Aberdeenshire

C O U N C I L   **Education & Children's Services**

REPORT TO MARR AREA COMMITTEE – 21 JUNE 2022

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES YEAR-END PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – OCTOBER 2021 TO MARCH 2022 (COUNCIL PRIORITIES: AREA PLAN 2021-2023)

1   Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1   The purpose of this report and accompanying appendix is to provide an update on the progress with key council area outcome indicators identified as provided by the Education & Children's Services Directorate, which help demonstrate how we are delivering on the Aberdeenshire Council Plan Priorities (2020-2022) framework linked to the Marr Area Plan (2021-2023), and consider how the Service is progressing, evidenced through a reflection of the performance achieved during the last six months of the reporting year 2021/22 (October 2021 to March 2022), in order that Committee can acknowledge progress and fulfil their scrutiny and monitoring role.
Over the last six months of 2021/22, over half of Marr Area Plan outcome measures linked to the Council Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 27 combined, and updated by ECS during this same period, are performing on target.

1.2   **The Committee is recommended to:**

   1.2.1 Acknowledge and consider progress made during October 2021 to March 2022 toward achieving the Council Plan Priorities 2020-2022 linked to the Marr Area Plan 2021-2023; and

   1.2.2 Instruct the Director of Education & Children's Services to continue to present performance reports to the Area Committee on a six-monthly basis, evidencing progress and performance with delivery of the Council Plan linked to the Marr Area Plan.

2   Decision Making Route

2.1   In light of the unparalleled impact of Covid-19 on Aberdeenshire communities, the economy and on public services, Full Council formally closed down the former Council Plan 2017-2022 and associated priorities at the special meeting of 23rd July 2020 (Item 4), and approved a renewed Council Plan 2020-2022 at the special meeting of 7th October 2020 (Items 3 and 3a) to better reflect the current challenges being faced by the council and the region – centric to the three pillars[1] *Our People*, *Our Environment*, and *Our Economy*.

2.2   The current Education & Children's Services (ECS) Directorate Plan and accompanying *Directorate Improvement Action Plan 2021/22* provides more detail around how the outcomes are to be delivered with a focus on performance and improvement. These combined set out high level key themes for performance measures and benchmarking to monitor the progress of our

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[1] Full link: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-plan/strategic-priorities/

key actions, and accountability for delivery. The current plan was considered and approved at ECS Committee on 27th May 2021 (Item 11), however a refreshed Directorate Plan is scheduled to be presented to ECS Committee on 9th June 2022. The Service scrutinises and primarily leads or collaborates on the below council priorities[2] and associated outcomes:

To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for ALL children and young people (Council Priority 1)

To have better, integrated working arrangements in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people (Council Priority 2)

Efficient and effective business support, advice and regulation (Council Priority 3)

To develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life @ Home (Council Priority 27)

2.3   The *Marr Area Plan* is the delivery vehicle for Directorate Plans at an Area level, providing a clear performance and scrutiny framework – and aims to capture the synergies and relationship with Directorate Plans. Area Plans are, in part, informed through Directorate Plans, Council policies, and locally based information to reflect the needs and priorities of the area and it's communities. The current Area Plan covers the two year period 2021-2023, and was considered and approved at Marr Area Committee on 25th May 2021[3] (Item 6).

2.4   Those outcome indicators with an area perspective are also considered by the five other Council Area committees (outlined within their Council Area Plans currently covering the two year period 2021-2023), in line with their remit of reviewing the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and service delivery within their Area and making recommendations. Performance information in relation to Education & Children's Services (ECS) key Directorate project actions and outcome indicators associated to Council Priority 27 are considered by the Communities policy committee, in line with their scrutiny remit, with the latest combined Services performance update presented on 24th March 2022 (Item 8); the year-end update on those associated to Council Priorities 1, 2, and 3 is due to be presented to ECS Committee on 9th June 2022. Updates on the progress with delivery and impact of projects and actions within the Marr Area Plan is scheduled to be presented separately, as outlined in the area performance calendar considered at area committee on 14th December 2021 (Item 9).

