

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
REDESIGN BOARD – 14 FEBRUARY 2017
ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOLS

Agenda Item	
Report No	

Summary

This report outlines the work carried out by the Administration in Schools (AiS) Review Team. It highlights a range of opportunities for process and productivity improvement, aligned with the existing Schools Management Review Programme, and makes recommendations for immediate action and for future work.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The purpose of the review was to make recommendations for the redesign of the administrative function in Highland Schools which would:

- a) find savings and/or income that will help the Council meet its affordability challenge;
- b) be mindful of the principles of redesign; and
- c) appraise the ten options for service delivery

The Project Scope and Objectives are detailed in full at Appendix 1.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Review Team which considered the Administration in Schools function comprised:

- Kate Lackie, Business Manager, the Chief Executive's Office (Team Leader)
- Caroline Urquhart, Business Management Analyst, Finance Service (Review Team)
- Noel McLaughlin, Service Improvement Manager, Community Services (Review Team)
- Brian Porter, Head of Resources, Care and Learning Service
- Margo Ramsay, GMB
- Cllr Isobel McCallum, Convener and Redesign Board representative
- Cllr Drew Millar, Chair of ECAS and Redesign Board representative

2.2 The Team has been supported with input from the Management in Schools Business Support Working Group and a range of other teams in the Care and Learning Service, Finance Service and Corporate Development Service.

2.3 A number of approaches have been taken to gather evidence for use in the Review:

- a) A review of previous schools administration improvement projects
- b) Engagement with the Management in Schools Programme, primarily but not exclusively the Business Support work stream and working group
- c) Engagement with relevant CIT Improvement projects

- d) Review of relevant regulations and guidelines
- e) Improvement Service initiatives and initiatives from other local authorities.
- f) Review of working practices, tasks and process mapping
- g) Engagement with key support functions for the Education Service
- h) Assessment of current ICT/systems performance and capability
- i) Staffing budgets
- j) Engagement with a range of teaching and non-teaching staff at primary and secondary level
- k) Engagement with teaching and non-teaching union representatives

There is a lack of service-wide performance data which meant it was not possible to compare Highland schools against one another in terms of their administrative activities or to make direct comparisons with other local authorities. This has been highlighted as an area for further work in the recommendations section later in this report.

3. OBSERVATIONS ARISING FROM ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION

a) Review of previous schools administration improvement activity

There have been a number of reviews of the administrative function within schools in recent years. The most recent was the Support to Schools project established as part of the Future Management of Schools Programme which concluded in August 2016. A review of the school office function introduced a team leader model for one rural ASG and one urban ASG on a trial basis in 2014/2015. There were a number of earlier pieces of work that also fed into these later projects.

The most recent Support to Schools project, under the umbrella of the Management in Schools programme, concluded that an enhanced role within the school office to provide additional support to head teachers and the school management team was needed to ensure head teachers had sufficient support in place to be able to focus on the management of learning and teaching. In addition, school office staff who participated in the pilots benefited from the team leader role giving them better support and developing enhanced relationships across the school group. It recommended further work was required to define this role to take into account the other elements of the Management in Schools Programme and developments, like the expansion of early years and wrap around care.

A significant amount of engagement has taken place previously with head teachers, their management teams and schools office staff across Highland and all of this review activity has provided a large amount information about school office tasks and processes; staffing models; ICT systems; finance, purchasing and payments; catering and FM; and information management. All of this has been very relevant and helpful in informing the work of the Administration in Schools Redesign Project and points to there being scope for real improvement and efficiency. However, it should be noted that the number of previous

consultation exercises, combined with a lack of implementation, has led to a degree of review fatigue amongst teaching and non-teaching staff and some cynicism about the outcome of any further review of the administrative function.

An area that the Redesign Team was not able to verify was the assertion that all head teachers require an enhanced administrative officer role to provide them with the support they require to focus on learning and teaching. Whilst this may well be the case in some circumstances – for example in some of the large secondary schools – this was not borne out in the smaller, more rural ASGs. It is certainly the case that the school office function needs to be designed so that it supports the new management structures. However, in some of these cases it may be that additional fte is required, rather than an increase in grade, whilst in other circumstances there may be spare capacity which needs to be utilised.

If improvements are made to key processes and systems in schools, it is likely that even more spare capacity will be created. Consequently, further work is required to understand what is required on an ASG by ASG basis, because it is clear that one administrative support structure will not be appropriate to all settings.

b) Engagement with the Management in Schools Programme

The 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. This accords with the 'Highland First' commitment to 'work collaboratively with head teachers to provide them with the best opportunity to maintain standards, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and to drive further improvement.'

The Care and Learning Service established the management in Schools Programme to take this work forward, with six inter-related workstreams:

1. Curriculum Development;
2. Management Structures and School Groupings;
3. Support to Schools;
4. Early Learning and Childcare;
5. Workforce Planning and Recruitment; and
6. Workforce Planning and Staff Development.

Regular reports have been taken to ECAS committee and series of briefing and seminars for members and head teachers have taken place.

Changes to management structures and school arrangements have been scoped over a three year period. The most recent report went to ECAS committee on 26 January 2017 set out new approaches and management structures in eight Associated Schools Groups to be developed and taken forward for August 2017, largely selected on the basis that they have significant difficulties recruiting head teachers or there are low or declining school rolls.

Member approval was given to proceed with six of these: Millburn; Lochaber; Kilchuimen; Kinlochbervie; Dornoch and Plockton. Proposals for the Farr and Mallaig ASGs will be coming back to Committee in March 2017 and the remaining ASGs will be brought forward for approval for rolling out in two more phases, in August 2018 and August 2019.

The first phase will be delivered within existing budgets and the predicted saving once all arrangements are in place across Highland is £750,000.

For the purposes of this report, the most significant issue around the new management arrangements in schools is that a team approach needs to be designed for the schools office function to ensure cluster head teachers and principal teachers in primary schools are properly supported in carrying out their new roles across the whole ASG. This is a departure from current arrangements where staff only provide support to the school in which they are located.

In order to design sustainable and effective proposals for the administrative support arrangements, it is essential that form follows function. Consequently, the AiS Redesign team has been working with the Schools Support Working Group, Chaired by the Head of Resources, Care and Learning, to ensure that proposals dovetail with the wider work being developed across all 6 work streams in the Management in Schools Programme.

The phasing of the Management in Schools Programme is helpful, because the first 6 ASGs to move across to the new arrangements should not require major changes to the administrative function in order to accommodate the new arrangements. There are a number of actions that can be taken to assist the transition to the new arrangements in relation to supporting technical and systems infrastructure, and these are highlighted in detail in the recommendations below.

The phasing means that there is time available to undertake a detailed assessment of need on and ASG by ASG basis to get as much process improvement in place by August 2017 have the most appropriate structures in place in time for Phase 2 of the roll out in 2017/18. This date should be considered a deadline rather than a target: requisite adjustments should be implemented when ready to do so and not wait until August 2018.

c) Engagement with Digital First/CIT Improvement Projects

Prior to the commencement of the Redesign Project, three projects had already commenced under the Digital First Programme looking at moving certain schools activities from largely manual processes onto digital platforms. Each project has a savings target identified. These are:

1. School Enrolment and Family Data Review. Target £90,000
2. School Payments. Target £330,000 over 2 years
3. School Lets. Target £35,000

The first project has been implemented for the 2017/18 school enrolment process. Initial feedback is that on-line enrolment has been largely successful, with some scope for improvement in terms of the back office handling of data.

The School Payments Project has the potential to make real efficiency improvements in the way schools office staff process payments for a range of activities, including school lunches, school trips, fundraising and school uniform purchase by enabling payments to be made on-line. This will significantly reduce the amount of cash handling being undertaken by office staff and teachers, freeing up support capacity, reducing or removing the involvement of teachers in cash handling altogether and providing an improved service for parents/carers and pupils. This proposal has the support of the unions because of staff vulnerability associated with holding cash in the office and carrying cash to the bank. It will also satisfy a number of audit requirements.

The combined savings target of £455,000 is significant and represents over 10% of the overall schools office staff costs. It should also be noted that these initiatives come on the back of existing transformational savings focused on schools admin which have also removed budget from schools. This is discussed in more detail in the financial section 3h) below.

d) Review of relevant regulations and guidelines

There is relatively little in the way of regulations or even guidelines for the provision of schools office support and this explains the wide variations in practice across Scottish authorities. The 2011 MaCrone report made some recommendations about the type and level of support that should be provided and this is the approach largely followed in Highland, where admin and clerical hours per school are calculated by a formula based on the size of the school roll. However, because so many schools in Highland have a low roll – over 60% have under 100 pupils – MaCrone is used as a guide only and many schools in have a far higher pupil/support staff ratio. This is explored in further detail below.

e) Improvement Service Initiatives and initiatives from other local authorities.

The Redesign Project Team contacted the Improvement Service and a number of Scottish local authorities to find out whether there were any initiatives underway that could have useful application in Highland and a range of approaches have been reviewed as a consequence. Useful projects are underway in East Renfrewshire, Glasgow and Perth and Kinross and other authorities, such as South Lanarkshire, have already reviewed their schools office function and have established a new schools support service. These initiatives have helped to inform a number of the AiS Review recommendations in Section 5.

f) Review of working practices, task and process mapping

Building upon much of the work that has already been done in previous schools office projects and the Management in Schools Programme, the Redesign AiS project has looked at the mapping of current processes required within schools and who does them in order to

identify opportunities to reduce bureaucracy, improve processes, increase productivity and reduce costs:

- Reducing Bureaucracy: Reducing teachers' bureaucratic burden is one of the key objectives of the Management in Schools Programme and a priority for the Scottish Government. Areas that have been identified by head teachers include HR systems and processes, such as Talent Link/Change Forms; RPO responsibilities; budget delegations; SQA administration and supply teacher sourcing.
- Improving processes/increase productivity: Processes that are currently overly labour intensive or involve double handling include attendance/class register, maintaining supply teacher records and financial transactions. There are variations across schools in the way common tasks are undertaken and improved consistency would also deliver benefits. Enhanced systems support could help to improve records management; interruption management and the availability of performance information.
- Reducing Cost: In addition to c£3.9m budget for schools-based office staff, assistance is also provided to schools from the Workforce Planning Team, Shared Business Support HR Hub, Shared Business Support Small Schools Unit, and the Service Information and Support Unit. Savings could be made by requiring fewer staff to undertake core activities by streamlining and digitising manual processes to be more efficient (see 1&2, above); equipping schools to undertake activities currently undertaken by SBS and releasing SBS spare capacity or vice versa; equipping schools to undertake activities from other parts of the Council so they become community hubs; removing duplication of tasks between schools, Workforce Planning Unit and HR Hub.

g) Engagement with key HQ support functions for the Education Service

The Redesign team has considered the activities undertaken by the Service Information and Support Team in the Care and Learning Service and the HR Hub, the Small Schools Business Support Unit and the Shared Business Support function provided by the Finance Service, all of which provide a variety of centralised support functions to schools on top of the resource that is provided by the schools office staff.

There is some evidence of duplication, multiple hand offs and manual data entry, all of which present opportunities for improvement in processes, systems and structures, whilst the skills present in the Service Information and Support Team offer opportunities to improve the operation of SEEMiS and provide wider systems and information management support to head teachers. More detailed investigation is required to fully understand how to best to capitalise on these opportunities.

h) Resources – Staffing and budgets and opportunities for savings

In Highland there are 29 secondary schools and 174 primary schools with total school rolls of 13609 and 17309 respectively. Administrative support in the school setting is largely

provided by a mix of Admin and Clerical Assistants in secondary schools and Clerical Assistants in primary schools. The allocation is derived from a calculation based upon school roll with a minimum of 16 hours clerical time per week for primary schools and minimum of 0.65 clerical and 1 admin for secondary schools. The number of hours increases with the size of the school roll.

Current FTE is 179 Clerical Assistants; 33.3 Administrative Assistants; and 2 Team Leaders. The majority of clerical assistant posts are part time. The current cost of staffing the schools office function is £3.975m.

The average amount of clerical time that is currently provided per pupil across the entire schools estate is 9 minutes per week. If this allocation was applied rigidly to every school, as happens in some local authorities, it would result in a total reduction of 46.7fte and a cost saving of £708,251. However, this ignores the reality that in order to deliver this, small schools would lose clerical support almost altogether and this is not sustainable either for the schools or for the rural communities in which they are situated. However, these figures do tell us that small schools currently have an over provision of clerical hours compared to their larger counterparts and this suggests there is spare capacity. This is explored further in Section 5.

There are a number of historic savings targets that are sitting against the Schools Office budgets as pressures, in addition to the £455,000 identified in the CIT savings proposals mentioned in section 3c) above. Taken together, they come to a third of the current total schools administration budget and represent a significant delivery challenge. It is consequently the conclusion of the Redesign Team that the redesign of the schools support function is both possible and necessary to support the Management in schools project and identify opportunities to make these savings through genuine efficiencies rather than cuts. It is not possible, certainly at this stage, to identify where financial savings can be made over and above those.

i) Engagement with a range of teaching and administrative staff at primary and secondary level

In the course of the review the team has visited and met with Head Teachers and school office staff at Charleston Academy, Kichuimen Academy, Inshes Primary, Kinlochbervie Academy and Millburn Academy. The visits have been very helpful in informing the conclusions in this report and, even looking at a relatively small number of schools, it is clear that the office support required varies widely from one to another and the changes introduced by the Management in Schools Programme will also impact differently. It is likely that this variety will be replicated across all 29 ASGs and so any changes to schools

support will need to be mindful of, and responsive to this and only following direct engagement with teaching and non-teaching staff in each ASG.

