



REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL EMERGENCY CABINET ON 21 MAY 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 - REVISED EDUCATION PLAN

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on changes to the Education Strategic plan to take account of COVID-10 impact on service delivery.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Emergency Cabinet following a decision of Moray Council on 25 March 2020 to temporarily suspend all delegations to committees as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (para 2 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Emergency Cabinet:

- (i) acknowledge the changing position due to Covid-19 pandemic;**
- (ii) agrees the revised plan which will be subject to further review and development;**
- (iii) acknowledge the impact of remote learning on learners and expected outcomes; and**
- (iv) agrees that a further paper is presented to Children and Young People's Services Committee once all Committees reconvene to update on progress, or to the Emergency Cabinet should an urgent issue arise before then.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Education plan (Schools and Curriculum Development Strategic Plan) which has run from 2018 focused on 6 strategic areas which aligned with the National Improvement Framework (NIF) and other areas of priority for the Scottish Government including equity and excellence. These were:

- Raise Attainment and Achievement
- Learning and Teaching
- Curriculum

- Self-evaluation for Self-improvement
- Supporting Learners
- Leadership at all Levels

3.2 The impact of strategic work to date has impacted positively on attainment levels as seen in Achievement of a Level data, senior phase data across a number of measures, positive inspection reports, improved leadership, a wider curriculum offer, particularly in the senior phase, improved processes to support learners and more accurate self-evaluation across establishments.

4. **Education Plan 2020-2023**

4.1 The Head of Education (Chief Education Officer) started a review of the Education Plan as a result of the management restructure and Early Years being a part of the strategic portfolio as well as aligning with other Educational delivery services assigned to the Head of Education Resources i.e. Additional Support Needs, Special Educational Behaviour Needs (SEBN) and Educational Psychological Services.

4.2 Evidence for the plan came from the Standards and Quality Report which was a large self-evaluation exercise as well as school inspection reports, data and schools for the future reports.

4.3 The Education Strategy Group, consisting of Head teachers, Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT) and officers finalised the plan which has a clear focus on getting it right for every child in Moray in order to improve outcomes for all. This is driven by robust self-evaluation for self-improvement and is underpinned by the Council's values; fair, ambitious, improving and responsive. The plan will focus on:

- Curriculum
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Leadership
- Supporting all learners

Each priority area has clear strategic priorities in order to further improve Educational outcomes in Moray for learners.

4.4 **Curriculum:**

- Provides progressive learner pathways from 2-18 to develop skills for learning, life and work
- Deliver a responsive curriculum reflecting clear vision, values and aims
- Collaborative approaches will be developed through flexible opportunities to meet the needs of all learners

4.5 **Learning, Teaching and Assessment:**

- Action and embed our Moray Standard
- Promote personal and collegiate responsibility for improved learning and teaching through professional learning and collaboration

- Build and sustain a culture of reflective and empowered leaders of learning at all levels in our system opportunities to meet the needs of all learners

4.6 Leadership:

- Develop practitioners' skills and knowledge of leadership in line with professional standards and expectations
- Review and implement a revised framework for professional development and career pathways
- Enable and promote empowerment and leadership across our system

4.7 Supporting all Learners

- Develop a culture of inclusion, equity and diversity leading to improved outcomes for all
- Promote resilience and positive mental health, emotional, physical and social wellbeing supported through multi-agency working
- Listen, engage and work collaboratively within communities to reduce the impact of poverty and create a safe and nurturing environment

4.8 The plan has yet to be endorsed by Children and Young People's Services Committee due to the disruption to normal service. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic there was a need for new plans to be developed and implemented in order to implement a new service as well as provide remote learning.

5. **COVID-19 REVISED EDUCATION PLAN**

5.1 The Scottish Government made the decision to close schools on 19 March with effect from close of play on Friday 20 March 2020. Plans had already been put in place for schools to consider supporting remote learning and for the final week of the spring term, children across Moray were provided with learning packs and set activities to maintain education provision remotely.

5.2 On 24 March, the Deputy First Minister announced in Parliament that local authorities were to put in place arrangements for childcare for key workers and for vulnerable children as well as other provisions. This required a number of strategic workstreams to be set up by officers across the department with Education leading on remote learning and childcare hubs for key workers across Early Learning Settings and schools. Education staff were also involved in the Connect workstream for vulnerable children. The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) examination diet for 2020 was cancelled and a new procedure for estimates introduced.

5.3 As lockdown continued, advice and guidance has been received from the Scottish Government and other national organisations in order to continue to support remote learning, provide childcare and ensure that staff and children and young people's wellbeing is closely monitored. It became clear that schools were unlikely to reopen this term and so the Scottish Government has created an Education Recovery Group with 10 workstreams:

- Term 4 learning
- Preparing for the next academic year
- Curriculum and assessment
- Supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Pastoral care for children and young people
- Workforce support
- Workforce planning
- School improvement in a new context
- Critical childcare
- Early learning and childcare

These groups are led by Education Scotland senior leaders with representation from national groups, teaching and non teaching unions, Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) and other key partners.

- 5.4 In response to the national expectations and to take account of work already progressing in Moray a revised Education plan has been implemented which will be a working document to bridge the 'old' Schools and Curriculum Development Plan and the new draft Education Plan taking account of the Covid-19 actions and priorities. This plan is attached and will be subject to constant review, update and amendments as work progresses and national advice and guidance is received. Officers will red, amber, green (RAG) rate the plan and regularly update it. There is a degree of uncertainty and unpredictability which requires constant reflection and updating.
- 5.5 The plan has been set out in stages i.e. Responsive, Resilient and Readiness to Improve. The Responsive section outlines what has been achieved so far and in very short timescales. For example the childcare hub planning to implementation took 7 officers 3 days to execute with support and help from ICT, catering, cleaning, janitorial staff and business support staff. The other areas of the plan are what officers are currently working on and will continue to until schools are fully operational. Current consideration is being given to re-opening schools following strict social distancing guidance. This will require input from a variety of Council services and departments.
- 5.6 Feedback to date from Head teachers and Early Years' managers informs us that there is already variability in terms of engagement in remote learning. Parents cannot replicate the school day and remote learning will not cover all that is covered when children and young people are in a school or early years setting. Concerns have already been raised about lack of routines in households and about the wellbeing of children and young people and their families. It is vital that children and young people's wellbeing is a major focus for any return to school and this may be for some time ahead. The impact of this will mean that efforts to raise attainment will take second place to ensure healthy minds and a readiness to learn.
- 5.7 Consideration has also to be given to the capacity of the Education team to be able to deliver what is required in the time expected. Capacity has been raised for some time and work to date has only been possible due to the long hours that officers are currently working, with leave dates being cancelled to

meet expectations. There is a huge risk if illness affects the team or any support services without whose help this could not be achieved.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS.

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

This report relates to the priority 'Provide opportunities where young people can achieve their potential to be the best they can be 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

National policy guidance is being reviewed regularly as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to affect services including Education. Current reporting processes are being reviewed and guidance issued by the Scottish Government is adhered to as and when received.

(c) Financial implications

Any financial implications are being recorded as Covid-19 costs and monitored regularly. School recovery will incur additional costs as well as maintaining Free School Meal voucher provision and childcare hub costs.

(d) Risk implications

The risks associated with this plan are the capacity of officers to maintain current working hours to deliver what is required. There is a small team working on the majority of the key tasks and if absent this will put significant pressure on the service and the ability to implement plans for school recovery. Childcare hubs are in operation due to staff volunteering to work in them. There is a risk if volunteer numbers reduce.

(e) Staffing implications

The effects of report, trace and isolate may have an impact on staffing across hubs, to support remote learning and also to re-open schools.

(f) Property

Property issues may arise as we implement return to schooling with strict adherence to social distancing as well as ensuring that schools are maintained to the correct levels of health and safety and cleaning requirements to keep staff and children safe.

(g) Equalities

None arising directly from this report

(h) Consultations

Depute Chief Executive (Education, Communities and Organisational Development), Quality Improvement Managers, Lindsey Stanley, Business Support Team Manager, Grant Cruickshank, Senior HR Adviser, Paul Connor, Principal Accountant, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer and the Equal Opportunities Officer have

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

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 A reviewed strategic plan has been implemented to take forward the work associated with school closures and implementation of childcare hub settings as well as support remote learning. The reviewed plan is a bridge between the previous Schools and Curriculum Development Plan and the draft Education Plan 2020-23. Updates will be provided until a new normal delivery of Education resumes.**

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross (Head of Education, Chief Education Officer)

Background Papers: