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| Agenda Item | 9. |
| Report No | CLH 06/19 |

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Care, Learning and Housing

Date: 24 January 2019

Report Title: **Update on the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative**

Report By: Interim Director of Care and Learning

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members on the further development of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. Note the progress of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2)
- ii. Note a grant of up to £1,086,067 has been allocated to the Northern Alliance to enhance the Regional Improvement Collaborative's activities and capacity building

3. Background

- 3.1 The Northern Alliance is a Regional Improvement Collaborative [RIC] between eight local authorities, across the north and west of Scotland: Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar [Western Isles], Highland, Moray, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. The Northern Alliance is committed to improving the educational and life chances of children and young people. Each RIC was asked by a joint Steering Group, consisting of the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and Local Government to produce a Regional Improvement Plan. The Regional Improvement Plan is tasked with outlining how the RIC intends to reduce inequalities and target improvement in the four national priorities from the National Improvement Framework [NIF].
- 3.2 The Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan (Phase 2) was consulted on and taken to appropriate committees in each local authority. The Plan was submitted to Education Scotland on the 3rd September 2018 and signed off by the HM Chief Inspector of Education/Chief Executive of Education Scotland on the 17th October 2018. The Scottish Government on 2nd November 2018 made a grant of up to £1,086,067 to support RIC activity and capacity building over the current school year (01/08/2018 to 31/07/2019).

4. Progress to date

- 4.1 To date the Northern Alliance continues to make overall sound progress. The Lead Officer has met with all work-stream leads to discuss progress and a mechanism for providing evidence of impact.
- 4.2 The work-streams are listed below and details of progress to date can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative work-streams

- 5.1
- Emerging Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - 1 +2 Modern Languages
 - Community Learning and Development
 - Leadership Development
 - Systems Development
 - Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)
 - Data Sharing and Performance
 - Equalities
 - Children's Services and Children's Services Planning
 - E-learning
 - Future Delivery Models
 - Rural Poverty
- 5.2 In term of next steps, the Northern Alliance will use the allocated funding grant to strengthen resources and collaboration to support learning and teaching in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

6. Implications

6.1 Resource

The grant of £1,086,067 made by the Scottish Government to the Northern Alliance is to be used for the purposes of the Programme and for no other purpose. The funding will be drawn down in March 2019. Strong engagement with the work coming out of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative Improvement Plan will support improved outcomes for young people.

6.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations of this report.

6.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)

The work of the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative initially formed to address the Care and Learning challenges being faced in multiple authorities- including the challenges that rurality, poverty and inequality bring to delivering high quality educational outcomes. This Plan is taking forward this necessary work.

6.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever

There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

6.5 Risk.

There are no risk implications arising from this report

6.6 Gaelic

There are no Gaelic implications arising from this report.

Designation: Interim Director of Care and Learning

Date: 21 December 2018

Author: James Vance, Interim Head of Education

Appendix: Details of the progress made in each work-stream

Appendix 1: Details of the progress made in each work-stream

- **Emerging Literacy work stream:**
 - 344 primary schools are involved in the work stream.
 - There is a skeleton school improvement plan insert for the 18/19 session which can be used by schools, following their self-evaluation, and linked to the whole-school Emerging Literacy audit.
 - Practitioners have access to online resources to support the observation/assessment of and planning for learning in early literacy, language and communication.
 - Practitioners have access to and are signposted to online training resources which can be used as part of whole-school CPD.
 - There is an Early Level Literacy and English progression framework linked to the Benchmarks. This is being woven into the network sessions.
 - The Emerging Literacy work stream is in the process of working with early years, school, educational psychology and allied health professional teams at local level to plan for sustainability of the approach into the 19/20 session and beyond.

- **Numeracy work stream:**
 - NA Numeracy Progression completed and made available to schools July 18 (Early, First, Second Levels).
 - A lead officer for numeracy is working with colleagues across the Alliance to discuss approaches for learning and teaching in numeracy.
 - General agreement that each LA follows its own path, subsequently sharing what has worked.
 - Baseline data collected from P3 and P4s in Dec'17 using assessments.

