



**REPORT TO: EDUCATION CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON 2 NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: INFORMATION REPORT: NORTHERN ALLIANCE PROGRESS
AND IMPACT REPORT 2021-22 AND PHASE 4 REGIONAL
IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the latest progress and impact report for the Northern Alliance along with the Phase 4 Regional Improvement Plan for the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative.
- 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. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs) were established by the Scottish Government in 2018 to bring local authorities and Education Scotland together with the aim of improving collaboration in education between schools and Councils as well as adding value to the work of local authorities.
- 2.2 The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) between eight local authorities, across the north and west of Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar (Western Isles), Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands, with a shared vision to improve the educational and life chance of our children and young people through collaboration.

Regional Improvement Plan Phase 3: Progress and Impact

- 2.3 Now at the end of the Phase 3 of the Regional Improvement Plan, the Northern Alliance local authorities remain committed to improving outcomes and closing the attainment gap across our wide and varied communities through working together and adding value to local authority activity.

- 2.4 The Northern Alliance continues to strive to achieve Workstream priorities which remain aligned to the National Improvement Framework (NIF) Priorities and have been developed collaboratively with local authority practitioners and national partners.
- 2.5 The Northern Alliance Progress and Impact Report 2021-22 can be found at Appendix 1 to this report and it sets out the work which has been achieved over the final year of the Phase 3 Northern Alliance Plan.
- 2.6 Throughout the pandemic and specifically over the past year, colleagues across the RIC have continued to work hard to develop meaningful and active collaboration which can truly make a difference to practitioners in their day-to-day work and which ultimately supports us all in improving outcomes for children and young people. Much of this has been achieved through our improvement strategy, which is known as the CCITI model (Connect, Collaborate, Innovation and Ideas, Try Out and Test and Improvement). Two schools in Moray were involved in this to support them in their improvement journeys (St Gerardine Primary, Lossiemouth and Speyside High School, Aberlour) with a Quality Improvement Officer working with them and one of the RIC leads.
- 2.7 Throughout the Phase 3 Plan, the RIC has also focused on increasing its reach and impact, mainly through the ongoing promotion of digital engagement and this has resulted in over 1,667 collaborative engagements involving over 18,000 professionals from across the eight local authorities and Education Scotland. In addition, the RIC has 57 active Microsoft Teams operating with almost 3,000 memberships and the Northern Alliance newsletter has in excess of 4,500 subscribers. Given our geography as a RIC, communication remains of significant importance and they will continue to do all they can to improve the reach to support as many practitioners and schools as they can to add value to the support already provided at a local authority level. The engagement supports a 'bottom up' empowerment approach to engage with practitioners and leaders at all levels.

Regional Improvement Plan Phase 4

- 2.8 Session 2022-23 marked the final year of the current regional improvement planning cycle and since January 2022, the RIC has undertaken its most significant engagement exercise to date with schools across the Northern Alliance as it has developed the Phase 4 Plan and priorities. This involved undertaking 22 live engagement sessions, involving 460 practitioners, resulting in over 1400 contributions which were used in shaping the Phase 4 Plan. Moray were involved in this across the Education department.
- 2.9 The RIC remain committed to the vision of developing a culture of collaboration, sharing of expertise and creating local networks to improve the educational and life changes of our children and young people. The Phase 4 Plan (2022 – 2025) has been developed in line with Michael Fullan's Right Drivers for Whole System Success;
- Wellbeing and Learning (Feeling well and learning well)
 - Social Intelligence (How we work and learn together)

- Equality Investments (How we break down barriers to wellbeing and learning)
- Systemness (Working together to improve our system)

2.10 This work aligns with the current Education Strategic Plan 2020-23 as follows:

- Wellbeing and Learning (Learning and Teaching and Curriculum)
- Social Intelligence (Self-evaluation for Self-improvement)
- Equality Investments (Supporting all learners)
- Systemness (Leadership)

2.11 Full detail of all planned improvement activity for each workstream priority can be found in the Regional Improvement Plan: Phase 4 in **Appendix 2**.

2.12 The tenure of the current Regional Improvement Lead comes to an end in December 2022 (Director of Education and Children's Services, Aberdeenshire Council) and will hand over to the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and House in Orkney Islands Council who will take over until December 2023.

3. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

(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.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report with agreement from the Scottish Government that funding will continue until March 2023. A guarantee of continued funding would provide stability for the collaborative in moving forward with the regional improvement plan as we strive towards realising the vision for our children and young people across the Northern Alliance. Discussions are currently ongoing between Scottish Government, Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) and Education Scotland around the future direction of RICs further to the publication of a Scottish Government commissioned review into the RICs which was published in late October 2021.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risks arising directly from the report however there may be risks in lack of engagement with the RICs from individual practitioners, Early Learning and Childcare settings and schools which will result in missed opportunities to collaborate with colleagues across the Alliance.

(e) Staffing Implications

There is one workstream lead who is seconded from a Moray school and this post is currently being backfilled.

(f) Property

There are none arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are none arising from this report.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The majority of collaboration is carried out virtually which has a positive impact on the climate with no need for travel etc.

(i) Consultations

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

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Committee are provided with this report for information so that there is a greater understanding of work to date and planned across the Northern Alliance.

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

Background Papers: [Regional Improvement Collaboratives \(RICs\) Interim Review](#)

Ref: SPMAN-1315769894-341 / SPMAN-1315769894-342/
SPMAN-1315769894-343