

Agenda Item	7.
Report No	EDU 17/20

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Education

**Date:** 30 September 2020

**Report Title:** Education Recovery and Resilience: additional funding for counselling, teacher resource and digital inclusion

**Report By:** Executive Chief Officer Education and Learning

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Education and Learning Service is committed to prioritising the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, practitioners and families. This is in line with The Highland Council expectations and is a central aspect of our educational recovery strategy moving forwards, including the Highland road map for education.
- 1.2 This report refocuses and realigns a number of funding workstreams, pre and post Covid-19, that will lead to improved outcomes for young people, support the wellbeing of our school communities and as a result have a longer term impact on attainment and achievement in Highland Schools.
- 1.3 The Education and Learning Service are keen to promote Head Teacher Empowerment and local decision making – Associated Schools Groups will be asked to collaborate together for the benefit of their school communities to lead a focus on supporting the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- 1.4 This report sets out the current position relating to counselling funding from the Scottish Government and proposed next steps.
- 1.5 This report also sets out the current position relating to the recruitment of additional staff to support the return to school and identifies improved agility with additional capacity in the teaching workforce which will be required should schools need to switch to a blended model of learning at any stage.
- 1.6 Education return and recovery continues to be a significant focus and the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, staff and our school communities is at the heart

of this. The Highland Council's response to test, trace and isolate including supporting young people with the impact of self-isolation will be a key area for consideration in using the resources available. This will also include working across a range of Council and community supports to ensure a response to any emergent welfare issues.

1.7 As we move forwards with an ever changing context in our schools, we remain flexible and agile in our approach. The resilience and creativity of our schools have been demonstrated throughout Covid-19 and schools continue to respond positively and proactively to change and challenge on a daily basis, with learners central to all decisions made.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Members are asked to:

- agree the approach being taken regarding the distribution of Counselling funding of £1,022,000 in financial year 2020/2021 and that a report of the impact of these funds will be reported to the Education Committee as part of the returns that will be sent to the Scottish Government;
- agree the approach to the use of the additional funding of £2,200,000 to support Education Recovery through additional teaching resource as set out in appendix 1; and
- note the allocation of approx. £1,188,489 capital and £204,520 revenue awarded to The Highland Council through the 'Connecting Scotland Education Programme' and agree the distribution approach as set out in section 5 of this report.

## **3. Implications**

### **3.1 Resource**

In relation to 2020/21, the proposal outlined in this paper recognises the delayed implementation due to Covid-19 creating scope for The Highland Council (THC) to consider a broader range of strategies. assessing the impact of Covid-19 and how it continues to affect our communities.

### **3.2 Legal**

Health and wellbeing and the mental health of young people in our schools is a priority (especially after the impact of lockdown) and supported in ASL Acts/Equality Act. Due consideration will be given to THC's responsibilities within this area with the wellbeing of the individual viewed as paramount.

### **3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural)**

Communities already have embedded and positive approaches to supporting the wellbeing of families involving a range of voluntary organisations, charities and third sector providers: THC will adopt an inclusive approach that provides opportunities for localised solutions and sustainability.

### **3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever**

No impact other than consideration of remote/virtual/carbon neutral approaches to counselling service delivery particularly in remote areas.

3.5 **Risk**  
Risk to individual and family wellbeing and lack of intervention at the correct level of tiered support i.e. escalation of wellbeing rather than prevention and support de-escalating risk.

3.6 **Gaelic**  
Translation service/delivery in GM will be assessed/pursued. Increased vulnerability for families and individuals e.g. unable to use language owing to shielding or isolation.

#### **4. Introduction / Context**

4.1 There has been an abundance of positive work undertaken by education professionals to support continuity of learning during Covid-19. Through a place based strategy and a community led approach which sits with our Associated Schools Groups, our intention is to reimagine and refocus educational resources and prioritise wellbeing as one of the key priorities for education across the Highlands.

4.2 The funding streams that this strategy aligns, are monies that can be used immediately and directly impact upon our recovery in education and to support wellbeing. The Highland approach is very much community based, supports young people and recognises our schools are best placed to make these decisions within the local context. Empowerment continues to be at the heart of our agenda, connecting our schools and our communities, working in partnership together to make a difference to all young people in Highland.

4.3 Partnership with local providers is further encouraged to support The Highland Council economy drive and we will encourage guidance for schools accessing counselling services that will support local employment.

4.4 The funding streams that are relevant to this strategy are:

- 'Access to Counsellors through Schools' Project;
- Recruitment of Additional Teachers for the Education Recovery Phase– 2020/21; and
- Connecting Scotland – Education Phase/Phase 1 & 2.

4.5 A key approach for success will be local solutions and establishing local priorities and partnerships involving head teachers, local providers and NHSH key personnel. This local co-production will identify a range of options for spend and delivery which will be agreed at ASG level.

#### **5. Key Funding Areas**

5.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the key funding areas relevant to this strategy.

##### **5.2 Access to Counsellors through Schools Project**

5.2.1 The conditions of funding as agreed at COSLA are specific and state a requirement that spend must achieve the outcome of increasing the number of counsellors in

schools. Due to the need for schools to close quickly at the beginning of Covid-19, it was very difficult to proactively assess the impact on young people. Now with Education Return complete measures within the counselling project will be able to assess and understand the needs of our young people and what additional support in schools and appropriate interventions need to be planned within a place based approach. However, assessment of support and mental and emotional health needs will be on-going and based on relevant and up to date need.

5.2.2 Confirmation of funding for THC – has been communicated as follows: **20/21 (£1,022,000) – 21/22 (£1,022,000) – 22/23 (£1,022,000)**. Given the impact on normal operations from the Covid-19 pandemic and to give schools an opportunity to identify their new gaps this has delayed 20/21 implementation. However, with a positive return to school now in place staff are now very well placed to assess and respond to emerging mental and emotional health issues.

### 5.2.3 **Next steps/Timescales**

- Each ASG is allocating resource to each school and retaining a local top-sliced resource for possible enhanced challenges e.g. localised lockdowns.
- Local and regular meetings involving a range of staff to consider needs and response focused on individual young people and a targeted case approach as well as regular support in each school for ongoing individual support.
- Innovative approaches to co-production across schools to ensure the greatest impact and ensure no school or young person is left without the opportunity to access support e.g. an approach where the secondary school hosts the counsellor (base) and the counselling service is flexible i.e. Outreach / remote / virtual to ASG schools with 'pooled' funding to enable a service for smaller schools given their relative (lower) allocations.
- An agreed approach within each ASG to assess the impact of the resource linked into The Highland Council's COSLA return.

## 5.3 **Recruitment of Additional Teachers for the Education Recovery Phase 2020/21**

5.3.1 The Scottish Government has provided additional funding to support Education Recovery; this funding is to be wholly spent on additional teacher resource in Highland Schools. The grant allocation of £2,200,000 is set out in appendix 1. Highland Schools will use this additional, creative teaching resources over the next year to compensate for any loss of learning suffered during lockdown, as well as to bring much needed resilience to the education system at this challenging time. Already after 6 weeks of Education Return, the Highlands has experienced significant impact within schools in Inverness, Kingussie, Kinlochleven and Gairloch owing to local outbreaks of Covid-19. At these times additional capacity and resource in the teaching workforce has been required in particular when significant numbers of pupils or staff are required to self-isolate. The Highland Council in partnership with NHS has a clear resilience response which prioritises, and problem solves the challenges these outbreaks create for staff, young people and communities: the deployment of additional teaching resource is a key part of the response to ensure the continuation of learning. Details of the governance around this resource is captured in **Appendix 1**. It has also been communicated to Headteachers that The Highland Council will support the supply costs linked to Covid-19 as part of the additional funding received. These are expected to be significant and beyond DSM capacity for all schools.

### 5.3.2 Next Steps:

- Education Officers to communicate final agreed plan of distribution with Head Teachers;
- recruit additional teachers to compensate for any loss of learning, and to support the wellbeing of both staff and young people created during the Covid-19 lockdown, as well as to bring much needed resilience to the education system;
- measure impact on young people and staff; and
- report to Education Committee.

## 5.4 **Connecting Scotland – Education Phase/Phase 1 & 2**

5.4.1 Under the umbrella ‘No-one-left-behind’, Connecting Scotland is a Scottish Government funded programme set up in response to Covid-19. The first phase of Connecting Scotland has made a significant difference to the lives of many people in the Highlands who were missing out on the benefits of being online and were digitally excluded. This Second Phase of the programme which was launched on 18 August, builds on this initial investment which will prioritise disadvantaged families with children and young people leaving care.

5.4.2 In parallel, under the Connection Scotland Education programme, the Scottish Government provided £25 million for local councils to bid into to provide support for school students with devices and connectivity to help with their learning and to build resilience should schools need to close again for a localised or national lockdown. The Highland Council was successful in the bid and was awarded £1,188,489 capital and £204,520 revenue funding, payable over the financial years 2020/21 to address digital inclusion for disadvantaged children and young people in Highland Schools.

5.4.3 This grant has enabled us to further expand The Highland Council’s Chromebook estate, invest in an improved management of the Chromebook service and platform and expand connectivity for families with MIFI devices. The revenue allows funding for further school support, including increased network capacity, digital support for implementation, G-Suite Enterprise, Securely and software subscription investment.

5.4.4 As per the monies for counselling and also the recruitment of teachers, the digital funding stream will support the recovery of education and the wellbeing of our young people. The digital funding stream will ensure that no child in Highland is digitally excluded (device & connectivity).

5.4.5 In Highland Schools, a 1 to 1 model exists for Primary 6, through Senior Phase. The existing and extensive Chromebook estate in Highland for pupils allowed the delivery of on-line learning to continue throughout this period. This is important as we potentially expand the capacity of the on-line learning model with the recruitment of staffing (paragraph 5.3.1).

5.4.6 P1 – P5 devices will be distributed after Head Teacher assessment, with the following key criterion being applied:

- a. free school meals and SIMD;
- b. families affected by COVID linked to information from key partners e.g. families with significant health risks; and
- c. any other appropriate reason for digital exclusion.

- 5.4.7 Consideration for Head Teachers will include:
- a. Whether Digitally excluded students in P1-5 can take a device home each night or only when needed;
  - b. Number of students in each household;
  - c. Whether digitally excluded students would have priority to the device during school time; and
  - d. Online safety and parental awareness for any students in P1-5 who are taking a device home
- 5.4.8 As per the Primary 6 allocation of Chromebooks, schools will be supported centrally by the ICT iLearning and Chromebook Support Team to record key information to ensure the end user is identified. Given understanding of local context, families and young people, the schools are in the best place to oversee this process. These devices will remain as part of THC estate and will provide a computer for home learning. This approach will ensure that devices are set up and working for young people and their families.
- 5.4.9 Throughout COVID lockdown, the internet was one of the most important aspects of our daily lives and allowed connection between family and friends, an ability to work and also a way to support the education of our young people. Connectivity for many families was through mobile data, which is expensive and often runs out. The Connecting Scotland Initiative aims to get the most vulnerable families online. MiFi devices are available for families who are digitally excluded in this way and this is of a huge support for families.
- 5.4.10 All schools in Highland have access to an application process, whereby the Head Teacher can apply on behalf of a young person for a MiFi device providing connectivity in the home setting, where families for a wide variety of reasons may be affected by financial pressures. 92 devices were distributed during lockdown, these devices will be extended as part of this grant funding, and another 308 devices are currently being distributed.

**Designation: Executive Chief Office Education and Learning**

**Date: 20 September 2020**

**Author: Nicky Grant**

**Appendix 1 – Additional funding for teacher resource – approach and governance.**



## **ADDITIONAL FUNDING: GRANT FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL TEACHERS FOR THE EDUCATION RECOVERY PHASE– 2020/21**

### **Scottish Government rationale for spend of resource:**

*Schools will need all possible teaching resources at our disposal over the next year to **compensate for any loss of learning suffered during lockdown**, as well as to bring much needed **resilience to the education system** at this challenging time.*

*We cannot be sure what the future path of the virus will be. If circumstances were to deteriorate again, resulting in further lockdowns (whether nationally or regionally), additional capacity in the teaching workforce will be required should we need to switch to a blended model of learning at any stage.*

Fortunately, school leaders are best placed to know and understand their own school communities, there will be unique gaps in each setting individual to contexts. Within localised back to school plans, Highland Council wanted pupils back in schools and the community impact of Covid-19 is being assessed. It is up to schools in Highland to connect, collaborate and reimagine together in order to intensify the support where it is needed in order to ensure that we can:

- Recruit additional teachers and support staff to compensate for any **loss of learning suffered by pupils during the COVID-19 lockdown**, as well as to bring much needed **resilience to the education system**.
- **Ensure this resource must be clearly additional to that which would otherwise have been allocated to teacher recruitment for the 2020-21 school year.**

**Grant amount: £2.2M (2021/22)**

### **Proposed Model £2.2M SG grant, teacher recruitment:**

As set out by SG a proposed model has been worked out to meet the needs of communities in the best way. Grant amount from Scottish Government to Highland Council = £2.2M over 2 years.

14 identified targeted teaching support (Full Session 20/21) appointed since August for the full session.

Six teaching posts to support online learning to be advertised for 2 Primary (literacy and numeracy), 2 Secondary (literacy and numeracy) and 2 IDL (Primary and Secondary). This support would be Highland wide when young people are isolating with no teacher being able to support online learning in school. We also suggest that our existing development team create/collate resources to extend our Highland digital learning site in consultation with our young people and staff.

The rest of the funds going to ASGs to utilise in order to best meet local need. Smaller ASGs would be provided with a fixed minimum amount to ensure that they benefit from a resource that will provide effective impact based on criteria set.

ASGs that sit close to each other are able to come together in order to maximise impact of each resource if they choose to do this. Collaborative working is encouraged; this will be at the discretion of Head Teachers.

Recruitment may prove difficult in certain areas, if this is the case please highlight this on the return below. If teacher recruitment is not possible then alternative use of spend may be agreed based on local need.

**Breakdown of costings:**

	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Costings</b>
Overall teacher numbers to Support ASG's (November 20 to July 21)	21	£0.9M
Overall teacher numbers to compliment online learning (November 20 to July 21)	6	£0.3M
Identified targeted teaching support (Full Session 20/21)	14	£0.8M
<b>Total Additional Teaching</b>	<b>41</b>	
Additional Support Staff (November 20 to July 21)	11	£0.2M
<b>Total Additional Support Staff</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>£2.2M</b>

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Costings</b>
Teacher (top scale)	£45K (costings for 1FTE from November - end of session July 21)
Additional support staff	£22K (costings based on 0.86FTE, 35 hours from November – July 21)



**Timescale:**

	<b>Actions needed</b>	<b>Date / Deadline</b>
Step 1:	PHRG, HSHA Reps & Union Representation invited to discuss draft plan Reps invited to comment on google doc and share draft with other HTs	Monday 31st August Friday 4th September Monday 7th September
Step 2	Each ASG to nominate a Head Teacher representative as a point of contact who will be responsible for the allocated budget and associated reporting.  Drop-in support sessions (optional) will be provided in order to offer advice and to enable ASGs to highlight potential recruitment concerns.  ASG submit plans	Date: Wed 16/9 9.30-10.30am or 1.30-2.30pm Meeting Code: <a href="https://meet.google.com/vuo-usbo-nri">https://meet.google.com/vuo-usbo-nri</a>  Monday 21st September
Step 3	Feedback given on ASG plans	Week beginning 21st September
Step 4	Education Committee to approve model	Wednesday 30th September
Step 5	Recruitment process to begin (Business support will submit ATRs and organise interview process for each ASG)	1st October
Step 6	Interviews to take place during last week of Term 1	Week beginning: 26th October (tbc)

**Expected Impact:** It is anticipated that these additional teachers or support staff will provide a range of additional support to help with recovery work such as supporting young people who may have suffered a loss of learning during lockdown, supporting young people who are shielding, affected by mental health issues as a result of Covid, supporting small groups of learners who need more intense support and covering classes for teachers who are self isolating. They will also be vital in responding to any local flare-ups of the virus, which could necessitate implementation of contingency plans for blended learning for a period.

