

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 31 October 2017

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Education Governance Next Steps: Regional Improvement Collaboratives

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Council of the announcement of the agreed position between Local Government and the Scottish Government on implementing Regional Improvement Collaboratives.
- 1.2 To seek Council approval for East Lothian to be a member of the South East Alliance and to progress with a South East Regional Improvement Collaborative Plan to add value to our current improvement activities and support East Lothian Council to achieve its vision for children and young people.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is asked to:
 - i. note the contents of this report;
 - ii. note the contents of the draft South East Regional Improvement Collaborative Starter Paper;
 - iii. approve East Lothian Council's membership of the South East Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative;
 - iv. agree to delegate to the Chief Executive Officer, East Lothian Council's participation in the development of the South East Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative and Regional Improvement Plan;

- v. note that update reports will be brought to the Education Committee outlining progress with the development of the South East Regional Improvement Collaborative and Improvement Plan.

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'. The Governance Review examined the system changes required to devolve decision making and funding directly to schools and communities. The review also sought views on the governance of education in Scotland and how the Scottish Government can further empower teachers, practitioners, parents, schools and early learning and childcare settings.
- 3.2 The Scottish Government published an analysis of the submissions to the Governance Review consultation alongside the publication of Education Governance: Next Steps June 2017. The Education Governance: Next Steps paper sets out a number of changes to the governance of Scottish education some of which require legislative change and will be included in an Education Bill.
- 3.3 The Education Governance: Next Steps paper makes it clear that enhanced regional collaboration between education authorities will be a feature of future arrangements. *A Nation with Ambition, The Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-18* states the Government's intention to consult on an Education Bill to take forward a programme of reform to school education; strengthen the education workforce and improve collaboration and engagement. The Education Bill will provide legislative underpinning for Regional Improvement Collaboratives.
- 3.4 A Scottish Government and Local Government Steering Group was established to jointly scope out the design and development of Regional Improvement Collaboratives based on the policy direction outlined in the Education Governance: Next Steps paper. An agreed position between Local Government and the Scottish Government on implementing Regional Improvement Collaboratives was announced 28 September 2017 and set out within the Regional Improvement Collaboratives for Education Joint Steering Group Report Appendix 1. A letter sent to all Chief Executive Officers 3 October 2017 states that both the Scottish Government and Local Government have shaped the development of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, working to ensure improved outcomes for children are at the heart of this work Appendix 2.
- 3.5 The Joint Steering Group Report outlines the initial proposals for the composition of six Regional Improvement Collaboratives and that East Lothian Council will be a member of the South East Regional Improvement Collaborative. Immediate next steps include agreement around the leadership and formation of the Improvement Collaboratives

with a Regional Lead Officer to be identified to support the development of a Regional Improvement Collaborative Plan and Workforce Plan by January 2018. The Regional Lead Officer and the Regional Improvement Collaborative Plan will be agreed and approved by the Chief Executives of the local authorities within the collaborative.

- 3.6 Chief Executive Officers and Directors of Education from each of the local authorities within the South East Alliance have worked in partnership to develop and build on existing partnership arrangements to inform the South East Regional Improvement Collaborative Plan. Some of this existing work will be included as part of the delivery plan for the South East Regional Improvement Collaborative.
- 3.7 The South East Alliance has commenced plans for a Regional Improvement Collaborative with a focus on Quality Improvement and Raising Attainment. More detail is set out in the South East Alliance starter paper included as Appendix 3. The progress and outcomes of the Delivery Plan for the South East Improvement Collaborative will be reported to Education Scotland and to the appropriate committee within each Council.
- 3.8 Membership of the South East Alliance presents the opportunity to develop a vision for our South East Improvement Collaborative that is inclusive of our headteachers and schools to deliver excellence and equity on a regional basis. Each of the local authorities within the South East Alliance is signed up to the key principles outlined within the Education Governance: Next Steps paper. Following these principles will allow a partnership approach in delivering the relevant aspects of the Edinburgh City Deal as well as the expectations detailed in the Next Steps document. The South East Alliance recognises that it will not succeed in reducing inequity without a holistic approach across Children's Services. The wider Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda is of crucial importance when tackling inequalities and closing the attainment gap.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct policy implications associated with this report.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - no direct implications associated with this report. The outcome of the Scottish Government's Fair Funding consultation could have significant implications for the Council in terms of the future funding of education and the work of the South East Regional Improvement Collaborative.
- 6.2 Personnel - no direct implications associated with this report. The South East Regional Improvement Collaborative will have implications for personnel within the Council in order to progress the actions set out in the Regional Improvement Plan.
- 6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Education Governance - Next Steps Executive Summary June 2017
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00521038.pdf>

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REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVES FOR EDUCATION

Report of the Joint Steering Group – Updated 21st September 2017

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1. Background

Following the publication of the '*Education Governance: Next Steps*' paper in June 2017, it was agreed that a joint Steering Group be established between the Scottish Government and Local Government. The remit of this group is to work together to develop proposals, based on the policy direction outlined in the 'Next Steps' document.

The Steering Group is led by co-chairs, Fiona Robertson, (Director of Learning, Scottish Government), and Angela Leitch (SOLACE Education and Young People's Strategic Lead). Membership includes representation from the following:

- Scottish Government, Learning Directorate
- Scottish Government, Children & Families Directorate
- Education Scotland
- COSLA
- SOLACE
- ADES

2. Purpose

This report summarises the first task of the Steering Group, which is to develop options for the role and responsibilities of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives. The purpose of this task is to ensure that together we can establish a clear basis for the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (ICs) so they can be developed at pace, with a clear focus on supporting schools and authorities to raise attainment and close the attainment gap. This work is driven by 'Getting It Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC), and will also make a central contribution to ongoing joint work on Public Service Reform, and in particular, the collaborative work on children and young people that is already underway.

3. Scope

The remit for this work on ICs was jointly agreed and defines a set of specific areas for the Steering Group to consider. These were set out as follows (direct extract):

- Guiding principles: Clear guiding principles will be developed and agreed to frame the work of the collaboratives and help to 'operationalise' the policy intentions in the 'Next Steps' document.
- Functions: Building on the purpose of the collaboratives as set out in the 'Next Steps' paper (Section 3.1 and 4.1 in Annex A), consider the essential functions that each collaborative must discharge, and the extent to which other functions

should be for each collaborative to determine. This will include what needs to be consistent across the collaboratives and where there is scope for regional flexibility in terms of approaches to improvement.

- Leadership: Proposals for putting in place interim leadership arrangements that will enable the collaboratives to develop their work, and consider arrangements for filling leadership roles in the longer-term. This includes views of the group on the skills and qualities that those leading the collaboratives will need to demonstrate and build on existing collaboratives.
- Staffing: Initial guidance on the optimal staffing mix of the collaborative, drawing on existing local authority officers, Education Scotland and staff from other agencies.
- Geography: Agree the process, building on existing work, to define the regional improvement collaborative geographies, ensuring reach and deliverability in every part of Scotland and to every school.
- Accountability: Options to consider local democratic accountability alongside national accountability.
- Measures of success: Initial thinking on criteria to describe what success would look like at the various stages of the development and implementation of the collaboratives; including the initial launch, the formation and content of a collaborative action plan, at the end of year one, and so on.

