

**REPORT TO EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE –  
18 MARCH 2021**

**THE USE OF DELEGATED POWERS BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND  
CHILDREN'S SERVICES BY REASON OF SPECIAL URGENCY**

**1 Reason for Report / Summary**

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform the Committee of the use of delegated powers by the Director of Education and Children's Services, by reason of special urgency, in respect of the delivery of "Raising Attainment" Foundation Apprenticeship pilots.

**2 Recommendations**

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 2.1 Acknowledge the successful Aberdeenshire Council bid to Skills Development Scotland to become a lead provider for the delivery of "Raising Attainment" (RA) pilots during the calendar year of 2021; and**
- 2.2 Acknowledge the use by the Director of Education and Children's Services of delegated powers, as fully provided for in Appendix 1 of this report, in order to engage external providers to deliver Raising Attainment pilot courses in schools, where required.**

**3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route**

- 3.1 Since session 2019/20, Aberdeenshire Council has been a lead provider of Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeships in our schools. This has improved the senior phase curriculum offer and the opportunities for young people. There has been a very significant uptake and successful development of Foundation Apprenticeships as a result.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 21 March, 2019, this Committee acknowledged the successful Aberdeenshire Council bid to become a lead provider for the delivery of Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire schools from August, 2019, and requested officers to provide regular updates to the Committee.
- 3.3 At its meeting on 19 March, 2020, the Committee considered an update report on the development of Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire schools. The Committee acknowledged progress made with the development of Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire schools during session 2019/20 and acknowledged the successful bid by the Council to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to continue as a lead provider for the delivery of Foundation Apprenticeships in session 2020/21.

Subsequently, at its meeting on 8 October, 2020, the Committee acknowledged the successful bid by Aberdeenshire Council to Skills Development Scotland to

become a lead provider for the delivery of Level 4 and 5 Foundation Apprenticeships for session 2020/21, at a contract value of £275,000,

- 3.4 In late January, 2021, SDS awarded a contract to Aberdeenshire Council to offer our schools a number of Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) opportunities as part of a pilot programme, specifically aimed at raising attainment for identified vulnerable groups who may be at risk of under-achieving. Running a number of these pilot 'Raising Attainment' FAs will build on our successful Creative & Digital Media FA Pilot from last year and can be used flexibly to help meet the needs of a wider cross-section of our young people.
- 3.5 This report, therefore, is to inform members of this successful bid, which was approved at very short notice, and to update members on the use of delegated powers. The information in this report has not been considered by any other committee.

#### **4 Discussion**

- 4.1 The Scottish Government aims to improve the work-related offer to pupils across Scotland and has identified Foundation Apprenticeships (FA) as a central part of achieving this vision. The strategic context rests in the first two recommendations from the Scottish Government.

*"Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce report: Education Working for All!"*

##### **Recommendation 1 - Senior Phase Vocational Pathways:**

Pathways should start in the senior phase which lead to the delivery of industry-recognised vocational qualifications alongside academic qualifications.

##### **Recommendation 2 - Preparing Young People for the World of Work:**

A focus on preparing all young people for employment should form a core element of the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence, with appropriate resource dedicated to achieve this.

- 4.2 Aberdeenshire Council became a lead provider of SCQF Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeships in 2019 and launched the first frameworks (courses) in June, 2019. In session 2019/20, we successfully delivered almost 200 FAs, and, in session 2020/21, we currently have 315 pupils studying a Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeship through the Aberdeenshire Council model, and 115 at Level 4 and 5.
- 4.3 In late January, 2021, we submitted a bid and were awarded the contract to deliver pilot "Raising Attainment" Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) in Aberdeenshire. As this was developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we required to get the courses up and running as soon as possible, notwithstanding the public health challenges faced at present. This initiative is part of the Scottish Government's emergency response to the current public health impact on educational delivery.

#### 4.4 “Raising Attainment” FA Pilots

4.4.1 At the end of January, SDS, on behalf of the Scottish Government, awarded a contract to Aberdeenshire Council to offer our schools a number of Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) opportunities as part of a pilot programme, specifically aimed at raising attainment for identified vulnerable groups who may be at risk of under-achieving.

