

Agenda Item	13.
Report No	PEO 09/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: People

Date: 25 January 2018

Report Title: Management of Schools update

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update of the progress being made in the management of schools project.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. consider and comment on the progress being made in the delivery of this programme; and
- ii. agree the principles of a revised plan for the roll-out of 1140 hours early learning and childcare.

3. Background

- 3.1 In October 2015, Members agreed a new strategic approach to school management 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.
- 3.2 Six interrelated workstreams were developed to take this programme forward:
- Curriculum Delivery
 - Management Structures and School Groupings
 - Support for Schools
 - Early Learning and Childcare
 - Workforce Planning and Recruitment
 - Workforce Planning and Staff Development
- 3.3 Regular updates and briefings have been provided for members over the last three years. The most recent seminar was held in September 2017.
- 3.4 At the October 2017 Committee, Members agreed the list of Associated School Groups to be progressed in Phase 2, as well as the stakeholder engagement process.

4. Workstream Progress

4.1.1 Curriculum Delivery

This workstream focusses on the development of innovative ways of curriculum delivery, to suit the Highland context. The following areas are being 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.
- A core curriculum for Highland schools, including e-learning.
- Increased partnership between schools, college and employers.

4.1.2 Progress Delivered:

- The 33 period week is now in place across all secondary schools. This provides the framework for common timetabling and collaboration across schools, including the opportunities for e-learning.
- The common timetable format is being trialled across small and medium sized schools.
- Nineteen courses are now being provided by virtual delivery. Over a hundred pupils are involved.

- Meetings have continued with colleagues in Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, to build on the foundations established by the eSgoil development, to take this forward as a strategic, joint development across our two authorities.
- A strategic partnership agreement is now in place with the three colleges to increase online, academic and vocational provision.
- The Chromebook roll-out has started with the Millbank ASG. While the start date was delayed by a few weeks, it was anticipated that the roll-out would catch up, but there are continuing issues regarding the rate of the network refresh.
- 1750 Chromebooks have been deployed to the Millburn ASG. Good feedback has been received from the Primary Schools, but Millburn Academy has experienced a variety of network issues which has affected the rollout to several year groups. Once these are resolved, progress should continue.
- 1600 Chromebooks have been deployed to the Dingwall ASG. One Primary will not be able to accept devices until after the Easter break, due to work required with the school building.
- The Portree ASG is due to complete e-safety and school readiness training. Once this has been delivered, the Chromebooks will be deployed.
- The ICT in Learning Development Officer has been providing support to schools and teachers with the learning and teaching aspects of the roll-out. This involves direct support to the Millbank, Dingwall and Portree ASGs, with training on Google-Suite for Education for all digital leaders. He will shortly be making contact with the next phase of schools, commencing with the Kinlochleven ASG, and then Kingussie, Gairloch, Mallaig and Lochaber ASGs.
- In association with the roll-out of Chromebooks, the Council has enhanced work with young people on Digital Citizenship. This includes best practice advice, and implementation of an audit and key actions by all schools ahead of the devices being deployed. This includes engagement with pupils, parents and staff, and we aspire that Highland Schools will be the first in Scotland to achieve full accreditation, for being 'E-safe'.
- The use of Google-Suite for Education continues to grow across the authority. This has been assisted by the preparatory training in Learning & Teaching being undertaken for the Chromebook roll-out, but is also independent of this, as the material can be accessed on other hardware.

4.2.1 **Management Structures and School Groupings**

This workstream focusses on the concept of what defines a school – e.g. cluster, 3-18 models etc. It will set out the approach to grouping schools which will help sustain Highland schools in their communities. The following

programmes will be explored and developed:

- To establish school groupings which will allow Highland to provide a sustainable education model for schools.
- 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.

4.2.2 Progress Delivered:

- Phase 1 Associated School Groups (ASGs) now have revised structures agreed and in place. Further reports will be provided to Committee regarding progress and impact.
- Areas are progressing engagement with Headteachers, staff and Parent Councils for the proposed new structures in the Phase 2 ASGs. This began with discussions with Headteachers, and is using the process agreed by Committee for wider stakeholder engagement.
- Draft proposals are due to be finalised by February 9th. There will then be a ten day period for stakeholders to submit any further comment, before the plans are completed for presentation to Committee in March 2018.
- Early Level teaching has been put in place across seven ASGs.
- A revised staffing model for special school provision has been developed, and is being implemented in conjunction with the relevant Headteachers.
- The devolved school management parameters are beginning to be reviewed and this will be taken forward in line with the conclusion of the consultation on 'Fair Funding' by the Scottish Government.

4.3.1 **School Support**

This workstream has consisted of two main strands of activity:

- school janitorial services
- school office and administrative support.

4.3.2 Progress Delivered:

- The transfer of Catering, Cleaning, Facilities Management (FM) and Janitorial Services to Development and Infrastructure (D&I) Services was effective from 1 April 2017. This included transfer of the responsibility for school lets to D&I.
- At the point of transfer, the intention was to ensure in the short-term it was business as usual to continue and maintain service delivery - with

change processes thereafter to improve the service delivery arrangements, and in particular in relation to FM Services, to improve the service delivered across Highland schools. A transition process is now underway to amend the allocation of FM staff resources, to deliver a service to all Highland schools (excluding PPP schools), including around Primaries who previously received no entitlement. This change process and re-distribution of staff resource, does mean some reductions in larger establishments to allow for a more equitable allocation, which was a key aspect of the business case for transfer of these functions to D&I. Officers from the new Property and Facility Management Service in D&I have been consulting with the Headteachers, and the staff affected, as part of the transition process.