4. Process

The Steering Group first met on 3rd August 2017 and agreed how to tackle each of the areas identified in the remit, drawing on the expertise and experience of all members. A number of discussion papers were commissioned from group members for wider discussion by the Group as a whole. The Steering Group also drew on the work of existing collaboratives operating on a regional basis, in order to learn lessons from their experience and build on their approach. The Group recognised the need for pace, commitment and energy to be focused on collaboration, in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

This report will now outline the Group's interim conclusions for each of the areas outlined above, for consideration by SOLACE Officer Bearers (by Education and Young People's Strategic Lead), Sally Loudon (Chief Executive, COSLA) and Paul Johnston (DG Education, Justice and Communities, SG).

The report will then be subject to discussion and agreement between Ministers and COSLA. An interim discussion took place between DFM and Cllr. McCabe on 15th September, which is reflected in the accountability section. A further discussion took place on 21st September to agree this version of the report.

5. (a) Interim Conclusions: Key Messages

It should be noted from the outset that all members of the Steering Group welcomed the opportunity to work together to shape these proposals, which will essentially deliver on the policy direction set by 'Next Steps'.

Early discussions revealed a strong consensus around a number of key messages, namely:

- A shared vision to improve the education and life chances of our children and young people, through delivering excellence and equity, with a collective commitment to close the gap in attainment between our least and most disadvantaged children and to raise attainment for all.
- Clear recognition of the improvement work that is already underway across Scotland, whilst acknowledging the need to address variability in performance and quality improvement support for schools. There is a need to secure greater consistency in pace and impact, reflecting the ambition of 'Next Steps'.
- Agreement on the importance of increased collaboration and the principle of establishing ICs, as part of wider improvement work.
- Recognition that strong and collaborative leadership, at all levels, will be key to delivering on this ambition. This is not about creating a new formal body, but about developing different ways of working, bringing together capacity from across an area, and beyond, in order to add value through collective efforts.
- A commitment that the development and implementation of the ICs should be driven by the analysis of data and performance, and an absolute focus on addressing gaps, variability in outcomes and areas for improvement.
- A strong commitment to the principles of GIRFEC and a clear desire to ensure that together we create an empowered 'system' to deliver excellence and equity for all our children.

5. (b) Interim Conclusions: Guiding Principles

A set of 'guiding principles' will frame the work of the ICs to help 'operationalise' the policy intentions as set out in the 'Next Steps' document. The Steering Group has therefore defined a set of guiding principles which it is proposed should be core to all ICs. This does not preclude individual ICs from expanding upon this core list should they wish to reflect additional aspects of existing regional activity, or to respond collectively to particular local needs.

The guiding principles proposed by the Steering Group for all ICs, are as follows:

- **Outcome-focused** – the primary purpose for ICs is to support schools in the delivery of educational improvement, developing and maintaining a coherent focus on raising attainment and closing the attainment gap, whilst ensuring that activity is aligned to the National Improvement Framework (NIF).
- **Child-centred** - improvement must reflect the principles of GIRFEC and take a holistic approach to the needs of the child. ICs must consider the 'whole system' and ensure that all partners are working across authority boundaries and that they are engaging with those working closest to children, and with children themselves, at the point of need, as and when required.
- **A thematic approach** – in order to ensure function comes before structure, ICs must establish clarity of purpose and common goals, drawing on the NIF and contributions of all partners. The focus should be on building collective expertise, knowledge and capacity to drive continuous improvement.
- **Robust, locally-driven and evidence-based** – reform initiatives must be driven by the needs and priorities identified in each region, whilst reflecting national priorities and evidence. Where appropriate, ICs will also draw on the activity and experience of existing regional groupings and their work to date. Evaluation must be built in from the outset.
- **Agile and flexible** – each IC must build the capacity of the 'system' in order to respond to specific needs, and to react to change and unexpected events. They should actively encourage innovation and seek opportunities for partnership working. Sharing best practice within and beyond their IC will be essential.
- **Empowering** – it will be important for ICs to create an environment based on trust and open dialogue, working with partners to ensure that progress can be made at pace, and that any ambiguities or tensions can be surfaced and resolved through collective effort. A 'culture of collaboration' will need to develop at all levels across the 'education community', whilst ensuring collective support to the role and responsibilities of headteachers in securing change in the classroom and beyond.

Furthermore, the Steering Group discussed whether ICs may want to supplement these guiding principles with more detailed 'design principles' to further assist them in their work, particularly in areas where collaborative working is at an earlier stage. These could be expressed as key questions to be asked when considering specific priorities and improvement initiatives. An example of some initial work that was developed by an existing Collaborative is given in Appendix A for consideration.

5. (c) Interim Conclusions: Functions

The Group was asked to consider the functions for ICs, based on the overarching purpose set out in 'Next Steps' which states that ICs will:

- Provide excellent educational improvement support for headteachers, teachers, managers and practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals. These teams will draw on Education Scotland staff, local authority staff and others.
- Provide coherent focus across all partners through delivery of an annual regional plan and associated work programme aligned with the National Improvement Framework.
- Facilitate collaborative working across the region, including sharing best practice, supporting collaborative networks and pursuing partnership approaches.

The Steering Group wish to endorse and emphasise the importance of the following parameters regarding the functions of ICs:

- The functions of the ICs must support and directly contribute to nationally and locally identified priorities, and the overall policy objective of empowering our teachers, parents, partners and communities to deliver excellence and equity for all our children.
- There should be clarity at the outset regarding the essential core functions for all ICs, and those functions which individual ICs should determine, where a more tailored and flexible approach is required to suit local areas and clusters of schools. As referred to in 'Next Steps', there is no 'one size fits all' solution. The Steering Group has set out a proposal for that distinction in the next section on 'functions'.
- All ICs should be evidence-based and build on existing practice across Scottish education, at both local and national level. Activity should not be restricted to schools alone, but encompass the range of learning environments that are experienced by children and young people, including all early learning and childcare providers delivering the statutory entitlement.
- ICs should also consider educational improvement within the context of local Children's Services and the range of work led by multi-agency partners to improve outcomes for children, including Community Planning Partnerships, Social Work, Community Learning and Development and the Third Sector. Links with business and skills-related organisations will also be important in terms of supporting the development of the young workforce.
- The Group was also clear that this was about all partners working differently, as well as about securing 'additionality' through collaboration, thereby protecting against displacement or replication of activity.

- The Group emphasised the key role that Education Scotland will play in supporting the delivery of all the functions, as a core part of the work of ICs, including bespoke support to schools. This will require Education Scotland to take on a significantly enhanced role and purpose going forward, with a strengthened improvement function, as referred to in 'Next Steps'.

On this basis, the Steering Group proposes that the following functions are undertaken by all ICs:

- Identify **priorities** for improvement within the region, based on an **analysis** of all available evidence on educational performance within the region, including school attainment data, and consideration of the priorities set out in the **National Improvement Framework (NIF)**.
- Formulate a **regional improvement plan**, based on the process of analysis and prioritisation mentioned above, and drawing on school improvement plans, local authority improvement plans and the national improvement plan. The plan should be agreed with the Chief Inspector of Education, to both ensure that it takes account of all available evidence on performance, and to support and challenge the selection of the educational strategies and interventions. 'Next Steps' refers to this plan being an annual requirement for all ICs. **The Steering Group discussed whether it would be preferable to require three year regional plans, with a clear commitment for an annual review of performance.** This would empower colleagues to tackle more systemic change and to develop more substantive and sustainable programmes of work, whilst retaining a clear commitment to pace and delivery. It would also match the three year budget planning timeframe within local authorities which could help unlock new ways of allocating resource to improvement activity. **It is proposed that this is considered alongside the current legislative requirements for annual reporting on the National Improvement Framework.**
- Enhance and improve **professional learning** for teachers, other professionals and key partners within the region, within a national framework, to ensure delivery on identified local priorities.
- Ensure that an appropriate **range of support, interventions and programmes** are in place to raise attainment and close the poverty-related attainment gap within the region. This should include proportionate and tailored support to schools and early learning and childcare providers.
- **Identify, promote and share good practice** in learning, teaching and assessment within the region, and with other regions. This should operate at all levels, and include developing networks of teachers and other professionals to share good practice, through **peer-to-peer and school-to-school collaboration**. These networks should include subject or sector specialisms across the region and build on areas identified for improvement, ensuring an appropriate level of challenge is injected into these groupings.

- Support schools **to interpret and implement key educational developments** and insights gained from research.
- Ensure and enhance **subject-specific support and advice** across all eight curriculum areas, with a clear focus on literacy and numeracy and the areas of improvement identified for that region, and their contribution to attainment.
- Facilitate access to **sector-specific support and advice** which may include areas such as early learning, Gaelic Medium Education, and additional support for learning.
- Build capacity in **improvement methodology**, through review, collaboration and shared approaches. This will include working with local authorities to ensure appropriate support is in place for schools to ‘manage change’ successfully through training, support, peer review and challenge.
- Take a **regional approach to supporting staffing challenges**, including recruitment and retention; promoting shared approaches to building capacity and securing improvement.
- Work with local authorities and other partners to **support wider collaborative working** across the ‘system’, including education, social work, health, Community Planning Partnerships and others to ensure that together, ‘we get it right for every child’.

The Steering Group proposes that the following functions should be tailored to local needs by individual ICs:

- The ‘**improvement offer**’ should be proportionate depending on school performance and capacity for self-improvement. Within a region, some schools may need a ‘light touch’ approach and others may need more significant support or intervention to secure improvement. It will therefore be the responsibility of the IC, in collaboration with the constituent local authorities, schools and other local partners, to determine the nature of activity and how that is delivered in practice.
- Following on from this, it should be the responsibility of each individual IC to decide on their ‘**model of staff deployment**’, to ensure they are able to deliver on the core functions and agreed priorities.
- Each IC will have a different starting point as they consider how best to deliver on the core activity and priorities. It is anticipated that all the ICs will develop over time and that in order to secure real improvement, each IC will need to **test new and different ways of working** to assess the impact on improvement in their area. What works in one area may not work in another. Whilst all ICs should encourage innovation, there will need to be flexibility and variation in the approaches taken.

Once regional plans are in place, it will be important for each IC to **simplify and clarify the landscape to avoid any confusion in schools and learning centres**,

in terms of where to go for different types of improvement and support. This will be particularly important for headteachers given their changing role and responsibilities, as well as by other professionals, who will need clarity as to what is being provided by the IC, what is being provided by their individual local authority, and essentially where to go for specialist advice.

5. (d) Interim Conclusions: Leadership

The Steering Group would like to highlight the critical role of effective leadership in the development of the ICs, for example:

- It is clear that the ICs will rely on excellent educational leadership and the top priority for educational leaders will be to achieve excellence and equity for every child within the region.
- There is already a wide range of improvement activity underway across the education sector in Scotland. 'Next Steps' builds on this and sets out a clear ambition for increased pace, reach into every school and greater consistency of impact. Strong and collaborative leadership, at all levels, and across the system, will be key to delivering on this ambition.
- The leadership must ensure that improvement activity is focused on the most effective interventions and that it progresses with pace and impact.
- Educational leaders working within the ICs must have the highest levels of credibility, visibility and educational strength and expertise in order to motivate and inspire change and improvement.
- They will also need to ensure that improvements are embedded and sustained.

There are a number of options available for developing leadership capacity across the ICs. As stated in 'Next Steps', leadership development at all levels will be built around new career pathways for teachers and the 'Framework for Educational Leadership'. Programmes currently led by SCEL will be expanded and offered as progressive leadership pathways for teachers within regions. This will be linked to succession planning and the new campaign to attract more teachers into promoted posts including headship.

The Steering Group has considered the policy direction set by 'Next Steps' and a number of themes have emerged from those discussions:

To recap, 'Next Steps' indicates that strategic leadership and direction will be provided by a 'Regional Director' and a wider regional leadership team. It indicates that the Regional Director post will be appointed by the Scottish Government and will report to the Chief Inspector of Education for Scotland.

- Whilst there is a strong recognition of the importance and critical contribution of leadership to the work of ICs, since the publication of 'Next Steps' there have been a range of views regarding the model of leadership proposed. This relates to the identification, deployment and accountability of the Regional Directors, as well as to any changes in the statutory responsibilities of Local Government with respect to education.

- Having considered how this might operate, local government colleagues have reflected on current experience and developed a proposal for that top tier of leadership which is intended to address some of those concerns and to secure buy-in, pace, ownership and support from local authorities, ADES and other partners. In this model, the Director role is positioned as a 'Regional Co-ordinator' and is appointed following a nomination by local authority Chief Executives and employed by a Local Authority. The Director would be accountable as senior officer, to the Chief Executives of the constituent local authorities, as well as providing reports and information to the Chief Inspector of Education. A wider system of local and national reporting could then be developed which allows for local and national democratic accountability for children and families. This type of model is currently being developed in the Northern Alliance and West Partnership.

On considering the proposed Local Government model of leadership, Education Scotland indicated that the Chief Inspector of Education would want to be involved in the appointment, working with colleagues to ensure that candidates have the right skills, experience and track record, to make the best possible impact on leading improvement within the region.

Following discussions between the DFM and Cllr. McCabe on 15th and 21st September, each IC will be led by a 'Regional Improvement Lead' (rather than the title of 'Regional Director'). The Regional Improvement Lead will be selected jointly by the local authorities that make up the IC and the Chief Inspector of Education. The appointment would be made with the agreement of the Chief Executives in all the authorities and with the Scottish Government, (who would be advised by the Chief Inspector). The Regional Improvement Lead would be formally line managed by the Chief Executive of the employing authority, whilst reporting to all of the collaborating authorities and to the Chief Inspector.

5. (e) Interim Conclusions: Staffing

The Steering Group agreed the following:

- Staffing decisions must directly reflect consideration of all the functions required for the IC and the agreed priorities for improvement.
- It will be important for each IC to ensure they secure the best possible mix of staffing to enable them to deliver with ambition and pace. Getting the right mix of expertise will be essential.
- The Group acknowledged the current variability in support for improvement across the country and that for some there will be a need for a significant shift and rapid scaling up of activity, based on the local needs identified.

The Steering Group has developed some initial guidance for ICs to consider when developing their education leadership teams. For example:

- Firstly, it is worth re-emphasising that within 'Next Steps', there is not a proposal to establish a new body or employing authority, a position supported by the Steering Group. Collaborating on a regional basis towards collective aims will be a **way of working** which will be embedded throughout the system – both within and between organisations who are working to get it right for every child. This should be reflected in how the ICs approach their staffing decisions.
- Each IC will develop a '**workforce plan**', taking a holistic view of the functions they need to deliver on, (reflecting national, regional and local priorities), the skills mix to deliver those functions, and identifying where there is existing capacity, (including the role of digital solutions), and where there are gaps.
- As mentioned earlier, the Steering Group proposes that it should be the responsibility of each individual IC to decide on their '**model of staff deployment**', to ensure they can deliver on the core functions and agreed priorities. The priority for each IC is to ensure it has an agile and flexible staffing model which is responsive to the needs and priorities within the region, whilst also reflecting the ongoing requirements of the constituent local authorities. ICs will also need to think carefully about how they balance that need for flexibility with the need to ensure that the core offering is sufficiently resourced to deliver progress at pace, and to ensure that improvement support is available where and when it is needed.
- In determining the exact make-up of each IC, each area should consider the evidence and the agreed priorities, but also ensure that they draw on existing activity, connections and partnerships. Furthermore, given the strong focus on the use of performance data and evidence from a range of sources, it will be important for each IC to consider how best to ensure they have the required **resource for data analysis** on a regional basis.

- It will also be important to **consider the respective areas of strengths and expertise within a region, alongside areas for accelerated development**; this will help ensure a region is getting the most from existing skills and expertise, that it is identifying gaps, and that it can target where to share and redeploy resources and where it needs to bring in additional expertise.
- All ICs will need to have a **core team** which will include senior officers, e.g. the Chief Education Officers from each local authority within the IC, and senior officer(s) from Education Scotland and from the Care Inspectorate in relation to early learning and childcare. They should also ensure that their Attainment Advisers form a key part of the ICs, charged with bringing an equity focus to the work of the IC, whilst still working intensively on the Scottish Attainment Challenge. It will also be important to link with the Improvement Advisers for the Children & Young People Improvement Collaborative.
- This **core offer would obviously be built upon** depending on the scale of the IC and the needs/ priorities within the region. Other areas that ICs may want to consider include Continuing Professional Development, social care, health and well-being, parental engagement, and additional support for learning.
- A **wider leadership forum** could also include cluster leaders, (for example, a headteacher from each of the clusters/ area school groups within the region), and leaders from partner agencies and youth employment co-ordinators.
- It is anticipated that **additional resources** will be needed to boost staffing capacity within the ICs. This may include specialists in all eight curriculum areas within each IC, plus additional dedicated sector or specialist expertise and capacity as required. The impact of recruiting additional staff, (who are likely to come from schools), will need to be risk assessed in terms of staffing shortages in areas such as STEM. Resourcing may also draw on universities, businesses and other wider community links, again depending on local needs and priorities. ICs may also need to look beyond their own region to secure the required expertise and input, and engage with national agencies and national networks.
- A model for **administrative support** will be required for each IC. This could include communications, events and branding. Arrangements for aspects of support such as travel and subsistence could be met by the employers of the individuals within the IC or through a service level agreement between the partners within the IC. This will be for each IC to determine.

5. (f) Interim Conclusions: Geography

The Steering Group was asked to agree the process, building on existing work, to define the geographies of the ICs. The approach must ensure reach and deliverability in every part of Scotland and to every school, including consideration of early learning and childcare settings.

Initial work has been undertaken by Local Government to look at existing relationships and the range of activity. They propose that each local authority in Scotland belongs to a collaborative grouping based on local assessment of where the most meaningful work can be undertaken on a partnership basis. The geographies proposed by Local Government are noted below:

The Northern Alliance	Aberdeen City Council Aberdeenshire Council Argyll and Bute Council Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Highland Council Moray Council Orkney Islands Council Shetland Islands Council
The Tayside Collaborative	Angus Council Dundee City Council Perth and Kinross Council
The West Partnership	East Dunbartonshire Council East Renfrewshire Council Glasgow City Council Inverclyde Council North Lanarkshire Council Renfrewshire Council South Lanarkshire Council West Dunbartonshire Council
South West Collaborative	East Ayrshire Council North Ayrshire Council South Ayrshire Council Dumfries and Galloway Council
South East Collaborative	Edinburgh City Council East Lothian Council Fife Council Midlothian Council Scottish Borders
Forth and Almond Valley Collaborative	Clackmannanshire Council Falkirk Council Stirling Council West Lothian Council

The Steering Group noted the groupings which have been identified by Local Government. Based on this consideration, the Group reflected further on the remit of the Steering Group which was to agree the process for final decision-making. The Group had an initial discussion on the range of factors that will need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the final groupings. They are as follows:

- Scale of the grouping.
- Capacity to deliver additionality, including the availability of specialist support.
- Range of school performance.
- Existing regional footprint and regional arrangements.
- Other cross-authority collaborative working, such as the City Region Deals.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Scottish Government Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Programme Delivery Team is working with the Improvement Service, to ensure that Change Managers appointed to support authorities in planning for and implementing the expansion, are aligned to IC geographies, once agreed.

5. (g) Interim Conclusions: Accountability

The Steering Group was tasked with developing options to address local democratic accountability alongside national accountability, within the context of the policy direction set out in 'Next Steps'. This will enable ICs to directly support teachers, practitioners and headteachers to deliver excellence and equity in education, by facilitating both the decentralising of some Education Scotland resources and the pooling and sharing of local authority resources to ensure an enhanced and responsive improvement capacity.

There is also a strong link between governance and funding. The Steering Group's remit does not extend to funding and so this is highlighted as an area requiring further discussion.

In considering a possible model, the Steering Group looked at how an accountability framework can contribute to an effective governance system, with reference to the changes that are articulated in 'Next Steps' regarding the roles of headteachers, Local Government, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government, as well as the step change in pace and impact which 'Next Steps' requires. The Steering Group therefore considered accountability along the lines set out in 'Next Steps', as well as a proposal developed by local government colleagues.

The Steering Group agreed that the key responsibility for all ICs will be to:

- **Secure excellence through raising attainment:** ensuring that every child achieves the highest standards in literacy and numeracy, set out within Curriculum for Excellence levels, and the right range of skills, qualifications and achievements to allow them to succeed.
- **Achieve equity:** ensuring every child has the same opportunity to succeed, with a particular focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- **Share collective responsibility across the whole system - the embodiment of GIRFEC:** multiple agencies within and outwith the Scottish Government and local authorities strive towards these aims at every level of their delivery. Relationships forged at a strategic level help to make sure that delivery on the ground can put the child at the centre.

The Steering Group also agreed that any model must also meet the following five principles:

- **Strategic alignment and deliverability** - the role of ICs within the system to ensure alignment from high-level strategy to operational delivery and to bring added value to the delivery of the policy direction of 'Next Steps'.

- **Clarity** - clear agreed goals for multiple agencies and parties, (the system), around children and young people, striving towards commonly held aims (primarily delivering excellence and equity).
- **Simplicity and transparency** - minimal additional bureaucracy and structures.
- **Agility** - each stakeholder's (agency or individual) ability to articulate their place in the whole picture and be an active participant in its success.
- **Support collaboration** - clear process(es) whereby stakeholders can add value to the 'system' and be held to account for their contribution and performance in relation to ICs.

Following discussions between DFM and Cllr. McCabe on 15th and 21st September, the following model of shared accountability is set out below. This model demonstrates a commitment to collaboration throughout the approach, at every stage and at every level:

The Regional Improvement Lead would be:

- Selected jointly by the local authorities that make up the IC and the Chief Inspector of Education for Scotland. The process of selection will itself be collaborative, with the IC authorities and the Chief Inspector working closely from the outset of the appointment process. It is the expectation that in the first instance, the regional role will be fulfilled by reassigning an existing local government employee into this post, although this may be someone from outwith the region. The exact parameters will be for discussion between the local authorities and the Chief Inspector depending on their assessment of the local context. The final appointment should be made with the agreement of all of the Chief Executives within the IC and with the SG (who will be advised by the Chief Inspector).
- Formally line managed by the Chief Executive of the employing authority, but reporting to all the collaborating authorities (at official and political level), and to the Chief Inspector.

The IC as a whole would also have an accountability to the Chief Executives and Convenors of the collaborating authorities and to the Chief Inspector. Schools and headteachers must have an opportunity to comment on the extent to which the IC provides the support that they need.

This model is based on the following agreements:

- **Each IC must take forward a meaningful and substantive improvement agenda**

As stated earlier, a 'Regional Improvement Plan' must be developed that covers all eight curriculum areas, with a clear focus on the key improvement priorities in the region and on the work that is needed to close the attainment gap. The Plan must also be designed in a 'bottom-up manner, based on the needs and improvement priorities of schools, and must be approved by the Chief Inspector.

A 'Workforce Plan' also needs to be developed alongside the Improvement Plan. The Workforce Plan will be assessed to ensure that it will deliver the full range of activity within the Improvement Plan, at pace. As many staff as possible need to be deployed full-time or close to full-time, in order to achieve the relentless focus on improvement as set out in the functions of the ICs. All contributors will have a role to play in the staffing (including Education Scotland) and the Chief Inspector must agree the Workforce Plan.

- **The Role of Education Scotland**

Each IC will be committed to supporting headteachers to deliver improvement at pace. This requires close collaborative working with Education Scotland who will make a substantial contribution to each IC, including involvement in selecting the Regional Improvement Lead, agreeing the Improvement Plan and the Workforce Plan, as outlined earlier.

- **Timing**

Each IC must be fully operational with a Regional Improvement Lead in place by the end of October. Given that the primary purpose of the ICs is to support schools and teachers in the delivery of educational improvement, the views and priorities of schools will be crucial in developing the plans. The Improvement Plans of ICs should flow from those identified by schools in the National Improvement Framework process. Each IC must also consult with schools and wider interests on the development of their Improvement Plan and their Workforce Plan. To ensure that sufficient time is built in to support this consultation, it is suggested that both plans must be agreed by the end of January 2018 in alignment with National Improvement Framework timescales.

- **Geography**

It will be important to ensure that each proposed grouping has sufficient educational strength.

- **Review**

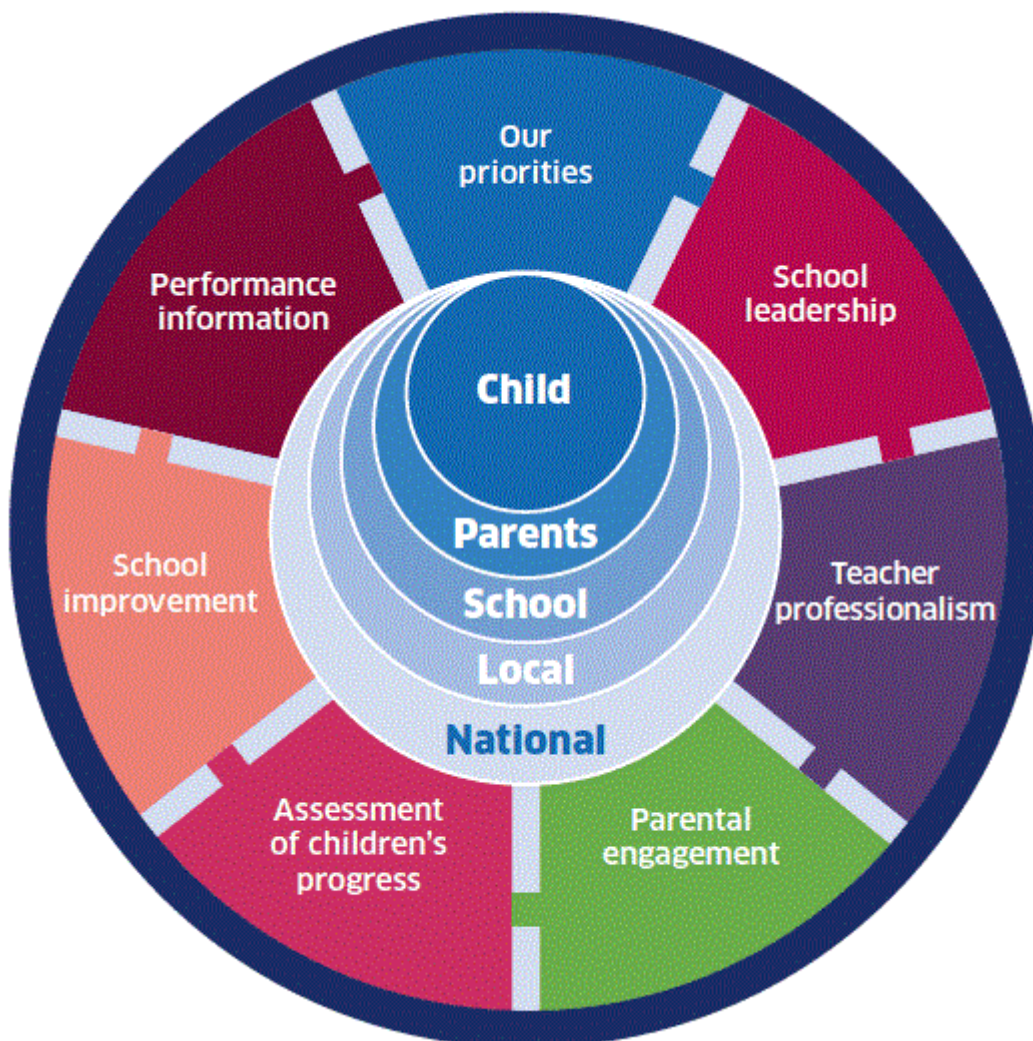
This arrangement will be subject to review. This would involve an independent review when each IC has been in full operation for six months, followed by a more detailed review after 12-18 months. One suggestion is to invite the OECD to conduct a 'rapid review'; this will be explored further, along with other options.

6. Interim Conclusions: Measures of Success

The Steering Group has undertaken initial thinking on what criteria and approaches could be adopted to reflect the various stages in the development and implementation of the ICs.

The Steering Group agreed that we are starting in a strong position with the National Improvement Framework (NIF), which provides a clear foundation for looking at performance data and the established drivers of improvement (see diagram below). This should form a core part of the regional plans for each IC and their assessment of progress going forward, along with other measures that may already be in operation.

It will also be important to look at what other mechanisms reveal about ‘measures of success’. ICs will need to draw on existing measures, where they exist, and link in with other initiatives and evaluations that relate to children and young people, and the attainment gap in particular.



The challenge will be how to assess the additional contribution of collaboration to improved outcomes. Several existing collaboratives are already in discussion with partners from academia regarding independent evaluation. It would be worth drawing on those discussions to share the thinking and to consider whether these approaches could be developed for other regions, and to consider how this might contribute to a 'national picture' of progress. HM Inspectors of Education may also inspect and review the impact of the ICs in the future. Similar models of inspection have been introduced in other countries where regional models are in place, e.g. Wales.

The approach to measurement should also reflect the move to an outcomes-based approach to performance which ties in with existing mechanisms for monitoring performance.

At this stage, the Steering Group recommends that further development work is undertaken once the approach and formation of ICs have been agreed.

This would enable the work to be more closely aligned to the principles and functions that have been proposed in this report, drawing on the NIF, as well as wider work looking at the measurement of the attainment gap. A subgroup could be formed to bring together experts and analysts from relevant organisations along with links to the existing Collaboratives. This subgroup could be tasked with developing a more detailed plan, perhaps considering the core expectations for all ICs and other options that individual ICs might consider. This would also inform further thinking on the key milestones for the development of ICs.

This will be considered alongside the proposal referred to in the accountability section, where all ICs would be subject to an initial independent evaluation, after six months of full operation.

Appendix A: Example of Design Principles/ Key Questions

As reported earlier, the Steering Group agreed a set of guiding principles to shape the work of ICs. The Group also agreed that ICs should consider some key questions as they develop their plans. Whilst acknowledging that design principles must be locally driven to be meaningful and effective, the Group felt that the following extract, drawn from work by an existing Collaborative, could be a helpful way of supporting prioritisation and assessing individual proposals.

- Which outcome/ priority does this contribute to? What is the scale of change envisaged?
- Does it support our national priorities of excellence and equity, and the principles of GIRFEC?
- How well does it reflect the 'guiding principles'?
- What does the related evidence tell us? Do we have the views of headteachers, teachers, other professionals, families, children, others?
- Is the proposal about a change in delivery or improving performance within the current approach? Have a range of options been considered?
- Has the use of digital technology been considered?
- What are the staffing implications?
- What is the potential social impact?
- Are there any negative social consequences or potential unintended consequences?
- Does this reflect the level of ambition envisaged – could it go further?
- Does this contribute to a shift to prevention?
- Have all partners agreed to this? Are there other organisations that this may impact upon? Do we have a 'handling plan'?
- Does it require a realignment or closure of other services or funding streams? Who would need to make changes or realign funding?
- What does the cost-benefit analysis reveal?
- Are there any potential savings that arise from this? If so, when would they be realised?
- Are there other options that could have a greater impact?

Appendix B: Current Regional Groupings

A number of local authorities across Scotland have already begun to develop stronger approaches and mechanisms for collaborative working. The three most developed are the Northern Alliance (eight Councils), the Tayside Children's Services Collaborative (three Councils and an NHS Board) and the West Partnership (eight Councils). All have established relationships with wider partners in their region, in addition to these core members.

These models of collaboration all vary in scope, approach and maturity, but all illustrate a strong and shared commitment to the improvement agenda and our shared goal of improving the education and life changes of our children and young people.

The Steering Group has drawn on the experience of these areas in developing this initial work and further engagement will be undertaken to ensure that the development of ICs continues to build on that activity and indeed the learning.

A number of key themes from these three groupings have emerged to date:

- All have a strong commitment to raise the ambition and pace and are thinking carefully about scale, capacity and how best to secure additionality through their collective efforts.
- There is variation in the contexts in which they are defining their collaborative working, (e.g. an initial focus on education now evolving to the wider system, children's services as the starting point, and economic development as the overarching framework); all have devoted time to articulating their shared purpose and local connections.
- All have identified education as a key priority and demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering excellence and equity.
- There is a strong focus on the use of data and evidence as the main driver to inform priorities and action.
- Whilst all are at different stages of delivery, all report being at a crucial stage in their development, thinking carefully about the leadership and sustainability of their collective efforts, including the potential to increase the scale and pace of those efforts, and how they can measure impact and the contribution of collaboration to improved outcomes.



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Local Authority Chief Executives

CC: Directors of Education

03 October 2017

Dear Chief Executive,

EDUCATION REFORM: REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVES

Following the announcement of the agreed position on implementing Regional Improvement Collaboratives on Friday 28th September, we would like to set out the process for progressing with the operation of each collaborative.

Both the Scottish Government and local government have shaped the development of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, working to ensure improved outcomes for children are at the heart of this work.

As you know, the guiding principles which will underpin the development of the Regional Improvement Collaboratives, and the next steps to put them in place, have been developed through a Steering Group co-chaired by Scottish Government and SOLACE and are supported by both Scottish Ministers and COSLA Leaders. The report of the Joint Steering Group is Annexed to this letter for your information.

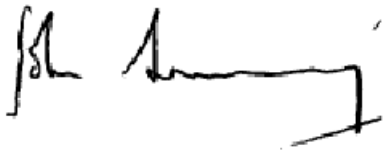
The immediate next steps agreed are around the leadership and formation of the Improvement Collaboratives with a Regional Improvement Lead to be identified by 31 October 2017; and the development of both an Improvement Plan and a Workforce Plan for each collaborative by 31 January 2018. These appointments and plans will be agreed and approved by the Chief Executives of the local authorities within the collaborative and with the Scottish Government, as advised by the Chief Inspector of Education Scotland. The improvement plans should flow from the priorities identified in school plans under the National Improvement Framework process and the timescale is intended to allow sufficient time to consult with schools.



The report recognises the need for bespoke models, within a nationally agreed set of core functions, to be developed to reflect each region's particular context. Education Scotland has also announced that most of their education staff will be contributing to the collaboratives, working alongside staff from local authorities and schools to support and drive improvement. Discussions should now to be taken forward in regions in the first instance, including officials from both Education Scotland and the Scottish Government so that work can continue in close partnership. You are asked to confirm to the Scottish Government the Chief Executive lead contact for each Improvement Collaborative, to facilitate those discussions.

We look forward to working in partnership as we take forward this important first step in implementing the education reform agenda.

Yours faithfully,



**JOHN SWINNEY, MSP
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**



**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN McCABE
COSLA**

South East Alliance

South East Improvement Collaborative
Collaboration to Deliver Excellence and Equity

DRAFT

South East Alliance Members:

Edinburgh City Council
East Lothian Council
Midlothian Council
Fife Council
Scottish Borders Council

Background

South East Alliance (SEA)

The existing South East Alliance partnership, (Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and Scottish Borders) have already been engaged in planning collaborative activity to support development work across the 4 local authority areas. Previous work developed is attached as Appendix 1. Some of this existing work will be included as part of the Delivery plan for the South East Improvement Collaborative and some may sit as pieces of work that will be delivered as part of the South East Alliance partnership eg delivery of 1140hours of Early Learning and Childcare.