Schools within each ASG are asked to connect with each other to discuss the above information. When a representative from the ASG has been identified they are asked to complete the form below and return to: [annika.jansson@highland.gov.uk](mailto:annika.jansson@highland.gov.uk) no later than Monday 21st September 2020.

### **Criteria & Key Questions when considering use of spend**

The criteria of spend should fall under the following categories. Please consider the following key questions together as an ASG before making a decision around your use of spend.

#### **Curriculum**

- How will this resource help support continued recovery curriculum delivery?

#### **Covid absence – staff**

- How will this resource provide support during local flare ups and ensure continuity in learning and teaching?

**Covid absence – pupils**

- How will this resource provide equity in education for pupils that are absent for any Covid related reason?

**Challenges because of Covid across sites**

- Are there any ways in which this resource will support any other challenges faced by the ASG due to Covid?

**Actual Impact / Reporting:** It is important that a service level overview can be created in order to inform reporting procedures which will be carried out by Education Officers as requested by the Scottish Government. The ASG representative will be the voice of the ASG and have an accurate update available on the impact of spend when requested.

Date	Report
Aug	LA submitted compliance statement to SG Education Officers link with Union & HT Working Group re Additional spend and draft pro-forma
Sep 20	LA monthly reporting on numbers of additional teachers and support will be required
October 20	LA monthly reporting on numbers of additional teachers and support will be required
November 20	LA monthly reporting on numbers of additional teachers and support will be required
March 21	A report at the end of the financial year should be submitted that details: the total number of additional teachers and support staff recruited and the expenditure on these staff.

**GRANT FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF ADDITIONAL TEACHERS FOR THE EDUCATION RECOVERY PHASE – 2020/21**

**HGIOS?4**

Linked to QI 1.5: Management of resources to promote equity

Themes: Management of finance for learning & Management of resources and environment for learning

- We manage allocated resources proactively and efficiently to meet planned learning and development priorities
- We make innovative use of the finances available to allocate resources to take forward our improvement priorities and planned developments. Our available budget is used very effectively to meet the needs of all learners.

Please highlight the drivers which underpin your use of spend:	School Leadership Teacher Professionalism Parental Engagement	Assessment of Children’s Progress School Improvement Performance Information
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**The Resource**

Things to consider:

- Covid related absence pupils & staff
- Disengaged pupils as a result of Covid
- Identified gaps in learning (loss of learning)
- Offer targeted / universal interventions
- Lockdown Survey Feedback
- Local need

Please indicate the teacher FTE you would like to recruit below. Please tick.

Teacher 1:

1.0 FTE	0.9 FTE	0.8 FTE	0.7 FTE	0.6 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.4 FTE	0.3 FTE	0.2 FTE	0.1 FTE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Teacher 2:

1.0 FTE	0.9 FTE	0.8 FTE	0.7 FTE	0.6 FTE	0.5 FTE	0.4 FTE	0.3 FTE	0.2 FTE	0.1 FTE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ASG would like to discuss with Officers in regards to appointment of teacher/Education staff yes/no

Please briefly describe the role of additional staff:

How will you measure the impact?

	Please describe the working pattern across the ASG for additional staff member:			
<b>Please ensure your intended spend meets the criteria</b>	Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/>	Covid Absence – Staff <input type="checkbox"/>	Covid Absence – Pupils <input type="checkbox"/>	Challenges because of Covid across communities <input type="checkbox"/>

Please complete the form and return to: [annika.jansson@highland.gov.uk](mailto:annika.jansson@highland.gov.uk) no later than Monday 21st September 2020

**ASG** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Allocated (please see spreadsheet)** \_\_\_\_\_

**ASG HT Representative** \_\_\_\_\_

Further comments (optional). Please use this space to record any further questions / comments that your ASG has with regards to this additional money.
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