- **1 +2 Modern Languages work stream:**
 - Developing 1+2 in secondary BGE – building on last year's Scotland wide languages roadshows and sharing and comparing models across authorities.
 - Started to share NA models and strategic documents to support schools.
 - Planning development of sustainable training to meet the varying needs of primary teachers.
 - Gathering of authority strategies to identify baseline of activity (using Government Survey responses and Insight data to establish current picture and measuring improvement).
 - Identification of key work streams for 1+2 this session including P1-S3 entitlement, Developing Young Workforce/business links, Transition, Professional Learning.
 - Establishing collaboration and partnerships: Scottish Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Education Scotland, University of Highlands and Islands, Initial Teacher Education and Aberdeen University.
 - Trialling development of smarter communication – using 'Teams' on Glow.

- **Community Learning and Development work stream:**
 - Across the work stream smaller groups are analysing data / information and measurements.
 - The group is identifying how they might target family learning within each of the Local Authorities.
 - Link in with Emerging Literacy to explore interdependencies.

- **Leadership Development work stream:**
 - Development group established with all NA LAs represented.
 - 3 meetings (including 1 in Orkney).
 - Leadership frameworks discussed and developing.
 - Leadership development strategy for NA being developed.
 - Practical professional development tools and resources to be developed

- **Systems Development work stream:**
 - Group reconstituted with new members have met to discuss the school element of this work stream.
 - Have agreed in principal a way forward to support improvement by collaborating on a common approach to evaluative language and a means of developing a shared understanding and expectations of standards. How Good Is Our School 4 to be used as our supporting framework.
 - Discussion has taken place with our Education Scotland Regional Advisor to plan the delivery of this involving QIOs and HTs from across the Northern Alliance.
 - Discussion around sharing our different approaches and local agreements to classroom observations.
 - Yammer group set up for those involved in this work stream as a means to communicate quickly and share any documentation etc.
 - Aberdeenshire secondary school QIV planned for Nov with participation from colleagues across NA (Highland and *Aberdeen City*) as a means to begin to share approaches, practice and develop shared standards etc.

- **Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)**
 - Early Years Lead and Early Year Improvement Advisor in post from 1/10/18 until 31/03/2020. Both posts are 0.6FTE.
 - A NA brief for infrastructure projects has been delivered. All other improvement plan actions are ongoing.
 - Individual meetings with LAs to discuss progress/challenges with delivering the expansion.
 - Representing NA at National ELC Partnership Forum.

- **Data Sharing and Performance work stream:**
 - Continues to work constructively with Education Scotland to take forward a new process for sharing and interrogating data.

- **Equalities work stream:**
 - LGBTI group has presented at the Scottish Learning Festival.
 - It has been decided however to open out this group to make it a wider Equalities work stream. The young people themselves have asked that we have some way of identifying and supporting group practice in schools, so that this can be spread across the NA and are keen to work with us on a Charter Mark for equalities.

- **Children's Services and Children's Services Planning work streams:**
 - The collaborative is also reviewing group membership and looking to identify a sponsor and lead for Children's Services and refreshing the agreed purpose of the aforementioned work stream.

- **E-learning work stream:**

- Shetland Islands' Council and Highland Regional Council have appointed staff to the e-Sgoil Management Team.
 - The team is currently standardising policies, practices and procedures in order to avoid duplication of effort and ensure that inter-authority delivery is as efficient and streamlined as possible:
 - QA procedures
 - Internet Safety Policy e-Learning
 - Pupil, School and e-Sgoil Contract
 - E-Sgoil Handbook
 - E-Sgoil Improvement Plan
 - Working group to develop digital learning pedagogy.
 - Working closely with the GTC and EIS to ensure that all practices and documentation comply with national guidelines and agreements.
- **Future Delivery Models**
 - The Sustaining Education in Communities Conference was held on 14th September in Inverness and brought a range of stakeholders together to try and better understand the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention, falling school rolls as well as new models that will enrich rural communities. This work stream is now named 'Sustaining Education In Our Communities' and will look to develop agreed principles, sharing good practice and identifying supportive collaboration opportunities.
 - **Rural Poverty work stream:**
 - The Northern Alliance is working to identify a lead to take this important work stream forward. This area needs to build on previous work and ensure that research reflects the breadth of the Northern Alliance, including developing a practical metric approach for assessing poverty related issues.