The South East Alliance has now included Fife and have begun plans for a Regional Improvement Collaborative with a focus on Quality Improvement and Raising Attainment. The South East Improvement Collaborative focus on Quality Improvement and Raising Attainment allows some existing work and any future work (eg the skills agenda as part of the Edinburgh City Deal) to be developed as part of the South East Alliance partnership.

The progress and outcomes of the Delivery Plan for the South East Improvement Collaborative will be reported to Education Scotland, other work carried out as part of the South East Alliance partnership will be reported to relevant groups such as City Deal Board or ELC regional structures.

South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)

The Scottish Government published its Education Governance: Next steps paper in June 2017, in response to the Delivery Plan and Consultation document Empowering teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence in education and subsequent wide ranging consultation.

The Next Steps paper makes it clear that enhanced regional collaboration between education authorities will be a feature of future arrangements. COSLA, working with SOLACE and ADES, reviewed existing regional education collaborations across Scotland with a view to identifying a collective local government proposal on cross boundary collaboration. Each of these Regional Improvement Collaboratives would meet the strategic aims of the Delivery Plan and requirements for local authority accountability.

This offers the South East Alliance the opportunity to develop a vision for our South East Improvement Collaborative that is inclusive of our headteachers and schools to deliver excellence and equity on a regional basis. As the South East Alliance all local authorities are signed up to the key principles outlined within the Next Steps paper. Following these principles will allow a partnership approach in delivering the relevant aspects of the Edinburgh City Deal as well as the expectations detailed in the Next Steps document. The South East Alliance will not succeed in reducing inequity without a holistic approach across Children's Services. The wider Getting it Right for

Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda is of crucial importance when tackling inequalities and closing the attainment gap.

This document is intended to outline how we could use the South East Alliance to create a South East Improvement Collaborative Improvement (SEIC) with the function to:

- raise attainment and achievement
- help to deliver excellence and equity
- develop work related to GIRFEC and tackling attainment inequity
- share expertise across the Collaborative to effect change
- maintain local democratic accountability
- contribute to the growth of the regional economy
- contribute to relevant Edinburgh City Deal outcomes

Context for the Development of the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)

Local Outcome Improvement Planning

In July 2015 the Community Empowerment Act and related legislation came into force requiring each Community Planning Partnership to have a coherent plan that will empower and support local communities even down to a neighbourhood level. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan may take account of the Council Plan or there may in some instances still be both. As a large part of each local authority, Education must play a central role in the development and delivery of the LOIP as part of the Community Planning Partnership.

Children's Services Planning

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is a key part of the Scottish Government's desire to make Scotland the best place to grow up. It is underpinned by the Scottish Government's continued commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the GIRFEC approach.

The Act aims to ensure that planning and delivery of services are integrated, focussed on securing quality and value, based on a preventative approach, dedicated to promoting, supporting and safeguarding children and young people's wellbeing.

Plans for each Community Planning Partnership are to be published for a three year period starting in April 2017 setting out how outcomes are to be improved for children and young people. An annual report on progress is to be published.

National Improvement Framework

In December 2016 the Scottish Government published the 2017 National Improvement Framework (NIF) and Improvement Plan for Education, which are

designed to deliver the twin aims of excellence and equity with a focus on four priorities:

- improving attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- improving children and young people's health and wellbeing; and,
- improving employability skills and sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people.

The NIF also recognises the importance of six drivers for improvement:

- School leadership;
- Teacher professionalism;
- Parental engagement;
- Assessment of children's progress;
- School improvement; and,
- Performance information.

Education Governance

On 15th June 2017, the Deputy First Minister published the government's response to the Governance Review, focusing on the empowerment of schools and communities to deliver excellence and equity for all learners. The main thrust of the document is to empower headteachers to make more localised decisions on learning and teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of their communities. In addition, the document states that up to seven Regional Improvement Collaboratives will be created.

Regional Improvement Collaboratives will:

- 1) *Provide excellent educational improvement support for headteachers, teachers and practitioners through dedicated teams of professionals. These teams will draw on Education Scotland staff, local authority staff and others;*
- 2) *Provide coherent focus across all partners through delivery of an annual regional plan and associated work programme aligned with the National Improvement Framework;*
- 3) *Facilitate collaborative working across the region, including sharing best practice, supporting collaborative networks and pursuing partnership approaches; and*
- 4) *Be led by a Regional Director, to be appointed by the Scottish Government and report to the HM Chief Inspector/Chief Executive of Education Scotland.*

Education Governance: Next Steps

In its *Education Governance: Next Steps* paper, Scottish Government indicates that Regional Improvement Collaboratives should align their plans with the Priorities and Key Drivers set out in the National Improvement Framework (NIF):

The SEIC is committed to the key drivers within the National Improvement Framework and the planning and reporting cycles as outlined in the Education (Scotland) Act 2016. The SEIC will identify and work on areas where collaboration will enhance each individual education authority's existing and future plans to implement the priorities and key drivers as outlined in the NIF. The SEIC also recognises the role of headteachers, teachers and parents in an empowered and collaborative approach to improving educational outcomes for our children and young people.

Focus for SEIC Delivery Plan

The priorities, key drivers and aims sit well with possible future work and indeed areas where some work has already taken place. In order to be able to have a clear focus and measure the impact of our work we have agreed two areas as an initial focus:

- 1) Improving Attainment and Achievement, including closing the attainment gap
- 2) Quality Improvement in Schools and Early Years settings

1. Improving Attainment and Achievement, including closing the attainment gap

Improving attainment and achievement is a key driver for all improvement work in school communities. Within SEIC we would wish to look at ways to improve attainment and achievement for all, ensuring that our children and young people are best placed to access a positive and sustained destination on leaving school leading to good life outcomes.

SEIC offers schools and early years' settings the opportunity to be part of, and benefit from, work streams linked to NIF key drivers that will focus on:

- professional learning and leadership development (**teacher professionalism**)
- how to engage parents, particularly from areas of deprivation and those that are hard to reach, in their child's learning (**parental engagement**)
- using data related to closing the attainment gap to maximum advantage (**performance information**)
- ensure effectiveness for the use of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) resources (**school leadership**)
- share research and evidence-based practice to inform programmes of work (**school improvement**)
- the formation of specialist curriculum support (**teacher professionalism**)

- assessment and moderation of CfE levels (**assessment of children's progress**)

In order to develop our Regional Improvement Collaborative we require to:

- create a culture where our headteachers, teachers and parents embrace the responsibility of continuous improvement in schools, across clusters and on a regional basis
- develop a joint programme of professional learning based on developing teacher professionalism, professional enquiry and school leadership
- share practice in family learning to secure parental engagement in children's learning as well as parental involvement in schools
- share ways of preparing data and analysing data relating to vulnerable groups
- moderate PEF/SAC plans including PEF/SAC spend and sharing practice through peer review opportunities
- provide opportunities to share research outcomes and outcomes from Improvement Collaborative work
- establish specialist curriculum teams from central and school based staff which will offer support and professional learning to bring about improvements in curriculum delivery and learning and teaching.