4.4.2 It was our aim, therefore, to run a number of these pilot ‘Raising Attainment’ FAs, building on our successful Creative & Digital Media FA Pilot from last year. Circumstances have changed significantly for young people in our area and many, as well as finding difficulty in adapting to learning opportunities during the pandemic, are also facing restricted ‘next step’ opportunities. The “Raising Attainment” (RA) Pilots are designed to respond to this, to enable vulnerable pupils to re-engage with education and also to seek to address an identified, and growing, sense of ‘hopelessness’ amongst some young people. We plan to use the existing subject frameworks in an innovative and flexible manner for the following identified and targeted groups of pupils:

- Pupils currently disengaged, or not fully engaged, and at significant risk of underachievement or little meaningful attainment.
- Winter (Christmas) leavers who have been identified as at particular risk due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Care Experienced pupils.
- Pupils with specific Additional Support for Learning needs.
- Pupils who currently do not have a suitable curriculum offer.
- Pupils who are currently on extended flexible learning pathways.
- Those pupils who have dropped out of courses, including college courses, and are currently back at school without a meaningful curriculum.
- S6 pupils who have not been able to complete any FA or Work-Based Learning courses due to lack of opportunity in their curriculum offer.

4.4.3 Those pupils taking part in the RA pilots are based on school recommendation, an individual’s capacity to work at Level 6 and appropriateness for the course, rather than simply previous examination results. Spaces are limited to around 12 pupils per framework (subject). As well as the delivery of all aspects of the framework, we plan to provide “meta skills”, career management skills and “wraparound employability” courses, as appropriate, to individual groups and students. Identified pupils have an alternative curriculum model, where the RA Pilot will be the main focus of the school week.

4.4.4 Delivery will be across one or two days per week at a central location for National Progression Award (NPA) delivery and as close to the pupil’s home address as possible for the SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) work placement. The Raising Attainment Pilots will run for the remainder of this calendar year but we will also look to offer ‘fast-track’ options which could lead to completion in summer, 2021. Delivery is initially online but will move to ‘in-person’ learning as soon as possible.

### **Proposed Frameworks**

- Creative & Digital Media
- Business Skills
- IT Hardware or Software
- Health & Social Care
- Children & Young People

4.5 Raising Attainment pilots are part of the Scottish Government's emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic and, therefore, there has been some pressure to have this option delivered as quickly as is practicable. It was, of course, necessary to canvass our 17 secondary schools to ascertain their capacity to deliver these courses and to identify the number of young people likely to be interested in enrolling in this course option. Additionally, prospective external providers had to be identified, while following the Council's agreed procurement governance. As a consequence, the Service was not in a position to move forward with arrangements until the very end of January, outwith the normal committee cycle for reporting to elected members.

In normal circumstances, conducting a formal tendering process would be the default procurement route, but this has not been possible because:

- We only recently received confirmation that our bid for funding from SDS had been successful.
- Most RA pilots will need to be delivered by external providers.
- There is an urgency to get a service provider in place to deliver the services. Failure to do so would mean that running the courses this year is not feasible and, therefore, would result in losing out on the funding. Furthermore, it would mean we were unable to offer this option to a number of particularly vulnerable young people, at a time when they are required.

4.6 All administration and support for RA pilots will be managed centrally by the Foundation Apprenticeship Project Team. The FA Team is responsible for organising all providers, employers, and teaching and assessment materials etc, to keep any additional workload and administration connected with the introduction of these courses to a minimum. The new option available will have the following key features:

- Delivery at a suitable location in Aberdeenshire
- Cohorts of 8-12 young people
- Delivery either by Aberdeenshire Council staff or external providers
- All delivery costs covered by the SDS funding awarded to the Council and managed by the FA Project Team.

### **4.7 Special Urgency Powers - Specific Delegations for Procurement**

4.7.1 As indicated above, the Raising Attainment FA pilots are a newly-developed national initiative, and the successful Aberdeenshire Council bid to deliver the courses in the current session was only confirmed at the end of January.

- 4.7.2 As with our existing Level 6 FAs, our default position is to deliver these in schools timetabled alongside other subjects and delivered by our own staff, where possible. Where schools do not have the staffing capacity or specialist expertise, however, we require to bring in external providers. Conducting a formal tendering process would normally be the default procurement route.
- 4.7.3 However, this was not possible due to the very restricted timescale, given that we required to get these courses up and running as soon as possible and we did not have the timescale to implement the normal procurement procedure. Failure to secure a service provider would have meant the risk of not running the courses and the result would have been Aberdeenshire Council losing out on the funding.
- 4.7.4 Any decision regarding items for inclusion on a procurement plan which relate to the purchase of services, where the value is £50,000 or more and relate to more than one area, would normally be a matter for the Committee to determine. The timescale involved for the RA pilots was beyond our control and therefore, following consultation with the relevant parties, the Director of Education and Children’s Services exercised his use of delegated powers by reason of special urgency to approve external providers to be engaged to deliver the courses in schools where this was required.
- 4.7.5 Further detail as to the context and the reasons for the use of urgency powers by the Director is contained within the forms attached at **Appendix 1** to this report.