In addition to the observations already described, the following points have also been noted: head teachers are heavily reliant on their administrative assistants and there needs to be succession planning to ensure resilience when these key staff move on; head teachers would welcome being provided with a dashboard of performance measures so they can assess their school's performance over time and against other schools in Highland and across Scotland; office staff would benefit from more pro-active support from the centre and also greater networking opportunities with their counterparts in other schools to share good practice and provide mutual support; there are a variety of approaches to home/school communication and schools need support to move this onto digital platforms wherever practical; the implementation of significant initiatives – chrome books/ict transition/curriculum and SQA developments – carry an administrative overhead that is currently shouldered by head teachers but could/should reasonably be delegated if there was sufficient admin resource at the right level, to do so.

j) ICT/systems performance, capability and technical challenges

The single issue around which all teachers and office staff agree there needs to be improvement is in the operation of SEEMiS. SEEMiS is an Educational Management Information System (MIS) provider. It is the standard MIS within Scottish Education and all local student data is processed and managed by SEEMiS software which interfaces with external agencies like ScotXEd and SQA. School Office Staff and teachers carry out 15 distinct tasks on SEEMiS and a detailed assessment of these is contained in Appendix 2. Schools would be keen to have more involvement in driving system developments and improvement on both a local and national level.

Other technical challenges include poor connectivity in rural areas which impacts on how school staff interact/update IT systems such as SEEMiS and Integra in real time. There is an opportunity to address this with the roll out of the SWAN network upgrade. In addition, only 40% of teachers have laptops which means the other 60% are unable to work from their own PC. Teachers also do not have access to the Highland Council's internal SharePoint processes/forms or to My View, restricting their access core corporate processes and data and placing a greater burden on the office staff to collate information manually.

There is a mix of technical capabilities within schools. It will be important for office staff and head teachers to be offered assistance when moving to the new cluster arrangements from August 2017 to ensure they are able to capitalise on shared document systems, have access to management information relating to budgets, facilities and the staffing establishment across the ASG and ensure their telephony arrangements are fit for purpose.

k) Engagement with teaching and non-teaching union representatives

Unions have been represented on the Business Support Working Group and the team leader has also had a number of one to one meetings with the union rep for the Review, Margo Ramsay and EIS rep, Alistair Bell. The following issues were identified as a concern: cash handling; reducing bureaucracy; lone working (points of presence). The first two issues have been addressed earlier in the report. The issue around lone working and points of presence is a critical and requires further explanation.

As already outlined, office staff hours are allocated on the basis of the size of the school roll. However, because of the number of very small schools in Highland, a large number have a far higher allocation than the equation might otherwise warrant, and this is to provide a point of presence in schools where there is only one teacher. Even so, for over half of Highland primary schools, this still only provides between 16-19 clerical hours per week, leaving significant numbers of hours when there is no adult present in the school except for the teacher. Expanding clerical hours in the small schools is problematic however, not only because there is insufficient budget to do so, but also because there is currently insufficient work to warrant it and in an organisation with a reducing workforce and staffing budgets, it is not sustainable to create posts that don't have enough to do. Nevertheless, the benefits of having a point of presence throughout the week for health and safety reasons and because of the positive rural impact, means that consideration should be given to pushing work to the quieter schools offices. This could come from other, busier schools, or from other parts of the organisation such as the small schools business support unit, or the implementation of a centralised telephony service for school registration. In the medium to long term this could even include moving Service Points/registration into schools in rural areas and using them like community hubs.

4.0 INCOME GENERATION

- 4.1** Some opportunities for income generation have been identified in the delivery of early years and in wrap around care. This a workstream that is already being taken forward by the Management in Schools Programme and so has not been pursued by the Redesign project. However, it must be recognised that there will be an administrative overhead involved in the delivery of these functions and so any income calculations should be net of this cost.
- 4.2** Another option for income generation could arise in the event that the SG's Education Governance Review proposes the transfer of schools and nurseries to a regional body. In this instance, the Council could potentially 'sell' the schools admin function to the regional body for use in schools in Highland. In order to be in a competitive proposition, it will be important to evidence that Council can provide an efficient, productive and measurable service and this means progress would need to be made on the areas identified for improvement. Responsibility for the delivery of an outsourced service to a 3rd party education provider would sit well with the Council's Shared Business Support Service.

5.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Schools office staff are conscientious and hard working. They are highly valued by head teachers and play a key part in school life. This will become even more important as the new schools management structures are rolled out and so this is a critical time to consider their role and the systems and processes they need to support what they do.
- 5.2 A day in the life of a school office varies enormously between primary and secondary schools, large and small schools, and urban and rural schools. This variety will be replicated in the roll out of the new ASG arrangements and presents clear challenges when considering how the administrative function should be resourced. It is evident that a one size fits all approach will not work.
- 5.3 There is a need to review the way in which the administrative function is structured as a result of the new ASG arrangements but it is not possible within the timescales of the Redesign Review to determine precisely what these should be across Highland. Reducing teachers' bureaucratic burden is a government and council priority and in some cases this may require additional resource at existing grades, in others, more senior administrative support at a higher grade whilst in others, the existing resource may be sufficient. It is clear that form will need to follow function and so structures should not be drawn up in advance of a detailed assessment of the needs of each ASG. Any new or changed posts would need to be job evaluated. Additional costs could be funded through savings made in the new management structures if they are as a consequence of administrative staff taking on enhanced responsibilities.
- 5.4 The Redesign Team has found there are issues that have been raised in successive reviews and in many cases these relate to the systems and processes that are common across all ASGs – as detailed in sections 3f) and 3g) above. Tackling these will result in improved efficiency and productivity, provide access to better performance data and improved job satisfaction. These do not need to be timed with the phases of the schools management structures but should be implemented as soon as possible. They will be central to freeing up spare capacity to absorb some of the additional workload arising from changes in the schools management so that any additional or enhanced admin resource, if this is considered necessary, can be targeted to where it will genuinely add value.
- 5.6 Identifying opportunities for financial savings is not straightforward. As explained in Section 3 h) above a simple rigid formula based allocation will not work in the Highland context. However, any capacity should be utilised as efficiently as possible within these confines. One way in which more sustainable savings could be made is to push tasks to the outlying offices from larger schools, from centralised support teams, or other parts of the Council altogether, and take savings from the capacity that this releases. In this way, and in the longer term, it may even be possible to increase the clerical presence in small schools as their workload increases. Activities that could be considered include call handling (entering

absence/attendance data onto SEEMis for larger schools); end to end financial transactions (currently undertaken by the small schools business support unit); data inputting and cleansing (currently undertaken by the Workforce Planning Unit); service point functions (closing existing service points and moving into schools front offices); other Shared Business Support transactional activities.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 In order to maintain momentum and ensure progress is made on delivering efficiencies and an enhanced administrative function for schools, the Schools Office workstream needs to be properly resourced. Improvements in the school administrative function have suffered in the past from a series of projects which have come to a halt before full implementation has been possible and the same risk presents itself now.
- 6.2 Consequently, it is recommended that the project continues with a dedicated project manager put in place for a minimum 6 month period. The current schools support working group would provide the basis for an effective project team as it includes the right mix of officers to provide both senior users and senior suppliers. A representative from ICT Services would provide a useful additional senior supplier role. It is recommended that the project sponsor position is undertaken by senior manager outwith the Care and Learning Service to provide the linkages and influence needed to corporate systems and processes. The project manager and project team need to have a detailed grasp of school requirements. The Project Leader for the AiS Redesign Project would also provide support for as long as required.
- 6.3 A full project plan and progress report should come forward for the August Redesign Review date.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Resources – a Project Manager for 6 months will cost approximately £25,000 falling primarily in the next financial year. This could be funded by earmarking the sum from underspends in the schools administrative and clerical pay budgets arising from vacancies in the current year – subject to approval from the Director of Finance – or from savings made from the Management in Schools project.
- 7.2 Legal - there are no legal implications for The Highland Council from the conclusions in this report.
- 7.3 Equalities – the majority of administrative and clerical employees in Highland schools are women and so any change to working hours, grades or terms and conditions would need to receive equalities screening.

- 7.4 Rural – A significant number of school clerical and administrative posts are in rural areas, some are in particularly remote and fragile communities. There are potentially significant positive and negative rural implications, depending on the outcome of this piece of work.
- 7.5 Risk – there is a risk that the Management in Schools Programme could fail to achieve its objectives if the supporting arrangements are not appropriate to the new teaching structures. There is also a reputational risk to the Council if this happens.
- 7.6 Climate Change Gaelic - there are no negative climate change or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Redesign Board is asked to agree that:

- A dedicated project manager is appointed for a minimum 6 month period to take forward the project;
- The project team is established along the lines set out in paragraph 6.2
- The project provides an action plan for addressing the systems and process issues outlined in section 3f) and 3g) with a view to implementing improvements at the earliest opportunity;
- The project presents costed proposals for the support staffing arrangements required to underpin the Management in Schools Programme on and ASG by ASG basis;
- The project considers what processes can be pushed to the smaller schools to enhance the role and release capacity/efficiency savings elsewhere;
- The project establishes the management information required by head teachers and senior managers within the Education Service, and how this to be gathered and disseminated;
- A full project plan and progress report is provided for the Redesign Review in August.
- Assistance is provided to all schools in cluster arrangements to ensure they are able to capitalise on shared document systems, have access to management information relating to budgets, facilities and the staffing establishment across the ASG and ensure their telephony arrangements are fit for purpose

Signed: Kate Lackie, Business Manager

Date: 10 February 2017

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Project Scope and Objectives

Appendix B: ICT/systems performance, capability and technical challenges

Appendix 1

ADMINISTRATION IN SCHOOLS

PROJECT SCOPE

The administrative/clerical/business support functions provided for schools in Highland.

OBJECTIVES

To consider how to deliver the most efficient and flexible school office staffing model that meets the learning, teaching and assessment requirements in all Highland schools, delivered at same/less cost and with opportunities for further cost reductions identified for future work.

Must

- scope the extent and cost of clerical and administrative tasks undertaken in schools and elsewhere, to support learning, teaching and assessment in schools and establish the tasks and accountabilities that should be carried out by education support staff in the future.
- identify existing spare capacity and create new additional capacity by delivering efficiencies through process redesign, elimination of duplication, elimination of unnecessary tasks and processes, standardisation of good practice through increased consistency and collaboration and realisation of the benefits of improved ICT and management of information.
- Ensure new structures support the management in schools project proposals to deliver £750k savings and identify if/where cashable savings can be achieved over and above this.
- Present initial recommendations to the Redesign Board on 10 January 2016.

Should

- Link with other CIP Projects to realise cashable savings and process improvements.
- Identify ICT systems used within education and the wider council that currently support or could support service delivery.
- Define performance management standards for the future delivery of school office support in order to ensure continuous improvement and cost reduction.
- Understand what is required of the school office function in order to optimise support for learning, teaching and assessment, and reduce the burden of bureaucracy, taking account of sectorial and geographic factors.
- Learn from best practice elsewhere.
- Present options for work to continue post January 2017.

Could

- Further professionalise and consider the creation of career opportunities for School Office staff by re-defining resource allocation, structure, roles and job descriptions.
- Identify opportunities for income generation;

Would

- consider the transfer of activities from the wider council in order to boost the point of presence in small rural schools
- consider shared service with other authorities and organisations

Appendix 2

Technical issues capabilities and weaknesses

SEEMiS is an Educational Management Information System (MIS) provider. This is the standard MIS within Scottish Education and all local student data is processed and managed by SEEMiS software which interfaces with external agencies like ScotXEd and SQA.

SEEMiS is composed on different modules to support Pupil and Staff record management. The Highland Council implemented SEEMiS in 2015.

The school office staff are the main user of SEEMiS maintaining records of pupils and teachers. Individual schools offices maintain their staff access to SEEMiS and set up individual registration periods and each school can only see their own records. The Service has carried out significant assessments of office tasks from previous work outlined in the 'Outcomes and Achievements of the School Support Project'. This identified office tasks into 4 main areas:

- Information Management
- Purchasing & Financial
- Payroll & Personnel
- SQA

15 tasks that school office staff carry out in SEEMiS (see Table 1.)

1. Class registration - recording on SEEMiS
2. Class registration - Contacting Parent/Guardian
3. Systems administration
4. Young Scot cards
5. Staff Sickness recording & reporting to payroll
6. Reports & Returns
7. Maintaining staff records
8. Pupil enrolments - entering in SEEMiS
9. EMA Payments administration
10. Maintaining pupil records
11. Assisting with Timetabling & Curriculum
12. Violent Incident Reporting
13. Flexible Early Learning and Childcare –Planning
14. Supply Staff Administration
15. SQA Administration

Statutory Requirements:

Pupil Registration: Am & PM daily

Pupil Education Record – also known as PPR: a manual paper file that follows the pupil throughout Primary and Secondary schools and is retained for 5 Years after the pupil leaves secondary education.

Statutory requirements for pupil registration is once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Some secondary schools have implemented pupil registration for each period.

Technical challenges:

Connectivity in rural areas has impacted on how school staff interact/update IT systems in real time.

Only 40% of teachers have laptops whilst every class has a computer; this is used to drive the SMART boards accessed by pupils and teachers.

Teachers do not have access to the Highland Council's internal SharePoint processes/forms.

Teachers have two email accounts, the Highland Council email account and the GLOW accounts.

Teachers have always taken work home but since Direct Access they have not been able to work from own PC and have few laptops (40%)

The reporting tool used for interrogating SEEMiS (Business Objects) licences run out in April 2017. SEEMiS intend to replace Business Objects with individual SSRS reports. Not having the ability to create/manage our own reports in Highland will impact on our ability deliver good performance reporting.