- School lets was part of the Council's Re-design reviews, and another aspect of the transfer to improve the school let service to the public, deliver a more efficient service, and reduce the burden on schools. Colleagues in D&I, are progressing implementation of Re-design recommendations.
- The new model of office and administrative support to schools was initially trialled in two ASGs, and new arrangements were then due to be piloted. This was put on hold because of concerns from one of the trade unions. Albeit this has now been resolved, it has delayed the Pilot Programme by five months. The pilots have therefore been extended through to the end of this term, ending on Wednesday 28th March 2018. Clear outcomes for the pilots have been negotiated and agreed with the participating schools. These outcomes are intended to provide the evidence we need to establish a new, more coherent structure for office support across schools, building on appropriate links with other redesign initiatives across the authority.

4.4.1 Early Years

This workstream aims to establish the necessary infrastructure to support Headteachers with the enhanced provision in early years.

- The development and introduction of the childcare manager post.
- The development of an electronic administration system for early years
- The introduction and development of the flexibility model in early years

4.4.2 Progress Delivered:

- The initial Delivery Plan for the implementation of 1140 hours was submitted to Government at the end of September. This envisaged an increase from 600 to 760 hours in August 2018, and two further stepped increases to 1140 in 2020.
- It is now clear that the allocated Scottish Government funding will not allow this approach in 2018/19, and a revised plan will be required. It is proposed that this should involve moving to 1140 hours in one step from August 2018 in a very small number of centres in areas of deprivation, including rural deprivation. This approach fulfils the Government's requirements and will provide learning to other Centres across the authority. An update regarding this will be provided at Committee.

- Further, discussions are still taking place across Scotland, regarding the necessary level of capital and revenue funding for 2019/20 and 2020/21. It is likely that there will be an announcement towards the end of this financial year.
- Government funding has been indicated for six graduate appointments in areas of deprivation, and these staff will be deployed to:
 - Newton Park Nursery School, Wick
 - Lundavra Nursery School, Fort William
 - Millbank Nursery School, Nairn
 - Merkinch Family Centre, Inverness
 - Hilton Nursery School, Inverness
 - Park and South Lodge Nursery schools, Invergordon.
- Thirteen childcare managers are in post in local authority nurseries that have larger numbers of children, to enable the development of flexibility as described by the Scottish Government. The childcare managers also support the clericals in the other schools across Highland that are also providing flexibility.
- An electronic data base has been developed to deal with the requirement for additional billing for childcare that flexibility has placed on the Council. The Care & Learning Service is working with the corporate improvement team to ensure these systems and processes are fit for purpose, and there are already significant improvements.
- The offer of flexible hours is now in place in 55 schools, and as we move towards 2020, more schools will be providing a greater number of flexible hours to parents.
- The Northern Alliance Improvement Plan will include three of our Early Learning & Childcare priorities: workforce development, quality assurance and support to families.

4.5.1 **Workforce Planning and Recruitment**

This workstream is seeking to ensure a competent and confident workforce across all of our schools.

4.5.2 Progress Delivered:

- We have carried out a Generic Primary Recruitment exercise early in the calendar year over the last 3 sessions, which has been successful in recruiting over 100 primary teachers each year, retaining a large number of probationers in the Highland Council area.
- We now list all of unpromoted teaching posts in the educational print and online media.
- We increasingly use social media to highlight difficult to fill posts, as well as other appropriate publications when recruiting to Gaelic medium or denominational vacancies.
- We continue to work in partnership with UHI who now deliver PGCE

courses in primary education. We sponsor all Highland based students which mean that they will be offered a place in a Highland school to complete their probation. This approach has worked well and the course has contributed to a major increase in the supply of locally based newly qualified primary teachers.

- UHI is now offering several PGCE secondary courses in STEM subjects and Home Economics, which are areas of particular shortage. We also work with Aberdeen University to deliver the Distance Learning Postgraduate course, and although these cohorts are small, around 40 local people have now qualified as primary teachers through this route.
- As a result of these actions, we have managed to meet the Scottish Government commitment on teacher numbers over the last three years. It is fair to say however, that this is proving to be an even more challenging year.
- With the Northern Alliance, we are looking to develop our engagement with Government and local initial teacher education providers, to further support and (as appropriate) further fast-track recruitment processes.

4.6.1 **Workforce Planning and Staff Development**

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

4.6.2 Progress Delivered:

- A new framework for leadership development from probationer to Headteacher.
- Existing pathways have been reviewed. Provision for probationers, early teaching development and early leadership development continues to be a strength. Work continues regarding development opportunities for Depute Headteachers and Headteachers.
- Revised mentoring and coaching support has been put in place. The process will be reviewed before being rolled out across the authority.

5. Implications

5.1 Resources – All work in this programme is progressing on the basis of working within available budgets. This takes account of the need for planned and anticipated budget reductions.

5.2 Legal – There are no legal implications

- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - It is important that these plans maintain and enhance the equity of educational provision across the Highland area. In particular, the revised delivery model must ensure a sustainable provision for children, families and staff.
- 5.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever - Increased use of technology, both in curricular and business support terms, should reduce current travel requirements.
- 5.5 Risk – If this programme is not delivered successfully, there is significant risk that our management and administrative infrastructures will be inadequate to deliver the quality of education that Highland Communities and Highland Council. Indeed, there would be risk regarding the long term sustainability of small and rural schools, and also that access to the breadth of the curriculum will be constrained for many young people.
- 5.6 Gaelic - It is envisaged that this programme of work will enable us to progress our objectives for the enhancement of Gaelic Medium Education.

Designation: Director of Care & Learning

Date: 16 January 2018

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Background Papers: