HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 22 August 2018

Report Title: **Sustainable Education in Highland Communities: Update**

Report By: Director of Care and Learning

1.   Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1   The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Sustainable Education in Highland Communities programme, and to make recommendations on next steps.

2.   Recommendations

2.1   Members are asked to note the progress on proposals presented to the May Committee, and agree to:
   i.   Support the review of a revised school office support structure for the Mallaig ASG
   ii.   Note the processes being put in place for the delivery of Workstream 1 - Improving Education Outcomes
   iii. Endorse the formal relationship being set up with e-Sgoil.

3. Introduction

3.1 At the Care, Learning and Housing Committee in May 2018, Members agreed the 're-framing' of the Management of Schools programme as the Sustainable Education in Highland Communities programme.

3.2 The key aims of the programme remain to address the challenges facing schools and Highland Council in delivering affordable and high quality local education, but also ensuring a clear focus on promoting sustainable communities.

3.3 Members agreed in May to a range of recommendations, including:
    i. the reframing of the programme as 'Sustainable Education in Highland Communities'
    ii. the five workstreams set out in the revised programme plan
    iii. engagement progresses with regard to management structures and school groupings in the Gairloch, Kinlochleven, Inverness High, Thurso and Wick ASGs
    iv. that local stakeholder groups are established in other ASGs, linking with Community Planning and other local partnerships
    v. a programme team
    vi. Team Leader school office posts.

3.4 Committee was also apprised of progress with regard to Headteacher recruitment discussions and progress with the external evaluation of the programme.

4. Sustaining Education in Highland Communities

4.1 The new Programme Steering Group has now met on three occasions, considering update reports from the Area and Workstream Leads as well as helping to redefine the programme remit and governance.

4.2 Five Workstreams were agreed for the revised programme:
- Achieving high quality educational outcomes – lead: Head of Education
- Management structures and school groupings – lead: Head of Education
- Support for schools – lead: Head of Resources
- Workforce planning and development – lead: Workforce Planning and staffing manager
- Communications – lead: Communications Officer

4.3 Workstream Leads are developing action plans to take forward work they are responsible for as part of the programme.

4.4 As agreed in May, progress is being made with recruitment to strengthen the programme team to ensure that there is capacity and the specialist skills to deliver and drive change. This involves the following roles:
- Programme Manager
- Programme Officer
- Communications Officer
- Community Engagement Officer

4.5   Appointments have been made to the posts of Programme Officer and Communications Officer. Discussions are ongoing with partners about the Community Engagement Officer post. The current Programme Manager is due to retire by the end of the year, and recruitment will soon be underway to confirm a replacement.

5.   Management Structures and School Groupings

5.1   Discussions and the engagement process with the communities of Gairloch, Thurso and Wick ASGs continue. It is proposed to bring proposals for management structures and school groupings for these ASGs back to a future Committee.

5.2   An initial meeting, chaired by Councillor Baxter, has been held at Kinlochleven, with further engagement planned. Engagement has been widened to include locality partners and the Ward Business Manager, to take account of not just the educational arrangements across this ASG but also to consider the wider community context.

5.3   Engagement regarding Inverness High ASG will need to take account of discussions regarding the school estate in that ASG. The intention is to explore the advantages of an integrated model of local management to offer support to the communities that evidence the highest indicators of multiple deprivation in the authority.

5.4   Discussions at a local level are at varying stages, Gairloch, Wick and Thurso are quite advanced whilst Inverness High and Kinlochleven are at the earliest stages. Further engagement with local stakeholders in these communities will be supported by the programme team once fully appointed.

6.   Support for Schools

6.1   The Office Team Leader pilot has been concluded with the final report appended (Appendix 1). As agreed at the last Committee, this has now moved to implementation for some of the 3-18 schools in Phase 1:
   1. Permanent Team Leaders have been appointed at Dornoch, Farr, Kilchuimen and Kinlochbervie
   2. A revised clerical structure to support the new 3-18 management arrangements for the Mallaig ASG is being developed.
   3. Discussions with the Ardnamurchan ASG are also planned, to explore the possible implementation of a Team Leader to co-ordinate school office support

6.2   The Team Leader and cluster clerical posts are part of a proposed clerical structure for school office support. The aim is to develop a career pathway for clerical staff starting with the HC03 school clerical and progressing possibly to Business Managers. Models are being developed and costed to share with Headteacher representatives early in the new session, before bringing to Committee in October.

6.3   A representative working group is being formed and a workstream plan is being written. More information on these will be presented to the October Committee.

6.4   A summit will take place in Inverness on September 14th, to articulate and learn from the shared experience regarding sustainable education across the Northern Alliance

authorities. Senior Officers and members from all Authorities in the Northern Alliance have been invited, as well MSPs, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.

7. **Work Stream 1 - Achieving High Quality Educational Outcomes**

Key objectives:

1. Delivering equity of curricular provision for all young people in Highland
2. Improving educational outcomes through improving the breadth of Learner Journeys available to young people in Highland

7.1 The process listed below will be put in place to support the delivery on the key objectives of this workstream:

Stage 1 – Establish a strategic planning group. This group will be led by the Head of Education and comprise of Headteachers, Quality Improvement Officers, a member representative, a union representative and parent representative ***By August 2018***

Stage 2 – Produce draft action plan for discussion at steering group and Care, Learning & Housing Committee. ***By October 2018***

Stage 3 – Set up working subgroups to deliver on work stream objectives. These will be led by Quality Improvement Officers. ***By October 2018***

Stage 4 – Progress report submitted to steering group Committee. ***By June 2019***

Stage 5 – Revised plan in place for session 2019-20. ***By August 2019***

7.2 In constructing the action plan, we will look to build on the work already begun. We will look to enhance existing partnerships and develop new partnerships which will provide greater breadth to our curricular delivery. Engagement with our key stakeholders will vital in this process.

Engagement with Pupils
Focus groups of young people from across Highland schools will be set up to collect views regarding any possible curricular changes.

Engagement with Parents
The main channel of consultation will be through the Highland Council Parental Forum. Draft proposals will be discussed with parents at an early stage.

Engagement with Staff
Staff views on proposed curricular changes will be collected by electronic survey and focus groups.

Engagement with Headteachers
Headteachers will be involved at all stages of this workstream. Headteachers will be

asked serve on working groups. Consultation and engagement will also take place through Headteacher meetings and conferences.

Engagement with Colleges

A strategic partnership has already been set up with North Highland, Inverness and West Highland Colleges. The group comprises College reps, Headteachers and Council Officers. The key outcome of the group is to work towards an integrated curriculum between schools and colleges which will deliver a broader range of Learner Journeys for young people. The group meets five times a session. At the next meeting, the draft strategic work plan will be discussed.

Engagement with Employers

The existing Developing Young Workforce (DYW) partnerships with the three regional groups will deliver improvement on this front. Action plans have been put in place by each of the regional groups to support schools in the delivery of DYW.

8.   Establishing a formal partnership within e-Sgoil

8.1   Members have been keen to advance eLearning opportunities as part of this plan. There is already in place a solid building block with eSgoil in the Western Isles, through the work of the Northern Alliance. This has attracted funding of around £1m from Government, and is regarded as a major national initiative.

8.2   While the initial formal partnership has been between Highland and the Western Isles it is anticipated that other authorities from the Northern Alliance will also become part of the agreement.

8.3   Outcomes to be achieved through the partnership will be:

- Provide every child and young person with equality of opportunity and access to high quality learning and teaching.
- To have in place staffing, IT and timetabling structures to ensure equitable deployment of resources and appropriate training programmes.
- Ensure that the support provided meets needs and helps to realise the potential of all children and young people.
- To make subject specialists available in all curricular areas, in all schools, across the partnership.

8.4   Key enabling actions of the partnership will be:

1. The Western Isles will take the lead role in the delivery of the project outcomes.
2. A steering group will be set up which will comprise the relevant Heads of Service from each of the participating authorities. The Head of Education will represent Highland on this group.
3. The day to day management of the partnership will be through e-Sgoil. The

Head of e-Sgoil (Angus Maclennan) will be the lead officer for the project outcomes. Each of the partnership authorities will nominate a lead officer to work with the Head of e-Sgoil. In Highland this will be the lead for virtual delivery.

4. The ICT requirements will be delivered by capitalising on the good practice that already has been developed in the Western Isles and Highland.
5. The lead officers will audit Senior Phase learning courses across the Northern Alliance. A particular focus will be placed on the delivery of Gaelic Medium delivery in secondary schools.
6. The lead officer reference group will work with e-Sgoil HT to review curriculum infrastructure and class groupings in order to identify timetabling efficiencies.
7. To look at a degree of timetable harmonisation across schools where it is appropriate.
8. A bank of appropriate qualified staff to ensure that curricular gaps can be met through the partnership.
9. The lead officers will collate and share existing authority e-learning policies and strategies.
10. To develop and implement quality assurance/controls for all staff undertaking on-line learning to provide consistent high quality learning experiences.
11. To establish a cost neutral business model that will meet the costs of delivery. It is anticipated that this will be in place for session 19-20. There is potential for income generation in the future with the delivery of this type of learning to other authorities.

9. Project Evaluation

9.1 The external evaluation of the programme will commence early in the new session. Hugh Fraser, former Director of Education and Rory Mair, former Chief Executive of COSLA, will conduct the evaluation of phase 1 of the programme. The evaluation proposal paper is appended (Appendix 2).

9.2 The evaluation will focus on three key areas;
  I. The issue of Programme Management
  II. The broad concepts under-pinning the programme;
      1. Sustainable Education
      2. Community Empowerment/Engagement
      3. Communication
      4. Localism v Centralism
      5. Equality & Fairness
  III. Programme outputs

9.3 A desktop exercise reviewing programme papers and committee reports is underway, which will be followed by a number of meetings and interviews with members, key staff and community representatives involved in phase 1.

10. Implications

10.1   Resource

        Nothing additional to previous reports.

10.2   Legal
        All changes to education provision must take account of the relevant education
        legislation.

10.3   Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)
        These proposals are based on the concept of local education at the heart of sustainable
        communities. This is a message that requires to be articulated more explicitly as part of
        the programme.

10.4   Climate Change / Carbon Clever
        It is envisaged that new management and organisational arrangements for schools can
        make best use of our buildings and other assets.

10.5   Risk
        This programme is of critical importance to communities, the Council, and the provision
        of local education for years to come.

10.6   Gaelic
        All proposals should take full account of the Council's commitment to the promotion of
        Gaelic medium education.

        Designation: Director of Care and Learning

        Date: 13 August 2018

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        Appendices: Team Leader Pilot final report
                                Sustainable Education – Proposed Evaluation

Management of Schools Programme

Administration in Schools Project

3-18 Team Leader Pilots

Version control	
Author	Laura Husher
Date	**Version**
02/05/2018	1.7
04/05/2018	Final 1.0

Contents

OVERVIEW

To tackle administrative workload and bureaucracy on senior management teams in schools, an opportunity exists to formally enable the delegation of complex administrative tasks from Head and Depute Head Teachers to a senior administrator, and create a clear school office structure which supports this.

A senior administrator, based in the school office(s), will remove administrative tasks from Head Teachers to free up capacity for leaders of learning to focus on improving educational outcomes for young people in Highland.

Currently in Highland schools, the following administrative tasks are carried out by the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher amounting to significant time spent diverted away from the core delivery of education:

- Responsible Premises Support
- SQA Administration
- Finance and Budget Support
- Timetabling and Systems Administration
- Recruitment Administration
- Office Staff Management

The school office structure in Highland does not contain an appropriately graded senior administrator role so a new role will need to be created which will be designed to provide an appropriate channel for the delegation of complex school administrative tasks.

PILOTS

From August 2017, Head Teachers at three newly-created 3-18 school campuses and one existing 3-18 campus Dornoch, Farr, Kinlochbervie and Kilchuimen agreed to pilot an enhanced administrator role (known as a 'Team Leader'), to whom they would delegate administrative tasks which are unnecessarily diverting them from their primary focus on teaching and learning.

The pilots would ascertain:

1. What admin tasks could be delegated to the Team Leaders?
2. How much time they would be able to free up for school senior management teams?
3. What would the school senior management teams use this time for instead?

Throughout the pilot, Head Teachers, some Depute Head Teachers and Team Leaders provided detailed task logs showing which admin tasks they delegated and what the capacity this created was used for.

OUTCOMES

Over 9 weeks, 415 hours of administration was passed to Team Leaders of the 3-18 campuses, creating capacity to enable school senior management teams to focus on:

- curriculum, strategic and 3-18 development
- raising educational standards and attainment
- school improvement and self-evaluation
- leadership of the whole school community
- building sustainable partnerships, and
- creation and delivery of relevant and effective learning experiences for young people

Head Teachers agree that having a senior administrator in their school office results in significant benefits, which include:

- Reduced administrative burden
- Reduced stress
- A flexible, adaptable and responsive office function
- Better cohesion across multiple school sites and teams
- Increased capacity to focus on and improve educational outcomes
- Delegation of office workload and staff management away from SMT

CONCLUSIONS

The Team Leader model delivers **significant benefits** to school senior management teams. The data and anecdotal evidence collected throughout the pilot show that:

3 out of 4 Head Teachers were able to spend **more time in classrooms** observing and monitoring teaching and learning

34% of the capacity created by Team Leaders was spent on **Quality Improvement**

31.5% of the capacity created was spent on **Curriculum** and **3-18 Development**

15% of the capacity created was spent on **Leadership** of teachers (such as mentoring, developing collegiate working practices, building a culture for **Self-evaluation**)

100% of the participating Head Teachers support the creation of this role in the school office structure

In addition:

- Head Teachers require a **flexible and responsive school office function** which is adaptable, reliable and trustworthy, and can handle change
- The Team Leader model allows Head Teachers and senior management teams to have greater **focus on driving quality improvement** in schools and more **capacity for leadership development**
- Team Leaders felt more **valued**, more **integral** and more **empowered** in the enhanced admin role. This meant they were not only able to effectively manage the administration passed to them but were able to **take initiative** to identify **streamlining opportunities** and **drive improvements** to the whole administrative function

THE 2013-15 SCHOOL SUPPORT PROJECT – 'SCHOOL OFFICE REVIEW'

1.0 The School Support Project was initiated in 2012 with the objectives of

- modernising the school office function
- providing a viable response to change
- reviewing the methods by which administrative resources are allocated and deployed in schools
- creating capacity within the school office

1.1 At the time the project was established there were 222.36 full-time equivalent staff based in school offices in Highland, costing around £3.5m annually.

1.2 The project carried out extensive task analysis in order to fully evaluate the function of the school office and the provision of administrative support to schools, identifying 53 individual tasks carried out in the school office. 106 office staff from 75 schools participated in workshops across the Highlands to help identify areas for improvement, elimination or transformation. Significant stakeholder engagement took place throughout the project alongside consultation with Trade Unions, Head Teachers Executive Groups and Highland Councillors.

1.3 Project interdependencies were identified as:

PROJECT OR WORKSTREAM	IMPACT ON SCHOOL OFFICE
SHARED BUSINESS SUPPORT	Improved processes to include HR administration, Information Management, purchasing and financial transactions, resource deployment and application of new technologies to enable agile and flexible working
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	Channelled customer contact processes, improved/integrated benefits assessment processes (e.g. Free Schools Meals and Clothing Grants, online forms)
SEEMiS	New schools MIS system deployed 2014 - training required across Highland as well as written guidance and user support
RESOURCELINK / MYVIEW	Development of the integrated payroll/personnel system
UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS	Replacement communications systems and infrastructure (Lync deployment, telephony improvements)
ONLINE PAYMENTS	Opportunities to explore online options for school payments such as trips and school uniform
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	Information handling across all media

1.4 A paper reporting on the progress of the School Office Review was presented to the Education, Children and Adult Services committee in August 2014 which identified a number of emerging themes.

These themes are still pertinent in 2018:

i. School office employees have a deep sense of loyalty to their school

ii. The school office is the primary port of call within the school and is therefore a busy place with a large number of unplanned interruptions

iii. School office staff perform an essential role as the consistent link between the outside world and life within the school

iv. A single school is in many ways unique but there remain consistencies around the tasks that are carried out and the issues and frustrations that are faced

v. How tasks are completed and ways of working can be variable across schools

vi. There are a number of tasks that are frustrating and time consuming for staff due to outmoded processes, systems and interfaces with corporate and school office functions that lead to errors and additional effort for all stakeholders to resolve

vii. There is in general a lack of appropriate ICT within school offices which could be used to enhance productivity and service, for example security systems, telephony and mobile ICT capability

viii. There is some variability in the breadth and level of responsibility at which office staff operate

THE TEAM LEADER MODEL

1.5 In September 2014, through the School Support Project, a need was identified within the school office structure for an enhanced administrator who would actively seek to reduce the increasing administrative burden on Head Teachers and simultaneously support school office staff across school groups.

1.6 In consultation, many school office staff reported feeling isolated from their peers and the Team Leader role was considered one way to address this whilst increasing school office morale and productivity. The majority of staff reported a lack of regular employee reviews or training opportunities. The Team Leader model would look to address these issues.

1.7 The key principles of the Team Leader model are:

- Provide a 'go to' person for Head Teachers, senior management teams and clerical staff across all ASG schools

- Lend support in all aspects of school management where required

- Encourage collaborative working, task sharing and more efficient resource deployment

- Implement and share Best Practice across the ASG

- Identify training requirements of school office staff and increase productivity across school offices

- Design and implement streamlined processes where appropriate

- Manage change within the school office environment

1.8 To explore all the benefits of an enhanced administrator role, two associated school groups were invited to participate in trials. The ASGs chosen were Ardnamurchan and Charleston, as it was felt these school groupings would represent the varied cross-section of schools and school groupings across the Highlands.

1.9 The residing Administrative Assistants in each of the secondary schools were temporarily upgraded to a 'Team Leader' role graded at HC0735 which was adopted as a secondment post only for the specific purpose of these trials.

2.0 The School Support Project manager accompanied the Team Leaders on visits to every school within each of the associated school groups to engage with and brief staff on the purpose of the enhanced admin role and the themes and workstreams set out to address as part of the pilot.

**2.1** Feedback was gathered throughout the duration of the project pilots with regular site visits, workshops, clerical team meetings, telephone conferences, and support provided to the Team Leaders throughout by the project team. This feedback was largely anecdotal although there are a number of initiatives which were implemented which have had a lasting positive impact on the school office function in these ASG's.

THE 2014 TRIAL SCHOOL GROUPS

ARDNAMURCHAN

2.2 A remote rural ASG was selected to explore how the Team Leader model might work across an isolated peninsula community in Lochaber.

2.3 In 2014, the associated school group educated circa 300 pupils across 6 schools which included the primary cluster of Acharacle and Ardgour. Now there are around 260 pupils across the 6 schools and Kilchoan has joined the original cluster to make a primary tri-cluster.
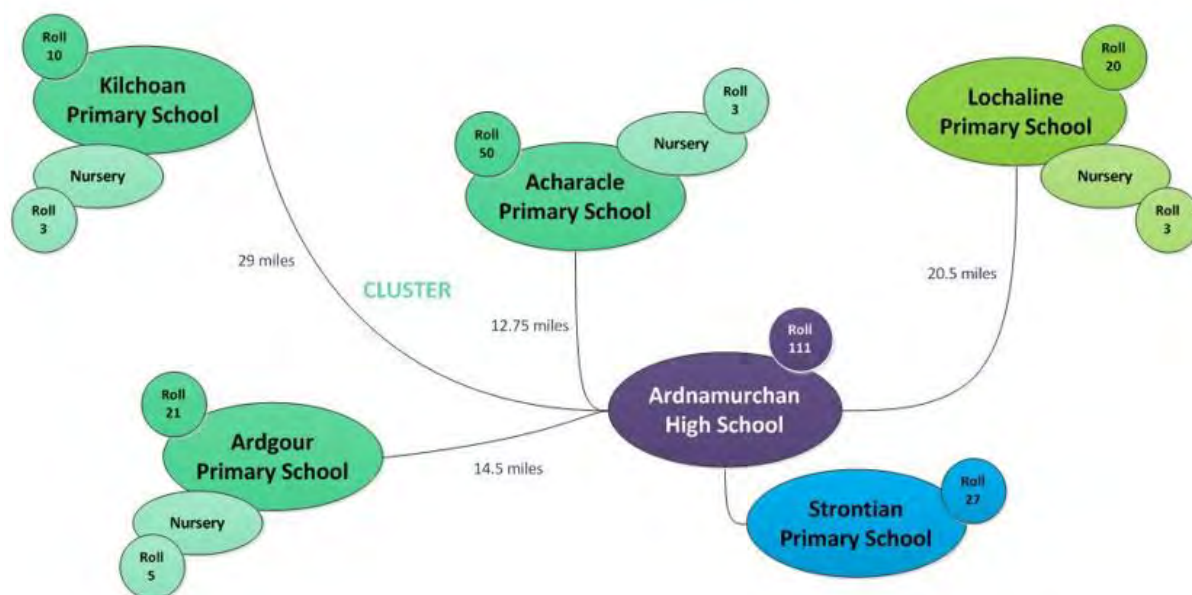
2.4 The Ardnamurchan Head Teacher is supported by one Depute Head Teacher who is teaching some sessions of RME and PE, and managing the school pupil support and guidance teams. They also provide general teaching cover if necessary, as supply is hard to source given their location.

2.5 The Ardnamurchan ASG is spread over the peninsula, accessible by road (A830) or by ferry from Corran via Fort William. The furthest primary school from the high school is at a distance of 29 miles which given the location takes over an hour to reach.

CHARLESTON

2.6 An urban academy in Inverness with a variety of rural, semi-rural and urban feeder primaries was selected to compare outcomes with Ardnamurchan.

2.7 In 2014, Charleston ASG was educating c.1750 pupils across 8 schools. It now has closer to 1900 pupils across the school group, which also incorporates a primary tri-cluster.
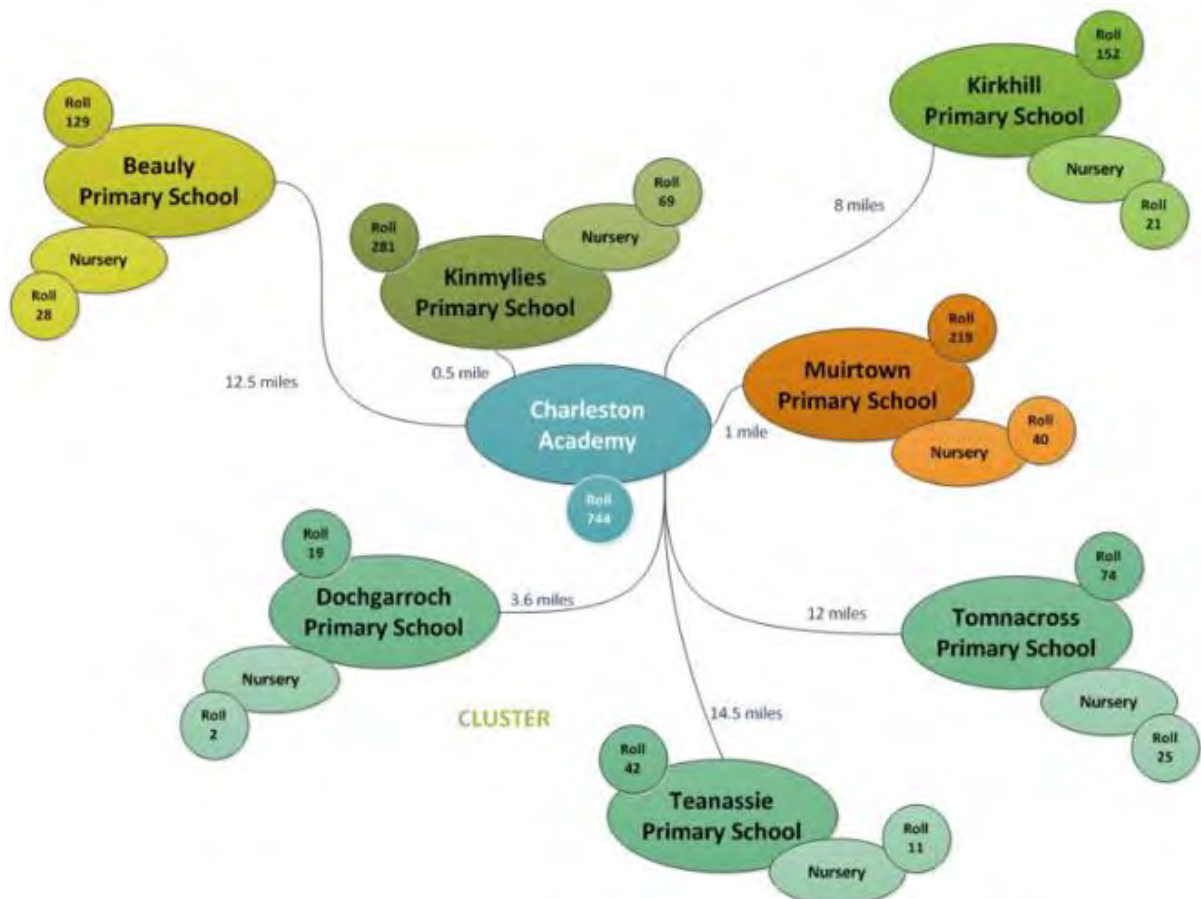
2.8 In 2014, the Head Teacher at Charleston Academy was supported by three Depute Head Teachers, each of whom are timetabled to teach for three periods per week. There has been a change of Head Teacher since August 2017 but the structure of the senior management team remains the same.

2.9 The Charleston ASG spreads out from west Inverness and extends down towards Loch Ness across to Beauly and as far as Struy in Strathglass. All schools are accessible by road. The furthest primary school from the academy is at a distance of 13.5 miles taking around half an hour to reach.

2014 TEAM LEADER INITIATIVES

3.0 A number of areas for improvements were identified, and within these [themes] several initiatives were explored:

THEME	INITIATIVE
RECEPTION AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	Improving parental communications
	Increasing electronic communications such as email
	Website development, blogs and social media
	Reduction in volume of paper sent out to parents in school bags or by mail
	Managing calls, improving the use of telephony and blocking nuisance calls
	General support, visitors, handling complaints and dealing with difficult customers
MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT	Provision of a higher level of support to the whole senior management team
	Pupil absence management
	Support to emergency protocols
	Help with timetabling and SQA administration
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	SEEMiS data quality and verification
	Information security (including PPR's and Child's Plans)
	Email and mail management
	Systems administration
	Records management, file sharing, retention, archiving and paper storage
FINANCE	Procurement and driving best value
	School Fund management and audit preparation
	Departmental budget support
PERSONNEL	Supply staff support and administration
	Induction procedures
	Training and support of school office staff
	School office staff development and review processes
	Office Layout (workstation review)
	ASG relationships and communications, networking and support structure

3.1 To lend support to the main themes and initiatives, the Team Leaders were provided with mobile devices (Windows tablets and laptops), giving them a greater ability to work more flexibly around their base school and across the ASG.

3.2 They were also tasked with exploring the possibility of task sharing across all the schools within the ASG to provide support during times of staff absence. This is especially valuable in small or remote schools where additional cover may not be easily sourced, during long-term staff absence or during pressure points in the school calendar.

ANECDOTAL FEEDBACK FROM THE EARLY TRIALS

3.3 Initial feedback from the primary Head Teachers and staff across the Ardnamurchan ASG indicates that they felt there had been a lack of consultation around the decision to include them in the trial. This can be documented as one of the most fundamental lessons to learn from the School Support Project early Team Leader trials. However, due to focussed efforts from the secondary Head Teacher and the Team Leader, closer collaboration with ASG colleagues realised the perceived benefits of the Team Leader role.

3.4 Subsequent feedback from the Head Teachers of the small rural ASG confirms that the Team Leader model provided them with a 'go-to' person for support, and as a link between all the ASG school office staff, the Team Leader was able to support staff development and provide greater cohesion between the schools within the ASG. They also agreed that many of the initiatives trialled had improved processes and that they could see several benefits to an enhanced administrator as a permanent part of the school office structure.

3.5 Feedback from the urban ASG was not as positively conclusive, as work within this ASG started later, was progressed at a slower pace and the Team Leader had challenges to overcome such as new Head Teachers in two of the feeder primaries, significant staffing issues in the academy school office during the trial period and limited support from the Head Teacher in post in 2014. This made it challenging to implement some of the trial initiatives and resulted in a reduced amount of engagement across the primary schools within the Charleston ASG. This diminished the impact the role could have on school office staff across the ASG despite the best efforts of the Team Leader.

3.6 Both ASG Team Leaders experienced some degree of difficulty in encouraging everyone involved to participate in the trials, further complicated by poor project stakeholder engagement and communication. There were a number of difficulties to overcome at the beginning of the trials and significant work was done by both Team Leaders to overcome these initial challenges.

3.7 Despite some issues, many of the trial initiatives were progressed in both ASG's, such as improved parental communications, website and blog development, streamlined school office processes, increased collaborative working between schools and staff, and significant improvements in information management, financial management, premises management, procurement and systems administration. Many of these successful initiatives have led to new ways of working in school offices and best practice examples of these have been developed and published to the School Resources site in Glow for others to adopt.

3.8 Both ASG's recruited new office staff during the trial period and the Team Leaders were able to provide comprehensive support to Head Teachers during the recruitment process through to induction and training of new staff. Both Team Leaders created bespoke induction processes to tie in with the corporate standard induction for Council staff and again these were published and shared.

3.9 A large amount of work was carried out by the project team to tackle a number of areas where improvements were identified. The Team Leaders worked closely with the project team to document these through redesign, implementation and creation of guidance to drive and manage change. These areas of 'best practice' included work on managing interruptions, School Fund, induction, parental engagement, use of the Highland parent information telephone line and office layout.

4.0 From August 2017, a new acting Head Teacher has been appointed at Charleston Academy following a period of absence in the management team which enabled the new Head Teacher and the Team Leader to work closely together on a new plan for development of a more strategic Team Leader role at Charleston.

4.1 Task lists and a school cycle calendar have been drawn up to enable the Team Leader to provide a greater level of administrative support across the pressure points in the school calendar and create capacity to provide targeted support for Guidance and ASN teams.

4.2 The Team Leaders in their trial posts at Ardnamurchan High School and Charleston Academy remained in post after the conclusion of the School Support Project to enable positive outcomes to feed into the work of the Administration in Schools project and to enable further development of the Team Leader model as the Management of Schools programme impacts on the provision of the school office support function.

4.3 These trial posts will conclude at the end of session in June 2018 along with the enhanced administrator posts in all the 3-18 school groups.

4.4 OUTCOMES FROM THE EARLY TRIALS

- Ability for Head Teachers to delegate

    o Head Teachers from participating schools felt the addition of a Team Leader into the school office structure added value and provided an additional tier of support for administrative tasks

- Focused support for office staff

    o School office staff in the ASG feeder primaries understood the role of the Team Leader within the ASG and began to value the backing provided to them in training, information and general support where it was required
    o Rural or remote primary schools had never experienced this level of support before and in turn, many reported feeling less isolated in their roles
    o Team Leaders were able to provide Head Teachers with support in managing school office staff training needs and professional development, including the provision of regular staff ERD's. It was found that currently the majority of school office staff do not receive regular performance reviews and this is a function that should be provided by Team Leaders
    o Induction checklists were developed in collaboration with a panel of three clerical assistants from outwith the trial ASGs. A thorough and well-planned induction will help new employees feel comfortable and settled in their new roles more quickly and in turn this will lead to increased job satisfaction, higher morale and greater productivity

- Better Parental Engagement

    o Development of school websites and blogs improved parental communications and provided a smarter, more engaging and cost-effective method of communicating with parents. Two of the participating schools did not have a website at all prior to the project, and a further four improved existing websites and are now blogging regularly
    o An increased volume of non-sensitive parental communications were sent by email as the default method which will reduce costs and time
    o Parents have an increased awareness of schools' eco ethos and are accepting new methods of electronic communications

- The development of school communications plans gave school office staff and Head Teachers a greater understanding of how they currently communicate with parents, enabling them to identify where improvements could be made. Schools were provided with the tools to develop their own communications strategies, and both Team Leaders worked hard to engage schools across their ASG's to work on this

- Collaborative Working

  - An Integra workshop was set up by the Team Leader at Charleston Academy for a large group of school office staff to provide support to users of the new system. Staff reported feeling more confident in a group environment. Lessons learned from this confirm that staff felt it easier to learn new skills as part of a group in a practical environment than from an online source, alone
  - Office Communicator has provided school staff in more remote locations the tools for more collaborative working

- Increased Office Productivity

  - Work on office layout gave school office staff a better understanding of how they work and enabled them to identify any changes that could be made to enhance comfort, safety and efficiency
  - New furniture and peripherals have made a positive impact on the office environment, reducing the chances of stress, illness or injury at work and increasing productivity and wellbeing
  - Mobile devices provided to Team Leaders (tablets and laptops) enabled them to work more flexibly in their base schools and gave them the ability to work across the ASG schools
  - Office Communicator has also enabled school staff in more remote locations to send instant messages to each other, conference call and share desktops for more collaborative working

- Information Management and Telephony Improvements

  - Improved guidelines on Information Management and the sharing of best practice has enabled school office staff to better understand data storage, retention and archiving requirements which has resulted in improved compliance and more streamlined office processes
  - Telephony improvements were identified by the Team Leader and rolled out at Ardnamurchan High School. These developments have improved call-handling and anecdotal user feedback is very positive
  - Charleston have since followed suit and activated a number of telephony tools within their telephone system to improve call handling, including a dedicated mailbox for stacking messages regarding pupil absence

- Task Sharing

  - It was agreed that task sharing presented many opportunities and while not specifically trialled within the initial project trial phase, the Team Leaders understood the value of task sharing and provided suggestions for where support could be provided to relieve Head Teacher stress

- The 'One-Stop Shop' [Resources site] and Regular Newsletters

  o Following consultation with office staff and Head Teachers, the project designed, built and launched a dedicated School Resources site hosted in Glow
  o The site has around 150 online web pages and provides 'how to' guidance on processes, links to relevant Council policies, a forms and downloads document library, a contacts directory, a newsfeed, community forum and a Best Practice repository
  o A poll of users in 2016 showed that **72%** of staff believe the site has saved them time, and **99%** of users would recommend the site to their colleagues
  o Weekly project newsletters were launched from May 2015 to improve stakeholder communication. Feedback from staff showed that 33% felt they benefited from a weekly newsletter

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

4.5 In October 2015 the Council's Education Children and Adult Services Committee considered proposals to enhance support for Head Teachers and to sustain management in schools across the authority.

4.6 Members agreed that a new approach to school management was required for the following reasons

- 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 Highland geography

4.7 The Care and Learning Service established the Management of Schools Programme to take this work forward, with six interdependent workstreams. One of these was the Structures and School Groupings workstream which, in January 2017 made proposals for changes to management structures in a number of ASGs and presented these to the ECAS committee.

4.8 Agreement was reached to proceed with the implementation of a 3-18 management structure at the Dornoch, Farr, Kilchuimen, Plockton and Kinlochbervie ASGs from August 2017.

4.9 Another of the six interdependent Management of Schools workstreams was the Administration in Schools project which seeks to examine how school office support can better support Head Teachers going forward, responding to changes within school management structures to cement sustainability and improve standards of education for children in Highlands.

5.0 A number of cross-cutting themes have been identified which will impact on two or more of these workstreams. These are around resourcing, available and effective technologies, behavioural changes and change management, and property and assets.

Management of Schools Programme

Curriculum Delivery

Workforce Planning Development

Structures and School Groupings

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: Workforce Planning   Workforce Skills Development

Technology (ICT)   Culture Shift
Property (maintenance & estates)

Workforce Planning Recruitment

Administration in Schools

Early Learning & Childcare

THE ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOLS PROJECT PILOTS

THE 3-18 TEAM LEADER

5.1 Learning outcomes established from the previous School Support Project Team Leader trials and by applying the same basic principles of the role – to provide targeted support to Head Teachers in reducing administrative burden and increase school office efficiency – the Administration in Schools project identified the model to be appropriate in a 3-18 context, allowing a Head Teacher of a number of schools spread over more than one site the ability to delegate administrative tasks to a senior level administrator.

5.2 Head Teachers would also be able to task these enhanced administrators with overseeing school office staff across the 3-18, thus reducing the time Head Teachers would need to spend managing school office teams.

5.3 From the start of session in August 2017, the existing secondary office administrators at the Dornoch, Farr and Kilchuimen ASGs were tasked with providing an enhanced level of support to their Head Teachers by actively reducing the administrative burden to enable them to focus on teaching and learning, the development and delivery of a 3-18 curriculum, early years expansion and the many other challenges of the newly implemented management structures. As per the previous project Team Leader role, these enhanced administrators would also be tasked with supporting school office teams during transition and with new ways of working.

5.4 Coinciding with early plans to implement the Team Leader role in the new 3-18 campuses, proposals to create a completely new school office role [School Support Assistant] were rejected by

the GMB Trade Union who submitted a grievance. Resolution to this grievance was not reached until 21 November 2017 when all considerations for the proposed new role were shelved.

5.5 This led to a delay in the full implementation of the Team Leader pilots until 22 November 2017 when the secondary school administrators at Dornoch, Farr and Kilchuimen who had been temporarily seconded to the higher graded Team Leader post (graded at HC0735) from August 2017 could fully imbed into their roles alongside the existing Team Leaders at Ardnamurchan High School and Charleston Academy and the trials could begin in earnest.

5.6 The Team Leader pilots were due to end on 28 March 2018 but on 26 March 2018, agreement was reached by Care and Learning Senior Management to continue these pilots until the end of the 2017-18 session to enable full and comprehensive feedback to be extracted from the pilots to provide informed conclusions and recommendations.

5.7 Kinlochbervie was the fourth 3-18 campus to join the pilot, from mid-January 2018.

5.8 All staff participating in the Team Leader pilots will revert back to their substantive posts from the end of the 2017-18 school session.

THE SCHOOL SUPPORT ASSISTANT

5.9 Following consultation with Head Teachers and office staff in the schools due to transition to the new management structures in August 2017, and in collaboration with members of the Management of Schools Support to Schools working group, proposals for an additional new post were made as a possible way to implement positive change to office roles and provide a point of presence to smaller, rural schools which currently only benefit from a part-time clerical assistant. As stated at **5.4**, the proposal for this new [School Support Assistant] role was rejected by the GMB and, at this point, has been held in abeyance pending further consideration.

THE CLUSTER CLERICAL ASSISTANT

6.0 A cluster Clerical Assistant role has been trialled since August 2017 across the Dochgarroch, Teanassie and Tomnacross primary tri-cluster which is part of the Charleston ASG in Inverness.

6.1 This role seeks to provide three main benefits to a single Head Teacher of three primary schools of varying sizes:

- streamlined, consistent processes across the cluster
- a flexible, fluid approach to office resourcing between schools in a cluster
- a single point of contact for Head Teacher, staff and parents across the cluster

6.2 At the time this model was implemented at the start of the 2017-18 session, there were school office vacancies in two of the three primary schools, and as a result of this the remaining long-serving and experienced Clerical Assistant had been managing a number of office tasks for all three of the schools within the cluster.

6.3 Intended initially as a short-term solution to the school office staffing shortages within the cluster, this situation resulted in a necessary redistribution of tasks across the three school offices to enable one Clerical Assistant to oversee a number of the administrative functions, such as School Fund, procurement, parental communications, SEEMiS administration, supply cover sourcing and staff absence management. The benefits of redistributing some of these tasks are described in a separate document looking specifically at this role.

6.4 The cluster Clerical Assistant model also provides a single point of contact for support for all three schools for the Head Teacher which has proved to be beneficial not only to the Head Teacher but to all staff within the schools.

EVALUATING THE TEAM LEADER ROLE IN THE 3-18 CONTEXT

6.5 Two online feedback form templates were created for participating Head Teachers and Team Leaders to complete on a weekly basis. The forms were developed to provide a consistent approach to logging and recording data (time and nature of tasks carried out). Information and outcomes from the pilots would enable the project team to evaluate the benefit of the senior administrative role using data and not just anecdotal evidence.

6.6 The form was pre-populated with 71 Team Leader tasks over 13 categories and 52 Head Teacher tasks over 8 categories (details of these at **8.1**).

6.7 The form provided an organised method of logging tasks participating staff members carried out over the course of each week during the pilot. The responses could then be collated by category to evaluate which task categories were the primary areas of focus for Head Teachers and Team Leaders during the pilot.

6.8 The task categories pre-populated into the feedback form were:

Head Teacher
- 3-18 Development
- Child Protection
- Continuing Professional Development
- Curriculum Development and Delivery
- Financial Management
- Quality Improvement
- Responsible Premises Management
- Staff Management

Team Leader
- Developing Parental Communications
- Early Learning & Childcare Administration Support
- Financial Management and Support
- Improving Processes
- Leadership and Building a Team Ethos
- Policy and Protocols

- Procurement and Best Value
- Recruitment and HR
- Responsible Premises Support
- SQA Administration
- Staff Resourcing
- Strategic Planning
- Systems Support

6.9 Over the course of the pilot, feedback was completed and submitted by both the 3-18 Head Teachers and their Team Leaders as shown.

	DORNOCH		FARR		KILCHUIMEN		KINLOCHBERVIE	
	HT	TL	HT	TL	DHT	TL	HT	TL
29/01/2018	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓
05/02/2018	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
12/02/2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19/02/2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
26/02/2018	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
05/03/2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✗	✓
12/03/2018	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
19/03/2018	✗	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
26/03/2018	✗	✗	✓	✓	-	-	✗	✓

ADMIN IN SCHOOLS 3-18 TEAM LEADER PILOT SCHOOL GROUPS

DORNOCH
THE DORNOCH FIRTH 3-18 CAMPUS
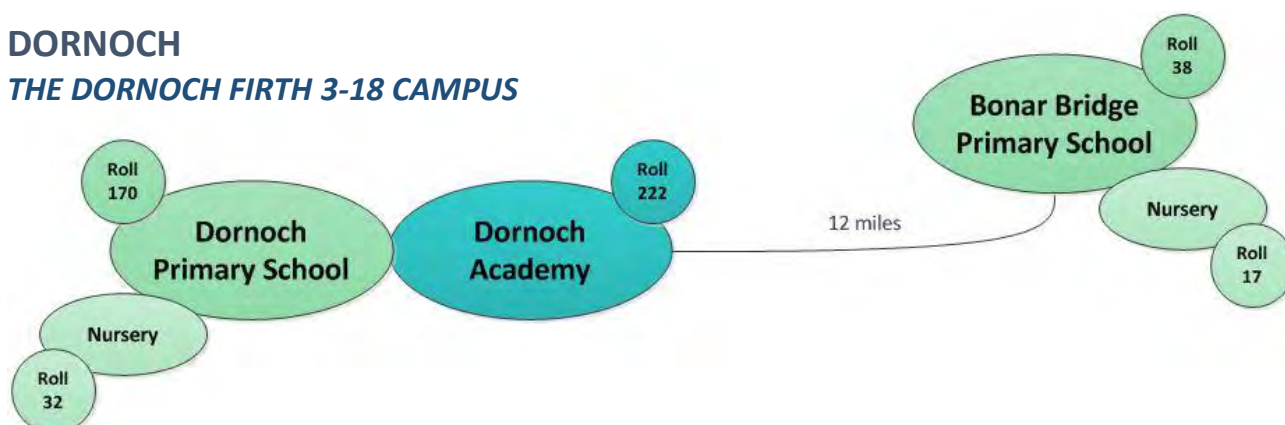
7.0 3-18 Senior Management Team and Office/Janitorial Support Staff

- Head Teacher
- Depute Head Teacher (Secondary)
- Depute Head Teacher (Secondary)
- Depute Head Teacher (Primary)
- Team Leader (seconded Administrative Assistant)
- Four additional members of school office team split across the 3-18
- Full-time on-site Janitor at the academy

DORNOCH HEAD TEACHER RESULTS

7.1 The enhanced Administrator post at Dornoch ran for the entire pilot period which allowed for a full 9 weeks of feedback on the benefits of the Team Leader role as experienced across the Dornoch campus.

7.2 During this time, seven feedback forms were completed and submitted by the campus Head Teacher, logging a total of 175.6 hours of senior management tasks carried out as a direct result of having the support of the enhanced administrator (Team Leader).

7.3 The hours were utilised in the following areas:

Quality Improvement	37%	66 hours
3-18 Development	33%	58 hours
Staff Management	17%	29 hours
Curriculum Development & Delivery	8%	13 hours
Other	6%	10 hours

175.6 hours
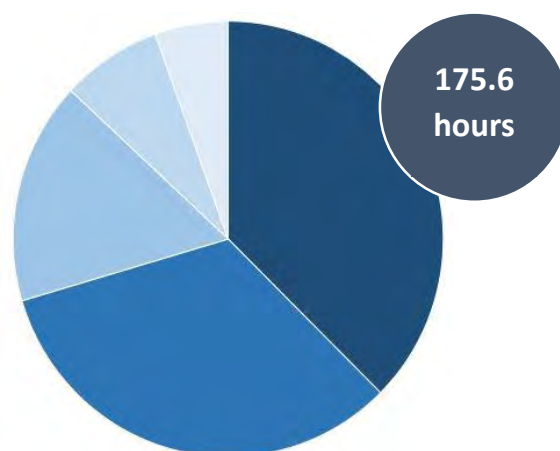
7.4 In greater detail, tasks logged hours specifically as follows (in hours):

Task	Hours
School improvement through Self-evaluation	23.6
Mentoring staff	19.35
Policy Development	16
Analysing data	14
Curriculum development and delivery	13.27
General 3-18 Development	12.5
School Improvement Plans	11.6
Budget Monitoring	10
Strategic Leadership	9.67
Other	9.67
Parent Council Executive Development	5.6
Secondary Curriculum Development	5
Raising attainment	5
Primary Curriculum Development	5
Departmental Meetings	5
Early Years expansion	3.75
Strategic development across the 3-18	3.6
PEF funding	3

7.5 To fully benefit from the enhanced administrator role, the priorities of the Dornoch Head Teacher during the pilot were to:

- utilise capacity created by the Team Leader to focus on Quality Improvement and curriculum development across the Dornoch 3-18 campus
- focus on planning for school improvement and learning, teaching and assessment
- focus on raising attainment and achievement
- work on policy and strategy, such as Health and Wellbeing and Equalities and Diversity
- maximise on time freed up by the Team Leader to work more collaboratively with members of the Senior Management Team in areas such as Insight/Incas/SNSA data analysis
- lead on mentoring, coaching and staff development
- strategic planning across the 3-18 campus, including for the Dornoch transition group, the Executive Parent Council, and work on future SISE and QI activities for the coming session
- spend time working on tracking with the 3-18 senior management team

7.6 To enable the senior management team at Dornoch to focus on these priorities they delegated senior level administrative tasks to the Team Leader; it would not have been pay grade appropriate to delegate many of these tasks to an administrator before the trial began.

7.7 The tasks logged by the Head Teacher via the feedback forms were carried out to benefit or impact on pupils (35%), staff (35%) and parents (30%) across the 3-18.

7.8 The Head Teacher commented that the online feedback form did not provide adequate opportunity to evidence how the enhanced administrator role benefited the rest of the schools' senior management team. It is noted that a number of the tasks carried out by the Team Leader at Dornoch were to provide support to the SMT rather than specifically to the Head Teacher which is in line with the expectation of the role. Additional anecdotal evidence taken from the feedback forms submitted by all participating Head Teachers can be found in Appendix 1.

DORNOCH TEAM LEADER RESULTS

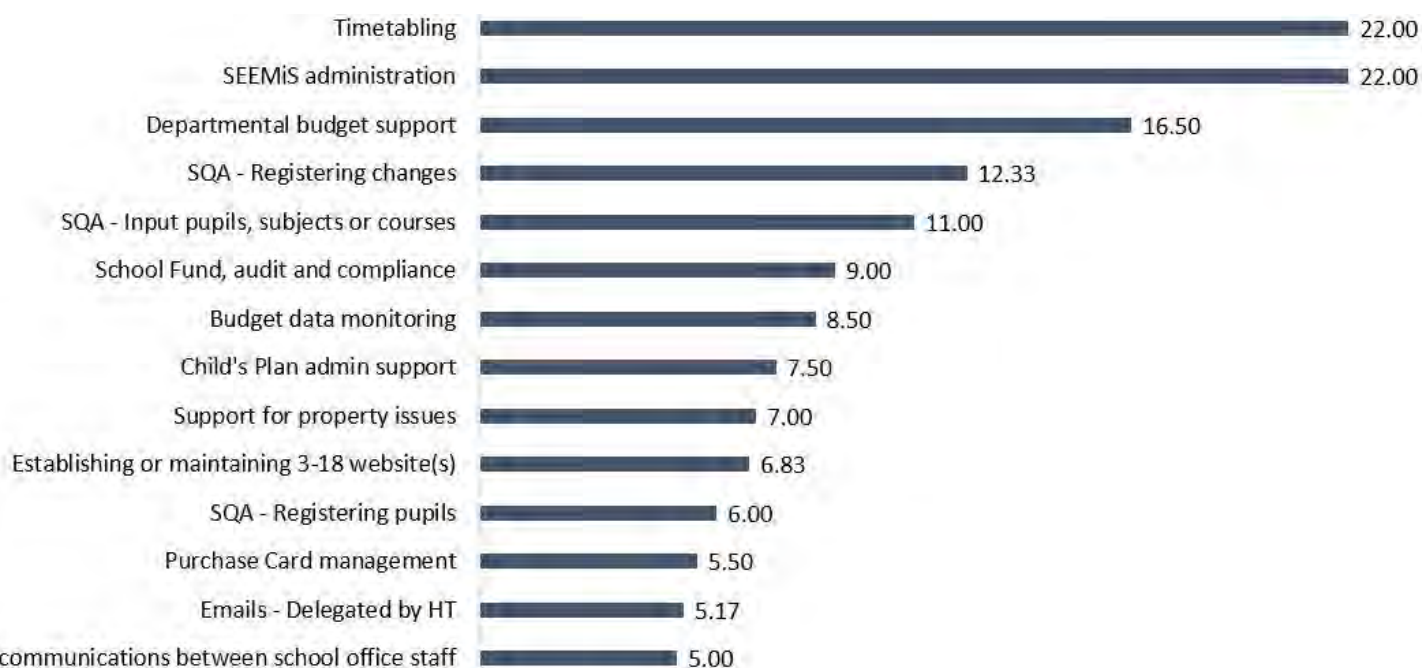**7.9** Over the course of the pilot at Dornoch, the Team Leader submitted seven feedback forms logging eligible tasks equating to a total of 213.8 hours (note that eligible tasks refers to any administrative task which was taken on by the Team Leader from a member of the school senior management team which is over and above the post-holder's substantive administrative assistant remit).

8.0 The hours logged were spent on the following administrative themes:

Systems Support	22%	46 hours
Financial Management and Support	18%	38 hours
SQA Administration	15%	32 hours
Other	10%	21 hours
Responsible Premises Support	8%	18 hours
Developing Parental Communications	8%	17 hours
Leadership & Building a Team Ethos	6%	12.5 hours
Policy and Protocols	5%	11 hours
Procurement and Best Value	3%	6 hours
Recruitment and HR	2%	4 hours
Improving Processes	1%	3 hours
Strategic Planning	1%	2 hours
Early Learning and Childcare Admin	1%	2 hours
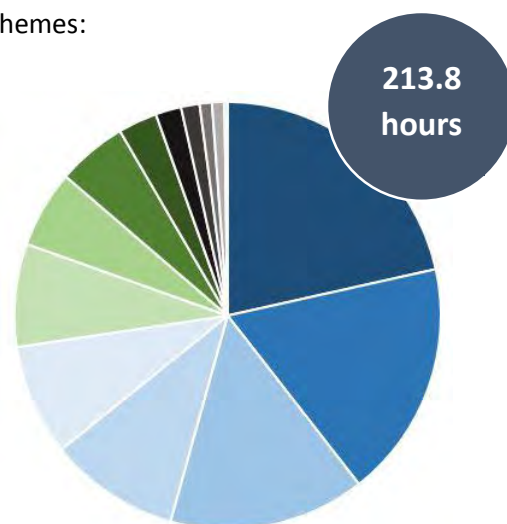
213.8 hours

8.1 213.8 hours were logged by the Team Leader across all thirteen task categories provided by the online form. Given the spread of tasks across the task categories, it is most beneficial to evaluate the tasks carried out which took up most of the time, therefore the following task breakdown shows only those tasks which were logged for 5 hours or more across the seven weeks the Team Leader submitted a feedback form:

Task	Hours
Timetabling	22.00
SEEMiS administration	22.00
Departmental budget support	16.50
SQA - Registering changes	12.33
SQA - Input pupils, subjects or courses	11.00
School Fund, audit and compliance	9.00
Budget data monitoring	8.50
Child's Plan admin support	7.50
Support for property issues	7.00
Establishing or maintaining 3-18 website(s)	6.83
SQA - Registering pupils	6.00
Purchase Card management	5.50
Emails - Delegated by HT	5.17
Improving communications between school office staff	5.00

8.2 During the pilot, the Team Leader was able to identify a number of improvements to existing processes to maximise efficiency across the 3-18, among them:

- Regular review of staffing budget data to present to the Head Teacher along with highlight reports of school financial matters and suggested solutions. Working with the school Finance Officer, the Team Leader was able to increase the level of financial support she has been providing which is reducing the time required to be spent by the Head Teacher. This includes identification of underspends and support to end of financial year processes
- Use of the TalentLink system for the Head Teacher to provide support with recruitment administration. While it is appropriate for a school administrator to help Head Teachers with recruitment paperwork, the TalentLink system has proved to be time-consuming for users, so support in this area is welcomed by Head Teachers who describe the system as onerous
- Redevelopment of school email distribution lists to enable better communications across the 3-18 ASG and out to parents
- Development of a Dornoch Firth 3-18 Campus Major Incident Plan, merging the template document from three documents into one whilst retaining key site-specific emergency protocols
- Creation of a new integrated staff personnel record system for the whole 3-18
- Implementation of revised staff absence reporting procedures in the campus primary schools, including return to work interviews which were not previously taking place
- Working closely with Facilities and maintenance teams and school staff to review and implement health and safety, fire regulations, fire policies and hazard and risk assessments for all schools (and nurseries) across the campus
- Revised expenses claim system in campus primary schools
- A complete review of the procurement processes across the 3-18 campus culminating in the development of a single process for procurement allowing the Head Teacher greater visibility of spend and more control over purchases for the whole ASG
- Implementation of regular school office staff meetings to provide a forum for discussion, learning and sharing best practice across the 3-18. This will lead to greater collaboration, better communications and improved morale across all the school offices
- Revised process for supply cover forms (processing and reporting) to ensure systems in place are fully compliant
- Review of staff access rights in SEEMiS to ensure all staff have the appropriate level of access to the data within the system. This will also enable teachers to be able to generate reports and access tracking and monitoring where appropriate, and improve data security

8.3 Throughout the trial period, the Team Leader was unable to identify any tasks carried out which are no longer necessary.

8.4 The Team Leader reported supporting pupils in the office setting for around 4.7% of her time over the trial period.

8.5 Additional anecdotal evidence received from Team Leaders regarding the role can be found in Appendix 2.

FARR
THE NORTH COAST 3-18 CAMPUS
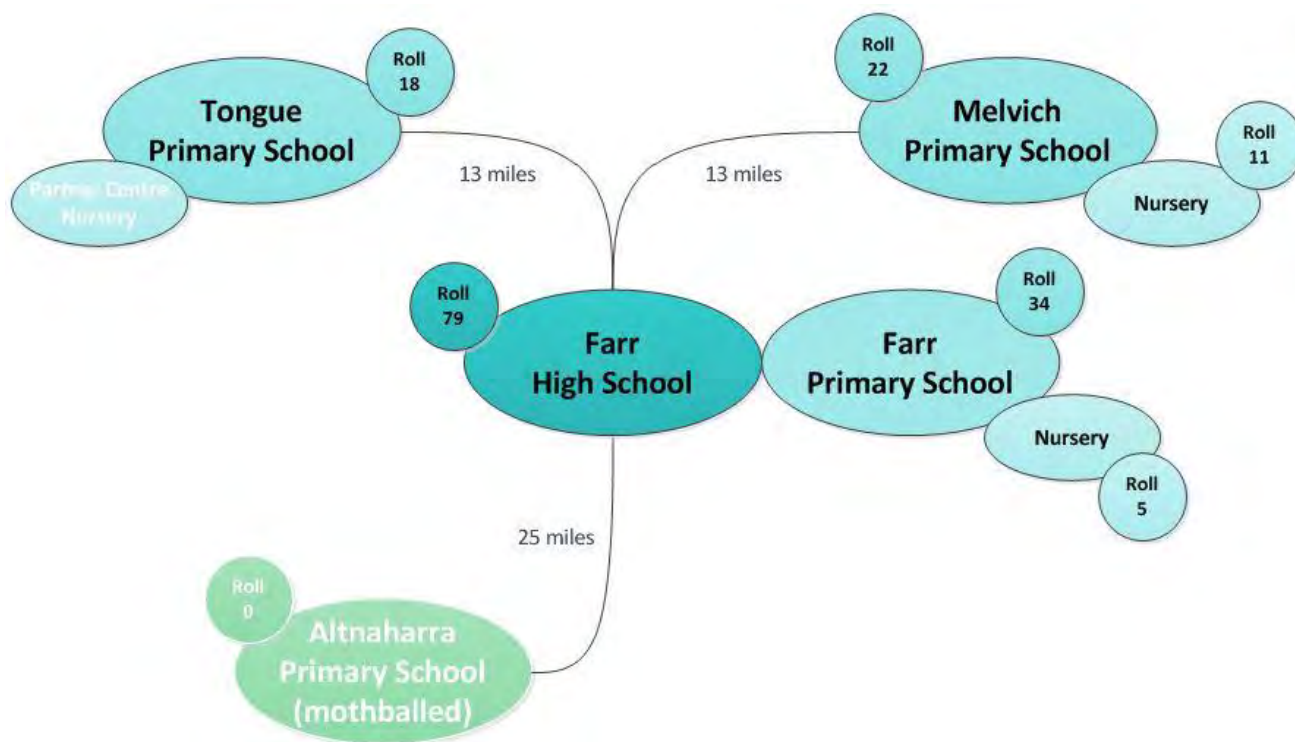
8.6 3-18 Senior Management Team and Office/Janitorial Support Staff

- Operating as a 3-18 campus since August 2017
- Head Teacher
- Depute Head Teacher (Secondary)
- Depute Head Teacher (Primary)
- Team Leader (seconded Administrative Assistant)
- Full-time on-site Janitor at the High School
- Four additional members of school office team staff split across the 3-18
- Secondary and [Farr] primary office staff are located centrally at the 3-18 campus base with two additional members of office staff located in Melvich and Tongue, each around 13.5 miles from the Farr campus

FARR HEAD TEACHER RESULTS

8.7 The enhanced Administrator post at Farr ran for the entire pilot period which allowed for a full nine weeks of feedback on the benefits of the Team Leader role as experienced across the Farr campus.

8.8 During this time, seven feedback forms were completed and submitted by the campus Head Teacher, logging a total of 146.3 hours of senior management tasks carried out as a direct result of having the support of the enhanced administrator (Team Leader).

8.9 The hours were utilised in the following areas:
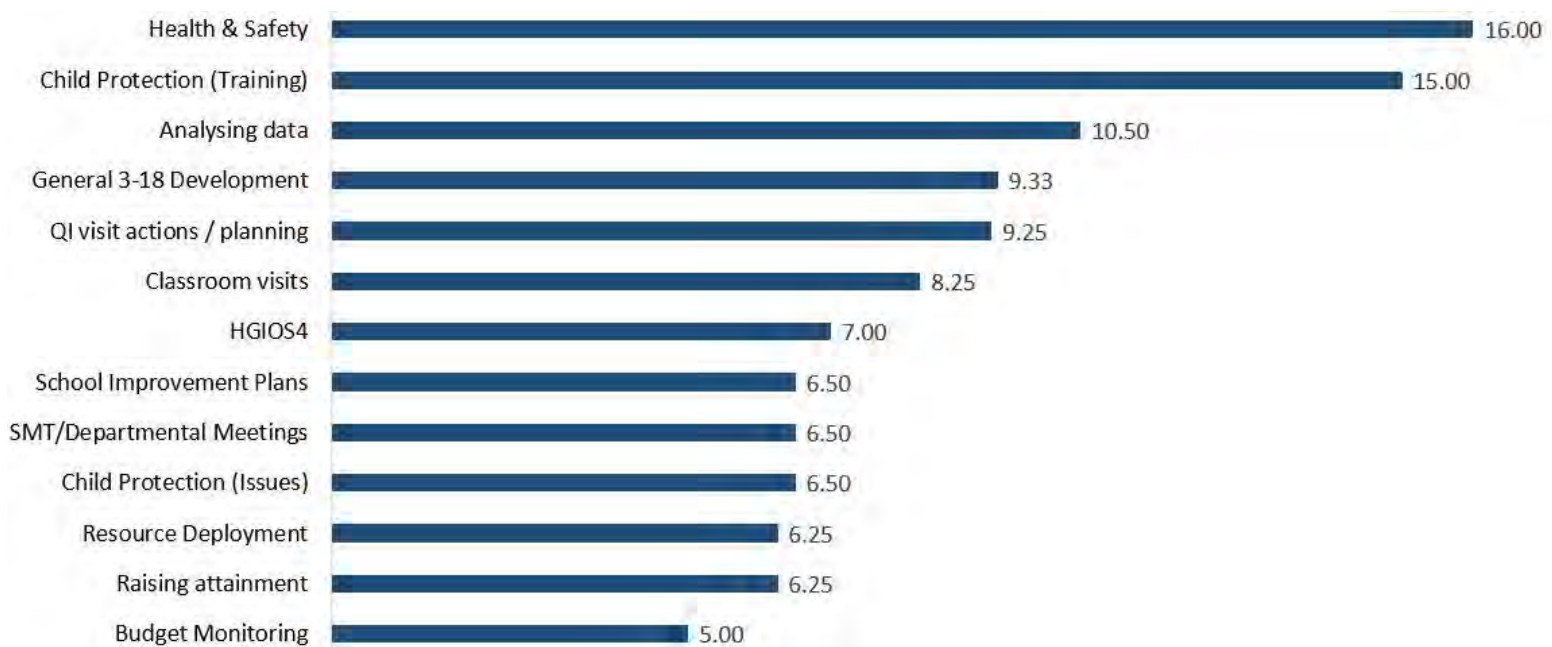
Quality Improvement	26%	38 hours
Staff Management	17%	25 hours
Responsible Premises Management	15%	22 hours
Curriculum Development & Delivery	12%	18 hours
Financial Management	9%	12.5 hours
Continuing Professional Development	8%	12 hours
Child Protection	6%	9.5 hours
3-18 Development	6%	9 hours

146.3 hours
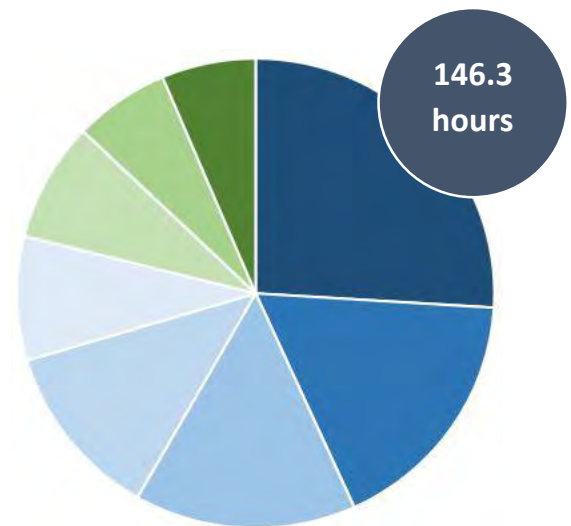
9.0 Given the spread of tasks across the task categories, it is most beneficial to note the tasks carried out which took up most of the time, therefore the following task breakdown shows only those specific tasks which were logged for 5 hours or more (in hours):

Task	Hours
Health & Safety	16.00
Child Protection (Training)	15.00
Analysing data	10.50
General 3-18 Development	9.33
QI visit actions / planning	9.25
Classroom visits	8.25
HGIOS4	7.00
School Improvement Plans	6.50
SMT/Departmental Meetings	6.50
Child Protection (Issues)	6.50
Resource Deployment	6.25
Raising attainment	6.25
Budget Monitoring	5.00

9.1 To fully benefit from the enhanced administrator role, the priorities of the Farr Head Teacher during the pilot were to:

- utilise capacity created to drive quality improvement across the campus
- focus on improving collegiate working practices
- focus on staff management and staffing issues, including the implementation of additional departmental and SMT meetings, and staff mentoring
- allocate time for continuing professional development and self-evaluation
- delegate administrative tasks to the Team Leader to free up time to manage specific issues relating to asbestos at Melvich Primary School
- dedicate time to driving positive change across the 3-18, improving collaborations, team working and morale
- spend more time in the classroom observing and evaluating to inform curriculum development

9.2 To enable the senior management team at Farr to focus on these priorities they delegated senior level administrative tasks to the Team Leader.

It would not have been pay grade appropriate to delegate many of these tasks to an administrator before, such as:

- advanced budget support for multiple budgets (collation, analysis and reporting on overspend/underspend) including PEF allocation and working closely with the schools' Finance Officer to resolve budget issues
- streamlining and process redesign followed by implementation, training and change management around these
- completion of staffing returns across all schools in the 3-18
- timetabling in SEEMiS
- SQA Administration
- handling Head Teacher emails during pressure points, diary and Head Teacher time management
- completion of the school Major Incident Plans (3-18 campus development)
- co-ordinating staff CPD and creation of training logs
- responsible premises support
- liaison and support of school office staff within the campus who are not based at the Bettyhill site to improve collaborative working practices and increase staff morale
- take an active role in the organisation of estates building works to be carried out around the campus

HEAD TEACHER ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

9.3 The tasks logged by the Head Teacher via the feedback forms were carried out to benefit or have most impact on staff (41%), pupils (39%) and parents (20%) across the 3-18.

9.4 The Head Teacher at Farr identified the following benefits of the Team Leader during the period of the pilot:

- increased capacity to focus on teaching, learning and quality of education
- reduced stress trying to juggle multiple administrative tasks which are felt to be a barrier to the primary focus of improving the educational experiences of and outcomes for young people
- improved communication between senior management team and school office staff across the whole 3-18 campus
- increased morale and confidence in school office staff leading to greater productivity and task ownership
- new opportunities for standardisation and streamlining of processes and task sharing

9.5 Additional anecdotal evidence taken from the feedback forms submitted by all participating Head Teachers can be found in Appendix 1.
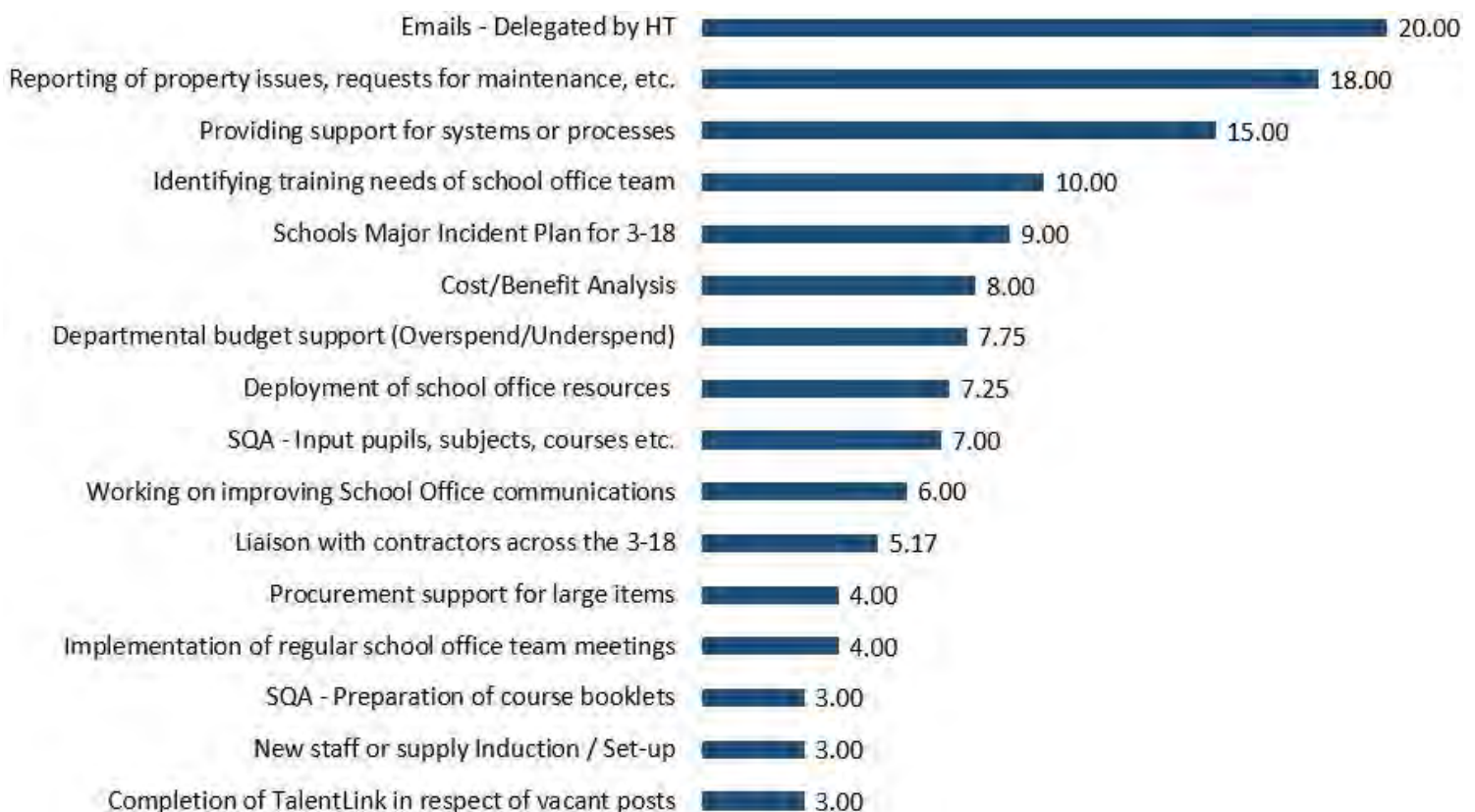
FARR TEAM LEADER RESULTS

9.6 Over the course of the pilot at Farr, the Team Leader submitted seven feedback forms logging eligible tasks equating to a total of 144.2 hours (note that eligible tasks refers to any administrative task which was taken on by the Team Leader from a member of the school senior management team which is over and above the post-holder's substantive administrative assistant remit).

9.7 The hours logged were spent on the following administrative themes:

Leadership & Building a Team Ethos	24%	35 hours
Responsible Premises Support	22%	32 hours
Other	15%	21 hours
Procurement and Best Value	9%	13.5 hours
Financial Management and Support	8%	11 hours
SQA Administration	7%	10 hours
Staff Resourcing	6%	8 hours
Recruitment and HR	5%	6.5 hours
Improving Processes	2%	2 hours
Developing Parental Communications	1%	2 hours
Systems Support	1%	2 hours
Policy and Protocols	1%	2 hours

144.2 hours
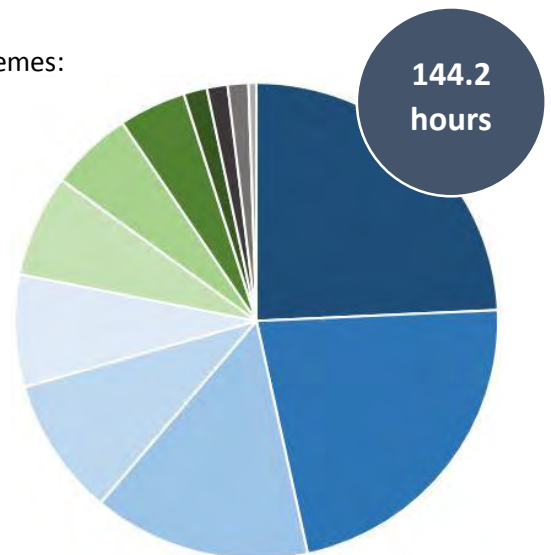
9.8 Noted below is the task breakdown of those specific tasks which were logged for 3 hours or more (in hours):

Emails - Delegated by HT	20.00
Reporting of property issues, requests for maintenance, etc.	18.00
Providing support for systems or processes	15.00
Identifying training needs of school office team	10.00
Schools Major Incident Plan for 3-18	9.00
Cost/Benefit Analysis	8.00
Departmental budget support (Overspend/Underspend)	7.75
Deployment of school office resources	7.25
SQA - Input pupils, subjects, courses etc.	7.00
Working on improving School Office communications	6.00
Liaison with contractors across the 3-18	5.17
Procurement support for large items	4.00
Implementation of regular school office team meetings	4.00
SQA - Preparation of course booklets	3.00
New staff or supply Induction / Set-up	3.00
Completion of TalentLink in respect of vacant posts	3.00

25

9.9 During the pilot, the Team Leader was able to identify a number of improvements to existing processes to maximise efficiency across the 3-18, among them:

- Regular review of staffing budget data to present to the Head Teacher along with highlight reports of school financial matters and suggested solutions. Working with the school Finance Officer, the Team Leader was able to increase the level of financial support she has been providing which is reducing the time required to be spent by the Head Teacher. This includes identification of underspends and support to end of financial year processes
- Use of the TalentLink system for the Head Teacher to provide support with recruitment administration. While it is appropriate for a school administrator to help Head Teachers with recruitment paperwork, the TalentLink system has proved to be time-consuming for users, so support in this area is welcomed by Head Teachers who describe the system as onerous
- Redevelopment of school email distribution lists to enable better communications across the 3-18 ASG and out to parents
- Provision of enhanced support to responsible premises management issues. There has been a number of occasions during the pilot where the Farr ASG has faced property, maintenance, estates management issues and resulting school closures, and the Team Leader has been key in handling these issues and providing support to the Head Teacher across all sites. There is also significant work to be carried out across the ASG in the coming months at multiple sites and the Team Leader has been able to take a key role in managing the liaison around this
- Creation of a Farr 3-18 single Schools' Major Incident Plan, merging the template document from four documents into one whilst retaining key site-specific emergency protocols
- A complete review of the procurement processes across the 3-18 campus culminating in the development of a single process for procurement allowing the Head Teacher greater visibility of spend and more control over purchases for the whole ASG
- Implementation of regular school office staff meetings to provide a forum for discussion, learning and sharing best practice across the 3-18. This will lead to greater collaboration, better communications and improved morale across all the school offices. There was work to be done in this area due to issues around the transition of Farr to a 3-18 management structure but improved communication and consultation with school teams will improve a number of aspects in this regard. Low morale is a considerable barrier to increased productivity and the desire to work collaboratively. It is hoped that the whole school office team across the 3-18 will be better prepared and more willing to make positive change with the guidance and leadership of the Team Leader
- Review of staff access rights in SEEMiS to ensure all staff have the appropriate level of access to the data within the system. This will also enable teachers to be able to generate reports and access tracking and monitoring where appropriate, and improve data security
- Creation of a new integrated staff personnel record system for the whole 3-18
- Identification of staff training requirements and organisation of training and set up of training logs (teachers and non-teaching)

10.0 Throughout the trial period the Team Leader was unable to identify any tasks she had been carrying out which she felt were no longer necessary.

10.1 The Team Leader reported supporting pupils in the office setting for around 2% of her time over the trial period.

10.2 The Team Leader at Farr has worked hard to provide a flexible and reliable administrative support function whilst refining the whole team approach to task sharing and proactively allocating and prioritising office resources according to need. There have been challenges leading up to the end of the financial year and the team have managed these administrative pressures effectively.

KILCHUIMEN

THE KILCHUIMEN 3-18 CAMPUS
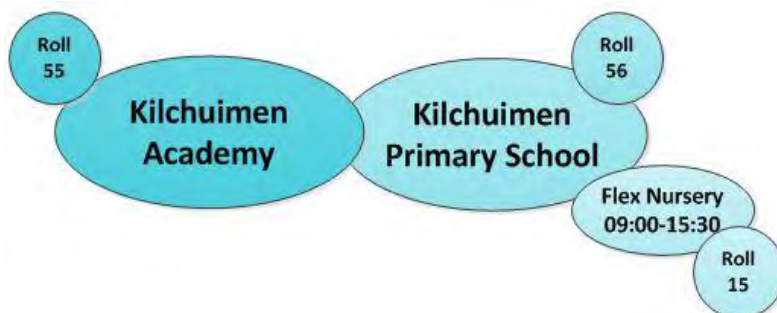
3-18 Senior Management Team and Office/Janitorial Support Staff

- Operating as a 3-18 campus since 2015
- Head Teacher
- Depute Head Teacher (Primary)
- Depute Head Teacher (Secondary) (secondment)
- Team Leader (temporary seconded Administrative Assistant)
- Full-time onsite Janitor at the academy
- 3-18 office staff work from a single school office located centrally within the campus

## KILCHUIMEN DEPUTE HEAD TEACHER RESULTS

10.3 The enhanced Administrator / Team Leader post at Kilchuimen ran for a period of five weeks before the post-holder began a leave of absence to undergo medical treatment.

During this time, no feedback on the Team Leader role was provided by the campus Head Teacher, but four weekly feedback forms were received from the depute Head Teachers, logging a total of 19.6 hours over the course of the five week pilot.

The logs provided detail of work they were able to carry out as a direct result of having the support of the enhanced administrator [Team Leader].

10.4 The 19.6 hours were utilised in the following areas:

Curriculum development and delivery	66%	14 hours
Quality Improvement	24%	5 hours
3-18 Development	5%	1 hour
Other	5%	1 hour
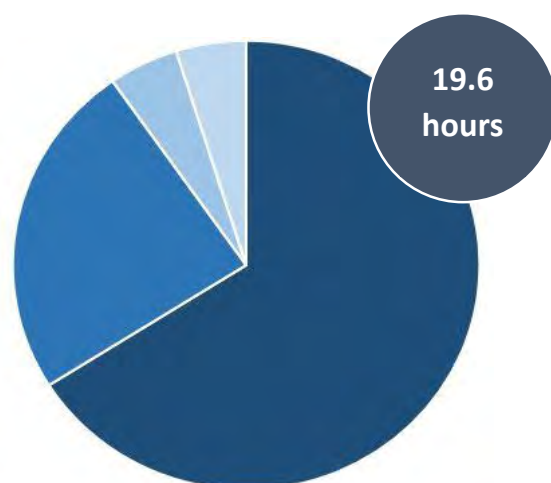
10.5 In greater detail, the 19.6 logged hours were spent specifically as follows:
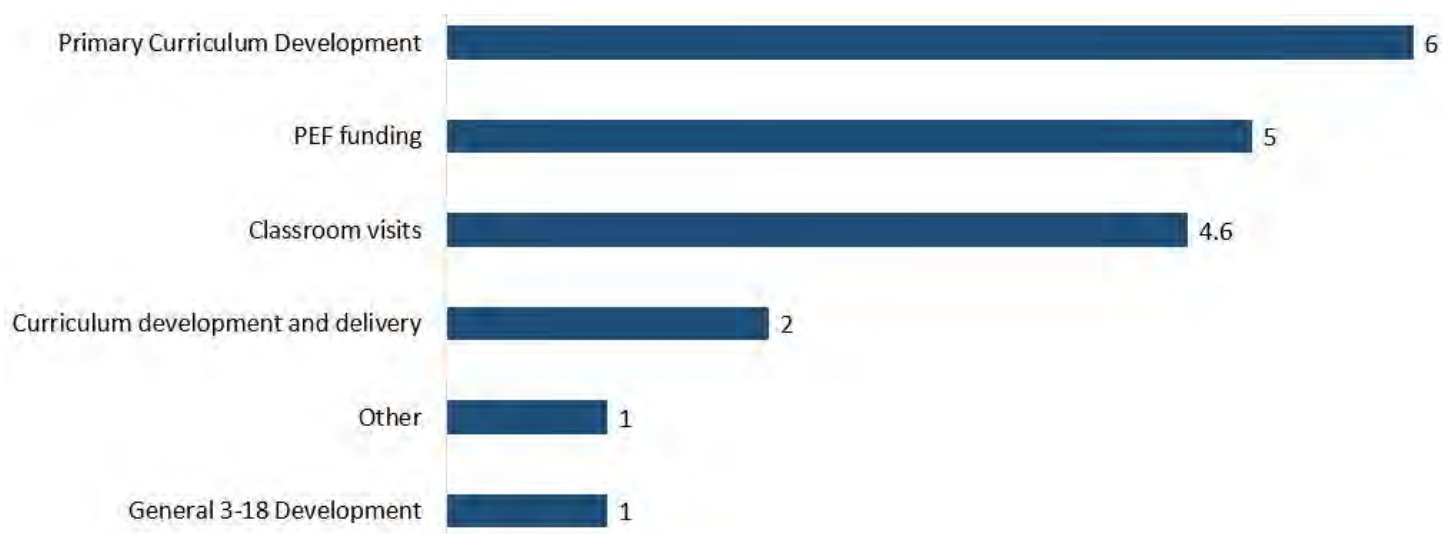
10.6 To seek best value from the enhanced administrator role, the priorities of the Kilchuimen senior management team were:

- to maximise curriculum development (specifically primary curriculum)
- to make classroom visits (P1/2)
- to focus on raising attainment through effective allocation of pupil equity funding

10.7 To enable the senior management team at Kilchuimen to focus on these educational priorities, they delegated senior level administrative tasks to the Team Leader. These tasks included many which it would not have been pay grade appropriate to delegate before, such as completing staffing returns, timetabling, handling Head Teacher emails, recruitment support, responsible premises support and budget support.

10.8 All the tasks completed by the depute Head Teacher who submitted the feedback forms were carried out to benefit either solely the pupils or both pupils and staff across the 3-18.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

10.9 All three members of the senior management team identified the following benefits of the Team Leader during the period of the pilot:

- increased capacity to focus on educational activities
- less stress trying to manage multiple administrative tasks which are felt to be
  - a barrier to the primary focus of improving educational experiences of young people
  - unnecessary for a senior manager to carry out
- improved communication between senior management team and school office staff
- increased morale and confidence in school office staff leading to greater productivity and task ownership

11.0 Additional anecdotal evidence taken from the feedback forms submitted by all participating Head Teachers can be found in Appendix 1.
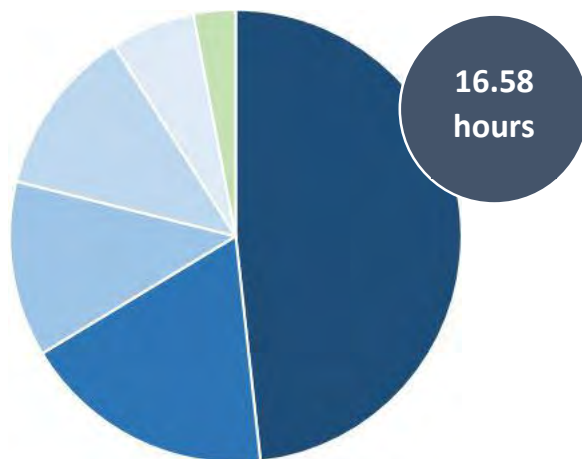
KILCHUIMEN TEAM LEADER RESULTS

11.1 Over the course of the five weeks the pilot was running at Kilchuimen, the Team Leader submitted three feedback forms logging eligible tasks equating to a total of 16.58 hours.
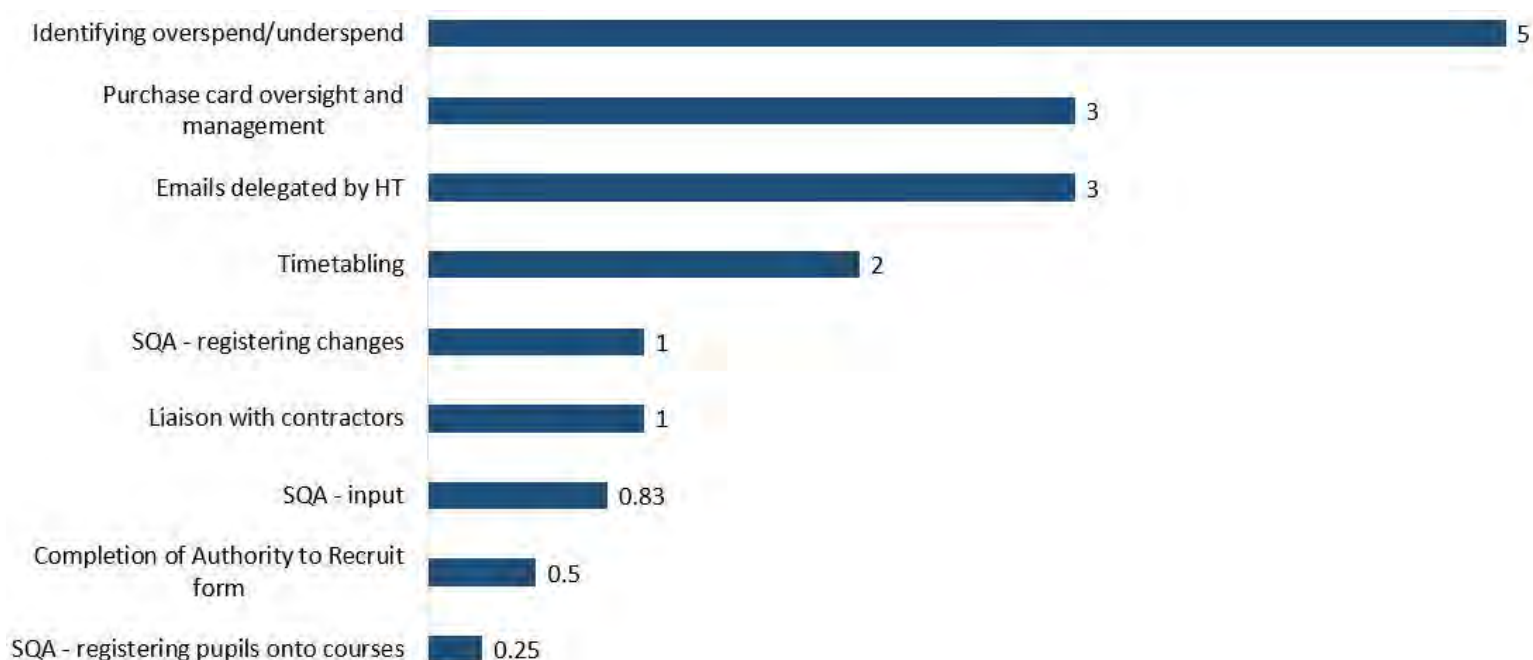
Eligible tasks refers to any administrative task which was taken on by the Team Leader from a member of the school senior management team which is over and above the post-holder's substantive administrative assistant remit.

11.2 The 16.58 hours logged were spent on the following administrative themes:

Financial Management and Support	48%	8 hours
Other	18%	3 hours
SQA Administration	13%	2 hours
Systems Support	12%	2 hours
Responsible Premises Support	6%	1 hour
Recruitment & HR Support	3%	½ hour

16.58 hours

11.3 In greater detail, the 16.58 logged hours were spent as follows:

Task	Hours
Identifying overspend/underspend	5
Purchase card oversight and management	3
Emails delegated by HT	3
Timetabling	2
SQA - registering changes	1
Liaison with contractors	1
SQA - input	0.83
Completion of Authority to Recruit form	0.5
SQA - registering pupils onto courses	0.25

11.4 During the pilot, the Team Leader was able to identify some improvements to existing processes to maximise efficiency.

These included:

- amalgamating staff records for secondary, primary and nursery staff
- providing training on Timetabling in SEEMiS to school office clerical staff to increase the level of support which can be given to SMT in this area
- completion of recruitment paperwork for vacant posts
- installation of an additional workstation in the school office to enable closer collaboration of all school office staff
- provision of enhanced support to responsible premises management issues
- training of the existing clerical assistant in some aspects of secondary school administration she was not confident in to enhance productivity and increase opportunities for greater flexibility of resource deployment
- communications improvements, such as increased use of Office Communicator across the campus and changes to telephony (primary school calls are now diverted to the main school office and phones have been deployed into classrooms). This provides a cohesive 'hub' for all 3-18 communications both internally and externally
- increased use of email, website and social media for parental communications

11.5 Over the five week period the Team Leader was unable to identify any tasks carried out which could be stopped.

11.6 Over five weeks, the Team Leader reported supporting pupils in the office setting for 5% of her time.

11.7 The 3-18 management structure has been in place at Kilchuimen since 2015 and the Team Leader has been working in the school office for 22 years, firstly as a Clerical Assistant and latterly as an Administrative Assistant. The management and office teams' shared experiences of the 3-18 environment, and changes to processes to accommodate the changed management structure, have had longer to bed in at Kilchuimen than in the other 3-18 campuses. The office staff have needed to be agile multitaskers with a flexible approach to covering workload across the 3-18 and they share a willingness to rise to challenges as they arise.

11.8 The contribution to the success of the school from support staff (the office team being a major contributory factor) was highlighted in the last Kilchuimen Education Scotland Inspection visit as one of the strengths of the school.

