

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	CLH 59/18

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 6 December 2018

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

Report By: Interim 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 agree the following recommendations:
- i. Note the progress on appointments to the SEiHC Team
 - ii. Note the change in Directorate responsibility for the Programme
 - iii. Agree to the development of an overall multi-year plan for the Programme covering all 29 Highland Associated School Groups.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Members have continued to be updated, at each meeting of the Committee, regarding progress on the Sustainable Education in Highland Communities programme. However, it has been agreed to report in future to alternate Committee meetings.
- 3.2 This report updates further progress in recruiting to the Sustainable Education Team, advises on the change of strategic lead responsibility for the programme and proposes the establishment of a Highland-wide plan for ASG review.

4. Directorate Responsibility

- 4.1 With the interim senior management arrangements within Care and Learning there has been a need to review roles and responsibilities. It has been agreed that responsibility for the strategic leadership of the programme should now rest with the Interim Head of Education, Dr. James Vance.

5. Sustaining Education in Highland Communities Recruitment

- 5.1 Members agreed in May the recruitment of a small team to take forward the Programme. The Team comprised a Programme Manager, Communications Officer, Community Engagement Officer and Programme Officer.
- 5.2 The Community Engagement Officer has now been appointed. Jonathon Wartnaby will begin a 23 month appointment on Monday 26th November managed through a partnership arrangement with the Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI). The post will be based at and supported by HTSI, with the postholder being an integral part of the Programme Team.
- 5.3 The Programme Manager is due to retire shortly and consideration will be given to the most efficient way of supporting the programme before any new recruitment takes place.
- 5.4 Work has begun to provide the data and information required by areas to take forward engagement and to 'capture' the case studies and good news from the 3-18 developments in phase.

6. Work Stream 1 - Achieving High Quality Educational Outcomes

- 6.1 Details of progress in this workstream will be reported to the next committee.

7. Work Stream 2 – Communications

- 7.1 Sarah Chapman, the Communications Officer, has begun to visit some of the schools from phase 1 to record progress and note the positive developments. Visits have taken place to the North West Sutherland Campus (Kinlochbervie) and the North Coast campus (Farr) with examples of cases studies from these phase 1 schools appended to the report (Appendix 1).

7.2 The Communications workstream plan was agreed at the last committee with a Communications Strategy under development as part of this plan. The Communications Strategy will cover both internal and external communications bringing consistency to the messages we share about the programme.

7.3 To widen our multi-media communications the programme now has an on-line blog and a Twitter account which we hope to encourage staff, Members and stakeholders to participate in.

8. **Work Stream 3 - Management Structures and School Groupings**

8.1 Discussions and the engagement process with the Gairloch, Kinlochleven, Thurso, Wick and Inverness High School Associated School Groups (ASGs) continue:

- **Kinlochleven** – Further stakeholder meetings, chaired by Councillor Baxter, have been held at Kinlochleven. A package of information for the ASG including positive destinations, school capacities, school rolls, possible structures etc. has been shared with the Stakeholder Group to help them engage in discussions on the future arrangements for their schools.
- **Wick/Thurso** – The Stakeholder Group has met again to discuss possible management models. A similar set of information to the one outlined for Kinlochleven was provided to aid the discussions. Information requested at the previous meeting on possible management models that fit within the programme parameters was also provided.
- **Inverness High School** - Further meetings are planned with partners to discuss a refreshed and clear focus on what we all need to do to engage with communities and family learning. The improvements, new builds and refurbishment in this ASG provide opportunities to link teaching and learning with family learning; and also with the range of outcomes and outputs in Community and locality planning. Engagement with communities must focus on giving young people in this Associated Schools Group the best possible experiences and opportunities from early to senior levels and onwards into the world of work.

8.2 With identified pressures on Education budgets there is a need to increase momentum in the programme. Members will recall from the May committee the plan for a rolling ASG programme allowing more time for community engagement. Whilst this is still the aim and will be supported by the Community Engagement Officer we need to have an identified timescale to work towards for all of the ASGs in Highland. Work has begun on a plan that will be brought to the next committee in the New Year in readiness to move on from the ASGs currently under review. The plan will set out timescales for the coverage of all ASGs in Highland.

