HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee:	**Education**
Date:	**11 February 2021**
Report Title:	**Short, Medium and Long-Term Action Plan – Education and Learning**
Report By:	**Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning**

1.   Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1   The purpose of this report is to outline The Highland Council's Education and Learning three year action plan, covering short, medium and longer term priorities.

1.2   More detailed action plans will be developed by the facilitating officers in dialogue and collaboration with school staff and other key partners and will be openly available. The detailed action plans will cover specific interventions, timescales, measures of impact and evaluation processes.

1.3   Short term plans are designed to meet immediate needs during the period of remote learning. Medium and long term plans are designed to address areas requiring improvement, as indicated by the Best Value Assurance Report, the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, Education Scotland Inspection Summarised Inspection Findings and analysis of data regarding attainment and other outcomes.

2.   Recommendations

2.1   Members are invited to:
- note and agree the short, medium and longer term priorities as described in the report; and
- agree that further reports on the progress of the action plan will be taken to future education committees for challenge and scrutiny.

3.   Implications

3.1   Resource: The resource required to continue educational performance improvements will be part of a broader Council wide budget position.

3.2   Legal: There are no legal implications for the recommendations of this report.

3.3   Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): Planned improvements will take into account the specific challenges of inequality, Covid-19 recovery, poverty and rurality.

3.4   Climate Change/Carbon Clever: The benefits provided by digital engagement will be considered to ensure the reduction of travel by the many thousands of school staff will be built upon in order to reduce our carbon footprint.

3.5   Risk: There are reputational and life chance risks for young people should this collaboration not continue and improve educational outcomes.

3.6   Gaelic: Gaelic pedagogy and improvement planning for education is ongoing and in line with current legislation; close monitoring will ensure there is a clear focus on Gaelic in each strand of the priorities listed in this report.

4.   Short-term (urgent) priorities

4.1   The following priorities have been identified for immediate action while schools are open only for vulnerable children and the children of certain key workers:
1) Managing remote learning expectations, including curricular progression and assessment strategies
2) Supporting complex needs during remote learning period, including safeguarding
3) Collecting data/tracking and monitoring progress with learning during remote learning period
4) Communication with families and wider school communities
5) Supporting transitions
6) Supporting health and wellbeing
7) Operational support for schools with staffing
8) General operational support for Senior Management in schools

5   Medium and long term priorities

5.1   The following priorities form part of the medium and longer term plan to improve outcomes in The Highland Council Education and Learning Service (some will also have an impact in supporting schools during the period of remote learning). Work on these priorities will be scaled back in the current situation though some groundwork will be carried out to ensure that areas where the evidence indicates improvements are needed continue to receive attention. Some of these priorities are relevant even while remote learning is taking place and work on these will be ongoing (much work has already been done). Once schools return to face to face learning, the pace of implementation of these priorities will accelerate. The priorities are grouped under relevant headings. Please see **Appendix 1**. Additional Support Needs considerations will permeate all strands of the plan, though there is also a discrete section which covers inclusion, health and wellbeing matters.

6.   Conclusion

6.1   Development and implementation of the plans in appendix 1 will be the joint responsibility of Highland Council officers (operating as facilitators), Head Teachers, other school staff and school community partners. The focus will be on collegiality and collaboration, and on enhancing the capacity of the entire system to continue to develop and improve outcomes, including engagement and collaboration with Education Scotland Action. A fuller version of the plan will be available for Members following consultation with Head Teachers in the first two weeks of February.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer – Education and Learning Service

Date: 12 January 2021

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Medium and Long-term Priorities

Leadership and Empowerment
• Development of Leadership Support Plan, based on the six national Empowerment themes
• Development of a coherent Leadership Framework
• Provide professional development activities to ensure that officers and HTs receive appropriate training and skills development to enable them to support, challenge and validate the work of schools effectively
• Develop and implement an authority-wide school rationale for school support, challenge and validation, ensuring that all schools benefit from regular and well-planned visits from officers
• Revision of School Improvement Plan and Standards and Quality Report templates to increase impact and minimise bureaucracy
• Further development of "School Families" approaches following consultation with HTs
• Development of Validated Self-Evaluation (VSE) approaches to replace previous Quality Improvement Visit process
• Improved links with Northern Alliance colleagues and leadership officers from other Local Authorities
• Programme of induction support for new and acting HTs (and other HTs seeking refresh)
• Review of Professional Review and Development and Professional Update processes
• Developing a whole system approach to supporting leadership development through national courses
• Developing approaches to learner leadership
• Enhancing collaborative leadership development with Parent Councils

Performance Analysis and Improving Outcomes
• Enhance data literacy of central officers and teachers in schools in using tracking and monitoring tools
• Support schools to develop systematic approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring to enable the effective use of assessment data
• Develop an authority approach to raising attainment and closing the poverty related attainment gap, including focus on ASN priorities

Assessment and Moderation
• Further develop a shared understanding of standards in the teaching and assessment of literacy and numeracy in the Broad General Education –
• Continue to develop Literacy and Numeracy strategies
• Review Learning, Teaching and Assessment approaches for raising attainment

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)
• Rollout of 1140h across all Highland settings
• Refreshing the Highland ELC Rationale
• Work on key areas for improvement in ELC settings: family engagement, curricular framework and continued learning and professional learning (CLPL) processes
• Shifting CLPL to a self-evaluation model
• Building a quality monitoring and response system
• Model for Improvement training on a collaborative multi-agency and partnership approach
• Northern Alliance collaboration: Outdoor learning
• Improvement Methodology training
• Embedding trauma-informed approaches into quality support resources
• ELC structure
• Out of School Care

Curriculum
• To further develop and embed pre-birth to 18 curriculum pedagogy, approaches and frameworks to provide progressive learner pathways to develop skills of learning, life and work
• Develop and embed Inter-disciplinary learning approaches to curriculum delivery
• Develop an authority strategy to better prepare, young people for the world of work, connecting employers with education
• Embed differentiation approaches across the curriculum, sharing of good practice within and across departments and sectors
• Development of opportunities for attainment and wider achievement to be recognised for Senior Phase pupils
• Development of curricular approaches for complex learners in our special schools, enhanced provisions and mainstream settings

Safeguarding
• Create and implement a rigorous Children Missing in Education procedure in Highland
• Create and deliver Child Protection (CP) and Safeguarding annual training for central senior officers
• Develop integrated working in relation to a whole system approach to safeguarding
• Develop and implement on-line safeguarding resources to support and enhance work across educational settings
• Develop vision and leadership of safeguarding and CP across education
• Provide effective counselling within an integrated approach to supporting children and young people
• Develop and implement new Personal and Social Education resources for use in schools
• Create and implement cross-sector professional learning events for senior managers

e-learning and Highland Virtual Academy (HVA)
• Empower school leaders to drive innovation and investment in digital technology for teaching and learning
• Improve access to digital technology for all learners
• Develop the skills and confidence of educators in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology
• Ensure that digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery
• To provide further curricular opportunities through the HVA
• To provide, through the HVA, short and long term support for pupils affected by coronavirus
• Review use of HVA to increase curricular access for LAC and non-attenders or those on part-time timetables

Inclusion and Health and Wellbeing
• Continue to develop the GIRFEC approach and Highland Practice Model implementation
• Development of whole system mental health strategy
• Develop and implement new PSE resources specifically supporting mental health education in schools
• Developing approaches to ensure all schools hold and enact professional values of inclusion and inclusive practice
• Developing teachers' understanding of what additional support needs are and clarity about their role in supporting the identification of ASN and providing appropriate learning experience for all learners
• Review of roles and remits of ASNTs and PSAs