

## The Highland Council

### Education, Children and Adult Services – May 2016

Agenda Item	14ii.
Report No	ECAS 41/16

## Management of Schools – Structure of Schools and Curriculum

### Report by Director of Care and Learning

#### Summary

This report updates Members on the progress being made around workstreams 1 and 2: the delivery of the curriculum and the organisation of schools and management structures.

#### 1. Work Stream 1: Curriculum Delivery

- 1.1 As previously indicated, this workstream focuses on the approach and development of new innovative ways of curriculum delivery, to suit the Highland context. The following projects are being explored and developed:
  - Best practice timetabling formats across key school groupings
  - A core curriculum for schools
  - The development of virtual courses, accessed through new technology
  - Increased partnership work between schools, college and employers.
- 1.2 A key objective is to ensure that schools maximise the opportunities provided by the introduction of the 33 period week. Four secondary schools have operated this model for a number of years. Seven further schools will have this in place for session August 2016 (Charleston, Fortrose, Nairn, Dornoch, Ullapool, Invergordon and Tain) and it is envisaged that all will be operating this model from 2017-18.
- 1.3 Further discussions in ASGs and school communities are taking place regarding the advantages of aligning secondary and primary school weeks.
- 1.4 The following work is continuing, to confirm a revised staffing entitlement for all secondary schools:
  - Discussions with Head Teachers about the alignment of school budgets, staffing levels and curricula
  - Confirmation of minimum staffing levels
  - A review of the existing Devolved Management staffing formula.
- 1.5 Work also progresses to increase the number of external online course and the development of the virtual school. The objective is to maximise the opportunities provided by increasing the number of external online courses and the benefits of ICT in Learning.
- 1.6 Further to the update provided at the last meeting of the Committee, there has been a Member/officer visit to Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, to look at their virtual learning developments and consider opportunities for collaboration and shared services. In addition, two secondments have been advertised, to progress work on distance learning and support to staff.
- 1.7 An ICT training plan is in the process of development for next year. This will focus

on ensuring school staff are provided with training opportunities at a variety of levels, and it will take account of the considerable learning and experiences of many staff, that has been gathered to date. During session 2015-16, we have tested the use of Chromebooks and other devices to deliver a small number of online courses for pupils. We have also gathered information from other authorities of their work in this area.

- 1.8 As well as pursuing the opportunities with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, it is anticipated that additional provision will be delivered for session 2016-17 in the following ways.
- The use of surplus teaching capacity that already exists in schools to enhance the curriculum delivery across Highland.
  - Additional provision supported by a virtual learning base in Inverness High School (through the use of Scottish Government funding) which will provide additional curriculum delivery in identified subjects.

## **2. Work Stream 2: Management structures and school groupings**

- 2.1 It has previously been indicated that this activity will require to be taken forward in five phases of delivery:
1. Strategic ideas
  2. Planning
  3. Engagement phase
  4. Implementation phase
  5. Review phase
- 2.2 A range of strategic ideas has been generated, and the direction for this workstream has been set out for members in previous reports.
- 2.3 Further preparation has been taking place as part of the forward planning, which includes:
- Exemplar templates for working through possible options with Associated schools Groups(ASG)
  - Discussion with Area staff on possible options for some individual ASGs (Dornoch, Farr, Kinlochbervie, Kilchuimen and Golspie)
  - Initial discussions of possible revised management structures and job remits
  - Initial discussions of revised support structures required around schools.
  - Collection of information from other authorities
  - Links to the other work streams
  - Estimated costings for the delivery of this work stream.
- 2.4 It is now important that we move into the engagement phase, and consider how these various ideas might apply in practice and in the range of diverse communities across Highland. Accordingly, an initial session was held in April with Head Teachers from the Plockton and Tain ASGs.
- 2.5 That session enabled these Head Teachers to consider the educational benefit of the ideas that have been presented to Members, apply them to their communities, and to develop options and proposals in line with the overall strategic direction. For both ASGs, this proved to be an extremely positive exercise, generating a number of options that could improve provision locally, building long term sustainability. Also, while some of the strategic ideas previously proposed were reaffirmed, consensus was achieved around other possible developments that

could be considered across other ASGs.

- 2.6 The Area Management Teams will now start working with both ASGs to develop these ideas into options that can be presented and considered by Members and the local communities.
- 2.7 This is challenging work, but the additional challenges are:
- How to take this work forward across all 29 ASGs
  - How to identify and address the strategic or local developments that require discussion with corporate colleagues in the Council, staff and parent representatives, members and (where necessary) agreement with Committee.
- 2.8 In addition, there continue to be some immediate challenges in schools, where decisions require to be taken about the organisation of provision to address short term issues, but in line with the strategic direction of travel. While some of these will be operational matters, which can be effected through management processes, others will require local consultation and Member involvement.
- 2.9 Accordingly, albeit the ideal scenario would be to take time to map out the issues in all 29 ASGs and then make necessary strategic plans, Head Teachers and Members (and parents) are unlikely to agree that it is feasible or practical to adopt an approach over an extended time period.
- 2.10 It is therefore suggested that we adopt the following process:
- Late August/early September: Member seminar (also involving some Head Teachers) to reflect on overall objectives and work undertaken to date.
  - August–September: 4/5 area based workshops for Head Teachers, including dedicated sessions for each ASG (given the size of South Area, this may require two events).
  - September–October: collation of the initial proposals from these workshops.
  - November–December: 4/5 area seminars involving Head Teachers and Members, to discuss and clarify proposals for consultation, also identifying actions that require more immediate Committee decisions.
  - From January, detailed discussions with schools and stakeholder groups, ASG by ASG, on proposals for the future organisation of provision.
- 2.11 A parallel process of discussions will continue with representatives of the Highland Parent Forum and LNCT, to discuss these various developments and to agree consultations with specific groups. It is anticipated that this will include the use of a variety of techniques, including social media as well as face to face meetings.
- 2.12 In addition, at each meeting of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, officers will continue to provide updates and identify actions that require political support and immediate decision making. Members should note that this approach will increasingly supersede the current SSER process.

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 **Resources:** This work is progressing on the basis of the revised budgets

established for the Service. Members will continue to be updated about resourcing issues.

- 3.2 **Gaelic:** It is envisaged that this programme of work will enable us to progress our objectives for the enhancement of Gaelic medium education.
- 3.3 **Equalities and Rural:** It is important that these plans maintain/enhance the equity of educational provision across the Highland area. In particular, the revised delivery model must ensure sustainable provision for children, families and staff.
- 3.4 There are no Legal, Risk or Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the progress on these workstreams, and to agree:
- (i) the work being taken forward on developing the online provision in 2016-17;
  - (ii) the programme of work and timeline set out for the organisation of schools and management structures across ASGs.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 10 May 2016

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