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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 26 MAY 2021**

**SUBJECT: MORAY SCOTTISH ATTAINMENT CHALLENGE (SAC) 2015-2020  
IMPACT REPORT**

**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 (Pupil Equity) funding for the children and young people of Moray, in particular, those most affected by poverty as framed by our Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact Report for Moray 2020.
- 1.2 To review the impact of SAC funding on closing the poverty related attainment gap and impact of Covid-19 on work by schools to address this.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance, (para 9 of the minute refers).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:**

- (i) **scrutinises and notes the progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap in Moray over the last 5 years and;**
- (ii) **acknowledges the impact of Covid-19 on work to close the poverty related attainment and progress of schools despite this disruption.**

**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 The Council has been part of the SAC since session 2016/2017 and receives funding through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund. Moray has received £4,308,920 over the last 3 years across the various funding streams linked to the SAC.
- 3.3 Over the past two academic sessions, PEF planning and interventions have been impacted by Covid-19 and disruption to our schools. Engagement and participation in learning was variable for some children, with the impact on progress over time not fully known at this stage.
- 3.4 The SAC programme focuses on closing the poverty-related attainment gap, targeting improvements in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Moray is 1 of 11 'Universal Support' local authorities, with focus on key policies and access to core funding including Pupil Equity Funding. This is different to the 12 local authorities forming 'The Schools Programme' focusing on key interventions and enhanced funding where there is a significant proportion of pupils and families facing some of the greatest challenges across Scotland. There are now 72 schools across wider Scotland in the Schools Programme
- 3.5 The 'Challenge Authorities' make up the final part of the SAC programme, 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. The table below outlines key local authority areas within each of the SAC programme areas:

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Universal</b>
<i>9 Local Authorities</i>	<i>12 Local Authorities</i>	<i>11 Local Authorities</i>
Clackmannanshire	Aberdeen City	Aberdeenshire
Dundee	Argyll & Bute	Angus
East Ayrshire	Dumfries & Galloway	East Dunbartonshire
Glasgow City	Edinburgh City	East Lothian
Inverclyde	Falkirk	East Renfrewshire
North Ayrshire	Fife	Midlothian
North Lanarkshire	Highland	Moray
Renfrew	Scottish Borders	Orkney
West Dunbartonshire	South Lanarkshire	Perth & Kinross
	South Ayrshire	Shetland
	Stirling	Western Isles
	West Lothian	

- 3.6 Care Experienced 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.
- 3.7 Completed in late December 2020 and published in March 2021, our Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact Report for Moray 2020 (**Appendix 1**) reviews data sets to session 2019/2020. In 2019 it was noted that Moray had 38% of pupils with an Additional Support Need (ASN), slightly higher than National averages. In total, 9.8% of pupils were registered

for Free Schools Meals (FSM) and almost all Moray Schools received PEF funding ranging from £1,200 to £109,200 per school. £1,200 is representative of PEF funding available for one PEF funding eligible child for spending on targeted and wider universal supports.

3.8 Until session 2020/2021, Moray had no SIMD decile 1 children and families. However, school profiles have notably changed from last year with changes in Scottish Government classifications resulting in 90 Primary School children in Moray now within SIMD decile 1 highlighting increased number of children and young people living in poverty in Moray. Where PEF funding was set for 2 years from session 2020/2021, schools impacted by this change have not benefited from additional funding or being included in the schools programme. Moray has attainment gaps in the upper SIMD deciles, specifically decile 7 where 25% of Moray school cohort reside.

3.9 Key principles of PEF funding are as follows:

- Head Teachers must have access to the full amount of PEF
- PEF must deliver additional activities, interventions or resources
- Head Teachers should work in partnership with each other and partners, taking account of local authority guidance
- PEF should articulate closely to existing planning and reporting procedures. For example, through School Improvement Planning and Standards and Quality reports
- Parents, carers, children, young people and other key stakeholders should be involved in the planning process
- Funding must provide targeted support for children and young people (and their families if appropriate) affected by poverty. PEF is allocated on the basis of Free School Meals – Head Teachers can use their professional judgement to bring additional children in to the targeted interventions and approaches
- Head Teachers must develop a clear, data informed, rationale for use of the funding
- PEF planning should include measuring and evaluating the impact in relation to the attainment gap
- Plans for future sustainability should be considered as part of this

#### **4. IMPACT OF SAC FUNDING IN MORAY ON IMPROVING OUTCOMES**

4.1 The SAC Impact Report for Moray contained within **Appendix 1** contains full details of impact of SAC and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) for Moray. The ethos and vision of SAC is reflected across our Moray Strategic documents including the Children's Services Plan where reducing the impact of poverty is a core aim. This is further reflected in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and work is ongoing to ensure school PEF plans take account of the current Moray Child Poverty Action Plan linking with work on Cost of the School Day. Local authority guidance on PEF strategy and planning has recently been reviewed and relaunched working in partnership with our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor.

- 4.2 Data for Broad General Education (BGE) attainment in literacy indicates a 4-year trend of improvement in attainment for Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. There has been a notable reduction from 28% to 15% (-13%) in the poverty related attainment gap for literacy (P1, P4, P7 and S3 combined). While below the National average, schools continue to use PEF funding to provide a range of targeted interventions to improve reading and writing including effective writing workshops, recovery programmes and reading initiatives.
- 4.3 Data for BGE attainment in numeracy indicates a 4-year trend for improvement across CfE levels. There has been a notable reduction in the poverty related attainment gap for numeracy at P1, P4, P7 and S3 combined. The gap has reduced over time from 21% to 13% (-8%). While below national averages at early to second level, Moray are above national average at 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Supported by local authority Maths Conferences, training, resources, school-based interventions, Associated Schools Group resourcing and partnership working, work continues to address identified poverty related attainment gaps.
- 4.4 At Senior Phase, there is a 3.09% poverty related attainment gap for Senior Phase Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 attainment which is 2.8% lower than the National average (5.89%). There is a 5.09% poverty related attainment gap for Senior Phase SCQF level 5 attainment which is 12.02% lower than the National average (17.11%). There is a 16.67% poverty related attainment gap for SCQF level 6 attainment which is 15.87% lower than the National average (32.54%). Overall, this demonstrates a positive position.
- 4.5 In 2019/2020, 117 separate PEF interventions were delivered within the majority of schools. The majority of schools report improvements in quantitative and qualitative evidence including health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Schools continue to use PEF creatively to consider how they may close the poverty related attainment gaps, using data to inform improvements.
- 4.6 Schools continue to develop approaches to wellbeing and family engagement, strengthening knowledge and developing interventions in support of closing identified attainment gaps and improving attendance rates of children and young people supported by our PEF strategies.
- 4.7 Moray has significantly lower numbers of children looked after at home than the Scottish average. While looked after children's school attendance and attainment are below their peers, the Corporate Parenting Strategy Group's Education pillar continue work to address improvements required where Moray is committed to the published 'Promise' and progressing the findings of the National Independent Care Review. This is planned to support improvements in attainment and attendance, maintaining positive destinations in line with National averages.

## **5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 A number of key areas are identified for further development. It is recognised that lower levels of FSM registration impacts the reach of PEF and as such, the Education Poverty Action Group plan has been developed to tackle this. Where Moray is a rural local authority, basing PEF allocation on FSM may not be a true reflection of poverty prevalence in Moray. Anticipated changes to Scottish Government PEF funding model may positively benefit our rural locality.
- 5.2 Despite barriers presented, Moray practitioners have demonstrated determination and creativity in planning and delivering PEF interventions with positive attainment impact. As a rural Local Authority, Moray is impacted by wider issues including transportation, connectivity, employment and changing context of industry. Moray has the second lowest wage in Scotland and child poverty rates are increasing within Moray with 1 child in 5 living in relative poverty.
- 5.3 Schools will continue to explore opportunities for joint PEF collaboration across Associated Schools and local comparator schools, sharing good practice and enacting universal and targeted interventions in support of identified learners.
- 5.4 Moray PEF planning guidance has been refreshed and relaunched with support sessions delivered by our Education Scotland Attainment Advisor guiding planning and interventions. The Advisor also provides targeted support and bespoke sessions for schools.
- 5.5 Through strategy development and wider strategy groups including 'Supporting All Learners' and wider Corporate Parenting Strategy in relation to looked after and care experienced children and young people, work will continue to support learner wellbeing and close identified attainment and achievement gaps to ensure equity for all of Moray's children and young people.
- 5.6 Through lessons learned and future priorities contained within our Education Scotland 'Scottish Attainment Challenge' Impact Report for Moray 2020 (section 6), we will continue to build sustainability in PEF interventions recognising challenges in recruiting staff to temporary PEF posts due to nature of funding, ensuring all elements of our Education Strategic Plan 2020-2023 continue to deliver improvements in data outlined in section 3 above.

## **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.

**(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. 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.

**(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, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, 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 That Committee notes the contents of this report and key findings and;**

**7.2 notes findings, impact and next steps identified in Moray's Scottish Attainment Challenge 2015-2020 Impact Report**

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Background Papers: Education Scotland Scottish Attainment Challenge Impact  
Report for Moray 2020 (**Appendix 1**)

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