## 5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 This report helps deliver the following Council Priorities:

### Our People

- Education
- Health & Wellbeing

### Our Environment

- Resilient Communities

### Our Economy

- Economy & Enterprise

5.2 This report helps support the delivery of the [Aberdeenshire Children’s Services Plan](#) Priorities - Corporate Parenting.

5.3 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty			x
Town Centre First			x

Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

- 5.4 An equality impact assessment was carried out and presented to the Committee meeting in March, 2019. It identified that there is a positive impact on groups with protected characteristics. The development of FAs in Aberdeenshire secondary schools will help identified 'at risk' groups, as outlined in the Developing the Young Workforce Programme. This includes support for young people at risk of disengaging from education and those who are Care Experienced. An equality impact assessment is not required here because the purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the expansion of the wider FA programme through a new national initiative and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.
- 5.5 There are no direct staffing and financial implications arising from this report. Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services has secured SDS funding to be used for the purposes of Raising Attainment FA pilots; the funding will be used for no other purpose. The costs involved are in relation to staffing, tendering of external providers, costs of materials, and central support and administration. Recruitment will be in line with identified need and Council procurement processes and procedures.
- 5.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level. [Corporate Risk Register](#)
- ACORP005 - Working with other organisations (e.g. supply chains, outsourcing, partnership working and commercialisation). This is mitigated through the Council's Partnership Policy & Partnership Risk Registers and Procurement Policy, and clear governance and milestone reporting to SDS and the ECS Strategic Leadership Team. Governance risk is mitigated through the SDS-led Regional Guidance Strategic Group.
  - ACORP004 - Business & Organisational Change (*including ensuring governance structures support change, and, managing the pace of change*)
  - ACORP006 - Reputation Management (*including social media*)

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Register](#)):

- ECSR002 – Developing Excellence and Equality
- ECSR003 – Embedding GIRFEC
- ECSR004 – Support Inclusive, Vibrant & Healthy Communities

## 6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report. They are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.

- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section E.1.1.b of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance, as it relates to Education.

**Laurence Findlay**  
**Director of Education and Children's Services**

Report prepared by Allan Bell, DYW Project Officer  
Date: 15 February, 2021

**List of Appendices**


Special Urgency Forms – Use of Specific Delegations to Chief Officers

Appendix 1a - Form for Use of Delegated Powers – Raising Attainment Pilots

Appendix 1b - Extract for Service Procurement Plan – Raising Attainment Pilots

Appendix 1c - Procurement Approval Form (PAF) – Raising Attainment Pilots

APPENDIX 1a

	<p>This form records and confirms approval of the use of the delegation to the Specified Chief Officers (called the Delegated Officer) in <u>Section B of Part 2B of the Scheme of Governance</u>.</p> <p>The Delegated Officer can make a decision instead of Full Council, Committee or Sub-Committee</p>
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<b>Full Council/Committee with delegation</b>	Education and Children's Services		
<b>Delegated Officer</b>	Director of Education and Children's Services		
<b>Requesting Officer</b>	Name: Andrew Ritchie	<b>Date prepared</b>	<b>08.02.21</b>
	Service: ECS		
	Job Title: Lead Officer DYW		
<b>1. Recommendation</b>			
Description of the matter that requires use of special urgency delegation and how it has arisen	<p>Skills Development Scotland (SDS), on behalf of the Scottish Government, has very recently awarded a contract to Aberdeenshire Council to offer our schools a number of Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) opportunities as part of a pilot programme, specifically aimed at raising attainment for identified vulnerable groups who may be at risk of under-achieving.</p> <p>Our proposal, therefore, is to run a number of pilot 'Raising Attainment' FAs, which will build on our successful Creative &amp; Digital Media FA Pilot from last year. The proposed pilot research will focus on how FAs can be used flexibly to help meet the needs of a wider cross-section of our young people.</p> <p>Circumstances have changed significantly for young people in our area and many, as well as finding difficulty in adapting to learning opportunities during the pandemic, are also facing restricted 'next step' opportunities. The RA Pilots are designed to respond to this, to enable vulnerable pupils to re-engage with education and hopefully also to address an identified, and growing, sense of 'hopelessness' amongst some young people. We propose to use the existing FA frameworks in an innovative and flexible manner for identified and targeted groups of pupils.</p> <p><b>The following are targeted groups of young people who would benefit from a Raising Attainment FA Pilot</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils currently disengaged, or not fully engaged, and at significant risk of underachievement or little meaningful attainment.</li> <li>• Winter (Christmas) leavers who have been identified as at particular risk due to the Covid pandemic.</li> <li>• Care Experienced pupils.</li> <li>• Pupils with specific Additional Support for Learning needs.</li> <li>• Pupils who currently do not have a suitable curriculum offer.</li> <li>• Pupils who are currently on extended flexible learning pathways.</li> <li>• Those pupils who have dropped out of courses, including college courses, and are currently back at school without a meaningful curriculum.</li> <li>• S6 pupils who have not been able to complete any FA or Work Based Learning courses due to lack of opportunity in their curriculum offer.</li> </ul> <p>Our target demographic is current senior phase pupils. Recruitment will be based on school recommendation, an individual's capacity to work at Level 6 and appropriateness for the FA course, rather than simply previous examination results. Spaces will be limited to around 12 pupils per framework.</p> <p>As well as the delivery of all aspects of the FA framework, we plan to provide "meta skills", career management skills and "wraparound employability" courses, as appropriate, to individual groups and students.</p> <p>The identified pupils will have an alternative curriculum model where the RA Pilot FA will be the main focus of the school week. The pilot programme will also have elements of meta skills development, FA leadership and ASN support, similar to our existing FA delivery.</p> <p>Delivery will be across one or two days per week at a central location for National Progression Award (NPA) delivery and as close to the pupil's home address as possible for the SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) work placement. We wish to start the Raising Attainment Pilots as soon as possible and run them for the remainder of the calendar year ie <b>February to December, 2021</b>. However, this may depend on the pupils and we would look to offer 'fast-track' options which could lead to completion in</p>		



	<p>summer, 2021. It is likely that delivery will initially be online but moving to 'in-person' learning as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Proposed Frameworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative &amp; Digital Media</li> <li>• Business Skills</li> <li>• IT Hardware or Software</li> <li>• Health &amp; Social Care</li> <li>• Children &amp; Young People</li> </ul> <p>Schools have been contacted to provide an indication of interest to allow us to progress our planning to get these courses up and running as soon as possible.</p> <p>As a newly-developed national initiative, the timescales involved with this have been outwith our control. Funding has just been agreed and the award of contract intimated to us at the end of January.</p> <p>All admin and support for the pilots will be managed centrally by the FA Project Team. The FA Team will organise all providers, employers, teaching and assessment materials etc, which will keep any additional workload and administration connected with the introduction of these courses to a minimum.</p>
What is the recommendation to the Delegated Officer?	<p><b>Approve a procurement of the required services to start delivery as soon as practicable.</b> The contract awarded to Aberdeenshire Council from Skills Development Scotland to deliver the Raising Attainment FA Pilots was for £280,000. Of this allocation, it is anticipated that around £120,000 will be used to deliver the relevant subject frameworks through procurement of external providers. The rest will support in-house delivery, employer engagement, ongoing administrative support, and provision of materials and resources.</p> <p>This approval requires the project to be added to the ECS Procurement Plan. The relevant Procurement Approval Form is attached to this paper as an appendix.</p>
<b>2. Justification for use of delegation</b>	
Detail the consequence/risk if matter cannot be progressed timeously and include why this cannot wait for the next meeting of the committee.	<p>At the end of January, 2021, we were awarded the contract to deliver pilot "raising attainment" Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) in Aberdeenshire. As they have been developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we hope to get these courses up and running as soon as possible. They are part of the Scottish Government's emergency response to the current public health impact on educational delivery.</p> <p>In normal circumstances, conducting a formal tendering process would be the default procurement route. However, for the reasons outlined below, this is not possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have only recently received confirmation that our bid for funding from SDS was successful.</li> <li>• Most delivery of the pilots will need to be delivered by external providers.</li> <li>• There is an urgency to get a service provider in place to deliver the services. Failure to do so would mean that running the courses this year is not feasible and, therefore, would result in losing out on the funding.</li> </ul> <p>The timescales involved have been outwith the Council's control. The bidding and award processes were undertaken in a very short space of time.</p> <p>Procurement for Foundation Apprenticeships at Level 6 and 4/5 was most recently agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 3 December, 2020.</p>
<b>3. Consultation</b>	
Chief Executive	Date: 17 February, 2021 Response: Agreed
Chair of Committee	Date: 17 February, 2021 Response: Agreed
Vice-Chair of Committee	Date: February, 2021 Response: Agreed
Main Opposition Group Spokesperson of Policy Committee (if a policy committee decision)	Date: 17 February, 2021 Response: Agreed
Any other relevant officer or elected member	Date: N/A Response:
<b>4. Council Priorities, Implications and Risk</b>	
Specify which Council Priorities are supported by the decision to be made	<p><b>Our People</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Our Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilient Communities</li> </ul> <p><b>Our Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economy &amp; Enterprise</li> </ul>

Detail any other key strategic priorities that this decision supports	Developing the Young Workforce Strategic Plan
Equalities Impact Assessment required?	Yes – Same as wider Foundation Apprenticeship programme. Link <a href="#">here</a>
Fairer Scotland Duty	There will be benefits to the young people in completing these FA pilots as they progress through life.
Staffing Implications	This will be dealt with from within existing resource.
Financial Implications	All covered by the SDS funding.
Sustainability	
Town Centre First Principle	Yes No N/A
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing	This offers young people an enhanced curriculum to better meet their needs making links between school and the world of work which will allow for more coherent next step pathways into work, college or university.
<b>5. Governance</b>	
Name of Committee and delegation in <u>Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance</u> that should have been utilised	Committee: Education and Children's Services  Delegation: E 4.2.1
Monitored by Finance	Name: Diane Bain Date: 23 February, 2021
Monitored by Legal	Name: Lauren Cowie Date: 19 February, 2021
Final Decision by Delegated Officer	Agreed
If required, Committee Meeting to be reported to -	Committee: Education and Children's Services Date of Meeting: 18 March, 2021
Electronically Signed by Delegated Officer	Name: Date:

**A COPY OF THIS FORM ONCE COMPLETE MUST BE FORWARDED TO [ASKGOVERNANCE@ABERDEENSHIRE.GOV.UK](mailto:ASKGOVERNANCE@ABERDEENSHIRE.GOV.UK)**



APPENDIX 1b

APPENDIX 1

C&PSS Contract Reference	Service	Contract Name	Contract Description	Est Contract/ Contract Extension Start Date	Est Contract/ Contract Extension End Date	Maximum Extension Period (Months)	Value to be approved by this Committee	Total Contract Value (Inc. all options & extensions)	Area(s) Contract Covers
000-JBLF1551	Education & Children's Services	Foundation Apprenticeship Raising Attainment Pilots	<p>The contract is for the delivery of a number of pilot 'Raising Attainment' FAs, which will build on our successful Creative &amp; Digital Media FA Pilot from last year. The pilots are specifically aimed at raising attainment for identified vulnerable groups who may be at risk of under-achieving.</p> <p>The contract to deliver these pilots was awarded to Aberdeenshire Council by Skills Development Scotland at the end of January, 2021, for a total amount of £280,000. Of this allocation, it is anticipated that around £120,000 will be used to deliver the relevant subject frameworks through procurement of external providers. The rest will support in-house delivery, employer engagement, ongoing administrative support, and provision of materials and resources.</p> <p>The project requires to be added to the current ECS Procurement Plan. The relevant Procurement Approval Form is attached.</p> <p>Circumstances have changed significantly for young people in our area and many, as well as finding difficulty in adapting to learning opportunities during the pandemic, are also facing restricted 'next step' opportunities. The RA Pilots are designed to respond to this, to enable vulnerable pupils to re-engage with education and hopefully also to address an identified, and growing, sense of 'hopelessness' amongst some young people. We propose to use the existing FA frameworks in an innovative and flexible</p>	01.03.2021	n/a	£120,000	£120,000	All	

			<p>manner for identified and targeted groups of pupils.</p> <p>The contract requires delivery of each framework (subject) area and also, within each, these may be subdivided to cover geographical areas within Aberdeenshire, depending on take-up.</p> <p>The individual contracts will run from approximately 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2021, to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.</p>						
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**PROCUREMENT APPROVAL FORM (BUSINESS CASE) (For proposed procurements £50k and above)**

**APPENDIX 1c**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Delivery of “Raising Attainment” Foundation Apprenticeship Pilots</b>	
<b>C&amp;PS Reference</b>	000-JBLF1551	
<b>Service</b>	<b>ECS</b>	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Andrew Ritchie</b>	<b>Date prepared: 08/02/2021</b>

**1. Brief Description and Rationale**

Please briefly outline your business requirement(s). Include information on:

- type of requirement – description of need. Goods/Services/Works – or combination of these
- whether there is a current structure/contract delivering some or all of the requirements
- Information on those contracts - start date, end date, value, scope.
- Key stakeholders – Services, consumers, communities, suppliers etc.
- Options considered for procurement and option proposed – tender, framework, reserved contract etc.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS), on behalf of the Scottish Government, has very recently awarded a contract to Aberdeenshire Council to offer our schools a number of Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) opportunities as part of a pilot programme, specifically aimed at raising attainment for identified vulnerable groups who may be at risk of under-achieving.

The proposal, therefore, is to run a number of pilot ‘Raising Attainment’ FAs, which will build on our successful Creative & Digital Media FA Pilot from last year. The proposed pilot research will focus on how FAs can be used flexibly to help meet the needs of a wider cross-section of our young people.

Circumstances have changed significantly for young people in our area and many, as well as finding difficulty in adapting to learning opportunities during the pandemic, are also facing restricted ‘next step’ opportunities. The RA Pilots are designed to respond to this, to enable vulnerable pupils to re-engage with education and hopefully also to address an identified, and growing, sense of ‘hopelessness’ amongst some young people. We propose to use the existing FA frameworks in an innovative and flexible manner for identified and targeted groups of pupils.

**The following are targeted groups of young people who would benefit from a Raising Attainment FA Pilot**

- Pupils currently disengaged, or not fully engaged, and at significant risk of underachievement or little meaningful attainment.
- Winter (Christmas) leavers who have been identified as at particular risk due to the Covid pandemic.
- Care Experienced pupils
- Pupils with specific Additional Support for Learning needs.
- Pupils who currently do not have a suitable curriculum offer.

- Pupils who are currently on extended flexible learning pathways.
- Those pupils who have dropped out of courses, including college courses, and are currently back at school without a meaningful curriculum.
- S6 pupils who have not been able to complete any FA or Work Based Learning courses due to lack of opportunity in their curriculum offer.

Our target demographic is the current senior phase pupils. Recruitment will be based on school recommendation, an individual's capacity to work at level 6 and appropriateness for the FA course, rather than simply previous exam results. Spaces will be limited to around 12 pupils per framework.

As well as the delivery of all aspects of the FA framework, we plan to provide "meta skills", career management skills and "wraparound employability" courses, as appropriate, to individual groups and students.

The identified pupils will have an alternative curriculum model where the RA Pilot FA will be the main focus of the school week. The pilot programme will also have elements of meta skills development, FA leadership and ASN support, similar to our existing FA delivery.

Delivery will be across a minimum of one or two days per week at a central location for National Progression Award (NPA) delivery and as close to the pupil's home address as possible for the SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) work placement. We wish to start the Raising Attainment Pilots as soon as possible and run them for the remainder of the calendar year ie **February to December, 2021**. However, this may depend on the pupils and we would look to offer 'fast-track' options which could lead to completion in summer, 2021. It is likely that delivery will initially be online but moving to 'in-person' learning as soon as possible.

### **Proposed Frameworks**

- Creative & Digital Media
- Business Skills
- IT Hardware or Software
- Health & Social Care
- Children & Young People

As a newly-developed national initiative, the timescales involved with this have been outwith our control. Funding has just been agreed and the award of contract intimated to us at the end of January.

All admin. and support for the pilots will be managed centrally by the FA Project Team. The FA Team will organise all providers, employers, teaching and assessment materials etc, which will keep any additional workload and administration connected with the introduction of these courses to a minimum.

In normal circumstances, conducting a formal tendering process would be the default procurement route. However, for the reasons outlined below, this is not possible:

- We have only recently received confirmation that our bid for funding from SDS was successful.
- Most delivery of the pilots will need to be delivered by external providers.
- There is an urgency to get a service provider in place to deliver the services. Failure to do so would mean that running the courses this year is not feasible and, therefore, would result in losing out on the funding.

The timescales involved have been outwith the Council's control. The bidding and award processes were undertaken in a very short space of time.

The contract awarded to Aberdeenshire Council by Skills Development Scotland to run these pilots is dependent on pupil take-up but is anticipated to be of the order of around £280,000. Of this allocation, it is anticipated that around £120,000 will be used to deliver the relevant subject frameworks through external providers. The rest will support in-house delivery, employer engagement, ongoing administrative support and provision of materials and resources.

Direct awards to existing providers will be based on previous award criteria, such as:

- Good Value
- Sustainable Partnership Development
- Experience and Track Record
- Innovation and Flexibility

In future years, the Service will deploy the Dynamic Purchasing System approved by members in December and currently being set up to procure Foundation Apprenticeship delivery from session 2021/22 onwards.

The individual contracts will run from approximately 1<sup>st</sup> March this year until completion of the pilot modules.

This approval requires the project to be added to the ECS Procurement Plan.

## 2. Business Need

Please indicate the broad reasons for your proposed procurement in terms of the following categories:

Legal/statutory obligations (please define legislation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Scotland Act</li> <li>• Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)</li> <li>• Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014</li> <li>• The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000</li> <li>• Curriculum for Excellence Education</li> <li>• Equalities Act 2010</li> </ul>
Lifecycle maintenance – linked to maintaining existing assets/service provision.	N/A
Links to delivering the Community, Council and Service strategies	This project delivers improvements to work-related opportunities in our secondary schools and local communities.

## 3. Business Impact

Please indicate below how you anticipate that the requirements, if met, would contribute to a positive business impact (please outline any known financial savings, customer service benefits, benefits to the service, impact on Council plan or priority etc.)

Nationally, the benefits of any Foundation Apprenticeship provision are to:

- Raise the bar in vocational education
- Give all our young people equal chances and choices to succeed at school and succeed in life
- Address inequalities in educational outcomes and narrow the attainment gap

The benefits of Aberdeenshire Council being a Foundation Apprenticeship Provider specifically in respect of this pilot initiative include:

- Enhanced partnership working in line with Scottish Government DYW recommendations
- Delivery of planned, strategically coordinated, resourced and supported Senior Phase change and pathways
- Attainment and Closing the Gap benefits
- Effective delivery of pupil entitlements embedded in Career Education Standard and Work Placement Standard
- Council Workforce planning e.g. Early Years, Social Care etc.
- Provides additional resource for capacity building to ensure equity and sustainability

#### 4. Assessment of Business Impact

Please define clearly how you propose to measure and benchmark the benefits set out in item 3 to justify the investment. These will be used later by you to track, monitor and measure the delivery of the benefits and assess the overall success of the project in achieving its objectives.

Benchmarks will include:

- Increase in number of positive destinations for vocational pathways
- Increase in attainment data for schools, including addressing issues relating to equalities, gender and the vulnerable
- Continue to assess and monitor the quality of suppliers through contract monitoring
- Assess and record any cost savings, through bids received

#### 5. Potential for Reduction in Required Resources

Please define the existing resources involved and describe how your proposed procurement will reduce the resources required to deliver the service or make more efficient use of these.

No significant reduction to resources required is anticipated.

#### 6. Financial Implications Summary (Capital and Revenue)

**Note: A detailed financial breakdown is encouraged. It shall be prepared separately and appended to this business case.**

Capital Estimates	£000's	£000's
Total Capital Cost		0
<u>Less</u>		
Total Funding		0



<b>Net Total Capital Cost</b>		0
<b>Revenue Implications</b>		
Borrowing Costs of Net Total Capital		0
Total New Operating Costs		280
Total Revenue Costs		280
<u>Less</u>		
Existing Revenue Costs	0	
Income Streams	280	
<b>Total Deductions</b>	0	
<b>Net Balance of Revenue Implications</b>		0

**6a. Notes and Assumptions on Financial Implications**

No change to overall operating costs. The funding for these “Raising Attainment” pilots comes from Skills Development Scotland. All costs are covered and there is no additional cost to Aberdeenshire Council.

Individual contracts would be awarded based on delivery until the end of the calendar year. Given the developing nature of this pilot initiative, it is difficult to estimate precisely the likely spend over future years.

**7. Implementation Plan**

Please define the base date for the proposal, the potential timescale for implementing the proposal and the proposed start date for implementation. How will implementation take place?

Base Date (Process start date)	February, 2021
Timescale (for process)	1 month
Contract Start Date	1 March, 2021

Implementation Process:

February, 2021

Consult with elected members and chief officers on use of delegated authority by Director of Education & Children’s Services to procure delivery of PA frameworks by direct award.