9. **Work Stream 4 - Support for Schools**

9.1 Meetings have taken place to further develop plans for school office support. Following the last committee a second workshop was held with Head Teachers to discuss the implementation of Team Leaders and further explore the potential role for Business Managers across the ASGs. Further costing and modelling of possible structures is

now being undertaken, in the context of business support across Care and Learning.

- 9.2 A 'modelling' exercise on some of the larger ASGs has been carried out to inform the proposed piloting of the Team Leader role in a large urban secondary school setting, as had been requested at a previous meeting of this Committee.
- 9.3 To support progress with this workstream, structure and membership of the Project Board and Working Group will also be refreshed.

10. Work Stream 5 – Workforce Planning & Development

- 10.1 Work is progressing with Dundee University to address teacher shortages in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects (STEM). Eight Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)/STEM students will be starting 18 month certificated programmes in six Highland Secondary Schools in December. These are students, who all live in Highland, and who, once successfully trained, will be potential recruits for our schools.
- 10.2 Generic recruitment has been reviewed by a group of stakeholders involved in the process during this last year. This is the process where a 'block' of Primary teaching vacancies are advertised early in the New Year in an attempt to recruit the many strong probationary teachers we have in our schools. The meeting was positive and will help to refine and improve our recruitment.
- 10.3 The North Leadership Group - A group of Head Teachers, Depute Head Teachers and Principal Teachers have identified 6 sessions of leadership training that they feel are vital in developing our future school leaders;
- Session 1 Introduction to Leadership
 - Session 2 Self- Evaluation for School Improvement
 - Session 3 Self - Evaluation and Developing Collegiality
 - Session 4 Visioning and Valuing in Context
 - Session 5 Improving quality of teaching and learning from a leadership perspective
 - Session 6 Developing and maintaining positive relationships
- These sessions will be planned, delivered and reviewed by the group over the next year.
- 10.4 Meetings have been held with the senior management team at Mallaig to explore and agree the support and training that needs to be offered as the Mallaig ASG moves towards becoming our latest 3-18 'school'. This is the first step towards establishing an effective leadership group for the school with a bespoke training programme tailored to the needs of the staff involved.
- 10.5 The Scottish Centre for Educational Leadership (SCEL) have been approached to facilitate a session with current 3-18 Head teachers to use their experience in defining a shared rationale for our 3-18 schools. This is much needed and needs to be progressed with urgency.

11. Implications

- 11.1 Resource

This programme will provide a sustainable basis for schools in Highland, by delivering some efficiencies which will be identified through detailed planning in each Associated School Group.

- 11.2 Legal
All changes to education provision must take account of the relevant education legislation.
- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 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.
- 11.5 Risk
This programme is of critical importance to communities, the Council, and the provision of local education for years to come.
- 11.6 Gaelic
All proposals should take full account of the Council's commitment to the promotion of Gaelic medium education.

Designation: Interim Director of Care and Learning
Date: 21 November 2018
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Appendices:
North West Sutherland Campus Case Study

Doing Great Things Together

The creation of the North West Sutherland Schools effectively responded to the challenges faced by rural Highland schools.

As you enter the North West Sutherland Schools at Kinlochbervie on the Scottish West Coast, whether walking along corridors, visiting classrooms or appreciating the breath-taking scenery whilst enjoying a rowing lesson on the loch, it is clear that schooling here is very much a shared effort where the enthusiasm, warmth of friendship and familiar banter filters through all areas. During morning break teachers are discussing how best to include the seniors in the annual Christmas celebrations with chatter alluding to a Christmas Ceilidh for all. Parents talk of how children have started looking forward to coming together on Wednesday's as they've formed friendship bonds with their peers from neighbouring schools. There has also been praise for how the familiarity of surroundings, and the development of relationships with peers, leaders and mentors contributes to a smoother transition for those starting S1. Head teacher, Mr Graeme Smart, further pointed out that with their shared educational background and experiences pupils enter S1 on a solid foundation from which to continue with the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) into secondary.