3   **Discussion**

3.1   A high-level summary overview of the progress made during October 2021 to March 2022 in relation to key Directorate outcome indicators with an Area perspective updated during Q3 or Q4 2021/22, can be found in the discussion below with a focus on Council Priorities 1 and 27, with fuller details of progress made, including any corrective actions identified where performance is below target, provided in Appendix 1.

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[2] Full link: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-plan/delivering-our-priorities-across-services/
[3] Full link: https://committees.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Committees.aspx?commid=10&meetid=19796

3.2   Due to the nature of education data, most of the outcome indicators linked to the Council Priorities (2020-2022) and Marr Area Plan (2021-2023) that are reported to Area Committee, provide whole-of-session data, therefore are reportable on an annual basis released at varying times during the following reporting year within the biannual update closest to when the data is released. There were no annual measures reported in the mid-year performance report.

3.3   During the last six months of this reporting year (2021/22), the Service has maintained an adaptive response to the Covid-19 pandemic, with the impact of response and recovery phases influencing the ways services ordinarily delivered by ECS have been actualised since the initial national lockdown which commenced 23rd March 2020, although this has continued to ease over the course of recent months with the gradual lifting of national legal requirements or restrictions such as spacial distancing, self-isolation, and the wearing of face coverings in enclosed or crowded spaces – although remains encouraged as part of the national 'Covid sense' and 'distance aware' promotions. Scottish Government guidance for reducing risks of Covid-19 in schools[4] also reverted to the pre-Omicron protections from February 2022, with the reduction of wide-spread testing coinciding with schools Easter break, and national mitigation measures adjusted towards the latter part of this reporting period in a manner aimed to support wellbeing, learning and teaching. Similarly, their guidance specific to Early learning and Childcare services[5] and CLD providers[6] were also updated towards the end of the reporting year to provide guiding principles and clear expectations to manage Covid-19 and reduce the risk whilst remaining vigilant. Such reduced restrictions should positively influence performance reported in future reporting cycles where these have been an impacting factor.

3.4   Although overall performance over Q3 and Q4 2021/22 has remained affected compared with services provided pre-pandemic, performance updates for this year-end period signify many positive, flexible and innovative ways the Service has continued to adapt to offer support and maintain engagement with our service users and communities, using and embedding alternative or additional means of providing services (e.g. digital).

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[4] Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/
[5] Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-learning-childcare-services/https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-learning-childcare-services/
[6] Full link: https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-universities-colleges-and-community-learning-and-development-providers/

	Service Priority linked to Council Priority 1
	• To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people

Outcome Indicators				
Overview Year-End 2021/22[7]	0% at 🛑	0% at 🔺	67% at ✅	33% at ❓

- Work with Funded Providers has continued across Marr towards increasing the number of Early Learning and Childcare places available, resulting in the number of funded hours being accessed by children increasing, although it is parental choice how many hours are accessed. An alternative to the Central Health Index previously used in the percentage calculation of this measure (1.4b) should be in place for 2022/23 reporting, however the overall number of 3, 4, and 5 year olds accessing LA or Funded Provider places in Marr has increased compared to the previous year, up from 601 in 2020/21 to 666 in 2021/22.

- During school session 2020/21, 96.6% of all Marr school leavers secured a positive post-school destination, increasing ⬆2.3% on the previous year. This is above the Aberdeenshire level of 96.2%, and also notably higher the national rate for Scotland of 95.5%. The impact and challenges on post-school education and employment opportunities should continue to be taken into account when considering these levels.

- Although the percentage of young people successfully completing a Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) in Marr schools as part of an Aberdeenshire managed or FE college managed programmes in 2020/21 has reduced to that experienced in the previous year (73.3% in 2020/21 compared with 90.5%), there were more than four times the number of young people taking up the opportunity of the FA scheme in Marr in 2020/21, and still represents a very positive outcome when considered in the context of an entire school year being Covid affected, and continues to far exceed the most recently available percentage for a full national cohort of students taking and successfully completing a Level 6 FA (46.6% 2018-2020). There has been a steady uptick of young people undertaking their FA in Marr as part of the Aberdeenshire managed scheme this year rather than via the alternative NESCoL route.