Table 1. SEEMiS tasks for school office staff

	Office tasks carried out in schools	Current IT systems that support the process	Guidance docs in place	Issues/problems			Potential solutions
1	Class registration - recording on SEEMiS	SEEMiS	YES	<p>Not all Teachers have a laptop.</p> <p>Digital connectivity in some areas has proved maintaining instant SEEMiS updates unrealistic</p> <p>Duplication of effort through a manual registration creates further pressure on office staff.</p> <p>Latency of updates will have an impact on the accuracy of follow up actions by office and support staff.</p> <p>Capture pupil absence directly into SEEMiS</p>	Y	Y	<p>Single point of contact within either ASG or virtual for all Schools!</p> <p>Improve on our duty of care to individual students.</p> <p>Instant updates and visibility to teachers on student absences. Ability to run reports on frequency of absence by school and reason for absence.</p> <p>Benchmark data and create healthy competition.</p> <p>Consistency in recording absence data will aid the production of KPI's and PI's.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians receive communications in a structured/consistent format.</p>
2	Class registration - Contacting	SEEMiS/Office 2010	YES	All Schools use SMS within SEEMiS and some secondary schools using Groupcall SMS (at lower costs)	Y	Y	Develop a consistent model for parent communications regarding absence. This will help build in business

	Parent						<p>resilience and lower costs by having all schools move to GroupCall SMS.</p> <p>Create timely updates for parents/guardians to deliver a consistent service</p>
3	Systems administration	SEEMiS/Glow/Wordpress		<p>SEEMiS System Access arrangements will need to be reviewed in light of the ASG model.</p> <p>Formulise Roles & Responsibilities of users access within SEEMiS to ensure that staff are equipped and trained and to support them in their role.</p> <p>Establish clear User management principles for systems access.</p> <p>Use Corporate datasets to cleanse employee's access e.g. Joiners. Movers, leavers reports</p>	Y	Y	<p>User security matched against job roles helps the Service understand roles and responsibilities to support our staff in delivering an effective service.</p> <p>Establish good User Management principles by formulise the process.</p> <p>Link Users access to the new/temp staff employee process.</p> <p>Reduce repetitive tasks carried out by school office staff.</p>
4	Young Scot cards	SEEMiS					
5	Staff Sickness recording & reporting to payroll	SEEMiS	YES	<p>Understand the roles of all stakeholders in the process.</p> <p>C&L School staff do not use MyView</p> <p>There is a significant amount of effort currently assigned to this task. This includes various staff members, School clerical staff, Shared Business Support and the</p>		Y	<p>There is a significant opportunity to improve the speed and quality of delivering this process.</p> <p>Re-map the process according to task and use all available tools to ensure the process can be managed from start to end.</p> <p>Provide Head Teachers with timely, accurate reporting on staff absence etc.</p>

				Information and Support Team. Unable to manage the process as it's too fragmented in terms of who's responsible for which part of the process. Therefore management information is difficult to achieve.			
6	Reports & Returns	SEEMiS/Office 2010	YES	The information and Support team provide a valuable service in delivering the statutory Performance indicators. Often non-compliance or data latency results in a back-log at key times in the year when submissions are due.			To deliver robust trustworthy business intelligence to Head Teachers
7	Maintaining staff records	SEEMiS	YES				
8	Pupil enrolments - entering in SEEMiS	SEEMiS	YES	New enrolment FIRMSTEP form live for customers to apply. Separate process for customers to apply for transport?			Data captured at first point of contact with customer is then used to update SEEMiS. Potential to spread the workflow from this task to any school office?
9	EMA Payments administration	SEEMiS	YES	Currently scanned by Civica team for payment	Y	Y	
10	Maintaining pupil records	SEEMiS	YES	Understand which data needs to be held on SEEMiS for good case management and Gov reporting and which data needs to be held against, Child Support Plan, additional support needs, Individual	Y	?	Investigate/utilise current HC investment in scanning technology (CIVICA) to create an electronic version of the Pupil Education Record. Save staff time, printing and postage when students move schools. EMA Payments

				<p>Educational Plan (which needs to be shared with Parents/Guardians)</p> <p>SEEMiS does not have an advanced document management facility therefore the Pupil Education Record (PPR) schools maintain manual versions.</p> <p>Ensure we have a consistent Child Support Plan – created by a lead professional]</p>			<p>are scanned by CIVICA (Mark Blair’s team) could this be extended to PPR’s?</p> <p>Define how best to hold data on additional support needs as this is currently not done in SEEMiS</p>
11	Assisting with Timetabling & Curriculum	SEEMiS	YES	Although there are no periods in Primary, the am and pm sessions are timetabled.			
12	Violent Incident Reporting	SEEMiS/CRM	YES				
13	Flexible Early Learning and Childcare - Planning	SEEMiS/SharePoint//Office 2010	YES	<p>Offering customers a flexible easy to use booking system that links to expenditure.</p> <p>Review cash collection and billing to be as efficient as possible.</p>			Include requirements for paying nursery places through the new Online payments system
14	Supply Staff Administration	SharePoint/SEEMiS/Office 2010	YES	<p>How Teachers access the Supply Teacher list is under review. The current lists exists in different formats and in different electronic locations. Both Angela Campbell and Laura Husher are facilitating Service Improvement here.</p> <p>The issue is to review the processes end to end. One of the challenges</p>	Y	Y	<p>Single point of contact within either ASG or virtual for all Schools!</p> <p>Assess other Highland Council IT investments as to suitability for booking out teacher’s time.</p> <p>Ensure office staff are aware of the process end to end and apply LEAN</p>

