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**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
30 OCTOBER 2019**

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL EDUCATION PRIORITIES – EXCELLENCE AND  
EQUITY**

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

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee on the annual National Improvement Plan return which is submitted to the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (C) 1 of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercising all of the functions of the Council as Education Authority within the terms of relevant legislation with regard to nursery, primary and secondary education.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:**

- (i) scrutinises and notes the contents of the report; and**
- (ii) notes the annual NIF return submitted to Scottish Government.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The First Minister launched the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) in February 2015 to achieve equity in educational outcomes for all children and young people irrespective of their economic background. It is underpinned by the National Improvement Framework (NIF), Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- 3.2 A report outlining the SAC and the then draft NIF was presented to Committee on 9 December 2015 (para 8 of the minute refers).
- 3.3 An Attainment Scotland Fund of £100m was made available initially targeting schools in the local authorities with the highest concentration of deprived

areas as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). In addition 53 schools across Scotland benefitted from dedicated support due to the numbers of children in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. Universal support was offered to all other authorities which included Moray. We have had input from a part-time Attainment Advisor who has worked with a number of schools including those with acting or newly appointed headteachers as well as providing ad hoc support to others regarding school improvement.

- 3.4 Schools were invited to bid for funding in 2016/17 from the Attainment fund and Moray successfully received some awards.
- 3.5 From April 2017 a further £120m has been provided directly to Head Teachers to use for additional staffing or resources they consider will help to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. This Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is allocated directly to schools and targeted at those children most affected by the poverty related attainment gap. The funding is allocated to schools in every local authority in Scotland and has been distributed on the basis of the numbers of pupils in P1-S3 known to be eligible and registered for free school meals. A report on the PEF was presented to Committee on 8 March 2017 (para 12 of the minute refers).
- 3.6 Almost all schools have received funding although a few have either never received or have not received in one particular year. As separate report is provided to this Committee on PEF funding for the last academic year.

#### **4. STANDARDS IN SCOTLAND'S SCHOOLS ACT**

- 4.1 The NIF for Scottish Education was launched by the First Minister in January 2016. The Framework supports Scottish Government ambition to achieve excellence and equity for every child in Scotland and builds on the Raising Attainment for All agenda. Importantly it places a legal duty on local authorities to actively address the poverty related attainment gap.

The National Improvement Framework identifies 4 key priorities for action:

- Improvement in attainment, particularly literacy and numeracy
- Closing the attainment gap between most and least disadvantaged children
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school leaver destinations for all young people

The Framework is underpinned by a series of new planning and reporting duties designed to support transparency and accountability. These legal duties have been integrated into the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 through amendments contained in Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016.

The Scottish Government has published statutory guidance to support education authorities to carry out their new legal responsibilities.

- 4.2 The statutory guidance clarifies how the 2000 Act has been amended through the 2016 Act in order to:
- Impose duties on education authorities to enhance equity and promote a reduction in inequalities of educational outcome experienced by pupils as a result of socio-economic disadvantage;
  - impose a duty to secure improvement in the quality of school education with a view to achieving the strategic priorities of the National Improvement Framework; and
  - impose duties in relation to annual planning and reporting; and annual school improvement planning
- 4.3 A revised approach to planning and reporting based on NIF priorities was introduced in order to improve the quality of information to:
- children, young people, parents and carers;
  - support education authorities and Community Planning Partnerships in planning and delivering services, and
  - support the development of national education policy
- 4.4 School improvement plans (SIP) should be informed by the priorities of:
- the NIF
  - the appropriate Local Authority strategic plans (Corporate Plan, Moray Children's Services Plan and the Schools and Curriculum Development Strategic plan)
  - the priorities of the school community plan

The process should be underpinned by consultation and engagement with stakeholders.

SAC and PEF plans are incorporated within the school improvement planning documentation thereby reducing the need for additional bureaucracy and considering workload. The advice and guidance to schools on their plans was approved by LNCT and is updated on a yearly basis. PEF planning must be aligned to pupils, levels of attainment and the impact of this has to be in measurable outcomes for children and young people. This is a key focus during an inspection of a school for Quality Indicator 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement. Headteachers are allocated PEF to use knowing the context of their school, community and learners, making local decisions which make a difference.

## **5. PROGRESS, PLANS AND REPORTING**

- 5.1 Local plans are aligned with the priorities in the NIF. In the first year that a NIF plan was required, officers produced a separate plan, however when the Schools and Curriculum Development strategic plan was reviewed in 2018, the NIF plan was incorporated into the Service plan making it much easier for schools to align their SIPs to one plan which dovetails with National Priorities.
- 5.2 Quality Improvement Officers review school SIPs and provide feedback to

Headteachers over the summer period. It is good practice for schools to use the SIP as a working document and a few review this over the course of the academic year to ensure that areas for improvement are closely aligned to school context, areas for improvement identified and, where applicable any Education Scotland Inspection activity. In addition to this Secondary Headteachers would review their improvement plans after the August release of senior phase attainment data.

- 5.3 A copy of the current Schools and Curriculum Development Plan priorities are attached in **Appendix 1** - this incorporates the NIF plan and is due to be reviewed in 2020 after the management restructure of the Council so that the current Integrated Children's Services Plan and the Schools and Curriculum Plan are merged into an Education plan moving forwards.
- 5.4 Each year in August a return is made to the Scottish Government to report on progress towards meeting the NIF priorities. The 2018-19 report is attached in **Appendix 2**. In addition Education Scotland gather evidence for the NIF as part of their inspection processes which feeds into the annual NIF progress report produced by the Scottish Government in December each year.

## **6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

- (a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**  
This report relates 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 Education Act and Standards in Scotland's Schools Act have been adhered to.
- (c) **Financial implications**  
The cost of all improvement actions will be undertaken within schools existing budgets and any additional funding through PEF or SAC funding streams.
- (d) **Risk implications**  
Risks are related to any inability to raise standards or improvements in relation to the NIF priorities and aims of the PEF.
- (e) **Staffing implications**  
Many schools hope to recruit additional staff in order to maximise use of PEF funding. Due to delays in recruitment imposed by HR for the start of the new session, this will have an impact on work starting to target individuals and groups of children and young people. Teacher shortages continue to cause problems and will have an impact on some of the NIF priorities particularly raising attainment.
- (f) **Property**  
There are no property issues arising directly from this report.

**(g) Equalities**

Non arising directly from this report

**(h) Consultations**

Senior Officers in Education and Social Care, Quality Improvement Officers, HR Manager, 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 Committee should be assured that plans are in place to meet the requirements of the National Improvement Framework and Pupil Equity Fund by all schools in Moray and that there is a clear plan for the National Improvement Framework priorities with progress reported annually.**

Author of Report: Vivienne Cross (Head of Schools and Curriculum Development)

Background Papers: Standards in Scotland's School etc Act 2000 through amendments contained in Part 1 of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016  
Ref: