024/25 and any new savings would be reported to the Council for consideration during budget considerations if required.

4.5 A key requirement of the revised national guidelines is effective consultation and engagement with parents and partners. Engagement took place with 18 of the 54 Parent Councils in Moray to assess the current level of engagement and to discuss how information about the DSM scheme should be made available to parents. The information gained informed the development of the new version of the Moray DSM Scheme.

4.6 The DSM Guidelines (2019) emphasise the importance of professional learning to support understanding and enhance confidence in DSM, and stipulate that Local Authorities are expected to provide specific training opportunities to individuals who make use of, or may influence, the DSM scheme. Financial training sessions for Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers have been developed and will be offered on a regular basis across

the school year. Professional learning opportunities for other relevant staff will be considered as appropriate.

5.   DSM FORMULA CHANGES

5.1   While reviewing the Moray DSM scheme consideration has also been given to changes required to reflect new management arrangements, or to flexibilities that may impact on the overall budgetary position of the Education service.

5.2   Formula changes that are proposed are as follows:

5.3   Removal of energy costs from the DSM scheme as Head Teachers no longer have full control of energy costs within school buildings as ELC settings are managed separately, and there is community use of the facilities within some schools. Head Teachers would still be required to monitor energy use and highlight any unusual usage to the Energy Officer. The main impact of this change is that it will reduce the overall amount that Head Teachers can carry forward as an under spend from one financial year to the next. The difference is relatively small when considering individual setting budgets; if this had been applied to the 2022-23 budget the overall reduction in the carry forward available across all 54 schools would have been £31,410.

5.4   Reduction in the overspend carry forward limit for Head Teachers from 5% of their overall budget to 2.5% of their budget. The underspend limit is currently 2.5% of the overall school budget.

6.   SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a)   Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)
This report relates to the priority 'Provide a sustainable education service aiming for excellence' from the Corporate Plan and to 'Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray' from the LOIP.

(b)   Policy and Legal
The 2019 Guidelines on Devolved School Management were issued by the Scottish Government under Section 13 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000.

(c)   Financial Implications
The main impact of the amendments is to change the overall amount that Head Teachers can carry forward as an over/underspend from one financial year to the next.

(d)   Risk implications
There is a risk that a reduction in the underspend limit would restrict Head Teacher flexibilities to an extent that they are unable to set aside budget to save for specific projects or more expensive items that would support the delivery of education within their local context.

(e)   Staffing Implications
There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. The temporary post created to support this review project is due to conclude in August 2023.

(f)   Property
There are no property issues arising directly from this report.

(g)   Equalities/ Socio Economic Impact
The revised scheme will offer more accessibility provided through the Moray Council Website, Parents Portal, and school websites. The scheme will also be available in different formats and in different languages (if requested).

(h)   Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
While the budget for energy will sit outside the DSM scheme there will still be an expectation that Head Teachers monitor energy usage and look to reduce usage in line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Head Teachers will maintain their tenant responsibilities and undertake building improvements as required within the landlord/tenant agreement, some if which will support improved energy efficiency. Any investment in major net zero carbon projects would sit outside of the DSM scheme.

(i)   Consultations
The Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Chief Financial Officer, Legal Services Manager, the Business Support Team Manager, , the HR Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, Climate Change Strategy Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

7.   <u>CONCLUSION</u>

7.1.   To inform the Committee of progress with the review of the Moray Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme. Committee is asked to consider the updated DSM Scheme in the context of the revised National Guidelines (2019).

Author of Report: Amy Hartill, Project Officer (DSM)
Background Papers:

- [children and young people's services committee on 30 october 2019, devolving budgets in an empowered school system](#), and
- [children's and young people's services committee on 22 june 2016, devolved school budgets – carry forward.](#)

Ref: SPMAN-9425411-239 / SPMAN-9425411-205 / SPMAN-9425411-206

Cover here

Contents

Part A

The Scheme Introduction

Welcome to Moray Council's Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme.

The DSM Scheme sets out Moray Council's financial processes for funding their schools, how they delegate some financial decisions to their schools, and the accountability and responsibility for these financial decisions.

Background

The Devolved School Management Scheme was first introduced in Scotland in 1993 to enhance and improve the management of resources at school level. The DSM guidelines are issued to Local Authorities by the Scottish Government under section 13 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000. It is then the Local Authoritys' responsibility to update their DSM Scheme in line with the newly issued guidelines.

This scheme has been revised in accordance with the updated DSM guidelines, published in June 2019. It reflects and integrates with the Education Reform Programme and priorities emerging from Scottish Government and COSLA Education Reform Joint Agreement of June 2018.

Introducing Moray

Moray is well known for its outstanding natural resources, affordable housing, world famous coastlines, its great schools, and high standard of living.

The current population of Moray is estimated at 96,410 (NSR2021), with the average population density low at just 43 people per square kilometre, however approximately 57% of the population live in the 5 main towns of Elgin, Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth and Keith.

Moray is home to RAF Lossiemouth, one of the largest and busiest multi-aircraft-type stations in the Royal Air Force, and Kinloss Barracks, the base for the Army's 39 Royal Engineers (Air Support.) Within a decade, MOD investment is said to increase Moray's population by up to 4,000 people. The wider impact on population is significant, with RAF personnel families accounting for 1,919 children (<16 years of age).

The learning estate is spread across 46 Primary schools supporting approximately 6,889 children and 8 secondary schools supporting approximately 5,328 young adults. The needs of most pupils, including those with significant and complex needs, are met within mainstream classes. There is advanced provision in all of the secondary schools and 8 of the primary schools for students with Additional Support Needs (ASN), participate in mainstream education.

Our Children, Our Vision

Moray Council's mission is to remove barriers to learning so that people are more likely to reach their potential, leading to improved health, well-being, employability, and quality of life. Our aspiration is to ensure that Moray is the best place in Scotland for our children and young people to grow up. Our vision is to provide the best possible education and care for Moray's children. Moray Council's core values are: ambitious, fair, responsive, and improving. This vision will be delivered for all children and young adults through the following objectives:

- Raise attainment and achievement for all

- Provide the highest quality learning and teaching delivered by our practitioners

- Review and improve our curriculum in the broad general education and senior phase

- Strengthen our processes for self-evaluation for self-improvement

- Meet the needs of all by supportive learners

- Build practitioner and learner capacity through leadership at all levels.

Role of the Parent Council

We recognise the influence and impact that parents and carers have on their children's learning, and value working in partnership with parents at school level through well-established Parent Councils. The Parent Council has an important role to play in school improvement by ensuring that the parental perspective is represented in their school and taken into account by their Head Teacher.

The Parent Council helps to create an environment where parents feel confident and comfortable putting their views forward. The Parent Council works on

Moray has an estimated population of **96,410**

Low population density of **43** people per km²

Sizable MOD presence with RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks

46 Primary Schools supporting **6,889** pupils

5 main centre of population; , Elgin Forres, Buckie, Lossiemouth and Keith

8 Secondary Schools supporting **5,328** pupils
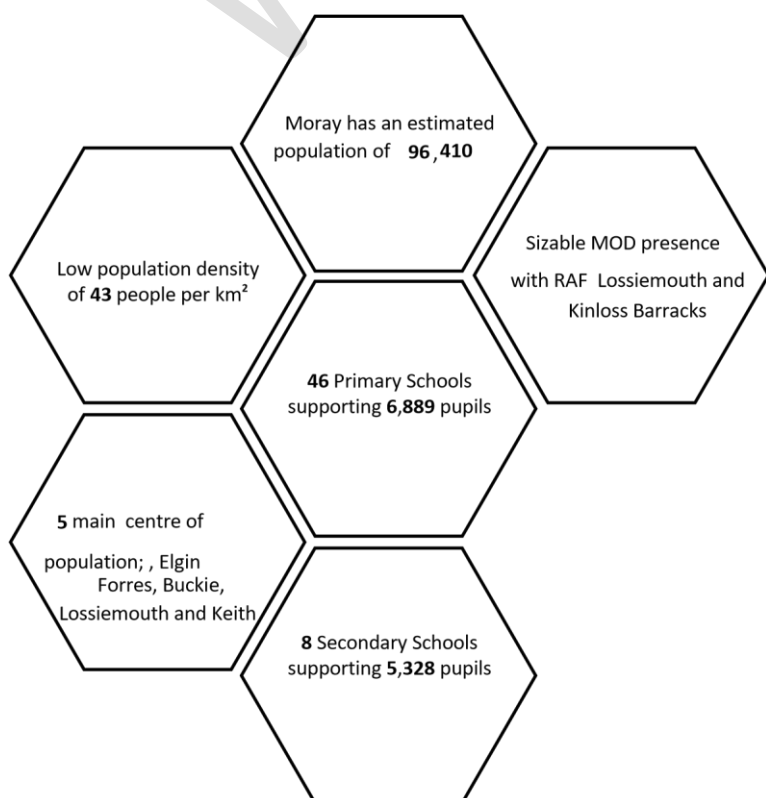
behalf of all parents to discuss educational matters that are important to all. They do not get involved in individual matters relating to children or staff in the school.

Parent Councils are constituted bodies who are independent from the school and the local authority. As an independent body, Parent Councils are designed to be flexible but their main functions are to:

• Work in partnership with the setting or school to decide on the key priorities to take forward;
• Ensure that the setting or school, and learning is the best it can be;
• Provide a voice for parents in settings or schools and in their Local Authority on issues that are important to them;
• Improve the setting or school's understanding of how to engage parents in their children's learning and in the wider life of the school;
• Discuss the setting or school's strengths and areas for development from a parental perspective;
• Gather and represent the views of parents to the Head Teacher, Local Authority and HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE);

• Apply for grants and seek out funding sources.
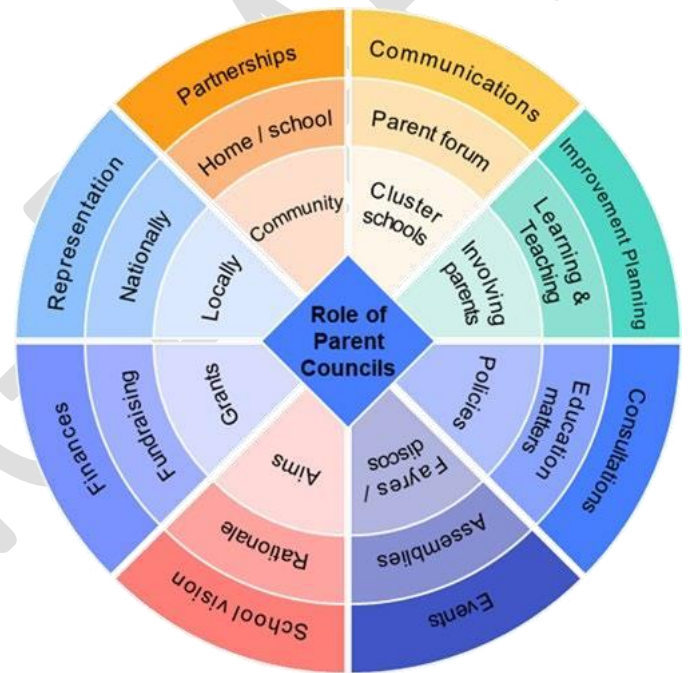
brightly coloured circular diagram displaying the roles of the parent council.

Devolved School Management Overview

Education is a fundamental core service that is delivered locally under the strategic democratic leadership and accountability of councils.

To enhance and improve the management of resources at school level, the Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme was introduced.

The DSM guidance was reviewed in 2006, and again in 2012, taking into account the changing economic and financial climate for both Local Authorities and the Scottish Government. In June 2017 the Scottish Government consulted on changes to the DSM Scheme as part of the wider 'Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education' consultation.

The updated DSM guidelines, published by the Scottish Government in June 2019, seek to build and improve on previous DSM Schemes and critically reflect and integrate with the Education Reform Programme and local financial arrangements and priorities emerging from the Scottish Government and COSLA Education Reform Joint Agreement of June 2018.

The DSM guidelines: https://www.gov.scot/publications/devolvedschool-management-guidelines/

Principles of Devolved School Management

Moray council is committed to delegating responsibility for budget management and decision making to the most appropriate level in the organisation and seeks to ensure that the detailed regulations in its DSM Scheme are consistent with the principles of the 2019 DSM guidelines issued by Scottish Government/ COSLA.

The updated DSM principles, agreed by the Fair Funding Reference Group and building on and enhancing the foundations and principles of the 2012 guidance, are:

- Subsidiarity and Empowerment

- Collaboration

- Accountability and Responsibility

- Clarity and Equity

These principles reflect the National Improvement Framework aims of excellence through raising attainment and achieving equity. The principles also fully endorse those proposed in the Fair Funding consultation:

- Support excellence and equity: ensuring every child and young person has the same opportunity to succeed

- Be fair: placing the needs of all children and young people at the centre

- Be simple, transparent and predictable: ensuring the costs of delivering education can be easily

understood and explained and that schools are able to manage and plan ahead with certainty.

- Deliver value for money: ensuring that every penny spent is used effectively

Budgets within the DSM Scheme are only one part of the overall financial management of the Education Service and it is important to recognise that there is a strong relationship between devolved and non-devolved budgets in maintaining a sound and robust financial strategy for Education Resources.

It is important to also note that the DSM Scheme sets out the rules and principles in which schools operate in normal circumstances. The financial climate is such that it may be necessary to review the Scheme. All schools will be made aware any proposed changes as early as possible with the implications of any proposed changed clearly identified and explained.

Budget Overview

Moray Council's Education and Education Resources & Communities budget makes up around 42% of the overall Council revenue budget. This budget is set and approved each year by the Council.

The following budgets consist of non-school based and school based services:

- Early Years

- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Additional Support Needs (ASN)

- Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
- Moray Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Business Support Team

The above budgets are allocated between the following:

1. Central budgets to support non-school based teams (e.g. Educational Psychology Service)
2. School Level Expenditure non-devolved i.e. those items of expenditure falling out with the scope of the DSM Scheme (managed centrally).
3. School Level Expenditure devolved to Head Teachers which includes the items of expenditure devolved to Head Teachers.

School Level Expenditure Not Devolved

Whilst Head Teachers are given maximum flexibility over their budgets, there are areas of expenditure that are generally not considered suitable for devolvement. The reasons for this may include, but are not limited to, areas of spend that:

- Are outside the influence of a Head Teacher

- Are too bureaucratic

- Have unacceptable levels of risk

- Benefit from economies of scale

- Require professional expertise

- Are complex by their nature

The Scottish Government DSM Guidance would indicate that the following areas of expenditure are generally not considered suitable for devolution in relation to the budget for schools:

- Rent in relation to school premises

- Capital expenditure, including PPP/PFI costs

- Property Insurance

- Non-Domestic Rates

- Statutory Local Authority contracted work on managing the school estate

- Corporate support function costs for example Finance, HR, and Legal functions

- School clothing grants

- Education Maintenance Allowances

- Home to school pupil transport

- Premature retirement costs

- Local Authority Information Management Systems (currently SEEMIS)

- School meals

The following areas require Local Authority determination (with different approaches used within different Local Authorities):

- Waste collection

- Energy costs

- Carbon charges

- Janitorial and Cleaning staff costs

- Central support Services

- Examination fees

- Long Term Sickness Absence

- Family Leave Costs

- Visiting Teachers

- Music Instructors

- Parent Council expenditure

Moray Council has agreed that the following elements of expenditure are more appropriately retained and administered centrally by the Local Authority rather than devolved to schools:

- Waste collection

- Energy costs

- Carbon charges

- Cleaning Contracts

- Cleaning travel and uniforms

- Central Support Services (e.g. Educational Psychology Service, Quality Improvement Team)

- Examination fees

- Long Term Sickness Absence

- Long Term supply cover for Teaching staff sickness

- Family Leave Costs

- Supply cover for Teaching Staff maternity leave

- Supply Cover – other (JPs, Trade Union duties, etc.)

- Visiting Teachers

- Parent Council expenditure (devolved to Parent Councils)

- Repairs and maintenance – Landlord responsibilities

- Elements of Health and Safety

- Education, Communities and Organisational Development Central Services

- Music Instruction Service

- Clothing and Footwear Grants

- Sanitary products

- Grounds Maintenance

- Expenditure supported by Central Government

- Most Redundancy costs
  (Head Teachers should consult with the Business Support Team in relation to their potential liability for any posts created through change management procedures).

- ASN Teacher and Pupil Support Assistants

School Level Expenditure Devolved to Head Teachers

The Moray Council Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme sets out the rules and formulas for the budget calculations for each individual school, and sets out any restrictions on how those budgets may be used. These formulas can be found in Part C of this Scheme.

Like all other service areas within the Council, schools are allocated running cost budgets (also referred to as revenue budgets) for the period of a financial year (1 April to 31 March).

All budgets listed below are seen as being within the direct control and responsibility of the Head Teacher for the purposes of Devolved School Management.

Scottish Government Guidance would indicate that the following areas of expenditure are considered suitable for devolution, in relation to budgets for schools, and are devolved to Head Teachers under the Moray Council's DSM Scheme:

- Employee Costs
    - o Teachers
    - o Supply cover (If a primary school has under 145 pupils in attendance, the first 15 days of sickness cover are funded by the school. All other primary and secondary schools fund the first 20 days)
    - o Clerical staff
  - · Technicians
  - · Janitorial staff (excluding PPP schools)
  - · School support staff.

- Property Costs
  - · Tenant repairs and maintenance (excluding PPP schools)

- · Cleaning materials
- · Rent and rates

- Administrative Costs
  - · Telephones
  - · Postage
  - · Travel
  - · Staff and curriculum development
  - · School resources

In addition, the Scottish Government may award specific grants to schools which are devolved to Head Teachers to be used in accordance with the grant conditions, i.e. Pupil Equity Funding, Gaelic Specific Grant and Scottish Attainment Funding. More information on any grants and funding streams that are not covered in the DSM Scheme can be found at: http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_section/section_2027.html

Breaches of the Regulations

Any Head Teacher who breaches the Scheme's regulations may have devolved management responsibilities and facilities removed. In these circumstances the budget will be managed centrally by the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer) or their representative until such time as the situation is resolved to the satisfaction of the Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), the Chief Financial Officer and, if necessary, Internal Audit.

Part B

Financial Regulations (Copies in all establishments)

General Information on Devolved School Management

The following documents help guide and support Head Teachers to ensure they are empowered to deploy resources in the manner best suited to meeting the needs of learners in their School.

Financial Regulations

As per Moray Council's Financial Regulations , Head Teachers, like all other Council officers, must take reasonable action to provide for the security of the assets/ resources under their control, and are responsible for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, property authorised, provides value for money and achieves the statutory duty to secure best value.

Financial Regulations:
www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file111196.pdf

The Council must also adhere to the requirements of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, and all other relevant procurement legislation. Council officers, including Head Teachers, engaged in procurement activity must comply with the Council's Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations as well as the approved Council Procurement Strategy and Procurement Procedures.

Procurement Strategy:
www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file70120.pdf

All Moray Council employees must comply with Moray Council's Procurement Procedures and failure to comply may result in disciplinary proceedings. The Council's Procurement Procedures are an Operational document and will be updated from time to time by the Payments Manager to reflect relevant thresholds, legislative documents and guidance.

Within the authority's financial reporting system, each Council financial unit is allocated a 5 character identifying element which is used for reporting purposes. The unit is also allocated an individual cost centre code which comprises of 4 digits and which is linked to various 4 digit management centres, providing further analysis. All valid cost centre/ management centre combinations feed up to the 5

character elements. All budgets and related income and expenditure transactions are identified by 5 digit account codes, used along with appropriate cost centre/ management centre combination, which indicate the nature of spend and which are grouped appropriately to form the basis of monthly management accounts.

Each element will have a nominated Budget Manager authorised to act on the Head of Service's behalf in respect of payments, income collection and placing orders. In school establishments this will be the Head Teacher. The Budget Manager is the person primarily responsible for the management of the budget and for all resulting actual expenditure and income. Whilst the Budget Manager may delegate some day-to-day budget operations to other staff, ultimate responsibility remains with the Budget Manager.

Finance ensures that Head Teachers are complying with the Council's Financial Regulations including those set out within the DSM Scheme and advise Head Teachers on the monitoring and operation of devolved budgets.

Moray Council's DSM scheme uses a formula based approach to calculate each individual schools budget allocation. This ensures a fair and equitable distribution of resources.

The formulas are detailed in Part C.

Best Value Principles

All purchasing must take place in accordance with the Council's statutory duty to secure best value under the Local Government in (Scotland) Act 2003. Best Value means choosing a supplier that offers the best balance between the whole life cost (from acquisition to disposal) of goods and services against predefined requirements (which include quality) and this takes into account savings from collaborating with other public bodies and from streaming the procurement process.

'Procurement' is the process followed when purchasing works, goods and services. The term applies to all aspects of the purchasing process, from the identification of a need to purchase, to the end of the contract or useful life of the item.

It is recognised that Devolved Management of Resources (DMR) applies to schools. However the above requirements still apply to all education staff.

Head Teachers are empowered to determine the purchasing requirements for their schools within the budgets devolved to them. Where pre-existing contracts are in place, which cover such requirements, these must be utilised on every occasion in order to ensure best value is being obtained. Head Teachers (and their authorised delegates) will be enabled to place orders under such contracts through the PECOS (Provider Enrolment, Chain, and Ownership System) using external marketplaces and catalogued suppliers. Where there are no pre-existing contracts which meet their requirements, Head Teachers are required to work with the Procurement Team who will provide advice, source or assist in identifying best value recommendations/ options for the required goods, services or works on their behalf.

The Procurement Team will ensure that suitable goods and services are sourced at best value to meet those requirements. They will co-ordinate and consolidate similar requirements across schools wherever possible in order to achieve best value.

Certain purchases can also be made by schools through authorised purchasing card payments. This is subject to agreed limits and categories which are agreed for each card with the cardholder. Such purchases must be made in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions attached to the card's use.

Any queries relating to any aspect of Procurement for Education should be addressed to the appropriate Category Management Officer or the Payments Manager or Assistant Procurement Manager.

Local Authority Commitment to Devolved School Management

Moray Council is committed to delegating responsibility for budget management and decision making to the most appropriate level in the organisation and seeks to ensure that the detailed regulations in its Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme are consistent with the DSM Guidelines published as part of the 'Fair Funding to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education' consultation.

The Council's DSM Scheme has the twin aims of improving local decision making and providing greater flexibility to Head Teachers and those closest to the educational experience of our children and young people in responding to the needs of individual schools.

Although the scheme endeavours to maximise the budget within the control of the Head Teacher some areas of the budget are unsuitable for devolution. These budgets are listed in Part A, Section titled Budget Overview.

Education Scotland – 'How good is our School? 4' (HGIOS?4) provides a national expectation of how Head Teachers will utilise resources to support improvement. School performance in the Management of Resources to promote equity will be evaluated based on the quality indicator (QI) 1.5 and school leadership teams should be familiar with the expectations within the QI. QI1.5 has two themes:

• Management of finance for learning

• Management of resources and environment for learning

Head Teachers are expected to consider the challenge questions in HGIOS?4 (pages 28 – 29) to self-evaluate their current processes to inform improvement. This will be further considered during training sessions to ensure those with budget responsiblity are aware of national and local expectations.

The expectations and challenge questions can be found in section 1.5 Management of Resources to Promote Equity.

Management of Resources to Promote Equity https://education.gov.scot/improvement/ documents/frameworks_selfevaluation/frwk2_ nihedithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdf

Scottish Expenditure within Wider Strategic Planning

School expenditure decisions are made, where possible, closest to the learner and are delegated to Head Teachers and schools in line with the Education Reform Programme.

An empowered system is built on mutual trust, cooperation and highly effective communication. In an empowered system Head Teachers and the Council are partners, each contributing and supporting each other to meet departmental and strategic plans whilst respecting the different role each plays. Decisions about education spending at Council and school level are made in a collaborative and transparent way,

paying due regard to wider responsibilities including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

The Head Teacher is accountable for the leadership and management of financial resources within their delegated budget following consultation with pupils, parents, staff and the wider community and with due consideration of the School's Improvement Plan and Local Authority's Annual Plan.

The Head Teacher's Charter advises that Head Teachers are required to:

• Manage a delegated budget in a fair, equitable and transparent way, supported by the Local Authority and a Devolved School Management Scheme.

• Deploy the school's budget in accordance with best value principles and Local Authority procurement arrangements, with appropriate support and guidance from their Local Authority.

• Play an active role in designing and reviewing recruitment and staffing approaches, both for their own school(s) and for the wider community.

• Be empowered to design a staffing structure which best supports the school's curriculum and leadership requirements, working within their delegated staffing budget and supported by their Local Authority and Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT)/ Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) agreements and guidance.

• Be integral to the appointment of staff in accordance with the best interests of children and young adults, and work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure good practice in recruitment and appointments, in line with SNCT/ LNCT agreements and guidance.

Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers and Local Negotiating Committees for Teachers Agreements

Head Teachers are required to operate within the agreed SNCT terms and conditions for all staff who come under this scheme.

The SNCT handbook: https://www.snct.org.uk

In addition, some terms and conditions are governed by LNCT (local) agreements and there is also a requirement to adhere to these.

Details of local agreements: https://www.snct.org.uk/lnctAgreements.php

Publication

Publication Availability
Moray Council's DSM Scheme is available to view on the Moray Council website.

A link to the scheme will be provided on all available school websites.

Training

Available Training
Within the 'Into Headship' qualification there is a module covering financial governance which includes the DSM Scheme. A copy of the slides can be requested from Finance.

Financial one-to-one training is provided to individual schools by Finance.

Consultation, Engagement, and Transparency

Consultation and Engagement
Consultation is a key element in the process of devolved decision-making. Advice and support from all services within the Council should ensure that decisions are supported by the expertise that resides in the Council as a whole.

A forum to consult on budget and resource decisions (including representatives from Education Management, Head Teachers, Finance, Human Reosurces and relevant Trade Unions) will be established to ensure ongoing consultation and engagement with the DSM Scheme.

Recommendations from this Forum will be taken to the Transform Learning Board and thereafter the Corporate and Senior Management Team and/or Committee as appropriate..

Head Teachers should discuss detailed budget planning directly related to curriculum developments and School Improvement Plans with Principal Teachers and Depute

Head Teachers on an annual basis and consult on appropriate ratios for the distribution of departmental funding. Parents are consulted on School Improvement Plans which in itself directs the spending plans.

Transparency

Full details of Moray Council's budgets are published on the Council website which includes the total budget allocated to Education.

In the spirit of genuine collaboration and consultation Head Teachers should also discuss the budget and their spending proposals with their Parent Council and encourage meaningful discussion.

Head Teachers are expected to ensure that any costs to be met by parents/ carers related to the curriculum are minimised to ensure equality of access. It is recommended that where charges exist for pupils, including extra-curricular activities (school trips, school uniform, etc.) they should be clearly detailed in school information published at the start of the academic session.

Moray Council will ensure that their published DSM Scheme is easily accessible and is written in plain English to maximise engagement and support transparency.

Collaboration

Local Priorities

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its vision with a focus on making Moray a place people choose to live, learn, work and do business.

The strategic priorities are:

- Our People: Provide opportunitiesd for people to be the best that can be throughout their lives with a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination

- Our Place: Empower and support communities to build capacity

- Our Future: Drive economic development to create a virbrant economy for the future

- Creating a sustainable Council that provides valued services to our communities

The Council's Corporate Plan is supported by Departmental Service Plans and Team Plans, all of which detail what we will do to deliver these priorties.

These plans are key documents that provide the basis for how our services and budgets are planned and managed. The plans are monitored on an ongoing basis through our Performance and Improvement Framework (PIF).

Our PIF is focused not just on measuring what we do but on measuring the difference we make in terms of our outcomes.

The performance of schools will be planned and monitored using School Improvement Plans and Standards and Quality Reports.

Improving the wellbeing and attainment of children and young adults is increasingly multi-agency in approach and it is important that decisions are taken with other key stakeholders wherever possible. This will include close collaboration with Health and Social Care and with Partnership Forums to enable them to contribute towards shared agendas and allowing stronger partnership working between schools and wother agencies and stakeholders.

Local Authority decisions about education spending are expected to be made in a collegiate and transparent way, paying due regard to their wider responsibilities, including Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and the role of Local Authorities as Corporate Parents.

Schools are encouraged to pool resources, where appropriate, in order to access a shared service/ resource across a locality and this innovation is encouraged to make best use of resource.

Moray Council Corporate Plan: http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/ file119976.pdf

Children and Young Adult's Service Plan: http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/ file136154.pdf

Staffing

Staffing Structure

Most staffing budgets are devolved under the scheme. The budgets for staff have been broken down into

Teaching and School Support Staff, most of which are allocated on a formula basis.

Head Teachers will continue to appoint and manage employees in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures, and in line with SNCT and LNCT agreements. Head Teachers are expected to empower school communities to consider how best to utilise the resource available to them and to consider the need to amend their staffing structure to better serve local need.

Although the scheme gives greater flexibility for the management of employee budgets, Head Teachers should always consider the wider implications of any proposals, for example, staffing standards, employment rights etc.; and therefore Head Teachers should contact appropriate staff within the Education Central Support Team, who can assist them with any such decisions.

Significant changes to the management structure of a school requires full staff consultation and cannot be enacted by either the Head Teacher or the Local Authority without such consultation.

Legislative and Contractual Requirements

Although staffing budgets are devolved to schools Moray Council remains the employer and all conditions of service continue to be negotiated at national level. Within the DSM scheme, schools must adhere to SNCT/LNCT national and local agreements in areas such as class sizes, staff structures, and teaching time.

Staff Resource

Devolved budgets are issued to schools at the beginning of the financial year and the teaching budget is then adjusted to reflect any change in entitlement from the start of the academic year. This is called a mid-year adjustment and is calculated around October/November each year. Teaching and Support Staff, including Clerical and Classroom Assistant support, are allocated to schools on a formula basis, with the formulas reviewed every two years. ASN Teaching input and Pupil Support Assistant hours are allocated from a central non-devolved budget.

Professional Support

Professional Support teams, functions, and transparency

Head Teachers are supported by central professional teams.

These include:

• Central Education Team
• Education Business Support Manager
• Financial Services including the Procurement Service
• Legal and Regulatory Support
• Human Resources
• ICT and Payroll Services
• Property Officers

Head Teachers should contact the nominated contact within each of the services for guidance and advice.

Accounting

Budget Monitoring Arrangements

Schools will incur expenditure across the financial year either actively (e.g. by placing purchase orders for goods and services) or passively (e.g. by the payroll costs of their in-post staff being processed automatically through the payroll system). The key principle of financial control is that schools should only actively incur expenditure for which they have corresponding uncommitted budget.

Schools are issued with monthly budget monitoring reports showing spend to date, budget allocated to date and annual budget. They are also supplied with detailed monthly payroll reports showing cost details of all staff being charged to their budgets. In addition, all schools have access to the Council's financial reporting system, to identify the transactions which underlie any accounting total.

Head Teachers are assisted by a Finance Contact (Financial Services) throughout the financial year for regular budget monitoring and to help them identify, explain, and resolve any significant differences between actual and budgeted expenditure. The budget for staffing and premises costs will be profiled centrally by Finance staff, based on the expected pattern of actual expenditure.

The comparison of year-to-date actual expenditure against year-to-date budget can be a useful indicator of whether progress is on target or whether any intervention is required. This is particularly the case where the profile of expenditure can be accurately assessed from the outset (as in the case of permanent staff). Year-to-date information on its own however can be of limited value, or even misleading, unless one also takes account of what is likely to arise in the remainder

of the financial year. It is for this reason that budget monitoring in Moray Council now focuses primarily on each budget holder's assessment of the
year-end outturn position (forecast of their estimated year end position).

Part C

Detailed Formulas for Budget Allocation

Note: Admin costs are the subject of an ongoing review and there may be a change as a result of the outcome of that review, which will require an alteration to the DSM Scheme formulas

Primary Devolved School Budget

Fte = Full Time Equivalent

Employee Costs – Teaching

Probationary funding = Probationary funding fte x unpromoted minimum basic scale

Supply Teachers = 1.125% of core fte x Maximum Basic Scale

Employee Costs – Non Teaching

SJC Admin Support:

APTC = 0.275 x Grade 5 (47.27 weeks) +(Y hrs x core fte x
Grade 5 hourly rate) + (Z hrs x Roll (incl. ESF count) x Grade 5 hourly Rate)

Where $Y = 14.4$

Where $Z = 5.245$

Lunchtime/Playground Supervisors:
Supervisors – Allocation based on school roll for 46.09 weeks at Grade 2.

Roll	Playground Supervisor Hours	Lunchtime Supervisor Hours	Total Hour
0-70	7	7.5	14.5
71-100	7	15	22
101-200	1	23	30
201-350	7	30	37
351-450	7	35	42
451 +	7	40	47

Classroom Assistants
Allocation based on school roll as seen on the table below where 1fte = 25 hours per week for 46.09 weeks at Grade 2.

Roll	Classroom Assistants	Total Hours
1-19	1	25
20-144	0.5	12.5
145-198	1	25
199-279	1	25
280-387	1.5	37.5
388+	2	50

SJC Technicians
Janitors – Budget per agreed staffing level

Employee Cost Super/NI

Employee Cost Super/NI	No carry forward
Superannuation	% of salary costs
National Insurance	% of salary costs
Teaching Superannuation	% of salary costs
	% of salary costs
Teaching National Insurance	

Property Costs Devolved

Rents and Rates:

Based on actual costs   No carry forward

Repairs and Maintenance:

Allocated a fixed basic amount plus additional allocation based on roll numbers and area of the school:

Budget = £J+ £KX + £LY

Where

J   = 250
K   = 2
L   = 1.1

X   = Roll Number Y
         = Area of School

Cleaning Materials:

Budget = £M + (£N x roll (Primary))

Where

M = 51.25 N = 2.35

Supplies and Services

Equipment and furniture:

Budget = £P + (£Q x primary roll)

Where

P = 211.00 Q = 1.50

Travel and Plant – Devolved

Travel:

Weighted amount per school + (E x core fte)

Where

E   = 20.0

Administrative Costs – devolved

Telephones:

Basic allocation contributed towards line rental and alarm costs plus an amount per pupil to cover call charges and maintenance contracts

Budget = £A + (£B x Roll (Primary))

Where

A = 360 B =2.29

Postages:

Basic allocation plus an amount per pupil

Budget = £C + (£D x primary roll)

Where

C   = 90
D   =0.35

Curriculum and staff development:

Budget = F (fixed amount per school) + (G x core FTE)

Where

F = 200 G =90

School Resources:

Basic allocation plus an amount per school

Budget = £I + (£H x Primary roll)

Where

H   = 25.21
I   =1059.43

ASN Per Capita:

Budget = £J x ASN Teaching FTE

Where

J   = 310

Salary Scale Point	Staffing Point
7	136
8	141
6	132

Secondary Devolved School Budget

Employee Costs Teaching:

Total staff points calculation by formula 1235.2 + (6.1062 x roll)

NB: Changes in school roll will directly impact the total staff points available.

Staff points converted to salary applicable to scale points utilised.

Promoted Staff:
Points utilised based on fte and grade of promoted staff in post

Unpromoted Staff:
fte = (Total staff points – staff points utilised for promoted staff)/100

NB If, as a result of job sizing, changes are made to promoted staff grades, this will have a direct impact on the unpromoted staff budget available.