Quality Improvement in Schools and Early Years' Settings

As stated in the Education Governance: Next Steps paper, local authorities will retain the duty to support schools to continuously improve. SEIC offers schools the collective opportunity to look inwards, outwards and forwards, as described in HGIOS?4, and will support and challenge schools and early years settings through:

- approaches to self-evaluation and quality improvement which improve outcomes (**school leadership**)
- use of data to secure continuous improvement (**performance information**)
- support and guidance on improvement planning in line with NIF (**school improvement**)

Each of the above will enhance and complement individual local education authority's existing practices and plans for Quality Improvement as well as building a sustainable model for the future. It will also build on partnerships and collaborations across schools encouraging a delivery model for improvement and accountability that will be the responsibility of the school to deliver.

In order to develop our Regional Improvement Collaborative we require to:

- identify resources available within each authority, across the region and in Education Scotland which will offer support and challenge to schools
- develop a proportionate formula to secure equity for each local authority
- build on each local authority's approaches to continuous improvement and self-evaluation and develop a SEIC plan to offer support and challenge to schools and early years settings
- offer opportunities for school improvement collaboratives across SEIC to share best practice and learning between and amongst schools and early years settings
- explore how best to engage children and young people in improving services
- identify and utilise available data analysis already in use, both quantitative and qualitative, to help drive improvement
- ensure engagement and ownership of headteachers to deliver improvement at a school, cluster and regional level
- develop a plan for SEIC to address continuous improvement.

Method of Delivery

We will ensure that our work produces collective added value through:

- Increased capacity to directly support in a targeted way
- Increased knowledge of a critical mass of staff to be focussed on specific areas to make a difference
- Using the expertise of a wide range of headteachers, deputies, principal teachers and teachers
- Making best use of the most effective systems from across the SEIC
- Sharing solutions to reduce bureaucracy

Examples of delivery of collective improvement through:

- the use of our expertise from across the region, including headteachers and teachers, to make best use of data analysis from the new national standardised assessments through a SEIC forum on assessment
- facilitating the delivery of a series of seminars/engagement sessions to allow for the sharing of best practice across schools, clusters and the regional area in closing the attainment gap
- developing with headteachers, teachers and parents support, guidance and practical advice on engaging parents in their child's learning
- establishing a culture of Peer Learning/Peer Review (schools pairing or clustering to quality assure across their group of schools) within the SEIC where headteachers take the lead role
- establishing a regional senior phase forum with school staff, specialists, employers and colleges
- developing school partnerships to evaluate the impact of PEF/SAC plans with a view to supporting the reporting cycle on the PEF/SAC and Improvement Planning; and

- providing an online forum to share research findings from practitioner inquiry and improvement collaborative tests of change.

Governance and Reporting

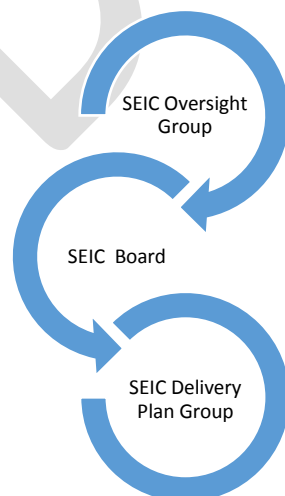
In addition to the priority areas, at the Deputy First Minister’s request, the Council also made some recommendations around the issue of governance. The Council felt that it was important to consider how to de-clutter the system without damaging it. The Council advised against becoming too focussed on changing the structure of the education system when, arguably, the more important aspects are the culture and capacity within the system. In particular the Scottish Government should:

- Learn from existing attempts to formally share education services between local authorities e.g. the Northern Alliance, and other forms of non-structural regionalisation that have been successful internationally.
- Create learning hubs around the country where education professionals can go to learn about different elements of educational practice.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION ADVISERS
July 2017

Getting governance right is imperative. It is vital to retain local democratic accountability whilst at the same time bringing together the key representatives involved in decision-making across the SEIC. The 3 groups of personnel as seen below would provide the relevant staff to drive improvement across the ‘region’ and provide accountability for the work of SEIC.

The South East Improvement Collaborative Governance



SEIC Oversight Group would comprise Education Conveners/portfolio holders x 5 and CEOs x 5. It is envisaged this group would only meet once or twice per year to oversee the work of SEIC as part of the political accountability.

The SEIC Board would be formed with Directors of Education or equivalent x 5, Headteachers x 5 and National Bodies (ES, SDS, Colleges) The SEIC Board would appoint a Chair. The SEIC Board will also approve the SEIC plans and receive reports on the progress of the plan and its impact. This will be the key officer leadership group, agreeing areas for priorities for collaboration, commissioning workstreams and receiving reports from workstream leads. It will meet quarterly with the first meeting in each new financial year considering progress with previous work and setting new priorities for the coming academic session, as well as overseeing the formulation of the SEIC Plan.

SEIC Delivery Plan Group will accept commission from the SEIC Board. Officers, headteachers and teachers will collaborate to undertake specific tasks, with Heads of Service, senior officers or Head Teachers taking the lead as appropriate to levels of expertise and need. Such delivery groups will meet as appropriate to address and deliver the commissioned tasks from workstreams within the SEIC Plans.

Importantly the work of each local education authority will continue to be overseen through existing governance arrangements, maintaining local government accountability for the delivery of education services to each community and local authority area.

The SEIC Board may be chaired by the 'Regional Lead Officer' or a nominated member of the group. This post should be appointed by Chief Executives of the SEIC from among the existing Directors/Heads of Service in the five local authorities. This would not be a substantive position but would be a leadership role for a fixed term. The Regional Lead Officer (RLO) will also report to the Chief Executive of Education Scotland on the outcomes of the SEIC Board decisions.

The support for the RLO would be agreed by Chief Executives and may take different forms dependent on existing structures and agreed priority workstreams. Additional resource could be added if available to support the co-ordination and delivery of the SEIC Plan.

Discussions would need to take place with Education Scotland to consider the best way in which they could support the Partnership. For example, this could be through a link senior officer, similar to their Area Lead Officer role. Rather than having the Partnership linking with up to five Area Lead Officers, there would be one Education Scotland appointee who would provide the Partnership with direct support.

These arrangements would also provide a platform for the potential development of self-evaluation and improvement work in wider children's services particularly where there is a close connection to school attainment such as with outcomes for looked after children. A more holistic GIRFEC approach would be beneficial in tackling the attainment gap and reducing inequity.

Proposed Measures to Evaluate Impact

Short-term measures required for implementation of action plan to be decided to help have a focus for value added impact in first 6 months.

Improvement:

- Improved approaches to self-evaluation and managing change as measured by ES school inspections and local authority visits
- Effective Improvement plans in place
- Positive evaluations of events to share good practice across SEIC
- Number of schools involved in Learning Partnerships (schools that partner to support and challenge each other)

Attainment and Achievement including closing the attainment gap

- Number of schools engaged in moderating and evaluating PEF Plans and reports as part of a School Partnership
- Increase in number of pieces of research undertaken across the SEIC to inform practice
- Increase in CfE attainment across the SEIC
- Reduction in CfE attainment gap between the least and most deprived
- Increase in SQA performance across the SEIC
- Reduction in SQA performance gap between the least and most deprived
- Increase in % of positive school leaver destinations
- Reduction in gap between the most and least deprived for SLD

South East Alliance

