East Lothian Council

REPORT TO:	East Lothian Council
MEETING DATE:	28 March 2017
BY:	Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)
SUBJECT:	East Lothian Council Response to the Scottish Government Consultation – Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education: a Governance Review

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update the Council on the response to the Scottish Government's consultation on *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: a Governance Review*.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Council is asked to:

i) note the contents of this report; and

ii) note the response to the consultation

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 In September 2016 the Scottish Government published *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education: a Governance Review.*

3.2 The Scottish Government carried out a consultation on the Governance Review between September 2016 and January 2017.

3.3 At the Education Committee meeting held on 22 November 2016, it was agreed to delegate delivery of East Lothian Council's response to the Scottish Government consultation to the Head of Education, in consultation with the Education Convener.

3.4 To ensure the response took account of the views of local people, the Education Service carried out a consultation between November and

December 2016. The consultation received 61 responses from children, young people, parents, parent councils and education staff.

3.5   Responses to the consultation were collated in December 2016 and informed East Lothian Council's formal response to the Governance Review.

3.6   East Lothian Council's formal response was submitted to Scottish Government in January 2017 and is attached as Appendix 1.

3.7   The Scottish Government are currently in the process of analysing the responses with a view to implementing proposals at the earliest opportunity.

4   POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no immediate direct policy implications associated with this report. Pending the outcome of the Governance Review, any future policy implications will be the subject of a future report to Education Committee or Full Council, as appropriate.

5   INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1   The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Financial - none

6.2   Personnel - none

6.3   Other - none

7   BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1   Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education A delivery Plan for Scotland http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00502222.pdf

7.2   Empowering Teachers, parents and Communities to Achieve Excellence and Equity in Education A Governance Review https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/empowering-schools/a-governance-review

7.3   Report to Education Committee on Delivering Excellence and Equity (November 2016)

7.4   East Lothian Council's response to the Scottish Government's consultation on *Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellent and Equity in Education: A Governance Review*

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DATE	14 March 2017

Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve Excellence and Equity in Education
A Governance Review

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

☐　　　Individual

☒　　　Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

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The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

☒　　　Publish response with name

☐　　　Publish response only (anonymous)

☐　　　Do not publish response

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

x☐　　　Yes

☐   No

Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education

A Governance Review

Foreword

About this response

East Lothian Council is a democratic organisation comprising 23 elected Councillors and is a coalition Labour /Conservative /Independent Administration. The Council is responsible for taking decisions, but it can delegate decisions to Committees, Sub-Committees or officers. A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services) to East Lothian Council's Education Committee 22nd November 2016 to inform Committee members of the Scottish Government's Education Delivery Plan and Governance Review and seek the Committee's agreement to provide an East Lothian Council response to the Governance Review to help shape future proposals for the governance of Scottish education. The Education Committee approved the recommendation to undertake a range of consultation activities to gather the views of stakeholders and agreed to delegate to the Head of Education, in consultation with the Education Convener, that East Lothian Council would provide a response to the Governance Review. The Education Committee also agreed that the final response would be presented to a full meeting of East Lothian Council 28th February 2017 for noting and that the response should reflect the following views:

- No extra layers of bureaucracy should be introduced into the education system within East Lothian
- There is no clear educational benefit to establishing Education Regions and they should not be imposed on East Lothian
- The local link and accountability between the support service provided by East Lothian Council's Education Department and other departments to Head Teachers, School Leaders, Teachers, Parent Councils and Unions should not be broken

Political and public accountability and responsibility for improving outcomes for the communities we serve is central to the work of East Lothian Council's Education Service. The Education Service is committed to working in partnership with communities across the County to improve continuously the quality of education provision and outcomes for children and young people. East Lothian Council's Education Service facilitated stakeholder engagement with the content and questions detailed within the Governance Review Consultation Document through the provision of resources and organised events. An online consultation hub enabled stakeholders to submit their views to inform East Lothian Council's response to the Governance Review. Therefore, this response has been compiled based on the views expressed by children, young people, parents, Parent Councils, and education staff within the 61 responses received.

Overview

East Lothian is the 21st largest area out of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities in terms of population. The population is forecast to grow by 23.35% between 2012 and 2037. Whilst the greatest increase is forecast to be within the over 65 years age group and 25-39 years age group, the 0 to 15 years age group is due to increase by 27.5%. East Lothian is estimated currently to have a higher proportion of 0-15 year olds than the average for Scotland as a whole. East Lothian has lower levels of deprivation than most Local Authorities in Scotland. However, there are areas across the county that fall within the most deprived 20% of areas in Scotland. Population growth and demographic change is likely to generate different needs and challenges within the communities.

'Working Together for a Better East Lothian: The East Lothian Council Plan 2012-2017 sets out the Council's ambition to make East Lothian an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable place with a dynamic and thriving economy that will allow our people and communities to flourish. This ambition is driven forward through four key themes/objectives:

- Growing our Economy – to increase sustainable economic growth as the basis for a more prosperous East Lothian
- Growing our Communities – to give people a real say in the decisions that matter most and provide communities with the housing, transport links, community facilities and environment that will allow them to flourish
- Growing our People – to give our children the best start in life and protect vulnerable and older people
- Growing the capacity of our Council – to deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible within our limited resources.

The "Growing our People" priority actions and objectives recognise the importance of getting it right for every child and how education is fundamental in shaping a child's life. In 2015/16 there were 8,265 children in East Lothian's primary schools and 5,640 young people in the six secondary schools. East Lothian Council continues to support children and young people with Additional Support Needs within mainstream settings and specialist facilities for those with significant additional support needs such as the new £1.4 m communications provision at Knox Academy, Haddington, opened in August 2016. One of East Lothian's key strengths is the strong sense of community in each of its towns and villages. This sense of community is replicated within associated school cluster learning communities. The Council is committed to ensuring that services are built around people and communities. Six Area Partnerships have been allocated devolved budgets to produce community-led plans in partnership with the local area cluster schools to raise attainment and improve outcomes for children and young people. Local ward and cluster profiles provide the range of information and data to support decision-making at a local level in tackling local issues impacting on children's and young people's progress and achievements. Whereas the Governance Review suggests the encouragement of school clusters, East Lothian Council firmly advocates the encouragement of collaboration within communities, both the learning and wider community.

The key challenges facing East Lothian's education service are:

- Improving attainment among pupils from deprived areas
- Closing the attainment gap between the highest and lowest attaining pupils
- Gender differences in attainment

East Lothian Council has set out its position on the place of education in improving outcomes for young people and its aspirations for its young people in its Council Plan, 2020 Vision for East Lothian and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023. That position and vision resonates strongly with the aspirations of the Governance Review. Therefore, any changes to governance arrangements must be able to prove without any doubt the extent to which any changes will have a greater and more positive impact on the lives and outcomes of East Lothian's children and young people than those currently being delivered at a local level.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

This response has been compiled based on the views expressed by children, young people, parents, Parent Councils, and education staff within the 61 responses received.

Question 1

What are the strengths of the current governance arrangements of Scottish education?

Governance arrangements

Overall, respondents feel that current governance arrangements, including legislation are embedded and understood well by most in the system. Whilst the review was welcomed, respondents feel that the considerable changes that have taken place within the education system over the past few years, including the year-on-year increased expectations, have impacted negatively on staff recruitment and retention. Further change is perceived as inevitably leading to a dip in outcomes in all parts of the system. Representations made by Parent Councils clearly question the assumption that parents want more power over school governance. Significant concerns were expressed by respondents in relation to embarking on further reform and changes to Scottish education.

Current strengths highlighted include:

- the inclusion of all members of the education community in the design and implementation of education provision;
- national professional standards and working conditions;
- the role of Local Authorities in supporting the delivery of national policy and initiatives at a local level; and
- the balance of devolved powers with reserved centralized control to enable schools to be creative and responsive to local situations whilst recognizing the need for some unified approaches.

Concerns relating to a change in governance arrangements include:

- reduction of resources available to Local Authorities leading to a drop in the level of support offered to schools;
- burden placed on Head Teachers if provided with more autonomy and budgetary powers;
- the extent of and implications to increase the role of parents in the governance of schools;
- pressures within the education system created by restrictions on resources available;
- schools could lose their negotiating power if COSLA was removed as the representative body; and
- concerns around accessibility to other Local Authority and professional, partner services if governance arrangements at a Local Authority level change.

The Role of the Local Authority

Almost all respondents were strongly in favour of retaining current governance arrangements in relation to the role of the Local Authority. Overall, respondents expressed the view that the Local Authority's role is valued and that the authority supports schools to continue to focus on delivering excellence and equity to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Current strengths highlighted include:

- Shared vision and collegiate working practices leading to improving outcomes for all;
- Overview and range of intelligence and data held centrally to inform key improvement priorities and actions;

- Targeting resources in response to local need;
- Facilitating and funding professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across all establishments;
- Supporting schools to take forward national and local policy including GIRFEC, NIF and managing the pace of change and improvement;
- Professional support and challenge provided by authority officers important to the maintenance of an improving education system
- Support provided in areas such as Human Resources, Legal, Building Maintenance, Transport, Health and Safety; Outdoor Learning Service; Education Psychology Service;
- Specialist advice on Additional Support Needs
- Spectrum of services available from universal to targeted;
- Accountability sitting with the Local Authority supports and challenges schools in a positive way; and
- The support provided to all Parent Councils including a policy of encouraging parental engagement in all areas of school life.

The role of national bodies and organisations

Very few comments were received regarding the role of national bodies and organisations. The following points capture the views of those who did provide a response in relation to the GTCS, Education Scotland, SEEMiS and SQA.

GTCS

- The GTCs ensures there are clear national standards and enhance opportunities for professional development;
- Creates a level playing field;
- Regulates the code of conduct and national standards.

SQA

- The organisation ensures the involvement of practitioners in the development and delivery of national qualifications; and
- ensures consistency in setting national standards.

Education Scotland

- The role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIe) in providing an overview of all educational developments and standards in schools.
- HMIe supporting the work towards excellence nationally.
- Self-evaluation frameworks developed by HMIe.
- Is Education Scotland doing enough to encourage and support collaboration/best practice?

SEEMiS (one response)

- Offers an excellent model of a responsive, representative and effective governance structure that caters to the needs of multiple education related stakeholders; it strikes an effective balance between local, regional and national control and influence.

Question 2

What are the barriers within the current governance arrangements to achieving the vision of excellence and equity for all?

In partnership with other Local Authorities in the South East Scotland City Region, the Council submitted propositions for an Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. The Deal is a mechanism for accelerating growth by levering in significant government investment. By investing this funding in infrastructure, skills and innovation, economic performance will be significantly improved. Greater autonomy and decision making powers are also being sought for the City Deal Region to help deliver public services more effectively and to tackle inequality and deprivation. It will be appropriate for the Scottish Government to consider the implications of the Governance Review in relation to the current strategic plans being developed through this regional partnership to deliver public services more effectively and to tackle inequality and deprivation.

Respondents to the Governance Review provided the following points in relation to barriers to achieving the vision of excellence and equity for all:

- Current and planned funding mechanisms do not recognise fully the barriers to learning faced by our children and young people. Within East Lothian there are a few areas that fall within the most deprived SIMD deciles. However, children and young people within and across our communities experience barriers to learning which impact negatively on their progress and success. More account needs to be taken of these factors if excellence and equity is to be achieved for all. The continuing focus on SIMD ignores the complexity of the issue.
- The Governance Review does not take adequate account of the wider responsibility to addressing barriers to learning. There is a wider service agenda in terms of Health and Social Services that is beyond the control of schools.
- Current staffing levels and teaching commitments impact negatively on time available to drive forward school improvement priorities and initiatives. Staff require the right conditions within which they can focus on their roles and responsibilities. Some respondents reflected on school managers finding teacher non-contact time as inflexible and holding back development work.
- Stability versus pace of change – the pace of change has been relentless and the level of increased expectations difficult to deliver given current staff recruitment and retention issues. Insufficient time to implement and embed new guidance effectively.
- University and Initial Teacher Education – within the present system there is little or no consistency in the delivery of teacher education. There are persistent shortages of teachers across the education sectors and in several subject areas. The quality of student teachers is too variable. There is a need to explore further the range of routes into teaching and to consider the development of opportunities for other staff with an appropriate level of pedagogy knowledge and experience to work with classroom teachers.

Question 3

Should the above key principles underpin our approach to reform? Are there other principles which should be applied?

Overall, respondents broadly agree with the principles set out within the Governance Review. However, a significant number of respondents commented that these principles already underpin our current educational approach and a governance review is not required to implement these given

they are already enshrined within current East Lothian policy. The following key aspects were deemed to be missing or lacked sufficient emphasis within the principles:

- A statement on inclusion. Meeting the needs of all our young people, no matter where they live or their family circumstances. There is insufficient focus on GIRFEC and on children and young people who require additional support with their learning.
- The funding system should be transparent and seek to ensure maximum public benefit and value for money but ultimately should also be fair and equitable to ensure that other barriers to learning which are not poverty related can be addressed. The funding mechanism should take account of the need for planning and agreeing collectively between all community planning partners the outcomes sought for its children and young people for prevention and early intervention to become a reality.

Question 4

What changes to governance arrangements are required to support decisions about children's learning and school life being taken at school level?

Question 5

What services and support should be delivered by schools? What responsibilities should be devolved to teachers and Head Teachers to enable this? You may wish to provide examples of decisions currently taken by teachers or Head Teachers and decisions which cannot currently be made at school level.

Overall, there is no key desire from respondents to make any adjustments to formal governance arrangements to support decisions about children's learning and school life at school level. East Lothian Council already provides schools with a level of autonomy and responsibility for decision making at a local level within a clear framework of accountability. There are arrangements developed in specific association with Devolved School Management (DSM) covering financial arrangements. Respondents expressed the view that schools in Scotland already have significant autonomy over their own budgets, with clear benefits. A significant number of respondents commented on the need to improve the level of input and response time of other key specialist areas, such as CAMHS, in order to provide support to children and young people at the point of need. Adequate prioritisation of the support services operated by other agencies and partners is essential.

 "Within East Lothian authority a great deal of responsibility has already been devolved to schools under Devolved School Management (DSM). Devolving more responsibility risks overburdening our Head Teachers and distracting them from their main function which is the education of children."

 "We want schools to be run by Local Authorities. We would like HTs to have a say and control over the decision making which we feel they have already but not at the expense of Local Authorities"

A significant number of respondents expressed concern in relation to changes to governance arrangements at school level detracting from senior leaders having a clear focus on improving the quality of learning and teaching and better outcomes for children and young people. If any change in governance arrangements is to be implemented, this would require significant capacity building at different levels and well-developed frameworks and accountability mechanisms. Some concerns were raised about individual Head Teachers pursuing their own agenda leading to inconsistencies in education provision across schools. Respondents also commented on who would hold Head Teachers to account for poor decisions.

"We are unclear about what decisions could be made at a school level that don't happen already. We would worry that total control could mean that we would have a two tier system where parents with money and contacts could drive forward their schools to the detriment of others."

"East Lothian Council currently provide support and challenge and this is both welcomed and appreciated. This is not something the school would like to lose nor would they like to be in a position where services of support they offer comes at a cost."

Question 6

How can children, parents, communities, employers, colleges, universities and others play a stronger role in school life? What actions should be taken to support this?

Elected members

East Lothian Council's elected members play an important role in the life and work of schools across the county. They regularly meet parents and pupils, and attend parent council and community council meetings. They visit schools and meet Head Teachers and teachers in a variety of contexts, including the recruitment of school staff. They take a close interest in attainment, the ethos of the school within its community and other outcomes both at individual school level and across the authority. This knowledge and understanding of schools within their constituencies plays an important part in the development of key policies and budget considerations. Parents and members of the community recognise the role of elected members as a voice for their communities.

Employers

East Lothian Council is represented on the Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian DYW Regional Board. The Regional Board is developing a School and Industry Partnership policy and framework which will ensure all secondary schools receive a more equitable level of employers in line with the key recommendations set out in the DYW progress report published December 2016. An online digital platform – Marketplace – has recently been launched and is being piloted across all secondary schools in East Lothian, Edinburgh and Midlothian, with the aim of improving meaningful engagement between employers and schools through matching employers with schools through skills sessions, inspiration events and career insights. Individual schools and Parent Councils have developed positive and productive partnerships with employers. A challenge faced by some communities is accessibility given the demographics of the area.

An example of good practice is the work of Musselburgh Grammar School's Parent Council to plan and organise highly-regarded careers events for young people in the community. Through Community Benefits in Procurement, Knox Academy, Haddington, have a well-developed and successful engagement and employability relationship with CANON UK, which has created many innovative employability initiatives with pupils in the school.

Universities and Colleges

East Lothian Council benefits from productive partnership arrangements with local universities and colleges. Partnership arrangements with Edinburgh College continue to grow to the benefit of children and young people across the county. In partnership with Edinburgh College, with financial support from the Scottish Futures Trust and with strong support and engagement from employers, the Council has established a Construction and Technology Centre to help address a skills shortage in the construction sector. Further collaboration with Edinburgh College is supporting East Lothian Council's drive to increase primary children's knowledge and interest in STEM career pathways.

Partnership arrangements with Queen Margaret University offer young people a broader range of course options within the senior phase. However, factors such as distance and transportation costs impact on the viability of extending or sustaining such provision.

"It is doubtful whether colleges and universities have the capacity to effectively engage with all schools, indeed the recent changes to Initial Teacher Education have led to increased workloads for schools."

"..members expressed some concern about greater engagement with universities in relation to Initial Teacher Education as the recent changes have considerably increased the workload for schools in relation to receiving student teachers."

Children, parents and communities

East Lothian has made significant progress towards establishing effective learning communities that empower communities and work in partnership with parents. Across the county there are many excellent examples of children, parents, and communities playing a strong role in the life and work of East Lothian's schools. Overall, respondents expressed a view that parent/carer involvement should be at a level that is comfortable for them. Responses from parents and parent groups indicated a desire to continue to focus on engaging with schools in relation to children's learning and understand how best to support their child. Schools becoming a meaningful hub within the community with increased opening hours could increase and encourage more parents to engage with the school and wider community.

"We want to spend time working with our children rather than being forced to become experts in education and/or run our children's schools."

"Area Partnerships have representation from all corners of the community, including schools. This allows different areas of the community to work together and to agree on funding for projects across the community, including schools."

Question 7

How can the governance arrangements support more community-led early learning and childcare provision particularly in remote and rural areas?

Respondents held different views in relation to the proposed increase in early learning and childcare provision. However, parents clearly expressed the view that the current entitlement to early learning and childcare and proposed increase to 1140 hours should take into consideration what is best for the child/children. The importance of strong parental- child attachments in creating well-balanced children should be valued and flexibility within provision is necessary to ensure a greater balance between home and more formal settings. In relation to ensuring equity of provision in rural areas, creativity in approach is advocated including the exploration of mobile nurseries. Respondents expressed the view that currently there are blurred lines of responsibility with regard to childcare and early learning. Opportunities to co-locate services with partners could lead to greater collaboration and enhance provision to families.

"There is a concern that we are creating a society which removes children from a home environment at an ever younger age and for longer periods of time."

Question 8

How can effective collaboration amongst teachers and practitioners be further encouraged and incentivised?

Question 9

What services and support functions could be provided more effectively through clusters of schools working together with partners?

Cluster working is already well-established within East Lothian. Teachers and practitioners within East Lothian Council have a strong track record of collaboration with schools within their cluster, across the county and out-with the Local Authority. Cluster school collaboration has supported moderation activities, sharing of best practice, professional learning opportunities, and benchmarking. Inter-authority collaboration has also supported the implementation of CfE, for example, East Lothian and Midlothian Council secondary schools worked collaboratively to develop resources to support the delivery of new qualifications. Currently, cross-sector curriculum development groups formed by representatives from different schools across the county are taking forward the development of curriculum frameworks to improve consistency in delivery of the curriculum across all schools. East Lothian's education service provides additional funding to support cluster and curriculum development groups. Collaborative working across authorities is being encouraged through recently established inter-authority groups in key aspects such as quality improvement, early learning and childcare and assessment. Overall, respondents identify the need to provide teachers with more time to ensure collaborative activities are meaningful and lead to improved practice in learning, teaching and assessment. There is a strongly held view that teachers and Head Teachers would increase collaboration if capacity within staffing levels and time was there to do so. Funding was also identified as key to increasing levels of collaboration. The establishment of a cluster leadership role with specific resources to carry out the functions of the cluster group could strengthen further the impact of the cluster approach.

East Lothian Council's Children and Young People's Strategic Plan was developed jointly with key partners recognising the vital role wider partnership arrangements with key services, agencies and CLD play in achieving our ambition to deliver the equity agenda for children in our community. The proposal to encourage cluster schools arrangements does not take sufficient account of the other services around a child. There is a need for other agencies and services to have the time and resources to support a commitment to joint working at a cluster level. Increasing the involvement of health and social care, specialist services such as speech and language therapy and CAMHS within a cluster approach was a frequent theme within the responses received from stakeholders. However, it was also noted that cluster arrangements will require central co-ordination to ensure local contexts and the needs of children and their families are better met by not being delivered through a 'one-size fits all' approach.

"Effective collaboration does not need to be encouraged or incentivised, it needs to be enabled."

"If teachers take on responsibility for services and support functions that are currently handled by Local Authorities, the outcome is likely to result in less time for collaboration rather than more."

Question 10

What services or functions are best delivered at a regional level? This may include functions or services currently delivered at a local or a national level.

Question 11

What factors should be considered when establishing new educational regions?

East Lothian Council supports the definition of "regions" given by the Depute First Minister at the meeting with CoSLA on 01 November 2016 and at the Preston Lodge High School Learning Festival as being "collaboration" between authorities. The present position where the legal and wider accountabilities rest with Local Authorities is clearly understood by most stakeholders.

East Lothian Council is well represented and an active participant within a number of inter-authority partnerships established to achieve our ambition to grow our economy, communities and people. East Lothian Council's education service is actively involved in establishing formal partnerships with neighbouring authorities, referred to as the Southern Alliance authorities. Plans are taking shape and have been determined through the identification of key priorities in response to an assessment of local needs. A key area identified is the scope for co-operation in additional support needs provision including educational psychology. Strategic planning for such services within the Southern Alliance area will strengthen provision for all children and young people.

Respondents indicate that there is scope to develop the following functions/services within a voluntary regional arrangement albeit this was caveated with the request to retain these at a local level:

- Additional Support Needs provision
- Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers agreements
- Business functions, HR administration
- Career Long Professional Learning
- Legal support and advice
- Quality Improvement
- Alignment of the school day/academic session
- Languages both 1+2 and Gaelic education

The establishment and development of 'educational regions' will require those democratically elected at a local level to be assured that such arrangements will add value to the Council's service delivery and ensure best value is sustained. Elected members will seek to safeguard local planning, statutory responsibilities for the delivery of services and scrutiny arrangements within any move towards education regions. Continued local accountability is essential.

"Locally elected members have a key role to play in local education, supporting the needs of their electorate, ensuring accountability and supporting parents who request their help."

Question 12

What services or support functions should be delivered at a national level?

Question 13

How should governance support teacher education and professional learning in order to build the professional capacity we need?

East Lothian Council's education service concurs with the views expressed within the ADES response to the Governance Review in relation to the functions to be delivered at a national level.

Very few responses were received from stakeholders in relation to the services or support functions to be delivered at a national level. Overall, there is consensus for aspects such as the independent scrutiny of the quality of education to be undertaken by relevant bodies such as Education Scotland. However, there is clearly a desire to reduce the burden placed on schools with nurseries to work to one quality framework and for the quality of service to be evaluated by a single scrutiny body. Stronger direction in setting out best practice and greater consistency and clarity in the guidance and advice from both the Scottish Government and Education Scotland is highlighted as an area for improvement. Respondents also commented on the need for clarity in relation to the dual role of Education Scotland in relation to inspection and the capacity to provide high-quality equitable support within current staffing arrangements.

Respondents reflected on the need for Initial Teacher Education establishments to provide an equitable experience for student teachers in relation to the content of course programmes and to have a stronger focus on aspects such as research proven approaches to the teaching of reading, input on additional support needs and inclusive teaching practices. Schools need to be a genuine partner in the design and delivery of teacher education. Increasing opportunities for teachers to teach across sectors and primary teacher subject specialization will support curriculum progression and transition, a continuing area for improvement at national and local level. The lack of career pathways is highlighted as an area to be explored in relation to attracting new recruits into the teaching profession and incentivizing existing staff.

Question 14

Should the funding formula for schools be guided by the principles that it should support excellence and equity, be fair, simple, transparent, predictable and deliver value for money? Should other principles be used to inform the design of the formula?

Question 15

What further controls over funding should be devolved to school level?

Overall, respondents were unclear as to how changes to current funding mechanisms will be in the best interests of individual schools or of all children in need. Budgets for individual schools being set locally by local authorities is regarded as beneficial given the detailed knowledge of the local areas under their responsibility and an understanding of the demographics of individual schools in a way that a postcode based funding formula could not achieve. There is significant concern that vulnerable children in schools in less deprived and/or rural areas will miss out on much needed support given the current emphasis on SIMD and FSM. There is a distinct view that directing funding to schools will result in this funding being utilised to fill the health and social services gap. Concerns were raised in relation to the capacity of senior school managers to manage a more devolved school budget given the need to focus on learning and teaching. This is particularly the case for Head Teachers in small schools and for those who hold shared headship responsibilities across more than one school.

The Governance Review does not reflect the current arrangements for devolved school management currently in place within Local Authorities. East Lothian Council continues to collaborate with its Head Teachers to review current budgetary arrangements in line with the guidelines on Devolved School Management published by the Improvement Service.[1] As articulated within the ADES

response to the Governance Review, these guidelines cover the areas presently incorporated within the Governance Review, including giving more decision making to schools and were widely welcomed as being the result of careful consideration and wide consultation. East Lothian Council and stakeholders are of the firm view that it is difficult to see where the value added comes from the inclusion of DSM matters in the present Governance Review.

Question 16

How could the accountability arrangements for education be improved?

Question 17

Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the governance of education in Scotland?

Overall, respondents commented on the value of accountability being held at a local level. There is no appetite to change current accountability arrangements and respondents are clear that there are already in place well understood systems of accountability. Respondents raised concerns about any proposed changes leading to an additional layer of bureaucracy. Section 70 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, as amended already provides the appropriate level of safeguards in relation to accountability. Statutory appeals mechanisms exist within which the statutory responsibilities of education authorities can be challenged.

"Any changes made to the governance of Scottish Education MUST give school leaders freedom to engage in activity which will enhance learning and teaching, not extra duties which will divert them from that core role and their professional skill-set."

"If further inconsistency is to be avoided local authorities should retain ultimate accountability."

"It is vital that support and challenge of schools and the non-education management is accountable locally, we do not want oversight too far from schools as this could risk making education more remote from parents and therefore much less accountable."

Delivering excellence and equity cannot be the sole responsibility of schools. Whilst East Lothian Council shares the aim to reduce inequality and improve educational outcomes for all children and young people this cannot be achieved by separating schools from the wider children's services. It must be recognised that the potential to achieve excellence and equity exists within the current system of Local Authority governance.

"Closing the attainment gap is a shared agenda delivered through a multi-agency approach and creating productive learning communities that work in partnership to achieve this goal."

"To achieve equity there has to be a recognition (in policy and funding) that SIMD is not the only barrier to learning."

The aforementioned response incorporates the views of members of the current East Lothian Council Administration, Council Officers, Teaching Staff, Parent Councils and parents/carers however their views will also have been taken account of and represented separately through their respective local/national organisations and professional bodies.