	Service Priority linked to Council Priority 27
	• To develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life @ Home

Outcome Indicators				
Overview Mid-Year 2021/22[7]	0% at 🛑	0% at 🔺	50% at ✅	50% at ❓

- As the focus remained throughout the course of the last six months on establishing and maintaining safe operational delivery, the service only reinstated the customer satisfaction surveys in March usually carried out directly during a physical visit on-site to determine the level of customer satisfaction experience when participating in LLA services. Results for this measure (27.4) will resume from Q1 2022/23.

- Adults who engaged with CLD during the last six months of 2021/22 across Marr remained well above the target of 80% achieving their intended learning goals, with the latest quarter (January to March 2022) seeing learners in Huntly achieving their SQA Core Skills accreditation; learners in Aboyne engaging in literacies learning such as SQA Information and Communication accreditation; a Family Learning group being established in Banchory, in partnership with the EAL team, focussing on improving awareness of the benefits of bilingualism and parental engagement; along with a group of learners in Ballater engaging in person-centred learning. Across the year, 2021/22 saw a substantial increase in the overall percentage of adults achieving outcomes in Marr (⬆12.9% compared to 2020/21).

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[7] Percentages based on combination of quarterly, biannual or annual measures, linked to this Council Priority, updated during Q3 or Q4 2021/22 with latest data.

3.5 Although the set of measures outlined above and in the accompanying appendix collectively provide a focus on our Service Priorities with an Area perspective – encompassed within the associated Directorate Plan and Area Plan – teams aligned to each Head of Service within Education & Children's Services continue to collect and monitor a broad wealth of additional measures and data supporting internal scrutiny and self-assessment and providing direction for the allocation of resources and work plans at an operational level.

3.6 This and future performance monitoring reports are provided to assure and enable the Committee to monitor progress of delivery of the Council Priorities the Service is responsible for, providing a balanced overview allowing elected members to form a judgement on performance and support improvement as required in line with their remit of reviewing the effectiveness of Council policy implementation and service delivery within their Area and making recommendations.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priorities 'Education' and 'Health & Wellbeing' within the Pillar 'Our People', 'Resilient Communities' within the Pillar 'Our Environment', and 'Economy & Enterprise and 'Estate Modernisation' within the Pillar 'Our Economy', underpinned by the key principles *right people, right places, right time*; *responsible finances*; *Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection*; *tackling poverty and inequalities*; and *digital infrastructure and economy*.

4.2 This report also helps deliver against the Aberdeenshire Children's Services Plan[8] priorities, and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) priority on Reducing Poverty[9].

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

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland		X	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		X	
Climate Change and Sustainability			X
Health and Wellbeing		X	
Town Centre First		X	

4.4 Although there are no direct staffing or financial implications arising from this report, trends are used to inform improvement activity and future budget planning.

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[8] Full link: https://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/about-girfec/our-childrens-services-plan/
[9] Full link: https://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/our-priorities/reducing-child-poverty/

4.5   The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken as: *this report is to inform committee on performance and during the IIA Screening process no differential impact was identified*.

4.6   The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level (Corporate Risk Register[10]):
- ACORP004 – *Business and organisational transformation*
- ACORP006 – *Reputation management (including social media)*

   The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level (Education & Children's Services Directorate Risk Register):
- ECSSR001 – *To have better, integrated working arrangements within ECS in pursuit of improved outcomes for children and young people*
- ECSSR002 – *To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for children and young people*
- ECSSR003 – *To have improved business support and resource management arrangements in place across ECS*
- ECSSR004 – *To develop and deliver a revised LLA Business Plan focused on the three pillars of Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life @ Home*

Continued monitoring of the key Directorate and Area outcome measures and key actions linked the Council Plan Priorities, along with the project management approach and services' internal policies and procedures, will mitigate these identified risks, and strengthen the link between performance information and service outcomes.

5   Scheme of Governance

5.1   The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance[11] and relevant legislation.

5.2   The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to considering, commenting on, and making recommendations on any matter or policy which impacts their Area.

Laurence Findlay
Director of Education & Children's Services

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[10] Links to each of the Risk Registers (Corporate and Directorate): https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-us/plans-and-reports/
[11] Link to Scheme of Governance and the List of Committee Powers: https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/scheme-of-governance/

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Date 20 May 2022

List of Appendices
APPENDIX 1 – Marr: ECS Performance Monitoring Report – Measures of Success: Outcome Indicators October 2021 to March 2022 Update (Council Priorities 2020-2022)

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Generated on: 26 April 2022

PI Status		PI Status and Trends	
🔴	Red; Significantly adrift of target	❓	Data not yet available /status unknown – PIs only the status is not available either due to data not being available or no target being set
⚠️	Amber; Slightly adrift of target		Long trends are illustrated through Spark Charts, providing compact visual representations of performance based on the last three years (or 12 quarters) values preceding and including the latest period (or less where three years is not available).
✅	Green; On target		

QUARTERLY PI trend definition: Short trends are calculated by comparing the value for the current period to the value immediately preceding it, e.g. Q1 2021/22 is compared to Q4 2020/21. Long trends are calculated by comparing the current value to an average of historic values in the three years preceding, e.g. Q1 2020/21 is compared to an average of all the quarterly values in the preceding three years (i.e. 12 quarters, Q1 2018/19 to Q4 2020/21).

BI-ANNUAL PI trend definition: Short trends are calculated similar to quarterly but e.g. H1 2021/22 performance (reporting Q1 and Q2, or April to September) is compared to H2 2020/21 performance (Q3 and Q4, or October to March). Long trends are calculated e.g. H1 2021/22 is compared to an average of all the half-yearly values in the preceding three years (i.e. 6 half-years, H1 2018/19 to H2 2020/21).

ANNUAL PI trend definition: Short trends are also calculated similar to quarterly, but e.g. 2020/21 performance (reported during 2021/22 reporting cycle) is compared to 2019/20 performance; and long trends are calculated e.g. 2020/21 (reported during 2021/22 reporting cycle) is compared to an average of the annual performance in the preceding three years (2017/18 to 2019/20).

Traffic Light: Red 0, Amber 0, Green 3, Unknown 2

Note: Red and amber thresholds are determined by services on an annual basis. The thresholds included in this report apply to the current reporting year only. YTD stands for Year-To-Date for the current reporting year which runs 1st April to 31st March.

Council Priorities 2020-2022: 1. To secure continuous improvement in outcomes for ALL children and young people

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Base	Status	Spark Chart
1.4b Marr: Overall ELC take-up of eligible 3, 4 and 5 year olds as a percentage of the Central Health Index (CHI)	95.0%	90.0%	85.0%	2019/20	94.0%	634	?	
				2020/21	N/A	N/A		
				2021/22	N/A	N/A		

Aberdeenshire Council has worked with Funded Providers in the local area to increase the number of Early Learning and Childcare places. The number of funded hours being accessed by 3 to 5 year olds has increased, with the number of 3 to 5 year olds accessing more than 600 hours increasing from 60.3% in 20/21 to 100% 21/22.

Aberdeenshire Council still don't have access to CHI data breakdown but there has been an agreement to access birth data by school zone. This information will be in place for June 2022 for reporting on.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Status	Spark Chart
1.10 Marr: Percentage of school leavers securing a positive post school destination	96.6%	94.7%	93.2%	2018/19	97.3%	✓	
				2019/20	94.3%		
				2020/21	96.6%		

This measure is based on data published on the Scottish Government *Insight* national senior phase benchmarking tool.

Scottish Government's statistical publication which provides information on initial destinations of 2021/22 school leavers from publicly funded schools in Scotland was published in February 2022 (**Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations, No. 4: 2022 Edition**).

This percentage is based on the 2020/21 school session, measuring the number of school leavers who secured a positive post-school destination. Positive destinations include Higher Education, Further Education, Training, Employment, Voluntary Work and Personal Skills Development (which replaced Activity Agreements).

Both the short and long trends indicate the proportion of senior phase leavers from secondary schools in Marr has returned to levels more akin to pre-Covid this year at 96.6% (cohort 504) - increasing 2.3% compared to the previous year (cohort 495), and up 0.7% when compared with the average of the previous three years (average cohort 512). However, the impact and challenges of Covid-19 on post-school education and employment opportunities should continue to be taken into account when considering the levels of our school leavers who initially secured a positive post-school destination during the pandemic. Nevertheless, these latest figures for this council area are higher than experienced across Aberdeenshire as a whole for 2020/21 school leavers (96.2%), and notably above the national rate for Scotland of 95.5% (which itself improved 2.1% compared to 2020/21 school leavers).

As a comparison, the three council areas with the highest overall rates of school leavers securing an initial positive post-school destination during session 2020/21 were Formartine, Garioch, and Marr (96.6%, 96.3% and 96.6% respectively).

Further detail on Aberdeenshire school leavers initial destinations for school session 2020/21 were considered at the **ECS Committee meeting of 17th March 2022** (**Item 7**); and within **Skills Development Scotland's Annual Participation Measure** (SDS APM) interactive report on 16-19 year olds participating in education, training or employment.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Base	Status	Spark Chart
1.18 Marr: Percentage of young people successfully completing a Foundation Apprenticeship (FA) in Aberdeenshire schools as part of Aberdeenshire managed or FE College managed FA programmes	65.0%	60.0%	55.0%	2018/19	N/A	N/A	✅	
				2019/20	90.5%	21		
				2020/21	73.3%	90		

Some FA programmes are two years in duration. This figure is the percentage of those students on either 1 year or 2 year FA programmes who were scheduled to complete this year.

Although lower than the very high figure achieved in 2019/20, (73.3% compared with 90.5%), the level achieved in 2020/21 still represents a very positive outcome when considered in the context of an entire school year being Covid affected. It also exceeds the most recently available baseline figure for a full national cohort of students taking and successfully completing a Level 6 Foundation Apprenticeship (46.6% in 2018-2020). See **Foundation Apprenticeship Progress Report (SDS, June 2021)**.

23% of the Marr students in 2020/21 doing an FA did so in conjunction with NESCoL, which compares with 29% in 2019/20.

Further details on Foundation Apprenticeship provision in Aberdeenshire is available in the "Update on Developing the Young Workforce - Foundation Apprenticeships in Aberdeenshire Schools" report, recently considered by Education and Children's Services Committee. (**ECS, 17-03-2022, Item 10**).

Council Priorities 2020-2022: 27. People are supported to live healthy active lifestyles focused on Live Life Outdoors, Live Life Well and Live Life at Home

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Status	Spark Chart
27.4 Marr: Live Life Aberdeenshire - To determine level of customer satisfaction experience (excellence) when participating in services	70.0%	59.0%	50.0%	Q4 2020/21	N/A	?	
				2020/21	N/A		
				Q1 2021/22	N/A		
				Q2 2021/22	N/A		
				Q3 2021/22	N/A		
				Q4 2021/22	N/A		
				2021/22	N/A		

The service re-established customer satisfaction surveys in March 2022, these are live and will be updated in Q1 2022/23.

Performance Measure	Current Target	Amber Threshold	Red Threshold		Value	Base	Status	Spark Chart
27.8 Marr: Percentage of adults achieving outcomes	80.0%	74.0%	72.0%	Q4 2020/21	87.0%	54	✓	
				2020/21	82.8%	239		
				Q1 2021/22	96.8%	63		
				Q2 2021/22	94.5%	73		
				Q3 2021/22	96.8%	63		
				Q4 2021/22	94.5%	55		
				2021/22	95.7%	254		

In Marr in Q2 2021/22 52 of 55 (94.55%) of adults engaged with CLD Adult Learning achieved their intended learning outcomes. This is well above the target of 80%.

In Huntly, 7 learners successfully completed their SQA core skills accreditation. In Banchory, in partnership with the EAL team a family learning group has been established to focus on improved parental engagement learning outcomes for bilingual families. Currently 7 parent/carers have engaged with this project. Learners report improved awareness of the benefits of bilingualism. In Ballater there are currently 10 learners who are in recovery from drugs and alcohol are engaged in person centred learning.

In Aboyne, 4 learners are engaged in literacies learning mainly accredited SQA Information and Communication learning.