				<p>here is that Teacher & Supply Teachers absence's must be recorded into SEEMiS.</p> <p>Double handling data: Details on hours worked is processed in schools, informing payroll is carried out by SBS and the commitment from the Information & Support Team.</p> <p>C&L no access to MyView</p> <p>Workforce Planning carry out the capacity management role and advertising for posts. They have 10 teachers (on demand).</p> <p>To keep one supply teacher list up to date in accordance</p>			<p>techniques to reduce waste.</p> <p>Establish clear KPI's for staff involved in process to inform management decision making.</p> <p>Fully understand the roles of all staff involved in process:</p> <p>School office staff, HR Hubs in Dingwall, shared business support, workforce planning and staffing team (WPST) and the information and Support Team at HQ.</p>
15	SQA Administration	SEEMiS	YES				

Reporting:

It is without doubt one of the most important factors in redesign is that we must establish good quality management information. From a quality assurance perspective it's essential to have timely changes to staff and pupil records in a timely manner. There has been an improvement in the quality of the information recorded by schools:

- The change to SEEMIS has greatly improved the recording of exclusions.
- The ASN team's increased use of data from SEEMIS has also improved recording in relation to pupil additional support needs. This is also an area that ScotXed (Scottish Government Education Statistics Dept) focuses on, in relation to the pupil census.
- The creation of a GLOW site that stores guidance documents relating to use of SEEMIS and data standards, that schools have access to.

- Termly reporting to Quality Improvement Team highlighting issues.

Table 2. Submissions from the Information and Support Team (Catering and Cleaning/Estates/Social Work submit separate reporting).

Month	Name Return	Mechanism of Submission	Submission to	Team
Jan	Winter Leavers	extract from SEEMIS	ScotXed	Info and Support
May	School Hostels - GAE data collection	completion of spreadsheet	Scottish Govt	Info and Support
June	Rate Review	completion of spreadsheet	CIPFA	Info and Support
July	Establishments Survey	upload of dataset via ProcXed	ScotXed	Info and Support
July	Early Years Pre Survey	upload of dataset via ProcXed	ScotXed	Info and Support
August	CfE Level -Teacher Judgement Survey	upload of dataset via ProcXed	ScotXed	Info and Support
Sept	Pupil Census	extract from SEEMIS	ScotXed	Info and Support
Sept	Early Years Survey	upload of dataset via ProcXed	ScotXed	Info and Support
Sept	Staff Census	extract from SEEMIS	ScotXed	Info and Support
Sept	Bi-annual Attendance, Absence and Exclusions	extract from SEEMIS	ScotXed	Info and Support
Sept	Summer Leavers	extract from SEEMIS	ScotXed	Info and Support
Oct	Teacher Pay Scale Return	upload of dataset via ProcXed	ScotXed	Info and Support

Risks, The reporting tool used for interrogating SEEMiS (Business Objects) licences run out in April 2017. SEEMiS intend to replace Business Objects with individual SSRS reports. Not having the ability to create/manage our own reports in Highland will impact on our ability deliver good performance reporting.

The reports that are produced throughout the year and made available to Senior Management Team and Quality Improvement Team:

Termly – Exclusions, Attendance (detailing high levels of absence), Equalities and Bullying, Incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour and Violence Towards Staff

Head of Service and Workforce Planning

Monthly – Teacher report (similar to the teacher element of the Staff census)

Principal Service Information Officer

Termly – TBCs (to be confirmed attendance) on SEEMIS

There are many reports that are run annually and on an ad hoc basis throughout the year as and when required.

Recommendations:

ID No1. There can be a duplication of the task No1. Class registration, some offices have in place a manual pupil absence recording sheet. This increases the workload on the school office staff and creates a delay in the process of updating SEEMiS.

This can be achieved by either the main ASG school taking all the calls from parents/guardians or like Glasgow realise further efficiencies in having a virtual office - phone line.

Glasgow: The pupil absence service is provided by a dedicated team of experienced Education support staff. The information you provide to the team is updated in the school's system when you call, so the school is immediately aware of all absence information.