Back in August 2017 four Sutherland schools; Kinlochbervie Primary and Secondary, Durness Primary and Scourie Primary, clustered to form the North West Sutherland Schools. This collaboration has seen each school effectively embrace the all through 3-18 model that was introduced to positively impact, improve and sustain education in the area.

At the time of clustering these 4 rural schools varied in size from 9 to 48 pupils, and were all situated in small villages, with two at 25 miles apart within the same local authority. The schools were all at different stages of development and had expressed different needs. Whilst the head teachers had always worked together they had not formally collaborated on leadership and school improvement issues. Along with the authority, head teachers and senior management felt strongly that sharing expertise and skills would positively impact on the leadership and school improvement plans of the cluster.

A year on and it is clear that following the schools' collaboration the new management structure is highly effective with leaders experiencing favourable respect amongst pupils, parents and the wider community. Since the amalgamation, and following a period of decline in pupil numbers, the Durness Primary School roll has doubled. With trust in leadership restored it means that an Early Years/P1 class could potentially be in the pipeline for Durness in the future.

The North West Sutherland Schools are embedded in a supportive local community and share similar values, and it is these attributes that provided the foundation from which the head teacher and senior management could work together for continuous improvement. This collaboration has combated isolation and produced a number of positive outcomes such as effective professional development and mutual pastoral support. It is felt that this cluster peer support has embedded leadership styles and effective knowledge sharing which in turn is having a positive impact on achieving school improvement objectives. The support of a shared head teacher also reinforces that value system and guides the all-inclusive implementation of the schools improvement plan.

“We've always had links to our neighbouring primaries; as such it was a natural transition to extend these links formally to offer our children a richer learning experience and our staff a wider support network. I cannot underestimate the effectiveness of mutual school support; the formalisation of the cluster has provided a level of accountability in the area that wasn't there before. The pooling of

resources and expertise, and the sharing of good practice to deal with common issues, is having a positive impact”, enthused North West Sutherland Schools Head Teacher, Graeme Smart.

Every Wednesday both staff and pupils from Durness and Scourie Primary Schools are bussed to Kinlochbervie to join their peers for a day of shared teaching, learning and socialisation. Primary pupils visiting the secondary school allows for richer experiences where children, who pre-cluster weren't able to, now have access to lessons in the science laboratory and gym hall. The children proudly arrive in purple sweatshirts, readily assuming their shared identity with their neighbouring classmates. A well-stocked and beautifully laid out library presents an inviting and well-used space for primary and secondary children alike. The Harry Potter themed quiet area for reading, along with a welcoming and well-thought out sensory room and pupil-led décor in common areas all contribute to the shared sense of belonging and collective ethos of the schools.

Wednesday's also provide a useful opportunity for teachers to share their experiences, expertise and knowledge with each other, thus building their capacity as educators. Primary school management also reap the benefits of the Wednesday collaboration as they have access to uninterrupted management time to ensure they maintain the expected leadership and management standards for the schools. With teachers planning together every child at each key stage has access to the same opportunities and shared experiences. All pupils benefit from access to specialist teaching staff and the various school working groups include representatives from both primary and secondary schools which enables effective tracking and recording of pupil progress to set reasonable next steps in ensuring educational progression for all pupils.

Another key benefit of the 3-18 model that the North West Sutherland Schools have effectively embedded is seamless learning across stages. This is particularly evident in the sciences curriculum area and the leadership team is now actively looking ahead to cement a continuous curriculum for numeracy, literacy and health & wellbeing too. Noteworthy too is Mr Smart's passion to ensure that breadth of subject choice is available; “I like to make choice happen. Where a child shows an interest in a subject area I will make a plan to see that subject introduced or extended as a viable option. Our approach is to tailor-make access to a broader curriculum where there is demand.”

Although it's early days it would seem that the North West Sutherland Schools are making significant progress with a community-wide approach to educating their children and young people. With effective home/school partnerships in place, strong collegiate relationships that have been cultivated across the four schools, and pupils readily embracing and effectively learning alongside one another, it is clear that everyone is working towards a common goal; to focus on improving educational outcomes for all.

ENDS

Notes to Editors