11.9 Additional anecdotal evidence received from Team Leaders regarding the role can be found in Appendix 2.

12.0 Despite being off work on medical grounds, the Kilchuimen Team Leader has been able to identify a number of improvements she would have implemented throughout the remainder of the pilot at Kilchuimen, should she have had the opportunity to do so. These include:

- Office staff regular meetings for task prioritisation and delegation to ensure appropriate resources are deployed across the 3-18
- Increased budget support, monthly analysis of spend, liaison with Finance Officer
- Identifying cost savings, such as print costs, materials, time, postage etc.
- Structured staff development, training needs and support for development for office staff

KINLOCHBERVIE

THE KINLOCHBERVIE 3-18 CAMPUS
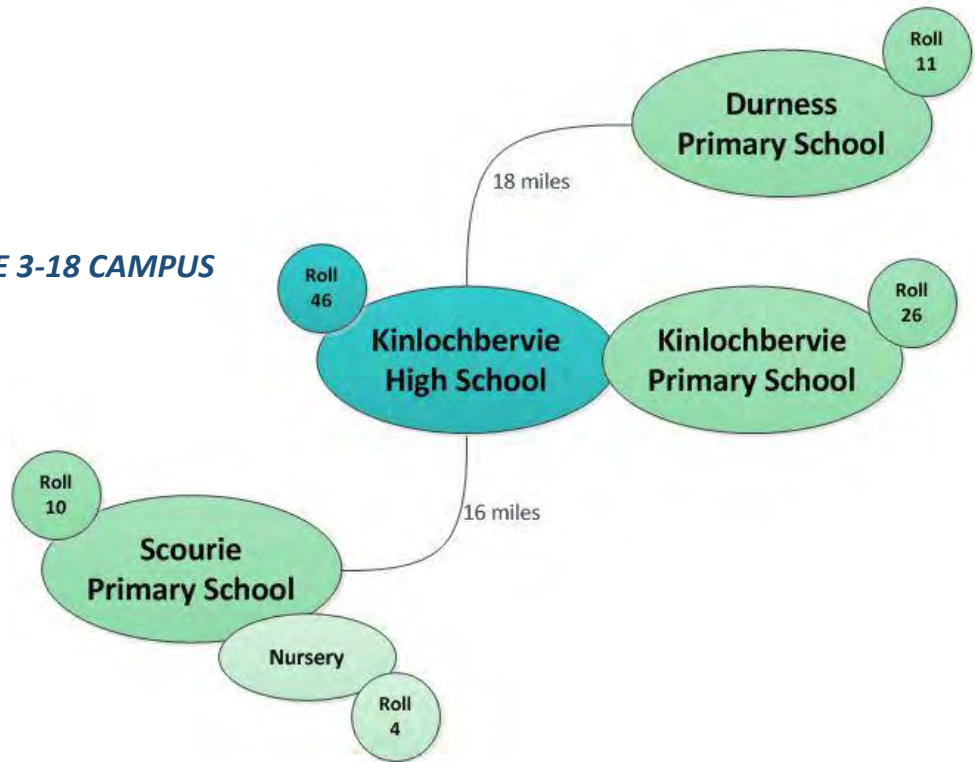
3-18 Senior Management Team and Office/Janitorial Support Staff

- Head Teacher
- Depute Head Teacher (Primary)
- Team Leader (seconded Administrative Assistant)
- Full-time on-site Janitor based at the high school
- Secondary and [KLB] primary office staff are located centrally at the 3-18 campus base with additional members of office staff located at Durness and Scourie, both schools less than 18 miles from the KLB campus
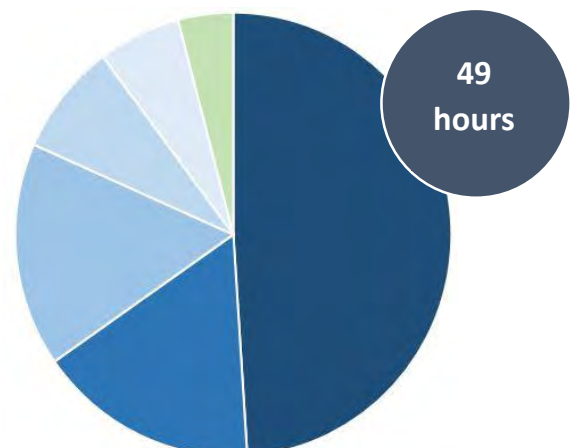
KINLOCHBERVIE HEAD TEACHER RESULTS

12.1 The enhanced Administrator post at Kinlochbervie was not officially implemented until mid-January 2018 but this did still allow for the full 9 weeks of feedback on the benefits of the Team Leader role as experienced across the Kinlochbervie ASG.

12.2 During the pilot, four feedback forms were completed and submitted by the campus Head Teacher, logging a total of 49 hours of senior management tasks carried out as a direct result of having the support of the enhanced administrator (Team Leader).

12.3 The hours were utilised in the following areas:

Quality Improvement	49%	24 hours
Child Protection	16%	8 hours
Curriculum Development & Delivery	16%	8 hours
Staff Management	8%	4 hours
Financial Management	6%	3 hours
3-18 Development	4%	2 hours

12.4 In greater detail, the 49 logged hours were spent specifically as follows:

Category	Hours
Care Inspectorate / Care Commission / HMiE	17
Classroom visits	8
Multi-agency Meetings	4
Child Protection (Issues)	4
HGIOS4	3
Budget Monitoring	3
Raising attainment	2
QI visit actions / planning	2
Primary Curriculum Development	2
Occupational Health Referrals	2
Mentoring staff	2
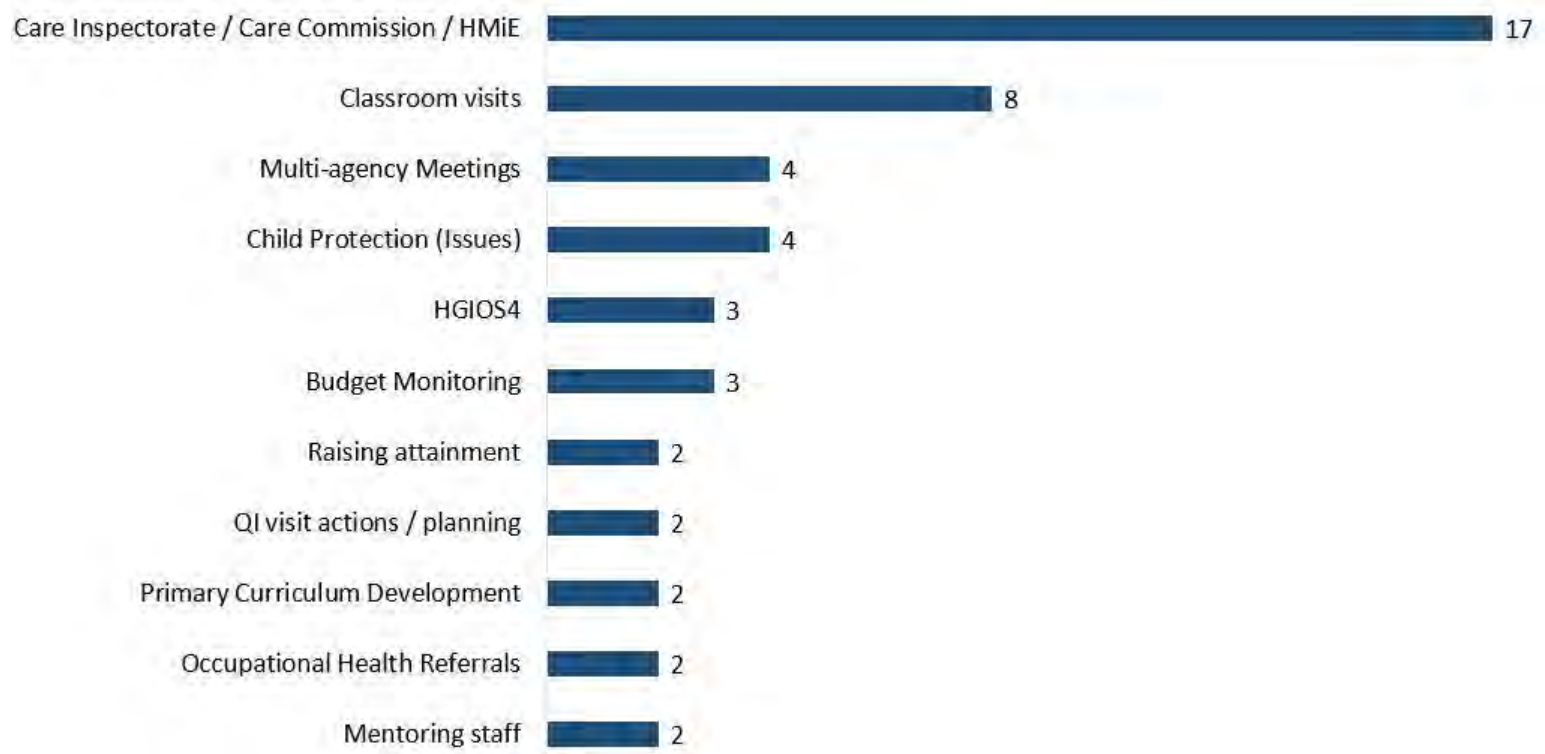
12.5 To fully benefit from the enhanced administrator role, the priorities of the Kinlochbervie Head Teacher during the pilot were to:

- utilise capacity created to drive quality improvement across the campus
- focus on preparing for primary inspection

12.6 To enable the senior management team at Kinlochbervie to focus on these priorities they delegated senior level administrative tasks to the Team Leader. It would not have been pay grade appropriate to delegate many of these tasks to an administrator before, such as

- SQA administration
- Advanced budget support for multiple budgets (collation, analysis and reporting on overspend/underspend) including PEF allocation and working closely with the schools' Finance Officer to resolve budget issues
- Streamlining and process redesign followed by implementation
- Training and change management around newly implemented or redesigned processes
- timetabling in SEEMiS
- Handling Head Teacher emails during pressure points, diary and Head Teacher time management
- Identifying staff training needs and action around these
- Liaison and support of school office staff within the campus who are not based at the KLB site to improve collaborative working practices

HEAD TEACHER ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

12.7 The tasks logged by the Head Teacher via the feedback forms were carried out to benefit or have most impact on staff (44%), pupils (34%) and parents (22%) across the 3-18.

12.8 The Head Teacher at Kinlochbervie identified the following benefits of the Team Leader during the period of the pilot:

- increased capacity to focus on teaching, learning and quality of education
- reduced stress trying to juggle multiple administrative tasks which are felt to be a barrier to the primary focus of improving educational experiences of young people
- ability to delegate responsibility for school office staff, workload and task distribution across the 3-18 to free up time to prepare for primary school inspection

12.9 In addition, the Team Leader is able to provide a high level of support to the organisation (both logistical and financial) of school excursions, extra-curricular activities and fundraising events; all of which are time-consuming and can easily be handled by a skilled administrator.

13.0 The Head Teacher also reported significant benefits to having the Team Leader present at SMT meetings to create strong links between the senior management team, teaching staff across the 3-18 and the office staff.
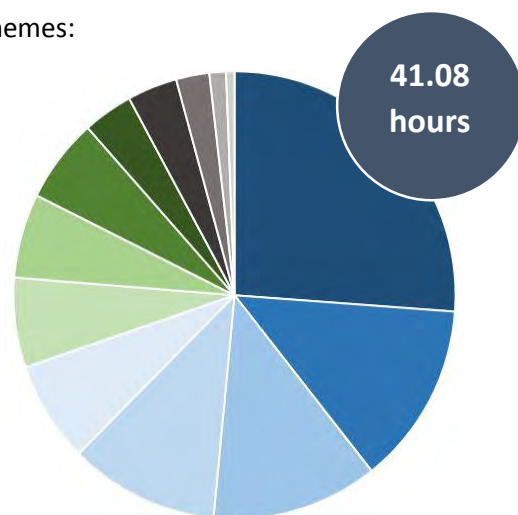
13.1 More anecdotal evidence taken from the feedback forms submitted by all participating Head Teachers can be found in Appendix 1.
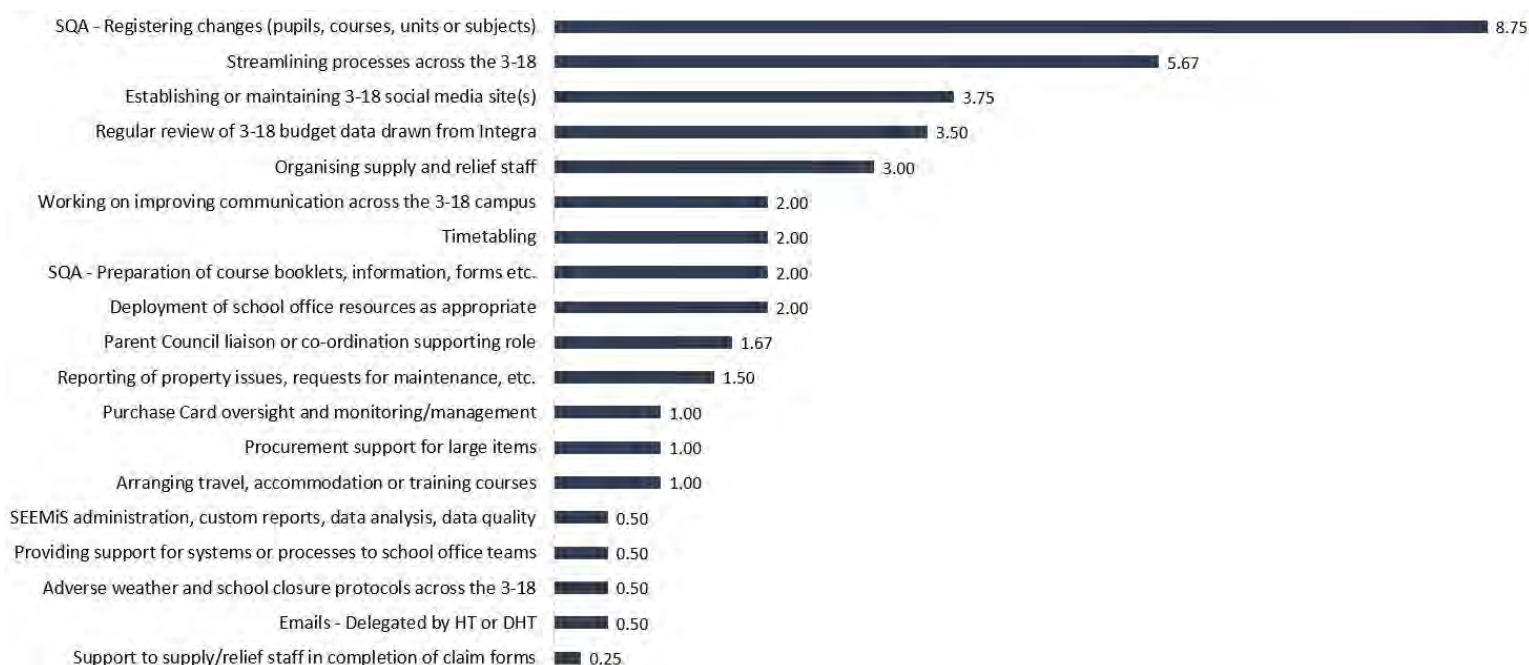
KINLOCHBERVIE TEAM LEADER RESULTS

13.2 Over the course of the nine weeks of the pilot at Kinlochbervie, the Team Leader submitted eight feedback forms logging eligible tasks equating to a total of 41.08 hours. (Eligible tasks refers to any administrative task which was taken on by the Team Leader from a member of the school senior management team which is over and above the post-holder's substantive administrative assistant remit).

13.3 The hours logged were spent on the following administrative themes:

SQA Administration	26%	10.75 hours
Developing Parental Communications	13%	5.5 hours
Staff Resourcing	12%	5 hours
Financial Management and Support	11%	4.5 hours
Strategic Planning	7%	3 hours
Improving Processes	6%	2.67 hours
Leadership & Building a Team Ethos	6%	2.5 hours
Systems Support	6%	2.5 hours
Other	4%	1.5 hours
Responsible Premises Support	4%	1.5 hours
Procurement and Best Value	2%	1 hour
Policy and Protocols	1%	0.5 hour
Recruitment and HR	1%	0.25 hour

41.08 hours

13.4 In greater detail, the 41.08 logged hours were spent as follows:

Task	Hours
SQA – Registering changes (pupils, courses, units or subjects)	8.75
Streamlining processes across the 3-18	5.67
Establishing or maintaining 3-18 social media site(s)	3.75
Regular review of 3-18 budget data drawn from Integra	3.50
Organising supply and relief staff	3.00
Working on improving communication across the 3-18 campus	2.00
Timetabling	2.00
SQA - Preparation of course booklets, information, forms etc.	2.00
Deployment of school office resources as appropriate	2.00
Parent Council liaison or co-ordination supporting role	1.67
Reporting of property issues, requests for maintenance, etc.	1.50
Purchase Card oversight and monitoring/management	1.00
Procurement support for large items	1.00
Arranging travel, accommodation or training courses	1.00
SEEMiS administration, custom reports, data analysis, data quality	0.50
Providing support for systems or processes to school office teams	0.50
Adverse weather and school closure protocols across the 3-18	0.50
Emails - Delegated by HT or DHT	0.50
Support to supply/relief staff in completion of claim forms	0.25

13.5 During the pilot, the Team Leader was able to identify a number of improvements to existing processes to maximise efficiency across the 3-18, among them:

- Implementation of termly meetings for all school office staff across the 3-18
- Set up structured and collaborative reviews of office processes with a view to identifying improvements (e.g. School Fund, staff absence recording, SEEMiS data administration)
- Review of the First Aid processes across the 3-18 and emailed out instructions and accident forms to the primary school staff
- Assisting the senior management team with planning, organising and delivering charity events across 5 days for Sport Relief (KLB is active in the local community and the schools have a vibrant social media presence. Community events are important to sustain a high level of community and parental engagement for all schools in the 3-18)
- Taking initiative by carrying out analysis of SEEMiS data on pupil attendance, e.g. percentages attendance, highlighting absence patterns and flagging up low attendance for SMT to action
- Assisting with strategic planning, i.e. working with the 3-18 Head Teacher on dates for the summer term, arrangements for P7 transition, Prize Giving events, Leavers Dinners etc.
- Continued cycle of process review and redesign where required, to be followed by implementation across the 3-18 and staff support and guidance
- Provision of support specifically to facilitate the creation and smooth transition to one executive 3-18 Parent Council from individual Parent Council bodies
- Active involvement with the schools' online presence, improving parental communications and raising the profile of the whole ASG (this included generating publicity information for the Press and development of social media sites)

13.6 Throughout the trial period the Team Leader was unable to identify any tasks she had been carrying out which she felt were no longer necessary, and in fact identified some areas where she felt she could provide an even greater level of support for Fundraising, organising events and attending community committees where appropriate on behalf of the Head Teacher.

13.7 The Team Leader reported supporting pupils in the office setting for around 5.9% of her time over the trial period.

13.8 The office team across the Kinlochbervie 3-18 have responded well to the Team Leader. Although the staff already know each other and were accustomed to contacting each other when needing support, the implementation of the Team Leader model has affirmed the unofficial support network they already had in place and allowed them to build on this.

13.9 The school office staff at Durness and Scourie work remotely and the geographic challenges of the Kinlochbervie ASG often impacted their ability to share best practice. To combat this, the Team Leader has worked hard to bring the team closer together, implementing team meetings and driving positive change to processes and working practices throughout the course of the pilot.

14.0 Additional anecdotal evidence received from Team Leaders regarding the role can be found in Appendix 2.

IMPACT OF THE TEAM LEADER ROLE ON THE WIDER SCHOOL OFFICE TEAM

14.1 While the key principle of the role of the Team Leader in the 3-18 context is to reduce administrative burden on Head Teachers and senior management teams, following the pilots consideration should be given to the following:

- What was the impact of the role of a Team Leader on the wider school office team?
- Did the Team Leader redistribute any substantive administrative tasks to the rest of the office workforce, and if so, how did they do this?
- Did the delegation of additional administrative tasks result in related pressures around
  - Office time management
  - Workload/task volume
  - Stress
  - Paygrade
- How did the role of the Team Leader impact on colleagues based in the same location compared to on colleagues in other locations?

14.2 There has been mixed feedback on the impact of the Team Leader role on school clerical staff, with varying opinions on its success in delivering improvements across the campuses. It is clear there are legacy issues from the time of transition to the 3-18 structure, the launch of the project pilots and the impact of the Trade Union grievance on school office staff.

Issues identified include:

- Some Clerical Assistants based in schools outwith the secondary school campus 'hub' have found it harder to integrate into a 3-18 office team than those based at the main 'hub'
- Some Clerical Assistants have felt there was a lack of consultation and/or communication which has led to misunderstanding of the overall vision for the 3-18 school office function
- One Clerical Assistant said they did not know they were part of a pilot
- Communications between the project team and members of the GMB Union in the early stages of the Team Leader pilots were intentionally cautious which resulted in difficulties engaging with school office staff, leaving some staff feeling disengaged with the process
- Staff in school offices across the Highlands have been involved with or witnessed a number of attempts to review the school office function over more than a decade with little perceived change. In addition to this, there are legacy issues around the outcome of the Job Evaluation process in 2007 which left school administration staff feeling undervalued
- Some Clerical Assistants feel there has been no change at all

14.3 To try and address these issues, the 3-18 Team Leader (if model implemented) will need to focus heavily on building relationships, encouraging closer working together, involving staff in process redesign and building a shared vision and ethos into the 3-18 school office.

14.4 Staff in outlying primary schools will need to see tangible benefits of having a Team Leader to be convinced it is a positive model for them, and this will need to include increased communications, proactive engagement around process redesign, close collaborations and a clear definition of the role of the Team Leader in respect of induction, training, workload support and performance reviews.

14.5 Throughout the pilot, clerical staff working in participating 3-18 campus school offices have provided anecdotal evidence based on their experiences. This can be found in Appendix 3.

PILOT CONCLUSIONS

## AND 3-18 HEAD TEACHER POLL RESPONSES TO EACH CONCLUSION STATEMENT

14.6 The addition of an enhanced administrator within the school office structure does reduce the administrative burden on Head Teachers and senior management teams and result in a more efficient school office function.

🔵 Strongly agree	4
🟠 Agree	0
🟢 Not sure	0
🔴 Disagree	0
🟣 Strongly disagree	0
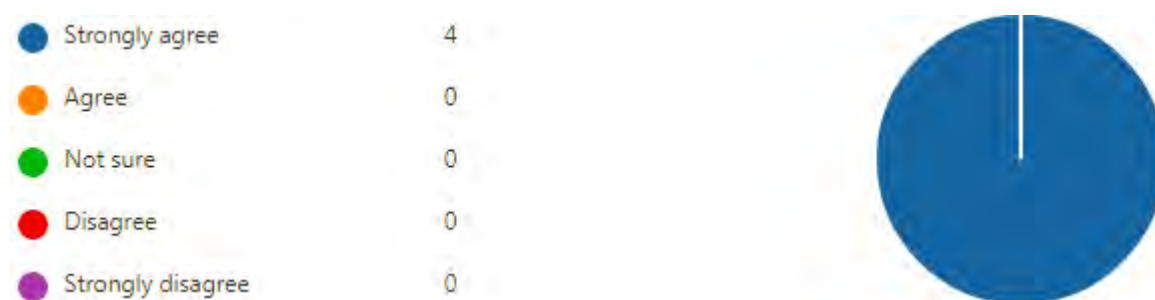
14.7 The addition of the enhanced administrator within the school office structure results in a more efficient school office function.

🔵 Strongly agree	4
🟠 Agree	0
🟢 Not sure	0
🔴 Disagree	0
🟣 Strongly disagree	0

14.8 The presence of a Team Leader gives Head Teachers more scope to delegate senior administrative tasks away from school senior management teams to enable greater focus on leadership for learning, developing collegiate working practices, school quality improvement and curriculum delivery from 3-18.

🔵 Strongly agree	4
🟠 Agree	0
🟢 Not sure	0
🔴 Disagree	0
🟣 Strongly disagree	0
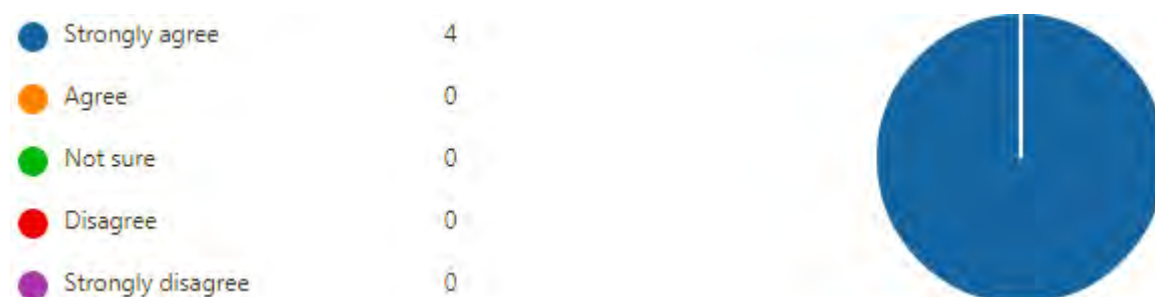
14.9 The ability for Head Teachers to delegate the management of the school office function (including the management of school office staff) to a senior administrator provides significant benefits, especially when managing staff over multiple sites.

🔵 Strongly agree	3	
🟠 Agree	0	
🟢 Not sure	1	
🔴 Disagree	0	
🟣 Strongly disagree	0	
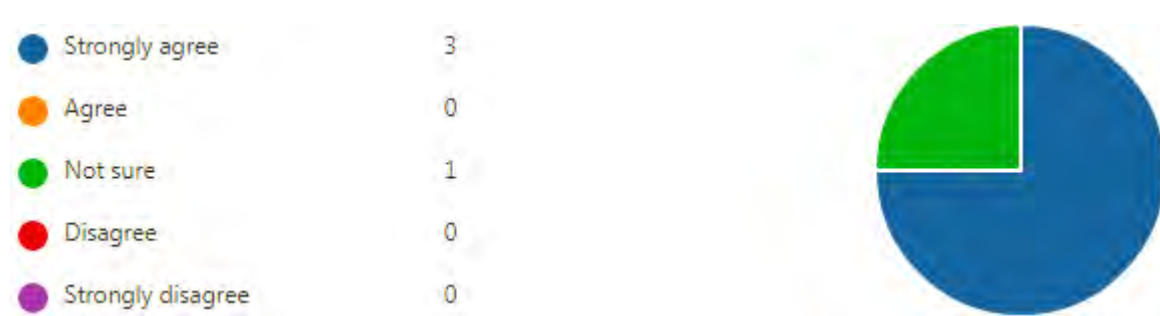
NB: This 'Not sure' response may have been submitted by a 3-18 participating in the pilots which is a single campus 3-18, therefore they have no requirement to manage staff over multiple sites.

15.0 The role of the enhanced administrator (Team Leader) was utilised in different ways by every Head Teacher of the participating 3-18's. This shows that a flexible and adaptable approach to managing the school office function across the 3-18 is desirable and the school office model should reflect this need.

🔵 Strongly agree	4	
🟠 Agree	0	
🟢 Not sure	0	
🔴 Disagree	0	
🟣 Strongly disagree	0	

15.1 3-18 school office teams have faced a number of firsts during the pilot, and learning from these has enabled them to be able to plan more effectively and strategically for events in the school cycle calendar where office resources need to be focused in future.

🔵 Strongly agree	3	
🟠 Agree	1	
🟢 Not sure	0	
🔴 Disagree	0	
🟣 Strongly disagree	0	
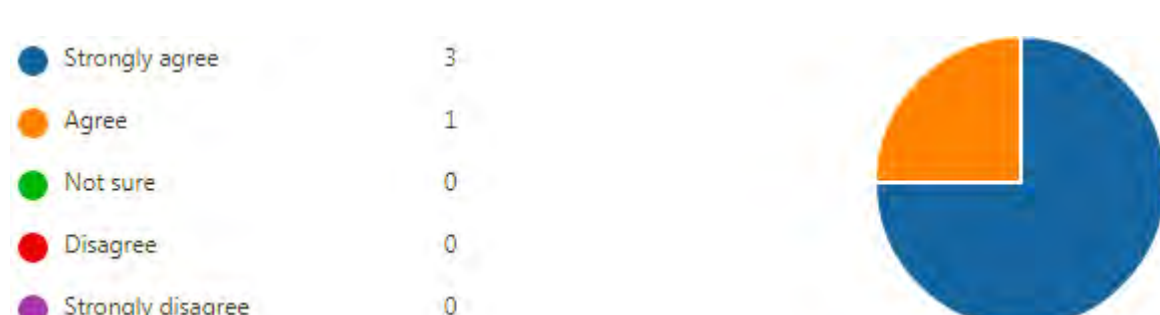
15.2 Head Teachers from participating 3-18 schools unanimously support the creation of the [Team Leader] role.

● Strongly agree	4	
● Agree	0	
● Not sure	0	
● Disagree	0	
● Strongly disagree	0	

IN ADDITION…

15.3 Although Head Teachers used the role of the enhanced administrator in slightly different ways to achieve their desired outcomes and focus support in specific areas, the data gathered throughout the pilot shows that positive outcomes for pupils was the primary focus for the capacity freed up by the implementation of the Team Leader model. This is followed across the board by focus on outcomes for staff.

15.4 As with other significant areas of change within the Council, there exists in school offices a resistance in general to change and there are many cultural and legacy reasons for this. Due to this, change will need to be carefully managed.

15.5 Due to issues described around engagement at the start of the Team Leader pilots, school office staff did not have an opportunity to engage in the early stages around the design and implementation of the Team Leader model. This meant some employees could not share the vision for why change was needed. Any changes to school office structure, job roles and tasks or process will need to be carefully planned and managed.

15.6 A robust communications plan is required to ensure staff involved are kept up-to-date with planned changes.

# NEXT STEPS

SCHOOL OFFICE STRUCTURE

15.7 Currently the school office structure in Highland lacks opportunities for staff to progress in a clearly defined career pathway.

15.8 The creation of at least two new school administration roles in a revised school office structure will offer staff greater opportunities for career progression. Targeted training and development will be tailored to support school office staff to progress if desired.

15.9 The current structure contains two General Auxiliary posts graded at HC03 and HC04, a Clerical Assistant post at HC03 and two Administrator posts graded at HC04 and HC05.

16.0 The current structure contains a number of rogue posts which have been introduced to the school office structure over many years for various historic reasons, including two pilot roles graded at HC07. The Business Support Officer and Team Leader posts have never been job evaluated and were historically implemented in schools on a pilot basis.
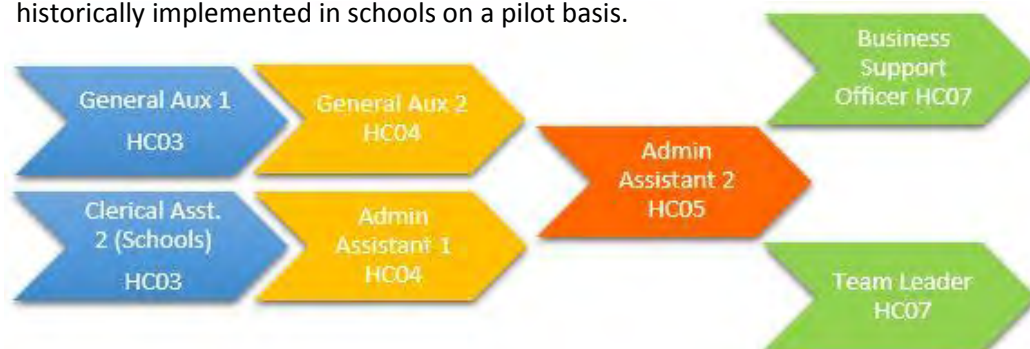
16.1 The proposed structure contains two new posts which should be created to provide staff with a clear career pathway and opportunities to progress.

16.2 Should a School Business Manager role be introduced into the Highland Council establishment in the future, it could be the final post within the school office administrative structure, or it may sit within the school senior management team.

PROPOSALS

16.3 The following proposals are made based on outcomes documented from the pilots:

1. Agreement is sought from the Management of Schools Programme Administration in Schools Project Board to create a new senior administrator role within the school office structure in Highland, based on the conclusions drawn from the 'Team Leader' pilots conducted as part of two separate projects reviewing the school office function in 2014/15 and 2017/18.

2. Implementation of the revised school office structure which incorporates the role of Senior Administrator (Schools) ('Team Leader') as detailed in section 16.7 to 17.1.

    Consideration should be given to:

    a. The creation of a detailed and meaningful job description and person specification

    b. The need for a full and transparent recruitment exercise to ensure the correct staff members are appointed

    c. Appropriate stakeholder engagement and communications

    d. Options for deployment

        i.   3-18 campuses
        ii. Remaining ASGs

    e. The continued need for administrative hours at the existing Admin Assistant 2 level in some school offices. A rationale matrix may be required to ascertain the proportion of HC05 administration which could still be needed, alongside the enhanced administrator, to ensure appropriate task distribution across the whole school office.

APPENDIX 1: HEAD TEACHER NARRATIVE OF THE ROLE OF THE TEAM LEADER

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Reducing administrative burden	"My Team Leader has gained new skills in the process which means I am spending less time explaining how and what needs done, meaning the burden on me is lifted" "I feel able to ask the Team Leader to carry out tasks that it would not be fair to expect an admin to do" "…not having the interruptions makes tasks much more efficient than would have been the case otherwise" "[The Team Leader] allows us to focus on issues that are time critical" "We can take a more long-term strategic approach as we're not getting so caught up in the day-to-day things"		
Process Improvements	"The more efficient working practices which have been facilitated by having a Team Leader are invaluable"		
Improving team relationships	"Team Leader has taken key role in liaising with and training other clerical staff" "The role is developing across the ASG and TL is involved in training other staff in office procedures and policies" "The Team Leader provides security and stability"		
Focus on quality of education and learning outcomes	"Many hours have been spent on improving the educational experience of our pupils which would have otherwise been lost on more admin related tasks" "Having the Team Leader allows me and the other management staff to concentrate on teaching and learning and on ensuring the school continues to improve in line with the school improvement plan" "Allows us to take a more long term and strategic approach [to school management] as we're not getting caught up in day to day things as much" "The Team Leader provides support which allows me to focus on the leadership of the ASG" "The role has removed admin tasks from the HT" "Linking team members together and facilitating their CPD in a supportive manner"		
Strategic Support	"Team Leader has been helping with the development of the plans for building within the 3-18"		
Wellbeing	"It has made a hugely significant impact" "The reduction in stress by having a Team Leader is inestimable" "The stress that is attached to this job is tremendous and having an excellent Team Leader in post has reduced this for me" "Without the Team Leader in place, the job of the [3-18] Head Teacher would become almost impossible and stress would almost certainly lead to absence and illness"		

APPENDIX 2: TEAM LEADER NARRATIVE ON THE PILOTS

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Improving team relationships	"For those working on their own in the primary offices I believe they feel more secure knowing that they are now part of a team" ° "[The Team Leader model has] been a positive step for our ASG" ° "The clerical staff in the different schools have always had good relationships but this definitely makes all of us feel more like a team" ° "I see the Team Leader as a really positive role as some of the team work out on their own and some came into the job without any real training or even induction" ° "There was worry at the start from some that this was a way to take hours away from them and possibly even job losses. However once they understood that this wasn't the case then they were happy to be part of it" ° "The team happily come to meetings, ask questions and made changes to processes etc. as requested by me without any issue" ° "We are operating more as one office, rather than separate secondary and primary schools" ° "It is important that we all work together to support each another as one team"		
3-18 transition and change management	"Overall the 3-18 [transition] has made the school busier and this impacts on everyone on a daily basis. We try to not get too stressed about [mounting] workloads and realistically work at higher priority issues so the Head Teacher can concentrate on teaching and learning rather than administrative issues"		
New ways of working	"[Clerical staff] can do ASG work while they are on site in the primaries if required" ° "[We are] ironing out issues on a day by day basis with a view to us all working more as one team and ensuring consistency across the campus"		
Supporting colleagues	"[Office staff] appreciate having someone at the end of a phone/email to help and answer questions and queries" ° "I know that the clericals in the primaries feel much happier about phoning, emailing or dropping by to ask for help, advice or assistance as that's now part of my job role" ° "I think staff appreciate that they have someone they can go to for advice and support on any matter"		
The Role of the Team Leader	"[The role has] given me recognition" ° "[The Team Leader] role is a necessary progression in the current 3-18 school office environment"		

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Task distribution and Office Workload	"[The Team Leader] hasn't expected me to take on extra Admin tasks" ◦ "I haven't been asked to do anything that is above my clerical remit" ◦ "There is a clear line of direct management and someone who has taken control of the day to day running of the office"	"It's hard to say if the implementation of the Team Leader role has led to greater efficiency; I think probably yes" ◦ "I understand the reasoning behind the standardisation of processes and for the school it's positive, but it has led to additional workload for us"	"Things which I previously did, i.e. organisation of certain activities, were done by others adding an extra layer of communication and confusion that would have been avoided if dealt with directly at school level" ◦ "I have definitely been passed more work on a regular basis by the Team Leader" ◦ "The extra volume of work has put significant strain on [us] all"
The Role of the Team Leader	"It would be good to have regular performance reviews" ◦ "If the Team Leader had the ultimate say on things that would be beneficial, they would be our 'go-to' person [for decisions]" ◦ "[My] Head Teacher does seem less stressed" ◦ "[I would like] regular team meetings and these are now in place" ◦ "[My Team Leader] is proactive, friendly and helpful" ◦ "My Team Leader has been totally supportive throughout the trial" ◦ The role of Team Leader has definitely been a positive experience and I personally would like to see it rolled out on a permanent basis "Having the Team Leader role is definitely a benefit to the office."	"There may be a benefit to clerical assistants to have a Team Leader"	"[The Team Leader] role has made me feel worthless in my job as all [my] actions are questioned [which] does not do staff morale any good" ◦ "I do feel a bit undervalued" ◦ "Up to this point we had clerical and admin staff, both with different remits and both with completely different pay grades and scales and now a Team Leader role has been created with a different pay grade altogether yet the clerical staff are being asked to take on more tasks for the same grade and pay scale as before"
The 3-18 Office 'Team'	"Things are slowly but steadily improving" ◦ "I think it has brought the schools together so we can support each other" ◦ "Yes - there is a sense of bringing together the staff across the 3-18 school offices to create better team working" ◦ "The role has definitely made the office team feel as one"		"I am unsure as to what exactly my role is here [now]" ◦ "I would say we are less efficient and do not work [well] as a team"

APPENDIX 3: CONT.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Process Redesign	"I feel that standardisation across the 3-18 schools is a good thing [as] it means we are all doing things the same way"		"I can see the need for standardisation of processes to an extent but I don't see the need to change things which have worked well for many years just for the sake of change"
3-18 transition	"For the campus to work I think the Team Leader is a good idea" ◦ "I feel the 3-18 is working well" ◦ "I feel less isolated"		"[Office] workload has increased since the transition" ◦ "[I] feel that campuses do not work for schools unless in very close proximity" ◦ "[There has been] a huge impact on our office now running four schools and I see my colleagues under a lot of pressure" ◦ "The extra volume of work has put significant strain on [the office]"

The Highland Council - Job Description

Service:	**Care and Learning**
Job Title:	**Senior Administrator (Schools) – TBC**
Grade and Salary:	**HC0??? £? – £?**
	This post is subject to PVG Scheme Membership
Location:	**Flexible within [school group]**
Responsible to:	**Head Teacher**

Job Purpose:

- To be the schools' leading support staff professional for the school office and work alongside the Senior Management Team to assist the Head Teacher in their duty to ensure that schools meet educational aims.
- To be responsible for the leadership of school office staff to enhance efficiency in order to support teaching and learning in the schools. He/she will promote the highest standards in the administrative function for the schools whilst tackling bureaucracy to provide opportunities to relieve the administrative burden from Head Teachers and the senior management team whilst building a team ethos for the school office across the school group.
- To work closely with the Senior Management Team, the Senior Administrator (Schools) will manage the school office, the financial administration for the school group and support the management of information and ICT and Human Resources. He/she will assist the Responsible Premises Officer to ensure effective Health & Safety management of the school(s).

Key Duties and responsibilities:

Leadership and HR responsibilities

- Providing a key role in developing areas for improvement and implementing changes to provide support to the school office function and to remove any bureaucracy from the head teacher and senior management team
- Working with senior staff to gain oversight of all school office tasks across the ASG, the day-to-day running of the school offices and organising workload to maximise resources and capacity across the school group.
- Assisting SMT with all school recruitment administrative processes including managing the use of TalentLink and the HR Portal
- Organise and ensure best value deployment of existing teaching resources to reduce impact of supply cover on school budgets where required
- Attendance at Senior Management Team meetings to provide input and create robust links between the senior management team, teaching staff and the school office

Responsibility for Administrative Support to SMT

- Assess SMT administrative tasks to identify streamlining opportunities, releasing time for curriculum-based activities
- Provide support to the Head Teacher and SMT regarding diary management and RPO management as required
- To take on a lead role in the design, implementation and maintenance of effective administrative systems
- Senior Management Team general administrative support, including logistical and financial planning of school excursions, extra-curricular events and school fundraising
- Ensure effective processes, legislative requirements and compliance is in place in adherence with Council policies and Financial Regulations, to support:

  o SQA Administration
  o School MiS (SEEMiS) systems administration
  o Staff absence reporting
  o Pupil attendance management
  o EMA Payments administration
  o School Fund administration
  o Timetabling
  o **Child's Plans a**dministrative support (where required)
  o Evolve Risk Assessment administration support (where required)
  o 16+ Choices administration (where required)

Responsibility for School Office Employees

Provide day-to-day supervision and support to all school office staff across the school group. This includes:

- carry out regular staff Employee Reviews, including development discussions and identifying and facilitating of training where required
- school office staff absence management
- school office staff performance management
- handling school office staff disciplinary matters
- induction, back to work interviews and exit interviews

Responsibility for Financial Resources

- Regular monitoring of school budgets to ensure the school is achieving best value for money and identify areas of over or underspend
- Responsibility for the development and management of financial systems and procedures ensuring they are effective, efficient and compliant with financial regulations and legislation
- Maintain effective internal controls to ensure that expenditure is correctly accounted for, receipted appropriately and that the assets of the school and council are secure in compliance with policy and guidelines to reduce risk of fraud, error or financial mismanagement. This may include the design and implementation of new processes
- Maintain effective internal controls to ensure that Purchase Card expenditure is correctly accounted for
- **Management of any budgets allocated by the Head Teacher from the schools'** Devolved Budget Liaise with internal audit where required
- Oversee and support the presentation of School Fund accounts from across the school group to present to Finance for auditing within defined timescales and in accordance with legislation

- Support the school(s) procurement processes and secondary approvals of orders if required
- Oversee Petty Cash procedures across the school group to ensure compliance with financial regulations

Strategic Development and Policy Support

- Assist the SMT in strategic planning and accountability for business activities in the context of the school(s), Council and Government policies
- Assist in the development and communication of emergency protocols in line with Council guidelines
- Assist with the implementation of Council and government policies to ensure schools adhere to all policy guidelines and legislation

Communications

- Lead on developments and best practice regarding school websites, online tools, email, text messaging and social media to enhance communication with stakeholders and promote the schools ethos
- **Assist the SMT in developing the schools' communication strategies and seeking** ways of continuously improving parental engagement

Initiative and Independence:

- The post holder will operate largely under their own initiative, based on given **procedures, to manage the needs of the schools' senior management team(s)** across the school group to effectively deliver the school office function

Working arrangements:

- The role is office-based requiring a considerable amount of VDU work along with travel between the schools
- The role requires regular interaction with all school staff, Care and Learning Service Managers, and other Council teams e.g. Payroll, Quality Improvement teams, Facilities Management and Finance Officers
- The role requires a flexible, adaptable approach
- The role involves managing the school front office service which provides support to pupils, parents and external callers

Other Duties:

- The post holder may be required to undertake any other duties appropriate to the level of the post
- Duties and responsibilities will vary from time to time

The Highland Council – Person Specification

Service:	**Care and Learning**
Job Title:	**Senior Administrator (Schools) – TBC**
Grade and Salary:	**HC0??? £? - £?**
Location:	**Flexible within [school group]**
Responsible to:	**Head Teacher**

Essential Attributes:

- Experience of working within a busy office with conflicting demands and pressures
- Experience of working in a school office
- Excellent Microsoft Office skills in relation to Word, Excel and Outlook
- Advanced keyboard skills
- Excellent communication skills including high level of literacy and numeracy for report writing and ensuring data quality including assistance with financial management
- Excellent interpersonal skills for communicating with colleagues at all levels
- Demonstrable knowledge of data protection and security to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all pupil records
- Experience of line management of staff including day-to-day supervision, performance management, managing sickness and disciplinary procedures
- Ability to manage own workload and under own initiative
- Ability to prioritise effectively and work to deadlines
- Experience of supporting budget management for a school or multi-disciplinary service (more than one budget)
- Experience of managing a range of administrative systems
- Ability to handle conflicts and support school office staff with managing stakeholders
- Experience of leading on process improvement and redesign

Desirable Attributes:

- Experience of using school office systems including SEEMiS
- Experience of using corporate office systems including Integra
- Microsoft Office skills in relation to SharePoint, PowerPoint, Teams and Yammer
- Experience of providing systems training and inductions for colleagues

SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION – PROPOSED EVALUATION

1.   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this report is to ensure that all those involved in the sustainable education programme know and understand what this evaluation will cover and what issues it is most likely to concentrate on.

2.   Detail

2.1   Highland Council has approached Hugh Fraser and Rory Mair to carry out this evaluation on their behalf. Hugh Fraser is a former senior Education manager, and Rory Mair was until recently the Chief Executive of CoSLA.

2.2   We have decided that while we each bring specific experience to the evaluation we will work together to evaluate the programme. The purpose of this programme is seen to be sustainable quality education within stable satisfied engaged and empowered communities. The education outcomes are fundamentally linked to long term sustainability and broader issues within the community, so to separate out these strands of the programme does not seem appropriate.

2.3   This will not be an academic exercise designed from some best practice perspective to decide what was right or wrong within the programme. The clear purpose and outcome of the evaluation is to give the Council and others useful and practical information about what worked and what did not, in order that decisions about future activities can be made on an informed basis.

2.4   The need for the Council to move forward with the programme demands that this evaluation is carried out quickly so that any time delay for any future decisions' being made on an informed basis is not too long. We believe the evaluation involves two months' work but need to discuss the exact timing of this work as access to schools, staff, parents and wider community representatives may be difficult in the summer holiday period.

2.5   A final point with regard to the nature of the evaluation is that it will focus on assessing and evaluating those outcomes that are directly attributable to activities within the programme itself. It is highly likely that due to factors well beyond the Council's control, and the remit of the sustainable education programme, outcomes will have occurred within communities which are simply not attributable to the programme itself. It may be for instance that the opening of a new business brings inward investment and new families to a community which has an effect on school provision. Unless this is directly attributable to the Council's programme, it would be wrong to evaluate this outcome as part of the programme. It is equally likely that adverse outcomes will have occurred somewhere in Highland while the programme has been in existence and once again these should not be taken into account as part of the programme evaluation.

3.   Evaluation

It is likely that the evaluation will focus on three key areas, though there may be some overlap between them.

3.1 **Firstly**, we will look at the issue of programme management. It must be recognised that this is a genuine programme not an individual project or a single service. It has genuinely strategic objectives and outcomes which demand a huge range of inputs that the programme has to try to influence, control or direct to get the desired results.

It has to be recognised that programme management, as opposed to project management or service management is a specialist skill which has not always been prevalent within local government, and the Council and its partners needs to know whether it has worked or not.

This is important because outcomes - good or bad - will have occurred as a result of the activities that the Council and its partners have put in place. We need to know whether these outcomes are a result of the planned application of resources and services in a designed and considered way or whether they are not. It will not be possible for the Council and its partners to rely on outcomes being achieved again, if it doesn't understand the management process that drove them to be delivered in the first place.

In evaluating programme management, we will undoubtedly look at a number of key issues.

> Were the objectives of the programme fully explicit and understood by all those taking part;
> Were the resource implications of the programme understood and could those resources be managed and directed within the programme itself;
> Were there satisfactory milestones and targets in place that would allow programme managers to know whether or not the programme was achieving their expectations.

This will be, for the most part, a desktop exercise involving detailed discussions with those involved with programme management itself.

3.2 **Secondly,** on first examination of the programme, there are a large number of very broad concepts and outcomes which would have to be defined and understood if the programme was going to deliver the desired outcomes in these areas.

It seems possible that in order to avoid being too specific and directive about these concepts and outcomes, the programme may have defined them so loosely that it is difficult to decide what they really mean. It is important therefore that a range of these concepts and outcomes are examined in detail not simply to evaluate retrospectively where they are sufficiently defined but in order to make clear proposals about how they should be defined into the future. The concepts and outcomes that need to be evaluated in this way include at least the following:

3.2.1 **Sustainable Education –** This concept lies at the very heart of the programme and deserves and demands to be unpicked and clearly defined. The phrase suggests some form of future proofing, and a level of educational benefit which the Council seeks to ensure can be maintained over time.

However, the concept and the outcomes can be misinterpreted, and indeed it is clear that at least for some communities, a concern existed that this was a simple cover for less resources and school closures.

As the programme moves forward it would be useful for the Council to be absolutely clear about both sides of this equation. What are the educational benefits that it

wishes to maintain, and what over time are the potential future threats against which these standards have to be protected. It will be impossible to be convincing about the need to change provision to deal with a threat that may have a 10 or 20 year timeframe, if we cannot be clear about the nature of that threat and the likelihood that we have predicted it properly.

As we examine this issue it will also be useful to pick up those more specific outcomes which are implied by the Council's understanding of sustainable education which needs to be made more explicit. If the Council is seeking to avoid closing rural schools, then knowing that as an outcome for the future programme will be an important issue.

3.2.2 **Community Empowerment/Engagement –** Much is made of this idea as part of the way in which this programme is developed. It seems clear that real definition is required in order for all those in the programme to understand what this really means. In most community development activity there tends to be a sliding scale. At one end of the scale is simple consultation and at the other is genuine empowerment. These are very different approaches and it is important that they are used knowingly and not simply interchangeably. Consultation implies that while the communities views are going to be sought and hopefully taken into account in decision making, that decision making will rest elsewhere and will be made outwith the community itself. Community empowerment on the other hand implies that those who have previously had a decision making power are giving that up and the community itself will gain the power to make these decisions directly.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the programme where certain elements are exposed to consultation and engagement, whereas others are the subject of genuine community and empowerment. What is important, is that it is absolutely clear which approach applies to which issues. It seems at least a possibility that this matter has become confused within this programme.

3.2.3 **Communication –** It is clear from initial discussions that because this is a very complex programme there is concern about the quality of communication, its consistency and how it delivers understanding to those with whom we are communicating.

There is a view that some of the resistance and concern about the programme results from communities and individuals' not understanding what it is really about. There is a view that if the programme was better communicated, a proportion of any resistance to it would go away. We need to evaluate whether communities and individuals genuinely understood the programme and didn't like it, or whether they didn't understand the programme and their worries about it as a result of poor communication led them to be resistant.

This is a crucial issue. It is very common for institutions of all sorts to make the assumption because communication is difficult, resistance to their direction of travel is because of a lack of understanding rather than anything else. (We have all heard the banks put forward this argument as a reason to resistance of bank closures). When these programmes are evaluated it very often becomes clear that the community had a very acute understanding of what was about to happen, and was resisting it because they fundamentally disagreed with that direction of travel. This evaluation is important because there is little point in investing new or increased resources in communication if communication is not a problem.

3.2.4 **Localism v Centralism –** It is likely that in a programme of this complexity there are elements which are open to local design discussion and decision, and there are those which are not. The Council and its partners have a responsibility not only for broader educational issues outwith this programme, but also for the application of resources to many other services. They have the right and the responsibility to make Highland wide decisions about resource allocation, service standards etc. Within that however, there is the opportunity for local design and decision to take precedence. Once again, it's quite appropriate for both of these processes to be ongoing at the same time however we need to evaluate how well this is understood and how clearly there is a differentiation between local and central decision making.

We know from other studies that communities become particularly frustrated if they believe they are being involved in decisions which ultimately they are going to be afforded no control over. It is better to be clear from that start what decisions can be genuinely local and what can't, and have that discussion with communities as part of the development process. For the future of the programme, we need to know where the balance between the two approaches lies, and how effectively that is understood by communities.

3.2.5 **Equality & Fairness –** The programme suggests that delivering equality underpins all of the outcomes that are trying to be achieved. Once again, it would seem important that this idea is unpicked and made more explicit. What is absolutely clear, is that equality does not mean simple "sameness".

We know that professionals and communities in the more populous areas of Highland are concerned, that because the cost of provision is much higher in rural areas, their schools and services are being denied resources to fund these other areas.

Equally we know that parents and professionals in rural areas accept travel distances and difficulties arising from geography which simply would be unimaginable and unacceptable in a more urban context.

Given these existing perceptions, the programme needs to be absolutely clear what it means by delivering equality and fairness, and the extent that this relates to outcomes, not inputs and costs. We need to know how well this is being articulated and understood within the programme.

4. **Thirdly,** there are certain specific outputs and service issues which lend themselves to a more objective assessment. As this is an evaluation, wherever possible, we will identify these issues and evaluate them on that basis. There are very clear outputs which the programme expected to achieve, and this evaluation should look at these in some detail. In terms of education these include:

> ➢ The creation of non-teaching Head Teachers;
> ➢ The ability to recruit the skilled workforce needed to deliver education into the future;
> ➢ Greater sharing across clusters of educational establishments;
> ➢ Greater use of technology to overcome any educational disadvantages;
> ➢ The closure of the attainment gap.

In terms of community development and engagement, we need to examine the following practice issues:

> ➢ Detached or attached community development approaches;

- ➢ An assessment of development activity against known best practice and process;
- ➢ Was development genuinely community based or talked down;
- ➢ The extent to which the whole community was involved;
- ➢ The extent to which the development process met the communities' aspiration for involvement, engagement and empowerment.

5. **Conclusions –** This is a complex programme and a full scale evaluation of all aspects of it would take a considerable amount of time. On a pragmatic basis, the least that needs to be delivered by this evaluation process is information which makes future decision making better informed and more effective. This report outlines those areas which the authors feel will require evaluation to achieve that purpose. However, others, Council members, the steering group, senior officers and community representatives have all interacted with this programme in recent months, and may have a different view on where the focus of evaluation should lie. We should therefore do as much as possible before starting the evaluation to circulate this report and ensure that it has the agreement and involvement of as many of those individuals as possible. Their involvement in focusing the evaluation will make a significant difference to how effective and valuable it is.

Rory Mair and Hugh Fraser
19 June 2018