Unpromoted salary budget = fte x Maximum Basic Scale

Subject to adjustment to reflect actual salaries of staff in post Unpromoted Teachers:

Salary Scale Point	Staffing Point
All	100

Principal Teachers:

Salary Scale Point	Staffing Point
1	109
2	114
3	118
4	123
5	127

Salary Scale Point	Staffing Point
1	124
2	127
3	132
4	136
5	140
6	144
7	149
8	153
9	157
10	161
11	168
12	175
13	182
14	189
15	199
16	210
17	220
18	231
19	241

Depute and Head Teachers:

Probationary Teachers:

Budget = Probationary funding fte x Probationer teacher salary

Supply Teachers:
Budget = 1.5% of core fte x Maximum Basic Scale (MBS)

Employee Costs SJC

Admin Support:
Budget = 1 Grade 8 + 1 Grade 4 + X hrs x (Roll + ESF count) x Grade 3 hourly rate

Where X

= 7.94

SJC Technical:
Janitors – Budget based on agreed staff complement

Technicians
– If roll   >599, (3 x Gd6) + (1.44 hrs x Gd 3 hourly rate x roll)

≤599, (2 x Gd 6) + (3 hrs x Gd 3 hourly rate x roll)

Librarians
– If roll   >599, 0.6 fte at Gd 8
≤599, 0.4 fte at Gd 8

Employee Costs Super/NI

Employee Cost Super/NI	No carry forward
Superannuation	% of salary costs
National Insurance	% of salary costs
Teaching Superannuation	% of salary costs
Teaching National Insurance	% of salary costs

Property Costs Devolved

Rents and Rates:
Based on actual costs – No carry forward

Repairs and Maintenance:
Allocated a fixed basic amount plus additional allocation based on roll numbers and area of the school:

Budget = £A + £BX + £CY

Where

A = 1250

A   = 4.0
B   = 1.1
X   = Roll Number
Y   = Area of School

Cleaning Materials:
Basic Allocation per school plus an amount per pupil.

School with Community Facilities have been allocated a fixed amount in addition of £200

Budget = £A + (£B x Roll)

Where

A = 50

B = 0.96

Supplies and Services

Equipment and furniture:
Budget = £A x Roll

Where

A = 8.70

Travel and Plant – Devolved

Travel:
Budget = £A + £B x FTE

Where

A = Fixed weight amount per school
B = 20

Administrative Costs – devolved

Printing:
Budget = £A + (£B x Roll)

Where

A = 220 B = 0.3

Stationery:
Budget = £A + (£B x Roll)

Where

A = 220 B = 0.3

Telephones:
Basic allocation to be contributed towards line rental and alarm costs plus an amount per pupil to cover call charges and maintenance contracts

Budget = £A + (£B x Roll)

Where

A = 660 B = 6.05

Postages:
Budget = £A + (£B x Roll)

Where

A = 500 B = 1.35

Curriculum and staff development: Budget = £A x FTE

Where

A = 200

School Resources:
Budget = (£A x Pupil Roll) + B

Where A = 70.599

B = 3000

ASN Per Capita:
Budget = £A x ASN Teaching FTE

Where

A = 310

Cover

What is the Devolved Management Scheme?

Moray Council's Devolved School Management (DSM) Scheme is a set of guidelines and formulas that determine how much funding a school receives to deliver the very best for Moray's children and young adults and their families through our 46 primary schools and 8 secondary schools.

The DSM is designed to

- Be fair to all
- Provide equal opportunities for all schools to be successful
- Be clear and transparent in how financial decisions are made by the school leadership team
- Deliver value for money

Why have guidelines changed recently?

The Scottish Government issued updated guidelines in 2019 and asked local authorities to review and update their schemes by August 2022.

The new guidelines require Local Authorities DSM Schemes to be easier to understand for everyone in the learning estate and for Head Teachers to listen to the views of pupils, staff, parents and local councillors before making decisions about how they spend their funding to improve the educational opportunities of all children and young people in their schools.

How often is the DSM Scheme reviewed?

The DSM Scheme will be reviewed every 3 years by a 'working group' which will include representatives from schools, central education, finance, human resources and trade unions. Every 3 years the DSM Scheme will be reviewed by another Local Authority who may make suggestions for improvement.

If there are big changes to the Council budget allocation or policy decisions that impact on the DSM Scheme, it may be necessary to review it sooner that every 3 years.

How is a school budget set, and how often?

Moray Council sets its budget annually, taking effect from April 1st.

The Councils annual budget is broken down into many different sectors, one of which being the Education Service. Using the DSM Scheme guidelines and formulas, the Education Service budget is divided to create individual school budgets. This is based on number of pupils and classes, as well as factors such as free school meal entitlements.

Generally, over 90% of the funding a school receives will be to pay for the cost of employing staff. This leaves less than 10% of the total funding to pay for class resources, materials, and other costs associated with running the school identified in the DSM Scheme.

It should be noted that the financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March, but the school academic year runs from August to July. Schools need to consider this when planning their staff recruitment as, for example a contract for a teacher for the full academic year, August to July will be paid for over two different financial years.

Primary and Secondary school budgets have the same guidelines but the way the budgets are used can be different:

- In Primary Schools the budget is calculated based on the entitlement for a teacher for each class for the full week. This will be more than one teacher cost due to teachers having planning and preparation time. The staffing costs are likely to be greater than 90% of the total school budget allocation. A budget for educational resources is based on the number of pupils at the school.
- In secondary schools the budget is calculated based on the pupil number and from this budget the school has to pay for both staffing and resources costs. The Head Teacher and senior leadership team decides on the staffing structure required to meet the timetable in place of management needs of the school each year. This can change each year depending on the number of pupils at the school and the subject choices made by pupils. The budget on staffing is likely to be greater than 90% of the total budget allocation. The remainder of the budget after staffing costs have been taken into account to meet the costs of educational resources, for example text books, jotters, paper, photocopying and printing costs, art, science and technology materials and cooking ingredients, and sports equipment. Secondary schools do not pay directly for energy costs or many of the building maintenance and running costs, such as cleaning and janitorial services which are met by a separate contract arrangement that schools do not meet from their budget allocation.

Role of parent council in relation to the DSM Scheme

Under the DSM Scheme, Head Teachers are required to provide Parent Councils with funding information, budget updates, plans and priorities throughout the year, and to discuss how their approach meets their School Improvement Plan objectives. It is the role of the Parent Council to share this information with parents/ carers via Parent Council meeting minutes.

What does DSM Scheme funding pay for?

The DSM Scheme provides funding for staff- wages including; taxes and pension contributions, property costs, and educational supplies and services needed to deliver teaching and learning for pupils. This will include items such as pencils, paper and jotters, text books, calculators, art and craft materials, PE equipment. It also includes funding for running the school (known as overhead costs) for resources such as phones and photocopying machines, soap and paper towels.

What does the council pay for?

Some costs are not considered suitable to be devolved and are met centrally by the Council's Education Service. These include services such as school meals, home to school transport, energy costs, and waste collection.

Specialist education services may be provided via a shared centralised team with particular areas of professional expertise such as Instrumental Music Instructors, Educational Psychologists, and Learning and Behaviour Support Teams. This approach is a more efficient use of such staff than provision to each individual school, as they may only be needed by the school for a few hours a week or less, but across all the schools the hours add up to a full or part-time role.

In addition, some external services like the computer system that manages pupil data are paid for centrally for all schools under one contract, rather than every school having to manage a separate contract. Buying this service on behalf of all schools helps the council to keep the costs of the service lower and getting the Best Value from this resource while making sure every school receives the same level of service.

What is Best Value?

Best Value is the term used to describe the legal duty for Local Authorities, such as Moray Council, to ensure that all public money is used to achieve the best possible outcomes for the public. Best Value is a key principle of the DSM Scheme. In the case of Educational Services and Schools, this means that all funding must be spent in line with council financial and purchasing guidelines to deliver the best education possible for all pupils from the resources available.

Where can I access the full version of the DSM Scheme?

Moray Council will update and publish their DSM Scheme in full online at
http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file135058.pdf

Head Teachers should also arrange for their school DSM budget to be published on the school website and inform parents and other interested parties when it is available.

REPORT TO: EDUCATION CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
             COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF EDUCATION FUNDING

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

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To update the Committee on allocation of the funding for Education in the 2023/24 revenue grant settlement and to ask the committee to consider the allocation of the funding taking account of these issues.

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 determines the future use of the funding of £706K referred to in the report and agrees:

   i)   there be no new spend against the funding and it is applied to cover budget pressures, in particular those arising from the increasing school roll or the emerging ASN requirements referred to in the report; or

   ii)   the funding is used on a temporary 12 month basis (to July 2024) to enable a saving to be considered at that time; or

   iii)   the funding is used on a permanent basis.

2.2   If the Committee agrees to retain the budget for use within the service, it is recommended that Committee agrees the following options:

   i)   to amend the Devolved School Management Scheme formula for primary schools so that the Head Teacher is non-class committed

at a roll of 121 and above at a cost of £103,000, for schools without an enhanced provision

ii) **to amend the Devolved School Management Scheme formula for primary schools so that Head Teachers are class committed for 2 days at a roll of 95-120 at a cost of £45,000, for schools without an enhanced provision.**

iii) **to amend the Devolved School Management Scheme formula for enhanced provision primary schools so that the Head Teacher is non-class committee at a roll of 90, this currently has no cost implications.**

iv) **to provide funding for one PT raising attainment for each secondary school at a cost of £558,000 and**

v) **the remaining budget £41K should be used to partially fund the extension of the PT Flexible Education for a further year**

3. BACKGROUND

Funding and Use to Date

3.1 In August 2020 the Scottish Government provided additional funding to local authorities to increase teacher numbers by 1,000 and pupil support assistants by 500 across Scotland through the General Revenue Grant. Moray's allocation of this funding was £0.87m which equates to 17 teachers and 9 pupil support assistants. The Scottish Government updated funding purpose was, however, wider around support for Education in 2021. A report was taken to this Committee on 26 January 2022 (para 15 of the minute refers) providing detail of the funding and options for spend as laid down in the recommendations of the report. The funding is no longer ring fenced for teachers however Scottish Government do expect local authorities to maintain teacher numbers.

3.2 A further report was taken to this Committee on 9 March 2022 (para 12 of the minute refers) to update on the allocation of funding for Education in the 2022/23 revenue grant settlement. A number of options were discussed by Committee and it was agreed to request 21 Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) across Primary and Secondary and officers were instructed to do this along with the annual return to Scottish Government. In addition to this a Principal Teacher (PT) of Flexible Education was created for one year to progress the Flexible Education policy and to review the extent of children and young people on part-time timetables.

3.3 The funding was provided in order to support local authorities to maintain teacher numbers. Moray had 960 teachers in the census in September 2022 and will need to maintain that number in session 2023/24. This included the 21 NQTs noted above and additional free NQTs (see para 3.9 below) – An element of General Revenue Grant has been held back from distribution and

will be distributed in March 2024, dependent on teacher numbers being maintained, pupil support staff numbers being maintained and places are available from probationer teachers through the probationer teachers scheme. All three conditions must be met. The level of funding retained for Moray is £769,000.

3.4   It should be noted that the overall school roll in primary for session 23/24 is reducing and the anticipated staffing allocations based on those projected rolls are in line with this decrease. From current staffing of 357.76 full time equivalent (FTE) from the staffing formula, it is anticipated to reduce to 351.9 FTE. Over and above this formula related allocation however are the additional free NQTs which Moray has been allocated. In secondary schools, rolls are increasing and schools are staffing to support this increase but have not been able to appoint in a number of cases and have not received all the NQTs that they have requested. In primary and secondary the total number of NQTs allocated to the authority has fallen as per the allocations in 3.7/3.8. Therefore, teacher numbers will require careful monitoring.

Proposals

3.5   As NQT positions are temporary, current appointments will terminate at the end of June 2023 releasing the funding for consideration of alternative use. Therefore, this paper provides proposals for Committee to consider how the funding will be used, either on a permanent basis or if otherwise minded to consider a further temporary option for an additional year or, given the current financial climate, whether to applying the funding to budget pressures. In particular those that were agreed in the Council budget in March 2022 as being related to the increasing school roll for financial year 2023/24 (£700k), which would in effect give a saving against the budget approved in March 2023, or the emerging pressures as a result of increasing numbers of children with additional support needs, which will be reported to the Council in June as a result of the annual review of need and realignment of resources.

3.6   Service self-evaluation evidence has been reviewed which highlights an increase in additional support needs and behavioural needs resulting in an increase in the number of children in child's planning as well as the need to further improve attainment and achievement of learners. Currently Head Teachers of schools without an enhanced provision are non-class committed when the roll is 145 and above, the proposal is to reduce this to 121 and above. Self-evaluation evidence from schools informs us that the majority of schools are rated as satisfactory or less for the main Quality Indicators. The role of a Head Teacher is to lead school improvement which is a very difficult task when they are class committed for half of the week. To drive forward improvements in learning and teaching, curriculum, empowered leadership and attainment for children, they need to undertake class visits and monitor children's progress, which cannot be completed if they are teaching. During Covid, additional teaching posts were allocated to schools to enable the Head Teacher to be non-class committed so that they could lead and manage Covid mitigations. This was extremely successful hence why the proposal to look create time to lead school improvement to support colleagues who are class committed. Looking at primary school rolls for August 2023, 3 primary

schools will meet the new threshold. It is also proposed to reduce the class commitment of Head Teachers in schools with no enhanced provision and a roll of between 95 and 120 from three days to two. Projected rolls suggest that rolls will rise and so this provides leadership continuity and capacity at this time to focus on school improvement activity.

3.7 Additional capacity was provided to the system during the pandemic and the positive impact of an additional whole school Principal Teacher (PT) post in secondary was starting to demonstrate improvements for individual and groups of learners. Head Teachers had identified attainment/ achievement /inclusion/transition as key priority areas however as the funding was temporary the posts ceased. Post pandemic attendance is variable across secondary schools with percentages dropping significantly and with more regular absence. It is proposed to reinstate the additional PT post in each secondary school to target learners for a variety of reasons depending on school context and add much needed capacity. In addition, this will also allow each school to look at the proposed model for senior phase qualifications in line with the Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland, Interim Report which has just been published. It is also proposed that any balance in funding be targeted at secondary schools with a roll of 600 or more as part of their staffing points to support current issues with behaviour and ASN vacancies and impact of ongoing review.

3.8 Secondary Head Teachers have been consulted and contributed to the development of the recommendations taking account of their assessment of the circumstances and needs in their individual schools and collectively across Moray. The recommendations for changes to primary school linear formulae align with the Covid support put in place and acknowledges the challenges certain schools face at this time.

3.9 It is incumbent on the Council to maintain teacher numbers which are set at 960 in line with the annual census figure as at September each year. This has been possible due to additional allocation of NQTs. In this session (2022/23) Moray was allocated 97 NQTs in total, some fully funded and some as additional free places from Scottish Government although only 74 remain as some left or have failed their placements. Twenty one of the NQTs were funded through the additional funding in this report. At the time of writing this report Moray has been allocated 67 NQTs for next session however this will not be the final figure as there will be fails, drop outs for various reasons including not wishing to come to Moray or opting for the alternative route to teaching by accepting a full time position in a school/authority where they will not be supported. If we experience the same percentage drop out rate as this current session of 24%, it would reduce our current allocation to 51 which would jeopardise our ability to meet teacher number commitment.

3.10 In considering the recommendations of this report, given the financial position of the Council at this time Committee may be minded to consider applying the funding to cover budget pressures, in particular those arising from the increasing school roll, which were agreed in March 2022 budget report to the Council and included in the budget set on 1 March 2023. However, as noted

above the funding to date has been used for additional posts and so there is a risk that applying to budget pressures would result in a reduction of teacher numbers and the Council's grant settlement from Scottish Government is conditional on teacher numbers being maintained.

3.11 Furthermore, given the recommendations of this report as well as the financial position of the Council and including the uncertainty around maintaining teacher numbers with further NQTs being allocated for another year, Committee may be minded to agree the recommendations temporarily to allow the teacher number issue to settle and resolve whilst also giving an option for future saving if required. This will provide time to look at a solution to link data systems in Human Resources and Education where teacher posts are recorded and ensure these align to give accurate figures.

4. **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**
There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

(c) **Financial implications**
The financial figures presented in this report do not include any pay awards for this year. Teacher pay awards have now been agreed up to January 2024 and will be reviewed in future for August each year instead of April.

The proposals set out in this report will be contained within current budget £747,000 with no additional finance required.

The cost of the additional positions are below.

Non class commitment roll of 121 and above 1.62 fte	£103,000
Class committed 2 days roll 95 -120 0.7 fte	£45,000
PT Raising Attainment for each secondary 8 fte	£558,000
Balance to secondary schools of 600 and above	£41,000

The funding is included within the Council budget. Use of the funding is not prescribed and it could be used to alleviate pressure from school roll numbers.

(d) **Risk Implications**
If primary Head Teachers remain class committed there is a risk regarding ability to drive forwards improvements and to monitor learning and teaching and track attainment. The additional posts in secondary

were beginning to show impact, particularly on attainment and supporting young people who required alternative timetables and so there is a risk in terms of capacity if these posts do not go ahead.

There is also a risk that as the funding for teaching and support roles continues to increase nationally that demand for employees outstrips supply. The Education and Human Resources services will work together to develop and update a workforce plan to ensure effective arrangements and monitoring are in place to manage this risk.

There is a risk that the Council loses £769,000 funding if conditions regarding teacher etc. numbers are not met.

(e) Staffing Implications
The proposals for additional staffing would equate to 10.32 FTE across Primary and Secondary schools as follows:

2.32 FTE in Primary to cover HT class commitment.
8.0 FTE principal teachers of raising attainment in Secondary.

(f) Property
There are no property issues arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
There are no implications arising directly from this report, however, equalities impacts and considerations have been taken into account in the previous deployment of resources to support the Covid impacts and would be factored into any development of options directed by the committee beyond the budget pressures set out.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
None

(i) Consultations
The Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Chief Financial Officer, Head of HR, ICT and OD, Quality Improvement Managers, Secondary Head Teachers and Primary Head Teachers of Pilmuir, Burghead, Mortlach, Hopeman, 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.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Improving outcomes for Moray's children and young people is a key focus for the service. In addition, Education is in a period of reform with the full outcome of the National Discussion in Education awaited along with the initial findings of the Hayward Review - The Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment in Scotland – Interim Report just

being published in March 2023 for consideration. From here on there will be a period of consultation on any proposed approach along with practical steps to any model to be put in to practice. As a result secondary schools will benefit from additional capacity so that they are prepared for this radical reform. This paper also takes account of the impact of those primary schools which are on the cusp of the number which requires the Head Teacher to be class committed, providing additional staffing to provide them with time to lead and manage their schools on their improvement journey. It is proposed that Committee agrees the recommendations.

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross, Head of Education Background
Papers: Hayward Review Interim Report
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-400

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
             COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY UPDATE AND GUIDANCE

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

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To inform the Committee of the publication of the Cost of the School Day guidance to all Educational establishments following the collaborative work that was undertaken by the Cost of the School Day Project Workers, with schools across Moray.

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 Education Authority.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   It is recommended that Committee:

   i)   considers and notes the progress to date to reduce the cost of the school day; and

   ii)   notes the Guidance that has been produced as a result of collaborative work with Educational establishments that will be used to support ongoing work in schools to continue to reduce the cost of the school day.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   Since 2014, Child Poverty Action Group Scotland (CPAG), a registered charity, has worked with schools and local authorities across Scotland in a range of ways including direct work with schools, training, resource development and practice gathering and sharing. The work initially undertaken by CPAG was funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge funded by the Scottish Government and is based on the successful 3 year project delivered in Dundee schools (as they were a Scottish Attainment Challenge Authority).

3.2 To expand the Cost of the School Day (CoTSD) project to rural areas in Scotland, the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) submitted a bid to The National Lottery Community Fund. They were successful with their bid and Moray was selected due to work already started. Moray had access to two CoTSD project workers who worked closely with individual schools and officers.

3.3 The number of children living in relative poverty in Moray is recorded at 23%. Poverty means, stress, pressure, difficult choices and exclusion from everyday activities for some pupils. This includes being able to access every opportunity on offer at school without causing financial stress for families. The guidance supports schools to remove and reduce costs for families to access education.

3.4 In Moray, the appointed CoTSD project workers engaged with all schools through presentations at Head Teacher meetings and other various twilight opportunities. They worked directly with 8 schools (5 primary and 3 secondary) on projects to support each individual school to develop an action plan to reduce the cost of the school day within the context of the school setting and community. These individual projects and the valuable information and data obtained also supported the CoTSD project workers in producing a comprehensive guidance document to support all schools to engage in tackling poverty through reducing the Cost of the School Day.

3.5 As part of the Children's Services Plan and to support this work an Education Poverty Steering Group was put in place, which in turn linked with the Fairer Moray Forum and the Fairer Moray Forum Action Group.

3.6 In Moray, insight was gathered through the voices and experiences of pupils and families across five primary schools and three secondary schools. Some secondary subjects incurred additional costs to parents including Technical, Home Economics and Art and Design. The Scottish Government provided grant funding to local authorities to support them in reducing these costs to families, whilst schools continued to look for alternative ways to continue reducing the costs after the grant funding ceased. Secondary schools continue to look for innovative ways to reduce these costs, including developing links with local businesses.

3.7 During the consultation 1,562 pupils, over 200 parents and over 100 schools staff participated in a variety of questionnaires and workshops. The consultation explored a wide variety of costs including uniform, school trips, access to learning resources and fun events at school.

3.8 The data, feedback and information gathered has not only formed the Guidance **(Appendix 1)** but the eight schools participated in local and national online events in October 2022 to share good practice in addressing Cost of the School Day and the positive impact it has had on shaping the individual school Curriculum Rationales.

3.9 The final draft of the Cost of the School Day Guidance for schools, written by the CoTSD project workers, was completed in February 2023.

3.10 The next steps are to:-

- Issue an electronic copy of the Guidance to schools by the end of June 2023 to support them as they plan for all learners.
- For schools to use the Guidance to identify ways to continue to reduce the cost of the school day for their context and setting.
- For schools to use the Guidance to support individual families, children and young people who are requiring addition sources of financial support.
- To use the Guidance to support schools as they continue to work on their Rights Respecting School Awards. This will continue to be reviewed and updated and good practice will be shared across Moray.
- Continue to share good practice across schools through online events.

4. 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 the 10 Year Plan and the Poverty Strategy.

(b) Policy and Legal
The Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill is an Act of the Scottish Parliament to set targets relating to the eradication of child poverty; and to make provision about plans and reports relating to the targets.

The Moray Poverty Action Plan 2018-2021which incorporates the statutory requirements of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act and the local implementation of *Every Child, Every Chance.*

(c) Financial implications
There are no financial implications.

(d) Risk Implications
There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications
There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) Property
There are no property issues arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on legislation change.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
None arising directly from the report.

(i) Consultations
Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Head of Education Resources and Communities and Tracey Sutherland, Committee

Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

5. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

5.1 That the Committee scrutinise and note the contents of this report.

Author of Report: Susanne Campbell, Quality Improvement Officer
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-402 / SPMAN-1315769894-403

Cost of the School Day
Guidance for Moray schools

"Of course, you are not going to feel great at school, if you are constantly worrying about money and being found out." (Moray pupil)

Introduction from Moray Council Education

"The Cost of the School Day project has been delivered over the past three years across ASGs in Moray, to support schools and ELCs in identifying ways in which the impact of poverty upon children and young people can be reduced to allow greater equity of opportunity, support raising attainment, increase in school and wider achievement, support improved attendance and enhance the life chances of children and young people beyond their formative educational years.

The Cost of the School Day guidance has been developed to specifically to support those who work and volunteer in schools and ELCs across Moray, to enable them to reflect on how poverty impacts on the children and young people in their care and what effective measures can be undertaken to reduce this and implement changes into school and ELC policy, practice and guidance, with the anticipation of opening up new and better life opportunities for all. It is also anticipated that the Cost of the School Day guidance, when more fully understood in the context of each individual child or family situation will also maximise the potential of mitigating the worst effects of child, family and community poverty.

This guidance is linked to the **Supporting All Learners** strategy and closely fits with the wider **Moray Council Poverty Strategy,** Priority 3 of the **Children's Service Plan** and the **National Improvement Framework** as well as the fundamental purpose of the **Pupil Equity Funding** and **Scottish Attainment Challenge** monies."

Kathleen Robertson

Leader of Moray Council
Chair of Education, Communities and Organisational Developments

Vivienne Cross

Head of Education (Chief Education Officer

1

Purpose of guidance

Removing cost barriers at school and ensuring that all children and young people can participate and learn is key to achieving greater equity in our schools. This guidance is intended to give all Moray schools a clear understanding of what to consider when delivering Cost of the School Day approaches and interventions in their settings.

Drawing on research with 1562bchildren and young people and 200 parents in Moray schools,[1] this guidance sets out:

1. Taking a Cost of the School Day approach
2. Problem costs throughout the school day, good practice to reduce them and key questions to consider in your establishment
3. Funding sources
4. Ongoing support from Moray Education
5. Further information and resources.

> You can hear about the main Cost of the School Day Moray findings and from schools reducing costs and supporting learners in this online learning event for practitioners.

1. Taking a Cost of the School Day approach

1.1 Poverty awareness and understanding

"Cost of the School Day is something I consider when planning anything with potential cost implications." (Moray teacher)

1 in 5 children in Moray are living in poverty.[2] **All staff working in schools should be aware of the impact which low income and financial pressures at home can have on children's wellbeing, attendance, attainment, inclusion, participation and engagement in education.**

At a time of increasing financial hardship, making sure children have what they need to take part at school can be another worry for families. **All staff should be mindful of the impact of school costs on family budgets when planning and delivering the curriculum.**

Knowing your families and being aware of changes in circumstances is important. Any family can fall into poverty, but some are at greater risk. Single parent households, larger families, families with a disabled member, minority ethnic families and families with younger mums or children aged under 1 are all at greater risk of experiencing poverty.

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[1] Cost of the School Day at Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland is a national Scottish Attainment Challenge programme which supports school communities to explore and address the practical cost barriers faced by low-income pupils. This guidance is based on Cost of the School Day research with children, young people and parents in Moray schools as part of a partnership between Moray Council and CPAG in Scotland between 2019-22.

[2] End Child Poverty child poverty estimates across the UK by local authority area

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Young Carers and Care Experienced pupils are also at higher risk of poverty. Addressing costs at school and removing barriers to participation supports The Moray Promise and Getting it Right for Every Child.

Professional learning can be supported by the Cost of the School Day eLearning course, the Cost of the School Day Toolkit and a range of other resources on the CPAG website.

1.2 Leadership and planning

The following approaches are recommended to help develop and sustain Cost of the School Day in your setting:

- Designating a Cost of the School Day lead to take this work forward
- Setting up a Cost of the School Day working group or including this work in other school improvement groups focusing on equity, wellbeing or raising attainment
- Including Cost of the School Day commitments in your School Improvement Plans
- Organising practice sharing opportunities through ASG and Head Teacher meetings. Examples of cost reducing approaches in other school across Scotland can be found in the Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank

1.3 Using Pupil Equity Funding to reduce the cost of the school day

Removing financial barriers to learning helps to create the right foundations and conditions for attainment. This is central to the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge mission to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) should be used where appropriate to reduce or remove costs and make sure that children on low incomes can take part, learn and feel included at school.

Cost of the School Day is highlighted in PEF operational guidance as a way of mitigating the impact of poverty and developing poverty aware policies and practices. Involving your school community in discussions about cost pressures and barriers can help inform effective spending of PEF allocations. You may wish to consider Participatory Budgeting approaches when exploring PEF spend and cost reducing measures in your school.

1.4 Involving your school community

1.4.1 Learner voice and children's rights

"We know about the right to food, the right to play, to have free school and to tell people what we think." (Moray pupil)

Poverty violates a wide range of children's rights, including rights to a decent standard of living, to leisure and play, to social security and to the best health possible. When children on low incomes are unable to take part and learn at school in the same way as everyone else, their right to education is being denied.

Work to tackle cost barriers in our schools helps all pupils to realise their right to education. It is also part of creating a learning environment that promotes equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation and can be incorporated into existing Rights Respecting Schools work.

"If we aren't heard, how can we make a difference?" (Moray Pupil)

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Children and young people's voices, experiences and opinions are crucial to Cost of the School Day and they should be supported to play a key role. Consultation and action on costs in our schools supports UNCRC Article 12, children's right to express their views and have them heard and taken seriously. Understanding pupils' perspectives on cost challenges and working alongside them to implement change feeds into our wider commitment to meaningful pupil participation. Existing pupil voice or pupil equity groups can be a good place to start this work with the ultimate aim of hearing from the widest range of children and young people possible. Examples of learner involvement in Cost of the School Day activities can be found here.

Watch two great film clips of Moray pupils talking about why listening to children and young people and considering the cost of the school day is important to them.

1.4.2 Parental engagement

Parents' and carers' voices, experiences and opinions are crucial to the Cost of the School Day and the widest range possible should be consulted and involved.

Parent Councils should be involved in Cost of the School Day as key partners. Parent Councils should be supported to understand school context and the financial challenges families are facing so that fundraising and events do not add unnecessary pressure.

- Consider making Cost of the School Day a standing item on Parent Council meeting agendas
- Involve the Parent Council in consulting with parents on costs, developing Cost of the School Day action plans and communicating positively with the wider parent forum about activities
- Parent Councils can support schools with external funding applications to generate additional funds for school activities that is not always reliant on families giving money.

There are a wide range of resources to support awareness raising and consultation with your community in the Cost of the School Day Toolkit. Examples of children, young people and parents leading this work and of inclusive fundraising can be found in the Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank. Cost of the School Day eLearning is suitable for parents and carers as well as practitioners.

1.5 Avoiding assumptions and communicating to all

"I try really hard for it not to show to the other kids that my son is from a low-income family by making sure he takes part and contributes to everything, however there is times that I think the school could be more sensitive to people's situation." (Moray parent)

School staff should avoid assumptions about family incomes and be mindful of families' changing financial situations. The financial impact of Covid and the cost-of-living crisis and high levels of in-work poverty means that difficult financial circumstances may be hidden. Many families sit above eligibility thresholds for Free School Meals (FSM) and do not show up in this data but are still struggling.

Universal approaches to support and communication about costs and money, wherever appropriate, ensure that no child misses out. When support and communication are targeted, consideration needs to be given to doing this is in non-stigmatising way that doesn't embarrass or single anyone out.

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1.6 Partnership working

Schools can't tackle the poverty related attainment gap on their own. Equal partnerships between schools, youth work and other third sector partners are crucial to reducing the impact poverty has on young people's learning and life chances.

Talking about Costs and Money at School and the Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank provide examples of non-stigmatising communication and support with families.

2. Problem costs, good practice and key questions to consider

2.1 School uniform

"Changing the uniform so it can be bought without the school badge is great. Much cheaper." (Moray parent)

School uniform can be a considerable cost for families and a source of worry for children and young people.

- How affordable is your school uniform policy? Across a school year, how much do parents pay and could this be reduced?
- Is every eligible family receiving the School Clothing Grant and other support that would help with uniform costs?
- How well do you currently support children and young people to access uniform when required?
- How income aware are your responses to children and young people presenting without correct uniform?

Have you considered?

- Consulting with pupils and families around uniform affordability and provision
- Reviewing current uniform policies to ensure affordability, bearing in mind local school clothing grant allowances
- Ensuring a range of suppliers, including supermarkets, to ensure choice and lower cost options for families
- Reviewing and removing badged items and promoting plain school colours
- Allocating PEF to purchase a stock of uniform.
- Ensuring that affordable school uniform policies are widely known and promoted with families and pupils.

What to avoid:

- Expensive items of uniform and unnecessary branding
- Multiple items – for example, requiring different shoes for indoor, outdoor and gym
- Promoting pre-loved uniform provision as an alternative for only low-income families. Engaging the whole school community in reducing waste and making uniform more sustainable can help reduce stigma.

Good practice in Moray schools:

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- Free ties to welcome P1 or S1 pupils
- Pre-loved uniform provision available to all pupils
- Regular promotion of School Clothing Grant and support for families to complete forms and maximise incomes
- Removing requirement for pupils in senior years to purchase different items of uniform
- Offering support with expensive items such as blazers for prefects
- Using funds raised by Parent Councils to purchase supplies of school clothing

Good practice case studies from Moray schools addressing the cost of uniform can be found here

2.2 Trips and Clubs

"School trips would be out of my league but for funding, the school highlighting these sources is a great help." (Moray parent)

Trips, educational outings and extra-curricular clubs and experiences play an important part in children and young people's learning. Costs involved in trips and clubs can mean that some children and young people miss out.

- Which children and young people take part in trips and clubs in your establishment? Are any pupils missing out for financial reasons?
- What financial support is available for trips? How do you tell parents and carers about this? How would they raise this with you and do your processes encourage this?
- Are there any additional costs for clothing and equipment involved in attending trips or participating in clubs? Have these been considered in advance and can the costs be covered?

Do you?

- Carefully consider the purpose of any trip, particularly those which are costly and likely to exclude pupils on low incomes
- Consider using a portion of PEF allocation to support pupils from low-income households to access trips and residential opportunities.
- Offer no cost clubs and experiences, taking into account any additional transport costs for staying after school
- Provide lengthy timescales and notice about trips, subsidising or covering costs wherever possible
- Set payment schedules that are flexible and considerate of pay days
- Explore local trip options that can reduce or remove costs for families
- Consider the hidden costs of trips, such as sleeping bags, outdoor clothing or the cost of a meal out. Consider including the costs for meals in the total and providing pupils with their allowance when required.
- Promote the option to order a packed lunch on trip days to help pupils eligible for Free School Meals access their entitlement and deliver this in a way that doesn't make these children stick out
- Provide a variety of affordable trip experiences, ensuring young people and families are consulted about the experiences they feel is important for them and their children.

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What to avoid

- Short notice requests for money and requests at expensive times like Christmas and the start of the school year
- Phrases on correspondence home that might embarrass the parents you want to support, like *'suffering hardship' or 'disadvantaged pupils.'* Instead tell all families about *'confidential support available with costs'* and tell them who to get in touch with and how.
- Making assumptions about who might need support to access trips and clubs and, instead, communicating about support available to all families

Good practice in Moray schools:

- Providing a range of free lunch time clubs with equipment included
- Allocating PEF to cover costs of activity days for some pupils or partially subsidised whole class trips
- Supporting pupils with community-based fundraising events like bag-packing and carol singing to subsidise trip costs for everyone
- Using PEF to purchase outdoor clothing to be borrowed during the school day and lent on residential trips
- Making clear that spending money is not required on day trips and setting limits on amounts taken on longer trips
- Removing Duke of Edinburgh costs for children and young people on lower incomes.

2.3 Resources

"They ask everybody if they have everything they need." (Moray pupil)

Children and young people should have access to all the resources they need to access the curriculum and learn. School staff should be mindful of individual circumstances if children do not have any classroom resources required.

- How do your pupils access the resources they need to learn? If you ask for any to be provided, are there pupils who frequently don't have what's needed?
- Are there costs for resources or taking part in subjects that are passed on to families? Are pupils asked to purchase resources or provide suggested donations? What impact might this have on family budgets?
- How income aware are your responses to children and young people presenting without required resources? Is this consistent throughout your establishment?

Do you?

- Provide all necessary equipment and resources in the classroom for pupils to use
- Allow pupils to borrow resources from school for home learning and coursework (for example devices, art supplies or the use of a calculator)

What to avoid

- Sanctioning or singling out children and young people who do not have resources. Some children have reported feeling embarrassed and upset when they have been asked in class why they do not have items
- Asking young people for a monetary contribution or swapping a personal item in exchange for borrowing equipment such as a pencil. Pupils have reported feeling embarrassed and worried about this practice as it highlights income differences
- Not asking pupils to use their personal phones and data allowance to carry out research in class

Good practice in Moray schools:

- Resource stations located in central areas of the school or classroom that all pupils can borrow from
- Providing starter packs of school resources
- Ensuring practical costs such as ingredients for Home Economics are not passed onto families
- Offering lending and borrowing schemes: for example, the lending of calculators for the year.

2.4 Home learning

"Printing at home costs a lot of money and is a huge waste of resources." (Moray Parent)

Some children and young people do not have access to the resources they need for home learning. All staff should be mindful of cost barriers when planning homework. Some pupils still report not having a digital device or poor internet connectivity which hinders their progression.

• Do you know which pupils in your school do not have access to a suitable device or connectivity at home?   • Is there a consistent policy across the school regarding late submission of homework and support available for pupils who may not have the resources to complete it at home?

Do you?

- Have a clear picture of digital access at home, consulting regularly with parents to establish this
- Provide devices for home learning
- Ensure pupils can access and submit their homework in a variety of formats, avoiding the need to use a printer at home
- If setting an arts or craft exercise, ensure pupils have access to the correct materials in order to complete this.

Things to avoid

- Immediately sanctioning a pupil for not submitting homework before finding out about access to necessary resources
- Assumptions about the basic materials children might have at home like coloured pens or 'junk' materials for crafting

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Good practice in Moray schools

- Allowing pupils to print using school or library printers
- Providing opportunities at lunchtime and after school to access school computers, supported study and music departments
- Being mindful about activities such as show and tell which can place pressure on pupils and can highlight income differences. Some pupils said that they are worried about discussing Christmas gifts and holiday activities in front of their peers.

2.6 Charity Days and Fun Events

"It's pretty anonymous. Nobody needs to know if you have, or you haven't donated" (Moray Pupil)

These days are important for children's learning and fun. Schools should continue to offer opportunities while being mindful of cost implications for families and mitigating against the risk of excluding children and families on lower incomes.

- How many charity days and fun events do you organise across the year? How much would a family in your establishment pay in total? What about families with more than one child?
- What items from home are you asking pupils to wear or bring and potentially purchase? Can these costs be reviewed and reduced?
- How income aware is your response to children who are not able to donate or provide a suggested item?

Do you?

- Consider how often events are planned and ensure they are evenly spread out throughout the year
- Allow pupils to discreetly provide a donation of their choosing - 'Chuck it in a Bucket' - making sure they are not singled out and can still take part if they do not contribute
- Consider making entry to social events like discos or Christmas Fayres free or donation only
- Consider alternative ways to celebrate days like World Book Day, Hallowe'en and Christmas Jumper Day rather than asking families to spend money on costumes or clothing in special colours
- Consult with pupils and families around which activities are most important to them and where possible ensure these are free or low cost
- Consider other ways to fundraise that is not always reliant on parents - for example, community-based coffee mornings, raffles in the community and sponsorship from local businesses.

What to avoid:

- Multiple events with costs attached, especially at expensive times of the year like Christmas
- Short notice requests for money or sudden notifications about events that will put extra pressure on carefully worked out family budgets.

Good practice in Moray schools:

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- Free entry to school social and seasonal events and no cost activities included as part of these events
- Stopping non-uniform or dress up days or reducing the number in a school year
- Giving envelopes for pupils to provide donations or giving families the link to a charity website if they would like to donate, ensuring greater anonymity
- Making items in class to celebrate fun events or charity days which doesn't rely on parents purchasing additional items or official merchandise
- Including bus travel in the ticket price of some school social events.
- Providing costumes for drama productions or nativity plays
- Creating a yearly or termly Cost Calendar so families have plenty of advance notice of days and events that might incur costs.

2.7 Food

"No child will go hungry in this school" (Catering staff)

Hungry children can't learn. For some children and young people, school lunch is their most important meal. It is crucial that children eligible for Free School Meals are supported to receive and take up this entitlement.

> - Are your families aware that FSM entitlement is a saving of more than £400 per year per child? How often are you telling families about how to apply and is this reaching the right people?
> - Are you aware of children in your school who do not have a snack at break time or are attending school hungry in the mornings? What provision is in place and is it sufficient?
> - How income aware is your response to the lunch debt that some families accrue?

Do you?

- Make sure that every child or young person is able to access lunch at school
- Regularly promote Free School Meals and support families to apply
- Ensure P1-5 families still apply for FSM if eligible, so that they can access FSM support during holidays and the School Clothing Grant
- Ensure pupils can order lunch both online and on paper and that provision is made for pupils arriving late who may not have ordered lunch
- Provide breakfast and snacks wherever possible and in whatever way works in your setting
- Support pupils with using their FSM allowance. Some pupils say that they don't know whether their FSM allowance will allow them to get a full meal in the canteen - ensure that prices and meal deals are well advertised
- Consult on preferred food options and feedback to central catering team to help increase uptake.

What to avoid

- Systems which indicate to a child's peers that they are receiving FSM
- Highlighting lunch debt with children or young people directly or in a stigmatising way to parents and carers

Good practice in Moray schools:

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- Universal breakfast club provision and grab and go breakfast bags.
- Providing free break time snacks such as fruit bowls or trays of toast available in central locations, funded through local partnerships
- Ensuring that jugs of water and cups are available at break and lunch times
- Different collection points for pre-ordered lunch in secondary schools for different year groups to reduce queuing time and encourage more pupils to use their FSM allowance.
- Regular promotion of FSM provision on a variety of platforms to boost uptake.

2.7 Promoting financial entitlements

"I very much appreciate that open communication that never assumes that parents know everything." (Moray Parent)

Parents in Moray say it is important that they all know about what support is available to them. School staff are not expected to have an exhaustive knowledge of financial support but regularly telling families about the following is important and helpful:

- School related financial entitlements such as Free School Meals and School Clothing Grant and the Education Maintenance Allowance
- Services that support families with claiming entitlements and maximising incomes such as Moray Income Maximisation Service
- Share with families the Worried about Money tool which supports local families with benefit advice and support.
- Letting families of children transitioning into P1 know about the Best Start School Age Payment
- Letting families know about Scottish Child Payment
- Letting families know and supporting young carers aged 16-18 to apply for the Young Carers Grant which can support qualifying individual young carers with accessing leisure and educational opportunities

Schools should use school websites, social media, newsletters and school apps to regularly promote and direct families to these entitlements. Sharing all of this information at enrolment, at the start of each term and at transition points is especially helpful for families.

One useful example of a Moray school website can be found here.

> Financial Help for Families provides a quick overview of entitlements for school aged children which can be shared with parents and carers in Appendix 1

2.8 Tackling stigma and income related bullying

"It shouldn't really matter if you are poor or rich… but that doesn't always help." (Moray Pupil)

Children and young people say that greater awareness, understanding and empathy around poverty and low incomes across the school helps to reduce feelings of difference and stigma. Schools can support this by delivering

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- Assemblies or PSHE lessons addressing poverty and stigma. Activities to support classroom-based discussions and consultation on school costs can be found in the [Cost of the School Day Toolkit](#)
- Ensure that young people know income related bullying is unacceptable and will be taken seriously
- Support young people led campaigns to address poverty stigma and unhelpful stereotypes. [Challenge Poverty Week](#) or Anti Bullying Week can be good hooks for this.
- Ensure that children and young people understand the causes and impact of poverty in their own communities and that poverty and social inequality is covered wherever possible across the curriculum.

2.9 Other useful things to remember

- Free period products are now available in schools and community settings. Ensure that these are visible and easily accessible to pupils. Ensure pupils can access these in a manner that is private and does not rely on asking a member of staff
- Provision has been made for free music tuition for all Moray school pupils. Charges for a number of practical subjects have been removed. Regularly promote this with all pupils and families who may not know that this is the case
- Children and young people in Scotland under the age of 22 are now eligible for [free bus travel.](#) For those with access to suitable routes, the cost of travel to school and in their communities has been removed. Schools are well placed to support and encourage pupils to access this entitlement.

Watch a great film clip of one Moray school with a 'no child left behind' policy [here](#).

3. Funding sources

Alongside PEF, there are a range of other funding sources which can help to support Cost of the School Day activities in your school.

Type	Fund	Description	Purpose
Local	Banffshire Educational Trust	For residents, schools and organisations in the former county of Banffshire. This area includes Buckie and Keith.	educational excursions for school pupils or the purchasing of educational equipment
	Moray and Nairn Education Trust	For residents, schools and organisations in the former combined county of Moray and Nairnshire	educational excursions for school pupils or the purchasing of educational equipment
	MFR Cash for Kids	Grant giving charity to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and young people in our communities	Grants given for specialist equipment, clothing, Christmas gifts and household items such as beds.
	Budge Foundation	Support organisations whose focus relates to the health, education and well-being of children and	Previously provided funds for Moray school playground equipment.

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		young people. Interest in Moray and the North East	
	Moray School Bank	A local charity supporting families with uniform provision.	Referrals can be made by school staff to support families with uniform provision.
National	Asda Foundation Grants	A range of grant options.	Previously supported Moray schools with resources, equipment, uniform provision and breakfast club provision
	Scotmid Coop Community Grants	Community grant to the value of £500	Fund various projects and initiatives in schools and communities that support children.
	Tesco Community Grants	A range of grant options.	Activities funded include breakfast clubs, holiday clubs, play equipment and resources.
	Aldi Scottish Sports Fund	Open to schools and community groups.	Sporting activities and clubs.
	Nature Scot	Grants are available to cover up to 75% (£200 maximum) of transport costs for educational visits to the National Parks	Support with school trip and travel costs.
	National Trust Scotland	Free and discounted entry to various NTS sites for school groups and support with travel costs.	Support with school trip and travel costs.
	Historic Environment Scotland	Free learning visits for schools and support to partially subsidise travel costs.	Support with school trip and travel costs
	Greggs Foundation and Magic Breakfast	Please note criteria applies regarding levels of FSM eligibility or number of pupils in SIMD Deciles 1-4.	Costs of setting up and running breakfast club provision.
	Ernest Cook Trust	£500 to fund outdoor clothing or for projects that provide nature on the doorstep.	Support for outdoor learning clothing and experiences
	Royal Highland Education Trust	Supporting school groups to visit local farms and engage in rural learning.	Support for Day trips.

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Grant databases	Youth Link Funding Directory SCVO Funding Scotland Creative Star	Databases featuring wide range of grants and funding.	-

4. Ongoing support from Moray Education

Contact Susanne Campbell, QIO Supporting All Learners, for support with Cost of the School Day in your establishments: Susanne.Campbell1@moray.gov.uk

5. Further information and resources

- Cost of the School Day eLearning course
- Cost of the School Day Toolkit to support involvement of whole school communities in developing poverty aware policies and practices (updated 2023)
- Cost of the School Day Ideas Bank
- Talking about Costs and Money at School, a resource and animation based on what parents and carers say they want when it comes to communication about costs, money and financial entitlements/support
- Cost of the School Day Calendar 2022/23, highlighting common costs throughout the school year and good practice in tackling them from schools in Scotland, Wales and England
- Cost of the School Day films and practice papers featuring schools across Scotland reducing costs for families and supporting children and young people
- Financial help in the early years and Financial help in the school years factsheets from CPAG in Scotland
- Information from mygov.scot on Best Start Grants and Scottish Child Payment, and on Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants and Education Maintenance Allowance with links to all local authority websites
- CPAG in Scotland's Advice Line offers advice on benefits and tax credits for practitioners working with families: 0141 552 0552 or advice@cpagscotland.org.uk

March 2023

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Support for Families in Moray

A helpful guide on financial support for families with children in Moray schools.

Some families with children at school are entitled to financial support. If you are on a low income you may be able to get some help, even if you haven't claimed before. Knowing what you are entitled to, how to apply and who can help is important. This guide explains Free School Meals, School Clothing Grants, Education Maintenance Allowance, Best Start Grants, Scottish Child Payment, Scottish Welfare Fund and other help you could get.

Free School Meals

What: Pupils in primary schools are offered two-course meals. The current cost of a primary school meal is £2.30 per day. If you qualify for free school meals you can save **£437** per child per year.

Secondary schools operate self-service cafeterias so cost varies according to what your child chooses from the menu. If you qualify for free school meals your child will be given an allowance of £2.40 a day credited to their NEC card, saving you **£456** per year.

When: All school children in Primary 1 to 5 are automatically entitled to a free school meal so you don't need to apply in order for your child to get a meal. **Important:** If your child is P1-5 and you are eligible for free school meals due to low income then **you should apply** to make sure you don't miss out on any free school meal payments during the holidays.

Who: Free school meals are available to pupils from Primary 6 onwards if you receive:

• Income Support
• Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
• Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
• Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit, with an income of less than £17,005
• Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of up to £7,920

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• Support under Part VI - Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
• Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £660

If you applied last year and received free school meals for 2022/23 you do not need to reapply for 2023/24.

How: Moray Council has made things easier for families to apply for school related entitlements. They have created one form that assesses you for all the following benefits and entitlements; Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Free School Meals, School Clothing Grant and Education Maintenance Allowance.

You can apply via Moray Council website, the application form can be found here or you can contact the Revenues Section at Moray Council at revenues@moray.gov.uk or telephone **01343 563456** to request an application form by post.

If you don't have internet access at home you can go to your local library or you can visit any of the following access points to request a form:

BUCKIE - 13 Cluny Square, Buckie, AB56 1AJ
ELGIN - Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX
FORRES - Forres Library, Forres House, High Street, Forres, IV36 1BU
KEITH - The Resource Centre, 26 Mid Street, AB55 5AH

School Clothing Grant

What: The School Clothing Grant is a once yearly payment of **£120** for a primary school child and **£150** for secondary school child towards the costs of essential school clothing.

When: From when your child starts school, up to the age of 16.

Who: You may be entitled to a School Clothing Grant if you receive:

• Income Support
• Income-based Job Seekers' Allowance
• Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
• Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit, with an income of less than £17,005
• Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of up to £7,920
• Support under Part VI - Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
• Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £660

How: Moray Council has made things easier for families to apply for school related entitlements. They have created one form that assesses you for all the following benefits and entitlements; Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Free School Meals, School Clothing Grant and Education Maintenance Allowance.

You get an automatic award if you received a clothing grant in 2022/23. However, you'll need to apply if your child is entering P1 or if you haven't made an application before.

The School Clothing Grant is paid directly into the bank account of the parent/guardian who has signed the application form

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You can apply via Moray Council website, the application form can be found at http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file112723.pdf or you can contact the Revenues Section at Moray Council at revenues@moray.gov.uk or telephone **01343 563456** to request an application form by post.

If you don't have internet access at home you can go to your local library for support or you can visit any of the following access points to request a form:

BUCKIE - 13 Cluny Square, Buckie, AB56 1AJ
ELGIN - Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX
FORRES - Forres Library, Forres House, High Street, Forres, IV36 1BU
KEITH - The Resource Centre, 26 Mid Street, AB55 5AH

Education Maintenance Allowance

What: An Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is **a weekly payment of £30** paid to the young person during term time, but not during breaks.

When: An Education Maintenance Allowance provides financial support for 16-19 year olds who stay on at school or undertaken another course of eligible learning. You should apply as soon as you become eligible as payments may not be back dated.

If you were born between 1 March 2004 and 30 September 2007 you may be eligible for an EMA from August 2022.

If you were born between 1 October 2007 and 28 February 2008 you may be eligible for an EMA from January 2023.

The closing date for 2023/2024 EMA applications is 31 March 2024.

Who: A young person aged 16-19 who attends a Moray school or lives in the Moray area and is undertaking a programme of learning in community or voluntary setting or college course.

The young person qualifies if your household income is £24,421 or less (£26,884 if you have another child under 16 or under 25 in education).

The young person must also have a learning agreement, signed by the parent, young person and school/college.

How: if a parent or carer does not currently receive Free School Meals, School Clothing Grant, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction then they will need to complete the following Moray Council Benefits Form found here. The young person must also complete an EMA application form which can be completed online here or you can print a copy and complete here. Your EMA application form should be posted to **The Revenues Section, Moray Council, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX.**

If you have any queries, please email revenues@moray.gov.uk or telephone **01343 563456.**

You can also hand deliver your application to any of the following offices:

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BUCKIE - 13 Cluny Square, Buckie, AB56 1AJ
ELGIN - Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX
FORRES - Forres Library, Forres House, High Street, Forres, IV36 1BU
KEITH - The Resource Centre, 26 Mid Street, AB55 5AH

EMA is paid on a fortnightly basis into your bank account.

If the young person is a student attending college full time they should contact the college directly for further information or to get an application form.

Best Start Grant

What: The **Best Start Grant School Age Payment** is £267.65 to help with the costs of starting school. It is up to you what you spend it on, and you don't need to show receipts.

When: If you are responsible for a child born between 1 March 2018 and 28 February 2019 you can claim from 1 June 2023 to 28 February 2024. You can apply before your child starts school.

Who: You can claim this payment if you are responsible for a school age child and you or your partner are entitled to:

- Universal credit. You must have been getting UC in the monthly assessment period in which you apply, or the one before that. You are still entitled if your UC has been reduced to nil because of a sanction.
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit (any amount payable).
- Income Support.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Housing Benefit.
- Pension Credit.

OR

If you are either under 18 (regardless of income) or you are 18 or 19, and a dependant in someone else's benefit claim because you are still in school or college.

How: Apply online or download a claim form https://www.mygov.scot/benefits/ or apply by calling 0800 182 2222 to request a claim form or make a claim over the phone.

You can claim at any time within the 9 month application window (1 June 2023 to 28 February 2024.). If you are waiting for a universal credit decision, you should still claim the payment within this time and then contact Social Security Scotland when awarded.

If you have become responsible for a child, for instance as a kinship carer, you might qualify for a payment. This may be the case even if a payment has already been made to someone else – as long as you were not that person's partner when they received the grant, and the child is not living with that person.

The School Age Payment has not replaced the School Clothing Grant. The School Age Payment does not affect payments of the School Clothing Grant in any way. If you want to apply for both, you can.

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Other Best Start Grants

If you have a child aged between 2 and 3½, you may also qualify for a **Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment**. If you are at least 24 weeks pregnant or within six months of giving birth, you may also qualify for a **Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment**. Please see https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods for further details.

If you're paid **Scottish Child Payment**, when your child is old enough Social Security Scotland will check if you can get a **Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment** and **School Age Payment**. They'll do this unless you opt out of automatic checks.

Scottish Child Payment

What: Scottish Child Payment is a weekly payment of £25 that helps towards the costs of supporting your family**.** Scottish Child Payment does not affect any other UK or Scottish Government benefits that you, or any person in your household currently get. It's up to you how you use this money to support your family.

When: It's a weekly payment of £25 that you can get for every child you look after who's under 16 years of age. You'll get the payment every 4 weeks if your application is successful. That's equivalent to £1,300 per year for each child.

Who: You can get Scottish Child Payment if you live in Scotland, are responsible for a child under 6 years of age and you get one of the qualifying benefits listed below.

You can apply whether you're in work or not, as long as you're getting one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

How: You can apply online or download a claim form here. Or apply by phone on 0800 182 2222, or request a claim form.

Scottish Welfare Fund

What: The Scottish Welfare Fund provides **crisis grants** for living expenses in the event of an emergency or disaster, and **community care grants** to enable and support independent living.

Crisis Grants can be awarded to meet expenses to avoid an immediate threat to the health or safety of you or your family:

- In the case of an emergency, applications can be made for short-term living expenses
- In the case of a disaster, applications can be made for living expenses or household items

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Living expenses are essential items such as food, heating costs, nappies, toiletries, and travel costs in case of an emergency.

Community Care Grants can be awarded to help you in the following circumstances:

- Following a period in care and you aren't able to return home without some help.
- To prevent the need for you to go into care if you can't continue to live at home without some help.
- To help you set up or maintain a settled home, alongside other support to help to sustain your tenancy, after being homeless or living an unsettled way of life.
- To ease exceptional pressures, over and above that of living on a low income, that you and your family may experience.
- To help you care for a person released from prison or young offenders' unit on temporary release.

Applications can be made for essential items such as furniture, household equipment, travel costs, removal expenses, storage charges, connection charges for gas and electricity

When: The Scottish Welfare Fund is open all year round. While there is no limit on the number of Community Care Grants an individual can receive in any one year, Crisis Grants are normally limited to three in a rolling 12-month period.

Who: You may be eligible to receive a grant if you are aged 16 or over and on a low income.

How: You can access this fund through Moray Council, applications and guidance can be found on their website here or you can call **01343 563456** between 8.45am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. In the event of an emergency outwith office hours you can contact the council on **03457 565656**.

Young Person Free Bus Travel

What: If you are under 22 years of age and living in Scotland, you are eligible for free bus travel throughout Scotland. Young people aged 5-21 will either be issued with a National Entitlement Card (NEC) or an updated Young Scot Card with the free bus travel element included.

When: Applications are open all year round. Please see the Young Person's Free Bus Travel website for further information.

Who: Parents or guardians must apply on behalf of 5–15-year-olds, young people who are 16-21 years old can apply themselves. Children under 5 years old already travel for free on buses and don't need a card.

How: There are different ways to apply depending on the age or school stage of your child. Look on the Young Person's Free Bus Travel website to find out the best way to apply.

If you're not able to apply online, get in touch with your local council at accessmoray@moray.gov.uk or 0300 123 4565

Pupils can use their Young Scot Card to get other discounts and rewards, including 10% off at Co-op, discounts on revision guides, reduced entry to attractions and more. See Young Scot for more information and deals. Young Carers can also access specific rewards and discounts through their card. See here for more about the Young Carers Package.

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Young Carers Grant

What: A yearly payment of £326.65 for young carers in Scotland. This can be used for leisure activities, help with education or anything else that supports a young carer with their health, well-being or education. The Young Carers Grant does not affect any other UK or Scottish Government benefits that you, or any person in your household currently get.

When: Applications are open all year round. You need to apply every year twelve months in order to get the yearly payment.

Who: Young people aged 16, 17 and 18 who have a caring role for one or more people for around 16 hours a week. You could be caring for an adult or a child. The young person applying can be in education, training, employment or seeking work. The person you are caring for must be getting one of the following benefits:

- the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP),
- the middle or highest care rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), including Child Disability Living Allowance.
- the middle or highest care rate of Child Disability Payment,
- Attendance Allowance,
- Armed Forces Independence Payment,
- Constant Attendance Allowance.

How: You can apply online here or you can call Social Security Scotland 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday on **0800 182 2222** to discuss an application or find out if you qualify.

Other support

There are a number of a local Moray trusts and bursaries that can support families on low incomes with some costs associated with school, in particular support with the costs of school trips. Information about the Banffshire Trust, Moray and Nairn Education Trust, Donald Manson Bequest and John Pringle Bequest can be found here, or by contacting education@moray.gov.uk or telephoning **01343 563374**.

Who can help?

Many families don't get all the benefits they are entitled to. This may be because the rules are complex or because they have been wrongly refused. If you are on a low income you may be able to get some help even if you haven't claimed before or if you think you won't qualify.

If a member of your family has a disability or long term health condition, or is an unpaid carer for someone, you may be able to get some extra help – for example, parents of disabled children can get disability benefits without taking into account their income.

If you have a low income, or are affected by disability or ill health, it may be worth getting a benefit check from one of the organisations listed below. If you have been refused a benefit that you think you should get, the organisations below may be able to help to challenge a decision.

Moray Council Income Maximisation Team

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Can help with claiming benefits, budgeting, and managing debt and benefit appeals:

Call: **0300 123 4563** Email: benefitadvice@moray.gov.uk Website: www.moray.gov.uk/incomemaximisation

Helpful advice and support about money in Moray can also be found at https://www.worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/moray

Moray Citizens Advice Bureau

Moray CAB can give impartial and independent advice and assistance on a wide range of issues, including benefits, debt, housing, work related problems, consumer issues and more.

Call: **01343 550088** email: bureau@moraycab.casonline.org.uk website: www.moraycab.org.uk

Information correct as of March 2023

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REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: LEARNING ESTATE PROGRAME – CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL STATUS UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

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

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To inform the Committee on the current status of Crossroads Primary School and to seek a decision by Committee on the next steps.

1.2   This report is submitted to the Council in terms of Section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to all the functions of the Council as Education Authority.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   It is recommended that Committee:

i)   scrutinise and notes the information included in the report;

ii)   reviews the proposed options for next steps on the future of Crossroads Primary School and decide to progress with either:

a. Option 1 - Do nothing and review the decision within next 12 months; or,

b. Option 3 – Consider future options for the school earlier.

iii)   agrees to receive a further report following issue of the next annual School Roll Forecast report and completion of 24/25 schools admission process.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   Crossroads Primary School is a remote rural school which is part of the Keith Associated Schools Group (ASG). It is paired with Rothiemay Primary School, sharing the same Headteacher. Moray Council agreed on 28 September 2022 (para 27 of the minute refers) to mothball the school from

9 January 2023 as a consequence of the roll falling to a low level. Due to the adjacency of the Crossroads Primary School catchment to the Buckie ASG catchment area it was advised that the mothballing decision could influence voters in the upcoming Buckie Ward 3 by-election on 3 November 2023. Consequently, the public, including Crossroads Primary School parents, were not informed of the decision to mothball the school until after the by-election.

3.2   The term 'mothballing' is used, according to Scottish Government guidance, to refer to a temporary decision to close a school where the roll has fallen to a very low number of pupils. Mothballing is the temporary closure of a school, which does not in itself lead to statutory consultation, and this provides the opportunity for a school to reopen should circumstances change. There is no legal process for mothballing.

3.3   The Scottish Government has issued statutory Guidance under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 which can be found at the following link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/schools-consultation-scotland-act-2010-statutory-guidance/pages/2/ - Paragraphs 63 to 65 of the Guidance (page 16) deals with the issue of mothballing as follows:

Mothballing

63. In considering alternatives to closure, authorities may choose to consider "mothballing" a school (or a stage of education or a nursery class at a school). This is a temporary closure which does not lead to a consultation under the 2010 Act. It is only appropriate in very restricted circumstances. When a school roll falls very low, the authority and/or community may consider that the school is not presently viable but do not wish to close it immediately because there is a reasonable prospect that the number of pupils in the area will increase such that it should be re-opened in the future.

64. It is vital that this flexibility to close a school for a temporary period is not used to undermine the requirements under the 2010 Act to consult on all school closure proposals. Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school (or stage of education). The maximum length of its duration is likely to depend on the location of the school and the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open a school there, but it is unlikely that it should exceed 3 years in areas that are not very remote. The condition of the school building and cost of maintaining the mothballed provision will also be relevant.

65. A school can be mothballed where the school roll has fallen to zero and continues to be zero. It may also be appropriate where the roll or potential roll is very low and the authority considers the only other option to be closure. However, in circumstances where a school is mothballed rather than closed and some children and young people remain in the catchment area, this decision should be taken in consultation with the parents involved, and the possibility should be raised as early as possible, in order to ensure that families can understand the options open to them.

Mothballing should not be a way of denying parents' access to the statutory consultation process required under the 2010 Act and if the majority of parents oppose mothballing, it would be appropriate to move to statutory consultation on closure as soon as possible.

3.4   In taking the decision to mothball Crossroads Primary School it was noted that it is only appropriate for a temporary period and should be subject to regular review, at least annually, against the same requirements which led to the original decision to mothball the school. The maximum length of mothballing depends on: the location of the school; the desirability of maintaining capacity to re-open the school; the condition of the school building; and, the cost of maintaining the mothballed provision.

3.5   The Council process for mothballing a school states that should a school roll fall naturally to a 'very low number' (defined as less than 15) this will trigger an operational assessment of the decision, which should consider the impact on the community, other local schools, current users of the building and the school roll forecast.

3.6   At the time of the decision in September 2022 to mothball Crossroads Primary School the school roll had fallen to 5 pupils. As a result of the mothballing and consultation with parents, 4 of the children were placed at Rothiemay Primary School and one at Keith Primary School. The school has from 9 January 2023 been placed into a 'care and maintenance' regime.

4.   NEXT STEP OPTIONS

4.1   The December 2022 school roll forecast supporting information reported that the total number of primary school children living within the Crossroad Primary School catchment for the 2022/23 academic session totalled 22. This included the 5 children at Crossroad Primary School at the time of mothballing. The additional 17 pupils are placed at other schools within the Keith ASG at parental request.

4.2   With the loss of 2 x P7 pupils, balanced by the gain of a P1 and P3 pupil at the start of 2023/24 academic session, the Crossroads school roll is expected to increase to 6, with the overall primary school catchment total unchanged at 22 children.

4.3   Given the current status of the school and the data provided in the most recent school roll forecasts there are considered 3 options for the start of the next academic year in August 2023.

Option 1 – Do Nothing – Review the decision within next 12 months

4.4   This 'Do Nothing' options takes account of the expected school roll for August 2023. Based on the outcome of the schools admission process and the potential additional placing requests there is an anticipated increase in the school roll for the 2023/24 session from 5 to 6 children. This remains well below the ideal minimum of 15 children recommended by Education and does not change the context from that informing the recommendation of September 2022 that Crossroads Primary School should be mothballed.

4.5   This option is considered the logical and the least disruptive for parents, children and staff. It does however extend the uncertainty across the Crossroads community over the long term future status of Crossroads Primary School. The intent would be to review the decision following the completion of the 2024/25 admissions process in February 2024.

Option 2 - Reopen the school for 23/24 academic session

4.6   This option to reopen the school in August 2023 takes account of the information within the latest school roll forecast (December 2022) which is set out in Table 1 below. The information indicates the pupil numbers will gradually increase to 15 for the 2028/2029 academic session, which is a considered a lowest viable roll for a school to deliver an effective educational experience.

CROSSROADS	ACTUAL					FORECAST							
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
INPUTS													
Primary 1 Input						3	3	4	4				
Pupils per household	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Placing Requests	0	2	-2	-4	-1	-1	-2	-1	-1	-2	-2	-1	-2
CLASS													
P1	2	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	3	2	2	2	2
P2	1	3	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	3	2	2	2
P3	1	1	3	3	1	0	0	2	1	3	3	2	2
P4	5	1	1	2	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	3	2
P5	1	5	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	3	3
P6	3	1	4	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	3
P7	6	3	1	3	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	2	1
Total Roll	**19**	**16**	**13**	**11**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**9**	**9**	**11**	**13**	**15**	**16**
Physical Capacity	66	66	66	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63
(Tot Roll/Physical Capacity)%	29%	24%	20%	17%	8%	10%	11%	14%	15%	17%	21%	25%	25%

Table 1: Crossroads Primary School – Roll Forecast (December 2022)

4.7   To achieve this forecast increase a total of 15 new children would need to enter P1 over the next seven years; whereas, the actual data shows that over the past five years only 5 new children have entered P1 and during the same period the overall school roll has fallen from 19 to 5 (in 2017 it was 25).

4.8   It is inferred from the actual and forecast data that the current school roll increase forecast for the next seven years is overly optimistic. It neither accounts for the actual rapid decline in school numbers over the last twelve months (10 to 5 children), nor the impact of the low numbers and current mothball status on the decision of parents with young children due to enter Crossroads Primary School over the next few years to send their children there or to an alternate school.

4.9   Given the uncertainty over the school roll forecast for the next few years, the evidence to reopen the school is not sufficiently robust and there is a risk that in reopening the school it would be recommended for mothballing again within the next few years resulting in further disruption and uncertainty for children, parents and staff. The option is therefore not recommended at this time.

Option 3 – Consider future options for the school earlier

4.10 This option is to start to actively consider the long term future of Crossroads Primary School and undertake an Options Appraisal to support this that would be completed within the next academic year.

4.11 The Options Appraisal would include engagement on all the possible options for the future of the school with all the Crossroads catchment community including children, parents/carers, staff, individual community members and representive community groups.

4.12 One of the options of the appraisal would be to consider closure of the school. If this is considered to be the only viable option for the school then the Council must undertake a statutory consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. As a rural school, there is a presumption against closure and the Council must ensure all other alternatives have been identified and robustly considered prior to recommending statutory consultation on this matter.

4.13 Following the Options Appraisal process, a report would be brought back to Committee detailing the outcome of the appraisal and recommendations for the longer term future of the school.

4.14 Option 3 is similar to Option 1 but assumes that the forecast for the next seven years is overly optimistic and that future analysis will show that the school roll will not reach the minimum viable number of 15 for the foreseeable future. It effectively calls forward an option that could be recommended early next year following review of the next school roll forecast (December 2023) and completion of initial schools admission process (February 2024).

Consideration of Options

4.15 In considering the options it is important to note that the mothballing process should not be extended for a prolonged period, as this results in continued uncertainty for the community, particularly for future prospective parents who may wish to see the school re-open. However, it is also imperative that the Council do not rush into a decision without robust school roll data.

4.16 Based on the current school roll and that expected for the 2023/24 academic session, together with the uncertainty over the future school roll projections either Option 1 or Option 3 should be considered.

5. 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:

• Healthier Children: children get the healthiest start in life and are supported to achieve the best possible mental health and wellbeing and there is equity for vulnerable groups.

And the aims of the Corporate Plan to:

• Improve health and wellbeing for the people of Moray.

(b) Policy and Legal
The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 and Children and Yound People (Scotland) Act 2014 have been referred to and will continue to be adhered to with respect to any decisions on the future of Crossroads Primary School.

(c) Financial implications
The current contract daily rate for transport for Crossroads Primary School children to alternate schools is £339.00. This is an increase of £143.00 on the previous cost of £196.00 to transport children to Crossroads Primary School although this is managed within the revenue savings as a consequence of mothballing.

The cost of any weather and/or security protection to the Crossroads buildings will be managed within current revenue budgets assigned to Crossroad Primary School.

Travel expenses for redeployed staff is met through existing budgets.

(d) Risk implications
There are no risks associated with the proposal to continue to mothball Crossroads Primary School, although this will be regularly reviewed.

(e) Staffing implications
There are no staffing implications arising from this report that were not previously reported as a consequence of mothballing.

(f) Property
Whilst the school has been mothballed, the building has been maintained as wind and water tight. The building has been drained down and regular janitor inspections established. Any issues, e.g. water ingress will be addressed as required

A detailed condition survey of the school was completed and future maintenance requirements noted.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
An equality impact assessment has not been required to date. There will be a requirement to complete one should a decision be taken to formally engage with parents, children and community and an Options Appraisal be instructed.

(h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**
There has been a small increase in travel distances undertaken by buses and taxies from Crossroads catchment to Rothiemay and Keith primary schools although this has been assessed as offset by the reduction in energy use at the school while mothballed.

(i) **Consultations**
The Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Head of Education Resources and Communities, Legal Services Manager, the Chief Financial Officer, Public Transport Officer (Education), the Business Support Team Manager, the Human Resources Manager, the Equal Opportunities Officer, Climate Change Strategy Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

6. **CONCLUSION**

6.1 **Committee considers this report in light of the future of Crossroads Primary School and agrees to progress either: Option 1 - to do nothing at this stage, to keep the school mothballed but review the decision within the next 12 months; or, Option 3 - to undertake an options appraisal on the long term future of the school earlier.**

Author of Report: Andy Hall (Programme Manager (Learning Estate))
Background Papers:
Ref: SPMAN-9425411-237

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
             COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: EDUCATION SCOTLAND: MORAY PROGRESS IN
             IMPLEMENTING THE SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE
             PROGRAMME

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

1.   REASON FOR REPORT

1.1   To inform Committee of the impact of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding
      for the children and young people of Moray, in particular, those most affected
      by poverty

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.   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   It is recommended that Committee:

   **(i)   scrutinise and note the progress in closing the poverty related
            attainment gap in Moray using Scottish Attainment Challenge
            funding; and**

   **(ii)   acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 on work to close the poverty
            related attainment gap and subsequent progress made, including
            reducing underspend noted through targeted actions,
            interventions and support**

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) was launched in February 2015 to
      support the Scottish Government in achieving its vision of delivering
      excellence and equity in education.

3.2   Moray has been part of the SAC since session 2016/2017 and now receives funding through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) and Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund (CECYP), all forming part of Attainment Scotland Funding (ASF). Impact of SAC funding on improving outcomes for children and young people in Moray has previously been reported to Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee on completion of SAC 5-year impact report and 1 year progress update on 26 May 2021.

3.3   During session 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, SAC and PEF/CECYP planning and interventions have been impacted by Covid-19 and disruption to our schools including two extended periods of national lockdown. Engagement and participation in learning was variable for some children, with the impact on wellbeing and progress in learning continuing to emerge as noted in behaviours exhibited, attendance and engagement in learning. Due to restrictions on activities, pressures in recruiting additional staff and flexibility provided to schools over use of PEF during both sessions, an underspend resulted which has continued to be addressed from the latter part of session 2021/2022, working with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor.

3.4   In November 2021, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills at that time further set out plans for a refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge from April 2022, for session 2022/2023 and beyond. The mission of this refreshed Challenge 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. Up until then, Moray was 1 of 11 'Universal Support' local authorities, with focus on key policies and access to core funding including Pupil Equity Funding and CECYP funding only. Those local authorities identified as 'Challenge Authorities' made up the final part of the SAC programme at that time, receiving the greatest proportion of funding with targeted funding allocated to the 9 local authorities with the highest concentration of pupils living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 1 and decile 2 areas. Moray was a 'universal' authority and as such, the local authority or schools within Moray received no additional funding other than PEF devolved to schools and CECYP funding.

3.5   CECYP funding has also been available to local authorities since session 2018/2019 with key work underway within Corporate Parenting led by Social Work colleagues and containing an 'Education' pillar within the strategy. Following changes in service managers, further links for oversight of the CECYP funding working in partnership with Social Work colleagues is now in place. As a result, it is now planned to recruit within Education using CECYP monies, a Virtual School Head Teacher, which is common with in local authorities, in order to work with multi-agency partners and with care experienced children and young people across schools, improving outcomes and maximising progress and achievements for all.

3.6   From session April 2022, the Scottish Government altered their funding model with specific regard to removal of funding to SAC 'Challenge Authorities' and instead, adopted a more equitable model across Scotland in launching 'Strategic Equity Funding'. Instead, Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) amounting

to £43 million is to be shared by all 32 local authorities in Scotland to invest in approaches to achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) noted above.

3.7 Through the revised Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress launched in April 2022, the Scottish Government recognise that the first five years of the Scottish Attainment Challenge saw much progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap but at a limited pace. The pandemic disrupted the learning of children and young people and had a disproportionate impact on children affected by poverty. The refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge programme, backed by a further commitment of £1 billion from Scottish Government through the SAC Attainment Scotland Fund (ASF), aims to address these challenges and ensure that equity lies at the heart of the education experience for all.

3.8 The refreshed SAC programme, from 2022/23 now includes:

- An annual investment of up to £200 million in 2022/2023 to support children and young people impacted by poverty.
- Continued empowerment of Headteachers through Pupil Equity Funding as the primary model for distributing funding to the education system, with funding of approximately £130 million annually to be allocated to 97% of schools.
- Continued investment to support Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP funding), contributing to keeping The Promise.
- The introduction of Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) of over £43 million, which will be distributed annually to every local authority based on Children in Low Income Families Data.
- Investment in national programmes to enhance supports across the system, supporting a range of national initiatives such as youth work and mentoring.
- A broader recognition of children and young people's achievements and attainment through the refreshed mission.

3.9 Through the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (the Framework) it is further aimed to:

- Reinforce collective commitment to equity in education, to mitigate the impact of poverty on children's outcomes and tackle the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Set high expectations, including annual, ambitious locally identified stretch aims, to help ensure significant progress is made in recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and in achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- Take advantage of multi-year funding allocations for schools and local authorities to plan and set aims for long-term progress in the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- Use existing improvement processes, as far as possible, in order to minimise additional bureaucracy; this is accompanied by specific new

guidance to ensure there is greater consistency on how processes are used across the country and enable a more accurate national picture.

- Through local stretch aims, drive improved outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty in the local authority.
- Build on the continued commitment to empowerment for local planning and decision making, while ensuring strategic direction, support and challenge is provided by local authorities and national agencies. This will help ensure that the best possible outcomes for our children and young people are achieved

.
3.10   The Scottish Government have intimated that following one year of operation in session 2022/2023, the above Framework and guidance is under review with revision to Stretch Aims guidance for 2023/2024, anticipated in late May/early June 2023.

3.11   Funding allocations for SEF and PEF have been confirmed from April 2022 on a multi-year basis until the end of the Parliamentary term, giving local authorities and schools certainty to support long term planning. Funding allocated to Moray and received through SAC monies is as follows:

Funding:	Per child	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
SEF	*N/A*	£170,500	£338,950	£507,400	£675,851
CECYP	£1,200	£158,025	*tbc*	*tbc*	*tbc*
PEF	£1,225	£1,484,285 per year, fixed until 2025-2026			

3.12   SEF is provided on a fixed amount basis increasing over time as highlighted in the table above. SEF must be used to deliver targeted activities, approaches or resources which are clearly additional to universal local improvement plans. SEF must provide targeted support for children and young people (and their families if appropriate) affected by poverty to achieve their full potential, focusing on targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

3.13   In Moray, 2022/2023 SEF funding to date has been directed to two key projects in Buckie and Elgin High localities focused on supporting equity for all learning with specific focus on lower Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles and improving achievement for all alongside strengthening Primary-Secondary school learning and wellbeing transition. These projects would continue up until 2025/2026 as final year with additional project bids considered, working with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor through revised local guidance and criteria. A process has been initiated for schools to participate in, working with our Attainment Advisor for funding allocation for 2023/2024. Bids will be centrally reviewed against Scottish Government and Education Scotland guidance for SEF and Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress approaches, moderated in partnership with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor.

3.14   CECYP allocation is based on £1,200 per looked after child aged 5-15, as outlined in the Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland, 2020/21 and continues to be allocated on a yearly basis. This funding can then be used to support care experienced children and young people from birth to the age of

26. The funding is provided to local authorities and aims to improve the educational outcomes for care experienced children and young people, supported by the strategic goals of The Promise and the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

3.15 PEF is allocated from 2022/2023 up to 2025/2026 based on the number of pupils from P1 to S3 who are eligible and registered for free school meals or FSM (£1,225 per child or young person). This funding is allocated directly to schools to help close the poverty related attainment gap. Use of FSM as an indicator of need should not promote overly rigid and prescriptive use of the fund. Head Teachers and Teachers are asked to use professional judgement when deciding how funds are targeted to most effectively improve outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty in their schools and communities.

4   IMPACT OF SAC FUNDING IN MORAY ON IMPROVING OUTCOMES

4.1 The SAC Triannual Report 2 (March 2023) is contained within **Appendix 1** for reference. This report provides an overview of the local authority's progress in implementing the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) program for the reporting period December 2022 to March 2023. (Note this Appendix is the triannual report referred to in the minute of the ECLS Committee on 19 April 2023 that request a report to committee, para 11 of the minute refers.)

4.2 Key progress noted with SAC is as follows:

- Finalisation of action plans, recruitment to key posts and identification of key outcomes and measures in relation to SEF project briefs at Elgin High School and Buckie Associated Schools Group. Both projects are underway with schools supported by our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor and local authority lead officer.
- Progress with PEF monitoring and impact, including PEF database population and analysis in order to provide targeted intervention for schools requiring additional support. Schools continue to implement a range of universal and targeted literacy, numeracy, wellbeing, curricular, transition, staffing and resource based interventions in order to support children and young people to thrive and achieve.
- Review of financial processes in relation to PEF with targeted support to schools in order to address PEF underspends, exacerbated as a result of flexibility from Scottish Government over PEF use during the pandemic, including issues with spending PEF monies due to two extended periods of national lockdown and further disruption due to mitigations in place in schools as a result of the pandemic (most lifted in April 2022). Underspend has been reduced by approximately 60% with ongoing work underway in planning for further reduction.
- Continued roll-out of Seemis Progress and Achievement training to senior staff in schools in a 'train the trainer' approach, strengthening tracking of learner attainment and progress, supporting identification of children and young people in need of targeted support.

- Working with Social Work colleagues, we have worked with social work colleagues and our Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) to progress with recruitment for a Virtual School Head Teach for Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP). It is hoped to appoint to this post following second advert in June 2023.
- As part of our Supporting All Learners strategy previously reported to Committee, in-service training has been delivered in support of roll-out of nurture principles across Moray for wider wellbeing support.
- Data analysis and interrogation by the central team is supporting scrutiny and challenge, with Moray Health Checks further informing school self-evaluation. Central officers following submission of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels (ACEL) early indications for June 2022 achievement are undertaking support and challenge visits in line with Moray Quality Improvement Framework approaches under review.
- Our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor has supported the local authority lead officer with review of PEF planning guidance, templates and training with PEF twilight sessions offered in support of PEF planning, outcomes and measures. Our Attainment Advisor continues to support schools on a targeted basis based on emerging needs identified in partnership with the local authority lead officer.

4.3 Positive progress with Stretch Aims set in line with Scottish Government and Education Scotland's Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress (under review) is provided below. It should be noted that nationally, stretch aims are set with measurement of poverty related attainment gap against Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation SIMD) quintile 1 against quintile 5. However, in Moray we have a very low proportion of our school population at time of stretch aim setting (3.3%) within quintile 1 and as such comparisons below are based on smaller cohort size with quintile 5 based on average pupil population of 11.8% at time of stretch aim setting:

- Stretch aim for 1 or more SCQF level 5 qualifications (SQA National A-C pass) has been achieved, with reduction in the poverty-related attainment gap from 2020/2021 in 2021/2022.
- Stretch aim for 1 or more SCQF level 6 qualifications (SQA National A-C pass) has been achieved, with decrease in poverty-related attainment gap.
- While the Annual Participation Measure (APM) for 16-19 year olds has decreased slightly by 0.2% and is 0.8% below the national average, the poverty related attainment gap has narrowed by 1.7%. Positive leaver destinations as reported previously to committee (Analysis of Secondary School Leaver Attainment 2021-2022; 19 April 2023) are above all comparators for the first time in five years.

4.4 Key areas identified for further development:

- Positive progress is being made in percentage of Primary pupils achieving expected levels for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Literacy combined, increasing by 1.1% in 2021/2022 and 2% from stretch aim

achievement. However, current performance remains below the national average by 6% and 4.7% above the national poverty related attainment gap.

- Overall levels of attainment for CfE Numeracy across the Primary stages improved by 4% from 2020/2021. However, levels remain below national average by 6% and the poverty related attainment gap has widened, 7.3% above the national poverty-related attainment gap.
- Progress in achieving stretch aims for attendance and exclusion – with specific regard to secondary schools – as reflected by the national picture are of note. As a result, it is unlikely that ambitious stretch aims will be achieved as a result.

5   NEXT STEPS

5.1   A number of areas identified as next steps are underway in order to support improvements in identified areas, as reported to Committee previously this session within the Initial Analysis of Secondary School Attainment: Session 2021-22 committee paper in November 2022 (para X of the minute refers). Further interventions specific to CfE Achievement of a Level as noted in 4.4 above are outlined in the Initial Analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2022 committee paper reported to Committee on 25 January 2023 (Para 11 of the minute refers).

5.2   Further next steps for continuous improvement have been identified in relation to SAC Impact reporting with focus on:

- Completion of recruitment and selection process for the role of Virtual School Head Teacher (CECYP).
- Finalisation of HR processes in relation to appointment of data/finance colleague to support PEF planning and spend monitoring.
- Analysis and intervention planning – with initial focus on secondary schools in partnership with secondary Headteachers – due to data emerging vis a vis attendance and exclusions.
- Continue at pace with plans in relation to collaborative curriculum change, improving learning teaching and assessment, and system empowerment through leadership at all levels and unified support of the additional support needs review as outlined in Service Plan.
- Continue to work with our Attainment Advisor, attend events and share learning across the Moray Education system.
- Continued monitoring of PEF and SEF project interventions and impact, with case study capture across our schools for sharing good practice.

6   SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)
Reflective of priorities within the Corporate Plan with particular regard to providing a sustainable education service aiming for excellence in line

with council values of ambitious, improving and responsive. With regards to the LOIP, through raising aspirations, focus relates to building a better future for our children and young people in Moray through equity of learning experience offered across our schools; supporting ambitious and confident children, able to reach their full potential and reducing the impact of poverty.

(b) Policy and Legal

The legal implications arising directly from this report are outlined in the National Improvement Framework to close the poverty related attainment gap.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Financial implications may arise only as a result of key recommendations from feedback informing wider strategies moving forwards, outlined above and relation to SAC funding models allocated by Scottish Government. There are often underspends in PEF due to funding being across the financial year yet delivered across the academic session. Work has continued this session in a targeted manner to consider schools where underspends in PEF may arise and plan for improvement in support of children and young people.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. The attached report outlines progress of Moray in implementing the Scottish Attainment Challenge with positive progress reported to date, minimising risk associated with delivery.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. Many interventions are dependent on securing staff to take forward but due to the temporary nature of these, there are often delays in recruitment or sometimes inability to fill vacancies. This has resulted in underspends in some schools, with particular regard to impact of the pandemic in recruiting staff and is being addressed.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee on survey findings and recommendations arising from responses received.

(h) Consultations

Senior Officers in Education, Communities and Organisational Development, Equal Opportunities Officer, Human Resources Manager, and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report as regards their respective responsibilities.

7.   CONCLUSION

7.1   Moray has made positive progress in implementing the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) through Attainment Scotland Funding (PEF, SEF and CECYP funding) as outlined further above and through our SAC Triannual Report 2 Impact Report contained within Appendix 1. A range of universal and targeted interventions and approaches have contributed to positive progress with stretch aims set as part of Scottish Government and Education Scotland's Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress.

7.2   It is recognised that further actions are required in addition to those previously reported to committee through performance reports during session 2022/2023 noted above with specific regard to identified stretch aims: ACEL Literacy and Numeracy, attendance, exclusion, APM. Key actions have been identified previously and in partnership with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor in order to progress key areas of work with our wider system.

7.3   Committee is invited to scrutinise and note the contents of this report, strengths and identified areas for development with positive progress made as we have emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic in addressing key actions for improvement through a range of interventions and approaches using SEF, PEF and CECYP monies through SAC ASF.

Author of Report: Stewart McLauchlan, Quality Improvement Manager

Background Papers:

Appendix 1: SAC Triannual Report 2 – March 2023
Initial Analysis of Secondary School Attainment: Session 2021-22 and Stretch Aims
Analysis of Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels 2022
Analysis of Secondary School Leaver Attainment 2021-2022
SAC Framework for recovery and accelerating progress
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-412 / SPMAN-1315769894-413

Scottish Attainment Challenge

Triannual Report 2
March 2023
Moray Council

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

Contents

Section 1

1.1 Introduction

This report provides an overview of the local authority's progress in implementing the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) program for the reporting period December 2022 to March 2023. The key theme for this report is data for improvement.

1.2 Progress towards next steps

The lead central officer and the attainment advisor (AA) will continue to support outcomes and measures for Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) proposals Significant progress has been made and monthly meetings have taken place with the SEF project leads. Recruitment of key posts has taken place. Driver diagrams have been developed to capture high level aims into smaller manageable goals. Impact will start to be captured and measured against original proposals in term four.

The lead central officer and the AA will populate the local authority Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) database which will give a clear baseline and rationale for PEF support Some progress has been made in populating the PEF database. Data collated evidences impact and emerging spend trends within the local authority (LA). The central team and AA will continue to undertake this task to inform targeted support and maximise impact.

Clarification of PEF carry over and remaining budget for the 21/22 academic session Strong progress has been made in understanding PEF carry over and forecast. The quality improvement manager, alongside finance colleagues, has worked hard to collate this information and disseminate it accordingly. 13 schools have been targeted in this reporting period, with a further six schools identified as requiring a visit from the AA to explore PEF underspend and planning. This has resulted in underspend being reduced by approximately 60% (approx. £600,000) within three months. However, there continues to be a capacity risk attached to this. The central team is reflecting on lessons learned and are exploring creative ways to mitigate risks moving forward.

Central team staff will continue to roll out SEEMiS Progress and Achievement training to relevant staff Significant progress has been made on this task. 75% of staff within Moray have now accessed this training, which is a 45% increase from the last reporting period.

The majority of staff report that this is facilitating tracking attainment and achievement of pupils allowing for targeted support on identified stages or groups/cohorts.

The education central team in collaboration with social work colleagues will recruit and appoint a virtual head teacher for Care Experienced Children and Young People who will lead on the actions identified in the 22/23 summary report Significant progress has been made with the recruitment for this post being concluded. The appointment of this post will provide a holistic overview of identified pupils. It is envisaged that this will help to co-create environments where children and young people will feel more settled and motivated. This, in turn, may help to improve attendance and educational outcomes.

As part of the "Supporting all Learners" (SAL) strategy, nurture training will be delivered to staff via the SAL strategic group in the November inset days Strong progress has been made with training successfully delivered across all eight associated school groups (ASGs). Self-evaluation has indicated that further work is required to ensure that nurture principles are consistently embedded across ASGs. Key actions will form an action plan which is being developed with SAL Strategy Group to address this.

Section 2

Theme: Data for improvement

2.1   Systems and Processes

An extensive programme of events to support staff in using data effectively to inform school improvement has taken place. SEEMiS Progress and Achievement training has been delivered to the majority of senior staff, in a train the trainer approach. This will enable senior leaders to create holistic pictures of learners and target support accordingly.

Robust interrogation by the central team has ensured that the majority of schools have improved knowledge and application of data. Schools provide data information on predicted performance at all levels three times a year. Rigour in self-evaluation for improvement is supported by the "Moray Health Checks." A systematic approach and regular professional dialogue between school leaders and central officers around data and improvement targets takes place regularly. The attainment advisor (AA) supports data interrogation via Scottish Attainment Challenge visits. This has all led to self-reporting of greater practitioner confidence in data use and handling.

One data analyst collates and presents the data. There is an emerging risk associated with this role/task due to capacity issues which is being explored internally. Central team and schools are responsible for analysis of the data which is intersected with national data and local qualitative data. There has been some progress with schools interrogating this data and applying this to PEF planning. A bespoke PEF planning template has been developed. This is currently being used by a majority of schools, however, there is inconsistency in the population of this. The AA will continue to offer targeted support to address emerging need.

Self-evaluations gathered from the ADES, Education Scotland, Moray Collaborative Improvement Event in March has informed future approaches to data gathering and analysis. Reviewing current approaches to data analysis and dataset sharing may lead to increased data literacy and improvement in attainment as this will be based on present, real-time data.

2.2   Broad General Education

There has been no improvement in the poverty related attainment gap for literacy and numeracy. This gap has increased over time. Quintile one v quintile five is being used to measure the poverty-related attainment gap.

Literacy

In 2021-2022, overall levels of attainment in literacy for P1,4,7 combined, improved by 1.1% when compared to 2020-2021. There has been no improvement in attainment compared to 2018-2019 data. Current performance is below the national average by 6%. The poverty-related attainment gap has widened from 2020-2021. The gap has increased from 19.8% to 26 percentage points (pp) in 2021-2022. This is above the national poverty-related attainment gap by 4.7%. Post pandemic poverty-related attainment data has shown a year-on-year increase of the gap. Achievement of stretch aims for literacy (combined) would see improvements in levels of attainment of 2%, which would lead to a decrease of the poverty-related attainment gap from 26% to 18%.

Numeracy

In 2021-2022, overall levels of attainment in numeracy for P1,4,7 combined, improved by 4% when compared to 2020-2021 levels. 2021-2022 data illustrates signs of recovery in relation to pre-pandemic performance with an 8pp increase when comparing 2021-2022 and 2018-2019 data. Although there have been improvements, levels are below the national average by 6%. When looking at the data for each stage in isolation, the most significant improvement is at P4 with a 4% increase. However, the poverty-related attainment gap has widened in 2021-2022, increasing from 17.5% in 2020-2021 to 25pp in 2021-2022. This is higher than the national poverty-related attainment gap by 7.3%. Achievement of stretch aims for numeracy would see improvements in levels of attainment of 3%, which would lead to a decrease of the poverty-related attainment gap from 25% to 16%.

2.3   Senior Phase

Quintile one (Q1) v quintile five (Q5) is being used to measure the poverty-related attainment gap.

1 or more Level 5 qualifications (SQA National A-C pass)

Overall levels of attainment in this measure have increased by 0.02 percentage points (pp) to 86.60% of all school leavers achieving one or more qualifications when compared to 2021. The percentage of leavers from quintile 1 achieving this measure has increased by 18.16pp. The poverty-related attainment gap has reduced considerably from 2020-2021. The gap has decreased from 36.93% to 10.58% in 2021-2022. This demonstrates a 26.35pp improvement. Therefore, the stretch aim for this measure has been achieved.

1 or more Level 6 qualifications (SQA National A-C pass)

Overall levels of attainment in this measure have decreased by 5.01pp to 55.97% of all school leavers achieving one or more qualifications when compared to 2021. The percentage of leavers from Quantile 1 achieving this measure has increased by 4.90pp. The poverty-related attainment gap has reduced considerably from 2020-2021. The gap has decreased from 39.15% to 21.06% in 2021-2022. This demonstrates an 18.09pp improvement. Therefore, the stretch aim for this measure has been achieved.

Annual Participation Measure

There is a marginal decrease in the overall annual participation levels from 91.8% in 2021 to 91.6% in 2022. This is 0.8% below the national average. Despite this, data indicates that there is a narrowing of the poverty related attainment gap for quantile Q1 v Q5 1.7pp. A 1.4% increase of overall levels is required to achieve the stretch aim. There has been a positive increase in the initial leaver destinations in 2022, which is above all comparators for the first time in five years.

2.4 Progress towards stretch aims

Core stretch aims are tracked and monitored via SEEMiS. The Moray tracker is used to measure core plus stretch aims. Progress to achieve stretch aims has been made across the majority of core stretch aims; with a minority requiring progress. Examples include:

- Progress is being made for the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) in literacy (combined): Overall levels for literacy (combined) has increased by 1.1% in 2021/2022. An increase of 2 percentage points (pp) is required to achieve this stretch aim.

- Good progress is being made for the percentage of primary pupils achieving expected CfE numeracy (combined). Overall levels for numeracy (combined) have increased by 4% in 2021/2022. An increase of 3pp is required to achieve this stretch aim.

- Currently, no progress is being made to achieve stretch aims for attendance and exclusion, respectively. This is due all secondary schools reporting below 90% attendance, which is reflective of the national picture. Exclusion rates are also increasing; which will prove a challenge to achieve the attendance and exclusion stretch aims previously set in September 2022. An action plan is being developed to explore the reasons behind this and identify steps that can be taken to address low attendance and alternatives to exclusion. This will include reviewing the attendance policy and developing an attendance toolkit to support schools.

From the ADES/ Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement Sessions that took place in March, priority areas were identified, which will support attainment and stretch aims. This includes co-creation of a holistic plan that will improve learning, teaching, and assessment to meet the needs of all learners. An improved curriculum offer to meet the needs of all learners will also be considered as part of this plan.

Section 3

3.1   Next steps for continuous improvement

- Successfully induct virtual head teacher to lead on the Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund objectives

- Exploration, and if appropriate, the creation of a SAC data/finance post to support SAC planning and capturing impact

- The development of an action plan with clear time frames to address emerging attendance and exclusion data

- Feedback from the Collaborative Improvement session has evidenced the need for a co-created, holistic plan to focus on:
    - Improved learning, teaching, and assessment to meet the needs of all learners
    - Improved curriculum to meet the needs of all learners
    - As part of this, the outstanding additional support needs review will be concluded

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REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (EDUCATION) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2023

1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

(i) scrutinises and notes performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2023; and

(ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

4.1 Each Service Plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an update on progress on the Service Plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

4.2 The narrative included is by exception, however links to Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES		RAG
STRATEGIC LEVEL	Improved attainment at both the Broad General and Senior Phase	84%
SERVICE LEVEL	Curriculum	89%
	Leadership	88%
	Learning, Teaching and Assessment	88%
	Supporting All Learners	70%
	Self-evaluation for Self-improvement	80%
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS		84%

Comment

Service Plan - Annual progress is measured by milestone achievements, with due dates aligning with the academic year (June 2023). At the end of this reporting year satisfactory progress has been made against the majority of actions, where competing work pressures and priorities have impacted action progress these acitons will remain active for 2023/24.

Performance Indicators - Revised suite of indicators and targets agreed linked to Core Stretch Aims. Initial LGBF data for 2021/22 shows improvement for Moray, however performance remains below national rates in a number indicators.

SERVICE PLAN PI'S

- Achieving Target: 2
- Within Target: 3
- Below Target: 0
- Data Only: 3
- Data not available: 9

Total: 17

Strategic Outcomes - successes

4.3 Work continues to progress on improving attainment at both Broad General and Senior Phase levels. As requested by Scottish Government and Education Scotland guided by the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress, Stretch Aims have been set in discussion with both organisations, and provide a basis for measurement and review, to guide improvement activities moving forwards across the service. The suite of indicators and targets were agreed by this Committee on 25 January (item 11 of the Minute refers), covering Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL), Senior Phase and Health and Wellbeing indicators. Initial targets have been set for 2023 with stretch aim aspirational targets projected up to 2026. (Actions EDU STRAT 2.1 and 2.3)

4.4 Senior Phase 2021-22 leaver attainment results were published at the end of March through Insight. Moray results show an improving trend across the majority of key national indicators, including literacy and numeracy, positive leaver destinations and accumulated tariff points. While Moray performed above our virtual comparator and the national results in some of the key indicators, further progress is still required across the leaver attainment and breadth and depth measures for Moray to continue to close the gap across the suite of attainment indicators. A full report on school leaver attainment (2021-22) was submitted to this committee on the 19 April 2023 (item 11 of the Agenda refers). In addition, the Education Public Performance Report (PPR) 2021-22 has been published on the Council website, providing detailed school performance data to include attainment, leaver destinations, attendance and exclusion and staying on rates at an ASG level. (Action EDU STRAT 2.1-2.4 / PI's EdS099a, EdS413.11 and CHN11)

4.5   As part of implementing iMpact Moray Strategy all secondary schools continue to engage with the SCQF Ambassador programme, with schools reviewing SQA catalogue for wider qualifications and accreditation options for students. Seven of eight Secondary Improvement Model (SIM) visits have now been completed, final visit due in term 4. Primary Visits are almost complete with focus on Quality Indicator (QI) 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment with self-evaluation and moderation due to take place in term 4 across the visit programme. Roll-out of Progress and Achievement and wider tracking for ACEL continues with 77% of primary schools reached, the roll out will be completed in term 4 in advance of ACEL census in June 2023. (Action EDU STRAT 2.2 and 2.3)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.6   2021/22 LGBF results for ACEL at primary stage show Moray have improved on the previous year for both Literacy and Numeracy. The rate of improvement was on par with the National performance for Numeracy, however Moray were behind that for Literacy. For both LGBF indicators Moray ranked in the bottom quartile of Scottish local authorities:

- % pupils P1/ P4 / P7 achieving expected level in Literacy – Moray 65.1% / National 70.5% (Rank 27th)
- % pupils P1/ P4 / P7 achieving expected level in Numeracy – Moray 71.8% / National 78% (Rank 30th)

Committee acknowledged the work underway by Education in addressing identified areas of underperformance following submission of the 2021/22 ACEL assessment analysis on 25 January (item 11 of the Minute refers). 2022/23 ACEL early indication data and June predictions are currently being collected and will be used to support and challenge school target setting. (Action EDU STRAT 2.1 and 2.3 / PI's CHN13a and CHN13b)

Service Level Outcomes - successes

4.7   Curriculum actions have progressed well this academic year. The roll-out and implementation of Moray Curricular Progressions from Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings to senior phase are now well established and have been expanded to trial RME, social studies and modern languages – feedback from schools trialling has been very positive. The majority of primary schools are engaging and working with Moray Play and responsive planning approaches, with further training scheduled over the last term. Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing early level progressions will support pre-school children transition into P1. The development of Literacy and Numeracy strategies previously delayed due to staff absences, have progressed with information gathering and review complete and a working group established to take forward and develop the strategies. (Action EDU STRAT CUR 1.1, 1.2 and 1.5)

4.8   Actions around Learning, Teaching and Assessment are on schedule or have completed. Committee approved the Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy on the 25 January 2023 (para 13 of Minute refers) with a roll out plan and ongoing support in place. The Steering Group have devised a case study template to capture work throughout Moray and agreed to champion within Associated School Groups. Development of play pedagogy across ELC and

primary continues with support and challenge from Quality Improvement Officer visits, with key messages informing next steps for a child centred pedagogy. (Action EDU STRAT LT&A 2.5 and 2.6)

4.9 Secondary Improvement Model (SIM) visits have taken place involving a team of QIO/QIM staff and SIM partner school staff. Reports outlining key findings including key strengths and areas for development have been issued to participating schools. Findings used to inform school improvement, supplementing school self-evaluation evidence. Positive feedback has been received on approach taken and rigour of triangulation and depth of visit reporting. A programme of primary school visits for session 2023/24 is to be planned this term, building on the positive work carried out in the Secondary Improvement Model. (Action EDU SERV SELF-EVAL 5.1 & 5.2)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.10 An updated Professional Leadership and Learning (PPL) Strategy was approved at this committee on the 25 January 2023 (para 12 of the Minute refers). Work to refresh and roll out plan from February 2023 onwards has been delayed due to competing workload priorities, this will be carried over to the 2023/24 service plan. Activities around professional leadership and learning are ongoing with resources being updated and added to for practitioners, including 12 tootlkits added to the Moray Education PLL SharePoint site. (Action EDU SERV LEADER 3.1 - 3.6)

4.11 As part of the roll-out and implementation of the Supporting All Learners Strategy, the development of the nurture rubric has not progressed as anticipated, with work now planned to take place over term 4. Recruitment to the post of a Virtual School Head Teacher (CECYP) to lead projects building on the five foundations of 'The Promise' was unsuccessful and will be re-advertised. Further work on strengthening the Curricular Health and Wellbeing offer across Moray has not progressed during term 3 due to the number of Support and Challenge school visits undertaken by officers. This work will be carried forward to the 2023/24 service plan. (Action EDU SERV SUPPORT ALL 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4)

5.   SERVICE PERFORMANCE

5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny. Regular attainment reports are presented at Committee as and when local and national data is available.

5.2 Initial publication of 2021-22 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators in February 2023 will be refreshed in early June. The full suite can be viewed using the My Local Council tool.

5.3 The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

SERVICE PERFORMANCE PI'S (EDUCATION)

Achieving Target: 6
Within Target: 1
Below Target: 4
Data Only: 9
Data not available: 2

Total: 22
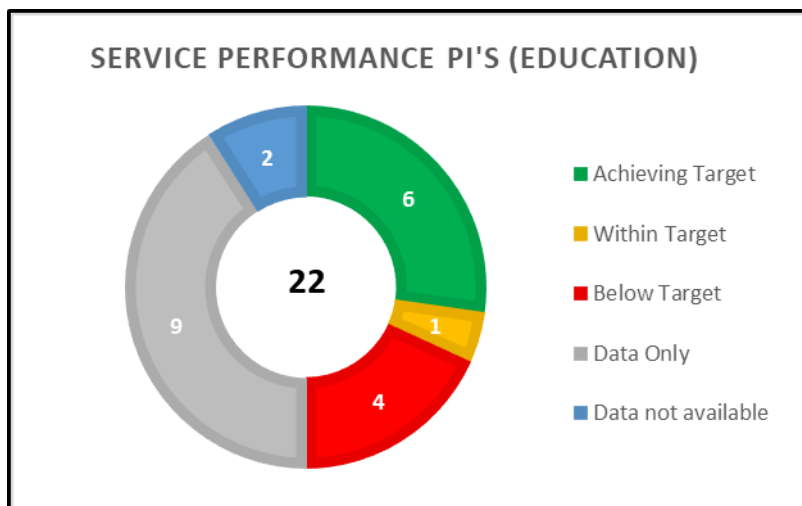
Operational Indicators - successes

5.4 Moray have improved or maintained performance across a number of Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) education indicators. In 2021/22, 79.3% of adults surveyed were satisfied with local schools (2018-21), an increase of 2.3% on the previous year and above the Scottish average of 74.5%. Biennially reported, attendance and exclusion shows Moray improving on previous years' performance and meeting local targets. Overall attendance and Looked After Children attendance rates report Moray being ranked as 6th and 11th respectively. Exclusion rates have fallen sharper in Moray than across Scotland over the two year reporting period, however rates remain above the national average for both overall and LAC pupils. (PI's CHN19a-b, CHN20a-b and CHN10)

Operational Indicators - challenges

5.5 Moray rank in the bottom quartile of Scottish local authorities in four of the five LGBF indicators for total tariff points which are measured across the five SIMD quintile groupings. Only students from SIMD quintile 1 (20% most deprived areas) in Moray performed above the Scottish average and achieving a ranking within the top quartile for equivalent SIMD 1 students. It should be noted that the indicators are based on total tariff and not complimentary tariff points, where the curriculum structures of authorities will impact on points available to students through number of qualifications they are able to take.
Ave. Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 1 - Moray 757 / National 702 (Rank 4th)
Ave. Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 2 - Moray 652 / National 827 (Rank 30th)
Ave. Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 3 - Moray 879 / National 965 (Rank 29th)
Ave. Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 4 - Moray 957 / National 1113 (Rank 30th)
Ave. Total Tariff SIMD Quintile 5 - Moray 1021 / National 1316 (Rank 28th)
(PI's CHN12c-f)

6.   OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints and MP/MSP Enquiries

6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points.

6.2 A total of 27 complaints were received during the second half of 2022/23 with 27 complaints closed. Of those, 10 were at frontline stage (37%), with one being upheld and the remaining 9 not upheld. The average time to resolve frontline complaints was 6 working days, with 6 of the 10 frontline complaints responded within the 5 working day target.

6.3 Due to their complexity, a number of complaints require further investigation in order to achieve a resolution. A total of 17 investigative / escalated complaints were closed in the second half of 2022/23, with one being upheld, nine partially upheld and seven not upheld. The average time taken to resolve investigative / escalated complaints was 28 days, above the 20 working day target. Four of the complaints were resolved within the 20-day timescale, while the majority of the remaining complaints were resolved within 25 working days. The few complaints taking longer required further investigation before a resolution was found.

6.4 Of the 27 complaints resolved two thirds were at primary school settings and the remaining third at secondary schools. The majority of complaints related to process/procedure issues (15), while 6 were against staff, 3 for bullying concerns and the remaining 3 categorised as other.

6.5 Over the reporting period common complaint issues within Education included administrative shortcomings and issues around the additional support needs of pupils. Quality Improvement Officers have been involved in training school staff on SEEMIS to ensure that the system is used appropriately and sensitive data is up to date and guidelines followed in sharing data. Education officers have also worked closely with Beechbrae to provide Behavioural Support Strategy (BSS) training to staff, while relevant schools have held restorative conversations between staff and pupils where relationships had broken down.

6.6 A total of 17 MP/MSP enquiries were received during the second half of 2022/23, with all enquiries resolved. Overall 25 MP/MSP enquiries were received in the reporting year, less than half the number received in 2021/22 (51).

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)
6.7 No information to report.

Case Studies
6.8 No case studies available for this report.

Consultation and Engagement
6.9 No information to report.

7. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) Policy and Legal

The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) Financial implications

None.

(d) Risk Implications

None.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

None.

(i) Consultations

The Head of Education (Chief Education Officer), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. <u>CONCLUSION</u>

8.1 **As at 31 March 2023, overall progress against the service plan for 2022/23 was 84% complete, with the majority of actions scheduled to be completed by the end of the 2022/23 academic year. Actions subject to slippage have been impacted by competing priorities, outstanding actions at the end of the academic year will be reviewed for 2023/24.**

Author of Report: Neil Stables, Research and Information Officer
Background Papers: Service Plan Actions
                      Service Plan Performance Indicators
                      Service Performance Indicators
                      Service Complaints
                      Public Performance Report (Education)
Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-401

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT - EDUCATION RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to 31 March 2023.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of section III (D) (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to the functions of the Council as an Education Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

i) scrutinises and notes performance in the areas of Service Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end of March 2023; and

ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where required.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

4.1 Each Service Plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic priorities. This report provides an interim update on progress on the service plan, key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and further direction where performance requires attention.

4.2 The narrative included is by exception, however links to backing tables for all Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

Figure 1

	SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES	RAG
STRATEGIC	Empowering and connecting communities	32%
	Improve our understanding of the issues in our communities based on the experience of local people	67%
	A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	46%
	Improve the Wellbeing of our population	50%
RECOVERY	Empower and support communities to further develop capacity	100%
SERVICE	A Sustainable Council: that provides valued services to our communities	62%
	Improve the Wellbeing of our population	58%
	Building a better future for our children & young people	64%
	Workforce Development to meet demands and deliver priorities	21%
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS		66%

Comment

Q4 2022/23 - Whilst overall the plan is making good progress there are a number of Service Level actions which are overdue and a number which have not made expected progress.

Data not available - Data not yet published or unavailable due to reporting timescales.

SERVICE PLAN PI'S

40

- 12 Achieving Target
- 4 Within Target
- 5 Below Target
- 11 Data Only
- 8 Data not available

Strategic Outcomes - successes

4.3 Development of Community Action Plans in Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth, in partnership with anchor organisations are all at either stage 7 or 8 of the 8-stage process. The Forres community plan is due for publication in quarter 1 2023/24. In Keith funding was secured and the process to recruit a Community Development Officer is underway. After public consultation on projects the Lossiemouth Community Development Trust are supporting plans to progress the 'Men's Shed' and the asset transfer of Station Park. The number of local residents engaged in the locality planning process has almost doubled to 425 during the course of 2022/23. (Action STRAT ERC 2.2, PI's ERC009, ERC009a)

4.4 Planned work on tackling the affordability and standard of Moray school estate has progressed in the second half of 2022/23. The annual update of the Learning Estate Strategy Plan will be presented for approval by the programme board in quarter 2 2023/24. Analysis of statutory consultation on the closure of Inveravon Primary School concluded with results informing the report submitted to this Committee on 19 April 2023 (para 16 of the minute refers) with the decision on the closure being considered by Full Council in May 2023 before review and ratification by the Scottish Government in July 2023. Following a decision at Full Council on 28 September 2022, Crossroads Primary school was 'mothballed' in January 2023. Consultation with parents

and the community will take place from May 2023 with an update report on next step options anticipated in June 2023.

4.5   An updated position on the Findrassie Primary School new build project was provided to this Committee on 25 January 2023 (item 18 of the Minute refers) noting the change in projected pupil numbers and challenges impacting on affordability and delivery. Projected pupil numbers show capacity within current catchment schools, bi-annual monitoring will ensure, if projections change, any action required can be taken timeously. The Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Government Learning Directorate have agreed to transfer Learning Estate Investment Programme Phase 2 project to the extension of Elgin High School.

4.6   LEIP Phase 3 bids have been submitted for future Forres Academy and Buckie High School projects however a Scottish Government decision has been delayed by 5 months. Meantime work around option appraisals and site identification in Forres is progressing,

4.7   Suitability surveys have been carried out in 51 of 52 schools, the remaining secondary school survey will be completed in quarter 1 2023/24. All schools surveyed have achieved B (Satisfactory) or better.

4.8   Works on Elgin High School temporary accommodation were completed on time and cost. The feasibility study on the permanent extension commenced in January 2023 and is anticipated to complete by June 2023.

4.9   Further requirement analysis underway and due to complete by June 2023 to inform Universal Free School Meal scheme expansion to P6 / P7 (Action STRAT ERC 3.1, PI's EdS100, ERC011)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.10   Of the £1.975m Participatory Budget (PB) potential, based on the indicative 1% of overall council budget, £474k of spend / commitment has been identified to date. Whilst showing improvement in comparison to 2021/22, the 24% achieved falls significantly below target. With just 36% of council services devolved to participatory budgeting processes, the limited participation of budget managers across services is a contributory factor. A number of projects are ongoing within Moray communities; however, all involve relatively small amounts of funding (5k - £85k). (Action STRAT ERC 1.2, PI's FS214, ERC005)

4.11   An evaluation report relating to the Wellbeing Support pilot project is expected in May 2023. The Intensive Family Support and Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership projects, continue to be impacted by staffing priorities and the withdrawal of quality improvement and service redesign support by national bodies. Support is now in place from Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) for a workshop in May to develop and agree next steps for the Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Project. (Action STRAT ERC 4.1)

Service Level Outcomes - successes

4.12 The development and expansion of performance opportunities for everyone involved in music programmes completed during quarter 4, culminating with the Moray Music Centre spring concert. Moray ensembles competed in various regional festival competitions and the inaugural Moray Young Musician final competition took place as well as numerous gradings and exams. A target to deliver 20 musical performance opportunities in 2022/23 was exceeded by a significant margin with 90 delivered, quarter 3 witnessed the biggest increase with 67. (Action SERV ERC 3.3, PI ERC024)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.13 The implementation of the Sport and Leisure Business Plan did not complete by the target due date of 31 March 2023. A review of the Business Plan is to take place in quarter 1 of 2023/24 to determine next steps for the future plan. The development of a marketing plan struggled to progress due to resource pressures. During quarter 4 a marketing company was engaged to create and implement service delivery tools. Despite some slippage, recovery of admissions continues, with a significant increase of 24.5% reported in comparison with 2021/22, resulting in a 42.6% rise in revenue over the period. (Action SERV ERC 1.2, PI's ERC018, ERC018b, SCC1, SCC2)

4.14 Planned engagement with communities to further develop programmes did not complete by 31 December 2022 as expected, progress is currently at 89%. Community engagement was hampered by access to available funding streams, other service elements being prioritised and a more reactionary than proactive approach to community requests. More focussed engagement is planned for 2023/24 with an emphasis on providing services to communities not currently engaged. (Actions SERV ERC 2.2, PI SCC5c)

4.15 Partnership programmes to support positive transitions from secondary school did not complete as planned by 31 March due to no activity taking place during quarter 3. The delivery of Health and Wellbeing interventions are seen as a significant driver for enhancing employability of young people. 80 young people took part in the programmes which were built around resilience and confidence building. A further 151 young people have engaged through detached work and community-based projects during quarter 4. (Action SERV ERC 3.2)

4.16 Undertaking ERDP's (Employee, Review and Development Process) for all staff has proved challenging due to workload pressures for senior managers. It is estimated that 65% of ERDP's were carried out within timescales. This estimate does not include school or early learning and childcare based staff funded through the Additional Support Needs (ASN) budget. (Action SERV ERC 4.1, PI ERDP.ERC3)

Recovery and Renewal Actions

4.13 Although work to support community councils develop resilience plans has completed as planned by the end of March 2023, support will continue for groups expressing an interest in developing resilience plans. A total of 12 groups are currently supported. Further training events for volunteer groups are being developed, one example of which is a basic life-saving skills course in the use of an external defibrillator. (Action REC ERC 1.1, PI ERC026)

5.   SERVICE PERFORMANCE

5.1   In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.

5.2   The finalised publication of 2021/22 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) are not expected until late May 2023. Where indicators for 2021-22 have been published for this service they have been incorporated within the relevant sections of this report if results are used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. LGBF indicators for Education, Resources and Communities are identifiable with the CLS prefix.

5.3   The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

Figure 2
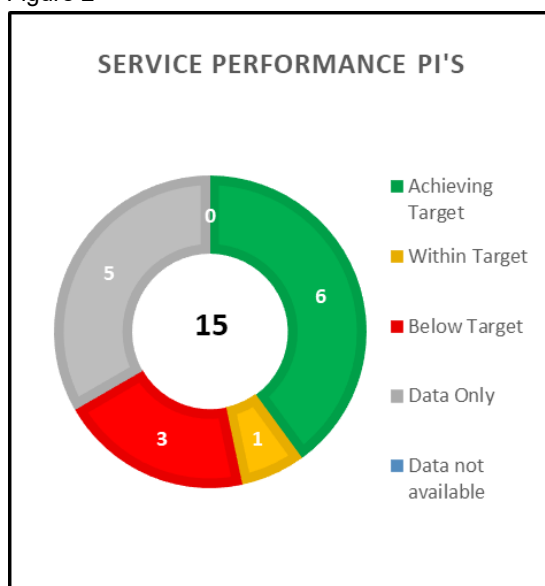
Operational Indicators - successes

5.4   The cumulative number of individuals attending holiday and term-time sports coaching programme sessions at the end of quarter 4 (8,443) exceeded target of 8,000 and shows a 40% increase in comparison to 2021/22. (PI EdS006.2)

5.5   Attendances at indoor leisure facilities have risen by 30% in comparison to the same period of 2021/22 continuing to show increased public confidence in service provision. (PI's EdS407.1, EdS407.2 & EdS409.2)

5.6   £1,761,262 in revenue was raised from admissions to leisure service in 2022/23, an increase of £346,912 from 2021/22 and exceeding target of £1,485,068. (PI's ERC018a)

Operational Indicators – challenges and actions to support

5.7   Whilst the number of attendances at staffed community centres (133,705) have increased in comparison to 2021/22 (73,849) they fell short of target (176,250). With the future of Elgin Community Centre uncertain several, previously regular, group bookings have chosen to use alternative facilities. (PI EdS407.5)

5.8   The proportion of borrowers (13.3%) showed a small increase from 2021/22 (10.6%) but did not achieve target of 20%. During the COVID period readers found other methods of accessing materials such as Amazon and it would appear than many have remained using these methods. The new marketing plan will seek to encourage readers to return to accessing free library materials. (PI EdS511.2)

5.9   80% of data protection requests were responded to within 30 calendar days during quarter 4, contributing to a 2022/23 average of 81.3%, well below the target set at 95%. Throughout 2022/23 there has been a number of staff changes, placing pressure on the service. It is envisaged the response times will improve during 2023/24. (PI CE037)

6.   OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints and MP/MSP Enquiries

6.1   In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

6.2   A total of seven complaints were received during the second half of 2022/23 and seven complaints closed. Of those, five were at frontline stage (71%), four were upheld and one was not upheld. Four (80%) of frontline complaints were closed within the 5-day target timescale.

6.3   One investigative complaint was closed in the same period, this complaint was not upheld. Time to resolve the complaint was within the 20-day target timescale.

6.4   Of the seven complaints resolved five were regarding leisure services, three of which concerned Forres and two concerning Buckie facilities. Four of these complaints were upheld, the remaining complaint was not upheld. During 2022/23 there were a total of six complaints made regarding Forres swimming facilities, 42% of all complaints resolved within 2022/23. The nature of the complaints related mainly to staffing issues, lessons have been learned and actions taken to redress the issues raised.

6.5   Fifteen MP/MSP enquiries were received during the second half of 2022/23, 14 of which were resolved within the period. Half of all enquiries related to leisure services.

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

6.6   The service contributed to a national HMI thematic review on community development approaches to the Covid pandemic, work relating to local resilience groups was mentioned as good practice.

Case Studies

6.7   Resilience planning progressed with community councils and other stakeholders. £207k of external funding secured for local resilience groups and a successful community conference delivered by the Joint Community Councils of Moray

6.8   The Community Support Unit (CSU) had significant involvement in generating £309k of external funding for community groups – with a further £20k from other Community Learning and Development (CLD) teams. In addition, a further £290k was leveraged with CSU support. Examples of this funding include community councils resilience funding (£207k), play parks (£55k), Fisherman's Hall (£33k).

Consultation and Engagement

6.9   Long-term engagement in support of learning estate strategy and programme is ongoing. Customer engagement has been a key part of the journey towards decision making around the learning estate. Feedback will inform options development over the next 2-3 years.

7.   SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a)   Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))
Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b)   Policy and Legal
The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c)   Financial implications
None.

(d)   Risk Implications
None.

(e)   Staffing Implications
None.

(f)   Property
None.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
None

(i) Consultations
The Head of Education Resources and Communities, Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer, and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 By 31 March 2023, Service Plan actions are 66% complete with most actions progressing well. Two Strategic actions and two Service actions are subject to slippage, it is anticipated that these actions will make progress during of 2023/24 to bring them back on schedule. Three further Service Actions did not complete within agreed timescales.

Author of Report: Iain Sneddon, Research and Information Officer
Background Papers: Service Plan Actions
Performance Indicators
Service Performance Indicators
Service Complaints
Ref: SPMAN-9425411-238

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: PERFORMANCE REPORT (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK) – PERIOD TO MARCH 2023

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the performance of the service for the period to
31 March 2023.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of section III (D) (2) of the
Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to the functions of the Council
as a Social Work Authority.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:

**i) scrutinises and notes performance in the areas of Service
Planning, Service Performance and other related data to the end
of March 2023; and**

**ii) notes the actions being taken to improve performance where
required.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 On 7 August 2019, the Council, approved a revised Performance
Management Framework for services (para 5 of the minute refers).

4. SERVICE PLANNING

4.1 Each service plan sets out the planned strategic and service level priorities
and outcomes it intends to deliver in the coming year aligning closely with
financial planning, corporate and community planning partnership strategic
priorities. This report provides a final update on progress on the service plan,
key outcomes and performance indicators. Committee is invited to review
progress to secure assurance that is satisfactory and to provide scrutiny and
further direction where performance requires attention.

4.2   The narrative included is by exception, however links to backing tables for all Service Plan Actions and Performance Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

Figure 1

SERVICE PLAN PRIORITIES		RAG
STRATEGIC LEVEL	Improved outcomes for looked after and care experienced children and young people	92%
	Children and Young people are safe from harm, abuse and neglect	77%
SERVICE LEVEL	Instigate transformational change programme	100%
OVERALL PLAN PROGRESS		87%

Comment
Progress is measured over the 3-year plan period. Annual progress is measured by milestone achievements. Whilst making good progress during Q3 & Q4, the plan failed to complete by 31 March 2023.
Data not available - Data not yet published or unavailable due to reporting timescales.

SERVICE PLAN PI'S

- Achieving Target — 9
- Within Target — 4
- Below Target — 8
- Data Only — 9
- Data not available — 0
- Total: 30
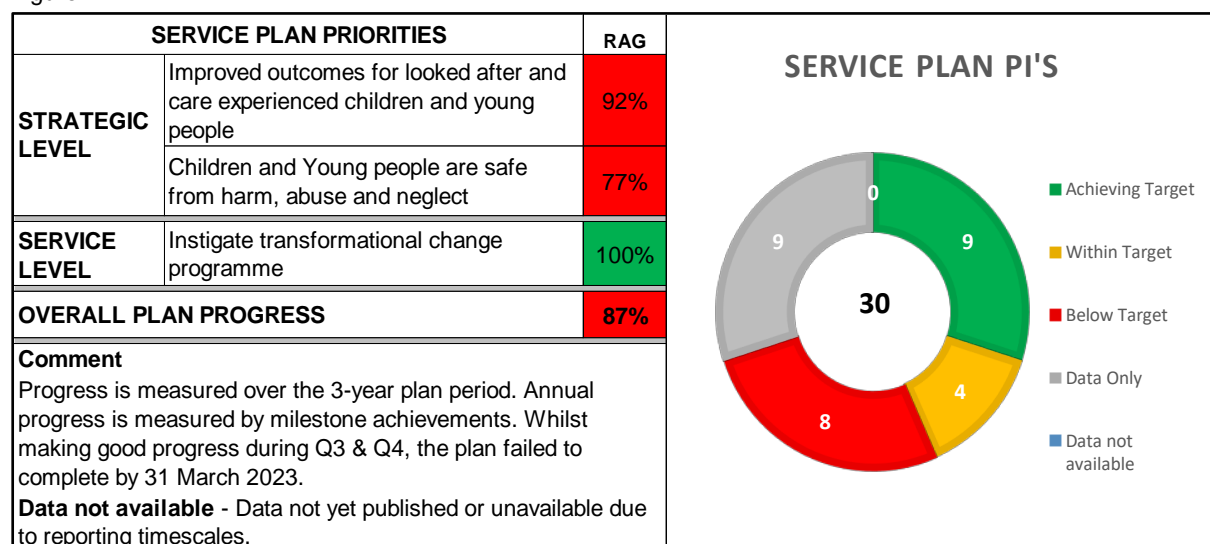
Strategic Outcomes – successes

4.3   As at 31 March 2023 there were 171 Looked after Children (LAC) in Moray, a rate of 9.5 per 1,000 population aged 0-17 years, continuing to remain below that of the comparator authority median of 10.5. (PI's CSCF100, LAC003)

4.4   At the plan end date of 31 March 2023, six of the eight Strategic actions have completed, five during quarter 4 as detailed below.

4.5   All milestones to monitor movement in placements before permanence is achieved have completed as planned. Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) monthly meetings continue in tandem with tracking and oversight meetings. These provide a level of scrutiny to the process matching young people to the most appropriate placement reducing the need for placement moves. There has been a sustained year on year decrease in the percentage of Looked after Children with more than one placement in the last year to 14.9% in 2020/21, ranking 6 against all other local authorities. Maintaining and expanding foster carers is crucial to maintain service stability. A recruitment strategy and marketing plan is moving forward at pace to increase the number of varied placement options. (Action STRAT1.2, PI CHN23)

4.6   There continues to be positive feedback from children and young people about feeling secure and supported within kinship care placements which has been consistently reflected within social work reporting throughout the course of 2022/23. The Champion's Board is becoming well embedded in practice with young people being involved in recruitment, tendering processes and with better representation on strategic groups. Moving forward the Champions Board will be supported by the newly recruited Engagement officer. (Action STRAT 1.3)

4.7   In the quarter to March 2023, 9.2% of care experienced young people were in the youth and criminal justice systems, contributing to a year on year decrease well below the accepted target level of 15%. With all planned milestones complete, effective processes are in place to identify CEYP and refer appropriately to prevent duplication of work and overwhelming the individual with multiple contacts. Reviews take place at regular intervals to ensure the young person's voice is heard and exit questionnaires completed to inform future practice and a partner agency Youth Justice Sub-group meets regularly to analyse data to inform future action required to further reduce the representation of CEYP within Youth Justice System. (Action STRAT 1.5, PI LAC014)

4.8   The continued proportionate reduction of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) due to neglect concerns marked completion of the final milestone. The number of Children on the CPR, whilst remaining static during the first three quarters of 2022/23, dropped significantly in quarter 4 from 40 to 23. The reduction of those registered for neglect concerns dropped from 11 to 5.The implementation of the 'Graded Care Profile 2' is well underway with 'Train the Trainer' dates scheduled to take place in the later part of 2023 allowing for the full roll-out of training to partnership staff. The cost-of-living crisis remains as the largest contributory factor impacting upon neglect. Social work staff are working with families to differentiate between poverty and neglect to establish which presents as the main factor. (Action STRAT 2.1, PI CMS021c1)

4.9   The proportion of children on the CPR due to parental alcohol and/or drug concerns, has reduced during 2022/23. A whole system approach to intensive family support for children and young people impacted by drug and alcohol use is actively developing and a pilot project underway is a key priority within the Children's Services Plan 2023/26. Work with families continues to focus on supporting parents to reduce their use and help them to recognise the impact of their use on their children. (Action STRAT 2.2, PIs CMS021g1 & CMS021h1)

Strategic Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.10   Actions to support the increase of children and young people looked after in kinship and foster care and care at home have not completed within the original due date of 31 March 2023. Progress will continue into 2023/24, a Business Plan has been completed as part of the review and a marketing plan is in place setting out a campaign schedule for the coming year. In addition to continued awareness raising, a targeted approach within the caring profession has been added. A panel to consider all children at risk of becoming accommodated away from their parents and assess families for functional family therapy, a new service to support families stay together and connected is being formed. The working group continue to meet regularly to monitor progress. Numbers of children in foster care and kinship care have remained relatively stable, the percentage under home supervision and in kinship care fell short of target. Perhaps due to a reduction in fostering capacity, the proportion of brothers and sisters remaining together within the same placement fell for the third consecutive year to 69%. As of March 2023, 82% of Looked after Children were cared for in a community setting, below the target of 87.5% and the proportion in residential accommodation continues to remain stubbornly high at 18% showing little change over the last four years.

The service faces the ongoing challenge of receiving high numbers of referrals exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. (Action STRAT1.1, PI's CSCF101, EdS601.01, Eds606.02, Eds606.03, EdS606.09, LAC009, LAC010, LAC013, CSCF102, CSCF104).

4.11 Domestic abuse concerns for children registered on the CPR have increased in the second half of 2022/23 to t 47.8%, significantly higher than the target (16.9%) set pre-pandemic. High levels of domestic abuse are a legacy of the COVID pandemic which saw numbers rise steeply across the UK. The Social Work Department continue to work on implementing the Safe and Together Model into practice to assess risk when children are living in environments where gender-based violence is a risk. Core sessions of training were delivered to 75 staff across the partnership in November and February, it is anticipated these numbers will increase to around 190. (Action STRAT 2.3, PI CMS021f1).

Service Level Outcomes - successes

4.12 Actions contributing to the transformational change programme 'Our children return to Moray' have completed as planned. During 2022/23 only one child was placed 'out of area' with three returning to Moray. The Placement Oversight Group continues to meet monthly to track children who are in interim, emergency, out of area and agency placements. Contract monitoring templates are in place with service providers allowing effective scrutiny of service delivery along with information gathering documentation to record and monitor comments, complaints, incidents and restraints. (Action SERV1.4, PI's LAC004, LAC005)

Service Level Outcomes – challenges and actions to support

4.13 Nothing to report.

5.   SERVICE PERFORMANCE

5.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, operational performance is reviewed quarterly by departmental management. Areas performing well and/or areas subject to a decreasing trend or where benchmarking results show performance significantly below comparators will be reported to this committee for member scrutiny.

5.2 The finalised publication of 2021/22 Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators are not expected until late May 2023. Where indicators for 2021-22 have been published for this service, they have been incorporated within the relevant sections of this report. The results can be used to evidence progress against strategic, service plan or service performance priorities. LGBF indicators for Children and Families & Criminal Justice Social Work are identifiable with the CHN prefix.

5.3   The narrative included is by exception, links to Service Performance
        Indicators can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this
        report.
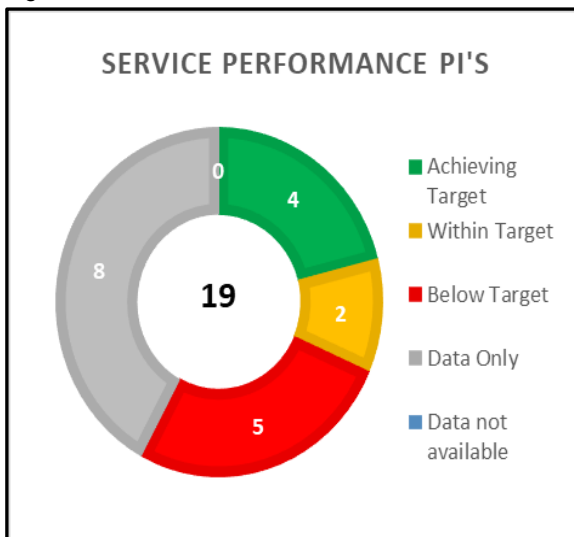
Figure 2

Operational Indicators - successes

5.4   Figure 3 below shows numbers of LAC and children on the CPR are on a
        reducing trend. (PI's CSCF100, CMS013)

Figure 3
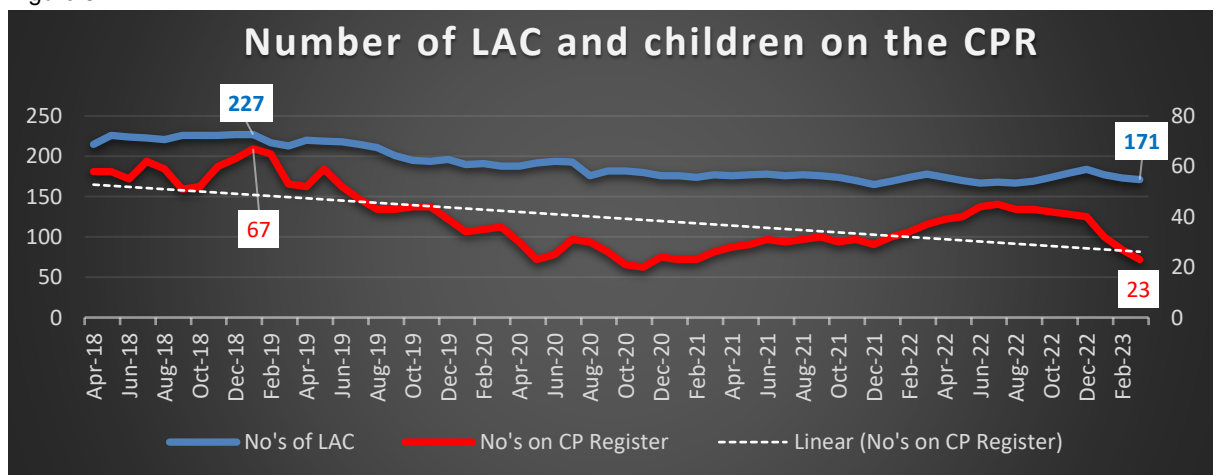
5.5   As at March 2023, 4% of LAC were in foster care placements paid for by
        Moray Council, an improvement on previous year's performance of 6%. (PI
        LAC007)

5.6   One young person was placed in a secure placement during quarter 4, the
        proportion (0.6%) however remains below target (1%). (PI 606.08)

5.7   Children subject to compulsory measures of supervision per 1,000 of 0-17
        population has reduced further during 2022/23 and at 6.65 remains
        significantly lower than target of 10. (PI CSCF013)

5.8 The number of children on the CPR, remained relatively static around 40 in the first three quarters of 2022/23, but dropped significantly to 23 in quarter 4, below 37 reported in the same period last year. (PI CMS013)

5.9 The number of Criminal Justice reports submitted to court by the due date continues to remain at 100%. (PI CJ01)

Operational Indicators - challenges and actions to support

5.10 Although lower than 2021/22 result, the proportion of LAC in paid placements (72.8%) remains above the 65% target which has not been achieved for a number of years. Until the proportion of children accommodated in residential placements reduces it is unlikely that the comparator authority median target will be met. (PI LAC006)

5.11 In the 2022/23 reporting period, on average 89% of initial case conferences were held within planned timescales, below the 100% target. As with last year, the second half of 2022/23 accounted for one third of case conferences, with just two held slightly outwith target timescales. (PI CMS001a)

5.12 In quarter 4, two of the fifteen review case conferences were held out with target timescales of 28 days with an average result of 45 days. Throughout 2022/23, in the few review case conferences being held late the majority were held within one week of target. The three-year trend does show time taken to hold late conferences is increasing and the service will closely monitor in order to improve performance. (PI CMS002e)

5.13 In the quarter to March, 82% of practitioners from relevant agencies invited to attend case conferences did so, just below the 100% target. Similarly to the fall in the number of case conferences held, attendance has dropped in the second half of the year, particularly in relation to housing and support worker representatives, perhaps reflective of the competing pressures within those services. Social work attendance has been maintained at 100% during 2022/23. (PI CMS004)

5.14 As of 31 March 43.5% of children on the CPR had been registered for more than 12 months, significantly higher than the target (15%). With a significant drop in the number registered to 23, it is perhaps indicative of case complexity to ensure children are safe to be removed from the register. (PI CMS017f)

6. OTHER PERFORMANCE RELATED DATA

Complaints and MP/MSP Enquiries

6.1 In line with the Performance Management Framework, complaints are reviewed quarterly by departmental management in terms of time taken to respond, outcome and learning points. Detailed tables can be accessed within the Background Papers section of this report.

6.2 A total of 19 complaints were received during the second half of 2022/23 and 15 complaints closed. Of those, 12 were at frontline stage (63%), four were not upheld and the remaining eight were closed via resolution. Six (50%) frontline complaints were closed within the 5-day timescale, with an average closure time for all frontline complaints of 8 days.

6.3 Two investigative complaints were closed in the same period, both of which were not upheld and closed just outwith the 20-day timescale.

6.4 One escalated complaint was closed in quarters 3 & 4. This complaint was upheld and responded to within nine days.

6.5 A total of 6 MSP enquiries were received in the period between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023, four were resolved. The remaining two were out with the jurisdiction of the Councils decision making ability

Other Performance (not included within Service Plan)

6.6 Nothing to report.

Case Studies

6.7 Nothing to report.

Consultation and Engagement

6.8 Nothing to report.

7. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**
Performance measurement is used to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of services to meet the Council's priorities in both the Corporate Plan and the LOIP.

(b) **Policy and Legal**
The Council has a statutory requirement to publish a range of information that will demonstrate that it is securing best value and assist in comparing performance both over time and between authorities where appropriate.

(c) **Financial implications**
None.

(d) **Risk Implications**
None.

(e) **Staffing Implications**
None.

(f) **Property**
None.

(g) **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**
An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform the Committee on performance.

(h) **Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts**
None

(i)   Consultations
Head Service (Chief Social Work Officer), Chief Officer (Health and Social Care Moray), Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Service Managers, Legal Services, the Equal Opportunities Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer have been consulted with any comments received incorporated into this report.

8   CONCLUSION

8.1   The period to 31 March 2023 represents the end of the three-year service plan, with 87% of Service Plan Actions completed. Two Strategic Actions did not complete within target timescales and will be carried forward to 2023/24. All Service Level Actions were completed as planned.

Author of Report:	Iain Sneddon, Research & Information Officer
Background Papers:	Service Plan Actions
	Performance Indicators
	Service Performance Indicators
	Service Complaints
Ref:	SPMAN-305227695-89

REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 7 JUNE 2023

SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN 2023-26

BY: CHIEF OFFICER, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE MORAY

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the Children's Services Plan 2023-26 which was signed off by the Community Planning Board on 17 May 2023.

1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of sections III (D) (1 and 2) of the Council's Scheme of Administration in relation to the functions of the Council as an Education and Social Work Authority.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Part 3 of the Children Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on the local authority and its relevant health board to prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority, in respect of each three-year period. It is expected that they will work collaboratively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families at various stages of the plan's development and review.

2.2 Part 3 of the Act seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is integrated, focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches, and dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing. It aims to ensure that any action to meet need is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, this is taken to prevent need arising.

2.3 The Scottish Government reviews all Children's Services Plans within 6 months of submission in line with statutory criteria detailed below.

1.	**Does the Children's Services Plan:** Have a clear, ambitious compelling shared vision of what will be achieved by the end of the plan?
2.	Reflect relevant National Performance Framework Outcomes?
3.	Incorporate a robust evidence-based joint strategic needs assessment

	of the current population of the children and young people in its area?
4.	Include analysis of quantitative and qualitative evidence and data relating to both service performance and child wellbeing?
5.	Identify a manageable number of measureable priorities clearly linked to the joint needs assessment to ensure that the rationale behind the priorities is explicit?
6.	Cover local services which fall into the categories of both 'children's services' and 'related services' in its scope?
7.	Recognise and describe services which can fulfil both 'primary prevention' and 'early intervention' across all aspects of wellbeing?
8.	Describe how the **Community Planning Partnership** is creating and maintaining effective Getting it Right for Every Child practice for individual children, young people and their families?
9.	Describe how the **Community Planning Partnership** is using children's rights to inform the structural, procedural and outcome framework of the plan?
10.	Convey a shared sense of ongoing engagement and ownership with staff, children, young people, families and the wider community, evidencing that the **Community Planning Partnership** has made a full use of stakeholder's ideas and suggestions?
11.	Set out a comprehensive strategy for supporting families through a broad range of preventative and early intervention approaches from universal services to targeted intensive support and describe the rationale for how and where the family support services are provided?
12.	Describe what services are going to be developed in the future and specifying which areas will see **disinvestment** in order to facilitate the shift of resources towards preventative and early intervention options?
13.	Set clear indicators for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of children's services in terms of their success in responding to and addressing children's wellbeing needs?
14.	Present all the information in an easily accessible format which is SMART?
15.	Illustrate links to other statutory plans and reports?

2.4   In June 2022, GLG agreed to incorporate the following statutory plans within CSP:-
- Child Poverty Plan
- Corporate Parenting Plan
- Children's Rights and Participation Plan

2.5   In addition, it was agreed to incorporate the Promise Plan and the Child Protection Improvement Plan. The Scottish Government has endorsed this approach.

2.6   The action plans within the CSP detail the steps we will take to both meet our statutory duties and address the key areas of concern, as highlighted through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Development Process

2.7　GLG members devolved responsibility to produce the CSP to a multiagency development group made up of representatives identified from their own organisations. In addition, there was representation from Adult Services.

2.8　The development process is detailed in P10 of the Children's Services Plan and meets all requirements, as set out in the statutory guidance.

2.9　The plan is based on a robust Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which was produced on a partnership basis, led by Public Health. JSNA Presentation 2023

Key Points to Highlight

2.10　All efforts have been made to simplify the planning landscape within Children's Services.

2.11　By incorporating the key partnership plans that have an exclusive focus on improving outcomes for children and families into the CSP, the number of separate and often disconnected planning forums is reduced. The added benefits of this approach are:-

- Less staff time is spent on producing and reporting against plans. The Children's Services Plan Annual Reports will meet out statutory reporting responsibilities in relation to Child Poverty, Children's Rights and Corporate Parenting.
- More coordinated engagement activities with children, young people and families, which minimises the risk over consultation.

2.12　The action plans are more detailed, based on feedback from the members of the strategic groups with responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the previous plan. This approach ensures there is greater clarity on the steps that need to be taken to achieve the agreed outcomes.

2.13　Throughout the development of the plan, there has been a clear focus on ensuring the plan comprises of a manageable set of actions. This includes the specific actions we are required to take to meet our statutory responsibilities. The Tackling Child Poverty and Improving Outcomes for Care Experienced and Looked After Children are lengthier, to reflect statutory responsibilities, as well as the requirement to deliver the Promise Change Plan 2021-24.

The majority of the short-term actions are already underway as we transition from CSP 2020-23 to the new plan.

2.14　The CSP incorporates the national wellbeing dataset
Baseline data is included in the 'Wellbeing of Moray's Children' section of the plan (see P7).

2.15　The CSP has been reviewed through a Children's Services inspection lens, given the impending inspection of Children's Services, which has a clear focus on how the partnership is improving outcomes for children and young people in need of care and protection.

2.16   This plan has been written with and for children, young people and their families. The language throughout reflects this and meets our requirement to Keep the Promise.

2.17   Children 1st have kindly agreed to support children, families and frontline practitioners to produce a 'plan on a page'. It will be distributed across the partnership and publically displayed.

2.18   The Community Planning Board have requested a mid-point progress report and interactive session to explore how they can best support the delivery of the plan.

3.   **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a)   **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)**
The Children's Services Plan 2023-26 supports the delivery of key priorities within the Corporate Plan and the LOIP

'Provide opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives with a strong sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination' Corporate Plan 2024

'Building a better future for our children and young people in Moray' from the LOIP.

(b)   **Policy and Legal**
Part 3 of the Children Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on the local authority and its relevant health board to prepare a Children's Services Plan for the area of the local authority, in respect of each three-year

A progress report must be submitted to the Scottish Government on an annual basis.

(c)   **Financial implications**
The CSP outlines the partnership commitment to pool their finite resources to meet their shared responsibility to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. It will be reviewed and revised as required on an annual basis.

(d)   **Risk Implications**
There are no known risk implications.

(e)   **Staffing Implications**
There are no staffing implications arising from the production of the annual report.

(f)   **Property**
There are no property issues.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact
An Equalities/Socio Economic Impact Assessment is not required as this report is to inform Committee of the Children's Services Plan (2023-26).

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts
Not applicable.

(i) Consultations
GIRFEC Leadership Group and Community Planning Officers Group have reviewed and endorsed the plan.

Extensive consultation undertaken with children, young people, their families and the front line practitioners who know them best informed the priorities and action plans within the CSP. See details on Page 10.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The CSP (2023-26) is for noting so all organisations are fully cognisant of the multi-agency commitment to improve the lives of the children, young people and families of Moray.

OUR PROMISE TO THE CHILDREN OF MORAY

MORAY CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN 2023-26

Being Safe – Being Healthy and Happy - Being all that I can be - Having people in my life that care about me- Being Active - Being Respected –Being Included

Moray Community Planning Partnership

we will
#KeepThePromise

getting
it right
for every child
in Moray

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welcome to Moray Children's Services Plan 2023-26

Our plan has been produced by the public sector agencies with a responsibility for Moray's children and families, alongside third sector and community partners. At its heart is the voice and experience of children, young people and families themselves. It sets out our joint vision for Getting It Right for every Family in Moray.

"All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal, because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time."

We have taken time to listen to children and their families who told us where we were getting it right, as well as the improvements that they feel would make the biggest difference to them.

Moray Youth Matters, a group of young people from diverse backgrounds across Moray reviewed the vision they had developed in 2020. They decided to make no changes and highlighted the importance they place on being heard, not just listened to.

"We live in communities where our voice is heard, and we are built up to be all we can be."

This plan outlines how we intend to realise our vision and deliver the improvements children, young people and their families both need and want, building on our success to date. The key areas for improvement identified are; tackling child poverty, keeping children safe, improving the mental wellbeing of families and strengthening support for families. We have also prioritised meeting the needs of specific groups of children and young people; our care experienced and looked after children and children and young people who experience challenges due to disability or neurodiversity. To deliver these improvements we recognise whole system change is required. This plan includes the actions we intend to take to achieve this.

The plan was developed and will be delivered in the uncertain and challenging times we are currently experiencing, both locally and nationally. The longer-term impact of the restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic on the wellbeing of children, young people and families remains unclear. At the same time, family finances are being squeezed in the face of the rising cost of living, particularly,

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Being Safe – Being Healthy and Happy - Being all that I can be - Having people in my life that care about me- Being Active - Being Respected –Being Included

but not exclusively, in the rising costs of energy and food. Both have a direct impact on our services and community supports who continually strive to meet this escalating demand with ever diminishing resources.

As a partnership, we recognise that it has never been more important for us to work closely with our communities, pooling our collective resources to prevent more children and families reaching crisis point. We will build on the real successes delivered over the past 3 years, particularly those led by our communities and third sector partners.

We know that having a skilled, trauma informed workforce who have trusting relationships with children, young people and families is critical to our success. We will place an even greater priority on investing in the development of our paid and voluntary workforce, as well as providing the support they need to safeguard their own wellbeing.

This plan is our Promise to the children, young people and families of Moray. Our grateful thanks go to all those who collaborated on its production. We look forward to delivering it together, keeping children and young people at the heart of all that we do.

Signature:……………………………..

Being Safe – Being Healthy and Happy - Being all that I can be - Having people in my life that care about me- Being Active - Being Respected –Being Included

INTRODUCTION

The GIRFEC Leadership Group, which is made up of strategic leaders from Education, Health, Social Work, Police and 3rd sector have co-ordinated the production of this plan on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership.

The plan covers: -
- Universal services available to all children and families such as health visiting and education
- More specialist services for families under pressure or in need of more support. For example, counselling for young people experiencing poor mental wellbeing
- Targeted services for the small number of children and young people who need care and protection.

Building on our achievements from our previous plans, it describes how we will work together to Get It Right for Every Family by delivering high quality, trauma responsive services and supports in a way that works for the children, young people and families of Moray. In accordance with statutory guidance, our focus is early intervention and prevention.

To streamline our strategic planning landscape and better coordinate partnership improvement activity, this plan incorporates the other key partnership plans that have an exclusive focus on children, young people and their families. They are:

- Child Poverty Plan
- Children's Rights and Participation Plan
- Corporate Parenting Plan
- Child Protection Improvement Plan.

On 5th February 2020, a promise was made to Scotland's infants, children, young people, adults and families. The Promise describes Scotland's commitment to children and young people that they will grow up loved, safe and respected. **This Children's Services Plan is our Promise to all children and families in Moray. It outlines our shared priorities, outcomes and actions under the 5 foundations of the Promise.**

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Being Safe – Being Healthy and Happy - Being all that I can be - Having people in my life that care about me- Being Active - Being Respected –Being Included
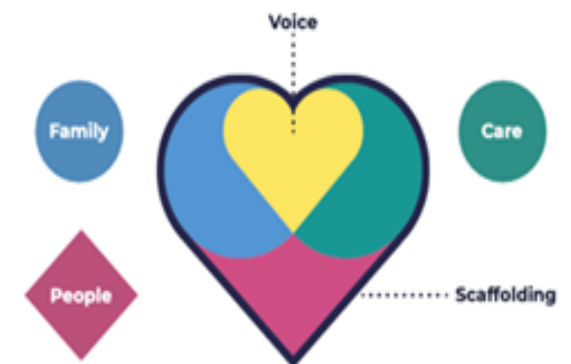
POLICY CONTEXT
National

Scotland's National Performance Framework articulates the vision of creating a more successful country by setting out 11 national outcomes we will work towards collectively. All the outcomes interlink and all are crucial to improving the lives of children and young people. **Our improvement priorities and associated actions are aligned with the ambitions for Scotland.**

The Scottish Government's Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach overarches everything that Government and public and voluntary services do that impacts on children and young people. It is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of children and young people. **Our Children's Services Plan details the improvements we are going to make to get it right for every child in Moray.**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the global "gold standard" for children's rights. It sets out the rights that all children have to help them to "be all they can be". They include rights relating to health, education, leisure, play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard. **We have detailed which rights are being met through the delivery of each of our priority action plans.**

The Promise is based on the voices of over 5,500 children and young people of which more than half had experience of living in care. It outlines what needs to happen on a Scotland wide basis to make sure children most in need feel loved and have the childhood they deserve. Keeping the Promise implementation plan outlines what is going to happen at a national level to help ensure the PROMISE is kept. **This plan details what we are going to do together in Moray to #keepthepromise.**

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on the council and NHS Grampian to produce a plan on how they will meet the targets set by Scottish Government to reduce child poverty. Best Start, Bright futures explains how the public, private and third sectors should work with communities to reduce child poverty. **This plan outlines the actions we will take together to reduce child poverty in Moray.**

The Mental Health Strategy 2017-27 sets out what the government and local services need to do to prevent and treat mental health problems. It has a clear focus on prevention and early intervention. **This plan details steps we are going to take together to support children, young people and families to maintain good mental wellbeing and to address problems as soon as they arise.**

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Local

Local Strategies and Plans

Across the Community Planning Partnership, there is a wide range of local multi-agency strategies and plans which seek to improve the lives of children, young people and families in Moray in different ways. As previously highlighted, the partnership plans which solely focus on children, young people and families have now been incorporated within our Children's Services Plan. Links have been made with the other local strategies and plans whose scope is either broader than children, young people and families e.g. the Community learning and Development Plan or they have a thematic focus such as the Community Safety Strategy and Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategy.

Individual members of the GIRFEC Leadership Group either chair or are members of the other partnership groups responsible for developing and implementing these related plans. As such, they have an explicit remit to ensure the necessary linkages are made over the 3-year lifespan of this plan.

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PROFILE OF MORAY'S CHILDREN
Population

All Children and Young People

Moray Population in 2022
95,780 people in total
18,093 children under 18yrs
749 live births in 2021

95% of under 15 year olds identify as White Scottish.

761 children with English as a second language.

Households with children under 18yrs
20% single parent
62% small family
18% large family (3+ children)

School Pupils in 2022
13,733 pupils in total
11% at nursery
50% at Primary School
39% at Secondary School

452 pupils live in a family with at least one member in the armed forces.

Children in Need of Support

Children receiving free school meals in 2022
1382 children in total
12% in Primary School
10.4% in Secondary School

School pupils with additional support needs in 2022/23:
250 (16%) at Nursery
2414 (35%) at Primary School
2545 (40.6%) at Secondary School
The most common reason is social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

142 children with a disability open to Social Work

164 registered Young Carers.

182 children assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Children in need of Care and Protection

174 people under 18 are categorised as Looked After, just under 1% of the people in that age group.
13% living in a residential setting.
87% living in a community setting.

33 children on the Child Protection Register.
The most common concern is parental substance use.

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WELLBEING OF MORAY'S CHILDREN

Being Safe
Growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect

Neighbourhood safety
86% of P5-S6 children feel safe when out in their local area *always* or *most of the time*

Bullying
35% of P5-S3 children said they were bullied in the last year

Being Healthy and Happy
Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices.

Mental Health and Wellbeing
47% of S2-S6 children have *slightly raised*, *high* or *very high* Strength & Difficulties score

Physical Health
56% of P5-S6 children eat vegetables every day or most days

77% of P1 children are a healthy weight

Being all I can be (Achieving)
Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

Positive destinations
94% school leavers moved onto education, training or employment

Literacy
64% of P1, P4 & P7 children achieved expected CfE literacy levels (reading, writing, listening & talking)

Numeracy
68% of P1, P4 & P7 children achieved expected CfE levels in numeracy

Having people in my life that care about me (Nurtured)
Growing, developing and being cared for in an environment which provides the physical and emotional security, compassion and warmth necessary for healthy growth and to develop resilience and a positive identity.

Pre-school development
4% children with a development concern at their 27-30 month review

Trusted Adult
62% of P5-S5 children have an adult in their life they can trust and talk to about any problems

Being Active
Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

Physical activity
57% P5-S6 children have at least 1 hour of exercise a day

Being Respected
Being involved in and having their voices heard in decisions that affect their life, with support where appropriate.

Involvement in Decision Making
54% of P5-S6 children agree that adults are good at taking what they say into account

Childrens Rights
63% of P5-S6 children know their rights

Being Responsible
Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision.

Peer relationships
78% P5-S4 children have friends who treat them well

Being Included
Having help to overcome inequalities and being accepted as part of their family, school and community.

Digital inclusion
99.7% of P7-S6 children have access to the internet at home

Housing
35 children are in temporary accommodation

Child poverty rate is **21%**
School exclusion rate is **1.42%**

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WHAT WE SPEND ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Service	£
Local Authority:	
Social Work (including commissioned services)	£18,442,475
Early Learning and Childcare	£14,816,105
Schools	£63,456,912
Additional Support Needs - Education	£17,336,156
Youth Work and Family Learning	£465,838
Employability (Council core funding and Scottish Government grants specifically for children and families)	£1,639,100
Health	
Health Visiting and School Nursing	£2,144,046
Perinatal Mental Health Services	£996,000*
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	£4,800,000*
Paediatric Allied Health Professional Services	£758,599
Partnership Funding (Confirmed on an annual basis)	
Whole Family Wellbeing Fund	£546,000
Whole Family Approaches –Alcohol and Drugs Partnership	£60,000
Mental Wellbeing Framework Funding	£275,000

*Grampian budget. Moray breakdown not available

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OUR VISION, CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

"All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal, because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time."

The principles and values which underpin the delivery of this plan reflect the core principles set out in The Promise and the 10 principles of holistic family support.

A relentless focus on what matters to children, young people and their families

What matters to children and families will be our highest priority and the cornerstone of how our services will operate both on a single agency and partnership basis. It will be centre of all policy, planning and service delivery.

Strengths based approach adopted by all

Inclusive, non-stigmatised approaches will be adopted which build on the strengths of all stakeholders - children and families themselves, the communities they live in and the professionals with a responsibility to support and protect them.

Prioritise prevention and early intervention

As a partnership, we will endeavour to retain a clear focus on identifying needs as early as possible. We will respond quickly and strive to provide the right services at the right time, with the knowledge that early intervention and support delivers better outcomes. We will place an ever-increasing focus on preventative work.

Uphold children's rights and enable participation

Through the development and delivery of this plan, we will protect, promote, defend and uphold children's rights. Our partnership is committed to investing in the engagement of children, young people and their families in the development, implementation and review phases of this plan.

Tackle inequalities

Our collective efforts and shared resources will be on addressing the greatest differences in outcomes for children, young people and families living in Moray.

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DEVELOPING THE PLAN
Our Approach

The production of this plan was a collaborative effort. Building on our strong partnership relationships, in July 2022 we established a Children's Services Development Group made up of Managers from all key agencies and other relevant partnership groups including; Education, Social Work, Child Health, Public Health, Community Learning and Development, Public Protection, Adult Health and Social Care, Police and 3rd Sector.

The Children's Services Development Group completed a joint strategic needs assessment to inform the plan. This comprised of:
- Analysis of key quantitative data available across the partnership.
- Findings of the national health and wellbeing survey, which was undertaken across schools in Moray in June 2022. Over 5400 pupils from P5 to S6 participated.
- Findings from two engagement events with members of the locality networks, made up of front-line practitioners and representatives from community organisations from across Moray. They were asked to highlight what is going well, the areas of greatest concern and what children and families are telling them would make the biggest difference. 102 front line practitioners and representatives from community organisations participated.
- The views of young people who participated in the summer school holiday activity programmes.
- Findings from more targeted engagement with children, young people and families whose voices are seldom heard including; LGBTQI+ community, care experienced young people, care experienced parents, young carers, young people with neuro-diverse challenges, parents whose children were born during the pandemic and parents of children with disabilities.

Findings from the strategic needs assessment were shared at a stakeholder event attended by 91 people from across the partnership. We are delighted that our community and third sector partners were particularly well represented at this event. The areas for action both in the short and longer term were identified. They focus on continuing to build on the successes to date, as well as tackling emerging themes and ongoing challenges where a partnership approach is most likely to deliver the improvements required.

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The key priority areas agreed are:
- Overcoming challenges experienced by children with a disability or neurodiversity
- Tackling child poverty
- Improving the mental wellbeing of children and young people
- Keeping children and young people safe
- Strengthening support for families
- Improving outcomes for our care experienced children and young people

Our action plans are structured around the five foundations of the Promise.

Voice	**Voice**	Explains how we will seek out and act on the voice of children, young people and their families
Family	**Family**	Details the actions we will take to; tackle child poverty, improve the mental wellbeing of children, young people and families, keep children and young people safe, strengthen support for families and meet the challenges children, young people and families face due to disability and neurodiversity
Care	**Care**	Outlines how we will support our looked after and care experienced children and young people to reach their full potential
People	**People**	Describes how we will support the workforce to listen and be compassionate in their decision making, develop trusting relationships with our children, young people and families and deliver the services and supports they need
Scaffolding	**Scaffolding**	Outlines the key actions strategic leaders will take together to ensure that the 'system' supports the delivery of improvements outlined within this plan.

Children's Rights underpin every foundation, so we have explicitly highlighted the rights we promise to meet when delivering the different aspects of this plan. As a partnership, we are committed to ensuring every child knows their rights and is heard in matters affecting them.

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OUR PLAN AT A GLANCE

OUR VISION

All children and young people in Moray grow up loved, safe, respected and equal because our services and workforce put people first and support families with the right help at the right time

OUR PRIORITIES

Family				
Overcoming Challenges Experienced By Children with a Disability Or Neurodiversity	**Tackling Child Poverty**	**Improving Emotional and Mental Wellbeing**	**Keeping Children Safe**	**Strengthening Family Support**
Care		**Voice**	**People**	**Scaffolding**
Improving Outcomes for Care Experienced Children and Young People		**Hearing children's voice**	**Supporting our Workforce**	**Working in Partnership**

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Family		
Family	**Overcoming Challenges Experienced By Children With Disability or Neurodiversity**	• Children and young people's education and care needs are met, regardless of need. • Parents and young people with neurodiversity challenges can access early help and support. • Children, young people and families with additional support needs have improved access to support, leisure and community-based activities. • Families can access a neurodiversity diagnosis in a timely way. • Children with additional support needs experience a smooth transition to adult services.
Family	**Tackling Child Poverty**	• Parents claim all of welfare benefits they are entitled to and do not feel stigmatised when seeking support. • The impact of poverty on children, young people and their families is minimised. • Young adults and parents experience no poverty related barriers to entering and sustaining training and employment
Family	**Improving Mental Wellbeing of Families**	• Parents are confident and able to support their child(ren) to sustain good mental wellbeing. • The right mental health and wellbeing support is available to children, young people and their parents as soon as they need it. • Community based mental wellbeing support is strengthened. • Children, young people and their parents experience a smooth transition between support services, including transition to adult services
Family	**Keeping Children Safe**	• Workers are confident and supported to identify and understand risk. • Children, young people and families are empowered to participate in child protection processes. • Children and young people develop healthy relationships with peers, online and in the community. • Children and young people are safer because risks have been identified early and responded to effectively. • Children and young people at risk of or who come into conflict with the law are supported with compassion and care. • Children and young people are supported through recovery and do not experience further trauma.

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	Strengthening Family Support	• Children and family's needs are addressed early through implementation of effective child's planning processes. • There is a clear pathway of non-stigmatised support available to parents throughout Moray. • Children's transition into Nursery is consistently good. • Parents are supported and enabled to be the best parents they can be.

Care

	Improving Outcomes for Care Experienced Young People	• The gap in educational outcomes of looked after and care experienced young people is reduced. • Looked after and care experienced young people enter and sustain education, training or employment after leaving school. • The health needs of looked after children and young people are met. • Looked after and care experienced young people and their parents/carer feel their voice has been heard through the provision of independent advocacy. • The number of range of placements available meets the needs of children and young people in need of care. • Transitions feel and are experienced as integrated, with maintaining relationships being paramount. • Siblings are supported to maintain positive relationships with one another. • Children and young people seeking asylum are fully integrated into school and community life. • Looked after and care experienced young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system. • Our improvement activity is shaped by the voice of our looked after and care experienced young people.

Voice

	Hearing children's voice	• The voice of children and young people is evident in all things that impact on them. • Adults successfully seek out and hear the voices of children and young people of all levels of ability. • Engagement activities are more coordinated, minimising the risk of children and young people being over consulted.

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People		
Supporting our Workforce		• Integrated working practice is enhanced through joint development opportunities that support our shared vision, core principles and values. • Staff facilitate and enable the relationships, networks and connections that support our children, young people and families

Scaffolding		
Working in Partnership		• As a partnership, we are aware of the changing needs of children, young people and their families. • As a partnership, we maximise all opportunities to lever in additional funding and work together to ensure it supports the delivery of our shared priorities. • The risk of silo working across children and adult services minimised. • We more consistently and effectively measure impact of the actions we are taking to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. • The co-ordination of continuous improvement activity improves

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VOICE
Hearing Children and Young People's Voices

We promise to…
Respect Your Views UNCRC 12
You have the right to express your views in each and every matter that affects you and for your views to be taken seriously.

Enable You to Express Your Views in the Way That Works Best for You UNCRC 13 and 23
You have the right to express your views in whatever way you choose, as long as you don't harm others.

Make Sure We Understand the Language You Choose to Use to Express Your Views UNCRC 30
You have the right to use your own language to express your views.

Promote and Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42
You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

The Promise mandates that we listen properly to the voice of children and families and respond to what they need and want. The voice of the child is used to describe the *real* involvement of children and young people. It does not exclusively refer to what children say and does not and should not preclude those who cannot communicate through speech.

We believe that the voice of the child is more than seeking their views; it is about enabling children and young people to take as active a role as possible in making decisions about things which affect them. On a departmental, single agency and partnership basis we are using a range of different approaches to successfully engage those affected by the decisions we make.

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Moray Champions Board is a forum for care experienced young people aged 16years + to come together with key decision makers to influence and affect change in the care system. Our Champions Board has been re-invigorated and 20 young people are now actively participating. Our younger care experienced young people (aged 10-16years) have their own forum called Little Fix. Key successes include young people planning and hosting a series of events to celebrate national Care Day and taking a lead role in the commissioning of advocacy services and residential children's houses in Moray.

"Every young person should be celebrated here in Moray. We will continue to celebrate our care experienced young people and have those voices of all care experienced young people heard."
Bev, Member of the Champions Board

The Better Meetings Project is led by a group of 21 young people with experience of care. This is an ambitious project which aims to ensure that young people have choice and feel fully involved in shaping their meetings. With the support of Out of the Darkness, a local theatre company, they have produced three powerful films through which they voiced their experiences of how meetings and Children's Hearings feel for them and how those responsible for supporting them could make things better. The young people are now working with professionals to produce guides and checklists for all those involved in meetings, as well as child friendly meeting spaces. They have also showcased their work to Sheriff David Mackie and key members of the National Hearings System Redesign Group.

"We want our meetings to feel like our meetings and that it's all about me, please keep meetings to 5 or 6 people in the room and give us more choice in shaping where and how our meetings will take place."

Young Carers in Moray were involved in the development of Moray's new unpaid carers' strategy. They participated in a range of activities, including the production of a short film through which they explained what it feels like to be a young Carer in Moray and what they need from the adults around them. The strategy explains what we will do together to deliver the improvements young Carers have prioritised. Young Carers Leads have now been identified in every Moray school with a remit to continue to seek out and act on the voice of young Carers within the school community and a group of young carers have supported the redesign of Moray's Young Carers Statement.

"I am proud to be a young carer and want to be recognised and feel supported in school, I want my teachers to talk more about young carers."

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VOICE			LEAD: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION GROUP
OUTCOME	**HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS**		**HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?**
	Short Term	**Longer Term**	
The voice of children and young people is evident in all things that impact on them.	Across the partnership, establish how the voice of young people is currently being captured.	Develop a Moray wide 'Youth Voice' which connects with all the other thematic and geographic youth forms that exist throughout Moray.	Feedback from members of Youth Voice. Evidence of connection and joint working with other youth forums.
Adults successfully seek out and hear the voices of children and young people of all levels of ability.	Develop and roll out a toolkit to strengthen single agency and partnership knowledge understanding and skills to successfully gather the voices of children and young people. This will include under 3s and those with a disability or English as a second language.		Survey of members of all groups which make up the Children's Services Partnership. Evidence of increase in range of tools being used. Evidence of seldom heard voices being captured.
Engagement activities are more coordinated, minimising the risk of children and young people being over consulted.	Develop a central portal where findings from engagement activity undertaken across the community planning partnership can be shared and promoted. This includes summary of action taken in response.		Feedback from Moray Youth Voice members.

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FAMILY

Tackling child poverty

We promise to...

Help You if You Are Really Struggling Because Your Family Doesn't Have Enough Money UNCRC 26
You have the right money and support if your family is poor.

Help You Grow Up Safe and Healthy UNCRC 27
You have the right to clothing, good food and a clean and safe home.

Make Sure You Have Opportunities to Play and Participate in Community Life UNCRC 31
You have the right to have the same opportunities as other children to rest, play and take part in culture and leisure activities.

Poverty impacts on the health and wellbeing of the whole family and for children it can have long term effects on outcomes in adulthood.

Child poverty in Moray has been rising over many years, with 21.3% of children living in poverty in 2020/21.

Most of these children live in households where a parent is in employment. This is not unexpected given Moray has one of the lowest average incomes in Scotland.

Families experiencing poverty are not concentrated in the areas of greatest deprivation in Moray - only 7.1% of Moray residents classified as income deprived live in the most deprived geographic areas.

Proportion of children living in low-income families

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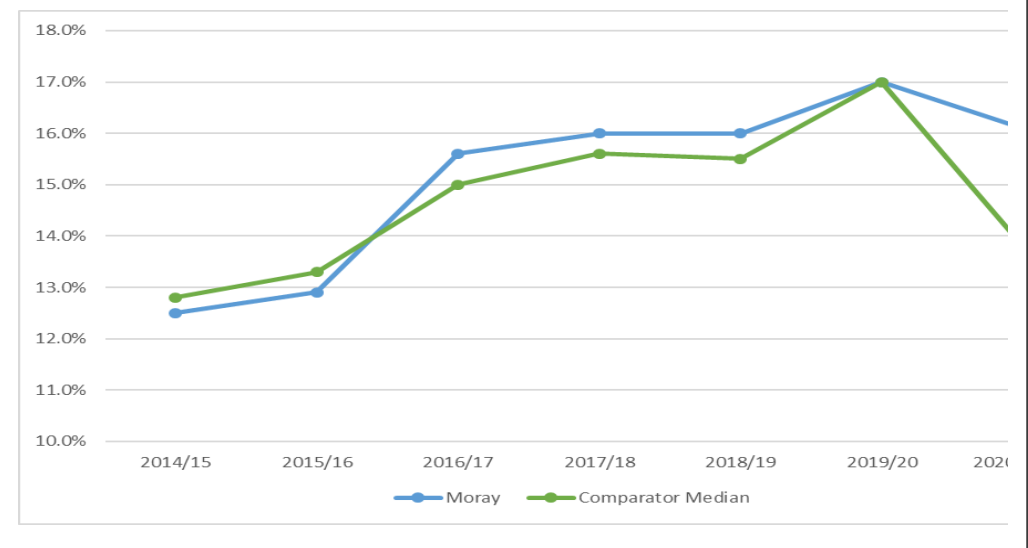
Through the Health and Wellbeing Survey, 8% of children reported that they often or always go to bed or school hungry.

"I didn't have a breakfast this morning, as there wasn't enough bread left"
-child attending summer holiday activities

Research tells us that poverty is a significant risk factor for children. "Changes in income alone, holding all other factors constant, have a major impact on the numbers of children being harmed. Reduction in income and other economic shocks increase the numbers of children being subject to neglect and abuse, whilst improvements in income reduce these figures "(Neglect: New Evidence March 2022)

There has been a steep rise in demand for emergency food, clothing and financial support. Through the wide range of engagement activities undertaken to inform this plan, families, community organisations and front-line professionals have painted the picture of a perfect storm of low pay, increasing costs and insufficient income from benefits. Large families, single-parent households and those with additional needs are most often experiencing 'deep poverty', but the impact is being seen across a broad range of families in Moray. This is reflected in the steep rise in demand for emergency food provision, clothing and financial support.
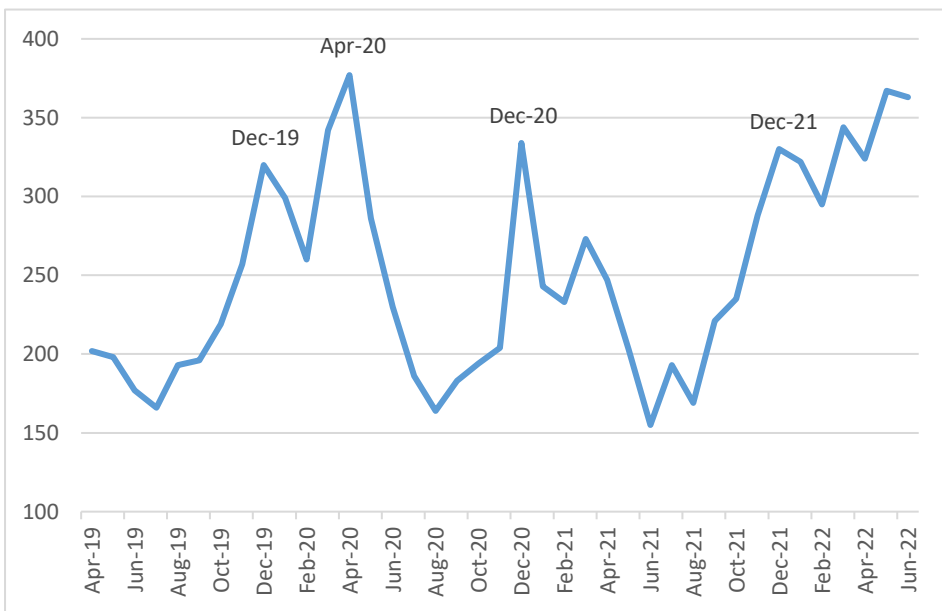
Number of referrals to Moray Food Plus for emergency food provision, by month.

"Had to pay deposit for new boiler so no money left for the next two weeks"

"Sanctioned for missing appointment due to COVID-19. I appealed and the decision was reversed but had to wait for the balance to be paid. No money for food or power"

"Universal credit has been cut. Direct debits took all the money out of my account in the same week. I now have 4 weeks to wait until the next payment"

"Client requires oxygen machine and electricity bill has gone up considerably but been told not entitled to help with running costs of vital equipment"
-Moray Food Plus – reasons for needing support

"Energy bills have increased from £100/month to £300/month"

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Fuel poverty is a significant issue in Moray, with the most recent data (2017-19) identifying nearly a third of households as fuel poor and 19% as being in extreme fuel poverty. An even greater proportion of the Moray population is now likely to be living in fuel poverty.

The housing stock in Moray is very poorly insulated making the cost of heating houses even more expensive. Also, a high percentage of households are not connected to the gas grid and use oil to heat their houses. A tank of oil must be paid for prior to delivery. This is a further barrier to heating for families on low incomes.

Families have told us that they are struggling to pay for activities for their children. This has prevented them from joining their peers as equal members of their community. In addition, a survey of 110 parents, showed us that families living rurally struggle to afford public transport to access groups and activities for their children.

> *"I'm glad all the activities are free, or I wouldn't have been able to go."*
> -young people who participated in our summer activity program.

Families tell us that they struggle to ask for help and professionals struggle to initiate conversations with families, whom they suspect are struggling financially

> **"I didn't tell anyone because I've been too nervous or too, too frightened... I've just been like, no, say it's okay"**
> -18yr old mother of 2yr old

*In 2022, r*esearch into the Early Years Financial Inclusion Pathway highlighted that parents were fearful about drawing attention to their financial problems, some saying they would deny they were struggling, if asked.

Through the Locality networks, frontline professionals and community representatives have highlighted that they don't know how to start a conversation with a family whom they suspect is struggling due to lack of money, but aren't asking for help.

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OUTCOMES	HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS		HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?
FAMILY: Tackling Child Poverty		**LEAD: CHILD POVERTY GROUP**	
	Short Term	Longer Term	
What poverty looks like in Moray is understood by all.	Establish a child poverty data set, which includes data relating to the key priority groups*.	Build on the data set to ensure all the statutory elements of child poverty can be captured and accurately monitored.	Dataset is informing improvement activity.
Parents claim all of welfare benefits they are entitled to and do not feel stigmatised when seeking support.	Map and promote support available across Moray.		Children, young people and parents report they are aware of support available and feel able to access it. Child Poverty Group and Locality Network members can clearly articulate the support available.
	Develop and implement a financial inclusion pathway for parents of children under the age of 5 years.	Evaluate impact of the financial pathway. Based on evaluation findings, extend the pathway to include parents with children over the age of 5 years.	Increase in sign posting and referrals to supports available. Dip sample of family's experience of accessing support.
	Work alongside parents to understand and overcome barriers to engagement with financial support services.	Embed income maximisation support within intensive family support services.	Families entitled to benefits will have a financial gain to household income.

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The impact of poverty on children, young people and families is minimised.	Understand the extent of maternal and infant food insecurity within Moray.	Roll out and embed the emergency Infant formula pathway within Moray.	Increase in uptake of emergency access to infant formula.
	Develop poverty toolkit guidance for practitioners.	Roll out poverty toolkit guidance and associated training across frontline practitioners and community organisations who have contact with children and families.	Number of practitioners trained. Increase in numbers referred for support by practitioners utilising the toolkit.
The impact of poverty on children and young people is minimised whilst opportunities for wellbeing and attainment are maximised.	Promote subsidised and free supports and activities.	Better understand and address reasons for low uptake of subsidised and free support available to families. Initial focus on free school meals, bus passes and leisure activities.	Increased uptake of free school Meals. Increased uptake of bus passes. Increased participation in and evaluation of free/ subsidised activities.
	Rollout the revised Cost of the School Guidance and adopt a partnership approach to ensure costs are equitable across Moray.		Number of schools engaged with the cost of the school day indicatives. Number of breakfast clubs available.
	Improve joint working between Child Poverty Group and Transport and Housing Departments to better understand and address the specific challenges faced by families experiencing poverty.	Build improvements into revised transport and housing policies and strategies. Through ongoing review of poverty dataset, identify other policies/strategies which require to be reviewed through a child poverty lens.	Impact of improvement activity.

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Young adults and parents experience no poverty related barriers to entering and sustaining learning, training and employment	Promote access to Moray Pathway Local Employability Partnership support and provision for those young people who are aged 15yrs + and no longer in Education.		Increase in Young People accessing Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and other grants/allowances through Moray Pathways. Increase in young people aged 15yrs plus and no longer in Education who are participating and sustaining employment, learning and training opportunities.
	Develop and test affordable wrap around childcare options (Led by short life working group).	Further develop and upscale affordable, wrap around childcare throughout Moray based on learning from tests of change.	Increase in the number of School aged childcare places available. Increase in the uptake of School aged childcare places by those in the six priority groupings. Parental feedback and case studies on the impact of School aged childcare Increase in household income
	Raise awareness of and embed the Moray Pathways local employability partnership support and provision which is available for all young people 16 years and beyond.		Increase in referrals to Moray Pathways local employability partnership. Increase in parents from the six priority groups participating and sustaining education, training or employment opportunities.

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		Pool existing resources to provide year round programme of holiday provision for priority family groups. Maximise opportunities as a partnership to lever in additional external funding streams to maximise supply.	Increased uptake of school holiday provision by those in the six priority groupings.
	As a partnership, promote all existing free and subsidised school holiday provision in one central place and support families to access it.		

* The 6 priority groups are; families with 3+ children, lone parent households, families where the mother is aged under 25years, families with child aged under 1yrs, ethnic minority families and households where someone is disabled.

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Improving the mental wellbeing of children, young people and their families

> We promise to...
> **Support Your Parents to Help You Stay Mentally Well UNCRC 5**
> You have the right to receive guidance from your family and community around you.
>
> **Help You to Develop in the Best Possible Way UNCRC 6 and 24**
> You have the right to get the help you need to stay healthy and to recover should you become ill.

Positive mental wellbeing greatly improves the experience of growing up and provides a solid foundation upon which a person's lifelong health and wellbeing outcomes.

The mental wellbeing of young people, particularly adolescents has continued to decline both locally and nationally.

In 2022, the national health and wellbeing survey was undertaken across schools in Moray. Over 5400 young people from P5 to S6 expressed their views on their own wellbeing. Between 47-51% of the teenagers reported experiencing some mental wellbeing difficulties. Loneliness steadily increased with age, with 13% of S1 young people feeling lonely rising to 26.4% in S4.

The mental wellbeing of girls has declined much more rapidly than that of boys and is a specific concern in Moray. Girls scored lower than boys on almost all measures. 2 in 5 girls reported feeling confident "rarely" or "none of the time". As COVID-19 restrictions have eased, mental wellbeing services across Moray have experienced a significant rise in referrals, particularly in relation to increased levels of anxiety. Teenage girls are most affected.

Average WEMWBS score for each year group by gender. From Moray Schools HWBC, 2022.

We know we are still not identifying and addressing mental wellbeing concerns early enough. There has been a rise in referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, an increasing percentage of which relate to eating disorders and self-harm. There has also been a rapid rise in the number of young people presenting out of hours in relation to significant self-harm, overdose and suicide risk. A significant number of those presenting at crisis were not previously known to services.

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Young Carers, children and families experiencing poverty, children and adults in single parent households, children with disabilities and their parents as well as LGBTQI+ young people report a higher prevalence of poor mental health and wellbeing.

Mental wellbeing is impacting on young people's ability to attend and engage in Education. Children across all ages have struggled to transition back to school post COVID-19 and schools are reporting that children who were doing well before COVID-19 are now struggling. Declining school attendance rates reflect these challenges.

We need to get better at identifying and addressing the mental wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people

The Promise places a specific responsibility on us to identify and address the mental wellbeing needs of our looked after and care experienced young people. Worryingly, we have seen a decline in numbers receiving a health assessment and a decline in numbers being referred for support. This is very different from the national picture.

Parental Mental Wellbeing

There is a lack of local data available on perinatal and infant mental health, however we know nationally that perinatal mental health disorders are the most common complication of child-bearing women and anxiety, and depression affects nearly 20% of expectant and new mothers. Through local engagement activities parents of babies born during COVID-19 reported feeling isolated and lonely. They explained how lack of peer and family support has impacted on their mental wellbeing.

We know that to improve the mental wellbeing of children and young people of all ages we need to address the mental health needs of their parents too. To do this we need to work more closely with adult mental health services, adopting a holistic family approach.

"Need to have parent support groups, it's especially hard when you're a single parent family, you need people to talk to"

"I would say it was the loneliest time of my life having a new baby and being pregnant again soon after with the restrictions, no groups to go to and no family close by"

Knowledge and self-help

There is a strong desire from young people and their parents to build their own knowledge and ability to maintain good mental wellbeing, as evidenced through consultation activity undertaken with 150 children, young people and their families as part of the local mental wellbeing improvement programme. The consultation also highlighted that both professionals and families were unclear about the support available to them and how to access it. A concerning number of young people said they didn't feel connected to their community, and this was impacting on their social, physical and mental wellbeing.

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FAMILY: Improving Mental Wellbeing		LEAD: WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP GROUP	
OUTCOMES	**HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS**		**HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?**
	Short Term	**Longer Term**	
Parents are confident and able to support their children) to sustain good mental wellbeing.	Collate and promote the existing tools, training and community assets available to meet parents wish to feel more confident to recognise and address problems as soon as they arise.	Identify and address gaps in training and support available to parents and overcome barriers to access.	Numbers engaging with training. Training feedback.
The right mental health and wellbeing support is available to children, young people and their parents as soon as they need it.	Complete the mapping of existing mental wellbeing services and supports and promote widely to families, communities and front-line services who have regular contact with children, young people and families.	With families, identify gaps in mental wellbeing provision and overcome barriers to accessing existing provision.	Survey with young people and families and frontline professionals via Locality Networks report increased awareness of support available. Reduction in referrals which are declined by services.
	Develop and embed a coordinated pathway of mental wellbeing support for children, young people and their parents.	Quality assure the mental wellbeing support pathway, prioritising and addressing areas for improvement on a partnership basis.	Increased provision. Service user feedback on accessibility and impact of service provision. Evidence of improvement through quality assurance activity.
	Establish whether the newly established Grampian Perinatal & Infant mental Health Services is accessible to families in Moray and meeting their needs.	Establish the Infant Mental Health Team to provide specialist support for families with children 0-3years.	Uptake of services and supports. Parental feedback on impact of support provided.

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	Overcome barriers to access and shape delivery of provision with families. Establish the need for perinatal peer support provision and the extent to which this need is currently being met.	Develop a sustainable model of perinatal peer support, which meets local need.	
	Trial the extension of counselling in schools to younger children.		Counselling in schools outcome data.
	Progress the implementation of the mental wellbeing system redesign project, which focuses on meeting the mental wellbeing needs of families with pre-school children.	Upscale the mental wellbeing system redesign, based on the learning from the test of change.	Reduction in wellbeing concerns at point of school entry. Further measures to be identified as part of the development of this project.
Community based mental wellbeing support is strengthened.	Explore how a coordinated participatory budgeting approach could be developed to enhance existing community-based provision.		Evidence of increased community led provision. Numbers accessing provision. Feedback from young people and parents on impact of provision.
	With Health and Social Care Moray, design and test a social prescribing model for young people in the Forres and Lossiemouth locality. A component part includes young people shaping improvement of community-based supports and services.	Based on learning from the pilot, roll the social prescribing model out across Moray.	Feedback from young people, their parents and relevant professionals on the impact of the pilot. Evidence of impact from data collated through outcome measurement tool. Increase in community provision shaped by young people.

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	Through the locality networks, explore how community organisations and local services can work more effectively together to address the escalating number of young people not engaging in school and community life due to low level anxiety.	Test new approaches within 2 localities.	Evidence of partnership working leading to reduction in the number of young people not engaging in school or community life due to low level of anxiety.
Children, young people and their parents experience a smooth transition between support services, including transition to adult services.	Improve coordination of mental health and wellbeing support provided to children and families by CAMHS, Counselling in Schools and the Tier 2 Family Mental Wellbeing Service.		Dip sampling to explore experience of joint up practice. Feedback from services.
	Journey map care experienced young people who have recently transitioned between children and adult services and use learning to prioritise improvement activity for all.	Implement improvements identified and quality assure.	Feedback from young people and their parents. Evidence from quality assurance activities.

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Keeping children and young people safe

We promise to...

Act in Your Best Interests UNCRC 3
When we make decisions, we will consider how these decisions will affect you.

Respect Your Views and Keep you Informed UNCRC 12 and 17
You have the right to express your views in each and every matter that affects you, and for your views to be taken seriously. You have the right to receive information, in a way that you can understand.

Work to Keep Families Together UNCRC 9
You have the right to live with your parents if this is what's best for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Keep You Safe UNCRC 20
You have the right to special care and help if you cannot live with your family.

Protect You UNCRC 33, 34 and 36
You should be protected from dangerous drugs, sexual abuse, being taken advantage of, being sold, and from doing things that could harm you.

Support You to Recover UNCRC 29
You have the right to special help if you've been hurt, neglected or treated badly.

The safety of children and young people is recognised as a core component of their wellbeing. To be safe means growing up in an environment where a child or young person feels secure, nurtured, listened to and enabled to develop to their full potential. This includes freedom from abuse or neglect. Our children and young people have the right to be protected from all forms of harm and abuse. Child abuse can take many forms: physical, sexual or emotional abuse - or a combination of all three. It can also come in the form of neglect, exploitation, and anything else that puts children at risk. Sometimes the harm caused isn't intentional but happens because someone doesn't have the skills or support needed to care for someone. That doesn't make the impact of it any less, but it can help us to understand how it happened.

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People, Places and Spaces

It is everyone's job to keep children safe and it is crucial that we raise awareness with professionals and public about how they can recognise and respond to children at risk of harm. Children who are at risk of or experience harm may not recognise or understand what is happening to them, they may be too young or not have the words to tell their story. Some children and young people may be made to feel afraid or ashamed to talk to someone, so it is important that we create safe spaces with trusted adults in our children's services settings.
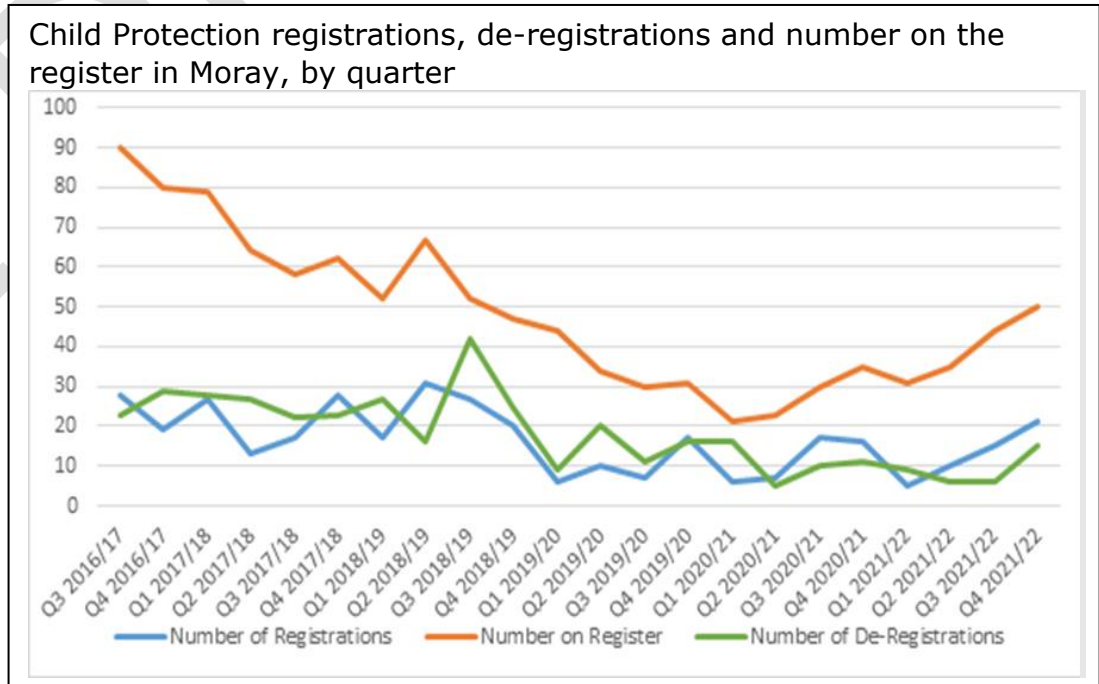
Where we live and how safe we feel there can be a key factor in our wellbeing. 86% of P5 students and 94% in S6 tell us that they feel safe in their local area. Teenage girls and young women are less likely to feel safe than boys and young men. Young people with disabilities, neurodiversity, and LGBTQ+ told us they can feel unsafe and want to be able to access safe spaces to meet and talk in school and the community.

Bullying in childhood and adolescence can have severe and long-lasting impacts on both those victimised and those engaging in bullying. We have found that the proportion of children reporting that they feel bullied reduces with age with 44% of P5 pupils telling us they have been bullied in the past year against 24% of S3 students.

Child protection provokes constant developmental challenges for every individual practitioner and for every team. The Moray Child Protection Committee provides leadership for safe systems and practice by placing an evaluative focus on outcomes and promoting systematic learning from case reviews.

Child Protection services have remained categorised as critical and protected throughout the COVID-19 pandemic so support, advice and response to child protection issues did not change. However, it is widely recognised that school closures and disruption of early year's services meant that children at risk were less visible to professionals.

In Moray, the most common reasons for children to need a protection plan and have their name placed on the child protection register are parental drug use, domestic abuse, parental mental health and neglect.

Child Protection registrations, de-registrations and number on the register in Moray, by quarter

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Supporting Families

There is significant research that demonstrates the pervasive impact and relationship between substance use, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse and likelihood of children being removed from the care of their parents. We know that families experiencing these issues must be supported with flexible, creative services and relationships. Our workers need to be confident, knowledgeable, skilled and supported to be effective in complex situations, and be able to spend time with families to really understand what they can do to make a difference. Families should feel able to be open and honest with workers and receive the same in return.

Poverty is a significant contributor to stress and potential to develop harmful coping mechanisms and can increase the risk of abuse and neglect. It is important therefore that we assess the impact of all structural factors such as poverty and poor housing as part of our care and protection planning, to support more holistic approaches that reduce stressors in families and communities to help reduce the risk of harm to children.

Gender-Based Violence is a major health, human rights and social justice issue. The prevalence of gender-based violence increased during COVID-19 and the restrictions in place made it more difficult for those experiencing violence to leave and access support. The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Police in Moray is below national average however, the rate of increase in Moray is well above and the cost-of-living crisis exacerbates the financial barriers to leaving an abusive relationship and increases the potential for coercive control.

Moray Child Protection Committee and Moray Violence against Women and Girls Partnership are working together to roll-out the Safe and Together practice approach. This evidence-based model will help to ensure that our systems and services are Domestic Abuse informed. Preventative initiatives are also delivered to young people throughout schools in line with Moray's Equally Safe Delivery plan to prevent and eradicate all forms of violence against women and girls.

Young People's Behaviour that is Antisocial or Harmful

There has been a slow but consistent upward trend in the number of reported crimes in Moray. The number of offences where young person is aged under 18years has increased by 24% since 2019/20, however the number of young people has remained relatively stable meaning the same number of young people are offending more often. The offences with the largest increase include fire raising, malicious mischief, vandalism and miscellaneous (mainly assault and threatening and abusive behaviour).

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FAMILY: Keeping Children and Young People Safe		LEAD: MORAY CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE	
OUTCOMES	**HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS**		**HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?**
	Short Term	**Long Term**	
Workers are confident and supported to identify and understand risk.	Develop a learning and practice development programme that is informed by an assessment of training needs.	Develop a learning culture through local implementation of multiagency training and learning reviews.	Workforce survey and course evaluations. Supervision audit. Evaluation of Learning Reviews.
Children, young people and families are empowered to participate in child protection processes.	Introduce a solution orientated approach to Child Protection Planning Meetings and Core Groups.	Develop resources about our child protection processes with and for children and families.	Reviewing Officer quality assurance activity. Feedback from parents, children and young people.
	Ensure all children and young people can access independent advocacy as early as possible.		Advocacy service contract reporting.
Children and young people develop healthy relationships with peers, online and in the community.	Encourage parents and carers to have conversations with children and young people about online safety.		Feedback from parents, young people and professionals. Uptake of sexual violence prevention programme. No. of LGBTQ+ Charter awards gained in Moray. Referrals to and outcomes from Prevent Multiagency Panel Meetings.
	Deliver education programmes in youth settings on issues of consent, gender equality and healthy relationships.	Support schools and organisations in Moray to take part in the LGBTQ+ Charter programme.	
	Identify young people who are vulnerable to extremist and terrorist ideologies and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support at an early stage.		
Children and young people are safer because risks have been identified early and responded to effectively.	Work in partnership with families to enable the reduction of factors causing risk.	Develop our relationship with commissioned services to best understand those who require intensive family support to reduce risk factors in the home.	Referrals to Functional Family Therapy. Child planning quality assurance.
	Continue to embed domestic abuse informed systems and practice.		Safe & Together evaluation.

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	Scaffolding	Ensure our child protection processes are reviewed and in line with national guidance.	Adopt a place-based approach to safeguarding young people at risk of harm beyond the family home.	Child protection minimum dataset and associated quality assurance.
Children and young people at risk of or who come into conflict with the law are supported with compassion and care.	Scaffolding	Review our whole systems approach (WSA) to develop and deliver an implementation plan towards rights based and trauma informed justice services, with a particular focus on: • The needs and rights of young people who pose risk of serious harm to others, and the systems in place to support them • Developing our diversion activities with young people and reducing the criminalisation of our youth • Interventions that take a family-based approach	Partnership self-evaluation: Youth Justice Standards, performance monitoring and feedback.
Children and young people are supported through recovery and do not experience further trauma.	Embed a child centred and trauma informed approach to our Joint Investigative Interviewing of Children & Young People.	Develop a joined up holistic model of therapeutic recovery support for children who have experienced or witnessed abuse.	Application of Scottish Child Interview Model Self-Assessment and Quality Assurance Framework. Partnership self-evaluation: Bairns Hoose Standards.

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Supporting children and families who experience challenges due to disability and neurodiversity

We promise to...

Act in Your Best Interests UNCRC 3
When we make decisions, we will consider how these decisions will affect you.

Remove obstacles To Independent Living UNCRC 23
You have the right to become independent and actively participate in school, work and community life.

Help You Grow Up Safe and Healthy UNCRC 24
You have the right to the best health care available.

Provide You With An Education Which Meets Your Needs UNCRC 28 and 29
You have the right to be educated on a full time basis. We should help you learn in a way that works best for you.

Enable You Play and Participate in Community Life UNCRC 31
You have the right to have the same opportunities as other children to rest, play and take part in culture and leisure activities.

Promote and Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42
You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

Children in Schools with Additional Support Needs
In Moray between 2017 and 2022 the number of children in schools with an additional support need rose by 50%. There are currently 2414 primary pupils and 2540 secondary pupils with additional support needs, of which 396 pupils are recorded as requiring additional support for their autism. The most common reason overall is social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. The escalation in volume and complexity of needs is also being noted by Social Work who currently support 142 young people with complex disabilities and their families.

Support for Parent Carers
It is well evidenced both nationally and locally that the pandemic has profoundly impacted families with children with a disability, or long-term condition. UK-wide research conducted by the Family Fund found that around 80% of the participating families had lost formal and

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informal support due to the pandemic. Parents and the front-line practitioners who know them best including; school and nursery staff, 3rd sector organisations and health visitors have told us that this is a significant gap in Moray. The re-establishment and further development of peer support provision is a priority for our parents. They would also like training built into this provision, so they can understand how to best support their child.

Support for Learning Differences and Neurodevelopmental Conditions

Significant concerns have been raised around the particular needs of neurodiverse young people. Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the different ways in which people think and feel, or the different ways that brains 'work'. Parents of neurodiverse children and young people have told us that they want more opportunities for their child to be involved in activities within communities. This includes additional support to access the activities available to all, as well as groups and activities specifically for them. Families who have the added pressure of limited finances and single parent families are least able to access the activities which are available.

The Neurodiversity GIRFEC survey 2022 found that there was not enough support available to families before diagnosis and there were real frustrations with delays in diagnosis. Current waiting time in Moray is over 12 months. Parents also told us they don't know where to go to find about the help available to them. They don't feel heard and are worried that they will be left until things get really bad before they get help.

"We think that other people listen more once there is a diagnosis "
-Parent

"It helps me that I know I have Autism. I want to be able to talk about it and find out more so that I can chat to others and be part of a group"
-young person

The specific number of children with disabilities on reduced school timetables is unclear at present, as the current recording system does not collate the detail required. However, Education, Social Work and parents highlight it as an issue which requires to be better understood and addressed. Reduced education provision not only impacts on the child, whose rights to an education are not being fully met, but there is wider impact on family. Finances are stretched as parents can't work fulltime and the additional strain of caring responsibilities can impact on both their physical and mental wellbeing

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	HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS		HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?

Family: Overcoming Challenges Experienced by Children and Young People with Disability or Neurodiversity — **LEAD: DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP GROUP**

OUTCOMES	Short Term	Longer Term	HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?
Children and young people's education and care needs are fully met, regardless of need.	Develop and implement a framework of support for all children and young people who cannot access their education in a school setting. Framework is twofold:- - Council Team structure to provide education out with school settings - Procurement framework comprising of 3rd sector and other external suppliers of wellbeing and learning support		Number of young people who cannot access education in a school setting receive an education which meets their needs. Reduction in out of area placements.
	Explore options to extend nursery provision for children with complex needs.	Increase in sustainable nursery provision suitable for and available to children with more complex needs.	Increase in provision available and uptake of this provision.
	Voice — Better understand the impact of reduced school timetables on children and young people with a diversity of needs.	Create and implement a policy and associated processes to ensure effective oversight of the use of reduced school timetables.	Increase in the time children and young people spent meaningfully engaged in education.
Parents and young people with neurodiversity challenges can access early help and support.	Voice — Establish the specific gaps in peer support provision for parents of children with neurodiversity challenges and barriers to accessing existing provision.	Enhance existing peer support and establish additional provision to meet identified gaps. Build peer support into the commissioned unpaid carer contract.	Number of peer support opportunities available, shaped by parents. Feedback from parents on impact of peer support.
	Promote information on disability specific financial support and identify barriers to access.	Overcome all barriers to access.	Parents supported through the commissioned Carer Service report they are:- - aware of the benefits available - able to access the benefits they are entitled to.

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	People Work with existing providers to improve access to support and development opportunities for parents who want to better understand and manage their child's behaviours, with a specific focus on under 5s.	Increased range of opportunities for parents to engage with training and development opportunities.	Range of provision on offer. Nos engaging in training. Feedback on impact of training.
Children, young people and families with additional support needs have improved access to sport, leisure and community-based activities.	**Voice** Understand and remove barriers to inclusion in existing community, sport and leisure opportunities.		Feedback from children and young people. Increase in number of young people reporting they feel able to access opportunities they want to.
	Establish the needs, costs and current availability of specialist out of school and holiday activities for families with additional support needs.	Develop and implement a programme of specialist weekend and holiday activities.	Availability and uptake of provision. Feedback from parents and children.
	People Respond to the request from community organisations to better understand neurodiversity and be able to support young people to engage in the activities they offer.		Feedback from activity providers on their confidence to welcome and support neurodiverse young people to enjoy the activities they provide. Increase in neurodiverse young people participating in activities.
Families can access a neurodiversity diagnosis in a timely way.	Autism Diagnostic Assessment Pathway Team (ADAPT) will	Roll out the Grampian Neurodevelopmental pathway across Moray thus ensuring all	Number of children referred and seen under ADAPT.

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| | | transition to the Grampian Neurodevelopmental pathway | children impacted by neurodiversity have access to timely diagnosis and early support. | Reduced time between referral and assessment, reduced number of re-referrals.

Families report receiving the support they need whilst waiting for assessment and diagnosis. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Voice | Refresh and implement the autism strategy, ensuring the voice of children, young people and their families is central. | | Autism strategy launched.

KPIs within the strategy are achieved. |
| **Children with additional support needs experience a smooth transition to adult services.** | Voice | Understand barriers to effective transition to adult services. | Implement clear transition pathways into adult services. | Feedback from young adults. |

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Strengthening family support

Where children are safe in their families and feel loved, **they must stay.**
Families must get support together to nurture that love, and to overcome the difficulties which get in its way.

Promise 2020

We promise to...

To Be Guided by Your Family UNCRC 5
You have the right to receive guidance from your family and community.

Work to Keep Families Together UNCRC 9
You have the right to live with your parents if this is what's best for you. You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.

Help You to Grow Up Safe and Healthy UNCRC 24 and 27
You have the right to clothing, good food, a clean and safe environment, and to see a doctor if you are ill.

Promote and Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42
You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

Holistic Whole Family Support involves a range of services that help families meet their individual needs, to thrive and to stay together. We want to make sure that families can access the help they need, where and when they need it. Holistic support should address the needs of children and adults in a family at the time of need rather than at crisis point, helping families to flourish and reduce the chances of family breakdown.

Community Based Support: Keeping the Promise requires us to have places in every community where parents of young children can meet, stay and play and get the support and advice the need. The restrictions put in place during the pandemic isolated families from their normal support networks and this has had wide ranging impact on family member's health and wellbeing.

"[Looking to] meet new people. There's no groups. It's so isolating at the moment... I've met some lovely people which has really helped"
-Parent attending Parent Wellbeing Walks

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Support for Parents

Through survey and focus group work undertaken as part of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment with both parents and locality group members who support parents, the following needs were highlighted:-

- Targeted support for new parents, especially those who became parents for the first time during COVID-19
- Ongoing support with return to nursery, school and community life post COVID-19
- Specific support to help with routine and boundary setting
- Support for parents struggling with their own mental wellbeing and/or that of their child
- Support for families where a member; is LGBTQI+, has a disability or long-term health condition

Early Learning Centres and nurseries are reporting a significant increase in the number of children with a diversity of needs entering nursery, although the number of children in Moray with at least developmental concern at their 13-15month and 27-30month reviews has not increased. This is concerning given numbers with developmental concerns in our comparative authorities and Scotland wide are between 5 and 6 times higher.

Families under Pressure

Whatever issues families face, we must ensure that intensive family support is available, proactive and characterised by the 10 family support principles. Alongside our work to refresh child's planning processes in Moray, we are working with families and using methods for improvement and service redesign to build support systems and services that follow these principles. Together with the Moray Alcohol and Drug Partnership, our key focus is to improve the supports for parents experiencing problematic substance and adopting whole family approaches to support.

10 Principles of Intensive Family Support	
o Community Based	o Holistic and Relational
o Responsive and Timely	o Therapeutic
o Work with Family Assets	o Non-Stigmatising:
o Empowerment and Agency	o Patient and Persistent
o Flexible	o Underpinned by Children's Rights

Through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, we will continue to build on the work across adults and children's services to establish responsive and relationship based models of family support across a wide range of specialist service areas.

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OUTCOMES	HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS		HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?
	Short Term	**Long Term**	

FAMILY: Strengthening Family Support — **LEAD: FAMILY SUPPORT STRATEGIC GROUP (TBC)**

OUTCOMES	Short Term	Long Term	HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?
Children and family's needs are addressed early through the implementation of effective child's planning processes.	Test the revised child's plan paperwork and associated guidance in one Associated School Group area.	Based on feedback from families and Team Around the Child, roll out revised plan and associated guidance across Moray.	Dip sample survey of Team Around the Child and families in child's planning.
	People Develop a bank of solution orientated trainers across Social Work, Health and Education.	Design and roll out a programme of training to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of named persons and Lead Professionals to implement child's planning processes.	Quality assurance of child's plans through Multi Agency Practice Hub.
	Further develop the role and function of the Wellbeing Coordinators and Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) based on findings of the external evaluation and ongoing self- evaluation activities.		Feedback from children, families and Team Around the Child. Evidence of impact captured on child's plan.
	Voice Develop and implement a multi-agency child's planning self-evaluation calendar, which includes voice of children and families, child's planning at points of transition.		Improvements measured through self-evaluation activity.
	Develop a central repository of information and supports available to children, young people and families in Moray and a system in place to keep it current.		Numbers accessing the repository. Feedback from families and front-line practitioners.
There is a clear pathway of non-stigmatised support available to families throughout Moray.	Utilising Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, recruit a skilled manager to coordinate the development of holistic family support in Moray. With parents and frontline practitioners, undertake self-evaluation of existing provision, utilising the national family support evaluation tool.	Based on self-evaluation, identify gaps in provision. Pool resources across the partnership and maximise external funding streams to develop a pathway of support with and for parents. Quality assure impact of pathway and implement improvements.	Increase in provision and evidence of impact from suppliers. Feedback from parents and the frontline practitioners who know them best on - Accessibility of support - Whether support meets their needs - The difference support has made.

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			Increase in number of PEEP groups operating.
	Based on learning of pilots to date, roll out PEEP across Moray on a partnership basis covering the antenatal to 5yrs age range (Health, Early Years and 3rd sector).	Further develop PEEP programmes, maximising opportunities for parents and senior phase pupils to gain qualifications which could lead to employment in childcare.	Feedback from parents on impact of PEEP.

Increase in the number of children meeting developmental milestones. |
| **Children's transition into nursery is consistently good.** | Undertake Quality Improvement (QI) activity within the Speyside Associated School Group (ASG) to establish an information sharing protocol between Health and Early Years. | Roll out the findings from the QI project across Moray. | Increase in the number of children transitioning into nursery with their needs clearly identified.

Practitioner's feedback evidences smooth transition. |
Parents are supported and enabled to be the best parents they can be.	Commission specialist services that provide tailored support to families under pressure (Social Work).	Embed commissioned services in the pathway for family support.	Evidence of impact utilising robust outcome measurement tool.
	Test the intensive family support redesign, utilising Whole Family Wellbeing Funding.	Scale up and roll out the Intensive Family Support Service across Moray.	Reduction in family breakdowns.
	Roll out the vulnerable pregnancy pathway across Moray.	Quality assure the vulnerable pregnancy pathway to ensure it is fit for purpose and having the desired impact.	Finding from quality assurance and evaluation activity including feedback from parents.

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We promise to...

Act in Your Best Interests UNCRC 3
When we make decisions, we will consider how these decisions will affect you.

Work To Keep Families Together UNCRC 9
If you can't live with your parents, you have the right to be helped to stay in regular contact with them, when it's safe to do so.

Make Sure You Grow Up Feeling Loved and Safe UNCRC 20 and 21
If it isn't possible for you to live with your own family, you have the right to be loved and cared for in a family setting where you are enabled to thrive.

Help Children, Young People and Families Seeking Asylum UNCRC 22
You have the right to get the help and protection you need.

Check In Regularly With You if You Are Living Away From Your Parents UNCRC 25
You have the right to live in a loving home and to be asked regularly whether it's working for you.

Work Together To Overcome The Barriers You Face When Trying To Access Education UNCRC 28 and 29
You have the right to be educated on a full time basis. We should help you learn in a way that works best for you.

Promote and Protect Your Rights UNCRC 42
You have the right to know your rights! Everyone including you, should be helped to learn and understand them.

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In 2022, there were 174 people under the age of 18 are categorised as 'Looked After' in Moray, representing just under 1% of young people in that age group.
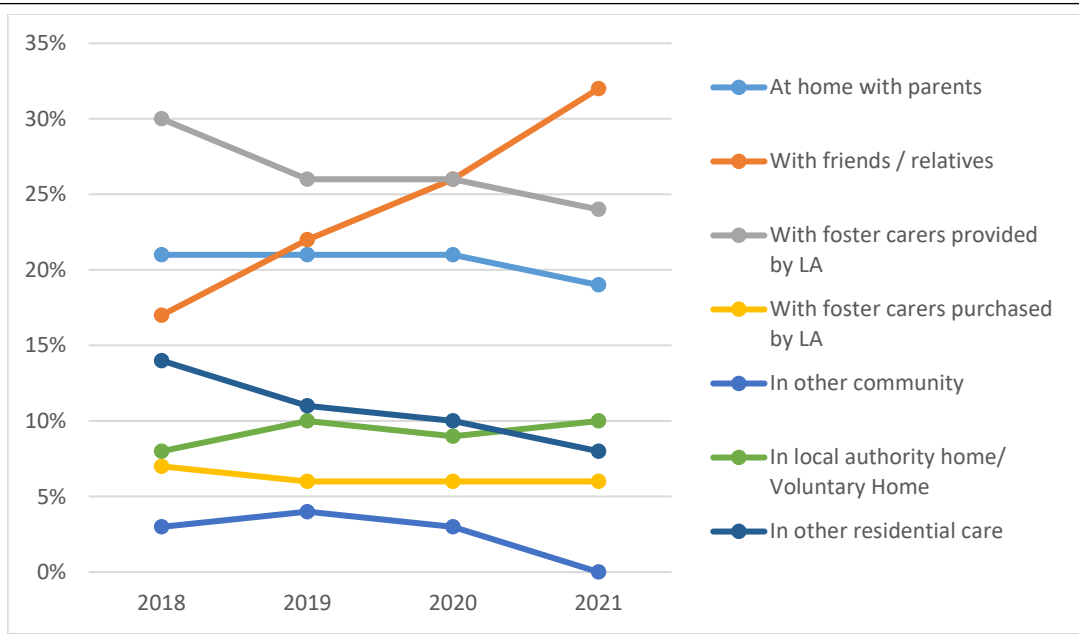
Looked After Children and Young People (LAC) by accommodation type in Moray 2018-2115

Legend:
- At home with parents
- With friends / relatives
- With foster carers provided by LA
- With foster carers purchased by LA
- In other community
- In local authority home/ Voluntary Home
- In other residential care

Percentage school attendance for children looked after within the last year, by gender, 2020/21

Legend: Female, Male

Education

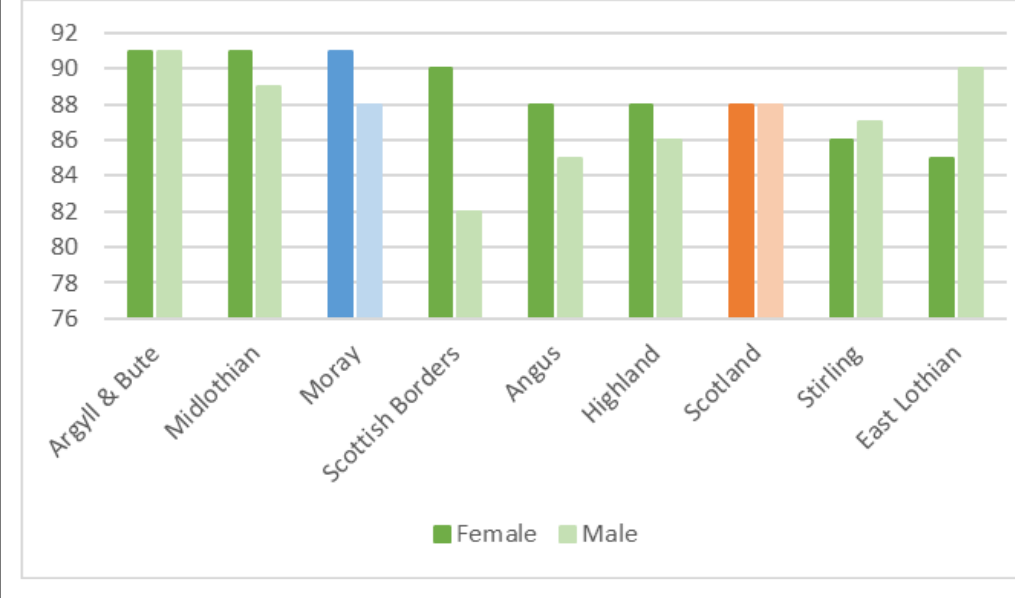Care experienced young people's school attendance and attainment levels are lower than their peers and a high number are not in education on a full-time basis. Attendance rate for care experienced children highlight that looked after girls have an attendance rate of 91% and looked after boys of 88% whilst their non-care experienced peers attendance remains stable at around 94%.

Exclusion rates have reduced across Moray but the number of looked after children and young people being excluded from school remains higher than their non-looked after peers. In 2020/21 there were 125 exclusions per 1,000 looked after pupils compared to a rate of 14.2 per 1,000 for the whole school population. This data highlights looked after children were 9 times likelier to be excluded from school.

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School rates of exclusion per 1,000 pupils, by year
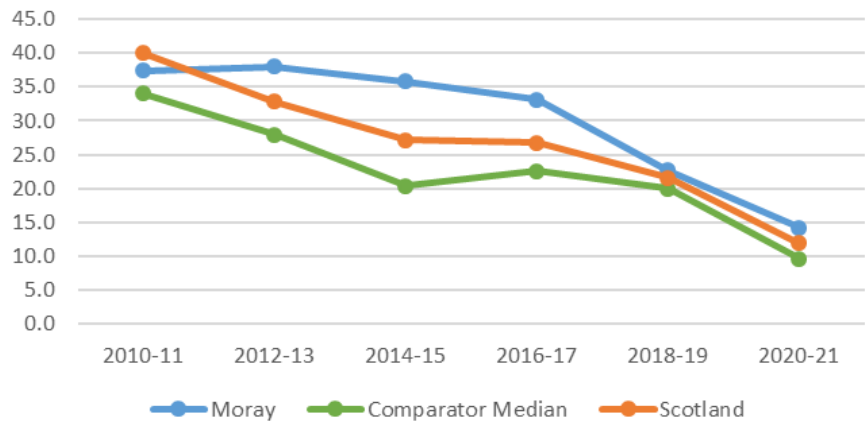
Proportion of cases of school exclusion by gender in Moray 2020-21
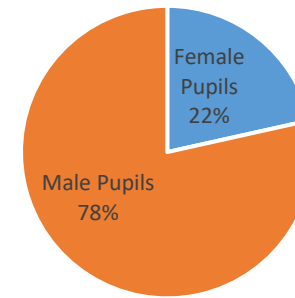
Our looked after and care experienced young people are at risk of being further marginalised from their peers, communities and educational opportunities by being on a reduced timetable. The table on the right shows the number and percentage of care experienced and looked after and care experienced young people on a reduced timetable.

School	No. of LAC pupils on reduced timetables	% of LAC School population
Buckie High School	10	42%
Elgin Academy	1	7%
Elgin High	6	26%
Forres Academy	2	9%
Keith Grammar	2	33%
Lossiemouth High School	0	/
Milnes High School	0	/
Speyside High School	0	/

Percentage of Looked After and Care Experienced Young People on Part-Time Timetables by School in Moray.

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Care experienced young people in Moray continue to have poorer educational outcomes than both the national average and all but two of our local authority comparators. The proportion of young people achieving at least one qualification at SCQF 3 is 73% compared with 97% of all school leavers. For SCQF 4 65% compared to 96% for all school leavers. 29% of looked after children are not receiving any qualifications at SCQF 3 or above.
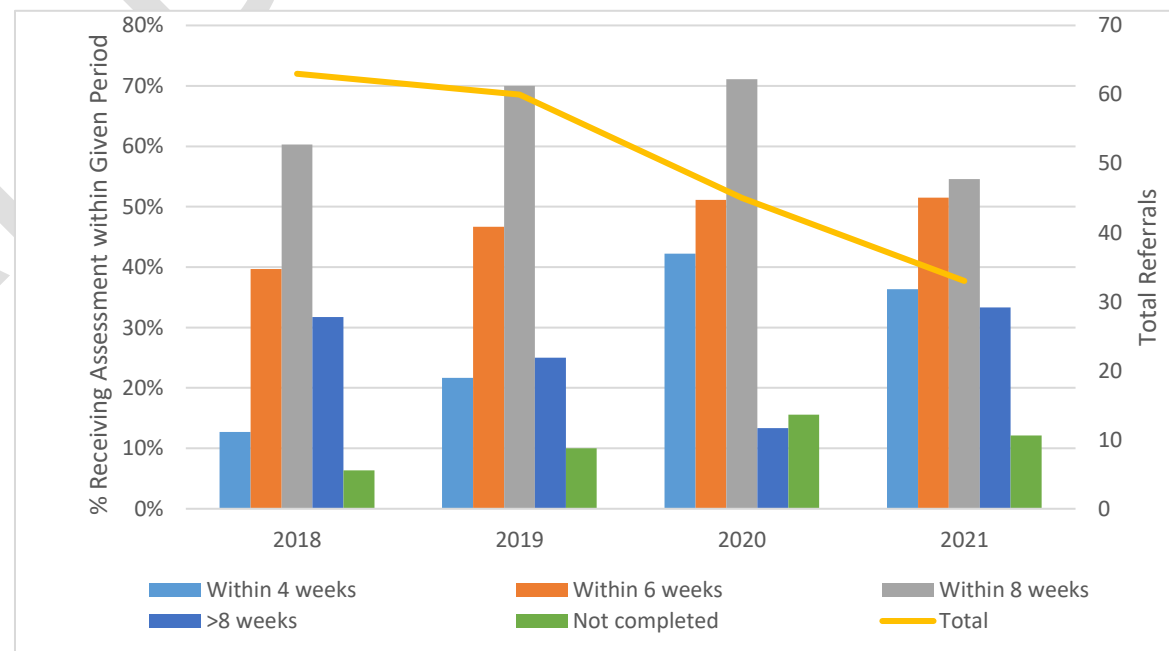
LAC Initial destinations			
Establishment	**Year**	**% of Schools Leavers in a Positive Destination**	**Number in Cohort**
Moray	2020/21	75.00%	16
Virtual Comparator	2020/21	91.25%	160
The Northern Alliance	2020/21	82.79%	122
The National Establishment	2020/21	87.94%	1045

Positive Destinations

75% of the 16 looked after and care experienced young people in Moray moved on to a positive destination after leaving school in 2021.

Health & wellbeing

Looked after and care experienced children and young people are more likely to experience poor health than other young people. All children who become looked after receive an initial Health assessment within 4 weeks of becoming looked after. The number of initial health assessments completed within nationally agreed timescales remains low at just over a third of referrals. The proportion of health assessments not undertaken within 8 weeks has increased to 45% (33% undertaken after 8 weeks and 12% not undertaken).

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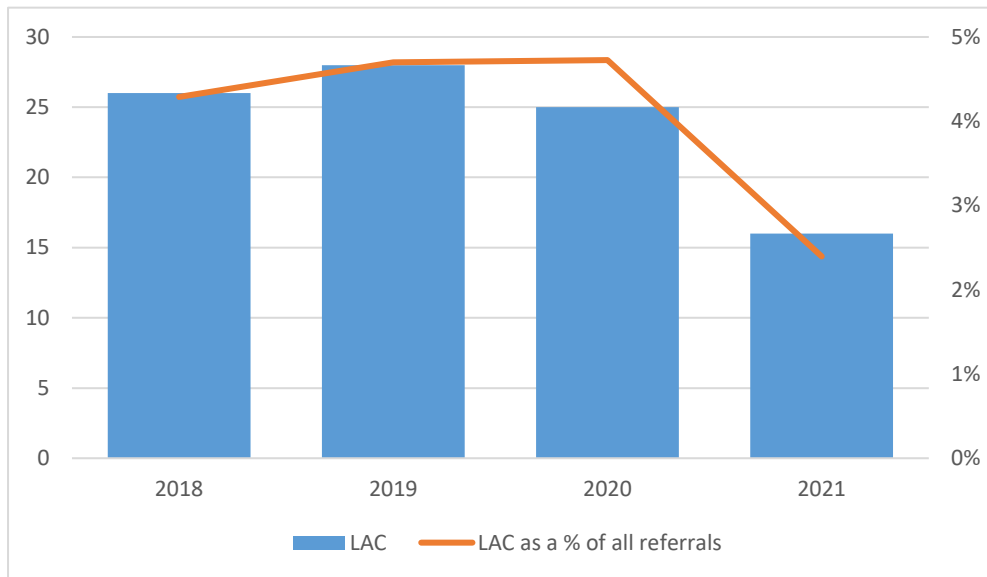
The number of looked after children and young people being referred to CAMHS has significantly dropped during 2021/2022 resulting in looked after children and young people potentially not receiving the mental well-being support they need.

Number (left-hand axis) and proportion (right-hand axis) of CAMHS referrals in Moray classified as Looked After Children and Young People

Care Experienced Parents

In order to truly understand the impact of care on families in Moray, we need to understand the needs of care experienced people as parents. Care experienced parents reported feeling judged and stigmatised as a poor parent. They told us that they place great importance on having someone they can trust such as Health Visitors and Support Workers. They want opportunities to mix with other care experienced parents in a community setting.

"I think [it would help] if there were groups. Especially when I was a young mum, I had no-one else to talk to, nobody spoke about being care experienced."

-care experienced parent

"[It would help] being able to talk about being care experienced. Groups for mums and dad – being in care is one part, your journey how you ended up in care would be good to talk to others who have been through similar experiences."

-care experienced parent

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Moving on

There is a lack of affordable housing options available for young people leaving care and transitioning on to independent living. During 2021/2022, 6 care experienced young people were living in homeless accommodation. Young people have told us they want continued support when they leave care from the people they have relationships with and trust.

> *"I am really struggling since I left care, managing all my bills and living on my own is difficult, I feel very lonely and isolated."*

> *"Living in homeless accommodation on the outskirts was hard, it was a place where no one spoke to me. I felt so isolated. No one in there ever spoke to me I felt really alone. I didn't know anyone in that area as I'm not from there so I couldn't even go out to talk to people."*

Youth Justice

A disproportionately high number of care experienced children and young people are represented in the youth justice system. The majority are boys and young men. This raises important questions about gender norms prevalent in our society, which lead more boys and young men than girls and young women to offend; but also, about whether systems are working appropriately to support boys before they come into contact with the Police and the Criminal Justice System.

Voice

To better understand care experienced children and young peoples journey within the care system and where improvements are needed qualitative data was captured through a range of engagement activity. Children and young people told us

Number of young people accused of an offence in Moray by gender, by age group, by year[192].
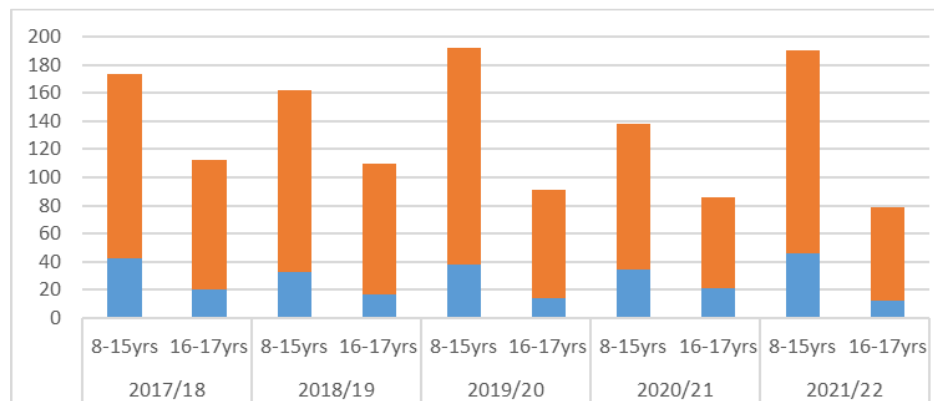
> *"I would like to see family especially parents and siblings more frequently"*

> *"I would like for better understanding at school of what it means to be care experienced."*

> *"To move around from foster placements is challenging and just being in care is hard in case people at school find out."*

> *"I feel like I'm treated differently because I'm in care. It holds me back doing what I'm able to do."*

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Care: Improving Outcomes for Looked After and Care Experienced Children and Young People		LEAD – CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGIC GROUP	
OUTCOMES	**HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS**		**HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?**
	Short Term	**Long Term**	
The gap in educational outcomes of looked after and care experienced young people is reduced.	Improve the identification, tracking and monitoring of looked after children and young people within schools, nurseries and other preschool settings.	Embed systems and processes that allow for the ongoing monitoring of support to looked after children and young people.	We will know what support our looked after young people are receiving.
	Recruit a Virtual Head Teacher who will work alongside local partners to better understand the barriers to attendance, engagement and achievement in Education. With care experienced and looked after children, design and test new and improved interventions to overcome the barriers identified.	Implement improvements on a partnership basis and quality assure effectiveness.	Improvement in attendance. Findings from quality assurance activity. This includes feedback from children, young people and their parents. Improvement in educational outcomes.
	Improve understanding on the use of reduced timetables and internal/external exclusions for looked after children and young people. Adopt a multi-agency approach to improve engagement in Education.	Develop and implement a policy and governance structure around the monitoring and tracking of reduced timetables.	Increased attendance in meaningful Education. Reduction of informal and formal exclusion.
Looked after and care experienced young people enter and sustain education,	Identify the challenges and barriers to looked after and care experienced young people accessing further/higher education, training opportunities and alternative awards.	Adopt a partnership approach to improving accessibility of further/higher education, training opportunities and alternative awards.	School leavers outcome data via SDS, Moray Pathways and further/higher education.

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training or employment after leaving school.	Track and monitor care experienced destinations up to the age of 26 years old – to measure the effectiveness of existing supports and identify if there are gaps in current provision.	Develop and implement a partnership action plan to improve positive destinations for care experienced and looked after young people.	Annual dip sample of care experienced young people measuring positive destination outcomes.
	Raise awareness and access to funded early learning and childcare provision for care experience parents.	Monitor uptake of early years provision for care experienced parents.	Increase in care experienced parents accessing training and employment opportunities.
The health needs of looked after children and young people are met.	Better understand and overcome barriers to consistent completion of Initial Health Assessments within agreed timescales (4 weeks from NHS Grampian receiving notification).	Review best practice around Strength and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ) and how they support onward referral to CAMH services where required. Investigate systems to strengthen SDQ data capture and electronic scoring within Moray. Understand the needs of Looked after children who are living at home and ensure they all have an initial health assessment completed.	Increase in number of children receiving IHA within 4 weeks. Increase in number of children referred to CAMHs or other services because of elevated SDQ's at the three-month review. Audit of 'child's voice' in the health assessment process. Improvements in children and young people's health related outcomes. Increase in the number of Looked after children living at home receiving IHA.
	Ensure mental well-being needs are identified early, a range of support (up to age 26 and beyond) is accessible and outcomes monitored.		Increased referrals for mental health and well-being support where evidenced it is required. Services provide evidence through impact reporting of improved outcomes.

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Looked after and care experienced young people and their parents/carers feel their voice has been heard through the provision of independent advocacy.	People Appoint a single service advocacy provider who will provide independent advocacy to care experienced children and their families at all stages of their care journey.	With care experienced young people and their parents, quality assure the advocacy support delivered via commissioned services within Social Work and Education. Agree improvements and begin implementation.	Annual dip sample to collect views of children and families who have accessed advocacy support.
The number and range of placements available meets the needs of children and young people in need of care. (Including those who experience disability/have complex needs, young people seeking asylum and brothers and sisters who should be accommodated together).	Scaffolding Increase focus and resources on the recruitment of foster carers, drawing on the assistance of local, regional and national partners.	Review the impact of the foster carer recruitment campaign and further develop building on success to date.	Increase in number of foster care placements available Increase in children and young people accommodated in foster care placements. Decrease in out of area and residential placements.
	People Identify and address the training and development needs of foster, kinship and residential care workers employed by Local authority.	Update and implement revised training provision provided by the local authority.	Numbers attending training. Feedback on impact of training. Reduction in placement breakdowns.
	People Better understand what peer support foster and kinship carers want.	Develop and implement peer support opportunities with and for foster and kinship Carers.	Feedback from foster carers and kinship carers on the how this impacts their ability to care for children and young people.
Transitions for children and families feel and are experienced as integrated, with maintaining relationships being paramount.	Scaffolding Review the current pathway plan to ensure young people receive support before, during and after they move on to independent living.	Implement changes identified through the review of the current pathway plan and quality assure.	Care experienced young people voice their transition to independent living felt positive and they are maintaining the relationship which are important to them. Number of Care experienced young people up to the age of 26years with a pathway plan in place.

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	Scaffolding Develop and implement a care leavers Housing Needs Policy which includes a homelessness prevention pathway.	With the Housing Support Officer (care experience) and care experienced young people identify a resource for young people transitioning from care to trial living independently.	Reduction in homelessness.
	Voice Understand young people's experience of the current support received when transitioning out of care and identify gaps in provision.	Improve Through Care and Aftercare support provision for care experienced young adults up to the age of 26 years ensuring support is based on individual need not on 'age of services' criteria.	Young people voice feeling supported as they transition on to adulthood. Increased uptake of Through Care Aftercare Support Services.
Siblings are supported to maintain positive relationships with one another.	Embed the learning from PACE in policies and procedures relating to the placement of children and young people in Care.	Quality assurance implementation of policies and procedures.	Increased proportion of siblings growing up together.
	Voice With care experienced children and young people develop a local maintaining relationships policy with a specific focus on siblings.	Implement and evaluate maintaining relationships policy.	Services report increased numbers of young people maintaining relationships that are important to them.
Children and young people seeking asylum are fully integrated into school and community life.	Understand what barriers there are for children, young people and their families seeking asylum with regards to education, health and inclusion within their community.	Adopt a partnership approach to supporting asylum seeking children, young people and families to access education, health and community life.	Children and young people who are seeking asylum achieve educational outcomes in line with their peers. Feedback from children, young people and their families who are seeking asylum report they feel included in their community.

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Looked after and care experienced young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.	Evaluate effectiveness of current support system.	Improve early and preventative supports for young people at risk of offending.	Reduction in the number of care experienced young people in justice services.
	Develop and implement robust guidance in on the use of restraint across the care system.	Support the workforce to adopt a trauma informed, rights-based approach when responding to children and young people in distress.	Reduction in use of restraint.
Our improvement activity is shaped by the voice of our looked after and care experienced children and young people	Voice Develop and monitor a corporate parenting data set which reflects looked after and care experienced children and young people's experiences within the care system.		Areas for improvement identified.

Evidence of impact of improvement activity. |
| | Voice Increase the voice, choice and participation of looked after children in their hearings and meetings through implementing and evaluating the Better Meetings Practitioners Guide. | Create with children and young people, safe trauma informed spaces for looked after children and young people attending their hearings and meetings. | Children, young people and their families report positive experiences of their meetings. |
| | People Develop and embed the role of Promise Keepers across the partnership ensuring the Promise remains at the forefront of service design and delivery. | Extend the network of Promise Keepers across the Health and Social Care partnership (adult services). | Children and young people report that they have been included in the design and delivery of services they access. |
| | Further develop forums through which care experienced children and young people can both socialise and affect change Initial focus on younger children and those with additional support needs | | Increase participation in Champions Board and Little Fix

Vehicle established with and for younger children and those with additional support needs

Young people involved report that they are affecting change |

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PEOPLE

Supporting our Workforce

Our workforce includes all volunteers, carers and employees who have a role in improving wellbeing of children, young people and families. This might be through direct contact or indirectly through a supporting role. It may be within a statutory service or as part of a community group or organisation. There are a broad range of professions and roles, and therefore diversity, of staff across the partnership.

"Maintaining a stable and motivated workforce is central to the delivery of effective high-quality services for children, young people and families. Pivotal to this is valuing and supporting the workforce and promoting their wellbeing"

The Promise 2020

Relationship building is key to providing the correct support to children, young people and families. In practice this requires an understanding of the ways that trauma can impact on children and young people's development and wellbeing. This involves working in consultation with the child or young person and taking all reasonable steps to understand what is going on in that child's life and how current and past life experiences may influence relationships. The work required to keep The Promise for all our children and young people will be a key area of our workforce development. We recognise there is much to build on including changes we have made to our language, introducing love, kindness and relationships as key concepts and practices in the work across children's services.

We will continue to build on our trauma informed and compassionate approaches to work with families. We know that workers must also feel valued and supported to respond to the individual needs and wishes of a child or young person and their family. We will strive to create the conditions for best practice through leadership, supervision and support for workers to feel empowered and confident so they can, in turn, instil that feeling in the children and families they work with.

Learning and Practice Development

We need to be aware of the learning and development needs of our workforce to ensure learning opportunities are relevant and delivered in a way that makes best use of resources. We previously undertook an options appraisal for children's services partnership training and are now working to develop a joint workforce development strategy and engagement plan. This will take into consideration changes in legislation, policy, priorities and working practices.

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People: Supporting Our Workforce	LEAD: MULTI AGENCY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP	
OUTCOME	**HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS**	**HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?**
Integrated working practice is enhanced through joint development opportunities that supports our shared vision, core principles and values.	Review our workforce training needs and ensure we have all we need to meet them, incorporating national developments. Develop a workforce development plan that supports our vision and values and priorities established in the creation of this plan. Continue to deliver joint workforce development programmes to implement National Child Protection Guidance and GIRFEC policy.	A partnership workforce plan with a baseline, measures and reporting is agreed. Monitoring and reporting of single and multi-agency training activity.
Staff facilitate and enable the relationships, networks and connections that support our children, young people and families.	Embed the principles of trauma-informed and strengths-based working across all multi-agency/sector training and development activity. Change our language and introduce love, kindness and relationships as key concepts and practices.	Reflective feedback incorporated into planning cycle. Audit of minutes, plans and papers.

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SCAFFOLDING
Working in Partnership

Through the development of this plan, we have sought the views of children, families and our workforce to better understand what's getting in the way of progress at both a strategic and operational level. Our ongoing self-evaluation activity that includes learning reviews, file auditing and journey mapping has also informed the actions we plan to take to strengthen our scaffolding. During the lifetime of this plan, we will strive to ensure that our governance, culture, systems and processes empower our paid and voluntary workforce and local communities to deliver the improvements children and young people have told us matters most to them.

*"Children, families and the workforce must be **supported by a system that is there when it is needed:** the scaffolding of help, support and accountability"*

The Promise 2020

Successes we will build on:

Revised governance structure with streamlined partnership groups each with a clear focus on statutory responsibilities and the delivery of actions to progress priorities within the Children's Services Plan

Pooling of single agency budgets to meet partnership priorities
Our revised locality networks, which are made up of front line practitioners and community organisations, have operated as a successful means of identifying and addressing emerging themes. The need for a substance use service for young people aged under 18 years was identified through the Buckie Network. A successful partnership funding bid was made to CORRA, led by Aberlour Childcare Trust. Health, Education, Social Work, Moray Drug and Alcohol Partnership and the 3rd sector pooled their budgets to provide match funding, in recognition that the new service supports the delivery of both our partnership and their single agency objectives.

Building the capacity of the 3rd sector to take a lead role in the identification and delivery of our partnership priorities
Through a competitive procurement process, 3rd sector organisations are bidding to become chairs of the locality networks. Their remit is to coordinate the identification of emerging needs within the communities that make up Moray and facilitate creative joint working at a local level to meet those needs.

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Scaffolding: Working in Partnership		**LEAD: GIRFEC LEADERSHIP GROUP**
OUTCOME	**HIGH LEVEL ACTIONS**	**HOW WILL WE KNOW WE HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE?**
As a partnership, we are aware of the changing needs of children, young people and their families.	Identify a dedicated resource to coordinate the annual update of our partnership Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Integrate the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment into our continuous improvement framework. Host the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in a central repository, accessible to all and ensure it is used to inform all other relevant single agency and partnership strategic plans, including; LOIP, Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care Moray, Community Learning and Development Plan and Moray Council Corporate Plan.	Current Joint Strategic Needs Assessment accessible to all.
As a partnership, we maximise all opportunities to lever in additional funding and work together to ensure it supports the delivery of our shared priorities.	Raise awareness across GIRFEC Leadership Group of external funding allocated to single agencies and the partnership to address priorities within this plan. Agree how this funding can be used to best effect. Maximise opportunities to work with the 3rd sector to lever in additional funding. Develop and resource a joint commissioning process through which funds will be allocated and monitored.	There will be an overall increase in external funding. External funding is being targeted to priorities of this plan. A joint commissioning process is operational.
The risk of silo working across children and adult services is minimised.	Agree and implement a reporting process across children and adult services. Improve communication and joint working with relevant adult services including drug and alcohol partnership and adult mental health services.	A clear oversight of activity across the partnership evidences coordination.

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	Ensure members of partnership groups responsible for improving outcomes for children and families highlight silo working on both a single agency and partnership basis.	
We more consistently and effectively measure impact of the actions we are taking to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.	Build on the quality assurance process to ensure that the intersectionality across our thematic priorities is well evidenced, widely understood and all mitigating actions are co-ordinated. Listen to the views and opinions of children, young people and families and collate information together to evaluate overall impact.	Findings from our self-evaluation activity.
Improve co-ordination of continuous improvement activity.	Develop a robust performance management and quality improvement framework and implement on a consistent basis. Celebrate and build on good practice.	Framework will be in place and there will be evidence of what works.

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OUR PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK
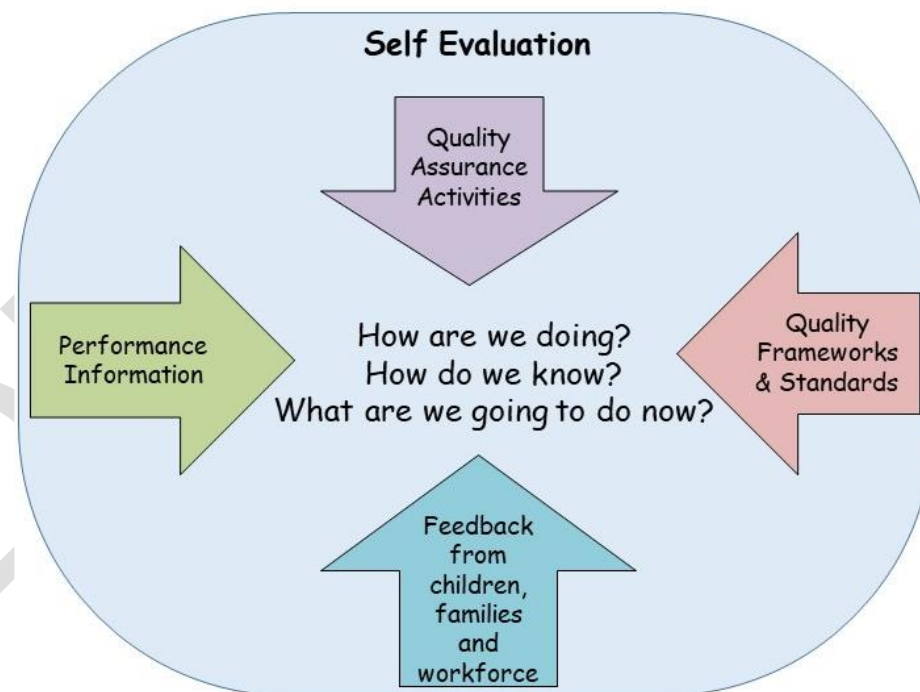## Measuring Progress

Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a useful process that enables us to identify what's working well and where we need to target efforts to support improvement and achieve better outcomes for children. Self-evaluation is a complex area which involves the measurement of what we do (actions), what we deliver (outputs/products), and the difference that this makes to children and their families (outcomes and impact).

In children's services planning, both in Moray and nationally, one of the challenges has been to focus more effectively on outcomes for children and their families. We can measure our outputs, systems and processes but demonstrating the impact of these in terms of improved wellbeing outcomes is more difficult. In practice, there may be many different actions and process improvements that together lead to improvement in one or more outcomes, and it is not always possible to evidence a direct linear relationship between activity and outcome.

This challenge led the Scottish Government to work with stakeholders to develop a Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) Outcomes Framework to provide an overall holistic picture and understanding of children and young people's wellbeing in Scotland. The CYPF Outcomes Framework will sit below Scotland's National Performance Framework at an intermediate level and will be aligned to this. The aim is that the proposed framework will contain a 'core' suite of indicators which authorities will supplement with their own local indicators. Use of these core indicators will allow us to compare the holistic picture of children and young people in Moray with that of other authorities in Scotland.

We are using the core suite of indicators in this plan along with our own locally identified indicators which will be developed. Any canges to the final suite will be reflected as our Children's Services Plan is reviewed and revised.

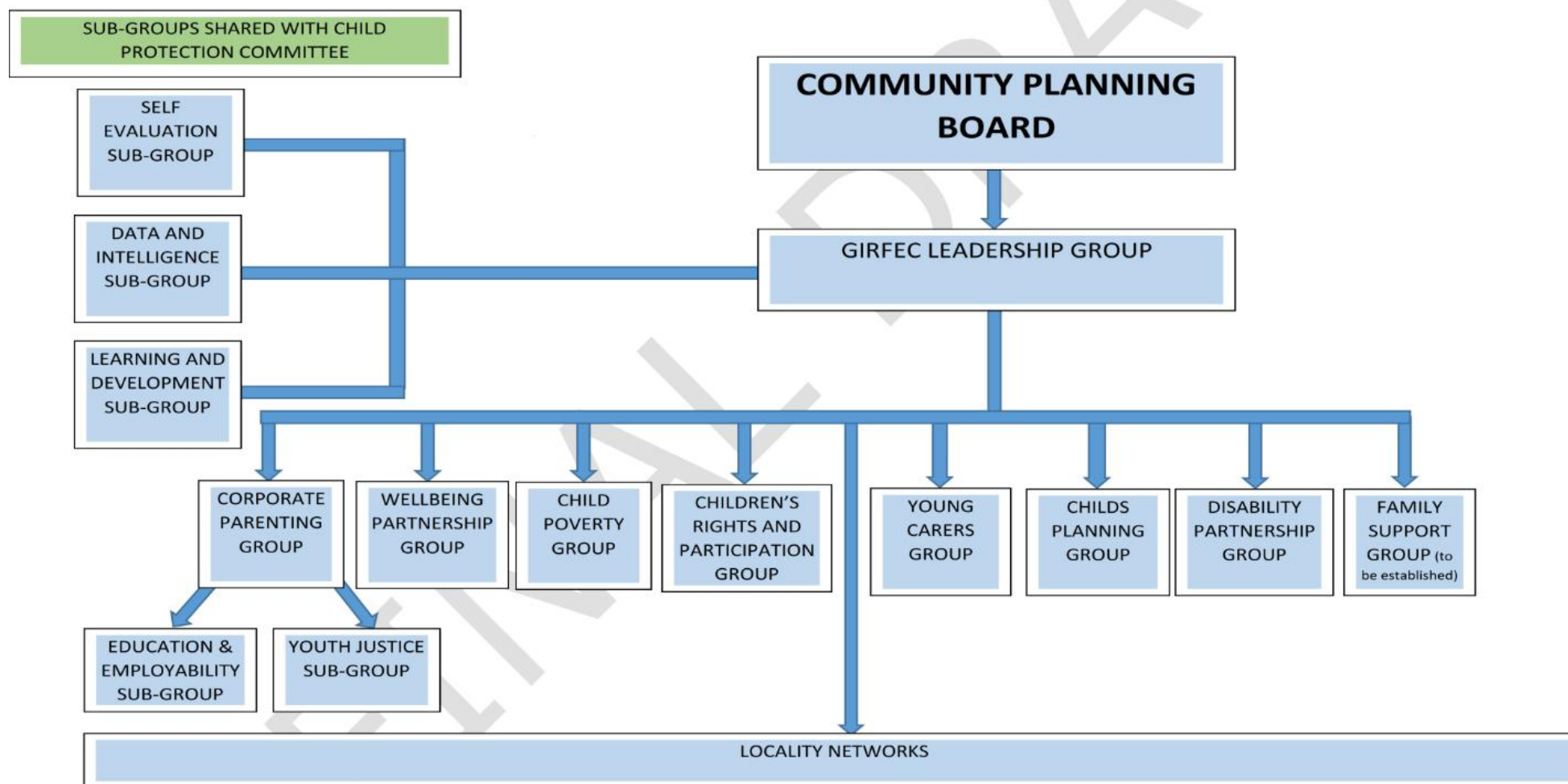The proposed core suite of indicators from the Outcomes Framework is shown below.

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Scottish Government Core Wellbeing Indicators:

- Mean score on Stirling wellbeing scale for P5-S1 children/Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Score for S2-S6 children (WEMWBS)
- Percentage of S2-S6 children with slightly raised, high or very high Strength and Difficulties score
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who agree that adults are good at taking what they say into account
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who eat both fruit and vegetables every day
- Percentage of children with a concern at their 27-30 month review (as a % of children reviewed)
- Percentage of P5-S5 children who say they always have an adult in your life who they can trust and talk to about any personal problems
- Relative child poverty rate after housing costs
- Percentage of settings providing funded Early Learning and Childcare achieving Care Inspectorate grades of good or better across all four quality themes
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who say they feel safe when out in their local area always or most of the time.
- Percentage of S1-S3 children participating in positive leisure activities (participation in at least one from list)
- Percentage of P5-S6 children who agree that their local area is a good place to live
- Percentage of P5-S3 children who were bullied in last year
- Number of children subject to Interagency Referral Discussions
- Number of children in temporary accommodation at 31 March
- Percentage of P5-S6 children that had at least one hour of exercise the day before the survey
- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 children achieving expected CfE levels in literacy (reading, writing, listening and talking)
- Percentage of P1, P4 and P7 children achieving expected CfE levels in numeracy
- Percentage of all school leavers in positive destinations at 9-month follow-up
- Proportions of all children under 16 who live in households that contain at least one person aged 16 to 64, where all individuals aged 16 and over are in employment
- Percentage of P7-S6 children who have access to the internet at home or on a phone or another device
- Percentage of P5-S4 children who agree that their friends treat them well.

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Governance

Moray Community Planning Partnership has devolved responsibility to both produce and deliver this plan to the GIRFEC Leadership Group (GLG). GLG comprises of senior decision makers from the public and 3rd sector who have a remit to work together to improve the lives of children and young people across Moray. The group is chaired by the Chief Social Work officer and Head of Service.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

SUB-GROUPS SHARED WITH CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

- SELF EVALUATION SUB-GROUP
- DATA AND INTELLIGENCE SUB-GROUP
- LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SUB-GROUP

COMMUNITY PLANNING BOARD

GIRFEC LEADERSHIP GROUP

- CORPORATE PARENTING GROUP
- WELLBEING PARTNERSHIP GROUP
- CHILD POVERTY GROUP
- CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION GROUP
- YOUNG CARERS GROUP
- CHILDS PLANNING GROUP
- DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP GROUP
- FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP (to be established)

- EDUCATION & EMPLOYABILITY SUB-GROUP
- YOUTH JUSTICE SUB-GROUP

LOCALITY NETWORKS

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Specific strategic groups across the Children's Services partnership have oversight responsibility for the delivery of each of the action plans. Given the interlinkage between the priorities and associated actions, the chairs of these groups will meet regularly throughout the life of this plan to coordinate improvement activity.   Progress will be reported on a quarterly basis to GLG.

Priority	Strategic Group with oversight responsibility
Supporting families where children experience challenges due to disability or neurodiversity	Disability Partnership Group
Tackling child poverty	Child Poverty Group
Improving the mental wellbeing of children and young people	Wellbeing Partnership Group
Keeping children and young people safe	Moray Child Protection Committee
Strengthening support for families	Family Support Strategic Group (To be established)
Improving outcomes for looked after children	Corporate Parenting Strategic Group

An annual report will be approved by the Community Planning Partnership and submitted to the Scottish Government in accordance with our statutory duties in relation to Children's Services planning, as outlined in section 3 of The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014).

This annual report will also meet our statutory reporting responsibilities in relation to UNCRC, Corporate Parenting and Child Poverty.

Our plan needs to remain agile and responsive to the changing needs of children and families. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be revised annually and will inform priorities and actions for the forthcoming year.

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