The Highland Council

**Education, Children and Adult Services Committee
20 January 2016**

Management of Schools Update

Report by Director of Care and Learning

Summary

This report updates members on progress on the management of schools programme.

1. Background

1.1 The October meeting of the Committee considered proposals to enhance support for Head Teachers and to sustain management in schools across the authority. Members agreed that these ideas should form the basis of more detailed discussions with Head Teachers and other stakeholders. This accords with the 'Highland First' commitment to 'work collaboratively with Headteachers to provide them with the best opportunity to maintain standards, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and to drive further improvement.'

1.2 The Care and Learning Service has established a programme to take this work forward, with six inter-related workstreams. Progress on these workstreams will be reported regularly to Committee.

2. Management of Schools Programme

2.1 Members agreed at the October meeting, that a new approach to school management was required because of the:
- Sustained requirement for Head Teachers to maintain quality and lead school improvement.
- New corporate management systems, placing new demands on school management.
- Pressures on time to manage, especially for Primary Head Teachers who are also class committed
- Challenges filling Head Teacher and other management posts.
- Continued challenges presented by the Highland geography.

2.2 Headteachers need sufficient time to manage the school and lead learning and teaching. They indicate that they feel increasingly isolated, and that management support should be enhanced to enable them to properly fulfil their remit.

2.3 The range of ideas that were agreed for further consideration included the development of best practice management structures, to reflect new school clusters around 3-18 models and natural communities.

2.4 This builds on existing thinking about the organisation of the curriculum, and particularly the senior phase, greater collaboration across schools and colleges, and the enhancement of distance learning. More recently, the deteriorating financial situation, along with the new challenge of developing 25 hour week provision across all year groups in primary Schools, has necessitated the

consideration of new models of delivery.

2.5 Accordingly, six inter-related workstreams have been established, and they will run as projects with action plans, reporting back to the main programme group, which is chaired by the Director of Care and Learning and includes Headteacher and Parent Forum representation.

3. Workstreams

3.1 Curriculum delivery (led by Head of Education)

3.1.1 This workstream will focus on the approach and develop new innovative ways of curriculum delivery, to suit the Highland context. The following projects will be explored and developed:
- Best practice structures for the shape of the school week in secondary and/or primary
- Best practice timetabling formats across key school groupings
- To develop a core curriculum for highland schools
- To set up and development a virtual school in Highland
- To increase the use of external online course in Highland schools
- To increase the level of partnership work between schools, college and employers
- To maximise the impact of ICT on the delivery of learning and teaching.

3.2 Management structures and school groupings (led by Head of Education)

3.2.1 This workstream will focus on the concept of what defines a school – e.g. cluster, 3-18 models etc. It will set out an approach to grouping schools which will involve them being managed differently, and provide the means to sustain a greater number of schools in their communities. The following projects will be explored and developed:
- To establishing school groupings which will allow Highland to provide a sustainable education model for Highland.
- To review the cluster management model.
- To set out frameworks for a variety of school management structures age ranges – 3-15, 3-15, 15-18, 12-18 & 3-11. These frameworks will include making best use of a revised administrative support, and a revised janitorial services model to support Headteachers in leading their schools.
- To set out new staffing parameters for primary staffing and establish the concept of Early Level teaching.
- To look at staffing models for the special schools.

3.3 Support to schools (led by Head of Resources)

3.3.1 This consists of two main strands of activity: school janitorial services; and school office and administrative support. It is recognised that property management, health and safety, finance, staffing and administration, represent critical areas where Head Teachers require support to fulfil their responsibilities. With an appropriate support structure in place, Head Teachers can delegate many activities to other members of staff, allowing their focus to be on the management of learning and teaching. The existing models of support are not consistently resourced or structured across all Highland schools. Hence in many locations, Head Teachers still carry significant operational responsibilities.

3.3.2   Both of these areas have been the subject of separate reviews over the past 12 months, with updates provided to Committee, and most recently in principle agreement reached around a new model for janitorial services provision. This workstream will therefore bring together these two existing reviews, assimilate the lessons learnt and recommendations arising from each, and look to ensure that models of delivery are developed which integrate with the wider Management of Schools review.

3.3.3   With the strategic principles for a new janitorial services model already agreed by Committee, the focus of this area of activity will be to develop resource allocation models and implementation plans which match available resources (to be confirmed in the February 2016 budget) and fit with the broader Management of Schools review. As previously reported, it is anticipated that local stakeholder engagement would take place over spring/summer 2016, with a view to implementing the new janitorial services model from late 2016 onwards.

3.3.4   The Council has already trialled new arrangements and structures for the school office within the Ardnamurchan and Charleston ASGs. Lessons learnt from these trials will be reviewed within this strand of activity, to develop future model(s) of delivery.

3.4   **Early Learning and Childcare (led by Senior Manager, Early Years)**

3.4.1   This workstream aims to establish the necessary infrastructure to support Head Teachers with the enhanced provision. Following the November Committee, there are 13 posts of Childcare Manager being advertised across the authority. Meetings with the Head Teachers who would immediately benefit from this change were held in December, and six workshop sessions have been arranged for all Head Teachers and nursery staff in January.

3.4.2   It is anticipated that Childcare Managers should be in post soon after 1 April 2016, in order that they will have the responsibility for developing the expansion in their own base schools, but also support other schools in the Associated School Group with any new working arrangements for the new session.

3.4.3   The lack of electronic systems to support the administration of the flexible arrangements and the charging for the services to parents, continues to be an area of concern, but it is hoped that progress can be made.

3.4.4   The three pilots of flexible delivery continue to run very successfully, with the feedback from parents and staff being very positive.

3.5   **Workforce planning and recruitment** (led by Workforce Planning & Staffing Manager)

3.5.1   This workstream is progressing the following activities:
   • Generic Advertising of Primary posts in early 2016 to attract current probationer teachers.
   • Advertising of Secondary posts early in 2016 to attract current probationer teachers.
   • Increased use of Social Media as part of advertising strategy.
   • Possible high profile media campaign to recruit the best teachers.
   • More creative advertising such as on buses, local radio etc.
   • More targeted adverting, as one size does not fit all across Highland.

- Encouraging the participation of Parent Councils in highlighting vacancies in their schools (as per Scoraig and Strathconon).
- Possible expansion of the Distance Learning for Teachers course.
- Possible removal of restrictions around the Removal and Relocation Policy.
- Issues around accommodation in rural areas and how informal assistance provided by Head Teachers could be formalised.
- The possibility of central funding for PGCE courses to be held locally for Highland Council staff.

3.5.2 Last session, there was a generic primary recruitment campaign which resulted in the appointment of over 90 Primary Teachers. Following the results of the survey monkey sent to Head Teachers and successful candidates and the work of the short-life working group on recruitment, an internal generic primary advert to attract current probationers to apply for vacant posts starting August 2016 is being issued to schools.

3.5.3 Meetings have been held with all Secondary Head Teachers to assess their teacher staffing requirements for August 2016. Posts will be released for individual advert in January - internally in the first instance to attract current probationers to apply.

3.5.4 As well as considering applications as part of Highland Council's current Voluntary Redundancy Scheme, the Workforce Planning Team are holding six roadshows over January and early February across Highland, to provide information to teachers on Flexible Working, Phased Retirement and Winding Down options.

3.6 **Workforce planning and staff development** (led by Quality Improvement Officer)

3.6.1 This workstream is focussing on:
- Leadership strategy, from student to experienced Head Teacher
- Ensuring that leadership , support, induction and continuing professional development are linked to corporate programme
- Creating pathways for each group linked to continuing professional development
- Using mentoring and coaching to support all levels of development - coaching group rolling out continuing professional development for coaching within ASGs

4. Implications

4.1 Any new resource, legal, equalities, climate change/carbon clever, risk, Gaelic or rural implications will be identified and reported to Committee.

5. Recommendation
5.1 Members are invited to note this update on progress on the management of schools programme

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

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