Schools to give indication of intended take-up by young people of PA subjects. Confirmation of the delivery arrangements in current academic session.

Complete all necessary documentation and liaise with providers. Commence and

complete tender evaluation, and advise providers of outcome.

March, 2021

Delivery of Raising Attainment pilots commences.

Report to Education & Children’s Services Committee for information, notifying members of the use of delegated powers as a matter of urgency.

**8. Deliverability and Risks**

Please set out the key risks which may arise in the delivery of the project and how these will be mitigated along with information on supply market and engagement with this.

The key risk is that we do not have the capacity in Aberdeenshire Council to deliver the Raising Attainment pilots. If we do not procure external providers timeously, we risk not allowing our young people to benefit from these pilots which are on offer nationally. We need to procure external partners to deliver the programme and assess the appropriate SVQ performance criteria in work placements. There is a tight timetable, with a great deal of work involved, but we are confident we can start to deliver the frameworks very quickly, once authorisation has been given to proceed.

**9. Sustainable Procurement & Community Benefits**

Consider the table below. If applicable, indicate between 3 and 6 themes that you consider are relevant to the proposed Contract. Please note that where selected these themes **must** be referenced within procurement documents.

Improve (Wellbeing)	Promote	Facilitate (Involve)
Social <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SMEs <input type="checkbox"/>
Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Equalities/reduce Inequality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations <input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental <input type="checkbox"/>	Ethical trading and social justice <input type="checkbox"/>	Supported Businesses <input type="checkbox"/>
Health <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair Work Practices/The Living Wage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prompt Payment throughout the supply chain <input type="checkbox"/>
Food poverty/fuel poverty/energy efficiency <input type="checkbox"/>	Resource efficiency and the circular economy <input type="checkbox"/>	Community engagement and community empowerment; community projects <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Air quality/reduction of harmful emissions/reduction of waste and packaging <input type="checkbox"/>	Education; employability and skills training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Collaboration and collaborative working <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Justification for above:

Raising attainment through Foundation Apprenticeships is a key Scottish Government initiative, as part of the Developing the Young Workforce programme. The identified

indicators are integral to the FA programme.	
<b>10. Contract Management</b>	
What contract management procedures shall be put in place to manage the proposed contract? Use the Contract and Supplier Management Assessment Tool (available within C&PS Document Store) to determine whether the level of management required for a specific contract and supplier should be High/Medium/Low.	<b>Contract/Supplier Management Requirement</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
<b>11. Contract Exit</b>	
Whether because of end of contract or in the event of termination – what are the considerations, implications and timescales for ending the proposed contract?	
<p>The contracts will sustain for one year. The associated terms &amp; conditions (as advised by Legal and Governance colleagues) will include relevant termination clauses.</p> <p>It is not anticipated that there will be significant risk regarding contract exit, given the scale, duration and nature of this project.</p>	
<b>12. Governance</b>	
Please confirm the name of the Head of Service who is Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for this project.	Andrew Ritchie, Lead Officer DYW
List key stakeholders who have been consulted in the development of this project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and Children’s Services Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and main opposition group spokesperson</li> <li>• ECS Leadership Team</li> <li>• Aberdeenshire Council Leadership Team</li> <li>• ASHTA</li> <li>• Developing the Young Workforce North East</li> <li>• Skills Development Scotland</li> <li>• Education Scotland</li> </ul>
List the most up to date committee approvals to proceed ‘in principle’ with the project.	Report to ECS Committee – 3 December, 2020 (approval in principle for use of a DPS for a number of lots, including future delivery of “any other related projects”).
What budget has been allocated for this project? Please give budget code.	A successful bid has been made to SDS to deliver Pathway Apprenticeships which will cover all costs. The budget code is <b>E316120</b> .
<b>13. Approvals, Decisions and Notification</b>	
<b>Service Leadership Team Comments:</b> A paper accompanies this PAF which outlines the delivery of these “Raising Attainment” Foundation Apprenticeship pilots in Aberdeenshire in 2021.  The key risk is that we do not have the capacity in Aberdeenshire Council to deliver the pilots. If	

we do not engage with external partners, we risk not allowing our pupils to benefit.

**Recommendation** Progress

Date

Signed

Andrew Ritchie, Lead Officer DYW

**Decision**

Progressed to procurement phase?

Yes/No

**Service Notification Approved to progress**

Signed

Date

Vincent Docherty, Head of Education